



CROSS-CULTURAL FILM COLLABORATION

Film workshop at SANORD 2025, convened by Katrine Pahuus and Christian Suhr (Aarhus University)

In this workshop we wish to explore the possibilities of cross-cultural film collaboration through three examples: "Proof of Work" a forthcoming documentary by Steffen Köhn and Samwel Moses Ntapanta (Kenya, Forthcoming); "Creative Women in Lagos", a collaborative documentary by Lauren England, Eka Ikpe, and Roberta Comunian; and the ethnographic documentary "Light upon light" (Christian Suhr and Hala Lotfy, Egypt–Denmark 2022).

Whether we want it or not, making images is almost inevitably an act of coproduction between people behind and in front of the camera and the relationships between them is directly or indirectly made visible by the camera. As Taylor (1996:79) points out, film recordings "bear the scars of the encounters that produced them". The modes of collaboration involved in the arrangements before recordings take place and in postproduction after filming also play a decisive role in the outcome. Film recordings are in this sense both the result of, a mirror, and a co-creator of the relationships that are involved in their emergence. This aspect of filmmaking

can be used productively as a kaleidoscopic stage for collectively exploring and facilitating new perspectives on collaboration across social, cultural, political, and disciplinary differences.

Further information about the films below:

"Proof of Work"

Discussion of rough cut of forthcoming film produced in collaboration between Samwel Moses Ntapanta and Steffen Köhn

"Proof of Work" is a vivid, on-the-ground portrait of Nairobi's Bitcoin maximalists. Blending street-level documentary with intimate storytelling, the film follows a group of Bitcoiners as they build grassroots crypto networks in Kenya's capital. Their "proof of work" is not just digital mining but the daily labor of teaching, organizing, and sustaining an alternative financial future from the margins.

"Creative Women in Lagos"

Produced by Dr Lauren England, Dr Eka Ikpe, and Professor Roberta Comunian

"Creative Women in Lagos" is a collaborative research and impact project that unveils the untold stories of dynamic women who have played pivotal roles in shaping the artistic landscape of Lagos, Nigeria. From the bustling streets to the heart of creative spaces, this film is a celebration of resilience, innovation, and the power of women in the arts. Produced by Dr Lauren England, Dr Eka Ikpe, and Professor Roberta Comunian of King's College London, this documentary is a result of collaborative, interdisciplinary research, and a passion for showcasing the cultural richness of Lagos. It goes beyond the surface to provide an understanding of the forces that can both drive and inhibit creativity in this vibrant city, highlighting women's experiences. In collaboration with esteemed partners such as Ituen Basi, Terra Kulture, Tribe XX Lab, and Wy Art Foundation, and support from the renowned Nike Art Centre, "Creative Women in Lagos" brings together the collective efforts of visionaries and institutions dedicated to nurturing and promoting creativity in Lagos.

"Light upon light"

Ethnographic documentary — Egypt, Denmark, Hassala Films, 2022 — Directed by Christian Suhr — Produced by Hala Lotfy — Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/680959384>

A fieldtrip into the mystical traditions of Islam exploring people's search for light at a time of darkness and political tension in post revolutionary Egypt. Sonia sees light streaming into her heart from a person's finger. Aya is lifted into a luminous space in the midst of a ritual. Maher travels to the shrine of a holy man to find out if the light and love that people are referring to is real. Meanwhile the film crew, Muhammad, Amira, and Christian tries to find out how they can film these experiences of light and how there can be so much light and darkness in this world and inside themselves.

In the session at SANORD, we will show and discuss excerpts of this film collaboration and our new project about experiences and the cultivation of love, also produced by the Hassala Film Collective and funded by the Heart Openings Research Project (ERC-STG).