

Creative Bodies—Creative Minds 2026



CONFERENCE VENUE

University of Graz
RESOWI, Universitätsstraße 15, 8010 Graz, Austria

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Rooms:

SZ 15.21 (RESOWI, part A, 2nd floor),
LS 15.01, LS 15.02, LS 15.03 (RESOWI, part C, ground floor)

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CONFERENCE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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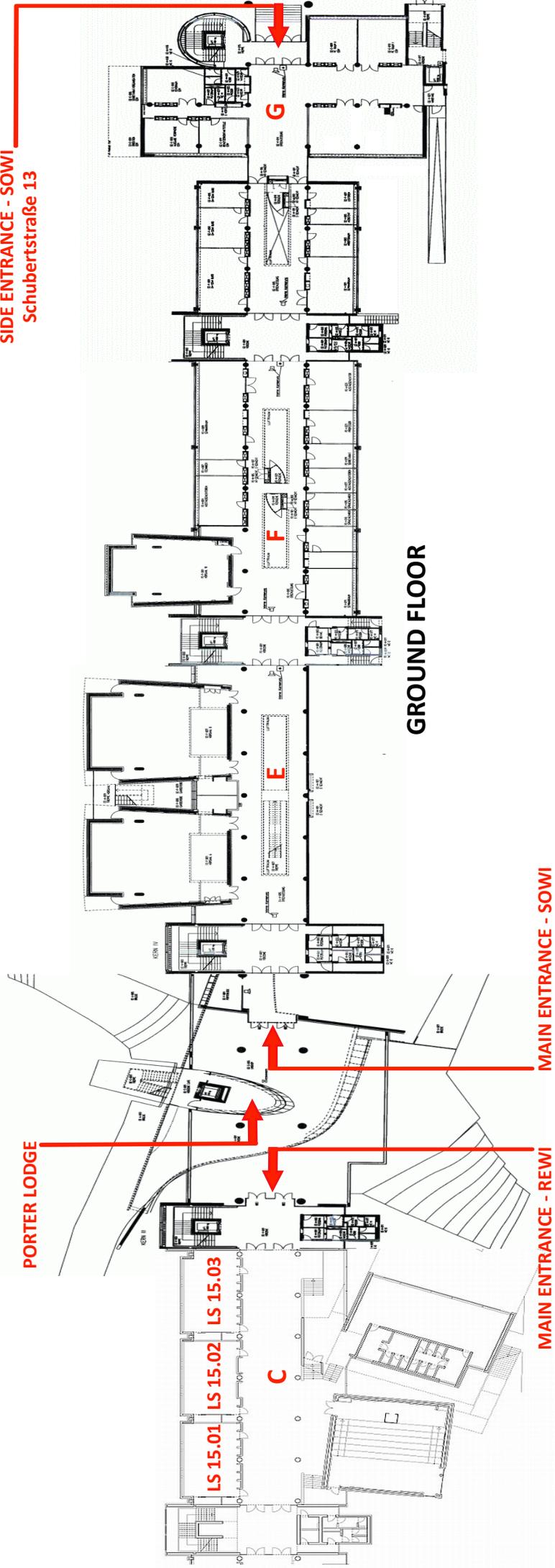
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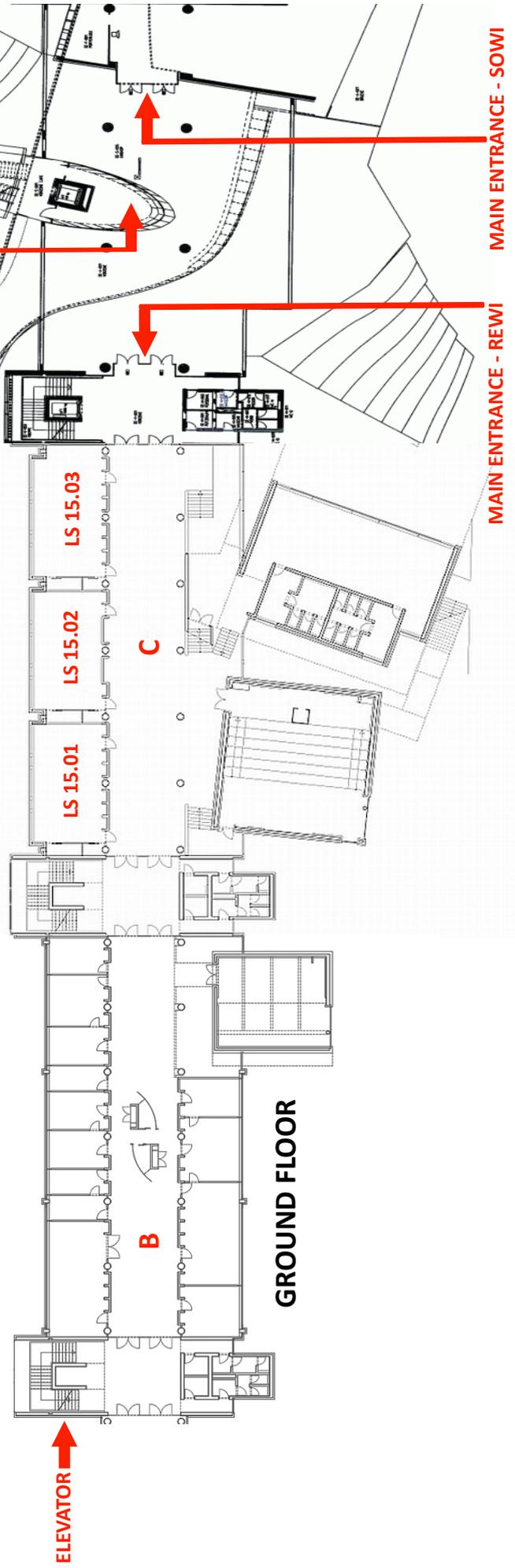
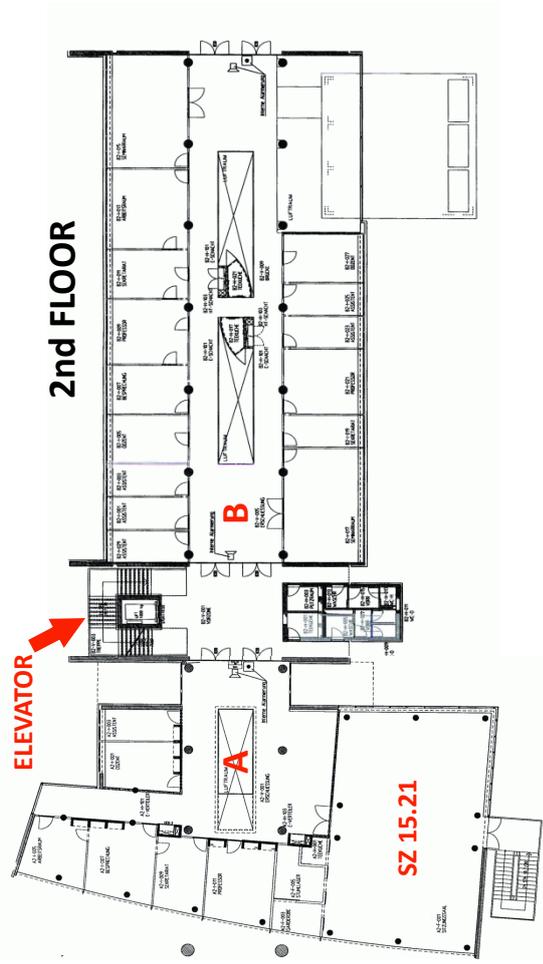
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PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Monday, 30 March 2026

8:30 - 9:30	REGISTRATION, coffee/tea, SZ 15.21
9:30 - 10:00	CONFERENCE OPENING, SZ 15.21 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Libora Oates-Indruchová (University of Graz)• Zorica Siročić (University of Graz)
10:00 - 11:00	KEYNOTE 1, SZ 15.21 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isla Cowan (Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh & Scotland's feminist theatre company, Stellar Quines) <i>Survival of the Fittest: Playing with Power and Perspective in Two Monologue Plays</i> Chair: Libora Oates-Indruchová (University of Graz)
11:00 - 11:15	BREAK, SZ 15.21
11:15 - 12:45	PANELS: <u>LITERATURE, WRITING, SPEECH, TRANSLATIONS (I)</u> LS 15.01, Chair: Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová (Charles University, Prague) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Andrea Anđelić (University of Zagreb), <i>The Linguistic creativity and queer subversion in Jasna Jasna Žmak's "Moja ti"</i>• Clara Müllenmeister (University of Bremen), <i>Doubt as a Form of Creative Tension</i>• Jennifer A. Reimer (Oregon State University – Cascades), <i>Writing as solidarity: Vulnerability, precarity, and the affective labor of cross-border feminist praxis</i> <u>BODY (I)</u> LS 15.02, Chair: Frithjof Nungesser (University of Graz) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sonja Trurnit (LMU Munich), <i>Abject Creativity: The Maternal Body, Writer's Block, and the Semiotic Disruption of Authorship</i>• Carolin Zieringer (University of Bremen), <i>Misfitting Vulnerability: Taking a closer look at crip critiques of care</i> <u>METHODS, METHODOLOGY (I)</u> LS 15.03, Chair: Barbara Hönig (FH JOANNEUM Graz) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sara McHaffie (Northumbria University), <i>Triumphs and (Productive) Failures: Creative writing as participatory method for autistic women</i>• Claudia Gertraud Schwarz (KL Krems), <i>The [DIA]show Method: Mobilising Feminist Creativity, Vulnerability, and Collective Repair</i>
12:45 - 13:45	LUNCH, SZ 15.21

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METHODS, METHODOLOGY (II)

LS 15.01, Chair: **Marika Pierdicca** (University of Klagenfurt/Celovec)

- **Antu Sorainen** (University of Helsinki),
Nike Project 2024-2025: exploring creative methodologies and dissemination innovations that reconfigure, reinterpret, reimagine and preserve protoqueer history
- **José Renkens** (Radboud University),
Roots unrooted: arts-based-methods in doing identity-work by refugee women
- **Martin Tharp** (Concrete eye organization),
Margins, Scars, Plants: Creative Botanosociology in the Czech Border Regions

LITERATURE, WRITING, SPEECH, TRANSLATIONS (II)

LS 15.02, Chair: **Elisabeth Scharkin** (University of Tübingen)

- **Dilruba Temuçin** (Bursa Technical University's & Dokuz Eylul University),
"Is the future going to be all girl?" Feminist Translational Representations and Discourses in Doctor Who
- **Petra Požgaj** (University of Zagreb)
Creative subversions of the creativity dispositif in Patricia Lockwood's novel No One Is Talking About This
- **Mae Michiko** (University of Düsseldorf)
From Vulnerability to Posthumanist Creativity: New Visions of a Feminist Future by the Japanese Writer Murata Sayaka

BODY (II)

LS 15.03, Chair: **Mónica Cano Abadía** (BBMRI-ERIC)

- **Birte Kohtz** (Max Weber Network Eastern Europe, Helsinki office),
Giving Birth on Screen – Vulnerability, Agency and Responsibility in Soviet Educational Films on Obstetrics
- **Anneli Haase** (University of Duisburg-Essen),
*How are bodies formed in a pedagogical setting?
On gender and age-specific body production in daycare centres*
- **Julia Sprenger** (University of Applied Arts Vienna),
Queer Vulnerabilities: Body Art as Subversive Knowledge Production

15:15 - 15:45

BREAK, SZ 15.21

15:45 - 17:15

PANELS:

BODY (III)

LS 15.01, Chair: **Birte Kohtz** (Max Weber Network Eastern Europe, Helsinki office)

- **Sam Schwickert** (BTU Cottbus – Senftenberg),
Circular Economies – Linear bodies? The menstrual cycle as a feminist glitch against capitalism.
- **Michaela Appeltova** (Wake Forest University, North Carolina),
Makeshift Gyms and Morning Runs: Creative Uses of Mandatory Military Service in Socialist Czechoslovakia
- **Marta Kargól** (independent),
Stigma, memory, and absence: garments as a language in discourse on violence against women

AFFECTS

LS 15.02, Chair: **Bahar Oghalai** (University of Koblenz)

- **Elena Rieger** (ETH Zurich),
Soft resistance. Affective Anecdotes as Method
- **Antonina Wozna Urbanczak** (University of Graz),
Attitudes of the abjected embodiments as a key to the inclusive theological ethics

WORKSHOP, LS 15.03

- **Michael Wrentschur** (InterACT; University of Graz),
Researching with the body. Image theatre as a creative tool for data generation in collaboration with marginalized groups.

17:15 - 18:15

DINNER, SZ 15.21

18:15 - 18:45

ARTIST TALK, SZ 15.21

- **Michael Wrentschur** (InterACT; University of Graz)
- **Karin Scaria-Braunstein** (University of Graz)

Tuesday, 31 March 2026

10:00 - 11:00	<p>KEYNOTE 2, SZ 15.21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jennifer Ramme (University of Graz), <i>Intersectional Critique. Articulations of Dissent beyond Western Frameworks</i> Chair: Zorica Siročić (University of Graz)
11:00 - 11:15	<p>BREAK, SZ 15.21</p>
11:15 - 12:45	<p>PANELS:</p> <p><u>THEATER</u></p> <p>LS 15.01, Chair: Andrea Anđelinić (University of Zagreb)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rebecca Fischer (Munich Volkstheater) & Marie-Christine Bischur (LMU Munich) <i>Fumbling Forward. Structural Change for Inclusive Theatre</i>• Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová (Charles University, Prague), <i>Co-Creation of Democracy through Gender Subversion and Vulnerability: Theater Minor's Staging of Jaroslav Foglar's "The Mystery of the Puzzle"</i> <p><u>RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY, SUBVERSION (I)</u></p> <p>LS 15.02, Chair: Sam Schwickert (BTU Cottbus–Senftenberg)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valeria Motta (University of Birmingham) & Claudia Gertraud Schwarz (KL Krems), <i>Vulnerability as Creative Resistance: Youth Mental Health, Gender, and the Subversion of Deficit Narratives</i>• Bahar Oghalai (University of Koblenz), <i>The Power of Vulnerability – Creative Practices of Solidarity among Migrant Feminists from Iran in Germany</i>• Dona Smith (Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh), <i>Entanglements between creativity, vulnerability, subversion and gender: Creative silence as a safe space</i> <p><u>ACTIVISM</u></p> <p>LS 15.03, Chair: Maria Wald (University of Birmingham)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yana Kirey-Sitnikova, (independent), <i>Creative uses of the vagueness of the law to circumvent anti-trans policies in Russia</i>• Aurelia Kraus (Freie Universität Berlin), <i>Killing joy or questioning power structures?</i>• Ieva Šakelaitė (Vilnius University), <i>To be seen vulnerable: Activism for Ukraine as a Testing Ground for Collective Agency</i>
12:45 - 13:45	<p>LUNCH, SZ 15.21</p>
13:45 - 14:30	<p>BOOK TALK: <i>Artistic Labour of the Body</i> SZ 15.21, Chair: Jennifer Ramme (University of Graz)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rose-Anne Gush (TU Graz) & Andreja Hribernik (Kunsthhaus Graz)
14:30 - 14:45	<p>BREAK, SZ 15.21</p>

14:45 - 16:15

PANELS:

AGEING, DESIRE, MEMORY

LS 15.01, Chair: **Julia Sprenger** (University of Applied Arts Vienna)

- **Ren Aldridge** (University of Graz),
Speculative arts-based approaches to feminist ageing futures
- **Joana Maria Pereira** (University of Lisbon) &
Angélica Maria Zorrilla (PUJ, Bogotá; UCM, Madrid)
To Retreat into Love: The Creative Agency of Female Desire within Drawing Research
- **Marika Pierdicca** (University of Klagenfurt/Celovec),
Doing Research through Life-Affirming Corpo-Memorial Agency

STORYTELLING, AFFECTS, VULNERABILITY

LS 15.02, Chair: **Jennifer A. Reimer** (Oregon State University-Cascades)

- **Özge Kaya Manav** (University of Bayreuth),
Storytelling as Survival: Vulnerability and Creative Resistance in Out of Africa
- **Elisabeth Scharkin** (University of Tübingen)
Gender Construction through Narratives: Creativity and Subversion in the Portrayal of Female Figures in Antiquity
- **Maša Mrovlje** (University of Leeds),
Reframing Circles of Solidarity in the Wake of Disappointment

RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY, SUBVERSION (II)

LS 15.03, Chair: **Aurelia Kraus** (Freie Universität Berlin)

- **Paulina Drėgvaitė** (Vilnius University)
Fragile Practices, Subversive Possibilities: Gender, Vulnerability, and Creativity in Adult Education
- **Ellen Thuma** (Marburg University) &
Paula Achenbach (Marburg University)
Turning into Stone: Mapping Sediments of Shame through Creative Feminist Cartographies
- **Hana Drštičková** (Charles University, Prague)
Brain Worms In Revolt: Neurokvíring activist research in Czechia

16:30- 17:00

CLOSING REMARKS, SZ 15.21

- **Libora Oates-Indruchová** (University of Graz)

Afterwards:

WINE & CHOCOLATE RECEPTION

ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

KEYNOTES

Survival of the Fittest: Playing with Power and Perspective in Two Monologue Plays

Isla Cowan (Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh and Scotland's feminist theatre company, Stellar Quines)

Monologue plays, as a solo theatrical form, are inherently interested in questions of vulnerability, agency and power. Examining two of my recent plays, *She Wolf* and *Alright Sunshine*, I will consider the unique ways in which the monologue form allows me to play with audience expectations and target the paradoxical power of vulnerability in my exploration of gender, class and ecology.

Set at the zoo, *She Wolf* casts the audience as wolves in an enclosure as Maggie tells them the story of her rise to and fall from wealth and power. This unique character-audience relationship challenges the traditional binaries of observer and observed, human and animal, in the theatre, and directly implicates the audience in Maggie's transformation. Playing on the ancient myth of the she-wolf and contemporary socio-zoological depictions of wolves as vicious and dangerous, the monologue builds to a poetic climax, or volta, in which these ideas are suddenly flipped, and the wolf-pack is revealed to be the caring alternative to capitalism's 'survival of the fittest'. While *She Wolf* subverts animal symbols and the role of the audience, *Alright Sunshine* is concerned with inverting toxic masculinity and victim-perpetrator dynamics. Structurally, *Alright Sunshine* works through a slow drip-feed of information. Police constable Nicky McCreadie speaks to the audience while waiting to attend a disciplinary meeting for using excessive force. As a female police officer, Nicky occupies a complex socio-political position and has internalized the misogyny of her father and peers. Her monologue combines comedic social commentary with shocking and traumatic accounts of gendered violence, conveyed through Nicky's macho style banter. This uncomfortable tonal juxtaposition creates a surprising dramatic irony that plays with audience expectations and gender norms. Moreover, as Nicky's mask of masculine bravado starts to slip, details of her personal experience of sexual assault are slowly revealed. Nicky is therefore torn between her performative laddish persona and the realities and vulnerabilities of being a woman – both within and outwith the police force. Both Maggie and Nicky attempt to escape their womanhood in order to gain power – one through an animal becoming and the other through masculine bravado. To survive and thrive in a capitalist, misogynistic world, they have learnt that they must become more like a wolf, more like man. However, this leads them both to rage and violence – and ultimately to a reckoning with themselves, and the audience. In this keynote, I consider 'female rage' and the knotty tensions between gender, violence, and vulnerability, and conclude by showing how these monologues illuminate the potential for a new kind of power – a power that does not seek to replicate patriarchal, capitalistic hierarchies, but embraces kinship, connection, and community. Exploring ideas of animality, femininity, and performativity, I reflect on my own experience as a playwright and my motivations in writing these plays, as well as considering the role of theatre and monologue more generally to harness vulnerability as a powerful, positive force.

Isla Cowan is an award-winning playwright, performer, and director, from Scotland. Isla specialises in making ecofeminist theatre, and is committed to exploring issues of class, gender, and ecology in her work. Isla won the 2022 Assembly ART Award and the 2021 Alpine Fellowship Theatre Prize for her acclaimed fringe play *She Wolf*, and was nominated for the 2022 Filipa Bragança Award for best female solo performance. Isla's plays have also been recently shortlisted for the St Andrews Playwriting Award and the Phil Fox Award.

Isla was 2024 Playwright in Residence at The Traverse Theatre, in partnership with the IASH Fellowship (University of Edinburgh), and is Resident Writer at the Tron Theatre in Glasgow.

Recent playwriting credits, include: *Alright Sunshine* (Tron Theatre, Wonder Fools, Pleasance), *Here in the Long Now* (CCTA International Tour), *To the Bone* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre), *She Wolf* (Assembly Roxy), *To Save the Sea* (co-written with Andy McGregor for Sleeping Warrior), *Progress Review* (Stellar Quines/Traverse), *And... And... And...* (Strange Town Touring Company), *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Hopscotch), and *Daphne, or Hellfire* (Pleasance). While Isla performs and directs much of her own work, she also has her own distinct directorial practice and was recently the Associate Director for the National Theatre of Scotland on two productions, *KELI* and *Kidnapped*. Isla is currently under commission with the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh and with Scotland's feminist theatre company, Stellar Quines. She is also working on several new TV projects.

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Intersectional Critique. Articulations of Dissent beyond Western Frameworks

Jennifer Ramme (University of Graz)

What does it mean to resist and to express dissent when everyone is supposedly equal? Drawing on film footage, photography, underground publications, and oral histories from alternative music cultures across late state socialism and the 1990s system transformation in Poland, this talk examines how intersectional critique takes form. Intersectionality, as a framework for analyzing power relations, requires contextual sensitivity and attention to situated inequalities, as well as possible blind spots. This also means that categories, mappings, and interpretations developed in one setting cannot be uncritically transferred to another. Centering gender, this talk asks how the (post-)state socialist context shapes the expression of dissent by those at the margins due to sex/gender, class, and race systems, which distribute precarity differently. Advancing an approach to intersectional politics of aesthetics/aesthetics of politics, the talk traces how music, style, bodies, and performance mediate dissent, revealing power relations. By situating intersectionality beyond Western frameworks, it highlights how the post-/state socialist context reconfigures dissent and the making of alternatives to dominant cultural and political orders; this analysis draws on findings from "Rebellious Youth Movements, Alternative Music Cultures and Intersectional Critique in (Post)-State Socialist Poland (1977–1995)" (MSCA-IF).

Jennifer Ramme (Dr. phil.) researches social movements, dissent cultures, intersectionality, and memory/archiving practices. She is conducting her postdoctoral project REBYOUTH (*Rebellious Youth Movements, Alternative Music Cultures, and Intersectional Critique in (Post)State Socialist Poland, 1977–1995*, GA-ID: 101152829) at the University of Graz and the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. She has amidst others co-edited books and journal issues on feminist and LGBTQ* movements, including *Intersections Vol. 10 No. 3* (2024). Her recent book on *Contested Gender Orders* (2025) examines the transformation of sex/gender regimes and the rise of a popular feminist movement in Poland.

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Website: <https://soziologie.uni-graz.at/en/research/fsp/fsp-4-sociology-of-gender/team/ramme/>

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WORKSHOP

Researching with the body. Image theatre as a creative tool for data generation in collaboration with marginalized groups

Michael Wrentschur (InterACT; University of Graz)

Participatory theatre methods and formats in the tradition of the 'Theatre of the Oppressed' aim to create a creative and community-building space characterized by a high degree of dialogue, cooperation, participation and interaction when it comes to detecting, identifying and exploring relevant issues and concerns of marginalized groups or communities. Specific elements of theatre are utilized as a form of expression and communication, as well as a means of jointly generating knowledge and insight. Physicality and the feelings associated with themes and experiences play a special role, with the symbolic language of theatre becoming a medium for dialogue and joint exploration. The body-oriented approach of theatre work allows micro-physical power relations to be illustrated and experienced, combined with the search for alternative courses of action that can also be expressed in awareness of body posture, gestures and voice. To this end, opportunities are created to recognize the power effects of existing structures and to identify possible courses of action within these structures. The central question is how individuals, groups and communities gain power over their affairs, including in terms of social and political rights and social justice. Starting with an introduction to the concept of scenically participatory research, practical exercises are presented and tested that can contribute to the generation of body- and sensory-related data. One focus of the workshop is on the method of 'picture theatre,' which is used to jointly explore the central theme of the conference.

Michael Wrentschur, Associate Professor, Mag. Dr., sociologist, educational scientist and theatre practitioner; works in the department of Social Pedagogy at the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Graz. He is also artistic director of InterACT, the studio for theatre and socio-culture in Graz. Main areas of work: theatre work in social fields, socio-culture and social cultural work, poverty and social exclusion, participation, and drama-based and participatory research methods.

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BOOK TALK

Artistic Labour of The Body

Chair: Jennifer Ramme (University of Graz)

Rose-Anne Gush (IZK – Institute for Contemporary Art, TU Graz) in a discussion with Andreja Hribernik (Kunsthhaus Graz)

Rose-Anne Gush is an art historian, theorist and sporadic artist and curator. Since 2020 she is Assistant Professor at IZK – Institute for Contemporary Art at TU Graz. After studying Art Practice and Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths, University of London, she completed her PhD in Art History at the University of Leeds in 2019. Her research critically investigates “global art” discourses; Marxist aesthetics; the politics of artistic labour, focusing on the body, memory, and reproduction; feminist and ecological theories; geographies of extraction and liberation; the connections between (anti)fascism and (anti)colonialism, as well as the central question of artistic form. Her recent articles are published in the *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, *FKW // Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur*, *e-flux*, *Art Monthly*, *Camera Austria*, *Berlin Review*, and *Brand-New-Life Magazine*. Her first monograph, *Artistic Labour of the Body* (Historical Materialism book series, Brill/Haymarket) was published in 2025.

Andreja Hribernik is director of Kunsthhaus Graz since 2023. She was curator of “The News Belongs to Us!”, the Slovenian contribution to the 2017 Venice Biennale. In 2016 she completed her doctoral studies with her dissertation on “The Museum as a Place of Utopia”, at the Institute for Humanistic Studies, Historical Anthropology of Art in Ljubljana. Prior to that she was scientific, artistic, and commercial director of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Koroška (KLGU), Slovenia. She has also worked at the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana and the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Leipzig, among others.

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ARTIST TALK

A discussion between Michael Wrentschur (InterACT; University of Graz) & Karin Scaria-Braunstein (University of Graz)

Michael Wrentschur, Associate Professor, Mag. Dr., sociologist, educational scientist and theatre practitioner; works in the department of Social Pedagogy at the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Graz. He is also artistic director of InterACT, the studio for theatre and socio-culture in Graz. Main areas of work: theatre work in social fields, socio-culture and social cultural work, poverty and social exclusion, participation, and drama-based and participatory research methods.

Karin Scaria-Braunstein, has been a postdoctoral university assistant at the Institute of Sociology at the University of Graz since 2024, where she directs the Archive for the History of Sociology in Austria (AGSÖ). She is currently the spokesperson for the History of Sociology section of the Austrian Sociological Association. Having trained as a sociologist, she devoted her doctoral dissertation to collective creation, engaging intensively with the independent theatre scene over several years. She continues to be active in theatre to this day, in a variety of roles. Her research primarily addresses the intersection of art and sociology, the history of sociology and qualitative research.

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PANELS

MONDAY, 30 MARCH 2026

LITERATURE, WRITING, SPEECH, TRANSLATIONS (I)

Chair: Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová (Charles University, Prague)

Linguistic creativity and queer subversion in Jasna Jasna Žmak's "Moja ti"

Andrea Anđelinić (University of Zagreb)

"Moja ti" (2015) is a lesbian novel (or a short story collection – no consensus on this has been reached) by Jasna Jasna Žmak, a Croatian writer and dramaturg, thematising queer love and its relation to writing, as well as the power of fiction to subvert lingual and cultural codes and meanings. By playing with language and its constructed nature, as well as the readers' expectation from a typical love story, the text addresses the relationship between fiction and reality, the metatextual and quotational character of language itself, and the complex link between language and identity. Establishing a playful, oftentimes humorous tension between truth and fiction, fixed and unexpected meanings, linguistic theory and popular culture, and denotative and connotative use of language, Žmak's text embodies creativity and re-negotiates the relationship between personal history and communal legacy, fiction and faction, all the while highlighting how identity, just like these stories, is a construct of language and society, one to be subverted, played with and reviewed, rather than assumed as definite and predetermined. This presentation will aim to show how this interplay is represented in Žmak's text, adopting a feminist and queer reading of its potential meanings and effects. The "queer" in Žmak's text will then be regarded as a product of its creative and identity-destabilising textuality, an example of how queer literature could hold potential to articulate a textuality that is an "open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning" (Kosofsky Sedgwick 1993) with a possibility to subvert social, literary and linguistic expectation.

Andrea Anđelinić is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, studying at the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Zagreb. Her main interests are feminist and queer theory, and her doctoral thesis explores the topic of the politics of friendship and community in contemporary European queer literature. She has so far published articles and participated at international conferences and summer schools. Her first article, "Feminist Reading of Marija Čudina's Poetry: Emotional Rupture in the Lyrical Subject Stemming From the Transition of Childhood Into Adulthood" was published in 2023, and her second article, "Friendship, hope and communication during second-wave and postfeminism: Gillian E. Hanscombe's *Between Friends* and Sally Rooney's *Conversations with Friends*", was published in 2025 on the Open Research Europe platform. She is a collaborator on the upcoming "Contemporary textual hybrids of fiction, autobiography and theory" project at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb.

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Doubt as a Form of Creative Tension

Clara Müllenmeister (University of Bremen)

My research explores normative tensions in personal reference without binary gender. I analyse doubt and insecurity as situations of contradicting norms and how speakers perceive and navigate them. In German, personal reference requires binary gender identification, not only in nouns, but in pronouns, articles, and adjectives as referential agreement markers (Klein 2022). When gender is not binary or not identified at first glance, speakers are faced with a contradiction that leaves no room to comply with both norms in the same utterance. Language is created and maintained by its use in interaction. Meaning is simultaneously reproduced and altered, mediated by its use in context (Coseriu 1975). By referring to themselves and others in gendered terms, speakers performatively place individuals in gender categories while at the same time

iterating the abstract category (Butler 2011[1993]). While from a perspective of certainty, defying undisputed norms is a mistake or an insubordination, from a perception that relevant norms are incompatible (Warnke 2009), finding new ways might be the most obvious thing to do. In situations of doubt, it becomes evident that norms like categories and their meaning are not universal but composed and negotiated anew in every situation. Common ground might also present itself differently from each perspective. When shared or at least comprehensible, uncertainty allows for artistic use, which will then be subjected to evaluation. Normative tension that opens up a space of negotiable adaptability (Verschuren 2012), here.

Clara Müllenmeister studied sign and spoken language linguistics and law in Hamburg, Bremen, and Vienna. They are part of the interdisciplinary research training group Contradiction Studies at the University of Bremen with a project concerning normative tensions and controversies around referential gender presupposition. They specialise in discourse analysis, the interdisciplinary intersections of linguistic pragmatics, norm and ideology research and standpoint epistemology. Their key interests as a linguist are how the shaping of individual and collective language, perception, and knowledge interact.

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Writing as Solidarity: Vulnerability, Precarity, and the Affective Labor of Cross-border Feminist Praxis

Jennifer A. Reimer (Oregon State University-Cascades)

This paper explores writing as an act of solidarity forged through vulnerability and shaped by precarity. Drawing from transnational feminist theory and creative-critical praxis, I examine how collaborative writing—especially in poetic and cross-genre forms—enacts a radical method of relational knowledge production that confronts institutional, geopolitical, and affective borders. Foregrounding precarity not as a static condition but as an ongoing process shaped by racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and gendered violence, I consider how collaborative writing becomes a mode of survival, resistance, and mutual recognition. Writing together across geographic, linguistic, and institutional divides demands trust, openness to dissonance, and a shared willingness to remain in states of creative vulnerability. This kind of solidarity, I argue, is not built on sameness but on affective risk and the co-labor of meaning-making. The paper offers three brief case studies from my own cross-border collaborations: co-authored poetic essays with a Scotland-based writer; dialogic life writing with a North African poet-scholar; and a mixed-media epistolary project, developed with an Egyptian-British artist, that emerged during the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic. These works, grounded in friendship, uncertainty, and collective reckoning, show how writing as solidarity operates within and against precarious conditions—illuminating not only shared struggle but also the messy intimacies that make feminist praxis possible. Ultimately, I suggest that such collaborations, while often peripheral to academic recognition, constitute vital practices of feminist world-making—creative refusals of isolation, sovereignty, and narrative closure.

Jennifer A. Reimer, Assistant Professor of American Studies at Oregon State University—Cascades, received her PhD in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and her Master of Fine Arts in Writing from the University of San Francisco. Jennifer's scholarly work has appeared widely in academic journals. Her current research interests include migration studies, transnational feminism, and U.S. poetry & poetics. She is the co-editor of the Forms of Migration book series, and the author of two books of poetry: *The Rainy Season Diaries* (Quale Press) and *Keşke* (Airlie Press). She is the Forward Editor for the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*. She lives in Salem, OR (USA) and dreams of the Mediterranean.

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LITERATURE, WRITING, SPEECH, TRANSLATIONS (II)

Chair: Elisabeth Scharkin (University of Tübingen)

"Is the future going to be all girl?" Feminist Translatorial Representations and Discourses in Doctor Who

Dilruba Temuçin (Bursa Technical University/Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir)

This study examines feminist translatorial representations and discourses in the *Doctor Who* universe (*Whoniverse*) through a multimodal transmedia corpus consisting of TV series episodes to comics, audio-books to novels & light novels that spans six decades of British Science Fiction (Sci-Fi) transmedia storytelling. Consulting *Multimodal Content Analysis (MMCA)*, *Bourdiesian Translation Sociology* and approaches of *Feminist Translation Studies* this research aim to analyse how translatorial agents (re-)produce, challenge, or subvert gendered beliefs about translation and translators along with interpretation and interpreting within Sci-Fi narratives. *Fictional Translatorial Representation* encompasses three analytical themes: translatorial agents (both male and female translators & interpreters), agents' attitudes and behaviours toward feminist translatorship and gender dynamics, and metaphorical conceptualisations that either reinforce or challenge gendered translation discourse—examining how traditional misogynistic metaphors like "*les belles infidèles*" (beautiful but unfaithful translations), "*traduttore, traditore*" (translator as traitor), and the Turkish saying "*çeviri kadın gibidir; güzeli sadık, sadığı güzel değildir*" (translation is like a woman; the beautiful one is unfaithful, the faithful one is not beautiful) are contested by new paradigms of "*Translation as Feminine Power*" and "*Translator as Creative Agency*." Six key translatorial agents embody different positions within this gendered field: the Doctor's various incarnations (male Doctors' discourse about women and translation versus the Thirteenth Doctor's explicit feminist positioning), TARDIS' transformation from objectified machine to autonomous female subject (Idris), River Song's archaeological-temporal translations that challenge academic and translatorial hierarchies, Liu Hui Ying's revolutionary warrior-translator identity, CIA agents Sandra Lopez and D. Sinclair's professional authority as secret agents, and Helen Sinclair's cultural mediation position as an accredited museum translator. Using doxa-heterodoxa analysis, this research reveals how *Doctor Who* functions as a site of ideological struggle where orthodox beliefs (historical invisibility of female translators/interpreters, woman-translation denigration metaphors) compete with heterodox resistance (feminist translatorial agency, vulnerability as creative strength). The study demonstrates whether science fiction reproduces gendered stereotypes about translation or creates counter-narratives that challenge patriarchal assumptions, ultimately examining if "the future" of translation might indeed be transformatively feminist.

Dilruba Temuçin is a Research Assistant at Bursa Technical University's Department of English Translation and Interpreting and PhD Student at Dokuz Eylül University, Translation and Interpreting Studies PhD program. Her research interests are Localisation, Translation Sociology, Digital Humanities, Cultural Studies, Multimodality, Ethnocultural Digital Marketing, Tourism and Aviation Texts, Community Interpreting. Her master's thesis entitled "*An analysis of capitals, investments, and conversions in localisation from the perspective of the sociology of translation*" merged Bourdieusian Translation Sociology and Latourian Translation Sociology and she mapped out Turkish localisation field dynamics via consulting interviews, questionnaires and netnographic methods such as a corpus of job postings. Some of her former researches are: *A Proposal for Localisation: Localisation Typology Model*, *(Multimodal) Retranslations in the digital era: Revisiting the use of iconography in localisation practices as digital retranslations*, *(Cultural) Recall of Multimodal Messages in the Turkic World: Multimodal Messages of Pre-Flight Safety Briefings*, *Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Localization: Friends or Foes? Some Insights Regarding AI Utilization in Localization Practices*, *The position of localization literature (1998-2024) in Türkiye*, *A review of actor-oriented capitals and investments in the field of interpreting in Türkiye*.

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***Creative subversions of the creativity dispositif in Patricia Lockwood's novel
No One Is Talking About This***

Petra Požgaj (University of Zagreb)

Contrasting understandings of vulnerability – as injurability that requires protection or as permeability that enables connection – underpin conflicting gendered models of subjectivity and forms of creativity. Through its dipartite structure, Patricia Lockwood's novel *No One Is Talking About This* (2021) opens up the ground for their exploration. While the first part depicts the experience of the frenzied production and consumption of novelty “in the portal”, the second part emerges when a disturbing event in real life leads to their abandonment. The story of the novel could therefore be framed as one of a retreat from creativity due to trauma. However, this paper argues that the novel actually functions as an examination of the limits of the creativity dispositif characteristic of late capitalist modernity and an exposition of its alternatives, resting on the subversive potential of intersubjective permeability. It does so on two levels. On the one hand, it puts forward a comparison of the forms of creativity represented in the two parts of the novel, arguing that the everyday creative practices of the characters that promote intersubjective connections in the second part of the novel constitute an alternative to the circulation of novelty in the attention market that drives the subsumption of individuals under a collective self in the first part. On the other hand, it affirms the subversive potential and continued cultural relevance of the novel as a genre, resulting from its permeability, which allows it to represent, historicise and critique other genres and their limitations while offering an alternative.

Petra Požgaj is a doctoral candidate in literary and cultural studies at the University of Zagreb, where she works as an assistant at the Department of Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her PhD project deals with cultural politics, cultural theory and popular culture in Yugoslavia, while her broader research focuses mainly on feminist literary and cultural criticism.

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***From Vulnerability to Posthumanist Creativity: New Visions of a Feminist Future
by the Japanese Writer Murata Sayaka***

Michiko Mae (University of Düsseldorf)

In recent years, many female Japanese authors have created different visions of the future in their literary works. Among them, Murata Sayaka (*1979) has established herself as one of the most important contemporary Japanese authors; her novel *Convenience Store Woman* (2016) has been translated into more than 30 languages and enjoys a high level of international recognition. This is surprising because she is not a popular author who deals with subjects that are easy to understand and consume. In fact, there is hardly any author in contemporary Japanese literature who deals so radically with various social and cultural differences, especially gender differences. In her works, Murata creates utopian-dystopian "upside-down" worlds in which femininity, sexuality, pregnancy, and childbirth are decoupled from marriage and family. In these worlds, men can also become pregnant. Her work expresses deep scepticism and existential "ontological" unease about a social life in which the "normal" and the "abnormal" are clearly separated and ways of thinking and behaving that deviate from this "normality" are rejected and marginalized. Murata has developed great sensitivity and vulnerability in today's patriarchal and inhumane society. By creating an "upside-down" world, Murata transcends the boundaries between humans and animals, humans and aliens, and depictions of "queer," non-conforming existences. Does her world point to a feminist posthuman world imagined by philosophers such as Rosi Braidotti? In my talk, I will analyze Murata's new worlds in relation to corporeality, difference, and the utopian and dystopian aspects of a "gen-der-free" world. I will also consider the new implications and perspectives that her work brings to gender studies.

Michiko Mae is Professor (em.) of Japanese Studies at the University of Düsseldorf. She is specialised in Japan-related cultural studies and gender studies. Visiting professor at the universities Vienna, Tokyo, Keio-

University as well as Cornell University (Ithaca, NY.). Her main research fields are: inter- and transculturality, cultural identity, transcultural studies, the public and the private sphere, concepts of subjectivity in modern Japan, women's movements and civil society. Her publications include: *Japanische Populärkultur und Gender 19* (*Japanese Popular Culture and Gender, 2016*); *Transkulturelle Genderforschung* (*Transcultural Gender Studies, 2014, ed. with B. Saal*); *Frauenbewegung in Japan. Quellen und Analysen* (*Women's Movement in Japan. Sources and Analyses, 2023, with I. Lenz*).

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METHODS, METHODOLOGY (I)

Chair: Barbara Hönig (FH JOANNEUM Graz)

Triumphs and (Productive) Failures: Creative writing as participatory method for autistic women

Sara McHaffie (Northumbria University)

While participatory methods are identified as important for autistic people (Fletcher-Watson et al 2019), methods should align with autistic people's needs. Autistic women's voices were absent from research until recently (e.g., Gould 2017, Sedgewick 2020), so a feminist participatory research approach (Gatenby & Humphries 2000) with methods selected by participants is one potential lens into understanding their experiences. My study comprising eleven autistic women in Tayside, Scotland involves us engaging with feminist ideas. We participated in dialogue for six months, then selecting embroidery and creative writing as methods, further exploring and analysing our project. Focusing on creative writing, sessions with a writing tutor generated data encapsulating project themes and sub-themes amazingly well. They provided a forum and means through which participants shared their life stories. Discussion of traumas had been avoided earlier in the project but poetry and short prose excerpts provided a means to share as much as was comfortable for participants. Additionally, I mobilise Fox's "humitas" (2017), exploring how humour entwined with traumatic anecdotes as a form of care for others. What worked less well was inviting participants to write outside of the group meetings. Participants shared no final work with me. Arguably, in-situ zine-making or story completion tasks would result in neat products which could be used in dissemination, but our "messy" (Phillips & Kara 2021) approach can be celebrated as an aspect of neuroqueering (Walker 2022) research practices. Creative writing enabled a space in which we could be safely vulnerable and share and co-analyse resonant experiences.

Sara McHaffie is an autistic and disabled public sociologist using creative and dialogical methods, whose doctoral research at Northumbria University is concerned with co-producing articulations of autistic women's feminist consciousness. She interviewed autistic writers, academics and activists who draw on ideas from feminism and from the autistic people's movement. She shared some of these ideas with a group of autistic women who discussed them over an 18-month period, alongside discussions about their lives and whether feminist ideas relate to their experiences. She is using an approach informed by public sociology and Feminist Participatory Action Research, alongside creative methods. Her MSc project was titled "The lived experience of accessing public space within a group of Muslim and/or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in Edinburgh: Attitudes and Activism expressed through film". She was an invited speaker at the University of Helsinki's gender studies department, and for Dundee's Violence Against Women Partnership.

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The [DIA]show Method: Mobilising Feminist Creativity, Vulnerability, and Collective Repair

Claudia Gertraud Schwarz (KL Krems)

This presentation introduces the multimodal [DIA]show method I developed within the #Me-TooSTS/#WeDoSTS movement in Science and Technology Studies (STS). The [DIA]show combines autoethnographic writing, critical memory work, and digital image curation into a performative format that artistically interweaves text, image, and sound. Drawing on my personal digital photo archive since 2022—marking the beginning of the movement sparked by my public testimony of gender-based harassment in academia—I transformed selected images into digital “Dia” slides. The term “Dia” recalls the Diapositives of my childhood, while also invoking cross-linguistic resonances that infuse the method with layered cultural, affective meanings. I have developed the [DIA]show in dialogue with Gloria Anzaldúa’s autohistoria-teoría, a creative-scholarly practice that unsettles patriarchal notions of objectivity by foregrounding embodied-intuitive ways of knowing. I connect the method to Anzaldúa’s Coyolxauhqui imperative, which reframes fragmentation and trauma as opportunities to engage in ongoing processes of dismemberment and reconstitution. The [DIA]show demonstrates how vulnerability can be mobilised not as weakness, but as a generative force in feminist knowledge production and transformative, survivor-led activism that can reshape whole research fields. The method offers a queer-feminist approach that values not only major milestones but also seemingly mundane moments on my often-difficult journey towards justice. It contributes to the emerging field of mental health autoethnography by reframing psychiatric categories such as Complex PTSD—of which I am both subject and analyst—not as individualised pathology, but as lived and culturally mediated phenomena that hold potential for collective healing and political transformation.

Claudia Gertraud Schwarz, born in Graz, Austria, has a background in the social sciences (media studies, sociology, gender studies, STS), English and American studies, psychotherapy/psychology, ethics, science communication, activism, and art. She/they are currently based in Vienna and work in the Division of Biomedical and Public Health Ethics at the Karl Landsteiner University of Health Sciences, as part of the ASPbelong project. In recent years their work has focused on the sociopolitical dimensions of psychedelics as healing modalities, movements against gender violence and abuse of power in academia, and augmented reality classroom interventions to improve social and mental wellbeing.

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METHODS, METHODOLOGY (II)

Chair: Marika Pierdicca (University of Klagenfurt/Celovec)

Nike Project 2024-2025: exploring creative methodologies and dissemination innovations that reconfigure, reinterpret, reimagine and preserve protoqueer history as queer, with widely accessible and sustainable research approach

Antu Sorainen (University of Helsinki)

I will discuss how the complex understanding of conceptual activism (Cooper 2025) could be productively channeled to address queer history by combining cross-art live performance with sustainable museum space and smart advertisement to bring research-based queer knowledge to locally based audiences, also outside the metropolitan or university cities. I will rely on photos and video clips to present how I have combined private archives and historical (proto)queer diaries with intersectional and narrative research approach to cross-art live performances and exhibition materials to create public events, scientific essays and regional museum exhibitions in Finland in 2024-2025. "Branded" with a certain image and a logo (with the help of a graphic designer) we created a coherent display, and a way to save in materials as we did not have to print separate ads for each event. A regional museum was chosen for its sustainability certificate. All the parts of the divergent Nike Project events could be combined in new events in novel ways so that it is possible, easy and sustainable to do the event/exhibition in different locations and places and add new layers to it, through an idea of spiral history/memory. As a queer and legal researcher with a long-standing record on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on the history and future of a more just society, and a critic of rooted attitudes, I will present an example of such a project ("Nike") that aimed to increase socio-diverse justice by bringing together responsible research and public dissemination innovative manner, and stemming from a place-based approach. The Nike project engaged and examined the dynamics of putting such mechanisms into play that envisioned more socially just and diverse futures through a novel gaze on the history of protoqueer women's lives during the turbulence of revolution, civil war and winter war in Finland. Moreover, this evolving and multiform Nike project (still evolving until a new exhibition and events coming up in 2027) explored creative methodologies and analytical dissemination innovations that reconfigure, reinterpret, reimagine and preserve protoqueer history as queer but also provide widely accessible and sustainable research dissemination approach.

Antu Sorainen (PhD, Ass. Professor) works at the University of Helsinki, Gender Studies. Sorainen is the Principal Investigator of the research project "Protolesbian Life and Nationalist Sentiment in the 1920-30s Finland", funded by Finnish Cultural Foundation and The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland. Sorainen has been The Academy of Finland Research Fellow and directed a research project on Kinship in Margins. She has published widely on inheritance and will-writing, queer legal studies, research ethics and protolesbian anarchism, books on lesbian trials and conceptual history, and edited special issues on kinship in margins and queer grief. She is currently writing a book on queer inheritance. She has recently created and produced research-based multi-art performances and a museum exhibition on protoqueer lives in the shadow of criminalization in Finland (2024-2025).

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Roots unrooted: arts-based-methods in doing identity-work by refugee women

José Renkens (Radboud University)

In this paper, as part of a PhD study on inclusion of refugees, we explore how arts-based methods can contribute to the process of doing identity-work by refugee women, in a non-extractive way. Identity-work (coming from rehabilitation psychology) appears to be a useful concept for understanding the process by which refugee women rediscover who they are, what they need, and what they are capable of, in an unfamiliar context. I organised three meetings with five women with refugee experience. In these meetings, the women got several creative 'assignments' and were invited to elucidate their creations.

Expressing thoughts and feelings with a drawing or a photo card, sharing these with others, helps to gain recognition and support. Through creative methods, some thoughts and feelings become visible that are difficult to express in words: more happens internally than we perceive externally. Applying this method is not so much aimed at revealing this process precisely/completely, but at stimulating it and allowing women to choose whether and how much they want to share, as far as possible. Creations can serve as boundary objects: they facilitate talking about thoughts and feelings, which gives women agency in supporting reflexivity on identity and sense of belonging.

Benefits of arts-based-methods:

- Making the unsaid visible, accessible – especially for themselves;
- Reflecting differently, devoting time and attention to this;
- Support from others, recognition, connection;
- Be truly heard and seen by others, even what is left unsaid

José Renkens (1971) holds a master's degree in cultural psychology from Radboud University Nijmegen. Currently, she works as a teacher and researcher at HAN University of Applied Sciences, next to her research as an external PhD candidate at the Gender & Diversity Department of Radboud University Nijmegen. Besides this, she writes advisory reports for lgbtiqa+ refugees who appeal against the rejection of their asylum application. In her spare time, she teaches acrobatics and likes to engage in feminist queer activism: she's been living in a womyn-only (F/X) community for 25 years, likes to organise feminist FLINTA* events like for International Women's Day and Reclaim the Night marches in Nijmegen.

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Margins, Scars, Plants: Creative Botanosociology in the Czech Border Regions

Martin Tharp (Concrete eye organization)

The present contribution aims to examine one form of vernacular creativity under conditions of "Second World neoliberalism": the range of human-vegetative interactions subsumed under the broad term "gardening" that occur in the specific cultural (post)industrial landscapes of the Czech border regions. The former Sudetenland, after the 1945 expulsion of its German-speaking population, bears a conflicted reputation of ecological scars and untamed vegetation, industrial devastation and decades of rewilding, not to mention attitudes from urban intellectuals ranging from stigmatization to fetishization. Yet it not only presents a unique interaction between the material and the social: precisely through this state of vulnerability, from physical damage to social exclusion, these regions offer an unusual legacy poised between trauma and a surprisingly long history of resistance. The focus here is on a "botanosociology" of place and people: garden-making both private and communal, vegetable-raising, plant-based placemaking, cultivation and decultivation, weeds and lawns. From borderland *atrevados* (Anzaldúa 1987) to conformists, or equally the region's sizeable Roma and Vietnamese populations: to investigate the methods used to live, create, or heal among plant life. In parallel, to examine the gender(ed) politics of vegetation-care, whether the normative standards

of the Czech house-and-garden media or the often more complex practice on the (literal) ground. And finally, to draw the attention of both scholarship and activism to instances of plant-creativity that might otherwise remain obscure.

Martin Tharp's research interests touch upon aesthetic resistance and subcultural movements in socialist and post-socialist Europe, material cultures and physical materialities, cultural sociology and built environments. At present, he is in charge of publication logistics at the website www.concrete-eye.org, a forum for urban, material, and architectural discussion for the post-Communist sphere and collaborates externally with Prague's ViPer Gallery. He received a PhD in historical sociology from Charles University, Faculty of Humanistic Studies in 2021, and his publication *Paper Agora: The Samizdat Periodical Vokno and the Provincial Czech Underground in Historical and Social Perspective* will appear with Karolinum Press in autumn 2025.

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BODY (I)

Chair: Frithjof Nungesser (University of Graz)

Abject Creativity: The Maternal Body, Writer's Block, and the Semiotic Disruption of Authorship

Sonja Trurnit (LMU, Munich)

In the past decade, literature engaging explicitly with motherhood has experienced a marked resurgence, with authors exploring the maternal experience in forms that range from autofiction to experimental prose. These texts seek to render the vulnerabilities, ruptures, and ambivalences of early mothering with unprecedented authenticity. Yet the rise of maternal literature has been accompanied by a persistent backlash: often dismissed as confessional, "lowbrow," or "female" literature, these works are positioned at the margins of literary value. Implicit in this devaluation is a deeper cultural anxiety: while women may write, mothers, it seems, should not. The maternal body is imagined as belonging exclusively to the child, leaving little room for its reconfiguration as a creative and discursive site. This paper examines how this tension surfaces within the literature itself, where maternal narratives frequently stage scenes of writer's block and self-silencing. Through close readings of selected contemporary texts, such as Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962), Rachel Cusk's *A Life's Work* (2001), and Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* (2015), I argue that these moments should not be read as failures of creativity but rather as formal enactments of the very conditions of maternal authorship. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's theory of the semiotic and abjection, I propose that the maternal body, far from being emptied of agency, emerges as a site of generative disruption where new modes of language and subjectivity are negotiated. By situating maternal writing within broader debates on literary value, embodiment, and creativity, this paper reframes the maternal not as a limit to authorship but as a locus of aesthetic and theoretical innovation.

Sonja Trurnit is a doctoral researcher and lecturer in English Literature at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) Munich. She holds an M.A. in English Literature from LMU Munich and the University of Alberta, Canada (2022). Her PhD project, *Going into Labour: Procreativity in Contemporary Mothering Memoirs and Autofiction*, examines the intersections of mothering, authorship, and creativity in recent maternal life writing. She has previously written on queer textuality in Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992) and is currently part of the DFG Research Training Group 2845 "Family Matters. Figures of Allegiance and Release".

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Misfitting Vulnerability: Taking a closer look at crip critiques of care

Carolin Zieringer (University of Bremen)

For a long time, disabled people have resisted hegemonic understandings of vulnerability as weakness while critically analysing the political production of differential vulnerability especially along the lines of gender, race, class, dis/ability. In my talk, I'd like to delve into these „archives of resistance“ (Choukri) that reinvent vulnerability as a collectively shared and politically shaped corporeality. I do so by taking a closer look at crip critiques (cf. Arani 2022) of care given its current prevalence as a preferred feminist response to the human predicament of vulnerability. Disabled/disability scholars have dissented with feminist care ethics for at least two reasons: Firstly, care is sometimes romanticized as a prefigurative practice that can be exercised outside of dominant power structures. This risks ignoring ableist complicities that play out even in subversive caring practices. Secondly, whilst the desire for a caring society devoid of masculinist (entirely phantasmatic) ideals of autonomy is a shared one, conceptualizing care as intersubjective might underestimate how bodies that are politically produced as more or less dependent on being cared for by others, thereby materializing as mis/fitting (Garland-Thomson 2011) the world as it is. Mis/fitting then becomes analogous to being the passive object or the active subject of care. While it is undisputably necessary to create a social order in which everybody receives the care they currently need, I argue that it is also worthwhile to explore crip ways of undermining this very subject-object-dichotomy and its ableist background conditions – a strategy I propose to call „misfitting vulnerability“.

Carolin Zieringer is a feminist political theorist at University of Bremen, Germany. She has recently completed her PhD project titled „Caring for Contradiction“ in which she took a closer look at the entanglements of radical democracy, practices of contradiction and care. She specializes in democratic theories, feminist and queer theories of power and subjectivity while taking a keen interest in their intersections with critical disability studies as well as queer crip theories. Her new project engages with the affective and sensual aspects of experiencing contradiction.

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BODY (II)

Chair: Mónica Cano Abadía (BBMRI-ERIC)

Giving Birth on Screen – Vulnerability, Agency and Responsibility in Soviet Educational Films on Obstetrics

Birte Kohtz (Helsinki office of the Max Weber Network Eastern Europe)

Since the 1920s, but especially since the end of WWII, pregnancy and birth in the Soviet Union were one of the main objects of Soviet biopolitics. To increase the birth rate, to lower perinatal and infant mortality was a persisting concern of all Soviet governments. These goals were to be reached by an extensive expansion of the prenatal and maternal health care system. Pregnancy and birth were drawn into clinics and subjected to intense processes of medicalization, thus defining them as situations of a special vulnerability that women would not be able to master without medical assistance. The picture of special vulnerability was also drawn by popular enlightenment literature and talks, that urged women to be aware of their responsibility of their unborn child's fragile wellbeing. Meanwhile, the highly prescriptive and authoritarian practices of the Soviet obstetric system meant that giving birth left women with a different kind of vulnerability that was perhaps more relevant to them. In my paper, I will explore negotiations about different aspects of vulnerability within the context of pregnancy and birth through the lens of educational documentaries about antenatal care and birth in normal and critical medical circumstances. These films were conceptualised and produced with the guidance of obstetricians, many of whom were women, as Soviet gynaecology and obstetrics were far less male-dominated than in Western countries. The paper will trace how these instructional films, created to establish norms of perception and strategies of action in obstetrics, depict prenatal and maternal

vulnerability, as well as female agency during pregnancy and birth. It will also discuss power relations in obstetrics from a gendered perspective, moving beyond the dichotomy of male physician and female patient.

Birte Kohtz: After studying Eastern European History, Medieval and Modern History, and Political Science in Cologne, she worked as a research fellow at the Chair of Eastern European History at the University of Gießen from 2009 to 2017, where in 2023 she also received her PhD with a dissertation on psychiatry in late imperial Russia. From 2017 to 2023, she worked as a research fellow at the German Historical Institute in Moscow. Since 2024, she has been a research fellow at the Helsinki office of the Max Weber Network Eastern Europe, where she is working on her current research project *“Sowjetbürger in utero: Eine Geschichte des Ungeborenen in der Sowjetunion”*.

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How are bodies formed in a pedagogical setting? On gender and age-specific body production in daycare centres

Anneli Haase (University of Duisburg-Essen)

Research on bodies in pedagogical settings remains limited although pedagogy is bound to the physical and cannot be theorised or practised without the physical dimension (cf. Magyar-Haas 2021; Wehren 2020). Pedagogy is physical and focuses on bodies in educational "intent", e.g., guiding a child's hand when spooning soup, comforting a child by hugging them or lining the children up in pairs in daycare centres. These pedagogical references to the body respond to and shape bodies, a.o.t. gender-specific bodies. In my doctoral thesis I use ethnographic and grounded theory approaches to analyse how bodies are addressed and treated in pedagogical institutions, especially daycare centres. Adopting a poststructural praxeological perspective, this study examines how certain bodies are produced within those settings through pedagogical references to the body. It explores, among other things, how gender and age intersect in these produced/formed bodies in different ways (cf. Reckwitz 2003/2014; Butler 2016). The contribution will present the research approach in the context of a workshop or seminar and use ethnographic material excerpts to illustrate initial analyses of the pedagogical production of gendered bodies of children. The ensuing discussion will encompass both the research and its subsequent interpretation. This will be conducted in an open forum, wherein pertinent questions concerning the conference are to be addressed, such as: Which gendered bodies of children are being produced? How can the method be applied more creatively? What significance can subversion have in these situations? To what extent can children be considered as vulnerable actors in this context?

Anneli Haase (she/-) is a researcher and lecturer for general educational science with consideration of gender and pedagogical anthropology at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. The primary focus of her qualitative research is the body, political education and social difference processes, with a particular emphasis on gender and age. Anneli's research interests lie in the domain of feminist, praxeological, poststructural and anthropological perspectives, with a particular focus on gender studies. She is currently engaged in her doctoral research, which focuses on the study of bodies in pedagogical settings for children and youth. Utilising ethnographic methodologies, Anneli's research explores the processes through which bodies of children and adolescents are shaped within pedagogical contexts with a particular focus on gender and age aspects.

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Queer Vulnerabilities: Body Art as Subversive Knowledge Production

Julia Sprenger (University of Applied Arts Vienna)

This contribution explores how queer performative practices transform failure and vulnerability into epistemological resources that challenge dominant academic hierarchies. Drawing from Halberstam's „queer art of failure" and critical embodiment studies, I argue that creativity emerges precisely through the embrace of failure, precarity, and bodily transgression in practices spanning drag performance, feminist body art, and everyday acts of gender non-conformity. Halberstam's concept reveals how queer subjects, already positioned outside normative success narratives, can harness failure as a creative force. This reframes vulnerability not as deficit but as generative potential. These performative practices demonstrate how knowledge generated through individual bodily experience transcends the singular body to inform collective understanding, transforming personal vulnerability into shared epistemological resistance. Tracing a genealogy from 1970s feminist artists critique of normative femininity to contemporary trans* artists like Cassils, I examine how apparent bodies become sites of knowledge production. Through queer phenomenology (Ahmed) and disidentification (Muñoz), I examine how bodies marked by non-normative gender and sexuality transform “deviance” into epistemological resources. Using bodily modification, endurance, and gender markers as “glitches” (Russell), contemporary queer*feminist performers continue the feminist tradition of revealing constructed embodiment while generating situated knowledges (Haraway) through strategic vulnerability. The research contributes to current debates around the vulnerability turn by demonstrating how queer failure produces alternative epistemologies through an intersectional lens. Rather than treating vulnerability as deficit, this genealogy reveals failure as a generative condition for creative subversion spanning five decades of body-based resistance.

Julia Sprenger is a researcher and university lecturer at the Gender Art Laboratory, University of Applied Arts Vienna. She holds a PhD in Theatre, Film and Media Studies from the University of Vienna (2024). Her dissertation *Schauplatz Körper. Geschlechterinszenierung in der Body Art zwischen Stereotypen und Subversion* examines how body art transforms vulnerability into subversion through performative gender practices.

Her research explores the intersections of vulnerability and resistance in queer*feminist performance practices, investigating how marginalized bodies generate alternative knowledges through performative strategies. She focuses on transgressive forms of identity staging, intersectional approaches to resistance, and the relationship between bodily vulnerability and epistemological innovation. She has presented at the international conference "Taboo – Transgression – Transcendence in Art & Science" in Malta and Vienna. Her curatorial practice includes exhibitions and symposia with her students exploring embodied identities and subversive paths. Currently, she is developing research on performative epistemology.

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BODY (III)

Chair: Birte Kohtz (Max Weber Network Eastern Europe, Helsinki office)

Circular Economies – Linear bodies?

The menstrual cycle as a feminist glitch against capitalism

Sam Schwickert (BTU Cottbus–Senftenberg) & Prof. Melanie Jaeger-Erben (BTU Cottbus–Senftenberg)

The Circular Economy (CE) is often celebrated for its promise to align economic growth with ecological regeneration by mimicking natural cycles. Yet while drawing on metaphors of nature and circulation, CE frameworks largely neglect the human body—rendering it absent, mechanistic, or reduced to a disembodied consumer. This contribution critically examines how dominant CE discourses and policies marginalize embodied experience and explores alternative imaginaries that foreground relational and ecological understandings of sustainability. Analysing two flagship policy documents - the EU Circular Economy Action Plan (2020) and Germany's National Circular Economy Strategy (2024) - we show how both reproduce technocratic and

androcentric assumptions by reducing bodies to units of productivity and consumption. In response, we argue for integrating feminist, ecological, and decolonial perspectives into CE thinking and propose circular body politics: an approach that centres bodily diversity, relational care, and bodies as embedded within ecosystems. This reframing positions human bodies not as inputs or outputs in economic systems but as situated, temporal, and creative beings. To illustrate the creative and subversive potential of circular body politics, we systematically read for and from the concealed bodily process of the menstrual cycle. The cycle is subject to paradoxical norms: it is stigmatized and historically used to claim vulnerability or inferiority of women and people with menstrual cycles (WPMC), yet current trends, such as “cyclical work” or the notion of a “female superpower”, recast it as a source of productivity. We argue that both narratives risk reinforcing neoliberal meritocracy, stereotyping, and bio-essentialism. As a counter-vision, we call for reimagining workplaces and economic systems that take cyclic bodies as norm, value care and regeneration, and accommodate diverse embodied experiences. In this sense, cyclic bodies become a “feminist glitch” (Russell, 2020) that unsettle patriarchal and neoliberal norms and opens creative pathways toward more human and ecological futures.

Sam Schwickert (she/her) studied Physics (B.Sc.) at the University of Hamburg and Climate Physics & Sustainability Science (M.Sc.) at the University of Kiel. Over time, her research focus shifted towards relations of exploitation under capitalism, power structures, and feminist practices of transformation. She is the founder and managing director of the feminist game publishing company “Spielköpfe” and currently works as a research associate in the Department of Environmental and Technology Sociology at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg within the project EPOS – Energy Transition and Gender: Potentials of Diversity in Citizen Energy. Her Ph.D. project at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, titled “From ‘Menstrual Monstering’ to ‘The Cycle as a “Female” Superpower’ – The Menstrual Cycle under Capitalism,” explores how emancipatory movements like the “Menstrual Movement” are absorbed by capitalist and patriarchal systems. She investigates whether these movements can trigger genuine change or if they remain bound by gender stereotypes and capitalist norms, limiting their disruptive and transformative potential.

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Makeshift Gyms and Morning Runs: Creative Uses of Mandatory Military Service in Socialist Czechoslovakia

Michaela Appeltova (Wake Forest University, North Carolina)

That socialist armies largely failed to entice men to participate in cultivating soldierly masculinity, one of the quintessential projects of masculinity in modern Europe, has been well documented. In Czechoslovakia, the failure to interest men in military service was exacerbated both by tales of uninterested or bullying superiors, and the fact of Soviet occupation, with 200,000 Soviet soldiers stationed in the country. This paper argues, however, that while ordinary Czechoslovak men generally despised their time in mandatory military service, they creatively utilized it for body-building and fitness purposes. Some may have faked collective morning exercises but created makeshift gyms to cultivate their physiques, others used their free time to go for a run to maintain their shape, still others learned to cook and eat in ways that catered to their fitness and weight levels. This was taking shape within the context of the home-grown (and growing) bodybuilding and fitness movement in Czechoslovakia - one that was originally suppressed but was becoming increasingly legitimate. Within the confines of the barracks and its limited freedoms, mandatory military service encouraged, even forced Czechoslovak men to view their bodies as a site of agency, made them aware of their bodily limits, and sometimes made them experience their bodies in new, unexpected ways.

Michaela Appeltova is Assistant Professor of History at Wake Forest University. Her research focuses on gender, body, and everyday life in 20th century Czechoslovakia. She is currently working on a manuscript tentatively titled *Embodied Socialism: Gendered Bodies and Medical Expertise in Czechoslovakia 1965-1989*. The project investigates the ways in which the political and social upheaval of the 1960s, common to both East

and West of the Cold War divide, transformed notions of gender, body, and subjectivity in Czechoslovakia. It shows that the fashioning of one's body and its cultivation, criticized as a bourgeois holdover in the Stalinist 1950s, came to be promoted from above and demanded from below as part of socialist lifestyle in the 1970s and 1980s.

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Stigma, memory, and absence: garments as a language in discourse on violence against women

Marta Kargól (independent)

Pieces of clothing act as silent witnesses to violence, recording the abuse inflicted on women's bodies. Dirty clothing is associated with stigma, while stains signify shame and invite judgment. Women who experience sexual abuse are often blamed for their oppressor's crime, confronted with questions such as *What were you wearing at the moment of the rape?* Clothing also signifies both presence and absence. It preserves memory by carrying traces of use, such as body shape, wrinkles, and scent. For families, garments may become a tangible connection to the deceased, cherished and commemorated. An empty garment can also mark the absence of a missing person, sometimes serving as the sole remnant of a body. During the past decades, artists and activists worldwide have initiated projects addressing violence against women. They created artworks thematizing sexual abuse and femicide, often using garments as central motifs. Among these are *Red Shoes* by Elina Chauvet (2009), *The REDress Project* by Jaime Black (2010), *What Were You Wearing?* by Jen Brockman & Dr. Mary Wyandt-Hiebert (2013), *Shrine for Girls* by Patricia Cronin (2015), *Thinking of You* by Alketa Xhafa Mripa (2015), and *SA's Dirty Laundry* by Jenny Nijenhuis & Nondumiso Msimanga (2016). By analysing these projects and examining how artists utilize and subvert the cultural meanings of garments, this paper explores the extent to which clothing functions as a universal language in discourse on violence against women. It identifies strategies and approaches through which artists express dissent against abuse and commemorate its victims.

Marta Kargól, Ph.D., earned her MA in History (2007) and History of Art (2009) from Jagielloński University in Kraków, Poland. She received her Ph.D. (2013) in cultural anthropology for her dissertation, "Tradition in Fashion: Dutch regional dress in various contexts of contemporary culture." Her research interests include the history and social significance of embroidery, women's clothing and identity in the 19th and 20th centuries, the heritage of regional costumes, economic and gender aspects of homemade clothing, and socially engaged fiber art.

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AFFECTS

Chair: Bahar Oghalai (University of Koblenz)

Attitudes of the abjected embodiments as a key to the inclusive theological ethics

Antonina Wozna Urbanczak (University of Graz)

Marginalized embodiments of migrants, gender-discriminated and abused people are abjected bodies. They are present and can be easily found in the existential peripheries of our world, as the project of Vatican Dicasterium of Human Integral Development 2021 states. However, they are not minorities and their vulnerability are motors of two, out of three mayor world industries: prostitution and traffic of human-beings, and drug-dealing. This paper focuses on the attitudes of the survivors who live in these contexts in different continents and how they perceive the Church that serves liberation. The aim is to explore what principles and attitudes drive their daily decisions and how these decisions are made. In order to do this, we will use a cognitive methodology of "creditions" designed at the University of Graz in an interdisciplinary project that connects neurosciences with ethics through the embodied condition of living-beings. As a result, an

interesting intersection between individual ethics and social ethics will be shown, to enable creative ideas on how to challenge current moral theological principles so that they correspond and engage the experiences of people, whose life-conditions, if seriously considered and changed, could change economic rules and the enact new visions of justice and hope of a different world.

Antonina Wozna Urbanczak is postdoctoral researcher in Gender at the Institute of Systematic Theology and Liturgy, Catholic Theology Faculty in the University of Graz on the project about Ecofeminist and Gender Theology. PhD in Fundamental Theology in the Pontifical Antonianum University in Rome, 2021. PhD in Arts and Humanities, in the University of Murcia (Spain), 2019. Member of the Association of Spanish Women Theologians, Board-member of the European Society of Women Theological Research (ESWTR) and of the Theological Seminary in Valencia. Member of the Interreligious Society of Women Sophía. Master in Business Administration and Management by ENEB, Barcelona and Specialist in Sales Management by ESIC, Valencia (Spain). The main lines of research are ethics and theological hermeneutics. Her interest is focused on investigating whether there is a minimum agreement between the different proposals of feminist ethics amongst the philosophers of the second half of the 20th century.

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Soft resistance. Affective Anecdotes as Method

Elena Rieger (ETH Zurich)

A daily bus ride: Misplaced keys. Sweat. Running late. Boundaries. More sweat. Wounded knees. Exposure. Anxiety. Shame. These affective fragments form the lines of a poem that testifies to my commute as a fat academic. The bus is mundane, yet politically charged; it becomes a site where belonging and exclusion are negotiated. I write from my own perspective, but many bodies are made to feel out of place here. Fatness, in this context, is both a marker for being out of place and a form of resistance. This paper will draw on embodied experience to consider fatness not as a metaphor or medical condition but as a lived reality. Abolitionist Da'Shaun L. Harrison has shown that anti fatness is not simply about weight but about race, gender, ability, and class, deeply rooted in anti-Blackness. Fatness, then, must be understood as a structural oppression. Working with affective anecdotes, analysing them through the lens of fat studies and critical feminist theory, I will examine how fatness intersects with race, gender, class, and sexuality, revealing the systems of power that marginalise nonconforming bodies. This paper will explore the paradox of hyper-visibility and invisibility, asking how fatness might be rethought as a boundary that unsettles capitalist, heteronormative, and ableist norms. What happens if we subvert shame? What if fatness were approached not with disgust but with tenderness? Can softness itself become resistance? Here, poetry is both method and critique, opening fatness as a site of vulnerability, relation and soft resistance.

Elena Rieger is an Art Historian and PhD research fellow at the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture at ETH Zurich. She is part of the ERC-funded project 'Women Writing Architecture: Female Experiences of the Built 1700-1900' (WoWA), led by Anne Hultzsich. Her PhD research focuses on women as recipients, critics, and theorists of the built environment in the 18th and 19th centuries, centring on their embodied experiences. Grounded in feminist theory, her methodology weaves affective anecdotes with historical and theoretical analysis, thereby bridging different temporalities and ways of writing architectural histories. Elena studied Art History and Archaeological Sciences at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Università degli Studi di Udine and at the Technische Universität Dresden. After her studies, she worked as a coordinator and research assistant at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. In addition, she worked as a curator at the Stephanie Kelly Gallery in Dresden.

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Tuesday, 31 March 2026

THEATER

Chair: Andrea Anđelinić (University of Zagreb)

Fumbling Forward. Structural Change for Inclusive Theatre

Rebecca Maria Fischer (Munich Volkstheater) & Marie-Christine Bischur (LMU, Munich)

How can collective responsibility regarding gender identity and intersectional discrimination contribute to creating inclusive working conditions in the theatre industry? Theatre work is often shaped by informal power structures, high performance pressure, and a lack of sensitivity to diversity. For trans, intersex, and non-binary (TIN) actors, this results in a multidimensional burden: beyond normative role expectations, linguistic marginalization and the absence of institutional protection mechanisms significantly impact both professional and personal well-being. An inclusive practice requires collective responsibility — particularly from those in leadership positions who shape structural processes. This requires recognition that the transformation of work cultures is an ongoing, learning-based process. While structures cannot change overnight, they can be meaningfully influenced through consistent self-reflection, participatory practices, and the normalization of a constructive, dialogue-oriented error culture. International models such as the “oops and ouch” system or lived forms of allyship offer practical approaches to building a culture of shared responsibility and could be productively adapted to the German-speaking theatre context. Furthermore, the use of pronouns has a direct impact on psychological safety and a sense of belonging, as language shapes reality — it can include or exclude. Production conditions, dramaturgy, casting, and direction all play a role in determining whether gender identity and artistic practice can coexist. The central question remains: how can we create a theatre space that not only represents diversity on stage but embraces it as a foundation of its artistic identity?

Rebecca Maria Fischer (B.A.), born on September 7, 2002, studied Theatre Studies as well as Art, Music, and Theatre at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Alongside her bachelor's degree, she worked as a student assistant on the DFG project "Music Theatre for Young Audiences" and published theatre reviews in Theater der Zeit, lichtung, and various festival blogs. She also gained practical experience in directing, stage management, dramaturgy, production, and festival organization, including at the Munich Kammerspiele, the Residenz Theater, the Munich Volkstheater, and the Bregenz Festival. As a co-organizer of the festivals "TUSCH plus X Diversity Festival" and "#ActNow" for the city of Munich, she advocated for inclusive and diversity-sensitive outreach work. Since September 2024, she has been working as a permanent assistant director at the Munich Volkstheater.

Dr. Marie-Christine Bischur, born on September 23, 1983, is a theatre scholar and lecturer at the Institute of Theatre Studies at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich. She also serves as the deputy head of the Department for Cultural Education, Social Education, and Gender-Equitable Pedagogy at the Pedagogical Institute – Center for Municipal Education Management, part of the Department of Education and Sports of the City of Munich. Since 2023, she has been the director of TUSCH Munich and the festival director of the #Act-Now cultural festival at the Munich Volkstheater. Her teaching and research focus on theatre education, dance studies, transcultural theatre forms, and intersectional perspectives on theatrical interrelations, incorporating gender and queer theories.

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***Co-Creation of Democracy through Gender Subversion and Vulnerability:
Theater Minor's Staging of Jaroslav Foglar's "The Mystery of the Puzzle"***

Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová (Charles University, Prague)

Censored during the 1970's till the collapse of the state socialist regime due to the author's involvement in the Boy Scout Organization (also outlawed then), Jaroslav Foglar's books nevertheless made an imprint on many generations of young Czech boy and girl readers and continue to do so in many recent, high quality, illustrated re-editions. While the author's single life, 60-year-long career in Boy Scout leadership, and explicit focus on teenage boyhood (and alarmingly obvious omission of girlhood and/or femininity) provoke questions about Foglar's sexual identity and allow for homoerotic and queer readings of his oeuvre, the proposed paper will focus on a theater rendition. The Prague-based theater, which caters to children and youth, currently stages a performance of Foglar's most prominent book and explicitly works with subversions of dichotomous understanding of gender. *The Mystery of a Puzzle (Záhada hlavolamu)* (1941) tells a story of a boy's group The Rapid Arrows that cross the streets to Stínadla, an enemy part of town of sorts, to learn about a death of an apprentice boy, his puzzle that contains technical plans for a bike that flies, and the local boys' Vont grass-root organization that controls the relationships in the neighborhood and employs the puzzle as a legacy that legitimates this control. While the Vonts are feared and portrayed both as aggressive and transgressive and unruly boorish representations of boyhood masculinity, Rapid Arrows represent the essence of Boy Scout virtues of obedience, service, discipline, and noble-mindedness. Altering the notions of Shakespearean theater, the performance casts masculine-clad women into men's roles and while the scenography conveys an air of masculinity tested in the public sphere of the city's rugged streets, it uses various deprecatative techniques to subvert established expectations of Connellian hegemonic masculinity pertaining to power, control, and social gender norms. Specifically, it contrasts a single boy's leadership in the Rapid Arrows with the democratic decision making of the Vont organization and raises questions about associations of masculinity with aggression, violence and authoritarianism on the one hand and democratic leadership on the other. In the course of the performance, the audience participates in creating the climactic scene in which the Chief of the Vont organization gets elected whereby two members of audience function as competing candidates. While Foglar's book targets solely young boys and completely ignores women's existence, Theater Minor's staging of the work is radically inclusive, which helps usher Foglar's work into contemporary contexts and question established gender binarisms. The paper will focus on close reading of subversion of gender duality through the performance of masculine vulnerability and its links to democratic representation as communicated by the said play and the audience's co-creation of the performance thereby making each one original and containing unexpected turns.

Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová is Assistant Professor in the Graduate Program of Gender Studies at Charles University, Czech Republic. She is a member of Committee for Ethical Research at Faculty of Humanities, and Gender Studies Centre Collegium at Faculty of Arts (both Charles University). In 2022-2023 she was a Senior Fellow with Elisabeth List Fellowship for Gender Research at University of Graz, Austria. With background in American studies, political science, and gender studies, her research spans cultural representations of gender in literature, film, and arts as well as post- and decolonial thought, feminist theories of nationalism, femicide, and settler colonialism.

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ACTIVISM

Chair: Maria Wald (University of Birmingham)

Creative uses of the vagueness of the law to circumvent anti-trans policies in Russia

Yana Kirey-Sitnikova (independent)

The last three years were characterized by an anti-trans turn in Russian politics, including a ban on the “propaganda of the change of sex”, recognition of trans NGOs as “foreign agents”, prohibition of medical and legal transition, and recognition of the “international LGBT movement” as an extremist organization. Responding to these challenges, Russian trans groups pursued two main strategies: going underground, or emigrating and working from abroad. However, there is a third approach: creatively exploiting the gray area. Three examples of such work include: (1) Saint-Petersburg-based group “T-Action”, following its recognition as a foreign agent, changed its name and logo, and to avoid charges for “propaganda”, they no longer write about trans people but about fictional “killkots” who represent a mixture of a cat and a seal. (2) Western sanctions in combination with a ban on medical transition made continuing hormone-replacement therapy challenging for many Russian trans individuals. To counter this problem, at least two grassroots initiatives started producing injectable estradiol. (3) A former activist, I started positioning myself exclusively as a researcher to avoid being incriminated for engaging in extremism. What is similar in these diverse cases? They all rely on the vagueness of the law. It is not clear what “propaganda” and “extremism” are, putting these activities in the shadow zone, whereas Russian law puts the form of estradiol produced by activists in the vague category of dietary supplements. Although vagueness opens up possibilities for subversion, the same vagueness can arbitrarily be turned against activists at any time.

Yana Kirey-Sitnikova is an independent researcher working in the field of transgender studies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Her research interests span transgender health, social movements, political science, sociolinguistics, history, and biochemistry. Currently Yana is working on a book “Transgender Russia: the rise and fall of trans rights in an autocracy” (expected in 2027). She is also doing a PhD in Public Health at the Semashko National Research Institute of Public Health.

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Killing joy or questioning power structures?

Aurelia Kraus (Freie Universität Berlin)

My essay examines, through the example of a graffiti found in Berlin-Kreuzberg—“WE’LL BE LESS ACTIVIST IF YOU BE LESS SHIT! PMS REGELT”—the discursive negotiation of activism, emotions, and delegitimation strategies in public space. The graffiti refers to a form of queer feminist activism that does not reject patriarchal attributions such as PMS but instead reclaims and reappropriates them in an empowering and creative manner. At the core lies the question of which emotions are considered legitimate within political and everyday discourse, and which are disparaged. Using examples such as debates around children’s book classics or “culturally sensitive” carnival costumes, the text demonstrates how criticism of racism and sexism is routinely discredited as exaggeration, censorship, or “spoiling the fun.” Such depoliticization serves to perpetuate existing power relations and normative conceptions of happiness without scrutiny. This connects to Sara Ahmed’s figure of the “feminist killjoy,” who, by deliberately interrupting social promises of happiness, draws attention to real inequalities. Ahmed’s Manifesto for Killjoys articulates ten principles that frame unhappiness as a political practice by resisting the hegemonic order of happiness and fostering solidarity with other marginalized groups. The essay thus highlights that activism is not merely about disruption or spoiling the fun, but about making power structures visible, challenging them, and opening up alternative horizons of collective life. Therefore, what is conventionally perceived as negative—anger, frustration, unhappiness—emerges as a productive and creative force of feminist resistance.

Aurelia Lucretia Kraus is a Master's student in Theatre Studies at Freie Universität Berlin, with an interdisciplinary background in Theatre Studies, Philosophy, Comparative Literature (B.A., FU Berlin), and Psychology (B.A., University of Graz). Her research focuses on intersectional, queer feminist analyses of (in)visible dynamics of power both within and beyond institutions, as well as on questions of gender, desire, and performativity. Since 2020, she has worked as a research assistant for Prof. Dr. Doris Kolesch. In parallel, she has served as a tutor at the Institute of Theatre Studies since 2018. Previous professional experiences include contributing to the blog of the Berliner Theatertreffen 2023, serving as an assistant at the Let's CEE Film Festival in Vienna, and completing an internship in the psychosocial field. In addition, she is actively involved in projects such as the FLINTA* anti-violence project L Support, and as a volunteer reading mentor.

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To be seen vulnerable: Artivism for Ukraine as a Testing Ground for Collective Agency
Ieva Šakelaitė (Vilnius University)

My research contributes to the literature on the visibility of collective agency by examining the surge of public artistic activism in Lithuania in response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. While much research on artistic activism within the field of visual studies focuses on symbolic resistance to dominant discourses, the artivism does not overtly resist the hegemonic narrative; rather, it aligns with the Lithuanian government's stance on the war in Ukraine. Still, following e.g., Hannah Arendt's notion of the "space of appearance", increased visibility in public space is related to recognition, political subjectification and agency. Drawing both on Arendt and on such feminist thinkers as Judith Butler and Sabba Mahmood, I suggest conceptualizing this artivism as agentic politics beyond the resistance and subversion paradigm that has been linked to the patriarchal idea of the autonomous liberal subject. Instead, I argue, they express and actualize collective vulnerability, a theme conveyed through visual motifs of suffering, wounded, and vulnerable bodies. In my research, I am interested in looking into the ways artivism can be utilized in maintaining hegemonic narratives, such as nationalism and victimhood, but at the same time be a form of agentic politics that brings care into visibility, fosters horizontal ties, and builds affective solidarities among post-imperial subjects of the Soviet empire.

Ieva Šakelaitė is a PhD candidate at Vilnius University, the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, working under the supervision of Professor Natalija Arlauskaitė. Ieva's doctoral research concerns connections between visibility in public spaces and collective agency, namely, artistic activism in support of Ukraine in Lithuania. Ieva holds an MA in Politics and Media (2022) and a BA in Scandinavian studies (2017), both from Vilnius University, and an MA in Literature, Culture and Media (2019) from Lund University. Currently, Ieva teaches a BA course on feminist theory at Vilnius University. Her work is interdisciplinary, drawing on visual studies, the humanities, and political theory. Her main research interests include artistic activism, feminist theory, Scandinavian and Eastern European studies, memory studies, and critical spatial practices.

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STORYTELLING, AFFECTS, VULNERABILITY

Chair: Jennifer A. Reimer (Oregon State University-Cascades)

Storytelling as Survival: Vulnerability and Creative Resistance in Out of Africa

Özge Kaya Manav (University of Bayreuth)

This paper explores how Sydney Pollack's 1985 film *Out of Africa*, which is based on Karen Blixen's book of her experiences in colonial Kenya during the apartheid period, explores the relationships between subversion, creativity, and vulnerability. Despite the film's common interpretation as a romanticized colonial story, it nevertheless provides important insights into the politics of vulnerability as a situational and relational concept. As a European woman settler, Karen Blixen's status displays a contradictory state: she is both precarious due to gendered marginalization, illness, and emotional dependence, yet privileged due to her racial and colonial authority. Based on postcolonial and feminist research on vulnerability (Butler, Gilson, Bilge), the study demonstrates how Blixen's weaknesses can be creatively fruitful. Her narratives, her reorganization of rural and home spaces, and her uncomfortable interactions with colonial structures demonstrate how vulnerability may give rise to other forms of relationality and belonging. The film simultaneously reveals the duality of vulnerability, operating under colonial paternalism, while simultaneously creating opportunities for rebellious resilience. *Out of Africa's* cinematic depictions of colonial Africa challenge our understanding of vulnerability, as this analysis demonstrates by placing the film within larger discussions on the "vulnerability turn" in cultural and gender studies. Instead of associating it with passivity, the movie shows how it may act as an actor to alter power dynamics and reframe cultural memory.

Özge Kaya Manav, with a focus on English and Cultural Studies, is a doctoral student at the University of Bayreuth's Intersectionality College. Her work focuses on how gender studies and literature overlap, with a concentration on feminist and postcolonial philosophy. She looks at how stories in both historical and modern settings deal with issues of race, class, sexual orientation, and identity. Her PhD dissertation examines how underrepresented voices are represented in literature by applying intersectionality to a selection of texts. She is dedicated to using multidisciplinary methods that link literary criticism to more general discussions about culture and society.

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Gender Construction through Narratives: Creativity and Subversion in the Portrayal of Female Figures in Antiquity

Elisabeth Scharkin (University of Tübingen)

This paper examines how narrative structures in ancient texts contribute to the construction of female gender identities, with a special focus on creative forms of subversion and the ambiguous role of vulnerability. Contrary to traditional approaches that often interpret female figures in binary terms—as passive or dangerous—this narratological analysis reveals how narrative techniques such as focalization, temporal structuring, and characterization enable nuanced and contradictory female identities within patriarchal power dynamics. Drawing on feminist theories and narratological models (Genette, Bal, Booth), the study compares fictional and historical women of similar social status across different genres. It particularly highlights how female characters exert agency through their narrative positioning and voice—often in subtle and creative ways that challenge conventional notions of vulnerability and open spaces for subversion. The paper contributes to interdisciplinary gender research by understanding creativity as a social and narrative process that shapes and transforms gender identities. This approach aligns with the conference's focus on the entanglements of creativity, vulnerability, and subversion within social power structures.

Elisabeth Scharkin is a PhD candidate in Classical Philology at the University of Tübingen, specializing in narratology, gender studies, and education. In the winter semester 2024/25, she independently designed and

led the seminar "Wording Women? The Narrative Construction of Female Figures in Ancient Roman Literature." Her research bridges feminist theory, identity construction, and narratological methods to explore the creative role of narrative structures in shaping gender. She holds a full scholarship from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom and is committed to interdisciplinary exchange in gender studies.

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Reframing Circles of Solidarity in the Wake of Disappointment

Maša Mrovlje (University of Leeds)

The paper examines the disappointment of marginalized groups within resistance, such as women, whose concerns are often neglected within and subordinated to the overall goals of the movement. It shows how marginalized resisters' disappointment can mobilize new forms of solidarity that challenge both the systemic violence of the repressive regime and the oppressive attitudes within the resistance movement. To theorise how (women) resisters can reinvigorate bonds of solidarity broken by internal oppression, I draw on Sara Ahmed's notion of circulation of affect and Audre Lorde's understanding of vulnerability as a source of resistance. Ahmed's notion of circulation of affect helps me explore how the practice of breaking oppressive masculine resistance solidarities and forming new safe(er) feminist solidarities in the wake of disappointment is ultimately about intervening in and reframing circles of affect. But how could disappointment break oppressive circles and make new safe(er) circles? Drawing on Lorde, I suggest disappointment can shatter the marginalized resisters' ideals of the unity of resistance and reveal how such supposed ideals of unity are predicated upon a neglect, silencing or exclusion of some individuals' or groups' embodied vulnerabilities. The marginalized resisters' affirmation of vulnerability in the face of disappointment, in turn, can disclose new solidarities predicated upon mutual recognition and sharing of one another's embodied, context-specific vulnerabilities. I put this theoretical engagement in dialogue with a prominent example of feminist activism, where women resisters have experienced disappointment over oppressive gender attitudes within resistance and initiated new solidarities to challenge them: a radical feminist group Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment (Opantish) that organized against sexual violence emerging in the wake of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. I examine how the concrete practical mechanisms through which these feminist activists revived solidarity after disappointment managed to reframe circles of affect and rethink vulnerability as a source of resistance.

Maša Mrovlje is an Associate Professor of Political Theory and Co-Director of the Centre for Contemporary Political Theory at the University of Leeds. Her research interests are located within contemporary political thought and international political theory. She has contributed to pressing issues of political judgement, memory politics, transitional justice, political violence and, most recently, resistance. She is author of *Rethinking Political Judgement: Arendt and Existentialism* (Edinburgh University Press, 2019). Her articles appeared in leading international peer-reviewed journals, including *Political Theory*, *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, *Millennium*, and *The Journal of Politics*. She currently works on two projects. The first explores the political potentials of disappointment within the modern revolutionary tradition. The second focuses on women's experience of resistance.

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AGEING, DESIRE, MEMORY

Chair: Julia Sprenger (University of Applied Arts Vienna)

Speculative arts-based approaches to feminist ageing futures

Ren Aldridge (University of Graz)

Socio-technical imaginaries relating to older women tend to be rooted in assumptions and disciplinary regimes of anticipation that are both sexist and ageist. Such imaginaries configure older women as frail and at-risk, ignoring and often reinforcing the socio-cultural conditions that render them vulnerable and deny their agency. This results in data-driven technologies that contribute to the marginalisation of older women despite claiming to increase independence and safety. Attending to older women as a group generally excluded from futures studies, our interdisciplinary project utilises arts-based methods to co-design speculative objects and experiences that expose and interrupt these dominant imaginaries and disciplinary regimes of anticipation, aiming instead to nurture new ways of imagining futures centred on care and community, equity and inclusion. The project employs Donna Haraway's "sympoiesis – making-with" and engages a local group of older women as co-researchers through a series of creative workshops to explore how they resist/ embrace imaginaries about their vulnerability and retain/ regain agency in everyday encounters with data-driven technologies. In employing arts-based methods we hope to foster an embodied and affective engagement with these questions and open up possibilities for imagining otherwise. At a relatively early stage of our project, this paper reflects on our experiences of the first creative workshops and the arts-based methods that we are developing.

Project team: Juliane Jarke, Helen Manchester, Steve Symons, Ren Aldridge

The project Feminist Ageing Futures in Datafied Worlds is funded by the Elisabeth List Fellowship.

Ren Aldridge (she/ her) is an artist, writer, researcher and front woman of feminist punk band Petrol Girls. She is currently employed as an arts-based researcher on the project Feminist Ageing Futures in Datafied Worlds at the University of Graz. Her research interests include gender-based violence, ageing, anticipation and vulnerability as well as participatory arts-based methods. Based in Graz since 2019 she is deeply embedded in the local creative and feminist community. Having cofounded the local demonstrations against femicide and delivered a TEDx talk on the topic, she developed The Resistance Quilt Project - a community art project against femicide. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London and a Master of Research in Creative Practice from Glasgow School of Art.

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To Retreat into Love: The Creative Agency of Female Desire within Drawing Research

Joana Maria Pereira (University of Lisbon) & Angélica Maria Zorrilla (PJU, Bogotá/UCM, Madrid)

Advocating for the transformative power of love, the American writer and activist Alice Walker (1997) claims that love is a force that inspires both personal and collective action, arguing for an intersection between love and activism. James Baldwin (1998) also explains how falling in love allowed him to understand that love – making individuals at once stronger and more vulnerable – was a human possibility that was not simply the key to his life and work, but was in fact the key to life itself. Drawing upon Walker, Baldwin, and other queer and feminist authors, in this paper Pereira and Zorrilla will discuss the creative agency of female love and desire, while considering the different ways in which they operate as artists and lovers. Despite their geographical and cultural political backgrounds being very distant from each other, they will share their methodological and conceptual affinities. Emphasis will thus be placed on their love for drawing, and on the power its minimal gesture contains: how it mingles with fragility and resistance, contact and surrender. Can artistic practice reclaim love and its vulnerability as a driving force for change? This presentation will further the idea of drawing as a counter-movement, arguing for an approach to drawing experience that includes a profound attention to our bodies and emotions, as well as to creation – understood as the result of contact and

interaction between materialities. Hence, drawing-or-writing must be framed here with an important logic of resistance, exploring the potentiality of love (for drawing) to connect us across borders and social and cultural modes of dwelling.

Joana Maria Pereira is a Portuguese artist, researcher and educator. Her research focuses on the politics of methods and materials, social inequality, intangible heritage, and feminism. Pereira is particularly interested in the interdisciplinary and democratic nature of writing, drawing and printmaking practices. Pereira publishes regularly and has lectured internationally since 2009. Forthcoming publication include: *Drawing as Placemaking: Environment, History, and Identity* edited by Simon Woolham and Jill Journeaux, and *The Handbook of Drawing Research*, both book chapters to be published by Bloomsbury.

Angélica Maria Zorrilla's practice oscillates between the solitary, concentrated work of a draughtswoman and collective and collaborative work through drawing and writing as points of encounter and reflection in processes of social transformation. Zorrilla works in the Visual Arts programme at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (PUJ), Bogotá, Colombia.

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Doing Research through Life-Affirming Corpo-Memorial Agency

Marika Pierdicca (University of Klagenfurt/Celovec)

My contribution develops theoretical hypotheses from my habilitation project, which explores the intersections of economic justice, bodily integrity / autonomy, and corporeal memory. My aim is to ground ethnography on queer and non-dyadic lives through what I call corpomemorial agency. By this, I understand a way of knowing and acting rooted in life-affirming bodily memories and lived experiences. In this frame I investigate how embodied practices of remembering histories—conceived as pleasurable remembrance—can forge political activism and transformation, as well as guide alternative ethical and methodological/ ethnographic practices. Rooted in affects, relations, and matter, my understanding of the body in this context is political: Using Rosi Braidotti's carnal empiricism as a non-reductionist, non-biologist approach, I am referring to a kind of experienced embodiment that can be understood as a common affect and embodied coalition. I understand this in terms of a political embodiment beyond the prioritization of individual corporeality. The everyday practices and fleeting moments that make up queer life are the moments where life or existence itself, in all its insistence and precarity, becomes central, including its forgetfulness and in finding new ways of remembering; It is here where the act of making and remembering a life is an act of resistance, especially for those whose bodies and desires do not fit normative scripts. This is not about sharing remembrance for the sake of inclusion or visibility, but for the sake of disentangling oneself and one's memories from capitalist scripts of what counts as a good life.

Marika Pierdicca is a political anthropologist based in Berlin (Germany) and Klagenfurt (Austria). Her research engages political anthropology, critical migration studies, and queer studies, with a focus on labor, precarity, processes of subjectivation, differential inclusion, queer materialism, and bodily integrity. She also has a background in cultural education policies and social engagement with an emphasis on intersectionality and sexual and gender diversity.

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RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY, SUBVERSION (I)

Chair: Sam Schwickert (BTU Cottbus–Senftenberg)

Vulnerability as Creative Resistance: Youth Mental Health, Gender, and the Subversion of Deficit Narratives

Valeria Motta (University of Birmingham) & Claudia Gertraud Schwarz (KL Krems)

Mental health problems among young people have risen significantly in recent years. A scoping review we conducted within the EU-funded ASPbelong project across six European countries (UK, Ireland, Austria, Portugal, Norway, Czech Republic) highlights the unequal burden of vulnerability among young people. Female and LGBTQIA+ youth emerge as particularly at risk alongside other high-risk groups such as youth facing socioeconomic disadvantage, minoritisation, disability or illness, system involvement, rural isolation, parental mental illness, heavy social media use, or major life transitions. Against this rather bleak backdrop, our presentation explores how these vulnerabilities can become sites of agency, creativity, and subversion in supportive R&D settings. Instead of treating vulnerability as a deficit, we approach it as a generative concept that opens possibilities for new forms of subjectivity and belonging. Methodologically, we embrace the controversy surrounding vulnerability with dialogic and creative practices—drawing, storytelling, participatory writing—that enable young people to define and express their lived experiences on their own terms. In our project, we collaborated with 40 young people across diverse gender identities and social, national, and economic backgrounds. Our collaborative, arts-based approaches position young people not as passive recipients of care but as active co-creators of knowledge and self. In doing so, we destabilise objectivist assumptions and institutional narratives that often pathologise youth. By foregrounding creativity and subversion, we demonstrate how practices of co-creation can reframe vulnerability as a resource for collective meaning-making, and, ultimately, as a pathway toward more holistic understandings of (gender) inequalities and youth mental health.

Valeria Motta is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Birmingham in the Horizon Europe-funded ASPbelong project (2023–2027), a multi-country initiative addressing belonging and inclusion among young people across Europe. With a background in philosophy of science and epistemology, she engages with young people in vulnerable situations, including those experiencing educational retention, institutional exclusion, and psychosocial precarity. Her research integrates phenomenological, relational, and creative methodologies to explore belonging, rupture, and transformation. **Email:** v.motta@bham.ac.uk

Claudia Gertraud Schwarz, born in Graz, Austria, has a background in the social sciences (media studies, sociology, gender studies, STS), English and American studies, psychotherapy/psychology, ethics, science communication, activism, and art. She/they are currently based in Vienna and work in the Division of Biomedical and Public Health Ethics at the Karl Landsteiner University of Health Sciences, as part of the ASPbelong project. In recent years their work has focused on the sociopolitical dimensions of psychedelics as healing modalities, movements against gender violence and abuse of power in academia, and augmented reality classroom interventions to improve social and mental wellbeing. **Email:** claudia.schwarz@kl.ac.at

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The Power of Vulnerability – Creative Practices of Solidarity among Migrant Feminists from Iran in Germany

Bahar Oghalai (University of Koblenz)

This paper examines how experiences of vulnerability become a resource for feminist solidarity within the Iranian diaspora in Germany. Drawing on biographical interviews with migrant feminists from Iran who reflect on their politicization in both Iran and exile in Germany, it highlights how vulnerability—emerging from patriarchal control, political persecution, exile, or racial marginalization—can generate new, creative forms of feminist agency. The protagonists recount how their vulnerabilities enable them to build resonant spaces with marginalized groups. Queer coming-outs provide entry points into transnational feminist networks; encounters with racism in Germany foster solidarities with feminists from Kurdistan, Afghanistan, Syria, and other WANA countries; and political activism for refugees emerges from shared experiences of exclusion. These narratives show that vulnerability is not simply restrictive but can act as a generative force for cross-border alliances. Engaging with feminist debates on vulnerability (Butler, Ahmed, Fineman), the article argues that vulnerability must be understood as relational and productive. It arises from social entanglements and enables resistant empathy as well as creative practices of coalition that, especially in the context of Western migration societies such as Germany, extend beyond national boundaries and fixed notions of belonging. The analysis demonstrates that for the interviewees, vulnerability appears as a transnational condition that nurtures practices of solidarity, challenging structural inequalities and envisioning alternative political communities. In this sense, vulnerability reveals a subversive dimension: it not only connects feminist struggles across borders but also reimagines conditions of political collectivity.

Bahar Oghalai is a doctoral candidate at the University of Koblenz, where she conducts research on the political biographies of migrant feminists from Iran living in Germany. Her dissertation explores how these women reflect experiences of migration, exile, and activism in their personal narratives, and how their perspectives enrich feminist movements in transnational contexts. Alongside her doctoral studies, she works as a research associate at the University of Applied Sciences Nordhausen. As a scholarship holder of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, she receives academic and financial support for her work. Her research interests lie at the intersection of diaspora studies, critical race theory, and feminist theory. In addition to her dissertation, she actively engages in publishing and teaching, with a focus on intersectional justice, political representation, transnational feminist solidarity as well as migrant and feminist activism.

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Entanglements between creativity, vulnerability, subversion and gender: Creative silence as a safe space

Dona Smith (Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh)

I explore silence as gendered space of safety, drawing on my work as group facilitator with art psychotherapy students at Queen Margaret University. Typically, silence is framed as absence or even a “wall” (Ahmed 2016) and this poses challenges for psychotherapy students. I often experience the silence of students as resistance or defence (Freud 1911, Kohut 1957). However, this paper investigates silence as a creative safe space as part of our internal landscape. By exploring the subversive act of silence paradox - silence as a voice through creativity and exploring the barriers to creative learning in art therapy practice, we can make new meaning and give voice to the intersubjective silence. Having a voice and being heard is an undeniable aspect of feminist theory. Silence has often occupied space equated with oppression. (Malhotra and Rowe 2013) and women are encouraged to speak out (Clark-Parsons 2021) If we consider the flat external landscape as silence in our internal landscape, We have the urge to ‘break’ it with something a word, and image or object, “ ..something for the imagination to organise itself around in this flat space.”(Masud 2023 p76). Through artmaking we can safely explore the intransigence and vulnerability of silence, ‘where verbal interventions

may arouse resistance' (Schaverien 92, p105). Allowing the art to speak for itself, we centre silence as a transformative space of safety. Generative aspects of silence are explored in this paper explicitly in the context of psychotherapeutic education, and the implications for pedagogy in higher education more generally.

Dona Smith has a Masters in Women's Studies from the University of Lancaster and a Masters in Art Psychotherapy from Leeds Beckett University. For over a decade, she has been a feminist practitioner of art psychotherapy, specialising in trauma. She is now a wellbeing advisor and lecturer at Queen Margaret University within Paramedic Science and facilitates students in experiential group within the Art Therapies department at QMU. Dona has previously worked within the women's sector and in forensic settings. She is also a practising artist, working predominantly with printmaking and oils. In her practise as a therapist, she encourages the use of creativity as a form of collaborative meaning-making which can enable exploration and articulation of intersubjectivities. She is currently developing methods of creative reflective practice to use in her work and incorporates this in her reflections of silence in the facilitation of experiential art therapy groups.

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RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY, SUBVERSION (II)

Chair: Aurelia Kraus (Freie Universität Berlin)

Fragile Practices, Subversive Possibilities: Gender, Vulnerability, and Creativity in Adult Education

Paulina Drėgvaitė (Vilnius University)

Adult education has long been framed as a tool for empowerment and democratic participation, used both in formal and informal education settings. Yet in practice, it is also a space where vulnerabilities surface and where creativity can emerge in unexpected, subversive ways. Drawing on feminist pedagogical theory and qualitative research into adult gender equality education in Lithuania, this paper explores how adult education programmes both reproduce and contest gendered vulnerabilities that are further replicated in formal education. The analysis focuses on the Lithuanian Life Skills Programme (Gyvenimo įgūdžių programa), a state sponsored initiative that includes gender equality among its learning objectives, as well as other gender mainstreaming initiatives directed to train teachers and bureaucratic officials in public administration. While official curricula often present gender equality in depoliticised, bureaucratic terms, teachers and participants re-interpret, negotiate, and creatively adapt these frameworks in everyday practice. By situating adult education at the intersection of creativity, vulnerability, and subversion, the paper highlights its ambivalent role: on the one hand, it risks reinforcing normative gender regimes and producing new vulnerabilities through silence or simplification; on the other, it opens possibilities for relational vulnerability, collective reflection, and grassroots subversions. The analysis is heavily influenced by autoethnographical reflections from a practitioner and curricula developer standpoint. Ultimately, the paper argues that adult education should be understood not only as an instrument of policy but also as a fragile, creative practice where vulnerability can generate agency and where feminist pedagogical approaches can transform seemingly marginal acts into forms of resistance.

Paulina Drėgvaitė is a first year PhD candidate in Educational Sciences at Vilnius University and is a practitioner working at the intersection of education and human rights. Her research is focused on the history and politics of sexuality education in Soviet-era Lithuania, with a broader focus on how education functions as a site of power, resistance, and transformation. Her newest publication, Gatekeeping Gender Equality: Curriculum Politics in Lithuanian Education, was recently published in Acta Paedagogica Vilnensia. Paulina holds an MA in Gendering Practices from the University of Gothenburg, and an MSc in Film, Exhibition and Curation from the University of Edinburgh. Alongside her academic work, she writes on art and culture, bringing

together interests in gender, trauma and memory, as well as working as a gender equality expert in various local and international research projects.

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Turning into Stone: Mapping Sediments of Shame through Creative Feminist Cartographies

Ellen Thuma (Marburg University) & Paula Achenbach (Marburg University)

„The very physicality of shame – how it works on and through bodies means that shame also involves the de-forming and re-forming of bodily and social spaces, as bodies ‘turn away’ from the others who witness the shame.“ (Ahmed 2014:103) Shame is deeply relational and marks the existential need for belonging to a community on an ontological level (Dolezal 2017). This embodied vulnerability reveals itself as a traumatic archive, in the involuntary exposure and corporal petrification of the collapsing subject (Wuttig 2016). As shame is deeply entangled with social norms, its dissociative power can be understood as collective phenomena, especially in terms of somatizing gender (Wuttig 2016; Ahmed 2014). Turning into stone reflects how shame becomes inscribed in the body, normalized and habitually re-enacted as gendered de/sensibilities (Thuma 2021). This raises the question, how to salvage buried forms of vulnerability. Coming from a decolonial feminist approach, the concept and method *cuerpo-territorio* (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo 2017) recognizes an ontological connection between body and territory. The process of corporeal sedimentation can, in this sense, be conceptualized as a petrified landscape of an archive of feelings (Cvetkovich 2008). Following the idea of *cuerpo territorio*, we experiment with feminist body cartographies as a collaborative mapping method and creative practice. Seeking ruptures in the normative, we want to retrieve sedimented memories of shame and vulnerability which may open up to transformative affects and thus emancipatory potentials.

Ellen Thuma, M.A. is a research assistant and doctoral candidate at the Chair of Psychology of Movement at Marburg University with an academic background in Motologie, Media Studies, Art History and Musicology. In her PhD project, she investigates embodied memories of shame and the production of a gendered sensorium within the horizon of feminist new materialism. Situated at the intersection of affect theory, feminist phenomenology and soma studies, her work engages with questions of how embodied, collective practices can unsettle normative knowledge formations. Yet her methodological and theoretical sensibilities are still informed by her prior engagement as a dance movement therapist. Further research interests include post-digital culture, philosophy of technology, and the affective dynamics of social media.

Paula Achenbach, M.A. is a feminist researcher and scholar activist, interested in constellations of embodied practices and spatial imaginations. In her PhD project entitled “Explorations in the ‘open archive’ of feminist spatial utopias” she traces volatile utopian atmospheres in queer*feminist social movements and performances through aesthetic and performative research. From a theoretical perspective, her dissertation that follows an interdisciplinary approach aims to link reflections on gender, space, bodies and affect as well as time, utopia and practices of memory. She studied Educational Sciences in Marburg and Santiago de Compostela. Currently she is a research associate at the Chair of Psychology of Movement at Marburg University.

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Brain Worms In Revolt: Neurokvíring activist research in Czechia

Hana Drštičková (Charles University, Prague)

My paper reflects on methodological strategies of doing crip ethnography as a part of research focused on queer and neurodivergent experience in Czech activist environment. It maps the messy process of designing and applying methodology specific for the terrain of (neuro)kvír/krip (queer/crip) activism, with neurokvír activist participants, by a neurokvír researcher-activist. This process is rich with creative-by-necessity, creative-for-revolt and creative-for-joy modes of operation, that strive to embrace multitudes, intersections and queer failures. I am drawing on the experience of rethinking boundaries of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and (auto)ethnography, as well as inviting participatory art practices to seep in the methodology. Particular effort is focused on systematic unweaving of the notion of normality within ethnographical practice. Whether heteronormality, gender normality, neuro normality, or the normality of research/activism separation. Concepts of masking and passing are interrogated as an at times exhausting part of the normality performance. Activism and (expanded version of) activist research is conceived as a potential force for creating a liveable, reproducible post-normality and kvír/krip futurity, however the double precarity and exhaustion that goes with combining academic and activist work is also directly addressed. My research responds to the growing body of Czech kvír/krip political engagement, which has become more visible in recent years, due to, among other factors, the rise of fascism in this particular geo-political area.

Hana Drštičková: is a PhD student at the Department of Sociology (Faculty of Social Sciences) at Charles University in Prague. She previously studied contemporary art (Brno University of Technology, MA) and social anthropology (Masaryk University Brno, BA). She is also an active member of the trans activist feminist collective “Sdružení”, based in Brno, and a disability justice focused Crip Collective, based in Prague. In her PhD research, she focuses on the intersection between kvír/queer and neurodivergent identities, in the political context of kvír/krip activism and is passionate about neurokvíring, whether in academia or activism. The guiding principles of her work are intersectionality and care. Her recent achievements include an invitation to contribute a chapter to the forthcoming volume *Understanding Disability in East and Central Europe: Performing Inbetweenness*, part of Routledge’s *Interdisciplinary Disability Studies* series.

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