

# Problematising reality – Encounters between art and philosophy 2023–2024

The second edition of **Problematising reality – Encounters between art and philosophy** is a partnership between CAM – Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian, IFILNOVA (CineLab) / FCSH / UNL and Maumaus / Lumiar Cité. This is a series of six discussion sessions and four seminars taking place at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, focusing on the moment when art and philosophy establish productive dialogues, proposing diverse approaches to contemporary thought. Each discussion session departs from a partial or full exhibition of works of art in the medium of film, accompanied by a reflection led by theorists, researchers or artists.



*Salam Cinema* (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 1995), film still

The fifth discussion session brings together writer and academic **Esther Leslie** and artist and film-maker **Jihan El Tahri** in a reflection prompted by the screening of **Salam Cinema** (1995) by Mohsen Makhmalbaf, a leading figure in the new wave of Iranian cinema. On the occasion of the centenary celebrations of cinema, Makhmalbaf decided to make a film, placing an advert in the press to hire a hundred actors and actresses. Around five thousand people turn up for the auditions, resulting in riots and injuries among the candidates. During the auditions, in front of the camera, the candidates express their love of cinema, while commenting on the concerns, ambitions and contradictions that govern their daily lives, such as women whose invisibility is promoted by political power. Ultimately, this eulogy to cinema, which premiered internationally at the Cannes Film Festival, straddles the fine boundaries between fiction and documentary and reveals the potential of cinema as a medium, particularly in societies where freedom of expression is restricted.

## Programme 5:

### TRUE OR FALSE

09.05.2024 | 18h30

Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Auditório 2

#### Film:

**Salam Cinema** (1995, 75 min.)  
by Mohsen Makhmalbaf

#### Discussion:

**Esther Leslie, Jihan El Tahri**

Session duration: 150 min. | M/12 | Entry is free and limited to the number of seats available. Film spoken in Persian and subtitled in English and Portuguese; the discussion will be in English, with simultaneous translation to Portuguese.

For further information, please contact:

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[www.facebook.com/ProblematisingReality](https://www.facebook.com/ProblematisingReality)

**Esther Leslie** (UK) is Professor of Political Aesthetics at Birkbeck, University of London. In addition to her studies on Walter Benjamin, her books include: *The Rise and Fall of Imperial Chemical Industries: Synthetics, Sensism and the Environment* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023); *Dissonant Waves: Ernst Schoen and Experimental Sound in the Twentieth Century* (with Sam Dolbear, Goldsmiths Press, 2023); *Deeper in the Pyramid* (with Melanie Jackson, Banner Repeater, Grand Union, Primary, 2018; Wellcome Collection, 2023); *Liquid Crystals: The Science and Art of a Fluid Form* (The University of Chicago Press, 2016); *Derelicts: Thought Worms from the Wreckage* (Unkant, 2014); *Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art and the Chemical Industry* (The University of Chicago Press, 2005), and *Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant Garde* (Verso, 2002).

**Jihan El Tahri** (Egypt/France) is a filmmaker, visual artist, writer and producer. Her work has been presented in museums, biennials and other spaces, including: Dak'Art (Dakar), Bamako Encounters, Berlin Biennial, Centre Pompidou (Paris), HKW-Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), The National Museum of Norway (Oslo), Clark House (Bombay), San Ildefonso (Mexico City) and Museum of Modern Art (Warsaw). Her award-winning documentaries include *Nasser* (2015, premiered in the official selection of TIFF - Toronto International Film Festival), *Behind the Rainbow* (2008), *Cuba, an African Odyssey* (2007) and *House of Saud* (2004, nominated for an Emmy). As well as being a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences (Oscars), he has sat on several selection committees, including of the Locarno Film Festival, Jeune Creation Francophone and Le Fond Franco-Tunisien. She has taken part in numerous film festival juries, including as President of the Documentary Jury at FESPACO.

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