

Letter from the Editors

Dear readers,

Just before Vancouver went into lockdown last year, we conceived this issue from our shared interests. Bodies and screens: how are bodies shown on screen? what kinds of bodies is the screen? what exchanges occur between the screen and the body? This was meant to take part in the long history of work on bodies and screens in cinema and media scholarship, but it took on new meaning during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. For those who could work from home, living space and working space became indistinguishable. The screens of our laptops and cellphones became, even more than before, points of social contact—even contact with the world full stop. For many others, however, work could not be done remotely. That point of contact with the world was maintained by delivery drivers, factory workers, and service employees who were put in disproportionate danger by our local and federal governments.

Less drastically, movie theatres closed and streaming reigned. One kind of cinematic body—public, bigger than life—was replaced by another—private, small and buffering. The same screens we used for work we used to relax and socialize, often through the Zoom tile. Our homes became an extension of our bodies because our backgrounds became an image on others' screens and thus an extension of ourselves, seen. As some places begin to relax pandemic restrictions, how these viewing and living configurations will or will not change remains to be seen.

In this issue, we collected a range of writing on the body and the screen, a configuration with infinite potential. For some of our authors, this relation is between specific bodies and media forms. Writing on Ali Wong's standup comedy special *Baby Cobra*, Amila Li shows how Wong's presence, as a pregnant Asian woman, disrupts anti-Asian racist stereotypes. Dany Jacob explores Leonardo DiCaprio's performance and memeification as Jay Gatsby to question the place of the modern *flaneur* and their relation to white masculinity. Haley Rose Malouin, looking at Tod Browning's feature film *Freaks*, offers a reading of the film and its bodies as rhizomatic assemblages. Turning to TV, Kim Wilkins

writes on *Babylon Berlin*'s Lotte and how her body is overworked in terms of femininity, prestige TV, and as an allegory for a changing Berlin. Lastly in this loose category, but not least, Steven Shaviro writes on Moses Sumney's music video "Virile," and its challenge to fixed understandings of gender and race. Two of our authors take a more media-specific approach, writing on the limits and potentials of specific technologies. Aaron Tucker carefully outlines the widespread and invasive use of facial recognition technologies and their problematic data biases, while Simona Schneider offers what she terms 'proxy poetics' in considering Ali Cherri's installation piece "My Pain is Real" and the artist's position relative to an ongoing, America-led global war. Finally, Austin Svedjan's essay is something different. Reading Luchino Visconti's *Death in Venice* with Xavier Dolan's *Heartbeats*, Svedjan offers a theory on the look as an erotic, bodily exchange—one that should not be reduced to less than touch. We hope it might be a guide for you in future film viewings as well as in relation to this issue and life.

The value of this subject, the screen and the body, only became more apparent over this past year of production. This issue couldn't have been possible without the many people that helped give it a body: our editorial team scattered over two countries, our authors around the globe, and our patient and generous illustrator quinn rockliff, in Toronto. Thanks, as well, to our department's administrators and our *Cinephile* supervisor, Dr. Christine Evans. Thanks, finally, to all the editors who came before us, especially Jemma Dash for fielding questions long before we even took over as editors. We selected papers not only for a range of bodies and screens but also for what we loved. This love and care became a guiding principle for this issue. We hope some finds its way back to you.

Sincerely,

Harrison Wade & Kate Wise
Editors-in-Chief, 2020-2021



This issue of *Cinephile* is dedicated to the memory of Brock Poulin.

Brock Poulin, the inagural editor of *Cinephile*, has passed away. All *Cinephile* staff, past and present, mourn this huge loss of a wonderful and talented colleague. Brock was a vibrant, genuine, and wholly unpretentious scholar, critic, and journalist whose passion for cinema inspired everyone he met. His wit, talent for sparkling wordplay, and propensity to spontaneously burst into song will always be fondly remembered by the people who were lucky enough to know him.

Brock held an MA in Film Studies from the University of British Columbia (2005), an MA in Journalism from Ryerson University (2002), and a BA in Film Studies from the University of Regina (2000). After graduation he lived in Korea for several years teaching English, and taught international students at St. George International College in Vancouver from 2013 until his death.

As *Cinephile*'s first editor, he was responsible for naming the journal (although it was titled *UBCinephile* for its first two volumes), assembling its first editorial board, and starting its trajectory and building its philosophy. He also served in an advisory capacity for the journal for several years after his graduation. Simply put, there would be no *Cinephile* without Brock, as his original vision for the journal has carried over through the years, passed from editor to editor.

Some of Brock's friends have created a memorial scholarship in his name to support students from Yorkton Regional High School in Saskatchewan, including students intending to start a career or pursue further study in the arts, students from the school's Rainbow Club, or students entering a care profession. They are also accepting donations for Heads Up Guys, a mental health initiative through UBC that focuses on the wellbeing of our male friends, brothers, coworkers, partners, and family members.

Thank you, Brock. We'll miss you.