

CALL FOR PAPERS

CFP: Melodrama: Home is Where the Heart Is
An area of multiple panels for the 2017 Film & History Conference
Representing “Home”: The Real and Imagined Spaces of Belonging
November 1-November 5, 2017
The Hilton Milwaukee City Center
Milwaukee, WI (USA)

DEADLINE for abstracts: Early acceptance: June 1, 2017; General acceptance: July 1, 2017

Melodrama, in the words of Ben Singer, is a topic that “[remains] close to the heart and hearth.” From the maternal melodramas of the 1930s and 1940s (Stella Dallas, Mildred Pierce) to the great family melodramas of the 1950s by filmmakers such as Nicholas Ray, Vincente Minnelli, and Douglas Sirk, the genre was known for stylistic excess, overwrought emotion, and tales of tears, maternal sacrifice, and desperate domesticity.

How have our understandings of these classic films so closely tied to “home” shifted over time? How has the melodrama come to be seen not as a single genre, but as the underlying mode of mainstream American cinema—encompassing practically every genre? What does it mean that the fundamental traits of melodrama—pathos, wronged victims, the loss of innocence, nostalgia for the past, and stark moral conflicts—have come to be understood as the bedrock not only of American cinema, but much of American culture and politics more generally?

This area invites 20-minute papers (inclusive of visual presentations) on melodrama. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Family, or domestic, melodramas
- The idea of the melodramatic home as a “space of innocence.”
- New takes on classic family melodramas, such as *Home from the Hill*, *Written on the Wind*, *Imitation of Life*, *Splendor in the Grass*, *Bigger than Life*
- The maternal melodrama (from *Stella Dallas* to *Thirteen*)
- Melodrama and film style
- Melodramatic stars
- Soap operas (daytime or primetime, older or more recent)
- Melos (music) + drama
- Melodrama auteurs
- Melodrama and race
- The history of melodrama within film studies
- The melodramatic underpinnings of any genre
- Melodrama and global cinema

Proposals for complete panels (three related presentations) are also welcome, but they must include an abstract and contact information, including an e-mail address, for each presenter. For updates and registration information about the upcoming meeting, see the Film & History website (www.filmandhistory.org).

Please e-mail your 200-word proposal to the area chair:

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