

Transnational Screens: New Directions, New Collaborations Transnational SIG Report and collaboration notes

The BAFTSS Transnational Film and Television first SIG event was held on 13th June 2019 at the University of Portsmouth, Eldon Building. It was organised by SIG coordinators, Deborah Shaw, Yael Friedman and Rajinder Dudrah. The event was free and open to all members of BAFTSS, and colleagues at the University of Portsmouth. It was attended by Deborah Shaw, Yael Friedman, Austin Fisher, Louis Bayman, Maryam Ghobankarimi, Ana Mendes, Patti Gaal Holmes, Jamie Steele, Sally Shaw, Simon Hobbs, Olly Gruner.

Activities for the day were:

- Attendees presented an overview of their research interests
- An overview of the field and future directions (Deborah Shaw led)
- A roundtable discussion on New Transnational Exhibition Platforms (Yael Friedman led). Panellists were Yael, Austin Fisher, Louis Bayman, Maryam Ghobankarimi
- Discussion on future potential funding bids, collaborations and networks
- Evening dinner

Streaming platforms discussion summary:

Yael's opening comments pointed to the diverse landscape of online streaming services and the academic work that needs to be done in classifying, mapping and typifying those different platforms. She raised several opening questions about the implication of these transformations to Transnational films including:

What is the impact of the collapsing distinction between the TV and cinematic formats on the type of films from around the world that are exhibited on these platforms?

What is impact of the collapsing distinction between independent/art films and commercial/ generic ones on the type of films available and their curation (or lack of..)

Rethinking analytical frameworks – is Netflix simply the 'Hollywood' of the streaming space and Mubi the arthouse or do we need to reconceptualise the categories of analysis?

In this new landscape what is the relationship between the national, the transnational and the global? Are we seeing new formations emerge? Are questions of cultural imperialism still relevant and how?

What is the relationship of these platforms with 'traditional' exhibition spaces – the big cinema chains / film festivals/ television ?

What are the commissioning and funding mechanisms and agendas of platforms such as Netflix and Amazon?

Panel members then presented:

Austin Fisher drew on Stefano Baschiera's work on streaming Italian horror to update and reflect on the streaming landscape for Italian horror films.

Amongst other areas Maryam Ghobankarimi considered the social and political implications of dubbing on Netflix and Amazon Prime with a focus on Iranian and Arabic content.

Louis Bayman discussed how research into streaming platforms shows that they do not merely individualise film spectatorship but have made us ever more connected globally. However, this global connectivity intermingles with significant countervailing factors to do with corporate monopolistic practices, the actual range of films being viewed, the persistence of the national at a level of audience identification and film theme, and the use of data mining and surveillance. This is all against a backdrop of the globalisation of authoritarian xenophobic political regimes.

Summary of Discussion on future potential funding bids, collaborations and networks and action points

We discussed the centrality of the new exhibition platforms and the streaming exhibition landscape and agreed that what we could bring to the topic as a group of scholars is the transnational focus. This was an initial discussion, but there is work to do to clarify what we want to do, who we want to involve, who will lead the work and other questions. We suggested a follow up meeting possibly at the University of Lancaster and led by Maryam Ghobankarimi.

We considered the idea of developing a research network around on the following area: Decolonizing the screen: transnational screens and streaming platforms.