ICS Lecture Series 2008: Cloning Terror, Telling Tales, & Surveying the Ruins

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CLONING TERROR, TELLING TALES, & SURVEYING THE RUINS

Paula Rabinowitz University of Minnesota

Epidemics of Collapse: Notes on Documentary and the Post-Industrial Sublime

Wednesday, January 30, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. | 201 BTSU, Sky Bank room | Reception to follow

How can documentaries represent the post-industrial without reproducing a nostalgic representation of industry?

How do Black gay men from the South build community and resist oppression?

How does the metaphor of the “war on terror” converge with the digital and cybernetic?

How do these narrators use the performance of “southerness” as a cultural identity?

Professor Rabinowitz explores the transcultural poetics of post-industrialism through an analysis of film, photography, and poetry, paying special attention to Thomas Labuson’s Living Among Rainy Threeth and Komunobu’s Mark Nowak’s Shut Up Shut Down, and Spike Lee’s When the Levees Broke. She examines how the iconic figures of the struggling worker and the devastated agricultural locations of the Depression era are rearticulated to make sense of contemporary post-industrialism. Looking at multiple transnational sites including China, Russia, and Detroit, she explores how these images are “remnants” both of abandonment and of progress.

E. Patrick Johnson Northwestern University

Performance of Pouring Tea: Black Gay Men of the South Tell Their Tales

Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. | 202 BTSU, Ballroom | Reception to follow

How do Black gay men from the South build community and resist oppression?

How do these narrators use the performance of “southerness” as a cultural identity?

Professor Johnson offers a performance based on oral histories of black gay men who were born, raised, and continue to live in the South. Collected between 2004 and 2006, these narratives document the lives of a diverse group of black gay men from fifteen different states, ages 19 to 94. He explores how these narrators use the performance of “southerness” as a cultural identity to simultaneously conform to southern cultural ideals, but also to mediate, transgress, and sometimes subvert them. They use those very ideals in order to build community and/or interject their own black gay subjectivity into a conservative southern landscape.

W. J. T. Mitchell University of Chicago

Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to Abu Ghraib

Thursday, February 28, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. | 206 BTSU, Theatre | Reception to follow

How do images of violence in the new millennium reproduce or clone terror?

How does the metaphor of the “war on terror” converge with the digital and cybernetic?

While wars have always been fought over and conducted by images, the current “war on terror” has raised the imaginary component of warfare to a new level of importance. Professor Mitchell discusses new media technologies that have made the reproduction, circulation, and transformation of war images much faster. He explores the metaphor of a “war on terror” as an imaginary, fantastic notion—a metaphor that has become all too literal, real, and deadly. Professor Mitchell investigates whether the war on terror has had the perverse effect of strengthening and proliferating its enemy or “cloning terror.”

W. J. T. Mitchell is Professor of English and Art History at the University of Chicago. He is editor of the interdisciplinary journal, Critical Inquiry, a quarterly devoted to critical theory in the arts and human sciences. A scholar and theorist of media, visual art, and literature, Mitchell is a leader in the emerging fields of visual culture and of iconology, the study of images across the media. His numerous awards include the Guggenheim Fellowship and the Morey Prize in art history given by the College Art Association of America. His many publications include What Do Pictures Want? Essays on Lives and Loves of Images, Picture Theory, and Iconology, as well as The Last Dinosaur Book: The Life and Times of a Cultural Icon. He is working on a book addressing the violence of images in the new millennium, Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to Abu Ghraib.

BATTLEGROUND STATES 2008:

The Body & Culture

An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference

February 27-23, 2008

“Body & Culture” is a national conference organized by Culture Club: The Cultural Studies Scholars’ Association. This year’s conference will create a space in which different but interconnected meanings of the body—human bodies, bodies of land, canonical bodies, and bodies politic—can be discussed, debated, and explored. Along with panels, presentations, artwork, and films, the conference features a keynote address by Patricia Hill Collins, author of Women: Performance in a Mediated Culture.

For more information, please contact conference organizers at battlegroundstates@gmail.com or visit their website at http://www.battlegroundstates.org.