PROFESSOR RICHARD DYER RETURNS TO ST ANDREWS
CHELSEA WESSELS AND KATHLEEN SCOTT

The Centre for Film Studies is pleased to welcome Professor Richard Dyer as the newest member of faculty, from September 2011. Richard is world renowned for his extensive publications on a wide array of topics relating to film; the major focus of his work being issues of representation and entertainment. What is perhaps less well known is that Richard began his illustrious career as an undergraduate at the University of St Andrews.

For Richard, coming back to the university where he studied as an undergraduate didn’t seem at all like a ‘return.’ For one thing, the department of Film Studies wasn’t around when he was a student. Richard, who received his degree in French at St Andrews, recalls wanting to write about French cinema during his final year, but being pointed towards 16th century theatre because there was no one to supervise a project in film. However, regular visits to the cinema and involvement in the Film Society provided him with an active film culture throughout the four years.

Instead, being back in St Andrews, Richard says, feels more like ‘being in a nice place,’ rather than a familiar one. The shops have changed, with more high street chains than the local markets he remembers. Even the student traditions have altered. Richard remembers his own Raisin Monday (an annual, memorable, if somewhat messy celebration for the student community) involving flour being thrown at first years, rather than the current tradition of a foam fight, and having a ‘senior man’ and ‘senior woman’ instead of academic parents.

But even with all these changes, some things remain the same. Claiming that he is looking forward to the darkness of winter, Richard recalls fond memories of seeing the lights from fireplaces in the early night and rushing to lectures against the famous St Andrews wind. This time, of course, any lectures he rushes to are likely to be his own. Welcome, Professor Dyer!

Professor Richard Dyer received his undergraduate degree from St Andrews and his PhD from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. He currently holds professional posts at St Andrews and King’s College London. He is researching such diverse subjects as music in Italian cinema and the portrayal of serial killers on film, and supervising doctoral students at St Andrews on such topics as widescreen aesthetics and pop music in film narrative.
PROLIFERATING PATHWAYS
DAVID MARTIN-JONES

The Centre for Film Studies, established in 2005, has for the past six years provided a dynamic new aspect to the University of St Andrews’ research environment. Stepping in to the position of Director at this point in time, I feel privileged to inherit such a well-constructed platform of research experience on which to build further. For the past several years the UK’s university sector has increasingly been called upon to measure research output in terms of its impact. Responding to this context, the Centre continues to balance its commitment to more traditional forms of Film Studies research – textual, theoretical, historical, et al. – alongside an engagement with broader cultural and social realities.

The Centre for Film Studies experienced a remarkable growth, developing a series of research initiatives on a blank slate, from the international conference Cinema at the Periphery in 2006 to the establishment of the Scottish Consortium for Film and Visual Culture. At the heart of this development has been a commitment to cultural engagement within local, national and international contexts. Accordingly, the apparent strength of the Centre for Film Studies is the diversity of initiatives it accommodates – including projects emphasising theoretical, historical, institutional, geopolitical, and cultural policy-related aspects of our engagement with cinema. For example, the pages that follow contain reports on various activities related to the impact of film festivals, nationally and internationally, including the recent Royal Society of Edinburgh funded workshop on Film Festivals, Activism and Social Impact. This work on festivals, pursued by the former director of the Centre, Professor Dina Iordanova, and involving several other members such as Leshu Torchin, sits alongside Joshua Yumibe’s involvement in the Davide Turconi Project – a valuable research resource now in the public domain – and many other such activities that reach out beyond the immediate university environment.

This diversity has been aided by a rapid growth in faculty members in Film Studies at St Andrews, to a point where we are now nearly double our starting cohort of staff from 2004. This year we are delighted to welcome Professor Richard Dyer to the team. Simultaneously, the doctoral programme has grown dramatically in a very short time, a development I have overseen as Director of Postgraduate Studies. This combined growth in faculty and research postgraduates has ensured the continued proliferation of approaches to research in the Centre. For this reason, although somewhat uncertain times for the academy (due to the shifting Higher Education funding landscape in the UK and the growing presence of the impact agenda), the next six years also look set to be extremely exciting and

BAFTSS LAUNCHED
ALEX MARLOW-MANN

BAFTSS (British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies) is a new organisation that aims to represent the interests of those involved in teaching and research in the field of Film, Television and Screen Studies in the UK. It will offer a forum for networking and scholarly exchange, in addition to providing a body capable of representing the discipline’s interests to funding and research councils and Government departments.

Although BAFTSS is a cross-institutional organisation, Dina Iordanova and Alex Marlow-Mann have been intimately involved in the organisation’s founding from the very beginning, both now sit on the Interim Executive Committee.

BAFTSS was officially launched at Birkbeck College in London on the 26th June, a date and venue chosen to coincide with the NECS (European Network for Cinema and Media Studies) conference. Alex Marlow-Mann chaired the meeting, which saw a lively debate about the new organisation’s proposed function and its relationship with other organisations in the field. An Interim Executive Committee was appointed for the first year, which will be responsible for building membership and establishing the main functions before a new Executive is elected at next year’s AGM. The IEC then held its first meeting on the 9th October, where good progress was made towards the organisation’s goals.

To find out more about the organisation and its Postgraduate Network, visit: http://baftss.org. To sign up to the BAFTSS discussion list, where news and information pertinent to the discipline is posted, visit: http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/baftss.
FIRST BUSAN CINEMA FORUM, BUSAN IFF
DINA JORDANOVÁ

In October I had the privilege to take part in the inaugural Busan Cinema Forum, a scholarly conference which, from now on, will be taking place on an annual basis as part of the Busan International Film Festival. It was an opportunity to meet and engage in conversations with filmmakers (from Thai Apichatpong Weerasethakul and South Korean Bong Joon-ho to Indonesian Ari Shihabse), industry figures (from Simon Field and Kim Dong-ho to New York Asian Film Festival’s cult producer Goran Topalogic), and scholars (from Dudley Andrew and David Dessler to Asia-based colleagues such as Gina Marchetti). The three-day event was an excellent opportunity to promote the recent volume Film Festivals in East Asia (2011), which Ruby Cheung and I worked on throughout last year. The moderator for our series of talks (dedicated to film festivals) was Soo Jeong Ahn, whose book on the Busan Film Festival is about to be published by Hong Kong University Press, other speakers included Marjolein de Valk (Netherlands) and Skadi Loist (Germany), our regular collaborators on a number of film festivals-themed projects. Within the short 16 years of its existence, Busan IFF has become Asia’s leading film festival, and it is not just for the expenditure but also for the high artistic standards that it has made it to the top.

The level of investment in cinema (and culture in general) in South Korea over the past two decades has been amazing, and it begins to bear fruit. A visit to Yonsei University in Seoul (which until this last summer employed indie filmmaker Jon Jost) left me deeply impressed; a range of other Universities in the country have established film studies programmes and provide excellent opportunities for both Korean and foreign academics. The new director of Busan Film Festival, Lee Yong-Kwan, is an academic himself, teaching film at Chung-ang University in Seoul. Having established the academic event as part of the festival, he promised, in his speech at the closing party for the Busan Cinema Forum, that the conference will, from now on, be an inseparable part of the festival, for as long as it exists. I can only salute him for this statement!

BOOK LAUNCH: HOW THE MOVIE BRATS TOOK OVER EDINBURGH
ALEX MARLOW-MANN


The author, Matthew Lloyd, who is currently programmer of the Glasgow Short Film Festival, gave a highly entertaining summary of why these key years in EIFF’s history mattered and then took questions from the audience – many of which revolved around the Festival’s future in a moment of great turbulence and transition.

The event was very well attended and even included two very special guests in the form of former EIFF directors Lynda Myles and David Wills. To find out more about the book, or to order a copy, visit: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/filmbooks/books/mo

IMAGE CREDITS
The photograph of Richard Dyer on the cover page is courtesy of CineExcess, whereas the one on page 9 was taken by Kathleen Scott. The picture of Želimir Zilnik on page 4 was taken by George Nalbandov. All the film frames reproduced in the newsletter are courtesy of Fondo Davide Turconi. The other images on page 9 were taken from the web and assumed to be in public domain; please notify if otherwise.
VETERAN FILMMAKER ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK COMES TO THE BYRE!

ALEX MARLOW-MANN

For the past few months the Centre for Film Studies has been working with the Byre Theatre in order to make film programming a regular part of their calendar. The first outcome of this collaboration took place on Sunday 6th November when the Serbian filmmaker Želimir Žilnik presented his latest film, The Old School of Capitalism.

Žilnik, who was in Scotland at the invitation of the Centre for Film Studies, has a long and illustrious career. His first feature, Early Works, took the top prize in Berlin in 1969, and since then he has been a regular fixture on the international festival circuit. A fierce opponent of censorship during the Socialist era, and then an outspoken critic of nationalism during Milosevic’s reign, Žilnik is no stranger to controversy. An activist filmmaker in the true sense of the word, he has a canny ability to anticipate the zeitgeist and to focus on the most burning issues of our time.

His latest film, The Old School of Capitalism, dates from 2009 and deals with workers occupying the factory where they worked for many years after it is privatised and then stripped of its assets following the fall of Communism. The Occupy Wall Street protests erupted after filmmaking was already underway and were soon incorporated into the film. As the film screened at the Byre, protesters were occupying the financial district around St Paul’s in London, and it therefore seemed that, once again, Žilnik’s prescience had not failed him.

The screening was followed by an engaging Q&A in which Žilnik explained his working methods, the film’s origins and his thoughts on the new, capitalist

FILM FESTIVALS IN SCOTLAND AND BEYOND – ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL IMPACT

ALEX MARLOW-MANN

This term saw the inaugural meeting of the Scottish Film Festival Studies Network. Founded by Dina Jordanova and Alex Marlow-Mann, and funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh, this initiative provides a forum for festival scholars and practitioners (both within Scotland and beyond) to interact and exchange ideas.

The first meeting took place on Monday 7th November at the Royal Society of Edinburgh and took the form of an interactive workshop dedicated to Film Festivals in Scotland and Beyond – Activism and Social Impact, a subject closely linked to the fourth Film Festival Yearbook, which is forthcoming in January and will be dedicated to Film Festivals and Activism.

The first session comprised a lively discussion on ‘Film Festivals and Activist Causes’ between Nick Higgins (University of Edinburgh/ filmmaker), Eddie Harrison (Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival) and Ron Inglis (Regional Screen Scotland), which was moderated by David Archibald (University of Glasgow). This was followed by a session on ‘Documentary Film Festivals: Nodes and Networks’, moderated by our own Lesha Torchin and featuring interventions by Robin McPherson (Edinburgh Napier University), Mona Rai and Paula Larkin (Document Film Festival) and Sonja Henrici (Scottish Documentary Institute). After lunch a session on ‘Where Is the Edinburgh International Film Festival Headed Next?’ focused on the festival’s prospects after the appointment of its new Artistic Director, Chris Fujiwara. The debate was chaired by Matthew Lloyd (Glasgow Short Film Festival/ author of How the Movie Brats Took Over Edinburgh) and featured comments by David Cairns (Edinburgh College of Art, Shadowplay) and Diane Henderson (Edinburgh International Film Festival).

Each of these panels was highly interactive and featured extensive discussion between the panellists and members of the audience, which comprised a range of academics, festival practitioners and industry figures. The final session was a little different; it featured a conversation between veteran activist filmmaker Želimir Žilnik and Dina Jordanova in which he reflected back on his long career and the role festivals have played in the success of his films.

Some sixty people attended this event, which proved a stimulating forum for both debate and networking, and a second workshop is planned for the same time next year. To be kept abreast of developments, and to join in the discussions on film festival culture, sign up to
Recently at Le Giornate del Cinema Muto in Pordenone Italy, Paolo Cherchi Usai and I launched the Davide Turconi Project (http://www.progettaturconi.it/) as part of the festival’s thirtieth anniversary celebration.

The project is based upon the 35mm nitrate film frame clippings collected by Italian film historian Davide Turconi (1911-2005) from the Josef Joyce Collection in Switzerland and from other unidentified sources. As a tribute to Turconi’s belief that knowledge is a treasure to be shared, the collection is being made available for free online with the financial support of Le Giornate del Cinema Muto and the Cineteca del Friuli.

The Turconi Project is the result of twelve years of ongoing work (2000-2011). The collection consists of 23,491 clippings in total (usually two to three frames each) that have been preserved and also digitally scanned into an online database. The vast majority of the frames cover the early years of cinema (from ca. 1897-1915); however, some items in the collection represent films produced as late as 1944. Most of the original frames are now preserved at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York; smaller groups of frames are held by other institutions. Through the Turconi database, scans of the frames are represented in a single digital repository. This database is the largest of its kind currently available and provides a unique resource for film scholars, enthusiasts, archivists, and curators. We hope you will take advantage of this new tool for
Following the success of previous postgraduate conferences organised by the film studies department and due to an influx of new PhD students in 2010-11, the 2011 conference widened considerably both in size and scope. With the impressive Gateway Building as the venue, the event took place over two days encompassing a total of sixteen presentations dealing with a vast array of topics. From Uruguayan cinema, Romanian cinema, and the films of Clint Eastwood, to Cuban zombie films, post-human aesthetics in the cinema of Andy Warhol, and haptic horror, the presentations were a great showcase, not only for the level of excellent work being produced by our students but also for how far-reaching this work is.

Acting as keynote speaker was Dr. Sarah Cooper from King’s College, London. Her paper on ‘The Soul of Film Theory’ was very well-received as was her excellent feedback given to the presenters. We are extremely grateful for her contribution to what turned out to be a stimulating two-day event.

This year’s conference was also notable for its inclusion of specially invited presenters, including Zehra Ziraman and Tit Leung Cheung as visiting students from Istanbul and Hong Kong respectively, and Michael Franklin from the school of management.

As well as allowing current PhD students the chance to present, share and receive feedback on their respective projects, the 2011 conference offered a clear indication of the academic excellence being achieved within the department and, as most of the participants were first-year researchers, suggests that much high-level research will be generated in the future.

* 2011 Postgraduate Conference Organiser

‘FILM AND MEMORY’ IN STIRLING: THE 2011 SCOTTISH CONSORTIUM REPORT
JOHN TRAFTON

What do films ‘remember’? How do films ‘remember’? These were among the central questions addressed by each speaker and panelist at 2011’s Annual Scottish Consortium, held at the (appropriately) haunted, medieval grounds of the University of Stirling. As the key note speaker, St. Andrews’ Professor Richard Dyer set the tone with his paper “Memory and Music: Rota and Fellini,” in which he addressed, through a reading of composer Nino Rota’s soundtrack to Fellini’s Amarcord, how music is connected to memory. Professor Robert Burgoyne delivered the John Orr Memorial Lecture, presenting a paper entitled “Generational Memory and Affect in Memories from Iwo Jima.”

Other St Andrews contributors included Pasquale Cicchetti, who argued that in many cases memory in film is the result of some films psychoanalyzing their authors, and Beatriz Tadeo Fuica, who contributed to a panel on the topic of memorializing conflict. In his reading of Pan’s Labyrinth and historical memory of Spain, Bernard Bentley reminded the audience that the varied proximity of a viewer to a certain national memory could produce two or more possible endings to a film. All in all, the diversity of the topics made for an enlightening Consortium.

SCREEN STUDIES CONFERENCE: REPOSITIONING SCREEN HISTORY
ALEX MARLOW-MANN

The 2011 Screen conference took place at the University of Glasgow from 1st-3rd June. As a recent arrival in Scotland, this was a good opportunity for me to sample for the first time what is arguably the discipline’s most important conference in the UK.

The conference largely lived up to its reputation; it was well attended, with over 100 presentations spread over the two and a half days. All of the major academic publishers were also represented and the event proved a good opportunity for networking and gaining a sense of what was currently happening in the field.

This year’s theme was ‘Repositioning Screen History’ and a real highlight for me was Saturday’s plenary lecture, delivered by Jan-Christopher Horak, an archivist from UCLA who spoke about archives, film studies and the internet. Packed with first-hand knowledge gleaned from a long career in the industry, it was provocative and beautifully delivered. The opening plenaries were delivered by Barbara Klinger (Indiana) and Christine Geraghty (Glasgow) and the closing by Mark Betz (King’s College), who spoke convincingly about the ‘post-war play of European art and exploitation’. I, for one, am certainly keen to attend next year’s conference.
Before attending my first SCMS conference this year in New Orleans, I was warned about its massive size and multitudes of simultaneous panels. Although this was the case, and I often felt like I was lost at sea amongst all of the cinema scholarship, I also really enjoyed the ability to cater the conference experience to my particular interests. Although, I have to admit, I did skip out of a couple sessions to wander around New Orleans.

At the conference I presented my paper “An Exiled Filmmaker Under House Arrest: Bahman Farmanara’s Homecoming and Smell of Camphor, Fragrance of Jasmine” in a panel examining ‘cinematic homecomings’ around the world. Our panel had a dedicated respondent, Lutz Bacher, who provided invaluable feedback to all members of the panel and led an excellent conversation about the topic of cinematic homecomings.

Faculty members Robert Burgoyne and Joshua Yumibe also presented research at the conference, “Abstraction and Embodiment in the War film” and “Color’s Occult Harmonies in Experimental Cinema” respectively, and a former post-doc at St Andrews, Alex Fischer, took part in a workshop on film festivals.

Highlights from the town included lots of food: muffulettas, beignets, and, the drink of New Orleans, the sazerac. Interesting food fact: in New Orleans they put hollandaise sauce on anything and everything. Although I didn’t get too much time to spend out on the town, it was enough just to enjoy the change.

RESEARCH TRIP REPORT: JAPAN AT LAST

Having closely studied Japanese cinema for many years, it was hard to believe that last summer I was actually among the people, architecture, and atmosphere that had ingrained itself on my mind through so many films. However, throughout my time in Japan other images emerged, many of which refocused many of my ideas about the relationship between cinema and Japanese society.

Although faced with the obligatory cultural differences, I quickly set about the various tasks I had planned. This included a visit to the National Film Center located in Kyobashi. The center offers much in terms of film-related exhibitions, library resources, archives, and screenings. Certainly there was enough there to keep me occupied for three days. I also took the opportunity to watch several special screenings in the center’s excellent theatre.

My month-long stay in Japan was rounded off with a series of meetings with film industry workers and scholars. One of my hosts happened to be working in the independent filmmaking sector and through him I was able to speak with several industry representatives. This was followed by a meeting with Dr. Chika Kinoshita from Shizuoka University, a person whose work I was familiar with. After an enjoyable conversation about film studies and multiculturalism in Japan, Chika was kind enough to show me around the beautiful Waseda University campus. I also had the chance to speak with prominent film critic and recently appointed artistic director of the Edinburgh Film Festival Chris Fujikawa. Both showed an interest in my current work and provided valuable insights into the Japanese film industry and its relationship with international markets.

Although the trip has changed some of my current thinking, it has also reinforced a lot of my initial assessments. I became fascinated with the lay-outs and structuring of Tokyo, for instance, and the apparent ‘sameness’ of certain areas. So much of the city appeared to be highly regimented in its architecture and street patterns, and in many ways this feeds into some of my own analyses of Tokyo as depicted onscreen. Furthermore, so many of the films that come to represent Japan in the West and elsewhere remain peripheral in the domestic market. The majority of people I spoke to had either never heard of the films I was writing about or had never seen them. Both experiences indicate that I am working along the right lines as I progress towards an interesting and original thesis.
After three years working on the colonial film project, one of the remaining challenges and ambitions for the project was to engage directly with the archives, institutions and people of the former colonies depicted on screen. The establishment of the colonial film website (www.colonialfilm.org.uk), which has more than 150 films and 350 historical essays freely available online, was a first step towards achieving this. In October, thanks in no small part to the efforts of Colin Maccabe, I had the opportunity to present our research at a conference in India with other members of the project team.

The two-day conference, entitled “Film Cultures: Historical Perspectives”, was superbly organised by the Department of Cultural Studies at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. The event brought together more than a hundred Indian scholars and elicited lively discussion throughout. On the first day, five of us from the project – the principal investigators Colin Maccabe and Lee Grieveson and fellow researchers Francis Gooding and Richard Osborne – each presented hour-long papers on aspects of our research. My paper was entitled ‘Watching Audiences: The Colonial Film Unit and the (mobile) exhibition of Empire’ and sought to examine the largely overlooked role of the local commentator within colonial cinema.

We also had the opportunity to screen material from the colonial archive. Our first screening, a 90 minute program comprising 11 films from pre-1947 India, proved especially popular. The reactions and enthusiasm for films that I had seen many times before was a further reminder of just how rich this material is. I wouldn’t have predicted that an audience anywhere in the world would spontaneously applaud a co-operative tea advert from 1942, but they did. On the second day, the discussion stretched beyond the colonial archive with a succession of fascinating papers, culminating in S. V. Srinivas’ superb study of Telugu cinema.

Lee Grieveson and I were also invited by the department of film studies to lead a one-day workshop on early cinema to a group of 25 faculty and postgraduates. It was particularly interesting to learn more here about the research undertaken by the students and as I was staying on campus throughout the week, I had plenty of opportunity to discuss work (and much more besides) with staff and students. The students were especially generous in providing us with various tours of the city, although St Andrews didn’t prepare me for rush hour in Hyderabad (I spent the first few days looking in vain for a pedestrian crossing).

Although the project has now officially ended, the work continues in various ways. In November, there is a further two-day conference at the Tate (Out of the Archive: Artists, Images and History) and a film season, running throughout the month at the NFT, entitled End of Empire. The season is screening a series of fiction films from the 1950s and 1960s alongside shorts selected from the colonial archive. In addition, November sees the release of the two edited collections, Empire and Film and Film and the End of Empire (Grieveson and Maccabe eds.), which are published through the BFI.
Tue 11th October 2011 | Yun-hua Chen

MOSAIC SPACE AND MOSAIC AUTEURS
This talk proposed approaching multi-strand films in a way that extends our focus beyond narrative strategy, arguing that the assemblage of narrative threads infers a larger spatial mosaic.

Tue 18th October 2011 | Michael Duckworth

ACADEMIC PUBLISHING IN ASIA
This seminar by the publisher of Hong Kong University Press discussed the publication and distribution of printed English-language books in Asia, and how electronic publishing is changing the communications eco-

Thu 20th October 2011 | Richard Dyer

THE CLASS OF JACK THE RIPPER
An event co-sponsored by the School of English, this presentation considered literary and filmic representations of Jack the Ripper from the point of view of social factors and class.

Tue 1st November 2011 | Sean Cubitt

ECOCRITICISM AND MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES
Dr Cubitt argued that the history of mediations between population and environment is intrinsic to the forms of

Tue 15th November 2011 | Sara Brinck

WHAT TO BELIEVE IN AND HOW TO BELIEVE
Dr Brinck, a visiting scholar at St Andrews, discussed how spectators come to believe in the historical persons depicted in fictions through reference to Colin Firth’s portrayal of George VI in The King’s Speech (2010).

22nd November | Patricia R. Zimmermann

THE FLAHERTY FILM SEMINAR IN THE 1950S
This talk probed the historical significance of the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar – a unique, intensive gathering and one of the oldest

Thu 1st December 2011 | Anu Koivunen

TALKING HEADS, IMAGINED COMMUNITIES
This talk discussed male confessional in Finnish documentaries, touching on topics such as talking heads, emotional transparency, nation and gender.
FILM-PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE
KATHLEEN SCOTT

The annual Film-Philosophy Conference was held from July 6th-8th at Liverpool John Moores University. The yearly conference is organized by Film-Philosophy, an online journal dedicated to the study of cinema and critical theory. St Andrews’ own Dr. David Martin-Jones provided the closing keynote address. His paper, entitled “How Tasty are Deleuze’s Cinema Books?,” addressed the cultural bias of Deleuze’s work on film. Drawing on the work of Latin American philosophers on topics such as Eurocentrism and Orientalism, Martin-Jones argued that Deleuze’s theories of film cannot be indiscriminately applied to a wide variety of social and political cinematic contexts.

Several papers were also given by St Andrews postgraduate students. Matthew Holtmeier gave a paper entitled “The Modern Political Cinema: Pre-Hodological Space as a Cinematic Ethics,” in which he spoke about a Deleuzian ethics of “belief in the world” in contemporary Chinese and American Mumblecore films. My own paper was entitled “Freud is dead, isn’t he?: A Haptic Reading of Antichrist.” I discussed the ways in which the visceral aesthetics of Lars von Trier’s controversial film relate to its depiction of a female antichrist figure.

BATTLEGROUNDS: SITES AND SIGHTS OF CONFLICT
JOHN TRAFTON

In October, I attended the “Battlegrounds: Sites and Sights of Conflict,” which was held on the fifth floor of the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh. The Cathedral of Learning has over twenty floors and offers a commanding view from the top of the Pitt campus, the city of Pittsburgh, and the congergent point of the Ohio, Alleghany, and Monongahela rivers. What a monument to higher learning, and what a great place to hold a conference.

The topics of the conference ranged from the how video games deconstruct military history to graffiti and street art as a form of combat against the destruction of the public sphere. The paper I delivered at the conference concerned the World War II films directed by Clint Eastwood and how they critique both sides of the debate over American Exceptionalism. In my paper, I used the story of Ira Hayes in Flags of Our Fathers as a case study to argue that Eastwood’s films perform this critique through a deconstruction of war hero mythology. The three-day conference ended with a keynote address by Stephen Prince on post-9/11 film and television and their depictions of terrorism.

L’IMPACT DES INNOVATIONS TECHNOLOGIQUES SUR L’HISTORIOGRAPHIE ET LA THÉORIE DU CINÉMA
GILES TAYLOR

On November 1st, I gave a paper entitled ‘At the Ends of Cinematic Frames’ at Le colloque sur l’historiographie et la théorie du cinéma, at the Cinémathèque québécoise in Montreal. My talk focused on the invisibility of the pre-widescreen frame shape, and marks the beginning of a doctoral thesis exploring the aesthetics of aspect ratios through the transition to widescreens.

Dr. Joshua Yumibe also presented a paper, entitled ‘The Davide Turconi Collection: Early Cinema Historiography Through New Media.’
NEW PHD STUDENTS

The department welcomed four new PhD students this fall: Heath Iverson, Diana Popa, Sarah Soliman and Giles Taylor.

ST ANDREWS HOSTS ‘IMAGES OF THE PAST’ CONFERENCE
BEATRIZ TADEO FUICA

On 18th November 2011, St Andrews hosted the Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Conference ‘Images of the Past’. This conference’s aim was to offer postgraduate students in the Faculty of Arts at the University of St Andrews and neighbouring Scottish universities the chance to share their research in an interdisciplinary environment.

The event was organised by three PhD Students (Andrew Dodd, Jutta Kling and myself) from different backgrounds (Centre for Transnational History, School of Modern Languages, and Centre for Film Studies), and received financial support from a GRADSkills Innovation Grant.

Papers came from a wide range of disciplines and were delivered by 21 speakers from Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews and the German university of Tübingen. Among these, there were five presenters from St Andrews Film Studies department: Matthew Holtmeier, Heath Iverson, Kathleen Scott, John Trafton, and Chelsea Wessels.

The keynote address was given by Dr Geoffrey Kantaris from the University of Cambridge. Dr Kantaris’ research encompasses history, literature and film studies, which made him an ideal speaker for such a diverse audience. His paper was entitled “Memories of the Future and Simulations of the Past: The Anxiety of History in Latin American Film”. All in all, this event exceeded by far our initial aims and expectations. Undoubtedly, it was an enjoyable and thought provoking day.

MECCSA POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE
SARAH SOLIMAN

The 8th annual MeCCSA Postgraduate Conference was held on July 4th and 5th, 2011 at Bournemouth University. Keynote addresses were presented by Professors Barry Richards and Sean Street, both from Bournemouth University. The conference also offered a Women’s Media Studies Network Plenary, as well a range of workshops including topics such as publishing and teaching. Four St Andrews students presented papers at the conference. Matthew Holtmeier’s paper, ‘A Belief in the World: Inception’s Ethics of Choice,’ used Deleuze’s cinematic ethics to debate the choice presented in Inception between reality and the dream state. Chelsea Wessels, Kathleen Scott and I presented a panel entitled ‘Expanding Frontiers: Reconceptualizing the Western.’ Chelsea’s paper discussed a series of westerns made by East German production companies, known as Indianerfilme. She incorporated Hamid Naficy’s work, arguing that these films are a form of accented cinema, made by East Germans in exile under Soviet control. Kathleen’s paper drew on the work of Deleuze and Guattari to make connections between outlaws and capitalism in westerns. She argued that the pursuit of monetary gain makes outlaw gangs part of the State, rather than opposed to it. My own paper discussed the television series Justified, which, in its modernization of the western genre, closely examines the idea of the cowboy as an American icon.

The MeCCSA conference provided an excellent opportunity to hear papers from postgraduate students across a wide spectrum of media and cultural studies. The conference also offered the chance to socialize with our colleagues, and the first day ended with a beach barbecue (see picture) and an impromptu game of volleyball.
LESHU TORCHIN has three recent publications: “The Green Wave: Documenting Iranian Democracy” and “Memorizing Steve Jobs” online at Souciant, and “Hollywood and the Holocaust” in the exhibition catalogue for the Jüdisches Museum Wien/Vienna Jewish Museum.

ELISABETTA GIRELLI’s article “Man and Boy: Montgomery Clift as a Queer Star in Wild River” was published in the Journal of Popular Film and Television. Some of DINA IORDANOVA’s work has been translated recently into Danish and Korean.

FREDRIK GUSTAFSSON published two articles in Filmrutan: an article about film and music, and one about Hasse Ekman. He also published eight portraits of Swedish film directors on the Swedish Film Institute’s database.

DINA IORDANOVA was elected as Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts and as Treasurer of BAFTSS. She is also serving as a Trustee on the Board of the Centre for the Moving Image, which runs the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

MATTHEW HOLTMEIER and CHELSEA WESSELS were both made Fellows of the Higher Education Academy.