

SYDNEY SCREEN STUDIES **NETWORK** SYMPOSIUM





WELCOME

Welcome to the Sydney Screen Studies Network (SSSN) Symposium.

The SSSN Symposium provides an intimate, one-day forum for local scholars, researchers, and industry practitioners – ranging from research students to early-career researchers – to present on their work and to engage with the work of their peers. We invite all students and scholars of screen studies to participate and hope you enjoy this exciting day of challenging papers our members have put together. Please join us for social drinks after the symposium.

The SSSN organising committee are Jessica Ford, Melanie Robson, and Phoebe Macrossan. The Sydney Screen Studies Network Symposium is made possible by a UNSW Australia School of the Arts & Media Research Grant. Our thanks go to George Kouvaros, Ed Scheer, and the SAM Research Committee for their support. Thanks also to our panel chairs Jane Mills, Jodi Brooks and Collin Chua.

ABOUT SSSN

The Sydney Screen Studies Network is a research led group of scholars from Sydney and surrounds, working in all aspects of film, television, and screen-based media. The network welcomes scholars from all universities across Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, and greater New South Wales, bringing together the diverse research activities and expertise of local scholars, researchers, and industry practitioners.

SSSN also has a dedicated higher degree research students and early career researchers group, running events and workshops focused on building a community among and developing the skills and careers of higher degree research students and early career researchers in Sydney and surrounds.

The network aims to provide a collegial relationship-building space in screen studies in Sydney. The network aims at producing research outputs through collaborations including grants, publications, screenings, workshops and other projects.







The network objectives are:

- Create an academic community of scholarly engagement on and around screen studies, specifically film, television, and screen-based media studies, in the greater Sydney area.
- Create a collegial environment within which to cultivate ideas and develop research practice.
- Provide a forum to create sustained engagement with the key concerns and themes on and around screen studies.
- Advance discipline-specific discourses on and around screen studies through workshops, seminars, screenings and conferences.
- Foster an environment and develop a program that caters to the needs of higher degree research students and early career researchers in screen studies.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list please send an email to **sydneyscreenstudies@gmail.com**



sydneyscreenstudies.wordpress.com



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Continue the conversation using the symposium hashtag #SSSNSymposium15

Program

December 1, 2015 Room 327, Robert Webster Building, UNSW

9.00am	Registration opens – Level 3 Foyer
9.20am	Acknowledgement of country and housekeeping
	Room 327
9.30am	Session 1: New Frontiers
	Ben Chapman (WSU) What's So Special About Wolf Creek?
	Kate Jinx (UNSW) You Can't Tell Just By Looking
	Rodney Wallis (UNSW) The Man Who Knows Nazis: Inglorious Basterds as Frontier Myth
	Chairperson: A. Prof. Jane Mills
11.00am	Morning Tea – Level 3 Foyer
11.30am	Session 2: Race, Gender and Value
	Jessica Ford (UNSW) Situating Orange is the New Black: Race, Feminism and Privilege in the Age of 'Quality Television' Ava Laure Parsemain (UNSW) Empire and the Pedagogy of 'Bad TV'
	Emily Chandler (UNSW) "Loving and Cruel, All at the Same Time": Girlhood Identity in The Craft Chairperson: Dr. Jodi Brooks



1.00pm	Lunch – Level 3 Foyer
2.00pm	Session 3: Screening Philosophy
	Miro Bilbrough (WSU) What Does Emotional Time Look, Sound, and Feel Like in Film?
	Tara McLennan (UTS) Your Timeline Starts Here: Networked Smartphone Photography of the Newborn and the Dead
	Adam Daniel (WSU)
	Here and There: Consciousness and Corporeality in the Worlds of Malick's Cinema Chairperson: Dr. Collin Chua
3.30pm	Afternoon Tea – Level 3 Foyer
4.00pm	Session 4: Nation, Geography and History
	Melanie Robson (UNSW) "How Can One See History?": Re-Staging History Through the Long Take in Russian Ark
	Eliza Waterhouse (USyd) War in the Middle East: Imaginative Geographies of Conflict and Mona Hatoum's Measures of Distance
	Klara Bruveris (UNSW)
	Sojourner Cinema: Global Dialogues in Contemporary Latvian Film
	Chairperson: TBD
5.30pm	Closing address and directions to the bar

ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

SESSION 1: New Frontiers

Ben Chapman (WSU) What's So Special About Wolf Creek? Wolf Creek was released in Australian cinemas on the third of November 2005. The film is depressingly violent and nihilistic in a way that those not hardened in the horror/thriller genre need time to adjust. It is also, however, enthralling in a way that confounds easy explanation and is to date the highest grossing R 18+ rated Australian film at the Australian box office by some margin. It is well executed, stylistically and generically, with visually and aurally engaging sequences vividly creating a thoroughly believable setting in which the conventions of the horror/thriller genre can be played out. For Australian audiences, it is also more than this. In an Australian context. the film has a real world cultural and environmental resonance. This, combined with the well-executed and intense visual and aural effect of its genre, makes the film special. This paper focuses on exactly how this combination functions, what its perfect, though perhaps accidental, execution in Wolf Creek tells us about Australian audiences and the ability of film to interact with those audiences. Why was the film so successful and what does this success tell us about the motivations and desires of the twenty-first century Australian audience and screen storytelling?

Ben Chapman has worked in Australian politics for the past ten years. During this time he has also studied and researched the expression of Australian identity in film and what it can tell us about broader Australian society. He wrote an article on Australian filmic mining mythology in the March 2014 edition of Studies in Australasian Cinema and presented on the same topic at the recent Film and History Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference in Brisbane.

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Kate Jinx (UNSW)

You Can't Tell Just By Looking Themes of activism, social change and personal politics underpin most documentaries focused on queer life and history. These films, although disparate in their locations and core subjects, are united in their motivation for documenting often otherwise unseen queer life. This paper examines 'coming out' on film, across non-fiction Australian film, television and videos made between the late 1960s and 1970s, and also compares them to their UK counterparts. One of the most prolific tropes of queer documentary film – particularly in this period - 'coming out' was an act of self-declaration that could (and often did) have grave social and career consequences. This paper will analyse and compare the language and visual styles of these works, taking note of the radical jumps from cloaking devices and shadowy silhouettes in 7 Days: Love is Love: Lesbians (1966) to the bold declarations in Chequerboard: This Just Happens to Be Part of Me (1972), placing them into a larger queer narrative of Australian cultural history.

Kate Jinx is a writer, artist, and broadcaster. She is a current Ph.D. candidate at UNSW Australia. undertaking the thesis 'Australia's Coming Out: Documenting Queer Life on Screen between the 1960s and 1990s'. Kate is also the Director of Programming at Golden Age Cinema in Sydney, and the National Film Editor for The Thousands. Formerly of FBi Radio and triple j, she is a regular guest on ABC radio and television, and has given lectures about culture, design, and film at UWS, UTS, and NYU. She has also presented performance lectures about important topics like evil cats and teen witches at the MCA, AGNSW, Craft Victoria and Performance Space.

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Rodney Wallis (UNSW)

The Man Who Knows Nazis: Inglorious Basterds as Frontier Myth Upon its release in 2009, Quentin Tarantino's *Inglorious Basterds* was widely regarded as a 'spaghetti Western with Nazis', a notion that the director himself did much to perpetuate. What has been neglected throughout much of the critical commentary on the film, however, is its heavy debt to the mythology that emerged during the earliest days of European settlement of North America. This paper argues that *Inglorious Basterds* bases its titular protagonists – Jewish warriors who hunt and scalp Nazis – on the so-called 'Indian Hunter' of early American frontier mythology, a character that can be rightfully identified as the first truly unique American hero. By re-imagining

Rodney Wallis is a Ph.D. candidate at UNSW Australia in the School of the Arts & Media. His thesis focuses on the various ways in which Hollywood has mobilised the image of Israel for the purpose of articulating contemporaneous conceptions of American national identity. His other interests include cinematic representations of American history and American mythology.

the Indian Hunter within the historical context of World War II, and positioning Jews as hunters and Native Americans as the source of their inspiration, *Inglorious Basterds* ignores the shameful stains on American history such as the genocide of Native Americans and the long tradition of anti-Semitism. Instead it creates the inclusive image of a frontier hero driven not by racism, but by fierce opposition to an inherently evil ideology. In so doing, *Inglorious Basterds* demonstrates both the centrality of frontier mythology to the American mode of storytelling, and the ways in which the frontier myth is continually refashioned so as to effectively speak to contemporaneous American audiences.

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SESSION 2: Race, Gender and Value

Jessica Ford (UNSW)

Situating Orange is the New Black: Race, Feminism and Privilege in the Age of 'Quality Television' Jenji Kohan's Orange is the New Black (Netflix 2013-), based on Piper Kerman's memoir of the same name, is produced and distributed by streaming service Netflix and intended for binge watching. Orange is the New Black takes the notions of liminality and privilege as both industrial and thematic concerns. While the series is produced and distributed on the fringes of the traditional American television system, it requires a certain amount of cultural capital and privilege from its audience in order to access the series. The series' setting within a women's prison gives the opportunity to tell a wide range of women's stories and negotiate various feminist and postfeminist discourses. This paper considers how Orange is the New Black uses its large and diverse ensemble cast to create a feminist utopia that explicitly negotiates issues of race, class and privilege that are at the core of third wave feminism. This paper argues that in doing so Orange is the New Black is both engaging with and producing fourth wave feminism. Orange is the New Black's large female ensemble cast both distinguishes it from other male-centred so-called 'quality' television series and enables it to perform its feminist politics.

Jessica Ford is a Ph.D. candidate and Postgraduate Teaching Fellow at UNSW Australia in the School of the Arts & Media. She has published essays on the television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Community. Her research interests lie in contemporary American postnetwork television and television histories with a focus on gender and feminism.

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Ava Laure Parsemain (UNSW)

Empire and the Pedagogy of 'Bad TV'

American soap opera *Empire*, broadcast during primetime on the FOX Network in the United States, and Channel Eleven in Australia, is one of the most successful television programs of 2015, both domestically and internationally. The series first appears to be pop culture 'trash', or at least, escapism with no artistic or educational value, as it follows the lives of the Lyon family who fight and create alliances to take control of hip-hop music company Empire Entertainment. My aim in this paper is to demonstrate that programs like *Empire*, which are often considered low quality, 'bad', or 'trash' television, can educate about social issues. I demonstrate that *Empire* has an educational dimension and can contribute to the formation

Ava Parsemain is a Ph.D. candidate in the School of the Arts & Media at UNSW Australia. Her doctoral project investigates the educational dimension of television, using case studies to understand how television teaches and how viewers learn. Her ongoing research interests include television, media literacy, informal learning, pedagogy and the relationship between education and entertainment. She has taught in the

of what media scholars call cultural citizenship, not despite its soapy dimension, but because of it. Through this case study, I examine the pedagogy of the soap opera, and show how this genre can raise awareness, inform and educate, neither by using formal pedagogical techniques traditionally used in classrooms or textbooks, nor by adopting a serious educational or political approach. On the contrary, soaps like *Empire* can teach ethics (as engagement with otherness, respect and tolerance) and cultural citizenship (as awareness about social issues, cosmopolitan curiosity and neighbourliness) through entertainment techniques like storytelling, emotions, empathy, identification, and parasocial relationships with characters.

Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney and currently teaches in a subject called Media, Society and Politics at the University of New South Wales.

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Emily Chandler (UNSW)

"Loving and Cruel, All at the Same Time": Girlhood Identity in The Craft The teen horror film *The Craft* (1996) has remained a cult classic with girl audiences for two decades. Scholarship around the film has focused on its negative representation of girls' friendships, sexuality, and desire for power. In this article, I honour the significance of girl culture by accounting for *The Craft*'s appeal to girl audiences. I argue that *The Craft*'s relevance to girls arises from its subversion of teen film tropes. *The Craft* explores adolescent girls' fear of isolation by depicting a mentally ill teenager who draws strength and happiness from the company of her friends, and becomes depressed when they oust her. By flouting the imperative for adolescent girl protagonists to be White, middle-class, mentally healthy, and normatively bodied, *The Craft* portrays girls' desire for understanding over 'popularity', girls' anger arising from marginalization, and girls exploiting niceness as a weapon.

Emily Chandler is a Ph.D. candidate in the School of the Arts & Media at UNSW Australia. She works in media studies and girlhood studies. She is currently completing her dissertation on 'Girl Typing in American Children's Television Animation', examining Daria, Recess and As Told By Ginger. She blogs at girlrepresentationinfilm.wordpress.com.

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SESSION 3: Screening Philosophy

Miro Bilbrough (WSU)
What Does Emotional
Time Look, Sound,
and Feel Like in Film?

Yvette Biro's proposal that no two individual time worlds are the same turns on a conceptualisation of human experience of time as sensitive to its emotional content. This she calls 'Tempus', defining it as the micro of inner process time as it undulates within the macro of clock time or 'Chronos' (2008).

In this paper, I explore how to construct Tempus in image and sound as I encountered this challenge in cutting my feature film Being Venice (2011). Drawing on theories of physical thinking that include Thomas Lipps' neuromuscular empathy or Einfühlung (1905), I trace rhythmic acts of kinaesthetic empathy at stake in the circulation of affect and mood between onscreen players, editor, audience, and screenwriter's tactile imagination. These reveal themselves as material to the embodiment of Tempus.

In Andrei Tarkovsky's film *The Mirror* (1974) — a ciné-poetic meditation on his mother, a Soviet childhood in wartime, memory, and on the medium itself — the narrator's relationship to time inspires aesthetic strategies whose thrilling complexity deepens the discussion. Embodying Dziga Vertov's precept, 'slow motion is time in close-up', the filmmaker concentrates some of his most kinaesthetic yet enigmatic materialisations of Tempus in the long-duration tracking shots he made of his central character moving through her Stalinist-era workplace. Consideration of these shots begs the question: is the signature of Tempus the unsolved space it leaves in the empathic and sensory relay for the viewer to enter? I argue that this is what Tempus looks, sounds and feels like: a tantalising combination of access plus withholding, a dilation of this moment...this moment...and this moment.

Miro Bilbrough is completing a Doctorate of Creative Arts on the fusion of ciné-poetry with feature film narrative at the Writing & Society Research Centre, Western Sydney University. She is the writer-director of feature films 'Being Venice' (2012) and 'Floodhouse' (2004), which was nominated for three AFIs; also 'Bartleby' (2001) which won a Silver Medal, Bilbao IFF, and 'Urn' (1995). Her screenplays include Bafta-nominated animation 'Bad Baby Amy' (2001), plus the doco-dramas 'The Fifth Continent' (1998) and 'Carcrash' (1995). Her poetry is published in a number of Australasian journals and in her debut anthology 'Small-time Spectre' (Kilmog Press, 2010).

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Tara McLennan (UTS)

Your Timeline Starts Here: Networked Smartphone Photography of the Newborn and the Dead Photographic records of lived time have coevolved with social representations of birth and death. Shortly after the inception of this visual medium there emerged portraits of newborns carefully held still for the slow exposure of daguerreotypes; this was the period that also produced memento mori, images of the dead posed side by side with the living. In the smartphone era, cameras co-exist with portable networked devices, and personal photographs exist predominantly in cyberspace. Birth and death narratives carry renewed resonance on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, where personal timelines are available for contemplation, yet asynchronously scattered by the dissemination of the live feed. Internet-time fragments chronological forms, imbuing the photograph with a nuanced articulation of the synthesis of living with dying. Furthermore, social norms regarding the representation of birth and death reveal contradictory conceptions about what the photograph should and should not show of the body's beginnings and endings. How does the photographic medium in this networked age perform grief of someone's departure, or celebration of a newborn's arrival? What continuities and ruptures are to be found in our historical encounters with photography as a mediation of birth and death?

Tara McLennan is a Ph.D. candidate and tutor at the University of Technology Sydney. She is currently working on a non-traditional thesis, 'Photography's Album: How Smartphone Photography Mediates Lived Time', and teaches undergraduate subjects in film studies.

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Adam Daniel (WSU)

Here and There: Consciousness and Corporeality in the Worlds of Malick's Cinema Author Ian McGilchrist proposes that since the Industrial Revolution the manner of experiencing the world presented by the brain's left hemisphere is colonising our experience as a whole. This conceptual reduction, from abstract to concrete, from metaphor to symbol, from contextualised wholes to decontexualised parts, is often repeated in film scholarship, where analysis infrequently focuses on the non-representational aspects of cinema. McGilchrist also argues, however, that the arts have a pivotal role in putting us in touch with the transcendent. Drawing on the works of filmmaker Terrence Malick, my paper reiterates this belief and argues that these

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films are generative of a particular ecological and holistic consciousness, an awareness that emerges from the embodied spectatorial experience. Whilst much critical analysis has focused on the spiritually symbolic aspects of Malick's work, I will employ Vivian Sobchack's 'cinesthetic subject' to examine how the co-constitution of consciousness and corporeality activates the centrifugal movement of a viewer's engagement with the world. In considering Malick's cinema as exemplary of a mimetic engagement that challenges the hierarchical colonisation of a 'left-hemispheric' experience of spectatorship, this new understanding identifies the limitations of analysis that relies wholly on representational elements of cinema, and reiterates the sensorial intensification that powers cinema's transformative capacities.

SESSION 4: Nation, Geography and History

Melanie Robson (UNSW)

"How Can One See History?": Re-Staging History Through The Long Take in Russian Ark When Russian Ark was released in 2002, it broke the record for the longest unbroken single shot in cinema history. Further, its narrative covers 300 years of Russian history in its 99-minute run time. Its large-scale production and ambitious technical feats have since become the focus of much of the criticism and scholarship surrounding the film. But this paper argues that the unbroken tracking shot, of which the film is solely comprised, is not the sole spectacle of the film. The shot further allows a particular form of history to be performed that would otherwise not be possible without this technical feat. Such a conception of history not only promotes a sense of fluidity between multiple historical periods, but also a history that is constantly in flux. Focussing on the apparent unrestricted nature of this ambitious long take, I interrogate not only what kind of history it opens up for the viewer, but also what it closes off, or, as Dragan Kujundzic questions, "what would it give or allow to be seen?" I argue that this manipulation of history reveals the instability of the Russian identity. Through the radicalisation of form using the unbroken shot, Sokurov manages to further re-order, re-frame, reject and even re-stage history for the viewer, provoking questions into the formation and stability of the Russian identity both prior to and after the Russian Revolution.

Melanie Robson is a Ph.D. candidate and tutor at UNSW Australia in the School of the Arts & Media. Her thesis investigates the aesthetic, political and ethical role of the long take in contemporary European cinema.

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Eliza Waterhouse (USyd)

War in the Middle East: Imaginative Geographies of Conflict and Mona Hatoum's Measures of Distance As the title insinuates, this paper both reacts to and tests certain theoretical tenants of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, specifically, his conception of "imaginative geographies and its representation". Broadly speaking, imaginative geographies describe the synthesising of the politics and poetics of space. For Said, geopolitical constellations are not written merely in the shifting maps of history but through a kind of poetic process of endowing space with meaning, a process he argues is simultaneously political. However, whilst Said's conception of imaginative geographies is chiefly concerned with explanations

Eliza Waterhouse is a third year Ph.D. candidate at the University of Sydney examining the nation in Palestinian film. She teaches in the University's Aboriginal education program as well as within film studies.

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of the production of imperial subjects, in this paper we re-conceive his politics and poetics of space somewhat against the grain by examining the critical voice of the subjugated, in this instance the exile. The short film Measures of Distance (1988) by the Lebanese-born Palestinian artist and occasional filmmaker Mona Hatoum provides fertile ground for such explorations. Fashioned in exile, by a diasporic Lebanese/Palestinian artist, the film explores the politics of place and displacement amid conflict so urgent in the current global geo-politic climate. If a large part of Said's project was to interrogate the politics and poetics of space in order to uncover the kind of 'common sense' understanding spatial knowledge is built upon, this paper continues this project by examining Measures of Distance as a kind a disorienting film, a text that critiques the discursive constellations of knowledge that comprise imaginative geographies.

Klara Bruveris (UNSW)

Sojourner Cinema: Global Dialogues in Contemporary Latvian Film The term 'Sojourner Cinema' was introduced by Jane Mills in the spring 2014 issue of the journal Framework. Mills developed this concept in response to a gap in film scholarship, where displacement and dislocation are only discussed in terms of forced migration through paradigms such as 'diasporic', 'exilic' and 'postcolonial' cinema. Cosmopolitan cinema, where mobility is not necessarily associated with exile and displacement, remains under-theorised. Mills supports this claim by asserting that there are filmmakers who travel voluntarily across borders to produce and develop films, but for which there is no constructive paradiam. This paper applies the concept of the sojourning filmmaker to Latvian director Maris Martinsons. Martinsons' films are highly dialogic. Hong Kong Confidential (2010), Oki- In the Middle of the Ocean (2014), Tempura (forthcoming) and Magic Kimono (forthcoming) are all structured around quest/host interactions. They are punctuated with moments of cross-cultural communication and local/global tensions. In turn the aesthetic of his films can

Klara Bruveris is an early career researcher at UNSW Australia. Her Ph.D. thesis examined the impact globalisation had on the development of thematic and aesthetic trends in contemporary Latvian cinema. Her current research interests focus on understanding how different contemporary media forms are used in the formation of identity in diasporic groups.

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be characterised as multifocal and multivocal, visually and sonically representing transnational global flows. His films are, therefore, difficult to situate within a Latvian 'national cinema'. In applying the sojourner framework to Martinsons' films, the paper aims to highlight the usefulness of this framework and its importance to the study of national and transnational cinema.

DIRECTIONS AND USEFUL INFORMATION

Getting to UNSW

Buses from the city

UNSW Express Bus routes (890, 891, 892 and 895) run to and from Eddy Avenue, Central Station. These routes are prepay only and are fast and high frequency. Alternative services include 339 (Central Station on Foveaux St), 372 (Central Station), 373 (Museum Station), 374 (Central Station), 376 (Museum Station).

Buses from the inner west

- Metrobus 10 (M10) Leichhardt to Maroubra Junction via Anzac Parade
- Metrobus 50 (M50) Drummoyne to Coogee via the City, Anzac Parade and High Street.

Parking

All day casual parking is generally available on the top floors of the Barker Street (Gate 14), Botany Street (Gate 11) car parks and in the Western Campus Carpark across Anzac Pde from the main campus. Paid 2 hour parking is also available via most entrance gates, particularly Gates 2, 8 and 14. Please see the campus map overleaf for further details. Free parking is also available in the surrounding streets.

Location of the symposium on campus

All symposium sessions will take place in Room 327, Robert Webster Building (Building G14), which is located adjacent to the University Mall. See campus map on the following page for exact location, or download the app Lost on Campus. Registration, Morning Tea, Lunch, and Afternoon Tea will all take place in the Level 3 Foyer outside Room 327.

Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is freely available on campus for anyone with a university affiliation. Connect to Eduroam and use your normal university username and password details to log in. Alternatively, login to the uniwide_guest wifi network.



Kensington Campus Parking

