

Call for Papers

“Reflections in the Funhouse Mirror”

Saint Louis University, Department of American Studies

October 19-20, 2018

Deadline for proposal submissions: July 13, 2018

Email: slu.visual@gmail.com

Facebook: [SLU American Studies Department](#)

Twitter: [@SLUAmerStudies](#)

The Department of American Studies at Saint Louis University proudly presents, “Reflections in the Funhouse Mirror,” a visual culture conference soliciting graduate student applicants.

Unlike a roller coaster thrill ride, the traditional funhouse attraction invites amusement park visitors to move around and interact with the lighthearted attractions inside, giving some visitors power to control their experience. The fun of the funhouse is in its often playful obstacles: it seeks to warp reality and surprise the viewer with an unstable and unpredictable perspective. Similar to a funhouse mirror, visual mediums also have the power to distort, obscure, and transform particular ways of seeing and looking, for better or worse, for amusement or shock.

We invite papers that explore the power of visual culture to distort, obscure, and transform ways of seeing and looking that address a variety of media and topics such as:

- The depiction of race, class, gender, and American identity/identities in visual media
- The politics of representation through visual means
- The intersection of cultural and national identity in visual culture
- Visual culture as a platform for social and cultural commentary
- Visual culture across diverse media
- The politicization of the visual within the context of local and global American policy
- Historicized depictions of visual culture in relation to America
- Visual culture as a facet of producing and asserting identity

Interested graduate student contributors are asked to submit a title and 250-word abstract of their paper to slu.visual@gmail.com by July 13, 2018.

We are honored to welcome Dr. Laura Wexler, Professor of American Studies and Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Yale University, who will deliver the keynote address.

Dr. Wexler’s scholarship centers upon intersections of race, gender, sexuality and class with film and photography in the United States, from the nineteenth century to the present. Her book, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U. S. Imperialism*, won the Joan Kelley Memorial Prize of the American Historical Association for the best book in women’s history and/or feminist theory. She is co-author, with Sandra Matthews, of *Pregnant Pictures*, and co-editor, with Laura Frost, Amy Hungerford and John MacKay, of *Interpretation and the Holocaust*. Her most recent publication is *No Doubt the Cubans! in A New Literary History of*

America, edited by Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Harvard University Press, 2009). Currently she is working on a monograph entitled *The Awakening of Cultural Memory*, using historical photographs as a source of resistance to the politics of white supremacy in the formation of contemporary American reading practices. In addition, she is composing a volume of essays entitled “The Look, the Gaze and the Relay Race: Photography and Everyday Memory”, exploring of the work of Diane Arbus, Roman Vishniac, Randolph Linsly Simpson, and the F.S.A./O.W.I. photographers, among others. Professor Wexler has served on the Editorial Boards of *The Little Magazine*, *American Quarterly*, *Genders*, and the *Yale Journal of Criticism*.