



**Karen Boswall** (University of Sussex)

“The Mobile Phone Musical Documentary: Exploring Innovative Participatory Video Methodologies in Creative and Collaborative Digital Documentary Production in Mozambique”

Drawing on the methodology of Jean Rouch’s participatory cinema and Freirian inspired participatory video, this multimedia presentation traces the journey of a musical documentary and the additional converged digital content from its origins in Niassa, Northern Mozambique to audiences across the country, the African diaspora and beyond. The work and methodology presented forms part of on-going practise based research which seeks a new artistic form of digital documentary that embraces the potential of digital technology to go beyond notions of participation towards real creative collaboration. Inspired by the cinematic documentary aesthetic and Rouchian approaches to post-colonial, post communist Mozambican non-fiction, the research draws on the talents and experience of Mozambican men and women across the country to tell stories that provoke political and social engagement on themes of gender equality through cultural identification, humour and creativity. The creative collaboration, which began in July 2016, identified music as the core medium for gathering and sharing stories around gender identity in Mozambique is exploring the potential of both digital and analogue approaches to distribution. Songs and stories gathered across the north of the country are being transformed into contemporary pop songs and musical documentaries. The distribution plan combines sharing multi-media content through social media with local exhibition through television, radio and mobile cinema. The presentation will include extracts from behind the scenes footage, completed short documentaries and the social media and digital content produced and shared since the research began. It asks if there is more that can be done with available digital technology to promote not only participation but true global collaboration in the production and distribution of documentaries that expand the number and types of voices heard across the world and so contribute to social debate and change.

**Bio:** Karen Boswall began making broadcast documentaries in the early 1980’s. She lived in Mozambique for 17 years. Her work in film, music and radio production focusses on gender, HIV and post-conflict reconciliation. She has been living in the UK since 2007 and was awarded a CHASE scholarship to conduct her own PhD research at Sussex, which she began in September 2016.

**Ben Burbridge** (University of Sussex) Friday Evening Roundtable Participant

**Bio:** Ben Burbridge is Senior Lecturer in Art History and Co-Director of the Centre for photography and Visual Culture at the University of Sussex. He is currently working on a book about photography, contemporary art and neoliberalism.

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### Abigail Child (Independent Filmmaker)

#### “A Politics of Poetic Form: Sound and its Affect”

If slow cinema is seen as an oppositional response to the speed of advertising, and indeed the pace of our digital computerized lives, how does sound enter the political picture? How do aural dimensions in a work of durational documentary cinema create layers, multiple meanings, a prosody? What are the relations, the poetics between image and sound, sound and time, that register or can be accounted “political”?

In this paper, I will discuss *Leviathan* by Verena Paravel and Lucien Taylor, *Territorio* by Alexa Cuesta, and *Quality Control* by Kevin Everson, and my own recent experimental documentary *Acts & Intermissions* to analyze the use of sound as a poetic device. The aural dimension of the cinematic experience *reorders* the image. Sound — its volume, constancy, synchrony, redundancy — pushes the image to a new place. The means might be a strategy of volume and insistence, or of the unexpected, the hiatus, the asynchrony. The result creates a poetic reverberation and direct affectual relationship in the viewer. Sound is large in its effect [it is difficult, for example, to fill the Tate Modern opening room with visual art but with sound, it is easily imagined]. Sound can authenticate the *real* or underline the artifice of the cinema process. Sound can be oppressive, time consuming, repetitive, dull. It can reproduce the geography of the worker, delimit space, re-create off-screen space, and suggest life and death drama.

The works I examine each take a somewhat different poetic strategy in their combination of image and sound, yet whether that of anthropological immersion, choreographed vérité, structural materialism, or prismatic chapters, each uses sound to push our eyes beyond the spectacle, to create their singular ‘reality fictions’ and time travel.

**Bio:** Abigail Child has been at the forefront of experimental media and writing since the 1980s, having completed more than thirty film/video works and 6 books, five of poetry and one of criticism. An acknowledged pioneer in montage, Child addresses the interplay between sound and image, to make, in the words of LA Weekly: “brilliant exciting work...a vibrant political filmmaking that’s attentive to form.”

### Christine Cynn (Independent Filmmaker)

#### “From the past to the future: dramatisation and meta-narrative process as documentary practice in *The Act of Killing* and *scienceFUTURE*”

How might public generation of speculative fiction transform our future history? Can we use narrative feedback cycles with many participants as a process that might produce an inclusive collective vision? How can we best document the layers of this process and its effects? These questions are part of my 19-year conceptual exploration of meta-narrative processes (fiction dramatisation or mediated re-enactment) to create transformational spaces. These spaces allow participants to play and transform the stories through which they define their role in the world, and these transformations are documented and re-presented in new works. My hypothesis is that our narrative imagination can transform the present, and thereby condition the future in favour of those stories in which we have invested the most energy.

This presentation will include some discussion and examples of the dramatisations in *The Act of Killing* and how the methodology and theoretical framing might be applied to speculative fiction about the future, crowdsourced from a much wider group of participants using digital tools. I am now developing a new cross-media project called *scienceFUTURE*, which uses the Xquisite app (offline beta) to collect

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video contributions from scientists to a chain-story about X, a woman born in 2045. I will present extracts from a prototype virtual reality experience, made for a museum exhibition.

I am currently considering the potential for dramatising scenes from the Xquisite database on a virtual fiction set. As in TAOK, I plan to document the process, and fiction elements will be presented in a documentary frame. I will discuss the questions of whether and how to use new technology, new formats, and new distribution platforms both to explore questions about an increasingly technological future, and to increase project participation and impact. Create an online series integrated with an app? Augmented reality in a museum or other setting? Who might finance such a work, and what are the implications of support from technology corporations?

**Bio:** Conceptual artist and filmmaker Christine Cynn has been directing documentary and experimental films for the past 14 years. She co-directed and co-produced the award-winning documentary *The Act of Killing*. Her work explores emotional resonances hidden in cracks created by political tension. For the last decade, Christine has been developing new ways to document the human imagination. Her goal is to illuminate the largely unseen, and often surreal, conflicts of desire, fear, and hope that shape our lives and our world. She has worked as a screenwriter for FilmFour. Christine is now releasing her latest film, *Shooting Ourselves*, a feature documentary on the arms trade. She is now developing *scienceFUTURE*, a longterm laboratory on the future which just had its first exhibition X2066 at Polaria Museum in Tromsø. Her company, Ice-9 AS, is based in Balsfjord, Northern Norway. [www.sciencefuture.nu](http://www.sciencefuture.nu)

### Sharon Daniel (University of California, Santa Cruz)

“Aftermath: Geographies of Ethno-territorial Violence and Restorative Justice in the City of Belfast and Beyond”

*A work-in-progress presentation of “Aftermath,” which will become an interactive documentary, comprised of interviews with former paramilitaries, police and Restorative Justice practitioners in post-conflict Belfast.* These interviews and conversations will focus on the participants’ histories with, and reflections on, violence – how it is rationalized and perpetuated by individuals, state and non-state actors and how effectively, or not, the trauma of racial and state violence might be addressed through truth recovery, tolerance and compromise. The project will provide a multi-dimensional analysis of the spatial, social and psychological implications of racio-ethnic segregation and sectarian violence applicable to current situations around the globe, from conflict in the Middle East to conditions of racial and economic inequality and segregation in the US. The city of Belfast is a microcosm of the socio-political and spatial practices of ethno-nationalistic segregation and territorialization. It is a site that embodies a long history of factional struggle over civil rights and dominance in its urban spaces. “Waste grounds,” parking lots and abandoned buildings, still surround many interfaces and sites of British army occupation and surveillance. Sites of violence, occupation, persecution and surveillance, like Casement Park, the Crumlin Road Court, the infamous Divis Towers, and many less remarkable street corners, intersections and vacant lots, still resonate with echoes of conflicting perspectives, contradictory accounts and traces of past violence. For “Aftermath,” these sites will serve as stages where the reflections and analyses of interviewees will be rendered by acts and gestures performed by actors or surrogates from the community that will be staged and recorded at the site and edited to the audio of the original participants’ interviews. This strategy is intended to move documentary subjects and testimony *beyond empathy* and affect. In the presentation I will discuss how displacing the drama of “character,” and “story” through forms of abstraction, enactment and exchange echoes the practice of restorative justice and facilitates an analysis of structural racism and violence across temporal and national boundaries.

**Bio:** Sharon Daniel is a media artist who produces interactive and participatory documentaries focused on issues of social, economic, environmental and criminal justice. Detailed descriptions and links to these works can be found at <http://sharondaniel.net>. Daniel is a Professor in the Film and Digital Media Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

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**Danica Evering** (Concordia University, presenting with Matt Soar)

“Migration, Media Archaeology, and the Montréal-Mirabel International Airport”

YMX is the unique airport code for the Montréal-Mirabel International Airport, which opened in October 1975. This ambitious project emerged in the late 1960s in conjunction with the economic optimism and global attention brought to the city of Montreal through major events such as Expo '67 and the 1976 Summer Olympics. Though promoted as a symbol of modernity, and destined to be the largest airport in the world, the airport swiftly became an economic albatross.

YMX is also the title of a new media installation currently in the final stages of development, featuring two Solari split-flap information displays which were recovered by the Montréal Signs Project prior to the passenger terminal's controversial demolition in 2016. A collaboration between artist Cheryl Sim, Matt Soar (Associate Professor of Communication Studies and founding director of the Montréal Signs Project), and research assistant Danica Evering, YMX explores parallel stories of displacement and forced migration: the thousands of people who arrived at Mirabel escaping war, disaster, or economic adversity; the two-decade organized protests of the farmers dispossessed of their land in the late 1960s to build the airport; the inter-species displacement of birds considered harmful to aircraft; and the Canadian government's ongoing refusal to recognize the preexisting land claims of the Mohawks of Kanesatake.

Visitors follow a labyrinth created with airport belt stanchions, encountering: a video montage of interviews and archival materials reflecting Mirabel's many intertwining narratives; *Lignes Aériennes*, a collection of poems about the airport by celebrated Montreal author Pierre Nepveu (whose family was one of many displaced by the Mirabel project); and, the two Solari displays chattering rhythmically in a dialogue composed from data on flights to and from Mirabel in its very brief heyday. Soar and Evering will discuss the overlapping cultural histories of politics and feeling activated through this alternative immersive installation, making a case for the documentary potential of new media installations through a complex nexus of intertwining narratives of arrivals and departures.

**Bio:** Danica Evering is a metaphorist and imposter of German descent from Cobourg, Ontario. Her current MA work addresses power structures in socially engaged art through poetry. She is on the editorial team of Publication Studio Guelph (a sibling studio of a publishing network) and a board member of Kazoo! (a new music and art festival).

**Jason Fox** (New York University)

“The Politics of Habit in the Production of Space”

A chorus of social theorists, from William James to Pierre Bourdieu, have argued that habits are coded systems of social control that keep us within the bounds of our racial, gendered, and class divisions. Yet others, including Henri Bergson, John Dewey, Gilles Deleuze, and Elizabeth Grosz, frame habits as the second natures that provide stability, thus conditioning the expanded possibility for thinking, for creativity, and for freedom. Informed by my own video works on the U.S. National Park system, this presentation calls for a renewed attention to the politics and visualities of habit in the production of social spaces. I frame social habits as the residues of history that linger in our reactions and relationships to physical environments and the populations that inhabit them. Habits, as they move from conscious thought to second nature, are ideology in action and in space.

In *Rights of Action* (Fox, 2016), a pastoral symphony for Rocky Mountain National Park on the occasion of its centennial anniversary, shared habits and gestures are the great engine that powers and produces the space of the park, revealing the ways that history materializes itself in the habituated body. The film

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emphasizes the relationship between habits and habitat, habits as a shared basis for community, and shared habits as those which come to mark “insiders” from “outsiders.” At stake in this frame, I argue, is an engagement with a critical mode of social documentary practice that turns away from the logic of empathy without turning away from the human body itself. It is one that engages and challenges a neoliberal conception of individuals as collectively dissolving social bonds through isolated actions, and it is one that brackets the space of a public park to consider its relationship to private action.

**Bio:** Jason Fox is a filmmaker and professor based in New York, currently teaching in the Graduate School of Cinema Studies at New York University. His work has screened internationally film festivals, in galleries, and on broadcast television. He has worked as a programmer in conjunction with The American Museum of Natural History, The Flaherty Seminar, and the Museum of Modern Art. He is the founding editor of the forthcoming journal of documentary, *World Records*, published by UnionDocs in Brooklyn, NY.

### Melanie Friend (University of Sussex)

*“The Lacquer Box and The Field Gun: A Study of the Militarised Landscape of Salisbury Plain”*

I will present my new photography/sound piece *The Lacquer Box and the Field Gun* (work-in-progress), which is envisaged as a photo-film/and or publication for 2019. This work focuses in detail on one particular landscape in rural Wiltshire in England, near to my mother’s home – Salisbury Plain, the UK’s largest military training area.

The work will use extracts from extended interviews with local inhabitants on their emotional attachment to this landscape, alongside my own quest to document the intermittent military presence – at times a frustrating task owing to difficulties of access. Interviewees range from a retired Brigadier & a serving female soldier in Afghanistan through to a war tax resister and a Salisbury CND spokeswoman. I will include images of objects purchased from the Tank Museum shop in nearby Bovington Camp (Dorset) and an image of the *Lacquer Box* itself, which closely relates to the theme. Through landscape images of Salisbury Plain, silent movie footage & still life imagery, & by using the emotional power of the inhabitants’ voices and personal narratives, the piece will engage with both aesthetics and poetics to explore both the familiarity of militarization in the UK. I am also focusing on a subject very close to home (and with which I have always been at odds): rural conservatism. This feels particularly pertinent now that it has recently proved itself to be such a powerful force (the majority of rural voters voted for Brexit; it was partly the rural vote in the US which brought Trump victory).

I will preface discussion of my new project with a very brief summary of two earlier projects – *Homes & Gardens: Documenting the Invisible* (1996) and *The Home Front* (2013) – which also engaged with the poetics and politics of documentary.

**Bio:** Melanie Friend is a photographer/artist. Many of her works – exhibitions and books – have used alternative documentary strategies to represent conflict. She is Reader in Photography at the University of Sussex.

### Patti Gaal-Holmes (Arts University Bournemouth)

*“Excavations for Opening up Histories: In Search of ‘the Nervature of the Past’”*

This paper considers how experimental documentary practices can open up new affective engagements with histories. The focus is not on character-driven films shaped by linear narratives but on films taking experimental approaches, including reworking archival material or exposing film materiality to open up the cracks and fissures of history and memory. Paulo Magagnoli’s ‘critical nostalgia’ (2015) is considered and Alisa Lebow’s premise, asking: ‘what is the nature of the interplay between the

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individual and culture and how is this tension played out in representational terms?’ also underlies investigations (2012: 7). Additionally, this paper asks how historically-situated works might be approached through storytelling, which TJ Demos notes may create ‘a context for *imaginative invention* as much as a suggestive recounting of events’ (2012: 104). The excavation of personal/collective memory is considered to understand the ‘inherited loss’ in traumatic histories. In his poem *After Nature* W.G. Sebald goes in search of ‘the nervature of past life’ by entering into the history preceding his birth as he tries to understand and ‘mourn the loss of a memory that he never had’ (Franklin 2007: 133).

These discussions provide critical contexts for ‘*into the frameless distance*’, a work-in-progress (film and photography), focusing on my father, Miklós Gaál’s escape from Hungary (1948); internment in a Displaced Persons camp (Austria, 1948/49); his mother’s imprisonment in a Forced Labour Camp; and Gaál’s refugee status and eventual claim for asylum (Belgium, 1950). The project therefore asks what ‘*The Freedom of the Migrant* (Vilém Flusser, 2003) is, particularly within the context of the current refugee crisis articulated in publications like Patrick Kingsley’s *The New Odyssey: The Story of Europe’s Refugee Crisis* (2016). Contexts discussed include artist/filmmakers like John Akomfrah (Britain/Ghana), Péter Forgács (Hungary) and Penny Siopis (South African) who work with archival films to open up affective engagements with histories.

**Bio:** Patti Gaal-Holmes is an artist/filmmaker and historian, Reviews Editor for *Transnational Cinemas* (Routledge) and lectures in film at Arts University Bournemouth. Recent works include the monograph, *A History of 1970s Experimental Film* (2015, Palgrave), and the short experimental film *Liliesleaf Farm Mayibuye* (2016), screened at the 60<sup>th</sup> BFI Film Festival.

### John Greyson (York University) Keynote Speaker

“Stereoscopy’s Unknown and Karaoke’s Uncanny: A Documentary Dialogue about Activism and Poetics (Using Chat Roulette)”

When Melania was busted for stealing Michelle’s words during her disastrous speech at the Republican Convention, vloggers leapt into action, and within hours, side-by-side stereoscopic duets of the two speeches were trending on youtube. It’s a new and now ubiquitous form of split-screen schadenfreude, when anyone ventures to claim someone else’s song as their own. Melania and Michelle, taking the ‘ok’ out of karaoke. M ‘n M, putting the ‘copy’ back in stereoscopy.

The eerie fascinations of cinematic mimicry — from Van Sant’s shot-for-shot remake of *Psycho* and Joynt/Arsenault’s redo of Campbell’s *True/False*, to the crowd-sourced shot-for-shot remake of Chris Marker’s *Sans Soleil*, currently in progress — exploit and explore the same-yet-different vibrations of side-by-side stereoscopy frames. These hybrid doppelgangers (with or without permission, in or out of sympathy, as sincere tribute or ironic treachery) proliferate exponentially in our digital moment, and with them, their poetic and political contradictions and implications expand and demand accordingly. What does it mean to perform a cover version of someone else’s film? How does the new version stereoscopically agitate in relation to the original? How do traditions of satire and agit-prop navigate the uncanniness of split-screen? What does side-by-side remake culture do to the verités of doc practice?

This talk will critically examine a spectrum of such recent visual karaoke duets, from shot-for-shot radical documentaries such as Subrin’s *Shulie* and Godmilow’s *What Farocki Taught*, to the activist pop-culture parodies of Dam doing ScarJo, Bernie meming Hotline Bling, Bibi doing Downfall, or Householder/Yael riffing ‘approximations’ of Kubrick and Gibson. A detailed case study will then be presented of Captifs D’Amour, my shot-for-shot remake of Jean Genet’s 1950 *Chant D’Amour*, his black-and-white queer activist love story of two prisoners separated by a wall. In my retelling, the urgent French/Algerian context of 1950 is remapped onto the Israel/Palestine conflict of today, this time with an Apartheid Wall separating the two lovers (who are now naked gay penguins). Genet’s most famous scene, the blowing of cigarette smoke between the cell walls using a straw from the mattress, will become an eerie evocation of the tear-gas that so often clouds and kills at military checkpoints.

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The efficacies (and ethicacies) of split-screen mimicry will be further complicated by the gambit of delivering this talk as a live Chat Roulette performance, seeking to engage with viewers one-on-one through the interactivity of this now vaguely old-fashioned platform. Can such side-by-side conversations about split-screen contribute something beyond the eerie and the uncanny? Can such online stereoscopy become a karaoke duet?

**Bio:** John Greyson is one of cinema's queerest experimenters, redefining political cinema that embraces the highest and lowest culture has to offer. His video operas vacillate between public service announcement and art work, making short shrift of the divisions between the political and the poetic, not to mention those between fiction and documentary. He began as a video activist working often in collaboration and/or collective, and has made several award winning films and installations.

His shorts, features and installations include: *Fig Trees* (2009, Best Documentary Teddy, Berlin Film Festival; Best Canadian Feature, Inside Out Festival); *Proteus* (2003, Best Film, Diversity Award, Barcelona Film Festival; Best Actor, Sithenghi Film Festival); *The Law of Enclosures* (2000, Best Actor Genie); *Lilies* (1996 – Best Film Genie, Best Film at festivals in Montreal, Johannesburg, Los Angeles, San Francisco); *Un@ut* (1997, Honourable Mention, Berlin Film Festival); *Zero Patience* (1993 – Best Canadian Film, Sudbury Film Festival); *The Making of Monsters* (1991 – Best Canadian Short, Toronto Film Festival, Best Short Film Teddy – Berlin Film Festival); and *Urinal* (1988 – Best Feature Teddy, Berlin Film Festival).

He co-edited *Queer Looks*, a critical anthology on gay/lesbian film & video (Routledge, 1993), is the author of *Urinal and Other Stories* (Power Plant/Art Metropole, 1993), and has published essays and artists pieces in *Alphabet City*, *Public*, *FUSE*, and twelve critical anthologies. He was awarded the Toronto Arts Award for Film/Video, 2000, the Bell Canada Video Art Award in 2007, the Arts & Culture Pride Award, 2009, and the 1st annual Alanis Obomsawin Award for Commitment to Community and Resistance, Cinema Politica, 2011. He has taught at California Institute of the Arts (1986-89) and York University Film Department (2005-present).

**Irene Gustafson (University of California, Santa Cruz)**

### *“Home Work”*

Children and animals hold a potent place in the political and emotional landscape of American culture. They are, at once, seemingly beyond the reach of serious cultural or political consideration, and yet these figures—the innocent child and the loyal loving dog, for example-- play a surprisingly central role in our cultural and political lives. Or more precisely, our cultural and political feelings and imaginaries. My experimental documentary video (2017 in progress- forthcoming) dwells inside of this state of affairs. The film examines an event that took place in San Francisco—a one-time city program, titled WOOF, wherein formerly homeless people fostered homeless dogs (as animals in the shelter system are called). The program was premised on the sentimental idea that love can mend our tattered social fabric, that recuperation is just a feeling away. The film documents three years in Eric Wightman's life—a WOOF program participant and a recovering heroin addict who lives in supportive housing in San Francisco's tenderloin district. The film follows Eric and his animals as they navigate the hazards of redemption and relapse and as Eric deals with the publicity, attention, and judgment that his participation in WOOF brings.

Many contemporary social documentaries use emotion, crafted in the service of social change-- they want the audience to feel outrage, compassion, solidarity, empathy, and hopefulness. *Home Work*, to the contrary, critically examines how emotion itself is already present and powerful in the fabric of social reality. Feelings not only follow the social condition, they produce it. *Home Work* is not a social issue documentary, rather, it's a realist and essayistic meditation on the sights and sounds of our shared cultural and political feelings: in what instances can (you) feel compassion? Empathy? When and why do you feel indifference?

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My presentation will focus on the making of the film and reflect upon the relations between affect, agency, human and non-human representation, and the possibilities of an affective political documentary.

**Bio:** Irene Gustafson is an Associate Professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Her video work has screened nationally and internationally; her writing has appeared in *Camera Obscura*, *Journal of Visual Culture*, *The Moving Image Journal*, and *Cinema Journal*. Her video essay, *Facing the Subject*, appeared in *[in]Transition* (March 2016).

### Amir Husak (Leeds Trinity University)

“Digital Dissent: Citizen-activist video and the emergent forms of documentary practice”

The utopian promise of the digital era and the seemingly open, democratic power of the Internet have raised hopes of many activist filmmakers across the globe. The immediacy, reciprocity and accessibility of the emergent communication technologies appear to be particularly suitable for documentary media projects that aspire to mobilize for action, engage communities, and challenge the existing power structures in order to have direct influence on policy making. No more is the labor of capturing visual evidence delegated solely to the professional filmmakers and media activists. It appears that almost anyone with a mobile phone can record and participate-intervene. This has, without a doubt, enabled greater influence and correspondence between dissents staged virtually and those happening in physical reality. In the context of these predicaments, this presentation focuses on two technological developments that truly expanded the dialogic social dimension of digital documentary; the rise of mobile video and social media as a parallel public sphere with its *imagined communities*. Employing examples from two interactive documentaries in development, it looks at some of the ways documentarians can collect, integrate and (re)appropriate activist media in their projects, and use it to construct new meanings. Furthermore, it examines how the emergent documentary forms integrate these technologies and radically change the way we approach social engagement today – with a specific accent on co-creation, collaboration and sharing. The presentation draws on the existing documentary theory, as well as the implicit, yet rarely invoked, links between the emerging documentary practices and the so-called “relational art”.

**Bio:** Amir Husak is a multimedia artist based in New York. His works have screened internationally, including festivals and venues such as SXSW, Sundance, Sarajevo Film Festival, PBS, and Stadtmuseum Graz. He teaches in the School of Media Studies at The New School and pursues a practice-based PhD in Leeds, UK.

### Fabiola Hanna (University of California, Santa Cruz)

“Software and its Structuring of Interactive Documentary”

Without software, idocs would not exist, yet no critical evaluation of how software influences these documentaries exists! The fields of i-docs, media studies, software studies and computer science have largely ignored the very medium that constitutes these projects. In this paper, I argue that the claims attached to idocs, whether about participation, agency, authorship, co-creation, democracy, are ultimately curtailed if the medium, namely the software that houses and makes an idoc, is not addressed. Using my current in-progress work, *We Are History*, an idoc about the modern history of Lebanon, as a point of departure, I show that looking at the process of writing the software enables critical analysis of software’s influence on the the idoc itself.

In pursuit of generating communal dialogue in the context of inability to have conversations about our contested history in Lebanon, I set out to build an Artificial Agent that would sift through an oral history



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video archive of testimonies of daily life with the task of figuring out common threads, sometimes confirming and sometimes contesting each other, and automatically editing many different versions of possible histories. This automatic montage machine addresses two problems in the Lebanese context: first, it circumvents the tiring accusation of being biased since a machine is now the moderator (presenting a multiplicity of stories might be the closest one can get to strategic objectivity) and second, it opens up the possibility of conversation by weaving various and often opposing perspectives in order to start imagining what our histories could look like. The project, which would reside online as well as in booths in public spaces across Lebanon, invites people to listen to an automated montage of oral histories and to then share their own stories and memories. Each newly contributed story is instantly added to the archive, analyzed using new developments in computational corpus-based linguistics, automatic story generation, and social computing and tagged with its transcript which enables the interface to incorporate newly added video interviews into the pool concerning the event discussed, thereby changing the version of history previously compiled.

The paper concludes that both scholars of media and media-based practitioners need to pay attention to the critical effects of software in shaping i-docs, mainly in the context of activist video.

**Bio:** Fabiola Hanna is a new media artist & software designer. She is a PhD candidate in Film and Digital Media at UC Santa Cruz where she also holds an MFA in Digital Arts & New Media. Her research lies in software and media studies, archives, memory & post-colonialism, and new media art activism.

**Susanna Helke (Aalto University)**

“On the Emotion Economy and the Poetics of Compassion”

Creative documentary film culture has gone through an *emotive turn* during the last two decades. The production culture has been fertilized with the vocabulary of the mainstream film industry’s “emotion economy” with the prevalence of terms such as *storyline*, *conflict*, *character development* or *emotional arc*, marking a surge in quests for individualistic identification and emotion-based engagement. First person strategies have veered away from the body politics characteristic of the early subjective documentaries of the 1980s. The emotional realm of life, personal growing pains, therapeutic perspectives and projects of self-construction have become ever more important as subject matters.

Acknowledging the pitfalls of the categorizations such as “subjective” vs. “objective”, “personal” vs. “collective”, “emotional” vs. “factual”, “mainstream” vs. “art cinema”, I am scrutinizing the potential of *poetic* strategies in creating a compassionate, rather than emotive, identification in documentary film and testimonial literature. If the strategy of art, echoing the Shlovskyan formalist view, is about the technics of *defamiliarizing*, how does this notion relate to documentary art as a critical and radically reflective praxis. Art functions *beyond* the pre-existing order of commonsensical reality. The pressing question in my own film practice and art-practice-based theorizing is: how reality-material based art can construct a *transformational* ethical address, one which does not rely on individualistically driven social subjectivity, but rather creates experiential spaces for agonistic collisions of differences, the paradoxical, dialectical cinematic expressions and experiences that can be claimed to be more complex than a mere “emotive” address? Sentimentally driven reality entertainment constructs a very different social subjectivity from the one, for example, created by the technique of Svetlana Alexievich’s testimonial literature. In this dangerously polarized era epitomized by a grave societal empathy deficit, instead of the simplified quest for a post-empathetic stance, it is crucial to distinguish the differences between such fluid concepts as *sentimental*, *emotional* or *compassionate*, in order to rehabilitate the poetics of documentary art in creating a compassionately reflexive political address.

**Bio:** Susanna Helke is an award-winning documentary filmmaker (e.g. *American Vagabond* 2013, *Playground* 2010, *The Idle Ones* 2001, *White Sky* 1998, *Sin* 1996), an associate professor, the head of research and the director of the Critical Cinema Lab at the Film, Television and Scenography Department of Aalto University in Finland.

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### Anandana Kapur (Jamia Millia Islamia University)

#### “Co-creating with my viewing publics”

Creating a “collaborative” i-doc raises several aesthetic, technological and ethical questions: What is the relationship of the collaborator with the material and the digital landscape? What poetics can be alluded to the collaborative process such that the performative potential of the material is not undermined? How does one elevate the authorial intervention to be more than just compilation? An exegesis of an ongoing documentary that uses ‘situated technologies’ i.e. mobile phones as a means to enable women to document the city of Delhi, the proposed paper will examine how the ‘viewing publics’ of collaborative interactive works may be imagined. It will demonstrate how the enterprise of shared subjectivity begs several ethical considerations that account for the design and architecture of an interactive work. The process of creating an i-doc should entail cognizance of the digital inequalities that exist in our world because the extant technological-divide confronts claims to agency made by web-based i-docs. Dade-Robertson et al (2012) observe, “[w]eb based technologies are often placeless, designed to be “anytime and anywhere,” and do not reflect the local condition. Therefore, participatory design and the modes of interactivity employed need to extend beyond aesthetics to encompass experience. In addition, it is imperative that creators of interactive works recognise that the reduction of ‘directorial necessity’ is an opportunity to explore enhanced possibilities of hyper-medial richness and depth, of including multiple voices and alternative points of view, feedback and participation.

**Bio:** Co-founder of CINEMAD India, Anandana Kapur is an award-winning filmmaker and communications designer working extensively towards integrating film and social change initiatives. As a researcher and film scholar, she has written on gender, culture and cinema. Anandana’s current work is on interactive cinema and the city of Delhi.

### Margareta Kern (Falmouth University)

#### “Thursday War”

... ‘the best kind of authority works invisibly. If it must brandish weapons and admonish its subjects, it only advertises its weakness; the stablest order is unfelt and unquestioned’\*

... ‘the problem of knowing who is the subject of the state and war will be of exactly the same kind as the problem of knowing who is the subject of perception’\*\*

A note came through my door. It said: ‘residents are reminded not to film or photograph the navy from their properties’. I had just moved out of east London, into a small place on the south-east coast of Cornwall, UK. I’ve exchanged the view of busy streets and the noise of traffic for the view and noise of the sea. And the navy ships. And the low-flying helicopters and military planes.

In this talk I explore the role of image-making techniques in the production of narratives that accompany the military state apparatus and its strategies of (in)visibility, so as to ask how they have influenced the political and spatial subjectivities of today’s viewership. I am particularly interested in the historical role that central perspective played in the construction of a Western-centered optical paradigm. Even though it did not correspond to any subjective perception (by its disregard for the curvature of the earth and the eye), the central perspective rendered space as calculable, navigable and predictable, and placed the viewer in the center (of the image, and the worldview).

I will draw on my current process of filming the military training maneuvers of the naval ships (outside my kitchen window) and on my ongoing process of formal complaints to the ‘UK military low flying enquiries and complaints’ unit, to further ask questions around (self) censorship, surveillance and

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control. My research into colonial and telecommunications archive, will further inform this talk, which in its form will embrace the performative, the documentary and the fictive.

**Bio:** Margareta Kern is a visual artist and lecturer at Falmouth University (Institute of Photography), working in photography, video and animation. Her research-led practice explores ideologies that shape our political agencies and subjectivities. Her work has been presented across gallery and educational contexts, including Tate Modern, The Photographers Gallery, Whitechapel Gallery, Spacex, Impressions Gallery, INIVA, Shedhalle Zurich, Photomonth Krakow, 54th October Salon Belgrade and many others. Kern is a recipient of several project grants and awards, including from the National Media Museum, BFI, Arts Council England and most recently an international 54th October Salon Award (2013). Margareta grew up in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and due to war migrated to the UK in 1992, where she has been based since. [www.margaretakern.com](http://www.margaretakern.com)

### Arine Kirstein-Høgel (Aarhus University)

*“Glob and the Creation of Knowledge: Haptic détournement, Archive and Appropriation”*

This proposal presents a practice led research project that uses ‘haptic détournement’ in order to investigate on contemporary consumption of cultural pasts and cultural difference by shifting the focus to the 1950’s and 60’s. The paper will discuss strategies for re-workings of unused and newly digitized archival material shot in the Persian Gulf in the 50s and 60s aiming to contribute to an investigation of Harun Farocki’s call for another kind of empathy: Empathy’ is too good a word to leave to the other side. It should be possible to empathize in such a way that it produces the effect of alienation. (Farocki 2008) *Glob and the Creation of Knowledge* explores the cultural tensions between late artist and archaeologist PV Glob and the Danish Media in their efforts to represent the Arab in past and present.

The concept of ‘haptic détournement’ was developed on the basis of archive fieldwork. On the one hand working as a participant observer with the aim of mapping the audiovisual material in it’s ‘irreducible alterity’ (Suhr et al 2012). On the other hand doing a selection of the material informed by a Benjaminian notion of time and montage. The selection of key scenes in the material was done inspired by the idea of a ‘now-time’ allowing a view on the present as more than a passage between past and future. The present is rather regarded as an opportunity to appropriate a past “shot through the splinters of a messianic time” (Mills 2008:117, Bullock et al 2006: 397). The presentation will include excerpts from work-in- progress *Glob and the Creation of Knowledge*.

**Bio:** Arine Kirstein-Høgel (1970) is a doctorate in Film Studies and MA in Film Studies and Anthropology, and is postdoctoral research fellow in visual anthropology, at Camera as Cultural Critique/Eye & Mind Lab, Aarhus University. She is a filmmaker as well as film archivist and programmer. She began her postdoctoral film project ‘Glob and the Creation of Knowledge’ in the non-fiction workshop at the Film Study Center at Harvard University and developed it in the École Nationale Supérieure des Metiers de de l’Image et de Son (La Fémis), Paris.

### Alisa Lebow (University of Sussex) Symposium Organiser

**Bio:** Alisa Lebow is a Reader in Film Studies at University of Sussex. She is known for her work on first person film and questions of ‘the political’ in documentary, most recently performing her scholarship digitally, with her interactive database documentary, *Filming Revolution* about filmmaking in Egypt since the revolution ([www.filmingrevolution.org](http://www.filmingrevolution.org)), soon to be published as part of the new digital humanities initiative at Stanford University Press. Her books *The Cinema of Me* (Wallflower, 2012) and *First Person Jewish* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008) explore aspects of the representation of self and subjectivity in first person documentary. She is also the co-editor of *A Companion to Contemporary Documentary* with Alexandra Juhasz (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015) and has published in journals such as *Film*

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*Quarterly*, *Visual Anthropology*, and *Camera Obscura*. She is a filmmaker as well, whose work includes *For the Record: The World Tribunal on Iraq* (2007), *Treyf* (1998) and *Outlaw* (1994).

### Irene Lusztig (University of California, Santa Cruz)

*"Yours in Sisterhood: Feminism, Utopian Conversation and Talking to the 70s"*

My in-progress film project "Yours in Sisterhood" is a performative, participatory documentary based on archival research reading thousands of mostly unpublished letters to the editor sent to Ms. Magazine—the first mainstream feminist magazine in the US—between 1972 and 1980. Since the summer of 2015, I've been traveling to regions across the US with a camera and a portable teleprompter. In each place, I invite strangers to create spontaneous performative readings of letters that were written to Ms. in their community in the 70s. As I shoot each reading, I also invite participants to respond to the tone, language, and content of their chosen letter and to talk about its relevance to their present-day lived experience. Over the course of the past year and a half, I have filmed over 200 readings with participants of all ages, shapes, sizes and colors in eighteen US states, working both in large urban areas and in remote, one-stop-light towns. As I film, I am interested in the performative space that the teleprompter reading provokes—an impromptu interpretation of a character's letter to the editor, filtered through the reader's quick assumptions about race, class, and time period, as well as their own contemporary notions of feminism. I am interested in the power of re-speaking and reenactment to create a complex, real-time, affective space of responding (sometimes empathically, sometimes critically) to the feminist past. My project is invested in deep and critical listening—across history and across divergent perspectives. By inviting project participants into dynamic embodied engagement with historical texts and by using methods of "critical casting" to create complex relationships between readers and texts, my project participants and I together investigate new, active, and embodied imaginative spaces of documentary empathy. I hope to present materials and methods from this work in progress.

**Bio:** Irene Lusztig is a filmmaker, visual artist, and archival researcher. Her work has been screened around the world, including at MoMA, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Anthology Film Archives, Pacific Film Archive, Flaherty NYC, IDFA Amsterdam, and on television in the US, Europe, and Taiwan. She teaches filmmaking at UC Santa Cruz where she is Associate Professor of Film and Digital Media.

### Ian McDonald (Newcastle University)

*"The Political Documentary as a Cinema of Poetry"*

In this paper I explore the potential and possibilities found in Pier Paolo Pasolini's 'cinema of poetry' for documentary practice. In so doing I am concerned with developing a documentary practice that acknowledges the Griersonian political imperative to education and engage, but that also embraces the expressive possibilities characteristic of the Fine Arts (without descending into solipsism or disengaging with the real). I contend that there is much to be gained from Pasolini's ideas of 'contamination', of the 'sacredness of the real world' (re-sacralizing of life), and of the cinema as 'writing with reality'. Pasolini's critical and theoretical formulation of a 'free indirect point-of-view', enabled him to break down the conventional distinction between the self-conscious avant-garde cinema and the European realist cinema, to allow a more personal, lyrical, and expressive style (one nevertheless filled with complexity, and at times, contradiction) to emerge. Might a parallel gesture be feasible in contemporary documentary practices. What forms might it take? How does this relate to an engagement with politics. I will draw on my previous work, a cinematic documentary called *Algorithms* (2012, 96mins) on young blind chess players in India, and my current film project, a film installation on Martin Luther King for the Great North Museum Gallery in Newcastle, to illustrate and to work through some of the key themes in Pasolini's cinema of poetry.

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**Bio:** Ian McDonald is based at Newcastle University where he is the Director of the Research Centre for Film & Digital Media. He is also the founder and Director of Film@CultureLab, the home of film practice at the University. Ian debut feature documentary, *Algorithms* (2012, 96mins) was nominated in the Best Newcomer for the Griersons 2014: The British Documentary Awards.

### Roz Mortimer (University of Westminster)

“Pools of Affect: The Tableau Vivant as a Disruptive Space”

My research is focused on how the devices and methods of documentary theatre might have the potential to disrupt and challenge established notions of truth and authenticity when applied to documentary film. Taking van Alphen’s term *the Holocaust effect* as a starting point, I will demonstrate how theatrical strategies can question how history (and historiography) are constructed by destabilising the relationship between authenticity and experience.

Applying this to my practice has taken a variety of forms, from constructing a re-imagined forest as a stage set to writing the imagined testimony of a victim whose name I do not even know and re-creating the ‘Gypsy Camp’ at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the studio I am creating theatrical environments, which are re-enactments of my witness’s traumatic memories presented as tableaux vivant. These are physical spaces that are simultaneously real and imagined. In them, the traditional form of the tableau is subverted, with the subjective camera entering and roaming around the space while the actors remain static, frozen in time. We literally enter a simulacrum of her memory. These tableaux serve as punctuations in the film that pause or disrupt narrative, focus attention on specific [socio-political] gesture and operate as a space where affect can collect and become heightened.

**Bio:** Roz Mortimer is an artist-filmmaker and doctoral researcher at University of Westminster. Her experimental films have been shown widely around the world since 1995. Taking documentary methods as a starting point, she incorporates elements of fantasy in her work to create films that aim to present alternative understandings of society. Roz has a MA in Visual Sociology from Goldsmiths, University of London and has taught at universities in the UK and USA. [www.wonder-dog.co.uk](http://www.wonder-dog.co.uk)

### Fathima Nizzarudin (Jamia Millia Islamia University)

“Nuclear Hallucinations”

How does epistemological violence in the discourse of rationalist documentary (Renov, 2004) work in tandem with other acts of violence? This question was central to my practice based research, which attempts to undermine the pro-nuclear documentary narratives around the Indian nuclear project through the use of comic modes and irony. In the presentation I will share excerpts from *Nuclear Hallucinations*, the single screen film and performances around it that emerged out of my enquiry. Within the framework of ideas on politics and dissensus (Rancière, 2015) that informed my research, I will argue that there are many realities and documentaries have a role in constituting them. In the Indian context, police firing, documentary assertions and imprisonment of anti-nuclear activists work together to bring into being a pro-nuclear reality in which nuclear reactors work in perfect harmony with the environment and nuclear weapons tests are part of a scientific project to bring the nation to the path of progress and development. Using the notion of *Tamasha*, which in South Asia has diverse meanings including joke, farce as well as carnival, *Nuclear Hallucinations* explores the possibility of creating trouble within the pro-nuclear documentary iterations through improper repetitions. The register of *Tamasha* that *Nuclear Hallucinations* uses was developed in an interactive manner. However, instead of using VR or digital interactive technology, I relied on strategies from political street theatre in India to form this register. The paper will elaborate on the questions raised by this approach

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**Bio:** Fathima Nizaruddin is a filmmaker and researcher. Currently she works as an Assistant Professor at AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She is a doctoral candidate at Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (CREAM), University of Westminster, London. Her documentary work includes Talking Heads (muslim women), My Mother's Daughter, Another Poverty Film and Nuclear Hallucinations.

### Treasa O'Brien (University of Westminster)

“Making of’ as Primary Form – a Generative Reflexive Rhizomic Film Genre”

Can film still be a subversive art? How did ethics become the antimony of empathy? Can a film teach you how to watch it and include viewers as engaged agents rather than empathetic audience? My paper will trace methods of reflexivity in documentary making, with readings of films that tell the story of the story they tell, building a theory of what I call ‘making-of’ as a primary genre rather than as a derivative of another film. I will trace the histories of reflexive practice from Vertov through Brechtian influenced Cinema Verite to reality TV, drawing on Bill Nicholls, Jay Ruby, Laura Mulvey, Stella Bruzzi and Garnet C. Butchart.

I will theorise the making-of as a method. The making-of as a genre is usually associated with a type of film that documents the production of a feature film, and is usually seen as a derivative form, a secondary film premised on the existence of a main film. My research identifies films that generate themselves as independent making-ofs as a primary form. I call this method a generative, reflexive and rhizomic method of making. Drawing on Butler's and Deleuze's theories of performativity and of the rhizome and drawing also on narrative theory, I borrow the term ‘making of’ to re-invent it as a neologism for films that document and thus create themselves as the formal drive of the film.

This presentation focuses on films that use their own making as a main conceit, or become the impetus or motivation of the film e.g., *Salaam Cinema* (dir. Mohsen Makhbalhaf, 1990), *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* (dir. Robert Greaves. 1968), *Guerrillere Talks* (dir. Vivienne Dick, 1978), *Mysterious Object at Noon* (dir. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2000) and *The Machine That Makes Everything Disappear* (dir. Tinatin Gurchiev, 2012). If time permits, I will also show clips as examples. These films are not just reflexive in a modernist or ethical sense, but the reflexivity itself is what drives the film to generate itself, in a rhizomic manner of invention. Finally I will discuss the methodology of my own film-in-progress, *Town of Strangers* and explore the impetus of the film and how it might employ further strategies for making of and rhizomic reflexivity as it develops.

**Bio:** Treasa O'Brien is a filmmaker, activist, curator and final year PhD by practice researcher at Westminster University. She has made several documentaries, fictions and experimental films but is most interested when these distinctions collapse. Recent films have screened at London Film Festival, Athens Ethnographic Film Festival, Berlin British Shorts, Belfast Film Festival, Guth Gafa and Dublin International Film Festival. She has curated film programmes for Tate Modern, Artists Space New York, and ICA. She was Executive Director of Open City Docs Fest 2012-14 and is a co-curator of London's Essay Film Festival 2015-present. She has edited the monograph *Between Truth and Fiction: the Films of Vivienne Dick* (Lux and Crawford Art Gallery, 2010) and co-edited *Printed Project 15*. She has written for Sight & Sound, Visual Artists Ireland, Film Ireland, Oberhausen Catalogue, Circa and contributed to a chapter collectively written by the feminist performance activist group Speaking of IMELDA in the forthcoming *Routledge Guide to Radical Politics*, due 2017. [www.treasaobrien.wordpress.com](http://www.treasaobrien.wordpress.com)

### Miranda Pennell (Independent Scholar/Filmmaker)

“On Looking More Justly at an Image of the Past”

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Taking my reworking of images from the archive of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now 'BP') as a starting point, I consider some of the ways in which archival appropriation produces an order of historical meaning that registers through affect and the experiential. In particular I focus on what colonial photographs embedded within film 'do', and how they act on the viewer, and in particular, how they shape a viewer's experience of time, and the past in its relation to the present. Crucially, I show how the dynamic between various actors – the photographic subject, the hidden figure of the photographer, the archivist, the filmmaker and a contemporaneous film viewer, can be made palpable through the merging of still and moving images. I argue that when these trans-historical relationships become animated, they confront the contemporary viewer with questions of responsibility that pertain to being an onlooker in a situation of radical inequality. I will show how the moving image has the power to continually re-position the viewer in relation to the archival photograph, its subject, and to the past it purports to represent. I argue that this uprooting of the viewer offers a potent way of engaging with our collective troubled pasts, and in so doing, models an ethics of remembrance.

**Bio:** Miranda Pennell is an artist filmmaker. She originally trained as a dancer, made films about performance, and later studied visual anthropology at Goldsmiths College, London. Her films *Why Colonel Bunny Was Killed* (2010) and *The Host* (2015) rework archival material as the starting point for a reflection on the colonial imaginary. She received her PhD from the University of Westminster in 2015.

### Pratap Rughani (London College of Communication) Friday Evening Roundtable Participant

**Bio:** Pratap Rughani is an award winning documentary filmmaker, photographer, academic and writer. He has made over 25 films for BBC TV, Channel 4, The British Council and fine art spaces. His work is wide-ranging, from investigative and social stories to human interest and environmental films embracing observational, narrative, and artists' documentary film and photographic practices. His documentary film practice finds homes in broadcast, festival and artists' exhibition environments. Pratap is currently Course Director of the MA Documentary Film at the London College of Communication. He has written widely about the relationship between film, philosophy and the evolution of post-colonial thought, with an emphasis on questions of ethics in the documentary form.

### Eyal Sivan (Independent Filmmaker) Keynote Speaker

"Redemptory Spectacle or Emancipatory Experience: The Politics Behind the Character- and Story-Driven Documentary"

Documentary practice, its funding and distribution streams, are in permanent development and expansion. Never before was documentary so visible, accessible, diverse, popular and profitable as it is now. This apparent "success" is being analysed and justified by the growing emphasis on character and story driven documentary projects.

But also as signifying the emerging understanding of the possibilities offered to documentary practice by the emotional and sensorial engagement of the spectator. Consider the current focus on 'good characters' and 'dramatic narratives' or on 'emotional' and 'sensorial experience' as symptoms of documentary's transformation into popular entertainment or at least a mass-form. Rather than being a sign of de-politicisation of the documentary practice, I suggest that we are witnessing a redefinition of the political role of the documentary.

This redefinition of the political in/of documentary considers the representation of reality as a redemptory spectacle, marginalising the documentary as an emancipatory experience. In fact, documentary becomes a tool for the construction of binary oppositions: pleasure vs. thought; empathy vs. analysis. Documentary practice serves then only to mirror and amplify current political discourse.

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This 'entertainment trend' supported by the dominant actors, gatekeepers and financiers, represents a challenge to documentary practice as a social-political tool. It marginalises its function as a platform of research, of subjective expression, and a framework of criticality. But rather than considering this the end of an era, a shift, a transformation, or the advent of the dark days of the documentary practice, I would like to propose, using my on-going research "framing perpetrators" concerning the documentary representation of political evil, that the tension between empathy and politics and the question of the politics of empathy are at the heart of the documentary from its very inception.

The current hegemonic political trend expressed through mainstream documentary practice obliges us practitioners (and represents an opportunity) to redefine the critical role of a radical documentary practice.

**Bio:** Eyal Sivan is a Paris based documentary filmmaker and theorist. Known for his controversial films (*The Specialist* 1999, *Route 181*, with Michel Khleifi 2003, and *Jaffa: the Orange's Clockwork* 2009), Sivan has directed more than 10 internationally awarded political documentaries and produced many others. Worldwide theatrically released and broadcast on television, Sivan's works are also regularly exhibited in major art shows around the world, influencing cultural debates and inspiring scholars from various academic and artistic disciplines.

In parallel to his filmmaking and research practices, Sivan conducts an extensive practice of master classes and of teaching artistic research in and through cinema and visual media. He lectures on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict representation, documentary filmmaking and ethics, political crimes and representation, political use of memory, genocide and representation, and more.

He is the founder and artistic director of the Paris based documentary film production and distribution company, Momento! and the film distribution agency, Scalpel. He is the founder and Chief Editor of South Cinema Notebooks – a journal of cinema and political criticism edited by the Sapir academic college in Israel where he was a visiting professor for more than 10 years. After co-leading the MA program in Film, Video and New Media as Reader (associate professor) in media production at the school of Arts and Digital Industries (ADI), at the University of East London (UEL) Sivan is visiting professor and program advisor to the Masters in Film at the Netherlands Film Academy in Amsterdam as well as an Honorary Fellow at University of Exeter UK.

Currently Sivan leads three web-based interactive database documentary research projects: Common Archive Palestine 1948; Framing Perpetrators, and; Montage Interdit. For more information visit his website: [www.eyalsivan.info](http://www.eyalsivan.info)

### **Matt Soar (Concordia University, presenting with Danica Evering)**

"Migration, Media Archaeology, and the Montréal-Mirabel International Airport"

YMX is the unique airport code for the Montréal-Mirabel International Airport, which opened in October 1975. This ambitious project emerged in the late 1960s in conjunction with the economic optimism and global attention brought to the city of Montreal through major events such as Expo '67 and the 1976 Summer Olympics. Though promoted as a symbol of modernity, and destined to be the largest airport in the world, the airport swiftly became an economic albatross.

YMX is also the title of a new media installation currently in the final stages of development, featuring two Solari split-flap information displays which were recovered by the Montréal Signs Project prior to the passenger terminal's controversial demolition in 2016. A collaboration between artist Cheryl Sim, Matt Soar (Associate Professor of Communication Studies and founding director of the Montréal Signs Project), and research assistant Danica Evering, YMX explores parallel stories of displacement and forced migration: the thousands of people who arrived at Mirabel escaping war, disaster, or economic adversity; the two-decade organized protests of the farmers dispossessed of their land in the late 1960s



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to build the airport; the inter-species displacement of birds considered harmful to aircraft; and the Canadian government's ongoing refusal to recognize the preexisting land claims of the Mohawks of Kanesatake.

Visitors follow a labyrinth created with airport belt stanchions, encountering: a video montage of interviews and archival materials reflecting Mirabel's many intertwining narratives; *Lignes Aériennes*, a collection of poems about the airport by celebrated Montreal author Pierre Nepveu (whose family was one of many displaced by the Mirabel project); and, the two Solari displays chattering rhythmically in a dialogue composed from data on flights to and from Mirabel in its very brief heyday. Soar and Evering will discuss the overlapping cultural histories of politics and feeling activated through this alternative immersive installation, making a case for the documentary potential of new media installations through a complex nexus of intertwining narratives of arrivals and departures.

**Bio:** Matt Soar is an intermedia artist interested in media archaeology, database filmmaking and direct animation. From 2008-2016 he was co-developer of the Korsakow System, an opensource software for nonlinear storytelling. He is currently working on a web doc exploring the histories of signmaking and signmakers in Montréal.

### Brett Story (CUNY Graduate Center)

“Against a Humanizing Prison Cinema”

While more people are imprisoned in the United States than at any other time or place in the history of humanity, the prison has been rendered increasingly invisible with our social and geographic landscapes. How do our chosen tropes of representation help, or not, to upend the prison as a key ingredient of our common sense, and denaturalize it from both our social landscape and imagined horizon of possibility? Using the production of a recent documentary film, *The Prison in Twelve Landscapes*, as its anchor, this presentation offers a concrete case against “humanization” as the dominant framework of in prison imagery. *The Prison in Twelve Landscapes* is a film about the prison in which one never sees a prison. Instead, the film is organized as a cinematic journey through a series of landscapes across the United States where prisons do work and affect lives: an anti-sex offender pocket park in Los Angeles, a congregation of ex-incarcerated chess players shut out of the formal labor market, the overnight buses that carry visitors to far away prisons, and an Appalachian coal town betting its future on the promise of prison jobs, to name just a few. We not only find the prison and its logic operating in these spaces, but we're presented with a more complex picture of the different kind of work that prisons do, and don't do, than the rescue narratives of conventional prison films. In so doing it seeks not to appeal to the moral indignation of a spectating audience, but rather to implicate that audience in the carceral frameworks, whether ideological, affective, or politically economic, embedded throughout our social spaces and relations.

**Bio:** Brett Story is a writer and non-fiction filmmaker based in New York. Brett holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Toronto, and is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for Place, Culture and Politics at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York. Her most recent feature documentary, *The Prison in Twelve Landscapes*, is currently touring festivals internationally. Brett is a 2016-2017 Sundance Art of Nonfiction Fellow.

### Alia Syed (Independent Filmmaker/Artist) Featured Screening

*On a Wing and a Prayer* (2016) is a film inspired by the story of Abdul Rahman Haroun, who walked through the channel tunnel on 17th August 2015. Mr Haroun was held on remand for 5 months at Elmley Prison. He has since been released and granted Asylum but was charged under The Malicious damages act of 1861 for illegal entry into the UK. The language in this bylaw, when juxtaposed against

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the physical and emotional feat of traversing 30 miles of the Channel Tunnel supplies the terrain for this film. The journey is shot on two video cameras attached to the filmmaker's body. The first person view offered to the audience in the film invites a reciprocal investment in the physical and emotional exertion of the act; to sense with their whole bodies the relationship to the environment created by the cognitive dissonance at the heart of Europe's landscape.

**Bio:** Alia Syed's films have been shown at numerous institutions around the world including Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2012-13, 5th Moscow Biennale (2013); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2009); XV Sydney Biennale (2006); Hayward Gallery, London (2005); Tate Britain, London (2003); and Glasgow Museum of Modern Art (2002). She has also held several solo exhibitions at Talwar Gallery in New York and New Delhi.

Alia Syed's recent works combine her interest in storytelling with a compelling presentation of history as visual narrative. Her unique approach sutures different subject positions in relation to culture, diaspora and location. She was shortlisted for the 2015 Jarman Award and her latest film *On a Wing and a Prayer* was shown at the 2016 London Film Festival.

### Lizzie Thynne (University of Sussex) Symposium Organiser

**Bio:** Lizzie Thynne produces films for galleries, the web and television. Her work has been shown in major exhibitions, in international festivals and on Channel Four. Her latest film, *Brighton: Symphony of a City* (2016) is a modern take on the city film commissioned by the Brighton festival and made in collaboration with the composer Ed Hughes. Her feature documentaries, *On the Border* and *Playing a Part: the Story of Claude Cahun*, reflect her special interest in the often neglected role of women in history and the history of art. She explores inventive and challenging ways of representing the past that underline its importance and fascination for the present. She established the MA in Digital Documentary which she currently runs. She is the author of many essays on the surrealist artist, Claude Cahun, and has written on documentary ethics, research by practice, women's representation and employment in television and film.

### Lennaart Van Oldenborgh (Goldsmiths College)

"Memory and Montage in Mostar: re-reading the past in a southern Bosnian town"

Most moving images of conflict reach us packaged in news stories that, according to a common wisdom, form "the first draft of history". At the heart of their narrativisation is the process of montage, but can we think of uncut documentary rushes as a store of 'raw memory'? And how can we best characterise the relationship between memory and montage?

In 1993-94 I worked as a cameraman and editor for the UN mission in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), as part of a small 'UNTV unit' which made news stories about UNPROFOR's work. Early in 1994, I was assigned to film the reconstruction of a bridge in southern Bosnia, but got stranded in the besieged town of Mostar for a day, so I filmed 'everyday life' there instead – rushes that were never used.

I will present a pilot for an experimental documentary-in-process (as part of a practice-based PhD), bringing these historical rushes together with contemporary documentary images and sounds from Mostar, including reconstructions of the framing and camera movements of the original shots on location. I am juxtaposing various ways of framing the historical rushes in order to explore how it changes their reception in relation to both personal and collective memory.

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To interrogate the dominant misreading of the war as an 'ancient ethnic conflict', rather than as a very modern political conflict, I will trace other archive footage of the siege of Mostar, analysing the role of montage in the loss of narrative potentials in representations of this conflict, and considering the 'memoro-political' implications in the light of the persistent divisions in Bosnia, which are entrenched by the postwar settlement of 1995.

**Bio:** Lennaart Van Oldenberg is currently a part-time PhD candidate at Goldsmiths; working as documentary film editor for many years; produced and co-directed documentary films (a.o. Bitter Lemons, 2014, with Adnan Hadzi); published 'Performing the Real', in 'The State of the Real', 2007, I.B.Taurus); background in media arts (Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, exhibitions in Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, USA).