



#### Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient  
Kirchweg 33  
14129 Berlin

## ZMO-Colloquium Winter Term 2018/2019

*Performing Gender and Sexuality in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia*

Thursday, 31 January 2019, 5 pm

### **Gender, Sexuality and the Socialist Interlude: Pakistani Cinema's Long 1960s and Turbulent Seventies**

Lecture by **Ali Nobil Ahmad** (ZMO)

National and international media interest in Pakistani cinema has increased considerably since the film industry's digitalization since 2013. This transition from celluloid, which has entailed a gentrification in film content, distribution and exhibition in multiplex cinemas, has been celebrated as a 'revival' akin to the supposed heyday of Pakistani cinema during the cinematic 'Golden Age' of the 1960s and 1970s. This lecture problematizes the periodization implicit in this media narrative of middle class triumph by exploring the history of Pakistani cinema during the 1970s, an era of socialist transformation and destabilization of gender norms abruptly cut short by Zia-ul-Haq's ultra-right wing military dictatorship of the 1980s. Analyzing the performance of gender and sexuality on screen and behind the camera through close attention to professional biographies, directorial subjectivities and key cinematic texts that defined this era, I argue Pakistani cinema reflected the emergence of new and rebellious voices. New forms of experimental popular cinema and well changing thematic content reflected the anti-colonial revolutionary fervor of the 'Long 1960s', whilst hegemonic norms of gender and sexuality were destabilized in the 'Turbulent Seventies', pointing to the need for a fundamental rethink of the so-called 'Golden Age' as a symbol of social harmony and bourgeois ascendancy.

**Ali Nobil Ahmad** is a fellow at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin. He was formerly Visiting Professor of South Asian Studies at Brandeis University, Assistant Professor of History at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, and a recipient of the Guardian's Scott Trust Bursary for Journalism. He has authored/edited numerous books, chapters and articles on migration, political ecology, film and media studies, and curated film festivals at the British Film Institute, the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London and the Kino Movimento in Berlin.

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