

Dynamics of World Cinema Blog

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[‘Rethinking Chinese Film Industry: New Methods, New Histories’ Conference](#)

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Oct 18, 2010

8-9 October 2010

Hong Kong

As an important element of the world cinema, Chinese-language cinema has a long history almost as long as film itself. Yet it only started to attract serious scholarly attention in the mid-1980s, and most of the important work thus far has been focused on contemporary Chinese-language films over the last three to four decades.

The 'Rethinking Chinese Film Industry: New Methods, New Histories' conference held on 8-9 October 2010 and organised by Hong Kong Baptist University came timely as an important intervention of the field to raise awareness regarding the gaps that are not yet filled. It brought scholarly and critical attention to the matters of pre-war Chinese-language film industries. Led by Emilie Yeh (herself a specialist in East Asian cinemas), the conference built a platform where speakers and participants could

discuss new perspectives on Chinese film industries with a focus on, though not limited to, pre-1950 industrial history. It had two aims: to expand the existing scope of industry research and to explore new methodological approaches. It featured experts from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, the UK and USA.

There were six panels altogether over two days. The first day had four panels, bringing to us some under-researched periods in the past when Chinese film industries in different localities began to gain momentum, albeit unknown to the world until recently. Panel One set the tone of the conference with 'New Directions in Chinese Film Industry Research'. Feng Xiaocai (Fudan University, China) talked about the possible reconstruction of a synoptic Chinese film history from 1896 to 1976. Hong Kong veteran film critic Law Kar's paper highlighted the close connection between Shanghai's and Hong Kong's film industries during several years (1946-50) of the post-war period.

Panel Two was on 'Rethinking Westernization'. Two papers offered us new vantage points to study Chinese film industries. Qin Xiqing's (Chinese National Academy of Arts) paper provided us with a methodological reflection on the comparative film studies between Chinese film industry and Hollywood during the period from the 1900s to 1950. Xiao Zhiwei (California State University, USA) raised questions about the notion of 'cultural imperialism' by reflecting on Hollywood's presence in China during the first half of the twentieth century in his paper 'Translating American Films to a Chinese Audience: Agency and Appropriation in Cross Cultural Encounters during Republican China'.

Panel Three shifted the focus of film industry in mainland China to those in peripheral areas, forming the first part of 'Film Capital and Regional Spheres'. Yung Sai-shing (National University of Singapore) explored the cultural importance and industrial network of *xiayu* dialect cinema in Southeast Asia between 1949 and 1959. Yang Yuanying (Beijing Film Academy) offered an overview of how Beijing Film Studio has become an important breeding ground of mainland

Chinese cinema after 1949 through studying its infrastructure, creativity strategy, filmmakers and film star system as well as the modes of film sale.

Panel Four, 'Industry Moguls', discussed several big studios and their impact on Chinese film industry evolvement before Chinese-language films were introduced to the world. While Stephenie Chung (Hong Kong Baptist University) painted a concise picture of how the Shaw Brothers expanded their film empire from Shanghai, through Hong Kong, to Singapore in the first half of the twentieth century, Sugawara Yoshino (Kansai University, Japan) revisited the influence of Liuhe Company in the early silent cinema era of China in the 1920s. Liu Hui (Shenzhen University, China) investigated the setup of China Film United, a Shanghai-based studio established by Japanese occupation forces between 1937 and 1945.

On the second day of the conference, Panel Five brought to us new research approaches to studying Chinese-language film industries. Robert Chen and Yi-ting Huang (National Chengchi University, Taiwan) employed ideas from business studies to examine the market concentration of Taiwan film industry and its evolvement over the past twenty years. My paper entitled 'Running Out of Time: From *Red Cliff* through New Media Platforms Then Back to the Old Days' was included in this panel. It shed new light on audience reception studies among Chinese audiences across various places and in different historical time periods. This paper and the research on which it was based form part of the 'Dynamics of World Cinema' project funded by The Leverhulme Trust. I am delighted that this paper was given positive feedback by the panel discussant Lu Fei from National Chengchi University, Taiwan.

Panel six constituted the second part of the discussion on 'Film Capital and Regional Spheres'. Albert Tang's (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan) study on Chongqing's neglected role in regaining cultural resources from Shanghai in the 1930s before many of them were moved to Taiwan was illuminating. Stephanie Ng (Hong Kong Baptist University) employed post-war sing-song comedy films in Hong Kong as a case study to explore the production modes of the

local Cantonese film industry of that period.

Papers were presented in languages with which the presenters were most comfortable, including Mandarin, Cantonese and English - an aspect showing the international dimension of the study of Chinese-language cinemas nowadays. All conference panels were given feedback by specific discussants, including Chen Xihe (Shanghai University, China), Lu Fei (National Chengchi University, Taiwan), Sam Ho (Hong Kong Film Archive) and Xiao Zhiwei (California State University, USA). Their constructive comments on individual papers helped generate insightful exchanges that will surely lead to more research work in Chinese-language film industries in the near future.

Dr Ruby Cheung Research Associate Dynamics of World Cinema

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[Simon Field: Congratulations on the Palme d'Or](#)

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Jun 1, 2010

Thai film production, LUNG BOONMEE RALUEK CHAT (Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives) has won the Palme d'Or - Feature Films at this year's Cannes Film Festival. We would like to send our warmest congratulations to director Apichatpong Weerasethakul and producer Simon Field on their wonderful achievement. Simon, formerly Director of the Rotterdam International Film Festival, is member of the Dynamics of World Cinema research project's International Advisory Board, and has supported our work throughout.

Congratulations!

[Comment \(0\)](#)

Member of the Advisory Board Opens Film Bookshops

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Nov 10, 2009

Yoram Allon, owner of Wallflower Press and member of the International Advisory Board, has diversified into bookselling with two new recently opened film-themed bookshops in London, Cinephilia East and Cinephilia West (Coffee, Croissants and Cinema).

Congratulations!

See more information and a virtual tour at www.cinephilia.co.uk.

[Comment \(1\)](#)

Michael Curtin: New Appointment at UC Santa Barbara

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Nov 10, 2009

Prof. Michael Curtin, a member of the International Advisory Board, has moved from the University of Wisconsin to become the Film and Media Studies Mellichamp Professor at the University of California Santa Barbara. Congratulations!

Formerly the director of Global Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Curtin also has held teaching or research appointments at Northwestern University, Indiana University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica, and the Center for the Humanities at Wesleyan University. His books include *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television, Documentary and Cold War Politics* (1995), *Playing to the World's Biggest Audience: The Globalization of Chinese Film and TV* (2007), *The American Television Industry* (co-author, 2009), and *Reorienting Global Communication: Indian and Chinese Media Beyond Borders* (co-editor). He is currently at work on *Media Capital: The Cultural Geography of Globalization*. With Paul McDonald, he is co-editor of the 'International Screen Industries' book series for the British Film Institute and with Paul S. N. Lee, he is co-editor of the *Chinese Journal of Communication*.

[Comment \(0\)](#)

Michael Guillen's Blog Post about FFY1

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Oct 5, 2009

Michael Guillen has published further writing on the [Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit](#) at his blog, [The Evening Class](#).

To read his review, click [here](#).

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Report on Film Festival Workshop in Film International

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Sep 21, 2009

Serazer Pekerman's report on the Film Festival Workshop in April 2009 has been published in *Film International*, Vol. 7, Issue 3, pp. 94-97, along with other interesting reports on festivals like Africa in Motion (Edinburgh) and the Richmond French Film Festival.

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Film Festival Workshop - Video Clips

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Jun 17, 2009

During the Film Festival Workshop held on 4 April 2009 in St Andrews, our discussants talked about some of the most pressing issues that were concerned with the development of Film Festival Studies.

Click here to hear what they said:

Clip 1

[Michael Gubbins](#) , former Editor, *Screen International*, UK

Clip 2

[Richard Porton](#) , Editor, *Cineaste Magazine*, USA

Clip 3

[Nick Roddick](#) (aka Mr. Busy), film journalist and critic, *Sight & Sound*, UK

Clip 4

[Nick Roddick](#) (aka Mr. Busy), film journalist and critic, *Sight & Sound*, UK

Clip 5

[Stuart Cunningham](#) , Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Clip 6

[Irene Bignardi](#) , Filmitalia and former Locarno Festival Director, Italy

Clip 7

[Núria Triana Toribio](#) , University of Manchester, UK

Clip 8

[Dina Iordanova](#) , Director, Centre for Film Studies, University of St Andrews, Scotland

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[Radio Interview \(STAR, University of St Andrews\)](#)

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Jun 4, 2009

Please click here [cinema.mp3](#) for the radio interview that DWC team members, Dr Ruby Cheung and Dr Ragan Rhyne, did with St Andrews Radio (STAR) -- the student run radio station serving the St Andrews area in Scotland and beyond. The programme was aired at 8pm on 23 March 2009.

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[Talk on Digital Cinema](#)

Posted by: [Ruby Cheung](#) in *Untagged* on Mar 9, 2009

On 24 February 2009, the [Centre for Film Studies](#) hosted a talk on digital cinema by [Mr J. Ron Inglis](#)

, the newly-appointed, first Director of the new development agency [Regional Screen Scotland](#)

. Ron is one of the UK's most experienced and respected authorities on cinema exhibition in both their development and operation, and on wider strategic development. A graduate of University of St Andrews, Ron has worked in the field of cinema and media for over 30 years. He is an independent consultant and researcher, and has worked for local authorities throughout the UK, Scottish Screen, the British Film Institute, the UK Film Council, the Arts Councils of Scotland, Ireland, England and Wales. He has senior management and board level experience in private sector technology companies as well as in the arts and cinema sectors. His work covers options appraisals, feasibility studies, capital project developments, digital cinema implementation, strategic development, marketing and audience development, and artform-specific audits. He is the author of the recent Scottish Screen publication: *Tentpoles and Pixels: Developing a Local Digital Cinema*

.

This stimulating talk was entitled 'Will Pixels Save the Soul of Cinema as We Once Knew it?'. Ron introduced us to the latest development of digital cinema in the UK (and Europe in passing). According to Ron, digital cinema will soon be replacing the older, more conventional way of film distribution, focusing primarily on small, specialised audience. It gives flexibility to exhibitors in changing their screening programmes. Yet, since this trend of digital cinema is still very new, many exhibitors are at the stage of trial and error in using digital cinema to do their screenings.

[Comment \(0\)](#)

[Film Festivals - Questions](#)

Posted by: [Ragan Rhyne](#) in *Untagged* on Mar 2, 2009

In preparation for the upcoming [Film Festival Yearbook](#), which will be available from Wallflower Press in May, we had the opportunity to 'pick the brain' of festival professionals about how their festivals fit into the international dynamics of the festival circuit.

We posed the following questions to them and have received some insightful responses. Check back soon to see their answers; others will be published in the Yearbook. In the meantime, we invite other festival programmers and directors to comment below.

1. As the number of film festivals around the world has increased dramatically over the last decade, the festival circuit - and the calendar of festivals that constitute it - has become a subject for discussion among festival professionals, the popular press, and academics. Do you understand the festivals on this circuit to be linked together in substantial ways? If so, how do you see your own festival as fitting into this network?

2. Does your festival have a particular mandate in terms of regional and national programming? What is your own philosophy in programming international cinema? How do you work to program your festival in relation to other festivals and their programmatic philosophies?

3. What sources do you use to find content for your festival (e.g. filmmaker submissions, attending festivals, film journalists)?

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