

The logo consists of several overlapping diagonal lines in grey, black, and yellow, creating a stylized 'X' or star-like shape.

PALESTINE
FILM
FOUNDATION

PALESTINE AND THE MOVING IMAGE

International conference in association with the
Centre for Palestine Studies at the London Middle East Institute, SOAS

SATURDAY MAY 11, 2013

10am - 6pm

KHALILI LECTURE THEATRE

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

10:00 **Registration, tea and coffee**

10:30 **Opening address**

10:45 **FROM THE COLONIAL GAZE TO THE POLITICS OF SELF-REPRESENTATION**

Panel chair: Dina Matar,

Senior Lecturer & Director of the Centre for Media and Film Studies, SOAS

Side by Side in Peace: Tolerance, Terrorism, and the “Street Scene in Jerusalem”

Francis Gooding

As if they do not Exist

Irit Neidhardt

Form vs. Function: Experimentation in the Militant Cinemas of the 1970s

Nick Denes

Beyond Images of Claims

Nadia Yaqub

12:45 **Lunch**

13:45 **INSURGENT GESTURES IN RECENT / CONTEMPORARY CINEMA**

Panel chair: Alisa Lebow

Senior Lecturer in Screen Media, Brunel University

Aesthetic Resistance in the Films of Elia Suleiman

Refqa Abu-Remaileh

Reviving the Palestinian Narrative on Film: Joint Productions as a Form of Negotiating the Future through the Past and Present

Haim Bresheeth

The Credits of My Next Movie

Kamal Aljafari

15:15 **Tea and coffee**

15:45 **VIDEO, INSTALLATION, AND ALTERNATIVE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE MOVING IMAGE**

Panel chair: Nirmal Puwar

Senior Lecturer in Sociology & Co-Director of the Methods Lab, Goldsmiths College

Presenting Absence: Darwish in Dialogue With the Palestinian Moving Image

Anna Ball

The Impossibility of Return in ‘Enter Ghost, Exit Ghost’

Bashir Makhoul

Doppleganging

Basma Alsharif

Screens of Struggle: Palestinian Video Experiences

Helga Tawil-Souri

17:45 **Closing remarks**

ABSTRACTS

Side by Side in Peace: Tolerance, Terrorism, and the “Street Scene in Jerusalem”

Francis Gooding

Taking the **World Pictorial News** newsreel of the 1946 King David Hotel bombing (‘Tragedy in Jerusalem’) as its central subject, this paper examines the report as a ‘type specimen’ in the understanding of the official language for reporting and coding terrorism at the birth of the modern ‘mass casualty’ era. The paper relates the news report to the earlier history of Jerusalem on film, seeking to trace visible filmic and narrative threads back to the actions of General Allenby during the first minutes of the British Mandate, and hoping to show that in this context descriptions of violence and tolerance share the same historical root.

Francis Gooding is a writer and researcher who has published widely on film, music and art. He worked as an author and researcher on the Colonial Film: Images of the British Empire project (colonialfilm.org.uk), focusing on amateur film, missionary film, and films of Palestine and Aden. He is a contributing editor to **Critical Quarterly**, and the author of **Black Light: Myth and Meaning in Modern Painting** (2009).

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As if they do not Exist

Irit Neidhardt

For over 150 years, photographs, and later films, of Palestine have been commercially distributed throughout the Western world. Only in the late 1960s would Palestinians themselves begin producing moving images of their own, and on their own terms. By this point a certain set of imageries regarding Palestine had become widespread and familiar abroad. Reflecting on this history, the paper discusses those elements that Palestinian filmmakers added to this preceding canon of imageries, and asks to what extent audiences have been willing to alter their views of Palestine as a consequence.

Irit Neidhardt was born in Germany and brought up between Germany and Israel/Palestine, where her parents worked. Since 1995 she has taught and curated in the field of Middle Eastern cinema, founding specialist distribution company MEC Film in 2002. Her production credits include the award-winning documentary **Recycle** (Mahmoud al-Massad, 2007), as well as **The One Man Village** (Simon el-Habre, 2008), and **Gate #5** (Simon el-Habre, 2011). She has published and presented widely on Middle Eastern cinema, as well as on left-wing politics in Germany, Palestine, and Israel.

Form vs Function: Experimentation in the Militant Cinemas of the 1970s

Nick Denes

From 1968 to 1978, a large and varied body of film was produced in differing forms of contact with the Palestinian revolution. Some was made by cadre linked to the PLO and its factions, some by Arab directors drawn to the liberation struggle as a harbinger of regional change, and some by international figures seeing the Palestinian cause as a vanguard of global revolution. Citing examples from each such sphere, this paper asks how the altering course of the revolutionary project was reflected in the cinematic forms emerging in the period. It emphasises the tension artists faced when reconciling a functional need for films suited to propagating political ideas with the impetus for formal experimentation and creative autonomy associated with the revolutionary ethos.

Nick Denes is an independent researcher and curator. With Khaled Ziada, he co-founded the Palestine Film Foundation in 2004, and has since managed the organisation and its annual London Palestine Film Festival. He is a founding member of UK-Palestinian art collective Subversive Film, a curatorial group specialising in militant moving images from the 1970s.

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Beyond Images of Claims

Nadia Yaqub

In **Newstime**, shot during the al-Aqsa Intifada, Azza El-Hassan wanted to challenge the association within the global imaginary between Palestinians and violence. What she found, however, as the stories she followed fell apart during the mounting conflict, was that she, too, was incapable of producing images free of violence and destruction. In this presentation I analyze how Palestinian filmmakers have grappled with the necessity and limitations of images of violence in light of Ariella Azoulay’s argument for the citizenship of photography. What constraints does the claims-making described by Azoulay place on the potential relationship between spectators and photographed victims of violence?

Nadia Yaqub is associate professor of Arab Culture in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is the author of **Pens, Swords and the Springs of Art: the oral poetry dueling of weddings in the Galilee** (Brill, 2006) and numerous articles and book chapters on Arabic literature and film. She is currently writing a book on Palestinian cinema.

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Aesthetic Resistance in the Films of Elia Suleiman

Refqa Abu-Remaileh

Elia Suleiman's films defy what they might 'tell' us about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Instead the viewer is transported into a realm where stories are told not through speech and dialogue, but rather through silences, absences, and disappearances. Foregrounding a discussion of aesthetics and narrative techniques, this paper explores the subversion of conventional narrative forms in Suleiman's work, relating this in turn to the question of resistance in the director's films.

Refqa Abu-Remaileh is a film and literature scholar whose work focuses on intersections between modern Arabic literature and cinema. After completing an undergraduate degree in literature at the University of British Columbia, she took up Modern Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford University, completing her PhD in 2010 with a thesis examining the films of Elia Suleiman and the novels of Emile Habibi. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Freie Universität Berlin, where she is developing a book based on her doctoral work.

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Reviving the Palestine Narrative on Film: Joint film productions as a form of negotiating the future through the past and present

Haim Bresheeth

For many decades, the Zionist narrative has been the hegemonic historical narrative on Palestine. Much of this dominance has been attained through cinematic texts. The urgency of telling the narrative of ethnically-cleansed Palestine, has been pronounced since the first Intifada, and has intensified since. This need for cultural resistance has been shared by Palestinian and certain Israeli filmmakers connected to Palestinian intellectual and political circles. Such links have resulted in a number of joint projects, notably **Route 181** (2003, Eyal Sivan & Michel Khleifi) and the recent **5 Broken Cameras** (2012, Emad Burnat & Guy Davidi). Exploring these films and their reception, the presentation relates the cultural and political comingling prefigured in these shared projects to reflections on the prospects for a future society in which wider communities might in turn negotiate a radically new postcolonial relationship.

Haim Bresheeth is a filmmaker, photographer and film studies scholar. His films include **State of Danger** (with Jenny Morgan, 1989), and **London is Burning** (2011). He has published widely on cinema, in both Hebrew and English. He was Professor of Film Studies and Chair of Cultural and Media Studies at the University of East London until retiring in 2012. He currently teaches film at SOAS.

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The Credits of My Next Movie

Kamal Aljafari

This presentation tackles the idea of using the credits from Israeli films shot in Jaffa for my own film currently being created. By projecting this re-appropriated footage of the city, overlaid with the names of those who worked in each of these Israeli film units, 'The Credits of My Next Movie' suggests a roll-call of those who have taken part in the cinematic occupation of Jaffa.

Kamal Aljafari is a graduate of the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne, where he received the visual arts award of the city of Cologne in 2004. His films include **The Roof** (2006), which won the Best International Video Award at the 2008 Images Festival in Toronto, and **Port of Memory** (2009), which received the Prix Louis Marcorelles. He was a featured artist at the 2009 Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, and in 2009-2010 was the Benjamin White Whitney fellow at Harvard University. He is currently head of the directing program at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin.

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Presenting Absence: Darwish in Dialogue With the Palestinian Moving Image

Anna Ball

In his prose-poem **Absent Presence** (2006), the revered Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish identified a source of tension at the heart of the Palestinian imagination: not between Arab and Jew, nor between Israeli and Palestinian but between presence and absence. This paper seeks to translate Darwish's poetic meditations into a visual context by exploring the dialectical interplay between presence and absence in a range of recent works of Palestinian video art. Drawing on Derrida's theories of the 'spectral' and on the notion of the 'archaeological imagination', this paper seeks to reveal the complex ways in which Palestinian video artists are employing the moving image in order to visualise that which is absent, and in doing so, are establishing a vibrant aesthetics of 'the present' in motion.

Anna Ball is Senior Lecturer in Postcolonial Studies in the Department of English, Media and Culture at Nottingham Trent University, and the author of **Palestinian Literature and Film in Postcolonial Feminist Perspective** (Routledge, 2012). Interested in theoretical questions of space, border-crossing and embodiment, she is currently working on a new monograph, **The Body in Flight**, which explores the gender politics of mobility in narratives of refugee experience.

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The Impossibility of Return in 'Enter Ghost, Exit Ghost'

Bashir Makhoul

In this presentation, I relate the still to the moving image in the context of my recent large-scale installation **Enter Ghost, Exit Ghost**. In this work, I use lenticular micro-lens panels to conjure an illusory (and allusory) space into reality. The walls are clad with images of other walls that are constantly shifting as one moves through them, emphasising our entry into the unreliable domain of the image. The work is inspired by Hamlet and by the dystopias of video games and military training models, particularly the Israeli army's building of an 'Arab town' in which to train. Describing the composition in **Enter Ghost, Exit Ghost**, of a 'spectral space' effected by the viewer's own movement, I focus on ideas of repetition and return in the ontology of the ghost, testing Derrida's observation that 'a spectre is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back.' Spectral spaces are thus designed with the movement of people in mind – they direct flow, ease or interrupt movement, and so produce a shifting architectural spectacle.

Bashir Makhoul was born in the Galilee and has been based in the UK for the past 18 years. His art work is exhibited and collected widely internationally, and will feature at this year's Venice Biennale. He has contributed to numerous arts publications, including **Near** (2004), **Return** (2007), **Return in Conflict** (2007), and **Dust and Dispute** (2008). He is presently Head of the Winchester School of Art at the University of Southampton.

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Doppleganging

Basma Alsharif

I recently developed a curiosity for the subject of bilocating – as a subjective experience I want to convey through film, such that a film might materialise the experience of bilocating. This project is still in progress, but its conceptual development has led me to wonder if I haven't always made films whilst bilocating: while being an American in Palestine, or a Palestinian in Lebanon... My position as a filmmaker investigating the ways in which we try to understand Palestine currently, historically, and subjectively, is that I am always representing something apprehended from multiple vantage points. There has not been one Palestine since its occupation, but rather many places that exist there and elsewhere. As such, being a Palestinian in the diaspora who grew up nomadically, I am simultaneous from nowhere and everywhere. Reflecting on this condition in my practice as an artist, I will discuss the strategy of bilocating as a means

of representing Palestine, myself, and a non-place that exists everywhere.

Basma Alsharif was born in Kuwait, to Palestinian parents. She received an MFA in 2007 and has since worked as a visual artist nomadically, moving from Cairo, Beirut, Sharjah, and Amman to Paris where she is currently based and represented by Imane Fares Gallery.

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Screens of Struggle: Palestinian Video Experiences

Helga Tawil-Souri

This paper situates Palestinian cinema and film within the changing media landscape and geographic and political contexts that have characterised the past twenty years. It holds that cinema belongs to a larger landscape of screens and scenes of political struggle. By approaching cinema as one video experience amongst others, the paper places film in conversation with other major media transformations over this period, discussing, amongst other developments, the emergence of dozens of private television stations in the West Bank, the exponential growth of pirate videos, the phenomenon of 'martyr' videos, and the role of the internet as a key moving image platform.

Helga Tawil-Souri is an Associate Professor in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University (NYU). Her research focuses on the intersections of spatiality, technology, and politics in the Middle East and especially in Israel/Palestine. As well as numerous academic articles, she has directed experimental documentaries and produced a body of photographic work on Palestine/Israel and beyond. She is the author of the forthcoming book **Digital Occupation: Infrastructures as Borders in Palestine/Israel**, and a co-editor of the forthcoming volume **The Handbook of Media and Culture in the Middle East**.

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