



# Conference Programme

(long version, with abstracts)

## London Conference in Critical Thought 2025

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025

Birkbeck, University of London

Malet St, London WC1E 7HX (entrance on Torrington Square)

# London Conference in Critical Thought 2025

First established in 2011, the London Conference in Critical Thought (LCCT) is a free, inter-institutional, interdisciplinary conference in critical thought that takes place annually in institutions across London. It is envisaged as a space for those who share theoretical approaches and interests but who may find themselves at the margins of their academic department or discipline.

LCCT follows a non-hierarchical and decentralised model of organisation that undoes conventional academic distinctions between plenary lectures and break-out sessions, aiming instead to create opportunities for intellectual critical exchange regardless of participants' disciplinary field, institutional affiliation, or seniority. Following this decentralised, 'margins-at-the-centre' logic, LCCT has no overarching or predetermined theme. Each year the conference's intellectual content and academic tone are set by thematic streams that are conceived, proposed and curated by a group of stream organisers. Each stream generates its own intellectual rationale and Call for Presentations, with conference participants responding to the accepted stream proposals.

In addition to the stream organisers, the conference is run by the trustees and volunteers from London Critical, which formally became a charity in 2024. Key organisers this year include Jane Frances Dunlop, Chris Henry, Jakub Kowalewski, Victoria Ridler, Victoria Spano, Tom Trevatt, and Samuel Wilson.

The organisers are grateful for the support and facilities provided by Birkbeck Law School, Birkbeck, University of London, without which this year's conference would not be possible.

# Conference Streams 2025

The Cruellest and Most Bloody Stream  
Imaginable: What's Left of Warhammer  
40,000?

Nicolete Burbach

Cruising as Critical Methodology:  
Practices and Imaginaries from the  
Shadows

Emmanuel Guillaud & Ezequiel González  
Camaño

Critical Thought Maintenance: How  
to mediate intellectual and  
organisational form (and get away  
with it!)

Toby Bennett

The Crisis of Experience in the in the  
Age of Algorithmic Attention

Daniel Neofetou & Nikita McCauley

Diagramming Digital Image  
Ecologies: Material Articulations of  
Invisual Relations

Hannah Lammin

Is Empathy Dead? Understanding  
and Questioning The Relevance and  
Significance of Empathy in the  
Digital Age

Gorvika Rao

Ephemeral Resistance

Justyna Struzik & Tomasz Sikora

Interweaving Embodied Practice and  
Critical Theory in Transnational  
Feminisms

Marie Theresa Crick

Labour and Liveness in a New Age  
of Automation

Richard Whitby & Richard Allen

Margins & Ambiguities: Reflections  
Between Material and  
Epistemological Metaphors and  
Limits

Anna Migliorini & Letizia Konderak

Monstrous Becomings: The politics,  
aesthetics and contradictions of  
Monstrosity

Isabelle Donetch

Masturbatory Reading: The Erotics  
of Knowledge Production

Kaiya Waerea & Sophie Paul

'In Theory': Media, Systems and  
(Re)Conceiving Communication

Walter Alberto Abalo Navia & Soumyajit Basu

Radical Listening: Collective  
Practices, Histories and Possible  
Futures

Raluca Soreanu, Ana Minozzo, Ana Tomcic,  
Ana Cvorovic, Lizaveta Van Munsteren,  
Julianna Pusztai, Ewan Oneill & Ivan Ward

The Art of the Gimmick

Oliver Cloke, Patrick Loan & Ziegi Boss

# Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June

All conference sessions take place in Birkbeck's main building on Malet Street (entrance on Torrington Square).  
Please note you can find a programme overview at the end of this document.

## 9:00-9:30 – Registration (MAL G13, G14, & G15)

## 9:30-11:00 – Parallel Sessions 1

### MAL 251 – Mapping AI's latent spaces / Diagramming Digital Image Ecologies: Material Articulations of Invisual Relations

The Synaesthesia of Latent Space: A Genealogy of Material Languages for AI

*Mujie Li*

Recent research on human-robot communication adopts cross-modality embedding of physical force and natural language, in which the haptic and the verbal share a unified latent space, and proximity between the two can be quantified. This modality of force-language reveals a kind of materialised and technical language: language can be mapped out via numerical and geometrical measures, and these formal abstractions instruct and navigate concrete human-robotic interactions. Such a perspective encourages viewing language as a material process rather than solely as a system of representation and translation of human language. Can this material language serve as a means to reconsider the very lineages of Artificial Intelligence? This paper aims to explore such a question by arguing that the materialisation of technical language itself constitutes the genealogy of AI's evolution.

By employing early chatbots such as ELIZA and PARRY, which illustrate a kind of schizophrenic language from Gilles Deleuze's aspects of philosophy of language, early media artwork Text Rain by Romy Achituv and Camille Utterback that reveals a materialisation of this schizophrenic language within a computer programme, Jean-Jacques Lecercle's concept of the violence of the forces of language, and the recent development of the shared latent space of forces and words, this genealogy of material languages demonstrates that the technical lineages of latent space are always entwined with linguistic theories and practices, suggesting an alternative perspective for critically and creatively reflecting on the history and evolution of AI.

Is Mapping the Algorithm a Mission: Impossible? The Case of Dead Reckoning

*Austin Jones*

The "algorithmic imaginary" refers to the way in which users conceptualise algorithms via their experiences with algorithmic processes, like social media feeds (Bucher, 2017). These systems are ubiquitous but operate invisibly and under corporate secrecy. The algorithmic imaginary therefore attempts to map a widely felt, but radically elusive, aspect of our digital ecology. As such, it allows users to negotiate the currents of power running through these experiences. However, it is poised to reinforce this power as well as resist it (Ruckenstein, 2023, p.22). Of all the experiences and representations that construct this imaginary, which of them produce resistance and not complicity?

Research here has been mostly ethnographic, surveying the imaginaries of platform users and 'producers'. However, an under-explored field is the representation of algorithms in popular screen media, despite their newfound prevalence as a trope in not just mainstream sci-fi like *Silo* (2023-), but also sitcoms like *Casual* (2015-2018), and even memes (cf. de Seta, 2024).

*Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning* (McQuarrie, 2023) is a uniquely productive case study. Through its AI villain it dramatically represents the danger of algorithmic processes, yet its genre and franchise contexts, upon analysis, flatten this representation entirely. The result is an abortive and ineffectual attempt to map algorithmic processes. Through analysing the unique narrative, aesthetic, spatial and extratextual constraints of *Dead Reckoning*, this presentation will show how these factors can compromise the mapping process and thereby suggest alternative, effective approaches to mapping our algorithmic terrain through screen media.

### The New Kings Don't Die

*Tanner Yocom*

This paper examines the cultural construction of artificial intelligence (AI) as purely logical. Set against the frameworks of rationality, modernity, and technology's mythmaking, it critiques AI's portrayal as an objective intelligence, reinforcing Enlightenment ideals while obscuring the material influences on its development. Employing media theory, science and technology studies (STS), and posthumanist critiques, the paper explores how AI's spectacle fosters perceptions of machine rationality despite its ties to human biases and capitalist motives.

This paper contends that the notion of artificial intelligence (AI) as mere logic embodies a medieval epistemology in which knowledge is mediated through images rather than direct material engagement. During the Middle Ages, transcendent elements—such as divine authority and metaphysical truth—significantly influenced epistemic life. AI operates in a comparable manner, providing objective intelligence that transcends human fallibility while serving the interests of technocapitalist power. This digital transcendence reverberates with medieval structures of control, where epistemic authority was concentrated in a select few's hands.

Certain theorists designate this transformation as "technofeudalism;" however, this paper argues that feudalism has not genuinely resumed. Instead, technofeudalism arises as a novel ideology—an interpretation that conceals the persistence of capitalism while modifying perceptions of labor and digital authority. The spectacle of AI endorses this ideology, not by reinstating feudal relationships but by establishing new epistemic hierarchies masked as rationality and progress. This study rigorously examines the role of AI in reinforcing these ideological constructs.

### MAL 252 – Witnessing, Possession and Radical Listening / Radical Listening: Collective Practices, Histories and Possible Futures

Listening to life stories: dissonance, blue notes and silences within oral history interviews

*Zibiah Alfred Loakthar*

In life story oral history interviews, narrators as well as interviewers are listeners too. People may be offered an “open space” to unroll personal life narratives in any direction they choose. However, in reality, various power dynamics may be at play and the stories that unfold may be better thought of as co-constructions between narrators and perceived and imagined listeners. Where narrators’ stories include dissonance, blue notes and silences what sort of negotiation, silent or spoken may take place, between narrators and interviewers? In this presentation, Zibiah will reflect on experiences conducting oral history life story interviews for public exhibitions and collections. She will discuss how narrators may listen to their listeners in deciding whether to share stories with silences, dissonance and unresolved chords.

### Listening to Possession: Witnessing, and the Limits of Psychoanalytic Ears

*Shalini Masih*

Psychoanalysis has long privileged speech as the primary medium of psychic expression, framing the “talking cure” as its foundation. Yet, what happens when the unconscious speaks not through words, but through the altered states of spirit possession? How do we listen when the very act of speaking collapses into a crisis of agency—when the self is voiced through an other, whether divine, spectral, or demonic?

Drawing from psychoanalytic ethnographic research with states of spirit possession in India (Masih, 2023), this paper challenges Eurocentric listening practices that privilege speech over embodied, ecstatic, and mystical expressions of the unconscious. Through the case of Riya, a young woman whose possession states revealed a language of psychic conflict, social entrapment, and unarticulated desire, I explore how possession disrupts dominant psychoanalytic assumptions about voice, agency, and interpretation. Attending to Riya’s experience required moving beyond conventional frameworks toward what Winnicott (1971) calls “holding”—a stance that suspends judgment and allows meaning to emerge. Yet, such listening is fraught with troubles and impasses. Drawing on Levinas’ (1969) reflection that a conversation with an Other is a teaching, I reflect on moments where interpretation foreclosed dialogue, where the desire to decode possession silenced rather than opened up meaning.

Further, I engage Bion’s (1962) concept of “negative capability”—the capacity to tolerate uncertainty—as a necessary condition for radical listening. Through Riya’s story, this paper argues that listening to possession requires an ethics of attunement to the spectral and the ungraspable, resisting closure while fostering a shared space of witnessing. In doing so, it contributes to discussions on decolonizing psychoanalysis, the politics of listening, and the limits of speech as testimony.

### MAL 253 – The Erotics of Land and Reciprocity of Place / Masturbatory Reading: The Erotics of Knowledge Production

Indigenous Erotics, Leaky Bodies, and Grounded Relations: Queer Native Placemaking  
in Joshua Whitehead’s *Jonny Appleseed*

*Mark Rifkin*

Joshua Whitehead’s novel *Jonny Appleseed* (2018) takes up the problem of the reserve (legally recognized Indigenous territory) in terms of the gender and sexual normativities it engenders and the enervating effects of ongoing colonial impositions and impoverishment that deeply mark it, addressing its harms and the powerful potentials for Indigenous flourishing that lie within

ongoing connections to people, lands, and waters. In doing so, the text is less interested in condemning the reserve than in considering the ways that attending to the abjection of queerness opens toward a consideration of vulnerability as a central feature of Indigenous relations to persons and place. As part of emphasizing Jonny's interdependence with family and friends and his felt attachment to his people's territory, the text features dreams in which Jonny experiences an eroticized relation to his people's home territory as well as images of bodies as immersed in flows of tears, blood, piss, and cum. The paper will address how these aspects of the novel foreground the ways bodies are porous, playing on the very debasement attributed to these fluids and queer sex in order to refigure them as indicative of a fundamental openness to others and to one's surroundings -- including possibilities for both wounding and pleasure. The leakiness of bodies in the text's imagery is part of its reimagining of Indigenous placemaking as occurring through forms of abjection, pointing toward the presence of complex forms of Indigenous subjectivity, sensation, and situated worldmaking that do not necessarily sit comfortably within discourses of political sovereignty.

### Intimate Ecologies: Liquid Landscapes of Pleasure, Blackness and Queer Speculation

*Ama Josephine B. Johnstone*

Where does the sensual live within an interdependent Black ecology? Through what poetics, aesthetics and conversations might these Black Intimate Ecologies be traced? In what ways has Blackness been removed, severed - through violence; and removed itself - through more subtle violences, from the more-than-human world? How can these processes of excision be made visible and traced within the context of contemporary Ghana and across the Black diaspora? *Intimate Ecologies: Liquid Landscapes of Pleasure, Blackness and Queer Speculation* takes embodied Black feminist processes of interdisciplinary research as a point of departure through which to language and make visible the importance and perseverance of sensual erotic relations between Black communities and the more-than-human: earth, fungi, plants, animals, insects, bodies of water, bodies of weather, bodies of gas.

Building on a wider body of research considering the importance of these transoceanic relations in the face of climate colonialism, *Intimate Ecologies* works to trace lineages of Black Indigenous lifeways and ontologies that might be interpreted as queer interspecies relations or entanglements, through queer speculation, decolonial aesthetic practices, and necessarily opaque oral histories. *Intimate Ecologies* is praxis, ritual and speculation; it is a mode of becoming-with; it is a methodology for Black resistances of climate colonialism and Black queer insistences on liberatory interspecies futures.

### Lakebursts Where Erin Touches Herself: reading ecological autopoiesis in precolonial Ireland

*Dáire Nic Cana*

*Lebor Gabála Éirenn* is a medieval Gaelic text disclosing the cycles of arrival and exile native to the mythical history of Ireland. With each new invasion the land lakebursts, fecund. These lakes will form the lyrical linchpins of this piece.

LGÉ is masturbatory: it chews on an historical imaginary to express the concept of Ireland as an eschaton — something which, purified of sin, will usher in the Rapture. At the far edge of the known world, the Gaels placed themselves at the centre of the Biblical narrative, expressing something queer in the early essence of Irish ontology by centring their own marginality.



The text ruminates on invasions, on murder/incest/impurity, climaxing with the salvific arrival of the Gaels. The rawness of exile, return as a carnal act — the text produces, ultimately, an erotics of belonging, where the land possesses an independent agency to incubate or abort the sinful.

The cultural impulse of reaching back to disclose the past is an onanism. Having been colonised, the archive of fantasy recorded here offers the Irish present a means of understanding its own historicising process as apocalyptic, pleasurable, migratory, queer, marginal, onanistic. This archive of fantasy challenges the contemporary orthodoxies of the nation and resists the rising narratives of fascistic nationalism by rejecting recourse to ethno-statist logic. Belonging functions as a sublime object and my reading argues, from a text at the heart of the Irish nation's historical narrative, for the discovery of connection to land in places most beyond the Pale.

## MAL 254 – Objects of Desire / The Art of the Gimmick

Object of Desire (The Pump): Nostalgia, Gimmicks, and the Illusion of Exclusivity

*Patrick Loan*

This presentation explores nostalgia, consumer culture, and the commodification of desire through my adolescent obsession with the Reebok Pump—a basketball sneaker introduced in 1989 with a technologically innovative gimmick: an inflatable bladder for a customized fit. More than a shoe, the Pump was the pinnacle of technology and status, an object of longing created by marketing.

My recent art installation examines the Pump as a case study in how gimmicks shape cultural memory, particularly in sports shoes design. As a teenager, I obsessed over this unattainable sneaker, making intricate drawings, adding it to wish lists, and modifying my own shoes in an attempt to mimic it and other sports shoes I desired. This reflects Jean Baudrillard's idea of the 'sign-object'—products loaded with symbolic value beyond their function.

Engaging with Tom Sachs' DIY aesthetic, my work deconstructs branding's illusion of exclusivity, exposing how marketing can manufacture desire. Walter Benjamin argued that mass production erodes uniqueness, yet the Pump's inaccessibility only heightened its aura for me, glimpsed in magazines and TV ads but always out of reach.

Beyond sports shoes, this presentation extends to nostalgic collecting, particularly 1980s sportswear, as a way to materialize past desires and to relive youth. Revisiting these objects reveals how consumer culture embeds products with aspirational narratives that shape identity. By presenting the Pump, I critique the seductive power of marketing and the emotional weight we place on the objects of our youth.

Sounding the Gimmick: on Performativity and Erasure in Music Gear Culture

*Hoi Yan Guo*

We are situated in an unprecedented democratic age of music and sound production — in terms of accessibility of both educational resources and devices, specifically those which have been mass-manufactured or digitalised, anyone interested in sound creation could start somewhere manageable without being a professional owning designated studio space and costly equipments. Yet the “happily-ever-after” has not happened for musicians, there are still demons to fight:



creative blocks, self-imposed limitations, and GAS, also known as the Gear Acquisition Syndrome. Temptations are loud.

The music gear market is a candy shop blessed with the magical touch of the gimmick. From pedals that yield shimmering, glitchy, quirky sounds with the playful twist of a knob to playstation-inspired interface of portable synthesiser and sampler, to something as ridiculous as guitar pickups that light up while striking the strings... Sianne Ngai's aesthetic category of the gimmick has found its way into how sound practitioners evaluate, create, and perform sound as both art form and product that results from labour of sound designers, engineers and hand-workers then commodified according to capitalistic structures.

The theoretical presentation and accompanying performance centre on the gimmickry in the current sound/music culture and explores the following aspects: the performativity of the gimmick and how it alters the relationship between instruments and musicians; finding musical authenticity in the gimmick; the erasure and embodiment of labour amplified by gimmicky commodified music products.

### The transparent Gimmick and a world without Truth

*Guy Levitan*

The gimmick is the imaginary part of exchange value, the added social meaning bestowed upon a commodity, overplaying its hand. The Omega watch turning me into a desirable, successful, handsome CEO works, but the Turbo sunglasses, or AI refrigerator, don't. Both the successful embodiment of desire in an object, as well as its faltering relies on a **shared** world of social meaning. On a Big Other which makes heels and cufflinks desirable. It might be a lie, but one which we collectively accept as truth.

WeWork overplayed its hand, it was a property company dressed up with the pastiche of a tech startup, and when the gimmick became visible, it plummeted. But in its wake a new model was born. Startup companies stopped being evaluated for their potential earnings, but solely on the potential of the next rung in the ladder, the next investment, to increase the value of the current. A lie which stands naked, as the next investor understood and exploited it just as his predecessor did. Similarly, NFTs and crypto coins are minted with the same logic, the worthless tokens sold, not on the promise of any value, but that the next tier of buyers will maintain the delusion, while completely cognizant of its lie.

From influencers and "hustle culture" to political pundits on social media, a new form of meaning is at our doorsteps, the lie which is both true and false. It is a meaning in which the Wizard of Oz is transparent yet still believed. A world in which myth is known for its falsehood but does not fall apart. In this world – what is the gimmick?

## MAL 255 – Haunted Forms: Monstrosity Across Flesh, Faith, and Form / Monstrous Becomings: The politics, aesthetics and contradictions of Monstrosity

Impunity, Incarnate—A Monster Walks into A Pulpit Dressed like Jesus

*Susan M. Tyrrell*

Accused of serial sex abuse; his victims were girls as young as 12, as old as he could cajole. From Evangelical pulpits across the US and UK, he preached a modern gospel of women's empowerment in the morning, stole a child's innocence at night. Shrouded in tunnels of darkness, he revealed what monsters look like.

Tied to a rising tsunami of nationalism, religion meets politics in the "Seven-Mountain Mandate", more aptly called the "Seven-Headed Monster Mandate". This work examines how streams of western Evangelicalism, predominately in North America/ Europe, hijack politics, manipulating religious freedom to control society—some to the White House in the U.S. (Sharp, 2022; Holvast, 2008). Using a pseudo-educational movement to mask egregious impunity for certain patriarchal privilege of carrying "hall passes" for crimes—from sexual assaults to genocides which destroy women, children, and land—myriad disturbing crimes come from inhuman(e) creatures, manifesting monstrosity—in cultural, historical, political, psychological manners—this unified manifestation speaks a coded language, managing to infiltrate the pew, the pulpit, and the pillars of society.

Haraway (1991) writes of the "intensified importance of churches in resisting the militarized state; central struggle over women's meanings and authority in religion; continued relevance of spirituality, intertwined with sex and health, in political struggle"(p.49). No longer fringe television fodder or satirical Second City improv; this nationalist Evangelical horror story traps those it promises to free. My ongoing project presents the academic foundation/research and demonstrates how and why we fund the monster who tries to control us.

### Horrific Appetites. Binging and Purging as a Practice of Eating Otherwise

*Alkistis Lara Papadaki*

Notions of the monstrous appear often in a variety of cultural discourses on eating disorders, from medical advice literature, public media discourses and theoretical approaches, to self-narrations and fictional accounts. Binging and purging, become, in these texts, sites of horror, anguish and sickness, where the self, food and the desire to eat are portrayed through metaphors of monstrosity, as demons and beasts that seek to destroy and possess· disruptive threats, uncontrollable and uncontainable.

In my presentation, leaning into those representations, I approach Bulimia, as an abnormal, excessive monster, and, drawing from Michel Foucault's (2003) work on abnormality and the figure of the human monster, I theorize binging and purging as a monstrous practice of eating otherwise.

Foucault's analysis of the monster as a violation of natural limits and classifications, a natural irregularity that confuses, transgresses and challenges societal law, calling into question its very foundations and practices, becomes a method for examining the definitions and modes of representation of Bulimia otherwise. A method for locating the limits of systems of recognition to address experiences of monstrous corporeality, intimate relations with foodstuffs, with positive and negative affects, and the biopedagogies that, by pathologizing deviation, render certain eating experiences unintelligible.

I argue that binging and purging understood as monstrous practices, can offer a framework for rearticulating the hegemonic terms that occupy and formulate them, while embracing the abnormality, excess and leakiness embedded in them, opening up possibilities for appropriation and subversion in coalition with queer, crip and mad critical genealogies.

This paper interprets the stream's concern with monstrosity as an invitation to engage the politics of alterity. Taking off from a reading of John Akomfrah's *Vertigo Sea* (2015) and the transformative and estranging encounters it stages with the sea and its non/human cast, the paper explores the political potential of concepts of the creaturely and estrangement (both theorised through Walter Benjamin). It argues that these concepts enable us to trace a path through radical critical and aesthetic practices concerned with otherness; the definition of the human; social, political, and historical change; cultural systems; and technology. Responding to these practices brings us to recognise critical engagements with humanism (including post-colonial ones) but also leads us to a call for its re-enchanted, planetary iteration. We are moved from the definition of the racialised, gendered definition of the human as 'Man' to what Sylvia Wynter describes instead as its ongoing process of its defining.

We are also led to concept of history beyond the *Anthropos*, one which is strikingly articulated through the non-human eye and ear of audio-visual mediums. Attending to the call of the creaturely and amplifying these various claims opens up ways of thinking differently and historically about human and non-human life and a pathway to more liberated forms of being historical.

#### Chronotopics of Malign Nature: Parsing Architecture's Imprisoned Horrors

*Deniz Ozbek Kocak*

Horror, at its core, is a material manifestation inherent to matter itself—a transgressive ontological disruption of/from nature that eventually alters epistemological capacities.

Horror is imparted into Architecture as a registration of time-space events, imprisoned in architectonic bodies. These bodies are monsters, eclectic chimeras with elements bound together by thresholds; assemblages of materialities, historical traces, temporal stains, and situated onto-epistemological fragments of horror. My inquiry concerns how the captured horror in architectonic bodies can be revealed. In this research, drawings—in a representational sense—are the architectonic bodies that I focus on as artifacts that locate horror within themselves.

I propose using Bakhtin's (1981, p.84) literary theory of chronotope, or "the intrinsic connectedness" of time and space, as a materialist and historicist translating agent to uncover the horror in drawings, thereby revealing the "historical poetics" of horror in Architecture. Drawing on Bakhtin (1981, pp.84-258) and Holquist (2005, pp. 105–145), I deploy chronotopes functioning like portals and seams conveying historical and spatial imprints, keeping a record of them. My research claims that architectonic elements act like chronotopes and that horror is embedded in their materiality, with its situated time-space.

Through chronotopic translation, I propose a methodology that mediates architectural drawings with horror from a materialist perspective, recognises horror's registration in chimeric architectonic bodies, and reveals how they capture horror. I will present the development of a methodology that incorporates and oscillates between aesthetics, nature, and literary and architectural theory.

## MAL 351 – Sabotage of the Everyday / Ephemeral Resistance

### From Doomers to Grass Eating Men

*Ari Ofengenden*

This paper explores the resistance of Doomers, Sampo, Freeters, NEETs, Wojak Doomers, and "grass-eating men"— These groups, often defined by economic precarity, societal disillusionment, and withdrawal from conventional life paths, are not passive victims of structural oppression but active in evading social control and social repression. The Doomer steeped in nihilism and despair, embodies a form of resistance by rejecting the relentless optimism of a failing system, instead confronting realities of ecological collapse, economic instability, and systemic alienation. Similarly, the Sampo generation in South Korea, Freeters in Japan, and NEETs globally resist the pressures of rigid labor markets and lack of social mobility by opting out of conventional trajectories. The phenomenon of "grass-eating men," characterized by a retreat from romantic and economic ambition, can be seen as like a quiet quitting against societal expectations that no longer align with lived realities. Through disengagement, these groups challenge the dominant narratives of productivity and success, carving out spaces of meaning and agency within systems that otherwise deny them. This study argues that lack of denial regarding lost futures is intertwined with acts of resistance, as they navigate and subvert the structural constraints that seek to define their lives. By examining these narratives, the paper highlights the complex interplay between structural oppression and individual agency, offering a nuanced understanding of how marginalized groups resist, adapt, and reclaim dignity in an era of systemic failure.

### The squat as a site of absence

*Pip Hudd*

Capital has repurposed an aesthetic of protest for profit and the spirit of rebellion is structurally present in what Catharine Malabou has recently labelled 'capitalism's current anarchist turn'. In response to this, Malabou imagines a space of genuine resistance, 'radically foreign' to that which it resists, as 'the place without a place... the frozen polar rock' (Malabou: 2023).

Drawing on personal experiences living in squats in London (2022-2024) my presentation will examine the possibilities for the squat to constitute a space of ephemeral resistance via Malabou's framing. I will consider the squat as a site of economic withdrawal and social absence, as hidden spaces that rarely last longer than a few weeks and whose inhabitants often strongly resist their documentation. In 2025, squats often constitute sites of existence for its own sake – of just sitting around and surviving (especially as increasing legal restrictions make squatting untenable as a launchpad for other forms of more overt resistance).

By nonetheless recognising the potential for squats to be profoundly lonely places, often characterised by addiction and sexual violence, I will go on to ask whether the radical indifference of the squat towards wider society translates to an internal indifference (or lack of care) between those living in them. I will argue that this is sometimes but not always the case and that squats can help us to understand the specific ways that care might manifest in spaces characterised by acts of absence and withdrawal.

### Queer resistance in the prison heterotopia

*Rachele Girardi*

How can we reflect on queer resistance as embedded in the lived experiences of people in prison? This presentation builds on the findings of my PhD thesis, exploring the gendered regulation of women's prison spaces in England and Wales. In my project, I reconfigure the prison space as a heterotopia, a mirror where the reflections of heteronormativity, sexism and transphobia produce distorted and abject experiences behind bars.

Nevertheless, by engaging with an emotional mapping exercise with participants who have experienced incarceration, heterotopic imagination emerges as a vehicle for thinking about everyday practices of resistance. These cracks in the prison mirror destabilise the prison system, representing glimpses of alternative possibilities to the current carceral state. More specifically, people in prison engage in everyday practices of queer contestation, subverting the gendered regulation of the institution, and generating liminal spaces where familiarity and strangeness juxtapose, producing apparent incongruent experiences.

In my work I argue that, by actively attuning to lived experiences through affective solidarity, and thinking about spaces of marginality through heterotopic imagination, we can reveal traces of everyday resistance as embedded in the life lived at the margins of social space. The affective and symbolic significance of these acts of contestation rests in their potentiality, considered as fleeting but concrete moments to envision new ways to resist the carceral hold and imagine alternative abolitionist futures.

*11:00-11:30 – Break*

## 11:30-13:00 – Parallel Sessions 2

### MAL 251– Reading the Margins / Margins & Ambiguities: Reflections Between Material and Epistemological Metaphors and Limits

Disegno ai margini. Notes for a Marginal Definition of Drawing

*Filippo Bosco*

How can a practice or a theory be displaced from the center to the margins? What are the consequences of that move? What can construct a marginal perspective? This paper addresses these questions through formal reflections and broader theoretical reflections (building on Derrida, Spivak, hooks) to articulate a marginal definition of drawing. Since its first theorization in Western art, drawing was mostly understood at the center of the theory of the art(s), as well as at the core of artistic ideation and practice. Accounted in the canonical history of drawing and its “primacy” (Petherbridge 2010) are typical metaphors of centralization and essentialism, taken from nature and patriarchy: “disegno” as “the father of the arts” (Vasari, 1568), the “most artful of the arts” and “necessary to the universal” (Armenini, 1587) or the intellectual idea inspired by God (Zuccari, 1604). Counternarratives, or marginal perspectives, highlight instead how drawing “deviates” from ideation or runs parallel to creation processes. Constructed from negative judgements in the modern artistic literature, this perspective frames drawings from the point of view of gribouillage (or random scribbling), sketching and noting as literal “marginalia” on works on paper and books, and “pentimenti”, or the “corrected” mistakes in a drawing. A non centrist political function of drawing is exemplified by William Kentridge’s texts and/on drawing practice (2014). Marginality frames these features as resisting the univocal (as centripetal) reading of drawing. Marginal drawing expresses situated and critical knowledge, multiplies the levels of understanding of a theoretical discourse and cuts across the linearity of the topological model of center-margins.

Ambivalent Margins: Cahiers du cinéma, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Film Theory

*Nicolas Helm-Grovas*

A theory of marginality as political discourse is rooted in formal thinking, as the historical connection between the work of Jacques Derrida and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak suggests. This paper will approach the politics and epistemology of the margin through a juxtaposition of two engagements with this concept in film theory. First, Marxist and psychoanalytic writing in the French journal *Cahiers du cinéma* in the early 1970s, for instance in writing by Pascal Bonitzer and Jean-Pierre Oudart. For these theorists, the margin – or related terms such as surplus, residue and off-screen (*hors-champ*) – signals a politically and subjectively radical excess which, however, is continually neutralised through the ideological forms of mainstream cinema and cinema discourse. Second, feminist, decolonial writing of the 1980s, notably the work of Trinh T. Minh-ha, who sees it as a space where situated and subjugated knowledges develop, while also being attentive to the pitfall of the margin becoming the site of a predetermined, acceptable ‘otherness’ established by existing institutions. In other texts, Trinh plays literally with the margins of the page, in doing so probing the border between inclusion and exclusion. In both *Cahiers du cinéma* and Trinh, despite being elaborated in distinct historical and geographic contexts and having political and theoretical divergences, the margin is seen as a potential space of resistance which

is also constantly in danger of being reincorporated, to become a support for the centre rather than something undermining it. In both, as well, political and theoretical questions cannot be separated from reflections on form, including the form of the theorist's own writing.

Margins of Literary Theory and Marginal Methodological Approaches to the  
Publishing Process: The Page as a Sign, Typographic Rhetoric, and (Il)legibility

*Verónica Stedile Luna*

In a reassessment of *Allegories of Reading* by Paul de Man, Magnus Wield (2015) suggests that we can think of the indeterminacy in the meaning of a text not only as the impossibility of deciding between the figural and literal sense of a sentence but also on a “material level.” This means that, beyond the figural rhetoric of a text, there is also a typographical “rhetoric of print.” Invoking Paul de Man's theory as a starting point for reflecting on legibility and illegibility should also prompt us to consider the subtle and marginal connections between Literary Theory and Publishing Studies. Not at the core of their theories, but at their margins, authors such as Theodor Adorno, Jacques Derrida, and Roland Barthes have reflected on this “material level” of the text in ways that intersect with publishing concerns: typographical issues, page layout, paratext, inscription instruments, material procedures of publication and printing processes. Within their frameworks, forms, formats, and inscriptions enact literal and material margins. At the same time, their politics of form open up the possibility of reading the margins as sites where epistemological displacements emerge. The margin, then, would serve both as the object of study and the perspective from which to think about the editorial poetics of the text.

This paper explores how aspects often considered marginal to literary theory—frequently addressed by disciplines such as design, cultural history, and publishing studies—can be understood as integral to language and writing. This approach involves attending to the moments when certain theorists, albeit tangentially, have engaged with these concerns. At the margins of literary theory, there emerges a fascination with the visual and material dimensions of writing—as part of the realm of publication—which reveals editorial processes—and their margins—not as secondary acts of interpretation, but as formative forces that shape our encounter with a linguistically and materially mediated experience.

## MAL 252 –Histories of Radical Listening / Radical Listening: Collective Practices, Histories and Possible Futures

Listening to the (Transgenerational) Body

*Janka Kormos*

The paper discusses Judith S. Kestenberg's (1910-1999) concepts of kinesthetic listening and kinaesthetic imprints of transgenerational trauma, as well as her methods of embodied witnessing in the analytic space.

Kestenberg was a Polish-Jewish emigree who arrived in New York psychoanalytic circles at the outbreak of World War II. Between 1945-1965, she became a pioneer of psychodynamic movement studies and psychohistorical Holocaust studies. Freud's work shifted the paradigm of medical investigation from looking to listening. Kestenberg further shifted it towards embodied listening and kinaesthetic attunement. In the Freudian view, the psychic material behind the symptom is revealed by language and the patient's narrative; for Kestenberg it is revealed by the



specific constellation of kinetic features in the individual's movement repertoire. Kestenberg was vocal about engaging the therapists body in the analytic process and believed that observing and kinesthetically attuning to the patients' movement expressions enriches the therapeutic process with an embodied depth.

In 1981, Judith and her husband, Milton Kestenberg, launched the Jerome Riker International Study for the Organised Persecution of Children. They conducted the largest, international oral history project on the effects of the Holocaust consisting of approximately 1500 testimonies from child survivors, children of survivors and war-children. Kestenberg developed an interview technique which focused on reconstructing narratives of child survivors based on evoking early kinaesthetic memories. Kestenberg believed that transgenerational trauma was visible in the movement repertoire of survivors. She viewed the body as an archive and movement as language that speaks about the psychic life of the individual.

### *The 388: Listening and Speech*

*Alexander Miller*

After 43 years, the 388 (Centre for the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Young Psychotic Adults in Quebec City) was recently closed. This was a forced closure carried out by regional authorities. If there's one thing that's sure about this closure, it's that these authorities had no interest in listening: not to political representatives, community members, mental health professionals, and especially not to current and former service users who implored a change of course, testifying to the life-changing effects of the treatment they received. This closure thus engages directly a series of questions pertaining to listening and its refusal, but it is only the latest chapter in a decades-long struggle over the 388 and the services it offers—a struggle emblematic of broader issues concerning, e.g., mental health infrastructures and the place of psychoanalysis today.

The 388 was an institution that had as its objective to listen to psychosis, which put it at odds with predominant epistemologies and methodologies from the start. Such listening, however, is not mere hearing, nor is it a passive receptivity to speech that is already there. Rather, it is a finely structured praxis, which presupposes speech not as something given but as something that may yet emerge, if the conditions of such emergence are enacted. In this talk, I will thus reflect on how 'radical listening' might be conceived in light of the psychoanalytic treatment of psychosis—not as diffuse openness, empathic presence, or generalized care, but as a temporally and spatially distributed assemblage, and as an ethical practice animated by a wager. At the heart of this problematic is the question of psychoanalysis itself—the specificity of which has to be upheld in the face of a range of discourses that either actively strive to eliminate it or risk dissolving it into generalized therapeutic or intellectual cultures, in each case foreclosing the very nexus of listening and speech through which psychosis may become an opportunity for transformation.

### *Sanity, Madness and the Family. A listening history*

*Mike Roper*

When asked in 2008 about books that had changed her life, the novelist Hilary Mantel cited Laing and Emerson's 1964 study *Sanity, Madness and the Family*. Its portraits of people diagnosed as schizophrenic were 'vivid, direct, gripping'; the eleven women and their families who feature in the book 'seemed close enough to touch.'

How did Laing and Emerson achieve this affective power? Among historians of psychiatry, the book's contribution is typically seen in terms of a 'social diagnosis', a shift of attention from the pathology of schizophrenia to the milieu of the family, whose mystifications had led the patient to distrust her own perceptions and memories, and ultimately to break down.

The research for *Sanity, Madness and the Family* entailed considerable methodological innovation. Laing and Emerson did not just take their case histories in note form, as was common practice among psychiatrists at the time; they undertook over 200 hours of interviews with patients, their siblings, parents and even grandparents.

Above all, for Laing and Emerson, the researcher must listen, and their book, with its long extracts of direct speech, turns the reader into a listener. Listening was the vehicle through which the patient's subjective experience of the world, and the double-binds that had led them to psychiatric hospitals, could be laid bare. The patient's words – captured on tape, transcribed and reproduced as text – foster an empathetic relationship, transporting the reader into the world of the patient, whose situation becomes humanely comprehensible.

## MAL 253 – Cruising Archaeologies: Ethnographic traces, archival poetics, and queer knowledge production / Cruising as Critical Methodology: Practices and Imaginaries from the Shadows

Cruising the archive: a material analysis of a subcultural sexual practice

*Jack Scollard*

This audiovisual presentation will give a brief background and timeline to the Cruising Archaeology including its subsequent release as a physical publication in May 2024. The project is an ongoing creative research practice that began as an anonymous Instagram account involving the collection, reconstituting, scanning and cataloging of cruising litter from over a dozen prominent cruising locations across London. This presentation will explore the ways in which cruising and this project can destabilise fixed categories, offering insights into its potential as a disruptive practice. In this project, everyday disposable objects such as hypodermic syringes, used condoms and empty viagra packets become elevated to status of cultural artefact; disrupting normative expectations and acceptability associated with objects found in traditional archives. The online and physical display provokes thought on what a material analysis of contemporary sexuality and pleasure could look like as well while also confronting institutional frameworks and ethical questions around revealing and exhibiting such objects in the first place. Drawing on works like *Unlimited Intimacy* by Tim Dean and *Cruising Utopia* by José Esteban Muñoz, this project explores cruising as a challenge to hegemonic ways of relating—to each other and the world. It positions cruising as a world-building practice that reimagines pleasure, identity, and community. This presentation argues not only for new ways to understand cruising, but for cruising itself as a mode of inquiry.

Cruising by Night, Cruising by Day: Queer Black knowledge production in Guy St. Louis's Poetry

*Anne Potjans*

In 1983, Berlin-born and raised, Black German poet, nurse, and queer S&M practitioner (Nzingha) Guy St. Louis published a semi-autobiographical poetry volume entitled *Gedichte Einer Schönen Frau* (Poems of a Beautiful Woman), the first known volume of poetry written by

a Black German author. The volume negotiates Black queer existence in Germany in the early 1980s between working as a nurse in a geriatric care facility and queer subcultural nightlife. In doing so, the poems' speaker moves in and out of different temporal and geographic spaces that can become sites of affirmation as well as of anti-normative and anti-social critique. At the same time, they provide the parameters between which a desire for love and a desire for violence fluctuate.

In my talk, I propose cruising both as a utopian practice of queer existence, where the present emerges as a testing ground for that which is not there (yet), but also as a methodology of queer being-in-the-world where seemingly unrelated or even contradictory forms of knowledge combine and bring us closer to what we need to know in the moment. In my reading of *Gedichte einer Schönen Frau*, my interest is in the knowledge that the text produces around the dichotomies of life and death, tenderness and violence, but also the need for human connection versus the speaker's consciousness of how human connection might fail. My aim is to show how this text is an example of how fleeting, momentary impressions or encounters can become rich sites of understanding.

My talk will be based on pertinent sections from the text that I will include in my presentation, both in the German original and in English translation (provided by me). Whenever possible and necessary, those sections will be read aloud.

## MAL 254 – Sensitive Media: On Art, Mood, and Optics / 'In Theory': Media, Systems and (Re)Conceiving Communication

Curatorial Interface: From Theory to Practice

*Tatiana Isaeva*

My research examines interface through net art curatorial practices, aiming to redefine and expand on the interplay among art, technology, and space. As Pold notes, "digital art reveals the role of the interface and its significance as an aesthetic, cultural, and ideological object" (Pold, 2005, p. 4). These ideas resonate with Lev Manovich's *The Language of New Media* (2001), where he draws a parallel between the concept of form and interface. He further asserts that to eliminate the interface from the analysis of new media art is to undermine its status as art. I fully agree with this assertion; the interface is not merely a neutral canvas upon which images are displayed, but rather a dynamic system of binary data, algorithmically constructed to present the artwork within a digital environment.

To theorise and understand the digital environment and interface as a medium I have contracted a [Curatorial Interface project](#) that serves as a curated collection of diverse UI designs, brought together on a single website to highlight the trends and tendencies employed in net art exhibition practices. The website is composed of three integral parts. The first part is the PhD thesis and its chapters, which provide the theoretical foundation for the project. The second part, *Wrong Archives*, is a curated collection preserving *The Wrong Biennale N5* (2021/2022). The final part focuses on the website's design, offering a detailed explanation of the stylistic choices made during its development. Together, these components form a comprehensive exploration of net art curatorial practices and their contribution to interface design.

Much recent scholarship in the field of media phenomenology has investigated the role of temporality in shaping our experience of digital media in everyday life, as well as the ethical and political ramifications that flow from it. Consistent with the central phenomenological tenet of locating the present as ontologically prior to any past origin, the idea is that in order to properly understand the texture of day-to-day digital navigation our focus should not be on discrete media texts or objects, but on the way they are experienced first and foremost as presents into which we find ourselves repeatedly thrown. The aim of this paper is to establish an empirical framework for scrutinizing the ethical dimensions of digitally mediated temporal experience. The traces of this experience are not paths from a past or causal origin, but traces of mobility experienced as always-already presentness. Next, the paper moves on to map out the relationship between the experiential textures of everyday digital wayfaring and public values such as recognition, legitimacy and solidarity. Affective modes of being digitally, namely moods, shouldn't be seen either as a reaction to the state of our public realm, nor as a private filter that shapes one's personal experience of a pre-existing public world. Instead, it will be argued that the various moods associated with ordinary digital life - distractedness, listlessness, tetchiness, boredom and so on – are constitutive of publicness, including the values associated with it.

Beyond Kittler: From Optical to Computational to AI Image Systems

*Joel McKim*

In his lectures on the history of optical media, Friedrich Kittler traced the development of image production from painting, to mechanical optical devices like photographic cameras, to electronic image processing and computational simulations. Importantly, Kittler names the object of his study optical media, rather than visual media, as the physics and mathematics of light capture and simulation are at the centre of his history. From Renaissance experiments in linear perspective, to lens and film-based image capture, to ray tracing computer graphics simulations, for Kittler, the history of image media is the history of calculating, modelling, and storing light.

What then is the relationship of AI generated images to Kittler's genealogy of optical media? Do the neural networks, statistical processing, latent spaces, and diffusion models powering current still and moving image AI generation bear any relation to the physical and mathematical processes of light? Or have we entered an entirely post-optical era of the image? And if so, what are the consequences of this shift? When introducing its text to video model Sora, OpenAI made the bold claim that generative video models presented a path towards the development of "general purpose simulators of the physical world." Referring to Kittler's theories of optical media and computer image simulation technologies, this paper will examine the ontology of the AI generated image and question the AI industry's assumptions regarding the relationship between these images and the physical world of light and matter.

MAL 255 – Affective Infrastructures / The Crisis of Experience in the in the Age of Algorithmic Attention

The Liminal Algorithmic Space of Psyop Capitalism

*Esther Forse*

In “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”, Frederic Jameson uses the Bonaventura Hotel as a figure to understand postmodern space and its effects. Now, Trevor Paglen proposes that we have entered ‘psyop’ capitalism- an era where media acts as a psyop, morphing through feedback to manipulate human perception and thereby also sculpt reality. What might a Bonaventura Hotel for psyop capitalism look like? I propose that the Backrooms- a genre of liminal spaces popular in short-form video- can be read in this way.

In the Backrooms, the viewer wanders alone down corridors and through temporally disjointed settings such as swimming pools and shopping malls. The algorithmic condition is both subject matter and medium; perpetual motion, disorientation, being watched, and the mystery and superstition appropriate to immersion in black-box technology. Temporal and spatial unmappability is a given, since the composite architecture across videos varies for every viewer. Logic, narrative, and memory are abandoned in favour of wandering, chance, and vibes; a particular experience of digital time that forces the user to go with the flow and adjust to ‘surviving’ (a common theme) in this immersive environment rather than hoping to master or escape it. This cultural logic is not defeatist, but productive: it offers a critical view of the experience of digital time and history, suggests potential in the relationships between viewer and virtual architecture, human and algorithmic gaze, and works to understand how the brain is sculpted as a plastic medium under psyop capitalism.

#### Mood as Performance: Visibility and Affective Participation in the Attention Economy

*Jiahui Zhou*

This presentation offers a case study of a viral short-form video in which a Chinese influencer stages a flirtatious encounter with Apple CEO Tim Cook. Although framed as accidental, the video is carefully choreographed: stylized glances, dramatic pacing, and the romantic soundtrack “After Last Night” transform it into a performance of mood designed for recognition. The clip has generated numerous reenactments across platforms like Douyin/TikTok and Xiaohongshu, each elaborating on the original’s gestures with overlaying captions such as “pretending to have a headache to attract your crush.” The video offers no real message, as viewers already know the encounter was planned. What resonates instead is how mood is performed.

I argue that the Cook video exemplifies a genre of memetic content that creates space for political engagement. Mood performance in algorithmic feeds does not express genuine emotion or reveal identity. It functions as an aesthetic structure that enables recognition and circulation without requiring personal disclosure. Through elements of ambiguity and play, these performances often evade the censorship embedded within systems of platform control and become possible grounds for critical reflection.

Combining affect theory (Berlant; Ahmed) with Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, this presentation situates the video within a broader cultural shift toward mood as a mode of appearance under conditions of fragmented attention. This case illustrates how mood performance responds to the crisis of experience by offering a soft but durable structure for visibility: light, recursive, and quietly plural, where meaning resides in each individual user instead of the content.

What emerges in the quarrels of programmers regarding their own practice are new problematics of writing in the age of its total heteronomy, and hence new ideas which reflect different embeddings of these problematics.

I will critique three variations on the theme of control flow, or its liquidation, using a toy example of the generation of primes in three languages; realizing, respectively, the ideas of the imperative, the functional and the array.

The array-oriented register of writing will be further investigated according to Perlis and Hsus' notion of the lyric in Iverson's APL, with a view to trace Valéry's account of the liaison between poetry and thought in reverse.

## MAL 351 – Unlicensed and Illegitimate / Ephemeral Resistance

“We were a danger to the system”: PCRL as sonic enclave, 1985 – 1989

*Jacob Saheb*

In September 1988, the IBA, Britain's regulatory body overseeing independent television and radio announced it would grant 20 new licenses to community radio stations by 1990. One application was fielded by Birmingham free radio (aka “pirate”) station People's Community Radio Link (PCRL). Having taken to the airwaves clandestinely in 1985, PCRL quickly established itself as a provider of music and programming in service to (and dialogue with) the city's Black and South Asian communities. Despite its sizeable following and credible application, the new licence instead went to a newly formed station, Buzz FM. This decision effectively ended any hopes that PCRL would become a licensed station and marked the start of intense state and legal scrutiny towards those involved with PCRL.

It would be easy to interpret the PCRL story as an almost/not-quite attempt to challenge dominant media and/or as a story of defeat at the hands of the mutually reinforcing state/legal/racial forms of oppression that sought to police the radiospace; yet, rather than fixating on the cruel optimism (Berlant 2011) of the prospect of being licensed, one might instead turn attention to PCRL's unlicensed presence on the airwaves during the period 1985-1989 as historical example of an intervention -- however fleeting -- into the tightly constricted realm of media. I argue that one might look (and listen) to PCRL for a template to imagine a shift from heavily centralised media, towards community-facing forms that align with Brecht's (1932) utopian understanding of radio as a multidirectional “apparatus of communication.”

Ephemeral Acts of Felt Resistance: Digital and Embodied Protest against Oppression

*Gholami Fatemeh*

In Iran, women have been finding creative ways to resist the strict rules imposed by their government. While these actions might seem small and transient, they carry significant emotional and political impact. This presentation explores these acts using affect theory to examine how emotions shape behavior and social interactions, fostering shared responses and strengthening community ties. These connections, in turn, can lead to questioning and challenging oppressive norms. A powerful example is the symbolic reddening of Tehran's fountains—an anonymous act

that transformed public spaces into sites of protest. This intervention serves as a reminder of sacrifices made during uprisings and highlights the regime's repression, moving people emotionally and fostering solidarity. Additionally, women's dissemination of evocative images on social media—whether appearing without veils or engaging in acts of noncompliance, such as cutting their hair in public (done by both men and women, and posted on social media)—functions as a digital form of resistance. While each image may seem minor, collectively they challenge the government's narrative, question norms, and inspire further defiance. As Judith Butler argues in *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), resistance is not only about direct confrontation but also about appearing and persisting in public, creating new forms of solidarity and recognition. Even in the absence of physical gatherings, these dispersed yet visible acts embody a collective presence that disrupts authoritarian control. Being primarily visual, this presentation illustrates how these brief yet powerful acts of resistance accumulate over time to challenge power structures and contribute to broader societal change.

### The moving target of censorship in Cuba and artwork as resistance

*Yoli Terziyska*

Contemporary artists in Cuba circumvent the continuously moving target of censorship resulting in artworks of ephemeral resistance that elude scholarly debate. The state's cultural regulations have been subject to stringency and loosening up, making censorship and the idea of what is counter/revolutionary ambivalent, oftentimes dependent on preference and interpretation. To elucidate an alternate methodological approach to understanding censorship in Cuba as a nuanced phenomenon defined by temporality and preference, I will discuss contemporary art that resists those moving targets. I will discuss the art practice of Yulier Rodriguez whose work is symbolic of Cubans' lived experiences. Recognizing the futility of his temporal works, Rodriguez painted graffiti, which is illegal by an elusively worded state decree. After multiple threats from authorities, the artist was given 24 hours to erase his graffiti or face incarceration. While engaging in a seemingly futile repetition of making and erasing graffiti, the artist's works and actions have an affective impact on passerby in highlighting the failures of the state. Working outside approved institutions, his art is on the fringe of un/recognition, including his paintings on rubble collected from the crumbling facades of the city's infrastructure. The miniature debris pictures show counterrevolutionary imagery, including starving ghostly figures representative of Havana's inhabitants. These artworks engage with invisibility, appearing as part of the streets' refuse. Whoever finds them could understand their symbolic impact and the reason the images are not in a museum—they are ephemeral, critical of the state, and resistant to its fluctuating and ambivalent cultural regulations.

*13:00-14:00 – Break for lunch (not provided)*

## 14:00-15:30 – Parallel Sessions 3

MAL 251 – Visualising communication, participation and resistance /  
Diagramming Digital Image Ecologies: Material Articulations of Invisual Relations

Diagramming the Digital Image Ecology of Censorship and Resistance in Iran

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<http://londoncritical.org/>



The article will suggest a diagrammatic way to visualize the complex interaction between digital images, censorship, and resistance among Iran's online environment. Iran has seen a unique image ecosystem in which images serve as the tools of control and the sites of subversive actions due to the strong control of the government over digital information. The study resource will discover how digital images, which may be official government propaganda or generated by civilians, are subject to the process of creation, distribution, and alteration within the digital space. Present study will also shed light on the way Iranian activists and artists use counter-mapping and critical visualizations to question the (de-)formation of these patterns, thus discovering some of the previously hidden spaces. Moreover, it will explore whether visual counter-mapping and critical visualizations can provide pragmatic alternatives to these bounded topologies of resistance, whereby the latter models are constituted, leading to latent spaces of resistance and alternative narratives. In this aspect, the present article is regarded as a projection-aided communication venture, which seeks to globally extend its communication to facilitate the present environmental communication so as to be able to explain a wider range of other related or derived phenomena. By this approach, the article also becomes a mediatization entrepreneur which appropriates and generates new media to create and expand the flexible communicational.

p\_ART\_icipate!- Online Design & Facilitation for Participatory Art for Social Connectedness, Social Inclusion and Wellbeing

*Oliver Mag Gingrich, Dominik Havsteen-Franklin, Claire Grant and Daniel Hignell-Tully*

p\_ART\_icipate! - an AHRC-funded ECR research project explores the effect of participatory art on social connectedness in digital and online settings. Drawing upon previous studies within the field of art and health that articulated a general correlation between artistic participation and wellbeing- such as the Alma Alta declaration (1978), the foundation of the Centre for Arts and Humanities in Health and medicine (2000), or the Inter-parliamentary Report on Health and Wellbeing (2017)- the p\_ART\_icipate! research project seeks to uncover the specific relationship between wellbeing and artistic participation in online environments, with a focus on design and facilitation of participatory art experiences.

Situated within a new materialist media theoretic context, researchers from across the fields of design, creative health and partners interrogated conditions for accessible and ethical participatory arts online. Working with a range of stakeholders with particular access needs through focus groups and co-design across four different case studies, the research examined ethics, accessibility needs and affordances of digital participatory art online. Insights have led to the development of guidelines for best practices on the design and facilitation of ethical and inclusive participatory arts, for artists, practitioners and researchers for real-world contexts. The presentation will share visual articulations and diagrams of the logic model, thereby laying bare the research challenges include interactive demonstrations of some of the artworks, and an open debate about artistic and creative relations in an online context.

Stitched in Code: New imaginaries and new challenges in the fashion media

Michele Varini

Since the origins of the fashion phenomenon, there has always been a strong connection with technology; these are two areas closely related and connected, starting from the communicative component, up to the purely creative, artistic, productive and consumer dimension. Among the

many possibilities, revolutions and innovations enabled in the fashion industry by technological advancements, one in particular is the advent of visual AIs. They are taking on a new role, both from an artistic and creative point of view and from a purely technical and production point of view. These innovations, these previously unknown possibilities, opened up previously unexplored avenues and, of course, revolutionised many of the classic professions in the sector, starting with stylists and milliners through to tailors and patternmakers, and ending with communication professionals and photographers. Communication in the fashion industry has long been linked to magazines, and generative AI today, particularly sophisticated in the production of graphics material, has posed a new challenge to this sector. This paper aims to explore these new experiences, and intends to do so through the visual analysis of two sui generis fashion magazines: Copy magazine and CYBR magazine. Copy is the first printed magazine to be entirely produced using AI, while CYBR, which has also recently been printed in a paper version, is dedicated to NFT fashion (largely produced by AI). The research intends, through a visual analysis, to analyse which imaginaries are developed in these new experiences, paying particular attention to the representation of bodies and beauty stereotypes.

## MAL 252 – 40kulture / The Cruellest and Most Bloody Stream Imaginable: What's Left of Warhammer 40,000?

Warhammer as trans culture

*Aasa Timonen*

Warhammer has been often positioned as a very male-dominated hobby, and one steeped in reactionary misreading of the game's original satirical worldbuilding (see McClainn Brown 2024). Warhammer 40,000 especially stands out here, with the game described as having a “nazi problem” (Doyle 2020) and Games Workshop having to put out public statements declaring that “Imperium is driven by hate, Warhammer is not” (Warhammer Community 2020). In stark contrast, there has been a reclamation of Warhammer happening by the transgender members of the community. This is evident in the increased visibility of the trans-identifying members of the community, and in the meme culture that has formed around this paradigm shift. In this presentation, I will examine how transness is seen in the online culture surrounding Warhammer and how it is used to build an alternative past, present and future for the hobby community and spaces for trans identities to exist and flourish (Gupta 2020). This study is formed around a reflexive thematic analysis of the moments of overlap and blending between Warhammer online culture and trans reclamation of online spaces through meme culture (Panova 2022). Reflexivity of this study is a vital aspect, as I am doing research as both transgender woman and an active member of Warhammer online communities. This study shows how queer acts of reclamation can be used for deradicalization, as well as how increased visibility of transgender hobbyists in Warhammer have shifted the whole community towards a more inclusive grimdark future.

Neurodivergent Making: Kitbashed temporalities and weirdboy leanings

*Tom Railton*

Science-fiction tropes have long provided analogues for the traits of ‘differently-wired’ bodyminds. Intersecting neurodivergence, science-fiction and DIY subcultures, my PhD research analyses the material and technical ‘grammar’ artists use in articulating their lived experiences of complex temporalities.

As a neurodivergent artist, I embrace non-linear temporalities as survival tools in adapting to a neurotypical world. Psychologist Russell Barkley describes non-normative experiences of time in ADHD, such as ‘myopia to the future’ (2012), suggesting that ADHDers live entirely in the present - in one singular time - a perception of ‘always now’. Time can be capricious when your head’s in a job, especially if you zone in/out with particular intensity and frequency. I’m forever rediscovering the terms of temporal engagement with materials, chemistries and technologies.

My art practice depicts other potential worlds through improvised or re-imagined technologies. Still part-fuelled by a mid-90s adolescence beholden to the patchwork lore and spiky aesthetics of White Dwarf, my artworks resemble technologically anachronistic ‘artefacts’ from multiple speculative spacetimes, often embracing a recurrent flow-state which recalls tiny, hand-sculpted chainmail, drybrushed fingertips and hordes of plastic/lead (plaslead?) hybrid avatars.

What I call ‘neurodivergent making’ platforms nondominant, adaptive methodologies of articulation, and the myriad ways in which practitioners lean into their challenges and communities as part of their process(ing).

This artist talk aims to doomscroll through the chaotic and the kitbashed of some recent works, as this weirdboy attempts to harness the warp, though contemporary art practice.

## MAL 253 – Archival Architectures of Yearning / Masturbatory Reading: The Erotics of Knowledge Production

Subjects in Speculation: imagining the archival close reading

*Sophie Mak-Schram*

If historical research – and specifically close reading of source material – is a form of speculative erotics, then how can we engage with the archive and the archival text as frameworks for sensory reimaginings in which the identified/categorised body is no longer necessarily the precursor? More simply put: how might close reading, as speculative erotics, unbind us from hetero and cis normative relationships of power to a ‘past’?

My proposal is to draw forward from my contribution to the Masturbatory Reader (2023), in which I wrote around my desire for Black Mountain College’s first black student, Alma Stone Williams, and how that desire was a form of temporal drag (Freeman, 2010). Since, I’ve continued to search into the gap in that archival matter by researching in archives such as the Lesbian Herstories Archives and the Interference Archive. The desire of the archivist for the source material or their ideas of my search, is another layer of ‘shimmer’ (Rose, 2017) that affects how, and with what relation, I can approach the materials they eventually give me. Returning to my original proposal back in 2022, I’d like to revisit my concerns around consent, desire and intimacy by bringing the archivist into the conversation. Who subjects who, and what other bodies engage in speculation together? I imagine this as a conversation (more explicit and speculative than my chapter in your book, having since grown in confidence!) between the imagined archivist, fragments of the Watermelon Woman (1997), historical letters from Alma Stone Williams, and my own archival findings and subjections to racial and gender categorisations.

A potential decline in empathy could be indicative of the emergence of a novel concept that may supersede it: apathy. If empathy denotes capacity for emotional connection, apathy may be considered its antithesis, i.e. the elimination of the capacity to connect. To question the occurrence of this process, I would propose to examine its relation to a pressing issue our time: climate crisis. Taking full responsibility in climate-catastrophe would entail the reclaiming of empathy. By acknowledging the existence of other beings as equal members of an endangered species, we recognise a true form of empathy: recognising to be part of a greater whole. In a time where climate crisis stagnates in popular discourses and becomes secondary in political agendas, apathy prevails and hinders engagement. Literature can provide insights into the strategies employed to confront apathy. The recent literary genre climate fiction is a notable example of this. This genre – employed to address challenges posed by climate change – has as one of its goal collective sense-making. Scholars such as Alexa Weik Von Mossner propose that through the deployment of textual cues literature has the power to foster a sense of care. She further elaborates on this notion, asserting that climate-fictions have the ability to evoke profound emotional engagement in readers, thereby cultivating awareness. It is therefore suggested that literature, through its potential to emotionally engage readers, could reignite empathy towards our own species, offering a way to transcend the apathy that defines our times.

Becoming a Sex Machine: Lines of flight, desire, and sublimation in the archives

*Alexandra Fanghanel*

In March of this year, I spent one month becoming a sex machine. Machines, for Deleuze and Guattari (AO, 1977), produce and demolish and produce and demolish in ongoing flow. I was conducting archival research on sadomasochism and leather culture in the Leather Archives Museum, Chicago. Archival research requires ongoing interplays between rigour and playfulness; clarity of analysis, and openness to chaos. I must be rigorous in how I search for, manage, and categorise the materials. I must be playful enough to follow lines of flight, to stumble upon unexplored parts of the archive, to take unexpected paths in order to discover unusual things.

In this paper, I reflect on the embodied and erotic experiences of playing with these lines of flight. Through critical autoethnography I reflect on the tensions between navigating various subject positions as researcher, as sexual subject, as citizen, as pervert. I consider the methodological and epistemological implications of researching in this way; how I tumbled into some dark and delicious places and had to resist others before I tumbled too far... and how, in assemblage with the archive, with my phone, with my writings, with my body, with the museum itself, we became sex machine. I will also tell you what I learned through this assemblage about subjectivity, sexual justice, and about what research driven by erotic desire can do.

## MAL 254 – Labour and the Gimmick / The Art of the Gimmick

Performing the Gimmick: Labor, Value, and the Art of Doing Nothing

*Ziegi Boss*

This presentation examines how Sianne Ngai's theory of the gimmick operates as a theoretical framework for exploring contemporary labor in my own artistic practice. In late capitalism, labor is often no longer aimed at producing goods or meeting collective needs, but at generating

signals—of productivity, of competence, of identity. This has especially intensified in spheres like advertising, content creation, and cultural participation, where the product is less the commodity than the worker's self as a data point, a persona, or a consumer. The gimmick isn't merely a faulty object; it becomes the mode through which labor is experienced — overly elaborate, self-justifying, and ultimately disconnected from meaningful purpose.

My work engages this dynamic through what might be called “performances of overfunction”. In *YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT*, a series of “productivity facts” are delivered by an unreliable narrator, laying bare the metrics by which our work is judged. *How to Be an Exemplary Human* documents the absurdities of self-optimization through five days of relentless time tracking with bureaucratic precision. Finally, in *EVRSTEMMED™* corporate branding is collapsed into a hollow spectacle — parodying a marketplace flooded with products whose value lies in their ability to signal status rather than meet a need.

Together, these works examine the absurd rituals of value creation in a system where labor is both hypervisible and empty. What emerges is a portrait of labor as gimmick: work that promise efficiency or value, yet feels suspiciously hollow—driven not by necessity or purpose, but by the endless performance of worth.

Recognising the Detrimental Gimmick of Ambiguity in the age of the Anthropocene:  
Introducing the Semiotic Triangle Addendum

*David J Beesley*

Aesthetic gimmicks are unhelpful distractions, fracturing formal discourse to playful, yet insipient ambiguity. From modernist to contemporary post-postmodern paradigms, ambiguity has become a gimmick for neoliberal market strategies, and detrimentally, the dominant pedagogic framework. This is disturbing as we slip further into the anthropocene.

The chain of signification has dominated arts theory, the never-ending reiteration of subjective associations ignores one key element: the referent. Critical Realist, Roy Bhaskar, argues for ontological investigative philosophy as praxis to be codified by rigorous epistemological critique. His alternative to the chain of signification – the semiotic triangle.

My artistic output of praxis has formed an addendum to this model. What becomes obvious when one creates art that values realism over formal exploration, is there is a dialectic within referential positionality. One must consider artistic intention alongside the various iterative considerations of meaning of a heterogeneous audience. Barthes's, *Death of the Author*, cemented the concept that intention was not serious within arts discourse; but as evidenced by Sean Burke, one's intention frames meaning in aesthetic creation – even Barthes. The dialectic that exists then can frame art as a tool for didactic discourse to social ontology and epistemological critique.

The semiotic triangle addendum establishes referential subjective-to-objective readings. Poststructuralism has rendered meaningless and ambiguity as the aesthetic pinnacle of the gimmick, but the need for ontological debate to epistemological knowledge in how we address psychological values to sustainable structures is dependent on referential meaning. This framework revindicates realism as a model of production suitable for addressing the anthropocene.

The Aesthetic of Ultra-Processing: Sianne Ngai's "Gimmick" as a Lens on Chris van Tulleken's "Ultra-Processed People"

This presentation explores the intersection of Sianne Ngai's "Theory of the Gimmick" and Chris van Tulleken's critique of ultra-processed foods (UPFs) in "Ultra-Processed People." Ngai's concept of the "gimmick" as an aesthetic category revealing anxieties about capitalist production offers a powerful lens for understanding our complex relationship with UPFs. These foods, marketed on the promise of labour-saving convenience, often embody the ambivalence of the gimmick. They "overwork" through extensive industrial processing and artificial additives to mimic whole foods, yet "underwork" in terms of nutritional value and satiety.

Van Tulleken's work provides empirical evidence of how UPFs employ "tricks" of sensory appeal and misleading health claims, masking their low nutritional quality and potential health harms. This aligns with Ngai's notion of the gimmick as a deceptive facade. Furthermore, both perspectives highlight an underlying unease about the capitalist forces driving the production of UPFs, raising concerns about the exploitation of labour, alienation from food origins, and environmental consequences. By cross-referencing Ngai's theoretical framework with Van Tulleken's investigative journalism, this paper argues that our often-dismissive perception of certain mass-produced foods as "gimmicks" reflects a deeper, often unconscious, critical engagement with the labour processes and value claims inherent in the industrial food system. This analysis encourages a more informed and critical consumption of food in contemporary *capitalist societies*.

## MAL 255 – Beyond the institution: How to mediate collective critical thought (Roundtable Discussion)/ Critical Thought Maintenance: How to mediate intellectual and organisational form (and get away with it!)

How to do therapy in football boots: Playing by the rules when the rules don't fit

Riccardo Gentile

The Sport and Thought (S&T) project operates at the crossroads of psychoanalysis, education, and sport, challenging dominant frameworks of mental health and behavioural intervention in institutions such as secondary schools and Youth Offending Services (YOS). Developed by the Brent Centre for Young People (one of the UK's first mental health services specifically for young people aged 11-24, reaching those who may otherwise not receive help), S&T is a model of group psychodynamic psychotherapy, offering an alternative for adolescents who struggle with traditional talking therapies.

Using structured football sessions as a therapeutic medium, S&T facilitates real-time exploration of emotional regulation, authority, and group dynamics. Therapists interpret on-pitch behaviours—such as aggressive tackles, missed goals, or dominant playstyles—as manifestations of underlying psychological states. These moments provide opportunities to mediate thought in practice, fostering self-reflection and relational awareness.

However, collaborating with institutions and organizations poses structural challenges, as they often operate under differing regimes. Schools and youth services typically prioritize control, compliance, and measurable outcomes, making it difficult to sustain a critical, process-oriented intervention without being absorbed into disciplinary frameworks.

By presenting case studies from schools and community programs, this discussion will explore the political, organizational, and intellectual dilemmas of maintaining a psychoanalytically

informed intervention within structured institutions. It situates S&T within broader conversations on how critical thought is mediated, constrained, and reconfigured in practice.

How to generate a critique with 7,000 people

*Jacob Stringer*

In theory social movements should be incubators of critical thought, but what conditions are necessary to make this true? A social movement organisation of 7000 members, of which I was one, was the subject of my PhD research. As an insider researcher I sought to engage with the organisation through my research process, and to initiate new learning processes within the organisation, but came up against blockages and reluctance. Sometimes it felt like the organisation had been set up to resist new learning processes, or just that bureaucratisation dominated. This was perplexing on the face of it, because the organisation states one of its core values as ‘always listening, always learning’. It also aims to be led by the most oppressed, which was the thrust of the new learning processes being proposed. But even more curiously, I was one of the people who set the organisation up, including being heavily involved in writing its cooperative constitution. Was I caught in a deadlock situation with my past self? Was the awkward mixture of bottom-up and top-down democracy self-defeating? Or was something else going on? Through examination of the constituted organisation, the organisational culture, the left wing culture it was embedded within, and the pressures on social movement organisations, I ask how a co-founder of an organisation could have found it so difficult to initiate new learning process within it, and what lessons can be learned for other researchers and organisations.

How to Confer

*Members of the London Critical Collective*

The first London Conference in Critical Thought was held in 2012, at Birkbeck College, with subsequent iterations held at a different institution most years since. Throughout that period the organising collective has expanded, contracted and evolved, working hard to embody its interdisciplinary, non-hierarchical ethos in its behind-the-scenes organisational processes. To continue developing in this vein, in 2024, London Critical was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with a formal remit to “progress critical research approaches” through a variety of activities. Returning to Birkbeck, this is an opportune moment to reflect on the LCCT’s navigation of formal and informal means of fostering critical thought so far.

## MAL 351 – Dwelling the Margins / Margins & Ambiguities: Reflections Between Material and Epistemological Metaphors and Limits

Rethinking Agency from the Margins: Critical Reflections on New Materialist Definitions

*Thomas Gogolewski*

This paper explores the evolving concept of agency within new materialism, particularly through the lens of marginal figures and relations. Traditionally, agency is perceived as the capacity for individuals to act independently, emphasizing human intentionality and rationality. New materialism, however, redefines agency as dynamic, distributed, and relational, involving both



human and non-human entities. This approach challenges anthropocentric notions and promotes a more inclusive understanding.

The analysis examines six dimensions of agency from influential theorists, including distributed agency (Bennett), relational agency (Barad), emergent agency (DeLanda), embodied agency (Grosz), non-human agency (Latour), and transcorporeal agency (Alaimo). Each dimension offers a radical rethinking of agency, inviting critical examination of how marginal figures can redefine the notion of agency.

Critics argue that diffusing agency across networks risks diluting intentionality and accountability, while emphasizing non-human agency raises questions about ethical responsibility and human agency's distinctiveness. This paper illuminates how new materialist perspectives redefine agency, offering insights for debates in philosophy, political theory, and environmental studies. It argues for understanding agency as distributed, emergent, and transcorporeal, providing a framework for analyzing systems where human and non-human forces shape realities. However, it calls for nuanced engagement with theoretical tensions between new materialist and classical definitions, encouraging further dialogue on this reworking's potential and limitations.

Resistance comes first: re-materializing the modern subject

*Geoffrey Whitehall*

In painting, dance, sculpture, writing and even thinking, we work with materials that resist us. In this way, resistance comes first. Here resistance is not a reaction to established power(s) nor is it a reciprocal escalation of forces that leads to politics, war, and revolution (a la Clausewitz). Instead, resistance can be theorized as a material condition in which new images, movements, stories, and concepts are generated (a la Benjamin and/or Deleuze). Instead of being the last recourse in an oppressive world, resistance becomes the first material resource to generate differences.

This paper explores this “re-materialization of resistance” in the context of a 2024 art exhibit titled “femmes volcans forêts torrents” at the Musée D’Art Contemporain de Montréal. The exhibit brought together nine artists living in Quebec whose work make the viewer aware of the history of natural elements, the power of the water, the heartbeat of the earth and the torrents within themselves. The exhibit is not reactive.

I argue that the exhibit re-materialize resistance by struggling with the indifference of the world and in order to generate aesthetic works that mobilize this indifference. These works enact the weight of life, history, geology, and nature as their starting point.

Poison Soluble, Blood for Sale: Margins of Representability and the Insoluble Pain of Others

*Lucy Wowk*

This paper stages an encounter between two aesthetic occurrences that operate at the margins of representability: Poison Soluble by Jean Jacques Label (2013) and Blood for Sale by Khaled Jarrar (2018). Poison Soluble was a life-size maze constructed out of large-scale reproductions of photographs depicting the American army’s abuse of Abu Ghraib prisoners. Its display at the 12th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2022) sparked controversy and resulted in the resignation of curator Ana Teixeira Pinto and the withdrawal of works by Sajjad Abbas, Layth

Kareem, and Raed Muta in protest ([Rijin Sahakian](#) 2022). In *Blood for Sale* (2018), Palestinian artist Khaled Jarrar sold vials of his own blood on Wall Street at prices matching the stock value of American defense contractors (Jasmine Weber 2018).

Reading these cases together elucidates how margins of representability—concerning violence and suffering—are established, maintained, and reconfigured through aesthetics. On the one hand, Label's work wagers that an encounter with images of extreme violence might prompt reflection and therefore ethics in a viewer, however, the subsequent opposition to the work identifies that these reproductions unethically restage the violations made against the Iraqi prisoners, reproducing the very violence the work claims to be solving qua visibility. The withdrawal of Pinto, Abbas, Kareem, and Muta, on the other hand, articulates an aesthetics of refusal, communicating operations of (non)complicity and the power of absence, or non-representation, as an ethical position. Conversely, in Jarrar's performance, the metaphor blood on your hands is materialized, as the literal depletion of his own blood acts as a figuration of the greater destruction of Palestinian life. This act converts/reverts the abstraction of complicity involved in financial capital and the art world in subaltern death. Further, the particularity of his own blood as the material of exchange limits the act to a measure of the instance.

Reading each case as illustrative of structural and epistemological limits to representations of human suffering, I argue that in both cases, configurations of the literal/figurative are demolished, rearranged, and crystalized, and thresholds of communicability are exerted at the margins of perceptibility and raw material violence.

*15:30-16:00 – Break*

## **16:00-17:30 – Parallel Sessions 4**

### **MAL 251 – Panel 1 / Labour and Liveness in a New Age of Automation**

#### **Precarious Gigging (amplified live performance)**

*Kate Mahony*

Since 2012, my live practice has operated like a Deliveroo service: I use a wheelie bag of performance props and sound equipment to make the work in front of people. My performances critique the attention and gig economy: a space that is creatively open but precariously paid/unpaid.

I propose to create a live performance from my 'gigging' practice by setting up a 'conventional' performance space of performance paraphernalia: a collapsing stage, cardboard curtains, a human smoke machine (me vaping), scrunched, vacuum-packed paper (discarded spoken word drafts), a 10-meter microphone lead, a slippery mic stand, knotted cables, a rogue spotlight, an Argos keyboard, and feedbacking amps. Spoken word pieces won't be read but discarded on the floor, while too much water will be drunk, dribbling onto the ground. Cables will be knotted and slowly unravelled, chewing gum and sighs amplified. Through navigating my set, the sounds of the performance and site will be recorded through my microphone and slowly looped into a hysterical sonic landscape.

#### **Evicshen's Liveness**

*Richard Whitby*

This presentation examines the currency and impact of live, embodied performance at a time when cultural production is increasingly automated and 'inhuman'. It is built on a case study of sound artist and instrument maker Evicshen (Victoria Shen).

As well as enveloping distorted sound and scratched vinyl, Shen's performance is noted for her use of her own body (for example, using an instrument that amplifies the act of brushing her own hair; another that consists of record player needles attached to artificial finger nails). Whilst her work is also disseminated on social media and as recordings in both digital and physical media, I will argue that Shen's live performance centralises experiences and potential meanings that can only be articulated and accessed when in the same room as the artist.

As well as considered Shen's own statements on her work, I will use comparisons with other viral video stars such as 'Salt Bae' as well as work on noise music, burlesque and Sianne Ngai's book on the gimmick.

Traditional live performance necessitates bodily presence, however Shen forces an audience into a nuanced and complicated relationship with the powerful but also vulnerable position of the performer. This will be argued as an explicit aesthetic and political strategy for this artist and perhaps others too.

It's Time I Do It Myself: Dehumanize and produce, but do so kindly

*Vincenzo Estremo*

This presentation explores the transformation of the factory as a spatial and temporal construct and its entanglement with bodies, labor, and art under late capitalism. Beginning with a personal narrative from the shop floor—where conveyor belts dictated every gesture—I trace how the factory's mechanized temporality has extended beyond industrial walls to shape contemporary life. From the vertical textile factories of 19th-century New York to the horizontal assembly lines of Fordism, and finally to the de-industrialized lofts of SoHo repurposed by underground artists, the evolution of factory space reveals a deeper mutation: the factory has become performative, operating 24/7.

This shift is not just architectural or technological, but temporal and psychological. The mechanized logic of production has moved into cultural spheres, where labor is now affective, cognitive, and imaginative. Audiences, no longer passive, are invited to co-produce meaning, rendering spectatorship itself a form of labor. In this social factory, the imagination becomes both a productive tool and a commodity.

Drawing on post-operaismo thinkers and the legacy of experimental art practices, I argue that contemporary capitalism has absorbed artistic strategies to optimize imaginative labor. The result is what I call IMCOIN: a labor economy where the value is generated through imagination, consumed in real-time, and regulated not by machines, but by the self. In this system, life and work blur—performance becomes survival.

## MAL 252 – Marginal Communities & Literary Communities / Radical Listening: Collective Practices, Histories and Possible Futures

“She cast a greater shadow than the reality that existed”: a psychoanalytic listening of the sexuality and femininity in the short stories “Preciousness” and “Remnants of Carnival”, from Clarice Lispector

Psychoanalysis and literature intersect in their aspects and objects of interest, one of which is the constitution of what is understood as being a woman. The present study aims to analyze the construction of femininity, and female sexuality through the stories "Preciousness" and "Remnants of Carnival", by Clarice Lispector. This is psychoanalytic research, more specifically the listening to the characters as clinical cases, reflected in the transference between the researchers and their research object. Literature emerges as an essential tool for understanding the female condition and its intersections with ethical and psychoanalytic issues. Based on this, three categories of analysis were outlined: Listening to the character in "Remnants of Carnival"; Listening to the character in "Preciousness"; and Intersections between both characters. The research findings highlight the articulation between Freud's psychoanalytic theory and modern gender studies, enabling a critical examination of the multiple facets of "becoming a woman" and the feminine dispositive. Through the characters "listened to" here, it was possible to see that the transition from childhood to womanhood is still mediated by violence and compulsory sexuality, marked by a patriarchal, phallogocentric logic. Furthermore, these characters create possible destinations for their drives, for example, the girl who became a rose and found in that costume a refuge for her inner desires, and, the teenager who received new shoes, subverting the destiny that was given to her. The researchers explore through the writing of a literary piece about a symbolic encounter between the protagonists of the short stories analyzed here.

The roar on the other side of silence: Radical Empathy and Witnessing in Literary Communities

*Madeleine Wood*

In this paper, I explore the radical potentiality of sound and listening produced in literature. Through close reading of Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) and George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1872), I demonstrate how the written invocation of sound can create an ethics of listening. In *Bleak House*, following the death of the homeless child Jo, Dickens employs oratory, grounded in the rhetorical figure anaphora, to produce a rhythmic attack against the uncaring authorities, presenting a demand for his readership to bear witness: 'Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day' (2008, 677). In contrast, as the opening quotation shows, Eliot self-consciously produced an ethics of listening through her physiological understanding of sound as reverberation, and her interpretation of both reading and empathy as forms of synaesthesia.

Benedict Anderson (1983) argued that the creation of the reading public was simultaneous with the construction of the nation state as an 'imagined community': this imaginary a way to impose boundaries, between self and other, here and there. Dickens and Eliot were alert to the ways in which cultural production could be used to embrace or reject alterity, and through their novels attempt to produce new forms of community attending to shared feeling, thinking, and in Dickens's case, righteous anger. I conclude my paper by reconsidering the possibilities for radical literary community in the twenty-first century.

MAL 253 – Digital Interference: Updating Law and Cognition / 'In Theory': Media, Systems and (Re)Conceiving Communication

Systems theory is both a theory of closed social systems and a theory of intersystemic coupling. In this paper I address a framework for critical application of the theory to law and digital media.

According to the basic schema of functional differentiation, the legal system manages society's competing and conflicting normative expectations via the assignation and specification of legal validity to one side (and not the other) in legal dispute. To do so, law does not have, nor does it require, a consistent theory of technology – rather the opposite. Legal practice involves skilfully reducing the complexity of the environment in order to make legal argumentation possible. Legal decisions, generating both legal and illegal results, in turn enable further complexity to arise in other social systems (Luhmann, 2004, pp. 87–88, 2013, pp. 104–105). Law's operations are indifferent to the technical operations of media that take place in its environment, except insofar as they raise specifically normative questions.

Similarly, digital technologies are, in their technical operations, indifferent to legal norms. But digital technologies remain allopoietic, and therefore transcoding of normative expectations into digital operations – and normative expectations of digital operations in return – remains possible. The second-order relationship produces a surplus of possibilities on both sides, which must be managed if law is to retain its functional role in stabilising normative expectations. This paper argues that the proliferation of digital interfaces and their selective transparency allows the law to be bypassed, contributing to current political and economic crises of confidence in legality.

#### The Shift in Human Cognitive Processes in the Era of Algorithms

*Natalia Tomash*

Merlin Donald's theory of cognitive evolution posits that the human brain is evolutionarily adapted to function within distributed symbolic cultures (i.e., mindsharing culture) and argues that our cognitive potential is realised only within shared networks of communication and cultural exchange. It determines the empathic, emotional, and cognitive attunement of members of cognitive communities in the process of distributed cognition. The latter consists of cooperative cognitive work carried out within distributed cognitive networks. However, the development of the Internet and the World Wide Web in the twentieth century marked a pivotal stage in the expansion of these networks, culminating in the twenty-first century with the mass adoption of mobile devices and social platforms. This led to an explosive growth in users accessing knowledge from the collective memory of humanity. But, the rise of algorithmic systems has altered how information is processed, prioritised, and shared. Algorithmic agents, rather than humans, now determine the visibility and relevance of content, including scientific knowledge. These systems function through mechanisms such as stigmergy (a mechanism of indirect coordination between agents or actions) and viral propagation of content, reshaping our epistemic environment and introducing non-human actors into the cognitive process. As a result, traditional epistemological foundations have eroded, and truth is increasingly fragmented into algorithmically produced polarities. Thus, cognitive culture today operates within distributed networks marked by polarisation, binary clustering, and structural conflict. This marks a transition to what James Lovelock termed the Novacene: an era in which human and artificial intelligence coexist within a post-anthropocentric cognitive ecology. In this context, human cognition is no longer autonomous but embedded in a larger, evolving system that redefines how we think, learn, and communicate.

*Walter Alberto Abalo Navia*

This essay will study the idea of the materiality continuum in autopoietic theory and its relationship to hetero-reference operations. Luhmann (1987) points out that the 'materiality continuum', or the medium, is a presupposition for the existence of social systems. In this sense, he points out that this materiality is found 'both inside and outside' social systems. This concept allows him to argue that there are singular events that have different reactions in different social systems. Additionally, the concept of structural coupling is central to explain internal reaction of systems, in this sense, he argued (2012) that they function as 'digitising mechanisms', which convert these analogue relations into digital relationships that allow the system to extract information while reducing complexity. In legal theory, this conceptualisation of system boundaries and hetero-reference operations has had some revisions: Teubner (1993) proposes on the one hand an alternative model that works through interferences and deepens the idea of structural couplings through more durable links that he calls linkage institutions (1992). Neves (2012), while differing with Teubner on interferences, in a similar track proposes more durable links, which he calls partial transversal rationalities. These last two approaches to the issue relatively solve the problem of cognitive openness of the legal system to its environment concerning social systems. However, I critically consider whether autopoietic theory can deal with the limiting relationship that the materiality continuum might impose on the symbolically differentiated media themselves.

## MAL 254 – Rewriting Gender: Re-enacting Radical Deviance / Masturbatory Reading: The Erotics of Knowledge Production

WORKSHOP: 'Re-writing 'Re-writing Gender'?: infrastructures for trans knowledge,  
1998-2025

*Evelyn Wh-ell*

This workshop enacts the un-realised Syntegrity Conference 'Re-Writing Gender,' planned to take place at London's South Bank University in 1998, revisiting acts of transgender theorising in 1990s Britain to explore infrastructures of trans knowledge making via the group form's relational production of sexed subjectivity towards gender transition.

The workshop will open with a short introduction, contextualising the Syntegrity Conference within British trans theorising and organising in the 1990s, a project shaped by institutional defunding and privatisation; the availability of digital media and the internet; the disciplinary production of queer studies and novel theories of gender and sexuality.

Participants will take part in an hour-long experimental enactment of the Syntegrity Conference, followed by a reflective conversation on the activity of the workshop. This enactment takes the form of a collective discussion of the original conference's central theme 'Re-writing Gender.' The discussion follows the organisational structure intended by the Syntegrity Conference, which applied concepts from cybernetics to structure the internal group relations, an interest that originated in trans theory's early investment in the possibilities of digital technology for altering transgender embodiment and community organising.

Rather than accurate reconstruction, this workshop uses performative practices to generate discussions that bridge the historical past and the present, negotiating the historic and contemporary problems facing trans studies embodied by Syntegrity's aims and failures. Through strategies of re-enactment, this workshop will navigate these historical tensions to consider the role of group organisation in the production of sexed knowledge. In revisiting the 1990s, this workshop will learn from historic projects of knowledge making to reflect on the infrastructural conditions that produce or foreclose upon trans theory and subjectivity.

## MAL 255 – Platformed Realities / The Crisis of Experience in the in the Age of Algorithmic Attention

I am sitting in a Zoom: If the platform could speak, would we understand it?

*Ben Seymour*

'I am sitting in a Zoom' (23 mins, 2021) is a critical/artistic engagement with the shock experience(s) of platform capitalism in a specific historical conjuncture through a specific platform. A Zoom lecture performance documented through the platform's screen recording function, the video invokes Alvin Lucier's 1969 minimalist sound work 'I am Sitting in a Room'. By joining a single Zoom meeting with two different inputs (phone and laptop), the speaker provokes the platform into a form of positive feedback, with the virtual 'room' of the Zoom taking the place of the material and spatial room of Lucier's original. Adopting and alienating Zoom's business-oriented affordances (images, captions, sound) it shuts down the formal communicational equality of the platform – occupying both sender and receiver channels – to point to various elephants in the Zoom: covid lockdown, George Floyd Uprising, Capitol siege.

Discussants and attendees are invited to collectively continue the lecture/video's experiment in the room (and if possible the Zoom) in which we will be sitting.

## A Situated Encounter with Ambient Advertising

*Miriam Sorrentino*

All advertising wants to attract attention and engage an audience. In the steady move towards targeted digital advertising as the solution for brands the non-traditional advertising format, ambient advertising, creates an experience, an encounter. It engages people in a different way than other advertising formats. Ambient adverts are situated things, 'imbued with meaning through their use and placement within particular settings,' (Pink, 2012, p. 47). We encounter these situated things in the flow of our ordinary lives as situated beings. Situatedness is an idea explored in the writing of three philosophers. Heidegger, who details how we are thrown into a specific place and time as a being-in-the-world (2019), Merleau-Ponty who situates us within with our sensory perceptions (2014), and Donna Haraway who describes our situated knowledges created through our unique situations (1988). Ambient advertising's meanings are co-created by us as a viewer as we experience it in an everyday place in the context of our lives. However, each of the qualities that situate an ambient advert has lines of flight away from that moment, that place (Cresswell, 1996). Over the last few years, I have been working with participants to understand how these experiences are different to other forms of advertising. These situated encounters traced in desktop-films, interweaving theory, experiences, digital moments and my



own thinking process into one fabric. This is one of those films, *A Situated Encounter with Ambient Advertising*.

#### Weird Objects: The Labour of Multiples as a Dramaturgical Device

*Richard Allen*

This paper is concerned with a specific thinking of history and experience in the poetry of Tongo Eisen-Martin. Current poet laureate of San-Francisco, anti-carceral organizer and author of four poetry, Eisen-Martin refuses to recognize a significant difference between his aesthetic practice and what he aims to achieve within his political work. I will argue here that the common ground between these two lies in a comportment towards social reality which sees it as fundamentally transformable in the face of collective agency. I am particularly interested in the manner in which Eisen-Martin mobilizes a fragmentary sense of historical experience and tradition in order to render a calcified real once fluid and malleable for thinking and action. In particular, I aim to suggest that this work develops a negative dialectic founded on a particular mode of paratactic composition, and that this mode is itself comprehensible as a way of relating to, and communicating a form of, contemporary experience of the historical. I will demonstrate this via readings of Eisen-Martin's own writing on aesthetics, which I claim identify poetry as fundamentally paratactic, as well as close-readings of several poems, and of his syllabus for education in carceral situations entitled *We Charge Genocide Again!*.

#### MAL 351 – How (Not) to Disappear Completely / Ephemeral Resistance

##### A Doll with a Dick? Trans Performance Art as Ephemeral Resistance

*Avik Sarkar*

In a memorable act at a gay nightclub in San Francisco, Miss Kitty Litter (1962–1995) sang “Doll on a Music Box” from the children’s musical *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968). She rotated on a pedestal in a bridal gown like a marionette—until the end of the song, when she lifted the dress to reveal another queen sucking her cock underneath. Some spectators were titillated, others scandalized, but almost none could make sense of what was on display. A doll with a dick? The artifice of Kitty’s drag disturbed the stability of gender, which fell apart in the exact moment when she exposed her naked body. The very idea of a woman with a penis was enough to generate massive confusion—what Judith Butler (1990) might consider “gender trouble.”

My presentation will explore Kitty’s performance art as an ephemeral mode of resistance in which she staged her body as a disruption of the oppressive norms of the gender binary. The productive challenge of writing and thinking about her performances is that they are not archived or documented—living on instead through memories, impressions, and evocations. These ephemera, as José Esteban Muñoz (1996) reminds us, are expressions of queer/trans life and survival despite the constant threat of erasure. Following Muñoz, I suggest that Kitty’s performances offered glimpses of imaginative possibility in the face of transphobic violence. Her aesthetic practice was a powerful site of resistance that speaks to the world-building capacity of the ephemeral.

##### Missing Archive. Case of OLA-Archivum

*Rita Müller*

OLA-Archivum (National Feminist Lesbian Archive) was founded by Olga Stefaniuk in 1996 and operated in Warsaw until 2001. This initiative included publishing a "Furia Pierwsza" magazine, collecting archives, lesbian studies courses, women's meetings, film screenings, and more. It is unknown where the archives are today or whether they still exist. What artefacts, documents, and memorabilia were in these collections is also a mystery. Instead of focusing on searching for archives (and the archivist who withdrew from public activity), I propose to open up to lack, distance, incompleteness, and unavailability and recognize the possibilities they provide.

Archive, as Rebecca Schneider states in her book "Performing Remains" (2011), is a place of encounter with the material remains of the past, which are the seeds of future scenarios. Fragmentary remains from OLA-Archivum (like press mentions, magazine issues, and leaflets) prove that experiences escaped archiving but also can be the leaven of future actions. I intend to talk with those who cherish memories of moments spent there, search for some written relations and propose to share the story of researching the research-resisting case from Polish queer herstory.

#### The Poetics of Peace: Non-violent storytelling as ephemeral resistance

*Alex Martin-Carey*

In 1941, Muriel Lester, British anti-war activist and social reformer, was taken from a boat in Trinidad and interred by the British Government. Lester's anti-war activism has been characterised as a 'failure' by historians, and she rarely features in historical accounts of the twentieth century. Yet accounts of her arrest and incarceration illustrate the extent to which her philosophy confused and troubled officialdom; that her resistance to the binaries of the moment, her refusal to abandon empathy, her combination of the serious and the playful, and her insistence on throwing certainties into question were a powerful, if ephemeral, form of resistance. Powerful enough to see her jailed by her own government.

This paper will explore how my research into the life and philosophy of Muriel Lester, as well as years spent writing this philosophy into fiction and performance, cast all my certainties about resistance, activism and art into question. Understanding Lester's practice led to the formation of set of ideas about storytelling and creative work which harness the power of this kind of non-violent resistance through the ephemeral and questionable qualities that define it. Finally, the paper will argue that stories are inherently ephemeral, and that when they cease to be so they lose their power as resistance.

*17:30 – Drinks reception (George Birkbeck Bar, Level 4, Birkbeck Main Building)*

# Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June

All conference sessions take place in Birkbeck's main building on Malet Street (entrance on Torrington Square).  
Please note you can find a programme overview at the end of this document.

## 9:00-9:30 – Registration (MAL 252, 253, & 254)

## 9:30-11:00 – Parallel Sessions 5

### MAL B35– Generative Analogue Network / Diagramming Digital Image Ecologies: Material Articulations of Invisual Relations

WORKSHOP: Generative Analogue Network – a collective experiment in diagramming AI image generation processes

*Hannah Lammin*

This workshop explores hidden processes of machine vision and image generation systems. It translates the training process of machine-learning models, into visual procedures (mark-making, cutting, collage, etc.), to enable a critical exploration of algorithmic perception and creativity.

Participants will work together to instantiate a rudimentary Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) by performing a series of iterative analogue activities – collectively producing images using rule-governed stochastic procedures. A GAN is a machine-learning model that sets two neural networks in a competitive relationship: a “discriminator”, which learns to classify objects from training data, and a “generator”, which attempts to discover the former’s “rules” and so produce synthetic images that pass for “real”. The paper-based activities will serve as an analogue of a GAN’s learning process, functioning as a creative machine that evolves images from visual noise.

The experiment is expected to be a failure – its purpose is not to produce images that meet the criteria of “machine realism”, but to explore how both classification and generation relate to hallucinatory “primitives” (subcomponents of images that dwell unseen in the latent space of AI models), which Trevor Paglen (2024) likens to pencil- or brushstrokes. By staging an encounter with analogue primitives, the workshop reveals the diagrammatic nature of the latent space, where the diagram is understood as: “the dimension in which abstracted functions intermingle between two heterogeneous systems, [which] proceeds by an atomization of matter into traits” (Zdebik, 2012: 97).

### MAL 532 – Vulnerabilities, Exposed Fractures and Re-embodiment / Interweaving Embodied Practice and Critical Theory in Transnational Feminisms

On Vulnerable Pedagogy and the Refusal of Neoliberal Abstraction

*Tim Huzar*

This paper explores how Adriana Cavarero’s interconnected concepts of singular uniqueness and vulnerability offer a framework for developing emancipatory educational practices that refuse

neoliberal tendencies towards abstraction and standardisation. I argue that Cavarero's focus on the specificity of existents provides a foundation for educational approaches that refuse the flattening of difference characteristic of market-driven pedagogies. Drawing on my work on "apprehension" — the attending to another's singularity as a practice of care — I explore how this orientation to specificity can contribute to anticolonial and nonviolent philosophical imaginaries.

Practising vulnerability can create spaces where intellectual equality can be presumed and trust can flourish, positioning vulnerability not as a weakness but as an ethico-political encounter. This approach attends to students in their particularity rather than as abstract units within a system of measurement and assessment. By engaging with embodied encounters and what Karen Gravett calls "relational pedagogies," practising vulnerability creates conditions for learning that remain rooted in the situated context of specific classrooms and relationships, attentive to difference without reducing it to the seriality of qualities that liberal traditions would account for.

Critically, such approaches refuse instrumentalisation; they cannot be extracted as "best practices" to be deployed across diverse contexts without losing their essential character. This refusal of scalability represents not a limitation but a strength — an embodied critique of educational approaches that prioritise abstraction over specificity, measurement over meaning. While practising vulnerability may remain modest and localised, its very non-generalisability challenges dominant educational paradigms and keeps alive emancipatory possibilities within increasingly marketised institutions.

#### Exposed Fractures: Feminist Encounters with Archive, Landscape, and the Technocratic Eye

*María Rosario Montero*

This presentation emerges from Exposed Fractures, a visual and essayistic project that investigates the representation of the mountains in Chile through three image archives: the institutional archive of SERNATUR (Chile's National Tourism Office), the technical photographic archive of my father—an engineer shaped by modernist ideals of development—and my own contemporary photographic practice. The project is centred on the Andes Mountain range, a central but often instrumentalised figure in Chile's national imaginary, which here becomes a site to trace tensions between extractive vision, personal memory, and territorial effect.

The work began with my father's death, which triggered an intimate confrontation with a visual legacy rooted in control and transformation of the land. His archive—filled with images of dams, tunnels, and displaced mountains—became a portal to interrogate broader questions: Who builds the image of nature? What aesthetic regimes persist in shaping our relationships with land? How do the feminine, the personal, and the grieving body interrupt extractivist visuality?

I propose a feminist reading of the archive not as a fixed container of history but as a fractured and affective field where image, memory, and territory are entangled. Through embodied research, visual montage, and critical theory, I explore how engaging with these archives can unsettle hegemonic representations of the Andes and open space for other narratives—partial, vulnerable, and situated.

#### Reembodying the archive: Creative critical practice in feminist archival recovery

This paper explores how experimental history can recover women's contributions to the stage through the reconstruction of costume and performance practices. Drawing on the feminist critiques of Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker, alongside practice-as-research methodologies from scholars such as Hilary Davidson, Toni Bate, Serena Dyer, and Sarah Bendall, this study examines how recreating costume bridges archival gaps shaped by gendered hierarchies in artistic production. Without such revival, the work of designers, productions, and embodied material knowledge risks being overlooked.

Costume history is particularly vulnerable to archival loss, with garments, fabrics, and textures often surviving only as sketches, photographs, or descriptions. Yet essential qualities such as weight, movement, and tactile experience cannot be fully understood through visual records alone. Experimental history allows practitioner-researchers to reconstruct lost or fragmentary productions, restoring embodied knowledge and illuminating overlooked labour.

This paper applies these methods to a case study of Julia Trevelyan Oman's costume designs for The Boston Ballet's 1981 *Swan Lake*, demonstrating how hands-on reconstruction revives forgotten material knowledge and reveals costume's role in shaping theatrical legacy. By engaging directly with Oman's designs through practice, this research restores a fuller understanding of her creative vision and material choices—insights inaccessible through text-based study alone.

## MAL B33 – Cruising the other: Promiscuity as becoming-with alterity / Cruising as Critical Methodology: Practices and Imaginaries from the Shadows

'This Abject Stranger': Consent, Conatus, Cruising

Chrys Papaioannou

'Promiscuous we! Me, plus anybody else. Permeable we!' Singing the praises of promiscuity with an infectious Whitmanesque exuberance, queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick invites us to think the interrelations between promiscuity, permeability and collective subjectivity (*A Dialogue on Love*, 1999). How can we think Sedgwick's queered promiscuous 'we' transversally, through the promiscuous sociability of cruising? In this work-in-progress paper, I seek to examine cruising as a mode of queer relationality by thinking with, and beyond, Leo Bersani's foundational writings on gay male subjectivity, the sociability of cruising, and the sexual ethics of radical alterity (cf. *Homos*, 1996; 'Sociability and Cruising', 2002; *Receptive Bodies*, 2018). Adopting a queer-feminist perspective and drawing on the work of theorists of consent such as Avgi Saketopoulou (*Sexuality Beyond Consent*, 2023) and Manon Garcia (*The Joy of Consent*, 2023), this paper expands cruising's homosocial relations and approaches cruising as an epistemic category which has the potential to counter a humanitarian, often racialised, ethics of hospitality. At the centre of this enquiry lies the sexual-political subject of cruising, a desiring subject which, as this paper argues, is constituted by a reciprocal capacity to affect and be affected by their intimate encounter with 'this abject stranger' (Saketopoulou, p. 25). It is, therefore, my hope to think beyond Bersani's model of cruising as 'impersonal' sociability and mobilise the political metaphysics of Baruch Spinoza to propose instead cruising as Spinozist affect. What if the intimate encounter with 'this abject stranger' led not to alterity-through-sameness ('homo-ness') but to a

Touch of the Other (2016—now) is a mixed-media project including photography, video, performance, and critical theory that draws inspiration from the early work of gay liberation sociologist Laud Humphreys, whose controversial *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* (1969) revolutionized how we think about male-male cruising in the public toilet. Stage iterations of Touch of the Other have been performed in Australia, Japan, and the United States, and the project has engendered a Japanese photo series on cruising and gay-bashing, a US trans/dyke video installation, and several essays on both historical and contemporary uses for cruising. The presentation introduces Humphreys' "Systematic Observation Sheets," as well as their reenactment by a wide range of community actors and agents. This body of work collectively underscores how Humphreys remains remarkably pertinent for today's queer, post liberal critique.

While most historians have focused either on Humphrey's exposure of conservative hypocrisy or on his unusual data-collection methods (which undermine the hygiene of contemporary research ethics), Jonathan M Hall and Takao Kawaguchi (Touch of the Other's creators) were drawn to Humphrey's exposition of an architecturally queer modularity that provides alternating interface with a numinous alterity. In other words, Hall and Kawaguchi brought Humphreys' mapping of the public toilet's rapid oscillation between degraded public (heterosexual) space and hallowed private (homosexual) one into dialogue with discourses of the glory hole's own numinous divinity. This move has enabled us to theorize cruising as a cruel ethics of radical alterity that potentially inspires, demeans, and enriches its performers.

## MAL B18 – Deep Listening, Queer Listening & Sonic Hermeneutics / Radical Listening: Collective Practices, Histories and Possible Futures

Echo echo echo echo: listening, inventing and dissolving, radically

*Emily Orley*

I propose a presentation/performance in which I will reimagine the story of the ancient Greek nymph Echo to ask a series of questions that in turn echo themselves.

This is part of an on-going artistic research project which comprises a series of experiments in making, listening and co-responding, inspired by the writings of Donna Haraway, Pauline Oliveros, Sara Ahmed, Rajni Shah and Alexis Pauline Gumbs (among

others). I ask: what does it mean to gather, think, teach and create as a human, woman, scholar, artist, and parent in the world as it stands (spins?), now, in social, political and ecological crisis? What does it mean to assemble, to listen, to imagine together and to ask questions? What does it mean to offer the speculative as mode? What does it mean to do this radically? What if I were to try listening first, and then echo back, invent and then dissolves? What if a practice of dissolving (or perhaps, more accurately, de-solving) might be one way to disrupt the deeply embedded patriarchal, white-supremacist and ableist structures of power that surround us?

Sonic Hermeneutics: Ontological Belonging and More-than-Human Listening

*Jamie Stephenson*

During a 1955-56 Freiburg lecture cycle, Martin Heidegger alludes to a shift in ontological register: a “transformation of thinking” from “the commonplace” to a “new tonality” (1996). This paper pursues Heidegger’s proposed reorientation by situating Anthropocene narratives of human exceptionalism as “commonplace”, to be transgressed by a “new”, radical mode of more-than-human listening. This operation is performed via an exploration of Heidegger’s conceptual trilogy of *hören* (“to listen”), *hörchen* (“to hearken”), and *gehören* (“to belong”) (1979; 1995). I parse this trio of cognates in correspondence with his notion of “attunement” (*Gestimmtheit*) (1995), contextualised amid my proposal of a speculative

sonic hermeneutics, whereby entities (human and nonhuman) “experience” one another through a kind of “listen[ing] abstractly” (Heidegger, 1935), at a relational and affectual level.

What is implied by the term “belonging”? I suggest a reorientation of the noun along egalitarian lines: an equalisation and balancing of the ontological status of things. Heidegger describes this modality of Being as “ecstatic” (1995), in the Ancient Greek sense of *ἐκστασις* (*ekstasis*): beings as mutually open and exposed towards one another. If Being subsists in this sense, as exposure to the world, French Heideggerian thinker Jean-Luc Nancy’s consonant idea of “being-toward [*l’être à*]” (1997), facilitates a radical listening as a being-open-to. Through my hermeneutic methodology of “auditioning”—of listening to and understanding the world through sonic tropes (e.g., resonance, touch, reciprocity)—I question whether such an expansion of “listening”—broadly defined as ontological belonging—might potentially de-hierarchise human agency and amplify togetherness in late capitalism.

Un/folding – dangerous listening, affect and queer utopias

*Victoria Karlsson*

This paper takes as its starting point a 121 intimate performance piece called *un/folding*, which encourages the audience members to listen both inwards and outwards, for (queer) growth and/or change in various forms, together with the performer. Using the piece as a starting point, the paper explores the idea of ‘queer listening’ as defined by Yvon Bonenfant: “Queer listening listens out for, reaches toward, the disoriented or differently oriented other [...] listening out through the static produced by not-queer emanations of vocalic bodies.” Taking my cue from Bonenfant, in this paper I propose that queer listening could be imagined as a listening against, underneath and past the static of heteronormative noise. In particular, I am interested in teasing out overlaps between sound, (queer) listening, phenomenology and affect theory – of sounds that travel across thresholds, across affect theory’s “brain-body-world entanglements” (Blackman, 2014, p. 1); of a listening that stretches both inwards and outwards at the same time. Finally, I tentatively want to ask if this kind of listening/sounding – messy, intertwined, “tentacular” (Haraway, 2016, p 31) and perhaps dangerous – can also listen for the alternative future of Munoz queer ‘horizon imbued with potentiality’ (Munoz, 2009, p1)

## MAL B20 – Oppositional Formations / The Crisis of Experience in the in the Age of Algorithmic Attention

The Struggle for Attention Must Be the Radicalisation of Distraction

*Dimitra Kotouza*

Much theoretical discussion on attention and technology agrees on a key narrative: digital media are corrupting human experience and attentive faculties. The contemporary condition of

experience is described as one of distracted, overloaded fragmentation. Radical theorists, at least since the mid-2010s, have sought to imagine ways of reclaiming attention through science and technology. Authors such as Catherine Malabou prompted us to ‘place scientific discovery at the service of an emancipatory political understanding’ (2008: 53) and to ‘construct and entertain a relationship with [our] brain as the image of a world to come’ (Malabou 2008: 82). Similarly, Matteo Pasquinelli (2013: 287) proposed a ‘militant’ ‘neuropedagogy’ as a tool to overcome the ‘psychopathologies of cognitive capitalism’. In this paper, I question the radical potential of such strategies by highlighting their productivist inclinations and their resonance with emerging attention-enhancing neurotechnologies developed for use in coercive educational and work environments, which are precisely designed to address the contemporary ‘crisis of attention’. Insofar as contemporary philosophy has used neuroscience to understand the crisis of experience, it has been looking to recuperate the wrong kind of attentional experience. Following the narrow, normative categorisations of attention that the most instrumentalised branches of neuroscience propose, I highlight the qualitative forms of internal experience—called ‘mind wandering’—they seek to banish or repurpose into creative outputs: daydreaming, reminiscing, future planning, rumination and everyday worries about relational and material concerns. The question of attentional experience then needs to open up further, by reference to relational and psychosocial perspectives, to mean: class experience, but also caring and being cared for, memory and utopic desire.

#### Pharmacopornographic Capitalism, Body Genres, and Fan Service in a Transnational Media Context

*Rajsi Rajora*

Paul Beatriz Preciado first used the term “Pharmacopornographic Capitalism” to describe “a new kind of hot, psychotropic punk capitalism” that is “dominated by the industry of the pill, the masturbatory logic of pornography, and the chain of excitation-frustration on which it is based.” This paper conceptualises the phenomenon of ‘fan service’ within this critical framework as the formulaic inculcation of gratuitous elements and erotic potentialities into otherwise non-pornographic media texts of contemporary East Asian media industries. It further delineates how fan service is harnessed to ‘reward’ loyal consumer bases, especially through the commodifications of bodies and pleasures in the hyper-sexualised female bodies of the anime and manga industry and the strategic queering of male idol groups in the K-pop industry.

By adopting a “technopharmacological” perspective on fan service that emphasises its pharmakon-like nature, this paper maps how the prevalence of fan service imaginaries can impact and transform the affective, cognitive, and somatic capacities of their fans in both mundane and potentially extraordinary ways while also expanding and truncating their capacities to thrive. To theoretically anchor this investigation, this study draws on Koichi Iwabuchi’s “brand nationalism”, Paul Beatriz Preciado’s “pornographic surplus value”, Linda Williams’s work on “body genres”, and Bernard Stiegler’s “psychotechnologies”. Ultimately, the goal of this paper is to critically evaluate the media logics of fan service within the complex paradigms of neoliberal media ecologies, post-Fordist fandom cultures, and the technologised media landscapes of the digital age.

#### The Immediacy of Pure Opposition within Political Discourse

*Andrew Milward*



Based on the presenter's essay *Opposition* (2022), the talk will discuss pure opposition in its relation to political discourse. This form of opposition can be defined as a movement that does nothing but oppose, a movement that is found in the thought that only negates what is other than itself. Pure opposition appears throughout history – it can be found during the French Revolution, where, for example, religious artefacts were destroyed due to the association between the Church and the Monarchy – but in our digital age, it has found a new mode of expression through social media, where the simplicity of the oppositional form provides an immediacy, allowing an instantaneous, habitual movement within the digital mechanics of approval and disapproval: the content allows us to make an immediate decision because the opposition is pure, because there is no grey area, no subtlety, only a purity of oppositional form.

The aim is to develop a concept of opposition: in outlining its structure, we will show how non-opposition allows the incorporation of impurity, how an ethical demand may be used to demarcate oppositional limits. We then have a means towards reclaiming the need for subtlety within our oppositional discourses. Going beyond the immediacy of habitual experiences can involve the purpose of self-development through self-reflection: we can engage in oppositional contents but also become aware of the operation of opposition itself, the way that it creates terrains of thought and what it is that may in turn create changes therein.

## MAL 402 – Minor Agency, Solidarity and Survival / Ephemeral Resistance

Ephemeral Acts, Enduring Shadows: Northeast Indian Literature and the Aesthetics of Fleeting Resistance

*Tina Borah*

The Northeastern border region of India are often defined from the perspective of terror—framed as necropolitical margins where sovereign power manifests through suspension, impunity, and death. This presentation seeks to resist such spatial essentialism by focusing instead on ephemeral resistance in Anglophone literature from the region. Through close reading of Aruni Kashyap's text *The Way You Want to Be Loved* (2024), I argue that Northeast Indian literature foreground modes of dissent that do not seek institutional legibility but operate through the minor, the quiet, and the relational. The text's spatially and socially marginal figures—queer lives, returning migrants, the “diseased” relatives—remain illegible to State, yet become charged sites of affective and narrative resistance. Drawing on Judith Butler's formulation in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004), where grief and vulnerability become the grounds for an alternative ethics of political being, I suggest that survival in these texts is not merely a passive condition but an affective labor that refuses the State's erasure of grievable life. These narratives do not monumentalize resistance; instead, they dwell in the ordinary—the whispered rumor, the act of mourning, the vanishing body—as insurgent moments. Guided by Amit Baishya's notion of “deathworlds” and James C. Scott's theory of infrapolitics, the paper reads these literary works as sites where the conditions of life are contested through fugitive temporalities.

Outsider Pedagogy, Anarchy and Sonic Prefiguration: Two Case Studies from the '70s

*Ruari Paterson-Achenbach*

In 1974, a teenager from the Wagner Projects in East Harlem scribbles lyrics on a bathroom wall or under the table during maths class whilst staying at a Quaker Boarding School. With the support of her music teacher and with money raised by the community, Shira Small recorded what would be her only album; an expansive world of dreaming is lyrically couched amongst radiant and unpredictable piano chords, delivered by the sincere, raspy, and still adjusting voice of a teenager. Two years later in rural Canada, former itinerant musician now teacher Hans Ferger forged an unexpectedly radical approach to music pedagogy focused on collective improvisation and interpretations of pre-existing material: songs by the Beach Boys, David Bowie and Fleetwood Mac. The result was the album *Innocence and Despair*, a series of peculiar and idiosyncratic recordings, featuring enthusiastic crashes and washes of sound, the voices of young children belting and harmonising along to recognisable melodies.

I want to discuss these two stories as forms of ephemeral resistance, specifically looking through the lenses of children's liberation, radical pedagogy and anarchist thought. What does it mean to take 'children' seriously, as political and creative agents? How does this exhibit differently from conventional understandings of 'resistance'? Incorporating Randall Allsup's notion of pedagogical 'space-making', bell hooks' radical pedagogy and David Graeber's anarchist thought, particularly his theorisations of direct action and 'self-subverting authority', I will explore how both case studies function as prefigurative creative projects which draw their energy from the anarchic potential of children's sociality.

#### Refusal, solidarity, and children's anarchist resistance in *Zero for Conduct*

*Sophie Marie Niang*

In recent decades, we've seen the beginning of a more general reckoning with the structural oppression of children in society. Much of the scholarship and research on the subject has focused on the mechanics and logic of this domination, but there is still much work to be done to understand how children resist their domination. I suggest that one of the reasons that children's resistance tends to escape registration is that it is often ephemeral, unpredictable, and rooted in refusal. In this paper, I propose to read the central dormitory riot in Jean Vigo's 1933 movie *Zero for Conduct* as an example of children's ephemeral resistance, where they refuse discipline and act out against adult domination. Indeed, the riot is sparked by unwanted physical touch from a professor on a genderqueer boy. This boy begins by protesting this assault on his bodily autonomy individually, before being joined by the other boys in a chaotic dorm uprising. Reading this nearly-century-old film in this way enables us to resist dominant apolitical narratives around children's oppression (that children can only be protected by adults and cannot constitute themselves as political subjects, or that children speaking up about violence done to them is a recent phenomenon). It can also teach us to acknowledge other forms of ephemeral children resistance – from teenage-led urban riots to various forms of "misbehaviour" – as political, so that we can better act in solidarity with them.

*11:00-11:30 – Break*

## 11:30-13:00 – Parallel Sessions 6

### MAL B35 – An Embodied Exploration of Shared Air / Interweaving Embodied Practice and Critical Theory in Transnational Feminisms

WORKSHOP: Warm Bodies: An embodied exploration of shared air

*Rhona Eve Clews*

This experiential workshop aims to foreground ecofeminist methodologies and practices, interweaving embodied creative writing exercises with visual art, feminist theory and breathwork. Inviting participants into an embodied enquiry of air as a living commons, listening, sensing and co-being, we'll experience air as a medium of memory, connection, and potentiality.

Drawing from my experience as a somatic practitioner, Luce Irigaray's philosophy of breath, adrienne maree brown's emergent strategies, and Daisy Hildyard's concept of the second body, we'll collectively attune to air's presence and relationality, challenging the normalised boundaries between self and environment/other.

Utilising a simple, distilled structure of Nora Bateson's Warm Data Lab as our backdrop, we'll blend breathwork and somatic exercises, reading and writing from air-related poetry and texts by typically overlooked and marginalised voices. Taking our visual inspiration from cloud studies by Tacita Dean and Georgia O'Keeffe, we'll then reflect on our autobiographical encounters with air via imaginative and accessible writing prompts.

Through reclaiming skies, clouds, and conversation as sites of sanctuary, we'll refresh and enliven our awareness of the overlapping ecologies of bodies and communities, and air's nourishing capacity to generate both intimacy and detachment at this time of polycrisis.

### MAL 532 – Interrogating Empathy in the age of Neoliberalism/Finding Solutions in Fiction? / Is Empathy Dead? Understanding and Questioning The Relevance and Significance of Empathy in the Digital Age

Cringe dialectics and sincerity under neoliberalism

*Nivedita Nair*

Sincerity was once understood to be a virtue and core tenet of pre-Enlightenment era society (Trilling 1971). Liberal individualism took sincerity to be a key rhetorical strategy to create conditions of trust and avowal through which modern civil societies are formed (Kelly 2010). Following this, 'postmodernity' has been described as the era in which irony had overtaken sincerity as the predominant mode of communication, which had led to a 'waning of affect' (Jameson, 1989) and withering notions of trust (Eve 2017). Literature and film since the turn of the century has experimented with irony and sincerity in form and content to consider how trust and empathy are shaped in 'postmodern' societies (Wallace, 1993). In a neoliberal world, how does 'the individual' renewed as consumer/producer affect interpersonal processes of avowal and empathy? In this presentation, I propose that 'cringe' is a form of sincerity under neoliberalism. Cringe, with its animosity towards self-consciousness and pretence, presents itself as a form of precarious sincerity, one which is shaped by ironic consumption (Salvato 2019, Schwanebeck 2021, Sloan 2022). I explicate the mechanics of cringe by analysing its popular resurgence as a genre in contemporary visual cultures to assess how it intervenes in spectatorship engagement

and immersion. In doing so, I examine the role that trust, expression, and avowal plays within the neoliberal media regime, to suggest that cringe is as much a product of the logic of neoliberalism as it is a reaction against it.

#### Alienation: a route past empathy

*Josh Woods*

This paper is seeking to engage with the limitations of empathy as a societal organising principle within the context of late-capitalism. It proposes alienation as an alternative. Ultra-realist criminology's focus on the underlying mechanisms that drive harm include the concept of the pseudo-pacification process. This posits that violent, libidinal energy is sublimated and transferred into non-violent but aggressive capitalist work through individual competition. This takes the form of a striving for personal material and symbolic gains, often at the expense of the other, collective well-being, or indeed of empathy.

In late capitalism, this competitive ethos has exacerbated social fragmentation and disorder. Pertinent questions of tolerance and collective life arise: can we still construct a social framework based on empathy? If we cannot, is it possible to envision a society without empathy? As material conditions further deteriorate, the space for empathy diminishes further as the realities of zero-sum competition, exacerbated by a symbolic structure of personal gain, creates increasing antagonisms with ever higher stakes. How then can we escape this doom-spiral?

McGowan (2024) offers us a way out through his conceptualisation of alienation. McGowan turns to Lacanian theory and encourages us to recognise ourselves (and the other) as inherently lacking subjects, and develop a public based on this existential lack. A political project built around the metaphysical recognition of universal lack circumnavigates the need for empathy; we are all definitionally alike in our negatively constituted subjectivities. This paper contends that lack and alienation could supplant empathy as a foundational organising principle.

#### Shifting Empathy: Fiction in the Face of Change

*Letizia Ambrosetti*

A potential decline in empathy could be indicative of the emergence of a novel concept that may supersede it: apathy. If empathy denotes capacity for emotional connection, apathy may be considered its antithesis, i.e. the elimination of the capacity to connect. To question the occurrence of this process, I would propose to examine its relation to a pressing issue our time: climate crisis. Taking full responsibility in climate-catastrophe would entail the reclaiming of empathy. By acknowledging the existence of other beings as equal members of an endangered species, we recognise a true form of empathy: recognising to be part of a greater whole. In a time where climate crisis stagnates in popular discourses and becomes secondary in political agendas, apathy prevails and hinders engagement. Literature can provide insights into the strategies employed to confront apathy. The recent literary genre climate fiction is a notable example of this. This genre – employed to address challenges posed by climate change – has as one of its goal collective sense-making. Scholars such as Alexa Weik Von Mossner propose that through the deployment of textual cues literature has the power to foster a sense of care. She further elaborates on this notion, asserting that climate-fictions have the ability to evoke profound emotional engagement in readers, thereby cultivating awareness. It is therefore suggested that literature, through its potential to emotionally engage readers, could reignite empathy towards our own species, offering a way to transcend the apathy that defines our times.

## MAL B33 – Textual Intercourse and the Speculative Erotics of Reading / Masturbatory Reading: The Erotics of Knowledge Production

### Speculative Erotic Devices in London's Contemporary Trans Writing

*Donna Marcus Duke*

I'd like to present on the use of 'speculative erotics' in my own work and my contemporaries in and around the London trans writing community. By 'speculative erotics', I mean the technique of inserting other writers, theorists and philosophers into fictional pleasure-focussed scenarios (including sex and partying) in order to explore theory and non-fiction. This will draw on my own essays published by Sticky Fingers Publishing, The BitterSweet Review and Sadie Coles HQ. I'll situate these essays first amongst my peers, including Francis Whorall-Campbell, Tomara Garrod, Louis Shankar and P Eldridge, and secondly more broadly in the context of New Narrative writers, including Robert Glück's 'Margery Kempe', Dennis Cooper's 'The Sluts' and Jackie Ess' 'Darryl', and the experimental fiction of Katrina Palmer.

I'm interested in how these speculative erotics are used to navigate theory's application to embodied feeling, bringing thought back to the body, especially in trans feminist thinking. I also see this as transgressing academic approaches to theory, where the situating of 'respectable' thinkers in pleasure-driven contexts produces new affective contexts which can intensify or my emotional display the meaning of the thinking. Some examples explored in the presentation will include Kierkegaard undergoing BDSM force-feminisation, Kurt Cobain's auto-gynephillic fantasies, an cannaballistic render-vows between Valerie Solonas and Andrea Long Chu, British Library cruising with D Mortimer and Micheal Warner's debut as a fisting bottom.

Alongside taking the 'masturbatory' as erotic/sexual, the presentation takes it as 'self-obsessed' and 'naval-gazing'. This is a term wielded against auto-theoretical/fictional modes that these writings participate in, and I'm keen to lean into it by analysing my own work, and the work of the literary community I'm apart of. What does it mean to look from the inside in? This will also be the first attempt at critical analysing this contemporary literary community.

### Subtitles / Domtitles: the Erotics of Time-based Reading in Video

*Jessa Mockridge*

Sara Ahmed, Katherine McKittrick, Fred Moten, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Saidiya Hartman, manifest a politics of citation respectively as: Feminist Memory. Not an inward-looking project that requires exclusion. A modality of policing and intellectual property. Evocation and song. Fabulation—a history written with and against the archive.

I am developing a practice of willful second-hand citation. It follows Ahmed's refusal to cite the institution of white men in *Living a Feminist Life*, and McKittrick's assertion that liberatory practices should not replicate systemic violences they attempt to dismantle, in *Footnotes (Books and Papers Scattered About the Floor)*. I do not seek out white men, but when they find me—I acknowledge how they found me. Lakoff's *Metaphors We Live By* via Roy Claire Potter's instagram post. My reading of Lakoff is laced with the queer trace of Potter's reading before me.

Second-hand referencing foregrounds relational practices. Second-hand Referencing centres inter-dependencies. It's an expanded form of Secondary Referencing, against an originary reading that hasn't already been filtered through the body of another. Second-hand referencing maps how

books travel hand-to-hand through screenshotting as praxis. Second-hand referencing troubles 'academic practice' by de-centring institutionalised knowledge to make way for the erotic, gossipy, situated, partial readings of friends and comrades. Second-hand referencing proposes a practice of queering metadata. Circling back to Ahmed: 'Queer as reused; reuse as queer use.'

### Masturbatory Writing: Gay Fanfic as Erotic Freedom

*Lux Pyre*

This presentation will take a critical look at gay fanfiction and its radical potential for erotic freedom. I will start by introducing the online worlds of gay fanfiction as being hidden sites of queer and trans embodied erotic knowledge. I will focus particularly on archiveofourown.org (AO3) as a key distributary framework and erotic archive, examining how the collective action of masturbatory reading enables us to access pluralistic architectures of erotic knowledge. The hidden nature of such sites is integral to their masturbatory nature - a chthonic spatiality I will define in relation to the 12th house in astrology, a place traditionally symbolic of incarceration, shame and hidden desire.

I will then explore the ways in which fanfic writing is intrinsically self stimulatory, through examining the differences between erotic and pornographic writing. I will close the presentation by inviting the audience to partake in an erotic writing exercise using their own fantasies and characters.

This presentation, written during the Venus Retrograde in Aries (2025), will extrapolate upon joint research initiated by Alice Sparkly Kat and I during Venus Retrograde in Leo (2023). Venus Retrograde compels us to review how we relate to intimacy, love and the erotic, as well as to our own creative life force. Leo and Aries remind us of our vitality, our passion and the ways in which we feel alive. They are both signs associated with play. Through playing with the erotic we become aware of our own infinite capacity for creation.

### MAL B18 – Law's Mediations: Cultural Techniques and Operational Code / 'In Theory': Media, Systems and (Re)Conceiving Communication

The cultural techniques of law: reading with Cornelia Vismann

*Panu Minkkinen*

Cornelia Vismann was a well-known critical legal scholar, but she was also a bit of a polymath. Well-read in the areas of especially legal history and procedural law, she was at heart a rather formal thinker, albeit with a twist. The formal undertow of her scholarship eased collaborations with media theorist Friedrich Kittler and his troupe in Berlin under whose influence Vismann completed her doctoral thesis (published in English as *Files*). However, the centrality of the monograph in Anglophone legal engagements with Vismann has left her other works underused. In this paper, I focus on the media-theoretical notion of 'cultural techniques' and engage in a relatively unrestricted reading of an article by Vismann. I look at the article in detail and situate it within the media-theoretical constellations in which it was both written and since then discussed. Through this reading exercise, I hope to be able to suggest some initial step marks for a transdisciplinary approach involving law and legal theory, art and media, and media theory.

### Im/mobilities: Movement as Cultural Technique

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<http://londoncritical.org/>

For the law, bodies are troublesome things, and in the sense that they are capable of movement, always potentially dangerous. From being stopped by police or placed in a holding cell, to being shackled and ‘perp walked’, physical movement (and its restraint) is one of law’s central preoccupations. Indeed, far beyond criminal law, in both the language of civil procedure and its actualisations, concerns for motions or their obstruction are ever-present. And it is this tension between mobility and immobility within the courthouse that I hope to explore as cultural technique.

As we increasingly turn in our encounters with law towards the empirical study of corporeality, sensoriality, affect, and beyond, I seek to reassess Cornelia Vismann’s critical contributions to our understanding of courtrooms as spaces of legal performance. Specifically, I look to the cultural techniques of law’s enactment – courtroom layout, furniture, legal artefacts, and media technologies – insofar as they govern our physical movement before the law. A corresponding matrix of rules, norms, and practices, I argue, legislates where, when, how, and why each actor may move. In turn this communicates – both inwards and outwards – many of the values law and lawyers cherish most.

Drawing on Vismann’s subtle explorations of law’s spatiality, the geometries of legal spaces and spatio-kinetic dimensions of legal practice, I discuss one specific courtroom here: the 1st Division of the Inner House, Court of Session, Edinburgh. Employing qualitative methods of in-person observation, and utilising the Court’s new livestreaming functionality, I argue that motility – and the potency and potentiality of that which may move – must be controlled for the law to have effect.

#### ‘Soft-wiring’ the Programme: Cultural Techniques of Software Patents

*Soumyajit Basu*

Software has been characterised as a master metaphor, capable of standing in for any ‘hard’ object or ‘soft’ process. Attempts to define software have been particularly troublesome for US patent law. Existing between textual instruction and its wired execution in hardware, the ontological status of software inventions has never rested comfortably in the domain of patentable subject matter. Excluded from patentability in the US context are inventions over abstract ideas, laws of nature, and natural phenomenon, encompassing ‘disembodied mathematical algorithms and formulas’, judicially recognised as expressing a form of ‘scientific truth’, outside of private property claims. The art of drafting early software patents appeared to rest on embodying algorithms, producing a measurable change in physical matter. Consequently, legal conflicts arose as to whether the novelty of invention rested in the symbolic media of code or the encoded physical machine, reanimating contests over matter, form and function.

#### MAL B20 – “...or it is nothing”: formations of academic critique / Critical Thought Maintenance: How to mediate intellectual and organisational form (and get away with it!)

##### Affording Criticism: Form and the Dialectics of Academic Critical Thought

*Tim Lanzendörfer*

My paper will address itself to difficult dialects of the critical affordances of forms. With reference to Adorno’s arguments about the utility of the essay, but also contemporary economic thinking

around the very pairable ideas of enshittification and sludge, it will try to outline a minor theory of why it's so hard to make things better. It will suggest that it is difficult to imagine the possibility of critical academic thought outside of recognized forms even as the necessity of forms constrains the possibility of criticality—especially of radical critical thought. Form enables the consensual far more than the critical, especially so when we consider the various institutional and professional pressures which are reified in it. But at the same time, we potentially rightfully discount criticism which does not take form, in the very literal sense of being recognizably a form and thus a credentialed intervention into the discourse, an artifact which it is possible not just to take seriously but in fact to even see amongst all the other things we encounter every day. We might go so far so to say: formless thought is not critical thought. Form, here, is not mediated, but is inevitably the mediator, of all critical thought—alas, to the detriment of criticality; and this view of academic forms (potentially illustrated by work on the book review) has wider applications in critical thought

Student collectives, knowledge production and educational imaginaries at LSE between 1967-69

*Wendy Willems*

Recent student activism around and solidarity with Palestine has posed new challenges to universities globally such as state capture and ongoing threats to academic freedom. However, the 2024 encampments also created new collective and collaborative spaces for education and knowledge production within the highly marketised, individualised and quantified neoliberal academy (Collini 2017; Pardo-Guerra 2022). In this paper, I reflect on an earlier moment of student activism between 1967-69, which was frequently invoked and remembered by students part of the 2024 protests. This, too, was a moment of global student solidarity which helped to expose the complicity of universities with colonialism in Rhodesia, apartheid in South Africa and war in Vietnam. These protests were also about the changing role of universities and produced moments of deep reflection and introspection on the nature of the university and the power of students within such institutions. These were also generational struggles against what students referred to as the 'pedagogic gerontocracy', i.e. older generations of faculty members and administrators. Student activists part of a range of collectives produced a wealth of material — pamphlets, manifestos, magazines and even books— in which they shared their visions on education and the role of universities in society. Drawing on an analysis of archival material produced by students linked to the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), I reflect on what we can learn from both their educational imaginaries as well as their methodologies of knowledge production.

Editing Otherwise: On Scholarship, Suffering, and the Possibility of a 'Perhaps'

*Rebekka Kieseewetter*

Part theoretical reflection, part personal account, and part speculative hyperbole, this contribution explores editing not as an administrative function or process-management tool, but as a vital scholarly practice that actively intervenes in the conditions that lead to feelings of suffering and alienation within academic labour.

As commercial publishing has become increasingly interwoven with institutional benchmarking, funding allocations, and career progression, the value of scholarship is predominantly framed in terms of the efficient production of research outputs that can be quantified, measured, and marketed for the competitive advantage of institutions and scholars. In response to these normative pressures, scholars often engage in forms of self-regulation, directing their attention away from dimensions of academic labour that lack immediate quantifiable impact – be it slow



or speculative thinking, experimental work, or intricate collaborative practices – while also adjusting their research topics, methodologies, and writing styles to align with what is deemed valuable within prevailing positivist frameworks.

Taking my recent guest-editorship of the Culture Machine special issue ‘Publishing after Progress’ as a point of departure, I explore how the resulting struggle to reconcile situated ways of knowing, scholarly values and aspirations, and institutional demands raises democratic concerns around knowledge equity and diversity, and often leads to overwork, stress, and alienation among scholars. In response to this condition – and drawing on my experience with open peer review, responsive workflows, and horizontal editorial structures – I propose editing as a practice through which experiences of suffering and alienation can be shared, politicised, and reworked into collective strategies for reshaping the conditions of academic labour. In doing so, I call for a renewed commitment to knowledge democracy, intellectual responsibility, and shared accountability – not as institutional mandates or policy blueprints, but as an insistence on a ‘perhaps’: the assertion that alternative ways of working, collaborating, and becoming an academic are possible, or at least plausible, beyond the constraints of what is deemed achievable, valid, or acceptable within dominant academic regimes. This insistence is especially urgent at a time when democratic institutions are under increasing pressure, and the critical humanities are being systematically contested and devalued.

## MAL 402 – Theorizing in Action / Ephemeral Resistance

### Queer and Junkie Lifeworlds: Molecular Resistance in Everyday Survival

*Tomasz Sikora & Justyna Struzik*

This paper intervenes in dominant narratives that portray people who use drugs as passive, self-destructive and lacking agency. Drawing on ethnographic research with opioid users in Poland, it highlights the often-overlooked experiences of women and non-binary people. Challenging the male-centric and hetero-patriarchal discourse prevalent still in drug policy and media, this presentation focuses on how these drug users enact everyday resistance against stigma and systemic, state-based violence.

Through the stories of Karo, Tonek, and Lucy, alongside other female-identified users, the analysis explores selected spaces of resistance: encounters with the police, paramedics, in a hospital ward, and the emergency room. Ultimately, this paper, situated within the framework of narcofeminism (Dennis & Pieenar 2023; Chang 2023; López 2020), aims to demonstrate the diverse tactics of resistance employed by women and non-binary people using opioids in Poland to preserve their sense of dignity and reclaim pride in their identity as a “junkie,” acknowledging the fluid and situational nature of these expressions and challenging simplistic understandings of addiction. Crucially, both resistance and pride are not understood here as totalizing categories, but rather as ephemeral, context-dependent, and temporal practices that enable survival.

### Parasitic Resistance: Ephemeral Tactics as Counter-Hegemonic Strategies

*Jakob Margit Wirth*

Ephemeral resistance, by its very nature, evades capture, leaving no permanent trace yet exerting significant symbolic and affective impact. This presentation explores the intersection of ephemeral resistance and parasitic strategies in contemporary art and activism. Drawing from Michel Serres’ concept of the parasite as both an intruder and a necessary disruptor, I argue that

parasitic interventions—those that infiltrate, appropriate, and temporarily occupy existing structures—exemplify forms of ephemeral resistance that reconfigure relations of power without seeking lasting institutionalization.

Parasitic resistance operates through moments of disruption: clandestine occupations, unauthorized performances, or camouflaged interventions that dissolve as quickly as they appear. These acts exploit the host system's vulnerabilities, transforming its infrastructures into sites of temporary counter-hegemonic practice. While the parasitic is often dismissed as opportunistic or unsustainable, I propose that its transitory nature is its strength—offering a resistance that thrives in precarity, eludes commodification, and refuses assimilation.

Through case studies of my parasitic art interventions, this talk examines how fleeting disruptions in public space, institutional frameworks, and digital networks can destabilize dominant narratives. By situating ephemeral resistance within the logic of the parasite, I explore how subversive occupations, tactical withdrawals, and momentary gestures challenge hegemonic structures without relying on endurance or visibility. Ultimately, this presentation asks: What forms of resistance emerge when permanence is no longer the goal, but rather, the act of infiltration itself?

#### Failing Better, Failing Together: A Glimpse into (a) Narcofeminist Autoethnography

*Kaisa Urbaniak*

Many years ago, during my several months in in-patient rehab, I struggled constantly with the notion of 'drug addict identity.' Each evening, I was forced to self-identify, having to choose between 'I'm a drug addict' and 'I'm a person diagnosed with Substance Use Disorder (SUD)'. The former was deemed the only acceptable answer, as expected by both the therapists and most other patients.

I found this perspective to be essentialist and repressive. Moreover, I had no intention of abandoning my practices of self, which, at the time, revolved around opioids and provided me with a sense of security, if only through a sense of detachment.

It was around that time that I began to reframe my drug use as a 'practice of failure.' Initially, I viewed it as closely related to radical negativity, perhaps best expressed in Bartleby's refrain, "I would prefer not to." At that moment, I associated it with a sense of abandonment and refusal, with death representing the ultimate act of passive resistance.

Only a few years later, after becoming involved in PWUD activism and connecting with other narcofeminists—both in person and through their writings—did I begin to embrace the more joyful side of failure.

In this paper, I will explore the significance of the narcofeminist art of failure, particularly its ambivalence and potential for imaginary world-building. Because we indeed fail better together.

*13:00-14:00 – Break for lunch (not provided)*

## 14:00-15:30 – Parallel Sessions 7

### MAL B35 – Popular culture and the Gimmick / The Art of the Gimmick

#### Beauty Ideals as a Gimmick: Capitalist Mechanisms and Identity

*Lennart Forster*

In capitalist societies, beauty ideals function as a gimmick that suggests to us that self-expression - through clothing, style or body staging - is a necessary prerequisite for social value and recognition. This gimmick promises belonging and individuality in one, while at the same time linking the identity of the individual to consumer goods and their perception by others.

Beauty becomes a commodity, whose value is not intrinsic, but is constructed and determined by capitalist mechanisms.

This dynamic is particularly evident in the sexual context: the body becomes a product that is defined and valued through its visual presentation. The fashion, cosmetics and fitness industries benefit from the fact that people link their self-worth to external appearances and position themselves as a “brand”. This form of self-presentation is often sold as an expression of individuality, but is deeply embedded in economic structures that promote conformity and constant consumption.

In parts of my artistic work, I examine these connections by questioning the relationship between the body, clothing and social expectations. I consider ideals of beauty as an aesthetic category in the sense of Sianne Ngai's theory of gimmicks: they promise more than they deliver and at the same time reflect the capitalist systems that produce them.

#### WORKSHOP: The Gimmick in Motion: Footballer Hairstyles as Participatory Performance

*Q plus I*

This performative and participatory 45-minute workshop explores persona and identity as shaped through popular culture, with a focus on the aesthetics of footballers' haircuts. These iconic styles, shaped by media clichés, operate as potent visual signifiers—communicating status, allegiance, rebellion, and cultural trends. Through setting up a ‘gimmicky’ situation and the use of visual gimmicks (props) the workshop considers how hairstyles become a site for image-making and symbolic excess in the construction of athletic personas.

Inspired by theorist Sianne Ngai's framing of props as “gimmicks,” the workshop considers how hair becomes a site for image-making and symbolic excess in the construction of athletic personas.

The session opens with A History of Footballers' Haircuts, a performative lecture featuring lo-fi cardboard props representing famous football hairstyles. This humorous yet critical overview traces how footballers' haircuts have mirrored shifts in popular culture—from the mullets and mohawks of past decades to today's hyper-curated styles.

Participants then engage in a playful drawing activity. Using the cardboard haircut props, individuals pose as imagined personas within a frame which is a life-sized football sticker/ trading card, while others sketch them. This rapid-fire exercise externalises the performative nature of self-image and reveals the visual codes used in media representation. The session concludes with a collaborative display of the drawings, creating a wall of constructed personas.

Participants are encouraged to carry this heightened awareness of performance and cultural styling into their own creative and academic practices.

## MAL 532 – Cruising as collage: simultaneity and superposition in the shadows / Cruising as Critical Methodology: Practices and Imaginaries from the Shadows

### WORKSHOP: Cruising Literature

*Baptiste Fabre*

Cruising is an attitude of sharing and the haphazard arrangement of bodies. Initially, my talk will focus on the hypothesis of a queer literature constructed like an cruising's afternoon. I will notably discuss RFD magazine, whose construction, across geographical and social boundaries, is a laboratory of thought through intersections. Authors like Arthur Dreyfus also use this process of collage and compilation to create a chance encounter. Between two texts, or a text and an image, the reader enjoys a narrative path of their own. The poetry of the encounter through the printed page invites a choral sensuality. I will illustrate my remarks with my practice of the photogram as a recomposition through images of the act of cruising.

Then, I will revisit a performance I began in April at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, which consists of fisting a piñata and feasting on the texts it contains. The cruisers present in the clearing will be invited to pick up these short texts, which we will read together. This haphazard recomposition, through multiple voices meeting, responds to the political project of the cruise, through sharing and in situ performativity.

### Cruising as an atmosphere with alchemical potentials for transformation

*Kristijan Radakovic*

Spaces, whether we are talking about the mental ones or the physical ones (they are interconnected), are defined by using the principal of mapping. Once mapped, space shapes the structures and the practices of knowledge production- the knowledge on which we will later understand and act upon the world.

With the redefined 'we', cruising is a place where 'we' is made of bodies of water, whose logic is hydrologic and the bodies are connected through the oceanic feeling. It is a place where the answers to the questions of who are we and who are we to each other are to be found in the low waters of the theories where the solid structure is not a *conditio sine qua non* and the best way to go, is to go with the flow and cruise, as "the best kind of prize is a surprise."

With its constant changes in shapes and contents, with the knowledge production as a result of its fluidity, the Third Landscape reveals itself as the landscape which overcomes the systems we were used to so far: the binary systems or "a social constructs composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites." (Milian Kang, Donovan Lessard, Laura Heston, Sonny Nordmarken, Introduction to women, gender, sexuality studies)

Once started as a fight for the fundamental human rights, feminism became an integrative part of human nature which as a result gives the answer to the question: what do we mean when we say 'we'? Further, once we define 'we', equally important becomes the question of who are we to each other?

By becoming an integrative part, feminism also became a tool for re-shaping the strong borders of the way we think we are and it opens the door to new concepts, new bodies and new subjectivities, leaving us with numerous possibilities. Feminism, in a way, became a landscape which invites all the possible forms of existence or to use the words of Gilles Clement while describing the Third Landscape, feminism became “a diversity that has not yet been classified as richness.”

Cruising leaves no space for the subject creation and the power division. Its non surveillant and the fluid nature doesn't recognise these categories. Once becoming cruising we construct fluidly.

In her searching for a world as a better place, Neimanis was looking at our embodiments which are positioning us to divide, hence to gain or to lose power. We all agree that the embodiments in the forms of gender, race, class, species are the premises on which we are claiming our own power position or disclaiming someone else's.

And what was the common thing connecting and/or separating all of us? Neimanis realises it is a water. She invites us to take that fact as our starting point or to be more precise, she invites us to become a body of water. To become a body of water means to realise how no matter what differences there are between our selves and others we will all easily see how the water is the thing which connects us.

If we would place water as a starting point of our logic we will more easily realise the connections between us, such as species, genders, races etc.

Putting water as a principal on which we will construct our relations and build our knowledge is called hydro-logic and the system which is built based on that way of thinking is called hydrofeminism. “We are all bodies of water. To think embodiment as watery belies the understanding of bodies that we have inherited from the dominant Western metaphysical tradition. As watery, we experience ourselves less as isolated entities, and more as oceanic eddies: I am a singular, dynamic whorl dissolving in a complex, fluid circulation. The space between our selves and our others is at once as ”

In her vision of who we are to each other and who we are in a relation to more-than- human, Neiman reminds us of the fact that we are all from water, of water and finally are water, at the same time she is trying to realise what this becoming a body of water (ex. fluvial, dripping) could possibly mean for us. More, what could it possibly mean for us becoming a body of water “as both - matter and meaning.”

Being a body of matter is answering the question who are we to ourselves? (no matter who is ‘I’ in the ‘we’) Becoming a ‘body of water as a matter’ would allows us to question and to reconfigure the social architecture, it would allow us to re-think ‘we’, the same ‘we’ based upon we will draw the lines.

Becoming a ‘body of water as a meaning’ would allow us to reconfigure our way of thinking and our way of constructing social architecture.

## MAL B33 – Practicing Perversions from the Highlands to the Cruising Bar / Masturbatory Reading: The Erotics of Knowledge Production

Every Day is a School Day When You're a Pervert

*Brutalisturinal*

'Every day is a school day when you're a pervert' will take the form of an experimental performance text and will discuss the ways in which knowledge of queer modes of desire and sites of public sex are best learned and shared through active participation rather than via an academic detachment. Drawing on my lived experiences of cruising, BDSM and autodidactic learning, as well as bringing in research and stories from my time running the queer sex party Temporary Cruising Zone, I will examine how dungeons, sex clubs and cruising grounds have become the libraries and universities of the pervert and how these sacred sites of learning are being pushed further underground due to sexual policing and gentrification, as well as highlighting how traditional methodologies can fail to adequately represent these practices and communities due to ethnographical diluting and sensationalism.

What I'm saying is, in order to know how to be a pervert, you have to be a pervert. You need to graze your knees, get your fingers wet and know the best place to suck dick on a Wednesday afternoon. Get out of the library (unless there's a glory hole in the toilet) and hold that raw, visceral knowledge in your fist.

#### In a Field with Something up my Butt

*Maggie Campbell*

Through film, images, performance and text, this presentation will share elements of my ongoing artistic practice, informed by my experience as a sex worker, to explore themes of land, boundaries, shame, sex, fetish and intimacy.

In 2022, at a residency looking at the work of DH Lawrence around sexuality and land, I created sculptural costume works called "butt plug tails." These appendages, which encircle and extend the body, engage with themes of kink, gender presentation, and sexuality beyond the human form. I performed with them through landscapes such as Derbyshire, the Peak District, Lake District, and the Scottish Highlands, documenting my movements through video and using automatic writing as a tool for processing. Overlaying the videos with audio recordings of my writing, I created a feedback loop that articulates and interrogates these embodied experiences.

Restaging this work later in club settings, divorced from the non-human agent of the land and shaped in relation to the desire of the audience and the club's fiscal framework, the feedback loop shifted, transforming the work again. The dissatisfaction of performing this work in these nightlife contexts raised some key questions. What clarity can be reached through performing erotic acts without having to consider anyone else's desire? How can this allow you to feel truly situated in a place? How can you access sites where you can be free of the pervy eyes of god? Where do these urges come from, and where are they going?

#### Between Rubber, Masculinities and the Smell of Cum: Architectural Thinking Behind the Cruising Bar

*Alexander Auris*

While cruising originated in public spaces, its transition into closed venues, such as bars, has led to the institutionalization of these performances. This shift has not only influenced user behavior but has also introduced a new group into the ecosystem of cruising: the staff. Bartenders, coat check attendants, cleaners, and administrators play a crucial role in the operation of these spaces, yet their perspectives remain largely absent from academic discourse.

At first glance, these spaces may seem solely dedicated to sexual encounters, catering to men seeking fleeting interactions. However, by shifting the focus of research from abstract theories and metaphors to the lived experiences of the workers, we gain a deeper understanding of how these spaces function beyond their sexual purpose.

This presentation is based on six months of work in Stammbar, the only cruising bar in Brussels, where an architect-turned-bartender navigates a personal and professional transformation. Initially approaching the space with an architectural lens—analyzing its spatial elements—his perspective shifts towards its social dynamics. Through daily interactions with both patrons and staff, the experience reveals a broader understanding of what sustains these spaces, moving beyond design to consider the human and operational factors that keep them alive. The methodology and presentation take the form of a journal, documenting observations, interactions, and reflections over time, providing an intimate and immersive perspective on the subject. This research aims to question the academy, institutionalization and theories surrounding cruising.

## MAL B18 – Monstrous Desires and Disobedient Bodies / Monstrous Becomings: The politics, aesthetics and contradictions of Monstrosity

Bastardized Vampirism – towards methods of queer monstrosity and vampiric (trans\*)gressions

*Mayra Jenzer Azevedo*

This presentation examines the monstrosity of the vampire figure as a trans\* resistance method, inspired by Frau Diamanda's *Escenas Catalanas*, where she recounts her nocturnal cruising experiences as a trans woman/travestí. In the foreword, Diego Falconí Trávez describes the author as both a vampire and an anthropologist. The vampire, I argue, queers anthropology here. Taking Sandy Stone's "gender-as-genre" approach literally, I turn to the vampire genre and align the vampire's (trans-)temporality with José Esteban Muñoz's notion of cruising as a break with "straight [and cis] time": Vampiric existence in liminal zones—at night, in the mist—functions as a political act. The vampire's partial invisibility is both dangerous and protective, offering emancipation from a society that confines trans\* bodies within normative structures. In the sense of Jack Halberstam's "fugitive politics," this vampiric method insists on a politics beyond state recognition.

I then develop a trans\* methodology I call "bastardized vampirism." Drawing on Juliane Rebentisch's camp materialism as a tenderness toward the monstrous and decaying—not affirming necropolitically determined queerness but collapsing biopolitically imposed stable identities—I position the bastardized vampire as both an identificatory figure for queer and trans\* subjects and a method for constructing a trans\*(formatory) vampire-ontology. Here, trans\* is not an identity but a practice. Finally, following Adair and Aizura's re-appropriation of transphobic "infection" narratives, the bastardized vampire emerges as a campy, non-binary, "omnisexual" cruiser, embodying transgressive desire, monstrous consumption, and pleasurable transformation in the dark.

The monster can speak: Self-theorisations of monstrosity in the therapy room

*Anna-Peter Magyarlaki, Farrah Jamaluddin, Dain Jeong*

A felt experience of monstrosity may rear its head in any therapy room that engages marginalised communities: and it would logically be best articulated by clients who experience it. Yet, the psychoanalytic canon continues to be built upon a false subject/object binary (Preciado, 2020) where clients' experiences are conveyed in clinical vignettes written by analysts with no input, and at times no consent, from clients.

Echoing Preciado's call for a mutant psychoanalysis (2020) and Mossop's call for an epistemology of the patient (2025) this paper will turn this paradigm on its head. Instead, the three authors (who are both clients and therapists themselves) will share their own vignettes, as clients of psychoanalysis.

Monstrosity, one's own and that of their therapists' has been key to the authors' therapeutic journeys. Disavowal, reclaiming and projection operated within the rooms as clients and therapists tried to move with monstrous imageries. Three vignettes will be shared: two discussing the perceived and/or projected monstrosities of the authors that are linked to their positionalities as trans and Muslim subjects, and a third exposing the monster-making capacity of the psycho-disciplines.

These vignettes will be analysed using critical theory, and in particular Fanon's writings on dehumanisation (2001), Malatino's reflections on queer monstrosities (2019) and Sheehi's (2019) analysis of islamophobia in psychoanalytic practice. Finally, disrupting the client-therapist binary, the authors will reflect on how these experiences affected their positionalities as practising/trainee therapists.

### Desiring Monsters and Monstrous Desires: Crippling Trans Poetry and Poetics

*Jasper Verlinden*

The relationship between disability and trans studies and activism is fraught, not only because of transphobia and ableism in the respective movements, but because of a diagnostic parcelling up of bodies and identities into discrete categories that goes back to the nineteenth century. This paper uses the figure of the monster, as one of the oldest representations of embodied difference, to challenge these "categorical exclusions" (Kari Hong) not only regarding trans and disability, but race as well.

The monster is not only a figure of fear and othering. As Jeffrey Cohen has argued, fear of the monster goes hand-in-hand with desire. Reading theoretical texts on monstrosity alongside recent trans poetry, specifically poetry that thematizes transness in relation to race and/or disability, the paper asks what makes the monster such a powerful figure of identification for people with non-normative forms of embodiment. One possible answer to this question is the potential of what I term "monstrous agency": a capacity to act outside of the norms and bounds of society.

By bringing together transness with race and disability, the paper does not only advocate for an intersectional perspective that traces the converging lines of disablement, normative gendering, and racialization in constructions of the monstrous, but argues for the employment of the monster as itself an intersectional analytic.

### MAL B20 – Redemptive Protocols / The Crisis of Experience in the in the Age of Algorithmic Attention

Experience, Poverty, and Messianicity: from Benjamin to Stiegler



This paper attempts to trace a line of thought from Walter Benjamin to Bernard Stiegler, exploring how this trajectory forms a distinctive problematic surrounding the concept of experience and its intimate connection to notions of poverty and messianicity, thereby opening up new critical pathways for engaging with the impasses and possibilities in the contemporary world. For Benjamin, the Kantian *Erfahrung* became profoundly impoverished after WWI. In the shock of the new paradigm of *Erlebnis*, Benjamin's philosophical wager emerges: how might the modern subject preserve a particular coming form of "absolute experience," grasping themselves within it as an event, and resonating with an abstract "absolute spirit"? Simultaneously, within the barbarism of modernity, seek a new and proper barbarism that allows life to continue creatively, enabling modern experience to become thinkable again through a philosophical practice of destituent? How can one become a *Konstruckteur*, sustaining the perpetual openness of the narrow gate to messianicity in an era defined by the poverty of experience? Subsequently, this paper turns to show how Stiegler subtly borrows and develops Benjamin's concept of experience (through Jacques Derrida), exploring how, in the hyper-industrial automatic society, the modern subject might restore the faculty of attention, and move toward a future that could rescue life from the ruins of symbolic misery and the poverty of experience, especially in confronting the latent crisis of algorithmic governmentality. In doing so, it enacts an ethical and political movement towards an "absolute future" marked by the Benjaminian-Stieglerian messianicity, that is, to experience the yet-to-be-experienced.

#### Crisis of Experience as Decline in Benjamin's Weimar Writings

Tiger Liu

It has become custom to characterise the present as in a state of permanent crisis, deeply lodged in our ordinary experience, rendering the very invocation of the "everyday", a once redemptive concept, derogatory. Philosophical iterations of such a crisis of experience often turn to the works of Walter Benjamin, a thinker who mobilised the post-Kantian distinction of elaborated experience[*Erfahrung*] relating to the auratic and spiritual[*Geistig*] and the lived experience[*Erlebnis*] of commodification. As the story usually goes, the epidemic of the proliferation of commodified everydayness characteristic of (aesthetic) modernity condemns the esoteric/mystic kind of experience to near extinction, summarised by Adorno's infamous preface to *Minima Moralia*, *das Leben lebt nicht*/the life is not lived. This loss of experience have since then invoked various rearticulations, either couched in terms of "postmodern subjectivity" recently revived by Anna Kornbluh's recent book on the style of immediacy, or characterised by a certain discussion around the phenomena of exhaustion mobilised to understand political incapacity, or, one could also trace it within the discourse and critique of memorial practices that have emerged since the crisis of historicism post-Auschwitz, continued by Benjamin Buchloh and Andreas Huyssen, all of which have met a certain conceptual impasse failing to constitute a "way out". It is therefore opportune to return to Walter Benjamin's Weimar writings, following recent historiographies by Anson Rabinbach, Miriam Hansen, and recent studies on Weimar mass culture, to reread the origin of this tragic-play of experience not as a generic death of aura, but as the experience of historical time as declension[*Untergang*]. Thinking specifically how the diverging concepts of experience is inherited and mobilised by Benjamin to counter the Weimar rightwing narrative of decline in/of history, thus allowing us to reread Benjamin's conception of photography and cinema, the paper will attempt to argue, in a Benjaminian fashion, the index for the "way out" is in the past.

*Tom Allen*

This paper is concerned with a specific thinking of history and experience in the poetry of Tongo Eisen-Martin. Current poet laureate of San-Francisco, anti-carceral organizer and author of four poetry, Eisen-Martin refuses to recognize a significant difference between his aesthetic practice and what he aims to achieve within his political work. I will argue here that the common ground between these two lies in a comportment towards social reality which sees it as fundamentally transformable in the face of collective agency. I am particularly interested in the manner in which Eisen-Martin mobilizes a fragmentary sense of historical experience and tradition in order to render a calcified real once fluid and malleable for thinking and action. In particular, I aim to suggest that this work develops a negative dialectic founded on a particular mode of paratactic composition, and that this mode is itself comprehensible as a way of relating to, and communicating a form of, contemporary experience of the historical. I will demonstrate this via readings of Eisen-Martin's own writing on aesthetics, which I claim identify poetry as fundamentally paratactic, as well as close-readings of several poems, and of his syllabus for education in carceral situations entitled *We Charge Genocide Again!*.

## MAL 402 – Listening in Necropolitical Times / Radical Listening: Collective Practices, Histories and Possible Futures

Active(ist) Listening: Biffo Berardi's Address to Psychoanalysis

*Angie Voela*

As an activist and philosopher, Franco (Biffo) Berardi often discusses the widespread suffering of contemporary capitalism. He advocates the need to reactivate our ability to (re)connect language and desire before it is too late, whilst distancing himself from mastery and knowledge, rejecting paranoids and hysterics alike, calling for ways of remaining human, warnings against the total circle of total transparency, before declaiming: 'Don't be attached to life, don't have hope [...] don't believe (me)'.

How does psychoanalysis listen to both to the style of this address and the invitation to respond? In this paper I discuss psychoanalytic listening and thinking as a way of becoming that moves beyond being immobilised in the tangle of techno-linguistic automatisms, towards the possibility of a future (futurability). Societies of control and automation have little room for aporia and the Real, the incomputable, the vibrational and the excessive. Addressing automatism(s) means gradually opening up established equations between signifiers (gestalts in Berardi) to different meaning(s). This disentanglement, an emancipation of content from the form that contains, allows one to see something that was previously impended. Political-cultural theorists often speak of the revival of language and imagination as an integral part of this process: of poetry, rendering the familiar unfamiliar, and metaphor as providing a different outlet to affect. We might call these processes becoming irregular, espousing unpredictability and welcoming the unexpected. Further in response to Berardi's call, I argue that psychoanalysis outside the conventional clinic, can promote 'deep listening' characterized by a critique of hegemonic discourses and automations, whilst advancing invention, relating, friendship and freedom.

Necropolitical Listening: Towards a Psychopolitical Ethics of Care

*Rosendo Del Rio*

In a world shaped by necropolitical conditions—where systemic violence renders certain lives disposable—listening emerges as a radical act of care, witnessing, and world-making. While psychotherapy has long privileged the ‘talking cure,’ less attention has been given to the ethical and political dimensions of listening. This paper explores how listening, particularly in therapeutic practices, can foster new forms of relationality amidst socio-political collapse. Drawing on Achille Mbembe’s *Necropolitics*, Martín-Baró’s *Liberation Psychology*, and Félix Guattari’s *The Machinic Unconscious*, this paper interrogates the infrastructures, rituals, and struggles of ‘listening well.’ What does it mean to listen when the capacity to be heard is unequally distributed? How might listening—beyond recognition—generate possibilities for resistance, survival, and reparation? Engaging clinical vignettes, ethnographic material, and political theory, I propose that radical listening entails not just attunement to what is spoken, but also silence, rupture, and unspeakability. If listening extends beyond individual voices to collective, systemic, and non-human forces, Guattari’s machinic unconscious helps expand this notion, positioning listening within affective, technological, and ecological networks, rather than just interpersonal dialogue. In necropolitical conditions, where institutions, infrastructures, and algorithms manage life and death, listening could disrupt or reprogram these assemblages. How do subjects unconsciously register these forces? How do subjects within necropolitical structures register and respond to these forces unconsciously? If listening can be co-opted by power structures—through surveillance capitalism or therapeutic governance—how might we rethink its complicities? By positioning listening as both a psychosocial practice and a political strategy, this paper argues that listening ‘otherwise’ is not merely ethical but a necessary mode of co-constructing a world-in-common.

#### Colonised Aggression: Listening Beyond the Analytic Frame

*Usman Zafar*

This paper examines how white prejudice and racism shape experiences of aggression in the post-colonial world, drawing on a different kind of listening. The research was conducted using the psychoanalytic single case study research. While aggression has long held a central place in psychoanalytic theory, traditional frameworks often overlook the cultural and racial dimensions that shape its expression—particularly for those marked by histories of colonial violence and racial subjugation. The paper calls for a different kind of psychoanalytic listening: one attuned to the complexities of colonised aggression—aggression that may be disavowed, internalised, or rendered unspeakable. It argues that listening through the lenses of race, migration, and colonial history opens up new ways of understanding the psychic entanglements of aggression and identity. The discussion attempts to link psychoanalytic theories of narcissism and the death instinct (Freud, Rosenfeld, Britton) with Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*, particularly his insights into the imposed servility and psychic rupture wrought by colonialism. These frameworks illuminate the difficulty many post-colonial subjects face in identifying with their own aggression and the challenge of finding a voice for it in the therapeutic encounter. The paper concludes with a clinical vignette featuring a therapist and patient—both from post-colonial contexts but from different global regions—highlighting the therapist’s attempt to receive and make sense of aggression in the consulting room. Through this, the author argues for an analytic stance that can bear witness to the psychic aftermath of colonialism and its impact on aggression, rage and anger.

*15:30-16:00 – Break*

## 16:00-17:30 – Parallel Sessions 8

### MAL B35 – Panel 2 / Labour and Liveness in a New Age of Automation

#### The Performance of Labour In, As and Beyond the Image

*Pil and Galia Kollektiv*

Within post-Fordist economies, work has been theorised as increasingly performative, relying on communicative faculties even at the menial level of call centres and carework. In popular discourse, automation has been presented as a threat to this model. However, since the extraction of value can only happen in relation to labour rather than machines, this fantasy continues to function in the way it has historically, as a disciplinary means of lowering wages. Within performance art, liveness has been fetishized in opposition to mediation. However, performance, like all art today, results in the documentary image, which becomes the commodity produced by artistic labour. The circulation of such images in turn relies on yet more performative labour, including the sharing of the image and other discursive practices. As a consequence, the more it tries to present a critique of mediation, the more artistic performance draws nearer to non-artistic, extractive labour practices. Instead of seeing liveness as external to mediation, then, we argue that it is more productive to explore the critical potential of the mediated image of living labour.

#### Song Work: Field Recordings, Focus Tools and the Future of Workplace Noise

*Siôn Parkinson*

This presentation explores Song Work, an online library of workplace noise dedicated to conserving Scotland's environmental industrial soundscapes and integrated with the National Library of Scotland Sound Archive. Launched in 2022, precisely a year after furloughed employees in the UK returned to work, the archive preserves the humming, droning and mechanical rhythms of productivity—sounds that now serve a new purpose in an era of remote and hybrid work.

As field recordings from Song Work are repurposed into 'ersatz' soundscapes to aid focus for those working from home, this presentation critically examines the paradox of simulated liveness in the context of automation and atomised labour. How do such soundscapes function as sonic antagonists to the personalised home workspace? And how do they echo historical efforts to manipulate workplace noise, such as Muzak, which sought to enhance worker efficiency?

Combining spoken word with audio recordings from the Song Work archive, this performance-lecture will explore how field recordists, sound artists and digital archivists are not only conserving workplace noise as intangible cultural heritage but also transforming it into 'functional' music to augment contemporary work environments.

The presentation concludes by asking: What are the sounds of today's workplaces? Does human physiology even register them? Beyond the health benefits of noise protection, how does our increasing reliance on noise-cancelling technology shape our auditory perception of labour? What sounds might we be inadvertently neutralising in the process, and what are we missing as a result?

### MAL 532 – The grimdark future in an imperfect present / The Cruellest and Most Bloody Stream Imaginable: What's Left of Warhammer 40,000?

After battle, there is some law: Sublimation, Bolt Thrower and Warhammer

Death metal confronts death head-on. It lists a vast number of ways you can die, from the hands of a murderer (Hammer Smashed Face), erosion by mental illness (Spirit Crusher), or unfathomable cosmic horror (Planetary Hypnosis).

This is a practical approach to existential anxiety. Fans construct counterfactual scenarios for every potential demise – in the the most sonically-appropriate fashion – allowing them to live a reasonably ordinary life.

This is similar to tabletop games such as Warhammer 40,000, where players assume the role of generals dictating actions from afar, taking seismic decisions that affect the course of battle. Violence and the desire for conquest of territories are acted out and resolved, before players return to society.

In both cases, the threat of death and violence is sublimated – acted out in a contained space. No real-world agents are harmed (before we get into the methods of producing vast quantities of plastic or t-shirts).

The two are unsurprising bedfellows. The focus of the talk is Warhammer-themed death metal/grindcore band Bolt Thrower, who use the settings to confront the grim horrors of war.

This talk explores the history of Warhammer's overlap with metal, arguing that they play a similar societal role – sublimating violent drives or anxiety around death. It asks – how can we safely explore ugly fears or desires? And in a world where production methods are increasingly coming under scrutiny – what the limits of this fantasy?

#### The Armour of Contempt: Theology According to Drive, According to Chaos

*Nicolette Burbach*

The Radical Orthodox theologian, John Milbank outlines a sacramental political theology in which difference is analogically mediated. Marika Rose, via Lacan, characterises this as a politics of desire that, in seeking unity and wholeness, violently overcomes difference; something that is made particularly apparent by Milbank's colonialism, antifeminism and queerphobia. Drawing from Slavoj Žižek's Death of God theology, she instead advocates for a theology "according to the logic of drive" that breaks with the violence of desire.

However, Žižek's more recent comments on trans people suggests that Žižek and Milbank are not as opposed as they might first appear. Žižek criticises trans calls for toilet access as representing a desirous attempt to overcome irreducible sexual difference. Che Gossett criticises this in turn, arguing that Žižek fails to recognise the material dimension to these calls, which seek freedom from the violent policing of racialised gender. The upshot is that, in this instance, Žižek's political theology according to drive simply incorporates the pursuit of negativity in the form of sexual difference within a cisnormative politics that desirously motivates the violent policing of bodies.

This essay reads Chaos in Warhammer 40,000 as a "misoantitheism" that can serve as a corrective to Žižek's politics according to drive. It argues that the primordial truth of Chaos offers a reductive critique of Imperial theopolitics of desire, much like Žižek's Death of God theology does. However, Chaos' treacherous, self-defeating, and pathetic nature motivates a contempt that prevents its inscription into, and so co-option by, a politics of desire.

## MAL B33 – The Image and it's Affective Residue / Masturbatory Reading: The Erotics of Knowledge Production

Masturbatory Reading and Copulatory Reading; or, you're so horny you probably think this essay is about you

*Louis Shankar*

This paper would theorise masturbatory reading as a mode of interpretation: “reading” as an interpretative act (per the dictionary, “a particular interpretation of a text or situation”). What would a masturbatory reading look like? To this end, I would extend Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s model of paranoid and reparative reading — often understood as a dichotomy rather than a taxonomy, one with multiple directions and potentials. In keeping with Sedgwick’s citation of Melanie Klein’s work, I would root this essay in psychoanalysis, a mix of Klein and Sigmund Freud. I will focus on *jouissance*, between Jacques Lacan and Roland Barthes. At the crux of the examination is the relationship between the artist and the viewer/the writer and the reader: a copulatory reading brings the two together; a masturbatory reading focusses on the viewer/reader, using the text to gain a personal, solipsistic *jouissance*. Throughout the paper, I will look at works by a number of queer artists from the 1970s to the present, including Andy Warhol, Jimmy DeSana and Felix Gonzalez-Torres. I’m interested in Warhol’s cum and piss paintings; in DeSana’s strange eroticism and self-portraiture; in Gonzalez-Torres’ participatory works and his own theoretical investment in Barthes and Brecht. What is a masturbatory mode of engagement? What purposes might this serve? How can it be used to queer and to activate the museum and the gallery — its history and its present?

Dance Image Dance! The ‘Time-Image’ and Tactile Politics of Usama Alshaibi’s Cinema

*Munirah Almeiri*

This paper explores the tactile strategies in Usama Alshaibi’s *Dance Habibi Dance* (1999), *Flesh Tone Genesis* (2000), and *Qawliya Dance* (2006), proposing that these experimental short films function as embodied forms of historiography, working across diasporic memory, queer desire, and ritual performance. They mobilize what Deleuze terms the “time-image” through a choreography of bodies and pixels, where the ritual of Iraqi dance traditions is mirrored in the movement of pixels, glitching, looping, and layering in montages that refuse linearity. Through repetition and rhythmic disorientation, the image lingers, not as narrative, but as affective residue. Drawing on Laura U. Marks’ theory of haptic visuality, a way of seeing that prioritizes the sensorial over the visual, I argue that these films serve as tactile archives, embracing opacity, assemblage, and affect as sites of historical potential.

This paper situates Alshaibi’s practice within a broader politics of decolonial and queer experimental media, asking how haptic cinema can function as a method of embodied knowledge-making, where history is not reconstructed, but sensed, rehearsed, and performed.

Casanova X uncaged

*Fanny Wendt Höjer*

Since 1995, the Taiwanese pavilion of the Venice Biennale has been hosted in the 16th-century castle Palazzo delle Prigioni (literally “The prison palace”). When artist Shu Lea Cheang

presented in the pavilion in 2019, this carceral history became the starting point of her exhibition 3x3x6. 3x3x6 is based on ten portraits of people around the world who have at some point in history been incarcerated for nonnormative expressions of gender and/or sexuality. One of these is the famous womanizer Casanova, who was locked up in the palazzo in the 18th century. In this presentation, I read Cheang's portrait, and the accompanying ten-minute-long speculative video work Casanova X, as a commentary on how transgressive sexuality is and has been criminalized, and as a work that at the same time breaks queerness out of incarcerating frames.

Cheang's video Casanova X recasts Casanova as a queer person in the contemporary. In one scene, Casanova X fantasises their way out of their prison cell, into an all white, boundless room, which becomes the setting of an orgy. I propose to read this scene as a play with negative space, not as a space free of context, but as attached to José Esteban Muñoz's idea that "radical negativity" can become a "resource for a certain mode of queer utopianism" (Muñoz, 2009, p. 35). Cheang's repurposed white cube is a fantasy space that cannot be fully separated from carcerality, but where an excess of queer desire surpasses the logic of the prison.

## MAL B18 – More-than-Human Listening / Radical Listening: Collective Practices, Histories and Possible Futures

The Spiral: The Conch & The Jellyfish

Ania Mokrzycka

One *falls into* a spiral, spirals *out of control* or *into* an ever more agonising vortex. But to spiral is also to never return to the same. It is to never settle in one form but to keep shifting, searching, re-making, multiplying, troubling; always already slipping away towards another (possible) recoiling. It is to re-turn, "not going back to a past that was, but re-turning as in turning it over and over again" (Barad, 2014).

Drawing on the work of Karen Barad, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Édouard Glissant, Sara Ahmed and others, this performative talk/sounding-listening session uses the figure of the spiral to rethink (expanded) listening in the more-than-human, oceanic context. Guided by marine life experience and movement across volume rather than plane and mirroring rhythmic movement of waves and tides and Kamau Brwaaite's concept of tidalectics, it entices unmoored thinking-sensing; a fragmented, fluctuating process where erosion and accretion coexist. The subject/object/environment spiral into each other cutting together/apart (Barad, 2007), swayed by a centrifugal force that keeps them away from a 'decentered centre:' always becoming, always at the periphery. In its rejection of hierarchy and resolution, what I propose as *spiral listening* carries the possibility of attending to the (never) same questions, wounds and experiences through a multiplicity of voices, unfolding new axes of relation rather than responding in absolutes. It invites the listeners to step out of the 'solid' ground (long crumbling with each explosion, war, drill, tillage, deforestation and toxic spill), allowing the currents to draw them - deeper, under, transdimensionally - in vibrating, abyssal, oceanic elsewhere.

Whales, AI, And The Right To Opacity: Decolonising Interspecies Communication

Tessel Janse

Inspired by Mexican artist Ariel Guzik, who creates instruments designed to subtly interact with the voices of cetaceans and create a context for interspecies encounter, I ask

how to listen to whales in the wake of imperialism. Recent developments in ecoacoustics have generated awareness of the impact of noise pollution. Combined with the rise of AI, this now culminates in attempts to talk to sperm whales using Machine Learning in order to ‘understand and protect them better’, according to Project CETI. I argue that breaking the language barrier deserves careful consideration. Throughout history, whales became resources to technological ‘progress’: first as whale oil that lubricated the industrial revolution and pushed imperial frontiers, while whale candles kept enslaved peoples working around the clock, then in twentieth-century sonar research in an attempt to dominate the sea-space. Considering Project CETI’s discourse on whales, their research ethics, broader financial and military interests, the environmental footprint and risks of Large Language Models, I ask for whom it works primarily. Project CETI’s portrayal of whales as efficient ‘encoders’ that ML can train on for future projects indeed indicates that whales are ‘captured’ in a specific way. How, then, might art offer more empathetic ways of listening? I propose that Guzik’s approach to listening without understanding and thus respecting Glissant’s ‘right to opacity’ constitutes a decolonial and non-extractive approach. When ML reduces sperm whale voices to ‘clicks’ and ‘codes’, Guzik holds space for animals’ ‘overspill’ from representation, drawing attention to whales’ sound-centred life worlds and colonial histories, and to exchanges already taking place.

FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION: Other ears: listening with more-than-human methods

*Olivia “Lilly” Edward & Rhona Eve Clews*

This discussion explores listening as a central methodology for The More-Than-Human Book Club and the filmmaking practice of one of its co-founders. How might listening be an ethics, an attunement, a form of care? Drawing on ecofeminism, queer ecologies, and somatic listening, we’ll consider how listening fosters multi-species reciprocity and honours the living world.

The session begins with *If I eat you, will we both still be OK? (Plant)* (Rhona Eve Clews, 8 mins, 2024), a film she created by crawling across a field with a lo-fi macro lens. Flung into more-than-human encounters, the film disrupts traditional natural histories and hierarchies that come with being human and upright. Through poetic text and embodied filmmaking, we are plunged into human, plant, and fungal entanglements, asking how we might listen with rather than to, centring ecofeminism, intimacy, mutuality and care.

Following the screening, co-founders Rhona and Lilly will discuss how listening shapes both the film and The More-Than-Human Book Club, a monthly ecology discussion series at Barbican Library since 2022. Having co-hosted over thirty events, the group nurtures an egalitarian structure to accommodate multiple voices; listening through somatic and experiential knowledge and integrating methodologies including co-ownership, transparent finances, co-intention-setting, and co-mushroom imbibing. The club has previously collaborated with institutions such as the Barbican Centre (RE/SISTERS exhibition) and Pitt Rivers Museum, with upcoming partnerships including All Things Fungi Fest and MOTH (More-Than-Human Life Project, NYU Law).

*17:30 onwards – Marlborough Arms (36 Torrington Pl, WC1E 7LY)*



# Friday 20<sup>th</sup> (overview)

	MAL 251	MAL 252	MAL 253	MAL 254	MAL 255	MAL 351
9:00-9:30	Registration (MAL G13-15)					
9:30-11:00	DDIE / Diagramming	RL / Listening	MR / Masturbatory	TAG / Gimmick	MB / Monstrous	ER / Ephemeral
11:00-11:30	Break					
11:30-13:00	MAR / Margins	RL / Listening	CCM / Cruising	IT /Theory	CE / Attention	ER / Ephemeral
13:00-14:00	Break for lunch (not provided)					
14:00-15:30	DDIE / Diagramming	CBSI / Warhammer	MR / Masturbatory	TAG / Gimmick	CTM / Critical	MAR / Margins
15:30-16:00	Break					
16:00-17:30	LLAA / Labour	RL / Listening	IT /Theory	MR / Masturbatory (workshop)	CE / Attention	ER / Ephemeral
17:30 onwards	Drinks reception (George Birkbeck Bar, Level 4, Birkbeck Main Building)					

## Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> (overview)

	MAL B35	MAL 532	MAL B33	MAL B18	MAL B20	MAL 402
9:00-9:30	Registration (MAL 252-254)					
9:30-11:00	DDIE / Diagramming (workshop)	IPTF / Interweaving	CCM / Cruising	RL / Listening	CE / Attention	ER / Ephemeral
11:00-11:30	Break					
11:30-13:00	IPTF / Interweaving (Workshop)	ED / Empathy	MR / Masturbatory	IT /Theory	CTM / Critical	ER / Ephemeral
13:00-14:00	Break for lunch (not provided)					
14:00-15:30	TAG / Gimmick (workshop)	CCM / Cruising	MR / Masturbatory	MB / Monstrous	CE / Attention	RL / Listening
15:30-16:00	Break					
16:00-17:30	LLAA / Labour	CBSI / Warhammer	MR / Masturbatory	RL / Listening		
17:30 onwards	Post-conference drinks - Marlborough Arms (36 Torrington Pl, WC1E 7LY)					