



FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BOZEN

LIBERA UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLZANO

FREE UNIVERSITY OF BOZEN · BOLZANO

# CONFERENCE

## TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: FILM AND MEDIA ANALYSIS

FREE UNIVERSITY OF BOLZANO  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
AULA MAGNA

OCTOBER 7-8, 2011

The First Conference of Film and Media Analysis held at the Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bolzano, Italy, focuses on educational film analysis and its relation to common research methods in cultural investigations. Evolving pedagogies provide exciting opportunities for academics and artists to investigate the role of film and media as witness and voice of social reality. Scholars, artists and civic group leaders need to focus on the visual component as it effects the individual's ability to learn.

The most recent trends in the use of visual literacy to reflect physical cultural shifts in immigration and cultural mores are addressed. The focal point of the different films and texts reflects and problematizes the position of visual representations as a new meeting place for people and researchers from different disciplines.

Using panel presentations, workshop discussions and film critique sessions a number of international productions of recent years are referenced and screened. These productions combine social and educational science with performative medias to explore power and ideology from theoretical and historical vantage points. Several experts will show how performative medias can be represented as a new, complementary research method in the different sciences. The thematic focus of the conference is on trends in higher education in the Muslim world, with particular emphasize on different ways to look at and interpret the position of social and familial change.

The premier of the film „Understanding Islam: A Prerequisite for Integration of Muslim Immigrants into South Tyrol and the Region” by Prof. Profanter, Cate, Nederveen highlights the Free University's commitment to migration research. Visual representations highlight and discuss changes in traditional cultural foundations of Muslim societies, cultural shifts in immigration patterns and varying cultural mores of the Muslim population in the Arabian Gulf and northern Africa.

This multi-disciplinary conference provides a forum for scientists, institutions, organizations, students, and individuals to engage in cultural, political, social, historical, ethnographic, and pedagogical discourse and perspectives from the fields of education, sociology, ethnology, political science, anthropology, film, media, and cultural and communication studies.

**The conference is trilingual German, Italian, and English.**

A sampling of **social science films** will be screened, including

- „Understanding Islam: A Prerequisite for Integration of Muslim Immigrants into South Tyrol and the Region” (2011) produced by Arda Nederveen, Visual Productions, Amsterdam, Netherlands in collaboration with Annemarie Profanter, Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano, Italy, and Stephanie Ryan Cate, University of Alabama, Huntsville, USA
- „Fashioning Faith” (2010), „The Women of Tahrir” (2011) by Yasmin Moll, Department of Anthropology, New York University, USA/ Egypt
- „Young and Invisible: African Domestic Workers in Yemen” (2008) produced by Arda Nederveen, Visual Productions, Amsterdam, Netherlands in collaboration with Marina de Regt, International Research Center „Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History”, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany
- „Kampala Babel” (2008) by Cecilia Pennacini, University of Turin, Italy
- „Young Arabs” (2008) by Michael Graziano & Ernie Joong-eun Park, uji films, USA
- „Messages from Paradise #1” (2009) by Samuli Schielke & Daniela Swarowsky, Centre for Modern Oriental Studies (ZMO), Berlin, Germany

### **THEORETICAL INPUT:**

Gerd Becker, Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, Germany

Stephanie Ryan Cate, University of Alabama, Huntsville, USA

Yasmin Moll, Department of Anthropology, New York University, USA/Egypt

Kathrin Oester, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern and PHBern – University of Teacher Education, Switzerland

Cecilia Pennacini, Department of Anthropological Sciences, University of Turin, Italy

Annemarie Profanter, Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano, Italy

Marina de Regt, International Research Center „Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History”, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany

Farshad Zahedi, University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain

## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**Friday, October 7, 2011**

9.00-9.15	Conference Kickoff and Welcome Address, Dean Prof. Franz Comploi
9.15-10.30	<p><b>Live, Love and Laugh! Shifting Muslim Perspectives surrounding Familial and Marital Traditions in the Arabian Gulf</b> Annemarie Profanter, Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano, Italy Stephanie Ryan Cate, University of Alabama, Huntsville, USA</p> <p>Film premiere „Understanding Islam: A Prerequisite for Integration of Muslim Immigrants into South Tyrol and the Region” (2011) produced by Arda Nederveen, Visual Productions, Amsterdam, Netherlands in collaboration with Annemarie Profanter, Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano, Italy, and Stephanie Ryan Cate, University of Alabama, Huntsville, USA</p> <p><i>Q &amp; A session</i></p>
10.30-11.00	Coffee break
11.00-11.45	<p><b>Making Invisible Women Visible: Some Experiences with Filmmaking for Educational Purposes in Yemen (2008)</b> Marina de Regt, International Research Center „Work and Human Life-cycle in Global History“, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany Arda Nederveen, Visual Productions, Amsterdam, Netherlands</p>
11.45-12.15	<p><b>Anthropology, Images that Move and the Politics of Education</b> Film: „The Women of Tahrir” (2011) Yasmin Moll, Department of Anthropology, New York University, USA/ Egypt</p>
12.15-12.30	<i>Discussion with researchers, film directors, and producers</i>
12.30-2.00	Lunch Break
2.00-2.45	<p><b>Educational Borders: Film and Media Analysis of Cultural Foundations</b> Kathrin Oester, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern and PHBern – University of Teacher Education, Switzerland</p> <p><i>Q&amp;A session</i></p>
2.45-3.30	<p><b>Reflections on Filmwork in Morocco - Visuality in Transcultural Communication and Education</b> Gerd Becker, University of Mainz, Germany</p>
3.30-4.00	<i>Discussion and Concluding remarks</i>

<p>8.00-10.00 <b>FILMCLUB</b></p>	<p><b>Scholar at work: Action based Visual Research - Public screening in cooperation with the "Filmclub Brixen"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public film premier: „Understanding Islam: A Prerequisite for Integration of Muslim Immigrants into South Tyrol and the Region” (2011) produced by Arda Nederveen, Visual Productions, Amsterdam, Netherlands in collaboration with Annemarie Profanter, Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano, Italy, and Stephanie Ryan Cate, University of Alabama, Huntsville, USA</li> <li>- „Fashioning Faith” (2010) by Moll Yasmin, Department of Anthropology, New York University, USA/ Egypt</li> <li>- „Ali explains the Oasis?” (2011) by Gerd Becker, University of Mainz, Germany</li> </ul> <p><i>Film makers roundtable: Discussion with researchers, film directors, and producers afterwards</i></p>
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### Saturday, October 8, 2011

<p>9.00-10.30</p>	<p><b>Incontri sui confine: Il film etnografico come medium interculturale</b> Cecilia Pennacini, University of Torino, Italy</p>
<p>10.30-11.00</p>	<p>Coffee Break</p>
<p>11.00-12.30</p>	<p><b>The Identity Crisis and the Wise Child</b> <b>The Microcosmic Image of the Educational Space in Iranian Cinema</b> Farshad Zahedi, University Carlo III of Madrid, Spain</p>
<p>12.30-2.00</p>	<p>Lunch Break</p>
<p>2.00-2.30</p>	<p><b>Exploring the Educational Limitations of Documentary Film as a Means of Humanizing the Other</b> Michael Graziano, Uji Films, USA</p>
<p>2.30-3.00</p>	<p><b>“Messages from Paradise#1” (2009)</b> Samuli Schielke/Daniela Swarowsky, Centre for Modern Oriental Studies (ZMO), Berlin, Germany</p>
<p>3.00-4.00</p>	<p><i>Roundtable Discussion and Conference Wrap up</i></p>

For more information see: [www.annemarieprofanter.com](http://www.annemarieprofanter.com)

**Attendance and participation are free!**  
**We welcome anybody who is interested in the topic!**

Please contact Annemarie Profanter (annemarie.profanter@unibz.it) or Claudia Lintner (claudia.lintner2@unibz.it) for further details or with any questions.

Abstract 1: **LIVE, LOVE AND LAUGH: SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES SURROUNDING FAMILIAL AND MARITAL TRADITIONS.**

*Annemarie Profanter, Free University of Bolzano, Brixen, Italy*

*Stephanie Ryan Cate, University of Alabama, Huntsville, USA*

There is a need to understand the societal and cultural traditions of Muslim immigrant groups in order to foster understanding and mutual comprehension. The vibrant and rapidly developing countries of the Arabian Peninsula present a visual *mélange* reflecting shifting marital confluences with strong Islamic polygyny. Polygyny is plural marriage that is limited to 1 male and as many as 4 females at any time and dependent upon ones ability to provide for, be just to and care for your wives. In many other Arab states polygyny exists today as a viable marital choice and familial standard. Through a visual medium we are able to offer a glimpse into an age old lifestyle and the reasons for its continuity and shifting pathways from an insiders' view with wives, children and husbands providing unique perspectives. This presentation of our film "Understanding Societal Functioning in Islam: A Prerequisite for Integration of Muslim Immigrants into South Tyrol and the Region", which was produced in collaboration with Arda Nederveen reflects on polygyny as practiced in many Islamic states and recorded in the Qur'an. The film addresses this by explaining in intimate and vulnerable language one cultural practice in the Sultanate of Oman, polygyny, which can antagonize and alienate European neighbors and colleagues. This visual ethnography presents alternative insights into intimate spaces and practices, familial traditions and emerging perspectives centered around an age old practice closely associated with both the region and Islam.



**Annemarie Profanter**, holds doctorates in both Education and Psychology and a master's degree in Psychology of Education from the University of London. She is a tenured professor of the Faculty of Education at the Free University of Bolzano. She has done visiting lectureships and fellowships for international institutions such as The City University of Science and Information Technology in Peshawar, Pakistan; the American University affiliated Dhofar University in Salalah, Sultanate of Oman; and Prince Mohammed University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. She is currently working with a number of Arabian and European colleagues on projects addressing Arab women's experiences in the Gulf/Islamic integration and migration in Europe.



**Stephanie Ryan Cate, MA**, is an American Scholar from North Carolina who has since 2000 resided in the Arabian Gulf doing fieldwork and teaching at different Universities across the Arabian Peninsula. She has done numerous projects in the Dhofar and Muscat regions of Oman with both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Media and Information as well as working closely with Kingdom Schools in their early development in Riyadh, KSA. Her current research projects include socio-political and cultural studies involving performative social science projects related to gender, family, migration and the Arab Diaspora.

## Abstract 2: **MAKING INVISIBLE WOMEN VISIBLE: SOME EXPERIENCES WITH FILMMAKING FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES IN YEMEN**

*Marina de Regt, International Research Center „Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History“, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany*

*Arda Nederveen, Visual Productions, Amsterdam, Netherlands*

In this paper I will describe and analyze my experiences with making an educational documentary in Yemen. Whereas the large scale employment of Asian domestic workers in the rich countries of the Arabian Peninsula is well-known, very few people know that also in a poor country like Yemen mainly migrant women do paid domestic labor. Somali and Ethiopian women are the most predominant nationalities employed by middle and upper class Yemeni families in the main cities. They suffer from a low status; have very limited rights and work sometimes under exploitative conditions. Most Yemenis claim that the living and working conditions of migrant domestic workers in their country is much better than in neighboring countries on the Peninsula, but domestic labor is not covered by the labor law and government institutes, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, do not consider migrant domestic workers their responsibility. At the time of my research (2003-2006) there were also no NGOs defending the rights of domestic workers. In order to make these women more “visible” and in doing so improve their living and working conditions I decided to make an awareness raising film. Together with a professional filmmaker I returned to Yemen in 2007 to shoot the film. The making of the film was, however, not easy and we encountered many obstacles on our way whereas the end product was also not contested. I will describe some of these obstacles and end the paper with a number of lessons learned about ethnographic filmmaking for educational purposes.



**Marina de Regt** is an anthropologist with extensive research experience in Yemen. Her main research interests are gender, labour, migration and development. She obtained her PhD from the International Research Centre Humboldt University Berlin, Germany, Netherlands in 2003. Her post-doctoral research was about migrant domestic workers in Yemen. In 2007 she and Dutch filmmaker Arda Nederveen made the documentary *Young and Invisible* about the lives of Ethiopian and Somali domestic workers in Yemen. In the academic year 2011/2012 Marina is a research fellow at the International Research Center IGK “Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History” of Humboldt University Berlin.



**Arda Nederveen** Visual Productions was established in 2000. In the past ten years Arda Nederveen Visual Productions has produced a large number of videos and documentaries, most of them in order of non-profit organizations both in and outside the Netherlands. Examples are a short documentary about the activities of the labour union for small farmers in Guatemala (2003); an awareness raising film about people with HIV/AIDS (2004); a documentary about the relationship between the local population and the environment in Mongolia (2006); and an awareness raising film about migrant domestic workers in Yemen (2007). Most recent and the corporate film for the biggest worldwide Flowerauction FloraHolland In progress is a documentary about how a Senegalese drummer is making a living in Dakar.

### Abstract 3: **ANTHROPOLOGY, IMAGES THAT MOVE AND THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION**

*Yasmin Moll, Department of Anthropology, New York University, USA/Egypt*

In this paper, I will address two main questions: First, what are the limitations and potentials of film for both popularizing anthropological knowledge as well as being an ethnographic analysis of popular culture? And second, what are some of the ethical and pedagogical issues at stake in the images we (filmmakers, anthropologists) create for public circulation and consumption? In exploring these questions, I will draw on my experiences training in video production and ethnographic film theory at NYU's Culture and Media program as well as my more recent experiences making a short internet video on the participation of women in the Egyptian revolution.

I argue that the widespread privileging of the textual mode in anthropology rests on the assumption of an unchanging, inherent, hierarchy between image and text that is theoretically and empirically weak. The denial of the reflexivity of film, and the attribution of reflexivity solely the written text, stems from this erroneous hierarchy and its implied failure to see beyond the "recording" function of film. I argue that film can be a conceptual medium for the discipline as long as it is acknowledged that image and text are not competing modes, but rather interpenetrating ones where anthropological knowledge is produced and conveyed in the (necessary) zones of overlap.

At the same time, I make the case for the unique capacities of film as a medium which permits an embodiment and physical inscription of the social space generated by the cinematic encounter of filmmaker, film subject and film spectator, favoring experiential modes of understanding over conceptual ones.

Following the theorist of visual culture WJT Mitchell, the point of inquiry here becomes not what do pictures *mean* – a question that revolves around images' power of signification – but rather what do pictures *want*, where the point of inquiry becomes images' power of performance, of action. It is precisely in this capacity of images to literally *move* viewers that its potential for the education of diverse publics lays.



**Yasmin Moll**, Department of Anthropology, New York University, USA/Egypt spent a nomadic childhood in the Middle East, living in Bahrain, Dubai and Egypt. Settling down in NYC, Yasmin is an active member of the city's vibrant Muslim community. She trained in video production and ethnographic film theory at New York University's innovative Culture and Media program. Yasmin is currently in Egypt conducting doctoral dissertation research on Islamic televangelism. *Fashioning Faith* is her first film.



Abstract 4: **FROM SWITZERLAND'S SUBURBS TO SUMATRA'S JUNGLES- PERFORMANCE ETHNOGRAPHY IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS**

*Kathrin Oester, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern and PHBern – University of Teacher Education, Switzerland*

While shooting *Moi, un noir* (1959) in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, Jean Rouch developed, together with his African protagonists, a new methodological approach - 'shared anthropology'. Rouch acted no longer as the objectively observing anthropologist, but entered into an exchange-relationship with his African partners. At the eve of the post-colonial era, *Moi, un noir* was not only the starting point for a major epistemological change in generating ethnographic data, but also for what was considered an 'ethnographic film' at the time. 'Ethnofiction', as the genre is called today, with its mixture of documentation, re-enactment, and improvisation developed on the spot, abolished the dichotomizing categories of documentary versus fiction film and challenged an empiricist paradigm. As I will argue, *Moi, un noir* can thus be considered a precursor of the 'performative turn' in the social sciences of the 1980s and 1990s.

Rouch's 'shared anthropology' with its specific epistemology imposed itself upon our recent research in an ethnographic video project with disadvantaged youths in Switzerland. After some preliminary exercise in fieldwork methodology, and after having been taught basic technical skills in using camcorders and editing programs, the adolescents spontaneously started to explore their urban field with the camera, performing scenes from their everyday lives as well as acting out their dreams and fantasies. In the course of the events, the students thus changed the intended ethnographic documentary approach into performance ethnography. And we, by letting them do so, were highly rewarded with new insights on their transnational lifeworlds.

To conclude, performance ethnography can neither be chosen by a researcher nor by an ethnographer's partners. It works out only as the result of an exchange-relationship *between* partners - as I will show with a failed example from my own research with Muslim women in Highland Sumatra. Ethnographic methodology itself is thus the result of a negotiation between researcher and research partners, an insight with far reaching epistemological implications and its own specific ethics - the ethics of reciprocity.



**Kathrin Oester** is an anthropologist and filmmaker, specialised in media anthropology, youth, and migration. She taught visual and media anthropology in different universities and developed the media anthropology curriculum at the Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern. She has (co-)directed and written several ethnographic documentaries and authored and edited several books, including "Ramadan im Regenwald. Aufzeichnungen aus einer matrilinearen Gesellschaft Zentralsumatras" (2011). She is currently professor at the University of Teacher Education, Bern, Switzerland.

Abstract 5: **REFLECTIONS ON FILMWORK IN MOROCCO - VISUALITY IN TRANS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION**

*Gerd Becker, University of Mainz, Germany*

Looking back on two decades of studying a Muslim society with visual methods I'd like to raise a wide spectrum of questions asking for the scientific potential of images: – Is teaching film a research strategy? – Which particular insights does indigenous filmmaking offer into Moroccan culture? – Does ethnographic film mean staging otherness? – What can we learn from the analysis of film reception? – How do visual media construct reality? – Can images express theory? Referring to experiences gathered in teaching social documentary film making in Morocco, I will discuss if visual communication owns a higher degree of cultural universality than verbal exchange. As films are always Janus-headed – we get visual information about what has been in front of the lenses, but we can also detect the gaze of the person behind the camera – indigenous film informs us about the others' culture in two ways: by showing the subjects filmed as much as by revealing the filmmakers' subjectivity. Analyzing the reaction of the viewer offers us a third way to insights into cultural particularities. This will lead us to the further question, in how far the making of film creates the social realities we depict. What do we actually see in a film? On the footage we see the results of the interaction of the filmmaker and his protagonists. But that is not the end of the process of filmmaking. Editing our material allows us to make statements. Arranging visual representations of social phenomena in a meaningful way can even reveal the patterns and principles behind them and herewith make theoretical statements in a non-verbal way. As examples for non-verbal transcultural cinematography and for discussing the independent scientific potential of the image I will screen scenes from my films „L'Art du Désert“ (2010) „Geerds Artropology“ (2005) and „Ali explains the Oasis“ (2011).



**Gerd Becker**, born 1954, studied Anthropology, social history and Journalism at Berlin, Nsukka (Nigeria) and Hamburg Universities. Ph.D. (1989) on visual symbolism in Morocco. Extensive experiences in teaching scientific filmmaking in Hamburg, Bremen, Mainz and Ifrane (Morocco). Numerous publications (verbally and visually) on anthropological film. Professor (guest) at Center for Intercultural Studies (Mainz). Presently coordinator of an interdisciplinary study group on audiovisual methods in social and culture studies and research fellow for Center of Comparative Indigenous and Native Studies (Mainz).

Abstract 6: **INCONTRI SUI CONFINI- IL FILM ETNOGRAFICO COME MEDIUM INTERCULTURALE**

*Cecilia Pennacini, University of Torino, Italy*

Molto presto nella storia dell'antropologia, il documentario etnografico ha adottato modalità produttive fondate sulla collaborazione con i soggetti filmati. La complessità stessa della produzione filmica - del "set" che richiede sempre, anche se in misure diverse, un lavoro d'équipe - imponeva infatti una negoziazione di tecniche, di linguaggi e di sig-

nificati, che l'antropologia scritta scoprirà soltanto molto più tardi. Inoltre, il cinema è stato spesso descritto come un medium trans-culturale, capace di mettere in relazione le culture senza far ricorso agli ostacoli che le tradizioni scritte tendono a interporre. Senza sottovalutare il potere che il mezzo tecnico conferisce a chi lo detiene, il cinema può fornire importanti occasioni di condivisione del progetto antropologico, particolarmente rilevanti nella dimensione post-coloniale. A partire dalla mia personale esperienza di ricerca etno-visiva, che conduco in Uganda dal 1995, intendo riflettere sulle possibilità euristiche che la realizzazione di un film etnografico può aprire. Nel mio film *Kampala Babel* (Uganda-Italia 2008), che descrive l'attuale scenario religioso ugandese, ho infatti potuto sperimentare due livelli distinti di collaborazione: da un lato la partecipazione alle riprese di un gruppo di medium del culto di possessione Kubandwa ha consentito una performance rituale che ingloba, in una certa misura, la presenza stessa dei cineasti, restituendo con forza allo spettatore il significato dell'evento; dall'altro la collaborazione sistematica con lo scrittore ugandese Moses Isegawa in qualità di "mediatore interculturale" ha consentito di strutturare l'intero film a partire dall'incontro tra due sguardi che osservano lo scenario ugandese da distanze variabili. Il progetto ha dunque consentito di sperimentare una modalità di ricerca che fa convogliare verso la rappresentazione audiovisiva punti di vista culturalmente distanti, creando un prodotto "multivocale" fruibile anche in ambito didattico e divulgativo.



**Cecilia Pennacini** studied cinematographic direction in Milan and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Turin, where she obtained her Ph.D. in 1996. Having worked for several years for RAI, she later started to teach Ethnology and Visual Anthropology at the University of Turin, where she was recently appointed Associate Professor. Since 1988 she has carried out research in the Great Lakes region of Africa as a member of the Italian Ethnological Mission In Equatorial Africa (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), taking the direction of the Mission in 2005. She has published extensively on aesthetics, traditional religion and cultural heritage in the Great Lakes region, and realized several ethnographic films (the last one: *Kampala Babel*, 54', 2008).

#### Abstract 7: **THE IDENTITY CRISIS AND THE WISE CHILD** **THE MICROCOSMIC IMAGE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SPACE IN IRANIAN CINEMA**

*Farshad Zahedi, University Carlo III of Madrid, Spain*

This study is an effort to analyze the image of the educational space in Iranian cinema since the late 60's up to the present. In this regard, we find this image in the works of the directors of the movement known as the New Iranian Cinema among the members of which, Abbas Kiarostami is the best-known figure in the West. The attempt is to show the relationship between the image of children and adolescents in Iranian cinema, and the prolific image of the *wise child* that exists in Persian mythology and literature. The wise child appears in the times of crisis, when the logic of the elderly, based on patriarchal experience and control, is unable to solve a social problem, and all lines of communication and dialogue between the people and opponents —either as an external threat or as a tyrannical ruler—, have reached

an impasse. At this crucial moment, the wise child's particular logic saves the people and solves the problem through its intelligence which is not contaminated by the logic of benefit, and through a strategy that is only possible by its high flexibility. In cinema, this myth appears at a critical moment of Iranians contact with the modernity, and becomes the protagonist in a number of Iranian movies in a certain social-historical context. The educational space, moving this character forward, builds a perfect micro-cosmic relationship with social reality and sometimes turns the text into an allegorical image of a society which is changing value system, and thus in a deep identity crisis.



**Farshad Zahedi** in 2008 received his Ph.D in History of Cinema from University of Autónoma de Madrid. At the present he is Assistant Professor in Department of Journalism and Audiovisual Communication of Carlos III de Madrid University. Among his last published papers stand out the book and papers.

#### Abstract 8: **EXPLORING THE EDUCATIONAL LIMITATIONS OF DOCUMENTARY FILM AS A MEANS OF HUMANIZING THE OTHER**

*Michael Graziano @ Ernie Joong-eun Park, Uji Films, USA*

Attempting to understand those who are different from us is essential for the well being of our rapidly shrinking world. Global citizenship requires that we strive to recognize the interwoven nature of our shared futures and, more importantly, the depths of our shared humanity. With these ideas in mind *YOUNG ARABS* seeks to humanize and give voice to those who many of us may only know as stereotypes or caricatures. While direct cinema filmmakers such as Albert and David Maysles or Nicolas Philibert inform our general documentary aesthetic, *YOUNG ARABS* owes a particular and obvious methodological debt to the groundbreaking work by Michael Apter on the BBC's *UP SERIES*. Our approach is theoretically inflected by the work of sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu (chiefly his notion of "Habitus") and Erving Goffman (chiefly his notions regarding the "Presentation of Self in Everyday Life", particularly his idea of "Front stage" and "back stage" personas). We hope the discussion that follows this film will address questions about the possibilities and pitfalls associated with "humanizing" the other in a documentary film context. What does this mean? Is such representation even possible? *Educating Publics: Ethnographic Film and The Politics of the Image*.



**Ernie Park** and **Michael Graziano** formed Uji Films in 2007. Their award-winning films have aired nationally and internationally in more than 100 countries, are distributed on DVD throughout the US, and have screened at a variety of well-known film venues and festivals in the US and abroad. In addition to making films, Park and Graziano have also taught and written on an array of subjects within film and media studies, each having achieved doctoral candidacy in the field – Park at New York University and Graziano at Northwestern University.

## FILM DESCRIPTIONS

### FASHIONING FAITH (2010)

by Yasmin Moll

When most Americans think of the Islamic veil, the image of Afghan women in blue burkas or the black chador of the Islamic Republic of Iran may come to mind. But what about the Muslim-American woman who easily combines her headscarf with jeans or haute couture gowns? *Fashioning Faith* takes a behind the scenes look at the emerging world of Islamic fashion and US-based clothing designers who make it possible. The film interweaves interviews and verité footage from a diverse array of Muslim women with one goal in common – to express their faith through fashion.



### THE WOMEN OF TAHRIR (2011)

by Yasmin Moll

The Egyptian revolution of January 25th was made possible by the women of Egypt. This short video seeks to highlight the powerful role these women played in making history.



### YOUNG AND INVISIBLE: AFRICAN DOMESTIC WORKERS IN YEMEN (2008)

by Arda Nederveen and Marina de Regt

Many families in economically developed countries make use of migrant women as domestic workers and cleaners. But even in a relatively poor country such as Yemen, migrants and refugee women do paid domestic work. The majority of these come from the Horn of Africa. Why do these young women come to Yemen and what are their living and working conditions? Instead of portraying the women as victims, the film gives them a face and lets them show their resilience. Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East, yet despite this attracts large numbers of refugees and migrants, mainly from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. There are scarcely any national and international organisations that defend the rights of domestic workers. They often work in isolated circumstances, have poor conditions of employment, make long working hours and are sometimes the victims of abuse and exploitation and have no possibilities to defend their rights. One of the indirect outcomes of the research was the start of a UNIFEM-funded project to improve the working conditions of domestic workers. The documentary is being used to promote awareness about the living and working conditions of domestic workers in Yemen, but also further afield.



### KAMPALA BABEL (2008)

by Cecilia Pennacini

Kampala, caotica e multi-etnica capitale dell'Uganda, teatro negli ultimi anni di un rapidissimo sviluppo economico, cui si accompagna una crescita costante di immigrati e profughi provenienti da tutta la travagliata regione dei Grandi Laghi che vanno a



popolare i sempre più vasti e numerosi slum cittadini. Come in molte altre città africane, il contrasto tra l'opulenza dei quartieri ricchi e la miseria degli slum è di giorno in giorno più stridente. Kampala ha molte storie da raccontare, che si stratificano le une sulle altre lasciando tracce ben visibili nel panorama cittadino.

La storia dell'Uganda, e in particolare di Kampala, è soprattutto storia dell'incontro e spesso anche dello scontro tra religioni diverse, un caleidoscopio variegato che oggi, finalmente sembra aver trovato un equilibrio nel pluralismo delle pratiche e delle credenze. Isegawa, profondo conoscitore dell'universo religioso - essendosi formato all'interno di un seminario cattolico - approfondisce questo aspetto cruciale della storia ugandese, che intreccia la spiritualità tradizionale (incentrata sulla possessione spiritica), tornata ad essere apertamente praticata a partire dalla restaurazione nel 1993 dei regni tradizionali, con le "Religioni del Libro" nelle loro diverse espressioni, cui oggi si aggiunge il pentecostalismo, religione "globale" che da dieci anni a questa parte sta assorbendo in Africa numeri sempre più alti di fedeli attratti da pratiche sensuali ed emozionanti, per molti aspetti più vicine all'esperienza tradizionale.

### YOUNG ARABS (2008)

by Michael Graziano and Ernie Joong-eun

Young Arabs takes viewers inside an elite preparatory school in the heart of Cairo, Egypt. The film offers a quiet encounter with a collection of students as they reflect on God, America, terrorism, marriage, the Middle East, and more. Despite being founded and still managed by French-trained Jesuit priests, the students and faculty of this all-boys school

are roughly 60% Muslim and 40% Christian. By virtue of lineage, moreover, these young men are expected to help lead the Middle East into a new and uncertain world - a fact that, along with the socioeconomic and religious complexion of the school, gives their views particular significance.



### UNDERSTANDING SOCIETAL FUNCTIONING IN ISLAM: A PREREQUISITE FOR INTEGRATION OF MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS INTO SOUTH TYROL AND THE REGION (2011)

by Arda Nederveen, Annemarie Profanter and Stephanie Ryan Cate

Globalization as a worldwide phenomenon connects people in more intimate ways while challenging existing cultural and religious mores. There is a need to understand the societal and cultural traditions of Muslim immigrant groups in order to foster understanding and mutual comprehension. This film addresses this by explaining in intimate and vulnerable language one cultural practice that can antagonize and alienate European neighbors and colleagues. Produced and directed by a multi cultural trio Dutch filmmaker Arda Nederveen, Italian researcher and professor Annemarie Profanter and American lecturer and researcher Stephanie Ryan Cate the film tells the story of Islamic polygyny in the Arabian Gulf from an insider's view with wives, children and husbands providing unique perspectives that resonate with all families on some level. This is a glimpse into an age-old lifestyle and the reasons for its continuity. Polygyny as practiced in many Islamic states is recorded in the Qur'an as limited to 1 male and as many as 4 females at any time and dependent upon one's ability to provide for, be just to and care for your wives. "Marry women of your choice, two, or three or four; but if ye fear, that ye shall not be able to deal justly



[with them], then only one..." (The Holy Qur'an, English translation by Yusuf 1983: Sura IV, Verse 3). In the Sultanate of Oman polygyny exists today as a viable marital choice and familial standard. By talking with and viewing these Omani peoples' lives an opportunity for dialogue emerges that reflects respect for the diverse social customs in this and other parts of the world. The language of the film is in Arabic with narration and translations in English, German, and Italian subtitles.

## MESSAGE FROM PARADISE#1 (2009)

by Daniela Swarowsky and Samuli Schielke

Central to the trilogy is the eternal longing for elsewhere. To broaden your horizon, to envision your future, see the world and earn a good living: to go where the grass is greener on the other side of the hill is a universal human desire. The rich West is the greener grass, a paradise that a young and frustrated generation dreams of in poor countries. As they see no future at home and there is no work, they feel increasingly frustrated. But those who successfully manage to cross to the other side of the hill, are often confronted with a harsh reality. An interesting phenomenon can then be observed: the longer you are away from the country you came from, the more the image of your home country changes from 'hopeless and without possibilities' to a 'lost paradise'.

The Messages from Paradise trilogy is both a poetic reflection as a domain of research concerning the universal myths and experiences relating to migration. The project confronts these myths and poses questions with a critical eye. Young people from Egypt, Morocco and other non-Western countries are portrayed with their dreams, hopes and realities. They have questions and important things to say to those that left and who are on the other side. Migrants and their children living in Vienna, Rotterdam and other European cities also express their experiences. They too have questions and things to say to those who stayed in their home country. Different sides of the story of migration are told through dialogue by the means of video.

## Messages From Paradise

### # 1 رسائل من الجنة



**Daniela Swarowsky** is an Austrian filmmaker, artist and curator living and working in Berlin. Since 2001 she has developed a number of projects related to questions of migration, identity, and the idea of home in an attempt to connect artistic as well as scientific questions and social reality. Her concept 'Zwaanshals in Motion', a community-art project in a migrant street of Rotterdam, has won a prize for innovation by the city of Rotterdam.



**Samuli Schielke** PhD in social sciences, University of Amsterdam, 2006/2006 - 2007, postdoc researcher at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies. 2008 post-doctoral researcher at the University of Joensuu (Finland). Currently project leader of research- and art project "In Search of Europe: Considering the Possible in Africa and the Middle East" at ZMO, Belrin/ Schielke is also a photographer and filmmaker and has been collaborating with Daniela Swarowsky in previous art projects.

## GEERDTS ARTROPOLOGY (2005)

by Gerd Becker

Bildgestaltung hat immer auch ästhetische Aspekte, welche angestammte Domänen der Kunst sind. Der wissenschaftliche Film bewegt sich im Spannungsdreieck von Technologie, ästhetischer Gestaltung und rationaler Argumentation. Zentraler Gegenstand des künstlerischen Schaffens von Hans Werner Geerds sind die Menschenansammlungen auf der Jemaa el-Fna. Er studiert mit künstlerischen Verfahren die Beziehungen der Individuen zueinander. Damit ergibt sich ein Berührungspunkt zur soziologisch-anthropologischen Forschung, der sich im Titel des Films *Geerds Artropology* widerspiegelt. In dieser, zum 80. Geburtstags des Künstlers entstandenen Würdigung seines bildnerischen Schaffens kehren die re-animierten und über den alpha-Channel freigestellten Geister des Gnawa Tanzes wieder zurück in die Realbilder vom Ort ihres Ursprungs, den Gassen von Marrakech. Nur Vorgestelltes wird durch Compositing- 10 Techniken visualisiert, Visualisiertes wird zu Wirklichem, Reales zur Struktur, Muster werden zu Motiven, Motive zu Bildern und Bilder zu Metaphern.



## L'ART DU DÉSSERT- WIRKLICHKEITSKONSTRUKTION IN MAROKKO (2009)

by Gerd Becker

L'Art du Désert verfolgt Strategien der Erweiterung des Kompetenzbereiches der Bilder. Interaktionsweisen von lokalen Tourismusangeboten und ihrer Kundschaft werden mit der Kamera beobachtet und so montiert, dass wiederkehrende Handlungsmuster durch Gegenüberstellung und Aneinanderreihung der Einstellungen deutlich werden. Jeder filmische look verweist auf eine Grenz Zugehörigkeit und definiert damit eine bestimmte Konvention des Verhältnisses von äußerer zu kinematographischer Wirklichkeit, jeder Kamerastil impliziert eine epistemologische Haltung und jeder Schnitt macht eine Aussage. Im Film soll gezeigt werden, dass diese filmspezifischen Argumentationsweisen hinreichen, um komplexe, abstrakte und theoretische Aussagen zu machen.

## ALI ZEIGT DIE OASE (2011)

by Gerd Becker

*Ali zeigt die Oase* folgt dem jungen Guide durch die Palmerie. Beim Schneidevorgang thematisch geordnet sieht man, wie Ali auf landwirtschaftliche Produktion und Nutzung verweist, Einblicke in Bau- und Wohnformen gewährt, und dem Besucher die Augen für die naturräumlichen Gegebenheiten öffnet. Zunächst unter dem Arbeitstitel „Ali erklärt die Oase“ geführt, wurde beim Schnitt des Filmes deutlich, dass das, was als Erklären von Zusammenhängen durch Ali erschien, doch nur sein entwickeltes Zeigeverhalten war, das er offenbar auf Grund seiner Behinderung zu perfektionieren genötigt war. Die Art und Weise wie Ali zeigt, erlaubt den Dingen, sich selbst zu erklären. Er lässt den Betrachter die Zusammenhänge selbst entdecken, macht ihn sehend. Das erklärt Alis Beliebtheit und seinen Erfolg als Touristenführer. Zugleich bestätigt Ali damit ein Paradigma für ethnologische Kinematographie und Wissenschaft: show it, don't tell it!

