

SPECIALE Geopolitical Strategies in Film Festivals between Activism and Cinephilia

This special edition of *Cinergie* adheres to two main purposes. The first, is to present the studies of a group of researchers and scholars within the academic community working on various aspects and characteristics of film festivals and form part of the Italian branch of the Film Festival Research network. The second, is to develop a dedicated research field that interlaces with the issues of cinephilia, criticism, and the geopolitics of film consumption that *Cinergie* is fostering since years.

Partially, the following special issue was inspired by the NECS Conference 2014 held in Milan, where some of the essays published here had found an initial exposure in the form of presentations. Authors who expressed interest to include their work in this special issue were requested to draft and elaborate their manuscripts in accordance with the guidelines of *Cinergie*, which were then blind-refereed. This issue has particularly benefitted from the keynote paper from Dr. Felicia Chan from the University of Manchester, UK, who kindly accepted our invitation. Finally, alongside academic discourses we have decided to place two interviews; one, with an internationally renowned film scholar Professor Ian Christie from Birkbeck, University of London, and the second, with the Director of an international film festival on Indian cinema, Ms. Selvaggia Velo - both of whom have been committed to academic research and cultural ventures. The scope of these interviews is to observe diverse facets of film festivals, ranging from issues of cultural geopolitics to cultural distribution.

Following this line of inquiry, the essays in this issue attempt to explore very diverse case studies, and provide a compelling argument on the complexities of geopolitics and film festivals. The variety of approaches adopted here, tap into historical but also ethnographic and cultural analysis to unravel socio-cultural concerns that span from social activism, urban spaces, ethnic mobilization, film production culture and also cinephilia.

Thus, in this special edition of *Cinergie*, we seek to widen the current debates on film festivals and geopolitics, and insert novel and diversified views on the position that film festivals have, via the development of specific programming, in defining novel film culture. To start with, the analysis of Dr. Chan looks at the ways of thinking about festival venues as affective spaces – both in physical and metaphorical terms – and integrates memories of spaces to rework events, and historical and cultural contexts. In this direction, Monia Acciari explores the way Indie Indian cinema venues – London Indian Film festival and River to River Indian Film festival – are spaces that largely expand the notion of spatiality of the festival, interlocking with concerns of ethnicity, urban geography and networking. This last issue has also been picked up by Enrico Vannucci's work looking at the ecosystem of short film festival arenas in Italy, problematising the laborious relationship between the Italian political instability and the cultural panorama even further. Human Rights and its cultural complexities have been elaborated by Ludovica Fales, whose work poses an accent on the need to re-think 'testimonial encounter' via art and multiple cultural discourses. In conclusion, Giacomo di Foggia's essay takes us back into cinephilic pleasure. His work highlights the need to look at the lives of the festival directors to think further about cinephilia in places that are geographically tangential to western – accounted – cinephilia.

We leave the task of articulating the content of this special edition of *Cinergie* to the respective authors and their essays.

Edited by Monia Acciari and Roy Menarini