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Environmental Film Festivals: Beginning Explorations at the Intersections of Film Festival Studies and Ecocritical Studies

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Environmental Film Festivals: Beginning Explorations at the Intersections of Film Festival Studies and Ecocritical Studies

Abstract

Drawing from the burgeoning field of film festival studies and its engagement with public sphere theory, I examine environmental film festivals to suggest that their festival terrain is bounded by three end-member festival types, that of the official public sphere, the alternative public sphere, and the corporate or trade-show sphere. Few environmental festivals fall neatly into a single end-member category. Analyzing how they construct their identities suggests the complex ways in which these festivals work to negotiate their presence in a heterogeneous environmental and media landscape and makes room for continued attention to these unique sites of ecocinema engagement.

Keywords

film festival, environmental film, environmental film festival, festival studies, ecocritical studies, ecocinema

Disciplines

Environmental Sciences | Film and Media Studies

environmental film festivals: beginning explorations at the intersections of film festival studies and ecocritical studies

s a l m a m o n a n i

The mission for Nevada City's Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival—"leaving you feeling INSPIRED and MOTIVATED to go out and make a difference in your community and the world"—expresses what all these festivals aim to achieve; it recalls Bertolt Brecht's conviction that a successful play is one that makes the audience riot in the streets.

Randy Malamud, "A New Breed of Environmental Film."¹

Environmental film festivals yield a rich array of options for anyone interested in the ways cinema and environment intertwine to present engaging perspectives about our world. High-profile festivals include the DC Environmental Film Festival, held annually in the US capital, and the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival, held in Wyoming's Teton National Park and attended by the wildlife film industry's who's-who. There are also regional film festivals, such as Tales from Planet Earth, and online community environmental film festivals. Many of these festivals are young, as Table 12.1 shows: the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival dates back to 1991, the DC environmental film festival was founded in 2004, and Tales from

Table 12.1 Established environmental film festivals (five years or older) with updated online web presence (as parsed from the list resource EcoFootage.com).

	<i>Date established, name, and URL</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Time of year</i>
1	1977 International Wildlife Media Center & Film Festival www.wildlifefilms.org International Wildlife Film Festival and Montana Cine International Film Festival	Missoula, MT	May and October respectively
<i>1980s</i>			
2	1981 Black Maria Film and Video Festival www.blackmariafilmfestival.org	New Jersey City University, NJ City	February
3	1981 Global Visions Film Festival www.globalvisionsfestival.com	Edmonton, Canada	Originally in November moving to spring
4	1982 Wildscreen Festival www.wildscreen.org.uk	Bristol, UK	October (Biennial)
5	1985 Vermont International Film Festival www.vtiff.org	Burlington, VT	October and November
<i>1990s</i>			
6	1990 World Community Film Festival www.worldcommunity.ca/film.htm	Comox Valley, Vancouver, Canada	February
7	1991 Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival www.jhfestival.org	Jackson, WY	October (Biennial)
8	1992 DC Environmental Film Festival www.dcenvironmentalfilmfest.org	Washington, DC	March
9	1993 FICMA – Festival Internacional de Cinema del Medi Ambient www.ficma.com	Barcelona, Spain	June
10	1995 United Nations Association Film Festival www.unaff.org	Stanford, CA	October (tours after)
11	1997 Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival www.ithaca.edu/fleff	Ithaca, NY	April

Table 12.1 Continued

	<i>Date established, name, and URL</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Time of year</i>
12	1998 CinemAmbiente Environmental Film Festival www.cinemambiente.it	Torino, Italy	May–June
13	1999 EarthVision Santa Cruz Environmental Film & Video Festival http://www.earthvisionfest.org	Santa Cruz, CA	May
14	1999 Planet In Focus: Toronto International Environmental Film & Video Festival www.planetinfocus.org	Toronto, Ontario	October (then tours)
15	EcoMove International www.ecomove.de/ueberuns/mitglfest.cfm Earth Vision (founded 1992) Ekofilm (founded 1974) Envirofilm (founded 1995) Green Vision (founded 1996) Puchalski Nature Film Festival (founded 1996) International Documentary Film Festival on Parks (founded 1987)	Tokyo, Japan Czech Republic St Petersburg, Russia Lodz, Poland Sondrio, Italy	March October May November September October
2000s			
16	2000 Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org	Nevada City, CA	October– November
17	2001 Media That Matters Film Festival www.mediathatmattersfest.org/issue/ environment/	New York, NY premieres online	June premieres
18	2003 American Conservation Film Festival http://conservationfilm.org	Shephardsville, WV	Early November
19	2004 Artist Film Festival www.artistfs.org	Los Angeles (Travels London, NY etc.)	July thru September
20	2004 Big Sky Documentary Film Festival www.bigskyfilmfest.org	Missoula, MT	February
21	2004 EarthDance: The Short-Attention-Span Environmental Film Festival www.earthdancefilms.com	Oakland, CA	Winter

Table 12.1 Continued

	<i>Date established, name, and URL</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Time of year</i>
22	2004 EcoVision Festival www.ecovisionfestival.com	Palermo, Italy and Fortaleza, Brazil	June and July
23	2004 ecofilms – Rodos International Film + Visual Arts Festival www.ecofilms.gr	Rhodes, Greece	June
24	2007 Princeton Environmental Film Festival www.princetonlibrary.org/peff	Princeton, NJ	January
25	2007 Tales from Planet Earth Film Festival www.nelson.wisc.edu/tales	Madison, WI	March (Biennial)

Planet Earth began in 2008. The Vermont International Film Festival, which began in 1985, claims it is the “world’s oldest environmental and human rights film festival.”²

Despite the growth of environmental film festivals, however, there has been no scholarly attention directed at these festivals by eco-film critics, or for that matter by film critics in general. This neglect seems remiss, particularly as the emerging field of film festival studies has generated vibrant scholarly interest in other types of film festivals.³ While scholars argue that film festivals cannot be ignored as a “force in the global circulation of cinema,”⁴ one can further argue that *environmental* film festivals are part and parcel of the global circulation of *ecocinema*. More importantly, in a media-saturated world in which film is increasingly disseminated through commercial multiplexes, DVD mail-order rentals, and online platforms that either encourage individual consumerism and/or generate virtual communities of long-distance users, festivals serve not just as outlets for ecocinema circulation but also as meeting places where filmmakers and audiences can interact face-to-face. As community events, they become crucial ecocinema sites that draw attention to and also forward agendas that collate cinema and environment. The purpose of this chapter is to remedy the neglect film festivals have received so far, and by doing so to point towards new directions in ecocinema studies.

In recent years, film festival studies has burgeoned as a thriving segment of film and media studies. As David Archibald and Mitchell Miller note, “researchers have come to recognize that film festivals are not just an adjunct to other activities but a phenomena in their own right.”⁵ In addressing film festivals as a coherent area of film studies, the *Film Festival*

Yearbooks (first published in 2009 by the University of St. Andrews Press) and the webpage *Film Festival Research* (founded in 2008 by Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist) display the breadth of this interdisciplinary research, which “takes a cultural studies approach, reframing interests in film aesthetics, art, and the role of national and [sic] festivals as sites of self-identification and community building.”⁶

While there are many approaches one can take within cultural studies to engage film festivals (for example, humanities approaches that consider the aesthetics of film to more social science approaches that examine the organization of festivals),⁷ in this chapter I approach environmental film festivals through the theoretical framework of the public sphere. If one takes to heart the quote that I have cited in the epigraph from Randy Malamud’s journalistic piece (which is the *only* article I have seen on environmental film festivals as a group in an academic publication, in this case the *Chronicle of Higher Education*), the notion that these festivals can and even should make their audiences agitate publicly by “riot[ing] in the streets” or at least mobilizing some form of environmental action, makes public sphere theory an excellent starting place from which to interrogate them.

Public sphere theory, first suggested by Jurgen Habermas, is a way to examine how ordinary citizens “ready themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion.”⁸ Distinct from government-run forums, such gatherings bring together individuals without state position or not representing this official capacity. They are also distinct from corporate-run forums, as their primary function is not about the economic buying and selling of goods but about the vigorous exchange of discursive ideas. Public sphere theory has been successfully applied to other types of film festivals by scholars such as Julian Stringer, Derek Ros, and Soyoung Kim, because film festivals often present themselves as meeting spaces for expanding the spheres of democratic and public engagement.⁹ As argued by Stringer, in considering their function as public spheres, thematic film festivals often take on a dual role, evoking *both* the notion of the *official public sphere* as well as the *alternative public sphere*.¹⁰

The official public sphere suggests that everyone unhampered by and *outside* of state position has a legitimate say in a political dialogue about the “management of civil life.”¹¹ However, as various critics argue, such a sphere is power-stratified, thus, by contrast, the alternative public sphere, first conceived by theorist Nancy Fraser, offers minority groups (for example, feminist, gay, or queer communities) spaces for parallel democratic and participatory engagement in ways that enable them to “withdraw and regroup” as well as generate the grounds for “agitational activities directed towards wider publics.”¹² As Stringer suggests, thematic film festivals often market themselves as both, encouraging a general audience (which forwards the official public sphere notion of “the civic and socially legitimate on the one hand”) and a specialized audience (which celebrates “the cult and

socially oppositional on the other").¹³ In doing so, they strategically legitimize their presence as both unique and valid to mainstream discourse.

Environmental film festivals intuitively seem to represent both the public and alternative public sphere. But if, and how, they do can only be clearly pinpointed if we more critically turn our attention towards them. In this initial attempt to theorize the environmental film festival, I engage the "written festival," a term coined by Daniel Dayan to point to the print materials produced by and about a festival.¹⁴ Dayan and others (for example, Stringer; Ruling and Pederson), suggest that the written materials associated with film festivals help us understand how film festival identities are constructed and critiqued. Here, I examine the websites of environmental film festivals to understand how they construct their *own* identities. I suggest an important first observation of environmental film festivals: all festivals appear to champion ideas of both the public and alternative public sphere, yet when we probe a bit deeper it becomes obvious that they are quite variable in their commitments to such notions.

To make sense of this surface commitment and its variability, I argue that we can bound the overall environmental film festival terrain not only within the framework of the official public sphere and the alternative public sphere but also within the corporate sphere. That is, while some festivals lend their rhetoric more clearly to engaging the public, others (what I call *trade show festivals*), fit more easily into corporate realms, which tend to negate the notion of the public sphere. It is important to highlight that general film festival studies scholarship does not use this term. Despite the fact that many big, global film festivals such as Sundance, Cannes, and Berlin are marketplaces dominated by Hollywood-produced films, as scholars such as de Valck discuss, they are also seen as venues for alternative cinema.¹⁵

This is less the case in the environmental film festival circuit, where there are clearly film festivals, such as The Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival, that are corporate driven. However, it is also important to highlight that, like general film festivals, few environmental festivals fall neatly into a single end-member category. In seeing how they construct and negotiate their identities as public spheres, alternative public spheres, and/or trade shows, one quickly becomes aware of the complex ways in which these festivals work to establish their presence in a heterogeneous environmental and media landscape.

This three end-member framework, based on how environmental film festivals project their *own* constructions through their websites, is only a first step to understanding these festivals. It is valuable to further consider how these identities actually function when put into practice. In the last section of this chapter I therefore turn to a case study of a single festival: the Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival (FLEFF), which I attended in 2008 and 2009. In examining how an individual festival like FLEFF negotiates its identity, I use not only the "written festival" but also participatory and interview research.

While the newness of this research limits how extensively I have engaged with FLEFF and how precise my categorization of all film festivals are, I hope that this work compels others to interrogate environmental film festivals through the research trajectories provided by film festival studies. Specifically, its two-pronged approach—“case studies and the theorization of their broader relevance to our understandings of the festival as circuit”¹⁶—can better capture the part that film festivals play as environmental and cinematic discourse and action.

surveying the environmental film festival terrain

The number of self-designated environmental film festivals is hard to pin down. There does exist an Environmental Film Festival Network (EFFN), hosted by WordPress, that has links to about 20 film festivals worldwide, but the blog has been inactive since March 2011. Therefore, I focus on films listed in EcoFootage.com, a web database started in 2006. While this site is not necessarily ideal due to a few broken links, it has been updated regularly since 2009. In all, EcoFootage.com contains 25 links to festivals that meet three basic criteria that suggest they have staying power: they were established five years prior (in 2007 or earlier), are still operating, and have websites that are current. As Table 12.1 shows, two of these 25—the International Wildlife Media Center and Film Festival in Missoula, Montana and EcoMove International in Frieburg, Germany—are not film festivals per se, but organizations that coordinate festivals (two and six respectively), bringing the total of established yet current film festivals up to 31.

While the bias of the website’s provenance (in the US) suggests more US-based festivals, 12 festivals are located outside the US, mainly in Europe and Canada. In effect, EcoFootage.com serves as a reliable starting point in trying to gauge the breadth and variety of contemporary, yet established, festivals. The site categorizes a broad variety of environmental film festivals, thus fitting in with the turn in ecocritical studies that recognizes “environment” as more than “wilderness” or “Nature.”¹⁷ Though some festivals fit these latter themes, others such as FLEFF take a more inclusive view of “environment”: they point to blurred lines between human-nonhuman interactions and agencies, and the films they showcase may directly contradict traditional notions of environmental film.

Most festivals listed on EcoFootage.com initially appear to evoke *both* the notion of the public sphere and the alternative public sphere. They welcome public participation, provide open invitations to attend screenings, and use language that emphasizes the second person or direct address (Table 12.2). Nearly all of these festivals have no or very low submission fees for filmmakers wishing to enter their work. However, in addition to such all-inclusive gestures, the festivals also encourage dialogue about a specialized topic (the environment) in intimate settings: screenings coupled with

Table 12.2 Festival websites evoke the notion of the public sphere through their rhetoric of openness to public audience participation.

<i>Name and URL</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
American Conservation Film Festival http://conservationfilm.org/filmgoers/	"Meet filmmakers and experts, take workshops, debate issues, vote for the winner of the Audience Choice Award. Activate <i>yourself</i> and your children."
Artist Film Festival http://festival.artist.com/	"Artist film screenings are free to the public, but fill quickly. Reserve <i>your</i> advance seat today."
Big Sky Documentary Film Festival www.bigskyfilmfest.org	"Free <i>Public</i> Admission."
Black Maria Film and Video Festival www.blackmariafilmfestival.org	No explicit rhetoric. Screenings are open to communities that are willing to host the travelling festival.
CinemAmbiente Environmental Film Festival www.cinemambiente.it/film_piemonte/138/1_Admittance.html	"Admission is free on a first come, first served basis to all screenings and events organised by the Festival."
DC Environmental Film Festival www.dcenvironmentalfilmfest.org/about	"Thank <i>you</i> for joining us in March as we presented 150 diverse and engaging films from 40 countries, enhanced by the perspectives and knowledge of 70 filmmakers and 130 special guests, whose creative energy enlivened the Festival."
EarthDance: The Short-Attention-Span Environmental Film Festival www.earthdancefilms.com	"EarthDance Films is on the road . . . Coming soon to a theater near <i>you!</i> "
EarthVision Santa Cruz Environmental Film & Video Festival www.santacruzfilmfestival.org/events-1	"The Santa Cruz Film Festival invites <i>you</i> to celebrate the universal language of film, music and entertainment."
ecofilms – Rodos International Film + Visual Arts Festival www.ecofilms.gr/06.0.rodos_en.htm	" <i>You</i> can too, be one of the lucky ones. It costs much less than you think!!"
EcoMove International www.ecomove.de/ueberuns/mitglfest.cfm	
Earth Vision (Japan) www.earth-vision.jp/english/2-0what_is_earth_vision.html	"The EARTH VISION mission to offer a venue for the <i>public</i> to see environmental films has broadened its scope of activities in the last 17 years."
Ekofilm (Czech Republic) www.ekofilm.cz/?page_id=2&lang=en	"Our varied program is open to everyone, from schoolchildren to students, and for the general as well as the professional <i>public</i> ."

Table 12.2 Continued

<i>Name and URL</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
Envirofilm (Slovakia) www.envirofilm.sk/en-historia.html#	"It is a place of meeting of film makers, environmentalists, journalists, members of international association of environmental festivals EcoMove International and <i>public</i> , especially to which the film show is addressed."
Green Vision (Russia) and Puchalski Nature Film Festival (Poland) www.infoeco.ru/greenvision/index.php?id=12 www.wfo.com.pl/eng/festival_eng.html	There is no explicit rhetoric defining a public viewing audience; anyone can submit as a filmmaker.
Sondrio – Intern. Documentary Film Festival on Parks (Italy)	There is no explicit rhetoric defining a public viewing audience; anyone can submit as a filmmaker. There is mention of <i>public</i> screenings.
EcoVision Festival www.ecovisionfestival.com/edizione2009/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=134&Itemid=112	No explicit rhetoric although statements like "to make the <i>public</i> aware about the environmental issues that regard us" on the about page as well as the open program list suggests a public audience.
FICMA – Festival Internacional de Cinema del Medi Ambient www.ficma.com	No explicit rhetoric, although most screenings at local Barcelona theaters are open to the <i>public</i> .
Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival www.ithaca.edu/fleff/allaboutfleff/	"The Division of Interdisciplinary and International Studies invites <i>you</i> to leap with us into a consideration of environmental and human rights, to listen to the rest of the world, and to link ideas with technology and international perspectives. So speak up (or write, I should say), listen, read, and learn."
Global Visions Film Festival www.globalvisionsfestival.com/aboutus.php	"In addition to dozens of films we present <i>public</i> workshops and panel discussions with filmmakers, as well as our popular Youth Media Arts Day for young filmmakers."
International Wildlife Film Festival www.wildlifefilms.org/festivals/iwff/about.html	" <i>You're Invited!</i> Please join us for the 34th annual, International Wildlife Film Festival in the heart of Montana's breathtaking Northern Rockies."
Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival www.jhfestival.org	Explicit <i>public</i> participation is limited to the outreach page, which exists outside of the festival events. For example: "To watch short films from the community outreach programs click here to access the JHWFF YouTube channel."

Table 12.2 Continued

<i>Name and URL</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
Media That Matters Film Festival www.mediathatmattersfest.org/issue/environment/	"Welcome to the Media That Matters Film Festival website—watch the newest collection, browse by issue below, or view the festival archives through the dropdown menu above. Enjoy the films, take action and don't forget to share <i>your</i> comments!"
Planet In Focus: Toronto International Environmental Film & Video Festival www.planetinfocus.org/about-pif	"Our programs are portable and we seek to expand <i>public</i> access to them through a myriad of collaborative and partnering opportunities on multiple platforms."
Princeton Environmental Film Festival www.princetonlibrary.org/peff	"FREE ADMISSION to all screenings and talks."
Tales from Planet Earth Film Festival www.nelson.wisc.edu/tales	"Free to the <i>Public</i> : Please join us in celebrating the power of film as a force for environmental change."
United Nations Association Film Festival www.unaff.org/2011/index.html	"We hope that the variety of film programs and other related events during UNAFF 2011 and UNAFF Traveling Film Festival will present <i>you</i> with a truly exciting and memorable experience."
Vermont International Film Festival www.vtiff.org/about/	"VTIFF is eager to build relationships with community members and present quality films that might otherwise not make their way to our area ... Team up with VTIFF."
Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org/festival/how-to-festival/	The How to Festival page is set up to help the public access the festival with FAQs such as: "What if I fall in love with a film, and want to share it with all my friends at home? First of all, be sure to vote for it for the People's Choice Award!"
Wildscreen Festival www.wildscreen.org.uk/downloads/Festival.pdf	"The Wildscreen Festival also offers a series of free <i>public</i> film screenings during the evenings and weekends—where Panda Award nominated films are shown at the Watershed, Bristol."
World Community Film Festival www.wcdes.ca/film-festival	"The films we share with <i>you</i> are a celebration of activism."

Many employ direct address and use second person pronouns. "You/your" and "public" have been italicized for easy emphasis.

seminars, workshops, panel discussions, and events such as parties for networking and socializing. Words such as “unique,” “premiere,” “new,” and “different” are common on all websites.

As both public and alternative public spheres, film festivals highlight the democratic nature of participation. Audiences are especially encouraged to interact with festival organizers and filmmakers in settings that inspire conversations (again, see Table 12.2 and its entries for the Wild and Scenic Film Festival, Media that Matters, and the American Conservation Film Festival). Finally, all take seriously their environmental missions. These festivals are not simply forums for general entertainment—they are formatted to bring communities together to share a common cause (environmental understandings, however vaguely defined) and to feel “inspired” in community gatherings. In effect, as Stringer has articulated is common for thematic film festivals, the majority seem to be both for a “specialized minority interest and also ‘for everyone.’”¹⁸

Despite first impressions as spaces of public gathering and of specialized community, each of these festivals presents its own complex structure of cultural, economic, and sociopolitical negotiations that constrain or encourage the notion of the public sphere. A more concerted examination of their individual websites—mission statements and programs, institutional affiliations and sponsorships (Table 12.3), targeted audiences, and related rhetoric—begins to uncover nuances.

What emerges is an overall terrain bounded by not two but three end-member types of festivals: the public sphere festival, the alternative public sphere festival, and what I call the trade show (or corporate-driven) festival. As I elaborate on how these three “end-members” differ from each other, it is important to keep in mind that most of the festivals listed don’t fall neatly into a single category. Instead, they exhibit characteristics of more than one type, foregrounding the tensions between aligning with and opposing the hegemonic politics of the official public sphere.

environmental film festivals: public spheres, alternative public spheres, and trade shows

I have generated the terms public sphere festival, alternative public sphere festival, and trade show festival as end-members to frame the environmental festival terrain. As I suggest above, each indicates a different type of public engagement. While public sphere and alternative public sphere festivals pointedly engage political rhetoric, the former legitimizes itself as *part* of the “official” public sphere, whereas the latter’s rhetoric seeks to agitate or disrupt the official public sphere. Trade show festivals, by contrast, align their agendas most closely with the private sphere and existing political and economic systems. Each approach leads to a different strategy for shaping environmental discourse and action.

Table 12.3 Festival organizations and prominent sponsorship affiliations.

<i>Festivals with prominent international and national corporate sponsorship</i>	
Artist Film Festival www.artivists.org	Non-profit: The Artist Collective, Inc. Corporate sponsors
International Wildlife Media Center & Film Festival www.wildlifefilms.org	Non-profit: International Wildlife Media Center National/international corporations (e.g. Animal Planet, BBC)
International Wildlife Film Festival and Montana Cine International Film Festival	Educational Institutions (American University, University of Montana) Regional and local businesses
Wildscreen Festival www.wildscreen.org.uk	Non-profit: Wildscreen Corporate support (for profit and non-profit, e.g. National Geographic and BBC)
Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival www.jhfestival.org	Non-profit: Jackson Hole Film Institute National/international corporations (e.g. National Geographic, Animal Planet, BBC, Canon) Educational Institutions (American University, Montana State University)
<i>Festivals with prominent national and regional government organization or support</i>	
EcoMove International www.ecomove.de/ueberuns/mitglfest.cfm	Earth Vision Organization: Consortium of organizations (for and non-profit)
Earth Vision (Japan)	Local and national government support
Ekofilm (Czech Republic)	National Government: Ministry of Environment working with ECOfilm Civic Association, and local government agencies
Envirofilm (Slovakia)	National Government: Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, and city governments
Green Vision (Russia)	Government: Committee for Nature Use, Environmental Protection and Ecological Safety of St. Petersburg
Puchalski Nature Film Festival (Poland)	Educational Film Studio and Film-Nature-Culture Association
Sondrio – Intern. Documentary Film Festival on Parks (Italy)	ASSOMIDOP: Consortium of government and private agencies (Sondrio Town Council, the Italian Alpine Club, the BIM Consortium, Stelvio National Park and the Orobie Valtellinesi Nature Park)
ecofilms – Rodos International Film + Visual Arts Festival www.ecofilms.gr	Non-profit, Image and Environment, working closely with regional government: the Municipality of Rhodes, and the Cultural Organisation of the Municipality of Rhodes

Table 12.3 Continued

<i>Festivals with prominent national and regional government organization or support</i>	
EcoVision Festival www.ecovisionfestival.com	National and regional government organizations (e.g. Sicilian agriculture and forestry department, Palermo university) International partners: United Nations
FICMA – Festival Internacional de Cinema del Medi Ambient www.ficma.com	Non-profit: FICMA Association Regional and local government organizations (Catalunya and Barcelona) International, national, and regional businesses (e.g. Fox international channels, Greenpeace)
Big Sky Documentary Film Festival www.bigskyfilmfest.org	Non-profit: Big Sky Institute Regional arts council (Missoula government) National, regional, and local arts and/or social foundations and businesses (e.g. HBO, Missoula Art Museum)
CinemAmbiente Environmental Film Festival www.cinemambiente.it	National Museum of Cinema and Maria Adriana Prolo Foundation National and regional government International, regional, and local arts and/or social foundations and businesses (e.g. WWF, Asja)
DC Environmental Film Festival www.dcenvironmentalfilmfest.org	Non-profit: Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital Regional and national arts councils (governmental and private funding) Local, regional, and national businesses Educational Institutions (e.g. American University, Yale University)
Global Visions Film Festival www.globalvisionsfestival.com	Non-profit: The Global Visions Festival Society Regional, national and local arts councils (Alberta and Edmonton) Local and regional businesses (e.g. the Sutton Place Hotel, the Gazette press)
Media that Matters	Non-profit: Arts Engine National and regional arts councils (government and corporate; e.g. NY State Council of the Arts and Kellogg Foundation)
Planet In Focus: Toronto International Environmental Film & Video Festival www.planetinfocus.org	Non-profit: Planet in Focus National, regional and local arts councils (Canada, Ontario, Toronto) Local and regional businesses

Table 12.3 Continued

<i>Festivals with primarily local support bases</i>	
Earth Dance www.earthdancefilms.com	Non-profit: Oakland Museum of CA Foundation Local and regional business and non-profit partners, national corporations
EarthVision Santa Cruz www.santacruzfilmfestival.org	Non-profit: Santa Cruz Film Festival Local arts councils and organizations (private and government) Local and regional business and non-profit partners
Princeton Environmental Film Festival www.princetonlibrary.org/peff	Local government: Princeton Public Library Local and regional business and non-profit partners
United Nations Association Film Festival www.unaff.org	Non-profit: UN Association (mid-peninsular chapter), held at Stanford University Donors and UNA-USA support
Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org	Non-profit: South Yuba River Citizens League Corporate founding sponsor (local business: AJA video), local government support International, national, and local businesses Private individual donors
World Community Film Festival www.worldcommunity.ca/film.htm	Non-profit: World Community Local government councils
<i>Festivals with educational institutions as primary organizers and sponsors</i>	
American Conservation Film Festival http://conservationfilm.org	Educational institution: Shephard University and US Fish and Wildlife National Conservation Training Center Local businesses, non-profits, and individuals
Black Maria Film and Video Festival www.blackmariafilmfestival.org	Non-profit: Thomas Edison Media Arts Educational institution: New Jersey University Regional and national arts councils (governmental and private funding)
Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival www.ithaca.edu/fleff	Educational institution: Ithaca College National and regional arts foundation (Parks Foundation, New York State Council in the arts)
Tales from Planet Earth Film Festival www.nelson.wisc.edu/tales	Educational institution: University of Wisconsin Regional and local arts councils (governmental and private funding) Local businesses
Vermont International Film Festival www.vtiff.org	Educational institutions: Burlington College and University of Vermont Regional arts councils (governmental and private funding) Local businesses

Of the three end-members, festivals that align with the official public sphere are most focused on being part of the “civic and socially legitimate,” even as they promote public participation. Such festivals tend to market themselves as prestigious events that draw both large crowds and famous people. For example, as seen from Table 12.4, both FICMA and EcoVision promote their affiliation with important mainstream people and organizations (FICMA’s “sponsors and ambassadors” include Martin Sheen, Daryl Hannah, and Daphne Zuniga).¹⁹ Such festivals are also marked by official government sponsorships. As Table 12.3 suggests, though many of these festivals are run by independent, non-profit organizations, they receive much of their funding through national and/or international government arts and cultural grants.

While such grants legitimize the presence of these festivals in the official public sphere, there is a potential drawback to such support. Specifically, one has to ask, as is asked more broadly of the official public sphere: How ideally democratic are these spaces? Are they too strongly influenced by political agendas that skew the dialogue towards existing systems of power? For example, while festivals such as Ekofilm in the Czech Republic and Green Vision in Russia are hosted by government agencies and thus are, despite their public evocation, disqualified as public spheres (they are after all state-run), other festivals also become suspicious. This is particularly the case when the rhetoric of these festivals, even if somewhat angled to inspire and motivate audiences to think in new ways (as we see with FICMA and EcoVision’s rhetoric in Table 12.4), is tempered in its political criticisms by, paradoxically, its aims for civic and social legitimacy, buying into the systems these festivals ostensibly criticize.

Festivals without primary government sponsorship, by contrast, are more likely to present obviously critical rhetoric, which places them in the alternative public sphere. For example, the World Community Film Festival states: “All over the world hope shines through in action taken by ordinary people *who dare to confront global forces* with the strength of their own vision.”²⁰ The Wild and Scenic Film Festival states clearly in its mission: “SYRCL’s Wild & Scenic Film Festival is a call to action. At Wild & Scenic, filmgoers are transformed into a congregation of committed activists, dedicated to saving our increasingly threatened planet.”²¹ This is an activist rhetoric, aiming to inspire not just awareness but also *change*. In effect, these festivals seem more assertively vocal in their “agitational activities directed towards wider publics.”²² They also often locate cinema’s primary value not in its use as an artistic mode but in its potential as an activist tool.

As one begins to parse apart the differences between public sphere festivals and alternative public sphere festivals, a third category also becomes evident, that of the trade show festival with its clearly industry oriented agendas. Heavily sponsored by big corporate interests, they attempt to generate buzz about the existing wildlife media industry. In doing so, they

Table 12.4 Classifying environmental film festivals based on their website rhetoric (a sampling).

Trade Show Environmental Film Festivals: Places for Business

Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival (Jackson Hole, WY)

"Since its inception in 1991, the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival organization (JHFFF) has provided broadcasters, filmmakers, and other industry stakeholders with a forum to *conduct business*, stay informed on emerging market opportunities and technologies" (About Us)

Wildscreen Film Festival (Bristol, UK)

"Wildscreen's supporters, partners and collaborators include the world's most influential conservationists, environmentalists and broadcast industry leaders . . . representing some of the most influential names in the wildlife media industry, conservation science and environmental education." (About Us)

Public Sphere Environmental Film Festivals: Marketing Prestige and Politics

Festival Internacional de Cinema del Medi Ambient-FICMA (Barcelona, Spain)

"The FICMA is the founder of the largest and most important global network of festivals of this kind: The EFFN (Environmental Film Festival Network) ... During the 18 years of FICMA, many people in the world of politics, human rights and world cinema have come together to give their support, their solidarity and to contribute to the project . . . Viewed as a worrying and unwelcome project by some and as a necessary and healthy one by others, the FICMA has taken its first steps." (Editorial)

EcoVision (Italy and Brazil)

"The agreement was born to reawaken in the audience and in the media both the importance to preserve the environment and the sustainable development and to highlight social questions of a great emergency, in a world wasted by religious, ethnic, political and economic wars, through emergent authors ... The festival, one of the most important of Europe, will see in competition films produced from 2007 to 2009 ... they will be submit[ted] to the decision of an International Jury chaired by Tonino Pinto, journalist for the most important Italian newspapers, special envoy for RAI on cinema, culture and show business and international festivals expert." (About Us)

Alternative Public Sphere Environmental Film Festivals: Grassroots Activism and Political Criticism

American Conservation Film Festival

"As environmental issues become increasingly global, understanding our individual roles in the biosphere and the global human community is more important than ever. Yet many of us don't appreciate how our actions, lifestyles, and cultures affect the world we live in . . . ACFF provides a venue to explore these issues and bring them back to our own lives, through high quality films and discussions with filmmakers and other experts." (About Us)

Vermont International Film Festival-VTIFF (Burlington, VT)

"The Vermont International Film Festival was born from the anti-nuclear movement in 1985, making it the world's oldest environmental and human rights film festival ... VTIFF is eager to build relationships with community members and present quality films that might otherwise not make their way to our area. Consider supporting this effort by collaborating with VTIFF to select and show films, cosponsoring screenings, and contributing to the festival. Team up with VTIFF!" (About Us)

disqualify themselves as public spheres, despite the fact that they might have public components or open registration. The Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival and the Wildscreen Festival in Bristol, for example, are places to “conduct business,” and serve as “a crucial marketplace, where films are bought and sold” (see Table 12.2 and Table 12.3).²³ Their primary audiences are delegates who can afford the steep registration fees (\$1200 for Jackson Hole’s five-day pass, and £595 for Wildscreen’s events).²⁴ In spotlighting their connections with the elite among wildlife filmmakers and conservationists, these festivals validate and profit from corporate models of top-down expertise and power.

These corporate models also influence the trade show festivals’ communication strategies: they appear to be less interested in information *exchange* than in information *dissemination* (from a central elite source). Wildscreen describes its initiatives as follows: “All of Wildscreen’s activities involve harnessing the very best of the world’s wildlife imagery and media to promote a greater understanding of the natural world.” Jackson Hole takes a similar tack: “Equally committed to a path of education and outreach, the Festival is dedicated to raising awareness and empowering action, through the innovative use of media . . . Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival offers special screenings, lectures, and in-school education programs year-round.”²⁵ In forwarding these top-down models of interaction, these festivals position their interest as helping their audiences rationalize relationships with corporate largesse and established systems as essential to “inspire[ing] an appreciation of the natural world and the need for its protection.”²⁶

Suggesting that trade show environmental film festivals are not public spheres is not to dismiss them completely. Despite being driven by corporate models of operation, they nonetheless invite “internal” dialogue through seminars, panel discussions, and Q&A. Chris Palmer, a long-time industry insider, has spoken about his “growing suspicion that most wildlife films were not doing their job” at adequately addressing environmental issues. In *Shooting in the Wild*, he discusses his arguments that mainstream, industry-lauded wildlife films “actually hurt conservation efforts,” as audiences are given a “false sense of security, a fraudulent promise of endless bounty” and become complacent.²⁷ While many in the industry disagree with Palmer, he notes that the resulting festival debates have had an impact on filmmaking. Big corporate productions (like BBC-Discovery’s *Planet Earth*) have begun to engage conservation messages rather than offering solely apolitical and aesthetic appreciations of the natural world.²⁸ Nevertheless, trade show festivals generally validate the existing, profit-generating social and economic system, even when this system is recognized as environmentally problematic. For example, Palmer acknowledges that there are still no official standards for wildlife filmmaking, which leaves the industry open to ethically troublesome environmental practices.²⁹

Though there are contrasts among public sphere, alternative public sphere, and trade show festivals,³⁰ it is crucial to recognize that most festivals don't fall neatly into one or the other of the three categories discussed above. Instead, individual festivals present overlapping agendas. The International Wildlife Film Festival's (IWFF) "About the Festival" page offers an example. The page begins "You're invited!" and suggests "No matter where you are from, whether a veteran or a newcomer, or a student, IWFF welcomes you!" These uses of direct address invoke the inclusiveness of the public sphere. These addresses are simultaneously restricted, however, through statements such as "All films presented and screened have been through a rigorous judging process selected in advance of IWFF. When *your* film wins an award, it means something!" Such rhetoric highlights how the word "you" is directed to a specialized audience (the aspiring filmmaker). There is also a relatively high registration fee: as much as \$450 depending on the type of registration.³¹ Thus, the festival evokes public sphere, alternative public sphere, and trade show possibilities.

Despite the hybrid nature of film festivals' rhetoric, the end-member schema clarifies how festivals position themselves in forwarding environmental discourse and mobilizing action, and how they cluster. For example, while IWFF has obvious trade show characteristics, its less expensive registration, and its rhetoric aimed at two-way participation ("your films, your projects, your ideas")³² distinguishes it from Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival and Wildscreen. At the same time, it is quite different from a festival such as the American Conservation Film Festival, which although also interested in conservation films is less about bandying the value-adding potentials its festival gives to filmmakers (awards that "*mean* something") and more about providing a forum for up-and-coming filmmakers to engage with public audiences.³³ Figure 12.1 is a rough visualization of how these festivals compare within the three end-member framework.

The purpose of this figure is not to demarcate the festival terrain categorically, but to encourage us to engage more rigorously not just with the festivals' websites but with other associated aspects: reviews, programs, audience reception, histories, and analysis both of the films screened and of their production and distribution. In essence, this schematic of environmental film festivals and their rhetoric offers a first step in understanding this part of the ecocinemascape. Below, I take a second step, turning our attention towards one film festival, the Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival (FLEFF) held annually in Ithaca, New York. This research is preliminary, but focuses on a single festival by examining its website rhetoric and other written materials, and engaging in some participatory observation of my experiences there in 2008 and 2009.



Figure 12.1 Making sense of environmental film festivals based on their public sphere engagements.

case study: finger lakes environmental film festival as alternative public sphere in word and practice

Held annually in Ithaca, NY, the Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival (FLEFF) began in 1997 at Cornell College and was adopted in 2005 by Ithaca College, which has worked hard to boost the festival's profile as a regional event with international appeal.³⁴ FLEFF's success can be measured not only by its longevity but also by its attendance, which has surpassed 10,000 in recent years.³⁵

FLEFF presents itself primarily as an alternative space with the purpose of agitating the public's sense of existing political frameworks. In their 2009 "Codirectors' Welcome," titled "A Bailout Plan for Collective Joy," Patricia Zimmerman and Thomas Shivery partially respond to their own question: "Why mount a festival during the worst global economic turmoil since the 1930s?"

Each day, toxins ooze through financial systems of capital accumulation, banks, balance sheets, and trade: toxic securities, toxic assets, toxic mortgages . . . When the possibilities of shutting down and shutting up leach like toxins, festivals insist on discovering what is sustainable, valuable and necessary. Festivals demand that diversity and the joyous dislocations of syncopation fuel recovery. Festivals, in fact, are syncopated counterpoints to the mundane realities of economic necessities and daily life.³⁶

FLEFF is also presented as a counterpoint to traditional ideas of environment. As the FAQs explain: "Many people assume that the term environmental refers to a very confined view of nature, pollutants, and protection of natural resources," but FLEFF's philosophy explores "a broader matrix of inter-connecting issues that help us to map sustainability from an international perspective. This wider view entails exploring the interconnections between humans and the environment."³⁷

Significantly, FLEFF presents itself not only as an alternative ecocritical space, where different ways of thinking about the environment take center stage, but also as an alternative *public* space. The festival's programs display a series of unconventional opportunities for audiences, artists, and organizers to exchange dialogue. For example, FLEFF couples Douglas Fairbanks' 1926 silent film *The Black Pirate* with live music from contemporary local jazz musicians, defying conventional ideas of environmental film explicitly focused on nature. FLEFF also hosts galas and gatherings free to festival attendees, staff, and featured guests; a FLEFF lab, which is an all day "unconference," open to any and all free of charge "where you participate rather than observe"; one credit mini-courses open to all Ithaca students; an internship program that engages over 100 students; and the Fellows program, which invites graduate students of color from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds and institutions to spend three days at the festival.³⁸ Such alternative public sphere sentiments are also present in additional materials, such as in Carlo Arreglo and Belinda Chiu's interviews with festival organizers, and co-director Patricia Zimmerman's own scholarly articles.³⁹

The festival seems in practice to be especially successful at creating a space where like-minded individuals can withdraw, regroup, and learn from each other. I saw evidence of such success not only in the written testimonials online⁴⁰ but also through personal participation and observation at two consecutive festivals. I first attended FLEFF in April 2008 as a FLEFF Fellow, and returned to FLEFF in 2009 with a group of my undergraduate students. My observations and experiences suggested that most participants allow the festival's frames of "vigorous debate" coupled with "collective joy" and "safe zone" to forward amiable but critical exploration and negotiation. Experiencing such negotiations as a Fellow in 2008 was particularly enlightening: participants debated, contested, and ultimately came to consensus on definitions of environmental meaning and their intersections with race and the festival's ideal and practice of inclusivity.⁴¹

It was equally illuminating to see such negotiation and exploration highlighted in the reflection of one of my students, who attended in 2009. This student participated as an audience member at Justin Dillon's *Call + Response* (2008), a film that uses musical celebrity power to explore human slavery in contemporary global contexts. In response to this event, the student wrote:

The discussion following the film . . . further highlighted FLEFF's emphasis on community, encouraging audience members to learn from and with each other. For example, my classmate challenged an intern's remark that the performances took away from the weight of human trafficking. Speaking with that same intern the next morning, he remarked that he learned from that rebuttal; however, knowledge is perhaps only as useful as the activism it inspires.⁴²

The last sentence of this student's reflection is a useful reminder that FLEFF's agenda is activism and change. As Tanya Saunders, dean of Ithaca College's Division of Interdisciplinary and International Studies (the festival's primary sponsor) writes, the experience is "not only for its own sake, but for the new opportunities it provides for intellectual growth, meaningful engagement, and for constructive action."⁴³

If this constructive action is intended to enable participants to "reboot" environmental meaning, the festival seems to be working—there seems to be a genuine give-and-take in thinking about environmental agendas. In addition, since most of the festival's events are open to the public, one can also suggest that the festival potentially succeeds at directing its "agitational activities" at "wider publics" as is reflected in this student response:

Attending the Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival was quite possibly the most interesting "environmental studies experience" that I have had to date. Until this semester, I have not had much exposure to nor even considered the importance of the "human" part of ecology . . . After experiencing FLEFF, I feel very remiss in my neglect of this extremely important facet of my field.⁴⁴

Such a sense of experiencing something so different yet suddenly and obviously important was a common thread through most of my students' papers. Students also frequently voiced the sense of being empowered to take what they learned at the festival and share it with others:

FLEFF was also successful in the sense that it provoked interest in me and other students about issues that would otherwise not be on our radar. As a result, it increased the chance that these issues will become public knowledge that can be acted upon. For example, although I did not see the film *Torturing Democracy*, I came back and looked at the website and watched clips from the film online as a result of how moved other students were by it.⁴⁵

While this participatory and testimonial experience highlights how FLEFF's identity construction as alternative public sphere works in practice, I

acknowledge that such insights are still woefully inadequate in really capturing FLEFF's alternative public sphere functions. They reflect a small fraction of the festival's attending publics.

Despite this limitation, these observations contextualize and confirm interpretations gleaned from FLEFF's website rhetoric. For example, the website points to the presence of the festival in a small New York college town, which results in a demographic skew of attendees towards college-educated, white, middle- to upper-class individuals. This was apparent to the FLEFF Fellows, some of whom expressed a sense of being the "token" person of color. At the same time, the sense that FLEFF's audiences are moved and inspired by their festival experiences leaves room for considering how such individuals can have larger impacts as "the self-selecting environmentally conscious audiences diffuse these ideas and debates throughout their larger communities."⁴⁶

While my own observations are inadequate in measuring the festival's larger impact, there are a number of ways in which one can grasp at such an impact. Empirical audience reception studies involving surveying, focus groups, and continued longitudinal studies can be considered. At the same time, these festivals can be further engaged through linguistic and cultural theories of film studies.⁴⁷ For example, Marijke De Valck's materialist actor-network approach⁴⁸ could be adapted to ecocinema's interests in ecosystem networks to assess both FLEFF's alternative public sphere impacts on environmental issues through attention to its audiences' actions and its own sustainability practices in acquiring films and using other material resources in its events (for example, infrastructural electricity in lighting and heating).⁴⁹

FLEFF is a thriving festival with committed organizers who have been continuously involved since its inception, and the research I have started here by examining some of their written materials as well as the festival experience is ongoing. Comparing FLEFF with other festivals can further our understanding of the role of such arenas in environmental and cinematic discourse and action.

conclusion

As these beginning explorations suggest, environmental film festivals are compelling sites for ecocinema scholarship. As public sphere theory helps us grasp, festivals are very much about evoking spaces for specialized interests, which in turn are geared towards public engagement. The festival terrain reveals a heterogeneous field of public engagements. One can frame this heterogeneity within a schema of end-member festivals: the public sphere festival, the alternative public sphere festival, and the trade show festival.

Each has a unique strategy for engaging the public and stimulating environmental involvement. These strategies take a variety of attitudes

toward existing socioeconomic systems—some complicit, some oppositional. Because many festivals use rhetoric from more than one end-member, I have presented this schema as an invitation to ecocinema critics to further explore environmental film festivals, and to ask additional questions about the role of such festivals, and their place in environmental and cinematic discourse and action. After all, as de Valck and Loist eloquently state: “any categorization or mapping of film festivals is bound to be contestable.”⁵⁰ My schematic can be refined or redefined through case studies (such as I begin with FLEFF) that reveal how public and participatory evocations are made and practiced. In addition, comparing individual festivals to others within the environmental festival terrain and beyond can better highlight how this segment of the ecocinemascape functions to inspire political action.

Ultimately, public sphere theory is only one means by which we might assess the function and presence of environmental film festivals. Film festival studies provide a valuable blueprint from which to forge ahead as one considers both empirical methods and linguistic and cultural theories. Even as film festival studies helps push ecocinema studies forward in compelling ways, exploring environmental film festivals makes room for looking at other, *non-environmental*-designated film festivals ecocritically.

For example, film festival studies has examined festival time and space but with focus primarily on human interests (such as through attention to festival circuit timing and the importance of juried awards, or through emphasis on how cities project their tourism appeal).⁵¹ Ecocritical studies broadens this focus as questions of how festivals construct and perform notions of time and place become grounded in material and ecological spaces that are occupied by human *and* nonhuman/more-than-human communities. The festival terrain I map here and the interpretations I suggest are a first step in opening up inquiry at the intersections of film festival studies and ecocritical studies.

acknowledgments

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notes

- 1 Malamud, Randy. “A New Breed of Environmental Film.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 54.33 (2008): B19.
- 2 “About Us.” Vermont International Film Festival. Accessed August 12, 2011. www.vtiff.org/about/. While there may be older festivals in existence, these are hard to pinpoint without web or additional print presence (i.e. they don’t have much visibility).

- 3 Film Festival Studies is a recent but thriving segment of film and media studies. I discuss it more fully below. Its evolution and growth is documented in the Film Festival Yearbooks published annually by the St. Andrews Film Studies press.
- 4 Iordanova, Dina and Ragan Rhyne, eds. *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*. St Andrews, UK: St Andrews Film Studies, 2009: 1.
- 5 Archibald, David and Mitchell Miller. "The Film Festivals Dossier: Introduction." *Screen* 52.2 (2011): 249-252.
- 6 De Valck, Marijke and Skadi Loist. "Film Festival Studies: An Overview of a Burgeoning Field." In Iordanova and Rhyne (eds.) *Film Festival Yearbook 1* (2009): 180.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 The quote is taken from Habermas' seminal *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989: 25.
- 9 Public sphere theory has been a key framework in film festival studies. While Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist's bibliographies in "Film Festival Studies: An Overview of a Burgeoning Field" point to some of this scholarship (specifically see their section "Festival Space: Cities, Tourism, and Public Spheres": 193), two references that I have found especially valuable in grounding my research are Soyoung Kim's "'Cine-Mania' Or Cinephilia: Film Festivals and the Identity Question." In Chi-Yun Shin and Julian Stringer (eds.) *New Korean Cinema*, New York: New York University Press, 2005: 79-94.; and Julian Stringer's "Genre Films and Festival Communities: Lessons from Nottingham 1991-2000." *Film International* 6.4 (2008): 53-59.
- 10 Stringer, "Genre Films and Festival Communities."
- 11 Ibid: 54.
- 12 Nancy Fraser wrote a powerful, feminist critique of Habermas's monolithic public sphere in "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." *Social Text* 25 (1990): 56-80. This caught the attention of a number of critics, and Habermas himself responded, reworking his ideas of the public spheres (see for example, Habermas, Jürgen. *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Trans. William Rehg. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).
- 13 Stringer, "Genre Films and Festival Communities": 54.
- 14 Dayan, Daniel. "Looking for Sundance: The Social Construction of a Film Festival." In Bondebjerg (ed.) *Moving Images, Culture and the Mind*. Luton, UK: University of Luton Press, 2000: 43-52.
- 15 de Valck, Marijke. *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007.
- 16 Iordanova, Dina and Ragan Rhyne, eds. *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*. St Andrews, UK: St Andrews Film Studies, 2009: 1. While many scholars (such as Daniel Dayan and Julian Stringer) have pointed to the value of the written materials—both produced by the festival and by critics of the festival—they, as well as others, have also pointed to ethnographic research of the actual event: what I term the "visual" festival. One of the most ambitious programs that combines both components of research is the multi-authored Euro Festival Project funded by the European Commission, which can be accessed at www.euro-festival.org/research.html
- 17 Ecocritical studies is an interdisciplinary field of research that has its roots in literary studies. Its early studies (Thoreauvian nature writing, British

- Romantic poetry) privileged environment as wilderness. However, informed by scholarship in environmental history, philosophy, and cultural studies, it now recognizes environment as a much more complex and problematic construct. While there is plenty of scholarship to mark this turn, two recent references that capture the expanded breadth of ecocritical understandings include: LeMenager, Stephanie, Teresa Shewry, and Ken Hiltner, eds. *Environmental Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Routledge Press, 2011; and Dobson, Katrina. "Introduction: Eco/Critical Entanglements." *Qui Parle* 19.2 (2011): 5–21.
- 18 Stringer, "Genre Films and Festival Communities": 53.
- 19 FICMA, "Editorial." Accessed August 7, 2011. www.ficma.com/editorial.php; see also Artist, "About Us." Accessed August 7, 2011. www.festival.artist.com/about.html
- 20 I have italicized the quote for emphasis. World Community Festival. Accessed July 28, 2011. www.wcdes.ca/film-festival. See also the examples in Table 12.3, where words like "anti-nuclear" and phrases such as "Yet many of us don't appreciate how our actions, lifestyles, and cultures affect the world we live in" are indicative of a more critical stance.
- 21 Wild and Scenic Film Festival. "Mission." Accessed July 28, 2011. www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org/about/mission/. See also Table 12.4 examples.
- 22 The quote is from Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere": 68.
- 23 Wildscreen. "2010 Programmer of Events" Accessed August 10, 2011. www.wildscreenfestival.org/index.php?pageid=347&parentid=0.
- 24 Wildscreen, "Delegates." Accessed August 10, 2011. www.wildscreenfestival.org/index.php?pageid=313&parentid=0; Jackson Hole, "Registration." Accessed August 10, 2011. www.jhfestival.org/registrations/registration_landing.htm
- 25 Wildscreen, "Wildscreen's Initiatives." Accessed August 10, 2011. www.wildscreen.org.uk/initiatives; Jackson Hole, "About Us." Accessed August 10, 2011. www.jhfestival.org/aboutUs/index.htm
- 26 Wildscreen, "About." Accessed August 10, 2011. www.wildscreen.org.uk/about
- 27 Palmer, Chris. *Shooting in the Wild: An Insider's Account of Making Movies in the Animal Kingdom*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 2010: 158–159.
- 28 Ibid: 161.
- 29 Palmer's entire *Shooting in the Wild* is written to highlight this fact, and in his concluding chapter he forwards an "eight-point plan for wildlife film-making reform" (p. 181).
- 30 Three EcoMove film festivals, the Puchalski Nature Film Festival in Poland, Sondrio Nature Festival in Italy, and GreenVision, Russia also appear to be trade show festivals, although funding comes from both corporate sponsors and governmental agencies. I hesitate to comment decisively on these as there might be loss of information from the original language websites to their English translations, which are the ones I accessed.
- 31 International Wildlife Film Festival, "Register." Accessed August 8, 2011. www.wildlifefilms.org/festivals/iwff/register.html
- 32 International Wildlife Film Festival, "About Us." Accessed August 8, 2011. www.wildlifefilms.org/festivals/iwff/about.html
- 33 American Conservation Film Festival, "Filmmakers: What we Offer." Accessed August 8, 2011. http://conservationfilm.org/filmmakers/what_we_offer.html

- 34 FLEFF, "About Us." Accessed July 21, 2011. www.ithaca.edu/fleff09/faq/aboutus/; Chui, Belinda and Carlo Arreglo. "The Intersections of Theory and Practice: Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice at the Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival (FLEFF)." *Environmental Communication Journal of Nature and Culture* 5.2 (2011): 221–227.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Zimmerman, Pat and Tom Shevory. "Co-Director's Welcome: A Bailout Plan for Collective Joy." FLEFF. 2009. Accessed July 20, 2011. www.ithaca.edu/fleff09/codirectorswelcome/
- 37 FLEFF, "FAQs and Other Vital Information." 2009. Accessed July 20, 2011. www.ithaca.edu/fleff09/faq/
- 38 FLEFF, "Learn with FLEFF." 2009. Accessed July 21, 2011. www.ithaca.edu/fleff09/learn/
- 39 Chui and Arreglo, "The Intersections of Theory and Practice"; Hudson, Dale and Patricia Zimmerman, "Cinephilia, Technophilia, and Collaborative Remix Zones." *Screen* 50.1 (2010): 135–146.
- 40 For example, on the "Testimonials" page, Gretjen Clausing, program director of Scribe Video Center wrote: "In a film festival landscape littered with swag and industry buzz, FLEFF is a refuge for intentioned film goers seeking cinematic experiences rich in ideas and calls to action. As a film programmer and public media advocate, FLEFF for me was immersion therapy, an opportunity to recharge my batteries, experience new works of all genres in unique settings, converse with guest filmmakers, curators, scholars, IC students, faculty and community activists and be inspired by it all." Accessed July 21, 2011. www.ithaca.edu/fleff09/faq/testimonials/
- 41 Chui and Arreglo's "The Intersections of Theory and Practice" indicate that I was not the only Fellow who responded to the festival's agenda of open dialogue.
- 42 O'Shea, Tara, "ES319: Environmental Film: Reflections on FLEFF." Unpublished class assignment, Environmental Studies Department. Gettysburg College, PA, 2009.
- 43 Saunders, Tanya. "Message from the Dean of Interdisciplinary and International Studies." FLEFF, 2009. www.ithaca.edu/fleff09/deanmessage/
- 44 Swerida, Rebecca. "Extremely Active Movies." Unpublished class assignment, Environmental Studies Department, Gettysburg College, PA.
- 45 Gownaris, Natasha. "The Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival." Unpublished class assignment, Environmental Studies Department, Gettysburg College, PA.
- 46 Malamud, "A New Breed of Environmental Film."
- 47 American Conservation Film Festival, "Filmmakers."
- 48 de Valck, *Film Festivals*.
- 49 For example, CinemAmbiente credits itself as "the first zero-emission festival."
- 50 de Valck and Loist, "Film Festival Studies": 180.
- 51 Ibid: 186; 192–193.