“Beyond Cheap Thrills: The ‘Pop-Out’ Debate in 3D Cinema Today”
Prof. Dr. Barbara Klinger

One of the most debated aspects of contemporary 3D cinema is its use of the illusion of depth that extends from the screen into the auditorium. In technical terms this is known as negative parallax and often simply called “pop-out” by audiences. Critics often equate negative parallax with low-budget 3D films of the 1950s, such as Creature from the Black Lagoon in which the amphibious claw of the title monster, as it reaches for the viewer, seems to exploit 3D technology for cheap thrills and quick profits. However, the dismissal of negative parallax as mere gimmickry has obscured some vital functions it serves in film. Suspending this criticism, Prof. Klinger sheds light on the textual roles of this key 3D element and experience. Her talk will draw on a variety of films, including superhero blockbusters, horror and fantasy films, comedies as well as art-house documentaries.

Barbara Klinger is President-Elect of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies and Interim Chair and Professor of Film and Media Studies of the Department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. She is the author of Melodrama and Meaning: History, Culture, and the Films of Douglas Sirk (Indiana University Press, 1994) and Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home (University of California Press, 2006).

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