



METABOLIC COMMONS

AGAINST ENTROPIC ZONES AND THE ECOLOGY THAT WAR BUILT
FEMINIST POLITICAL ECOLOGY WORKSHOP

21–22 SEPTEMBER 2026

Aula Mario Baratto · Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Curated by Rose-Anne Gush and Antonia Majaca

Programme

Monday 21 September 2026

INTRODUCTION

9:30

Francesca Tarocco

Roberta Raffaetà

1 • UNSETTLED GROUND

10:00–11:45 • chair **Justas Patkauskas**

Avi Varma *Flume Study 5: Anataxonomy of Waves*

Christina Chalmers *Reproduction, the inorganic, and the multiplicity of the metabolic rift*

Henrike Kohpeiß *Erosion and Anthropocene Affects in the Swedish Arctic*

Jeff Diamanti *Bloom and Hypoxia: Introducing The Inorganic Composition of Capital*

2 • CHEAP NATURE AND THE UNWAGED

12:00–13:45 • chair **Pietro Daniel Omodeo**

Katerina Genidogan *Whiteness as Entropy, Blackness as Ectropy: Development, Ecology and the Colonial Genealogy of Climate Governance*

Jason W. Moore *Class, Metabolism & the Commons: Capitalism, Socialism, and Why “the Commons” are a Goal and not the Means*

Ana Teixeira Pinto *Mind Children*

Terike Haapoja *Animal Capitalism and Subsumed Life*

3 • ACCUMULATION BY ARMAMENT

14:45–16:30 • chair **Giulia Dal Maso**

Antonia Majaca *Energy of War Ecology: The Maximum Power Principle*

Philipp Sattler *Calculable Ground: Agrarian Violence, Property, and Administrative Conversion*

Lorenzo Feltrin *Critical minerals, fertilisers and war: The political ecology of phosphate*

Michaela Büsse *Blazing Heath/Heidegluhen: On the Production of Environmental Knowledge in Military Ruins*

4 • COMMONS IN CONTAMINATED GROUNDS

16:45–18:30 • chair **Jasmine Pisapia**

Farah Alkhoury *Against Purity: Toxic Remediation in Militarized Landscapes*

Morgan P. Vickers *Entropic Wetlands, Swamp Commons*

Aleksei Borisionok *Negative commons of post-socialist radiation and anarchy*

Antonio del Giudice *Metabolic Resistance: Wasting relationships, and commoning in the Italian wasteland*

DINNER

18:30

OKE, Zattere — provided for participants

Tuesday 22 September 2026

5 • THE PRODUCTIVITY OF WASTE

9:30–11:15 • chair **Valentina Bonifacio**

Rose–Anne Gush *Double Negative: Figures of Entropy as Anchors of Value*

Monika Halkort *Metabolic Commons at the Extractive Frontier*

Imani Jacqueline Brown *And still, the brightness shines through the holes in the earth / The Remote Sensation of Disintegration (6 min screening)*

Lama El Khatib & Jule Ulbricht *Wastelands: Imperial Warfare and Ecologies of Decay*

6 • THE POINT OF REPRODUCTION

11:30–13:15 • chair **Roberta Raffaetà**

Carina Brand *The Human Gut Microbiome, Primitive Accumulation, and Fossil Agriculture*

Andreas Petrossiants *Autoreduction Against the Social Factory: Assembly Line or Circulation Struggle?*

Marco Baravalle *Curatorial Ecologies: Towards a definition*

Ana Vilenica *Periphery in movement: Against displacement in place*

7 • IN DEFENSE OF THE COMMONS

14:15–16:00 • chair **Wietske Maas**

Maria Chehonadskih *The Collective Infrastructure of Even Distribution*

Louise Carver *Reconstructing the Metabolic Commons: Energetics, Enclosure and Convivial Blue Commoning*

Marwa Arsanios *The Metabolic Image of Land Struggle*

Denise Ferreira da Silva *Negative Accumulation or that which happens without time*

CLOSING DISCUSSION

16:15–17:30

THROUGHOUT BOTH DAYS

Kellie O'Dempsey, Drawing the Room

About the workshop

The frameworks that govern environmental governance and climate policy inherit from Cold War military research, colonial field sites and postwar techno-scientific infrastructures, which shaped both, which questions could be asked, and which were foreclosed. In that lineage, life was progressively reformulated as a thermodynamic process, onto which competition was encoded as an ecological necessity. The ecology that naturalised maximum energy describes an ecosystem and a market economy with identical indifference to what is being maximised, for whom, and at whose expense. This ecology survives in ecosystem services, carbon stocks and natural capital; rearmament and the green transition are being financed at the very same moment. Without critical reflection, the transition reorganises the structure it claims to resolve, shifting the extractive frontier and subsidising itself with reproductive and subsistence labour.

This workshop uses the thermodynamic vocabulary against the grain of its inheritance. An entropic zone is a territory, community or body whose social-ecological reserves have been irreversibly dissipated through extraction, then made to appear as the natural background of accumulation. Capital's metabolism works by networking entropic zones, from Lubumbashi, Wolfsburg, to southern Greenland and the Atacama, joined in a single infrastructure of accumulation.

Feminist historical materialism identifies the gendered division of labour as the originary template of that accumulation. The operation that first constituted regenerative work as nature's free gift built the infrastructure through which capitalism has organised every metabolic relation since. In existing models of energy, the bodies that sustain metabolic processes appear only as components of a circuit, never as agents with differential relationships to the entropy the circuit produces. The destruction registers in the microbiomes of the communities who absorb it, in microbial ecologies accumulated over generations of land-based diet and depleted by industrial food systems, antibiotic regimes and the toxic exposures that abolitionist geography names as organized abandonment.

Across two days, thirty speakers work from specific ground: the Ahwar marshes in Iraq and the former US Navy range at Vieques, Soviet oil shale waste in Estonia and Soviet training grounds in Brandenburg, the Punjab canal system, Louisiana's Cancer Alley, the swamplands of Lowcountry South Carolina, Campania's Land of Fires, mining subsidence beneath Sámi land at Kiruna, lithium in Serbia's Jadar valley, coastal Jamaica after the plantation, the phosphate fields of Italian-occupied Libya.

The starting point is the knowledge generated within metabolic practice embedded in metabolic relations as social relations, inseparable from the labour through which those relations are sustained, defended and composed anew. The commons is not settled ground here, and we ask whether commoning names a strategy for taking power or a practice that depends on a power it cannot itself produce and cannot defend. We will learn with practices underway in the present, including assemblies against lithium extraction in Serbia, the legal communalisation of land in North Lebanon, grassroots organising in the Land of Fires, the Kisan Andolan in Punjab, the Convivial Blue Commons Lab in post-plantation Jamaica. We will learn from practices of the past: the swamp commons of Lowcountry South Carolina, autoriduzione in Turin in 1974, peasant cooperatives under famine, anti-nuclear organising after Chernobyl.

During the workshop, we will ask what forms of metabolic commons are already being built from inside entropic zones: what forms of knowledge the energetic models cannot accommodate, what political subject they constitute, and what a feminist political ecology adequate to their specificity would look like.

Full Programme

Panels in the order in which they are given.

Monday 21 September 2026

1 • UNSETTLED GROUND

10:00–11:45 • Aula Mario Baratto • chair **Justas Patkauskas**

Avi Varma

Flume Study 5: Anataxonomy of Waves

Flume Studies is an ongoing series of artistic-theoretical studies investigating the imposition of colonial time-space through the infrastructure of the canal and the technology of the flume. Flume Study 5: Anataxonomy of Waves proposes a lecture-performance of approximately 15 minutes in the form of studies for an unmade essay film. It looks at documentation of the movement of waves across three different image-making regimes: the archives of colonial engineering in early cinematic geographies and river training manuals, the political films of Harun Farocki, and the artist's own documentary practice at sites of ecological struggle. Engaging practices of the essay and political film via Harun Farocki and methods of spatial analysis from the Centre for Research Architecture, the paper will present a genealogy of an ecological conceptualisation of waves as turbulent beings that required domination in the era of British direct rule in colonial India. As a project, Flume Studies emerged from many years of engagement with the Kisan Andolan, Farmers' Movement, and affiliated organisations from Punjab, Northwest India. At a continental scale, the Punjab canal system transformed space by internally displacing people in order to grow wheat for European markets through perennial canals that erased whole seasonal water bodies from the earth. At a micro-political scale, this colonisation of seasonality was perpetuated through the technology of the flume-channel. Flume Study 5 has the central aim of tracing the

arc of eugenics from the colonial era to the present by means of the aesthetics of taxonomising waves.

Biography. Avi Varma is an artist-researcher who received his PhD from the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London, for the thesis *Theory of Grasses*. His work takes as its departure point the nexus of ecology, epistemic violence, anti-colonial struggle. Previously, he led the Research Studio "5, 0, 1000 rivers" in the Environmental Architecture programme at the Royal College of Art and has taught as an Associate Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. His Flume Studies project is an ongoing series of artistic-theoretical studies investigating the imposition of colonial time-space through the technology of the canal.

Christina Chalmers

ENS Paris

Reproduction, the inorganic, and the multiplicity of the metabolic rift

This paper will attempt to complicate the notion of the "metabolic rift," supposedly taking place between organic humanity, and inorganic nature, by discussing 4 related rifts which are often collated into one: organic and inorganic; life and capital's life-process; labor and property; production and reproduction. These are four non-identical but related splits, which touch on questions of free labor and slavery, modes of production, social and biological reproduction, machinery, community, and capital's specific organisation of living and non-living natures. From here "survival" in a condition of rift is seen as complicated by multiple contradictions, and not reducible to the contradiction of capital and labor (despite its "organising" role, to repeat the organic claim) or capital's domination of the metabolism with nature. This paper also considers the question of historical strategies of capital accumulation in relation to a "metabolic commons" through struggles over the "disembedding" or "re-embedding" of collective values in the reproduction and production of human life, which alter the conditions of labor more generally.

Biography. Christina Chalmers is a researcher working between intellectual history, feminist philosophy, Marxist political economy, and psychoanalysis. She has published in journals such as *Diacritics* and *Radical Philosophy* and is working on a book concerned with relations between Marxism and feminism in Italy in the post-war. She is also working on a research project considering the philosophy of nature and the inorganic in relation to reproduction. She is presently a Leverhulme postdoctoral fellow at ENS Paris, and will be a visiting researcher in Gender Studies at Roma Tre University (Rome) in Spring 2027.

Henrike Kohpeiss

Leuphana Transformation Lab

Erosion and Anthropocene Affects in the Swedish Arctic

More than a century of mining beneath the Swedish town Kiruna has destabilized the ground to such an extent that large parts of the city center are currently at risk of collapsing into the mine. As a result, around one-third of Kiruna is currently being relocated. While this move is taking place under comparatively favorable conditions it nevertheless represents a moment of rupture for the town's population. Also, the Sami people who live in and around Kiruna have been severely affected in their economy and daily lives by mining activities for decades and political struggles around land use remain unresolved. Although Kiruna's current transformation is not directly caused by the climate crisis, it is a consequence of decades of destruction, and the necessity of adapting quickly to radically altered circumstances is becoming a defining feature of life in the Anthropocene.

Beyond the relations of production and extraction, this project includes a social angle aiming to understand the affective dynamics of transformation and erosion. Looking at the social dynamics in the small town of Kiruna during its relocation thus offers an opportunity to study the affective repertoires that accompany ecological and material upheaval. Feelings of grief over the loss of familiar sites, alongside trust and even excitement about the creation of a new city, reveal an ambivalent

emotional relationship to change, an openness to the offers that are being made by the state owned mining company LKAB and general fears of the future. While immediate crises often generate temporary surges of solidarity, the longer-term effects frequently include heightened vulnerability and the erosion of social infrastructures.

Biography. Henrike Kohpeiss is a philosopher, working on critical theory, philosophy of emotion, Black Studies, feminist philosophy and aesthetics. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Leuphana Transformation Lab, studying affects of Transformation, the relationship between crises and transformation and the notion of Transformation Literacy, and was formerly employed at the CRC "Affective Societies" at Free University, Berlin (2019–2025). Her first book *Bourgeois Coldness* was published in 2023 (Campus) and released in English translation in 2025 (divided). She studied philosophy and applied theatre studies in Berlin, Rome, Vienna and Gießen and was a visiting scholar at Lund University, University of Copenhagen and New York University. Her current project *Respect for Reality* deals with the social affective dynamics that lead to a derealization of the global ecological crisis. It initiates a dialogue between different methodologies like psychoanalysis, decolonial critique of extractivism, phenomenology and aesthetics of devastation in order to generate insights into the current experience of planetary collapse.

Jeff Diamanti

University of Amsterdam

Bloom and Hypoxia: Introducing The Inorganic Composition of Capital

This paper begins with the uncontroversial claim that the sublation of socially necessary labor time into the measure of expanded reproduction of surplus value over time involves the grounds of capitalist abstraction writ large, and that what is abstracted are a series of political, epistemic, and categorical oppositions unravelling in today's conjuncture: life/nonlife; land/labor; concrete/abstract; inhuman/human; and organic/inorganic. Taking the organic composition of capital as the apogee of capitalist abstraction, the paper offers a materialist rehearsal of the primary scenes by which the realm of the inorganic works its way

into the reification of empirical appearance, promising an account of what the author calls the inorganic composition of capital.

It traces the inorganic from the famous bone mills feeding soldiers and horses into the soils of British agriculture, through the troubling conclusion to Hegel's Philosophy of Nature, to a rereading of chapter 25 of Capital Vol 1, and finally an encounter with what Kathryn Yusoff calls "white geology" observed in unsettled terrain aquatic bloom ecologies. The inorganic composition of capital, the paper argues, names a rise (or accumulation) of so many energies, contradictions, and expressions which in hydrological terms could be measured empirically as the chemical composition of dead zones, but in the critique of political economy might require a different standard of reasoning to think.

Biography. Jeff Diamanti is Professor of Global History of Sustainable Development at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (by special appointment) and teaches Philosophy and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. For over a decade he has researched and written on logistical cartographies, energy infrastructure, and political ecology. His first book, *Climate and Capital in the Age of Petroleum: Locating Terminal Landscapes* (Bloomsbury 2021) tracks the political and media ecology of fossil fuels across the extractive and logistical spaces that connect remote territories like Greenland to the economies of North America and Western Europe. His new research, *Bloom Ecologies*, follows the mining of phosphorous in the occupied Western Sahara to the aquatic currents forcing algal bloom and hypoxic milieu all over the planet. He is also building a long-term research network on Supply Chain Criticism to document and evaluate the conflicts implied by the EU's Critical Raw Materials framework.

2 · CHEAP NATURE AND THE UNWAGED

12:00–13:45 · Aula Mario Baratto · chair **Pietro Daniel Omodeo**

Katerina Genidogan

Whiteness as Entropy, Blackness as Ectropy: Development, Ecology and the Colonial Genealogy of Climate Governance

Contemporary climate discourse remains dominated by a carbon-centred and future-oriented epistemology that obscures the colonial histories through which environmental degradation, development, and ecology became intertwined. This presentation explores these relations through the figures of whiteness as entropy and blackness as ectropy. It argues that recovering the centrality of entropy for development and racialisation is crucial to identifying the epistemic premises of environmental devastation, and that retrieving the colonial emergence of ecology as an imperial science is indispensable for understanding climate governance. If mathematician and economist Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, author of *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process* (1971), lamented that the entropic degradation of "productive activity" never entered the epistemological framework of economics, the presentation seeks to understand, first, the importance of entropic degradation as both an anxiety and a necessity for homo oeconomicus and evolution (encapsulated in what Sylvia Wynter calls Man2); and, second, in challenging the view that entropic degradation stemming from economic activity tied to progress has not informed economic decision-making and broader patterns of production. Rather, it argues that it has done so in ways governed by racial reason(ing), a history that remains largely illegible and must be retrieved through a genealogy of colonial eco-logics. The presentation illustrates how the awareness of productive activity's entropic degradation entered the epistemological framework of colonial development already a century ago and has continued to produce governing effects, particularly as evidence regarding the material impossibility of universalising Western development accumulated from *The Limits to Growth* report onwards.

Biography. Katerina Genidogan holds a joint PhD from the Erasmus School of Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Cultural Studies at Leuphana University Luneburg. Her research sits at the intersection of history and philosophy of science, postcolonial, Black, environmental, and critical development studies. She holds a BA in Business Administration from the Athens University of Economics and Business, a Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History, and an MRes in Curatorial/Knowledge from the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is a co-organiser of the feminist reading group collective Post-materialisms. Her recent publications include 'The Cultural Logic of Green Capitalism: A New Coalition of Geo- and Chronopolitics,' in *Liquidity, Flows, Circulation: The Cultural Logic of Environmentalization*, and "Race Re(con)figurations through Speculative and Environmental Futurity," in *View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture*. At Leuphana, she has designed and taught seminars on "Chronobiopolitics" and "Raciality, Ecology & Blackness."

Jason W. Moore

Binghamton University

Class, Metabolism & the Commons: Capitalism, Socialism, and Why "the Commons" are a Goal and not the Means

Celebration of the commons has become a pillar of "critical" scholarship in the humanities and social sciences since the 1990s. It has revived a longstanding peasant romanticism that supports an anarchist strategy of abstract localism and "mutual aid" organizing. This failed strategy underpinned the "missing revolution" of the 2010s (Bevins), and surrenders the question of political power to what Tariq Ali calls the "extreme center" and its drift towards fascism. This presentation advances three world-historical propositions that inform the present conjuncture. First, capitalism has survived through the successive enclosures of frontiers of Cheap Nature, yielding the Cheap labor, life and land necessary for recurrent "fixes" to world accumulation crises. Second, the long history of popular revolt and revolution in the modern world has built upon the dismantling of the commons, shattering age-old peasant bonds and producing new working classes, in city and countryside alike. Third, the

politics of post-capitalist transition have flowed through socialist states and not anarcho-peasant communes because of imperialist counter-revolution and counter-insurgency. A revolution that cannot be defended cannot be realized. The "reclaiming of the commons," irreducibly class-metabolic in character, must be situated within the long and recent history of capitalism, the long history of revolution and counter-revolution, and today's epochal crisis. The abolition of private property and the re-commoning of re/production remains the goal. But the history of the worldwide class struggle in the web of life admits no shortcuts. There is no royal road to reclaiming the commons.

Biography. Jason W. Moore teaches world and environmental history at Binghamton University, USA. He is author, among other books, of *Capitalism in the Web of Life* (Verso, 2015).

Ana Teixeira Pinto

HGB Leipzig

Mind Children

The Aristotelian opposition between hyle (matter) and form is historically coextensive with the metaphysical devaluation of nature, a devaluation that is thoroughly gendered. Hegel aligns the female with matter and nature, and the male with form and mind. Nature, for him, is "fertile, but impotent", a "bad infinity", an endless, cyclical repetition devoid of meaning.

This gendered structure re-emerges in cybernetic discourse, where information is theorized as the negation of entropy (negentropy), a principle capable of overcoming biological finitude. The fantasy of AI as informational progeny, "mind children", extends this logic, positing that carbon-based life is destined to be superseded by silicon substrates and informational patterns.

Yet AI infrastructure carries a substantial and growing ecological cost. This is not merely an energy problem, but a multidimensional resource crisis. Because silicon substrates do not require potable water or a breathable atmosphere, many singularity theorists lionize

capitalist subsumption to the fullest extent of its creative and destructive capacity. In this view, the loss of the Earth's biosphere and the carbon-based life it sustains, regrettable as it may be, is merely collateral damage in a great technological acceleration that will ultimately culminate in general AI as the crowning evolutionary leap.

This talk will theorize this trajectory, tracing how Western metaphysics has forged a convergence of mind, masculinity, and information that finds its contemporary expression in the Romantic myth of the tech CEO as the male who becomes a mother by generating new, monstrous forms.

Biography. Ana Teixeira Pinto is a writer and cultural theorist. She is a professor of Art Theory and Digital Cultures at HGB Leipzig and the editor of the Sternberg Press book series *On the Antipolitical*. Her writings have appeared in publications such as *Third Text*, *Afterall*, *e-flux journal*, *Hyperallergic*, *Ibraaz*, *Artforum* and *Berlin Review*. She co-organized HKW Berlin's "The White West" conference and podcast series, co-editing the subsequent publication *Fascism, Unreason and the Paradox of Modernity* (Sternberg Press/MIT). Her forthcoming publication is *Death Wall: Entropy and the Chronopolitics of Modernity*.

Terike Haapoja

Animal Capitalism and Subsumed Life

The concept of a "metabolic rift" has been central to eco-socialist theorizing. The term points to the way in which capitalism's extractive production processes disturb nature's ability to renew itself, eventually throwing planetary life cycles off balance. In its continuous hunger for the enclosure and expropriation of human and nonhuman resources, capitalism leaves behind destruction, depleted and impoverished land, extinction, sacrificial zones, and the annihilation of life. On the other hand, Marxist feminists have articulated how the enclosure of women's reproductive capacities, and defining the labor of social reproduction as non-productive, has been foundational to capitalism's mode of operating. Contemporary feminist scholars have expanded this analysis to include surrogacy, the

organ trade, and tissue cultivation as arenas of biocapitalist exploitation of the metabolic labor of feminized and racialized bodies. Both frameworks tend to, however, undermine the centrality of the enclosure and harnessing of nonhuman life force, particularly the reproductive and metabolic capacities of nonhuman animals, for capital accumulation. The animal capacity to reproduce itself, as well as produce matter, bodily fluids, flesh, organs, and tissue, provides an infinite source of accumulation. This process is defined not by destruction, but by multiplication, intensification of reproduction cycles, maximized fertility, growth hormones, institutionalized rape, species monocultures, and total subsumption of life, life force, and death. Hidden in plain sight, the enclosure of the metabolic, reproductive, and gestational labor of nonhuman animals constitutes a massive arena of exploitation at the heart of capitalism that requires its own political and theoretical focus within the eco-socialist project.

Biography. Terike Haapoja is an interdisciplinary visual artist. Her large scale installations, writings, and collaborations explore the possibility of nonviolent coexistence across differences, with a specific focus on multispecies politics. Haapoja is currently working on a long term project *Animal Capitalism* that maps paths towards multispecies left politics. She is the co-editor of seven publications on art and politics/environment, and her work has been exhibited widely in solo and group shows internationally. Haapoja represented Finland in the 55th Venice Biennale with a solo show in the Nordic Pavilion, and her work has been awarded with the Guggenheim Fellowship (2022), ANTI Prize for Live Art (2016), Finnish State Art Prize (2016) and the Dukaatti prize (2008), among others. She worked as an adjunct professor at NYU and The New School, New York 2017-2023 and is currently an independent artist based in Berlin. terikehaapoja.net / animalcapitalism.org

3 · ACCUMULATION BY ARMAMENT

14:45–16:30 · Aula Mario Baratto · chair **Giulia Dal Maso**

Antonia Majaca

Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Energy of War Ecology: The Maximum Power Principle

Two grammars order the world and operate in tandem. Counting takes everything into its energetic accounting, living or inert, the child and the server, and energy-as-currency is indifferent to whether the quantity was ever alive. Clearing acts on what is already there, which is almost always the living: people, prior use, historical metabolic relations, coral, olive groves. Counting presents itself as a law of nature; clearing declares a decision and presents itself as sovereignty. Both were given form in the 1920s, laundered through evolutionary biology and given their ecological twist in the 1950s. Counting runs from Ostwald's energy-currency through Lotka's energetics of evolution to the Cold War ecology funded by the Atomic Energy Commission, where Howard Odum measured the metabolism of a coral reef at Enewetak Atoll, an accuracy that rested on the atoll having been cleared of its inhabitants. Clearing takes shape in the same decades out of the same social Darwinist material, in Ratzel's state as an organism rooted in soil and Schmitt's law that begins in a seizure of land no rule can authorize. Both grammars were already at work on the settler frontier, where the counting operation reads inhabited land as empty of the one activity that counts. They continue to operate together in Caracas, in Greenland, in Palestine, and in two dry European policies: the Critical Raw Materials Act and ReArm Europe. The question is not whether there is fascism, but, as Rastko Močnik argued, how much of it is built, by whom, on whose land, and with which energy.

Biography. Antonia Majaca is a researcher, curator and theorist whose work develops at the intersection of political epistemology, critical environmental theory, and anti-colonial feminist thought. She is the editor of *Incomputable Earth: Technology and the Anthropocene Hypothesis* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2025), *Feminist Takes* (Sternberg, 2020) and *Parapolitics* (Sternberg, 2021). She is currently a doctoral research fellow in the Department of Philosophy at Ca' Foscari University

of Venice. She founded and directs the research cluster Radical Epistemologies: Political Ecology and Transversal Praxis at NICHE, New Institute for Environmental Humanities, Ca' Foscari. She has held teaching and research positions at Graz University of Technology and the Dutch Art Institute, and was principal investigator of the multi-year Austrian Science Fund (FWF) project *The Incomputable*. She has directed research, discursive, exhibition and publishing projects for Documenta 14, the Berlin Biennale, the Venice Biennale, HKW Haus der Kulturen der Welt, DAAD, the Dutch Art Institute, and Goldsmiths.

Philipp Sattler Royal College of Art

Calculable Ground: Agrarian Violence, Property, and Administrative Conversion

At Aflenz an der Sulm, agricultural land, a Nazi forced-labour complex, postwar property reconstruction, and contemporary suburban development occupy the same ground. This paper asks how agrarian violence remains operative when the political categories through which land is governed change.

Under National Socialism, agricultural territory was made calculable through linked regimes of metabolism and inheritance. Herbert Backe's wartime planning translated land, population, and food into caloric requirements, while the 1933 Reich Hereditary Estate Law ("Reichserbhofgesetz") organised the reproduction of agricultural property through racial eligibility and a gendered succession order that privileged male heirs. Metabolic governance concerned both what land could produce and through whom it could reproduce itself as property.

After 1945, these categories did not simply persist unchanged. Racial eligibility lost its legitimacy, while debt relief, credit, productivity, subsidy, and later zoning and price rendered the same land economically legible. Drawing on Wendy Brown's account of economisation, the paper argues that political relations were not erased so much as translated into apparently technical-economic procedures.

Following one set of parcels across these shifts, from postwar title reconstruction to agricultural

restructuring, rezoning, and a 987 percent increase in land value between 2015 and 2018, the paper traces a sequence of administrative conversions: calorie, inheritance, debt, subsidy, zoning, price. It argues that what persists across regime change is not a single ideology but the capacity to convert territory into successive calculable registers, allowing histories of violence to survive as administrative normality. This complicates any simple opposition between the metabolic commons and entropic zones.

Biography. Philipp Sattler is an architect, researcher, and filmmaker whose work examines how historical, political, and economic processes become spatial, and how they persist through land, property, infrastructure, and administrative systems. His current doctoral research focuses on Aflenz an der Sulm, where forced labour, quarrying, agricultural property, and postwar redevelopment intersect within the same landscape. More broadly, his work addresses extractive territories, energy transitions, memory politics, and the political economies through which environments are governed and transformed. With Rose-Anne Gush, he co-directed *How Does One Get to Own a Mountain?!*, a film tracing lithium extraction, land ownership, and anti-fascist histories in the Austrian-Slovenian border region. His practice combines archival and field research with writing, film, exhibition, and spatial investigation.

Lorenzo Feltrin

Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Critical minerals, fertilisers and war: The political ecology of phosphate

Fertilisers are not just an agricultural input: they are a strategic resource hidden at the centre of geopolitical conflict. The US and Israel's war on Iran and the related disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz sent shockwaves through the global farming system. A large share of the world's traded chemical fertilisers normally passed through this strategic chokepoint, alongside key feedstocks needed to produce fertilisers elsewhere, such as gas, ammonia and sulphur. The rise in fertiliser prices is contributing to push up food costs across the globe. This may seem like a recent vulnerability. In reality, fertilisers have been entangled with war and imperialism for more

than a century. This presentation traces the origins of phosphate commodity chains in the Mediterranean region, focusing on Italy's role in the first half of the 20th century. It argues that due to its key role in Italy's economic development and geopolitical strategies, phosphate can be seen as a critical mineral to the country, even if, at the time, this terminology was not yet used by its policymaking circles. Italy sought to secure its phosphate supplies by invading Libya, while also obtaining mining concessions in Tunisia and Egypt. Phosphate imports became necessary to the fascist regime's policy of purported agricultural self-sufficiency. However, when WWII broke out, Italy's phosphate supplies collapsed. The role of competition over natural resources as a factor contributing to war is of contemporary significance, in light of the current "scramble" for critical minerals.

Biography. Lorenzo Feltrin is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow at the Department of Humanities of Ca' Foscari University of Venice. His current project relates to the political economy of phosphate and the history of labour and environmental conflicts in Porto Marghera, Venice. He is the author of the book *Workers and the World: Fighting Ecological Crisis from Within* (Verso, 2026).

Michaela Busse

TU Dresden

Blazing Heath/Heidegluhen: On the Production of Environmental Knowledge in Military Ruins

Following German reunification, vast military areas formerly occupied by Soviet forces were transferred to nature conservation organizations. Heavily contaminated by unexploded ordnance, chemicals, and other military residues, many could not be conventionally remediated and instead became protected landscapes. Paradoxically, decades of military disturbance had created habitats for rare and endangered species, turning former training grounds into valuable sites for biodiversity conservation and ecological research.

The presentation features excerpts from the multi-channel installation *Blazing Heath/Heidegluhen*, developed through fieldwork with foresters, conservation practitioners, and remote-sensing scientists on former Soviet training grounds in Brandenburg. Combining drone and thermal imagery, camera-trap recordings, bat acoustics, and archival footage, the installation examines how these landscapes are rendered knowable across scientific, technical, and sensory registers. These sites are approached not simply as military ruins but as experimental landscapes in which histories of destruction actively shape contemporary environmental knowledge. Controlled burns and mechanical soil disruption reproduce forms of disturbance to prevent forest succession and maintain ecologically valuable heathlands. Military disturbance thereby becomes both an ecological condition and a resource for experimentation.

Rather than documenting these environments from a singular perspective, *Blazing Heath* foregrounds the heterogeneous practices through which ecological knowledge is assembled. The presentation asks how histories of violence become folded into contemporary epistemic infrastructures, and what remains obscured when depleted landscapes are transformed into laboratories for environmental futures.

Biography. Michaela Busse is an interdisciplinary researcher, filmmaker, and postdoctoral fellow at TU Dresden. Her work explores environmental speculations and emerging material and territorial configurations in the context of planetary urbanization and the climate crisis. Drawing on visual ethnography and field-based inquiry, she investigates how future imaginaries are materialized and often unsettled through material, ecological, and technological interventions. Michaela has directed several short films and installations dealing with the recursive relationship between technologies and environments (*Building with Nature* 2022, *White Elephant* 2022, *Assembling the Coast* 2023, *energio* 2025, *Blazing Heath/Heidegluhen* 2025, *Overcast* 2025). She frequently collaborates with geoscientists and artists, fostering interdisciplinary and multimodal engagements with landscapes in transformation. Her work has been presented internationally in academic, artistic, and curatorial

contexts. She is the editor of *Granular Configurations: Sand, Materiality, and Planetary Urbanization* (K. Verlag, 2025).

4 • COMMONS IN CONTAMINATED GROUNDS

16:45–18:30 • Aula Mario Baratto • chair
Jasmine Pisapia

Farah Alkhoury

Bard College

Against Purity: Toxic Remediation in Militarized Landscapes

Sites of militarization are indelibly shaped by the devastation of war and the more insidious forms of toxicity embedded in soil, water, and air for decades after. Post-militarized landscapes are reconfigured through preservation, remediation, cleanup regimes, and Superfund grids, made to appear as though toxicity has been contained and managed while land remains unrestituted. Bombing ranges are transformed into restricted wildlife refuges, wetlands are stripped of their Indigenous stewards, and contamination is reconfigured as preservation.

The paper examines Vieques in the archipelago of Puerto Rico and the Ahwar Marshes in Iraq as two landscapes where militarism and extraction continue to occupy land and water. Both sites trouble the fantasy of nature as pure and remediation as a linear process, while heavy metals in soil and water, unexploded ordnance, and toxic diffusions continue to structure daily life. The paper engages with practices that form ways of living with toxicity, fighting for access, and working towards ecological continuity. It follows the infrastructural, spatial, and material flows of contamination.

The spatiality of contamination, and its containment, form a planetary entanglement. A former US Navy testing site and a Ramsar-designated wetland in Iraq are connected through a planetary infrastructure in which materials are enriched, weaponized, tested, deployed, stored, and re-encountered. Through field research, counter-maps and oral

histories, this paper traces histories and futures that refuse the logic of sacrifice zones.

Biography. Farah Alkhoury (She/Her) is an Iraqi architect and researcher based in New York. She is currently an Architecture Fellow at Bard College, where her research and teaching examines environmental violence, war toxicity, and political entanglements as central to architecture and spatial thinking. Farah has taught at Bard College, Columbia GSAPP, Rutgers University, and NJIT. She has collaborated on research and exhibition projects with Andres Jaque / Office for Political Innovation, curator Mark Wasiuta, and Studio Joseph, among others. She received a 2025 Graham Foundation Grant for Against the Denial of Wetland: Environmental Stewardship in the Hawizeh Marsh, and is also a recipient of the GSAPP Incubator Prize, the GSAPP Honor Award, and the William Kinne Fellowship.

Morgan P. Vickers

University of Washington

Entropic Wetlands, Swamp Commons

This paper critiques the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and its homogenizing conception of the wetland through a historical study of the swamplands of Lowcountry South Carolina. The paper centers on the infamous Hell Hole Swamp, today known as the Francis Beidler Forest, a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. While the original 1971 Convention sought to establish a unified framework for protecting watery ecosystems, the creation of the umbrella category "wetland" collapsed the ecological, social, and political distinctions between swamps, bogs, marshes, peatlands, and other watery spaces. This conceptual enclosure transformed historically maligned and racialized landscapes into universalized ecological resources subject to statist management, conservation, and extraction. The paper contrasts the Ramsar wetland with what it names the swamp commons: a political ecology of Black terraqueous life grounded in collective land use, community governance, ecological knowledge, and stewardship. Before and beyond the Convention, Black swamp-dwelling communities cultivated swamplands as metabolic commons: geographies of shelter, mobility, subsistence, kinship, and resistance to

racial capitalism. As the statist antipode of the swamp commons, the Ramsar wetland is a conceptual catchment, an infrastructure of accumulation, and a global governance structure that makes possible ecological enclosure in the name of progress and development. Not merely a conceptual slippage, the distinction between wetland and swampland reflects a geographical divide between entropic zones and palustrine geographies of metabolic potential. Through in-depth archival analysis, this paper interrogates how a material and social (re)turn to the swamp commons can offer a path forward in the face of indubitable watery futures.

Biography. Morgan P. Vickers is an Assistant Professor of Race/Racialization in the Department of Law, Societies & Justice and an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Washington. Vickers researches swamplands, racial ecologies, twentieth-century infrastructure, and eco-social repair. They are currently writing a book examining the social, racial, and legal construction and transformation of swamplands in Lowcountry South Carolina. The monograph illuminates the swamp as a geography of condemnation: a wretched ecology in the Southern imagination; a terraqueous site of labored, legal, and climate struggle; and an ill-fated 'wasted space,' destroyed in the name of Southern progress. Vickers has written about these themes in the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, *Environment and Planning F*, *American Anthropologist*, and elsewhere.

Aleksei Borisionok

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Negative commons of post-socialist radiation and anarchy

This research investigates the intersections of nuclear catastrophe, post-socialist temporality, and visual cultures in Eastern Europe (with a particular focus on Belarus and Ukraine) after the Charnobyl accident. It examines how visual cultures emerging from the independent artistic and political scenes articulate both the trauma of nuclearity and forms of defiance against technopolitical control. Drawing on contemporary art practice and photography, as well as political and environmental organizing,

the project explores how post-Chernobyl visual cultures expressed ecological anxiety, anti-nuclear critique, and anti-imperialist resistance.

This paper suggests a reading of one particular case, particularly post- and anarcho-punk figuration of late 1990s and early 2000s. It attends to the cultural forms that address radioactive pollution, which has complex radiobiologic and thermodynamic scope and encompassing qualities that affect life, in labour, in food, in sound. Deriving from the theories that elaborate on Marx's metabolic rift (Foster, 2000), negative commons (Monnin, 2021), and negative (or toxic) sublime (Peeples, 2011), it pursues the intersections of radiation and anarchy. Seeing radiation as a masterless object (Kohso, 2022) helps to illuminate the polluted environment and scope of techno and radiopolitical operations as an interesting terrain (entropic zone) of political agency, survival and contamination.

Biography. Aleksei Borisov is a curator, writer, and organiser who currently lives and works in Vienna. He writes about art and politics for various magazines, catalogues, and online platforms such as e-flux Journal, L'Internationale Online, Partisan, Springerin, and Paletten, among many others. He was a fellow at the Vera List Center in New York, and, together with Katalin Erdodi, he co-curated the Matter of Art Biennale in Prague (2024). He is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Art Theory and Cultural Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

Antonio del Giudice

Royal College of Art

Metabolic Resistance: Wasting relationships, and commoning in the Italian wasteland

Wasting relationships in Campania's Land of Fires exemplify capitalist accumulation, ecological trauma, and metabolic dispossession, the systematic conversion of reproductive labour and land commons into conditions of accumulation elsewhere. Commoning movements in Campania constitute counter-metabolic practices that challenge both the organised criminal networks (Ecomafia) responsible for illegal dumping and the

institutional negligence that enabled it, forces that, together, constitute what the workshop identifies as entropic operations.

This research departs from an in-depth analysis of the Land of Fires in the Campania region (Alberti, 2022), an area severely impacted by decades of illegal waste dumping facilitated by organised crime and political corruption. Building on commoning principles (Federici, De Angelis, 2014; Stavrides, 2016) and on critical spatial practice approaches (Kinstler, 2022) shaped by back-to-the-land movements in the Campania region, the research examines the spatial conditions and planning policies that perpetuate inequality, specifically through the production of 'wasting relationships' (Armiero, 2021).

The project frames the ongoing ecological crisis not merely as a technological problem but as a direct outcome of disenfranchising political and planning policies, which affect not only the socio-economic organisation of this region but also the health and wellbeing of human and other-than-human communities (Federici, 2019; D'Alisa et al., 2010). The research is being developed through an embedded approach, collaborating with grassroots movements to document and amplify the metabolic justice they already enact. It aims to demonstrate how organising around reproductive, communal, and situated knowledges can counter dominant paradigms of extraction and accumulation.

Biography. Antonio del Giudice is an architect and researcher focused on spatial politics, environmental conflicts, and radical ways of producing and owning space. He is a PhD researcher at the Royal College of Art, London, where he has served as Associate Lecturer for the MA Environmental Architecture (Research Studio 4 - Anemol), and held a Guest Lectureship at the University of Brighton. He has collaborated with practices including Architecten de Vylder Vinck Taillieu and June 14 Meyer-Grohbrugge & Chermayeff, and institutions such as the Autonomy Institute. In 2022 he joined 2,3,1000-GIT, an action-research organisation focused on social and environmental struggles. His interdisciplinary work also spans publishing and curating: he co-authored "Extractive Landscapes" for Inactual Magazine and co-curated Wasteocene, a Panopticon Magazine issue on Campania's waste politics as a

lens onto systemic exploitation and environmental injustice. His projects have been exhibited at the Nieuwe Instituut, Galeria Municipal, Fargfabriken, and CIVA.

Tuesday 22 September 2026

5 • THE PRODUCTIVITY OF WASTE

9:30–11:15 • Aula Mario Baratto • chair

Valentina Bonifacio

Rose-Anne Gush

IZK- Institute for Contemporary Art, TU Graz

Double Negative: Figures of Entropy as Anchors of Value

This paper traces the notion of 'entropy' as a recurring analytical figure across Marina Vishmidt's body of work, from her early focus on social reproduction through her final unfinished writing on infrastructural critique. Vishmidt writes that 'entropic waste is at once the exception to and constitutive of value'. Following this thread, the paper shows how value and valorisation, entropy and devalorisation, bring together dispossession and devalued labour with land grabs and 'cheap nature' – the 'sacrifice' or 'entropic zones' of huge swathes of the planet made under energy and labour transitions, re-armament, and insurgent war economies. Beginning with Vishmidt's use of entropy to theorize housework as an 'unproductive', limitless analogue to certain strands of late-twentieth-century art, the shows how this concept expands: from feminist artworks depicting the entropic exhaustion of domestic labour, to the production of voids in Land Art, to NFTs and AI as energy-devouring waste-making. The argument is that the central insight was to invert the status of entropy and devaluation: what appears external to capitalist value – unwaged reproductive labour, wasted nature, the 'reserve army of labour' – in fact functions as a constitutive anchor of value itself. As such, the paper reveals how 'entropy' folds into determinate negation and extends to

institutions, bringing their infrastructural conditions of possibility – and forms of emancipatory political organisation – into view. Here Vishmidt's thinking resonates with a question posed in Endnotes' 'Error': what does it mean that capitalist social relations have become 'mineralised' into the material infrastructure of the world? Endnotes argues that revolutionary thought is caught between fantasies of total rupture and continuity, proposing instead a determinate, strategic negation: identifying which technical structures are tractable to communal appropriation, and which remain bound to class domination. Read alongside this, Vishmidt's 'infrastructural critique' emerges as a parallel effort to distinguish the tractable from the intractable, attentive to the necropolitical costs of extraction, energy transition, and automation.

Biography. Rose-Anne Gush is an art historian, theorist, and curator. She is Assistant Professor at IZK, Institute for Contemporary Art at Graz University of Technology. From October 2026, she will be Senior Fellow at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg (KHK) „Rohstoffwelten, Kulturen im Umbruch“ at the University of Kassel. Her research critically investigates the political aesthetics of 'global art' and its discourses, political ecologies, and geographies of extraction and liberation; the connections between antifascism and anticolonialism; feminist Marxist theories, and the politics of artistic labour, with a focus on the body, and the central question of form. She is currently working on a book titled *The Work of Art in the Age of the Planetary Mine*. In 2025, she co-organised the conference *What is Infrastructural Critique?*, held in celebration of the life and work of Marina Vishmidt at the University of Applied Arts Vienna; its proceedings are collected in issue 41, 'Energy', of *Arts of the Working Class*. Her recent work has appeared in the *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, *e-flux*, *Arts of the Working Class*, *Camera Austria*, *Berlin Review*, and *FKW // Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur*. Her first monograph, *Artistic Labour of the Body*, was published in the *Historical Materialism* book series (Brill/Haymarket) in 2026.

Monika Halkort

University of Applied Arts Vienna

Metabolic Commons at the Extractive Frontier

The growing demand for Rare Earth elements has prompted renewed interest in industrial waste as a potential source of minerals deemed critical to a less resource-intensive economy. With total demand expected to double or triple by 2040-2050, governments are making substantial investments in developing new methods for separating chemical elements from processed geological materials to meet the projected surge. Drawing on a case study of energy waste inherited from the Soviet period in Estonia, this presentation discusses how the techno-scientific renderings of potential resource latent in discard recalibrate the calculus of value in relation to energy and labour as waste is turned into a productive force. At what point does the appropriation of industrial discard end up capitalising on historical violence and harm?

In response, the paper argues that speculative engagements with energy waste hinge on calculative techniques in which past forms of forced labour and dispossession no longer register, and the uneven distribution of risks, utility and value attached to human and non-human labour is both reconstituted and normalised. In this way, secondary extraction can be understood as the optimisation of metabolic flows for accumulation, ushering in modes of techno-spheric governance that thrive on the collective fallout of historical violence and harm.

Estonia's transition from Soviet enclave to EU member state provides a privileged site for this discussion, as the waste currently valorised was produced under a regime that no longer exists. This raises critical questions regarding access, ownership, and the legitimacy of claims on the material legacy of extractivism that inextricably link the idea of regenerative metabolic commons with demands for transformative justice as a trans-scalar, planetary force.

Biography. Monika Halkort is Assistant Professor at the School for Transformation at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. The School is an inter-university initiative for transdisciplinary research, education, and critical practice, launched in 2023. Her current research focuses on the political and moral ecology of transformation

processes, which she explores in relation to shifting geopolitical orders and energy regimes. Earlier work on the coloniality of digital infrastructures appeared in peer reviewed academic journals such as the International Journal for Communication, the Canadian Journal of Communication, and *Tecnoscienza* as well as edited books, including *Communication Innovation and Infrastructure: A Critique of the New in a Multipolar World*, edited by Rolien Hoyng and Gladys Pak Lei Chong (Michigan University Press, 2022), *Mapping Crisis: Participation, Datafication and Humanitarianism in the Age of Digital Mapping*, edited by Doug Specht (University of London Press, 2020) and *Oceans Rising*, edited by Daniela Zyman and Markus Reymann (Sternberg Press, 2021).

Imani Jacqueline Brown

Queen Mary, University of London

And still, the brightness shines through the holes in the earth / The Remote Sensation of Disintegration (6 min screening)

In the coastal wetlands of the US state of Louisiana, the fossil fuel industry maintains the spatial, environmental, and economic logics and landscapes of colonialism and slavery. Two hundred of America's most polluting petrochemical plants and refineries occupy the sites of former slave plantations along the Mississippi River. Once called 'Plantation Country,' this region is now called 'Cancer Alley.' Since the 1930s, oil companies have dredged 10,000 miles of canals in order to drill and access 90,000 wells, which connect to Cancer Alley's refineries and petrochemical plants via 50,000 miles of pipeline. The canals usher salt water from the Gulf of Mexico into freshwater wetlands, killing the vegetation that holds sediment together as land. Humans consist of myriad bodies; we hold our individual bodies, our microbial bodies, our community bodies, and our environmental bodies. Woven together, these bodies constitute ecological bodies, or ecosystems. Extractive violence is the violence of segregation: the human mind is segregated from the rest of its biological body; the Black human being is segregated from the body of humanity; the human species is segregated from its wider ecological body. Extraction from one body is simultaneously extraction from an

ecological body. Extraction from any body demands ecological solidarity and reparations. How might we sense the multiscalar, multispecies, multigenerational, multidimensional disintegration of our ecological body by Extractivism?

Biography. Imani Jacqueline Brown is an artist, activist, writer, and architectural researcher raised in New Orleans, based in London. Her work investigates the “continuum of extractivism,” which spans from settler-colonial genocide and slavery to fossil fuel production and climate chaos. Through conceptualizing extractivism as a cosmology, Imani reimagines vectors of corporate-colonial violence as networks of solidarity and as paths to ecological reparations. Imani’s multimedia practice uses any means necessary to disentangle the logics that make geographies, unmake communities, and break Earth’s geology. She combines photography and videography, archival research, ecological philosophy, legal theory, peoples’ and oral history, remote sensing, and counter-cartography, emerging in the world as video installations, sculptural objects, and murals. Her art and research has been disseminated internationally through art installations, public actions, investigative reports, and legal testimony delivered in courtrooms and forums of the United Nations. Imani received her MA in Forensic Architecture with distinction from the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2019 and her BA in Anthropology and Visual Arts from Columbia University in 2010.

Lama El Khatib and Jule Ulbricht

Freie Universität Berlin / Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Wastelands: Imperial Warfare and Ecologies of Decay

Writing from the collapsing post-industrial US cities of the 1960s and 70s, James and Grace Lee Boggs describe the emergence of wastelands, a concept they mobilize to describe both natural and material decay and the degradation of the social fabric. In the Boggses’ analysis, capitalism’s intensified value production not only brings about ecological damage but also produces a racialized surplus and enacts a spatial reordering of certain sites into abandoned geographies. In other words, this concept of the wasteland points to the

ecological and social death engineered by expanding capitalization.

Our world is not that of the Boggses. Yet their proposition of thinking through ‘waste’ towards an entangled rendering of ecological and racial violence remains pertinent. What also remains pertinent is the ways in which they diagnosed planetary-scale catastrophe, not through describing an abstract diffuse violence but through analyzing the very localized site of their life and work.

Arguably today, capitalist accumulation cannot be thought of without a study of the global infrastructures and industries of war that maintain imperial power. Military violence unfolds not only as concentrated assaults on life but also as the drawn-out destruction of infrastructures of social relations and sustenance while simultaneously relying on the libidinal and psychic function of producing the “image” of destruction, the image of the wasteland. In this context, what can a concept of the wasteland serve in relation to mapping imperial violence today? And how can we understand the accumulation of waste as Ali Kadri describes it, in relation to the production of value in a world economy reliant on genocide and war in their various temporalities?

This paper organizes itself along four contemporary scenes. It studies sites from Palestine and its expanded geography, to critical waterways and contexts across the imperial core as concentrated locales of historically intertwined processes of ecological destruction, racialization, and militarized valuation. The paper aims to not only map the ways in which death and destruction are administered under empire but even more so to think what the figure of the wasteland can offer anticapitalist and antiimperialist politics today.

Jule Ulbricht is a historian and researcher. She is a doctoral candidate in Social and Economic History at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and was a doctoral researcher at the Global Intellectual History graduate school at Freie Universität in Berlin. She studied History and Philosophy at Columbia University, University of Chicago and Humboldt-University. Her research

is situated at the intersection of critical studies of capitalism, spatial theories of economic infrastructure and history of economic ideas.

Biography. Lama El Khatib is a writer and curator. She studied architecture and art history at the American University of Beirut and is currently pursuing a doctorate in philosophy at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Her work focuses on the spatial infrastructures of colonialism as well as questions of intellectual inheritance/debt.

6 · THE POINT OF REPRODUCTION

11:30–13:15 · Aula Mario Baratto · chair **Roberta Raffaetà**

Carina Brand

Loughborough University

The Human Gut Microbiome, Primitive Accumulation, and Fossil Agriculture

This paper proposes a reading of the human bowel and gut microbiome as a site of struggle and domination. It considers the gut microbiome through the framework of primitive accumulation and the enclosures (Marx 1976) and ask if, as Silvia Federici does of women's labour and bodies in the emergence of capitalism (2004) the bowel in the same way becomes a new site of enclosure in the emergence of petrocapi-talism. This leads to the question whether the further embeddedness of fossil fuels and agriculture not only represents a shift in energy systems and ecology but a change in our bodies and microbiome through the consumption of mass produced and standardised monocrops.

The paper looks specifically at the mid-century when the Fritz Haber method of nitrogen fertiliser was rolled out across North America (Serrano 2015) and Europe (Gross et al. 2022). This "green revolution" (Mencher 1974), bankrolled and enabled by fossil fuels (Mitchell 2009, Huber 2013), was focused on transforming agriculture to industrial monocrops, which further entrenched the value form into agriculture (Mander 2002, Shiva 2014). At the same time technologies in the home for storing, making and cleaning food are developed by petrochemical industries (Huber 2012), and

secondly, we see the development and extension of fast food, premade foods and processed foods that coincide with women's entry into the labour market (Schlosser 2001). Therefore, can we consider the gut/microbiome as a feminised domain where production and consumption meet, and where regimes of petroleum fuelled thermodynamic energy insert themselves into the previously "free" and feminised domain of (re)production in the home.

Biography. Carina Brand is a Lecturer in Fine Art at Loughborough University, where she researches interdisciplinary readings of art and culture, drawing on feminism, Marxism, critical theory, theories of extraction, ecology and petroculture. She currently runs the research group Emerging Ecologies and Radical Practice. Publications include 'A Materialist Reading of Abject Art: Performance, Social Reproduction and Capitalism', Open Library of Humanities (2021), 'The Necropolitics of Reproduction: Black Feminism, Mothers and the Death Drive' in Politics of the Many (2022) and 'The Extractive Unconscious in Science Fiction: A Saga of Concrete and Gas' in Strange Horizons (2022). Currently she is writing on the work of Tala Madani and Jala Wahid, considering petroleum and gender in contemporary art, and on the ecofeminism of Agnes Varda's early depictions of petroculture.

Andreas Petrossiants

New York University

Autoreduction Against the Social Factory: Assembly Line or Circulation Struggle?

During an instance of *spesa proletaria* in the periphery of Milan in October 1974, a leaflet was distributed which read: "The goods that we have taken are ours, as is everything that exists because we have made it with our exploitation." With this remarkable phrase, those participating in the appropriation of commodities underlined their role in producing surplus value. Climaxing that fall, *autoriduzione* (autoreduction) became a widely popular social movement. Distinct from other modalities of popular appropriation (looting, for example), here, factory workers, "housewives," squatters, and other subjects in the "social factory" directly reduced the price of public services, commodities, and housing by force, blocking buses and standing up to

electric, telephone, and gas utilities by setting prices themselves. By the end of autumn 1974 over 200,000 electricity bills were autoreduced in Turin alone.

The magazine Contro-informazione ran a thematic section on autoreduction that year alongside a section dedicated to the Wages for Housework campaign. In a photograph of a feminist demonstration in Mestre in 1974, two banners hanging next to each other declare: "Against the continuous increase in prices imposed by employers, organized struggle" and "Our assembly line is serfdom [in the home]." This paper argues that autoreduction materially performs the workerist feminist critique of the labor process. Like workerist feminism, the tactic critically pushes the social factory thesis beyond false totalization. The circulation struggle thus emerges as a method for reestablishing a metabolic commons that is otherwise obscured by both neoliberal capitalism and modalities of struggle that continue to separate productive and reproductive spheres.

Biography. Andreas Petrossiants is a writer and editor living in New York. His work has appeared in Social Text, Antipode, New York Review of Architecture, Lux Magazine, The New Inquiry, AJ+ Subtext, Bookforum.com, Frieze, the Verso and Historical Materialism blogs, and e-flux journal, where he is an editor. He is a PhD candidate in performance studies at NYU, where he is writing about the role of circulation struggles in larger class struggle against urbanization.

Marco Baravalle

Sale Docks / Institute of Radical Imagination

Curatorial Ecologies: Towards a definition

Curatorial ecologies is proposed here as an analytical framework for investigating curatorial and institutional models in contemporary art. The term ecologies carries a twofold meaning. First, it draws attention to the ecological dimension, understood in materialist terms as the metabolism between human beings and nature, a relationship widely recognised as being in crisis, with multiple causes, not least the effects of capitalist and colonial extractivism. Curating is analysed here as a form

of labour, following Marx's definition of labour as a process between man and nature, by which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature. Second, the term reflects the conviction that curatorial research must move beyond the individual dimension of curatorial poetics and practice, just as the analysis of art institutions must move beyond the governmental framework of sustainability. The concept of the curatorial, which described a curatorial style characterised by a distinctly relational logic, is no longer sufficient for the present task; curatorial ecologies seek a materialist interpretative framework in which the exhibition, understood as an event of knowledge, resists any fetishisation of the curator's role. This paper develops one element of that framework: the materiality of social relations at the intersection of curatorial practice and the institutional apparatus, analysed through the workerist method of class composition after Alquati and Tronti. The task is to attend to the organisation of living labour in order to develop an effective critique of the institutional apparatus of neoliberal art, restoring political primacy to collective mobilisation and countering the dynamics of co-optation characteristic of the art-industrial complex. The paper develops this in dialogue with Dalla Costa, Fortunati and Federici.

Biography. Marco Baravalle is a researcher and curator. He is the author of *The Battleground of Art: Alter-institutions and Radical Curating in the Neoliberal Era* (Verso, 2026). He has published articles and essays on the relationship between art, activism and ecologies, with a focus on curating, and has co-edited *Art For UBI Manifesto* (Bruno, 2022) and *Art For Radical Ecologies Manifesto* (Bruno, 2024). He is the author of the monograph *L'autunno caldo del curatore. Arte, neoliberalismo, pandemia* (Marsilio, 2021). He is a member of Sale Docks, an independent space for visual arts and activism in Venice, and a co-founder of IRI, the Institute of Radical Imagination, an international collective experimenting with the intersection between art and commons. From 2018 to 2021 he was a research fellow on INCOMMON. In praise of community. Shared creativity in arts and politics in Italy (1959-1979), hosted by IUAV, University of Venice. He is an adjunct professor at NABA in Milan, where he

teaches Phenomenology of Contemporary Art, and has taught Curatorship at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Visual Culture at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano.

Ana Vilenica

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory,
University of Belgrade

Periphery in movement: Against displacement in place

Across Europe's periphery, the expansion of resource extraction takes place through both conventional mining and new forms of extraction linked to the low-carbon transition. While lithium and copper are increasingly framed as strategic resources necessary for decarbonisation, gold and coal mining continue to expand through more conventional extractive economies, alongside the rapid development of renewable energy infrastructure. Practices of predatory accumulation and productive destruction place growing pressure on ecosystems, livelihoods and communities. This has generated a sense of unhomeliness and forms of displacement that do not necessarily involve the physical removal of people. Extractivism progressively undermines the ecological, social and material conditions that allow people to remain and reproduce their lives in a place, producing what can be understood as displacement in place. At the same time, multiple forms of resistance and experimentation in organising have given rise to a movement structured around three interconnected dimensions: the use of blockades to stop extractive and destructive processes as a condition for the periphery to move forward; the development of direct democracy through assemblies; and the building of a Social Front that connects different struggles, organisations and communities. This periphery in movement thus draws attention not only to what movements oppose, but also to how they create new forms of political practice and life-preserving proposals. This talk discusses how the anti-extractivist movement emerged and how it continues to grow within the context of Serbia's student-led movement.

Biography. Ana Vilenica is an Associate Research Professor in Ethnography and Anthropology at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade. She is currently a co-investigator on the SustainAction project, which focuses on social movements in post-collectivist contexts, including Poland, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, the Czech Republic, and Sweden. Her focus is on housing struggles, urban commons, extractivism, and feminist approaches to social reproduction, with particular attention to the post-socialist and semi-peripheral context of Eastern Europe, the UK and the Americas. Ana's current research focuses on mining and green extractivism in Serbia and infrastructures of engagement in times of multiple crises. She is a co-author of the book *Infrastructural Violence, Displacement and Rebel Life: Social Consequences of The Jadar Project* and editor of the books *Decoloniality in Eastern Europe: A Lexicon of Reorientation*; *Urban Marginality, Racialization, Interdependence*; *Radical Housing: Art, Struggle, Care*; *Becoming a mother in neoliberal capitalism* and *On the ruins of the creative city*. She is also a member of the ULTRA RED collective.

7 • IN DEFENSE OF THE COMMONS

14:15–16:00 • Aula Mario Baratto • chair
Wietske Maas

Maria Chehonadskih

Queen Mary University of London

The Collective Infrastructure of Even Distribution

This intervention begins with some basic observations on how the traditional epistemological model of individual responsibility still determines our ethical and political responses to the multiple crises of ecology, economy and war. The old concept of the sovereign individual, who should act responsibly has recently been recovered in order to tackle the energy crisis ("consume responsibly") and the war crisis (refugees have become guests in the houses of homeowners, on precarious visas, they are at the mercy of their individual hosts). It is obvious that individual responsibility cannot replace the urgent need for new infrastructures transnational in scale and collective in scope. Its second part elaborates what the author defines as an

epistemic figure of even distribution, and what can be juxtaposed to the ideology of individual responsibility. Even distribution establishes a horizontal type of self-regulating cooperation or a system in which parts modify one another by evening out each other's capacities. This model brings together a Soviet rethinking of Marx's theory of reproduction, based on a cybernetic concept of moving equilibrium developed by Alexander Bogdanov, the law of the minimum established by a biologist Justus von Liebig, the concept of negative reproduction developed by Bukharin, Kozo-Polyansky's hypothesis of symbiogenesis, and Andrei Platonov's experience of peasant cooperatives during the civil war and famine. Seen from a perspective of these various models, social experiences and political experiments, even distribution also appears as a new concept of infrastructure and a mode of collective life.

Biography. Maria Chehonadskih is a Lecturer in Russian at Queen Mary University of London. She was a Max Hayward Visiting Fellow at St Antony's College, University of Oxford (2019-2021). Chehonadskih received her PhD in Philosophy from the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Kingston University in 2017. Her research and work concentrate on the epistemologies of (post-)socialism across philosophy, science, literature, and art. She is the author of *Alexander Bogdanov and the Politics of Knowledge After the October Revolution* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

Louise Carver

TBA21-Academy

Reconstructing the Metabolic Commons: Energetics, Enclosure and Convivial Blue Commoning

This contribution develops the concept of the blue metabolic commons as a response to the energetic grammars and legacies shaping contemporary marine governance. It traces how ecological and economic ontologies converge within blue-economy and marine conservation agendas, rendering ocean life governable through productivity, efficiency, resilience and optimisation. Drawing on genealogies of energetics from nineteenth-century

thermodynamics through twentieth-century ecosystem and transition modelling, it argues that energetic abstraction underpins contemporary categories of ecosystem services, carbon stocks, biodiversity units and natural capital, naturalising ostensibly post-political responses to ecological crisis within capitalist political economy. Politicising and diversifying energy ontologies opens possibilities for thinking otherwise about both ecological and economic value. Rather than merely resources held in common, metabolic commons are understood as relations of active commoning through which communities reproduce the conditions of life across land, water, food, care, knowledge, cultural practice, multi-species relations and political institutions. Where energetic legacies privilege optimisation, metabolic commoning asks how collective capacities for life might be sustained, repaired and transformed. The paper situates this conceptual intervention within the post-plantation coastal watershed of north-east Jamaica and the Convivial Blue Commons Lab, a TBA21 initiative and ontological experiment with Jamaican marine conservation organisation, Alligator Head Foundation. The Convivial Blue Commons Lab combines action research, artistic residencies, assemblies, territorial governance and notions of relational finance. It configures as an expression of infrastructural activism, aiming to make visible and challenge the pervasive extractive character of the blue economy while enacting alternative worlds making project.

Biography. Louise Emily Carver is an independent researcher, political ecologist and feminist geographer whose transdisciplinary work examines questions of value and valuation in green and blue economies, especially regarding biodiversity. She obtained her PhD from the University of London and works across research, practice, policy, arts and cultural settings. She leads the Convivial Blue Commons Lab, a TBA21-Academy initiative with the Alligator Head Foundation in north east Jamaica, and co-directs the Convivial Conservation Centre at Wageningen University (NL) as a global network of scholar-practitioners promoting post-capitalist biodiversity governance. Her work concerns the ways in which knowledge, institutions and material systems come together to produce norms in

environmental governance and explores strategies for how these can be shifted onto new pathways.

Marwa Arsanios

KASK HOGENT

The Metabolic Image of Land Struggle

This presentation is part of a larger project developed in the context of the author's post-doc research (at KASK HOGENT) which tries to expand on Marx's notion of the metabolic rift to think about the possibility of a metabolic image and more generally filmmaking practices stemming from land struggles. From historical films to more recent documentaries, essay films or videos, the paper articulates in a broad sense what is captured in the ruptured relation to land and how it is reconstituted in resistance movements, more specifically how film becomes the space for an anti-colonial political imagination centered in land struggles. The rift is understood in its colonial capitalist meaning, its consequences on the social metabolism of the earth as well as the different resistances to it. The research is divided into different sections covering questions of occupation, resistance, floods, scorched earth, commons, re-appropriation, colonial property regimes and more. This presentation covers only a few of those examples.

Biography. Marwa Arsanios' practice tackles structural questions using different devices, forms and strategies. From architectural spaces, their transformation and adaptability, to artist-run spaces and temporary conventions between communes and cooperatives, the practice tends to make space within and parallel to existing art structures allowing experimentation with different forms of assemblies. Film becomes another device and space for connecting struggles through images and montage. In the past ten years Arsanios has been attempting to think about these questions from a new materialist and a historical materialist perspective with different movements that are in a struggle for taking back their land. She looks at questions of property, law, economy and ecology from specific plots of land, while focusing on the histories of the commons in the levant region. She has been part of artist collectives and initiatives, the most recent being the legal communalisation of a land in the North Lebanon through its transformation to a

Mashaa.

Denise Ferreira da Silva

New York University

Negative Accumulation or that which happens without time

Negative accumulation, as a thought experiment, foregrounds racial and colonial subjugation in considering the political architecture of the global present. As an image to be read, it encapsulates two questions. The first is economic: how to account for how those with nothing, black and migrant persons, were blamed for financial losses of those who attempted to profit from their (the former) lack of assets? The second is ethical: How to account for how the current global crisis (pandemics, ecological devastations, etc.) more dramatically impact black, indigenous, and certain migrant persons and collectives? Exploring the negative, in four valences, in this presentation, I unpack the above questions by considering accumulation, in terms of (a) what is valued as negative (bad, pernicious, etc.) and (b) of negative values as well as (c) of hierarchical form ($[_+ _]/[_ - _]$) of difference that prevails in accounts and arguments racial and cisheteropatriarchal subjugation. The move here is (d) to deploy the negative through pervasion (occurrence without directional determination), that is, an image for heat that does not rehearse the prevailing image of existence, which figures it as a directional event, but as that which happens everywhere in the cosmos – the image of existence as corpus infinitum. That move allows for an argument regarding accumulation that foregrounds the in/difference between excess and loss, and allows for an account of how the colonial and the racial function in the political architecture of the global present that is not undercut by the historical and categorical enclosures that compose our critical arsenal.

Biography. The artist and philosopher Denise Ferreira da Silva is the Samuel Rudin Professor in the Humanities and Co-Director of the Critical Racial & Anti-Colonial Study Co-Laboratory at New York University and adjunct professor at the Monash University School of Art, Architecture, and Design (Australia). Her artistic and academic work reflects

and speculates on themes and questions crucial to contemporary philosophy, aesthetics, political theory, black thought, feminist thought, and historical materialism. She is the author of *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), *A Divida Impagavel* (2019), *Unpayable Debt* (Sternberg / MIT Press, 2022) and co-editor, with Paula Chakravartty, of *Race, Empire, and the Crisis of the Subprime* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). Her artwork includes the films *Serpent Rain* (2016), *4Waters-Deep Implicancy* (2018), *Soot Breath / Corpus Infinitum* (2020) and *Ancestral Clouds Ancestral Claims* (2023), in collaboration with Arjuna Neuman; and the relational artistic practices *Poethical Readings and Sensing Salon*, in collaboration with Valentina Desideri. She has performed and lectured at the Centre Pompidou (Paris), Whitechapel Gallery (London), MASP (Sao Paulo), the Guggenheim (New York) and MoMA (New York), and has written for major art events including the Liverpool Biennial, the Sao Paulo Biennial, the Venice Biennale and Documenta 14.

THROUGHOUT BOTH DAYS

Aula Mario Baratto

Kellie O'Dempsey

Drawing the Room: Metabolic Witness and Live Archive

This live drawing work explores how an artist might witness, respond to and produce knowledge from within a gathering as it unfolds. Working in real time, the artist acts as a durational witness, translating the conversations, arguments and atmospheres of *Metabolic Commons: Against Entropic Zones and the Ecology That War Built* into line, form and text as they happen. As an active experiment, the drawing does not document the event from outside; it exists within the event itself, generating drawing as knowledge in the moment of its making, inseparable from the labour that produces it. This method of responding to the gathering approaches knowledge as something produced from within the metabolic relation. Drawing with the flow of attention, the artist remains present as a somatic recorder, altered by what she witnesses and experiences, while her own act of witnessing alters what is recorded. This situated

and embodied practice is grounded in Donna Haraway's situated knowledges (1988). Structurally, the work unfolds as a recursive, non-identical loop, materialising Karen Barad's intra-action (2007), in which the artist, the discussion, the architecture, time and the bodies present emerge through mutual entanglement. The resulting works exist somewhere between energy, transition and scribe. In this live experiment, the drawings are made as an Anglo-Australian on First Nations Kabi Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) and Jinibara Country, Aboriginal land that has never been ceded. This positioning is not a resolved argument, but a grassroots artistic mode of engagement in which a space of shared knowledge produces both an immediate response and an embodied record. The works form a slow archive: uncompressible and returned to the workshop's commons.

Biography. Dr Kellie O'Dempsey is an interdisciplinary artist based on Kabi Kabi and Jinibara Country, Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia. Her research-driven, durational practice spans installation, drawing, performance, sound and video, building spaces that address how knowledge is formed from atmosphere, and how feminist and post-humanist concerns are entangled across time, scale and lived experience. Drawn to a post-human feminist approach, she makes visible the unrecognised durations of care and labour that capitalist time refuses to count, with grief and loss, personal and ecological, as the thresholds where her practice converges, using the loop as both structure and motif: recursive, never identical, always becoming. Kellie is represented by Jan Manton Gallery, Brisbane. O'Dempsey holds a PhD and an MA from Queensland College of Art and Design, Griffith University, Brisbane, with a practice-led methodology in performance drawing. Her work has been presented at MONA FOMA Hobart, the National Gallery of Australia, Queensland State Library and Museum of Brisbane.

Practical information

Venue. Aula Mario Baratto, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Dorsoduro 3246, 30123 Venezia.

Times. Monday 21 September 2026, 9:30–18:30. Tuesday 22 September 2026, 9:30–17:30.

Contact to register for online participation. antonia.friedman@unive.it

Workshop committee. Rose-Anne Gush, Antonia Majaca, Roberta Raffaetà.

Organisers and support

Organised by the *Radical Epistemologies: Political Ecology and Transversal Praxis* research cluster at NICHE Centre for Environmental Humanities, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, in collaboration with IZK Institute for Contemporary Art, Graz University of Technology, and the ERC project HealthXCross at the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage.

With the support of the UNESCO Chair in Water Heritage and Sustainable Development.

Funded by the European Union (GA number 949742). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Cover image: Marwa Arsanios, *Who is Afraid of Ideology? Part 3: Micro Resistancias* (still), 2020. Video, colour, sound, 31'16". Courtesy of the artist.



IZK Institute for Contemporary Art

