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Queer Bodies, Toxic Bodies

This panel brings together three papers that examine representations of the “toxic” within a queer and trans rubric. Notions of toxicity have become increasingly popular shorthand for a range of phenomena, from the purported effects of Chinese lead toys in the U.S. to transnational economies’ “toxic assets.” Each paper investigates several forms of contemporary U.S. and Asian/ Pacific Rim cultural production (mass media representations, East/Southeast Asian queer/trans film, and visual art about nuclear radiation), teasing out the corporeal metaphors of infection, contamination, risk, and vulnerability that resonate within discourses around toxicity and sometimes emerge anxiously to signify threatening transnational flow. How are “bodies” (individual, national, otherwise collective) rendered as porous to “poisons,” which are themselves rendered as vacillating among chemical properties, bioterrorisms, and human/animal vectors? If such representations can be racialized, gendered, and sexualized, how might we productively queer this porousness, bringing a transnational critical lens to their metaphoric mediations?