

International Symposium, 13–15 October 2026

Université Rennes 2, Maison des sciences humaines et sociales en Bretagne (MSHB), campus
Villejean — Robert Castel Auditorium

“Art Criticism and Eco-Socially Engaged Practices: New Writing, New Challenges?”

On the occasion of the 58th Congress of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA), to be held in Rennes from 12 to 16 October 2026, université Rennes 2, the Institut national d’histoire de l’art (INHA) and AICA, the three founding members of the Archives of Art Criticism, are organising an international event dedicated to art criticism and its renewal in response to the challenges posed by eco-socially engaged artistic practices.

In light of the evolving relationships between art, society, and politics since the 2000s—shaped by new forms of artistic engagement, institutional debate and collaborative practices—this congress seeks to explore the social, cultural and political functions of contemporary art criticism. Art criticism is understood here as a body of discourse that contributes to an evaluation of contemporary art, serving as an instrument of legitimisation attentive to the aesthetic and socio-political contexts from which artworks emerge, and receptive to their broader placement within historical practices and their own historicity. In doing so, it shapes literary practices which, in turn, play a prescriptive role within the field of visual practices. With this in mind, the congress aims to explore a range of issues at the intersection of critical theory, art history and the social sciences.

This reflection builds on several key milestones in recent critical history. On the one hand, Claire Bishop's work and her debate with Grant H. Kester (2006) initiated a renewed critical perspective on participatory and collaborative artistic practices. By insisting on the need to evaluate such works not only in terms of the effects they produce and responses they elicit within society—whether through audience reception or the evaluation of cultural policies—but also by taking their aesthetic forms into account, Bishop argues that ‘the social turn in contemporary art has led to an ethical turn in art criticism’. This shift directly raises the question of how art criticism itself can engage with practices in which social interaction becomes the material of the artwork. Her work has also helped foster new discourse on the relationship between art, politics and criticism within an increasingly antagonistic context (Marchart 2019). At the turn of the millennium, the contradictions shaping the relationships between museum and/or curatorial institutions and activist practices - amid transformations in the frameworks of production and exhibition—emerged as one of the most visible manifestations of this, as notably evidenced by New Institutionalism and Jacques Rancière’s notion of the ‘emancipated spectator’. These tensions have contributed, in particular, to intensifying the blurring of roles between art critics and curators.

On the other hand, in a Europe encouraged to decentralise, or even to be ‘provincialised’ (Chakrabarty 2000), an event such as Documenta 15 (2022), curated by the Indonesian collective ruangrupa, illustrated a contemporary art tendency to become deeply rooted in the social world, its forms of organisation and its struggles, thus unsettling the expectations of the international art world regarding such types of events. By foregrounding collaborative, non-hierarchical, community-based practices that often challenge established powers and counter Western hegemonies over contemporary art, this edition brought to light a widespread crisis in dominant curatorial models, as well as in traditional forms of art criticism, its modes of expression, theoretical assumptions and legitimising function. In an art world still governed by the imperatives of a globalised market, which produces homogeneous perceptions, Documenta 15 attests to a heterogeneity in ways of thinking and making art that calls for a renewal of critical writing. It also highlights the growing consideration given to ecological imperatives through artistic approaches which, by reflecting on the tools of production and on materials themselves, advocate for *ecosocially engaged art* in practice.

Organizing Committee : Baptiste Brun (HCA – université Rennes 2), Cécile Cunin (PhD HCA – université Rennes 2), Émeline Jaret (PTAC – université Rennes 2), Kenan Khatib (PhD PTAC/CAPS – université Rennes 2), Marie Tchernia-Blanchard (HCA – université Rennes 2), Sonia Recasens (AICA International), Fabien Simode (AICA-France), Mathilde Vaillant (PhD PTAC – université Rennes 2).

Scientific Committee : Lotte Arndt (université Paris 1), Baptiste Brun (université Rennes 2), Clélia Barbut (université Paris 8), Damien Delille (INHA), T.J. Demos (UC Santa Cruz), Gabriel Ferreira Zacarias (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, São Paulo), Véronique Goudinoux (Université de Lille), Samuel Hernandez Dominicis (AICA Cuba — Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico), Émeline Jaret (université Rennes 2), Jesus Pedro Lorente (AICA International — University of Zaragoza), Ceren Ozpinar (University of Brighton), Camille Paulhan (AICA-France), Sonia Recasens (AICA International), Dorothee Richter (University of Reading), Fabien Simode (AICA-France), Marie Tchernia-Blanchard (université Rennes 2), Elvan Zabunyan (université Paris 1).

PROGRAMME

The symposium will be held in French and English, depending on the speakers' languages. A simultaneous interpretation system will be provided.

Tuesday, October 13, 2026

09h30–10h15 : Welcome and registration

10h15–10h45 : Opening remarks — Vincent Gouëset (université Rennes 2), Anne-Solène Rolland (INHA), Hélène Fribourg (DRAC Bretagne), Malgorzata Kazmierczak (AICA International)

10h45–12h15 : *Ouverture du 58^e congrès de l'AICA*. Symposium AICA – « Freedom of Expression Survey »

12h15–13h30 : Lunch Break

13h30–13h45 : Welcome Coffee

13h45–14h15 : Baptiste Brun, Émeline Jaret, Marie Tchernia-Blanchard (HCA / PTAC, université Rennes 2) — « La critique d'art face aux pratiques éco-socialement engagées : nouvelles écritures, nouveaux enjeux ? » (*Art criticism and eco-socially engaged practices: new writing, new challenges?*) – Introduction

Session 1 – « New Forms, New Critiques: Ecosophy Through Art »

Moderator: Antje Kramer-Mallordy (HCA, université Rennes 2)

14h15–14h45 : Irène Unholz (Université de Fribourg, AICA Switzerland) — « Evaluating the Model? Documenta Fifteen and the Structural Limits of Art Criticism »

14h45–15h15 : Chiara Vecchiarelli (École Supérieure d'Art de Lorraine — ÉSAI) — « Vers une critique relationnelle : esthétique, milieux et éco-temporalité des pratiques artistiques contemporaines » (*Toward a Relational Critique: Aesthetics, Contexts, and Eco-Temporality in Contemporary Artistic Practices*)

15h15–15h45 : Fanny Van Opstal (Critique d'art, France) — « Pérégrinations, posture et relais d'une critique d'art mobile en ruralité » (*Wanderings, posture and relay of a mobile art critic in rural areas*)

15h45–16h00 : Break

Session 2 – « Rural Worlds: New Territories of Critique and Practices of Cooperation »

Moderator: Émeline Jaret (PTAC, université Rennes 2)

16h00–16h30 : Marie Preston (université Paris 8 Vincennes – Saint-Denis) & Camille Azaïs (Critique d'art et autrice, France) — « Quelque chose est en train de se passer. *Levains*, un projet de recherche participative (2021-2026) » (*Something is happening. Levains, a participatory research project (2021–2026)*)

16h30–17h00 : Paola (Lola) Mayer Fabres (Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – Contemporary Arts Studies Programme) — « Long-term processes and collective resonances in the Argentine Pampas: towards a dialogical art criticism of situated artistic practices »

17h00–17h45 : Fernando García-Dory (Inland, Espagne), in conversation with Marv Recinto (Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London)

17h45 : End of the day

> See the AICA Congress Program

Wednesday, October 14, 2026

9h00-9h30 : Welcome Coffee

Session 3 – « From Writing Regimes to Situated Critiques: Fields of Criticism in Changing Worlds »

Moderator: Gabriel Ferreira Zacarias (State University of Campinas, Sao Paulo)

9h45–10h15 : Zsuzsa László (KEMKI – Central European Research Institute for Art History, Budapest / AICA Hongrie) — « Can Art Still Be Critiqued? Situated Criticism from László Beke's creative misunderstanding to Irit Rogoff's Criticality »

10h15–10h45 : Katarzyna Cytlak (PhD, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun / AICA Poland) — « Environmental Expectations. Eco-Socially Engaged Practices in and from Latin America »

10h45–11h15 : Break

11h15–11h45 : Delphine Buysse (GIRCI, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar / AICA SN, BE & Int.) — « Écrire au contact des pratiques collectives : critique d'art et légitimation à Dakar » (*Writing in the Context of Collective Practices: Art Criticism and Legitimation in Dakar*)

11h45–12h15 : Anthony Ogochukwu Agbapuonwu (Critique d'art et curateur indépendant, Lagos) — « Art criticism as shapeshifting Indigenous Knowledge Systems »

12h15–13h45 : Lunch Break

Session 4 – « Writing Art Criticism as/on Experience »

Moderator: Damien Delille (INHA)

14h00–14h30 : Ilaria Despina Bozzi (université Paris 8 Vincennes - Saint-Denis / Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca) — « Pratiques artistiques contemporaines et récits biographiques autour du mouvement No TAV en Val de Susse, Italie » (*Situated Artistic Practices and Forms of Autonomous Creation in the No TAV movement in the Susa Valley, Italy*)

14h30–15h00 : Marina Pirot (Artiste-chercheuse et curatrice / Kerminy, France) — « Éprouver des milieux : pratiques artistiques éco-sociales et écritures situées » (*Experiencing environments: eco-social artistic practices and situated writing*)

15h00–15h30 : Samuel Hernandez Dominicis (Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City / AICA Cuba) — « Between Experience, Social Media, and the Archive: The Displaced Time of Contemporary Art Criticism. Writing After—or Too Late? »

15h30–16h00 : Break

16h00–16h30 : Marie Cantos (Critique d'art / AICA France) — « Sub-critique. Où l'émergence, par la pratique, d'une critique d'art écosophique » (*Sub-critique: The Emergence, Through Practice, of an Ecosophical Art Critique*)

16h30–17h15 :]POEZL[Judith Espinas et Natalia de Mello (Artistes, Belgique) – « La critique participative comme processus actif d'un projet situé » (*Participatory Critique as an Active Process Within a Situated Project*). Conversation with the local inhabitants of Val Maria : Mokhtar Dimah, Leila Jamal et Alain Mondele Ayatolla

17h15 : End of the day

> See the AICA Congress Program

Thursday, October 15, 2026

09h00-9h15 : Welcome Coffee

Session 5 – « Critique and Curatorial Contexts (from Museums to Alternative Spaces) »

Moderator: Marie Tchernia-Blanchard (HCA, université Rennes 2)

9h30–10h00 : Gabriel Ferreira Zacarias (State University of Campinas, Sao Paulo) — « Engagées et mondiales ? Réflexions à partir de la documenta de Kassel et de la Biennale de São Paulo » (*Engaged and Global? Reflections Inspired by the documenta in Kassel and the Sao Paulo Biennial*)

10h00–10h30 : Laila Algaves Nuñez (NOVA University of Lisbon) — « What Happens to Difference When it Enters the Museum (or How to Continue Fantasising) — Denilson Baniwa's "Counter-spell" and the work of Terra Batida [Earthways] platform »

10h30–10h45 : Pause

10h45–11h30 : Maria Lind (Kin Museum of Contemporary Art) — « The Generous Edge »

11h30–12h00 : Maud Houssais (Art Critic, Morocco) — « “Aléas retour”, pratiques artistiques collaboratives en contexte de marginalité au Maroc : enjeux épistémologiques et critiques » (« *Aléas retour* », *Collaborative Artistic Practices in Marginalized Contexts in Morocco: Epistemological and Critical Issues*)

12h00–13h30 : Lunch Break

Session 6 – « Critical Practices as Tools of Resistance »

Moderator: Baptiste Brun (HCA, université Rennes 2)

13h30–14h00 : Joan Grandjean (Käte Hamburger Kolleg « Rohstoffwelten – Kulturen im Umbruch », Université de Kassel) — « Écrire l'insurrection : auto-théorisation et critique d'art dans le Queer Muslim Futurism » (*Writing the Insurrection: Self-Theorization and Art Criticism in Queer Muslim Futurism*)

14h00–14h30 : Xueyan Chen (University of Zurich) — « Loading Out Information on a Map: Where Criticism Stands between the Master's Tool and the Colonizer's House in Cian Dayrit's Counter-Cartography Tapestries »

14h30–15h15 : Mat3amclub – Jade Saber (université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne / INHA) & Léna Kemiche (Critique d'art, France) — « “Gramsci dans la ges3a” : hacker et saboter pour un outil critique situé face aux pratiques artistiques diasporiques et collaboratives » (*“Gramsci dans le Ges3a”: Hacking and Sabotage for a Critical Tool Engaged with Diasporic and Collaborative Artistic Practices*), performance

15h15–15h30 : Break

15h30–16h30 : T.J. Demos (UC Santa Cruz) – Keynote : “Criticism after Gaza”

16h30–17h00 : Sonia Recasens (AICA Internationale), Fabien Simode (AICA-France) — Conclusion et perspectives (*Conclusion and perspectives*)

17h00 : End of the day

> See the AICA Congress Program

RÉSUMÉS & NOTICES

Tuesday, 13 october

Baptiste Brun, Émeline Jaret, Marie Tchernia-Blanchard (HCA / PTAC, université Rennes 2)

“Art Criticism and Eco-Socially Engaged Practices: New Writing, New Challenges?” — Introduction

Baptiste Brun is a senior lecturer (HDR) in contemporary art history at université Rennes 2. He also serves as vice president of culture and documentation there, and oversees the curatorial training programme in MA. His research primarily focuses on the interactions between artistic creation, art history, the humanities, the social sciences and psychiatry in the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as on works related to the so-called outsider art and the epistemology of art history in relation to primitivism.

Émeline Jaret is a lecturer in contemporary art history at université Rennes 2. Since 2019, her research has examined artists' relationship to work, looking at both artistic practice and its institutional support, and questioning the notion of the author and how it relates to the collective. Building on earlier research into modes of cooperation within artist residencies, her current work focuses on collective and situated practices in rural territories. Since 2024, she shared the co-direction of the *galerie art & essai* at the université Rennes 2 together with Yann Sérandour.

Marie Tchernia-Blanchard is a lecturer in contemporary art history at université Rennes 2. She holds a doctorate from the université de Lorraine and the École du Louvre. In 2016, she defended a thesis on the intellectual and professional trajectory of Charles Sterling (1901-1991), which was published by Les Presses du réel. Her current research focuses mainly on the different forms of art-historical writing in the twentieth century. Since September 2023, she has been director of the Archives de la critique d'art.

Session 1 – “New Forms, New Critiques: Ecosophy through Art”

Moderator: Antje Kramer-Mallordy (HCA, université Rennes 2)

Hailing from Germany, Antje Kramer-Mallordy is Full Professor of Contemporary Art History at the université Rennes 2 and director of the Research Unit Histoire et critique des arts. From 2019 to 2023, she also headed the Archives de la critique d'art. Her research focuses on art and art criticism in 20th-century Europe, particularly on transnational circulations and the relationships between avant-garde and neo-avant-garde. She has just completed the manuscript for her forthcoming book, which explores the French perspective on non-conformist Soviet art during the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on the case of the kinetic art collective *Dvizhenie* [Movement].

Irène Unholz (University of Fribourg / AICA Switzerland)

“Evaluating the Model? Documenta fifteen and the Structural Limits of Art Criticism”

Documenta Fifteen (2022), curated by ruangrupa, foregrounded *lumbung* as a model of shared resources and non-hierarchical organisation. Conceived as an open-ended experiment, it challenged evaluative frameworks premised on authorship, artistic intention, or aesthetic outcomes. Through a comparative reading of German-, English-, and French-language media coverage, this paper examines how art criticism responded to that challenge. While political controversy often dominated public debate, it asks how critics approached an exhibition whose primary operation lay less in individual artworks or curatorial narratives than in the collective reorganisation of authority, resources, and decision-making. The case suggests that critical vocabularies shaped by Western debates on socially engaged art only partially account for practices such as *lumbung*. The difficulty of evaluation is therefore not simply an internal limitation of art criticism, but symptomatic of the institutional and geopolitical conditions under which it operates.

Irène Unholz is a doctoral researcher at the Chair of Modern and Contemporary Art History, University of Fribourg (CH). Within the SNSF-funded project “Real Abstractions: Reconsidering Realism’s Role for the Present,” she investigates processes of simulation and reproduction in contemporary art, focusing on how artists model, replicate, and intervene in sociopolitical, economic, and technological systems. Her cultural journalism includes contributions to *Kunstbulletin*, *Republik*, and *WOZ*, addressing social, ecological, and institutional questions. She is a member of the Swiss section of AICA.

Chiara Vecchiarelli (École Supérieure d’Art de Lorraine – ÉSAL)

“Vers une critique relationnelle : esthétique, milieux et éco-temporalité des pratiques artistiques contemporaines” (*Towards a Relational Critique: Aesthetics, Contexts, and Eco-Temporality of Contemporary Artistic Practices*)

This presentation examines the contemporary transformations of art criticism in the face of the rise of eco-socially engaged artistic practices, drawing on a conceptual shift inspired by the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon. Often processual, collective, and embedded in complex ecological and social milieus, these practices exceed the traditional categories of aesthetic evaluation, which rest on the idea of an autonomous work and on the subject/object dichotomy. How, then, can art criticism renew its forms of writing and its conceptual tools in order to account for artistic practices that exceed its traditional categories, by deploying modes of existence that are both ecological and relational? Starting from the relational ontology developed by Simondon, this talk puts forward the hypothesis of a relational critique, attentive not only to the visible forms of artworks but also to the processes of individuation, the ecological milieus, and the dynamics of coexistence they bring into play. From this perspective, aesthetics can no longer be considered an autonomous domain, separate from ethical, social, or political dimensions, but rather an operator of relation that makes it possible to think the contemporary transformations of artistic ecosystems. Such a perspective sheds light on certain contemporary artistic practices that make relation, in its living dimension, and the milieu the very conditions of aesthetic experience: the decolonial work of Laura Huertas Millán, the algaographies of Lia Giraud, and the agroecological practice of Fernando García-Dory.

Chiara Vecchiarelli is the director of the École supérieure d'art de Lorraine (Esal). She holds a doctorate in philosophy from the École normale supérieure in Paris – PSL and a doctorate in visual culture from the University of Venice. She teaches philosophy of art, aesthetics, and general philosophy at Sorbonne Université in Paris. She has also taught at the École normale supérieure Paris-Saclay, université Sorbonne Nouvelle, and université of Rennes 2, as well as art criticism and contemporary art history at other institutions. A curator of numerous exhibitions, she has contributed essays, articles, and texts in edited volumes to publications by Les Presses du réel, Sternberg Press, Les Éditions des Beaux-Arts, Skira, Hauser & Wirth Publishing, *Mousse Publishing*, and *Flash Art*, among others. She was a researcher for documenta in Kassel, is a member of PhilOfr at the ENS Paris, and sits on the editorial board of *Oboe – Journal on Biennials and Other Exhibitions*.

Fanny Van Opstal (Art critic, France)

“Pérégrinations : posture et relais d’une critique d’art mobile en ruralité” (*Peregrinations, Stance, and Relay of a Mobile Art Criticism in Rural Areas*)

La Balbuzarde grew out of a transregional journey through art venues in rural France: residencies, studios, art centers, and independent initiatives, each engaging differently with territory and the collective. The trip was first undertaken to ask how one might account for situated artistic practices, but it gradually shifted the question toward art criticism itself: what becomes of its posture when it goes into the field, stays on site, encounters works in progress, and lets its gaze take shape over the course of the journey? Mirroring the figure of the artist-ethnographer, this paper will consider peregrination as a critical method and examine the positions it entails: how to look, temporarily dwell, investigate, write, and report back from territories with which art criticism is little familiar? From the journey to the texts, and then to the recirculation of these experiences and of the works, notably during a residency at the Palais de Tokyo, it will examine criticism as a practice of relay, and mapping, fiction, and the social sciences as possible tools for writing these new geographies of art.

Fanny Van Opstal, art critic and curator, develops projects that combine research, spatialization, and publishing. Her work explores, among other things, forms of hospitality and collective organization in art-making spaces in rural areas, as well as the relationships between places, objects, and the beings that move through them. In 2025, she created La Balbuzarde, a map illustrated by Pia-Mélissa Laroche that brings together some sixty creative venues (residencies, studios, artists' houses, and collective spaces) encountered over the course of her travels.

Session 2 – “Rural Worlds: New Territories of Critique and Practices of Cooperation”

Moderator: Émeline Jaret (PTAC, université Rennes 2)

Émeline Jaret is a lecturer in contemporary art history at université Rennes 2. Since 2019, her research has examined artists' relationship to work, looking at both artistic practice and its institutional support, and questioning the notion of the author and how it relates to the collective. Building on earlier research into modes of cooperation within artist residencies, her current work focuses on collective and situated practices in rural territories. Since 2024, she shared the co-direction of the *galerie art & essai* at the université Rennes 2 together with Yann Sérandour.

Marie Preston (université of Paris 8 Vincennes – Saint-Denis) & Camille Azaïs (Art critic, France)

“Quelque chose est en train de se passer. LEVAINS, un projet de recherche participative (2021-2026)” (*Something is Happening. LEVAINS, a Participatory Research Project (2021–2026)*)

Since their theorization in the early 2000s, socially engaged art formats have challenged art criticism. Taken hostage, in a sense, by a debate over values (is this really art?), critics have had to invent new ways of relating to complex, long-term, shifting forms of experience, sometimes involving several types of collaboration at different moments. Should art criticism become more biographical, in the sense that it calls for greater involvement on the part of researchers? Drawing on the example of the LEVAINS project, initiated by Marie Preston, a participatory action-research project, we will unfold this idea and its multiple implications. The LEVAINS project is emblematic of eco-socially engaged forms involving participants from fields other than art: microbiologists, bakers, farmers, intermediaries (*passeurs* et *passeuses*) and artists. It integrates artistic practice as a stakeholder in the research and questions the status of collectively produced forms in relation to everyday life, understood as political (Geneviève Pruvost). Starting from the personal involvement of the critic Camille Azaïs in the project, Marie Preston and she will present, in a two-voice dialogue, the theoretical implications opened up by the aesthetic dimension of these objects, the value system in which they are situated, their relationship to craft and to use, their impermanence, and their symbolic charge.

Camille Azaïs is an art critic and author, and has taught art history at *ésam* Caen-Cherbourg since 2020. Her critical writing on contemporary art, like her fiction, explores the ramifications of the ecological crisis. *Les oignons roses*, an essay on the notion of rurality in recent artistic practices, supported by the Cnap's 2022 Critical Research Grant, is forthcoming from Tombolo Presses at the end of 2026.

Marie Preston is an artist and teacher-researcher at université Paris 8, a member of the AIAC-Teamed laboratory, and an associate of the Art, Design and Society group at Ensadlab. In October 2026, the book *Faire alliance : art, pédagogie et éducation populaire* [Forming Alliances: Art, Pedagogy and Popular Education], co-edited with Céline Poulin and Katia Schneller, will be published, and in 2027, *Un art socialement engagé* [A Socially Engaged Art], a collection of texts co-edited with Olivier Desvoignes and Marianne Guarino-Huet, will be published by Presses universitaires de Rennes. The *Levains* experience will be presented at the art centers Bétonsalon (Paris) and 40mcube (Rennes) in 2027.

Paola (Lola) Mayer Fabres (Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – Contemporary Arts Studies Programme)

“Long-Term Processes and Collective Resonances in the Argentine Pampas: Towards a Dialogical Art Criticism of Situated Artistic Practices”

In recent decades, eco-socially engaged practices have introduced new challenges to the field of art criticism by taking shape as collaborative, situated, and durational processes. Their reception is not confined to the public presentation of an artwork, but unfolds alongside the political and socio-environmental dynamics of the contexts in which they operate. From this perspective, what theoretical and methodological expansions are needed to analyze practices rooted in their territories, which take social relations as a constitutive dimension of their materiality?

This presentation argues that such experiences require a dialogical paradigm—a situated regime attentive to the polyphony of their contexts. To this end, the discussion departs from *Comunitaria*, an artistic project followed by the author for a decade in the Argentine Pampas—a vast region of fertile plains in east-central Argentina, historically shaped by cattle ranching and agriculture and, in recent decades, by profound social, environmental, and territorial transformations associated with the expansion of agribusiness—, working with rural villages marked by severe processes of depopulation and by the impacts of agribusiness. Through long-term engagement with the project—involving coexistence, listening, and the collection of oral accounts—the presentation examines how the collective and territorial dimensions of these practices shape both their artistic configuration and their conditions of reception, interpretation, and critical enunciation. It therefore proposes expanding the modes of operation of criticism by incorporating a dialogical and processual dimension, through which criticism may also be understood as interlocution and the shared production of meaning.

Lola Fabres is a researcher and curator specializing in community-based and eco-socially engaged art in South America. She holds a PhD in Art History, Theory, and Criticism from the University of Sao Paulo and is a postdoctoral researcher at Universidade Federal Fluminense (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil). Her work examines collaborative methodologies, long-term artistic processes, and the intersections of art, territory, and environmental concerns. She coordinates the Casco Pós-Balsa Residency Program, working with artists, researchers, schools, and local communities in rural territories underserved by formal arts and cultural institutions, and is a member of the Art, Territory, and Environment research group at the National University of San Martín (CONICET, Argentina).

Fernando García-Dory (Inland, Espagne), in conversation with Marv Recinto (Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London)

How can artistic practices meaningfully intercede during a time of accelerated ecological devastation? Looking to various case studies and shared interests, artist Fernando García-Dory of Inland and critic Marv Recinto will consider shifting the notion of art as a representational mode of epistemological affect, toward one of tangible social change. Through case studies of life preservation proposals, 1:1 scale projects, community-oriented work and activism, this conversation will interrogate what it means to redefine 'art' and how feasible it is to ingrain these practices within the current system of Contemporary Art. What criteria of criticism can be deployed? How can we nourish a corresponsable relationship between art practice and art critique within today's contexts and challenges? Can art influence material change? These are the questions at stake in interrogating what art means today.

Fernando García-Dory's work engages the relationship between culture and nature, as manifested in multiple contexts, from landscape and the rural, to desires and expectations in relation to identity, crisis, utopia and social change. Interested in the harmonic complexity of biological forms and processes, his work addresses connections and cooperation, from microorganisms to social systems, and from traditional art languages drawing to collaborative agro-ecological projects and actions. He studied Fine Arts and Rural Sociology, and is preparing his PhD on Art and

Agroecology. Since 2010 he has been developing a project about a para-institution called INLAND, in which to dissolve his authorship. He is also coordinator of the European network on Rural Arts called Confederacy of Villages, supported by Creative Europe program and Carasso Foundation.

INLAND (various locations in Spain) is a collaborative agency started in 2009 by Fernando García Dory. It provides a platform for diverse actors engaged in agricultural, social, and cultural production. During its first stage (2010–2013) and taking Spain as an initial case study, INLAND was engaged with artistic production in twenty-two villages across the country, nationwide exhibitions and presentations, and an international conference. This was followed by a period of reflection and evaluation, launching study groups on art and ecology, and a series of publications. Today INLAND functions as a collective focused on land-based collaborations and economies, and communities-of-practice as a substrate for post-contemporary art and cultural forms. INLAND has a radio station, an academy, produces shows, and makes cheese. It is also a consultant for the European Union Commission on the use of art for rural development policies, while promoting a European Shepherds' Network, a social movement to question those same policies. INLAND is currently coordinating the Confederacy of Villages network and has exhibited and worked with institutions such as the Istanbul Biennial (2015); Casco Art Institute, Utrecht (2015); Maebashi Museum (2016); Serpentine Gallery, London (2020); Casa do Povo, Sao Paulo; Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015); SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin (2019) and documenta fifteen.

Marv Recinto is a critic, editor and PhD candidate at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. Her AHRC CHASE-funded research focuses on the political aesthetics of excess in contemporary Philippines and Southeast Asia. She is a co-founder of *The Decolonial Network*. Previously, she acted as Managing Editor of *ArtReview*, London and Managing Editor of the peer-reviewed journal *ARTMargins* (MITPress). In addition to her cultural criticism published in *ArtReview*, she has contributed writing to various publications and exhibition catalogues in New York, London, Berlin, Manila. Her edited book with Turner Prize-nominated Pio Abad, *Fear of Freedom Sees Ghosts* (Ateneo University Press & Hato Press, 2024), was shortlisted for two national book awards in 2025.

Wednesday, 14 October

Session 3 – “From Modes of Writing to Situated Critiques: Sites of Critique in Upheaved Worlds”

Moderation: Gabriel Ferreira Zacarias (State University of Campinas, Sao Paulo)

Gabriel Ferreira Zacarias is a Professor of art history at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) in São Paulo, Brazil. At the same university, he currently serves as director of the Museu de Artes Visuais (MAV). He is also a research associate at the Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar at the University of Hamburg in Germany, with support from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. In France, he served on the editorial board of *Marges. Revue d'art contemporain*, co-editing the issues *Globalisms* (No. 23, 2016) and *Archives* (No. 25, 2017). Among his works published in Brazil are *No espelho do terror: jibad e espetáculo* (2018), *Crítica do espetáculo* (2022), and the collective volume *Histórias da arte em construção* (2022).

Zsuzsa László (KEMKI – Central European Research Institute for Art History, Budapest / AICA Hongrie)
“Can Art still be Critiqued? Situated Criticism from László Beke’s Creative Misunderstanding to Irit Rogoff’s Criticality”

In 1979, as a contribution to the AICA Congress in Buenos Aires, the Hungarian art historian László Beke (1944–2022) addressed a letter to Jorge Glusberg, director of CAYC (Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires). Reflecting on the “role and situation of the art critic,” Beke advanced a theoretical proposal grounded in the “double misunderstanding” theory of György Lukács. If criticism seeks to reconstruct an already given meaning, he argued, it is necessarily doomed to failure. Yet this very failure opens a productive space: criticism becomes a creative and performative act, aware of its own situatedness and of the social consequences of interpretation. This paper places Beke’s late-1970s redefinition of criticism in dialogue with Irit Rogoff’s early-2000s concept of “criticality.” Rogoff’s framework moves beyond traditional judgmental criticism as well as critique understood as the “endless processes of

uncovering” hidden assumptions from an external perspective. Instead, criticality requires acknowledging that we are “fellow sufferers of the very conditions we examine.” Criticality thus displaces the illusion of exteriority and calls for a self-reflexive, implicated position.

These two models, though emerging from different geopolitical and historical contexts—one articulated from within late-socialist Eastern Europe, the other in the context of globalized biennial culture—converge in their advocacy for situational self-awareness as the fundamental ground for interpreting art. By confronting these historical proposals with the present situation, this paper addresses the question of what the currency of art criticism is in our age of permanent crisis. [...] The question then arises: in the globalised art world, which juxtaposes a plethora of antagonistic artistic and curatorial stances while cohabiting a complex eco-social system, what shared but specific situation can the critic place themselves “inside”? [...]

Zsuzsa László is a researcher and project leader at the Central European Research Institute for Art History (KEMKI) in Budapest. She is a member of the editorial team of *ARTMargins Online* and the Hungarian Section of AICA. Previously, she was a guest lecturer at the Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies at ELTE, Budapest (2005–2007), where she completed the Art Theory Doctoral School in 2008. She also taught at the Intermedia Department of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts (2008–2012). Between 2009 and 2019, she was a curator at tranzit/hu, and between 2019 and 2022, a museologist at Artpool, Budapest. She is currently working on two book projects: a volume of selected writings by the Hungarian art historian László Beke, and a book exploring how the concept of Eastern European art evolved in the context of transnational art events in the 1970s.

Katarzyna Cytlak (PhD, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun / AICA Poland)

“Attentes environnementales. Pratiques éco-socialement engagées en Amérique latine et depuis l’Amérique latine” (*Environmental Expectations. Eco-Socially Engaged Practices in and from Latin America*)

The Bolivian feminist, theoretician and essayist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui proposes in her writing to advance the sociology of the image understood as a decolonizing practice. By revealing the interconnectedness between Quechua and Aimara traditions and contemporary Latin American cultures, Cusicanqui develops alternative conceptions of visual works and alternative epistemologies while speaking about colonial violence, internal colonialism and sees in the experience provoked by the Andean zone a new chance to rethink the power relations in the contemporary world, and within the field of visual arts. Many other decolonial thinkers follow Rivera Cusicanqui in her radical criticism by searching the distance from the Western-based concepts such as the Anthropocene in order to rethink ecologically engaged art produced in Latin America and visible not only in this continent but also in Europe and the United States. [...] The paper will compare the reception of artworks created by the Latin American artists in their countries of origin and abroad, and will critically examine the institutional and market-driven attempts to include - or potentially exploit - these practices in order to assimilate them into the contemporary art world. Referencing Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui’s concept of a *ch’ixi* world, which in her writing designates a cultural cross-mixing or cultural motley mix that occurs simultaneously and ignores the rules of linear time, the paper will ask the question what the non-Latin American societies could learn from Latin American artists. As the thinker argues, the rules of the Andean world could spread not as a utopia or a dream, but as a tangible possibility for understanding the universe we already know. The paper will ultimately question if the recognition of eco-socially engaged practices in Latin American art functions merely as a strategy of the art market and institutional validation, or whether it can contribute to the emergence of new narratives about art and contemporary societies.

Katarzyna Cytlak is a Polish art historian working at Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland, whose research focuses on Transatlantic artistic creation in and from Central Europe, Latin America and Africa. She studies conceptual art, radical and utopian architecture, socially engaged art, and art theory in relation to post-socialist countries, seen through a transmodern, transnational and decolonial perspective. In 2012, she received a PhD from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. She was later a postdoctoral fellow at the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Argentina (CONICET) and at the University of San Martín, Argentina. In 2018, she began working at the School of Humanities of the University of San Martín, Argentina. She is a grantee of the Sorbonne Université (Paris), the Terra Foundation for American Art (Chicago), and the Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art (Paris). She is a member of Red Conceptualismos del Sur an international research platform bringing together art critics and historians from South America. In 2023, she was awarded second place in the AICA Art Critics Association Incentive Prize for Young Art Critics 2023.

Delphine Buysse (GIRCI, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar / AICA SN, BE & Int.)

“Écrire au contact des pratiques collectives : critique d’art et légitimation à Dakar” (*Writing in the Context of Collective Practices: Art Criticism and Legitimation in Dakar*)

Based on the artistic ecosystem of Dakar, this presentation examines art criticism in relation to collective, process-oriented, and eco-socially engaged practices. How do its descriptions, interpretations, and judgments contribute to the legitimization of these practices? Informed by historical context, the analysis intersects temporalities of intervention with positions of enunciation. It examines narrative choices, criteria for judgment, and the relationships among authors and actors. The hypothesis is that criticism also contributes to legitimization by defining the scope of the experience, characterizing its forms and commitments, and attributing contributions. These choices are shaped by the conditions of access and enunciation, and their impact depends on the authority accorded to these interpretations, as well as their capacity to be reinterpreted or challenged. Without assuming that these practices are free from power relations, the study examines the conditions for a situated and revisable judgment and distinguishes between judgments and their documented effects on recognition.

Delphine Buysse is a curator, artistic advisor, and researcher who has been based in Nairobi since 2026. Originally from Belgium, she has lived on the African continent for twenty years. As a PhD candidate in the sociology of art at Cheikh Anta Diop University, she studies artistic ecosystems in Africa and the history of collectives. She served as program curator at RAW Material Company and was a member of the artistic direction team for the 14th Dak’Art Biennale. Her practice focuses on collective approaches and artistic forms that engage the public space and examine power dynamics. She is a member of AICA (SN, BE & Int.), C-E-A, and ICOM.

Anthony Ogochukwu Agbapuonwu (Art critic and curator, Lagos)

“Art criticism as Shapeshifting Indigenous Knowledge Systems”

This presentation proposes shapeshifting indigenous knowledge systems as a critical methodology that moves fluidly between historical and contemporary, individual and collective, visible and invisible, attending to spirituality, relationality, and opacity rather than demanding material manipulation and transparency. Through Ben Enwonwu MBE's Anyanwu (1955-56), I demonstrate how this approach addresses institutional, temporal, and epistemological challenges facing contemporary criticism. Created during Nigeria's independence transition, Anyanwu embodies Igbo cosmology while visually referencing Benin Bronzes. Beyond nationalist symbolism, the sculpture operates as ancestral technology, where physical and spiritual forces commingle. Reading Anyanwu through indigenous epistemologies reveals spirituality as a constitutive force in artistic production, demanding critics attend to tangible and intangible entities. This challenges institutional logics, privileging material objects over processual, ephemeral, or spiritually-grounded practices.

Such methodology responds to Claire Bishop's “disordered attention, which recognizes that “contemporary art and how we look at it exists not just in tandem with the uneven development of globalisation but alongside unimaginable developments in technology.” When criticism encounters event-driven, collaborative, or non-Western cosmology-rooted works, traditional frameworks collapse. This approach disrupts symbolic validation mechanisms and creates space for marginal, local, and activist expressions to generate their own critical languages. With reference to Édouard Glissant's notion of “opacity” as the “dense strata of memories, histories, conflicts and imaginaries” within postcolonial relations, the paper argues that criticism must embrace Glissant's “beautiful chaos” rather than demand transparency. Ultimately, shapeshifting criticism repositions art writing's political role: not as arbiter imposing external frameworks, but as collaborative practice listening across epistemological differences; essential for addressing tensions around whose histories and knowledge systems shape critical discourse.

Anthony Ogochukwu Agbapuonwu is a curator, writer, and strategy consultant whose practice explores the intersections of heritage, Indigenous knowledge systems, urban studies, memory, and socio-political histories through the lens of African philosophies. He is the founder of Art Bridge Project, a community-based organisation supporting artistic exchange, public programmes, and creative knowledge production in Nigeria. In 2025, he curated *Anyanwu: The New Light* at the National Museum, Lagos. He recently completed a curatorial residency at Cité internationale des arts, Paris, where his research examined how artists and marginalized communities create alternative cultural infrastructures and ethical tactics, placing Lagos and Paris in conversation.

Session 4 – “Writing Art Criticism as/on Experience”

Moderator: Damien Delille (INHA)

Damien Delille is lecturer in Contemporary Art History at université Lyon 2 Lumière and is currently on secondment to the INHA, where he is working on the *Objets minoritaires* (Minority Objects) project. His research focuses on the visual arts and fashion at the turn of the twentieth century and in contemporary practices, through the lens of queer cultures and gender studies. His publications include *Fashion Heritage: Narrative and Knowledge Creation*, co-edited with I. Cantista (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); *Genre androgyne. Arts, culture visuelle et trouble de la masculinité (XVIIIe–XXe siècle)* (Brepols, 2021); *Modes et Vêtements. Retour aux textes*, co-edited with P. Sénéchal (Paris, INHA–MAD, 2020); and, most recently, *La carpe et le kimono. Porter l'habit de l'autre* (INHA, 2026).

Ilaria Despina Bozzi (université Paris 8 Vincennes – Saint-Denis / University degli Studi di Milano- Bicocca)
“Pratiques artistiques contemporaines et récits biographiques autour du mouvement No TAV en Val de Suse, Italie” (*Contemporary Artistic Practices and Biographical Narratives Surrounding the No TAV Movement in the Susa Valley, Italy*)

This paper examines the relationship between artistic creation and forms of resistance to the construction of a second high-speed rail line between Lyon and Turin. It focuses in particular on the No TAV movement, a social mobilization rooted in the Susa Valley (Piedmont, Italy), which has opposed this major transnational infrastructure project since the 1990s. The project now comprises twelve construction sites spread between the Maurienne Valley (Savoie, France) and the Susa Valley. Based on participant observation and ongoing fieldwork, this contribution analyzes contemporary art practices developed within several *presidi* (permanent protest camps) linked to the No TAV movement, practices grounded in biographical narratives and lived experience. It explores how these projects, at their own scale, contribute to building a collective memory of the struggle, to a form of introspection that is both personal and collective, and to imaginaries of civic mobilization. These projects thus carry the traces of the ups and downs inherent in a long-term territorial conflict, now marked by a certain weariness, but also by generational renewal.

Ilaria Despina Bozzi is a PhD candidate in contemporary art at université Paris 8 Vincennes — Saint-Denis, in a joint supervision with the University of Milano-Bicocca. Her comparative thesis examines the relationships between contemporary art practices and forms of resistance to the construction of the Lyon-Turin high-speed rail line and to migration policies, in the French-Italian Alpine territory of the Maurienne, the Briançonnais and the Susa Valley.

Marina Pirot (Artiste-chercheuse et curatrice / Kerminy, France)

“Éprouver des milieux : pratiques artistiques éco-sociales et écritures situées” (*Experiencing Environments: Eco-Social Artistic Practices and Situated Writing*)

Drawing on situated artistic practices developed at Kerminy, a site of “agriculture in the arts” founded in Finistère (Brittany) in 2020, this presentation examines the forms of writing that can accompany eco-socially engaged artistic practices, which shift the traditional categories of the artwork, artistic production and its reception. Ecosomatic arts, sound art, experimental agricultural practices, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), low-tech and solarpunk imaginaries come together there to form a “œuvre-milieu”, in which contributory performances, ecosomatic farming, meteorological sonification, and collective practices of seed planting, care and harvesting activate relationships among humans, plants, animals, tools and technical infrastructures. Drawing on the notions of situated aisthesis and solarpunk imaginaries, this talk explores the conditions for a situated form of writing, embedded in practices and attentive to atmospheres, gestures, techniques and living milieus.

Marina Pirot is an artist-researcher, curator and designer of research-creation projects. At the crossroads of somatic arts, performance, agriculture and low-tech practices, she explores forms of experience that transform our relationship to living beings, and situates her research within the field of ecosomatic practices. She draws in particular on the approaches of Body Weather Laboratory, Body-Mind Centering® and Authentic Movement. Co-founder of Kerminy (Finistère, Brittany), a site for artistic residencies and agroecological experimentation, she develops there frameworks in which creation, research, transmission and ecology are built from within living milieus. In 2015, she founded the artistic duo (n) with Dominique Leroy, whose projects question the relationships between arts, territories and ecologies.

She designs and coordinates research-creation programs bringing together artists, researchers, art schools, universities and local authorities around ecological issues, notably KAMPUS, a research and transmission program rooted in living milieus. Her work has been published in *Tangence* (“Plant Dramaturgy, Artist Farmer”, 2023), *Planète Laboratoire–Makery* (The Aesthetics of Meteorology, 2024) and *Percées* (Ecosomatic Market Gardening at Kerminy”, 2025). She was nominated for the COAL Prize 2024 (“Transformative Territories”).

Samuel Hernández Dominicis (Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City / AICA Cuba)

“Between Experience, Social Media, and the Archive: the Displaced Time of Contemporary Art Criticism. Writing After—or Too Late?”

This paper examines the contemporary crisis of art criticism through the gap between situated artistic experience, immediate digital circulation, and delayed critical writing. It argues that the crisis involves a structural displacement of criticism’s temporal framework, rather than simply a decline in its formats or authority. Drawing on Brad Haylock, Megan Patty, and Jacques Rancière, it explores how social media, mediation, and archival practices reshape the production of critical meaning. The discussion follows four axes: the gap between experience and writing; social media’s regime of immediacy; the “after” of criticism as a space of historical distance; and the archive as a framework that gives depth to fleeting practices and discourses. The question “writing after—or too late?” thus names a structural desynchronization that invites us to rethink the temporal, political, and epistemological functions of art criticism.

Samuel Hernández Dominicis (Cuba, 1987) is an art critic and researcher whose work spans criticism, curating, editing, teaching, and institutional leadership. He is an International Vice-President of AICA, President of AICA Cuba, and Chair of AICA’s Archives and Living Memory Committee. His research focuses on the history and theory of art criticism, editorial practice, institutional memory, and contemporary Latin American art. He holds a BA in Art History from the University of Havana and an MA in Art Studies from Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, where he is currently a PhD candidate in Modern Literature.

Marie Cantos (art critic / AICA-France)

“Sub-critique. Où l’émergence, par la pratique, d’une critique d’art écosophique” (*Sub-Critical. Or the Emergence, through Practice, of an Ecosophical Art Criticism*)

In *L’Art de la mémoire. Le territoire et l’architecture* (2010), Sébastien Marot sets against conventional urbanism, at its margins, “super-urbanism” (sur-urbanisme), which asserts the primacy of the architectural program over the site, and “sub-urbanism” (sub-urbanisme), which would reverse this paradigm. Drawing on a conceptual shift inspired by this essay by the philosopher and environmental historian, I propose to observe the transformations at work in art criticism over the past twenty years or so, and to postulate the existence of a “super-criticism” and a “sub-criticism.” I will set aside “super-criticism” which, through its formal qualities and its authorial dimension, contributes to consolidating art criticism as a shared edifice built from our creative singularities. I will focus on “sub-criticism,” which abandons the stance of overview and normative evaluation, claims its practical and situated dimensions, and favors process over outcome. Standing at the intersection of struggles, “sub-criticism” would indeed be the expression of an “ecosophical” turn, articulating in an ethical and political manner Félix Guattari’s *Three Ecologies* (1989): environmental, social and mental.

Marie Cantos is an author of texts, exhibitions, performed interventions, and sound and printed objects (and, probably, other forms to come), which she envisions as different unfoldings of one and the same body of research, both theoretical and practical. Trained as an art historian, she worked in cultural mediation and artistic coordination before developing her own projects and programs, and then serving as artistic director of several organizations. Today, she once again pursues her projects independently, while continuing her regular teaching interventions in art schools.

]POEZL[Judith Espinas and Natalia de Mello (Artists, Belgium)

“La critique participative comme processus actif d’un projet situé” (*Participatory critique as an active process of a situated project*)—*Conversation with the inhabitants of Val Maria: Mokehtar Dimah, Leila Jamal et Alain Mondele Ayatolla*)

The]POEZL[project took shape in 2023 as part of a 101% call for proposals issued by the Brussels-Capital Region Housing Society for the Val Maria’s garden city in Neder-Over-Heembeek (Belgium) (<https://slrb-bghm.brussels/fr/projets/poezl>). From the moment it was conceived,]POEZL[was designed and built as a tool for co-creation with the residents for whom it is intended. Respecting the wishes and voices of each and every individual, the creative process is diverse and multifaceted, and everyone has a say. Drawing on Jacques Rancière’s concept of the “emancipated spectator,” we propose for this conference to give voice to the critics who matter most to us—those most directly affected: the site’s users. Thus, we are joined by three inhabitants of Val Maria, who will share the comments gathered beforehand during workshops with those who wished to participate. This participatory critique aims to put into perspective the challenges of an artistic, urban planning, and social project led by artists in a specific area, with and for its inhabitants.

Natalia de Mello was born in 1966 (Lausanne) and holds Belgian and Portuguese citizenship. She lives and works in Brussels. Professional practice as a visual artist in the mental health sector: commissioned to create a space/workshop for visual creation at La Fabrique du Pré, Nivelles (2001–2008) and at the short-stay shelter in Enaden, Brussels (2007–2013). Instructor in the multidisciplinary “Image in the Environment” track at the Mons School of Fine Arts, ARTS2, since 2010. Multidisciplinary practice: video, video installation, sculpture and interventions in public spaces, set design, video performance, and computer graphics. (Website: www.nataliademello.net)

Judith Espinas was born in 1985 (Bourgoin-Jallieu) and is a French citizen. She lives and works in Brussels. Works as a visual artist in the educational and social sectors: educational workshops for children ages 2 to 15, creation of educational materials, and the design and creation of an art library with the W collective. Co-founder of the Nissi artist residency with Alexandra Roussopoulos in Spetses. Teacher in the sculpture program at the Higher School of Arts in Mons, ARTS2, since 2019. Multidisciplinary practice: sculpture and interventions in public spaces, video, painting, and drawing. (Website: <http://judithespinas.free.fr>)

Thursday, 15 October

Session 5 – “Criticism and Curatorial Contexts (from the Museum to Alternative Spaces)”

Moderator: Marie Tchernia-Blanchard (HCA, université Rennes 2)

Marie Tchernia-Blanchard is a lecturer in contemporary art history at université Rennes 2. She holds a doctorate from the université de Lorraine and the École du Louvre. In 2016, she defended a thesis on the intellectual and professional trajectory of Charles Sterling (1901-1991), which was published by Les Presses du réel. Her current research focuses mainly on the different forms of art-historical writing in the twentieth century. Since September 2023, she has been director of the Archives de la critique d’art.

Gabriel Ferreira Zacarias (State University of Campinas, Sao Paulo)

“Engagées et mondiales ? Réflexions à partir de la documenta de Kassel et de la Biennale de São Paulo” (*Engaged and Global? Reflections on Kassel’s Documenta and the São Paulo Biennial*)

With the consolidation of the global turn, major periodic exhibitions took on an even more prominent role than they had previously held. They became the showcase for an art world that sought to be as global as the new geopolitical order. The cracks in globalization, however, soon began to appear, with new wars, migration crises, and environmental crises. Mega-exhibitions quickly became platforms for criticism of the existing order. Curatorial discourses and choices began to be guided by a desire to take a stance regarding the global order and its crises. Before the artists, engagement here would stem from the curatorship itself, sometimes in harmony or in conflict—with artists, institutions, and the market. Art criticism is thus compelled to follow this movement, becoming, in turn, a critique of curatorial discourses

in their epistemological and political dimensions. We will seek to problematize this issue by taking as examples recent editions of two long-standing seasonal exhibitions, created in the 1950s and in constant transformation: documenta in Kassel and the São Paulo Biennial. In this way, we will be able to compare examples from the global North and South, and assess to what extent these concepts vary and converge, and what challenges they pose to the critical gaze that approaches them.

Gabriel Ferreira Zacarias is a Professor of art history at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) in São Paulo, Brazil. At the same university, he currently serves as director of the Museu de Artes Visuais (MAV). He is also a research associate at the Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar at the University of Hamburg in Germany, with support from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. In France, he served on the editorial board of *Marges. Revue d'art contemporain*, co-editing the issues *Globalisms* (No. 23, 2016) and *Archives* (No. 25, 2017). Among his works published in Brazil are *No espelho do terror: jihad e espetáculo* (2018), *Crítica do espetáculo* (2022), and the collective volume *Histórias da arte em construção* (2022).

Laila Algaves Nuñez (NOVA University of Lisbon)

“What Happens to Difference When it Enters the Museum (or how to continue gantaisising) — Denilson Baniwa’s ‘Counter-spell’ and the Work of Terra Batida [Earthways] Platform”

This paper examines how situated eco-social practices and artistic creations, grounded in research and fieldwork, are reformatted into administrable and legible cultural forms within institutional spaces and grammars. Drawing on the work of Terra Batida network—a long-term residency programme connecting art and ecology between Portugal and Brazil—and, in particular, on “Counter-spell”, the first solo exhibition in Portugal by Indigenous artist Denilson Baniwa (Upper Rio Negro, BR), it investigates what happens to alterity once it enters exhibitionary circuits. It conceptualises this transition as a multi-layered process of modulation, in which an ecology of practices (Stengers, 2010), initially embedded in specific ecological, cosmological and political relations, is progressively translated into curatorial languages. Within this process, art criticism occupies a pivotal position, actively organising and stabilising interpretations, and affects. How might it contest dominant modes of recording and archiving while sustaining zones of mystery, indeterminacy and instability, resisting the reduction of ontological difference to thematic content? Drawing on the author’s involvement in the conception and production of “Counter-spell” and its performative cycle, it approaches criticism as a regime of obligation (Povinelli, 2013)—a site of both fantastical and material responsibility for fostering modes of memory rooted in duration, attentiveness, and sustained relationality.

Laila Algaves Nuñez is a researcher, writer and cultural worker, particularly interested in future studies developed in philosophy and the arts, as well as in transfeminist contributions to imagination and social and ecological thought. She is a Bachelor in Social Communication with a major in Cinema (PUC-Rio, Brazil), Master in Aesthetics and Artistic Studies (NOVA FCSH, Portugal) and a PhD candidate in Art Studies—Art and Mediation (NOVA FCSH, Portugal) with an FCT scholarship. Her current research, a project provisionally entitled “More-than-human literatures: weaving stories and reclaiming agencies in the Anthropocene”, developed under the guidance of Bartholomew Ryan and Erik Bordeleau (IFILNOVA), moves through the field of feminist material ecocriticism, considering the potential of writing and fiction as tools for safeguarding the Rights of Nature. She works with the Institute of Philosophy at NOVA University of Lisbon as a collaborator researcher; Umbigo magazine as a writer and art critic; and Ritó Natálio / Terra Batida [Earthways] in the proposal and organisation of artistic-research projects that traverse the intersections between words, performance, imagination and ecological activism.

Maria Lind (Kin Museum of Contemporary Art)

“The Generous Edge”

In this conference Maria Lind will discuss her work at Kin Museum of Contemporary Art in Giron/Kiruna and its context on the Swedish side of Sápmi in the Arctic. She will relate it to her previous roles as director of Tensta konsthall in the Stockholm suburb of Tensta and the 11th Gwangju Biennial and discuss the impact of the different types of institutions and governance structures on curatorial and institutional work. Case studies such as “The Benevolent Food”, “The Critical Zone” and “Tensta Museum” will be addressed while asking “What might it mean to be the generous edge”?

Maria Lind is a curator, writer and educator from Stockholm. She is currently the director Kin Museum of Contemporary Art, Kiruna. From 2020 to 2023 she was serving as the counsellor of culture at the embassy of Sweden, Moscow. She was the director of Stockholm's Tensta konsthall 2011-18, the artistic director of the 11th Gwangju Biennale, the director of the graduate program, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College (2008-2010) and director of Iaspis in Stockholm (2005-2007). From 2002-2004 she was the director of Kunstverein München and in 1998, co-curator of Europe's itinerant biennial, Manifesta 2 in Luxembourg. In 2015 she curated Future Light for the first Vienna Biennial, and in 2019 she co-curated the Art Encounters Biennial in Timisoara. She has taught widely since the early 1990s, including as professor of artistic research at the Art Academy in Oslo 2015-18 and as a lecturer at Konstfack's CuratorLab 2014-2024. She has contributed widely to newspapers, magazines, catalogues and other publications. She is the 2009 recipient of the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement. In 2010 *Selected Maria Lind Writing* was published by Sternberg Press, and *Seven Years: The Rematerialization Art from 2011 to 2017* appeared in the fall of 2019. In 2021, *Konstringar: Vad gör samtidskonsten?* was published by Natur & Kultur. *Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden* (2021) and *The New Model* (2020) are two publications reflecting long-term projects at Tensta konsthall, both published by the art center and Sternberg Press.

Maud Houssais (Art Critic, Morocco)

“Aléas retour”, pratiques artistiques collaboratives en contexte de marginalité au Maroc : enjeux épistémologiques et critiques” (*“Aléas retour”, Collaborative Artistic Practices in Marginalized Contexts in Morocco: Epistemological and Critical Issues*)

In Morocco, the 1960s and 1970s marked a shared movement among artists and intellectuals who imposed a reflection on identity and otherness into the public discourse. These reflections are certainly embodied in a body of critical literary work—the significance of which is better understood today (notably the journals *Maghreb Art*, *Souffles*, and *Integral*)—but also in a range of cultural initiatives that, through experimentation and exploration, sought new ways to link aesthetics and sociopolitics. These years opened the door to a collaborative methodology specific to forms of artistic expression that had remained on the margins of history.

Today, artistic and curatorial approaches are re-examining diverse explorations that take place within marginal spaces—spaces that are both individual and collective, physical and conceptual. Drawing on various works by the collective The Minority Globe (as part of the Organic Knowledge residency and participatory workshop program), this presentation demonstrates how these processes rethink the phenomena of integration and exclusion. It also examines how these situated practices challenge established categories of art criticism, notably by contributing to their own theorization.

Maud Houssais is a researcher and independent curator based in Morocco. Her work focuses on collaborative artistic practices in marginalized contexts and their capacity to produce autonomous and situated knowledge. She examines the processes of emancipation at work in these practices and the ways in which they reconfigure established categories in art history and sociology. She is the co-editor of the book *CASA: Casablanca Art School Archives*, co-published in 2026 by Zaman Books & Curating and Carrefour des Livres. Since 2024, she has been the curator of the *Organic Knowledge* research and exhibition program in collaboration with the collective The Minority Globe.

Session 6 – “Criticism as a Tool of Resistance”

Moderator: Baptiste Brun (HCA, université Rennes 2)

Baptiste Brun is a senior lecturer (HDR) in contemporary art history at université Rennes 2. He also serves as vice president of culture and documentation there, and oversees the curatorial training programme in MA. His research primarily focuses on the interactions between artistic creation, art history, the humanities, the social sciences and psychiatry in the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as on works related to the so-called outsider art and the epistemology of art history in relation to primitivism.

Joan Grandjean (Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Rohstoffwelten – Kulturen im Umbruch”, Universität de Kassel)
“Écrire l’insurrection : auto-théorisation et critique d’art dans le Queer Muslim Futurism” (*Writing the Insurrection: Self-theorization and Art Criticism in Queer Muslim Futurism*)

Since 2018, Queer Muslim Futurism—formalised by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto—has underpinned artistic, curatorial and performative practices (notably drag) among queer Muslims seeking just futures. This presentation analyses the corpus of critical texts produced by artists within this phenomenon between 2018 and 2025, which constitute a form of self-theorisation emerging from subaltern counterpublics, with its own mechanisms of legitimisation. By bringing together the social and ethical turn in art criticism with the global turn and queer theory, the analysis examines how these writings negotiate multiple marginalisations—within Muslim communities, queer spaces and the art world alike—in order to construct a discursive space of their own. The discussion is structured around three key issues: hybrid modes of enunciation; alternative infrastructures of critical legitimisation; and the collective dimension of this production, which fosters translocal and transdiasporic solidarities. Drawing on theoretical references (Muñoz, Said, Puar, Qureshi) and genealogies of resistance (intifadas, Black Panthers), this presentation contributes to debates on the decolonisation of art criticism by bringing together eco-social, global and queer perspectives.

Joan Grandjean is a visiting scholar at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Rohstoffwelten – Kulturen im Umbruch” at the University of Kassel, Germany, and an associate member of the PTAC Research Unit at université Rennes 2. His research explores contemporary art, globalisation and imagined futures, with a particular focus on North Africa and South West Asia—the subject of his doctoral thesis undertaken at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. His publications include the double issue “Photographie et politique” of the journal *Tumultes* (2023) and the exhibition catalogue *Arabofuturs: Science-fiction et nouveaux imaginaires* (Institut du monde arabe, 2024). He is currently completing a book on donations of Arab and Iranian works of art to the United Nations, co-written with Professors Alexandre Kazerouni and Silvia Naef (forthcoming with Presses du Réel in 2027). In 2019, he co-founded the Manazir platform, dedicated to visual art, architecture and heritage in North Africa and South West Asia, and sits on the editorial board of *Manazir Journal*.

Xueyan Chen (University of Zurich)

“Loading Out Information on a Map: Where Criticism Stands Between the Master’s Tool and the Colonizer’s House in Cian Dayrit’s Counter-Cartography Tapestries”

When a work’s force lies in its embeddedness in land distribution and agrarian struggles rooted in colonial mapping, what is the specific task, and what is the authority, of art criticism? Recent debates on the social turn testify how readily criticism is drawn toward ethical affirmation or curatorial pedagogy, as though urgency could substitute for evaluative argument. Bishop’s diagnosis of “information overload” names one symptom of this condition, in which research and documentation proliferate while judgement is deferred. Using Cian Dayrit’s counter-mapping tapestry works, this research reconsiders the task and authority of criticism under these conditions and argues that the tapestries and their associated communal workshops redeploy the master’s tool in order to articulate how claims to land become an under-contested, enforceable status quo. Methodologically, the presentation treats criticism as a mediating practice that produces criteria, thereby foregrounding an ambivalence within criticism itself: if mapping is one of the master’s tools, does criticism remain structurally aligned with the master’s house as it translates such practices into value and visibility within the art world?

Xueyan Chen is a PhD candidate at the Kunsthistorisches Institut, University of Zurich. Her dissertation examines contemporary counter-cartographic art in Japan and the Philippines, asking how artistic practices contest cartographic regimes that visualize land and naturalize borders, with particular attention to ethnonationalism and archipelagic geographies. She inhabits Zurich’s alternative cultural and music scenes.

Mat3amclub – Jade Saber (université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne / INHA) & Léna Kemiche (Art critic, France)

“Gramsci dans la ges3a’ : hacker et saboter pour un outil critique situé face aux pratiques artistiques diasporiques et collaboratives” (*Gramsci in the Ges3a’: hacking and sabotaging to create a situated*) — Performance

This presentation takes the form of a performed reading by the mat3amclub collective. It examines how art criticism is being reconfigured in response to collaborative, community-based, and diasporic artistic practices through the development of a situated critical tool: the ges3a. Bringing together critical theory, art history, and the social sciences, the ges3a seeks to develop forms of mediation, exhibition-making, and writing capable of accommodating marginalised artistic narratives without essentialising them or reproducing symbolic violence. In this way, the ges3a hacks institutionalised art criticism and disrupts its model, becoming a space from which to build a diasporic politics of the commons in art.

Rooted in a research-creation approach combining theory and experimentation, this reflection draws on the concepts of critical pedagogy (Paulo Freire, bell hooks), the “commons” (Silvia Federici), and the thought of Antonio Gramsci. Care, community solidarity, hospitality, and knowledge, understood as commons, provide tools for working locally and in situated ways with artists whose multiple identities and struggles are rooted in different contexts. The ges3a thus makes it possible to redefine the contours of critical thought while constructing hybrid spaces of mediation based on dialogical, collaborative, and conversational approaches. The presentation will introduce the three fundamental stages that structure its ethical and political requirements and will activate the ges3a by unfolding its content and presenting the tools it generates.

The mat3amclub is a hybrid independent curatorial and research collective founded by Jade Saber and Léna Kemiche, curators and researchers from the SWANA diasporas in France. Its work operates at the intersection of critical theory, decolonial studies, and experimental curatorial practices. Drawing on situated perspectives—feminist, diasporic, and local—the collective designs exhibitions, workshops, critical texts, and outreach initiatives aimed at producing alternative and collaborative narratives in art history regarding diasporic aesthetics and practices. To this end, the collective employs various tools, such as: the unofficial archive, critical pedagogy, and fiction conceived as an alternative political space. The mat3amclub seeks to collaborate with artists without reinforcing the logic of precariousness inherent in the art world or reproducing existing structures of domination. It operates in both institutional and independent spaces, developing methodologies based on the sharing of knowledge between artists/curators and the public through conversation, primarily around practices related to food—in keeping with its name: “mat3am” means “restaurant” in Arabic.

Léna Kemiche is an exhibition curator and cultural projects programmer, currently involved in the artistic programming at the Palais de Tokyo. She explores the connections between aesthetics and politics in contemporary art, focusing in particular on representations of the Maghreb and Arab diasporas. Her curatorial practice lies at the intersection of programming, arts education, and postcolonial studies. At the same time, she participates in various local community and cultural projects. She has also worked at AWARE (Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions), where she contributed to promoting women artists and to discussions on issues of visibility and representation in the art world.

Jade Saber is an independent curator and a PhD candidate in art history; she is currently a contract researcher at the INHA and she teaches at université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. Her research focuses on the uses of archives in contemporary art in Palestine, Lebanon, and Algeria from 1982 to the present. In 2023, she founded the mat3amclub collective to promote decolonial art education and to disseminate and archive the work of young SWANA artists. She is a member of the QUILT research group (HiSCA). She was awarded a research grant from the Malatier Jacquet Foundation (2023) and has collaborated with several international arts institutions (Villa Medici, MUDAM, Cité internationale).

T.J. Demos (UC Santa Cruz)

“Criticism after Gaza” — Keynote

What does it mean to practice art criticism after Gaza? This presentation considers how the genocide-ecocide in Gaza has extended into an assault on art’s critical capacities, including through institutional and state censorship and counterinsurgency. Yet repression never achieves totality: criticism persists through refusal, displacement, reinvention, and collective resistance. I ask what forms such criticism might take amid the collapse of the political and juridical frameworks that once authorized claims to justice. I develop this question through three interconnected challenges. First, the infrastructural turn asks how the economic, institutional, ideological, and technological systems in which art operates have become mechanisms for organizing contemporary power. Second, “the society of the psy-op” draws attention to surveillance, disinformation, and behavioral manipulation increasingly embedded in media and social life. Third, fascist AI, names the dangers of automated governance and the displacement of human judgment, raising urgent

questions about thought under technological dehumanization. These challenges demand a criticism that is situated, oppositional, and materially engaged—one capable of confronting institutional contradictions, building experimental collectives, practicing mutual aid, and imagining forms of survival amid unprecedented violence, democratic breakdown, and existential threat.

T. J. Demos is Professor and Chair in the Department of the History of Art and Visual Culture, at University of California, Santa Cruz (UC Santa Cruz), founding Director of its Center for Creative Ecologies; and Distinguished Visiting Professor in the VIAD Research Centre at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). His research, situated at the intersection of contemporary art, politics, and ecology, has resulted in numerous publications, including *Radical Futurisms: Ecologies of Collapse, Chronopolitics, and Justice-to-Come* (Sternberg Press, 2023), *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today* (EPR Murcia Cultural, 2022), and *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology* (Akal, 2020). Between 2019 and 2021, he directed the Mellon Foundation–supported research seminar *Beyond the End of the World*, a collective reflection project organized around the questions “what comes after the end of the world?” and “how can we cultivate futures of social justice from within capitalist ruins?”

Sonia Recasens (Director, AICA) and Fabien Simode (President, AICA-France) **Conclusion and Perspectives**

Sonia Recasens is an art critic and independent curator who holds a Master’s degree in art history with a focus on contemporary art from université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. She has developed an engaged, sensitive, and intuitive critical and curatorial practice that explores issues related to intimacy, the body, memory, transmission, and migration. Winner of the Special Jury Prize—AICA France Award 2019, Sonia Recasens regularly collaborates with art centers, museums, and publishing houses on publications, conferences, and exhibitions. Informed by the history of feminism, gender studies, and postcolonial studies, her research and projects aim to raise the visibility of women artists and/or artists of immigrant background. After working for various institutions, such as the Institut du Monde Arabe and the Palais de Tokyo—where she served as chief of staff and artistic advisor to its president, Guillaume Désanges—Sonia Recasens became director of AICA International in November 2025, an association for which she had been working as a coordinator since 2019.

Born in 1975, **Fabien Simode** is president of AICA-France, director of the Maisons-Alfort media libraries, and an art critic. After studying art history and sociology at université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, he joined a specialized news agency in 2000, where he was responsible for writing and coordinating newspapers and magazines. In 2006, he joined the editorial staff of the art magazine *L’Œil* as deputy editor-in-chief before being appointed editor-in-chief in 2011, a position he held until May 2023. As a radio and television commentator, he appeared notably on *La Compagnie des œuvres* on France Culture (from 2019 to 2021) and on *La Matinale* on TSF Jazz, where he has hosted a weekly segment since 2019. In 2021, Fabien Simode created, in collaboration with the National Institute of Art History (INHA), *L’art entre les lignes*, a program dedicated to the latest in art books, which he hosted until 2023 in the Labrousse Room at the Quadrilatère Richelieu. He is also the author of catalog essays on photographer Leonora Hamill, painters Philippe Favier and Lydie Arickx, and visual artists Martine Feipel and Jean Bechameil.