



THE CINEMA OF TANAKA KINUYO: (De)constructing the figure of the ‘female director’ in Japan

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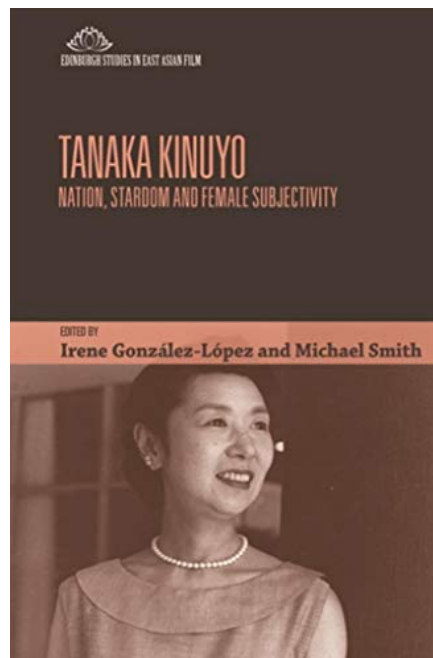
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Asien-Afrika-Institut, Raum 121

In the early 1950s, Tanaka Kinuyo, one of Japan’s most beloved stars, shook the industry by turning to film direction at the age of 43. Tanaka went on to direct six feature fiction films between 1953 and 1962, becoming a trailblazing figure in the history of world cinema. As her films are being reappraised in recent years around the globe, Tanaka offers a fascinating case study through which to rethink the relationship between gender and authorship.

This lecture introduces the life and career of Tanaka Kinuyo and examines the ways in which her controversial decision to work behind the camera was received and discussed in the industry throughout the years. It examines a wide range of primary sources, including Tanaka’s autobiography, interviews with crew members who worked under Tanaka, and posters and promotional materials of her films. The aim is to further our understanding of how the figure of the ‘female director’ is culturally

constructed by shedding light on the gendered experiences of authorship, stardom, and ageism that intersected in Tanaka’s career.

Dr Irene González-López is Lecturer in Japanese Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London. Her research spans Japanese creative industries, with a special focus on postwar cinema and issues related to gender and sexuality, both in front and behind the camera. Her publications in various book chapters and journal articles explore topics of representation, female authorship, stardom, and reception. In 2018 she co-edited the first academic book on actress and director Tanaka Kinuyo. She is currently working on a book on the representation of sex work in Japanese cinema, and on an edited volume on documentary director Haneda Sumiko.



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