

On intimate encounters in the field: trust, love, and research that notices

Friday 23 June 2023 15:00 (1h 30m)

“Some stories are crying out to be told. Some stories have already been told but no one listened. When the time is right you will remember having been told some stories. You will pass some stories on, and you had better be careful.” (PoetryProse, Robbie Shilliam)

How can international studies scholars perform research as if people matter? (Koomen) How can it pay critical, feminist, class-, and environmentally conscious thought to encounters in the field that are not often spoken of?

This roundtable brings together a carefully curated list of individuals, each of whom have worked as practitioners and scholars alike, to critically reflect upon and draw insights from their fieldwork encounters. It draws from and reflects upon stories of solidarity, trust, friendship, love, and care in their diverse relationships with other scholars, interlocutors, fixers, translators, interpreters, friends, local organisations, politicians, journalists, and most of all, with sensitive and vulnerable populations in diverse cultural, social, and political contexts.

Working, interviewing, researching, and living in conflict-afflicted regions to countries in the midst of wide scale protests and democratic unrest, the roundtable seeks to relay stories of building trust, raising cooperation, preventing conflict, and working with young individuals at the grassroots to build peace. As such, this conversation holds critical insights for the Secretary-General’s proposals for a renewed social contract, to attempt a collective imagination of what such a contract must be constituted of. Learning lessons from working with the people who are most affected by a Summit of the Future, the roundtable is a step forward in the attempt to ‘leave no one behind’, driving the scholarly impetus to understand how best to include stories from the periphery. To do so, this roundtable will exclusively root itself there – the magnified margins, the speaking subaltern (Spivak), and the caring corners – to understand how we tell the story of theory (Shilliam), and understand these productive tensions, contrasts, and differences, to ultimately find ways to fill a conference room with tales of intimacy and entanglement, alongside “knitting, stitching, storytelling and love” (Hozic).

Membership

Track Classification: Interpretivism in International Relations Working Group