



# Western

Centre for Research on  
Migration and Ethnic Relations

Winter Colloquium  
Series 2022

## Sarah Bassnett



Sarah Bassnett is an associate professor of Art History in the Department of Visual Arts at Western University. Her research focuses on the intersections of photography and social change. Her award-winning book, *Picturing Toronto: Photography and the Making of a Modern city* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), looks at photography's role in the liberal reform of early twentieth-century Toronto, while her current research, funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, examines photography and undocumented migration.

### **“Photography as Contact Zone: Witnessing the Trauma of Undocumented Migrants in Mexico.”**

Between the years of 2000 and 2013, approximately 11.7 million people were apprehended trying to cross the southern border of the United States. Instead of raising public awareness and revealing how public policy affects experiences of undocumented migration, the mainstream media currently relies on a series of tropes to represent migration. This talk contrasts media tropes with a project by Mexican photojournalist Moysés Zuñiga Santiago (b.1979) to show how Zuñiga engages with photography as a contact zone where power relations and agency are negotiated. His approach combines photographs with narrative to bear witness to traumatic consequences of government policy and to expose human rights violations. In telling the overlooked stories of undocumented migrants, Zuñiga shows that migration to the United States is often a complex process involving dangerous journeys through multiple geographical and political territories. Zuñiga's work reveals both the human cost of indifference toward undocumented migrants and the resilience of the people who undertake this difficult process.

Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022

4:00 pm, Virtual Zoom Event

*All Welcome!*

<https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/94548605821>