Andreas Kötzing / Caroline Moine (eds.)

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Film Festivals in the Cold War

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Andreas Kötzing / Caroline Moine

Introduction

A great deal of past scholarship has emphasised the pivotal role played by culture during the Cold War; and the term 'Cold War cultures' has even become a commonplace in academia. Particular cultural practices and products, it can now be seen, were pervasive in contemporary societies around the world, in both East and West, North and South.[1] Of them, cinema, with its cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions, has been especially significant.[2]

Indeed, studying the cultural history of cinema allows for a highly nuanced analysis of the complex and variable aspects of the confrontations and divisions in place between the late 1940s and early 1990s. This can be achieved by examining not only the films of the time and the representations they generated, but the entire system of cinematic production, circulation, and reception as well. This kind of study subtly addresses the issue of the non-linear development of circulation not only across the Iron Curtain, but within either bloc, the fissures of which are becoming increasingly apparent. Such an approach challenges the widely accepted view of Cold War dynamics as largely quite rigid and uniform. Shifting relations of confrontation, competition, and rapprochement were in fact pervasive during the decades of the Cold War; and this is made especially clear in the history of film festivals.

1 See Konrad Jarausch/Christian F. Ostermann/Andreas Etges (eds.), The Cold War: Historiography, Memory, Representation, Oldenburg 2017; Annette Vowinckel/Marcus M. Payk/Thomas Lindenberger (eds.), Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies, New York 2012; Patrick Major/Rana Mitter, 'Culture'. In: Saki Ruth Dockrill/Geraint Hughes (eds.), Palgrave Advances in Cold War History, Basingstoke 2006, pp. 240–262.

2 On this very thorough topic, see the dossier "The Cold War and the Movies". In: Film History, 10 (1998) 3; Tony Shaw/Denise J. Youngblood, Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds, Lawrence 2010; Christin Niemeyer/Ulrich Pfeil (eds.), Der deutsche Film im Kalten Krieg, Brussels 2014.

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Following the founding of the Mostra in Venice in 1932, which rapidly became a showcase for films of the Rome-Berlin axis,[3] and of a provisional festival in Moscow in 1935, the first generation of cinema festivals emerged more convincingly in the wake of the Second World War, as the reconstruction of Europe was getting underway.[4] Karlovy Vary,[5] Locarno,[6] and Cannes[7] were all born in the summer and early autumn of 1946, as the Old Continent was looking to reinvigorate national cinemas and revive international cultural exchanges. As the confrontation between East and West took off in 1947, diplomatic ambitions became a more significant factor in film festivals, especially those founded in conjunction with the Cold War.[8] The rivalry between Moscow and Washington was especially evident in the two Germanies, with the founding of the Berlinale in 1951 in West Berlin[9] and of the documentary film festivals of Mannheim and Oberhausen in 1952 and 1954 respectively in the Federal Republic; while in the GDR the Leipzig documentary and short film festival was launched in 1955.[10]

The establishment on a permanent basis of the Moscow festival in 1959 completed a first wave of film festival foundings, after San Sebastián in Franco's Spain in 1953, Pula in Yugoslavia in 1954, and London in 1957. It happened, however, in a period of relative détente, when the Soviet cultural field was opened up to incoming international flows and high-quality national film productions were

3 Francesco Bono, La Mostra del Cinema di Venezia: Nascita e Sviluppo nell'Anteguerra (1932–1939). In: Storia Contemporanea, 22 (1991) 3, pp. 513–549; Marla Stone, Challenging Cultural Categories: The Transformation of the Venice Biennale International Film Festival under Fascism. In: Journal of Modern Italian Studies, 4 (1999) 2, pp. 184–208.

4 Jesper Strandgaard Petersen/Carmelo Mazza, International Film Festivals: For the Benefit of Whom? In: Culture Unbound. Journal of Current Culture Research, 3 (2011), pp. 139–165 and 145–147; Caroline Moine, Les festivals artistiques de la guerre froide: quel rôle dans le renouveau de l'espace culturel européen? (années 1940–1960). In: Anaïs Fléchet et al. (eds.), Une histoire des festivals. XX–XXIe siècle, Paris 2013, pp. 41–53.

5 Jindriska Blahova, National, Socialist, Global: The Changing Roles of the Karloy Vary Film Festival, 1946–1956. In: Lars Karl/Pavel Skopal (eds.), Cinema in Service of the State: Perspectives on Film Culture in the GDR and Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960, New York 2015, pp. 245–274.

6 Guglielmo Volonterio, Dalle suggestioni del Parco alla Grande Festa del Cinema. Storia del Festival di Locarno 1946–1997, Venice 1997.

7 Loredana Latil, Le festival de Cannes sur la scène internationale, Paris 2005.

8 See Stefano Pisu, Il XX secolo sul red carpet. Politica, economia e cultura nei festival internazionali del cinema (1932–1976), Milano 2016.

9 Wolfgang Jacobsen, 50 Jahre Berlinale: Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin (1951–2000), Berlin 2000.

10 Andreas Kötzing, Kultur- und Filmpolitik im Kalten Krieg. Die Filmfestivals von Leipzig und Oberhausen in gesamtdeutscher Perspektive, Göttingen 2013; Caroline Moine, Cinéma et guerre froide. Une histoire du festival international de Leipzig (1955–1990), Paris 2014.

11 Lars Karl, Zwischen politischem Ritual und kulturellem Dialog. Die Moskauer Internationalen Filmfestspiele im Kalten Krieg (1959–1971). In: Lars Karl (ed.), Leinwand zwischen Tauwetter und Frost. Der osteuropäische Spiel- und Dokumentarfilm im Kaltem Krieg, Berlin 2007, pp. 279–298.

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being promoted.[11] Film festivals would continue to play a crucial role in the Cold War in the decades that followed and until the early 1990s; but every festival nevertheless remained influenced by local, national, and other international stories and specificities.[12]

Cultural transfer and Political Conflicts: Films Festivals in the Cold War[13] offers an overview of current research on the history of festivals during this period. In the ten essays included, festivals are engaged and conceptualised as sites of exhibition, sociability, and exchange, and accordingly they are situated as much in the cultural history of cinema as of international relations.[14] These case studies present a variety of research perspectives and methodological approaches, each taking public and private archival sources as a starting point, be they written, oral, or film.

Our initial focus was on festivals that are less well known and studied than those of Cannes, Berlin, or Moscow. Similarly, with a view to covering a range of locations and thematic areas, we aimed to highlight festivals with specialised programmes, such as television festivals, as studied by Yulia Yurtaeva, or those promoting the construction of a European identity, as analysed by Anne Bruch.[15] Although the focus of this volume is on European festivals, the festivals studied span the Iron Curtain, from West (Mostra, Locarno, Oberhausen) to East (Karlovy Vary, Prague, Leipzig), with special attention paid to those in south-eastern Europe (Thessaloniki, Belgrade). However, countries from the global South are also featured by way of inquiry into film selections in European festivals on both sides of the Iron Curtain.[16] The case study by Regina Câmara on the distribution of Brazilian New Wave films demonstrates, for instance, how certain directors of

12 Marijke De Valck, Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia, Amsterdam 2007.

13 This volume is the product of "Cultural Transfer and Political Conflicts: Film Festivals in the Cold War", an international conference held in Leipzig on 9–10 May 2014 by the Lehrstuhl für Neuere und Zeitgeschichte (University of Leipzig), Hannah-Arendt-Institut (TU Dresden), and the Centre d'histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines (Université Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines/Paris-Saclay).

14 For an overview of the research on cinema festivals, see Dina Iordanova (ed.), The Film Festival Reader, St Andrews 2013; Jindriska Blahova (ed.), Film festivals. In: Illuminace. The Journal of Film Theory, History, and Aesthetics, 1 (2014); Aida Vallejo, Festivales cinematográficos. En el punto de mira de la historiografía fílmica. In: Secuencias. Revista de Historia del cine, 39 (2014), pp. 13–42.

15 See also works by Václav Šmidrkal on festivals around films produced by military studios, which took place in the West as much as in the East, namely in Versailles, France, or Prague, Czechoslovakia. Paper by Václav Šmidrkal, Festivals of Military Films in the East and the West, Cultural Transfer and Political Conflicts: Film Festivals in the Cold War, conference, Leipzig, 10 May 2014.

16 On the crucial role of the South in the Cold War, see Odd A. Westad, The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times, Cambridge 2006.

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the South – and no doubt one could include certain Cuban directors here, too – navigated the European divisions. As a result, their role shifted from observer to agent in the circulation of films between North and South and East and West.[17] Likewise, the history of European film festivals during the Cold War cannot be complete without analysing the role played by American producers in the film selection of certain events, in both the East and the West.[18] Dragan Batancev's study of the Belgrade FEST in Yugoslavia investigates this question.

These dynamics lead to the following realisation: film festivals, whether they called themselves international or not, were at the epicentre of the various circulations, exchanges, and tensions that fuelled the economic and cultural development of the Cold War. Each festival was in constant interaction with the broader contemporary political and cultural context. A few well known examples serve to illustrate this point: in 1956, Alain Resnais' *Night and Fog* (*Nuit et brouillard*, France 1956), a documentary on the concentration and extermination camps during the Nazi era, was to be presented at Cannes; the West German and French governments, however, intervened to cancel the screening in order to forestall discussions about the Holocaust that might affect French-German relations.[19] In 1963, Federico Fellini's *8 ½* (Italy 1963) caused a scandal at the Moscow International Film Festival when the jury awarded it one of the main prizes.[20] Soviet politicians criticised the decision and reprimanded the jury for their 'error'. In 1970, the competition at the Berlinale was entirely cancelled because the jury resigned after a controversial debate over Michael Verhoeven's Vietnam film *o.k.* (FRG 1970).[21]

A number of the essays here engage the kinds of mutual interaction in which many film festivals participate. While they cannot be described as systematic networks, such relationships and their histories must nevertheless be addressed and accounted for, on both institutional and personal levels, on either side of the Iron Curtain and through it.[22] This is what Andreas Kötzing provides in his German-German *étude croisée* on Oberhausen and Leipzig in the 1950s and 1960s.

17 For film festivals between North and South, see also Rossen Djagalov/Masha Salazkina, Tashkent '68: A Cinematic Contact Zone. In: Slavic Review, 75 (2016) 2, pp. 279–298.

18 See also Caroline Moine, La strategia europea della Fiapf durante la Guerra fredda: i produttori, arbitri dei festival internazionali di cinema? In: Stefano Pisu/Pierre Sorlin (eds.), La storia internazionale e il cinema. Reti, scambi e transfer nel 1900. Cinema e Storia. Rivista de studi interdisciplinari, Rome 2017, pp. 143–158.

19 Sylvie Lindeperg, "Night and Fog". A Film in History, London 2014.

20 Lars Karl, Zwischen politischem Ritual und kulturellem Dialog, p. 286.

21 Jacobsen, 50 Jahre Berlinale, pp. 165–166.

22 Thomas Elsaesser, Film Festival Networks: The New Topographies of Cinema in Europe. In: European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood, Amsterdam 2005, pp. 82–107.

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In a similar vein, Dunja Jelenković traces the effects of competition in the selection of the critical films of the Yugoslavian Black Wave both in Belgrade and in Oberhausen. These interactions involved both confrontation and collaboration, and they both embraced Cold War divisions and transgressed them, depending on the persons and periods involved.

This volume thus also aims to underline the importance of analysing different temporalities in studying the Cold War. Once again, film festivals are apposite objects of study for highlighting such "games of scale".[23] Stefano Pisu's analysis of the film selection for the 1977 Venice Biennale of Dissent demonstrates the potential that an in-depth study of a single key moment in the history of a festival – in this case a moment of crisis and post-1968 transformation both in Italy and internationally – can have. John Wäffler offers an entirely opposite approach with his long-term study of Locarno, from the 1950s to 1989, which allows us to see how the festival's profile was built gradually under the close – and sometimes suspicious – supervision of the Swiss federal police. Dragan Batancev investigates the end of the Cold War by way of the FEST of Belgrade, from its founding in the 1970s until the 1990s, when Yugoslavia's existence itself came to a chaotic end.

The different essays featured here represent the great variety of historical actors involved in film festivals during the Cold War. The history of festivals cannot be concerned solely with institutions. Both institutions – whether public or private; whether state, regional, municipal, or social – and individuals are members of a complex collective that undertakes not only the organisation and management of a festival, but also the process of writing its history. Maria Stassinopoulou's investigation of the early stages and evolution of the Greek Cinema Week during the 1960s and 1970s, clearly shows the complexity of the multiple cultural, political, and economic influences – both Greek and foreign (via the Ford Foundation, for example) – that were at stake before, during, and after the military junta. Film directors, producers, and critics are transmitters – from one festival to another, from one country to another, from one side of the Iron Curtain to the other. Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann demonstrates the crucial role, both individual and collective, played by international festivals as nodal points, spaces of interaction and exchange for cinema students in Eastern Europe from the 1950s to the fall of the Berlin Wall – despite the complex international policies in the East that developed in light of those festivals.

The volume's contributions have been arranged according to a progression, both chronological and thematic, and separated into three main sections. The first, "Festivals as Crossroads Between West, East and South?", features four studies that analyse the complex circulation of films and people between East and

23 Jacques Revel (ed.), Jeux d'échelles: la microanalyse à l'expérience, Paris 1996.

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West and North and South at different moments of the Cold War. The second section, "New Protagonists in Film Festival Politics", offers an overview of festivals that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s and were headed by institutions who did not fit the classic mold of film festival organiser. The final section, on "Festivals as a Stage for National and Transnational Politics", features four case studies that address the interconnectedness of local, national, and transnational contexts in the creation and evolution of film festivals, in both the West and the East, from the 1950s to the 1990s.

Produced by scholars of different national backgrounds, the contributions here demonstrate the richness and diversity of historical scholarship on film festivals during the Cold War. This is a first step, and it will hopefully encourage further studies that deepen our knowledge of global themes – the relationships between festivals in Europe and other parts of the world, for instance, such as Montevideo, Mar del Plata, Ouagadougou,[24] Montréal, San Francisco, or the multinational host cities of the Asia-Pacific Film Festival.[25]

24 Colin Dupré, Le Fespaco, une affaire d'État(s), 1969–2009, Paris 2012.

25 Sangjoon Lee, It's 'Oscar' Time in Asia! The Rise and Demise of the Asia-Pacific Film Festival, 1954–1972. In: Jeffrey Ruoff (ed.), Coming Soon to a Festival Near You: Programming Film Festivals, St. Andrews 2012, pp. 173–187.

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I.

Festivals as Crossroads Between West, East, and South?

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Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann

Socialist Competition or Window to the World? East German Student Films at International Festivals in the Context of the Cold War

Following its founding in 1954, the state-controlled film school in Babelsberg educated most of East Germany's filmmakers for more than three decades of the German Democratic Republic's forty-year existence. Graduates of the school influenced the development of audio-visual media in their country, and they shaped the way East German film was perceived and reviewed both in East German society and abroad.[1]

The following chapter focuses on the function of film festivals as an international forum for young filmmakers from East Germany to present their debut films.[2] Furthermore it aims to outline the film school's festival policy and its attempts to use international festivals to present itself as an internationally acclaimed institution and socialist agency. Following a brief historical overview, which describes the establishment and consolidation of the school as well as the ambivalent effects of internationalization strategies on its educational profile, this chapter analyzes how the GDR film school presented its work during three decades at festivals in Leipzig and Oberhausen and at various student festivals.

1 Dieter Wiedemann, Woher wir kommen, wer wir sind, wohin wir gehen! In: Horst Schäde/Dieter Wiedemann (eds.), Bewegte Bilder, Bewegte Zeit. 50 Jahre Film- und Fernsehausbildung HFF 'Konrad Wolf' Potsdam-Babelsberg, Berlin 2004, pp. 21–51. Egbert Lipowski, Curriculum vitae einer Berühmten. In: Ibid., pp. 53–111. Claus Löser, Im Dornröschenschloss. Dokumentarfilme an der Babelsberger Filmhochschule. In: Günter Jordan/Ralf Schenk (eds.): Schwarzweiß und Farbe. DEFA Dokumentarfilm 1946–1992. Berlin 1996. Tobias Ebbrecht, Nonkonformismus und Anpassung: Überlegungen zur Rolle und Funktion der Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen in der DDR von 1954 bis 1989. In: Benjamin Schröder/Jochen Staadt (eds.), Unter Hammer und Zirkel. Repression, Opposition und Widerstand an den Hochschulen der SBZ/DDR, Frankfurt/Main 2011, pp. 277–288.

2 This chapter presents preliminary results from a research project on the archive of student films located at the Film University "Konrad Wolf" in Potsdam. The research is part of the DFG project on "Regional Film Culture in Brandenburg" headed by Professor Dr. Chris Wahl at the Film University in Potsdam. The author was part of the project team from April 2013 to July 2014. The project's final results will be published by Dr. Ilka Brombach. See for an overview of the project Ilka Brombach/Tobias Ebbrecht/Chris Wahl, 'Walls Have Never Held Us Back'. 60 Years

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Historical and Institutional Background

The first students began their studies in Babelsberg in November 1954. From the beginning the Deutsche Hochschule für Filmkunst (German Academy for Film Art) offered educational instruction in various fields of film production, including directing, cinematography, production, and acting. Headed by the well-known director Kurt Maetzig and managed by Heinz Baumert, a former assistant professor from the University of Jena, the early years were characterized by a shortage of film footage and technical support as well as provisional conditions.[3] Following the years of experimentation and consolidation, the first generation of filmmakers graduated in 1959/1960. The school also became the place for educating future personnel for East German television, which had been established in 1952 and began broadcasting regularly in 1956. During the 1960s and especially after 1969, when a second channel was established in honor of the twentieth anniversary of the GDR's founding, East German television gained increasing influence in the school. As an effect of this influence many graduates went on to work for television after finishing their studies. Additionally, television offered support for additional technical resources to the film school, which was consequently renamed Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen der DDR (HFF) (Academy for Film and Television of the GDR) in 1969. Heavily controlled by the state and ideologically framed, GDR television became one of the most important "windows" for presenting student films to the East German public, mainly in specially adapted program slots in the second television channel.[4] Thus, the education and instruction of future filmmakers in Babelsberg was both clearly embedded in and served as a major support of the media system in the GDR, which was oriented towards the interests of the state's political leadership and focused on a national audience.[5]

A significant element in the school's ideological orientation was internationalization. This element, on the one hand, reproduced ideological conformism and was determined within the framework of officially propagated internationalism and of "international solidarity" with national liberation movements in Latin

of Student Films at the Film University Babelsberg 'Konrad Wolf'. In: Cahier Louis-Lumière 9, September 2015, pp. 78–85. Online: http://www.ens-louis-lumiere.fr/fileadmin/pdf/Cahier/9b/PDF-interactif-FR_ENG.pdf.

3 Heinz Baumert, Gründungsgeschichten. In: Hartmut Albrecht (ed.), 25 Jahre Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen. Versuch einer historischen Bilanz, Potsdam 1979, p. 56.

4 For an overview on East German television see for example Knut Hickethier (with Peter Hoff), Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens, Stuttgart 1998; Rüdiger Steinmetz/Reinhold Viehoff (eds.), Deutsches Fernsehen Ost. Eine Programmgeschichte des DDR-Fernsehens, Berlin 2008; Peter Hoff, Continuity and Change. Television in the GDR from autumn 1989 to summer 1990. In: German History, 9 (1991) 2, pp. 184–196. Markus Schubert/Hans-Jörg Stiehler, A Program Structure Analysis of East German Television, 1968–1974. In: Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, 24 (2004) 3, pp. 345–353.

5 Tobias Ebbrecht, Nonkonformismus und Anpassung, p. 278.

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America, Africa, and the Middle East.[6] However, especially after the final closing of the state's borders in 1961, internationalization also enabled students to expand their views. Thus, the idea of internationalization slightly expanded, although partly involuntarily, the narrow national focus of GDR culture, which also characterized the film school. This broadening of perspectives can be understood in terms of three dimensions of internationalization, which influenced the work and lives of the students in Babelsberg in different ways.

The first dimension involved the level of education and instruction. The film school in Babelsberg offered its students much greater access to international film production and film history than that provided by state-sanctioned exhibition in East German Cinema and television. During their required lectures on international film history, students encountered, (needless to say within socialist patterns of interpretation), canonical international films, which influenced their understanding of cinema in general and had an impact on the stylistic composition of their own films in particular. Additionally the students had the chance to see a wide range of films, from internationally acclaimed productions of the European New Waves to new movies from Hollywood that were not approved for cinematic release in the GDR.

The second dimension of internationalization involved the student body. Besides East Germans who were delegated to the school from the DEFA studios or, beginning in the 1960s, from television, a number of filmmakers from other countries studied in Babelsberg as well. These international students were sent from socialist states like the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Bulgaria. Others came from allied communist parties and liberation movements that regularly dispatched students to East Germany. As a result, young people from virtually the entire world met in Babelsberg originating from Vietnam, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, and even from Israel, the Netherlands, and the UK. Between 1955 and 1964 alone sixty students from 23 countries studied at the East German film academy, almost exclusively in the fields of directing and cinematography.[7]

At first, the training of international students was intended to support the international efforts of national liberation movements, a concept based on an idea by the acclaimed documentary filmmaker Joris Ivens. These foreign students from "young nation states" were to be trained as "camera reporters" in order to document the struggles in their home countries. In September 1964 a special study group of foreign students from Bulgaria, Costa Rica, England, Greece,

6 Quinn Slobodian (ed.), Comrades of color. East Germany in the Cold War World, Oxford/New York 2015.

7 Beschluss über die Weiterführung des Ausländerstudiums an der Deutschen Hochschule für Filmkunst, 3.11.1964 (BArch, DR 118/3353).

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