



INTERNATIONAL
GRADUATE PROGRAM

Berlin – New York – Toronto



CENTER FOR
METROPOLITAN
STUDIES

New Visions. Cinema and Cinematic Practices in Times of Radical Urban Transformation

Change is arguably the most consistent characteristics of cities; and cinema, from its very beginning, has played a major role in raising awareness about processes of urban transformation. However, in particular, moments of large-scale urban redevelopment trigger the advent of new topographic imaginaries. In the 1960s, for example, the city dwellers' perception of the urban habitat emerged as a central focus in several studies on the urban lived environment. Works such as Kevin Lynch's *Image of the City* (1960) or Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe's *Des hommes et des villes* (1965) asserted the importance of organizing changing urban spatialities into recognizable visual-mental patterns. Concurrently, a reemergence of realist traditions became apparent in both the visual arts and counter cinematic production. This return was, in part, the result of a need to redefine subject positions during a time of social and political crisis. It was a time when many cities in the western world faced particularly drastic structural changes, resulting in a growing dissatisfaction with the living conditions created this way.

Aiming at an interdisciplinary exploration of the relationship between artistic production and changing urban environments, this workshop takes the historically close correlation of cities and cinema as a starting point from which to discuss cinematic production of urban space in times of transformation. This strong connection of habitat and artistic medium seems especially evident in practices of Underground cinema, where films often premiere in the very same urban environment in which they were produced.

Assuming that every cultural product is framed by the circumstances of its creation as well as by the material environment in which it is conceived, the focus of this workshop will be on the interrelations between representations of cities in different forms of cinema and their specific institutional and discursive contexts. While an emphasis is on North American counter cinemas of the postwar era, we welcome contributions extending the historic and/or geographic frame. Looking at the ways in which cinema refers to constitutive conflicts of the contemporaneous urban society, prospective presenters should refer to any of the workshop's key questions:

- > How is the urban cartography construed in the films? What kinds of experiential spaces are built up for the viewer and how does cinema mediate urban change?
- > If the political impact of art and cinema lies in the ways they redefine the frame of how an everyday environment is perceived, to what extent do films reorder the perception of the metropolis by testing new cinematic forms?
- > In which ways did other forms of artistic and cultural production as well as industrial filmmaking influence, in terms of content and form, the films treatment of urban space? And, in return, what impact did the different cinematic practices have on urban cultural production?
- > How did prevailing practices of film production and consumption interrelate with the urban realities they encountered, and to what extent did they shape the cities' fabric?

The workshop will take place on December 12, 2014 at Technische Universität Berlin in form of a one-day symposium with panel discussions and three lectures by Edward Dimendberg (UC Irvine), David James (University of Southern California) and Mark Shiel (King's College London).

Please submit your proposal (300 words max.) for a fifteen-minute presentation along with a short CV by August 31 to berit.hummel@metropolitanstudies.de. All applicants will be notified by the middle of September.

The presented papers shall be circulated amongst all participants two weeks prior to the workshop. In order to create an interdisciplinary dialogue between doctoral students and young researchers studying the interrelation of cinema, visual culture, and the urban, the workshop is open to a variety of disciplines ranging from film studies and art history to cultural studies, urban studies and geography.