

Panel Abstract: Verena Stefan's Poetics of Emancipation

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This year's German Studies Association Conference is being held in Montréal, the city where the pioneering feminist writer Verena Stefan spent the last two decades of her life (b. 1947 in Bern; d. 2017 in Montréal). As part of the panel series *Emancipation and Resistance* organized by the Swiss Studies Network, the panel *Verena Stefan's Poetics of Emancipation* aims to explore not only Stefan's most famous literary work *Häutungen. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen: Gedichte, Träume, Analysen* (München 1975), but also to provide an overview and new insights into her entire oeuvre.

Contributions attend to the historical context of Stefan's involvement in the German women's movement (including her roles at *Brot+Rosen* or the *Frauenhandbuch Nr. 1*) and her political activism, focusing on the production, appropriation, and transnational circulation of *Häutungen*. For this purpose, they include archive materials from Stefan's literary estate at the Schweizerisches Literaturarchiv (SLA) to emphasize the significance of materiality for Stefan's so-called "Bibel der Frauenbewegung." Moreover, contributions re-establish the link between the materiality of *Häutungen* and Stefan's unique *Körperpoetik* – an emancipatory writing practice that encompasses linguistic, epistemic, and bodily transformations through the concept of shedding skin layers. Additionally, by focusing on previously unresearched works such as *Es ist reich gewesen. Bericht vom Sterben meiner Mutter* (Frankfurt am Main 1993), *Rauh, wild & frei. Mädchengestalten in der Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main 1997) and *Fremdschläfer* (Zürich 2007), contributions trace the interferences of individual and collective emancipation processes, allowing for a reevaluation of mother-daughter-relationships, spaces shared by communities, and interactions with the non-human world. Finally, contributions highlight Stefan's scenes of writing with regards to the body in illness, challenging the linear narratives of illness institutionalized in medical care.

All in all, the panel aims to elaborate the constitutive thematic areas and their intersections in Stefan's oeuvre from a historical and literary viewpoint. These thematic areas encompass topics such as the synergy of "Resistance and Emancipation" (Casas and Bollig 2011), the history of European feminist writing, Medical Humanities (including illness, death, and motherhood), multilingualism (including *Berndeutsch* and *Francophonie*, especially in Montréal), foreignness and immigration, as well as the persistence of language games and the recoding of terminology. Thereby, Stefan's poetical practices and her diverse use of literary genres and forms will be put into new perspectives, allowing for a discussion of her emancipatory writing in its entirety.