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Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe (Network)
End of Year Report for 2007

Our second conference 'The Industrial Context of Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe', organised in collaboration with the IGRS, Ciné Lumière and French Institute in London between 12-13 January 2007, focused on the experience of film and media industry professionals. Consistent with the DMI Programme priorities, which place emphasis on Knowledge Transfer, the event provided a platform for an exchange of ideas and perspectives between academia and the film industry. Seven distinguished speakers took centre stage: producer and diversity adviser Parminder Vir, OBE; filmmakers John Akomfrah and Abdelkrim Bahloul; Thierry Lenouvel of the Amiens Film Festival; Gareth Jones, founder of the script-funding initiative BABYLON; Eve Gabereau of the film distribution company Soda Pictures, UK; and German film producer Ralph Schwingel of Wüste Film. Delegates came from as far as Göteborg, Istanbul, Samarkand and Sydney. The young international profile of the audience suggests a rising interest in migrant and diasporic cinema in particular amongst the new generation of academics. The conference highlighted the complex and often conflicting positioning of films made by migrant and diasporic filmmakers when they are entered at film festivals or distributed across different European countries. Speakers also emphasized that policies promoting cultural diversity have changed over the past two decades and discussed the implications this has had for ethnic minority filmmakers in Europe.

The conference was launched with a well-attended double screening at the Ciné Lumière of Bahloul's *The Night of Destiny* (1997) and *The Assassinated Sun* (2003). The two films were introduced by the director and were followed by a lively Q&A with the director, actor Mehdi Dehbi and the audience.

The six presentations of the conference (each approx. 30-40 minutes long) have been made available as podcast on our website (<http://www.migrantcinema.net/podcasts/>). A detailed conference report, written by Network member Sarita Malik, can be found on the website and in the *Journal of Media Practice*.

Our proposal for a book, provisionally entitled *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe* (eds. Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg), was accepted by Wallflower Press in June 2007. The book (approx. 90,000 words) will consist of fifteen chapters, written by the Networkers as well as some invited additional contributors (see Research Staff below). It is anticipated that the book – the first study to investigate migrant and diasporic European cinema from a comparative, transnational perspective – will be published in 2009.

Our conference '*The Industrial Context of Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe*' (2007) has been the most significant event in terms of Knowledge Transfer. Speakers were exclusively representatives from the film

and media industry and from the cultural sector (for details about the speakers cf. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESEARCH). The insights we gained through the dialogue with international experts complement our critical and theory-centred approaches to migrant and diasporic cinema. Since we are convinced that the information will be relevant to anyone researching this topic, we made the insights offered accessible to the wider public in six podcasts on our website: <http://www.migrantcinema.net/podcasts/>

Those stakeholders from the industry and the cultural sector who agreed to participate in our conferences were interested in a dialogue with the academic community. To them gaining insight into our different perspective was as interesting and informative as it was for us, to learn more about the industrial and policy-making issues. Thus, the Knowledge Transfer that has taken place could be described as a mutually complementary exchange of different areas of expertise. Moreover, producers, filmmakers and distributors who are operating in this sector benefit from the fact that migrant and diasporic cinema is featuring more prominently on the scholarly agenda as a result of this AHRC-funded Network and its publications, conferences and papers. After all, art cinemas, film clubs and university film courses are important intermediaries for this kind of cinema. In other words, Knowledge Transfer enhances the visibility and cultural prestige of migrant and diasporic films. We have also been able to refer young diasporic filmmakers to the BABYLON script funding initiative, which was launched and is managed by Gareth Jones, one of our Network participants (see special section on BABYLON above). Our Network thus benefits related initiatives which are designed to support the work of media practitioners.