

Summer 2014 | Film Newsletter

Film

Welcome to this edition of the Film newsletter. Film is consistently ranked in the top 10 in the UK for student satisfaction by the Times University Guide; it has also been externally noted that we have maintained the best staff-student ratio in the UK (the Guardian University Guide). This recognition, that Film students find at Southampton an experience that closely meets their expectations, is very important to us. And we are delighted to have this opportunity to highlight some of the many achievements and activities with which Film students have again been involved: both on and off campus. Film at Southampton was ranked number one in the UK by the latest Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and this newsletter also provides an opportunity to celebrate the considerable reputation Film staff have for the excellent quality of their research, teaching, and postgraduate supervision.

News from Film alumni | Page 2

Aardman revealed | Page 3



Bardot in London

‘Sex, Art and Crime: From Brigitte Bardot to Sarah Lund’ Film Study Day

A Film Study Day was held in June 2013 organised as part of Southampton University’s Lifelong Learning programme.

The well attended day explored the history of ‘foreign’ film in Britain and its changing status, looking at various ideas and agendas which have determined what is being shown, where and to whom. Professor Lucy Mazdon’s talk – ‘Sex, Art and Cinephilia: French Cinema in Britain’ - opened the day, when she shared aspects of her research into the reception and exhibition of French cinema in Britain. This talk was then followed by Sally Keenan’s presentation on ‘Asian Cinema in Britain’, after which, following a screening of an episode of popular Swedish drama, ‘The Killing’, Kevin Donnelly spoke about ‘Scandinavian Dramas on British Television.’ The day concluded with Ed Fletcher, co-founder and Managing Director of leading British independent distributor - Soda Pictures - giving a lively insight into the challenges presented for the distributor in getting foreign films exhibited in British cinemas.

News from Southampton’s Film Alumni

In March 2013 another successful and popular alumni event was organised by Film Lecturer, Sally Keenan, closely assisted by the Student Careers’ Service. The panel included Daniel Cox, Set Production Assistant, who graduated from the University of Southampton in 2009 with a BA in Film and English. Here, Dan answers questions about his experience on set.

How would you describe a typical day?

You can generally expect a long working day of either 10 shooting hours (known as a ‘continuous day’) or 12 shooting hours (with one hour break). On a typical day I will arrive at work an hour or so before call and take care of the cast arriving, and helping the Second Assistant Director get the cast through make-up and costume process. The process is similar if you are a runner working with the supporting artists (otherwise known as extras).

Next, all the crew head to set for call-time and the shooting day begins. My role then switches to being on set with the First and Third Assistant Directors, helping them organise the cast and crew in order to facilitate the shooting of what’s on the call-sheet (a document detailing what the unit must shoot on that day) and keep on schedule. This can involve anything from

making teas and coffees, keeping the crew quiet during takes, to cuing actors off-screen or directing the supporting artists.

What have been some of the highlights of your work?

Highlights of my career so far have included, but are not limited to: working with Steven Spielberg on ‘War Horse’; Christopher Nolan on ‘The Dark Knight Rises’; working as a Crowd Assistant Director on ‘The Fifth Estate’; working as Kenneth Branagh’s on-set assistant, as he directed Disney’s live-action adaptation of ‘Cinderella’ this year; and working with the truly fantastic Dame Judy Dench on ‘Philomena’.



Dan Cox on set

‘Get Started with Film’ event

BA Film and Philosophy graduate Jamie Hilton writes here about his work for the Prince’s Trust.

“The Prince’s Trust is an organization which supports young people across the whole of the UK into employment across a range of programmes. Between May 8th and May 17th the Prince’s Trust delivered ‘Get Started with Film’ in collaboration with Eventful at the British Film Institute. A group of 16-25 year olds were selected from the London boroughs, and were supported in creating short films in small production teams from inception to completion based on the initial stimulus of emotion.

The programme concluded with a screening of the films at the Prince Charles Cinema in Leicester Square in front of an audience which included; industry professionals, Southampton academics, previous Prince’s Trust participants, Prince’s Trust staff and the funder, Vivendi Create Joy Fund. The young people introduced their films and spoke of what had led them to the programme; how they had benefitted; and the plans that they had created with the Prince’s Trust for their development.

Post programme, the young people received support from the Prince’s Trust and all went on to education, employment or training. Six of the group went on to a longer term Film production programme, while another two quickly went on to work in the industry.”

Idols Past and Present

“I have been fascinated by the relationship between screen stars and their historical contexts for many years, and particularly their role in cinema’s complex negotiation between past and present.

My recent period of Study Leave enabled me to plan my next book, provisionally titled ‘Film Stardom and the Ancient Past: Bodies, Landscape and Antiquity’, which is under contract to Palgrave Macmillan, and also undertake research at the BFI in London, and the Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles. While my last book focussed on the formative silent era, my current research develops an ‘archaeology’ of stardom to explore what happened to the ‘classical’ influence of star myth and iconography between the 1930s and the present. It includes case-studies ranging from the ‘Olympian’ star body and the films of Buster Crabbe, ancient Egypt and star myths, and the 1940s film noir ‘Sirens’ of Ava Gardner and Rita Hayworth, right up to chapters on the post-‘Gladiator’ (1999) cycle of classical epics and on the impact of digital technology on the construction of contemporary star images.



French and British fan-magazines of the 1930s

This study has also stimulated the development of a new third year Film module - Stardom: History, Myth and Heritage in the Cinema - which explores the influence of ancient idols on the development of modern screen stars, but also cinema’s relationship to the past more widely. I am excited to be able to include our Film Studies students in this on-going research, which I hope will be an inspiring experience for us all.”

Michael Williams
Senior Lecturer

The Dongguk Film Summer School, South Korea

“Why not?’ was the thought that went through my mind when, in November 2012, I was told, at a meeting about exchange programmes organised by the Film Dept, of the opportunity to attend a summer school at Dongguk University in South Korea. Nine months later, I was on a plane, flying to Seoul, wondering what the next four weeks of my life were going to be like.

I knew I would be taking some classes, but other than that I had little idea of what to expect. Thus, I didn’t expect the food to be so delicious (even the silk worm cocoons were good, but I recommend avoiding the chicken feet dish!). Similarly, I didn’t expect to visit the set of South Korean director and producer, Park Chan-Wook’s ‘J.S.A: Joint Security Area,’ with my short film-making class, a week after having gone to the actual Joint Security Area at the border of North and South Korea. And I certainly didn’t expect to be spending my second night in Dongguk, with a few of my teachers and some friends from the Summer School, from Korea, Hong

Kong, America, Australia, France, Holland and Germany, singing a duet in a karaoke bar. It was in this manner that my time in Seoul unfolded: as a truly unique and unforgettable experience, and one I am glad to have said ‘yes’ to.”

Ryan Gardner
Year 3 Film student



Ryan with his classmates at Dongguk



Richard Beek shows models to audience members. © Copyright 2013 City Eye

Aardman Revealed: Film’s first joint event with the Southampton Film Week

Film lecturer, Anne Hogan was delighted to organise the first joint Film Dept and Southampton Film Week event in October 2013, when she invited Associate Producer at Aardman films, Richard Beek to give a talk at Avenue campus.

To a large, appreciative audience, Richard Beek revealed what’s involved in bringing the characters of British director Nick Park – such as Wallace and Gromit – to cinema screens. The talk, which was accompanied by film clips, showed in detail what it is like to work to tight deadlines, whilst at the same time making sure that the high standards and quality expected of these internationally acclaimed stop-motion animated films, is not compromised. Some of the carefully crafted models of the much loved characters were available for the audience to look at, and some Film students took the opportunity to talk to Richard about working in film animation

Film student receives praise for doctoral research

Postgraduate film student, Victoria Kearley, was given a Highly Commended award for the poster she exhibited at a showcase of the Faculty of Humanities’ doctoral work held at Southampton University.

A great deal of interest was shown from other students in Victoria’s work, and she was delighted to have an opportunity to discuss her research with Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nutbeam, who visited her stand during the day.

MA Film and Cultural Management student volunteers at the Sheffield Documentary Film Festival

Whilst studying for an MA in Film and Cultural Management, Yang Cao wanted experience of working in the film industry to help find work in the business on returning to China, after completing his studies at Southampton University. He was fortunate to be accepted as a volunteer for the prestigious Sheffield Film Festival:

“Volunteering at the Sheffield Documentary Film Festival exposed me to films by some filmmakers I had not previously heard of, and, on some occasions, allowed me to meet with the directors. It was inspiring to see these sometimes challenging films and hear the filmmakers discuss them, and learn about the



Yang Cao with Film Critic Mark Kermode

real difficulties often faced getting the films made. During the five days of the festival, I watched more than 20 documentaries.

My role as volunteer meant I was responsible in particular for ticket checking at one of the key venues: the Sheffield Library Theatre. Each day, the film festival team received large audiences from all over the world. As well as gaining excellent experience working with audiences, I met some interesting people, and the day often ended with my having lively conversations, with other volunteers, about films watched and the events of the day, over a drink in the festival bar.

In addition to making new friends, the festival also gave me an invaluable opportunity to network and helped get me closer to my dream of working in the film industry.

So, I would certainly recommend other students to volunteer, as it is a great chance to gain an insight into British film festival culture, and perhaps help further your own career ambitions. So if you are considering volunteering, I would encourage you to stop thinking about it and simply get on and do it!”

Yang Cao
MA Film and Cultural Management

A celebration of Professor Pam Cook's work in Film Studies

Pam Cook (Professor Emerita at Southampton's Film Dept) has been shaping the field of Film Studies since the 1970s.

Her groundbreaking 'Cinema Book' (first published in 1985) remains a standard in film curricula the world over, while her influential research has covered subjects such as feminist criticism; the history of popular cinema; the intersection between screen cultures, fashion and design; stardom and nostalgia. During the event, colleagues, friends and former students celebrated and discussed Pam Cook's

work in the context of the changing face of Film Studies, while Pam Cook herself talked about her latest research project. There was also an opportunity to watch the silent film 'Salome' (1923). Speakers included: Claire Hines (Southampton Solent University); Richard Dyer (King's College, London); Sarah Street (University of Bristol); Catherine Grant (University of Sussex); and Michael Williams (University of Southampton). The day closed with a panel discussion, including all the speakers and was chaired by Professor Tim Bergfelder (University of Southampton) who played a key role in arranging the event.



New Film Module in Contemporary Argentine Cinema

Research Fellow, Claudia Sandberg, spent seven months in Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile this year. Besides researching and writing an article about the crossings of German and Argentine history in two recent Argentine films, she attended a number of cultural events, such as the Buenos Aires independent film festival, BAFICI.

In Santiago, Claudia ran a film workshop with Chilean students at a local university. Some of the sessions were filmed and became included in her short film, 'Hidden Treasures.' This was a project in collaboration with Alejandro Areal Velez, a filmmaker whom Claudia has worked with before. 'Hidden Treasures' traces ways Chileans deal with their turbulent history. The film contains an interview with renowned author Antonio Skarmeta.

Many of Claudia's observations and experiences will go into the new third-year Film module, Contemporary Argentine Cinema, she has developed. The course introduces students to the cinematic landscape from post-dictatorship Argentina up to the present time. It includes feature films and documentaries from filmmakers as diverse as Luis and Lucia Puenzo, Fernando Solanas, Pablo Trapero, Adrian Caetano, Lucrecia Martel and Juan Jose Campanella.

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For details of upcoming events and talks, please visit:

www.southampton.ac.uk/film