

# Breaking the chains

A film by Erminia Colucci



**Screening and Q&A with the director – Friday 19 May 6pm**  
Amphithéâtre François-Furet, 105 bd Raspail 75006 Paris

The film will be followed by a Q&A with the film-maker and a panel composed of **Ursula Read** (Cermes3), **Joan Sidawy** (author of the blog *Comme des fous*), and **Livia Velpry** (Cermes3-Univ. Paris8),

*The film is in English and Indonesian (with English subtitles) but a French synopsis will be available. The question and answer session will be held in French and English*

**Synopsis –** The practice of using shackles, chains and cages to physically restrain people with mental illness (known as *pasung*) is widespread in Indonesia. This observational ethnographic documentary explores the perspectives of people who have experienced *pasung* and the families and healers who use it. The film follows the activities of an organization in Cianjur (West Java) run by Indonesians with mental health problems who collaborate with families to free people from *pasung*. The film-maker follows the workers as they visit family homes and traditional healers and tells the stories of several individuals who are released from *pasung* such as Yayah, a young woman who has been chained inside a small room for 17 years.

This sensitive and moving film engages with questions around the control and restraint of people with severe mental illness, the ethical dilemmas faced by families, particularly poor families living in remote settings, and the role of communities and mental health services in addressing these challenges. The film will be of interest to researchers in mental health, people who use mental health services, people working in mental health, culture, human rights and global health, and people with interest in documentary film and visual research methods.

For more information, visit: <http://movie-ment.org/breakingthechains>



**Erminia COLUCCI** is a senior lecturer and researcher in mental health, culture and arts at *Queen Mary University of London*. Dr Colucci conducts research in issues of social justice, human rights, violence

against women and children, suicide and refugee mental health.

Dr Colucci began her career as a clinical psychologist in Italy. In 2008 she completed a PhD in Cultural Psychiatry on *'The cultural meanings of suicide: A comparison between Australian, Indian and Italian students'* with the *University of Queensland*, Australia. In 2012 she completed an MPhil in Visual Anthropology/Ethnographic Documentary at the *University of Manchester*, UK, for which she directed *'Breaking the Chains'*, her first feature-length documentary. She was formerly research fellow and lecturer at the *Global and Cultural Mental Health Unit, Centre for Mental Health at The University of Melbourne*, Australia.

**Ursula M READ** is a postdoctoral researcher at Cermes3/INSERM, Paris. She worked as an occupational therapist in mental health services in London, UK before studying for a PhD in anthropology at University College London. She conducts ethnographic research on the experiences of people with severe mental illness and their families in Ghana, including their use of mental health services and traditional and faith healers. For her current research, as part of the ERC Globhealth project at Cermes3, she is exploring the implementation of rights-based approaches to mental health care in Ghana, including the reform of mental health legislation and the expansion of community care.

**Joan SIDAWY** is an architect and curator of the blog *Comme des fous* which aims to change perspectives on madness and mental health. Born out of his personal experience of psychiatry, the blog is constructed as a collective tool to aid understanding of what we commonly call madness. The assumption is that in talking about madness we overcome the fears which it invokes and break the taboo of mental health.

Joan is also involved in advocacy as a member of Clubhouse Paris and is vice president of 'Mad Pride Paris' which is organising a citizens' march for mental health on the 10<sup>th</sup> June.

**Livia VELPRY** is a sociologist and lecturer and researcher at University Paris8 and at Cermes3. She is interested in the social experience of severe mental health problems in France. She is also conducting research on the emergence of psychosis and on the question of violence and difficult situations in psychiatry. Since 2013 she has co-led the transdisciplinary research programme *'Contrast'*, which concerns the reform of regulations on coercion and consent in mental health care.

In her recent work, she studies how recourse to the use of coercion is currently considered and how this articulates with respect for patient rights, revealing the ambivalences of everyday care. For this she has completed ethnographic studies in secure psychiatric units and in a centre for persons with autism and challenging behaviour, taking particular interest in physical interventions used by health workers with patients.

