

Invited Speakers and Abstracts



Erica Carter (Kings College London)

Unhousing Restitution (UNREST): African audiovisual heritage between displacement and return

This paper presents initial perspectives on (re)locating African audiovisual archives from the UK Arts and Humanities Council-funded collaborative research project Unhousing Restitution (UNREST).

UNREST builds on prior work by the research team and ten cultural partners in Sudan, Egypt, Ghana, Germany and the UK to develop Africa-led methods and approaches to audio-visual heritage restitution. Its framing term, ‘unhousing’, derives from Sudanese artist-filmmaker Hussein Shariffe.

Writing in exile from Islamist dictatorship, Shariffe described the ‘unhoused energies’ released by states of exile. UNREST harnesses those energies by recasting restitution as a collaborative endeavour led by archivists and artists on the African continent.

Connecting the project’s prior initiatives is a comparative focus on displaced archives. One is a collection of ca. 50 digitised films from Ghana, salvaged by Ghanaian film workers from a London bonded warehouse, and part of the only known remaining collection of films produced by the Ghana Film Industry Corporation during the early years of independence under Kwame Nkrumah.

The second collection — and the focus of this paper — is a cache of films, documents and photographs from the oeuvre of Hussein Shariffe, held in the archive of the Arsenal Institute, Berlin, and the London-based Hussein. Shariffe Foundation. Since 2021, I have collaborated with the daughter of Hussein Shariffe, Eiman Hussein, and with colleagues from the Sudan Film Factory, Cinatheque Cairo, Arsenal Institut Berlin, the BFI and Hussein Shariffe Foundation to preserve, reactivate and recirculate this migratory collection. This paper will present perspectives from that work, centring on UNREST’s key framing category, ‘restitution’, and on the role of curatorship, independent archivism and artistic research in developing new frameworks for conceptualizations of restitutionary practice.

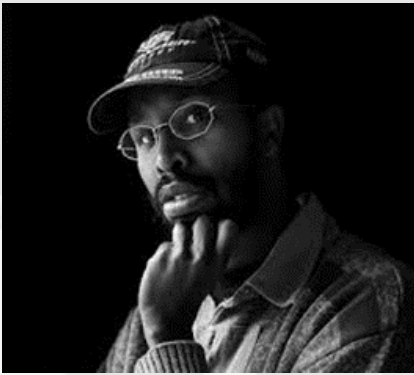
Erica Carter is Professor of German and Film at King’s College London, Principal Investigator for UNREST, and a Fellow of the British Academy. Her publications include the co-authored *Mapping the Sensible: Distribution, Inscription, Cinematic Thinking* (2022), *Béla Balázs: Early Film Theory* (2010), *Dietrich’s Ghosts. The Sublime and the Beautiful in Third Reich Film* (2007) and the *BFI German Cinema Book* (2nd ed. 2021). Her current research centres on colonial whiteness, decolonial curatorial and archive practice, and audiovisual heritage restitution in Ghana, and Sudan. She is a member of the Hussein Shariffe Creative Collective.

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The Black Beach: Moving Images between Swedish and Caribbean Shores

Departing from the traces of a partially lost silent film shot by Sten Nordensköld on the Swedish-Caribbean former colony Saint-Barthélemy in 1952, we ask what role artistic research can play to complement or challenge conventional historiography and refuse the circumscribed framework of the colonial archive. What role does imagination and speculation play in knowledge production—particularly in relation to the audiovisual archive and slavery on the island? What is the relationship between audiovisual restoration and restitution, between archival reactivation and decolonial redress?

Drawing on “informed speculation” (Allyson Nadia Field), “Afro-fabulation” and “archival opacity” (Tavia Nyong'o) we propose and elaborate our own method of careful archival reiteration, specific to the Swedish history of enslavement in the Caribbean and to the Afro-Swedish experience. For the presentation, we will screen archival material from the '50s, '60s, and '70s, as well as our own footage from the Caribbean, elaborating a still ongoing project of archival remediation and of bringing back the films to Saint-Barthélemy and Guadeloupe for screenings organized together with a local film projectionist and film scholar.



Salad Hilowle (born 1986 in Mogadishu, Somalia) holds an MFA from the Royal Institute of Art (2020) and a BFA from Konstfack (2018) in Stockholm. Hilowle works in a variety of media, he uses a research-based approach that highlights forgotten or hidden stories throughout art history.



Christian Rossipal (born 1991 in Stockholm, Sweden) is a filmmaker and postdoctoral fellow in Film and Media at Yale University. Prior to Yale, he held a postdoc position at the University of Cambridge and he holds a PhD in Cinema Studies from New York University. Rossipal works at the intersection of theory and practice, often with a focus on archives and how they are (re)activated.

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Dagmar Brunow (Linnaeus University)

Archiving Power: How Metadata Shapes Digital Audiovisual Memory

This talk examines the ethical dilemmas faced by curators and archivists when publishing audiovisual heritage online. I argue that archivists need to carefully navigate the tension between visibility and vulnerability when it comes to marginalised communities (Brunow 2018, 2025).

While many minor or micro archives have traditionally operated through an archival ethics of care, recent collaborations with major institutions (e.g. to grant long-term preservation) risk undermining these practices.

Central to this negotiation is the role of metadata. As the primary engine for the circulation and reuse of archival footage, metadata performs an act of social recognition, determining which lives are rendered legible and worthy of preservation. However, far from being neutral, metadata infrastructures often encode and amplify existing epistemic imbalances. This talk critically addresses how digital tools and AI-driven harvesting processes can perpetuate the erasure of queer pasts by forcing fluid histories into rigid, positivist categories.

Adopting a queer theoretical lens, I challenge the inherent positivism of digital methods that prioritise 'discoverability' over the safety and nuances of the subjects involved. By tracing the evolution of knowledge infrastructures, from the material constraints of analogue card catalogues to the algorithmic logic of digital databases, this presentation investigates how these frameworks mediate what can be seen, said, and remembered. This talk asks: how can film and media scholars intervene in these epistemic inequities to ensure that audiovisual memory serves as a site of care rather than a tool of exposure?

Dagmar Brunow is professor of film studies at Linnaeus University (Sweden) and the leader of the NECS workgroup "Cultural Memory and Media". Her research centres on archives, cultural memory, film historiography, experimental filmmaking and video culture, feminist and queer cinema, and screenwriting as transmediation. She is the author of *Remediating Transcultural Memory: Documentary Filmmaking as Archival Intervention* (de Gruyter, 2015), co-editor of *Queer Cinema* (with Simon Dickel, 2018), and co-editor of the *Frauen und Film* special issue "Archive" (with Katharina Müller, 2024). Her research projects "The Lost Heritage: Improving Collaborations between Digital Film Archives (2021-2024)" and "The Cultural Heritage of Moving Images" (2016-2018) have been funded by the Swedish Research Council. For many years, she has been part of the programming collective at the Hamburg Queer Film Festival.

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Can Sungu (Sinema Transtopia)

Practicing Cinema as Commons: Curatorial and Archival Practices of SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA

SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA (Berlin) is a transnational space for film culture, art, knowledge, and community that explores cinema as a site of social discourse, exchange, and solidarity. By creating a bridge between urban space and film as a cultural practice, it has developed an ecology of programming that understands archiving not merely as preservation, but as a living practice of hospitality and commonality.

SİNEMA's community-rooted model — integrating non-cinematic activities such as cooking, ritual-making, and karaoke — interweaves public memory work, multilingual access, and neighbourhood participation, offering a blueprint for future cinema spaces that aspire to function as cultural commons.

Archival practice is understood here as an integral part of cinematic practice. Its ongoing collaborative engagement with moving-image worlds shaped by migration, displacement, and exile reveals neglected and erased film histories that have existed alongside dominant, largely Eurocentric narratives of film history. These films, mostly produced and circulated within diasporic contexts, are often held in precarious conditions: scattered across personal collections, carried in suitcases, remembered in community spaces, or lying dormant in mislabelled boxes within European archival repositories.

In his talk, Can Sungu, artistic director of SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA, will discuss how alternative cinematic practices can provide platforms for fostering the visibility of neglected and erased film histories and for creating space for post-migrant and transnational voices. Drawing on selected project examples, he will propose new curatorial, artistic, activist, and pedagogical strategies that challenge the notion of national film heritage and advocate for a transnational, collaborative approach to archival practice.

Can Sungu is a freelance artist, curator and researcher. He studied film, interdisciplinary arts and visual communication design in Istanbul and Berlin. He has given lectures on film and video production, curated various programs and events on film and migration, and taken part in numerous exhibitions. Selected publications include *Please Rewind – German-Turkish Film- and Video Culture in Berlin* (Archive Books, 2020), *Bitter Things – Narratives and Memories of Transnational Families* (Archive Books, 2018). He has worked as a juror and consultant for the Berlinale Forum, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen and the DAAD, among others. He is the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of bi'bak and Sinema Transtopia in Berlin.

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Lars Gustaf Andersson (Lund University)

The discontinuous archival afterlife of immigrant cinema: Epilogue of a research project

From 2013 to 2015 John Sundholm at Stockholm University and I had funding from the Swedish Research Council for the project The Cultural Practice of Immigrant Filmmaking which resulted in several presentations,

screenings, journal articles, and finally a monograph, published by Intellect in 2019.

Most of the fifty films that we studied, covering about forty years of post-war independent immigrant filmmaking in Sweden, have not been archived. Thus, the films have remained invisible, and because there has been no knowledge

about them there has been no demand, and no distribution. In my presentation I will try to summarize and contextualize our research and connect it to some fundamental theoretical aspects, guiding our trajectories through the maze of minor cinemas and their archival afterlife.

Lars Gustaf Andersson is Professor of film studies at Lund University. He is currently researching a number of international as well as Swedish experimental filmmakers from the 1920s onward. His work focuses particularly on the aesthetics and cultural contexts of the sketch and the unfinished artwork, and he is now planning a project tentatively titled “Momentary Life Worlds.”



John Sundholm (Stockholm University)

Archival Afterlife 2.0. and affirmative and critical practices.

The aim of this paper is to follow up on mine and Lars Gustaf Andersson’s previous work on collecting and archiving minor

immigrant cinemas. Whereas that project may be described as being founded on an affirmative historiography in which the ideology of the original, as defined by Giovanna Fossati, is necessary to adhere to for enabling archival acknowledgment and historical recognition, we also have to undertake an archival practice that is in congruence with a critical historiography.

I will exemplify my points by using the different versions of Muammer Özer’s films *Yabancı/Ulkomaalainen/Utlänningen* (1971/1981/1983) and *Immigrant Women* (1984), the latter made in close collaboration with his wife Synnöve Özer, as case studies.

John Sundholm is a Professor of Cinema Studies at Stockholm University. His research centers on minor cinemas, experimental film cultures, and immigrant filmmaking practices. Together with Lars Gustaf Andersson, he has conducted research projects on alternative film production, from Swedish experimental cinema to the cultural practice of immigrant film.