



# Christina Guenther

**Wednesday, February 13th, 2008**  
**2:30 pm**  
Sky Bank Room (201A)  
Bowen-Thompson Student Union

## **Cartographies of Identity: Memory and History in Ruth Beckermann's Documentary Films from 1980-2007**

**Who are we, the children of the second generation? Where do we belong?**

**Why did our parents, survivors of the Holocaust, choose to settle in postwar Vienna and raise us in an anti-Semitic city that publicly erased its Jewish population?**

Austrian Jewish filmmaker and writer Ruth Beckermann first poses these questions in her film *The Paper Bridge* (1987). As a cartographer of postwar Jewish and Austrian identities, Beckermann characterizes her documentaries since then as journeys or “filmic maps.” She charts those geographical locations whose coordinates have been narrated across Austrian Jewish generations via both public and familial memory. Professor Guenther will discuss the modes by which Beckermann represents spaces, city- and landscapes and relates them to identity in her documentaries. Of particular interest to Guenther is how Beckermann “performs ethnography” as she theorizes the relationship between memory, history and documentary. Guenther’s discussion will include the following documentary films and essays: *Wien retours* (1983), *Paper Bridge* (1987), *Toward Jerusalem* (1991), *A Transient Passage to the Orient* (1999), *Homemad(e)* (2001), and *Zorro's Bar Mitzvah* (2007).

Christina Guenther is Associate Professor of German at BGSU. Her teaching and research focus on German and Austrian culture, Jewish identity, and the Holocaust. She has published essays in *Comparative Literature Studies* and *Unterrichtspraxis*, and her work has also appeared in anthologies, including *Visions and Visionaries in Contemporary Austrian Literature and Film*. Currently a fellow at ICS, she is at work on a book-length project exploring the life and work of Jewish Austrian writers Doron Rabinovici, Ruth Beckermann, Robert Schindel, and Anna Mitgutsch.

Special Thanks to the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and to the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences for their support of this work. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, call (419) 372-0585