

Department of Languages & Cultures
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Presents a talk by:

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‘O Falladah’: the screen life of a broken contract



The German writer, intellectual, and right-wing militarist, Ernst Jünger, suggested that the millennia-old contract between man and horse was finally and brutally torn up as cavalry and other military horses were shredded in the ‘Storm of Steel’ of the First World War. In 1919, in the midst of the German Revolution, Bertolt Brecht wrote his poem ‘O Falladah, die du hangest’ about a carthorse that lies dying in its traces in Berlin’s Frankfurter Allee. In Walther Ruttmann’s 1927 semi-documentary film *Berlin, Sinfonie einer Grosstadt*, working horses struggle to pull their loads amidst the onslaught of the new motorised mobility while other, more privileged members of their species carry their gentleman riders along the carefully tended riding paths of the *Tiergarten*. Drawing on the figure of the horse in Ruttmann’s film and on other cinematic images of the horse from the period, this paper examines some of the visual evidence of the violation of this contract and discuss its consequences in the context of the continuing mobilization of human and animal life after the Great War.