Pink globalization – the spread of cute goods from Japan to other parts of the industrial world – has become a consumer force led by Sanrio Corporation’s Hello Kitty. In this talk I examine both the fandom surrounding Hello Kitty as well as the experience of becoming part of that fan phenomenon. My experiences as curator of “Hello! Exploring the Supercute World of Hello Kitty” at the Japanese American National Museum (October 2014-May 2015) gave me an insider’s perspective upon the marketing and promotion of commodity cuteness. Further, my active participation as speaker and curator at the world’s first Kitty Con – a four-day massive gathering of Hello Kitty fans in Los Angeles at the Contemporary Geffen and Japanese American National Museum in Fall 2014 – gave insights upon myriad consumer and media experiences. By examining the complexities of fandom surrounding pink globalization, I suggest ways by which we may address the far-reaching impact and potential of something as superficially benign as commodity cuteness.

Christine R. Yano is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. She has authored numerous books and articles, the latest of which is Pink Globalization: Hello Kitty's Trek Across the Pacific (2013, Duke). She also served as curator of the exhibition "Hello! Exploring the Supercute World of Hello Kitty" at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles in 2014, and soon to be opened in Seattle at the Experience Music Project in November 2015.

For further information, please contact anthprog@hawaii.edu.