

Dr Ger Zielinski

On YouTubers and Their Festivals

Dr Ger Zielinski delivered a talk – On YouTubers and Their Festivals – as part of Liverpool John Moores University’s Liverpool Screen School Research Seminar.

Dr Ger Zielinski (Ryerson University, Toronto)

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Toronto’s Buffer Festival is almost exclusively known to and cherished by young local YouTubers. The festival organizers took the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) their model, including categories, celebrities, awards, and even a red carpet, arguably guided by the city’s noted cinephilic culture. Sponsored by YouTube and Adobe, among other industry giants, the festival affords with ease some of the prime venues in the city to host its screenings.

In this talk I survey my current research findings while exploring the subtle variations on festivity produced at this new type of film festival that has arrived long after the hype of the late-1990’s and the advent of online festivals. While the earlier enthusiasm around the creation of online mobile film festivals has receded, a new type of festival appears to be succeeding at finding large publics, namely the popular festivals that utilize YouTube as their primary exhibition and distribution platform, combined with associated off-line events. A range of hybrid events, either following the structure of the trade fair or festival, has emerged that combines online streaming platforms with off-line in-situ screenings.

My research seeks to account for this apparent return to the in-situ mode of festivity along with a renewal of sorts of online digital film festivals that embrace a wider demographic of digital filmmakers and approaches to mediamaking (new “microgenres” and formats).

Biography:

Dr. Ger Zielinski lectures on cinema and media art in the Faculty of Communication and Design at Ryerson University. He received his PhD from McGill University in Montreal, where he wrote his dissertation on the cultural politics of queer film festivals, and then worked as a postdoctoral research fellow in the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. He has published widely on film festivals, queer cinema, and digital media art, and co-founded the Film and Media Festivals Scholarly Interest Group (SIG) associated with the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS). Zielinski is grateful for the financial support that his research projects have received from such funding agencies as Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), Canada Council for the Arts, and the Centre de recherche sur l'intermédialité (CRI).