

Sabine Hake

The University of Texas at Austin / German Studies Association

The Proletarian Prometheus

Monday | June 12, 2017 | 6-8 pm | Freie Universität Berlin
Ehrenbergstr. 26/28 | Room 009 | 14195 Berlin



Image: Marx as Prometheus chained, März Zeitung, 1899 - Rheinische Zeitung Collection, International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam).

Berlin Program GSA Distinguished Lecture 2017

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In the symbolic politics that have come to dominate public debates, the notion of cultural appropriation plays a central but often misunderstood role. Inseparable from questions of hegemony, the term refers to the use of elements of a minority culture or subculture by a dominant culture. But what if it is the working class that appropriates elements of bourgeois high culture as a gesture of political empowerment and an expression of class unity? We can examine the cultural, political, and emotional aspects of this kind of refunctionalization through the example of proletarian Prometheus, a key figure of the nineteenth century socialist imaginary. Focusing on Imperial Germany and Social Democracy, this lecture uses the representation of the most famous Titan in political cartoons, poems, and essays to draw attention to the little studied visual culture of the labor movement and to argue for a different model of appropriation that emphasizes the emotional aspects of such appropriation and refunctionalization.

Sabine Hake is Professor and Texas Chair of German Literature and Culture in the Department of Germanic Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. A cultural historian working on nineteenth and twentieth century Germany, with a special emphasis on film, she is the author of six monographs, including *German National Cinema* (2008), *Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin* (2008), and *Screen Nazis: Cinema, History, and Democracy* (2012). In addition, she has coedited four anthologies and published numerous articles on German film, urban culture, and mass culture and modernity. Since 2011, she serves as the editor of *German Studies Review*, the journal of the German Studies Association. This lecture is related to her forthcoming book on “The Proletarian Dream—Class, Culture, and Emotion in Germany 1863-1932.”

The lecture will be followed by a commentary by historian Ute Frevert, Director at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, and a discussion. The event will be moderated by Jeremy DeWaal, Friedrich Meinecke Institute, FU Berlin.

TIME: June 12, 2017, 18-20 h (c.t.) followed by a reception 20-21 h
 LOCATION: FU Berlin, Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies
 Room 009, Ehrenbergstr. 26/28, 14195 Berlin
 LANGUAGE: The lecture and discussion will be held in English.
 REGISTRATION: Not required; participation is free of charge.
 GETTING THERE: S/U-Bahn: S1 Lichterfelde West | U-Bahn: U3 Thielplatz
 Bus: M11 Ehrenbergstr., M48 und 101 Unter den Eichen/Drakestr.