



Korean Screen Culture I:

Oct 24, 2018 (Wednesdays) 6-8pm, Wilhelmstraße 133, Room 30

Prof. Chi-Yun Shin (Sheffield Hallam University, UK)

Spectres of Colonial Love & Postcolonial Exorcise: Strange Tales in *Epitaph* (2007)

Abstract:

The 2007 South Korean horror film *Epitaph* (기담) tells three independent yet interwoven 'strange tales' (the literal translation of the Korean title) set in a hospital in 1942, during the last stage of Japanese colonial rule in Korea. The frame story, however, takes place in 1979, as an old medical professor reminisces his trainee days at the hospital. Although the film does not directly comment on the interconnections, by overlaying the colonial reality with the year 1979 when the military dictator Park Chung-hee was assassinated (who had served in the Japanese army as an officer during the colonial period, and who forced on the unfinished Japanese project of colonial modernity), the film takes the form of a composite structure. In addition, its seemingly disparate three 'supernatural' stories of 1942 are all connected by the common theme of love through and beyond life and death, but love here is a deviant kind, fraught with colonial identity crisis and confusion. Considering the film's layered structure and its 'strange' love stories, the paper examines the ways in which *Epitaph* evokes the issues of colonial trauma, identity and memory through the horror genre conventions, while suggesting a different way of viewing the past that haunts the present.

Chi-Yun Shin is Principal Lecturer in Film Studies at Sheffield Hallam University in the UK. She is co-editor of *New Korean Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2005) with Julian Stringer and *East Asian Film Noir: Transnational Encounters and Intercultural Dialogue* (I.B.Tauris, 2015) with Mark Gallagher. She has also published a range of articles on contemporary East Asian cinema and black diaspora films in Britain in various journals and anthologies. Her latest article 'In Another Time and Place: *The Handmaiden* as an Adaptation' is published in the *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*, available Taylor & Francis Online, published Open Access.