

AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2012

INTRODUCTION

In 2012 the AFI Research Collection (AFIRC) has provided a range of services and resources to those interested in film, television and media. We have acquired books that examine a broad range of international films and personalities as well as those which provide focussed studies of people (Reg Grundy, Tim Burstall, Gil Brealey), films (Song of Exile, Waltz With Bashir), and significant industry concerns (trans-national film production in Australia, the convergence of videogames and cinema, informal and illegal film distribution).

The AFIRC continues to receive weekly clippings from major Australian papers covering the activities of the film and television industries. We curate these clippings to make them easily searchable by subject, title and personality, and they are filed into our extensive and ever-expanding clippings file collection. Over 400 new clippings files have been created within the past year.

Additionally the AFIRC subscribes to over 40 hardcopy journals that deal with a wide range of relevant subjects, which include: cinematography, critical analysis, special effects, feminism, horror films, education and industry matters. By engaging in such pursuits the AFIRC keeps a finger on the pulse of film and television industries and academia.

As well as continually updating our holdings, the AFIRC has endeavoured to 'unlock' a significant selection of material that is held but not yet catalogued, such as the Crawfords crime material discussed herein. We continually explore our holdings and work on bringing these items to light so that they can be studied by researchers and enjoyed by the public. We hope that unlocking these items will encourage further research into Australia's vibrant film and television histories.

We gratefully acknowledge the funding of the AFI Research Collection by the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University and our partnership with the Australian Film Institute.

If you are ever interested in accessing the library, please come by and visit us (it is free) or contact us and we'll see what we can do to help out.

Alex Gionfriddo and Cathie Gillam, Librarians, AFI Research Collection



Alex Gionfriddo



Cathie Gillam

HONOUR ROLL

AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS 2011-2012

Librarians

Cathie Gillam, Alex Gionfriddo

Staff

Jenny Anderson, Eleanor Colla, Peter Gravestock, Amree Hewitt, Harley MacDonald, Olympia Szilagyi, Sathiyaseelan Veerappan, Matt Niccoli.

Extra Staff/Volunteers/ Industrial Placements

Alejandro Castro, Jenny Gibson, Zach Holly, Felicity Kelly, Marina Matthews, Richard Steinbach, Nicole Richardson, Emily Miller, Ian McPhail, Tara Judah.

AFI RC volunteer Jenny Gibson and staff member Harley MacDonald.



SILENCE IS GOLDEN

The recent black and white 'silent' film, *The Artist* (Dir: Michel Hazanavicius, 2011), had audiences mesmerised with its evocation of cinema's silent era glamour and swashbuckling insouciance! The film garnered multiple awards including Oscars, BAFTA's, Cesar's and Australia's own International AACTA.

For those who wish to explore the foundation garments of such joie de vivre the AFIRC's wealth of books and journals on the pulchritudinous pleasures of early cinema and filmmaking's transition to talkies are a must.

Perhaps the most enticing are the journals of the day: time capsules of fashion, attitudes and life filtered through the cinematographic lens. Moving image records of society, whose gestation from occasional music-hall turn to the most popular public entertainment was seemingly so swiftly accomplished - with its tilt at being the new art form to dominate the 20th century shadowing every step.

From the US film industry bible *Variety* (1909 to today), to Australia's own *Everyones* (1913 to 1937 - originally titled *Australian Variety* and *Show World*) or *The Exhibitor* (1923 - 1926); from the UK's *Pictures* and *the Picturegoer* (1914-1915) to decades of *Picture Show* magazine (1920s onwards), the riches of early film journals covering the silent film period are rare treasures of the AFIRC collection available to peruse. They can be found on microform and sometimes in hardcopy - white gloves provided on occasion!

Get caustic insights from the "Lessons We Learn From Films" list (according to *Picture Show* Oct 30th 1920) such as: "the young lady with a bank account needs no make-up box"! Uncover the stars and filmmakers of the time or experience the history of the times illuminated by the product advertising that graces every page. For examples of early scholarly approaches (and one must remember that even the introduction of technical credits on films sparked early derision from key cultural pundits of the day) journals such as Switzerland's monthly *Close Up* (1928-33) write in depth on the likes of Eric von Stroheim, interview writers such as Anita Loos, review revolutionary Russian film offerings and pursue the beauty of German cinema composition. For those who read French there are books like *Le cinéma des origines à nos jours* (1932) that explore the technology, craft/artistry of celluloid creation.

These and other gems from the golden era of silent film are housed in the AFIRC, just waiting to be dug up by the intrepid researcher.

THE CRAWFORD COLLECTION: CRIME RESEARCH

An ongoing project at the AFIRC is the cataloguing of a very large donation of materials from Crawford Productions. Over the past 12 months we have focussed on organising and cataloguing the resources concerning iconic Crawford police dramas such as: *Homicide*, *Division 4*, *Matlock Police* and *Cop Shop*.

Our collection contains a large number of the resources used by Crawfords to provide background research for the development of storylines in their police dramas. The items were originally organised by Crawfords into various interesting research topics:

- Resources relating to a range of different types of crimes (e.g. murder, kidnap blackmail, robbery)
- Character insights (e.g. vagrants, conmen, executives, prison officials)
- Technical information (e.g. customs, explosives, electrical devices, medical information)
- Historical context

The resources include newspaper clippings, interviews, notes on murder cases plus history and background information on aspects of the Victoria Police Force.

SENSES OF CINEMA AND THE AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION

The online journal *Senses of Cinema* has been lauded as one of the most important cinema journals. And as it happens it has a close relationship with the AFI Research Collection.

Senses of Cinema have been using space provided by the AFI Research Collection for their office as well as meeting spaces and general administrative support.

AFI RC SNAPSHOTS



Famed scholar Murray Pomerance on a visit to the AFI RC.



AFI RC Library Assistant Peter Gravestock.



Crawford Collection materials.

SCREEN FUTURES CONFERENCE AND THE AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION

AFI Research Collection's Cathie Gillam at the Screen Futures Conference sponsored by the Australian Teachers of Media and Metro Magazine in September 2011.



BILL POSTERS WILL BE CELEBRATED

The movie lobby card may generally be relegated to cinema collectables history yet the movie poster still has a vital role in the marketing and identification of theatrical film releases. However the traditional paper based theatre hang and graphic design concept is, like all other aspects of the cinema going experience, being challenged by its digital doppelganger.

AFIRC has a significant and growing (400+) collection of paper based movie posters – documentary, animation and fiction feature – each a window into the changing art, times and business of international film making. With a strong focus on Australian cinema the collection reveals that design innovation still flourishes and a strong visual concept may or may not include a simple photographic display of the lead players (in the case of fiction features often driven or dictated by the ever growing demands of marquee casting).

The life of the collection is made possible by the continued generous donations of production houses, designers, national/international distribution companies and/or exhibitors across Australia.



Researcher Dean Brandum examines one of our many posters.

MIFF 60 AND THE AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION

The 2011 Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) was the festival's 60th anniversary (the first one was held in Olinda in outer suburban Melbourne in 1951). As it was a landmark birthday for MIFF, a number of special events were held to celebrate and revisit the festival's past. In this endeavour MIFF called upon the AFI Research Collection to assist with a couple of notable projects. They were:

- ➔ 'The Archive: 60 years of MIFF' – Staff from MIFF used the AFI Research Collection to obtain many of the film festival guides so as to compile screening information details for MIFFs over the years. The information gathered has been put into a wonderful database titled '60 years of MIFF' and can be accessed at http://miff.com.au/60_years_of_miff/
- ➔ MIFF 60: the graphic art of the Melbourne International Film Festival – an exhibition displaying the design of the MIFF guides (of which many were created by noted Australian designers), was held at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image during the 2011 festival. The AFI Research Collection loaned a number of their copies of the festival guides to MIFF for the exhibition.



Alex Gionfriddo at the 'MIFF 60: the graphic art of the Melbourne International Film Festival' exhibition at ACMI in 2011.

THE AUSTRALIAN FILM INSTITUTE AND THE AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION

The AFI Research Collection (AFIRC) is an excellent place to discover important cinema histories and events. One thing that might surprise is that the AFIRC was once part of the Australian Film Institute (AFI). During its days at the AFI the library was called the AFI Research and Information Library and was located at the AFI offices in Melbourne.. Many of the functions that the AFIRC now carries out originated at the AFI Research and Information Library and the resources of the old library have moved to the AFIRC at RMIT University's city campus.

Since the move to RMIT in early 2003, the AFIRC has maintained a happy relationship with the AFI. The AFIRC does ongoing research for the AFI and provides vital information for the AFI's annual awards ceremony (now known as the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts awards, or the AACTAs). The AFIRC holds extensive historical resources about the AFI, including clippings files and reports and has been a useful resource for those interested in the history of the AFI (including the AFI staff themselves).

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

DO YOU WANT TO VOLUNTEER FOR US?

The AFI Research Collection receives a good deal of assistance from those willing to donate their time and skills to become an AFIRC volunteer. Volunteers have been a vital source of inspired effort for the development of the collection and without volunteers the AFIRC would be a far quieter and less productive environment.

Volunteers take on all manner of tasks at the AFI Research Collection. From filing and shelving, to assisting with research and cataloguing, the volunteer's role is varied and challenging. Volunteers keep the wheels of the collection turning over and it is great for the librarians to see important tasks completed and volunteers gaining knowledge about librarianship and film and television.

Almost all volunteers end up leaving the AFI Research Collection, but we are happy to report that a great majority of volunteers leave because they have found paid work within their profession. Occasionally they end up with a paid position at the AFI Research Collection!

Volunteers at the AFI Research Collection tend to come from a background of information management/library studies or from a cinema studies background. That said, there are no real barriers to volunteering with the collection. We have hosted some excellent volunteers with no formal training or who weren't cinema buffs but displayed a willingness to learn about cinema and television and libraries.

Does volunteering at the AFI Research Collection sound like an interesting challenge? If so, please feel free to contact us and we can talk to you about whether you would like to have a go at volunteering here.

A VOLUNTEER'S VIEWPOINT: JENNY GIBSON

I first began volunteering at the AFI Research Collection in the second half of 2011, while I was studying in the Master of Information Management program at RMIT. Luckily, I found the library while researching an assignment to do with my library-related studies. I loved the collection at first sight, and was excited by the breadth of resources it held, particularly its Australian film and television content.

My main volunteering duties at the library have involved helping to sort and catalogue its extensive collection of film stills from Australian and international productions. I love photography, so working with these thousands of beautiful images is a gift, which also gives me important professional skills when it comes to organising and cataloguing collections.

I have got a lot out of my volunteer work at the AFI Research Collection. Cathie, Alex and all the staff and volunteers alike are wonderful to work with. They are very generous in passing on their knowledge on the subject of library management, as well as film and television, to students and new volunteers like myself. It would be great to see more volunteers stepping up to continue to help shape this very special collection, that's just as important a reflection of Australian culture as it is a wealth of information about media and communications.

DONATIONS

The AFI Research Collection was honoured to accept a generous donation from Associate Professor Ina Bertrand. Associate Professor Bertrand is recognised as one of the leading academics of Australian cinema history. She has made invaluable contributions to cinema academia, which includes extensive publications, as well as founding the vaunted online cinema journal, 'Screening the Past', and creating the cinema database: Western Australia Cinema Web. During her illustrious academic career Associate Professor Bertrand has gathered a wealth of research material, which is now housed within the walls of the AFIRC.

Associate Professor Bertrand's donation includes numerous research files that she gathered on various subjects pertaining to Australian cinema as well as a large quantity of books and magazines. The AFIRC thanks Associate Professor Bertrand for her kind and considered donation.

If you have materials that you might think are suitable for the AFI Research Collection, please contact us for more information.

BRENDA WEBER

WINNER OF THE INAUGURAL AFIRC RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

In keeping with the School of Media and Communication, and RMIT University's mission

to develop a global research environment, an international Research Fellowship for the AFI Research Collection was established to raise the profile of the collection amongst film and television scholars in Australia and overseas, and to develop research projects connected to the collection.

In 2011 Indiana University based academic Associate Professor Brenda Weber was awarded the fellowship and visited the AFI Research Collection in December of that year.

Associate Professor Weber utilised the resources of the AFI Research Collection to examine 'reality' television in Australia with plans to publish her research. Associate Professor Weber conducted a workshop for RMIT academics as well as presenting a public seminar about the US reality television star Kate Gosselin titled 'An insult to "normal" moms everywhere: Kate Gosselin, reality TV and the contested terrain of celebrity motherhood'.

The AFI Research Collection is in the process of selecting a recipient of the 2012 AFIRC Research Fellowship. For more details please visit our website: www.afiresearch.rmit.edu.au

NEWSLETTER CREDITS

AFI Research Collection 2012 Newsletter

- Conceptualised and written by: Cathie Gillam, Alex Gionfriddo, Amree Hewitt, Jenny Gibson
- Designed by: Viveka de Costa @ hercyaniasilva.com.au

FIND US



Enter from Russell St via lane between corner of La Trobe St and The Old Melbourne Gaol.

AFI Research Collection
Building 21, Level 4, RMIT University
T: 613 9925 2829 F: 613 9925 9730
Mail: GPO Box 2476, Melbourne VIC, 3001

Open: Tuesday 11 - 4
Wednesday 2 - 7
Thursday 11 - 4
other times by appointment

email: afiresearch@rmit.edu.au
web: www.afiresearch.rmit.edu.au