

“Nothing to see here”

Refusing, Protesting, Collaborating, Playing

An interdisciplinary seminar on just audio-visual methodology



Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025

Venue: Aula Błękitna, Collegium Maius, Kopernika 11, Opole

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Social minorities, vulnerable groups, non-human subjects and other marginalized categories of humans and non-humans face multifold exclusion from visual representations, not only are they portrayed less, but also when they are, they tend to be gazed at from the power positions, exploited or misrepresented. This seminar explores ways of inclusion of the underrepresented groups in documentary filmmaking and photography. Dwelling into resistance, playful expressions and co-creation this seminar inquires into just oriented visual methodologies and techniques. By inviting and centering scholars and filmmakers critical of Eurocentric traditions, we consider the intersections of decolonial epistemologies and the specific historical and geopolitical dynamics of Central and Eastern Europe.

10:00 Welcome and Introduction

Michał Wanke, Department of Cultural Studies, University of Opole, Poland

Opening talk: *"Seeing and being seen in the periphery: transnationality, resistance and stigma in the CEE"*

Michał Wanke is a sociologist and an Assistant Professor at the Department of Cultural Studies of the University of Opole, Poland. He studies people who use drugs, especially cannabis in non-Western contexts. He also conducts research on migration, most recently as a postdoctoral fellow at the Cracow University of Economics in a Horizon Europe PREMIUM_EU project.

10:20 - 11:10 Presentation and Screening

Hernán Barón Camacho, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales Quito, Ecuador

Film: *Chroniques d'un Film Colonial*, 2021, 15'

"Notes on a Colonial Film" is composed from several Belgian colonial films that span from 1926 to 1958, just two years prior to the Congolese independence. Repurposing archival images from the explorations of Belgian filmmakers in Congo, the film critically reflects on how the colonial gaze invents its subjects and builds otherness.

The optical unconscious and the archive

Otherness emerges at the shifting frontier between the self and the Other—between "us" and "them." The Other is not simply encountered, but actively constructed by the self as a means of reaffirming its own identity. In this process, the Other becomes a screen onto which the self projects its fantasies, fears, and desires. Yet this screen also functions as a mirror. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's notion of the optical unconscious, this talk revisits key ideas involved in re-visioning archival films of the Belgian Congo (1908–1960), as re-edited in *Chroniques d'un Film Colonial* (2021). Through a playful yet critical lens, it explores how images of the Other function not only as projections, but also as mirrors that reflect—and potentially unsettle—the self.

Discussion

Hernán Barón Camacho is a Colombian artist, filmmaker, and researcher interested in the relationships between fiction and document, story and history, film archives and home movies, selfhood and otherness. He studied Social Communication at the Universidad del Valle (2009). He completed the Erasmus International Master's Degree in Documentary Film Directing, Doc Nomads (2020), and the Master's Degree in Visual Anthropology from FLACSO Ecuador (2025). He directed the feature-length documentary *Ejercicios para la Memoria* (2018). He is co-founder of the Artistic Collective La Nocturna and co-creator of the digital platform *amorfatalp.com*, a website that hosts various projects that address image (sound) from a critical, practical, and pedagogical perspective.

11:10 - 11:30 Break

11:30 - 12:20 Presentation and Screening

SidyLamine Bagayoko, Université Yambo Ouologuem of Bamako, Mali

Film: *Mari* and *Faje* as masculine and feminine monuments worshipped in Sagabala

Discussing **Mari** and **Faje** I aim to expand the concept of collaborative visual anthropology. A de-colonial approach in visual anthropology values diverse knowledge systems and perspectives, emphasizing the importance of ethical research practices that prioritize reciprocity and collaboration. It is not only the researchers deciding the research topic, but the communities can decide which topic is interesting for them to be treated with the camera. **Mari** and **Faje** focuses on ritualized social practices with specific objects considered powerful, sacred and having special requirements in their cultural and belief context. These two small monuments are a sacred worship place where people go and ask for their wishes. Visual ethnographic data has been shot, edited and safeguarded in order to improve the knowledge on these components of the Malian cultural heritage.

Discussion

SidyLamine Bagayoko is an anthropologist with expertise in visual and digital communication (film). He is lecturer at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Bamako, Mali. He has also directed several research films related to education and poverty in Mali. His research focuses on visual anthropology, economic anthropology, environmental anthropology, urban poverty and education in Mali. He attended UiT.no the Arctic University of Norway, (Tromsø) where he did a Master in Visual Cultural Studies at the Institute of Social Anthropology of the Faculty of Social Sciences. After graduating from the University of Tromsø in 2009, he started his PhD studies in Social Anthropology and Visual Communication at the University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis currently Côte d'Azur in southern France where he received a Doctorate in 2014. SidyLamine Bagayoko is currently the coordinator of a Master programme called Collaborative Visual Anthropology and the head of the Laboratory -LAVISCOL- Laboratoire Anthropologie Visuelle Collaborative in the University of Bamako.

12:20 - 12:30 Break

12:30 - 13:00 Screening

Monika Febriana, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia

Film: Under the Feathers (work in progress)

In the small Polish city of Opole, the tradition of pigeon keeping quietly lives on. This short documentary peels back the feathers of what might seem like a simple hobby in a deeper point of view: routine, patience, ambition, and the unspoken bonds between human, animals, and nature.

Monika Febriana is a Communication Science student of Airlangga University, Indonesia. Monika views filmmaking as a way to communicate creatively about things that are often overlooked in everyday living.

13:00 - 13.30 Presentation

Mytha Eliva Veritasia and Satrya Wibawa, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia

Talk: The Wicked Witch of Southeast Asia: The Ageing Female Grotesque in Indonesian Horror Cinema

Indonesian horror cinema is often cited for its uniquely terrifying portrayals of ghosts, particularly through the depiction of female spirits with grotesque and monstrous features. These female characters are frequently presented with an emphasis on their sexuality – a sexuality which is exploited within the narrative framework to add layers of horror, but also to provide a social discourse. Scholarly discussions on women in horror cinema often examine how these representations focus on the female body and maternal figures as sources of both fascination and fear, positioned as they are as catalysts of supernatural curses within the film's storyline. Women's bodies are thus dissected to find clarity between two contrasting elements: death and birth, infancy and old age, the womb and the grave, all of which are represented in singular bodies (Ayun, 2015; Prawiranauli, Aritonang & Wahjudianata, 2018; Pangastuti, 2019; Larasati & Wahid, 2020; Pasaribu & Meilia, 2022). However, questions around the issues of ageism in such portrayals of female ghost characters are often overlooked, despite numerous Indonesian horror films featuring these older female characters in their narratives. Grandmothers and mothers-in-law in contemporary cinema, such as in the Indonesian films *Pengabdian Setan* (Satan's Slave) and *Perempuan Tanah Jahannam* (Impetigor), appear to be vengeful and hateful characters who cause horrific chaos. Using discourse analysis, this article seeks to investigate the discourse of ageing female bodies in Indonesian horror films. This chapter argues that older female characters in horror films are invariably portrayed as freaks which exist outside of society and social norms, and it is this that makes them terrifying abominations which need to be conquered. They do not only represent the grotesqueness of female bodies, but also reinforce that the ideal female body is one which is ageless and eternally youthful – a point emphasised by the older characters often masquerading in the bodies of young attractive ladies who seduce the protagonist through their visual charm.

Mytha Eliva Veritasia is a lecturer in the Communication Department, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga. She is passionate about studying and teaching media and cultural studies, particularly in the representation of gender and the discourse of the body. In 2017, she graduated with an MA focusing on gender and media from the University of Sussex. She currently teaches a number of interdisciplinary courses, which include 'Media, Gender and Identity', 'Cyberculture', 'Public Speaking', and 'Marketing Communication'.

Break 13:30 - 13:50

13:50 - 14:40 Presentation and Screening

Clara Kleininger-Wanik, University of Opole

Talk and screening: Films for the Pluriverse: a Multispecies Collaborative Visual Ethnography on the Mexican Pacific Coast

This is a work in progress screening of the collaborative ethnographic film **Nahual**, which aims to represent Afro-Mexican and Indigenous ecological knowledge in the Chacahua-Pastoria lagoons, on the Pacific coast of Mexico. I propose the pluriverse, as described by authors Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser, as a way to understand the encounter of knowledges in the lagoon, which encompasses conservation practices determined by Chacahua being a national park and carried out by the community as well as the ontology of being *tonal*, sharing life with an animal. In particular I will discuss how the collaborative approach modelled as *anthropologie partagée* and demanded by Faye Ginsburgh as 'aesthetics of accountability' have worked out in practice for representing the pluriverse on film.

Clara Kleininger-Wanik, visual anthropologist and filmmaker, researches and films on topics of multispecies relationships (in Mexico, in Romania) and migration (in Poland). Clara is currently a PhD candidate in Film by Practice at the University of Exeter and London Film School (UK). Clara studied an MA in Visual Anthropology at the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology, University of Manchester and the DokPro course at the Wajda Film school in Warsaw. Several of Clara's films have been shown in international festivals, her feature-length documentary *No Elephant in the Room*, which questions human and more-than-human relationships at the Bucharest State Circus, was awarded special mention at the Krakow Film Festival 2023 (Poland).

14:45 - 15:15 Presentation (online)

Abraham Nahón, Universidad Autónoma “Benito Juárez” de Oaxaca, México

Talk: Research and Curatorial Project: “Paths of Memory. Photography and Community.”

This research works with photographers and researchers from the Oaxaca region to become aware of silenced stories and memories, and to recognize the uniqueness that has been denied by the hegemony of a centralism which disregards — by omitting, simplifying, or exoticizing — the cultural heterogeneity and plurality across the country. The project analyzes decolonial methodologies and forms of image-making in contrast to the visual extractivism suffered by pluricultural regions (Indigenous and Afro-Mexican). Six long-term photographic projects are addressed, focused on the construction of memory from within the communities and regions of Oaxaca, including their diaspora. The purpose is to share these situated, authorial perspectives, which — stemming from belonging, immersion, or closeness to the territories and their people — are not only able to produce images of communal life, but also to gradually shape a collective, plural, and visual memory of what is yet to come. The display of the exhibited work, the stories and contexts that engage with the photographs, as well as the methodological and research proposal presented by this exhibition, invite a rethinking of the ethical, cultural, and social ways in which a visual memory — one that is constantly in dispute — can be formed.

Abraham Nahón is Professor-Researcher at the Institute for Humanities Research of the Autonomous University Benito Juárez of Oaxaca (IIH-UABJO), Mexico. He teaches and conducts research on art, photography, and society from the perspectives of history, anthropology, and sociology. He led the creation of the “Doctorate in Education, Art, and Culture,” and he is part of Mexico’s National System of Researchers. His work involves studies in Indigenous, Afro-Mexican, and mestizo communities. He has taken part in academic residencies at the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina), the University of Finis Terrae (Santiago, Chile), the Federal Fluminense University (Brazil), the Mora Institute, the Directorate of Historical Studies at INAH in Mexico City, and the University of Sciences and Arts of Chiapas (UNICACH). For over 20 years, he has collaborated on and written more than 25 books, working on editorial and research projects related to Mexico and Latin America.

15.15 - 15.30 CONCLUSION