

**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
**Archipelagic Memory: Intersecting Geographies, Histories and Disciplines**  
University of Mauritius, 2 – 4 August 2022  
<http://www.archipelagicmemory.wordpress.com>



**Confirmed keynote speakers**

Ananya Jahanara Kabir, King's College London  
Stef Craps, Ghent University  
George Abungu, Archaeologist and International Heritage Consultant  
Anwar Janoo, University of Mauritius  
Ari Gautier, Novelist

The concept of the “archipelago” has been discussed and deployed by historians, social scientists, literary and cultural studies scholars since the 1950s to dismantle linear narratives of historical, national and cultural development; to resist the taxonomy of centre-periphery; to emphasise shared human experiences premised on relation, creolisation and cultural diversity; and to inspire research and creative projects tracing discontinuous yet interlinked geographies over a planetary scale.

Taking the Indian Ocean as a principal site for investigating new meanings and experiences of the archipelagic, the conference will marshal and build upon the different strands of archipelagic thinking already engendered by the Caribbean world to explore connected histories across oceans and seas, and to instigate a theoretical dialogue on memory-production encompassing the Indian, Atlantic, Pacific and Southern Oceans and their articulated spatiality. What has been enabled and what has been precluded by thinking primarily through the model of the Caribbean archipelago and its anti-mimetic patterns of repetition and difference? What has not yet been thought of archipelagically? What if ethnic, national and geological borders are in conflict with each other, resulting in fractured archipelagic identities? How does the sea function as an imagined space that reduces or entrenches geographical and affective distance? How, indeed, does the sea enable archipelagic relations?

Simultaneously, the conference addresses the possibilities offered by an archipelagic approach to memory, one that is mobile and dynamic as much as entangled, even surpassing island and archipelagic spaces. If the past is memorialised as archipelagic, as a series of fragmentary geographies, cultures and histories converging in a fluid space that might also act as a symbol for other connections, how can archipelagic memory enhance traditional practices of articulating the past? How can archipelagic mnemonic projects be multidirectional, reparative and committed to justice, instead of competitive, suppressive or destructive? In light of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the tightening of national borders, and the formation or solidification of ‘social bubbles’, international corridors and archipelagic-like clusters, in what ways can archipelagic thinking help us reconfigure future trajectories in individual, collective, as well as national identities?

We welcome paper and panel proposals from scholars at any point of their academic career addressing the theme of archipelagic memory. Suggested topics for papers include, but are not limited to:

- **Archipelagic epistemologies**
- The memorialisation of transoceanic connections, transnational movements and displacement, and cosmopolitan cultural entanglements in the archipelagic mode

- New and old meanings of ‘archipelagic thinking’ in the humanities and social sciences and critical archipelagic methodologies for memory studies
- The archipelago and postcolonial, heritage and memory studies
- **Archipelagic memory practices**
  - The thematic and symbolic dimension of archipelagic memory
  - Performative memory-making in and across archipelagos
  - Museums, mnemonic centres, non-canonical and disobedient archival practices: orality, musicality, embodied knowledge, the senses
  - Textual and symbolical translation, cultural borrowing and divergence
- **Archipelagic memory spaces**
  - Ships, shorelines, port towns and other places where archipelagic memory is inscribed
  - Isthmuses, canals, peninsulas, and their role in increasing the sense of the archipelagic
  - National, ancestral, and imaginary homelands as archipelagic memory palimpsests
  - Trans-oceanic identification across islands and archipelagos; archipelagos as continents, continents as archipelagic
- **History, trauma, and archipelagic memory**
  - Human (e.g. slavery, indenture, genocide, the Holocaust) and natural catastrophes (e.g. storms, cyclones, tsunamis, diseases, climate change) in archipelagic spaces
  - Ways of remembering and moving beyond past conflicts and collective traumas across oceans and continents
  - Vestiges of the colonial past in the postcolonial archipelagic present
- **Memory and politics in the archipelago**
  - Bi- or multi-lateral relations between archipelagic states, small island nations, and established or emerging continental powers
  - Maritime and territorial claims and their impact on regional stability and peace-keeping
  - Activism and its implications in the building of an archipelagic future

We invite contributions in English and French for 20-minute papers. Please send a 300-word abstract, accompanied by a 100-word bio-note, to: [archipelagicmemory@gmail.com](mailto:archipelagicmemory@gmail.com). We also invite proposals for panels of 3 papers. Panel proposals must include: a panel title and short description; a 300-word abstract for each presentation, accompanied by a 100-word bio-note.

### **Deadline for proposals: 20 March 2022**

Notification of acceptance: 31 March 2022

For more information and regular updates, please visit the conference website, <http://www.archipelagicmemory.wordpress.com> or contact us at [archipelagicmemory@gmail.com](mailto:archipelagicmemory@gmail.com)

Conference Organisers: Sraddha Shivani Rajkomar (University of Mauritius); Luca Raimondi (King’s College London/University of the Witwatersrand); Linganaden Murday (King’s College London/University of Mauritius). Conference Administrator: Rosa Beunel (King’s College London).

