



The Biopolitics of America: Bodies, Environments, and the Liberal Imagination

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Sandow Birk. *Salinas Valley State Prison (SVSP) - Soledad, CA*. Image courtesy of the artist and Catharine Clark Gallery.

Gabriele Schwab (Irvine)

Radioactive Ghosts: Precarious Lives in Nuclear Ecologies

This presentation explores representations of what Ward Churchill calls the "radioactive colonization" of indigenous lands by the extractive economy that developed during the Cold War, predominately on reservations in the United States. Drawing on Martin Cruz Smith's *Stallion Gate*, a novel about the Manhattan Project and the first nuclear tests in New Mexico as well as Joseph Masco's ethnography *Nuclear Borderlands*, it emphasizes the impact of this emergent nuclear politics on individual protagonists and their collective struggles for survival. In particular, it foregrounds a cultural climate of secrecy and deception as well as the emergence of "nuclear subjectivities" marked by a psychic toxicity that parallels the radioactive poisoning of bodies and land. Finally, it explores the transgenerational nuclear trauma that marks individuals and cultures alike.