

Faith Smith

Strolling in the Ruins

Narrating the Early Twentieth-Century Caribbean

Beginning with a consideration of how catastrophes such as earthquakes (Jamaica 1907 and Haiti 2010) provide the Caribbean with both a terrible legibility and a convenient temporal marker ("after the earthquake" as a sign of the necessary rupture of modernity), this talk reflects on the period 1900–1915. The novels, poetry and non-fiction of the region's writers, and the photographs taken of them by a growing stream of tourists, show us Caribbean people measuring the growing imperial interests of the USA against the fortunes of their European imperial territories, in the wake of the Spanish American and Boer Wars.

Faith Smith's research interests in the cultural production and intellectual history of the Caribbean range across the aesthetic strategies of writers and artists contending with the legacies of slavery and indentureship, feminist engagements with the state in the wake of globalization, and the resonance of archival histories of intimacy and loss in our post (-national/colonial/racial) present. Her book manuscript, "Whose Modern? Forging Futures in the Trans-Caribbean, 1900–1915," focuses on the period just before the beginning of the First World War. An Associate Professor of African and Afro-American Studies, English, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, this semester she is teaching in the English Department at Florida Atlantic University.

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