Screening Shanghai:
Public Screens and Public Space

Professor Chris Berry (King’s College, University of London)

Date and Time: December 11, 2014 (Thursday); 11:00am-12:30pm
Venue: Room 730, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU

Abstract: How are moving image screens in public spaces participating in the transformation of public culture under neoliberalism? This talk examines the functions of public screens at Shanghai sites such as the Wujiaochang shopping district, the Shanghai Science and Technology Museum, and the Shanghai South Railway Station. While some scholars have argued that public culture is now centred on cyberspace and the neoliberal city is generic sprawl, recent events in Hong Kong, Taipei, Cairo, and other major cities around the world have proved this wrong and demonstrated that control over urban public space and remain crucial. This talk argues that the study of public screen culture in Shanghai enables us to understand the both the wider and the specifically Chinese neoliberal vision for urban public life as an individualized culture of competitive material aspiration that is redundantly engineered to block the development of collective democratic participation.

Chris Berry is Professor of Film Studies at King’s College London. His work centres on screen culture in the Chinese-speaking world and East Asia. Publications include: (edited with Janet Harbord and Rachel Moore), Public Space, Media Space (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); (edited with Lu Xinyu and Lisa Rofel), The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record (Hong Kong UP, 2010); and (edited with Kim Soyoung and Lynn Spigel), Electronic Elsewhere: Media, Technology, and Social Space (Minnesota UP, 2010), and (authored with Mary Farquhar) Cinema and the National: China on Screen (Columbia and Hong Kong Ups, 2006).

All are welcome!