A New Newsletter

From the “Director’s Chair”

This Fall we are launching The News Reel, a bi-annual newsletter for the Film Studies Program of the University of Pittsburgh. Our intention is to publish an issue during each semester of the regular academic year (Fall and Spring).

Our goals are multiple. We hope to inform the university and broader Pittsburgh community of the numerous activities which our Program sponsors, and to invite people to participate in them (film screenings, lectures, new courses, student clubs, etc.). Furthermore, we hope to celebrate the many achievements of our students and faculty (conference presentations, book publications, internships, film releases, awards, etc.). Finally, we hope that The News Reel becomes a means of communicating with our graduates so that we might learn about their activities and they of ours.

For those of you not familiar with our curriculum, the Film Studies Program offers a series of interdisciplinary courses concerning the history, aesthetics, theory and production of cinema. At the undergraduate level, students can complete a certificate or a major in the field. The program provides classes in critical studies and, by special arrangement with the Pittsburgh Filmmakers, courses in production. At the graduate level we offer MA and Ph.D certificates.

Many thanks to the individuals who make this newsletter possible: Jessica Mesman, editor, and Andrea Campbell, administrative assistant and layout designer.

Inside this issue:

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Film Studies Protests CMA Elimination

On Tuesday, January 7, 2003, The Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh eliminated their Department of Film and Video, permanently laying off three full-time museum employees as part of extensive budget cuts. CMA Cinema, directed by curator Bill Judson, hosted 180 screenings of independent and foreign films annually, and it often brought in visiting filmmakers, including Werner Herzog and Chuck Jones.

In a letter of protest to the museum directors, the Film Studies faculty called the termination of the programming, “a severe blow to Pittsburgh, a city that has often been seen...as insular and provincial.”

The English Department Graduate Student Organization (GSO), headed by co-presidents and Film Studies teaching fellows Richard Purcell and Henry Veggian, sent their own letter of protest. At the time of this newsletter’s publication, the museum has not responded.
Our Higher Faculties

The Film Studies Faculty have distinguished themselves in many ways this year. Film Studies director, Lucy Fischer, just retired as the president of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, the largest international scholarly organization of cinema critics and historians. In November, Fischer traveled to Adelaide, Australia, to present Cinema, Art Deco, and Transnational Style at the Film and History Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference. Her book, Designing Women: Cinema, Art Deco, and the Female Form is has just been published by Columbia University Press.


Welcome News: Film Studies Faculty Member

Neepa Majumdar is an assistant professor in English and Film Studies. She earned her PhD in Comparative Literature, also specializing in Film Studies, at Indiana University in June 2001. Her teaching experience includes courses on Indian Cinema, Contemporary Black Film, Introduction to Film, and Cinema and Ethnography. Neepa volunteered as an elementary school teacher on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico. She studied in Berlin, received a research grant to work in the Library of Congress, and was a Junior Research Fellow in the American Institute of Indian Studies at the National Film Archive in India. Her dissertation, Female Stardom and Cinema in India, 1930s to 1950s, won the Society for Cinema Studies Outstanding Dissertation Award for 2002. In it, Neepa analyzes the cultural prohibitions and desires surrounding the construction of female stardom in India. The project provides a different vantage point for exam-

New Courses

New Offerings in the Film Studies Program:

Indian Cinema (Spring 2004)—Neepa Majumdar — This course will expose students to the complex context of Indian film production, including a range of interconnected and interdependent "histories": aesthetic trends (in stylistic, narrative, and genre conventions), institutional shifts (in the studio system, film financing, and censorship), cultural changes as related to both ideological formations and to specific historical events and periods (affecting both the "style" and "content" of Indian cinema).

Photographers and Photography since World War II (Summer 2002,03)—Linda Benedict-Jones of Pittsburgh’s Silver Eye Center for Photography—Course material changes with each semester based on local exhibitions but always examines in depth the tremendous range of photographic expression of post-war image makers. "I try as much as possible to get students out of the classroom and into a gallery or museum, where we can see the richness of original photographic prints," explains Benedict-Jones, who began teaching this new course in the summer of 2002. "They are so much more impressive than projected images on a screen or even reproductions in a book."
**Recent Library Acquisitions in Film**

The University Library System regularly acquires new titles in Film Studies—so regularly in fact, it is impossible to list them all here. For a complete list of all relevant new acquisitions, go to [www.library.pitt.edu](http://www.library.pitt.edu) and click on “Find Books & More.” On the next page, click on “New Books.” Next, set your parameters by scrolling down and clicking on “Performing Arts” in the left column. Choose to search titles from either the last 30 or 90 days. Finally, click on “Call Number” to have books listed by call number. Film Studies titles are usually listed in the PN1900s.

**New Microforms:**

- *Motion Picture Catalogs by American Producers and Distributors, 1894-1908* (University Publications of America, microfilm)
- *D.W. Griffith Papers, 1897-1954* (University Publications of America, microfilm)
- *The Merritt Crawford Papers* (University Publications of America, microfilm)
- *The Nickelodeon and Motion Pictures, 1908-1918* (Norman Ross, microfilm)
- *Film Daily and Film Daily Yearbook, 1915-1970* (Primary Source Microfilm)
- *Photoplay, 1912-1980* (UMI, microfilm)
- *Motion Picture Story Magazine, 1911-1941* (Norman Ross, microfilm)
- *Little Magazine Series: Selected Complete Short-run Cinema Periodicals, 1889-1972* (World Microfilm Publications, British Film Institute, microfilm)
- *Cinema History Microfilm Series: Film Journals, Parts 1 and 2* (University Publications of America, microfilm)
- *Motion Picture Catalogs by American Producers and Distributors, 1894-1908* (University Publications of America, microfilm)

**Some new books:**

- *Nanni Moretti* (by Jean Antoine Gili)
- *Mister Rogers Neighborhood: Children, Television, and Fred Rogers* (by Mark Collins)
- *Soap Opera Evolution: America's Enduring Romance with Daytime Drama* (by Marilyn Matelski)
- *Leni Reifenstahl's Triumph of Will* (Publications of America)
Our Higher Faculties (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

Jane Feuer’s article on the 50th anniversary of Guiding Light appeared in Television Quarterly, the journal of the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences, and she was recently interviewed by USA Today for an article on the Academy Award Nominated film Chicago. Jane was just awarded the DAAD German Academic Exchange Service Faculty Scholarship to study at the Goethe Institute in Berlin.

Sabine Hake is the co-editor of the new book series Film Europe, published by Berghahn Books. A DAAD summer grant and a NEH fellowship for the academic year 2004 will enable Hake to work on a new book project on modern architecture and mass utopia in Weimar Berlin.

Herman Herlinghaus is the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Hispanic Languages & Literature. He co-edited the book "Fronteras de la modernidad" (Borders of Modernity) with Mabel Moraña forthcoming from Pittsburgh: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana in 2003.

Carl Kurlander was profiled in Po Bronson’s much ballyhooed career guide/memoir What Should I Do with My Life? One reviewer described Kurlander as “the creator of St. Elmo’s Fire, who wasn’t sure he could quit his successful Hollywood life for the deeper artistic life he had always wanted to pursue” (right here at Pitt). The book’s success led to Kurlander’s January appearance on Oprah.

Kurlander is excited about his work with Pitt in Hollywood, a student organization devoted to encouraging the interaction between Hollywood and the university community. (See pg. 8 for more information about Pitt in Hollywood. http://www.pittinhollywood.org)


Moya Luckett is involved in the editing of the Pittsburgh Film Trailer, which focuses on major studio releases shot in Pittsburgh to showcase the city’s film industry. She is also helping to organize the upcoming Pittsburgh Film Summit. Luckett’s article “Good Gracious Mel! British Television and the Indian Diaspora” was collected earlier this year in Planet TV: A Global Television Reader, edited by Lisa Parks and Shanti Kumar. “Sleaze and the Demise of Soft-Core” will appear in Sleaze, edited by Jeffrey Sconce. She currently is working on a new book, provisionally titled Femininity in Cult Film.

Vladimir Padunov, Associate Director of Film Studies, ran the Russian Film Symposium (Spring 2003), Arrogance and Envy: Anti-American Cinema Under Communism and After with Nancy Condee. The symposium included 35mm screenings of films and eight panels featuring visiting film critics from Russia, the UK and the US, each featuring a documentary or made-for-TV film.

In May 2002, Padunov took Pitt students to Moscow’s Institute for Cinema Art to present a paper, “Imperial Fatigue and Global Amnesia”.

Jen Saffron, adjunct instructor, taught a film studies course in Bolivia this summer for Amidaze/Global Service Learning (GSL). She spent July 13-27 in Cochamba, where she and her students produced a documentary video and created ways to share photography and video with the community. They also assisted in the construction of a Bolivian orphanage. Jen taught a course for GSL in Ireland in 2001. (See page 7 for the GSL photo gallery.)

Carole Stabile presented “When Father Knows Best: Ideologies of Gender in Fifties TV Sitcoms” as part of High Heels, Tupperware, Sex and Miss Dior: Women in the 1950s, a special event at the Warhol Museum. Television Animation: A Reader in Popular Culture, a collection she co-edited with Mark Harrison, is forthcoming in 2003.

Colin MacCabe has just been promoted to Distinguished Professor.

(Continued on page 5)
(Continued from page 4) He’s working on a biography of Jean-Luc Godard. Colin is editor of Critical Quarterly, and his publications include James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word and Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics.

Keiko McDonald received a Fulbright Research Fellowship for the Spring of 2002 to research a book on Japanese women directors. She is currently writing How to Read a Japanese Film, a textbook on Japanese cinema under contract from the University of Hawaii Press. McDonald will be an invited speaker at various academic institutions in Japan, including the Hokkaido International Foundation.

Phil Watts is the director of the French Program. He is currently working on French film and film criticism of the 1940s and 50s and has written on the film theory of Roland Barthes and Jacques Ranciere. His article “Le cinema entre mimesis et zones d’ombre” appeared in Critique (October 2002).

James Snead Award Winners

The 2003 James Snead Conference Award Winners:

First Prize: Barbara Machamer for “Eyes Wide Shut: A Modern Kubrick Noir”

Second Prize: John Pistelli for “Moral Wilderness: The Enigma of Hawthorne’s Sexual Vision”

Third Prize: Justin Eichlaub, Brian Watson and Christopher Byers

On March 28th and 29th, in addition to the Snead Awards being given out, the University held a conference titled Racist Traces: European Pedigrees and African Contagions in honor of the memory of former faculty member James Snead.

Speakers included:
Tom Gunning
Stephen Heath
Isaac Julien
Kara Keeling
Cornel West
Hortense Spillers

Other Award Winners

The 2003 Film Studies Undergraduate & Graduate Writing Award Winners:

Graduate Winner: Kevin French for “Transforming Realism: Representation and the Political in Krystof Kieslowski’s “Blind Chance.”

Undergraduate Winners: Nicholas J. Lindner for “Urban Environments and Their Counter-

Other Awards:
Kara Andersen presented a paper, “Peculiar Reality: the Film Star in Moviegoer” at the Fragmentation & Film panel at the University of California Riverside Tenth Annual Humanities Graduate Conference.

 Speakers and Events:

- Pittsburgh Film Colloquium—Sabine Hake - January 16, 2003.
- Eric Gold — February 7, 2003
- Slovak Film Series March 25 - April 15th, 2003
  Landscape (Šulík)
  Paper Heads (Hanák)
  Rivers of Babylon (Balco)
  Hannah and Her Sisters (Adásek)
- Korean Film Festival — April 9 - April 12th, 2003
  I’ll Be Seeing Her: Women in Korean Cinema (Soyoung Kim)
  Take Care of My Cat (Jae-eun Jeong)
  A Petal (Sun-Woo Jang)
  Chunhyjang (Kwon-taek Im)
  Chihwaseon (Kwon-taek Im)

Speakers included:
Soyoung Kim
Kyungsoon Lee

Neepa presented a paper titled “Jamai Babu's Indiscretions: Tourism, Modernity, and Indian Silent Cinema” at the 31st annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison in October 2002 and at the 2003 SCMS conference in Minneapolis. In January 2003, she presented “Bombay’s ‘India’: Music and Authenticity in Indian Cinema” to the Asia Over Lunch Series at the Asian Studies Center of the University Center for International Studies at the University of Pittsburgh.

She has two articles forthcoming. “Doubling, Stardom,” and “Melodrama in Indian Cinema: The ‘Impossible’ Role of Nargis” will appear in Post Script’s special issue on the double in movies. Her article on Satyajit Ray’s Pather Panchali will be collected in Film Analysis: A Norton Reader, edited by R.L. Rutsky and Jeffrey Geiger.

Neepa with Jeanette Tsosie (since deceased)

New Courses (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

Topics in Genre: Independent Film—(Fall 2003) Moya Luckett—This course explores the many faces of independent film and examines how it has changed the film industry. It examines how independent film now manages to be at the center and at the margins of contemporary film practice and historically helped to define and construct concepts of taste and cultural value, and the consequences for mainstream filmmaking from the Hollywood era and beyond.

Gender and the Media—(Fall 2003)—Carol Stabile—This course is structured around the following inquiries: What representations of gender have been permissible across US media? How have these representations shifted over the past 50 years? Does the absence of women in media affect the quality of gender representations? Students will read theoretical and historical texts and watch screenings of primary media texts, like The Simpsons.

Jews and the American Cinema—(Spring 2003)—Lucy Fischer—Over the course of American film history, Jewish-Americans have played an important role in the cinema—both on and off screen. Beyond their presence as studio heads, Jewish-Americans have often achieved prominence as actors and directors in the American cinema. Issues of Jewish concern have also played a part in the history of American film. Throughout the course, an attempt will be made to relate the role of Jews in the American cinema to broader cultural concerns.

David Cronenberg: Genre/Art/Nation—(Spring 2004) Adam Lowenstein—This graduate seminar uses Cronenberg’s controversial oeuvre as a test case for crucial questions in film studies, cultural studies, and contemporary critical theory: How do we distinguish “genre” from “art”? How do we define (or resist defining) a nation and/or national cinema between the poles of genre and art? How does Cronenberg’s identity as a Canadian director locate his work between critical models of US imperialism and non-Hollywood national cinema?

Film and Literature: H.G. Wells, Edgar Allan Poe, and the Nature of the Fantastic (Fall 2003)—Adam Lowenstein—This course approaches the question of what happens when film and literature strive to represent the fantastic, or that which is beyond our realm of understanding and experience, through consideration of both cinematic and literary texts by Edgar Allan Poe and H.G. Wells.

Film and Literature: Narconarratives in the Americas (Fall 2003)—Hermann Herlinghaus—The astonishing variety of narratives linked to the “narcomundo” embraces novels, short stories, performances, graffiti, films, television and music. This course concentrates on literary and dramatic texts from Mexico, Brazil and Puerto Rico and will discuss power, social marginality, gender and mass media fetishism. Taught in Spanish.
**While We’re on the Subject**

**Upcoming Events: 2003-04**

The Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series and The Film Studies Program are bringing this well-known author, whose work has become a major motion picture, to speak at the University.

**Chuck Palahniuk** (*Fight Club, Survivor, Invisible Monsters, Lullaby, Choke*)

September 16, 2003
Reading and Screening of *Fight Club*
Screening: 2:00pm
Reading: 8:30pm
Alumni Hall Auditorium—7th Floor

**Other Speakers/Events:**
Mary Ann Doane
Barbara Klinger on *The Titanic: Haircut*
Marcia Landy on Monty Python
David Shumway
A French Film Series - Oct 21-Nov. 18th.

**Cinema News**

**Newly Released to DVD:**
La Belle et la Bête: Criterion
Black Hawk Down: Dx. Ed. Dreams (Akira Kurosawa)
Three Colors: Blue, White and Red (Krzysztof Kieslowski)
Homicide: Life on the Street, Seasons 1 & 2
Metropolis
My So-Called Life: The Complete Series
Thelma and Louise: Special Edition
Throne of Blood: Criterion
Wrong Men and Notorious Women: 5 Hitchcock Thrillers

**Newly Released to VHS:**
Adaptation
Far From Heaven
Frida
Rabbit-Proof Fence
Talk to Her
The Pianist
25th Hour

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**The Truth From Harry**

*By Harry Kloman*

**Godzilla Meets Mothra?**

This Fall’s (04-1) section of *Writing the Review*, a course taught at least once a year by the writing program, will be an interesting hybrid. Usually students in the class review movies, plays, music, books and more. But this time, it will be all film reviews with a special section of the class restricted to writing majors or film studies majors.

I’ve taught the general Writing the Review class off and on for almost 10 years, and each term the class is a mix of savvy students – with good instincts for writing about popular culture – and students who struggle with a film review as much as I’m sure they struggle with an expository English Lit. essay on *Moby Dick*. But year after year, I do find that the film studies people in the class often write smartly about film, no doubt because they’ve read more film reviews. They also have more film knowledge. That’s good because, in their reviews, they can refer to other films with ease.

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**Oscar Winners**

The 2003 annual Oscar contest compiled by Ron Emerick was won by our own Film Studies advisor, Fiore Pugliano. Fiore is also the all-time contest record holder. No gold statue was awarded, but a modest pot of $56 went to the winner. Congratulations!

Long time participant and Chicago director Rob Marshall again submitted a ballot for this year’s contest. Wonder who he voted for.

**Alumni News**

**Alexander Andres**
Film Studies BAS, 1987
Currently employed as a Camera Operator (Video) for Comcast Ad Sales in Green tree, Alexander has also worked on many motion pictures and is a member of the international Cinematographer’s Guild as a Second Assistant Camera. He remembers fondly Jane Feuer, Marcia Landy, Keiko McDonald, (they ran marathons together) and former Pitt Professor, Dana Polan.

Other films Andres has worked on in Pittsburgh:
*Mothman Prophecies, Children of the Living Dead, Wonder Boys, Dogma*.

**GSL Photo Gallery from Ireland**

Clockwise from left: Family in Belfast (Jim Sullivan); “the wall” in Belfast (Gera Sivak); cook at the Ormeau Center (Kim Burt); Dublin schoolgirl (Rene Whiteside).
Pitt in Hollywood

Pitt in Hollywood (PIH) is a student group that serves Pitt students and alumni by bringing in Hollywood professionals, such as producer Bernie Goldman (The Matrix), and Manager Eric Gold (Jim Carrey) to speak, facilitating student internships and employment, and providing a comprehensive resource for all those interested in the entertainment industry. PIH members are currently developing their own short film productions to be used in a Pittsburgh Film Summit. http://www.pittinhollywood.org.

Sprocket Guild

The Sprocket Guild is a student-run production organization that facilitates creative, critical, production work in the area of film and video at the student level. While primarily an undergraduate organization since the year 2000, the Sprocket Guild has enabled graduates, alumni and the surrounding community, to enhance both their cinematic appreciation and experience in terms of film and video. In fact, because of the hands-on experience provided through membership in the Sprocket Guild, some undergraduates have already been afforded internships in the commercial world of media production. http://www.sprocketguild.org/