'Visual International Politics: Theories, Methods and Institutions' Workshop

13-14 June, 2016, LSE

Old Building, Room 3.28

Monday 13 June 2016

12.00 – 13.00	**Buffet lunch and welcome remarks**
13.00 – 15.00	**Panel One: Theory, Visuality and IR**

Visual Global Politics (Introduction to edited book), Roland Bleiker (University of Queensland)

The role of the visual in critical social science, Lilie Chouliaraki (LSE)

Omni-Aesthetics in Japan, Marie Thorsten (Doshisha, Japan)

Hindutva and the Tourist Gaze: Saffronising India in the Realm of the Visual, Shakuntala Banaji (LSE)

15.00 – 15.20	**Refreshments**
15.20 – 17.20	**Panel Two: Methods of Visual International Politics**

Maximum Visuality: semiotics, surveillance and creativity, Debbie Lisle (Queens University, Belfast)

'Photos of my life': Using borrowed cameras to access the perspectives of refugee and migrant children in Malaysia, Catherine Allerton (LSE)

The Ideal River: Maps, Legibility and Creating International Institutions in the 19th Century, Joanne Yao (LSE)

I See: Video Data for Studying International Negotiations, Marian Feist (LSE)

18.00 – 19.30	**Film Screening**	Wolfson Theatre, NAB
	Border Crossings, William A. Callahan (LSE)	
	'We Are Not Immigrations': Examining Everyday Border Practices at the US-Mexican Border, Cynthia Weber (University of Sussex)	

Tuesday 14 June 2016

8.30 – 9.00	**Breakfast**
9.00 – 10.30	**Panel Three: Images, Identity and Security (1)**
	Constitutive Visualities of Cosmopolitan Imaginaries, Aaron McKeil (LSE)
	Cultivating Power: Gardens of War and Gardens of Peace in Visual Global Politics, William A. Callahan (LSE)
	Rebel Karaoke: Propaganda, Performance and Practice in the Kachin Insurgency, David Brenner (LSE)
10.30 – 11.00	**Refreshments**
11.00 – 12.30	**Panel Four: Images, Identity and Security (2)**
	Art as Conflict/Conflict as Art: The Venice Biennale as International Relations, Lene Hansen (University of Copenhagen)
	Diplomacy as Presentability, Iver Neumann (LSE)
12.30 – 14.00	**Lunch**
14.00 – 16.00	**Roundtable: Building Institutions, Outreach and Publication Strategies for VIP**
	Roland Bleiker, William A. Callahan, Lene Hansen, Lilie Chouliaraki, Cynthia Weber
16.00 – 16.30	**Closing comments**

Selected Abstracts

Rebel Karaoke: Propaganda, Performance and Practice in the Kachin Insurgency
David Brenner (Department of International Relations, LSE)

This paper traces the emergence of a new social movement in Myanmar's restive Kachin borderlands through the lens of visual politics. It first explains how the propaganda arm of the insurgent Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) has utilised karaoke music videos, propagating ethnonational revolution, as part of their effort to recruit a new generation of rebels among the local youth.

In a second step the paper analyses similar music videos that were produced by independent Kachin musicians. Tracing the evolution and emancipation of these visual politics helps the paper to conceptualise insurgency as an embodied social practice rather than a phenomenon that is analytically separate from the fabrics of Kachin society. This helps to further our understanding of a social movement that, while co-created by the insurgency, has emerged as a powerful revolutionary force itself, developing a momentum of its own in driving wider dynamics of conflict and peace in the Kachin borderlands.

Cultivating Power: Gardens of War and Gardens of Peace in Visual Global Politics
William A. Callahan (Department of International Relations, LSE)

Although it is common to see gardens as peaceful spaces of apolitical serenity, this essay argues that gardens can be a key site of global politics. It follows the "aesthetic turn" and the "visual turn" in international studies to show how gardens are sites of diplomacy and war, as well as spaces for social ordering and world ordering.

It argues that rather than code spaces as "peaceful" or "militarist," it is more interesting to use the classical Chinese conceptual pair of civil/military (wen/wu) to understand the workings of gardens as a mode of cultural governance (and resistance). The essay uses the idea of wen/wu governance to examine two case studies – the Nanjing Massacre Memorial in China and the Yasukuni Shrine in Japan – to see how they are constructed as gardens of war and gardens of peace.

It concludes that the "wen/wu–civil/military" dynamic is helpful for understanding visual global politics, not simply as an analytical distinction, but as a method for an aesthetic appreciation of IR. In other words, although this essay employs Chinese theory and Asian examples, it should be categorized as "IR theory"—rather than "area studies."

Border Crossing
William A. Callahan (Department of International Relations, LSE)

Borders not only separate things, but are the place where people come together. This short film examines how Chinese and non-Chinese people experience their encounters with the Other (and thus with their Self) at the Lo Wu Bridge, the iconic border between Hong Kong and mainland China.

The role of the visual in critical social science
Lilie Chouliaraki (Department of Media and Communications, LSE)

This presentation develops a critique of two influential social scientific arguments that are negative about the status and role of images in contemporary public life: Baudrillard (and the French Cultural Theory School) and Habermas (and the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory).

This presentation will put forward an alternative account of the role of the visual that draws on the work of Hannah Arendt and Adam Smith, which allows us to theorise the image as integral to and constitutive of the political and moral tissue of public life. The presentation will demonstrate the value of this approach, by briefly discussing examples of visual campaigns in human rights and humanitarian communication.

I See: Video Data for Studying International Negotiations
Marian Feist (Department of International Relations, LSE)

The use of videos for international negotiation research, or IR in general, is anything but widespread. While video analysis is fruitfully employed in other social sciences like sociology, there are usually no cameras when deals are struck in green room politics. However, some recent negotiation recordings have been made public in an effort to increase the transparency of the process.

This paper contends that these recordings offer unique opportunities compared to more conventional data sources, i.e. documents and interviews. They can circumvent filters of what negotiators claim or even believe happened by looking at what actually happened. Being able to pause and re-watch also allows studying aspects beyond what is being said in unprecedented detail, such as gestures and tones, timing and sequences, revealing new dynamics in the negotiations.

On the other hand, there are also limitations that must be understood, like the exact time the camera is switched on and off, or who and what exactly is shown at each moment. Drawing on the empirical analysis of UNFCCC's Green Climate Fund negotiations as an

example, this paper explores the merits and limits of qualitative video analysis for the study of international negotiations.

Art as Conflict/Conflict as Art: The Venice Biennale as International Relations
Lene Hansen (University of Copenhagen)

The Venice Biennale is the largest, most prestigious event in the art world. Held for the first time in 1895, the Biennale combines national exhibitions, a show organised by the main curator, and a series of so-called "collateral events" for six months of art extravaganza. Curiously, while the Biennale is thoroughly reviewed and avidly discussed by art critics, it has so far escaped the attention of international relations scholars.

Introducing the Biennale as a site through which international politics is shown, consumed and practiced, this paper focuses on the way in which national pavilions generate political controversy and diplomatic responses. After a brief account of how geopolitical events of the 20th century have been reflected in "Biennale crises", the paper takes the 2015 Biennale as a case in point showing the links between international conflict and the displays at national pavilions.

Three pavilions are analysed in particular detail: the Ukrainian exhibit entitled "Hope!," the award winning Armenity centered on the centennial of the Armenian genocide, and the Icelandic site specific contribution in the form of a working mosque. The analysis combines analyses of text (reviews, curatorial, political and media), art work, and a visual archive produced in on-site field work collaboration with a professional photographer, Johan Spanner.

Constitutive Visualities of Cosmopolitan Imaginaries
Aaron McKeil (Department of International Relations, LSE)

How are cosmopolitan imaginaries visually constituted? What are their politics and political effects? This paper argues visuality has a constitutive role in cosmopolitan political theories. Aspirations for a cosmopolitan community or polity, from global imperiums, socialist utopias, and liberal morality-scapes, to ecological communities of fate have been partly constituted through art, film, and photography. Analysing the phenomenology of four cases of visually constituted cosmopolitan imaginaries reveals a politics of diverse cosmopolitan experiences and motivations. Constitutive visualisations of liberal cosmopolitanism, critical and neo-Marxist cosmopolitanism, global civil society theory, and ecological spaceship earth politics are found to constitute rival intentionalities shaping alternative world order visions. This paper concludes by calling for greater visual reflexivity in cosmopolitan theory and practice.

'We Are Not Immigrations': Examining Everyday Border Practices at the US-Mexican Border
Cynthia Weber (University of Sussex)

The closing of the US-Mexican border is on-going historical event that affects the daily lives of many people living on one side or the other of this border. Yet these are a group people who - because they have traditionally lived on both sides of this border - experience these effects in another register. These are indigenous US and Mexican Americans whose tribal lands sit on both sides of this border.

This presentation shares two short films - a narrative film in which some indigenous US Americans speak to how the US-Mexican border effects their daily lives and a non-narrative film that illustrates border crossing points on the US-Mexico border between the US State of Arizona and the Mexican state of Sonora.

The Ideal River: Maps, Legibility and Creating International Institutions in the 19th century
Joanne Yao (Department of International Relations, LSE)

Cartography as a technology played a subtle but important epistemic role in forging the modern, territorial state (Branch 2014). This paper argues that mapping technologies also shaped 19th century conceptions of international space. To do so, this paper examines depictions of geographic spaces, particularly international rivers, and argues that these depictions of the international river shaped the idea of the river as an economic instrument to be measured, harnessed and improved. This vision of the river as a purely economic entity became imbedded in the first international organisations designed to manage cooperation along these rivers. The paper will look at images of three rivers –the Rhine, the Danube, and the Congo—and engage critical geopolitics (O Tuathail 1996; Scott 1998) as a method to question the cartographic assumptions behind the creation of the first international organisations.