Celluloid Revolt: German Screen Cultures and the Long 1968, edited by Christina Gerhardt and Marco Abel, Rochester, Camden House, 2019, 330 pp., £72.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-5711-3995-5.

A panorama of studies has since its fiftieth anniversary been conceived on the social, political and cultural impact of 1968, with *Celluloid Revolt: German Screen Cultures and the Long 1968* zooming in on the dynamics and transformations of German-language cinemas. The editors, Christina Gerhardt and Marco Abel, have been guided less ‘by a nostalgic desire to return to it nor to add an entry to a fatalistic narrative that considers 68 as a failure’ (11). Their project rather identifies ‘the long 1968’ as dormant, realised and unfulfilled possibilities for engaged, participative and democratic models of film and filmmaking practices in East and West Germany and Austria. In this spirit, fifteen essays and three interviews bring together activists and practitioners, junior and senior scholars of screen and media studies and the visual arts – a diversity of voices that investigate an array of film formats, including feature films, documentaries, animations, shorts, experimental and student films, exploitation and *Arbeiterfilm* genres. By including hitherto neglected or forgotten thematic, geographical and aesthetic spaces, and by addressing the critical relation of gender and film production, this volume presents itself as a collective effort to redefine the relationship between art and politics as they are attached to the notion of 1968.

Michael Dobstadt sets the tone by undertaking to rediscover the ambiguous and conflicting agendas of 1968. With an analysis of Peter Zadek’s *Ich bin ein Elefant, Madame/I’m an Elephant, Madame* (1969), Dobstadt uncovers the struggles between the ‘anti-authoritarian orthodoxy’ and the ‘fun guerrilla’ (27-41). The following six contributions all deal with the *deutsche film- und fernsehakademie berlin* (dffb), collectively shedding light on conflicts between school leadership and the student body, the student’s importance for the

cinematic representation of 1968 in West Germany, and the efforts of students in finding a new film language that effectively aligned with their political activities. Timothy Scott Brown's essay in particular offers an excellent overview of actors and agents in collaborative and autonomous filmmaking projects, the feminist movement, and new distribution and exhibition initiatives that critiqued capitalist practices (42-52). These avenues are further fleshed out by Priscilla Layne's essay about Hans-Rüdiger Minow and his *Berlin, 2. Juni/Berlin, 2 June* (1967), a documentary that highlights the dffb students' break with the Young German Cinema (YGC), their ideological bond with the *Außerparlamentarische Opposition*, and concomitant conflicts with Erwin Leiser, the dffb head (53-68). Christine Gerhardt, meanwhile, studies Helke Sanders's early dffb films, which she argues are key to an understanding of Sanders's oeuvre, contemporaneous German screen cultures and the feminist movement (69-86). Equally fascinating is Madeleine Bernstorff's essay, which traces the presence of female filmmakers, their works and activities that led to a feminist aesthetics and public sphere in West Germany (87-104). These ideas then resonate with Fabian Tietke's essay on participative filmmaking initiatives in Berlin's Märkisches Viertel with the inhabitants of these housing projects (105-121). Furthermore, the Basis-Film group created by Christian Ziewers and Max Willutzki brought the *Arbeiterfilm* to life, while female peers, Christina Perincioli's *Für Frauen – 1. Kapitel/For Women: The First Chapter* (1971) and Helga Reidemeister's unfinished *Wandernde Kameras 114* ("Wandering Cameras") were highly contested projects that gave agency to women. In his contribution about the WDR *Arbeiterfilme*, the late Thomas Elsaesser takes an institutional approach to analyse this short-lived genre as a co-production template that presented a democratic model of public broadcasting in the contemporaneous West German mediascape (122-133). And Lisa Haegle argues that by virtue of bad taste and excess, exposing and negotiating ideological clashes of the long 1968, exploitation films added an alternative form of protest (134-151).

In what is unfortunately the only Austrian contribution to this volume, Andrew Stefan Weiner analyses the Austrian Filmmakers Cooperative as involving multi-genre, multi-media activities that, while critiquing the aesthetics and politics of cinema in Austria, nevertheless operated under the radar of public interest and support (152-167). This is then followed by a second cluster of essays that navigate East German visual cultures through the long 1968. While the East German leadership anxiously watched over their population and was ready to suppress any seed of dissent, the protests that took place in Prague certainly influenced East German youth. The unsettled political situation in the summer of 1968 leads Ian Fleishman to analyse *Heißer Sommer/Hot Summer* (Joachim Hasler, 1968) through the dichotomy of political escapism and utopian thinking (168-182). Sean Edy then sees in the DEFA Fairy Tale Trickfilme (1970-1975) a model of socialist realism that flourished in spite of the political and cultural openings that happened in the 1970s (183-200). Patricia Simpson's reading of Studio Heynowski & Scheumann's Vietnam film cycle (1976-1984), especially the way in which it weaves together the Vietnam War and German WWII trauma, reflects how the globally defining event of 1968 found its way into East German socialist documentary (201-217). In arguably the strongest chapter in this mini-series on 1968 and East German cinema, Evelyn Preuss reminds scholars to differentiate between socialism as a theoretical concept, socialism as an institutional project, and socialism as an everyday experience, with these three acting together as a 'highly productive force field;' for 'East German intellectual and artistic discourse' (219). According to Preuss, films such as *Ich war neunzehn/I Was Nineteen* (Konrad Wolf, 1968), *Abschied/Farewell* (Egon Günther, 1968) and *Paul und Paula/The Legend of Paul and Paula* (Heiner Carow, 1973) critically and actively engage spectators to co-produce meaning in a fashion similar to the ideas postulated in Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas' 1969 Third Cinema manifesto (218-236).

The last two essays pick up the social and cultural heritage of 1968. The first constitutes another contribution to the important work on female and feminist filmmaking that this volume undertakes, with Ervin Malakaj reading *Unter dem Pflaster ist der Strand/Under the Pavement Lies the Strand* (Helma Sanders-Brahms, 1975) as revisiting revolutionary motivations and energies amidst the complexities of personal urges and political demands in the late 1970s, while also challenging assumptions that Sanders-Brahms's filmmaking is less politically engaged (237-252). Meanwhile, *Der kleine Godard: An das Kuratorium deutscher Film/The Little Godard: To the Production Board for Young German Cinema* (Hellmuth Costard, 1978) captures for Kalani Mitchell an array of pre- and post-1968 developments, while also showcasing technology as revolutionary cinematic means and suggesting a reshuffling of the cinematic canon according to formats rather than politics or author style (253-267).

The interviews are another useful resource of the volume. A reprint of Tilman Baumgärtel's 1997 conversation with the late Harun Farocki recurs around the filmmakers' friendship with Holger Meins, memories of Philip Sauber, and his view of 1968 as the last chance to 'intervene in the unfolding of history' (271-280). Randall Halle's talk with Birgit Hein is instructive about the origin of experimental film in the fine arts movements of the early twentieth century (281-291). And Abel's extensive interview with director Klaus Lemke unearths the New Munich Group's self-cultivated anti-intellectual mindset and/as rebellion to the *petit bourgeois* attitude of the YGC (292-312).

To sum up, *Celluloid Revolt* provides fresh perspectives on the participation of German-language film in contemporaneous social, cultural and political campaigns. In exploring film practices, media activities, institutional initiatives and formal experiments, this text highlights how the vitality and abundance of cultural production at the time goes well beyond, stands aside from, and/or critiques leftist politics. Given these features, the volume

becomes an invaluable source for the study of German and Austrian screen cultures aligned to the events of 1968, while also stimulating new directions and approaches around this subject.

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