Constructing Socialism From Within: Entertainment and Media in the Soviet Home

My talk will explore the daily lived condition of real existing socialism during the latter part of the Soviet period. I will engage with official ideology while also showing how Soviet citizens shaped political discourse from the bottom-up by writing letters to local newspapers, television journalists and local radio stations.

Key Words: socialism, Soviet Union, media

Dangerous Visibility: The Visual Epistemology of Eugenics

In the 1927 Buck v. Bell decision, the Supreme Court upheld a Virginia statute allowing sterilization of people determined to have “hereditary” mental illness such as “idiocy, imbecility, feeble-mindedness or epilepsy.” Key testimony asserted that her infant child had “a look about [her] that is not quite normal” and descriptions of Carrie as “poor in looks” formed the basis of the argument that Carrie’s “feeble-mindedness” was hereditary. Thinking through the ways that representations of the Buckses were curated and challenged, this paper argues that eugenic discourse operates through a visual economy.

Key Words: eugenics, disability, visual culture

What We Talk About When We Talk To Aliens

Throughout the history of the search for ET, strategies for sending radio signals towards potentially inhabited planetary systems have always made unscientific assumptions and projections about alien culture, language, society and even economy. In my presentation I will deconstruct some recent scientific attempts to actively send out radio signals to other star systems and the hegemonic assumptions that are tied to the content of these radio compositions.

Key Words: astronomy, extraterrestrial, space exploration

Rights Are Not Justice: A Case Study in Campus Segregation and How University Accessibility Policies Do Violence To the Spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act

“Rights Are Not Justice” is the product of a community facilitated project in public sociology and critical disability studies. This project outlines why and what it is at stake when a campus elevator/building is inaccessible by building segregation; 2) which bureaucratic structures maintain or operationalize the necessary conditions for inaccessibility; and, 3) what ideas work to organize these structures?

Key Words: disability, social justice, accessibility

Sexual Policing and Immigration Policy in the United States at the Turn of the Twentieth Century.

While much research has focused on Chinese Exclusion laws as mostly male-oriented, I consider how the 1892 Chinese Exclusion Act and 1875 Page Act, which excluded “immoral” immigrants, contributed to categories of sexual morality for Chinese women.

Key Words: immigration, gender, federal policy

Captivate Nature:

Grotesque desire in the performative sculptures of Amber Hawk Swanson

In this paper I examine two projects by the artist Amber Hawk Swanson, Tilikum, 2011 and Lolita, 2013. Through a process of radical identification with the captive Orca whales Tilikum and Lolita, Hawk Swanson explores the ethics of aquatic theme park performances. I argue that the grotesque sculptures make visible the violence done to both humans and Orcas in the misconceptions of nature, culture, and relationship manifested in the Shamu spectacular.

Key Words: animals, spectators, desire

After Lives, After-Palimpsests

Aime Cesaire & Claudia Rankine’s (Surinamian) “American Lyrics”

My project seeks to frame certain forms of poetry as attempts at experimental, non-linear historiography, examining the ways in which lyric and documentary impulses—so often pitted against one another critically—are intertwined from the inception of discursive poetry, an emerging multi-genre’s genre I read as quintessentially “American”:

North, South, and Central.

Key Words: Caribbean, poetic, documentary

What We Talk About When We Talk To Aliens

The Morally Incoherent Indoctrination of the American Soldier in Iraq:

An Institutional Theory of Traumatic Experience

I take up an issue that most of us cannot help but see as a problem of psychology: trauma, war, and result in flawed cultural and institutional indoctrination. I argue that the traumatic experiences of American soldiers in the Iraq War resulted from flawed cultural and institutional indoctrination.

Key Words: trauma, war, psychology

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