Cine-Files Winter 2017

Centre for Film Studies
Editorial

While every new academic year brings change, this one is marked by a number of farewells and welcomes. We are delighted to welcome Paul Flaig and Philippa Lovatt to the department and equally thrilled that Jennifer O’Meara stays with us another year. And while Michael Cowan is not new, his promotion to Professor is.

Our student cohort, too, continues to grow as Andrea Gelardi, Peize Li, and Quan Liu begin their PhDs with us. We are also joined by visiting PhD scholars, Bruce Chu and Lifei Liu. Welcome!

This sweet news is tempered by the retirement of Robert Burgoyne, whose enthusiasm for research and teaching has made such an impact on our department. Additionally, we are sad to say that Jean-Michel Frodon’s visiting professorship has come to a close. But we do not say good-bye, but rather, au revoir, as we look forward to continuing contact and collaborations with both of them.

All these changes have neither stopped nor slowed the range of activities going on in the department and beyond. We continue to stay involved with film festivals, as reports from the Edinburgh International Film Festival, Yamagata Documentary Festival, and Bucharest Short Film Festival attest. We also offer reports from the field, with Shruti Narayanswamy reporting on archival research in India. And we are excited to share a number of conference reports, all of which place on display our range of interests, from industry to memory and beyond.

And there are more changes on the horizon! We are moving to digital distribution in order to enhance the possibilities of a newsletter. In addition to sharing our research, we can engage in reflection, also providing links, video essays and podcasts for those interested in knowing more.

Amidst all this change, we wish everyone a peaceful new year.

Leshu Torchin

NOTE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM
Welcome to CINE-FILES. Thank you for your loyal readership over the past few years. Starting in spring 2018, we will be shifting to a new digital platform. We look forward to offering a new reader experience, including an archive of past issues and original audiovisual content. Stay on the lookout for updates!
The Next Chapter

Robert Burgoyne

As of September 1, I retired from my position as Chair in Film Studies to take a new title as honorary professor. Embarking on the next stage of my professional career, I have started working at Cinepoetics in Berlin as a senior research fellow. I have also begun working with the research project, The Face of Terror, based in Trondheim and Copenhagen. My time at St Andrews has been gratifying in every way. I expanded the compass of my professional and personal life to an extent that has surpassed even my most optimistic hopes. This is a result, mainly, of the people I had the pleasure to work with. I wish to thank my colleagues and students in the Department, who have given me a great deal -- friendship, intellectual excitement, and above all, a sense of shared accomplishment. With our work together, Film Studies at St Andrews has now risen to a position of prominence within the discipline. I am confident that with the splendid new hires the Department has made in the past few years, we will continue to make our mark. The opportunity to work on new projects with leading scholars is and continues to be enormously stimulating, and has already opened a number of possibilities for the future. And I know that my time at St Andrews and the friends I have made will continue to buoy my life and career going forward.

Archival Fieldwork in Mumbai and Pune

Shruti Narayanswamy

In June of this year, I undertook an archival fieldwork trip to Mumbai and Pune as part of my ongoing research on Indian cinema in the 1930s and 1940s. This trip was made possible by a generous travel grant by the Russell Trust, which enabled me to spend 3 weeks looking at digitised ancillary materials such as song booklets and film magazines. At the National Film Archive of India, Pune, I was able to spend time with Indian film magazines such as The Mirror and Filmindia. Among the most exciting findings from these materials were several references to the Second World War, and the Indian film industry’s response to it. On the basis of this research, I wrote a piece for The Conversation (subsequently re-published in The Independent) on the contribution of Indian cinema to the Allied war effort.

My next stop was the V. Shantaram Library and Archive in Mumbai, a collection that is managed by the V. Shantaram Foundation. Carrying on the legacy of the iconic director, the foundation’s collection of film booklets from the 1930s-40s is a valuable resource for researchers like myself who work with non-existent films. The foundation’s structure itself retains its original Art Deco stylings, harking back to the glory days when the entire complex was part of the Rajkmal Film Studio, where several landmark productions of Indian cinema were shot.

All in all, the trip was a wonderful opportunity to access some extraordinary materials and also to visit my loved ones back home in Mumbai.

“In Beyond Borders: Ritwik Ghatak Retrospective” at DCA

Sanghita Sen

The first Ritwik Ghatak Retrospective in Scotland was organised in collaboration with Dundee Contemporary Arts, National Film Archive of India (NFAI), Ritwik Ghatak Memorial Trust, and Department of Film Studies of University of St Andrews between 5 and 27 May 2017. Sanghita Sen, a third-year doctoral student of the department curated the programme. The programme inaugurated with a panel discussion entitled “Discrepant Dislocations: Ghatak’s Film and Indian Partition” with Professor Dina Iordanova as the Chair, Dr Anindya Raychaudhuri from English department of the university and Sanghita Sen as speakers. The programme screened six of Ghatak’s eight completed feature films: Meghe Dhaka Tara/Cloud Capped Star (1960), Komal Gandhar/ E-Flat (1961), Subarnarekha/The Golden Line (1965), Nagark/The Citizen (1952), Titash Ekta Nidir Naam/ A River Called Titan (1973), and Jukti, Takka Aar Gappo/ Reason, Debate and Story (1974). Each screening was preceded by a brief introduction by the curator. All the films other than Nagark/The Citizen have been recently restored by the NFAI. The restoration of Nagark was done by Ritwik Ghatak Memorial Trust. The Film Foundation took initiative of digital restoration of Titash Ekta Nidir Naam/ A River Called Titan (1973) as part of their World Cinema Project and it is available as part of the Criterion Collection. The programme found due coverage in media including a radio interview in the Janice Forsyth show of the BBC Scotland. The screenings were attended by around 125 people with many of them travelling from far away. It was an important exercise in creating an audience for the Indian Arthouse cinema and something beyond Bollywood. Gathering from the audience feedback on the programme, it appears that the retrospective was successful to a considerable extent to create an interest in one of the most important Indian filmmakers. There was also a display of books by and on Ghatak as part of the event. As a follow-up of this Retrospective, two films of Ghatak’s Partition trilogy, viz Meghe Dhaka Tara/Cloud Capped Star (1960) and Komal Gandhar/ E-Flat (1961), were included as part of a programme in Home, Manchester in June 2017 and the Cloud-Capped Star was included for a travelling season on Indian cinema organised by the Independent Cinema Office, UK, to be shown in different UK venues in 2017.

Cinepoetics/ “The Face of Terror”

Robert Burgoyne

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Robert delivers his farewell lecture, ‘Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Wall Street Film’
Interview with Dr Paul Flaig

Shruti Narayanswamy

Firstly, how are you finding the transition to the professional and academic environment in St Andrews so far?

The transition to St. Andrews has been as smooth and welcoming as possible. Colleagues and staff in Film Studies have all been exceedingly kind in showing me the ropes. I have been especially impressed with the excellence of undergraduate and post-graduate students both in the classroom as well as in undertaking such a range of activities, from participating in workshops to organizing screening series to putting together publications like CINE-FILES.

How do your varied research interests - which range from silent cinema, to new media, and media archaeology - inform your teaching?

In two ways primarily. First, I am fortunate, at St. Andrews, to be able to flesh out my own specific research questions in the classroom by bringing in material near and dear to my scholarly heart for discussion with curious, insightful students. These range from considering the conditions and possibilities of a feminist media archaeology in the “Feminist Film Studies” honours module co-taught with Leshu Torchin and Lucy Fife Donaldson to looking at legacies of early cinema in the digital landscape with M.Litt students. I am also excited about developing future honours seminars focused on screen comedy and animation. Second, one of the central themes of my research is the ways in which film is appropriated across both transnational and historical spans for varied purposes and effects, a transformation no less at stake in the study and teaching of film history. My hope is to encourage students to think about their own engagements with film in this active, creative sense, less an excavation of some settled, relegated past, but more a kind of re-mixing of past and present, old and new.

You are currently completing a monograph that looks at how American slapstick influenced comedy and slapstick in Germany’s Weimar Republic. Could you tell us how this project was conceived?

This project, Weimar Slapstick: American Eccentrics, German Grotesques and Hollywood Comedy Re-Functioned, is based on my doctoral thesis, which I completed at Cornell University in 2013. Since then I have continued to refine Weimar Slapstick, largely through archival research in the US and Germany, while pursuing several other projects, including the co-edited essay collection, New Silent Cinema (Routledge, 2016). Weimar Slapstick was initially conceived out of my interest in the influential role comic figures like Chaplin’s Tramp, Keaton’s deadpan and Disney’s Mickey Mouse played for several luminaries of Weimar culture, including Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht and members of Berlin Dada. After much time spent in archives and libraries, the project expanded, each chapter using on a central pair of slapstick star and Weimar figure to examine a wider theme of inter-war modernity, ranging from class antagonism to sexual androgyny to the promises and perils of new technologies, including and especially the cinema.

As an academic interested in how archives and technology are used to re-purpose film across transnational contexts and periods, how is this research particularly relevant now?

I am tempted to paraphrase one of Nietzsche’s Unzeitmeditations: I do not know what meaning studies of film history or media archives could have for our time if they were not untimely—acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come. While Nietzsche was, in fact, describing his own status as a classicist, his gesture is an important one, especially as film history takes on an increasingly ancient aura. As each latest, greatest new media is marketed to us, it is important to seek out moments in film history which speak to this “post-cinematic” present in an untimely way. Untimely”, here names the ways in which the film-historical past at once speaks to and fractures the seeming progress of the present, its secure direction into a settled, knowable future. Archives of earlier images and formats in film history not only offer important lessons and precedents, but opportunities for creative re-use and deliberate anachronism that trouble historiographic distinctions as well as boundaries between disciplines not to mention those separating scholarship from practice.

Organising an Event Outside St Andrews: Latin American Women’s Filmmaking Conference

Isabel Seguí

Recently, I’ve been part of the stirring committee of the conference Latin American Women’s Filmmaking held by the Institute of Latin American Studies and the Institute of Modern Languages Research of the University of London on 18th and 19th September at the Senate House. The organization of this conference was my first experience outside St Andrews and, at the same time, the first inside my research field.

The event was a total success and a very fulfilling experience. More than one hundred scholars from all over Europe and the Americas responded to our CfP. That came as a surprise and what was initially envisioned as a one day seminar finally developed into a two-day conference.

As for me, the absolute highlight of the event was the invitation sent to Marta Barea — the third case study of my dissertation Andean Women’s Filmmaking, On/Off Screen Practices and Politics—to be one of the guest filmmakers. The presence of Barea in London was significant mainly because I am responsible for the recovery of her figure from the historiographical oblivion. It was, hence, my duty to introduce her work properly to the audience through a paper focused on her relevance within Peruvian oppositional cinema.

Seeing Barea, a 74-year-old woman, recognised and acclaimed publicly was very satisfactory, not only academically but mostly at a human level, as it opened the possibility of methodological and theoretical discussions with fellow specialists. The experience created solidarity and excitement among ourselves, not only among the newcomers but also the sacred cows. Everyone left London hoping for a new encounter in subsequent years.

The keynote speaker and guest for this year was Dr Iain Robert Smith, Lecturer in Film Studies at King’s College in London. Dr Smith’s keynote focused on the possibility of methodological and theoretical discussions with fellow specialists. The experience created solidarity and excitement among ourselves, not only among the newcomers but also the sacred cows. Everyone left London hoping for a new encounter in subsequent years.

Department of Film Studies Postgraduate Conference

Connor McMorran

The 12th annual Department of Film Studies Postgraduate Conference took place on the 27th and 28th of April at Parliament Hall. The two-day event featured five panels focusing on Political Cinema, Early Cinema, Asian Cinemas, Film Festivals, and Entertainment. The papers presented featured discussions on the cinemas or film industries of countries such as the United States, Germany, Bolivia, China, France, the Arab Gulf region, India, and South Korea, examinations of the Flatpack Film Festival in Birmingham and the Document International Human Rights Film Festival in Glasgow, discussion on the ethics of film festivals, and interrogations into textual and intertextual theory.

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EIff DocSalon: Documentary in the Age of Fake News

Leshu Torchin

With inflammatory clickbait, conspiracy theories, and misinformation streaming at new speeds affecting how people make sense of the world and understand the role of nonfiction media, it makes sense to explore what this means for documentary. What obligations and challenges face filmmakers and film programmers, among others? So on 1 July I convened a panel of industry professionals for the Edinburgh International Film Festival’s DocSalon. Feras Fayyad (director of Last Men in Aleppo), Flora Gregory (independent documentary consultant and former commissioning editor of Al Jazeera English), Sonja Henrici (producer of the multi-award-winning Donkeyote [Chico Pereira]), Luke Moody (director of Film Programming, Sheffield Doc/Fest), and Richard Warden (Film Lead, Mental Health Foundation) joined me for a robust and lively discussion on the subject: Documentary in the Age of Fake News.

Aided by enthusiastic audience participation, we touched on a range of topics. We considered the role of technology as, for instance, the Internet provides both risks and benefit, spreading misinformation yet hosting voices omitted from the mainstream. The question of governments, too, came up: Authoritarianism and dismissal of media as ‘fake’ is not so much new, as new to the West. Perhaps we need to look at other documentary practices, we concluded. And what about the history of productive fakes, we wondered; hoaxes and mockumentaries launch essential critiques—will these get lost in a fight against fakes? Throughout the discussion, one thing stayed clear: Documentaries play a crucial role in encouraging contemplative engagement with the world.

With the success of this event, we look forward to the possibility of future collaborations with EIff. And for those wishing to learn a bit more about the DocSalon, I wrote about it for The Conversation.

The 15th Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival

Dina Iordanova

Serving on the international competition jury for the 15th Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, the brainchild of Shinsuke Ogawa (1935-1992), was a true privilege, alongside experimental Japanese filmmaker Shichiri Kei and the legendary Indian cameraman Ranjan Palit. We voted Ignacio Aguero, the Chilean documentary, as jury President. Aguro’s One Hundred Children Waiting for a Train (1988) had played as the very first film shown in competition at the inaugural festival and had then screened around the country, proving a formative film for a whole generation of Japanese documentary practitioners (as Kei himself attested).

Featuring fifteen feature-length films with a cumulative total of 40 hours of viewing time, the international competition curated by Haruka Hara represented the best in contemporary documentary cinema. There was little time and energy left to view more. Yet the festival provided a chance to also see important Japanese experimental and documentary films – and it is those that I would like to turn my attention to.

The opening night selection featured shorts by avant-garde filmmaker and theorist Matsumoto Toshio (best known for Funeral Parade of Roses, 1969), including the screening of his amazing debut film Bicycle in Dreams (1955) and For My Crushed Right Eye (1968) which was shown as the director intended – simultaneously out of three 16 mm projectors – resulting in a complex overlapping image on screen. Equally fascinating was Onishi Kenji’s 8mm Almost Ghost (2017).

The main award in the New Asian Currents competition went to the Hong Kong film Yellowing. This award is particularly special to me – in a way, it is evidence of the impact of our work on film festivals. The film’s producer, Tit Leung Cheung, was a visiting scholar at St Andrews in 2010. Later on, I served as external examiner for his doctoral thesis at Lingnan University in Hong Kong – and it is from his research, which spoke at length of the qualities of YIDFF, that I learned in detail about YIDFF’s unique model. Congratulations, Tit!
NexT Short Film Festival

The other members of the jury included Nick Pinkerton, a NYC-based film writer; John Canciani, artistic director of the short film festival Winterthur in Switzerland; film director Cristi Ifitome, and sound designer Codrin Lazar. Watching short films may appear easier by comparison with the heavy duty viewing at festivals that focus on full length works – but I was surprised to realise that it is, in a way, even more intense. Each programme includes several different films – and yet, every single film is an accomplished narrative work in its own right. Thus, it was intense and tiresome work, but also rewarding. The Romanian competition, focused on twelve select shorts, gave us a chance to get a glimpse into the current state of Romanian shorts – the incubator for all these wonderful directors of their perpetual ‘new wave’. The international programme, curated by Massimiliano Nardulli and Oana Ghera, was diverse and comprehensive. We gave several awards, yet I admit that my heart was with the two special mentions – Sadhu in Bombay by Kabir Mehta and Nuestra amiga la luna by Velasco BROKA.

After an earthquake in Bucharest, the government has closed a number of cinemas located in older buildings around the city centre as they are deemed dangerous in the event of another seismic event. No immediate plans have been made for the replacement of the theatres in these parts of town – the process is compensated, in part, by the opening of multiplexes in the periphery of town. From the point of view of a festival that seeks compactness and conviviality, this situation invites inventiveness in finding alternative exhibition opportunities to bring films to various neighbourhoods. One of the most successful solutions offered by director Yvonne Irimescu was to initiate open air screenings in the Botanical Garden, a wonderful leafy space. Other screenings took part in the gardens of various bars and locales that held a relatively small audience but ensured wonderful atmospheres for meetings with filmmakers and musicians.

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The 8th Annual International Conference on Small Cinemas

Diversity in Glocal Cinemas: Language, Culture, Identity

Diana Popa

This is the second conference on Small Cinemas that I participated in. At this year’s conference we reflected on the diversity of Small Cinemas by looking at the tension between local specificity (national, regional) and global appeal. In his keynote talk, Ib Bondebjerg rightly pointed out that Small Cinemas’ linguistic and cultural diversity is simultaneously a strength and a weakness. Diversity means local specificity and variety as well as a challenge to provide a market for these cinemas beyond national and regional borders. Presentations reflected these preoccupations by addressing various strategies that Small Cinemas adopt to ensure visibility beyond their domestic market, such as genre filmmaking (horror, Western, Sci Fi), transnational filmmaking practices, and informative and engaging talks on national identity, multilingualism, and language and translation in Small Cinemas. Very aptly, the film selected for screening La casa Emak Bakia / The Search for Emak Bakia (Oskar Alegria, 2012) reflects on language, culture and identity via a journey through the Basque country.

The last day of the conference was a trip to San Sebastián where the participants attended a round table discussion on Small Cinemas, Film Festivals and Transnational Circulation with Dina Iordanova, Margarita Ledo, and Ib Bondebjerg, moderated by Aida Vallejo. The speakers raised, among others, the issue of the film festivals’ potential role in promoting cultural production in minority languages. The organisers were particularly inspired to time this year’s conference just before the San Sebastián film festival. We ended the conference by watching, courtesy of the film festival and conference organisers, the visually lavish La Truite / The Trout Farm (Joseph Losey, 1982) in original with Spanish subtitles. Nobody seemed to mind the absence of English language subtitles.

NECS Conference 2017

Sensibility & the Senses: Media, Bodies, Practices

Various

The St Andrews Department of Film Studies was amply represented at this year’s European Network for Cinema and Media Studies conference, hosted in Paris by the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle in co-operation with the Centre Pompidou and the Université Paris Diderot. This year’s conference centred upon the theme of sensorial experience, specifically in relation to media and the body.

On the opening day of the conference, Michael Cowan delivered a paper on ‘Affective Training in the Cinematographic Shooting Gallery’ as part of a panel exploring this theme as it pertains to early film and visual culture. Meanwhile, also on this date, Dina Iordanova and Jean-Michel Frodon partook in a workshop entitled ‘Cinemas of Paris’. On the conference’s closing date, Michael Cowan chaired a panel on ‘Looking into “the Other’s Other”: the (Body) Politics of Newsreels, Amateur Films, and Utility Films’, while Dina Iordanova again took part in a workshop, this time entitled ‘Traces: Film Festivals and History’. The department’s final contribution for this year was delivered by PhD student Isabel Segui, who gave a presentation on ‘Embodied Testimonies of Subaltern Women in Andean Collective Cinema: the Cases of Ukamau (Bolivia) and Warmi (Peru)’ as part of a panel looking at non-fiction films by South American women.
Centralised Ownership, Regional Infrastructures Symposium

Jinuo Diao

On 2 June 2017, I was delighted to attend ‘Centralised Ownership, Regional Infrastructures: A symposium on the Asian Media Conglomerate’, convened by Dr Keith B. Wagner (UCL) and Dr JungBong Choi (HKBU) at the University College London.

With a shared focus on Asian media conglomerates who have been increasing production capabilities, fostering high-value services, and diversifying by Dr Keith B. Wagner (UCL), Jaeho Kang (SOAS), Griseldis Kirsch (SOAS), and Ralf Zaborowski (LSE). Research outcomes pertaining to the roles of media conglomerates, relations with regulators, and trends of development were reported and discussed.

As an invited PG student, my presentation about ‘Evolution of the State-owned Enterprise in the Chinese Film Industry: take China Film Group as an example’ received considerable attention. The state-owned media conglomerates are an important subject, and my research on the film industry in China garnered a strong response at this symposium.

Collaboration and Competition in the Cultural and Creative Industries

Jinuo Diao

‘Collaboration and Competition in the Cultural and Creative Industries’ was an international conference hosted by USC-SJTU Institute of Cultural and Creative Industry (ICCI), at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, in Shanghai, China between 5th and 7th June 2017. ICCI was jointly founded by Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the University of Southern California in 2015.

The purpose of this conference was to bring together scholars and industry practitioners from a wide variety of disciplines and interests, with a view to establishing common ground in order to compare, exchange and develop new ways of researching, teaching, and working in the creative and cultural industries.

Four keynote speakers delivered their outstanding papers in the conference. Andrew Spicer, Professor at the University of the West of England, discussed ‘Media Production Studies: Contributions and Prospects’. Chris Berry, Professor at King’s College London, presented his paper of ‘Taiwan’s Forgotten Film Industry’. Jenny Romero, Head of Reference and Public Services at one of the world’s oldest film research institutions, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences’ Margaret Herrick Library, delivered an interesting paper on the importance of historical documents and increasing access to archival resources. Professor Brian Winston, the Lincoln Chair of Communication at the University of Lincoln, outlined why methodological determinism is obfuscating and debilitating and suggested a social shaping theory-based model for exploring technological change in the media.

Thirty delegates presented their papers over three days on the most recent developments in their research field. There were great presentations and interesting discussions throughout. I presented the paper ‘Transnational Film Production in the Chinese Film Industry’, which received positive feedback from attending scholars.

A screening of China’s Van Gogh (2016), a film by Haibo YU and Kiki Tianqi YU, attracted considerable scholarly attention. It won Best Documentary (international co-production) at the Beijing International Film Festival, and the TRT Documentary Award – International Category. I enjoyed this film very much.

An Interdisciplinary Workshop on Cultural Memory: Memory, Nation, Race

Patrick Adamson

Organised and hosted by Dr Catherine O’Leary (Modern Languages, University of St Andrews) under the aegis of the Cultural Memory Research Group, this two day workshop brought together speakers from across the fields of film studies, international relations, and modern languages.

On Thursday afternoon, Professor Robert Burgoyne from the St Andrews Department of Film Studies delivered a paper on the ‘afterlife of stereotype in contemporary art’ as part of a ‘Film/Media’ track. At Robert’s invitation, this panel also included contributions from: Professor Michael Wedel (Cinepoetics, Freie Universitat, Berlin) on history, Siegfried Kracauer, surrealism, and Roman Polanski’s The Pianist (2002); Professor Anne Gjelsvik (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim) on remembrance practices in art and media following the 2011 terror attacks in Norway; and Patrick Adamson (PhD student, University of St Andrews) on the intersections of genre, myth, and history in silent era historical westerns. This was followed by a screening of a special 2D version of the immersive VR experience, Hearts and Minds: The Interrogation Project (2016), and a Q&A session with project collaborator, Dr Jefrey Murer (International Relations, University of St Andrews) – both in the Arts Lecture Theatre. Further panels – on ‘National Identity’ and ‘Museums’ – took place on Friday, after which Professor Alison Landsberg (George Mason University, Virginia) delivered an interesting, and ultimately troubling, public lecture entitled “Post Post-racial America” in Parliament Hall.

The William and Mary Symposium

Shruti Narayanswamy

The William and Mary Symposium is an annual event for researchers from William and Mary University and the University of St Andrews to collaboratively present research and discuss exciting academic developments from both institutions, as well as jointly broaden research towards new possibilities.

This year’s symposium was hosted at the University of St Andrews from 17-19th of May, with the theme of ‘Adaptations-Networks’.

The Film panel at the symposium saw presentations from the staff and PhD cohort at the Department of Film Studies. The panel, which was led by Prof Dina Iordanova and Dr Lucy Donaldson, comprised a mix of presentations and video essays exploring various facets of transnational film adaptations. The contributions from Dr Anuja Jain, Dr Dennis Hanlon and PhD student Souraj Dutta looked at the transnational transformations in various Indian cinemas. Chris Fujiwara and Abdulrahman Alghanem used video essays to open up the discussions to transnational film adaptations in the national contexts of Japan and Saudi Arabia respectively.

The William and Mary University film panel was chaired by Prof Michael Cowan, and featured contributions by Jeremy Stoddard on ‘Historians’ Approaches to Teaching Difficult History Through Film’, Jennifer Taylor on ‘Repressed History in Kim Jee-woon’s A Tale of Two Sisters’ and Arthur Knight on ‘The Black Biopic since Malcolm X’.

Both film panels yielded rich and layered discussions on the flows between world cinema cultures, and how films open up the possibility to understand these global cultural dialogues. On the whole, the symposium was a wonderful platform for exchanging ideas and broadening the field of transnational film studies.
The CFS Speaker Series for this academic year began on 27th September with Dr Sophie Mayer’s ‘One Way or Another: Why Feminist Film Curation Matters’. Speaking from her experiences as a member of the queer feminist collective Club des Femmes, Mayer led a rewarding and wide-ranging discussion that coalesced around the radical intentions that prompted her curatorial work. In short, Mayer demonstrated that by sourcing and screening films otherwise rendered unavailable by systemic sexism and racism, feminist film curation could offer an alternative to the narrow, tokenistic narrative in which female filmmakers are so often framed.

On 18th October, media historian James Chapman, founding Professor of Film Studies at the University of Leicester and editor of the Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, hosted a workshop for PhD students on writing for publication. Following Chapman’s publishing workshop, Kirsten MacLeod, Lecturer in Film and Television at Edinburgh Napier University, presented ‘Community Media Practice: Filming local knowledge, past and present’. MacLeod was as an intriguing and suggestive lecture informed by the speaker’s own collaborative and participatory filmmaking projects – one involving the local community in Govan, Glasgow, and another exploring local knowledge of the Spanish Armada in Scotland. Through community engagement, MacLeod advanced community media as a means of validating and promoting the creation of new knowledges.

On 27th September, Dr Sophie Mayer’s ‘One Way or Another: Why Feminist Film Curation Matters’, Dr Kirsten MacLeod, Lecturer in Film and Television at Edinburgh Napier University, presented an innovative and thought-provoking talk. MacLeod’s presentation focused on the role of community media practice as a tool for filming local knowledge, past and present. Through collaboration with local communities, MacLeod demonstrated how community media can serve as a means of validating and promoting the creation of new knowledges.

IGCCC: Om Puri at St Andrews

Veteran Indian actor Om Puri passed away in January this year. His sudden and untimely death sent waves of shock and disbelief throughout the global film-loving community. Puri was a stalwart who acted in over 300 films, including several key neorealist art films of the 1970s and 80s collectively known as the New Wave. The IGCCC and the Department of Film Studies at the University of St Andrews organized an event in memory of the prolific actor on April 18, 2017. Under the enthusiastic guidance of Prof Dina Iordanova, the postgraduate students of the department presented their thoughts on Puri through brief talks, essays, and presentations. The evening started with an introductory note by Aakshi Magazine, who traced Om Puri’s contribution to Hindi cinema. Following Magazine’s introduction, Shorna Pal presented a video essay and spoke about her experiences of meeting Puri in person when she met with him for an interview a few months before his passing. Shrutí Narayanswamy and Souraj Dutta made a short presentation and spoke about how Puri was not only a master of serious character acting but was equally unparalleled in his comic roles, and left an indelible mark in mainstream Bollywood cinema as well. Prof Iordanova spoke about the transnational influence of Puri, whose filmography spanned outside India, traversing through British, American, and even Pakistani film industries. Finally, Dr Anuja Jain introduced the film of the evening: Ardha Satya (Govind Nihalani, 1983), a gritty drama which cemented Puri’s position as an actor of calibre in his early days.

Achievements

The CINE-FILES editorial team extends their congratulations to the following:

Nathanai Prasannam, for successfully defending his PhD thesis, ‘Mnemonic Communities: Politics of World War II Memory in Thai Screen Culture’, on 3rd November.


Diana Popa, who was awarded her PhD for her thesis, ‘The Specificity of Aesthetics of Slowness in Contemporary Romanian Cinema’, on 13th November.

Shrutí Narayanswamy, for securing a paid internship with Glasgow Life. This was part of a very competitive SGSAH scheme and is both a really impressive achievement and a great opportunity. Shrutí will be working with Dr Helen Watkins, the Research Manager for Glasgow Museums. The project is entitled “Mapping Migrant Community Collections in Glasgow”.

Sanghita Sen, whose chapter titled “Breaking the Boundaries of Bollywood: Women in a ‘Man’s Industry’” has been published as part of Women De Genre in Film and Television, ed. by Mary Harrod and Katarzyna Paszkiewicz (London: Routledge, 2017).


Alex Fincher, former post-doctoral fellow on the Dynamics of World Cinema project, on his invitation by the Sultan of Brunei to develop the first film school in the country. Alex is currently Senior Lecturer at The Multimedia University in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.
CINE-FILES
NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRE FOR FILM STUDIES

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