



ART, DATA & STORY:

The Role of ADT-Assisted and Arts-Based Approaches in Shaping Migration Narratives

1 June, 2026

1 PM - 5PM
BST

ONLINE & IN PERSON

Mawby Room, Kellogg College
University of Oxford

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Toronto
Metropolitan
University



Program Overview

Convened by **Zhixi Zhuang**, Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University and Visiting Academic at the University of Oxford, this seminar brings together interdisciplinary researchers from Bridging Divides in Canada, scholars from COMPAS at the University of Oxford, the United States, and Europe, to explore how digital tools and arts-based methodologies influence the production, interpretation, and circulation of narratives about migration.

PANEL 1

This panel focuses on the Superdiversity project, an innovative methodological and conceptual initiative that harnesses interactive data visualization to make complex urban diversity visible and enable storytelling. Through the demonstrations of a suite of interactive data visualization tools developed for metropolitan regions in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, the panel will discuss how visualizing intersecting variables reveals multiple layers of diversity and the meanings underneath them across cities globally.

PANEL 2

This panel brings together comparative perspectives from the US, Canada, UK, Australia, and New Zealand to examine welcoming and integration infrastructure across diverse contexts. It explores formal, informal, and hybrid support systems, challenges across non-gateway, smaller, and rural communities, and methodological approaches, highlighting key insights for building sustainable and inclusive practices for migrant integration and belonging.

PANEL 3

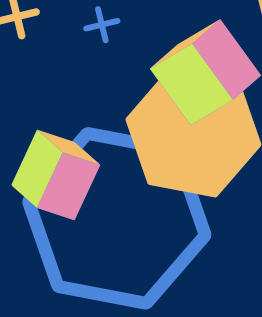
This panel examines how a wide range of arts-based participatory methodologies, such as film, sound, body mapping, and digital arts, are used to shape complex migration narratives. The arts have become not only a medium of expressions, but also an embodied means of giving voice to migrant communities, fostering bonding and belonging, and enhancing impact across research, policy, and community practice.

Program Agenda

TIME (BST)	ACTIVITY
1:00PM - 1:10PM	Welcoming & Opening remarks by Michael Keith
1:10PM - 2:20PM	Panel #1: Superdiversity & Data Visualization Michael Keith, Steven Vertovec, Daniel Hiebert, Philip Kasinitz, Van Tran
2:20PM - 3:30PM	Panel #2: Welcoming Cities, Welcoming Infrastructure Zhixi Zhuang, Melissa Weihmayer, Melissa Kelly, Cathy Yang Liu
3:30PM - 3:40PM	Coffee Break
3:40PM - 4:50PM	Panel #3: Arts-based Participatory Methodologies Yvonne Su, Cyrus Sundar Singh, Annie Wan, Robert McNeil, Stuart Fowkes
4:50PM - 5:00PM	Final thoughts & Wrap up

PANEL 1

Superdiversity & Data Visualization



Michael Keith is the Director of COMPAS, University of Oxford and the Director of PEAK Urban Research Programme. His research focuses on migration-related processes of urban change. He has experience, working in the community and voluntary sector, and, for 20 years, as a politician in the East End of London, as a leader of a London local authority, and as a founder, chair, and board member of a wide range of urban regeneration companies and public-private partnerships.



Steven Vertovec is an anthropologist and Director of the Max Planck Institute for Political and Social Science (formerly the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity), based in Göttingen, Germany and Emeritus Fellow at Linacre College, Oxford. Previously he was Professor of Transnational Anthropology at the University of Oxford and Founding Director of COMPAS.



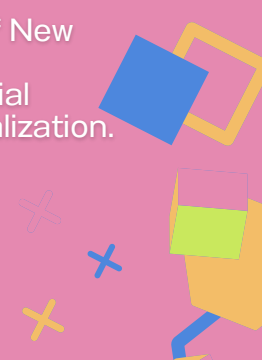
Daniel Hiebert is Emeritus Professor of Geography at the University of British Columbia. He conducts research on the impact of immigration on Canadian cities and plays an active role in the Canadian policy process. This has included extensive engagement with municipal, provincial and federal authorities. In 2021-2024 he was appointed Academic in Residence at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.



Philip Kasinitz is Presidential Professor of Sociology at the City University of New York Graduate Center. His co-authored book *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age* received the American Sociological Association Distinguished Book Award and the Eastern Sociological Society's Mira Komarovsky Book award. Other books include *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race*, *Growing Up Muslim in Europe and the United States*.



Van C. Tran is a professor of sociology at the City University of New York Graduate Center. He specializes in the study of race and ethnicity, immigrant and refugee integration, public opinion, racial attitudes, urban inequality, data disaggregation, and data visualization. His current project focuses on vulnerable Asian Americans.



PANEL 2

Welcoming Cities, Welcoming Infrastructure



Zhixi Zhuang, as the convenor of this seminar, is a Professor at the School of Urban and Regional Planning, Associate Director of the Global Migration Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, and Founder and Director of the DiverCityLab. Her research explores the intersection of migrant integration, urban landscapes, and municipal policy focusing on topics such as building welcoming infrastructure, entrepreneurship, place-making, and suburban transformation.



Melissa Weihmayer is a Researcher with the Global Exchange on Migration, the knowledge exchange arm of COMPAS. With a PhD in Urban Planning, she studies the intersection between urban governance and migration challenges. She manages the Capacity for Welcoming project to study and inform local authority practice in welcoming newcomers to the UK.



Melissa Kelly is a Lecturer in Human Geography at Southampton University and is affiliated with Toronto Metropolitan University. Her research adopts a place-based approach to examine how international migrants and refugees experience settlement, integration, and belonging across diverse urban and rural contexts in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK.



Cathy Yang Liu is a Distinguished University Professor and Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. She also holds the Mescon Endowed Chair. Her research focuses on economic development, urban policy, migration and entrepreneurship in both U.S. and international contexts.

PANEL 3

Arts-Based Participatory Methodologies



Yvonne Su is Associate Professor at York University, Visiting Scientist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and Research Fellow at Oxford's COMPAS. She studies forced migration, climate adaptation and (im)mobilities in the Global South.



Cyrus Sundar Singh is an AcademiCreActivist: a Gemini Award-winning filmmaker, scholar, composer, singer-songwriter, author, poet, and changemaker. He has delivered multidisciplinary scholarly outputs and creative productions across the globe. Cyrus successfully conceived, produced, and delivered 54 research projects with the Global Migration Institute. Currently a Senior Research Associate with the University of Johannesburg.



Annie Wan is an international digital media scholar specializing in XR and AI for social good. A University of Washington PhD with two decades of global exhibitions, she leads major research - including a \$3.1M SSHRC grant - focused on humanizing technology in healthcare and migration to foster inclusive digital humanities.



Rob McNeil is Deputy Director of the Migration Observatory at COMPAS, University of Oxford, working on issues relating to migration in the media. Previously Rob worked for environmental and development organisations and as a journalist and news editor for UK newspapers. He works as a consultant on migration and communications issues for UN and intergovernmental agencies.



Stuart Fowkes, a sound artist and field recordist from Oxford, UK, is the founder of Cities and Memory launched in 2015. With over 20 years of experience, he has used field recordings to give context to musical composition, produced reimagined sounds, and curated global collaborations. Cities and Memory has been exhibited in a series of installations both in the UK and internationally.

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