

Con-founded Object: (Recent) Thai film and the global / local.

Abstract

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The “global” and “globalizing” technology of film has enjoyed a presence in Thailand / Siam almost since its inception. Throughout the twentieth century, and as part of the uneven nature of the “global,” this has meant the deep penetration of everyday Thai life with the spectacle of, above all, Hollywood images and genres (though Chinese diasporic films have also now been long present) inflecting local product and experience. This paper re-traces the historically specific conditions that colour film production and exhibition in Thailand, then examines some recent Thai films in the context of a global / local nexus. The film *Fa Talai Jone / Tears of the Black Tiger* (2000), “anastomosing” the “Spaghetti Western” and the Thai genre films of the 1960s to create a highly exoticised experience of cinematic nostalgia presents a particularly attractive, yet difficult and unruly postmodern text. The film is discussed in its “global” reception, with respect to upcoming Thai productions, and in contrast with other recent Thai representations of the past with regard to national identity, the boundaries of the nation and shifting global flows of ideas, images and capital.