

# Symposium

## The Place of Documentary – Traversing Disciplines



Leuven (Belgium), 22-24 March 2022



**beursschouwburg**



# THE PLACE OF DOCUMENTARY – Traversing Disciplines

## Program

### Contents

Introduction .....	5
Program overview.....	7
Tuesday 22 March .....	7
Wednesday 23 March .....	7
Thursday 24 March .....	8
Tuesday March 22 - Opening evening:.....	9
<i>Un film dramatique</i> by Eric Baudelaire .....	9
Wednesday March 23.....	11
Ambiguity & other phenomenon panel .....	11
Philip Cartelli - In search of ambiguity .....	11
Nikolaj Lübecker - Watching Documentary Images with Niels Bohr: Barbet Schröder and Kazuo Hara .....	12
Pascal Vandelanoitte – Futuristic archive .....	14
Poetics of exchange in contemporary documentary practices ...	16
Eric Baudelaire in conversation with Christina Stuhlberger	16
Keynote Dara Waldron: 'I stare into a deep blue ocean and see only Light:' Personal Documentary as an Art of Nonfiction.....	18

Thursday March 24 .....	20
Place of Documentary – Site: Contestation and Speculation panel .....	20
Stefanie Baumann - (De)Framing North Korea. On the critical potential of documentary forms .....	20
Des O’Rawe - Moving Images: Documentary and Post-Conflict Northern Ireland .....	22
Eneos Çarka - Speculative Worlds: Anthropocentric Realities and World-Building in Speculative Documentaries .....	23
Maria Luna - Documentary Film Festival as site of displacement .....	24
Expo Wael Shawky Dry Culture Wet Culture .....	27
Keynote Fiona Tan Beyond Fact and Fiction.....	29
<i>Ascent</i> by Fiona Tan .....	30
Credits symposium:.....	31
Thanks: .....	31

## Introduction

LUCA School of Arts (Brussels, Belgium) Audiovisual Arts, hosts a symposium on contemporary documentary film. The symposium takes place in Leuven with an opening event on the 22nd and the symposium on 23th & 24th March, 2022, in collaboration with Docville and the additional participation of LUCA PhD's, DocNomads students and faculty, as well as Beursschouwburg (Brussels).

Confirmed keynote speakers include author Dara Waldron (New Nonfiction Film), filmmaker Eric Baudelaire and artist-filmmaker Fiona Tan (Archive, Ascent). The symposium will also include a screening of works by Fiona Tan.

Recent documentary practices have evolved significantly through technological, social and economic shifts, which have had an impact on both narration and aesthetics. This diversification of form is tangible in approach and style, as well as alternative distribution means. Collaborative practices suggest new shapes, raising important questions around themes such as representation and authority, which influence the ethical position of both filmmaker(s) and subject(s), as well as contemporary narrative and engagement strategies. Similar, self-evident evolutions are apparent in the audiovisual arts.

We will focus on these oscillations, shifts and interactions within this conference. Presentations include theory, practice-based, or imbrications from within film and associated fields. The assemble of presenters feature artist-filmmakers, festivals as well as film scholars, established scholars and PhD students.

Topics and subtopics elaborate how they engage and reveal speculative and emergent futures in non-fiction filmmaking. Is the form evolving, its place diminishing, consolidating or transforming, and if so, into what and with which relevancy? How can or should we co-operate, anticipate and contend with its prospective materialisations, along with considering an 'art of the real' that evidently traverses disciplinary thresholds. Entangled within fictive, poetic, archival, ritual and cinematic practices, it raises additional notions concerning our proximity to events, which both identify and distance us from them.

Further questions include how filmmakers represent communities that they are not actually part of, and whether current ideas on directorial roles necessitate change. Equally, do pathways towards production, distribution and exhibition need re-evaluation and increased meritocracy? Is the orthodox documentary format being superseded by artist-filmmaker-academic or activist collectives propagating essential changes of emphasis in methodology (or are they symptomatic of the need for other radical alternatives?). Which new channels or models of thought might be instrumental in providing alternative epistemologies, or to incite change within a newly composed, extended field of shared image-making? How do any of the above affect change within institutional boundaries, moving image agencies and research oriented environments (creative and curatorial), thereby transmitting new discourses and independent thought within and elsewhere than academic and auditorium environments?

## Program overview

### Tuesday 22 March

Opening night: *Poetics of Exchange*

19:30: welcome

20:00: screening *Un film dramatique*, Eric Baudelaire  
(2019, 2u)

22:00: reception

### Wednesday 23 March

10:00 – 12:00 panel *Ambiguity & Other Phenomenon*

- Philip Cartelli - *In search of ambiguity*
- Nikolaj Lübecker - *Watching Documentary Images with Niels Bohr: Barbet Schröder and Kazuo Hara*
- Pascal Vandelanotte – *Futuristic archive*

moderator: Dara Waldron

13:00 – 14:30 *Poetics of Exchange*: artist talk Eric Baudelaire  
with Christina Stuhlberger

15:00 – 16:30 keynote by Dara Waldron  
*'I stare into a deep blue ocean and see only Light:'  
Making Sense of Personal Documentary as an Art  
of Nonfiction*

20:00 optional: screening festival Docville Cow (Andrea  
Arnold) or other film in the program of Docville

## Thursday 24 March

10:00 - 12:00 panel *Place of Documentary – Site: Contestation and Speculation*

- Stefanie Baumann - *(De)Framing North Korea. On the critical potential of documentary forms*
- Des O’Rawe - *Moving Images: Documentary and Post-Conflict Northern Ireland* Eneós Çarka - *Speculative Worlds: Anthropocentric Realities and World-Building in Speculative Documentaries*
- Maria Luna - *Documentary Film Festival as site of displacement*

moderator: Roel Vande Winkel

13:00 – 16:00 introduction to the work of Wael Shawky –  
location Museum M Leuven

+ visit expo Wael Shawky

16:00 – 17:00 keynote by Fiona Tan  
*Beyond Fact and Fiction*

dinner

20:00 screening *Ascent* by Fiona Tan (80’)

## Tuesday March 22 - Opening evening

### *Poetics of Exchange*

#### *Un film dramatique* by Eric Baudelaire

Color, 114 min, 2019

What are we doing together? A recurring question for the students of the film group at Dora Maar middle school, and for Éric Baudelaire who worked with them over their four years starting in the 6th grade. Answering this political question – one that involves representations of power, social violence and identity – led them to seek a cinematic form that does justice to the uniqueness of each student, but also to the substance of their group. What are we doing together, if it is neither documentary nor fiction? A dramatic film, perhaps, where time does its work on the students' bodies and discourse, and where we discover the possibility for each to speak in their own name by filming for others, and to become co-authors of the film and subjects of their own lives.

#### **Bio**

*Eric Baudelaire (1973) is an artist and filmmaker based in Paris, France. After training as a political scientist, Baudelaire established himself as a visual artist with a research-based practice incorporating photography, printmaking and video. Since 2010, filmmaking has become central to his work. His feature films *Un film dramatique*, *Also Known as Jihadi*, *Letters to Max*, *The Ugly one* and *The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu*, *Masao Adachi* and *27 Years Without Images* have circulated widely in film festivals (including Locarno, Toronto, New York, FID Marseille and Rotterdam). When shown within exhibitions, Baudelaire's films are part of broad installations that include works on paper, performance, publications and public programs, in projects such as *Après* at the Centre*

*Pompidou in Paris, and The Secession Sessions, which began at Bétonsalon in Paris and traveled to Bergen Kunsthall, the Berkeley Art Museum and Sharjah Biennial 12. Baudelaire has had monographic exhibitions at the Witte de With, Rotterdam, Tabakalera, San Sebastian, the Fridericianum, Kassel, the Beirut Art Center, Gasworks, London, and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, and has participated in the 2017 Whitney Biennale, the 2014 Yokohama Triennale, Mediacity Seoul 2014, and the 2012 Taipei Biennial. In 2019 Baudelaire was the recipient of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and the Prix Marcel Duchamp.*

Wednesday March 23

## Ambiguity & other phenomenon panel

Moderator: Dara Waldron

### Philip Cartelli - *In search of ambiguity*

While filmmaking involves organization, films regularly blend specificity and ambiguity, as weavers interlace yarns meant for softness and structure. As Marcel Hanoun once wrote, 'The filmmaker should only show that which he does not yet know,' a statement of cinema's function as a process of discovery as well as an argument for withholding elements of a depiction as an aesthetic or conceptual goal. Such tendencies are innately present in documentary, which delivers to the greatest extent on cinema's indexical promise, its direct reference to the recorded encounter. Documentary makers regularly preserve an element of the unknown that is inherent in experience, which contributes in turn to the ambiguous dimension in the work that we produce.

I propose to discuss the convergence between ambiguity and depictions and approaches in documentary film. For the most part, documentaries aim to depict, in some way, the density of lived experience, which entails an ambiguous dimension. How can and do documentaries interweave specificity and ambiguity today, as more and more so-called 'hybrid' works and cross-pollinations with contemporary art are included in the non-fiction genre? In my response I will build on discussions by Dai Vaughan and David Macdougall (among others) and I will also discuss my next film project, now in development, which centers the ambiguous dimension of reality and even truth. This project, 'The Anarchist,'

focuses on an apocryphal story which is retold, reenacted and, at times, challenged throughout the film from different perspectives. Given the project's interest in presentation and performance, I propose to integrate it into my presentation at the symposium as a simultaneous meditation on this form itself as an example of knowledge production that also depends on specific and ambiguous elements.

## **Bio**

*Philip Cartelli is a moving-image artist and researcher whose film and video work has been exhibited at Locarno Film Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Visions du Réel, Torino Film Festival, FID Marseille, and Film at Lincoln Center's Art of the Real, among others. He holds a PhD in Media Anthropology with a secondary emphasis in Critical Media Practice from Harvard University, where he was a member of the Sensory Ethnography Lab, and a PhD in Sociology from the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (Paris). He is currently Assistant Professor of Film and Chair of the Department of Visual Arts at Wagner College in New York City as well as a member of the Comité du film ethnographique in Paris.*

## **Nikolaj Lübecker - *Watching Documentary Images with Niels Bohr: Barbet Schröder and Kazuo Hara***

In 'Meeting the Universe Halfway' (2007), Karen Barad draws on the writings of the physicist Niels Bohr to argue against our cultural inclination to distinguish between reality and its representation (an inclination she labels 'representationalism'). A key point in Bohr's philosophy-physics was the insight that the 'apparatus' – which includes the instruments, the experimental design and the

designer of the experiment (i.e. the physicist) – co-shapes the studied reality. There is no distinction between apparatus and the ‘real’: in Bohr’s vocabulary there is only one single ‘phenomenon’. This does not mean that Bohr believes that reality is subjectively constituted or that he gives up on objectivity, but it does mean that the physicist reconfigures objectivity (insisting on reproducibility, statistical predictability and communicability).

This talk contends that Bohr’s idea of the ‘phenomenon’ can be useful for the analysis of documentary films also. It asks: what might it mean to think the documentary film (and images more broadly) beyond representationalism, as a phenomenon at the same time more encompassing and more dynamic than usually accepted, a phenomenon in which all participants and constitutive parts (filmmakers, protagonists, technology, settings, etc.) are thoroughly entangled? To explore this question, the presentation will consider two well-known documentaries in which the directors seem particularly willing to let their protagonists take control: Barbet Schröder’s eloquently entitled 'Idi Amin Dada: a self-portrait' (1974) and Kazuo Hara’s 'The Emperor’s Naked Army Marches On' (1987).

## **Bio**

*Nikolaj Lübecker is Professor of French and Film Studies at the University of Oxford, UK. He is author of 'The Feel-Bad Film' (2015, Edinburgh University Press) and co-editor (w. Daniele Rugo) of 'James Benning’s Environments' (2018, EUP). His current project – co-written with Daniele Rugo – examines the experiential nature of images of political violence in non-fiction films by Chantal Akerman, Rithy Panh, Éric Baudelaire and Gianfranco Rosi among others.*

## Pascal Vandelanoitte – *Futuristic archive*

The use of archival material in film has longtime been limited to an indexical relation, where the image not only points to, but also serves as “proof” of a pre-existent reality. Luckily, the creative use of archival material has taken many more directions. In ‘The Archive Effect’, Jaimie Baron explores many directions and illustrates how the meanings of archival material are modified when placed in new contexts and this “archive effect” often creates new histories, alternative histories and misreadings of history.

As complement, I would like to discuss possibilities that arise if you leave the relation with history behind. What if the use of the archive points primarily to the present time, or even creates a view on a future – utopic or dystopic? Artists and filmmakers as Bill Morrison, Gustav Deutsch, John Akomfrah and Fiona Tan re-boot, re-work, re-contextualise the archival and turn these witnesses of a past into spokesmen that address the contemporary. This talk will provide an effort in mapping different directions, and argue that their creative use of the archival goes beyond the historiographic and often turns it into an echo chamber of the presence, glimpsing at the future.

### ***Bio***

*Pascal Vandelanoitte is film scholar and lectures at LUCA School of Arts Brussels and Genk on contemporary film and documentary. He is also Head of Audiovisual Arts at LUCA Brussels.*

*He obtained a Ph. D. in Social Sciences – Film Studies at the University of Leuven in 2012. At that time, he was also working as an advisor within the Flemish regional government, with responsibilities for the Brussels arts*

*scene, a position he held for more than a decade. This interest in different art forms is also present in his lectures and research. As such, his recent research focusses mostly on the intertextual use of existing music in film, such as the enriching use of Wagner's music in Ludwig from Luchino Visconti, Mahler's music in Ken Russell's biopic Mahler, or the use and perception of jazz music in film noir. Another focus is the interplay between contemporary documentary and other art forms.*

## *Poetics of exchange in contemporary documentary practices*

### **Eric Baudelaire in conversation with Christina Stuhlberger**

In this conversation between artist and filmmaker Éric Baudelaire and Christina Stuhlberger, filmmaker and researcher at LUCA School of Arts, we will examine cinema as collaborative practice and discuss collectivity and participation as strategies towards reformulating cinematographic structures of power, identity, and representation. In documentary film, the legitimacy of dominant regimes of representation have repeatedly been called into question. As filmmakers, we navigate the complex process of capturing and speaking about the worlds of others. If done with care and sensitivity, seeing, listening, touching, recording, can be acts of solidarity. However, in a vastly exploded terrain for the circulation of ideas and images, social media, microaggressions, and commodification of identity, debates on ownership, authorship, and the question ‘When is speech free, and when does it harm?’ have taken on a new cast.

Éric Baudelaire’s work consists primarily of film, but which also includes photography, silkscreen prints, performance, publications and installations. His 2019 film *Un Film Dramatique* is co-directed by Baudelaire alongside a class of 20 middle schoolers. The film features as the opening film for this conference. It presents the students’ insights on their young lives as they offer personal reflections and join in shared discussions about politics, identity, cooperation and belonging. The ensemble examines what cinema is, resisting any concepts such as master and student while learning becomes performative, in the making, activity. Humorous,

intimate, and illuminating, the film is a testament to cinema's collaborative nature, in which the young filmmakers become co-authors and subjects of their own lives.

In the framework of Christina Stuhlberger's research project "Double Voice – poetics of exchange in documentary film" the two artists will discuss various questions regarding contemporary filmmaking practices: How to film lived experiences in cinematic terms of engagement? How do participatory practices and collaborative filmmaking strategies yield frameworks towards more equal exchange? What are the roles and aesthetic implications of the documentary interview and more specifically the cinematic testimony in creating of spaces of exchange?

### **Bio**

*Christina Stuhlberger is a documentary filmmaker based in Brussels and Vienna. Her work centers on portraiture exploring history and contemporary politics through lived experience. Since 2020, Christina Stuhlberger is a doctoral student at KU Leuven where she holds a position as research assistant in the Intermedia research unit at LUCA School of Arts. Her artistic research project Double Voice – poetics of exchange in documentary film examines the documentary interview as a space of dialogue and encounter, in view of negotiating a more equal exchange in filmmaking and transposing ethical concerns into cinematic form. In 2021, she became a member of the Young Academy of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts. Stuhlberger is a founding member of elephy.org, an artist-run production platform for documentary and artist moving image in Brussels.*

## Keynote Dara Waldron: *'I stare into a deep blue ocean and see only Light:'* *Personal Documentary as an Art of Nonfiction*

Pat Collins's *All that is, is Light* (2021) is a thirty-five-minute experimental documentary that originally began as a travelogue. With the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic's stay-at-home orders in Ireland, the initial idea morphed into a personal mediation on place, home and the subject of family (*Light* in both a personal and aesthetic sense). Collins, Ireland's leading documentary filmmaker, includes his family in one of his films for the first time. Anchoring the film is a performance by the director's mother of the traditional Irish song 'Wings of a Swallow,' the subject and title of a painting by Jack B. Yeats. My paper examines the performance of the song as an instantiation of the performative mode of documentary, to rework Yeats's painting into a speculative 'event' in real time. For this keynote, I therefore explore the reconstruction of the art historical by way of the documented performance of the song. *All that is, is Light*, I argue, hinges on deploying the documentary image as aesthetic reconstruction - an inquiry into film form as a medium of light - while offering an observational quasi-report on time passing for a family living on the Atlantic seaboard during the Covid 19 pandemic. Over the course of the presentation, I reference the exchange of ideas with Collins on documentary, art and place over the course of our ten-year friendship (Collins is one of the filmmakers explored in my book *New Nonfiction Film*), in addition to reflecting on the practice of traversing disciplines - creative writing, photography, blogging - as part of my own research.

## **Bio**

*Dara Waldron is a writer and researcher based in the Midwest of Ireland. His academic work focuses on the relationship between fiction and nonfiction across documentary platforms. He is the author of *New Nonfiction Film: Art, Poetics and Documentary Theory* (2018) and has published in many international journals and magazines, including *Studies in Documentary Film*, *Alphaville*, *OLH* and *Millennium Film Journal*. He teaches on the *Critical and Contextual Studies* program at *Technological University of the Shannon (Midlands/Midwest)* and is a research member of the *Ralahine Center for Utopian Studies* at the *University of Limerick*.*

Thursday March 24

## Place of Documentary – Site: Contestation and Speculation panel

Moderator: Roel Vande Winkel

### *Stefanie Baumann - (De)Framing North Korea. On the critical potential of documentary forms*

Representations of North Korea constitute a crossroad of complementary, affectively overloaded ideologies. Official state propaganda provides heroic depictions of social achievements and military power, and promotes an extreme cult of the personality of its leader. Western media, by contrast, uphold a diabolic image of North Korea as ‘rogue state’ or ‘outpost of tyranny’ controlled by a totalitarian dictator who not only subjects the population to aggressive ideological manipulation and constant terror, but also condones humanitarian catastrophes in order to maintain his absolute power. Such media formats often portray the North Korean society either as a suppressed, brainwashed, backward mass of servants to their leader or as his helpless victims, while presupposing Western societies, the capitalist system and globalisation as superior guarantors of freedom, human rights, education and democracy. Those same solidified patterns also appear through documentary formats exhibiting North Korea from a personal perspective, capitalizing on the claim to provide sensational, rare, “authentic” images of the “most secreted” country on earth. By means of its overdetermination as global exception and pure ideology, North Korea has become a smoothly consumable pattern of otherness. Conversely, films like Welcome

to North Korea (L. Kallistová Jablonská, 2008) or International Tourism (M. Voignier, 2014) subtly problematize precisely this quest for sensationalism by returning the gaze on their own position rather than pretending to reveal a hitherto unknown truth or to display a righteous attitude. They not only destabilize the common perceptions of North Korea by mediating it differently, but also question the conditions of possibility of critically depicting a foreign but overdetermined reality. The problem of formal construction and its intrinsic relation with hegemonic representations is therefore of utmost importance. Throughout this contribution, I aim at unfolding the inherent aesthetic and political significance of such independent productions.

### **Bio**

*Stefanie Baumann is a researcher at CineLab/IFILNOVA (New University of Lisbon), where she coordinates the working group "Thinking Documentary Film". She obtained her PhD in philosophy in 2013, with a doctoral thesis on Walid Raad's artistic project The Atlas Group. She taught philosophy, aesthetics and contemporary art theory at University Paris VIII (Paris, 2007-2010), Ashkal Alwan (Beirut, 2013), ALBA - the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts/ University of Balamand (Beirut, 2012-2015) and the Maumaus Study Program (Lisbon, since 2016). She also worked with the artist Esther Shalev-Gez as personal assistant from 2005 to 2010, and collaborated with video artists Marie Voignier and Mounira Al Solh.*

## **Des O’Rawe - *Moving Images: Documentary and Post-Conflict Northern Ireland***

This paper discusses experimental forms of documentary filmmaking that have emerged in response to the post-conflict politics of memory and reconciliation in contemporary Northern Ireland. In particular, it focusses on three expository-poetic documentaries that integrate other artistic practices and artefacts into their mise en scène and subject matter: *The Life After* (Brian Hill and Niamh Kennedy, 2018), *Hear My Voice* (Brendan J. Byrne, 2019), and *Lost Lives* (Michael Hewitt and Dermot Lavery, 2019). The paper assesses the aesthetic significance the intermediate strategies evident in these films, and the extent to which such an approach can threaten to foreground the particular artists and their art rather than the experiences and memories of the victims and survivors. Furthermore, in activating the ‘aura of art’ do such documentaries risk decontextualising history, or even becoming complicit in the aestheticization of suffering? Or, in eschewing more typically mainstream investigative and expository documentary styles, do such films help to create alternative imaginative spaces for dialogue and reconciliation in a dysfunctional post-conflict democracy, where the responsibility of political institutions and elites is failing to adequately address the rights of victims and survivors.

### ***Bio***

*Des O’Rawe is a senior lecturer in Film Studies at Queen’s University Belfast, where he is also a Research Fellow at the Mitchell Institute for Conflict Transformation and Social Justice. His recent publications include: Regarding the Real: Cinema, Documentary, and the Visual Arts (Manchester University Press, 2016), and Post-Conflict Performance, Film*

*and Visual Arts: Cities of Memory (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Moving Images: Documentary and Post-Conflict Northern Ireland.*

## **Eneos Çarka - *Speculative Worlds: Anthropocentric Realities and World-Building in Speculative Documentaries***

This paper examines the anti-anthropocentric world-building in documentaries that employ a speculative mode of inquiry and reckon with the ecological crisis. These films, dubbed speculative documentaries ('A Manifesto'), move beyond the Griersonian "creative treatment of actuality" toward "speculative treatment of subjectivity" (Waldron 53). They fabricate the unreal as opposed to depicting the real, centering on an anti-anthropocentric view of the world, and deploy it as political resistance in face of catastrophic realities. They implement speculation as a tool for predicting the way that power structures in society continue to oppress and exploit, and a tool through which they visualize other political and more-than-human possibilities and worlds. *Slow Action* (2010) imagines the evolution of species and ecosystems when isolated and surrounded by unsuitable habitats. It envisions a science fiction future of island biogeography in face of extinction due to the rapid rise of sea level. *Truth or Consequences* (2020), on the other hand, considers the possible cataclysmic futurity as its present-day setting. It seeks to define the mode of speculative documentary as documentary footage placed into a fictionalized context where, as if it were science fiction, takes what is nascent today and treats it as though it is already happening. Jan Ijäs's documentary series *Waste* (2016-ongoing) assumes a more-than-human approach to anthropogenic habitats by expanding on the concept of waste and critiquing the devastating human effect on

the earth. The results of these speculative documentaries are part ethnographic, part science fiction, offering a space for contemplation on constructed and natural environments, which both bewail and anticipate Earth's transformation over time.

## **Bio**

*Eneos Çarka began his film education at University of Arts of Albania graduating in Film Directing. As a recipient of the Fund of Excellence Scholarship, he was awarded an MA in Film Studies with Distinction from University College London. He graduated with Magna Cum Laude from DocNomads Masters on Creative Documentary, and is now a PhD candidate at University of Southern California researching the hybrid forms of documentary. His films have screened at numerous festivals, galleries, and cultural events such as Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin in Musée du Louvre, Message to Man IFF, and Festival dei Popoli among others. They focus on character studies and deal with memory, identity and family relations. As both a filmmaker and a programmer, he pays particular attention to issues of representations experimenting with various approaches to documentary cinema.*

## **Maria Luna - Documentary Film Festival as site of displacement**

Focused on the question of the displacement from an orthodox documentary format in opposition to an artist-filmmaker-academic or collective film, I am interested in how this artistic and conceptual displacement is expressed in the transformation of documentary film festivals in the last decade. Based on the contextual approach to film festival proposed by Vallejo and Winton, that maintains that documentary film festivals contribute

to the definition of the genre through its selection and discourse, I will analyze the sections, programming and curatorial practices and publications of MIDBO (Muestra Internacional Documental de Bogota) to understand how the idea of documentary has becoming more malleable and elusive in this decade and is gradually expanding its borders in relationships with other arts and expressions. In particular I will explore the history of MIDBO to describe how during 22 years in Colombia, the festival has created spaces of debate, creativity and exhibition for a community of documentary filmmakers. Taking into account the experience of organizing and programming teams, filmmakers, artists and the audience that have participated in different periods of the festival I will explore how a documentary festival that was born as a place for thinking documentaries (*Pensar el documental*, 1998), an initiative to find a place for the exhibition of non-fiction films from the group of documentary filmmakers that also founded the association ALADOS is still relevant today in the changing ecology of the documentary field. In an interconnected global world with an explosion of film festivals and digital contents I am interested in how the festival works to find a connection among cultural spaces for the exhibition of artistic and social cinema with the realities and interest of the students, audiences and diverse social collectives in Colombia and in its potential as a place of inter-generational encountering to discuss documentary practices of production, exhibition and publication.

### **Bio**

*Dr. in Autonomous University of Barcelona (2014) with the thesis Mapping Heterotopias: Colombian documentary films of the armed conflict. Artistic director of the 23rd MIDBO (International Documentary Film Festival of Bogota) in Colombia and Associated professor of creative documentary*

*and contemporary television at TecnoCampus, Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. Co-author with Daniela Samper and Pablo Mora of the Book Territory and memories without borders, new strategies for thinking the real, 2021 (in Spanish), Co-coordinator of the HoMER network (History of Moviegoing, exhibition and reception) and Member of the research group Narratives of Resistance.*

## Expo Wael Shawky

### *Dry Culture Wet Culture*

Introduction to the expo by Lore Boon, co-curator and visit of the exhibition

Location: Museum M, Leuven

Egyptian artist Wael Shawky (1971) spent many childhood years in Alexandria, Egypt and Mecca, Saudi Arabia where he witnessed the transition from a nomadic society to a modernised society. This transition from Dry Culture to Wet Culture made a deep and lasting impression on him.

Social change remains central to his art and in particular the question how this intertwines with themes such as identity, religion, politics and history. He sees his artworks as a way of making these issues tangible. He works with various media including paintings, drawings, sculpture, film and even music.

At the exhibition 'Dry Culture Wet Culture' you can see two new installations. The first is 'The Gulf Camp project: The Wall #2' and is part of 'The Gulf Project Camp' series, a project that explores the history of the Arabian peninsula from the 17th century onwards. The installation includes a wall covered in black graphite on which cloths have been stretched out recalling Bedouin tents. It brings together a traditional nomadic form of society with a contemporary, industrialised one.

The second new installation was made especially for M. Based on Shawky's interest in societies and local traditions, he tries to adapt

his works and the way they are presented to the surroundings. The museum hall, with a panoramic view of the city of Leuven, was the starting point for 'The Gulf Camp Project': Drama' which is a large installation that embraces the concepts of urbanity and architecture.

M also shows drawings, woodcuts and a film from the 'Cabaret Crusades' series. At its centre is a film trilogy that tells the story of the Crusades, but then from an Arabic perspective. The characters are played by puppets - some of them are on display in the exhibition.

'The Cave' is also a film work. It shows Shawky walking through a supermarket while reciting a passage from the Koran. The video raises questions: Is it an attempt to link economics and religion? Or does he just want to make it clear that those worlds are incompatible?

# Keynote Fiona Tan

## *Beyond Fact and Fiction*

### **Bio**

*Fiona Tan is a visual artist and filmmaker. She is best known for her skilfully crafted video and film installations, in which explorations of memory, time, history and the role of visual images are key. Her installations and photographic works have been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in international venues. She has written and directed to date two feature length films. Recent solo exhibitions took place at the Museum der Moderne Salzburg together with Kunsthalle Krems (2020-21), Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2019), Museum für Modern Kunst, Frankfurt (2016), De Pont Museum, Tilburg (2017), Izu Photo Museum, Japan, Mudam, Luxembourg, Nasjonalmuseet Oslo, The BALTIC, Gateshead, UK, Fiona Tan – Inventory, at the MAXXI, Rome and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2013-14); Ellipsis at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan; Vox Populi London at the Photographer's Gallery, London (2012); Fiona Tan – Rise and Fall, a touring solo exhibition at Aargauer Kunsthau, Switzerland; Vancouver Artgallery, Sackler Galleries, Washington DC and Galerie L'Uqam, Montreal (2010-2011). With her solo presentation Disorient, Fiona Tan represented The Netherlands at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). Her work has been shown at various international group shows including in the São Paulo Biennial (2010), Venice Architecture Biennale (2010), Documenta IX (2002), Istanbul Biennale (2001). Her work is represented in numerous international public and private collections including the Tate Modern, London, the Guggenheim Museum New York, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the Neue National Galerie, Berlin and the MCA, Chicago.*

*Fiona Tan lives and works in Amsterdam.*

## *Ascent* by Fiona Tan

Color, 2016, 80 min.

'A photo-film, a story of memory and grief through photographic steps in time, set against the permanence of a mountain.' - Ben Harman

'The beautiful and mysterious Mount Fuji is the site for an adventure of the imagination for a western female writer and her soulful male Japanese correspondent. We go on a metaphorical journey with them up the mountain, crossing geographical, temporal and cultural divides. Employing a collection of dazzlingly varied still images spanning the history of photography, the mountain becomes a breath-taking cultural monolith, inspiring the writer to uncover different paths and to muse on the significance of its dominant presence in Japanese history, religion and philosophy. By combining fiction and documentary, the film is able to explore the intersections between Japanese and western art and popular culture, from Van Gogh's passion to the perspectival simplicity of Japanese designs to Hokusai's woodblock print of 'The Wave'. Evoking both the insight and lyricism of Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil* and emotional complexity of Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, Fiona Tan's wonderful film captures the paradox of existing in time and space without movement. Profound stillness.' - Helen de Witt

### CREDITS

With Hiroki Hasegawa and Fiona Tan

Produced by: Antithesis Films

## Credits symposium:

Organised by LUCA School of Arts (Brussels, Belgium) by the department of Audiovisual Arts & DocNomads & the research unit Intermedia

In collaboration with Docville, International Documentary Filmfestival Leuven and Beursschouwburg, Brussels

Program: Pascal Vandelanoitte

Practical organisation: Ha Nguyen (LUCA), Franks Moens & Reinhard Deman (Docville), Sofia Dati (Beursschouwburg)

## Thanks:

LUCA School of Arts

The colleagues of DocNomads, Roel Vande Winkel, Christina Stuhlberger

Special guests Eric Baudelaire, Fiona Tan, Dara Waldron  
Docville

Beursschouwburg

Museum M Leuven

IBIS Leuven Centrum