

Program in Transnational Korean Studies

“Three Days a Day”



Presents:

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“Seoul and the Emergence of Landscape and Cuisine in Contemporary Korean Media: Across Shifting Borders to Displaced Spectators”

Monday, May 23, 2016
4:00 – 6:00pm
Red Shoe Room, Price Center West

If Im Kwŏn T’aek’s masterpiece, “Sŏp’yŏnje” (1993), marked the emergence of landscape in Korean national cinema, then the internationally-celebrated historical drama “Jewel in the Palace” (2003) invented Korean cuisine transnationally as an essential element in the newly aestheticized national landscape. Through an analysis of changing representations of Korean food in film (“Chilsu and Mansu,” 1988; “The Way Home,” 2002;

“Samaritan Girl,” 2004; “Le Grand Chef,” 2007, 2010), and contemporary media genres like reality shows (“Three Meals A Day,” 2014-2015; AfreecaTV), this project asks how food has become a new locus of grounding and mediation in the urban Korean ethnoscapes of Seoulites, tourists, international students, and exilic bodies in constant motion between shifting centers and peripheries, and across borders. A recurrent theme emerges as the absence of mother in the increasingly gendered imaginaries of the young Seoulites “consuming” food shows, famous fathers feeding their children, and young male celebrities organic farming and cooking in the remote countryside. The aroma of Korean food, like Proust’s famous madeleines, reaches powerfully across (transnational) boundaries, in opening up forgotten memories of lost mothers and hometowns to the diasporic community, who keep up with the latest Korean programs online through their laptops, and create new imagined futurities. These forms of electronic capitalism create imagined communities whose identities are created beyond the Seoul city and spatial borders, and reconfigures new spaces where that same identity is consumed through a voyeuristic relationship with food as culturally framed in media production about the city and countryside.

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