

## »kunst im biotop.« Leben und Nachleben der Literatur vom Prenzlauer Berg

### *Abstract*

The unofficial art scene of the late 1970s and 1980s in the East Berlin district Prenzlauer Berg is commonly characterized through various forms of nature imagery. In this respect, it has been called a "Biotop" (biotope/habitat, L. Lorek), "Dichtergarten des Grauens" (poets' garden of horrors, J. Faktor) or "Schrebergarten der Stasi" (allotment of the Stasi, W. Biermann). My project investigates these ambiguous naturalizations of community as metaphors for the perpetual dynamics of in- and exclusion, which created the so-called "Prenzlauer Berg Connection" (A. Endler): In order to distinguish themselves from the official GDR literary system, several poets from Prenzlauer Berg imported, circulated and even adapted theories, textual practices and forms of writing that had not been accepted into the regular canon of the GDR. I will explore these diverse techniques of adaptation (e.g. of French poststructuralist theory, the poetry of the US-American Beat Generation and East European avant-gardes) not solely as matters of individual literary influences, but as circulation tactics that aided community building and created visibility in the Western public sphere.

In return, the community not only became more compatible with Western ideals of resistant underground writing – the term 'Prenzlauer Berg' itself evolved into a significant buzzword for evaluating oppositional GDR literature in general, thus contributing to the circle's self-image of a small, "fruitful" community sheltered by the underground, where poetry was allowed to grow wildly.