

## [Call for Abstracts Global Screen Worlds: An International Workshop SOAS University of London, UK September 2021](#)

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### **Call for Abstracts**

### **Global Screen Worlds: An International Workshop**

SOAS University of London, UK

September 2021

“Comparative film studies...must necessarily proceed by way of a collaboration between intellectuals from different geo-historical formations. The precondition for such a collaboration is that the participants should be prepared to consider their own intellectual formations and thought-habits as symptomatic constellations shaped by the very same dynamics that animate historicity itself.”

Paul Willemen, “For a comparative film studies”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6.1 (2005): 99

“We need to forge ‘off-centered’ networks of individual scholars, academic programs and institutions, and venues for publication internationally. The final goal is not to create a globally unified discursive space of film studies, but to forge new networks and channels of communication.”

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, “A future of comparative film studies”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 14.1 (2013): 54-61

In September 2021, a three-day, fully-funded workshop will be held at SOAS University of London as part of the ERC-funded project “Screen Worlds: Decolonising Film and Screen Studies”. This workshop will form part of the “Global Screen Worlds” strand of the project which – inspired by Willemen’s and Yoshimoto’s words above – calls for comparative, interdisciplinary and “off-centered” approaches to Film and Screen Studies. The workshop and the Open Access edited volume that will result from it are, accordingly, designed to inspire and facilitate collaborative dialogue, research, and authorship among Film and Screen scholars from different parts of the world, but especially from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and those working on indigenous cinemas.

Film and Screen Studies still largely situates itself within an Anglo-American, European

framework. This workshop wants to contribute to work that takes the field beyond this geographical bias by developing new frameworks and methodologies that foreground how the specific histories, languages, politics and cultures of particular places shape and interact with narrative screen media. Rather than the top-down nature of a “world cinema” approach - in which one, lone scholar attempts to be an expert on multiple film cultures - we encourage a grassroots approach in which we will seek to move towards more universal understandings of “global screen worlds” *from* the specific and particular. The way we aim to do this is by inviting participants to ‘pair up’ with other screen scholars with similar interests but working from or on very different places to co-author work that brings “screen worlds” from two or more diverse contexts into conversation without losing local specificity. We recognise that this is a highly ambitious undertaking and we will offer support with ‘pairing up’ to those eager to participate but who do not have scholarly contacts in other regions.

In the workshop and edited volume we want to explore and compare diegetic screen worlds within films, and also how industrial screen worlds operate (i.e. modes of film production, distribution and exhibition). We seek proposals that aim to pay attention to diegetic similarities, differences and/or significant affinities across narrative screen texts from two or more particular contexts, and/or study actual screen connections (in line with critical transnational cinema studies, cf. Higbee and Lim 2010) or parallel screen histories (e.g. how two distinct regional cinemas that have *not* interacted have nevertheless had similar experiences). We are interested in comparative analyses that cover, for example, issues of stardom, genre, and melodrama; the films and experiences of female and/or LGBTQ+ filmmakers; themes related to intersectional identities (race, gender, class, ability); the roles of film festivals and “live” cinematic events such as premieres; how video-on-demand platforms and/or the “televisual turn” is affecting the creation, circulation and consumption of narrative screen media; cross-cultural representation (e.g. how Africans are represented in Asian films and vice versa); modes of working with sound and music, as well as issues of subtitling, dubbing and live ‘voicing’ in cinema; the use of narrative screen media (including creative documentaries) within movements for social change and justice; and self-reflexive and autobiographical modes of filmmaking.

Specific questions we are interested in exploring include, but are certainly not limited to:

- What can be achieved through comparative analysis of experimental cinema in Senegal and Palestine in the 1970s, or of contemporary science fiction cinema in Kenya and Palestine?
- How can thinking about the work of Wong Kar Wai (Hong Kong) and Mahamat Saleh Haroun (Chad) help us to explore the overlaps between arthouse and popular cinema?
- Given that many African and Asian filmmakers were trained in the Soviet Union, what

impact has this had upon their work?

- Why have Bollywood and South Korean drama been so popular in certain parts of Africa?
- Why, in a global context of a shift to online film viewing, has there been a recent increase in cinema-building and cinema-going in places such as Ethiopia and Pakistan?
- Why has China become so interested in representing Africa in its diegetic screen worlds and in contributing to industrial screen worlds in Africa through investment in Chinese film festivals and Chinese television stations in Africa?
- How are video on demand platforms such as GagaoLaLa, V-Live, ALT Balaji, BigFlix, Oksusu, Voot, Pooq, iflix, and Qiyi changing the forms and routes of screen media?
- Do terms such as “world cinema” or “transnational cinema” remain important categories of analysis when it comes to contemporary screen media and why/why not?

All submissions will need to engage, in some way, with the concept of “screen worlds”, which we put forward as a heuristic device to encourage creative, provocative approaches in relation to screen media. We strongly encourage submissions from both established and early career researchers. Participants must, however, be interested in working closely in a collaborative, supportive way with one or more co-author(s), with other workshop participants, and with the editors.

Submissions need to include:

1. An abstract of 500 words (highlighting whether you wish to be ‘paired up’ by us with a scholar from a different region)
2. A statement of 500 words about why you are interested in participating
3. A biography of 300 words

Deadline for abstract submissions: 15 February 2020

Submit to: Professor Lindiwe Dovey ([LD18@soas.ac.uk](mailto:LD18@soas.ac.uk)) and Professor Kate Taylor-Jones ([k.e.taylor-jones@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:k.e.taylor-jones@sheffield.ac.uk))

Please note: we will notify you by 15 March 2020 as to whether we are interested in your abstract. If we are, we will expect a full chapter draft of 6-8,000 words by 15 February 2021. Final decisions about who is selected for the workshop will depend on the quality of these drafts. All transport, accommodation, visa, and meal costs will be fully covered for selected participants. Please note that, in addition to workshopping the chapters during event, there

will be several inspiring keynote presentations by leading international screen media scholars, practitioners and creative researchers.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 819236).

Contact Info:

Professor Lindiwe Dovey ([LD18@soas.ac.uk](mailto:LD18@soas.ac.uk))

Professor Kate Taylor-Jones ([k.e.taylor-jones@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:k.e.taylor-jones@sheffield.ac.uk))

Contact Email:

[LD18@soas.ac.uk](mailto:LD18@soas.ac.uk)