The conference “Images of Power / Representations of the Past” focuses on the relation between images and political power. It addresses social, political and ideological utilizations and function of images in European dictatorial regimes of the 20th century, as well as in post-dictatorial societies in transformation. The goal is to identify diverse types of these visual acts and various types of images— including mental images about the past— which were used in order to represent or contest political power, to construct national identity, historical narratives and national myths. Forms of political iconography (posters, photography, film, promotion material for election campaigns, etc.) and discourse will be particularly examined.

The focus of the conference “Public Sphere, Ideology, Transformation of Power” lies on the formation and functioning of European dictatorial regimes of the 20th century, particularly on how different instruments were used to establish political hegemony in view of the communication between political power and society. These mechanisms of communication will be analyzed from two perspectives. The top-down approach aims to examine how the key state representatives used different strategies to shape public opinion. In addition, bottom-up initiatives introduced by various social groups as a response to a regime helps to understand social needs and the extent of resistance to a regime. Such an analysis can also clarify the conditions and processes of the formation of public or private sphere.