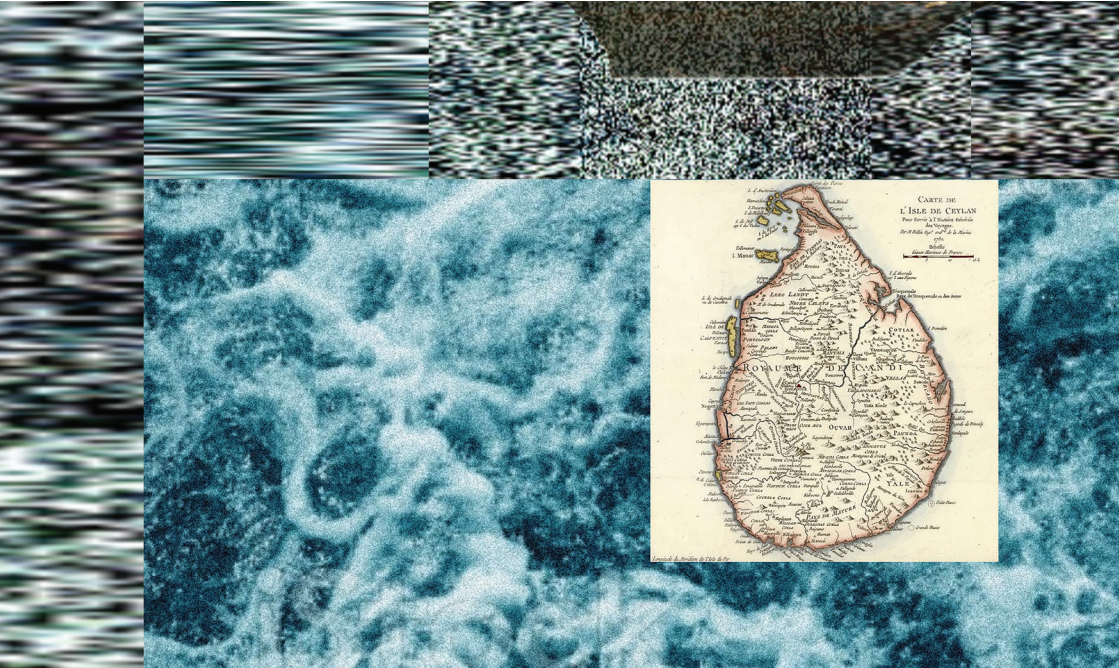


SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE  
**DECEMBER 6-8  
2024**



# **INTERTWINED ECOLOGIES AND INTERCONNECTED HISTORIES: THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM**

SHARJAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

THEAFRICAINSTITUTE.ORG

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# INTERTWINED ECOLOGIES AND INTERCONNECTED HISTORIES: THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM

## SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE

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SHARJAH,  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Global Studies University (GSU) was established in 2023 as a non-profit institution for higher education by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al-Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah.



# FOREWORD

**Intertwined Ecologies and Interconnected Histories: The Indian Ocean Rim** marks the fourth and final symposium in the *Thinking the Archipelago: Africa's Indian Ocean Islands* series, taking place from December 6-8, 2024, in Sharjah, UAE. This event concludes the third edition of The Africa Institute's Country-focused Season, which explores the complex relationships between Africa's Indian Ocean islands and their broader ecological, cultural, and historical contexts.

This symposium builds on previous discussions held in *Reimagining Mobilities/Immobilities in the Indian Ocean* (December 2022), *Legacies of Race and Slavery in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans* (June 2023), and *Colorful Threads: The Interwoven Worlds of Art and Culture in the Western Indian Ocean* (December 2023). These gatherings brought together scholars, writers, artists, and activists, creating a platform for diverse perspectives on the forces shaping Africa's Indian Ocean rim.

This year's event, supported by the Social Sciences Research Council, focuses on the region's ecological and socio-economic challenges. Experts from various fields will come together to discuss the environmental, cultural, and economic connections that define the Indian Ocean rim.

The *Thinking the Archipelago* season is a key part of The Africa Institute's ongoing efforts to explore Africa's history and engage with current issues across the continent. Over the past two years, The Africa Institute has hosted symposia in Sharjah and Zanzibar, advancing discussions on topics such as migration, race and slavery, and the role of art in fostering cultural exchange across the Indian Ocean.

*Intertwined Ecologies and Interconnected Histories* will examine pressing issues such as climate resilience, environmental adaptation, and the impact of socio-economic changes on coastal communities. The symposium aims to foster dialogue and collaboration among scholars and policymakers, offering new insights into sustainable development for the region.

The Indian Ocean rim is increasingly at the center of global attention, as rapid urbanization and climate change pose unprecedented challenges. As the fastest-warming ocean on Earth, the Indian Ocean connects diverse regions—from the eastern coast of Africa to the Arabian Gulf, Peninsular India, Southeast Asia, and western Australia. This unique intersection of histories and ecosystems makes the region a key focus for discussions on environmental justice and sustainability.

This final symposium is part of a season convened by leading scholars Jeremy Prestholdt, Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego; Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf, Professor of Anthropology at Georgetown University in Qatar; and Uday Chandra, Assistant Professor of Government at Georgetown University in Qatar. In addition to their contributions, this symposium will feature a cohort of over 15 scholars, environmental policymakers, cultural historians, and climate activists.

# PARTICIPANTS

Intertwined Ecologies and Interconnected Histories: The Indian Ocean Rim

**Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf**  
Georgetown University, Qatar

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Ardalan Associates, USA

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The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

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State University of Zanzibar,  
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**Anna L. Tsing**  
University of California, USA;  
Aarhus University, Denmark

**Akshay Sarathi**  
Texas A&M University, USA

**John Thabiti Willis**  
The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

**Alden Young**  
Yale University, USA



# **CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

# PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Intertwined Ecologies and Interconnected Histories: The Indian Ocean Rim

## FRIDAY DECEMBER 6

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10:00 am	<b>Welcoming Remarks</b> Salah M. Hassan – Chancellor, Global Studies University (GSU); Dean, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE
10:15 am	<b>Introductory Remarks</b> Jeremy Prestholdt – Professor of History, University of California, San Diego, USA
10:30 am	Opening Keynote <b>INTERTWINED ECOLOGIES AND BIOTIC BORDERS: PLANTS, POLITICS AND PRINT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD</b> Isabel Hofmeyr – Professor Emeritus, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa <b>Chair</b> Uday Chandra – Assistant Professor of Government, Georgetown University, Qatar

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11:30 pm	Panel 1 <b>FACING CLIMATE CHANGE: LIVELIHOODS AND ADAPTATION</b> Panelists <b>Climate Change in Zanzibar: Coastal Communities, Livelihood Adaptation, and Environmental Justice in the Indian Ocean Rim</b> Mary Khatib – Lecturer and Head of The Research Center of Oceanography, Environment and Natural Resources (TROCEN), State University of Zanzibar, Tanzania <b>The New Triangular Trade: Managing Inequality across Afrabia during the Long 1970s</b> Alden Young – Associate Professor of History and Global Affairs, Yale University, USA <b>Indian Ocean Warming, Environmental Degradation, and Threatened Livelihoods: Perspectives and Initiatives of Coastal Communities in Tanzania</b> Almas Fortunatus Mazigo – Senior Lecturer, Department of History, Political Science and Development Studies, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania <b>Moderator</b> Jeremy Prestholdt – Professor of History, University of California - San Diego, USA
1:30 pm	<b>Lunch</b> Location: The Africa Institute (GSU) Courtyard

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3:00 pm

Panel 2

**TIDES OF CHANGE: INTERACTIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD**

Panelists

**Fish that Empty the Water: Co-Species Invasion at the Eastern End of the Indian Ocean**

Anna L. Tsing – Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Cruz; Professor of Anthropology, Aarhus University, Denmark

Hatib A. Kadir – Postdoctoral Researcher in Global Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

**Elephants, Agriculture, and Ecological Change in Unyamwezi (West-Central Tanzania), 1850s-1910s**

Philip Gooding – Project Manager and Former Postdoctoral Researcher, Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University, Canada

**Entre Terre et Mer: Climate Change and Psychosocial Resilience in the Seychelles Archipelago**

Rosabelle Boswell – DSI-NRF South African Research Chair in Ocean Cultures and Heritage (OCH), Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

Co-moderator

Trish Kahle, Assistant Professor of History, Georgetown University, Qatar

Victoria Googasian, Assistant Professor of American Literature, Georgetown University, Qatar

5:00 pm

**Coffee Break**

Location: The Africa Institute (GSU) Courtyard

5:15 pm

Panel 3

**BRIDGES: FROM PARADISE GARDENS TO OFFSHORE WINDS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN**

Panelists

**The Diffusion of the Paradise Garden Paradigm in the Indian Ocean Rim**

Nader Ardalan – Architect and President of Ardalan Associates, Consultants in Architecture & Planning, USA

**[Solar] Geoengineering an Unequal World: Delicate Ecologies and Precarious Economies of Monsoon-Dependent Regions in the Indian Ocean**

Prakash Kashwan – Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, Brandeis University, USA

Moderator

Zaynab El Bernoussi – Associate Professor of Political Science, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE



## SATURDAY DECEMBER 7

Firat Oruc  
– Associate  
Professor  
of Foreign  
Service,  
Georgetown  
University,  
Qatar.

### Panel 4

#### **TRIBUTARIES: ECOLOGY, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN HISTORIES**

##### Panelists

#### **Ecology as Economic Assemblage:**

#### **Ivory, Shell and Relational Geographies of Extraction in the Indian Ocean**

Pedro Machado – Associate Professor,  
Department of History; Director, Dhar India  
Studies Program, Indiana University, USA

#### **When the Subaltern Prophesies: African Slaves, Arab Saints, & Nature in Southern Arabia**

Wilson Jacob – Professor of History, Concordia  
University, Canada

#### **Fish, Shellfish, and Commerce: The Interplay of Subsistence and Economics in East Africa's Indian Ocean Links**

Akshay Sarathi – Lecturer, Department of  
Anthropology, Texas A&M University, USA

##### Moderator

Firat Oruc – Associate Professor of Foreign  
Service, Georgetown University, Qatar

12:00 pm

### **Lunch**

**Location:** The Africa Institute (GSU) Courtyard

1:30 pm

### Panel 5

#### **RECORDING ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE**

##### Panelists

#### **A Sonic Approach to Vernacular Archives and Cultural Memory of the Fishing Communities of Mozambique Island**

**Rufus Maculuve – Lecturer of Cultural Production, Kaleidoscopio - Research in Public Policy and Culture, Mozambique**

#### **Transregional Cultures of Rule: Maritime Environmentalisms of the Indian Ocean**

Aarthi Sridhar – Founder trustee and Head  
of Communities and Resource Governance  
Programme, Dakshin Foundation, India

#### **Drying Fish as an Act of Being and Becoming: A Diffractive Reading on Nature-Culture Entanglements in the Indian Ocean Region**

Sunil Santha – Dean of Academic Affairs;  
Chairperson of Centre for Livelihoods & Social  
Innovation, Tata Institute of Social Sciences  
(TISS), India.

##### Moderator

Emery Kalema – Assistant Professor of History,  
The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

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3:30 pm

**Coffee Break**

Location: The Africa Institute (GSU) Courtyard

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3:45 pm

Project Presentation

**Constructing the Ocean - Dawoodi Bohras  
as a Case of Transregionalism**

**Presenters**

Uwe Skoda - Associate Professor of India and  
South Asia Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

Thomas Fibiger - Associate Professor for Arab  
and Islamic Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

**Moderator**

John Thabiti Willis - Associate Professor of  
African History, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

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5:00 pm

Music Performance

**Zinat Sharjah**

Zinat Sharjah is an Emirati traditional folk band,  
led by Mr. Ali Khamis Al-Ashar Al-Suwaidi, that  
preserves and celebrates Emirati and Gulf  
heritage through music.

Location: The Africa Institute (GSU) Courtyard

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## Opening Keynote

### **INTERTWINED ECOLOGIES AND BIOTIC BORDERS: PLANTS, POLITICS, AND PRINT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD**

Isabel Hofmeyr - Professor Emeritus, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Themes of plant exchange and transfer have long constituted an important strand in the environmental history of the Indian Ocean world. This paper builds on this research while drawing on recent work in the plant humanities. This latter body of scholarship urges humanities scholars to focus on the material plant, not simply its representations. Rather than just turning attention to botanical life, it is essential to consider *botanical lives*, i.e., particular plants rather than plant life in the abstract.

Taking this advice, the talk will focus on specific plants and plant encounters. As a literary scholar, the focus is on the texts that plants generate, with the paper investigating several related themes. First, it considers plant inspectors in Indian Ocean ports who checked incoming plant matter and policed colonial biotic borders. In this account, the documents and texts generated by plants as they move are tracked. The second focus will be on two instances of dried plants: in herbaria, on one hand, and as used in 'traditional' medicine, on the other. One species of interest is *Commelina africana*, widely used in indigenous healing around much of the Indian Ocean littoral. The paper discusses herbarium sheets from specimens collected along different parts of the southeast African seaboard and the miniature texts on these sheets. Additionally, it investigates the popular advertisements and pamphlets for herbal and other medicines, paying attention to one early 20th-century figure in colonial Natal, Mafavuke Ngcobo, who ran a 'muthi' mail-order empire. His icon was *idangabane*, *Commelina africana*.

## Panel 1

### **FACING CLIMATE CHANGE: LIVELIHOODS AND ADAPTATION**

#### **Climate Change in Zanzibar: Coastal Communities, Livelihood Adaptation, and Environmental Justice in the Indian Ocean Rim**

Mary Khatib - Lecturer and the Head of the Research Center of Oceanography, Environment, and Natural Resources (TROCEN), State University of Zanzibar, Tanzania

Zanzibar islands are blessed to be in a strategic environmental position on the Indian Ocean Rim, which faces a critical crisis related to anthropogenic impacts on climate change. The tranquil coastline, home to Swahili communities and rich ecosystems, is increasingly threatened by climate change. Sea-level rise, unpredictable weather patterns, and sea temperature change pose existential challenges to the very fragile communities that depend directly on marine resources for their livelihood. The disruption that is associated with climate change weakens local livelihood activities like artisanal fishing, seaweed farming, and tourism. It is a place where sustainable adaptation measures are urgent. Therefore, the paper examines how climate change disrupts the lives of these communities and how adaptation measures signify the importance of environmental justice. Finally, the paper positions Zanzibar's struggles within the broader context of the Indian Ocean Rim.

### **The New Triangular Trade: Managing Inequality across Afrabia during the Long 1970s**

Alden Young - Associate Professor of History and Global Affairs, Yale University, USA

This paper begins with the Arab-African Symposium in Sharjah in 1976, where African intellectuals from across the continent converged in the newly independent United Arab Emirates and proposed an exchange. African intellectuals and professionals would lend their skills to the Emirates and other petroleum-wealthy states across the Arabian Peninsula in exchange for Arab investment and cooperation. A number of these intellectuals, like the Kenyan scholar Ali Mazrui, even framed this trade as a form of reparation for the long Arab-African slave trade. Mazrui argued that the independence of the Eastern Arabian states could be the catalyst for the long-awaited reconciliation between African and Arab peoples.

But beyond a social and cultural reconciliation, there was also the expectation that closer ties across the Red Sea would allow both Africa and Arabia—what Mazrui called “*Afrabia*”—to escape dependence and actualize the long struggle for African independence, in the words of the Sudanese intellectual Muhammad Abu Qasim Hajj Hamad. This paper ends in 1979 with Hajj Hamad moving from Beirut to Abu Dhabi. In Beirut, Hajj Hamad had helped to popularize the cause of Eritrean independence in the Arabic press. In the process, he had become part of the early 1970s Third World cosmopolitanism of Beirut. In 1979, he moved to Abu Dhabi, where he helped to reorganize Emirati intelligence in the wake of Camp David and the Iranian Revolution. In doing so, Hajj Hamad brought a mixture of African and Arab revolutionary networks into the service of the expanding Emirati state. This personal story becomes a microcosm of the ways the new Emirates were able to harness transnational networks of professionals, often imbued with revolutionary ideals, into the service of state power.

### **Indian Ocean Warming, Environmental Degradation, and Threatened Livelihoods: Perspectives and Initiatives of Coastal Communities in Tanzania**

Almas Fortunatus Mazigo - Senior Lecturer, Department of History, Political Science and Development Studies, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

This paper is based on five years of empirical research on Tanzanian coastal communities’ innovative approaches, cultural practices, and moral resources fostering responsible management of the climate crisis, environmental degradation, and threatened livelihoods. The coastal communities along the Indian Ocean in Tanzania have faced challenges such as rising sea temperatures, sea levels, coastal floods, windstorms, cyclones, and salinization of water sources. These climate change effects have negatively impacted coastal areas, livelihood opportunities, coral reefs, and mangroves, affecting aquatic biodiversity. Some communities have designed and implemented innovative projects aimed at addressing these issues, including coral reef and mangrove restoration, conservation of endangered species, and raising awareness about climate change. Empirical evidence gathered through surveys, life narratives, and interviews with coastal people engaged in community-led initiatives was analyzed to gain insights into their perspectives on the causes and solutions to ecological crises, as well as their responsibilities to overcome environmental degradation and livelihood threats. The analysis uncovered valuable insights and deeply rooted values and principles motivating them to preserve the environment and protect livelihood opportunities for both human and non-human species. These insights, along with the ethical values and principles embraced by these communities, point to a much-needed philosophy of sustainability that can guide thinking about human and non-human relationships and encourage efforts to promote fair interactions in coastal and marine ecosystems. This philosophy of sustainability will be further elaborated to emphasize its practical guidance.

## PANEL 2

**TIDES OF CHANGE: INTERACTIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD****Fish That Empty the Water: Co-Species Invasion at the Eastern End of the Indian Ocean**

Anna Tsing – Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, University of California - Santa Cruz, USA; Professor of Anthropology, Aarhus University, Denmark

Hatib A. Kadir – Postdoctoral Researcher in Global Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

The concept of “co-invasion” refers to the role of non-human species in colonial, neocolonial, and settler occupation. This paper argues that introduced fish contribute to the remaking of landscapes for settler projects. The focus is on freshwater fish in and around the city of Sorong, in Indonesian Papua, where new infrastructure has disrupted the local hydrology, replacing it with deoxygenated, sediment-filled drains, sinks, and canals. Introduced fish thrive in such waters while also enacting an almost complete replacement of native water fauna. In promoting invasive species, the government justifies the infrastructure-driven destruction of the Indigenous landscape and its replacement with a settler property regime.

Sealing land-water porosity has been a defining characteristic of colonial and postcolonial governance along the soft shores of the Indian Ocean. Canals drain swamps; embankments contain rivers; harbors are dredged; and seawalls are constructed. On newly dried land, plantation economies of property and labor were established; on newly contained waters, imperial trade flourished. The northwest coast of Papua was one of the earliest participants in the European-driven part of the Indian Ocean trade. Ironically, it remains one of the last regions to undergo the landscape-as-governance transformations described above. Most of the destruction of land-water porosity in this area has occurred since Indonesian occupation in the 1960s, with much of it taking place since 2000. As a result, the more-than-human violence of this land-and-water transformation, in which exotic species play a central role, is evident.

**Elephants, Agriculture, and Ecological Change in Unyamwezi (West-Central Tanzania), 1850s-1910s**

Philip Gooding – Project Manager and Former Postdoctoral Researcher, Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University, Canada

This paper writes the history of the Indian Ocean World from the perspective of elephants. Beginning during the first millennium CE and ending in the mid-twentieth century, it shows how a multispecies perspective can shed light on some of the major themes of Indian Ocean World history over the long term, including diplomacy, commerce, cultural exchange, colonialism, and ecological change. In so doing, it integrates studies of Asian and African elephants, which, for the most part, have been considered separately in historical analysis. It shows that each species of elephant has been connected by shared experiences of oceanic voyages, human symbolism, and exploitation for their products, which have varied over both time and space. The intention is to create an innovative and accessible history that can be used as a pedagogical reference work for educators teaching the intersection of some of Indian Ocean World history’s core themes.

**Entre Terre et Mer: Climate Change and Psychosocial Resilience in the Seychelles Archipelago**

Rosabelle Boswell – DSI-NRF South African Research Chair in Ocean Cultures and Heritage (OCH), Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

This paper focuses on the role and place of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in resilience to climate change in the Western Indian Ocean. The presentation offers a film and a brief discussion on how the African-descended peoples of the Seychelles archipelago are using mobility and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) to achieve climate and psychosocial resilience. The paper draws on anthropological field research conducted on Mahé Island, La Digue, and Silhouette Islands in the Seychelles archipelago in October 2023.

## Project Presentation

### **CONSTRUCTING THE OCEAN - DAWOODI BOHRAS AS A CASE OF TRANSREGIONALISM**

Uwe Skoda - Associate Professor of India and South Asia Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

Thomas Fibiger - Associate Professor for Arab and Islamic Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

Focusing on community-led infrastructure projects, CO-OC examines how transregional relations and imaginaries manifest in the Dawoodi Bohra community across four locations: Mumbai, Tanzania, Dubai, and Cairo. Through an ethnographically rich analysis of Dawoodi Bohra infrastructural initiatives, the project explores the connections within and between Indian Ocean regions. It investigates how the Bohras shape infrastructures and how infrastructures, in turn, shape the Bohras. By focusing on the material, social, and religious (dis)continuities produced by and through infrastructures, we explore how transregionalism is both imagined and constructed in practice.

Buildings have long served as a critical mode through which communities around the Indian Ocean cultivate local and transoceanic modes of belonging, as well as assert power and status. From 19th-century merchant houses to religious, scholastic, and community centers, the significance of the built environment in materializing transoceanic ties is well-documented. In recent years, community-led infrastructure projects across the Indian Ocean have continued to advance.

The project begins with the ongoing redevelopment of Bhendi Bazaar in Mumbai, a historical and spiritual center for the community and home to many Bohras. Initiated in 2009 by the former 52nd Dai, Syedna Muhammad Burhanuddin, the upliftment trust has provided new housing for more than 3,000 inhabitants (90% Bohras) of the dilapidated area, as well as shopkeepers, in the form of new high-rise buildings still under construction. After many years in temporary housing, the first tenants have now moved into their new apartments. The CO-OC project raises several questions:

What does this infrastructure project, and others like it, mean for the Bohra community in Mumbai and beyond? What does it reveal about the role of infrastructure for such communities, both locally and transregionally? How are these projects connected to diasporic community-building in East Africa and the Gulf region, and to the restoration of Fatimid mosques in Cairo?

## Panel 3

### **TRIBUTARIES: ECOLOGY, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN HISTORIES**

#### **Ecology as Economic Assemblage: Ivory, Shell and Relational Geographies of Extraction in the Indian Ocean**

Pedro Machado - Associate Professor, Department of History; Director, Dhar India Studies Program, Indiana University, USA

Sites of ecological extraction are (variously) differentiated in number of important ways but are constituted by complex interactions among actors, social factors, and political imperatives. Furthermore, they are often structured and articulated through specific exchange mechanisms and institutional frameworks that undergird commercial networks with extensions across mutable spaces of economic life. Their dense interrelation animates the spatialities and temporalities that define extractive possibilities and shape geographies of human and non-human movement and mobility.

This paper examines how two ecologies and trades—ivory and shell—came to coexist within a shared framework of extraction in Southeast Africa, whose contours were shaped by the dense interplay between animal and human relations. The interplay is read terraqueously, employing perspectives from the decks of Gujarati boats that, as infrastructural technologies, sailed the western Indian Ocean in the 18th and 19th centuries along the coastal waters of what is today Mozambique. It also considers hinterland exchange and movement patterns to emphasize the importance of the land-water interface in mutually shaping cross-species histories.

**When the Subaltern Prophecies: African Slaves, Arab Saints, & Nature in Southern Arabia**

Wilson Jacob - Professor of History, Concordia University, Canada

The connections between Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia via the slave trade have been explored by several scholars in the last quarter of a century or so. Among other achievements, this research has enlightened us about the similarities and differences between Atlantic, Eastern Mediterranean, and Indian Ocean slavery. There is, however, a disturbingly reifying character to many of these studies. This paper posits that the reason for this is an unexamined and persistent Orientalism in the treatment of Arab history. By exploring the relationship between an Arab sayyid (a descendant of the Prophet) and slavery at the height of global abolitionism, this paper aims to demonstrate how assumptions about Arab nefariousness obscure a myriad of historical relationships that exceed the typical oppressor/oppressed dichotomy. Arabs and Africans, humans and animals, spirits and environments constituted in concert—whether harmoniously or discordantly—worlds of ever-becoming that eschew the facile ontological categories upon which historians of the “non-Western” world all too often depend. Such dependence results in narratives that are overly moralistic, to the extent that interconnections in history are skewed in one direction or another, making any picture of a geopolitical and economic totality more phantasmic and normative than scientific. Going in reverse, so to speak, this paper queries whether examining a phantasy of humans and the rest of the natural world in one corner of the Indian Ocean might shed more light on totalities than a scientific rationale that purports to discover verifiable objects.

**Fish, Shellfish, and Commerce: The Interplay of Subsistence and Economics in East Africa’s Indian Ocean Links**

Akshay Sarathi - Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Texas A&M University, USA

Ethnographic, archaeological, and historical data reveal that fish and shellfish played a critical role not only as subsistence products but also as key components in East Africa’s participation in Indian Ocean exchange networks and economies. The historical and modern trade in fresh and preserved fish, for instance, intricately links the exploitation of marine resources with Western Indian Ocean trade networks. Additionally, the historical use of cowrie shells as currency facilitated East African participation in broader Indian Ocean economic systems. Moreover, East Africa’s rich culinary heritage, which blends indigenous fish and shellfish cooking methods with influences from across the Indian Ocean, further underscores the region’s integration into this interconnected world. The trade in fish, the economic use of cowries, creolized culinary practices, and other phenomena highlight how local marine resources were instrumental in embedding East Africa within the wider Indian Ocean World, reshaping our understanding of its historical and economic landscape.

## Panel 4

**RECORDING ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE****A Sonic Approach to Vernacular Archives and Cultural Memory of the Fishing Communities of Mozambique Island**

Rufus Maculuve - Lecturer of Cultural Production, Kaleidoscopio - Research in Public Policy and Culture, Mozambique

Mozambique Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is known for its rich cultural tapestry influenced by African, Arab, and Portuguese traditions. The island's inhabitants are deeply connected to the Indian Ocean, with distinct cultural practices and generational knowledge. Despite extensive research on the island's cultural heritage and history, the intersection of vernacular archives, cultural memory, and sound remains underexplored. This paper explores the role of vernacular archives in preserving the cultural memory of fishing communities on Mozambique Island through sonic practices. The methodology integrates listening and recording work songs, interviews, sound walks, and participant observation, coupled with text and subtext analysis. Through deep listening to fishermen and choco women chants and sonic narratives, it was possible to acknowledge the role of sound in shaping cultural practices and collective memory. Delving into vernacular sonic archives also allowed for a deeper understanding of lived experiences, narratives, cultural identity, and socio-environmental relationships. In conclusion, the sonic approach to marginalized voices stands in stark contrast to official archives (colonial or post-colonial) and approaches, thereby questioning the validity of historical narratives derived exclusively from written official records. Men and women of Mozambique Island, through work songs, sing their joys, express their woes, critique, educate, satirize, and maintain their cultural memory through generations, all while adapting to socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental changes.

**Transregional Cultures of Rule: Maritime Environmentalisms of the Indian Ocean**

Aarthi Sridhar - there is r missingr - Founder trustee and Head of Communities and Resource Governance Program, Dakshin Foundation, India

Long histories of intersecting and interconnected epistemic practices, disciplinary training, and currents of social movements make for familiar yet diverse strains within environmental movements across the Indian Ocean. As the fastest-warming ocean in the Anthropocene, the Indian Ocean compels urgency in global thought and practice that narrativize and construct 'One Ocean.' This thinking is fueled by an ecologically driven planetary flattening of the region's diverse oceanic histories, experiences, and meanings. Attending to the multiple maritime environmentalisms that traverse shared littoral spaces of the Indian Ocean in the 21st century, this paper reviews the unequal regulatory cultures that are (re)produced with the blue (ill)legalities through technologies of rule. The paper argues that the objectification and structuring of diverse marine life and livelihoods by alliances of unequal humans and cultural objects of regulation - render the reproduction of inequality a transregional practice.

**Drying Fish as an Act of Being and Becoming: A Diffractive Reading on Nature-Culture Entanglements in the Indian Ocean Region**

Sunil Santha - Dean of Academic Affairs; Chairperson of Centre for Livelihoods & Social Innovation, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), India

This paper explores the shifts in nature-culture entanglements through the lens of "dried fish" in the Indian Ocean Region. By relying on a posthuman ontology, it specifically examines the transitions in the relationalities and sacredness associated with the dried fish economy in contrast to the emerging commodity frontiers in fisheries. Aimed at unearthing the entanglements amidst differences, the author applies a diffractive methodology of reading through three different contexts, namely (i) the moral economy of drying fish in a small village in Kerala, India; (ii) the struggles of women fish vendors in Mumbai city, India; and (iii) shifts in the dried fish relationalities in a few African nations. Finally, an attempt will be made to connect these dots. Corresponding



to this intent, this paper adopts a reflective ethnographic approach for the Indian context and an in-depth desk review for the African contexts. Such an approach will also provide insights into the agential capabilities of fish, humans, and their coexistence in place-making and shifting ecologies.

## Panel 5

### **BRIDGES: FROM PARADISE GARDENS TO OFFSHORE WINDS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN**

#### **The Diffusion of the Paradise Garden Paradigm in the Indian Ocean Rim**

Nader Ardalan – Architect and President of Ardalan Associates, USA

This paper explores one of the most profound and historically ancient concepts of the Paradise Garden paradigm and is structured in three parts. Part 1 introduces the concept and profound spiritual meanings of the Paradise Garden Paradigm, tracing its origins in the ancient mythologies of Mesopotamia to its elaborate development in Persia. Part 2 follows the diffusion of this paradigm across diverse Muslim cultures of the Indian Ocean Rim over the past three millennia, where it is transformed in the Quran into the Islamic Garden. Part 3, titled “Saving Paradise,” confronts the endangered contemporary world facing the impacts of climate change, rising ocean waters, and the crucial challenge to humanity to serve as the stewards of nature to save the earthly paradise and reestablish the natural sustainability of the Earth.

#### **[Solar] Geoengineering an Unequal World: Delicate Ecologies and Precarious Economies of Monsoon-Dependent Regions in the Indian Ocean**

Prakash Kashwan – Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, Brandeis University, USA

The failure of global efforts to mitigate climate change has prompted an influential group of Western climate scientists and physicists to call for solar geoengineering interventions. They seek to spray a layer of sulfur dioxide into the upper atmosphere to reflect a portion of the incoming sunlight away from the Earth’s atmosphere. Such a reduction in sunlight would cool the Earth, an effect observed following large volcanic eruptions in the past. However, both volcanic eruptions and the proposed solar geoengineering interventions interfere with global hydrological cycles and disrupt the Indian Ocean Monsoon in a perceptible way. This article argues that the potential effects of such an intervention cannot be gauged using climate and physical science models alone. Solar geoengineering would intervene in a deeply unequal world without a level playing field. The implications for the region’s agriculture, food security, ecologies, and economies could be enormous. Furthermore, it is argued that the deeply entrenched inequalities of Indian Ocean societies cannot be fully understood or analyzed using rational-choice bargaining models of decision-making and human behaviors popular in Western societies. Instead, this paper conceptualizes and demonstrates the utility of “diffused inequalities” to better reflect the complex sociocultural context of the Indian Ocean. In conclusion, this article urges the application of the precautionary principle to assess the grave risks that solar geoengineering presents for the most marginalized and vulnerable sections of societies in the Indian Ocean region.



# **BIOGRAPHIES**

**Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf**

Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf is a Sudanese ethnographer and Professor of Anthropology at Georgetown University in Qatar. She has received Postdoctoral and Senior Fellowships from Durham University, Brown University, and Harvard University. Her research has been supported by prestigious institutions, including the Guggenheim Foundation and the Royal Anthropological Institute. Her scholarship focuses on culture and politics, gender anthropology, human rights, migration, and diaspora issues in Sudan, the Gulf, Oman, Zanzibar, and the Indian Ocean. Abusharaf is the author of *Darfur Allegory: Transforming Displaced Women in Sudan and Wanderings*, both published by the University of Chicago Press, and co-editor of *Oceanic Circularities*, published by Georgetown University Press. She has also edited significant works, including a 2010 special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly* and *Female Circumcision: Multicultural Perspectives* (2006). Her numerous articles have appeared in various journals, including *Sciences*, *Differences*, and *Anthropology News*. Additionally, she serves as a co-editor of *Monsoon: Journal of the Indian Ocean Rim*, published by Duke University Press in collaboration with The Africa Institute (GSU).

**Nader Ardalan**

Nader Ardalan is an Architect and President of Ardalan Associates, Consultants in Architecture & Planning. He holds a Master's in Architecture from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University and a Bachelor of Architecture from Carnegie-Mellon University. With extensive academic experience, he has served as a Visiting Professor of Design at prestigious institutions such as Harvard, Yale, MIT, and Tehran University. Ardalan is a founding member of the Steering Committee for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and is involved in the Harvard Jerusalem Studio Studies Program and the Board of Directors of the Architecture, Culture & Spirituality Forum. His expertise encompasses Eastern philosophies and symbolism, sustainable urbanism design and implementation, indigenous cultural identity, and perennial placemaking paradigms. His research techniques include archival research, field documentation, and interview analytics. His publications include *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* (1974), *Habitat Bill of Rights* (1976), *Blessed Jerusalem* (1985), *New Arab Urbanism* (2010), and *Gulf Sustainable Urbanism* (2018).

**Hatib A. Kadir**

Hatib A. Kadir earned his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 2018. He is currently a postdoctoral researcher in Global Studies at Aarhus University, Denmark. Beginning in January 2025, Kadir will join the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) as a researcher in the Netherlands. Kadir's research focuses on environmental humanities, with particular attention to the Anthropocene in peripheral regions. His work examines settler colonialism, multispecies interactions, and the emergence of feral species in the swampy landscapes of coastal West Papua, exploring how settler colonial projects are inherently multispecies enterprises involving the settlement not only of people but also plants and animals.

**Zaynab El Bernoussi**

Zaynab El Bernoussi is an Associate Professor of Political Science at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, specializing in dignity politics, international relations, and international political economy. She holds a Ph.D. in Political and Social Sciences from the Catholic University of Louvain, an MPA from Columbia University, and a MIF from Instituto de

Empresa. Before her current role, El Bernoussi was a Visiting Assistant Professor at New York University Abu Dhabi and held academic positions at Al Akhawayn University and Sciences Po Rabat. She has conducted research as a visiting scholar at Smith College and Harvard University. Active in international relations, she is the Vice-Chair of the Global South Caucus of the International Studies Association and a founding member of the Security in Context network. Her scholarly contributions have earned her Fulbright and Carnegie awards, and her work has been recognized with the Arab Prize for her article on dignity politics. El Bernoussi's book, *Dignity in the Egyptian Revolution*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2021. Her research focuses on the politicization of dignity demands in the global South, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East.

**Rosabelle Boswell**

Rosabelle Rose Boswell is a DSI-NRF South African Research Chair in Ocean Cultures and Heritage (OCH). The project is a multi-country endeavor investigating human cultural relations with the sea. The OCH team is engaged in multidisciplinary research, producing photography, film, poetry, and sculpture. Rose has an MA in Anthropology from UCT and a Ph.D. from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. She has conducted anthropological research in Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Zanzibar, South Africa, Kenya, and Namibia. She is the author of *Le Malaise Créole: Ethnic Identity in Mauritius* (Oxford: Berghahn 2006) and several other books, including *The Palgrave Handbook of Blue Heritage* (co-edited with David O'Kane and Jeremy Hills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2022) and four anthologies. The two latest publications (2024) are an anthology titled *Lover Brine* and a photographic book, *Ocean Beings*.

**Thomas Fibiger**

Thomas Fibiger is an Associate Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies at the Department for the Study of Religion, Aarhus University in Denmark. He has worked for many years with the Arab Gulf states, focusing particularly on heritage, historicity, and religious communities. His research has been published in journals such as the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *Journal of Arabian Studies*, and *Middle East Critique*.

**Almas Fortunatus Mazigo**

Almas Fortunatus Mazigo is a Senior Lecturer at the Dar Es Salaam University College Of Education (Duce), University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. He holds a Ph.D. in Applied Ethics from Stellenbosch University in South Africa, a Master of Development Studies from the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and a Bachelor of Philosophy from Pontifical Urbaniana University in Italy. Mazigo has expertise in action research, climate change ethics, sustainability thoughts and practices, community-led social innovations, and development evaluation thoughts and practices. His social and ethical inquiries seek to understand socio-cultural and moral resources that influence people and organizations to improve human conditions and address sustainability challenges. His research findings have been published in the *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, the *Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics*, the *Utafiti Journal of African Perspective*, the *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, and the *African Evaluation Journal*.

**Uday Chandra**

Uday Chandra is an Assistant Professor of Government at Georgetown University in Qatar. He earned his B.A. in Economics from Grinnell College and his Ph.D. in Political Science from Yale University, where he received the 2013 Sardar Patel Award for the best dissertation on modern South Asia from a U.S. university. Prior to his appointment

in Doha, he held a prestigious research fellowship at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, Germany. His research intersects critical agrarian studies, political anthropology, postcolonial theory, and South Asian studies, focusing on state-society relations, power and resistance, political violence, agrarian change, rural-urban migration, popular religion, and the philosophy of the social sciences. Uday's work has been published in leading journals, including *Law & Society Review* and *Social Movement Studies*, and he has co-edited volumes on self-making in modern South Asia and social movements in rural India. His first monograph, *Negotiating Leviathan: Making Tribes and States in Modern India* (Stanford University Press), and his second book project examining Hindu nationalism and democracy in postcolonial India.

#### **Philip Gooding**

Philip Gooding is a project manager and former postdoctoral researcher at the Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University, Canada. He is the author of *On the Frontiers of the Indian Ocean World: A History of Lake Tanganyika, c. 1830-1860* (Cambridge UP, 2022), editor of *Droughts, Floods, and Global Climatic Anomalies in the Indian Ocean World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), and co-editor of *Animal Trade Histories in the Indian Ocean World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). He is also the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies*.

#### **Victoria Googasian**

Victoria Googasian is an Assistant Professor of American Literature at Georgetown University in Qatar. Her research interests include 20th- and 21st-century American literature, narrative theory, animal studies, and the environmental humanities. She is currently completing a manuscript titled *Animal Minds, Other Minds*, which explores species difference and narrative form in American fiction. Her work has been published in *New Literary History*, *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, and *JML: Journal of Modern Literature*. At GU-Q, Googasian teaches courses in Culture & Politics, American Literature, and Environmental Humanities. She also co-coordinates the Energy Humanities research initiative at the Center for International and Regional Studies. Googasian received her Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Stanford University in 2019. She also holds a B.A. in English and a B.M. in Music Performance from DePauw University.

#### **Isabel Hofmeyr**

Isabel Hofmeyr is Professor Emerita at the University of the Witwatersrand and served as Global Distinguished Professor at New York University from 2013 to 2022. Her extensive work focuses on print culture and book history, integrating these fields with environmental and oceanic themes. Recent publications include *Dockside Reading: Hydrocolonialism and the Custom House* (2022) and a co-edited special issue on "Reading for Water" in *Interventions* 24 (3) 2022. From 2018 to 2023, she co-directed the project *Oceanic Humanities for the Global South* in collaboration with partners from Mozambique, India, Jamaica, and Barbados.

#### **Wilson Chacko Jacob**

Wilson Chacko Jacob is a Professor of History at Concordia University, Canada. In addition to several articles, he is the author of two historical monographs: *Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870-1940* (Duke, 2011) and *For God or Empire: Sayyid Fadl and the Indian Ocean World*

(Stanford, 2019). He is currently the principal investigator (PI) on a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant to conduct preliminary research for a new project on the environmental dimensions of claims to religio-spiritual authority among the Indian Ocean 'Alawiyya.

#### **Saarah Jappie**

Saarah Jappie is Senior Program Officer for the Mellon Mays Graduate Initiative Program (MMGIP). Trained formally in history, her research interests lie in interdisciplinary approaches to histories of the Indian Ocean world with a focus on cultural mobilities across Southeast Asia and Southern Africa. Jappie has studied and worked in Australia, South Africa, the United States, Indonesia, and Jordan. She holds an MA and PhD in history from Princeton University, an MA in historical studies from the University of Cape Town, and a Bachelor of International Studies (Languages) from the University of New South Wales. Her publications include the co-authored book *Ocean as Method: Thinking with the Maritime* (Routledge, 2022), among other texts. Jappie is an associate member of the Oceanic Humanities for the Global South Initiative, a research associate of the Visual Identities in Art and Design research center (VIAD) at the University of Johannesburg, and a research scholar in Africana Studies at Barnard College (2022-23). Before joining the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), she lectured on the history of the Global South at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

#### **Trish Kahle**

Trish Kahle is Assistant Professor of History at Georgetown University in Qatar. She is a historian specializing in energy, work, and politics in the modern United States and the world, with a broad interest in using energy as a lens to explore political life, social relations, the economy, and the environment. Her first book, *Energy Citizenship: Coal and Democracy in the American Century* (Columbia University Press, 2024), examines how the work of coal miners has shaped the modern U.S. energy system and its attendant forms of social citizenship, political imaginaries, and governance practices. Kahle is currently working on projects aimed at reframing the global history of the U.S. electric power system through the lens of the laborers who built, operated, and maintained it. Her research seeks to bring attention to the overlooked human history of electricity, contributing to discussions on justice for workers, communities, and decarbonization efforts. In addition to her research, she co-leads the Program in Energy Humanities with Victoria Googasian and Firat Oruc. This interdisciplinary project explores energy's past, present, and future, bringing together scholars from around the world. Kahle is also the curator of *Cinematic Afterlives: Film and Memory in the Black Atlantic*, a project that explores how cinema has shaped historical memory and ongoing struggles for justice, particularly in relation to Atlantic slavery and its legacies.

#### **Emery Kalema**

Emery Kalema is an Assistant Professor of History at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, holding a Ph.D. from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He has served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institut de Sociologie at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the South African Research Chair in Historical Trauma and Transformation at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Kalema was also a Summer Program in Social Science Fellow at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study and received the inaugural CSAAD Research Fellowship at New York University. In 2021, he won the Central African Studies Association (CASA) Essay Prize for Best Published Article by a Junior

Scholar. Kalema's research centers on power, politics, memory, and trauma. He is currently working on a book project titled *Violence and Memory: The Mulele 'Rebellion' in Postcolonial Congo*, which investigates the suffering caused by the Mulele Rebellion (1963-1968) and its lasting effects on survivors' memories, exploring the complex relationships between embodied suffering and psychological trauma.

#### **Prakash Kashwan**

Prakash Kashwan is an Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Brandeis University. He is the author of *Democracy in the Woods* (Oxford University Press, 2017), editor of *Climate Justice in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), co-author of *Decolonizing Environmentalism* (Bloomsbury, 2024), and editor of the journal *Environmental Politics*. He is also a co-founder of the scholar-activism collective Climate Justice Network. Kashwan is also the current Chair of the Environmental Studies Section of the International Studies Association (ISA).

#### **Mary Khatib**

Mary Khatib is a Lecturer and the Head of the Research Center of Oceanography, Environment, and Natural Resources (TROCEN) in the School of Natural and Social Sciences at the State University of Zanzibar. Previously, she served as a Research Officer at the Research Office in the Department of Planning, Policy, and Research within the Zanzibar government's Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Khatib completed her Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Her dissertation, titled "A Changing Climate: Local Adaptations in Northern Coastal Communities' Livelihoods of Unguja Island, Zanzibar," examined the effects of climate change on local livelihoods that are highly dependent on coastal resource extraction in northern Unguja Island, Zanzibar, and contributed to various research projects related to climate change adaptation and livelihoods. Currently, she is the Co-Principal Investigator for the project "Himili Pamoja: Gendered Encounters to Climate Change Adaptation in Tanzania," funded by DANIDA. This project aims to strengthen gender-transformative approaches to climate change adaptation at the district and community levels in four districts in rural Tanzania, including Unguja and Pemba, in support of sustainable livelihoods and justice for future generations. Additionally, Khatib has worked as a Climate Change Expert under the National Consultancy for Developing an Information and Knowledge Management System to Inform Climate Change Adaptation Planning in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar.

#### **Pedro Machado**

Pedro Machado is a global and Indian Ocean historian with interests in commodity histories, enslavement, labor and migratory movements, and the social, cultural, environmental, and commercial trajectories of objects. He is based at Indiana University, Bloomington, and is currently the Rabindranath Tagore Chair and Director of the Dhar India Studies Program. He is the author of several works, among which are *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); *Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures and the Material Worlds of the Indian Ocean* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); and *Pearls, People and Power: Pearl and Indian Ocean Worlds* (Ohio University Press, 2020). He is currently at work on a global history of pearl shell collection and exchange while also developing research on eucalyptus and colonial forestry in the Portuguese Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

#### **Rufus Maculuve**

Rufus Maculuve is a musician, researcher, and arts manager. He is a self-taught musician and a founding member of the acclaimed Mozambican band Kapa Dech, where he has recorded and composed songs, including soundtracks for films such as *A Ponte*, *Night Stop*, *A Bola*, and *I Love You*. He lectures on sound for film at the Instituto Superior de Artes e Cultura (ISArC) in Mozambique, and he co-founded Kaleidoscópico - Research in Public Policy and Culture. His research focuses on the cultural practices of the coastal communities of the Mozambican coast. As a manager, he has held leadership positions in various projects and organizations, including Music Crossroads Mozambique, Umoja CFC, and Ntsindya - Maputo City Cultural Centre.

#### **Salah M. Hassan**

Salah M. Hassan is currently the Chancellor of Global Studies University (GSU), and Dean of The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah –roles he assumed following the establishment of GSU in 2023. He has served as Director of The Africa Institute since its founding in 2018. Additionally, Hassan holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences in Africana Studies, Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities (ICM), and Professor of Art History and Visual Culture at Cornell University, USA. Hassan is an art critic, curator, editor, and co-founder of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* (Duke University Press). He currently serves as a member of the editorial advisory board of *Atlantica*, *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, and the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. His recent publications include *Ahmed Morsi: A Dialogic Imagination* (2021) and *Ibrahim El Salahi: A Visionary Modernist* (2012). Notable exhibitions he has curated include *Gavin Jantjes: To Be Free! A Retrospective 1970-2023* (Sharjah Art Foundation, 2023; Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2024) and *Kamala Ibrahim Ishag: States of Oneness* (Serpentine South, London, 2023), among others. Hassan's work has been supported by prestigious grants and fellowships from the J. Paul Getty Foundation, Sharjah Art Foundation, and other institutions. He was honored as the 2021 Distinguished Professor by the College Art Association (CAA), the oldest and largest scholarly organization dedicated to the history and criticism of the visual arts.

#### **Jeremy Prestholdt**

Jeremy Prestholdt is a Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego, specializing in African, Indian Ocean, and global history, with a particular focus on consumer culture and politics in East Africa. His research has garnered support from prominent institutions, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Fulbright Foundation. He has held visiting fellowships at esteemed universities such as Ritsumeikan University, the University of Warwick, and the University of Basel. Prestholdt's scholarship has appeared in leading journals like the *American Historical Review* and the *Journal of African History*. He is the author of two influential books: *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (2008) and *Icons of Dissent: The Global Resonance of Che, Marley, Tupac, and Bin Laden* (2019). He co-edits *Monsoon: Journal of the Indian Ocean Rim*, published by Duke University Press in collaboration with The Africa Institute (GSU), and the Brill monograph series *African Social Studies*.

#### **Sunil Santha**

Sunil Santha is currently the Dean of Academic Affairs and Chairperson of the Centre for Livelihoods & Social Innovation at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), India.

As an academic with keen interests in the fields of posthumanism, climate justice, and sustainable futures, Sunil believes in action research and diffractive practice aimed at strengthening livelihoods and ecological resilience, specifically within farming and fishing communities.

#### **Akshay Sarathi**

Akshay Sarathi is a Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at Texas A&M University, USA. He received his Ph.D. in Anthropology (Archaeology) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2020. His research specializes in trade and exchange in the Indian Ocean World and the zooarchaeology of marine faunal exploitation on the Swahili coast. Sarathi has published on modern and historical maritime subsistence patterns in Zanzibar and the bead trade across the Western Indian Ocean. His work contributes to a deeper understanding of the subsistence patterns and the complex socio-economic networks that have shaped the Indian Ocean's past and present.

#### **Uwe Skoda**

Uwe Skoda is an Associate Professor for India and South Asia Studies at the Department of Global Studies, Aarhus University. As a scholar, he works on visual culture, especially photography, and in the field of political anthropology—particularly transformations of kingship, indigenous peoples, and domestic politics. His recent books include *Bonding with the Lord: Jagannath, Popular Culture and Community Formation* (Bloomsbury, 2020, co-edited with Jyotirmaya Tripathy).

#### **Aarthi Sridhar**

Aarthi Sridhar is a founding trustee of the nonprofit Dakshin Foundation (dakshin.org), based in Bengaluru, India, and heads its Communities and Resource Governance Program. Her interests include the sociology of knowledge and socio-legal studies, with a focus on promoting and facilitating on-the-ground practices of resource regulation, environmental justice, and governance in relation to coastal and marine systems. Through her program at Dakshin, she facilitates collaborative platforms for strengthening coastal and marine environmental knowledge and practice and produces learning tools on environmental subjects. She is one of the co-principal investigators of the 'Southern Collective,' a collaboratory whose mission is to build and sustain collaborative partnerships aimed at democratizing knowledge production about marine worlds.

#### **Anna L. Tsing**

Anna L. Tsing is Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a Professor of Anthropology at Aarhus University, Denmark. She is co-director of the Center for Southeast Asian Coastal Interactions at UC Santa Cruz. One of the center's key projects, "Fragmented Porosity," investigates hard and soft land-water interactions in relation to histories of colonial governance on one hand, and more-than-human ecologies and livelihoods on the other. Tsing is the author of multiple books, including, most recently, *Field Guide to the Patchy Anthropocene: The New Nature* (Stanford University Press, 2024; co-authored with Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena, and Feifei Zhou). Her current research is a collaboration with Hatib A. Kadir, a postdoctoral researcher in Global Studies at Aarhus University.

#### **Alden Young**

Alden Young is an Associate Professor of History and Global Affairs at Yale University. Previously, he was an Associate Professor of African American Studies at UCLA and a standing member of the faculty at the International Institute, where he taught in the International Development Studies program. Before that, he taught for five years in the History Department at Drexel University. He has been a fellow of the Berggruen Institute and a member of the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. He is the author of *Transforming Sudan: Decolonization, Economic Development and State Formation* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), with a paperback release in 2020. He has published in numerous academic journals and writes frequently in popular forums like *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, and *Noema Magazine*.

#### **Firat Oruç**

Firat Oruç is an Associate Professor at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. He is the editor of "Indian Ocean Literary Circularities," a special issue of *Comparative Literature* (2022) and *Sites of Pluralism: Community Politics in the Middle East* (Oxford University Press, 2019). His scholarship on the Indian Ocean and Gulf Studies has appeared in a range of peer-reviewed journals. These include: "Thalassological Worldmaking and Literary Circularities in the Indian Ocean"; "Petrocolonial Circulations and Cinema's Arrival in the Gulf"; "Transoceanic Orientalism and Embodied Translation in Sayyida Salme/Emily Ruete's Memoirs"; and "Historicizing Gulf Moving Image Archives." He is currently working on a book project on the cultural and political history of film in the Arabian Peninsula.

**Khor Kalba Mangrove Centre** is a notable ecotourism project located in the Kalba region of Sharjah, within the UAE's oldest and most ecologically diverse mangrove forest. This area is home to trees that reach up to 26 feet in height and play a vital role in biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration. The center provides visitors the chance to observe a variety of species, including the rare Arabian Collared Kingfisher, green turtles, crabs, and numerous marine organisms. It also features interactive exhibits that offer an in-depth understanding of the ecological functions of mangroves. Open daily except Mondays, the center serves as an invaluable resource for both local and international visitors, fostering environmental education and appreciation for natural heritage.

#### **Social Science Research Council (SSRC)**

Founded in 1923 by seven professional associations in the social and behavioral sciences, Social Science Research Council (SSRC) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization committed to mobilizing policy-relevant social and behavioral science for the public good. With a century of experience, the SSRC connects policy and philanthropic communities with social and behavioral scientists who are innovating and evaluating scalable solutions to pressing societal challenges. To learn more, visit [ssrc.org](http://ssrc.org).



**THE AFRICA  
INSTITUTE**

### **About The Africa Institute, Global Studies University (GSU), Sharjah**

Based in Sharjah, UAE, **The Africa Institute** is a non-profit higher education academic entity dedicated to advancing the study, research, and documentation of Africa and its diaspora, focusing on the humanities and social sciences. It operates as a center of research and documentation, and a postgraduate studies institution, offering master's and Ph.D. programs and certificates in African Languages and Translation. **The Africa Institute** aims to be a center of excellence to train a new generation of critical thinkers in African and African diaspora studies. In 2023, **The Africa Institute** became part of the newly established Global Studies University (GSU), integrated into its network of semi-independent and interdisciplinary institutes, with each focusing on different regions worldwide. These institutes emphasize postgraduate studies, research, and documentation of various global regions' histories, cultures, and peoples. The next entity to be officially established in 2025 is The Asia Institute. Additionally, preparations are underway to launch other institutes focusing on Oceania, Europe, and the Americas in the coming years. Led by Hoor Al Qasimi, President of Global Studies University, and Salah M. Hassan, Chancellor of Global Studies University and Dean of **The Africa Institute**. For more information, visit [theafricainstitute.org](http://theafricainstitute.org).

### **Our Campus**

Situated in Al Manakh, the Khalid bin Mohammed School (KBMS) was established in the mid-1970s as a boys school, forming part of a series of nearly identical schools constructed across the UAE. Its distinctive soft orange colored design has been replicated 28 times across Sharjah City and the three port-towns of Dibba Al-Hosn, Khor Fakkan, and Kalba, making it the most widely used school typology in the region. The school model, which emerged as the first primary and secondary school typology after the UAE's union, boasts a modular precast structure designed with shaded external circulation and passively ventilated classrooms. Its eye-catching features encompass repetitive flat vaulted bays, tall arcs with long corridors, and covered walkways encircling courtyard spaces, granting the schools an iconic and unmistakable

presence that enhances neighborhoods across the country. These architectural wonders were designed by the architecture studio, Khatib & Alami, under the patronage of the Ministry of Education.

Over time, the doors of Khalid bin Mohammed School eventually closed, but its story did not end there. Recognizing the potential of this historical structure, the Sharjah Art Foundation acquired it from the government and architect, Mona El Mousfy, led the renovation, not only preserving Sharjah's modern heritage but also showcasing a brilliant example of adaptive reuse, breathing new life into the existing framework.

Today, the once-abandoned school has metamorphosed into the vibrant nucleus of **The Africa Institute (GSU)**—an interdisciplinary academic research institution dedicated to the study, research, and documentation of Africa and the African diaspora. Within its walls, one can find an auditorium, workshop spaces, modular classrooms, a library, and a bookshop, all catering to the Institute's mission of fostering knowledge and engaging with the broader community of Sharjah, the UAE, and beyond.

### **Africa Hall**

The original **Africa Hall** building was inaugurated on the same day as the Municipality's building in 1976, however, the original buildings of both were first built in the early 1970s as part of a wave of modernist government buildings. The building was inaugurated as "**Africa Hall**," and its first cultural and political event was the Arab African Symposium. The new Africa Hall, which was rebuilt on the site of the original building - demolished in 2015 is part of the future complex of buildings for **The Africa Institute**.

**Africa Hall** serves as a knowledge center and platform for conferences, symposia, lectures, film screenings, and staged plays related to the university's outreach activities to the larger community of Sharjah, UAE, and beyond.



