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IDENTITY AND BELONGING

MeCCSA

ABSTRACTS

Dr Gholam Khiabany

Dr Gholam Khiabany is a reader in Media and Communications at Goldsmiths, London. His academic career has focused on the relationship between citizenship, political activism and media and cultural practices, including alternative media

State of Citizenship and Identity

The recent rise of the far right and the spectre of fascism, rather than appearing from nowhere, builds upon and expands Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' thesis which dominated imperialist state policy after 9/11. Disastrous military interventions which ensued in Afghanistan and the Middle East were followed by the redrafting of citizenship laws across Europe and identifying racialised minorities as a threat to Europe's Enlightenment values, in what was repeatedly described (with no hint of irony or shame) as Europe's Judeo-Christian heritage. The clash of civilisations, therefore, was not only taking place 'out there', but also, very much 'at home'.

A few decades earlier Stuart Hall suggested that Thatcherism had succeeded in 'neutralising the contradiction between the people and the state/power bloc and winning popular interpellations so decisively for the Right'. Authoritarian populism, he argued, could therefore be understood as 'the project, central to the politics of Thatcherism to ground neoliberal politics directly in an appeal to "the people"; to root them in the essentialist categories of commonsense experience and practical moralism – and thus to construct, not simply awaken, classes, groups and interests into a particular definition of "the people"'. This construction of people was, and continues to be, racialised.

This paper argues that the nation (and national identity) as a particular ideological construct arises out of the conjunction of i) a long history of imperial civilisation in which the reification of citizenship, nation-state and culture, has projected racial identities to those who don't belong and are from 'over there' and an those who belong as being 'from here'; ii) the contemporary failure of the state to implement any radical change in the lives of the popular classes; wrought by neoliberal economic policies and iii) a specific dissociation of the intellectual strata from those classes. The paper also examines whether the new great moving right show is neutralising or exacerbating the contradiction between the people and the state and explores what forms of resistance can challenge and overcome the nostalgic cultural chauvinism which has become the substitute for a progressive project.

Dr Mallika Sarabhal

Dr Mallika Sarabhal is an Indian classical dancer and choreographer, actress, writer, and social activist known for her promotion of the arts as a vehicle for social change. Her work received the prestigious French Palme d'Or Award and the Parma Bhushan Award of India.

Says Who?

In Hindu philosophy the first being is half male and half female. One, with static energy, the other with kinetic. From this springs life.

In India we worship Goddesses and women rulers – both historic and current.

In India we also abort female foetuses and video gang rape as sport.

What is the jaundiced perspective that makes all these facts sit together comfortably? Why do women become the foot soldiers of patriarchy and misogyny?

Over the years I have worked at unearthing variations of our myths, to track down in which periods women and goddesses got reduced or became subservient. What was the ethos? Who ruled? Why was she inconvenient? Who didn't become a goddess?

Another prism of examination has been looking at who authored these text – male or female? Upper caste or marginalised? North Indian or South Indian?

This performed talk looks at these perspectives and tries to navigate the many pitfalls in standing tall in a gendered and hierarchical world. Using India's most codified and ancient classical Dance style, with theatre and often masks or objects, I try and unravel where 'being' gets refracted and then becomes an accepted reflection or truth. What happens to a woman's identity as she navigates these patriarchies of 'being' and 'belonging'?

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[3] Alexander Nevill: Landscapes of belonging and exclusion: a practice-research journey around the UK's borders.

Abstract. Recent political events such as Brexit, the election of a nationalist first minister in Northern Ireland and repeated campaigns for independence in Scotland have brought into question the United Kingdom's union of countries. At the same time policies and attitudes toward immigration across the nation have become increasingly oppressive and hostile. (Cowan, 2021) Grappling with these contemporary contradictions, this paper brings together discourse surrounding landscape and liminality from the fields of cultural geography (Lukinbeal & Sommerlad, 2022), political anthropology (Thomassen, 2009) and film studies (Lefebvre, 2011 and Rascaroli, 2022) to examine the UK's borders and understand how documentary cinema might evoke or construct interstitial spaces, regions and nations.As a central case study, the paper draws on a work-in-progress creative documentary Notes From Brook House which explores the borders between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Roaming landscapes reveal physical traces of different boundaries throughout the nation, which contrast people's attitudes toward immigration heard in voice over narration. This impressionistic approach aims to give a new perspective on politically and emotionally charged issues that surround migration, sovereignty, and Unionism throughout Britain today. The film forms the basis of a practice-research enquiry which questions; How are attitudes surrounding national identity in the country evolving? How can the UK become a home for all its inhabitants?

[4] Annalisa Toccara-Jones: Colonial Legacies and Digital Identity Narratives Among UK Adult Adoptees.

Abstract. In the past decade, policymakers, researchers, and social workers have increasingly explored the role of social media in adoption practices, particularly regarding contact, family reunion, and adopter confidentiality. While studies by HeeRa Heaser (2016) and Emily K. Suh (2021) explore adoptees' social media experiences in the American and Korean Australian diaspora, little research addresses how UK adult adoptees use these platforms to construct their identities. This paper explores how UK adoptees navigate social media to negotiate their adoptee identities, deconstruct adoption narratives, and challenge dominant portrayals of adoption in the media. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 35 adoptees and using decolonial theory, critical discourse analysis, intersectionality, the

Adoptee Consciousness Model (Branco et al., 2022), and critical adoption studies, the findings show how colonial narratives of adoption and historical and modern practices shape adoptee identities. Participants described feelings of otherness and a lack of belonging within adoptive families, compounded by guilt and shame when searching for biological family connections, especially when support by post-adoption service is lacking. As such, social media platforms such as X, Instagram, and Facebook offered spaces for belonging, connection, and self-expression through peer-to-peer adoptee communities. The study also highlights critique by adoptees on dominant adoption narratives in the media, which frame adoption as a 'better life,' often oversimplifying experiences of trauma, loss, and grief and rooted in a colonial saviour narrative. By reclaiming their identities online, adoptees contribute to a nuanced understanding of adoptee identity, opening broader conversations about what it means to be adopted.

[7] Fotios Begklis: The 'Strangers' home - If you don't tell your story, someone else will tell it for you.

Abstract. The starting point for this presentation is a practice research project and a documentary that explores the history of the local community around Royal Docks in East London and what became one of Britain's most ethnically diverse places in the early twentieth century, focusing on personal family memories of the Asian and black sailors' descendants.For this project, we recruited and trained Newham, East London residents and volunteers to research and trace the history of migration in the area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The research primarily carried out by the trainees guided and directed the narrative shape and content of the film. The documentary mixes archive and contemporary footage researched and discovered by the trainees. It combines interviews with descendants of the community, discussions with the research team, the trainees themselves to explore the stories that have been lost, forgotten or misshapen by the media.In this presentation, I will argue that this practice research provokes questions and opens a dialogue that challenges the currently limited narratives about migration, the British Empire and the media that have shaped debates about immigration in modern Britain. I will conclude that The 'Strangers' Home is an innovative practice research project and a film that shows how a community-driven collaborative research process can result in a profoundly moving and relevant documentary that contains both personal and universal meanings and offers a glimpse between the images of past and present to unearth the unspoken stories of many hidden voices.
LINK: www.fotisb.com/the-strangers-home-2024

[8] Wei Jhen Liang: Youths' Digital Literacy Practices and Identity: Exploring the Intersections.

Abstract. Young people's digital practices are increasingly central to understanding how digital technologies shape learning, identity, and social interactions. As digital media extend human senses and mediate relationships between the self and society, they profoundly influence identity—a dynamic construct reflecting how individuals perceive themselves in relation to social roles, groups, and unique traits. Despite its significance, the intersection of identity processes and youths' digital literacy practices remains understudied. This paper examines how digital literacy practices shape and are shaped by youths' identity construction, presentation, and negotiation. Drawing on educational and sociological perspectives, it integrates quantitative and qualitative methods within a larger postgraduate research project. The quantitative phase employed a scenario-based survey scale to explore how 918 university students in Singapore construct identities through digital literacy practices. Statistical analyses, including one-way ANOVA with Scheffé's post-hoc tests, revealed significant differences in digital literacy perspectives across gender and academic disciplines.The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with 25 participants, offering rich insights into their use of digital media to signal affiliations, align with communities, and express ideologies. Preliminary findings suggest that digital literacy not only reflects cognitive competencies but also mediates identity processes in socio-cultural contexts. This study underscores the need to center identity in digital literacy education to reconcile individual agency with the structuring power of digital media. Embracing this expanded perspective can advance academic discourse and inform practices that empower individuals to participate meaningfully in a dynamic digital society.

[12] Helena Bassil-Morozow: Semiotic Shaping of Brand Identity on Social Media: Charlotte Tilbury on Facebook.

Abstract. Charlotte Tilbury is a popular luxury cosmetics brand founded and curated by the eponymous make-up artist and entrepreneur. Launched in 2013, its brand identity is characterised by the focus on 'cult' products (such as the 'Pillow Talk' collection), the aesthetics of glamour, a focused and consistent colour palette (rose gold), and use of celebrity clients to endorse its products. As Wang and Chen note, 'a brand's culture creates brand associations that help to enhance brand personality' (Wang and Chen, 2021: 657). When expressed through social media accounts, brand culture allows consumers 'to exploit brand symbolism and establish their self-concepts, as brands are grounded in an image and personality communicated to the public via social media' (2021: 656). In her exploration of

marketing semiotics, Oswald also highlights that brands link their values to their cultural environment, including myths, archetypes, and rhetorical operations, expressed in semiotic constructions (Oswald, 2012: 8). Charlotte Tilbury's social media presence (particularly on Facebook) reveals various dimensions of its semiotic structure, often achieved through counter-intuitive multimodal choices: editing decisions such as jump cuts, opulent and cluttered mise en scene, unscripted or contextual delivery, use of over-exposure, close-ups, low angles, and overwhelming sound. Through the plasticity and accessibility offered by social media, these choices help build complex semiotic layers culminating in its overall image: the brand implies excess, mystery and glamour, and offers its consumers an escape into the world of archetypal beauty and magical transformation.

[13] William Burton: Queen Elizabeth's passing, balance and identity in Northern Ireland.

Abstract. This paper will examine the challenges to broadcast journalists covering stories in post-conflict Northern Ireland and will examine the balance required following the death of Queen Elizabeth and how her death was reported in a deeply divided society. Last year was the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday/ Belfast Agreement that largely brought relative peace to Northern Ireland. However, the end of hostilities and the establishment of the devolved institutions, have continued to be a challenge to journalists covering Northern Ireland. With the aid of historical context, case studies and interviews with editors/journalists in Northern Ireland the paper will examine the need for balance and objectivity required when reporting unionists/loyalists and republican/nationalists. The paper will draw on key journalism objectivity scholars such as Stephen J. A. Ward (2015) and Brian McNair (2017) but also scholars who have examined Northern Ireland specifically such as Charis Rice and Maureen Taylor (2020). The paper will also examine the establishment of trust across traditional communities and Northern Ireland's growing immigrant communities, and how broadcasters can achieve accurate and balanced reports in the shared public sphere of Northern Ireland.

[15] Doug Specht: Media, Risk, and Resilience: Examining the INFORM Risk Index in Climate Crisis Communication.

Abstract. In an era of escalating climate-driven disasters, effective risk communication is crucial for building resilient communities. This study examines the INFORM Risk Index, a global open-source risk assessment tool, and its role in shaping media narratives and public understanding of humanitarian crises and disasters (to which the author was an advisor).Drawing on interdisciplinary

approaches from media studies, risk communication, and disaster preparedness, this research investigates how the INFORM Risk Index is interpreted, visualized, and disseminated across various media platforms. It explores the index's influence on public discourse, policy decisions, and media framing of disaster risk and climate change impacts.The study addresses critical questions about media representation of quantitative risk data, the index's impact on risk perception in diverse global contexts, and the ethical implications of translating complex risk assessments into accessible media content. By analyzing these aspects, the research provides insights into the interplay between scientific risk assessment tools and media ecosystems in shaping public understanding of crises. This investigation contributes to our understanding of how emerging data tools and media practices can enhance disaster prevention, preparedness, and response strategies. It offers valuable perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in communicating global risks effectively through media, particularly in the context of climate change and humanitarian crises. The findings have significant implications for media practitioners, policymakers, and disaster management professionals, offering guidance on leveraging risk assessment tools for more effective and ethical crisis communication.

[16] Paul Reilly: The Blame Game? Social media and affective ritualised responses to civil disorder in divided societies.

Abstract. Online platforms have been widely blamed for increasing tensions around contentious political issues. Claims that they are barometers of public opinion are contradicted by studies showing how easily algorithms can be manipulated to artificially inflate certain narratives, or drown out others through misinformation and information pollution.This is particularly problematic in deeply divided societies where there is often no shared pool of agreed facts in the first place. While peace theorists like Johan Galtung hypothesised that quicker forms of communication would bring former antagonists closer together, the evidence to date suggests that social media empower communication practices that harm peacebuilding efforts.In this paper I add to the literature on social media and peacebuilding by theorising social media responses to sectarian violence as affective rituals. Drawing on empirical data gathered from nearly a decade of fieldwork in Northern Ireland (2012-2021), I argue that event or issue specific hashtags on sites like Twitter/X are ritualised responses to contentious episodes such as parades, protests and civil disorder.

They are typically affective rather than informational in nature, with political partisans accusing each other of being responsible for the violence. These are not communication formations that help promote reconciliation, with the evidence

suggesting they inflame tensions rather than quell them. Moreover, the presence of bots within these hashtags raises questions about whether they can really be considered representative of wider public opinion. While cyber optimists suggest online platforms empower marginalised communities in divided societies, their peacebuilding potential appears to be somewhat overstated.

[19] Annie Watson: *Bonjour Tristesse* Reimagined.

Abstract. I propose a viewing of this practice-based PhD film, (14 mins) with a short introduction to give context to how and why it successfully conveys Cecile's introspection and inner thought process. Practice based research was necessary in exploring how to adapt written poetic introspection into visuals and sound through the creation of an experimentally adaptive film. Through adaptation theory, archival research and (feminist) film theory, and using practice as a research method itself, this research questions the influence of the film director on the 'voice' of the protagonist. In a dance sequence from Otto Preminger's 1958 film adaptation of Francoise Sagan's 1954 French novel, Jean Seberg looks directly into the lens. By slowing down the footage to an almost imperceptible movement and stripping the original audio away, I have audibly and visually reimagined memories the character Cecile might have had, drawing on research from the poetic and sensual original prose. The sound design is built up again, layer by layer. Some sound is resynced (Juliette Gréco singing) and some sound is displaced from across the timeline of the film to introduce new meaning, but most sound, including all foley, is new. Sumptuous widescreen visuals from Preminger's film are layered and cut in with new footage – iPhone macro images of organic matter (sand, fingers, coffee, water) and incidental playful everyday normalities (a fly, the sea) to present a seductive sense of multiple time frames existing simultaneously. Using text from Irene Ash's English translation, key words and sentences are presented boldly, (and sometimes integrated within the moving images) on screen. They're not subtitles, translating a language, they offer something else - perhaps somewhere in between a book and a film, like a moving graphic novel.

[24] Chiadikaobi Ihuoma: Nigerian Social Media Influencer's Feminist Content Strategies for Effective Engagement with Audiences.

Abstract. This paper discusses strategies Nigerian feminist influencers employ to engage effectively with their audience on social media. The study adopted an in-depth interview approach notable for capturing nuanced human experiences to examine the drivers, practices, and barriers shaping their digital feminist content. It gave insight into how Nigerian feminist influencers construct and maintain online

feminist discourse through complexities involving audience dynamics, cultural expectations, and the challenging environment of social media platforms. The key findings are that influencers depend mainly upon organic engagement driven by personal passion and authentic connections rather than predefined strategies. They curate audiences and keep safe spaces by blocking detractors and deleting disruptive comments to allow constructive discussion. A simplified language, Pidgin English, makes the contents more accessible and increases relatability in a multi-lingual society like Nigeria. Community-building was another approach the influencers applied in harnessing organic spread through like-minded networks rather than paid promotions.Of importance, the influencers singled out continuous education for men about the effects of patriarchy as fundamental to the level of societal change. This inclusive strategy underlines the importance of solidarity in dismantling systemic gender norms. The study also reveals the emotional cost of digital activism in the form of burnout and irregular posting. Through reflexive engagement in the research process, the study examined how the influencers' lived experiences and challenges inform their content creation. This research contributes to understanding strategies for feminist engagements within Nigeria's sociocultural and digital contexts.

[25] Emily Coleman: Constructing identity on screen: a documentary contributors' perspective on the editing process in factual film & TV.

Abstract. The concept of mediated visibility is often used to describe the way that audiences engage with public figures, or witness the world events that are relayed to them through the media. But how does it feel to be the subject at the centre of this process of mediation, and to what extent do the representations that are created of them align with their perceptions of reality? In this paper, I explore how documentary contributors relate to their mediated selves, analysing the process of editing from the perspective of the people on screen. Based on a series of in-depth interviews with documentary-makers and participants, this paper will examine the patterns of presence and absence that are created through the editing process, the impact of narrative norms upon storytelling, and the limitations of our representational resources in depicting human experience.

[28] Zoë Irvine and Jules Rawlinson: Conversations on Belonging: conversation recording and nonlinear, polyphonic composition as methodologies for encounter in the 900 Voices project.

Abstract. This session explores notions of belonging, connection, and community through a performative and discursive presentation of 900 Voices, a sound artwork

focused on these themes, originally installed in St Giles' Cathedral for the Edinburgh International Festival in 2024. The work continues to be developed as Conversations on Belonging for broadcast other settings and the project's oral history archive will become publicly available at The School of Scottish Studies Sound Archive (University of Edinburgh). The session will combine a brief performance of the work and discussion of the practice-based methodologies.900 Voices creates a dynamic interplay between individual and collective lived experience. I will discuss how recorded conversation and polyphonic composition function as tangible methodologies, fostering elastic connections with ideas and identities. These non-linear strategies create space for evolving understandings and resist simplification. The session will also explore the power of active listening, the distinct nature of recorded conversation (versus interviews) as a connective act of belonging, and the non-hierarchical, non-repeating compositional strategies, that articulate and share complexity and connectivity within this lived experience corpus. To conclude I will show how the tools and methodologies used here may offer new ways of exploring and conversing with our auditory past.

[30] Noam Gal and Ido Ramati: Post-digital memetics: The case of commemorative bumper stickers.

Abstract. The concept of "meme" extends beyond digital arenas, not only by its roots, decades before social media, but also through contemporary communicative practices. This study examines a particular manifestation of post-digital memetics that has become extremely prevalent in the aftermath of 7 October in Israel: commemorative bumper stickers. Our multifaceted analysis of 800 stickers, commemorating mostly casualties within the Jewish society but also some Palestinian ones, points at repetition, variability, and spatiotemporal transformations within the corpus and the texts comprising it. These features expose both classic memetic practices demonstrated by these stickers, and unique communicative characteristics emerging from their material presence. Combining theories of (digital) memetics and post-digitality, we investigate these offline memes, and the communicative dynamics they demonstrate. While in terms of content we identify familiar acts of both imitation and subversive resistance to the dominant voice, new dynamics emerge in terms of virality, regarding attention economy and social network boundaries. In addition, we point at new aspects of discursive conduct, stemming from the medium's materiality and physical location. The study points to the presence of digital practices within their post-digital manifestations, namely the ways in which digital logics of circulation, repetition, and variation manifest in material, non-digital media. It contributes to our understanding of contemporary

modes of participatory communication and communal meaning-making processes, and sheds light on points of amalgamation between digital and post-digital cultures.

[31] Evripidis Karydis: *Trash Walk*.

Abstract. Trash Walk is a short documentary that follows Christina during Christmas. She is an art activist based in Glasgow who through street performances conveys her stance against consumerism. By adopting a hybrid approach of documentary modes (observational, expository) this film tries to explore the concepts of art activism (artivism) and street performance.

[34] Paul Rekret and Henry Ivry: Small-Scale Online Radio Stations: Developing a Conceptual Framework.

Abstract. This paper seeks to develop a framework and conceptual account for Small-Scale Online Radio stations (SSORs). There has been substantive growth among small-scale, online radio stations (SSORs) across the UK in recent years. SSORs are a distinct, emerging type of cultural and media institution and represent a new form of radio broadcasting that appeared in the mid-2010s. These stations share four distinct characteristics: (1) They are local or 'hyperlocal': identified with a particular city, town, or region. (2) They broadcast exclusively online without licensing. (3) They operate on a voluntary basis and rely upon donations and fundraising to cover running costs. (4) Personnel tend to be drawn directly from local music and arts communities with stations serving as local hubs for creative industries. SSORs also tend to emphasise inclusion and accessibility and foster a sense of community. Stations can be entry points into creative industries for young people and their lower barriers to entry are especially significant for groups historically excluded or under-represented in music and related industries. SSORs operate with little, if any, commercial or public investment, run primarily via voluntary support and depend entirely on commercial platforms (e.g., SoundCloud, MixCloud) to broadcast and archive content. Our paper traces the development of SSORs across the UK by positioning them within a larger media landscape and emphasising their underappreciated role in fostering new cultural, political, and interpersonal infrastructures.

[35] Nahiyan Rashid: Embodied Masculinities: Masculine Identity in Contemporary Fitness Culture.

Abstract. The growth of social media has overseen the development of diverse identifications with masculinity. In recent years, the online fitness space has emerged as an arena for men to play with, negotiate and experiment with their identities. This research examines performances of masculinity and male embodiment that

dominate contemporary fitness culture. As the fitness space continues to develop, a growing number of men are becoming increasingly committed to sharing their conceptions of masculinity which often range from attempts at sustaining hegemonic logic to assimilating a 'softer' identity that is built on vulnerability and emotional intimacy. In this project, I unpack the construction of identity in a space that is permeated with narratives of corporeal labour, stoicism and male bonding. This involves an exploration into the discourses surrounding male identity and the ideas of masculinity that are held within the fitness landscape.By adopting a multimodal angle that combines the use of free association narrative interviewing (FANI) with the media go-along, I will be presenting extracts from interviews with male bodybuilders who discuss their story, particularly their perceptions of masculinity, their online practices, their pursuit for authenticity and crucially, what it means to be a man. At a time where the internet continues to perpetuate gendered politics, this study hopes to shed light on the male voice amidst the anxieties that are held around being a man today.

[37] Gavin Maclean: Human moves versus computer moves: Exploring the labour of chess and chess streaming.

Abstract. Chess is experiencing a boom with record usage of digital chess platforms, record viewership of recent tournaments and a rise of streamers who blur the lines between professional player and content creators. Chess has achieved this increased profile since the Covid-19 lockdowns and the release of the popular chess-centred Queen's Gambit drama, with the two providing an impetus for thousands to get more involved in chess. This paper explores the dynamics of chess and chess streaming, a context which cuts across key areas of interest in cultural studies, particularly with regard to AI, automation, (e)sport and streaming.This paper is structured in three parts. Firstly, since the 1990s, computers have been able to beat the best human players. As a result, professional chess players have integrated superior computational power into their play, with greater priority placed on finding moves that take opponents out of 'preparation' to provoke inaccuracies in play. Secondly, there is an element of conflict within this work between the 'human' aesthetics of chess versus a more machine-based rationality. This apparent conflict reflects the valuation of flawed, human skill within the field of chess. Thirdly, the use of online platforms within a booming streaming industry integrates the 'free labour' of fans into professional chess. While chess has had an extensive literature documenting games, platforms have extended the reach of this documentation to the point that labour of amateurs is increasingly appropriated in the production of strategies as well as providing material for streamers and content creators.

[38] Corey Schultz: Auteurial Identity, Auteurial Sites: The Pingyao International Film Festival.

Abstract. Pingyao is a 14th century city that has long been associated with arthouse cinema's Jia Zhangke, and is the recognisable shooting location of many of his films including Platform (2000), A Touch of Sin (2013), and Caught by the Tides (2024). Due to this connection, it has become the site of film tourism for his fans, as well as the site of the Pingyao International Film Festival, which was co-founded by Jia in 2017. This presentation examines the film festival, its site, and the visitor's engagement with both the site and the festival, analysing it as an auteur film festival - a film festival not only founded and organised by an auteur, but also a festival situated in a place associated with the auteur that, along with repeated genres, storylines, actors and characters, has also become associated with the auteur's identity and a recognisable recurring 'presence' in his films. After examining these elements, it examines the visitor's engagement with the site and the festival as a 'film-induced tourist' (Beeton 2005) and 'film pilgrim' (Urry 1990). Using the methods of auto-ethnography and film tourism phenomenology, I examine my own corporeal engagement with the site as an 'embodied spectator' (Pethö), and my desire to not only be present in the same location that the film was set but also uncover the exact viewing angle of the camera and thus 'embody' the site itself through this corporeal experience.

[39] Hazel Collie and Gemma Commane: The Performance of Pain: Emotional Disclosure, Exploitation, and Identity in RuPaul's Drag Race.

Abstract. In Season 16, Episode 4 of RuPaul's Drag Race, Ru addresses Mhi'ya's timidity: "When you can express yourself openly is when the audience falls in love with you. They feel a kinship. If the wall's up, they can't get in." RPDR prides itself in bringing drag visibility into the mainstream (Edgar 2011, Goldmark 2015), with the show framed as a worldwide phenomenon promoting love, inclusivity, acceptance and drag (Collie and Commane 2020). Reflecting conventions of reality television (Grindstaff and Murray, 2015, Marshall 2010), emotional disclosure is strategically staged across all seasons to allow audiences to connect with queens. This traumatic disclosure is signposted as a key route to building authenticity and achieving success. The expectation of emotional disclosure in this show directly relates to identity more widely (i.e. family, sexuality, community, etc.) and not just drag queen identity. Queens are manipulated by the format to disclose trauma (Collie and Commane 2020), which is uncomfortable in a text which also preaches inclusivity and is characterised by Drag Mother care. Whilst revelation and

emotional disclosure of 'real' stories are not new for reality television (Biressi and Nunn 2005), we argue that in this uncomfortable space of manipulated trauma juxtaposed with pseudo-therapeutic sensibility and the gameshow format, RPDR is more troubling as a result. If the format of the show packages identity and trades upon contestant's performances of disclosure, then who, or what, really benefits from the performance of pain?

[40] Ngozi Marion Emmanuel: Examining the Role of Documentary Films in Facilitating Positive Disability Identity and Belonging.

Abstract. This research analyses a sample of documentary films to determine how identity and belonging are fostered for disabled people in documentaries. Current reality shows that disabled people have had some of the worst years in recent times despite increased advocacies for disability rights and inclusion. In many countries such as the UK and US, recent events like the parliamentary discussions on assisted dying bill in the UK and the recent US government's attack on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), appear to threaten the rights and place of disabled people in society. In many ways, disabled people continue to be excluded and discriminated against. On the other hand, the quality of authenticity that documentary films possess has been known to contribute to different change agendas in various fields. Thus, this research aims to analyse disability documentaries as a way of establishing how the visual media can continue to contribute to a positive disability identity and engender a sense of belonging for disabled people. Through the analysis of three purposively chosen documentary films, namely Crip Camp (2020), I didn't see you there (2022), and Better off Dead? (2024), this research illustrates the gap in representation of identity and belonging in disability documentary films as well as provides recommendations for how documentary films can contribute to promoting a positive disability identity and belonging for disabled people as a non-fictional art form.

[41] Sukhmani Khorana: Making Representation Matter.

Abstract. There has been longstanding interest in media and cultural representation of gender and cultural diversity in the Global North. More recently, interest has shifted to other aspects of such diversity, such as including those of diverse sexualities and abilities both on media platforms and in the workforce of changing media and cultural industries. In most cases, the demand for greater diversity has been premised on the assumption that representative media and those work in it must 'reflect' the shifting demographic of immigrant nation states such as the US and Australia. This paper presents case studies which illustrate that viewing representation through a parity lens is undoubtedly important, but should not be

an end in itself. In other words, representation does matter, yet adequate attention needs to be paid to when, why and where it is taking place. Through the case studies, I take stock of the reporting on a lack of diversity across screen media and newsrooms in two comparable contexts – Britain and Australia. These reports include those commissioned by mainstream government-funded arts bodies such as the British Film Institute (BFI), and those completed by advocacy organisations such as Media Diversity Australia (MDA) in partnership with university research centres and other stakeholders. What is of interest here is the momentum in this reporting since #OscarsSoWhite, the deployment of a reflection model of media representations, and also of the proliferation of 'media on media'. In outlining these developments and the political economy of the organisations funding such reporting, this paper asks questions about the absence of broader movement goals or a theory of change to inform what alternative models of representation might look like and what structures/processes would inform them.

[42] Natalie Fenton, Des Freedman, Marcela Pizarro, Gholam Khiabany, and Marcos Ortiz: Panel Title: Journalism in ruins: Dependency, power and resistance.

Panel Description: This panel coheres around the critical notion of a Western normative ideal of independent journalism in ruins. The mythology of a 'free' news media sustaining 'liberal' democracy has long since been exposed as exhausted at best, and as preventing or absolving of truths at worst. So why do scholars and journalists alike cling to terms that have become hollowed out of all meaning? How has the notion of 'independent journalism' come to stand in for power dependencies reifying liberal ideas of journalism rather than critiquing what journalism could become? Each of the papers in this panel address this theme through a different lens and in different theoretical, empirical and methodological ways. Each challenge journalism (and journalism scholars) to shed the pretence of independence (exemplified in the reporting of Gaza by Western media or the mainstream reporting of the uprising in Chile) that serves to disguise and turn away from power relations that (will always) exist; and a geopolitics articulated in terms of liberal values that do no more than perpetuate journalism's complicities, its blind spots and its silences. The panel then asks what resistance to the reification of journalism could look like and what news and journalism reimagined could be.

1) Natalie Fenton: News is relational: cutting loose from the ties of 'independent' news.

Abstract. Normative liberal understandings of news declare independent news production as the holy grail of media freedom. A free media is in turn associated

with a healthy democracy. Independence of news organizations from government interference is considered vital to democracy's well-being. Independence of journalism from wealthy sponsors or corporate pressures as key to its integrity. This mantra has been asserted for so long it is difficult to even begin to question its validity. This paper attempts to do just that. It asks, what if the pilgrimage for independence is blindsiding us to power and blinkering our visions of what journalism could become? It argues that news and journalism are always relational and interact constantly with other organizations, institutions, professions and people. As such, we would be better placed to interrogate the relations of power therein and establish the levels of interdependence that exist in order to determine how these can be better understood and managed. The paper argues that for news media to actually support a just democracy they must not only recognize where interdependency exists and address its imbalances of power, they must also seek to become intra-dependent with the publics they serve.

2) Des Freedman: Journalism without history?

Abstract. Journalism, according to the former publisher of the Washington Post, Phil Graham, is 'the first rough draft of history'. This paper makes a different claim: that history is often evacuated from journalism. This is partly to do with its form in that journalism privileges what is new and cannot afford to provide context and memory. It is also, however, to do with its commodity status in that journalism is a reified area of human activity in which public affairs are transformed into private transactions and objectified through the lens of power. The Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukacs was specifically referring to journalism when he wrote that 'the more deeply reification penetrates into the soul of the man [sic] who sells his achievement as a commodity, the more deceptive appearances are'. This paper reflects on the spectral qualities of journalism – the absence of history and its preoccupation with 'miscellaneity' as Raymond Williams put it – in relation to a mainstream reporting of Gaza that is marked by its lack of history, context and memory.

3) Marcela Pizarro and Gholam Khiabany: Covering Palestine: Journalism from Gaza.

Abstract. Ever since Hamas' 7th October attack and the Israeli bombing campaign on Gaza that ensued, western media have often alerted audiences to the challenges of reporting the truth of the story due to Israel's ban on foreign journalists entering the Strip - in a formulation that enacts yet another erasure: that of the very notion of a Palestinian journalism. That the field of western journalism aligns itself to western delusions of objectivity as part of a wider discourse on democracy is nothing new and is part of a wider debate around foreign news production, its racialised hierarchies, its extractive economics and its wanton amnesia. For that reason, this

paper seeks to map out journalisms in Gaza both present and past. The assault on Palestinian journalists is a significant part of cultural genocide that is taking place, but its endurance also reveals the resistance against what Claudia Card (2003) has called 'social death'.

4) Marcos Ortiz: Ideological cartographies of the media: weaving power together.

Abstract. In 2019, after a massive social uprising that took the country's elites by surprise, Chilean traditional print media, entangled with other hegemonic actors – political parties, corporations, universities and think tanks – aimed to secure the political economic status quo. While the estallido managed to expose the cracks of Chilean capitalism, these contradictions did not permeate these outlets' pages. This paper argues that the weaving power of the media serves as the glue that holds the foundations of social, political and economic power together, granting legitimacy and coherence to a set of discourses that wish to remain hegemonic, and shrouding them in a series of relations that render this fabric largely impenetrable. Using qualitative network analysis, this paper excavates the key news sources and elite networks within the two most influential newspapers – El Mercurio and La Tercera – in order to present media-centred cartographies of power. These maps serve as tools to reinvigorate not only agenda-setting theory but also our understanding of agenda-building and ultimately contemporary understandings of ideological dominance.

[43] Victoria Adams: Mapping New Geographies of Cultural Production in Brazil through Pontos de Cultura.

Abstract. In the early 2000s, Brazil pioneered efforts to encourage cultural production and digital inclusion in geographically diverse and marginalised communities. The recognition of pre-existing cultural organisations throughout the country as Pontos de Cultura [Cultural Points] that were eligible to receive funding for activities and multimedia equipment was central to this endeavour. This paper explores the impact of these efforts to democratise access to culture and digital media twenty years later. Drawing on qualitative research conducted with those involved in the Pontos de Cultura past and present, it asks how the programme has affected the activities and engagement with mediums such as digital media of the pre-existing NGOs, cultural centres and artistic collectives involved in it, as well as the lessons and attitudes towards government that those involved in the programme have taken from it. Through analysis of these questions, this paper explores what the experiences of the Pontos de Cultura tell us about the ability of governmental and culturally orientated interventions to alter longstanding socio-cultural inequality. It also probes the sustainability and afterlives of government-led programmes as the willingness of political administrations to fund cultural initiatives oscillates.

[44] Pablo Nabarrete Bastos: Impacts of the techno-aesthetic pattern of social media platforms on the communication of ALBA Movimentos and Via Campesina and possible alternatives to platformization.

Abstract. One of the central technical characteristics of the hegemonic process of platformization is the development of certain tools that enable the spread of the logic of dominant platforms to various technical devices that become part of their technical structure and resources, which in turn enable large-scale surveillance and extraction of user data (Helmond, 2015). One of the consequences of this process, according to the advertising logic inherent to social media platforms (Poell; Nieborg; Van Dijck, 2020), is the establishment of a standard and a techno-aesthetic regime (Bolaño, 2015) that affects platformized communication and intellectual work in communication. This paper seeks to answer the following research questions: how does the logic of platformization affect the communication developed by networks of popular social movements on social media platforms? And what are the contributions of two of the main Brazilian social movements to thinking about alternatives to this hegemonic process? Based on these research questions, the main objective of the paper is to analyze the communication developed by the international networks of popular social movements ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) Movimentos and Via Campesina, seeking to observe how the techno-aesthetic pattern of social media platforms conditions their discourses. And to think of alternatives to this process, the paper analyzes the communication policies of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) and the Homeless Workers Movement (MTST), which propose and develop technological tools for social transformation.

[45] Julie Feng: Belonging, Solidarities, and Worldbuilding in Student Movements for Palestinian Liberation.

Abstract. In the spring of 2024, student organizing for Palestinian liberation sparked an uprising of protest encampments on university campuses across the world, reclaiming and transforming public and educational spaces. This paper examines the ways in which student organizers navigated identity and belonging in the context of these resistance movements. How did they understand their roles and identities as "activists"? How did they understand their connections to the Palestinian struggle? How did they mobilize particular spacemaking strategies (spaces for libraries, mental health care, mutual aid, teach-ins, and art in the (encampments) in order to welcome collectivity and solidarity? Drawing from dialogic interviews and rhetorical fieldwork with student organizers, I explore how

their mobilization, connection, and worldbuilding within the broader context of decolonial struggle. This paper situates the practices of student organizers within a genealogy of cultural resistance and civil disobedience, drawing a throughline to global struggles against settler colonialist powers, and theorizing these actions as commoning. By examining these spaces within this context, this study highlights the generative power of collective spacemaking and resource distribution to sustain movements and build transformative solidarities in the face of systemic oppression.

[46] Bev Enion: Intimacy on Instagram: construction of disabled women's sexual identities.

Abstract. Digitization can create a divide for disabled individuals, but social media, particularly Instagram, has enabled them to participate in public debates, form communities, and shape narratives around disability (Ellis & Kent, 2010; Haller, 2010). Despite these positives, Instagram fosters a complex web of relationships shaped by dominant ideologies and media representations. As such, disabled individuals have turned the platform into a tool for political activism, social change and identity belonging, making it a key area for disability inquiry. Instagram affects both personal experiences and broader political processes (Gelfgren, et al., 2021) allowing disabled people to seek validation and connection through community interaction (Miller, 2017). Via user-generated content, Instagram uniquely enables identity expression in ways not possible elsewhere (Todd, 2018) which significant when aligned with the lack of socio-political activism relating to disability and intimacy. Typically portrayed as asexual, vulnerable, or deviant, disabled women are now using Instagram to challenge these stereotypes and through user-generated photographs, they engage in activism and resistance alongside self-expression which works to shape their identities. This PhD research adopts a qualitative approach to explore how women with physical impairments critically engage with Instagram's representations of disability and intimacy. Using a participatory arts-informed methodology, the study uses semi-structured interviews and a collaborative focus group to gather insights into how disabled women depict intimacy in Instagram photographs, and how they are used for identity construction. Data collection will begin March 2025, and preliminary findings may be available for discussion during the presentation.

[47] Barbara Mitra: Gender Lens on Autistic Sleuths: Exploring Identity and Belonging in the Portrayal of Television Detectives.

Abstract. Gender plays a significant role in how autism is perceived and experienced. This paper aims to explore the similarities and differences between male and female

television detectives that are perceived as having autistic traits. This includes comparing characters such as Sherlock and Enola, Patience and Ludwig, Mackenzie Clarke in Return to Paradise, Ben Miller in the first series of Death in Paradise, Extraordinary Attorney Woo and Move to Heaven. Whilst these characters often share commonalities in how autism is represented, they tend to rely on stereotypical portrayals. These stereotypes can impact how autistic individuals are perceived by others, particularly those who do not fit such stereotypes. Additionally, the inaccurate portrayal of gender can further complicate these representations as such portrayals can deeply influence the identity, self-perception and social experiences of autistic individuals. By examining these characters, this paper seeks to highlight the importance of diverse representation of autism and gender in television programmes, aiming to contribute to a more informed and inclusive discourse on autism, challenging stereotypes and promoting a better understanding of the diverse experiences of autistic individuals.

[48] Davinia Thornley: Learning to Float: Trauma, Auto-Ethnography, and Standpoint Theory via "Days of Happiness" (dir. Chloe Robichaud, 2023).

Abstract. This article acts as a methodological case study, one that marries traditional film studies work—entrenched in literary and textual concerns—and standpoint theory in order to shine a new, contextual light on media critique. Using a combination of auto-ethnographic and reception analysis, I unpack a recent film, "Days of Happiness" (dir. Chloé Robichaud, 2023) in order to 1) deconstruct the current reviews surrounding the film and 2) demonstrate both the possibilities and 'blind spots' that occur when applying a standpoint reading instead. In doing so, I zero in on what some may see as a controversial position to read from, but one that "Days of Happiness" is carefully—if obliquely—crafted around (and that most reviewers missed—or chose not to see): childhood trauma and the imprint this leaves on people's lives. The article concludes with specific suggestions as to the use-value of this multi-modal perspective: in unseating many of the assumptions present in popular criticism, while simultaneously acknowledging the recuperative role of communicative narratives, the fact that films—if we let them— "can always lift us out of life."

[49] Maire Tracey: Documenting belonging and ownership in urban space .

Abstract. Tactical urbanism is about reimagining and repurposing urban spaces to meet the evolving needs of communities. Town centres across the globe have been impacted by a massive reduction in footfall. People want to connect – they

just need the space.Makerworld is a short documentary I made in 2024 showing how artists are using an empty retail unit in Huddersfield to run free workshops for children, how this impacts the lives of the people who take part, and what this brings to the town. At its core, this films poses the question: What is a town for? Like many towns across England, Huddersfield is transitioning away from a retail town centre to an experiential one. Makerworld offers a utopian glimpse of how town centres could thrive if they replaced consumerism with community. Told through the lens of the of the parents and children who attend the free weekly sessions; we hear about the benefits of free community art to young and old – from stress relief to confidence and from social mobility to inclusivity.Henri Lefebvre's notion of public space informed the critical practice and the creative storytelling of the documentary.Within the body of the film, I focussed on the tripartite of the exterior space of a post-capitalist town, the interior social space of MakerWorld and the creative space inside the families' worlds.The film also sets the interior abstract space of MakerWorld in dialogue with the exterior concrete space of Huddersfield – a town with 358 listed buildings and yet also a town with huge economic deprivation.As town centres are rushing to reinvent themselves, Makerworld provides an alternative view of how free community art can change lives, bring families into our dying towns and help reimagine our town centres in the 21st century.
Link to film: https://vimeo.com/1007349984/72a3b587f2

[50] Funke Osae-Brown: Through the Lens: Documentary Film as a Tool for Exploring Identity and Belonging Among Nigerian Migrants in Scotland.

Abstract. Migration is a transformative experience that shapes notions of identity and belonging, particularly for racialised groups navigating new social and cultural landscapes. This presentation explores the integration experiences of Nigerian migrants in Scotland through the lens of documentary film, focusing on the intersections of race, racial discrimination, and identity formation. Using visual storytelling as both a research method and a mode of representation, this study examines how Nigerian migrants negotiate their sense of belonging in a society where race and migration status influence social inclusion. Drawing on narratives captured through documentary filmmaking, the presentation highlights lived experiences of discrimination, resilience, and cultural adaptation. It considers how participants articulate their identities in response to racialised encounters and structural barriers, while also fostering community and redefining belonging on their own terms. By engaging with film as a medium, this research not only

provides a platform for migrant voices but also challenges dominant discourses on integration by centering subjective experiences.This presentation contributes to discussions on migration, race, and identity by demonstrating the potential of documentary film in academic research and advocacy. It invites reflections on the power of visual storytelling in shaping public perceptions, influencing policy, and fostering more inclusive societies.

[51] Runze Ding, Huiqian Lai, and Jiahui Liu: Framing Gender Controversies: Topic Modeling and Discourse Analysis of Weibo's Reaction to Lisa's Crazy Horse Show.

Abstract. By analyzing public discourse surrounding the controversy sparked by K-pop idol Lisa's 2023 performance at Paris's Crazy Horse Show, this study explores how gender norms are being contested in contemporary China under the "melon-eating" (吃瓜) culture on Weibo. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines computational topic modeling and critical discourse analysis on over 60,000 Weibo posts, we identify five thematic frames that structure the "melon-eating" culture surrounding this event. These include sensational curiosity, moral judgments tied to traditional norms, debates on feminist autonomy, critiques of the entertainment industry, and dynamics within fandom culture. Our findings reveal that Weibo functions as a participatory space where public discourse reinforces, yet also challenges, traditional gender expectations. While some users defend conservative values, especially regarding femininity and modesty, others invoke post-feminist ideals of autonomy and body positivity, highlighting a complex negotiation of gender roles. By analyzing how Chinese netizens engage with global feminist discourse in a culturally specific, digitally mediated context, this study contributes to the understanding of how participatory online cultures shape and negotiate gender norms in contemporary China.

[53] Sarah Kennedy-Parr: Can animating cultural artefacts reposition historical events within in a tradtional historical research framework.

Abstract. Connectivity is one of the criteria for the 2029 REF with a view to enable inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches both within and between institutions, fostering co-creation and engagement with research users and society, and recognizing and supporting open research. Recently I worked with members of staff from the University of Manchester and Glasgow Caledonian University on a special edition journal called Transaction of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire. The journal contained various articles about a political event that took place in Preston between 1853-54. The event was a strike by mill workers because

Preston mill owners refused to pay a 10% pay increase. My article discussed an animated film I created using historical drawings about this event. The aim was to add to the cultural memory and refocus understanding of the event. The drawings had largely been dismissed by history academics but by examining these drawings in depth, I felt it offered a new perspective. The process opened up discussion about research methodologies and a lack of cognizance of practice based research in more traditional research subjects. Sharing research practice across the disciplines acted as a nexus shedding light on the possible transformative potential of interdisciplinary perspectives. A familiar process for animation academics as Paul Ward suggests, 'animation theory and practice itself has emerged from a disparity of disciplines and less for more traditional research disciplines.

[54] Gil Sharon: TikTok and the reactionary right around the 2024 US election.

Abstract. The 2024 US Presidential Election marks TikTok's first election as an essential social media platform shaping the turbulent political information flow among Gen Z. TikTok enabled the reactionary right to undergo a form of rebranding and distance themselves from the increasingly sinister image of the alt-right by strategically utilizing TikTok's personal, performative, and "authentic" conventions. This rebranding might have significantly enhanced their appeal to a broader audience and could align with the demographic shifts we saw in voter turnout. In this paper, I share samples from my PhD project, which focuses on the US far-right use of TikTok during the 2024 election. I followed and coded the videos from 280 prominent far-right creators on TikTok around the 2024 election. By combining issue-mapping and critical analysis, this paper illuminates the far-right strategies to appeal to the interests and emotions of Gen Z.Reactionary actors, ranging from professional pundits to "regular" users, utilised TikTok's norms to engage with potential young voters, amassing millions of followers and likes. I will share an emerging analysis that sheds light on the shifts that took place during the 2024 election as the "traditional" appeal to white, Christian and masculine victimhood reached broader demographics. I argue that TikTok enabled the US far-right to create a new "people" in the populist sense, based on their identity as Trump supporters and shared beliefs of Christianity and anti-"woke" sentiments.

[56] Nazife Ebru Güney: Identity and Belonging in Cli-fi Cinema.

Abstract. The term climate fiction (cli-fi) was introduced by journalist and climate activist Dan Bloom in 2011 to promote Jim Laughter's novel Polar City Red, and gained wider recognition after Angela Evancie's use of it on NPR's Weekend

Edition Saturday in April 2013. Cli-fi refers to a literary and cinematic genre that engages with anthropogenic climate change, depicting its consequences through speculative narratives. It rises as extreme weather events, rising sea levels, flooding, desertification, movements of individuals and climate-related diseases. In cli-fi cinema, climate catastrophe disrupts ecosystems and destabilizes social-interpersonal structures, challenging traditional notions of home and belonging. Characters often experience what Freud terms the unhomely (unheimlich)—a condition where familiar spaces become strange and the concept of home dissolves into uncertainty. Whether navigating desolate wastelands, submerged ruins, or artificial shelters, cli-fi protagonists are torn between nostalgia for lost environments and the alienation of unfamiliar landscapes. Simultaneously, they are positioned as the Other, perceived as outsiders by those who control resources, access, and space. This Othering process reinforces tensions between isolation and collectivity, survival and solidarity. This paper explores how cli-fi films depict these dynamics, examining how the characters struggle to reconstruct identity and belonging in an era of ecological collapse. By foregrounding the unhomely and the Other, cli-fi narratives reflect on the ethical, psychological, and existential dimensions of belonging in a world shaped by environmental crisis.

[60] Maria Tomlinson and Annalisa Toccara-Jones: Decolonising Hair in the Francophone World: Online Social Movements in French and their resistance to Eurocentrism.

Abstract. The legacy of French colonialism, which imposed Eurocentric culture on indigenous people, still shapes attitudes towards hair in the Francophone world today. This is evident in workplace discrimination in France against Black and North African women for having hair that is "unprofessional" according to European beauty norms (Cumberbatch 2021). This community also navigates the expectation that they use harmful and expensive products, such as chemical relaxers, to conform to European standards (Jeremiah 2024). These standards have long been perpetuated in the mainstream media (such as in women's magazines) in France and beyond (Davis and Jackson 2024). To resist these Eurocentric norms, people of colour are creating online spaces in which they share their trauma whilst also working together collectively to heal through storytelling and celebrating their natural hair. This paper draws on two natural hair movements as case studies, presenting a multimodal critical discourse analysis of 50 videos and photographs that these accounts have posted on TikTok and Instagram. The first, "Decolonisez vos cheveux" (Decolonise your hair) is primarily aimed at Black women in France whilst the second, "Hrach is Beautiful" (Curly hair is beautiful)

is aimed at celebrating the hair of people with North African heritage. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's concept of the Feminist Killjoy (2010) alongside scholarship about hair and colonialism (Dabiri 2019; Norwood 2018), our paper argues that, by creating spaces in which diverse identities and aesthetics are celebrated, these online communities are making a significant contribution to creating a more inclusive and diverse Francophone world.

[61] Yu Sun:Tackling environmental pollution in China: data flows and outsourced environmental data activism .

Abstract. This study pays attention to the "data arena" to capture the relational dynamics between the state's infrastructural power and activists' grassroots data practices in China's environmental data activism. By moving beyond the contestational view of data activism, it contributes a deeper understanding of the complex power relations in data politics and also the constantly changing state-society relations in the authoritarian context.In the civil society realm, data serves as the new mediators of political interventions and actions, generating new forms of political activism. The tactical use of data technologies in enhancing social justices is seen as data activism. This study focuses on the grassroots data practices of IPE, an environmental non-government organisation in China, examining the convergence of the state's infrastructural building and the grassroots contentions in what I call "outsourced environmental data activism". Guided by the relational approach, it analyses the emergence of a data arena around IPE's data activism practices to tackle environmental pollution and the climate change crisis at the material, spatial and temporal levels. Through participatory observations and in-depth interviews, I focus on the interrelated power relations among technology, civil society and the state in shaping the material infrastructure, action repertoires and their ability to open up and sustain a participatory space for the public to engage in environmental actions. Furthermore, this study discusses how the institutional, technical and social imaginations of environmentalism are merged in the work of reimagining and reconfiguring a governing structure that lives up to environmental values under datafied conditions.

[62] Matthew Robinson:'We Need to Hear Your Voice!' Silence, Rhetoric and Female Agency in the British Biopic.

Abstract. Trial sequences have long been a feature of the biopic genre. They permit historical figures to voice their beliefs in crystal clear terms to a diegetic audience, one which stands in for the film's viewers. Denial (2016) focuses on the "David Irving v Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt" law case and seems ripe for this

treatment. Yet the Jewish American historian never took the stand against the man she labelled a holocaust denier, a strategy devised by her legal team to ensure that the trial's focus remained on Irving's misrepresentation of the holocaust.In a reworking of convention, scenes depict Lipstadt (Rachel Weisz), struggling to maintain her silence as Irving (Timothy Spall) presents his case, her silence a necessary ordeal to secure justice for Holocaust victims. Yet Lipstadt's tendency to swear, shout and gasp within the courtroom and outside suggests the legal strategy is shaped by her conduct as well: these scenes suggest an emotional instability like that discussed in Kaja Silverman's The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema (1988). The guidance offered to Lipstadt by barrister Richard Rampton (Tom Wilkinson) – "[w]hat 'feels' best isn't necessarily what works best" – reflects the film's broader approach: Lipstadt's excessive emotionality compromises her rhetoric, and she must rely on the support offered by her male legal team. The film includes a holocaust survivor's challenge to Lipstadt, "We Need to Hear Your Voice!", but the underlying and deeply problematic assertion is that Lipstadt's silence serves a greater good.

[63] Nariman Massoumi: Short film screening: POURING WATER ON TROUBLED OIL (2023, 26 minutes).

Abstract. In 1951, the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas travelled through Iran on an assignment to write a Technicolour prestige film for the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (forerunner to BP). It was one of the company's 'most important publicity projects ever undertaken', according to its public relations officer at the time. 'My job', Thomas would later remark, 'was to pour water on troubled oil'. Taking place two years before his death, Dylan Thomas's Iranian journey remains an intriguing yet unknown episode in the poet's short and complicated life. POURING WATER ON TROUBLED OIL is a poetic documentary film that draws directly from the poet's personal papers to chronicle his unique encounter with coloniality in mid-century Iran. Thomas's lyrical account (performed in voiceover by the actor MICHAEL SHEEN) is juxtaposed to rarely seen striking black and white photographs from the BP archives chronicling the colonial encounter, and combined with an intricate and haunting soundscape, to capture a sardonic vision of oil and modernity against the backdrop of political upheaval. Constructed entirely from archive sources, the film reconstitutes Thomas's neglected and unrealised vision of Iranian oil – one which was both unrestrained by, and offered a counterpoint to, the company's propagandist objectives. In doing so, it seeks to challenge existing presumptions of the imperviousness with which oil company's shaped and controlled perceptions of oil.

[64] Audrey Laing: Identity, belonging and place: An exploration of remote Scottish book festivals.

Abstract. Literature Alliance Scotland (LAS 2023) lists more than 60 book festivals which take place annually across Scotland. This number has grown in recent years and these festivals often take place in geographically remote areas including Scottish islands.Festivals are events where the audience and reading take on a collective and social dimension (Johanson and Freeman 2012) and where visitors acquire cultural, social and economic capital (Weber 2018). Driscoll (2014) finds that book festivals encapsulate value and meaning.Using semi-structured interviews with book festival organisers, this research examines the growth of remote Scottish literary festivals, exploring the role of the festival as a social space; the festival as agora and the importance of rurality and place, while also acknowledging the ongoing challenges of inclusivity and financial survival. The contribution of festivals to the wider field of Scottish cultural life is also considered.Preliminary findings suggest the distinctive Scottish identity of each festival is important for festival visitors. Interviewees emphasise 'the landscape, the seascape' and the immersive experiential element of the holistic festival experience. A strong element of community engagement and cultural dedication to the role of the book festival was demonstrated as organisers and volunteers are driven by dedication to the vital cultural role played by their book festival.This research examines identity, belonging and place in the context of the immersive cultural destination of Scottish book festivals (McAleese, 2018).

[65] Chris Birchall and Simon Popple: AI-imagined Spaces and Community-led Redevelopment of Heritage Assets.

Abstract. This project uses innovative Generative AI (GenAI) technologies, immersive media and participatory methods to engage local communities in the co-design and redevelopment of heritage spaces and assets in West Yorkshire. In partnership with local heritage organisations, redevelopment agencies and charities, this ongoing work aims to create sustainable models for heritage asset redevelopment that not only preserve historical significance but also enhance community cohesion and cultural vitality.Building on previous work in immersive storytelling, fundraising and community outreach in the charity sector, this research expands these methods to explore and implement heritage-centred approaches that foster local community involvement and resource building. Partners ranging from well-established community-oriented heritage organisations to projects at the start of the redevelopment process – including that of a grade-II listed former textile mill – form a network of expertise and experience, building bridges between community and heritage organisations across the locality to lay the foundations

for a heritage-centred infrastructure for participatory local redevelopment.Through a series of interactive events and campaigns, the project involves community members in co-design processes, including through creative use of AI-driven immersive and digital media, to develop diverse imagined futures for spaces. This encourages community members to envision and shape the potential uses and cultural significance of heritage assets, enabling the inclusion of their voices and perspectives within redevelopment efforts. Adding present and future local stories and perspectives to the narrative of historical past, digital media is utilised to leverage the transformational possibilities of heritage redevelopment in ways that speak to contemporary and future community realities.

[66] Aleksandar Kocic: Is there still a role for local radio in community building?

Abstract. Local news coverage in the UK is in decline with radio moving away from its focus on the 'local', and local newspapers in decline. The present study focuses on local radio in England and Scotland, the two UK nations characterised by the presence of local BBC radio, although in significantly different ways, as well as local commercial radio run either by large media groups – which increasingly move away from local content - or a handful of small independent companies whose stations often struggle to provide substantial local news coverage. Does local news still matter to the people in an increasingly globalised and digital world where people move home more often and their links with the local area are weaker than in the past? And how does the decline in localness affect those working in local radio in Scotland and England and their sense of purpose? Using the theoretical frameworks of the public sphere and localism, the present study aims to answer these questions by speaking to those who work in local radio and those who listen to it. The main aim of the study is to provide a better understanding of how radio professionals perceive their role in today's media environment and juxtapose those against the perceptions of radio by the listeners. In doing so the present study aims to address gaps in research on local radio and contribute to a limited body of knowledge on the role of local radio as seen by both those who make it and those who listen to it. Ultimately, the present study aims to provide a better understanding of the local radio setup in the UK and the challenges it faces

[67] Madeleine Marcella-Hood: Media narratives and Scottish fashion.

Abstract. Scotland has a vast iconography that is recognised globally. However, it is argued that many of these symbols and stereotypes are outdated and not always reflective of a modern Scotland. This paper is part of a wider project exploring Scottish fashion outside of its traditional tropes and that seeks to uncover a

contemporary and forward-looking vision for the sector.The paper begins by exploring the Highland vision of Scotland, which dates back to the 18th century, and analyses how this aesthetic is sustained and represented by the fashion media today. Established publications like Vogue and luxury brands like Chanel have a long-standing influence on global fashion, which has continued into the digital era where content is produced and then reproduced, reaching mainstream fashion audiences. At the same time, new influential actors like bloggers and content creators are recognised for their contribution towards a more democratic fashion system and arguably also play a role as contemporary cultural icons who reimagine fashion in particular geographic contexts.Through an analysis of fashion media output, this paper considers some of the tensions surrounding the traditional view of Scottish fashion and more contemporary outlooks.
Conclusions are drawn around how traditional fashion media and influential new voices are shaping fashion narratives and feeding into contemporary perceptions of national and cultural identity. The research contributes to the fields of Scottish studies, national identity and cultural studies and the evolving field of fashion studies, where sense of place is a significant theme.

[69] Paul Reilly, Catherine Happer, Cairsti Russell, and Gavin Hawkton: Bad News on the Cost of Living Crisis: a Glasgow University Media Group panel .

Panel Description: The cost of living crisis (COLC) has been ubiquitous in the British media landscape over the past three years. A combination of the UK's departure from the European Union, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in March 2022 and the economic legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic fuelled the highest levels of inflation recorded in decades. The increased cost of food and domestic energy bills saw record numbers of citizens using food banks on a regular basis. Yet, there remains little consensus on the origins of the COLC, not to mention ways to resolve it.This panel will explore the role of contemporary media in shaping public understanding of the COLC in the United Kingdom. Applying the methodological approach of the Glasgow University Media Group (GUMG) to the digital media landscape, these papers examine information production and supply, content and reception through a combination of textual analysis, content analysis and focus groups. This mixed methods approach demonstrates how mainstream media construct the crisis and amplify a narrow range of perspectives on its causes and potential solutions, while the public experience an increasing disconnect with mainstream media and the failed politics they are seen to represent.
Chair: Dr Paul Reilly, University of Glasgow

1) Catherine Happer and Isaac Hoff: Naming the Crisis.

Abstract. Media and communications have the power to define and shape the problems dominating the public imagination, as well as to demand responses from those in power (Philo et al., 2015). This paper introduces the role of the media in constructing 'crisis', and the mechanisms by which journalists identify causes and promote solutions to the problems they make salient whilst marginalising consideration of others in ways which sustain and legitimise the current system. It offers an explanation for the emergence of the cost of living crisis (COLC) as a term for understanding the current set of circumstances to which politicians are required to respond in particular ways. It also considers media coverage of the COLC alongside other recent 'crises' such as the migrant crisis and the climate crisis in the context of the global 'permacrisis', and the impacts of a digital infrastructure which delivers a speeded up, increasingly personalised and simplistic set of perspectives on any issue.

2) Gavin Hawkton and Lluis de Nadal Alsina: Short-term narratives, long-term realities: A content analysis of media coverage of the cost of living crisis.

Abstract. This paper presents results from a content analysis of British press articles on the COLC from 2022-23, examining how it is framed, what causes and solutions are highlighted or ignored, and whose voices are privileged. The analysis reveals that the media often frame the COLC as a result of short-term drivers, primarily rising inflation in food, energy, and housing. This overlooks longer-term structural factors, from the neoliberal settlement of the 1970s to post-2008 austerity policies that weakened social safety nets. By focusing on those recently 'squeezed' by short-term factors, this framing obscures deeper structural causes and marginalises the plight of long-term sufferers of austerity. Media coverage of solutions mirrors this short-term focus, presenting responses to the COLC as a choice between individual belt-tightening (e.g. personal budgeting, cutting subscriptions) and government handouts (e.g. energy subsidies). While differing in responsibility, these approaches are two sides of the same coin – both applying band-aids to economic wounds without addressing root causes, focusing on temporary relief over prevention.

3) Cairsti Russell and Catherine Happer: Audience reception: understandings, perceptions, and responses to the COLC.

Abstract. This paper presents findings from focus group research undertaken in the UK in 2024-25 which explore public understanding, perceptions and experiences of the COLC. This includes the language, reference points and sourcing audiences draw on to make sense of this crisis, as well as the causes underlying the crisis and opinions on how the government should respond to it. The role of both mainstream and social media in constructing public perceptions of the COLC is also explored. Results indicate

that there is a profound crisis of trust in mainstream media institutions, alongside emerging patterns of news consumption and evaluation. This distrust has given rise to complex verification practices such as cross-checking across multiple sources, with participants particularly valuing alternative media outlets and content creators they see as authentic and independent. However, this shift appears to coincide with declining political literacy, as participants showed less familiarity with basic political knowledge compared to previous eras of traditional media consumption. The research also identified news avoidance behaviours, with some participants actively disengaging from news they perceive as overwhelmingly negative and emotionally draining.

[70] Hollie Price: Four Corners Film Workshop: Experimenting with Social Realist Traditions and Community Cinema in London's East End.

Abstract. Four Corner Films was established in the early 1970s by a group of filmmakers concerned with developing their creative work outside of the mainstream film industry, basing themselves in a former grocer's shop in Bethnal Green, where they lived and worked as a film co-operative. Ron Peck, founding member and director of the group's sole feature film Nighthawks (1978), emphasised that their interests were diverse – Four Corners' work ranged across representations of London's gay scene, feminist explorations of women's lives, films made as part of youth workshop groups, and collaborative productions with young Bangladeshi filmmaker Ruhul Amin. Drawing on my research as part of an AHRC fellowship project, this paper will examine how Four Corners' socially-committed projects explored questions of identity through an approach combining documentary-realist filmmaking traditions with a more formalist, avant-garde style. This work was fundamentally shaped by the group's integrated practice: their projects were developed through film workshops and a wide variety of screenings in their small cinema, which were an important means of making connections between their practice and local communities – at a time when the cinema/workshop's locale was characterised by thriving community arts initiatives, squat communities, and local activist movements, but also by rising unemployment, racist violence, and widening social divisions. By foregrounding this local context, this paper will explore how the Four Corners cinema/workshop created spaces for discussing, interrogating and reimagining the meanings of community and belonging in London's East End in the 1970s and early 1980s.

[72] Dafydd Sills-Jones:Where does Virtual Production belong in Higher Education?: Balancing Technology-Enhanced Learning with Pedagogical Freedom and Institutional Challenges.

Abstract. This presentation examines the establishment of a virtual production

facility at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) as a case study in technology-enhanced learning, informed by the pedagogical theories of bell hooks, Ivan Illich, Welby Ings, Kevin Gannon, and the media philosophy of Friedrich Kittler. The integration of advanced virtual production technologies into higher education offers opportunities for transdisciplinary collaboration and creative learning. However, it raises critical questions about how large-scale infrastructures like virtual production studios can avoid being dominated by industry-driven models while maintaining real-world relevance in educational contexts.Bell Hooks' Teaching to Transgress (1994) advocates for education as a transformative practice of freedom, where both students and educators engage in critical dialogue and creative experimentation. The virtual production facility at AUT has the potential to support this vision by empowering students to challenge conventional knowledge and creative practices. However, there is a risk that such a facility could become aligned with industry standards, undermining its educational potential in favor of commercially-driven priorities.
Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society (1971) critiques traditional educational institutions, calling for decentralized, flexible learning that connects more directly with real-world practices. The virtual production facility, while offering access to state-of-the-art technology, faces the challenge of ensuring it remains an educational space rather than one that simply mirrors professional production environments. How can it maintain a focus on learning, creativity, and critical engagement, while providing students with relevant industry skills?Welby Ings' concept of the "disobedient teacher" (2017) encourages educators to disrupt traditional pedagogies and engage students in ways that provoke new thinking and creativity. The virtual production facility could provide an opportunity to rethink how education is delivered, creating a space for students to experiment with media-making in innovative ways. However, this must be balanced against the practicalities of running a sophisticated technological space. Kevin Gannon's notion of "radical hope" (2020) emphasizes the potential for education to inspire creativity and imagine better futures, even within the constraints of institutional structures. The facility could be a site of such hope, offering a space for radical learning and innovation.Drawing on these perspectives, this article explores how the virtual production facility can balance industry relevance with pedagogical freedom, and how it can serve as a site of creative, critical learning rather than becoming an industry-driven space.

[73] Anna Zsubori: Famous and Foe: Social media activism and resistance among LGBTQ+ influencers in an illiberal regime.

Abstract. In January 2025, a Hungarian music video on YouTube reached 10

million views in less than 2 weeks, portraying a dictator who is rapping, 'We grew bigger and bigger as a congregation, All I had to do was bash the gays' (Majoros & Elek, my translation). The video is claimed to be a political satire of the Hungarian government (Németh, 2025), while also illustrating the power of social media and the regime's attacks against the Hungarian LGBTQ+ community.In illiberal environments, social media can have significant value for LGBTQ+ people, since Public Service Media (PSM) are in the hands of anti-LGBTQ+ elites. Over the last few years, LGBTQ+ people have been under various attacks by the Hungarian government (Kottasová, 2021). Although there are academic accounts exploring queer communities' social media usage, they are predominantly focused on the West (Duguay, 2016). Therefore, Hungarian LGBTQ+ communities' digital media usage has been mainly overlooked by scholars.This work aims to remedy these shortcomings by employing concepts such as power, resistance (Foucault, 1978), master (Delanty, 2006) and counter narratives (Meretoja, 2021), and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), as well as relying on in-depth interviews with famous Hungarian LGBTQ+ influencers. This paper argues that while their social media approaches when addressing attacks of the illiberal may differ, these influencers aim to create a counter narrative to challenge the omnipresent PSM propaganda and resist the regime. As a result, this work offers unique contributions to audience, LGBTQ+, communication, and media studies, as well as political science.

[74] Ruth Garland: Racism, political branding and Rishi Sunak – how an anglicised online persona and biased storytelling were punctured by a complex reality.

Abstract. After five years as an MP, Rishi Sunak became UK Chancellor (Finance Minister) in February 2020. The 30-month online personal branding campaign that followed was conducted by a branding specialist from within the finance department (the Treasury), using taxpayers' money. The campaign enabled this inexperienced politician to portray himself as 'leader in waiting'. In October 2022, having earlier helped to oust Boris Johnson, he became the UK's youngest Prime Minister in modern times, and the first from an Indian background.This study conducted a thematic content analysis of all Tweets issues by the Treasury's official Twitter feed, @hmtreasury, during a sample 12-month period. The analysis was conducted in the light of issues raised by political branding theory and findings from earlier studies from Hungary, Spain and Canada that examined the social media activity of governing and campaigning politicians (Farkas and Bene, 2021; Pineda et al., 2022; Lalancette and Raynauld, 2019).This paper considers two main strands that emerged from Sunak's branding campaign as Chancellor: the anglicized branded

persona that was created, and the claims made about the UK economy and the cost-of-living crisis. To what extent did political branding considerations promote disinformation and disguise a complex reality, both in Sunak's online persona and the stories he told through the 412 Tweets, including 70 short films, that were released during this key 12-month period? How should the campaign be evaluated in the light of the disastrous 2024 election when Sunak led the Conservatives to the worst defeat in their 190-year history?

[75] Nelson Correia: Building a National Screen Workforce: Scottish Filmmakers and the Late-20th-Century Drive for Self-Representation of the 'Film Bang' Movement.

Abstract. This paper discusses the history of 'Film Bang', a network formed by Scottish film workers in the 1970s, which was crucial in shaping their identity as a community and establishing a Scottish narrative film sector in the late 20th century. Until the mid-1970s, film production in Scotland had been limited; there were no mechanisms to support indigenous narrative features; and the local film workforce counted 60-odd freelancers across key creative and technical roles. Keen to expand, that small filmmaking community came together and launched the Film Bang manifesto, campaigning for more funding and institutional support. Film Bang started as a two-day public event in January 1976 and evolved into an annual gathering, held until the mid-2000s, where film workers would socialise, network and debate key sectoral issues. The initial event also saw the launch of the Film Bang directory, listing film crews and production companies across Scotland, which became a local point of reference and has been published until today. The paper shows how the Film Bang movement provided validation, self-representation and community identity to Scottish-based film workers and, consequently, supported their strategy to venture into the production of narrative features, showcasing Scottish stories to domestic and international audiences, between the 1980s and 2000s. The paper derives from a broader study on the evolution of the Scottish-based freelance screen workforce in the last half-century, based on oral history and archival research, and features extracts from interviews with long-established Scottish-based film workers reflecting on their experiences with Film Bang.

[77] Harriet Fuest: How people with ME/CFS use cyberspace to mediate their suffering.

Abstract. This study examines how individuals with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) utilise cyberspace to mediate and depoliticise their suffering. Given the historical medical and societal scepticism surrounding ME/

CFS, the internet provides a space for patients to construct meaning, challenge dominant narratives, and negotiate their identities. Through a six-month passive netnography, participant journals (N=14), and follow-up interviews (N=12), this research explores how individuals with ME/CFS engage with digital environments to navigate their experiences of illness. The findings demonstrate that the ME/CFS community actively constructs peer-reviewed knowledge systems in cyberspace, challenging institutional authority and traditional medical frameworks. Through a biosocial habitus, community guidelines shape procedures and interactions within the fields of medicine, academia, and media. These knowledge systems empower individuals with ME/CFS to reclaim control over their broader representation, resisting biopolitical narratives that have historically undermined their condition. The study also reveals that this community engages in ongoing debates regarding the distinction between "chronic health identity" and "disabled identity", underscoring how dominant models of disability maintain regimes of suffering. This research contributes to broader discussions on the challenges posed by the social model of disability for individuals with chronic health conditions. The findings illustrate the necessity to explore further how other marginalised health groups utilise digital platforms to resist prevailing biopolitical discourses and assert epistemic authority over their lived experiences.

[79] Rachel Abreu: Forging Alternative Femininities: Religious Women's Negotiations of Identity, Community, and Belonging on Instagram.

Abstract. Instagram provides unique opportunities for self-expression and self-representation, which subsequently contribute to conceptualisations of ideal beauty and femininity. Yet, the platform continues to uphold normative, Western ideals that alienate those who do not conform to them. Using narratives from religious, ethnic minority women, this paper considers how marginalised groups utilise Instagram to resist colonial framings of identity.Social media are often touted as contributing to cross-cultural engagement and greater acceptance of difference. However, religious, ethnic minority groups persistently contend with stereotyped and tokenised representations of their identities. Coupled with the rise of popular feminism and the belief that religion has little to offer women, religious women risk being homogenised into one ugly, oppressed group. Through in-depth focus groups and interviews with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim women located globally, this paper offers a detailed, intersectional exploration of religious women's avenues for finding belonging online and the opportunities that social media create for expressing new, unconventional femininities.The findings demonstrate several ways in which religious women take advantage of Instagram's tools to foster

communities of hybrid identity and advocate for alternative, religious feminisms. Specifically, Instagram is used to forge networks that highlight nuanced, lived experience; reconcile mainstream standards of beauty, femininity, and sexuality with religious, cultural values; and uphold portrayals of religious women that challenge both fundamentalist and Western, liberal feminist stereotypes. These opportunities for community-building are, however, not without their constraints. This paper thus addresses recommendations for fostering identity and belonging for future generations of religious women, even beyond social media.

[80] Tokoni Uti: Women in the Public Sphere; From Online Hostility to Government-Backed Female Erasure.

Abstract. One of the most potent and long-standing forms of misogyny is the erasure of women from public life. From women being banned from public speaking in Afghanistan to the current rollback of support for DEI initiatives in the US (theorised by feminist scholars as part of an effort to push women out of the workforce entirely), this is evidently true even today. But beyond the major regulatory changes, an anti-female sentiment appears to have taken root and flourished in the online space.Using the case study of r/IamTheMainCharacter, this study seeks to explore the prevalence of these sentiments that are not just anti-women but anti-women engaging in public life.The subreddit r/IamTheMainCharacter is dedicated to 'Videos/photos of people acting like they are the center of the world' and criticising them for such behaviour. Many of the subjects of these videos are filmed in public and the rhetoric shared is that they constitute a nuisance. The study aims to conduct an analysis of 400 posts on this subreddit, coding the subjects by gender. This will offer evidence of a preoccupation with women in public life within these communities. Additionally, a content analysis will be conducted in the comments section to identify any prevalent anti-female rhetoric. Specifically, language differences between posts with female and male subjects will be examined. Understanding how these anti-women sentiments take root in online communities not explicitly dedicated to discussing gender can expose avenues for intervention from regulators, digital communication platforms, educators, and private citizens.

[81] Mariana Gomes: Beyond news production: Citizen journalism as civic infrastructure in marginalized communities.

Abstract. Existing scholarship on citizen journalism remains fragmented, often emphasizing its role in citizen witnessing, counter-hegemony, activism, or micro-watchdog reporting. Moreover, the interchangeable use of terms such as participatory media, community journalism, and alternative journalism contributes

to conceptual ambiguity (Rodriguez, 2001; Thorsen, 2020). Additionally, current research tends to reiterate what has already been established, while remaining largely Western-centric, which leads to an incomplete and sometimes distorted understanding of citizen journalism in the Global South (Rodriguez et al., 2014; Wall, 2015). To address these gaps, this study moves beyond media-centric approaches and reframes citizen journalism as part of a broader civic infrastructure. Traditionally defined as a practice where "anyone can actively produce and publish news" (Dourado, 2010), citizen journalism in marginalized contexts extends far beyond news production. In the Global South, grassroots journalism projects serve as civic hubs, offering educational programs, vocational training, cultural events, food banks, meeting spaces, etc. Journalists in these settings act as ethnographers, identifying and addressing local communication needs (Rodriguez et al., 2014). For instance, producing news and distributing food baskets are both parts of a civic system supported by citizen journalists, which has not been fully recognized in existing literature. By applying communication infrastructure theory (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006), and the concepts of "counter-commoning" (Greenwood, 2023) and "ethics of care" (Robinson, 2023), this paper argues that news production is linked to broader commons-building efforts, aligning with the conference theme of resilience and community building.

[82] Idil Osman: Digital Technologies, African Diaspora Youth and Culture-Centred Development.

Abstract. In the past few decades, culture has become a central element to development, understood as a source of profound social and economic transformation through culture's influence on aspiration and collective action. It is the cultural proximity and familiarity that African diasporas have that makes their development interventions more sustainable and having wider reach than international aid and development agencies (Hammond 2009).However, scholars have begun since the mid-2010s to scrutinise the lived experiences of those diasporas who engage in these transnational activities (Osman 2017; Akesson et al 2015; Hammond 2012). This is especially problematic for conflict-generated diasporas (Lyons 2012) who carry the trauma of conflict and can exacerbate tensions and conflict dynamics with their development initiatives interventions. Recent scholarship has signalled the possibility of the younger generation, often void of their elders' conflict baggage, being interested in participating in the development of their homelands but are taking a broader approach to development, that is enabled by digital technologies and linked to culture and heritage.This paper is based on an ongoing study that explores how digital platforms enable convivial spaces for African diaspora youth

to initiate and engage in development initiatives that adopts a culture and heritage methodology. Its aim is to shift current understanding of African diaspora and development and demonstrate new insights into the critical role that digital technologies are increasingly playing.

[85] Michele Paule, Nathalie Weidhase, Maike Dinger, and Isabel Sykes: Panel proposal: 'I girlbossed too hard': Gender, Labour, Visibility and Identity.

Panel proposal: 'I girlbossed too hard': Gender, Labour, Visibility and Identity
At the close of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, patriarchal power structures continue to shape women's work. Inequalities persist in the workplace, in the ideology of the family, and in wider cultural institutions via patriarchal exclusionary mechanisms that include both material and representational limitations. At the same time popular feminism has made certain kinds of women's work newly visible: A concern with the representation of women in top power roles, a recognition of women's economic power as audience value, and algorithm-based funding of social media platforms relying largely on girls' and women's engagements all contribute to a media prominence of middle-class, professional and entrepreneurial models of femininity, while the economic hardships faced by working-class women, the distribution and monetisation of domestic labour, and the gendered precarity of the labour market are elided. This panel brings together papers from scholars exploring intersecting discourses of labour, femininity, (in-) visibility, and class in diverse media and cultural contexts: social media platforms; representations of the de-industrialised north; domestic spheres and teen girls in schools. Here the definitions of 'labour' include (cultures of) paid and unpaid work; identity work, online labour.

1) Isabel Sykes: 'CEO of the family': class, domestic labour and the mental load.

Abstract. This paper is based on a thematic analysis of interviews with working-class and low-income women across the UK about their daily unpaid domestic labour. An ongoing care crisis, exacerbated by events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis, has brought renewed attention to the unpaid domestic labour shouldered by women. Drawing on previous scholarship which has focused on middle-class experiences of such work, this paper brings new focus to working-class women's lived experiences of doing housework and care work amidst economic upheaval and uncertainty. Building on the 'CEO of the family' concept (Orgad, 2019), I detail how the women in my study employ managerial practices such as scheduling, supervision, and delegation in order to cope with their considerable domestic responsibilities and associated mental load, exploring how classed notions

of respectability and practicality permeate and shape these roles.

2) Michele Paule: 'If she can see it, she can be it': Role models, labour and un/remarkable girls.

Abstract. This paper approaches the concept of the role model from a gendered discursive and political economy perspective. In it I argue that a specific discourse of role models has emerged around girls, born out of the twentieth century psychologisation of girlhood. This is contingent with neoliberalism's appropriation of feminism and repurposing it as a buttress for individualism and self-responsibility, as material structures for developing well-being and economic thriving are stripped away. Role model discourse, circulating via media industries and educational institutions, makes specific demands of the girl subject in terms of imaginative labour, entrepreneurship, and identity work. Using data from studies conducted with girls between 2013 and 2024, I show how girls take up and negotiate this discourse that requires them to respond to 'remarkable' women by refashioning their 'unremarkable' selves. Their encounters with exhortations to adopt role-models reveal their awareness of the demands and limitations of role model discourse, and the risks of 'remarkability' for women.

3) Maike Dinger: Women's labour in (de-industrialised) communities.

Abstract. Industrialisation with its focus on heavy industries has prioritised male labour in coal mines and large factories. Mediated representations of those maintaining the industries and providing for families are male-connotated and focused on stereotyped gendered characteristics of bodily strength, physicality, camaraderie and drinking culture. In contrast, the labour of women in industrial settings has routinely been associated with the domestic – barring the war efforts – and often overlooks women's vital role in economically supporting the heavy industries through "menial" work and their families through the socio-economic challenges of strikes and deindustrialisation.This paper explores working-class women's role in (post-) industrial settings based on data from exploratory discussion groups with women (aged 55-95) in deindustrialised communities in the North of England. It addresses their crucial contributions as economically active labourers in support industries, as providers, community-builders and working wives. On this basis, this paper argues for and draws attention to the underrepresented labour of women in industrial communities and their responses to industrial decline: it highlights working-class women's perseverance in supporting their families, explores their mobility in gendered spaces, and challenges ideas around women as housewives and mothers.

4) Nathalie Weihase: Corporate Queens and Girlbosses: Gendered Representations of Labour on Social Media.

Abstract. From hashtags such as #Hustling to #QuietQuitting, paid labour

is a hotly discussed topic on social media. This paper explores key hashtags on Instagram and TikTok exploring gendered representations of paid labour. Social media is a key space in which young people explore the meaning of work beyond traditional spheres such as politics or trade union activism, and social media is recognised (and perhaps feared) as such. In the current fourth wave of feminism, mediations of work often take on a gendered dimension, such as in the supposedly empowered girlboss (Tran 2022). Under postfeminism, this often took the form of 'having it all', where women seemingly effortlessly combined full-time work with being a wife and mother. In the popular feminist media environment, we see this myth continued in the #Girlboss and the #CorporateQueen, but also encounter disillusionment with the impossibilities of these demands in hashtags such as #LazyGirlJobs. Analysing discourses of work in the context of postfeminism and popular feminism, the paper explores the role work plays in constructions of contemporary femininity.

[86] Claire Evans: Not always perfect but wearable: embracing wonky clothing to reduce fashion waste.

Abstract. This practice-based research explores the design and production of what is termed 'wonky clothing'. Wonky clothing has been coined to support active engagement with the creative aesthetic of designing garments that are not always perfect but wearable. For climate conscious fashion consumers and citizens this research presents practical research on embracing imperfections in garments to reduce fashion waste.To reduce the quantity of fabric waste created during the garment production process it is essential to consider alternative methods, to forge new, radical approaches that challenge traditional models. Applying purposeful tilt to pattern grainlines, offers the possibility of increasing fabric usage efficiency, saving waste. For this exploratory study a skirt with tilted (wonky) pattern grainlines was designed and manufactured, to investigate wearer perception of skirt fit following periods of wash and wear. Nine wearer trial interviews were conducted with participants over a three-month period. Areas of change in the perception of skirt fit and appearance, over the studies length, were identified.Wonky clothing may challenge traditional garment pattern-cutting conventions, however, reducing cutting waste has made it imperative that risk-takers, not afraid of making mistakes, produce new and novel radical creative solutions. The effect of waste on climate change provides an opportunity to rethink cultural approaches to contemporary garment aesthetic. This qualitative study provides an in-depth examination of wearer perceptions, and the findings identify how participants priorities regarding skirt aesthetic, fit and appearance change over time.

[87] Sarah Lahm: Women Replace Themselves: Parallel Realities and Fragmented Identities on Contemporary TV.

Abstract. In a January 2025 op-ed for The New York Times, Eric Schwitzgebel invokes the recent streaming series Severance (Apple TV+, 2022—) and Coraline Fargeat's film The Substance (2024) in the context of our 'increasingly splintered selves', demonstrating that fragmented psyches and bodies continue to be all the rage in popular culture. They manifest in manifold ways, from clones in Orphan Black (Space/BBC America, 2013-2017) to twins in Dead Ringers (Amazon Prime, 2023), as well as virtual alternate selves or doppelgangers that threaten to take over one's body in Made for Love (HBO Max, 2021-2022), visual or physical manifestation of versions of oneself in one's mind in Search Party (TBS/HBO Max, 2016-2022) and The Flight Attendant (HBO Max, 2020-2022), divided selves governed by a corporation in Severance, many versions of oneself in parallel realities, such as in Slip (The Roku Channel, 2023), and as part of time loop and time travel narratives in Russian Doll (Netflix, 2019-2022) and Undone (Amazon Prime Video, 2019-2022). This paper will focus on the kinds of splintering that evoke ideas of self-replacement as a consequence of perpetual self-optimisation (Tolentino, 2019) and individual feminist resilience (McRobbie, 2020). It will situate the splintered female subject within the context of contemporary cultural anxieties and crises in the US (Ames, 2020; Hargraves, 2023), with an examination of Made for Love's Hazel Green (Cristin Milioti), whose 'messy', imperfect self has to compete with a 'perfect' virtual self that threatens to take over her body in the programme's second season.

[88] Altman Yuzhu Peng and Nicole Talmacs: Replicating a tradwife on Douyin: The jiaoqi aesthetic and its discursive war on feminism in China.

Abstract. Today, the 'tradwife' (traditional wife) aesthetic, often embodied by female influencers who celebrate returning to the domestic sphere, has gained popularity across Euro-American societies. Mirroring this phenomenon, a comparable jiaoqi (娇妻, meaningyoung, beautiful wife) aesthetic has emerged within China's influencer economy, valorizing women's withdrawal from public life. In this article, we draw on Teun van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to analyse Douyin videos posted by a female influencer who has brought jiaoqi discourse to the forefront of public attention on the Chinese-language internet. We contend that jiaoqi discourse operates as a nuanced form of therapeutic governance, establishing a discursive apparatus tailored to uphold gender asymmetry in China. Commercially, the discourse enables lifestyle influencers to construct appealing

personas that resonate most with heterosexual, middle-class women living in cities. Politically, it dovetails with the party-state's post-socialist governing doctrines by assisting the depoliticization of gender issues, as well as legitimizing state-sanctioned fertility policies and beyond. Therefore, the proliferation of jiaoqi discourse should be interpreted as both a localized adaptation of a global reactionary trend and a vernacular manifestation of the state-market nexus under party-state rule.

[91] Felicity Wilcox: Reclaiming opera for women and gender minorities through process and practice.

Abstract. Operatic narratives traditionally portray women as victims of murder and/or sexual violence (Clément 1979). In the evolving social and cultural environment opera practitioners are starting to problematise such narratives, whether through the creation of new work or realising old works in new ways. Australian composer Felicity Wilcox's current research, funded through an Australian Research Council Fellowship, includes development of an original opera titled Emergenc/y, which aims to challenge the status quo in opera through artistic practice that is as much political in its subject matter as in its ways of doing. The opera's diverse cast ensures a range of perspectives and practices are included in shaping it, collectively representing First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, those with disability, and women and gender diverse people. A key goal is to reclaim the narrative of sexual assault and present it through an authentic lens mediated by those with lived experience. Method is also tailored to creating a culture of belonging: improvisation is a starting point for score development; a therapist is present to support artists triggered by the subject; and vocal parts are revised for one lead performer undergoing gender affirmation treatment, among other interventions. Incorporating her research undertaken with other practitioners of contemporary opera and data from her report, Women and Minority Genders in Music (Wilcox and Shannon 2023), Wilcox will interweave first-source interviews, auto-ethnographic reflection, qualitative and quantitative analysis, video of work-in-progress, and aspects of contemporary global practice to reveal new disruptive practice that challenges the structural inequities at opera's core.

[93] Darren Berkland:The Invaluable Place of Mirrors within Media Studies.

Abstract. A mirror and identity are inextricably linked; the research presented here will reassess the mirror as a topic of media studies.The mirror has seen investigation in media studies: cinema studies of the 20th century typified the mirror as a metaphor for understanding cinema (Baudry, 1986, p. 313; Metz, 1977, p. 48; Mulvey, 1989, pp. 17-18; Sobchack, 1992, pp. 14-17, 105-107) following the

influence of psychoanalytic theory (Lacan, 1977, pp. 2-3, 15, 234). Further, in the early 21st century – with the rise of video-calling and selfies – the mirror again became an object of study as media researchers attempted to distinguish this specular surface and its relationship to the camera and mediated online identities (notably Tiidenberg, 2014, 2015, 2016; Tiidenberg & Gómez Cruz, 2015; Warfield, 2014a, 2014b, 2017a, 2017b; Warfield et al., 2016; Walker, 2005; Walker-Rettberg, 2014).However, this paper argues that these attempts at understanding the mirror have not been satisfactory and has left a considerable gap within understanding the broader media ecology. Investigations of the mirror remain at best perfunctory, and at worst, invisible to media theorists and requires urgent reassessment within the contemporary media landscape of front-facing cameras and live-streaming facecams.To do this, this research draws from critical theories of apparatus, interface and screenology to (re)articulate the mirror. In doing so it returns to this specular surface and provides a novel framework for addressing the mirror as a mediated, screenic-interface that should be central within discussions of the contemporary media landscape and crucial to answering questions of mediated identity.

[95] Daniel Turner: Precious - Reclaiming Value From Personal Data.

Abstract. "Value: 1. the amount of money that can be received for something; 2. the importance or worth of something for someone" Cambridge Dictionary. We live in a world where data is increasingly extracted from our every movement and interaction. The digital traces and patterns of our life are broken down, reconstructed, bought, sold and interrogated for the purposes of economic and political gain. Artists and designers frequently use this data as material to explore, expose, interrogate and define what it means to exist in this environment.Defining the 'environment' as a dual space which encompasses both our physical and digital existence we can consider that personal data forms part of the extended self. The invisible nature of computers, interfaces and data from a physical and linguistic viewpoint are contributing factors to people's passivity in relation to propertisation of their digital identity. With Enterprise as the dominant steward of our data, blurred concepts of ownership and a power imbalance in collection, a lack of agency for the individual is a distinct and growing problem.This practice-led, PhD study aims to create a suite of software programs that allow people to explore their personal Facebook data, selecting, connecting and visualising elements of it to create physical artworks that tell stories personal to them.In promoting exploration of this data to produce artefacts that are personal, unique, anchored in the physical world and visible, the research seeks to engage a broader audience with an asset that we often give away freely.

[96] Sinuo Wang: Redefining Asian Masculinity: Tensions, Resistance, and Negotiations on Reddit.

Abstract. Compared to Western men, Asian men have distinct histories and experiences, shaped not only by their status as a racialized minority but also by enduring legacies of colonial and postcolonial power structures (Shek,2007). The construction of Asian masculinity has historically been influenced by Western orientalist discourse, often portraying Asian men as submissive, passive, and powerless, rather than being defined by Asian men themselves (Shek, 2007, Kalra, 2009). However, many Asian men tring to challenge dominant stereotypes, as well as Western imagination of the East. As a commonly use and community-base in Western society platform, Reddit provides a chance to explore how Asian men living in Western as a group negotiate their masculinity online. This research aims to explore the discourse within the subreddit Asian Masculinity, whether and how they challenge stereotypes of Asian men and construct a redefined masculinity. This research combines critical discourse analysis (CDA) with computer-assisted analysis techniques (linguistics and word embedding). Through mixed methods research approaches, this research finds that these Asian men seek to break away from Western stereotypes that portray them as weak and passive. However, the self-image they aspire to construct is still influenced by Western hegemonic masculinity. By exploring Asian men's collective identity negotiation and self-presentation, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how marginalized groups engage in identity reconstruction within digital spaces.

[98] Karen Dickinson: Investigating the Blythe Duff archive: Representations of women, the LGBTQ+ community and the city of Glasgow in the popular TV series Taggart (STV 1983-2010).

Abstract. In 2018, the Scottish actress, Blythe Duff – best known for portraying DI Jackie Reid for twenty years (1990 – 2010) in the long-running popular Scottish TV crime drama, Taggart – donated her entire archive, comprising scripts and memorabilia, to Glasgow Caledonian University.In 2023, I was the successful recipient of a PhD bursary awarded by the University in order systematically to investigate the holdings of the archive for the first time, paying particular attention to Taggart.What has become clear from the subsequent investigation is that Taggart is an important historical artefact in terms of articulation of themes of identity and belonging, containing a multitude of information about the changing culture, attitudes and opinions in Glasgow over the years the series was broadcast. The series forms a unique document of a rapidly changing city: from the hangover of industrial collapse in the early 1980s when the series was first launched through

to the city's renaissance as a cultural centre brimming with style and confidence by the time it ended in 2010.A key focus of the study has been the growth and evolution of Jackie Reid - the character played by Duff - and how she reflects changing attitudes towards women and gender over the 27 years Taggart was screened. Taggart has been subject to little or no critical enquiry, and very limited research has been undertaken until now into the specific role the series played in capturing the evolution of Scottish society over almost three decades and of changing social and cultural attitudes.This presentation will review my research findings at the end of the primary data collection phase and disseminate these in public for the first time. As well as discussing my research in the archive itself, it will include reference to extended personal interviews conducted with Blythe Duff herself and numerous of her associates who worked on Taggart. Emerging themes from the research will be highlighted, including changing attitudes towards women in the police force, to the LGBTQ+ community and how the series depicted and interrogated Glaswegian identities.

[99] Christa Van Raalte, Frances Pheasant-Kelly, Jenny Alexander, and Helena Bassil-Morozow: Action Heroines in the 21st Century: Sisters in Arms.

Panel Proposal. The Action Heroine is something of an ideological oxymoron. Intruding into a traditionally (and, even now, primarily) male-dominated genre, she continues to present a fundamentally disruptive figure, challenging gendered notions of identity and belonging. Her ideological impact lies less, it might be argued, in any actual violence than in her image and what it says about her latent ability to assert her will. As Robert Warshow says in his classic essay, in action cinema 'A hero is one who looks like a hero'. (1954: 47). Recent years have seen an increase in the numbers of women in these roles yet mainstream texts continue to adopt a number of strategies to, in Yvonne Tasker's words, 'explain away' (1993: 20), the action heroine, and contain the potential threat she represents to a patriarchal world order. One of the most potent of these has been the representation of the action heroine as a 'one off', a woman in a man's world – suggesting that she does not belong in this space. In this panel we will discuss examples from a range of action genres that present female action figures who work collectively, thus challenging this norm.

1) Christa van Raalte: Passing the Baton: Age, Mortality and Mentorship in Three Hollywood films.

Abstract. Action narratives have long offered the ageing male star a role as mentor to a younger successor - passing on, as it were, the baton of patriarchal power, with

a spot of Oedipal sparring along the way. His female counterpart, however, is largely absent from our screens. Indeed, where our female action heroes have the benefit of a mentor, that mentor is typically male, reinforcing a sense that her power is inherently masculine and provisional. When it comes to the relationship between an older woman and the younger woman preparing to replace her, Hollywood has traditionally portrayed them as jealous rivals rather than allies. Such relationships are haunted by the spectres of the 'wicked stepmother' of fairy tales or that of the dangerous usurper epitomised in Mankiewicz's All About Eve (1950). This paper explores how traditional patterns are disrupted in three female-led action films: The Old Guard (Prince-Bythewood, 2020), Mulan (Caro, 2020) and Charlie's Angels (Banks, 2019). Despite the generic and structural differences between them, all three challenge the trope of the jealous 'older woman' threatened by the usurping ingénue and replace it with a narrative of mentorship and intergenerational allegiance.

2) Jenny Alexander: 'Nubian Queen Rise' : The Black Queer Action Heroine, Sisterhood and the Closet in Captain Marvel (2019) and The Harder They Fall (2021).

Abstract. Black queer action heroes and heroines remain marginal figures in the Hollywood action genre. This paper considers two such queer/ queer-coded characters, Maria Rambeau (Lashana Lynch) in Captain Marvel (Boden and Fleck, 2019), and Cuffee (Danielle Deadwyler) in The Harder They Fall (Samuel, 2021), and the way that they are either granted, or deprived, of 'sisterhood'. I explore how their primary relationships (with women) for Rambeau with Captain Marvel (Brie Larson) and for Cuffee with Stagecoach Mary (Zazie Beetz), are productively complicated on screen, by what Eve Sedgwick calls the 'glass closet', meaning queerness, structured in narrative, as a now-you-see-it, now-you-don't 'open secret' (Sedgwick 2008: 164). I argue that these two action heroines are constructed by intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989) mobilisations of cinematic Blackness and queerness, through the sisterly bonds scripted between them and their whiter/lighter-skinned, cis-gendered/femme, friends and lovers. To do so, I make use of three theoretical understandings of 'sisterhood': bell hooks' Black feminist definition of sisterhood as 'political solidarity' (1986); Adrienne Rich's sisterhood as existing on a 'lesbian continuum' (1980: 651); and Amber Musser's 'brown jouissance', as 'womanist embodied relationality' (Musser, 2018: 13).

3) Helena Bassil-Morozow: Harley Quinn: Trickster, Action Heroine, and a Reluctant Team Player.

Abstract. This paper looks at the character of Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie) in Birds of Prey (and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn) (Yan, 2020) and The Suicide Squad (Gunn, 2021) using the taxonomy of trickster

characteristics (Bassil-Morozow, 2012; Bassil-Morozow, 2015) and the concept of the female persona (Bassil-Morozow, 2023). It assesses Quinn's ability to subvert the various dimensions of traditional femininity, including physical appearance such as clothes and make-up, victim-like behaviour, and subservient demeanour. Tricksters disrupt stereotypes, cross boundaries and reject the standards imposed on them by society. Essentially, the trickster is a pre-social being who despises the very idea of belonging to a structure. However, the trickster can also form liminal communities (communitas) with other outcasts, as Quinn does in Birds of Prey. Indeed, Harley Quinn is consistently presented as a team player in the films released so far. Admittedly, she does not voluntarily join the team of super-villain assassins in The Suicide Squad, but she does, albeit reluctantly, unite around herself a motley group of female fighters and outcasts, and they succeed in overpowering and destroying Sionis and his army of criminals.

4) Frances Pheasant-Kelly: Agency and Sisterhood in the Revisionist Western: The Missing (2003), The Keeping Room (2014) and Godless (2017) as Feminist Westerns.

Abstract. The Western is the genre perhaps most associated with displays of violent masculinity. While tough, independent women have always played central roles in Westerns, ranging from Jessica Drummond (Barbara Stanwyck) in Forty Guns (Fuller, 1957) through to Mattie Ross (Hailee Steinfeld) in True Grit (Coen Brothers, 2010), they are in a minority. Few productions, moreover, feature women collectives as central to the narrative – with Wellman's Westward the Women (1951) a notable exception. However, the twenty-first century has witnessed numerous productions that challenge the Western's traditions in terms of gender representation, with groups of women increasingly taking centre-ground. Recent films such as The Missing (Howard, 2003), The Keeping Room (Barber, 2014) and Netflix series, Godless (2017) focus on women operating together to resist violence inflicted by men. Such content corresponds with the agency of real-world cases whereby women increasingly act collectively. Engaging theoretically with feminist and postfeminist scholarship, particularly as it relates to the Western (Schwarz, 2014; Wildermuth, 2018), this paper argues that female agency and sisterhood are establishing new patterns in the genre, and through textual analysis of these case studies, together with reference to further relevant examples, identifies the revised conventions and codes of the feminist twenty-first century Western.

[101] Sara Davies: Dreaming the Between: an arts-based exploration into the effects of migration on our memory and imagination.

Abstract. My arts-based research examines the intersection of creativity, migrant

subjectivity formation and narratives of belonging. As a first-generation Swedish migrant in the UK, I explore how memories of home, issues with belonging, self-uncertainty manifest in my artworks. Building on previous PhD research (Davies, 2024) I investigate how art practice, particularly the emotional and physical touch when making art, both reveals and counteracts self-uncertainty linked with migration and diaspora. In current research I examine how these representations of self-uncertainty, contribute to a diasporic imaginary (Axel, 1999, Quayson, 2013, Bader et.al. 2019), that challenges traditional notions of national identity and belonging.This paper focuses on the process of making a body of work that uses a historic collection of photographic portraits from Platt Hall, Manchester Art Gallery, exploring migration's effect on our memory, imagination and relationship with place. Through my art practice, I engage in 'embodied dreaming' (Bollas, 1999; Gaffney, 2019), drawing out the experiences of migration that only the body knows. Rooted in psychoanalytic theory, embodied dreaming proposes that the unconscious mind reveals itself through the body, manifesting in physical sensations, movements, and intuitive mark-making (Bollas, 1999). I explore how specific photographs or details within them resonate with me—how I see myself in them—and how I use my art practice to explore this connectivity. Uncovering the subconscious aspects of migrant and diasporic experience—of being located between languages, histories, and cultures, the approach reveals a fragmented and incomplete 'I' of someone living a borderland life between cultures (Bhabha, 1994).

[102] Hatana El-Jarn: The Veiled Selfie: Performing Identity in Digital Spaces.

Abstract. This paper explores the performance of identity among women who wear the face veil (niqab) through their engagement with digital networks. The 'selfie'—a widely used form of self-representation on social media—raises critical questions about identity construction for niqabi women, whose visual anonymity challenges conventional understandings of self-presentation. While mainstream media often depict niqabis as a faceless, homogenous group, online platforms offer a space where they can actively shape and assert their identities.Using Erving Goffman's (1979) dramaturgical approach, this study examines the 'veiled selfie' as an act of digital self-performance. By analysing Instagram and Facebook content, the research explores how niqabis use visual markers, framing, and context to articulate a multifaceted public identity while maintaining religious and cultural privacy. This paper contributes to broader discussions on mediated identity, demonstrating how digital self-representation allows niqabis to challenge stereotypes, negotiate agency, and construct a sense of self within an evolving digital landscape.

[104] Sophie McCooey, Greg Nixon, and Thomas McCooey: Developing AI literacy in journalism students.

Abstract. We would like to share at the conference details of a session we ran to introduce L4 news and sports journalism students to using generative Artificial Intelligence, while also discouraging them from using it inappropriately. We were aware that attitudes towards AI in higher education are changing and wanted to create a session that started students on a journey to becoming AI literate while also understanding the potential pitfalls.A particular worry for colleagues who teach news writing is that students could use tools such as ChatGPT to generate work and submit it as their own. To try to tackle this head-on, we came up with the idea for this session.They would be taught what AI is, how it works, and about public opinion surrounding its use in journalism. They would also cover some of the issues with using AI such as hallucinations, ethical issues, and bias. Students were then given the task of using ChatGPT to write a news story. They were given a press release to use and could adapt their prompt as necessary to make changes to the response.The thought behind the session was to show students that ChatGPT is not great at writing news stories, and they, therefore, still need to learn and demonstrate their learning of this skill. Even if they could choose to use AI to write their news stories, they would need to edit the story to make it publishable, and of course, check for any inaccuracies introduced by the technology.

[109] Cara Bamford: Team Green: Seeking Sustainability in Collaborative Filmmaking.

Abstract. The average feature film creates 2,840 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e), comparable to seventy-five return flights from London to New York. An average 15-minute short film has a carbon footprint of approximately 9.8 tonnes of CO2e, comparable to five return flights from London to New York. Transport alone accounts for over half of these emissions estimates.(sources: wearealbert.org, Watershed) Collaborative, community-based filmmaking allows eco-minded individuals to work together creatively in more sustainable and accountable ways. Locally focused film production uses less mass transportation, already creating a smaller carbon footprint in the long run through access to nearby talent and resources. Looking at a case study of my own community filmmaking practices, centered around sustainability and utilising green choices, we will explore how sustainable measures benefit filmmaking and the planet long term and how educational practices are intertwined with participation. Community media often involve themes of activism, citizenship, and self-created identity, while developing accessible ways of producing, distributing, and exhibiting films without a large

sponsor. While these methods become increasingly accessible and environmentally friendly, they are often overlooked as they fall outside the mainstream as alternative or amateur filmmaking, with frequently limited visibility and recognition. This presentation will examine in more detail, collaborative techniques used by community-based filmmakers, including smartphone distribution and participatory practices. It will address ways to achieve more sustainable solutions for non-studio model filmmaking while envisioning a more environmentally friendly future across all areas of the screen industry.

[111] Seána Dubh: The Other Edis: Exploring audiovisual concrète and the environmental uncanny within non-narrative work.

Abstract. *Please note: This is a proposal for a virtual reality-based, installation work.* Despite the wealth of discussion, literature, and content involving the uncanny as a conceptual premise, there remains demonstrably less focus and attention on its existence within non-narrative media, particularly on how sonic and visual elements can enhance it. The uncanny has been notably explored in psychologist Sigmund Freud's essay Das Unheimliche, where he relates it to the strangeness that can arise when the familiar is made unfamiliar, and vice versa. The Other Edis is the creative component of a creative practice-based doctoral thesis and an audiovisual virtual reality installation that delves into the concept of the spatial uncanny and the blurry boundary between the familiar and unfamiliar. This immersive work, which contains thirteen virtually constructed and unique environments, allows users to navigate and explore these realms at their own pace. The installation juxtaposes familiarity and estrangement, prompting users to reflect on their sense of connection, belonging and integration into the experience, navigating which elements lead to their understanding of the un/familiar dichotomy. Featuring an original soundscape and score that incorporates familiar and de-familiarised sounds, this creative practice-led research examines how the interplay of elements such as music, sound, colour and light can evoke the uncanny within a non-narrative, virtual, environment-based work, offering a new perspective on the affective potential of the audiovisual relationship.

[113] Dave Harte, Brian Martin and Richard Jones: Panel: Narratives of place, identity and representation in local media.

Abstract. This panel offers case studies from historical and contemporary perspectives that explore the role of local and alternative media in shaping community and identity. Collectively, these papers offer insights into the power of local and alternative media to shape narratives, amplify diverse voices, and navigate

complex and dynamic local media landscapes. "The City Speaks 1971–1979" examines two Birmingham alternative magazines, highlighting grassroots activism and marginalised voices during a period of rapid urban transformation. It analyses their contribution to an alternative public sphere and reflects on the challenges of independent publishing in that era. Two papers on local sports media, in the UK and Ireland, explore how media platforms foster engagement and a sense of belonging among fans but also touch on ethical issues in media relations and the tensions involved in maintaining a critical distance in local media. The final paper takes an intersectional feminist approach to a study of local media through the work of the Komola Collective, a London-based arts organisation led by migrant women. Focused on amplifying women's perspectives, Komola revisits history and addresses contemporary issues through an intersectional feminist approach. Their work fosters inclusive identity formation, sustains cultural heritage, and sparks critical social dialogue.

[114] Eleanor Milne: Bedroom Culture and Shakespeare: Scrapbooks, Social Media, and Identity Aesthetics.

Abstract. This paper examines the evolution of bedroom culture as a site of female identity formation, tracing connections between nineteenth-century Shakespearean scrapbooking and twenty-first-century digital aesthetics. The bedroom, historically framed as a feminised space of self-fashioning (McRobbie and Garber, 1976), emerges as a critical site for understanding how young women have engaged with Shakespeare's tragic heroines – Ophelia, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, Cordelia, and Juliet – across time. This engagement shapes both personal narratives and broader cultural discourses around femininity and mental health.The domestic practice of scrapbooking, allowed Victorian women to collect, curate, and aestheticise representations of Shakespeare's heroines, shaping their own emotional and intellectual worlds. This archival impulse is echoed in contemporary digital media, where platforms like Tumblr, Pinterest, and TikTok function as virtual bedrooms. Blurring the private and public, these sites function as intimate yet performative spaces where users create digital collages of melancholic femininity. By juxtaposing nineteenth-century visual culture with today's 'sad girl' aesthetics, this paper reveals how Shakespeare's heroines persist as symbols of romanticised introspection, longing, and self-fashioning, influencing contemporary discussions of identity, self-representation, and mental well-being.Ultimately, this paper argues that both scrapbooks and digital platforms function as affective archives, mediating gendered experiences of emotion, solitude, and self-representation. By examining the relationships between Shakespearean iconography, Victorian material culture,

and contemporary digital spaces, this study provides new insights into how media and literature shape emotional identities. The applications of this work will contribute to wider conversations regarding digital culture, mental health advocacy, and the evolving nature of self-expression.

[116] Maike Dinger, Darren Lilleker, James Morrison and Antje Glueck: Marginalisation and belonging in deindustrialised communities in England's North.

Abstract. Industrial decline has had a significant impact on representations of former industrial communities in the national media and psyche: from perceptions as important heartlands of productivity and pride to a deprived periphery of poverty, violence and lost opportunity. Affected communities are frequently discussed in economic terms – and addressed as such in political discourse, e.g., through the Levelling Up agenda and regeneration projects. The result is an image of abject, apathetic communities reliant on initiatives and funding from the outside, with little attention to the voices of those living through deindustrialisation and economic decline. Where economic changes and loss are publicly played out in the media, there is little space to mourn the loss of a whole way of life, local community bonds and belonging rooted in pride of place and industry.By adopting a grassroots perspective on the marginalisation of post-industrial milieus, this paper – and the DFG-/AHRC-funded project "Voices from the Periphery" on which it is based – challenges attempts to speak for and about deindustrialised communities by speaking to those who have experienced industrial decline and its ramifications for a sense of belonging and identity in areas across the North of England. Drawing on data from storytelling salons and interviews with long-term residents in Rotherham, Middlesbrough and Redcar, we capture residents' personal experiences of socio-political change. By relating these experiences to the under- or misrepresentation of deindustrialised communities in political debates and media communications, we will draw conclusions as to how such discourses have affected local communities' sense of identity and belonging.

[117] Katarzyna Kosmala, Gareth Rice and Eleni Koumpouzi: Cultivating Belonging with Heritage: (Re)Activating Waterways through Crafts.

Abstract. Cities are undergoing significant transformations. Socio-economic struggles, conflicts, and migration have become commonplace. This dynamic urban environment presents unique challenges for transient communities as they strive to cultivate a sense of belonging in the cities they inhabit. This paper explores

how engagement with local heritage can assist these communities in addressing a sense of exclusion and displacement.Based on case study evidence, this paper examines how crafts associated with traditional boatbuilding and boat-handling in and around Glasgow, particularly along the Forth and Clyde Canal and the River Clyde, can provide meaningful engagement with post-industrial cultural landscapes for transient communities. Through a series of hands-on craft workshops, we observed how traditional cultural practices enabled participants to navigate and reinterpret previously inaccessible spaces around these waterways.We argue that the relationship between heritage and identity is shaped by place. Here, the case study sites are perceived not merely as physical locations, but as concentrations of social relations and practices (Kearns and Gesler, 1998; Werlen, 2017), and as zones of experience and meaning (Wilson, 2003). We contend that belonging is indeed formed within these fluid and contested environments. This paper posits that heritage is not simply inherited but actively constructed through various phases of participation. This raises critical questions about how transient communities can create familiar spaces, connect with cultural memory, and navigate issues of ownership in evolving urban contexts.Findings show that by activating waterways through craft-facilitated direct engagement, participants were able to increase the accessibility of these spaces by transforming them from "uninherited heritage" (Grydehøj, 2010) into collectively meaningful places. The traditional craft of boatbuilding extended beyond material production. As tangible and intangible heritage interweave in the activated livescape of the workshop, it also became a means of fostering community identity and a sense of belonging (Koumpouzi et al , 2022). While the activated livescapes of the boatbuilding workshops cannot resolve wider structural inequalities, they provided temporary social cohesion and wellbeing benefits, demonstrating how engagement with the heritage environment can function as an inclusive tool in an otherwise exclusionary landscape.

[118] Agnes Gulyas, Dave Toomer, Francesca Tampone, Giovanni Ramos: Local journalism in transition: community, gaps, and challenges.

Abstract. This panel examines how local journalism shapes community identity, delivers essential information, and navigates structural and economic challenges in an evolving media landscape. The papers collectively explore the relationship between news provision, civic engagement, and social inequalities, highlighting the persistence of news deserts and disparities in access to critical information. As traditional print media declines, digital platforms and independent hyperlocal news providers have emerged to fill gaps. However, these alternatives vary in their

ability to meet communities' needs, particularly in deprived areas. The intersection of geography, digitalisation, and news production reveals the complex ways in which journalism fosters belonging, reinforces social cohesion, and influences public discourse. Furthermore, the role of proximity in journalism—both in a spatial and positional sense—raises important questions about the authenticity and sustainability of local news in different contexts. By integrating empirical data, GIS mapping, and ethnographic insights, this panel offers a comprehensive view of local journalism's evolving function. It underscores the need for policy interventions to address inequalities and ensure that journalism continues to serve as a vital pillar of democracy and community representation.

[119] Margaret Hughes: Should we be acknowledging activism in journalism education: is it the way for journalism to challenge growing authoritarianism?

Abstract. In this era of growing authoritarianism, 'post-truth' and alternative facts, and the ongoing drop in trust in the news media (RISJ 2024), it is more important than ever that those involved in journalism education return to the fundamental questions of 'what is journalism for?', 'what is its role in society?' and 'how can it challenge power effectively?'As many authors (Berger & Foote (2013); Harcup (2020); DeBurgh (2003); Deuze (2017)) note, journalism education should have as its goal graduates whose work has a positive impact on society. This paper will take this as a starting point but will also explore the well-established notion of journalism's role in speaking truth to power and how in doing this it can be inextricably linked to an activist agenda.From McLuhan to Chomsky (and many in between) the power of the news media to persuade and influence challenges notions of bias, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of many journalism education programmes. But in an age of growing inequality and rising authoritarianism across the globe, is it now time to reconsider this in journalism education curriculum?This paper will explore by a literature review and critical analysis of existing programmes, the necessity, or not, for journalism education programmes to put greater emphasis on the development of critical, knowledge building that equips journalism graduates to more confidently challenge power and authority. It will explore, via interviews with educators, challenges around creating relevant curricula and pedagogical approaches and confidence building in students.

[120] Anke Fiedler and James Morrison: How do different models of media regulation influence approaches to social inequality: A comparative qualitative analysis of key legal texts from Germany and the UK.

Abstract. The media have been criticised for reinforcing social inequalities for various reasons. For instance, research has shown that editorial teams are male-dominated (e.g. Głuszek-Szafraniec and Brzoza 2019). People suffering from disabilities are underrepresented (e.g. Dimopoulos 2017), just like people with a (post-)migrant background (e.g. Signer et al. 2011). Journalists tend to come from middle-class families (e.g. Lueg 2012). Underprivileged groups, including those from working-class/socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (NCTJ, 2022), are neglected both in the profession and in news coverage. Such structural conditions reinforce cultural hegemonic practices, while the voices of socially disadvantaged groups are marginalised. Similar phenomena can be observed in the digital sphere (Botero Arcila and Griffin 2023).

Media regulation and control can be seen as a possible means of reducing social inequality and balancing interests in stratified societies. However, such top-down interventions raise the question of whether regulation itself may cause and promote social inequality in the first place (see, e.g., Nenova 2007). This study aims to shed light on the interplay between media and social inequality from the macro perspective of media regulation, using a comparative qualitative textual analysis of key legal texts in Germany and the UK: How is social inequality addressed in media regulation? It is argued that both countries represent different types of media regulation models, democratic-corporatist and liberal, rendering them optimal comparators. The results of the study demonstrate the extent to which regulatory frameworks contribute to either reducing or reinforcing inequality, and offer insights into their potential to promote a more equitable media landscape.

[121] Hakan Ergül: Writing the unwritten: Exploring GenAI, crises of identity, and emotional burden in higher education through Social Fiction.

Abstract. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in conventional qualitative studies examining the role of Generative AI (GenAI) in educational settings, reflecting both the rapid advancements in the field and the significant tensions that accompany them. While these methods are effective in capturing first-hand accounts, the “unsaid”, emotional dimensions of the GenAI debate in higher education are overlooked, despite being equally crucial.In this presentation, we address this gap by focusing on the “felt” and “unarticulated” through Social

Fiction, a reflective Practice-as-Research method. We begin by exploring Social Fiction as ethnographic writing to document and interpret the emotional aspects of human-machine interaction. Drawing on data gathered through a creative writing workshop with staff and students, follow up interviews, and flash fictions, we observe that interactions with GenAI evoke an unsettling sense of the erosion of traditional academic roles and moral/personal values, leading to complex emotional burdens and crises of identity tied to a potential complicity in unethical behaviour. We propose that Social Fiction, as a mediated method of relating to lived experience, may be a potent activist intervention in addressing the "unwritten" while also deconstructing the thick, intimidating wall of emotional burden that is difficult to navigate.

[123] Anna Khlusova: From 'Non-traditional' to 'Extremist': The Evolution of Russian Anti-LGBTQ Discourse in the Wake of the Ukraine War.

Abstract. In November 2023, Russia's Supreme Court declared the international LGBT movement an "extremist organisation," claiming it incites "social and religious discord" (Human Rights Watch, 2023). The law represents the latest and most drastic step in a decade-long campaign by the Kremlin to suppress LGBTQ rights, a repression that has notably intensified following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.In previous research, I demonstrated how Russian news media play a key role in legitimising the Kremlin's political homophobia, portraying queer sexualities as antithetical to Russian national identity and traditional values (Khlusova, 2017). Building on this research, this paper looks at the period after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and examines how the continued repression of LGBTQ citizens' rights has been framed and justified in national news media from February 2022 onwards. Using critical discourse analysis, it demonstrates how anti-LGBTQ rhetoric in Russian news media has become increasingly militarised, framing LGBTQ identities not only as immoral and non-traditional but as posing an existential threat to national security and survival. Crucially, anti-LGBTQ rhetoric has also become increasingly intertwined with anti-Ukrainian propaganda, with news discourse positioning Ukraine's pro-LGBTQ stance as evidence of its Western subjugation and moral decline.As this paper argues, through this strategic framing, Russian media not only consolidates domestic support for the Kremlin's continued exclusion of LGBTQ people from full citizenship but also justifies Russia's aggression against Ukraine, casting both as essential to safeguarding Russia's sovereignty and cultural identity against Western impositions.

[125] Mac Wang: Bittersweet Optimism in Deafening Silence: Chinese Student LGBTQ+ Activism's Polymedia Strategies to Address Online Censorship.

Abstract. China's LGBTQ+ student activists face increasing precarity amid escalating digital censorship. The erasure of university LGBTQ+ organizations' WeChat accounts on 6 July 2021 (Ni & Davidson, 2021) exemplifies top-down suppression that not only delegitimises queer groups but also emotionally annihilates activists under necropolitics (Foucault, 1978; Mbembe, 2020). While research has focused on established NGOs, the resilience of grassroots student groups, particularly their persistent reconstruction of WeChat channels despite repeated bans, remains underexplored. This study examines how Chinese university LGBTQ+ groups mobilise polymedia strategies to counter censorship and reclaim lost digital spaces (Carey, 2008; Couldry & Curran, 2003; Hirschkind, 2006). Drawing on affect theory and cruel optimism, this research highlights activists' paradoxical attachment to a better future that obstructs immediate flourishing (Berlant, 2011; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Wang, 2022). In response to state-imposed digital erasure, they develop 'technologies of patience' (McNevin & Missbach, 2018) while constructing 'affective soundscapes' to sustain resilience (Ahmed, 2010). This two-step qualitative study first conducts rhetorical analysis of 12 widely circulated polymedia campaign articles (2015–2023), identifying ethos, logos, and pathos as core communicative strategies (Leach, 2000). Next, semi-structured interviews with 14 queer group convenors across China (Knott, 2022) were analysed thematically to uncover evolving folk theories of censorship: (1) Retrieving Elitist Legitimacy via Ethos, (2) Leveraging Bittersweet Affects via Pathos, and (3) Deafening Silence Amid Emotional Deadlock (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gelman & Legare, 2011). This study recontextualises cruel optimism for digital activism under authoritarianism, underscoring the emotional stakes of censorship and the resilience embedded in digital resistance.

[126] Scott McLaughlin and Jenny Evans: [Round table] Future Paths for UK Practice Research: A Repository?

Abstract. This session will present current proposals (led by Evans and McLaughlin) toward a national repository for practice research, and seeks discussion and feedback from the MECSSA community. The discussion will explore the importance of consistent discoverability of creative practice research and the way the proposed repository could address that need. It will also consider how that would considerably enhance a more consistent understanding of creative practice research contexts and current trends. Finally, we seek to discuss the intricacies of dissemination practices

in the landscape of the growing diversity of formats creative practice research offers.
Background: The PRAG-UK reports on practice research (Bulley & Şahin 2021) were a comprehensive overview of UK practice research with a view to 'development of coherent and well-communicated guidance [as] an opportunity to clear up much of the confusion and complexity that has confronted researchers and research support professionals'. A key suggestions of this is that the sector needs to examine 'how practice research is structured and disseminated amongst a diverse range of audiences', and proposes that a system is needed to 'harvest' and 'host' practice research outputs and 'act as an in-perpetuity resource for practice research outputs available to both current and future researchers and audiences'.In 2023 both the SPARKLE (Leeds) and PR Voices (Westminster) scoping projects (AHRC-funded) looked at the feasibility of a national repository for practice research. Both projects concluded that such a repository is vital for the success of practice research by strengthening the community, offering some forms of standardisation while respecting the autonomy or artistic enquiry, and highlights the importance of practice research beyond REF as an ongoing knowledge ecosystem that stretches across academia and industry.
Currently, a combined SPARKLE/PR-Voices team are working on a proposal for a national repository that would: (1) implement FAIR principles to make all practice research Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable, and embeds open research principles and PIDs as standard; (2) this is achieved by developing the repository alongside the user community so that it is a tool (a "scribe on the side") that a practice researcher works with on an ongoing basis; (3) and is supported by a suite of training resources for researchers at all levels, as well as research managers and librarians to better understand the principles and specific challenges of practice research.
PR Voices final report - https://doi.org/10.34737/w3803
SPARKLE final report - https://doi.org/10.48785/100/296

[128] Tiago Lapa: The Language of Populism: Discursive Strategies and Agenda-Setting on Chega and VOX's Facebook accounts.

Abstract. The following paper draws from the concept of partisan agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Hopmann et al., 2010) to unveil how far-right populist parties Chega (Portugal) and VOX (Spain), through agenda-setting practices and strategic framing, place salience on different topics in order to obtain issue ownership. Through the usage of Wodak's (2001) discourse-historical approach of critical discourse analysis, this study focuses on identifying both parties' interdiscursive practices and discursive strategies to understand how these help to

highlight different discourses through partisan narratives. The data sample consists of posts from Chega and VOX's official Facebook accounts from the period of January-March 2024. The results indicate that the main discursive focuses shaping the parties' agendas during this period were immigration, separatism, and anti-environmentalist rhetoric for VOX, while corruption, and anti-system discourses dominated Chega's agenda. Additionally, Law and order discourses emerged as a key priority for both parties. These findings underscore how far-right populist actors strategically adapt their discursive agendas to respond to distinct national political contexts while reinforcing exclusionary narratives. By emphasizing law-and-order concerns as a shared priority, alongside other tailored themes such as immigration and separatism for VOX and corruption for Chega, both parties construct partisan frames that seek to legitimize their political stances and undermine competing narratives. This study contributes to understanding how far-right agenda-setting practices not only shape and influence public discourse but also foster political polarization by amplifying specific societal concerns and grievances.

[129] Yifan Zhao: Why Do They Choose To Be Tomgirls? An Ethnographic Study of China's Tomgirl Communities.

Abstract. This study examines the interplay between identity construction and the pursuit of belonging through the lens of tomgirl identity—a fluid gender identity that reconciles male cognition with strong femininity. While extant literature has extensively discussed transgender identity within Western discourses, a critical gap remains in understanding motivations underlying tomgirl identities in contemporary China. Nowadays, many Chinese tomgirls express intense longing to truly be girls. For understanding the motivation of Chinese transgender people, the study employs 8-month online ethnography of Chinese tomgirl forums and 33 in-depth interviews with self-identified tomgirls aged 18-32. The study indicates three main motivations: First, the embodiment of gender fluidity as resistance to binary socialization processes, where respondents strategically adopt tomgirl identity to navigate paternalism constraints while maintaining social legibility. Second, the findings demonstrate how erotic autonomy drives gender performativity, with respondents describing tomgirl presentation
as facilitating queer intimacy negotiations and expanding sexual agency beyond heteronormative scripts. Finally, the study identifies belonging-seeking as both catalyst and outcome of this identity formation, manifested through digital community building practices that reconfigure traditional kinship structures. This self-positioning emerges as a deliberate strategy to reconcile internal gender schemas with external social expectations, constructing what respondents term "a

third space of recognition" that transcends conventional identity categories while fostering grassroots belonging through shared aesthetic codes and embodied praxis. These findings contribute to bridge intersectional feminism and Sinicized gender liminality, framing tomgirlhood as negotiated resistance to China's patriarchy-hedonism duality and Confucian norms, enriching non-Western queer praxis.

[130] Bryan Jenkins: Combatting Disinformation Targeted at Black Communities: The Necessity of the Black Press in the Digital Age.

Abstract. Black people in America are in the midst of multiple crises (e.g., racism, climate change, loneliness, health inequities). One of the most critical needs during a crisis is trustworthy and accurate information that can be used to access vital resources. However, as crises continue to unfold, Black communities have been consistently targeted with harmful disinformation that seeks to disparage us. Unfortunately, many mainstream and digital media platforms have been proven to proliferate the mis/disinformation aimed at Black people, putting our communities at risk. Black people need competent media outlets that provide reliable information to support us in navigating the multiple crises we face. In the digital age, there is still much to be learned from our legacy media about navigating crises, in particular the Black Press. Since the establishment of the first Black newspaper in 1827, one purpose the Black Press has served is the combatting of disinformation about Black people spread within mainstream media by providing counternarratives that promote critical thinking and collective action against our oppression. The precedent set by our historical institutions (e.g. the Black Press) can help us navigate our current circumstances. Leveraging critical media literacy and Armond Towns's Black media philosophy as a guiding framework, this research will analyze and contextualize literature focused on the Black Press, digital media, and anti-Black mis/disinformation campaigns. Importantly, this textual analysis does not endeavor to wholly discredit digital media nor argue for a complete return to physical media; rather, it evokes the concept of Sankofa, seeking to unveil the lessons we can learn from our predecessors about combatting disinformation to carry forth into the future.

[134] Yutong Lin: Youth Engagement in Opera: Key Challenges.

Abstract. The opera industry in Italy is a significant cultural space, where youth engagement plays a crucial role in shaping the evolving identities of opera audiences. With the recognition of Canto Lirico as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in December 2023, the relevance of this research has become even more critical. As Italy faces economic challenges, migration, and shifting cultural landscapes, opera

acts as both a reflection and a construct of personal and collective identity. This qualitative study explores youth participation in opera through interviews with arts managers and young participants, examining how opera serves as a platform for the exploration of self and belonging. Interviews have already been conducted with the leaders of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Royal Opera House in the UK, and the Teatro Regio in Turin. Future interviews are planned with key figures from the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. The study will also explore strategies for sustaining the intangible cultural heritage of opera through effective media and marketing practices, with a focus on how opera organizations can enhance youth engagement and diversify income streams. The research will offer strategic recommendations to support the sustainable development of opera, while addressing contemporary social and cultural changes.

[135] Hasmik Gasparyan: Documentary: My Voice Journey.

Abstract. My Voice Journey is a documentary film, a creative practice component of the YorVoice Research Lab - Vocal Authenticity interdisciplinary project. It explores the ways in which singing and performance activities with marginalised groups can enhance or impede a person's relationship with their own voice. (We define this as 'vocal authenticity').Community singing and acting activities have been shown to have a wide range of benefits from improved respiratory health and cognitive function to better social functioning, confidence and positivity. But do these activities also alter the relationship between a person and their voice for the better? We use documentary filmmaking techniques to investigate this question, interviewing people participating in these activities with a range of Middlesbrough based community arts groups led by North East Opera, exploring the impacts on their lives, and working with contributors to co-create My Voice Journey evidencing their personal 'voice journeys'. My Voice Journey film creators and crew comprises University of York current and graduate film students from School of ACT. As part of this research, with colleagues from the Department of Language and Linguistic Science Department, we will carry out phonetic analyses comparing the speaking and singing voices of participants, measuring how people change their voice to sing as part of an ensemble.In cooperation with School for Business and Society, we will also consider the investigation of the attitude of participants to their voice as a part of their identity, analysing the conversations they have around voice to determine their perceptions of their voice, dialect and place within their community.

[136] Myrtle Ziwei Zeng:"TikTok Refugees" and the Search for Digital Belonging: Identity, Ideology, and Platform Migration.

Abstract. Since January 13, 2025, over 700,000 users flocked onto RedNote, mostly from the U.S., calling themselves "TikTok Refugees". It was one week before the TikTok ban law took effect, which claimed TikTok, owned by China-based company ByteDance, might cause a "national security threat", according to U.S. officials. It is curious that these Americans, instead of moving to domestic alternatives like Meta or X, chose another platform that is Chinese-owned, China-based, and Sinophone-centric, and all data storage and management is in China. Through cat memes, cuisines, and local landscapes which "share more commons than we thought", the new and old RedNote users cultivated a new form of online belonging that transcends national borders while simultaneously reflecting ideological divisions.This study explores how digital platforms function as political-ideological agents that shape and mediate user identity and collective belonging. It argues that RedNote's appeal lies not only in its algorithmic culture similar to TikTok but also in its perceived alternatives to the growing ideological polarisation within Western social media. However, this phenomenon highlights a shift where political contestation is less about intra-platform debates and more about inter-platform migration, reflecting broader national and geopolitical tensions.By analysing user-generated content and evolving regulatory frameworks of TikTok and RedNote, this research investigates how platform infrastructures, national ideologies, and corporate interests co-construct digital identities and foster political allegiances. Ultimately, this study contributes to discussions on the intersection of platform studies and political science, revealing how platform-driven belonging both challenges and reinforces global ideological divides.

[139] Isidoropaolo Casteltrione: Tweeting for Solidarity: Social Media as a Catalyst for Union Activism during the UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott.

Abstract. Social media has transformed activism by fostering decentralised participation, facilitating mobilisation, and enabling the expression of activists' identities. The widespread adoption of digital platforms has also opened new avenues for trade unions to reinforce and adapt their traditional organising practices. This paper contributes to the growing body of research investigating the role of social media in union activism, focusing on the use of Twitter by the University and College Union (UCU) during the 'Marking and Assessment Boycott' (MAB), a pivotal component of the broader 'UCURising' campaign in 2023. It investigates how the UCU employed Twitter to amplify member voices, foster solidarity, mobilise support, and engage stakeholders in higher education.Guided by two research objectives, the study first analyses user activity, network dynamics, and

engagement patterns on Twitter during the MAB from 17 April to 27 April 2023, coinciding with key developments in the industrial dispute. Second, it identifies the themes and messaging strategies emerging from union activists' Twitter activity. A quantitative approach was adopted to analyse over 10,000 tweets, with data collected using NCapture and processed through ChatGPT Pro's advanced data analysis tools. A human-machine hybrid approach was employed for the thematic analysis, combining manual coding of a random sample of 2,500 tweets in NVivo with automated coding based on identified patterns for the remainder of the dataset. The findings offer insights into how unions can leverage social media as a strategic communication tool, contributing to wider debates on the opportunities and challenges of digital activism in contemporary labour movements.

[140] Stephen Andriano-Moore: Messages of Fatherhood in the Complex Identities of Fathers of Sons versus Fathers of Daughters in New-Era Chinese Sci-Fi Cinema.

Abstract. This paper examines the roles and identities of fathers in China's New Era science fiction films, focusing on five father-son and five father-daughter narratives. This examination is motivated by the genre's recent popularity and increased government support for producing films that promote contemporary Chinese values and "tell people in a covert but influential way what should be praised" (Xi Jinping cited in China Daily, 2014). Fatherhood has become a prominent topic in the media, exemplified by numerous news articles and government initiatives addressing the 'masculinity crisis' and the rise of fatherhood-themed films and TV shows since the 2010s. However, there are few studies on fatherhood, particularly in science fiction. The project utilizes narrative and thematic analysis, presenting findings through spatial mapping of fatherly attributes, roles, and identities in relation to the gender of their children. Father identities are structured around two ancient responsibilities: Jiao (教), the educating father, and Yang (养), the protecting and providing father, along with several related sub-categories. Children's identities are plotted along a continuum of activity and passivity and xiao (孝), the respect, obedience, and care owed to parents, and fen nu de hai zi (愤怒的孩子), the angry, resentful child. The findings, discussed through the theoretical frameworks of ideology and propaganda, reveal significant differences in identities, values, and dynamics between fathers of sons and fathers of daughters, reinforcing hegemonic notions of gender rooted in patriarchy. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how contemporary Chinese media shapes and reflects fatherhood and gender roles.

[141] Wenni Zhang: Exploring Digital Feminism Activism Practices in China: Analyzing Female Gender Imitation Short Videos on Douyin.

Abstract. Gender imitation videos, particularly those featuring women performing masculinity, have emerged as a unique form of digital feminist activism on Chinese social media. This study examines how these videos navigate gender discourse under state censorship, focusing on their production, narratives, dissemination, and audience reception. By incorporating Judith Butler's performativity theory and feminist humor scholarship, the study situates gender imitation within broader feminist resistance practices. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study will analyze 20 selected videos through critical discourse analysis, focusing on humor, nationalism, and gender consumption. Additionally, drawing on Couldry's Media Practice approach, this study will conduct semi-structured interviews with 30 participants from diverse roles in media activism, including content creators (influencers), male and female audiences, and platform regulators. These interviews will examine the nature of influencer content production, the interpretative frameworks of gendered audiences, and the principles guiding platform moderation, thereby elucidating the complex interplay among different actors in negotiating feminist discourse within a restrictive digital environment. The study further contextualizes these videos within three evolving stages of Chinese digital feminism: collective action, hashtag activism, and comedic subversion. Ultimately, this research argues that gender imitation videos provide a subversive yet strategic response to cyber misogyny and patriarchal norms, offering a new lens to understand digital feminist activism in China.

[142] Susan Luckman and Michelle Phillipov: Artisanal Identity, the 'theatrics of craft' and peak online storytelling.

Abstract. Across multiple digital spaces, foregrounding the story of the business, the owners, and their products has long been a way for small-scale artisanal makers to differentiate themselves from large-scale production, and to assert the unique authenticity and affective power of their products. Platforms such as Instagram and Etsy, and their capacities for storytelling and self-making, have centred the maker's identity in the promotion of crafted goods in ways that have been a boon to small-scale businesses. However the centrality and promise of DIY social media promotion and sales has also ended up turning often reluctant neo-craft artisans into 'forced' platform labourers (Gandini et al., 2024). Such that today, the near blanket saturation of performative storytelling as central to projecting a sense of "strategic authenticity" (Gaden & Dumitrica 2015) risks rendering this an increasingly compromised way for small producers to differentiate themselves

in the marketplace. As small businesses compete in an online storytelling 'arms race' driven by changing platform logics, economic pressures, and the co-optation of artisanal identities, this paper asks the question: with the performance of authenticity now a marketing mainstay for businesses of all sizes of on digital platforms, have we reached peak storytelling?; what does this mean for the future sustainability of small-scale artisanal businesses for whom this has always been their key point of market access, value and difference; and what new identities in the now increasingly cliched norms of platform storytelling are they exploring to survive?

[143] Vegas Dyce: Living life through the lens: How 'foodstagramming' shapes digital identity and belonging.

Abstract. This paper explores the phenomenon of foodstagramming and its role in shaping digital identity and fostering a sense of belonging among social media users and businesses. As social media continues to mediate self-expression, foodstagramming has evolved beyond simple food photography into a curated practice of digital storytelling, influencing both consumer behaviour and the hospitality industry. Through qualitative interviews with Scottish-based foodstagrammers and hospitality professionals, this research provides rich insights into the phenomenon and explores the identity-related motivations behind this behaviour. Furthermore, this research highlights the pressure felt by hospitality businesses to adapt and create "Instagrammable" spaces that attract social media-driven consumers. This research draws conclusions around how foodstagramming fosters a sense of identity and belonging on platforms like Instagram, where shared aesthetics, engagement with influencers and participation in food-related trends help individuals connect and express themselves. Foodstagramming acts as a form of self-expression, allowing individuals to curate a personal brand and signal lifestyle choices through shared dining experiences. By analysing the intersection between digital identity, consumer culture and hospitality trends, this research provides deep insights into the broader implications of social media-driven identity formation. It contributes to discussions on media, technology and belonging, illustrating how platforms like Instagram shape contemporary society and culture.

[145] Bronwen Wilson: BBC Radio 4's Today programme and its representation of non-human animals.

Abstract. As Radio 4's staple morning programme, Today fits into the working lives of listeners to provide the latest news for its three hour slot. Today has therefore – to its more dedicated listener - become a trusted and familiar programme. Chignell describes Todays influence by stating, "there can be little doubt that

Today is a very important and influential provider of both news and comment, without transgressing the rules which forbid the BBC to appear to 'editorialise' as a newspaper might do" (2009, p.139). However, it could be argued that the BBC perpetuates dominant ideologies, particularly regarding non-human animals (NHAs).For most, our understanding and perceptions of non-humans begins and ends with the way in which different forms of media represent them. This is how we come to understand non-humans we do not have regular contact with. There have been studies on the representations of NHAs in other forms of media, however, there has been none on their representation within radio. Speciesism is the assumption of human superiority leading to the exploitation of NHA's. Non-anthropocentric speciesism refers to the unequal way in which humans view and treat different species.This presentation will address how different non-humans are represented on Today and how the challenges certain non-humans face are mostly left out of the news agenda. This presentation will provide potential solutions to the issue of non-anthropocentric speciesism within journalism, and address how a potential speciesist news agenda may affect listeners perceptions on non-human's and the wider implications of this.

[146] Ilhem Allagui: Building Identity and Belonging in Populist Nations.

Abstract. This study examines how populist politics shape the formation of identity and belonging and their representation in media content in Global South countries, including cases from Tunisia and Turkey. This empirical study uses the content analysis approach to analyze nation branding campaigns. The sample includes official YouTube promotional videos and images, leadership speeches, and media discourses.Focusing on the country's emotional image (identity and belonging) as per Buhmann and Ingenhoff's (2014) 4D model—the three other model features are functional, normative, and aesthetics—the analysis explores the positioning of citizens and how they are represented in populist campaigns. Are they included or excluded from discourses about development and the future of the nation? Additionally, the analysis questions how development is framed vis-à-vis foreign dominance and otherness and how national unity is depicted in critical times.Populist nation branding campaigns and narratives disregard connections with foreign or external elements, typically portraying them as adversaries. Media narratives shape national identity through four functions (Olea, Ingenhoff, & Keel, 2020): constructive, where a positive image is being created; perpetuation, when reinforcing existing concepts; transformation, when the meaning of identity is being altered; and dismantling when myths of national identity are challenged or rejected.

This study examines perspectives from nation branding, populist discourse, and media studies to highlight the role of populist leaders in branding their nations and shaping national identity. It contributes to broader discussions on how media and political narratives define inclusion, exclusion, and identity during such times of rising populism.

[147] Jelena Krivosic: Attenborough: hero, environmental advocate, climate action influencer?

Abstract. The BBC's Natural History Documentaries and their iconic presenter, Sir David Attenborough, are celebrated for inspiring audiences to love and value nature. Central to this reputation is Attenborough's legacy, the belief that spectacular storytelling raises environmental awareness and fosters a sense of responsibility for the natural world. Many wildlife filmmakers identify as "environmentalists," shaping their films in line with this ethos to influence audiences. This paper, drawing on an extensive review of academic and industry literature and over 20 interviews with filmmakers and broadcast practitioners, examines the relationship between Attenborough's legacy and the "environmentalist" identity in the natural history genre. It explores whether this identity motivates audiences' engagement with climate action or simply supports passive consumption of crisis stories in wildlife documentaries.By analysing the genre's shift from suppressing crisis discourses to adopting climate-aware storytelling, the paper assesses how Attenborough's legacy has been adapted to encourage audience responsibility for global crises. It also considers the influence of broader, sometimes polarised, discussions on climate action and activism in media training and production practices. The paper questions the BBC's role as a public service broadcaster in shaping audience responses to genre's crisis narratives. It asks whether Attenborough's legacy contributes to an individualistic crisis-delay discourse, shifting responsibility from broadcasters to audiences. Finally, it suggests that Attenborough's reputation could provide an opportunity for the genre to move beyond entertaining passive environmentalism towards storytelling that normalises and popularises climate action, promoting collective and systemic change.

[150] Rosana Vivar: Assembling Festival Memories: Narratives of Belonging and Survival in Rural Galicia.

Abstract. This conference paper presents findings of a multi-positioned ethnography conducted in 2024 and 2025 at Festival de Cans, a medium sized short film festival that takes place every May in a rural parish in Galicia, Spain. As live events that return annually, film festivals have an important role in producing festival memories

that the community revisit year after year. These festival memories can occupy a unique position in the event through the festival's official rhetoric, through people's oral remembrance, through commemorative rituals and through the film program itself (Högerle, 2019). As Festival de Cans is held in a geographically and linguistically peripheral area of Spain, memory creation is directly concerned with the (at times, desperate) need to preserve the culture and memory of a community that has been historically marginalized and whose traditions are slowly and progressively becoming extinct (Vivar & Suárez-Canedo 2020). Drawing on mixed-method research that combines ethnography with oral history, this conference paper discusses the different memory-creation and memory-activation practices through which the festival creates its own cultural history and narrates the history of the rural parish where it takes place. By assembling ethnographic fragments of conversations with attendees, personal interviews, audio-visual materials, live performances and festival rituals, the paper explores how the festival orchestrates an event of commemorative importance where the festival takes up a primary role in preserving and reactivating the local cultural heritage. This ethnographic field work is framed under the archival project, Cans 25: Pasado, Presente, Futuro. The project has as its main goal the setting up of a physical and online archive to document, preserve, and make accessible the cultural patrimony of both Festival de Cans and the parish.

[152] Miranda Hurst: Changing Approaches to Journalistic Ethics and Credibility in Mobile Journalism.

Abstract. This presentation will be based on a chapter I have written for Routledge which addresses how mobile journalism (journalistic content recorded and edited using mobile phones) distinguishes itself as robust and trustworthy and a credible alternative to fake news and disinformation. Journalism ethics such as accuracy, fairness and impartiality are central to creating effective and robust news content. Mobile journalism is a challenge as well as an opportunity for news providers and journalists must approach it with a full awareness of its limitations and risks. Footage recorded and edited on a mobile device will never compare in technical quality to a television news report produced by professionals. However mobile technology does afford opportunities which align with journalistic priorities, such as immediacy, flexibility and fast access. Mobile journalism is often published on social platforms where it sits alongside generic content created by social content providers who use the same technology as the mobile journalist but produce content which lacks journalistic rigour. On these platforms mobile journalism cannot benefit from the contextual credibility afforded by established news channels. Mobile journalists

must take additional steps to establish a digital identity for their work, making their ethical content visible and overt to all audiences and users. This can include deliberately articulating editorial processes, demonstrating verification techniques or engaging viewers in the technology being used. This presentation will outline the ethical concerns for mobile journalists and consider approaches for addressing those concerns in terms of both journalistic content and audience perception.

[153] Abi Rhodes: Environmentalism and identity: social movement responses to the 2024 UK election.

Abstract. 2024 was one of the biggest election years in history and social movement-voter interaction formed a component of these elections. Social movements engage in movement-voter interaction to persuade citizens to participate in the electoral process (Rhodes 2021). A key part of this argument is that increasingly managed electoral messaging and disinformation have led to higher levels of voter cynicism and lower levels of engagement and belonging. It is contended that movement-voter interaction can side-step this cynicism, offering a space outside institutional politics for voters to mobilize around shared identities to address injustices and advocate for climate action. This research uses discourse and qualitative content analysis to examine election-focused communication by environmental groups, such as Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion, during the UK general election. Data collected will include TikTok posts from the organisation's official accounts alongside other official tactics. Findings will include how often and to what extent environmental movements attempt to set the political agenda, form identities, and challenge disinformation during elections.

[154] Marion Gabrielle Derouineau: Collaborative Fashion Photoshoots: Instagram and the Shaping of Creative Identities in the Digital Age.

Abstract. Recent academic research on the creative industries has highlighted the precariousness and platformisation of labour in photography and fashion (Thomson and Kranert 2021; Mensitieri 2020; Mears 2011). However, despite financial uncertainty, many professionals (photographers, makeup artists, models) regularly work on unpaid 'test shoots'. Scheduled between paid jobs often deemed creatively lacking, these projects allow freelancers to build portfolios and skills, generate self-promotional Instagram content, and network with peers. This study investigates creative labour and the making of creative careers in the digital age, through the case of these unpaid collaborative fashion photoshoots.My methodology combines ethnography, visual methods, and personal experience working as a freelance

fashion photographer. Data was collected during a year-long fieldwork consisting in observing participants at work, capturing behind-the-scenes photographs of collaborative photoshoots, semi-structured interviews, and collecting participants' Instagram content. First, findings highlight the influence of digital platforms on creative industries and creative workers themselves, who developed Instagram 'literacies' and online 'personas'. Indeed, participants discussed modifying their content and changing their practice to maintain engagement and visibility on the platform according to its algorithm changes. Secondly, this study demonstrates how collabs foster a sense of community within an economy built on freelancing and which encourages individualistic careers. Paid jobs are often creatively disappointing and clients demanding. Therefore, while collabs are symptomatic of an industry based on unpaid labour, they also allow fashion freelancers to reclaim institutional space and power, by becoming a safe space to express themselves and experiment creatively.

[155] Kayleigh MacLeod: Waulking Simulator.

Abstract. "Waulking Simulator" is a rhythm game that offers a novel, immersive gameplay experience designed to engage players with the history, culture, and language of Scotland's Highlands and Islands. The game draws inspiration from the traditional practice of waulking tweed, in which groups of women rhythmically beat newly woven fabric against a table while singing Scottish Gaelic work songs (Òrain Luaidh) that conveyed news, stories, and community histories. Featuring an innovative cloth-based controller, Waulking Simulator authentically replicates this tactile process, allowing players to engage with the tradition in a meaningful way. The game includes traditional Gaelic waulking songs, performed by practitioners and presented with both Gaelic and English subtitles, allowing players to follow along while gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural practice and the diverse themes explored in these work songs.This is an executable game with an alternative controller that may be played and run on a laptop or PC.

[157] Miranda Hurst and James Blake: Global approaches by news organisations to video misinformation and disinformation.

Abstract. This presentation will be based on a book the authors are currently writing for Routledge exploring the nature, propagation, and impact of manipulated video content in the public sphere. As digital media technologies evolve and advance, the creation of convincing video fakes is now relatively straightforward and inexpensive. Social media sites have a dual role: as a source for visual content and a platform for dissemination. They facilitate the almost inexhaustible supply of digital images

and videos online and remain largely unchecked and unregulated in the sharing of pernicious stories and disinformation on a global scale.This is a critical time for a study which focuses specifically on synthetic and manipulated video content. Historically, audiences viewed video as the most trustworthy medium in news. And we know that social media content which contains video material is more likely to be clicked, commented-on, and shared. TV news is powerful because it is emotive, and viewers can share in the experience of bearing witness.It is partly for this reason that TV has, historically, been subject to more stringent regulations than the printed press. However, the explosion of video content online has changed everyone and has left existing regulatory frameworks and safeguards redundant or ineffective.The present international geopolitical landscape makes an examination of video mis/disinformation significant: the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, the growing relationship between Russia and China, the second presidency of Donald Trump and the growth in the influence of AI technologies on our everyday lives.

[159] Alessia Marzano, Åsne Håndlykken-Luz and Iffit Z. Qureshi: "These are not just cute mittens": Reflecting on the Mittens for Peace Movement in terms of Belonging and Affective Solidarity (Working title).

Abstract. The escalation of genocidal violence in Gaza since 2023, witnessed through social media, has compelled many to view the world through the lens of these ongoing events amid widespread feelings of powerlessness. The "Mittens for Peace" initiative is a transnational movement initiated in Norway by Iffit Z. Qureshi to raise money for Palestinians affected by the genocide. In 2024, the 450 activists raised over 1.3 million kroner (ca. 92,500 £) for aid organizations in Gaza by knitting and selling Selbu mittens featuring Palestinian patterns (Selbuvotter for Fred, 2025).Utilizing traditional crafts to promote social justice causes, craftivism (Greer, 2007) materializes solidarity, challenging the abstract language of oppression. The mittens initiative has shown how knitting can become a political resource to organize change by generating affective relations between people (Vachhani et al., 2024, p.1) in this increasingly polarized world.We contribute to the MeCCSA's discourse on identity and belonging by reflecting on the mittens' unique production and circulation and the affective encounters they generate, including the ones that bring us together as co-authors. As Ahmed (2017) contends, we are moved to action by a sense of injustice: "A collective is what does not stand still but creates and is created by movement" (p.3). Our study builds on sensory ethnography (Pink, 2013) and critical participatory rhetoric (Endres et al., 2016), illuminating the layers, patterns, stories, and interconnections the mittens

bring forward while reflecting on how being part of a community with a shared purpose fosters a sense of belonging beyond the activists' identities.

[161] Seáron Thornton: Pinterest's potential as an effective therapeutic tool; A multi-discipline exploration the effects of the aesthetic appraisal of digital fashion imagery.

Abstract. The proposed paper explores users' aesthetic appraisal of fashion-related imagery on the social media platform Pinterest, and how digital art and participatory media culture can play an important role in the development, preservation and expression of identity. Grounded in media principles of digital participatory culture and digital aesthetics, the research seeks to develop a multi-faceted approach to the assessment of Pinterest user benefits, through the additional incorporation of the therapeutic practices of art therapy, therapeutic photography, and fashion psychology. The research uses a novel methodological approach, combining qualitative methods of photo elicitation interviews and therapeutic photography with principles of art therapy practice to explore how the self-directed user actions on Pinterest can serve as an important tool of self-preservation during a range of challenging contemporary contexts. Participants share their experiences of using Pinterest during periods where restrictions apply to their typical conditions of online or real-word sartorial self-expression, including students' experiences during social distancing and the Covid-19 pandemic, and the experiences of new mothers during an extended period of breastfeeding their infants. Findings will contribute to a broader understanding of positive and beneficial effects of social media use in relation to themes of identity and self-expression, belonging, community representation and connection, self-reflection, self-continuity and the development of self-concept and resilience. Conclusions will be drawn around Pinterest's potential as an effective therapeutic tool to strengthen alignment of users' digital and real-world user identities, and build resilience in an evolving cultural, social, and digital environment.

[162] Theo Panagopoulos: Re-Orienting Archival Biblical Film Gaze as Palestinian Counternarrative.

Abstract. Feminist scholar Sara Ahmed introduced the term "orientation" as an approach to understand Orientalism and the Orientalist gaze, not just as a critical and academic analysis but as a phenomenological and embodied reality. For Ahmed, the Orient distills the idea of being 'orientated' towards a specific location and thus it's an intentional form of facing something that is 'other than me' and at the same time reasserts one's own location as it 'always reflects back or

shows where one is located' (2006 p.115). The paper and presentation uses as a case study never-before-seen film archives presenting Palestine in the 1930s filmed by a Scottish missionary, at a time when Palestine was under British occupation. I argue that participatory performance methodology and specifically its ability to be used as a deeply embodied and collective praxis of countering colonial ways of looking, can be explored as a two-step methodological approach; firstly by "re-orienting" the colonial "biblical" gaze seen through the footage and secondly by creating Palestinian counternarratives. I draw on workshops I conducted as part of my practice-as-research PhD during which Palestinian diasporic communities in Scotland and Greece took part in a 2-day process of developing their own participatory performance as a response to the archives. By grounding this analysis within decolonial and participatory praxis, the paper and presentation contributes to current discourse film archives and participatory praxis related to non-Western decolonial epistemology, phenomenology and the body as archive re-appropriation and memory work.

[167] Anne MacLennan: Manufacturing Canadian Culture & Identities: The Intersection of Culture, Perception, Citizenship, and Belonging.

Abstract. The manufacture of Canadian culture and identities to unite the people in the politically defined geographic space called Canada connects many threads of regional, local, and community identities. Canada's population has doubled since 1967 when conceptions of Canadian identities and culture seem to have crystalized with the nation's 100th anniversary. Since then, five decades of immigration following the Multiculturalism policy in 1971; the calls to action stemming from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015); movement toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusion; and other shifts in the way Canadians understand their identities, citizenship, belonging and culture in the 21st century. A defensive nationalism (MacLennan, 2019) has pervaded Canada's sense of what it is not – American or British, dominated the definitions of Canadian identities. Physically the construction of Canada evolved through canals, railroads, Trans-Canada Highway, airlines and political-economic structure established a nation. The creation of cultural structural supports such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (first radio and then television) and a host of other agencies served to reinforce what is Canadian. A myriad of agencies and organizations were started to support conceptions of Canadian cultures including: The Canada Council for the Arts/Conseil des arts du Canada (1957), the Department of Canadian Heritage (1993), the Canada Cultural Investment Fund (2001), the Canada Music Fund (2001), the Giller Prize (1994), Polaris Music Prize (2006), National Film Board

(1939), Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (1992), Telefilm (1967), and the Canada Media Fund (2010). A mixed-methods approach will interrogate the manufacture of Canadian identities and belonging.

[169] Ana Tominc, David McBey, Benjamin McCormick and Stacey Marko: I Farmer: Narratives about Self, Land and the Future of Farming.

Abstract. Farmers primarily produce food, but new subsidy requirements increasingly demand that they also deliver other public goods, which may conflict with their identity as food producers. These shifting expectations can influence how they respond to policy changes, as research suggests that identity plays a crucial role in decision-making (cf. van der Gaag et al., 2020). Rather than being driven solely by rational economic considerations, farmers' decisions are shaped by a complex interplay of business needs, experience, incomplete information, traditions, and identity—particularly in relation to gender, nationality, and social class. To understand the role of identity in farmer decision-making, we analyze data from ten semi-structured interviews conducted in January–February 2025. Male and female farmers aged 35 to 55 were recruited from a diverse range of Scottish farms—including dairy, soft fruit, upland sheep grazing, mixed cereal and ruminants, and specialist crops—to examine how they construct their identities, communities, and farms through language in different agricultural contexts.

Drawing on this data, the presentation will explore key themes related to identity and farmers' relationships within the Scottish food system and broader society. These include concepts of tradition versus progress, family, the environment, and farming stereotypes, as seen in preliminary findings. Given the significant gap in research on how farmers, as a social group, perceive and define themselves, this study addresses an important area of inquiry with direct implications for shaping food and environmental policy.

[170] Adina Maglan: Inclusive Britain: A comparative study on marginalisation and recognition of Eastern European identities in London and Birmingham public policy.

Abstract. Since Brexit, Eastern European communities have become more visible in public policy environments which referred to them as 'White Other' as an umbrella ethnic category, an oversimplified approach to identity as argued by scholars (Kalmar, 2023; Balogun, 2023; Turda, 2023; Boatca, 2023), linked to racism and colonial power hierarchies. Weaponised in public policy to adversely impact these groups (Lewicki, 2023) and fuel the East/West divide (Epstein & Jacoby, 2014:8),

this generalisation obscures the complex process of (a) identity negotiation (Smith, 1991; Guibernau, 2024) and creates barriers to (b) recognition and participation (Wells & Friedland, 2003). It also strips communities and individuals of agency through (c) racialisation and marginalisation (Balogun, 2023; Turda, 2023; Boatca, 2023, Lewicki, 2024) and influences their organising capacity in relation to (d) diaspora diplomacy and citizenship (Dolea, 2024). This interrelates to community tensions arising from the asymmetry between contemporary scholarly knowledge on identity and the approaches of the law and policy makers (positioned here also as consumers of research (Bogenscheneider & Corbett, 2021). Through researching the Romanian and Polish communities in London and Birmingham by holding interviews with policy experts (to understand ethnicity classification frameworks and how exclusion produces) and representatives of community organisations and members of the public (to explore how these communities self-identify), the research will aim to unpack the identity negotiation processes and develop a more inclusive ethnicity framework to help address exclusion and miscategorisation, aiming for a broader application to other groups (e.g. Black British) with clear impact outcomes at policy level.

[171] Ana Tominc: How Adoption of Plant-Based Treaty in Edinburgh (Scotland) was Reported in the UK Press: Between Scottish Identity, Environment and the Economy.

Abstract. Plant-based treaty is a UNFCCC/ Paris agreement grassroot companion that puts "food systems at the heart of combating the climate crisis". Part of this agenda is a transformation of eating habits from meat-based to plant-based diet. In this presentation I will focus on how the British Press reported on discussions around implementation of this treaty in Scotland, where the treaty has been endorsed by the City of Edinburgh in January 2023 as "the first capital city in Europe" to do so. In particular, the presentation will look at how these discussions are framed as well as what argumentation strategies are used to support/dismiss ideas that surround the treaty in the three months following the announcement of the City of Edinburgh Council. Methodologically, I will engage in qualitative analysis of newspapers available via Proquest International Newsstream (15 Jan-15 Feb 2023). Depending on the newspaper in which they appear, the claims around the treaty and Scotland, are either dismissed as leftist radicalism by a government that wants to dictate people what to eat (and destroy agriculture) or as a step in the right direction in an inclusive, progressive Scotland. Often framed as economic or identity issues, newspapers often present reasons against such initiative as a threat to established agriculture, traditional ways of living and individual freedom, and

as a common-sense view. Through this, this presentation discusses challenges in communicating the changing diets to the general public, especially as they are wrapped in complex questions of national identity, economy and common sense.

[172] Karen Cross: Shaping Sustainable Fashion Identity in Heritage Scottish Fashion and Textile Brands.

Abstract. Sustainable fashion purchasing has become a social movement, mediated by brands, consumers, governments, organisations and researchers. Identifying as a sustainable fashion consumer provides a sense of belonging aligned with activism and purpose, fulfilling a need to respond to anxieties related to issues such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and overflowing landfills. Online content plays a key role in social connectivity, enabling consumers to find like-minded tribes and explore sustainable fashion.

However, there is a recognised attitude-behaviour gap between consumer intention and actual purchase behaviour, with barriers to sustainable fashion purchases including cost, availability and perceived fashionability.Scottish fashion and textile brands are well-placed to produce products sustainably as they are mostly Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) not involved in mass production, unethical labour practices or toxic waste release. Heritage brands in particular can champion sustainability in terms of preserving cultures and communities, decent work, and responsible consumption. There can be tensions though, where traditional methods of manufacture might be incompatible with contemporary sustainability standards. Presenting as a sustainable brand could yield benefits in terms of positive press, customer acquisition and retention, but is not without risks in an era of cancel culture, where consumer-consumer and consumer-brand communications are facilitated across websites and social media platforms and awareness of greenwashing is growing. This paper utilises an interpretive paradigm to present a textual analysis of heritage Scottish fashion and textile brand communications online, utilising the United Nations Sustainable Fashion Communications Playbook as a lens through which to view online content from a sustainability perspective.

[173] Christopher Chadwick, Daniel Turner, Lau Jamero, and Miguel Esteban: Racing the King Tide.

Abstract. This paper will present three documentary case studies from the Racing the King Tide project. It will compare an Expository and Participatory Mode documentary (Nichols) and expand upon this with an Immersive/Experiential documentary Mode using 360VR and HMD (Head Mounted Display). Racing the King Tide documents Philippine Island communities' in-situ adaptation

and mitigation techniques to sea level rise (SLR) and disaster risk and reduction management (DRRM) strategies. These case studies use three separate approaches to documentary filmmaking and this paper will discuss the impact, power, and sense of empathy of each documentary style. The differing methodologies used will be presented and the contrasting approaches to the filming will be illustrated. These documentaries help build the capacity of the Philippine Island communities to disseminate their own stories about adaptation and mitigation to Sea Level Rise and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management. The islands experience complete (55 days) and partial flooding (120 days) caused by the 2013 Tubigon earthquake which induced 2 metres of subsidence on the islands. The islands were also struck by Typhoon Rai (16th December 2021), damaging home and key infrastructure and inundating the islands with storm surges up to 4 metres high.The Racing the King Tide documentaries have helped inform and support policy change at local and national Philippine government level around disaster response and risk reduction and mitigation techniques to sea level rise. They have also fed into policy support and international debate around SLR and DRRM worldwide.
www.racingthekingtide.com

[175] Ana Oh: Intellectual Property and streaming services: P stands for property or profit?

Abstract. Intellectual Property is a major contribution to profit in the global entertainment industry. “IP” has evolved from private property protection to now driving one of the most profitable sectors of Hollywood – streaming services. IP has influenced creative demand, production cycles, revenue streams, viewing behavior and the engagement of audiences with films and tv shows. Creators have been able to protect their work and achieve a source of income. Fans create communities to share their identification with characters through merchandise. New stories are picked up everyday as an attempt to connect with new markets, giving opportunities to small writers and minority groups. Squid Game was purchased as a 10-year-old rejected story to become the biggest Netflix show ever and several merchandising partnerships but no bonus to its Korean creator. Disney made StarWars go to the next level in budget and reach, but became a business concern with its extension Acolyte getting cancelled after polarization of fans on its LGBT inclusion. This paper examines IP as both a brilliant marketing strategy and a cultural cause for concern - raising questions of ethics. This month, James Bond’s producers for 60 years handed creative control to Amazon. What are the positive and negative consequences of these events? Who benefits? Is there now a need for protection from IP protection? As postgraduate student, and former marketing professional

at Netflix for 3 years and at Amazon Prime Video for 3.5 years, I understand IP studies as a fundamental part of today's entertainment, communication and cultural studies.

[177] Hanna Kubicka: Seeing Yourself in Fiction: Listening to Viewers to Formulate a New Definition of Identification with Characters.

Abstract. Identification with fictional characters, a form of psychological immersion where viewers adopt characters' perspectives and emotions, is a troubled theoretical concept with a long history of controversy in Film and TV studies. Psychoanalytical film theory raised it to prominence, and the term remained influential until most cognitive film theorists criticised and finally rejected it. The unfaltering persistence with which viewers refer to 'identification' and the ubiquity of the alternative definitions they use, however, suggest that its vernacular meanings warrant further investigation and signal a significant gap in the theoretical understanding of audience engagement. Using empirical methodologies (online observation and a survey), I analyse real-life engagement, investigate what viewers mean when they claim to identify with fictional characters, and propose a new definition, which integrates the term into the cognitive theory framework. My definition breaks through the theoretical impasse affecting the field, and sheds light on viewers' practical, everyday uses of identification. I argue that identification is an extended form of assimilative, comparative thinking, a psychological concept that supports many identity-building activities and explains the many functions of character engagement. This explanation frees the concept from its harmful theoretical legacy and reconfigures the understanding of emotional engagement with fiction, bringing film theorists closer to viewers and allowing for fresh, empirically grounded insights.

[179] Dom Holdaway: Populist Screens. Political Structures of Feeling in and around Fictional Film and TV.

Abstract. With the re-election of Trump and vastly expanding movements like Reform, the Alternative für Deutschland and Fratelli d'Italia, the relevance of western populism cannot be overstated. While populism is not inherently dangerous, as Mouffe and Fraser have argued, its ethno-nationalistic tendencies are deeply concerning. Within this context, this paper seeks (i) to explore the role of fictional screen media in today's populism, and (ii) propose a conceptual framework for studying this. Populism filters complex social issues through a pattern of reactionary narratives to appeal to nationalistic cores of electorates – for instance, through the rhetorical construction of a united people against corrupt elites or migrants. While the impact of news and social media on these narratives is well-

documented, little research has examined how screen fiction contribute to populist mediascapes. This is striking, given screen media's cultural and economic influence and its power to shape affective worldviews: a key tool for populist electioneers. To address this, I suggest there is value in asking not (only) whether/how screen media represents populism directly, but rather whether a broader sentiment permeating our culture feeds both populist leadership and certain narratives. To analyse this, I adopt Williams's concept of "structures of feeling", for its identification of counter-hegemonic impulses within a culture.Drawing on findings from a research project ("Circulating Populist Sentiments in Film and TV Fiction in Italy"), the paper illustrates this reasoning through a set of exemplary narratives – e.g., corruption, precarity, national identity, and migration – in film and TV and in the discourses they generate, suggesting they capture these slippery structures.

[181] Alice Giuliani: When the Other looks back: returned gazes and shared vulnerabilities in Cloverfield and Troll Hunter.

Abstract. This paper examines faux footage horror films Cloverfield (Reeves 2008) and Troll Hunter (Øvredal 2010) and their moments of "returned gaze", in which the object of vision looks back at the camera operator. Through these moments, I explore questions of identity in relation to humanness, nonhuman otherness, and more-than-human belonging in the context of climate change. Engaging with Stacy Alaimo's concept of exposure (2017) and its "critique [of] transcendence and the splitting of subject and object" (Alaimo 2017, p. 7), I argue that the films in question display a sense of vulnerability that goes hand-in-hand with the dissolution of boundaries and the recognition of the agency of the "other". When the Other looks back, the relations of identity and otherness that shape Western ideas of the "human" come into focus while, at the same time, other modes of relating are opened up. Drawing on Alaimo, alongside Anat Pick (2015) and Donna Haraway (2008), I propose a posthumanist perspective, grounded on embodiment and relationality, on the post-cinematic modes of vision employed by Cloverfield and Troll Hunter, such as portable consumer cameras, wildlife observation cameras, and surveillance footage. Broadly, these films point at the role of post-cinematic media in (re)shaping boundaries and relations between self and other, the human and the nonhuman. Ultimately, I argue, the two films collapse subject and object of vision to articulate a shared sense of embodied, enmeshed, shared vulnerability at the time of climate change.

[183] Agnieszka Piotrowska, Chamrmaine Dambuza, Priyanka Singh and Ireneusz Koper: A Round Table linked to the new EUP volume The Ethics of Documentary Film.

Abstract. The new collection (to be published in the summer of 2025) reflects on the connections between history, archive and documentaries in the broadest meaning of these categories. The ambition of the book is to create a space that strives to reformulate some of the foundational notions in the documentary films studies and practice, relating to archive and the production of knowledge, or knowledges (as Donna Haraway would say).Can one define the ethics of the documentary project? In the current post pandemic, post-truth age in which we are invited and expected to live in a continuous state of insecurity and anxiety, what role can a documentary film/factual moving image play in culture and society? What can we do to be ethical? But then, in this context, how do we consider autobiographical documentary texts or the works which combine factual footage with fiction and animation? These are just a few of the questions this volume seeks to explore. The roundtable will include Agata Lulkowska, Jill Daniels, Charmaine Dambuza and Priyanka Singh - all academics and practitioners who have contributed to the volume which has contributions from 19 writers around the globe.

[186] Jane Wilkinson, Sibylle Ratz, Linden Rennie Taylor and Yuliia Vasylieva: Intercultural explorations of identity and belonging in the work of hospitality and integration.

Abstract. When individuals are forced to leave their homes and seek refuge elsewhere, they are also forced to 'navigate their sense of self in new and evolving cultural and social environments' – 'new' and unfamiliar to them, and concomitantly 'evolving' in response to their presence. 'Questions about how identities can be preserved or adapted' therefore affect both those who move and those they encounter in 'receiving communities.' In other words, questions of identity and belonging are also questions of 'hospitality' and 'integration'. In the Scottish context, this is clearly acknowledged in the 'New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy', which frames integration as 'an intercultural process' involving 'dialogue and mutual learning between the many different cultures, beliefs and faiths which make up our society' (2024) and directly addresses identity by proposing the 'inclusive' term 'New Scots' to refer to those who have made Scotland their home. Third sector organisations such as Forth Valley Welcome in Stirling play a vital role in supporting this 'intercultural process' of integration. Their work serves a dual purpose: meeting the immediate and material needs of New Scots, while also supporting the complex process of identity navigation fundamental to community building and belonging.

It is the latter aspect that we propose to explore in a conversational presentation involving Jane and Sibylle, lecturers at Edinburgh Napier University (ENU), and Linden and Yuliia, employees of Forth Valley Welcome (FVW). Our conversation will tell the story of our collaboration and our collective learning through a series of projects and activities, including the co-creation of 'cultural presentations', and cookery and craft sessions with refugee women. We will discuss ways in which we, the presenters, diverse groups of New Scots and volunteers have 'made place together' (cf. Gilmartin and Dagg, 2023) in reciprocally hospitable (cf. Ager and Strang, 2008; Ferri, 2018) spaces, exploring the 'possibility' of shared language (Derrida, 2000) between the various stakeholders engaging in the projects.

[187] Jenny Alexander: Thirsting for Luigi Mangione: Propaganda-by-the-Deed in the Age of Political Fandom.

Abstract. I consider Luigi Mangione, the alleged vigilante executioner of United Healthcare CEO Brian Thompson (4th Dec 2024) in context, firstly of the 19thC anarchist tactic, the attentat, or political assassination as "propaganda by deed" (Bantman, 2019) and secondly, in relation to our social media era of "political fandom" (Sandvoss 2013, Allen and Moon 2023). Mangione appeared in court in New York for a preliminary hearing (BBC News, 21 Feb 2025) attended by supporters wearing facemasks and green hats to represent the Nintendo Mario Brothers' video game character, Luigi (1983-). Such ludic solidarity is a nascent form of popular culture "shaping the civic imagination of people involved in political struggles and social movements" (Jenkins, Shresthova and Peters-Lazaro, 2020). It is also a mobilisation of cultural resources supporting violence-as-empathic-solidarity. Emma Goldman defended anarchist attentat; "The ignorant mass looks upon the man who makes a violent protest against our social and economic iniquities as upon a wild beast… or… as an irresponsible lunatic…. those who have studied the character and personality of these men… are agreed that it is their super-sensitiveness to the wrong and injustice surrounding them which compels them…" (Goldman, 1917). But Mangione's legal-defence fundraiser features, not mass opprobrium, but mass admiration, expressed both in pop culture vernacular ("Pop off. Slay, even") and as political fandom ("You're truly a hero. You've awakened the working class"). How should we understand Mangione's spectacularised violence and its summoning, in the digital age, of an atomised private suffering into the realm of public community?

[188] Lin Cheng: Exploring the subjectivity of Chinese female art in the practice of self-expression: taking ancient Chinese female painters and my artistic practice as a comparative case.

Abstract. In the long history of Chinese art, the painting images of ancient women were mainly designed under the guidance of imperial power and religion, and created by male painters with brushes. The rulers used these paintings to domesticate more women to pursue the ideal image of chastity and sacrifice. It was not until around the 16th century that self-portraits and self-expressions of Chinese female painters began to appear frequently. Among them, the most revolutionary group of female painters came from the vacuum zone of social discipline at that time, brothels. Female artists from this background were proficient in talents such as painting and poetry. They not only showed their character and spirit through painting, but some also changed their names and their clothes to men in life to achieve inner self-identity and transcend the social system's discipline on women.The last feudal dynasty ended in the early 20th century in China. As a contemporary art practitioner and researcher who was born in the late 20th century, I am currently living in a foreign country. I unconsciously emphasized my childhood, identity, and lost state in different media of works (animation, printmaking, and painting). In my works, I reflect on the relationship between the female body, creation, and inner identity.Therefore, this presentation will be based on my current doctoral research at the University of Glasgow, which is a study of the self-expression of the works of ancient Chinese female painters and the autobiographical image narratives of contemporary women. I will select the works of female painters in the background of ancient Chinese brothels and my own artistic practice (installment, animation and printmaking) to explore the subjectivity of women in different historical periods and their artistic expression in creation.I plan to share three art projects. They are Women in a Case (installation), Silent Absence (pseudo-documentary) and Dancing with Lines (short animation).In these three projects, I explored the inner world of women as individuals and family members in the contemporary era. In the Woman in a Case project, I used the cheapest plastic cloth material to make a 22-meter-long giant headless female body by myself. During the production process, I forced myself to experience the meaningless weaving process. And I recorded the whole process with a video. Finally, I displayed this case in shopping malls and suburbs in Beijing. The two animation projects are extensions of my two projects made at the University of the Arts London. As an indirect witness of domestic violence, in Silent Absence, I explored the feelings of women in the turbulent domestic violence environment in the family. I made silhouette animations to match the audio clips from two domestic violence documentaries

released by the Chinese government, and then projected the animations in the house I rented. I hope to create a kind of exhibition hall that uses home as the inner heart to show the collective subconscious of some family trauma groups. Another work, Dancing with the Line, is a self-entertainment play when I feel myself being separated from my family identity. I recorded my own dancing shadow, and then drew a line animation frame by frame to dance with myself. In this project, I reflected on the situation of women being separated from a created identity.

[189] Xin Xin: Between Attraction and Geopolitics: Narrating China's Soft Power through Italy's Belt and Road Participation (2019–2024).

Abstract. Since China formally embraced soft power as state strategy in 2007, scholars have increasingly analysed its global initiatives—particularly the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—through this lens. Yet many assessments overlook the geopolitical contest that shapes both the production and perception of soft power. This study foregrounds Italy's unique trajectory: from becoming the first G7 country to sign onto the BRI in 2019, to its submission of a withdrawal notice in December 2023 for an official exit in early 2024, followed by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's diplomatic "relaunch" talks in July 2024—as narrated by Al Jazeera English's (AJE) online news coverage. Using Reisigl and Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach, triangulated with Eagleton's and van Dijk's ideological frameworks, this study undertakes a three-layered critique: (1) a social-diagnostic critique situates each report within its historical and (geo-)political context; (2) an immanent critique identifies inconsistencies, contradictions, and omitted messages in the reporting; and (3) a prospective critique offers recommendations for more balanced, transparent, and geopolitically informed coverage—though this study primarily focuses on the first two dimensions. Findings reveal that AJE's coverage oscillates between highlighting cultural and economic cooperation and glossing over strategic tensions—ultimately shaping public perception of China's soft power in relation to broader alliance politics. Italy's BRI exit emerges not as a failure of Chinese attraction but as a signal of strategic recalibration, suggesting that soft power theory—especially Nye's formulation—requires refinement to account for the discursive role of media and the pressures of great-power rivalry.

[190] Antje Glück: The (Post)colonial Nation – How journalism shapes South Asian identities in the UK.

Abstract. Journalism is a central institution for constituting collective memory and shared identities in contemporary societies. Taking the "nation" as a starting point, journalism is essential in supporting and enhancing the constitution of shared

memories, grand narratives and "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1991; Zelizer & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2014). This turns especially relevant when looking at the intertwined past of the United Kingdom and India. Their shared history as colonizer and colony, as former British Empire and subordinate colonial subject reflects essentially within their public and media discourses, which are marked by mutual observations, references, emotions, and interpretations of a common (post) colonial past.This study takes two points in time to analyse the re-examination of what national identity constitutes in the UK, and how this shapes by its own history. The year 2022 was marked by a journalistic remembrance of the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, while 2019 evoked a 100 years anniversary of memories about the Amritsar massacre committed by the British colonial Dyer. Both events appear as traumatic; constituting turning points in each nation's writing of history.The conference paper examines these tensions, asking how journalism (re)shapes national identities in interlinked countries. The study draws on a sample of newspaper opinion pieces (through LexisNexis) and news reports of major British and Indian print and television outlets, which will be analysed using Foucault's Critical Discourse Analysis.

[193] Miranda Lynn Barnes: Witness Tree: Considering Ecological Destruction as Femicide via Mythology and Arboreal Sciences.

Abstract. As Peter Wohlleben reminds us in The Hidden Life of Trees (2015), the way industry views the forest 'eventually distorts the way they look at trees.' (xiii) And similarly, the way we view each other can become skewed, with women often seen through the eyes of exploitation. Community is damaged when we view each other this way. My new collection of poems (to be published) uses the framework of forest ecology, dendrochronology, and other arboreal sciences. I weave together themes of femicide and ecological destruction, by way of reinventing the myths of the Sibyl of Cumae, famed for writing her prophesies on leaves, and Daphne, who was turned into a laurel tree to save her from the amorous "advances" (see: rape) of Apollo. The fates of these two collide within the forest of these poems. The poems' reimagining is set directly within the climate catastrophe we are currently undergoing, as well as the epidemic of femicide that unrelentingly grips the world. Interspersed are poems addressing my own experiences with intimate partner violence and sexual assault. When considering the reactive, destructive violence against nature committed senselessly, such as the Sycamore Gap tree and intentional wildfire arson, I purport this and violent gender-based attacks on women come from the same source. And with such violence, both the victim and perpetrator are damaged. But like trees after being burned by fire, or cut to a stump, tender

shoots of hope may emerge yet, if we tend to our community, and share life at the roots. (This proposal includes a performance of poems in addition to the paper. The performance can be held separately or alongside the paper.)

[194] Hal Conte: NFTs as an Art Movement— A retrospective look at a phase of online art.

Abstract. The bubble in non-fungible tokens (NFTs) in the years 2020-21 is often seen through the viewpoint of a merely a financial bubble or in some quarters still as a new way of valuing images online or raising revenue for existing art institutions. I argue that "NFTs 1.0" can be best understood as just another art movement in the vein of previous avant-gardes and earlier iterations of online art, repeating common features to these movements including incorporation of mixed media, a reinvention of the notion of the "readymade," and concerns with identity in a changing and fluxuating consumer capitalist economy that had gone through a traumatic period during the coronavirus lockdowns and new social justice movements (such as Black Lives Matter). This presentation will conclude with a discussion if anything can be salvaged from the "NFT bubble" era of online art and what it presages for a coming period where personal identity and collective identity will interface yet more with technology hype-cycles including artificial intelligence, with implications for myriad fields of media and cultural studies

[195] Antje Glück: Journalistic Courage vs Authoritarianism: What German 1920s Journalism can tell us about the present.

Abstract. That the relevance of critical and courageous journalism remains undisputed reflects in the recurring awarding of the Noble Peace Prize to journalists such as Dmitry Muratov of Russia. But autonomy of journalists and media freedom is increasingly under threat, a trend including many European countries. Hence, this project asks how journalism can operate under changing circumstances of increasingly right-wing and/or authoritarian tendencies within democratic countries – by centring on a similar historical situation, the Weimar Republic in 1920s Germany.We explore this through a study of the life and works of German journalist Carl von Ossietzky (1889-1938). Despite receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1935, little is written about Ossietzky in the English language. As editor-in-chief of Die Weltbühne, Ossietzky was a vocal critic of Hitler's rise to power. This ultimately led to his death at the hands of the regime. What appears most striking about von Ossietzky is that he represented how we confront the moral conundrum of authoritarian and totalitarian menace. This approach will help to identify lessons and examples of good journalism which can serve as inspiration

and template for today's journalism and a robust public sphere in the present. The exceptional case of von Ossietzky demonstrates a type of journalism radically different from the assumption of objectivity when confronted with an authoritarian menace. Using archival research and close reading technique, I argue that examples like this demonstrate that it is no longer sufficient to present the facts and the truth, but to advocate for truth.

[199] Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau: How Art Can Help Us Save the Planet.

Abstract. I have been working for several years in the network labos1point5 in France, which aims at reducing the carbon print of academia. I quickly realized that knowing about the climate crisis didn't seem to be enough to make people change their behaviors. I then had the intuition we also needed to move people, to make them feel about the climate, and I thought art could do that. I then had the idea of creating a working group to investigate the role art could play in eliciting emotions in people regarding the climate situation, hoping that these felt emotions would trigger some behavioral changes. I will present some of the actions we have undertaken inside this working group: it goes from writing first-person accounts of how some of us became aware of the climate crisis, to creating a stage show and some short films based on some of these texts; to imagining the research lab of tomorrow, and creating a song and a dance choreography based on these utopian views of the lab of tomorrow. Recently, I extended this work into designing a new undergrad course titled "How Art Can Help Us Save the Planet". The idea was to build a course that explores the connection between art and ethics, applying it to the climate issue, and culminating in having the students create art pieces on this topic and organizing an art show at the end of the semester. I will give an account about two iterations of this undergrad course.

[200] Anh Dinh-Hong: Radio as a national belonging and the foundation of podcasts.

Abstract. Using archival research, media analysis, and textual analysis, this study explores how Vietnamese people's long-established radio listening habits were developed through communal radio during wartime and public loudspeakers from a historical perspective (1945–2024), and I argue that radio is considered as a national belonging since the war and the foundation of podcasts in contemporary Vietnam. VOV, Vietnam's national radio broadcaster, was founded on September 7th, 1945, just five days after President Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam a Democratic Republic (Tạ Ngọc Tấn, 2001, p.112; Nhân Hạnh, 2003, p.7).

However, shortly after Vietnam proclaimed its independence, the country became entangled in long-lasting wars that lasted for around three decades, all to protect its unity and autonomy. The development of a national radio station during that time was considered crucial because it could serve as a communication channel between the central government, local authorities, and the general public, mainly within the country (Dang, 2008). Vietnamese people needed to listen to the radio daily to update announcements and air defense during wartime. Until the 1960s, public loudspeakers connected to each neighbourhood and broadcasted scheduled announcements regarding food stamps, military service examinations, immunizations, and street cleaning. Loudspeakers were closely intertwined with the transmission of daily news and established a familiar bond with individuals and households. They continually aired, encouraging and reminding people to adhere to evacuation instructions. During the spring of 1975, they operated at full capacity, disseminating the news of Saigon's liberation. According to **Đặng Quỳnh Lê** (2022), loudspeaker systems gradually gained popularity nationwide and became widely utilized in remote areas and towns. Public loudspeakers are still used in inner-city blocks and suburban towns today. After 1980, portable radios were imported into Vietnam and gained popularity due to their convenience and compactness. The Vietnamese populace continues to maintain the long-standing habit of consuming radio usage until now (**Phạm Xưởng**, 2021). Radio use has been a long-lived tradition, mainly for broadcasting announcements. Nevertheless, in the 2000s, such announcements shifted towards modern radio formats. The nation experienced a shift in the way of listening. The former communal space transitioned to an individual space with a singular compact radio in each family home. Until this decade, podcasts have appeared in this nation and gained much popularity. Internet users aged 16–64 spend around 50 minutes daily with podcasts (DataReportal, 2024). Podcasts are still used in individual spaces (like small portable radios) but on personal devices such as smartphones, tablets, and smart speakers. Vietnam currently features about 3000 podcast channels and over 76,000 episodes spanning 124 different genres as of March 2022 (Liulo.fm, 2022). The Music, Radio & Podcasts market in this country is expected to experience a growth rate of 5.02% from 2024 to 2029 (Statista, 2024). Vietnamese people's long-established radio listening habits contribute an important part to this nation's easy acceptance and growth of the podcast format, and radio turns out to be a national belonging and the foundation of podcasts in this Global South country.

[201] Luca Antoniazzi: Eco-food documentaries in Northwestern Italy: Culture, Food, and Identities.

Abstract. This paper presents the findings from a research line within the project Digital and Sustainable Northwest (NODES), a large-scale research venture that includes all universities in northwestern Italy. The specific line I consider here focuses on eco-food documentaries.Based on semi-structured interviews with producers, filmmakers, and so-called 'intermediaries,' this paper explores their eco-food documentaries and their role in both reflecting the region's gastronomic culture and contributing to the ecology of the local cultural industries.The identity of the region is strongly shaped by its food production (e.g., Barolo wine) and gastronomic heritage. The region is home to significant food justice movements, such as Slow Food and Food Pride. Additionally, the region serves as a major hub for documentary filmmaking, supported by initiatives like the Doc Film Fund, managed by the local screen agency Torino Piemonte Film Commission, and Documentary in Europe, a key industry event organized from 1995 to 2013, thanks to producer Stefano Tealdi and others. This paper situates itself at the intersection of food media and cultural studies (Phillipov 2017, Bell et al. 2017), environmental communication (Brereton 2022), and cultural policy (Cucco 2013). It argues that documentary food films are shaped in some cases by a genuine connection with local food production but also by the relationship between creative labour and the larger media systems. This argument has significant implications for debates in food media, highlighting the need for further food media studies that critically examine the logics of the cultural industries.

[202] Amanda Allen: Transmedia and the Forgotten Generation. Can transmedia techniques be used to engage the older generation, as part of a family audience?

Abstract. In an increasingly digital world, discussions of belonging in media often focus on younger, tech-savvy audiences, leaving older generations at risk of exclusion. This presentation explores how transmedia storytelling—where narratives unfold across multiple platforms—can foster a sense of belonging for the Silent Generation (born 1928–1945)and, moving forward, the oldest generation at that time. By strategically integrating familiar media forms (such as print, radio, art and live events) with digital extensions, transmedia techniques can create inclusive, multi-platform experiences that bridge generational divides.This research examines this phenomenon through the adaptation of Marvel Comics characters into a TV mini-series designed for older audiences. By shifting from the fast-paced, CGI-heavy blockbuster format to a more character-driven, narrative-focused

approach, the adaptation demonstrates how transmedia can be restructured to fit different audience preferences while maintaining a cohesive storyworld. This case study highlights how familiar characters and established franchises can be made more accessible through changes in pacing, storytelling techniques, and platform choice, ultimately fostering a deeper sense of engagement and belonging among older viewers.By expanding audience engagement through tailored transmedia approaches, creators, educators, and cultural institutions can develop more inclusive narratives that welcome older audiences into evolving storytelling landscapes. This research challenges conventional assumptions about transmedia's reach and proposes new ways of using it to connect generations, ensuring that no audience is left behind in the stories we tell.

[204] Melissa Avdeeff: Humanizing the Algorithm: Community and Belonging in AI Popular Music.

Abstract. The rise of AI-generated music has produced contrasting discourses, ranging from rejection (exemplified by artists recently producing a silent album in protest) to enthusiastic embrace (Grimes' collaboration with generative platforms). These debates echo broader historical anxieties about AI, often linked to misinformation, misunderstanding of technological capabilities, and discomfort concerning the perceived challenges to anthropocentric notions of creativity/musicality.A key source of current misinformation in this discourse involves AI music covers, frequently perceived as fully autonomous productions without human intervention. This misconception erases the significant role of human creators and reflects a longer history of scepticism toward new music technologies. Such scepticism is rooted in ideologies that prioritize live and acoustic music as more "authentic" than technologically mediated sound. More broadly, people interpret AI music through prior experiences with AI in general, reinforcing assumptions about value, authenticity, and the limits of machine creativity. Minna Ruckenstein (2023) calls for the re-humanization of algorithmic systems through narratives that recognize human agency in socio-technical transformations. As such, this paper using critical technocultural discourse analysis in the examination of digital community-building practices among AI music practitioners, exploring the ethics of balancing generative AI, creativity, and copyright. Case studies include (1) UTOP-AI, a community-driven Travis Scott deepfake album developed via Reddit and Discord, and (2) YouTube communities that shape conventions and expectations around technological uses. These digital spaces cultivate a sense of belonging, demonstrating how AI-generated music is negotiated within participatory cultures rather than existing as purely autonomous creations.

[205] Emma Graves-Sandriman: Introducing a Media Framing Model for Analyses of Emerging Technologies: The Cases of Big Data and Gen-AI.

Abstract. Media discourse can have a significant impact on public perception of new technological developments, as well as their adoption and even development (Asif and Gouqing, 2023; Buenaflor and Kim, 2013; Harley, 2022). In particular, studies have found that the way these developments are framed in the media is often mirrored in readers'/viewers' opinions of those technologies (e.g. Brewer et al., 2022; Scheufele and Lewenstein, 2005). Uncovering these representations is therefore paramount in understanding how emerging technologies are socially constructed. While many such studies exist, there are varying approaches to framing analysis that are often criticised for lack of transparency or comparability (Tankard, 2001). Therefore, this paper presents the Frame Categories for Emerging Technologies (FCET) model, which provides methodological guidance on identifying media frames for technological innovations. To demonstrate the model, the paper explores original empirical data on the framing of Big Data and Generative Artificial Intelligence in UK news, also providing insights into the social construction of these technologies.The frame categories approach allows comparisons to be made more effectively between studies while offering researchers the flexibility to identify specific, perhaps unique, frames for each context. This will enable richer and more accurate studies about media discourse of emerging technologies.

[206] Tamara Spitzer Hobeika: How campaign software mediates citizen identity.

Abstract. It has become the norm for political campaigns, political party operations, and elected representatives across the globe to use purpose-built software to maintain their databases and manage their interactions with citizens (as potential volunteers, donors, and voters). The role of citizens – how they engage with politics, and how political actors engage with them – is mediated by these technologies that are designed to identify, categorize, and communicate with them. Focusing on NationBuilder (as the leading global and nonpartisan provider of campaign software, with 100,000+ customers in 110+ countries, including many presidential candidates, as well as both Brexit campaigns, for instance) and its ecosystem of partners, this paper takes an ethnographic look at how these private companies and tools are reshaping what it means to be a citizen in today's technologically-mediated political systems. Existing research has explored the advent of digital campaign tools in the early 2000s, and has been centered on how these tools were adopted by the two main U.S. political parties. This interdisciplinary project (drawing on

media studies, communication, and STS) examines the wider political importance, beyond the U.S. context, of campaign software's ubiquity and its unique lens of 'who we are' as citizens. By looking closely at the technology and its uses, from individual profiles in a given "Nation" (parlance for the database owned by a NationBuilder campaign), to features and practices for engaging with volunteers or voters, this paper unpacks the ecosystem's assumptions of what constitutes a citizen in tech-intensive democracies around the world.

[210] Lily Wu: Far from Slacktivism: Risks and Strategies of Participating in Chinese MeToo in China and from Abroad.

Abstract. This article explores different challenges faced by domestic and overseas digital feminists in participating in Chinese MeToo, as well as the strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles. This is the first research to explain the distinctions that arise from the differing contexts for Chinese feminists engaging with feminist activism–domestically, within an authoritarian framework, versus abroad, in a Western democratic setting. Existing research on Chinese MeToo has predominantly focused on online data analysis; however, this research, based on 34 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Chinese digital feminists both in China and abroad in Western countries, highlights the often-overlooked voices of Chinese MeToo participants. I found that although domestic MeToo participants frequently adopt an "amplifying voices" strategy–supporting prominent cases, rather than speaking out directly–to mitigate the risks posed by strict censorship, they still face significant threats. While Chinese feminists abroad face fewer censorship constraints, their engagement with MeToo extends beyond gender inequality to confront the intersections of sexism, racism and Chinese nationalism. I argue that, in both contexts, participation in Chinese MeToo is far from "slacktivism"–a term often associated with Western online activism–and instead reflects complex and multifaceted struggles of immigrant communities.

[213] Victoria Antonio: Outsourcing Digital Intimate Labour.

Abstract. Social media content publishing has enabled the monetisation of content through platforms like OnlyFans, Fansly, and JustForFans, where adult content creators (ACCs) charge subscription fees for access to their work. This model allows for unique outsourcing of intimate labour, as ACCs can hire contractors to manage Direct Message (DM) interactions with subscribers, effectively creating new business process outsourcing (BPO) dynamics.Limited research exists on parasocial labour and the outsourcing of digital intimate labour. This study employs qualitative methods to identify emerging work types, business models, and labour

relations stemming from asynchronous, digital, and parasocial sex work (ADPSW). It will explore the experiences of both ACCs who outsource their labour and the contracted workers performing these tasks, along with the role of intermediaries like agencies. Notably, parallels are drawn between the outsourcing of intimate labour correspondence to the Philippines and broader economic dynamics based on geographical relationships. The study also explores themes of worker identity. Ultimately, this research aims to support the recognition of sex work as legitimate labour and provide a voice to ACCs and BPO workers in the adult content creation industry. The findings will also inform policymakers about labour rights and emerging relationships in platform work.

[214] Kainaat Maqbool: Creative Method(s) of Resistance: Racial (Cyber)Bullying, Identity Politics, and Belonging for AfroGreek Youth.

Abstract. AfroGreek youth navigate complex intersections of race, identity, and belonging. Marked as outsiders due to phenotypical, cultural, and religious differences, they experience racial (cyber)bullying and systemic marginalization. Greek media and culture play a pivotal role in influencing how they negotiate their sense of self in a society that often resists their inclusion. This paper explores how AfroGreek youth use creative and decolonial methods to resist these exclusions, reclaim identity, and challenge dominant narratives. Using participatory arts-based methodologies—including zines, posters, and poetry—this research highlights how youth produces counter-narratives that disrupt hegemonic understandings of citizenship, belonging, and identity politics. By centering their voices in knowledge production, this work repositions AfroGreek youth as co-creators rather than subjects, unsettling conventional researcher-participant dynamics and resisting epistemic erasure. Creative resistance provides AfroGreek youth with tools for worldbuilding, fostering alternative spaces of belonging while navigating issues of migration, cultural memory, and systemic racism. These acts of self-representation not only challenge racial marginalization but also illuminate broader themes of resilience, activism, and anti-racism. The participatory methods employed demonstrate how counter-narratives reshape socio-political realities, aligning with interdisciplinary discussions on media, identity politics, and community-building. By constructing a Living Archive that documents these experiences, this work contributes to critical debates on media representation, migration, and cultural heritage. It underscores the necessity of participatory and arts-based approaches in amplifying marginalized youth voices, resisting exclusionary frameworks, and reimagining identity and belonging in an evolving socio-political landscape.

[215] William Muir-Kirk: Who are The Masters of the Universe? He-Man's Negotiation of Masculinity within a Transforming Society.

Abstract. With the rise of "manosphere" celebrities, demanding strength, emotional detachment, and which seemingly contrast the current demonization of masculinity, what identities can a child develop? In this study the necessity for traditional masculinity, and its validity in contemporary childhood are examined through the lens of children's media, focusing on the long-standing popular franchise, He-Man and the Masters of the Universe. Traditional definitions of masculinity often describe an inherent toxicity, emphasizing competitiveness, dominance, and aggression. However, He-Man's portrayal complicates this paradigm by embodying masculinity that integrates boundless physical strength with a non-violent, pacifist ideology. The character thus challenges popular reductionist dichotomies that either fully accept concepts of traditional masculinity or entirely reject them, advocating instead a nuanced perspective that distinguishes between maleness and toxic masculinity. This analysis explores how media representations shape early gender identities and influence societal understanding of what it means to belong. Although the show acknowledges the influence of superficial appearances, by reimagining traditional masculine norms, He-Man emerges not merely as a relic of hyper-masculine ideals but as a potent alternative role model who facilitates male identity as a broad spectrum. This perspective is applied within broader debates on gender conformity and societal inclusion, proposing that a more flexible understanding of masculinity, fosters healthier identity formation and promotes a sense of belonging among children navigating complex gender expectations, they "have the power!"

[216] Kainaat Maqbool: Mapping Youth Narratives: An Interactive Workshop On Art and Creative Methods for Decolonial Research.

Abstract. When working with minority youth, it is significant to acknowledge that they are the knowledge-holders; i.e. the ones providing essential knowledge regarding the subject matter at hand. Academics and researchers alike often fail to acknowledge that involving youth, especially those who are marginalized, requires empowering them to express their lived experiences and untold stories to envision solutions as they deem fit. This workshop is one such attempt from a doctoral researcher from the Global South aiming to bring to the fore the voices of youth in a decolonial, participatory manner. This workshop aims to collaborate with the researchers, academics, educators, policymakers, and other attendees of MeCCSSA2025 to play around different arts-based, creative methods to work with youth, especially migrant and diasporic. Including but not limited to

Storywriting, Creative Poetry, Collaborative Zines, and podcasting, this workshop will actively engage the participants in designing creative research processes that foster youth-centered inquiry by involving them in co-creating and co-producing rich, meaningful data. As a result, not only the youth voices and lived experiences are amplified but that information can be actively and effectively used to design interventions. In summary, the workshop participants will work with the facilitator to brainstorm about creative approaches that can be used in their areas of interest across cultures and disciplines. It is strongly aimed, but not limited, toward those who work with/ for youth to explore their digital lives and cultural media habits.

[217] Yixuan Duan: Sparks between algorithm-based platforms and marginalized female content producers: How disadvantaged Chinese rural women navigate the exacting standards of the Kuaishou social media platform.

Abstract. The impact of algorithm-based platforms on people's lives has been increasingly discussed. In China, the participation of rural women on short-video platforms, notably Kuaishou—a prominent Chinese platform boasting 395.3 million daily users (Kuaishou Annual Report, 2024), 43.7 per cent of whom are women—highlights the growing engagement of rural women in this digital landscape. However, existing studies of Kuaishou overwhelmingly focus on the role of creative industries or platform economies while neglecting the gendered aspect. Moreover, previous studies on women and Chinese digital platforms focus mostly on elite-led feminist deliberations (Yin& Sun, 2021) and pay little attention to how disadvantaged Chinese rural women interact with algorithmic platforms as part of their everyday lives.In response, this article examines the interactions of female content producers from the southwest Chinese rural area with Kuaishou. Using the method of "algorithmic ethnography" (Christin, 2020) and feminist critical discourse analysis, I explore how the algorithm of Kuaishou shapes the expressions of those producers, and how producers manage to survive based on the algorithm of Kuaishou and cultivate visibility. This article therefore makes an original contribution to the literature on underprivileged women and cultures of algorithm-based platforms from a non-Western perspective. I argue that, despite a lack of access to education, the platform mechanism makes it possible for Chinese rural women to become micro-entrepreneurs by mastering 'platform-based knowledge'. However, as users need to strictly adhere to complex and changing standards of Kuaishou, they constantly negotiate with the platform within the context of unequal power.

[218] Ada Marlen:"Everyone's read the Silmarillion": Gatekeeping and withholding of sub-cultural capital at Comic Conventions.

Abstract. A notable experience of Comic Con was research at an afterparty and hearing the dismissing of one non-white Londoner's association to fan culture (sub-cultural capital) through the phrase "Everyone's read the Silmarillion". Subcultural capital is described as a form of "currency which correlates with and legitimizes unequal status" (1995: 104). In this regard, this gesture as an outsider who did not attend the convention, is to boast about one's connection to a fan item. By claiming to have read the reputationally difficult (Harth, 2024) 'Silmarillion at age 8' and that 'my favourite character is Fëanor', the Londoner uses his shared identification with fan items to buy status with cosplayers. This is then rejected through a dismissal, similar to the fan border policing mentioned by Busse of those too invested or not invested enough in the fan object (Busse, 2013: 84). This presents an interesting line of questioning, how does gatekeeping and the withholding of subcultural capital function to isolate outsiders from fandom. In this paper I will explore fan identity in London MCM Comic Con and how interactions with local Londoners in the immediate surrounding area are managed. This will utilise auto-ethnographic research undertaken in my PhD supplemented with additional fieldwork into the area and a mapping of fan afterparties.

[220] Lee Cadieux: No Waves of Low Fi: Punk Experimentation in Video Art and Super 8.

Abstract. No Waves of Low Fi: Punk Experimentation in Video Art and Super 8 examines current music video and social media practice as part of a wider culture of the alternative in art film and music. Pre-digital video and Super 8 film practice by No Wave artists such as Vivian Dick, Arturo Vega provide an historical structure with which to analyze current social media facilitated participatory cultures of analogue practice in film, music and performance from specific communities such as the NYC based Cumbia Punk of Ratas an Zelo and Aranivah.

[221] Regina Mosch, Jess Orense, and Rowan Quinn: Trust in Arts-Based Research.

Panel Presentation. This panel examines the role of trust in collaborative, creative research practices. Each paper explores ethical considerations in working with marginalised communities and how these practices shape and negotiate identity and belonging. Rowan's paper investigates how sharing control in queer creative spaces fosters trust and a space for mutual respect and creative expression. Jess's paper explores the role of the lived experience researcher's self-disclosure(s) in Mad

Studies, framing it as an act of care and resistance that facilitates the reclaiming of stories from dominant and medicalised narratives. Regina's paper takes a phenomenological approach to trust in arts-based research, exploring its role in co-created film projects on queer experiences of trauma and microaggressions. Together, these papers challenge traditional research methodologies and emphasise the importance of co-creating spaces where identities are preserved, affirmed, and uplifted. Through these collaborative practices, the panel highlights the role of creative, participatory research in fostering belonging for underrepresented communities. It also considers how embodied ways of being and knowing shape the creative process, offering alternative pathways to understanding and engaging with identity and lived experience.

1) Rowan Quinn: Sharing Control - Establishing Trust in Queer Creative Spaces.

Abstract. This paper posits that trust is built into metaphorical and physical space constructed socially by those inhabiting it. When we discuss space, we primarily define it by its use - work space, creative space, personal space – and infer who has control within those spaces. If art is self-expression, then it is an inherently vulnerable act, and collaborative art particularly invites others to share in spaces where individuals are exposed. This vulnerability is compounded when an individual is a member of a minority group. This was the case over the course of my PhD project, We Claim this Sanctuary, where queer theatre and film professionals were invited to create a collaborative film. It became vital to establish trust, not just between myself and my participants, but between participants themselves.When we codify how an individual may interact with a space, we limit the vulnerability and trust they can demonstrate. Thus, I suggest that trust is established first by relinquishing control, allowing participants to establish the parameters of their engagement, and opening the 'room' to new personal and creative ideas.

2) Jess Orense: Mad Trust: Researcher self-disclosure and shared understandings in autoethnodrama.

Abstract. This paper explores the role of the 'lived experience researcher' in Mad Studies and survivor research, focusing on the ethical responsibility of maintaining participants' trust. As an openly Mad and neurodivergent researcher, self-disclosure is central to my work – both as an act of care and a form of resistance. By challenging institutional norms and embracing vulnerability, self-disclosure fosters a sense of belonging and mutuality, particularly when working with communities with whom I share histories and identities. For individuals who identify as Mad, mentally ill, neurodivergent, disabled, or as survivors (MMINDS), storytelling and theatre-making offer opportunities to reclaim narratives that have been pathologised,

stigmatised, and even criminalised by medical systems. In Mad Studies and survivor research, trust is built on recognising that these narratives are not simply data but deeply personal, embodied lived and living experiences. Through co-creation, participants resist institutionalised control over their stories, reclaiming agency in how they are represented. This paper reflects on the ethical implications of self-disclosure and collaborative knowledge-making, highlighting how these practices foster belonging for those whose voices have long been marginalised or erased.

3) Regina Mosch: A Phenomenology of Trust: Arts-based film Research on Trauma and Queerness.

Abstract. In the film art projects over/exposed and me in my gut, which were creative outcomes of my arts-based PhD, I worked co-creatively with other people to explore queer subjectivities of microaggressions. With an ethico-political methodology, trust was an inherent part of our creative process and so this paper poses the question of trust as a phenomenological one: What did trust feel like and how did it manifest creatively? How did it affect how we moved in our creative space? How did it shape our experience of our film world? Phenomenologically speaking, the idea of drawing near each other's bodies and traumatic experiences through film requires trust to not only be established verbally or through consent forms, but to be lived and embodied throughout the process. And so, I argue that trust in this project was a reciprocal flow of affect that oriented our creative space and the bodies moving within it.

[222] Ruth Stoker and Beth Parkes: Designing learning programmes for journalists and media workers in dispersed and diverse spaces: an Impress case study.

Abstract. The disruptive impact of social-media platforms and new technologies on how journalism operates is challenging us to rethink how we define journalism to embrace its emerging formats. As Maares and Hunusch (2020) note, technological disruption is also bringing into focus how we perceive the occupational identity of the journalist, in terms of how the role is enacted, how this is boundaried, and how physical and online spaces are used to create and disseminate output. Historically, occupational training has had an important role in the formation of occupational identity (Schwartz et al 2011), but the increasingly dispersed nature of both media work and actors in this space presents challenges when looking to design occupational training programmes useful to all stakeholders wherever they operate.The Community of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) construct for understanding how work-based learning shapes occupational identity formation depends on workers interacting with others in their workplace, and this has been

useful in exploring how learning happens in journalism (Stoker, 2023). However, shifts in understanding what journalism is and where it is practiced requires a reconceptualization of this construct to understand how to reach potential learners in a way which is meaningful to them. Using the UK regulator Impress and its project to develop a training programme in ethical journalism as a case study, this paper considers the challenges of meeting the learning needs of diverse stakeholders, and how we might reconceptualise the Communities of Practice construct to take account of new occupational identities as they develop their understanding of ethical working. Dr Ruth Stoker and Dr Beth Parkes (University of Huddersfield) are supervisor and associate on a KTP project with Impress to develop ethics training programmes for those working in British media news industries.

[223] Jill Daniels: Place, Identity and the Imagined Witness.

Abstract. In this presentation I discuss how place may play a powerful role in the cinematic mediation of history and contested identity to bring the past into the present in my autobiographical epistolary documentary essay film, Resisters (2021), located in Berlin, a city full of memorials to a traumatic history. I chose the essay film form because of its fundamentally enquiring nature; as a genre it can never become stable. I represented myself as a flaneuse, whose voiced aim is to defy the warnings of her Jewish mother never to visit Germany, in order to address as witness, the ghosts of resisters to a fascist past - a ghostly haunting where 'the ghost presents itself as a sign to the thinker that there is a chance in the fight for the oppressed past' (Gordon). I mediated place, not as in stasis, but as an object of contested identity. Vignettes edited throughout the film, depict a house, or a street where a subject once lived – which, my voice-over observes may no longer exist at the point of being filmed – evoking the past through slow motion aimed to enable the spectator to imagine a subject living in a place as it existed in the past. My performative voice, over extensive images of place enables the film to re-join memory and history to the present through the creative act of the imagination where the looking is in the story the spectator imagines to fill in what has been omitted.

[224] Sana Bilgrami: Diasporic Identity and Scottish Land/Cityscapes in Documentary Film.

Abstract. In this paper, through the lens of my documentary film practice spanning the last 25 years, I will use Henri Lefebvre's concept of 'representational spaces' in The Production of Space (2017) to examine how geographical sites in Scotland can be cinematically transformed into significant places through which diasporic identities can be evoked, inscribed or reconfigured.Wild and urban Scottish

landscapes traditionally denote 'tartanry and kailyard', or more recently, isolation and claustrophobia, in cinematic explorations of identity (Petrie, 2024), but almost always in a 'white' Scottish context. Framing a visibly Pakistani Muslim woman or black Belizean man against a Hebridean or rural East-coast landscape can create a visual dissonance that provokes questions around 'belonging' and 'Otherness'. In my films, the frequently picturesque land/cityscapes of Scotland become evocative and provocative spaces against and through which aspects of the identities of immigrants can be explored.I propose that this framing of visible difference has a two-fold effect. The first is the creation of a liminal cinematic space that enables a multi-layered exploration of the histories and experiences of colonial/post-colonial migration, dislocation and relocation which inform migrant identities. The second is an activation of the representational 'potentiality' (i.e., Aristotle's dunamis apropos energeia in Metaphysics) of the land/cityscapes as places that hold potential to signify diverse histories, inclusive identities and difference. The latter effect offers rich possibilities of inspiring empathic readings, and I suggest that 'empathy' is crucial in countering the historical impulse to stereotype immigrants in Scottish media (Macdonald, 2011) and screens (Bilgrami, 2024).

[226] Omega Douglas: Decolonial Journalistic Field Theory: A toolkit for unpacking colonial and decolonial practices in journalism.

Abstract. Western bias persists in global journalistic practice and in journalism studies that analyses that practice "US scholarship still reigns supreme […] directing the field in theoretical, epistemological, and methodological terms" (Hanitzsch, 2019, p. 215). In much journalistic practice globally, including in former European colonies, Western news values have been found to be viewed as universal (Serwornoo, 2019). Western bias also informs ongoing racially stereotypical reporting of Southern regions, like the African continent (Egwu, 2022), in international news. The repetition of these stereotypes inflicts psychological and economic harm (Fanon, 1986 [1952]; Adjignon et al., 2024).To contribute to subverting colonially rooted, racialised dynamics that reproduce ideological constructions of Black people and the African continent in some dominant global journalistic practice, this paper proposes a new interdisciplinary theoretical framework: decolonial journalistic field theory (DJFT). It aims to enable researchers to unpack how and why colonially rooted, racialised discourses occur and recur within journalistic practice; and what to do about them. DJFT is also designed to illuminate how journalists, particularly Black journalists who live in African countries or are part of the diaspora, may, on the one hand, be constrained and/or influenced by the institutional spaces they work within to such an extent that they are complicit in processes of reproducing

problematic ideas of race within representation; thereby extending the tentacles of coloniality. On the other hand, decolonial journalistic field theory is devised to illustrate how journalists draw on their capital and habitus to help reorientate narratives in a decolonial sense.

[228] Michael Wamposzyc and Leo Philp: From pen to pixels. Your handwriting in transition from paper to screen.

Abstract. Surrounded by current discussion about impact of digital uniformity of AI on our medial modes of communication, we want to propose a workshop aiming at exploring personal identity through handwriting and it's use within digital tools.Participants will be encouraged to critically assess the role of handwriting as a medium of personal and cultural expression and produce a functional digital font based on their handwriting. Combining personal creativity and technical skill, the hands-on proposed workshop will examine handwriting as a physical and cultural artifact, emphasising its transformation into a digital medium as a site of individual meaning-making. Through practical exploration the workshop triggers reflection on tensions between analog and digital, permanence and ephemerality, as well as identity and standardisation.Handwriting, in its variability, captures the subjective gestures of the individual. As it transitions to a digitised format, it interrogates how personal expressivity and material presence are mediated by technological processes. By empowering participants to preserve their handwriting in a functional digital medium, the workshop underscores the enduring interplay between personal expression and technological evolution. We will experiment with different tools (pens, brushes, styluses) on various surfaces (paper, fabric, digital tablets) to heighten awareness of the materiality of writing.

[229] Kirsten MacLeod and Lesley Ingram-Sills: How can media and arts practice support and promote greater sports participation for women and girls?

Abstract. This panel will address the gendered inequality of girls' participation in sport and physical exercise and the parallel imbalance in their representation in the media on screen and behind the camera. Women and girls drop out of sport as teenagers, often never to return. They are poorly served by a media that is male participant and audience focused, competitive & performance based. This media reinforces gender stereotypes and physical, social and emotional barriers, such that it becomes near impossible for women and girls to see themselves in sport. This panel brings together sports, arts, media and gender focused academics and practitioners to discuss their approaches to research, methodology, sports

broadcasting and practice. Through combining these often-distinct disciplines they consider alternative approaches to engaging participation, representing women in sport and the breadth of what doing media and arts production can mean in relation to sport. Can these multi-disciplinary approaches support more sustainable and meaningful participation and change? We will ask, "How can media and arts practice and production engage and support young women and girls to participate and enjoy sports and physical activity?"

[232] Elysia Lechelt: Culture in Action: Leveraging the Capabilities Approach for Equitable Futures.

Abstract. This presentation draws on insights from my forthcoming book, "Culture in Action", which investigates strategies to reaffirm the role of arts and culture in promoting equitable and sustainable futures. Focusing on the chapter Catalyst for Change, I will discuss how a capabilities approach offers alternative methods for assessing and reimagining the intricate relationships between arts, culture, collective well-being, and human flourishing essential for creating more just societies. Over the past forty years, the capabilities approach to social justice has emerged as a framework for analysing individual well-being and social structures across various domains. Despite its versatility, it remains underutilised in cultural policy research. To address this gap, the presentation will establish a theoretical foundation by introducing an enhanced concept of the "cultural capabilities approach." This will explore two key contributions to the field: first, how this framework can shift cultural policy focus from narrow social and economic concerns to broader ideals of collective freedoms, opportunities, well-being, and flourishing; and second, using Calgary Arts Development's renewed commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable arts ecosystem as a case study, it will demonstrate how a cultural capabilities approach can act as a vital tool for assessing the effectiveness of current socially engaged policy initiatives in promoting or hindering human flourishing. Through this theoretical and practical application, the presentation aims to foster discussion about the capabilities approach's usefulness in facilitating radical policy reforms and practices that can transform creative and cultural policies from contributors to global crises into proactive agents addressing these challenges.

[233] Tara Thomson: Animal Intelligence and Ecological Belonging in Jerzy Skolimowski's EO.

Abstract. This paper explores the challenge Jerzy Skolimowski's film EO (2022) poses to perceived hierarchies of intelligence and self-reflexiveness by which humans self-identify as distinct from and superior to other species. Informed by

eco-theory by James Bridle (2022) and Timothy Morton (2007), and drawing on Claire Parkinson's work on representations of animal subjectivity (2020), I argue the film constructs belonging and kinship as reciprocal and ecological, foregrounding ecological breakdown as a direct result of human exceptionalism and market-driven exploitation of other species. Inspired by Robert Bresson's classic Au hasard, Balthazar (1966), EO follows its eponymous donkey through a series of encounters as he wanders in search of his human companion, Magda, from whom he has been separated. On his journey, Eo bears witness to many different beings – human, animal, and vegetal – recognising their individual suffering, fears, hopes, dignity, and inherent intelligence. Like his cinematic predecessor Balthazar, who bears witness with his presence and is sacrificed to redeem human suffering, Eo is also a redemptive figure. However, unlike Balthazar, Eo is represented through innovative cinematographic techniques to see, feel, reflect on and respond to suffering and ecological alienation. Eo's sacrifice at the film's end is for all beings who have been cast out of the world to which they belong, and for which they are essential to its flourishing. In tracking this narrative, my paper examines cinematic strategies for representing animal subjectivity, selfhood, and intelligence. EO remarkably does so without excessively anthropomorphising the more-than-human world, inviting its human audience to recognise reciprocal ethical relations with our animal kin as a route to ecological belonging and restoration.

[234] Alistair Scott: Un-hidden from history: examining how the re-discovery of the forgotten feminist photography of Franki Raffles and the creation of archival access unlocked multiple areas for new research .

Abstract. This paper investigates how the re-discovery of a hidden collection of photographs has opened new areas of research and considers the advantages for an archive to hold the entire output from a creative practitioner. Franki Raffles (1955–94) was a feminist social documentary photographer who documented women's working lives in Scotland and internationally. After graduating with a Philosophy degree from University of St Andrews in 1978, she was based in Scotland for the rest of her life. In the 1980s and early 90s Raffles produced a substantial body of work documenting how working life for women in Scotland compared with the lives of women around the world. She travelled widely to the Soviet Union, Zimbabwe, China, Tibet, India, the Philippines, the Caribbean, Israel and Palestine. Raffles's career was suddenly cut short in December 1994 when she died aged thirty-nine. At that time she was establishing her reputation based on an innovative public campaign to raise public awareness of male violence against women entitled 'Zero

Tolerance'. She had created large scale posters with black and white photographs depicting staged tableaux of ordinary women and girls in everyday situations with short texts highlighting the evidence of the prevalence of violence. Her early death meant that her work remained forgotten for over twenty years until 2015 when I gathered the entire collection of her negatives and prints to be deposited with the Special Collections at St Andrews University Library. The creation of this archive has led to significant new research to assess Raffles's legacy and her contribution to feminist photography. Her early death meant she never had the opportunity to look back on her own work. Photo archivist Marc Boulay observed one "advantage of this collection is, and how it differs from other museum collections is that we have the entire negative collection, we have the entire print documentation. So you get to see the process of the photographer". Over the past few years students have investigated different bodies of her work and starting with a small exhibition of her work at the St Andrews Photography Festival 2016 curators have selected work for exhibitions including a major retrospective at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. Raffles' work is no longer hidden or forgotten. Archival research is enabling an assessment of Raffles's work in the wider contexts of debates about documentary photography and critical practice. This paper will trace the ripple effect of how one archive collection can stimulate new strands of research.

[235] Mita Lad: Gujarati-speaking British Indian Hindu Diasporic women's pleasure through the narrative and characters of Prime-time Hindi language serials.

Abstract. In the paper, I explore the dynamics of pleasure Gujarati-speaking British Indian women garner from watching prime-time Hindi language serials. I argue how, the participants of this research, find pleasure in identifying with certain characters, recognising visual aesthetics, and seeing handsome male characters. I further argue that not all pleasure is garnered from positive aspects, such as those described above. Pleasure is also garnered from additional elements, such as experiencing emotional realism that is represented in the serials, seeing villainous characters and narratives becoming nonsensical. The analysis focuses on the conversation with the women during the observations and responses to questions during the interviews about the narratives and the personalities of characters in the serials. For these participants, pleasure is complex and not simply associated with looking at television, but also stems from multisensory (such as listening as well as looking) ways of engaging with the serials. The paper begins to illustrate the fluidity of engagement with the serials as the participants indicate actively watching the serials through their critical understanding of narratives, characters, and visual aesthetics.

[237] Garrabost Jayalakshmi: Who am I?: The Experiences of a Diasporic Filmmaker.

Abstract. Some time ago, I made an auto-ethnographic film exploring notions of identity and belonging. The film, entitled Going Home1, is the account of a three-day train journey in India, asking the question – what does home mean to me? More recently, I embarked on a dance film, using Bharatanatyam and film to address issues of climate change. As I made Dance of the Seasons2, I discovered aspects of 'Indian culture', and my own sense of personal identity that have surprised and disturbed me. In this paper, I shall explore the fundamental questions of identity and belonging through Hall's dual sense of 'cultural identity'3 and through Naficy's discussion of 'an accented cinema'4. Hall evokes Fanon in describing a first sense of cultural identity that emerges as 'a shared history and ancestry' uncovering the 'essence' of belonging to a culture. For Hall, a second sense of cultural identity deal with a 'matter of 'becoming'; as well as 'being'. This is 'constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth' but unlike the first one, it is, Hall argues, 'not an essence but a positioning'. Naficy has written about an accented cinema as the artistic and aesthetic expression of exile and diasporic living. For him, like for Hall and Fanon, it is memory driven, informed by nostalgia and often multi-lingual. I shall apply Hall and Naficy's analyses to my two films to explore a fundamental question – who am I and how have I come to construct myself so?

[238] Giovanna Santaera: The National Science and Media Museum and the Challenges of Glocal Media Museums' Histories.

Abstract. In 1983, the National Museums of Film, Photography and Television was founded in Bradford, inaugurating a new museological era in the media's field. Part of the then network of the National Museum of Science and Industry Museums (Science Museum Group from 2012), since its opening it has been at the centre of a process of adapting and sometimes criticising the relationship between media-related heritage with national, global and local audiences by trying to redefine the connection between them. This paper aims to trace, starting from the author's doctoral research conducted on the restructuring of the museum's designs and activities, the transformations of the institution, renamed as National Media Museum in 2006 and subsequently National Science and Media Museum in 2017. The results derived from the analysis of different documents (such as press articles, policy and promotional materials, and complementary outcomes beyond exhibitions) show the transition from a predominantly object-oriented mediality to a much more socially and culturally oriented one. This type of study, which requires a framework for the transmission of media in theoretical, museological

and historical-institutional perspective, with particular attention to the connection with individuals and communities, can lead to a new awareness of the role for future studies and practices around museums' media histories.

[244] Mark Collington, Carla Abbott, Penelope Allen, Matt Petoe and David Nayagam: Constellations of Aesthetics - Developing Aesthetic Visual Scenes with Retinal Prosthesis Patients.

Abstract. This interdisciplinary paper explores the capacity of individuals with ultra-low vision and retinal prostheses to process aesthetics. In a world saturated by high-stimulus hyperreal imagery, we question whether we've lost sight of the intrinsic value and deeper meaning of images, and how far images can be reduced to their basic elements and still convey profound truths. The research, adjunct to clinical trials, involved participants with an ultra-low resolution electrode array implanted behind one retina, primarily used for object detection, orientation, and mobility. While previous studies focused on these functional aspects, this study delves into the aesthetic experiences of recipients by combining methods from animated documentary, biomedical science, cognitive neuroscience, semiotics, design thinking, and inclusive arts practice. Inspired by Jung's analysis of primordial symbols, our pilot study involved visual scenes composed of simple shapes (circles and rectangles), basic audio cues, haptic aids, and questionnaires, to determine how minimal stimuli can be for evoking an aesthetic experience. Results showed that our audio-visual scenes did provide an aesthetic experience for retinal implant recipients, though not necessarily according to established visual conventions. Instead, our findings support Jung's concept of amplification – the connection between perceiving a semiotic sign and an unconscious symbol – and Ramachandran's idea of bootstrapping a series of "mini-ahas" to create a cognitive reward from interpreting a narrative. These findings have the potential to enhance visual experiences for retinal prosthesis users, impacting clinical practices and the broader field of neuroaesthetics., and offer insights into advancing methods in design thinking and inclusive arts practice.

[247] Kirsty Styles and Elsie Roderiques: Values in the media: How cultural values shape media content - and how media content shapes cultural values.

Abstract. Most in the industry will be familiar with 'news values' (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001; 2017) but even such widely cited authors admit that this idea only provides part of an explanation for why we may write, or see, the headlines we do.Donsbach (2004) examines a number of psychological reasons for news selection

by journalists - namely validation by industry peers and any pre-existing knowledge or attitudes. He argues that in journalism these two are "... more present because journalists… constantly have to make perceptional decisions (truth, relevance, acceptability of facts and issues). They are [also] more relevant because these decisions form the input of much of the perception of reality by citizens. In this combination, our picture of the world outside is mainly the result of journalists' perceptions and group-dynamic processes within the profession" (ibid, p. 151). But where do journalists' attitudes come from?

This paper will argue that both industry peer groups and individual attitudes are shaped by, and shape, our 'cultural values' (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz et al, 2012). Cultural values matter because they influence what we think and do, both individually and collectively, and the more we 'use' certain values, the more pronounced they can become (Holmes et al, 2012). Based on empirical data gathered for a submitted PhD thesis, it will discuss how we might observe such values in media content, what this may tell us about the media industry and what this could mean for society at large. This will be accompanied by a workshop.

[248] Jillian Wallis and Walter Stabb: Ambitious Panic: using filmed performance to explore anxiety and ambition, 35 mins screening plus Q and A.

Abstract. Ambitious Panic is an interdisciplinary film project developed collaboratively by researchers in Drama, Film and Health Sciences. In an age of anxiety awareness, we are all encouraged to take care of our mental health and wellbeing. What can a specific performance and film-making process offer the individual in this goal and how might it shape and reevaluate our sense of self and identity? How can a 'Community of Practice' emerge from the testing of a new creative methodology shared on mobile devices? And how does editing, sharing and reflecting on our own mediated performance and those of others help to build collective resilience? The Ambitious Panic screening will show a 22 mins documentary of our practice research journey and a selection of the final short films and reels made by the participants so far. In the AP process, participants follow a set of guided, step by step prompts and instructions that have been created by researcher and performance director Jillian Wallis. They use movement, gesture and storytelling to create material based on their experiences of humiliation and ambition. This is then filmed and edited together. In the pilot, the editing process was carried out by researcher and film editor Walter Stabb. In the current iteration, participants are Gen Z creatives who will edit the films themselves. As young adults who are highly aware of self-representation and body judgments, the current group

of participants are well placed to contribute to this ongoing project, both in the practical workshops and in choosing how to represent themselves digitally.

[249] Kirsty Styles and Elsie Roderiques: Workshop (60 minutes): Values in the media: Understanding our cultural values and exploring how these may appear in our work.

Abstract. This workshop will be facilitated by Common Cause Foundation, which is leading a project called Values in the Media with the support of a cross-media advisory board, and is now in its third year. The session is designed to get participants to explore their own values and consider how these may present in the work they do. Participants will:Reflect on their own values using Schwartz's (1992) 'values map'; See that most people (likely) prioritise 'intrinsic' or 'self-transcendent' values; Explore where values may be elevated within media organisations; Reflect on whether and how they may be able to elevate different values in their work; This workshop has been submitted alongside a complementary research presentation.

[250] Lynda Clark: The Sound of My (?) Voice: Identity and AI Vocal Synthesis.

Abstract. Astrophysicist Stephen Hawking was frequently described as having "one of the most distinctive, and famous, voices in the world" (McNamara, 2011). However, as Jason David Myers observes (2016), defining what we mean when we say 'Hawking's voice' is somewhat complicated by its electronic and synthesised characteristics. Hawking was English, from Oxford, and his synthesized voice was American, (or a roboticized approximation thereof). In later life he could have 'upgrade' to a voice which more closely matched his actual dialect and age, but chose not to because of his strong identification with this mechanised vocal style. Comedian Lee Ridley auditioned voice actors and selected Dan Pye to use as a basis to synthesise a voice using AI vocal cloning technology. His aim was to create the particular Geordie accent he would have had if he had ever been able to speak. Ridley said of his original synthesised voice 'there was nothing wrong with my other voice, except from the fact that it sounded very posh' (Ridley, 2021).

Drawing on my own experience as a creative and the sufferer of a vocal disorder, I will consider the two possible extremes of Hawkings' and Ridley's preferences – a synthesised voice which bears no relation to any human voice, and one with absolutely fidelity to a human utterances; the ways in which those with vocal disorders might identify with and make use of such voices; and how current AI synthesis might aid the development of greater vocal choice for those with vocal impairments.

[252] Shirley Xue Yang: "The Chinese Daughter with a Westernized Life": Navigating Queer Invisibility and Feminist Resistance Online.

Abstract. This paper examines how Chinese queer women's online practices intersect with queer representation and feminist resistance in digital spaces. In March 2023, the state media People's Daily referred to the queer daughter from the Oscar-winning film Everything Everywhere All at Once (2022) as a "daughter with a Westernized life," marking a peak moment of censorship and state-driven de-Westernization narratives. In response, Chinese female netizens have developed coded language as a necessary survival tool to engage with queer and feminist discourses online. This paper argues that the strategic use of coded language and symbolic discourse has created a semi-protected digital space where queer fandom and feminist communities can emerge and grow. Through these strategies, online expressions of queerness and feminist activism evade censorship while fostering spectacular yet subversive modes of resistance.Using digital ethnography and discursive analysis of selected Weibo hashtags and Douban forums focused on female queerness and feminist discourse, this study explores how Chinese queer women construct a self-sustaining feminist community. This digital network not only fosters a sense of belonging for queer and transnational feminist individuals under state surveillance and heterosexual hegemony but also serves as a space for voice-making and resistance. While digital platforms provide moments of belonging and representation, they simultaneously reinforce a precarious politics of visibility, where queer and feminist voices remain vulnerable to censorship and erasure. Ultimately, this paper contributes to the broader discourse on queer digital activism, online feminist resistance, and political communication in restrictive media environments.

[253] Brandon Walker: Flamenco, cultural identity and perception.

Abstract. I am in the middle of a composition PhD, focussing on the relationship between flamenco culture and classical guitar. In seeking to understand my creative relationship to the flamenco tradition, I have been digging into its history, and on field trips I immerse myself in performances whilst allowing time to sketch and compose new material in between times. I have just returned from my second field trip, and have some fresh developments in my understanding.I would like to share one of my compositions, accompanied by a talk on the cultural identity of flamenco and complexities of 'defining' flamenco in the context of research.

[254] Jernej Kaluža: Peripheral Identities and Local Creators at Risk? Media Regulation and the Future of Small Linguistic Communities.

Abstract. In an era of globalized media and digital platforms, small and peripheral identities face increasing challenges in maintaining their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. Media policy plays a crucial role in shaping and preserving these identities, yet regulatory efforts are often met with political polarization, legal complexity, and conflicting stakeholder interests. Slovenia, as a small state on the European periphery, provides a compelling case study of these tensions. This paper examines the ongoing debate surrounding Slovenia's proposed new media law (ZMed-1) and its intersection with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA). Specifically, it explores whether and how media policy should actively protect local content creators in an increasingly homogenized media landscape.

This research is based on qualitative analysis of two sources of empirical data: (1) 56 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in media regulation and (2) 113 written responses submitted during the public consultation process on the proposed media law. The study assesses how the logic of protectionism interacts with, contradicts, or aligns with the principles of media (and market) freedom, public interest, and media pluralism. It focuses on three specific cases of protectionist measures for local media and content creators: (1) the protection of Slovenian music authors, (2) the promotion of Slovenian audio production, and (3) the safeguarding of Slovenian journalists and local news media. By situating Slovenia's case within broader European media governance trends, this research contributes to discussions on the role of media regulation in peripheral countries in the face of digital disruption and economic pressures.

[255] Chiara Minestrelli: Indigenous Digital Futures: Disrupting Algorithmic Power in the AI Era.

Abstract. Increased engagement with digitally mediated environments has led to the creation of spaces with real socio and political impact as communities gather around these spaces and interact with their content and infrastructures in meaningful and contextual ways (see Duarte, 2014; Lewis et al., 2018; McMahon et al., 2014; Ormond-Parker et al. 2013; Wallis and Ross, 2021). These virtual/digital spaces can generate real loci for place-making that can promote forms of belonging and contestation, and yet they also pose numerous risks, especially for underrepresented and stigmatised groups. More recently, the advent of AI has further expanded the horizons of creative expression through generative AI, promising a more egalitarian approach while introducing new challenges. For instance, an Indigenous Protocol and Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) working group was formed

to address critical issues connected to Indigenous peoples' relationship with AI, including questions of data, sovereignty and design, just to name a few. Within this scenario, Australian Indigenous projects such as 'Walking Between the Worlds' and 'IndigeNFT', alongside the Māori-led 'Kiwa Digital Group', exemplify Indigenous peoples' deep connection and engagement with technology in the Pacific region. Looking at algorithmic forms of resistance enacted by Indigenous activists through the above-mentioned case studies, this paper reflects on the ways in which digital strategies are mobilised by Indigenous creatives and entrepreneurs in navigating dominant technological and data paradigms (Carlson and Berglund, 2021; Mejias and Couldry, 2024) as a mode of 'survivance' (Vizenor, 1999), resilience, belonging and community strengthening, towards a 'self-determined' technological future.

[256] Walter Stabb; Hadi Bastani and Natasha Bird: Exploring situated cultural heritage and belonging through child-centred sound/image and immersive storytelling.

Abstract. This presentation explores Thamesmead Creative Playscapes - a series of participatory creative practice as research projects using experimental filmmaking methods to develop and exchange new insights into Thamesmead, London and its formation as a site of cultural heritage. Co-created with The Hundred Club, a local experimental arts space that uses arts and play for children and their families to explore social justice issues, participants and researchers use multimodal approaches to creative practice to explore the built environment and spatiomaterial relations in a series of pilot workshops focusing on play, what makes a playspace and the politics of place. The multisensory approach includes walking and deep listening, filmmaking and field recording, performance and spatialized composition and visual editing with immersive sound and image technologies. Creative workshops that successfully centre children as creative producers invite play, spontaneity and experimental and exploratory enquiry. This project opens the potential for new insights into the value of audiovisual, immersive and filmmaking practices as participatory methods of critical enquiry. Conceptual frameworks including bricolage, remix, acoustemology, creative and participatory research with qualitative feedback gathered informs the reflection and analysis. Harnessing creative methods to explore questions of social justice, sustainability, individual and collaborative creative self-expression, inter-generational community building and place-making withparticipants often underrepresented in discourse on their local natural and built environment, a site of 20th century architectural cultural heritage, invites new understanding. It challenges the boundaries of who creates cultural heritage narratives and how they are shaped, fostering a dynamic process

that can potentially redraw the cultural map in a more inclusive and diversified manner while demonstrating the potency of creative media as both investigative means and social tactic in inviting discourse on the potential futures of our shared urban spaces. https://hundredclubsoundmap.hotglue.me/

[257] Matthew Floyd: Barriers and belonging in British television: Discourses on diversity at the Edinburgh International Television Festival.

Abstract. This paper considers changing discourses on who speaks for British television, who participates in the industry and the barriers to doing so, as presented at the Edinburgh International Television (EITF, 1976 – present). Throughout the history of the EITF, questions of barriers to and belonging in the British television industry range from implicit to what is made explicit. These considerations are epitomized in the festival's headline-making keynote MacTaggart Lecture, an important platform for policy announcements and agenda-setting speeches by leading broadcasting figures. Who is selected to give the speech at that time and why? What issues do they address, and what is the function of the lecture in a constantly shifting broadcasting landscape? Identity, diversity and inclusion manifest across the EITF's near-fifty-year history, which in the early years constituted discursive conflicts around form and medium, before the multiplication of channels and technologies opened British television to wider questions of representation and responsibility. In the twenty-first century, MacTaggart Lectures have dealt directly with barriers to the industry and identity politics, most recently with major industry figures including David Olusoga, Jack Thorne and Dorothy Byrne addressing experiences of racism, ableism and sexism in broadcasting. This paper considers from a historical perspective the key MacTaggart Lectures that directly explore who belongs in British television, the purpose it serves in identity making, and the barriers it both builds and breaks down across career levels.

[259] Jacob Danson Faraday: Labour, Mobility, and Value on Large-Scale Music Tours.

Abstract. Touring is an essential component of many large-scale performance-oriented productions, such as concerts and theatre. Large-scale tours can be important cultural and economic events, selling thousands of tickets in each city, and increasing the influence of associated artists and producers. For these productions, establishing and cultivating the kind of mobility that allows for touring can align with identity and different forms of value. Crucially, a touring show's mobility is entirely dependent on an interplay between movement and stability—between

what moves and what doesn't—and is predicated on the use of local, often immobile resources at each stop. In this paper, I address this interplay in a two-pronged discussion of mobility. First, touring is a matter of pragmatic materiality. Moving a show from city to city and country to country requires careful planning and a steady supply of equipment and labour. Second, a romanticised notion mobility—an unfettered, adventurous freedom to travel—is a central feature of mediated representations of touring and tour promotional materials. I argue that these two notions of mobility—romantic and practical—are fundamental to how large-scale productions are conceived and built, and that tension can emerge on tour when the apparently unencumbered ephemerality of show business intersects with the ponderous, earth-bound business of moving a show. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted on a Cirque du Soleil arena tour, I show how technical workers, and their labour, are valued or devalued according to their place on a hierarchy of mobility.

[260] Avril Gray and Christoph Bläsi: "Young Professionals in Publishing – Expectations, Challenges, Chances". An international collaboration between two universities and Springer Nature to publish the first AI-generated book on the publishing industry.

Abstract. Among the many productive, and provocative, ways in which humans can "creatively collaborate" with large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, writing text is perhaps the most familiar. For publishing, LLMs present a double-edged sword of threat and promise which has pierced the very foundations upon which the industry rests. On the one hand, global conglomerates are instigating copyright lawsuits and expressing considerable concerns about the unauthorised mass scraping of their copyrighted works to train AI models, while on the other, multinational publishing companies not only embrace GenAI's potential to deepen relationships with their readers, but are actually harnessing the technology to create their own commercially lucrative content. To mark the first anniversary of the "birth" of ChatGPT, and to contribute to the evolving processes and procedures of companies such as Springer Nature, who embrace LLMs in their content creation as part of their commitment to "accelerating solutions to address the world's urgent challenges", we launched a new initiative and partnered with Johannes Gutenberg University and Springer Nature to publish the first book on publishing using ChatGPT. Our aims were to (1) explore what is currently possible using the most advanced tools, (2) feed that knowledge into the subsequent publishing value chain and examine what such a book means for each step along the publishing workflow, and (3) test and establish a workflow system for the industry at large. As part of

our practice-based research, we reflected on the publication process as it unfolded, documenting the entire ground-breaking process from ideation to testing, creation and evaluation; we explored the specific opportunities and challenges of using LLMs for the authoring of academic / non-fiction books; and examined the extent to which existing knowledge and competences (in the publishing industry and within publishing studies) about "bookmaking" can or should be productively incorporated into such an innovative process. The result was not only a tangible book, but a new creative process for similar AI-generated books – a 7-step workflow template for the publishing industry. This book will be published in 2025 and is not only a ground-breaking endeavour, the project as a whole is a significant step into the future of academic publishing, providing insights into a process where technology and human oversight, experience and expertise can be mixed and matched to produce high-quality, commercially valuable, intellectual property.

[262] Sharon Hooper: Creative Practice as Community Building: Feminist Social Activism and Resistance.

Abstract. Leeds Animation Workshop (LAW) made Who Needs Nurseries? We Do! (1978) to express one of the demands of the Women's Liberation Movement, the need for childcare provision. A grassroots, feminist collective since the Seventies, LAW became a franchised workshop in 1982 and are still active today. Based in Harehills, Leeds, an area once described as 'down at heel' (The Telegraph 31/07/1986), archival artefacts evidence collaborative creative practice as a form of care and community resistance to patriarchal neo-liberalism.This paper presents a work-in-progress, participatory practice-based research project from the position of gendered and minority exclusion from linear, historical time (Kristeva, 1982). Drawing on participants experiences of need and opportunity in the community around themes of work and wellbeing, it explores ways in which familiar, everyday experiences can be a form of repetition and resistance (Watts, 1998; Baraitser 2017). These ideas intersect with gendered notions work-life balance (Holdsworth, 2020) to think about creative practice as an interruption that can build community identity and personal belonging.The practise combines psychogeography and reflective autoethnography methods with digital media: film, photography, audio recordings and interviews, writing, drawing and stop-frame animation. It builds on previous work with the community group over several years, and it is intended that it will culminate in a collaborative audio-visual piece representing community, care, repetition and time spent together.

[263] Regina Mosch: Opaque Bodies, Opaque Methods: Queerness, Trauma and Video Art.

Abstract. The co-creative video art piece 'me in my gut' explores microaggressions against queer bodies through the concept of opacity. With its aesthetic, but also through what I have termed an ethico-phenomenological creative process, I examine how queer bodies are distorted by the opaque presence of microaggressions, but also how an opaque being-in-the-world, both inside and outside of the film, can act as a form of defiance.In this project, I use creative practice to articulate and process bodily knowledge shaped by trauma - and share it with the viewer. As queer bodies unhinge norms and normative spaces (Ahmed, 2006; Lindner, 2018), 'me in my gut' unhinges normative viewing habits. The opacity in the film and photographies never reaches a full level, the image always stays just out of reach. The viewer has to strain their eyes to see. And so, while drawing the viewer close, creative practice becomes a space to further affirm queer bodies as slippery, complex and irreducible. This paper is proposed as a dialogue between research participant/co-creator Keegan Siebken and myself as artist-researcher. Since with this project I critique existing hierarchies in how we do research, I would like to carry this over to the format of the presentation. Rather than presenting and speaking about the project by myself, I would like to give equal space to Keegan. This can be a 30-minute stand-alone event with an exhibition of the artworks, or be part of a panel.Link to practice: https://www.regimosch.com/me-in-my-gut

[264] Jayne Stynes, Rebecca Wallace and Ashley Stein: Barriers in Music: Change-making through pedagogical practices, institutional accountability and creative expression.

Panel Presentation. Music making is often a place where a sense of identity and belonging can be fostered, allowing individuals and groups to develop personal, professional and creative esteem (Scott and Scott, 2017). What happens when barriers based on class, disability, gender, sexuality or race prevent certain groups from thriving in these spaces? This panel engages with some of the existing impediments to music making and to professional careers in the music industries by presenting work that considers the possibilities of activism and change-making in community based, creative and professional music contexts. Panellists draw from their respective work as researchers alongside their experiences as creative and industry practitioners. From developing the creative potential of a hip-hop pedagogical approach, exploring the value of social justice organisations in the music industries, and devising electronic music practices that destabillise gender binaries, this panel seeks to critically engage with strategies and pathways where

empowerment, connectivity and solidarity in music could be (and are being) made possible.

1) Rebecca Wallace:'Rupture, Ritual, Repair'- Hip-hop pedagogy as positive intervention for women in addiction recovery.

Abstract. Hip-Hop's global impact extends beyond sound and aesthetic, influencing the public mindset. "Hip hop may have begun as the result of young people with limited resources figuring out how to find a power source … but the same sensibilities have led to building the power of political parties." (Siedel, 2022, p.15). The ripple effect of hip-hop, an inherently African American creation, is evident in working-class Scotland. "It's a housing scheme, if you don't know the place that's where they knock down schools tae build motorways" (McGarvey, 2010). Hip-hop emerges in communities with a lack of proximity to power, poverty, and exclusion from influence. However, the hip-hop aesthetic supports effective rupture, allowing for innovative learning (Seidel, 2022). In my practice, I have found an authentic expression of hip-hop within communities experiencing deprivation where rap music is one of the most accessible modes of creative expression. I will present examples of hip-hop created with women in recovery, to demonstrate how the rituals of the genre foster self-confidence, emotional literacy and repair through practice.

2) Jayne Stynes: 'It's a positive project- rather than trying to slag anyone off or call anyone out': A 'Gentle Accountability' Approach to Gendered Inequalities in the Music Industries.

Abstract. While the mid-2010's saw an increase in the number of organisations set up to support women and gender expansive people in the music industries, the findings of the UK Parliament's inquiry into Misogyny in Music (2024) demonstrate that amongst other forms of discrimination, gendered inequalities such as sexual harassment and the gender pay gap continue to persist. Drawing from research exploring how social justice organisations in music navigate the challenge of confronting gendered inequalities, this paper looks specifically at an approach I describe as 'gentle accountability'. Through the use of strategies including target-setting and pledge-making, this paper explores how gender equality organisations in music veer towards collaborative, positive, non-confrontational approaches to industry change. Through a critique of 'gentle accountability' I argue that gender equality organisations engage with powerful music industries stakeholders, urging them to make adjustments or commitments. In doing so, however, these organisations may limit or compromise their own core objectives.

3) Ashley Stein: Resisting definition: Subverting gender narratives in popular music.

Abstract. Across European history, the female voice has been synonymised with

connotations of noise; 'disorder, chaos, complexity and excess' (Thompson, 2016, p.4). This has resulted in 'feminised' genres being 'trivialised and dismissed as sonically monotonous, dull, banal and meaningless' (Thompson, 2016, p.5). In this vein, mainstream pop has often been received by critics as vapid, and analysed in opposition to rock music, which is historically characterised as a masculine genre based on authenticity and truth telling. This opposition to pop music is an opposition to the feminine voice, to our truth. How do we, as women and gender expansive artists, move past internal misogyny and patriarchal musicological discourse to reclaim pop music for ourselves? It starts with voice. By using vocal manipulation software like Auto-Tune alongside singing techniques, artists working in the queer dominated genre of hyperpop are shaping their voices with the aim of subverting gender ideals and redefining vocal authenticity. Through autoethnographic data I will show how I have used hyperpop vocal and production techniques to explore my own gender fluidity as a practice led researcher.

[265] Shreepali Patel: Preserving and Re-framing Identity and Belonging: surfacing encoded memory in inherited media archives and objects.

Abstract. This paper explores encoded memory within inherited objects of the twice migrant Indian diaspora through the development of Threads a practice-led visual case study. Underpinning this case study is the re-presentation of personal diasporic narrative that questions and reformulates the past, to lay the foundations for re-evaluating identity and belonging in the present. Driven by a need to coax memories from loss and posit an alternative interpretation to Indian diasporic histories and memories which cannot be expressed in Eurocentric terms, Threads explores and seeks to discover what Paul Gilroy (1988) described as the 'memory stored in safekeeping until a means of translation can be found.' As such, the process of development considers media archaeology, application of creative technologies, inherited media archives and transnational objects (textiles).

[266] Laura Mora: Transnational mediated solidarity with Palestine based on situated interpretation.

Abstract. As the world watches the ongoing destruction of Gaza unfold in real-time, the role of social media in transforming conflict dynamics merits closer consideration. Instead of seeing liking, sharing and commenting on activist social media posts as powerless acts (i.e. "clicktivism", see Dennis 2019), I regard those instances in which it should be seen as a form of highly relevant activist engagement. Through a visual media analysis and interviews, this research project explores

how the aesthetic, rhetorical and affective qualities of pro-Palestine content on Instagram garners "mediated solidarity" (Nikunen 2019; Couldry 2012) among an online "affective public" (Papacharissi 2015), with the power to gain high "visibility across the media ecology and shift discourses" (Poole et al. 2023).
In this "participatory warfare" (Chernobrov 2022; see also Davidjants and Tiidenberg 2022), the pro-Palestinian affective public necessarily consists of transnational, (everyday) social media users of various backgrounds who "operate across difference" (gender, race, religion, language) to express solidarity and respond to humanitarian crisis (Poole et al. 2023: 2). In this presentation, I demonstrate that certain groups of users interpret and re-narrate Palestinian narratives according to their own identity position. For instance, Native Americans, the Irish (in ROI and NI), doctors, mothers and Muslims all have specific identities and socio-historical positions that inform their solidarity—a phenomenon I call "situated interpretation" (following the scholarship of Chernobrov 2014 and Harding 2012). Other interesting findings are the use of AI to generate utopian and dystopian images, the circulation of activist toolboxes and media literacy resources, and the creation of "feeling rules".

[267] Barbara Plotz: Humour and comedy in the 2025 anti-Trump movement on TikTok.

Abstract. Since Donald Trump was inaugurated as US president for the second time in January 2025, he and his administration have made a number of far-reaching economic and political decisions, both in terms of domestic as well as foreign matters, that have caused protests, nationally and abroad. One of the sites of anti-Trump-protest has been TikTok, and in my paper I will discuss the use of humour and comedy within that protest movement.Whereas TikTok originally was known as the social media app for lip-synching and funny dances, this is not the first time it has been used for political expression, protest and/or propaganda. Previous instances included the run-up to the 2020 US presidential election (Sanchez-Querubin et al., 2023), political parties increasingly relying on TikTok for political communication (Gerbaudo and Moreno, 2023) or also the suspected interference of Russia in the Romanian presidential elections 2024 via 25,000 TikTok accounts. My paper will focus on how comedy has been employed on TikTok to express dissent against the second Trump presidency. Comedy and humour have a long tradition within political activism and resistance (Sorensen, 2016; Borum Chattoo and Feldman, 2020), and I will analyse how TikTok's platform vernaculars, such as mimesis (Zulli and Zulli, 2023) or "embodied responses" (Jung, 2023), have been utilized in a comedic manner by the anti-Trump movement.

[268] Max Kandhola: The Embodiment of The Aging Make Body.

Abstract. The art practice explores the vulnerability of the aging male body, themes of self-grotesqueness, aesthetics, physical decline, and mortality. Central to this discourse is the tension between chronological aging and subjective experience, alongside the sociocultural dimensions of ageism. Through a collaborative and photographic directorial approach with his son, Kandhola engages with these themes by positioning himself as both subject and artist, utilizing his own body as a performative medium. His collaboration with jewellery designer Sara Preisler extends this exploration through sculptural objects, offering a reflective commentary on mental health. These sculptures, inspired by Baoding balls, invite multisensory interaction and contemplation. Constructed from silver folio and repurposed medicine packaging accumulated over fifteen years, they embody the crucial role of medication in sustaining physical and psychological well-being. The integration of clay and fragmented tablets transforms these objects into corporeal extensions of the body, evoking both its vulnerabilities and resilience. The work is positioned in philosophical notions of 'care of the self' and 'know thyself,' (Foucault) emphasizing self-awareness and spiritual practice as essential to holistic well-being. This is further reflected in his father's adherence to Sikh traditions, particularly the meditative ritual of 'amrit vela,' where bathing was an act of both physical and spiritual purification. This ritual held profound significance in his spiritual practice. There is a poetic ritual that spiritually cleanses the body, Tagore's poem Stream of Life, is his embodiment of his transformation in life, 'I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life'.

[269] Liza Tsaliki, Despina Chronaki and Olga Derzioti: Selfie Pedagogies: Audience Reception of Sexual/Sensual Selfies.

Abstract. Just like comics, video games, and electronic games before them, selfie culture is usually frowned upon—and when associated with teenagers, becomes a source of various "discourses of anxiety" (Tsaliki & Chronaki 2020; Hasinoff 2015). However, rather than adopting the popular view that sees selfies as a pathology, we draw inspiration from the pedagogical approaches of the Selfie Researchers Network and examine selfies as cultural objects and expressions. More specifically, we view selfies as erotic objects and expressions of sexual identity.From this perspective, selfies are considered "cultural objects deeply embedded in larger narratives about celebrity, commodification, self-presentation, surveillance, identity, and normative practices" (Albury et al. 2017: 175), while sexual selfies are viewed as "intimate edgework" (Hart 2016).By considering selfies as a tool for constructing and (re) presenting sexual identity and producing sexual subjectivity, we are particularly

interested in how, within a culture that demands eroticism from women while condemning their sexuality, individuals make decisions about the (re)presentation of sexual identity. Furthermore, given the notion that "real men don't take selfies," we question how men engage with sexual selfies. What are the politics of sexual/sensual selfies, given that they unfold within discourses of both empowerment (e.g., sexual self-determination, sexual identity, sexual expression) and disempowerment (e.g., privacy violations, public humiliation, the non-consensual sharing of private images in the context of "revenge porn")? In this paper, we will share findings from research conducted over the past four years in the Porn Studies Seminar that is being held annually at the Department of Communication and Media studies at NKUA. Specifically, we will present audience research on "public perceptions of sexual/sensual selfies," focusing on issues such as: • self-expression and self-exposure • the significance of NSFW content for personal pleasure, sexuality, and sociality • reactions when the sexual identity presented does not conform to normative standards of body aesthetics and/or sexuality • what happens to selfies when they are publicly shared (social media popularity, audience expectations, the right to privacy, consent, and trust) • ethical regulation and self-regulation in the production of sexual selfies (particularly concerning body aesthetics)• the gendered dimension of public shaming

[270] Neil Percival: A career in TV: love affair, or abusive relationship?

Abstract. This paper aims to provide a new perspective on the immense structural challenges of working life in the UK TV sector, and the wider societal implications of the growing crisis faced by many freelance workers in the last two years.Drawing on new interviews and survey data acquired in 2024, this paper explores the experience of a screen career in terms of a romance: a love affair with one's working life and aspirations that is initially exhilarating, self-sacrificing and passionate, and encourages a growing self-identity inextricably linked with the beloved career. But this carries a corresponding risk of disillusionment, personal loss and ultimately bereavement if the the relationship proves unsustainable. Several interviewees refer to their career not in terms of love, but as an abusive relationship: amazing and addictive when it is working, but toxic and destructive when it isn't.

The paper teases out the 'love what you do' trope, the emphasis on 'passion' in entry level aspirations, and the sense throughout of a love affair with a career that asks for much sacrifice, and stakes a strong claim to an individual's self-identity, but pre-conditions entry level workers to the symbolic violence of unpaid work and self-exploitation; the aspirational passion of entry level may soon give way to a passion of a different sort, in its more Latinate sense of suffering. While some

can eventually move on positively to other careers, the fundamental linking of work and self-identity is clearly articulated – in a way that can make career exit a profoundly traumatic separation.

[271] Haftor Medboe: Hvor En Var Baen – Places of Childhood.

Abstract. This paper presents a multi-component research project that explores artistic settings of the work of Danish poet, Martin N Hansen (1893 – 1976). What started as an exercise in musical reinterpretation through the recording of the album Hvor En Var Baen (Medbøe/Halle/Malling, Copperfly Records, 2019) evolved into the making of a short film (Places of Childhood, 2019) shot on location in the south of Denmark. The meanings and processes behind these outputs subsequently formed the basis for a recently published book chapter for Routledge edited by Antonia Lima that brings together perspectives on music and literature from diverse academic authors.At the heart of the overarching cross-media research is playing with ideas of memory and nostalgia through intertextual approaches. Hansen's poetry describes life on the small Danish island of Als on the Baltic coast. Although written during the 20th Century, his characterisation of local people and places hark back to the pre-industrial era – an unspoiled, bucolic idyll. His verse was originally set to music by a number of local composers which, together with collaborating musicians, we reimagined in a contemporary Nordic jazz style. In doing so we chose to attempt a nostalgic approach in terms of minimal use of technological artifice to represent the aims of the original material. The film that was subsequently made around the album tracks includes the voices of older-generation islanders reading aloud Hansen's original poems in the dialect of the region. Again a conscious decision was taken around the age of participants in order to highlight the language as it was spoken in earlier times – as is common to dialects of language, they change with the times and, indeed, many are at risk of disappearing entirely. The paper will present excerpts from the album and film and the dominant themes of discussion emerging from the related book chapter. Through an intertextual approach, my presentation will play with ideas of nostalgia, memory construction and meaning making through sound, picture and spoken/written language. Both local geography, culture and the poems of Hansen played an integral part in my own childhood and consequently a parallel strand of personal identity and memory making is at play throughout.

[272] Alison Preston: Mitigating Misinformation: understanding people's habits and attitudes.

Abstract. Significant minorities of the UK population are turning away from

mainstream news narratives and seeking a sense of belonging in other online spaces, as our presentation will illustrate and address. Related to this, the potential for misinformation is on the rise, fuelled by a range of technical and societal developments. There are of course a range of ways that misinformation can be characterised, which makes it important to understand the wider context of people's attitudes and knowledge. This presentation will outline the ways that UK adults think and feel about misinformation, aka "false or misleading" information: where they see it, why they think it's false or misleading, and what they do and feel as a consequence. It will major on recent qualitative research by Ofcom, comprising depth interviews and workshops with people from a range of backgrounds, including potentially susceptible groups. The research co-creates with these participants ideas on how best to mitigate misinformation, working "with the grain" of existing identities and how these can be acknowledged and heard. The presentation will also include recent survey research which explored people's understanding and relationship with news information, for example that over four in ten are sceptical of conventional news production processes and only one-third agree that journalists follow codes of practice.

This research forms part of Ofcom's media literacy activity, as set out in our 3-year Strategy published in October 2024.

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