



BEYOND POSTMEMORY

November 2025

Conferences & Seminars

Dr Umberto Rossi's Keynote Lecture
at the 'Days of War' Conference
(Università Ca' Foscari)

From 3 to 5 November, the international, interdisciplinary conference *Giorni di Guerra: La Photo-Graphika del Trauma* (Days of War: Photographics of Trauma) was held in Venice. The event was organised by the Museo della Battaglia di Vittorio Veneto and Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, in collaboration with the ICLA Research Committee on Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative.

The conference explored the representation of war across three main media—photography, literature, and illustration/graphic narrative—from a comparative and transmedial perspective. The project arises from Alessandro Scarsella's monograph *Teoria di un conflitto mondiale* (Marietti, 2023), which foregrounds the anthropological dimensions of war representation and the interaction of different languages in personal and collective narratives. It investigates the cognitive models and social behaviours that shape war stories, extending well beyond the immediate context of conflict.





Photo taken during the conference
Giorni di Guerra

The programme combined two main conferences and an international seminar with teaching exhibitions, readings, and film screenings, all devoted to examining how war is mediated through photography, writing, graphics, and comics. On November 4, Dr Umberto Rossi delivered one of the keynote lectures on the influence of the Great War in comics by Hugo Pratt, Jacques Tardi, and Disney.

His talk explored how the lived experience of conflict informs both the creation and interpretation of war narratives, emphasising the enduring role of truthfulness in war literature since the 1920s and its impact on writers, artists, and audiences alike. The presentation concluded with a discussion of postmemory in the works of Pratt and Tardi, highlighting how inherited memories of past conflicts continue to shape their storytelling.



Dr Umberto Rossi's keynote speech



Beyond Postmemory at AEDEAN 48th Conference (University of the Basque Country)

From 12 to 14 November, the University of the Basque Country hosted the 48th AEDEAN Conference. There, the Beyond Postmemory Research Group participated in roundtables and individual presentations in the Cultural Studies and Modern and Comparative Literature panels.



Chaired by Dr Cristina Pividori, the roundtable brought together Elvira Aguilera, Cristina Franco, Dr Sara Martín, Dr Nick Spengler, and Dr David Owen to discuss the intersection of war, trauma, and ecology through the lens of environmental postmemory in contemporary Anglophone literature and culture. The six contributions examined a diverse range of literary and cultural texts, reimagining memory through bodies, landscapes, and temporalities damaged by war—revealing the critical role of literature and culture in bearing witness to trauma beyond the human. Following this joint participation, Cristina Pividori, Elvira Aguilera, Cristina Franco, and David Owen presented their individual papers at the Modern and Contemporary Literature panel.




Cristina Pividori's intervention titled "Beyond the Banality: Assemblage, Hauntology, and the Ethics of Space in The Zone of Interest (Novel and Film)" reinterprets Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" by shifting focus from individual morality to structural and spatial conditions of violence. Through Martin Amis' novel *The Zone of Interest* and Jonathan Glazer's film adaptation, the paper explores how atrocity is embedded in everyday routines, architecture, and ambient space. Building on Manuel DeLanda's "assemblage theory" and Mark Fisher's "hauntology," Pividori argues that evil is not just psychological, but also materially and atmospherically distributed, calling for ethical analysis rooted in space, form, and systemic complicity.



Dr Cristina Pividori at the 48th AEDEAN
Conference





Elvira Aguilera presented "Matter and the (re)construction and mediation of memory and identity in Isabella Hammad's novel *Enter Ghost*," addressing Palestinian identity as one shaped by loss, displacement, and memory. Through Sonia's return to Haifa and her involvement in a local *Hamlet* production, the novel illustrates how material objects and spaces function as active agents in reconstructing postmemory.



Elvira Aguilera at the 48th
AEDEAN Conference

Drawing on Karen Barad's agential realism and Alison Landsberg's concept of prosthetic memory, Aguilera argues that both human and non-human matter participate in the affective reconfiguration of inherited trauma. In addition, the paper suggests that the *lieux de mémoire* (Pierre Nora) in the novel serve to reclaim and reshape Palestinian history and identity.

Cristina Franco focused on the chronological and social backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic in her paper "Make America Sick Again: Dislodged Temporalities and Communities in Elizabeth Strout's *Lucy by the Sea*." In this intervention, Franco argued that *Lucy by the Sea* redefines conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic as an emotional and historical rupture. Drawing on Chakrabarty's notion of "chronopolitics" and Heringman's "deep time," the novel explores fractured memory and disrupted ethical norms that collapse the linear understanding of time and societal cohesion.



Cristina Franco and Dr David Owen at the 48th
AEDEAN Conference

Finally, David Owen delivered his paper "The Long Shadow of War: Militarised Authority in Austen's Domestic Worlds." Owen focused on the works of *Sense* and *Sensibility*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*, and argued that these novels reveal how military authority permeates domestic and emotional life, despite the absence of battlefield renditions. Drawing on Judith Butler's theorisation of precarity (*Frames of War*, 2009) and Mary Fravert's concept of "war at a distance," Owen argues that military characters and logic permeate the private sphere, shaping gendered interactions, emotional expectations, and familial power.

Words beyond War at the Jornada de Cooperació per la Justícia Global



Promotional banner for the Jornada Cooperació per la Justícia Global

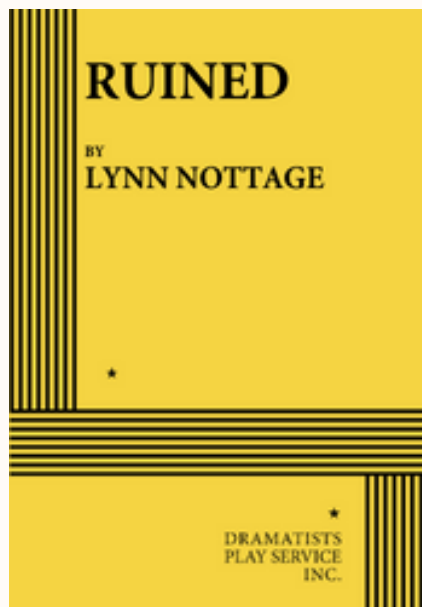
On 24 November 2025, the Facultat de Filosofia i Lletres hosted the Jornada Cooperació de la Justícia Global, an event organised by Fundació Autònoma Solidària. There, Dr Cristina Pividori presented the project Words Beyond War, a FAS-funded initiative linking higher education with lived refugee experience through ethical, participatory dialogue on war memory and displacement.

The project's goal was to create a shared space for students, staff, and refugees in Catalonia to critically examine cultural representations of war and trauma while practising empathetic listening and collaborative knowledge-making. This was pursued through curricular integration and co-created activities with KUDWA, a refugee-led association partnering with research groups G4RoC and POSTLIT.



Three public events in spring 2025 embodied this aim:

- Storytelling Session (28 March): reflective activities on narrative, migration, and displacement with BA/MA/PhD Students led by KUDWA.
- Role-Play Workshop (25 April): simulations of asylum interviews, newsroom debates, and border encounters.
- Singing Survival (12 June): a lecture-performance on Lynn Nottage's *Ruined*. The talk was given by Dr Andrea Bellot (URV), followed by her TFG student, Laura Jarque, who staged selected songs from *Ruined*.



Cover of *Ruined* (2007) by Lynn Nottage

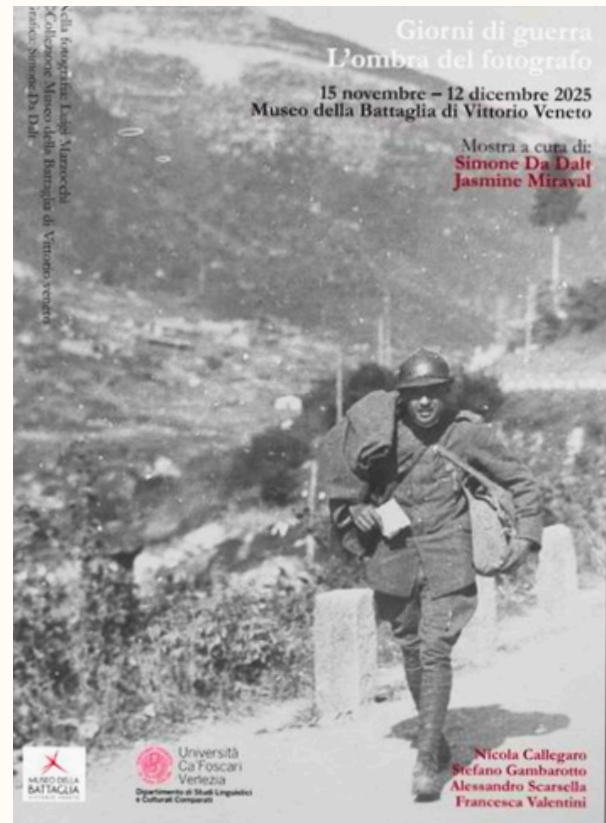
The outcomes were transformative: students engaged dialogically, refugees became co-educators, and classrooms expanded into community forums. The project strengthened collaboration with KUDWA and demonstrated how universities can host reparative encounters that reshape how war is studied, remembered, and publicly addressed.



Publications

Days of War Exhibition Catalogue: "The Dynamics of Postmemory: Visual Art as a Living Site of Remembrance" by Dr Cristina Pividori

We are pleased to share that Dr Cristina Pividori has contributed an essay to the exhibition catalogue Giorni di Guerra - Days of War, produced for the project Days of War - The Photographer's Shadow, which marks the 110th anniversary of Italy's entry into the First World War. The event brings together historical and contemporary visual work in Venice (Ca' Foscari Zattere - Tesa Rooms) and at the Museo della Battaglia in Vittorio Veneto.



Pividori's article, "The Dynamics of Postmemory: Visual Art as a Living Site of Remembrance", appears in the catalogue (Italian/English) within the section "The Photographer's Shadow." It accompanies the exhibitions devoted to Heinrich Vogeler, Luigi Marzocchi, Daniil Revkovskiy & Andrii Rachynskiy, Stanislava Pinchuk and Albane de Labarthe, tracing how their engravings, stereoscopic photographs, data-maps, installations and textile works reactivate memories of war across conflicts from the First World War to Afghanistan and Ukraine.

News

WAR AND PEACE IN UKRAINE

The United States and Russia designed a 28-point peace plan to put an end to the war in Ukraine. Rather than being a proposal, Donald Trump set Thanksgiving as the deadline to accept this deal, threatening to withdraw from any negotiations supporting Ukraine. The plan, however, does not seem to be in Ukraine's best interest—it imposes a reduction of the Ukrainian military, a ban on basing NATO troops on its territory or ever joining NATO. In turn, Russia would be readmitted to the G8, seize the occupied Ukrainian territory, and the Kremlin would not be pursued for alleged war crimes. In exchange, the US would guarantee security, while Russia would adopt a policy of non-aggression toward Europe and Ukraine. These assurances may be insufficient, as protection policies are not specified, and Russia has a history of violating agreements. In addition, the plan largely benefits American and Russian interests and disregards Ukrainian and European ones, thereby raising fears of a forthcoming war.





In response to criticism of the initial plan, the United States and Ukraine have created an updated and refined peace framework to ensure Ukrainian sovereignty. This announcement came only hours after Europe had published its own truce proposal, which omitted some of the pro-Russian conditions, yet continued to reflect certain Russian interests. Notably, the proposal includes a gradual easing of sanctions imposed against Russia since 2014. Despite the initial hostile rhetoric, Donald Trump has retreated from his demands that the truce be accepted by Thanksgiving and has signalled willingness to continue negotiating.

Sources:

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Harding, Luke. "Trump Says Ukraine Showed 'Zero Gratitude' for Peace Plan at International Talks." *The Guardian*, 23 Nov. 2025, www.theguardian.com/world/2025/nov/23/trump-ukraine-zero-gratitude-peace-plan-international-talks. [Accessed 26 November 2025]

Sanger, David E., Zolan Kanno-Youngs, and Edward Wong. "Trump's Russia-Ukraine Peace Plan Seeks Middle Ground." *The New York Times*, 24 Nov. 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/11/24/us/politics/trump-russia-ukraine-peace-plan-middle-ground.html. [Accessed 26 November 2025]

"Trump's Ukraine Peace Plan Would Require Zelenskyy to Cede Territory, Block NATO, and Invite Russia Back to G8." *The Guardian*, 21 Nov. 2025, www.theguardian.com/world/2025/nov/21/trump-ukraine-peace-plan-zelenskyy-territory-ceded-nato-russia-g8. [Accessed 26 November 2025]





Don't Miss...

SOUND OF FALLING (IN DIE SONNE SCHAUEN) DIRECTED BY MASCHA SCHILINSKI

Release Date: 14 May 2025

Screenplay: Mascha Schilinski
& Louise Peter

Production: Lucas Schmidt,
Lasse Scharpen, Maren Schmitt

Cast: Hanna Heck, Lena
Urzendowsky, Laeni Geiseler,
Susanne Wuest, Luise Heyer,
Lea Drinda

IMDb:

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt28690468>



Sound of Falling (2025) is a German film directed by Mascha Schilinski. Inspired by a farmhouse they visited on a holiday trip, Schilinski and Louise Peter wrote this drama, imagining the lives of women who had inhabited that space before them.

Throughout a hundred years—shortly before World War I, at the end of World War II, in the 1980s, and during the early 21st century—the film explores the lives of four interconnected girls, whose lives are shaped by trauma and violence, and the dream of escaping into a new life.



QUEEN ESTHER

BY JOHN IRVING

Publication Date: 4 November 2025
Publisher: Simon & Schuster
ISBN: 9781501189449

Esther Nacht is born in Vienna in 1905. Her father dies on board the ship to Portland, Maine; her mother is murdered by anti-Semites in Portland. Dr. Larch knows it won't be easy to find a Jewish family to adopt Esther; in fact, he won't find any family who'll adopt her.



When Esther is fourteen, soon to be a ward of the state, Dr. Larch meets the Winslows, a philanthropic New England family with a history of providing foster care for unadopted orphans. The Winslows aren't Jewish, but they despise anti-Semitism. Esther's gratitude for the Winslows is unending; even as she retraces her roots back to Vienna, she never stops loving and protecting the Winslows. In the final chapter, set in Jerusalem in 1981, Esther Nacht is seventy-six.

John Irving's sixteenth novel is a testament to his enduring ability to weave complex characters and intricate narratives that challenge and captivate. Queen Esther is not just a story of survival but a profound exploration of identity, belonging, and the enduring impact of history on our personal lives showcasing why Irving remains one of the world's most beloved, provocative, and entertaining authors—a storyteller of our time and for all time.

COUNTRY OF WORDS

BY REFQA ABU-REMAILEH



Country of Words: A Transnational Atlas for Palestinian Literature is a digital-born project that retraces and remaps the global story of Palestinian literature in the twentieth century, starting from the Arab world and going through Europe, North America, and Latin America. Sitting at the intersection of literary history, periodical studies, and digital humanities, Country of Words creates a digitally networked and multilocational literary history—a literary atlas enhanced. The virtual realm acts as the meeting place for the data and narrative fragments of this literature-in-motion, bringing together porous, interrupted, disconnected, and discontinuous fragments into an elastic, interconnected, and entangled literary history.

Its creator, Refqa Abu-Remaileh from Freie Universität Berlin, joins host Mikey Muhann in the podcast *This Is Not a Watermelon* to discuss her project and delve into Palestinian literature, what it means to historicise it and the challenges it is facing, and the concept of a “diaspora-homeland continuum”.