

# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Cities of Film as Local Cinematic Assemblages

Cities of film exist all over the world. Los Angeles is a prominent example. The [Hollywood Sign](#) stands for the US dream factory, its history, and Hollywood's present standing as the quintessential city of film. The film studios, the [Academy Museum of Motion Pictures](#), the [Walk of Fame](#) on Hollywood Boulevard, the [TCL Chinese Theatre](#) with the hand and shoe prints of movie stars in the entrance area, the [John Wayne](#) statue in Beverly Hills—these are just the most obvious ways in which both the visitors to Hollywood and its residents encounter the film in the urban space. Numerous film festivals and other cinematic events as well as attractions such as studio tours and bus trips to the homes, villas, and mansions of the Hollywood stars attract tourists by the planeload. The landmarks and monuments as well as the cinematic institutions, events, and attractions are strategically framed by urban marketeers as an irresistibly attractive characteristic of the city.<sup>1</sup> Such attractions are supplemented by offers organized by civic film initiatives.<sup>2</sup> The whole ensemble is surrounded by manifold texts (such as, for instance, travel literature<sup>3</sup>) that highlight the way in which Los Angeles and film are inextricably linked.

In addition to the city of stars, there are many other medium-sized and small cities of film worldwide. In the Turkish city of Adana, for example, there is a walk of fame ([Şöhretler Kaldırımı](#))<sup>4</sup> and a film museum (Adana Sinema Müzesi). In the latter, an entire room is dedicated to [Yılmaz Güney](#), one of the most important Turkish filmmakers. More generally, one can get to know film personalities related to the city of Adana. Adana also hosts the international [Golden Boll Film Festival](#) (Altın Koza Film Festivali), which is of great importance to the Turkish film industry.

<sup>1</sup> For example, the official guide to Los Angeles promotes the [Starline Tours of Hollywood](#).

<sup>2</sup> One example of such an initiative is the [Secret Movie Club](#).

<sup>3</sup> Travel literature is understood here in the broadest sense: as printed travel guides, travel guides and blogs on the Internet, and also, for example, travel recommendations in the form of videos.

<sup>4</sup> However, this walk of fame honors not only filmmakers but also prominent citizens of Adana who come from other industries.

In Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou sees itself as the “capital of African film.”<sup>5</sup> In addition to cinemas, film production companies, and the film school *Institut Imagine*, the most important and largest film festival in Africa, the *Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou* (Festival panafricain du cinéma et de la télévision de Ouagadougou), takes place here.<sup>6</sup> In 2019, a statue was inaugurated in honor of the Cameroonian director, screenwriter, and actor *Jean-Pierre Dikongué-Pipa*.<sup>7</sup> In Ouagadougou’s city center, there is, in addition, another monument consisting of circular forms reminiscent of film reels and camera lenses, erected to pay tribute to the country’s filmmakers (Figure 3).



Figure 3: A monument in Ouagadougou pays tribute to Burkina Faso’s filmmakers.

The city of Bradford in Great Britain is another good example. The city hall and its historic prison wing have been specially adapted to accommodate film shootings. Plaques have been placed at locations in the city center to mark the

- <sup>5</sup> Ruth Maclean: “Capital of African film”: the Burkina Faso festival celebrating continent’s movies, in: *The Guardian*, Feb 27, 2017.
- <sup>6</sup> The mayor of Ouagadougou opened the festival in 2017 with the words, “This is the city of creativity, the city of culture, and the capital of African film”; *ibid*.
- <sup>7</sup> Cf. Valentin Kabore: *Cinéma africain: Une statue immortalise Jean-Pierre Dikongué-Pipa à Ouagadougou*, in: *LeFaso.net*, Feb 25, 2019.

spots where film shootings have taken place and free film screenings have become an important element in the creation of a cultural program aimed at senior citizens. The local [National Science and Media Museum](#) makes a point of addressing the emergent history of filmmaking in Bradford. These and other film-related activities (such as the placement of references to the movies in public spaces) received an enormous boost when Bradford became the first city to successfully apply for the title of [UNESCO Creative City of Film](#) in 2009.

Seventeen other cities, including Bradford, are gathered under the umbrella organization [UNESCO Cities of Film Network](#), among them Busan (South Korea), Mumbai (India), Qingdao (China), Rome (Italy), Santos (Brazil), Sofia (Bulgaria), and Wellington (New Zealand). These cities are characterized by a common orientation toward the world of film. They are home to film studios or film production infrastructure and host cinematic institutions such as film museums or film schools; they share the various characteristics that have come to define a city of film: hosting cinematic events, promoting and developing cinematic tourist attractions, embedding reference to film in public spaces, creating institutionalized marketing departments oriented toward film, and promoting travel literature thematically linking the city with film.

However, it is not only the prominent cinematic institutions, events, and attractions as well as the strategic marketing institutions, the film-related initiatives, and the various texts and publications that promote each of the above places as a city of film. In addition, cities of film often name streets, avenues, and squares after filmmakers or with another reference to film. In Los Angeles, there are, for example, streets named after [Fred Astaire](#), [Judy Garland](#), and [Hedy Lamarr](#), among others. In Adana, a park is named after the artist and filmmaker [Abidin Dino](#). In Ouagadougou, a street was dedicated to [Ousmane Sembène](#), a central founding figure of African cinema. A square bears the name Place des cinéastes (Filmmakers' Square). Bradford is an exception to this trend of linking particular public spaces with film or film personalities. However, it is considered a good idea and thought is being given to how the city's film history can be acknowledged in this way.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> According to information provided by David Wilson, director of [UNESCO Creative City of Film Bradford](#), in a social media message dated Sep 6, 2021, to Lisa Nawrocki, director of [UNESCO Creative City of Film Potsdam](#).

Nothing has yet been said of cinematic artifacts which, when embedded into the public space of the city, constitute a potent addition to the sense of a city being explicitly associated with film. Cinematic artifacts include landmarks, monuments, and those painted images and graphic collages in the public space for which movie stills<sup>9</sup> served as templates. Cinematic artifacts also include autograph cards and movie posters, displayed, for example, on the wall of a restaurant or café; star portraits of actors used as decorative elements in the creation of a promotional ambiance in a clothing store; behind-the-scenes pictures<sup>10</sup> used for much the same purpose in a hotel lobby; or old film canisters or spotlights used as decorative elements in an assortment of public spaces. In addition, one should include in this category those restaurants and hotels that have named themselves after a movie or an actor. This means that the adoption of film titles or names of filmmakers beyond street names also counts as cinematic artifacts. In many ways, cinematic street names and cinematic artifacts refer to the (local) film history and to film in general.

All of the characteristic elements of the city of film thus far referenced—prominent cinematic institutions, events, attractions, strategic marketing institutions, film-related initiatives, and various texts and publications—form, together with the cinematic street names and cinematic artifacts, an extremely heterogeneous cinematic assemblage. This assemblage constitutes an accumulative combination of elements that are linked to film in manifold ways, many of which are firmly anchored in the everyday lives of the residents. In this regard, no two cities of film are alike; each local cinematic assemblage is constituted in its own way and evolves at its own pace. When we compare Los Angeles as a city of film with, for example, Adana, Ouagadougou, or Bradford, we are referencing, in each case, a completely different cultural milieu and one, moreover, that inter-

<sup>9</sup> Movie stills are photographs taken during the production of a movie and used by production companies to promote their product. They are recreations of movie scenes intended to give an impression of what the movie will look like and who will be in it. For more information on the history of movie stills, see Anna Luise Kiss: Die Spur der Bilder, in: Anna Luise Kiss, Dieter Chill (eds.): *Pathenheimer: Filmfotografie. DEFA Movie Stills*, Berlin 2016, 174–181.

<sup>10</sup> Behind-the-scenes pictures are photographs taken during the production of a movie and showing the movie team at work or during breaks from shooting.

acts with film in its own particular and often peculiar way. That said, we are still justified, however, in designating the whole conglomerate of film cities as a worldwide global cinematic assemblage because they are united each by their common connection with and involvement in an international network of cities steeped in cinematic lore and committed to the art of film and its promotion. This international assemblage is in constant flux as the cities of film continue to evolve. With every new film-related location, every new event, every new cinematic artifact or artifact cluster, the local cinematic assemblages change and the global assemblage follows suit. The converse also follows: when cinematic references at the local scale are lost or overwritten, the larger assemblage is depleted. Each description of a city of film thus represents 'only' a snapshot in a continuous process of change.

## 2. The Cinematic Streetscape in Potsdam as an Object of Investigation in Film Studies

This book takes the global cinematic assemblage of cities of film described in the previous chapter as a starting point and returns to it at the end. However, the study focuses on Potsdam as a local cinematic assemblage which has been part of the [UNESCO Cities of Film Network](#) since October 2019. Potsdam is home to the [Studio Babelsberg](#)—a film production lot where movies have been made since 1912. The history of the studio can be roughly grouped into five periods: After an initial period during which it established itself in film production (1912–1921), the studio was associated with the movie company Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft (Ufa) (1921–1933) and Nazi film production (1933–1945). After World War II, Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA), the German Democratic Republic’s (GDR’s) central production studio, used the lot (1946–1992). After the end of the GDR and after German reunification, the studio remained a film and television production facility and is now operated by the Studio Babelsberg AG (1993–present).<sup>1</sup> Numerous media companies have settled at the lot so that the studio is now regarded as part of the [Media City Babelsberg](#).<sup>2</sup> Potsdam is also home to the [Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF](#), the [Film Museum Potsdam](#), the “[Sehsüchte](#)” and “[moving history](#)” film festivals, and the theme park [Film Park Babelsberg](#). The [Marketing Department of the City of Potsdam](#) and the [PMSG Potsdam Marketing and Service GmbH](#) focus on the topic of film as an essential part of the city’s brand in their publications and events. Tourist publications also encourage visitors to discover, explore, and enjoy Potsdam as a city of film.

<sup>1</sup> A chronological arrangement of studio history based on film history or the studio’s development can only be made roughly. The transitions between the individual periods are fluid due to personnel and stylistic continuities, among other things. In this chapter, the periods have been adopted from [Michael Wedel](#), [Chris Wahl](#), and [Ralf Schenk](#); see [Michael Wedel](#), [Chris Wahl](#), [Ralf Schenk](#) (eds.): *100 Years Studio Babelsberg. The Art of Filmmaking*, Kempfen 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. anonymous: [Media Location. Dream Factory Babelsberg](#), in: [potsdam.de](#).

For this project, Potsdam's cinematic streetscape, as part of its local cinematic assemblage, was chosen as the central object of investigation. Just as the local cinematic assemblage as a whole can be seen as a sub-assemblage of the global assemblage, the cinematic streetscape of Potsdam can be seen as a sub-assemblage of the local cinematic assemblage. The decision to focus on cinematic streets was motivated by three factors: Firstly, as far as city-centered film studies are concerned, cinematic streetscapes have not yet received scholarly attention (see [Chapter 3](#)). Similarly, no study has been devoted to streets named after film personalities in critical street-name studies (see [Chapter 4](#)). This book addresses this twofold research gap.

Secondly, street naming is a topical issue. Starting from the US Civil Rights Movement<sup>3</sup> and continuing to the contemporary Black Lives Matter movement,<sup>4</sup> the act of naming in the context of the public space has become the object of sharp critical attention. The same is true of public monuments and other forms of urban honorary signification. This is the case not only in the USA but also in Germany and other countries.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the critical discussion of street naming in the context of the US Civil Rights Movement, see [Derek H. Alderman: A Street Fit for a King: Naming Places and Commemoration in the American South](#), in: *Professional Geographer*, vol. 52, no. 4, 2000, 672–684 and [Derek H. Alderman, Joshua Inwood: Street naming and the politics of belonging: spatial injustices in the toponymic commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr.](#), in: *Social & Cultural Geography*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2013, 211–233.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the critical discussion of street naming in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement, see [Brianna McGonigle Leyh: Imperatives of the Present: Black Lives Matter and the politics of memory and memorialization](#), in: *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2020, 239–245.

<sup>5</sup> One example of this topic attracting public attention also in Germany is the front page of the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* from July 19, 2020, which features a street sign of Mohrenstraße in Berlin that has been pasted over. Moreover, a feature article is devoted to the naming history of Straße der Pariser Kommune in Berlin and a cartoon parodies the debates about street naming; see [Patrick Bahners: Die Straßen der Kommune. Grenzen der Geschichtspolitik](#), in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, Jul 19, 2020, 33–34 and [Ahoi Polloi: Richtig & Falsch. Cartoon](#), in: *ibid.*, 8.

Thirdly, the decision to designate the cinematic streetscape as the object of investigation is based on a pragmatic research consideration: the cinematic streetscape is a well-defined sub-assemblage of the local cinematic assemblage—unlike, for example, the cinematic artifacts, many of which can be found in large numbers in Potsdam. This pragmatic research consideration does not mean that the other elements of the local cinematic assemblage are left out of study. On the contrary, the overall goal is to integrate the reflection on the relations of the cinematic streetscape with the other elements of Potsdam's cinematic assemblage and, indeed, with the global assemblage of cities of film. This process of integration is undertaken at the end of the book.

As was said earlier, the designation of cinematic streetscapes as the object of investigation uncovers a research gap of considerable topicality within the discipline of city-centered film studies and critical street-name studies. The study of Potsdam's cinematic streetscape opens the possibility of developing an understanding of the interplay between the heterogeneous elements of Potsdam's local cinematic assemblage and generating a new perspective on the global cinematic assemblage of cities of film.



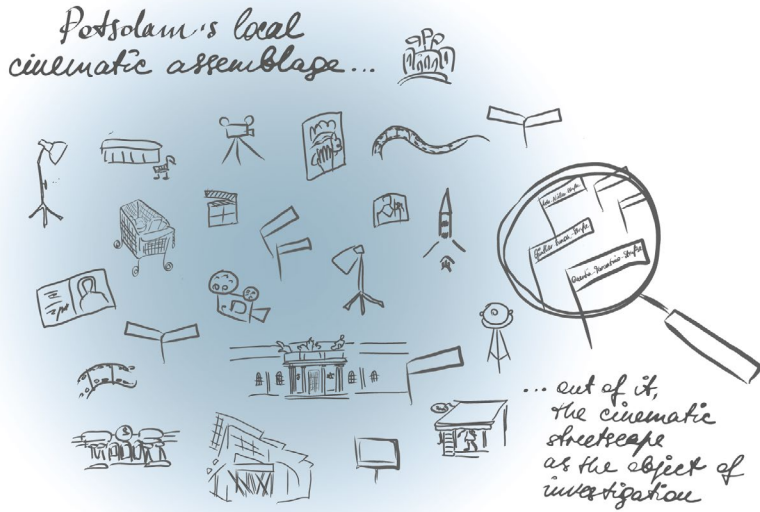


Figure 4: Out of Potsdam's heterogeneous cinematic assemblage, the cinematic streetscape was chosen as the object of investigation.