

WORKSHOP 1 "1968, CINEMA AND  
POLITICS", TUESDAY, MAY 8TH,  
2018

Workshop 1, "1968, Cinema and  
politics"

Tuesday, May 8th, 2018, 10am-3pm,  
with lunch 12-1pm

River Room, King's Building,  
King's College London, Strand  
campus, London WC2R 2LS

Convener Mark Shiel, Department of  
Film Studies, KCL

(mark.shiel@kcl.ac.uk), with Ros  
Murray, Department of French, KCL,  
and Margaret Dickinson, filmmaker  
and author of *Rogue Reels:*

*Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945  
-1990* (BFI Publishing, 1999)

This workshop will consist of a  
morning session, 10am-12pm, and an  
afternoon session, 1-3pm, with a  
one hour break for lunch.

### **Part 1) Morning session**

Attendees are asked to watch, in  
advance of the workshop, some  
short video clips online of  
relevant films made between 1967  
and 1976 (please see list below  
for the clips). The morning  
session will consist of three  
short papers by Shiel, Murray, and

Dickinson, addressing these clips and related issues, with plenty of opportunity for discussion by the audience as a whole and in small groups too.

Margaret Dickinson will discuss the mix of British and foreign influences on three British radical film workshops, starting in the late 1960s - i.e. cinema action, Liberation Films and Amber - and with reference to some of the work of Simon Hartog, a largely forgotten activist who was one of the founders of the London Film Coop and who argued for the nationalisation of the British film industry.

Ros Murray will discuss the relationship between technology and reproductive labour in French feminist video after 1968, looking in particular at the feminist collective Les Insoumuses and its Portapak video *SCUM Manifesto* (1976). The video, by Carole Roussopoulos and Delphine Seyrig, was an adaptation of the 1967-68 manifesto by the American radical feminist Valerie Solanas, who advocated the repurposing of

technological advances to combat what she called the 'dubious purpose of reproduction'.

Mark Shiel will examine film footage of mass protests, focusing on 1967-68 in Los Angeles, a city closely associated with escapist commodity culture (especially Hollywood) but also a hotbed of counterculture and leftist radicalism, as recorded in the historically-significant but little-known documentary film *Century Plaza Demonstration (President Johnson, June 1967)*. This is a fascinating portrayal of the largest anti-war demonstration in Los Angeles during the Vietnam War, but it is one-sided, made by the Los Angeles Police Department and US Secret Service.

Online video clips:

Carole Roussopoulos and Delphine Seyrig, *SCUM Manifesto* (1976, 27 mins)  
<https://vimeo.com/72825633>

Century Plaza Demonstration (President Johnson, June 1967) (U.S. Secret Service,

16mm training film,  
captioned "Century Plaza,  
June 23, 1967, compiled  
from footage and sound  
tracks of the Los Angeles  
Police Department and Local  
Television Stations," item  
USSS #18502, National  
Archives and Records  
Administration, Washington,  
DC; 27 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFAqd2pW96Q>

Unfinished film about the  
group 'cinema action' (12  
mins, 2017)

<https://vimeo.com/219028541>

*UCS1* (cinema action, 1971,  
22 mins)

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/31689>

[the clips below are  
optional extras, if you  
have time to watch them]

*End of a Tactic* (Liberation  
Films, 1969, 15 mins

<https://vimeo.com/193726552>

*All You Need's an*

*Excuse* (Liberation Films,  
1972, 11

mins.) <http://www.the->

[lcva.co.uk/videos/594bbb7d1](http://www.the-lcva.co.uk/videos/594bbb7d1)

[c423d243c1b14a8](http://www.the-lcva.co.uk/videos/594bbb7d1c423d243c1b14a8)

Various short clips from  
the 'cinema action' films,  
*Not a Penny on the Rents*

(1968) and *People of Ireland* (1970)

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/529319/>

Suggested reading:

Margaret Dickinson, *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945-1990* (BFI Publishing, 1999)

Ros Murray, "Raised Fists: Politics, Technology, and Embodiment in 1970s French Feminist Video Collective", *Camera Obscura*, 91, volume 31, number 1, pp. 92-121

Mark Shiel, "Los Angeles and Hollywood in Film and French Theory: Agnès Varda's *Lions Love* (1969) and Edgar Morin's *California Journal* (1970)", in François Penz (ed.), *Cinematic Geographies*, Palgrave Macmillan, Screening Spaces series, 2017, pp. 245-68

### **Part 1) Afternoon session**

This session will develop the discussion of "1968, Cinema and Politics" around a broader range of examples and issues, including multiple international contexts in which cinema and mass protest came together with particular volatility or influence (e.g. Tokyo, Mexico City, Milan, Berlin), including a range of types of representation (avant

garde or agit prop filmmaking, narrative fiction, documentary), as well as issues of production, distribution, and exhibition which shaped, facilitated or restricted the expression of progressive mass protest in moving image culture.

*For this session, anyone in the audience who has a particular interest in this regard should email Mark Shiel ([mark.shiel@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:mark.shiel@kcl.ac.uk)) with suggestions as to specific films, filmmakers, movements, or issues to bring into the discussion. The idea in this session will be to open the discussion as broadly as possible, including to discussion of the continuing influence of 1968 on film and video culture today.*