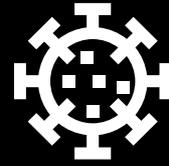
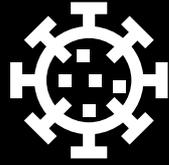




**BOOK  
OF  
ABSTRACTS**



# Keynote Lectures



**Carlo Caduff** (King's College London)

**Stigma: Notes on Community and Contagion in Pandemic Mumbai**

Drawing on fieldwork in India during the **coronavirus pandemic**, this talk examines scenes of social tension, irritation, and harassment to reveal what is being erased by stigma as it is currently used in health research and policy. Situated in **pandemic** Mumbai, the talk follows hospital staff moving in and out of the clinic in an unprecedented time of death, disease, and an almost total disruption of everyday life. The paper argues that in health research, “stigma” follows disease like a shadow, operating as both metaphor (as itself a kind of disease, an “**epidemic**” with “incidence” and “severity”) and metonym (as the social effect of disease). For health researchers, stigma is everywhere all the time because it has become a metaphor and metonym of the problem of illness itself. Against this notion of “stigma” used as trope for all kinds of negative social responses to illness, the paper shows how people make sense of experiences of social tension, irritation, and harassment in a different language, a language of caste, class, and urban life, a language that raises questions about identity, the meaning and value of social relationships, and the power of the state. Replacing local articulations with the homogenizing and deterritorializing trope of stigma fundamentally obscures the political stakes of everyday life in a time of crisis.



**Carlo Caduff** is a Professor in the Department of Global Health & Social Medicine at King's College London, where he serves as Director of Research and Chair of the Culture, Medicine & Power (CMP) research group. He has been working for over a decade as a social and cultural anthropologist with a focus on the anthropology of science, medicine, media, technology and the state. He received his PhD from the

University of California at Berkeley in 2009 and has been teaching at King's since 2012. His current work, located in the global South, examines how patients and family members access cancer care in India. Ethnographically the project follows actors and institutions struggling to make medicine affordable in an emerging economy grappling with entrenched forms of health inequality.

**Bishnupriya Ghosh** (University of California Santa Cruz)  
**Epidemic Intensities: On Apprehensions of Air/Breath**

Accompanying every **epidemic** experience is an anxious awareness of the medium of transmission and therein apprehensions of new risk environments. Thinking-feeling infection as **contagion** brings what lies between us to the fore. In the case of COVID, the air/breath complex materializes **contagion**, making it palpable a mediatic relation, both intensive (cells, mucous, lungs) and extensive (bodies, species). As we apprehend air/breath spatially stretching lung to lung, we rush to technical mediations to make the relation legible. Drawing on the theory of **epidemic** media in *The Virus Touch* (2023), my talk plots one aspect of the communal COVID experience that I characterize as the “**epidemic intensities**” of air/breath. **Epidemic** intensity arrives across the media-technological domain: in data visualizations that standardize and translate air/breath in universal terms and journalistic images that institute geopolitical difference, making diverse risk environments apprehensible. I turn to media archives of India's second wave to instantiate how scientific and journalistic transcriptions of air/breath attune us to historically particular epidemic intensities within an otherwise globally synchronic event. The question is: Can these situated apprehensions of air/breath become the informational-affective bases for a respiratory politics of air?



Bishnupriya Ghosh teaches in global media at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her recent work is on media, risk, and globalization: the co-edited *Routledge Companion to Media and Risk* (Routledge 2020) and a new monograph on viral pandemics, *The Virus Touch: Theorizing Epidemic Media* (Duke University Press, 2023). She is

starting research on media environments of viral infection in a book of essays tentatively titled *Epidemic Intensities*.

**Elizabeth A. Povinelli** (Columbia University)

*In Which All the World is At Risk and Yet Some Continue to be More So*

In 2020 as the world was gripped by a global **pandemic**, the Karrabing Film Collective created a short 2 minute film, "The Road," for the Wexner Center's Cinetracts Program about our bushwhacking a road to coastal ancestral lands. As short clips of our work roll superimposed texts notes the health consequences of settler colonialism on Indigenous bodies-- the heightened risk of diabetes, stroke, substance abuse, high blood pressure et cetera. Images of Indigenous refusal to give up on their ancestral relations are shown side-by-side the embodied nature of their health. In this talk, I examine how discourses of the global Covid **pandemic** mirrors those of climate change, namely, a form of eventfulness based on radical disavowal of the effects of western extraction until these effects waft into the lives of those who have long benefited from the violence of extraction.



Elizabeth Povinelli is Franz Boas Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies at Columbia University. She is a critical theorist and filmmaker. Her critical writing has focused on developing a critical theory of late settler liberalism that would support an anthropology of the otherwise. This potential theory has unfolded across five books, including *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism*, numerous essays, and a thirty-five years of collaboration with her Indigenous colleagues in north Australia including, most recently, six films they have created as members of the Karrabing Film Collective.

# Paper Abstracts

## Panel 1.

### Hidden Pandemics

**Rituparna Ray Chowdhury** (Rishi Bankim Chandra Evening College)  
**The Colonial Gaze: British India and its 'Contagious' Environment**

As the Europeans sought to extend their imperial borders on the subcontinent during the second wave of European colonization in the 18th and 19th centuries, depictions of the Indian climate as 'tropical' and ideas about the 'degenerative' tropics appear to have contributed to the racialized relationship between the colonizer and colonized. Tropical India as a geographical space was perceived as rancid and unhealthy for the alien imperialists. 'Disease laden' and '**contagious**' environment of the tropical India was seen as climatically determined which threatened the permanent settlement of the European colonisers. There was the overwhelming perception about the oppressive climatic conditions of India and her hazardous disease infusing environs which the Europeans argued was inimical to the survival of the Anglo-Indians in South Asia. In this context, the article shall focus on the ways in which the colonial normative discourse encouraged an ever-growing field of authoritative knowledge production pertaining to the tropical world, while exploring how these narratives informed perceptions about British colonial India, imagined in Anglo-Indian medical and topographical narratives during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This paper will investigate how these ideas were utilized to redefine India's '**contagious**' environment delineating the boundaries of cultural affirmations of the land and its people



Rituparna Ray Chowdhury is Assistant Professor in History ad Rishi Bankim Chandra Evening College, Naihati, West Bengal, India. Author of *Realisation. Documents Based on Self-Scholarly Effects with Google Scholar*

Citations (2018), *The Immortal Fly. Eternal Whispers. Based on True Events of a Family* (2019) and *The Revolt in the Desert. Journey on Literature from India to the USA* (2022).

**Dorota Sosnowska** (University of Warsaw)

**On hidden pandemic of domestic violence and feminist out-of-home environments**

Jacqueline Rose in her recent book *On violence and on violence against women* (2021) recalls “massively aggravated [domestic violence] during the **pandemic**, when lockdown trapped women with abusive partners in their homes (a global phenomenon which stretched from the UK and US to China and Spain)”. She shows how for women home became a trap. Recalling Hannah Arendt analyzing the ancient Greek democracy, Rose continues to argue that home is actually a very source of violence and must be left in order to be free. In Arendt’s thinking politics is a way of escaping home reserved for men. But they are able of ruling in democratic way in the public sphere also because they remain tyrants at homes directing violence against women and children. I propose to look from that perspective – of domestic violence **pandemic** – at two examples of Polish feminist art from 2021 in my opinion strongly influenced by the experience of lockdown. *Heksy* a novel written by Agnieszka Szpila while narrating the history of a women haunted by the ghosts of 18th century heroines living a life in nature, tortured and killed by men as witches, contains direct references to the covid 19 lockdown. *Larva* – a performance by Marta Ziółek – does not, although it premiered while tests, masks and temperature control were still mandatory. Both examples show women leaving their homes, their “civilized” environments, their clothes to form new, also sexual, relations with natural environment. Their bodies are redefined in contact with trees, grass, water, and plants. Their identity changes and everyday practices become untangled from the idea of home, connected to the unlimited space of the outside. In my paper I will argue that those artistic realizations form alternatives to the public sphere and its politics offering models of more-than-human communities, sexualities and identities as a response to the **Covid-19** and hidden **pandemic** of violence.



Dorota Sosnowska is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Polish Culture (Department of Theatre and Performance) at University of Warsaw. The author of the book about three actresses of the communist period in Poland entitled *Królowe PRL. Sceniczne wizerunki Ireny Eichlerówny, Niny Andrycz i Elżbiety Barszczewskiej jako modele kobiecości* (2014). She took part in the scientific projects devoted to the problem of performance documentation, theoretical status of sources, archives and documents in performance studies ("Sources and Mediations") and performance and memory ("Performing Memory"). She published articles on the subject in Polish and international journals such as "Performance Research or Maska" and co-edited a book devoted to the memory of worker's theatre (*Robotnik. Performanse pamięci*, 2017). Now she is working as principal investigator on the project *Odmieńcy. Performances of Otherness in Polish Transition Culture* and co-investigator in the project *Epidemics and Communities in Critical Theories, Artistic Practices and Speculative Fabulations of Last Decades* — both financed from the Polish National Science Center. She is a co-convenor of the Theatre Historiography group and a member of IFTR from 2016.

**Marta Miquel-Baldellou** (University of Lleida)

**Contagion as a Metaphor of Old Age: Images of Rhizomatic Infection in Contemporary Horror Films**

Due to social factors such as the increase in life expectancy and the decline in fertility rates, the aging population has been growing exponentially in the last decades. Global concerns about how to deal with this situation in terms of health, social security and the care of elders have found reflection in narratives that explicitly address social and individual anxieties. Following the worldwide **pandemic** which took place in 2020, when hospitals and nursing homes were unable to attend to the overwhelming number of patients, the spectre of ageism emerged when it was suggested that younger patients were given priority to the detriment of elders. As a result of latent anxieties in relation to the aging population in the last decades, as Cynthia Miller

and A. Bowdoin van Riper (2019) argue, there has been a proliferation of contemporary horror films that explicitly revolve around the fears of old age and the dread of aging badly from the perspective of elders, but also from the point of view of their younger carers.

Insofar as old age will affect most of us if we are lucky to live long enough, in contemporary horror films, old age is metaphorically portrayed as a **contagious** illness that keeps on spreading and that is suddenly contracted from elders. Resorting to tropes and archetypes pertaining to the horror tradition, old age has been taking central stage in films as a disease that acquires preternatural dimensions and that gradually reaches all of those around the aging subject. Drawing on Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's notion of the rhizome and its six different principles (i.e. connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture, cartography, and decalcomania), this paper aims at identifying and interpreting images displaying **contagion** as a metaphor of old age in contemporary horror films, such as Natalie Erika James's *Relic* (2020) and Andy Fetscher's film *Old People* (2022), among others.



Marta Miquel-Baldellou is a postdoctoral researcher and a member of the Dedal-Lit Research Group at the University of Lleida (Catalonia, Spain). She is currently taking part in a government-funded research project which looks into the matrix of aging studies and creativity in contemporary cultural manifestations. Her field of research revolves around age studies, film studies, and horror fiction. She has presented papers at different international conferences, and her articles have been published in volumes edited by international publishing houses such as Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Peter Lang, and Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

# Panel 2.

## Beyond Immunity

**Stephen E. Wilmer** (Trinity College Dublin)

### The Danger of the Foreign

Despite the UN Declaration on Human Rights that “everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum”, Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben and Jacques Rancière have commented on the lack of human rights of the refugee. They argue that, while the nation-state privileges the rights of its citizens, it arbitrarily deprives refugees of their human rights by determining their status to be that of illegal migrants. Arendt warned as far back as the 1940s, “The danger is that a global, universally interrelated civilization may produce barbarians from its own midst by forcing millions of people into conditions which, despite all appearances, are the conditions of savages.” (*Origin of Totalitarianism*, p. 302) Likewise, Agamben refers to the status of refugees as *zoe* or *nuda vita* (bare life), having no political status. Thus, we can consider the nation state as a biopolitical power **immunizing** itself from certain migrants, especially those from the global south, preventing them from becoming citizens or even entering their country. Surprisingly, migrants from Ukraine have not been regarded as the same contaminating threat as people from the Middle East and Africa. As Slavoj Žižek recently observed, there are clearly two types of refugees: those who resemble us and those who are regarded as different and alien. Because of that differential treatment, Žižek (2022) commented ironically, “Europe must defend itself from non-Europe”. Viktor Orbán has recently reinforced this attitude, calling for the exclusion of mixed races in words that his personal advisor compared to the rhetoric of Joseph Goebbels. In one of the early films that Goebbels promoted, Jews were depicted as vermin **contaminating** society. Thus, like the Jews in Nazi Germany, refugees from the global south have been treated like a **virus** that must be contained rather than allowing it

to endanger a supposedly homogeneous population. By contrast, the Ukrainian is not seen as a foreign element to be rejected, but rather as one who can be assimilated into the body politic and civil society, in a process of acceptance similar to vaccination. In this paper I will explore not only the mechanisms by which the nation-state **immunizes** itself against the refugee, but also the countervailing strategies proposed by Arendt, Agamben, Rancière, and various creative artists, including new forms of citizenship.



Stephen Elliot Wilmer is Professor Emeritus at Trinity College Dublin, where he was Head of the School of Drama, Film and Music. He has served on the executive committees of the American Society for Theatre Research and the International Federation for Theatre Studies and on the board of Nordic Theatre Studies and was Editor in Chief of Nordic Theatre Studies from 2018 to 2020. He has been a Visiting Professor at Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Helsinki, and as a Research Fellow at the Interweaving Performance Cultures at the Freie Universität Berlin. He has written and edited twenty books and co-edited a special topic on “Theatre and Statelessness in Europe” for *Critical Stages* in 2016. His latest books are *Performing Statelessness in Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) and *Deleuze, Guattari and the Art of Multiplicity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020). He is currently co-editing *Life in the Posthuman Condition* (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming in January 2023) and the *Palgrave Handbook on Theatre and Migration* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in April 2023).

**Patryk Szaj** (Pedagogical University of Krakow)

*Staying with the Fable: Jakub Kornhauser’s Poetic Volume *In amplexu* as a Narrative for the Contaminated World*

*In amplexu* is the latest volume by Polish poet Jakub Kornhauser who is known for using prose poetry as a writing technique and applying the surrealist approach. In his new book, he employs those features to tell the story of the **contaminated** world. **Contaminated** in a very literal sense, as etymologically, ‘**contaminate**’ means ‘bring into contact.’

Kornhauser tells an incredibly dense and intricate narrative, which draws upon the whole range of surrealist procedures (free associations, juxtapositions, spatial montages, etc.). However, some keynotes help the reader reconstruct the plot that turns out to be the story about the end of the “world” as an all-too-human invention. In each poem, different kinds of animal heroes/actors invade/inhabit the human order of reality. Moreover, as we read the volume, it becomes clear that the animal figures are as much “real” entities as allegories for humans, like in traditional animal fables. Ultimately, they amount to human-animal hybrids that are impossible to dismantle.

Kornhauser insists that **contamination** is an indispensable condition of life. As long as humans stay **immune** to it (and there are some hints at the war on the more-than-human world in the volume), they remain self-destructive. So, the Polish poet turns against immunology in a biopolitical sense coined by Roberto Esposito (being ‘im-mune,’ that is, closed to com-unity). Or, he assumes a different meaning of **immunity**, close to Donna Haraway’s thinking on the **immune** system as something that is always open to alien bodies, that relies on the collaboration with what is other-than-me. Kornhauser’s fables encourage us, like Haraway’s speculative fabulations, to stay with the trouble. In my presentation, I will try to show that he introduces a poetic version of the Chthulucene thinking.



Patryk Szaj (born in 1989) is an assistant professor of literary studies at the Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland. He obtained his Ph.D. in 2018, based on a dissertation on radical hermeneutics in contemporary Polish poetry. Since then, he has been interested mainly in environmental humanities and the Anthropocene discourse. He is a scientific editor of “Humanistyka Środowiskowa” [“Environmental Humanities”] series (publisher: Wydawnictwo WBPiCAK, Poznań, Poland). In 2022, his volume of essays *Pamiętnik z końca świata (jaki znamy)* [A Diary from the End of the World (as We Know It)] has been published.



**Mateusz Borowski** (Jagiellonian University in Krakow)

## Re-Imagining Contagion in Holobiontic Communities. Speculative Fabulations Against Regimes of Immunity

Long-standing historical and cultural studies have established critical links between the modern forms of **community**, prototypically understood as a national collective, and **contagion** as a direct threat to communal bonds. However, what comes into question in the era of multi-faceted anthropogenic catastrophes is the relationship between community and **immunity**, which Roberto Esposito laid bare in his works on biopolitics. Due to intense exchanges between laboratory and social life, modern understanding of **community** as an enclosed human collective emerged simultaneously with the consolidation of germ theory in the mid-19th century, together with notions of **immunity** and practices of sanitary and social purification. As the current context of an ongoing **Covid-19 pandemic**, as well as emergent new superbugs, throws to relief, the procedures of immunization of communities against literally and metaphorically understood pathogens cause biophobic responses that only contribute to the escalations of direct and slow violence. No wonder that the old understanding of **community** premised on stringent immunity is nowadays coming under scrutiny and I will approach this problem from the vantage point of speculative fabulations that show possible, more livable future human-microbial **communities**.

In my paper I will take a closer look at two such fabulations, Joan Slonczewski's *The Children Star* (1998) and *Brain Plague* (2000) which undertake the theme of **contagion** as a concept entangled with the logic of colonization. Slonczewski, considered today as one of the forerunners of today's microbial turn in humanities, demonstrates how changes in our understanding of the biological role of microbes on all levels of ecosystems can inspire visions of communities alternative to the neo-capitalist and neo-colonial order. Deeply immersed in the recent paradigmatic upheavals of microbiology, they investigate the cultural reverberations of the concept of holobiont as a possible alternative to traditional notions of an independent biological and social units endangered by external pathogens. In this context the subversion of the

modern concept of **contagion**, premised on a fundamental antagonism between humans and natures, is a necessary first step to working out more-than-human **communities** that prove more resilient in the era of ecologic catastrophes.



Mateusz Borowski is a Professor at the Department for Performativity Studies at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków. He holds a PhD from Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany and the Jagiellonian University. Currently his main areas of interest are the history and sociology of science, and counterfactual narratives in historiography and memory studies and speculative fabulations in the context of climate change. He recently published *Strategies of Forgetting: Memory and Cyberculture* (2015) and, with Małgorzata Sugiera, *Artificial Natures. Performances of Technoscience and Arts* (2017). He is currently leading the research project "After Climate Crisis. Non-Scalable Survival Strategies in Speculative Fabulations of the Last Two Decades" (2022-2026) funded by the Polish National Science Center.

## Panel 3. Archives of Contagion

Elisabeth Hobisch (Graz University of Technology)

**Corona Fictions Database: Contagious Narratives in the Digital Realm**

As Astrid Erll (2021, 47) states, the **COVID-19 pandemic** is the "first digitally experienced and witnessed" **pandemic** of human history. As a result, on the one hand, right from the beginning of the first lockdown, there have been institutional efforts by museums and archives to collect objects and non-fictional testimonies (cf. *ibid*, 46). On the other hand, there have been individual or collective efforts by artists to grasp the unprecedented **pandemic** experience in fiction. These fictional

crisis narratives is not only characterized by the **infection** with/inspiration by this specific **pandemic** historical context, but also by a very distinct creative surrounding – settled mostly in the digital realm. Whereas the simple existence of digital technologies is not able to modify human behaviour, only their active use by humans leads to a development in cultural practices and, consequently, provokes a profound modification in culture (cf. Van Dijck 2007, 49). In this sense, the Covid-19 pandemic and its mitigation measures accelerated cultural tendencies of the 21st century and formed an optimal environment for the development of new cultural practices. Nevertheless, given the ephemerality of digital (cultural) production (cf. De Kosnik 2016, 41; Van Dijck 2007, 48), there is a strong need for archival as well as for documentation work with regards to the Corona Fictions. Our approach to systematically document the variety of creative cultural responses to the figurative **contagion** with the **coronavirus** is the Corona Fictions Database (cf. Hobisch et al. 2021-). With this bibliographical database we collect and systematically represent the new genre of Corona Fictions as a transmedia, transcultural and transnational phenomenon.



Elisabeth Hobisch is a literary and cultural studies scholar in the field of Romance studies. For her PhD thesis on the epistolary form in the Spanish Spectators, she received the Award of Excellence 2016 of the Austrian Minister of Science, Investigation and Economy. Her main research interests concern 18th-century moral press in France and Spain, the digital humanities and Corona Fictions.

Katarzyna Szarla (University of Warsaw)

**Beware of Casual Contacts: Knowledge about HIV/AIDS in Poland in the 1980s**

At the beginning of the **HIV epidemic**, Poland, like other Eastern Bloc countries, remained partially isolated from the **HIV crisis** in the Western countries. Basic knowledge about the virus, still in the process of scientific confirmation, after crossing borders, became even more deficient, undetermined, and vague. The distrust towards information transmitted through the channels of the disintegrating state

institutions, felt at that time, further deepened the ambivalent feeling of simultaneous separation from the **epidemic**, a foreign phenomenon, and that of a growing threat. The aim of this paper is to look into the process of knowledge production about **HIV/AIDS** in Poland in 1980s, in particular, about the routes of the pathogen transmission — the knowledge, that seems most significant in shaping of practices both adopted individually to protect oneself against infection and promoted by institutions and organizations — and to map the information flows and their circulation in the society. How was the knowledge about **HIV/AIDS** acquired, interpreted, and shaped by various social actors? And how did it spread in various groups and reach individuals? The key starting point, I argue, is the reception of the **HIV epidemic** in Western countries and various modes of its interpretation by Polish social actors, that became crucial in construction of the local discourse on **HIV/AIDS**. Then, the information flow system was deeply reformulated in the early 1990s by political, economic, and cultural changes in the society, that coincided with the history of **HIV epidemic** in post-communist countries and deeply marked it.



**Katarzyna Szarla** is a PhD student in the Department of History, University of Warsaw, working on her PhD dissertation on the socio-cultural history of HIV/AIDS in Poland in the 1980s and 1990s. She holds a degree in medicine from the Medical University of Warsaw and studied history and bioethics at the University of Warsaw. Her research interests include medical humanities, film and visual culture as a historical source, oral history.

**Łukasz Kielpiński** (University of Warsaw)

**Western Scientists and Balkan Healers. AIDS and Production of Power/Knowledge in Post-Communist Poland**

By the end of 1980s in Poland, around 17 people will have died because of **AIDS** and around 629 will have been infected with **HIV virus**. In the 1990s, the numbers went up significantly raising public interest in the subject. In newly democratic state, leading journals, such as “Polityka” or *Gazeta Wyborcza*, took on the role of public educator publishing

articles about routes of **infection** and ways of prevention. However, the newly democratic state was also a capitalist one so the rules of free market applied as well. As a result, some press magazines tried to attract readers with eye-catching headlines. However, some of them presented a different approach to the **HIV epidemic** by questioning Western medicine which was unable to invent any cure for **AIDS**. Such an alternative knowledge circulation system was illustrated by the case of Todor Jovanovic, Serbian dentist who claimed that he found effective medicine for **HIV**. Despite obvious malpractices of Jovanovic's research and his charlatanry, his medicine called Todoxin became a topic of several articles in the Polish press in early 1990s. It was even introduced to seropositive individuals by Marek Kotański, who was a prominent public figure fighting the **HIV epidemic** in Poland.

During my presentation, I would like to focus on different knowledge production modes about **HIV/AIDS** in post-communist Poland. By applying the Foucaultian concept of "power/ knowledge", I intend to see how different modes of knowledge production reflected the changes in the Polish public sphere after 1989.



Łukasz Kiełpiński — PhD Candidate in Doctoral School of Humanities at University of Warsaw. Member of Collegium Invisibile. He holds a MA in Cultural Studies from Institute of Polish Culture at University of Warsaw. He has published in *Kwartalnik Filmowy*, *EKRANY* and *Pleograf*. Co-Investigator in OPUS research grant "Odmieńcy. Performances of otherness in Polish transition culture" funded by the Polish National Science Centre. His academic interests involve contemporary cinema, affect theory and cultural history of HIV/AIDS in Poland.

# Panel 4.

## Hybrid Embodiments

**Bilge Serdar** (University of Oslo)

Hybrid Format Movement Training Under the Pandemic Measures: A Clash Between Physical and Digital Realm

In the summer of 2021, following the initial **COVID-19 pandemic** crisis, I did ethnographical research in one of the institutions that offer Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies (LBMS) certification programs. I followed eight dancers' intensive training over a month, but unlike previous years, the training was conducted in a hybrid format due to the Corona measures. The training is designed to heighten and develop the awareness of bodily experience by putting theoretical context into participants' own movement experiences. In this way, the program intends to produce holistically moving knowledge. However, the embodied knowledge generation processes have been challenged in the hybrid format setting where some participants were remote, and others were in the studio under strict **pandemic** precautions. This was due not only to the technical difficulties of using telematic systems (Zoom) but also to limited collaborative work, lack of tactile interaction, and increased verbalisation, all of which intervened and shaped studio and remote participants' experiences differently. Moreover, participants' dissimilar spatial contexts generated diverse perceptual fields. As a result, how we learn and teach movement, as well as how we connect with one another and our surroundings through movement, have been challenged. In my presentation, those struggles will be my departure point, and I will discuss the outcomes of my ethnographic research by addressing the following questions:

- How does interaction through telematic systems with new **COVID-19** regulations impact our embodied learning processes and bodily awareness?
- How do remote participation and social distance challenge our sensorial experience and the shared sense-making process?



Bilge Serdar completed her BA in mathematics education and finished her master's degree and PhD at Ankara University Theatre Department. Recently, she completed two years EU funded Choreomundus - International Master in Dance Knowledge, Practice, and Heritage program, which is run by four universities in France, Norway, Hungary, United Kingdom. In her latest research, she worked on the digitalization of dance and movement experience in a hybrid format class setting under Corona measures through ethnographical methodologies. She is now a post-doctoral researcher at RITMO Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Rhythm, Time, and Motion at the University of Oslo.

**Eric Villanueva Dela Cruz** (University of the Philippines Diliman | TAXI Theater)

### **Creativity and Healing Through Sensory Attunement**

The last three years were marked by fear and uncertainty compounded by intermittent impositions of mobility restrictions, closures, and lockdowns that kept the world apart. The **Covid-19 pandemic** left most **communities** weary and unsure of the future. While the measures were supposed to protect individuals from the virus, emotional and mental states became increasingly turbulent within everyone.

While the world attempts to return to normal, it's realizing that much has changed. What is apparent are the new realities that the **pandemic** left behind - the inadvertent underlying impact to the psyche. Some individuals found themselves disconnected, decentered, and displaced by the **pandemic** from their creative selves.

In order to help individuals in their journey to healing and artistic recovery, TAXI Theater developed a series of creative sensory attunement workshops (CSAW) conducted in various iterations online or outdoors aimed at reawakening, reconnecting, and realigning the creative self into exploring new approaches to developing new artistic works from resources within and without the confines of the artist's immediate surroundings. Integrating the Philippine Educational Theater Association's creative pedagogy with the sentient pedagogy of TAXI

Theater, CSAW facilitates a conscious and mindful practice of using the body and senses to recalibrate creative practice and realize new ways of telling stories and shaping performances.

The presentation reflects upon the processes and experiences in the workshop. It looks at the creative potential of attuning the body and senses to the self, environment and circumstance to discover new ways of drawing inspiration and expanding the imagination.



Eric Villanueva Dela Cruz - a transdisciplinary performance maker, workshop designer and educator, Eric Villanueva Dela Cruz is also a licensed physical therapist. He is the founder of TAXI Theater, a transdisciplinary collaborative platform exploring innovative storytelling practices by engineering audience experiences through sensorial methodologies. Currently, he is an assistant professor in the University of the Philippines Diliman and a senior member of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA). His co-authored article, *Transformative power of spatial memory: an interdisciplinary approach to space as performance*, was recently published in the *Theatre and Performance Design* journal. His current theatre practice intersects with bioart, sentient performativities, and devised performances which overlaps with issues on disability and inclusivity, and sustainable community development.

# Panel 5.

## Contagion as Metaphor

**Florian Zitzelsberger** (University of Passau)

**Virality Reconsidered: From Transmission to Transformation**

The phrase “going **viral**” or “**viral** media content” has been accepted into common language use to describe the rapid, uncontrolled spreading of media content as the result of the affordances of digital and social media as well as the Internet more generally. In this presentation, I suggest that the context of the **COVID-19 pandemic** highlights virality as a mode of transformation that is distinct to a culture of digitization and its practices in addition to the mode of transmission as which it is usually understood. I thereby draw on the connotations of “**viral** transformation,” which not only implies mutations of the viral agent, but also effects change in the organism surrounding it.

On the one hand, viral media content itself can be seen as the result of an ongoing process of transformation in the sense that it is constantly shared, a transmission that entails the (re)appropriation, (de/re)contextualization, and distortion of the content, which is to say, **viral** media content is never static but complexly (re)worked and (re)framed on and across platforms. On the other hand, **viral** media content also transforms media users through changed patterns of use engendered by the mode of transmission of **viral** media. In other words, **viral** media socialize media users differently, not only allowing for a different kind of interaction with media content, but necessitating it. We are thus not just constantly adapting to **viral** media trends, but are conditioned under their changing terms of engagement. In conclusion, I argue that the **COVID-19 pandemic**, which has previously been called an “infodemic,” makes visible a lack in media literacy; the transformations engendered by viral media may thus be framed as a call for more appropriate literacies in the digital age.



Florian Zitzelsberger is a PhD candidate in American Studies at the University of Passau, Germany, whose research is situated at the intersections of queer theory, performance studies, and narrative theory. In his dissertation, Florian examines the film musical's narrative impossibilities from the perspective of queer narrative theory. Other research interests include social media, pandemic performance, and post/human drag. Recent publications focus on AIDS and COVID-19, influencer culture as well as hashtag activism. His work has appeared, among others, in *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, *Comparative American Studies*, *Humanities*, *The Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* and *JNT: Journal of Narrative Theory*.

**Michał Pałasz** (Jagiellonian University)

**Flattening the Curve: A Metaphor for the End of The World (As We Know It)**

As Patryk Szaj states in the introduction to his *Diary From The End of The World (As We Know It)* (2022: 15-16), the syntactic ambiguity in the title of the book makes the sentence in brackets relate to both, "the end" and "the world". I borrow this amphiboly for the title of this paper, for the "ambiguity" itself relates smoothly to the "**contiguity**" from the subtitle of the conference. Ambiguity is "a situation in which something has more than one possible meaning and may therefore cause confusion" (Cambridge.org). That is exactly the case with **COVID-19 pandemic** when one analyzes it, as did Bruno Latour (2018), not only as a threat to the people's health and the stability of the system, but also as a chance to transform the latter in line with the demands of all the other crises of the Anthropocene, especially climate-ecological disaster. "Ambiguity" comes from the Latin ambi- ("both") and agere ("to drive") (Miriam-Webster.com), and as such it shows that the Anthropause (Searle et al. 2021) could have driven us multiple ways. Can it still?

In the paper I argue that the metaphor of flattening the curve is a **pandemic** gift to the collective imagination that has done for sustainable development more than half a century of promoting this concept by the UN, teaching that mitigating the dangers - the **infections**, the emissions, the inequalities - gives the system a chance not to collapse before the necessary changes are implemented. System has to change, but does the new one necessarily have to be built on ruins (Lowenhaupt Tsing 2015)?



**Michał Pałasz**. Assistant Professor in the Chair of Contemporary Culture of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. Focused on management in the Anthropocene, which he understands as searching for and implementing ways to organize a sufficiently good common world in the era of climate-ecological catastrophe. His interests also include the actor-network theory, posthumanism, ecological humanities, humanistic management, critical management studies, sustainable development, degrowth. In 2022 he published an edited book *Tick-tock, the End of the World. The Climate-Ecological Crisis in the Voice of Multiple Sciences* (open source, in Polish <https://za512.uj.edu.pl>). Founding member of Jagiellonian University Climate Council.

## Panel 6.

# Contagious Environments

**Inna Sukhenko** (University of Helsinki)

**Contagious Radiation and Contagious Radiophobia: Literary Frames of Narrating Health Literacy in Fictionalizing a Nuclear Disaster**

Global debates on nuclear energy as a societal value in the energy dependent society face not only the pro-/anti-nuclear policies and movements but also the fact of over-emotionalizing nuclear energy, ranging from nuclear optimism to nuclear fascism, where the **contagion** of radiation and **contagion** of radiophobia are under discussion in

relation to (de-)emotionalizing 'the nuclear'. The emphasis on studying the literary responses to debates on the contagion of radiation within the nuclear toxic legacies and beyond, stemmed from experiencing nuclear disasters, not only helps to distinguish the emotional component of communicating radiophobia as a component of radiological hazards under regional/national/global 'nuclear narratives', not only highlights the factual/fictional narratives in nuclear fictional writings in the aspect of narrating 'nuclear trauma', but also makes a step towards researching the narrative tools of weakening 'apocalyptic' rhetoric of framing nuclear history and fostering health literacy (as a component of energy literacy, energy competence) via fictional storytelling. Researching the literary figurations of the **contagion** of radiation and the contagion of radiophobia in the context of narrating nuclear disasters and its aftermath under the perspectives of trauma studies/resilience studies appeals to implementing 'health literacy' via framing health knowledge management via fictional writing. Such approach contributes to revealing the socio-cultural parameters of contagious 'nuclear phobia' (Weart 2012) of narrating the events of nuclear history through the narrative toolkit of situating 'slow violence'(Nixon 2014) and 'slow hope' (Mauch 2018) in emoting post-nuclear survival (Brown 2018) within 'literary energy narrative' frames (Goodbody, 2018). The ways of shaping 'energy literacy' (including health competence, health literacy) in the context of communicating the **contagion** of radiation/radiophobia are studied here in U.S. post-Chernobyl fictional writings with the help of 'intermedial ecocriticism' (Bruhn 2020), enhancing the impact of different media types, with both form and content issues, in framing health literacy via fictional writing. Such perspective on fictionalizing the **contagion** of radiation/radiophobia allows amalgamating 'narrativization of experience' (Mishler, 1959) and 'collaborative storytelling' via the mediated ways of health knowledge management. The literary frames of the **contagion** of radiation/radiophobia are studied in U.S. post-Chernobyl nuclear fictional writings: such as Karren Hesse's *Phoenix Rising* (1994), Andrea White's *Radiant Girl* (2008), Anna Blankmann's *The Blackbird Girls* (2020). Such perspective of situating the issue of **contagion** of radiation and related **contagious** radiophobia in narrating

'nuke trauma' experienced **communities** in fictional writings aims to not only demonstrate how the focus on the literary imaginaries of radiation helps to reveal the narrative toolkit of framing critical thinking skills towards profiling energy literacy, but also raise awareness about the role of emotions in establishing the value paradigm of the energy-driven society.



Inna Sukhenko is a research fellow of Helsinki Environmental Humanities Hub, the Department of Cultures, the University of Helsinki. Her current project is focused on researching the literary dimensions of nuclear energy within energy literary narrative studies and energy humanities. After defending her PhD in Literary Studies (Dnipro, Ukraine), she has been a research fellow of Erasmus Mundus (Bologna, 2008; Turku, 2011-2012), Cambridge Colleges Hospitality Scheme (2013), SUSI (Ohio, 2016), Open Society Foundation/Artes Liberales Foundation (Warsaw, 2016-2017), JYU Visiting Fellowship Programme (Jyväskylä, 2021). She is among the contributors of *The Routledge Handbook of Ecocriticism and Environmental Communication* (2019). Her general research interests lie within environmental humanities, energy humanities, petrocultures, ecocriticism, nuclear criticism, literary energy narrative studies, nuclear fiction, energy ethics. She is a member of the Association for Literary Urban Studies (Finland), HELSUS (Finland), the Finnish Society for Development Research (Finland), and Nordic Association for American Studies (NAAS).

**Marta Tomczok and Paweł Tomczok** (Silesian University in Katowice)  
**Contagion and the Carbocene – How Contagion (Re)shapes Ecological Relations in Mining Communities**

Carbocene is one of the names of the Anthropocene (Sugiera). It is also the opposite of the Carbon, the period in the history of the Earth when the seams formed more than 350 million years ago began to be removed. A large part of Poland is experiencing the most severe effects of this process, when not only is there no coal left underground, but also no other seams, even those deposited by man. The effects of a lack of carbon become nature-cultural wounds; the lack of coal is not only a

severely felt wound on the body of Polish society, which since 1945 the communist authorities believed that they lived within the borders of the global coal power. We going to show how COVID-19 has strengthened the impact of Carbocene on ecological relationships and deepened its effects. Based on television and press materials, we will present how the authorities in Poland tried to use COVID-19 to disintegrate the hard coal mining industry and strengthen the hate campaign against miners. In 2020, hard coal mines became one of the main sources (seedbeds) of COVID-19. Thus, COVID-19 has become one of the most dangerous viruses in mining and has defeated all other occupational diseases such as pneumoconiosis or silicosis. Attempts to use COVID-19 to close some mines have failed. We will consider whether the cause of the media campaign was also the social hatred of coal as a toxic fossil fuel. And has coal itself not become a COVID-19-like virus in this campaign.



Marta Tomczok is Assistant Professor at the Department of Philology of the University of Silesia in Katowice. Her research interests include the environmental history of coal, industrial literature, post-industrial heritage, cultural and literary representation of the Holocaust. She recently published *Amiel. Życie [Amiel. A life]* (2021) and research papers *Literacka historia ołowiu [A Literary History of Lead]* (2021) oraz *Historia środowiskowa Holokaustu [An Environmental History of the Holocaust]* (2020).



Paweł Tomczok is Assistant Professor at the Department of Post-Romantic Literature at the University of Silesia in Katowice. He is the author of *Literacki kapitalizm: Obrazy abstrakcji ekonomicznych w literaturze polskiej drugiej połowy XIX wieku [Literary Capitalism: Economic abstractions in Polish literature of the second half of the nineteenth century]* (Katowice, 2018). His research interests include literary economics, narratology and alternative histories.

**Mateusz Chaberski** (Jagiellonian University in Kraków)

## From Spillovers to Viral Clouds. Rethinking Contagious Ecologies in the Viroisphere

The multispecies ethnographer Eben Kirksey argues that “[we] have always lived within the virosphere—the vast but poorly understood universe of **viruses**” (2022). Drawing on the current findings in **virology**, he succinctly points out that human and viral worlds cannot be separated. For viruses have always been integrated in the planetary biosphere, constantly influencing, infecting and augmenting existing modes of life, for better or worse. Thus, the **viroisphere** necessitates a significant reworking of the hitherto accepted conceptualization of **viral** ecologies, dominated by the figure of spillover.

Taking a cue from Kirksey, this paper critically revisits the figure of spillover whereby a **virus** “jumps” across the proverbial “species barrier” germane to the discourse of emergent diseases since the 1989. The figure not only offers a linear rendering of **contagious** events but also creates the impression that sources of **epidemics** are extrasocietal, unrelated to socio-political and economic processes (Lynteris 2020). Thus, the paper returns to the concept of the **viral** clouds introduced by Celia Lowe in 2010 as it offers a more compelling figuration of **contagious** ecologies. Not only does it point to the multidirectional viral flows across species, but also it foregrounds the dynamic, often contingent and ever-shifting assemblages of humans, nonhumans, institutions, and nations that co-constitute an **epidemic**.

Looking closely at the French Canadian TV series *Épidémie* (2021), the paper shows how **virus** clouds may be deployed to better account for contemporary **contagious** ecologies embroiled in big and small farm economies, digital **virality** and the oppression of Indigenous peoples.



Mateusz Chaberski is assistant professor in the Department for Performativity Studies of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. His academic interests range from performance studies, affect, and assemblage theories to Anthropocene studies. In 2015, he published

*Doświadczenie (syn)estetyczne. Performatywne aspekty przedstawień site-specific [(Syn)aesthetic Experience: Performative Aspects of Site-Specific Performance]* and in 2019 *Asamblaże, Asamblaże. Doświadczenie w zamglonym antropocenie [Assemblages, Assemblages: Experience in the Foggy Anthropocene]*. Together with Mateusz Borowski and Małgorzata Sugiera, he edited *Emerging Affinities: Possible Futures of Performative Arts* (Transcript Verlag 2019) and with Ewa Bal *Situated Knowing: Epistemic Perspectives on Performance* (Routledge 2020).

## Panel 7.

# Politics of Health

**Joanna Rak** (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

**Contagion and Legitimacy Claims: Medical Populism at the Service of Rulers in Pandemic-Ridden Poland**

The paper delves analytically into discursive means used by rulers in Poland to gain legitimacy for them in their ruling position during contagion. It focuses on claims for the right to rule. The paper addresses the following research question: how did rulers use medical populism to win political legitimacy? Theory-grounded in Johannes Gerschewski's, Christian von Soest's and Julia Grauvogel's theory of legitimacy claims and Gideon Lasco's theory of medical populism, the paper traces the evolution and explores the essential features of legitimacy claims at moments crucial to the Polish political regime's stability during the **pandemic**. The study draws on content and thematic analysis of news released by the most opinion-forming national media. The analysis sheds light on justifications for democratic backsliding in Poland. They aimed to create elite cohesion, influence opposition activity, and build political support for rulers. Medical populism, a means of justification, armed rulers with measures useful to explain the ruling party's new power competencies and restrictions on the Polish political nation's sovereignty. Finally, claims of dramatic limitations and lockdowns marked the contagion's outbreak. In turn, its further stages

resulted in a “vaccine messianism” and optimism related to the ruling party's efficiency.



Joanna RAK – prof. UAM, dr hab., Associate Professor at the Department of Political Culture at the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. In 2016–2018, she was a visiting researcher and professor at CEU San Pablo University in Madrid and in 2019 at the University Carlos III of Madrid. She is the principal investigator of the research projects “Civil Disorder in Pandemic-driven European Union” and “Contentious Politics and Neo-Militant Democracy” funded by the National Science Centre. The author of the book *Theorizing Cultures of Political Violence in Times of Austerity: Studying Social Movements in Comparative Perspective* (Routledge, London and New York 2018) and co-editor of *Neo-militant Democracies in Post-communist Member States of the European Union* (Routledge, London and New York 2022). E-mail: joanna.rak@amu.edu.pl

**Rafał Majka** (Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University)

**Reinvention of Health: New Biomedical Technologies in HIV Prevention and AIDS Prevention**

The **HIV/AIDS epidemic** in the 1980s saw a devastating reterritorialization of the gay identity, the homosexual body and male-to-male sex. In conservative social imaginaries the gay identity, the homosexual body and male-to-male sex were all blurred into an infected and infectious pathology for decades to come. Bryan S. Turner states that we live in a “somatic society”, in which, as Deborah Lupton explains, “the body is a metaphor for social organization and social anxieties, the principal field of cultural and political activities”. As Margit Shildrick observes, the Western discourse of health has cast the sick and the infected as both ontological and epistemological threat to the hygienic modern identity, which has to engage in compulsive monitoring of the boundaries of, to use Julia Kristeva’s term, its “clean and proper body”. For a long time, **HIV-positive** persons were constructed as “the undead with **AIDS**” (Ellis Hanson), “sick” and “infectious”. The introduction of effective antiretroviral treatment and

most importantly Treatment as Prevention (TasP) and Undetectability, has, however, complicated the normative discourses of health as related to HIV infection.



In my speech, I would like to show how new biomedical technologies in HIV and AIDS prevention have rewritten the idea of what constitutes a health and safe body. I will draw on poststructuralist feminism, science and technology studies and evidence-based health studies; also, I will use my interviews with HIV-positive men who have sex with men, showing how they narrate health, recovery and safety.

**Rafał Majka**, Assistant Professor at the Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University, holds a PhD in culture studies, postgraduate in Gender Studies. He is a co-editor of *InterAlia: A Journal of Queer Studies* (<https://interalia.queerstudies.pl/>). His current research interests are HIV and AIDS activism, new biomedical technologies in HIV prevention and AIDS prevention, community-based organising in the area of sexual and mental health among LGBTQ communities and LGBTQ migration and refugee studies.

**Małgorzata Sugiera** (Jagiellonian University in Kraków)

**Imagined into Being: The Birth of the Modern Contagion Revisited**

“What is usually called Western modernity is a very complex set of phenomena in which dominant and subaltern perspectives coexist and constitute rival modernities”, writes Boaventura de Sousa Santos in his *Epistemologies of the South* (2014). He is convinced that to secure a (better) future we have to imagine anew our pasts which have been suppressed, silenced or marginalised by the monoculture of the Moderns in Europe. To these pasts belongs the specific entanglement of nationalism, heteropatriarchy and **contagious** diseases of the turn of the 20th century, monopolised by **epidemiological** discourses. This paper demonstrates how to revisit this entanglement by looking closely at two recent historical novels: Orhan Pamuk’s *Nights of Plagues* and Olga Tokarczuk’s *Empuzjon*, published in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

In *Nights of Plague*, a contemporary historian revisits the 1901 outbreak of bubonic plague on Mingheria, a fictional Mediterranean island, an outpost of the Ottoman Empire. She draws on various contradictory sources, but mainly on letters of the period, written by a certain Princess Pakize, wife of an epidemiologist, sent by the sultan to contain the contagion. Set in 1913, *Empuzjon* unfolds in a well-known in Europe health-resort Görbersdorf in the Sudeten Mountains that gathers patients suffering from pulmonary diseases, in Tokarczuk's novel predominantly male patients from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

Despite the authentic location, the novel is written in critical dialogue with a well-known classical novel, Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, and narrated by and from the perspective of mysterious "we", voices of "nameless dwellers of walls, floors, and ceilings". As the title implies (Empusa or Empousa is a shape-shifting female being in Greek mythology), this perspective could be identified with a feminine perspective. Thus, both novels not only rewrite the chosen contagion cases as herstories. They also locate the action on the multi-ethnic and multi-religious fringes of collapsing empires to narrate the modern contagion in a clearly subversive, counter-hegemonic perspective.



Małgorzata Sugiera is a Full Professor at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland, and Head of the Department for Performativity Studies. She was a Research Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, DAAD, the American Andrew Mellon Foundation, and the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Her research concentrates on performativity theories, speculative and decolonial studies, particularly in the context of the history of science. She published and co-edited several books in Polish as well as in English and German, most recently *Crisis and Communitas: Performative Concepts of Commonality in Arts and Politics* (Routledge 2023). She carries out a three-year international research project *Epidemics and Communities in Critical Theories, Artistic Practices and Speculative Fabulations of the Last Decades* funded by the National Science Centre (NCN).

# Panel 8

## (Post)Pandemic Communities

**Katrin Isabel Schmitt** (University of Konstanz)

**After Contagion: (Re)Forming Community in Post-Apocalyptic Literature**

Apocalyptic stories are set in shattered worlds in which most of humanity has vanished and urban spaces have been destroyed. Yet, contemporary apocalyptic literature does not mainly focus on the destructive apocalyptic moment but on what happens after this cataclysm. Hence, the apocalypse is not an ultimate endpoint but a beginning after the end, making the genre inherently post-apocalyptic. In contemporary post-apocalyptic novels, **contagious pandemic** outbreaks have become a frequent trigger of catastrophe, picking up on, for example, worries about self-autonomy or contamination. Such stories portray the few survivors as victims, observers, and agents who are confronted with a traumatic disruption and struggle with the collapse of society as well as questions of identity.

In this framework, the (potential) rebuilding of post-pandemic **communities** is a key topic. Wind Meyhoff argues that post-apocalyptic narratives “most often focus on traditional family values, implying and promising a new beginning and a new life of community and solidarity” (307). However, reforming such social groups is usually more complex. Post-apocalyptic **communities** do not only repeat previous societal patterns but also introduce altered forms which renegotiate values and ideals such as gender roles, violence, or biocentrism. To approach these topics, I will examine three novels in which a pandemic leads to the end of modernity: Peter Heller’s *The Dog Stars*, Colson Whitehead’s *Zone One*, and Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy. Based on this corpus, I will outline how communities after the **contagious** outbreak reform while questioning if they portray a utopian impulse or the threat of returning to destructive behaviors of previous times.



Katrin Isabel Schmitt is a doctoral researcher in the field of Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Konstanz. She holds a doctoral scholarship from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and is currently working on her dissertation project titled "Beginning after the End: Narrative and Trauma in Twenty-First Century North American Post-Apocalyptic Fiction." Her research interests include Contemporary Literature, Speculative Fiction, and Environmental Humanities. Additionally, Katrin is a junior member at the Dr. K. H. Eberle Research Centre "European Cultures in a Multipolar World", board member at the doctoral students' convention, as well as organizer of the project "Collaborative Writing Time for Doctoral Researchers."

**Christian Mieves** (Newcastle University)

'Art as Infection': Collective art practices and identities

Art theorist Boris Groys reminds us of the importance of external inspiration within art making, of what he describes as a modernist feature of the "other within", or becoming other (2009, 32). He draws provocatively on the idea of 'art as infection' by tracing the relation between the art school (and by implication the artist studio) and the world, 'infecting' or polluting the world and vice versa (30). While artists need to 'boost their **immune** system', following Groys, he argues for the need 'to incorporate new aesthetic bacilli, to survive them and find a new inner balance, a new definition of health.' (28)

Following on from Groys' statement, the paper will explore the notion of **community** and artistic practice by interrogating 'collective creativity' in a **post-pandemic** context, where the breakdown of established notions of art making and identity lead to a heightened awareness of collective identity. Using the concept of 'anonymous collective production' (Kurczynski 2014, 88) with reference to International Situationist Asger Jorn, I will explore the changed understanding of collective identities and communal practices and the potential of a 'singular plural' (Nancy, 1991). This will be illustrated by case studies including my recent collaborative painting project *Glaucus and Scylla* (2022).

While the idea of contagion refers to a breach of boundaries, collective practices help to foreground the sometimes paradoxical and often contrary overlap of activities. Thinking of the other within, as a precept of collective practices, I will revisit Michel Serres' concept of the Parasite as a positive cypher that disrupts clear categorization. I propose the 'Parasite' as 'a break in the message' (Serres 1982, p. 8) where the notion of creator and recipient becomes interchangeable. This paper will review our notion of community in art practice as a way to work through ideas of contact, touch and productive 'contagion' as essential part of collaborative practices.



Christian Mieves is painter and lecturer in Fine Art at Newcastle University, UK. Research themes in Mieves' work to date have included themes such as erosion and illegibility of images. Recent publications include journal articles on David Schutter, Luc Tuymans, Dana Schutz and Peter Doig. He is editor of the special issue of the *Journal of Visual Art Practice* on 'Erosion and Illegibility of Images'(2018). He is also co-editor of the book *Wonder in Contemporary Artistic Practice* (Routledge, 2017) and a recently published interview with artist David Schutter (*Journal of Contemporary Painting*, 2018, 4:2).

**Dorota Sajewska** (Ruhr University Bochum)

Contagious performance. Interconnectivity of Crisis and Community in Contemporary Haitian Art and Reality

In his book *Infections and Inequalities*, Paul Farmer, an American physician and anthropologist, exposes the permanent **infectious** crisis in Haitian society resulting from the disastrous state of health care and education and the almost complete lack of access to them for the majority of the population. Despite the availability of effective methods of prevention, precaution, and treatment of communicable diseases in the Western world, tuberculosis, anthrax, meningococcal meningitis, Ebola, and **AIDS** continue to spread in the 21st century-Haiti, causing suffering and death to thousands of people. However, it is not only the entanglement of biological, political, and economic realities that severely affects Haitian society. The spread of **epidemics** is also

facilitated by climatic conditions, environmental pollution and natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods and, most tragically, earthquakes.

The Western world, preoccupied with its own fight against "bioterrorism", not only fails to share the discoveries of modern science with chronically afflicted poor regions, but also rarely seems to care about **epidemics** other than "its own". This privileged position of civilisation is particularly evident today in the so-called **post-pandemic** art and theatre, in which the two epidemics fundamental to the intervention of Western experience, **AIDS** and **COVID-19**, are key points of reference. Both epidemics are given the status of collective experience through aesthetic interventions that allow **communities** to work through the physical, existential, and cultural crises already overcome by modern medicine. Contemporary Haitian art, however, has for more than a decade presented a very different picture of reality, constantly reminding of the radical social inequalities responsible for the unequal distribution of infectious diseases and the spread of numerous **epidemics**. It also clearly demonstrates that the deep roots of these inequalities lie in centuries-old racism, which today manifests itself in invisible forms of bio-, necro- and geo-violence.

In my presentation, I would like to focus on two exhibitions of contemporary Haitian art *Reframing Haiti: Art, History and Performativity* at Brown University in 2011, and *In Extremis: Life and Death in 21st Century Haitian Art* at the Fowler Museum in California in 2012, as well as performances by Haitian choreographer Kettly Noël presented at the documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel in 2017. The works of the Haitian artists confront the disastrous socio-political reality of Haiti, as well as the tradition of communicating with the spirits and divinities of Vodun. In their works, **epidemics** and catastrophes manifest themselves as a permanent existential and cultural crisis, allowing more-than-human **communities** to emerge. Vodun divinities, sometimes wearing white masks to express their indifference to human suffering, appear in post-apocalyptic landscapes of social collapse among giant figures made from car chassis, human skulls, tyre chains and removed computer parts. In my presentation, would like to argue that contemporary

Haitian art, performing permanent crisis as a kind of chronic infectious disease, is proving to be the only form of community care.



Dorota Sajewska is a cultural theorist, theatre, and performance scholar, as well as dramaturge for theatre and dance. She is full professor of Theatre Studies at the Ruhr University Bochum in Germany and former assistant professor of Interart (Eastern Europe) at the University of Zurich, and former assistant professor for Theatre and Performance at the University of Warsaw. She is the author of *Necroperformance. Cultural Reconstructions of the War Body* (Diaphanes, 2019) and together with Małgorzata Sugiera, co-editor of *Communitas: Performative Concepts of Commonality in Arts and Politics* (Routledge 2023).

**Marta Smagacz-Poziemska** (Jagiellonian University in Kraków)  
*Cycling and Leisure in Nature. How the Pandemic has Impacted Everyday Urban Practices and How Urban Practices Impact Urban Communities*

The logic of a global capitalistic culture has complicated the relationship between analytical concepts of a city and a local **community**. Before the **COVID-19 pandemic**, there was a broad agreement among urban researchers that “The place where one resides is steadily losing its importance”. On the other hand, the need of understanding of “where individuals do actually live, meet, and develop their social contacts.” (Van Kempen and Wissink 2014: 104-105) still figures out the key-questions addressed in urban studies. Blokland (2018: 30) described the stuff of the issue saying, “These are times in which routes and not roots, or mobility and not stability, have become features of daily life that more and more urbanites share”. The **COVID-19 pandemic** affected subjects, places and performances, intensifying people’s fears of direct, bodily enacted interactions. However, the **pandemic** also nudged people to develop indirect contacts and new forms of practicing everyday life. The scoping review of 138 publications about various aspects of **COVID-19 pandemic** in European cities, conducted as a part of the project “Normality under uncertainty”, displays the impact of the **pandemic** on

the variety of everyday practices performed in urban public spaces. The most visible shifts refer to urban mobility and leisure. Using the theoretical model of social practice as the entity consisting of three types of elements: material, competence and meaning (Shove et al. 2012), I will analyse two practices: cycling and relaxation in nature. In many reviewed studies these practices are presented as the indicator of urban “green turn”, whereas I want to discuss their anthropocentric character and ambiguous consequences for urban **communities**.



**Marta Smagacz-Poziemska** – Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University; sociologist focused on urban processes, local development, urban neighbourhood communities and citizen participation. In research and in teaching she cooperates with people from various disciplines, sectors and groups. The author of the publications on revitalisation of urban districts, social exclusion, practices of urban everyday life. She was a coordinator of the Research Network 37 (Urban Sociology) of the European Sociology Association and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the JPI Urban Europe.

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