



The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses

Laura U. Marks, Dana Polan

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Memories that evoke the physical awareness of touch, smell, and bodily presence can be vital links to home for people living in diaspora from their culture of origin. How can filmmakers working between cultures use cinema, a visual medium, to transmit that physical sense of place and culture? In *The Skin of the Film* Laura U. Marks offers an answer, building on the theories of Gilles Deleuze and others to explain how and why intercultural cinema represents embodied experience in a postcolonial, transnational world.

Much of intercultural cinema, Marks argues, has its origin in silence, in the gaps left by recorded history. Filmmakers seeking to represent their native cultures have had to develop new forms of cinematic expression. Marks offers a theory of “haptic visuality”—a visuality that functions like the sense of touch by triggering physical memories of smell, touch, and taste—to explain the newfound ways in which intercultural cinema engages the viewer bodily to convey cultural experience and memory. Using close to two hundred examples of intercultural film and video, she shows how the image allows viewers to experience cinema as a physical and multisensory embodiment of culture, not just as a visual representation of experience. Finally, this book offers a guide to many hard-to-find works of independent film and video made by Third World diasporic filmmakers now living in the United States, Great Britain, and Canada.

The Skin of the Film draws on phenomenology, postcolonial and feminist theory, anthropology, and cognitive science. It will be essential reading for those interested in film theory, experimental cinema, the experience of diaspora, and the role of the sensuous in culture.

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