

# Documentary and Performance: A One Day Symposium at the University of Surrey — Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011

All events will take place in the Nodus Building, University of Surrey, Stag Hill, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH. Information on how to get to the University and a map of the campus can be found at <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/about/visitors/>

9.30 – 10.00 Registration and Welcome

10.00 – 11.00 Panel 1 Performance and Reenactment

Chair: Helen Hughes

Toni-Lynn Frederick, 'Problems of Representation: Simon Srebnik & the Strategies of Re-enactment in Lanzmann's *Shoah*'

Hing Tsang, 'Killing as Performance: the ethics and techniques of reconstruction and performance in the context of Rithy Panh's *S21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine* (2003)'

11.00-11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 – 13.00 Panel 2 Contemporary documentary aesthetics and performance

Chair: Bella Honess Roe

Alina Bernstein and Inbar Shenhar, 'The ebb and flow of day-to-day banality: The performance of self in *Connected*' (Israeli tv video diaries)

Gabriela Calchi-Novati 'Documentary in the Age of Digital Biopolitics *Catfish* & the "Aesthetics of Amphibology"'

Birgit Kohler, *Performing Documentary – IT HAPPENED JUST BEFORE* (Anja Salomonowitz, 2006) as an Example of a New Documentary Strategy (German and Austrian hybrid docs)

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch (own arrangements)

14.00- 15.30 Documenting the Artist's Performance

Chair: Lois Davis

Ulrike Hanstein, 'Ron Vawter's Roy Cohn/Jack Smith Documented'

Barbara Elektra Droth, 'Interrogating the artist's private and public self through documentary film practice: the visual narrative in the performance of life'

Willemien Sanders, 'Woman at work... A documentary participant's extended performance of her professional self'

15.30 – 16.00 Tea Break

16.00 – 17.00 Choreography and Performance

Jennifer Jackson, 'Behind The Setting of Diamonds'

Lucia King, 'Filming an Indian pilgrimage as a mass choreography'

17.00 Symposium Ends

# Documentary and Performance:

## A One Day Symposium at the University of Surrey

Abstracts and Biographies in order of the symposium.

### **Toni-Lynn Frederick (University of Reading), 'Problems of Representation: Simon Srebnik & the Strategies of Re-enactment in Lanzmann's *Shoah*'**

Claude Lanzmann has described *Shoah* as a "fiction of the real." He has never clarified exactly what he means by this provocative statement, but based on some of the strategies he uses in this film, he seems to be suggesting that the "fiction" involves putting people who have been subjected to "real" and harrowing experiences into constructed environments that will allow them to re-enact certain aspects of their traumatic pasts in front of the camera.

As a method, Lanzmann is interested in a process of "rememoration," and he uses this strategy of re-enactment to probe the subconscious part of traumatized memory in some of the Holocaust survivors that he interviews. By mining a part of the distressed psyche that even the survivors themselves may not realize has been so traumatized, he believes he can access a living archive and tap into a truth about the past.

This paper will examine one of the most striking scenes in this nine-and-a-half documentary: the opening sequence where Holocaust survivor Simon Srebnik is placed in a small boat and filmed as he is taken up the Ner river in Chelmno. This section of the film is remarkable for a number of reasons, most notably because the filmmaker re-stages an event from Srebnik's past and has asked Srebnik to sing the same Prussian war songs the Nazis taught him when he was a child prisoner at Chelmno. The image of an impassive Srebnik sitting at the bow of the boat is eerie, and this staged river journey sets an unsettling tone for the measured and unrelenting pace that Lanzmann will move at for the duration of the film.

**Toni-Lynn Frederick** is an independent filmmaker, writer, and installation artist from Vancouver, Canada.

Her films contribute to the genre of first person non-fiction experimental documentary; they explore issues of personal identity, trauma, and memory. Through her multi-media installations, she builds ephemeral monuments concerned with the notion of commemoration and pilgrimage.

She is currently doing her PhD by practice at the University of Reading, England, where her research centers on re-enactment in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, as well as the traces of trauma and the Holocaust as they are revealed in memory, testimony, altered topography, and the artifact as remnant, gesture, and pilfered relic.

### **Hing Tsang (University of Surrey): 'KILLING AS PERFORMANCE'**

This paper considers the ethics and techniques of reconstruction and performance in the context of documentary in particular Rithy Panh's highly explosive *S21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine* (2003). The film is a highly perturbing portrait of the Tuol Sleng Interrogation Centre in Phnom Penh where 16,000 people were murdered and which has since become a museum and part of the global tourist trail.

It was here that Rithy Panh would reunite the torturers and their victims at regular intervals, and set up firstly dialogues between murderers and survivors, and secondly reconstructions of the interrogation and torture techniques which were part of the daily regime. His intention was to delve into the mind and being of the torturer in order to establish why and how these men could kill in the first place.

This paper argues that Panh's use of performance and reconstruction is different from more journalistic accounts which would otherwise attempt to establish a view from the outside. Instead, performance is used as a form of therapy, both for the murderers to face the consequences of their acts as well a more generalised treatment of the Kampuchean nation's overall trauma in regard to the genocide occurring after Year

Zero in 1975. Because the film poses questions about what constitutes the human self in the first place we shall therefore argue that the acting and (re)-viewing of these harrowing events performed is ultimately salutatory, life-affirming and necessary.

Keywords - trauma, performativity, embodiment, presentation of the self.

**Hing Tsang** (PhD) is a tutor in the Dance, Theatre, and Film Department of the University of Surrey where he teaches a mixture of practical and theoretical modules. He has recently completed a monograph on Peircean semeiotic for publication by Mouton Gruyter. His research interests are semeiotic, Chinese cinema, and documentary.

### **Alina Bernstein (College of Management) and Inbar Shenhar (Tel Aviv University): 'The ebb and flow of day-to-day banality: The performance of self in *Connected*.'**

The docu-reality '*Connected*', aired on Israeli television in July 2009, offering a collage of video diaries tracing the lives of five women<sup>1</sup>. During the course of roughly one year, each of the five "characters" filmed herself and her life using a personal video camera. The materials were then heavily cut and moulded into an emotional rollercoaster advancing the plots of the "heart" and the "self".

Ian Goode<sup>2</sup> points to what he considers a generic boundary crossing with regards to Reality TV and Soap Operas. According to Goode, the 'proximity to, and observation of, behaviour and character - previously the domain

of soap opera – [...] drives the performative formats of reality

television'. While traditional soap operas, particularly in the USA, are slowly going extinct, it seems their "soap-esque" traits continue to live on in other genres.

In '*connected*' the women, armed with a camera, enable us to cross the threshold into their homes and hearts. These women's private lives fill up the small screen with emotional excessiveness, internal contradictions and the heavy intensity of life, whilst the aesthetic of self-filming partakes in the text's performativity.

In this paper, we wish to discuss the manner in which these soap-like traits which in soap operas are manifested in the form of an artificial aesthetic, are recreated in the documentary text '*Connected*'.

Additionally, we would like to address the way in which these traits, commonly viewed as a performance of "femininity", come into play in the "male" version of the format, thus sketching a performative multiplicity which undermines binary gender performance.

**Alina Bernstein** (PhD) is senior lecturer at School of Media Studies, Collage of Management. Her main area of research is media and sport on which she publishes extensively. Among her publications is the book *Sport, Media, Culture: Global and Local Dimensions* (Frank Cass, 2003 co-edited with Neil Blain) and the forthcoming book *Bodies of Discourse: Sport Stars, Mass Media and the Global Public* (Peter Lang, 2012 co-edited with Cornel Sandvoss and Michael Real). She teaches a verity of undergraduate courses on television genres and as of 2011 is teaching, with Inabar Shenhar, a course on Reality Television.

**Inbar Shenhar** (BA) is currently a graduate student at the Tel Aviv University and writing her dissertation on "Family Representation in Reality Programmes (working title)". She is teaches at School

---

<sup>1</sup>The format was a success and was sold to many countries; in Israel a male version was aired in 2010. The 3<sup>rd</sup> female and 2<sup>nd</sup> male versions are intended for 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Goode, 'Value and Television Aesthetics'. *Screen*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2003), p. 108

of Media Studies, Collage of Management and at the Cinema & TV Arts Department, the Sapir Collage. She also works as Content Editor in reality programmes for Israeli TV.

## **Gabriella Calchi-Novati (Trinity College Dublin) ‘Documentary in the Age of Digital Biopolitics: *Catfish* & the “Aesthetics of Amphibology”’**

*‘To resist meaning does not necessarily lead to its mere denial’.*<sup>1</sup>

*‘Staring into the computer picture of other people’s lives is like gazing into an abyss: you get digital vertigo’.*<sup>2</sup>

According to contemporary art critic and philosopher Boris Groys ‘in recent decades it has become increasingly evident that the art world has shifted its interest away from the artwork and toward art documentation’, so that ‘art becomes a life form, whereas the artwork becomes non-art, a mere documentation of this art form’.<sup>3</sup> If we were to consider these claims in relation to the controversial film *Catfish* directed by Ariel Schulman and Henry Joost and released in September 2010, we would be confronted with a new kind of documentary, one that instead of capturing some sort of ‘truth or reality on the run’ (Trinh T. Minh-ha), presents us with a quite evanescent, fragmented, and pixelated performance of real(ity). Amphibology, thus, seems to be what is at stake in *Catfish*. The ambiguity of the title – in which the term *catfish* embodies already in itself an oxymoronic coexistence (cat/fish), a crisis of meaning of some sort - virally contaminates the whole documentary, from the characters to the locations, from beginning to end. *Catfish* turns amphibology into an art form. I would argue that, by reflecting the opacity hidden behind the apparent transparency of the social network *Facebook* and by employing opacity as a legitimate artistic means of expression, *Catfish* can be considered a filmic paradigm of what Giorgio Agamben laments as being the cipher of our current biopolitical times, that is, the ‘crisis of communication caused by the alienation of communicability itself’.<sup>4</sup> The relationship between art (in this very case *documentary*) and the contemporary *performances of self and the everyday* happens to be always-already entangled in the vertiginous digital matrix that frames and at times constitutes our lives. Dominated by the “absence of presence”, *Catfish* documents the ways in which the performances of the self in the age of digital biopolitics strive to conceal such an absence with self-reflexive signifiers such as photographs, phone calls, online-chats and text messages. By articulating the facets of what I would call the “aesthetics of amphibology”, I will conclude by advancing that when it comes to digital platforms such as *Facebook* and the like we all adhere to such an ambiguity and in so doing we mould it into an aesthetic form of self expression and self documentation. After all, as Agamben suggests, the *face* is in itself one of the most highly ambiguous features of the human body, for ‘the face is at once the irreparable being-exposed of humans and the very opening in which they hide and stay hidden.’<sup>5</sup>

1 Trinh T. Minh-ha, “Documentary Is/Not a Name,” *October* 52 (Spring 1990), 76-98: 76.

2 Peter Bradshaw, *Catfish – review*, guardian.co.uk, (16 December 2010), available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2010/dec/16/catfish-review> (accessed on 3/06/2011)

3 Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge, London: The MIT Press, 2008): 53; 54.

4 Giorgio Agamben, “Marginal Notes on ‘Commentaries on the Society of Spectacle,’” in *Means Without End. Notes on*

*Politics*, trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 73-89:84, and in “Notes on Politics,” in *MWE*, 109-118: 115.

5 Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End. Notes on Politics*: 91.

**Gabriella Calchi-Novati** received a B.A. *magna cum laude* in Letters and Philosophy and an M.A. with honours in Public Relations and Corporate Communication from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan (Italy). In 2006 she received an M.Phil. in Irish Drama and Film from the Drama Department, Trinity College Dublin, where she now teaches undergraduate courses in Performance Studies and Performance & Technology as well as postgraduate courses in Critical Theory (mainly on the work of Slavoj Žižek, Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito). In 2010, she started collaborating with Dr

Matthew Causey, Senior Lecturer in Drama and Director of the Arts Technology Research Lab (ATRL) in Trinity College Dublin. Since then, Dr Causey and Calchi-Novati have worked on a number of co-authored papers and projects, which will culminate with the publication of the book: *The Bio-Virtual: Techno-Performativity, Digital Camps and the Biopolitical Event*. Gabriella Calchi-Novati is the recipient for the academic year 2010-2011 of the prestigious *Samuel Beckett Scholarship*, awarded by Trinity College Dublin in conjunction with the Irish Government Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport. She is currently completing the last year of her Ph.D. research entitled *Performativities of Intimacy*.

### **Birgit Kohler (Arsenal-Institute for Film and Video Art, Berlin Performing Documentary) ‘IT HAPPENED JUST BEFORE (Anja Salomonowitz, 2006) as an Example of a New Documentary Strategy’**

Over the last ten years, a new, experimental variation on the documentary has emerged in Austrian and German filmmaking. Films such as *IT HAPPENED JUST BEFORE* (Anja Salomonowitz, 2006), *WOLFF VON AMERONGEN – DID HE COMMIT BANKRUPTCY OFFENCES?* (Gerhard Friedl, 2004), *GANGSTER GIRLS* (Tina Leisch, 2008), *MICHAEL BERGER. A HYSTERIA* (Thomas Fürhapter, 2010), *MEETING* (Stefan Landorf, 2009), *ORAL HISTORY* (Volko Kamensky, 2009), *THE KICK* (Andres Veiel, 2006), *THE PROBLEM IS MY WIFE* (Calle Overweg, 2003) and *HAMBURG LECTURES* (Romuald Karmakar, 2006) all make use of various types of alienation effects, performative sequences, explicit re-enactments and obviously contrived situations, quite literally staging the carefully researched documentary material they are based on. This specific combination of performative and documentary elements serves on the one hand to portray complex social realities (such as international women trafficking, economic crimes, the prison system and domestic violence, to name just a few) and expresses on the other a certain scepticism towards standard patterns of documentary representation. Several of the films mentioned above were either shot in studios, offer reconstructions of actual events, work with theatrical methods or are staged as a form of cinematic reading, whilst others borrow techniques from the world of fiction. What they all have in common is their willingness to eschew immediacy, often substituting the actual protagonists for actors reciting pre-formulated testimonies. This approach demonstrates a clear distrust of empathetic identification with individual fates whilst calling into question the very idea of alleged documentary evidence. The documentary material is instead "performed" – a strategy perhaps best described as "performative / performing documentary".

Taking the Performing Documentary film series I curated at the Arsenal Cinema, Berlin in June 2011 (<http://www.arsenal-berlin.de/de/arsenal/programmtext-anzeige/article/2254/194.html?cHash=108d2b531f>) as a starting point, I shall present and discuss a new documentary strategy using Anja Salomonowitz's *IT HAPPENED JUST BEFORE* (2006) as an example, a film which explores the subject of women trafficking and the everyday reality of female immigrants in a highly unusual manner.

**Birgit Kohler** is a Berlin-based program curator and film studies scholar. She is co-director of Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art ([www.arsenal-berlin.de](http://www.arsenal-berlin.de)) and a member of the selection committee for the International Forum of New Cinema of the Berlin Film Festival. She has taught classes on film (contemporary auteur cinema, feminist film theory, curation in theory and practice) and published articles in periodicals as well as film festival and exhibition catalogues. She is a founding member and member of the editorial board for the internet magazine "Nach dem Film" ([www.nachdemfilm.de](http://www.nachdemfilm.de)).

### **Ulrike Hanstein (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar), ‘Ron Vawter’s Roy Cohn/Jack Smith documented’**

Since Bill Nichols identified a performative mode of documentary film, performative elements have been widely discussed, whether on the part of the documentary subjects or the filmmakers. Re-working Nichols' argument, Stella Bruzzi emphasizes that documentary should be viewed as performative act. According to Bruzzi, the performative elements of documentaries stem from the self-conscious performances of its subjects and from the interaction between reality, performance and visual style.

From a different perspective, however, the connection between performance and documentary is even more complicated. Film and video documentations from the history of performance art could be seen as an examination of performance-based practices. The exploratory nature of documentary can invest in questions of perception, immediacy, cultural frameworks and strategies for the expression of identities. Accordingly, the performative potential of documentary can be interestingly introduced with reference to live performances and their audiovisual documentation.

Relying on Philip Auslanders distinctive understanding of performative aspects of performance documentations, my paper considers Jill Godmilows cinematic translation of Ron Vawter's performance Roy Cohn/Jack Smith (USA 1995).

Vawter's live performance recreates Cohn's and Smith's public performances, contrasting the homophobic right-wing lawyer with the notorious underground filmmaker. Vawter's portraits of Cohn and Smith are based on documents, e.g. tapes, photographs, slides, and videos. In the piece Cohn and Smith are not impersonated, but rather appear as fragmented 'characters.' In this way, Vawter does not simply reconstruct past performances, but performs the incomplete and inconsistent documents that resulted from Cohn's and Smith's public performances.

This challenge to preconceived notions of realness (concerning the nature of documents and of live performance) is taken further in Godmilow's film. Several factors in the film's aesthetics proclaim the performative acts of moving-image documentation: The film offers a non-chronological montage of shots, showing the theatre space from different perspectives. Subsequently, the continuity and dramaturgy of the theatrical presentation are transformed by editing techniques. Godmilow's film highlights the contrasts between Cohn and Smith in alternating appearances of both personas. Furthermore, it confirms the artificiality of the documentary production process and tests the relation between action and image.

My analysis of Godmilow's film addresses the double nature of the moving images: They are traces of a past event and they could be seen as performative acts that bring into being a cinematic event for which the viewer is the present audience.

## **Barbara Elektra Droth (University of Sussex): Interrogating the artist's private and public self through documentary film practice: the visual narrative in the performance of life**

My practice-led research project examines how visual methods might be used to critically explore the relationships between biography, performance and identity. I set out to visually examine issues around the (re)presentation and (re)telling of another person's life story through the case study of three live artists. I employ video as a creative methodology to examine the individual experience of creativity within a theoretical framework of knowledge of self.

Some of the key theoretical contexts that frame the research include critical work on auto/biography and autoethnographic film. Visual and aural methods of experience-centred narrative research (Squire 2008) are combined/juxtaposed to recount the artist's life, reveal the complex construction of identity on and off stage and evoke the subject's own self-invention.

An important aspect of the work is to problematise the digital medium and the collaborative method. The production of documentary videos on the lives and work of women performance artists - through collaborative experimentation with the artists - is a method to examine their construction of self both on and off stage. To perceive the construction of artistic identity I aim to evoke a *sense* of the performance artist. The work interrogates the biographical genre through emphasising performative and fictional dimensions of life history, and by examining assumed binaries such as private/public, documentary/fiction, Self/other, subjectivity/re-presentation.

Ethical issues the project raises through its methodology principally concern the representation and documentation of another's live work of art; notions around the performance of life in documentary film; and the researcher's role in the process of constructing representations. These questions converge with debates on the digital image's

reformation of ideas on aura, authorship and authenticity, especially in relation to the role of the artist, and art's social/market/aesthetic values.

**Barbara Droth** is in her second year PhD by Practice at the University of Sussex, School of Media, Film and Music.

She studied Fine Art at Glasgow School of Art and received a scholarship for her MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Time Arts, focusing on video art and performance. She worked in communications and user research projects professionally for many years. More recently she completed a second Masters Degree at the University of East London in the School of Humanities, crossing film and media studies with narrative research. She is an active member of CNR (Center of Narrative Research at UEL) and has presented visual work at the Oral History Society Conference at the V&A in 2010. Barbara has AHRC funding for her research project, creating biographical visual material in collaboration with three woman performance artists.

### **Willemien Sanders (Utrecht University), 'Woman at work... A documentary participant's extended performance of her professional self'**

My paper will discuss how a documentary participant not only performed her professional self for the documentary and for the filmmaker, but extended her performance for the interviewer. The interview is part of my PhD research project on documentary filmmaking and ethics.

Documentary filmmaking ethics has in academia by and large been discussed as entailing the responsibility of the filmmaker toward the participant, with a focus on justice and care, and the responsibility of the filmmaker toward the audience, with a focus on telling the truth. Filmmakers occasionally dip in by discussing their film and their practice. But the perspective of the participant is largely absent.

I interviewed four documentary participants and asked them to talk about their experiences. Using semi-structured interviews I gave them ample opportunity to include topics they considered interesting and relevant and to talk about them as they pleased.

Debby was one of the interviewees. Her documentary experience was not without trouble: she encountered disagreement with the filmmaker and an interruption in their collaboration as a result. My paper addresses how Debby experienced her participation in a documentary film as well as how she constructed that experience in an oral account, in an interview. Analysing both the content of Debby's account and the way this content is conveyed shows that Debby not only performed her professional self during the making of the documentary, but also during the interview itself.

Debby's account shows that disagreement and interruptions do not necessarily play a role in the evaluation of the experience of being in a documentary film. It also shows how documentary participants-interviewees perform in front of the filmmaker / interviewer. This not only challenges persistent ideas about capturing reality, it also inspires questions about participants' capacities for self determination.

**Willemien Sanders** is an affiliated researcher at the Research Institute for History and Culture (OGC) at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Willemien studied Film and Television Studies at Utrecht University and graduated in 1993. Her thesis *Heimat. Analyse van een tijdperk* (*Heimat. Analysis of an era*) is a twofold analysis of Edgar Reitz' epic series.

After graduation, Willemien combined working for the International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam with extensive travels around the globe. Between 2002 and 2004 she worked for various cultural organizations. Since then, she combines working on her PhD project with other university jobs. Willemien's PhD project is on documentary filmmaking and ethics. In this research project, she tries to incorporate filmmakers' and participants' experiences into theories of documentary filmmaking ethics. Both quantitative and qualitative in nature, the study focuses on the everyday practice of making documentary films.

In addition, Willemien regularly contributes to DOX, the documentary magazine of the European Documentary Network.

## **Jennifer Jackson (University of Surrey), ‘Behind The Setting of Diamonds’**

*Setting of Diamonds* was first screened in 2010 at the Victoria and Albert Museum’s series of workshops for *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes* exhibition. This 20 minute documentary film follows 25 teenage girls from Copthall School, a North London Comprehensive, as they prepare to perform as part of *Encounters* at Peacock Theatre, London in March 2010. Initiated by English National Ballet and devised in collaboration with Sadlers Wells, the *Encounters* project set out to commission and stage work by professional and community based artists in a programme reflecting on and celebrating the legacy of the *Ballets Russes*.

My research interrogates how open ballet might be as a practice and form: challenging the hierarchies of participation, for example around body type, age, class and exploring how personal histories might be communicated in a shared dance form. The project presented an opportunity to work with a large group of young women on how images of community and individuality, femininity and beauty are constructed and to use ballet in ways that challenge the traditional aesthetic. Filming key stages and making a documentary of the project evidenced the students’ individual and collective learning and framed their performance as part of an on-going process rather than the end product. Thus the film foregrounds the long term goals and the links between broader educational and artistic outcomes that occur through a creative dance project.

The Copthall students, many of whom had no formal dance training, engaged in a choreographic process to create and perform a new work that wrestled with the following ideas:

dancing as individuals and together as a ‘*corps de ballet*’;

ballet posture - using the shared concept of an imaginary diamond (virtual lines connecting the outstretched limbs and running through the vertical body poised in relation to gravity) and the idea of ‘inner diamond’ as a metaphor for a personal quality; rituals of, for example, grooming the hair - how women might choose to tame, or let loose, potential beauties.

The paper uses examples from both film maker Jane East and choreographer Jennifer Jackson’s collaboration on the *Setting of Diamonds* and recent documentary about English National Ballet *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (2011) to highlight the shift of emphasis the documentary ballet film towards the individual dancer and process and away from group and spectacle. I draw on Bakhtin’s writing about the uses of language, context and the grotesque and John-Steiner’s theories of collaboration to discuss how narratives of the feminine and the personal are articulated.

### References:

Bakhtin, M (1986) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press.

John-Steiner, V. 2006. *Creative Collaboration*. NY: Oxford University Press  
Paperback

**Jennifer Jackson** lectures at Surrey University and the Royal Ballet School. A former dancer and choreographer with the Royal Ballet, her research into somatics and ballet choreography draws on practical study with Roger Tully and collaboration with Susan Crow on Ballet Independents Group (BIG) activities. Recent performance as research includes choreography - *Other Diamonds* (2010) for English National Ballet, dancing - *No time Ago* (2009) and writing in *Dancing Times*, *Research in Dance Education*.

## **Lucia King (SOAS): “Filming an Indian pilgrimage as a mass choreography”**





Panorama of the pilgrimage in rural Maharashtra July 2010 on the film location

Photo credit: Uma Tanuku

My ‘practice-with-research’ PhD at SOAS Centre for Media and Film is on:

“The strategies of South Asian independent filmmakers (1990’s-2011) who are documenting India’s marginal folk performance cultures”.

Around 36,000 different folk performance forms exist across India, many integrated within devotional movements. My interrogation is inter-disciplinary, exploring what occurs in the production relationship between filmmakers and folk performers when they collaborate to make a film<sup>3</sup>; how does the mediated exchange on camera reflect the participants’ priorities? I also question how the relationships struck on set contribute to different documentary styles, applying M.M. Bhaktin and Michel de Certeau’s theory to this context. Having looked closely at how these South Asian filmmakers are imagining their ‘traditions’ both domestically and for international audiences, I have applied this learning to my own filmmaking practice, and the process of doing so is what would be discussed at this forum. It concerns the wider politics of mediation across disciplines and geo-political divides.

### **The pilgrimage.**

In July 2010 I took part in a pilgrimage in Maharashtra, India, alongside approximately 1,000,000 pilgrims known as the *Varkaris*. This folk movement celebrates a legacy of *bhakti* (Hindu) poet-saints dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and incorporates dances, musical entertainment and rituals during a three-week 250 km walk. I produced a ‘poetic-documentary’ developed for art gallery exhibition. From the onset, I avoided expository documentary methods that would ‘explain’ the Varkaris socio-cultural practices, developing instead various investigations on camera involving the pilgrims. I found strategies for working reflexively with the event as a mass choreography; public spaces were continually being assembled and erased for ritual/dance/entertainment purposes. I avoided seeking ‘testimonies’, exploring instead the corporeality of this giant, moving organism.

**Lucia King** is an independent artist/filmmaker and PhD researcher at SOAS (London University) with circa ten years’ experience of theatre and film-based collaborations with artists from India. Having lived and worked in New Delhi for five years, (2000-2005) she continues to realize projects between India and the UK, whilst also sustaining a studio practice in London as a visual artist. King is an Associate Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Surrey, and an Associate Artist with *ArtsAdmin*, London. A forthcoming curatorial collaboration is with the Magic Lantern Foundation (New Delhi) hosting a one-week festival/symposium with the title, “*Persistence/Resistance*” showcasing current Documentary films from India. This is a cross-university partnership between the Goldsmiths, London School of Economics, SOAS and Westminster University with this Foundation, planned for Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 2011. King’s film, ‘The Varkari Cycle’ will run as an installation at this event.

For further details on King’s practice: <http://www.luciaking.co.uk/>

---

<sup>3</sup> The research has identified 98 films in this category produced within the time frame mentioned above.

# HOTEL AND GUEST HOUSE LIST

The following is a list of accommodation ranging from modest family homes to full service hotels. Your accommodation should be booked directly through the establishment concerned and not through the University. These Establishments are not endorsed by the University of Surrey but many are used regularly by visitors. Further information is available from the Guildford Tourist Information Office – 01483 444333 or through the Guildford Borough Council Website [www.guildford.gov.uk/GuildfordWeb/Tourism](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/GuildfordWeb/Tourism)

<b>Hotels</b>				
<b>Holiday Inn</b>	Egerton Road Guildford GU2 7XZ	<b>0870 4009068</b> <a href="http://www.HolidayInn.co.uk">www.HolidayInn.co.uk</a>	168 Bed	1 mile from Campus
<b>Asperion Hotel</b>	73 Farnham Road Guildford GU2 7PF	<b>01483 579299</b> <a href="http://www.asperion-hotel.co.uk">www.asperion-hotel.co.uk</a>	15 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>The Royal Hotel</b>	132 Worplesdon Rd Guildford GU2 9RT	<b>01483 575173</b>	10 Bed	2 miles
<b>Angel Posting House</b>	91 High St Guildford GU1 3DP	<b>01483 564555</b> <a href="http://www.angelpostinghouse.com">www.angelpostinghouse.com</a>	21 Bed	2.5 miles
<b>Premier Travel Inn</b>	Parkway Guildford GU1 1UP	<b>0870 1977122</b> <a href="http://www.premiertravelinn.com">www.premiertravelinn.com</a>	87 Bed	2.5 miles
<b>The Guildford Hotel</b>	253 High St Guildford GU1 3JG	<b>01483 564511</b> <a href="http://www.theguildford.co.uk">www.theguildford.co.uk</a>	46 Bed	3 miles
<b>Quinns Hotel</b>	78 Epsom Rd Guildford GU1 2BX	<b>01483 560422</b> <a href="http://www.a1tourism.com/uk/quinns.html">http://www.a1tourism.com/uk/quinns.html</a>	8 Bed	3 miles
<b>Mandolay Hotel</b>	36/40 London Rd Guildford GU1 2AF	<b>01483 303030</b>	80 Bed	3 miles
<b>Blanes Court Hotel</b>	4 Albury Road Guildford GU1 2BT	<b>01483 573171</b> <a href="http://www.blanes.demon.co.uk">www.blanes.demon.co.uk</a>	17 Bed	3.5 miles
<b>Manor House Hotel</b>	Newlands Corner Guildford GU4 8SE	<b>01483 222624</b> <a href="http://www.manorhouse-hotel.com">www.manorhouse-hotel.com</a>	50 Bed	6.5 miles
<b>The Drummond Arms</b>	The Street , Albury GU5 9AG	<b>01483 202039</b> <a href="http://www.thedrummondarms.co.uk">http://www.thedrummondarms.co.uk</a>	10 Bed	7 miles
<b>Barnett Hill</b>	Blackheath Lane Wonersh GU5 0RF	<b>01483 899200</b>	54 Bed	5.5 miles

<b>Guest houses</b>				
<b>Abeille House</b>	119 Stoke Road Guildford GU1 1ET	<b>01483 532200</b> <a href="http://www.abeillehouse.co.uk">www.abeillehouse.co.uk</a>	4 Bed	1 mile
<b>Patcham</b>	44 Farnham Road Guildford GU2 4LS	<b>01483 570789</b> <a href="http://www.bedandbreakfasts-uk.co.uk/visit/patcham">www.bedandbreakfasts-uk.co.uk/visit/patcham</a>	3 Bed	1 mile
<b>The Homestead</b>	75 Bray Road Guildford GU2 7LJ	<b>01483 828663</b> <a href="http://www.thehomesteadbnb.co.uk">www.thehomesteadbnb.co.uk</a>	2 Bed	1 mile
<b>Plaegan House</b>	96 Wodeland Avenue Guildford GU2 4LD	<b>01483 822181</b> <a href="http://www.plaeganhouse.co.uk">www.plaeganhouse.co.uk</a>	1 Bed	1.5 miles

<b>Bluebells</b>	21 Coltsfoot Drive Guildford GU1 1YH	<b>01483 826124</b> <a href="http://www.bluebellsbedandbreakfast.co.uk">www.bluebellsbedandbreakfast.co.uk</a>	2 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>Clandon Guest House</b>	2 The Paddock Morrow Guildford GU1 2RQ	<b>01483 573735</b> <a href="http://www.yewtreehouse.info">www.yewtreehouse.info</a>	3 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>East Woodhay</b>	86a Epsom Road Guildford GU1 2DH	<b>01483 575986</b>	1 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>Field Villa</b>	Liddington New Road, Guildford GU3 3AH	<b>01483 233961</b>	3 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>Lavender House</b>	4 Medlar Close Guildford GU1 1LS	<b>07709 760000</b> ayse.stevenson@ntlworld.com	3 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>Matchams</b>	35 Boxgrove Avenue Guildford GU1 1XQ	<b>01483 567643</b>	3 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>Akomodate</b>	2 Portland Terrace Guildford GU1 3LT	<b>01483 459317</b> <a href="http://www.akomodate.com">www.akomodate.com</a>	10 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>Candle House B&amp;B</b>	11 Franklin Court Guildford GU2 8ED	<b>0789 501 7541</b>	1 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>The Three Gates</b>	26 Worplesdon Road Guildford GU2 9RS	<b>01483 578961</b>	2 Bed	1.5 miles
<b>Guildford YMCA</b>	Bridge Street Guildford GU1 4SB	<b>01483 532555</b> <a href="mailto:accom@guildfordymca.org.uk">accom@guildfordymca.org.uk</a>	120 Bed	2 miles
<b>Acacia Villas</b>	29, Woodbridge Road Guildford GU1 1ED	<b>01483 458884</b> <a href="http://www.acacia-villas.co.uk">http://www.acacia-villas.co.uk</a>	3 Bed	2 miles
<b>Lavender House B&amp;B</b>	4 Medlar Close Bellfields Guildford GU1 1LS	<b>07709 760000</b>	3 Bed	3 miles
<b>Hill Place</b>	15 Harvey Road Guildford GU1 3SG	<b>01483573735</b> <a href="http://www.hillplace.info">http://www.hillplace.info</a>	2 Bed	3 miles
<b>The Albany</b>	80 Sydenham Road Guildford GU1 3SA	<b>01483 572410</b>	4 Bed	3.5 miles
<b>Cornerstones</b>	22 Gateways Guildford GU1 2LF	<b>01483 575231</b> <a href="http://www.cornerstonesquesthouse.co.uk">http://www.cornerstonesquesthouse.co.uk</a>	2 Bed	3.5 miles
<b>Yew Tree House</b>	2 The Paddock Guildford GU1 2RQ	<b>01483573735</b> <a href="http://www.yewtreehouse.info">http://www.yewtreehouse.info</a>		4.5 miles
<b>Heath Hall Farm</b>	Bowlhead Green Godalming GU8 6NW	<b>01428 682808</b> <a href="http://www.heathhallfarm.co.uk">www.heathhallfarm.co.uk</a>	4 Bed	7 miles
<b>The Garden Room</b>	Coltsfoot Crest Hill Guildford GU5 9PE	<b>01306 730547</b> <a href="http://www.gardenroom.org.uk">http://www.gardenroom.org.uk</a>	1 Bed	11 miles
<b>Heath House</b>	Alldens Lane Godalming GU8 4AP	<b>01483 416961</b> <a href="http://www.heathhouse.eu">www.heathhouse.eu</a>	3 Bed	11 miles
<b>Leylands Farm</b>	Leylands Lane Abinger Common RH5 6JU	<b>01306 730115</b> <a href="http://www.leylandsfarm.co.uk">www.leylandsfarm.co.uk</a>	1 Bed	11.5 miles