

Conference – April 2012

London – City of Paradox

CALL FOR PAPERS

In 2012 London will be a focus of public interest worldwide. The Olympic Games will bring intense media coverage, viewed by the British government and by numerous interest groups as an opportunity to celebrate the city as an economic hub and a centre of global cultural activity.

We wish to address these issues in the context of independent assessments - of the city, its histories, its cultural heritage, and its complex and contradictory role within contemporary global networks. From 3 to 5 April 2012 the University of East London will host an international conference: *London - City of Paradox*.

This event considers the city in its local, national and transnational contexts. It aims to stimulate discussion among academics, community activists, artists and others, encouraging development of informed, critical perspectives on London. It recognises that London is viewed and experienced in a host of ways: by its residents past and present; by those influenced by national, colonial and imperial authorities centred in the city; and by those who have embraced, contested and resisted the latter.

This will be a multi-disciplinary event, drawing on insights from History, Geography, Sociology, Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Film Studies, Migration Studies, Refugee Studies and Urban Studies. It will engage those involved in visual art, performance, creative writing and in community action.

Keynote speakers include:

- Craig Calhoun (New York University)
- Paul Gilroy (London School of Economics)
- Ranabir Samaddar (Calcutta Research Group)
- Saskia Sassen (Columbia University)
- Jerry White (Birkbeck, University of London)

Themes: you are invited to contribute a paper to one of six thematic streams:

1. **Contending histories:** London as an object of historical study; London in the national narrative; "people's histories"; London, gender and history; history and community today; "official" history and the Olympic project.
2. **London and the world:** colonialism, neo-colonialism and the metropolitan city; commerce, slavery and empire; London and the neo-liberal networks; global city: London and the cities of the South.
3. **Race, racism and the city:** "hidden" and "invisible" populations; inclusion and exclusion; geographies of community; immigration, work and settlement; refuge and asylum; citizenship, multiculturalism, "cohesion" and integration today.
4. **East London:** the East End in narratives of London and nation; East London and the maritime networks; the East End as refuge; East End, gender and sexuality; resistance and radicalism; regeneration and the "new" East End.
5. **Imaging and Performing London:** visual cultures yesterday and today – film, photography, multimedia, performance.
6. **City and spectacle:** London and the Olympic cities – global spectacle and local reality. Documenting the Olympics past and present.

Please send an abstract of 250-300 words by 1 October 2011 to Mary Sutton: M.J.Sutton@uel.ac.uk
(All enquiries about the conference also to Mary Sutton.)

London – City of Paradox is organised together with the Runnymede Trust, London East Research Institute, Raphael Samuel History Centre, Matrix East Research Lab, the Centre for Narrative Research and the Centre for Cultural Studies Research.