

Creating Violence from Exile (Montreal, 23 Feb 27)

Montreal - Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Feb 23, 2027

Deadline: Nov 15, 2026

LabARD

Creating, Narrating, Documenting, and Archiving Violence from Exile.

Contemporary forms of violence affecting Southwest Asia (often referred to by the colonial designation “Middle East”), Africa, and Latin America raise fundamental questions about how asymmetrical violence produced by wars, genocides, political massacres, and conflicts linked to the extraction of natural resources can be documented, narrated, and archived (de Swaan, 2016). These situations are frequently characterized by the impossibility, or great difficulty, of accessing research sites, as well as by the destruction, confiscation, or absence of archives and testimonies, whether written, visual, or oral. At the same time, there is an urgent need to narrate, show, interpret, and render these forms of violence intelligible within Western institutional, media, and cultural spaces. This responsibility is often borne by diasporic communities, exiled people, or generations born in exile, who become privileged mediators of these narratives. As they enter these frameworks, such subjects may sometimes find themselves in the position of “bodies out of place” (“space invaders”), having to negotiate their legitimacy within Western institutions that may tend to fetishize or constrain their voices (Puwar, 2004).

Faced with these constraints, exiled and diasporic communities develop practices of creation, documentation, and archiving from within spaces of exile. Today, these practices increasingly take place through social media, using smartphone images or born-digital archives. Yet these intrinsically volatile materials confront genuine “algorithms of oppression” (Noble, 2018), shaped by the logics of commercial surveillance and the invisible censorship of platforms that tend to erase traces of the violence endured. While these initiatives seek to counter such invisibilization by making exile a space of refuge and of alternative knowledge production, this dynamic nevertheless calls for a crucial conceptual distinction between the subjects who carry it forward.

As Edward Said points out in *Reflections on Exile* (2000), whereas the diaspora often takes shape over the long term as a political and transnational collective endowed with a public voice, exile remains a raw, solitary, and incurable rupture linked to the immediate loss of one’s place of origin. Diasporic space must therefore be understood as a complex and heterogeneous cartography (Brah, 2005), traversed by relations of power and generational asymmetries. The emergence of forms of “postmemory” (Hirsch, 2012) among second generations raises profound ethical questions: it is necessary to examine the risk of a certain discursive hegemony or an idealization of narratives by Western diasporic spaces, to the detriment of the voices of recently exiled people or of those who remain within the actual geography of violence.

In response to these issues, this study day approaches research-creation not as a mere mode of dissemination but, following Erin Manning and Brian Massumi (Thought in the Act, 2018), as a genuine methodology for producing situated forms of knowledge and “thought in the act.” In contexts where the field is confiscated or destroyed, artistic and speculative practices do not simply illustrate history: they actively contribute to bringing it into being by creating new concepts and new ways of documenting the sensible. This study day therefore proposes to examine the methodological, ethical, epistemological, and theoretical dimensions of these practices from the perspective of exile.

Themes for Reflection

Theme 1 — Documenting and Archiving Violence from Exile and Diasporas

- How is it possible to produce, from exile or within diasporas, shareable forms of knowledge that are sensitive and capable of documenting ongoing violence?
- To what extent do these practices of inquiry, creation, and documentation contribute to writing a history of the present from exile?
- What tools, methods, and research-creation frameworks make it possible to document and archive violence through sensitive forms, particularly in the face of the volatility of digital archives?
- What ethical and epistemological questions, linked to situated thinking in Donna Haraway’s sense (Situated Knowledges, 1988), emerge when research or creation is carried out from exile? What tensions or asymmetries of visibility arise between the direct biographical memory of exiled people and the “postmemory” of generations born in the diaspora? How can Western institutional structures be prevented from appropriating the voices of those working on the ground?

Theme 2 — Creating and Narrating from Exile

- How are deterritorialized experiences and memories of violence, shaped by exile, constructed and transmitted through artistic practices and research?
- To what extent do artistic practices developed from within spaces of exile and diaspora displace, decolonize, or renew perspectives on contemporary forms of violence?
- What relationships do creative works produced from exile or within diasporas maintain with situated narratives of violence? How do creative practices and forms of knowledge production emerging from these spaces interact, nourish one another, and contribute to narrating lived experiences and memories?
- What connections can be established between creative works and knowledge production devoted to the colonial pasts of these three regions and the contemporary forms of violence that affect them?

These avenues for reflection are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to open up dialogue. We welcome original proposals exploring other questions related to the themes of this study day.

Profiles and Disciplines Sought

We welcome proposals from artists (visual arts, live arts, music, literature, etc.) whose work privileges investigative or research-creation approaches, as well as from researchers in the humanities and social sciences who work with artists or draw on practices from the field of art. We also encourage proposals from art historians, exhibition curators, anthropologists, sociologists, and

other researchers analyzing artistic productions in relation to contemporary forms of violence in the three regions concerned. Proposals from master's and doctoral students are warmly welcomed.

Proposals situated within cultural and visual studies, memory studies, studies of mass violence, decolonial and postcolonial approaches, as well as any other theoretical perspective resonating with the issues addressed by this study day, are welcome.

The proposed formats are deliberately hybrid and may take the form of an academic presentation, a performative lecture, a workshop (particularly one devoted to sharing tools or methodologies), an urban walk, or a research-creation project presentation.

Timeline

- Call for papers issued: September 1, 2026
- Submission deadline: November 15, 2026, at midnight (Montreal time)
- Notification of decisions: no later than December 15, 2026
- Study day: February 23, 2027, in Montreal (UQAM)

Submission Guidelines

Proposals must include:

- A title;
- An abstract of no more than 300 words;
- Three to five keywords;
- A short biography of no more than 150 words.

Proposals must be sent by November 15, 2026, to the following address: labard.axe1@gmail.com. Please indicate in your proposal the format envisaged for presenting your work. Artists working in visual and media arts, live arts, or music may, where relevant, include up to three images, a video link, or an audio link in addition to their proposal. Proposals may be submitted in French or English. The study day will be bilingual and will take place in a hybrid format (in person and online).

A selection of contributions will be published in a peer-reviewed edited volume. Unfortunately, travel, transportation, and accommodation expenses cannot be covered. Lunch and coffee breaks will be provided to participants.

Scientific Direction and Organization

- Scientific direction: Professor Bahar Majdzadeh, as part of the 2027 exhibition-conference entitled "Know-How and Being: Strategies and Practices of Decolonial Research-Creation," within the Decolonial Art and Research Laboratory (LabARD).
- Organization: Clara Tabra Osorio and Ivette Doizi Cofre

Selected Bibliography

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- SPIVAK, Gayatri Chakravorty (1988). "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 271–313.
- NOBLE, Safiya Umoja (2018). *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. New York, New York University Press.

Reference:

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