

Tianyue Zhang (EALC): "Radiance: Espionage, War, and 'Surface Aesthetics' in Xu Xu's *The Rustling Wind*"

This presentation investigates the wartime spy fiction *The Rustling Wind* (1943) by Xu Xu. While in classic spy stories every encrypted message by necessity demands a proper interpretation, this novel never brings to light its characters' political affiliation or any explicit intelligence. Instead, it is saturated with abstract depictions of light. My paper close-reads this unusual information economy — where "useful" intelligence is replaced by enigmatic radiance — against the backdrop of wartime popular epistemologies of light. Departing from both mainstream wartime Chinese literature and the espionage genre, the novel may be read as an ethical response to contemporary politics as well as literary representation.

Friday, October 4th, noon to 1pm, in the EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall

Chen Tai (EALC): "Selective Transmission of a Monster Story in Early China."

The young Lu Xun (1881–1936) once stumbled upon a legend about a monster. Legend has it that the monster, "Monstrosity," appeared two thousand years ago, before a sage melted it in alcohol. But when Lu Xun began his search for an interpretation of this legend, his teacher refused to talk. Lu Xun's search blossomed into a reconstruction of this lore in his early short fiction. But the question of the provenance of the monster remains unanswered. In this presentation, I take a reverse approach to the anecdote. Sewing each fragment of the story back into the context of its transmission, this talk will delve into lost literary sources through the informed use of compendia.

Friday, October 18, noon to 1pm, in the EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall

Wendy Wan-Ting Wang (EALC): "Bodies on the Timber Reels: Taiwan's Cold War Forestry Film"

This talk explores two forestry-themed films from Taiwan, *Spring of Jade Hill* (翠嶺長春, 1958) and *Black Forest* (黑森林, 1964), shot at state-owned logging sites in the 1950s-60s. I interpret these films as testing grounds for reconceptualizing how human bodies mediate between technical infrastructure and the natural environment. This study complicates frameworks of Cold War film studies by integrating environmental perspectives and evolving concepts of indigeneity within geopolitical analysis. Moreover, it addresses a gap in Taiwanese film studies by unveiling these forestry films' unrealized ambitions to portray a utopian agrarian landscape, contrasting with the contemporaneous Healthy Realism aesthetic.

Friday, November 1, noon to 1pm, in the EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall

Robert Ashmore (EALC): "The Body Breaking (through): Performance and Embodied Truth in 4th-c. Textual and Aesthetic Culture"

This essay is part of a project on hermeneutical thought and practice in Chinese classicist traditions, centering on the persistent linkage in these traditions between seemingly disparate modes of "interpretation"—i.e., textual exegesis on the one hand, and embodied performance on the other. The particular question to be addressed here is to what extent such a framing, drawing on problematics from early interpretive traditions in and of classical ritual texts, might shed light on an "aesthetic turn" in fourth-century (Eastern Jin) thought and textual practice, with particular reference to the art of calligraphy.

Friday, November 15, noon to 1pm in the EALC Library, 287 Dwinelle Hall