



RePLITO

Quarterly Newsletter # 7, November 2023

Roundtable discussion on transnational anti-caste activism
(*Désirée Mohn*).....2-3

“I escaped to my future”
- conversation with Nagehan Uskan about an ‘invisible’ film
(*Nadja-Christina Schneider*).....4-6

New publication in RePLITO’s digital knowledge archive:
“Dwelling together. Urban Housing, Neighborliness
and Multilocal Homemaking”7-8

RePLITO Team Updates: Dr. Dina Wahba.....9

Past and upcoming RePLITO events.....11-13

<https://replito.de>

Roundtable discussion on transnational anti-caste activism (Sep 12, 2023)

Perspectives of anti-caste activists and implications for universities

With the support of GAMS and RePLITO, anti-caste activists were invited to IAAW to take part in a roundtable discussion on perspectives and experiences in transnational activism and to discuss the possibilities of establishing protections in university contexts. The event was organized by Désirée Mohn in the context of her research on transnational anti-caste activism.

Allyship and solidarity can be seen as important tools in working against social injustices. However, we must be careful to not use this rhetoric to justify ourselves and our work, without thinking of our position and putting the interest of marginalized groups in the centre of research. Swati Kamble is a Dalit activist and intersectional feminist. She uses the framework of Intersectionality to study marginalized communities. In the roundtable, she advocated for going beyond a rigid checklist of ethical considerations to be legally in the clear. Rather, she appealed to think about citing and permission of the communities, remuneration and keeping relationships sustainable. Hence, we need to think about ethical collaborations in which we include the community in a way that goes beyond extracting knowledge.



Swati Kamble
(photo: Nadja-Christina Schneider)



Sayali Zarekar and Aroh Akunth
(photo: Nadja-Christina Schneider)

This understanding of keeping the community involved is also shared by Aroh Akunth, who founded the Dalit Queer Project and the Dalit Art Archive. Aroh Akunth is a cultural practitioner, writer, and researcher at CEMIS Göttingen. She pointed to the complexity of the interplay between power, community and activism. She also highlighted the crucial role of community support in guiding individuals. The speaker emphasized the necessity of a political program that addresses the demands of the anti-caste movement. She sees similar challenges in Germany in terms of there being no political program or protective measures against caste inequality and discrimination. However, this is important, as studies from the US and UK have shown that the impact of caste is not limited by national boundaries. In 2020, Brandeis University became the first US university to ban caste-based discrimination, and was later followed by Harvard University, California State University, the University of California, Davis, and Brown University. Looking at these examples and being in a university context at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, we need to ask ourselves what can be done here.



Reyazul Haque

(photo: Nadja-Christina Schneider)

Reyazul Haque is a doctoral candidate at GAMS with a research interest in India and the GDR. He is a theatre practitioner, translator and writer. He pointed out the importance of writing down recommendations for universities in Germany, while also mentioning the necessity to ensure access to institutions of higher education. However, there also needs to be a discussion about decolonizing knowledge and problematizing casteist practices and symbols.

Sayali Zarekar is an activist and engineer based in Berlin, involved in mobilizing, and coordinating anti-caste events and networks across Europe. Her interests lie in water conservation, post-harvest techniques, and their connection to issues of social and environmental justice. In the discussion, she pointed out that practices such as Yoga and Ayurveda also need to be part of this conversation, in a way that goes beyond the discussion of cultural appropriation. She wishes for a more nuanced understanding of whom practices such as Yoga and Ayurveda are accessible to. This implies that it is imperative to shift from presenting a static and fixed image of India to concentrating on the social processes and practices that shape it. This means the acceptance of multiple and competing narratives, which cannot be reduced to a single idea that fits a certain bias or is more marketable than another.

Finally, the question is also where knowledge will be produced in the future and what will it be about? With the loss of the department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region (GAMS) here at HU, and the closing down of many South Asian Studies departments in general, will there be enough spaces to address the topic of caste in our university system, to initiate further meetings, screenings, and art? While caste discrimination needs to be addressed on a personal level, addressing and problematizing practices, institutional spaces also need to include caste in the context of diversity and provide necessary protections, while involving the community.



Désirée Mohn

(photo: Nadja-Christina Schneider)

About the Author

Désirée Mohn is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Modern South and Southeast Asian Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology. Her academic pursuits and research interests centre around the practices and discourse on Human Rights, with a particular focus on methods involving community engagement and the visibility of topics related to the South Asian diaspora and transnational solidarity.

Teaching cooperation with Off-University

How to See the Caste

While castes have been around for more than 3000 years, their evolving nature makes it imperative to understand them better, as they play a crucial role in the problems that South Asia in general, and India in particular have been facing. In contemporary India, violence against Dalits, patriarchy and gender subjugation, communitarian apathy and hatred, national jingoism, authoritarian politics and the persecution of minorities have been rooted in the dynamics of caste. This course provides an overview of the presence of castes in Hindi films, and their approach towards the system by focusing on feature films and documentaries. At the same time, it will provide an understanding of how the films also play a role in the dynamics of castes that inform Indian society today. In each class selected movie clips will be shown and analysed to understand how caste is embedded in the Hindi film and media culture.

The course is hosted at the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region (GAMS) at IAAW, HU Berlin, and funded in the framework of RePLITO's teaching cooperation with Off-University.



About the Instructors

Reyazul Haque studied at the School of Arts and Aesthetics (JNU, Delhi) for his Masters and M.Phil. He holds a bachelor in Spanish and has worked as a theatre practitioner as well as a journalist and editor at prestigious media and publishing houses in India. He has been associated with the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) as an academic fellow, and is currently pursuing his doctoral thesis on India's depiction in DDR newsreels at the GAMS department at IAAW. He regularly translates Arundhati Roy and Anand Teltumbde, among others.

Julia Strutz is one of the co-initiators of Off-University and a sociologist (HU Berlin), historian (Bilgi University Istanbul) and urban geographer (KU Leuven) by training. She conducts research in the fields of memory politics, urban renewal, the urban history of Istanbul, and the various ways this history gains importance in heritage and non-heritage contexts today. She works at Department of Gender of Gender and Media Studies (GAMS) at IAAW/HU Berlin and is a project member of RePLITO.

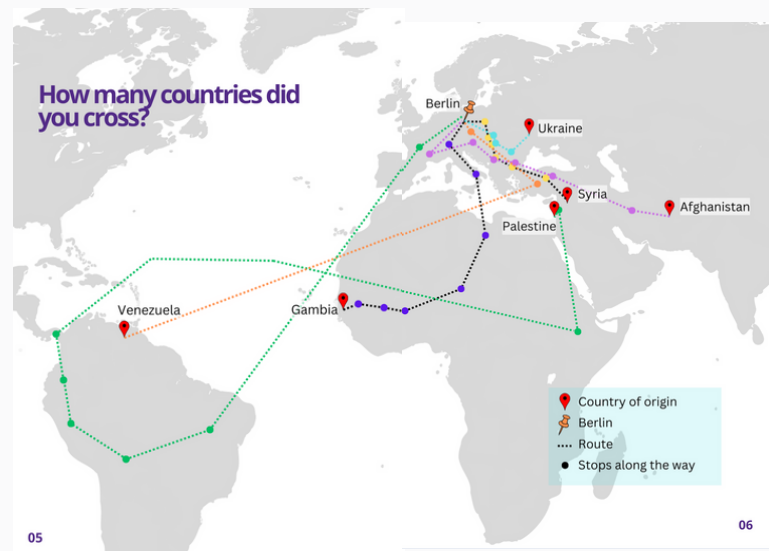
"I escaped to my future" - conversation with Nagehan Uskan about an 'invisible' film

"I ESCAPED TO MY FUTURE" is the title of an accompanying booklet to a participatory film project made in Berlin which was published by the GAMS department and RePLITO project in May 2023 (see also #6, August 2023). The idea for a joint film project with unaccompanied children and young adults who arrived here recently was jointly created during a workshop held by our visiting research fellow Dr. Nagehan Uskan on the topic of "Visual Storytelling as Resistance" at the beginning of 2023.

Due to data protection rules, it is not possible to share or screen the film publicly. This is the major reason why we decided to make a booklet instead which contains quotes from the interviews and introductions of the production team and workshop organizers. As this film is part of an emerging visual archive on young peoples' perspectives on migration and their expectations for the future they actively seek to 'escape to', it is important to speak about it, even though the film itself may remain 'invisible'. In the following conversation, Nagehan Uskan will share insights into the background and process of shooting this film.

Nadja: Hello Nagehan, thanks for taking the time for this conversation. Perhaps a good way to start would be to hear a bit more from you about the project from which both the film and the booklet emerged?

Nagehan: Thank you, Nadja. I also want to express my gratitude to you for providing us with the space, and, of course, a big thanks for making this project possible. As you mentioned, the project was realized at one of the first reception centers for unaccompanied minors in Berlin. We organized a week of artistic activities, including filmmaking, photography, and rap music workshops. As a part of the week, I conducted a "Visual Storytelling as Resistance" workshop. After the workshop, the participants had the idea of creating a documentary about migration and using the interview technique. We immediately took action. The participants prepared the questions, and we collectively decided which questions to proceed with. We utilized one of the rooms in the institution where they're staying. This room serves as their first living space here in Berlin, and we used a mattress as a background. We embraced this minimalistic aesthetic; it was the only material available at the moment, yet it spoke volumes about the lives of the young people residing there.



The workshop participants assumed various roles, including camera operators, sound recorders, and interviewers. Many young people from the reception center were eager to participate, both in front of and behind the camera. At times, filming proved challenging due to the crowded nature of the small room, filled with laughter and jokes. The filmmaking process unexpectedly transformed into an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. The humor fostered a new level of communication among them, encouraging a great deal of sharing, exchanging, and mutual understanding. Every step of the film was made collectively. As there are different languages and dialects especially from Afghanistan, different social workers of the center were also involved to support us during the editing process. And finally, we also had a screening with all the residents of the center, maybe the one and only collective screening of the film...

Nadja: We often assume that people, or in fact all living beings, seek to escape *from* a situation they perceive as too risky, unsafe or threatening for them, if they find a way to do so. To escape *towards* something to me conveys that the unaccompanied children and young adults that you have worked with already had a clear idea and expectation about their future when they decided to set off on their sometimes extremely difficult and lengthy journey. Why did you decide to use the quote "I escaped to my future" as the title of this film?

Nagehan: The title of the film was actually proposed entirely by the participants of the film. I was surprised upon hearing this. I appreciated the dialectic between 'escaping' and the idea of a hopeful future. While 'escaping' invokes a troubled situation, it also encompasses an autonomous action. This title places the idea of 'hope' at the center, which was the prevailing emotion during the workshop and, I can confidently say, the predominant sentiment among the participants during their initial days in Berlin. Of course, such an optimistic approach can lead to potential disappointments. However, with all the synergy and emotion that the film left in me, even if (and most probably, yes), new challenges arise along their paths, I believe they will be able to discover new lines for escape through new autonomous actions, along with the solidarity and struggle they've already encountered at such a young age.

Nadja: What do you think are the central 'messages' that we can learn from the interviews about the childrens' and young adults' experiences and perspectives?

What do you think about Europe?

“To have equality, to have some educational rights, to have the right to go to the gym, going to sports. Because, most of us, we have a lot of talents, like me, my friends, our people. They are really smart, but the vision that European people have of us is “okay, this guy is like a caveman, this guy didn’t go to school, this guy comes from another country with a different culture.” I really think that’s not right, that’s not correct, because all of us, we have a lot of talents. We just need a moment, we just need time, give it to us and then we will prove you. We have talents, we can go to school, we can study, we can learn many things, but we just need a chance. ”

I came to reach my hope and to live secure and I also find Europe really nice. And I hope all people can come here and reach their hope.

What do you think about migration?

“Migration in my idea is not a good thing to do at all, but there are people who are forced to do it and they will go through a lot of troubles. The struggle is more than you can imagine and a lot of dangers exists on the way. You can lose your life and you will lose a lot of things to get to a better place, a lot of dangers on this migration way. I wish all the best for humanity, to understand each other and to help each other. No division between black and white, and no differing between Iranian, Afghans and Turkish people. I wish there is no racism and all the world is the same for everyone. I hope there is no war and everyone can live in peace. ”

It's difficult to migrate from a country to the other, but we have to continue towards our future.

I've seen a lot and I've been through a lot and I learned a lot.

Nagehan: It is possible to escape and create a new, desirable future. However, escaping should not be something that you're forced into. A world with more equality and justice, a non-militarized world, is also possible, so escaping could be purely voluntary. The violence of border politics and the capitalistic investments that support it put numerous lives in danger and lead to the loss of many people every day. Imagining the hardships that young people under 18, considered as children, have to endure in order to reach a desirable and safe future—and comparing this with the freedom of movement that a Western child enjoys—is beyond the bounds of reason. Some peoples' lives should not be considered less valuable than others'. Despite all this darkness, hope is the most dominant message of the film, and we shouldn't give up on embracing it.



Nagehan Uskan lives and works on Lesbos Island where she is part of different grassroots migrant video collectives. She completed her PhD on the topic of Kurdish documentary cinema in Turkey. She was a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Fribourg/Switzerland with research on migration and its visual representation. She is a Visiting Research Fellow of the RePLITO project and has taught several courses on the topic of migration as well as cinema in exile at the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region (GAMS) at IAAW, in cooperation with Off-University. She also works as film programmer and as independent documentary filmmaker.

Dwelling Together. Urban Housing, Neighborliness and Multilocal Homemaking

Neighborhood relations are the focus of the three contributions by **İclal Ayşe Küçükırca**, **Trinankur Banerjee** and **Julia Strutz**. In her article “Dwelling Together - Thinking the Neighborhood as a Form of Home - Nusaybin, Turkey 2016-2023”, **İclal Ayşe Küçükırca** gives insights into her ongoing research on the question how people, after the violent destruction and loss of their homes, displacement and resettlement in new buildings, can build on previously established practices of homemaking and recreate the close neighborhood relationships that have also been lost. She shows that the tandooris continue to play a central role as places where bread is baked, but also where social ties are forged and news are exchanged.

Trinankur Banerjee sheds light on the film genre of popular Bengali Comedy after the Partition of India in 1947. Forms of neighborly coexistence under difficult living conditions in the urban centers of West Bengal had to be renegotiated after the arrival of many refugees from East Bengal. In his article “On the Problems of Being Together”, Trinankur Banerjee shows that comedies played an important role in this process and provided comic resolutions in mediated forms of living together.

Julia Strutz describes practices of good neighborliness and living together that are associated with the concept of komşuluk. As she argues in her article titled “Komşuluk. About Practices of Neighborliness in a Transregional Space”, the reciprocal obligations of good neighborly conduct are integral to the mahalle, which denotes the neighborhood in many parts of the Muslim World and beyond.

Urban narratives of migration, housing and cohabitation as well as the **archiving and transfer of memories of past lives** before the migration to future generations are the focus of the contributions by **Tuba İnal-Çekiç**, **Dhara Patel** and **Vahé Tachjian** to this collection.

For their joint contribution titled “Urban Narratives or Migration: Dwelling Practices and Identity Formation among Indian and Turkish Highly Skilled Migrants (HSM) in Frankfurt and Berlin”, **Tuba İnal-Çekiç** and **Dhara Patel** have chosen the format of a conversation. While socio-spatial dynamics and dwelling practices have a great influence on the relationship of the “new arrivals” to the respective cities, they argue that access to transnational networks, as support systems and connecting points between their past and future lives, are no less important for their identity and an emerging sense of belonging and familiarity.

In his article “To Remember and Write: The Armenian Memory Books (houshamadyan)”, **Vahé Tachjian** introduces the genre of houshamadyans. This genre of memory/memorial books started to be published during a period when diasporic Armenian elites inaugurated a process of reconstructing Ottoman Armenian identity. Vahé Tachjian shows how the houshamadyans, which provided depictions of a past life characterized by diversity, increasingly adapted themselves to diasporic nationalist environments.

Four further contributions in this collection look at different aspects of **entangled lifeworlds and multispecies coexistence**. In her article “A university campus as a multi-species city within a city”, **Anna Schnieder-Krüger** sheds light on the specific interactions and forms of cohabitation of plants, animals and humans on the campus of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

In her article “Plants as companions in migrant home-making”, **Hilal Alkan** draws our attention to the fact that “plants appear in displacement and migration trajectories of people in unexpected places and moments.” She shows that caring for plants and the close relationship with them can also play a central role in the process of arriving and home-making.

In preparation for the Islamic festival of sacrifice (Eid ul-Adha), the animals (sheep, goats or cows) are brought home and live with the family until the time of their sacrifice. In her autobiographical essay “The Sadness of Goats”, **Arshi Javaid** links her observations on this temporary and very specific form of cohabitation with memories of her childhood and youth in Kashmir.

Nadja-Christina Schneider uses the example of the “elephant village” Hathigaon in Rajasthan, designed by Rahul Mehrotra Architects (RMA) in her article on “Architects designing for multispecies cohabitation”, to reflect on the role new approaches to ‘animal aided design’ can play in future forms of multispecies cohabitation.

A special feature of this collection is that the authors have read and commented on each other’s articles. Thus, it was not an editors’ task to emphasize cross-connections between them or to formulate a framework, but this has resulted quite naturally from the mutual interest and feedback discussions on the articles. A very nice way of thinking together and sharing one’s ‘work in progress’.

Nadja-Christina Schneider

Read the articles in this collection [here](#).



The screenshot shows a Replika website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Replika logo and links for Search, Dashboard, and Login or Signup. Below the navigation bar, the main title of the collection is "Dwelling Together. Urban Housing, Neighborliness and Multilocal Homemaking", with a sub-header "Book · Created Jul 13, 2023". The main content area displays a grid of article cards. Each card includes a cover image, the article title, the author's name, and the publication date. The articles shown are: "Dwelling Together. Urban Housing, Neighborliness and Multilocal Homemaking: Introduction to the Collection" by Nadja-Christina Schneider (Nov 15, 2023); "On the Problems of Being Together. Popular Bengali Comedy after Partition" by Trinankur Banerjee (Nov 23, 2023); "Urban Narratives of Migration: Dwelling Practises and Identity Formation among Indian and Turkish Highly Skilled Migrants (HSM) in Frankfurt and Berlin" by Tuba Inal-Cekic and Dhara Patel (Nov 15, 2023); "To Remember and Write: The Armenian Memory Books (houshamadyan)" by Vahé Tachjian (Nov 15, 2023); "A university campus as a multi-species city within a city" by Anna Schnieder-Krüger (Nov 20, 2023); "Plants as companions in migrant home-making" by Hilal Alkan (Nov 15, 2023); and "The Sadness of Goats" by Arshi Javaid (Nov 15, 2023). A "CONNECTIONS" section at the bottom right indicates 4 replies from the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient.

RePLITO Team Updates

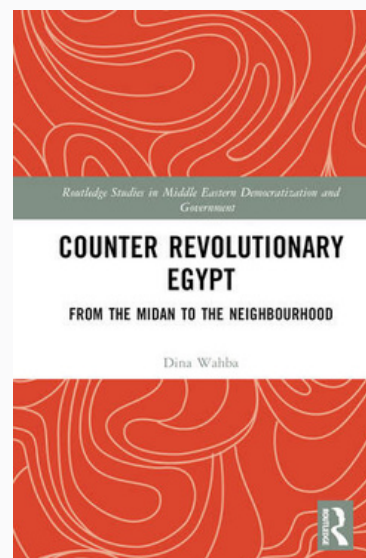
Dr. Dina Wahba

Postdoctoral Researcher at the Institute of Islamic Studies, FU Berlin



Dina Wahba is a political scientist and feminist scholar. Her research interests include intersectionality, construction of masculinities between Europe and the Middle East, protest movements in the Middle East as well as transnational political solidarity movements. Dr. Wahba received her PhD in political science from Freie Universität, Berlin where she worked as a research associate at the DFG funded project Affective Societies.

Dr. Wahba's recently published book is entitled "Counter revolutionary Egypt from the Midan to the neighborhood" (Routledge 2023). She is a recipient of the Chevening Scholarship, she completed her M.A. degree in Gender Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London . Her published thesis is entitled "Gendering the Egyptian Revolution" (Palgrave 2016). Dina Wahba received her B.A. in Political Science from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University.



Past and upcoming events

Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region

GAMS RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

SEASON 7 - WINTER TERM 2023/24 | FRIDAY 10-12 AM - ROOM 217 AT IAAW

ICLAL AYSE KÜCÜKKIRCA 24.11.
(GAMS/HU Berlin)
Homelessness and Homemaking in Post-Conflict in a Border City: Nusaybin, Mardin 2016-2023

ANANDITA BAJPAI 01.12.
(ZMO, Berlin)
Afro-Asian Solidarities, Epistolary Exchanges and Photographic Archives: Tracing Radio's Material Resonance(s) in Cold War India

MAREIKE BERNIEN & MERLE KRÖGER 22.12.
(pong film Berlin)
The Fifth Wall - Navina Sundaram: An Outsider's Inside View or An Insider's Outside View

DHANYA FEE KIRCHHOF 12.01.
(GAMS/HU Berlin)
"I Want to Be a Daughter of the World" - Subjectification, (Im-)Mobilities and Mediatization in the Ravidassia Context

PONNI ARASU 26.01.
(Universität Tübingen)
TamilThanmai: A Historical Ethnography of Public Political Lives in Tamil Nadu (1950-1970)
(Dr Arasu's lecture is jointly hosted by IfEE & GAMS)

 For registration please contact Prof. Dr. Nadja-Christina Schneider
nadja-christina.schneider@hu-berlin.de [c] Background image Jf-Korpa on Unsplash

Updates and abstracts: <https://www.iaaw.hu-berlin.de/de/querschnitt/medialitaet>

Ecology, Counter-Colonialism and Oral Knowledge



Roundtable conversation with the Indigenous activist and educator, Jéssica Tupinambá*, and the educator and activist from the Brazilian Landless Movement (MST), Felipe Campelo.

*Due to a last-minute change involving the initial speaker, Shirley Krenak, the poster provides the previous information.

PROJECT MODULE : CLIMATE CRISIS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24. 4-6 PM
AT FU BERLIN, BOLTZMANNSTR. 1

Roundtable conversation with the Indigenous activist and educator, Shirley Djukurnã Krenak and the educator and activist from the Brazilian Landless Movement (MST), Felipe Campelo. The event is in Brazilian Portuguese with the possibility of whispering-collaborative translation and will be moderated by **Juliana M. Streva**. The Project Module is taught by **Prof Sergio Costa** and **Prof. Regine Schönenberg**.

ECOLOGIA, CONTRA-COLONIALISMO E SABERES ORAIS

Shirley Djukurnã Krenak
Shirley comes from the Krenak Indigenous people of eastern Minas Gerais, Brazil. She holds a degree in journalism and advertising and works to defend indigenous rights and protect sacred rivers from mining activities. She is an indigenous writer and coordinates the establishment of the "Shirley Djukurnã Krenak Institute."

Felipe Campelo
Felipe is an educator at the Egídio Brunetto Popular School of Agroecology and Agroforestry (EPPAEB) and an activist from the Brazilian Landless Movement (MST). EPPAEB has been recognized as a reference in agroecological education in Brazil, providing a pedagogical space for learning about agroforestry systems as well as promoting popular literacy.

The event is part of the Speakers Tour: maiz brasil - decolonial voices and practices for climate justice and food sovereignty (treemedia e.V. 2023)

FB: maiz brasil // Insta: maiz_brasil

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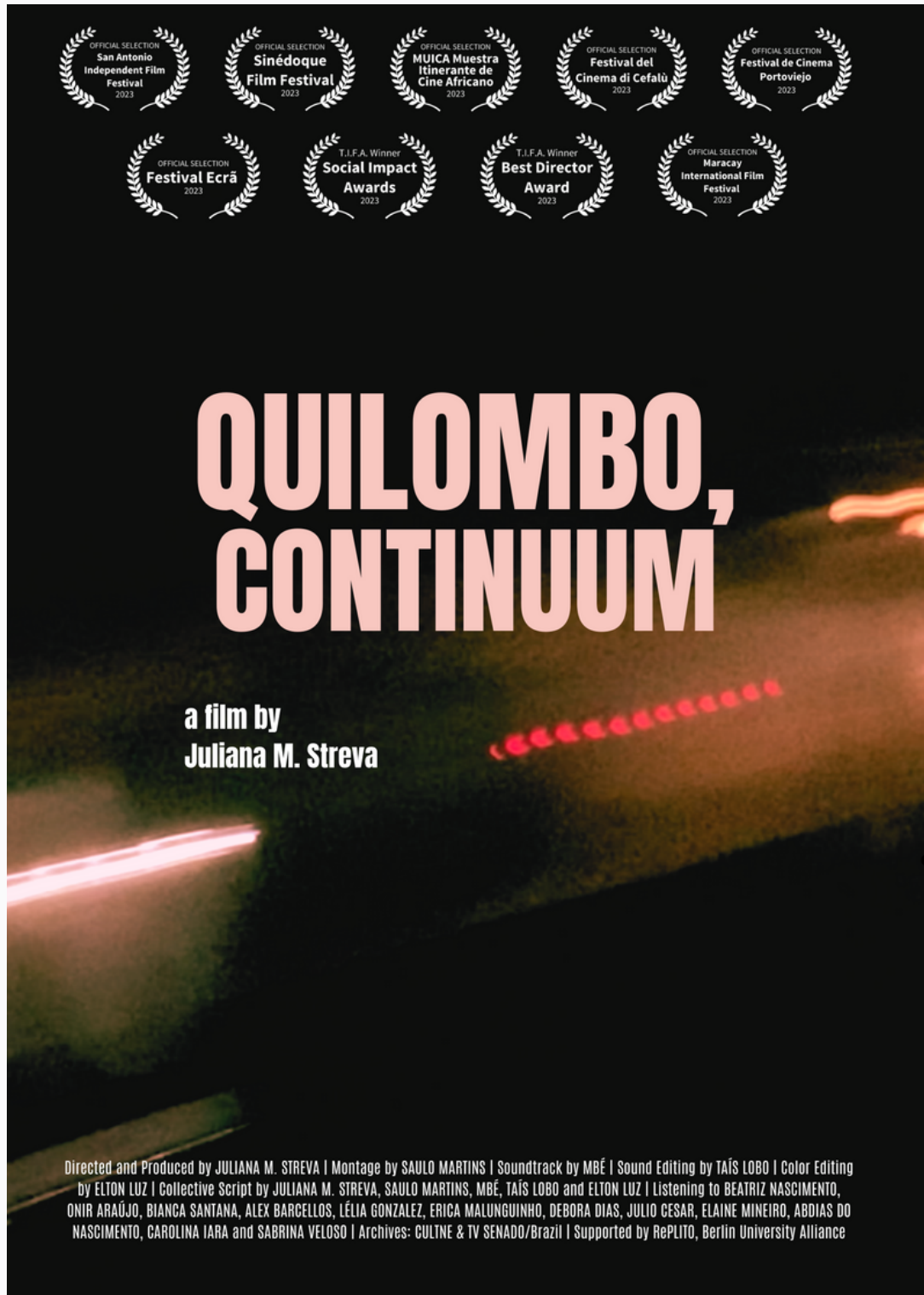


mit Mitteln des
Königlichen
Entwicklungsdienstes



Latest news on Juliana M. Streva's experimental film "Quilombo, Continuum" (2022)

We presented Juliana M. Streva's remarkable film in the two previous newsletter issues #5 (April 2023) and #6 (August 2023). The film has been screened and discussed with audiences at numerous events and film festivals this year. The journey of "Quilombo, Continuum" continues: Juliana M. Streva will be an invited guest at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg in Duisburg and exhibit her film in the framework of "Bridging Divides - Rethinking Reparative Politics through a North-South Dialogue" (Dec 14-15, 2023).



RePLITO's digital knowledge archive has three different sections:



Concepts and Repertoires

explores conceptualizations, definitions, interpretations and global repertoires of living together



Conversations

are dialogues about global repertoires of living together



Publications

presents articles, reports, journals and books emerging from our research on global repertoires of living together

Imprint

RePLITO Quarterly Newsletter

No. 7, November 2023

Newsletter of the joint research project "Beyond Social Cohesion - Global Repertoires of Living Together (RePLITO)", funded by the Berlin University Alliance in the framework of the Main Call Exploration Projects Social Cohesion

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