Visualising Transnational Solidarities
Workshop

5th-7th June 2024
University of St Andrews

Convened by Vindhya Buthpitiya and Viviane Saglier

Supported by the British Academy Early Career Researcher Network

"Our weapons in everyone's hands," cover of al-Kawakeb no. 277, 20 November 1956, Egypt
Overview

Resistance print cultures, in the form of magazines, posters, pamphlets and other ephemera played a crucial role in coordinating, maintaining, and organizing anticolonial movements and solidarities in the global south. While a shift to the digital might suggest imminent obsolescence to associated socialities, practices and technologies, activists, artists, and historians have demonstrated a renewed investment in the revival of these media formats, aesthetics and imaginaries that developed transnationally across political groups during the decolonisation era.

The workshop aims to bring together ECR researchers to interrogate the visual remnants of colonialism in the United Kingdom and explore past and present histories of solidarity print cultures with the aim of building a collaborative space and community to explore anti-colonial visual solidarity work.

Schedule

Day 1 | 5th June 2024

16.00PM-17.30PM: Keynote address by Palestinian artist printmaker Leena Nammari: *Everything is political, decolonisation is an ongoing process.*

17.30PM – 19.00PM: Welcome drinks reception

Day 2 | 6th June 2024

9.15AM-9:45AM: Morning coffee

9.45AM-10.00AM: Introduction

Vindhya Buthpitiya
Viviane Saglier

10.00AM-12.00AM: Presentations

Shamara Wettimuny: *Memoranda on a ‘Disturbance’ in Ceylon, 1915-1917*

Sohni Chakrabarti: *Anglo-Indian Cookery: Degchis, Kedgerees and Condiments for Resistance*
Mallika Leuzinger: “Going to London, or somewhere...”: photographic connections in an age of decolonization

Ellie Armon Azoulay: Diasporic Sonic imaginations

12.00PM-12.30PM: Responses/Discussion

12.30PM-1.30PM: Lunch

13.30PM-15.30PM: Presentations

Maryam Ohadi-Hamadani: Third World Solidarities: The Caribbean Artists Movement’s publications and Rasheed Araeen’s Black Phoenix

Malaka Shwaikh: Transnational Prison Solidarity and Resistance

Viviane Saglier: Egyptian Magazines and the Making of Anticolonial Culture

Vindhya Buthpitiya: Makkal Thilagam (The People’s King) and Resistance by Other Means and Pictures

15.30PM-16.00PM: Responses/Discussion

16.00PM-16.30PM: Afternoon coffee
16.30PM-18.00PM: Sample sharing and group reflection
19.00PM: Dinner

Day 3 | 7th June

10.00AM-13:30PM: Printing workshop
13:30AM-14:30PM: Lunch/plenary session
Abstracts

1. Memoranda on a ‘Disturbance’ in Ceylon, 1915-1917

Shamara Wettimuny

My talk examines Sri Lanka’s first campaign for transnational justice in the aftermath of colonial state excesses and mass persecutions following the 1915 anti-Moor pogrom. I will discuss two memoranda, one that was produced by a Sinhalese actor in 1915 and another produced by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society in 1917. Both memos called for an inquiry into colonial injustices but ultimately failed to prompt a full investigation. I hope to draw parallels to modern resistance against international inquiries into recent atrocities, reflecting on historical cycles of repression, failed justice, and emerging nationalist movements.

Biography

Dr. Shamara Wettimuny is a Junior Research Fellow in History at The Queen’s College, University of Oxford. Her research focuses on ethno-religious violence and identity in Sri Lanka, both historically and in the present day. Shamara is the founder of Itihas, an organisation that works on history education reform in Sri Lanka.

2. Anglo-Indian Cookery: Degchis, Kedgerees and Condiments for Resistance

Sohni Chakrabarti

In 1894, Thacker, Spink, and Company, a publisher based in Calcutta during the heights of the British Raj published a cookbook The Mem Sahib’s Book of Cakes written by Carrie Cutcrewe. The same author went on to publish The Mem Sahib’s Book of Cookery in 1903 with the same press. While the colonial anxieties around purity, safety and sanitary conditions are evident in texts such as these, they also note the early years of cultural co-optation and adaptation of Indian condiments, spices and techniques into British cooking. Using this as my starting point with a few excerpts and examples from the archival resource, I will trace the history of postcolonial and anti-colonial resistance to the empire. Looking at a mix of materials, such as, recipes, cookbooks and materials by Indians during the Raj, anti-British propaganda posters during the Bengal famine, advertisements emerging from a newly Independent India and the expansion of the Anglo-Indian cuisine, I will discuss how anticolonial solidarities were imagined, visualised and enacted through the use of food, nutrition and consumption habits.
Biography

Sohni Chakrabarti is an Associate Lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews. She completed her PhD in English from the University of St Andrews in 2022. She also has an MA in Modern and Contemporary English Literature from the University of Bristol and a BA in Psychology from the University of Pune, India. Her research critically examines the complex ways in which memory and nostalgia influences the imagination of identity, home and belonging in contemporary American women’s narratives. She specializes in twentieth and twenty-first-century American women’s writing, multiethnic literature, feminist theory, affect theory, memory studies, diaspora studies and critical food studies.

3. “Going to London, or somewhere…”: photographic connections in an age of decolonization

Mallika Leuzinger

This talk, based on my doctoral research on amateur photography in South Asia, focuses on the practices of middle-class women – and citizens of a newly independent and non-aligned nation – in the twentieth century. Debalina Mazumder (1919 – 2012) and Manobina Roy (1919 – 2001) were twins who began photographing with an Agfa Brownie at the age of twelve. Alongside images of their everyday life in the small town of Ramnagar, and portraits of relatives and acquaintances who included Tagore and Nehru, they produced striking street photography and portraiture during travels to the USSR and London in 1959-60. These circulated through regional and transnational photographic associations and the illustrated press, and now figure in their children’s memories and homes, and in institutional and journalistic endeavours to foreground Indian women in history. In tracking this ebb and flow, I excavate the confrontations of gender, race, class, family and nation entailed by their photography, as well as its cosmopolitan possibilities.

Biography

Mallika Leuzinger is a researcher in Colonial and Global History at the German Historical Institute London. She received her MPhil in Gender Studies from the University of Cambridge and PhD in History of Art from UCL and was a Fung Fellow at Princeton University. She is working on the book Dwelling in Photography: Intimacy, Amateurism and the Camera in South Asia, and a new project on crowdsourced archives and the politics of history.
4. **Diasporic Sonic imaginations**

Ellie Armon Azoulay

My ongoing research project seeks to examine how musical performance and its documentation were critical practices used to resist colonial and imperial legacies and institutions, to grapple with the afterlife of slavery and the generational trauma of the transatlantic slave trade in both the Caribbean and the United States. Or to ask how music was used to define and navigate notions of place and belonging, feelings of displacement, rupture and identity formation (local, national, and diasporic). These issues were particularly pertinent during this period, marked by anti-Black violence and pseudo-scientific racism, cultural appropriation and extraction, as well as with the expansion of diverse forms of resistance and the demand for independence and equality. For the purpose of this workshop, I will look at photographs and published material from booklets to record covers and liner notes (those publications that accompany music albums) and see how these explorations were translated visually and in print.

**Biography**

Dr Ellie Armon Azoulay is a cultural historian, curator and DJ. She is currently working on an exhibition and a public program as a Programme Committee Member at Newbridge Project (Newcastle) titled Tunes of Our Experience - Sonic Resistance and Music as Community Building Practices and has a monthly radio show at Slack’s radio title Diasporic Connections. She has a forthcoming chapter on the sonic archives of the African American novelist, folklorist and sound studies pioneer Zora Neale Hurston in a new anthology dedicated to her work (Cambridge UP), and she is working on her first book, Reclaiming the Lore: African American Music Collectors, Refusal and Anti-Preservationist Possibilities. The book centralizes the history and the storytelling of African American musical expressions from the end of the 19th century within various Black communities and Black-run and led institutions in the American South such as schools, HBCUs, churches, musical associations, and workers’ unions with which these collectors worked. In the coming September, she will start her Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship at the English Department in Durham, working on her new research project, “Sounds of Liberation: The Feminist Vernacular in Jamaican Folklore 1950-1980.”
5. Third World Solidarities: The Caribbean Artists Movement’s publications and Rasheed Araeen’s Black Phoenix

Maryam Ohadi-Hamadani

This talk will examine the publications and pamphlets published by the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) between 1966-1972, including the CAM newsletter and Savacou; and Black Phoenix (1978-79), the short-lived arts journal founded by artist Rasheed Araeen and Mahmood Jamal a decade later. I will contextualise these art journals by examining the racialised politics within Britain at the time, the discourse surrounding Third World solidarities between diasporic African, Afro-Caribbean, and South Asian intellectuals and cultural producers in Britain and those abroad, considering how these publications and print cultures contributed to grassroots organising, protest and political action within art practice and cultural production between the end of the 1960s-late 1970s.

Biography

Dr. Maryam Ohadi-Hamadani is an art historian and curator specialising in modern and contemporary art of the global diasporas, focussing on the postcolonial histories of African, Afro-Caribbean, Asian and Black British art in Britain and beyond. She earned her PhD at the University of Texas at Austin under the supervision of Dr. Eddie Chambers for her dissertation “The Commonwealth of Abstraction: Black Artists in London, 1948-72” (2019). As a postdoctoral research associate at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven Connecticut, she co-curated the exhibition Bridget Riley: Perceptual Abstraction (2022), and has held numerous curatorial positions, including the Wichita Art Museum and the Ulrich Museum of Art, in Wichita, Kansas, USA; the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, USA; and Tate Liverpool, UK. Maryam has published widely on diasporic artists including Denis Williams, Frank Bowling, and the Caribbean Artists Movement.

6. Transnational Prison Solidarity and Resistance

Malaka Shwaikh

Prisoners around the world have learnt about resistance actions through either creating their own methods or learning from other contexts, the latter is a process that is fraught with difficulties in a space that is meant to disconnect prisoners from the rest of the world. Prisons are spaces of power where authorities not only enforce their mechanisms of control but also learn from other prison authorities how to further dominate and subjugate prisoners. They are also spaces of resistance where prisoners
work to seize power and control from prison authorities. In hunger strikes, for examples, prisoners aim to seize power of life and death from authorities through starving themselves, at times to death. The ultimate form of prison resistance may be prison break, which is a step further to not only seize power of life and death but also to seize power to freedom from the prison system. In this talk, I will explore the importance of solidarity shown between prisoners in Palestine, Northern Ireland, the United States, and Turkey to show a case for transnational resistance that transcends prison power and violence.

Biography

Dr Malaka Shwaikh a Palestinian academic from the Gaza Strip, currently based at the University of St Andrews where I teach and research prisons as spaces of power, resistance, and peacebuilding. Much of her research has been on the dynamics of prison hunger strikes. In addition to her research commitments, she is a trustee Firefly International and STEPS. In 2021, she co-founded FreelancersinGaza.com with Candace Amani to connect youths in Gaza with clients around the world and provide them with mentorship.

7. **Egyptian Magazines and the Making of Anticolonial Culture**

Viviane Saglier

This talk examines Egyptian film and current affairs magazines from the late 1950s and early 1960s, such as Al-Kawakeb, Akhr Sa’a, and al-Musawwar, as expressions of an official and popular anticolonial culture. Circulating in an atmosphere steeped in Nasserist, pan-Arab, non-aligned, and Afro-Asian discourses, these magazines offered their middle-class audiences modernist and consumerist narratives that also took transnational solidarity as an unconditional backdrop. I will consider these magazines at the centre of a wider media ecology which functions as a cultural ‘infrastructure of solidarity’ (Reem Abou-El-Fadl, 2019). By analysing the visual architecture of these magazines, I hope to illuminate how they provide an understanding of the role of cinema and print culture in this infrastructure and in relation to state and military power and geopolitical alliances.

Biography

Viviane Saglier is a lecturer in Film Studies at the University of St Andrews. Her research pays attention to how post/colonial, anticolonial, and neoliberal logics organize film aesthetics and infrastructures. Viviane is currently working on two book projects: the first one traces a transnational history of audiovisual media, liberation
and gender in the Arab world; the second one, drawing from her dissertation, examines the making of a film culture premised on the politics of dignity in Palestine since the Second Intifada. Among other film programmes and exhibitions, she has co-curated ‘Making Revolution: Collective Histories, Desired Futures’ with Farah Atoui at Montreal Arts Interculturels (MAI) in Montreal in 2021.

8. **Makkal Thilagam (The People’s King) and Resistance by Other Means and Pictures**

Vindhya Buthpitiya

Fifteen years after the end of the armed conflict, Sri Lanka’s northern Tamil community continues to bear the many violences of postwar. Where the once dense and vibrant visual-material economy of the Tamil armed struggle has been proscribed and wholly erased by the Sri Lankan state, representations of the Sri Lanka-born South Indian cinema star turned Tamil Nadu politician MG Ramachandran or MGR, are among the few symbols from the period which have not been destroyed. Centred on an ethnographic account of Jaffna town’s last “mini theatre,” and MGR’s presence through the peninsula in posters, banners, statues and signage, this paper considers how MGR serves as a subversive, stand-in icon and invocation for the suppressed and silenced aspirations for self-determination and sovereignty, as well as hero of those who have long been marginalised on account of caste and class.

**Biography**

Vindhya Buthpitiya is an anthropologist working at the intersection of politics and visual culture. Her research is focused on resistance, ethno-nationalist conflict, and political violence in Sri Lanka, examining the local and global aftermaths of civil war through the making and moving of images. Her recent projects have explored the political work of photography, the transnational visual economies of war death, and the interlinked iconographies of justice and accountability. Her current research examines Sri Lanka’s 1983 “Black July” pogrom, in a dual visual-political consideration of incitement. Vindhya is a lecturer in social anthropology at the University of St Andrews.
Practical Information

Presentations

The presentations will be very informal and about 15 minutes in length as we would like to prioritize discussion to locate vocabularies, visuals and points of connection and solidarity with a view of co-producing a collaborative output that draws on the various themes that connect our diverse research and practice geographies together.

If you have slides or images, please feel free to email this to Viviane and Vindhya in advance.

Riso Workshop

The riso printing workshop run by Luke from Yalla Riso and will take place at Hapworks in Dundee. This is a beginner-level session, and we hope it will be a fun opportunity to try our collective hand at making print materials and not just writing them! Please have your printed samples in hand for this. If you need these printed for you, please email them in advance to Vindhya and Viviane. If they are physical materials, a quick snap on your phone should be fine. We expect that the samples can inform the riso printing we do.

We will meet at Dundee Train Station at 9.15AM on Friday and walk to the studio together. The workshop will run for approximately 2.5-3 hours, after which we will return to St Andrews for lunch and final reflections.

Key Locations

St Salvator’s Quadrangle
71, North Street,
St Andrews
KY16 9AL

Old Union Diner
Butt’s Wynd,
North Street,
St Andrews
KY16 9AL
Sleeperz Hotel Dundee
2 S Union St,
Dundee
DD1 4BF

Hapworks_00
7 Castle St,
Dundee
DD1 3AA

Travel

St Andrews is approximately a 15-minute bus journey from Leuchars train station and 25 minutes from Dundee train station. Leuchars is located in-between St Andrews and Dundee. The 99 Bus between St Andrews Bus Station and Dundee City Centre stops at St Andrews, Leuchars and Dundee with frequent service.

The bus timetable can be found here:


We will be covering your bus travel between St Andrews and Dundee. The easiest option for this to buy a North East Fife DayRider ticket https://www.stagecoachbus.com/regionaltickets/east-scotland/st-andrews-cupar-and-the-east-neuk/dayrider on the bus or on the Stagecoach App. Please retain the tickets and submit to the BA ECRN network for reimbursement after the workshop.

If you the BA ECRN has booked on your behalf to stay in Dundee, you should have received your hotel vouchers directly. If not, please contact them at the soonest.

Luggage

If you have belongings with you, please tell Vindhya or Viviane, and we can store them in one of our offices (nearby) for you.
Catering and Dinner

Day 1

We will be providing wine, soft drinks and a buffet of canapes at the keynote reception on the 5th of June.

Day 2

We will provide morning, afternoon, coffee and lunch (all vegetarian/vegan).

In the evening, we will be going to dinner at 6.30 PM at Jahangir Tandoor Restaurant (116 South St, St Andrews KY16 9QD) which is a 5–7-minute walk from Old Union Diner/North Street. There will be vegetarian and non-vegetarian options available. You can find the menu here: https://jahangirstandrews.co.uk/media/jahangir-pretheatre-menu-2024.pdf

Day 3

We will be providing coffee and snacks at the printing workshop, and a lunch (vegetarian/vegan) at St Andrews when we return.

We look forward to welcoming you to St Andrews! If you have any questions in advance, please do not hesitate to contact Vindhya and Viviane at vlb9@st-andrews.ac.uk and vmcs1@st-andrews.ac.uk.