

Jennifer Bajorek

Creating the Global Image Archive

Co-organized with Claire Colebrook (co-investigator)

Goldsmiths' College

First quarter 2009

### *Creating the Global Image Archive*

Project précis:

A project on images and image archives with a focus on new technologies and their impact on non-Western practitioners and practice. Colebrook brought interests and questions from the sphere of indigenous art and media in Australia; I brought interests and questions from image archives (analog and digital, photography and video) in Africa. A grant-funded symposium brought together scholars and practitioners working on/in film, photography, and video from Australia, Mexico, Kenya, Nigeria, Tibet, and the Black British LGBTQ community. Screenings of Nick Higgins, *A Massacre Foretold* (2007), Vicky Funari and Sergio de la Torre, *Maquilopolis* (2006), and reels by the Slum-TV media collective were cross-programmed with a film series, organized by Goldsmiths MA in Cultural Studies students, on border cultures, and artist talks taking place over several months in early 2009.

## Creating the Global Image Archive

### **A workshop on images and their archives in cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary contexts**

Our experiences and practices of the image are characterized by an ever-expanding circulation across proliferating and ever more diverse circuits. Scholars, artists, curators, and other practitioners have frequently sought to understand these changes in the name of globalization. Some have focused on technological transformation (new media and network or digital culture). Others have emphasized shifting zones of cultural contact (migration, transnationalism, postcoloniality). Curator Okwui Enwezor thus speaks of a “*global image ecology*.” Interactive media artist Graham Harwood speaks of the “*networked image*.” Thanks to these projects, we are working with and thinking about images in new ways, and with a focus on movement, transformation, and rhythms of access.

But images are also lost, forgotten, deleted. Structures of archivization are shifting. With the death of old technologies – and geopolitical inequalities in the distribution of new ones – we find ourselves handling images whose futures are uncertain.

There are furthermore whole classes of images whose original contexts are marked by forms of sacredness, consecration, and propriety. These haunt the discourses of global circulation and cast the fantasied openness and access in a different light. Increasingly, we are aware that the archive is troubled by two ethical and practical imperatives: to maintain and preserve the past while at the same time respecting its own modes of exclusion and memorialization, which may well be at odds with other contemporary drives.

We invite you to reflect on the image archive in transformation. We leave the field open, but we are particularly interested in work that is concerned with, or takes place in, non-Western or non-European space. This project began as an enquiry into an inter-disciplinary distinction between contextualizing practices, including those we call sociological or ethnographic, and more formalist approaches—those paying attention to the genesis and problematics of specific images and works. The aim of this workshop is to explore emergent tensions between the archive's singularities and the global contexts of circulation, and in so doing, to create new frameworks and methods for critical practice in relation to archived bodies of work.

**Jennifer Bajorek**, Goldsmiths, University of London  
**Claire Colebrook**, University of Edinburgh

16 February 2009 / 10.00 – 18.00 / Ben Pimlott Lecture Theatre  
/ Goldsmiths

This event is free and open to the public. Campus map and directions:

<http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/campus-map/>

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