



BERLIN FOOTPRINTS  
LISA PARKS

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As I write from Berlin, I sit in many footprints. Not do only the footprints of past Fellows linger in the rooms and hallways of these large Grunewald villas, the footprints of satellite and wireless systems, the technologies I am here to write about, abound across Germany and the rest of Europe. I came here to explore how the emergence of such systems alters geophysical and cultural territories on the margins of Europe, and I spent some time traveling to Turkey and Mongolia to finish my research. But I was even able to explore such issues in a more informal way by wandering through Turkish neighborhoods in Ber-

lin. While walking through Wedding and Neukölln I found satellite dishes and wireless towers sprayed across apartment buildings, which reinforced my assumption that the way we write about and analyze media must shift from a national paradigm to one of transnational study, from a field that looks at centers of production and consumption (whether Hollywood or Bollywood), to one that considers the scatterings of signal distribution in the world. The arrivals and departures of media signals challenge us to re-think concepts such as cores and peripheries, centers and margins. Where do signals originate and end up, and how do they get there? How do local cultural atmospheres change when signals arrive and depart so fast and at such a great volume that we cannot even perceive them? How can such processes be described, mapped, and analyzed in sociological, economic, and cultural terms? These are the kinds of questions and issues I address in my book *Mixed Signals*, and my time at the Wiko has helped me to elaborate a new methodological approach that I call Footprint Analysis.

Before arriving at the Wiko in October 2006, I had been to Berlin about six times to give lectures and participate in conferences. The longest period was for three weeks when I came to participate in the B-Zone art exhibition at the KW Contemporary Art Gallery in December 2005. This time was different. I had to leave Santa Barbara for almost a year! Instead of living in a loft in a repurposed agricultural warehouse near the beach, I inhabited a beautiful room in Villa Jaffé, long owned by a Jewish family (some of whom still live on the top floor) with high ceilings and large bay windows that overlooked a lush green backyard in the Grunewald. While there I always knew that a Lebanese poet (Fuad), or German art historian (Valeska), or anthropologist (Thomas), or legal scholar (Andreas) were either hard at work or dreaming on the other side of the walls. This was a comforting thought, and I feel fortunate to have lived, worked and dreamt near such amazing people, including lovely Flavia! If I could arrive here again, I would come with more knowledge of German language. Eva was very helpful providing me with both private and group lessons. Since I came with the intention of working on my book, though, I had to prioritize it, and felt somewhat frustrated not being able to spend more time learning German.

In addition to working on my research and trying to learn a new language, I had a very busy schedule during the year. Beyond the Wiko, in Berlin I presented lectures at the Anthropotechnical Spaces conference (Free University), the Einstein Forum, and Humboldt University. I attended conferences at the Max Planck Institute, the Museum of Telecommunications, and *medien>kunst<labor tesla*, helped organize a workshop on Satellite Voyerism in Dortmund, and participated in the Black Market art exhibition at the Hebbel

Theater. While a Fellow, I was invited to give lectures at Goldsmith's University, the University of London, Fundació Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona, Central European University in Budapest, the University of California at Santa Cruz, New York University, and Utrecht University, and I attended the Caspian Sea Telecommunications Conference in Istanbul. I contributed work to three art exhibitions: *The People from Nowhere* in Celje, Slovenia, *B-Zone: On the Margins of Europe* in Barcelona, and *Intersection 3* in Ulaan Baatar. Finally, I did interviews with Inforadio and the *Sputnik Gazetteer*. When I wasn't working, I felt compelled to immerse myself in the vibrant cultural scene of Berlin and explored such places as b-flat, White Trash Fast Food Club, Radialsystem, the Berlinale, KW Contemporary Art Gallery, Club Moscow, Slumberland, Bassy Cowboy Club, Lido, Victoria Bar, Hasir, The Frankel, and Roses Bar, among many other spots.

My year in Berlin was very exciting and transformative, and I am forever grateful to many of the Wiko staff, Fellows, and their families for their generosity and warmth throughout the year.

Three tips for future Fellows: take a subway to the end of the line in the direction East; go to Poland and the Baltic Sea; try the *Mangotorte* at the Wiener Café.