CASAR cordially invites you to a lecture entitled:

**An Uprising at The Perfect Moment: Censorship, Palestinian Filmmaking, and the Emergence of Cinematic Activism**

by Umayyah Cable

Date: 1 February 2016  
Time: 5:30 pm  
Place: Building 37 (CASAR), behind the old Lee Observatory

Within her larger project, *Cinematic Activism: Film Festivals and the Exhibition of Palestinian Cultural Politics in the United States*, Umayyah Cable examines Palestinian cinema—through films and film festivals—as a site around which Palestinians in the United States organize their political activism and assert their diasporic identification with Palestine. Cable employs a queer analytical lens with the methods of oral history, participant observation, and media analysis to illustrate how filmmaking and film exhibition constitute practices of ‘cinematic activism.’ She theorizes cinematic activism as a framework with four components—representation, organization, exhibition, and spectatorship—that identity-based groups leverage film culture to resist the censorship of their political expressions and cultural identities. Within the context of the United States, Palestinian-Americans have taken up the practice of cinematic activism in order to both transform the US discourse on Palestine and give voice to diasporic Palestinian identities in ways that recognize and accommodate gender, racial, and sexual difference.

This talk focuses on the controversy surrounding the exhibition and censorship of Elia Suleiman’s Palestinian film series, *Uprising: Film and Video on the Palestinian Resistance* at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, MA in 1991. Through analysis of the media discourse surrounding the *Uprising* controversy, this talk historicizes the ways in which the struggle over Palestinian films in the 1990s helped to identify experimental and narrative filmmaking and film exhibition as successful methods of cinematic activism, thus paving the way for the development of the Boston Palestine Film Festival in the 2000s. Palestinian artists and activists have since leveraged the power of cinema to resist the institutional censorship of Palestinian cultural politics and, in the words of a Boston Palestine Film Festival organizer, “do politics through art.”

Umayyah Cable has a BA in American studies from Smith College and is currently a doctoral candidate in the department of American Studies & Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, where she is completing her dissertation, entitled *Cinematic Activism: Film Festivals and the Exhibition of Palestinian Cultural Politics in the United States*. Umayyah also serves on the Executive Board of the Arab American Studies Association in the role of Web Coordinator where she manages the association’s web and social media presence.