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East-Asian Dolls: Lessons in Gendered (Im)mobility

This conference presentation and future paper will discuss a range of mediated narratives of East-Asian femininity, focusing on doll- and puppet-related images and objects recurrent in contemporary popular culture, including toys and adult toys. These will be drawn from a variety of sources, ranging from tourist campaigns and heritage movements to openly exploitative projects. Images of doll-girls and doll-women will be historicized, offering a comparative Central European/East Asian perspective. Methodologically incorrect(ed) gaze, with regard to the notion of "mobility," is to be implemented. The presentation and paper will be based on tangible ethnographic and auto-ethnographic feminist action-research in Seoul, South Korea (with some Japanese, Croatian, and Italian twists). The background agenda will be to discuss the fragility of western conceptual tools in understanding East-Asian gender constructs and to review important ethical demands directed at both the western feminist scholars working in East Asia and the Occidentalized East-Asian cultural studies intelligentsia.