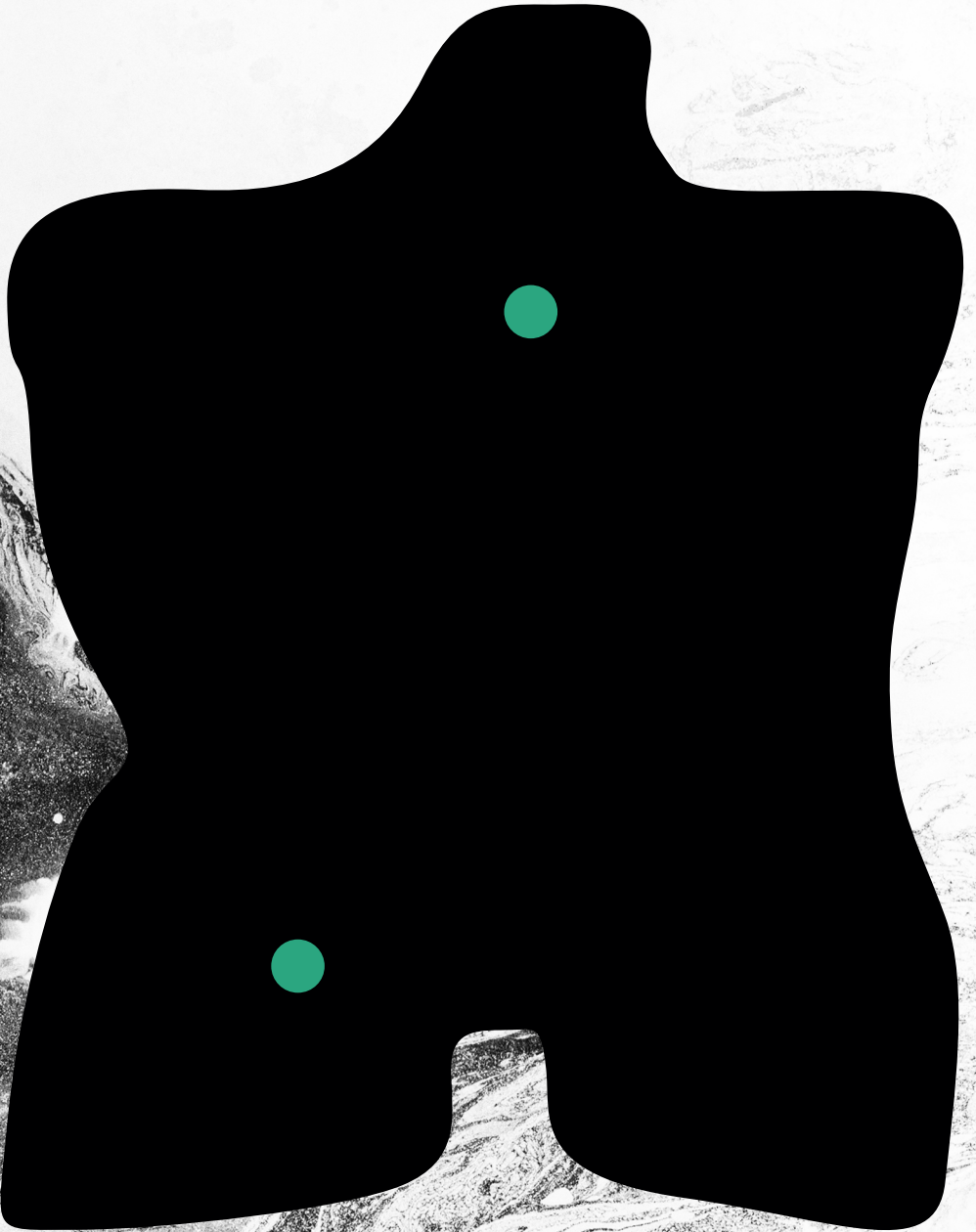


ATMOSPHERES OF VIOLENCE

HARVARD FILM &
VISUAL STUDIES
GRADUATE
CONFERENCE



ATMOSPHERES OF VIOLENCE

MAY 3-5, 2023

**HARVARD FILM & VISUAL STUDIES
GRADUATE CONFERENCE**



<https://afvs.fas.harvard.edu/fvs-graduate-conference>

In a world teeming with images of brutality and destruction, how can we look away from spectacular violence and toward the atmospheres that produce its representations?

Historical and structural violence haunts and sutures so-called reality, binding together the world as it is. Frantz Fanon named such violence “atmospheric.” Often anesthetic in itself, atmospheric violence is rendered perceptible by the ways in which it ceaselessly produces and circulates evidence of its existence: images and traces that gesture toward, but never fully depict, its underlying and enabling conditions. The 2023 Harvard Film & Visual Studies Graduate Conference, **Atmospheres of Violence**, grapples with these circumstances, asking: How might visual studies and media theory help us parse seemingly banal spaces—civic and institutional, local and global, biological and geological—as atmospheres of violence? What perceptual, critical, and creative modes are required to not only apprehend atmospheric violence, but to address it? What practices might help to stall or stop its reproduction and repetition?

The conference brings together scholars and practitioners in film, visual, and media studies whose work reconfigures dominant conceptualizations of affective atmospheres.

In their film practice, keynote artists **Colectivo Los Ingrávidos** stage the perceptual experience of a violence that is literally inhaled and manifests as sensory derangement or, as Fanon called it, bodily “petrification.” Keynote speakers **Pooja Rangan** and **Yuriko Furuhata** interrogate atmospheric violence in their scholarly work: Rangan by charting the juridical and forensic tendencies underpinning documentary listening, and Furuhata by mapping Neo-Imperial violence in geographically transposable techniques of climate control.

Conference panels and presentations detail the ways in which atmospheric violence—whether from a Transpacific media infrastructure too large to grasp, or a plastic, petrochemical, or heavy metal molecule too small to perceive—both animates and decimates bodies in its proximity, inflicting real corporeal harm. Under such conditions, acts of opposition appear less as “senseless” and more as sensible communiques that actively resist the insidious existing order. Our program bears witness to such resistant acts, calling attention to the clearings they forge in atmospheric violence’s wake.

ARTIST KEYNOTE + SCREENING COLECTIVO LOS INGRÁVIDOS

Colectivo Los Ingrávidos was founded in Tehuacán Mexico in 2012 to dismantle the commercial and corporate audiovisual grammar and its embedded ideology. The collective is inspired by the historical avant-gardes and their commitment to using both form and content against alienating realities. Their methods combine digital and analogue mediums, interventions on archival materials, agitprop, mythology, social protests, and documentary poetry. Their radical experimentations in documentary and cinematography produce visual and auditory impressions that are political possibilities in their own right. Their work has been exhibited internationally, including at the 2019 Whitney Biennial, the Bienal de la Imagen en Movimiento in Buenos Aires, International Film Festival Rotterdam, RIDM Montreal International Documentary Festival, Images Festival, Media City Film Festival, Ambulante Documentary Film Festival, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, and FILMADRID Festival Internacional de Cine.

Vision of Anahuac (2019), 1:03
Coyolxauhqui (2017), 9:46
Abecedario / B (2014), 4:54
Tear gas (2019), 1:35
La región más transparente (2019), 6:56
Batalla (2019), 4:35
El Nido del Sol (2021), 5:14
Tierra en Trance (2022), 38:00

CARPENTER CENTER FOR THE
VISUAL ARTS THEATRE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3
6.15 PM

KEYNOTE LECTURE

LISTENING IN REFUSAL OF COUNTERFORENSIC VIOLENCE

POOJA RANGAN

Listening to testimonial claims in pursuit of oppressed truths is commonly understood as the highest ethical responsibility of justice-seeking documentary publics. Rangan's keynote lecture examines the formation of this consensus, as well as the carceral implications of the jurification of documentary audiences as adjudicators of state and corporate crimes. What happens, Rangan asks, when documentary listening reifies the prison in our political and relational landscape—and what might it mean to approach it as a site of abolitionist struggle? “Listening in Refusal of Counterforensic Violence” parses the tensions between these two listening modes (listening like a cop, listening like an abolitionist) in a prevailing model of documentary accountability that involves appropriating the forms of authority associated with forensic truth-claims to present “counterforensic” evidence of state and environmental violence in a range of legal and public forums. Rangan focuses on a collaboration between research agency Forensic Architecture

and Chicago-based activist media organization The Invisible Institute in response to a racially motivated killing by Chicago police. Her reading of *The Killing of Harith Augustus* pays attention to how this project surfaces its own internal tensions, doubling as a tribunal on the anti-Black violence of juridical listening and an experiment in cultivating an outlaw listenership of neighborly care.

Pooja Rangan is a scholar of documentary media based in Amherst College, where she is Associate Professor of English and Chair of Film and Media Studies. Rangan is the author of *Immediations: The Humanitarian Impulse in Documentary* (Duke UP 2017, winner of the Harry Levin Best First Book prize from the American Comparative Literature Association), which explores how fantasies of humanity and alterity fuel participatory documentary interventions, and particularly their investments in the rhetoric of immediacy. Rangan is also co-editor of the new print and open access anthology, *Thinking with an Accent: Toward a New Object, Method, and Practice* (UC Press, 2023), as well as numerous journal articles and essays on topics such as disability and access aesthetics, accent as crip epistemology, forensic listening, and true crime and abolition (available on poojarangan.com). Her new book-in-progress, *The Documentary Audit*, explores the equation of listening, in documentary discourse, with accountability, asking how accented, crip, and abolitionist listening practices question documentary values such as neutrality, access, and justice.

**CARPENTER CENTER FOR THE
VISUAL ARTS THEATRE**

**THURSDAY, MAY 4
4.00 PM**

KEYNOTE LECTURE

CLASSIFYING CLOUDS: ATLASES OF ATMOSPHERIC VIOLENCE IN THE PACIFIC

YURIKO FURUHATA

Infrastructure tends to disappear into the atmospheric background, as media studies and STS scholars have argued. This dictum holds true not only for the hard, built structures of bridges, water pipes, and power plants, but also for the softer epistemic grids of sorting out information, including the focus of this talk: the taxonomic systems of classifying clouds. Arguably, clouds are one of the most taken-for-granted “natural” phenomena. And yet some clouds are not natural, most notably so-called mushroom clouds resulting from the detonation of atomic bombs. Foregrounding the categorical ambiguity of anthropogenic clouds in the history of cloud taxonomy, Furuhata’s keynote lecture turns to mushroom clouds to trace forms of taxonomic and atmospheric violence via the photographic atlases of clouds published in English and Japanese during the Cold War. In so doing, Furuhata connects

the atmospheric violence of the American military’s nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands to the categorical problem of anthropogenesis and anthropogenic climate change.

Yuriko Furuhata is Associate Professor and William Dawson Scholar of Cinema and Media History in the Department of East Asian Studies at McGill University. Her first book, *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Garde Filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics* (Duke University Press, 2013), won the Best First Book Award from the Society of Cinema and Media Studies. Her second book, *Climatic Media: Transpacific Experiments in Atmospheric Control* (Duke University Press, 2022) explores the geopolitical conditions underpinning environmental art, weather control, digital computing, and cybernetic architecture in Japan and the United States. She is currently working on *The Edges of Deep Time: Archipelagic Archives of the Anthropocene*, which explores the visual grammar of “deep time” through scientific atlases, photographs, and films of fossils, clouds, snow, and corals in relation to the settler colonial histories of geosciences in Japan, the Pacific, and North America.

**CARPENTER CENTER FOR THE
VISUAL ARTS THEATRE**

**FRIDAY, MAY 5
4.15 PM**

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts Lobby and Theatre

5.30-6.00 PM

Welcome Reception

6.00-6.15 PM

Opening Remarks

Valerie Werder, PhD Candidate, Film
& Visual Studies

6.15-8.00 PM

Artist Keynote + Screening

Colectivo Los Ingrávidos

Respondent: **Kendra McLaughlin**, PhD
Student, Film & Visual Studies

Translator: **Andrea Garza Erdmann**, PhD
Candidate, Romance Languages & Literatures

8.00-10.00 PM

AFVS End of Year Reception

THURSDAY, MAY 4

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Room B-04

10.00–10.30 AM

Coffee + Tea

10.30 AM–12.15 PM

Panel 1: Mediating Trauma and Materializing Abolition in the US Carceral State

Panel Chair: **Valerie Werder**, PhD Candidate, Film & Visual Studies

“Abolition and Faith: Embodying the Sacred in Migrant Liberation Narratives”

Dr. Itzel Corona Aguilar, PhD in Women’s Gender & Sexuality Studies, Rutgers University

“Seeing Just Another Girl About to Set It Off: Witnessing as a Catalyst for State Resistance”

Dominique Young, PhD Candidate, English, University of Maryland

“Traumatic Media: Fanon, Milieus, and Carceral Technology”

Haden Smiley, PhD Student, Anthropology, Harvard University

1.30–3.15 PM

Panel 2: Negative Forensics and Climate Media

Panel Chair: **Max Bowens**, PhD Candidate, Film & Visual Studies

“Machinic Genres of Seeing: Clarity and Deception in Post-Lens Techno Atmospheres (Or, On the Perversity of Enhancement)”

Andrea Avidad, PhD Candidate, Cinema and Media Studies, New York University

“Forensic Dust and Its Counters”

Julia Huggins, PhD Candidate, Modern Culture & Media, Brown University

“Towards an Abolitional Meteorology”

Dr. Harshavardhan Bhat, Postdoctoral Fellow of Race and Responsible Data Science, Translational Data Analytics Institute, Ohio State University

“Burning Aesthetics: Dissidence and the Pyrocene in present-day Iran”

Yohana Ansari-Thomas & Hermine Demaël, Masters of Architecture Candidates, Princeton School of Architecture

3.15–4.00 PM

Afternoon Break

4.00–5.30 PM

Keynote Lecture: “Listening in Refusal of Counterforensic Violence”

Professor Pooja Rangan, Associate Professor of English and Chair of Film & Media Studies, Amherst College

Respondent: **Nace Zavri**, PhD Candidate, Film & Visual Studies

7:00 PM

Dinner at Puritan & Company (1166 Cambridge St, Cambridge, MA)

12.15–1.30 PM

Lunch (provided)

FRIDAY, MAY 5

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Room B-04

9.30–10.00 AM

Coffee + Tea

10.00–11.30 AM

Panel 3: Colonial Legacies in East and Southeast Asia

Panel Chair: **Shaowen Zhang**, PhD Candidate, Film & Visual Studies

“A Study on the Origins of ‘Ear Training’ in the Modernization Period of Korea: Japanese Music Education and Military Training”

YoungEun Kim, PhD Student, Film & Digital Media, University of California Santa Cruz

“Fighting the Invisible Enemy: The Production of China’s Gas Warfare Defense Knowledge and Technologies (1927-45)”

Jiayi Li, Master’s Student, East Asian Languages & Cultures, Columbia University

“Flight’s Frictions: Surfacing Airport Ecologies in the British Empire”

Marcus Yee, PhD Student, History, Yale University

11.30–11.45 AM

Break

11.45 AM–1.10 PM

Panel 4: Contending with Opacity

Panel Chair: **Julia Sharpe**, PhD Candidate, Film & Visual Studies

“Verberations from the Foley Stage”

Dr. Emilija Talijan, Research Fellow, St. John’s College, Oxford University

“La tierra habla”

Anaís Córdova-Páez & Daniela Delgado Viteri, Artist Collective

“Rhetoric of War: Ekphrasis as Imaginary Documentary in Mai Der Vang’s *Yellow Rain*”

Michelle Chow, PhD Student, English, Yale University

1.10–2.30 PM

Lunch (provided)

2.30–3.50 PM

Panel 5: Thresholds of Regulation in Media Environments

Panel Chair: **Mahan Moalemi**, PhD Candidate, Film & Visual Studies

“It is only a piece of paper, sir!”

Shikhar Goel, PhD Student, Media, Culture & Communication, New York University

“Insecure Atmospheres’: A Psychosocial Approach to Art Museum Securitization in the United States”

Sila Ulug, PhD Candidate, Art History + Theater & Performance Studies, University of Chicago

“From ‘Landscape’ to ‘Streets’: Nakahira Takuma in the Ryūkyū Islands, 1973-1977”

Lucy Fleming-Brown, Master’s Student, Arts Studies & Curatorial Practices, Tokyo University of the Arts

3:50–4.15 PM

Afternoon Break

4.15–5.45 PM

**Keynote Lecture: “Classifying Clouds:
Atlases of Atmospheric Violence in the
Pacific”**

Professor Yuriko Furuhata, William Dawson
Scholar of Cinema and Media History, McGill
University

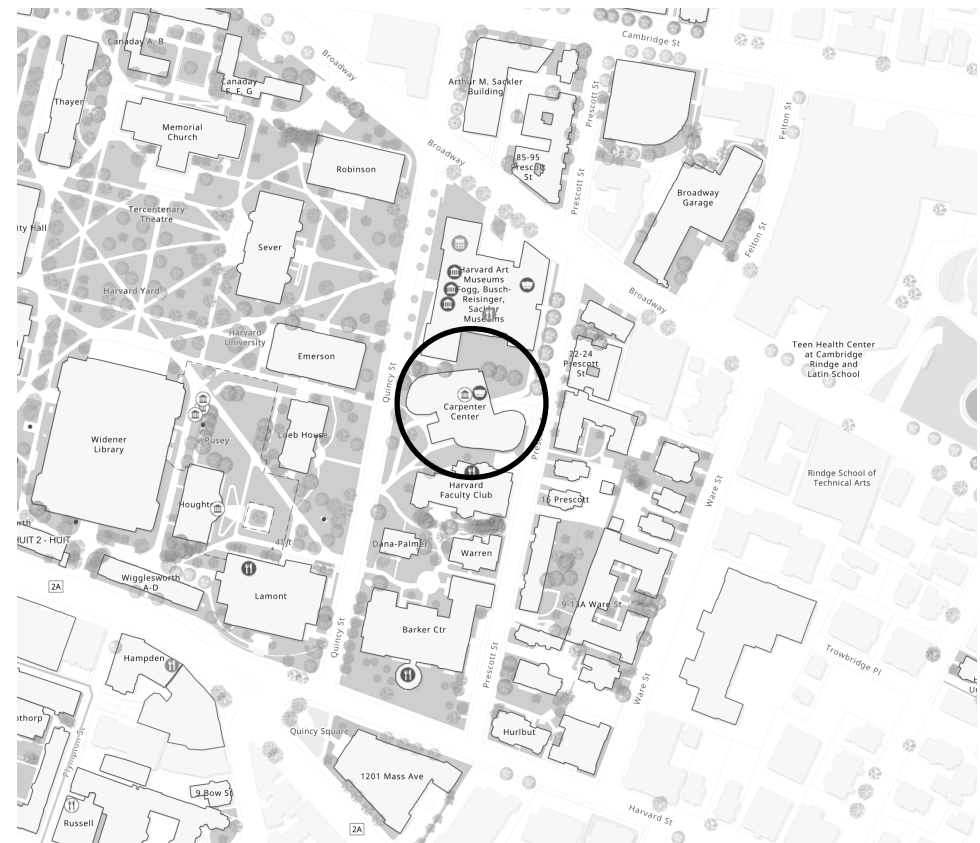
Respondent: **Toby Wu**, PhD Student, Film &
Visual Studies

5.45–6.00 PM

Closing Remarks
Julia Sharpe, Max Bowens, Toby Wu

7.00 PM

Reception: The Cellar (991 Massachusetts Ave,
Cambridge, MA)



RESTAURANTS

There are many dining options within walking distance of campus. Here are a few of our suggestions:

HOKKAIDO RAMEN SANTOUKA

(ramen)
1 Bow St.

TATTE BAKERY AND CAFÉ

(busy café known for coffee, pastries,
and Mediterranean-style lunch options)
1288 Massachusetts Ave.

BLUE BOTTLE

(coffee)
40 Bow St.

CLOVER FOOD LAB

(vegetarian fast food)
1326 Massachusetts Ave.

SALONIKI

(Greek chain inside the student
center with pita, souvlaki, and plates)
24 Dunster St.

ORINOCO

(Venezuelan eatery with
excellent arepas)
56 John F. Kennedy St.

WHOLESOME FRESH

(small grocery with a salad bar, deli,
and house-made sushi)
60 Church St.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Organizing committee:

Max Bowens
Julia Sharpe
Aden Solway
Valerie Werder
Toby Wu