

# Extraordinary and Everyday Utopias shaping shared futures

Thursday 11 July 2019, Grand Parade Main Building, University of Brighton,  
BN2 0JY

9.00-9.30 Registration and Fairtrade coffee M2  
9.30- 9.45 Introduction M2  
9.45-10.45 Keynote Sohaila Abdulali M2  
10.45-12.00 Parallel panels 1 & 2

**Panel 1**  
Room M2  
*Chair:* Jess Moriarty  
Tony Kalume  
Molly Drummond  
Fergus Heron

**Panel 2**  
Room G62  
*Chair:* Stuart Hedley  
Matt Adams  
Mary Gearey and Neil Ravenscroft  
Nicholas Van Hear  
Sophie Lewis (SKYPE)

12.00-1pm Lunch and exhibitions (Aston & Abbatuan)  
1.00-2.00 Keynote Miguel Amórtegui M2  
2.00-3.15 Parallel panels

**Panel 3**  
Room M2  
*Chair:* Jess Moriarty  
Chris Reading  
Sally-Shakti Willow  
Suryamayi Clarence-  
Smith

**Panel 4**  
Room G4  
*Chair:* Matt Adams  
Paul Howard  
John O'Donoghue  
Kate Meakin

3.15-3.30pm Comfort Break  
3.30-4.00 Group discussion and contributing to the edited collection -  
Q&A with Routledge  
4.00-5.00 Murmuration Performance followed by drinks reception



**University of Brighton**

CREATIVE FUTURES

## Contributions

**Sohaila Abdulali** was born in Mumbai and moved to the United States with her family when she was a teenager. Her undergraduate thesis dealt with the socio-economics of rape in India. She is the author of two novels as well as children's books and short stories. She lives in New York with her family. Her novel, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Rape*, was published by Myriad in October 2018. Writing from the viewpoint of a survivor, writer, daughter, mother, counselor and activist, Sohaila Abdulali looks at what we – women, men, trans people, politicians, teachers, writers, sex workers, feminists, sages, mansplainers, victims and families – think about rape. She also explores what we don't say.

**Miguel Amórtegui** is an international photographer, writer, filmmaker and visual storyteller. Throughout his 20-year career he has continuously strived to give the unrepresented, the marginalised and the misunderstood a voice and a place in our society.

Originally from Colombia, Miguel has worked with communities across the world, using photography and film as a tool to drive awareness and social change. He has worked with communities affected by war, poverty and sexual violence, with child soldiers, orphans, gang members and refugees. He has worked in cities and rural communities across South America, Europe and Africa. He is the author of the book *Voices of the Jungle* which documents his time spent in the refugee camp, infamously known as The Jungle, in Calais, Northern France. As the title of his book suggests, its purpose is to share an intimate portrait of the lives, memories, hopes and dignity of the people that were stranded there.

**Murmuration Arts** is a participatory arts organisation with over 14 years' experience delivering community engagement projects. They focus on projects which adopt a co-creation approach – creating collaboratively with communities. They connect with and build community through street theatre, site-responsive performance, participatory dance, music, reminiscence sessions, intergenerational workshops, cooking together, sharing stories, oral history projects and craft activities... and playing games.

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**Katrina Abbatuan** | Independent artist

*Artistic future / Future natures*

Brief synopsis: Exhibition of artworks <http://katrinaabbatuan.com/>  
Katrina's work highlights how more economically developed countries are taking inspiration from developing nations to form a more sustainable future, drawing on Katrina's own journeying across the Philippines.

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**Matt Adams** | University of Brighton

*Narrating vegan utopias: The counterfactual construction of human-animal futures*

Brief synopsis: The paper focuses on a very particular kind of utopian narrative and its potential for reimagining what constitutes a good life – the counterfactual construction of the future – via the example of the feature film *Carnage* (2017).

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**Hannah Aston** | University of Brighton

*The Being in the Body*

Brief synopsis: Exhibition of artworks - an exploration of the body as a cultural object, an opportunity to reflect on the cultural norms we surround ourselves with, challenging what is culturally accepted as 'beauty', and the societal pressures on women's bodies.

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**Suryamayi Clarence-Smith** | University of Sussex

*Auroville: An Anticipatory Utopian Community*

Brief synopsis: A consideration of Auroville, founded in India 1968, today amongst the longest-standing intentional communities in the world, a particularly rich site for furthering theoretical understandings of, and offering pragmatic insights into how, everyday utopias are sustained.

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**Molly Drummond** | University of Keele

*'I will never feel safe until the world is completely different.': Zines and the contribution of safe space practices to hopeful communities*

Brief synopsis: Out of a PhD project exploring the utopian potential of the zine community, who do not-for-profit and creative work that Molly argues contain transformative possibilities for attitudes to labour, art, and everyday life. The paper links the practices of safety in the zine community to zinesters' expressions of desire for, and work towards, a better world.

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**Mary Gearey & Neil Ravenscroft** | University of Brighton

*The nowtopia of the riverbank: elder environmental activism*

Brief synopsis: Based on empirical work undertaken along the River Adur valley in West Sussex, UK, this paper argues that dynamic examples of nowtopian initiatives (seeking to purposefully enact degrowth in the here and now) can develop from alternative and overlooked demographics, such as rural community elders.

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**Fergus Heron** | University of Brighton

*Photography and Future Natures*

Brief synopsis: This presentation of practice states the significance of embodied and subjective approaches to picturing through photography, our relation to creative processes, to different natures, and imagining possible futures.

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**Paul Howard** | University of Brighton

*Pedagogy of the Curious*

Brief synopsis: An exploration of a reorientation of our education system to a radical appreciation of learning, in which the questions one asks about the unknown have primacy over the superficial answers one can give from prior, factual knowledge.

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**Sophie Lewis** | Independent author

*Labour does you: Full Surrogacy Now and the refusal of work*

Brief synopsis: Based on Sophie's recent book *Full Surrogacy Now*, this talk addresses pregnancy and gestation from a labour point of view, asking questions about how we can politicise (human and nonhuman) work that's treated as natural, taken for granted, and done for free, offering an account of why the concept of "surrogacy" is crucial to our collective liberation, making links to queer liberation, Black revolutionary feminism, Wages for Housework, and the often forgotten horizon of family abolition.

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**Kate Meakin** | University of Sussex

*The Role of The Feminist Dystopia in Social Justice Organising: The Handmaid's Tale Protest*

Brief synopsis: A critical examination of the role of the dystopian imaginaries in configuring and motivating grassroots political struggles, and their ability to radically reconfigure alternative, utopian possibilities, with a focus specifically on recent examples of feminist protesters adopting the robes from the Hulu adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (Moynan, 2000).

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**Tony Kalume & Jess Moriarty** | Diversity Lewes and University of Brighton

*The Clothes on Our Backs*

Brief synopsis: A report on a project seeking to engage members of the BAME community in Sussex and UoB students and staff to work on archival material housed at Brighton Museum and create poems, textiles and prose. The workshops focus on identity and clothing and look at the history of the Khanga, which is a sarong popular in parts of Africa.

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**Jess Moriarty & Christina Reading** | University of Brighton and Independent Scholar

*Finding the inner compass: Mapping a way out of creative stuck places and personal change*

Brief synopsis: Following our experiences with cancer, we felt lost. Trying hard to get back to the people we were before our illness and creatively stuck - Chris with her fine art and Jess with her writing - we chose to adopt an autoethnographic approach that we hoped would be transformative and also help us resist conventional research practices that seek to deny the personal. We engaged in a process of walking, writing and critique that restored creative processes.

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**John O'Donoghue** | University of Brighton

*The Experiment*

Brief synopsis: A true and accurate account of the events that took place at University X. Our research outcomes are given in a spirit of dispassionate and academic objectivity. We believe that the process described in this paper demonstrates Generation Z's appetite for insurrection, and that the current moment makes this insurrection more likely, not less.

**Nicholas Van Hear** | University of Oxford

*Imagining Refugia: a new transnational polity in the making*

Brief synopsis: Against the background of the refugee and migration crises of the last four years, this contribution takes as a starting point recent proposals that explore alternatives to the current international migration and refugee architecture, by considering a novel kind of transnational polity – Refugia – which is neither a nation state nor an international organisation, but which is governed by refugees and migrants themselves, and which would link refugee and migrant communities globally.

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**Sally-Shakti Willow** | University of Westminster

*Writing Utopia Now: Poetry in Performance*

Brief synopsis: A twenty-minute poetry performance and manifesto of Utopian Poetics - a literary gesture towards the utopian, whereby reader and writer may enter into an equal and non-oppressive relationship with one another via the text. The performance will encourage and invite audience members' active participation as co-creators of each poem through each text's intersubjective strategies.

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