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Welcome to Paradise Island: The rise of Jamaica's cine-tourist image, 1891-1951

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This thesis, for the first time, examines the history of film in Jamaica from the late nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century. It concentrates on how practices of (location) filming were connected to tourism and how they participated in the production of the island as a tropical paradise for Western tourism consumption. Emphasis is on the British and Hollywood film industries as empire cinemas and the Jamaican tourism industry as a nation-building project built on (neo)colonial dependency structures. While tourism, including film tourism, continues to be promoted as an important model for economic development for Jamaica, the reality beyond the “cine-tourist” image often tells a different story. Aligning his work with the spatial turn in media studies and the media turn in geographical studies, Emiel Martens uses archival research to present new data and perspectives on the early interwoven history of film and tourism in Jamaica.

Emiel Martens is Assistant Professor of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. He is also the Founding Director of Caribbean Creativity, a non-profit organization committed to the promotion of Caribbean and Caribbean-themed cinema.