

ARTHEMIS

Is pleased to present a lecture by

Sarah Cooper

Merleau-Ponty and Film Theory

March 20, 2015

EV 6,720

1515 ste-Catherine W.

16h00

From the mid-1940s, when Maurice Merleau-Ponty gave a lecture on film at the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques in Paris, which was subsequently published as 'Le Cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie' ('Cinema and the New Psychology'), film scholars have shown a keen interest in the relationship between his philosophy and cinema. During his lifetime, his thinking influenced a number of important film theorists, from Amédée Aifre, who was a student of his, through André Bazin to Henri Agel. More recently, and largely due to the pioneering work of Vivian Sobchack, his phenomenology has been the source of inspiration for thinking about the film experience as one of embodied vision. In this paper, and in tandem with this history of scholarship, I revisit my own fascination with his philosophy and its legacy to film theory as touched on in my

book *The Soul of Film Theory*, shifting my focus now from a concern with the soul to consideration of the imagination. Although his work on perception is more widely discussed by film theorists, I explore here what we can learn from Merleau-Ponty about the imagination and how this might enhance our understanding of cinema.



Sarah Cooper is Professor of Film Studies at King's College London. She has published extensively in the area of film theory. Her books include: *The Soul of Film Theory* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *Chris Marker* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); and *Selfless Cinema? Ethics and French Documentary* (Oxford: Legenda, 2006). She also edited 'The Occluded Relation: Levinas and Cinema', Special Issue, *Film-Philosophy*, vol. 11, issue 2, 2007.