



## SESSION ABSTRACT

### **Dangerous Worlds: Encounters of Art and Violence**

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This session focuses on works of art and discusses how they can serve as sources for ethnography, be representations of memories and acts of violence and/or resistance. Art is relevant because it is relational and dependent on complex historical and socio-political processes. Art as a means of social communication and a powerful tool of socially engaged practices of interpretation and resistance reveals important aspect of human experiences of violence. Hence, we approach diverse works of art – in the ample sense of the word – that depict, describe, or narrate violent events. Pictures, paintings, films, performances, monuments, novels, poems, music and other creative products of human exertion offer profound views and detailed dissections of violent acts and processes, give insights into individual and social experiences of violence as well as into broader social, political and historical contexts in which violence occurs.

In this panel we engage with topics that analyse violence that in some way relates back to works of art and art that is prompted or inspired by acts of violence. An anthropological perspective, be it rather on a theoretical level or in a classical ethnographic setting, can enrich the at times estranged debates on art and on violence. Artistic representations of violence can be a tool of resistance as well as a provocation that leads to further conflicts, antagonism of groups or even further acts of violence. This dual position makes art an active agent, a communicative medium of resistance and a valuable tool for ethnographic research. Some of the questions we want to include in this session are: In what ways does art represent, transform or reinterpret (memories of) violence? How do diverse actors use art in order to resist violence? Or, in what ways is art mobilised as an act of violence itself?

We especially encourage contributions of young scholars working on the above-mentioned topics or research questions but also provide a podium for more experienced researchers. Since 2017, the research group "Art and Violence" serves as a platform for a deeper involvement with the theme of the session.

## SESSION SCHEDULE

### **Friday, September 21, 2018 | Slot 7 | Room 2**

Alenka Bartulovic & Miha Kozorog: *Punk against Institutionalized Boredom: Coping Strategies of Bosnian Refugees in Slovenia*

Alamira Samah F. Saleh: *Could We Never Stop Singing?! Music in the Egyptian Stifling Overall Sphere*

Stefan Khittel: *Marxist Aesthetics, by Comparison: Colombian and Philippine Guerrilla Groups and Their Approaches to Art*

Mariya Yakymakha: *Castigat Ridendo Mortem: Death vs. Laughter in Horror Movies*

### **Friday, September 21, 2018 | Slot 8 | Room 2**

Cheryl J. Fish: *Mining and (Re)Moval in Sápmi: Artistic Interventions into Extractivist Violence in Arctic FennoScandinavia*

Katja Seidel: *Wild Justice? H.I.J.O.S.' Street Activism between Art and Revenge*

Ulrike Davis-Sulikowski: *Trickster in Transfer: On Representing Collective Experience and Mythical Knowledge.*

Michael Schillmeier & Yvonne Lee Schultz: *'2Sweet2Kill' – The Art of Cosmopolitics*

### **Friday, September 21, 2018 | Slot 9 | Room 2**

Jaka Repic: *Artworks of Exile and Violence: Art and Cultural Production in Refugee and Diasporic Contexts*

Cristina Burke-Trees: *Broken Links: Archives of the Soul*

Melanie Sindelar: *Art for Art's Sake? Structural Violence and the Surveillance State in the Arab Gulf*

## SESSION PAPERS

### **Punk against Institutionalized Boredom: Coping Strategies of Bosnian Refugees in Slovenia**

*Bartulovic, Alenka (University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, SVN); Kozorog, Miha (University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, SVN)*

During the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina thousands of refugees, including many adolescents, found their temporary home in Slovenia's refugee centres. Although youngsters participated in schooling programmes in Slovenia, and were thus better integrated in the Slovenian society as were many adults, they were nevertheless influenced by repetitive schedules and boredom of socially marginalised refugee centres. This paper highlights the transformative power of art by concentrating on music/art collective Nešto između (Something in-between) and its artistic wing Sprung, formed by adolescent refugees during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in a refugee centre in Slovenia. Playing punk, making conceptual art and writing poetry were methods of transcending the repetitiveness of a secluded environment. The group managed to establish alliances with the underground scene in Slovenia and had shaken the established relations within and outside the refugee centre. Thus, the paper follows the impact of the refugee status on artistic practices and the integrative qualities of art in exile.

### **Could we Never Stop Singing?! Music in The Egyptian Stifling Overall Sphere**

*Saleh, Alamira Samah (Faculty of Mass Communication/ Cairo University, Giza, EGY)*

It is now seven years after the Egyptian revolution on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, a revolution that promised freedom for the people, human rights, social justice and stability. However, it has become clear that human security & social cohesion are not given to a new media practice in a new society under a new leader. Recent years witnessed more bitter and painful circumstances than Egypt ever knew before. Political dysfunction, political prisoners and crack down on civil rights are still pressing issues and arguably even worse.

Since 2011, music was a main unifying factor, building up long forms of resistance in Egypt. However, relatively few researchers have – in depth – looked into the role that music may play against the ideological rigidity, the ineffectiveness of the traditional-pro government media as means of opinion supervision and all such inadequacies.

Therefore, the current study seeks to address the following research questions: (1) what are the themes of the most prominent opposing music bands in Egypt? (2) What is their role in the Egyptian collective conscious and ways of soft resistance? (3) how can these songs help create the Egyptian's once again as a web of common identities? (4) What cultural and political tools do these songs use to encourage the audience's new collective actions even virtually via social media outlets? (5) How music can foster communities or networks of people over time that eventually can lead to collective action? (6) How the ethnographic approach to music engagement between listeners of text(s) could allow a better comprehension of this complex process of resistance?!

### **Marxist Aesthetics, by Comparison: Colombian and Philippine Guerrilla Groups and Their Approaches to Art**

*Khittel, Stefan (Universität Wien, Vienna, AUT)*

A positive identification with a guerrilla group is considered to be a necessary prerequisite for success in the battle for the hearts and minds of the civilian population. My contention is that Marxist guerrilla groups prefer certain expressions of art in order to form a group identity. Though different forms of art are put to use for this purpose, the strategies also vary from group to group. Whereas some focus on the violent side of their actions and aim at portraying them as a necessary tool for the improvement of society, others rather attempt to downplay or outright hide the violent side of the conflict. Moreover, the concrete art form may also have an effect on the type of coping with violent reality.

Photography employed by guerrillas in Colombia usually highlight the military aspect of the group, whereas film-material tends to depict apparently non-violent actions such as agriculture or dancing. The uses of music vary widely, sometimes it is used rather as distraction, sometimes as glorifying hymns of the armed-fight. In the Philippines Joma Sison aka *Amado Guerrero (Beloved Warrior)*, the leader of the Mao inspired revolution there, is also a poet and has published many poems on revolutionary topics and has become a role-model for other guerrillas. Murals and graffiti have become important means of transporting ideology in a contested environment. Though their artistic quality may be debatable – at least in some cases – their importance for conveying messages is out of question.

### **Castigat Ridendo Mortem: Death vs. Laughter in Horror Movies**

*Yakymakha, Mariya (Vienna University, Vienna, AUT)*

Since Aristotle's *Poetics* the literary and derivative art forms are ranked into high and low genres. The former include tragedy, epic and ode, the latter cover comedy, satire and adventure. Since 335 BC, the art dogma in the liberal arts has not undergone significant changes, while new forms of art have come to life, among others, cinema. In line with the post-colonial tradition to recognize a stand of the subjugated and the subaltern, the underappreciated film genres will be given voice, their subjectivity will be recognized, and the moved back art subjects will be elevated. The object of the present analysis is the combination of two undervalued genres of horror and comedy, which is performed on the basis of the New Zealand independent film piece *What We Do in the Shadows* (2014).

Departing from the existing discourse of history and criticism of horror and comedy film studies, the academic discussion is given an inter-disciplinary touch of mythology, psychology, anthropology, and global urban studies. The genre *mélange* is looked at from the standpoint of the audience examination as a historical anthropological analysis of the attitude to the “horror-comedy-watchers” in its evolution from the 1930s until today. The study of horror is tackled from the mythological perspective of the fear of death and other-worldly creatures as its natural extension (vampires, werewolves, and zombies), and the exploration of the underworld environment through the *katabasis* theme. Complexities of the modern urban life find their echo in the study of film and urban societies in a global context and production and in the exhibition of urban identities by way of example of vampires’ flattening situation. The created mythscape of reality and ordinariness of vampires and werewolves in everyday life of a big city falls under Joanna Overing’s and Mircea Eliade’s theoretical conceptions and is wrapped up by Benedict Anderson’s *imagined community*.

### **Mining and (Re)Moval in Sápmi: Artistic Interventions into Extractivist Violence in Arctic Fenno Scandinavia**

*Fish, Cheryl (Borough of Manhattan Community College, New York, USA)*

What are the effects of mining beneath the town of Kiruna in arctic northern Sweden where the drilling extends so deep that the foundations are shaking, forcing a removal of the city’s buildings, monuments, and citizens? How has industrial development in the Arctic areas of Finland, Russia, Sweden and Norway, known as Sápmi, created new forms of violent exploitation of land and resources as climate change intensifies? This talk discusses the ways in which Sami filmmakers and photographers, women from indigenous yet assimilated backgrounds, refigure traditional power structures of violence and the technocratic neoliberal policies towards mining that ignores the well-being of residents and indigenous cultural traditions.

Liselotte Wajstedt’s documentary films about Kiruna, include assorted stakeholders. With a father in the mines, and a Sami mother, Wajstedt in “Kiruna: Space Road” (2013) reveals a fascinating dialectic between freedom and dependency. In photographs of post-industrial landscapes Finnish Sami photographer/video artist Marja Helander evokes the terror of the sublime. Her work features active factories, ruins, refineries, polluting smoke stacks, and housing for workers, many in the Kola Peninsula of Russia. Her series “Silence” (2014) shares evocative environmental and cultural concerns with Wajstedt’s films, asking viewers to consider alienation, inertia, memory, and fear, to inadvertently challenge and resist the tourist’s aestheticizing gaze and the silent terror and violence of environmental destruction. In my talk, I will compare official narratives of extraction and utopia that minimize violence and destruction with the fractured, aesthetically provocative responses of these artists who use eco-media that enable indigenous people to reinterpret memories of violence based on their lived experience.

### **Wild Justice? H.I.J.O.S.’ Street Activism between Art and Revenge**

*Seidel, Katja (Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vienna, AUT)*

In Argentina in 1996, members of the human rights organisation H.I.J.O.S. invented the *Escrache* a form of street justice to publically out amnestied perpetrators of the last civil-military dictatorship in their own neighbourhoods. With carnevalesque protest marches, graffiti, leaflets and creative inversions of street signs that they designed together with a group of Argentine artists (GAC) activists demand ‘justice and punishment’. The activity applied in times of impunity is discussed in Buenos Aires as either of both, a highly effective practice of citizen participation or an illegitimate form of revenge or ‘wild justice’ (Francis Bacon).

Since 2006, trials started all over Argentina to bring to justice those responsible for past state terror, torture and killings. Since then, H.I.J.O.S. shifted their activism from the streets to the courtroom, working as lawyers and supporting the hearings with their testimonies. Having partly achieved its goal, the *Escrache* has since transformed and taken on new artistic and creative forms (such as a justice fun-fair at court or online *escrachés*), in which H.I.J.O.S. express the continuous need for social condemnation and citizen participation. Most recently, however, more traditional forms of the *Escrache* have seen some form of revival, as H.I.J.O.S. protest the increasingly common judgements, in which convicted mass-murderers are allowed to server their sentences in their own homes.

Presenting examples of photographs, leaflets and audio-visual documentation from my fieldwork in Buenos Aires and Tucumán as well as from online research, this paper discusses the *Escrache* in its many artistic manifestations and the continuities, meanings and effects of the *Escrache*. I then explore analytically the concept of wild justice and its applicability and usefulness to the Argentine case. I end my presentation by inviting the audience to share their reflections on philosophical and artistic forms of resistance between vengeance, violence and justice.

### **Trickster in Transfer: On Representing Collective Experience and Mythical Knowledge.**

*Davis-Sulikowski, Ulrike (Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, AUT)*

This contribution explores modes of expressing violence, collective historical and contemporary experiences of it, in popular visual media. An exciting example is the recent TV-Series ‘American Gods’ (USA, 2017) which applies mythical codes and narratives in current technologies of visualization. Of particular interest here is the figure of the Trickster, who is cross-culturally connected with specific concepts of violence and constitutes a key point for discussing notions and connotations of violence in general as well as in a particular socio-cultural context. In ‘American Gods’ the experience of slavery, the Middle Passage and the present in the case of the African-American Diaspora are, among other instances, represented and encoded in Ananse, the Ghanaian version of the trickster. People are thus connected and related, anchored and interwoven, and their bodies located in space, time and socio-cultural experience – “We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe” (Fanon).

## **'2Sweet2Kill' - The Art of Cosmopolitics**

Schillmeier, Michael (University of Exeter, Exeter, GBR), Schultz, Yvonne Lee (Berlin)

Weapons, such as pistols, are profound, more or less mundane techno-moral objects of conflict, destruction and war. The use of weaponry unfolds a way of dealing with differences, the enactment of the 'either-or', for which the production of victims is part of the solution. In this presentation we explore whether and how the techno-moral *victimology of weaponry* can be redesigned and become a playful and non-violent source of engaging with differences.

This paper discusses the performance of 'artful contrasts' that: a) re-contextualize weapons, and; b) rematerialize weapons whereby techno-objects of war may compose novel 'percepts' (Deleuze & Guattari) and enact disruptive but playful scenarios, creating events of hesitation, affection, doubt, questionability, insecurities, uncertainties and controversies. The paper engages with such artful contrasts in everyday spaces (e.g. in restaurants, playing grounds, or family life) 'bringing into disclosure an ingredient (e.g. violence, weapons and war like situations, power relations, desires and imaginations) that both belongs to the territory and connects with an outside against which this territory protects itself' (Stengers 2008: 42).

The presentation draws on video-ethnographic and photographic material from Yvonne Lee Schultz's work as well as from an on-going collaboration of Schillmeier with Lee Schultz, which visualizes and discusses the presence of violence in social spaces where it is meant to be absent. As such, the paper unfolds the collaboration between art, cosmopolitical sociology and empirical philosophy to experiment with *the art of cosmopolitical practice*. The latter tries to provoke affective relations that aim "to 'slow down' reasoning and arouse a slightly different awareness of the problems and situations mobilizing us" (Stengers 2010). The collaboration with art suggests a speculative, cosmopolitical research agenda as an experimental and nonviolent form of intervention that disrupts the fragile normalcy show of the every-day and the lures of the 'either or'.

## **Artworks of Exile and Violence: Art and Cultural Production in Refuge and Diasporic Contexts**

Repic, Jaka (University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, SVN)

The presentation aims at addressing art and cultural production in refugee and diasporic contexts and discusses possibilities of its theoretical framing. Studies of refugee, migrant and diasporic creativity has been frequently captured in rigid identitarian interpretative frameworks and is often addressed as preservation of national and ethnic identity, whereas other dimensions of art and creativity among migrants - exploring and representing personal and collective experiences, e.g. of violence, exile, migration, living in diasporas, home-making and identity formation - are often overlooked. Addressing these questions, I will present artworks of a number of Slovenian artists in Argentina, which reveal a marked ambivalence of artists' inclusion into two social spaces that influence genres, styles and themes of their creativity, often connected to violence, war, exile, homeland and life in diaspora.

## **Broken Links: Archives of the Soul**

Burke-Trees, Cristina (Independent, Exeter, GBR)

The present flow of migration presents us with a distinctly visible disconnect to ancestry and heritage or 'the archives of the soul', which one could argue is purely a microcosm of the emerging era of broken links across the globe.

The material presence of marks, imprints, art objects and cultural embodiment serve as a link to our internal and external perception of self and the other. Simultaneously it embeds in and reawakens sensory experiences from the archive of narratives within us and our relationship to the material world about us, which is essential to guide our temporal being in the present while also enabling us to imagine a future.

Particularly acute in immigrant and refugee populations is the sudden disruption and disconnect to the lived and shared archive of their souls, which often leads to a succession of adverse conditions of feeling isolation, suffering, cultural invisibility and a sense of personal and social non-existence. This project is speculating that humanities' compulsion to materialise memories through sensory objects, artefacts, marks, songs or artistic expression of any kind by the individual or communally. It may be seeking to bridge this severely disrupted sense of time and space, with an inherent need of proof of existence of the self through the objectification of memory, therefore re-enabling the flow of the more than human life-sustaining archives of the soul of human existence.

An abundance of artful expressions and disruptions, originating from a deeply felt bodily sensation of inert violation, are ever present in the global landscape. Next to historical evidence provided the paper discusses self-generated data from migration life in Athens to support and illustrate the argument outlined.

## **Art for Art's Sake? Structural Violence and the Surveillance State in the Arab Gulf**

Sindelar, Melanie Janet (Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, AUT)

The Arab Gulf states were relatively untouched by the violent uprisings of the Arab Spring that affected so many of the governments in the region, and it could be argued similarly that the contemporary art scene in these countries, therefore, did not artistically respond to state violence in their respective residencies. Based on fieldwork conducted between 2015 and 2017, this paper argues that contemporary art output nevertheless has engaged with state violence, albeit on different levels. Although panoptic governments in the Gulf may limit the way artists can express dissent, these artists creatively engaged with violent politics nevertheless, even if they describe their artworks as art for art's sake. While many of these artworks do not engage with blunt acts of street violence or revolution, they critique the structural and symbolic dimensions

of violence prevalent in these states, including the formation of leadership cults, exclusive national identities, and the kafala system that regulates migration to many Gulf countries. They do so however in a way that carefully avoids state surveillance of their art-output, even if that means that the scope of their messages remains circumscribed. In this way, these artworks also resist being relegated *prima facie* to a resistance paradigm, which has become particularly widespread in the interpretation of cultural productions and artworks from the Middle East.

In this paper, I argue that investigating this art production can provide a more varied understanding of creative engagement with violence that goes beyond popular framings of revolutions and violent eruptions through which the Middle East has so often been framed.