

Spectacle East Asia: Translocation, Publicity, and Counterpublics

[Extended Deadline to February 7, 2009]

The Graduate Program in Visual and Cultural Studies and the Global East Asia: Media, Popular Culture, and the Pacific Century Humanities Project at the University of Rochester invite submissions for an interdisciplinary graduate conference on Saturday, April 11, 2009. The keynote address will be delivered by the curator and critic Okwui Enwezor. Professor Enwezor is dean of academic affairs at the San Francisco Art Institute, adjunct curator at the International Center of Photography in New York, and has served as the artistic director of the Second Johannesburg Biennale in South Africa, Documenta 11 in Kassel, Germany, the 2nd Biennial of Seville in Spain, and most recently, the 2008 Gwangju Biennale in South Korea.

In East Asia, the year 2008 was marked by large-scale cultural spectacles: from the Beijing Olympics to contemporary art biennales and triennials in Taipei, Gwangju, Yokohama, Shanghai, Busan, Seoul, and Guangzhou. Each of these events reflected the local, national, and global points of production, dissemination, and reception that characterize spectacle in East Asia in the 21st century. The various degrees to which nation-states have been involved in orchestrating these events and the multifacetedness of public responses to and experiences of these spectacles call for a critical examination of the formation of publics and counterpublics encouraged, if not produced by, these events. This discussion, we contend, begins from looking beyond the long-held binary between oppressive state power and oppositional political resistance that has come to obscure the complexity of the various and competing trans-national cultural and political agendas advanced in the East Asian public sphere.

This conference aims to expand the traditional understanding of the public as constituted by print culture (articulated by Jürgen Habermas and Benedict Anderson, among others), by emphasizing "the poetic functions of both language and corporeal expressivity" in shaping publics (Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*). The focus on spaces of performativity—including but certainly not limited to print culture—as the site from which publics and counterpublics arise requires reflection on multiple forms of spectacle, such as public demonstrations, cyber space, film, video, performance, and other cultural practices.

Papers may include a theoretical model for how public and counterpublic discourses may emerge in the 21st century and/or analyses on visual and cultural production that speak to the notion of spectacle and/or publicity in the sociopolitical, economic, or cultural contexts of East Asia. The conference is open but not limited to original scholarship in the following areas:

- International art biennials, film festivals, and sporting events as spectacles
- Politics of the spectacle in its local, national, and global contexts
- Public demonstrations as spectacle or counter-spectacle (the May 18 Gwangju Uprising in South Korea in 1980, the June Fourth Movement in China in 1989, the candlelight vigil demonstrations against U.S. beef import in South Korea in 2008, the protests against the Beijing Olympic torch relay, etc.)
- Integration of art and activism
- Application of Internet, virtual communities, and new communication technologies (cell phone camera, web blogs, youtube, social network service, etc.) in forming public/counterpublic spheres

- Issues of techno-nationalism and netizenry
- East Asian subcultures (Otaku, QQ groups, migrant labor literature, outdoor exercise gathering, underground church, underground music, Internet Café and online game cultures, etc.)
- New social classes formed by forces of globalization ("Freeters and Neets," migrant workers, etc.)
- "Independent" or "underground" filmmaking and distribution (documentary films, queer films, home videos, pornography, etc.)
- Exchange of cultural products within East Asia and current shifts in their production and reception (movie or soap drama remakes, cross-media adaptation of Manga to films, Hallyu the "Korean Wave," collaboration and co-production among auteurs from different countries, transnational funding sources, etc.)

Key words: spectacle, public, counterpublic, transnational identification

The peer-reviewed electronic journal *In Visible Culture* plans to publish the conference proceedings in its Spring 2010 issue (http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/).

We also encourage artists to send in presentations of art projects related to these themes. We are especially interested in video work.

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words with a CV by February 7, 2009 to Godfre Leung and Sohl Lee (gleung@mail.rochester.edu and sohl.lee@gmail.com). Authors will be informed of the organizing committee's decision by mid- to late February, 2009.

The Spectacle East Asia conference is co-sponsored by the Graduate Program in Visual and Cultural Studies and the Global East Asia Humanities Project.