

Transcript – After So Mayer Event

I'm just driving, talking to myself, driving, having just attended an event at Leeds University in the new Cinephilia, which was a presentation by So Mayer who is just an absolutely brilliant speaker, educator, writer Programmer all of the wonderful things who gave a presentation about trans inclusive cinema, cinephilia, which was just naturally, so intersectional, considerate. Beautifully historic. My God, the references I was obsessed with the conversations and learning about trans presence and queer presence in German cinema in the early 1900s, and it was just really interesting conversations about the visibility in archive and how, you know. There's more stability than we can expect, but even when there isn't visibility, sometimes the lack of visibility is a conversation in itself, and the speculative presence of queer and underrepresented groups and archive, and how we can. Look at work such as unfinished work or you know the absence of work is has a presence in itself.

So I found it really interesting just when considering my looking through the South African Film Archives, one of the national the National Archive, and when reading through all the news reel lists and you know, seeing a real lack of political presence and also black presence in the lists of all the topics that news reels were focused on. From the early 1900s up until. When it ended, which? Is what in the end of the. 70s so. Yeah, it just helped me kind of consider the the lack of presence as a real presence and how we could approach that and how we could talk about it.

Another thing that was very interesting to me was the conversation around occupying cinema spaces and how instead of. You know, operating from a place of scarcity and thinking, OK, so you know, we have a lack of presence or lack of visibility in these spaces. So my being here, I should be grateful or I should be. I should be wanting to take up just a little bit of space or one films first of space and actually go aiming big seeing screenings as a as a protest as a radical act as a way to force your way in to then and once you're in there, to really kind of stake your place and be visible and be present.

So it made me think a lot about in cinema Africa, you know, it's amazing that I'm working with the cinema in which the door is open. But actually, maybe think once I'm in there instead of just feeling kind of grateful and appreciated to really think what's the maximum opportunity of present that we can be having here, how to be unapologetically African in a grand old kind of traditionally non inclusive or accepting space. People at all thinking about the visibility of hyde park picture house and how on one end from an arts cinema perspective and how exclusionary they are, but also from a heritage building perspective and the. The legacy that comes with you know how these films are initially funded and formulated.

Right. So there were so many things to come out of that session with and I really appreciated how So kept it broad ranging, intersectional and we realise about how all of our concerns and fights are interrelated. It also occurred to me about how. In the current you know, era of trans hate and transphobia, about how it's really hard to recognise those who are with you and. Those who are. Against you, it feels more like Brexit when you know you weren't quite sure if somebody was going to turn around and say something completely. Yeah, it's ridiculous. You know, the kind of opposition is less visible. So anyway, I was thinking about during the session about how it's not clear which institutions are, you know, in support of trans people and which are just keeping quiet because there may be people. Within their institutions that are transphobes.

It made me think about how during the BLM. Protest how institutions were so quick to put up this statement and measures of support, whereas in this, like violent climate against trans people, there's less visibility in what institution on their institutional stance. So maybe think about what we can be doing at hyde park picture house to increase our visibility of our support of trans people. Our belief

in trans. People how you know, we all sit talking hyper Picture house about, you know it's less about what you say that you believe in what you're showing and perhaps we should be considering in our reopening programmes and more activities celebrating trans lives and embedding that into our programme and partnerships. That's some food for thought to take to the programming team. So all in all, a superb session which just helps bring some of this film thinking and curiosity back into Leeds, giving it's my first day back in the city and it's currently snowing. It's cold. Everything feels cluttered and small in this city, so it feels great to kind of bring this thinking through. It's definitely helping.