



Talk:

Shards of Places, Shards of Time: Katja Petrowskaja's Modernist Poetics of History

NOV
16
TUE

4:00 – 5:30 PM

Zoom

ucsb.zoom.us/j/89607162040

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A family story, a memoir, a travelogue, an intimate history of Jewish migration and persecution in the twentieth century, Katja Petrowskaja's *Maybe Esther* (2019; *Vielleicht Esther*, 2014) relates the narrator's journey from Berlin to piece together her family's history across Poland, the Ukraine, and Russia. This presentation considers fragmentation as the text's key aesthetic quiddity to ask how Petrowskaja's modernist mode engenders a poetics of transnational history—after 1989. While in memory studies the fragment is often taken to signify loss and trauma, the talk revisits this form to argue that *Maybe Esther* recuperates the fragmentary, the additive, the incomplete as poetic possibilities in the face of twentieth-century atrocities.

Lilla Balint is Assistant Professor of German at the University of California, Berkeley. She specializes in twentieth- and twenty-first-century German literature, culture, and intellectual history in its transnational European contexts. She is currently at work on a monograph—tentatively entitled *After 1989*—that examines the aesthetics and modalities of historical representation after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

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