This conference explores the complex dynamics involved in the 'Americanization' of popular and consumer cultures across Europe with a focus on the years 1945-89. A central concern is to advance scholarship on 'Americanization' by asking for the experience of Central and Eastern Europe. Here 'Americanization' figured within a political, cultural, and economic context that defined itself in sharp contrast to 'America.'

Throughout the Cold War years, American goods and lifestyles traveled across political boundaries, generating (and gratifying) different desires and fantasies; they have since become icons in intense political debates in which 'America' serves as a signifier for variously accentuated notions of capitalism and/or modernity.

The conference situates itself within recent scholarship that no longer conceptualizes 'Americanization' as a unidirectional transfer of goods and policies merely 'affecting' passive recipients, but as a set of complex processes of cultural mixing, a cultural praxis of appropriation. A wide range of case studies will therefore address 'Americanization' not by defining its contours, but by understanding it from the various ambivalences of its boundaries, parameters and modes of engagement. Our international contributors will discuss such ambivalences as working on three levels: the dynamics of cultural transfer, the practices of appropriation, and the ways in which theorizing these phenomena itself becomes entangled in some of the generalizations at stake.

The conference is part of an ongoing research and teaching project involving faculty and advanced students at Leipzig University.

Conference Fee:
10.00 / 5.00

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung
Vereinigung von Förderern und Freunden der Universität Leipzig e.V.
Venues

A: Polnisches Institut
Markt 10

B: Zeitgeschichtliches Forum
Grimmaische Straße 6

C: Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum
Beethovenstr. 15

Program

Thursday, Polnisches Institut:

3:00 pm
Opening

3:30 pm
**Thomas Kolitsch** (Leipzig)
“Die Monotonie des Yeah, Yeah, Yeah:” Official Ways of Dealing with Western Popular Music in the GDR

**Leonard Schmieding** (Leipzig)
“Da system in dis state is your greatest enemy:” HipHop in the GDR

7:00 pm
**Reinhold Wagnleitner** (Salzburg),
Keynote. Jazz - the Classical Music of Globalization (w/ Günter Wagnleitner, Piano)

Friday, Zeitgeschichtliches Forum:

9:30 am
**Magdalena Ziolek** (Poznan)
American Culture in the Discourse of Globalization from the Perspective of the Polish Young Generation

**Ewa Grzeszczyk** (Warsaw)
American Models of Consumption and their Presence in Poland

11:00 am
Coffee break

11:30 am
**Nadine Swibenko** (Bangkok)
“Because I am an ‘Ossi’” – Asserting Identity by Buying East German Goods

12:15 pm
Lunch break

2:15 pm
**Katja Kanzler** (Leipzig)
Kansas, Oz, and the Magic Land: A Wizard’s Travel Through the Iron Curtain

**Nevena Dakovic** (Belgrade)
East/West Soap

3:45 pm
Coffee break

4:15 pm
**Sebastian M. Herrmann** (Leipzig)
The GDR’s Plastic Modernity

**Anne Koenen** (Leipzig)
Mail-Order Catalogues in the GDR

Saturday, Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum:

9:30 am
**Malgorzata Gajda-Laszewska** (Warsaw)
In the Crooked Mirror of Communism: Image of America in Polish Propaganda 1945-56

**Zoe A. Kusmierz** (Leipzig)
“The glitter of your kitchen pans:” Kitchen Appliances, Politics and Fantasies in Moscow, 1959

11:00 am
**Heike Paul** (Erlangen) Response

Discussion