



UCDAVIS

Global Migration Center

Affecting humanity,
challenging exclusion, *moving-
with* stories of deportation

Presenter: Sarah Ashford Hart,

Performance Studies

Discussant: Dorothee Xiaolong Hou,

Comparative Literature

Discussion/Response

- Hart's proposed framework, *relational responsibility* (the responsibility and ability to respond to our inherent interdependence) is not only helpful in humanizing deportation but also shifting the ethical underpinnings of larger debates of immigration policies (e.g. the European migrant crisis, etc.)
- Her insightful and innovative project, a combination of digital story-telling and contact improvisation, moves the participants' experience beyond passive spectatorship ("feeling of") and towards active, embodied listening ("feeling with").

- In Hart's work, she explores the experience of migration and deportation not through exclusion and separation, but connectedness and interdependence. One of the storytellers, Esther Morales Guzman, a woman migrant/deportee, mother, entrepreneur, and activist, presents an especially powerful story. Her experience also opens up discussions on the care economy and flexible labor under globalization, which are often exploitative to migrant, minority and women of color.
- Finally, under the current challenges of the global pandemic, the fragility and interdependence of all living beings have become more evident than ever. This also invites us, alongside Hart's project, to rethink *risk*. As Harts argues in her paper, migrants are often perceived as problematic and "risky subjects" - the cultural and racial other - for their questionable allegiance to their home countries. On the other hand, to view risk as shared, communal and interpersonal (rather than assigned to certain bodies) also helps us probe the complex questions of humanity today.