

# Centre for World Cinemas and Digital Cultures

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES, CULTURES AND SOCIETIES



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

A photograph of a cinema hall from the back of the audience. The seats are dark, and a central aisle leads towards a large white screen at the front. The screen displays the title and dates of the event.

## Cinema, Soft Power, and Geopolitical Change

University of Leeds  
19-21 June, 2017

The Carriageworks, Leeds

**Part of the AHRC-funded international research network  
Soft Power, Cinema and the BRICS and  
supported by the AHRC-OWRI programme “Cross-Language  
Dynamics: Reshaping Community” and the LHRI Sadler  
Seminar Series**

## Programme

### Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**12.30 – 13.00**      **Registration**

**13.00 – 13.45**      **Welcome**

*Prof. Lisa Roberts, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation at University of Leeds*

*Prof. Luke Windsor, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures at University of Leeds*

**Introductory address:**

**Soft Power, Cinema and the BRICS: the "Story" So Far**

*Prof. Stephanie Dennison, University of Leeds*

**13.45 - 14.45**      **PANEL 1** (moderator: Chris Homewood)

Soft Power, Film and the BRICS: South Africa  
*Prof. Paul Cooke, University of Leeds*

Non-State Agents, Quotidian Soft Power, and the Chinese–  
language Film Festival Abroad  
*Dr. Luke Robinson, University of Sussex*

**14.45 – 15.00**      **BREAK (Tea/Coffee)**

**15.00 – 16.00**      **PANEL 2** (moderator: Robert Saunders)

The global animation market: opportunities for developing countries  
*Prof. Alessandra Meleiro, Universidade Federal de Sao Carlos*

Glocal Soft Power: Contemporary Russian Digital Feature-Length  
Animation  
*Dr. Vlad Strukov, University of Leeds*

**16.00 – 17.00**      **KEYNOTE PAPER**

The Rising Soft Power of India

*Prof. Daya Thussu, University of Westminster*  
*Introduced by Professor William Gould, University of Leeds*

**17.00**

**CLOSE**

**19.00**

**Conference Dinner at Thai Edge, 7 Calverley St, Leeds, LS1 3DA**  
£20/head (not including drinks and tips). Please pay in advance via  
the Registration Page

## **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

**09.00 – 10.00**

**PANEL 3** (moderator: Stephanie Dennison)

Promoting Yishu dianying and the Two Sides of China's Soft-  
Power Strategy

*Dr. Xiaoning Lu, School of Oriental & African Studies*

Hollywood Blockbusters and Chinese Soft Power

*Dr. Chris Homewood, University of Leeds*

**10.00 – 11.00**

**PANEL 2** (moderator: Vlad Strukov)

Visualizing the Nation: The Role of Images in National  
Narratives

*Prof. Peter Rutland, Wesleyan University*

Fantastical Visions and Visual Fantasies of Russianness:  
Viking (2016) and Guardians (2017) as Agents of Russian Soft  
Power

*Prof. Robert Saunders, Farmingdale State College*

**11.00 – 12.00**

**PANEL 3** (moderator Song Hwee Lim)

Projecting Putin's Russia on the International Screen: Cinema,  
Cultural Diplomacy and Recursive Nationhood

*Prof. Stephen Hutchings, University of Manchester*

The Paradoxes of the 'Cuban Brand': Soft Power and Cuban Film

*Dr. Dunja Fehimović, University of Newcastle*

**12.00 – 13.00**

**LUNCH**

**13.00 – 14.00**

**PANEL 4** (moderator: Paul Cooke)

Blockbuster History 2.0: Soft Power and Nation Branding in  
Contemporary Russian Cinema  
*Prof. Stephen Norris, Miami University*

Soft power and national cinema: James Bond, Great Britain and  
Brexit  
*Prof. Andrew Higson, University of York*

**14.00 – 14.15**

**BREAK (Tea/Coffee)**

**14.15 – 16.00**

**Measuring Film as a Soft-Power Asset: A Round-Table  
Discussion** (moderator: Daya Thussu)

*Nicola Gallani, British Film Institute (BFI)*  
*Max Kellett-Cornils, Portland Communications*  
*Will Massa, British Film Institute (BFI)/British Council*  
*David Wilson, Bradford UNESCO City of Film*

**16:00-16:15**

**COMFORT BREAK**

**16.15 – 17.00**

**KEYNOTE**

Soft Power and Cinema: A Methodological Reflection and Some  
Chinese Inflections  
*Prof. Song Hwee Lim, Chinese University of Hong Kong*  
*Introduced by Professor Caroline Rose, University of Leeds*

**17.00**

**CLOSE**

**19.00**

**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Screening of *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* (UK: 1987)  
and wine reception/discussion at the White Cloth Gallery,  
Leeds.**

*Introduced by Dr Beth Johnson, University of Leeds*

## Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017

**09.00 – 09.15**      **Breakfast (Pastries, Teas, Coffee)**

**09.15 – 10.15**      **PANEL 5** (moderator Ashvin Devasundaram)

Chinese Localization of Korean Film Noir: The Role of Korean  
Cinema in Building Chinese Soft Power

*Elaine Chung, School of Oriental & African Studies*

Politics of Censorship and Soft Power in Ann Hui's Post-CEPA Films  
*Jessica Siu-yin Yeung, School of Oriental & African Studies*

The role of non-state actors in promoting China's soft power  
*Yanling Yang, University of Leeds*

**10.15 -11.15**      **PANEL 6** (moderator Xiaoning Lu)

Bollywood, Indie Films and India's Schismatic Soft Power  
*Dr. Ashvin Devasundaram, Queen Mary University of London*

New myths for an old nation: Bollywood, soft power and Hindu  
nationalism

*Prof. Rachel Dwyer, School of Oriental & African Studies*

**11.15 – 12.00**      **Journal Launch** (moderator: Chris Homewood)

Introduction: Dr Alan O'Leary, Director of Research and Innovation,  
School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film. Special journal issue  
on Soft Power, Cinema and the BRICS.

*With Paul Cooke, Stephanie Dennison, Alessandra Meleiro, Vlad  
Strukov, Ashvin Devasundaram, Yanling Yang*

**12.00**              **END**

## Paper Abstracts

### **Soft Power, Film and the BRICS: South Africa** ***Prof. Paul Cooke, University of Leeds***

Across the BRICS group of emerging nations film and media are seen as key assets in member states' attempts to increase their international influence, to maximize what is increasingly defined by commentators and policy makers as a nation's 'soft power' (Nye 2004) – and with a good deal of success: 'BRICS turn the film market on its head', declared Andrew Edgecliffe-Johnson of the Financial Times in 2013, suggesting that the efforts of this group was radically changing power relationships within the global film economy, a shift that was in turn demanding a re-evaluation of the global political economy (Edgecliffe-Johnson 2013).

This paper will explore some of the strategies used by cultural elites to maximise the potential of film as a soft power asset, focusing in particular on the case of South Africa, the BRICS nation which has been the least discussed in this regard. This paper will explore competing tensions in the contemporary film industry that challenge any policy aim to use film as a way of leveraging a South African 'Soft Power' narrative, while also looking at recent development that suggest a new, more sustainable narrative might well be emerging.

### **Non-State Agents, Quotidian Soft Power, and the Chinese– language Film Festival Abroad** ***Dr. Luke Robinson, University of Sussex***

This paper considers the role of Chinese-language film festivals in London in relation to issues of Chinese soft power. As part of this latter strategy, film festivals with connections to Chinese government institutions—what Cindy Wong (2015, 19) terms “China-sponsored Chinese-language film festivals”—have been established overseas. Their aim is to raise the profile of the PRC film industry abroad, while also bringing state-approved cinematic product to a foreign audience; their organization suggests a top-down, monological understanding of soft power that is often assumed as the default mode of Chinese state projects. In London, however, small film festivals specializing in Chinese-language film have sprung up alongside government-organized events. While these small festivals are in no sense state-managed, they can provide us with some insight into how non-state actors connect to Chinese government soft power strategies. Using two case studies—Filming East and the Chinese Visual Festival—I explore the ways in which

the organizational model and programming patterns of these festivals suggest alternatives to the top-down model of soft power. *Filming East* demonstrates a contingent, rhizomatic model of accommodation with state soft power policies and cinematic discourse, but one driven by the self-interest of UK-based festival “stakeholders” (Rhyne, 2009). The Chinese Visual Festival employs counter-programming strategies in ways consistent with what Dina Iordanova (forthcoming) has termed the “corrective” festival model, but in ways that I would suggest are also self-consciously “dialogic” (Bakhtin, 1999). Both events show how individuals and events with no direct connection to the Chinese state can participate in, but also reframe, soft power strategies and discourse in ways that draw on, and sometimes even advance, their own quotidian experience and interests—thus requiring us to reflect more critically on what we think Chinese soft power is, and how we understand it to work.

## **The global animation market: opportunities for developing countries**

***Prof. Alessandra Meleiro, Universidade Federal de São Carlos***

With 25% of the audiovisual market, global sales of \$ 100 billion in 2006 and \$ 222 billion in 2013, animation is one of the segments of the creative industry worldwide with the highest growth potential (7% per year). With this panorama, it is affirmed that the animation industry has gradually become a sector of economic dimension relevant to some countries and an important mechanism of economic growth for others: the American animation became the sixth largest industry of the country; Canada is the world's largest animation producer, with four hundred hours a year; In Europe € 2 billion has been earmarked to finance five hundred animations on the continent through the European Union; In Japan, the entertainment industry is the third largest in the country; Finally, animation production in South Korea is so significant that it currently accounts for a third of the world animation production.

The overall good performance of the digital animation market in recent years suggests an economic opportunity for companies not tied to US majors, including from developing countries, where animation has reached a strategic status in the creative industry's production chain.

The fact that animation is a labor-intensive activity with specialized labor generated a cost structure that forced the outsourcing of animation production: globally competing firms that are located in developed countries to smaller studios, located in developing countries where wage costs are lower. Thus, part of the animation production of the major studios of the major producing countries - the United States, Europe, Japan and Canada - was outsourced to small studios in developing countries, such as those located in Asia, especially for South Korea, Taiwan, India and China, which, in addition to



guaranteeing low production costs, have labor with specific capacity to work with computer graphics.

But the advantage of possible outsourcing, apart from cost reduction and increased global animation production, would be to create the opportunity for studios in developing countries to gain expertise in the production of better quality animation, as well as learning the best artistic techniques and computational.

In this article we intend to discuss the insertion of animation producers from developing countries, such as Brazil, in the international market, as the Brazilian animators, formerly absorbed by international studios, became producers and exporters of Brazilian animation content in the most diverse formats (Games, series, movies, VOD, licensed products), building a library of intellectual property rights that has given them a global reputation.

## **Glocal Soft Power: Contemporary Russian Digital Feature-Length Animation**

***Dr. Vlad Strukov, University of Leeds***

Current research has focussed on two areas of Russian soft power: cinema (for example, Stephen Norris's book on Russian patriotic blockbuster 2012) and media, especially the international broadcaster *RT*. In these studies, the researchers concern themselves predominantly with the top-down, government-led approach to soft power. They rehearse and re-produce the Cold-War era narrative of state control over media and film production and consumption, paying little attention to second-tier cultural producers (those acting outside the framework of the state but in sync with the state provision) and independent, grass-roots producers such as privately-owned companies and individual entrepreneurs.

Also, research on soft power has focussed on cultural products such as film, fashion and television shows that are aimed at adult as these audiences are perceived to be the main area of impact.

In my presentation I aim to challenge these two dominant discourses by exploring the work of independent animation studios in the Russian Federation. After the dissolution of the USSR, the state support for animation studios drastically diminished leading to the closure of classical studios. Limited state funding has been focussed on supporting artistic productions such as short films made using non-digital technologies. Since 2000s a number of independent animation studios making digital films have emerged including the Centre for National Film responsible for *Belka and Strelka: the Space Dogs* and Mel'nitsa which has produced a series of feature-length adaptations of Russian fairy



tales. *Masha and the Bear*, an animated television series, produced by Animaccord, has been a global success. The series is distributed for free on YouTube and some episodes have over 30m views.

The focus of my analysis will be on the Voronezh-based privately-owned animation studio Wizart and their feature-length digital animation film *Snow Queen* which has been sold to Europe, Africa and Australia. In February 2017 Universal Picture signed a contract to represent the company in the US.

## **The Rising Soft Power of India**

***Prof. Daya Thussu, University of Westminster***

India's soft power is on the rise, in parallel with its economic power as the fastest growing major economy in the world, at a rate of more than 7 per cent in 2016. Drawing on the notion of soft power, developed by Joseph Nye, whose focus is primarily on the United States, this paper will suggest that an ancient civilization such as India offers a more complex narrative of its global presence. India's growing soft power will be analysed within three domains: firstly, India's \$3.5 billion film industry – Bollywood - the world's largest in terms of production and viewership, will be examined as a soft power asset. The second domain will focus on the diasporic dimension of India's international presence, increasingly viewed by Indian government and corporates as a vital resource for its soft power. As the world's largest English-speaking diaspora, the Indian presence is visible across the globe, as are ideas emanating from India. The third domain will focus on the emergence of an Indian internet – part of the Indian government's \$18 billion 'Digital India' initiative, launched in 2015 - and its potential for becoming the world's largest 'open' internet. The paper will suggest that the push for digital commerce and communication is likely to increase under a pro-business government of Narendra Modi. Already home to the world's second largest internet population, India's creative and cultural industries have the potential to circulate across various digital domains, resulting in globalized production, distribution and consumption practices. Such content will no longer be an artistic or creative enterprise but a global brand, contributing to the reimagining of India's role on the international stage, from that of a socialist-oriented voice of 'the Third World' to a rapidly modernizing, market-driven democracy.

## **Promoting Yishu dianying and the Two Sides of China's Soft-Power Strategy**

***Dr. Xiaoning Lu, School of Oriental & African Studies***

Joseph Nye's concept of "soft power" has long been integrated into the contemporary Chinese political idea of Comprehensive National Power – the sum total of the powers of a country in economy, military affairs, science and technology, education and resources, and its influence. In recent years, with the popularization of the Chinese president Xi Jinping's new slogan "the China Dream," which envisions the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," the Chinese government has spent great efforts to improve China's cultural soft power in order to match the nation's new-found status as a global economic powerhouse. One of such endeavours is the implementation of its "going out" policy – China's overall activist foreign policy – in the film sector.

Rather than examining Chinese film exports, Chinese investment in Hollywood or big-budget transnational co-productions, this paper will focus on the burgeoning art film (yishu dianying) culture sponsored and promoted by the Chinese government in order to highlight the symbiotic relationship between the cultivation of domestic film culture and the development of cultural diplomacy. Specifically, it will examine a set of activities the Shanghai Art Film Federation has engaged in to promote Chinese "yishu dianying" (art film) among international audiences, including its first film exhibition in the United Kingdom, "2016 Shanghai Art Film London Showcase". Different from both art house films and Chinese independent films, "yishu dianying" refers to a group of officially sanctioned, government sponsored films that may or may not be classified as genre films but target at the general public and are of high artistic qualities. Striving to introduce excellent Chinese "art films" to the world, the Chinese government has created cultural policies favourable to young filmmakers and to the development of activities related to film appreciation and film criticism.

In short, the fact that the Chinese government actively uses "art films" as part of its 'going out' strategy to enhance China's soft power not just indicates that China's new vision of Chinese cinema on the global stage. It also calls attention to the underexplored aspects of soft power: its ability to transform the domestic cultural environment.

## **Visualizing the Nation: The Role of Images in National Narratives**

***Prof. Peter Rutland, Wesleyan University***

Benedict Anderson's classic *Imagined Communities* paid scant attention to visual imagery. There has been a series of media revolutions since the age of print capitalism

(radio, cinema, television, the internet), but there has been little scholarly effort to incorporate the role of these technologies into our understanding of nationalism. This paper examines what students of nationalism can learn from the work of scholars of visual studies.

Mainstream political science focuses on the rational pursuit of self and collective interests, but there is growing recognition of the role of emotion in cognitive processes. Images are emotionally powerful and often provide the dominant frame for 'rational' debate.

Most studies of the political valence of images focus on top-down, state-led processes, with much of the recent critical geography literature focusing on US hegemony. Examples discussed in this paper include the Mao cult and Vladimir Putin. The basic pattern which emerges in the use of images is threefold: (1) the cult of a leader who is (2) protecting the nation (often portrayed as female) (3) from a perceived threat.

At the same time, images play an important role in counter-hegemonic movements. Examples discussed include Mother India, the 1916 Easter Rising, Black Lives Matter, and the Brexit referendum.

## **Hollywood blockbusters and Chinese soft power**

***Dr. Chris Homewood, University of Leeds***

This presentation interrogates the impact that shifting sources of global box office growth are exerting on the messages Hollywood communicates about China to the rest of the world. With dollars at stake, the old orientalist tropes and stereotypes that encourage our regard for China as stubbornly uncivilised, morally dubious and just downright weird are being by and large held in abeyance in recent portrayals, which ostensibly aim to succour rather than stain China's reputation in the West. With this in mind, I am interested in testing claims that today Hollywood operates as an adjunct vehicle for the transmission of Chinese soft power. Although films such as *Looper* (Rian Johnson, 2012) and *Transformers: Age of Extinction* (Michael Bay, 2014) present a favourable view of all things Chinese and accommodate and endorse Chinese strategic narratives, I also consider how this newfound favourable regard for China is nonetheless predicated on orientalist knowledge, albeit a 'new' form identified by Daniel Vukovich (2012). No longer the site of absolute difference to the West, China is instead portrayed as a site of 'becoming sameness' to 'us.' Thus far from promoting China's national interest to the detriment of the United States, recent U.S. blockbusters draw on the operational logic of Sinological-orientalism to discover new and – crucially for Hollywood's market ambitions – less perceptibly offensive means to disadvantage or contain China *vis-à-vis* the U.S.-West.

## **Fantastical Visions and Visual Fantasies of Russianness: Viking (2016) and Guardians (2017) as Agents of Russian Soft Power**

***Prof. Robert Saunders, Farmingdale State College***

My paper focuses on two recent big-budget Russian films, *Viking/Викинг* (2016) and *Guardians/Защитники* (2017), with the aim of interrogating contemporary examples of filmic fantasy. I am particularly interested in these films' respective roles as influencers of geopolitical codes and geographical imagination, both at 'home' (i.e. within Russian cultural space) and 'abroad' (i.e. Europe, North America, and East Asia). Situated at the nexus of soft power, nation branding, and popular geopolitics scholarship, this paper employs and expands Saunders and Strukov's analytical framework of the 'popular geopolitics feedback loop' (2017) as it applies to the Russian Federation. My purpose is to examine the ways in which multidirectional, geopolitically-informed mediascapes shape the 'West' and Russia's respective Fremdbilder of one another, as well as prefigure changes in geopolitical attitudes, cultures and identities. By examining the (geo)visual representations and (geo)politically pregnant content of these two films in relation to their 'Hollywood'-based counterparts (*Viking* bears a great semblance to HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011- ) and The History Channel's *Vikings* (2013- ) while *Guardians*' is a clear adaptation of Marvel's *The Avengers* series (2012- ) and its adjuncts [Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, etc.]), this study seeks to explore the ways in which soft power flows can be more effectively employed using pre-established modalities of popular cultural persuasion. By reverse engineering profitable Western cinematic styles such as the neo-noir superhero film and the medieval political soap opera, both of which are proven to appeal to far-right elements in societies from the U.S. to Poland to Russia, Russian cultural producers are tapping into a reservoir of readily manipulated tropes that can provide long-term dividends to the Russian state in its efforts to resume its role as a major force in the world. However, as I will discuss, such retooling of Western cultural products is not without risk and may result in counter-readings that undermine Russia's attempts at promoting the country as a source of emulation and respect, particularly when such artefacts conflate (post-)Cold War fantasies with nightmares (*Guardians*) or overreach in their efforts to revise history and rebrand ongoing conflicts in the near abroad (*Viking*).

## **Projecting Putin's Russia on the International Screen: Cinema, Cultural Diplomacy and Recursive Nationhood**

***Prof. Stephen Hutchings, University of Manchester***

This article's starting point is the puzzle created by the international scandal surrounding the Academy Award success of Andrei Zviagintsev's cinematic exposé of corruption in Putin's Russia, *Leviathan* (2014). The Russian state's outrage at the award conflicted with *Leviathan*'s nomination to the Oscars and its 40% Ministry of Culture funding. The puzzle serves as a platform from which the article proceeds to advocate renewed attention to the hitherto neglected area of cinema as cultural diplomacy.

Acknowledging the problematic instrumentalism that 'cultural diplomacy' harbours (its implicit notions of reified nations as transitive 'agents' projecting reified cultures), the article endorses a re-conception of the term which accounts for the endurance of nations, but also the dynamic, ever-shifting mesh of intracultural and transcultural meaning flows constituting them. It further suggests that contradictions in the Russian political elite's crudely instrumental approach to cultural diplomacy foreground the tensions this mesh generates for all nation builders.

The article takes as case studies two Russian films that enjoyed recent international success, both of which also sparked domestic debates about Russian national identity – Aleksei Fedorchenko's *Silent Souls* (2010) and Karen Shakhnazarov's *White Tiger* (2012). It considers them within the framework of a recursive approach that captures both nations' deep entwinement with transnational flows, and the repetitious, dialogic process through which that entwinement is enacted. Identifying recursion's traces within the symbolic architectures, representational strategies and narrative perspectives of the two films, the article argues that the close reading of cinematic texts can illuminate cultural diplomacy's complex relationship with nationhood.

## **The Paradoxes of the 'Cuban Brand': Soft Power and Cuban Film**

***Dr. Dunja Fehimović, University of Newcastle***

Cuba's remarkable success in generating international solidarity and soft power has been largely premised on its ability to react to changing circumstances and harness them to its advantage (Bustamante and Sweig, 2008). Such has been the case with the Cuban response to the hugely unpopular US embargo, creating narratives of victimhood and resistance which, although they may appear contradictory, have in Cuba's case worked in complementary, mutually reinforcing ways. Similarly, officials and creators harnessed the communicative and promotional potential of culture in order to help Cuba weather the profound crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet Bloc; specifically, a number of

films made since the 1990s have simultaneously reinforced the romantic image of a rebellious Cuba and addressed the desperate need for hard currency by promoting the island as touristic idyll. This unlikely combination has been echoed in a new reliance on international co-production, subjecting a previously politicised, national cinema to the demands of the neoliberal marketplace. The resultant compromises are evident in two recent films: *Habana Blues* (Benito Zambrano, 2005) and *La película de Ana* (Daniel Díaz Torres, 2012), international co-productions that embody – in narrative and production – the coexistence of compromise and resistance. Both films tell stories of creative Cubans who must decide on the terms of their personal and professional relationships with foreigners. By analysing these examples, this paper shows that this combination of political, cultural, and market imperatives in Cuban cinema creates a paradoxical Cuban ‘brand’. Defined largely by the idea of authenticity in resistance to an encroaching global capitalism, this brand speaks to Cubans whilst advancing economic agendas that rely on tourism, and, at the same time, reinforcing soft power based on international solidarity.

## **Blockbuster History 2.0: Soft Power and Nation Branding in Contemporary Russian Cinema**

***Prof. Stephen Norris, Miami University***

This paper will examine the rise of Hollywood-style blockbusters in Russian since 2004 in two parts (2004-2012 and 2012-2017) and through two lenses (as examples of nation branding and as soft power cultural resources). Beginning in 2004, Russian films began to beat their Hollywood competition at the box office. To "win" this battle, however, required adopting Hollywood-style effects, PR campaigns, and plots. Films such as Timur Bekmambetov's *Night Watch*, Fedor Bondarchuk's *Ninth Company*, and Andrei Kravchuk's *The Admiral* regularly mined Hollywood tropes and genres but branded their final product as "Russian" in order to appeal to domestic audiences. In doing so, these blockbuster films helped to generate the patriotic culture that has dominated the Putin era. This blockbuster history has continued during Putin's second term as President, but has evolved in significant ways, as this paper will explain. Bondarchuk's 2013 *Stalingrad* set box office records, was the first Russian film made in 3D IMAX format, and did well in China, but it flopped in the US and generated a small amount of backlash for not being "patriotic" enough. These trends have continued with films such as Kravchuk's 2016 *Viking* and the not-yet released film by Aleksei Uchitel', *Matilda*, which have both generated controversy over their historical depictions. The efforts of nation-branding and soft power cinema that began in 2004 and that helped to create a revived Russian patriotic culture, in other words, have reached a point of crisis.



## **Soft power and national cinema: James Bond, Great Britain and Brexit** ***Prof. Andrew Higson, University of York***

The UK's impending departure from the EU is a major geo-political development. This paper reflects on the role of James Bond in this development. The apparent ease with which the Daniel Craig incarnation of Bond both asserts a British identity and moves around the world has been repeatedly invoked in recent political debates in and about the UK. The 2014 *Monocle* report and 2015 Portland report on soft power identified the UK as one of the world's leading soft powers, both citing the Bond films as an indicator of that status. Around the same time, the Bond films were also roped into VisitBritain's promotional campaign to make Britain seem an attractive place to visit, with the slogan 'Bond is GREAT Britain'. This was an exercise in national branding for a global world, fully supported by the British government, and a deliberate attempt to project and increase soft power.

There is of course an irony here, since Bond repeatedly exercises power through violent coercion rather than cultural diplomacy. At the same time, the highly seductive narrative world constructed by the Bond films associates him with prestige consumer goods and a luxury lifestyle in which it seems almost anything is possible. This is a national narrative, with the Bond films playing to a very particular project of national branding, but it is also a narrative of cosmopolitan globe-trotting adventure.

The politics of Bond's adventures equally play off the national against the global. In the most recent Bond films, British national security is threatened by a series of villainous global players, but protected almost single-handedly by Bond, with the support of the British secret service. There is little sense of international collaboration or cooperation as a positive force, even with the USA. Indeed, the organisation SPECTRE in the eponymously-named 2015 film is a multi-national corporation, a metaphorical version of the G7, which seeks to privatise global cyber-security for its own sinister ends.

This is the perfect narrative for the post-Brexit vision of the UK as a sovereign global power. No wonder that Michael Gove and the 'Better Off Out' Brexit campaign explicitly referred to both the Bond films and the idea of Britain as a globally-leading soft power. UK film policy was never particularly pro-European and is now increasingly oriented to the idea of Britain as a global player in the film industry; yet at the heart of that policy is a reliance on inward investment, and of course the Bond films are enormous beneficiaries of that policy, as US-funded UK productions.

Britain's role as a global soft power apparently depends on the politics of the Bond films and the attractiveness of their narrative world; the nation-branding at stake here coincided with the visions of the Brexiteers. Ironically, this power and this nation-branding depend on multi-national inward investment in UK's cultural economy. This is the plight of



national cinema in a globalised world, and indicative of how developed nations are mobilising soft power and adjusting their presence in the global media landscape.

## **Soft Power and Cinema: A Methodological Reflection and Some Chinese Inflections**

***Prof. Song Hwee Lim, Chinese University of Hong Kong***

It has been more than two decades since the political scientist Joseph S. Nye proposed the notion of soft power. Since then, the term has been borrowed by scholars in other disciplines to account for transnational transactions of various objects of research. However, the term itself has had a mixed reception in academia, particularly with regards to its methodological problems. In bringing this notion into dialogue with the discipline of film studies, what can it explain and explicate where extant approaches and frameworks could not? What insights into the production, distribution, consumption, and reception of films does it offer that are missing elsewhere? What are the methodological advantages and limitations in employing this notion?

This paper sets out to interrogate two interrelated questions. First, it offers a methodological reflection on the utility of the notion of soft power for the study of cinema (as laid out above). Second, it examines the relationship between soft power and hard power by focusing on the case of the People's Republic of China, whose manoeuvres in arenas covered by both forms of power have become a concern for many global observers. Putting these two questions together, in an era in which the rise of China and its exercise of soft power have raised alarm bells, this paper probes the methodological implications for the study of the relationship between soft power and cinema where cultural institutions (including cinema) cannot be divorced from broader political and ideological inflections.

## **Chinese Localization of Korean Film Noir: The Role of Korean Cinema in Building Chinese Soft Power**

***Elaine W. T. Chung, PhD Candidate, SOAS***

This paper intends to address how international film co-production plays a role in China's state led soft power project, and how far it has been achieved so far. While current scholarship primarily focuses on China's ambivalent relationship with Hollywood, I explore its less studied but equally thriving filmmaking network with Korea. The first part of this paper analyses official and academic discourses about Chinese-Korean film co-production in both countries. I argue that to China, it is a politically-driven strategy to cash in on Korea's soft power, for the purpose of building its own one. Ideally by adopting

Korean film styles, which have been proved successful in the global market, China can make films that are more exportable and capable of promoting its image overseas.

On top of existing discussions dominated by industrial/policy studies, the second part of this paper turns to the film texts, aiming to understand how Korean cinematic techniques are incorporated in practice. Narrative structures and formal elements of two recent, relatively lucrative Chinese-Korean films - *Bad Guys Always Die* (2015) and *Tik Tok* (2016) will be examined. In these two cross-border crime stories, while semantic qualities characterized Korean film noir are heavily replicated, they are localized by the Chinese directors due to ideological and industrial constraints. The constant comedic interruptions of violent scenes, diluted social critiques, and clarified lines between good and evil are examples. With this case study, I argue that in some ways, Korean practitioners did contribute to Chinese soft power by refining the genres, themes and overall quality of Chinese cinema. But if soft power also means boosting Chinese cultural exports, these co-productions are largely unsuccessful as their film forms Sinicized from Korean ones could hardly lure even Korean audience, let alone those of other cultures.

## **Politics of Censorship and Soft Power in Ann Hui's Post-CEPA Films** ***Jessica Siu-yin Yeung, PhD Candidate, SOAS***

This paper probes the ways Hong Kong film's aesthetics and subjectivity have become marginalised after the Closer Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed in 2003. I will refer to Ann Hui's *The Postmodern Life of My Aunt* (2007) and *The Golden Era* (2014) in my illustration. CEPA encourages Hong Kong and mainland Chinese filmmakers to co-produce films. The co-production between Hong Kong and mainland China enables Hong Kong directors to acquire budget necessary for production. Films distributed under CEPA, however, must satisfy the (ideological) examination of State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of the People's Republic of China (SAPPRFT), which may undermine the appeal of these films. The reason for this is that attractive thematics such as "satire, social taboos, violence, [and films with] criminals or ghosts as major characters" are all "subject to censorship in China" (Lovric 2016).

I deploy Michel Hockx's revised model of Pierre Bourdieu's new censorship theory (1998), which emphasises the power of political capital in the analysis of cultural field, to explicate the politics between censorship, hard power (political capital and economic capital), and soft power (cultural capital and symbolic capital) in Hui's so-called "Hong Kong films." I will also highlight how "socio-culturally marginalized differences" (Iwabuchi, 2012) in such films display urgent problems in the Hong Kong film industry at large by pointing out the problem of self-censorship.

The economic capital of the PRC instills willingness into Hong Kong and foreign film-makers to “self-censor” their script contents to meet the SAPPRFT’s regulation (Keane, 2014). CEPA therefore results in self-censoring and subsequent sabotage of the soft power or the appeal of Hong Kong cinema. By coercing film-makers to submit to the PRC cultural imperialism, auteurs such as Ann Hui are prevented from allowing their creativity to thrive in the East Asian film-making scene.

## **The role of non-state actors in promoting China’s soft power**

***Dr. Yanling Yang, University of Leeds***

This paper aims to investigate the role of non-state actors in film as an instrument of China’s soft power. Unlike previous studies, which relied primarily on the theoretical discussion of soft power and emphasized on the Anglophone world (Melissen 2005, xx), this study aims to investigate the ways in which China, a non-democratic regime, engages with soft power with the focus of non-state actors. Among the few empirical studies of China’s soft power, most have focused upon the state-funded Confucius Institute (Zaharna et al., 2014), and state-owned media enterprises (Shambaugh, 2015). Film, considered to be an important instrument of soft power, has been neglected in the research of China’s soft power.

To address these concerns, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the key state and non-state actors to investigate how they promote Chinese film onto the international stage; and finally I scrutinized the statistical record of Chinese film’s global performance to examine its potential ability of wielding soft power. By weaving together these rich and diverse data sets, this study proposes a new formula in assessing the role of film in promoting soft power. It also contributes to the existing scholarly debates in the soft power literature by providing a thorough empirical study with focus on the relationship between film and soft power from an authoritarian regime.

Drawing on relevant theoretical perspectives and mixed research methods, this study reveals that China has formulated the so-called “film going out” policy aiming to promote soft power and oversee film industry through the censorship system. It shows that the non-state actors has played important role in disseminating China’s soft power and the outcome of “film going out” policy is not as optimistic as the official statement has claimed.

## **Bollywood, Indie films and India's schismatic soft power**

***Dr. Ashvin I Devasundaram, Queen Mary University of London***

India's ascendancy as a global economic superpower is couched in an idiosyncratic soft power model. This consists of a dialectical tug-of-war between the outer global and inner domestic dimensions of the nation's soft power narrative. In this paper, I argue that the external address of the nation's soft power story portrays a unisonant outward-facing globalising nation, open to foreign multinational investment. The internal dimension of the soft power scheme, catalysed by religion-based politics, unfurls a nativist and nationalist soft power standard, hoisted on the flagpole of a majoritarian identity-based 'Indianness'. This paper argues that this dyadic soft power scheme could be framed through Bollywood - the cinematic custodian of the national soft power narrative(s). Drawing on an original theory of Bollywood's cinema meta-hegemony (Devasundaram, 2016), this paper will compare two films starring popular Bollywood actor Aamir Khan. The first, *PK* (2014), a scathing parody of entrenched religiosity in India, is one of the all-time top-grossing Bollywood films in India and abroad. The 2017 film *Dangal*, is a patriotic sports story about a female wrestler who gains plaudits for the nation in the Commonwealth Games. I will examine the turbulent discourses that bridge these two films, tracing the widespread national opprobrium faced previously by Khan for publically expressing anxiety about rising intolerance in India, noting *Dangal* as a cinematic return to soft power status quo as a celebratory paean to Indian national pride. As a third space counterpoint to Bollywood's sanctification of India's soft power status quo, I will reveal how self-critical new Indian Indie films with alternative 'state of the nation' stories expose the contradictions and inconsistencies of the soft power model. Demonstrating how Aamir Khan's two Bollywood films themselves exhibit Indie traits, I will analyse the innate instability, volatility and porosity in India's schismatic soft power scheme.

## **New myths for an old nation: Bollywood, soft power and Hindu nationalism**

***Prof. Rachel Dwyer, Queen Mary University of London***

Bollywood, the name by which mainstream Hindi cinema has come to be known over the last two decades, is recognised internationally as a style of glamour and kitsch, associated with song and dance. From being seen as something of a national guilty secret, it has come to mark a new image of modern India where it continues to hold around 95% of domestic film market (Thussu 2007) with the new and other media reinforcing, rather than detracting from, the cinema.

India has had a Hindu nationalist government since 2014, which has recently consolidated its success in several state elections (2017). Concerns with how the nation

is depicted have been mostly internal affairs with cultural wars on social media and on university campuses. This paper looks at how the Hindi film industry, which practises self-censorship in the face of recent depictions of religion, notably Hinduism and Islam, is shaping a new image of India in this climate but will also appeal to its overseas audiences.

The paper will examine key Hindi films from the last three years which look at religion and religious communities including *PK*, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, *Raees*, *Bajirao Mastani*, and the Telugu/Tamil/Hindi *Baahubali 1 and 2* and, perhaps, films which focus on gender and sexuality: *Dangal*, *Queen*, *Kapoor and Sons*.

## Biographies

### Elaine Chung | SOAS

Elaine W.T. Chung is a PhD candidate in Film Studies at SOAS, The University of London. Her research focuses on transnational cultural politics in East Asia, with an emphasis on Korean stardom in Chinese cinema.

### Prof. Paul Cooke | University of Leeds

Paul Cooke is Centenary Chair of World Cinemas at the University of Leeds. He is the author of *Representing East Germany: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (2005) and *Contemporary German Cinema* (2012). His edited volumes include *World Cinema's Dialogues; with Hollywood* (2007), *The Lives of Others and Contemporary German Film* (2013), with Marc Silberman, *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering* (2012) and with Rob Stone, *Screening European Heritage: Creating and Consuming History on Film* (2017). He is currently involved in an AHRC project exploring the role of film as a tool for the generation of 'Soft Power' across the BRICS group of emerging nations and is beginning an AHRC project working with marginalised groups in South Africa, Brazil and India to use filmmaking as a tool to challenge their nation's 'Soft Power narratives'.

### Dr. Ashvin I Devasundaram | Queen Mary University of London

Dr. Ashvin I Devasundaram is Lecturer in World Cinema at Queen Mary University of London. He is Programming Adviser to the London Asian Film Festival (LAFF) and Creative Director of the Edinburgh Asian Film Festival (EAFF). Ashvin's monograph

*India's New Independent Cinema: Rise of the Hybrid* (Routledge, 2016), is the world's first book on the topic. He is a BBC Academy Expert Voice in Cultural Studies and Visual Arts and is on the editorial board of *The South Asianist*, Journal of South Asian Studies, University of Edinburgh

### **Prof. Stephanie Dennison | University of Leeds (Conference Organiser)**

Stephanie Dennison is a Professor of Brazilian Studies and a founding member of the Centre for World Cinemas and Digital Cultures at the University of Leeds. She is co-author with Lisa Shaw of two monographs on Brazilian cinema (*Popular Cinema in Brazil*, MUP: 2004 and *Brazilian National Cinema*, Routledge: 2007) and edited books on Latin American film and popular culture. She co-edited with Song Hwee Lim *Remapping WorldCinema* (Wallflower, 2005) and she leads the AHRC-funded international research network Soft Power, Cinema and the BRICS.

### **Prof. Rachel Dwyer | SOAS University of London**

Rachel Dwyer is Professor of Indian Cultures and Cinema at SOAS, University of London. Her main research interest is in Hindi cinema where she has researched and published on film magazines and popular fiction; consumerism and the new middle classes; love and eroticism; visual culture; religion; emotions; stars and star families; Gandhi and the biopic; Hindi cinema in East Africa and in the UK. [Racheldwyer.com](http://Racheldwyer.com)

### **Dr. Dunja Fehimović | University of Newcastle**

Dr. Dunja Fehimović is lecturer in Spanish at Newcastle University, where she teaches on Hispanic film, literature and culture. Her PhD, from the University of Cambridge, explored national identity in contemporary Cuban film. In 2015, she co-convened an international, interdisciplinary conference entitled Branding Latin America. She has published on children in Cuban film, memory and Cuban documentary, and nation branding in Cuban cinema. Her research interests include national identity, branding, cosmopolitanism, and the Caribbean

### **Nicola Gallani | British Film Institute**

Nicola Gallani is the BFI's International Manager: Programme and Archive. She joined from the British Council where she managed the global Shakespeare Lives film programme which toured to over 100 countries in 2016. Nicola has a background in independent film distribution and exhibition spanning two decades, including stints at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Peccadillo Pictures and BFI London Film Festival. Nicola has helped launch many new and distinctive voices to UK audiences including Wong Kar



Wai, Abbas Kiarostami, Lars Von Trier and Michael Haneke, and in recent years worked on the releases of Celine Sciamma's *Tomboy* and Andrew Haigh's *Weekend*. She was distribution consultant to BAFTA on their first ever theatrical release and served as Artistic Director of the British Film Festival of Kurdistan in Erbil, Iraq, creating a film festival in a city without cinemas. In 2014 Nicola executive produced [three new short film commissions](#) from John Akomfrah, Mark Cousins and Penny Woolcock responding to the British Council's archive film collection. She has also produced two features and most recently directed a short documentary about London's historic Little Italy.

### **Prof. William Gould | University of Leeds**

Will Gould is Professor of Indian History at University of Leeds. He completed his undergraduate, MPhil and PhD at University of Cambridge, and was a Research Fellow at the Centre for South Asian Studies at Cambridge from 2000-2003. Principal Publications include "Hindu nationalism and the language of politics in late Colonial India (Cambridge University Press, 2004), "Bureaucracy, Community and Influence: Society and the State in India, 1930-1960s" (Routledge, 2011) and "Religion and Conflict in South Asia" (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

### **Prof. Andrew Higson | University of York**

Andrew Higson is Greg Dyke Professor of Film and Television, and the Head of the Department of Theatre, Film and Television at the University of York. He has published widely on British cinema, from the silent period to the present, and from contemporary drama to the heritage film. His monographs include *Film England: Culturally English Filmmaking Since the 1990s* (2011, IB Tauris), *English Heritage, English Cinema: The Costume Drama Since 1980* (2003) and *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (1995; both Oxford University Press). Running through much of his work is a concern for questions of national and transnational cinema, and his article 'The concept of national cinema', first published in *Screen* in 1989, has proved very influential and has been translated and/or reprinted several times. He led the HERA-funded research project on contemporary European cinema and television drama, MeCETES ([www.mecetes.co.uk](http://www.mecetes.co.uk)), from 2013-2016.

### **Dr. Chris Homewood | University of Leeds (Conference Organiser)**

Chris Homewood is Lecturer in German and World Cinemas at the University of Leeds, where he manages the JH Film Studies programme. In addition to work on filmic representations of the Red Army Faction (RAF), his recent publications include contributions to *Berlin School Glossary: An ABC of the New Wave in German Cinema* (2013) and *A Transnational Art-Cinema: The Berlin School and its Global Contexts*



(forthcoming, 2017). He is currently preparing an essay on the relationship between Hollywood and China.

### **Prof. Stephen Hutchings | University of Manchester**

Having worked previously at the Universities of Rochester New York, and Surrey, Stephen Hutchings is currently Professor of Russian Studies at the University of Manchester. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and former President of the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies. He has published extensively on Russian screen media (principally, television and cinema), frequently in a comparative context. He has been PI on 7 large AHRC grants since 2000, most recently leading a team which won £3.9 million for a project on the changing relationship between language and community under the AHRC's 'Open World' scheme, and £880K for a project entitled 'Reframing Russia for the Global Mediasphere'. His principle publications include monographs on Russian television culture under Putin, race and ethnicity in the Russian media, and a comparative study of television news representations of Islam as a security threat, edited books on Russian screen adaptations of literature and on film and intercultural dialogue; journal articles on the word-image dialogue in Soviet and post-Soviet film; and book chapters on the Russian auteur director, Aleksandr Sokurov, and on Russia's place within French cinema's postcolonial imagination.

### **Dr. Beth Johnson | University of Leeds**

Beth Johnson is Associate Professor in Film and Media at the School of Media and Communication, University of Leeds. She is the author of *Paul Abbott* (Manchester University Press, 2013) and has published widely on screen representations of gender and class. She has recently completed co-editing a dossier on 'English Television Stardom and Performing the North' (with David Forrest, University of Sheffield) for the *Journal of Popular Television*, as well as a book collection entitled *Social Class and Television Drama in Contemporary Britain* - to be published by Palgrave Macmillan in July 2017. In addition, last year Beth published an article on Clio Barnard's film *The Arbor* (2010) in the *Journal of British Cinema and Television* (13:2, 278-291)

### **Prof. Song Hwee Lim | Chinese University of Hong Kong**

Song Hwee Lim is Professor of Cultural Studies (with effect 1 August 2017) at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is the author of *Celluloid Comrades: Representations of Male Homosexuality in Contemporary Chinese Cinemas* (2006) and *Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness* (2014). He is also co-editor of *Remapping World Cinema: Identity, Culture and Politics in Film* (2006) and *The Chinese Cinema Book* (2011), and founding editor of the *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*.

## **Dr. Xiaoning Lu |SOAS University of London**

Xiaoning Lu is Lecturer of Modern Chinese Culture and Language at SOAS, University of London, UK. She is a member of AHRC Network “Soft Power, Cinema and the BRICS.” Her research focuses on the relationship among the aesthetic, the affective, and the political in the making of modern Chinese identities. Her recent writing on various aspects of Chinese cinema and culture has appeared in journals and edited collections, including *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, and *Surveillance in Asian Cinema: Under Eastern Eyes*.

## **Prof. Alessandra Meleiro |Universidade Federal de São Carlos**

Alessandra Meleiro is Associate Professor of Image and Sound at Universidade Federal de São Carlos, in Brazil (Department of Arts and Communication). Holds a Postdoc at the *Media and Film Studies Programme* (University of London/School of Oriental and African Studies). Author of “The New Iranian Cinema: art and social intervention” (Escrituras, 2006), Editor of the book series “World Cinema: Industry, Politics and Market” - five books on Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe and United States (Escrituras, 2007) - and “Brazilian Film Industry” - until now, six books on Cinema and Market, Cinema and Political Economy, Cinema and Politics of State (Escrituras, 2009). Scientific Coordinator of the “Center for Analysis of Cinema and Audiovisual” alongside with Cebrap (Brazilian Center for Planning and Analysis). President of FORCINE (Cinema and Audiovisual Education Brazilian Forum). President of the Cultural Initiative Institute, member of the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Creative Economy area. President of FORCINE (Brazilian Forum of Cinema and Audiovisual Education). Acted as Guest Professor at Aarhus University / Denmark in 2016.

## **Will Massa | British Film Institute**

From 2011-2017 Will was the Senior Programme Manager for the British Council's Film department. Working within the Arts team, his role was to support colleagues across the British Council's international network in the design and delivery of film initiatives, working with a range of partners in the UK. These initiatives included showcasing the best of contemporary and classic UK cinema to new international audiences in the EU and the Americas, running 'capacity building' skills training projects and organising inward delegations to the UK. In May 2017 Will took up the new role of Curator of Contemporary Fiction at the BFI. He is a Board Member at Encounters Short Film and Animation Festival.

## **Prof. Stephen Norris |University of Miami**

Stephen M. Norris is Professor of History and Interim Director of the Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies at Miami University (OH). He is the author of two books, *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812-1945* (Northern Illinois Press, 2006) and *Blockbuster History in the New Russia: Movies, Memory, Patriotism* (Indiana University Press, 2012), and the co-editor of three more. His edited volume *Museums of Communism: New Memory Sites in Central and Eastern Europe*, will appear later this year with Indiana University Press and his co-edited volume (with Pavel Lyssakov), *The City in Russian Culture*, is under contract with Routledge. At present he is working on a biography of the Soviet caricaturist, Boris Efimov, entitled *Communism's Cartoonist: Boris Efimov in the Soviet Century*.

## **Dr. Alan O'Leary | University of Leeds**

Alan O'Leary is Director of Research and Innovation in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds. He has published several books and many articles on Italian cinema and co-founded the annual Film Issue of *The Italianist*. His current project is entitled "Italian Cinemas/Italian Histories" (<http://arts.leeds.ac.uk/italian-cinemas-italian-histories/about/>) and he is working on a monograph on film and history in Italy and another on the 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers*. His next project is devoted to the 'trivial'.

## **Dr. Luke Robinson |University of Sussex**

Luke Robinson is Lecturer in Film Studies in the Department of Media and Film, University of Sussex, UK. He is the author of *Independent Chinese Documentary: From the Studio to the Street* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), and the editor, with Chris Berry, of *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translation* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming). His writing on Chinese-language feature film, animation, documentary, and film festivals has appeared in books and journals including *DV-made China: Digital Subjects and Social Transformations after Independent Film*, *The New Chinese Documentary Movement: For the Public Record*, *The Routledge Companion to Cinema and Politics*, *positions: asia cultures critique*, *Film Studies*, *Journal of Children and Media*, and *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*.

## **Prof. Caroline Rose |University of Leeds**

Caroline Rose is Professor of Sino-Japanese Relations at the University of Leeds, UK. Her research focuses on contemporary Sino-Japanese relations, history and citizenship

education in China and Japan, and Japanese foreign policy. She has published on various aspects of the history problem in Sino-Japanese relations, including textbook issues and the Yasukuni Shrine controversy. She is currently working on a monograph about patriotic education in China and Japan, and a new project on trust and friendship in Sino-Japanese relations. She may be contacted at [c.rose@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.rose@leeds.ac.uk)

### **Prof. Peter Rutland | Wesleyan University**

Peter Rutland is Campbell Professor of Government at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT. In 2016 he was a Leverhulme visiting professor at the University of Manchester. He is editor-in-chief of Nationalities Papers, the journal of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, and associate editor of Russian Review. Recent articles address neoliberalism, economic nationalism, the dynamics of Russian elites, and the role of oil in Russian national identity.

### **Prof. Robert Saunders | Farmingdale State College**

Robert A. Saunders, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of History, Politics and Geography at Farmingdale State College, a campus of the State University of New York (SUNY). His research explores various intersections of popular culture, geopolitics, nationalism, and religious identity. Professor Saunders' essays have appeared in *Progress in Human Geography*, *Slavic Review*, *Nations and Nationalism*, and *Geopolitics*, among other journals and his books include *Popular Geopolitics and Nation Branding in the Post-Soviet Realm* (Routledge, 2016), *Historical Dictionary of the Russian Federation* (Scarecrow Press, 2010) and *The Many Faces of Sacha Baron Cohen: Politics, Parody, and the Battle over Borat* (Lexington Books, 2008). He is the curator of the 'Popular Culture and IR' blog channel at E-International Relations.

### **Inés Soria-Turner | University of Leeds (Conference Producer)**

Inés is Research & Project Officer at the Centre for World Cinemas and Digital Cultures. As a producer, project manager, practitioner and researcher she focuses on creative education and cultural activism as a means of community empowerment and cross-cultural exchange on a local and global scale. Inés completed her MA in French Cultural Studies at University of Nottingham and PGDip in Arts Management, Policy & Practice at University of Manchester. She has worked across the academic, cultural, and creative industries since 2008 coordinating artistic learning programmes, producing international workshops, performances and conferences, and connecting creative communities across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the UK.

## **Dr. Vlad Strukov |University of Leeds**

Vlad Strukov is an Associate Professor in Film and Digital Culture at the University of Leeds. He explores theories of globalisation, empire and nationhood, global journalism and grassroots media, consumption and celebrity. He is the author of 'Contemporary Russian Cinema: Symbols of a New Era' (2016), and editor of 'Russian Aviation, Space Exploration, and Visual Culture' (2016), 'New Media in New Europe-Asia' (2014), and other books on media and digital culture. He is the founding and principal editor of the journal 'Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media' ([www.digitalicons.org](http://www.digitalicons.org)).

## **Prof. Daya Thussu|University of Westminster**

Daya Thussu is Professor of International Communication and founder and Co-Director of India Media Centre and research advisor to the China Media Centre at the University of Westminster in London. Author or editor of 18 books, his latest publication is *Communicating India's Soft Power: Buddha to Bollywood* (Sage India, 2016). He is the founder and Managing Editor of the Sage journal *Global Media and Communication* and Editor-in-Chief of the new Sage journal *Global Media and China*.

## **David Wilson | Bradford UNESCO City of Film**

David Wilson is Director of Bradford UNESCO City of Film, where he represents the city on an international level as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Using the UNESCO title, David and his team are working at many different levels to bring about positive social and economic impact for the people of Bradford, to ensure all are realising the benefits of its status as the world's first UNESCO City of Film. David is an international ambassador for the city, regularly speaking and presents at film, business and community events on Bradford's film heritage and the city's approach as a creative city, in addition to writing about film and presenting review shows on TV and radio.

## **Jessica Siu-yin Yeung |SOAS**

Jessica Siu-yin Yeung is a PhD student in the Centre for Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies at SOAS University of London. Her current research focuses on the intersections of allegory and homosexual representations in Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and Lebanese literatures and films. Her latest essays have appeared in *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* and *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*. Her forthcoming essay will appear in *Made into Hong Kong: Language, Literature, and Culture*. She is currently working on a book chapter on canonization, digital humanities, and East Asian literatures to be collected in *Histories of Digital Labor, Past and Present*.

## **Dr. Yanling Yang | University of Leeds**

Yanling Yang graduated from the School of Media and Communication, Leeds University in 2016. Her Ph.D thesis is “Film as an instrument of China’s soft power: practice, outcomes and dilemmas”. As a transnational scholar, her research interests cover the fields of film industry, cultural policy and soft power.

## **Laurence Carr | University of Leeds (Conference Assistant)**

Laurence Carr is an MA by Research student in the Centre for World Cinemas and Digital Cultures at the University of Leeds. His current research explores the role of sound in the silent films of director F.W. Murnau. Laurence studied film production at Edge Hill University in the UK and at the Film Academy of Miroslav Ondricek in the Czech Republic. Laurence will begin his Ph.D studies at Leeds in October 2017 as a member of the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities (WRoCAH) cohort.