

Case Study

Planetary Theatre
of TourismBeyond the Performative
Regimes of Unproductivity

The Planetary Theatre of Tourism is a global-scale performance sustained by a trans-scalar entanglement of infrastructures, discourses and bodies that transform ecologies, economies, and social relations. Far from being unproductive, tourism operates with intense rhythms of staging, consumption and restitution, maintaining an illusion of pristine destinations while concealing the disruptive realities behind the scenes. This case study focuses on the island of Mallorca, a territorial laboratory of tourism, to critically examine how spatial, ecological, and social assemblages have been shaped to fulfill global touristic imaginaries rooted in colonial and extractivist logics.

Through forensic analysis, site-specific investigations and political imagination, this case study seeks to expose and disrupt the epistemologies of current tourism monocultures. Rather than promoting superficial solutions like “sustainable” or “slow” forms of tourism, it aims to envision post-touristic paradigms grounded in radical unproductivity, ecological repair, or alternative forms of hospitality, amongst others. Mallorca’s emblematic touristic sites serve as “allegorical scenographies” to rehearse emancipatory futures of collective joy and unprogrammed desire.

[Introductory video →](#)

Pulso: Amaia Sánchez-Velasco and Jorge Valiente-Oriol from **Grandeza Studio**

Facilitating entities: Casa Planas and La Casa de la Arquitectura

In collaboration with: CRIGUST - Universitat de les Illes Balears

Critical Geographies of Urbanization, Sustainability and Touristification

02 Case Study conceptualization

Tourism is a theater of a planetary scale. A broadly distributed operational infrastructure articulates the tourism industry, reshaping the Earth's surface through ports, replenished beaches, artificial islands, luxury resorts, airports, ecological certification regimes, environmental preservation zones, etc. Far beyond the touristic destinations themselves, tourism transforms territories by reorganizing entire ecologies, economies, resources, audiences, and desires that feed as much from colonial domination as from a nostalgia of the early years of mass tourism. The Sisyphean choreography of tourism performs in an attempt to deliver idyllic, peaceful, exotic, virgin, unspoilt, pristine environments ready to be consumed, discovered and colonized by the incoming visitors.

In the Planetary Theatre of Tourism, “unproductivity” is merely performative. Indeed, tourism enhances productivity. On the one hand, hosts intensively work restoring the advertised scenic destinations like “guardians of authenticity” to meet the visitors' desires. Tourists also play

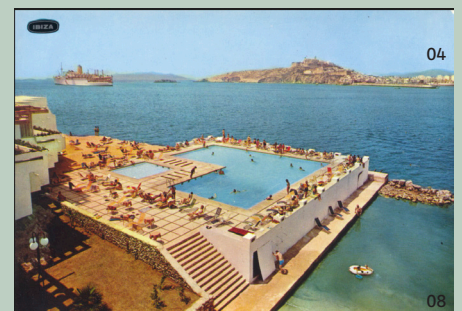
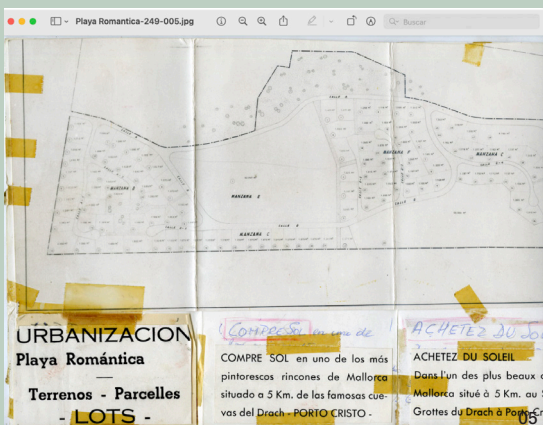
their role in this theatre by eagerly performing as an army of “expectations verification reporters” and “rating agents.” More-than-human actors play a role too: while Posidonia forests ensure the turquoise color of the beachfront waters, desalination plants employ electro-active bacteria to make fresh water available. In the backstage, sewage treatment facilities, landfills, and informal settlements for temporary workers keep the “messiness” away from the visitors' scrutiny.

The Planetary Theatre of Tourism stages the illusion that its recurrent performance can continue indefinitely despite its increasingly disruptive effects over the very same climates, ecologies and local populations it depends on. Ultimately, The Planetary Theatre of Tourism distracts from the possibility of more radical forms of interruption and structural unproductivity. However, if tourism is a space for imagination and fiction, it is perhaps the space in which other fictions could be rehearsed.

This case study will explore the performative potentials of the Planetary Theatre of Tourism. By combining methodologies of forensic and critical analysis with enactments of political and epistemological imagination, we will explore the notion of post-tourism as a way of transcending the extractivist, heterocolonial and anthropocentric paradigms of current monocultures of tourism.

The research will be situated on the island of Mallorca. After the end of WWII, and in order to spread hope and boost the desires (and the economy) of a depressed European population, Mallorca became a political-territorial stage for the rehearsal, enactment and dissemination of the imaginaries of an emerging mass-tourism industry. From Francoist Spain's strategic opening to foreign-capitals and visitors to the financialization of the global economy, new urban, architectural and hybrid-ecological assemblages have radically transformed the island's livelihoods and landscapes. The spatial and typological innovations rehearsed in Mallorca (such as *all-inclusive* resorts) were later exported to other touristic settings of the Global Sunbelt, from Southeast Asia to the Caribbean.

A selection of sites across the island that have served to stage the ideals promoted by the Planetary Theatre of Tourism will become the “allegorical scenographies” from which to put in crisis the myths, ideals and epistemologies they promoted. Ultimately, these locations will become the sites of enunciation in which to test alternative regimes of collective joy and radical unproductivity. Rather than trying to propose solutions to the effects and impacts of contemporary forms of tourism —through market clichés such as “sustainable”, “niche” or “slow” forms of tourism—, this case study will explore forms of stewardship, hospitality, and trans-scalar infrastructural interventions for a post-touristic paradigm of ecological repair, cohabitation, and deprogrammed desire.



01. All rights reserved ©Planas Archive. Josep Planas i Montanyà.
02. All rights reserved ©Planas Archive. Josep Planas i Montanyà.
03. All rights reserved ©Planas Archive. Josep Planas i Montanyà.
04. Cala Romántica. All rights reserved ©Planas Archive. Josep Planas i Montanyà
05. Cala Romántica. All rights reserved ©Planas Archive. Josep Planas i Montanyà
06. Postcard *Ensaïmades volantes sobre Palma de Mallorca*. All rights reserved ©Planas Archive. Josep Planas i Montanyà.

07. Tropical Island in Dresden (a tourist attraction built within a Zeppelin manufacturing hangar in Germany) Photo by Daniela Kloth. GFDL 1.2
08. All rights reserved ©Planas Archive. Josep Planas i Montanyà.
09. "Norderney, Strandaufspülung. 2025, CC BY-SA 4.0.

03 | Key research approaches

Tourists Go/Come Home?

- Traditional tourism hospitality infrastructures —which operated under biopolitical fictions of care, reception, and safety— are shifting into an atomized, neoliberal model where platform economies organize individuals into networks of transaction, commodified intimacy, and self-exploitation. A decentralized hospitality network driven by ratings and algorithms fragments the possibility of labour union and solidarity in the industry. In a context where locals become service providers, homes become commodities, and neighborhoods become transient zones, the “Tourists go home” motto has become the ultimate political reclamation of an emerging anti-touristification and right-to-the-city activism. How could we explore the agonistic potentials derived from the conflicts and frictions amongst the different actors on-stage at the Planetary Theatre of Tourism?

Tourism as Perpetual Terraforming

- Tourism is a powerful force reshaping the Earth’s surface today. Far from being just an activity of leisure, it acts as a form of territorial management that reorganizes entire ecologies, economies, and publics. From coastal re-engineering and artificial beachfronts to environmental certification regimes and luxury conservation zones, tourism actively produces landscapes of managed vulnerability, where the environment is formatted into operational infrastructures for economic gains. What are the tentacular geographies of the Planetary Theatre of Tourism? What territories, ecologies and bodies are sacrificed in the name of its performance? Could the infrastructures of tourism become regenerative forces rather than destructive ones?

Critical Mythologies and Simulacra: Staging Alternative Mallorcan Futurisms

- The Planetary Theatre of Tourism feeds from the capitalistic exploitation of cultural identity through the exoticization of local folklore and traditions, commonly represented as postcards and souvenirs. Jean Baudrillard saw the souvenir as part of a larger system of simulation and hyperreality. In his view, souvenirs are not authentic connections to a real past or experience but simulacra —representations of something that no longer exists or perhaps never did in the way we imagined. This case study will explore the potentials of critical mythology, queer regionalism, and other kitsch traditions to explore the political potentials of folkloric re-narrations. Could local mythologies help break the spell from the monocultures of tourism? How can folkloric imaginaries contribute to reterritorialize collective desires and re-enchant the world?

Post-Tourism as a Laboratory for Alternative Political Futures

- Driven by the rhythms of peak and low seasons, the staging infrastructures of tourism keep all its actors busy, ultimately distracting users from the possibility of more radical forms of interruption and structural unproductivity. If tourism is a space for imagination and fiction, we propose to collectively explore how the infrastructures of tourism could be re-signified into the spaces in which to rehearse alternative forms of living. How could tourism be re-imagined in a post-work scenario? Can tourism become a space of exception from the logics of productivity to push forward alternative forms of cohabitation and radical degrowth? Can we envision forms of radical hospitality that put in crisis forms of social expulsion associated with tourism?

Guardianship, Stewardship, and Multispecies Care

- The operational sturdiness of the Planetary Theatre of Tourism renders the possibility of a world without tourism unthinkable. But in recent years, the exhaustion of the involved actors, landscapes, ecologies and climates has brought forth a renewed imperative to think outside this ubiquitous extractive fiction. According to George Papam, “in this evolution of tourism practices, narratives of environmental protection, protocols of environmental care, and actions of environmental repair, all serve to consolidate and stabilize a specific type of nature that is geared towards human leisure.” Could tourism become a force of environmental reparation beyond anthropocentric desires? Can tourism allow us to test multi-species alliances, care and cohabitation? Do non-humans have the right to rest? What forms of territorial and trans-scalar environmental management could be rehearsed?

04 Pulsos

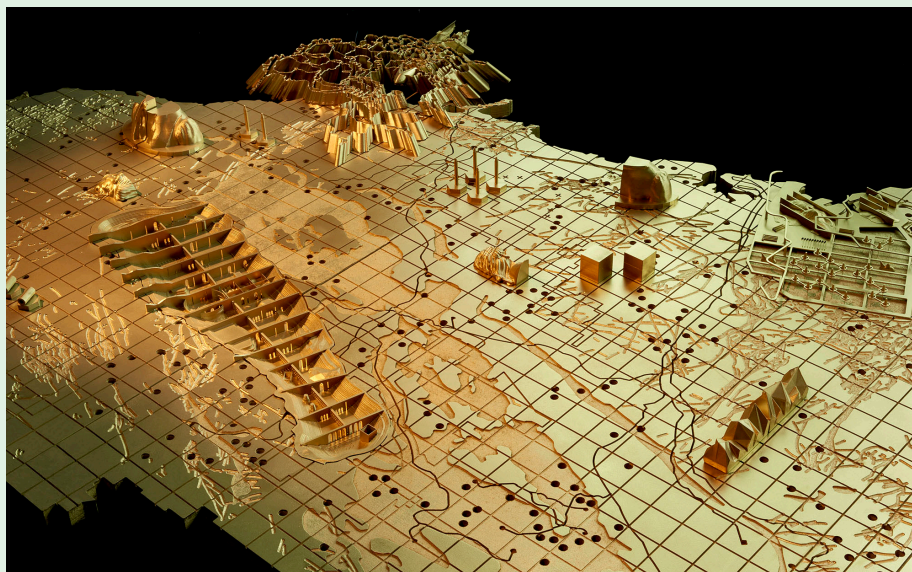


Grandeza Studio

→ Amaia Sánchez-Velasco and Jorge Valiente-Oriol

are co-founders and co-directors of GRANDEZA STUDIO along with Gonzalo Valiente Oriol. Based between Madrid and Sydney, 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. 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. Amaia and Jorge 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 have been appointed as visiting Adjunct Assistant Professors of Architecture at Columbia University (NYC).

grandeza.studio →



Left: Grandeza Studio, *Pilbara Interregnum*, image by Clelia Cadamuro.

Top: Grandeza Studio & Locument, *Strata Incognita*, 2023.
Bottom: Grandeza Studio & Bajeza, *Teatro Della Terra Alienata*, 2022.



05 Facilitating entities

Casa Planas

→ Casa Planas Foundation is a research centre dedicated to the study of tourist imaginaries, based in Palma de Mallorca. It operates as a laboratory for creation and interpretation, fostering innovative cultural languages. The project is rooted in the former photographic developing labs of the iconic Casa Planas studio, and in the preservation of its extensive corporate archive. Planas Archive holds more than three million images, negatives, postcards, cameras, and documents linked to the rise of tourism in the Balearic Islands. Together, these collections form a unique historical repository of the visual memory of the archipelago and of the visual narrative behind

the concept of *Balearización*. Casa Planas activates this archive through collective social practices, oral memory, and artistic research projects. Within this context, the Observatory of Sustainable Tourist Culture (COSTA) emerges as a platform for dialogue and interdisciplinary research, connecting art, science, tourism, and sustainability. Its mission is to generate new narratives and methodologies that open critical discussions on tourism development from an ecosocial perspective.

casaplanas.org →

La Casa de la Arquitectura

→ La Casa de la Arquitectura is a state-owned and state-managed museum under the Spanish Ministry of Housing and Urban Agenda. It is conceived as a meeting point, a space for communication and learning, aimed at fostering research and the preservation of architecture as a cultural phenomenon that reflects the specific circumstances of each society. Among its purposes is to disseminate the transformative potential of architecture as a multidisciplinary activity, as well as to raise awareness of its values and the influence of its quality on

people's well-being. It acts as a platform for exchange and collaboration among agents linked to the cultural dimension of architecture and related disciplines, seeking to improve knowledge of architectural heritage through exhibitions, initiatives, and activities of a recreational, tourist, cultural, and social nature, aimed at a broad and intergenerational audience.

lacasadelaarquitectura.es →

In collaboration with:

CRIGUST - Critical Geographies of Urbanization, Sustainability and Touristification Universitat de les Illes Balears

→ This consolidated research group focuses its analysis on the study of the Critical Geographies of Urbanization, Sustainability and Touristification (CRIGUST). The critical paradigm offers an innovative and enriching perspective after the turning point marked by recent episodes of crisis. The systemic crisis of 2008 was resolved in favor of maintaining the capitalist system, in Spain especially through a deepening of the real estate and tourism industries. The COVID-19 crisis imposed immobility and demonstrated human dependence on ecological balance. Based on these experiences, and in light of the crises to come, CRIGUST critically addresses the scientific analysis of these new scenarios. Its members form a multidisciplinary team, spanning Geography,

Anthropology, Economics, Art History, Architecture, and Urbanism. Beyond their scientific and technical contributions, they promote social engagement through collaboration with social organizations and with public administrations for the development of territorial, urban, environmental, and tourism policies. Its capacity for internationalization is based on establishing lasting ties—through the International Geographical Union, the Spanish Association of Geography, or Alba Sud—with colleagues from universities and other institutions (NGOs, trade unions, public administrations, etc.).

uib.es/es/recerca/estructures/estructura/CRIGUST →

06 Guest experts

Some of the voices informing
this case study, among others, are:



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 →



Maciá Blázquez Salom

→ is Full Professor of Geography at the University of the Balearic Islands (UIB) and founding member of the CRIGUST research group. His academic work focuses on critically analyzing the hegemonic tourism model in the Balearic Islands and its territorial, environmental, and social impacts. He has conducted research on processes of tourism-driven urbanization, gentrification, real estate speculation, and landscape transformation, as well as on tourism's capacity to generate inequalities in access to housing and in the quality of life of local communities. From an ecosocial perspective, Blázquez argues for the need to rethink territorial planning and the role of tourism as the dominant industry in the archipelago. His publications and lectures address the challenges of sustainability, tourism degrowth, and alternatives to the extractivist model, providing tools for the transition toward a fairer, more balanced, and more resilient form of tourism.



George Papam Papamattheakis

→ is a PhD student in Geography at Queen Mary University of London. He holds a Masters in Environmental Design (M.E.D.) from Yale University, and an MSc in Human Geography from Harokopio University. His current project looks at the cultural and infrastructural geographies of carbon removal. George has published research and essays in peer-reviewed journals, chapters, and other periodicals and has (co-)edited four books, of which most recent are *Stanley Tigerman: Drawing on the Ineffable* (Yale School of Architecture, 2025) and *Islands After Tourism: Escaping the Monocultures of Leisure* (kyklàda.press, 2022). In 2019-20 he was a researcher and tutor at the Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture and Design. In 2023, he was a recipient of the Yale Environmental Humanities Grant.

papam.work →

07 Expanded study materials

visit [are.na](#) Planetary Theatre of Tourism →

- Agnès Varda (dir.), *Du côté de la côte* (1958). - [link](#)
- Albert Serra (dir.) *Pacifiction* (2022). - [link](#)
- Catalina Salva, 'La memoria de un paisaje grabado. Las canteras de marès, trazas territoriales de un nuevo paisaje de Mallorca' in *Labor e Engenho* 7 (2013), pp.7-26. - [link](#)
- Diego Morera Sánchez, Antonio Giráldez López y Pablo Ibáñez Ferrera (web curating), *En primera línea*, La Casa de la Arquitectura (n.d.). - [link](#)
- *Emergencias Crónicas y Transformación Ecosocial en Espacios Turistificados*, Proyecto del Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación Plan Nacional de I+D+i (2022). - [link](#)
- George Papam Papamattheakis and David Bergé (eds.), *Islands After Tourism. Escaping the Monocultures of Leisure* (Kyklada Press, 2023).
- Giorgios Kallis. *In Defense of Degrowth, in Ecological Economy* (2011). - [link](#)
- Gus Van Sant and Alessandro Michelle (dir.), *Episode 1: At Home / Ouverture Of Something That Never Ended. Featuring Silvia Calderoni and Paul B. Preciado* (2020). - [link](#)
- Helen Hester and Nick Srnicek, *AFTER WORK: After Work: A History of the Home and the Fight for Free Time* (Verso Books, 2023). - [link](#)
- Murray, I., Fletcher, R., Blázquez-Salom, M., Blanco-Romero, A., Cañada, E., & Sekulova, F. Tourism and degrowth. *Tourism Geographies*, 27 (2023), pp.547–557. - [link](#)

→ George Papam Papamattheakis and David Bergé (eds.)
Islands After Tourism. Escaping the Monocultures of Leisure (Kyklada Press, 2023). pp 1-17.

"Despite the ceaseless earth processes, the fierce wildfires, the heat anomalies, the heavy floods, and the biodiversity crises, the socio-spatial infrastructures of hospitality work intensely to actualize and restore equilibrium and quiescence, in order to deliver the branded and advertised stagings, reproducing the expectations created by last year's Instagram posts. J.G. Ballard, writing in what he conceptualized as the endless resort of the Mediterranean sunbelt as early as 1973, captured this in a beautiful way with his concept of the beach fatigue: 'that chronic malaise which exiles the victims to a limbo of endless sunbathing, dark glasses, and afternoon terraces.'"

→ Paul B Preciado 'Forgetting the Idea of Being Special' in *An Apartment on Uranus: Chronicles of the Crossing* (MIT Press, 2019) pp.153-154.

"Sometimes I picture the world as a theatre company that numbers a little over 7.3 billion human actors. A company in which we are all, without exception, acting in the same play [...] I wonder how we could have decided to embark blindly on staging such an insane script. How and why we've come to submit to the role each of us holds. When people accept this production that's been assigned to us, they call it 'faith' or 'approval of the divine plan'; others invoke social determinism or human nature; neoliberalism speaks of the free market as if it were a meteorological given. And psychology of the ego makes identity into a quantifiable object that leads each actor to affirm his, her or their role in the scene as real, authentic, and irreplaceable. Even more incredible: why call an actor a citizen if he has no access to the definition of the terms of his entrance onstage, or any chance to rewrite his role? [...] First Spinoza, then Nietzsche saw the problem: we refuse to acknowledge that we are the ones who write (and act in) the script. We prefer submission rather than being responsible for this calamitous stage production [...] The first act of cognitive emancipation consists of realizing that, in this monstrous and naturalized work of theatre, anyone could act in place of anyone else."