

Call for Papers

**Cinema of Exploration: Essays on an Adventurous Film Practice.**

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Deadline for abstracts: **March 15, 2017**

Film and media scholars have begun to pay increasing attention to the entangled histories of cinematic media and forms of exploration: from audiovisual documentation of explorations of nature, people, and places, on the one hand, to what Stan Brakhage has called “adventures in perception,” or the manner in which these media may also be instruments of exploration in their own right, tracing the depths and limits of perception and the perceivable. From early cinema’s panoramas and travelogues, to more recent made-for-TV spectacles and immersive IMAX experiences, scholars have begun to examine and conceptualize the histories of this heterogeneous mode of filmmaking, demonstrating its often underexamined importance to some of the key questions posed by cinema and media studies. In light of postcolonial and globalization theories, as well as ecological and environmental criticism, attention has been given to filmic practices perceived as instruments of colonization, conquest, and ecological devastation through visual surveying, capture, and domestication. The legacies of imperialism, racism, and orientalism haunt the history and even present practice of the cinema of exploration. This mode of production has been tightly entwined with the extraction and exploitation of resources, territories, and species that have become increasingly politicized and urgent in an era of increasing ecological precarity. But these same practices have also been instrumental in cultivating wonder about the world and its multifarious inhabitants, and even serving as sites for reimagining one’s relations to them.

With these ideas in mind, we invite contributions to an anthology on “Cinema of Exploration: Essays on an Adventurous Film Practice.” We seek essays that discuss the implications of exploration filmmaking around the world in relation to the technological, social, cultural, and economic developments that marked its emergence and import in different geopolitical contexts. We welcome essays that tackle the global tradition of travel films from early anthropological reportages to different contemporary variations on the theme of the travelogue, presented through a wide array of modes of filmmaking (anthropological, “national geographic”, documentary, experimental, avant-garde, “fakes”, etc.). Of interest are explorations of film genres contingent on the trope of cinematic exploration (wild-life documentaries, Westerns, space operas, etc.). We are also looking for contributions focused on a wide variety of scientific exploration through film, from early examples of science documentaries and theoretical discourses, to the contemporary debates on the role of micro-cinema in the recording of experiments and other audiovisual technologies of life sciences.

Some questions that animate our endeavors are: How does the development of these practices and discourses impact our understanding of the history and geography of

moving images? How do they both reflect and impact the actual technological and sociocultural developments of our age? What role have these traditions played in the development of film theory, media epistemology, and concepts of perception, world, and universe? How have exploration films changed in the Anthropocene?

We invite contributions from scholars and practitioners to submit paper proposals. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- The *auteur* as explorer (Antonioni, Herzog, Rossellini, Rouch, Wenders, etc.)
- Space travel; science fiction travelogues; NASA and other space agencies image making productions
- Underwater filmmaking
- Scientific filmmaking; micro-cinema; medical image-making
- Non-professional filmmakers, amateur explorers, DIY technologies and aesthetics of exploration; home-made or family travelogues; Go-Pro films.
- Media arts productions; gallery and museum installations
- Film festival devoted to travel and exploration films
- Experimental/avant-garde cinema of exploration; experimental anthropology
- Nature as spectacle; National Geographic-style and its earlier versions (safari and expedition films, etc.)
- Cinema of exploration in relation to didactic and educational films (National Outdoors Leadership School, Exploration Film Tour, etc.)
- Military filmmaking
- Histories of critical debates about the status of the cinema of exploration in film and media
- The impact of the study of cinema of exploration on film historiography
- Ecological impact of filmmaking on the environments and species

Send a 500-600 word abstract and a brief biographical note to [luca.caminati@concordia.ca](mailto:luca.caminati@concordia.ca) and [james.cahill@utoronto.ca](mailto:james.cahill@utoronto.ca) by **March 15th, 2017**. The editorial team will notify selected proposals by **April 15th, 2017**. We expect completed manuscripts (between 7,000 and 9,000 words) be due **December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**, and accepted for publication pending editorial and external readers evaluation. All submissions will be subjected to double blind peer review.