

# INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR HISTORIANS

## *Dealing with the Kaleidoscope*

A public lecture by **Corinne Pernet** (University of Geneva)

**Leiden University | 22 March | 17.30-18.30 | Lipsius, room 147**

The kaleidoscope with its ever-changing patterns fascinates young and old alike: colorful beads and crystals appear in seemingly infinite forms, changing as we turn the mirrored tube. As object of scholarly inquiry, International Organizations also appear in manifold shapes and hues. Their growing importance gave birth to the field of International Relations and for decades, political science remained the dominant discipline in studies about IOs. But in the past two decades, historians have adopted International Organizations as a fruitful terrain for their research, frequently in the context of providing better explanations for processes of globalization. A true flurry of studies has addressed topics ranging from music at the League of Nations to worker's rights, human rights, and indigenous rights at the ILO; from the spread of the Middle-Under-Arm-Circumference armband to measure malnutrition in refugee centers to the spread of copyright regimes. The methodological approaches are as varied as the topics, from close studies of epistemic communities, to analyses of imaginaries, to IT-supported network analyses. An international organization, or even a division thereof, will appear in different shapes, patterns, and colors, depending on how we turn our methodological and thematic kaleidoscope. This is no reason for despair. We need to embrace these multiplying views with great reflexivity and openness for exchange to discern the relevant patterns, the relevant colors, the relevant movements for our endeavors. This might, at times, entail opening up the kaleidoscope to fill in more crystals, or, on the contrary, to take them out and add them to different tubes, where they contribute to fresh designs.

**Alanna O'Malley** (Leiden University) will moderate the lecture.

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*After a PhD in History at the University of California, Irvine, **Corinne Pernet** became an assistant professor at the department of History at the University of Oklahoma, before moving to the University of Zurich as an associate professor. Between 2010 and 2016 she took up a professorship funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation at the Universities of St. Gallen and Basel. She is a specialist in the social and cultural history of modern and contemporary Latin America, and in the history of International Organizations. Her current work focuses on the one hand on the role of Latin America in international organizations (especially the League of Nations, the ILO and Unesco), and on the other hand on how development and food policies have been put into practice in Latin America.*

**This lecture is open to everyone, but registration is required by email to [rethinkingdisability@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:rethinkingdisability@hum.leidenuniv.nl). It is part of the 'Historians without Borders' workshop, which takes place at Leiden University on 22 and 23 March and is organized by the team of the ERC project 'Rethinking Disability'. For more information, visit [www.rethinkingdisability.net/historians-without-borders](http://www.rethinkingdisability.net/historians-without-borders).**