

UC Davis Cultural Studies Presents:



Metabolic Aesthetics: Anicka Yi's Revaluing of the Reproductive Immaterial

The signature style of Korean-born, NY based artist Anicka Yi—winner of the 2016-17 Hugo Boss Award— involves repurposing materials associated with feminine domesticity—cooking paraphilia, edible ingredients, bath and vanity products—and coassembling them alongside industrial polymers, fiberboard, and metallic components. She has gained some notoriety as a smell portraitist due to her collaborations with perfumers and her incorporation into her work of molds and bacteria often sourced specifically from women's mouths, armpits and vaginas.

Through her fabricating techniques, her thematic riffs on consumption, and her recycling ethos, Yi forwards an intersectional feminist and racialized critique that widens the domain of what we think of as reproductive labor. I attend to the delicate balance whereby Yi both provokes within her viewer, on the one hand, stomach rumblings and distributed visceral feelings of implicatedness in consumption and, on the other, of observational distance or narrative reassurance that one is coming out advantaged by one's metabolic encounters. Yi's artistry occasions a productive conversation not only with feminism and food studies, but also with critical race studies precisely because of the artist's engagement with social issues via an aesthetic lexicon indebted to biochemical and sensory insights.

2/7 Hart 3201 4PM

Rachel C. Lee is Director of the Center for the Study of Women and Professor of English, Gender's Studies, and the Institute of Society & Genetics at UCLA as well as founder of the interdisciplinary research project, Chemical Entanglements: Gender and Exposure, involving scientists, community activists, educators, artists, and "canary" storytellers testifying to the health consequences of sub-acute, chronic exposure to toxicants. She is the author of the award-winning book, *The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality and Posthuman Ecologies* (NYU, 2014) and founding editor of the online journal, *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience*. She currently co-leads a Mellon-funded Seminar in Teaching Excellence on the topic of Medical Humanities for the UCLA Division of Humanities.

