



Film is Digital

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Practice Research

- HEFCE Promising Researcher Fellowship July-Dec 2006
- 3 minute promo
- Panavision, Technicolor and Kodak
- Curzon Community Cinema, Clevedon
- Shot on HDV Sony Z1
- Edited on Standard Definition DV PAL

Themes

- Cacophony of conflicting voices (*Blight*, John Smith, 1994-6)
- Engulfment of Hollywood cinema (John Williams score, *Raiders of the Lost Arc*)
- Emotion, nostalgia, sentimentality
- Exploring “structures of feeling” (Raymond Williams)
- The “work of production” - revealing the craft behind the film production process (*Kodak*, Tacita Dean, 2007)
- Cinema cultures and viewing practices (Pearl and Dean “Asteroid” ident)

Key Interviews

- Jeff Allen, Panavision
- Lionel Runkel, Technicolor
- Clive Ogden, Kodak
- Maurice Thornton, Film Projectionist
- Jon Webber, ex-Manager, Curzon Community Cinema, Clevedon

- Also Aardman Animations

No Industry Standard

- Stock - Format Wars
 - 100yrs of film vs “broken chain” of video and digital formats, HDCam, HDTV, Hard Disk recording, etc.
 - “Digital Film” a misnomer
- Cameras – Built-in Obsolescence
 - Sony F23, Sony F35
(<http://www.sony.co.uk/biz/view/ShowProduct.action?product=F35&pageType=Benefits&imageType=Main&category=HDseries>)
 - 2K Panavision Genesis – *Superman Returns* (Bryan Singer, 2006)
 - Thomson Viper
 - Arri D-20
 - REDOne (www.red.com) – claimed to be 6K in 2006, now prototyping 5K “early 2009”
 - Progressive / interlaced
 - CCD / CMOS chips

Digital Film Language

- Oldspeak
 - Genesis Sony camera in 35mm body
 - Technicolor’s “Digital Printer Light” maintains DOP’s control of look and feel of the film
 - Kodak’s “Display Manager” and “Look Manager” Systems
- Newspeak
 - Digitographer – Digital Imaging Technician
 - *Speed Racer*, Wachowski Bros (<http://speedracermovie.warnerbros.com/>)
 - 0s and 1s instead of rushes or “dailies”
 - Sohonet (<http://speedracermovie.warnerbros.com/>)

Pipelines and Workflows

- Postproduction, Special Effects & Sound
 - Already digital, neg cut & optical fx thing of the past
 - Off-line / on-line
 - “Digital Intermediate” as opposed to cutting neg and intermediate prints....
 - Grading – digital filters drawing on film terminology: “bleach bypass” chemical process

“Digital Decay”

- 10,000 word article
- Commissioned for *Moving Image* the journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists
- Exploring the impact of digital projection, the threat of end of 35mm film stock on archiving and preservation
- Work in progress....

Outputs

- Distribution

- 35mm film prints / digital distribution different business models
- Hard disk distribution
- Satellite distribution
- - Godfrey Cheshire's argument about cinema becoming television

http://www.picturehouses.co.uk/metropolitan_opera

<http://www.myvue.com/corporate/news.asp?sb=1&SessionID=1&cn=8&ln=1&intThisPageStructureID=6456>

<http://www.cinegames.es/english.html>

- Exhibition

- 35mm vs Digital projection
- Psychology of perception
- pixels vs molecules
- UK Film Council's Digital Screen Initiative
- Standardising at 2-4K
- Economics of Scale

“If you don’t preserve it, it’s gone forever”

- Archive
 - Preservation / restoration / reconstruction
- Access
 - Commercial vs public
- Future Proofing
 - Nitrate, acetate, polyester, video, digital
 - Triple dye transfer
 - Digital Betacam
 - HDCAM-SR
 - No stable digital archiving format

What is driving the technology?

- Market Forces
 - Built in obsolescence, multinational corporations, different business models

VS

- Aesthetics
 - Resolution, 2K, 4K, 6K, gain / grain, different tools in the palette, “horses for courses”, do you want a Mini or a Rolls?

What's new?

- Technological determinism
- Paradigms of techophilia and technophobia
- The radical potential of new technology is absorbed by the dominant culture (Brian Winston, Jon Dovey)
- What is different is the sheer pace of technological change
- We are living in an upgrade culture
- Obsolescent knowledge - “obsoledge” (Alvin and Heidi Toffler)

Academic Contexts

"film and video have, despite claims to the contrary, merged" (Holly Willis 2005: 3)

"Post-medium condition" (Rosalind Kraus 1999)

"postcomputer cinema" in which "computer media redefine the very identity of cinema" (Lev Manovich 2001: 249, 293)

- "Cinema is dead, long live Cinema"
(Peter Greenaway)

Practice Research

- How to take research forward as practice?
- Ambitions for feature-length documentary focused more on the 'creatives' - directors and DOPs
- Curzon Community Cinema's 100th anniversary in 2012 - documenting this
- Shorter forms - 3-Minute Wonders
- Blog / web / wiki to disseminate work in progress.