

Displacements: forced migration and the arts

<http://conferences.au.dk/displacements/>

Aarhus University, Denmark , October 3-5, 2013

Deadline for submissions extended to May 15, 2013.

Displacement is and has always been one of the fundamental forms of human existence. Throughout history and all over the world people are moving or being moved under the pressure of forces ranging from destitution to persecution and war. Lives are displaced by the forces of man, the forces of technology and the forces of nature.

Displacement is also a significant theme in almost all forms of aesthetic and artistic expression from antiquity to today. The violence of displacement translates itself into artistic representation on the thematic, discursive and formal levels, as artists reflect the changing worlds they live in, imagine other futures or try to come to terms with the ruptures of the past. The personal and collective histories of forced migration are inscribed in cultural, social and aesthetic practices throughout the globe, resulting at times in new, hybrid forms of life and art, but also often triggering continuing struggles and conflicts. And while the ghosts of past displacements haunt any historical present, new sources and routes of forced migration continue to emerge and challenge both our aesthetic imagination and critical consciousness.

This seminar wishes to explore how processes of forced displacement are and have been reflected in works of art and other forms of cultural expression throughout the world: from the lamentations of the exiled in the Old Testament through slave narratives, representations of war and contemporary renderings of the migratory flows following from climate changes. But while we aim to engage in the aesthetic forms and history of displacement, we also wish to address the underlying, theoretical and methodological issue of how art works and criticism might help us to better understand and change the intricate relationships between power and movement that cause displacement.

We welcome contributions that address forced migration in a contemporary context, highlighting new artistic strategies to express and address displacement, and contributions with a historical approach, investigating the relationship between historical forms of displacement and cultural expression, as well as more theoretically and methodologically oriented discussions.

The conference invites papers on the following topics of reflection and discussion

- Slavery and trafficking and its impact on aesthetic expression both in a historical and contemporary perspective.
- Artistic expressions of the refugee condition and the concepts of flight, shelter and asylum.
- Articulations of the experience of war and trauma in relation to migration.
- Artistic reflections on the relationship between poverty and migration.
- The representation of ecology, natural disasters and climate change as forces of displacement.
- Exile, the camp and diaspora as aesthetic forms and topics and as conditions of artistic production.
- Figurations of the concepts of right and freedom in relation to forced migration.

Confirmed keynotes

- [T.J. Demos](#), Reader, Modern and Contemporary Art, UCL
- [Madeleine Dobie](#), Associate Professor of French, Columbia University
- [Hamid Naficy](#), Professor of Radio-Television-Film and the Al-Thani Professor in Communication, Northwestern University
- [Parvati Nair](#), Director, United Nations University Institute in Barcelona and Professor of Hispanic, Cultural and Migration Studies, University of London

The symposium is jointly organized by

- [Network for Migration and Culture: The Interrelations of Migration, Culture and Aesthetics](#)
- The research program in [Globalization, Migration, and Memory](#) at Aarhus University
- The research project [The World in French - on translations and traces of memory in globalized francophone literature](#)

Registration

The registration fee is € 100 including light lunches and the conference dinner Friday evening. Participants are responsible for covering their own travel and lodging and other meal expenses. Information about registration, hotels and other practical matters is available on the conference website: <http://conferences.au.dk/displacements/>

Submissions should include the submitter's name, institutional address, e-mail address, short CV, and a 250-word abstract of the proposed 20 min. paper and should be sent via e-mail to displacements2013@hum.au.dk no later than April 15, 2013. Submitters will be notified of the outcome shortly after the deadline. Any questions and queries can also be directed to this address.

Organizers

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