



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR CHINESE STUDIES

ICS presents the "China in Transition" Lecture Series

Actor, Role and Character in Chinese Theater

Monday, October 24, 2016

4:00 - 5:30 pm

Mendenhall Lab 125

125 S Oval Mall



Dr. Regina Llamas

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Abstract: Early Chinese theater is often called a 'theater of actors' and traced to the *Adjutant Play*, a remonstrative comic farce between a straight man and a fool that developed in the Tang dynasty. This historical tradition places comedy at the source of the Chinese dramatic tradition and establishes the origin

of the role system in the comic and the fool. We now take the role system – that is, the division of characters according to an actor's specialized skill of performance – as the most basic structural unit of Chinese theater and one crucial part of play composition. While we take for granted the division of roles, we know surprisingly little about them. In this paper I will discuss the different theories on the origins of roles; the need for a role system (when the different characters would have been enough for the audience to understand the plot); and what is the relationship between the actor, the role and the character in a play.



The Qianlong Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour, Scroll Six: Entering Suzhou along the Grand Canal (1770) by Xu Yang (Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY)

Bio: Regina Llamas is working on a monograph on the historiography of Chinese drama and how this discipline was formed. Her earlier work, both in English and Spanish focused on southern Nanxi drama, dramatic historiography, modern ethnography and dramatic performance, and the later Qing commentarial dramatic tradition. Her latest work is *El licenciado número uno Zhang Xie*, in Spanish. She is currently a lecturer at the Center for East Asian Languages and Cultures at Stanford University.

This event is sponsored in part by a U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant to The Ohio State University East Asian Studies Center and the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures. It is free and open to the public.

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