

Critical Encounters

Organismo Transversal Studies Series

Critical Encounters is a seven-session online series conceived as a shared space for exchange and collective reflection around the main theoretical, methodological, and critical axes of Organismo 2026. Moving from tourism's terraforming impacts to counter-forensic strategies for navigating the erosion of shared truth, the series brings together artists, researchers, and guest experts to assemble a practical toolkit for operating the world otherwise.

Rather than assuming change can happen only at the level of politics, Critical Encounters looks to the underlying arrangements that underpin political life as a site for strategic intervention: the media, material substrates, dispositions, and protocols that quietly shape our world. Drawing on Keller Easterling's work on infrastructure—not as a neutral backdrop, but as a site of power and distributed agency—the series focuses on points of leverage inside systems, where small shifts can reroute flows, alter conditions, and enable trans-scalar transformations with sustained effect.

The series runs online once a week on Wednesdays (18:00–19:30 CET), from 4 February to 18 March. Each session brings the artistic agents leading this edition's case studies—pulso—into close conversation with invited thinkers and practitioners, opening the propositions to scrutiny from multiple perspectives and testing how interdisciplinary creative practices can act as a form of infrastructural activism in the face of our most urgent ecosocial pressures.

Wednesdays from 18:00 to 19:30 CET:

- S1 – 04 February: Keller Easterling
- S2 – 11 February: Andrea Muniáin feat Fernando Domínguez Rubio
- S3 – 18 February: Gary Zhexi Zhang feat Aslak Aamot Helm
- S4 – 25 February: Grandeza Studio feat Patricia Reed
- S5 – 04 March: Domestic Data Streamers feat Ben Ditto
- S6 – 11 March: Paulo Tavares feat Imani Jacqueline Brown
- S7 – 18 March: Chus Martínez

SESSION 1: *The Mix is All*

Alternative approaches to design disrupt some habitual white/modern/Enlightenment approaches to the world's intractable dilemmas—from climate cataclysm to inequality to concentrations of authoritarian power. Rather than a cultural firmware that favors singular solutions, monocultures, and binaries, solutions are mistakes, and ideologies are unreliable markers. Rather than the modern desire for the new, innovations are emergent relationships between emergent and incumbent technologies. Encouraging entanglement, these approaches do not try to eliminate problems but rather put them together in productive combinations. Errors and failures are information-rich resources and opportunities. There is strength in difference, impure coalitions, and an unpredictable dissensus that keeps power guessing and disoriented. The mix is all.



Keller Easterling

→ is a designer, writer and the Enid Storm Dwyer Professor of Architecture at Yale. She is currently working on a book about land activism in the US after the Civil Rights Movement. Other books include *Medium Design* (Verso, 2021), *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (Verso, 2014), *Subtraction* (Sternberg, 2014), *Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and its Political Masquerades* (MIT, 2005) and *Organization Space: Landscapes, Highways and Houses in America* (MIT, 1999). Easterling is also the co-author (with Richard Prelinger) of *Call it Home*, a laserdisc/DVD history of US suburbia from 1934-1960. Easterling lectures and exhibits internationally. Her research and writing were included in the 2014 and 2018 Venice Biennales. Easterling is a 2019 United States Artist in Architecture and Design.

kellereasterling.com →

Recomends:

- Keller Easterling and Jasper Ludewig, 'Beyond the Master's Tools: In Conversation with Keller Easterling' in *Architectural Theory Review*, Volume 28 - Issue 2 (11 Sep 2024), pp.277-289. - [link](#)
- James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1998). - [link](#)
- Arturo Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* (Duke University Press, 2018), Conclusion. - [link](#)
- Anna Tsing, 'Indigenous Voice' in Marisol de la Cadena, and Orin Starn, *Indigenous Experience Today* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2007). - [link](#)

SESSION 2: *Avowing Loss*

The talk will explore the hegemonic model of artistic cultural memory production that seeks to sustain the image of artistic and cultural objects as entities that remain identical over time. The aim of the talk is to analyze the infrastructures that make this denial of loss possible, as well as the climatic and financial costs and the logics of exclusion and dispossession that accompany it. The talk will conclude by asking what kinds of cultural and artistic practices can be created through a radical recognition of loss—that is, by accepting change and loss as constitutive elements of the cultural and artistic object, rather than as elements that must be repaired or eliminated.



Fernando Domínguez Rubio

→ (PhD in Sociology, University of Cambridge, 2008) is a Professor of Communication at the University of California, San Diego. His work moves across sociology, science and technology studies, anthropology, design, and architecture. He is the author of *Still Life: Ecologies of the Modern Imagination at the Art Museum* (University of Chicago Press, 2020). He is also co-editor of *The Politics of Knowledge* (Routledge, 2012) and *Fragilities: Essays on the Politics, Ethics, and Aesthetics of Maintenance and Repair* (MIT Press, 2025). He is currently working on his next book, tentatively titled *The Promise of Facts*.

fdrubio.ucsd.edu →

in conversation with:



Andrea Muniáin

→ develops her research-based practice at the intersection of architecture, visual arts, and critical theory. Her work examines the entanglements between digitality, corporeality, and materiality, with particular attention to the political dimensions of how bodies are digitally represented and mediated. Through practicable scenographies, she explores how spatial narratives can articulate critical reflections on the biopolitical and techno-social conditions of the present. Her investigations have been supported by institutions such as TBA21, Fundación La Caixa, and Fundación Caja Navarra, and disseminated in international cultural venues including Fosun Foundation (Shanghai), Frankfurter Kunstverein (Frankfurt), The Clemente Center (New York), the Cultural Office of the Embassy of Spain (Washington), Centro Cultural de España en México (Mexico City), La Casa Encendida (Madrid), and Matadero (Madrid). She co-authored *El Giro Fotogramétrico: Truncando el 3D* (Bartlebooth, 2024), addressing the biopolitical implications of 3D scanning. Muniáin directs the Master's in New Media at IED Madrid and is Adjunct Professor of Design at the School of Architecture and Design at IE University in Madrid.

andreamuniain.com →

Recomend:

→ Fernando Dominguez Rubio, *Still Life: Ecologies of the Modern Imagination at the Art Museum* (University of Chicago Press, 2020), p.149. - [link](#)

SESSION 3: *Temporal Drift*

What takes place between worlds? This presentation and conversation examines the methodological, infrastructural and imaginary challenges of working with unknowability and intergenerational consciousness as a basic horizon of practice. Drawing on cases at the thresholds of scientific research, risk modeling and narrative horizons, it explores the interfaces between science and culture necessary to inhabit the interregnum, in which technological and environmental complexity overflows the institutional capacity to confront them.



Aslak Aamat Helm

- works on building alliances, experiments, and organizations across art, science, advanced technologies, and industry. He is co-founder of the transdisciplinary studio Diakron and Primer, a platform for artistic and organizational development formerly housed in the biotech company Aquaporin. He has recently completed a postdoctoral research project with Medical Museion (DK) and Serpentine Galleries (UK) that has led to a recent body of work around the concepts under-determination and uncertainty. As of 2026, he is working on a postdoctoral research project, tracing the aesthetics of rising levels of unknowability in the biological sciences in collaboration with the Natural History Museum Denmark (DK) and Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin (DE).

in conversation with:



Gary Zhexi Zang

- is an artist and writer whose work explores systemic connections between cosmology, technology, and the economy. He recently edited *Catastrophe Time!* (Strange Attractor Press, 2023), a collection of essays, fictions and interviews about finance and time, and is working on a new book about technoculture in a multipolar world. He has held positions as Lecturer in Critical Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London, Adjunct Lecturer at Parsons School of Design, Lead Researcher at the British Council, amongst others and publishes widely on topics related to art, technology, economy, and China.

zhexi.info →

Recomend:

- Aslak Aamat Helm, 'Living in the Valley of Underdetermination' in *e-flux* Issue #150 (Dec 2024). - [link](#)

SESSION 4: *Mediant Narration and Planetary Conditions*

This session will explore how planetary descriptors like ‘entanglement,’ complicate our relations to space, time, location, sites, and scales. As conditions that condition life-worlds today, the presentation will extend ‘mediant’ narration (Arjun Appuradai)—an agential weaving of mediation with materials—to the domain of hypothetical modeling, and how such empirical-fictional approaches remediate orientations of situated practice and research.



Patricia Reed

- is a theorist, artist, and designer. Her work addresses social transformations of coexistence at planetary dimensions, focusing on the interactions between world-models and practices of inhabitation. Recent essays have appeared in *Pierre Huyghe: Liminal, Navigation beyond Vision*, and *Ceremony: Burial of an Undead World* (2022). She is Interim Head of the Critical Inquiry Lab (MA) at Design Academy Eindhoven, and a lecturer at Folkwang University. As Laboria Cuboniks, Reed is co-author of *Xenofeminist Manifesto*, which was republished by Verso. A Spanish anthology of her essays entitled *Cosmovisiones de otro mundo* was published by Holobionte Ediciones (2025).

aestheticmanagement.com →

in conversation with:



Grandeza Studio

- is a collective of architects and artists whose work weaves together research and critical spatial practice through design, performance, filmmaking, writing, and teaching. Based between Madrid and Sydney, their work studies late-capitalism's spaces and narratives to identify, through critical analysis, and challenge through political imagination, the mechanisms that veil and normalize structural forms of violence against bodies and territories. Their work has been internationally exhibited and presented at the Triennale di Milano, Venice Architecture Biennale, NGV in Melbourne, the Architecture Triennale Lisbon, the Canadian Center for Architecture, The Berlage, the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam and the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, amongst others. They have worked as academics at UTS Sydney, University of Sydney, UNSW, Domus Academy Milan, Andrés Bello University, Finis Terrae University, and Elisava Barcelona. They are Adjunct Professors at IE University Madrid and, in 2025, they were appointed as visiting Adjunct Assistant Professors of Architecture at Columbia University (NYC).

grandeza.studio →

Recomend:

- Gabrielle Hecht, 'You Can See Apartheid From Space in *Residual Governance: How South Africa Foretells Planetary Futures* (Duke University Press, 2023), Chapter 2. - [link](#)
- Zachary Horton, 'Scale Theory' in *The Cosmic Zoom. Scale, Knowledge, and Mediation* (Chicago University Press, 2021), Chapter 1.- [link](#)

SESSION 5: *The End of the Real*

This session will unfold as a live case study of *The End of the Real*, tracing how images, data, and spectacle will increasingly stand in for direct experience. Through Ben Ditto's cross-disciplinary practice and use of platforms like Instagram and Telegram as a form of public reportage and community gathering, he will reveal how truth will be produced through circulation, repetition, and aesthetic authority rather than verification. The session will sharpen the case study's focus on the mechanisms of truth, showing how contemporary realities will be engineered through networks of followers, interfaces, and algorithmic visibility, where authenticity will be performed and negotiated rather than discovered.



Ben Ditto

→ is a creative director living and working in London. Ditto's projects span a broad spectrum of disciplines, including moving image, CGI, creative coding, branding, AI, print and live experience, to name a few. Ben's utilisation of Instagram as a tool for reportage on topics ranging from military hardware to surgical procedures—and everything in between—has gained him a cult online following and propelled him to the realm of “niche micro-internet celebrity.” This led to the cultivation of an online community, Ditto Nation, on Telegram and Discord, as well as a documentary series under the same name. Ben is also the art director of his eponymous publishing company, Ditto, and founder of *Dazed Beauty* alongside Isamaya Ffrench. Ditto is the creative director of YayaLabs, and Global Editorial Director of *VICE Magazine*.

[@ben_ditto →](#)

in conversation with:



Domestic Data Streamers

→ is a collective from Barcelona comprising journalists, researchers, coders, artists, data scientists, and designers who have been focusing on exploring new data languages and their social implications since 2013. Their research and work translate into films, installations, digital experiences, performances, or exhibitions in a wide range of contexts such as schools, prisons, cinemas, museums, the streets of many cities, and even the United Nations Headquarters. Based in Barcelona, they have worked in over 45 countries from all continents and for cultural institutions such as the Tate Modern, the Hong Kong Design Institute or the California Academy of Sciences

[domesticstreamers.com →](http://domesticstreamers.com)

Recomend:

- “Artificial Intimacy”: the future of AI relationships - [link](#)
- “Extremely Selfish”: Technology and identity - [link](#)
- “Diagnosis Culture”: Technology and mental health w/ Joanna Moncrieff - [link](#)
- “Printed Freedom”: 3D-printed firearm culture- [link](#)

SESSION 6: *Continuum of Extractivism*

This session explores the relationship between extractivism—understood as an economic model based on the use of violence over a territory for the extraction of natural resources and their subsequent export and exploitation—and other forms of violence directly inflicted on human populations, particularly in their colonial and sociopolitical dimensions. This system, deeply entangled with capitalist and colonial ideologies, links ecological damage—such as contamination, resource depletion, and climate change—to human rights violations, including the displacement of communities, that most often do not benefit from the profits generated by these processes.

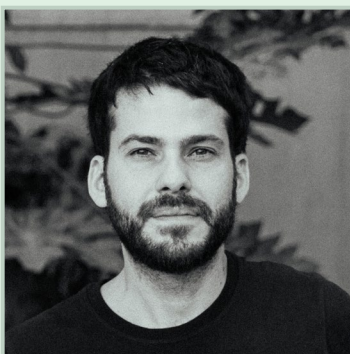


Imani Jacqueline Brown

- is an artist, activist, writer, and architectural researcher raised in New Orleans and currently based in London. Her work investigates the “continuum of extractivism,” which spans from settler-colonial genocide and slavery to fossil fuel production and climate change. In exposing the layers of violence and resistance that form the foundations of settler-colonial society, she opens space to imagine paths to ecological reparations. Imani's practice combines photography and videography, archival research, ecological philosophy, legal theory, people's and oral history, remote sensing, and counter-cartography. These strategies disentangle the spatial logics that make geographies, unmake communities, and break Earth's geology. Her research is disseminated internationally through art installations, public actions, reports, and testimony delivered in courtrooms and forums of the United Nations.

imanijacquelinebrown.net →

in conversation with:



Paulo Tavares

- is an architect, author, and educator. His practice dwells at the frontiers between architecture, visual cultures, and advocacy. Operating through multiple media, Tavares's projects have been featured in various exhibitions and publications worldwide, including Oslo Architecture Triennial, Istanbul Design Biennale, São Paulo Art Biennial, and the Venice Architecture Biennale 2023. He is the author of books questioning the colonial legacies of modernity, including *Des-Habitat* (2019), *Lucio Costa era Racista?* (2022), and *Derechos No-Humanos* (2022). He was co-curator of the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial, and the curatorial project Terra was awarded the Golden Lion for best national participation at La Biennale di Venezia 2023. Tavares teaches at the University of Brasília and leads the spatial advocacy agency autônoma.

paulotavares.net →

Recomend:

- Imani Jacqueline Brown, *What remains at the ends of the earth?* (2022). - [link](#)

SESSION 7: RADIANCE

In the last edition of the Ljubljana Biennial, Chus Martínez dedicated the exhibition to fantasy. The Spanish curator remains convinced that fantasy—unlike imagination—is a neglected concept in the arts. While the gaming and entertainment industries embrace fantasy to construct immersive worlds and secondary realities, the art field often treats it with suspicion or dismisses it altogether. At the same time, our current political narratives are driven by fantasies of destruction, and entire economic systems are sustained by fantasies of growth, stability, and desire. Fantasy is everywhere—except, curiously, in art, where it plays almost no acknowledged role. In this talk, Chus will outline her perspective on why fantasy deserves renewed attention as a critical and creative force. The aim is to open a debate on how we might reclaim fantasy from the industries that currently monopolise it, and explore how the arts can develop their own forms of radical, transformative, and liberating fantasy.



Chus Martínez

→ is head of the Art Institute at the FHNW Academy of Arts and Design in Basel, and in 2021-22, the Curator of Ocean Space, Venice, TBA21-Academy's center for catalyzing ocean literacy, research, and advocacy through the arts. Previously, she led The Current II (2018-20), a project initiated by TBA21-Academy. The Current is the inspiration behind Art is Ocean, a series of seminars and conferences held at the Art Institute, which examines the role of artists in the conception of a new experience of nature.

chusmartinez.ch →

Recomends:

- Chus Martínez, *THE ORACLE: A Curatorial Diary from LJ* in *Mousse Magazine* (2024) - [link](#)
- Chus Martínez, 'The ORACLE' (2024) - [link](#)