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The Centre for Korean Research is pleased to present:

“Rehearsing Cosmopolitan Asianness: Practicing Koreanness in Thai Queer K-Fandom”



By Dredge Kang
University of California, San Diego

Thursday, October 20th
3:30-5:00 pm

Room #120, C.K. Choi Building
1855 West Mall

Abstract: K-pop and K-drama have transformed contemporary beauty aesthetics among young Thai people. K-pop cover dance, or the reproduction of choreographed movements from Korean music videos, is a definitive social activity among Asian sissies (young feminine *gay* men). Thai sissies are among the most passionate and proficient practitioners of K-pop cover dance, and some groups, such as the Wonder Gays, Boys’ Generation, and Millenium Boy [*sic*], have become national and international celebrities. Semiprofessional cover dancers constitute a class of “hyper-fans” who become “demi-idols,” with boys love fan followings in their own right. Additionally, young Thai *tom* (masculine lesbian) gender performances are now being modeled on K-pop flower boys. I argue that Thai modeling of K-aesthetics embodies aspirations for personal and national development that index participation in a new cosmopolitan Asian sphere. Cover dance and related phenomenon in Thailand highlight recent shifts in Asian regionalism, idol fandom, and transgressive gender performance.

Bio: Dredge Byung’chu Kang is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego. His research focuses on the intersections of queer and trans* studies, critical race theory, and inter-Asian regionalism. Dredge’s second project, tentatively titled *Amazing Waves: Queering East Asian Popular Culture through Thailand*, explores the impact of the Korean Wave and Cool Japan on the performance of Thai gender, sexuality, and race as well as queer Thai influence on other Southeast Asian nations such as Vietnam and the Philippines.