

cate that small- and medium-sized festivals will find themselves compelled to present only a small selection of films that will attract the public and to drop exploratory programming or retrospectives (especially with old films now available on DVD). Only the big festivals that have strategic agreements with major sponsors can hope to survive and develop. But even with that, there will be strong economic pressure to integrate in the medium term with larger events such as international film festivals already taking place within the same city or LGBTQ events (pride celebrations or multidisciplinary cultural festivals).

—*Translated by Thomas Waugh*

BRIDGES AND BATTLES

Yau Ching

Having taught in visual communications and cultural studies at a design school in Hong Kong for more than five years, I have recently started to teach media production and theory at a University in Taiwan. I have been involved in the Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (HKLGF) since its early days in the 1990s, first as a publicist, later as a consultant, and recently as a guest curator. I was also on the programming boards of the first Asian Lesbian Film and Video Festival in Taiwan in 2005 and the first Sex Workers' Film Festival in Hong Kong in 2006.

In places like Hong Kong or Taiwan, the roles of film critics and curators are often mixed and interchangeable. Despite the richness of Hong Kong film history, there has been a significant lack of LGBTQ film culture here, which for me, at least, includes self-identified LGBTQ filmmakers and performers, and critics and scholars who address LGBTQ issues and works in their writing and research. I see my writing, my curatorial, and, in fact, my filmmaking activities as mostly motivated by this lack. There are just not that many people in the community who can afford to be out *and* have the time, resources, and energy to do so much volunteer work. Organizing and programming LGBTQ film festivals/programs here has always been a thankless, no-rewards job, so those of us who have been engaged with local film culture as critics and scholars and want to see it be more queer inevitably find ourselves drawn into taking up more festival work. I sometimes see myself

as a bridge between LGBTQ programs/festivals and the community of film critics' and scholars, yet at the same time I find it difficult—practically impossible—to maintain any critical distance about festival programming because I am so involved in it.

When I am more sane, I want my writing to help induce and deepen understanding and analysis of queer issues in film/video and my festival work to help build a community that would develop a conscious need for self-representation and a willingness to discuss issues raised by representation. I hope to use my writing and curatorial work to reinforce each other.

There have been many diverse images and identities emerging from film/video works of young LGBTQ film and video makers in Asia in the past few years, which dramatically depart from the images we saw and the stories we heard from past generations. While the social contradictions and problems foregrounded by images of the present are consistent with those from the past, the ways in which and the extent to which they are foregrounded and exposed have changed significantly. However, while LGBTQ identities and issues are more centralized or more explicit in independent, young film and video makers' works, other nonnormativities like polyamory, S/M, underage sex, HIV+, or sex work remain as—if not more—stigmatized.

Many LGBTQ film/video festivals in Asia suffer from the triple burdens produced by the globalization of Euro-American white gay culture, the colonial histories of our own social contexts, and the chauvinism embedded in our queer communities, all of which unfortunately reinforce each other. Hong Kong's film festivals and their audiences, including the HKLGFF, have been “programmed” to take the white, mainly gay—with a little bit of lesbian recently—culture as “natural,” “desirable,” and “progressive,” contributing to further suppression and marginalization of a localized and regional queer culture. This is the hardest battle for us as programmers and critics in Asia, on top of the universal lack of resources, which makes the professionalization of the festival milieu impossible. It becomes a vicious cycle when all the resources are channeled to support “white-muscle-boy” programming because it is presumed that these are the only kinds of images that our audience would pay to see. The “global gay” sensibility also affects how the film and video makers in Asia see themselves and the works produced and circulated. Film and video makers not only “mirror” the identities and issues of an imaginary globalized white culture, they also tend to prioritize Euro-American venues over local or regional ones in terms of distribution, rendering the formation and growth of local and regional queer cultures even more difficult. When I am less pessimistic, I do see that the global queer culture—which

of course has always been eclectic and full of contradictions—also inspires local film and video makers and critics actively to learn from and “talk back” to that culture. There has also been more regional networking and dialogue among the festival and scholarly communities in Asia in the past few years.

The recent development of consumer digital video technologies, which has enabled many more and much younger people to become filmmakers in Asia, has helped diversify our local cultures a great deal. The rapid formation of online queer communities also helped the festivals to reach out to more filmmakers and to a wider audience regionally within Asia. But again, access to technology further replicates some of the socially existing privileges defined by class and age differences, especially in Asia. I need to remind myself constantly—most importantly because of the kind of society I live in—that there are large pockets of the LGBTQ population that have not been empowered and are in fact further marginalized by these technologies.

To strengthen LGBTQ film and video makers’ access to production and, even more so, distribution resources in Asia; to foster the interest of film and video makers, critics, and programmers in connecting current issues with past histories, however repressed; to develop the willingness and courage of LGBTQ film communities to build coalitions with other sexual dissidents and minorities in order to diversify audiences, to discuss the interconnectedness of all sexual marginalization, and to advocate *real* social change; to relocalize LGBTQ issues and strategies within and against the global gay economy—these are all major challenges facing us today.

CAMPS AND SHIFTS

Margaret R. (aka M. R.) Daniel

I teach African America cinema, curatorial politics, and new media history at Emory University. Since founding the Women of Color Film and Video Festival at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1992, I have worked in distribution, programmed at the Mill Valley Film Festival and the Pacific Film Archive, among others, served on numerous festival juries and funding reviews, and consulted on