

**Illuminace 3/2025**

Special Issue

### **Filmic Matter and Geographic Specificity**

*Deadline for abstracts: December 15, 2024; deadline for submissions: April 30, 2025.*

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Much classical film theory was marked by an explicit concern with the material foundations of the cinematic medium, including its connection to “physical reality” (Bazin 1960; Kracauer 1960). The aim of articulating a self-consciously materialist ontology of cinema later developed out of awareness of film’s technological apparatus, with an especially rich relationship to experimental film (Wollen 1976; Gidal 1978; Le Grice 1978). Of course, there are also very few agreements about what “materialism” means in these discussions. For example, an assumption often emerging from apparatus theory is that a resolutely materialist perspective should counter the impulses lying behind photographic realism (Baudry 1976). But in other contexts, realism can appear to work intricately with materialism, including when it comes to a close analysis of photographic “noise” and “interference” (Frank 2019). Materialist views, including so-called “new materialisms” (such as Bennett 2010), are also understood to bear a close relationship to photochemical film practices (Knowles 2020). Nevertheless, materialist perspectives can also help us to understand digital media—including the material infrastructure of digital projection as well as of the screen itself (Manovich 2001; Denson 2020).

But are these even the same sets of questions in all regions of the world? Or are questions of materiality in film permeated by the fundamental geopolitical fact of exploitation of the Global South by the North? Recent film scholarship has foregrounded geographically varied photochemical and handmade film practices (MacKenzie and Marchessault 2019; Coelho 2023; Doing 2024; Ramey 2024) or regionally specific challenges with collecting, preserving, and curating film materials (Fossati 2021; Hediger and Schulte Strathaus 2023; Cua Lim 2024). Attention to the geopolitics of digital *matter* would additionally turn on access to and extraction of lithium and indium (Cubitt 2017). What, then, are the consequences of geopolitics and ecology for current treatments of “matter” in film scholarship? For example, if efforts in experimental cinema in the South can result in a “shamanic materialism” (Colectivo Los Ingrávidos 2021), what then might we understand to be film’s *shamanic matter*, if anything?

Taking into account the connections between filmic materiality and corporeality (Knowles 2020; Yue 2021; Suárez 2024), parallel questions might then arise regarding the geographic variability of conceptions of *bodies* communicated on film. Is filmic corporeality the same phenomenon in all regions of the world, or does it rather reflect the geopolitics and ecology of the different materials through which it is expressed?

This special issue invites scholars to address questions about geographically specific materials in film from a range of theoretical, philosophical, historiographic, and practice-based perspectives. Contributions may engage with topics such as experimental filmmaking, archival practices, film stock production, or broader media ecologies, while reflecting on how geographic specificity shapes variegated understandings of materiality and corporeality. We are especially interested in case studies of film practices from Latin America, Africa, Asia, Ocean-

ia, and other regions of the Global South. We are also highly interested in alternatives to Eurocentric frameworks and Indigenous conceptions of matter and materialism.

A thought guiding this issue is that attending to geographic specificity might render more concrete the divergent senses of “matter,” “materiality,” and “bodies” across a variety of traditions and perspectives, including seemingly irreconcilable ones.

For this issue, we welcome **articles** (6000–7500 words) or **audiovisual essays** (5–15 minutes) with written statements (1000–2500 words).

Please send an **abstract** (250 words + 3–5 bibliographic references) and a **short bio** (150 words) to [lucie.cesalkova@nfa.cz](mailto:lucie.cesalkova@nfa.cz), [jiri.anger@nfa.cz](mailto:jiri.anger@nfa.cz), and [byron.davies@um.es](mailto:byron.davies@um.es), by **December 15, 2024**. The authors will be informed of the decision by **January 15, 2025**. The deadline for submitting the full article or a completed audiovisual essay is **April 30, 2025**.

We will be pleased to consider proposals on these or related topics:

- The aesthetic significance of locally specific materialist film practices: experimental cinema, found footage, expanded cinema, animation, but also practices related to textiles, botany, ceramics, and painting (including painting directly on film).
- Materialist theories and philosophies of film articulated from the Global South, including the relationship between materialist philosophies of film and anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism.
- Global circulations of film theory/philosophy and their impact on our notions of filmic matter.
- Alternatives to Eurocentric frameworks for materialist approaches to film, including Indigenous materialist perspectives.
- The geographic specificity of archival film practices: collecting, curating, preserving, and exhibiting.
- The geographic specificity of film production: manufacturing, processing, printing.
- Possibilities of attending to geographically specific film practices as a basis for articulating alternative conceptions of “matter” and of “bodies.”
- The ecological impact of geographically specific film practices, including their potential for articulating visions of degrowth.
- How geographic specificity informs questions of the materiality of digital audiovisual formats.
- How geographic specificity informs questions of the materiality of profilmic events and objects.
- Consequences of geographically specific materials for debates about whether films can “do” philosophy.

#### **Submission guidelines:**

Proposals should be original, unpublished works relating to the philosophical significance of geographically specific materials in film. The detailed submission guidelines can be found on the journal’s website:

[https://www.iluminace.cz/artkey/inf-990000-1200\\_Instructions-for-Authors.php](https://www.iluminace.cz/artkey/inf-990000-1200_Instructions-for-Authors.php)

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