

Wilfredo Gomez (University of Pennsylvania)

Panel Proposal: "Shifty Subjectivities: Race, Gender, and Contingent Imagery in Popular Culture"

This panel organizes three individual but somewhat interlocking papers that wrestle with the ways in which intersectional identities (constructed across and within multiple genres of popular culture) are informed by/through ideology, culture, and power. Taking cues from theories of subjectivity, visual narrativity, and cultural studies, each paper explores a particular popular genre via the visual, literary, and lyrical texts of these genres (photography, film, literature and rap music) in order to engage and ultimately to embrace the uncertainty that various artisans of 21st Century popular culture are so frenetically encountering in their work.

Are you in that Mood Yet: The Gender Demons of Joe Budden

Popular Hip Hop Culture has been dogged by the dogma of an overwrought and now, overexposed black hyper-masculinity. Taking cues from Mark Anthony Neal's "NewBlackMan" theories, this paper locates the instabilities emerging within the constructions of masculinity in rap music. Perennial underground favorite, Joe Budden, thrives beneath the surface of popular culture by lyrically living in a state of existential crisis. Budden lyrically projects an uncertainty that challenges gender roles in rap music and he anxiously does so in a Hyper-masculine environment. His remake of Sade's "Ordinary Love," a lyrical blues that wrestles with the loss of his own unborn child, is but one example of his "mood" music that reflects Neal's call to deconstruct rigid notions of black masculinity.