



Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren e.V. | ZMO |
Kirchweg 33 D-14129 Berlin

Call for Papers

Workshop

Cinema and the City

12–13 September 2019
Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient

One of the main objectives of the workshop is to examine urban life (and spaces), cultural and social histories of cities (possibly in different regions) using the trope of the cinematic lens. One simple way of thinking about this workshop is to hypothetically imagine we are asking contributors the following question: if some cities, for example, Cairo, Algiers, Karachi, or Addis Ababa, vanished and there were no traces left of them and the only thing we have left are films that depict them, or use them, as backdrop for their cinematic stories: what kind of history would we write?

Films form an image-bank of society's various responses to historical events during the years of the 20th and 21st centuries: Colonialism, independence, wars, economic reforms, regional and international conflicts, democracy, gender relations, social mobility, housing crises, etc. Their exploration of this artistic, representational, and, indeed, productive venues forms a unique analytical window overlooking social, political, and cultural transformations in the city.

Of course, Arab, African, or South Asian urban historical transformations and current condition have been subjects of considerable critical enquiry and research in various fields within academia. Various urban, political, cultural, and social theorists have all contributed invaluable insights to our understanding of the urban transformation of cities during the modern and postmodern era. In particular, they have examined the modern city in relation to time and space, history and culture, colonial and postcolonial times, and gender relations. In this workshop, we can examine these shifting paradigms from a different angle: Building on the premise that movies are integral constituents of the urban environment, the various contributions can examine how the cinematic lenses of

selected films have depicted the various social and spatial transformations and responses to:

- (1) Changes over historical periods: for example, how representations of coffeehouses in the reel reflected urban transformation in the real over several historical stages.
- (2) Specific theme: Housing crises, progress, urban renewal, consumer society, etc.
- (3) Comparative topics among different cities or regions: colonial cities in African, Arab, South Asian cinemas; gender issues in these different regions, etc.
- (4) The infrastructure of movie theaters as part of the modernization processes.

We cordially invite current and former ZMO researchers, visiting fellows, associates, and other interested scholars and researchers to this event. Interested participants who wish to present should send a tentative title and a 150 words abstract by the 30th of March 2019 to Khaled.Adham@zmo.de

We plan to have 12 presentations covering the theme of "Cinema and the City" from cities in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. As we expect some of the presentations to include clip footages from movies, each presentation will have a time slot of 30 minutes followed by 10-15 minutes discussions. In addition to the papers presented by the various scholars, the workshop will include a keynote speech given by Dr. Viola Shafik, a film theorist, curator, and filmmaker and a film showing followed by a discussion with the director, namely, "In the Last Days of the City," by Tamer ElSaid.

Please direct all queries to Dr. Khaled Adham (Khaled.Adham@zmo.de).