Discriminating Sex: White Leisure and the Making of the American “Oriental”

Book Talk by

Professor Amy Sueyoshi

At the turn of the century, “wide open” and “international” San Francisco appeared to be a place of infinite possibilities. Women discarded long dresses for bloomers, began riding bicycles around town, and even organized a football league. Men devoted themselves to cultivating their feminine side and articulated an ideal manliness both robust and refined. While some viewed San Francisco as a “moral cesspool,” it grew in national reputation as a city that “knew how” in terms of its wide range of gender and sexual expression as well as easy race relations. Yet all would not be love and joy in this “wide open town.” Historian Amy Sueyoshi argues that increasing white gender and sexual freedoms directly created the archetypal “Oriental” – prostitute, geisha, martyr and finally “homo-sexual” all rolled into one.

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2:00pm

UCLA Powell Library, East Rotunda

Amy Sueyoshi holds a joint faculty appointment as Professor in Sexuality Studies and Race and Resistance Studies at San Francisco State University where she is currently serving as the Interim Dean of the College of Ethnic Studies. She is a historian by training and her research interests lie at the intersection of Asian American and queer studies. She is the author of two books, Queer Compulsions: Race, Nation, and Sexuality in the Affairs of Yone Noguchi and Discriminating Sex: White Leisure and the Making of the American “Oriental” just published in April 2018. Amy is also a co-curator and founding member of the GLBT History Museum and the recipient of the Clio Award for her contribution to queer history. In 2017 San Francisco Pride honored Amy as a Community Grand Marshal.

Co-Sponsored by the UCLA Department of Gender Studies, UCLA Department of History, UCLA Asian American Studies Center, UCLA Department of Asian American Studies, George and Sakaye Aratani Endowed Chair on the Japanese American Incarceration, Redress, and Community

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