

學術對談

文化研究新領域：城市屏幕文化

對談人：裴開瑞(Chris Berry)、馮應謙、陳錦榮

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裴開瑞教授

(Prof. Chris Berry)

「我認為在這個時代，左派的舊政治模式似乎無法找到立足點，與此同時人們意識到新自由主義的資本主義出現危機(或是比危機更甚)。有鑒於此，文化研究須融入哲學和批判理論視角，闡釋正義、自由等在今天的意義，探索權力在新自由主義建構的世界下如何運作，以及何種實踐力圖促進正義、自由等理念。」

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Emerging Screen Culture Studies

Discussants: Chris BERRY, Anthony Y. H. FUNG, John Nguyet ERNI

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Abstract

Professor Chris Berry, a leading scholar in Film, Television and Cultural Studies in this dialogue shares his views on Chinese cinema studies and a new line of research-screen culture and its future development. Emphasizing its uniqueness and importance in the Asian context, he explicates how and why this emerging screen culture has become part of the everyday life. He mentions the methodological challenges of engaging in this fluid and ever-changing public screen culture research. He also illustrates the potentially comprehensive applications and practical implications of insights generated from the study of public screen cultures.

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裴開瑞教授簡介

裴開瑞是倫敦大學金史密斯學院媒體與傳播系電視與電影研究教授。在二十世紀八十年代，他曾在中國北京電影進出口公司工作，其學術研究基於中國與周邊國家的電影及其他屏幕媒體。他特別關注東亞地區同志屏幕文化、城市媒介化公共空間，以及國家和跨國屏幕文化。此外，他還曾在墨爾本拉特羅布大學和加州大學伯克利分校任教。

AE: 馮應謙、陳錦榮

CB: 裴開瑞

AE: 在過去的20年，文化研究的探詢主要集中於性別、性慾特質、種族、身份認同、次文化、視覺文化及離散等文化議題。你如何概念化這些發展軌跡？在未來幾年，文化研究最新和最重要的領域將會是甚麼？

CB: 我的研究領域與文化研究重疊，這是為何我一直想在Crossroads這種會議發表論文，但文化研究並不是我的主要研究範疇。所以，就此而言，我只能從一個邊緣者的角度來回答這個問題。從這個角度，我首先要說，許多你提到的議題似乎都特別來自上個世紀八十、九十年代。因此，正如人們認為我主要從事的電影研究依舊受上個世紀八十年代的議題影響一樣，我想這種情況同樣適用於文化研究，因此也同樣須要與時俱進。例如，我認為文化研究要與人類學區別開來，不僅如人類學一樣聚焦於此時此地，文化研究的議題更當源自關注權力和社會公義。所以，我認為在這個時代，左派的舊政治模式似乎無法找到立足點，與此同時人們意識到新自由主義的資本主義出現危機(或是比危機更甚)。有鑒於此，文化研究須融入哲學和批判理論視角，闡釋正義、自由等在今天的意義，探索權力在新自由主義建構的世界下如何運作，及何種實踐力圖促進正義、自由等理念。我認為，例如政府、管治、政治實踐諸如此類的文化均須研究。但這遠超我的專業領域！

AE: 長期以來，你一直積極投入華語世界的電影研究。中國電影有甚麼地方吸引你去致力研究？我們認為中國電影中的一些關鍵問題或許與所謂的全球荷里活研究相當不同？這些不同之處又是甚麼？

CB: 一方面，不得不承認，我的西方背景使自己在理解中國電影時，會無可避免地受制於一種思維，即中國電影與我之前所熟悉的荷里活或其他西方國家的實踐如何相同或不同。不過，這並非如一些人所說的不過是東方主義而已，我認為這種思維方式並非那麼不合適，因為中國電影本身一直十分留意荷里活，並在許多時期和地區與荷里活競爭本地市場。然而，另一方面，我認為英文的中國電影研究已經足夠蓬勃，現在我們不須再以它與荷里活的差異來證明研究中國電影的必要性。我們現在明白，中國電影一直是、也繼續會是中國流行文化的重要組成部分，並承載於許多其他流行文化，因此中國電影就其自身而言已是值得研究的。

至於我對中國電影的個人興趣，是一個長而複雜的故事。太長了，在這裏一時講不完！但我本科修讀中國研究。(如果讓我解釋為甚麼有此選擇，這次採訪將不會結束，所以就此打住。)當時英國幾乎沒有講普通話的人，大多數在英國的中國人都講廣東話。所以，我們用普通話電影練習聽力。它們是毛澤東時代的電影，與我以前看過的任何電影都非常不同，所以這讓我非常好奇，由此開啟一連串意料之外的事和機會。中國電影對我沒有特別大的誘惑，但卻一直是我的興趣所在。並且我學習中文的時候只有少數人從事這件事情，我想也許我能做出些許貢獻。但在研究中國電影超過30年後，現在它便是我的工作。

不同的時期，我對不同的事物感興趣。例如，現今我對獨立電影界和畫廊界的融合非常有興趣，目前還不清楚像楊福東、曹斐這些創作移動影像的人應該被稱為電影製作人、錄像製作人、藝術家，或上述所有。我很好奇的是這如何為中國獨立電影開闢新的可能性，其現有的實踐領域正受諸多限制，但這個新舞台又是如何在自身的期望和限制下，塑造新的可能性。我也想知道更

多關於在中國蓬勃發展的商業主流的情況，但我尚未在這方面做深入研究。

去年在維也納，我和朋友Katja Wiederspahn籌辦了一個文革時代的電影展覽，所以現在我對文革十年的電影文化也非常感興趣。我剛剛寫完一篇關於文革時期電影色彩的文章，也與人合作了一個以採訪為主的研究，討論文革時期中國人的衣着及如何從電影文化中獲悉這一點。對我來說這是很震撼的經驗，因為我和那些曾經年輕過的人談及一個現在被否定的時代。通常，他們被期待的只是記住那是創傷的年代，他們鮮有機會去回憶當時仍然存在的日常樂趣。能夠跟我們談那些事情，他們高興極了，即使有時也碰觸到傷痛的一面。這使我想起我母親的人生。她現在92歲，當年在納粹柏林長大。也許並不奇怪，她不怎麼談論它。這一現象，成為我長久以來對後威權電影和文化感興趣的原因之一。該現象以各種方式呈現，吸引我不斷去做相關研究，如目前對土耳其電影的研究。

最後，還有我正在做的公共空間移動影像屏幕，我想可以說是「電影和屏幕研究」的邊界——也許出了界！

AE: 2010年，你在香港召集了「Crossroads：文化研究國際會議」，其中特別成立了屏幕文化小組。這個新的研究範疇有何獨特之處？屏幕文化研究和電影研究的理論差異何在？

CB: 我對公共場所移動影像屏幕的興趣源於對電影研究未來的思考。很多關於這一主題的研究，集中在數碼化所引起的本體論變化和其他哲學問題，卻沒有在歷史性和社會性具體實踐的層面進行考量。由於數碼發展，我們再不能如從前一般，在電影和其他移動影像媒體之間有一個清晰的界線，因為我們不能簡單地說電影是膠片。有些人側重於其哲學含意，而我也對其引發的社會和文化實踐感興趣。隨着移動影像的數碼化，其他技術——如迷你DV攝錄機——變革了拍攝手法。這種變革令中國的獨立紀錄片運動蓬勃發展，這也是我對此有濃厚興趣的原因之一。移動影像的屏幕也改變了。有許多新的形式，包括各種LED和等離子的形式，令

移動影像屏幕可以超越家庭和電影院，進入公共空間。Crossroads的屏幕文化小組和它所發表的研究，對我來說，是對於拓展電影研究的一種思考，使其發展為移動影像研究或屏幕研究，也思考如何將這些新的事物和實踐置於擴大的學科範圍，並在該學科範圍之中進行理解。但是，當然我也承認，這種現象從其他角度看也是有趣的，如跨媒介的科技與實踐融合如何轉變，這已成為我們不斷變化的城市之特色。

AE: 亞洲的屏幕文化有何重要和獨特之處？你如何看其未來在亞洲的發展？

CB: 這個嘛，我想亞洲城市有很多移動影像屏幕！但是，認真來說，我認為重點不在於一些泛亞共通性。當Anna McCarthy撰寫*Ambient Television*一書時，那時還是映像管時代。她極為正確地指出，公共空間中的電視因其所放置的場所不同而各有特性，換句話說，每個電視需要被理解為某個特定組合的從屬部分或是構建某個特定空間的組合元素。移動影像屏幕也同樣如此。McCarthy在美國工作。然而，如同許多美國或西方學者的常見情形，她也沒有明確指出，這些適用於美國或西方的分析是否也適用於世界其他地方。所以，我認為我們須要意識到：場所的特殊性也包括文化特性和每個城市的獨特文化，這是我為本次特刊所撰文章力圖強調的一點。

未來很難預測。但與紀念碑和雕塑不同的是，這些屏幕的有趣之處在於你總能把各種各樣的東西放進去。在開羅的咖啡館，電視機無處不在，主要用來播放足球比賽、MTV風格的節目和肥皂劇。自去年以來，它們一直充滿政治內容。公共場所的大屏幕，曾現場直播電視上的穆巴拉克審判。雖然公共屏幕未必馬上顯得有趣，但它們一旦裝好，就有潛力用於各種事情。

AE: 可否談談有關屏幕文化的獨特研究方法，尤其是考慮到屏幕的公共性質、流動性和飛速變化？

CB: 這輯特刊中我的相關論文來自一個研究計劃，比較開羅、倫敦和上海公共場所的移動影像屏幕。所以，也許我可以這個研究為基礎來回答你的問題。關於這個計劃，每當我們對人們提到它時，

大家的反應有兩種。他們要麼說：「哦，是啊，這些東西現在到處都有。」又或者他們以為我們要研究用於特定藝術活動或特殊場合的超大屏幕，如開羅解放廣場上向示威者播放半島電視台節目的大屏幕。其實，我們對日常生活中的屏幕更感興趣，即是大家所講的「那些無處不在」的屏幕。但它們真是無處不在嗎？第一個方法論上的挑戰是摒棄「無處不在」的假設，然後設計允許隨機性和偶然性發現的方法。我們通過在城市裏漫無目的地步行，設計出一種類似情境主義者漂移的方法。所以，這可以說是遠離以文本為中心的研究的一種努力，也超越了受眾研究，而是考慮如何研究情景。在這方面，我覺得現在最大的挑戰是設定研究計劃，讓學者們理解和分析總在不斷變化、並已融入我們日常生活的跨媒體組合。我的意思是甚麼？當你身處公共空間，你不僅被廣告牌包圍，同時也被移動影像屏幕包圍，它們可能是有廣告的標板，但也可能是提供幫你認識空間的資訊。你可能在用MP3播放器聆聽着你的個人音樂，你也可能同時使用黑莓處理電郵。隨着新技術快速地推陳出新，所有這些媒介在日常生活中被組合使用，並且它們以極為複雜和時刻變化的方式塑造你和誰溝通，我們習慣一次只研究一種媒介，但在日常生活中我們很少只使用一種媒介。所以，我們該如何研究這種現象呢？也許這就是人類學、媒體研究、文化研究、電影和屏幕研究的交會之處。

AE: 基於對屏幕文化研究的見解，你看到任何潛在的「應用」渠道嗎？例如應用在都市發展的政策領域、電影節、藝術展覽，媒體教育等？

CB: 首先，我不得不說，政府教育官僚要求學術界要有「影響力」，我對這一點非常抗拒，因為它像是說我們的研究工作沒有價值，除非它能轉化為立即的政策或以某種方式「以錢量化」。不過話說回來，我相信公眾屏幕文化的研究——也就是你在這次訪談中所說的「屏幕文化」研究——可以有各種實際意義。如果大眾想知道甚麼令遊客對博物館和畫廊更投入，以及屏幕和其他媒體形式如何幫助實現這一點，或是媒體如何令困難、擁堵的上下班旅程更愉

快和可以忍受等等，我敢肯定屏幕文化可以有所作用。但我也認為，如果某個政府部門、公司或博物館需要這些信息或想了解更多相關情況，他們應該委託獨立研究，而不應由現有學術研究提供經費資助。我認為現有的學術研究經費應專門用做各種較宏觀的理論和概念性研究，例如在當代全球化的新自由主義下，日常生活中的公共屏幕放置如何體現主體性和社會性。這種基础性研究使日後更多應用研究成為可能，但即使這兩種研究方向之間有辯證關係，我認為至關重要的是不可將二者混淆在一起。另外，雖然令我氣餒的是官僚們認為他們比研究人員更了解我們應當研究甚麼，並不斷試圖為我們設定方向和制定各項指標，但學術界在抵抗，這令我感到鼓舞。經費申請仍然是同行評審，而且我想即使是我們的教育官僚也還未傻到認為他們能夠或應該取代我們的這項職能。在我工作的這些領域中，我看到越來越多的同行評審人否決了僅僅是迎合「影響力」這一目標的經費申請，理由恰恰是這類申請缺乏必要的核心學術價值，不能成為真正的學術研究。

AE: 感謝你與我們學刊的讀者分享你的見解。

裴開瑞著作選

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Academic Dialogue with **Chris BERRY**

Public Screen Cultures: An Emerging Field in Cultural Studies

AE: Anthony Fung and John Nguyet Erni

CB: Prof. Chris Berry

AE: For the past twenty years, the inquiry of cultural studies has mainly centered on cultural issues of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, identity, subculture, visual culture, and diaspora. How do you conceptualize such trajectories of development? In the coming years, what would be the new and important arenas of studies in the field?

CB: Although I think my work overlaps with cultural studies, and that is why I have wanted to present it at conferences like Crossroads, it is not my primary discipline. So, I can only answer that question from the edges, looking in, so to speak. From that position, I would say, first, that many of the listed issues you mention seem to stem from a particular 80s/90s era. So, just as people have said that my main discipline, film studies, is still heavily characterized by the issues of the 80s, I guess the same could be said of cultural studies, and there is a need for renewal. I think what makes cultural studies different from, say, anthropology, is not only its focus on the here and now, but also on issues stemming from a concern with power and social justice. Therefore, I think that in this era, when the old politics of the left seem unable to find a foothold, but at the same time people recognize that there is a crisis (to say the least) in neoliberal capitalism, cultural studies has to join a philosophical and critical theoretical focus on what justice, freedom, and so on mean today, how power operates in the world that neoliberalism has built, and what kinds of practices attempt to instantiate justice, freedom, and more. I think that means cultures of government, of governance, and of political practice need to be researched, for example. But that is way beyond my areas of competence!

AE: We know that you have been very actively engaged in cinema studies in the Chinese-speaking world for a long time. What is such an alluring attraction of the Chinese cinema that has preoccupied you in this area of research? We suppose there might be some key problematics found in Chinese cinema that are quite different from the so-called global Hollywood study. What are these?

CB: On the one hand, I acknowledge that as someone coming to Chinese cinema from a background growing up in the West, it is inevitable that my thinking will be shaped by awareness of how Chinese cinema is/is not like Hollywood or other Western practices that I was familiar with before I encountered Chinese cinema. Furthermore, contrary to those who would say this is simply orientalism, I would argue that this way of thinking is not so inappropriate, because Chinese cinema has itself always been highly conscious of Hollywood and in competition with Hollywood for its local markets in many eras and areas. However, on the other hand, I think the field of Chinese cinema studies in English is big enough now that we don't need to justify the study of Chinese cinema in terms of its difference from Hollywood. I think we understand now that it is has been and continues to be a crucial part of Chinese popular culture and it circulates through many other popular cultures, and that therefore it is something to be studied in its own right.

In regard to my personal interest in Chinese cinema, that's a long and complicated story—too long to go through here! But I did Chinese Studies for my BA. (If I start explaining why I did that, this interview will never end, so let's not go there.) There were almost no Mandarin speakers in the UK then, when most Chinese people in England were Cantonese speakers. So, we used Mandarin films to practice aural comprehension. They were Mao era films, and they were very different from anything I had seen before. So, that got me curious. Things sort of went from there in a series of accidents and openings. There was no huge allure, but it held my interest and, having studied the language at a time when few people did that, I thought there might be something for me to contribute. But after more than thirty years of working with Chinese cinema, now it's just what I do.

At different times I am interested in different things. For example, at the moment, I'm very interested in the intersection between the independent film world and the gallery world, where it is unclear whether someone who works with moving images like Yang Fudong or Cao Fei should be called a filmmaker, a videomaker, an artist, or all of the above. I am interested in how that is opening up a new arena of possibility for Chinese independent cinema, which has been very constrained by its existing field of practice, but also how that new arena is shaping those new possibilities with its own expectations and constraints. I also want to know more about the burgeoning commercial mainstream in China, but I haven't done much work on that yet.

Having worked on an exhibition of films from and about the Cultural Revolution era in Vienna last year with my friend Katja Wiederspahn, I am also very interested in the film culture of the Cultural Revolution decade at the moment. I have just finished a piece on color in the films of the Cultural Revolution era, and also co-authored an interview-based piece of research on what people wore during the Cultural Revolution decade and how that was informed by cinema culture. I found that to be a very powerful experience for me personally, because I was talking to people who had been young in what is now a repudiated era. Normally, people are only expected to remember it as a time of trauma. They are rarely given a chance to remember the everyday pleasures that still existed then, and they were so happy to talk about those things with us, even though sometimes it also touched on the more distressing aspects of that time. It made me think about my mother's life. She is 92 now and grew up in Nazi Berlin. Perhaps not surprisingly, she doesn't talk about it much. I have a long abiding interest in post-authoritarian cinemas and cultures, and I think this is all part of the reason why. I am repeatedly drawn to work that engages with that phenomenon in various ways—current Turkish cinema, for example.

And, finally, there is the work I have been doing on moving image screens in public spaces, which is right at the edge of what could be considered “cinema and screen studies,” I suppose—and maybe over the edge!

AE: Screen culture is a special panel that you presented in the Crossroads: the International Conference in Cultural Studies held in Hong Kong in 2010. What is unique about this new line of research? What are the theoretical differences between the study of screen culture and cinema studies?

CB: My interest in moving image screens in public places stems from an effort to think about the future of cinema studies. A lot of work on this topic has focused on the ontological change caused by digitalization and other philosophical questions that are not always grounded in historical and socially specific practices. As a result of the digital, we cannot draw a clear line between cinema and other moving image-based media as clearly as we could before, because we cannot simply say that cinema is celluloid. While others have focused on the philosophical implications of this, I have also been interested in the social and cultural practices that result. Along with the digitalization of the moving image, other technologies—such as the mini DV camera—have transformed filming practices. This is part of the reason for my strong interest in the Chinese independent documentary movement, which has boomed after that change. And moving image screens have changed, too. There are many new forms, including various LED and plasma forms, which have made possible the proliferation of moving image screens beyond the home and the movie theatre, and into public spaces. The panel at Crossroads and the work presented at it is—for me—part of an effort to think about what cinema studies might be expanding to include as it becomes moving image studies or screen studies, and also to think about how these new objects and practices might fit into that expanded discipline and be understood in it. But, of course, I also acknowledge that this phenomenon is interesting from other angles, such as changes in the intermedial assemblages of technologies and practices that characterize our changing cities.

AE: In what way is screen culture important and unique in the Asian context? How do you see its future development in Asia?

CB: Well, I suppose there are a lot of moving image screens in Asian cities! But, to be serious for a moment, I think the issue is not about some pan-Asian level of generality. When Anna McCarthy wrote her

book on ambient television, it was still the era of cathode ray tubes. She noted quite correctly that TV in public space is very site specific; in other words that each one has to be understood as part of a very specific combination or perhaps assemblage of elements making up a particular space. That is also true for moving image screens. McCarthy was working in the United States. However, as is often true of people working in the US or the West, she did not specify that —she wrote as though what is true for the US and the West is true for everywhere else. So, I think what we need to be aware of is that site specificity includes cultural specificity and the particular cultures of individual cities. That's one of the things I try to emphasize in the essay I have written for this issue.

The future is harder to predict. But unlike monuments and sculptures, one of the interesting things about those screens is that you can always put different things on them. The TV sets that are ubiquitous in coffee shops all over Cairo used to show mostly football matches, MTV-style programming, and soaps. Ever since last year, they have been full of political material. And big screens in public spaces were beaming Mubarak's trial live while it was being televised. Once those public screens are installed, although they may not seem so interesting right now, they can be recruited for all kinds of things.

AE: Can you comment on the unique methods surrounding the research on screen culture, especially given the public nature of screens and their fluidity and rapid change?

CB: My essay in this issue is drawn from a project that compares moving image screens in public places in Cairo, London, and Shanghai. So, perhaps I can answer your question from that experience. Moving into this project, whenever we mentioned it to people, they reacted in two ways. They either said "Oh, yeah, those things are everywhere now." Or they assumed we were researching very exceptional huge screens that were used for special art events or special occasions, like the screens that were put up in Tahrir Square in Cairo to broadcast Al Jazeera to the demonstrators. Actually, we were more interested in the everyday screens, if you can call them that, the ones that inspired the "they're everywhere" reaction. But are they everywhere? The first

methodological challenge was to step away from that assumption and devise a method that allowed randomness and chance discovery. We did that by walking through the city without a clear plan—a sort of variant on the Situationist derive. So, I guess this could be seen as part of a move away from text-focused research and also beyond audience research to consider ways of researching context. In that regard, I think the biggest challenge now is to devise research projects that will enable scholars to apprehend and analyze the intermedial assemblages that are ever-changing but very much part of our lives now. What do I mean by that? When you are in public space now, you are not only surrounded by billboards, but also by moving image screens that may be billboards with advertising, but may also have information on them that you need to navigate the space. You might have your MP3 player with you and be listening to your personal soundtrack, and you might also be using your Blackberry to do your email. The combinations of all these things that are being used in practice and how they shape who you are communicating with are very complex and ever-changing, moment by moment and as new technologies are introduced in rapid succession. We are used to studying one medium at a time, but we rarely deal with only one medium at a time in our daily lives. So, how do we study that phenomenon? Perhaps that is where anthropology, media studies, cultural studies, and cinema and screen studies all intersect.

AE: Do you see any potential for “applied” outlets for insights generated from the study of screen culture, e.g., in policy arenas regarding urban development, film festivals, arts exhibitions, media education, etc.?

CB: Well, first, I have to say I am very resistant to the demand for “impact” that government education bureaucrats are imposing on academia, because it suggests that our research work has no value unless it can be translated into immediate policy or “monetized” in some way or other. But having said that, I do believe the study of public screen cultures—and I assume that’s what you mean when you say “screen cultures” in the context of this interview—can have all kinds of practical implications. If people want to know more about what engages visitors in museums and galleries and how screens and other

media forms help with that, or what media can make the difficult and crowded commute both more enjoyable and endurable, and so on, I'm sure that we can work on that. But I also believe that if a government department needs that kind of information, or a company or a museum wants to know more about that kind of thing, they should commission that research separately and fund it apart from existing academic research funding. I believe that existing academic research funding should be fenced around and reserved for the kind of research that attempts to contribute to the understanding of larger theoretical and conceptual questions in various ways—such as what the deployment of public screens in everyday life says about subjectivity and sociality under contemporary globalized neoliberalism. That kind of work is the foundation that makes more applied research possible, and even though there is a dialectical relationship between those two research directions, I think it is vital not to mix them up. And, while I am discouraged by the way in which bureaucrats think they know better than researchers what we should be doing, and keep trying to set directions and demand various targets, I am encouraged to see resistance to this in academia. Grant applications are still peer-reviewed, and I think that even our education ministries are not stupid enough to think that the bureaucrats can or should take over that function from us. In my work in those areas, I see more and more peer reviews that turn down applications for funding that seem to be driven by the effect to pander to the “impact” agenda alone, precisely on the grounds that such applications lack the necessary core intellectual properties to make them true academic research.

AE: Thank you for taking the time to share your views with our readers.

Selected Works by Chris Berry

Please refer to the end of the Chinese version of the dialogue for Chris Berry's selected works.