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LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

Distinguished Speaker Series Presents

“BRANDING THE MAYA: Reimagining an Ancient Culture During the Decline of the West”



Traci Ardren (PhD. Yale University 1997)

The Maya culture of modern day Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize has long been a canvas on which Western society has painted scenes of the exotic but subordinated indigenous. Through a critique of Mel Gibson's *Apocalypto* and related trends in transnational tourism to “brand” the Maya, this presentation explores the culpability of modern scholarship in exaggerations of the past, as well as the importance to modern Maya descendant communities, of a careful analysis of such modern manipulations of history.

Dr. Ardren is an anthropological archaeologist interested in New World prehistoric cultures. Her research focuses on gender, iconography, architecture and other forms of symbolic representation in the archaeological record. Dr. Ardren has conducted excavations on the west coast of Florida, at the Audubon House in Key West, at a Mississippian period site in Kentucky, and at Maya cities in Belize and Mexico. She is finishing a publication on Maya queens and writing a book on identity in the archaeological record of the northern Maya lowlands.

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