REFUSING DISPOSABILITY:
COLLABORATION AND REPRESENTATIONAL
STRATEGIES IN MAQUILAPOLIS: CITY OF Factories

Dr. Rebecca M. Schreiber

Join us for a special presentation with Dr. Rebecca M. Schreiber, Associate Professor in the American Studies Department and faculty affiliate with the Latin American and Iberian Institute (LAI) at UNM. She is the author of Cold War Exiles in Mexico: U.S. Dissidents and the Culture of Critical Resistance (University of Minnesota Press, 2008). Her current book project Migrant Lives and the Promise of Documentation examines contemporary immigration issues in the United States through forms of visual representation. Specifically, she explores how Mexican and Central American migrants have depicted themselves and their communities through documentary photography, film, and video since 9/11.

This presentation focuses on Maquilapólis: City of Factories (2006), a film produced by filmmaker Vicki Funari and artist Sergio De La Torre in collaboration with a group of women maquila workers who were being trained as promotoras (community activists) at the non-governmental organization Casa de la Mujer/ Grupo Factor X based in Tijuana, Mexico in the early 2000s.

In her paper Schreiber discusses how Maquilapólis narrates a critique of the way in which women workers are positioned as “objects of labor” within the maquiladoras, while also challenging the conventions of documentary film. The film highlights the multinational corporations’ treatment of women workers as “objects of labor” through the promotoras “performing” the monotonous movements from their workplaces. These staged performances also denaturalize more conventional documentary segments, including the video diaries, highlighting them as representational strategies. Funari, De La Torre and the promotoras thus disrupt the claims to self-representation as truth, instead positioning the video diaries, documentary and staged sequences each as representational strategies.

This event is sponsored by the LAI. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, contact the LAI at (505) 277-2961 or visit us online at http://laii.unm.edu/events.