**BFI WORKSHOP on THEORISING MEXICAN CINEMA THROUGH ARCHIVE-FILMS**

Ever since it was constituted as a major regional industry in the 1940s, Mexican cinema - in common with its far more powerful northern neighbour in Hollywood - developed what critic Emilio García Riera called “a nostalgic cult to itself”. A key component of this was what I call the “nostalgia compilation”: industry-produced anthology films that spliced together iconic footage from well-known movies with the aim of promoting leading stars and genres while extracting surplus value from old film prints. In subsequent decades filmmakers such as Nancy Cárdenas, Carlos Monsiváis, Marcela Fernández and Ximena Cuevas revisited the industrial movie-heritage nostalgia compilation genre with critical, experimental or countercultural aims. This session will look at a number of films from this corpus including *México de mis amores* (Mexico of My Loves, 1979), *De cuerpo presente* (With The Body Present, 1998) and *México, un país llamado cine* (Mexico, A Country Named Cinema, 2018), showing how they use techniques such as ironic citation and critical *remontaje* to create new re-readings of Mexican film history. In the workshop I will argue that these archive-films can be seen as sites of original film-theoretical thought, proposing as they do new insights on the problematic construction of national film heritage and the national-cinema canon, the variously manipulative and generative uses of stardom and generic conventions (particularly those of melodrama), and the widespread use of patriarchal and *machista* tropes.

The workshop will be led by David M.J. Wood (Research Fellow at University College London).

This will be an interactive session with film clips and the opportunity for attendees to engage and debate.

**Further Reading Suggestions:**

Gutiérrez, Laura G. “Ximena Cuevas’s Critical Collages”. In *Performing Mexicanidad: vendidas y cabareteras on the transnational stage*, pp.151-166. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010.

Monsiváis, Carlos. “One Suffers But One Learns: Melodrama and the Rules of Lack of Limits”. In *Melodrama Unbound: Across History, Media, and National Cultures* (ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams), pp.151-168. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

Noble, Andrea. *Mexican National Cinema*. London/New York: Routledge, 2005.

Wood, David M.J. “[Film and the Archive: Nation, Heritage, Resistance](https://cosmosandhistory.org/index.php/journal/article/view/199)”. *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 6.2 (2010): 162-174.