# VISUAL STUDIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## FALL 2022 EVENTS

## Images Out of Time Seminar



**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28**
12:30-2pm PST
Zoom

*Aniconic Icons:*
*Time and Gender in the Body of Angkor Wat*

**ASHLEY THOMPSON**
Hiram W. Woodward Chair of Southeast Asian Art
SOAS University of London

Readings and links for Images Out of Time events will be made available when you RSVP to vsri@usc.edu.

This talk approaches a holistic understanding Cambodia's Angkor Wat temple as an 'aniconic icon,' a complex architectural body which sublimates anthropomorphic form in an elaborate and exemplary manner. This reading derives from and probes the multiple temporalities at work in the temple's architectural and sculptural forms, which local devotees have themselves long probed; and second, the gendered and generative tensions operating in the oxymoronic formulation of the 'aniconic icon' – that is between apparently opposing modes of representation as they give body to relations between the mundane and the cosmic, the historical and the theoretical.

Ashley Thompson is Hiram W. Woodward Chair of Southeast Asian Art at SOAS University of London. Her research focuses on the premodern arts and literatures of Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on Cambodia. Publications of particular relevance to this talk: *Engendering the Buddhist State: Territory, Sovereignty and Sexual Difference in the Inventions of Angkor* (Routledge, Critical Buddhist Studies Series, 2016); 'Revenons, Revenants: Mémoires d'Angkor,' in J. Thach, E. Bourdonneau and G. Mikaelian, eds., *Temps et Temporalités khmères : de près, de loin, entre îles et péninsules* (Peter Lang, 2021); 'Icons: Standing out from the Narrative in Theravādin Art,' in S. Berkwitz and A. Thompson, eds, *Handbook of Theravada Buddhism* (Routledge, 2022); 'Early Theravadin Cambodia: Terms of Engagement,' in A. Thompson, ed., *Early Theravādin Cambodia: Perspectives from the History of Art and Archaeology* (NUS Press, 2022).

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