



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL



Edge Hill University

Independent Film (and) Women

A one day symposium organized by the Department of Communication and Media (University of Liverpool) and the Institute for Creative Enterprise (ICE)/Department of Media (Edge Hill University)

Thursday 21 May 2015

12:45 – 7:30pm

Rendall Building, Lecture Theatres 2 and 3, University of Liverpool

Although studies of independent film, especially in the United States, have blossomed over the past 25 or so years, with a large number of academic and more popular books published on the subject, the sub-topic of women independent filmmakers has remained vastly under-researched. Despite pioneering work by feminist film scholars in the 1970s and 1980s, and their efforts to support an openly political independent cinema, once the field of (American) independent cinema studies emerged in the 1990s, it took a direction that all but excluded significant attention to independent film women, whether openly oppositional filmmakers or ones working within an increasingly institutionalized independent film sector. Indeed, work by women filmmakers tended to be covered either within token chapters in surveys of contemporary American independent cinema such as Emanuel Levy's *Cinema of Outsiders* (1999) or through focus to individual film discussions such as *Go Fish* (1994) in John Pierson's *Spike, Mike, Slackers and Dykes* (1995), with the rest of similar filmmaking activity going largely unnoticed and only discussed (again minimally) in the pages of semi-academic/semi-commercial journals such as *Film Comment*, *Film Quarterly* and *American Film*.

More recently, however, the field has seen more interest thanks to the work of scholars such as Chris Holmlund, who co-edited the *Contemporary American Independent Film* volume (2005) and published numerous essays on the subject, Christina Lane, also a significant contributor through a number of essays on women filmmakers and Hilary Radner, whose recently authored and edited volumes on feminist and neo-feminist cinema threw ample light on independent films with strong interest for women. In 2014, Linda Badley, Claire Perkins and Michele Schreiber, all scholars who also had done work on independent film and women, announced the *Indie Reframed* collection, a volume that was set up to focus specifically on debates about the place and contribution of women (filmmakers) in American independent cinema. With these and other similar efforts starting to redress the balance, and with the opportunity afforded by Professor Chris Holmlund's visit to Liverpool (18-25 May) as a joint visiting professor to the Department of Communication and Media at the University of Liverpool and the Department of Media at Edge Hill University, this one day symposium aims to make its own contribution to this increasingly vibrant area in independent cinema studies. Bringing together scholars from across the country who have done significant work in, among others, the fields of women's films, distribution promotion and exhibition, silent cinema, queer film studies, underground cinema, American independent cinema and media industry studies, and with Professor Chris Holmlund as keynote speaker, this symposium promises to ask important questions on the subject of the contribution of women in/and independent film and participate in the emerging debates that surround it.

Yannis Tzioumakis, symposium convener

Participation is FREE, but please *confirm attendance* through email to the conference convener (y.tzioumakis@liverpool.ac.uk)

Symposium Schedule

12:45-1:00pm Welcome and opening remarks

Yannis Tzioumakis (University of Liverpool) organiser
Stephanie Hemelryk Donald (University of Liverpool) Head of School of the Arts
Philip Drake (Edge Hill University), Head of Department of Media

1:00 - 2:45 Panel 1 Independent Women and the Film Industry – Julia Hallam, chair

Promoting Women's Independent Film in the UK

Julia Knight (University of Sunderland)

All Together Now: Female Filmmakers and Collaborative Distribution in American Independent Cinema

Hayley Trowbridge (University of Liverpool)

Crafting a 'Personal Public': Megan Ellison on Twitter

James Lyons (University of Exeter)

Women Film Pioneers: Feminist Film History as Present-day Activism

Sofia Bull (University of Warwick)

2:45 - 3:15pm coffee break

3:15- 5:00pm Panel 2 Independent Women on and off the Screen – Ruth Doughty, chair

Women's Cinema/Underground Cinema

Gary Needham (Nottingham Trent University)

Independent Film-making Between Gallery and Cinema

Glyn Davis (University of Edinburgh)

Tragedy and the Legacy of an Indie 'Meta-Movie': Adrienne Shelly and *Waitress* (2007)

Steve Rawle (York St John's University)

Giving a Voice to Greek American Women: Nia Vardalos, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, and Contemporary US indie cinema

Lydia Papadimitriou (Liverpool John Moores University) and Yannis Tzioumakis (University of Liverpool)

5-5:30pm Wine break

5:30-7pm Keynote address (sponsored by the *Liverpool Film Seminar*, a collaborative project between the Department of Communication and Media at the University of Liverpool and the Department of Film Studies at Liverpool John Moores University) **Yannis Tzioumakis, chair**

Mutual Muses in Independent Film: Women Directors and Female Stars

Chris Holmlund (University of Tennessee, Knoxville)

7:30pm End of Symposium