Centre for Film Studies
University of St Andrews
Cine-Files

Spring 2015
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Bringing Film Culture to St Andrews

This semester has been an exciting one. It began with the news of the University of St Andrews’ innovative partnership with Fife Council to re-open the Byre, aka ‘the best small theatre in Scotland’. With this comes a venue filled with promise for hosting our many events; indeed, we’ve already begun. This lovely site provides an outstanding opportunity for us to bring our love of film and film studies to the community.

Not to boast, but our film culture is pretty thrilling. This semester built upon the tremendous moment offered in the autumn line-up, as we enjoyed talks on topics including Latin American cinema and European funds, middlebrow cinema in Mumbai, the unhip cinema of the 1960s, and actor John Barrymore.

Two presentations added colour, with James Layton (George Eastman House) and David Pierce (Media History Digital Library) giving an illustrated lecture on Technicolor’s origins and Joshua Yumibe (St Andrews) and Sarah Street (Bristol) discussing the spheres of colour presentation, findings from their three year Research Project Grant funded by the Leverhulme Trust: Colour in the 1920s: Cinema and its Intermedial Contexts.

Bringing in more excitement were famed Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzmán (whose The Pearl Button received a Silver Bear award at the 65th Berlin International Film Festival) and his partner Renate Sachse, who came in for screenings and Q&A sessions. An achievement of the Latin American Speaker Series in collaboration with organisations on campus (such as the CFS) and off (Dundee Centre for Contemporary Arts), this event will not soon be forgotten.

This likely would have been enough, but students make an essential contribution: The student-led Reel Film Society kicked off its second season with a line-up focussed on youth and cinema from around the world. The season began with a screening of Yasujirō Ozu’s Dragnet Girl (1933) set to live musical accompaniment and included collaboration with Document Film Festival (Glasgow, documentfilmfestival.org). This year’s Film Blitz received a record number of entries and its gala screening and awards ceremony made an impression on all who attended.

Educational dimensions of film culture followed when Grazia Ingravalle and Dr Tom Rice received funding from the AHRC Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities Cohort Development Fund to put on the workshop ‘Remote Access’, addressing the range of challenges of conducting archival research at a distance. The PG Symposium organised by Andrei Gadalean brought together researchers from around the UK to discuss mobile communities and traversing narratives. Meanwhile, Aakshi Magazine and Shorna Pal have taken the editorial helm of the Newsletter.

Last but not least (and more on that in the next newsletter), I’m pleased to share the news of Dina Iordanova’s newly launched Institute for Global Cinema and Creative Cultures; we’ll soon have even more to kvell about.

I could go on, but I’ll let the newsletter items share more of these stories of international research trips, conferences, new arrivals, and events. Indeed, with interviews and reports, this is our chance to bring a taste of our vibrant film culture to you.
I cannot tell the story in the order in which it may have happened, as the afternoon was mostly taken over by uncertainties. A premise that appears undisputed, as it seems to have been perceived the same way by both of us, was that Ana Grgic and I met in Montmartre, near the convivial rue des Abbesses, in early March to discuss the first draft of her thesis on early Balkan cinema.

It was meant to happen at the café of Studio 28, reputedly the oldest continuously-running film exhibitions venue in Paris and a famous surrealist haunt, best known as the site where the première of Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dalí’s controversial L’Âge d’or is said to have taken place on 29 November 1930. At that point, the film had triggered an aggressive reception from a group of far right extremists from the Ligue des Patriotes. Reportedly, the patriots were mad over the film’s critique of the sexual habits of the bourgeoisie and expressed outrage by interrupting the projection – they threw ink at the screen, broke seats, and assaulted the viewers, as well as destroyed the works – by Dalí, Miró, Tanguy and Man Ray – exhibited in the lobby.

It is true that at some point, after overcoming substantial difficulties equivalent to crossing the threshold in Bunuel’s Exterminating Angel (1962), Ana and I managed to get through to the backyard of Studio 28, where we found ourselves in the company of a small coterie of eccentric characters who engaged with us in a variety of ways, as if we were in Viridiana. The café did not seem manned, yet as soon as we began contemplating stealing drinks from the bar, a surreally behaving young man – a cross of characters seen in Raul Ruiz and early Carlos Saura – briskly approached and hastily took care of all our needs, and then oversaw our presence there for the next several hours, as we steadily went over all 260 pages of the thesis.

But all that preceded this happy arrangement was as if taken out of Meshes of the Afternoon (1943), full of tribulations and upheavals, and growing more and more ambiguous into a borderline state between reality and dream.

At moments we felt as if we re-lived The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie (1972), where our declared intention to start doing what was planned was perpetually being thwarted from happening. We intended to sit in the café of Studio 28, but found a metal girdle closed – yet the grid was to open at some magical moment, and we were able to go beyond it and into the interior, feeling as if we were running in between the soft watches of the dream sequence in Spellbound (1945). There was a moment when we tried to find refuge in the nearby Montmartre hotel, La Terasse, which is known for one of the best possible views over the roofs of Paris. On approach, however, cold wind came from the building and we realised that the welcoming facade was, in fact, entirely gutted, dusty, and abandoned, feeling like the belly of a whale. The beautiful balcony on top where we had imagined we would be seated, was cavernous and sorrowful.

And, even if I am no longer sure if this was dream or reality, at some point we tried to visit the grave of Francois Truffaut nearby. A dance of hide and seek, the experience was punctuated by mysterious detours and dictated by enigmatic characters who pretended to work in the cemetery yet kept giving us directions that alternated between incongruous and ineffectual. And as soon as we would find ourselves, once again in the wrong place, they would pop up again and scold us for not being where they had told us to be. I suspect that when we were not there, all these personages were, in fact, statues that had come to life from some Jean Cocteau film, and who enjoyed living under the troubled moving clouds of An Andalusian Dog (1929).
This March, I had the pleasure of visiting several cinema theatres in Paris, and in truly flâneur style, I wandered the streets, absorbing the unique cosmopolitan character of the city of lights.

For the upcoming book, Cinemas of Paris, in the guise of a photojournalist, I was on a mission to capture as many photographs of several historical cinema venues of the French capital as possible. Near Place de l’Etoile, literally a square in the form of a star where major Parisian roads join (at the Arc de Triomphe), stands a small cinema, the Mac Mahon, which most might remember as Jean Seberg’s refuge, where she hides from cops, in Jean-Luc Godard’s *A bout de souffle* (Breathless, 1960). Here, in the atmosphere of a chilly yet sunny morning, the shiny art deco letters were advertising Anouk Aimée’s presence for the screening that week, while a black and white cat (in “Chris Marker” style) lazily strolled in front of the cinema, posing for the camera.

That afternoon, on the 9th arrondissement’s lively and busy Haussmanian boulevard, I visited the Max Linder Panorama, which since its opening in 1912 has continued to be one of the most unique cinemas in Paris since, with a giant panoramic screen facing a large auditorium on three levels. The cinema’s owner, Anne, had kindly let me in, and after illuminating the art deco style hall and bar, let me wander around the cinema, and enjoy the vastness of the auditorium in complete silence and splendour. My reportage concluded with a visit to the many small arthouse cinemas in the Latin Quarter, which offered a vast array of films from around the globe, new and old, to the ardent cinéphile.
In 2014, the Department of Film Studies at the University of St. Andrews gave me the opportunity to be a visiting scholar for one year, as part of my PhD degree at Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil. I arrived here in the summer vacation, in June. Few of the postgraduate students were here, but I already loved it, including the rain and the wind.

When the first semester began, I could not be more surprised at everybody’s enthusiasm and involvement with all the program’s activities and classes. I even got to help Andrei Gadalean a little with the 2015 PG Symposium, and was part of the Frames Journal editorial team. I learned so much about film studies attending both undergraduate and postgraduate classes. In this second semester, Dr. Michael Cowan’s classes on European Science Fiction have been particularly fun and mind-opening, since my own dissertation is on Sci-Fi film.

Before when people asked me what I thought of St. Andrews I would say, “I don’t know much about Prince William or golf,” but I was so wrong. Culturally, St. Andrews is very international and offers much more than the highland experience. The historical weight of a university that is older than my home country fascinates me deeply, and makes Marty’s Kirk Research Library (a church converted into a library) the best place to pay for my dissertation sins. As my PhD colleague Amber Shields once said, “You took a vacation to finish your dissertation.” and I sure feel like I did.

I am extremely grateful to Professor Robert Burgoyne for his most helpful advice, both on my dissertation and travel spots, and to CAPES which sponsored me in this scholarly adventure.

The book Cinemas of Paris, co-written by Professor Dina Iordanova and renowned French film critic Jean-Michel Frodon, explores how the cinema venues of the city create a unique environment for global film that is superior to any other city in the world. The unique conglomeration of these cinemas provides the backbone of this city’s outstanding film culture which goes far beyond the Francophone offer. The number of cinemas in Paris within the city’s boundaries is about 100 (for a population of around 2 million), of which the majority are specialised in presenting diverse international and arthouse film.

It is a place where the Hollywood domination is not as pervasive as in other parts of the world. The book Cinemas of Paris investigates the venues, their programming specifics, and the economy and politics of film exhibition. Specific contributions to the volume will be made by Danny Fairfax (Yale/Melbourne), Ana Grgic (St Andrews/Lyon), Sue Harris (London), Flora Lichaa (Paris/Rennes), Renaud Olivero (Paris/Nottingham), and Yoana Pavlova (Sofia/Paris). This nicely illustrated volume will also include short contributions by a number of well-known international cineastes.

**Cinemas of Paris**  
Edited by Dina Iordanova & Jean-Michel Frodon  
*St Andrews Film Studies Publishing*  

**Crossing Continents in Film Studies**  
Marcia Tiemy Morita Kawamoto
My visit to Brazil in May 2014, for a three week stint as a visiting professor, reminded me of how remarkably friendly and cosmopolitan Brazilians are, and how strong the intellectual life is in the cities. My gig was at the Federal University of Santa Caterina, which I have visited before, at the invitation of my friend Anelise Corseuil. Our team taught a mini course on history and film, with excellent graduate students who participated with insight and interest, including Marcia Tiemy, who is studying with us at St Andrews this year. I also made a number of trips within Brazil, to Sao Paolo, Porto Alegre, and to Rio. These legendary places are rightly celebrated for their culture and beauty; and they also have the best bookstores I have ever seen. I was much pleased to see the Portuguese translation of my book Film Nation on the shelves in Sao Paolo and Rio, (even if I had to look quite hard). One of the real pleasures of my stay in Ipanema was eating fabulous dinners in the open air until after 11 pm, and then walking to the bookstore to spend an hour or so reading and browsing. Perhaps my new perfect evening. One of the finest of these evenings was spent with my good friend from our graduate school days together at NYU, Joao Viera, overlooking a moonlit lagoon.

This was the first time I had visited Rio, and I am convinced, by my one week visit, that this is the most beautiful city on earth. That extends to the people, of course, who were exceptionally friendly and helpful. The beach culture of Rio was more than I imagined: in addition to the fitness culture that is evident at every turn of the head (which I did my share of), vendors of every stripe walk the beach unobtrusively, so you never have to leave; ice cream, caipirinhas, and even sushi are all prepared and sold by vendors walking up and down the beach. There’s a sense of deep courtesy here and a pleasure in everyday life that is very appealing. Perhaps the most interesting part of the trip to Rio was my visit to the favela “Little Peacock.” A student from my class in Florianapolis knew someone who lived there, and the young woman came down to meet us and bring us up the hill. Some 275 almost-vertical steps later we were ensconced in one of the many pubs of the favela, overlooking the city and Ipanema Beach, drinking beer and eating chips.

The sense of community is strong here, the favela consists mainly of people who worked in Ipanema in the hotels and restaurants, and who climb those stairs each day. The bodegas, hairdressers, pubs, and even a lingerie shop were what you would find anywhere, except these businesses all seemed to be glued to the hillside, it was so steep. Little Peacock is a “pacified” favela, meaning there was a heavy police presence in the areas nearest Ipanema, and a tragedy had just occurred a week before. But what I took away from my visit was how accepting people were of me climbing along in their village, with ready smiles and nice words.

The potential for partnerships and exchanges between St Andrews and Brazil will be something I will be developing in the coming year. The transnational focus of the Department now has another compass point, and another major cinema to explore.
I was in New Delhi for Visible Evidence 21, the first time it had been held in Asia. As stimulating as the conference was, and as great as it was to finally meet such legendary scholars as Thomas Waugh and Rosie Thomas, my colleague Dr Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai and I could hardly wait to get away from it.

Not too long before, I had come across an article by our PhD student Aakshi Magazine in the online Indian film magazine *The Big Indian Picture* about a man who sold original Indian movie posters in Old Delhi. Pillai and I are working with another scholar on a book about Manmohan Desai which we had hoped to be able to illustrate with ephemera rather than the usual screen grabs. Two years earlier we had scoured the streets around Mumbai’s Naz Building, which used to house film production companies, in the hopes of finding posters from Desai’s films. The neighbourhood used to be a movie memorabilia bazaar of sorts, but we found that all of the shops were shuttered, and the trade in posters had shifted online. We were hoping that this man would have what we were looking for.

The problem was finding him without his phone number or the location of his stall. Fortunately, Aakshi still had his number and was able to send as our guides two associates, Tanushree Bhasin and Aniruddha Ghosal, a reporter for *The Indian Express*. We fixed a time to meet this man, Mohammad Suleiman (although he prefers to go by Shenky) in front of the Moti Mahal restaurant, which claims to have invented butter chicken. No sooner had we shaken hands with Shenky than he was off, making his way at a fast clip through the crowds and maze-like streets of Old Delhi, all the while never looking back once to see if we could keep up. We struggled to even keep him in sight. As we got deeper into the neighbourhood, the crowds thinned out, and we were able to follow him more easily down the narrow streets, which would not even qualify as wynds (alleys) here. We wondered what was going on, since we were moving away from the market. It turned out that he was bringing us directly to his home, where he keeps the collection of posters he inherited from his father. Shenky’s rapid stroll through the crowds should have let us know what we were in for.

He is a person of tireless energy, able to keep up a steady stream of extremely loud speech for hours while simultaneously tossing around piles of posters. This latter made us cringe at times, seeing an original poster for *Awara* (1951) fly across his small living room. Over the course of the four hours we spent there, fortified by delicious mutton stew made by his wife, we found many posters, song booklets and lobby cards for Desai films. It turns out that Manmohan Desai holds a special place in his heart, since *Chacha Bhatija* (1977) was the first film his movie-mad father took him to. Before we left, he promised to find more, as his collection was too vast and disorganized to go through in one day.

When it was time to leave, he guided us back out to the main street through a torrential thunderstorm. As we went back through the narrow alleys, the tangle of wires overhead, the result of years of people illegally tapping the power supply, was popping and dropping sparks. It all would have been quite pretty, if we were not terrified of being electrocuted.
Having survived the rains of Old Delhi and its uniquely local variety of lightning, I next went to Bangkok, to give a keynote at the 8th Annual HUSOC Conference at Katesart University, where our PhD student Natthanai Prasannam is an associate professor of English. I was the second of three keynotes. The first was given by Sulak Sivaraksa, one of Thailand’s most important political activists of the post-war era. Although he is a monarchist and a practicing Buddhist monk, he has tirelessly fought against the lèse majesté law that is used to justify long jail sentences for anyone perceived as criticizing the king. I was astonished by how openly he criticized Thailand’s current military dictatorship, which he told me with a swing of his hand he would like to slap away, then smilingly added, “with infinite gentleness, of course.” I had to follow him onstage immediately, and somehow I felt my talk on World-System Analysis and Film Studies was lacking in similar wisdom and gravitas. I saw no sign of Manmohan Desai in Bangkok, but that was probably only because I was too busy looking at other things.

After Bangkok, I went to Kolkata for a three-week research trip as part of a UKIERI (UK-India Education and Research Initiative) exchange programme between the Presidency University and the University of St Andrews. The hotel where the University booked me a room was in the same neighbourhood as The New Market, an enclosed market that has spilled out onto all of the surrounding streets, which have been practically taken over by hawkers’ corners that operate through unofficial arrangements with the police.

Wandering the streets I noticed a stall full of vinyl LPs, many of them soundtracks to Hindi films. I made acquaintance with its salesman, Danish Ashraf, and asked if he had any soundtracks from Manmohan Desai films. He told me he would check at home and get back to me. According to a 2010 article in the Kolkata Telegraph, this shop had been there since 1965 and was officially known as “The Record Prince”. Locals referred to it as “Chacha’s Shop” after the nickname of its founder, the now retired Ashish Ashraf, father of Danish. A few days later, I received a call from Danish saying he had found some LPs for me, and I set a time to meet him.

Fearing that he would raise his usual prices, I brought along our PhD student Sanghita Sen, who was used to the tough bargaining tactics of the New Market area. Although he seemed upset by this at first, after the deal was made, he bought us all celebratory bhands (disposable clay cups) of tea from a stall across the street, which I drank while he took photos of his favourite among the LPs I had acquired, Manmohan Desai’s *Mard* (1985).

While in West Bengal I had the chance to travel to the northern regions, and one of the highlights there was giving a talk at Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, which is named after Thakur Panchanan, the first lawyer from the Rajbanshi community of the Koch, an indigenous people from that area. I was a bit surprised to see that the room I was to speak in was packed, with students standing in the hallway outside the door. I later found out that attendance was mandatory, which I should have suspected. Still the talk ended in a very unfamiliar way for me; students asked to have their pictures taken with me and for me to sign their notebooks. Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University is in its first year, so I was very proud to be able to connect India’s newest university with Scotland’s oldest during my travels.
Reel Film Society

Dale Jenkins

Following a highly successful series in 2014, this semester has seen the return of the Reel Film Society.

This season is comprised of eight screenings and showcases; an eclectic range of films from across the globe. Celebrating both modern classics and neglected texts from years past, the series aims to unite cinephiles from a range of academic disciplines through engaging introductions, lively discussions, and toe-tapping musical accompaniment.

This year, the Reel Film committee consisted of myself, Emma Mason, Andrés Zambrano Bravo, Sammy Bennett, Alex MacKay, Mark Paul, Pedro Fernández and Sara Bell. Reflecting on last year’s theme of ‘essential cinema’ and wishing to frame the series more succinctly, we decided to compile a programme based around depictions of adolescence on screen. Aiming to highlight key issues and rites of passage experienced by young people in a variety of contexts, we spent the first few months of the academic year developing an exciting and diverse collection of filmic texts.

With the guidance and support of Dr Tom Rice and Dr Lucy Fife Donaldson, we compiled a broad programme featuring depictions of adolescence that transcend time, race, sexuality, gender and class. At the time of writing, we are halfway through our set of eight events. Our series began with a screening of One Week (1924) and Dragnet Girl (1933), each beautifully underscored by the Jane Gardner Trio. For many student attendees, this was their first experience of attending a silent film screening with live music. Subsequent dates have been equally successful; our exhibition of Boyhood (2014) in the run-up to the Academy Awards was particularly busy and atmospheric.

Moreover, the Reel Film Society has once again proved to be an effective way in which to enhance both key skills (teamwork, event management) and specialist skills (festival programming) amongst St Andrews students. After being asked by my fellow committee members to introduce the screening of Beautiful Thing (1996), I was challenged to present a cinematic text to a wider audience in ways that differed from conventional academic writing. Each member of the committee has remarked on the feeling of satisfaction derived from seeing an audience engage with and enjoy our chosen films. Whilst providing unique opportunities for its volunteers, the Reel Film Society is simultaneously positioning cinema as a key component of the university’s vibrant student culture.

The remainder of the series both reaffirms the society’s key aims as well as pushing it into new avenues. Facilitating discussions about film across academic disciplines is a core value of the Reel Film Society. Following Dr Dennis Hanlon’s enlightening talk about 7 Cajas (2012), we will next welcome Dr Maryam Ghorbankarimi to discuss At Five in the Afternoon (2003). In a first, we are also thrilled to be collaborating with the Document International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival in screening Since I Was Born (2013). The society sees this as the beginning of an opportunity to develop links with external partners to broaden the university’s film culture.
Celebrated filmmaker Patricio Guzman and his producer Renate Sachse visited the University of St Andrews on the 3rd and the 4th of April, 2015. The events were organised by Dr. Dennis Hanlon as part of the University of St Andrews’ Latin American Speaker series. Guzman delivered a fascinating lecture at the Parliament Hall in which he gave a detailed narration of the making of his films. This was translated into English by Andrés Zambrano Bravo, a student of Film Studies at the University. Guzman’s insights, involvement and clarity on his cinema and politics, and the honesty with which he spoke was endearing. This was followed by the screening of his film, The Battle of Chile, Part One (1975-76) at St Andrews, and the following day by Nostalgia For The Light (2010) at Dundee Contemporary Arts. The event was co-sponsored by the School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies, Department of Film Studies and Centre for Film Studies. The other sponsors who made the event possible were the School of International Relations, the School of Modern Languages, the School of English, Dundee Contemporary Arts and Institute for Global Cinema and Creative Cultures. It was a memorable and historic two day event, the flavour of which we hope to share with our readers on the following pages of this newsletter.

Friday

Winning the Battle Against Time:

Patricio Guzmán’s The Battle of Chile

Amber Shields

On the 3rd of April, 2015, the University of St Andrews had the pleasure of not only screening Patricio Guzmán’s The Battle of Chile (1975-1979) but also introducing it with a lecture by the legendary director himself. Listening to Guzmán’s stories about the making of the film, which could have been a movie in themselves if only the “Making Of” featurettes were popular then, began to clarify why this film not only holds a respected place in the historical film canon, but, more importantly, why it is able to escape from being confined to textbooks and can still speak to and move an audience.

Looking at the historical specificity of the film, its longevity seems almost contradictory. The film was made during a
particular moment of Chilean history, specifically the referendum to remove democratically elected Socialist President Salvador Allende. Filmed on the streets and capturing the political spirit and turbulence of the time, it is a historical chronicle of the people and politics shaping that moment.

Yet Guzmán’s stories of the film emphasize something beyond this facile reading, taking us to the heart of the film itself. This is more than a film about a specific time and place, rather it is a film about the energy of that time and place, an energy that the film crew shared when they went into the streets and realized direct cinema. They captured this energy by focusing on, as Guzmán described during his lecture, the “social process, the day by day, month by month, step by step”, a focus that allowed them to capture in an unsurpassed manner change as it unfolded. Not only does it capture this process, but, according to Guzmán, it “transmits the spectator to what happened.” This transportation nevertheless leaves space for the spectator’s individual interpretation, something else unusual in a film deemed political cinema.

It is this final distinction from more traditional avenues of political cinema trying to give a particular message to a specific audience that makes The Battle of Chile stand out. Guzmán states in the interview below that when he makes a film, he doesn’t think of a particular public but rather a person, an individual human being. This connection with the spectator on a human level is what makes the film special, allowing it to still speak to us and thus to stand the test of time.

*Translation at Friday’s events was provided by Film Studies Honours Student Andrés Zambrano Bravo.

Saturday

Falling in Love with Those Words: Patricio Guzmán’s Nostalgia for the Light

Amber Shields and Rohan Crickmar

More than providing answers, Guzmán’s Q&A sessions appear a continuation of the story itself, revealing another layer to the rich narrative he has constructed. One story that stood out during the Q&A following the screening of the director’s award winning documentary Nostalgia for the Light (2010) at the Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre was Guzmán’s tale of the title itself. During the pre-production stage of the film, Guzmán and his producer and partner Renate Sachse visited the French astronomer Michel Cassé and told him the story of the film. Cassé was so moved by this description that he gave Guzmán the title “Nostalgia for the Light” which he had used in his 1987 publication on astrophysics. Upon receiving this gift, Guzmán fell in love with these words. Guzmán’s passion is not only apparent in how he speaks of the title but is palpable throughout the film, a film where he meets people and, in an act of love, they give their stories to him. These are the stories that Guzmán shares with us through the film, and he continued the story after the film, where he told us of his interactions with the characters and his own story of his nostalgia for the light of the “luminous country” where he was born.

*Translation at Saturday’s events was provided by Dr Ricardo Fernandez, Lecturer in the Department of Spanish.
Cinema of Passion: A Weekend With Patricio Guzmán

Interview with Patricio Guzmán and Renate Sachse (Atacama Productions)

Isabel Seguí and Amber Shields

Patricio Guzmán is not only an intense man and artist, he is a great —almost hypnotic—conversationalist. In the following lines we will try to summarize one of the conversations we had with him and with his producer and partner Renate Sachse during their stay in St Andrews.

Q: In your talk yesterday you commented that ‘theory is fascinating, but does not serve to make movies.’ Where do your films come from?

Patricio Guzmán: They are born in the heart. One issue grabs you and when this happens you start the investigation. But the first thing that appears is an inner desire that does not obey any rules or any obligation. That’s very important because there’s a lot of so-called ‘political intervention cinema’ which is made out of obligation: ‘Let’s make this film because it will be useful for this purpose.’ This principle is not valid because it gives very schematic results. It is the problem of socialist cinematography.

Renate Sachse: I think that is the general problem of all militant art. The same can be said of the militant literature. It bothers me when they say that Patricio does political cinema. For me he never did political cinema, he makes cinema out of passion. He had a passion for conveying what was happening at the historical moment in which he lived. That was his place, his role and his motivation and not the vocation of making political films for the sake of ‘revolution’.

PG: You’re right Renate, because at the end, when everything fell apart, I never lacked ideas to make movies. On the contrary, I even think that I’ve lost plenty of time, because I have not done many films. I lost time in exile because in Spain, for instance, documentary genre is not recognized. However the excitement never left me, I never thought: ‘Well, now the revolution is over, let’s change profession.’ It is the opposite! Today more than ever we need to shake things up. There is always something that rejuvenates me. That does not happen to everyone. I don’t know…

Q: How do you create a space conducive to testimony, a space to evoke and rebuild memory?

PG: I do not know. Each film seeks its own way. Each film has its own formula and that works for everything.

It’s the same with the evocation of traumatic memory. How to interview a person without hurting her? How to build trust? How to create a small friendship? And there are many techniques that help. First of all total silence from the team is required. Those cameramen who are too noisy must be thrown out of the crew. Similarly, the boom should not be a threat. The crew should try to be as unobtrusive as possible. The connection between the director and the cameraman is also very important. To avoid distracting the interviewee we should know what we are thinking with a simple gesture.

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PG: You’re right Renate, because at the end, when everything fell apart, I never lacked ideas to make movies. On the contrary, I even think that I’ve lost plenty of time, because I have not done many films. I lost time in exile because in Spain, for instance, documentary genre is not recognized. However the excitement never left me, I never thought: ‘Well, now the revolution is over, let’s change profession.’ It is the opposite! Today more than ever we need to shake things up. There is always something that rejuvenates me. That does not happen to everyone. I don’t know…

Q: How do you create a space conducive to testimony, a space to evoke and rebuild memory?

PG: I do not know. Each film seeks its own way. Each film has its own formula and that works for everything.

When you’re editing a movie you wonder what will be the method to follow, and that method does not exist. Each film invents its own method. Only hard work is useful. If you work, you’ll find it. But if you get desperate, you are lost.
who work twenty hours a day and do not care. We’re not worried about our wage because all our wages are low. Or nonexistent.

Q: How has your intended audience changed? In The Battle of Chile you were thinking of a national or perhaps Latin American public and to contribute to an ongoing political process. This approach changed within exile. Who is your audience now?

PG: When I make a film I do not think of a particular audience. I think of a human person. What should I do? Telling a good story and tell it well. I cannot put together four abstract sequences, however beautiful they may be, because people will not understand. I cannot interrupt the story with a subplot that will weigh down the line of development. I have to limit myself to tell the best possible story to win the viewer. I do not think that every day, of course, but we must always consider the public. Nevertheless, when I show The Battle of Chile here, or in Hamburg, the reaction is exactly the same. The public became universal and everywhere there are people interested in watching intelligent things instead of idiotic television. People are interested in renewed ideas, environmental issues, women and indigenous rights. Things have expanded.

Q: But in your film Chile: Obstinate Memory (1997) you made the experiment of showing The Battle of Chile to three groups of young Chileans of very different ideological identities and the reactions and interpretation of history of the three groups of spectators were very different.

PG: Yes of course, but precisely because of that Chile: Obstinate Memory has hardly been seen in Chile due to distribution problems.

Q: Let’s talk about this issue, because distribution—or the lack of it— is still a critical issue for documentary films. How do you tackle this problem?

PG: In Latin America there are no exhibition spaces for our films. There are parishes or cine-clubs where 30 people get together and see Latin American films. It is a fragile archipelago that works, but cannot be compared with the strong multiplex structure that exhibits mainly American films. One answer to this problem is founding festivals.

The public of festivals is very diverse depending on each case. For example, at the International Festival of Documentary of Santiago de Chile (FIDOCS) we have a popular branch with extensions in theatres outside the capital city. The festival is open and the tickets are very cheap. In many Argentinian cities they also have small popular political festivals.

In the case of Europe, nowadays everything is more realistic. In the seventies the leftist distributors finished by owing us a lot of money. That is the way this business worked. Gauche distributors had no business experience and had no idea of competitiveness against large US companies. And we—as South Americans with no place to live during the early years of exile— were hit hardest. But they were not exploiters, they were just inexperienced. In the eighties, nineties, all were subsumed by larger companies. Today alternative distributors are more professional.

RS: Still no money is earned. Hopefully, when a documentary works really well—as in the case of Nostalgia of Light (2005-2010)— costs are covered, that’s all. Due to funding difficulties we set up our own production company in 2005, Atacama Productions. That allowed Patricio as a filmmaker to enjoy greater creative freedom at this point in his career. I became a producer inadvertently, I have no vocation for this. I know the work of Patricio and we have always collaborated throughout the entire process of creating the film, from scriptwriting to editing. We chose what we do, we do it with pleasure and for me it’s a pure exercise of resistance because it is not easy, there is never money available. But we must resist and make it possible. Each film is our life, we don’t separate life and work.

Renate, Patricio. Thank you very much for your attitude of resistance. It’s been a pleasure having you at the University of St Andrews.
A New Year, A New Space
Life for Film Studies at the Byre

Kathleen Fraese

As we brought in the New Year 2015, the Department of Film Studies brought in a new space to nestle, enjoy, and grow in. The roots of the Byre Theatre date back to 1933, and they have occupied their location since 2001. Despite a new building and horizon of beautiful performances, St Andrews mourned the potential loss of this historic theatre in 2013 due to financial difficulties. Thankfully, the community of St Andrews stood behind this landmark and the culture it provides, supporting its eventual reopening in 2014. Now, the University and the Department of Film Studies have a stake in its future.

The excitement has been overwhelming. Students and staff have gained a modern, well-equipped conference room for lectures, seminars and screenings; IT staff are on call for any difficulties, and it is an environment that truly encourages the study of performance and art. As you walk the halls and floors of the Byre, beautiful photographs and information on theatre happenings surround you. The conference room is set back and soundproofed for maximum privacy during teaching and screenings. However, when you leave the theatre there is a constant stream of enthusiastic local and University residents enjoying a cup of tea and scones while having insightful conversations about the play they have just seen, or talk they have just attended. The constant engagement of the spaces the Byre offers, from the theatre and conference rooms, to the bar and café, make people want to stay long before and after they are meant to be there.

As a postgraduate who also did my undergraduate studies at St Andrews, I have always had an affinity for the original Film Studies building. It has been my home for four years and I will continue to have fond memories of it. Despite my love for the building, the new space at the Byre has been a real joy, already full of wonderful new memories. Beyond the use of the Byre for classroom space, the theatre has and will continue to be home to some of the year’s more exciting events – two guest talks and the 60 Hour FilmBlitz. As a manager of the FilmBlitz event this year, it was an absolute pleasure to occupy an environment that has the aura of a real festival theatre for the gala night.

The Department sees a real relationship and future with the Theatre. Time will show the extent of scope for further collaboration, but given the engagements thus far, collaborations will be plentiful and well received. All in all, the New Year has been full of changes, and the Byre is one of the best.
“Colour Series” in St Andrews

Part 1: The Dawn of Technicolor

2015 has so far been a critical year for the study and exploration of the history of colour in film. The centenary of Technicolor – the first commercially viable system of colour cinematography – has given rise to a number of studies, publications, retrospectives and conferences, ranging from the “Glorious Technicolor” retrospective at the Berlin Film Festival to the “Colour Fantastic” conference at the EYE Film Institute in Amsterdam.

The Centre for Film Studies has recognised this critical interest in colour in early and silent cinema, by scheduling two talks on the subject into its richer-than-ever 2015 calendar of events. First in February there was the “Dawn of Technicolor,” an illustrated talk by James Layton (George Eastman House) and David Pierce (Media History Digital Library), followed in April by Professor Sarah Street (Bristol University) and Dr Joshua Yumibe’s (St Andrews/ Michigan State University) presentation, entitled “Chromatic Modernity: Color Standards and Visual Music of the 1920s.” In support of these talks, the department programmed work on the history of colour film into our teaching programmes, for example in our first year Film History course.

The publication of The Dawn of Technicolor: 1915-1935 was made possible by extensive archival research in the vaults of a number of archives around the world, including the Library of Congress, the George Eastman House, the Technicolor Corporate Archives, the Margaret Herrick Library, the Cinematic Arts Library at the University of Southern California, the Museum of Modern Art, the Finnish Audiovisual Institute, and private collections. Layton and Pierce unearthed hundreds of documents, such as trade journal articles, production files and scripts, letters, photographs, scrap books, unpublished interviews, personal papers, and rare footage, unlocking the scarcely explored history of the first twenty years of the company. The talk, punctuated with frame scans from the very first Technicolor picture The Gulf Between (1917), the notorious Ben-Hur (1925), The Black Pirate (1926), and the troubled production of The Mysterious Island (1929), highlighted the allure of colour to an audience of students and industry professionals from across Scotland. Through rare footage from otherwise lost films like The Gulf Between, and behind-the-scenes accounts of the early controversial years of Technicolor, we were reminded of the constructive link between archival research and non-linear histories, which can shed new light on the “forgotten” segments of cinema’s past.

With financial support from the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities, Dr Tom Rice and I were able to obtain a “St Andrews tour date” for the “Dawn of Technicolor,” bringing archivists and historians James Layton and David Pierce to Scotland, en route from the Berlinale back to the US. The talk, accompanied by rare gleaming footage from the Technicolor corporate archives, focused on the company’s origins during the silent era, and on its quasi-ruinous yet strenuous attempts to establish itself as the market leader in the 1930s with the three-colour process.
A “Colour Series” in St Andrews continued

Part 2: Chromatic Modernity

Grazia Ingravalle

The second part of our “Colour Series” brought to St Andrews the “Chromatic Modernity” talk by Professor Sarah Street and Dr Joshua Yumibe. The talk took place in April, immediately after the “Colour Fantastic” conference at EYE, both part of a 3-year research project grant funded by the Leverhulme Trust “Colour in the 1920s: Cinema and its Intermedial Contexts.”

If the “Dawn of Technicolor” investigated the first steps of colour cinematography, Street and Yumibe focused on the “chromatic culture” of the 1920s and its various forms and expressions in the spheres of art, printed media, and commercial exploitations, such as in the clothing and fashion industry, and in street design. Colour “exploded” as a visual form across different media and commodities, and connoted, with a mixture of consumerism and utopian optimism (as the abstract chromatism of Ruttman and Fischinger illustrates), the very experience of modernity in the United States and Europe. However, as these examples suggested, colour did not emerge in isolation, Professor Street highlighted, but in a rhythmic and dynamic relation with sound and music. Yumibe and Street’s extensive research into colour symbolism and aesthetics in the 1920s, and their work in synergy with archives conducting colour restorations recently culminated with the publication of Chromatic Modernity: Color, Cinema, and Media of the 1920s.

The “Colour Series” talks not only investigated colour as a historical phenomenon, but also showed us the epistemological implications the study of colour can have on film histories and theories. Research projects like the “Dawn of Technicolor” and “Chromatic Modernity” stemmed from interdisciplinary methodologies that place the work and exchange with film archives and professionals at the centre of their endeavours.
Archives and Fieldwork Research

Remote Access
Conducting Archival Research from a Distance

Tom Rice & Grazia Ingravalle

St Andrews is noted for its beautiful location on the east coast of Scotland. This somewhat isolated spot presents a particular set of challenges for those of us reliant on archival research. St Andrews postgraduate students are increasingly working with archives – whether in Romania, India, Uruguay, South Korea, Thailand or North America – and often institutions have overlooked the specific training and preparation required for such work.

With this in mind, we successfully applied to the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH) for funding and invited PG students from all over Scotland to participate in a one-day workshop, entitled “Remote Access: Conducting Archival Research from a Distance.”

The event, which was held in the Byre Theatre, newly equipped for teaching in Film Studies, attracted 23 postgraduate students from 10 Universities across Scotland. At the request of the funding body, the event was expanded to include students from an array of disciplines beyond Film Studies – including anthropology, art history, music, and Scottish Literature – who brought their own experiences, whether crowdsourcing historical materials in Glasgow, using (limited) online archives and private papers or, in one particularly memorable example, organising a research trip to Mongolia!

The workshop was organised in two sessions. In the morning, we invited four speakers to present on methodological issues, using film as a case study. David Pierce examined the challenges of the Media History Digital Library digitisation project and the new research opportunities it allows. Karl Magee, curator at the Grierson Archives, University of Stirling, provided an invaluable insight into the physical archive and how it is changing in the digital age. Maria Velez-Serna provided a researcher’s perspective, an engaging and illuminating study into the methodological issues raised when examining early local film exhibition. The final talk of the morning session by James Layton, an archivist from George Eastman House, Rochester NY, entitled "Researching The Dawn of Technicolor:

“Simple Steps for Finding the Unexpected” was filled with insights, advice and practical suggestions and prompted much scribbling and typing amongst the assembled group.

After an enjoyable and sociable lunch, we moved onto a student-led afternoon session. In advance of the workshop, the participants were divided into four groups, each addressing a different stage of archival research. The four stages were: How to Begin: Locating and Selecting materials; How to make the most of your trip to the archive: Planning and visiting; How best to use online archives: Incorporating digital material; How to make the most of your findings: After the archive – what next? A representative from each group introduced these questions in relation to their own research, before the groups dispersed around the Byre Theatre for an hour-long discussion session. On their return, each group presented their findings before a lively conclusion in which we
considered what more could be done to help and train students as they look to work with archival materials.

The workshop raised as many questions as answers, and highlighted the need and desire for further training in this field. The feedback from students was universally positive, but as organisers it was most interesting to get a glimpse at the huge array of fascinating projects and innovative research taking place across the humanities and throughout Scotland. There is clearly so much that we can learn from these exchanges, both across disciplines and institutions.

As a follow-up to the event, we have made a series of materials available on the Cinema St Andrews website (http://cinemastandrews.org.uk). We were fortunate to have a third member of our team as we employed a doctoral researcher, Shorna Pal, who filmed the day and ensured that the keynote talks became available for all to view online. Further materials will follow to make sure that the discussions and training reach far beyond the participants who attended the event in St Andrews.

Transmedial, Transcultural, & Transdisciplinary

A Masterclass with Marianne Hirsch & Susan Meiselas

One of the pleasures of film studies is the ease it affords in crossing boundaries with other disciplines. Caught up in this nebulous multidimensional realm called culture, film moves through different spheres, reflecting, influencing, and producing the world as we know it and come to know it. This idea of mobility, the mobility between disciplines, places, media and time was one of the key points of exploration during the master class “Transmedial/Transcultural Memories: Points of Convergence” held last Fall by the Ottoman Cosmopolitan Network, at Birbeck College, University of London.

Bringing together academics and practitioners from all disciplines, and led by scholar Marianne Hirsch and photographer Susan Meiselas, this class was a provocation in its bridging of worlds that traditionally may have had different approaches but that, in their search for answers to the same questions, have found themselves crossing disciplines and sharing practices. Presentations by both Hirsch and Meiselas revealed similar questions about the materiality of memory, the layering of history and perspectives, the role of places and spaces of memory, and the more practical questions of how to share and present memory, using it, not only to reflect on the past but also to think towards the future. The discussion that followed with students, academics, practitioners, and community organizers revealed that these are shared questions that trouble but do not provide easy answers, especially when working with contested memories of vulnerable or traumatized individuals and communities. And here is where the double disciplinary approach proved so useful; in answering some of these questions Hirsch, with her academic work with the theory and sites of memory, and Meiselas, with her practical experience from the field, gave new insight into not just how we think about memory, but what we do with it.

One of the final points of deliberation, one that perhaps does not come up as often as it should in discussions of vulnerability and trauma, is how to make these memories and the inescapable obsession with them more hopeful and future oriented. Here Hirsch and Meiselas suggested that this is perhaps where the transcultural turn becomes important as these memories are created and shared beyond borders in manners that engage and do not spurn these more fluid boundaries. Beyond the transcultural and transmedial, what was shown in the workshop is that it is also the transdisciplinary, not only in academia but between academics and practitioners, that becomes important as that which will not only provide new ways to think about memory but give new things to do with it.

(My attendance at this workshop was supported by a CAPOD grant.)
On the 15th of November 2014, the University of St Andrews screened a short documentary by Ethiopian refugee and filmmaker Dagmawi Yimer. Entitled *Va’ pensiero – Storie ambulanti* (2013), the film was screened as part of the 2014 Being Human Festival (Saturday 15 November 2014 to Sunday 23 November 2014). The Being Human Festival is an annual event taking place across different academic institutions of the United Kingdom. It seeks to demonstrate how the disciplines that form the humanities, from philosophy to film studies, are able to directly address issues of increasing importance to everyday life in a rapidly changing modern world.

In St Andrews a day of events based around the idea of migratory existences tied in with an AHRC-funded project entitled “Transnationalizing Modern Languages: Mobility Identity and Translation in Modern Italian Cultures”. It included work conducted by the Rome-based Archivio Memorie Migranti, a photography exhibition by Mario Badaglia and the screening of Yimer’s film (alongside a Q&A with Alessandro Triulzi, one of the film’s producers).

Yimer had apparently initiated the film project after coming into contact with the charismatic ‘griot’, educator and performer Mohamed Ba, a Senegalese immigrant living and working in Milan. Ba was subjected to a racially-motivated knife attack on March 31, 2009 in Milan, a place he had called home for over fourteen years. What initially started as a film focusing upon how Ba communicated his migrant experience and his Senegalese cultural roots to an Italian population through theatrical performance, storytelling and educational work with Italian school children, soon became something far more complex. On Saturday 31 December 2011 a shooting spree occurred within a Florence marketplace. The survivors of this attack (Cheikh Mbengue and Mor Sougou, both Senegalese) became a secondary focus of the documentary. Mohamed Ba now served as a mediating point of access for Yimer to these immigrant experiences.

Yimer’s film showed the latent racism of certain aspects of Italian culture, particularly those associated with the colonial era. The film showed Ba being subjected to a rendition of a racially offensive ‘fascist’ song by the parents of children that he’d just been educating about Senegalese culture. This is one example of the powerful ways in which the film highlighted some of the unthinking and ignorant societal behaviours that help to foster the conditions in which immigrants are viewed with suspicion and hostility.

Another fascinating aspect of the film was in showing how different and individual each experience of racial violence was. For Ba the attack seemed to come out of the blue, particularly as he had seemingly managed to integrate into Italian society without having to sacrifice the strong connection to his Senegalese culture and heritage. Unlike Mbengue and Sougou, Ba had married into a local Italian family, spoke Italian fluently and had found a space within Italian society as an artist and educator. Mbengue and Sougou were market workers, who had migrated to Italy primarily for economic reasons and therefore didn’t have access to as strong a support network after the attack. Though Mbengue at least had his family with him, for Sougou there was no such possibility. Yimer’s film paints a portrait of an increasingly isolated and vulnerable existence – with a postscript highlighting Sougou’s return to Senegal. The greatest irony was that Mbengue and Sougou were eventually given Italian citizenship (because) of the notoriety of the racial attack, whereas Ba, at the film’s close, remained unable to secure Italian citizenship, despite his lengthy period of time within the country and his family status.

In the illuminating discussion following the screening, Alessandro Triulzi pointed out that Yimer’s own status as an Ethiopian refugee within Italy – even if an award-winning filmmaker – had prevented him from coming to the United Kingdom. The prohibitive nature of the UK immigration policy for refugee-status migrants, stymied the overarching ideal of EU freedom of movement for citizens. Triulzi also shared his experiences of how the film had been received within different audience contexts, whilst tacitly acknowledging that many of the screenings had been to audiences who may already be more favourably disposed toward empathising with migratory narratives.
Sen-sational : A meeting with Mrinal Sen

Sanghita Sen

In January this year, I was thrilled to get an opportunity to meet Mrinal Sen at his Kolkata residence, as a city guide for Dr. Dennis Hanlon. I asked Kunal da (Mrinal Sen’s son) for the address and directions to their residence. We were received by Kunal da and Mrinal Sen’s wife, Geeta Sen, a noted Bengali cinema actress. Mrinal Sen joined us later.

We had a long chat about his cinema and his filmmaker friends from across the world. While talking to us, Sen mentioned that in the early seventies he met the stalwarts of Left Cinema and watched a lot of their films in various International film festivals like Mannheim, Nyon in Switzerland, and the University of Heidelberg. The interaction between the filmmakers and their art mostly happened through their films. Latin American filmmakers Humberto Solas and Miguel Littin visited Kolkata once.

Sen used a footage from one of Joris Ivens’ films in Padatik (The Guerrilla Fighter, 1973). When asked how he got hold of snips, sequences, and portions of various Latin American films, he replied that he acquired those clips from his contacts, friends, and the filmmakers themselves.

A lot of them were from unofficial 16mm prints of Latin American films. The smaller film festivals also facilitated interaction between directors.

He also recounted how he, along with his team, handled the issue of a very steep budget. He remembered that his first Hindi film, Bhuvan Shome (1969), which is still considered a very important landmark film in Indian parallel cinema, was made by a first-time crew. Among his films, Punascha (Postscript, 1961), Abasheshey (Finally, 1962) and Pratinidhi (The Representative, 1964) are lost. One of the reasons for the loss of films may be that the film negatives are owned by the financier and not the director, and when a film does not earn revenue, the financiers lose interest in them and they are no longer preserved with care. Moreover the weather conditions and the sub-optimal conditions in the labs also make it very difficult to preserve a film.

While these films are lost, some of his other films need immediate restoration. The restoration process itself, however, has glitches. The whole process is largely labour intensive and highly expensive. There are Indian businessmen who run film restoration units along with other businesses. Most of these businessmen demand a hundred percent exploitation right for two years for the restored films, and since the original financier of films owns the rights, they often don’t agree to such conditions. In 2010, Cannes Classics financed a pristine restored copy of one of Sen’s films. A couple of years back the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that Indian films are a national treasure and commissioned the restoration of 500 films. Sen’s Khandhar (The Ruins, 1984) was one of them. Meanwhile, till date, the National Film Archive of India (NFAI) has restored ten films of Sen, and Reliance has restored seven. There is an archive of his films in Lausanne, Switzerland.
As quickly as humans create borders and define nations, with equal velocity do others break them down and redefine nations. Millions of people cross borders because they have to. Very few of them want to. Nations are perpetually in transit and slums arise from this migration. Identity is so significant in our lives, yet a rolling stone gathers no moss.

In the Bhowanipore area of Kolkata, India lie the residences of acting legend Uttam Kumar Chatterjee and the great Bengali directors Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen and Ritwik Ghatak. Finding less frequent expression in the work of Ray and Sen, the trauma of transnational migration haunts the films of Ghatak.

Peyarabagan Bustee or the Pear Garden Residences, a half-mile long stretch of shanty town contributes 22,000 votes in the Bhowanipore area. Most residents are originally migrants from East Bengal (now Bangladesh and earlier East Pakistan), descendants of refugees who fled to Kolkata in 1947, when India was split into two and Pakistan was formed. Some are migrants from the neighbouring state of Bihar. In the materiality of cheek by jowl conditions of living on an average monthly wage of £20, where does one find the space to eke out an identity lost in migration?

The Chalk and Cheese project was filmed as an expression of people who were seeking to forge an identity with Kolkata from their experiences of living in it. As a longterm resident of Bhowanipore, my involvement with social work over the years has acquainted me with a number of persons living in the Peyarabagan Bustee. The film is made of, by, and for these people. It does not follow a bound script. Dialogue is scene-led and largely extempore. In a cast of a hundred persons, there are no professional actors and the scenes flow as a commentary of the people, their lives lived, and the lives they witness. The narrative follows the distinct fortunes of fourteen persons who look identical and is a reflection on human perception, where strife is frequently born out of an inability to perceive similarity and an inherent desire to view others as different.

A part of my PhD research at the University of St Andrews, involves the study of the globalisation of contemporary Indian film narrative and form, the impact of the multiplex, and the resultant drain of lower income viewers at cinema halls in India. Cinema-watching in Kolkata in January 2015 only confirmed the data I am analysing. Priya is the local privately owned single screen theatre. Nandan is the state government's cinematic complex. Inox is part of a national multiplex chain. At all three economic models of film exhibition in Kolkata, it seemed as though the proletariat had disappeared from the cinema halls.

The residents of Peyarabagan had asked me over the past year to show them their film. The work in progress for Chalk and Cheese was screened to a full house of forty residents from the slum at 8 pm. Some were working late and could not make it. Some had not come on a full stomach. The forty chairs and forty food packets cost under a total of £10. The venue was a private rooftop. The projector was a loan. The audience participated in the film experience, laughing at friends who were playing comic roles, debating the acting in other scenes. There was an animated question and answer session at the end of the screening. In partial comprehension of the financial web underlying the modus operandi of the sector, I put forth that the heights of economically efficient film exhibition need not obliterate the identity of a section of audience who very much want to participate in the show. Certainly the show must go on... but for everyone.
This year’s annual conference held by the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) promised to be an exciting one. Above all, it was my first SCMS, and my second, and much bigger, overseas conference. I had attended a couple of NECS conferences in Europe before, experiencing what I would call “academic speed dating” —the typical talk with peers and colleagues about affiliations and research interests, which always starts with the same academic pickup line: “Haven’t we met at conference XYZ?”

Consequently, I expected every possible encounter to be even more ephemeral and substantially more superficial. But on the contrary: never have I met so many new, interesting people, colleagues and scholars I have always read and admired.

It all really began for me with the inaugural meeting of the War and Media Studies Scholarly Interest Group. Along with the chairs, Karen Randell and Stacy Takacs, I got elected and have now the honour to call myself “Graduate Representative” of the group. It is one of quite a few Scholarly Interest Groups (or “SIGs”) within the context of SCMS that provides valuable opportunities to connect scholars from different fields sharing similar research interests. The inaugural meeting proved to be a fruitful exchange of panel, workshop and networking ideas and set the ground for more detailed conversations over the course of the following days—and beyond SCMS. The War and Media Studies SIG sponsored three panels at this year’s conference, one of them being called “The Body at Risk: War Cinema in Century.” The panel, featuring papers by Robert Burgoyne, Agnieszka Piotrowska, and myself, as well as a response by William Brown, spawned a lively discussion and helped me immensely to contextualise my work within the larger framework of War and Media Studies. Given the size of the conference, which meant up to 24 simultaneous panels per time slot, this outcome was more than I could hope for.

Numerous talks, receptions and even more hasty and unhealthy lunch breaks later, I found myself at the official Awards Ceremony to join the SCMS community in congratulating the recipients of several writing and achievement awards. Most notably, Michael Cowan received the Katherine Singer Kovács Essay Award for his text “Absolute Advertising: Walter Ruttmann and the Weimar Advertising Film.”

I had the pleasure of meeting and talking to several people, amongst them Thomas Elsaesser, Michael Renov, Dana Polan, Barbara Klinger, Yvonne Tasker, Lisa Purse and Shohini Chaudhuri. But more importantly, what made Montreal so infinitely valuable and enjoyable, apart from the city itself, was the time I could spend with friends and colleagues that I could not appreciate more, the often underrated opportunity to listen and to be heard, and the surprise and joy of seeing new pathways opening up. And what more can one wish for if one gets the chance to take some time off in the very hotel suite where John Lennon and Yoko Ono staged their ‘bed-in’ in 1969—the very room where Lennon wrote his famous “Give Peace a Chance”? Montreal was not that cold after all.
The 60 Hour Filmblitz 2015
Cassice Last and Melissa Jones

St Andrews, a small town on the east coast of Scotland, is a hub of inspiration and creativity. This was evident on Thursday the 12th of March, 2015 when The Byre Theatre auditorium was completely full for the screening of the 60 Hour Film Blitz. A student run competition, the 60 Hour Film Blitz is hosted in partnership with the Department of Film Studies at the University of St Andrews. Filmmakers, professionals and amateurs, come together to write, direct, edit and act in films. The festival comes with its own special twist, everything must be done in 60 hours and each final film must be no longer than 3 minutes.

Over the years the competition has produced some stunning cinematography, original creative writing, and the indication of some successful future filmmakers. What is arguably the driving force behind the competition is the amount of support available to all participants. The competition hosts several workshops that provide insight into the structuring and editing of films. The participants are also encouraged to make use of professional equipment and software in making their films. This provides much needed inspiration for budding filmmakers, and enables newcomers to feel supported and aided. This sense of inclusiveness marks this competition out as a remarkable and progressive event in the University’s calendar.

The theme of this year’s competition not only provided inspiration, but challenged film-makers to create something that was truly original. Participants were encouraged to be inspired by a piece of music, be it their favourite song or famous work. While visuals are vital for filmmaking, music provides a source of inspiration or dramatically alters the way in which a film can be received.

This broad theme allowed for a wide range of ideas, techniques, and locations for the work of the entrants. While some opted to recreate the storyline, others devised short stories from their choice of music or used the general sense of emotion created by the music to create a vignette within their film.

In its fifth year, the competition is becoming a staple event of the Film Studies department. The competition is also proving itself as a tour de force as local sponsors from all over St Andrews pledge their support for the competition. Those that backed this year’s competition included local food outlets such as The Cottage Kitchen and The Adamson as well as branches of National corporations such as Costa Coffee and Waterstones. This has provided the competition with extra gravitas and has helped the event achieve the status of a strong community backed film festival.
PG Conference: Postgrads “sans frontières”

Andrei Gadalean

On Wednesday the 11th of February 2015, the Department of Film Studies at the University of St Andrews hosted the “Crossing Borders, Traversing Narratives” Postgraduate Symposium, an event that, to paraphrase an expression made famous by Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address, was of the postgraduates, by the postgraduates, for the postgraduates. Previously known as the Postgraduate Study Day, the symposium was aimed at providing an inclusive and supportive debate and exchange platform for PG students in the field of film and screen studies, and more specifically in migrant and diasporic cinema, which was the topic chosen this year by the University’s Film Studies postgraduate community.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Shohini Chaudhuri, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies at the University of Essex, and a specialist in intercultural and transnational cinema, but also in film and human rights, feminist film theory, and film theory and affect. Dr. Chaudhuri’s paper was entitled “Cinema, News Media, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”.

The Ethics of Cross-Border Spectatorship sparked a passionate debate on the corrective role that cinema can play when dealing with issues often presented in a biased and agenda-driven manner by the mass media.

Anna Batori, a doctoral student at the University of Glasgow, dealt with issues of transnational identity, representation and narrative forms in German-Turkish cinema, drawing from German filmmaker Thomas Arslan’s Geschwister (1997). Using the example of her own short film Behind the Book (2014), Romana Turina from the University of Leicester launched an exciting discussion on how film today can voice post-memory and mediate the human need to ‘publicly remember’ pockets of history that are still prohibited from being either celebrated or mourned.

The Media and Film Department at the University of Sussex was represented by two of their postgraduate students, Marina Fuser and Behnoosh Amandi. Marina showed how a nomadic cartography permits the crossing of borders between socially built categories such as gender, race and nation, as a means to approach intersectionality in Vietnamese filmmaker and theorist Trinh Minh-ha’s cinema. Behnoosh, on the other hand, introduced her work-in-progress documentary, a look at Iranian migrants’ everyday life in Britain, their traditions, routines, meals, habits, ornaments and memorabilia, to explore their emotional and cultural connection to their original culture.

We also welcomed and screened the short films Off-White Tulips (Aykan Safoğlu, Germany/Turkey, 2013) and Tülay German: Years of Fire and Cinders (Didem Pekün, Turkey, 2010), that the young filmmaker and academic Didem Pekün was going to talk about in the context of artistic identity and migration to and from Turkey. Unfortunately, due to scheduling and visa issues, Didem was eventually unable to join us on the day. The event ended with Dr. Chaudhuri leading an informal feedback and summing-up session, in which everyone actively participated, and from which everyone seemed to benefit.

As the organiser of this event, I am extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to its success, including staff and students within the Department of Film Studies (too many to mention here!). Hopefully, the event opened some interesting lines of thought reflecting on cinema’s relationship with the notion of geographical border and its transgressions, continuing an already active and passionate debate in this specific area of film studies.
Placing Filmic Texts in the Politics of Attachment

Natthanai Prasannam

During a rainy 25th to 27th of March 2015, there was an international workshop and conference called “Politics of Attachment” in Amsterdam. The University of Amsterdam theatre, Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) welcomed doctoral researchers and scholars from different disciplinary and geographical backgrounds to its eye-opening platforms. From the first to the last day, the conference and workshop offered presentations, constructive discussions, and film experiences to the participants.

The conference was divided into three streams: emergent genre, ecologies of practices, and decolonising knowledge. My paper was presented in the emergent genre stream. Presenting a paper on the relationship between genre and other factors affecting various film adaptations of a World War II novel from Thailand, I had excellent and challenging questions from the floor and engaging, stimulating dialogues during coffee breaks. I also had a chance to expose myself to film research conducted by other scholars across different disciplines.

Within the genre stream, we were exploring American myth in European cinema, the coming out narrative in Summer Storm (Marco Kreuzpaintner, 2004), landscape in a Danish biography, Dutch comics, the salvage-punk and genre theory, burning effigies in transnational political protests, etc. In other streams, the workshop participants also exchanged their interests in affect theory, minoritised subjects in Thai cinema, activism in Balkan cinema, migrant women in Shanghai and mining communities in the Philippines to name a few.

As ‘cultural studies people’ the panellists’ writings integrated various theorists, texts, and art forms. Significantly, they reserved some room for filmic texts as shown in the presentations and in the film screenings throughout the event. Two films were screened in both morning and evening sessions: Endless Dream and Water Between (Renée Green, 2009) and Pinkwashing Exposed: Seattle Fights Back! (Dean Spade, 2015).

Keynotes speeches were dedicated to decolonisation, inter-artistic issues, and personal matters. Prof. Gloria Wekker dealt with decolonising knowledge in contemporary Dutch society. Alanna Lockward depicted her concerns in relation to decoloniality and secularity of the arts. Prof. Grada Kilomba gave an inspiring speech on “Tongues without Shame”, and she screened Plantation Memories (2013) a stage reading directed by her to address the standpoints and experiences in an unfinished decolonising process.

The conference charmed me with its vibrant aspects. All participants were seeking common ground with a keen awareness of multi-dimensional viewpoints. Although the event was not an official home for ‘film studies people’, I was granted an opportunity to learn more about cultural theory as well as film experiences relevant to students of film.

One of the major concerns of the conference and workshop was positionality in generating knowledge. What resonated with me most was an unknown song lyric mentioned by one of the keynote speakers: ‘I have a smile on my face because I have cried a lot.’ It, thus, was reaffirmed at the closing discussion that knowledge can emerge from bitterness, grief, pain and anger.

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The **Radical Film Network Inaugural Conference**

Isabel Seguí

The inaugural conference of the Radical Film Network (RFN) was held in Birmingham on the 7th and the 8th of February, 2015. This project is defined as “a network for all those involved with or interested in the production, distribution and exhibition of politically and aesthetically radical film” and was founded in September 2013, when a group of academics, filmmakers, programmers, and activists met with the aim to develop a network for exchange and mutual support. Today it has 83 affiliated organizations based in 18 countries world-wide, but remains predominantly transatlantic.

The original initiative came from the collective that runs the Bristol Radical Film Festival, and especially one of its members, Steve Presence, who had been acting as a coordinator up until the conference. Nevertheless, because of the left/libertarian orientation of the network, the conference in Birmingham was a key point at which members could define the sort of structure, if any, they would like to give themselves. Therefore, the first activity of the conference was an assembly on how to organise the network. As a provisional conclusion, it was decided that the structure would be as loose as possible, while at the same time trying to avoid what Jo Freeman called ‘the tyranny of structurelessness’.

The assistants were a mix of old leftists —some of them on the road since the time of the IFA (Independent Filmmakers Association)— and a variety of new folk, mainly of academic affiliation. After the assembly, a wide ranging programme of different panels and keynote lectures was developed. The topics addressed ranged from film history and theory to cinematic practice of any kind, with an emphasis on distribution and exhibition. What struck me the most was the constant reference, in papers and spontaneous speeches, to ‘Third Cinema’ as a desirable example for the present practice. Moreover, in conversations with some participants I realized the importance of the contribution of this Latin American impulse to the aesthetic and politics of the avant garde in the UK. It made me think that my research topic —the decolonised cinema of the Bolivian filmmaker Jorge Sanjines— may still be a current and substantial issue.

Finally, from the conclusions of the latest plenary emerged a new and healthy spirit of self-criticism: “Membership of the RFN so far is largely white, middle-class, middle-aged, and academic”.

“There are exceptions to this but it is not good enough, as a group dedicated to radical politics, to be largely separate from those who are already marginalised. Dedicating ourselves to solidarity, and contributing to increasing and solidifying equality in film culture, politics, and society as a whole will not only be more difficult without a diverse network of creators and organisers, but also hypocritical.”

(see the conclusions can be accessed on the website radicalfilmnetwork.com). The struggle to overcome this trend in our moribund European context will be challenging for all the participants in the network. In any case, self-awareness is the first step towards transformation and, for the RFB, contributing to social change through cinema is one of the few, but firm, consensual objectives. If you are in Scotland and want to follow this initiative a good opportunity will be at next year’s conference to be held in Glasgow.
Successes, Talks, Conferences, Publications

CFS Talks

2 February 2015
Deborah Shaw “European co-production funds and Latin American Cinema: Processes of othering and bourgeois cinephilia in Claudia Llosa’s La teta asustada/The Milk of Sorrow”

The talk dealt with Latin American filmmakers, their transnational funding and exhibition by discussing the work of Claudia Llosa and the issues raised by her award winning film Madeinusa (2006), and La teta asustada (The Milk of Sorrow, 2009). The arguments of theorists who critique what they see as neo-colonial European interventions in ‘world cinema’, and those who celebrate the enabling work of the funding bodies were also discussed.

12 February 2015
James Layton and David Pierce “The Dawn of Technicolor”

In this talk, the speakers explored rare photographs from the Technicolor corporate archive and extracts from rarely seen films chart. Their focus was on behind-the-scenes accounts of The Gulf Between (1917), Ben-Hur (1925), The Black Pirate (1926), and the troubled production of The Mysterious Island (1929) as a part of Technicolor’s success.

3 March 2015
Rachel Dwyer “Mumbai middlebrow and ways of thinking about the middle ground in Hindi cinema”

Rachel Dwyer outlined her talk by picturing the usefulness of the term ‘middlebrow’ to examine Indian popular culture with special references to film culture. She, therefore, raised some related questions on class and social mobility to locate ‘Mumbai middlebrow’ and its history in the wider sphere of Indian public culture.

5 March 2015
Dana Polan “The Square Screen: A Reflection on Unhip Cinema of the 1960s”

Dana Polan’s talk challenged the myth of 60s cinema as adventurous, cutting edge and ‘avant-garde’ by looking at more conventional, seemingly mainstream films to find the ways they too register the tensions of the historical moment. The talk proved another significant dimension that shaped Hollywood screen culture.

2 April 2015
Sarah Street and Joshua Yumibe “Chromatic Modernity: Colour Standards and Visual Music of the 1920s”

This talk investigated the major spheres of colour expression in and around motion pictures of the 1920s with two focuses: the colour standardisation in intermedial and industrial fields and the colour-light experiments in and around the cinema. The speakers explained their points through pluri-media connections and the contextualised notion of the jazz age.

7 April 2015
Martin Shingler “John Barrymore, Warner Star: 1924-31”

Martin Shingler analysed the relationship between John Barrymore’s acting career and the studio system of Warner Bros. Barrymore earned his reputation in integrating his stage acting methods to the big screen with his keen notion of various artistic movements, modern audiences and new technologies.
**Congratulations**

**Michael Cowan** received the 2015 Katherine Singer Kovacs Award for Essay Published in a Journal. The award was for his essay ‘Absolute Advertising: Walter Ruttmann and the Weimar Advertising Film’, published in Cinema Journal 52.4 (2013), pp. 49-73.

**Beatriz Tadeo** received the AHGBI-Spanish Embassy Postgraduate Publication Prize for 2014 by the Association of Hispanists of Great Britain & Ireland.

**Tom Rice and Grazia Ingravalle** were awarded funding by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities for a PG workshop entitled “Remote Access: Conducting Archival Research From a Distance.” The funding also helped host the “Dawn of Technicolor” presentation by David Pierce and James Layton.

**Isabel Segui** has received an SLAS Postgraduate Travel grant to conduct fieldwork this summer in Bolivia and Peru for her PhD thesis on Testimonio in Jorge Sunjinés’ Film, 1969-1983.

**Dina Iordanova** has been nominated among the 25 most important women writing on film, by Sight and Sound, UK’s leading film magazine.

**Dina Iordanova** will be joining the editorial team of Camera Obscura as advisory editor.

**Leshu Torchin** has joined the Editorial Board of Transnational Cinemas

**PhD Viva success:** **Pasquale Cicchetti** defended his thesis in March 2015 and passed with distinction

**Invited Talks**

**Dina Iordanova**

“Paris as hub for Global Cinema,” at the University of Kent in Paris, 12 March 2015.

**Robert Burgoyne**


**Dennis Hanlon**

Keynote speaker at “The 8th International HUSOC Conference”, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand on 18-19 December, 2014. His address was titled ‘Bridging the ‘Two Cultures’ with World System Analysis: Three Case Studies From Film”

“Cinematic Exchanges of the Global South: The Case of Latin America and India” at the Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Cooch Behar, India, 16 January 2015.

“Non-resident Indians and Non-indigenous Genres: Britain as Contact Zone for Bollywood Experiments with Genre,” as part of the Screen Lecture Series at the University of Glasgow, UK, 13 February, 2014.

**Tom Rice**


**Grazia Ingravalle**


**Gill Plain**

“The “duty to escape”’? Making a man of the British POW” at Warwick University, November 2013
Publications

Robert Burgoyne


Robert Burgoyne and John Trafton
“Haunting in the Historical Biopic: Lincoln.” In Rethinking History 19.3 (Special section on Lincoln edited by Louise Spence).

Lucy Fife Donaldson


Dina Iordanova


Leshu Torchin

“Conditions of Activism: Feminist Film Activism and the Legacy of the Second Wave.” In Feminisms: Diversity, Difference, and Multiplicity in Contemporary Film Cultures, edited by Laura Mulvey and Anna Backman Rogers, Amsterdam University Press, 2015, 141-148.

Contributions to Souciant, an online magazine of culture and politics on Charlie Hebdo, the continued crisis of masculinity in popular film, and the debate over Patricia Arquette’s speech at the Academy Award ceremony.

Gill Plain

Natthanai Prasannam

Eileen Rositzka

Ana Grgic

Conference Papers

Dennis Hanlon

“Moving People, Moving Pictures: Cinematic Migrations in India.” “UKIERI Narratives of Migration” Conference, Presidency University, India, January 2015.


Brian Jacobson


Natthanai Prasannam

Eileen Rositzka

Ana Grgic

“Beginnings to Interwar Period.” Hellenic Open University, Hyperion University Bucharest and Istanbul Şehir University, Athens, Greece: 5-7 June, 2015.

Philip Mann