

ICS Seminar Series

INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

‘Model Consumers’: Beauty Bloggers, Everyday Expertise, and New Consumer Subjects in Urban China

Dr Terry Woronov

Date

Thursday 9 October

Time

11.30am – 1pm

Venue

EB.2.21 Parramatta
(South) Campus

Abstract

‘Beauty bloggers’ (*daren*) are an important segment of China’s growing blogosphere. Offering advice to readers on makeup, skincare, fashion, diet, and travel, beauty blogs are a growing source of advice for China’s anxious middle-class consumers. I argue that *daren* and beauty blogs are a new form of ‘everyday expertise’ in China, linked to similar kinds of ‘self-help’ projects around the globe, where middle-class urbanites seek to construct appropriate identities as cosmopolitan consumers. I argue that the broad appeal of *daren*, as well as their authority as everyday experts in China, is partly made possible by the ways the bloggers deploy visual motifs that date from earlier historic eras. As ‘model consumers’, *daren* are a contemporary manifestation of visual emulation regimes dating back to ‘model worker’ campaigns of the 1960s.

Biography

Terry Woronov is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney. Her work has focused on the politics of youth, education, and class in the PRC, and she has published widely on topics including Chinese children’s nationalism, education for quality (*suzhi jiaoyu*), and changing ideologies around the production of the next generation. Her book *Learning to serve: vocational education, working class youth, and the politics of failure in China* (Stanford University Press) will be published in 2015. Her current research project is a comparative study of new labour regimes for working-class women in the growing beauty industries of China, Brazil and India.