



Invitation

Tuesday, 29 April 2008, 2pm

Venue

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin

„Young and Invisible“: African Domestic Workers in Yemen

A film by Marina de Regt and Arda Nederveen

While the employment of migrant domestic workers in the oil-producing countries of the Arabian Peninsula is well-known, few people know that also in a relatively poor country like Yemen mainly migrant women are employed as domestics. The majority of these women come from Somalia and Ethiopia, neighbouring countries where living conditions are far worse.

Dutch anthropologist Marina de Regt studied the backgrounds and motives of Yemeni employers and migrant domestic workers, the interactions between both parties, and the influence of outsourcing domestic household work on the families and society. Because there are scarcely any national and international organisations that defend the rights of domestic workers in Yemen, she decided to make a short documentary which will be used to promote awareness about the living and working conditions of domestic workers in Yemen, but also further afield. Why is there a demand for paid domestic labour in Yemen? And what are the living and working conditions of Ethiopian and Somali women working as domestics in Yemen? Instead of portraying the women as victims, the film gives them a face and lets them show their resilience. The film is made by Arda Nederveen, and shot on location in Yemen and Ethiopia.

Marina de Regt obtained her PhD from the University of Amsterdam in 2003 for her dissertation „Pioneers or Pawns? Women Health Workers and the Politics of Development in Yemen“ (Syracuse University Press 2007). She is currently working at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam as coordinator of SEPHIS, the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (www.sephis.org). Her specializations are gender, labour, migration and development in the Middle East, and in particular in Yemen.

After showing the film, Marina de Regt will give a short talk followed by a discussion.

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