The atrocities known variously as the Cheju 4.3 (April 3rd) massacres, uprising and resistance, are marked by the idea and practice of unrepresentability. This paper addresses the problems of historical representation in response to three interrelated developments in Cheju’s political scene. The first is the gradual but by no means even shift, since the late 1990s, in the range of knowledge about the 4.3 atrocities and the degree to which it could be spoken and disseminated publicly. The second is the furor surrounding the construction of a massive naval base in Kangjong, a small farming and fishing village on the south coast of the island, seen as only the most recent instance of South Korea’s enslavement to American political and military interests. The third is the proliferation of artistic practices, in particular film and video work, which bridge the history of 4.3 and the ongoing struggles in Kangjong. The paper focalizes these questions and developments into two disparate questions. First, what is the position of filmmaking within both the ideas and practices of 4.3’s unrepresentability? And second, what can be the work of filmmaking in efforts to attain not only truth and reconciliation, but also justice and healing, for the 4.3 atrocities?


3:30-5:00 PM, Thomson Hall 317
Tuesday, May 5, 2015

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