

Call For Papers
American Circuits, American Secrets
September 18-21, 2014
The Banff Centre -- Banff, Alberta
50th Anniversary Meeting of The Canadian Association for American Studies

According to a top-secret 2009 National Security Agency report leaked by now infamous former NSA and CIA employee Edward Snowden, approximately one third of all international telephone calls, and more than ninety-nine per cent of all internet traffic, are routed through the United States. At once a multi-media communications hub, a global waystation of cultural exchange, a nation of dynamic mobilities, and a synonym for commodity capitalism, "America" cannot be disarticulated from the very concept of circulation. But any movement through, and by, America conceals as much as it produces--otherwise, Snowden's disclosures themselves would be insignificant. This is, after all, the nation that enshrined "don't ask don't tell" into law, where democratic disenfranchisement and the ravages of unfettered capitalism are open secrets, and whose literary history is an archive of gothic tales, detective fiction, spy thrillers, and tell-all memoirs. Public circulation and economies of publicity are central features of American life--inciting revolution, producing dominant ideologies, and giving life to counterpublics. But these same public circuits give rise as well to scandal, to gossip genres, to secret societies, to new religious forms, to covert operations, to Batman.

Conference paper proposals, due February 14, 2014, are invited on the timely topic of American Circuits, American Secrets. Please see our submission guidelines at www.circuitsandsecrets.com. We welcome approaches to this conference theme from all disciplines, fields, and historical periods and deploying a wide range of methodologies and theoretical approaches. Possible considerations may include:

- unwritten or shameful histories
- lost archives and cultural recovery projects
- immigrant networks
- crip circuits: obstacles, access, and alternative public imaginaries
- subversive communities and underground societies
- circulating (or concealing) race and racial history
- covert operations and conspiracy theories
- circuitousness, indirection, straying, errancy
- errant letters of the republic
- movement as circuit, movement as affect
- hidden circuits, secret spaces, underground railroads
- black markets, smuggling, piracy, contraband
- waterways: nautical routes, sunken treasures, oceanic expansion
- labour on the move: migrant workers, free trade, globalization
- the limits of publicity: what can't be said or shown
- the ways and byways of settler colonialism
- wikileaks, NSA surveillance, backroom deals
- hacking, interrupting circuits, disrupting circuitry
- racial circuits, racist secrets
- celebrity scandals and the gossip industry
- commonplace secrecy, commonplace circuitry
- mnemonic secrets, amnesiac secrets
- Indigenous lands, maps, and narrative pathways
- cultural networks, connections, social circuits
- theatre and performance circuits (vaudeville, dancers, musicians, troupes)
- wired America, hardwired America, and rewiring the nation
- road trips, travel, traffic, movement, mobility across America
- Americans abroad, tourism, and The Grand Tour
- resource, energy, trade, and agricultural circuits
- outsourcing and manufacturing abroad
- the global circuits of industry, economy, and empire
- telephone, television, telegraph
- digital technologies, and communications technologies
- afterlives: the discarded, the outmoded, the misremembered
- posthuman circuits: cyborgs, robots, clones, drones