

# CONSTRUCTING AMERICA

May 4-5, 2018



University of Michigan  
American History Workshop  
Graduate Student Conference

Co-sponsored by:

The Department of History, Museum Studies Program,  
The Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies

# CONSTRUCTING AMERICA

Graduate Student Conference in U.S. History

May 4-5, 2018

**Keynote Address, May 4 2018**

**1014 Tisch, 4-6pm**

**Dr. Laura Barracclough**

American Studies, Yale University

## **Colonizing and Decolonizing Frontier Imaginaries in the U.S. West**

This talk examines three sites in which imaginaries of the “western frontier” have been constructed and deconstructed in relationship to structures of settler colonialism, migration, and inequality. These include: rural land-use protections for horse-keeping and western heritage in Los Angeles; Mexican Americans use of the charro (gentleman horseman) to secure public and private space in California, Texas, and Nevada; and the Gila River Indian Community’s purchase and operation of a Wild West-style theme park just outside of Phoenix. My goal is to have us think about the malleability of frontier myths: how they have been used to secure settler colonialism, but can also be repurposed for spatial justice, decolonization, and sovereignty.

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Friday, May 4, 2018

8:30 - 9am: Breakfast/Opening Remarks

**9 - 11am: (Re)Building Twentieth Century Landscapes**

Kristian Taketemoto, University of Pennsylvania, The American Megalopolis

Emily Bernin, Savannah College of Art and Design, Representing Suburbs of the Post-War Era: A Case Study of Ardmore

Davy Knittle, University of Pennsylvania, Toward a Queer, Crip Urban History: Re-Imagining Community in Urbanist Scholarship

Roman Koscielniak, University of Michigan, How to placemake a killing: Decline-as-urbanization and the contemporary production of the American metropolis

Zehra Ahmed, Princeton University, Constructing the Postwar Home in Arts & Architecture Magazine

**11:15 - 1:15pm: Borders, Boundaries and Contact Zones**

Dicle Taskin, University of Michigan, Américas Magazine and the Pan-American Highway as an "Imaginary Apparatus"

Sam Davis, Temple University, "They should as soon as possible be separated from us": Colonizationist ambitions in the Old Northwest

Barrie Blatchford, Columbia University, "Make the Desert Blossom Like the Rose": Building a Better Nature in the American West

Stephanie Fajardo, University of Michigan, "Permission to Marry": U.S. Army Anti-Miscegenation Strategies and the Filipina War Bride

**1:15-2pm: Lunch**

**2 - 4pm: Making Place, Making Community**

Kirkland Ellens, Wayne State University, The Detroit Airport Problem: Finance, Environment, and Reconsidering Detroit's Airport Planning Past

Kathryn Cundiff, Marshall University, Dairy: The Bread and Butter of West Virginia Subsistence Farmers During the Great Depression

Farhad Mizra, Harvard School of Design, The Lucinda River: Reflections on the American Public Bath, 1898-1936

Matthew Pessar Joseph, Columbia University, "Punk Rock Rap": Hip Hop, Punk, and the Integration of the Downtown Manhattan Arts Scene, 1977-1983

**4 - 6pm: Keynote Address, Laura Barraclough, American Studies, Yale University**

Colonizing and Decolonizing Frontier Imaginaries in the U.S. West

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Saturday, May 5, 2018

9-9:30am: Breakfast

**9:30 - 11:30am: (Infra)Cultures and Identities**

Jasmine An, University of Michigan, Written in Plain Sight: Textual Eruptions of Truth in Monique Truong's Bitter In The Mouth

Emma Rothberg, University of North Carolina, The Usable Past of John Van Arsdale: Evacuation Day 1883 and the Presentation of Civic Manhood

McKayla Sluga, Michigan State University, Three Years That Shook the World of Cinema: Sergei Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin in America, 1926-1929

Brian McNamara, Temple University, From Civil Rights Activist to Republican Senate Candidate: Maurice Dawkins and the Genesis of Conservative Black Internationalism

**11:30 - 1:30pm: Public History Roundtable/Lunch**

**1:45 - 3:45pm: Policing Publics and Carceral Spaces**

Grace Argo, University of Michigan, Crimes Against Mankind: Debates on Incest in U.S. Law and Print Culture, 1870-1930

Judith Aaron, University of Maryland, The War on Drugs in Baltimore

Mary Louisa Spangler, University of Kansas, "Quite a Pretty Girl": Incest and the Ideal Citizen

Zak Jones, University of Toronto, "That Tiny Square of White as though Gazing Down into the Barrel of a Gun": American Repression on the Brink of Violent Panic in Richard Wright's Native Son

**3:45 - 4pm: Closing Remarks**

Please register here:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd1hLqrSorDmxhDY0u-fLKXKx6ajSBQnHGYfvVsW7mqtaAtCA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd1hLqrSorDmxhDY0u-fLKXKx6ajSBQnHGYfvVsW7mqtaAtCA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

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