

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

**UCR** | **Today**

## "The Art of Homeland in the United States"

### UC Riverside to host the second annual Wong Forum on Art and the Immigrant Experience symposium

By [Mojgan Sherkat](#) On OCTOBER 19, 2016



*"The Art of Homeland in the United States," symposium will be held on Friday, Nov. 4.*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. ([www.ucr.edu](http://www.ucr.edu)) – The University of California, Riverside will host the second annual Wong Forum on Art and the Immigrant Experience symposium on Friday, Nov. 4 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This year's theme is "The Art of Homeland in the United States," and the symposium will examine the idea of homeland as it has been shaped and negotiated through the visual arts, media, and performance. The Forum is funded through the Voy and Fay Wong Endowment to the UCR History of Art Department.

"As a concept, homeland plays a vital role in the shaping of identity, and most directly, homeland can be understood to signify a person or people's place of origin. The concept is in this way deeply embedded in the specifics of location and lineage," said Jason Weems, art history professor at UCR, and the organizer of the event. "The term also connotes a more subjective and contingent set of allegiances, including those of family, community, nation, religion, race, ethnicity, environment, and experience."

Weems said that through these bonds, identification with a homeland provides one of the main anchors of individual being, group cohesiveness, and social legitimacy. Such connections offer people a framework for binding to others and, ultimately, a sense of place in the world. Homeland is, therefore, a positive cultural force.

"But, at the same time, the idea of homeland has been an abiding source of contention, divisiveness, and violence. Human history is pervaded with trauma and injustice – in this way, the assertion of a homeland has tested the very possibility of social cohesion and self-determination," Weems said.

Weems said laying claim to a homeland in the U.S. has become synonymous with struggles over voice, power, and beliefs. This can be seen throughout the country's history of colonization, indigenous removal, African American enslavement, and other longstanding patterns of unofficial and state-sanctioned inequality toward minorities.

"In our recent moment of globalization, the visibility of the concept has grown, from the post-9/11 founding of the Department of Homeland Security to the unsettling strains of anti-immigrant sentiment that mar the current presidential contest," Weems said.

"The Art of Homeland in the United States," will explore how the visual arts provide a powerful means to negotiate the problems and possibilities inherent to the notion homeland. Speakers will discuss topics such as: What roles have visual and material expression played in shaping both dominant and alternative visions of the US as homeland? How have these efforts influenced broader discourses of American identity—or failed to do so? How has the question of homeland influenced the form, content, and purpose of the artistic expression? How might studying evocations of homeland in art help us better understand and represent the term's cultural value and impact?

#### Speakers include:

- » Chon Noriega, professor and director of the Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA. Noriega is the keynote speaker at the symposium. His presentation is titled, "Home – So Different, So Appealing."
- » Leo Mazow, curator of American Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Mazow will discuss "Edward Hopper's Portable Homes."
- » Carmenita Higginbotham, associate professor at the University of Virginia. She will discuss "William H. Johnson's Between the Folk and Modern."
- » Mark Minch, assistant professor at UCR and Sawyer Fellow at Tufts University, will discuss, "Homeland as Gesture: The Paintings of Maidu Artist Frank Day."
- » Maryam Kashani, assistant professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, will discuss "Somewhere Else, But Here: Visual Ethnography and an American Islamoscape Between Imagination and Image."
- » Joshua Takano Chambers-Letson, assistant professor at Northwestern University, will discuss "Smiling Faces Sometimes: The Homeland Portraiture of Tseng Kwong Chi."



Jason Weems

For more information, and the full symposium schedule, visit <http://arthistory.ucr.edu/event/the-second-annual-wong-forum-on-art-and-the-immigrant-experience/>.

The symposium will be held at the UCR ARTSblock's Culver Center of the Arts, located at 3834 Main St., Riverside, CA. It is free and open to the public – a reception will follow the event.

#### MEDIA CONTACT

##### **[Moigan Sherkat](#)**

Tel: (951) 827-5893

E-mail:

[moigan.sherkat@ucr.edu](mailto:moigan.sherkat@ucr.edu)

Twitter: [moigansherkat](#)

#### ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

##### **Jason Weems**

Tel: (951) 827-5922

E-mail: [jweems@ucr.edu](mailto:jweems@ucr.edu)

#### RELATED LINKS

[Wong Forum on Art and the Immigrant Experience](#)

[More about Jason Weems](#)

ARCHIVED UNDER: [Arts/Culture](#), [Art History](#), [College Of Humanities Arts & Social Sciences](#), [Homeland](#), [Immigration](#), [Jason Weems](#), [Press Release](#), [UCR ARTSblock](#), [Voy And Fay Wong Endowment](#)

[^ Top of Page](#)

The University of California, Riverside ([www.ucr.edu](http://www.ucr.edu)) is a doctoral research university, a living laboratory for groundbreaking exploration of issues critical to Inland Southern California, the state and communities around the world. Reflecting California's diverse culture, UCR's enrollment is now nearly 23,000 students. The campus opened a medical school in 2013 and has reached the heart of the Coachella Valley by way of the UCR Palm Desert Center. The campus has an annual statewide economic impact of more than \$1 billion. A broadcast studio with fiber cable to the AT&T Hollywood hub is available for live or taped interviews. UCR also has ISDN for radio interviews. To learn more, call (951) UCR-NEWS.

[Feedback](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#) | © 2016 Regents of the University of California | Last modified: 2016-Oct-19