

Liverpool Film Seminar

2017 – 2018 series

Every year, Liverpool Film Seminar invites experts to deliver a series of talks. Topics vary greatly and the series does not focus on a specific aspect of film. Instead, a range of genres and approaches are celebrated, from historical reach to the internet's impact on cinematic material.

Professor Chris Holmlund (University of Tennessee, Knoxville)

The Trouble with Female Trouble

John Waters' 'Female Trouble' is a heady mix of art and exploitation, politics and pulp. Yet, due to inadequate study of the other performances, insufficient appreciation of its 'Balti-moron' production values, and imprecise attention to the cultural and industrial times, too often today it is labelled 'camp', 'cult' or 'gay'. After interviewing those still alive, perusing Waters' papers, reviewing critical literature, and reflecting on my own experiences as a Marylander



engaged in the political movements and audiences of the time, I agree with Karl Schoonover that "it is [...] crucial that we not read Divine's stardom" - or the other performances and production - "only in terms of our current media culture's assumptions about camp, irony, parody, and sex."

A sociological phenomenon at base, it screamed at Nixon's Silent Majority. Today it continues to question established thought. Chris Holmlund is the author of 'Female Trouble' (Arsenal Pulp Press 2017) and 'Impossible Bodies' (Routledge 2002). She edited 'The Ultimate Stallone Reader' (Wallflower 2014) and 'American Cinema of the 1990s' (Rutgers 2008) and co-edited 'Between the Sheets, In the Streets: Queer, Lesbian, Gay Documentary' (Minnesota 1997) and 'Contemporary American Independent Film' (Routledge 2005). She is finishing 'Being John Malkovich' (Edinburgh) and beginning a new book on Action/Adventure Films.