



# Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness

By Song Hwee Lim

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## Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness By Song Hwee Lim

How can we qualify slowness in cinema? What is the relationship between a cinema of slowness and a wider socio-cultural “slow movement”? A body of films that shares a propensity toward slowness has emerged in many parts of the world over the past two decades. This is the first book to examine the concept of cinematic slowness and address this fascinating phenomenon in contemporary film culture.

Providing a critical investigation into questions of temporality, materiality, and aesthetics, and examining concepts of authorship, cinephilia, and nostalgia, Song Hwee Lim offers insight into cinematic slowness through the films of the Malaysian-born, Taiwan-based director Tsai Ming-liang. Through detailed analysis of aspects of stillness and silence in cinema, Lim delineates the strategies by which slowness in film can be constructed. By drawing on writings on cinephilia and the films of directors such as Abbas Kiarostami, Hou Hsiao-hsien, and Nuri Bilge Ceylan, he makes a passionate case for a slow cinema that calls for renewed attention to the image and to the experience of time in film.

*Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness* will speak to readers with an interest in art cinema, queer studies, East Asian culture, and the question of time. In an age of unrelenting acceleration of pace both in film and in life, this book invites us to pause and listen, to linger and look, and, above all, to take things slowly.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

Lim's book is especially significant as it is also the first and long-awaited book-length study of Tsai Ming-liang, the Malaysian-born Taiwanese filmmaker whose films since the early 1990s have received extensive treatment from scholars working in the field of transnational Chinese cinemas. . . . Lim's book is extremely valuable: it not only contextualises the wider phenomenon that is slow cinema, but it also offers original readings of a filmmaker whose work has never been fully explored in detail.-- "Film-Philosophy"

Lim's study examines the director as a prime example of slow cinema, both in terms of his film aesthetics and underlying political motivations. Lim's approach is to contextualize Tsai's filmmaking practice within an extensive evaluation of slow cinema . . . Considering the noteworthy contribution it provides to the development of slow cinema studies as an academic subfield, Lim's work should be considered among the the earliest, if not the first, scholarly studies of slow cinema.-- "Film Quarterly"

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It is the first systematic treatment of cinematic slowness and a full-length study of Tsia Ming-liang, a key figure of the slow canon. . . . While cinematic slowness is as singular as the heartbeat, it also responds to the common rhythm of the time. Lim's book has made us more attuned to, and less afraid of, slowness' wayward uncertainty.-- "China Review International"

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About the Author

**Song Hwee Lim** is associate professor in the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

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