

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Recasting Commodity and Spectacle in the Indigenous Americas

Two-day symposium, London, 22-23 November 2012

**Keynote speakers:** Michelle Raheja (USA) and Gabriela Zamorano Villareal (Mexico)

Indigenous statements of authority and authorship through the arts frequently demonstrate concerns over the commodification of Native cultures, acutely felt by many practitioners who live with the consequences of (neo)colonialist appropriation. In the context of the circulation of contemporary Indigenous performance at local, regional, national, and global levels, this two-day symposium proposes to examine how artists and communities negotiate and challenge the commodification, exoticisation and spectacularisation of indigeneity, making reference to aesthetic forms, performative rhetorics, intertextuality, intellectual property, and political agency.

Recent criticism of neoliberal multiculturalism in the Americas has highlighted the pitfalls of culture being co-opted for capital's benefit, supporting a system of dominance that has long held Indigenous subjects marginalized within nation-states. Yet many analyses do not adequately acknowledge the potential for performance-based art forms to contest the commodification of culture in innovative, ludic and meaningful ways. In light of Michelle Raheja's recent work on 'visual sovereignty' (2007; 2011), this symposium seeks to probe the myriad forms in which Indigenous actors, performers, directors and communities may articulate authorship and agency in representations that are often associated with capitalist networks of circulation, and that might initially seem to operate at the level of spectacle. Can the 'culture-as-resource' (Yúdice 2003) equation be subverted through performance, rendering the arts a fertile testing ground for political intervention and aesthetic innovation?

Contributions might discuss the following issues in relation to contemporary Indigenous performance from across the Americas:

- In what ways do specific historical contexts, and particular performance genealogies, mould the responses of Indigenous artists and communities to economies of display?

- Where the heritage industries appropriate aspects of Indigenous cultures, and redeploy them to export a distinctive national identity, how do practitioners resist the co-optation of cultural diversity?
- How do tourist economies complicate interpretations of Indigenous performance? How do artists forge political pathways amid exoticist displays and revitalized cultural forms?
- How are discrepancies between individual authorship rights and collective cultural rights negotiated by artists who are inserted into a transnational system of distribution and circulation?

Performance here is interpreted broadly to include theatre, film, music, dance, spoken-word presentations and festival or community events. Papers are invited from, but not limited to, the disciplines of Indigenous, performance and postcolonial studies, as well as anthropology, music, geography, film, dance, sociology, politics, history and philosophy.

In view of the increasing circulation of Indigenous arts throughout the Americas and the potential for compelling transnational exchanges, the symposium seeks to consolidate a conversation between Latin American, US and Canadian interventions. This event is funded by the European Research Council project, 'Indigeneity in the Contemporary World: Performance, Politics, Belonging', led by Professor Helen Gilbert, Royal Holloway, University of London.

Send 250 word abstracts for 20-minute papers and a short biography to Charlotte Gleghorn and Helen Gilbert at [charlotte.gleghorn@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:charlotte.gleghorn@rhul.ac.uk) by **30 April 2012**. Acceptance of proposals will be communicated by 31 May 2012. The main language of the conference is English though we welcome proposals in other languages and will facilitate translation for those wanting to deliver papers in Spanish, French or Portuguese.

Further details will be posted at: <http://www.indigeneity.net/>



**Indigeneity in the Contemporary World: Performance, Politics, Belonging**

[www.indigeneity.net](http://www.indigeneity.net)

Dept of Drama & Theatre  
Royal Holloway,  
University of London  
Egham, Surrey,  
TW20 0EX, UK  
T: (+44) 01784 276 546  
E: [indigeneity@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:indigeneity@rhul.ac.uk)



European  
Research  
Council



A research project hosted by the  
Centre for International Theatre  
and Performance Research