

Cinematic realism, documentary film website



**[HTTP://DIGITAL.LIB.HKBU.EDU.HK/DOCUM
ENTARY-FILM/](http://digital.lib.hkbu.edu.hk/documentary-film/)**

Documentary film in South and South-East Asia

Research Programme



- To understand the post-war movement of British official film-making into South-East Asia
- To research the history of the HK documentary film, including current affairs TV production of ATV, TVB and RTHK
- To explore the work of the National Film Board of India
- To explore colonial film-making in S and SEA

Types of materials on the website



- Not all of the previous is on the website, some exist as publications. What is on the website:
- Official documents and memos written by British officials in Britain, Singapore, Malaya/Malaysia and Hong Kong
- Reports written by RAs involving specific research projects
- Film Reviews/analysis

Original location of materials



- **National Archives in Kew, London**
- **National Archives of Singapore**
- **National Archives of Malaysia**
- **Hong Kong Records Office**

- **HKBU Library collection of films by RTHK, TVB, ATV**
- **Hong Kong Film Archive**

GRF projects involved



- **HK Documentary Film (Aitken)**
- **HK Documentary Film Series (HKFU and RTHK) (Aitken)**
- **Influence of the British official film post-war on HK, Malaya and Singapore (Aitken)**
- **Documentary films of ATV and TVB (Aitken)**
- ***Berita Singapura* (Aitken)**
- **National Film Board of India (Deprez)**

Outputs: Books



- **Books:**

- (2016), *The British Official Film in Malaya/Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong (1945-73)*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- (2016), *The Colonial Documentary Film in South and South-East Asia* (eds. Aitken and Deprez), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- (2016), *The Major Realist Film Theorists: An Anthology*, (Aitken ed), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- (2015), 2nd edition *Hong Kong Documentary Film* (two chapters by M. Ingham, six by Aitken), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- (2014), *Hong Kong Documentary Film* (two chapters by M. Ingham, six by Aitken), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Outputs: book chapters I



- (2016) 'Berita Singapura: A Study of a 1960s Singaporean Official Film Series', in *The Colonial Documentary Film in South and South-East Asia*, (Aitken and Deprez eds), pp. 29-44.
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- (2016), 'Introduction', in Aitken and Deprez (eds), pp. 1-28.
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- (2016), 'Introduction' (18,000 words), in (Aitken ed.) *The Major Realist Film Theorists: An Anthology*, pp. 1-40. Book chapter.
-
- (2016), The 'Naturalist' Treatment of Film in *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* (Georg Lukács, 1963), and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (Alexander Solzhenitsyn 1962, Caspar Wrede, 1970), in Aitken (ed.) *The Major Realist Film Theorists: An Anthology*, pp. 156-171.
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Outputs: book chapters II



- (2014), 'The Griersonian Influence and its Challenges: Hong Kong, Malaya and Singapore', in Williams and Druick (eds), *The Grierson Effect: The Worldwide Influence of John Grierson on the Development of Educational and Documentary Cinema* London: BFI, pp. 93-104.
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- (2013), 'John Grierson and the Documentary Film Movement', in Winston, Brian (ed.) *The Documentary Film Book* London and New York: British Film Institute, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 129-137.
-
- (2013), Aitken, I., and Ingham, M., 'Official, Public-Broadcast and Independent Documentary Film in Hong Kong', in Marchetti, Cheung and Yao (eds) *the Blackwell Companion to Hong Kong Film*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Outputs: Journal articles: I



- (2015), 'British Governmental Institutions, the Regional Information Office in Singapore, and the use of the official film in Malaya and Singapore, 1948-1961', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 35: 1, 27-52.
- (2015), 'The Television Documentary Films of Hong Kong's Two Terrestrial Broadcasters: ATV and TVB', *Studies in Documentary Film*, 9: 2, 95-113.
- (2013), 'Georg Lukács' Late Aesthetic and Film Theory: A Study of the Chapter entitled 'Film' in Lukács The Specificity of the Aesthetic (1963)', *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 2: 3, 314-333.

Journal articles II



- (2012), 'The Development of Official Film-making in Hong Kong', *Historical Journal of Film Radio and Television*, 32: 4, 531-551.
-
- (2007), 'Physical Reality: The Role of the Empirical in the Film Theory of Siegfried Kracauer, John Grierson, André Bazin and Georg Lukács', *Studies in Documentary Film*, 1: 2, 105-21.
-
- 6. (2006), 'The European Realist Film Tradition', *Studies in European Cinema*, 3: 3, 175-188

Issues/areas explored as gaps in the research record I



- HKFU 1963-9
- Early years of the Malayan Film Unit (1946-52)
- Beginnings of TV in Malaya/Malaysia and Singapore (1945-64)
- Role of the British Council in HK, Malaya/Malaysia and Singapore (1945-1975)
- Change to a postcolonial situation in Singapore and Malaysia
- Analysis of the films of RTHK, TVB, ATV, *Berita Singapura*

Issues/areas explored as gaps in the research record II



- **Interaction between CO/FO and Griersonian traditions**
- **Changing conceptions of the colonial, late-colonial and postcolonial/post-colonial official film**
- **Roles played by colonial governments in Singapore, Malaya and HK, and British organisations: FO, CO, CRO, FO IRD**
- **General context of the Cold War**

What do the files reveal?



- Files record chronological debates taking place over a number of issues, eg. Fate of the Malayan Film Unit.
- Objective of the researcher: to understand the main parameters of the story that emerges
- This means that the files have not been captured comprehensively, but according to the evolving interpretation of the researcher

Role of the website



- **To place the files online**
- **To provide synopsis of content of documents**
- **To enable cross-referencing**
- **Provide online platform for research programme reports and film analysis**
- **Provide updates on publications and other activities**

Possible new projects emanating from files



- **Malcolm MacDonald**
- **FO IRD**
- **Different positions on the role/impact of the official film**
- **Decline of CO and conflict with post-colonial organisations (FO, CRO)**

New Direction: Cinematic Realism



- Cinematic realism
- Currently:
- ‘Introduction’ to *The Major Realist Film Theorists* (2016, 2017), 20,000 words
- In preparation: General bibliography of writings on cinematic realism

- The website:
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