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

Photograph No. 83-G-41610; “The children at the Canyon school play a game of Broadcast,” 12/1941, Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1876-1959, Record Group 83; National Archives and Records Administration
Keynote Address, May 4 2018
1014 Tisch, 4-6pm
Dr. Laura Barraclough
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

4 - 6pm: Keynote Address, Laura Barraclough, American Studies, Yale University
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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/1FAIpQLSd1hLqrsrDmxhDY0ufLXXKx6ajSBQnHGYfVtSw7mptaAtCA/viewform?usp=sf_link

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