Teh, David, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Animate Cinema: Permeability and Radical Candour

This paper offers the outlines of a 'permeable cinema', as exemplified by some contemporary film and video practices in Southeast Asia. Identifying here a critique of the sealed mode of industrial filmmaking, film discourse has emphasized practical innovation (non-professional cast; unscripted and improvised performance; location shooting, etc). But this new approach – which typically exploits the newer medium of digital video – also draws on much older modes of mediation. Of what cultural traditions, what non- and pre-cinematic forms, does it partake? Taking as a starting point the work of Thai artist-filmmaker, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, this paper traces permeability beyond the scene of production, crossing other, popular histories of performance and mediation. I will explore the ramifications of a permeable cinema for authorship, social agency, and the potential mnemonic function of the image. Might it give rise to a social history? What sort of an archive does it generate? I will propose that permeable cinema, suspending the supposed opposition between theatricality and reality, yields a *radical candour* where improvisation and play reveal embedded social archetypes; where the lived experience of individuals bleeds into oral and social history; and where the moving image rediscovers its redundancy.