

**14/15 oct 2016**

*Visual Anthropology and  
the City*

**UCL Institute of Archaeology Heritage Studies & Royal Anthropological Institute**

# *Visual Anthropology and the City*

'Visual Anthropology and the City' is a two-day-symposium which brings together anthropologists, filmmakers and artists. Urban anthropology has fascinated journalists, photographers and policy makers with the emergence of the Chicago School since the 1920s. Ethnography and long-term research facilitated deeper insights into the everyday lives of urban neighborhoods that were often associated with violence, crime and housing problems. Cinema and photography have also since their inception engaged with the urban, and their development is deeply entwined with that of the modern metropolis. We are interested in visual research that looks at modernity, subcultures, non-western cities, regeneration, urban elites, domestic space, social movements and urban architecture. In this symposium we will discuss films, photography and writings on the subject from both academic and practitioners' perspectives.

## *Locations*

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016 14.00-19.00

UCL Cruciform Building B304 - LT1 on Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016 10.00-17.30

Institute of Archaeology, Heritage Studies, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY, room: G6LT

## *Organisers*

Dr Barbara Knorpp (Anthropologist, UCL/Brunel University) [barbara.knorpp@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.knorpp@gmail.com)  
Caterina Sartori (RAI Film Officer) [film@therai.org.uk](mailto:film@therai.org.uk)

**Day 1 14 October 2016 UCL Cruciform Building B304 LT1**

14.00 Registration + Welcome

**Session 1 “London”**

- 14.20 Anthony Iles Inventory: Flesh and Stone
- 14.40 Anna Viola Sborgi *“This was our home”*: community and urban regeneration in moving image representations of East London
- 15.00 Haim Bresheeth *Convivencia* in Turnpike Lane
- 15.20 Caterina Sartori London Housing crisis on film
- 16.00 Coffee break

**Session 2 “Shifting Identities”**

- 16.30 David Kendall Disappearing into Night
- 16.50 Ektoras Arkomanis Work / Memories of Work
- 17.10 Lana Askari Lost in Transition: A Visual Ethnography on Imagining Future, Planning and the State in Iraqi Kurdistan
- 18.00 Wine reception
- 19.30 Delegates Dinner

**Day 2 15 October 2016 UCL Institute of Archaeology G6LT**

**Session 3 “Visual Representations of city life in art and film”**

- 10.00 Jessica O'Donnell Francis Bacon and the Street
- 10.30 Katarzyna Puzon Visualising Beirut
- 11.00 Burcu Bakö The cinematic representation of impact of neoliberal urban policies in Istanbul
- 12.00 Lunch

**Session 4 “Urban Regeneration”**

- 13.00 Ioanna Manoussaki-Adamopoulou and Liev Cherry Mining Detroit
- 13.30 Angela Torresan Fear and desire: Filmed conversation of gentrification in a Rio de Janeiro favela
- 14.00 Michael Dieminger Centre of the centre
- 15.00 Coffee Break

**Session 5 “New methodologies”**

- 15.30 Susan Hansen and Danny Flynn Longitudinal photo-documentation: recording urban dialogue
- 16.00 Camilla Morelli Forest hunters to slum dwellers: the lives and futures of migrant indigenous youth in urban Amazonia
- 16.30 Emiliano Esposito Outcasts from the past
- 17.00 Maria Salaru The Block

## 14.00–15.30 London

### 14.20

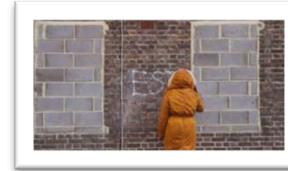
#### Inventory: Flesh and Stone

Making timely urban studies of Elephant and Castle, the Marquess Estate and Harlow New Town in the mid-1990s, art group and self-published journal, *Inventory* (1995-2005), initiated their practice with a call for a 'fierce sociology'. Through this contrarian methodology and practice they opposed the scientific category of humanity (*homo sapiens*) to a more playful ensemble driven by passionate enquiry (*homo ludens*). Seizing upon a 'bewitched spot' at the 'crossroads of magic and positivism', a point of tension established by Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *Inventory*'s 'fiercely sociological' gaze borrowed from the supposed objectivity and interdisciplinarity of sociology and attempted to both bring it closer to, and pollute it with, a messthetics of everyday life. Reacting against the professionalising tendencies of the contemporary art scene surrounding them, *Inventory* sought to deprofessionalise aspects of anthropological analysis just as such tools were themselves falling out of use in the profession. This presentation will summarise some of the contributions of the journal and the group to urban studies and attempt to assess their self-invented para-anthropological and experimental perspective.

**Anthony Iles** PhD candidate, School of Art and Design Middlesex University and a contributing editor the journals *Mute* and *Cesura/Accesso* Email: [anthony\\_iles@yahoo.com](mailto:anthony_iles@yahoo.com)

### 14.40

#### This was our home: community and urban regeneration in moving image representations of East London



London has emerged as a laboratory for global trends in urban renewal from the late 1970s, when the radical redevelopment of the Docklands was first envisaged, to the Olympic regeneration in 2012. East London, in particular, a relatively deprived area with a strong local character and sense of community, has undergone a radical, extensive regeneration, showing all the contradictions in the process, gentrification in the first place. In this paper, I will specifically focus on the multi-faceted representations of socially diverse and multi-ethnic communities in moving images on social housing, such as the essay film *Estate. A Reverie* (Andrea Luka Zimmermann, 2015) and the TV series *Chewing Gum* (Channel 4, 2015). I will look at the different representations of urban regeneration conveyed by these visual materials, analysing them within the wider visual landscape made up by promotions of redevelopments in East London (architectural visualisations and property development videos) where social and ethnic diversity are often advocated in line with the *convergence* principle – enacted by the creation of mixed developments – but, at the same time, they are frequently represented in stereotypical and less nuanced forms.

**Anna Viola Sborgi** King's College London, Film Studies  
Email: [anna.sborgi@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:anna.sborgi@kcl.ac.uk)

15.00

**Convivencia in Turnpike Lane**



Turnpike Lane, (Tottenham Lane until 1893) less than 800 yards long, is at the heart of the New London, a microcosm of the Global metropolis; here, more

than 120 languages are spoken, and people from all parts of the world live and work in close proximity. Their cultural heritage is what makes the road so special – every single door leads to another part of the planet, to another part of world history. The people living and working here have come to London as a result of wars, crises and conflicts – all parts of the world are represented in what must be one of the richest human tapestry anywhere. This is London at its most vibrant iteration – a world community living in harmony, where difference is an asset, not a problem. The paper deals with this cultural, linguistic and ethnic environment through a media installation using video, still photographs, maps sound and text.

**Haim Bresheeth** Professorial Research Associate, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Email: [hb26@soas.ac.uk](mailto:hb26@soas.ac.uk)

15.20

**London Housing crisis on film**



This paper focuses on the work of artists and filmmakers who have engaged with the housing crisis in London, and specifically with the privatisation and demolition of public housing. Experimental work such as *Concrete Heart Land* (Ball and Novakovic 2014), televisual

documentary *Home Sweet Home* (Colusso 2012), documentary essay *Estate: a Reverie* (Zimmermann 2015) and archival montage film *Out of the Rubble* (Woolcock 2016) have all in different ways engaged in formal experimentation to produce counter narratives and critical interventions around the demolition of housing estates. This body of work asks to be analysed critically and assessed in the light of film traditions that have tackled issues of the urban, of working class life, of the everyday and its relation to the political; whilst at the same time reflecting on issues of fetishisation that risk to accompany these kind of attempts at producing alternative histories of the present. I will attempt an analysis that understands 'film' to include the production and dissemination process, and para-filmic activities such as the creation of web-sites, Q&As and other engagements with 'the field'. I will relate this analysis to my research into the demolition of the Aylesbury Estate, South London.

**Caterina Sartori** PhD Candidate, Goldsmiths, University of London RAI Film Officer Email: [csart001@gold.ac.uk](mailto:csart001@gold.ac.uk)

15.40–16.00

**Discussion**

16.00–16.30

**Coffee break**

## 16.30–18.00 Shifting Identities

### 16.30 Disappearing into Night

In Gulf cities the rapid development of urban infrastructures transforms the built environment. In these settings electrical light sculpts new architectural landscapes, reorganises boundaries and visually erodes soon-to-be forgotten neighbourhoods erased by structural change. At night in Doha, Qatar artificial light and built environment fuse together to form fresh visual landscapes. The afterglow of overhanging floodlights merges with fluctuating climatic conditions to guide the focal direction. Crumbling sites become saturated and cloaked by the diffused electric light generated by 24-hour construction sites. In addition, temporality is an important structural component; the luminosity of building sites extends beyond the foreground, projected on existing facades, walls, buildings and streets. Sensory experiences of photography juxtapose with perceptual manifestations of resettlement whilst roaming at night. In residential streets atmospheres emerge that appear to be silent yet in reality never sleep in the sky glow enveloping the biosphere. Moreover, if an entire city is conceived as an archive, buildings are not only sites of infrastructural order, but become active through architectural destruction and re-construction. Delineated by an assemblage of activities and events created by inhabitants in particular places and moments in time. Consequently, triggering audio-visual works and soundscapes that express the city as an archive.

**David Kendall** Visiting Research Fellow, Goldsmiths  
University of London Email: [d.kendall@gold.ac.uk](mailto:d.kendall@gold.ac.uk)

### 16.50 Work / Memories of Work

The area of Eleonas, in Athens, has a rich history of shifting identities: in ancient times it was the olive grove of Athens; in the 19th century, small industries developed there to aid the reconstruction of the capital. Today, after a brief industrialization period in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Eleonas is a vast leftover space in the heart of the city, which continues to host diverse sites and activities: ruins of old farmhouses or kilns, abandoned factories, scavengers' markets, tanneries, construction sites, as well as a camp recently set up for Syrian and other refugees. *Work / Memories of Work* consists of three short films projected simultaneously and a written reflection. The films revolve around past and present occupations in Eleonas: *Skin* is an observational film in which the visceral nature of work in a tannery is juxtaposed to the hypnotic sound and rhythm of the machines. *Ghosts (Memory 1)*. Long tracking shots through streets with factories, as well as the aerial views of a factory shell, evoke the memories of work in the paper and fabrics industries in Eleonas, and invite contemplation on these extinct occupations. *Hephaistos (Memory 4)*. In a dilapidated site—an oven built in the 1970s for melting batteries that never functioned—lives a man with a slight limp who makes a living out of scrap materials. He demonstrates how to manually burn metals, but without using actual material or even naming the metals, because burning them is illegal.

**Ektoras Arkomanis** Senior Lecturer in Architectural History and Theory in London Metropolitan University  
Email: [h.arkomanis@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:h.arkomanis@londonmet.ac.uk)

**17.10 Lost in Transition: A Visual Ethnography on Imagining Future, Planning and the State in Iraqi Kurdistan**

This paper focuses on how people living in the de facto state of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraqi Kurdistan imagine, plan and (re) negotiate their futures by (visually) exploring infrastructural planning projects in the city of Sulaimani. I look at how, by keeping its inhabitants dependent on the Kurdish state for their livelihoods, people's imaginaries for the future generate different temporalities across generations. After 2003, the maturation of the KRG introduced new political and economic possibilities. However, recent clashes with the Islamic State (DA'ESH) and dropping oil prices have destabilized this "state in the making" into one in "crisis". In its attempts to make an unknown future knowable, development planning and infrastructure present fertile ground for an anthropology of the 'not-yet' (Larkin 2013; Abram and Weszkalnys 2013). Understanding horizons of imagination as determined by the visual and temporal, they have spatial and temporal dimensions (Crapanzano 2004). Engaging with infrastructural planning developments through ethnographic documentary film, I attempt to draw out how people's future imaginaries relate to that of the state engaging with issues of temporality, planning, infrastructure and the state.

**Lana Askari** PhD Candidate in Social Anthropology with Visual Media, University of Manchester

Email: [lana.askari@manchester.ac.uk](mailto: lana.askari@manchester.ac.uk)

**17.30-19.00 Discussion/ Wine Reception**

**DAY 2 15 Oct 2016 UCL Room LTG6**

**10.00-12.00 Visual Representations of city life in art and film**

**10.00 Francis Bacon and the Street'**

From at least the early 1950s, Francis Bacon articulated his wish to paint a series of street scenes. The painter's aspiration is reflected by the significant number of loose leaves torn from newspapers, magazines and photography books on street life that were found in his studio. These images featuring the work of photographers such as Brassai, Roger Mayne and Robert Frank and the anonymous, un-posed spontaneity of a city street in motion in photography books such as London: City of Any Dream (1965) had enormous potential to trigger compositional and figurative ideas for the artist. Bacon commissioned John Deakin to photograph his friends on the streets of Soho during the 1950s and 1960s, photographs that were used directly by Bacon in his paintings. Based on original research into the rich seam of material in the Francis Bacon Studio archive, this paper will offer an overview of the diverse literary, poetical and visual sources on street life belonging to the artist; demonstrate how the artist articulated his interest in the subject through his handwritten notes, material interventions and in interviews; and discuss specifically how Bacon would deliberately blur the boundaries between interior and exterior by re-contextualising visual sources drawn from city life and transpose them into domestic settings as for example in his painting *Portrait of George Dyer and Lucian Freud* (1967) thereby radically changing their meaning.

**Jessica O'Donnell** Collections Curator/Acting Head of Collections Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane  
Email: [odonnell.jess01@gmail.com](mailto: odonnell.jess01@gmail.com)

10.30

## Visualising Beirut



The city is a sensory phenomenon and visual images are part and parcel of imagining, experiencing, and narrating the urban space. Hence, there seems to be nothing more 'natural' than thinking about cities in terms of visuality and materiality. The images of

Lebanon's capital city provide a multiplicity of overlapping strands that hold for Beirut's variety in terms of its visual representations, frequently contradictory ones. This 'richness' of pictorial depictions is manifested in the number of labels that Beirut has acquired through the decades, such as the 'Paris of the Middle East', 'a meeting point between East and West', and a 'Phoenix city'. Lebanon's capital has also been named *Sitt al-Dunya* (Lady of the World) in Arabic novels, or an ever-changing metropolis, emblematically portrayed in Elias Khoury's novel entitled 'The Journey of Little Gandhi'. Approaching Beirut as a laboratory for a photographic analysis (Collier and Collier 1986), this paper seeks to examine how postwar and postcolonial urban space is created, remembered, and reproduced through visual images. In this respect, I also discuss visual methodologies and how they address people's perception of and interaction with the built environment they inhabit (cf. MacDougall 2005).

**Katarzyna Puzon** Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage (CARMaH), Humboldt University of Berlin Email: [katarzyna.puzon@hu-berlin.de](mailto:katarzyna.puzon@hu-berlin.de)

11.00

## The cinematic representation of impact of neoliberal urban policies in Istanbul

The purpose of this study is to examine the process of urban development and change of Istanbul within the framework of the representation of the city as a cinematic space, *i.e.* mainly through the post-1980 films. A comparative analysis between change of the urban development and the depictions of the city in the films is the main method of this study. Turkey's economy growth is linked to its construction sector and reproducing urban space because of the neoliberal politics. This situation has been causing profound changes of Istanbul physically, socially and culturally over the last thirty years. This expansion process of Istanbul in the globalization period and its cinematographic representation has to be analyzed within the context of cinema as a method of urban studies. Seven films were analyzed in this study: *Muhsin Bey* (*Mr. Muhsin*, Y. Turgul, 1987), *Tabutta Rövaşata* (*Somersault in a Coffin*, D. Zaim, 1999), *Büyük Adam Küçük Aşk* (*Hejar*, H. İpekçi, 2001), *Uzak* (*Distant*, N.B. Ceylan, 2002), *11'e 10 Kala* (*10 to 11*, P. Esmer, 2009), *Şimdiki Zaman* (*Present Tense*, B. Söylemez, 2012), *Çekmeköy Underground* (A. Türkmen, 2015). The main discourses of the films are consisted of these changes in a conscious way and concern themselves with social, economical, physical transformation of the city. The films examined in this study are different extensions of the knot in the globalization process of Istanbul.

**Burcu Bakö** Istanbul Yıldız Technical University, Department of History and Theory of Architecture Email: [brcbako@gmail.com](mailto:brcbako@gmail.com)

11.30-12.00

Discussion

12.00-13.00

Lunch



## 13.00–15.00 Urban Regeneration

### 13.00 Mining Detroit: reflections on urban 'regeneration' and value extraction through multiple mixed-media experiential perspectives

Structured as a dialogue between film-maker and academic, the presentation will draw on audiovisual materials recorded in the spring of 2016 to look at the current 'regeneration' in Detroit, with a particular focus on the generational transmission of authority, class privilege and whiteness in competing claims to the city's land, resources, and historical narrative/s. Through apparently conflicting intergenerational perspectives on how the modern city came to be and 'what it should become', four residents of Detroit (current, ex, old and new) speak to notions of moral authority, white legacy, anti-racist knowledge, empathy, structural discrimination and relations to/with 'community'; offering varying views and understandings of the ongoing gentrification and its effects, connected to their visions and hopes for the city. Through first account audiovisual narratives, these generational differences give way to a striking continuity in classed and raced understandings of the self as an agent of positive urban change. Using the idea of 'mining' the city- for both material and ideological resources, we examine the moralisation and racialisation of various practices- from scrapping and looting, to 'architectural salvage', art, property speculation and development, whilst considering the role(s) of the film-maker and academic within this schema.

**Ioanna Manoussaki-Adamopoulou** UCL Visual Anthropology Email: [i.manoussaki.adamopoulou@gmail.com](mailto:i.manoussaki.adamopoulou@gmail.com)

**Liev Cherry** PhD Candidate, Geography, Queen Mary University of London Email: [l.cherry@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:l.cherry@qmul.ac.uk)

### 13.30

### Fear and desire: Filmed conversation of gentrification in a Rio de Janeiro favela

In the wake of an ambitious urban regeneration programme and real estate expansion planned under the auspices of the recent mega-events, Rio de Janeiro's state government launched a securitisation policy to tackle organised crime in critically located slums (henceforth favelas). This 'pacification' policy has been partially successful and has brought profound changes to the residents of the affected areas. In this presentation I use what I call video research to explore the perceived pacification-lead gentrification process taking place in Vidigal, a favela located in the hills between two of the most affluent neighbourhoods of Rio. My ethnographic research in Vidigal included a variety of means to engage with the people I met, one of them was video recording of encounters and conversations between different agents through which they expressed their views and access each other's authority to weight in on the state of the favela . Drawing on the work of Hill (1995) and Modan (2006), I take the concept of moral geography that focus on different moral value systems within a specific physical geography, to try to bring together the performances and expressions I captured in the videos with the various discourses on the role of gentrification both as an individual strategy to escape poverty and as a global phenomenon that aggravates inequality.

**Angela Torresan** Lecturer in Visual Anthropology, Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology, University of Manchester Email: [Angela.Torresan@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Angela.Torresan@manchester.ac.uk)

**14.00**

**Centre of the Centre**

The project 'Centre of the Centre' explores the changing 'sense of place' of local residents affected by an urban regeneration process in the historic city centre of Mexico City. The imposed urban regeneration unleashes a harsh contrast between a formal urban heritage, which is institutionally produced and internationally connected, and a popular urban heritage, which is based on the contemporary cultural production in daily life, as well as including the preservation of traditions within those local practices. The search for one's own identity within the overarching concept of heritage invokes a new understanding of and relationship with the place the residents live in. In order to think about a 'sense of place' it is necessary to deal with the multitude of ways in which people make meaning from their environment. With the medium of a video-installation it is possible to reflect on the multi-vocality of perceptions and the multi-spatiality of places. The temporal and spatial immersion in a multi-screen video-installation enables the spectator to enter into a sensorial interaction with the material world presented to her/him, provoking an immediate contact with the "lifeworlds" of others. My presentation will include the double-screen projection and a verbal summary of the filmed interviews. In my talk I will reflect on the urban regeneration and how it deploys the concept of heritage, contrasting a multitude of daily-life experiences in this urban space.

**Michael Dieminger** Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology  
University of Manchester Email: [michael.p.dieminger@gmail.com](mailto:michael.p.dieminger@gmail.com)

**14.30-15.00**

**Discussion**

**15.00-15.30**

**Coffee break**

**15.30-17.30 New Methodologies**

**15.30**

**Longitudinal photo-documentation: Recording urban dialogue**

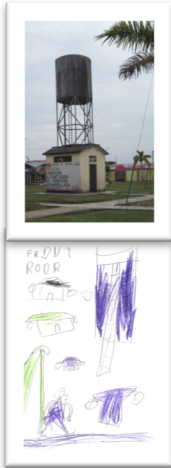
This paper advocates a methodological approach based on the documentation of urban sites over time. Longitudinal photo-documentation is a form of data collection that allows street art and graffiti to be examined as visual dialogue. By capturing everyday forms of public mark making alongside both more recognizably 'artistic' images, and more visually 'offensive' tags, we aim to attend to graffiti and street art's existence within a field of social interaction. We describe a relevant analytic tool drawn from ethnomethodology and conversation analysis – the next turn proof procedure – which may be adapted in order to study street art and graffiti as a form of asynchronous, yet sequential, visual communication. This form of analysis departs from existent forms of analysis in that it is not concerned with the semiotics or iconography of decontextualized individual photographs. We present a worked analytic example from our three year visual research project to demonstrate the utility of longitudinal photo-documentation in making visible the dialogue amongst artists, writers and community members, and we employ the principles of the next turn proof procedure to illustrate the ways in which each party shows their understanding of the prior work on the wall via their own contribution to the 'conversation.'

**Susan Hansen** Middlesex University, London  
Email: [S.Hansen@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:S.Hansen@mdx.ac.uk)

**Danny Flynn** London Metropolitan University  
Email: [dannyamosflynn@hotmail.com](mailto:dannyamosflynn@hotmail.com)

16.00

**Forest hunters to slum dwellers: the lives and futures of migrant indigenous youth in urban Amazonia**



This presentation will use participatory visual media-drawings, photography, filming and sensory walks-to explore recent and on-going forms of migration, social change and urbanisation in Amazonia from the perspective of indigenous children and youth.

Drawing on fieldwork with indigenous Matsigenka people in Peru, the talk will address the experiences of young Amerindians who are leaving behind a hunter-gathered lifestyle in the rainforest and moving to non-indigenous urban settings in order to access what they see as better livelihoods. In most cases, however, they

end up facing radical struggles and hardship in the city, where they are becoming a new class of slum at the margins of the urban space and its economy. My aim is to bring out the experiences, challenges and struggles of these migrant indigenous youth in the city. Using videos, photographs and drawings produced by young Amerindians themselves, I will try to offer a sense of their own feelings, perceptions and difficulties in the city. In doing so, I consider how non-indigenous media and technologies are understood, adapted and negotiated within indigenous aesthetics and worldviews; but I will also ask whether collaborative visual methods might open up new possibilities for impact and development in a globalised world.

**Camilla Morelli** Department of Archaeology and Anthropology  
University of Bristol, Email: [camilla.morelli@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:camilla.morelli@bristol.ac.uk)

16.30

**Outcasts from the past**



Ponticelli is a neighborhood in eastern periphery of Naples. Its historical center, the casale – Italian expression for a group of few rural houses – was guzzled in the expansion of Naples at the end of II WW. The public city is the model that local authorities undertook to address the urban expansion of the city, building new residential areas beyond urban periphery. The lack of a solid industrialization process and alternative investment opportunities and a lax urban

planning system make land and property market a profitable sector generating an unfettered process of urbanization, the main feature of which is speculation. The socio-spatial consequences of this are extensive and isolated public housing areas with low urban quality and without basic services and support facilities. Ponticelli is an example of non-industrial urbanization: a deprived residential district of Naples. One of the several public housing complexes of this area, Rione De Gasperi, has recently made the object of the Italian public opinion and the national and local press with regard to the relation between the housing emergency and public housing-related policy implemented by the local government. Born as a temporary residential complex to face the housing emergency after the II WW, Rione has survived for more than fifty years. In 2015, the local municipality implemented a re-settlement policy moving the inhabitants to a new social housing complex. This work investigates the phenomena of social exclusion clearly emerging as the following groups of individuals are overlooked by the public housing provisions: people living in illegal dwelling; not legalized squatters; family members of racketeering affiliates.

**Emiliano Esposito** PhD Candidate in Urban Studies at Gran  
Sasso Science Institute, Italy Email: [emiliano.esposito@gssi.infn.it](mailto:emiliano.esposito@gssi.infn.it)

## 17.00 The Block

This presentation will explore the rich social and material universe of a Romanian apartment building, as captured in the observational documentary *The Block*. The film follows the story of the block's administrator, in his effort to mediate relationships between neighbours, and it was recently awarded the *Best Documentary* prize at the *International Architecture and Film Festival Ficarq*. *The Block* forms part of my PhD research project that expands upon current anthropological debates in architecture, ecology and economic anthropology in order to examine how rapidly changing everyday life impacts on the infrastructure of buildings in post-socialist cities. I will discuss the manner in which inhabitants appropriate their block of flats in an interactive presentation, rich in visual material. Based on long-term participant observation and innovative visual methodologies, I will focus on the role various social actors play in the maintenance of blocks of flats in Piatra Neamţ, my PhD field site. Among the visual methods I used in my research, I will extensively discuss my use of films, maps, drawings and photographs (my own and my participants', but also archival ones). I will describe the manner in which I used this visual material to both engender new information in my research, but also to disseminate the research findings.

**Maria Salaru** Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology  
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*With special thanks to*

