



SGMS 2016 CALL: World-building in Asian Popular Cultures

The Call for *Mechademia 10* states: “Japanese popular culture — manga, anime, games, and SF — abound in scenarios in which our contemporary reality appears to be but one possible outcome within an open situation.”

Since Mechademia began, scholars and academics have addressed the way that dark narratives have been used to explore possible outcomes of open situations. Written in the context of Japan’s postwar period and continuing into the present, these dark narratives served as critiques of those conditions. However, within the 21st century, we are seeing alarming new developments that require more than critique, but instead, inspire creative action in response to the darkening turbulence of our cultural present.

For this conference, we propose the challenge of thinking of worldbuilding as a creative act, where narrative practices combine with new technologies to construct images, objects, texts, and performances of alternative worlds. We are not only looking at the dark implications of this moment in world history, but the creative interventions and possibilities that are found in the construction of alternate worlds, for future worlds, for saving worlds.

“Another world is possible” has already become the animating force behind a large body of cultural production within Japanese popular cultures. Examples include the construction of possible worlds, parallel universes, and parallel histories across a multitude of platforms. These practices can be read, not just as warnings, but as examples of how worlds can be, and are being, actively created.

We call for submissions that explore the aesthetic, mediatic, and technological dimension of these possible worlds, with an eye to the construction of inspiration and imagination within its circulation, as well as socio-political possibilities or potentiality. How might these worlds dismantle the rigid boundaries of concepts informing our current reality and reveal the glimmering potential of the unbounded reality that is the stable of such narratives?

We invite contributions that may consider or engage but are not limited by any of the following topics:

- Popular culture frequently juxtaposes different realities in the form of alternative timelines or bifurcating temporalities. How might imaginative

- narratives jostling time and space function as axes of a potential alternate world reality?
- How might worldbuilding address and even transform the dark portend of the Anthropocene?
 - How do new storytelling practices and forms of communication support worldbuilding across alternative locations and temporalities?
 - What is the role language plays in creating alternate worlds? Does one have to change language to create an altered reality?
 - Science fictions often encourage us to approach history and broad societal currents in terms of 'what if' scenarios. Such scenarios invite us to understand history through counterfactual narrations. But rather than dismiss such scenarios as non-factual, we ask: What are potential relationships to be found in the social and political implications of understanding our historical reality in such terms?
 - How do colonialism, social inequality and gender constitute frameworks toward the creation of alternate worlds? In what ways are these factors recontextualized in new fictional worlds?
 - How do musical scores and soundtracks create the affective atmospheres that shape worldbuilding practices in film, anime and gaming?

The deadline for submissions is August 1, 2016 to MECHADEMIA@MCAD.EDU
We welcome panel submissions as well as individual paper proposals and encourage emerging scholars (undergraduates and advanced high school students) to submit proposals to our Emerging Scholar sessions. All proceedings are held at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

You have the option of participating remotely via Zoom Room video conferencing if travel to the conference is a hindrance for you. This will enable you to virtually attend the full conference sessions, and to present on a panel.

The Millennium Hotel will probably have conference rates, and as soon as we have confirmation on rates we will publish them.

The register as an attendee, or participant after receiving notification of acceptance, go to:

<http://mcad.edu/events-fellowships/schoolgirls-mobilesuits>

For Panel Submissions:

-Panel title:

-Panel participant names, email addresses, titles, and 150-200 word abstracts

For Individual Presentation Submissions:

Participant name, email address, title, and 150-200 word abstract

For Emerging Scholar Presentations (High School and Undergraduate Papers):

-Participant name, email address, title, and 150-200 word abstract

Deadline for submission is: Aug. 1, 2016.

See our Facebook Page for details:

<https://www.facebook.com/SGMSatMCAD>