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| Section A | | |
| Institution: University of St Andrews | |  |
| Unit of Assessment: UoA 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies | | |
| Title of case study: Mapping the Festival Ecosystem: Informing the Practice of Programmers, Filmmakers, and Archivists | | |
| Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008 - 2014 | | |
| Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit: | | |
| Name(s): Dina Iordanova | Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor | Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 01 October 2004 - 31 July 2020 |
| Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 31 December 2020 | | |
| Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? Y | | |
| Section B | | |
| 1. Summary of the impact | | |
| <p>By helping forge a field of film festival studies, Dina Iordanova has influenced scholars, programmers, filmmakers, and archivists. Inspired by Iordanova's work on the political potential of film festivals, Philippa Lovatt and the Glasgow Short Film Festival programmer collaborated on an event subsequently adopted by the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Guided by Iordanova's suggestion to seek niche (environmental) festivals, a filmmaker she mentored won several prizes, including the grand prize at the 2019 Banff International Film Festival (Canada), and First Prize at the 2019 Kathmandu International Mountain film Festival (Nepal), and further film distribution in 9 countries, including the US, India, Japan and the UK. Iordanova's practice of uniting professionals and scholars amplified the significance of festival ephemera, in turn influencing the collection and preservation work of the BFI (British Film Institute). Her mapping of a festival ecosystem shapes cultural understanding of festivals for professionals and public alike.</p> | | |
| 2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) | | |
| <p>Dina Iordanova's research has been instrumental in establishing and advancing the field of film festival studies. Despite the significance of film festivals for cinema arts, industry, tourism, cultural heritage, and national identity, these had been a relatively understudied phenomenon, with only a handful of scholars working on the subject.</p> <p>Through the <i>Dynamics of World Cinema</i>, a major research project sponsored by The Leverhulme Trust (2008-2011), Iordanova hosted workshops, launched the Film Festival Yearbook series, and developed the Scottish Film Festival Research Network (sponsored by The Royal Society of Edinburgh). These activities 1) strengthened the presence of film festival studies as a field; 2) expanded the international scope of the field; and 3) united scholars and practitioners in mapping out the complex and diverse interactions of festivals, participants, and their various functions.</p> <p>The <i>Film Festival Yearbook</i> series are a model of this process and contribution. A yearly published collection of reflections, case studies, and accounts from not only scholars, but also</p> | | |

filmmakers, festival directors, and journalists, each yearbook focussed on a particular area, regional or conceptual. These included drawing attention to previously less-explored areas such as film festivals and the Middle East [R1], diaspora festivals [R2], and activist film festivals [R3], as well as building on essential work started in East Asian film festivals, mapping out a transnational ecosystem of festival, more broadly.

This mapping project has drawn attention to the complexity of festivals as networks, not merely single sites for exhibition, but as places for international co-production development and distribution, performances of soft power and cultural policy, and the conferral of prestige through prize-giving [R5; R6]. By drawing attention to important film festival practices in parts of the world that had previously been neglected in both scholarly writing and in the industry press, it helped to shift discourse in the field from a largely Western centric perspective. Additionally, the wider view enhances the ways in which scholars and practitioners can appreciate the dynamics of a shifting cultural landscape, from the local to the global, the national to the transnational, the theoretical to the practical.

Across both the series and her workshops, Iordanova's vision created space for dialogue-led, collaborative methodologies, central to the development of Film Festival Studies. These methods position academy and industry in relation—developing new modes of generating knowledge, whether it is scholar as festival participant or festival practitioner turned researcher (and back). These processes bring a dynamism to a subject that needs just such enriched perspectives, and which yields changes both in research and practice.

3. References to the research

The research was supported by funding from the Leverhulme Trust, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Caledonian Foundation and the Italian Academy of Sciences and were peer-reviewed by both scholars and practitioners.

R1. D. Iordanova & Stefanie Van de Peer (eds) *Film Festival Yearbook 6: Film Festivals and the Middle East* (St Andrews Film Studies 2014) ISBN: [978-1-908437-11-2](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781908437112) (ppb) 376 pp.

R2. D. Iordanova & R. Cheung (eds) *Film Festival Yearbook 2: Film Festivals and Imagined Communities* (St Andrews Film Studies, 2010) ISBN: [978-0-9563730-1-4](https://doi.org/10.1017/9780956373014) (ppb) 286 pp.

R3. D. Iordanova & L. Torchin (eds) *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism* (St Andrews Film Studies, 2012). ISBN: [978-0-9563730-5-2](https://doi.org/10.1017/9780956373052) (ppb). 315 pp.

R4. D. Iordanova & R. Cheung (eds) *Film Festival Yearbook 3: Film Festivals and East Asia* (St Andrews Film Studies, 2011) ISBN: [978-0-9563730-3-8](https://doi.org/10.1017/9780956373038) (ppb) 292 pp.

R5. D. Iordanova, 'The Film Festival as Industry Node' *Media Industries* Vol. 1, Issue 3 (2015), DOI: [10.3998/mij.15031809.0001.302](https://doi.org/10.3998/mij.15031809.0001.302) (ppb). 225 pp.

R6. D. Iordanova & R. Rhyne (eds) *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit* (St Andrews Film Studies, 2009) ISBN: [978-1-906678-04-3](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781906678043) (ppb). 260 pp.

4. Details of the impact

Iordanova has generated ways of thinking about the various function, participants, and interactions by mapping out a festival ecosystem. Moreover, her invitation of practitioners into her research networks and activities (publications and workshops) has enriched their cultural understanding of the field and informed their practice. The impact extends across types of practitioners and around the world.

Programmers: From Glasgow to Rotterdam

The Director of the Glasgow Short Film Festival is a participant in and beneficiary of Iordanova's research. A member of the Scottish Film Festival Research Network (2011-2013) founded by Iordanova and author of *How the Movie Brats Took Over Edinburgh* with her festival series, he has praised her support and legitimisation of the field, which "*has given me new perspective on my profession, and has informed decisions about my own festival*" [S1].

For instance, in 2018, he invited colleague, Philippa Lovatt (herself influenced by Iordanova's work on the political potential of festivals for forming networks), to develop a Southeast Asian strand for the festival composed of a symposium (Archives, Aesthetics, Activism in Southeast Asian Cinemas) and film programme (16-17 March 2018, Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow). The symposium attracted an audience of 80—a significant number for a small festival—including "*attendees from A-List festivals such as International Film Festival Rotterdam. This in turn allowed GSFF to form new connections and potential partnerships... [and] ... created a space for cultural ex-change ... with artists and curators from Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam ... [which] elevated the festival to a new level of cultural importance*" [S2].

The event was the attraction, as confirmed by the Programmer for the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) who wrote that the symposium "*triggered me to attend Glasgow Short Film Festival for the first time*" [S3]. IFFR has an annual attendance of 340,000 people (with 2,700 film professionals) making them a Film Festival world leader. As a result, the programmer invited Lovatt to host a similar event on artists' films in Asian (similar to the one held in Glasgow) at IFFR on 28 January 2019 [S4].

Filmmakers: Finding one's niche in the ecosystem

Iordanova's expertise has benefited filmmakers through direct mentorship. When the director of *Piano to Zanskar* came to St Andrews for a screening in April 2019, he discussed his challenges with gaining distribution for his film and securing screenings at film festivals. Drawing on her expertise, Iordanova suggested he explore genre film festivals (e.g. mountaineering). These 'on-point recommendations' brought benefit in the form of programming, 'international distribution deals' and prestige in the form of prizes, including the grand prize at the 2019 Banff International Film Festival (Canada), and First Prize at the 2019 Kathmandu International Mountain film Festival (Nepal) [S5], the latter with an added award of Rs200,000 (GBP2132.38). The financial benefit is noteworthy because many film festivals do not provide financial rewards and rewards are thus often regarded solely as esteem markers. From those two honours came "*further invitations and awards, in India, Italy, Slovenia, France, UK, Poland, South Korea, Japan, and the US*". As the director notes, "*It seems then that spawning from [Iordanova's] initial advice, the film has suddenly found its rightful niche*". [S6]

Archivists: Supporting Preservation

Iordanova's work has united festival professionals with libraries to preserve festival materials—ephemera like posters, programmes, marketing, funding applications, press coverage. This informs researchers and produces a needed institutional memory for festival workers within a rapidly evolving and often transient workplace with high turnover of paid and volunteer labour and no consistent storage space. For instance, upon attending one of Iordanova's interdisciplinary workshops ("Ten Years of Film Festival Studies", March 2019), British Film Institute (BFI – who maintain a detailed database of over 6,000 film events dating back to

1935) librarian stated that, Iordanova's work [R1-R6] "*are easily accessible on our Reading Room shelves and are well use*" [S7]. On the event facilitated by Iordanova, "*the evident interest in bringing together scholars and practitioners, fostering collaboration, inspired me to renew my own efforts in promoting the library's collections*". She also states that the Film Festival Yearbook series "*provided us with the evidence needed to help justify our continued efforts in collecting film festival related print and electronic materials.*" [S7]

Contributing to Public Understanding

Iordanova's expertise has been solicited by journalists to be used in reports on film festivals to produce cultural understanding. She has written for *The Conversation* with her pieces receiving a global readership of 10,000, with one translated into French ('A l'ombre de tapis rouge'). Moreover, she has been asked to weigh in on topics relating to festivals for print and broadcast media. This includes: her interview with Sichuan Radio and Television on the subject of women's festivals (20 September 2019); an item on the state of Sundance on its 30th anniversary for Turkish broadcaster TRT World, the largest broadcaster and media organization in Turkey with a network extending worldwide beyond Europe and Western Asia with satellite viewing figures reportedly of 1,200,000 people [S8]; and reports on the state of the festival industry in an age of Covid-19 including 'Cannes or Cannes Not?' (TRT World) and 'Global film industry suffers under coronavirus uncertainty' for ABC News Australia (with an average nightly viewing figure of 620,000 people) [S9].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1. Email from the Director of Glasgow Short Film Festival

S2. Letter from the Director of Glasgow Short Film Festival

S3. Letter from Programmer, International Film Festival Rotterdam

S4. "Artists' Moving Images in Asia" Report on the International Film Festival Rotterdam blog, 2 February 2019.

S5. "Kathmandu International Film Festival concludes" *My City*, 16 December 2019, <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/mycity/news/kathmandu-international-film-festival-concludes>

S6. Email from the Director of *Piano to Zanskar* 5 October 2020

S7. Email from the Librarian at the Reuben Library, the British Film Institute

S8. "Sundance 2020", TRTWorld (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), 24 January 2020 <https://www.trtworld.com/video/beyond-the-game/sundance-film-festival-2020/5e2ad56db53db80017183114> (1,800 views on YouTube)

S9. "Global film industry suffers under coronavirus uncertainty", ABC News (Australia) 26 May 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtOgnQILf68&feature=youtu.be> (2,583 views on YouTube)