

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Campus Germersheim, Germany
July 17-19, 2014

**Shifting Grounds: Cultural Tectonics along the Pacific Rim
Call for Papers**

Geological in origin, the term 'Pacific Rim' refers to a zone of high tectonic stresses, of seismic and volcanic energy, along the margins of the Pacific Ocean, thus conceptually tying together the Americas, the islands of the South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand as well as Southeast and Northeast Asia. While in use in other scientific and scholarly fields since the mid-1920s, the Pacific Rim gained wider currency in the 1970s, when the political and economic situation of the United States necessitated a strategic reorientation in terms of spatial imaginaries and, concomitantly, the coinage of a new transnational discourse. For about two decades, the idea of the Pacific Rim had a huge impact on politics, in the realm of business and trade, in the social sciences, and in environmental discussions. Although it lost relevance in those areas at the end of the 1980s, the Pacific Rim, which unifies many nation-states and linguistically and culturally disparate societies, has become a useful, albeit underdeveloped concept in cultural studies. With its logic of linkage along borders, it presents a viable alternative to the much more widely spread idea of center and periphery.

This international conference will provide a platform for exchange among experts from various disciplines including geography, history, ethnography, sociology, political science, economics, and indigenous studies as well as literary and cultural studies. Starting from the dynamically rich metaphor of 'shifting grounds,' the aim of the conference is, on the one hand, to investigate the concept of the Pacific Rim theoretically in the context of spatial reconfigurations and with reference to ideas of translation, amalgamation or globalization, and, on the other hand, to historicize and concretize the Pacific Rim via empirical case studies.

Topics to be addressed in 20-minute papers may include the impact of geographical exploration from James Cook onwards; geopolitical interests in the Pacific Rim; shifting power relations in local, regional, and global interactions; migration and transnational social networks; cities or regions as cultural hubs; trans-Pacific flows of knowledge; material objects and their social lives; representations of the Pacific Rim and its cultures in maps, literature, and other media; adaptation and cultural hybridization; cultural signifiers on the move, and changing conceptions of the Pacific Rim.

We welcome abstracts of 500 words and a short CV by July 15, 2013.

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