

## Kurdish Activisms: Art, Memory, and Self-Defence in the Struggle Against Oppression

*Friday, 20 June 2025 15:00 (1h 30m)*

This panel examines how Kurdish activism across Turkey and the diaspora employ memory, art, and film as powerful tools for confronting historical injustices, resisting colonial violence, and being parts of emancipatory politics. Starting with Kurdish activists' efforts towards transitional justice, the discussion reveals the challenges faced by initiatives for accountability and remembrance face under political constraints. By looking into participatory art practices, the panel highlights the role of relational art in amplifying the experiences of women ex-prisoners, fostering spaces for critical memory that challenge gendered silences. The panel then shifts to Kurdish LGBTI+ mobilisation, highlighting how concepts of non-violent self-defence can be adapted as a means of social movement organising. The panel presents Kurdish documentary cinema as a decolonial form of memory activism, using film to construct narratives of resilience that challenge erasure and provide a platform for marginalised voices. Finally, the Berlin Kurdish Film Festival illustrates how a diasporic cinema space sustains and legitimises Kurdish cultural expression, offering a site for representation and activism. Together, these perspectives reveal the diverse ways Kurdish activism create spaces for art, cinema, memory, and non-violence to resist and challenge longstanding oppression of the Kurdish people.

**Track Classification:** International Studies of the Mediterranean, Middle East & Asia Working Group