

American Studies Research Colloquium Guest Lectures Winter 2023/24

Rizvana Bradley

University of California, Berkeley
5 December 2023, 6pm c.t., Cas 1.812

» Dark Media and the Death-Work of Cinema «



This talk foregrounds a theory of black anteriority with crucial implications for the grammar of technics that predominates in the philosophy of media, the figure of the dialogical spectator advanced by film phenomenology, and the media archeology that subtends historiographical debates within film history. Undertaking a close reading of Glenn Ligon's 2008 video installation, *The Death of Tom*, Bradley argues that Ligon's citation of Edwin S. Porter's 1903 silent film version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's nineteenth-century sentimentalist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* does far more than simply expose or indict the racist origins of American cinema—Ligon's practice recursively deconstructs the cinematic itself, disclosing black mediality as the condition of possibility for the medium's emergence.

Rizvana Bradley is Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies and Affiliated Faculty in the History of Art Department at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Anteaesthetics: Black Aesthetics and the Critique of Form* (Stanford University Press, 2023).



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The lecture series is open to the public. All are welcome!
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