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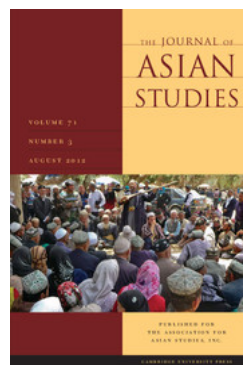
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Chinese Women's Cinema: Transnational Contexts.
Edited by Lingzhen Wang. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. xx, 430 pp. \ \$82.50 (cloth); \ \$27.50 (paper); \ \$24.75 (Kindle).

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Chinese women's cinema has attracted increasing critical attention since the first decade of the twenty-first century. *Chinese Women's Cinema*, edited by Lingzhen Wang, includes sixteen essays and an introduction. Together, they cover the representative work of noteworthy Chinese women filmmakers in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, as well as Chinese films that focus on female protagonists and women's issues in the context of the Chinese diaspora from the 1920s to 2007. The book provides further insight into the subject by reconfiguring the relationship between film discourse and women's cinema in the transnational feminist context.

Scholarly debates concerning women, feminism, and films, which tend to leave China out of the picture, are discussed in such books as *Feminism and Film Theory*, edited by Constance Penley (Routledge, 1988); *Reel Knockouts: Violent Women in the Movies*, edited by Martha McCaughey and Neal King (University of Texas Press, 2001); Mary Ann Doane's *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Indiana University Press, 1987); and *Women's Experimental Cinema: Critical Frameworks*, edited by Robin Blaetz (Duke University Press, 2007).

Barbara Koenig Quart's *Women Directors: The Emergence of a New Cinema* (Praeger, 1988) examines American, European, and Third World women directors, including Lu Xiaoya, Zhang Nuanxin, and Ann Hui. While it investigates the same geopolitical areas as Wang's edited volume, *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, edited by Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu (University of Hawai'i Press, 1997) discusses films by prominent male Chinese directors. Shuqin Cui's *Women through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2003) covers the early production of the National cinema, Socialist cinema, and the New Wave in mainland China, with a separate chapter on Hong Kong film. Cui interrogates how the filmmakers, though paying attention to women's oppression, have silenced female subjectivity from the leftist films of the 1930s to the present Hong Kong postmodern cinema.

The authors of the sixteen essays in Wang's book include Wang herself, Yau Ching, Zhen Zhang, Xingyang Li, Yu-Shan Huang and Chun-Chi Wang, E. Ann Kaplan, S. Louisa Wei, Gina Marchetti, Shuqin Cui, Yiman Wang, Yingjin Zhang, Christopher Lupke, Jingyuan Zhang, Kar Law, Staci Ford, and Shiao-Ying Shen. This book offers new insights in analyzing the strategies and alternative methods that the women directors adopt to enter the mainstream under national and cultural policy, ideological censorship, commercial expectations, and distribution restraints. The volume expertly dissolves the key questions of the binary opposition of male hegemony and female object by exploring the two sexes' collaborative works, such as the woman playwright Chu Tien-wen's gendered expression in Hou Hsiao-hsien's films, auteurs, the topics of female authorship and female subjectivity, and the directors' cinema whose theme is the transgender, for example, director Chou Zero's *Yanguang sise gewutuan* 《豔光四射歌舞團》 [Splendid

float] (2004). The authors intertwine the significant issues in Chinese women's cinema: nation and narrative, gender and feminism, stereotype and representation, and socialism and capitalism in the transnational and geopolitical contexts.

Part III ("The Visual Subject and Feminist Cinema") opens with Louisa Wei's chapter exploring the innovative contributions made in the 1980s and 1990s by female directors of the so-called Fifth Generation of filmmakers who graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982, including Hu Mei, Liu Miaomiao, Li Shaohong, and Peng Xiaolian. Wei argues "for the existence of a female counter-cinema in 1980s and 1990s China, which functioned to (re)write women's history/story, (re)construct women's speeches/voice, and/or (re)map women's space/place" (p. 33). In Taiwan, women's cinema is influenced by "the new Taiwan cinema movement of the early 1980s, the women's visual arts festival of the early 1990s, and women's documentary filmmaking since the mid-1990s" (p. 36). Wang concludes in the introduction: "The history of Chinese women's cinema illustrates how women's participation in filmmaking is geopolitically and historically contingent, and how women's films' meanings resist uniform interpretation. Gender matters in understanding Chinese women's cinema but is itself a historically and geopolitically specific concept always in need of close examination" (p. 39). In discussing Chinese female filmmakers' cinema, the essays in this volume do not neglect male directors' cinema, covering such topics as the gender expression in the films of Hou Hsiao-hsien in Taiwan. A bilingual filmography and glossary at the end of the book offer useful references for film titles and directors' names.

Despite the book's many merits, some issues deserve further consideration. For example, one might wonder why it was necessary to include two essays on the films of Xu Jinglei (pp. 154–70 and pp. 293–310), except that the two essays are written by two different scholars for an editor who is open to the expression of diverse viewpoints. In addition, what was the rationale for compiling these particular essays, which treat the cinema of specific female directors and cinema directed by specific men on women's issues, instead of any other cinema in the same national geography or within the Chinese diaspora? For instance, there is no essay focused on the films of the famous Hong Kong woman director Hui Ann or on Oscar-winner Lee Ang's gender-issue films, such as *The Wedding Banquet* (1993). Also, the emphasis is disproportionately on women directors in China rather than on women directors in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Australia.

Chinese Women's Cinema will be of great interest to students, scholars, and readers concerned with film studies, area studies, cultural studies, and women's studies. This book successfully addresses this audience by unearthing previously overlooked materials and presenting critical analysis and comments on select films by scholars in the United States, mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

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