

Liverpool Film Seminar

2017 – 2018 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 James Donald (University of New South Wales)

Native Land: Documentary, Modernism, Populism

Native Land (1942) is a film that was very much of its time, but one that missed its moment. It was a product of the American Left during the New Deal/Popular Front era, but it was not completed until after the Hitler-Stalin pact and America's entry into World War Two. To get across its message about the repression of trade union organisation, it combines newsreel material by the Workers Film and Photo League and original documentary footage with didactic fictional reenactments by professional actors. Among those involved in its production were Paul Strand, one of the twentieth century's great still photographers, the director and theorist Leo Hurwitz, and, as narrator, the singer and activist Paul Robeson. *Native Land* captures a unique historical moment that takes on a new resonance in an era of renewed populism on both right and left.

Biography:

James Donald is Emeritus Professor of Film at UNSW Australia and Visiting Professor at the University of Liverpool. He is author of *Some of These Days: Black Stars, Jazz Aesthetics, and Modernist Culture* (2015), *Imagining the Modern City* (1999), and *Sentimental Education* (1992), and editor of thirteen volumes, including *Fantasy and the Cinema* (1989), *Close Up: Cinema and Modernism* (2000) and *The SAGE Handbook of Film Studies* (2008). He was editor of *Screen Education* in the late 1970s, and founding editor of *New Formations*. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

