Viewing, Reading, and Entering Scenes of Mass Incarceration: A Testimonio on the Practice of Critical Witnessing

Dr. Tiffany Ana López, UC Riverside

Thursday, October 24, 2013, 12:00pm
English Lounge, 258 Goldwin Smith Hall

Sponsored by English Department Critical Race Series, Latino Studies, Performing and Media Arts, Romance Studies, & Society for the Humanities

In this presentation drawn from her book in-progress, The Alchemy of Blood: Trauma, Violence, and Critical Witnessing in U.S. Latina/o Cultural Production (Duke UP), Tiffany Ana López discusses a recent art exhibition, Geographies of Detention: From Guantánamo to the Golden Gulag, and the range of her response to the work as a scholar working at the juncture points of Latina/o studies, trauma discourse, and theater studies, but also as informed by her subject position as a Latina survivor of violence and the sister of a brother doing time. Among the questions López’ asks: How does storytelling (visual, verbal, written, and performed) serve as a catalyst for what López terms “critical witnessing” and thereby facilitate an alchemy of blood?

Dr. Tiffany Ana López is Professor of Theatre and the Tomás Rivera Endowed Chair in the College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences at the University of California, Riverside. Her research, teaching, and creative activities focus on issues of trauma and violence and the role of the arts in fostering community building and social change. Among her publications, she is editor of the anthology Growing Up Chicana/o (William Morrow & Co., 1993) and Chicanas/Latinas Studies: The Journal of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (2005-2012); and her essays have appeared in numerous books and journals including Theatre Journal; Art Journal; Aztlan: Frontiers – A Journal of Ethnic Studies; Prose and Cons - Essays on Prison Literature in the United States; and The Blackwell Companion to Twentieth-Century American Drama. She is currently completing a book manuscript, The Alchemy of Blood: Violence, Trauma, and Critical Witnessing in U.S. Latina/o Cultural Production (Duke University Press), about art as a form of engaging with issues of trauma and violence.