

Organizer: **Probyn, Elspeth**, University of South Australia, Australia

### **Systems of Sustainability: Ethnographic Network-based Cultural Studies of Consumption**

While cultural studies has long had an interest in practices of consumption the key terms (class, resistance, gender) have tended to narrow its focus to either collective or individual contexts of consumption, and have by and large been confined to overtly media-related activity. In the current climate of debate and suspicion about sustainability, we need more wide-ranging and innovative studies of consumption, which frame production and consumption as material and culturally distinct sets of practices and networks. Taking from areas of interest in other disciplines (material or more-than-human geography, actor-network theories, and the anthropology of technology) we propose to advance interest in studies, which take as their object the arrangement of forms of sustenance (air, water, food). Following the routes of objects as they move across and within cultures provides a crucial lens into changing human, non-human, technological and environmental networks.

The three papers are based on seemingly disparate objects (air-conditioning in Asia; the tuna-fishing industry in South Australia of which 90% is exported to Japan and China; and the politics and movement of plastic water bottles in Bangkok). Together these papers will begin to consolidate a more material framework for the study of production and consumption within cultural studies.