

# Counter-Cartographies: Reading Singapore Otherwise



Speaker: Dr. Joanne Leow

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Venue: AAB1312, HKBU

Zoom Link: <https://hkbu.zoom.us/j/93417052841>

## Abstract

In this talk, I will give an overview of my new book *Counter-Cartographies: Reading Singapore Otherwise*. I examine a body of Anglophone and multilingual cultural texts created in contemporary Singapore and in its diasporic communities. From banned documentaries to award-winning graphic novels, flash fiction collections to conceptual art, there is a vibrant, growing body of transmedial, multi-genre resistance to an overmapped, hyper-planned, and ecologically destructive postcolonial development. In this monograph, I theorize methods of cultural analysis and close reading that are “counter-cartographical” --- reading in resistance to and yet pressed up against the regulations of a (post)colonial map. To excavate, wayfind, circumvent, and confabulate in these spaces means being pinned against histories and legacies of mapped power, even as acts of reading, writing, and art making seek to rupture these conceptions of space. Excavating, wayfinding, circumventing, and confabulating enable us to understand the contours and pressures of authoritarian governance and reveal the insidious aspects of biopolitical power in the (post)colonial city. These four spatial and theoretical movements deliberately enmesh the space of everyday life in a complex awareness of time: in historical contexts, in ongoing social relations, in contemporary political realities, and the imagined possibilities of literary spaces.

## Biography

Joanne Leow grew up in Singapore and lives on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. She is Associate Professor and Tier 2 Canada Research Chair of Transnational and Decolonial Digital Humanities in the Department of English at Simon Fraser University. Her first academic monograph *Counter-Cartographies: Reading Singapore Otherwise* is forthcoming from Liverpool University Press. She is also a poet and writer with a debut collection of poetry, *Seas Move Away* (2022), published by Turnstone Press. Her creative work and research lie at the intersections of the environmental humanities, transnational and diasporic cultural production, global Asia studies, autotheory, and decoloniality.