CFS EDITORIAL

It is always a pleasure to reflect on the accomplishments and activities of the department (including the CFS and IGCCC). The greatest challenge is to include it all. For that reason, our editorial team is exploring an online interactive version that incorporates the video interviews with our guest speakers.

This issue of CineFileS shows that our film festival activity has yet to slow down: Dina Iordanova reports on her jury service at Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, Cassice Last on Ocean Film Festival and Banff Mountain Film Festival, and Robert Burgoyne offers the annual update from our own 60-Hour Film Blitz.

Shorna Pal offers an update of her field research, as does Dina whose world travels and masterclasses benefit people near and far, while Tom Rice reports on his trip to Jamaica as part of his Leverhulme-funded research project, ‘Watching Empire Dissolve.

The conference report from SCMS reflects some but not all of our activity as Michael Cowan travels across Europe and North America to deliver papers, and more locally, Lucy Donaldson, Jennifer O’Meara, and I all had the pleasure of speaking at Stirling.

Some of the most exciting activity happens right here at St Andrews. I speak not only of the CFS Speaker Series and IGCCC events (reported in this issue) but our Research Readings. For one day, the department paused to convene and present work-in-progress to one another. In doing so we generated and renewed conversation with each other and interest in our work. Inspiring and invigorating, this practice comes highly recommended. It’s important we remember why we got into this business!

Watching the success of students is equally inspiring. I hope you enjoy the reports on the work of Film Studies alumni Yun-Hua Chen and Beatriz Tadeo Fuica. I close with congratulations to Dr Grazia Ingravalle on her successful viva. Mazel tov!

Here’s to wishing you all equally inspiring days to come.

Leshu Torchin

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Department of Film Studies has had a very successful semester. Though a full list of publications, grants and awards will be published in the CFS annual report in September, we would like to make special mention of the following achievements. Several members of the department had success at the annual BAFTSS awards, with Ana Grgić winning best Doctoral Student Article or Chapter. Tom Rice was the runner up for best monograph and Jean-Michel Frodon and Dina Iordanova were given an honourable mention for best edited collection. In other achievements, Michael Cowan won the SCMS Award of Distinction for Best Edited Collection and Shrutí Narayanswamy was awarded the Charles Wallace India Trust grant. Anuja Jain co-edited and contributed to a dossier on Indian cinema for the Spring 2017 issue of Screen. Grazia Ingravalle and Eileen Rositzka also deserve congratulations on their successful viva examinations.
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In the past, I have called jury service at film festivals ‘torture by movies.’ As a jury member, you spend long hours watching prescribed films from a programme that is rarely what you would choose yourself; then, when decision time strikes, you must argue your ground with the other members of the jury – which can sometimes be ugly.

None of these aspects applied to my experience on the inaugural jury of the 19th Thessaloniki Documentary International Festival in March 2017. The twelve selected documentaries were diverse and the jury were of astonishingly similar mind when it came to choosing the best ones. We got along well as a ‘jolly gang’, and we were taken care of by Pavlina Lada who has honed the fine craft of managing juries over more than two decades.

The fact that it was a documentary festival – my first such service – was a bonus, as it allowed me to gain further insights and build connections in the world of documentary filmmaking. Colleagues on the jury included several important figures in the documentary world – Paul Pauwels, the Belgian producer and President of the European Documentary Network, Talal Derki, the Syrian-German director of the award-winning Return to Homs (2014), and acclaimed Greek documentarian Marianna Economou. We were joined by French critic Laurent Rigoulet, an expert on global mass culture. It was pleasure to spend an evening with Russian filmmaker Vitaly Mansky whose work was the subject of one of the festival’s tributes. It was also a delight to be shown around, in the sun, by Menelaos Karaghiolis, the author of the classical documentary Rom (1990) and fascinating connoisseur of Greek life. Yet another remarkable evening was spent in the company of veteran Philippe Jalladeau, the founder of the influential global Trois Continents film festival in Nantes. I had the chance to learn of the work of organizations such as Documentary Campus (Germany), the European Documentary Network (Denmark) Greenhouse (Israel), Balkan Documentary Center (Bulgaria), International Documentary Institute (Czech Republic), DocEdge (India) and Documentary in Europe (Italy), and the mobile film school Doc Nomads (Lisbon/Budapest/Brussels).

We gave the Golden Alexander to the Danish Dream Empire (David Borenstein) which presented a compelling and complex picture of contemporary China through a remarkable portrait of a young woman. The Indian Machines (Rahul Jain) – a class-conscious and beautiful exploration of the inhumane working conditions in a textile factory in Gujarat – was our second choice, but it also received the FIPRESCI award. We gave a special honorary mention to the Greek Shingal, Where Are You? (Angelos Rallis), which compassionately featured the fate of exiled Yezidi families.

The festival in Thessaloniki – which has its documentary section in March and main event in November – is under new leadership. Producer Elise Jalladeau is the CEO, Orestes Andreadakis is the Artistic Director, and the programmer is Dimitris Kerkinos. They have already introduced some changes – like having a competitive programme, for example, and are considering introducing a section that would feature the best of documentary work from around the Mediterranean and the Balkans.
In December 2016 I was asked to give a masterclass to the new Romani Studies MA and then take part in a panel discussion on exoticism and Roma representation in a downtown club in Bucharest, alongside film directors and activists. Our hosts were the director of the programme, Ciprian Tudor (who had spent a period of time at St Andrews as a visiting scholar) and the respected Romanian anthropologist Vintila Mihailescu. My work was featured along a masterclass by Swiss-based anthropologist Iulia Hasdeu, whose focus was mainly on media – whilst I discussed primarily cinematic representations. In a context where Romanies are vilified and often treated in deeply racist terms across Europe, the interest in my work was substantial. It was an opportunity for me to see my discussion impacting opinions and shaping views.

Earlier in the year, during a Romanian film week I caught in Beijing, I had the chance to see new Romanian films such as Cristi Puiu’s Sierranevada and Dan Pita’s Kira Kiralina, and later on I saw (and wrote about) Radu Jude’s Scarred Hearts and Cristian Mungiu's Graduation. Indeed, Romanian cinema is extremely strong at the moment. The visit to Bucharest was also a chance to catch up with friends who are at the centre of the rapidly evolving Romanian film scene – producer Ada Solomon, critics Andrei Gorzo and Andrei Rus, festival director Yvonne Irimescu, director Radu Jude, and my dear old friend, director Marian Crisan, who visited St Andrews some years back with his film Morgen.
In September 2016 I volunteered at The Ocean Film Festival, a film programme specialising in ocean culture.

In its third year, the Ocean Film Festival 2016 toured the UK with 7 original films ranging from an introduction of India’s first female surfer, to a peek into the lives of marine cinematographers Howard and Michele Hall. Films varied in length and covered whale songs, intrepid kayakers, and a never-say-die Icelander surfer in a long-term love-hate relationship with the fickle wind. Helping out behind the scenes, I experienced the festival’s growing popularity. The Festival Theatre in Edinburgh buzzed with engaging talks on ocean conservation, the best seas for swimming and films of past festivals. The most notable change from prior festivals was the venue, which had moved from Queen's Hall Theatre to the Festival Theatre, with its staggering 1900+ capacity.

Film programmer Nell Teasdale introduced each film, spoke insightfully about the festival’s origins in Australia and the importance of caring for the world’s oceans. The event was a success, with many viewers gasping and laughing in equal measure, before confirming their attendance at the next Ocean Film Festival tour. Many of the volunteers I spoke to revealed that they had helped out before and said it was the quality of the films and the organisation of the Ocean Film Festival that drew them back again.

At the start of this year I volunteered at the Banff Mountain Film Festival’s UK premiere.

In its 8th year touring the UK, the festival showcased the finest mountain culture films selected from the prestigious annual film competition held in Banff, Canada (an international competition in its 43rd year). The festival featured films about dog training, kayaking down Papua New Guinea’s Beriman river, four Yorkshire women who rowed across the Atlantic, and a feature piece on Mira Rai (National Geographic’s ‘Adventurer of the Year 2017’). Divided into two programmes, the festival made up a thrilling daylong event, showcasing the finest films from Banff’s competition. Nell Teasdale introduced each film with her insightful commentary and invited the audience to enter the event’s competition to win sporting equipment. The day rounded off with spectators and volunteers alike praising the high quality of films, innovative film-making and breath-taking stunts. Personally, I believe the Banff Mountain Film Festival expertly caters to the desire to witness extreme sporting talent, risky outdoor endeavours and the pursuit of the impossible beyond the confines of the indoors. I left the festival invigorated and counting down the days until I can attend the festival in Banff!
The Indian film industries have collectively produced over 40,000 feature films in a little over a century of filmmaking. Bollywood is the brand name most associated worldwide with Indian filmmaking in this millennium, just as the Bengali Art Film maestro Satyajit Ray was in earlier decades. The film industries based in different states in India are distinct in their themes, styles and production-distribution-exhibition conventions, with some regional industries matching the 250+ films produced by the Hindi film industry based in Mumbai (also referred to as Bollywood), leading to a collective product of over 2000 certified feature films annually. For a collective industry selling over 3 billion cinema tickets at the domestic box office each year, the Indian film industries are severely underresearched. Viewed as the morally decadent Other by the Gandhian order and swept under the carpet by Nehruvian socialism, the Indian film industries miraculously survived with production capital from predominantly dubious sources—including money laundering activities of private entrepreneurs, and mafia members based in Dubai. It was only in 1998 that the Indian film industries were granted official “industry” status by the government, enabling banks and corporations to legally invest in film production. This led to the multiplex boom in the early years of the millennium, large scale international co-productions, corporate investment, and ultimately trading companies declaring their return in the latter part of the 2000s.

My PhD thesis tracks the changes in the film form following the progressive corporatisation and internationalisation of the Indian film industries. With merely a handful of publications offering some data and analysis of these rapid recent changes, I felt that it was necessary to conduct primary research within some of these industries to get a sense of the creative thought processes, flow of capital, new working practices and new opportunities that had emerged. Having worked earlier within the Indian film and television sector, throughout 2016 I was able to interview 37 personnel working in different capacities in the Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Marathi and Assamese film industries, across the cities and towns of Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune, Siliguri, Cooch Behar, as well as conduct two audience focus groups, and research at the National Film Archive. Such an ambitious field trip would have been impossible without the support of the Russell Trust and my own department, to both of whom I am completely indebted. The data collected is proving to be invaluable, as findings such as these have never been available to any researcher of film, economics or relevant disciplines. I have already substantiated the claims made in my present chapter, on new avenues in distribution, by extracting relevant details from key interviews, and realise that I will have to revisit earlier chapters to incorporate some of my new findings. As expected, in its entirety there is a large body of data, which upon analysing fully I hope to publish as a book for the benefit of future scholarship and general interest.

As the industries are rapidly moving in new directions, it is imperative that I keep on top of these changes. Thanks to the funded field trip afforded by the Russell Trust and my department, I have been able to conduct two further very relevant follow up interviews over the phone and via email, with people I met on my field trip. I have also been invited to visit a personally hitherto unknown archive of 3000 Malayalam films as well as to interview personnel within the Malayalam film industry, a very old and renowned film industry based in South India. The excitement of unearthing an elephant in India’s backburner has been unparalleled!
Having one’s book published can be a lengthy process, puzzling at times but extremely fulfilling at the end of the day. I am very happy to share the news that my monograph Mosaic Space and Mosaic Auteurs: On the Cinema of Alejandro González Iñárritu, Atom Egoyan, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Michael Haneke has recently been published by Neofelis Verlag in Berlin thanks to the funding from Geschwister Boehringer Ingelheim Stiftung für Geisteswissenschaften. In this book I construct a model of mosaic which extends our focus beyond narrative strategy, to approach the trend of diverse multi-strand films across genres, nations and filmmaking contexts since the late 1980s. Through the travelling of transnational auteurs and their bringing-together of diverse spatial configurations, a mosaic is formed, which gathers, groups, juxtaposes, and re-arranges spaces. The book, officially launched at Volksbühne Pavillon bookshop in Berlin on 5 April, is both the fruit and the extended life of my years in St Andrews – which I hold very fond memories of.

FORMER PHD STUDENT BEATRIZ TADEO FUICA HAS BEEN AWARDED THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION MARIE CURIE FELLOWSHIP FOR THE TWO-YEAR RESEARCH PROJECT TITLED TRANSARCHIVES. FILM HERITAGE AND ARCHIVAL PRACTICES. PAST AND PRESENT TRANSCONTINENTAL ENCOUNTERS.

Starting in October, Beatriz will work as a postdoctoral fellow within the Institut de recherche sur le cinéma et l’audiovisuel (IRCAV) at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, under the supervision of film historian Laurent Véray, Professor of Film and Audiovisual Studies at IRCAV. The objective of her project, according to the successful grant abstract, is “to identify how the dissemination of European film heritage informs past and present archival practices”, and the project itself will focus specifically on the film exchanges between the Cinémathèque Française and the Cinémathèques of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay in the period between 1948 and 1959.
On February 23, the Department of Film Studies instituted the inaugural Research Readings day, a public event modelled on the annual postgraduate conference. Designed with the aim of exposing the vibrant research culture of the department, which often takes place out of the public eye, faculty members presented their current work to the department and PhD students. The day opened with presentations by Anuja Jain, who spoke about the politics and legacies of the New Wave movement in Gurvinder Singh's *Anhey Ghorhey Da Daan* (2011), Michael Cowan, whose presentation entitled Public Screens and the Wages of Interactivity traced the continuity of interactive screens from the 19th century to the present day, Jennifer O’Meara who drew on her current book project Screening Women’s Voices to discuss metaphors of the voice, and Leshu Torchin, who presented a paper questioning the role of documentary in a post-truth world. The afternoon session comprised talks by Dennis Hanlon on the changing representation of the UK in popular Hindi cinema, Dina Iordanova who spoke about her current project on Romani representations in film, Lucy Fife Donaldson with a discussion of the expressive touch of filmmakers in the surfaces of film, and concluded by Robert Burgoyne on the role of cultural memory as a principle source of cinematic affect. The day was a refreshing discussion on the process of developing works in progress and a fascinating insight into the collective expertise of the department.
REPORT ON THE 60 HOUR FILM BLITZ

Robert Burgoyne

The 60 Hour Film Blitz Community Film Festival was once again a splendid success, with some of the best work we have seen yet. This year’s theme, “Inspired by a Poem”, led to a number of truly creative 3-minute works, all of which were screened in the Byre Auditorium during the Red Carpet Gala on March 8—an event that was attended by over 120 guests. After the screening, awards were made by this year’s judges; Jennifer O’Meara, Film Studies, Emma Jones, Department of English, and David Evans, School of Modern Languages. As in years’ past, Tom Rice brought just the right touch of wit and graciousness to his role as MC.

The highlight of the evening was the appearance by Joe Russo, the Hollywood director best known for his films Captain America: Winter Soldier, and Captain America: Civil War, and his TV show, Arrested Development. Coming to us via Skype for the second year in a row, Mr Russo selected the top two films from a list of five, awarding Deathnaid the Best Picture prize, and Instructions the second prize. With his characteristic generosity to young talent—and to the Department of Film Studies—Mr Russo offered to host the five finalist teams on set in Scotland, where he will be filming his upcoming work Captain America: Infinity War.

The Film Blitz is one of the most fulfilling and exciting events of the academic year for our Department. Organized by a team of student volunteers, led by the wonderful School President Kit Klaes, and assisted by Karen Drysdale and Robert Burgoyne, the Film Blitz truly brings the academic community and the town into a happy and productive relationship. The prizes are donated by the merchants and members of the community, and they have done so each year with exceptional generosity. The proceeds from the Film Blitz, including the money collected for the entree fee and from the raffle we held, will be contributed to a local charity in the name of the Department of Film Studies.

SCMS CONFERENCE

Robert Burgoyne

The Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference, held this year in Chicago over the period March 22 - 26, was graced by a splendid location on Millennium Park, and gifted with a day on which the temperature was in the 70s. There were also many terrific panels and an abundance of receptions, including the main SCMS Members Reception which was held on the 80th floor of the Aeon Building. On a clear day—with views extending along the lakefront at least 25 miles—the spectacular setting made for a memorable evening. In many ways our aerial location matched the panel I chaired, which was entitled Aerial Vision in the Contemporary and Historical Imagination. Featuring our own Eileen Rositzka, along with Paula Amad, Garrett Stewart, and myself, our discussion of films and artworks concerned with drone surveillance and aerial warfare attracted an overflow crowd. At least ten people were turned away, as the small room quickly filled up, including every available space for standing and sitting on the floor. All the papers were well received, despite the less than ideal circumstances.

The Department of Film Studies also added to its splendid record of accomplishment in the awards categories as well, as Michael Cowan’s co-edited book The Promise of Cinema won an Award of Distinction in the Best Edited Book category. This marks the fourth award members of our Department have received in the past several years, a significant form of recognition for our small department in what is by far the largest international forum for Film and Media Studies scholars.
RESEARCH IN JAMAICA

Tom Rice

As part of my Leverhulme fellowship on British colonial film, I recently spent time researching in Jamaica. My first stop was the National Library, where I worked through government reports, unpublished autobiographies and a fascinating batch of films produced by the Jamaica film unit in the 1950s. Problems with the headphones meant that I had to play the final film through loud speakers for all in the library to hear—not ideal, as the film happened to be an all too detailed instructional film on the perils of VD.

I next went to the national archives where I found, amongst other things, minutes and documents relating to the local film unit as well as screening notes from mobile cinema operators in the 1940s. My final trip was to the University, where not only did I see a film made by local trainees of the Colonial Film Unit but, as always most usefully, also chatted with people familiar with these histories.

The trip was enormously productive and while a tour of the archives and libraries is unlikely to feature on any tourist trail, it was also great to visit (albeit briefly) sites familiar to me from popular culture—Bob Marley’s House, Carib cinema, Sabina Park cricket ground—and to recognise and connect with places that I have previously only seen on screen.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRIS MARKER JUNGLE

Jean-Michel Frodon

I confess I already have many hats (as a film critic, as an academic, as a writer, as a festival programmer, as a member of various committees) – some say too many, though I definitely like it. But I recently added one I was not expecting to wear: the hat of an exhibition curator. This hat looks very much like a explorer’s one, since it comes with entering a jungle – a fascinating jungle, full of treasures and inhabited by some weird species as one should expect. Because this exhibition is dedicated to the life and work of Chris Marker.

It is unfortunate that Marker – years after his death on the day of his 91st birthday, 29 July 2012 – remains quite unknown in the UK, compared to Continental Europe, the US and Japan, even in spite of the important exhibition that was dedicated to him at Whitechapel in 2014. The author of La Jetée – the seminal sci-fi short made-up almost entirely of stills – and also dozens of political and innovative documentaries and film essays, left behind an immense archive, which has been taken care of by Cinémathèque française.

Marker liked to call himself the most famous unknown filmmaker. It was somewhat accurate, since his work has been of the utmost importance to other filmmakers, activists, artists, academics and theoreticians all around the world, without ever reaching so-called wide audiences.

But Marker was by no means only a filmmaker: he was a photographer, a cat worshipper, a writer (poet, novelist, essayist), a publisher, a music composer, a militant, a traveller, a new technologies and new medias experimenter, a video artist... These are all the facets that, together with my two co-curators, Christine Van Assche and Raymond Bellour, we intend to display at Cinémathèque française through an exhibition that will open May 2 2018. For two years now, we have been trying to make Marker’s immense and largely secret jungle accessible. And there’s one more year of heavy but fascinating work to go – work which also includes the publishing of two books. A real treat.
The talks hosted by the Centre for Film Studies this semester reflected its commitment to supporting a vibrant multidisciplinary research environment and creating dialogue between the St Andrews community and broader, global researcher networks. This semester’s season of CFS talks kicked off with Professor William Uricchio’s (MIT & Utrecht University) talk on ‘Re-imagining the Documentary’, where he brought in his experiences as the founder of MIT’s Open Documentary Lab to explore the participatory and immersive possibilities of documentary while redefining the paradigms of the documentary in the new media atmosphere. Professor Uricchio showcased the possibilities of projects such as the Open Documentary Lab in including more voices in the creation and documenting history of documentary, and in opening up spaces for new stories and audiences.

The second CFS talk this semester was titled ‘Engaging Dialogue in American Independent Cinema’, where Jennifer O’Meara (University of St Andrews) delved into the under-researched area of cinematic dialogue, with a focus on the role of dialogue in American independent films in giving ‘voice’ to female protagonists. Jennifer underscored the rich research potential in looking at how dialogue opened up performative freedom for female characters, and how looking at the affective properties of dialogue (rather than solely the content of dialogue) can open up new dimensions into reading these films. Jennifer's talk also explored the role of new media texts such as GIFs and memes in studying the afterlife of dialogue and its performative qualities in new contexts, outside of the films themselves.

To wrap up the semester at the Centre for Film Studies, we were extremely lucky to have pioneering scholar in Indian cinema studies, Professor Rosie Thomas from the University of Westminster. Professor Thomas’ talk titled ‘Indian Cinema’s Islamicate Fantasies’ took us on a journey of reimagining the popular history and historiography of Indian cinema by shifting focus to the early “jaadu” (magic) and fairy films and highlighting the significance of Islamicate themes and motifs in popular Indian cinema. Professor Thomas called for an acknowledgement of these transnational and transcultural Islamicate influences which lie at the very roots of cinema in India – an acknowledgment that is especially important in the contemporary climate of right-wing Hindu nationalism and Islamophobia in India.
Professor Dina Iordanova was in China during November and December 2016, having been invited to take on a position as a Visiting Professor at the Beijing Film Academy (BFA).

The Beijing Film Academy was established in 1950 and is Asia’s largest and most prestigious film academy, having educated most of the high-profile Chinese directors, cameramen, actors and critics.


During her time in Beijing, Professor Iordanova was invited by the China Film Archive and the Central Theatre Academy to give masterclasses and workshops and to present her research relating to film festivals and transnational cinema. During the visit to the CFA – a leading institution in the education of film professionals and a site for the restoration of China’s cinematic treasures – she discussed key matters relating to the understanding of film festivals and the dynamics of global cinema studies. And it seems that these discussions were inspiring for local students. Meetings with some of the leading Chinese film scholars were also part of the visit, which was organized by Wang Yao from the BFA, along with main host Professor Guangming Wu, Head of the Film Studies department. There were also discussions with the founders of the leading Chinese site, Cinephilia, of which Prof. Iordanova has become an affiliate. Local students from the BFA and the other research institutions she visited benefitted from her knowledge and understanding. Among them were Che Lin, a post-doctoral fellow at China’s Academy of Sciences, and Ren Zikun, a 20 years-old student, who said he had learned about key Eastern European filmmakers, such as Jerzy Kawalerowicz and Makavejev, who were otherwise little-known in China. Yao Rui, a post-doctoral scholar at the China Film Archive, also spoke about the inspiration he gained from Prof. Iordanova’s workshops on Film Festival Programming, which, he added, will prove particularly valuable for the Chinese film festival organizers who attended. Last but not least, some of China’s independent producers and scholars, like Zhang Xianmin and Xu Feng, acted as Prof. Iordanova’s guides through the complex landscape of contemporary China.

Not only has this visit enhanced the international influence of the Department of Film Studies at the University of St Andrews, but this visit also has actively promoted academic and educational collaborations between the UK and China.
Abbas Kiarostami, the most notable auteur of contemporary Iranian cinema who passed away in July 2016, is fondly celebrated by global cinephiles for his aesthetics, visual poetry and humanistic politics. The Institute for Global Cinema and Creative Cultures (IGCCC) recently curated a workshop, Kiarostami at St Andrews, to pay homage to and uphold the legacy of Kiarostami. Under the leadership and guidance of Professors Dina Iordanova and Jean-Michel Frodon, the event was successfully facilitated on the 21st of February by postgraduate students Shorna Pal and Sanghita Sen. Professor Frodon provided an in-depth introduction to Abbas Kiarostami’s work, both as a critic and personal friend. Following a screening of the director’s seminal Palme d’or winning film *Taste of Cherry*, an animated question and answer session with Professor Frodon was moderated by Professor Iordanova. The event concluded with a video essay and paper by Shorna Pal tracing the philosophy underpinning Kiarostami’s films, photographic series, artistic installations and poetry, an analysis of the Koker Trilogy presented by Sanghita Sen, and closing remarks by Professor Iordanova.
OUT OF THE ASHES A DIAMOND: 
A NIGHT IN CELEBRATION OF THE 
LEGACY OF ANDRZEJ WAJDA

Rohan Berry Crickmar

On Tuesday, March 28th 2017 a cross-departmental event was staged at the Meeting Room of the School of Economics and Finance. The event was a celebration and commemoration of the Polish director Andrzej Wajda, who died in October 2016, at the age of 90. Hosted by Prof. Dina Iordanova and the Institute of Global Cinema and Creative Cultures, the event also benefitted from the cinephilic knowledge and passion of Professor John Burnside, from the School of English.

Prof. Iordanova opened proceedings with a brief introduction to the life and work of Andrzej Wajda, clearly establishing his significance as ‘a great’ within the pantheon of world cinema directors. A screening of a film that is considered by many to be the director’s undisputed masterpiece, Ashes and Diamonds [Popioł i diament] (1958), followed. Ashes and Diamonds clearly meant a great deal to Prof. Burnside, whose new novel Ashland and Vine (2017, Jonathan Cape) features a direct reference to the film and its star Zbigniew Cybulski. A passage from the novel inspired an essay film (Cybulski / Wajda: The Last Train) that screened in the second half of the event, alongside an interview clip with Wajda and his AD Janusz Morgenstern, discussing the casting of the film. Another essay film on Wajda’s film aesthetic closed proceedings.

The event could not have gone as smoothly without the assistance and promotion of Shorna Pal and Tomasz Hollanek. After last month’s event commemorating the life and work of Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, this was another engaging and informative night organised by the IGCCC.