

## Book Reviews

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Sarah Atkinson, *Beyond the Screen: Emerging Cinema and Engaging Audiences*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014; 312 pp. ISBN: 9781623566371, A\$130.00.

As I turn over the last page of *Beyond the Screen*, I wonder to what extent the concept of cinema can be more expanded in our digitally networked era. We have already come a long way from what generations have perceived as cinema for years, sitting in the dark auditorium and the screen as the first and foremost interface, watching images larger than ourselves and then socialising with people who have watched perhaps the same film afterwards over a glass of wine in a bar next to the movie theatre. Atkinson's book presents how far we have moved from this concept, investigates a vast range of extended cinematic forms within digitally networked environments we live in, and analyses the ways in which 'screen' has found multifaceted meanings and forms as a result of digitalisation.

*Beyond the Screen* challenges our conception of cinema and takes us to transitory, liminal space beyond the textual and/or visual/audial characteristics of cinema to show us the centrality and expansion of this space in the contemporary world of screen and technology. Atkinson investigates various manifestations of this space as 'the emerging cinema' in relation to the confluence of two main broad phenomena: one revolves around the ways compelling new cinematic forms are emerging (and continuously shifting) within an array of socially, culturally, narratologically, historically, politically, commercially, industrially and technologically layered paratextual materials, conventions and spaces of screen. The second is the complex relationship between the screen and audience as a result of the reconfiguration of these paratextual materials through technology and the ways audience experience has become an integral part of emerging or extended cinema today. The strength of the book lies, among other things, in conceptualising this audience–screen relationship through examining the emerging divergent permutations of extended cinema – cinema in the process of becoming.

The book is divided into eight chapters including Chapter 1, Introduction, and Chapter 8, Epilogue. In Chapters 2, 3 and 4, Atkinson provides methodically a series of discussions that focus on various dimensions of current extended screen phenomenon through numerous case studies and examples of transmedia, interactive cinema, experimental mobile cinema, alternate reality game (ARGs), iPad cinema, web, social media and live cinema ranging from completed to on-going and near-future developments projects. Throughout the book, the case studies have been selected to highlight the myriad ways 'screen' can be experienced (and expanded) by audiences in a digitally networked society. In Chapters 5 and 6, Atkinson takes a keen interest in bringing to the fore other dimensions of current extended screen phenomenon and discusses the ethical and industrial ('business') considerations of the emerging cinema. Chapter 7 offers 'a grammarology of emerging cinema' through synthesising the book's constituent chapters and discussion of dominant genres, themes, 'narrative devices' and 'participation modalities' which characterise the emerging cinema and the new storytelling experience it has offered through its myriad forms and layers.

*Beyond the Screen: Emerging Cinema and Engaging Audiences* is a thought-provoking book to cherish and to re-read. At times, the amount of information is almost overwhelming, but this is also a sign of the outstanding work that has aimed to establish the extended cinema as 'legitimate forms of study' for the generations to come. It stitches together a number of different case histories which may not be familiar to the reader, but it will long remain a key reference for students and specialists, those who are interested in understanding 'beyond the screen'.

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