

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **Creative Bodies—Creative Minds**

The fourth international, interdisciplinary conference in gender research

University of Graz, 30-31 March 2026

Since its inception in 2018, the interdisciplinary conference in gender research Creative Bodies—Creative Minds has, in its three cycles, brought together scholars, practitioners, and activists to explore the relationship between gender and creativity in a variety of fields. They engaged with everyday and vernacular creativities, including material and intangible DIY forms, creative self-fashioning, coping strategies, and resourceful adaptations to social and political circumstances by communities, groups, and individuals. These encounters have treated creativity as a social and collective process that is power-dependent and deeply gendered.

The fourth conference aims to continue this line of inquiry by exploring more closely the relationship between creativity, vulnerability, and subversion. The last decade has seen an increasing focus on vulnerability in the humanities and social sciences, even what we could term a “vulnerability turn” in some disciplines, such as in cultural and gender studies. “Vulnerability” has also come to an increased usage in political rhetoric, policies, and everyday language. However, the concept of vulnerability has come under increasing academic, political and public scrutiny, highlighting its ambiguity, with both positive and negative connotations. Critical research has also discussed the (mis)uses of the concept in political debates and in concrete social policies, where it often deepens social marginalisation and vulnerability instead of reducing it. Gender studies and feminist scholars, in particular, have persuasively exposed the androcentric and paternalistic bias in the cultural understanding of vulnerability as a condition of passivity and lack of agency in need of remedy. Instead, they have emphasized the relational nature of vulnerability that makes it a universal dimension of human existence, bringing attention to its social and situational aspects. Exploring vulnerability in relation to resistance has been powerful in revealing the agentic potential of vulnerability to challenge oppression, inequality, and injustice, as witnessed, for example, in the mobilizations and democratic struggles of the last decade in Southeastern Europe.

The fourth Creative Bodies—Creative Minds conference in 2026 invites interdisciplinary contributions that explore the entanglements between creativity, vulnerability, subversion and gender in different socio-cultural, political, economic and everyday settings.

#### **Keynote speakers:**

- Isla Cowan, Independent Playwright and Theatre Maker, Edinburgh
- Jennifer Ramme, Department of Sociology, University of Graz

The areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Everyday creativity, vulnerability, subversion and gender
- Creativity as a response to restrictive biopolitics and gender norms
- Intersectional approaches to creativity, vulnerability and subversion (race, ethnicity, age, class, gender, sexuality, ability)
- Collective creativities in contesting collective vulnerabilities
- Creativity, vulnerability and subversion in education, arts, and activism
- Material, temporal, situational, and relational aspects of creativity, vulnerability and subversion

- Creativity, vulnerability and subversion in the digital realm
- Creative subversion– subverting creativity imperatives
- Creative methodologies and creative research in social sciences and humanities
- Creative addresses of gendered vulnerabilities in medicine, science, and technology

We are inviting proposals for presentations from scholars of all career stages and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines including, but not limited to: sociology, cultural studies, anthropology, human geography, political science, gender studies, art, performance, social work, communication studies and journalism, history, literary studies, social studies of science and technology and environmental studies.

Please send a 250-word abstract and a 150-word bio note before 10th September 2025 to [Creative.Bodies@uni-graz.at](mailto:Creative.Bodies@uni-graz.at)

Registration fee: 190 EUR

Registration fee (student presenters): 130 EUR

The conference registration fee includes the conference dinner, two lunches, tea/coffee breaks and the conference pack with the book of abstracts.

Information on registration and updates on the program will be available on the conference website: [Creative Bodies—Creative Minds](#).

Graz, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site and Cultural Capital of Europe for 2003, is the capital of the Austrian province of Styria and the home of Austria's second largest university.

**Conference organizers:**

Libora Oates-Indruchová, Department of Sociology, University of Graz

Zorica Siročić, Department of Sociology, University of Graz

Mónica Cano Abadía, BBMRI-ERIC

Carolyn Defrin, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz

Barbara Hönig, Department of Social Work, FH JOANNEUM – University of Applied Sciences  
Graz

Frithjof Nungesser, Department of Sociology, University of Graz

**Important dates:**

Submission of abstracts: 10 September 2025

Informing about abstract acceptance: mid-November 2025

Conference registration opens: 15 December 2025

Conference registration ends: 31 January 2026