

Ann Reynolds

Associate Professor, Art and Art History; Center for Women's and Gender Studies; University of Texas at Austin

“Artistic Practice and New York Film Culture, 1945-1970: Toward a New Historiography of Radical Art”

This paper addresses 1968 in terms of a new historiography of radical artistic practice. The art associated with 1968 and the sixties in general is usually represented as a crux and foundation for the art that was produced—and continues to be produced—afterwards rather than something that was, in part, the product of the earlier two decades: the war, immigration and New York immigrant communities in particular, and what I call “film culture.” New York film culture was both a shared historical condition and a visual and social currency, an adhesive even. During the decades of the 1940s through the 1960s, New York emerged as an increasingly frequent subject and site of film production and consumption. By the 1960s, a New Yorker had access to a broad variety of films, including Hollywood movies, B-pictures, foreign, art or independent films, the emerging New American Cinema or underground film, and home movies, through numerous established and transient venues. These films and venues and their creators and participants delimited a set of fluid communities and practices with I am interested in tracing from circa 1940 through 1970.