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EDITORIAL

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From January 2020, on its twentieth anniversary, Studies in French Cinema becomes French Screen Studies, a change of title meant to mark both a consolidation of the core identity of the journal, and its embrace of a new era and an evolving media landscape. As outgoing and incoming Chief General Editors, we would like to explain the thinking behind these changes as well as articulating some of our aims and hopes for the future of the journal.

A success story

Studies in French Cinema, whose first issue was published in 2001, was established in 2000 by Susan Hayward. Phil Powrie joined Susan Hayward, and they acted as joint General Editors of the journal until 2010, when Phil Powrie continued on his own as Chief General Editor, supported by a small college of General Editors. From the start, the remit of the journal was to promote and disseminate the study of French cinema. At the time of its inception, Studies in French Cinema was unique internationally as the only academic publication devoted to French film, and to this day it has remained so, including in France. Drawing on a wide international base of established and younger scholars writing principally in English, though with a few pieces in French, Studies in French Cinema quickly found its place as a leading peer-reviewed academic journal, recognised as an authoritative reference, within both studies of French cinema and Anglophone film studies. The journal’s readership, reputation and impact grew steadily, and it is no exaggeration to say that it has been a spectacular success. For this, tribute must be paid to Susan Hayward and Phil Powrie’s vision and commitment. Phil Powrie has run Studies in French Cinema singlehandedly over the last 10 years, bringing in submissions in French as well as special issues with guest editors, negotiating the transition from Intellect to Routledge in 2014, and overseeing the journal’s accession to top quartile status.

In the 19 volumes since 2001, Studies in French Cinema has published 339 articles – a substantial proportion of which were submitted by doctoral students – as well as interviews with filmmakers, annual bibliographies, lists of theses and, more recently, review articles, in mixed or thematic issues three times a year and, since 2018, four times. Looking back through the issues, the rich array of articles and the depth and quality of the research are striking, a tribute to the variety of approaches fostered by the journal and intellectual diversity of the contributors. Nevertheless, in her editorial for the tenth anniversary of Studies in French Cinema, Julia Dobson observed that ‘the persistently dominant discourse of analysis in the study of French cinema remains that of an approach informed by auteurist principles’ (Vol. 10:1, 2010). Certainly, one noticeable change in the 10 years since these lines were written concerns the relative waning of auteurism as a critical paradigm, even though auteur-based movements such as the jeune cinéma français (Young French Cinema), prominent directors like François Ozon, Claire
Denis, Agnès Varda and Jacques Audiard, and emerging figures such as Abdellatif Kechiche and Céline Sciamma have been celebrated and analysed, and classic movements such as the New Wave have been revisited. Concurrently, *Studies in French Cinema* has reflected the growth of other perspectives, broadly speaking linked to cultural studies, film and philosophy, and identity politics. Articles and special issues have turned the spotlight on genre cinema (such as the continuing interest in ‘extreme’ cinema, or the biopic), queer and post-colonial cinema, various manifestations of stardom, and the changing and increasingly transnational nature of the French film industry. The journal has acknowledged the rise in women filmmakers, of comedy, of political cinema and documentary, and the development of new technologies, for example paying particular attention to sound.

Our goal is to continue promoting such a wide range of approaches, while welcoming new voices and debates. *Studies in French Cinema* is now a well-established and highly successful journal, and we want to nurture it so that it continues to grow and to be indispensable for anyone with a serious interest in French film. Yet we are also conscious that the rapidly shifting media landscape, in France as elsewhere, demands changes in the remit and scope of the journal. To this effect, in consultation with the outgoing Chief General Editor and the college of General Editors, the incoming Chief General Editors decided to change not just the title, but some of the orientations of the journal.

**Time for change**

In the 20 years during which *Studies in French Cinema* has been publishing pieces that scrutinise it, ‘French Cinema’ has changed beyond recognition and in such a way that these two words no longer cover either the variety of artefacts or the modes of production, distribution and reception of French audio-visual products. It is thus time to change, to expand and to some extent renew the journal’s scope, pool of contributors and readership. Our project is to rebrand *Studies in French Cinema* along more inclusive lines apt for a contemporary mediascape characterised by increasingly porous borders and a more and more diverse ‘French’ society, audio-visual culture and range of representations.

- **The growing importance of television.** While French television continues to play an important role in financing film, its status has changed significantly. From being the poor cousin, it has become a rival to the cinema, especially through the rise and success of long form series. Examples such as *Engrenages/Spiral* (2005–) and *Les Revenants/The Returned* (2013–2015) have had a wide international impact and more are on the way. French showrunners and other talent are now producing material across genres that exports to Netflix (from comedian Clovis Cornillac’s romcom *Un peu, beaucoup, aveuglément/Blind Date* [2015] to the multi-star vehicle series *Dix pour cent/Call My Agent* [four seasons since 2015]) or is directly financed by it (established director Noémie Saglio’s sitcom *Plan cœur/The Hook-Up Plan* [2018–] or comic super-star Gad Elmaleh’s aptly named English-language, US-set *Huge in France* [2019–]).
- **New technologies of production, distribution and exhibition.** Even if French cities, and especially Paris, are still better endowed than probably any other country’s in terms of the opportunity to see a wide range of films in actual cinemas, and even though
classic cinephilia still thrives in journals such as *Cahiers du cinéma* and *Positif* and in the film reviews of publications such *Les Inrockuptibles* and *Le Monde*, digital technology has altered the way ‘films’ are made, distributed and shown. Such a shift is perhaps nowhere more clearly evidenced than through the diversification of telecom providers into entertainment, as in France (and elsewhere) has occurred with Orange, whose cinema arm has recently merged with Canal+.

- **The increasingly dominant role of Internet screen culture.** The Internet has fostered a number of crucial changes in audio-visual industries and cultures. Its effects can be divided into two principal strands. In the first place, as an example of the kind of technological development described above, the Internet has hugely enriched the variety of formats, contents and interactive possibilities on offer for consumers of fictional artefacts, including games and platforms for fan remediations from blogs to YouTube. Secondly, the Internet has exerted a massive influence over film and celebrity culture more broadly, with stars emerging from and building their brands through it and in particular social media playing a key role in image curation as, for better and worse, a mass-participatory process.

- **Opening up the understanding of ‘Frenchness’**. *Studies in French Cinema* has long recognised that ‘French’ cinema is not restricted to work made within the ‘Hexagon’, for example with an issue on ‘French and Francophone cinema and contestation’ (Vol. 13:3, 2013) and articles devoted to diasporic filmmakers, African, Québécois and Belgian films and so on. We would like to further expand the diversity of the journal in terms of the range of works considered, exploring more fully the resources of ‘Francophone cinema’, as well as the contributors we may draw on.

Our aim is therefore, first of all, to open the journal up to scholars who engage with these areas (as we write, a special issue on television is at the planning stage). At the same time, we are mindful that while we need to be forward-looking, we must not only continue to foster work on films shown and consumed in traditional film theatres, but also play a bigger role in excavating areas of French film history that remain to be explored. We thus want to encourage proposals for publications in areas including, but not limited to, the following areas.

**FRENCH SCREEN STUDIES**

**An archaeology of French cinema history**

We welcome work by historians who address the ‘forgotten’ areas of French film history, especially, but not only, before the Second World War. Silent cinema for example remains a relatively neglected terrain, especially outside well-known pioneers (the Lumières, Méliès) and avant-garde figures such as Abel Gance, Germaine Dulac and Marcel L’Herbier. Similarly, silent cinema stardom, with a few exceptions (Max Linder, Pierre Batcheff), remains unexplored. In the post-war period, whole swathes of films between the New Wave in the early 1960s and the *cinéma du look* in the 1980s are still largely unknown.

As part of this desire to excavate ignored or marginalised areas of French cinema, we would like to solicit work by scholars researching the contribution of filmmaking personnel beyond directors or actors: screenwriters, cinematographers, editors, producers, composers, set and costume designers etc. At a time when the division of social and industrial
power among very few has rarely been so evident, the work of expanding canons and giving prominence to ‘unsung heroes’ and, perhaps even more so, heroines, as well as to non-white personnel, has never appeared more urgent.

**The new industry**

We seek studies of the complex changes in the industry, in light of both the digital revolution, giving access to constituencies previously barred from filmmaking, and globalisation. In May 2018, it was reported that subscription numbers for Canal+ – the television channel that is also the largest French film financier – are falling domestically but growing internationally. Canal+ also exemplifies the lead role played by French organisations in promoting European culture; the Franco-German cultural network Arte is another prime instance. Meanwhile, studios such as the now collapsing EuropaCorp and the more successful Pathé illustrate French business’s pioneering and important place in global audio-visual production.

**New modes of consumption and reception**

We are interested, among other things, in analyses of new modes of viewing, whether in collective settings (cinematic or other) or plugged into devices online. We also welcome work on reception, both critical and by audiences, and research into how shifts in consumption and reception have altered cinephilia.

**Conclusion: continuities and core principles**

As in the past 20 years, our mission remains to promote rigorous analyses of French films and other audio-visual products and foster debate. We continue to be committed to aesthetic, theoretical, political and cultural interpretations. In other words, we want to continue the ‘broad church’ nature of the journal discussed above without privileging particular aspects of the field. Nevertheless, some core principles underline our approach, two in particular.

First, we would like to promote a more equal balance between work on auteur and work on popular cinema in the journal’s outlook. Returning to Julia Dobson’s point, the auteur is undoubtedly still a core element of French cinema, at home and especially abroad. Nevertheless, its visibility at festivals and in critical practice has often eclipsed the still thriving mainstream production of French genre films. The fact that many popular comedies, for instance, routinely fail to export to Anglophone countries, or when they do receive limited distribution and derogatory reviews, should not be a bar to scholarship. Secondly, we wish to broaden our focus on racial and ethnic diversity, while updating our already strong focus on gender and sexuality. We need to register the impact of the different waves of feminism in the light of intersectionality and consider the effects of various revelations concerning the culture of abuse that has been highlighted in the wake of the Weinstein affair and the #MeToo campaign (in particular, at the time of writing, the revelations by the actress Adèle Haenel). This could lead to new enquiries into practices within the French film industry as well as reconsiderations of well-known figures and historical movements.
All those who have been involved with Studies in French Cinema to date should be immensely proud of its achievements. As outgoing Chief General Editor, Phil Powrie hands over the privilege of serving our community of scholars to Mary Harrod and Ginette Vincendeau. All three of us look forward to breaching frontiers of knowledge with its new iteration, French Screen Studies.

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