

Symposium

Selling EthniCity Urban Cultural Politics in the Americas

May 5 - 7, 2009

Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung, Bielefeld, Germany

As part of the year-long research group "***E Pluribus Unum?: Ethnic Identities in Transnational Integration Processes in the Americas***," this symposium will explore the importance of ethnicity in the performance and visualization of the city in the Americas. In our post-fordist age the cultural economy is of special importance: Cultural, political, and economic elites make use of cultural and ethnic elements in city planning and architecture in order to construct a unique image for a particular city, they create urban festivals and spectacles to attract (trans-)national tourists, they promote international urban heritage programs, and they involve cultural producers in performances and visualization of this city. These developments are recoded in daily life and contested by cultural politics of urban movements.

Over two days about 15-20 international scholars will present their ideas on the cultural, social and political consequences of this "Selling of EthniCity" and its functions within ongoing processes of transnational integration in the Americas.

We will examine:

- aspects of ethnic spectacularization and festivalization of the city
- changes in urban landscapes and new scopic regimes
- programs of urban construction and architecture that employ ethnic styles for inner city renewal, urban entertainment centers, or shopping centers
- disneyfication, theme parks, and the use and misuse of ethncity
- the importance of ethnic entrepreneurs, ethnic markets, and networks in the city
- the impact of post-fordist city marketing on social and ethnic exclusion and strategies of control
- consumerism, tourism, and the commodification of places
- urban heritage tourism, places of memory, and the narration of identity
- explorations of different sites of ethnic economy and translocal consumption like urban ethnic music, fashion trends, or ethnic food
- the representation and reconstitution of local ethnicities in translocal constellations of interaction
- contributions of globalization, particularly inter-American border crossings, to cultural hybridity in the Americas
- ways in which cultural producers (literature, film, art, music, and the media) engage in and reflect the ethnic city-marketing and imageneering
- the medialization of the ethnic-cultural city
- the role of cosmopolitan consumer identities in the geographical imagination of the city
- ways in which the city is read, decoded and perceived in the daily lives of inhabitants
- the role of urban social movements and ethnic communities in the contestation of the use of ethnicity in urban restructuring

Organizer:

Olaf Kaltmeier, Bielefeld University, Germany

Contact:

olaf.kaltmeier@uni-bielefeld.de

Phone: 0049-(0)521-106 2781

