

CFP: Digital Arab Diasporas

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Digital Arab Diasporas

archiving, curating, narrating

University of Sussex, 24 April 2019

From the migration of Lebanese migrants to the Americas in the 19th century, to the mass movements of North Africans to France in the 20th century, to the displacement of millions of Palestinian, Syrian and Iraqi refugees in more recent times, themes of movement, exile and diaspora have been an integral part of Middle Eastern and North African experiences in modern times. The digital age has transformed the possibilities, as well as presented new challenges, for documenting these experiences.

The symposium *Digital Arab Diasporas* brings together projects which employ digital technologies to record and share the stories of migrants and diaspora communities from the Arabic-speaking countries of the MENA region. How are archivists, community activists, historians and artists applying digital technologies to capture the complex experiences of migrants whose voices often disappear between the cracks of national narratives or the reductive discourses of colonialism, orientalism and “the War on Terror”? To what extent are grassroots initiatives able to link up across transnational spaces and how can they gain access to the expertise and often prohibitively expensive digital systems required to ensure the longevity of such projects? What are the particular challenges of using the Arabic language, with its non-Latin script, in such projects? The symposium will address these and related questions through an open forum of dialogue in which projects at various stages of completion can share experiences and practices.

The symposium is a joint initiative organised by the University of Sussex and the Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies at North Carolina State University, and will be held at the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK. The University of Sussex is involved with a number of initiatives which engage with Arabic-speaking diasporic communities. These include the *Planet Bethlehem Archive* which is collecting and displaying a large collection of digital objects related to the Palestinian town of Bethlehem and its global diaspora, as well as the exhibition *Paris-London - Two Global Cities* which will open at the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris in October 2018. The symposium will also involve

members of the University of Sussex's renowned centres for Digital Humanities (the Sussex Humanities Lab), Migration Studies (the Sussex Centre for Migration Research) and Middle East and North Africa Studies (MENACS).

The symposium will be held at the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK, on 24 April 2019 and will consist of presentations of 20-30 minutes followed by discussion. Presentations can be either individually delivered or as a team of presenters. We welcome proposals from practitioners in the fields of archiving, museums and digital storytelling as well as university-based researchers. To submit a proposal, please send a summary of no more than 400 words as an email attachment to arabdiasporas@gmail.com by no later than 31 January 2019.

Limited funds are available to assist with the travel and accommodation of presenters.

For any informal queries about the event, please contact Jacob Norris at J.Norris@sussex.ac.uk

Related date:
April 24, 2019