

# Vienna Taiwan Lecture Series

The Department of East Asian Studies/Sinology and  
the Vienna Center for Taiwan Studies are pleased to announce a lecture by



SCOTT SIMON  
University of Ottawa

## Thinking with Birds: Ornithomancy and Indigeneity in Taiwan

### ABSTRACT

Ornithomancy, divination by human observation of bird behaviour, is particularly elaborate in South-east Asia and Oceania. Taiwan's indigenous people, parts of the Austronesian cultural world, used to look carefully at birds to anticipate future events. In the Truku and Seediq tribes, hunters observed the flight path of the sisil bird in order to predict the outcome of a hunt. But ornithomancy has lost much of its relevance in the colonial and contemporary contexts. The people no longer live in the forest. In addition, because of the prohibition of many hunting activities, the men hunt clandestinely in the night and no longer see the diurnal birds. Nonetheless, people continue to talk about the birds and they have adopted the oracle birds as national symbols of their tribes. Reflecting on Formosan ornithomancy and ethno-ethology opens the door to discussions about bird agency as part of an entanglement of lives.



SCOTT SIMON Ph.D McGill University in Anthropology, is Professor at the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, University of Ottawa. His University and professional work included: Past President of the Canadian Asian Studies Association, Convenor, Joint Conference of the Canadian Anthropology Society and the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (2016-2017).



Date: Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2019  
Time: 16:20 - 17:50  
Location: SIN1, entrance 2.3, Altes AKH, Campus, Spitalgasse 2  
<http://bit.ly/aakhcampus>

Introduction and Moderation led by Astrid Lipinsky, University of Vienna  
The lecture is open to the public without charge or prior registration

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