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Policing realities, abolitionist horizons

Thursday 4 June 2026 15:00 (1h 30m)

‘the idea is simple / & permanently freakish: / to live outside of servitude’(Sean Bonney, Letters Against the Firmament, p. 56)

This panel will address the realities of policing and how we study/resist them from abolitionist perspectives. We understand policing as a broad critical category encompassing the myriad forms of (often normalised) violence that maintain hierarchical social orders, from the operations of state police and border regimes to disciplinary social services and informal ‘social policing’within communities and families. We include papers that reflect on epistemological issues such as the role of lived experience and struggle in revealing policing’s oppressive realities, and of pro-policing ideologies in obscuring and legitimising them. At the same time, we are interested in how policing constructs realities, e.g. through the production of social categories and identities, expanding architectures of control, or violently enforcing the commodity form. We want to think about what difference the ‘permanently freakish’idea and practice of abolition makes to how we see these realities and how we intervene in them, envisioning and contributing to their possible overcoming.

Track Classification: Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial Working Group