

## **Perrine Val: Away from the spotlights: DEFA's Presence in regional France**

Periodically, films and documents linked to the DEFA resurface in France in sometimes unexpected places, in archives that are both politically and geographically distant from the main channels for Franco-East German film exchanges during the Cold War (i.e., the communist and the film festivals networks). Some French university libraries and regional film libraries house French-language copies of DEFA films, and even archival documents directly linked to the production of East German films. In Perpignan, for example, the Institut Jean Vigo holds the collection of Max Douy, the French set designer who worked for Wolfgang Staudte's adaptation of „Mutter Courage“ in the early 1950s. Although the shooting of the film was interrupted, the tracings of Douy's sets are now archived in Perpignan. The same institute also holds the French version of „Die gefrorenen Blitze“ (967), which was significantly shortened to avoid offending West German sensibilities, and is therefore quite different from the original East German version. Other French versions of DEFA films (feature-length fiction films or documentaries produced by Camera DDR) have also been found (often by chance) in the university library in Nantes or the cinematheque in Saint-Étienne. In my presentation, I propose to look back at these recent rediscoveries and go beyond their anecdotal aspect to interpret them as further signs of the DEFA's strong but often underestimated links with France.

**Biography:** Perrine Val is a film historian and lecturer at the University of Montpellier Paul-Valéry. She is the author of a thesis on cinematographic relations between France and the GDR from 1946 to 1992, subtitled “between camaraderie, bureaucracy and exoticism” and published in 2021 by Presses universitaires du Septentrion.