

Airborne Dust Event

Experiments on a Chinese Airstream

2-4pm, March 20, 2017
Research Commons rm. 340

At the threshold of the 'Chinese Century,' consecutive seasons of frequent and intense dust storms over Beijing revealed decades of Reform as also a new air-condition. Dust storms revealed winds as vectors of meteorological entanglement that bound Beijing to desertifying inland and upwind regions as serial moments in the passing of a floating continent. Dust storms and the peculiar politics of meteorological control as a key problem for contemporary Chinese governance draw our attention to air as a permutation of land, and vice versa. In this paper, I explore state forestry programs to hold the earth to the ground in Alxa, a cradle of dust storms in Beijing's dust-shed. Through the fortuitous inter-rooting of two plant species, I explore the experimental reconfiguration of regional politics into a machine for creating and proliferating state-sanctioned multi-species landscapes for holding the sand and breaking the wind that make the land a potential aerosol suspension.

Jerry Zee is Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow in the program in Science and Technology Studies at the University of California, Davis, and Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His forthcoming manuscript, *Surface to Air: Experiments on a Chinese Duststream*, explores experimental reconfigurations of political life and governmental tactics along the life and course of a dust storm.

