

## Max Kade German Room Opens

In fall 2009, GSLL proudly opened the Max Kade German Room in McKenna Languages Building Room 112. The Max Kade German Room was made possible by a generous grant from the Max Kade Foundation in New York. The room serves as a state-of-the-art classroom and as a cultural facility and meeting space for the CU German Program.

Max Kade (1882-1967) left Schwäbisch Hall, Germany, for Montreal in 1904, and he later moved to New York. Together with a friend, he purchased the American rights to manufacture and distribute the cough medicine Pertussin in 1907. In 1944, he and his wife Annette established the Max Kade Foundation in New York. The Max Kade Foundation promotes

mutual understanding between Germany and the United States. It has supported the building of dormitories, libraries, and academic meeting places, in addition to providing scholarships and graduate fellowships. At CU, the Max Kade Foundation supports two graduate fellowships in our German Studies MA program, as well as study abroad scholarships for



students wishing to study in Germany. We are grateful for the Max Kade Foundation's support.

## New Graduate Certificate in Critical Theory

GSLL is proud to launch the Graduate Certificate in Critical Theory. The certificate offers students a background in the philosophical foundations of critical theory. Drawing on disciplines such as philosophy, psychoanalysis, Marxism, literary criticism and sociology,

critical theory develops analytical tools for describing and evaluating modern society and cultural production. Students who are currently enrolled in a graduate disciplinary degree or a professional degree program are encouraged to apply for the Graduate

Certificate in Critical Theory early in their graduate career. For more information, go to <http://gsll.colorado.edu/german/graduate/graduate-certificate-program-in-critical-theory.html>.

## New Faculty in GSLL



GSLL is delighted to welcome Assistant Professor Robert Adler Peckerar and Professor Helmut Muller-Sievers to our faculty.

Robert Adler Peckerar comes to CU from the University of California at Berkeley, where he earned his Ph.D.

in the Department of Comparative Literature. At Berkeley Adler Peckerar concentrated on Yiddish, Hebrew, and German literature and completed course work in Modern Standard and Levantine Arabic.

Helmut Muller-Sievers received his MA in German and Latin Literature from the Free University of Berlin, and his Ph.D. in German and the Humanities from Stanford. Professor Muller-Sievers's work is concerned with the interrelations of literature, science, and philosophy, and with the history of philology and interpretation. He is the author of the books *Epigenesis:*

*Naturphilosophie im Sprachdenken Wilhelm von Humboldts; Self-Generation: Biology, Literature, Philosophy around 1800; and Desorientierung: Anatomie und Dichtung bei Georg Büchner.*



## Recent Faculty Books

**Mark Leiderman**, *Performing Violence: Literary and Theatrical Experiments of New Russian Drama* (Bristol: Intellect Press, 2009), co-written with Birgit Beumers. New Russian Drama began its rise at the end of the twentieth century, following a decline in dramatic writing in Russia that stemmed back to the 1980s. Since 1999 numerous festivals of new Russian drama have taken place which have brought international recognition to such playwrights as the Presnyakov brothers, Evgeni Grishkovets and Vasili Sigarev. At the same time, young stage directors and new theaters have also emerged. New Russian Drama is therefore an artistic and cultural phenomenon shaped entirely in the post-Soviet period. The first English-language study of this phenomenon, *Performing Violence* explores the representation of violence in these new dramatic works penned by young Russian playwrights. As Leiderman and Beumers show, violence stems from the identity crisis of the first post-Soviet generation. The collapse of Soviet societal discourses, coupled with the disappointment in the reforms of the 1990s as well as the neo-conservatism of the 2000s, brings forward violence

and violent discourses as a form of integrative performative language that paradoxically unites post-Soviet society through the shared rituals of othering and (self)destruction.

**Rimgaila Salys**, *Laughing Matters: The Musical Comedy Films of Grigorii Aleksandrov* (London: Intellect Books, 2009). Aleksandrov's musical comedy films, created with composer Isaak Dunaevskii, were the most popular Russian cinema of the 1930s-40s. Based on studio documents, press materials, and interviews with surviving film crew members, *Laughing Matters* presents the untold production history of the films. Salys argues that, although Socialist Realism attempted to suppress genre, Aleksandrov's cinema actively exploited the paradigms of the American musical, including its distinctive comedic tradition, using both to inscribe the foundation myths of the Stalin era in the national consciousness.

**Davide Stimilli**, *Aby Warburg, Per Monstra ad Sphaeram* (Milano: Abscondita 2009), revised edition (with Claudia Wedepohl). This is the Italian translation of Aby Warburg, "Per Monstra ad Sphaeram": *Sternnglaube und Bilddeutung. Vortrag in Gedenken an Franz Boll und andere Schriften 1923 bis 1925*, edited D. Stimilli (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz 2008).

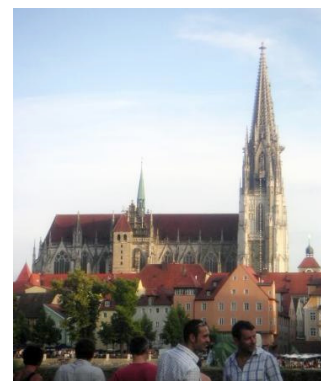
*Per Monstra ad Sphaeram* collects for the first time a number of unpublished writings on the history of astrology and Renaissance art by the Hamburg art historian Aby Warburg (1866-1929), pioneer of cultural studies and founder of the Warburg Institute, now in London. The translation is based on a revised, expanded edition of the German texts that Davide prepared with Claudia Wedepohl, archivist of the Warburg Institute.

For more information on GSLL faculty and what they are up to, visit our new website at: <http://gsll.colorado.edu/>.

## 40th Anniversary of CU's Exchange Program with Regensburg

The 2009-2010 academic year marks the fortieth anniversary of the creation of CU's study abroad exchange with the University of Regensburg. The longevity of the program is a testament to the ongoing commitment of Regensburg and CU administrators, faculty, and students. This year, 13 students from CU are studying in Regensburg.

As we celebrate the program's success, we invite CU alumni to submit recollections of their study abroad experience in Regensburg to [gsll@colorado.edu](mailto:gsll@colorado.edu). These will be posted later this year on our web site—stay tuned!



## Mark Leiderman on NOS Literary Prize Selection Committee

Congratulations to Associate Professor Mark Leiderman, who was invited in fall 2009 to serve on the prestigious NOS literary prize selection committee. Mark has written the following account of the NOS Literary Prize and his experience on the committee:

In fall 2009 I was invited to participate in the selection committee for a newly established Russian literary prize titled NOS – which is the Russian word for “nose.” This title refers to Nikolai Gogol’s famous novella “The Nose” – and 2009 is the year of Gogol’s 200th anniversary, an event widely celebrated in Russia. At the same time, NOS may be read in Russian as an acronym of both “new literature” (novaia slovesnost’) and “new social focus” (novaia sotsial’nost’). This ambiguous deciphering of the prize’s name, in a way, suggests clues to its originality – it seeks literary texts that fuse a new social focus with new literary optics, looking back at Gogol as the most brilliant example of such a fusion in Russian literature. The prize was established by the private Prokhorov Foundation and the publishing house New Literary Review (Moscow), which is one of the best Russian venues in the field of the Humanities.

I was invited to participate in the work of the NOS selection committee along with four other scholars. Little did I know what I had signed up for! The number of texts submitted exceeded 250, and they all had to be downloaded and read from an internet site. By far most of the texts were of high professional quality, and also incredibly long. While reading and discussing these texts, we first selected a long list of 30-plus titles. However, when we started selecting a shortlist we realized that our tastes were quite

different and we could not come to a consensus via the internet. We needed a meeting.

In November we thus presented our shortlist at a huge book fair, organized by the same foundation sponsoring NOS, in Krasnoiarsk. Krasnoiarsk is a city of one million inhabitants located in the midst of Siberia on the shores of Enisey. Although I grew up in the Urals, I’ve never been to Krasnoiarsk before. I was lucky – when I arrived there, the winter cold had passed, and the weather was only slightly colder than in Boulder (but by the time I departed the temperature in Krasnoiarsk had dropped to –20C). The book fair was truly enormous, and its cultural program comprised hundreds of events – including presentations, art exhibits, concerts, live poetic competitions, and poetry readings. The presentation of the NOS shortlist was one of the highlights of the book fair.

When all the committee members met each other, we immediately started arguing about our choices – indeed, our arguing began as early as in the Moscow airport, where we waited to depart for Krasnoiarsk. Our chair brought to Siberia a suitcase containing all thirty books on our long list. When we had our final discussion of the shortlist in his hotel room, he was juggling with the books we had selected, almost like a magician. Looking into each other’s eyes, we reached our conclusion more quickly than we had initially thought possible. We all liked our short-list: it consists of books by completely unknown or lesser-known authors, it has all spectrum of genres – a mock biography of a second Russian president (not Putin, actually anti-Putin), a book of funny and sarcastic fairy tales “not about people,” a



documentary novel about the military suppression of workers’ protests in a small Soviet town of Novocherkassk in 1962, a collection of legends and facts about St. Petersburg and Leningrad monuments, a quasi-autobiographic novel about the contemporary survival of the intelligentsia in Russia, and a very sophisticated psychological novel.

But this was not the end of the story. The prize was conceived as one marked in particular by an openness to the opinions of both experts and the audience. Nevertheless, it was not completely clear how this would work in practice. The organizers of the event had invited a group of Moscow literary critics to the presentation of the shortlist. After our announcement of the shortlist, the debate began, and it was one of the most heated debates in which I’ve participated. The problem was that, naturally, the literary critics did not know about our shortlist selections before the presentation, and they were not familiar with the majority of the texts that we had chosen. But they were very familiar with the works of some of the literary luminaries whom we didn’t include on our shortlist.

(cont. on p. 4)

## Visiting Russian Filmmakers

In October the Russian program hosted five filmmakers—four young Russian filmmakers who were brought to the Telluride Film Festival by CEC Art-slink NY, as well as Marina Goldovskaya, a prominent Russian documentary filmmaker and film professor at UCLA.

Filmmakers Natalia Govorina,

Petr Zabelin, Shota Gamisoniya and Alexei Andrianov presented their short works to Russian faculty and students. They also attended the Russian language table, visited the Dushanbe Tea House with Russian students, hiked in the Flatirons with the Russian Club, and participated in Elena Kostoglodova's

RUSS 2010 class.

Marina Goldovskaya's visit was sponsored by the CU GCAH, GSLL, and Film Studies. During her stay, she presented four of her documentaries on topics including contemporary Russia, the making of history, and the slain journalist Anna Politkovskaya.

## German-American Chamber of Commerce Sponsors Career Day

The Colorado Chapter of the German-American Chamber of Commerce (GACC-CO) sponsored a Career Day for our German majors and minors on November 4, 2009. Business professionals

from fields including international law, translating and interpreting, marketing, and international property services spoke with CU students about how to put their German language skills to

work. We thank Dan Cheatham, Executive Director of GACC-CO, for organizing this successful event.

## Study Abroad in Venice Mark Leiderman, NOS Prize (cont.)

Jewish life has been documented in Venice as early as the tenth century and a vibrant Jewish culture began to flourish there in the early years of the Renaissance. After the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, the massive influx of refugees and concomitant economic development made Venice one of the oldest and most important cities in European Jewish cultural life. Professor Robert Adler Peckerar will offer a new three-week summer course in Venice during May. Titled "Venice: The Cradle of European Jewish Culture," most of the trip will be spent in and around Venice with several overnight excursions to Padua, Mantua, Trieste and Ferrara.



So, mainly we had to explain – sometimes quite emotionally – why we decided not to shortlist the latest works of living classics, or an 800-page novel saturated with admiration of Stalin and his henchmen. As a result, we even voted – which wasn't planned ahead – on whether we should include on the shortlist those texts that caused the greatest enthusiasm from the experts and the audience. We voted, and of course didn't support any of these additions – since we had already discussed them before, and in so many words!

On January 29, in Moscow, along with other members of the committee I participated in a heated open discussion about the prize winner. The procedure we decided on allowed each committee member and member of the audience to vote for one of shortlisted texts (while the authors sat in the first row). The sophisticated, almost Nabokovian novel *The Stone Maples* by Lena Eltang won. This is her second novel, but she is not broadly known to the Russian public. The novel takes place in Wales and is full of various mythological references in a diapason from Ovid to Levi-Strauss. Eltang was born in Petersburg but lives in Vilnius (Lithuania). She admitted later that she was certain that she would not get the prize and was at a loss for words when it happened. Now, the Internet and newspaper critics spread rumors about our concealed agreements with the award organizers and writers, but I can swear that this finale was quite unpredictable, although I also have to admit that this was the best choice we could have made.

**Alumni/Alumnae News:** We would like to hear from our alums, wherever you may be! Keep us informed about what you are doing, and about developments in your lives and careers. See what other alums are doing on our website: <http://gsll.colorado.edu/>, under Newsletter and Alumni News. Please email your updates to [gsll@colorado.edu](mailto:gsll@colorado.edu).

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