



Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees & Belonging (CMRB)

An international conference at the University of East London, 3-5 April 2012

London - City of Paradox

Organised by CMRB, in co-operation with Runnymede Trust, Iniva, London East Research Institute, Raphael Samuel History Centre, Centre for Cultural Studies Research, Matrix East Research Lab, and the Centre for Performance Studies

The Olympic Games have focused attention on London. “Official” approaches towards the Games stress the city’s inclusiveness – a history and contemporary reality in which London brings together the peoples and cultures of the world.

This is an important part of London’s stories past and present – but only a part. Recent riots have summoned other histories – of tension and conflict, of exclusion as well as inclusion – highlighting current issues of security, surveillance and the criminalisation of young Londoners. How do we evaluate these different accounts? How to understand the city in all its complexity?

This conference examines London as a site of inclusion and exclusion – a city which has both encouraged and discouraged migration and settlement, and which has stimulated both cultural heterogeneity and homogeneity. It will provide opportunities to consider how powerful institutions have shaped discourses of nation and empire, of internationalism and globalism. It will examine multiple contradictions associated with the past and the present – *London, City of Paradox*.

Holistic approach

The conference embraces a multi-disciplinary perspective, drawing on insights from Urban Studies, History, Sociology, Anthropology, Geography, Development Studies, Cultural Studies, Film Studies, Migration Studies and Refugee Studies. It will also address key issues in cultural production, especially in relation to public representation of cultural diversity. Participants come from academic networks and Third Sector organisations undertaking community initiatives, especially in the arts.

The organisers have identified a number of themes:

- **contending histories:** London as an object of historical study; London in the national narrative; “peoples’ ” histories; London, gender and history; history and community today; “official” history and the Olympic project
- **London and the world:** colonialism, neo-colonialism and the metropolitan city; commerce, slavery and empire; London and the neo-liberal networks; global city: London and the cities of the South
- **race, racism and the city:** “hidden” and “invisible” populations; inclusion and exclusion; geographies of community; immigration, work and settlement; refuge and asylum; citizenship, multiculturalism, “cohesion” and integration today



- **East London:** the East End in narratives of London and nation; East London and the maritime networks; the East End as refuge; East End, gender and sexuality; resistance and radicalism; regeneration and the “new” East End
- **imaging and performing London:** visual cultures yesterday and today – film, photography, multimedia, performance
- **city and spectacle:** London and the Olympic cities – global spectacle and local reality. Documenting the Olympics then and now (UEL holds the Library and Archive of the British Olympic Association, including materials on the 1948 London Olympics).

Conference format

The conference will take place from 3 to 5 April 2012 at the Docklands Campus of the University of East London. It will include plenary sessions, discussion groups and parallel panels and workshops.

All participants will have opportunities to listen to experts and activists, and to participate in collective thinking and analysis. In this way the conference will include best practices of academic and non-academic workshops. There will also be opportunities to perform, to meet local NGOs, go for walks in East London and to observe exhibitions by local artists, scholars and activists.

Among many who have already agreed to take part in the conference are (in alphabetical order):

Claire Alexander, Floya Anthias, Rob Berkeley, Penny Bernstock, Avtar Brah, Craig Calhoun, Mary Chamberlain, Matt Cook, David Feldman, Ben Gidley, David Gilbert, Paul Gilroy, Vassil Girginov, Michael Keith, Roshini Kempadoo, Yosefa Loshitzky, Philip Marfleet, Doreen Massey, Mica Nava, Ann Phoenix, Gavin Poynter, Mike Raco, Michael Rustin, Nicola Samson, Saskia Sassen, Corinne Squire, Helen Taylor, Judith Walkowitz, Vron Ware, Georgie Wemyss, Jane Wills, Jerry White and Nira Yuval-Davis.

Regular conference fee £60; concessions (unwaged, students, seniors) £30.

Refreshments included.

(You are encouraged to register for the whole conference, facilitating active engagement in discussion groups.)

Daily rate available at the conference £25; concessions £12.

Register at: <http://uel-iis-b.uel.ac.uk/cmrb/booking/>

All enquiries please contact *Masi Fathi*: m.fathi@uel.ac.uk

UEL Docklands Campus is adjacent to Cyprus Station, Docklands Light Railway:
<http://www.uel.ac.uk/campuses/docklands.htm>

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