



TONAN TALK



Title : **The Place of the Dead: Queer Performance, Modern Ruins, and Dictatorship Architecture**

Speaker: Dr. Bobby Benedicto

Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellow in the Humanities, McGill University

Date : **February 17th (Tue.), 2015, 16:00-18:00**

Place : **Tonan-tei** (Room No. 201), CSEAS, Inamori Foundation Memorial Building, Kyoto University

Abstract: This paper examines the aftereffects of authoritarian power through an ethnographic account of queer performances set in the ageing Brutalist structures of the Philippine capital, Manila. Focusing on the megalithic public buildings erected under the orders of former first lady, Imelda Marcos, the paper suggests that the modern ruins of dictatorship architecture function paradoxically, as avatars for the violences and excesses of unbridled sovereign authority and as objects of nostalgia for the lost future of the past. It argues that Marcos's fantastic visions of a modernity to come survive as spectral traces in the very buildings that stand as evidence of their failure and which have been transformed into venues for drag performances and other theatrical productions featuring transwomen. This process of conversion, I contend, exposes the uncanny afterlife of the dream of modernity—its simultaneous perversion and preservation through the labor of queer subjects that have been left out of narratives of post-revolutionary progress and cast as the human ruin of historical change.

BOBBY BENEDICTO is an Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellow in the Humanities at McGill University. He is the author of *Under Bright Lights: Gay Manila and the Global Scene* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014). His work has appeared in journals such as *Social Text*, *GLQ*, and *Antipode*, among others.

Moderator: Lisandro Claudio, CSEAS, Kyoto University

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