

## CFP: The Sovereign Erotic

42<sup>nd</sup> American Indian Workshop in association with *Transmotion* journal

12-17 July 2021

Conference to take place online

Proposals are invited for the 41<sup>st</sup> annual AIW conference, organized by European University Cyprus in association with *Transmotion* journal, to be held from 12-17 July 2021. Papers are, as always, welcome on any topic in any discipline, though distinct priority will be given to papers that speak to the conference theme. Following the conference, a special issue of *Transmotion* will be dedicated to articles developed from papers presented at this event.

This iteration of the Workshop is inspired by the work of the increasing numbers of American Indian and First Nations thinkers and creative artists who are centering ideas of sexuality and eroticism in their work. Whether in the form of Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm's anthology *Without Reservation: Indigenous Erotica* (2003), Brent Learned's 2017 exhibition *Native American Body of Art*, or the Edmonton-based ongoing "sexy performance laboratory" *Tipi Confessions*, not to mention the landmark 2011 collection *Sovereign Erotics* after which the conference is titled, Indigenous artists have clearly found a powerful sense of sovereignty in the erotic. This has been accompanied by much academic work, particularly from Two-Spirit thinkers, into the history and ethos of tribal understandings of gender and sexuality. Such moves take on all the more force in a context too often dominated by trivializing, distorting, and demeaning settler concepts of sex and sexuality, in which many Native women, children, and LGBTQ2IA+ individuals carry a heavy burden of abuse. However, the decolonization of the erotic is anything but straightforward, raising questions of the body's interaction with tradition, modernity, gender, and sexuality. This conference will therefore consider questions of, and interdisciplinary approaches to, sex, sexuality, and gender, broadly defined. Questions that could be considered include:

- Reclamations and celebrations of the erotic as life-force in Indigenous literature, film, music and other arts
- Pre- and post-contact Indigenous cultural understandings of sexuality and the erotic
- Indigenous futurist eroticism
- Relationships between Indigenous and other ethnic minority theorizations and experiences of the erotic
- The intersections of rape culture and settler colonialism
- Joy, ecstasy and the erotic
- Narratives of personal erotic self-discovery
- Alternative Indigenous narratives of gender
- Questions of shame and courage in reservation, urban, and other Indigenous societies
- Depictions of intimacy in Indigenous arts
- Erotic interactions in digital Indigenous communities
- Two-Spirit and other LGBTQ2IA+ Indigenous lives in settler societies
- Pornography, human trafficking and the commoditization of Native bodies
- Attempted cultural appropriation of the erotic self

Proposals for panels and roundtables with 5 participants are especially welcome, as are proposals for discussions that seek to work creatively with the online environment. The major

focus of the conference is on the Indigenous peoples of North America, but comparative global work is also welcome.

Due to considerations surrounding international travel during the pandemic, the conference will take place online using the Zoom platform, and we are planning various modifications to the normal physical conference programme in order to recreate the atmosphere of the normal Workshop in digital spaces. Participants will be asked to make 10 minute presentations of their papers, the better to facilitate group discussion and knowledge exchange. Recognizing that participants will likely be coming in from a wide range of time zones, and also that online participation makes additional demands on the audience, the conference is planned to take place over a full week in a narrower time band (likely 15:00-21:00 CET): participants from the Western United States should therefore expect an early morning event, while participants in the Middle East and Asia will need to be prepared to attend late in the evening or early morning. There will be a conference fee of €30 (€20 for graduate students, independent scholars, and retired faculty).

Abstracts of not more than 300 words should be submitted to conference organizer James Mackay at [j.mackay@euc.ac.cy](mailto:j.mackay@euc.ac.cy), by January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Please include the words "AIW 2021 submission" as the subject line.

AIW: <https://www.american-indian-workshop.org/>

Transmotion: <https://journals.kent.ac.uk/index.php/transmotion>