Launched at Ca' Foscari University of Venice (UNIVE) in November 2024, the symposium **Film Festivals: Borders, Identities, Solidarities** continues in 2026 with its second edition at **Concordia University in Montreal**. Building on the discussions initiated in Venice, it aims to further explore how issues of borders, identities and solidarities have been shaped, negotiated and contested through film festivals in various contexts of social and political turbulences. The symposium is organised around the idea that film festivals are highly visible cultural events, experienced by audiences in the present and documented for the future through catalogues, press materials, media coverage, and critical discourse. Their influence is thus both immediate and enduring. In the present, they act as political actors, shaping public engagement with and understanding of major societal issues of our past and present. Over time, they also function as sites of memory (Nora, 1984 [1997]), contributing to the ways these issues are collectively remembered across generations (Assmann, 1995). Against this backdrop, this edition of the symposium places particular emphasis on film festivals as generators of **wartime solidarity** and **war propaganda**, as well as on the **gendered dynamics** of their engagement with conflict. Knowing that wars profoundly affect societies and human lives, the ways in which they are interpreted, represented and remembered are particularly important. In this context, film festivals constitute valuable sites for examining how solidarities are mobilised, political positions articulated, and narratives of conflict legitimised, contested or transformed.

Université Concordia University

Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage

FEST FM & WAR

Organising committee
Dunja Jelenkovic – Chair (UNIVE & Concordia University), **Giulio Tosi** (UNIVE), **Arlo Gross** (Concordia University)

Scientific committee
Ger Zielinski – President (Toronto Metropolitan University), **Bilge Yabanci** (University of Deusto), **Tania Saeed** (Lahore University), **David Archibald** (University of Glasgow), **Marco Dalla Gassa** (UNIVE),
Dunja Jelenkovic (UNIVE)

Organised by **Dunja Jelenkovic** within the MSCA project **FESTWAR FM – Film Festivals and War: A Fe-Male Perspective (1939-present)**, funded by the European Union (GA number: 101149227). Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

MARIE CURIE ACTIONS

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF
CONSULTA UNIVERSITARIA CINEMA

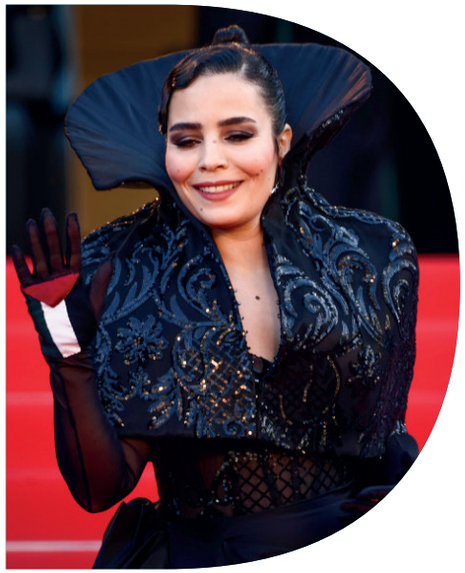


image: Filmmaker Asmae El Moudir wearing a glove with the Palestinian flag at the closing ceremony of the Cannes Film Festival, May 25, 2024. Photo: ZUMA Press Wire / Imago.

International Symposium

Film Festivals: Borders, Identities, Solidarities

Second Edition

November 2–4, 2026
Concordia University,
Visual Arts Building (VA 323),
1395 René-Lévesque Blvd. W.
& 4th Space, Library Building,
1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W,
Montreal, Canada

DAY 1

Monday, November 2
Room VA323 (Visual Arts Building)

11h30 – 12h00
Opening Remarks and Presentation of the Research Project FESTWAR FM
Dunja Jelenkovic

12h00 – 13h30
PANEL 1
North American Perspectives

Brendan Kredell, professor, Oakland University, *Over the Borderline: Film Festivals and Cultural Policy Differences in the Detroit/Windsor Region*

Habiba Boumlik, professor, and **Lucy R. McNair**, translator and professor, LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York, *Beyond the Line: The New York Forum of Amazigh Film and the Curatorial Undoing of Borders*

Joel Neville Anderson, curator and scholar, Binghamton University, *Critical Festive Snapshots: Framing JAPAN CUTS at 20*

Chair: **Dunja Jelenkovic**

15h30 – 17h00
PANEL 2
LGBTQ+ and Feminist Perspectives

Curan Nault, curator and assistant professor, Toronto Metropolitan University, *The Limitless Living Room: OUTsider's 'Conference on the Couch' and Queer Solidarities Across Borders*

Bears Rebecca Fonte, filmmaker, programmer and artistic director of aGLIFF/Prism festival, *Watching the Light Fade: Directing PRISM at the End of Austin's Queer Film Festival Era*

Elizabeth Venell, instructional associate professor, University of Mississippi, *The U.S. South's Queer Film Festivals: Boom and Doom*

Tugce Kutlu, PhD student, Ankara University, *International Women's Film Festivals as Sites of Feminist Solidarity: The Flying Broom Women's International Film Festival as a Case Study*

Chair: **Ger Zielinski**

18h00 – 19h30
KEYNOTE LECTURE
Rosanna Maule, Concordia University
War and the Gender-Biased Politics of Festival Funding

DAY 2

Tuesday, November 3
4th Space (Library Building)

10h15 – 11h30
FOCUS: *NECSUS* – European Journal of Media Studies. Spring 2026 Issue Presentation: Publishing Choices in Times of War

Greg de Cuir Jr, Managing Editor, *NECSUS*

Muhammad Nour ElKhairy, filmmaker, video essay: *Not a Single Mention: Dead Images and Institutional Laundering*

Dunja Jelenkovic, researcher, article: *Film Festivals and Wars: 2025 – The Year of Double Standards*

Ylenia Olibet, postdoctoral researcher, festival review: *Cinema under Siege, Cinema for Life: International Solidarity and Festivalisation at the Gaza International Festival for Women's Cinema*

Chair: **Antoine Damiens**

12h00 – 13h30
ROUNDTABLE:
Democratic Resistance Through Cinema and Film Festivals in Times of War and Authoritarianism

Maryam Ghorbankarimi, filmmaker and senior lecturer in film practice at Lancaster University

Iclal Can Gürbüz, lecturer, Department of Film Design and Directing at Başkent University

Muhammad Nour ElKhairy, Palestinian filmmaker, programmer and researcher based in Montreal

Chair: **Dunja Jelenkovic**

15h30 – 17h00
PANEL 3
Palestine – Film Festivals and Wartime Solidarities

Carlos Navarro González, researcher, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, *Three Circuits, One War: Palestinian Women Filmmakers, Wartime Solidarity, and the Uneven Geography of Festival Distribution (2021–2025)*

Chiara Lopriore, PhD student, Università degli Studi di Bari "Aldo Moro", *Film Festivals as Infrastructures of Conflict Mediation: The Case of Venice 82*

Krishnan Padinjassery, PhD Student, University of Exeter, *Will the Film Festival be Revolutionised? Solidarity, Habitus and Cultural Contestation at the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK)*

Chair: **Ylenia Olibet**

18h00 – 19h30
Room VA323 (Visual Arts Building)
KEYNOTE LECTURE
Elena Razlogova, Associate Professor, Concordia University
World Cinema as Infrastructure: Air Travel and Film Festivals

DAY 3

Wednesday, November 4
Room VA323 (Visual Arts Building)

10h00 – 11h30
PANEL 4
Genocide, Decolonization, and Rematriation: The Festival's Role

Claudia Sicondolfo, postdoctoral fellow, Simon Fraser University, *"Got Land? Give it Back": Rematriation in/as Public Art*

Em Barton, PhD Student, York University, *Circulating Solidarity – Global Coalitions & Film Festivals*

Jon Petrychyn, assistant professor, University of Regina, *Anti-Racist Film Festivals and Decolonial Solidarities*

Chair: **Ger Zielinski**

12h00 – 13h30
PANEL 5
Transnational Perspectives

Ylenia Olibet, postdoctoral researcher, McGill University, *Practicing Feminism through Film Curation*

Jesse Cumming, curator, writer and researcher, *From Screens to Scripts: The Emergence of the Hubert Bals Fund and the World Cinema Fund*

Salman El Ramly, filmmaker and researcher, *The Price of Visibility: Legibility, Self-Orientalism, and the Festival Economy in* Aisha Can't Fly Away

Chair: **Daniel Schwartz**

13h30 – 14h00
Closing Remarks
Dunja Jelenkovic