

Navigating Exclusions within Infrastructures of Leisure: Visual Expressions and Examinations of Single Screen Theatre Spaces and the lives of their Labour Force

S77 | Sensing Urban Exclusion: Atmospheric Attunement and Creative Interpretation

Session Organiser(s) | Ed Charlton

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Cinema, and its multi layered processes of production and consumption, are intricately woven into the cultural fabric of any city. This paper examines a particular thread in such a weave - looking at the experiences of workers and their exclusions in localized cultural (cinema) production and exhibition eco-systems. It does so by using the visual medium as both a mode of interrogation as well of expression. The site of analysis for the study was single screen theatres in one of the most rapidly urbanising cityscapes in India – Bengaluru. Such spaces, or infrastructures of leisure, are (while still being current) remnants of the past, currently fighting a losing battle with multiplexes and more recently, the shift to online spaces. This work examines the experiences of part producers of that cinematic cultural experience – theatre workers, traditionally considered peripheral to the production process. The study used still photography and video recordings to document and self-document worker's everyday life and invited participants to engage in the analysis of such produced material. This allowed for a participatory approach and an enriched analysis that draws on Tobin et. al.'s (2009) methodology called video-cued multivocal ethnography, which is a process of creating artefacts of analysis (in this case, videos and still photographs) by both respondents and the interlocutors, and making meaning through a negotiated engagement between the two sets of visual products and their producers. As the paper will show, this method allowed participants to both express their condition and examine their conditionality in innovative ways.