

Berlin Program Alumni Panel
at the 42nd Annual GSA Conference in Pittsburgh
September 29, 2018

State Building as a Cultural Act:

Intersections of Bureaucracy with Art and Architectural
Production in German Regimes, 1815-1989

Report



Image: "Der Staatsbesuch" by Hans Stephan, used with permission.

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**State Building as a Cultural Act: Intersections of Bureaucracy with
Art and Architectural Production in German Regimes, 1815-1989**

Moderator: **James Brophy, University of Delaware**

Commentator: **Claire Zimmerman, University of Michigan**

Laura diZerega, University of California at Santa Barbara

"Seen from the Rhine, it will make a fine view": Bureaucracy, Resistance, and Rhenish Church Building under Karl Friedrich Schinkel, 1815-40

Naomi Vaughan, University of Michigan

The Bureaucratic & Photographic Architecture of Nazi Sovereignty: Visualizing State Power in the Neue Reichskanzlei's "Vorräume der Macht"

Candice Hamelin, Freie Universität Berlin

The Support and Development of Art Photography in the German Democratic Republic

On Saturday, September 29, at the 2018 German Studies Association Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the Berlin Program convened its annual Alumni Panel. This year's exceptionally good panel was organized by 2016-17 alumna Laura diZerega, Ph.D. Candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her colleagues Naomi Vaughan, 2016-17 Berlin Program alumna, and Dr. Candice Hamelin, also a 2016-17 Berlin Program postdoctoral fellow, joined Laura, each presenting a paper around the theme "State Building as a Cultural Act: Intersections of Bureaucracy with Art and Architectural Production in German Regimes, 1815-1989." The panel benefitted immeasurably from the participation of Dr. James M. Brophy, the Francis H. Squire Professor of History at the University of Delaware, as Moderator, and Dr. Claire Zimmerman, Associate Professor of History of Art and the Director of Doctoral Studies in Architecture at the Taubman College of the University of Michigan, as Commentator. Dr. Zimmerman is a 2002-03 Berlin Program alumna.

Laura diZerega began with a talk on Karl Friedrich Schinkel's administration of church rebuilding projects in the Prussian Rhineland between 1815-40, a little known aspect of Schinkel's work. Laura's research examined ways in which Rhenish architects and parishioners contested the directives of Schinkel and the Prussian building bureaucracy. Using the case study of the parish church in the Rhenish town of Vallendar, Laura's paper compellingly revealed how the Prussian bureaucratic apparatus tasked to control provincial architecture paradoxically emboldened regional actors and created a discursive space for debate and negotiation with central authorities. Naomi Vaughan presented an extraordinary paper on the construction of the Neue Reichskanzlei through its production and reproduction across media from 1938 to the present. Naomi's research asserts the destroyed Reichskanzlei and adjacent Führerbunker form key, symbolic sites for examining the aesthetics of German fascism and its problematic legacy within Berlin's shifting political and memorial topography. Through her deft analysis of a series of photographs published contemporaneously

with the Reichskanzlei's completed construction, Naomi's talk investigated how the Neue Reichskanzlei's interior spaces and exterior design were emblematic not of a thousand-year Reich, but of the utter dysfunction of the state apparatus. Dr. Candice Hamelin's outstanding paper focused on art photography in the German Democratic Republic, showcasing the ways in which photographers' work for fashion magazines provided opportunities to circulate images presenting a more ambivalent and provocative narrative of the Socialist regime. Highlighting Arno Fischer's images for Sibylle magazine, which juxtaposed models with the shattered landscape of the Industriestadt Bitterfeld, Candice explored the political and societal currency of these images beyond their surface value as advertising.

In her opening remarks, Claire Zimmerman noted that in drawing connections between the three papers, she recognized the shared approach as "cultural construction of the state by non-state actors." Yet, she observed that, "we might better invert the title of the session and render it 'Culture as State-building Act.' The difference may seem inconsequential—and yet what we see in each of these papers is the way in which cultural construction leads, rather than follows, state policies—in part by the ways in which artists and architects deploy implicit or non-verbal messages embodied in cultural products, in this case in buildings and photographs." Professor Zimmerman posed targeted and thought-provoking questions to each of the three panelists. A lively discussion ensued and was followed by a steady flow of questions from a group of highly engaged attendees in a room filled to capacity.

In closing her remarks, Professor Zimmerman underscored how literacy, specifically as it applies to the reading of our buildings and public spaces, remains a critical task to be fostered not only in our daily interactions, but particularly in our roles as teachers and mentors. She noted that, in contrast to society's increasing facility with the flat image, particularly in the age of Instagram and Snapchat, "literacy in the built environment, by contrast, seems ever more elusive, as we settle for two options: starchitecture, for high-end, expensive public uses; or banality, for nearly everything else. Image-making now belongs to us all; making the built environment is still within the province of the experts. Despite the fact that it is in the built environment that we play out our lives, with near-total ignorance of its powerful effects on the micro-processing of daily life." Certainly, the work of the 2018 Berlin Program panelists aims to contribute to a keener and more critical understanding of the communicative potential of buildings, spaces, and photographic representations thereof.

The three alumna-panelists were grateful to have this opportunity to represent the Berlin Program at the German Studies Association meeting and were buoyed by the positive response to their talks, all of which represent on-going research projects. The session was widely complimented by senior academics in the fields of art history and german studies. In fact, Dr. Zimmerman recommended the content of the program, augmented by articles from other historical epochs, be considered for wider publication in a peer-reviewed publication, albeit with her very wise suggestion to modify the original title in order to foreground how culture's intersections with the state may, in fact, anticipate, diverge from, or contest official policies, offering unexpected paths for which history must continue to account. The panelists wish to express their heartfelt

thanks to Dr. Zimmerman, Dr. Brophy, and Karin Goihl for their efforts, enthusiasm, and encouragement in putting together this year's program!

Report by Laura DiZerega and Claire Zimmerman

James M. Brophy is the Francis H. Squire Professor of History at the University of Delaware. He is the author of *Capitalism, Politics, and Railroads in Prussia, 1830-1870* and *Popular Culture and the Public Sphere in the Rhineland, 1800-1850* as well as the co-editor of the two-volume reader, *Perspectives from the Past*, now in its sixth edition. He is finishing *Publishers and Political Dissent in Central Europe*, a study that examines the print markets of oppositional thought between Napoleon and Bismarck. He is currently vice president of the Central European History Society and will be its president in 2019. Professor Brophy served the Berlin Program Advisory Committee from 2013-2016.

Laura DiZerega is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She specializes in European architectural history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a concentration on Germany. Laura is interested in Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the politics of architecture in the Prussian Rhineland, nineteenth-century ecclesiastical architecture, the intersection between public architecture, bureaucracy, and the rise of the modern nation state, and the architectural impact of the Napoleonic period in German lands. Her dissertation examines the administration of ecclesiastical architecture in the Prussian Rhineland under Karl Friedrich Schinkel from 1815-40. Laura is a Berlin Program Alumna of the academic year 2016/17.

Candice M. Hamelin received her PhD in History of Art from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She is an Associate Postdoctoral Fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin and is currently preparing an exhibition on East German photographer Arno Fischer. She is also writing a monograph on the ways in which East German photographers circulated their work in the German Democratic Republic. She has been the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships, including the University of Michigan's Institute for the Humanities Fellowship, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship as well as a Berlin Program postdoctoral fellowship for 2016/17.

Naomi Vaughan is a Ph.D. candidate in German Studies at the University of Michigan. Her dissertation, "The Representational Architecture of the Hitler State, Construction and Deconstruction of the Neue Reichskanzlei in Berlin," analyzes the Nazis' central architecture of sovereignty through its production and reproduction across media from 1938 to the present. Naomi's research asserts the destroyed Reichskanzlei and adjacent Führerbunker form key, symbolic sites for examining the aesthetics of German fascism and its problematic legacy within Berlin's shifting political and memorial topography. A fellow of the FU's 2016-17 Berlin Program, Naomi is currently a Rackham Predoctoral fellow at Michigan.

Claire Zimmerman is Associate Professor of History of Art and the Coordinator of Doctoral Studies in Architecture at the Taubman College of the University of Michigan. She teaches courses on 19th and 20th century architecture with research emphases on architectural media, Weimar Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Current research interests include architecture culture as it interacts with commerce and industry, and the infrastructures of globalization that underpinned the spread of modern architecture throughout the 20th c. She co-curated *New Brutalist Image 1949-1955: Hunstanton School and the Photography of Life and Art with Victoria Walsh*, Royal College of Art, on view at Tate Britain in London until October 2015. Professor Zimmerman is a BP Alumna of the academic year 2002/2003.

Our cooperation with the German Studies Association (GSA) offers Berlin Program Fellows and Alumni a chance to present their work at the annual GSA Conference to an expert audience. Each year, one or more Berlin Program Panels and Roundtables at the GSA serve as a site for critical engagement. <http://www.fu-berlin.de/bprogram>

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