

<b>Institution: Queen Mary University of London</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: D28B (Modern Languages and Linguistics: Modern Languages)</b>
<b>Title of case study: Film festivals: creating, events, programmes and audiences</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Film Festivals constitute the main institutional alternative to commercially-driven cinema and as such occupy a vitally important part of our cultural heritage. The BFI estimates that 'only 7% of all cinema screens are regularly devoted to non-mainstream film', and cites the film festival as an exemplary model for broadening cinema knowledge and education ('New Horizons for UK Film 2012-17'). Film Studies Queen Mary is committed to enhancing a public understanding of obscure and complex film through film festivals, bringing to bear insights born of research including production histories and analytical interpretations of film texts and performances. Collaborating with programmers, curators, local authorities, and diasporic communities, researchers have made significant contributions to festivals including to the founding of two new film festivals (the London Spanish Film Festival 2005 and Cutting East Youth Film Festival 2013), engaging with constituent groups and cultures that are not strongly represented in the UK's commercial film culture.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Film Studies at Queen Mary has well-developed research interests in European cinemas, cinema-going and film festivals, that underpin the engagement with the creative industries in London and their audiences. The research has been developed through extended and in-depth engagement with film archives and libraries internationally, and has excavated new information concerning the role of actors, directors, scriptwriters, financiers and the memory of audiences. From these excavations, new interpretive accounts have been written to revise perceptions of films, extend audience engagement with cinema in particular periods and neighbourhoods, and engage communities with film culture more broadly. Researchers in the department have made wide contributions to the field in the form of monographs, articles, scholarly editions, edited collections and educational notes for exhibition and DVD publication.</p> <p>Peter Evans has been at the forefront of psychoanalytical approaches to film, tracing an ongoing fascination with sexuality and religion as a national unconscious of Spanish cinema, forging links between surrealist avant-garde filmmaking and popular film genres. Evans has published widely on Spanish cinema, notably <i>The Films of Luis Buñuel: Subjectivity and Desire</i> (1995), combining a history of Buñuel's exile in Mexico with a detailed analysis of his films, a study of a Pedro Almodóvar film, and an anthology of essays, <i>Spanish Cinema: the Auteurist Tradition</i> (1999). A further reconsideration of the career of Buñuel, the co-edited <i>Luis Buñuel: New Approaches</i> (2004), continues the re-evaluation of historical Spanish film. Evans' work has become a key reference in the narration of Spanish cinema history; he is cited on Buñuel's Wikipedia page, the journal <i>Senses of Cinema's</i> profile of the director and the International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers. In 2012, Evans wrote the booklet accompanying the Blue Ray release of Buñuel's final film, <i>That Obscure Object of Desire</i> (1977), and in the same year published a study of the cult film, <i>Jamón jamón</i> (Bigas Luna), placing another filmmaker on this map.</p> <p>Scholarship on the history of cinema-going, pioneered by Kuhn in the 1990s and continued by postdoctoral researcher Gil Toffell, has been at the forefront of developments in reception studies. Focusing on the immediate neighbourhoods surrounding Queen Mary, Toffell traced the ephemeral presence of audiences through archive sources including press reports, advertisements, reviews and the history of cinema ownership and film distribution. Archives sourced by Toffell include the British Library Newspaper Archive, Tower Hamlets Local History Library, People's Palace Archive, Manchester Jewish Museum and Edinburgh Film Guild Archive. Toffell's work on Yiddish cinema-going between the wars, the first scholarly examination of an explicitly Jewish cinema at this time, was published in the prestigious peer reviewed journal <i>Screen</i> (2009), and further articles have appeared in scholarly journals.</p>

Key researchers' employment at submitting unit:

- (i) Peter Evans, 1996- 2011 Professor in Film Studies (retired 2011).
- (ii) Annette Kuhn, appointed 2006 (0.2) Professor in Film Studies.
- (iii) Gil Toffell, 2009-11, Leverhulme Postdoctoral Fellow; 2011-13 fractional posts as Researcher in Residence, and Research Assistant (Bazaar Cinema).
- (iv) Janet Harbord, appointed 2010 Professor in Film Studies.

### 3. References to the research:

Gil Toffell, 'Cinema-going from Below: The Jewish film audience in interwar Britain', *Participations Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, Volume 8, Issue 2, November 2011: pp 522–538.

Gil Toffell, 'Come, See and Hear! Yiddish Cinema-going in inter-war London', *Screen* 50/3, 2009: pp 277-98.

Annette Kuhn, 'Film Stars in 1930s Britain', in Tytti Soila (ed.) *Stellar Encounters: Stardom in Popular European Cinema*, (London, John Libbey, 2009).

Peter Evans 'Splitting Doubles: Angela Molina and the Art of Screen Acting', in Rob Stone and Julian Daniel Gutierrez Albilla (eds) *Companion to Luis Bunuel*, (Wiley- Blackwell, 2013): pp.494-508.

Peter Evans, Isabel Santaolalla (eds), *Luis Buñuel: New Readings* (BFI, London, 2004).

Peter Evans (ed.), *Spanish Cinema; the Auteurist Tradition* (OUP, Oxford, 1999).

#### Key grants:

Leverhulme Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2009-11: £53,938 (Kuhn PI/Toffell Fellow).

London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange (LCACE) Award, 2011: £4,600 (Toffell).

Public Engagement Fund, Queen Mary, 2011: £2,500 (Harbord PI/Toffell RA).

AHRC Cultural Engagement Fund, 2012: £40,000 (Davis/Harbord PIs, Toffell researcher in residence).

AHRC International Network Grant, Bazaar Cinema: debating the cultural rights of youth communities in London and Mumbai: partners EEFF and TATA Institute: £42,359 (Harbord PI, Rai CI, Toffell RA).

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The department's strategic aims in its relation to film festivals have been to engage audiences in historical accounts of cinema-going, to exploit the potential of public cultural debate provided by film festivals, and to expand the audience demographic attending festivals. The involvement of academics as co-founders of and advisers to festivals, is supplemented by further contributions as interlocutors, co-curators, and mediators to enrich the understanding, knowledge and constitution of festival audiences. Through close collaboration with cultural partners, the public understanding of film outside of the mainstream and a regional history of cinema-going have been significantly extended. A variety of approaches have been used to translate scholarship into popular discourse, including on-stage interviews of those involved in film production, curation of film programmes and participatory memory-based events recalling cinema-going in the East End. Through collaborations and the adoption of formal roles—Evans as an advisor to the London Spanish Film Festival (LSFF), Toffell as an AHRC Public Engagement Researcher in Residence with the East End Film

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Festival (EEFF)—along with the College's financial support of the LSFF, the relationship between researchers and cultural institutions has been defined by a mutual shaping of agendas.

Evans' work, crossing popular and surrealist Spanish filmmakers of the 1920-1990s, was formative in 'supporting this festival since the conception of the very first edition' (Joana Granero, Director LSFF). Evans continues to influence the decisions of contemporary and retrospective film programming in the festival's eighth year. The LSFF is held at the Ciné Lumière and Instituto Cervantes, West London, for a period of two weeks during July, and assessment data shows that it attracts approximately 75% of new audiences each year (Tristana Media). In 2012, it attracted over 4000 people, its success leading to an extension of the festival as 'Spring Weekend' events. As a member of the advisory group, Evans continues to work with the programming team to determine the focus of each festival, to ensure the programming of contemporary and archive film, and during the festival, to introduce programmes and conduct interviews with key film production personnel. In 2009, Evans' interview with Angela Molina sold out a venue of 226 seats, a success that was repeated in 2011 when Evans interviewed actress Geraldine Chapman. Evans' analysis of Pedro Almodovar was highly influential in planning and commissioning a sell-out special series of events examining the acting registers developed by the director. Evans' psychoanalytic approach connecting acting styles to national culture, has a further dimension through his participation in the International Psychoanalytic Film Festival, a forum for dialogue between psychoanalysts, filmmakers, academics and the public.

Evans' work paved the way for a second tier of scholarship on film festivals and cinema history with particular attention to extending the audience for film festival events. The question of how to engage a spectrum of generations to festivals, specifically the post-retirement and youth audiences, was addressed through the appointment of Dr Gil Toffell as a Leverhulme funded postdoctoral fellow (2009-2011). Toffell's research on generations of film-goers in the East End was of interest to programmers at the EEFF, and during the following two years he worked with the East End Film Festival to present the history of East End cinema-going in the festival's programme. Securing funding from the London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange (LCACE), Toffell was invited to create an event on the history of Jewish East End cinema-going in summer 2011, 'The Sights and Sounds of the Jewish East End', involving a screening of a rarely seen documentary made in the East End, *The Vanishing Street*, and a presentation of Toffell's research. The playwright and novelist Bernard Kops gave the keynote introduction for the sell-out event (venue capacity 220). The audience was notably local, with some members having appeared in the documentary, and for whom this event provided the first opportunity to reflect on their involvement. Toffell's ability to unearth and interpret cultural heritage led to the issue of an invitation to develop future events.

In 2012, Toffell's engagement with East End film culture was consolidated with the EEFF screening of a Yiddish film, *A Kid for Two Farthings* (Reed, 1955), and a workshop for young people exploring film and the East End (supported by Queen Mary Public Engagement Fund). In November 2012, an AHRC Cultural Engagement Award facilitated further collaboration between the EEFF, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH), youth community organizations (Hi8tus, Mile End Community Project) and Queen Mary researchers to develop a semi-autonomous film festival with young people in East London. The project brought together Toffell's historical knowledge of migration and cinema in East London with contemporary diasporic culture to inform film festival decision making, and to help young people realise their own cultural aspirations. Toffell, with Harbord and Rai, worked with these organizations to recruit and train young people outside of HEI to develop the semi-autonomous 'Cutting East Youth Film Festival'. Cutting East ran from 28-30 June 2013 at Rich Mix cinema, attracting 553 people, 60% of whom were aged 19 or younger, and 42% were Bangladeshi and non-white minority ethnicities (LBTH monitoring report). In developing a new channel of involvement for local youth, the collaboration also sensitized the EEFF to local needs. Academic research methods aided the focus of the festival, with young people researching the views of their diasporic communities about the EEFF in filmed interviews, which in turn were screened at the event in July 2013. A further AHRC award (an international network grant) has been secured to debate the cultural rights of young people in their re-purposing of media, interfacing community groups in East London and Mumbai, partnering with the EEFF.

These recent awards provide for a sustained enhancement of public film culture through the collaboration of Queen Mary film scholarship and film festivals.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

The Cutting East film festival website describing the aims of the festival and its emergence from collaboration between Queen Mary researchers and LBTH: <http://www.cuttingeast.co.uk/>

A report by film festival youth programmers about their practice and the impact of Cutting East on their relationship to East London public culture: <http://www.cuttingeast.co.uk/the-east-end-is-an-experience/>.

Film London, the Government funded regional film and media agency, reporting on Cutting East: [http://filmlondon.org.uk/news/2013/june/cutting\\_east\\_film\\_festival](http://filmlondon.org.uk/news/2013/june/cutting_east_film_festival)

Screen International reporting on the decision of Film London to financially support the London Spanish Film Festival (August 2011) as a significant contributor to film culture: <http://www.screendaily.com/festivals/film-london-backs-three-autumn-festivals-with-pr-fund/5030428.article>.

Film London Cultural Film Exhibition Fund Evaluation and Monitoring Information, submitted by LBTH for Cutting East Film Festival.

1 Director of the London Spanish Film Festival: corroborating popularization of auteur films through academic frameworks.

2 Director of the East End Film Festival: corroborating the impact of working with Queen Mary researchers on the remit of the EEFF.

3 Films Officer for London Borough of Tower Hamlets: corroborating the success of a QM-LBTH-EEFF collaboration in involving a 'hard to reach' demographic in film festival culture.