

# Ruins of Modernity

## Program

### Conference Highlights

Boris Mikhailov, Photographer, Ukraine/Berlin, on Soviet ruins  
Thursday, March 17, 7:30 PM, 0520 Rackham

[Detroit: Ruin of a City](#) (2005), a film by Michael Chanan and George Steinmetz, music by Michael Nyman  
Friday, March 18, 8:30 PM, Rackham Amphitheatre

Interest in this film is likely to outstrip the seating capacity of the Rackham Amphitheatre, so the organizers of the Ruins of Modernity conference have kindly arranged for an additional screening of "Detroit: Ruin of a City." Because some people are driving in from Detroit to see the film, we gently suggest that some of our local Ann Arbor and UM campus audience might like to elect to come to the second screening.

**Additional screening:** Friday, March 25, 7 PM, Rackham Amphitheatre

Keynote Address: "Airwar and Architecture 1945-2005"  
Anthony Vidler, Dean, Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture, Cooper Union  
March 19, 4:30 PM, Rackham Amphitheatre

All events take place in the Rackham Building  
915 E. Washington, Ann Arbor, MI

Conference sessions are free and open to the public.

## Thursday, March 17, 2005

### Graduate Student Workshop

Osterman Common Room, 0520 Rackham

### 9:00-10:30 am, Photography and Photomontage: Capturing Ruination

"Eugène Atget's Poetics of Disappearance"  
Sebastian Ferrari, Comparative Literature

"'Use Photography as a Weapon!' - John Heartfield's Photomontages of the Reichstag in Ruin"  
Lauren Graber, History of Art

“The New Ruin: Bernd and Hilla Becher’s Industrial Photography”  
Kayte Bauss, German Studies

Respondent: Kirsten Olds, History of Art

**10:45 am -12:30 pm, Positions, Ruptures, and Alternatives in Historical Narratives: Unwinding the Tattered Thread of Modernity**

“‘To Vindicate the Architecture of Our Nation’: The German Ruin and History in Goethe’s ‘Von deutscher Baukunst’”  
Michael André, German Studies

“On the Effectiveness of Political Art: Adorno’s Ambivalence Towards *A Survivor from Warsaw*”  
Philip Duker, School of Music

“The Sound of Ruin: Schoenberg’s *A Survivor from Warsaw*”  
Daniel Stevens, School of Music

“Out of Time: Benjamin’s Monad-History”  
John Rowland, Comparative Literature

Respondent: Jonah Johnson, German Studies/Comparative Literature

**1:30-3:00 pm, Cities and Ruins; Destruction and Creation**

“City in Ruins: The 1945 Destruction of Dresden”  
Helga Rom, German Studies

“Looking Backwards while Moving Forwards: Memory, the Wall, and the Problem of *Ostalgie*”  
Stacy Swennes, German Studies

“Berlin’s *Palast der Republik* – A Ruin of In-Between”  
Courtney Glore, German Studies

Respondent: Richard Hess, Architecture/Film Studies

**3:15-4:45 pm, Modern Ruins: Postmodern Perspectives**

“Pelevin’s Heterotopic Restroom: ‘Vera Pavlovna’s Ninth Dream’ as a Ruin of Modern Soviet Space”  
Victoria Dearman, Slavic Languages & Literature

“Artificial Melancholy: Excavating Modern Time in Spielberg’s *A.I.*”  
Paul Dobryden, Germanic Languages & Literature

“Romanticism Refigured: Criticism, Poetry, Ruin”  
Jeffrey Lloyd, Comparative Literature

Respondent: Johannes von Moltke, Germanic Languages and Literatures/Film Studies

**5:00 pm, Keynote Speaker**

“Music, Ghosts, and the Ruins of Modernity”  
Kevin Korsyn, Music, University of Michigan

**7:30 pm, Boris Mikhailov**, Photographer (Berlin), on Soviet ruins

**Friday, March 18, 2005**

Rackham Amphitheatre, Rackham Building, 4th floor

**9:00 am, Welcoming Remarks and Introductions**

Terrence McDonald, Dean, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Daniel Herwitz, Director, Institute for the Humanities; Julia Hell, German, University of Michigan; and Andreas Schönle, Slavic, University of Michigan

**9:30 am, Ruins, Modernism and Post-Modernism**

Moderator: Kathleen Canning, History and German, University of Michigan

“Destruction in Modernism and the Destruction of Modernism”  
Vladimir Paperny, Independent scholar and designer, Los Angeles

“Art and Junk Culture”  
Alex Potts, History of Art, University of Michigan

“Authentic Ruins?”  
Andreas Huyssen, German and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Commentator: Marjorie Levinson, English, University of Michigan

**1:00 pm, Ruins and the Polity**

Moderator: Olga Maiorova, Slavic, University of Michigan

“Democratic Destruction”  
Russell Berman, German and Comparative Literature, Stanford University

“The Disintegration of Czechoslovakia, 1938-1939: Czech Modernism after the Munich Agreement”

Jonathan Bolton, Slavic, Harvard University

“Deutsche Demokratische Republik: Der Dumme Rest – A Western Take on the GDR”  
Charity Scribner, Foreign Langs. & Lits. and Comparative Media Studies, MIT

“Simultaneous Modernities – Negotiations and Resistances in Urban India”  
Rahul Mehrotra, Architecture, University of Michigan

Commentator: Scott Spector, German and History, University of Michigan

### **3:30 pm, Ruins: Layers of Spaces and Times**

Moderator: Sara Blair, English, University of Michigan

“Derzhavin’s Archaic Modernity: The Promise of a Ruin”  
Tatiana Smoliarova, Slavic, Columbia University

“Foundational Ruins: Beholding the Secular Sublime”  
Alexander Regier, English, King’s College, University of Cambridge

“Lost in Time: Boris Mikhailov and His Study of the Soviet”  
Helen Petrovsky, Russian Academy of Sciences

“Layered Time: Ruins as Lacunas and Presence in Israeli and German Landscapes”  
Amir Eshel, German and Comparative Literature, Stanford University

Commentator: Artemis Leontis, Classical Studies, University of Michigan

### **8:30 pm, Detroit**

Moderator: Johannes von Moltke, German and Film and Video, University of Michigan

Film Screening: [Detroit: Ruin of a City](#)

George Steinmetz, Sociology and German, University of Michigan and Michael Chanan, Cultural; Studies, University of the West of England— Bristol.

For questions about the film, please contact George Steinmetz at [geostein@umich.edu](mailto:geostein@umich.edu).

Additional screening Friday, Mar 25

## **Saturday, March 19, 2005**

Rackham Amphitheatre, Rackham Building, 4th floor

### **9:30 am, Ruins of Industrial Modernity**

Moderator: Laurence Goldstein, English, University of Michigan

“Mines to Museums. Postindustrial Memory Cultures in East and West Germany”  
Kerstin Barndt, German, University of Michigan

“Doctor Strangelove’s Cabinet of Wonders: Sifting through the Atomic Ruins of the Nevada Site”  
Jonathan Veitch, Dean, Eugene Lange College, New School University

“Shrinking or Moving? Liverpool/Manchester, Ivanovo, Halle/Leipzig and Detroit”  
Kyong Park, Artist, Berlin and Detroit

Commentator: Jason Young, Architecture, University of Michigan

### **11:30 am, The Ruins of World War Two**

Moderator: Geoff Eley, History and German, University of Michigan

“Ruins as Models: Displaying Destruction in Postwar Germany”  
Helmut Puff, History and German, University of Michigan

“Ridges and Ruins: Generic Topographies in German Film History”  
Eric Rentschler, German, Harvard University

“Landscapes of Ruin in War-time and Post-war Britain”  
Sarah Beckwith, English and Religious Studies, Duke University

Commentator: Brian Porter, History, University of Michigan

### **2:00 pm, Ruins of Empire**

Moderator: Vassilios Lambropoulos, Classical Studies and Comparative Literature,  
University of Michigan

“Sebald’s Ruins (via Hegel’s Philosophy of World History)”  
Todd Presner, German and Jewish Studies, UCLA

“Cities, Citizenship, and Other Jo’burg Stories”  
Lucia Saks, Film and Video, University of Michigan

“A Concept in Ruins: The Archaeological Site and Its Relation with Indigenous Material  
Pasts”  
Gustavo Verdesio, Romance Languages, University of Michigan

“An Interrupted Future: Santiago’s Ochagavia Hospital”  
Jonathan Beasley-Murray, Spanish, French and Italian Studies, University of British Columbia

Commentator: Ann Stoler, Anthropology, New School University

#### **4:30 pm, Keynote Address**

Moderator: Tom Buresh, Architecture, University of Michigan

“Airwar and Architecture 1945-2005”  
Anthony Vidler, Dean of the Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture, Cooper Union

Commentator: Daniel Herwitz, Director, Institute for the Humanities, University of Michigan

#### **Sponsors**

The University of Michigan Institute for the Humanities, Center for European Studies, Center for Russian and East European Studies, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Department of Sociology, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Office of the Vice-President for Research, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, Program in Film and Video, Department of English, and Department of Romance Languages and Literatures; and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

#### **Organizers**

Julia Hell, German, University of Michigan; and Andreas Schönle, Slavic, University of Michigan ( currently at School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, Queen Mary, University of London.)