Lecture Abstract

Primitivism, understood as an aesthetic and philosophical strategy that draws inspiration from nature or so-called pre-civilized cultures, is usually linked to Western, especially modernist cultural paradigms. After Rey Chow's invocation of primitivism in her discussion of China's Fifth-Generation film, a fascination with the primal has to be acknowledged as an important creative force in contemporary Chinese culture as well. This talk will discuss Jiang Rong's PRC novel Wolf Totem, The Remains of Life by Taiwanese writer Wuhe and Monkey Cup by Malaysian-Chinese novelist Zhang Guixing.

Dr. Andrea Bachner

Dr. Andrea Bachner is an assistant professor of Comparative and World Literatures in the Department of Comparative Studies at The Ohio State University. She joined the faculty in 2008 after spending a year as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Comparative Literature at Stanford. She received an MA in Comparative Literature from Munich University, Germany, and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Harvard University. Her dissertation Paradoxical Corpographies: Towards an Ethics of Inscription proposes a critique of inscription through readings of contemporary theoretical, literary and visual texts from different cultural and linguistic contexts. It scrutinizes scenes that stage the encounter between textuality and corporeality with a view to elucidating how inscription is deployed to negotiate crucial differences: between materiality and signification, between agency and determinism, between cultural and sexual sameness and alterity.

She has published several articles on critical theory, interculturality, literature and cinema in journals such as Comparative Literature Studies and Modern Chinese Literature and Culture. Her current book project, Alterity, Mediality, and the Sinograph: Chinese Writing Under Erasure, investigates how contemporary sinophone writers and artists reshape, decenter, and reflect upon the Chinese writing system and its cultural archive from positions of diaspora, interculturality, as well as regional, ethnic, and cultural difference, and how they engage with, translate, and contest Western theories of writing and mediality.