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CENTRE FOR
CULTURAL RESEARCH

CCR Seminar Series

2011

Sonja van Wichelen

(Centre for Cultural Research, UWS)

Moral Economies of the Adoptee-Body in Globalization

The transnational circulation of child bodies for the purpose of family-making increasingly occurs alongside consumerist principles and market logic of supply and demand. In the institutional practices regulating these forms of reproduction, justifications are met to circumvent the mixing of money with love. But what happens when a crisis of legitimation takes place? Which ethical principles are adhered to and how do they correspond to moral frameworks on the ground? How does morality "work" or "translate" to assemblages of global practice that involve bodies and circuits of exchange? This presentation investigates such a crisis of legitimation by exploring moral responses within a Dutch adoption agency to an adoption scandal regarding stolen children in China.

Dr Sonja van Wichelen is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Cultural Research. Her research projects broadly engage with cultural politics and moral economies in the age of globalisation and its effects on our understanding of citizenship. Her books include *Religion, Gender and Politics in Indonesia: Disrupting the Muslim Body* (Routledge, 2010) and *Commitment and Complicity in Cultural Theory and Practice* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, co-edited with B. O. Firat and S. de Mul). Her interests include science and technology studies, cultural economy and globalisation, feminist and postcolonial theory, anthropology of law, religion and the body politic.

Anne Rutherford

(School of Humanities and Languages, UWS)

Ten Canoes and the Ethnographic Photographs of Donald Thomson: 'Animate Thought' and 'The Light of the World'

This paper explores the genesis of the film *Ten Canoes* in the photographs taken by anthropologist Donald Thomson, in Arnhem Land, in the 1930s. Thomson's images profoundly informed the look and content of the film, and the paper traces this genealogy in order to identify a 'cultural imaginary' at work in the film. I argue that a close study of Thomson's original photographs reveals an approach to photography and to culture that dramatically exceeds the boundaries of the detached anthropological/scientific gaze. Thomson's vision is a highly tactile one. His images are as much an encounter with the light of the world as they are a document of a time, an environment and a culture; his lens is as much an organ of touch as an instrument of observation. In a remarkable example of what Tim Ingold has called 'animate thought', Thomson uses the materiality of photography to make manifest a life-world in which reeds, water and sky are as animate as human figures. Not easily accessible to established criteria for analysing ethnographic images, such as questions of self-reflexivity, Thomson's polycentric images profoundly challenge the humanist assumptions of many contemporary approaches to reading images. This insight raises new questions about both ethnographic photography and the relationship between the photographs and *Ten Canoes*.

Anne Rutherford teaches Cinema Studies in the School of Humanities and Languages at UWS. She has published critical essays and interviews on cinematic affect and embodiment, cinematic materiality, mise en scène, film sound and documentary film, in *Third Text*, *UTS Review*, *Senses of Cinema*, *Asian Cinema*, *Screening the Past*, *Metro*, *Art and the Performance of Memory* (Routledge), *Seoul Searching: Culture and Identity in Contemporary Korean Cinema* (SUNY), *Framer Framed: Film Scripts and Interviews with Trinh T. Minh-ha* (Routledge), and a range of other sites. Her forthcoming book, *'What Makes a Film Tick?': Cinematic Affect, Materiality and Mimetic Innervation*, explores questions of cinematic affect and its relationship to mimetic experience, embodied spectatorship and affect.



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Date

Thursday , 19 May

Time

2pm - 4:30pm

Venue

Building EB, ground level,
room 18 (EB.G.18)
Parramatta Campus
([view map](#))

Apologies

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[Click here to RSVP](#)