Keynote Address:

Professor Rebecca Krinke
Professor of Landscape Architecture
University of Minnesota

“Space Without a Map”

A “space without a map” refers to an unprecedented situation - and given that we are living in time of individual and collective trauma brought on by inter-related racial, social, ecological, political, and spiritual crisis - it’s clear that the world is deeply out of balance. Or as Greta Thunberg says: “OUR HOUSE IS ON FIRE!”

As teachers (and ideally life-long students), what are our responsibilities in these times without a map? What capacities to we need to build in ourselves and offer to our students? My talk will share my hybrid art-design practice alongside recent personal insights and questions, alongside those of my students. My fall semester studio course “Making Space for Emotion” foregrounded the emotional, the intuitive, and “un-learning”. Questioning fundamental assumptions about the educations we have received and their emphasis on the “rational” and the “measurable” was key to the experience. This keynote talk will be a kind of experiment in both telling a story and inviting your conversation: How has your state been altered in the last year? How is this affecting your scholarship and teaching?

Plenary Address:

Dr. Amy Cook
Professor of English and Associate Dean for Research and Innovation
Stony Brook University

“Gesturing toward the future: counter casting, gifs, and performative spectatorship.”

Casting—onstage and off—is how we make sense of the world around us. An actor walks on stage to play Lear, or Beatrice or Henry and we immediately begin making judgments about the story to come based on the actor selected. We may wonder to what extent the actor’s race or gender or body type will be relevant (and in what way), but we see it. In productions of Shakespeare today, directors are using the bodies of the actors to tell us how we are to understand this old story now. Directors can use casting to reflect or mirror the world we live in or the director can cast a body counter to our expectations in such a way that we are invited to challenge our categories for ruler, lover, villain. We can also use casting to alter our own state: if I post a reaction gif—say Nancy Pelosi’s flat palm clap—to something you have said, I can cast myself as the Speaker of the House and perform my spectatorship in a repeating gesture. In this talk I will argue for the importance of counter casting as a mode of social intervention and think about the potential of performative spectatorship as a mechanism for community building.

Featuring a Book Talk by Dr. Timothy K. August:

“Southeast Asian American Aesthetics and the Refugee Position”

Presented by Stony Brook University’s Department of English and Department of Asian and Asian American Studies.