

David Wagner (Wien): *Sur/faces: Faces and Masks on Film*

What happens to faces on film? While concentrating on the function of faces and masks in cinematic narratives, I will consider contributions by Aumont, Balász, Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty. On the silver-screen, both faces and masks are mere flickering surfaces of movement and light. That may be true, but it is certainly not the whole story. A face is not any kind of object. Even though we often talk of reading faces, our actual experience is nearer to an intuitive mode of seeing. Are faces then by themselves meaningful? Do they tell us things? Or is their function rather to affirm or refute our judgments?