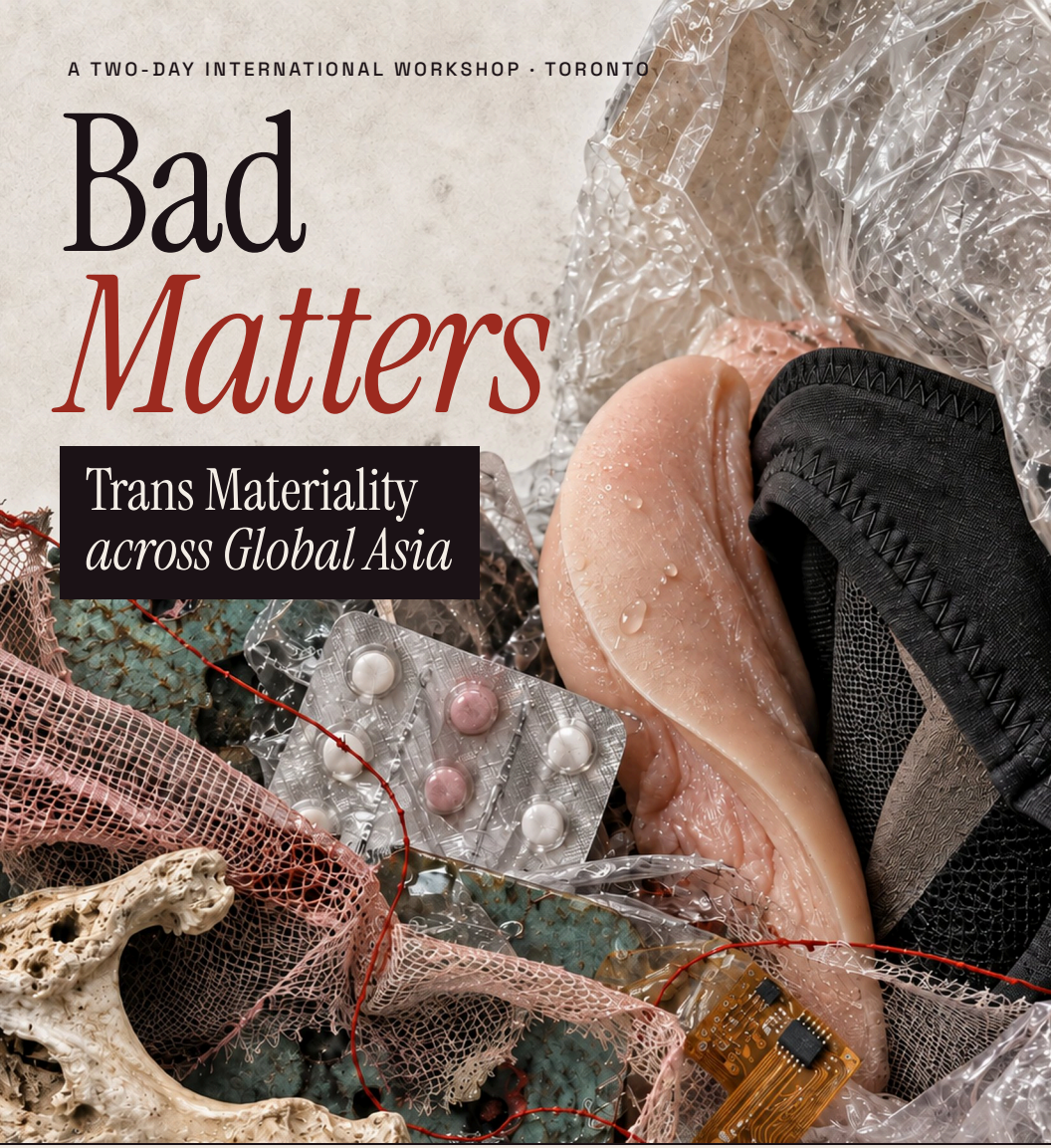
A TWO-DAY INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP · TORONTO

Bad *Matters*

Trans Materiality *across Global Asia*



Pro*gram*

TORONTO
21–23 OCTOBER 2026

WED 21 OCTOBER
11:00–6:00

Pre-workshop events with Carlos Rojas and Ari Heinrich

THU 22 OCTOBER
9:00–4:30

East Asian Studies Lounge, U of T St. George

FRI 23 OCTOBER
9:00–4:30

KW 130,
U of T Scarborough

22–23 OCTOBER 2026 · TORONTO

Join *us*

A two-day international workshop at the University of Toronto. Please RSVP for each day you plan to attend, in person or online.

DAY 1

Thursday 22 October

9:00 to 4:30
EAS Lounge, Robarts Library
U of T St. George

RSVP in person

RSVP online

DAY 2

Friday 23 October

9:00 to 4:30
KW 130, Kina Wiiya Enadong Building
U of T Scarborough

RSVP in person

RSVP online

RSVP on Eventbrite. Scan the code for your day, or tap it on a screen.

THE TWO DAYS AT A GLANCE

9:00	**Check-in**
9:20	**Opening Remarks**
9:45	**Panel 1** (In)Toxic Substances
11:20	**Panel 2** Care in the Debris
12:50	**Lunch**
2:00	**Panel 3** Material Verdicts
3:30	**Light Reception**

9:00	**Check-in**
9:30	**Panel 4** Bad Objects
11:10	**Panel 5** Fieldwork in the First Person
12:50	**Lunch**
2:00	**Closing Roundtable** Bad Matters, Next Matters
3:30	**Reception**

Wednesday 21 October. Pre-workshop events with Carlos Rojas at 11:00 and 1:00 in the EAS Lounge (page 9) and with Ari Heinrich at 4:00 in the William Doo Auditorium (page 10).

Venue addresses, maps and hotels are on pages 41 to 44. Questions can go to Shana Ye at **shana.ye@utoronto.ca** or Heng Simone Wang at **hengw01@student.ubc.ca**.

PROGRAM

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Introduction

Over the past decade trans studies has made materiality one of its central words. Trans life, scholars insist, is a matter of bodies, objects and environments as much as it is a matter of identity and representation (Salamon 2010; Gill-Peterson 2014; Barad 2015; Aizura et al. 2020).

Yet this materialist turn has stayed largely philosophical. It debates what matter is and seldom follows how materials are actually made, moved and governed. It has also stayed centred on North America. Meanwhile much of what sustains trans life today runs through Asia. Hormones and other pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, garments, prosthetics, digital platforms, biometric systems and care labour move through Asian economies and diasporic networks. They are more than a backdrop. They shape what transition can mean, who can reach it, and how bodies become recognizable to states, markets, families and communities.

Bad Matters begins from this gap. We ask what happens when transness is read through, across, as and against Asia. Song Hwee Lim once asked whether the trans in transnational is the trans in transgender (2007). The question still helps, because it invites comparison without assuming that crossing borders and crossing gender categories are the same movement. In the spirit of Kuan-Hsing Chen's call to take Asia as method (2010), we treat both trans and Asia as methods for understanding material relations across different sites, and not as a region or an identity from which to collect examples.

Our way in is badness. Trans studies has its own history with the word. Susan Stryker called the field queer theory's "evil twin" (2004), and Andrea Long Chu and Emmett Harsin Drager have argued that it began by leaving behind the "bad" figure of the transsexual (2019). Asia has been marked in a similar way. Stories of sexual modernity keep casting it as authoritarian, backward, late to liberation, or useful only for supplying cases to theories made elsewhere, a picture that queer Asian studies has long contested (Chiang and Wong 2017; Rao 2020). We set both histories beside a wider "bad turn" in queer and feminist work on the unruly, the vulgar and the improper (Stryker 2012; Gopinath 2018; Zuo 2022; Wong 2025).

For this workshop badness is not another name for negativity, and we do not assume that whatever is stigmatized is therefore resistant. We treat badness

as a material verdict. It decides whether a hormone counts as medicine or contraband, whether a changed body is read as treatment or as damage, whether labour is valued as care or dismissed as disposable service. A medicine bought across a border can sustain one life and criminalize another. The same garment, voice or document can protect a person and expose them to surveillance. These verdicts are never handed out evenly, and people often have to live inside them because no clean alternative exists (Awkward-Rich 2022; Malatino 2022). So instead of sorting the good from the bad, we ask what these verdicts do, who delivers them, and what forms of life and knowledge they miss.

The response to our call told us how much this conversation was wanted. It drew forty-two submissions in a single month, close to three times what we had planned for. We enlarged the program and opened hybrid participation so that colleagues facing visa, caregiving or funding barriers could still take part. Over two days and five panels, presenters working across China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, India and their diasporas follow hormones, garments, plants, documents, databases, shelters and care labour. These are the ordinary arrangements through which trans life is sustained and judged. Undergraduate and graduate students present alongside senior scholars, and each panel is paired with discussants whose comments are meant as real peer review on the way to an edited volume.

We do not expect to settle these papers into one theory. We hope to leave with a firmer sense of what Trans Asia gives to theory, and of what theory owes it in return. The closing roundtable, Bad Matters, Next Matters, gathers that conversation and looks ahead to the volume.

Welcome to Toronto, and thank you for bringing your work here.

Shana Ye and Heng Simone Wang

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Conveners

Shana Ye 叶霎那

CONVENER

Shana Ye (she/they/X也) is Associate Professor at the Women and Gender Studies Institute and the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies at the University of Toronto, where she coordinates the Women's and Gender Studies program at the Scarborough campus. Her research sits at the intersection of queer and trans studies, feminist science and technology studies, and Global Asian studies. She is the author of *Queer Chimerica: A Speculative Auto/Ethnography of the Cool Child* (University of Michigan Press, 2024) and is at work on a second book, *Queer AI: Alienated Intelligence, Asianized Infrastructure*.

wgsi.utoronto.ca/person/shana-ye

Heng Simone Wang 王恒

CONVENER

Heng Simone Wang (she/they/X也) is a PhD student in the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, a Graduate Fellow at the Centre for Asian Canadian Research and Engagement, and an inaugural member of the Queer Trans Centre for Radical Praxis at The University of British Columbia. Her SSHRC-funded doctoral research examines sexual ethics through trans of color critique. Her other projects focus on queer youth activism in the People's Republic of China and on trans-exclusionary and anti-SOGI movements across Canada. Her work can be found in *Social Movement Studies*, *Journal of Homosexuality*, *Celebrity Studies*, *International Journal of LGBTQ+ Youth Studies*, and *The Bulletin of Applied Transgender Studies*.

grsj.arts.ubc.ca/profile/heng-wang

Ash Aumeer

CONVENER AND RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Ash Aumeer (he/him) is an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto Scarborough majoring in Sociology and Women and Gender Studies. He has a particular interest in trans studies, queer theory, and classic sociological theories, and is eager to explore topics relating to migration, race, media, healthcare, and education.

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2026 · ST. GEORGE CAMPUS

Pre-Workshop *Events*

Two of our discussants give public events on the St. George campus the day before the workshop opens. All workshop participants are welcome.

PRE-WORKSHOP EVENT 1

A Day with Carlos Rojas

EAS Lounge, 14th Floor, Robarts Library, 130 St. George Street

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PROFESSIONALIZATION LUNCH

11:00 AM – 12:40 PM

Publishing, Editing, and Building a Scholarly Career

A conversation over lunch for graduate students and early-career faculty. Professor Rojas draws on his long experience as an author, journal editor, translator, and organizer of scholarly events to talk through publishing and professional life. Lunch is served at 11:00 and the conversation begins around 11:20. Please send your questions about publishing and careers to Shana Ye at shana.ye@utoronto.ca.

RSVP REQUIRED · 15 SEATS eventbrite.ca/e/2002946821862

RESEARCH TALK

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Androgynous: Transgender, Transspecies, and Transanimacies in the Works of Dung Kai-Cheung

Throughout his career, Hong Kong author Dung Kai-cheung has explored an array of transitional identities, from transgender and transspecies themes in several of his early works, to a growing interest in human-technological transitional identity formations in some of his more recent works. The talk will examine these thematics of trans-identities in Dung's works, while also considering a set of trans-tactics that operate at the level of his writing practice itself.

OPEN TO ALL · NO RSVP NEEDED

Carlos Rojas's biography is on page 37. Co-sponsored by the Department of East Asian Studies, the Women and Gender Studies Institute, the Cinema Studies Institute, and the Centre for Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto.

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2026 · ST. GEORGE CAMPUS

PRE-WORKSHOP EVENT 2

WGS Research Seminar with Ari Heinrich

William Doo Auditorium, 45 Willcocks Street

RESEARCH SEMINAR

4:00 – 6:00 PM

Strategic Proximity: Biological Materials and Anti-Colonial Practice at the 2020 Sydney Biennale

In this talk, I consider how an ensemble of biopolitically significant substances, deployed as art materials, can reshape how audiences understand viewing environments—and one another. Collectively, I argue, such substances have the capacity to challenge inherited narratives of race, gender, and sexuality through the deliberate positioning of audiences near real or perceived sources of contagion or contamination within exhibition contexts, a tactic I call "strategic proximity."

I focus on the unique conditions and curation of the 22nd Biennale of Sydney, a major multi-site exhibition that ran for less than two weeks in March 2020 before closing early due to COVID-related restrictions. Curated by Brook Andrew, the first Indigenous Australian artist to serve as artistic director of the Biennale, the exhibition foregrounded Indigenous sovereignty while drawing attention to the colonial histories embedded in its institutional sites. I consider Andrew's curatorial interventions alongside the contribution of queer and trans artist Jes Fan, whose work brought together melanin, blood, semen, urine, and sex hormones—substances that occupy outsized roles in the (bio)political imagination as potential vectors of contamination, whether through "disease" or through racialized, gendered, and sexualized meanings. Against the backdrop of the emerging pandemic, I argue that Andrew's curatorial framework and Fan's biomaterial interventions exposed and inverted assumptions of separation between museum visitors, exhibition spaces, and the materials on display.

Respondent Shana Ye, University of Toronto

IN PERSON · RSVP ON EVENTBRITE eventbrite.com/e/1999537076221

Ari Heinrich's biography is on page 36. The seminar is part of the WGS Research Seminar series at the Women and Gender Studies Institute and is held in conjunction with Bad Matters. For accessibility requests and dietary restrictions, write to wgsi.comms@utoronto.ca.

DAY 1 · EAST ASIAN STUDIES LOUNGE, ROBARTS LIBRARY, ST. GEORGE CAMPUS

Thursday *22 October*

9:00–9:40 **Check-in** from 9:00 • **Opening Remarks and Introduction** at 9:20

9:45–11:15 PANEL 1

(In)Toxic Substances. *Flesh, Hormones, and Clinics*

Discussant **Howard Chiang**, University of California, Santa Barbara

Thelma Y. Wang MIT p. 15
Transporting, Stockpiling, Reselling: Assembling Medical Transition in China–Thailand Journeys

Tianyi Bai Boston University p. 16
Breaking and Becoming: The Hauntings of a Good Trans Future in China

Gayeong Choi Yonsei p. 16
When Change Recedes: Voice Timelapse and the Materiality of Transition

Tianmeng Lan WashU p. 17
Imperfect Techniques, Bodies Beyond the Binary: Negotiating Trans Embodiment in Gender-Affirming Surgery in China

11:20–12:50 PANEL 2

Care in the Debris. *Bodily Maintenance, Communities, and Mutual Aid*

Discussants **Shana Ye**, University of Toronto and **Heng Simone Wang**, University of British Columbia

Leona ad Astra, Míngjué Xiè, Zehao Amber Pan Ritsumeikan / Independent / Toronto p. 18
Difficult Shelters: Reflections on Trans Shelters and Transfem Mutual Aid in Contemporary China

Ding-Liang Chen NTHU *(online)* p. 19
Dwelling in Debris: Trans Care and Infrastructural Failure in Neoliberal Asia

Qing Shen ICI Berlin p. 20
After Fabulousness: “Bad Livelihoods” of an Aging Trans Sex Worker in Shanghai

Jianmin Shao CU Boulder *(online)* p. 20
Emergent Differentiation in Gender-Affirming Care: Hormones, Bodily Materialities, and the Politics of Visibility

12:50–2:00 **Lunch**

2:00–3:30 PANEL 3

Material Verdicts. *Documents, States, and Moral Panics*

Discussant **Ian Liujia Tian**, Mount Saint Vincent University

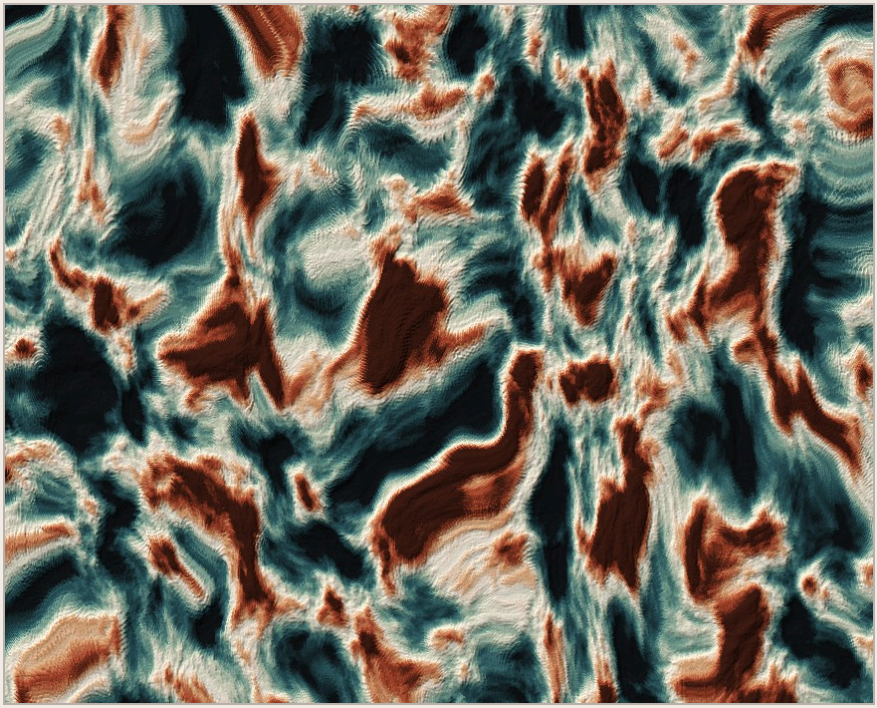
Vaibhav Saria SFU
Ritual Sexuality and Liberal Mattering of Hijras
p. 21

Tanya Goyal UNU *(online)*
Certifying the Trans: Recognition as Material Verdict from the Colonial Register to India's Digital Polity
p. 22

Sayan Bhattacharya Maryland *(online)*
Whither Ideology: Notes on the Trans Everyday in Fascist India
p. 22

Atlas Young Toronto
Speak No Evil: The Manufactured Ambiguity of Gender-queer Characters and the Gender Field
p. 23

3:30–4:30 **Light Reception**



Friday *23 October*

9:00–9:30 **Check-in**

9:30–11:00 PANEL 4

Bad Objects. *Things, Plants, and Unruly Media*

Discussant **Ari Larissa Heinrich**, Australian National University

Yuxing Zhang, Yifan Zhang Michigan State / Columbia
A Tree's Bad Travel: The Callery Pear and More-than-Human Trans Asia
p. 24

Pow Jun Kai Independent *(online)*
"Good Girls Go To Heaven, Bad Bitches Go Online": On Trans Things
p. 25

Ash Aumeer UTSC
"Improper" Gender Materialities: The Hijab, a Locus of Racial Politics and Legitimacy
p. 26

Suchismita Ghoshal IGNOU *(online)*
Silk, Sequins, and Survival: Textile Economies and the Material Politics of Hijra Embodiment in North India
p. 27

11:10–12:50 PANEL 5

Fieldwork in the First Person. *Embodied Methods and Improper Archives*

Discussant **Carlos Rojas**, Duke University

Loretta LeMaster Toronto
(Re)Telling Multiracial Tales: An Autoethnography of Coming Out Making Home
p. 27

Saoirse O. Concepcion UP Diliman *(online)*
(De)gendering as Transpinay Fieldwork Method: Reflections on Gender Performance During Anthropological Fieldwork in the Philippine Urban Ballroom Scene and a Rural Coastal Town
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Jiacheng Liu Memphis
Race, (Im)mobilities, and Materialities in China's Ballroom Scene
p. 29

Carman Fung SFU
Between Tomboy and Trans: Improper Sinophone Transmasculine Embodiments
p. 29

Dominic Wong UCSB
Recursive Bodies, Recursive Corpora: Transness, Translation, and Chinese Modernity in Gu Junzheng's *Sex Change*
p. 30

12:50–2:00 **Lunch**

2:00–3:30 CLOSING ROUNDTABLE · PAGE 31

Bad Matters, *Next Matters*

Facilitated by **Shana Ye** and **Heng Simone Wang**

3:30–4:30 **Reception**



FIVE PANELS AND A ROUNDTABLE

Abstracts

PANEL 1

(In)Toxic Substances

Flesh, Hormones, and Clinics

1

WHEN AND WHERE
Thursday 22 October, 9:45–11:15
East Asian Studies Lounge, Robarts Library

DISCUSSANT
Howard Chiang, University of California, Santa Barbara

Transporting, Stockpiling, Reselling: Assembling Medical Transition in China–Thailand Journeys

Thelma Y. Wang Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Since China's move to curtail online sales of hormone medications in late 2022, the state of hormone scarcity has necessitated extraordinary strategies to procure hormones for Chinese trans communities. One key pathway is to source medicine from Thailand and distribute it back to China. This paper takes up the temporal-spatial mobility of hormones as a key lens to examine the conditions and forms of medical transition today. Rather than prescriptions taken home from clinic counters, hormones undergo a circuitous route: purchased at Thai pharmacies, stuffed in suitcases through customs, traded in cafes, hidden in the closet, or shared at gatherings. Based on fieldwork from 2024 to 2026 where I traveled with my interlocutors through Shanghai and Bangkok, I examine the key roles that trans individuals perform as ordinary logistical workers who leverage spatial mobility to chart new terrains of hormone access. In conversation with literature on crisis preparedness (Keck 2017), I demonstrate that the perceived sense of the upcoming hormone shortage crisis, especially since the 2022 ban, has also generated shared vulnerability where stockpiling engendered not further shortage but sociality and improvised economies based on sharing, gifting, and reselling across time. In China's (im)mobility regime (Chu 2010) where spatial stasis is imposed to limit embodied possibilities, the unauthorized mobility of hormones shows, in a geography of uneven care access, how the logistical maneuvers of communities assemble emergent forms of supply chain that make transition possible.

Breaking and Becoming: The Hauntings of a Good Trans Future in China

Tianyi Bai Boston University

This paper explores how the promise of a "good" future for Chinese trans subjects is structured through break. I follow one interlocutor, Aira, a former activist, across three entangled moments in her life where the pursuit of a "good" future required her to break away from a particular past. As a trans daughter, Aira came to believe that being "good" to her parents required cutting ties with them, as she anticipated that her own identity and lifeway would harm them. As a Chinese citizen, Aira was required to demonstrate her legitimacy through a break away from her bodily and legal past. As a political subject, Aira's years of activism and subsequent political censorship in China produced a desperate aspiration to leave China, a bad geopolitical location, for a desirable trans destination in the West, where a "good," livable future might finally happen. Unpacking Aira's different attempts to becoming "good," I explore the material norms that rendered transness as "bad," thus requiring Aira to perform a "goodness" through break to pursue a better future; yet the better future continued to fail as the "badness" of Aira's transness continued to travel with her. Joining trans scholarship's attention to the particular materialities of transness, I suggest that the construction of trans "badness" is the material mechanism that produces and sustains the good as a horizon worth pursuing, while burdening trans subjects with both the residue of a past they could not fully leave and the weight of a future that might never come.

When Change Recedes: Voice Timelapse and the Materiality of Transition

Gayeong Choi Yonsei University

How should we understand the "end" of transition? This paper argues that transition does not end when bodily change stops, but when ongoing change no longer requires continual attention and verification. I develop this argument through voice timelapse practices among trans men undergoing testosterone therapy in South Korea. Hormonal intervention begins at an identifiable moment, yet its bodily effects unfold gradually and often remain imperceptible in everyday life. This perceptual gap matters because trans bodies are judged in social encounters: a voice, face, or bodily appearance need not be fixed in any essential sense, but it must become sufficiently stable and legible to sustain ordinary life. Drawing on interviews and voice timelapse videos, I examine

repeated recording, archival accumulation, playback, and comparison as material and sensory practices that make gradual change perceptible. By holding phrases, visual framing, and recording intervals relatively constant, timelapse produces comparability across time and renders subtle vocal differences audible as transition. These practices also organize anticipation, training attention toward bodily changes not yet readily sensed. Yet recording may eventually cease, not because hormonal change has stopped, but because comparison no longer produces meaningful difference. I understand this shift as stabilization, though an uneven one: a voice that passes on the phone can still fail identity verification, since Korean resident registration numbers encode legal sex. By tracing how hormonal change becomes perceptible, anticipated, and eventually recedes from focused attention, this paper rethinks trans materiality beyond both fixed bodily endpoints and abstract accounts of endless becoming.

Imperfect Techniques, Bodies Beyond the Binary: Negotiating Trans Embodiment in Gender-Affirming Surgery in China

Tianmeng Lan Washington University in St. Louis

In 2022, China issued a revised version of its national guidelines for gender-affirming surgery. Compared with the 2017 guidelines, one significant change was the removal of external genital reconstruction as a prerequisite for legally amending one's gender marker after surgery. Situating this negotiation of transness within legal and medical documents in its material genealogy, this paper examines the technical considerations underlying this policy change. In particular, it focuses on metoidioplasty and zero-depth vaginoplasty—two nonconventional surgical procedures that exist alongside phalloplasty and vaginoplasty—and asks how they came to be recognized as viable options within China's medical institutions and trans communities.

Drawing on historical archives, medical papers, and interviews with surgeons and trans folks, this paper elaborates the emergence of these alternative surgical options within the material conditions that constitute surgery and postoperative care: imperfect surgical techniques, insufficient autologous flaps, penile prostheses, vaginal dilators, and the labor required to use them, as well as the risks of tissue atrophy and scarring. At the same time, it examines how the introduction of these procedures extended the ideas about what counts as a penis or a vagina and how to evaluate success and failure in gender-reconstructing surgeries, creating space within clinical settings for in-between, ambiguous, and non-normative bodies beyond the binary.

PANEL 2

Care in the Debris

Bodily Maintenance, Communities, and Mutual Aid

2

WHEN AND WHERE
Thursday 22 October, 11:20–12:50
East Asian Studies Lounge, Robarts Library

DISCUSSANTS
Shana Ye, University of Toronto
Heng Simone Wang, University of British Columbia

Difficult Shelters: Reflections on Trans Shelters and Transfem Mutual Aid in Contemporary China

Leona ad Astra Ritsumeikan University · **Míngjué Xiè** Independent researcher · **Zehao Amber Pan** University of Toronto

This study is a reflective effort on the material realities of transfem shelters ("庇护所") in China, based multiple field experiences at a cluster of shelters in central China in 2024-2026, together with long-term observations from within the community and many discussions between the authors and those involved in shelter operations. Trans shelters run by private individuals are a relatively visible presence within Chinese trans femme communities, providing access to survival resources including emergency accommodation, personal protection, and mental crisis intervention on a non-profit basis for trans femmes facing financial difficulties and domestic/societal violence, and constitute a key node of local trans community and interpersonal networks. At the same time, resource allocation and organisational decisions within such shelters are mediated mainly through interpersonal relations with individual administrators, leading to consolidation and legitimisation of unequal power dynamics between shelter occupants. These dynamics reproduced a series of exclusion, harm, and exploitation against marginalised transfems within the space of such shelters in a manner that has proven difficult to identify, trace, and intervene against, to the detriment of their promised role as sanctuary spaces providing vital public infrastructures of survival. Issues surrounding the institution of private shelter spaces are not isolated to it, but deeply intertwined with broader mutual aid practices within Chinese transfem communities, where both material help and long-term mental health support often ties into intimate interpersonal relationships, making unequal and dependent relationships a wider communal norm. We seek to reflect on these realities, discuss material limitations, and also to envision possibilities of mutual aid practices within Chinese transfem

communities which might allow us to escape present reproductions of harm and marginalisation.

Dwelling in Debris: Trans Care and Infrastructural Failure in Neoliberal Asia

Ding-Liang Chen National Tsing Hua University *(joining online)*

This essay theorizes trans care through the material conditions of infrastructural failure that organize everyday life across neoliberal Asia. Rather than approaching care as an ethics of intimacy, affective labor, or welfare provision, I argue that trans care is a material practice of maintenance that sustains life amid the uneven withdrawal of state responsibility and the fragmented infrastructures of migration, housing, documentation, and informal labor. Drawing on the concept of "debris," I examine how the lives of trans migrant workers in Asia, despite being marginalized by neoliberal restructuring, are compelled to dwell within its material residues. Debris, in this sense, names the accumulated remains of abandoned institutions, exhausted bodies, unstable legal statuses, and improvised forms of survival through which trans life becomes possible.

The essay brings together Ya-Wen Lee's 李雅雯 Ladyboys 舞夢人 (2010), Teddy Chin's 陳立謙 Miss Andy 迷失安狄 (2021), and Jin Ong's 王禮霖 Abang Adik 富都青年 (2024) as cinematic archives of infrastructural maintenance of transness. Across Taiwan, Thailand, and Malaysia, these films reveal trans migrant workers repairing the failures of neoliberal governance through the everyday labor of sustaining households, navigating documentary regimes, securing shelter, and maintaining fragile social worlds. Moving beyond the representational regimes of identity politics, trans bodies here function as infrastructures that absorb, redistribute, and compensate for institutional abandonment.

By shifting analytical attention from recognition and representation to documents, housing, bodily exhaustion, and material survival, this essay extends trans of color critique beyond its dominant North American horizons. Interrogating how gendered life is produced through regional political economy, the essay reads transness as a material verdict embedded in the uneven distribution of infrastructural failure, where trans care emerges as the ongoing labor of dwelling, repairing, and surviving within the debris of neoliberal capitalism.

After Fabulousness: "Bad Livelihoods" of an Aging Trans Sex Worker in Shanghai

Qing Shen ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry

Trans Studies has often celebrated transgender lives through figures of becoming, visibility, glamour, and transgression, leaving relatively unexplored what transness looks like after youth, when one cannot afford or may not desire to be fabulous or transgressive. This paper tells the story of Jiaojiao (b. 1969), a transgender woman and sex worker in Shanghai, whom I came to know during my 2021–2022 ethnographic fieldwork among older queer men. Drawing on ethnography alongside the documentary Come Dance with Me (2019) of which Jiaojiao is one of the central characters, it examines how trans life is materially sustained when transition no longer promises spectacular transformation. Rather than centering hormones or surgery, I focus on what I call "bad livelihoods": her declining BDSM business, gambling, speculative home ownership, amateur lip-sync performances for retired audiences, and everyday forms of chosen kinship among aging queer companions. These practices both sustain Jiaojiao's everyday survival and reproduce the precarity that shapes her aging future. Rather than reading them as either heroic acts of resilience or signs of failure, I argue that they constitute the ordinary material infrastructures through which life of an aging working-class trans woman is maintained. Jiaojiao's aging experience suggests that transness in later life is defined less by a politics of becoming than by one of maintenance, repair, and endurance. By foregrounding these mundane and often disreputable arrangements, the paper shows that "badness" is not simply a social stigma but a material condition through which trans survival is simultaneously enabled and compromised.

Emergent Differentiation in Gender-Affirming Care: Hormones, Bodily Materialities, and the Politics of Visibility

Jianmin Shao University of Colorado Boulder *(joining online)*

Whereas trans women often experience more discrimination due in part to their visibility, trans men are often more invisible in gender-affirming care. This article unpacks this difference through attention to trans mattering—boundary-making practices that determine how and which bodies get affirmed and come to matter. Drawing on ethnographic research with physicians and trans people in China, I develop the framework of emergent differentiation to capture how the doing and experimenting of trans medicine enact subject-object relations that

produce not only the cisgender-transgender divide but also trans in/visibilities. Trans bodies, as medicalized objects, are differentiated from cisgender subjects; meanwhile, trans women (as visible objects) are differentiated from trans men (as unmarked, invisible subjects more capable of "passing" as cisgender). Emergent differentiation thus allows us to view trans in/visibilities not as mere social constructions or fixed gender differences but as results of trans mattering wherein hormones, bodies, and gendered negotiations become differentiated.

PANEL 3

Material Verdicts

Documents, States, and Moral Panics

3

WHEN AND WHERE
Thursday 22 October, 2:00–3:30
East Asian Studies Lounge, Robarts Library

DISCUSSANT
Ian Liujia Tian, Mount Saint Vincent University

Ritual Sexuality and Liberal Mattering of Hijras

Vaibhav Saria Simon Fraser University

This paper begins by identifying how the ritual aspect of hijra sexuality undoes the liberal mattering of trans bodies. Liberalism which rotates around concepts such as dignity and respectability is predicated on normativity; and if escape from normativity or anti-normativity is seen in risking one's status as human then attendant concepts such as wildness or animality will need to be revisited. This exercise is necessary to understand the place that hijras occupy in the state's imagination in which they are made to perform several contradictory tasks being at once emblematic of a historically liberal nation, and also a site for intervention to absorb them into a formal respectable economy. I tentatively propose using animality as a roaming device to measure the promises made to and value extracted from hijras in multiple sites.

Certifying the Trans: Recognition as Material Verdict from the Colonial Register to India's Digital Polity

Tanya Goyal United Nations University *(joining online)*

What decides whether a person legally exists as the gender they are? In India, as elsewhere, trans recognition is not an abstract right but a material verdict, a decision handed down through documents that grant or deny access to welfare, housing, and public life. This paper traces that verdict across three record-keeping technologies. First, the colonial register: a British Indian statute, the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, ordered police to enrol gender-variant communities labelled "eunuchs" in colonial parlance with the avowed aim of their "gradual extinction" (Hinchy, 2019). Second, the postcolonial certificate: India's Supreme Court recognised a legal "third gender" and the right to self-identify in its landmark 2014 National Legal Services Authority ruling, yet the Transgender Persons Act of 2019 made that identity conditional on a certificate from a district official and permitted reclassification as "man" or "woman" only on proof of surgery, which the 2014 ruling had called illegal. Third, the biometric database: this paperwork now feeds Aadhaar, India's billion-person biometric ID system, where records whose name and gender fail to match the existing binary-based system produce exclusion rather than inclusion (Brindaalakshmi, 2025). Reading these regimes together, including a 2025 Supreme Court judgment that condemned the near-total failure to implement these very protections in practice, this paper will explore whether India as a South-Asian country in the Global South, lag a Western timeline of trans freedom or stages its central dilemma: the body made legible, or illegible, by the improper materialities of the document. Read this way, does this theorise recognition than merely admitting and acting upon a systemic ambiguity?

Whither Ideology: Notes on the Trans Everyday in Fascist India

Sayan Bhattacharya University of Maryland *(joining online)*

This paper reflects on the trans lifemaking strategies that take shape when even fascism finds ways to incorporate ideas of gender nonconformity. As opposed to linear theorizations of resistance on the one hand and a trans version of homonationalism on the other, it approaches ambivalence and complicity as important strategies of building life, in which ideology is not pregiven but is given shape bit by bit.

Speak No Evil: The Manufactured Ambiguity of Gender-queer Characters and the Gender Field

Atlas Young University of Toronto

Although gender-queer characters appear vastly across Japanese pop-culture and media, confirmed accounts of transgender characters remain scarce. This paper recognizes this gap as a clear structural pattern and offers relocation for where this pattern is produced. Manufactured ambiguity lies not in poor characterization, but rather, it is a property of the fields in which characters – and persons – are immutably recorded. Badness is issued at the level of the schema: the value held, the rules for its amendment, and the utter permanence of record all fall within its range.

Since October 2020, the official profile of Akiyama Mizuki (Project Sekai) has completed the 性別 (gender) field with a "?". This designation has stayed unique and consistent – despite changes to school, height, and quoted line over years of story development, this "?" designation has never changed. On 8 May 2026, the Osaka High Court held that the binary operation of Japan's family register conflicts with Article 14 of the Constitution and is in need of correction, yet, it dismissed the appeal, stating an insurmountable need for registry administration to operate uniformly nationwide.

SEGA's commercial database subverts what the court cannot – allocating a third term that is but a null, letting a two-valued binary schema operate amidst an unsortable value. Regardless, the cost is distributed asymmetrically: the publisher faces little consequence, the registered subject has no say, and the record persists indifferently. These are all costs of the field and not of the portrayal – trans existence is ultimately permitted, granted it never becomes of value.

PANEL 4

Bad Objects

Things, Plants, and Unruly Media

4

WHEN AND WHERE
Friday 23 October, 9:30–11:00
KW 130, U of T Scarborough

DISCUSSANT
Ari Larissa Heinrich, Australian National University

A Tree's Bad Travel: The Callery Pear and More-than-Human Trans Asia

Yuxing Zhang Michigan State University · **Yifan Zhang** Columbia University

This paper follows the Callery pear (Pyrus calleryana) across East Asia and North America to examine how plant bodies become materially "bad" through transpacific regimes of colonial collection, species-specific cultivation, aesthetic valuation, and contemporary urban ecological management. Native to China, the tree was collected in the early twentieth century by Frank N. Meyer through collaborations involving the Harvard Arnold Arboretum and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Initially valued for its resistance to fire blight, the Callery pear was bred and widely planted across the United States. By the twenty-first century, however, the same qualities that once made it desirable—its hardiness and reproductive resilience—had become grounds for its reclassification as invasive.

Rather than treating this history primarily as one of botanical institutions, the article centers the pear as a more-than-human trans Asian body moving through and across the different worlds of botanical science, state agriculture, horticulture, and urban planning, as well as through negotiations of China–U.S. encounters. Its changing status reveals badness as a material verdict produced through shifting botanical, scientific, economic, and environmental regimes. The pear does not simply receive the meanings assigned to it by these institutions. Its biological capacities allow it to exceed the infrastructures designed to organize its movement and determine its value.

Using Trans Asia as a method, the article approaches transness through unstable classification, embodied transformation, and movement across ecological and institutional boundaries. In doing so, it brings a more-than-human and specifically plant-centered focus to the workshop, showing how trans Asian materiality can be examined through the circulation of botanical life across multiple institutions and contexts. It also offers a fresh lens on

queerness and on what queer materiality might mean beyond gender. The Callery pear's early aesthetic and Orientalist appeal was entangled with colonial botanical projects that feminized the Orient and rendered Asian plant life desirable, decorative, and available for transplantation. Drawing on underexamined archival materials from the Arnold Arboretum and documents from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, alongside literary and philosophical readings of Zhuangzi that seek to appreciate plants on their own terms, the article traces how the Callery pear was classified, circulated, and repeatedly revalued. It reveals how Asian lifeforms are made useful, improper, and disposable while retaining their own capacities for unruly world-making that challenge anthropocentric fantasies of management and control.

"Good Girls Go To Heaven, Bad Bitches Go Online": On Trans Things

Pow Jun Kai Independent researcher *(joining online)*

We are surrounded by things, some we use every day, others present themselves through our senses. We see them; we touch them. Many of these things come into and go away from our lives at different times. Things often serve as conduits for creative and useful communication. The arts as a medium of expression is also a tool to capture things. The texts, images and movements lock the objects in place whether in a state of fixity or transience. They attract our attention and actions; they generate a provocative force bringing them closer to other things. Such being the case of the fabrics and prosthetics in transgender beings. Coupled with photography and videography, light is reflected to commemorate trans objects in varying degree of brightness. Trans things of different shapes and scales are manipulated in situ by queer artists, giving birth to works of subjective art. Instead of people or scenery, trans objects are framed into focus by accentuating their materiality. Both their inert properties and dynamic characteristics are exposed and exhibited through the hands of the queer artist. Singaporean artist, nor, evokes emotions and politics where things–flowers, liquids and clothes–and texts become active components within videographic narratives. Nor's artistic practice hopes to situate belonging and community within speculative timelines of materiality in order to evoke the maladies of moribund and manipulative practices online and onscreen.

“Improper” Gender Materialities: The Hijab, a Locus of Racial Politics and Legitimacy

Ash Aumeer University of Toronto Scarborough

Western feminist understandings of the hijab are often framed through binaries of oppression and liberation, obscuring how race, religion, and materiality shape gendered recognition. While scholarship has examined the racialized ungendering of Black women (Spillers, 1987) and the Orientalist construction of Muslim women (Said, 1978), less attention has been paid to how these processes converge for Black Muslim women. This paper examines the hijab as a material technology through which racialized and gendered meanings are rendered “improper” in Western diasporic contexts. Drawing on Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), Muslim feminist critiques of liberal feminism (Abu-Lughod, 2001; Ahmed, 1992), queer diaspora scholarship (Gopinath, 2021), and Butler’s (2004) concept of gender intelligibility, I argue that the hijab destabilizes universalized conceptions of womanhood by exposing the racialized and religious assumptions embedded within Western gender norms.

Rather than treating transness as a comparative identity category, I draw on trans studies to examine how bodies become legible within racialized and cisnormative regimes. Through this framework, the hijab emerges as a material object that mediates surveillance, Islamophobia, racialization, and gender. As it circulates through diasporic spaces, it may be read as ordinary, oppressive, threatening, resistant, or gender affirming depending on the body that wears it (and methods). I argue that these meanings are contingent upon race, religion, embodiment, and gender identity rather than fixed within the object itself.

Bringing Black feminist analyses of racialized embodiment into conversation with trans critiques of gender intelligibility, this paper argues that Black Muslim women and trans people who wear the hijab reveal how race, religion, and material objects co-produce “improper” gendered subjects. By treating the hijab as a site where gender is materially negotiated rather than symbolized, this paper contributes to Trans Asia studies by demonstrating how material objects shape gendered and racialized intelligibility across diasporic contexts.

Silk, Sequins, and Survival: Textile Economies and the Material Politics of Hijra Embodiment in North India

Suchismita Ghoshal Indira Gandhi National Open University *(joining online)*

Scholarship on Hijra communities in India has largely examined questions of kinship, ritual authority, citizenship, and legal recognition. Comparatively little attention has been paid to the everyday material worlds through which gendered lives are sustained. This paper explores the role of textiles in the social and economic lives of Hijra communities in North India, arguing that cloth is not simply a marker of feminine identity but a material condition through which embodiment is negotiated, recognised, and lived. Saris, sequined garments, ritual clothing, cosmetics, and tailoring practices are approached as objects embedded in networks of labour, exchange, religious performance, and survival rather than as symbolic accessories.

PANEL 5

Fieldwork in the First Person

Embodied Methods and Improper Archives

5

WHEN AND WHERE
Friday 23 October, 11:10–12:50
KW 130, U of T Scarborough

DISCUSSANT
Carlos Rojas, Duke University

(Re)Telling Multiracial Tales: An Autoethnography of Coming Out Making Home

Loretta LeMaster OISE, University of Toronto

In this project, I revisit and revise the narrative flow and form that comprised a previously published journal article, "Telling multiracial tales: An autoethnography of coming out home" (LeMaster, 2013), which drew on tenets of queer theory to deconstruct normative notions of masculinity. At the time, I wrote the work as a trans femme person pressed to embody queer masculinity, relative to my transsexual comrade spouse, and in relation with my mixed-race Asian/white family. In it, I argued against the white queer Western demand to come out of the closet in favor of a queer of color onto-epistemology that labors toward coming home and making space at home. Since then, significant

changes have occurred in my life that have shifted insight derived from my initial autoethnographic analysis and that demand reconsideration. Key among those changes include: my comrade spouse died, I transitioned my sex-gender and my family no longer recognizes me, the matriarch of my Asian immigrant family passed away, and I immigrated to Canada for work. Intended as a critical rejoinder than a rebuke, this project explores the flux and flow constitutive of a mixed-race Asian/white trans life in relation and over the course of transition and centers the particularities inherent in being and becoming the immigrant Asian family's monstrous embarrassment. In this essay, I reflect not on coming home but to instead making home with the racialized gender freaks and weirdos who make life livable at all.

(De)gendering as Transpinay Fieldwork Method: Reflections on Gender Performance During Anthropological Fieldwork in the Philippine Urban Ballroom Scene and a Rural Coastal Town

Saoirse O. Concepcion University of the Philippines Diliman *(joining online)*

While work on transgender autoethnographies and gender performativity already exist (Nealy 2017), a critical autoethnographic inquiry on the interplay between the unique socioeconomic contexts of the Philippines and the performance of (trans)gender remains unexplored. Drawing upon two (2) years of sustained engagement with the Philippine Ballroom scene and six (6) weeks of fieldwork in a rural coastal town in Southern Luzon, I reflect on my experiences with self-presentation as a non-passing Filipino trans woman (transpinay) practicing anthropology, working with two different communities. During the course of my fieldwork, I lived amongst transgender and queer communities from both sites, where gender performance has affected rapport, access, and data quality during research. Tensions arise when the ethnographer's performance of gender does not necessarily align with hyperfeminine expectations and ideals of transgender bodies (Atkins 2012). Despite it, I propose that degendering—stripping oneself of certain gender performances— in this case, transfemininity, may be a strategic and positive approach to conducting ethnographic fieldwork for non-passing trans academics, especially within conservative and/or highly gendered field sites. I argue that while the process of degendering may sometimes be accompanied by experiences of transphobia and may negatively impact trans academics' sense of selves, it may allow the ethnographer to probe into cultural constructions of genders and sexualities, and the limits of hegemonized gender identities in the field.

Race, (Im)mobilities, and Materialities in China's Ballroom Scene

Jiacheng Liu University of Memphis

How does ballroom culture, which indexes a distinctly US genealogy of racialized trans survival, travel to contemporary China, where racial, geopolitical, and material conditions are markedly different? Rooted in the everyday stakes of realness for Black and brown trans women in the United States, the femme queen category has historically been tied to biomedical forms of gender transition. In China, however, access to gender-affirming care remains limited and unevenly distributed, and consequently participation in femme queen and transmasc categories does not require medical transition. Meanwhile, China's ballroom scene emerges within global anti-Blackness and Han-centric homoracial governance. Unlike trans/gender, the discussion of race is conspicuously absent and superficially allocated as a US problem through brief references to American racism, thus risking a displaced romantization of Black queer politics.

Drawing on ethnographic research in China's ballroom scene, this essay reconsiders the transnational rearticulation of these race-gender dynamics through the material politics of (im)mobilities. For Chinese trans ballroom participants, their exploration of gender transgression is often enabled or facilitated by their migrations across both domestic and transnational scales. These geographic movements are shaped by the household registration (hukou) system and unequal rural-urban division on the one hand, and passport restrictions and Asian racialization on the other. I argue that they constitute the material terrains through which ballroom rearticulates its central modality as gender-class-geographic mobilities (as a cultural product of the Great Migration) and acquires meanings anew in contemporary China.

Between Tomboy and Trans: Improper Sinophone Transmasculine Embodiments

Carman Fung Simon Fraser University

In Sinophone societies such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, the word "tomboy" refers to female-assigned individuals who keep their hair short, flatten their chests, date feminine women and take a dominating role in sex. For decades, this label had carved out space for transmasculine embodiments: Tomboy-identified people were seen as desirable partners in lesbian circles and were generally tolerated in society (Martin; Kam). The late 2010s marked a noticeably shift. The

medical term “transsexual” was translated and popularised, bringing with it the misconception that all gender-diverse people must hate their bodies and desire cis-passing surgeries (Fung; c.f. Stone). Tomboy-identified people become outcasts in lesbian communities where they are now seen as “failed” transmen “too afraid” to transition (Fung; c.f. Huang; Zhao). At the same time, advocacy groups are producing online content educating the public on the supposedly absolute differences between tomboy and “proper” transness.

This paper centres the lived experiences of five individuals who reported fought relationships with the terms “tomboy” and “trans.” Drawing on in-depth interviews, I explore their ambivalence towards the two terms, their decisions on nontransition, feelings of being outcast in lesbian circles, and experiences of connecting with local and global trans communities. Additionally, I read their stories alongside social media contents that are constructing boundaries between tomboy and trans. Rather than framing this study as an Asian variant of Halberstam’s butch/FTM border wars, my goal is to reposition trans Asian subjectivities as shaped by (and at times made improper by) global trans visibility and digital activism.

Recursive Bodies, Recursive Corpora: Transness, Translation, and Chinese Modernity in Gu Junzheng’s *Sex Change*

Dominic Wong University of California, Santa Barbara

Is there a method for rereading “bad translation”—the recurring and implicit judgement surrounding non-Western modernity, translated literature, and trans embodiment as derivative and belated? Examining Gu Junzheng’s 性變 （Sex Change） as a textual site, this paper proposes recursion as a mode of retheorizing transness in the relational field of translation and Chinese Modernity. I trace this recursive operation across three material registers. First, I examine the story’s grammar of bodily transformation, showing how Gu’s syntax preserves the prior body within every description of the transformed one. Second, I situate Sex Change within the translational formation of Republican Chinese science fiction, arguing that the story not only emerges from a recursively translated literary corpus but also retroactively exposes a narrative possibility absent from the contemporaneous Western science-fiction archive. Finally, I show how Jing Xian’s transition recursively reorganizes the relational field surrounding different characters, allowing the text to enact (rather than merely represent) Chinese modernity not as a belated reception of Western modernity but as a translational process that continually reconstitutes (gendered) bodies, literary corpora, and historical knowledge. In doing so, the

paper approaches Trans Asia as a recursive method for rethinking material relations between embodiment, translation, and world literature—one in which bad translation names not a failure of fidelity but the site where the unmarked standard becomes visible as one—while suggesting recursion as a narratological framework for transness beyond the opposition between terminal arrival and endless deferral.

CLOSING ROUNDTABLE

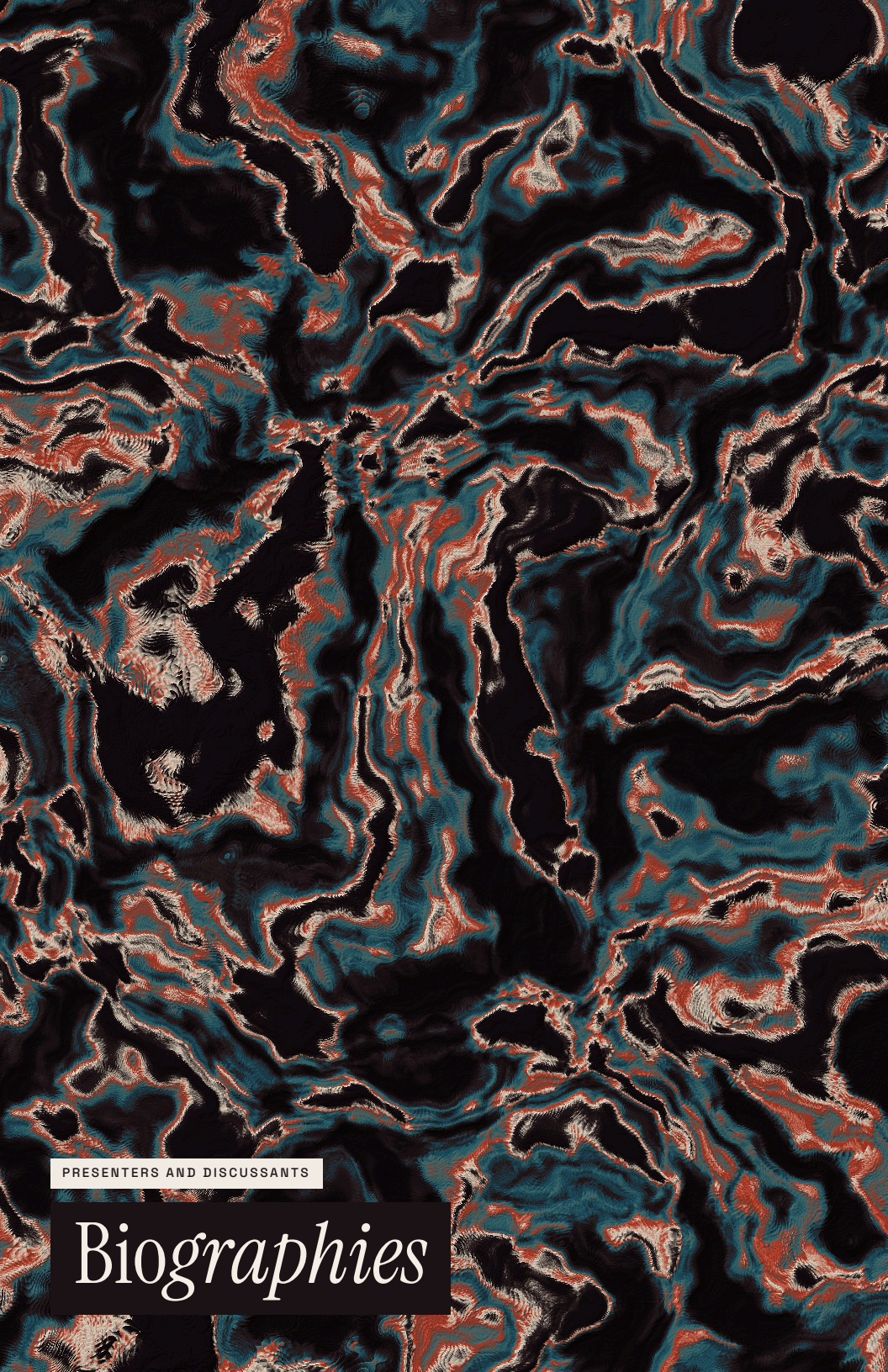
Bad Matters, *Next Matters*

WHEN AND WHERE
Friday 23 October, 2:00–3:30
KW 130, U of T Scarborough

FACILITATED BY
Shana Ye and Heng Simone Wang

After five panels we come back together for the last ninety minutes to ask what the two days have added up to and where the work goes next.

Presenters at different career stages offer short reflections, the discussants respond, and the room is open. We will talk through the shared questions that surfaced across panels, the concepts that travelled well and the ones that did not, and the plan for the edited volume that this workshop is meant to seed. A reception follows from 3:30 to 4:30.



PRESENTERS AND DISCUSSANTS

Biographies

Biographies

Leona ad Astra

Leona ad Astra is a master's student at Ritsumeikan University, Japan. Working across Chinese-, Japanese-, and English-language contexts, they conduct insider-oriented anthropological research on queer and trans lives. Their interests include queer/trans studies, digital ethnography, East Asia as a subject and method, community activism, intimacy, violence, and resistance.

linktr.ee/leonaadastra

Tianyi Bai

Tianyi Bai (they/them/tā) is a PhD candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology at Boston University, USA. They are interested in trans* and queer studies, with a particular focus on Chinese trans* lifeways. Their current dissertation bridges ethnography and trans/queer theories through the lens of time, exploring how different temporal frameworks scaffold material realities of belonging.

Sayan Bhattacharya

Sayan Bhattacharya (they/them) is Assistant Professor in the Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maryland. They hold a doctorate in Feminist Studies from the University of Minnesota. Their research explores the improvisatory and innovative strategies that Indian trans communities deploy to make life in an environment saturated by violence, staging conversations between anthropologies of the everyday, trans, queer, and critical disability studies, and anti-caste literatures. Their work appears in *Radical History Review*, *Global Public Health*, *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *QED*, *GLQ*, and *Anthropology and Humanism*. They received the 2023 Sylvia Rivera Award in Transgender Studies.

Ding-Liang Chen

Ding-Liang Chen is a writer and independent researcher working on transpacific histories of empire, environment, and intimate infrastructure. They previously served as Assistant Research Fellow and Director of the Department of Research and Planning at the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation. Chen is currently a research fellow in the Vietnam Studies Scholar Cultivation Program at National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. Their academic work has appeared or is forthcoming in Verge: Studies in Global Asias, Journal of the Society for Asian Humanities, and Critical Asia Archives: Events and Theories, among other venues.

Howard Chiang

Howard Chiang is Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he holds the Lai Ho and Wu Cho-liu Endowed Chair in Taiwan Studies and directs the Center for Taiwan Studies. His scholarship examines the history of systems of thought, from the social life of sexual concepts to the transcultural foundations of psychoanalysis and racial science. He is the author of *After Eunuchs: Science, Medicine, and the Transformation of Sex in Modern China* (2018) and *Transtopia in the Sinophone Pacific* (2021), the editor of *The Global Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (2019), and the Founding Chair of the Society of Sinophone Studies.

Gayeong Choi

Gayeong Choi is a PhD student in Cultural Anthropology at Yonsei University, South Korea. Her research examines embodiment, materiality, and medical practices through ethnographic research. Drawing on medical anthropology and science and technology studies, she explores how bodies are shaped through everyday material relations.

Saoirse O. Concepcion

Saoirse O. Concepcion is studying BA Anthropology at the University of the Philippines – Diliman. Her research spans gender and development, trans sexual health, and queer sensualities within the global cultural and political economy. Currently, she is engaged in the history of Philippine medical sociology, and the emergence of vernacular transness within the rural ecology of a coastal Mindoro town.

Carman Fung

Dr. Carman Fung is a researcher of queer Asian and transnational cultures. Their monograph *Leaving the Tomboy Behind* (University of Michigan Press) follows Sinophone lesbians who came to reject masculinity and search for other gender expressions in global LGBTQ+ media. Carman's other work address film receptions and dating app use.

Suchismita Ghoshal

Suchismita Ghoshal is a PhD researcher exploring philosophy, folklore, culture and media studies, heritage, and religious thought through interdisciplinary perspectives. Her work examines cultural memory, sacred landscapes, feminist philosophy, and consciousness studies. She has presented internationally at institutions including Oxford, Penn State, Leeds, Hawai'i at Mānoa, Durham, Illinois, UMass, Danubius International University, and IIT (BHU).

Tanya Goyal

Tanya is a social science researcher with a particular focus on Sociology of gender, climate-health, and popular culture studies. She is an Editor working for H-Net Humanities and Social Sciences, a researcher at United Nations University, Belgium and has recently completed her research study in Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. Awarded several international grants for research presentations and invited for guest lectures by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences (Germany), Freiburg Institute of Advanced Studies (Germany), and Bergische Universität Wuppertal (Germany), among many others, she brings an interdisciplinary perspective to societal trends and global forces.

Ari Larissa Heinrich

Ari Heinrich is Gallery Director at the Australian Centre on China in the World and Professor of Chinese Media and Literature at the Australian National University. Their research spans nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chinese visual cultures, histories of medicine and the body, and anti-Chinese racisms in Europe, North America, and Australia. They have written on subjects ranging from anatomical illustration in China to contemporary Chinese "cadaver art," as well as on the work of individual artists including Lu Yang, Chi Peng, Kongkee, and Jes Fan.

Heinrich's books include *The Afterlife of Images: Translating the Pathological Body Between China and the West* (Duke, 2008) and *Chinese Surplus: Biopolitical Aesthetics and the Medically Commodified Body* (Duke, 2018). In 2019, Ari received an Andy Warhol Arts Writers Grant for research on the use of the pigment melanin in Jes Fan's work. They are co-editor with Sophie Guo of a forthcoming special issue of the *Journal of the Society of Asian Humanities* on biohazards, toxicity, and the politics of display in modern and contemporary art in Asia and its diasporas. They have also translated queer literature from Taiwan, including Qiu Miaojin's *Last Words from Montmartre* (New York Review Books, 2014) and Chi Ta-wei's *The Membranes* (Columbia, 2021).

Tianmeng Lan

Tianmeng Lan (she/they) is a PhD student in Sociocultural Anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis. She is interested in the queer embodied practices that emerge at the margins of the transnational medical-industrial complex. Informed by medical anthropology, feminist STS, and trans theory, her project examines the history of trans medicine and the interplay between self-medication, identity formation, and the affective politics of transgender communities in China.

Loretta LeMaster

Lore/tta LeMaster serves as Associate Professor of Queer Studies in the Department of Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. Her work braids the social science with the humanities and performance in service of trans life, art, knowledge, and relationality.

Jiacheng Liu

Jiacheng Liu (they/them/tā) is an Assistant Professor of Media Studies at the University of Memphis. Their research examines the intersection of global queer Asias, trans and queer of color critique, and digital media and cultures. Their previous works have appeared in *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Sexualities*, and *Feminist Media Studies*, among others.

Zehao Amber Pan

Zehao Amber Pan is a PhD student at the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto.

zehao-pan.com

Pow Jun Kai

Pow Jun Kai, PhD, is a cultural historian of twentieth-century Southeast Asia. In addition to lectureship positions in different universities in Singapore (SIT, SIM, UAS), he was awarded research fellowships by Uppsala University; Leiden University; National Heritage Board; National Library Board. He is the editor of a special issue on Rethinking Schoenberg (EJM) and the co-editor of Queer Singapore (HKUP) and Singapore Soundscape (NLB). His journal articles are also published in South East Asia Research; Trans Asia Photography; TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly; European Journal of Musicology.

Carlos Rojas

Carlos Rojas is Professor of Chinese Cultural Studies and of Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies at Duke University. He is the author of *The Naked Gaze: Reflections on Chinese Modernity* (2008), *The Great Wall: A Cultural History* (2010), and *Homesickness: Culture, Contagion, and National Transformation in Modern China* (2015), co-editor of 10 volumes, and translator of 16 volumes of literary fiction and critique. He is also Associate Editor-in-Chief of *PRISM: Theory and Modern Chinese Literature* and Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Global Storytelling*.

Vaibhav Saria

Vaibhav Saria is an Associate Professor in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. Her work on Global Trans Studies, Medical Anthropology, and Oral History has won several awards including, the Early Career Research Excellence Award in Humanities, Honorable Mention, 2023 Anne Bolin & Gil Herdt Book Prize, the Bernard S. Cohn Prize, Dean's Award for Academic Excellence, Ruth Benedict Book Prize for Outstanding Monograph, Joseph W. Elder Prize in Indian Social Sciences.

Jianmin Shao

Jianmin Shao is Assistant Professor of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. They are a cultural anthropologist and psychologist working at the intersections of medical anthropology, feminist STS, critical queer and trans health, and global China studies. Shao's current book project examines how promising trans medicine initiatives in China have reproduced trans vulnerabilities under Chinese nationalism and Euro-American imperialism. A portion of this project has appeared in *American Ethnologist*.

Qing Shen

Qing Shen is a postdoctoral fellow at ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry. He specializes in gender, sexuality, and media culture in contemporary China and East Asia. He obtained his PhD in cultural anthropology from Uppsala University. He has published in journals such as *Continuum*, *Social Analysis*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, and *Made in China Journal*.

Ian Liujia Tian

Ian Liujia Tian is Assistant Professor of Global Queer Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University. He is the co-editor of *Asian Canada is Burning* (2025, Brill/Haymarket Books) and the author of *Pleasure Production: Cruising Love and Labor in China's Migrant Urban Villages*, a book under contract with Rutgers University Press. He co-convenes the Queer Asias Research Lab with four researchers based in the U.S. and Europe.

Thelma Y. Wang

Thelma Y. Wang (she/they) is a PhD Candidate in the HASTS program at MIT. She is a socio-cultural anthropologist and a feminist and queer science studies scholar with research areas in sex-gender, medicine, and the body. Her dissertation project traces the itineraries of transgender care between China and Thailand.

Dominic Wong

Dominic Wong is a PhD student in East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies at UCSB. His research sits at the intersection of trans studies, translation theory, posthumanism, and modern Chinese literature.

Míngjué Xiè

Míngjué Xiè (谢明觉; she/她) is a Chinese trans femme and independent researcher based in between Mainland China and Edinburgh, Scotland. She is interested in youth liberation from trans and Chinese perspectives, abolition of patriarchy and of the family, harm reduction, direct action, and crip linguistics.

orcid.org/0009-0003-9470-1093

Atlas Young

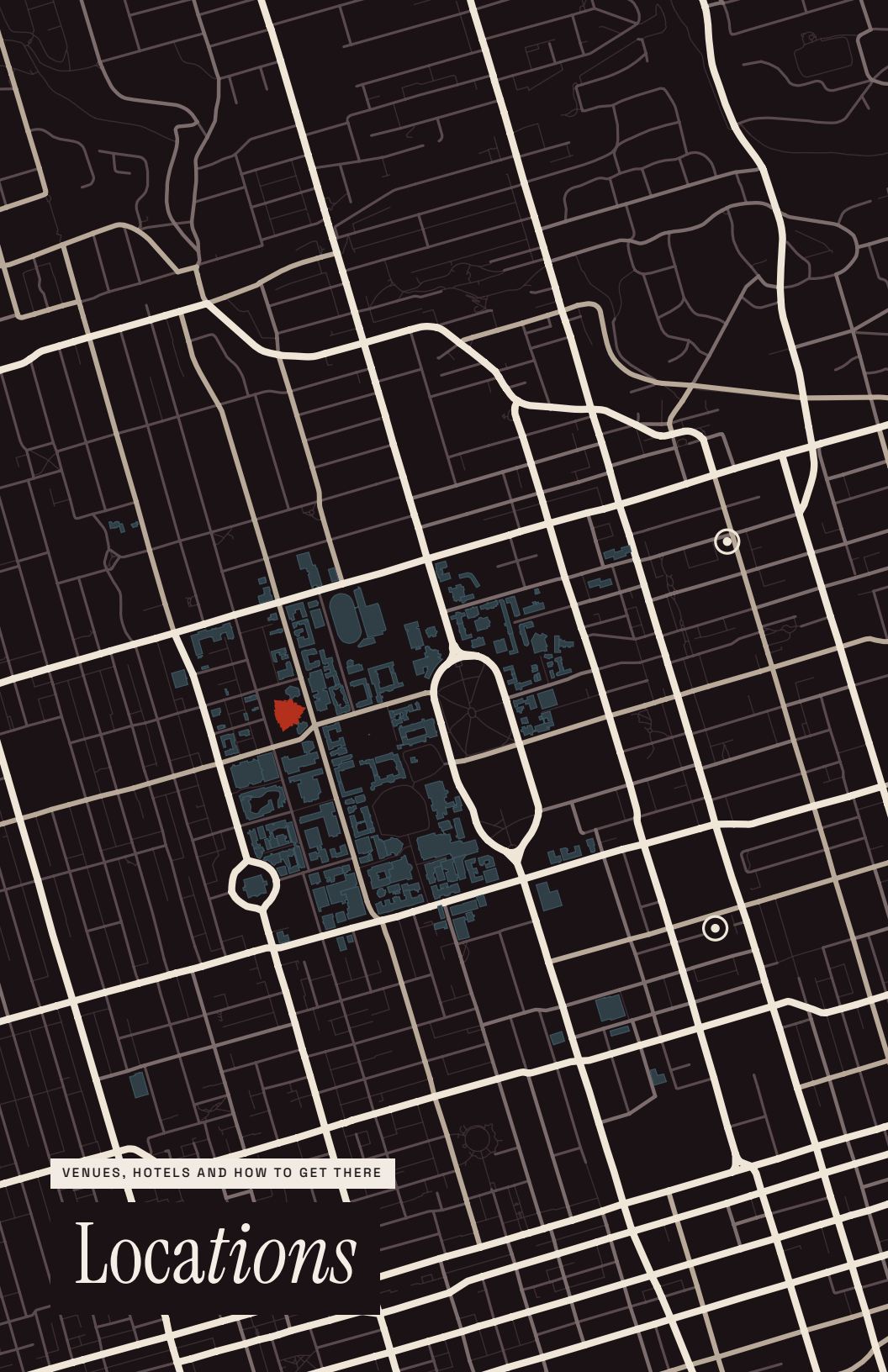
Atlas Young (he/him) is a fourth-year Undergraduate in Anthropology (Society, Culture, and Language) and East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. His research interests intersect at the crossroad of gender, identity, and language in Japanese society and culture.

Yifan Zhang

Yifan Zhang is currently a Postdoctoral Research Scholar at the Heyman Center for the Humanities and a Lecturer in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University. He holds a PhD in East Asian Languages and Cultures from Columbia University. He is a scholar of Chinese literature and cultural history, with a focus on the Ming–Qing period (1368–1911). Originally trained in Chinese philology and classical textual scholarship, his interest in the heterogeneity of the Ming–Qing cultural landscape has led him to draw on interdisciplinary methods to engage with both canonical and noncanonical genres, with particular attention to the role of literary practices in world-making.

Yuxing Zhang

Yuxing Zhang is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Department of Media and Information at Michigan State University and was the 2025–26 An Wang Postdoctoral Fellow at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University. She is a media and information studies scholar and holds a PhD in Information Studies from the University of Toronto. Her research examines how platforms bridge different markets and how value is translated across the interfaces of the economy, sustainable development, and cultures of innovation.



VENUES, HOTELS AND HOW TO GET THERE

Locations

St. George *Campus*

East Asian Studies Lounge
Room 14-080, 14th floor, Robarts Library
130 St. George Street
Toronto, ON M5S 1A5

NEAREST SUBWAY
St. George Station, Lines 1 and 2
About 350 metres, a five minute walk

WED 21 OCT, 4:00 PM SEMINAR
William Doo Auditorium, 45 Willcocks Street



Street geometry from the City of Toronto Centreline, Open Government Licence Toronto. U of T building footprints from the Cobalt open data set. North is up.

GETTING THERE

St. George Station is the closest subway stop. Leave by the St. George Street exit and walk south. Robarts Library is the large concrete building on your right, at the corner of St. George and Harbord. Take the elevators to the 14th floor and look for Room 14-080. Spadina Station is a similar walk from the west.

Scarborough *Campus*

KW 130

Kina Wiiya Enadong Building (KW)
University of Toronto Scarborough
1265 Military Trail, Toronto, ON M1C 1A4

FROM THE CAMPUS BUS LOOP

About 200 metres south, a three minute walk. Older maps label the building MW or Social Sciences Building.



Street geometry from the City of Toronto Centreline, Open Government Licence Toronto. U of T building footprints from the Cobalt open data set. North is up.

GETTING THERE BY TRANSIT

From downtown, take Line 2 east to Kennedy Station and change to the 905 Eglinton East Express, which stops at the U of T Scarborough bus loop. The 95 and 995 York Mills buses reach the same loop from York Mills Station on Line 1, and the 38 Highland Creek bus stops there too. The ride from downtown usually takes more than an hour, so leave early and check ttc.ca for the day's schedules.

BY CAR

Take Highway 401 to Morningside Avenue, go south, and turn left onto Military Trail. Visitor parking on campus is paid.

Hotels

Chelsea Hotel, Toronto

22 Elm Street
Toronto, ON M5G 1G7
+1 416-595-1975

College Station on Line 1 is about 300 metres north. Robarts Library is about 1.5 km to the northwest.

Town Inn Suites

620 Church Street
Toronto, ON M4Y 2G2
+1 416-964-3311

Bloor-Yonge Station on Lines 1 and 2 is about 350 metres northwest. Robarts Library is about 1.5 km to the west.



Street geometry from the City of Toronto Centreline, Open Government Licence Toronto. U of T building footprints from the Cobalt open data set. North is up.

Both hotels are downtown, and each is roughly a twenty minute walk from the Day 1 venue. If you would rather ride, the subway runs from Bloor-Yonge to St. George Station in two stops on Line 2.

DOWNTOWN TO SCARBOROUGH

Between the *Two Campuses*

The two days happen on two campuses. Day 1 is downtown at St. George. Day 2 is at U of T Scarborough, about 22 km to the east, so Friday morning needs a little planning.



Street geometry from the City of Toronto Centreline, Open Government Licence Toronto. U of T building footprints from the Cobalt open data set. North is up.

FRIDAY MORNING

Check-in at KW 130 opens at 9:00 and the first panel starts at 9:30. By transit the simplest route from either hotel is Line 2 east to Kennedy Station, then the 905 Eglinton East Express to the campus bus loop.

Ash and Heng will help participants arrange taxis or Uber rides from the hotels to the Scarborough campus on Friday morning. Please let them know on Thursday if you would like to share a ride.

UPDATES FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

Good News from the *"Bad" Folks*

Carman Fung

NEW BOOK

Carman's first monograph, *Leaving the Tomboy Behind: Sinophone Lesbian Subjectivities and Transnational Queer Media*, is forthcoming from the University of Michigan Press in March 2027, in the Global Queer Asias series. It follows queer women across the Sinophone world who came to reject the tomboy role and look for other ways of living gender.

press.umich.edu

Yuxing Zhang

NEW POSITION

Yuxing has joined the Department of Media and Information at Michigan State University as a Postdoctoral Scholar, after a year as the An Wang Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies.

Carlos Rojas

NEW EDITED VOLUMES

Carlos has co-edited, with Pei-yin Lin and Wen-chi Li, the two-volume *A Counter Literary History of Taiwan in the New Millennium*, forthcoming from Cambria Press. Volume I is *Taiwan in Contexts* and Volume II is *Taiwan and Life*.

cambriapress.com

Ian Liujia Tian

NEW RESEARCH LAB

Ian is launching the Queer Asias Research Lab, a virtual space of workshops and events for emerging scholars, which he co-convenes with four researchers based in the U.S. and Europe.

queerasiasresearchlab.com

Saoirse O. Concepcion

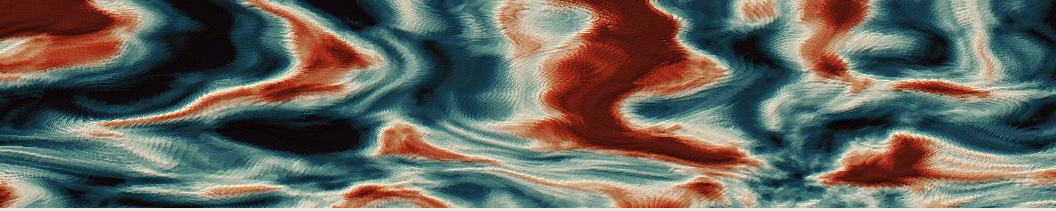
ALMOST THERE

Saoirse is on track to graduate from the BA Anthropology program at the University of the Philippines Diliman by June 2027.

Have news of your own? Tell us at the reception and we will add it.

Notes

Notes



WITH THANKS

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SSHRC CRSH Canada

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Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation
University of Toronto Scarborough

Women and Gender Studies Institute
University of Toronto

Department of Historical and Cultural Studies
University of Toronto Scarborough

Dr. David Chu Program in Asia-Pacific Studies
Asian Institute, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

Department of East Asian Studies
University of Toronto

Jackman Humanities Institute
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Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies
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Cinema Studies Institute
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