



LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN

FAKULTÄT FÜR KULTURWISSENSCHAFTEN
INSTITUT FÜR ETHNOLOGIE



Einladung zum Oberseminar am Montag, den 20.06.2011

Institut für Ethnologie
Edmund-Rumpler-Str. 9, Raum 110
18 -20 Uhr

A Century of Cinemagoing in Mexico City: The Roles of Audience and Uses of Urban Space

Prof. Dr. Ana Rosas Mantecón

Departamento de Antropología (UAM, Mexico)
Visiting Fellow at Goldsmiths University of London

Cinemagoing is a cultural practice that differs throughout time and places. The lecture will trace the changing forms it adopted in Mexico City since the arrival of the cinema till the beginning of the 21st century.

Cinemagoing cannot be understood in itself, so the lecture will articulate the analysis of the audiences' behavior within the theaters, and the changes in the forms of use of urban space. Mexico City cannot be fully grasped without its cinema theaters either. They became key spaces for the city's modernization and secularization, allowed the exercise of sociability -through the coexistence between unknown people with diverse social backgrounds-, and favored new forms of collective life when the metropolis became fragmented and segregated.

Mexico City and its cinema theatres have danced in and out of step, so the lecture will analyze four emblematic periods:

- 1) The arrival of Cinema and the forging of the new audience within a changing city (1896-1930)
- 2) The city and cinemas as places of inclusion (1940-1970)
- 3) Urban and cinema crisis: segregation, fragmentation and the disappearance of cinemas (1980-1994)
- 4) Urban reorganization and film screenings: city and cinema reunite (1995-2005)

Special attention will be paid to the emergence and development of the cinema audience, showing its transformation from actor to spectator, the encouragement to accept the non-negotiation of the screening, the self-controlled behavior (in silence and attentive), the darkness and being surrounded by anonymous and diverse individuals. Seeking to transcend the analysis of the communicative or aesthetic dimensions, the lecture will focus on the set of social processes that condition the audiences' relationship with film. From this perspective, the *role of audience* will be understood as an identity, not a mere activity, but a way of *being with others* that helps people to act in screening rooms and in the city as well.

The research was based on the analysis of material available in historical archives about the city, its festivities and spectacles. The place of cinema in the city is not only characterized by testimonies, chronicles and reviews but also through analyses of magazines, regulatory texts, movie theatres' architectonic spaces, statistics, census, literary texts and other sources, like interviews and ethnography.