

Vincent Woo Distinguished Visiting Scholars Programme 2024

11 Dec 2024 (Wed)

4:30pm - 5:45pm

**MPL130567, 13/F, M+
Lingnan@WestKowloon**

1.5 ILP units (Aesthetics Development) application in progress

PUBLIC LECTURE

Prof Michael Berry

The Allegorical American: Positioning the United States in Chinese-Language Cinema

Cinema can play many roles, from entertainment to escapism, and from the pedagogical to the propagandistic. Within the matrix of Chinese language cinema, representations of the United States and the figure of the American have served a particularly powerful role in helping Chinese audiences imagine new global possibilities as well as themselves. Since 1949, the image of the American in Chinese-language cinema has undergone radical transformations. This history of representation is further complicated by radically different portrayals in different regions that produce Chinese-language film, including the PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. These representations have also often served as a political tool to alternately temper or fuel global dreams, contend with new forms of nationalism, and establish a more complex understanding of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong's place in the world. This talk will provide a critical overview of some of the major tropes, trends, and permutations that the United States has gone through in Chinese-language cinema. Turning to the present, it will also address the curious ways in which, against the backdrop of a so-called "New World Order," it is actually old tropes and well-worn stereotypes that have found renewed cultural and political capital.



Professor Michael BERRY

Professor of Contemporary Chinese Cultural Studies
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Michael Berry (白睿文) Professor of Contemporary Chinese Cultural Studies and Director of the Center for Chinese Studies at UCLA. A Guggenheim Fellow (2023) and a two-time National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellow (2008, 2021), Berry is the author/editor of ten books on Chinese literature and cinema including *Speaking in Images* (2006), *A History of Pain* (2008), *Jia Zhangke on Jia Zhangke* (2022), and *Voiceover: Conversations with Chinese Filmmakers* (2023). He has served as a film consultant and a juror for numerous film festivals, including the Golden Horse (Taiwan) and the Fresh Wave (Hong Kong). He is also the translator of numerous works of fiction, including *To Live* (2004), *Remains of Life* (2017), *Hospital* (2023) *Exorcism* (2023), *Dead Souls* (2025), *Soft Burial* (2025) and *The Running Flame* (2025).

