CINEMA WATCHING IN TANZANIA

Reel Pleasures: Cinema Audiences and Entrepreneurs in Twentieth-Century Urban Tanzania.
By Laura Fair.
Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2018. Pp. 472. $34.95, paperback (ISBN: 978-0-8214-2286-1); $90.00, hardcover (ISBN: 978-0-8214-2285-4).
doi:10.1017/S0021853720000146

Key words: Tanzania, urban, film, cultural, sources.

Laura Fair's *Reel Pleasures: Cinema Audiences and Entrepreneurs in Twentieth-Century Urban Tanzania* is a heavy book. Weighing in at an impressive 35 ounces, the heft of the paperback reflects fifteen years of painstaking research on the history of film exhibition and filmgoing in colonial Tanganyika and post-independence Tanzania. Highlighting the rich commercial cinema culture in one East African country, Fair deftly details the nexus between the local business of film and broader patterns of cosmopolitan leisure and trans-Atlantic and Indian Ocean trade.

As the title suggests, Fair's primary goal is to examine the audiences that flocked to see popular releases, as well as the entrepreneurs who opened progressively larger picture houses as cinema became a cornerstone of urban leisure in Tanzania (Tanganyika) by mid-century. Her choice of countries is a fruitful one, for by the late 1950s, Tanzania could boast of more cinemas than any East African or Southern African country, with the notable exception of South Africa. Tanzanian audiences, in fact, enjoyed perhaps a wider range of genres than their counterparts in most areas of the globe. Imported Indian films proved to be perennial favourites (a phenomenon that seems to have surprised Fair), but depending on the decade, spectators enjoyed an eclectic array of Egyptian films, cowboy thrillers, Chaplin comedies, kung fu classics, blaxploitation films, and the like.

How did audiences respond to these films? In keeping with research by other African film scholars published in recent years, Fair makes clear that Tanzanian spectators were anything but passive. Rather, films were consumed, digested, and discussed with great passion, yet often in very different ways depending on one's age, class, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. When film showings concluded and audiences came spilling out of the cinemas, local streets became transformed into veritable salons, where movie-goers continued their discussions about the merits of the films and their relevance to everyday life in Tanzania.

The demographic range of audiences in Tanzania was impressive, with two poignant examples in particular showing the surprising inclusivity of the cinema-going experience. Addressing a major lacuna in African film studies, for instance, Fair suggests that 'often, going to the cinema was the only opportunity women had to leave their homes, walk the streets, and mix in public' (218). Muslim women in particular enjoyed the cinema, and prominent cinema venues like the Odeon, Empress, and Avalon catered to a broad cross-section of women by establishing 'ladies only' afternoon showings. Subsequently, streets nearby the picture houses filled with women sporting the latest fashions who sought to build their own community networks.

Fair also relates the story of Kassum Sunderji, a poor South Indian immigrant who first arrived in Dar es Salaam in the 1890s, and who became a co-owner of the Avalon in 1944.

His success led him to open the New Chox cinema, which soon became a mainstay among the European community. But Sunderji also opened the Amana in the African suburb known as Ilalla, making it the only cinema constructed outside the Dar es Salaam city centre prior to independence. The Amana is notable because Sunderji's purpose, according to his son, was predicated on the notion that all members of the urban poor should have access to the cinema. It was a low-priced venue, yet one with first-class amenities — and for that reason generated overwhelming enthusiasm on the part of local cinemagoers in the African district. Fair conforms to the recent drift of Cinema Studies in her attention to audiences and spectatorial response, but one of the book's great merits is that she effectively expands her focus to include the agency of entrepreneurs like Sunderji and Hassanali Jariwalla, with the latter getting his start as an itinerant showman bringing moving picture marvels to Zanzibar by way of a dhow in the early 1910s. By the Second World War, Jariwalla was one among many entrepreneurs in friendly competition who sought to construct increasingly palatial picture houses that became fixtures in the urban leisure patterns of Tanzanians. Indeed, the entrepreneurial spirit spurred architectural innovation and promoted a veritable cinematic arms race as venues sought to be the first to introduce cutting-edge technologies like 'talkies' and Cinemascope.

In conducting her research, Fair recognized the limitations of the national archives. Thus, to complete her manuscript, she incorporated material from questionnaires she devised, and roughly one hundred interviews with local residents, allowing for a more deeply nuanced study of the meaning of the film-going experience for Tanzanians. There are few flaws in the book. At times, it is unclear from the resulting quotations what year, or decade, the respondent is referencing, and the three-page index is a remarkable exercise in brevity for a tome of 452 pages. Nonetheless, Laura Fair's *Reel Pleasures* provides real pleasures to those interested in the history of cinema in Africa.

GLENN REYNOLDS
Mount Saint Mary College

FOOTBALL AND COLONIALISM IN URBAN MOZAMBIQUE

Football and Colonialism: Body and Popular Culture in Urban Mozambique.
By Nuno Domingos.
Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017. Pp. *xvi* + 325. $34.95, paperback (ISBN: 9780821422625); $80.00, hardcover (ISBN: 9780821422618).
doi:10.1017/S0021853720000158

Key words: Mozambique, urban, sports, colonialism, culture.

It is tempting to write that Nuno Domingos has written a book anyone can enjoy, but that would be hyperbole, however much my mind expanded while reading his book on football in Mozambique's colonial-era capital, Lourenço Marques. *Football and Colonialism: Body and Popular Culture in Urban Mozambique* is three histories rolled into one. It is an overview of mid-century football in Mozambique, an urban history of popular culture in colonial