



Humanities Institute at Stony Brook

p r e s e n t s

Wednesday, February 5th, 2013

4:00 p.m.

Humanities 1008

Reception to follow

Vanessa Smith

Romantic Exchange in the Age of Exploration

The Indigenous traveller to metropolitan Europe has been viewed as a figure caught between contradictory but not wholly incompatible discourses of scientific categorisation and Romantic idealization, and their attendant stereotypes. But their visits also provoked reflexive questions: what can be learnt from travel between cultures? Is knowledge translatable? Exactly how might people move between worlds? Focussing on anecdotal accounts of the 1772-76 visits to London of Mai from the Society Islands and of an Inuit family from Labrador, Smith argues that these figures present a nuanced and shared awareness of the limits of intercultural translatability.

Vanessa Smith is a professor of English at the University of Sydney, where she teaches in the areas of Literature and Travel, Victorian Literature and late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature and culture. Her research is primarily concerned with issues of intercultural exchange and emotional subjectivity. Her publications include the books *Mutiny and Aftermath: James Morrison's Account of the Mutiny on the Bounty and the Island of Tahiti*, *Intimate Strangers: Friendship, Exchange and Pacific Encounters*, and *Literary Culture and the Pacific: Nineteenth-Century Textual Encounters*.

