“Esther Eng and Other Challenges to Women and World Cinema”

A conference co-organized by:
M.A. in Film & Media Studies Program, School of the Arts
The Center for the Study of Ethnicity & Race
Columbia University, New York

February 4-6, 2016

Dorothy Arzner has long provided the paradigm for subversive feminist filmmaking and the inspiration for a number of key questions concerning the (in)visibility and agency of female filmmakers in 20th century Hollywood. However, as S. Louisa Wei’s documentary Golden Gate Girls (2013) reveals, Arzner’s contemporary Esther Eng, a Chinese-American, openly-lesbian director, producer, and distributor working in Hong Kong, San Francisco, and New York, offers a new paradigm for world feminist theory and filmmaking. Eng represents an intervention in the study of female film pioneers through the questions that her career poses surrounding immigration and queer theory, Chinese feminism, transnational filmmaking, and more. This conference will celebrate Eng’s legacy and reconsider feminist theory and world cinema in light of her contribution through keynote talks, panels, screenings, and roundtable discussions. Free and open to the public.

Wednesday, February 3
Conference "preview" event at New York University, Dept. of Cinema Studies
(Michelson Theater, 721 Broadway, 6th Floor)
6:15pm- Screening and discussion: Golden Gate Girls (dir. S. Louisa Wei, 2013)

Thursday, February 4
Columbia University, Dodge Hall, Room 411
12pm-1pm: "How to Make Your Research into a Film"
Lunch/talk with S. Louisa Wei (School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong; Director, Golden Gate Girls)

7:30pm: Conference Introduction: Eugenia Lean (East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University)

7:30-9:30pm: Sites of Cinema: Round Table
Topic: “Esther Eng: Challenges to World Feminism”
Chair: Zhen Zhang (Cinema Studies, New York University)
Yvonne Tasker (Film and Television Studies, University of East Anglia)
Patricia White (Film and Media Studies, Swarthmore College)
Lingzhen Wang (East Asian Studies, Brown University)

Friday, February 5
Butler Library, 522-23- Conference Room
9:30-10:00am: Continental Breakfast/Coffee

10:00-11:30am: Keynote #1
Yvonne Tasker (Film and Television Studies, University of East Anglia)
Introduced by Jane Gaines (Film & Media Studies, Columbia University)

11:45am-1:15pm: Queer Theory and Feminism: How Esther Eng Changes Everything
Chair: Aaron Boalick (Film & Media Studies, Columbia University)
Patricia White (Film and Media Studies, Swarthmore College)
E. K. Tan (Dept. of Cultural Analysis and Theory, Stony Brook University)
Respondent: Yuka Kanno (Graduate School of Global Studies, Doshisha University)

2:45-4:15pm Archival Challenges to Global Feminism
Chair: Kate Saccone (Film & Media Studies, Columbia University)
Paulina Suárez-Hesketh (Cinema Studies, New York University)
Debashree Mukherjee (MESAAS, Columbia University):
Respondent: Ying Qian (East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University)

Conference moves from Butler Library across quad to Dodge Hall

4:30-6pm: Round Table Discussion - 511 Dodge Hall, School of the Arts
   Topic: "Mapping Transnational Media Diversities"
   Chair: Deirdre Boyle (School of Media Studies, The New School)
   DeeDee Halleck (Founder, Paper Tiger Television)
   Frances Negron-Muntaner (English and CSER, Columbia University)
   S. Louisa Wei (School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong; Director, Golden Gate Girls)
   Debra Zimmerman (Executive Director, Women Make Movies)

7:30-9:30pm: Screening - 511 Dodge Hall
   Lost in Beijing (Li Yu, 2007) RT: 112 min
   Introduced by Liu Yang (Film and Theater, Nanjing University)

Saturday, February 6
Butler Library 522-23 – Conference Room
9:00-9:30am: Continental Breakfast/Coffee

9:30-11:00am: More Asian Cinema History Discoveries
   Chair: Emily Yao (French and Romance Philology, Columbia University)
   Weihong Bao (Film & Media Studies/East Asian Languages & Cultures, UC Berkeley)
   Hikari Hori (East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University)
   Respondent: Hilary Hallett (History, Columbia University)

11:00am-12:30pm: Keynote #2
   Lingzhen Wang (East Asian Studies, Brown University)
   Introduced by Liu Yang (Film and Theater, Nanjing University)

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Cinema/Columbia University Seminars.