

Centre for Film and Moving Image Research

FMIR

Newsletter Issue 6 FEBRUARY – APRIL 2024

Truly vibrant exchanges across the world!



香港浸會大學
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

School of Creative Arts
創意藝術學院

浸大電影學院
Academy of Film Mktu

香港電影研究會
HKFR

History out of focus: Chinatown Film Culture and the issue of perspective

Talk Abstract

This talk contains two origin stories. The first one is about the emergence of film culture in the beating heart of Chinese America. The second story gives a behind-the-scenes look at how my book, *Chinatown Film Culture: The Appearance of Cinema in San Francisco's Chinese Neighborhood*, came into existence. Cross-cutting from historical insights about moviegoing, female spectatorship, and the emergence of racist stereotypes in early 20th century Chinatown, to the contemporary challenges of researching marginalized history from a distance, this talk offers a guided tour of lost pasts and the issues of trying to bring them back.



GLOBAL SINFONIA 10

DATE:

1 FEB 2024 Thursday
(Hong Kong Date)

1 FEB 2024 Thursday
(Stockholm Sweden Date)

TIME:

4 pm (Hong Kong Time)

9 pm (Stockholm Sweden Time)

ZOOM: 922 4709 5236

DR.

KIM KHAVAR
FAHLSTEDT

is a writer and an assistant professor of film and media history at Örebro University, Sweden. His research focuses on media cultures, transcultural phenomena, and environmental history. He is the author of *Chinatown Film Culture: The Appearance of Cinema in San Francisco's Chinese Neighborhood* (Rutgers, 2020). His research has featured in peer-reviewed journals such as *Film History* and *Journal of Early Popular Visual Culture*. His forthcoming book *Oland*, about the Swedish American yellowface actor Warner Oland (Appell), is out in April 2024.

Presented by:



Host:
Dr. Kenny NG
Hong Kong Baptist University

Enquiries: fmiresearch@hkbu.edu.hk
ALL are welcome

What Remains Invisible When Chinese Science Fiction Reached the Big Screen? The Wandering Earth and Its Unseen Abysses

Talk Abstract

The rise of a new wave of science fiction has been a momentous literary phenomenon in contemporary China. I identify the invisible as a key element in the poetics of science fiction. As a symbolic trope, the invisible points to realms beyond what we ordinarily perceive, allows for the representation of our fears and dreams, and challenges moral conventions and political doctrines. The release of *The Wandering Earth* (流浪地球, dir. Guo Fan 郭帆 b. 1980) in theaters was widely regarded as an exciting moment when Chinese science fiction reached its maximum visibility. Science fiction, the lonely hidden army when it just emerged in 1999-2010, was no longer hidden—certainly not a force waiting in ambush. It came into the mainstream. Interestingly, *The Wandering Earth* also made *invisibility* even more undeniably felt. This talk will address the dialectic of visibility and invisibility in the aesthetics of Chinese science fiction film through a comparative study of *The Wandering Earth* the film and its original text.



DATE:
6 March 2024

Wednesday
(Hong Kong date)

TIME:
2:30 pm
(Hong Kong time)

ZOOM: 965 1615 8961

PROFESSOR MINGWEI SONG

is a Professor of Chinese Literature at Wellesley College. He is the author of *Young China: National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900-1959* (Harvard, 2015) and *Fear of Seeing: The Poetics and Politics of Chinese Science Fiction* (Columbia, 2023). He is the co-editor of *The Reincarnated Giant: An Anthology of Twenty-First Century Chinese Science Fiction* (Columbia, 2018). His Chinese-language publications include *New Wave in Chinese Science Fiction: History, Text, Poetics* (2020), *Criticism and Imagination: Collected Critical Essays* (2013), and *Sorrows of a Floating World: A Biography of Eileen Chang* (1996; second edition, 1998-).

Presented by:



Host:
Dr. Kenny NG
Hong Kong Baptist University

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ALL are welcome

GLOBAL SINO PHONIA 11

Women Make Waves in Sinophone World Cinema

Talk Abstract

In this talk I outline aspects of the research agenda in my new book, *Women Filmmakers in Sinophone World Cinema*. Tracking and analyzing several women filmmakers' innovative and socially engaged work in both fictional and non-fictional modes, I explore the aesthetic and political possibilities of their trans-cinematic practices for a multifaceted feminist intimate-public commons integral to women's world cinema.



DATE:
8 March 2024 (FRI)
TIME:
2pm

ZOOM: 941 2156 4700

PROFESSOR ZHEN ZHANG

teaches and directs the Asian Film and Media Initiative at the Martin Scorsese Department of Cinema Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University.

Her previous publications include *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema 1895-1937*, *The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the 21st Century*, *DV-Made China: Digital Subjects and Social Transformations after Independent Film* (co-editor). She is the lead editor of the forthcoming *Routledge Companion to Asian Cinemas*.

Presented by:



Host:
Dr. Kenny NG
Hong Kong Baptist University

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ALL are welcome

GLOBAL SINO PHONIA 12



Great interests were ignited!

PERFECT day for the topic!

香港浸會大學
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY
 School of Creative Arts
創意藝術學院
 浸大電影學院
Academy of Film & TV

Criminal Realism: Censorship and Hong Kong Crime Films in the Long 1970s

Talk Abstract

This talk will outline some of the key arguments of my recent monograph *Hong Kong Crime Films: Criminal Realism, Censorship and Society, 1947-1986*, which deals with the often-neglected local history of the Hong Kong crime film prior to its regional and then global success. The focus will be on the long 1970s, a period of rapid social and political change in Hong Kong, which, I argue, influenced local cinema directly through the relaxation of censorship standards. While the type of realism found in crime films was literally “criminal” up till the early 1970s, this changed around 1974, and cinematic exposés of local crime culture became a major trend later in the decade. Even though local film critics in the 1970s promoted cinematic realism, they remained blind to—or even violently rejected—the type of gritty realism of crime films made by the commercial film industry at the time, making this realism illicit in yet another way and thereby shaping Hong Kong film historiography for several decades afterwards.

DATE:
3 April 2024 Wednesday
(Hong Kong Date)

TIME:
4:30 pm (Hong Kong Time)

ZOOM: **977 7713 4102**

This talk will be conducted in ENGLISH

DR.
KRISTOF VAN DEN TROOST

Speaker Bio

Kristof Van den Troost is an assistant professor at the Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). His first monograph, *Hong Kong Crime Films: Criminal Realism, Censorship and Society, 1947-1986*, was published by Edinburgh University Press in 2023. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Screen*, *Asian Cinema* and *Asian Education and Development Studies*.

Presented by:

Enquiries: fmiresearch@hkbu.edu.hk
ALL are welcome

Host:
Dr. Kenny NG
Hong Kong Baptist University

Discussant:
Dr. Tom CUNLIFFE
University College London

GLOBAL SINO PHONIA 14

香港浸會大學
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY
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REVOLUTIONARY BECOMINGS: DOCUMENTARY MEDIA IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHINA

Book Talk Abstract

From the toppling of the Qing Empire in 1911 to the political campaigns and mass protests in the Mao and post-Mao eras, revolutionary upheavals characterized China's twentieth century. In this talk, Ying Qian draws from her newly published book to discuss documentary as deeply embedded in these upheavals and as a prism to investigate the entwined histories of media and China's revolutionary movements. Situating cinema's invention in 1895 in the East Asian context of colonial warfare and revolutionary agitation, this talk excavates the documentary's emergence in transnational activism at the turn of the 20th century, traces its development in political contestation and war propaganda between 1920s and 1940s, and reflects on documentary's productivity and crisis during the Mao-era and its reorientation in the post-Mao decade. Arguing that there is no universal “documentary,” but the historical materialization of its potentials, the talk proposes a method to engage with documentary as an “eventful medium,” around which the dialectical relationship between media practice, political relationality and revolutionary epistemology can be examined.

DATE:
2 April 2024
Tuesday
(Hong Kong Date)

TIME:
4pm
(Hong Kong local time:
GMT+8)

ZOOM: **980 7181 2479**

This talk will be conducted in ENGLISH

Professor
YING QIAN
of Columbia University

Speaker Bio

is an associate professor in Chinese Cinema and Media at the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University. Her first book, *Revolutionary Becomings: Documentary Media in Twentieth-Century China* (Columbia University Press, 2024) excavates documentary's multi-faceted productivities in China's revolutionary movements. She's now working on a new monograph on media and the ecologies of knowledge in China's reform and opening. Ying Qian's articles have appeared in *Critical Inquiry*, *New Left Review*, *China Perspectives*, *New Literary History of Modern China*, *Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas*, and other journals and websites. At Columbia, she teaches classes on East Asian cinema, Chinese media cultures, documentary media, media of science and technology, and comparative media theory and history. Drawing from her experiences in filmmaking, she has incorporated creative assignments in her classes, guiding students to try their hands on media production.

Presented by:

Enquiries: fmiresearch@hkbu.edu.hk
ALL are welcome

Host & Discussant:
Dr. Kenny NG
Hong Kong Baptist University

GLOBAL SINO PHONIA 13

A large audience was attracted by this fascinating topic!
Special thanks to Dr. Tom CUNLIFFE as our discussant!

Professor Ying Qian talked about the **NEW** book!



Gaming Reincarnation Inside the Chinese Pressure Cooker: Reading, Streaming, Teaching Reset

Talk Abstract

The People's Republic of China is a pressure cooker, compressing the West's hundreds of years since the Industrial Revolution into the short span of decades after Mao's Cultural Revolution, speed cooking a raw third-world country into a modern superpower. This boon to the Chinese people mutates into a terrorist boom, a bomb blast in the born-digital web novel *Kaiduan* (開端 *Genesis*) uploaded online circa 2019 by the author *Qidaojun* (祈禱君 One Who Prays). With a pressure cooker packed with explosives, a domestic terrorist in *Kaiduan* cooks up not food for her family but chemical compounds to blow a city bus to smithereens. With a plot like the Escheresque Mobius strip of infinite repeats, the protagonists relive their violent deaths to save the passengers, including the bombers. *Kaiduan* is one of many web novels so hot that they are born-again as TV series. Reading *Kaiduan* is thus reincarnated as bingeing the fifteen episodes of *Reset* in 2022. Despite its digital identity, I de-digitize Chinese TV series in a series of analytical "close-ups" or "freezes" on the content of the TV drama and the web novel. Digital streaming morphs into my freezing it in the pedagogy of teaching American students on a Sino-fi series of *chuanyue* or time travel.

Keywords: Chinese TV series; *chuanyue*; *Reset*; digital humanities; streaming, freezing, and teaching



DATE:
16 April 2024 Tuesday (Hong Kong Date)
15 April 2024 Monday (US Date)
TIME:
8:30 am (Hong Kong Time)
8:30 pm (US Eastern Time)
7:30 pm (US Central Time)
6:30 pm (US Mountain Time)
5:30 pm (US Pacific Time)

ZOOM: 962 0907 4024

This talk will be conducted in ENGLISH

Presented by:



Host:
Dr. Kenny NG
Hong Kong Baptist University

Enquiries: fmiresearch@hkbu.edu.hk

ALL are welcome

GLOBAL SINFONIA 15

Speaker Bio

PROFESSOR SHENG-MEI MA 馬聖美

Sheng-mei Ma (馬聖美 mash@msu.edu) is Professor of English at Michigan State University in Michigan, USA, specializing in Asian Diaspora culture and East-West comparative studies. He is the author of over a dozen books, including *Cultural Bifocals* (2025); *China Pop!* (2024); *The Tao of S* (2022); *Off-White* (2020); *Sinophone-Anglophone Cultural Duet* (2017); *The Last Idle* (2015); *Alienish* (2014); *Asian Diaspora and East-West Modernity* (2012); *Diaspora Literature and Visual Culture* (2011); *East-West Montage* (2007); *The Deathly Embrace* (2000); *Immigrant Subjectivities in Asian American and Asian Diaspora Literatures* (1998). Co-editor of five books and special issues, *Transnational Narratives* (2018) and *Diving English in Asia* (2016) among them, he also published a collection of poetry in Chinese, *Thirty Left and Right* (三十左右).

An early morning talk that inspired!