

Hi Bart, if you are here, we can start.

Bart Versteirt

Hi. I'm here.

Anuj Malhotra

To me, personally, it is very interesting the model you have arrived at in terms of managing the editorial operations at Cinea - it is horizontal, devoid of hierarchies and privileges exchange and transparency. Could you let us know of its genesis?

Bart Versteirt

Thanks!

...

I guess its genesis is partly informed by practicalities, partly by dreams and/or ideas.

The practical part is that we had this platform on our website, which we called photogénie, and which had been around for roughly 7 years; and besides that, there's the young critics workshop at Film Fest Ghent, that's going into its 7th edition this year.

...

So we have this platform for publishing critical writing on cinema, but with a very irregular publishing schedule, and on the other hand this pool of young talent, from all over, which replenishes every year through the workshop. Combining those two seemed logical.

...Also, a lot of people that participated in the workshop had become friends over the years, and I wanted to keep those bonds strong.

Leila Habib

Good night...

...so we are here and ready

Anuj Malhotra

I recall that during the YCW'15 you had mentioned your anxieties as a publisher - in that even though you felt that the work was great, but a lot of the younger people in Belgium weren't really aware of the magazine per se. Also, in how you mention the 'irregular publishing schedule', which seems to be an issue that plagues a lot of film magazines. Could you perhaps detail or elaborate on what such anxieties mean or signify in the context of the Belgian filmscape in particular?

Anuj Malhotra

Hi Leila, we will come to you.

Bart Versteirt is the editor and publisher of photogenie, published by Cinea.

PUBLISHING MODEL, INDEPENDENT ZINES, PUBLICATION GRANTS, CHALLENGES OF PUBLISHING

Bart Versteirt

Well, reaching an audience is a challenge, and even more so if you're unable to stay in peoples minds. It's a clichv©, but a lot of content is vying for our attention all the time, and if you disappear of the radar for a while, chances are people will forget about you.

Making this a collaborate effort definitely also was informed by this fear.

. .

Furthermore, as to the Belgian context. It's a small country, but it is very central in Western Europe and very open to outside influence, at least in the field I'm working in.

Anuj Malhotra

Yes, in that regard, Cinea (or photogenie) has always stuck me as an interesting oddity - in that its exterior surface seems to be that of a remarkable and well-oiled machine, but in that it is perhaps plagued by challenges very similar to ones you may identify with a smaller outfit.

Bart Versteirt

So it was relatively easy to contact and involve people from a lot of different places.

Anuj Malhotra

Interesting, do you feel, two issues into this model - that it will perhaps help sustain a more regular publishing schedule into the future? What are your other observations about the outcomes of this strategy, and how it is different from the more conventional model?

Bart Versteirt

Well, Cinea is a small outfit, with the benefit of operating out of a wealthy country which still (fingers crossed) funds the arts substantially.

Anuj Malhotra

Yes, wish we could say that about where we come from.

...But it is what it is, and we were just talking outside of the building where this performance is taking place - everything has its pros and cons. I know of Nicolas Rey's L'Abominable in Paris and how their funding was suddenly cut over the weekend and they lost the rights to the space that they had for their labs for two to three years. In India, no one notices you, so you do whatever you want to - for a bit, atleast.

Bart Versteirt

That's definitely what I hope to achieve. The ideal is that I'm not really necessary anymore, but that's perhaps a different issue. What I want is to be able to offer fertile ground to let other peoples ideas grow in.

Anuj Malhotra

That's incredible. We have a short time here today, but we will continue this discussion elsewhere - or here, but later. Thank you for joining us today. It means a lot.

Bart Versteirt

Definitely. I feel there's a lot to be said about this, and I'm very happy to have been able to participate in this. What you are doing with Projectorhead is really admirable.

Anuj Malhotra

Also, you can stay logged in, btw. This isn't to send you off in any way.

Thank you!

Bart Versteirt

I will!

I'm very lucky that I'm relatively free in what I do. Cinea has a long tradition, and my board of directors trusts me. That gives me opportunities that I want others to share in

CONFERENCE II

Anuj Malhotra

Hi Leila, Kaya and Srikanth - are you here?

Leila Habib

Yes

Kaya Erdinç

Yes, Anuj. Present!

Anuj Malhotra

That's excellent.

Anuj Malhotra

Excellent. We start in 2.

Srikanth Srinivasan

Hello, Anuj. Hello everyone.

Kaya Erdinç

Saying hi back!

Anuj Malhotra

I'd like to start with Leila.

...since she was here first!

Leila Habib

My pleasure

Anuj Malhotra

Leila, you have worked as a filmmaker in Iran, and also with the Khorshid International Film Festival. I am interested in learning how being able to contribute to those two areas - practice and then exhibition - translates into the growth of your work?

Leila Habib

I think it is come out by friendly coopration that we have in Iran, and as Khorshid Film Festival is an independent Festival the director use the help of filmmakers here ...so at the beginning I participated the Festival by a experimental film and then I became one of the coworkers.

Leila Habib is an independent filmmaker and festival organiser based out of Tehran.

Kaya Erdinç is a practicing cinephile and thinker, based out of Glasgow.

Srikanth Srinivasan is a freelance critic based out of Bengaluru who writes on

theseventhart.info

+
PERSONAL CINEPHILIA,
MEDITATIVE CINEPHILIA,
INSTITUTIONAL
INTERFERENCE,
KNOWING VIS-A-VIS
DOING

Interesting, I feel this transition - or almost a seamless synthesis, between doing and learning - is extremely undervalued, and is the subject of various false binaries. Kaya, this is one of the chief questions that we dealt with at Bela Tarr's film.factory - the distiction between theory and practice. Do you think you can contemplate it slightly here?

Leila Habib

And this cooperation helped me a lot to know other filmmakers and also join the workshops during the festival

Anuj Malhotra

Yes, I do think of Khorshid as an immensely interesting platform - even revealing, for the incredible quality of work it regularly features and shows. It is often overshadowed by the other filmic events in Tehran and in Iran in general, but it should not be, ideally.

Leila Habib

There are several Film Festival in Iran as you know and they are even more famous, but Khorshid is always help the filmmakers who are truley independent and cultivated and the films which have the exact factors of exprimental films

Kaya Erdinç

It is interesting how in Sarajevo, the school attempted to be this outsideoutside, but actually just colonised a part of Eastern Europe that already had its own richness and vitality. And rather than cultivating and trusting that, it was too afraid. Of course because there was money and power involved. So it just started to copy-paste its notions of cinema on top of that region, rather than to start from scratch. Growth was more important than maintenance and care.

Leila Habib

On the email you have mentioned about individualization in contemporary context, I think we live in a world that the believe is everyone is good but I am the best, instead of the past which there was good and bad,

Anuj Malhotra

About the notion of the epicenter and the peripheral - I'd like to invite Srikanth at this point to perhaps meditate on this, and also on his practice as a freelance film critic in Bengaluru. Can you perhaps talk of the various frustrations - and the possibilities offered by this position?

Srikanth Srinivasan

Sure Anuj

...

it's something that's been something of an existential problem for me (and I'm sure many others in this 'outside-outside')

...

I've been typing out something on the side, and I'm going to flood this window by pasting that.

Anuj Malhotra

Please do.

Srikanth Srinivasan

My cinephilia was mostly fostered by the internet. And while there are several

specialized cinephilias here focusing on particular cinemas, I think there does exist something called a global cinephilia with specific values, practices and consumption patterns. (And I think the poverty of a local cinephilic scene, combined with the higher quality of discourse at the international level, gravitates you towards it.)

...

Like with other knowledge domains, I think the experience of internet cinephila is shaped by a surplus: the surfeit of films available, but also the diversity of tastes, critical voices and canons.

...

The problem I faced - and continue to face - as a global, internet cinephile is of the "uncurated" aspect of it. One is bombarded by wildly different, even contradictory directives at all points. The internet puts you in undiscriminating contact with varied tastes and canons with specific histories and polemics. As an eclectic cinephile, you are expected to appreciate vastly different kinds of cinemas and filmmakers, no matter how incompatible each of them is with others.

...

While this does make your taste wide-ranging, it also takes you out of all cinephilic traditions. Let's say you end up loving the Cahiers darlings as much as the Positif ones!

Leila Habib

In our contemporary world this individualization is growing more and more and each filmmaker can creates own world, but we should not forget the impact of system which lead our minds...

Srikanth Srinivasan

And the problem with this lack of tradition is tenfold for the cinephile who is also a self-taught critic (like me). The absence of tradition means that you don't have a lineage as a cinephile, that you don't have mentors that a formal education or an apprenticeship with an organization or a writer will give you. And if this mentor-less critical practice might have its own advantages, I have found it particularly challenging to cultivate a set of reliable aesthetic values and a reliable approach to films, because the various traditions of this mentor-less, oceanic global cinephilia seem to cancel each other out. The risk, strictly in my personal experience, is a perennially provisional critical practice, without aesthetic absolutes but also often devoid of the conviction that a critic within a specific tradition might have.

...

I often dwell on Amit Dutta's statement regarding the Indian tribal artist Jangarh Singh Shyam, whose predicament can serve as the ur-text of the global cinephile residing on the periphery: "Do outsiders have traditions"?

Anuj Malhotra

This is a beautiful and poignant admission, Srikanth - if I may call it that. It reminds me of a comment you once wrote on your blog: 'I saw only twenty films this year, and this was the best year as a cinephile for me, because I saw films in depth, and not necessarily in breadth.'

Srikanth Srinivasan

Absolutely, I think a lack of access can shape you in very positive ways sometimes.

Anuj Malhotra

"Do outsiders have traditions" - but is it also not therefore incumbent upon them to locate these, or does an existence in flux becomes, so to say, 'normal'?

GLOBAL CINEPHILIA

Hi Leila, could you elaborate on the notion of the 'system' here - it is an abstraction, and can mean different things for different people. What does this mean for you?

Srikanth Srinivasan

Yes, there is certainly a pressure, if I may say so, to seek the mainstream, especially due to employment and recognition opportunities.

Leila Habib

System means government...

Srikanth Srinivasan

But I also wonder if it's even possible, as a glocal cinephile-critic, to work in the vein of someone like Henri Rousseau or Facteur Cheval or Nek Chand.

Anuj Malhotra

Is it possible - and Amit Dutta talks of this - to create a strict segregation between work and purpose. About Jangarh Singh Shyam, he wrote, 'Shyam told his contemporaries in the village: don't go to the city to make art. Go there to sell.'

Anuj Malhotra

How do you mean?

Srikanth Srinivasan

Just chip away at your own corner, come up with your own tradition by way of trial and error. I wonder if there's something called a naive cinephile.

Anuj Malhotra

I wonder if anyone will be allowed to remain a naive cinephile.

Srikanth Srinivasan

That's a very pertinent line about Jangarh.

Anuj Malhotra

Here, and for everyone's benefit, I mention Amit Dutta's incredible book on Jangarh Singh Shyam - it is called, Invisible Webs. Sort of a nice moniker of what we are doing here as well.

Srikanth Srinivasan

And I wish it's possible to keep your work pure and removed from the commerce.

Anuj Malhotra

Don't we all?

Srikanth Srinivasan

Given they work dialectically I think

...

It keeps bringing me back to my favourite question of who our tastemakers are.

...

As a global cinephile, even our innermost convictions are circumscribed by internationally curated tastes.

Anuj Malhotra

Leila, I truly do hope we could explore this more. The sixty-three-

+ NAIVE CINEPHILIA, TRIBAL CINEPHILIA odd films we saw at the Khorshid International Film Festival last year all demonstrated a disdain for the government - or a certain way of life. There is definitely a sentiment the younger filmmakers share.

...

I wonder if it is possible to become aware of the boundary between this mediation and our own, private, intuitive taste.

...

Kaya, I will have to bring this session to a close in a minute, but I do want to feature a last message from you.

Srikanth Srinivasan

Ah, but is there a private, intuitive taste outside of institutions at all?

...

I think that's the postmodern question.

...

Of the cinephilic 'I'

Kaya Erdinç

I admire that, Srikanth. To provide my own perspective: I decided to study and move to Vienna, where I thought I could be the closest to avant-garde cinema as I could possibly get. But I learned that, as they say, it's like peeling an onion: one can keep seeking. To stay with a few films, but incredibly close and consistently, means more to me now than going to the Austrian Filmmuseum everyday and "having it all."

Leila Habib

Anuj

...

thanks

Anuj Malhotra

We will move to the next group in a bit now. Thank you, everyone, and for those of you east of us, do sleep well. Or you can stay logged in and contribute!

Anuj Malhotra

'Night.

Srikanth Srinivasan

Cheers.

Srikanth Srinivasan

That's fascinating Kaya.

Srikanth Srinivasan

I feel you.

Kaya Erdinç

When I was still in my hometown, Maastricht, which was located in-between multiple bigger cities, I had to cultivate and love cinema through other means. I am still working to find that

freedom again, freedom of taste indeed, and therefore also on a political level.

Srikanth Srinivasan

I think it relates to my current personal experience too. I don't feel excited to see film X or Y anymore. Everything can wait.

Kaya Erdinç

Thank you!

Srikanth Srinivasan

Do you think this involves kind of a closing in of your world?

Srikanth Srinivasan

That you have to actively reject what Vienna and the bigger cities offer?

CONFERENCE III

Anuj Malhotra

We will start in two. Enrique, here?

Enrique Ceballos

Right here. Hello everyone!

Kaya Erdinç

I don't feel a sense of resistance anymore, to be frank. My move to Glasgow has taken me out of the cinema and into the world. Into my hands. When I started to do pottery last year, I later on thought about Bresson when he said that what you take into your hands is what you take into your heart.

Didi Cheeka

OPERATIONS IN THE MARGINS, LIFE IN THE

MARGINS, SOCIAL

OF CINEPHILIA

PROJECT, SOCIAL ROLE

...I'm supposed to be here, yes?

Anuj Malhotra

Didi, in a bit.

Anuj Malhotra

Enrique, Dan, Yoana - welcome!

Yoana Pavlova

Evening!

Dan Koh

wave

Enrique Ceballos

smile

Anuj Malhotra

In a manner, a lot of your work - whether as a curator, as a publisher, or as a filmmaker,

Enrique Ceballos is the organiser and director of the FIC Silente, Mexico, a festival of silent films and restorations based out of Mexico City.

Yoana Pavlova is the editor and convenor of the site of alternative film writing, festivalists.com.

Dan Koh is a producer of independent films based out of Singapore City, Singapore.

Srikanth Srinivasan

That's great. Very interesting.

Srikanth Srinivasan

I think it makes your inner life richer too.,

Yoana Pavlova

It feels kind of natural to me, as someone who comes from a very marginalized culture (and language), provincial even in the type of its dependancies

Dan Koh

Thanks for having us, Anuj! I struggle to define my "work" in film, as it just seems to be a losing battle

Enrique Ceballos

Well, I think curating cinema is a full social commitment. For me is more an exercise of giving back, since society payed for my education, than a place for vanity.

Dan Koh

At this point I just wanna try to defend the vulnerable in real life, I am kinda disillusioned by long-term "meaning" or "value" in art

Yoana Pavlova

To me, looking for voices in the periphery, and amplifying them is a way of hacking the existing hierarchies and narratives

Dan Koh

I'm not spiritual at all so can't speak on that I'm afraid

Didi Cheeka

...well... I'd followed the path of Senegal filmmaker, Djibril Mambety Diop: I've always been fascinated by marginalized people... so, part of my film practice has always been an attempt to be... marginal... so to say...

Anuj Malhotra

These are wonderful, extremely diverse responses - indicative also of the fact that we are talking essentially not to a mass, but to different people. How do you think of or relate to each other's responses?

Enrique Ceballos

Marginalized is a keyword for Mexico too, so, hence the importance of curating socially relevant films

Dan Koh

Coming from hypercapitalistic Singapore, where human rights are not even discussed (let alone exist), my "work" as a producer/writer I guess is to start conversations, esp when there are many who need help and I'm fairly privileged as a majority-ethnicity (Chinese) male

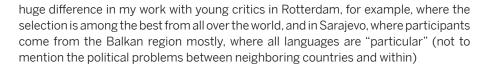
...

I don't have coronavirus though

Yoana Pavlova

some of Anuj questions the other day made me think that as a mentor I also see a

+ PERIPHERIES, HIERARCHIES



Didi Cheeka

...for instance, Yoana's search for marginal voices and the search to amplify them, yes... but, I want to amplify them not inclusively - but, rather, counter-culturally... to shatter accommodation and inclusivity...

Dan Koh

can i ask you a related question @yoana?

Yoana Pavlova

sure @dan

Enrique Ceballos

About loosing battles, I have to say that I consider myself really lucky of having the job I have. The figure of a film curator is not really a common place in my city, Puebla. It is not like a "regular", well known work.

Dan Koh

@yoana in our convo u mentioned being frustrated as stereotyped (?) as being part of the "New East" niche. And your Fuck Godard avifesto is inspiring stuff

..

What is the "New East" niche? Sorry I don't know about it

...

And how does one make a living as a film critic/editor?

Kaya Erdinç

I agree. It gave space to an emptiness that I never dared to feel before. It was there, yes, but somehow living through cinema was an endeavour that had its own set of consequences. Especially because it started mixing up the private and the professional, and then it got messy.

Yoana Pavlova

thanks @dan Well, that's the post-socialist territory in Central & Eastern Europe plus ex-USSR

...

It's a vast, and in terms of film culture -- not that well-known in the West. The problem, though, is the way English-language media is spinning content out of their ignorance, and profiting from that

Dan Koh

Ah right thanks for sharing! What are the stereotypes associated with being part of the "New East"? Like your editors expect only USSR trauma stories or..?

Kaya Erdinç

I'm now helping out Luke Fowler on a regular basis, who loves cinema but also has his own life in a city in which a thirst for cinema will always be solitary, and rarely shared.

+ LINGUISTIC DEPICTION, POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION, POLITICS IN REPRESENTATION

Didi Cheeka

...but, this question, Dan, is at the heart of the problem: inclusivity... how do you, for instance, make a living as a baker, a carpenter...

Yoana Pavlova

"how does one make a living as a film critic/editor" -> only a few can, being a native speaker helps too

Srikanth Srinivasan

I think this emptiness is crucial to move ahead as a person.

Yoana Pavlova

totally, @didi, I would love to be able to make a living as a baker

Dan Koh

that's pretty straightforward to me though. i used to work in a factory transporting boxes and made a decent living

Srikanth Srinivasan

For me it was the result of a crisis too.

...

And it's an essential discovery.

Yoana Pavlova

they want facts to be "explained", laid bare for readers to be educated, and while explaining abc to your audience, the word count is over

Enrique Ceballos

I think English language media a is a key factor to understand certain dynamics of exclusion in cultural manifestations.

Didi Cheeka

...yes, the other day, at the embassy, they asked me: "but how do you survive as a film critic and off-Nollywood filmmaker?"

Dan Koh

ah right! nowadays doesn't hyperlinking to Wiki make things easier though? or is that not "professional"?

Enrique Ceballos

We can be totally weirdos in this world, totally capitalized

Didi Cheeka

...why should existing as a film critic demand different survival mechanism?

Yoana Pavlova

the fact that we use English to communicate here, yet also need to take a critical stance on the very notion we need it, is interesting, yes

Enrique Ceballos

Total weirdos*

Srikanth Srinivasan

Right!

Dan Koh

@enrique are English speakers in Mexico privileged? as in they get access to much more opportunities

Srikanth Srinivasan

So much of international cinephilia passes through English.

Enrique Ceballos

Oh yes! English is the very first language you should learn in school, after Spanish.

Anuj Malhotra

We are listening to Arabic music here.

Srikanth Srinivasan

I'm thinking for instance Karagarga, where English interface and subtitles are the norm

Kaya Erdinç

I think so too.

Dan Koh

ah right! then why is so much Mexican cinema that travels (at least to my part of the world) in Spanish etc.? is it considered more "authentic"? are there many Englishlanguage Mexican films?

Srikanth Srinivasan

I don't necessarily fault it.

...

"It is what it is"

Didi Cheeka

...but, yes, this is the problem: I was asked by somebody who considers himself part of the centre If there where film critics in Nigeria and how such a thing could be possible...

Enrique Ceballos

Maybe 20% of our population speaks English at the end of the day

Bart Versteirt

Most international Critics Workshops are also held in English, as is the one I organize in Ghent, which has an American critic as a mentor.

Enrique Ceballos

The key factor here is to understand the "modernizing ways" of government so you can be a "world citizen"

Dan Koh

Wow that sounds so gross

Yoana Pavlova

At the same time using Spanish is a real treasure, no? Access to so many books and films

Enrique Ceballos

I know, but at the end we are right below the U.S

+
ANGLO-CENTRISM OF
MODERN CINEPHILIA,
CULT OF LANGUAGE,
SYSTEMS OF CONTROL

Dan Koh

I've produced 4 features so far, and only one was in English, that is our working lanugage in Singapore. The English-language docu hardly travelled as I really think white people or the international community at large finds Asians speaking in English weird

Bart Versteirt

There is the simple fact of English as lingua franca, but this of course implies an imbalance

Yoana Pavlova

@didi, I know two more Nigerian film critics, one a pharmacist and one a doctor

Srikanth Srinivasan

True.

Yoana Pavlova

sigh

Dan Koh

So I admit I've consciously had to adjust scripts to non-English "authentic" languages to sell the film.

Enrique Ceballos

Oh yes, @yoana . The thing is, since English language media is recognize as an instantly quality thing, many Mexicans despise their own cinema:(

Dan Koh

But I try never to watch English-language films or films with light-skinned people to be brutally honest

Srikanth Srinivasan

And even a knowledge of English (and a working practice in English) doesn't place you on equal footing in the discourse market.

Yoana Pavlova

we have a similar problem in Eastern Europe

Srikanth Srinivasan

Personally, I have hardly sought English language writing outside the recognized publications.

Didi Cheeka

...but, Enrique, this is not unique: at some point many Americans despised their own cinema in favour of European cinema...

Bart Versteirt

When selecting the participants in the workshop, out of all the applications we get, we try to limit the weight we give to English language proficiency. You can find out if the ideas in someones writing are interesting even when written in faulty or less then perfect English, but getting a sense of style is much harder.

Srikanth Srinivasan

One thing about this inclusivity initiatives at magazines and publications is that they want people of different origins, but they only seek out ones residing in their countries/cities.

Bart Versteirt

Definitely

Srikanth Srinivasan

So I think a lot more depends on your geography than your capacity to write/work in English.

Enrique Ceballos

I know @didi That's why so important, as a curator, to revise social and political history here, in our region and via cinema.

Didi Cheeka

...the question is how this attitude impacts our own work - beyond personal kneejerk reactions...

Didi Cheeka

...sorry, I mean Dan not Enrique...

Bart Versteirt

I'm all for more translations, but there's an economic reason (both in sense of time and money) why that isn't happening more.

Srikanth Srinivasan

Reminds me of what an Indian guitarist said. The West doesn't want to see a guitarist from India. They'd rather have someone who's "ethnic"

Yoana Pavlova

it is a bit as if "the hero's journey" gets a meta treatment with some masochistic overtones

Dan Koh

Yurp, and if I needa hear another French person say they "invented" cinema...

Yoana Pavlova

that's unpleasantly true

Didi Cheeka

...for me, the major problem about a centre and inclusivity/ exclusivity - I was at a workshop in Lisbon about decolonizibg the archives

Yoana Pavlova

in the sense that "being part" in such an "initiative" looks like an asset on the surface, but the dynamics behind such a structure can be not that glamorous

Anuj Malhotra

Hi, I am sorry, I need to find a way right now to include both Stefano and Sagorika, without just letting them type in their thoughts. If it is okay, I must initiate a formal ceremony. It is possible however for all of you to shift this incredible conversation to #secondary-itw

CONFERENCE IV

Didi Cheeka

...and I asked, how do you decolonize the archive when colonialism still exist in neoforms?

Hi Stefano, and Sagorika, have you been following us? I know there is a lot happening here.

Stefano Miraglia

Hi!

...

Thanks for having me!

Sagorika

Yes, all the way.

...

Hello everyone!

Stefano Miraglia

Great conversations by the way!

Anuj Malhotra

This is how we intended it - in terms of wanting a number of simultaneous conversations transpire.

Dan Koh

Can we try to crash the server?

...

I can try to hack it if you like

Stefano Miraglia

hahaha

sura

Sure, give it a go

Dan Koh

OMG gimme the IP I'll BRB

Anuj Malhotra

Stefano, Sagorika, could you perhaps try to respond to Didi's last statement, especially in terms of the decolonisation of the archive?

Sagorika

Sure Anuj. I share Didi's sentiment on this. I remember discussing this in our other conversations as well.

...

The archive, in the contemporary moment, evolves as something else. However, the kind of inclusiveness you imagine to come out of it, tends to go missing.

Sagorika

So, the question still remains, whose archive is it anyways?

Stefano Miraglia

I'd love to tell a story about the archive.

+
ARCHIVE,
ANTI-ARCHIVE, THE
ARCHIVE OF COLONIES,
THE DECOLONISATION
OF ARCHIVES

Please go ahead.

Didi Cheeka

...yes, Sagorika... whose archive... for instance...

Stefano Miraglia

This concerns the question: "whose archive?"

. . .

Italian Public television archive stores many films by marginalised artists/filmmakers

Didi Cheeka

...we inherited a colonial archive... and confronted the question - for me, anyway:

Stefano Miraglia

The public television has only one tv program that could, eventually, show this marginalised/experimental work. But what if that program is cancelled? What to do with those films? The archive charges unrealistic sums of money in order to screen them, if one wants to screen them.

Didi Cheeka

...how do we repurpose the archive; how do we use and exhibit these images so that they do not perpetuate colonialism?

Yoana Pavlova

The Bulgarian National TV solved all this effortlessly by simply deleting their archives, to free space :-D

Sagorika

Stefano, it is a similar story in the public domain in India as well.

Dan Koh

here in Singapore with zero rights to information, only 8% of the 2 million public government record that the National Archives has is publicly available. luckily there are non-governmental entities like the Asian Film Archive (disclosure: i worked there previously) that step in to fill the gap for AV

Sagorika

For an earlier era "experimental" films at least. Our public archiving is in a sorry state that way. There is no transparency as to what is archived and on top of that there are infrastructural infirmities as well.

Stefano Miraglia

Interesting. Last September I spoke about this to an old film curator and journalist. He told me that this happened a lot. While researching on Vittorio Cottafavi's early films, he found a document made by RAI (the national TV) saying that a film by Cottafavi, existing in only 1 copy (a cassette), was permanently deleted due to a recycling project.

Srikanth Srinivasan

Wow

Yoana Pavlova

A Bulgarian/French filmmaker made a great film about it, as her mother used to produce a show in the early 1990s -- luckily the family videotaped all the episodes in their private archive

Stefano Miraglia

Some Italian film curators had to create interesting human connections inside the Italian TV archive in order to bypass the rules and have digitized copies to screen/share.

Didi Cheeka

...yes, but, you can create an anti-archive - as is being done in Cairo... as a challenge to a hegemonic centre... I'm thinking too this is part of what this convo is about... the need to challenge the centre...

Anuj Malhotra

What is the anti-archive in Cairo?

Dan Koh

Anti-Archive is an important new film collective in Cambodia btw, formed in reaction to only Cambodian films about the genocide

Dan Koh

http://www.antiarchive.com/

Anuj Malhotra

Wow!

Sagorika

This sounds timely and apt.

Dan Koh

Here's an amazing new film collective from India, Romania and Italy too, happens to be all-female. Their debut film A RIFLE AND A BAG is essential viewing: http://nocutfilmcollective.com/

Didi Cheeka

...oh, Anuj, it's the Cimatheque - Alternative Cinema Centre in Cairo... it's in a way an opposition to the official government owned restricted film archive...

Stefano Miraglia

What's her name?

Stefano Miraglia

Thanks for pointing out the anti-archive and NoCut!

Yoana Pavlova

Elitsa (Elitza) Georgieva / Every Wall is a Door

Dan Koh

hi all i must go too as my flight to berlin was delayed by 23 hours and i stink and am sleep deprived. thanks again everyone esp anuj and suraj! nice meeting eveveryone online

Sagorika

Perhaps, such an idea of the anti-archive, that is born out in opposition to such scenarios, are the possible solutions but then who (and how they are funded) funds them will again decide their structural existence/identity, I guess.

Anuj Malhotra

Sagorika, I believe you were typing a message. At any rate, I want to, while everyone is here, thank her for her very generous time and contribution to helping arrive at the idea for this conference - as well as we hope, the new iteration for Projectorhead. She is central to it.

Stefano Miraglia

Thanks @dan

Yoana Pavlova

imho the problem with archives is about access, and interface

Didi Cheeka

...and also, Salute, Sagorika, for helping concieve this

Anuj Malhotra

I must confess that this has developed in a manner that is more fluid, intuitive and interesting beyond our original plans for it - thank you everyone. And this is without structure or design, so it does not have to end, really. But as arbitrary restrictions go, we need to leave the room now. However, I invite all of you to keep the conversation going if you need to.

Kaya Erdinç

What do people think of film festivals in line with what Margaret Tait described here: https://lux.org.uk/writing/throwing-film-festival

Stefano Miraglia

It's been a pleasure reading all of you people! We shoud do this again! @AnujA

Didi Cheeka

...yes, we'll need to keep the conversation going...

Anuj Malhotra

Yes, that is the intention Stefano. That's why the masthead recognises this as the first volume.

Sagorika

Thanks everyone! And, lets keep the conversation going.

Anuj Malhotra

But talk to all of you lovelies soon.

Bart Versteirt

Thanks @AnujA, @sagorika and @suraj,Äî this is amazing. Looking forward to seeing where you're taking Projectorhead and hope we can work together more in the future!

Anuj Malhotra

Logging out now.

Sagorika

Absolutely, it is just that archiving takes on such exalted stature, at least in terms of cinema in India, that it can be frustrating. The questions of access and interface, thus remain far behind, at least for now.

Yoana Pavlova

@kaya keeps typing <3