

The Department of Spanish & Portuguese and the  
Chicano Studies Research Center invite you to a talk by  
Charles Geyer, University of Arizona

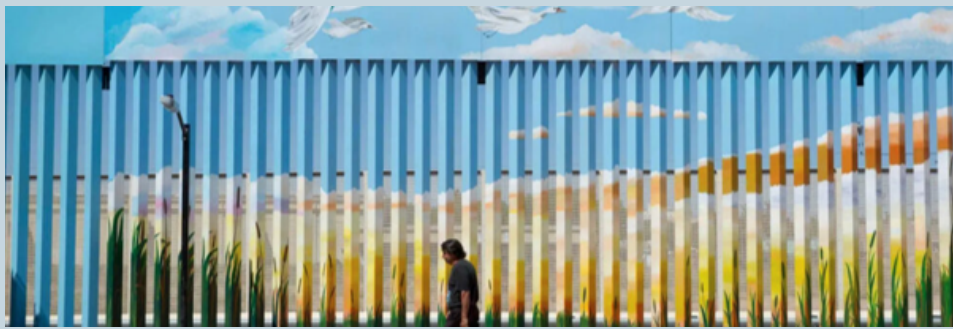


“Jarchar, or the Art of Crossing in Yuri Herrera’s *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo*”

Location: 4302 Rolfe Hall, Lydeen Library @ 4pm & Zoom

Please Register at:

<https://ucla.zoom.us/meeting/register/chd4NGozQ7SRYZGIjGws9A>



Charlie Geyer (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Arizona. He specializes in the comparative study of Latin American and US Latinx literatures and cultures, with a focus on Border Studies and the aesthetics and politics of bordering in a hemispheric context. His current book manuscript, titled *Disturbing Beauty: Border Crossing in Latin American and Latinx Imaginaries*, examines border construction and marginality through the framework of abjection, and explores the utopian political imaginaries that are mobilized through the aesthetic act of locating beauty within abject spaces and bodies. His publications can be found in *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana*, *The Comparatist*, *CENTRO: Journal for the Center of Puerto Rican Studies*, and the *Afro-Hispanic Review*.

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# Abstract



In this talk, I examine Yuri Herrera's novel *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo* to explore the dual role of aesthetics in 1) conceptualizing the US/Mexico border and 2) imagining its remaking. Departing from the anthropological work of Jason de León, I contend that the border between Mexico and the United States is both a sublime object and a scene of unthinkable abject violence, and I argue that the border-crossing voyage of Makina—the protagonist of *Señales*—from Mexico to the US may also be read as a journey into the sublime and the abject. The tension between these two aesthetic modes of reading the border reaches its peak at the novel's end, in which Makina's "final destination" remains indeterminate, and the reader is confronted with either: 1) the death of the protagonist (the abject annihilation shared by many of the undocumented people who cross the border) or 2) the sublime possibility of rebirth and regeneration. This duality is also represented in Herrera's neologism "jarchar," a term which appears throughout the novel and that refers to a bicultural art form born in another border space: the medieval jarchas of the Iberian Peninsula. Engaging with authors and theorists of Latinx diasporas such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Miguel Algarín, I argue that *Señales* functions as a contemporary jarcha: a work whose form itself bears the traces of the violent colonial history that produced the US-Mexico Borderlands, and which simultaneously articulates the possibility of rebirth—of a new subjectivity and a new border politics that could spring forth from the colonial wound that is the US-Mexico border.