



South Asia Forum

Lecture Series Autumn Semester 2022

Everyone is cordially
invited to participate!



ISEK University of Zurich
Andreasstrasse 15

11th October 2022, 16.15 – 17.45

Omar Kasmani (Freie Universität Berlin)
**Queer Companions: On Coming Close to
Saints in Pakistan**

ISEK, Andreasstrasse 15 (AND), Room 4.06

Abstract: Omar Kasmani theorizes saintly intimacy and the construction of queer social relations at Pakistan's most important site of Sufi pilgrimage. Conjoining queer theory and the anthropology of Islam, Kasmani outlines the felt and enfolded ways in which saintly affections bind individuals, society, and the state in Pakistan through a public architecture of intimacy. Islamic saints become lovers and queer companions just as a religious universe is made valuable to critical and queer forms of thinking. Focusing on the lives of ascetics known as fakirs in Pakistan, Kasmani shows how the affective bonds with the place's patron saint, a thirteenth-century antinomian mystic, foster unstraight modes of living in the present.

12th October 2022, 10:30 – 18:00

**Workshop: The Self as Public Archive:
Autotheory / Autoethnography / Autofiction**
ISEK, AND 5.03 (am) BIN-1-E.01 (pm)

Abstract: In this workshop we explore the potentials of autotheory, autoethnography, and autofiction as critical methods, modes of inquiry, and forms of (re)presentation in anthropological research. Against the background of debates around positionality, we reflect on how the “auto” even when ambivalent and vulnerable, is a rich mode for thinking through our affective embroilments in larger issues of belonging, racial or sexual difference, indigeneity, or settler-colonialism. Based on selected texts as well as other media, which call into question sharp divides between theory and poetry or ethnography and fiction, this interactive workshop also encourages its participants to draw on their own experiences in research, teaching, life and learning.

Please register with the organizers for the workshop in advance (lindsay.vogt@uzh.ch, banhishikha.ghosh@uzh.ch, stefan.binder@isek.uzh.ch).

Omar Kasmani is post-doctoral research associate in social and cultural anthropology at the Collaborative Research Center 1171 Affective Societies at Freie Universität, Berlin. His work is situated across the study of contemporary Islamic life-worlds, queer and affect theory and queries critical notions of intimacy and post-migrant be/longing. He is the author of *Queer Companions: Religion, Public Intimacy and Saintly Affects in Pakistan* (Duke University Press, 2022) and the editor of *Pakistan Desires: Queer Futures Elsewhere* (Duke University Press, 2023).