

# AFRO-ASIAN CROSSINGS: LANGSTON HUGHES AND WEB DU BOIS IN CHINA

DR. SELINA LAI-HENDERSON



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This talk interrogates the historic visits of Hughes (1933) and Du Bois (1936, 1959, and 1962) in China, and how the respective events opened rare and valuable platforms for historical and comparative dialogues on race, gender, and slavery in the U.S. and China. As the earliest African American writers to set foot on Chinese soil, Hughes and Du Bois helped rewrite the public image of African Americans in the Chinese cultural and intellectual imagination. Through considerations of their sojourns, my research examines the two black writers' unique, albeit conflicting, articulations of a racial and gendered consciousness that defied national, geographical, and political boundaries of the color line.

This talk is part of a series of lectures organized by the American Studies Programme (SMLC) and inspired by the exhibition "Rising Above: The Kinsey African American Art and History Collection" which is on show at the University Museum and Art Gallery until February 26, 2017.

The exhibition is co-organized by the Faculty of Arts and the University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong in collaboration with KBK Enterprises, Inc. and the Bernard and Shirley Kinsey Foundation for Arts & Education. Goldman Sachs is a Silver Sponsor and American Airlines is the exhibition's Official Airline. Supporting organizations include the Consulate General of the United States of America in Hong Kong and Macau, the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Lan Kwai Fong Group, and the Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong. With special thanks to Caripelago Trading Limited.



Selina Lai-Henderson is Research Assistant Professor of American Studies at HKU. She is the author of *Mark Twain in China* (Stanford University Press, 2015), and is currently researching race, gender, and transnational black masculinities in the works of Langston Hughes and W.E.B. Du Bois in modern and Maoist China.

All are welcome. No registration is required. For enquiries, please contact Dr. Tim Gruenewald at [tgruene@hku.hk](mailto:tgruene@hku.hk)