

# Liverpool Film Seminar

2015 – 2016 series

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Every year, Liverpool Film Seminar invites six experts to deliver a series of talks. Topics vary greatly and the series does not focus on a specific aspect of film. Instead, a range of genres and approaches are celebrated, from historical reach to the internet's impact on cinematic material.

## **Professor Thomas Elsaesser**

(University of Amsterdam/Columbia University)

### **Double Occupancy and Self-Exoticism: Space-Time Warps of Transnational Cinema**

My paper will offer a brief overview of what I think are the shortcomings of most of the terms we use (world cinema, global media) – including the inherent contradiction of the term 'transnational' – before proposing an expansion and refinement to the term 'double occupancy' which I first introduced for the study of European cinema in its post-national/post-auteurist phase, in order to highlight uneven power-relations and 'always-already' anti-essentialisms.

The aim in once more taking up the concept is to claim its heuristic and historical value, both for the study of films and cinemas that are only visible via the festival networks (where the tendency towards self-colonizing and self-exoticising is especially strong) and for the study of global Hollywood, whose economic dependence on world-wide audiences, hybrid platforms and accumulation of cultural capital through on-line communities makes for other forms of double occupancy.

Finally, the alternative to double occupancy is not identity politics, but abjection and post-mortem subjectivities: negative forms of double occupancy, i.e. double voiding and vacating, which is where and how the potential for resistance and dissent re-emerges.

## Biography:



Thomas Elsaesser is Professor Emeritus at the Department of Media and Culture of the University of Amsterdam and currently teaches at Columbia University. He has authored, edited and co-edited some twenty volumes on Early Cinema, Film Theory, German and European cinema, Hollywood, New Media and Installation Art. His books have been translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Turkish, Hebrew, Japanese and Korean.

Among his recent books as author are: *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 2010 [2<sup>nd</sup> revised ed. 2015], with Malte Hagener), *The Persistence of Hollywood* (New York: Routledge, 2012) and *German Cinema - Terror and Trauma: Cultural Memory Since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 2013).