

Call for Papers: “Pulver möchte ich schreiben”: Engagement in the German Tradition

Graduate Conference hosted by the Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures at the University of Toronto

Date: 26-28 April 2018

Location: Munk School of Global Affairs, 2 Devonshire Place, University of Toronto

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Peter Schweppe, Sewanee University

Submission Deadline: 20 December 2017

“Pulver möchte ich schreiben, in die Zeit hinaus, und auf dem Streitroß meiner kriegführenden Gedanken möchte ich als ein Held ausziehen in das Schlachtgetümmel der Geschichte.”

In this passage of his *Moderne Lebenswirren*, published in 1834, Theodor Mundt voices a characteristically modern sentiment, the desire to change the world through art. In the German-speaking sphere, this impulse and intention came to be referred to as *Engagement*, a term derived from Jean-Paul Sartre’s expression *littérature engagée*. From its genesis in the enlightenment to Schiller’s didactic classicism, the Junges Deutschland, naturalism, expressionism, Brechtian epic theatre, the 68er-Bewegung, feminism, and contemporary critiques of neoliberalism and mass surveillance, the spirit of *Engagement* has exerted profound influence upon German culture and its study. Recognizing that the many pressing challenges facing North-American and global society today (e.g. political polarization, cross-cultural understanding, reconciliation, terrorism, economic inequality, and climate change) are also rooted in culture and that culture plays a crucial role both in creating and in solving these conflicts, we ask what the German tradition can teach us about the role of the arts as a means to shape the world.

Our keynote speaker, Prof. Peter Schweppe, will address this question by examining the social significance of materiality in German-speaking graffiti culture.

We invite abstracts for 15-minute papers in English or German relating to *Engagement* in the German arts (literature, drama, music, cinema, etc.) and the German aesthetic tradition, including, but not limited to:

- Rhetoric
- Politics
- Ethics/morality
- Economy
- Terrorism
- Gender
- Environment
- Migration
- The “Crisis in the Humanities”

UofT’s Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures is home to the University’s Yiddish Studies program; as such, we also warmly welcome abstracts for papers addressing the subject of culture and social engagement from the perspective of Yiddish Studies.

The conference will take place at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, which is fully accessible. The conference will begin with an evening social to welcome participants on Thursday, April 26th, followed by presentations and keynote on Friday, April 27th and Saturday, April 28th.

Please submit an abstract of 200-300 words and a short biography (including current position and preferred pronouns) to utgergrad18@gmail.com by 20 December 2017. Any enquiries may be sent to the same address. Organisers: Veronica Curran, William Ohm, Livia Rrokaj, Tobias Wilczek