Cinema in times of radical urban transformation (Berlin, 12 Dec 14)

Berlin, Dec 12, 2014
Deadline: Aug 31, 2014

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New Visions. Cinema and cinematic practices in times of radical urban transformation

Change is arguably the most consistent characteristics of cities; and cinema, from its very beginning, has played a major role in raising awareness about processes of urban transformation. However, in particular, moments of large-scale urban redevelopment trigger the advent of new topographic imaginaries. In the 1960s, for example, the citydweller's perspective in relation to the urban habitat emerged as a central focus in several studies on the urban lived environment. Publications such as Kevin Lynch’s "Image of the City" (1960) or Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe’s "Des hommes et des villas" (1965) asserted the importance of organizing changing urban spatialities into recognizable visual-mental patterns. Concurrently, a return of realist traditions became apparent in both the visual arts and counter cinematic production. This return was, in part, a response to a need for redefining subject positions during a time of social and political crisis. It was a time when many cities in the western world faced particularly drastic structural changes, resulting in a growing disagreement with the living conditions created this way.

Aiming at an interdisciplinary exploration of the relationship between artistic production and changing urban environments, this workshop takes cities and cinema as a starting point from which to discuss cinematic production of urban space in times of transformation. This strong connection of habitat and artistic medium seems especially evident in practices of underground cinema, often times premiering in the very same urban environment it was produced.

Assuming that every cultural product is concurrently framed by the circumstances of its creation as well as by the material environment in which it is conceived, the focus will be on the interrelations between urban representations in different forms of cinema and their specific institutional and discursive contexts. While the main focus ison North American counter cinemas of the postwar era, we welcome contributions extending the historic and/or geographic frame. Looking at the ways in which cinema refers to constitutive conflicts of the contemporaneous urban society, prospective presenters should refer to any of the workshop's key questions:

- In which ways is the urban cartography construed in the films? What kinds of experiential space is built up for the viewer and how does cinema mediate urban change?
- If the political impact of art and cinema lies in the ways it redefines the frame of how an everyday environment is perceived, to what extent do films reorder the perception of the metropolis by testing new cinematic forms?

- What kinds of intertextual relations with other forms of artistic and cultural production and with industrial filmmaking determined the films treatment of urban space, either content wise or stylistically? And, in return, how did other forms of urban cultural production influence different forms of cinema?
- How did prevailing practices of film production and consumption interact with the urban realities they encountered? To what extent did they shape the cities' fabric?

The workshop will take place December 12, 2014 at Technische Universität Berlin in form of a one-day symposium with panel discussions and three lectures by Edward Dimendberg (UC Irvine), David James (University of Southern California) and Mark Shiel (King's College London).

Please submit your proposal (300 words max.) for a 15 minute presentation along with a short CV by August 31 to berit.hummel@metropolitanstudies.de. All applicants will be notified by the middle of September.

The presented papers shall be circulated amongst all participants 2 weeks prior to the workshop. In order to create an interdisciplinary dialogue between doctoral students and young researchers studying the interrelation of cinema, visual culture and the urban, the workshop is open to a variety of disciplines ranging from film studies and art history to cultural studies, geography and architecture.

Reference:

CFP: Cinema in times of radical urban transformation (Berlin, 12 Dec 14). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 14, 2014 (accessed Nov 27, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/8202>.