



University of
East London

UEL ADI PGR RESEARCH NETWORK COMMITTEE

WINTER 2020 CONFERENCE

SPEAKING FROM THE

MARGINS

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SHARING

What is a margin?

Who gets to define marginality, and who to inhabit it?

What voices have been speaking from a position of marginality in contemporary British arts and culture, and what have they been saying?

And has anyone been heeding this at all?

14TH FEBRUARY 2020

14:00 – 18:00

USS STUDIO 3

BOOK YOUR FREE SPACE.
SEARCH UEL SPEAKING FROM THE MARGINS
ON [EVENTBRITE.COM](https://www.eventbrite.com)

SPEAKING FROM THE MARGINS

UEL ADI PGR Research Network Committee WINTER 2020 CONFERENCE

14th February 2020 - 14:00 – 18:00 - Studio 3 - USS

What is a margin? Who gets to define marginality, and who to inhabit it? What voices have been speaking from a position of marginality in contemporary British arts and culture, and what have they been telling us? And have we been heeding them at all?

This event proposes to reflect upon and re-centres marginality by looking at less traditional modes of representation or practice, focusing specifically on:

- **Post/De/Anticoloniality** – what is the role of marginality in the discourse about race, culture and identity, and who is speaking from these specific margins?
- **Questions of ownership** – how does marginality affect the right to narrate and the right to own one's own work?
- **Ethos of accessibility and engagement** – from higher education to museums, how do practitioners and cultural institutions account for marginality in their approaches?
- **The East End** – from marginalisation to gentrification: what is the changing cultural geography of London margins?
- **Interdisciplinary perspectives** – voices from social sciences, media, civic engagement etc.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

14:00 **Introduction:** *Ralph Overill*

14:05 **Panel One: Performance and Participation: Marginality and Artistic Practice**
Benjamin Archer - *The Shakespeare Elite: A Myth about Affluence, Class and Power*
Michelle Harewood - *Exploring Narratives of Power and Resistance in Notting Hill Carnival*
Jessica Adams - *In the Margins: Transversal, Stealth (Art) Practices in the UK*
Q&A – Moderator: *Erica Masserano*

15:15 **Panel Two: Landscape, Labour, Loss: Marginality and Moving Image**
Ralph Overill - *Projecting on the Margins*
Sue Withers - *(Un) Necessary Labours: The Bubble Maker*
Paul Greenleaf - *I Will Become More Powerful Than You Can Possibly Imagine*
Q&A – Moderator: *Tom Drayton*

16:15 **Refreshments**

17:00 **Panel Three: The Centre Cannot Hold: Marginality and Post/Anti/Decolonialism**
OLLve Conference Group - *Other Margins: Anticolonial Perspectives from OLLve (Open Learning Initiative at UEL)*
Patrick Evans - *The Materiality of Media*
Kent Le - *Eat my pizza with a pair of chopsticks - will fashion brands ever learn about cross-cultural communications when going global: a personal perspective.*
Orson Nava - *Decolonialising the Curatorial Process*
Q&A – Moderator: *Naida Redgrave*

18:00 **Responses, feedback and networking opportunity with refreshments**

ABSTRACTS

PANEL ONE: PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION: MARGINALITY AND ARTISTIC PRACTICE

Benjamin Archer – *The Shakespeare Elite: A Myth About Education, Class and Affluence.*

Shakespeare wrote plays to entertain theatregoers from all walks of life, irrespective of class and with many of his audience members having no access to education. Yet in twenty-first-century Britain, data gathered demonstrates a link between educational background, affluence and attendance in the theatre with the average age of an audience member being fifty-two. While this marginalisation of theatre audiences is not unique to Shakespeare's plays there is a further 'status' illusion centred around his work. Shakespeare in contemporary Britain is viewed as 'high art' for the elite, with audiences and actors alike feeling Shakespeare is not for them. The problem is rooted in the way Shakespeare's plays have been adapted to be read more than performed, situating them in academia more than entertainment. With an emphasis on the text before character, the performance of the plays can fail to reach the masses. By readdressing the way actors are trained to perform Shakespeare, can Shakespeare be for the people once more.

Benjamin Archer is a trained actor with both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in acting. They spent nine years working in the industry as an actor, with a large amount of my career working in classical theatre. Ben is currently a PhD student at UEL researching and developing a new Character-driven way of training actors to work with Shakespeare's plays.

Michelle Harewood - *Exploring narratives of power and resistance in Notting Hill Carnival*

From the 1500s, captives from Africa were enslaved by Europeans. To dehumanise them, their culture, religion and language were taken away. Traditional forms of communication were forbidden and their sense of self forcibly eroded. However, using cultural resources, knowledge was hidden and transferred through the generations, orally, through art, performance and embodied in dance. In the Caribbean, carnival became the propagator for this knowledge. It thus evolved into a decolonial project and, a space for those whose voices have been silenced to, be heard. Using Notting Hill Carnival, this paper will explore narratives of power and resistance present within Caribbean carnival arts and performance.

As a PhD researcher, Michelle is exploring how carnival arts, performance and culture may be used to reduce inequalities and develop marginalised communities. She has been involved in Notting Hill Carnival since 1991 and worked in promoting diversity and equality for the past 15 years.

Jessica Adams – *In the margins: transversal, stealth (art) practices in the UK*

There is a vibrant form of creative, participatory activity taking place within British left-wing activist networks, at the media-determined margins of the UK's political life. These activities could be understood as activism, art, or anarchy, socially-engaged art or socialism, populism, prefiguration or participatory art, depending on your perspective. Perhaps the most interesting component of these activities is that they are transversal – a form of practice which “explicitly sets out to de-territorialise the disciplines, fields and institutions it works across” (Kelly, 2005). This paper will present some early-stage thoughts on these activities by setting out a theoretical framework and exploring some examples.

Jessica is a creative and practice-based researcher in the field of cultural studies, working towards their PhD at UEL. She gained a first-class honours degree in art history and political science from Victoria University of Wellington, and a MA in Global Arts with distinction from Goldsmiths. Jessica is also a Cumberland Lodge scholar and works for the UK's leading social mobility charity, The Sutton Trust.

PANEL TWO: LANDSCAPE, LABOUR, LOSS: MARGINALITY AND MOVING IMAGE

Ralph Overill – *Projecting on the Margins*

Ralph presents his recent practical research involving the marginal landscapes that they have frequented: from daily commutes to wandering walks and skateboarding expeditions. Ralph's approach draws upon recent work by Mark Leckey and Mark Bradford as they explore projection – the presentation of an image on a surface/a mental image viewed as reality – as a tool to investigate the fears, imaginations and memories we superimpose onto these non-places. What monsters – imagined or remembered – flicker in the edges and borders of the landscape?

Ralph is a third year part-time student on the Professional Doctorate in Fine Art Course at UEL, with a research title of 'Monsters and Margins'. Ralph is a practising artist, associate editor of the Journal of Arts Writing by Students and works as a printmaking technician at Havering College.

Sue Withers - *(Un) Necessary Labours: The Bubble Maker*

(Un) Necessary Labours: The Bubble Maker is a 13-minute video which invites the viewer to consider the marginal, hidden nature of female labour. From the edge, her absurd attempt to fill the water with bubbles evokes labour of a less industrialised time or place. The drifting, dissipating bubbles suggest the cycle of accumulation and disposal, of grooming and housekeeping, where capitalism has positioned women as consumers of the world's resources to adorn, beautify and decorate. Previously exhibited as an endless loop of futile activity, the opportunity to show this in conference conditions compels the viewer to witness her labour.

An artist, curator and educator, Sue studied Fine Art in Leeds, and completed an MA at Wimbledon School of Art. Her practice includes printmaking, photography, video and sculpture which examines the construction of female identity through consumerism and the pursuit of perfection, acceptance or visibility through the acquisition of goods.

Paul Greenleaf - *I Will Become More Powerful Than You Can Possibly Imagine*

A film exploring the haunting legacy of the M11 link road that cuts through Leytonstone, East London. In 1994 the final evictions took place in Claremont Road ending a significant road protest campaign. Following the demolition of over 300 houses, the A12 (M11 Link) road opened to traffic in 1999. Taking its name from the protestors' slogan on the final house to be demolished, 'I Will Become More Powerful Than You Can Possibly Imagine' captures fragments of spectral radio transmissions featuring testimonies from former residents that continue to occupy the landscape.

Paul is an Audio/Visual artist, part-time lecturer in photography BA (Hons) UEL, and a 3rd Year (part-time) Doctoral Researcher in Fine Art at UEL. With his research proposal 'Illusory Truth and Atemporal Artefacts in Photographic and Audio/Visual Art', Paul is investigating the idea that we are living in a dislocated era, where knowledge and experience are remembered and envisioned at the same time. Paul works with pictures and sound artefacts that trigger memories of lost futures and are fated to outlive us.

PANEL THREE: THE CENTRE CANNOT HOLD: MARGINALITY AND POST/ANTI/DECOLONIALISM

OLive Conference Group - *Other Margins: Anticolonial Perspectives from OLive*

Why do we keep attending events about migrants with no migrants are in the room? UEL students of the Open Learning Initiative for refugees and asylum seekers and postgraduates talk about borders, experiences of marginalisation outside and inside the UK and the cultural politics of migration as experienced and deconstructed by the group through debate and creative writing, bringing a situated take on the margin in the form of a choral presentation.

The OLive initiative at UEL and elsewhere in Europe introduces or reintroduces refugees and asylum seekers to higher education. This group facilitates wider participation of its students in a wider academic context, encourages a questioning attitude towards traditional pedagogies, and embodies the wish by its participants to take space and use their own voice.

Patrick Evans – *The Materiality of Media: To what extent has the boom in the manufacture of modern technological devices been implicated in territorial conflicts within Democratic Republic of Congo?*

Although the aesthetics of devices such as the iPhone may not encourage consideration of what lies beneath the surface, these are products comprised of naturally occurring materials. An ostensibly immaterial sphere of instantaneously accessible information might be best plotted on a continuum of time relating to where the materials inside have come from and where they will end up. For all the abundance of information available via the medium of telecommunications today, ironically and yet tragically there seems little awareness of the ethical issues which surround the mining of rare earth minerals in the DRC.

Having won the ADI Dean's Award prize for ADI upon graduating from UEL in 2016, Patrick has since studied at Goldsmiths as well as worked for UEL in a number of capacities, including periods with the sustainability team, as a music research intern, NSS survey ambassador, enrolment ambassador and at the ADI equipment store.

Kent Le - *Eat my pizza with a pair of chopsticks - will fashion brands ever learn about cross-cultural communications when going global: a personal perspective.*

Twenty years ago, the standard for fashion identity and consumption largely emanated from Europe and the USA. The balance has shifted towards Asian business economy, and in particular China, which has become the second biggest economy in the world. The admission of China into the WTO in 2001 and expiration of Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) opened up endless opportunities for trade to and from China. The "new money" economy created a new middle class, which use luxury fashion as the statement for their new status. For a while, western luxury brands had no domestic competitions and were welcome with open arms from China. Brands such as Burberry and Gucci were able to establish a strong position in Chinese economy. Some even have their own head offices to cater to specific consumer community. However, things started to change when Chinese consumers gradually realised they were being seen as "cash cows": a lot of fashion campaigns were targeted at them with no considerations towards their cultures and traditions. The breaking point, which received extensive media coverage, was the D&G Shanghai campaign 2019. The entire campaign was accused of trivialising Chinese culture and promoting unflattering racial stereotypes. This is paradigm of western Fashion's attitude towards Chinese consumers, or anyone who is typically considered an outsider in the bigger context. This raises a question of whether or not cross-cultural communications have ever been considered or integrated in global marketing strategies when fashion brands enter any Asian markets. As a British fashion professional with Asian heritage and having worked in lots "East meets West" contexts, these issues have been underlying concerns to me for some time. This study will provide a personal reflection on the lack of cross-cultural communications of western Fashion when investing in an Asian market using the campaign as the case study.

Khuong Le, professionally known as Kent Le, is a fashion marketing consultant and senior lecturer in Fashion Marketing at the University of East London. He has worked with some of the world-leading fashion brands in Asia, Europe and the USA, before joined UEL in 2015 to lead on the MA programme in International Fashion Business. He is currently doing his PhD investigating the impact of new digital technologies, AR & VR, on fashion marketing practices.

Orson Nava - *Decolonialising the Curatorial Process*

Decolonialising the Curatorial Process is a thirty-minute documentary which explores decolonial strategies in an academic and curatorial context. The film features academics, activist and practitioners, and contains case studies of institutions that are deploying critical, self-reflective forms of curatorial practice. The Museum of London Docklands' exhibition on slavery and the sugar industry features in the film as an example of how an institution can decolonise the curatorial process, utilise the work of artists in a museum context, and critically examine East London's imperial history. Another case-study in the film is the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford who are working with InsightShare participatory video company and a group of Maasai activists from Kenya and Tanzania on a project centred on the museum's collection of sacred Maasai artefacts. Orson will show some clips from the film and expand on some of the points it raises about radical curatorial practices, indigenous activism and the problematics of cultural ownership in the context of museums and the academy.

Orson Nava is a graduate of the Northern Media School and The National Film and Television School and has a background directing dramas and documentaries for the BBC, C4 and ITV and music videos for record labels including Polydor, EMI and Island Records. He has taught Media, Film Studies and Creative Industries modules at both undergraduate and MA level at The University of East London, Middlesex University, Sheffield Hallam University and Central Film School and run numerous participatory video projects with young people around the UK. Orson is currently completing a full-time funded PhD at the University of East London focussing on Race, Innovation and the Creative Industries lead regeneration of East London and is a visiting fellow at the Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging.

The ADI Research Networks Committee is made up of representatives across the disciplines within the Professional Doctorate and MPhil/PhD programmes. The committee aims be as inclusive and interdisciplinary as possible when curating events.

The committee would like to extend their thanks to all involved in convening this conference, the presenters, and UEL.