



2. How have the expanding parameters of production, reception, and distribution challenged classical definitions of "national," "international," and "transnational" for scholars in the field of visual studies today?

Hastie: In my responses to your provocative questions, I have elected to turn to example – textual, material, and intellectual – rather than proclamation. These are by no means exhaustive cases (and they are primarily borne from my own pedagogical and research interests), but I think they are still ones that might direct readers to current work in the field, work that demonstrates provocative methods and contestations around global media studies.

Scholars are indeed led by the objects we study. In a consideration of those works that have expanded the parameters of production, reception and distribution, we might consider such filmmakers as Jane Campion, Claire Denis, Ann Hui, Márta Mészáros, and Deepa Mehta – all of whom cross borders in each facet of their contributions to film culture over the past four decades. Their films themselves are often about border crossings (and reinventions); they are financed as multi-national productions; and they reach transnational, or global, audiences (albeit, at the very least, in an arthouse context). By taking a cue from these films themselves, scholars must re-map not just geographical understandings but also research practices. I would thus point here to Kathleen McHugh's brilliant recent essay, "The World and the Soup: Historicizing Media Feminisms in Transnational Contexts," as an example of a work that calls for and then enacts such remapping. In the context of a generation of women filmmakers born from 1945-60 across the world, McHugh considers the material conditions of filmmaking that necessarily connects national, international, and transnational spheres of production. In so doing, she finds other points of intersection between these artists, thus connecting media forms (like television and film, children's media and documentary production) as well as locations of production. As she concludes, "[A] historiographic strategy of analysis – of material, structural, and discursive resources – compels a focus on details of mobility and money in diverse and uneven circumstances rather than on a generalization of ... univocal historical determinant[s]." McHugh's work here traces enunciations and practices of transnational media feminisms, while her claims neatly resonate across global media research.

Marks: My answer is based on cases of experimental, activist, and documentary media; different patterns may apply to commercial productions. Media works made across cultures are rarely collaborations on an even playing field. Usually power relations with a Western bias apply. (For studies of commercial international co-productions I recommend a book by Elizabeth Heffelfinger and Laura Wright, [Visual Difference: Postcolonial Studies and Intercultural Cinema](#), forthcoming from Peter Lang.) Thus it's important to see how media works are funded and where they circulate; often their audience is a result of their funding, for example when festivals commission works or offer finishing funds. As a result, works from "here" bear the cash signature of funding priorities from somewhere else. For example, the fine series of videos produced under the auspices of Ashkal Alwan, the Lebanese Association for the Plastic Arts, is funded by the (also fine) Heinrich Böll Foundation, an advocate for citizen participation, equal rights, and sustainability in the Middle East. Or, as the research of Rahat Imran, a doctoral student working with me, shows, feminist and anti-fundamentalist activist media in Pakistan is often produced with funding from foreign government organizations and NGOs such as CIDA, ActionAid, and Oxfam. Such funding means these works will have a foreign audience as well as, before, or even instead of an audience at home. I am not criticizing these funding practices, even though they may have a ring of paternalism (or maternalism), for if foreign funds were not available such works would not be made at all. However, it means that the works are inevitably marked with their patterns of circulation, and the interests they meet, even before they circulate. Thus local audiences who do get to see them will evaluate them partly in the light of how they will be received in the West.

Kheshti: Firstly, it's not uncommon for media to have been produced in different national contexts than their intended sites of reception. Secondly, diasporas have for years now complicated the notion of "national cinema." Take for example the number of Iranian films made in Iran exclusively for international distribution and the popularity of Iranian diasporic films within Iran (though often limited to the black market).