



## Visualizing Africa: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on *The Rose of Rhodesia* (1917)

**Saturday, 2 June 2007, 9:00-17:45**

Slottsbiografen, Nedre Slottsgatan 6B, Uppsala

A stolen diamond, a colonial uprising, and a young girl dreaming of romance—such were the melodramatic ingredients of *The Rose of Rhodesia* (Harold M. Shaw, 1917), one of the earliest feature films made in Africa and perhaps the first film to cast African actors in lead roles.

Long thought lost, *The Rose of Rhodesia* was recently discovered in the Film Archief in the Netherlands. The English Department of Uppsala University is proud to present a premiere screening of a restored copy of the film, accompanied by distinguished pianist Matti Bye, at Uppsala's historic Slottsbiografen. The screening will be followed by a symposium in which international scholars will discuss the film from an array of theoretical and historical perspectives, including early cinema, Zimbabwean and imperial history, English literature, postcolonial theory, and gender studies.

Students, teachers, and film enthusiasts are all warmly invited to take part in this event.

To register, deposit 100 kr in PlusGiro account 1101943-7 no later than **Friday 18**

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## SPEAKERS

JAMES M. BURNS is an Associate Professor in African History at Clemson University. His monograph *Flickering Shadows: Cinema and Identity in Colonial Zimbabwe* (2002), a history of cinema and spectatorship in Southern Africa, was chosen as one of the Outstanding Academic Titles for 2002 by the journal *Choice*. He is the author of several articles on African film history, and a co-author with Robert O. Collins of *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa* (2007).

PETER DAVIS is a documentary film-maker with some 60 titles to his credit. His work has been mostly social and political commentary, ranging from Castro's Cuba to biographies of CIA agents E. Howard Hunt and Francis Gary Powers to the Vietnam War, the Middle East, Britain in the 1960s. Several of his early films were made in Sweden and broadcast on Swedish television. Much of his work dealt with apartheid in South Africa, which led him to study cinema's role in perpetuating or challenging that institution, as expressed in his documentaries and book with the same title, *In Darkest Hollywood*. His current focus is on the personalities involved in the making of the 1928 film *Siliva The Zulu*.

STEPHEN DONOVAN is a Lecturer at the Department of English, Uppsala University. His publications include *Joseph Conrad and Popular Culture* (2005) and articles on Modernist literature, empire, and travel writing. In 2005, he co-organized a screening of *Knocknagow* (1918), the first film made by an Irish company, at New York University. He is currently writing a cultural history of the British South Africa Company, which administered Rhodesia until 1924.

YLVA HABEL is a Research Fellow at the Department of Cinema Studies, Stockholm University. She completed her dissertation, "Modern Media, Modern Audiences: Mass Media and Social Engineering in the 1930s Swedish Welfare State", in 2002. Currently she is working on a study of the Swedish reception of Josephine Baker and Paul Robeson, focussing on issues of race, gender, diasporic travel and exile. Her publications include essays on advertising propaganda, the Stockholm Exhibition of 1897, and the cultural politics of television.

STEFAN HELGESSON is a Research Fellow at the Department of Literature, Uppsala University. His main fields of interest are Southern African literatures in English and Portuguese, postcolonial theory, and theories of world literature. He is the author of *Writing in Crisis: Ethics and History in Gordimer, Ndebele and Coetzee* (2004) and the editor of *Literary Interactions in the Modern World* (2006).

VRENI HOCKENJOS is a doctoral student in Cinema Studies at Stockholm University, where she is completing a thesis titled "Picturing Dissolving Views: August Strindberg and the Visual Media of his Age". She has been a Visiting Scholar at the University of Chicago and Cornell University. Together with Stephan Michael Schröder, she has co-edited a book on Scandinavian literature and intermediality, *Historisierung und Funktionalisierung. Intermedialität in den skandinavischen Literaturen um 1900* (2005).

## Programme

- 08:00-09:00 Registration (Slottsbiografen foyer)
- 09:00 Welcome
- 09:15-10:15 **Keynote address:**  
*In Africa, Diamonds Are Forever: From "The Rose of Rhodesia" to "Blood Diamond"*  
Peter Davis (Villon Films, Vancouver)
- 10:15-10:45 Coffee
- 10:45-11:00 *The Print of "The Rose of Rhodesia"*  
Elif Rongen-Kaynakci (Netherlands Film Archive)
- 11:00-12:15 **Premiere screening of *The Rose of Rhodesia***  
Piano accompaniment by Matti Bye
- 12:15-13:15 Lunch
- 13:15-15:15 **Session I.**
- Early *History with Lightning: "The Rose of Rhodesia" and Cinema*  
Vreni Hockenjos (Stockholm University)
- of *Ushakapilla's Dream: White Cape Town's Reading "The Rose of Rhodesia"*  
James M. Burns (Clemson University, USA)
- Imperial Supremacy Visualised as a Lesson in Love.*  
Ylva Habel (Stockholm University)
- 15:15-15:45 Coffee

## 15:45-17:45 **Session II.**

- The Imperial Perspective*  
Bernard Porter (Newcastle University, UK)
- "The Rose of Rhodesia" and the Colonial Imag*  
Stefan Helgesson (Uppsala University)
- Guns and Roses: Rhodesia and the Woman Rea*  
Stephen Donovan (Uppsala University)
- 17:45 Symposium ends

## PAPER ABSTRACTS

### *In Africa, Diamonds Are Forever: From "The Rose of Rhodesia" to "Blood Diamond"*

Peter Davis

From earliest times, diamonds have fascinated the purveyors of mass entertainment. Through the impact of literature and, later, cinema, and with the decisive intervention of manipulative advertising, diamonds came to signify romance, wealth, and social success in the popular mind. From the nineteenth century, diamonds were mostly found in Africa, a location wrapped in the exotic and quick with adventure. In this fabulous landscape, diamonds were there for the taking – which included stealing. Diamond theft was the subject of the first feature film made in South Africa, *Star of the South* (1911), and the motif continues in our own time with films such as the blockbuster *Blood Diamond* (2006). Although none can be called masterpieces of cinema, the films which will be examined in this keynote address are all important as social and historical documents whose significance lies as much in what they conceal as in what they reveal. They resonate with assumptions about Africa and Africans, with concepts of white superiority, and with racism, reflecting an ethos of control which was born in the nineteenth century and persists to this day: that of pirate capitalism.