

## **Society of Fellows in the Humanities** Spring Programme

June 6, 2019 5 PM Room11.01 Run Run Shaw Tower Centennial Campus

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## **Book Launch & Reception**

Kurosawa's Rashomon: A Vanished City, a Lost Brother, and the Voice Inside His Iconic Films (Chinese edition), by Paul Anderer (Columbia University)

A groundbreaking investigation into the early life of the iconic Akira Kurosawa in connection to his most famous film—taking us deeper into Kurosawa and his world.

Although he is a filmmaker of international renown, Kurosawa and the story of his formative years remain as enigmatic as his own Rashomon. Paul Anderer looks back at Kurosawa before he became famous, taking us into the turbulent world that made him. We encounter Tokyo, Kurosawa's birthplace, which would be destroyed twice before his eyes; explore early twentieth-century Japan amid sweeping cross-cultural changes; and confront profound family tragedy alongside the horror of war. From these multiple angles we see how Kurosawa's life and work speak to the epic narrative of modern Japan's rise and fall. With fresh insights and vivid prose, Anderer engages the Great Earthquake of 1923, the dynamic energy that surged through Tokyo in its wake, and its impact on Kurosawa as a youth. When the city is destroyed again, in the fire-bombings of 1945, Anderer reveals how Kurosawa grappled with the trauma of war and its aftermath, and forged his artistic vision. Finally, he resurrects the specter and the voice of a gifted and troubled older brother—himself a star in the silent film industry—who took Kurosawa to see his first films, and who led a rebellious life until his desperate end. Bringing these formative forces into focus, Anderer looks beyond the aura of Kurosawa's fame and leads us deeper into the tragedies and the challenges of his past. Kurosawa's Rashomon uncovers how a film like Rashomon came to be, and why it endures to illuminate the shadows and the challenges of our present.

Paul Anderer is the author of Other Worlds: Arishima Takeo and the Bounds of Modern Japanese Fiction, and Literature of the Lost Home: Kobayashi Hideo — Literary Criticism, 1924-1939. He has written widely on Tokyo and the culture of cities. He teaches courses on Japanese literature and film at Columbia University, where he is the Mack Professor of Humanities. Paul Anderer lives in New York City.

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