

JUNE
9TH
2026

A Public Lecture

in the
IMPULSE-Focus
Event Series
2026/27
on
*Imagination/
Memory*

**Hauptgebäude
Hörsaal VIII at 6 pm c. t.**

More information:



impulse.uni-bonn.de



About IMPULSE

The *House for Intellectual Innovation and Creativity* is a place of inspiration, intellectual encounter, and creative collaboration for the University of Bonn.

Grounded in the conviction that academic work thrives on receiving and sharing impulses, IMPULSE fosters creative environments for the exchange of ideas.

It serves as a dedicated hub for the University's commitment to inter- and transdisciplinary innovation.

The event is organized by the IMPULSE-team.



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UNIVERSITÄT **BONN**  **IMPULSE**
RHEINISCHE FRIEDRICH-WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT BONN HOUSE FOR INTELLECTUAL INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY



**Hans Ulrich
GUMBRECHT:**

**Imagination as
Sensory Power**

**An Energy at the Edge
of Human Existence.**

IMPULSE-Focus Event Series 2026/2027: *Imagination / Memory*

The **IMPULSE-Focus** program consists of a series of events that combine two closely interrelated elements:

Public talks and discussions with high-profile scientists, academics, artists, and intellectual figures, open to a broad audience.

Transdisciplinary explorations and experimental workshops with our guests at IMPULSE in the day(s) following the public event.

In 2026 and 2027, **IMPULSE-Focus** centers on the theme *Imagination/Memory*, approaching it from diverse disciplinary perspectives and through explicitly transdisciplinary methodologies. The human imagination and its relationship to memory constitute a cutting-edge topic in contemporary research across the neurosciences, psychology, philosophy, the humanities, and the arts. By bringing together scientific inquiry, artistic practice, and philosophical reflection, **IMPULSE-Focus** seeks to open up new ways of understanding imagination and memory as dynamic, relational, and socially embedded processes.

IMPULSE-Focus with Prof. Dr. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht: June 9–10, 2026

Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht studied Romance and German literatures, philosophy, and sociology in Germany, Spain, and Italy. He subsequently taught at the Universities of Konstanz, Bochum, and Siegen. In 1989, he became the Albert Guérard Professor in literature at Stanford University, where he retired in 2018. At the University of Bonn, he holds the status of Distinguished Professor Emeritus. As a scholar, Gumbrecht focuses on Central European and South American literatures and cultures. At the same time, he writes on the Western philosophical tradition, with a particular emphasis on 19th and 20th century French and German texts, and seeks to analyze forms of aesthetic experience in 21st century everyday culture. In Europe and in South America, Gumbrecht is also known as a public intellectual. Over the past forty years, he has published about two thousand texts including books such as *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*, *In Praise of Athletic Beauty*, and *Lives of the Voice*. In March 2026 his intellectual autobiography appeared under the title *Sepp – Mein Leben auf Halbdistanz*.

With a **public lecture**, Prof. Dr. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht will contribute to the **IMPULSE-Focus** Event Series. The lecture is aimed at a broad audience and invites open discussion. **Doctoral and postdoctoral researchers are additionally invited to take part in a transdisciplinary exploration** in the form of a one-day workshop at Uni Bonn's new *IMPULSE – House for Intellectual Innovation and Creativity*. Building on the public lecture, the workshop brings together Prof. Dr. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and colleagues from Bonn, including Prof. Dr. Adrian Hermann and Prof. Dr. Markus Gabriel (further participants to be confirmed), to **explore, together with the participants, questions of imagination and (human) existence at the intersection of philosophy, literature, a.o.** Through inputs from different disciplines and experimental working formats, participants will jointly investigate connections between human imagination and the human existence.

Event Overview



Lecture: **“Imagination as Sensory Power – An Energy at the Edge of Human Existence.”**
by Prof. Dr. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht

Over the past few decades, debates among analytic philosophers have brought a new clarity to the broad conceptual field of “imagination” through incisive distinctions, thereby directing intellectual attention to how this faculty is used in everyday life. Seen in this light, any focus on its effects as “sensory imagination” marks a return to classical notions about connections with aesthetic behavior. At the same time, it prompts a new reflection on the status of objects of consciousness, which, despite resembling perceptions in their physical vividness, are not dependent on environmental impressions as perceptions are. How does imagination succeed, to paraphrase a pressing contemporary question not only for scholars of the humanities, in suggesting various possibilities for transcending real existence through literary fictions and myths of higher worlds?

June 9, 2026: 6 pm (c.t.) to 8 pm (s.t.)

Lecture Hall VIII, Main Building, University of Bonn

Open to the public – no registration required

Transdisciplinary Workshop (for PhD candidates & postdoctoral scholars):
“Exploring the Interplay of Imagination and (Human) Existence”

June 10, 2026: 9.30 am to 4 pm

IMPULSE – House for Intellectual Innovation and Creativity,
Adenauerallee 131

Registration required

Registration deadline: May 31

Registration via: maria.ullrich@uni-bonn.de