

ARTS FACULTY RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

30 NOV
2021
(Tue)

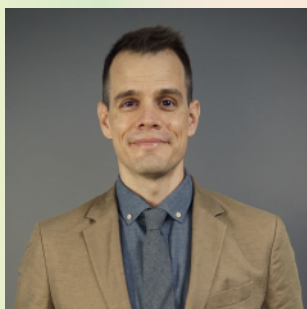
3:00pm -
4:30pm



Professor TAN Li Wen Jessica
Assistant Professor
Department of Chinese

A Portrait of Pain: Cold War Prosthetic Memory and Family Histories

In this talk, I discuss Chinese writer Wang Anyi's *Sadness for the Pacific* (1993) and Taiwan-based Malaysian director Lau Kek Huat's documentary *Absent without Leave* (2016). As descendants of Southeast Asian Chinese families that were embroiled in Cold War cultural and revolutionary politics, I argue that the works of Wang and Lau are driven by a similar impulse of making sense of a nation's buried past through their family histories. By piecing together fragments of family testimonies, photographs, and historical records, both narratives revisit the thorny history of transnational Chinese mobilities during the twentieth century and reveal the leftist legacies that have largely remained suppressed in Southeast Asia. While Wang's *Sadness* reveals a melancholic awareness that this search for one's roots is an inherently futile attempt, Lau's *Absent* offers a resolution to Wang's melancholy through a strategy of prosthetic memory and demonstrates a profound concern with the human condition of being displaced both geographically, textually, and ideologically.



Professor Wesley JACKS
Research Assistant Professor
Department of Visual Studies

To Serve and Protect: Sino-French Film Industry Connections from 1978-1993

Among the nations that have maintained formidable barriers-to-entry surrounding their domestic media markets, China and France are (perhaps) the most acclaimed and studied. Further, when media scholars seek to explain the policy developments and industry initiatives that have enabled this pair to remain among the most heavily protected markets, they point to the influence of formidable state-backed film bodies (CNC in France; CFC in China) trying to balance three-way tensions among (1) the threat of external media dominance, (2) the pursuit of domestic industry success, and (3) the maintenance of domestic cinema 'ideals' – political ideology in the case of China and art cinema/auteurism in France.

Despite the presence of these echoing economic, political, and cultural forces, France and China are often addressed as 'exceptional' case studies. This talk does not argue the two offer equivalent conditions, but it seeks to draw out generative parallels between strategies deployed by political and film industry leadership from the late-1970s to through the mid-1990s – a period of distinct vulnerability in both industries. It compares choices made by Chinese leadership newly re-engaging with global film flows with decisions from French policymakers and studio leaders who were long accustomed to carving out their own niche in flows within Europe and across the world. It seeks to connect developments in both nations to particular features of late-20th century media globalization and to offer suggestions for future sites of comparative media research.

Moderator:
Professor GONG Haomin
Associate Professor of Department of Chinese

The seminar will be conducted via Zoom.
No registration is required.
1.5 ILP units (Aesthetic Development)

<https://bit.ly/2ZyfKTn>



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