

# COLLOQUIUM BY ANNA GREENSPAN

COPYCAT ELECTRONICS IN 21ST CENTURY CHINA

TIME: 5:00-6:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, 24 AUG 2016

VENUE: AB 1079

## *Copycat Electronics in 21st Century China*

**Speaker:** Anna Greenspan, assistant professor of Global Contemporary Media at NYU Shanghai.

### ABSTRACT:

The iPad mini first hit the second hand markets of Shanghai months before it was invented in America. Copycat electronics (known as shanzhai) had begun to outpace the original.

Today, Shenzhen, which is faced with an economic downturn, labor shortages and increasing automation, is attempting to transition from a global manufacturing hub to a center of design innovation. Within this transformation, shanzhai - and its associated culture of copying - tends to be framed as a backward stage of development that the city must leave behind in order to progress.

This talk will question this view. It details how, in the manufacturing of cheap knockoff cellphones, shanzhai fostered a unique ecosystem of hardware production. This material culture, which emerges from the street markets of Shenzhen, came to designate a playful, anarchic, grassroots creativity that disrupts commonly held narratives about Shenzhen, China, originality and how technology gets made.

### BIO:

Anna Greenspan is Assistant Professor of Global Contemporary Media at NYU Shanghai. Her areas of interest include urbanism, new media and the philosophy of technology. Anna runs a digital humanities project on street food (<http://www.sh-streetfood.org/>.) and is currently mapping the changing culinary culture in two of Shanghai's urban neighborhoods. Anna is founding member of the research hub Hacked Matter, (<http://www.hackedmatter.com/>.) which is dedicated to investigating the process of technological innovation in China. She is currently working on a project on Chinese modernity and the wireless wave. Her last book *Shanghai Future:*

*Modernity Remade* was published by Oxford University Press in 2014. Anna maintains a website at [www.annagreenspan.com](http://www.annagreenspan.com).