**Abstract:**

**“We Are the Sixth City”: Archaeofictional Poetics in Laura Riding’s A Trojan Ending**

“The imagination is at its most powerful and most fragile in writing that could be said to be archaeological, that digs down in the dirt to bring other worlds back to life,” writes Jennifer Wallace in her book Digging the Dirt: The Archaeological Imagination (12). Laura Riding’s novel *A Trojan Ending* (1937), an important, if today little known, example of transatlantic literary modernism, is a text that incorporates a fair amount of dirt-digging. The novel, despite its undeniable preoccupation with language as a producer and carrier of meaning, or “truth,” as Ruth Hoberman (1997) convincingly shows, nevertheless accords an important and often complex role to materiality and material remains. The fact that Troy became materially tangible as a result of its identification through archaeology looms large both in the novel’s plot and in Riding’s commentary on her own text. It is hardly a coincidence that the novel was written and published at the time of a renewed archaeological campaign at the site on Hissarlik, the first to be undertaken in the 20th century and the first to be led by an American team of professional archaeologists. So what exactly is the role of archaeological practice and material culture in *A Trojan Ending*? Can we productively read the novel through the lens of “archaeofiction” (Conkey 2002, 167; Auguscik 2021, 205)? And which implications do these considerations have for the novel’s relationship to temporality? These are the questions that I aim to explore in this talk.

**Bio:**

Dr. Svetlana Seibel is postdoctoral researcher and lecturer in North American Literary and Cultural Studies at Saarland University, Germany. She completed her dissertation on Indigenous popular culture as a member of the DFG-funded International Research Training Group “Diversity: Mediating Difference in Transcultural Spaces.” She is co-editor of the special issue of *Studies in Canadian Literature* on “Indigenous Literary Arts of Truth and Redress” (2021), and her work has been published in journals such as *Transmotion*, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, and *Recherches Germaniques*, as well as in various edited collections. Her current research focuses on temporality and classicism in American women’s writing.