

The Place of Women's Filmmaking in an Interdisciplinary Architecture Curriculum Course

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This paper explores the use of films made by women within the interdisciplinary course *The 'Place' of Film: Cinematic Spaces, Sites, Settings* I offer as an elective at the Department of Architecture at Middle East Technical University. With a global emphasis, the course considers the ways in which cinema defines, reconsiders, and reshapes the notions of place and space. The main aim of *The 'Place' of Film* is to survey various approaches to “cinematic space” by studying a wide array of themes, concepts, and theories while also considering what happens to viewer's sense of space and/or place in different media environments. The topics of the course includes domesticity, borders and movement, screening space and spectatorship, cine-museology, national and transnational spaces, animated worldmaking, and digital realisms. Within this context, I extensively incorporate women's filmmaking to the curriculum especially opting for exemplary films that provide the students with a rich basis to discuss the construction of gender and cinematic space in relation to each other.

In this paper, I will consider the interdisciplinary discussions the class generated on two films: *The Babadook* (dir. Jennifer Kent, Australia, 2014) and *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (dir. Ana Lily Amirpour, US, 2015). Both films deconstruct not only the horror genre conventions but also the prevailing gender roles such conventions formulate and develop around. We analyze *The Babadook* under the week titled “Home” and discuss issues of gender, motherhood, domestic space, and domesticity vis-à-vis how the film challenges the traditional social constructions of gender by revamping haunted house and gothic horror formulas. Students watch and dissect *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* for the week titled “The Street” where we investigate the construction of gender within public and private spaces in relation to women's transnational filmmaking. With these classroom discussions of the case studies in mind, the paper considers how the pedagogical use of women's filmmaking within the context of an interdisciplinary course allows the students to understand the socio-culturally constructed nature of gender by exploring how diverse strategies of cinematic representation deconstruct and reshape the concept of gender in connection to the cinematic fabrications of sense of space and/or place.

Selected Bibliography:

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Short Biography:

Ekin Pinar is assistant professor at the Department of Architecture at Middle East Technical University. She received her Ph.D. from the History of Art department at the University of Pennsylvania. Her areas of interest include history of art and architecture (modern and contemporary), cinema studies, history and theory of animation, history of experimental film and visual culture, expanded cinema, site-specific art, museum studies, institutional critique, and gender and sexuality studies. She has taught several courses on history and theory of film, animation, and modern and contemporary art and architecture at the History of Art department and Cinema Studies program at the University of Pennsylvania, at Middle East Technical University, as well as at the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Film at the Franklin and Marshall College.