

Materiality, Polyvocality, Experimentality: Towards a Documentary of Many Voices

Guest lecturer: *Dr. Simona Eva Schneider*
(Università di Udine)

This talk will give a “sneak peek” into two separate ongoing projects in documentary studies connected by their interest in the multiple levels—human and non-human, structural and infrastructural—that contribute to a film’s meaning and effect. The first project takes up questions surrounding voices and collectivity while considering the film base—its physical support and format, and its economic, political, and material logics. Looking closely at the amateur student film *Il Friuli* (1936-1942), made on German film stock under protectionist Italian fascist policies, I will give an overview of the formation of the object and image and the material traces of the negotiation between amateur experimentation and corporate interest. The second project surveys recent “polyphonic” digital documentary filmmaking practices that seek to gather a variety of intersectional experiences around the act of reading and responding to a historical archive or a text. Two US films, *Yours In Sisterhood* (2018) and *The Cancer Journals Revisited* (2018), will serve as examples. How do these filmmakers’ approaches offer answers to the challenges of visualizing and empowering dispersed collectives during simultaneous crises? How do these projects also slow time to register and record change and continuity among communities and to what end?

About the speaker

Simona Schneider is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Udine, Italy, in the project Film Base Matters, a project interrogating the politics and industrial economy of small-gauge film in Italy and in transnational contexts. Her research interests include small-gauge and amateur film in the interwar period and lyrical and polyphonic musical structures in narrative and documentary experimentation starting in the silent era.



Photograph of 16mm reversal negative of *Il Friuli*, Cineteca del Friuli.

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