

Liverpool Film Seminar

2016 – 2017 series

Every year, Liverpool Film Seminar invites 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.

Professor Rob Stone (University of Birmingham)

Winging It: Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* (2015)

Richard Linklater's 'Boyhood' (2015) was always intended to be life-affirming, but not in any nostalgic manner. Rather, in its focus on life as one eternal, incomplete and ongoing moment it aspired to illustrate Nietzsche's conclusion that if we affirm one single moment, we thus affirm not only ourselves but all existence. Thus, whereas signs and symbols such as inter-titles, make-up, wigs and period details, for example, would have communicated the simulacra of ageing, Linklater's objective was a sense of pure cinema he thought achievable by recording the actual growth of a boy and the ageing of those around him over a period of twelve years.

The philosophy the film espouses in its form, content and aesthetics therefore responds to Fukuyama's 'the end of history' by reinstating that of six year old Mason (Ellar Coltrane) until he becomes an 18 year old student in order to counter the erasure of childhood. This critical reflection on *Boyhood* draws out the contrary political and philosophical meanings of a work that was most often misunderstood by those who lauded it. Twelve years in the life of a passive white kid might not strike one as a manifesto, but any such dismissal of the hermetic nature of Linklater's enquiry into moving and filming slowly through life misses the point of its counterplot illustration of an alternative to the effect on childhood of fast-track Neo-liberalism.

Biography:



Professor Rob Stone directs B-Film – the Birmingham Centre for Film Studies at the University of Birmingham. He has published widely on Spanish, Basque, Cuban and independent American cinema and is the author of 'Spanish Cinema' (2001), 'Julio Medem' (2007), 'Walk, Don't Run: The Cinema of Richard Linklater' (2013, 2nd ed. 2017) and 'Basque Cinema'(2015).