

SPANISH, PORTUGUESE AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

2024 OUR NEWS



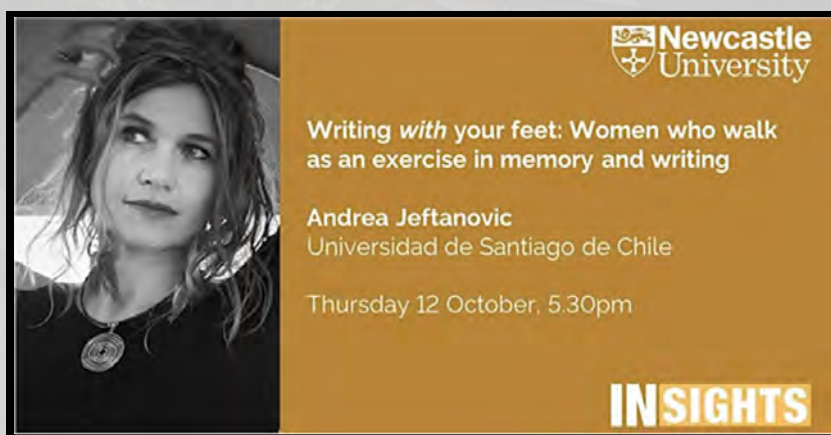
Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies (SPLAS) at Newcastle is ranked 9 (out of 34 departments) in the country by the Times Good University Guide 2024.

We are a team of 20 colleagues committed to working with you in the development of your language and academic skills to explore the diverse cultures and societies of Spain, Portugal and Latin America.

Our teaching and research delivers our core values on equality, diversity and inclusion. We believe students are co-creators of their learning process.

¡VAMOS!

¡Hola! Olá! This academic year is packed with exciting activities, distinguished invited lecturers and several exhibitions. We were honoured to host Chilean writer **Andrea Jeftanovic** who delivered the talk 'Writing with your feet: women who walk as an exercise in memory and writing'. The recent feminist marches across Latin America protesting against femicide and/or demanding the rights to sexual diversity and reproductive autonomy encourage us to think about the relationship between women, memory and public space. Introduced by Dr Philippa Page, the award-winning Chilean writer reflected on emblematic walks that have been led by women, from the era of military dictatorship to the present day. Walking implies facing the spectral presence of the past. Jeftanovic shared her own experience as an author who leaves the house to write with her feet about issues that are as personal as they are collective.



Newcastle University

Writing *with your feet*: Women who walk as an exercise in memory and writing

Andrea Jeftanovic
Universidad de Santiago de Chile

Thursday 12 October, 5.30pm

INSIGHTS

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LAYERS OF LANGUAGE: A COLLABORATIVE TRANSLATION CHALLENGE LAB AT NEWCASTLE. A REPORT BY DR. JOSEP CRU

On 7, 8 and 9 November, a group of Newcastle University students participated in 'Layers of Language: A Collaborative Translation Challenge Lab', coordinated by Dr Jenny Arnold, Dr Josep Cru (School of Modern Languages), and with the support of Dr Philippa Page and Prof. Richard Clay in the Humanities Research Institute (NUHRI). Challenge Labs are dynamic, collaborative, and interdisciplinary spaces at Newcastle University that draw together students from across faculties, staff, and collaborators from beyond the university. By working together, pooling their diverse knowledge, understanding, and experience, Challenge Labs enable participants to address some of society's most pressing challenges in all their complexity.

Twenty students, from a wide range of disciplines across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Medical Sciences, and the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering, and diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, shared their knowledge and expertise to produce a translation of five chapters of the booklet *Cinema and Language Diversity*, published by Linguapax. The booklet, currently available in Spanish and Catalan, includes ten renowned international films that highlight key sociolinguistic aspects related to linguistic diversity, inequality, and justice. The workshops also sparked lively discussions about translation as a multi-layered, multifaceted process, language revitalisation and the promotion of lesser-used languages, and intercultural literacy as a matter of social justice within the university and beyond. Students reflected on their own experiences of multilingualism and developed a set of recommendations as to how language diversity, as a foundation of social justice, can be better promoted within the university.



Collaborations with non-academic partners is an integral part of our learning vision because they provide vital learning opportunities for our students. Linguapax International is a non-governmental organisation (in official partnership with UNESCO) dedicated to the protection and revitalisation of world linguistic diversity and in favour of dialogue and peace. One of our lecturers, Dr Josep Cru, has a long standing relation with Linguapax. He is the secretary and sits in the Management Board.



**BLACK LISBON 1910–1935:
COLLOQUIUM ON ANTI-COLONIAL
AND ANTI-RACIST LEGACIES
COORDINATED BY
DR FERNANDO BELEZA**

In May 2023, the School of Modern Languages hosted a one-day colloquium on Black Lisbon, 1910-1935.

A group of scholars from the UK, Portugal, and the US discussed the work, thought, anti-colonial and anti-racist legacies of a group of artists and intellectuals of African descent living in Lisbon in the beginning of the 20th century.

The contribution of Black writers and intellectuals for Portuguese Modernism remains understudied, along with the role of Lisbon-based Black writers in the context of the Black Atlantic in the early 20th century. The research involved is part of the ongoing process of rewriting the cultural histories of Modernisms along the lines of urban social histories and multiculturalism.

The topics discussed included: Black internationalism and anti-colonialism; the Black press in early 20th century Lisbon; Black women and politics; micro-histories of Black Portuguese citizens; and race, gender and sexuality in early 20th century Lisbon.

The colloquium took place in person and it was streamed online, having had a very considerable audience. It was particularly wonderful to see a very good number of Stage 4 students turning up for the event! The colloquium was funded by the HaSS Global Fund, SML, and the Instituto Camões.



**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND VISUAL CULTURE EXHIBITION, A REPORT
BY RUBY BUTTOLPH, YEAR 4 (BA SPANISH, PORTUGUESE
AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES)**

At the start of this academic year, I had the opportunity to design posters for the 'Social Justice and Visual Culture' Exhibition in the SML Beehive. My responsibilities included the graphic design for the exhibition as well as liaising with staff participants about our process and keeping track of their contributions. Whilst it was daunting at first, I gained a lot of confidence in my abilities and developed great communication skills in a professional context.



With Jorge's guidance during this project, I found that I was valued as a team member and had my ideas and decisions listened to. I felt I was able to flourish creatively as well as gain some experience working in an entirely new area. This position also gave me an insight into the diversity and breadth of research in SML that we as students don't always get to see.

It has been really rewarding seeing our work appreciated in the corridors of the Old Library Building and noticing students, staff and visitors reading the posters and interacting with the virtual content. I'm grateful to have been a part of such a unique project showcasing some of the fascinating research taking place here in our school.

Jorge Catalá

Expulsions Social

© Jorge Carrión and Sagar

In the graphic novel *Barcelona. Los vagabundos de la chatarra* (2015) Jorge Carrión and Sagar uncover the underworld of scrap metal collection in Barcelona through graphic journalism depicting how mainly immigrant workers wander the streets, barely eking a living out of the detritus of consumerist society. It is an example of graphic journalism in comics, one of the most interesting developments in the genre in the past few years. Drawing on Verónica Gago's *La razón neoliberal* (2014) and Saskia Sassen's *Expulsions* (2015), I analyse the extractivist practices which go unnoticed in many of our modern cities. In this page, *framing* and *gaze* guide the reader following the steps of both characters representing the authors.

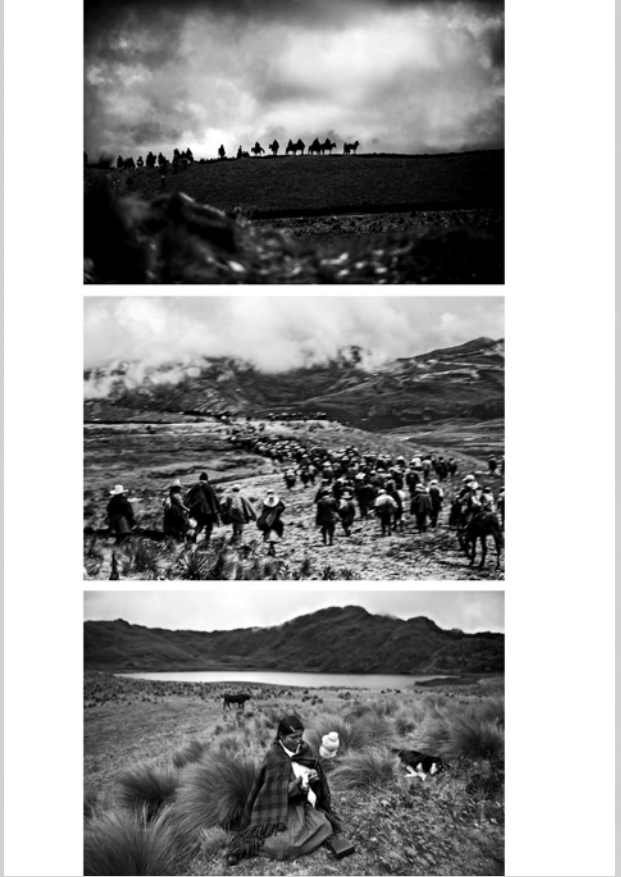
Patricia Oliart

Environmental Protest

The practice of contemporary Latin American documentary photography collectives sits at the crossroads between the arts, photojournalism, and political activism. Drawing on a well-established tradition epitomised by individuals such as Brazilian Sebastião Salgado, photography collectives produce knowledge and destabilise visual repertoires, while raising awareness on matters that need transformation or healing. The turn of the century and the popularity of the Internet have taken the work of documentary photographers to much wider audiences beyond photography gallery spaces or luxury coffee table books. The use of digital media and technologies offers them not only free access to worldwide audiences, but also the possibility of collective editing, organic links with social actors, and more control over their narratives through self-curated displays, where they unashamedly practice a partisan photography, siding with and serving social movements.

In 2011 rural communities in Cajamarca detained the Conga Project run by Yanacocha Mining, mostly owned by Newmont Mining Corporation. The project threatened the existence of four lagoons. The communities organized the vigil of the lagoons, surrounding them and camping there for days. The grassroots organisations named themselves Guardians of the lagoons.

Photos by Ernesto Benavides, Supay Fotos, 2011



Amazonart



Based on a collaborative methodology, the Amazonart Project explores indigenous self-representation and looks at the aesthetic-political dimension of indigenous contemporary art.

Harry Pinedo/Inin Metsa
Cantagallo and our battles for Housing, Healthcare and Education, 2020, Acrylic on canvas
 100 x 80cm

This painting of the Shipibo artist Harry Pinedo/Inin Metsa shows the agency of indigenous people and art in claiming social justice and the ongoing battles for housing, citizenship and human rights.

A fire destroyed the Shipibo Cantagallo community in Lima in November 2016. This accident occurred amid tensions with the city's government regarding a transport project that would affect the community. With Cantagallo burnt, the Shipibos had to spread out and find a place to live elsewhere. After three years without any governmental aid, the Shipibos decided to return and rebuild Cantagallo in 2019. Then Covid-19 reached the community. They were living in worse conditions than ever; many without running water. This painting brings together the 2016 fire, the Shipibo's demands such as 'Stop racism' and 'respect of the ILO convention 169: Housing, Healthcare and Education', as they are guarded by armed policemen; and a negotiation between the indigenous community leaders and the government officers, framed by both the Tahuantinsuyo flag as symbol of the original nations and the Peruvian flag. In this work, Pinedo shows the tensions, the precariousness, and the strategies of indigenous people to (re)build their community in Lima.

Project

Harry Pinedo/Inin Metsa:

"This painting refers to what happened in the Shipibo Cantagallo community. It shows how the first months of 2020... the police surrounded us since we, the community had 90% of positive Covid tests. The police surrounded us, locked us up, and no one could leave or enter only with permission from the authorities for fear of infecting. Neither food. The government helped us few times. It was the activists, the artists and the Christians who helped us... What the government did is to send the police and doctors to do rapid tests...

Those months we fought very hard, and we were fighting for our lives. But thank God it was not so terrible... They already had their diagnosis, that we were not going to resist the virus much. And that means that the police had close surveillance on us, so that we did not go out and infect Lima... I have painted this experience so the history of the struggle of the indigenous people who is in the capital for survival becomes visible. And there is a struggle for territory, health, and education. And that is part of the problem and what I am expressing in this painting".



Harry Pinedo/Inin Metsa
Covid-19 and the political repression, 2020
 Acrylic on canvas, 110 x 80 cm.

Giuliana Borea



SPANISH AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

On 27 November 2023, we had the pleasure, and the honour, of welcoming the Spanish Ambassador of Spain to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and the General Consul of Spain in Edinburgh. Mr José Pascual Marco Martínez and Mr Ignacio Cartagena met with university representatives, Spanish researchers and students of Spanish to strengthen collaborations between the Spanish Embassy and Newcastle University. Mr José Pascual Marco was appointed Ambassador of Spain to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in August 2021. During his diplomatic career, he has held posts in Pakistan, Nicaragua, Australia, Turkey, South Africa, DR Congo, USA and Brussels, as Ambassador-Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain to the EU. In Madrid, among other roles, he has been Director General for Cultural Policy and Editorial Industries at the Spanish Ministry for Education, Culture and Sport and, from 2017 to 2021, Director General for Coordination of EU Common Policies and General Affairs at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. Ambassador Marco holds degrees in Law and Philosophy, and a Diploma on International Studies from the Spanish Diplomatic Academy.



Mr. Marco Martínez delivered the talk *Global Challenges: EU-UK Relations and UK-Spain Bilateral Ties* and he met with finalists studying Spanish language and the cultures and societies of Spain and Latin America. He also enjoyed a coffee with Spanish exchange students learning about their experiences at Newcastle. He even managed to learn about the cultural heritage around Newcastle, paying a visit to Hadrian's Wall UNESCO heritage site.

LA VITA È BELLA AT NEWCASTLE!

Did you know that at Newcastle, as well as studying your main languages, you can also pick up other languages and have them count for credit in your degree? If you're doing French or Spanish, you can do Italian or Catalan; if you're doing German, you can do Dutch; and if you're doing Chinese or Japanese, you can do Korean. Here, Jenniveve Grason, who's doing Intermediate Italian, reflects on something she's enjoyed doing as part of that module, and an additional way of communicating as well...

La vita è bella ('Life is beautiful') is a heart-warming but also heart-breaking film about a father who tries to shield his son from the atrocities of a Nazi concentration camp through his imagination. Jewish bookshop owner Guido Orefice and his wife Dora, along with their son Giosuè and uncle Eliseo, are sent to the internment camp. Although separated from his family, Guido often makes grand gestures such as using the camp's loudspeaker to send messages so his wife would hear that he and Giosuè are safe. However, in the camp Guido wants to hide the true terror of what is going on from his son, so devises a game where Giosuè must perform tasks with his father to collect points, and the first team to reach 1000 points would win a tank. As the allied forces are approaching, Guido tells Giosuè to stay in a box until everybody has left, which is the final task before receiving the tank. Guido rushes to try and find Dora but is caught and ordered to be executed. He passes Giosuè one last time, always remaining in character in the point-scoring game, and is then taken down an alleyway and shot and killed. Giosuè and Dora are reunited, still unaware of Guido's death. We studied this film as part of our topic on the history of Italian fascism. Whilst it is horrible to learn and hear about, it is also incredibly important to study serious topics so we can honour the memory of the victims of such atrocities. The film showed us the extent that a parent will go to for their child, to protect them at all costs. All of the topics we study here at Newcastle University are relevant and they're all made interesting to learn about. As well as all of these topics, we learn grammar in depth to allow us to communicate freely!

Se da un lato abbiamo imparato argomenti importanti come questi, dall'altro abbiamo avuto modo di studiare argomenti divertenti come i gesti delle mani in italiano! Tutti sanno che gli italiani sono espressivi con i gesti delle mani, ma chi sapeva che esistevano così tanti gesti diversi con significati diversi! È divertente poterli praticare con gli amici e ancora di più praticare la comunicazione non verbale. Questi gesti sono molto utili se vi trovate in Italia e dimenticate la parola per qualcosa! Infatti, secondo il Centro linguistico italiano, ci sono circa 250 gesti diversi usati dagli italiani ogni giorno!



Jenniveve on the Spanish steps in Rome



CATALAN CALÇOTADA BY LAURA ARBONÈS MARTÍNEZ



Last academic year, students of Catalan had the opportunity to attend their first Geordie Calçotada. Calçotada is a gastronomic festival of significant importance in Catalonia, celebrated from February to March. During this festival, friends and family gather to enjoy calçots, large green onions dipped in delicious romesco sauce. These reunions are an integral part of Catalan culture, where social gatherings centered around food and laughter play a key role. Students helped to cook the onions and then ate them in the traditional Catalan way — standing up and *mirant al cel* (looking up at the sky), as Catalan tradition dictates. This year, we will have the pleasure of repeating the experience, as a second Calçotada is planned for March 2024. Calçotada not only provides an opportunity to discover Catalan food, practice Catalan, and listen to Catalan music, but also serves as a means of reinforcing the small yet continuously growing Catalan community at Newcastle University, which I am honoured to be a part of. Keep an eye on our Catalan Instagram profile (@catalanewcastleuk) to stay tuned!





RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Memory Studies Association Conference (July 2023)

In July 2023, as part of the Memory Studies Association annual conference, we hosted the plenary session 'Voces de la democracia/Democracy of voices' in partnership with the Argentine Embassy in the United Kingdom. The event brought together six voices in a powerful choral account of how human rights activism and the memory of dictatorship continue to resonate in Argentina and shape current political debate. These voices included: His Excellency, Ambassador Javier Figueroa; Alejandra Naftal, a survivor and the former director of the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory; filmmaker Liliana Furió, a founding member of the Historias Desobedientes collective; writer Félix Bruzzone, the son of disappeared parents; human rights lawyer and writer Monica Zwaig, the daughter of political exiles in France; and Newcastle University lecturer María Zubelzu de Brown sharing her experiences of growing up under dictatorship. The encounter was introduced and curated by Dr Philippa Page and Dr Cecilia Sosa as part of a research project that looks at the contemporary imaginaries of the dictatorship in Argentina as part of our portfolio of education and research activities focusing on social justice. Our Modern Languages students played a key role in this event, welcoming the delegates, helping coordinate the session, translating texts and reading translations. A book in English and Spanish is available with all contributions.



SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE LANGUAGES IN THE WORLD

- ⇒ There are **493m native speakers of Spanish** in the world. If you add L2 learners, the figure is 599m.
- ⇒ More than 23m students took Spanish as a foreign language in 2023
- ⇒ There are **250m native speakers of Portuguese** in the world. And 24m more take it as L2, making the total figure 274m.

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PHONE: +44 191 208 7441

E-MAIL: JORGE.CATALA-CARRASCO@NCL.AC.UK