

Residual Practices in a Digital Landscape of Film Distribution

10th June 2016, University of Southampton

CALL FOR PAPERS

The growth of digital culture and online distribution has coincided with a newfound emphasis on residual forms and practices. Indeed, despite advancements in digital technology, the media landscape has been witness to a sort of retro renaissance, as evidenced by the return of vinyl, the Polaroid and even the typewriter. The revival of these once beloved technologies suggests a powerful form of resistance in the face of sweeping digitalisation. Film has been no stranger to this tension. Like other forms of media, the climate of digital change has given rise to a number of resurgent efforts to preserve a range of largely obsolete formats, from the VHS to 35mm film. Furthermore, the increasing popularity of grassroots initiatives, like pop-up cinema events, suggests a public yearning for more communal forms of cinemagoing. This seems particularly pertinent at a time when isolated forms of consumption threaten to devalue this collective experience.

In *On-Demand Culture*, Chuck Tryon states that the utopian discourse surrounding this digital change is often guilty of ignoring the continued importance of residual media forms (2013: 177). This one-day symposium strives to address this issue. Rather than succumbing to technological determinism, this symposium seeks to understand how the persistence of physical media and traditional practices are impacting on the current trends in the digital landscape of film distribution and exhibition. In doing so, we must consider the ways in which residual formats and practices interact with complex issues of taste, distinction and notions of authenticity. What do these technologies and practices say about contemporary politics of cultural taste and distinction? To what extent are these residual practices undermining distributors' attempts to expand the digital market? And can these practices survive the exponential growth of digital culture?

We welcome proposals for papers which consider a range of topics related to the focus of this symposium. Such topics might include, but are no means limited to:

The re-emergence and persistence of VHS technology or other domestic formats

The preservation and presentation of 35mm film or other analogue film formats

Forms of collective cinemagoing and public performance

Fandom and forms of film collecting

Case studies of specific distributors, exhibitors or film releases

Notions of authenticity, distinction and cultural capital

Social and cultural nostalgia

Contemporary cinephilia

Re-examining the 'death of cinema' discourse

Proposals of no more than 300 words should be sent to Elliott Nikdel (en1e09@soton.ac.uk) along with a brief biographical statement of around 150 words. The deadline for submission is April 21st. Applicants will be informed of the decision by the end of April. Papers should last no more than 20 minutes in length.