

Letter from the Editors

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Letter from the Editors

By Yuanxin Chu, Rachel Ng and Camila Contreras-Langlois

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 22nd issue of *Frames Cinema Journal*, **(Re)Locations: Transformations of Place in Film!**

This issue explores the dynamic interplay between film and the nuanced, yet intertwined concepts of location, place, and space. When we began work on the issue, we had no specific brief in mind, except to always be mindful of the openness and immense potentialities of space, as spatial theorists from Henri Lefebvre to Doreen Massey have emphasised. Even so, far beyond our expectations, we found ourselves constantly—and pleasantly—surprised and impressed by the range, richness, and depth of intellectual insights offered in our submissions. Indeed, the issue has evolved into a space of encounter and possibility, fostering conversations and links across diverse films, media, regional and national contexts, academic disciplines, and critical perspectives. We hope you enjoy reading the issue—and taking part in these discussions and entanglements too.

Our Feature Articles section opens in early postwar Berlin, where **Nancy Wilson** scrutinises archival footage of urban spaces in post-WW2 German cinema to examine the layered interplay of the past, present, and future. The issue then moves into the space of the bullring in Albert Serra's *Afternoons of Solitude* (2024)—alongside more everyday locations in bullfighter Andrés Roca Rey's life—where **Alexandra Semenova's** interdisciplinary analysis reveals the “logic of disorientation” in Serra's spatial constructions. Shifting our

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focus to a very different documentary, **Oliver Dixon**'s "*So That You Can Live* (1981) and the Crisis of the Welsh Landscape" analyses how the landscapes of the South Wales valleys register a structure of feeling of crisis among the Welsh industrial working class against a backdrop of deindustrialisation and economic downturn in the 1970s. Then, through the example of Hong Sang-soo's *Night and Day* (2008), **Harriet Idle** investigates the tourist romance in "The 'Empty Centre' of Paris", attending to the genre's spatial logics of exclusion in its treatment of the figure of the *flâneur*. By foregrounding the South Korean film, Idle contests Western-centric perspectives on the tourist romance. Accordingly, our issue shifts to its gaze to another part of the globe. Through her examination of the post-3.11 documentary *The Double Layered Town* (Haruka Komori and Natsumi Seo, 2019), **Lucie Rydzek** probes questions of territory-making, identity, and belonging in the context of a post-disaster artistic response. Our globe-trekking journey then continues as **Alborz Mahboobkhah** delves into the works of Iranian auteur Abbas Kiarostami, paying special attention to his recurring spatial structures and motifs, from car interiors to zigzagging roads and rural spaces. Ultimately, Mahboobkhah argues, Kiarostami's cinematic spaces contribute to the director's long-standing negotiation and exploration of the tensions between the inside and the outside, the self and the world. The final feature article by **Marcell Bárdos** concludes our journey through various temporalities and geographies by contemplating how the atmospheric spaces in Jóhann Jóhannsson's *Last and First Men* (2020) evoke a cultural mood of "civilisational melancholy", a general sense of decline and impermanence felt collectively in the age of the Anthropocene.

The two POV featurettes offer distinct reflections by filmmakers on how space and place have shaped their creative practice. **Jenny Holt**'s practice-led research documentary *Arboreal* (2024) was filmed in a tree nursery and forest estate in the Scottish Highlands,

managed by rewilding charity Tree for Life. Her featurette provides extensive insight into how observational documentary practice, as a form of “attunement”, can serve as a potent and rich resource for ethical storytelling and world-making. The second featurette by **Alan Smithee** (wishing to remain anonymous as their film remains as yet unfinished) outlines their process of engaging with the histories and politics of geological extraction, music technology, and even film, in their project exploring the surprising—but generative—link between DecisionSpace365 (a software used in oil extraction) and AutoTune.

Drawing on Jean Baudrillard’s concept of hyperreality, **Xunnan Li**’s film featurette offers a compelling interdisciplinary interpretation of the intermediality of *Zero-Calorie Restaurant* (Zou Siwei, 2023). In his reading, the “suppositional space” of *xiqu* (traditional Chinese opera) is mediated on-screen, where it interacts and intertwines with physical space, props, and the immersive space created by virtual reality.

The cartography of film is the central focus of the two video essays in our issue. **Jessica Wax-Edwards** visits the physical filming locations of *Roma* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2018) as introduced in the promotional materials for the film from Netflix in “Mapping *Roma*”. Her journey inspires questions and observations about film production and distribution, the entanglement between film and location, as well as memory and imagination. **Cáit Murphy** takes a distinct approach in her video essay on Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Blow-Up* (1966); instead of travelling to the film’s locations physically, she “visits” them via Google Maps. “Google Mapping *Blow-Up*: A Desktop Remediation” rethinks and expands on the obsessions and preoccupations of Antonioni’s film: (screen) images, technological reproduction, and, of course, the urban spaces of London.

Finally, our book review section features diverse reviews of Rob King's *Man of Taste* by **Zoe Rogan**, Geoff Brown's *Silent to Sound* by **Jacob Browne**, and *Choreographing Mexico* by **Camila Contreras-Langlois**.

This issue would not have been possible without the dedication and generous support of our contributors, editorial and review team, advisors, and our intern, Kaitlyn Allen. Thank you—it's been an absolute pleasure.

Happy reading!

Yuanxin Chu, Rachel Ng, and Camila Contreras-Langlois