

Dr. Gregory Gan, Postdoctoral fellow, Leibniz ScienceCampus "Eastern Europe – Global Area" (EEGA). gregory.gan@alumni.ubc.ca

Dr. Gregory Gan has made research contributions in the fields of visual anthropology, urban anthropology, and postsocialism, with a focus on Russia and Eastern Europe. Gregory obtained his PhD at The University of British Columbia (2019), awarded an Outstanding Graduating Anthropology Student Award by the Canadian Anthropology Society. During his PhD, he developed a multimodal ethnographic installation created using "smart" objects, which traveled internationally to anthropology conferences and film festivals.

Gregory received training in ethnographic film in Canada at Toronto Metropolitan University (2007), and the Digital Research Centre for Qualitative Fieldwork at Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2008-2010. To date, he has created three feature films. "Turning Back the Waves" (2010) recounts the history of the Soviet Union as told through the life stories of seven women. Gregory also took part in SoundImageCulture (2010) a nine-month master class in ethnographic filmmaking in Belgium, which resulted in the film "The Theory of Happiness" (2014). The film describes a sect working to uncover the secret to happiness using mathematical formulas, and it was nominated for Best Canadian Documentary at Hot Docs International Film Festival.

Most recently, Gregory held a postdoctoral position at CRC1171: "Affective Societies" at Freie Universität (2023-2024), preceded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada fellowship (2021-2023). In both cases, Gregory applied visual anthropology methods to the study of the built environment, examining relations between affect and postsocialist architecture. Gregory also developed a prize-winning, animated ethnographic film, "Empathy for Concrete Things" (2023), presently screening at film festivals.

Current research titled "Affective architecture," applies visual anthropology methods to the study of panel-block housing in former East Berlin, articulating the nuanced role postmigrant actors from the former Soviet Union play in shaping their apartments, their neighbourhood, and their city, thereby shaping a wider pluralistic society.

Select Publications

Peer reviewed:

Preprint. "Panel block: Engineering dreams in three-dimensional space." Encyclopedia of Mobilities. Peter Adey, Weiqiang Lin, Kaya Barry, eds. Cheltenham, UK Edward Elgar.

2023. "Space shapes a person; constraints free the soul": Watercolour sketches of Moscow panel-block apartments on the eve of demolition. Streetnotes 30: 1-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/S530159525>

2019a. "Russia Outside Russia: Transnational Mobility and Imagination amongst Russian Migrants to Paris, Berlin, and New York." PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia. <https://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0376258>

2019b. "And with me, my Russia / I bring along in a traveling bag': Literary and ethnographic narratives of Russian exile and emigration, past and present." Revolutionary Russia. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546545.2019.1607023>

2015. "Soaring to dizzying heights: Christ the Saviour Cathedral as a historical arena for the persecution of Pussy Riot." Critique of Anthropology, Vol. 35(2), 166-186. May 2015. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0308275X1556985>

2017. "The trope of the suitcase: Narratives of mobile identities amongst transnational Russian migrants." Conference proceedings. Heritages of Migration: Moving Stories, Objects and Home. Buenos Aires, Argentina. July 6-10. ISBN 978-0-7044-2962-8

2010. MA Thesis: To Our Hopeless Affair: A Visual Anthropology Study of Women of the Russian Intelligentsia in the Post-Soviet era.

Not peer-reviewed:

Ethnographic Films:

Empathy for Concrete Things. 2024. 61 minutes.

- Animated feature-length film based on original watercolors. Released January 2024, anticipating premiere in Summer 2024.

Still Life with a Suitcase. Multimodal Installation. <https://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0376258>

- Select screenings: Digital Anthropologies/Anthropologies Numériques. Paris. 10.2017; CityLab: Berlin. Norwich University, Berlin. 12.2017; CASCA-Cuba: Contrapunteo-Counterpoints. Santiago de Cuba, 05.2018.

Phantom Couriers: Ghost in the Machine. 7 minutes. 2015. Ethnographic film.

- Filmed by Bike. Portland. United States; Main Film: Cinéma Expérimentale. Montréal.

The Theory of Happiness. 2014. 82 minutes. Ethnographic film.

- Select screenings: Nominated for Best Canadian Documentary at the Hot Docs International Film Festival, Toronto, Canada. 04.2014; Dum Národnostníh Menšin/House of Minorities. Prague, Czech Republic. 10.2017; PANDA Theater. Berlin, Germany. 10.2017; Beursschouwburg. Brussels, Belgium. 12.2014; Viscult-NAFA Ethnographic Documentary Film Festival. Joensuu, Finland. 10.2019; Days of Ethnographic Film. Ljubljana, Slovenia. 03.2019; Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität. Münster, Germany. 04.2019.

Make a Wise Wish Now. 33 min. 2011. Ethnographic film.

- Premiered at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Turning Back the Waves. 96 min. 2008. Ethnographic film.

- Archived at Library and Archives of Canada/Bibliothèque et Archives Canada; formerly archived at Memorial: International Human Rights Organization, Moscow.

Solo and group exhibitions:

A Brush with Nature: Hardangerfjord in Transparent Watercolor. 09-10.2020. Solo exhibition. Hardangergalleri. Grimo, Norway.

Closer to Home: Dwelling Places as Social Entities. 03-05.2020. Artist residency and group exhibition. Kunstnarhuset Messen. Ålvik, Norway.

Still Life with a Suitcase: a multimedia installation and linoprints of imagined places. Solo exhibition. Charles Street Video at the Toronto Media Arts Centre. Toronto. 06-09.2019.

Select Translations

Khudozhestvenniy Zhurnal [Moscow Art Magazine] Digest, 2007-2014. Translation (Russian to English). Moscow: Maier Publishing.

Impossible Community. 2011. Art catalogue. Translation (Russian to English). Moscow: Moscow Museum of Modern Art.