

**Research Workshop:
Ethnographic and Semiotic Perspectives on Cultural Industries
in the City of Haifa**

27-29 June, 2016

This three-day workshop is conceived as an opportunity for shared learning by scholars from a range of disciplines, who are interested in urban spaces as sites of multiple and intersecting histories, identities, power struggles, and cultural production. It has three main goals:

- a. Getting to know the city of Haifa, particularly downtown (the historical city and today lower class, with a Palestinian majority, the target of gentrification, and an area with interesting cultural life and cultural industries). Our focus will be on spaces that bring together diverse identities and histories, and on cultural industries.
- b. Creating an ongoing "conversation" among researchers from interfacing disciplines on the question how do we approach the study of diverse urban spaces using a culturally-sensitive perspective ("culturally sensitive" here stands for the ways that people appropriate space using particular vernaculars, as well as the ongoing cultural production that continues to occur under the radar of powerful processes of domination and exclusion).
- c. Enriching our methodological perspectives by learning what ethnography and semiotics are and how they mutually inform.

The workshop will have three components:

Ethnographic, mainly in the form of short "ethnographic visits," in small groups, to different locations in the city, as well as some guided tours.

Theoretical/methodological, discussions and lectures about methodology, history, and different angles of the city of Haifa, or cities more generally.

Recreational component: as part of our interest in cultural industries, we will attempt to visit a local theatrical production, and to meet with artists and people from the local recreational scene.

Tentative outline

Third day	Second day	First day	
<p>The group gathers to share reflections from the ethnographic tours. First each small group prepares its presentation and assigns a speaker, then they all present to the assembly. Lunch is incorporated – people bring plates and continue the session.</p>	<p>Short lectures about Haifa and some lectures by the Italian colleagues about issues that preoccupy them in Bologna (such as boundaries and immigrants and the like)</p>	<p>Gathering and introduction Panel on ethnography</p>	Morning
	<p>Discussions in small groups, over lunch. Participants present their work and share a dilemma that preoccupies them in their respective projects, others give feedback. Purpose: getting to know each other. Total two-three hours</p>		Lunch
<p>A panel with artists who have work spaces downtown that were allocated by the municipality, but who are actually critical of the latter's efforts to turn the neighborhood into an artists' colony.</p>		Panel on semiotics	Early afternoon
<p>Final gathering – we still need to work out the format and contents</p>	<p>Ethnographic excursions in small groups. Each group is designated a different area and receive a background package about it. They go out to explore it together. At the end they meet with a local person whose work is relevant to the topic. Total 4 hours</p>	<p>A panoramic tour of Haifa, by bus</p>	Late afternoon
		<p>Gathering on the beach, continuing the introduction using cameras (possibly photographing each other). This session will be guided by a photographer who will share some of his Haifa photos and rounded with a discussion about photography as a research strategy</p>	Evening
	<p>Attending "the year of snow" at a local theatre</p>	<p>Dinner at a restaurant with a guest</p>	Night
	<p>Optional: a nocturnal tour to the port and a view of Haifa from the sea <i>after</i> the show</p>		

Comments:

we have a very nice hall in a building that belongs to the university and is located downtown, directly overlooking the port (otherwise the main campus is high up on the mountain and totally disconnected from the city). There we can have sessions and also serve food. However, we opt to have some of the sessions in other locations, relevant to the content.

Considering that June is hot, we'll try to spend the hot hours indoors and do the "ethnographic" bits in the late afternoon and evening.

Possible format for the methodological panels:

We thought of inviting 3-4 people to give 10 minutes' presentations on some key aspects of ethnography/semiotics, and to offer a term (for example: embodied knowledge or linguistic landscape) or a methodological question that we can then go back to when we go out on the ethnographic excursions on the second day, and then again when we analyze "the findings" from these excursions in the discussion on the third day.

It is possible to choose a term or a phrase from an article, and in this case of course it will be distributed to the participants.

For the ethnographic panel, we are inclined to invite young scholars, say post-doctoral fellows, alongside more veteran ones.

We thought that it could be good to have a similar format for both the ethnographic and the semiotic panels, but of course this is open for discussion.

For the short lectures about Haifa or about urban research

We're not yet finalized as to what topics to choose and we invite you to think with us. We would like to include one or two short lectures about Haifa proper. But other than that, we may want to go by general topic (say: smart cities, gentrification, urban sustainability, cultural industries, etc.), or maybe by more theoretical topics? Of course we have very limited time.

The "ethnographic excursions"

These will take place in small groups, say 6 participants or so per group. We will determine several destinations, all in the down town area, and participants will choose their group according to the site they are interested in. Each group will receive a map and some background package. It will then go and explore the area. We will arrange for them to meet with at least one local person as part of the tour. Participants may also take photos, and of course approach people and talk to them if they feel comfortable. Groups should be mixed so that there are Hebrew and Arabic speakers in each one.

Possible topics / personae to meet with during the ethnographic excursions include:

- Uses of new technologies in urban space
- Local voluntary communities
- Invisible populations, such as youth that have left home, street dwellers, etc.
- Local activism, including feminist groups, people who are struggling against gentrification, activists for sustainable city, Palestinian activists, etc.
- Members of the municipal establishment, say from the town planning dept. or other figures from the local administration
- A curator of a municipal art gallery that is part of the official Jewish-Arab coexistence industry