

COLLOQUIUM BY AUSTIN WOERNER

SAGEBRUSH AND SNAKECLOUDS: BUILDING WORLDS IN TRANSLATION

TIME: 4:30-5:30 PM, FRIDAY, 10 MARCH 2017

VENUE: ACADEMIC BUILDING 1079

Sagebrush and Snakeclouds: Building Worlds in Translation

Speaker: Austin Woerner, Lecturer, Sun Yat-sen University

* The event is also a faculty recruitment seminar for Language and Culture Center.

ABSTRACT:

Words have the power to evoke a world, and when one translates a work of literature, the challenge is not simply to convey the meaning of the words—it is to make the world of the text come alive in a new language. How can a translator capture the flavor of a particular time and place when the intended readers have no knowledge of the text’s cultural background? How can he or she capture not just what the words mean, but what they hint at, the associations they inspire? Focusing specifically on translating Chinese fiction and poetry into English, this talk will explore these questions—what makes recreating the magic of a literary text so difficult, and how a translator, as a literary artist, can transmute these difficulties into sources of creative inspiration.

BIO:

Austin Woerner is a Chinese-English literary translator. His works include two volumes of poetry, *Doubled Shadows: Selected Poetry of Ouyang Jianghe* 《重影：欧阳江河诗选》 and *Phoenix* 《凤凰》, and a novel, *The Invisible Valley* 《迷谷》 by Su Wei 苏炜. From 2011 to 2014 he served as English translation editor for the innovative bilingual Chinese literary

journal *Chutzpah!* 《天南》, an anthology of whose short fiction has just been released by University of Oklahoma Press. He holds a BA in East Asian Studies from Yale and an MFA in creative writing from the New School, and is currently a lecturer at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou.

This event is open to all and entry is on a first come, first served basis. For any queries email y973@duke.edu or call 3665 7149.