Humboldt’s Exploration of the Americas and his Interest in the Pacific

A Lecture by Dr. Sandra Rebok

Monday, December 5th, 12:30-2:00 Sakamaki Hall A201

The Prussian explorer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt is famous for the scientific exploration voyage through large parts of Spanish America, carried out in the years 1799-1804 with an exceptional authorization of the Spanish Court. Though mostly known in the Atlantic World, Humboldt’s growing interest for the Pacific was awakened in his early years by his friend and mentor Georg Forster, the German naturalist and writer who had accompanied James Cook on his second voyage to the Pacific (1772-1775). Dr. Rebok will show how Humboldt’s fascination for this part of the world developed over time and in which way he contributed to the exploration of the Pacific beyond his own direct observations.

Dr. Sandra Rebok’s research focuses on exploration voyages, intellectual networks and transnational collaborations during the 19th century. She has over 20 years of experience in Humboldtian scholarship, she is the author of several books on Humboldt and the editor of three of his works in Spanish. One of her recent books examines his intellectual exchange with Thomas Jefferson (Jefferson and Humboldt, 2014), while her forthcoming monograph, Humboldt’s Empire of Knowledge, analyzes Humboldt’s position between the Spanish Empire in decline and the expanding United States. Currently she is a Visiting Scholar at the University of California in San Diego and a fellow at the UCSD Center for US-Mexican Studies. Contact: https://sandrarebok.net/