

Call for Papers

Frames of Change: Historicizing Recent European Cinema (1990–2025)

22-23 May 2025 | Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain

Organized by Fernando Ramos Arenas (Universidad Complutense Madrid) and Daniel Biltereyst (Ghent University, CIMS)

About the Conference:

The past three decades have seen European cinema undergo significant transformations, driven by a range of technological, economic, cultural, and political factors. From the proliferation of digital filmmaking and distribution to shifts in film programming, audience consumption patterns and evolving cultural policies, the landscape of European cinema has been dramatically reshaped. **Frames of Change: Historicizing Recent European Cinema (1990–2025)** seeks to explore these changes and reflect on their historical implications for the production, distribution, exhibition, and reception of European films, as well as for their modes of representation, aesthetics and ideology.

At the heart of this exploration is a broad rethinking of the very concept of **cinema** across Europe and its cultural, societal and industrial value. Hasn't cinema just become a "niche, like opera", as Paul Schrader recently argued? What about **cinema in Europe** and its (still valid?) reputation linked to 'auteur cinema', art, critical prestige? How do different national and regional cinematic traditions conceptualize film and **the cinematic in relation to global audiovisual media**? These questions extend beyond traditional notions of national cinema to encompass how filmmakers, audiences, and institutions across Europe have shaped and been (re)shaped by the evolving media landscape. They also open following **areas of critical reflection**:

- The conference invites scholars to interrogate the **shifting film styles, genres, and aesthetics** that have emerged over the past three decades, tracing how European filmmakers have navigated both global trends and regional sensibilities in their work. Additionally, questions of **representation, diversity, and inclusion** have become central to the European film discourse, especially as filmmakers tackle issues of migration, gender, race, and identity within an increasingly interconnected (and recently disconnecting) Europe.
- **Digitization** has had a deeply transformative impact on European cinema. What kind of new programming tactics emerged thanks to digitization? How have the **practices, strategies, and economies** of film exhibition in Europe evolved, particularly in response to the dominance of streaming services and changing audience behaviours? What was the impact of technological disruptions, financial crises, and global health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic?
- **The rise of major streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon, and Disney+** has led to profound shifts in distribution models, audience engagement, and

film financing, challenging traditional cinema exhibition and altering how films are consumed across Europe. Alongside this, the evolution of **film consumption patterns** across Europe—shifting from cinema to streaming platforms, from physical to digital formats—requires new methods of understanding audience experiences and engagement.

- At the same time, **European Union policies** have played a key role in shaping the audiovisual sector, fostering **co-productions** and defining funding structures that influence everything from filmmaking to consumption and experiencing films. Looking back at thirty years of European film policies it is however time to **evaluate how successful EU, national, regional and local film policies have been in strengthening cinema in the continent.**
- Finally, we encourage papers that explore case studies of **industry shifts**, including the role of streaming platforms, independent cinema, and the **research and development function of cinema** within the broader European audiovisual market.

This conference seeks to provide a platform for scholars to critically engage with these issues and contribute to the ongoing reimagining of European cinema in the 21st century. We invite papers that approach these questions from a range of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary perspectives, aiming to offer a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the forces shaping European cinema from 1990 to 2025.

Considering these aspects, we welcome proposals for papers addressing (but not limited to) the following topics:

- Conceptualizations of cinema, film, and the cinematic across Europe
- Shifting film styles, genres, and aesthetics across European cinema
- Representation, diversity, and inclusion within European cinema
- Reimagining authorship in European cinema
- The impact of digitization on European filmmaking and distribution practice
- Challenges, responses, and transformations in European film exhibition
- The role of European Union policies in shaping the audiovisual landscape
- The role of European festivals as sites of cultural and industrial transformation
- European film audiences and their experiences of European cinema
- European cinema as a tool for cultural diplomacy
- Evolving patterns of film consumption and audience engagement across Europe
- Reflections on the impact of the dominance of U.S. streamers and other global players on European cinema
- European cinema as world cinema: local narratives on the global stage
- Cinema as the R&D arm of the European audiovisual market
- Interplay between local, national, and global policies in European film markets
- European co-productions reconceived
- Case studies of industry shifts, including streaming platforms and independent cinema

The impact of far and extreme right-wing ideologies on cultural policies and on cinema culture

Approaches with a European scope are highly encouraged. An introducing keynote by an expert is planned. In conjunction with the conference, a follow-up publication is also planned.

The conference is part of the Horizon 2020 Research Project [REBOOT](#).

Submission Process:

Please send your title, abstract (max. 500 words) and CV (max. 150 words) to Fernando Ramos Arenas (ferramos@ucm.es) and Daniel Biltereyst (Daniel.Biltereyst@UGent.be) not later than 31/1/2025.

Important Dates:

- **Abstract Submission Deadline:** January 31, 2025
- **Notification of Acceptance:** February 28, 2025
- **Conference:** May 22-23, 2025



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