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Film Festivals / Film Festival Research: Thematic, Annotated Bibliography

Second Edition

Compiled for the Film Festival Research Network
by Skadi Loist and Marijke de Valck

Introduction to the Second Edition

The topic of film festivals has attracted a lot of attention since our first edition of the Film Festival Bibliography appeared online (7 Dec. 2008). Talk about festivals' past, present and future fueled debates among academics, professionals, and critics alike. It is pleasing to note that the momentum has also translated into substantial writing. This new version of the thematic bibliography on film festival research counts no less than 100 new entries, the majority of which are new publications.

In our introduction we will share some observations on this new body of literature. What follows is the full list of thematically clustered references. In order to make the extensive list of references more accessible, we have added a short introduction to each section and subsection. The short texts also help to give a brief overview of the field of film festival research as it currently exists.

We have included academic as well as journalistic work that has already contributed
or is likely to contribute to the study of film festivals. The academic work ranges from articles and book chapters to monographs and anthologies on the topic. Although we are aware of the existence of several interesting MA theses and unpublished conference papers, we opted to leave them out for two practical reasons: limited accessibility and space.

A recurrent theme in many new entries concerns the continuing proliferation of film festivals. We see at the same time a boom in mega-budget international film festivals in Asia and the Middle East as well as a sprawling number of micro-festivals on increasingly specialized topics in Western countries. Many writers express concern about whether the current model will hold and call for a reconsideration of what festivals should be about (e.g. Gass 2008, Gass ed. 2009, Kammermeier 2008). Festivals’ ability to program films, instead of merely exhibit them, the collective viewing experience they offer, and the added value that competitions and prizes bring, are mentioned as some of the more defining elements of film festivals that can serve as anchor points in the future. Specific attention is given to the financial aspect of organizing festivals as well as to (expected) transformations due to digitization (e.g. Peranson 2009, Roddick 2009). Should festivals really embrace their function as an alternative distribution platform and start paying (higher) fees for the films they screen? Is an event that only screens movies from DVDs still a festival?

Besides the widespread attention to such topical issues, a lot of other great work has come out, in particular case studies. Please check out the entries in sections 6, 9 and 10. We have further specified our distinctions between specialized festivals, and the section on specialized festivals now includes subsections on Jewish film festivals, fantasy film festivals and social concern film festivals. Worth mentioning are the contributions from the field of business and organizational studies (Mazza and Strengaard 2008, Mezias 2008, Rüling 2009), which bring new theoretical perspectives to film festival research.

The current debates on film festivals occur in a variety of circles, such as academia, the film and festivals industry, and journalism. What’s more there is a growing cooperation and exchange between these fields, in seminars and publications, but also on blogs and other Internet forums. These crossovers are most welcome because they offer great potential for knowledge aggregation. However, they also pose a challenge to the original design and focus of this bibliography, which was meant to present film festival research. What to do with publications that are not based on research, but on professional and personal experience that offer new engagements and novel insights? How to deal with some of the lucid writings that appear in the blogosphere? Where to put reflections on carrying out film festival research? In this second edition we respond to these questions in three ways: 1) by including important non-academic publications, mostly in the Long View cluster [1] that was designed to cover anecdotal and journalistic publications; 2) by adding a cluster called Online Sources [11]; and 3) by adding a sub-cluster on Reports and Responses to Film Festival Studies [1.1.b]. Due to their ubiquity, regular festival reports on individual editions are not included in the bibliography.

Enjoy your reading!
1. Film Festivals: The Long View

Several scholars and critics have devised models, suggested concepts and applied theories that offer general frames for understanding film festivals. Primary challenges faced by early festival studies were to differentiate between types of festivals, disentangle the multifaceted phenomenon into researchable parts, and identify distinctive functions and characteristics. The books, dissertations and articles in this category are characterized by an interdisciplinary orientation and, in this way, contest the inherent complexity of the film festival "object," which is in fact multiple objects in one. Taking a meta-perspective on film festivals, these studies frame and discuss the various festival constituencies (on which separate studies are included under categories 2–10 below). Some do so by presenting one or more case studies. Questions that are addressed include: How do festivals function? Can festivals' historical development be divided into phases? Which "models" underlie their institutionalization? What is their raison d'être? Which actors are involved? What relations exist with Hollywood? And what critical perspectives can help us understand the diverse range of festival practices? Also included in this category, directly below, are publications that approach the film festival phenomenon from a more anecdotal or journalistic angle. Concern about the proliferation and future of festivals dominates the recent non-academic agenda (e.g. Gass 2008, Gass ed. 2009, Kammermeier 2008).


1.1 a) Film Festival Theory

While it is true that film festivals need to be studied in greater detail and with more systematic rigor, it is no longer possible to maintain that there are not any comprehensive studies of film festivals available. The studies collected under the subcategory "1.1 a) Film Festival Theory" offer a solid introduction to the emerging field of film festival research, and constitute essential reading for anyone with an interest in film festivals. Due to the constraints of our format, we are limited to some brief introductory remarks. For more elaborate introductions we refer to Dina Iordanova's editorial in the *Film International* special edition on film festivals (2008),
As one of the first critical studies of film festivals, Bill Nichols' article "Global Image Consumption in the Age of Late Capitalism" (1994) takes up a central concern of film festival research, the local/global dynamics: "Never only or purely local, festival films nonetheless circulate, in large part, with a cachet of locally inscribed difference and globally ascribed commonality. They both attest to the uniqueness of different cultures and specific filmmakers and affirm the underlying qualities of an 'international cinema'" (Nichols 1994: 68). Media anthropologist Daniel Dayan introduced a second recurring theme in his study of the Sundance Film Festival: the engagement of distinctive groups with diverse interests. He described the festival as a set of divergent performances (by filmmakers, distributors, festival organizers, journalists, the audience etc.) and argues it is not limited to visual display, but above all a "verbal architecture" that is "made up of different versions, relaying different voices, relying on different sources of legitimacy" (Dayan 2000: 52). Several studies have attempted to make festivals' versatility understandable. Julian Stringer (2003) explored film festivals as institutions, festival nations, festival cities, festival films and festival communities in his dissertation, developing theoretical approaches to fit each new angle. Kenneth Turan (2002, section 1) and Marijke de Valck (2007) tackled the diverse festival phenomenon with case studies that respectively take geopolitical, business and cultural/aesthetic perspectives. Thomas Elsaesser (2005) and Janet Harbord (2002, section 3) offer valuable insights into festivals' temporal and spatial dimensions. Other threads running through all festival theories include the festival network as an alternative distribution system, core-periphery relations, festival programming as agenda setting, value addition and distinction, spectacle, and the festival as a media event.


De Valck, Marijke, and Skadi Loist (2009). "Film Festival Studies: An Overview of a


Iordanova, Dina, and Ruby Cheung, eds. (2010). *Film Festival Yearbook 2: Film Festivals and Imagined Communities*. St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies.


Nichols, Bill (1994). "Global Image Consumption in the Age of Late Capitalism."


1.1 b) Reports and Responses to Film Festival Studies

As more research on film festivals is being conducted, scholars and professionals have begun reflecting on definitions, methods and objectives. Is there a common agenda for this research that has been suggested to form an emerging field of film festival studies (De Valck/Loist 2009, section 1.1 a)? The contributions in this section are reports on international meetings dedicated to film festival research and responses to the discussions.
1.2 Political Aspects of Film Festivals (History)

Our understanding of today's film festivals and the contemporary international film festival circuit is tied to our knowledge of festival histories. Geopolitical interests held the first wave of (European) film festivals in a tight grip until the mid-1960s. The articles and books in this subcategory analyze certain parts of festival history in detail, such as the Fascist influence over the Venice Film Festival in the late 1930s (De Valck 2007, section 1.1), the Cold War agenda of the Berlin Film Festival (Fehrenbach 1995) and politically informed (programming) practices in Eastern Europe (Iordanova 2006; Karl 2007; Kötzing 2007a, b; Moine 2007). Although political agendas are discussed as powerful forces driving and shaping festivals, they are also shown to intersect with cultural objectives, economic interests and specific (inter)national historical circumstances. Other studies in this bibliography often also include historical passages or allusions to the formative role national legitimization played in the emergence of film festivals (Kuhlbrodt 2005, section 6.1). Attention has been devoted to the study of festivals as counter-public sphere, in
particular for specific communities (see sections 9.1, 9.1.1, and 9.1.2 on queer and women's film festivals). Finally, the question of political interventions is addressed in studies dealing with specific national cinemas. For example, censorship is central to the discussion of Iranian cinema by Azadeh Farahmand (2002, section 6.4).


### 1.3 General Academic Studies on Festivals (Not only Film Festivals)

Of great value to the study of film festivals is the extensive body of literature on festivals from an anthropological and sociological perspective (from which we can include only a small selection below). Festivals were first studied to gain understanding of so-called primitive people. Jean Duvignaud (1976) argues that the classic analysis of festivals goes back to Émile Durkheim, who distinguished between the sacred and profane and wrote about "collective effervescence" as the supreme moment of the solidarity of collective consciousness (Duvignaud 1976: 13). Other anthropologists observed how during festival time the norms and rules of everyday life were suspended. In the anthropological study of 'primitive people' this festival situation of excess, disorder and chaos has been interpreted in relation to communities' mythical pasts. Key contributions to the anthropological field, used by festival scholars, include Roger Caillois' theories of transgressions and play, Arnold
van Gennep's work on rites of passage, and Victor Turner's concepts of liminality and anti-structure. In the overview, Alessandro Falassi presents a morphology of festivals with ten ritual acts (rites) as building blocks for actual festivals (1987: 3–6). However, there is not one "essence of the festival" common to all civilizations, as Duvignaud argues, save perhaps that all are in a way antagonistic (1976: 18–19). Particularly relevant to film festival research is his observation that some festivals revolve around prestige and competition rather than tribal disorganization, and are related to economic activity rather than mythical fascinations with nature. When we turn to studies of modern festivals then, recent work specifically addresses the effects of the trends of commercialization and globalization. Montserrat Crespi-Valbona and Greg Richards, for example, argue that the "focus [in recent studies on festivalization] has often been on the replacement of local, traditional cultural by globalized, popular culture, and the transition from 'ritual' to 'spectacle'" (2007: 106).


The exceptional temporal frame of festivals has been theorized extensively from an anthropological and sociological perspective. In the introduction to *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, Alessandro Falassi describes how "festival time imposes itself as an autonomous duration, not so much to be perceived and measured in days or hours, but to be divided internally by what happens within it from its beginning to its end" (Falassi 1987: 4, section 1.3). In addition, film festival research has addressed the defining temporal characteristics that are more specific to film festivals, such as festivals' use of exceptional temporality to add value and set agendas (Elsaesser 2005, De Valck 2007, both section 1.1), as well as the festival calendar, which defines the relation of festivals to one another, their position in the circuit, and sets the expiration date at a one-year maximum. More specifically, our understanding of the way these characteristics shape film festivals needs to be advanced with close analyses of festival prizes, festival juries and the role of critics. The articles in this category flesh out some of the main concerns, such as the subjective nature of evaluations (Helmke 2005; Pride 2002), the effects of awards on distribution (Dodds/Holbrook 1998), and the correlation between taste and mediation in high art (Shrum 1996).


3. Festival Space: Cities, Tourism and Publics

In recent years, research on tourism has contributed significantly to spatial analyses of cultural festivals. There are two perspectives: the "arts and urban development"
perspective sees festivals "as a catalyst for urban renewal, attracting tourists and capital investments, enhancing a city's image and creating new jobs" (Crespi-Valbona/Richards 2007: 106, section 1.3), while the "liveable cities" perspective stresses how communities can appropriate commodified festival events for their own purposes, such as self-identification, and a local sense of community and place. Ros Derrett argues that it is possible to strengthen community cultural development and cultural tourism simultaneously with festivals that share their community's "culture" with visitors (2000, 2003). At film festivals the connection between the festival's content and regional distinctiveness of its location, however, is less obvious. Most programs have a strong international character and attract cosmopolitan visitors that want to celebrate and consume world/art cinema. Julian Stringer argues that festivals market both global similarity and conceptual difference, often using local attractions to compete in the contemporary global space economy. Taking the unevenly differentiated power relations between nations and regions into consideration, he regards the international film festival circuit as "a series of diverse, sometimes competing, sometimes cooperating public spheres" (Stringer 2001: 138). In addition, film festivals can be argued to provide counter-public spheres, for culture/aesthetics as well as (leftist) politics (Shapiro 2007; S. Kim 1998, section 9.1).


Stringer, Julian (2001). "Global Cities and International Film Festival Economy." *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*. Eds. Mark Shiel,
4. On the Red Carpet: Spectacle, Stars and Glamour

Many critics have written about the glamour of film festivals. Often they denounce the "hoopla" as distracting one from the cultural significance of the festival's programming (Sklar 1996) or, on the other hand, they try to weaken the persistent myth of festival folly that was set by Cannes in the 1950s by focusing on the mundane realities of attending film festivals (Stapleton/Robinson 1983). Major international film festivals are closely linked with media coverage – unlike traditional tribal festivals and contemporary cultural festivals. As media events, film festivals are of great interest to different people: young girls longing to become famous (starlets), Hollywood companies looking to launch their next blockbuster (Jungen 2005, 2008), and filmmakers in search of an audience and (international) career. Instead of merely engaging in a celebration of local culture, international film festivals contribute to the creation of a transnational and cosmopolitan film culture, and to achieve this end they use spectacle, stars and glamour (Schwartz 2007). While many studies are critical of "Hollywood's influence" on festivals, it is widely acknowledged that spectacular images and stories with popular appeal are the mortar that keeps the festival construction of "serious" film programming and criticism erect.


5. Business Matters: Industries, Distribution and Markets

Although film festivals’ core business is screening films, many festivals also facilitate "the business" of cinema. Arguably, the big international film festivals – Cannes, Berlin, Toronto etc. – owe a great deal of their prestigious and influential position in
the festival network to the success of their market activities and services for the industry. Art cinema, world cinema and independent cinema increasingly depend on the nodes of the festival network for financing, sales, promotion and traffic (Biskind 2004; Perren 2001). But even medium-sized and small (international) festivals can play important roles in national or regional industries, offering, for instance, networking opportunities for professionals, training for filmmakers and/or entry points into the transnational flows that define today's film culture.

In the subcategories listed below a variety of publications is collected. The diversity of audiences addressed by these works – academic, professional and institutional/governmental – points at a widespread recognition of the vital role film festivals play in media industries worldwide.


5.1 Markets and Funds

The writings in this subcategory look at film festival markets and funds from a predominantly cultural perspective. Cultural diversity (instead of economic productivity and efficiency) is therefore at the heart of these reflections and analyses of the business side of festivals. Most authors display a concern for an inclusive cinema culture: stretching from first world national cinemas to cinema in developing countries, keeping standards of artistic quality high, and offering space for aesthetic experiments, adversary views or lifestyles, and marginal voices. Consequently, the hype and hustle surrounding the buying-and-selling at festivals, though considered inevitable, is more often than not discussed with a critical eye for its potentially corrupting effects of the festival ideal of fostering "true variety." Of particular interest are those studies that deal with film festivals' active role as producer of world cinema through programming and funding (Steinhart 2006).


### 5.2 Distribution

When attempting to answer the question of why film festivals exist, discussions tend to gravitate to the problem of distribution. In a competitive market that is driven by commercial objectives and molded by the aggressive strategies of major film companies, it is difficult for non-mainstream films to find theatrical distribution. Film festivals provide several "answers" to this problem. Gideon Bachmann (2000) distinguishes between "wholesale" and "retail" events: the former act primarily as markets where sales agents sell films, the latter are essentially exhibitors (cf. also Mark Peranson's model of two kinds of festivals: business festivals and audience festivals [Peranson 2008, section 1.1]). "Wholesale" festivals revolve around the business of niche cinema markets, which is risky, but potentially lucrative when sufficiently tuned into the specific needs of "quality" products (Biskind 2004; Perren 2001, section 5). "Retail" festivals, on the other hand, fulfill a local function, showing films not (yet) available in regular theaters to people from the region. With the increasing pressure on art house exhibition and simultaneous boom in mid-sized and smaller film festivals, festivals themselves have become an alternative distribution method. Sales agents respond to the new situation by asking screening fees and revenues from ticket sales, putting added pressure on the low-budget festival organizations. In the studies below these current trends are described and evaluated. Some suggest an expansion to a "festival acquisition model," in which films can be bought for distribution at film festivals (Bachmann 2000; Gaines 2008). Others speculate about the influence of digitalization on future distribution models (Gaines 2008; see also De Valck 2008, section 9.5).


### 5.3 Service Guides for Professionals

For newcomers to the international film festival circuit, festivals are notoriously difficult places to find your way around. Filmmakers are burdened by a host of practical questions, ranging from how to submit films to festivals and increase chances of selection to using festivals to close distribution deals or find funding. For these "virgin" professionals service guides are published that offer "strategies for survival" or disclose "festival secrets." For those aiming to set up their own film festival, there are also several guides on the market. Besides giving practical information many of the guidebooks mentioned below include some historical background information. For academics, they are of interest mainly because of the revealing "human interest" look at the real life struggles of filmmakers, only a few of whom will find success.


5.4 Studies / Reports Related to Film Festival Research

This final subcategory in the business section contains institutional reports, overviews and directories of national or pan-national (EU) organizations that may be relevant to film festival research. The publications are predominantly quantitative in nature, listing numbers of festival admissions, accredited festivals and other data.


6. Trans/National Cinemas

As the concept of the nation state has increasingly come under attack, cinema studies have slowly adopted this approach and strive to think through the concept and different possibilities of the trans/national in cinema. Film scholars in the field argue, for instance, for a kind of European film studies that provides a new narrative beyond the distinct study of singular national cinemas (all opposed to Hollywood). Thomas Elsaesser (2005, section 1.1) emphasizes the different ways in which film production as well as film reception transcend borders and, thus, call for an account of the transnational in film.

Film festivals are the platforms where new national waves can be discovered (cf. Nichols 1994, section 8). Or as Owen Evans suggests, film festivals (in Europe) are "loci of cultural dialogue between Hollywood and the rest of the world's cinema" (2007: 24, section 1.1). What needs to be taken into account when stating this is the power differences between the (Western) film festival circuit and national cinema/"world cinema" (Stringer 2001, section 3). In the last few years, scholars have started to analyze how film festivals (in the West) have served as cultural tastemakers for global cinema, which have had (and still have) significant influence on the global film markets. This is true, for instance, for the marketing of African (Diawara 1993, section 6.3), Iranian (Nichols 1994, section 8; Nichols 1994, section 1.1) and Korean cinema (AHN 2008a, b) in Western arthouse cinemas. In several cases, the argument goes, the festival circuit's taste and the awards/rewards coming with it have influenced non-Western filmmakers in their careers and potentially led them to produce for the festival circuit rather than for their region or according to (an imagined) artistic integrity (Stringer 2001, section 3). Along with the criticism of the festival circuit for influencing (unacknowledged) the production of trans/national cinema comes the call to look critically at the impact that film festivals – and the writing of film reviews and criticism that comes at their tails – have on film history (cf. Stringer 2001: 135, section 3; Stringer 2003, section 1.1; Zhang 2002, section 6.2).

We have subdivided section 6 "Trans/National Cinema" in order to map out the different regions that have been studied in this context and to try to account for the differences that have been highlighted in the respective pieces.

6.1 Europe

The question of trans/national cinema and the film festival circuit's impact on it reaches European countries and beyond. As the cradle of film festivals, Europe's encounter with trans/national relations between film and their showcases for (inter)national competition is as old as the festival phenomenon. Lucy Mazdon investigates the role of the Cannes festival as a transnational space (2006) and its relationship to French cinema (2007). The meaning of Cannes for German film (Fründt/Lepel 1987) or Hollywood (Jungen 2008, section 4) has also been scrutinized. Several historical studies with a focus on film history during the Cold War
era also give insight into the history (of the study) of European film and the way it was discussed across borders at certain international film festivals, which did not conform to the general division of Western and Eastern bloc politics/art (Karl 2007; Kötzing 2007; Moine 2007, all in section 1.2). A special chapter in this history is the analysis of trans- or intra-national discussions of German film on either side of the Wall: East German film (Haase 2010) and children's film at the Berlinale (Felsmann 2002), East German film at Oberhausen (Kuhlbrodt 2005), and discussions of (Western) international film in Leipzig (Martini 2007; Kötzing 2004, both section 10; Kötzing 2007, section 1.2).


6.2 Asia

The pieces in this section look at several aspects of the transnational nature of the film festival circuit in relation to Asia and Asian cinema.

Soyoun Kim highlights the political and cultural context of the emergence of several film festivals in South Korea in the 1990s. Kim explains that there are three different categories of festivals: 1) state/local government-organized film festivals (e.g. Pusan International Film Festival [PIFF] and Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival [PiFan]), 2) corporate-sponsored festivals (Q Channel Seoul Documentary Film and Video Festival) and 3) festivals organized by activist groups (Seoul Women's Film Festival; Seoul Queer Film and Video Festival; Human Rights Watch Film Festival) (Kim 1998: 175, section 9.1). In her analysis, Kim gives insights into the relation between the launch of several film festivals in the context of a general cine-mania and the identity formation of new activists as well as a postmodern Korean identity. Kim's piece offers a great contextualization for further analyses by SooJeong Ahn who looks at the development of PIFF and its strategic moves to establish a hub for Korean cinema, as well as Asian cinema in general, to enter a global market (Kim 1998: 183, section 9.1; Ahn 2008a, b; Ahn 2009).

Several other scholars have taken a look at the impact the international film festival circuit has had on the acknowledgement, praise and economic exploitation of Asian film (cf. Stringer 2001, section 3): with the perspectives on Chinese Cinema (Zhang 2002), Hong Kong Cinema (Wong 2007) and Taiwan Cinema (Wu 2007).


### 6.3 Africa

This section assembles articles focusing on African cinema and African film festivals and their place within the international film festival circuit. The publications here focus on the two oldest film festivals on the African continent: Les Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage (JCC) / Carthage Film Festival and Festival Panafricain du Cinéma et de la Télévision de Ouagadougou (FESPACO). These two festivals, both taking place biannually in alternating years, have showcased and promoted African film regionally and internationally. This seemingly positive outcome, however, also has a drawback for the African film market which lacks an infrastructure, argues Manthia Diawara (1993). With the raised profile of African cinema, the marketing of these films became the dominant purpose of the larger (i.e. mostly Western) festival system. With better connections to established (Western) film markets, festivals for or (among others) featuring African film in Europe or North America become more important for filmmakers, as an infrastructure of film production and distribution has failed to establish itself at home in Africa. This, in turn, leaves the former spokes-festivals for African film, Carthage and Ouagadougou, in the dilemma of not being able to feature prestigious new African productions.

Bachmann, Gideon (1973). "In Search of Self-Definition: Arab and African Film at the Carthage Film Festival (Tunis)." Film Quarterly 26: 3 (Spring 1973): 48–51.


6.4 The Middle East

The relationship between the film festival circuit and cinema from/in the Middle East has seldom been studied. Bill Nichols developed his study of reception patterns at film festivals and the "discovery" of new cinemas using the example of Iranian cinema (Nichols 1994, section 1.1; Nichols 1994, section 8). Jeffrey Ruoff has described the Carthage Film Festival as a festival focused on the promotion of Arab (and African) film (Ruoff 2008, section 6.3). Azadeh Farahmand (2002, 2006) has presented a very detailed analysis. Farahmand takes the increasing attention paid to Iranian cinema since the 1990s as a starting point to examine how socio-economic factors and institutional politics, especially those facilitated through international film festivals, contribute to the production and elevation of films and national cinema. Key issues she touches on are the problem of censorship, (inter)national financing of film productions through the film festival circuit, and political negotiations via cultural exchange (Farahmand 2002).

Along with franchising prestigious universities and museums from Europe and America in the last few years, several film festivals have been established in the Middle East as part of a larger cultural shift in the project to transform the oil region into a big cultural player. Next to older events like the Haifa IFF (25 in 2009) in Israel, Cairo IFF (33 in 2009) in Egypt, and the Fajr International Film Festival (2009 in its 27th edition) in Tehran, Iran, several new festivals have been established in recent years: for instance in 2000 the Marrakesh IFF was started with support from King Mohammed, and more recently several well-funded festivals in the emirates: the Dubai IFF, started in 2004, established itself as a platform for Arab cinema and added the Dubai Film Market in 2008; in 2007 the Middle Eastern International Film Festival (MEIFF) was launched in Abu Dhabi; in 2009 the Doha Tribeca Film Festival opened in Qatar (cf. Jaafar 2009). There is obviously research needed for these new players on the festival circuit regarding their relationships to other festivals and their impact on the regional and world film (festival) industry.


6.5 South America

There are only a few publications that explicitly deal with the transnational quality of film festivals in relation to South America. Julianne Burton, for instance, stresses the


7. Programming

Programming or curating is an aesthetic practice and an essential part of film culture that can be found in film clubs, program/arthouse cinemas, in exhibition contexts and most obviously in film festivals (Klippel 2008). Surprisingly the practice of programming is one that – like film festivals – has been neglected for study until very recently.

The vast majority of the pieces addressing the issue of programming assembled here are written from a practical point of view. They aim to explain the decision-making processes at work during the act of programming behind the scenes of film festivals (Krach 2003; Thomson 2003), explicate the ideas and ideals of curators: many are written by curators themselves (Czach 2004; Givanni 2004; Haslam 2004; Marks 2004; Sandlos 2004; Schulte-Strathaus 2004, 2008; Straayer/Waugh 2005, section 9.1.1); others are interviews with curators (Gramann 2008; Gregor/Gregor 2008; Han/Morohoshi 2004; Noll Brinkmann 1990) or biographies (Heijs/Westra 1996).

Beyond the specifics of the act of programming, there are more general concerns addressed. The context of film programming and film reception plays an important role for programmers (Lehrer 1999). On a broader scale the analysis of programming also gives insights into (economic) exploitation strategies that can be found in the dealings of film festivals, by industry and festival alike (Stringer 2003a, b), and how this influences film criticism, scholarship and canon formations (Stringer 2003, section 1.1; see also June 2004, section 9.1.1)


Lehrer, Jeremy (1999). "But Will It Play in Peoria: Two Festival Curators Assess the


8. Reception: Audiences, Communities and Cinephiles

The issue of programming is intimately connected to the issue of reception. Curators imagine a certain program and by doing so envision a way to highlight, promote and contextualize a film. The program, however, is also dependent on the audience and its actual reception. Film festivals offer a framework which generates certain audience expectations; with their program festival programmers (often) try to encourage the active reception of the audience (cf. Klippel 2008: 10). Some scholars and curators would even go so far as to say that programming means not (only) programming films but "programming the public" (Fung 1999, section 9.1.1). They point to the fact that programming directly influences the constituency of the audience – although no one can foresee what audience reaction and outcome a certain program will have (Stringer 2008).

The specific reception environment created by film festivals is largely defined by the event nature of the festival. While cinema attendance is often bemoaned as
declining, festival attendances across the board are reported as going up. The possibility to see something first, or something one cannot see elsewhere, something unexpected – maybe even the added possibility to see a film star – brings people to the festival (cf. Reichel-Heldt 2007, section 1.1; cf. De Valck 2005).

For specialized festivals, the general feeling of belonging to a group, a cinephile community, is heightened by identity cues. Audience members of horror genre festivals (cf. Stringer 2008) or queer film festivals, to name just two examples, share a common interest that goes beyond film (or even a genre of film) in general. They meet with like-minded viewers, sometimes the subcultural community, when congregating at a festival screening. Such a specific context adds to the special nature of the reception setting. In a queer film festival, this might even result in critical, communal counter-readings of films (cf. Searle 1996, section 9.1.1). In a general sense, the setting and the programming structure of the event can induce a focused form of reception (discovering form, inferring meaning) which brings about "new cinemas" (Nichols 1994).


9. Specialized Film Festivals

The vast proliferation of film festivals and the differentiation of film markets contribute
to the development of specialized film festivals. There are a number of categories according to which these festivals can be grouped. The choice of our categories here is founded on basic elements which differentiate films and thus their showcase festivals as such. There are, for instance, festivals for long or short films, for features or documentaries, for animation or experimental films. Yet there are also other qualities that cluster films by way of a special programming profile of a festival: there are festivals that choose films not only according to their length, format or style, but rather according to a theme or context. Furthermore, not all specialized festivals have been studied yet, thus, our categorization is influenced by the texts available.

9.1 Identity-Based Festivals

The largest group of available research on specialized film festivals is dedicated to identity-based film festivals. Thus, this is the group located at the top of the list. As becomes visible in this list, there has been great interest in queer film festivals as well as women's film festivals. It is not surprising that this is the case considering the identity debates in feminist and queer activism and theory. Many of the pieces on queer film festivals are not only interesting to researchers of the queer theories or subcultural fields. Rather, these pieces can contribute to general discussions of the relation between film festivals and their cinephile communities, reception contexts and programming.

Apart from women's and queer film festivals there exists a wide range of other identity-based film festivals – which have not (often) been specifically studied as such. There are pieces, however, that deal with examples such as the Jewish film festival (Galliner 2004, section 10), black American film festivals, Asian (American) film festivals etc.


9.1.1 LGBT / Queer Film Film Festivals

As identity-based festivals, queer film festivals have a specific relationship to the audience to which they cater. More specifically, most of these festivals have had a strong connection to the political and social movement behind the lesbian and gay/queer agenda and try to maintain this relationship between cultural event and political framework (Jusick 2004; Stryker 1996; Ommert/Loist 2008). Because of this history, queer film festivals have a strong tradition of a nuanced critical inquiry into the interconnections of cultural event management, community politics, nation state politics, funding and marketing strategies, and organizational structures (cf. Rhyne 2007; Zielinski 2008).
Resulting from this is a cluster of pieces that deal with the relationship between film festivals and communities, focusing on the mutual formative processes between the two actors (festival and community/audience) (Gamson 1996; Rich 1993, 1999), and constantly updating the question of necessity (Schulman 1994). A strongly connected issue is the one of representation of the group/subculture in the films of the so-called (New) Queer Cinema and at the LGBT/queer film festivals (Rich 1993, 1999; Hohenberger/Jurschik 1994; Stryker 1996; Siegel 1998; Woitschig 2001; Loist 2008).

As a field that has been under more scrutiny than most other specialized festivals there has also been the attempt to show the dialog between the numerous actors at play in a festival. The three-part installment of a GLQ forum on Queer Film and Video Festivals approached the current queer festival landscape from the side of curators, critics/scholars, and filmmakers (Straayer/Waugh 2005, 2006, 2008).

A neglected field in the general film festival discussion (except for the attempt by Stringer 2008), the concept of the (counter) public sphere has been discussed in much detail in relation to LGBT film festivals (Rich 1993; KIM S. 1998; dossier ed. by Patricia White 1999; KIM S. 2003; Perspex 2006; Gorfinkel 2006; KIM J. 2007; Ommert/Loist 2008). As an extension of this discussion, special aspects such as the spatial elements of queer film festivals have been scrutinized (Brooke 1998, Zielinski 2008).


Feistel, Felix (2008). *Der Teddy-Award: Der schwul-lesbisch-transidentische*
**Filmpreis der Internationalen Filmfestspiele Berlin.** VDM Verlag.


9.1.2 Women's Film Festivals

Considering the impact feminist activism and theory has had on film theory, it is surprising that women's film festivals have not been analyzed as much as, say, queer film festivals. The pieces listed here focus on different issues related to women's film festivals. As is true for festival journalism in general, several articles provide a review of the films shown at these festivals interspersed with descriptions and analyses of the structures, concepts and practices of the festivals (Brauerhoch 1987; Hammer 1998; Hiller/Holy 1976; Huang 2003).

Beyond these historical snapshots of the women's film festival landscape, a few articles look at the historical contexts which informed and necessitated the establishing of women's film festivals: Melinda Barlow (2003) sketches the history of the New York Women's Video Festival established in the 1970s; and Eva Hohenberger and Karin Jurschick (1994) take stock of the first ten years of Cologne's Women's Film Festival Feminale and its concept of bringing feminist film theory and women's films together in a festival in the 1980s. Soyoung Kim and Yu Shan Huang provide insight into the concept of (women's) film festivals as alternative public spheres in the Asian context, South Korea and Taiwan respectively (Kim, S. 1998, 2003, section 9.1; Huang 2003). While the Asian context offers utopian visions of a political public sphere called film festival, a book reconstructs the history of the


discontinued Swiss women's cine-club project Frauenfilmtage Schweiz and discusses the reason of the decline of this women's film festival and its possible link to the shift in the feminist movement (Quetting 2007).


9.1.3 Jewish Film Festivals

Among the wide range of identity-based film festivals that exist, Jewish film festivals have generated modest, though significant, academic attention. Aiming to understand the role of the numerous Jewish film festivals (estimated to number over 100), questions of what it means to be Jewish, the nature of exilic and diasporic filmmaking, and the intertwining of memory and the Holocaust are discussed. Most studies address these issues by taking one festival as a case study. See for example Galliner’s book on the Jewish Film Festival in Berlin (2004, section 10).


9.2 Genre-Based Festivals

The festivals under this category select their films according to what can be called 'genre' distinctions in the broadest sense.

9.2 a) Film Genre

Under the rubric 'film genre' we group for instance festivals on fantasy, science fiction, horror, and crime (cf. Stringer 2008, section 8).

**Fantasy Film Festivals**


9.2 b) Type

By 'type' we mean festivals featuring films defined by stylistic or narrative feature, such as animation, experimental film (Becker 1992, section 9.1.1), fiction, documentary (Kötzing 2004; Martini 2007, both section 10), or silent film (Sørenssen 2008).

**Silent Film Festival**

9.2 c) Length

Since most festivals show a range of films in different lengths, the most common distinction is that of short film festivals (Kelly 2000; AG Kurzfilm 2006, section 5.4; cf. Reichel-Heldt 2007, section 1.1; Hedling 2008, section 9.3).

**Short Film**


9.2 d) Social Concern Festivals

Dina Iordanova suggests grouping festivals with a certain political aim as "social concern festivals" (Iordanova 2009: 31), which would encompass festivals such as disability film festivals, environmental/green film festivals (Haslam 2004, section 7), globalization film festivals, human rights film festivals etc.

**Disability Film Festivals**


**Human Rights Film Festivals**


9.3 National and Regional Showcases

Traditionally film festivals have been influenced by, or only exist due to, geopolitics. Festivals do more than just showcase films an audience would otherwise not have a chance to see. The film festival circuit as an alternative distribution network has a strong influence on the status of a film, the attention it receives and potentially the commercial life it has. Thus, many regional festivals – financed by the regional municipalities – are expected to weigh in their influence to highlight national and regional works and further the region’s (film) economy (cf. Reichel-Heldt 2007, section 1.1).

9.4 Online Film Festivals

In a time when 'media convergence' is a general buzz phrase and when cinema operators fear that the wave of digitalization might extinguish cinephilia as we know it, there has been a proliferation of hybrid forms where film festivals make use of or altogether migrate to the Internet. The label "online film festival" is not an easy one to define. Many major festivals also show a selection of (short) films online (Sundance, Berlinale), some festivals only exist in the virtual world (e.g. Babelgum Online Film Festival), and other ones let audiences vote online and then they screen the winning films in a conventional cinema (Bitfilm, Hamburg). The pieces collected under this rubric provide different views on this issue.


10. Publications Dedicated to Individual Film Festivals

The last section of our annotated film festival bibliography collects articles, book chapters and books that have been created with varying purposes. There are several books that have been edited to celebrate major anniversaries of festivals; some of those focus on the glamour and highlights (e.g. Baecque 2007; Toubiana 1997 etc.), while others strive for a contextualization and critical remembrance (e.g. Behnken 2004; Schenk 2007). Among the books, chapters, and articles are pieces collecting and describing a festival history (Stanfield 2008), or analyzing specific discourses and issues using a specific case study (e.g. Hope/Dickerson 2006a, b, c; Martini 2007).


Hope, Cathy, and Adam Dickerson (2006b). "'Ill-Will with the Trade': The Sydney and


11. Online Resources
There is a variety of online resources that discuss or compile information on film festivals, both for academic, professional and lay readers.

*The Big Queer Film Festival List*, festival database. <www.queerfilmfestivals.org>

*DinaView: Film Culture Technology Money*, blog. <www.dinaview.com/>


*Film & Festivals*, online & print magazine. <www.filmandfestivals.com>

*Film Festivals.com*, festival portal. <www.filmfestivals.com>


*IndieWIRE*, trade journal. <www.indiewire.com>

*Screen International: Festivals*, trade journal. <www.screendaily.com/festivals/>


*World Film Festivals: An Exploration of Film Culture based at Monash University, Australia*, blog. <http://monashftv.wordpress.com/>

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**Contact / Bio**

The **Film Festival Research Network** (FFRN) is a loose connection of scholars working on issues related to film festivals, founded by Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist. The FFRN aims to make festival research more available, to connect its diverse aspects and to foster interdisciplinary exchange between researchers.

A subgroup of the FFRN is the **Film Festival Research work group** within the European Network for Cinema and Media Studies (**NECS**) (www.necs-initiative.org)

For more information, please visit our website: [www.filmfestivalresearch.org](http://www.filmfestivalresearch.org)

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