

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 Gina Marchetti (University of Hong Kong)

Citing China: Politics, Postmodernism and World Cinema

Taking my book "Citing China: Politics, Postmodernism, and World Cinema" (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018) as a point of departure, this talk looks at the various ways "China" circulates globally within screen culture. The depiction of "China" serves as a site, sight, and citation—a place, an image, and a reference point—for an ongoing critique of global politics and film aesthetics. I examine the circulation of "China" as a marker of modernity/postmodernity in contemporary film culture by looking at the way in which global filmmakers cite "China" on screen. Cinematic quotations operate as part of a postmodern cultural marketplace, but, more importantly, they link current films to past political movements and unresolved social issues that continue to fuel screen fantasies about China in the 21st century. I explore how key figures in international film take an active interest in Chinese aesthetics, translate it into practice, and continue to have an impact on the way in which "China" is depicted in global cinema today. While some are in an avowedly Marxist tradition (Brecht, Eisenstein, Godard), others take a different route (transcendentalism, various traditions of critical realism, feminism, interrogations of the politics of race and colonialism, among others). Their films highlight political issues, but they also participate in cinematic experimentation to varying degrees. I focus, then, on cinematic encounters that cross various aesthetic boundaries—from popular entertainment with a political punch (e.g., the legacy of Bruce Lee) to international art cinema, the DV revolution, video activism, and the emergence of the so-called "festival film." Connections exist on a continuum, and this book focuses on that part of the spectrum that produces cultural, aesthetic and political critique across the China-West divide. Whether attempting to build solidarity based on a shared spiritualism, anti-capitalism, feminism, or other form of critique, the implications of these encounters continue to metamorphose as the world, in which they blossom and circulate, changes.

Biography:

Professor Gina Marchetti teaches courses in film, gender and sexuality, critical theory and cultural studies at the University of Hong Kong. She is the author of 'Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction' (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 'From Tian'anmen to Times Square: Transnational China and the Chinese Diaspora on Global Screens' (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), and 'The Chinese Diaspora on American Screens: Race, Sex, and Cinema' (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), Andrew Lau and Alan Mak's 'INFERNAL AFFAIRS—The Trilogy' (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), and Citing China: Politics, Postmodernism, and World Cinema (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2018), among other publications.