

***Thinking Nonviolence with Art and Art's Histories:
Aesthetic Theories and Practices for a Peaceful Planet***

A two-day Symposium at Art Hub Copenhagen, 7-8 May 2026



The Knotted Gun, 1980-81, Karl Frederik Reuterswärd, photo Håkan Dahlström

There is an increasing awareness of the centrality of imagination to prefigurative politics, and of the part played by art in peaceful forms of coexistence and community-building. In addition, mounting evidence demonstrates the success of ‘beautiful risings’ – creative forms of nonviolent civil resistance. In light of these factors, this Symposium proposes that it is time to revisit the potential of art’s histories, theories and practices to contribute to, and to shape, the intellectual frameworks and activist praxis of pacifism and nonviolence.

Over two days of presentations and organised discussions, the Symposium will engage with ‘the arts’ in the broadest sense – from works of art to films, commissioned public art and socially-engaged performances, to the writing of art’s histories and theories, and practice-led interventions into the institutional dynamics of curating and collecting. Drawing on a rich conceptual terrain ranging from intersectional feminisms, gender and queer methodologies, to transculturality, decolonial, race-critical, ‘new materialist’ and ecological thinking, the Symposium will provide space both for *thinking together*, and *with art and art’s histories*, for a more peaceful planet.

Symposium Timetable

DAY 1 - Thursday 7th May

9.30 - 10.00 Arrivals at AHC *refreshments provided*

10.00 - 10.20 Welcome and Introduction [Marsha Meskimmon and Anne Ring Petersen]

10.20 - 11.10 Keynote Lecture

Claire Farago *A Proposal for the Future of the Past: On the Phantasmagoria of Human Exceptionalism*

11.10 - 11.40 Morning Coffee Break *refreshments provided*

11.40 – 13.45 Morning Session [Introduced and Chaired by Kerry Greaves]

11.45 - 12.25 Michael Kjær *Terra Incognita - Field Aesthetic Exercises in Reversed Contamination*

12.25 – 13.05 Solveig Gade *The Politics of Lamentation: Re-imagining War and Environmental Destruction in Madeleine Kate McGowan's Solastalgia*

13.05 - 13.45 Birgitte Thorsen Vilslev *Monuments of Mourning: Larissa Sansour. These Moments Will Disappear Too*

13.45 - 14.45 Lunch *sandwiches, salads and drinks provided*

14.45 - 14.50 Introduction to Afternoon Sessions [Marsha Meskimmon, Anne Ring Petersen]

14.50 - 15.20 Terne Thorsen *Do you see what I am seeing? On communal viewing and collective writing*

15.20 - 15.50 Sabine Dahl Nielsen *Writing Together in the Stoa: Nonviolence, Art and Becoming with Many*

15.50 - 16.20 Afternoon Tea Break *refreshments provided*

16.20 - 17.00 Plenary Discussion *Nonviolence in Practice: On Methods and Methodology*

Terne Thorsen and Sabine Dahl Nielsen, joined by Alex Christoyannopoulos (Editor of the *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence*)

17.00 – 18.00 Symposium Reception *wine, soft drinks and snacks provided*

DAY 2 - Friday 8th May

10.00 - 10.30 Arrivals at AHC *refreshments provided*

10.30 - 10.45 Welcome and Introduction [Marsha Meskimmon and Anne Ring Petersen]

10.45 - 11.35 Keynote Lecture

Patricia Allmer *"A FLOWERLIKE FORM": Women artists, Surrealism, and the Bomb*

11.35 - 12.05 Morning Coffee Break *refreshments provided*

12.05 – 13.25 Morning Session [Introduced and Chaired by Birgitte Thorsen Vilslev]

12.10 - 12.50 Gunhild Ravn Borggreen *Worldmaking through Index: Avant-garde Calligraphy and Abstract Art in the Postwar period*

12.50 - 13.30 Mikkel Bolt *Undeclared Despair: Representing Colonial and Anticolonial Violence in Ici et ailleurs*

13.30 - 14.30 Lunch *sandwiches, salads and drinks provided*

14.30 – 15.30 Afternoon Forum Table Discussions with Presenters and Chairs

Opportunity for small-group discussions with presenters and chairs on key themes and issues raised by the symposium.
[Convened by Marsha Meskimmon and Anne Ring Petersen]

15.30 – 16.00 Afternoon Tea Break *refreshments provided*

16.00- 16.50 Closing Plenary [Introduced and Chaired by Kerry Greaves]

Mathias Danbolt in conversation with **Elle-Mie Ejdrup Hansen**
Revisiting *Peace Sculpture 1995*

16.50 – 17.00 Closing Remarks [Marsha Meskimmon and Anne Ring Petersen]

This Symposium is the final public event convened through the research project *Peace and Planet: Thinking nonviolence with transcultural art practices, decolonial feminisms and environmental humanities*, funded by the Novo Nordisk Foundation.

The two-year project is led by Novo Nordisk Foundation Visiting Professor of Art and Art History, Marsha Meskimmon and Professor Anne Ring Petersen of the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies. It is co-hosted by the department's research clusters, Global Entanglements, Art and Earth, and Nordic Models, and in partnership with Art Hub Copenhagen.

Keynotes, Session Speakers

Patricia Allmer

“A FLOWERLIKE FORM”: Women artists, Surrealism, and the Bomb

Abstract:

This talk explores the productive intersection of surrealist aesthetics, feminist politics, and the extended historical shock caused by the atomic bombing of Japanese cities in August 1945. Detailed readings of specific works by key post-war figures in post-war surrealist traditions, such as Meret Oppenheim, Unica Zürn, and Eva Wipf, will develop my discussion of how women artists negotiated and transformed the distinct series of tropes inaugurated by journalist William Laurence’s use of the simile of “a flowerlike form” in his eye-witness description of the atomic cloud over Nagasaki – a simile to which Belgian surrealist Jane Graverol’s 1954 painting *Le langage des fleurs* seems to offer a provisional and provocative response. The historical range and aesthetic complexity of women artists’ engagements with such tropes, I will argue, became key tools in an evolving feminist politics and aesthetics of protest that sought to register and comprehend how the Bomb’s wider cultural and political impact scrambled conventional temporalities and representational codes in ways echoed by surrealist strategies and procedures.

Patricia Allmer is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History at the University of Edinburgh. Her many books, exhibitions, and essays have transformed the study of modern and contemporary women artists and surrealism, starting in 2009 with her curation of the award-winning *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism* at Manchester Art Gallery, the first major exhibition on this topic. Her contribution to art history and her long-term international scholarly impact on the study of women artists and Surrealism have been recognised by awards including a Philip Leverhulme Prize (2010) and an Association for Art History Fellowship (2023). Her books include *Lee Miller: Photography, Surrealism, and Beyond* (2016) and *The Traumatic Surreal* (2022), hailed in its *Woman’s Art Journal* review as “groundbreaking”, offering “new perspectives on female positions and lineages in the history of Surrealism”. Her co-curated 2024-25 Henry Moore Institute exhibition *The Traumatic Surreal* was inspired by and based on this book. Professor Allmer is also a major international scholar of René Magritte, having published three books on the artist, and delivered the prestigious 2017-18 International Émile Bernheim Programme lectures in Brussels on his work.

Mikkel Bolt

**Undeclared Despair:
Representing Colonial and Anticolonial
Violence in *Ici et ailleurs***

Abstract:

'What can be done so that peoples are exposed to themselves and not to their own disappearance?' (Georges Didi-Huberman¹)

This presentation is an analysis of Jean Luc Godard's and Anne Marie Mieville's 1976-film *Ici et Ailleurs* in the context of the disappearance of a language of militant solidarity. As Jamaican-American anthropologist James Scott has put it, we are in a "historical conjuncture in which the triumphalist narratives of national liberation, anti-imperialism, and socialism have become exhausted".² The notion of the post-colonial national revolutionary state as redemption and a home, "the world-historical answer to the moral-political question about the harms of colonialism", no longer exists.³ Scott writes about Jamaica and Latin America, but of course the picture is the same in North Africa and the Middle East.

This paper focuses on *Ici et Ailleurs* as an early attempt to come to terms with this historical development. Godard initially travelled to Jordan, Lebanon and Syria in 1969-1970 to film the Palestinian fedayeen as part of a propaganda film for the PLO titled *Jusqu'à la victoire*. Godard envisioned the film as a political film-tract that should exemplify "how films are made politically". The plan was to show the footage to the fedayeen in the refugee and training camps and discuss it with them. This never happened because of the Black September massacre by king Hussein's troops in

Palestinian camps in Jordan. Most of the participants in the film were killed, and Godard did not finish the film. Several years later he decided to finish the film with his new partner Miéville. The result was a mixture of photojournalism, documentary, Brechtian epic and didactic film. The scenes with Palestinian fighters are intermixed with scenes of a French family watching television in their living room. The film moves between here (France) and elsewhere (Palestine, or Jordan, Syria and Lebanon) discussing the role of images and the impossibility of solidarity (after the massacre of Black September) or perhaps a different kind of coming solidarity, that the film cannot yet clearly articulate because its political subject is missing.

Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen is Professor of Political Aesthetics at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen.

He is the author of *After the Great Refusal* (Zero 2018; French translation 2019; Italian translation 2021); *Trump's Counter-Revolution* (Zero 2019; French translation 2019; Italian translation 2019; Greek translation 2020); *Late Capitalist Fascism* (Polity 2022; Spanish translation 2023; Italian translation 2024; Korean translation 2024) and *The Refusalist International: A Theory of the New Protest Cycle* (Polity 2025), as well as a number of books in Danish, most recently *Dialog med de døde* (Antipyrine 2024). He has edited and co-edited several anthologies, most recently *Aesthetic Protest Cultures* (Minor Compositions 2024).

¹ Georges Didi-Huberman: *Peuples exposés, peuples figurants. L'Oeil de l'histoire*, 4. Paris: Minuit, 2012, p. 11.

² David Scott: "The Tragic Vision in Postcolonial Time", in *PMLA*, vol. 129, no. 4, 2014, p. 799. I use the term militant solidarity as a description of a Third World and anti-imperialist

insurgent perspective that guided protest movements in the 20th century from the Russian Revolution to the late 1960s. These movements shared a vision of revolutionary world-making.

³ Ibid., p. 806.

Gunhild Ravn Borggreen

**Worldmaking through Index:
Avant-garde Calligraphy and Abstract
Art in the Postwar period**

Abstract:

In the early 1950s shortly after the end of WWII, artists in many countries sought new ways for art to become a medium for peace and reconciliation and for restoring communication among people across the globe after a period of devastating human and artistic rupture. Abstract art gained significance because of the lack of culturally specific references in representation, as well as the “freedom” associated with free and spontaneous brushstrokes. Looking closer at artists from Japan and Denmark, this paper explores how avant-garde calligraphy and abstract art became part of a discourse of transcultural worldmaking in the postwar period.

By analysing correspondence between and publications by avant-garde calligrapher Morita Shiryū (1912-1998) and abstract artist Asger Jorn (1914-1973), it is clear that they shared some overall notions of worldmaking and global human beings in the early postwar period through the handmade brushstroke. The article will include other transcultural relations within the field of calligraphy and abstract art, such as the connection between Hidai Nankoku (1912-1999) and K.R.H. Sonderborg (1923-2008) as well as contemporary artist Nishimoto Toshiko (b. 1946). Some of the ideas of worldmaking were based on the relationship between script and image as a means of communication beyond spoken languages, but more importantly, the ideas of a global human being were based on the gestural brush strokes performed by a human body. This paper will argue how calligraphic and abstract art works can contribute to peace and reconciliation through visual manifestations of the presence of human beings.

Following the semiotic theories of Charles S. Peirce, the line in calligraphy and abstract art can be understood as an index: A hand with a brush draws a line across paper or canvas and leaves a trace of ink or colour. The line as index creates an affective relationship to the viewer, because an index is always created simultaneously with the action it refers to, even if the index is encountered after the fact. The lines drawn in the 1950s can still touch us today. The indexical present-tense situation of the calligraphic line has a potential for creating an artistic transcultural and transhistorical bond between human beings.

Gunhild Ravn Borggreen is an Associate Professor at Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen and has published in numerous journals on Japanese art history and visual culture with perspectives on gender, technology, and cultural exchange. She has co-curated the exhibition *In Love and War* at Designmuseum Danmark in 2024, and published the monograph *Begærets billeder: Visuel kultur i japanske træsnit* (Images of desire: Visual culture of Japanese woodblock prints; Strandberg 2024). She is currently the PI of the research project Transcultural Modernism: Artistic Interchange between Denmark and Japan, 1945-1970, where she examines the transcultural exchange between Japanese and Danish artists within avant-garde and abstract painting and non-figurative sculpture during the postwar period. She is the co-editor of and contributor to the anthology *Rethinking Transcultural Interactions in Visual Art* (De Gruyter, 2026).

Mathias Danbolt *in conversation with*
Elle-Mie Ejdrup Hansen

Revisiting *Peace Sculpture 1995*

Abstract:

This dialogue revisits *Peace Sculpture 1995*, a landmark public art project conceived and realized by Danish visual artist Elle-Mie Ejdrup Hansen (b. 1958). Initiated in 1990 and presented in 1995 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Denmark's liberation from German occupation, the project brought together twenty-two Danish and international artists from countries engaged in WWII, who created fifty-six site-specific works along Denmark's west coast. Ejdrup Hansen's own contribution, *The Line-Light*, traced a 532-kilometer line of green laser light for two hours across 6,000 German bunkers built under the Danish government's wartime collaboration with Nazi Germany. Intended as a performative peace monument, the work illuminated a suppressed aspect of Danish history—the politics of collaboration—thereby unsettling established narratives of national resistance. The controversy surrounding *The Line-Light* was intense: the Danish right sought to halt the project, veterans called for sabotage, and more than 5,000 newspaper articles documented the public debate. Thirty years later, *Peace Sculpture 1995* remains a key case for understanding how contemporary art intervenes in processes of collective memory and national self-representation, and the imaginaries of peace. In this conversation, Ejdrup Hansen and Mathias Danbolt reflect on the project's legacy and continuing relevance in contemporary debates on art, history, and public memory in a time where war, once more, is taking place in Europe.

Mathias Danbolt is Professor of Art History at University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Over the last decade his research has focused on the contact zones between art history and colonial history in a Nordic context with an emphasis on memory politics, monuments, and art in public space. His latest publications includes the co-edited anthologies *Searvedoaibma: Art and Social Communities in Sápmi* (2024) and *Nordmandsdalen: Art, Power and Materials in 18th Century Denmark-Norway* (2025). His latest monograph is *Tropaganda: Kunst, kolonialisme og kampe om historie*.

Elle-Mie Ejdrup Hansen is a Danish visual artist whose practice spans drawing, painting, and large-scale site-specific installations exploring the relationship between space, technology, and human experience. Ejdrup Hansen is best known as the initiator and curator of *Peace Sculpture 1995*, a nationwide public art project marking the 50th anniversary of Denmark's liberation, and for her monumental light installation *The Line-Light* (1995). Her projects include the solo exhibition *STILL (for) PEACE* at Viborg Kunsthall (2020), the documentary *The Light* (2023) with Alexander Lind. Throughout her career, Ejdrup Hansen has combined aesthetic experimentation with social inquiry, creating works that challenge collective memory and spatial perception.

Claire Farago

**A Proposal for the Future of the Past:
On the Phantasmagoria of Human
Exceptionalism**

Abstract:

While I am not a political historian or legal scholar, I can demonstrate very convincingly that the imperially embedded, rapaciously extractive biopolitics that legitimize resource extraction cannot be understood without attention to the European discourse on human exceptionalism established 2500 years ago by Aristotle. In the sixteenth century, Aristotelian claims that humans possess a unique form of cognition, including the ability to make art (*techne*) defined in the broadest sense as anything humans make, were used to classify entire societies according to their purported degrees of humanness. This paper examines the ensuing epistemological structures and ontological premises of human exceptionalism maintained in the nature/culture divide of European (or "Western" or Euro-Mediterranean) origin as they became entangled with the destructive economic and social practices of imperial formations that economic historian Jason W. Moore aptly names the Capitolocene era. I open with an invitation to imagine a post-human, ecological history of planetary culture that includes all life and supports conditions of sustainability for the future of the planet. The second part of my paper turns to sixteenth-century Aristotelian theological debates over the rationality and civility of Amerindians, new hierarchical classifications of the arts originating in Italy, and Eurocentric descriptions of societies by political philosophers who claimed that differences are due to climate, geography, and the arts (*techne*). The final part draws on French economist Thomas Piketty and Brazilian art historian-turned-environmentalist Luiz Marquez to argue that

newly proposed, anti-imperialist strategies for building peaceful multilateral coalitions around mutual needs must still also regulate the trending environmental collapse to avoid the worst outcomes for all.

Claire Farago is Professor Emerita at the University of Colorado Boulder, currently living in Los Angeles where she is affiliated with UCLA. She has written extensively on processes of transculturation, the epistemological foundations of art history, art theory, museums, and occasionally, on Latin American art. Her anthology, *Reframing the Renaissance* (1995), opened the field of transcultural studies in art history. *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (2004) and *Art is Not What You Think It Is* (2012), are both collaborations with Donald Preziosi. Her monograph *Writing Borderless Histories of Art: Human Exceptionalism and the Climate Crisis* is complemented by an anthology co-edited with Susan Lowish and Jens Baumgarten, *Transcultural Histories of Art and Artisanal Epistemologies: Knowledge to Be Made* (both 2025). In 2026, she edited a special issue of the e-journal *Arts, Rethinking Art History and Culture: Defining an Ecological Approach*. Farago has held visiting professorships at UCLA, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; the University of Melbourne, Australia; York University, U.K; the University of Zurich, and Smith College. She has received fellowships from the Getty Research Institute, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fulbright Foundation, The Folger Library, and elsewhere. Farago is also specialized in the writings of Leonardo da Vinci, most recently *The Fabrication of Leonardo da Vinci's Trattato della Pittura* (2018). She is currently preparing a collection of her own essays on Leonardo's theory of painting (Brepols, forthcoming).

Solveig Gade

**The Politics of Lamentation:
Re-imagining War and Environmental
Destruction in Madeleine Kate
McGowan's *Solastalgia***

Abstract:

Militarized and environmental annihilation have always been closely linked. Consider, for instance, the age-old scorched-earth policy aimed at destroying all life in the enemy's habitat, whether human or more-than-human. In political photojournalist reportage, and for that matter, also in artistic representations of war, the destruction of non-human species has frequently been sidelined or rendered outside the frames of war, to invoke Judith Butler, in favour of the documentation of intra-human violence. In recent years, however, there has been a surge in artworks that challenge the anthropocentric perspective on militarized violence.

In this paper, I focus on *Solastalgia*, a participatory sci-fi musical performance directed by Madeleine Kate McGowan, which took place in Copenhagen, Denmark in the summer of 2024. The work situates itself within a growing trend in the performing arts that responds to our crisis-ridden historical present by turning to grief practices and collective rituals. I examine the potential of performance not only as a site of collective grieving, but also as a space for re-imagining the transformative and political potential of grief. In addition, I explore how embodied experiments set in speculative future scenarios may challenge the presentist temporality and the violent and extractivist logic that, I argue, drive both war and environmental destruction.

Solveig Gade, PhD, is a dramaturge and Associate Professor at The Department of Theatre and Performance Studies at The University of Copenhagen. She has published on political engagement and experimental dramaturgies in contemporary theatre and performance in journals such as *TDR*, *Performance Research*, *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, *Nordic Theatre Studies*, *Peripeti*, *K&K* and *Passage*. In 2020 she co-edited the book *(W)archives: Archival Imaginaries, War, and Contemporary Art* Sternberg Press, and in 2024 she co-edited the book *War and Aesthetics*, the MIT Press. She is Co-PI of the Velux-funded collective research project *Oikos: Crisis and Care in the 21st Century*.

Michael Kjær

Terra Incognita - Field Aesthetic Exercises in Reversed Contamination

Abstract:

This paper will describe interdisciplinary fieldwork carried out during a marine research expedition in the Fram Strait above Svalbard November 2025. Seeking out and mapping largely unknown areas of the Earth raises questions of the human desire to exceed the frontiers of the world known by man. Whereas until recently the Earth has been explored as holding “untouched” resources to colonize materially and confine imaginatively often most within conceptualizations of the sublime, pushing the limits of the frontier is no longer a question of expanding the reach of human dominion. The Earth is no longer untouchable. On the contrary it is contaminated by human geotraumatic interruption even at the scale of planetary climate. This means that we must enter an already present future of the arts of living on a damaged planet. Therefore explorations of ecological frontiers today should become a question of getting sensorially and imaginatively mixed with geological forces and biological environments as precisely exercises in *reversed contamination*. This is the outset for the *transformative aesthetics* that we seek to develop in our work: A contaminated Earth can, if we let it, change face into a terra incognita.

Michael Kjær, PhD, Assistant professor in Art History, University of Copenhagen, PASS The Novo Nordisk Foundation Center for Practice-based Art Studies. Michael Kjær's (1975) research is focused on understanding and developing non-anthropocentric sensibilities. He is particularly dealing with the development of sensibilities related to the Arctic Ocean and the wider hydrosphere of the Earth. Recently initiator and organizer of the international conference Imagine Earth at Louisiana, 2023. Founding partner of the multidisciplinary Uarctic network Extremes <https://uit.no/project/extremes>. Currently (2025-2027) prime investigator in ‘Terra Incognita: Field Aesthetics in Extreme Environments’ whose purpose is to develop a transformative aesthetics of extreme environments as a response to the rapidly changing earthly conditions of the Anthropocene. The project is conducting fieldwork during marine research expeditions in the Arctic Ocean. Here it performs a field aesthetic approach as a collaborative process involving art history, artistic practice and marine sciences.

**Sabine Dahl Nielsen, Marsha
Meskimmon, Nina Möntmann,
Pierluigi Musarò , Nikos
Papastergiadis, Anne Ring Petersen**

**Writing Together in the Stoa:
Nonviolence, Art and Becoming
with Many**

Presented by Sabine Dahl Nielsen

Abstract:

This presentation explores nonviolence as a creative, philosophical, and institutional practice. Reflecting on a collaborative writing project, the talk approaches nonviolence as a practice enacted through artistic processes, curatorial frameworks, and institutional experimentation. Drawing on a range of critical theories, the talk engages concepts of breath, affliction, and futurity in relation to contemporary artistic responses to ongoing violence and colonial afterlives, including the present devastation of Gaza. Against this backdrop, the presentation briefly mobilises the ancient stoa as a structuring metaphor, foregrounding its liminal and public openness as a way of unsettling the presumed universality of the classical canon. Through selected examples, the talk asks how art might rehearse radical equity, redistribute resources, and pluralise belonging, opening provisional spaces in which nonviolent worldmaking can be imagined beyond inherited epistemic orders.

Sabine Dahl Nielsen is assistant professor at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at University of Copenhagen. She is the Principal Investigator of the research project *Transcultural Contact Zones: The cultural pluralization of art institutions in today's migration-induced societies*, supported by the Novo Nordisk Art History Foundation (2023-2027). She has developed exhibitions, research, and educational programs at the intersection of curatorial practices and contemporary social urgencies including the struggles around migration, decolonisation, and anti-racism. Her work on contemporary curatorial and institutional practices has been published in exhibition catalogues, anthologies, and journals. Together with Professor Nina Möntmann, she is also editor of the anthology *Decentring the Art Institution in a Postmigrant Society* (Routledge, upcoming).

Terne Thorsen and Sarah Samira El-Taki

Do you see what I am seeing? On communal viewing and collective writing

Presented by Terne Thorsen

Abstract:

This article presents a collaboration between two scholars writing together using diary-style entries. What began as thoughts on national imaginaries and cultural heritage in the UK and Denmark developed into questions of authenticity during a time of a shifting political landscape.

Guided by the question “*Do you see what I am seeing?*”, Sarah explores modes of communal seeing, building on the work of George Lamming, Elizabeth Alexander, and Stuart Hall. Meanwhile, Terne writes with a renewed sense of urgency, as escalating tensions between Denmark and the United States threaten a post-NATO world. The images they engage with range from political satire and protest visuals to AI-generated content, interrogating old and new debates around authenticity.

The collaborative process itself serves as a feminist methodological intervention, challenging singular authorship. Writing becomes both a shared practice, producing a dynamic and responsive text. The text lays the foundation for both of us to consider what kind of images are necessary to the political shifts of our current conjuncture.

Terne Thorsen is a postdoc at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, currently researching unauthorized interactions with public statues and monuments in Copenhagen. Her research is fueled by a broader curiosity on the connection between the role and function of images and their treatment. She is particularly engaged in questions concerning contemporary expressions of iconoclasm and their relations to images, art, and digital media.

Sarah Samira El-Taki is a British scholar specialising in visual culture, currently based in Copenhagen, Denmark. She holds a PhD from the University of Copenhagen. Her research focuses on the history of photography, Black and Asian British visual culture, and the dynamics of British multiculturalism. She was recently awarded a two-year post-doctorate fellowship.

**Birgitte Thorsen Vilslev and
Malene Vest Hansen**

**Monuments of Mourning:
*Larissa Sansour. These Moments
Will Disappear Too***

Presented by Birgitte Thorsen Vilslev

Abstract:

In this paper, we argue that the monographic exhibition format of “Larissa Sansour: These Moments Will Disappear Too” 2025-2026 at Kunsthal Charlottenborg in Copenhagen facilitated a public space for monuments of mourning in the specific historical moment of history with an ongoing war in Gaza and thousands of lost lives.

The exhibition presented a retrospective selection of Palestinian artist Larissa Sansour’s film works and installations with a focus on science fiction, memory and trauma. Most of the works were created in close collaboration with Sansour’s partner Søren Lind (as well as a large crew of people working on the film and the exhibition), yet the exhibition was framed as a solo-show. When are lives grievable? Judith Butler asks in her book *The Force of Nonviolence. An ethico-political bind* from 2020. Here, Butler takes grievability as a precondition of reconfiguring ethics and politics of nonviolence. We consider this open question of grievability in relation to the exhibition, including close analysis of a selection of the films and installations - such as *In Vitro* and *Monuments of Lost Times* (2019), the aria *As if No Misfortune had Occurred in the Night* (2022) and *Tank* (2003).

What is the critical potential of the monographic exhibition in terms of grievability and nonviolence? How can the traditional monographic exhibition serve as a space for grievability, mourning the un mourned, and imagining almost impossible futures in the current Palestinian predicament?

Malene Vest Hansen is Associate Professor of Art History at University of Copenhagen, Denmark. She is specialized in modern and contemporary art working with, mainly feminist, politics and historiographies of art, curating, and museums with a particular focus on critical exhibition histories. Vest Hansen is currently PI of the research project *Curating the image of the artist: Monographic exhibitions under the critical lens of feminism* (2024-2028). Outputs from earlier research projects include anthologies: *Curatorial Challenges: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Contemporary Curating* (2019) and *Curating the Contemporary in the Art Museum* (2023). Vest Hansen holds a PhD in art history from 2002 (dissertation on Sophie Calle and private-public spaces). She has published widely in academic and art journals and was co-founder and co-editor of the art historical journals *Periskop: forum for kunsthistorisk debat* and *Sum – magazine for contemporary art*.

Birgitte Thorsen Vilslev is Postdoc at the University of Copenhagen in the research project *Curating the image of the artist: Monographic exhibitions under the critical lens of feminism*, led by Associate Professor Malene Vest Hansen. Vilslev’s former research project, *More-than-human. The impact of Posthuman Feminism in 21st Century Art* (2024-2025) focused on contemporary art practices in the Nordic countries. From 2022-2024 she was postdoc in *Feminist Emergency: Women Artists in Denmark 1960-present*, led by associate professor Kerry Greaves, and is co-editor of the anthology *Transformative Feminisms. Nordic Art in the Transcultural Present* (2026). She has co-edited art historical journals, exhibition catalogues, and the first monography on the Danish artist Susanne Ussing (2017). Vilslev holds a PhD in art history from 2021 on Danish avant-garde films at the National Gallery of Denmark (SMK) and the Danish Film Institute (DFI). Prior to this she worked as assistant and museum curator in Copenhagen at Fotografisk Center and SMK. |

Convenors, Session Chairs, Discussants

Alexandre Christoyannopoulos is Reader in Politics and International Relations at Loughborough University, UK. He is the author of *Tolstoy's Political Thought* (2020), *Christian Anarchism* (2010), as well as dozens of journal articles and book chapters on pacifism and anarcho-pacifism, on Leo Tolstoy and on religious anarchism. Recent publications include a paper in the *European Journal of International Security* articulating pacifist rejoinders to the “Hitler question”, another in *International Affairs* on pacifist critical reflections on reactions to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and one in *International Studies Quarterly* articulating an anarcho-pacifist critique of International Relations. He is the founding editor and current editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence*, and has edited or co-edited four books on anarchism and religion. A full list of publications is available on [his website](#). He also currently serves as Head of Department of International Relations, Politics and History within Loughborough University’s Schools of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Kerry Greaves is Associate Professor in Art History and Visual Culture at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. She was the curator of *War Horses: Helhesten and the Danish Avant-Garde During World War II*, organized by the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and the Carl-Henning Pedersen & Else Alfelts Museum, Herning, Denmark. Her book, *The Danish Avant-Garde and World War II: The Helhesten Collective* was published by Routledge in 2019. In 2020, she edited the anthology *Modern Women Artists in the Nordic Countries, 1900-1960* (Routledge). Her two most recent coedited volumes are (with Birgitte Thorsen Vilslev), *Transformative Feminisms: Nordic Art in the Transcultural Present* (De Gruyter, 2025) and (with Lindsay Caplan) *Model Collapse: European Contemporary Art in a Time of Democratic Crisis* (Manchester University Press, 2025). Her work has appeared in journals such as *Dada-Surrealism*, *The Oxford Art Journal*, and *Kunst og kultur*.

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