



International Association of Contemporary Iraqi Studies

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SOAS, University of London

**Abstract of paper to be presented at the conference.**

For details of the conference programme go to [www.iraqistudies.org](http://www.iraqistudies.org)

**Speaker:** Lucia Sorbera, Ca' Foscari University

**Title:** Dreams and fears in Iraqi cinema today: between exile and homeland

**Abstract:**

This paper focuses on contemporary Iraqi cinema. Based on a sample of 50 audiovisual productions and 15 interviews with actors and directors, it is a work in progress, whose main endeavour is opening some questions about the role played by audiovisual arts in contemporary Iraqi society. How does "the Iraqi factory of dreams" appear today? Which are the main obstacles that it is facing? Are there recurrent topics in the films? A first approach to these issues is articulated around a report of quantitative data, evidencing a shifting from classical cinema –dominated by feature films shot in 35mm- to a wider audiovisual corpus, where we find mainly short-films, documentaries and "docu-fictions", all made by digital tools. An overview of the recurrent topics (the occupation, everyday life of ordinary people, hidden and contested memories, social issues, exile), highlights three central phenomena in contemporary Iraqi cultural productions: the network between homeland and Diaspora, the weaving of evidences and artistic creation, and the complicated balance between heritage and new trends.

In conclusion, some considerations about the multiple meanings that can be attributed to the word "renaissance", with reference to the process characterising contemporary Iraqi cinema, are presented.