

ICSLAC talks 2020 Lecture

“Contemporaneity, Comparison, and the New Time Studies”

Professor Susan Stanford Friedman

Hilldale Professor and Virginia Woolf Professor Emerita of English and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Thursday March 5, 2020, 6:00 pm, public event
Dunton Tower, Room 2017, Carleton University
Public event, all welcome

Susan Stanford Friedman is Hilldale Professor and Virginia Woolf Professor Emerita of English and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her most recent books are *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (Columbia UP, 2015) and the edited volumes *Contemporary Revolutions: Turning Back to the Future in 21st-Century Literature and Art* (Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2018) and *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2013), co-edited with Rita Felski. She has published widely in modernist studies, narrative theory, feminist theory, women's writing, migration and diaspora, world literature, religious studies, archipelagic studies, and psychoanalysis. For more information please visit her website: <https://english.wisc.edu/staff/friedman-susan-stanford/>

In her lecture Professor Friedman will examine the questions: why do studies of contemporary art and literature often take for granted a linear periodization of history, which presumes an “arrow of time” from past to present and future? How viable are notions of the “contemporary” as distinct from the “modern” or “pre-modern”? To what extent do such assumptions embed an unacknowledged Euroamerican-centrism and inhibit comparison, especially transnational and transhistorical comparison? Is the attempt at planetary comparison inherently imperial or liberating? While recent texts, such as Amelia Groom's *Time: Documents of Contemporary Art* (2013) and *Time: A Vocabulary of the Present*, edited by Joel Burges and Amy J. Elias (2016), theorize the conceptualization of contemporaneity by challenging conventional notions of linear time, Friedman's lecture will propose transhistorical and transnational approaches, which promote a wider archive and a more complex notion of contemporaneity. Drawing on the implications for comparison of global examples explored in her edited volume, *Contemporary Revolutions: Turning Back to the Future in 21st-Century Literature and Art* (2018), Friedman will address a variety of phenomena, including the work of Swedish artist Hilma of Klint, whose recent rediscovery is transforming the history of abstract art. These and other examples will demonstrate ways in which artists and writers have anticipated recent ideas about contemporaneity, time, and planetary space. In the context of theoretical debates about comparison, Friedman will reflect upon these questions by reviewing defenses of and challenges to periodization and by offering alternatives to temporal linearity.

The lecture will be complemented by the workshop “Temporalities of the Contemporary” with Susan Stanford Friedman, which takes place on Friday, March 6 from 2:30 pm -5:30 pm in Room 415 of the St. Patrick’s Building. The workshop will be comprised of an introduction by Professor Friedman, followed by short presentations by ICSLAC faculty and Cultural Mediation PhD students, Q&A and discussion. To prepare for the workshop, you might want to read (attached) Professor Friedman’s introduction “The Past in the Present: Temporalities of the Contemporary” to her latest edited volume *Contemporary Revolutions: Turning Back to the Future in 21st-Century Literature and Art* (2018) Since there are limited seats available please make sure to RVSP to: Dawn.Schmidt@carleton.ca by March 5, 2020.

Event’s Convenors: Dr. Birgit Hopfener and Dr. Mitchell Frank, School for Studies in Art and Culture/Institute for the Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture