necs »

**European Network
for Cinema and
Media Studies**

Sonic Futures: Soundscapes and the Languages of Screen Media

The NECS 2011 Conference
LONDON , 23rd-26th June 2011
hosted by Birkbeck and King's College, University of London

Submissions deadline: 31st January 2011
Please address all inquiries to **conference@necs-initiative.org**

Keynote speakers: Richard Dyer (King's College London), Raphaëlle Moine (Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3), John Urry (University of Lancaster)

Call for Papers

Why is it that in space no one can hear you scream but everyone seems to be speaking English?

Contemporary media culture is as much a sonic and acoustic culture as it is a visual culture. Perhaps more than ever, sound carries cultural meaning, and the spaces we inhabit are soundscapes as much as landscapes and cityscapes. In the design of cars, for instance, the sounds of a new model, from the sound of the engine to the opening and closing of doors, are as carefully crafted as the look of the car or the engine. In architecture, the acoustics of a building or a space have become as important as statics or, for that matter, the containment of noise in urban environments. In aural art, sound objects from feedback to outright noise that go beyond melody, harmony and song have become part and parcel of musical composition and performance. In film, sound design has become as important as production design, and the sound now defines a film as much as the look does. Yet for all the global reach of sonic culture, in screen media language territories and language boundaries continue to mark the map of global media flows. Far from being complementary or contradictory, sound and language are poised in a complex and fluid relationship to each other. Given the seeming dominance of English and the recent rise of Chinese as global media languages, the universal and the particular cannot be accomodated in an easy relationship; moreover, the aporias of spoken and written language still haunt the soundscapes of today.

Taking up the challenge of the sonic dimension of contemporary media culture, the 2011 NECS conference "Sonic Futures: Soundscapes and the Languages of Screen Media" addresses the cultural meanings of sound with a particular focus on the cultural dynamics of language in screen media. With an eye to transnational media flows and the increasing importance of transmedia formatting the conference explores the relationships between images, sounds, voices and words in terms of politics and culture, history, production practices, theory, and aesthetics. Adopting both a contemporary and a historical perspective the 2011 NECS conference will focus on past, current and future trends as well as on production practices which have been historically marginalized because of their particular use of language, sound and text on screen.

Paper topics **may include**, but **will not be limited to**, the following:

Sonic Media Culture: Theory and Analysis
— How do we account for the sonic aspects of media culture? How useful are concepts such as "soundscape" and "sound design"?
— What are the acoustic equivalents to "imagination" and "vision"? How do we "envision" the future and the past in acoustic terms?
— What are the legacies of linguistics, semiotics and other theories of language for film and media studies?

— How can film and media studies integrate the insights from sound studies, musicology, rhetoric, and acoustics?
— How can film and media studies integrate concepts such as "multi-modality" and insights from psychology?

Politics, Identity, Memory
— How do language boundaries impact on global media flows?
— How does language relate to the production of national identity and cultural memory, particularly in screen media?
— How do questions of language impact on notions of "Europeanness"?
— How do we account for the politics of minority languages in post-national cinemas and digital media practices?
— How culturally and linguistically specific are film festivals? How do they shape the global map of media flows, particularly in terms of language?

History
— How do current models of media history account for text, language and sound? How should they be modified?
— How has the question of language shaped media production and film and television production in particular?
— How do we account for the practices of dubbing, sub-titling, multi-language versions and polyglot films? How do such "impure" practices figure in the history of film?
— How have certain aspects of media culture and film history been marginalized because of language issues?

Production Practices
— How do global digital networks redraw the linguistic maps of media production and media circulation? What, in particular, is the contribution of polyglot video platforms such as YouTube?
— Which films and programs travel (i.e. find audiences beyond their territory of origin), and why?
— How do we account for practices of adaptation, remaking, writing for screen, and criticism?

Aesthetics
— How is stardom dependent on language and the performance of speech? What is a "voice talent"?
— What is the relationship of body and voice in contemporary media culture? How has this relationship evolved?
— How has the relationship of body, voice and space evolved (as in voice-over, voice-off)?
— How do we account for aspects such as tone, intonation, rhythm at the level of language/dialogue and sound more generally?
— How do speech, music and sound relate to the visual?
— What is the relationship between language and gesture and voice and gesture?
— How do we analyze the spatial simulation of voices and voice-elements in digital spaces?

Scholars from all areas of cinema and media studies (radio, television, new media etc.), whether previously attached to NECS or new to the network, are invited to submit proposals for contributions.

Please note that you may hand in a paper or panel proposal related to the thematic guidelines of the conference outlined above, or alternatively submit a paper or panel proposal for open call in any field of cinema and screen media studies.

We especially encourage **pre-constituted panels** in order to strengthen the thematic coherence of individual panels.

There are four ways of participating in the London conference:

(1) by individually organizing a pre-constituted panel within an already existing network such as a NECS work group (see member section of the NECS website - www.necs-initiative.org) or a research project. The members of the NECS work groups are especially encouraged to put together a pre-constituted panel;

(2) by organizing a panel via the NECS website (www.necs-initiative.org). Those who consider putting together a panel outside already existing networks or work groups are asked to send a call for papers with a title and a short description of the objectives of the proposed panel no later than **December 15, 2010** to conference@necs-initiative.org. The conference committee will post these topics in the public section of the website, collect all responses and keep you informed about potential presenters;

(3) by responding to a call for papers that is proposed online (see item 2);

(4) by proposing an open call paper outside a pre-constituted panel.

Please note that individuals may submit **only one paper proposal**, either to the open call or as a part of a pre-constituted panel.

Panels may consist of 3 to 4 speakers with a maximum of 20 minutes speaking time each. All presenters are obliged to provide us with a title, an abstract of max 150 words, 3-5 keywords, 3-5 key bibliographical references, technical requirements, name of the presenter and institutional affiliation.

Panel organizers are asked to submit panel proposals including a panel title, a short description (up to 100 words) of the panel and information on all the papers as listed above.

Please submit all proposals before **January 31, 2011** by sending them via email to **conference@necs-initiative.org**. Notification will follow shortly thereafter (around February 28, 2011).

The conference language is English. Again, in case you consider an open call for a panel proposal, please send us your topic until December 15, 2010 so that we can post the description of the objectives of the proposed panel on our website.

Participants will have to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses. Travel information as well as a list of affordable hotels and other accommodations will be posted on the NECS website in Spring of 2011.

Conference attendance is free, but valid NECS-membership is required to participate (register with NECS at www.necs-initiative.org. For the terms of NECS membership, please also refer to our website).

Founded in February of 2006, NECS, the European Network for Cinema and Media Studies, brings together scholars and researchers in the field of cinema, film and media studies with archivists and film and media professionals. A first NECS workshop was held in Berlin on the occasion of the network's founding in 2006, followed by large international conferences in Vienna 2007, Budapest 2008, Lund 2009 and Istanbul 2010. Over the last three years, NECS has attracted close to 1.000 members worldwide.

For the conference organizers:

The NECS Conference Committee
Tina Bastajian, Melis Behlil, Aurore Fossard, Paulo Granja, Olof Hedling, András Bálint Kovács, Tarja Laine, Terez Vincze, Patrick Vonderau

The NECS Steering Committee
Malte Hagener, Vinzenz Hediger, Dorota Ostrowska, Alexandra Schneider, Patrick Vonderau