# London Conference in Critical Thought (LCCT)
## Friday June 30th & Saturday July 1st, 2023
## School of Social Sciences and Professions
## London Metropolitan University

## Call for Presentations

### Deadline for abstracts: March 13th, 2023

The Call for Presentations is now open for the 10th annual London Conference in Critical Thought (LCCT), hosted and supported by the School of Social Sciences and Professions at London Metropolitan University. This will be an **IN-PERSON** conference, occurring at the Holloway Road (North) campus of London Metropolitan University.

The LCCT is an annual interdisciplinary conference that provides a forum for emergent critical scholarship, broadly construed. The event is always **FREE** for all to attend and follows a non-hierarchical model that seeks to foster opportunities for intellectual critical exchanges where all are treated equally regardless of affiliation or seniority. There are no keynotes and the conference is envisaged as a space for those who share intellectual approaches and interests but may find themselves on the margins of their academic department or discipline. There is no pre-determined theme for each iteration of the conference, with the intellectual content and thematic foci of the conference determined by the streams that are accepted for inclusion in response to the Call for Stream Proposals (now closed).

The streams for #LCCT2023 are:

- **Affects & Collective Practices of the Undercommons**
- **Critical Spatial Action for an Earth in Crisis: Shuffling the Narrations**
- **Empirical Philosophies: Mediating Theory & Practice in Critical Thought**
- **Epistemic Challenges to Democratic Institutions**
- **Gentle Gestures**
- **Horrors of Philosophy**
- **Madness and Capitalism**
- **Planetarity and Apocalyptic Spaces: Literature, Art and Architecture**
- **Previsualisations: what's it going to be like?**
- **Radical Repetition: Repetition as Creative Subversion and Liberation**
- **Reimagining Data Visualisations: Critical Questions, Expanded Practices**
- **Representing the Non-normative: Othered groups in the (human) rights Imaginary**
- **Rethinking Work and Career: Resisting the Neoliberal Order**
- **Thinking-Feeling Desire in the Now: Post-Capitalist Desire and Creative Practices of the Body**

Please read the stream descriptions below. If you would like to participate in one of them, please send an abstract for a proposed presentation to **londoncritical@gmail.com** with the relevant stream title indicated in the subject line. Abstracts should be **no more than 250 words** and must be received by **Monday March 13th 2023**.

For more information, including guidance on presentation formats and accessibility, please go to:
*http://londoncritical.org*
Twitter: @londoncritical

# Affects & Collective Practices of the Undercommons

Stream Organiser: Minor Compositions

What affects circulate within the undercommons today (Harney & Moten 2013)?

This stream proposes to inquire into the relation between affective spaces and aesthetics in the construction of forms of collective intelligence and subjectivities, particularly in the ways this relation is worked with to expand the commonly understood realm of political action. It will explore processes of affective composition through which fleeting and ephemeral relations and performance are involved in what George Katsiaficas describes as 'engaging aesthetic rationality in the process of political transformation, of turning politics into art, everyday life into an aesthetically governed domain' (2001: 310). This is what Nick Thoburn terms a 'minor politics' (2003): one that is not based upon calling forth an already existing identity or position, but rather a politics based on a continual intensive and affective engagement of constant self-institution.

*Affects & Collective Practices of the Undercommons* proposes to explore the relation of affective relations and aesthetics in the construction and operation of formations of collective intelligence and subjectivity, particularly when these forms are brought about in a way intended to expand and modulate understood spaces for political action. These relations and their affectivity embody and express the movement of the social imaginary, or the constant process of becoming: what Raoul Vaneigem referred to as the revolution of everyday life. Everyday life and forms of political action residing in it, whether unseen or encoded in a hidden transcript, exists as a privileged location for political analysis and action precisely because it is where forms of collective intelligence, creativity, and social wealth are manifested.

The everyday manifestations and embodiments of collective imagination and intelligence through collective practices take part in the movement of this transformation of subjectivities. Forms of self-determining community and sociality, which have been understood and theorized as creating the possibility for exodus from relations of domination and the creation of other relations within the present, is premised upon working through, and extending these relations, intensities, and experiences.

*Affects & Aesthetics of the Undercommons* will explore the multiple fields and paths where these relations, intensities, and modulations of collective subjectivities are expressed and transformed through aesthetic expression and movement. This fleeting and ephemeral realm, one of both improvisation and ritual that Amendant Hardiker and Miekal And characterize as the space of the anartistic (1995) provides a unique and valuable entrance point for understanding and theorization of the relation of mind, culture, and collective imagination in constant movement.

Potential topics/possible intersections including but not limited to:
- Infrapolitics & creative subversion
- Black radicalism and genealogies
- Experimental education & nomadic pedagogy
- Creating spaces within and against institutions
- Autonomous spaces & protocols
- Study & Sociality, Convivial Research
- Infrastructure & Logisticality
- Performativity of/in the Commons

# Critical Spatial Action for an Earth in Crisis:
# Shuffling the Narrations

Stream Organisers: Hooman Foroughmand Araabi, Elahe Karimnia and Fidel Meraz

Crisis states have been identified and conceptualised according to a diversity of theoretical concerns, from philosophical positioning and critical theory, exploring the overall issue, to more specific social, historical, political and economic contexts. However, focused nuances in approaches emerge when the public space and the urban contexts are examined as the milieu of agents, places and situations of struggle and crisis. This might result in narrations of spatial practices being decontextualised, or these agents, places, and situations taken for granted. Thus, their theorisation often results incapable of consistently illuminating the meanings and needs of everyday life. This mismatching between narrations and practices – either critical or uncritical – suggests missed opportunities in articulating them as adequate responses to crises. Therefore, we pose the question, are our theoretical frameworks themselves in crisis when dealing with spatial practices in time of struggle?

This strand invites investigation, analysis and interpretation of collective modalities of spatial action, production and contestation that emerge from particular present conditions around the world. These crises are often originated, but not exclusively, by the pressures that colonisation, rampant capitalism, and perpetuating inequalities, that conflictive situations bring with sudden changes. The aim is to uncover what is behind the normalisation of spatial injustice (narratives) and materialisations (practices), and suggests alternative paths for emancipating the public space.

Analysing the relationships between radical spatial actions with broader oppressive systems and their peculiarities, the aim is to identify the material and ideal premises of decisive situations. Assuming that different contexts produce multiple narratives and explanation of spatial practices, depending for who the explanation is given (elites, working classes, intellectuals, activists, etc.), it is meaningful allowing for the condition of crisis not to hinder responses that may be desirable, even when they may seem untenable or unfeasible due to the obfuscation that often characterises crises.

Disentangling the emergence of crises within the medium of the city and its architecture as manifestations of socio-cultural performance the strand would aim to critically identify the limits between the awareness of crisis and to challenge the acceptance of detrimental human spatial conditions. As opposed to being framed by a particular discipline, the strand invites a plurality of approaches to the public and private space, as well as urban and architectural manifestations that reveal critical circumstances. In particular, transdisciplinary theoretical contributions that relate intersectional approaches would be of interest to trigger debate and propose innovative critical action. Contributions to this strand could approach among other possible the following issues:

- The city as site of social contestation and (class) emancipation.
- Nationalist fetishism of architecture as hyper-consumption (of hyper-reality)
- Narratives of and critical practices in contentious spaces in and around cities
- Post-colonial re-colonisation of public environments
- Contested historical buildings in times of conflict and culture wars

# Empirical Philosophies:
## Mediating Theory & Practice in Critical Thought

Stream organisers: Gijs van Maanen and Catherine Koekoek

If we understand critical thought as 'the self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age,' (Fraser 1985, 97) what methods, forms and strategies do we need to make sense of the overlapping crises of our times? Fraser praises Marx's definition of critical thought for its straightforwardly political, and thereby practice-based, character. We agree, but suggest that it is not enough to engage *theoretically* with social struggles. In this time of crises, we need to change the very ways in which we *do* critical thought if philosophy is to have any clarificatory and emancipatory potential.

Meaningful responses to such crises require us to leave our philosophical armchairs, open our departmental doors, and interact and mingle with the people and practices on which our work depends. Yet the neoliberal academy holds many obstacles for those, like us, wishing to engage in those unruly practices (Ahmed 2019) of interdisciplinary and empirical philosophy.

What experiences and traditions of thought can we draw on to develop and sustain empirical philosophies? Feminist and anti-colonial thinking often takes place in the 'border space' (Collins 2011, 4) between academia and social struggle. Members and followers of the Frankfurt School actively resisted modes of thinking that did not relate in any meaningful manner with the social-political realities about which they argued (Horkheimer 1982; Celikates 2019; Loick 2018; von Redecker 2021). From the 80s onward, contributors to the Dutch debates on 'empirical philosophy' started studying 'repertoires and 'exemplary situations', and recently, political theorists looked for answers to their theoretical worries in ethnography (e.g. Mol 2000; Herzog and Zacka 2019). Lastly, scholars working in science and technology studies (STS) have for decades been busy with the empirical redescription of the central categories — e.g. 'politics'; 'democracy' — of our 'nonmodern' existence (De Vries, 2007; Latour, 2007). The boundaries between sociology and philosophy have never been more porous.

In this stream, we explore: How to *do* engaged and interactive research? To what extent do the disciplinary boundaries present in our neoliberal universities — both conceptually and practically — promote or limit out attempts to get out of our armchairs? How do we change as academic subjects if we take seriously our interwovenness with existing practices? And to what extent do our research objects determine the character of our research methods? For this stream, we are looking for participants that connect ethnographic, empirical, or activist practices to their more 'theoretical' endeavors, to reflect on questions and themes such as the following:

- Dangers, limits and potentials of contemporary *academic* philosophy in turning to practice and empirical research.
- Empirical philosophy: history, theory, practice.
- The situatedness of research and the (evaluative) judgements of the researcher.
- Tensions between political *practice*, and political *theory*.
- Ethnographic methods and field work.
- Community work; engaged and participatory research
- Histories of feminist and decolonial thinking practices

# Epistemic Challenges to Democratic Institutions

Stream Organiser: Urja Lakhani

Epistemic justifications of democracy hold that, under the right conditions, democratic decision-making is more reliable at producing correct political decisions than alternative methods. However, recent philosophical and empirical research has challenged this view. Studies have shown that voters often lack knowledge about politically relevant issues (Brooks, Carpini, and Keeter, 1997), tend to vote in tribal or partisan ways (Anchen and Bartels, 2016), and that politicians often do not respond to the preferences of the general public while in office (Gilens, 2014).

There are several different theories that have been proposed to address the challenges and limitations of democracy identified by recent research. These theories largely fall into four camps. The first camp insists on the epistemic merit of democracy and holds that having more people involved – a full electorate – is epistemically better compared to a restricted electorate of highly competent individuals (e.g. Landemore, 2013; Hong and Page, 2004). The second camp proposes changes to the democratic system that aim to improve its epistemic reliability, while still maintaining the core principles of democracy (Ahlstrom-Vij, 2020; Brennan, 2021; Jones, 2020). The third camp advocates for an epistocratic form of government, in which political decision-making is restricted to a subset of individuals who are deemed to be more competent or informed (Mulligan, 2017; Guerrero, 2014; Brennan, 2016). The fourth camp agrees that epistocracy may be more epistemically reliable than democracy, but argues that it is not acceptable from a justice standpoint (Estlund, 2008).

Question: Can democracy withstand criticisms about the epistemic quality of the decisions made by democratic rule?

This discussion is interdisciplinary and spans politics, political philosophy, social epistemology, social psychology, history, critical theory. Papers which engage with these problems of democracy are welcome, including (but not limited to) the following topics:

- Governing of society by experts
- Symbolic value of democracy
- Condorcet's jury theorem
- Relationship between political deliberation and truth
- Conceptions of political legitimacy
- Role of good faith in political decision making
- Framework for epistemically 'good' legislators or legislative process
- Polarisation and tribalism in politics
- Relationship between democracy and liberalism
- Representative versus direct democracy
- Democracies around the world

# Gentle Gestures

Stream Organisers: Anouk Hoogendoorn, Roshana Rubin Mayhew, Sophie Mak-Schram & Paul Alexander Stewart

Where does learning happen? And, what affects, effects and alternatives are possible when we learn? The stream invites proposals across art, creative practices, pedagogical inquiry, practice-based research, and critical theory that explore ways knowledge production is embodied, pleasureable, multiple, empowered, navigated, inflicted, and shared. Through a re-evaluation of the relationships between process, pedagogy, gesture, ownership, pleasure, within accelerated developments of neoliberalism, what can be uncovered through these methods towards a deeper understanding of being-with, practice and power.

The stream welcomes a range of submissions from traditional paper/panel presentations, round tables, assemblies, art experiences, workshops, performances, critical reflections through, text, live action role play, performance, video, installation, sound, voice or, curatorial and learning programming. Practice based presentations should bear in mind that room allocations for the events may have limitations and we will utilise classrooms at the host institution, please take this into account during your application and any proposal that requires a specific space please state on application and we will discuss the possibility.

The stream will propose ways in which art practice can explore positions of unfamiliarity - our relationships with one another; the bravery required; the dynamics of ownership; comfort in expressing bodily knowledge and experience (hooks, Freire, Giroux). As such, it will appeal to artists and researchers of education, pedagogy and the arts with interests in social and critical theory.

Proposals could be around:
- Art and Commitment
- Methods of pedagogical art making
- Social engaged practices, ethics of collaboration and learning,
- Non-hierarchical approaches to knowledge exchange
- Galleries as sites for learning / Institutional critique, diversity of practice and ways inequalities are reproduced.
- Methodologies and tactics of radical practice
- Temporary zones and spaces
- Pleasure and knowledge
- Facilitation and dis/abling arts education

Some starting questions that may help form proposals:
- What kinds of spaces do these practices occupy – are they communal or individual?
- What kinds of interventions bring the body back into the learning space? Whose body, when and how?
- How do sites of collective learning negotiate problems?
- How central is practice to projects of learning?
- What is pleasurable about learning? What kind of learning might be made pleasurable?
- Which artistic endeavours can be practised in radical pedagogical encounters?
- How can, or do, radical pedagogies give way to systematically oppressed voices without falling back into dominant logics or reproducing narratives of oppression?

**Texts:**

- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972).
- bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (1994).
- Stephano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons* (2013).
- Keguro Macharia, *Frottage: Frictions Of Intimacy Across The Black Diaspora* (2019).
- Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South.*
- Filippa Christofalou, *Body Based Pedagogy in Museums* (2021).
- Edited Collection, *Adult education, museums and art galleries: Animating social, cultural and institutional change* (2016).
- Mignolo and Walsh, *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Duke University Press (2018).
- Paul Alexander Stewart, *Art, Critical Pedagogy and Capitalism* (2021).
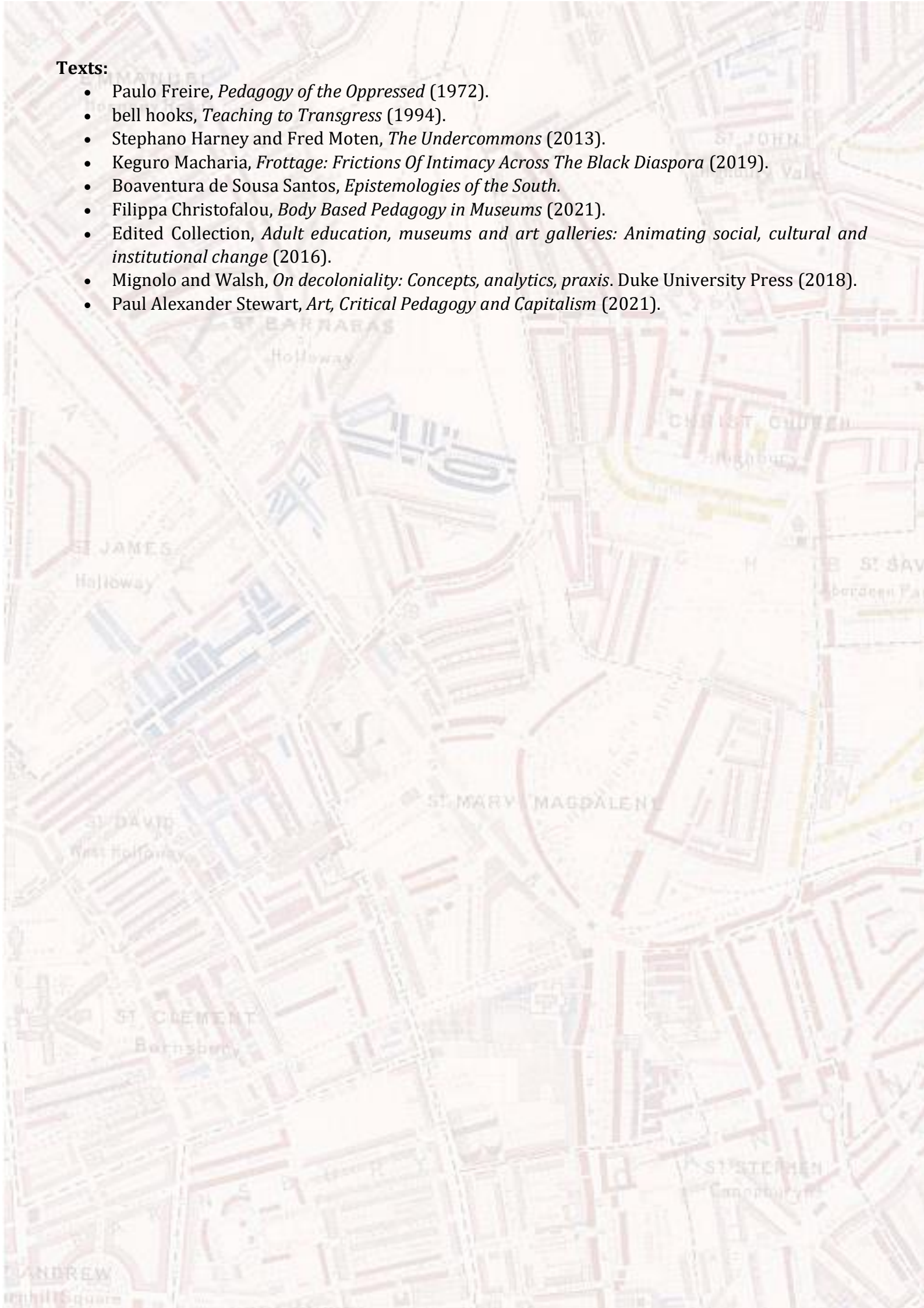
# Horrors of Philosophy

Stream Organiser: Evrim Bayindir

Horror has widely been regarded as the affect that has the highest significance for philosophy. Moreover, it has been detected at philosophy's origin: Maoilearca suggested that the Platonic 'wonder' that inaugurates philosophical questioning is identical with or at least as a preliminary form of horror (2015); similarly, Wood wrote that the Coleridgean 'sacred horror' that is arising from the experience of pure, objectless existence is the direct correlate of Aristotle's initiation of 'being in its essence' as 'a distinct theoretical enterprise' (2002). Indeed, this was already the concern of Nietzsche in his characterization of not only Greek philosophy but also the entire Greek culture as an experimentation with the play between horror and joy (1999).

Although Kant's discovery of transcendental subjectivity carries out a radical disenchantment of the old world, it not only becomes helpless in the face of the problem of horror but also exacerbates it, as Land points out (1992). As such, wonder's lapse into horror is seen as taking a whole new turn in Kant's discussion on the sublime, Jacobi's detection of nihilism in Fichte, and the subsequent growth of pessimism in 19th-century idealism. What we witness is the unfolding of an ever more traumatizing horror which is peculiar to a reason that claims to demystify the speculations of previous tragic thought and classical metaphysics.

Notwithstanding, it was not until—Nietzsche and Heideggerian phenomenology influenced—20th-century preoccupation with existential questioning and radical experience that horror has become a fully autonomous site for philosophical investigation. Levinas stands at the apex of this orientation when he conceives the traumatic horror of *there is* as the inevitable outcome of the question 'what is being?' (2001). This is the moment in which the analysis of horror becomes an inseparable component of the analysis of being.

More recently, the increasingly close ties between conceptual abstraction and horror have been scrutinized from various 'post-continental' perspectives, under the title 'concept-horror' (2008). The affinity of concept and horror indicates that horror is what happens to thought when it reaches its outer limits. In this sense, horror is the affect that is closest to thought. Furthermore, horror is proposed, as Harman puts it, as a 'research programme' to explore the 'weird reality' that escapes the residual idealisms of continental philosophy.

The progressive identification of horror and thinking does not explain, however, why thought's wonder for and venture into the mystery of existence each time tragically arrives at horror and why this inherently traumatic encounter constitutes the horizon of our affectivity. Can it be the case that philosophy is marked with a dogmatic belief in the superiority and the irrecoverability of trauma? If so, can there be ways out of the paradigm of horror?

Taking these various viewpoints and possibilities under consideration, this stream invites applications that examine the historical and contemporary implications of the links between philosophy and horror. Topics include but are not limited to:

- Horror in Greek and medieval philosophy.

- German idealism and the horrors of disenchantment.
- Horror in continental philosophy (Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas, Blanchot, Bataille, Deleuze, Kristeva...).
- Horror as an object of scientific investigation (as in cognitive sciences).
- Phenomenological perspectives on existence and affect.
- Philosophical consequences of the precise ways literature and various artistic disciplines (cinema, painting, music...) relate to horror.
- Psychoanalysis, death-drive, and trauma.
- The relationship between horror, negation, nothingness, death and nihilism.
- Horror in contemporary thought: Non-philosophy, speculative realism, new materialism.
- Horror in relation to the prospect and knowledge of extinction.
- The tension between horror and joy (can there be a philosophical and/or scientific criterion to choose one over the other?).
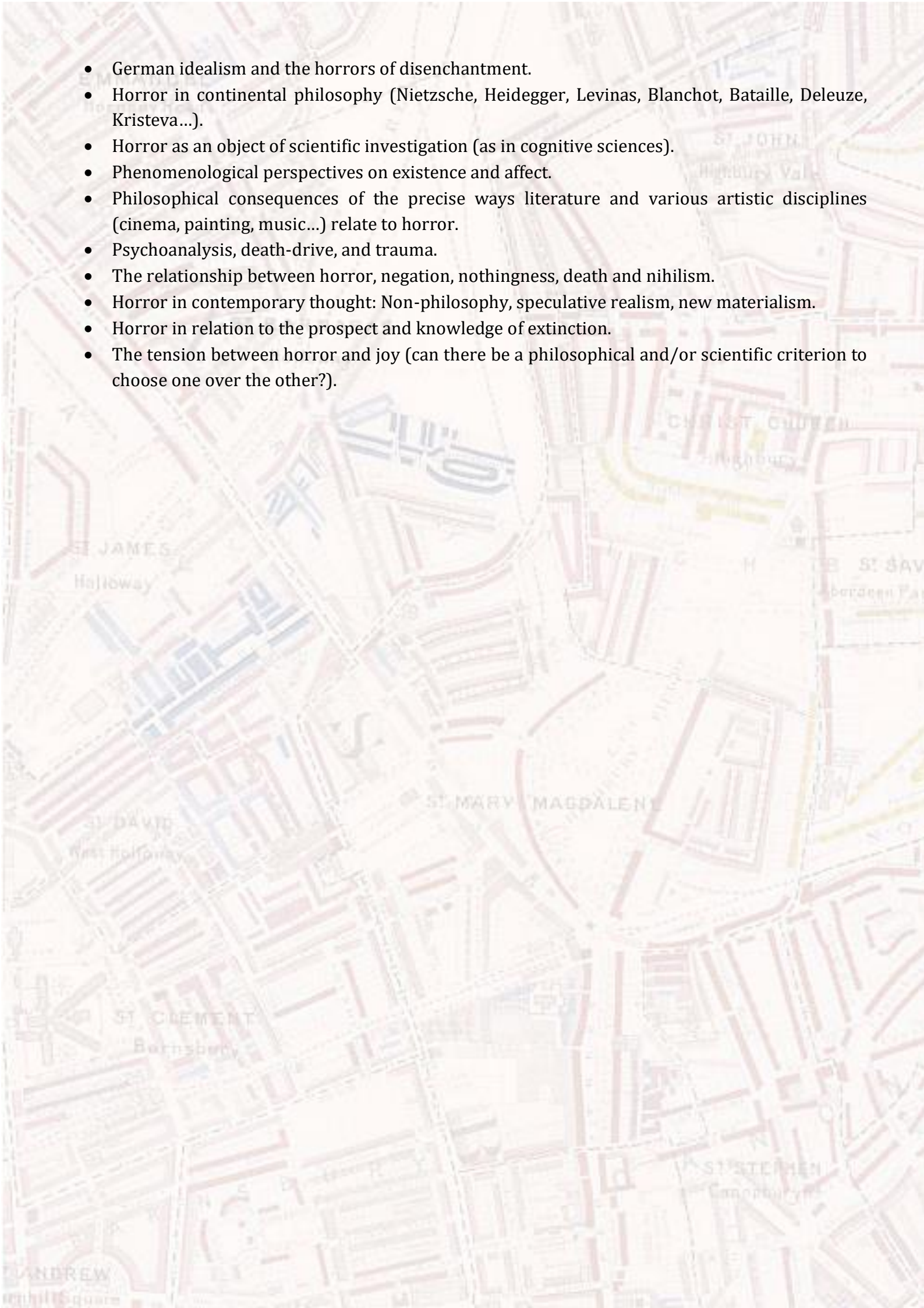
# Madness and Capitalism

Stream Organiser: Cynthia Cruz

On the topic of madness and civilization there are numerous philosophical texts. Hegel, for example, describes madness in *Philosophy of Mind* as a state in which the subject is internally split, fixated on a particularity they are unable to assimilate. When such a moment occurs, the subject finds themselves disoriented. Citing the French Revolution which resulted in mass madness, Hegel writes that such an encounter renders the subject 'plunged into absolute uncertainty'. While Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents* describes a growing unease that would become part of the very fabric of contemporary society. And in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud explains how the repression necessary to fit one's self into society results in neurosis, while those who cannot or will not fit themselves into society, are deemed 'un-civilized'. In his non-political analysis of society, Freud diagnosed, nonetheless, a decisive divide between those who are able or willing to conform to capitalist society and those who cannot or will not. Marx's analysis adds a political component, arguing, instead, that what we have is man-made madness, a structure that has escaped our control, an unceasing fury that knows no limit. This is the madness of capitalism with its vampires and butterflies, its glittering fetish hidden in plain sight. For Marx, capitalism is a contagion that infects all engulfed within it. To madness and civilization Foucault adds societal control and the institution, making the important connection between outside and inside, between the prison and the psychiatric ward. Deleuze and Guattari, with *Anti-Oedipus*, add their critical analysis of capitalism, as do countless others. Aaron Schuster writes of the 'debt-drive', David Harvey, following Marx, diagnosis capitalism as a form of madness, and Darian Leader, in his analysis of society and madness, examines the pharmaceutical industry and psychiatry's prioritizing profit over the healing of the patient, certainly its own form of madness.

This stream invites proposals that explore the concept of madness and civilization. Such proposals might explore the origins of madness or its contemporary causes, they might connect madness with economics and politics, or perhaps examine whether such a thing as madness exists or whether its diagnoses is purely political. In addition, proposals might explore social class and madness. Mark Fisher, for example, argues for a direct correlation between capitalism and madness, connecting the experience of being working class with depression. Similarly, proposals might explore the relation between madness and oppression in relation to race and gender, looking, for instance, at Fanon's work on race and social exclusion or work that examines eating disorders as a form of resistance to capitalism. Finally, proposals might also explore madness as a form of freedom, as Lacan suggests, because the mad are unchained from language, 'The mad person is the only free human being'.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:
- capitalism as a form of madness
- madness and social class
- Marx's concept of capitalism as madness
- Hegel's concept of the fury of the French Revolution
- Fanon's work on madness and colonization
- Deleuze and Guattari's concept of capitalism and madness/schizophrenia
- Madness as a form of resistance against capitalism
- Freud's concepts of madness and capitalism
- Madness as a form of freedom
- Lacan on madness (form of freedom, as not being a choice, etc.)
- the madness of political economy/capitalism

# Planetarity and Apocalyptic Spaces:
# Literature, Art and Architecture

Stream Organiser: Subham Mukherjee and Craig Lundy

Apocalyptic spaces are heterotopic thinking-spaces which offer us the possibility to re-imagine planetary futures along with an imperative to re-think alternative configurations of being human. Catastrophic encounters tend to subvert the fixed designations of the human and the planetary, thereby becoming a crucial spatio-temporal opening that resist the constant reinforcement of the dynamics of conformity. In the wake of re-thinking new planetary dimensionalities, catastrophic encounters, despite of their excruciating problematics, are events of alterity occurring as sites of difference, in the Deleuzian sense, and *différance*, in Derrida's sense, that initiate a radical (un)becoming of the human, producing new environments, new relations and new subjectivities.

Thinking through the concept of *planetarity* and the Stieglerian *pharmakon*, this stream seeks to explore apocalyptic spaces as open and possibility spaces, creating new models of co-existence, reinvent models of care – not merely as emancipation but also in praxis. Through our discussions, we shall attempt to recognise apocalyptic spaces as an open portal of living knowledge – a pharmacological and organological aperture that thwarts epistemic uniformity and neo-expansionist representations of globality and totality, and encounter collective inhabitations and response-ability by re-imagining the planetary and by reworking the praxis of being human. As an assemblage of indeterminacy harbouring, what Spivak said, an 'inexhaustible diversity of epistemes', we shall try to locate the idea of apocalypse in the diverse works of literature, art and architecture and discuss how catastrophic events shapes and conditions the possibility and impossibility of existence by changing our collective and individual percepts, affects and experiences. In a world riven by accelerated *exosomatisation* inevitably leading to what Han Byung-Chul appropriately called a *burnt-out syndrome*, we intend to encounter the apocalypse as a *caesura* – of historical discontinuity; a break from conformity; a necessary breathing rift in a compressed world from which we bleed together, blend together – a space for expunction and reassembling.

Apocalyptic spaces eschew bifurcations and embeddedness and is characterised by a conceptual openness to multiplicities, collectivities, transversalities and haecceities. In other words, it is a metamorphosis machine that produces new lines of flight and new permutations of becoming. It is, what Deleuze and Guattari call, a *fibroproliferative unground* – a processual exercise of molecular becoming and becoming-other. In this Deleuzo-Guattarian vein and through our discussions, we shall challenge the conventional mode of apocalyptic thinking, as a demarcation problem, that ontologises a nihilistic end-of-the-world thought, without questioning its socio-political agenda. Our idea is to liberate the apocalypse from the topographical ensnarement of our constructed mapping and fractalise apocalyptic thinking – identifying the apocalypse as a fractal-scape characterised by an affirmative schizoid plurality of thought administering a radical reshaping of planetary futures.

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Apocalypse, worldmaking and planetary futures
- Anthropocene and the ecological turn
- Apocalyptic thought and Deleuze/Guattari

- Landscape, Architecture and Spatialisation (also includes immigration, border politics and segmentarity)
- Dark Enlightenment (Nick Land, NRx, etc.)
- Digital catastrophism (accelerationism, multi-tasking cyber-cattle, smart cities, disappearance of desire, sexless pornography, hyperviolence, etc.)
- Necropolitics, petrocultures, technocolonialism, militarisation, zombie capitalism and geo-trauma
- Transgenic and experimental art (eroticism, surrealism, pitiless art, multimedia democracy, disappearance of sensation, fear, theatre of cruelty, etc.)
- Apocalyptic sensibilities in prehistoric, tribal, indigenous, esoteric cultures and religions (apophatic theologies, ritualistic sacrifice, demonology, de/colonial apocalypse, cannibalism, barbarism, anti-rational primitivism, tribal feud, voodooism, occultism, etc.)
- Sexuality and tracing the end of bodies
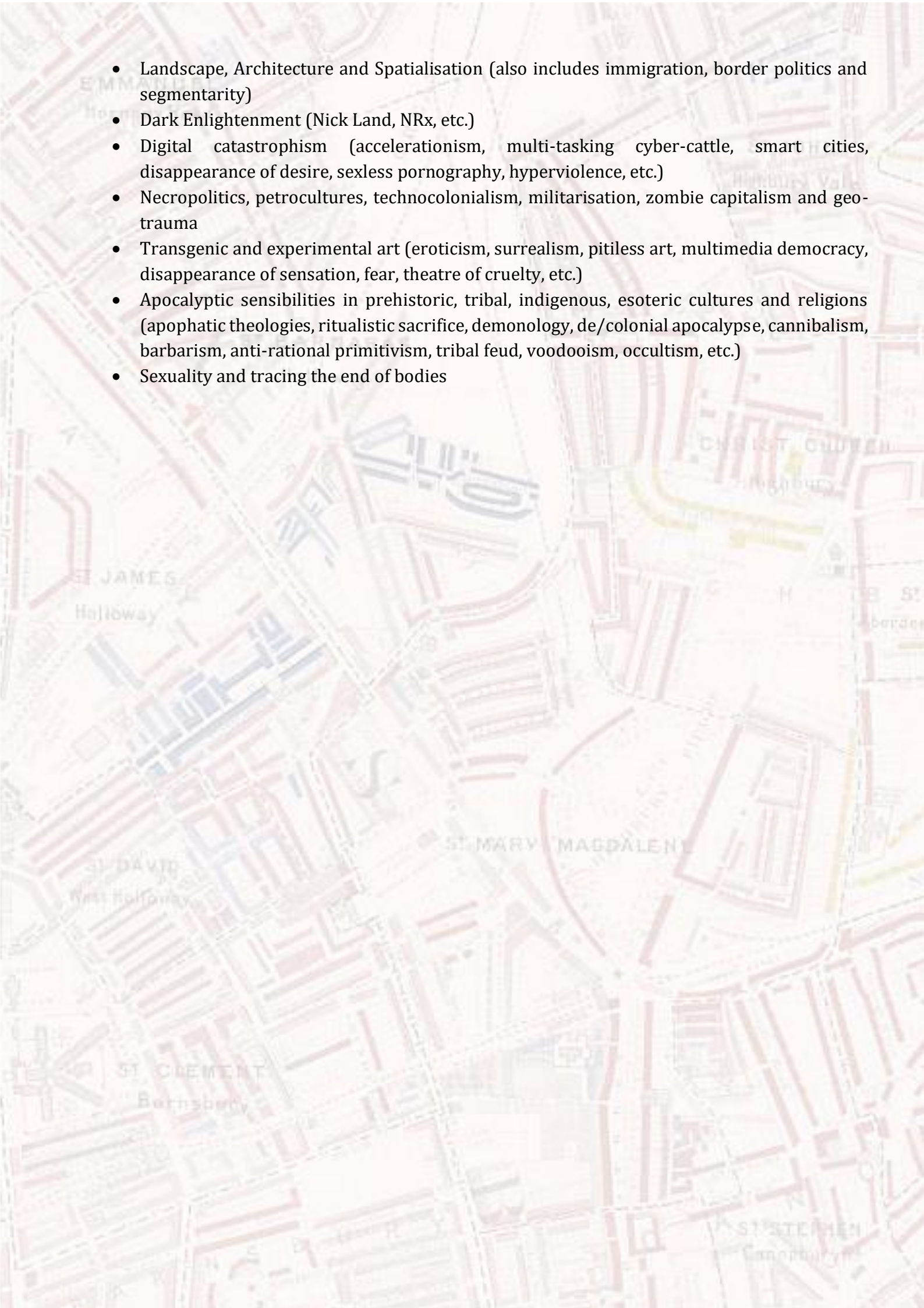
# Previsualisations – What's it going to be like?

Stream Organiser: Richard Whitby

When searching for an image of a recently constructed building online often what we are presented with is not a photograph of the actual structure but rather a digital image of the design: an artist's impression. 'Previsualisation' (a term most common in filmmaking) could be an appropriate term for a set of practices spanning architecture and urban planning, but also fiction, finance, political rhetoric and digital culture.

UK politicians have offered promises of 'sunlit uplands', national 'dividends', imaging a future that suited particular ideologies and projects. Advertising for cars frequently show empty roads and depopulated cities; national ceremonies like those of the Olympic games attempt to connect the past to visions of the future. Ad campaigns for Meta claim, rather vaguely, that although its 'metaverse' will be virtual, its 'impact will be real'. Tech companies float on stock markets with valuations based of projections of future profits, having yet to bring in any actual cash.

These are the dominant visualisations of the near and far future in Western culture and politics. If we choose to reject these, speculations and visualisations of different futures are necessary in order to build them, shaping our sense of what might still be possible. Post-apocalyptic fiction still dominates sci-fi on screen, but alternatives like Solar Punk offer a more optimistic vision. Some queer theory rejects the conservative and restrictive obligatory optimisms of late capitalism; Afrofuturism has envisioned radical alternative futures.

The present that we find ourselves in – including our economies, politics, living spaces and consumer products – was once visualised in imagery, numbers and writing. What status do these pre-visualisations have themselves, in apparently increasingly unpredictable times? Do they haunt us or warn us? Do they sometimes replace our actual surroundings and situations? Can we pre-visualise our way out of any of our current predicaments, as a species; a nation; a planet? Or are we producing more and more *weltschmerz*: an emotional pain and weariness caused by a reality that cannot match expectations.

This stream invites proposals that engage with pre-visualisations as historical artefacts, contemporary cultural objects and future propositions. What status do these pre-visualisations have themselves, in reportedly increasingly unpredictable times? Are they tactics of resistance or domination? Can they be both? How does critical engagement with already realised pre-visualisations (be it architectural renderings, urban plannings or speculative storytelling) provide insight into the process by which the imagined future becomes real? Examples of pre-visualisations include, but are not limited to:

- architectural renderings
- speculative fictions
- speculative design
- environmental modelling and scenario analysis
- venture capitalism and seed funding
- finance and futures markets
- near future utopias in advertising

This stream might appeal to architects, musicians, artists, cultural theorists, urban geographers, film scholars, queer theorists and others. Presentation formats might include video essays, artworks and musical performances as well as more traditional papers.

# Radical Repetition:
## Repetition as Creative Subversion and Liberation

Stream Organiser: Lee Campbell

Andy Warhol once said, 'I like boring things. I don't want it to be essentially the same – I want it to be exactly the same... because the more you look at the same exact thing, the more the meaning goes away, and the better and emptier you feel' (Warhol 1980, 50). In contrast, Arthur Koestler asserts that 'habits are the indispensable core of stability and ordered behaviour; they also have a tendency to become mechanized and to reduce man to the status of a conditioned automaton' (Koestler 1970, 98), and goes on to suggest that 'the creative act, by connecting previously unrelated dimensions of experience, enables him to attain to a higher level of mental evolution. It is an act of liberation - the defeat of habit' (Koestler 1970, 98).

This stream aims to set up a discursive space to explore Warhol's well-known love of repetition paired with Koestler's seemingly condemnation of repetition. We will seek to theorise, articulate and demonstrate how radical forms of repetition can be creative, transgressive, disruptive, politicized subversion and acts of liberation within themselves.

We invite submissions from practitioners, theorists and academics that explore one or more of the key areas/questions below and particularly encourage submissions that are performative in nature:

- Repetition in time-based/durational works (Film, Artist Moving Image, Performance practices etc.)

How can repetition be conceived in art forms that are time-based and durational?

How does an examination of repetition in these art forms help us (re)imagine acts of looking, spectatorship and ultimately, control of the viewer's gaze?

- Repetition in Fine Art practices (Painting, Sculpture, Drawing etc. )

How can repetition be conceived in static 2D forms within traditional Fine Art practices?

Considering time as being an aggregate of thought in relation to 2D/3D 'static' works, what is the role of repetition within the act of looking and duration involved in looking at supposedly 'flat' static surfaces whose form and content reveal themselves over time?

- Repetition as opening up a space for the transmission of self?

In what ways have artists, filmmakers, poets, performance makers etc. provocatively used repetition as a means to speak of the self?

Can repetition be used as a tool for self-liberation?

## References
Koestler, A.,1970. *The act of creation.* London: Pan
Warhol, A and Pat Hackett, 1980. *POPism: the Warhol '60s.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

# Reimagining Data Visualisation:
# Critical Questions, Expanded Practices

Stream Organiser: Hannah Lammin

Data visualisations are used in a wide range of disciplines, including digital humanities, visual communications, urbanism, environmental science and many more. This stream invites proposals that engage critically with visualisation practices, exploring their epistemological, social and ecological effects, exposing the assumptions inherent within them, and imagining alternative aesthetic and ethical approaches.

Data-driven computational processes constitute a substrate of human experience in the 21st century – we interact continually with digital devices, applications and networks, such that they become embodied aspects of our everyday lives, enmeshed in social, economic and cultural practices. This tendency towards datafication impacts scholarly research, having implications for what counts as knowledge, and how this knowledge is produced (see: Beer 2022; Esposito 2022). In this techno-cultural context, data visualisations have become an essential means of communicating complex information to broad audiences. Yet, visualisation practices are neither neutral nor transparent. Johanna Drucker (2020) posits that the translation of data into graphical forms acts constructively to interpret the information and construct an argument. Moreover, these processes of visual interpretation are imbued with a range of cultural biases which require further scrutiny, because they contain codes and hierarchies inherited from the history of visual culture – for example, presuppositions about what constitutes a 'scientific image' based on Western notions of objectivity. This raises questions of how visualisation practices might be decolonised and degendered to democratise knowledge production and communication (see: Ignazio and Klein, 2020).

This stream aims to articulate these questions by critically examining existing visualisation practices, and offer responses by testing alternative approaches that acknowledge the embodied and situated character of knowledge. It welcomes presentations of experimental, creative and speculative practice-research.

Possible questions to explore include:

- What forms of knowledge do data visualisations produce / how do they act to define the object of knowledge?
- Can we reframe what 'counts' as data and how data are counted?
- What is occluded in the process of selecting data and presenting it in visual forms?
- What role do visualisations play in data colonialism?
- What power structures are implicit in visualisation practices / what empowerment can be achieved by approaching them differently?
- What would a feminist data visualisation look like?
- How can indigenous knowledge inform a more inclusive and/or ecological approach to information visualisation?
- What forms of mapping can render the labour that produces datasets visible?
- Can participatory design approaches help to decolonise data visualisation, making it more transparent and accountable?
- What creative media methods could be used to develop an expanded and multi-sensory visualisation practice?

# Representing the Non-normative:
# Othered Groups in the (Human) Rights Imaginary

Stream Organisers: Luiz Costa do Valle Junior and Adimaya Keni

The great bourgeois revolutions of the 18th century relied on a legal grammar to make their claims of universal dignity and basic inalienable rights. Legal language has since come to dominate our political claims and practice, both conservative and progressive. Nowhere is this clearer than in the language of human rights. Scholars who have chronicled the rise of human rights discourse over the course of the 20th century have indeed argued that the 'moral' logic of universal rights now holds a de facto monopoly over national, as well as inter- and transnational social movements' agendas (Douzinas 2000; Moyn 2010; Whyte 2019).

But the universalism implicit in this contemporary version of natural law has been shown to obscure a commitment to specific visions of social and political order (Cançado-Trindade 2006) – as well as specific answers to the question of what constitutes the 'human' in the first place. Scholars have questioned, for instance, the conservative sexual and gendered imaginaries emerging out of transnational human rights advocacy and international fora (Sabsay 2016; Puar 2017); the role of international human rights law and transnational human rights activism in perpetuating colonial stereotypes (Fagan 2009, Knox 2013); and the presumption that only humans and human-created entities, such as corporations and States, can be endowed with legal personality (Stone 2010, Ohlin 2005).

The rights claims activists, courts, and political institutions pursue in these terms each implicate them – and us – in specific imaginaries purporting to answer the question of what constitutes a 'valid' subject endowed with moral worth (Butler 1999). And any concept of the moral subject or person will produce its own outside, or Other. Following these scholars' leads, this stream purports to explore what the representation of Others in social and legal discourses really teaches us about who we are as citizen-subjects. We invite scholars of all specialisms who interrogate what kinds of subjectivity are implied in, or even produced through, the conceptualisation of humans, our rights, and our politics.

Questions for possible analysis are:

- How is the moral logic underpinning human rights defined and where may fail to capture the rights of those who need it most?
- In what respects are social movement trajectories predefined to fit neo-colonial interpretations of the world? For instance, in what respects do social movements reinforce the idea of (social, economic) development as progress towards a pre-determined telos?
- Where are the boundaries of human rights and the assumptions of the inalienability of those rights being tested?
- How and where is the definition of 'human' rights changing?
- Are new Others being created and how might this process impact societies from a practical and philosophical perspective?
- Are contemporary forms of socio-political dissent highlighting that once-accepted forms of Othering are no longer accepted by those who *take the law* rather than *make the law*?
- What could a 21st century human rights regime look like if the global south led its restructuring?

# Rethinking Work and Career:
# Resisting the Neoliberal Order

Stream Organisers: Ricky Gee, Ranier Caro V. Abengana and Louise Oldridge

Since modernity, work, in general, has been understood as a fundamental human activity geared toward the realisation of our 'worthiness' (O'Connor, 2018). Over time, only select activities count as actual 'work.' Paid employment, for example, tends to be viewed as work of value while uncompensated work is largely undervalued (Taylor, 2004). The drive to pursue activities that matter creates an 'achievement society' in which people become *projects*, tirelessly working on themselves to thrive in a capitalocentric, neoliberal society, veering toward 'voluntary self-exploitation' (Han, 2017). The impetus for the centrality of work in careerism is the ideology of 'progress', signified by accumulative responsibility, status, and rewards (Hall and Mirvis, 1995; Gee, 2022). Progress as a central driver of the colonial/capitalist project, privileges patriarchy, whiteness and rationality via a Eurocentric lens, formulating an unjust globally structured labour market that exponentially exploits migrant, women and racialised workers (Andrews, 2021).

Some critics have pointed out that mental health disorders arising from careerism and the centrality of work have often been regarded as individual problems rather than social and political. (Fisher, 2012). Moreover, the prevalence of problematic and precarious working conditions tends to normalise (self-)exploitation. The inescapability of work in society, the phenomenon of idolising 'workaholics,' and the role of passion as a chief motivator, must be considered as the material bases that sustain unjust working conditions (Chung, 2021).

The (re-)emergence of work-related protests and resignations invites us to rethink the very paradigms of work and career. The abundance of faculty strikes and accounts of academic exodus exposes the working conditions in scholarly institutions which are supposedly more self-reflexive (Trakakis, 2020). The recent exponential support for anti-work (Seyferth, 2019), the great resignation, and quiet quitting (Lord, 2022) are also critical responses to unjust working conditions which were amplified during the pandemic. The growth of these movements merits a closer examination of the very working conditions from which they emerged.

This stream welcomes theoretical, empirical and performative proposals exploring varied perspectives from academics, activists, artists and practitioners to rethink work and career in the neoliberal order, considering opportunities and actions to build solidarity to resist and subvert such an order.

- How do we conceptualise 'work' and 'career' within and beyond the neoliberal society?
- How can we address the structural injustices allowing for uncompensated work (e.g., reproductive labour)?
- What are the different intersectional (race, class, gender, disability, etc.,) issues that affect working conditions and create just or unjust working environments?
- What are the arguments for and against the refusal of work?
- How can various forms of resignations and work-related protests be operative within working environments?

# Thinking-Feeling Desire in the Now:
# Post-Capitalist Desire and Creative Practices of the Body

Stream Organiser: Lizzy Le Quesne

As we come increasingly to recognise and interrogate the intelligence and agency within the body, the arts and both creative and therapeutic somatic practices are moving into leading positions in terms of exploring subjectivity, wellbeing and empowerment. This stream aims to explore how these practices may address or enable us to rethink desire. How are creative or therapeutic somatic/embodied practices supporting, activating and putting to use different kinds of 'desiring-machine' within selves, culture and society? This stream also asks how this might contribute to human flourishing in late-capitalist or post-capitalist space? How do embodied creative and therapeutic practices critique, resist and engage with culture in our political, social and economic present?

If there is wisdom in desire (LaMothe 2009) and if desire is a positive productive force (Deleuze and Guattari 1972), how do creative arts exploring bodily process and experience, or somatic and therapeutic practices, enable us to question and explore new relationships between desire, sexuality, affect, the personal, the social and the body? How are embodied creative and somatic practices engaging with and shifting the ways we experience and think about desire? How embodied is desire, and how is desire embodied?

Further questions that this stream seeks to explore include:

Body and self:
- How are intimate encounters with the affective space of the body shifting approaches to the self?
- How can experimental and creative practices engage desire to contribute to expanded and emancipated notions of the subject?
- How are creative or therapeutic embodied practices supporting or activating different kinds of 'desiring-machine'?
- What are the shapes and movements of desire as released from lack or object?
- What are the challenges and risks that arise regarding practices of the body?
- What are the psychological, moral or cultural blockages to rethinking desire?

Body and Culture:
- How might embodied processes critique, resist and engage with culture in our political, social and economic present?
- How may desire be disentangled from capitalism and reconfigured as a positive and deterritorialising force?
- How may thinking and practising with the body speak to Mark Fisher's unfinished ideological notion 'post-capitalist desire' (2021)?
- How can somatics and/or practices of the body function as space and modality of change in/through which to turn away from, circumnavigate or transform the negatives of capitalism?
- What does the creativity of the body have to say about desire and need? What does and could human flourishing look like in late-capitalist or post-capitalist space?

This stream invites proposals for papers, demonstrations or experiential workshops from across disciplines which explore notions and uses of desire in the now. Contributions are encouraged from practitioners or researchers working with the body in dance, performance, poetic or body-based writing, visual arts, somatic practices, therapeutic practices, and other fields. Papers submitted to this stream may be rooted in specific practices or in philosophy.