transnational asia graduate student conference

fri, feb 5. 9:00am-5:00pm
rice university
founder’s room, lovett hall

sponsored by the chao center for asian studies
Graduate Student Conference Organizers:

Abhilash Krishna
Elizabeth A. Marks
Brian J. Nichols
R. Janice Orlando
Uzma Quraishi
Amelia Scholtz
Samhita Sunya

and special thanks to the Chao Center Organizers:
Brian D. Hammer, Ph.D.
and
Michele Verma, Ph.D.

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Phenomena that accompany the movement of individuals, ideas, and goods across the boundaries of nation-states are often glossed as ‘transnational.’ Individuals in Asia are evermore bound to each other and to the rest of the world. This increase in transnational encounters has both tested and strengthened national boundaries. We are interested in how intra- and inter-regional, transnational flows impact Asian societies and their interlocutors. While telecommunications technology and convenient air travel facilitate the forging of trade, educational, and cultural links, they may also presage the development of new conflicts and frictions. Our Transnational Asia Conference seeks a cross-disciplinary approach for exploring the processes and effects of ‘transnationalism’ within contemporary and historical periods. We also aim to interrogate the very usefulness of the concept itself.

Introductory remarks 9:00am  Tani Barlow, Ph.D.
Director, Chao Center for Asian Studies, Rice University.
Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Professor of Asian Studies
Editor, positions: east asia cultures critique

Panel 1: Transnational Religious Exchange
Asia has a long history of transnational exchange of religious ideas, texts, and images. This panel invites scholars from any discipline to explore contemporary and historical phenomena in the context of Asian inter- and intra-regional religious exchange. 9:30 am

1. Andrea Jain (Rice) : The Samani Order of the Jain Terapanth and the Western Dissemination of Preksa Dhyana
2. Amy Holte (UT Austin) : Intersections of Modern Science and Yoga: Towards Clarifying Translational Confusions
3. Ben Dumbauld (Arizona State): Performing and Negotiating Culture within the Chinese Christian Church
4. Brian J. Nichols (Rice) : The Stones of Quanzhou: Religious Multiculturalism in Medieval Southeast China

Panel 2: Dating Transnationalism
While we recognize that transnationalism refers to the nation state system and thus is inextricably tied to its rise, two questions emerge. First, can we discuss transnational phenomena in contexts other than the very recent past and if so when can they be said to have begun? Second, are these phenomena actually part of even more foundational
Panel 3: Circulating Asia and transnational audiences, spectatorship, identity and pop culture

This panel seeks to address the overlapping categories of mass media, popular culture, and commodity forms. Further, it aims to interrogate the different ways in which media and cultural products can be conceived of as 'local' or 'foreign' by audiences/consumers, and examine how a transnational affect might add to the 'use value' of these products. 2:45 pm

1. Suzanne L. Schulz (UT Austin): Model Citizens: Film Stars, Anti-Piracy, and India’s War on Terror
2. Elizabeth A. Marks (Rice): The Work of Art in the Age of Loveable Japan: Transnationalism in Popular Culture
3. Samhita Sunya (Rice): Macbeth in Mumbai: “Singsong Syncretism” and the Beloved Other in Hindi Cinema
4. Zachary Hooker: (Columbia) Sounds of the Cowbell: Specters of Transnational Cinema in Contemporary South Korea

rapporteur 4:15pm Rosalind Morris, Ph.D.
Columbia University, Department of Anthropology

Rosalind Morris focuses her fieldwork in two main areas: South Africa and mainland Southeast Asia, especially Thailand. Her earlier work focused on the history of modernity in Southeast Asia and the place of the mass media in its development, particularly in the encounter between old and new forms of mediation. More recently, she has been working on an ethnography of South Africa’s mining communities. Traversing these fields of inquiry, her work addresses questions of the relationships between value and violence; the aesthetic constitution of the political; the sexualization of power and desire; and the history of anthropological thought and social theory. In her writings on all of these issues, she attends specifically to the matter of representation. Her publications include monographs on spirit mediumship and the mass media in Northern Thailand, the archive of visual anthropology, the history of photography in Asia, and the afterlife of apartheid in South Africa. Other essays have addressed the history of fetishism, the violence of culture in anthropological theory, translation and power, mediatic war, photography and its discontents, sex, gender and sexuality, and art in South Africa. Professor Morris is a former Director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, the Associate Director of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, and the former co-editor of CONNECT: art, politics, theory, culture.

concluding remarks 5:00pm