

Panel 1: Visuality and Gendered Body Across Borders

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Naked Ambitions: The Nude in Korean Cinema

Our understanding of the naked female body in Korean cinema has largely been filtered through frameworks and circumstances in the construction of a national cinema that compel us to see expressions of female nudity either as violent historical allegory of an oppressed nation or as pornographic representation. This paper explores the boundaries and trajectories between the nude figure and the naked body in select Korean films. It traces developments from Korean cinema's aesthetic engagement in the 1960s with the female form through an interest in the art cinema of the French New Wave to more contemporary digital artification processes in which we see covertly captured sex tapes and photos transformed into works of art in mainstream films about political and corporate corruption. It examines the less explored aesthetic contours and filmic engagement with the nude and the female form, and in the process questions how the complex iconicity of the Western nude gets transformed into a figure of naked fraud, which in turn becomes understood as fundamental to femininity itself. By placing nude art and the artification of nudity in films alongside nudes in Korean art, popular culture and social media, this paper discusses the ways in which fraudulence and deception gets coded as feminine in Korean visual culture.