Faculty Highlight – Kristin Romberg

This year, REEEC welcomes Dr. Kristin Romberg to our affiliated faculty. Dr. Romberg is a new Assistant Professor in the School of Art and Design. She received her Ph.D. at Columbia University, and has previously taught at Grinnell College and the College of Wooster. Additionally, she was a postdoctoral fellow at The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. Her articles have been published in *October* and the anthology *Formy i struktury. Antologiia rossiskogo modernizma* (Forms and Structures: Anthology of Russian Modernism, 2013). In 2005, she curated the exhibition *Architecture in Print: Design and Debate in the Soviet Union, 1919-1935* at Columbia University’s Wallach Art Gallery with Richard Anderson. The Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, American Council of Teachers of Russian, the Harriman Institute, Center for the Study of Modern Art at The Phillips Collection, and George Washington University have all supported her research.

Dr. Romberg specializes in modern and contemporary art, with a particular focus on media and design. Her current book project, tentatively titled *Radical Constructivism: Aleksei Gan’s Grass-Roots Modernism*, is the first serious study of one of the founders of Russian Constructivism, Aleksei Gan. She uses Gan’s work to flesh out a previously unarticulated version of modernist aesthetics, what she calls an “aesthetics of an embeddedness.” This aesthetics sheds light on many of the most important tensions within the early Soviet period, including those surrounding reconciling industrialization with socialist labor policy and the growing awareness of the mass media’s power in shaping the normative bases of social reality. Along with her book project, Dr. Romberg is also working on two new research projects: the first, about the specificity of black and white print media; and the second, exploring the idea of tectonic style in the art of the 1960s. She is also organizing a panel and an edited publication on rethinking art of the “former east” (Russia, Eastern, Europe, and Eurasia) within newly emerging paradigms of global modernism.

Dr. Romberg is very excited about being at the University of Illinois. According to her, “UIUC has amazing library and human resources for anyone interested in Russia, as well as an unusually vibrant culture of interdisciplinary intellectual exchange.”