

# Film Festival/Film History: The Impact of Film Festivals on Cinema Historiography. *Il cinema ritrovato* and beyond Festival de cinéma/Histoire du cinéma : l'impact des festivals du film sur l'historiographie cinématographique. *Il cinema ritrovato* et au-delà

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Résumé de l'article

L'objectif de cet article est d'offrir des points de repère pour étudier l'impact des festivals du film sur l'historiographie du cinéma. Depuis les années 1940, les festivals du film ont joué un rôle crucial en études cinématographiques, contribuant au développement de diverses avenues de recherche, tant chez les critiques que chez les théoriciens. Toutefois, ce n'est que récemment que les festivals du film ont attiré l'attention du milieu universitaire en tant que champ de recherche autonome. Qui plus est, dans la plupart des recherches qui leur sont consacrées, la relation entre les festivals du film et l'historiographie du cinéma est généralement négligée. On tentera donc ici de décrire l'étendue actuelle de ce champ de recherche et de proposer certains paramètres pour son étude future. Après une description générale du rôle qu'occupent les festivals dans l'historiographie du cinéma, nous tenterons d'ériger un cadre théorique capable d'expliquer comment les stratégies mises en oeuvre par les festivals — leur structure, leurs horaires, leurs publications, les tables rondes qui s'y tiennent, mais aussi leur façon de cibler un certain public — mettent en lumière, de façon implicite, leur impact potentiel sur l'historiographie du cinéma. Pour exemplifier nos propositions théoriques, nous nous référerons à différents types de festivals, dont un cas très particulier : *Il cinema ritrovato* de Bologne.

# Film Festival/Film History: The Impact of Film Festivals on Cinema Historiography. *Il cinema ritrovato* and beyond<sup>1</sup>

Francesco Di Chiara and Valentina Re

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this essay is to offer some coordinates for the analysis of the impact of film festivals on cinema historiography. Although film festivals have had a pivotal role in film studies since the 1940s in determining various aspects of research interests, both on a critical and theoretical level, it is only in recent years that they have gathered academic attention as an autonomous research field. Moreover, even among most studies of film festivals, the relationship between film festivals and cinematic historiography seems to have been overlooked. This essay is conceived, therefore, as a provisional contribution, attempting to delineate the scope of the topic and set some parameters for further research. After defining what we mean by the impact of film festivals on cinema historiography, we try to construct a conceptual framework, capable of examining how the strategies deployed by film festivals—such as their structure, schedules, published materials and round tables, as well as their identification of a target audience—implicitly highlight the potential impact of film festivals on cinema historiography. To exemplify our theoretical statements, we refer to different kinds of film festivals and, more particularly, make a few remarks about a very particular case, *Il cinema ritrovato* in Bologna.

*Voir le résumé français à la fin de l'article*

## Introduction

The aim of this essay is to offer some coordinates for the analysis of the impact of film festivals on cinema historiography.

Although film festivals have had a pivotal role in film studies since the 1940s in determining various aspects of research interests, both on a critical and theoretical level, it is only in recent

years that they have garnered academic attention as an autonomous research field. So far, studies of film festivals have used a wide array of methodological approaches to focus on them from different angles, such as: providing a film festival theory (de Valck 2007; Dayan 2000; Nichols 1994); the relationship between the history of film festivals and geopolitical history (Kötzing 2007); and film festivals seen from a spatial perspective—such as their relationships with their host cities and with tourism (Derrett 2000). Or, on the contrary, they have been studied from a transnational perspective, as a supranational network connecting directors, producers and critics (Elsaesser 2005; Mazdon 2006). Festivals have also been examined in their relation to the economy of cinema or reception studies (Stringer 2008).<sup>2</sup>

The relationship between film festivals and cinema historiography, however, seems to have been overlooked by film scholars. Therefore, this essay is conceived as a provisional contribution attempting to delineate the scope of the topic and set some parameters for further research.

We believe that in order to explore the relationship between film festivals and film historiography three steps are required. First, we will define what we mean by the impact of film festivals on cinema historiography. Then we will propose some tentative guidelines that may be useful for examining how the strategies deployed by the film festivals themselves—such as their structure, schedules, published materials and round tables, as well as their identification of a target audience—implicitly highlight the potential impact of film festivals on cinema historiography. Finally, the actual impact of the film festivals should be determined. Such a task could be accomplished by conducting a survey of the international body of writing on film history—both prior to and subsequent to a single festival's activity—and then comparing it with the conclusions reached in the previous steps. We maintain, however, that the goal of this third step should be identifying different kinds of relationship between film festivals and film history, rather than automatically assuming straightforward forms of influence.

In this article we will embark on just the first two steps, leaving the third to future studies. In the next pages, therefore, we

will begin to outline a theoretical framework suited to defining and evaluating the impact of festivals on film historiography. Even though the space limitations of this article make it unsuitable for putting such a framework to the test by means of a complete analysis, we will nonetheless try to make a few remarks about a very particular case, *Il cinema ritrovato* in Bologna, a film festival strictly tied to a film archive institution (the Cineteca di Bologna) and devoted to the presentation of newly restored material.

*Il cinema ritrovato* originated in the mid-1980s, in the wake of the 1978 FIAF congress at Brighton. It started roughly in between the establishment of two other major archive film festivals, the Pordenone Silent Film Festival (1982) and the short-lived *CinéMémoire* in Paris (1991). Unlike Pordenone, however, *Il cinema ritrovato* has never been solely devoted to silent cinema, but showcases newly found or newly restored films from the entire spectrum of film history. Moreover, it is important to stress that since the beginning *Il cinema ritrovato* has always operated as part of an archival institution, the Cineteca di Bologna. In fact, as Leonardo Quaresima (2009) writes, festivals of archival films can be seen as a particular way for film archives to handle the problem of exhibiting their own collections as opposed to designing official year-long program schedules<sup>3</sup>. Looking at *Il cinema ritrovato* therefore enables us to further investigate the role of a singular kind of festival as a link between the policies of film archives and research institutions. *Il cinema ritrovato*, however, was always meant also to explore beyond the collections and restorations of the Cineteca di Bologna and indeed it showcases those of a whole network of archives, mainly (but not only) European. Furthermore, *Il cinema ritrovato* contributes to the building of such an archive network by hosting an annual international congress devoted to theoretical issues related to questions around film restoration. This yearly congress cycle reached a peak in 1994, when *Il cinema ritrovato* hosted the 50th FIAF congress.

It is therefore apparent that *Il cinema ritrovato* is not an average film festival, but a quite particular one. In fact, *Il cinema ritrovato* is, above all, the result of film archival and restoration

theories and practices, very different premises indeed from that of film festivals devoted to showcasing brand new films and/or focused on a competition, as the majority of film festivals are: to this extent, *Il cinema ritrovato* appears to be a sort of borderline film festival. We maintain, however, that its conscious historiographical agenda makes *Il cinema ritrovato* an ideal model with which to exemplify our theoretical statements, naturally without claiming it to be strictly definitive.

### **1. The impact of film festivals on film historiography: a multiple definition**

In order to define the particular film festival/film history relationship, we believe that it is necessary to focus on three different facets of what we mean by “impact.” These aspects are indeed deeply intertwined, but we nonetheless prefer to keep them separate for the sake of clarity. Moreover, we wish to emphasize that our definition of impact applies potentially to every kind of festival, even to those that don’t intend explicitly to revisit cinema history, such as, for instance, the Venice film festival or the Cannes film festival.

First, a film festival’s impact works as a form of influence exerted by the festivals on the different research streams that are already present within film historians’ activity. It is a process similar to the “researchers/archives alliance” observed by André Gaudreault (2008): the archivists’ activity provides film historians with texts to work on and therefore shapes their research interests while, on the other hand, the film historians influence the archive’s preservation agenda. Likewise, we believe that by means of retrospectives, sections or round tables a film festival is capable of creating new canons, changing historians’ hierarchies and highlighting some existing research streams at the expense of others. Of course, this relationship can also work the other way around, as the film festival’s programming choices could in turn originate in film historians’ activity. We want to point out, however, that this process does not affect retrospectives alone. In addition, by presenting brand new films, a festival is able to shape the perception of the contemporary cinema landscape, such as by grouping pictures according to new authorial, generic

or stylistic features in side sessions such as the Berlin “Forum,” the Cannes film festival’s “Un certain regard” or Venice’s “Orizzonti.”

The second aspect is strictly tied to the first, albeit on the epistemological level. A film festival has the power to force film historians to change their perspective about a phenomenon that has already been fully described by a previous historiographical tradition, pushing new generations of scholars to reconsider their own methodology. By presenting a full retrospective of a given film corpus for the first time, for instance, or even gathering researchers from different areas, a film festival can shed new light on an already established topic, raising new questions or perhaps catalyzing a renewal process already present within the community of historians. Moreover, by spawning new sections or competitions a film festival is able to force film historians to change their perspective towards contemporary production, or even to abandon some traditional historiographical staples (the focus on *auteur*, nation, style, etc.) in favour of new ones. For instance, the present role of film festivals as a network creating new international production and distribution practices, as described by Thomas Elsaesser (2005), may have had the effect of encouraging the film historian community’s shift to a transnational approach.

Third, we believe that film festivals are able to privilege, at an institutional level, some types of researchers at the expense of others. In fact, every film festival has a board of experts that has to select films for its sections, for the competition (if any) but also for retrospectives of past material. Moreover, film festivals act frequently as publishers, producing very different kinds of written texts that accompany film retrospectives: catalogues, in the first place, but also monographic books, edited collections or special issues of already existing journals. Indeed, a film festival’s official publications mirror the research work behind the retrospectives themselves. But who is going to be chosen by a film festival to perform such research? He/she might be a researcher embedded in the organization, or a freelance researcher; or even a film critic with a high media profile who could help the film festival overcome certain difficulties at the

reception (and hence at the funding) level. By choosing researchers with different profiles and/or publishing their work, a film festival—an institution on its own—is therefore able to foster different kinds of research and work along with—or in competition with—other institutions, such as universities or archives.

As we have already pointed out, the topic selection and the epistemological level are deeply intertwined: the availability of new films provided by a film festival or the way they are presented within a section are able simultaneously to push the historiographical community to reconsider both existing research streams or canons and the perspective from which to deal with them. Therefore, moving on, we will take some cues from the case of *Il cinema ritrovato* in order to further exemplify our statements about the impact of film festivals on historians' selections of research streams and on epistemological awareness; then, in section 3, we will further explore film festivals on an institutional level.

## **2. Epistemological shifts and new research areas: some remarks about *Il cinema ritrovato***

The historiographical relevance of the *Cinema ritrovato* film festival is well known. In discussing the role of early cinema studies within the wider epistemological shifts that have affected cinema historiography between the 1970s and the 1980s, Gaudreault (2001, 2004, 2008) has repeatedly identified the festival as one of the various protagonists involved in this change. Started in the 1980s, *Il cinema ritrovato* both results from this development and, at the same time, fosters it.

It is quite easy to place the festival within this process. As a cultural event sponsored by the Cineteca di Bologna, the festival clearly shows the film archive's increasing awareness of the issues concerning the preservation and promotion of cinematic heritage. Of course, it is no coincidence that 1986 has been retrospectively<sup>4</sup> considered the year of the festival's birth. Although the label "*Il cinema ritrovato*" didn't yet figure in the materials supporting the cultural events sponsored by the Cineteca in that year—it took on a meaning closer to the current one only in

1988—it was precisely in 1986 that the first conference, devoted to “Experiences and Perspectives in the Conservation and Promotion of Film Heritage,”<sup>5</sup> initiated a series of reflections on the role played by film archives in safeguarding and promoting cinema. Such reflections continued in 1987 and 1988 with a second conference<sup>6</sup> and a workshop,<sup>7</sup> followed by a special workshop in 1989 devoted to “Films: cataloguing and restoration,”<sup>8</sup> with a particularly strong connection to the restorations of early Fritz Lang films, which were screened in a retrospective. It is enough to look through the programs of these first conferences to realize that the Cineteca doesn’t consider such activities as simply a support, or an additional feature, of another gradually growing event. On the contrary, the Cineteca considers them as an autonomous research activity to be developed in collaboration with other organizations and institutions charged with caring for cultural and cinematic heritage, in both a national and an international context.

These conferences are deeply connected to the need and the attempt to provide an ever-increasing number of filmic and extra-filmic materials; it is also clearly in relation to the new accessibility and availability of films that the film festival model (and, more precisely, the *cinema ritrovato* model) takes shape and consolidates.

As everyone is aware, it is more a qualitative than a quantitative availability. In other words, it is not just a matter of gaining access to a film; more precisely, and beyond any idealistic approach, it concerns the awareness of access to a certain “version” of the film, to a certain “state” of the film resulting from physical deterioration, censorship, recutting or, as we will see, restoration processes. In the frame of this stronger philological awareness, the strategies adopted by the *Cinema ritrovato* film festival are in tune with wider dynamics occurring within cinema historiography.

In 1990, the series of reflections devoted to the issues around the preservation and promotion of cinematic heritage were clearly focused on the topic of film restoration. The title of the international conference hosted that year—“Toward a Theory of Film Restoration”<sup>9</sup>—plainly signals the festival’s main interests



and ambitions. Besides developing a praxis and a methodology of restoration, the festival aims at defining a theoretical framework to guide the praxis and make the methodology coherent. Through comparison between cinema and other artistic fields in which restoration activity has a longer tradition, the purpose is to provide a definition of film restoration, to examine the topic of the “original copy” and to discuss how restored cultural objects can be enjoyed and interpreted.

As far as restoration is concerned, the 1990 edition appears to have been a pivotal edition for two other reasons. First, it was in 1990 that the “laboratory/school” *L'immagine ritrovata* was established<sup>10</sup>; second, theoretical reflections about film restoration were strengthened even further by the retrospectives. The problem of the original, which was implicit in the programs of previous years, explicitly emerged. The 1990 edition, in fact, along with two monographic sections about Hollywood pre-code cinema and the illegal rip-offs from Charlie Chaplin films in the 1910s, showcased a retrospective, titled “Original(?),” where multiple versions of well-known masterpieces such as *Foolish Wives* (Eric Von Stroheim, 1922) or *The Big Trail* (Raoul Walsh, 1930) were shown.

All these topics, as well as the issues of the exhibition and valorization of the film archive's heritage, are explicitly problematized in both *Cineteca* and *Cinegrafie* (1989-2007), a semi-annual (and later annual) journal promoted by the Cineteca. For instance, in issue 3 of *Cinegrafie* an article by Peter Delpout (1991) from the Nederlands Filmmuseum focuses on exhibition practices around the fragment, after having originated as a presentation at the workshop on cataloguing and restoration at the 1989 edition of the festival. In issue 4 an essay by Edmonson (1991) about film restoration was published. In issue 5 an article by Eric de Kuyper (1992) focused again on the fragment (this time coming from the conference on film restoration held by the festival in 1990); and the Italian translation of an excerpt from Dominique Païni's (1992) book *Conserver, montrer* also appeared. By 1994, the year in which the festival hosted the 50th FIAF congress, the ideas explicitly developed since 1990 warranted publication in a separate volume, *Il cinema ritrovato*.

*Teoria e metodologia del restauro cinematografico*, edited by the co-founders of the festival, Gian Luca Farinelli and Nicola Mazzanti. From 1994 to 2007 essays devoted to film restoration continued to be published regularly.

As mentioned above, the attention paid by *Il cinema ritrovato* to the theoretical dimension of restoration seems to correspond perfectly to certain dynamics within cinema historiography. Not only because, on the historians' part, it leads to—and at the same time answers to—a more demanding and careful attitude towards the “documents” on which they base their work, but also because it falls within a more general problematization of the “empirical” history that prevailed in the previous decades (see Casetti 1999, Lagny 1992, Aumont, Gaudreault and Marie 1989).

Gaudreault (2008) has shown very well the advantages that this new alliance between history and theory of cinema gives to both fields, particularly in the 1980s. An alliance between history and theory must be regarded as an opportunity and, most of all, as a necessity: no film history is possible without a theory of history and a theory of cinema.

Thus, on the basis of this new awareness of the problems of studying history—basically, of the fact that history doesn't record reality but constructs it as the object of its discourse—many categories previously used to analyze and understand cinema were criticized and new approaches were proposed.

At the risk of a certain simplification, we can point out at least some of the relationships between the main research areas emerging in cinema historiography (see Casetti 1999) and certain programming choices made by *Il cinema ritrovato*. For instance, the several retrospectives concerning cinema technologies, such as “From Silent to Sound – The Transition Years. 1 – Europe” (1992) and “2 – United States” (1993), as well as the sections devoted to 3-D cinema (2002), CinemaScope and other large formats (2003, 2004, 2006 and 2007), and colour (2009 and 2010) can be easily connected to the wider historiographical interest in the economic and industrial dimensions of cinema.

Similarly, the attention paid by the festival to the phenomenon of stardom can be connected to the increasing interest in

social aspects of the cinema; starting in 1996 with Rudolph Valentino, it continued in 1997 (“Silent Garbo”) and 1998 (Douglas Fairbanks) and developed into a wider investigation devoted to silent actresses in 1999 (“Divine Apparitions: Actresses and Stars in Europe. Birth and First Development of a System – The Teens and the Twenties”) and 2000 (“Divine Apparitions – Second Part: Girls, Ladies, Stars: American Actresses in the Twenties”).

The section “Ritrovati e restaurati” (Recovered & Restored),<sup>11</sup> a distinctive and ongoing element of the festival’s history, seemed, however, to strengthen the authority of the “masterpiece tradition” (see Allen and Gomery 1985, pp. 67-76) belonging to previous historiographical approaches. And, although the effect it produced was to see the canon proliferate and be problematized, it didn’t seem to call the traditional “canonization” criteria into question, such as author and work of art. The “*cinéophile* flavour” implicit in the twelve-hour marathon that took place at the Lumière movie theatre on December 19, 1987<sup>12</sup>—at which the label *Il cinema ritrovato* appeared for the first time—seemed sometimes to re-emerge in the “Recovered & Restored” section. As Michèle Lagny (1995, pp. 101-2) suggests:

As far as the film selection is concerned, the “philological” nature of the Bologna film festival, and the quality of the film copies shown there, allow the festival to take cover from potential criticism about its programming choices. These are of a very *cinéophile* kind: the purpose is in fact to take great films out of the dusty archives’ vaults. Some of those films are simply unknown, but others are actually *badly* known, due to the many edits and manipulations their copies underwent through the years.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. The institutional level

Writing about the archives/universities relationship, Quaresima (2009, p. 156) points out that, at least in the Italian context, it is customary that

in the film archives, research is performed by internal researchers, or independent researchers or even scholars who have had a

college education, but it is rare that they are actually part of an academic staff. In fact, it is very unusual that university scholars are entrusted by an archive with a research task; and even when that happens, it does so outside of an established agreement policy between the two institutions.<sup>14</sup>

We believe that a similar trend can be observed also in the context of film festivals. In fact—and we want to stress that this is a general principle not limited to archive film festival practice—a festival needs researchers in order to plan its programming choices, to edit books or catalogues related to its retrospectives and even to arrange its conferences. In doing so, a festival has a wide array of researcher profiles to choose from: academic researchers; internal or external independent researchers; finally, high profile critics a general audience may be familiar with through the media. By examining the festival's published materials and programming, it is therefore possible to determine which kinds of researchers a film festival may prefer to hire, and thus to guess what type of historical research is more or less explicitly endorsed by the film festival itself.

As for *Il cinema ritrovato*, we believe that it isn't possible to observe a stable strategy throughout all of its many editions. In fact, *Il cinema ritrovato* continues to hire different kinds of researchers according to the programming section—or retrospective, or publication—planned by its artistic directors and curators. During certain phases of its history, however, *Il cinema ritrovato* seems to have preferred some types of researcher at the expense of others.

From its birth and until the end of the 1990s, *Il cinema ritrovato* seems to have sought out the cooperation of academic institutions, and often worked alongside the film studies department of the University of Bologna. In fact, programming cooperation between the University of Bologna and the Cineteca seems to have started even before the festival's first edition, when in 1985 two university scholars, Antonio Costa and Michele Canosa, organized a full Marcel L'Herbier retrospective—using rarely seen copies from an archive institution, Les Archives du Film in Bois d'Arcy. In a sense, this served as a blueprint for the festival. Moreover, Canosa shortly afterwards

became one of the first *Cinema ritrovato* curators together with Farinelli and Mazzanti, and also the editor of the journal *Cinegrafie* which, from no. 2 onwards, accompanied every edition of the festival. However, it is noteworthy that most festival publications show a profitable co-existence of academic and independent researchers: this is the case of the books and retrospectives devoted to silent Italian cinema,<sup>15</sup> but also of the *Cinegrafie* issues that accompanied the retrospectives devoted to European and American stars at *Il cinema ritrovato* in the latter half of the 1990s.

The 2000s, however, marked a slight shift in the festival's choice of researcher profile. To start with, *Il cinema ritrovato* widened its program offering, but only a few of the many new sections were headed up by academic researchers. In fact, despite the fact that the new festival director, Peter Von Bagh,<sup>16</sup> was an academic himself, the majority of retrospective curators were independent researchers or archivists, as were most of the publications' authors. This choice seems to have been aimed at widening the film festival's target audience, in line, for example, with the custom of offering the most audience-friendly pictures at free-admission, public-square screenings. Following this more audience-friendly strategy, *Il cinema ritrovato* also seems to have sought out researchers who, besides being widely recognized experts, were also already known to a broader public. One example, among many others, might be Tatti Sanguineti,<sup>17</sup> one of the most important Italian film critics and a key expert on Italian film production who also has a strong track record as author and writer of several Italian radio and television shows. A similar strategy was particularly evident during recent editions of the Venice film festival, where a good number of retrospectives have been programmed by film critics already known to a wide audience because of their work as journalists in various media, including radio and television. Marco Giusti, for instance, who besides being a famous film critic and a renowned expert on Italian B-movies has also written many TV shows about Italian genre cinema.

Thus, academic researchers seem to have only a limited appeal even for an archive film festival. We can, however, look at

this matter from another perspective: a film festival is in itself an institution, and, as we have stressed before, it can work either together with or in competition with other institutions—for example, universities, archives or the film criticism community.

#### **4. Analyzing the potential historiographical impact of a film festival: some possible guidelines**

As we have already seen, the actual impact of film festivals on cinema historiography can be determined only by investigating those changes within historiographical production, which can be more or less directly linked to the festivals' activities. In order to do this, however, we should first analyze the potential impact of the film festivals, i.e. how film festivals can (deliberately or not) produce a historiographical discourse, a potential impact that can later turn into an actual impact if such historiographical discourse is accepted and developed by historians.

As far as historiographical research is concerned, we argue that film festivals have their own tools and carry out specific strategies that cannot be completely assimilated with the methodological devices related to academic research.

Some of these strategies have more or less explicitly emerged already in our attempt to illustrate the different issues involved in the notion of historiographical impact by quickly looking at some basic aspects of the *Cinema ritrovato* film festival: we have referred to festival-sponsored conferences, publications, programs, catalogues and various underlying criteria for retrospectives and discrete sections. Of course, in order to go beyond *Il cinema ritrovato*'s historiographical relevance, and be able to extend our analysis to different sorts of festivals, all these heterogeneous elements need to be outlined at a more generalized level.

Therefore, to conclude this brief essay, we would like to summarize some possible forms in which the historiographical discourse of festivals (any kind of festival) may be developed. We assume that through the analysis of such forms we can start to identify different strategies and practices with regard to a single festival or many, a single edition or many; afterwards, these data will have to be correlated with historiographical production in

order to discuss whether the festivals' practices, case by case, have historiographical relevance or not.

Essentially, we maintain that the potential historiographical impact of a film festival (in other words, the historiographical discourse produced by a festival) can be investigated at four levels: a) programming criteria; b) publications; c) conferences, workshops, round tables and gatherings; and d) promotional materials.

Before entering into detail, it must be noted that the festivals' choices and strategies, which can emerge by following these guidelines, necessarily have a potential historiographical impact, or produce a historiographical discourse, but it must not be taken for granted that this impact (or this discourse) results from a specific historiographical awareness.

In fact, all data we can obtain by following these guidelines are affected, in various degrees, by other heterogeneous, interrelated components, such as economic contingencies (for instance the budget at the festival's disposal, the sponsors, the policies of film production and distribution companies) or institutional factors (relationships with other institutions and organizations). We must also take into account the role played by the media, that is to say how the need for press coverage may affect the festival's choices and explain, for instance, the anxiety about novelty or discovery which affects any festival. Finally, we have to stress also how specific strategies may be developed by the festival with the aim of constructing its own identity—and constructing its own audience and cultivating their allegiance—in order to distinguish itself from other festivals.

As far as programming criteria are concerned, it is plain that any festival carries out an essential activity of selection. Through a process of inclusion and exclusion, the perceived value of some films can be enhanced and others not. In fact, the selection process entails that only some films are considered or re-considered (also by scholars and historians), and inclusion is often sufficient to attest to their status, authority and interest (see for instance the Cannes film festival's "Sélection officielle," and Venice's "Selezione ufficiale").

To guide the selection process, or to better organize what has been previously selected on the basis of heterogeneous factors,

festivals follow different criteria. On the one hand, criteria adopted by festivals may directly refer to the criteria which are already well established in the historiographical tradition in order to organize and understand (that is to say, to construct) the history of cinema as an area of study. Besides confirming them—as seems to happen with the “Giornate degli autori” (Venice Days) in Venice, the “Quinzaine des réalisateurs” in Cannes, the “Masters” section at the Toronto film festival or the “Documentary” and “Dramatic” competitions at the Sundance film festival—festivals can also modify them, going as far as introducing new ones. On the other hand, and more significantly, film festivals can also establish very particular organizing criteria, which apparently bear no relation to the historiographical tradition and yet can interact with historiographical criteria at different levels. It is sufficient to think of the “Orizzonti” (Horizons) and “Controcampo Italiano” (Italian reverse-angle) sections of the Venice film festival, the “Panorama” and “Forum” sections of the Berlin film festival, “Un certain regard” in Cannes, “Discovery,” “Midnight Madness” and “Future Projections” in Toronto, “Next,” “New Frontier” and “From the Collection” at the Sundance film festival, or, in many festivals, the “Out of Competition” section. As it clearly emerges, all these different kinds of sections imply heterogeneous criteria, such as discovery and rediscovery, unruliness and eccentricity, experimentation and innovation, relationships with other media and arts, genre, independent and low-budget cinema, debut films, and so on. Thus, starting to map these criteria would be the first step to try to investigate whether and how they are assimilated and modified by historiographical production.

Of course, this kind of “thematic” organization overlaps in the schedule with a temporal and spatial organization which produces hierarchies and also allows the festival’s program to be targeted towards different audiences. Thus, by managing different time slots and different spaces, creating different options and suggesting series and sequences, festivals construct their audiences, give special connotative values to the various segments of the program and introduce further hierarchies—which can be taken into account by historiographical production or not.



As has already emerged, diverse and sometimes separate criteria become operational in retrospectives and sections, where they can be developed through various editions, thus promoting in-depth examination, orderliness and continuity; or they can characterize a single edition, emphasizing exceptionality, exclusivity and novelty, which also emerge through single events such as “tributes.”

It is clear that it is essentially in the publications produced by festivals that programming criteria may last and also be discussed and strengthened. Thus publications can, to a great extent, enhance and highlight some of the festival’s choices (for instance, not all sections are supported by publications) and demonstrate how researchers with different profiles are involved. What is more, it is in publications that different ways of referring to historiographical sources—and to previous or contemporary historiographical research—can emerge in the most direct manner.

The main publication is usually the film festival catalogue, a very particular textual entity that, besides its written contents, represents a visual and graphic expression of the film festival’s identity and aims. Moreover, publications can also include monographs, collections of essays or other products, such as journals or DVD editions; the latter, of course, represent another means by which film festivals may carry on their essential activity of selection.

Furthermore, film festivals can augment the screenings with conferences, workshops, round tables and gatherings that, along with publications, can enhance and problematize some of the festival’s choices, and also point out new research areas.

Finally, all the promotional materials produced by festivals should be taken into consideration: posters, playbills, websites, blogs, press conferences and press releases represent other means by which festivals can introduce other forms of selection and emphasis and strengthen their programming strategies and criteria. Of course, in addition to the film festival’s promotional strategies, we should also take into account the particular forms that the promotional strategies of film production and distribution companies assume within the film festival context.

As we have seen, mapping the discursive strategies of film festivals which are capable of having a historiographical impact is quite a complex task. On the one hand, the provisional remarks we have provided about *Il cinema ritrovato* attempt to show how festivals can work as a space wherein broader topics, such as theoretical and methodological paradigm shifts, or historical canons and hierarchies, can be shared and negotiated among different institutions. On the other hand, the guidelines we have tried to outline represent an attempt to provide more specific tools to carry out this analysis and extend it to other sorts of film festivals.

Thus, rather than proposing conclusive outcomes, our research simply seeks to highlight some issues which could act as a set of coordinates for further in-depth studies.

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#### NOTES

1. This work is the fruit of genuine and intensive collaboration on all parts and aspects of the essay. Each of us was principally responsible for writing almost exactly half of the essay, as follows: Francesco Di Chiara wrote section 1, section 3 and the Introduction; Valentina Re wrote section 2 and section 4. We would like to thank Alberto Boschi, Michele Canosa, Francesco Pitassio, Leonardo Quaresima and Edward Smith for their comments and suggestions.

2. See also Skadi Loist and Marijke de Valck, "Film Festivals/Film Festival Research: Thematic, Annotated Bibliography: Second Edition," *Medienwissenschaft / Hamburg: Berichte und Papiere* 91, 2010 (<[http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/Medien//berichte/arbeiten/0091\\_08.html](http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/Medien//berichte/arbeiten/0091_08.html)>) and the website of the Film Festival Research Network: <<http://www.filmfestivalresearch.org/>>.

3. See also Loist and de Valck (2010) and the website of the Film Festival Research Network: <<http://www.filmfestivalresearch.org/>>.

4. See <<http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2011/ev/archivio2011>>.

5. "Esperienze e prospettive della conservazione e diffusione del patrimonio cinematografico." The Conference was organized by the Cinoteca di Bologna in collaboration with the Istituto per i Beni Culturali della Regione Emilia-Romagna, the Cinoteca Nazionale and the University of Bologna, and with the participation of a large number of international film archives. It also offered examples of film restoration and conservation: see *Cineteca* 8-9, II, 1986 and <[http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986\\_1999](http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986_1999)>. *Cineteca* (1985-) is the monthly bulletin of the Cinoteca di Bologna which functioned as a catalogue for *Il cinema ritrovato* until 1994, adding to the program some essential technical data, brief comments or excerpts from various historical sources and information about the restorations. From 1995 the program guide became a separate booklet and was released as a supplement to *Cineteca*. From 2002 the supplement became a more

substantial volume, *Cineteca speciale*, with images and more detailed comments on the films, and playbills started to be released. In 2010 it became a completely autonomous publication as a catalogue.

6. Organized again in collaboration with the Istituto per i Beni Culturali della Regione Emilia-Romagna and the University of Bologna. In addition to the Cineteca di Bologna, the Cinémathèque du Luxembourg and the München Filmmuseum-Stadtmuseum also offered examples of their restoration activity. See *Cineteca* 9, III, 1987 and <[http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986\\_1999](http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986_1999)>.

7. See *Cineteca* 9, IV, 1988 and <[http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986\\_1999](http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986_1999)>.

8. “Il film: problemi di catalogazione e restauro.” See *Cineteca* 8-9, V, 1989 and <[http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986\\_1999](http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986_1999)>.

9. “Verso una teoria del restauro cinematografico.” See *Cineteca* 8/9, VI, 1990 and <[http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986\\_1999](http://www.cinetecadibologna.it/cinemaritrovato2010/ev/archivio2010/1986_1999)>.

10. With the presentation of the school (sponsored by the European Social Fund) the first outcomes of the previous research and reflections were already emerging: restoration was regarded as a “complex and multilayered operation that implies rudiments of chemistry and mechanics, of film history and philology, and of preservation methods.” *L'immagine ritrovata*, in *Cineteca* 1, VI, 1990, pp. 3-4. From the very beginning the two-year training course was aimed at establishing a film restoration laboratory, which was actually established in 1992. See also: <<http://www.immagineritrovata.it/>>.

11. Started in 1989 as “I film ritrovati” (Recovered Films).

12. See *Cineteca* 9, III, 1987.

13. Our translation.

14. Our translation.

15. See the retrospective *Sperduto nel buio: Il cinema muto italiano e il suo tempo* (1905-1930), curated in 1991 by Renzo Renzi in collaboration with Michele Canosa, Gian Luca Farinelli and Nicola Mazzanti, or its catalogue (Renzi 1991), but also Canosa and Costa (1998).

16. Peter Von Bagh took over from Gian Luca Farinelli and Nicola Mazzanti as the new festival director in 2001.

17. Sanguineti has been the curator of many of the *Il cinema ritrovato* retrospectives, notably about Italian film restorations. These include the restoration of Alberto Lattuada's *The Boarders* (*La spiaggia*, 1954)—see Sanguineti 2001—or in the case of “Italia Taglia,” a project about Italian film censorship that involves, other than the Cineteca di Bologna, also the universities of Bologna and Padova (see Sanguineti 1999).

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## RÉSUMÉ

### **Festival de cinéma/Histoire du cinéma : l'impact des festivals du film sur l'historiographie cinématographique. *Il cinema ritrovato et au-delà* Francesco Di Chiara et Valentina Re**

L'objectif de cet article est d'offrir des points de repère pour étudier l'impact des festivals du film sur l'historiographie du cinéma. Depuis les années 1940, les festivals du film ont joué un rôle crucial en études cinématographiques, contribuant au développement de diverses avenues de recherche, tant chez les critiques que chez les théoriciens. Toutefois, ce n'est que récemment que les festivals du film ont attiré l'attention du milieu universitaire en tant que champ de recherche autonome. Qui plus est, dans la plupart des recherches qui leur sont consacrées, la relation entre les festivals du film et l'historiographie du

cinéma est généralement négligée. On tentera donc ici de décrire l'étendue actuelle de ce champ de recherche et de proposer certains paramètres pour son étude future. Après une description générale du rôle qu'occupent les festivals dans l'historiographie du cinéma, nous tenterons d'ériger un cadre théorique capable d'expliquer comment les stratégies mises en œuvre par les festivals — leur structure, leurs horaires, leurs publications, les tables rondes qui s'y tiennent, mais aussi leur façon de cibler un certain public — mettent en lumière, de façon implicite, leur impact potentiel sur l'historiographie du cinéma. Pour exemplifier nos propositions théoriques, nous nous référerons à différents types de festivals, dont un cas très particulier: *Il cinema ritrovato* de Bologne.