

Liverpool Film Seminar

2019 – 2020 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 Mandy Merck (Royal Holloway)

A Star is Born - Again

The Pygmalion myth of a male creator's love for his female creation has enjoyed an abiding life on screen. From 1937 to 2018, Hollywood has made and remade the story of a talented nobody discovered by a waning star four times, always with remarkable success. Recharged with rock music and the addition of cocaine, *A Star Is Born* has long since switched its original Oscar scenes to the Grammys while diluting the male star's dominance, but the iron law of succession is still in force: for a star to rise, another must fall. In addition to this edict feminist commentators have recently noted another laid down in these films: women's success is a threat to men. Reviewing all four versions in the light of the #Me Too movement, this talk – from Mandy Merck's forthcoming study *Cinema's Melodramatic Celebrity* considers this perennial narrative of contested celebrity at a time when the 'forgotten man' is attempting a comeback.

Biography:

Mandy Merck is Professor of Media Arts at Royal Holloway, University of London. *Cinema's Melodramatic Celebrity: Film, Fame and Personal Worth* will be published by BFI Bloomsbury this autumn.