



**Universität
Zürich** UZH



**Aesthetics of Early Sound Film Revisited:
Hybrid Films Between Silent and Sound (c. 1926–1939)
14-17 September 2023**

University of Zurich (Switzerland) in collaboration with Tsuru University (Japan)

Film scholars sometimes tend to neatly divide cinema's output from the 1920s and 1930s into silent films, on one hand, and sound films, on the other. In fact, however, many films from the period were *neither* silent *nor* sound but rather *something in between*. The production of part-talkies, synchronized films and other forms of hybrid films was a widespread phenomenon in global cinema and profoundly shaped the aesthetics of this transitional period, especially in countries in which the transition to sound lasted longer, such as China, the Soviet Union, or Japan.

What was the agenda behind these films in their respective production and exhibition contexts? What were the aesthetic considerations underlying their creation, appreciation and, ultimately, refusal? While hybrid films between silent and sound have often been a neglected part of film history, in research and preservation, this conference aims to bring together knowledge from different contexts (e. g., academia, archives) and different parts of the world in order to probe deeper into the 'liminal space' that hybrid films occupy in film production and reception from the mid-1920s until the end of the 1930s.

The conference follows up on the first 'Aesthetics of Early Sound Film' conference, which was organized by the Department of Film Studies at the University of Zurich as an online conference in 2021. This second instalment, including film screenings in cinemas, will take place on-site only in Zurich and is organized by the University of Zurich and Tsuru University.

Topics for oral presentations may include (but are not limited to):

- The place of hybrid films in film historiography
- The aesthetics of hybrid films
- Case studies of individual films or particular production contexts
- Production, distribution, and reception of hybrid films
- Economic and technological implications
- Preservation and presentation of hybrid films in current contexts

We especially welcome contributions on non-Western production and exhibition contexts. Please send paper proposals (about 250 words) to the conference organizers Johan Nordström and Daniel Wiegand:

earlysoundfilm_conference@proton.me

The deadline for paper proposals is 2 May 2023.