

FALL 2014 COLLOQUIA SERIES

Date: Monday, November 10

Time: 3:30PM – 5:00PM

Location: Social Sciences 1, room 261

Dr. Lesley Stern

Zig Zagging in and out of the Ethnobotanic Garden of Oaxaca

You enter a walled garden, and are instantly absorbed into a realm of tranquility. You almost forget about the world out there. But not quite. As you move through the garden so you wake up to a world beyond. This paper will register some of the ways in which, as we move, we are simultaneously *moved* (by the plants, textures, smells, sensations, artistry). This garden opens out in a remarkable way: to stories, to histories of entangled relations between plants and creatures of various kinds, to cultural scenarios, to political futures. The garden only contains plants native to Oaxaca, and pertinent in terms of ethnobotanic significance, but through this specificity it tells a great deal. Moreover, it is a provocation to think about how, in traveling through a garden, we might conceptualize the connections between diversity, sustainability, endurance and change.

Lesley Stern is the author of *The Smoking Book*, *Dead and Alive: The Body as Cinematic Thing*, *The Scorsese Connection*, and co-editor of *Falling For You: Essays on Cinema and Performance*. Her work moves between a number of disciplinary locations and spans both theory and production: although her reputation was established in the fields of film theory and history, she is also known for her fictocritical writing. Stern was born and raised in Zimbabwe, and she has taught in a number of universities around the globe before moving to UCSD in 2000. She has published extensively in the areas of film, performance, photography, cultural history, postcolonialism, feminism and gardening/ecocriticism. Stern's current projects include a further work of ficto-criticism, *Diary of a Detour*, and a book that asks: what is a garden, and explores this question through a number of case studies.