

Liverpool Film Seminar

2016 – 2017 series

Every year, Liverpool Film Seminar invites 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 Kriss Ravetto (University of California, Davis)

In Balkan: Mythopoetic cinema and the poetics of the body

While Marina Abramović is mainly known as a performance artist, her performances on the Balkans have integrated moving-image installation, and much of the work has been exclusively displayed as moving-image installation or distributed as a film.

These cinematic works and video documentations of her performance - *Balkan Baroque* (1997) and *Balkan Erotic Epic* (2005) - explore the poetics of confrontation. Her performances and experimental films illustrate how the political interests inscribed in even the most well-meaning distinctions (of victims and victimizers, just and unjust warfare, etc.) end up subscribing to untenable assumptions about morality.

In this paper Ravetto explores how these moral judgments conceal their own hidden assumptions about subjectivity and the body - positing the former as a priori centre of reflection and the latter as a site of vulnerability, a place for inscription. She is interested, for instance, in how *Balkan Erotic Epic* presents the politics of bodies, subjectivity, and morality as a series of changing interactions rather than a set of fixed social or natural relations. While it makes the body vulnerable to the gaze of others it also allows us to examine the performative aspects of both identity politics and moral judgments - the theatre of ancient tribal hatreds, the spectacle of competing victims, the translation of bodies in pain into wounded spaces and wounded images. Yet, the very introduction of the image into the discourse of suffering is a cause for suspicion because the image undermines the claim to the real - whether the experience of trauma, witnessing, or pain - as a form of singularity and uniqueness.

Biography:



Kriss Ravetto is an Associate Professor of Cinema and Digital Media, and Science and Technology Studies at UC Davis. She is the author of 'The Unmaking of Fascist Aesthetics' (Minnesota UP), 'Mythopoetic Cinema: Cinema on the Margins of Europe' (Columbia UP, forthcoming), and is currently working on Digital Uncanny. Her essays on film and digital media have appeared in such journals as Camera Obscura, Screen, Representations, Third Text, Leonardo Electronic Almanac, International Social Science Journal, and Performance Arts Journal.