



# UiT The Arctic University of Norway

## Programme for the international symposium:

### *The Nordic Eye (and Mind) meets the South. Visual Anthropology and Cultural Critique in the Nordic Countries and in Northern Cameroon*

UiT The Arctic University of Norway

26-28 August 2019

Organised by Peter I. Crawford (Department of Social Sciences, UiT) and  
Rossella Ragazzi (The Arctic University Museum of Norway)

One may argue that the birth of visual anthropology in the Nordic countries was marked by the foundation of the Nordic Anthropological Film Association (NAFA) in the mid-1970s, around twenty Nordic anthropology institutions, universities and museums, joining forces to promote the use of the film medium in research, teaching and public information. The term visual anthropology was not even widely in use at the time, and there were no degree courses at any university in the Nordic countries, and very few in the world. The anthropology departments in Tromsø and Aarhus were both founding members of NAFA. More than forty years later this symposium is celebrating the success, academically and otherwise, of visual anthropology and ethnographic film in the Nordic countries by bringing together scholars from or related to these two existing fortresses of visual anthropology, using film and other visual media in their research as well as offering international master programmes. Collaboration has always been a key issue in all this, perhaps most clearly seen in the way that UiT for many years has helped develop similar activities and programmes in Cameroon and Mali. The symposium thus forms an encounter of different ways of conceptualising visual anthropology and the diverse manners in which visual media are used in anthropological research.

#### **Programme:**

#### **Day 1, 26 August.**

**Venue:** The lecture theatre, The Arctic University Museum of Norway (Address: Lars Thørings veg 10)

9.15-9.30: Words of welcome by Rossella Ragazzi and Peter I. Crawford

9.30-10.30: Keynote address by Professor Ton Otto (Department of Anthropology, Aarhus University):



#### **Visualizing Impermanence. The making of an exhibition**

The exhibition *Museum of Impermanence*, Moesgaard Museum, 8 February – 19 May 2019, was a product of the research project *Precious Relics: Materiality and Value in the Practice of Ethnographic Collection* supported by the Danish research council, involving old and new museum collections from Papua New Guinea, Tibet and Nepal. It asked the question how people in different places and with different cultural traditions deal with the condition of impermanence in their lives. Its aim was to create a space for the

audience to reflect on and critically assess their own attitudes to this universal condition of human existence. A part of this was the reflection on museum practices of conservation and how these impact on questions of impermanence. In the realization of the exhibition, video-films and still images played a central role in connection with scenography and the juxtaposition of old and new artifacts.



**Ton Otto** is professor of Anthropology at Aarhus University, Denmark, and at James Cook University, Australia. Based on long-term ethnographic field research in Papua New Guinea he has published widely on issues of social and cultural change. His interests comprise the epistemology and methodology of ethnographic research, including visual and museum anthropology, and its relationship to innovation and design. His recent productions include the co-edited volumes *Design anthropology: Theory and practice* (Bloomsbury 2013), *Value as Theory* (Special issue *HAU* 3 (1-2), 2013), *Design Anthropological Futures* (Bloomsbury 2016), *Alternative Valuations* (Special Issue *Valuation Studies* 4 (1), 1916), *Camera as Cultural Critique* (Special Issue *Visual Anthropology* 31 (4-5), 2018), and the exhibitions *The life of the Dead* (Moesgaard Museum 2014-2019) and *Museum of Impermanence* (Moesgaard Museum 2019).

10.30-11.00: Coffee/tea break

11.00-11.45: Presentation by Associate Professor Christian Suhr (Aarhus University):



### Light upon light

Having worked for seven years on jinn possession, Islamic exorcism, and radicalization among Danish Muslims, I reached a point of exhaustion finding it difficult to work in the toxic political climate of escalating hatred and fear between Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe.

An Egyptian friend gave me a simple piece of advice: “Stop focusing on the darkness in this world: Look at the light”; an approach to life he had learned after having been in and out of Salafism as well as two failed revolutions before he found relief in a different form of religious devotion that is rising among young people in post-revolutionary Egypt.

I took his advice and together with the Egyptian filmmaker Mohammad Mustafa, the photographer Amira Mortada, and the philosopher Omar Rakhawy I embarked on a search for the light in the Egyptian capital. Recorded between 2014-19, the film documents our journey through the lights of the city, the Nile, and the desert. In addition, the film documents an inner search for answers; what is the light, what does it do, how can there be so much darkness and light in this world and inside ourselves, what is the meaning of these beings of light that sometimes present themselves in the midst of rituals, in our everyday lives, and in our dreams?

**Christian Suhr** is a filmmaker, associate professor, and coordinator of the Eye and Mind MSc-Track in Visual Anthropology at Aarhus University. His publications and film productions include the book and award-winning film *Descending with angels: Islamic exorcism and psychiatry* (Manchester University Press 2019; DER 2013).

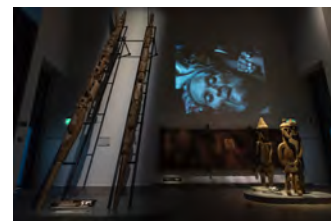


11.45-12.30: Presentation by Arine Kirstein Høgel (PhD in Film Studies)



### Haptic exploration of archival phantoms

In this presentation I address methods of creating aesthetic objects on the basis of audio-visual footage made during colonial eras. The intention is to discuss the use of interventionist filmic methods, such as haptic aesthetics, as a way to overcome the



dichotomy between observer and observed by posing multi-sensory and non-verbal forms of knowledge construction. In order to exemplify I present excerpts from my own work as well as other filmmakers, such as *La marcia dell'uomo—la marcia della conquista* (Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi 2001, Italy, 16 min) and *Passage* (Vium and Høgel, 2014, Denmark, 9 min.).

**Arine Kirstein-Høgel** has a Ph.D. in Film Studies and an MA in Film Studies and Anthropology, and completed postdoctoral work at the Eye and Mind Lab at Aarhus University in 2017. Forthcoming publications include *Looking for a “now-time” in family film footage: Appropriating and activating archival images in the present* (co-authored with Alyssa Grossman, *Visual Anthropology Review*, Wiley Online Library forthcoming 2020) and book chapter in *The Films of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi*, (ed. Alo Paistik and Jonathan Larcher. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2020)

12.30-13.15: Lunch break at the museum

13.15-14.00: Presentation by Associate Professor Christian Vium (Aarhus University):



### Notes on the Ephemerality of Vernacular Archives in St Croix, the US Virgin Islands

In this talk, I will present and discuss material from my first fieldwork in the three-year research project ‘Reframing Danish Colonial History’, which constitutes an anthropological investigation of the

continued influence of Danish heritage on social life in the former Danish colonies. The project provides a multimodal analysis of how Danes have perceived and represented ‘the colonial other’ then and now through photography, drawings and written accounts. The departure point is a comparative anthropological critique of historical archives in close collaboration with people living in the former Danish colonies in Qeqertat (Greenland), Tranquebar (India), and St. Croix (the West Indies) as well as historians, archivists and other experts at Danish universities, museums, research libraries, and archives.



**Christian Vium** is Associate Professor at the Department of Anthropology in Aarhus, Denmark.

14.00-14.45: Presentation by Anne Chahine (PhD student, Aarhus University):



### **The Future Memory Collection: An Online Archive and Virtual Exhibition Space**

The project engages young Greenlandic people living in Greenland and Denmark in collaboratively exploring and experimenting with perceptions of history, memory, contemporary culture and future imaginations in their respective post(-)colonial settings. Building upon design and visual anthropology, the study aims to develop new participatory methodologies for understanding different forms of memory practice. Co-creation and the idea of doing research with rather than about are at the core of the overall design of the study. The Future Memory Collection is part of Anne Chahine's on-going PhD dissertation and connected to the Horizon 2020 Innovative Training Network 'POEM' (Participatory Memory Practices). The study is scheduled to be executed over a total time span of three years between October 2018 and September 2021 in the anthropology department at Aarhus University.



**Anne Chahine** is a practice-based researcher currently pursuing her PhD in Anthropology at Aarhus University in Denmark. She holds an M.A. in Visual and Media Anthropology from the Freie Universität Berlin and has a bachelor degree in Media Design with the focus on documentary film.

14.45-15.15: Coffee/tea break

15.15-16.00: Presentation by Professor Peter I. Crawford (Department of Social Sciences, UiT):



### **Visual food for thought. Using film in research on food in Oceania and Europe**

Using examples from research carried out in connection with a long-term ethnographic film project in the Reef Islands (Solomon Islands) and a more recent ongoing research project concerning *Pata Negra* ham in Extremadura in Spain, I reflect on why audio-visual media are almost indispensable in such research due to their sensorial propensities and why this is particularly important when the subject matter itself is intrinsically related to a sensual experience, as is the case in what has become known as an anthropology of food.

**Peter I. Crawford** is professor of Visual Anthropology at UiT and currently head of the international master programme of visual anthropology (MVA). He formed part of the Camera as Cultural Critique research project at Aarhus University before returning to Tromsø in 2017. He is publishing editor of Intervention Press ([www.intervention.dk](http://www.intervention.dk)) and on the editorial board of the international journals Visual Anthropology and AnthroVision, and co-editor of Norsk antropologisk tidsskrift (the Norwegian journal of anthropology).



16.00-16.30: Closing discussion followed by comments from Gary Kildea (Independent filmmaker, Australia)

18.30-19.30: Small reception for invited guests, further information will be given on the day

**Day 2, 27 August.**

**Venue:** The cinema/kino, UiT main campus, Teorifagbygget 6, Room 6.222 (Address: Hansine Hansens veg 18)

9.30-10.30: Keynote address by Professor Clément Dili Palāi (Dean, FALSH, University of Maroua):



**When oral, written and visual meet: some methodological perspectives**

African knowledge is essentially based on orality as a mode of communication and as a system of thought, which has always coexisted with the written word, both in its perception and in its form. Research on languages, literatures and cultures in Africa has often been too theoretical, thus targeting primarily an elitist audience. Even in the case of oral literature, documentary research, data collection and analysis, and the interpretation of results tend to favour the intellectual world more than the local, which nevertheless produces the essential fieldwork material. The advent and the permanent presence of the visual (from the shooting to the exploitation of the image) offer to the researcher several methodological possibilities, to reach a wider public.

**Clément Dili Palāi** is Professor of African Literature at the University of Maroua in Cameroon, where he simultaneously holds the positions of Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences (FALSH) and Head of the Department of African Languages, Literatures and Cultures. He is the author of numerous books and scientific articles.



10.30-11.00: Coffee/tea break

11.00-11.45: Presentation by Associate Professor Trond Waage (Department of Social Sciences, UiT):



**Beyond Politeness**

‘Film as a tool in collaboration and cross-cultural communication producing anthropological knowledge’ has been a kind of key phrase summing up the approach of the visual anthropology program at UiT since our first application to the Norwegian research council in 1997. In this presentation I will give examples of ways collaborative filmmaking can contribute to the production of anthropological knowledge with a cross-cultural potential. I underline the anthropological importance of our collaborators’ engagement in the projects and the interpretation of the filmmaking process through its various stages. Examples will be given from my own film production: *Struggle for a Living* (2000, photo-documentary), *Let’s Build a Waterfall* (2016), *The world has not changed* (2018), and the work-in-progress, *Children of Crisis* (working title).



Bio to follow \*\*\*

11.45-12.30: Presentation by Babette Koulthoumi (PhD, University of Maroua)

**Title to follow \*\*\***

Abstract to follow \*\*\*

Bio to follow \*\*\*

12.45-13.45: Lunch break at Árdna, the Saami cultural centre on campus

14.00-14.45: Presentation by Associate Professor Bjørn Arntsen (Department of Social Sciences, UiT):

**Developing visual anthropology in Northern Cameroon and Northern Norway – a collaborative approach.**

The collaboration between UIT and the universities of Northern Cameroon started in 1992 with the Anthropos project that provided scholarships for many Master's students and PhD candidates. The University of Maroua opened in 2008, becoming the second university in Northern Cameroon. This new institution recruited academics who were former student-beneficiaries of Anthropos scholarships. One of the many results of the collaborative activities between the University of Ngaoundéré and UIT was the development of Visual Cultural Studies. Since its start, VCS hosted 20 exchange students from Cameroon, all attending one of the two collaborating universities. Four of these students were eventually employed in fixed or recruitment positions at the University of Maroua and three of them manage the Visual Anthropology options at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology. One of them, Babette Koulthoumi, defended her PhD, consisting of a written thesis and a film, at the University of Maroua in 2016 and Mouadjamou Ahmadou and André Ganava will defend later this year. This network based in the long collaborative efforts stands behind the VISCAM project started in 2017, running until 2021. The VISCAM project is to develop further the Visual Anthropology programs at the three collaborating universities by exchanges of students and staff, and by the joint development of course programs and digital learning tools. The project aims for the creation of applicable knowledge about the changing livelihood situation in Northern Cameroon by the use of audio-visual means.

**Bjørn Arntsen** is Associate Professor in Visual Anthropology at UIT and the coordinator of the VISCAM project. He has been doing research on fisheries resource management and migration in the Northernmost part of Cameroon since the turn of the millennium.

14.45-15.30: Presentation by Bata Diallo (PhD student, UiT/University of Bamako):



**“Death does not terminate the soul.” An analysis of the political, literary and ethnographic thought of Fily Dabo Sissoko (1900-1964), one of modern Mali’s founding fathers and my maternal grandfather**

Fate has brought me to this subject in various ways. Actually, the original proposal for my PhD research was about activist youth groups (and other associative movements) in the city of Gao, in far northern Mali; associations that sprang up in adaptive response to the political upheavals and ensuing social chaos of recent years. For medical reasons I had to choose a new research topic, which is on the life and thought of my late grandfather, Fily Dabo Sissoko, teacher-philosopher-politician and proud Malian. He was not only a man of letters and a leader at the birth of the nation but also one of Mali’s first ethnographers (albeit self-taught) who, in the 1930s engaged in vigorous debate by correspondence with the leading anthropological thinkers of his day, for example, with Lucien Lévy-Bruhl about concepts in “How Natives Think”. He was also known to refute aspects of James George Frazer’s pioneering work on religion in “The Golden Bough” (1890).



**Bata Diallo** is a PhD student at the University of Tromsø, Norway. She studied Visual Anthropology in the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Bamako, Mali. In 2008 She took part in a special ethnographic film workshop conducted by the Visual Cultural Studies program at the University of Tromsø, Norway. On the basis of the short film made in this workshop she was selected to travel to Tromsø under a NORAD scholarship to enter the master programme in visual anthropology. The one-hour film *Djeneba*, completed in 2011, was her graduation film. She started her PhD project in January 2018.

15.30-16.00: Coffee/tea break

16.00-16.45: Presentation by Professor emerita Lisbet Holtedahl (Department of Social Sciences, UiT):

**Anthropological filmmaking: lessons learned**



As a young novice anthropologist in the field, I made drawings of people and asked children to do the same thing. I also took pictures and shot 16 mm film material. This was in Eastern Niger 1970. I went home full of expectations. and looked forward to convey all my impressions and images from people’s lives to people in Norway. I did not at all expect the trouble I got into: no matter how beautiful a woman was in my material, my Norwegian audiences only showed pity. I thus became aware of the difficulty of conveying impressions of Africa. In my first film, *Niger-Norge* (1975), I address the living conditions of women in a village in eastern Niger, contrasting with corresponding scenes shot in Tromsø. I wanted to convey a provocative and tongue-in-cheek glimpse of what Westerners consider normal as a way of overcoming stereotypes. The potential and challenge of adequately translating different life worlds through film continues to occupy me. In my work, I have always had Western as well as African audiences in mind – their longings and their prejudices. My main goals are to enable them to empathize with the protagonists and to create space for identification.



Professor emerita in Visual anthropology, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø. Born in 1946 in Copenhagen, studied in Copenhagen, Oslo and Paris (history of art / anthropology). Participated in the foundation of NAFA. Initiator and head of the Anthropos collaborative university programme Ngaoundere-Tromsø 1992-2005. Founded the Visual Cultural Studies Master's programme at UiT. Since 1970 visual ethnographic research in Eastern Niger, Northern Norway and Northern Cameroon.

16.45-17.15: Closing discussion followed by comments from Gary Kildea (Independent filmmaker, Australia)

19.00-? Dinner for invited guests at \*\*\* in the city centre

### Day 3, 28 August.

**Venue:** The lecture hall, Nedre Lysthus, main UiT campus (Address: Hansine Hansens veg 18)

9.30-10.15: Presentation by Balz Andrea Alter (PhD student, University of Basel):



#### **Limits of documentary storytelling betwixt and between personality rights, ruling law(s) and research ethics**

The presented audio-visual material is based on a long-term cinematographic experiment (2009-2017) applying ethno-fictional approaches in combination with a screen-back for feed-back process inspired by Jean Rouch's feed-back method (Garlinski & Rouch: 1991). It will be analysed in order to bring up questions focusing on the limits of documentary storytelling, limits given by frameworks of personality rights, ruling law(s) and applied research ethics.

**Balz Andrea Alter** is currently working at the University of Basel on an audio-visual PhD thesis about the composition of the common world through art and politics in contemporary Cameroon and its diaspora, supervised by Prof. Peter I. Crawford, Prof. Jürgen Mohn and Prof. Adrian Hermann.



10.15-10.45: Film screening *The Future of Visual Anthropology*, introduced by Peter I. Crawford

10.45-11.15: Coffee/tea break

11.15-12.00: Closing panel and plenary discussion on the future of visual anthropology in the Nordic countries, Cameroon and Mali.

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