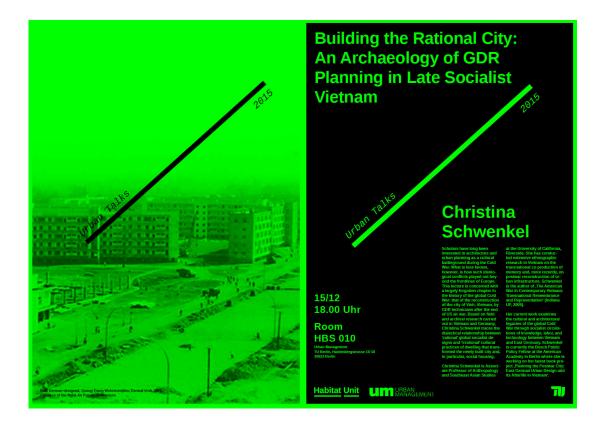**URBAN TALK**
Dezember 15, 2015 |18.00 Uhr |Room HBS 010

Christina Schwenkel
Building the Rational City: An Archaeology of GDR Planning in Late Socialist Vietnam

Scholars have long been interested in architecture and urban planning as a cultural battleground during the Cold War. What is less known, however, is how such ideological conflicts played out beyond the frontlines of Europe. This lecture is concerned with a largely forgotten chapter in the history of the global Cold War: that of the reconstruction of the city of Vinh, Vietnam, by GDR technicians after the end of US air war. Based on field and archival research carried out in Vietnam and Germany, Christina Schwenkel traces the dialectical relationship between 'rational' global socialist designs and 'irrational' cultural practices of dwelling that transformed the newly built city and, in particular, social housing.

Christina Schwenkel is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Southeast Asian Studies at the Universityof California, Riverside. She has conducted extensive ethnographic research in Vietnam on the transnational co-production of memory and, more recently, on postwar reconstruction of urban infrastructure. Schwenkel is the author of 'The AmericanWar in Contemporary Vietnam: Transnational Remembrance and Representation' (Indiana UP, 2009). Her current work examines the cultural and architectural legacies of the global Cold War through socialist circulations of knowledge, labor, and technology between Vietnam and East Germany. She has published in leading journals on the multi-directionality of such exchanges, including Vietnamese architecture students and contract workers in the GDR, and East German urban planning and reconstruction of the industrial city of Vinh. Schwenkel is currently the Bosch Public Policy Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin where she is working on her latest book project 'Planning the Postwar City: East German Urban Design and its Afterlife in Vietnam'.

Habitat Unit

The lecture series 'Urban Talks' is jointly organised by the Habitat Unit and the Urban Management Program at Technical University Berlin.

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