

Audiences beyond the multiplex: understanding the value of a diverse film culture

2nd & 3rd March 2021

A two-day virtual conference on the diversity of film audience experience in the UK

CALL FOR PAPERS

DEADLINE: 5th January 2021

We are delighted to invite contributions for the two-day conference 'Audiences beyond the multiplex: understanding the value of a diverse film culture' that will take place in March 2021.

With increasing digital distribution, changing audience behaviour and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on independent film exhibition there are many ongoing challenges to increasing the diversity of film available to all audiences regardless of their background or where they live. The conference takes place at this key moment for film exhibition, raising questions about how we might think differently about audiences and their relationship with film, and how these insights can support audience development. By bringing academic research and industry expertise together the conference will provide a platform to discuss insights on changing patterns of film consumption and offer opportunities to share new thinking.

'Audiences beyond the multiplex: understanding the value of a diverse film culture' marks the final event for the AHRC-funded project 'Beyond the Multiplex: Audiences for Specialised film in English Regions'. Drawing on industry definitions, 'specialised films' are understood as films outside the mainstream, including small-scale UK films, foreign language, documentary, archive and films with unconventional narratives, themes or cinematic techniques. Through the research the project has shown the dynamic and changing relationship people have with film over their life course, the final conference will provide an opportunity to discuss these findings and the future diversity of independent film exhibition in English regions with academics and industry professionals.

While provision of mainstream film is good across England, provision of specialised / non-mainstream film is low across regions outside London, limiting the opportunity for people to experience a diverse film culture in many places. Between 2017 and 2020, the 'Beyond the Multiplex' research project has investigated how audiences engage with film in four English regions (North East, North West, South West, and Yorkshire and the Humber) to understand how to enable a wider range of audiences to participate in a more diverse film culture that embraces the wealth of films beyond the mainstream.

The 'Beyond the Multiplex' research project has conducted extensive research with audiences using innovative methods to understand how audiences form and the personal film journeys we take as our film watching habits and experiences change over the course of our lives. The project has developed new insights into the use of film venues, platforms, and media to participate in film culture. It has focussed on articulating the different experiences and meanings of film watching for different audiences in a variety of contexts. The project has also placed a strong emphasis on engaging with those involved in developing audiences for film to ensure the research findings benefit those working to grow audiences for specialised film.

The conference will present the project's findings and policy recommendations for film audience development and bring together a range of academics and film industry experts to discuss the future of film audiences and the value of a diverse film culture.

Call for papers

There are two open strands to the conference.

Academic Strand:

Research perspectives on the diversity of film exhibition and audiences today, this might include (but is not limited to) the following areas:

- Research on contemporary film audience experiences
- Regional or place based studies of film audiences
- Audience comprehension, interpretation, and meaning-making
- Changing film viewing habits and tastes over the life course
- Socio-cultural factors that shape film taste
- New perspectives on film distribution, both theatrical and online
- The levels of diversity of film exhibition across different geographies
- Film viewing across different media, screens and platforms
- Film audience development in theory and practice
- Innovative methodological approaches to film audience research

Industry strand:

Industry perspectives, provocations, case studies and think-pieces on the future of film exhibition in the UK, this might include (but is not limited to) the following areas:

- Using film industry research data
- Film programming and curating in practice
- Film distribution, licensing, rights, and sales
- Marketing and audience development
- Funding and film audience policy in the UK

Timeline

Deadline for abstracts: 5th January 2021

Accepted papers notified: 15th January 2021

Format and submission

Please send a 300 word abstract to peter.merrington@glasgow.ac.uk by 5th January 2021.

Publication

All contributors will be invited to submit their paper for an open source online publication.

Contact us

For any queries or further information, please contact:

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For more information on the project see: <https://www.beyondthemultiplex.net/>