

## A Window, an Assemblage? Magazines and World Literature



Keynote Lecture by Prof. Francesca Orsini  
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In many parts of the world, readers learnt about the world and world literatures largely through the pages of magazines. Magazines provided “thick” and “thin” knowledge about foreign literatures in the form of translations, reviews, snippets of information, survey articles, and so on. While often envisaged as “windows” onto an already existing world and world literature, magazines in fact assembled from the resources they had at their disposal always specific views of world literature, assuming and creating familiarity in readers with particular writers, languages, genres, trends, and in world literature, while leaving or making others invisible.

In this talk I will compare three magazines that “did” world literature from different geographical and political locations—the GDR magazine *Der Bücherkarren* (The Book Cart, 1957, ed. Heinz Dieter Tschörtner), linked to the East Berlin publisher Volk und Welt; the Hindi story magazine *Sārikā* (Starling, ed. Kamleshwar, 1960s–1970s); and the Italian quarterly *Linea d’ombra* (The Shadow Line, 1983, ed. Goffredo Fofi). In each case, I will ask: what is the correlation between political and literary internationalism? Does literary visibility follow political alliances, and do literary choices map onto political ones? More generally, how do magazines produce world literature, and what experience of world literature do they produce? For example, how do we understand the choice of publishing “the latest” or “the classics”, in other words, the temporal as well as spatial production of world literature? How does the discursive production of world literature in a magazine compare with the range of literary texts it makes available?

**Prof. Francesca Orsini** is Professor Emerita of Hindi and South Asian Literature at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Prof. Orsini’s research interests traverse the fields of Hindi-Urdu literary culture, Indian book history, and world literature. She is the co-editor of the Cambridge Studies in World Literature series and is currently finishing a book project on the multilingual history of Awadh from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. She has most recently co-edited *Hinglish Live: Language Mixing Across Media* (Orient Blackswan 2022).