****

Louis Draper, Kathleen Collins working with Seret Scott and Duane Jones on the set of *Losing Ground* (1982). Image courtesy of Milestone Films and the Estate of Kathleen Collins

**Research Talk**

**‘Creativity in Motion:**

**Unfinishing Feminist Film and Literary History’**

**Dr Alix Beeston (Cardiff University)**

**Wednesday 30 April, 3.30-5pm**

**Followed by drinks 5-6pm**

**All Welcome**

Location: E17, Merchiston Campus, 10 Colinton Road, Edinburgh EH10 5DT

AND remotely via MS Teams

**Abstract:** This exploratory talk takes as its starting point a phrase that the art historian Alvia Wardlaw used to describe Kathleen Collins’s directorial practice during a 2020 discussion of Collins’ dramatic feature *Losing Ground* (1982). Wardlaw, who played a bit part in the film, said that watching Collins on set was like seeing "creativity in motion". What would it mean to conceive of feminist film and literary history not as tracking with production, publication, and dissemination, but instead as a series of motile, unfolding creative acts? This is the question that mobilises my in-process research into women’s unfinished creative labour in the late-twentieth-century United States and its afterlives in the present. In this paper, I lay out my suppositions about and plans for this work. Incorporating a close reading of a scene of writing in *Losing Ground*, in which the protagonist Sara serves as an avatar for Collins, I suggest that shifting attention from product to process via the study of the unfinished can serve not only to foreground the creative work of underappreciated and minoritised filmmakers and writers, but also as a means of newly theorising creativity and creative process—in its charged materiality, relationality, responsiveness, and ongoingness.

**Bio:** Dr Alix Beeston is Reader in Literature and Visual Culture at Cardiff University. Her work advances interdisciplinary approaches to literature, film, and photography in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, while also experimenting with new modes of scholarly writing and dissemination. She is the author of [*In and Out of Sight: Modernist Writing and the Photographic Unseen*](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/in-and-out-of-sight-9780190690168?cc=us&lang=en&)(Oxford University Press, 2018, paperback 2023) and a forthcoming critical–creative book tentatively titled *Image Encounters: Photography and the Feminist Art of Being Seen*. With Stefan Solomon, she co-edited the award-winning book [*Incomplete: The Feminist Possibilities of the Unifnished Film*](https://www.ucpress.edu/books/incomplete/paper) (University of California Press, 2023), and she is also the founder and co-editor, with Pardis Dabashi, of the Visualities forum at the online platform of [*Modernism/modernity*](https://modernismmodernity.org/forums/visualities)*.* Alix's ongoing research on women's unfinished creative work includes a forthcoming volume of Kathleen Collins's plays and screenplays, which she is co-editing with Hayley O'Malley and Samantha N. Sheppard, under contract with the University of California Press.