NECS 2026
CONFERENCE

In|Visible

Montpellier (FR)
18-20 June 2026

CALL FOR PAPERS

UNIVERSITÉ PAUL VALÉRY MONTPELLIER

necs European Network for Cinema and Media Studies

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In|Visible

«My story was never told. But my story was not documented. So I don't have photos since the invention of photography that document my story [...]. We need to be archaeologists; we need to be anthropologists of where we come from. We need to keep our archives».

(Raoul Peck, Senses of Cinema, 2015)

Which stories are made visible and which ones are not, according to Haitian film director Raoul Peck, is as much a matter of narrative as a trace-generating process. The media have contributed to this visual, social, and political partition by creating or erasing visual contents which were reflecting – in what they record and show, as in what they don't – various states of the world. Cinema, in particular, and media, in general, have often been considered through their tensions and resolutions between the realms of visibility and of invisibility. This inherent duality – between appearance and disappearance, materiality and temporality, inner and outside world, ideality and imagination, human and non-human – has persisted, even as technologies and formats have evolved. Over time, the spectrum of visible media has broadened to include previously marginalized formats. Television, digital screens, interactive media, streaming platforms, virtual and mixed reality, and artificial intelligence are redefining the boundaries of what is represented and accessible. However, this evolution has also generated new forms of exclusion and invisibility, sometimes leading to the emergence of alternative spaces of resistance that challenge dominant regimes of visibility and offer counter-narratives. So, at a time when IA, 360 VR, and other filters are reshaping visual perception, the constant transformation of images within a data and algorithmic-driven digital media culture calls for an archaeological approach to understanding how visibility is constructed and contested, and for a critical data approach to interrogate what in/visibility means in the digital age.

The 2026 NECS Conference will explore how in/visibility has been traditionally linked to formal and technical aspects (their aesthetics, apparatus, and most current actualizations), to economical choices, to bio-politics, and to historiographical shifts that have rearticulated these partitions within their socio-cultural and political contexts. Indeed, media historiography has substantially reassessed the influence of marginalized and silenced groups, rediscovering or acknowledging the major contributions of minorities, peripheries, women, and racialized communities to filmmaking and media productions. Recent academic research has shed new light on the feminization of the media industry and their persistent discriminations, inviting us to extend this analysis to other underrepresented social groups or cultural areas. To this end, the status of archives is particularly challenging: incomplete and fragmented archival traces (including lost versions, unachieved projects, abandoned scenarios) raise the question of an "absent presence" and the efforts to recover, acknowledge, and legitimize these traces for historiographical purposes. Furthermore, the shift from analogue to digital archives, in the context of digitization of old media and the expansion of new digital screen media, deeply transforms the constructing processes of representation and memory, calling us to renew our vision of the representativity of the archive itself.

Therefore, the 2026 NECS Conference will tackle more generally the processes through which invisibilization occurs, from pre-cinematographic apparatuses to contemporary screen and media industries, and how these dynamics concretely affect today's professional landscapes. It will also consider how resisting and alternative spaces continue to redefine what can be seen, by whom, under what conditions, and how the gradual inclusion of new media and the reinvention of old ones have expanded – or restricted – the horizons of visibility.

We will welcome proposals dealing with – but not limited to – the following subjects:

Marginalized Groups and Discrimination Patterns

- The representation and self-representation of marginalized or discriminated populations, social groups and minorities (women, racialized people, LGBTQIA+ communities, people with disabilities, etc.) in film and media.
- Access to artistic careers, pay gaps, and broader inequalities within the media industry, including the barriers faced by underrepresented groups.
- The intersection of (dis)ability studies and media representation, as well as the historiography of women in media industries.
- The study of specific cinematic traditions: minority cinema, "ethnic" cinema, First Nations cinema, and their unique narratives and challenges.

Silencing and Invisibilization Processes

- The mechanisms of recognition, prestige, and valorisation of works and artists, and how these processes contribute to the legitimization or delegitimization of certain voices.
- The role of institutional and cultural gatekeepers in determining what is preserved, celebrated, or erased from public memory.
- The role of amateur practices and fan communities in the construction of the visibility/invisibility of marginalized or discriminated groups.

Underrepresented Genres and Formats

- The evolving attention given to marginalized works and formats in media studies, and the gradual inclusion of formats and media that were initially overlooked.
- The impact of technological and cultural shifts on the visibility and accessibility of non-mainstream genres and formats.
- The impact of current digital environments and their material infrastructures – often invisible from the users' standpoint – on film and media production.
- The role of archives in preserving and promoting forgotten cinematographies, including the issues related to preservation, restoration, and digitization.

Politics and Aesthetics of In/Visibility

- The exploration of scenarios, themes, and motifs related to the visible and the invisible, appearance and disappearance.
- The use of cinematographic and audiovisual techniques to foreground or hide elements within the frame.
- Film and media theory's engagement with the visible and the invisible, and the aesthetic experience as an intensification of attention to the visible and the audible.
- The role of film and audiovisual analysis in highlighting images, their forms, and their contents, and in revealing hidden or marginalized meanings.
- Politics and policies of display across extradiegetic and diegetic dimensions.

Views on In/Visibility Apparatus

- The analysis of audiovisual dispositifs and processes of visibilization, particularly in "societies of control," including their histories and techniques.
- Archaeological inquiries into "minor media", "zombie media", or media that disappeared from the canonical practice, and yet eliciting fruitful discussion about protocols of use, DIY adaptations, experimental uses generally invisible to the public.
- The impact of virtual reality, mixed reality, augmented vision, and machine vision on questions of visibility and invisibility.
- The role of generative artificial intelligence in creating new visibilities and potentially new forms of invisibility.
- The impact of discriminatory data logics within algorithmic-driven production systems on financing certain forms of visibilities.
- The use of micro-cinematography and other techniques to make visible what is invisible, and the historical contexts in which cinema and media have enforced silencing, veiling, or denigration.
- The study of unachieved films, lost films, lost versions, traces of works that were never finalized, and the processes that lead to their invisibilization.

Margins and Centres

- The strategies of production, the role of film/series festivals and markets as sites of visibilization, and their impact on the promotion of marginalized or underrepresented cinemas, formats, genres, and communities.
- The relationships between hegemonic/highly visible and marginal/less visible cinematographies, as well as genres and media configurations at large.
- The dynamics of centre-periphery relations in global cinema, and how these relations shape the production, distribution, and reception of films.

Alternative Spaces and Sites of Resistance

- The emergence and impact of activist struggles, demands, and collective organization within the film industry, including unions, advocacy groups, and grassroots movements.
- The role of alternative spaces in challenging dominant regimes of visibility and offering counter-narratives (underground cinemas, independent festivals, alternative archives, and cyber-activism).
- The strategies used by marginalized filmmakers or communities to create and sustain spaces of resistance and self-representation.
- Decentring the gaze and regimes of visibility in the Anthropocene: the visibility and invisibility of nature and the non-human in film and media.

These are suggested themes, but any reflective proposal on the concept of in/visibility will be welcome. Particular attention will be given to works, approaches, disciplines, and film genres that are traditionally marginalized. Proposals linked to research-creation are encouraged.

Guidelines & informations

Please **submit all proposals by January 28, 2026**, using the **submission form available on the NECS website**. There is no conference fee. However, kindly note that the submission form is only accessible to NECS members with valid membership. Every author of paper, panel and workshop proposals is required to be NECS members. When submitting a paper, you agree on being scheduled any time ranging from the beginning to the end of the Conference, from June 18 to June 20. Due to the number of participants, we will not make specific accommodations with respect to the participants' personal availabilities. For questions about the conference in Montpellier please contact: **necs26.conference@gmail.com**. If you experience any problem with registration or membership renewal, please write an e-mail to **support@necs.org**.

Being a part of NECS gives access to a vibrant, diverse and engaging community of scholars and workgroups. The yearly NECS Conference is a privileged moment for academics from all over the world, at different stages of their careers, to come together to share knowledge and experiences and exchange ideas about the latest research in the areas of film and media studies. The beautiful Montpellier serves as the background for the NECS 2026 Conference and provides plenty of opportunities for socialization, informal networking and sightseeing.

When preparing submission for NECS 2026 please keep in mind the following restrictions. Individuals may submit only one proposal, either as an individual presenter or as part of a preconstituted panel or workshop. Moreover, it is only possible to present a paper either at the annual NECS conference or at the Graduate Workshop taking place on June 17. Conference participants may only serve in a maximum of two capacities.
These might be:
- deliver a paper and serve as a chair of a panel or a workshop;
- deliver a paper and participate in a workshop;
- deliver a paper and serve as a respondent on another panel;
- chair a workshop and serve as a respondent on a panel;
- chair a panel and participate in a workshop.

Individual papers

Presentations last a maximum of 20 minutes. Individuals wishing to submit a proposal are required to provide their name, email address, the title of the paper, an abstract (max. 300 words), key references (max. 200 words), and a short bio of the speaker (max. 150 words).

Pre-constituted panels

We support the submission of proposals for pre-constituted panels containing 3 or 4 papers (3 papers only if there is a respondent), to strengthen the thematic coherence of panels. Several thematically related panels may form larger clusters. We strongly encourage members of the NECS workgroups to put together pre-constituted panels, but we also welcome submissions from academic research project teams, museums, archives, and other institutions. We highly recommend no more than two speakers from the same institution with a maximum of 20 minutes speaking time per paper. Panel organizers are asked to submit panel proposals that include a panel title, a short description of the panel (max. 300 words) and information on all of the individual papers of the panel, as described above.

Workshops

Workshops and roundtables concentrating on practical aspects, teaching, research methods, publishing, or networking with the media industry are welcome. Speaking time should be limited to 10 minutes per participant. Organizers are asked to submit workshop proposals that include a title and a short description (max. 300 words) with a full list of participants.

Conference Committee

Pierre-Antoine Bourquin, Amandine D'Azevedo, Chloé Delaporte, Claire Demoulin, Pietsie Feenstra, Loïg Le Bihan, Frédéric Marty, Elena Tsouri, Perrine Val.