

Itinerant Witnesses – Conference, Saturday 28. January 2023

Louisiana Museum of Modern Art
Gl. Strandvej 13
3050 Humlebæk
www.louisiana.dk

Asylum seekers fleeing war and violence form a special kind of witness. Through their movements in space, they not only attest to what originally forced them to relocate, but also to the way that governments systematically fail in protecting their rights and even employ violence as a means to deter them. By blocking entry, denying safe passage, and by weaponizing nature against those travelling, European states facilitate the precarity of itinerant lives and extend the violence towards them.

The bodies of these itinerant witnesses store the memory of multiple human rights violations across contexts. They breath in bomb clouds, swallow seawater, bare the traces of torture or shootings at the borders, and absorb the toxicity often found on refugee camps. Both material witnesses and speaking bodies, itinerant witnesses are also technologically enabled investigators. They self-organise through social media groups, film their journeys through mobile phones or water-resistant cameras, send GPS locations, and document the multiple egregious violations they find on their way.

This day-long conference will draw lessons from itinerant witnessing. Bringing together feminist and environmental scholars who offer new notions of the human body as they tackle direct and indirect forms of violence, as well as artists/witnesses, and activists, the conference will both address theoretical frameworks as well as attempt to translate some of Forensic Architecture's methods to a local context and the struggle against violent European migration policies that keep itinerant lives at bay. In doing so the conference will propose witnessing as an activist practice and as a means to reframe accountability across human and environmental rights.

Speakers: Amel Alzakout, Giovanna di Chiro, Nanna Katrine Hansen, Edward Stanley Nwaogu, Lorenzo Pezzani, Christina Varvia



Image: Amel Alzakout