

Monday

28 January 2013

7:30 pm

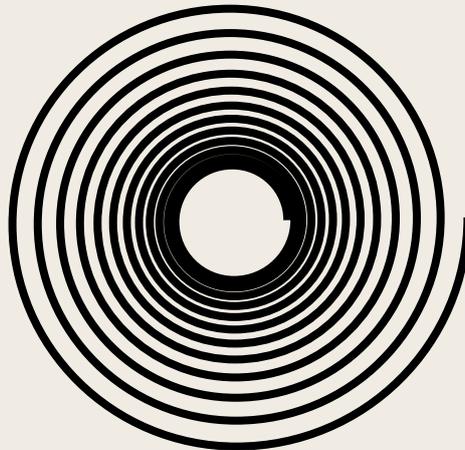
In English

In this talk, Halberstam wants to build ideas from her new book *Gaga Feminism* and begin to develop a theory of queer anarchism from a new companion project titled *GOING GAGA* in order to weave a story about emergent forms of life through the glimpses we catch of it in popular culture and subcultural production. The goal here is to learn how to read contemporary shifts in the meaning of sexuality and gender as indicative of other shifts and changes in the culture at large. And while most of the popular and journalistic literature on these changes in kinship, living arrangements, social life and gendered relations is mired in the project of saving and redeeming life as we know it, *Gaga Feminism* does not come to save marriage, the family, bodily legibility, it comes to bury them. In the second part of the talk, Halberstam explores the trope of anarchy through a sonic landscape of screams, open mouths, holes, wholes, and parts, and invites everyone to listen to the sound of fragmentation, disorder, and glorious chaos.

Jack Halberstam is Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity, Gender Studies and Comparative Literature at USC (University of Southern California). Halberstam is the author of five books including *Female Masculinity* (1998), *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011), and most recently *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender and the End of the Normal* (2012). Halberstam works generally in the areas of queer theory, visual and popular culture, gender studies and art, and blogs at bullybloggers.wordpress.com as well as jackhalberstam.com.

Constituting Wholes

Wholes are said to be more than the sum of their parts. This 'more' contains both a promise and a threat. When different elements – disciplines, methods, cultures, individuals – form a whole, they not only join forces, but also generate effects of synergy and a surplus from which also the parts can benefit. Being part of a whole is a way to acquire meaning and to extend oneself beyond one's limited existence; and having a part in the whole is to have an enlarged agency. But wholes are also more powerful than the sum of their parts. Wholes constitute their parts, determining what is a part and what is apart, what has a part and what is deprived of agency. Becoming a part requires submission and although parts may not pre-exist the whole, there may still be something in the elements that exceeds being a part – even if only the possibility of being part of a different whole. While a desire for being whole or part of a whole seems all-too-natural, organic metaphors, which are often used to think part-whole relationships, have been criticized precisely for naturalizing relations of hierarchy and power. Yet, entirely abandoning the whole in favour of the part(icular) is also problematic. After the disenchantments of the postmodern post-cold-war period and in the face of global crises – be they financial, economic, political, or ecological – the critical need to include a holistic perspective is felt with renewed urgency, as is the concern that the situatedness of any such perspective and the multiple, incommensurable ways of constituting wholes may be forgotten.



Jack Halberstam

**Going Gaga:
Chaos, Anarchy
and the Wild**

The lecture is part of the **ICI Lecture Series Constituting Wholes**, which will explore the double, both active and passive, aspect of "Constituting Wholes" within the framework of the multi-disciplinary ICI Research Focus **Complementarity and Wholes Which Are Not One**.