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Forum för Afrikastudier

Friday Research Seminar in Africa Studies

Religions in Sub-Saharan African cinemas: Authenticities and Others

with

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House 3, room 2028, Engelska Parken
Thunsbergsvägen 3H, Uppsala

Authenticity and Otherness have been essential elements in theorizing African cinema(s), and despite the advent of the video and appearance of new cinematic trends defying traditional categories of cinematic production, execution and distribution, the Spectre of Sembene – father of African cinema – keeps haunting African filmmakers and film scholars alike. The idea is that African cinemas, be it the FESPACO or Nollywood type, convey and construct images that are intricately related to the search of a cinematic African subject either by opposing, adopting or ignoring a nebulous and problematic idea of African identity. An integral part of this project can be traced in the cinematic treatment of religions and perceptions of religions in Sub-Saharan films. More specifically in the ways various versions of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religions have been portrayed as emblematic of the foreign and other, of an African authenticity, plurality or problematic. Focusing on specific films illustrating major cinematic trends in Sub-Saharan film history, the presentation will reflect on how religious representations play an important role in the complex search for and construction of that cinematic African subject.

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