

East Asia by the Book

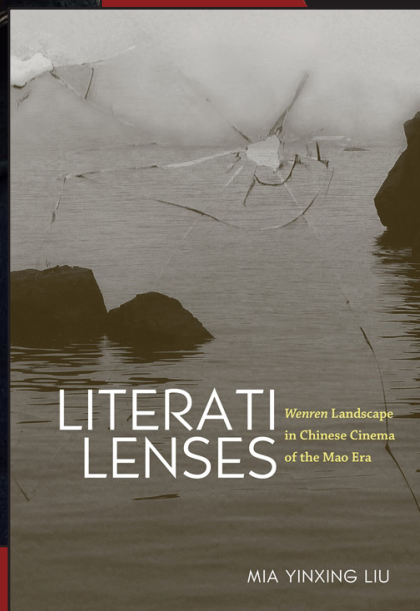
CEAS Author Talks

The Literati Lenses: Wenren Landscape in Chinese Cinema

By *Mia Yinxing Liu*

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Chinese cinema has a long history of engagement with China's art traditions, and literati (wenren) landscape painting has been an enduring source of inspiration. *Literati Lenses* explores this interplay during the Mao era, a time when cinema, at the forefront of ideological campaigns and purges, was held to strict political guidelines. Through four films, Mia Liu reveals how landscape offered an alternative text that could operate beyond political constraints and provide a portal for smuggling interesting discourses into the film. While allusions to pictorial traditions associated with a bygone era inevitably took on different meanings in the context of Mao-era cinema, cinematic engagement with literati landscape endowed films with creative and critical space as well as political poignancy. Liu not only identifies how the conventions and aesthetics of traditional literati landscape art were reinvented and mediated on multiple levels in cinema, but also explores how post-1949 Chinese filmmakers configured themselves as modern intellectuals in the spaces forged among the vestiges of the old. In the process, she deepens her analysis, suggesting that landscape be seen as an allegory of human life, a mirror of the age, and a commentary on national affairs.



MONDAY
Nov 16, 2020
5:00PM (CST)

Discussant:

Paola Iovene

Associate Professor in Chinese
Literature, UChicago

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