

EDITORIAL NOTE

Contemporary Greek Film Cultures: Moments of Documentary

Tonia Kazakopoulou

University of Reading

The journey of this special issue, *Moments of Documentary*, started at the 3rd *Contemporary Greek Film Cultures* international conference that took place in Vienna in 2018 (<http://www.univie.ac.at/strategiesofthedocumentary>). This conference, titled *Strategies of the Documentary*, brought together a large number of film scholars to share new research on an increasingly important genre for Greek cinema, and in Greek Film Studies, in the last couple of decades. The variety of strands and methodologies at the conference – from historical and historiographical approaches, to studies informed by anthropology, sociology and cultural studies in conversation with documenting screen practices and aesthetics, to explorations of documenting bodies, spaces and identities, and to formal explorations of the documentary in its connections and cross-overs with genres and modes more traditionally associated with fiction filmmaking – attests to the wealth of research currently conducted in the field, but also demonstrates the complexities and breadth of a category often simply referred to as ‘documentary’. My co-editors, Ulrich Meurer and Maria Oikonomou, discuss such complexities with great eloquence in their introductory article.

The articles and interviews in this issue examine *moments* of documentary that diverge from or challenge established notions of the form; they locate moments of documentary in spaces, places, genres and experiences that are unexpected and/or unconventional; and they all consider the interconnectedness of texts and wider contexts (social, historical, political, economic, inter/national, as well as contexts of production and reception), pointing to important ways that lived experiences and memories, the human condition, are documented on film. Reflecting these interconnected and intermedial explorations, the structure of this issue, then, invites the readers to reflect on shared key concepts relating to the act of documenting as these are introduced by and discussed in the analytical articles and in the interviews with filmmakers Eva Stefani and Angela Melitopoulos. Moreover, establishing a conversation between academic criticism and industry practice – between

'theory and practice' as it is often rather reductively understood – is a key aim of the *Contemporary Greek Film Cultures* conference 'brand' and all its subsequent publications.

A final word then on this wider research endeavour: *Contemporary Greek Film Cultures* is an ongoing project that brings together the international community of Greek film scholars to share and discuss new research in the field every 2-3 years, at a different location each time (London 2013, Seattle 2015, Vienna 2018, Thessaloniki 2020). These regular meetings take the form of a, now standing, conference of Greek film studies, which I curate (previously in collaboration with Philip Phillis [London] and Mikela Fotiou [London, Seattle]), and which is organised by colleagues and institutions around the world. In addition, every conference is followed by at least one publication inspired by its topic and selected papers and/or strands, expanding and enriching the bibliographical corpus of Greek Film Studies, and concurrently playing a critical part in regularly reviewing theoretical and historiographic practices in the field. Most of all, this is an initiative that seeks to enhance collaborations and networking between international scholars with an interest in Greek cinema (in the broadest sense of the term), as well as to become a bridge between industry and academia.

Since 2018 and the conference in Vienna, where the present special issue springs from, there has been a fourth conference in Thessaloniki, titled 'Cultural Neighbourhoods and Co-productions in South East Europe and Beyond' (<https://contemporarygreekfilmcultures4.blogspot.com>) and a book publication by the same name. A call for expressions of interest for the next conference is soon to reach the press.

I hope you will find this issue thought-provoking. On behalf of my co-editors, I wish to thank all contributors for sharing their excellent work and insightful views with us in this special issue. I would also like to thank Maria Chalkou for her unwavering support throughout the editing process. Moments of Documentary opens a conversation and extends a call for more research in all aspects and conceptualisations of Greek documentary.