

# Liverpool Film Seminar

2013 – 2014 series

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Every year, Liverpool Film Seminar invites six experts to deliver a series of talks. Topics vary greatly and the series does not focus on a specific aspect of film. Instead, a range of genres and approaches are celebrated, from historical reach to the internet's impact on cinematic material.

Below you'll find a list of speakers and topics from the 2013 – 2014 series:

**Dr Deborah Shaw (University of Portsmouth)**

**The relationship between European funding bodies and Latin American filmmakers: new forms of dependence or new partnerships?**

European social funding bodies, aligned with film festivals, have been instrumental through their support in developing the careers of some of the most high-profile contemporary Latin American filmmakers.

The Hubert Bals Fund, part of the Rotterdam Festival, the German World Cinema Fund, an initiative of the Berlinale, and Cinéfondation, a programme linked to the Cannes film festival, have all favoured Latin American directors.

Beneficiaries of grants from European funding bodies (among many others) include Mexico's Carlos Reygadas, the Peruvian Claudia Llosa, and Lisandro Alonso, Diego Lerman, Lucrecia Martel, Lucía Puenzo and Pablo Trapero, all from Argentina.

This paper will outline key debates relating to the political and social implications of this new funding landscape. It will examine the arguments of those who are critical and those who are supportive of these developments and, drawing on examples of films from the above-mentioned directors, will ask whether relationships between funding bodies and filmmakers create new forms of dependence or new partnerships.

In addition, the paper considers whether the contemporary auteurist festival film is a new transnational cinematic art form that makes critics reconsider notions of national cinema.

## Biography:



Deborah Shaw is Reader in Film Studies at the University of Portsmouth. She has published in the areas of Latin American Cinema, Latin Americans and Latinos in US cinema, Transnational film theory, and film production funding and 'world' cinema. She is the founding co-editor of the Intellect journal *Transnational Cinemas*, and is author of *The Three Amigos: The Transnational Filmmaking of Guillermo del Toro, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and Alfonso Cuarón* (Manchester University Press 2013) and *Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Ten Key Films* (Continuum, 2003). She is the editor of *Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Breaking into the Global Market* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007). She is currently working on establishing a network on Cinema Funding Bodies and Global Arts Cinema.

# Professor Frederick Wasser

(City University of New York, Brooklyn College and Fullbright Bicentennial Scholar in American Studies, University of Helsinki)

## Film History, Spielberg and *Lincoln*

The recent release of *Lincoln*, directed by Steven Spielberg, is a breakthrough for the director and an old-time Hollywood revival for the audience. Spielberg has been making historical films since 1985 both to extend and to break free of the blockbuster genre he helped pioneer in the 1970s. Hitherto his historical films have suffered from his own timidity. I argue that finally with *Lincoln* he found a subject appropriate for the times. His collaborator Tony Kushner writes a revisionist version of Lincoln even as Spielberg's camera worships the 16th President of the United States. The synthesis provides a consensual yet important history that the American audience has not seen since the days of Classic Hollywood.

## Biography:



Frederick Wasser is a professor and the chair of the Department of Television and Radio at Brooklyn College CUNY. His scholarly interests lie primarily in media industries, contemporary Hollywood and the culture industries, and his work focuses on synthesizing cultural and economic approaches. Such interests come in part from his experiences as a working professional in the film and television industries in Los Angeles during the 1980s. His first research publication, the influential *Veni, Vidi, Video* (University of Texas Press, 2001) discussed the effects of home video on film and television and has become part of the historical understanding of the creation of trans-national media companies. In more recent work he has turned towards the actual changes in story-telling in the era of the blockbuster. His most recent book, *Steven Spielberg's America* (Polity Press, 2011) is one result of this research as is his contribution to *The Time of Our Lives* (Wayne State University Press, 2012). His talk on "Spielberg's *Lincoln*," is based on his article in the current online edition of *E-Jump Cut* (no. 55). Professor Wasser is currently the Fulbright Bicentennial Chair in American Studies in the University of Helsinki for the 2013-14 academic year.

## Professor Lucy Mazdon (University of Southampton)

### French Cinema in Britain: Sex, Art and Cinephilia

In a market long dominated by Hollywood, French films have consistently been the most widely distributed English language works. However these French films undergo a transformation as they reach Britain, becoming something quite different to those films experienced by audiences in France. In this paper I shall discuss the distribution, exhibition and reception of French films in the UK, analysing the reasons for the selection of particular films and what happens to them once they arrive on British shores.

#### Biography:



Lucy Mazdon is Professor of Film Studies at the University of Southampton. She has published widely in the field of film and television. Her books include, *Encore Hollywood: Remaking French Cinema* (BFI, 2000), *France on Film: Reflections on Popular French Cinema* (Wallflower, 2001), *Je t'aime, moi non plus: Franco-British Cinematic Relations and French Cinema in Britain: Sex, Art and Cinephilia* (Berghahn: 2010 and 2013, both with Catherine Wheatley).

## **Professor Dina Iordanova** (University of St Andrews)

### **Ephemeral Abundance: Film Culture between the Cyberlocker and the Festival**

This talk will address some of the current transformations in film culture, resulting in a milieu that appears to be characterised by ephemeral abundance. It will focus specifically on the way smaller films with lesser chance for exposure move through new trajectories and reach new audiences. Instant online access to cinematic material has led to significant shifts in the way we see films. Previously obscure rarities are now within easy reach; unseen treasures of the celluloid era and distant images rooted in the cultures of faraway lands are only a click away. The wealth of cinematic databases, multitude of diaspora-driven web-vaults, proliferating feature and documentary footage available from enterprising YouTube-channel owners, and fresh material streamed by film festival web-sites, all profoundly change the landscape for the viewing and study of film.

#### **Biography:**



Dina Iordanova is Professor in Film Studies at the 600 year-old University of St. Andrews in Scotland, where she founded the Film Studies department in 2005. She also directs the well-known Centre for Film Studies and the publishing house St Andrews Film Studies. Starting as a specialist of Eastern European and Balkan cinema, she later on expanded her interest and has published extensively on international and transnational cinema matters. In recent years, her work has been focused on the dynamics of global film industries and film festivals. Her most recent book is *The Film Festivals Reader* (2013). Besides Europe, she has taught internationally in North America and Asia. Her work has been translated in more than twenty languages.

## **Professor Laura Mulvey** (Birkbeck College, University of London)

### **Hitchcock's Blondes and Feminist Film Theory: a Cinema of Voyeurism or a Cinema of Self-reflexivity?**

The 'Hitchcock blonde' has become an established cliché image within popular culture today, recognised, recounted and discussed beyond film theory circles. In this lecture Laura Mulvey returns to significance of Hitchcock's blonde heroines and his voyeuristic cinema for the development her feminist and psychoanalytic approach to film in the 1970s. Recently, after a gap of 40 years, she has returned to the 'Hitchcock blonde' to reflect on his cinema as, perhaps, revealing and self-reflexive rather than simply misogynistic.

#### **Biography:**



Laura Mulvey has been writing about film and film theory since the mid-1970s. She has published *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989, new updated edition 2009), *Fetishism and Curiosity* (1996 new edition 2013), *Citizen Kane* (1996 new edition 2012), *Death Twenty-four Times a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, she co-directed six films with Peter Wollen including *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1978; DVD release 2013) and *Frida Kahlo and Tina Modotti* (1980). In 1994, she co-directed with artist/filmmaker Mark Lewis *Disgraced Monuments* (Channel 4) with whom she has also made *23 August 2008* (2013). She is Professor of Film and Media Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London and Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image.

## **Professor Jane Feuer** (University of Pittsburgh, USA)

### **Theatricality and Quality Drama: a Neglected Connection**

Although HBO-style "not TV" dramas may be considered an offshoot of indie cinema, and although some HBO auteurs such as David Chase consider themselves to be filmmakers, the debt quality drama owes to a theatrical playwrighting tradition may be even greater than the influence of cinema. A newspaper article referred to Aaron Sorkin as "the playwright, television writer and Oscar-winning screenwriter of *The Social Network*" in that order. Writers on *In Treatment* and *Six Feet Under* have been cited for their backgrounds as playwrights, not as filmmakers. Network television, picking up on the quality TV style for the 2012 drama SMASH not only set the show in the theater, but also hired playwright Theresa Rebeck as the first season showrunner. HBO has awarded grants to develop playwrights. Writers and producers originating in theater dominated television drama in the 1950s and they dominate quality drama today to a much greater extent than has been recognized by academic TV scholars coming from cinema studies. Theater people can also be found in quality dramas of the 1980s that seem to have been eclipsed by post-HBO dramas. Theatricality is also a sensibility and a mode of scene construction; these too can be shown to be a major influence on television drama. Theater as an origin relates to the demographics of quality drama. This audience appreciates the higher cultural capital theater has over film, and HBO has not hesitated to publicize its link to the theater. The paper will argue about the importance of playwrights in US TV and the impact of theatricality on contemporary TV dramas.

### **Biography:**



Jane Feuer is Professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh where she teaches in the Film Studies Program. She has lectured internationally on Hollywood musicals and television. Her current work involves "quality drama" as it has evolved on U.S. television since the 1990s. Previously she wrote about earlier quality dramas in *Seeing through the Eighties*. She was one of the founders of Television Studies as it emerged out of film studies from the 1980s to the present.