

The Immigration Ship

THE BEAUTY PARLOR

ELLIS ISLAND

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UNI GRAZ



HOSPITALS

THE U.S. Embassy

Keynote Lectures

October 22
Lisa Lowe
 Meerscheinschlössl, Mozartgasse 3, 8010 Graz

October 23
Edward W. Soja
 Haus der Architektur, Mariahilferstraße 2, 8020 Graz

October 24
Ana María Manzanás Calvo
 Meerscheinschlössl, Mozartgasse 3, 8010 Graz

Deadline extended!

The deadline for **abstracts** (250-300 words) and 100 word biographical statement is now:

June 30, 2009

Please note: The conference will not be conducted with parallel sessions, but real WORKshops. I.e. active participants will not give presentations. Instead they are to send in a working paper prior to the conference. This need not look like a final version of a published paper, but obviously has to be consistent, logical and readable. The **deadline** for these **short working papers** (approx. 2.000 words) is Sept 21, 2009 (i.e. a month prior to the conference).

Contact Spaces of American Culture

LOCALIZING GLOBAL PHENOMENA

22-25 October 2009, Graz

THE SHOPPING MALL

AN ISLAND ANGEL

The Pistachio FARM in Fresno County

THE SUBWAY

The U.S.-Mexican border

Four Corners

THE AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Conference Organizers:
 Petra Eckhard, Walter Hölbling, Klaus Rieser
 and Silvia Schültermandl

AAAS Conference 2009
 Department of American Studies, University of Graz
 Attemsgasse 25/II, 8010 Graz, Austria/EU
 Fax: +43 316 380 9768
 aaas2009@unigraz.at

36th International Conference
 of the
 Austrian Association of American Studies
 (AAAS)
 organized by the
 Department for American Studies
 University of Graz

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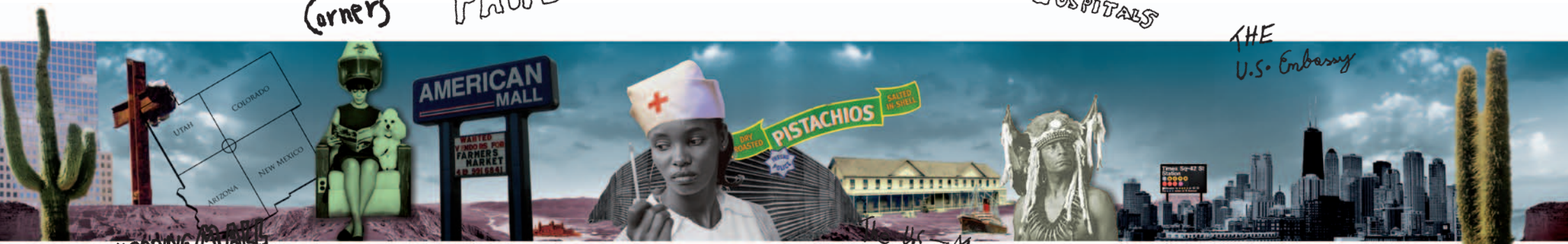
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THE SHOPPING MALL

U.S. Mexican border

Abstract

Open Space

Keynoters

What do airports, U.S. military bases, *The Huffington Post* and the dinner table have in common? They all are spaces where global phenomena manifest themselves in a local U.S. context. Emblematic of the underlying patterns that shape cultural encounters in the U.S. these cultural geographies evoke Mary Louise Pratt's concept of "contact zone," that is "the space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relationships, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict."

The conference will be conducted in an "Open Space" format. Accepted papers (short papers, approximately 2,000 words) will be made available to the participants by being placed online prior to the conference. On the conference itself, workshops (open discussion forums) will be formed ad hoc according to the interests of the participants: any participant can suggest a workshop topic. Thereby, the conference theme of "contact spaces" with its issues of openness, flexibility and spontaneity should also find its formal expression in the organizational form.

Lisa Lowe is Professor of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at UC San Diego. Her research and teaching interests include French, British, and American studies, and the topic of Asian migration within European and American modernities. She has published widely on culture within globalization, including *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (1996) and *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, with David Lloyd (1997).

In the context of the "spatial turn" that has heavily influenced the field of American Studies since the 1990s, Pratt's concept has not only taken on new meanings but has also been challenged by other theories of space. Marc Augé, for instance, argues that our age of "supermodernity" is producing more and more "non-places," which lack the main parameters of 'place' (relation, history and identity) and thus reduce social relations to temporary and anonymous encounters. This international conference will open up an academic contact space in which scholars from various disciplines can contribute to this ongoing debate.

Edward W. Soja is Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA where he teaches courses in urban political economy and planning theory. Prof. Soja's has published widely on space and geography in postmodern societies. His most recent books are *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996) and *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (2000).

Ana María Manzanás Calvo is an Associate Professor of American Literature at the University of Salamanca, Spain. Prof. Manzanás has written extensively on "Ethnic" American Literature from a comparative perspective. Borders, boundaries, space theory, and their application to literary studies, figure prominently among her research interests. She has published *Intercultural Mediations* (2003) and *Magic Realisms* (forthcoming 2009).

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