

Dr. Silke Flegel
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“Transitional Society - Utopia and Utopia Loss in the Late GDR Culture”

Volker Braun's “The Transitional Society” premiered in the GDR in 1988 (at the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin) marks the conflict between the last attempts to preserve utopian potential in late socialism and its total surrender. A year later, Christoph Hein confirms in the comedy “The Knights of the Round Table” that the belief in The Holy Grail, that is, an ideal beyond the labors of everyday life or the utopia of the better tomorrow, has become obsolete, precisely because of the crimes committed in the name of these ideals. This exciting character characterizes the late GDR culture in its last decade.

About the speaker:

Dr. Silke Flegel completed her vocational training in a law firm and notarial office in the Ruhr area, additionally, she studied theater, film and television studies, modern German literature, education and art history in Bochum. She had involvements at the German studies institute (German Literature and Book Studies of the 19th century) and at the Institute for German Cultural Studies of the Ruhr University Bochum, where she worked as a scientific assistant. Dr. Flegel was a coordinator of the post-graduate doctoral program Promotionskolleg Ost-West, (2001-2008) – and the RUB Europadialog (2015-2019). Her research focuses contain: German culture and cultural history, especially film and literature from the beginning of 1945, currently a particular focus on German emigrants in the cultural life of the GDR; book culture (literary paperbacks) of the 19th century.

Recent Publications:

- Bühnenkämpfe. Autor-Dramaturgen in der frühen DDR: Brecht, Kipphardt, Hacks (2017);
- Fluchtpunkt NRW. Zeitzeugenberichte zur DDR-Geschichte (2016; Mithg.).