WAITING FOR THE KING?
KINO’S TRAVELS + THE GLOBAL IMAGINATION OF URBAN PLACES

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES / 725 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE / ROOM B12

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The 2006 TV series Kino’s Travels 『キノの旅』 (based on a "light novel" by Shigusawa Keiich) follows the young girl (shōjo) Kino and her bike Hermès in their travels through a steam-punk world of European city-states. Kino comes, and leaves, never breaking the golden rule of a three-day stay during which s/he learns the customs and history of each city as retold by its inhabitants. Kino has no other aim on her travels than to remain a traveler, a shōjo suspended between childhood and adulthood, production and consumption. This talk will ask how the tension between home, travel and technology in Kino’s narrative helps us to rethink questions of belonging and sovereignty. It will also discuss what Ōtsuka Eiji and Azuma Hiroki’s recent works on the light novel have to tell us about the relation between urban subjectivity and mythic structures in global urban subcultures.