

Call for papers: **WELCOMING STRANGERS**

*An international, interdisciplinary postgraduate conference, 27 April 2012
Humanities and Arts Research Centre, Royal Holloway, University of London*

Keynote speakers:

Professor Robin Cohen (Emeritus Professor and Principal Investigator of the Leverhulme-funded Oxford Diasporas Programme, University of Oxford)

Professor John Hill (Department of Media Arts, Royal Holloway, University of London)

With accelerated inter- and intra-national mobility, the concepts of place and displacement, and their impact on individual and collective identities, have received unprecedented scholarly attention in disciplines as diverse as Modern Languages, Geography, Politics, Music, Film and Media Studies, English, Postcolonial Studies and Migration and Diaspora Studies. The growing importance of multi-locality, transnational (and 'post-national') communities, cosmopolitanism and various forms of flexible citizenship call binarisms which posit 'the stranger' as 'the Other' of the indigenous community, as the 'guest' who is welcomed by the hegemonic host society, into question. Contests around notions of ethnic essentialism and cultural purity have given way to a widespread acceptance of diversity and the celebration of hybridity. In music, literature, and film, the contributions of artists with transnationally mobile and/or ethnic minority backgrounds to the aesthetic traditions of western hegemonic cultural productions have resulted in innovative creative synergies of the local and the global and have enjoyed considerable cross-over appeal. On the other hand, many 'strangers' have not been welcomed, their voices have been silenced, and their artistic expressions have been marginalized. The exponential growth in informational technologies and the mobility of global capital, which once promised to fulfil McLuhan's vision of a global village, has been accompanied by many unforeseen challenges. Restricted mobility of labour, asylum legislation, and new security challenges pose a threat to the ideal of global identities and a cosmopolitan society.

The conference committee invites proposals for papers from postgraduate students working in or (in)between the fields of Geography, Politics, Music, Film and Media Studies, English, Postcolonial Studies and Migration and Diaspora Studies. In particular, we are interested in papers addressing the following issues:

- **The impact of displacement and transnationalism on artistic practice in literature, film and music**
- **Hybridity, creolisation and artistic innovation**
- **Representations of migration and diaspora in literature, film and television**
- **Stereotyping strangers**
- **Cosmopolitanism and identities at the margins**
- **Transnational mobilities, citizenship and bordering practices**
- **Migrants of calamity: financial crisis, terrorism, and environmental change**
- **Migration, politics, law, territoriality**
- **(Inter)disciplinary approaches to hospitality**

- **Producing and performing locality**
- **Transnational flows, transnational connections**
- **Emotional and social constructions of ‘home’**
- **‘Stranger again’ – returning to the country of origin**

Please send your 200-word abstract, together with a brief biographical note, 4 key words, and 4 bibliographical references to the conference committee **no later than 31 January 2012.**

Email: WelcomingStrangers@rhul.ac.uk

The Conference Committee:
John Abrahm (Politics)

Richard Bater (Geography)

Prof. Daniela Berghahn (Media Arts)

Lia Deromedi (English)

Stephanie Vos (Music)

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