

Transcultural Production Studies

In *Production Studies* (2009) and *Production Studies, The Sequel!* (2016), Vicky Mayer, Miranda Banks, John Caldwell and Bridget Conon asked media scholars from different disciplines to discuss the concept of Production Culture. Media workers are seen as “cultural actors” (2009, 2) whose practices and discourses shape the film industry culture. This approach thus favours a focus on “the lived realities of people involved in the media production” (2009, 4) as well as specific case studies and “grounded data” (2016, x). The institutional context remains a key element to comprehend film realities since a production culture exists in the tension “between individuals’ agency and the social conditions within which agency is embedded.” (2016, x). Production Studies rest on two questions: “How do media producers represent themselves (...)? How do we, as researchers, then represent those varied and contested representations?” (2009, 4). Any production culture thus appears as a cultural construct, as an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983) created by its agents in a context characterized by power issues. While *Production Studies* focused on North America, *The Sequel!* examined global issues, in line with the internationalisation of the film industry. The Transcultural Production Studies seminar series will explore the cultural phenomena at the heart of the internationalisation of film production.

Viewing Production Culture through an international lens raises new questions related to cultural diversity and cultural exchanges. Each film and television professional can be considered a pluricultural individual whose identity blends two production cultures: one linked to a specific profession within the film industry and one linked to the way cinema works in a specific nation. Globalization has led to more and more film professionals working in multicultural contexts, especially when collaborating on co-productions, runaway productions or globally dispersed productions, with the transnational production flows these entail. Within these multicultural work environments, film professionals face situations of intercultural communication, in which they must deal with cultural codes. Pluriculturalism, multiculturalism and interculturality provide tools to discuss phenomena at the levels of the individual, the context and communication situations. What happens when cultures meet shapes not only each individual’s identity and how they envision it, but also the different production cultures involved. Multicultural work situations thus create a contact zone, where cultures not only influence each other, but also lead to “the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena”, according to Fernando Ortiz, whose concept of “transculturation” was thus summarized by Bronisław Malinowski: “every transculturation (...) is a process in which something is always given in return for what one receives, a system of give and take. It is a process in which both parts of the equation are modified, a process from which a new reality emerges, transformed and complex, a reality that is not a mechanical agglomeration of traits, nor even a mosaic, but a new phenomenon, original and independent” (Ortiz, 1940). In order to comprehend the varied and complex phenomena of cultural exchanges at stake in the internationalised film and television industry, the Transcultural Production Studies seminar series invites scholars to discuss the following question:

What processes of transculturation are at play when film and television professionals work in multicultural contexts?

Case studies of transcultural processes can cover a wide range of issues and situations. Four multicultural work environments will be particularly conducive to significant observations:

Co-productions

How does co-producing influence the practices of film and television workers? What power imbalances between production companies are brought to light during negotiations and how do these impact creative choices (script, casting, etc.) and organisational decisions (contracts, work organisation, etc.)? Can one draw a portrait of typical models of transcultural co-productions? How does geographical, cultural and/or linguistic proximity impact transcultural co-productions? How does the recent involvement of North America-based digital platforms in co-productions around the world impact work organisation and creative cultures?

Globally-dispersed productions

To what extent do host countries change their working practices in order to attract and retain foreign productions? What are the long-term impacts of location shootings on the host country’s professional practices (working hours, communication means, environmental regulations, etc.)? Does the globally-dispersed production model lead to a homogenisation or a fragmentation of practices (production, filming, post-production)? To what extent does it impact the way public policies are designed?

Global circulation of film and television professionals

What is the impact of the different types of circulation (expatriation, transmigration, nomadism) on film workers' practices and cultures? What cultural, geographical, economic and/or political factors appear as significant in global circulation patterns? How important are networks in the decision to work abroad and in the constitution of expatriate professional communities? What is the link between professional competences and international circulation (education, training, linguistic skills, networking, etc.)? What adjustments, tensions and innovations are at play within multicultural film crews?

Film festivals and markets

What models of cultural cooperation are promoted through the initiatives organized during festivals, such as training workshops, co-production funds, films markets and forums? How is transculturation visible in the reflexive discourse of festival programmers, directors, producers and audiences? How do festivals and markets, as formal and informal exchange spaces, contribute to the creation of a transnational professional network? What transcultural communities are created through common practices over time?

The Transcultural Production Studies seminar aims to create a network of scholars, identify key issues and open up discussions on research practices. Scholars from all disciplines, specialised in contemporary and historical film industry issues, are welcome.

The seminar series will comprise six online sessions in 2021-2022 as well as panels during the NECS 2022 Conference.

Call for proposals – submission guidelines:

Please include the following points in your proposal (500-800 words, in French or English):

- a brief presentation of your area of expertise and short biography
- the cultural interactions and phenomena you observe which are relevant to a discussion on transculturation
- the epistemological, theoretical and methodological tools you use
- 3 to 5 bibliographical references

Proposals should be sent to transcultural@cinecosa.com and nolwenn.mingant@univ-angers.fr by **30 August 2021**.

Seminar led by Nolwenn Mingant (Université d'Angers)

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