

This is the first issue of *JMI* to come out of the new chapter of the Department's experiment in pedagogy, The Media Lab. The Lab was launched in January, 2008, with financial assistance from the Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai. It works with digital forms of knowledge and art. We had felt for some time the need to extend the curricular work of Film Studies in the University into areas where knowledge production is changing in tandem with new forms of the image. The pervasive visualization of information, the vast archival energy unleashed at the everyday level, or the increasing use of image-making as a tool of ordinary exchange suggest a radical overhaul of the humanities itself. The Media Lab seeks to participate in these experiments.

The Annual Seminar of November, 2008, had the future of celluloid as its theme. The major aspects of its work - digital database building, organizing workshops in digital practices, etc., all relate to the liquid state in which cinema finds itself today. As cinema dissolves into multiple image practices the latter in their turn develop their techniques and forms in relation to the cinematic. The everyday use of the digital tools pushes cinema towards the function of writing. The death of cinema may not be a useful prediction to make, given that it has been a prediction for too long, but its protean, expanding shapes have started re-defining the object for film scholars. What this means for Film Studies is a question we wanted to put on the table. Besides the

reflections on the coming forms, the fluid state of film affords a new historical glance at cinema, debates about physical conservation of films, forms of archives that the new tools have themselves created, etc. The seminar had occasion to address all these questions. It was in keeping with the Media Lab's interest in practices that combine art and scholarship that the seminar invited artists and archivists as well as theorists. Quite a few new faces, including Sebastian Lutgert, Josef Lindner, Matt Hanson and Nishant Shah, joined the veterans of our annual seminars, Ashish Rajadhyaksha, Madhava Prasad, Jeebesh Bagchi, et al.

But we realized soon the presentations would use modes that do not conform to the rules of print publication. Perhaps *JMI* should consider multimedia online forms for disseminating such work. We all feel the ground beneath our feet is shifting; but we would still like to use the advantages of the dual publication in print and online we adopted three years ago. The price one had to pay was to forgo the presentations that were heavily dependent on online and audio-visual demonstrations and shorter panel conversations. Lutgert and Hanson, scholars who are also new media artists, have written up their presentations in unconventional forms as brief, programmatic notes. *JMI 8* is slimmer as a consequence.

We started a 'Special Feature' section from *JMI 6* where we present contributions from senior scholars and from outside the ambit of the seminar themes. We are really glad to feature Kumkum Sangari's essay for this issue.

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