



## 2018 AFEA CONFERENCE – NICE

May 22-25, 2018

### “MAGNIFYING AMERICA: THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF DETAILS”

*Please note that the deadline is January 15, 2018.*

#### AFEA 2018 – LGBTQ+ workshop

#### **The Devil is in the Details: the Perpetual Quest for LGBTQ+ Equality**

Chaired by

Anthony Castet (Associate Professor, University of Tours) and Georges-Claude Guilbert (Professor, University of Le Havre)

Since the Stonewall riots (1969), the visibility of LGBTQ+ issues and the recognition of LGBTQ+ rights have steadily increased in the United States, to the point that some claim equality is now a reality, particularly since the legalization of same-sex marriage (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015).

Donald Trump's “tolerant” revolution during the presidential campaign proved to be an effective smokescreen to let “the Devil” work on the backsliding of progress acquired by the LGBTQ+ minority. “Making America great again” involves barely concealed strategies of erasure and renewed invisibility, of defense of religious freedom, and deference to state sovereignty in matters of sexual orientation and same-sex parenting. This institutional push toward morals and religious freedom is part of a movement of “flux of the spirit of religion” (Froidevaux-Metterie), legitimizing a patchwork of laws across the country to undermine *Obergefell v. Hodges* in particular. The observation of the living conditions of LGBTQ+ populations and their cultures quickly reveals that a variety of details continue to favor unequal treatment or even “legalize” discrimination, to varying degrees, depending on states and domains, to reinforce their inferiorization and marginalization. LGBTQ+ America is not as mainstream as some cultural products suggest, assimilation remains relative (and not universally desired), and the margin persists. Indeed, the most conservative Americans claim the right not to recognize LGBTQ+ Americans, based on conscientious objection as well as religious exemption, thus imposing their own moral code. While justice remains a tremendous

bulwark against structural inequality with respect to sexual minorities, the (forthcoming) appointments made by the President, such as that of Neil Gorsuch, could weaken the current ideological balance to impose a status quo.

Nevertheless, this workshop will aim to go beyond this binary approach by focusing on the way in which “detail politics” sometimes lead to consensus, through bipartisan dynamics around the issue of equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community. See, for example, the campaign to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (2010), but also the victories for the fundamental freedom to marry won by Marc Solomon and his allies in several states by adopting a pragmatic logic that consisted in convincing and collaborating with the conservative “enemy.” Progress can also be noted in the religious sphere where inclusive churches celebrate homosexual unions and welcome LGBTQ+ people. DignityUSA is intent on changing the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church and doing away with any form of normative assignments. Finally, all this is obviously reflected in culture—television, for example. We will welcome and consider with interest proposals for papers that address the most significant details of the disparities between the dominant culture and LGBTQ+ minorities, whether in the fields of queer studies, cultural studies or American studies.

Please send a 250-word abstract and a brief bio to both Anthony Castet ([anthony.castet@univ-tours.fr](mailto:anthony.castet@univ-tours.fr)) and Georges-Claude Guilbert ([guilbertgc@yahoo.com](mailto:guilbertgc@yahoo.com)).