

Liverpool Film Seminar

2018 – 2019 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 Chris Berry (King's College London)

China's Rambo? Wolf Warrior 2 and Chinese Masculinity

China's most successful film at the box office (with 50% more earnings than its nearest competitor) and its only film in the global top 100 is *Wolf Warrior 2* (*Zhanlang 2*, Wu Jing, 2017). Set in an unnamed African country and focusing on a former Chinese soldier discharged for being unable to control his anger in the face of injustice, this action adventure film has understandably been compared to Rambo. This presentation examines the parallels with Rambo and other Western models of 'toxic masculinity'. But it also locates it in the context of previous Chinese cinematic representations of encounters with foreigners and travel. Where previous films were always concerned with foreigners coming to China, Chinese movies are now outward bound. In this almost unprecedented situation, local archetypes that *Wolf Warrior 2* draws on are harder - but not impossible - to find.

Biography:

Chris Berry is Professor of Film Studies at King's College London. Prior to his current appointment, he taught at La Trobe University in Melbourne, The University of California, Berkeley, and Goldsmiths, University of London. Primary publications include: *Cinema and the National: China on Screen* (2006); *Postsocialist Cinema in Post-Mao China: the Cultural Revolution after the Cultural Revolution* (2004); *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translation* (2017); *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture* (2016); *Public Space, Media Space* (2013); *Chinese Cinema*, 4 vols, (2012); and *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record* (2010).

