

**Visual Culture of the Americas Workshop
17 April, 2010**

Call for Presenters, Keynote Speakers and Invited Participants

Department of History, Brock University
Department of American Studies, SUNY at Buffalo

Invitation: One-day workshop

Category: Presenter	—	Morning	Part I _	Part II __
		Afternoon	Part I __	Part II __
Keynote Speaker	—	Morning	___	Afternoon __
General Participant	<u>X</u>			

Organizers and Hosting Institutions:

Maria del Carmen Suescun Pozas, Department of History, Brock University
Camilo Trumper, Department of American Studies, SUNY University at Buffalo

Sponsors:

Humanities Research Institute, Brock University
Canadian – American Studies Research Grant, SUNY at Buffalo

Day and Place: Saturday, 17 April, 2010, Brock University, Saint Catharines, Niagara Peninsula, Ontario, Canada

Description:

We would like you to join us in a one-day workshop to reflect on visual and material culture as a locus of urban politics and memory from inter-disciplinary and transnational perspectives. We convene the workshop in the spirit of our location “on the border”: we propose the field of “visual culture” in general, and “visual studies of the Americas” in particular, as a site that allows us to bridge traditional disciplinary and national divisions. We invite scholars from humanities, social sciences, the visual arts, as architects, urban planners, and community representatives specializing in a variety of time-frames and geographic areas to discuss the bearing the visual field has on their research or work, with special focus on political conflict, human rights and memory. We invite you to engage the visual as a mediating field whether as a presenter, keynote speaker or invited participant in the audience.

We wish to provide scholars who are interested in the visual field or material culture as a mediating field to engage in creative exploration and group discussion built on strong scholarship, ask the questions that we often stop short of asking because of idiosyncratic disciplinary constraints, and speak across area/time-frames/subject matter to other colleagues so

as to 'undo' borders that may seem to divide us (in so many, and often unnecessary ways!).

Thus, we feel that all our invited presenters, as well as the keynote speakers and invited participants (who we expect to be very involved in the discussion regardless of them not presenting), will be able to contribute one way or another (via 'area', via 'subject', via their take on their unique take or reading of the visual field) to the discussion, and in this way we will succeed in combining hemispheric and global approaches to the visual field as it speaks to the proposed themes, and/or each individual discipline in exciting and stimulating ways.

About the Organizers:

This workshop marks the beginning of research collaboration between Camilo Trumper, Assistant Professor, Department of American Studies, SUNY at Buffalo and Maria del Carmen Suescun Pozas, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Brock University.

The proposed workshop builds on a series of interests we both share comprising area, subject matter and methodological approaches: we both specialize on Latin America (twentieth-century Chile and Colombia, respectively), open up politics to cultural analysis, and bring to bear methodologies for analyzing images and the visual field to historical analysis. Our respective research programs focus on individual or collective actions that are oriented towards transformation of society and crystallize in the visual field as principal vehicle for civic engagement. While bound to specific historical contexts, such actions may include works of visual artists in all media, documentary photography, graffiti, documentary film as well curatorial projects, reclaimed disaster urban areas, ephemeral urban projects, protests, marches, strikes, monuments, heritage sites and public performances of memory. What they all have in common is the importance historical actors give visual modes of communication to engage in political action.

The Themes:

The workshop is divided into two general themes and four sub-themes:

Morning:

‘Conflict, Violence and Resolution and Visual/Material Culture’

- Memory, Justice, and Visual Culture in an Interdisciplinary Perspective
- Visual and Material Culture: Locus for Interdisciplinary Sources/Studies of Truth and Reconciliation?

Afternoon:

‘Urban Politics and Visual/Material Culture’

- Politics, the City and Visual Culture in an Interdisciplinary Perspective
- Visual and Material Culture: Locus for Interdisciplinary Sources/Studies of Politics?

Proposed Schedule:

8:30 am Coffee and pastries
 9:00 am Opening Remarks
 9:30 – 10:15 am Keynote Speaker
 10:15 Coffee break
 10:30 am – 12:15 pm Morning Workshop
 12:30 – 1:30 pm Lunch
 1:45 – 2:30 pm Keynote Speaker
 2:30 – 4:30 pm Afternoon Workshop
 4:30 – 5:00 pm Summing Up
 5:30 pm Dinner / Special Events

Estimated Attendance:

The estimated number of attendants to the workshop ranges between 40 and 60, including specialists across disciplinary and national boundaries from Brock University, SUNY University at Buffalo, as well as from universities from across Canada and the United States. We are also inviting graduate and undergraduate students, local community organizations and representatives, and the general public.

Covered Expenses and Honorarium:

Food and drink will be offered to all attending the workshops. Lunch will be offered to key speakers, presenters and assistants. The Mirror Theater Group will accompany us at dinner (led by Joe Norris author of *Playbuilding as Qualitative Research: The Mirror Theatre Process* (2010)). PAN Café located in downtown Saint Catharines will provide a selection from their menu for a fixed rate (cost not covered by organizers). There will also be an after-dinner print workshop party I am co-organizing with the artist collective CRAM. CRAM recently set up the 'smallest' print press in Canada with the help of Cuban artists from Santiago de Cuba who participate in the CUBA-CRAM exchange since 2008 (<http://www.cramart.ca/bios.html>). Parking expenses for presenters and key speakers the day of the workshop is covered. We will offer keynote speakers a small honorarium for their presentation. Although we will only be able to cover travel and accommodation expenses for keynote speakers (in consultation), we would be glad to provide accommodations for presenters in private homes. We will in both cases do our best to ensure a comfortable and memorable stay. We appreciate your understanding.

Arrival:

The workshop starts Saturday, 17 April at 8:30 am. Participants arriving from adjacent areas may be able to travel by car between one or two hours to get to Brock University. Presenters and workshop participants coming from places further away may have to consider traveling Friday afternoon/evening.

Follow-up and Confirming Your Participation:

We will be happy to further discuss with you this invitation and your participation in the workshop. Either Camilo or Maria del Carmen will follow up this invitation by email / phone in the next couple of days. Should you have any questions prior to receiving our follow-up call please do not hesitate to contact either of us. Once you have confirmed your participation we will proceed to register you by collecting additional contact information, and issue a final letter. Two weeks prior to the event we will contact you to inquire on the title, a two-line summary of your contribution to the discussion the day of the workshop, two or three questions you would like co-participants and audience to discuss for pre-circulation, a short bio, and audiovisual equipment you may require for your presentation. We will also ask presenters about their accommodation needs.

Contact Information:

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