

Opening Days 2026: Research Institute for Interdisciplinary Ethnography on Violence, Gender, Sexuality and Justice

Webster Vienna Private University

19–21 November 2026

The Opening Days of the new Research Institute for Interdisciplinary Ethnography on Violence, Gender, Sexuality and Justice bring together ethnographic film, keynote lectures, multimodal methodologies, artistic interventions and public conversations. The programme includes the Travelling GIEFF – Vienna Ethnographic Film Days, a parallel Multimodal Appreciation workshop, and a closing afternoon at Kunsthalle Exnergasse that brings filmmakers, artists, anthropologists and visitors into conversation around gender, violence, sexuality and justice.

Please note that photography and videography will be taken at all events for marketing purposes.

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER

**OPENING &
VIENNA ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM DAYS**

LOCATION **MUMOK MUSEUMSPLATZ 1, 1070 WIEN, ÖSTERREICH**

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|-------------|--|
| 17:00 | Opening |
| 17:30–18:30 | Keynote: Ethnography,
Gender and Violence
Maka Suarez |
| 18:30–20:00 | Food and Drinks |
| 20:00 | Opening of the Vienna
Ethnographic Film Days |
| 20:15 | Highway Nomads
Mexico, 2023, 84 minutes
A film by Alberto Arnaut
Estrada |

Highway Nomads

The film offers an intimate, ground-level portrayal of the rarely visible social world of truck drivers in Mexico. At the centre is Luz de Luna, whose trajectory — from escaping domestic abuse to becoming a truck driver — provides a powerful entry point into questions of gender, labour exploitation and violence. Conversations and interactions along the road reveal the drivers' challenges, joys and hopes, while Luz de Luna's story gives insight into female strategies for survival and for finding one's own place and identity within a male-dominated sphere.



Highway Nomads

LOCATION BREITENSEER LICHSPIELE BREITENSEER STR. 21, 1140 WIEN, ÖSTERREICH

10:00–13:00 Film Programme

- 10:00 **Making Space**
India, 2024, 13.5 minutes
A film by Nikita Parikh
- 10:15 **As I Witness**
USA / Venezuela, 2024,
8.5 minutes
A film by Pamela Andrea
Martinez Barrera
- 10:25 **We Might Be Alike**
Germany / Iran, 2025,
17.5 minutes
A film by Monirsadat Jazaeri
- 10:45 **Dragging Chains**
Grenada, 2024,
30 minutes
A film by Emil Victor
Hvidtfeldt
- 11:15–11:30 Break
- 11:30 **Dating in the Dark**
51 minutes
- 12:25–13:00 **Discussion**
A Joint Conversation
Around the Morning's Films

FRIDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING

- 15:00 **Drags In Da' House**
Brazil, 2024, 67 minutes
A film by Mihai Andrei Leaha,
Paula Bessa Braz,
Divina Kaskaria,
Satine and Gab Brasil
- 17:00 **A Letter To Chinatown**
Hong Kong / United
Kingdom, 2025,
48 minutes
A film by Alexandra D'onofrio
and Elena Barabantseva
- 18:15–19:15 **Keynote: Ethnography
and Sexuality**
Omar Kasmani
- 19:15–20:00 **Outdoor Glühwein
reception at GRÄTZILLA,**
Laurentiusplatz
- 20:00 **Angry Spirits**
Mongolia, 2024,
104 minutes
A film by Iris Pakulla

Making Space

Alsana lives in a marginalised neighbourhood in Ahmedabad, physically separated from the rest of the city by a landfill and a highway. In a crowded family apartment, her small corner becomes a significant personal refuge. The film explores how identity, autonomy and belonging can take shape even under restrictive conditions.

As I Witness

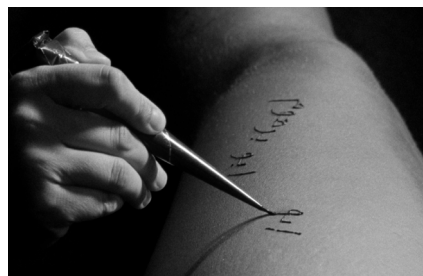
An experimental and multimodal work exploring writing, memory, the body and the experience of witnessing violence. Through writing on skin, testimony and archival sounds, the body becomes a surface where personal experience and wider histories of violence encounter one another.

We Might Be Alike

This intimate documentary follows Roya, an Iranian woman living in exile in Germany, through letters exchanged with her son Mani. Fragmented and non-linear, the film creates a shared space of memory, loss and longing and reflects on motherhood as a relationship continually renegotiated across borders, time and displacement.

Dragging Chains

Dragging Chains immerses audiences in Grenada's Jab Jab tradition during Carnival through oil-covered bodies, the weight and sound of chains, and driving rhythms. What begins as spectacle reveals deeper layers of historical trauma, resistance and resilience rooted in slavery and colonialism.



As I Witness



Dragging Chains

Dating in the Dark

In a remote village without electricity, young men walk along dark mountain paths in the evening to visit women they hope to court. By firelight, conversations unfold through shy declarations, teasing questions, silences and laughter. The film observes a courtship tradition shaped by darkness, patience and community life.

Drags In Da' House

A collaborative documentary exploring São Paulo's queer and drag scene. When the COVID-19 pandemic makes conventional fieldwork impossible, video diaries, screen recordings, online performances and self-filming become ways of continuing to work together. The film raises questions about collaboration, representation and shared authorship in ethnographic filmmaking.

A Letter To Chinatown

Ten years after their earlier film British Born Chinese, the filmmakers return to Daniel He as he prepares to graduate from Oxford and enter adult life. The film explores growing up between cultures and the ways family histories, responsibilities and transnational connections shape identity, belonging and home.

Angry Spirits

In Ulaanbaatar, Ainur, a young mother, struggles to support her children and parents while experiencing a growing sense of unease and haunting. The film bridges personal narrative, spiritual worlds and structural questions of poverty, inequality and rapid social change in contemporary Mongolia.



Dating in the Dark



Angry Spirits

PARALLEL EVENT - FRIDAY AT WEBSTER VIENNA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Multimodal Appreciation: Introducing the Kit

Ethnographers from across the humanities and social sciences have recently experimented with multimodal forms of description, analysis and intervention in order to grasp slippery research objects, reach new audiences, and activate latent potentials for a broad range of actions in the world. This multimodal turn has resulted in a proliferation of more-than-textual forms that are hard to classify and are at odds with institutionalised modes of disciplinary knowledge production.

In this workshop, the Multimodal Appreciation Kit will be introduced. Developed by Judith Albrecht, Tomás Criado, Ignacio Fariás, Andrew Gilbert and Carla J. Maier, the kit provides practical exercises and a framework for valuing and assessing multimodal works and their capacity to weave together diverse media forms, collaborative practices and public engagement.

Facilitated by Judith Albrecht, Tomás Criado, Andrew Gilbert and Carla J. Maier.

Registration: judith.albrecht@webster.ac.at

09:30–10:00	Coffee and registration
10:00–11:00	Welcome and public keynote: Interdisciplinary and Multimodal Ethnography Andrew Gilbert, Professor for Design Anthropology Halle, Germany
11:00–11:30	Coffee break
11:30–13:00	Multimodal Appreciation Workshop, Part I
13:00–13:15	Short break
13:15–14:30	Multimodal Appreciation Workshop, Part II
14:30–15:30	Lunch



LOCATION BREITENSEER LICHSPIELE BREITENSEER STR. 21, 1140 WIEN, ÖSTERREICH

10:00–15:00 Film Programme

- 10:00 **Only if the Baby Cries...**
India, 2024, 15 minutes
A film by Shadab Farooq
- 10:20 **Work Between Us**
Austria, 2024, 29 minutes
A film by Elaine Goldberg
- 10:50 **City on the Back**
Ecuador, 2023, 76 minutes
A film by Fadia Paola Rodas Ziadé
- 12:10–12:30 Break
- 12:30 **Ea – Home On Givær**
Norway, 2025, 36 minutes
A film by Ursula Möll
- 13:10 **Throne Of Wood**
Iran, 2025, 30 minutes
A film by Sadegh Kazemi
- 13:40–14:00 Break
- 14:00–15:00 **Closing Discussion of the Film Programme**
A joint conversation reflecting on the films and the social worlds they invite us to encounter.
- From 16:30 **Golden Record Event: Gender, Violence, Sexuality and Justice**
- 16:30–20:00 **Golden Record Event**
Visitors are invited to create and contribute their own Golden Records around gender, violence, sexuality and justice, and to enter into conversations with invited filmmakers, artists and anthropologists.
- 17:00 **Closing Keynote — Ethnography and Justice**

Only if the Baby Cries...

Set in a village in the Kashmir hills where many inhabitants are deaf, the film follows the birth of Misra Khatoon's baby. Villagers gather and beat drums, waiting to discover whether the newborn responds to sound. The film explores communication, identity, belonging and uncertainty in a social world where silence is not absence.

Work Between Us

Care work is rarely visible, is mostly performed by women, and is often underpaid and undervalued. Moving through Austria's care landscape, the film asks how family carers cope, under what conditions 24-hour carers work, and how inclusion is practised within care institutions.

City on the Back

María and Isabel work as informal recyclers in Quito. Following their daily labour through the city, the film

makes visible informal work in urban sustainability and explores gender, activism, family responsibilities, social organisation and everyday survival.

EA – Home on Givær

On Givær in northern Norway, Olaug Olsen cares for sheep and eider ducks, continuing a centuries-old tradition of mutual care between humans and animals. The film explores more-than-human relationships, ecological change, intergenerational knowledge and intangible cultural heritage.

Throne Of Wood

In the village of Avanj, a hundred-year-old woman known as the Chief gathers and stacks firewood even though the village has long been connected to natural gas. Her routine becomes a point of conflict and opens questions about ageing, autonomy, dignity and the meanings attached to everyday practices.



Only if the Baby Cries...



City on the Back



Home on Givær



Throne Of Wood

Golden Record Event: Gender, Violence, Sexuality and Justice

Location: Kunsthalle Exnergasse, within the exhibition "Off the Precipice", Währinger Str. 59, 1090 Wien, Österreich

The final afternoon of the Opening Days moves into the exhibition space at Kunsthalle Exnergasse. The Golden Record event invites visitors to engage creatively and collectively with the central questions of the new Research Institute: gender, violence, sexuality and justice.

Inspired by the idea of the Golden Record, visitors are invited to consider what stories, images, sounds, memories and perspectives we would choose to communicate about life on Earth — and whose experiences and forms of knowledge should be included. Rather than producing a single authoritative record, the event opens a space for multiple, situated and sometimes contradictory perspectives.

17:00

Closing Keynote — Ethnography and Justice

Hayal Ayakarsu

Hayal Ayakarsu's keynote on **Ethnography and Justice** will serve as the closing keynote of the Opening Days and will take place at Kunstraum Exnergasse within the ongoing exhibition **Off the Precipice**.

Hayal Ayakarsu's work on ethnography and justice resonates strongly with the questions at the heart of the exhibition and the **Golden Record** event. Throughout the afternoon, the Golden Record invites visitors to ask what we would choose to communicate about life on Earth if we were to create such a record today. Whose experiences would be included? Whose voices would be heard? What would we want to communicate about gender, violence, sexuality and justice—and what might remain absent, silenced or difficult to translate?

The keynote adds another perspective to these questions by asking what ethnography can contribute to our understanding of justice. Together, the exhibition, the Golden Record event and the keynote create different points of departure for thinking about how experiences of violence, inequality and injustice are documented, represented and made visible, and about whose knowledge and perspectives become part of the stories we tell about our world.

Together with Hayal Ayakarsu, a group of invited guests — filmmakers, artists and anthropologists — will be present in the exhibition space and offer short inputs about their work. Their contributions bring different perspectives, experiences, images, stories and ways of knowing into the Golden Record event.

Rather than a conventional panel, the format creates an open and conversational space. Visitors can move between the Golden Record activities, the artworks and the invited guests and engage directly with questions of gender, violence, sexuality and justice.

The closing afternoon thus brings the different elements of the Opening Days together: artistic practice, ethnographic research, film, storytelling and public conversation. It concludes with a question that also lies at the heart of the Golden Record: If we were to create a record of our world today, what would justice require us to include?

Invited Guests: Small Inputs & Open Conversations

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