Microfinance is a global poverty alleviation strategy aiming to provide poor people the world over with access to formal financial services in the form of microloans, savings, insurance and pension products. It came to public attention in 2006 when its founder, Mohammad Yunus, received the Nobel Peace Price, and more recently through the work of Kiva.org, a popular person-to-person microlending website. CGAP, a microfinance think tank housed at the World Bank, is hosting an annual photography contest to further spread awareness of microfinance; in 2011 the competition attracted over 2000 entries from 70 countries from professional and amateur photographers. In this talk I will analyze a number of winning photos to examine how microfinance is represented by CGAP. I am particularly interested in how these images legitimize particular microfinancial discourses and practices, how they mobilize affective investments and how they articulate with dominant representations of development.

Date: Monday 16 April, 2012
Time: 1:00pm to 3:00pm
Venue: RMIT University, city campus, Building 13, Level 3, Room 07
RSVP email: janette.chantry@rmit.edu.au

Abstract
Microfinance is a global poverty alleviation strategy aiming to provide poor people the world over with access to formal financial services in the form of microloans, savings, insurance and pension products. It came to public attention in 2006 when its founder, Mohammad Yunus, received the Nobel Peace Price, and more recently through the work of Kiva.org, a popular person-to-person microlending website. CGAP, a microfinance think tank housed at the World Bank, is hosting an annual photography contest to further spread awareness of microfinance; in 2011 the competition attracted over 2000 entries from 70 countries from professional and amateur photographers. In this talk I will analyze a number of winning photos to examine how microfinance is represented by CGAP. I am particularly interested in how these images legitimize particular microfinancial discourses and practices, how they mobilize affective investments and how they articulate with dominant representations of development.

Speaker
Anke Schwittay is a Lecturer at the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Auckland. Her recent research focuses on financial inclusion efforts, which aim to provide formal micro-financial services – loans, savings, insurance and pension, to poor people the world over who have been excluded from the traditional banking sector. Anke is particularly interested in the role of Information and Communication Technologies in the provision of microfinance, as well as in issues of representation and affect. Anke holds a PhD in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied global corporate citizenship programs of transnational high-tech companies. She is a Fellow of the Institute for Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion (IMTFI) at the University of California, Irvine.