



## 11th Seminar on the antecedents and origins of cinema

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### PRESENCES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN THE EARLY YEARS OF CINEMA 1895-1920

<b>DATES:</b>	Thursday, 30th and Friday, 31st March, 2017
<b>PLACE:</b>	EspaiCaixa. Plaza Poeta Marquina, 10. Girona
<b>ORGANISED BY:</b>	Museu del Cinema, Department of History and History of Art of the Universidad de Girona, Consolidated Research Group in the Theories of the Contemporary Art and Project of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness "Presencias y representaciones de la mujer en el cine de los orígenes (PRECINEMUJER)" (Presences and representations of women in the origins of cinema) Ref. HAR2015-66262-P

Forty-one years ago, the cinema researcher Laura Muvley published an article in the film studies magazine, *Screen*, entitled *Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema - Screen 16.3 Autumn 1975*. The text considered the position of women in classical films as the object of the gaze of male desire. This article soon had a considerable scientific impact. It went beyond the psychoanalytic way of thinking, which had become fashionable in the 1970s, and began to pave the way for a series of studies on the representation of women on the screen. The door soon opened and other key works appeared, with researchers such as Teresa de Lauretis, Judith Butler, Janet McCabe, and Giulia Colaizzi leading the way, and ended up consolidating gender studies as an essential branch of knowledge that would have a decisive importance in the historiographical and historical evolution of film studies.

The rise of feminist studies in cinema has mainly focused on the presence and representation of women in classic films, the cinematic avant-garde, in the models arising in cinematic modernism or in the study of contemporary cinema. Among these multiple fields, one of the areas in which the issue has been addressed more tangentially has been the origins of cinema, where, although some works have begun to emerge, there remains a broad range of work still to be done.

The seminar "Presencias y representaciones de la mujer en los primeros años del cine, 1895-1920" (Presences and representations of women in the early years of cinema, 1895-1920) has, as its starting hypothesis, the idea of trying to bring about a convergence in the two ways of approaching the study of cinema: the historiographical approach, focused on the study of original sources; and the theoretical approach, which questions the dominant forms of representation, in particular, the power of masculinity in cinema. These two modes will lead us from the application of some of the hypotheses proposed by studies in the origin of film, to the application of the areas of work explored in the field of *gender studies*. We believe that this coming together is useful in order to cement the relations between history and theory, between empirical research and critical discourse. This is demonstrated by the 'double game' we propose between presence and representation.

### PROCEDURE FOR PROPOSING PAPERS

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#### 1. SUBMISSION OF AN ABSTRACT FOR THE SELECTION OF PAPERS

■ THEME:

a) Specific themes of the 11th seminar:

-Who were the women working in the industry and what prominent roles did they have in the beginnings of cinema? The study of presences involves examination of the archives, cataloguing and

studying those women who worked in the origins of cinema, not just the few directors who carried out projects such as Alice Guy who, as well as being a director, was also a board member of the Pathé company, or Lois Weber, but also women who worked in other fields. Thus it is difficult to understand the work of Georges Méliès without considering Jean d'Alcy, who appeared as an actress in his films but was also a loyal technical collaborator. And the role of Segundo de Chomón could not be understood completely without taking his wife into account, Julienne Mathieu, with whom he opened a workshop in Barcelona for colouring his films and who helped him in his work for the French company, Pathé. The intention is to explore what the role of women was within the cinematographic profession - actresses, editors, decorators - and to see in which departments their presence was barred or was limited - directors of photography, producers.

-How were the behaviours and forms of masculinity created in the origins of cinema? The study of the female presence enables the better understanding of the process of institutionalisation of cinema and the creation of a series of behaviours that were decisive in the development of audiovisual culture.

-Can we consider the question explored by Laura Muvley on the role of women as the object of the male gaze in the cinema's origins as still valid? What was the role the female characters had in the fictions of the early years of the cinema? In classic cinema, the man observes; the woman is observed, she is shown in the eyes of others. The man acts, he controls the emotions, makes things happen; the woman is a passive, decorative element. This dual situation ensure the viewer always chooses the hero as an object of identification and the heroine as an object of enjoyment. This then means that the viewer necessarily goes through the male character to take possession of that which he desires: the female character. Starting from these premises, we can deduce that the cinema was a show made for men. However, in the origins of cinema, narration did not dominate; what generated attention was the visual attraction. What was the role of the male gaze and the visibility of women in a model of cinema intended for the emerging working class and as an element of visual attraction?

-What relationships can we establish between the role of the woman in the origins of cinema and the presence of women in other means of expression in the same era?

-What was the role of the 'woman as viewer' in the origins of cinema? Were there women-oriented fictions or stories? Did women occupy a role as a recipient of the new entertainment spaces that emerged with the rise of modernity at the turn of the century - such as the festival, the funfairs and the cinema - which would form part of those shows based on visual attraction?

-For gender studies, the ideology of male power does not manifest itself in the limited presence of women in films, but in placing women in a universe without time, populated by absolute and abstract entities. This fact places the woman out of history. Did the elements of this historicity develop in these early models of a cinema that was gradually discovering new paths of narrative?

-It is evident that the film provides a model of inclusion of the subject in the ideology; It reveals the mechanism of unconscious sexual difference in our culture and allows the social reception and the institutionalisation of audiovisual messages to be examined to their fullest extent. Did cinema offer a blueprint for the future society of the masses and was the representation of women in this cinema a way of creating the ideological messages of the cinema of the future?

NOTE: The twenty-five years that are covered in the chronological range allows us, at the same time, to observe the process of institutionalisation of cinema and to better understand what the role of women was. This factor allows us to go from the first representations of women in the cinema of attractions to the creation of the Star System. Regarding this last aspect, in the selection of proposals, the seminar will favour the transversality of a film corpus over proposals that reference a particular actress in a particular film.

## ***b) General theme:***

**Presentation of work in progress regarding cinema and pre-cinema until 1915. The seminar will include a working panel on the Magic Lantern, under the umbrella of the European project "A Million Pictures: Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefacts in the Common European History of Learning". Papers on these aspects will be accepted.**

- LENGTH: Summary of the paper in a maximum of 60 lines detailing the current research status of the issue to be considered, the bibliographic reference sources, primary, secondary, or unpublished documentary sources of research and the originality of the contribution.
- SUBMISSION DEADLINE: **31th October, 2016.**
- FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Name, address, telephone, e-mail
- SUBMISSION METHOD: E-mail: [institutestudis@museudelcinema.cat](mailto:institutestudis@museudelcinema.cat)

The Scientific Advisory Committee of the Seminar - comprising Ángel Quintana (UdG), J E Monterde (UB), J M Minguet (UAB), Sandro Machetti (UdL), Luis Alonso (U. Rey Juan Carlos), Begoña Soto (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos), Bernardo Riego (U de Cantabria), Mariona Bruzzo (Filmoteca de Catalunya), F Javier Frutos (U. de Salamanca), María Tortajada (U. de Lausanne), Pietsie Feenstra (U. Paul Valéry de Montpellier), Ramon Girona (UdG) and Jordi Pons (Museu del Cinema) - will evaluate the papers and will inform entrants individually of their acceptance or refusal before **23th November, 2016**

## 2. FORMAL REQUIREMENTS OF ACCEPTED PAPERS:

- MAXIMUM LENGTH. 10 pages (18,000 characters with spaces)
- LANGUAGES: Catalan, Spanish or English  
(There will be simultaneous translation during the seminar sessions)
- ILLUSTRATIONS: On digital media, a maximum of 6 images.
- SUBMISSION DEADLINE: **5th March, 2017**
- SUBMISSION METHOD: properly corrected, by e-mail to [institutestudis@museudelcinema.cat](mailto:institutestudis@museudelcinema.cat)
- ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
  - Name, address, telephone, e-mail
  - Brief curriculum vitae of the author (5 lines) and brief summary of the contents of the text (5 lines)
  - Material needed for the public presentation of the paper

The papers presented during the tenth edition of the seminar will be published in print, along with the presentations, in the course of 2018, provided they have been presented by the author during the seminar. The Scientific Advisory Committee reserves the right to publish, in the volume that includes the proceedings of the seminar, the submitted papers in their entirety or a synopsis - written by the same author - of the papers, and in the latter case, to make the full text available on the website of the Institute of Studies of the Museu del Cinema, for consultation and with the possibility of reproduction.

For any enquiries about the seminar, please contact:

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Kindest regards,

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Girona, 8th June, 2016