

Archiving as a research method: Chinese Independent Film Archive (CIFA) and Chinese Independent Cinema Studies

Speaker: Professor Sabrina Qiong Yu, Newcastle University, UK

Co-organised by the Asian Media, Culture and Society Research Group (Deakin University) and the Screen/Audience Lab (RMIT University)

Abstract

Despite being insufficiently researched, Chinese independent cinema has attracted scholarly attention over the past two decades. The focus of discussion mostly surrounds important independent filmmakers and their works, as well as a few key independent film festivals.

Chinese Independent Film Archive (CIFA), established with the help of a UK Arts and Humanities Research Council grant (2019-2024), aims to support and advance the research of Chinese independent cinema.

How can the CIFA collection generate new, unforeseen historical knowledge? How can the process of building the archive provide or inspire new ways of research into this cinema?

This talk will try to address these questions by proposing archiving as a research method through discussing various aspects involved in building CIFA, such as its acquisition criteria and process, the methodology of conducting large-scale oral-history interviews, identifying and adding keywords to all films and interview videos, and more.

The speaker will also reflect on her hybrid identity as a scholar, a curator and an archivist, and point out the strengths and limitations of her role as a cultural gatekeeper.

Speaker's bio

Sabrina Qiong Yu is Professor of Film and Chinese Studies at Newcastle University, UK.

Her research and publications focus on Chinese-language cinema, stardom and fandom, memory and archives, and film censorship.



She led the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project (2019–2024) on Chinese independent cinema and the establishment of Chinese Independent Film Archive (CIFA) in Newcastle University in 2023.

Since 2012, she has been regularly curating academic events/festivals/exhibitions related to Chinese indie cinema and is committed to promoting the research and circulation of Chinese independent cinema.

3.00 – 4.30 pm, Thursday 5 December 2024

The Cinema Theatre (01.02), Building 80,
Swanston Street, RMIT University

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