

Prof. Frank Schumacher
Phone: (519) 661-2111 ext. 84987
Fax: (519) 661-3010
fschuma@uwo.ca

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Roosevelt Visiting Professorship (May 15 - June 15, 2023)

My month-long stay at the RIAS was not only productive and enjoyable - it was fabulous. I co-hosted an international conference on Theodore Roosevelt, participated in the Spring International PhD Seminar, edited a chapter on U.S. Empire, made new friends at the RIAS, and networked with colleagues across the Netherlands. In addition, I learned much about town and region and used every opportunity with my *fiets*, to bike across Zeeland in this beautiful part of the country. All of this, and the fact that my daughter Nele was able to join me for the adventure, made my stay at the RIAS truly special for me.

Initial conversations about an extended visit to RIAS dated back to January 2021 when I proposed the idea of an international symposium on the global histories of Theodore Roosevelt to the institute. COVID waves and successive pandemic disruptions delayed these projects until the fall of 2022 when my RIAS colleagues and I further refined the conference project and subsequent call for papers. From May 24 – 26, 2023, my co-organizer Gaetano Di Tommaso and I were finally able to welcome a stellar line-up of speakers for our symposium “Theodore Roosevelt: Global American”. For further information on program and conference

Conference program: <https://www.roosevelt.nl/app/uploads/2023/07/TR-Programma-definitief.pdf>

Conference report: <https://www.roosevelt.nl/activities/conferences/theodore-roosevelt-and-the-progressive-era/>

The conference explored TR’s worlds and the world’s TR; the various panels examined tensions between globalism and nationalism through the biography of Roosevelt and his international perception and legacies. The symposium made at least four distinct contributions to the internationalization of TR scholarship, the historiography of the

Progressive Era, and the writing of global history: it examined the significance of global imaginaries, outlooks, and perspectives to Roosevelt's life and career; it studied how TR's 'world-making' shaped contemporary discussions of globalization(s) and globalism; it analyzed how global audiences perceived TR, appropriated him for their own contexts, and how his *perceptions* and memories shaped international *receptions* of the United States; and finally, the conference explored the utility of actor-centered approaches to writing global histories of the Progressive Era.

Middelburg and the RIAS were ideal for this look at TR's global legacies not only because of the historical significance of the location to the Roosevelt family history; but also because the RIAS is incredibly experienced and efficient in tackling the myriad logistical challenges of conference organization. At the heart of the operations which ensured an effective and enjoyable symposium were office manager Leontien Joosse and office intern Marco Segantini, while communications officer Karen Kroese connected our conference to the world. My co-organizer Gaetano Di Tommaso made conference preparation a 'breeze'. He was/is a pleasure to work with as were colleagues Dario Fazi and Damian Pargas for their many conceptual and logistical contributions. It was my first post-COVID conference with 'real' interactions, and it was fantastic. To all of you a heartfelt *hartelijk dank!*

Another scholarly engagement at the RIAS was being a commentator at the Spring International PhD Seminar (June 14-15, 2023) organized by Dario Fazi and Marcella Schute. I was deeply impressed by the wide range of research projects, their theoretical sophistication, and innovative empirical trajectories. The setting, and the conversations between presenters and commentators and the group-at-large, made for a welcoming and productive work atmosphere. The seminar, as well as the TR symposium, also gave me opportunities to learn more about the impressive research cluster on "Racial Democracy" – thank you to Marcella Schute, Christine Mertens, and Manar Ellethy for sharing your work and research insights. I thoroughly enjoyed these conversations and the PhD seminar and will recommend these spring and fall events highly to the doctoral students in my department.

This expansion of a Canadian-Dutch 'transatlantic connection' was also part of my networking activities during my stay at the RIAS. I am currently in the preparation stages of a multi-year research project on the cultural productions and collective memories of trauma, crisis, and decline anxieties in U.S. history and hope to include a joint project with colleagues from Utrecht University and Radboud University in Nijmegen. In this context, the RIAS could, once again, play an important scholarly role particularly in project components dedicated to environmental trauma, crises, and anxieties.

But first things first: Gaetano and I will continue work on a book proposal to publish a collection of contributions from our conference “TR: Global American”. We are hoping to make an innovative contribution not only to TR historiography but also to writing global histories of the United States. Based on the discussions and conversations at the symposium, we also recognized a surprising and substantial gap of up-to-date research and analysis on TR and questions of race. There might be worthwhile opportunities in this context for further – potentially triangular - collaboration between RIAS, UWO, and the TR Center in North Dakota.

In the meantime, however, I thank RIAS director Damian Pargas and the institute board for enabling me to spend a fabulous month at the institute; I thank Leontien Joosse for all her help with the logistics of my visit – her attention to detail relieved a lot of the stresses of such temporary ‘moves’. She helped me find a wonderful apartment rented by the equally wonderful Edith Mutsaerts, who became a good friend to both my daughter and I during our stay. I thank Gaetano, Dario, Marco, and everyone at RIAS for welcoming me/us - I will miss our conversations and coffee on the sunny terrace of the archive building.

You all made this a very special time – *dank u wel en tot ziens.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "F. Luns..." followed by a stylized flourish.