

HoMER 2025 Conference 'Cinema and Conflict'

Galatasaray University, Istanbul, 8-11 July 2025

call for proposals

pre-conference graduate workshop*

MICRO-HISTORIES FROM BEYOND THE SCREEN

other stories, other sites

*Organized by Elif Kaymaz (METU) & Özde Çeliktemel (BONU)
Submissions by May 31, 2025; homernetwork.org

7 July 2025

HoMER 2025 Pre-Conference Graduate Workshop: Microhistories from Beyond the Screen: Other Stories, Other Sites

Across the history of cinema, what's on the screen has often taken center stage, but the stories that surround it, circulate behind it, and spill out beyond the auditorium often remain untold. This graduate workshop explores the overlooked spatial and material dimensions of cinema culture, by approaching cinema not only as a medium, but as a catalyst; a generative core around which infrastructures are built, spaces are activated, and new practices emerge. Whether as the reason for constructing a theater, or the force behind archives, rental stores, or storage rooms, film generates infrastructures that live on, to be reused, reinhabited, or reconfigured across time.

Taking inspiration from the New Cinema History literature, this workshop foregrounds microhistory as both a method and a critical stance. A growing body of research has demonstrated how close attention to local exhibition practices, subaltern audiences, and non-canonical venues can reconfigure dominant narratives in cinema history (Thissen, 2019; Biltreyest & Meers, 2020; Gennari & Culhane, 2019; Şavk, Çam & Şanlıer, 2025). Microhistory's commitment to the fragmentary and the situated invites us to ask: What happens when we shift focus away from national narratives or auteurist frameworks, and instead consider a single movie theater, a marginal archive, or a fleeting moment of interruption?

These inquiries resonate with perspectives in architectural and urban history, where buildings are increasingly understood not as static containers but as adaptive structures shaped by conflict, negotiation, and alternative use (Till, 2009; Chattopadhyay, 2023). Architectural programs often drift from their intended purpose, and cities function not only through monumental form but through improvised and networked infrastructures that support events across multiple, interlinked sites (Simone, 2004; Graham & Marvin, 2001). Just as a cinema might serve as a shelter, archive, or assembly hall, so too do urban spaces reorganize themselves to hold the ephemeral weight of public experience.

This workshop invites contributions that pursue one of two parallel trajectories:

First strand focuses on **movie theaters as sites of "other" happenings**: moments when the cinema space was not only a site of exhibition but also of political meetings, refuge, religious ritual, protest, cultural negotiation, or even crime and harassment. Such spaces, in moments of scarcity, conflict, or transformation, have often taken on hybrid functions, becoming stages for crisis, solidarity, or improvisation. We are interested in microhistories of the cinema as a social architecture: lived-in, transformed, and contested.

The second strand turns to **cinematic spaces outside the movie theater**: the infrastructure that enables cinema to happen at all. From shooting locations and sound stages to editing rooms, labs, archives, and storage spaces, these environments are often peripheral to scholarship but central to film's material life. Recent work has drawn attention to the architectural and industrial histories of production environments, as well as the invisible labor of technicians, engineers, and preservationists (Jacobson, 2020; Marzola, 2021). These

spaces offer an alternative map of cinema: one traced through labor, logistics, spatial design, and maintenance, rather than spectacle alone.

Framed within the broader theme of HoMER 2025: Cinema and Conflict, this workshop invites short presentations that trace microhistories of other stories and other sites of cinema. We welcome particular attention to the methodological frictions these cases may reveal, where the archive is partial, sources are unstable, and the process of writing history becomes entangled with its conditions of possibility.

Submission & Participation

This one-day workshop will take place ahead of the HoMER 2025 Conference: Cinema and Conflict, and is designed as an interdisciplinary forum for graduate students and early career researchers working at the intersection of history, cinema and spatial studies. The aim is to foster peer-to-peer dialogue, collaboration, and exchange across disciplines. The workshop will be held in English. Each invited participant will present their research in a 10-15 minute presentation, with a particular angle on the two strands. Attendance is free of charge.

To participate as a speaker, please submit an abstract (max. 300 words) and a short bio (max. 50 words) to ekaymaz@metu.edu.tr by May 31, 2025.

For more information on the HoMER 2025 Conference, visit:

<https://homernetwork.org/annual-conference-2025/>

Graduate Workshop Organizers:

Elif Kaymaz (Middle East Technical University), Özde Çeliktemel (Boğaziçi University)