

CINEMA & NATION

SPOTLIGHT: GEORGIA

Round Table & Guest Lecture

28 September, 10:00-13:00 (ER, A29)

**School of Modern Languages and Cultures
Durham University**



Ian Christie (Birkbeck, London)

Nino Dzandzava (NAG, Tbilisi)

Tamar Koplataдзе (Oxford)

Oksana Sarkisova (CEU, Budapest)

Dušan Radunović (Durham)

Film and Identity in Georgian Cinema (1908-2018)

10.00-11.45 (Elvet Riverside, A29)

Nino DZANDZAVA: “Soviet Ideology and National Identity in the Late Works by Kote Mikaberidze”

The paper is dedicated to the Stalin-era output of the Georgian director Kote Mikaberidze, whose 1929 magnum opus *Chemi Bebia* (My Grandmother, 1929) represents the high point of the cinematic avant-garde in Soviet Georgia. By focusing on Mikaberidze’s rarely discussed films *Hasani* (1932), *Kajeti* (1936) and *The Fiancé Who Was Too Late* (1939) the presentation will draw attention to Mikaberidze’s adjustment to the ideological currents of the 1930s.

Oksana SARKISOVA: “From Blind to New Vision – Sergei Tret’iakov and the Image of Svanetia”

This presentation focuses on the writings and film scenarios about the Caucasus by Sergei Tret’iakov, one of the key authors and ideologues of early Soviet avant-garde. While all of Tret’iakov’s scenarios about the Caucasus emphasize the anti-colonial struggle of the local people, the paper focuses on two of them that led to the creation of one of the early masterpieces of Georgian Soviet cinema, Mikhail Kalatozov’s 1930 *Salt for Svanetia*.

Dušan RADUNOVIĆ: The Other Spaces in Otar Iosseliani’s “French” Films

This paper looks at the estrangement of social space in the late films of the Georgian born director Otar Iosseliani. Iosseliani’s unsettling of the space-time junction decentres the historical/geographical coordinates of his narratives, creating a form of what Foucault would call “heterotopias”, or hybrid spaces that exist beyond exact social denominators. What is the meaning of heterogeneous spaces today?

Tamar KOPLATADZE: “Gender and Identity in Contemporary Georgian Cinema”

This presentation will consider the factors that contributed to the unique creative scene in Georgia in relation to other post-Soviet national cinemas, where women directors are less socially visible. To this aim, the phenomena of the post-Soviet crisis of masculinity and the way in which the changing position of women in contemporary Georgian society affects identity politics nowadays will be foregrounded and open to discussion.

Guest Lecture

12.15-13.00 (Elvet Riverside, A29)

Professor Ian Christie

Who Needs National Cinema?

The Caucasus Case

The issue of national cinema is a conundrum that sits problematically among film history, film theory, and the operations of contemporary media policy. From one perspective, it is flourishing, keeping well over one hundred state, regional, and municipal agencies around the world in business. From another perspective, it could be argued that none of this really makes much of an impression on the larger world of cinema, which remains dominated by the major studios. Whatever South Korea, Tunisia, or Georgia do to promote their films, the world still overwhelmingly watches *Harry Potter*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, and the like. As scholarship from Kristin Thompson (1985), to Thomas Elsaesser (2005) has demonstrated, the global domination of American film industry and the contrasting drive for self-definition by other “national cinemas” is everything but a clear and straightforward process. Having problematized the essentialist vision of national cinema, the lecture will address its peculiar manifestations in the context of the former Soviet Union, in which small national cinemas, such as that of Georgia, were “nested” within Soviet cinema as a source of pride of small nations, as well as patronage of the supranational Soviet state. Finally, the lecture will reflect on the struggles, and perhaps some opportunities for post-Soviet national cinemas that have followed the collapse of the USSR.

Professor Ian CHRISTIE is Anniversary Professor of Film and Media History at Birkbeck College, University of London. Christie is also Director of the AHRB Centre for British Film and Television Studies, with its headquarters at Birkbeck, and of the London Screen Study Collection, housed in Birkbeck's new Centre for Film and Visual Media Research. Christie's publications include *Audiences* (Amsterdam, 2012), *The Art of Film: John Box and Production Design* (Columbia UP, 2009), *A Matter of Life and Death* (BFI 2000), *The Last Machine: Early Cinema and the Birth of the Modern World* (BBC/BFI, 1994), *Eisenstein Rediscovered* (Routledge, 1993), *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896-1939* (Routledge, 1994).