

[CFP - International Interdisciplinary Online Conference Contagion: Between Contiguity and Community](#)

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Type:

Conference

Date:

May 24, 2023

Location:

Poland

Subject Fields:

Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Contemporary History, Cultural History / Studies, Race / Ethnic Studies, Theatre & Performance History / Studies

International Interdisciplinary Online Conference

Contagion: Between Contiguity and Community

Date: 24-26 May 2023

Call for papers

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis, with its obsession with protective gloves and disinfectant liquids, has put into stark relief that contagion – as Sria Chatterjee has recently reminded – shares etymology with contact and is all about touch (Latin: *con*: together; *tangere*: to touch). The ability or inability to touch and be touched at the time of the pandemic (un)marks the boundaries between human and nonhuman bodies, transforming relations between them. “The distribution of the sensible” (Rancière) becomes literal and produces new environments and forms of being together which are dependent not only on who/what touches and is touched but also on our current understandings of contact. In this context, contagion is not only about viruses infecting bodies but rather becomes a pointer to the dynamic of flourishing and spreading diverse and multiple relations across the biological, the

cultural and the technological. Thus, it enables us to see how touch and contact plastically shape both new realities and corporealities – new ways of experiencing, understanding and using bodies.

Taking this observation as its vantage point, the international conference *Contagion: Between Contiguity and Community*, organized as part of the project *Epidemics and Communities in Critical Theories, Artistic Practices and Speculative Fabulations of the Last Decades* financed by the Polish National Science Centre within Opus 20 funding scheme (UMO-2020/39/B/HS2/00755) and “*Odmieńcy*”. *Performances of Otherness in Polish Transition Culture* (2021/41/B/HS2/01540) aims to investigate what kind of contiguities, between what agents, emerge through contagion. What kinds of relations, both intra-species and between the living and the non-living, can arise from contagious contact? Under what circumstances can contiguity result in (more-than-human) community? How does this experience of contagion refer to experiences of communities living with viruses in the (post)colonial world?

Those questions also incite significant reformulations of the concept of health which remains a shifting but still desired horizon in the times of contagion. But, as Elisabeth Povinelli in *The Empire of Love* (2006) aptly demonstrated with the notion of *ghoul health*, the very notion of health and health system is already producing biopolitical divisions. The body formed and constructed in the discourse of health is afraid of contact, infection, penetration by the outside world. But the body understood in terms of carnality is always open, in constant touch with environment, in contact with inside and outside – its boundary being dynamic and changing. What new conceptions of health may emerge at the time of the contagion? What are the carnalities and corporealities of contagion? What bodily constellations does it form?

The conference is structured around 10 interconnected thematic streams. The thematic strands may be interpreted widely and are intended to encompass as diverse a historical, geographical, social and cultural range as possible. We therefore invite submissions connected to the following streams:

1. Corporeality and carnality – how contagion shapes embodiment.
2. Other bodies, other knowledges – how contagion is understood, experienced and lived through in non-western communities.
3. Foggy brains and lost senses – how contagion reconfigures the sensory.
4. Contagion and affect – how contagious contact influences the body's potential to affect and be affected.
5. Health and illness – how contagion challenges received notions of Western medical discourses and practices.
6. Practices of (co)healing – how contagion stages modes of recovery.
7. Post-pandemic communities – how contagion instigates new socialities, human and more-than-human.
8. Identities and contagion – how new contagious contiguities influence identity politics, historically and now.
9. Virality – how contagious contact traverses natural, cultural and digital worlds.
10. Contagion and the Anthropocene – how contagion (re)shapes ecological relations.

Proposals are invited for academic papers, panels, roundtable discussions and artist-research presentations in the online format. Each panel should, in principle, consist of 3-4 presenters and a chair. Each roundtable should consist of around 4-5 participants with shorter statements and discussions.

Abstracts of 250 words should be sent to the email address epidemicsandcommunities@gmail.com. Deadline for submissions is February 10, 2023. Responses will be given by February 28th, 2023.

Contact Email:

epidemicsandcommunities@gmail.com