global dis:connect summer school 2024 (Munich, 22–26 Jul 24)

Maria-Theresia-Straße 21, 81675 Munich, Germany, Jul 22–26, 2024
Deadline: Mar 1, 2024

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"infrastructure(s): dis:connective perspectives".
Organised by Christopher Balme, Nikolai Brandes, Hanni Geiger, Nic Leonhardt and Tom Menger, Käte Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect at the LMU, Munich.

global dis:connect invites MA and doctoral students from the humanities as well as creative professionals at any stage of their careers to meet and discuss in Munich for a summer school that will concentrate on Cultural infrastructure(s): dis:connective perspectives
Over the past decade the investigation of global and supra-regional infrastructures has opened new perspectives on the interconnectedness of the world and is now a well-established interdisciplinary field of inquiry throughout the humanities. Recently, scholars have also turned their attenttion not only to the connective aspects of such global infrastructures, but also to those that disconnect. This research, especially in the historical disciplines, has focused on shipping routes, telegraphic communication, (air)ports, oil pipelines, to name only some of the more obvious kinds of technical-material infrastructure. This summer school, however, wants to turn this perspective towards cultural infrastructures. Cultural infrastructure we define here as the material, immaterial and institutional elements that support and facilitate cultural, especially artistic, activities and experiences within a society. The term can encompass a wide range of components that contribute to the development, preservation and dissemination of cultural assets. It can cover organisations, activities and spaces. These include exhibition and performance spaces, libraries, archives, educational facilities and digital platforms but also funding programs and cultural heritage sites. The term is now well established in urban studies and policy initiatives. Cities and the EU Commission issue reports on cultural infrastructure, digital maps can be consulted, and research initiatives are launched. Cultural infrastructure research is clearly a rapidly growing area of inquiry (Wagner 10) which, following anthropologist Brian Larkin, emphasises the aesthetic and semiotic dimension rather than the purely functional-technological context: '[Infrastructures] need to be analysed as concrete semiotic and aesthetic vehicles oriented to addressees. They emerge out of and store within them forms of desire and fantasy … that sometimes can be wholly autonomous from their technical function'. Performance theorist Shannon Jackson has called for a focus 'on the supporting infrastructures of both aesthetic objects and living beings'. Understood in this way, cultural-artistic and social infrastructure are interconnected 'support systems of sociality' that can only be studied together.
In the summer school, we will look at such cultural infrastructures from what we at global dis:connect would call dis:connective perspectives. This means paying particular attention to disruptions,

disturbances and absences in processes of globalisation, which we have hitherto tended to see in terms of ever-increasing connectivity. Seen from a global perspective, cultural infrastructure is characterised above all by major disparities. These apply not just to investment in physical structures but also to institutional agreement on the necessity of such infrastructures. It equally applies to those who are excluded from the global exchange of cultural capital and artefacts and who have to shape their own, alternative, infrastructures
for cultural production.
While much infrastructural research has a spatial focus on transportation, communication and physical sites, i.e. on infrastructures that serve to overcome or define space, there has been a shift in recent years to questions of temporality. Infrastructures formulate 'promises' to population groups and communities in order to win them over to the future semantics of modernisation, urban and regional transformation or globalisation, but without always keeping these promises. The promise of infrastructure can also be highly divisive as the needs of one group, say for a spectacular concert hall, are fulfilled and the demands of another, for alternative performance spaces, are ignored.
In the summer school we shall focus on themes that balance spatial and temporal
perspectives. Topics to be addressed might include:

• Infrastructure and temporality: futurity, present, past
• The globality of cultural infrastructures: can such infrastructures generate or sustain
'global culture(s)'?
• The global transfer/mobility of cultural infrastructures and its frictions
• Cultural infrastructures of inclusion/exclusion; power asymmetries
• Cultural infrastructures and migration
• White elephants: where and when do cultural infrastructures fail?
• Conceptual approaches: what is cultural infrastructure?
• Methodologies: what is a cultural infrastructural approach to research? What
research approaches can we find in practice (artistic, architectural, etc.)?
• Politics of cultural infrastructure: public investment or 'subsidy'?
• Performance spaces between iconic architecture and urban renewal
• Ecology and cultural infrastructures: between exploitation and sustainability
• Infrastructure as action/activism
• Alternative infrastructures: decolonial and anti-capitalist
• Infrastructure and ethics/social questions
• Future perspectives: post-human and more-than-human (cultural) infrastructures
global dis:connect is a research centre dedicated to gaining a more complex understanding of globalisation processes, historical and contemporary. As a centre dedicated to researching not only the connections but also disconnections in globalisation processes, we hope the summer school might overcome some of these disconnections and bring together di erent subjects, approaches and geographies.

The summer school will allow the participants to present their own projects and will feature several master classes as well as art and film presentations. All sessions will be held in English.
global dis:connect promotes dialogue between scholarship and art as coequal means to approach dis:connective phenomena of globalisation. Such phenomena often leave few traces in archives and defy direct observation in many cases, but artistic practice can often reveal and pro-

vide access to them. It is through art, film, theatre, design and architecture that cultural infrastructures and the absences, interruptions and detours they reveal and produce have recently been thematised.
Dissertation projects, grant proposals, exhibition projects and artistic interventions are all welcome. Participants can propose the presentation format that best fits their work, be it an academic paper, a film screening, an artistic intervention, moderated discussions or slide shows. All proposals should relate to the topics described above and stimulate discussion.
The deadline for applications is 1 March 2023.

There are no participation fees. global dis:connect will cover accommodation and travel costs for all participants. For participants with children, we o□er free childcare facilities during the summer school.

Please apply in writing by 1 March with the following documents:
- A CV (max. one page).
- A cover leter of max. one page explaining why you wish to take part in the summer school.
- A description of what you intend to present at the summer school (from a half page to max. two pages). Proposals for presentations of artistic projects can include images, video stills or other media.

Please send us your application, addressed to the organisational team, as a single PDF file bye-mail to our executive assistant Dogukan Akbas, D.Akbas@campus.lmu.de. Following the invitation, we expect the participants to submit a paper (max. 10 pages) or other adequate material as a basis for discussion during the group sessions.

For further details, the bibliography related to this call and more information about the Käte Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect, please visit our website.

Partcipants are also invited to join the gd:c annual lecture with Shannon Jackson (UC Berkeley) on 22 July.

Reference:
ANN: global dis:connect summer school 2024 (Munich, 22-26 Jul 24). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 21, 2024 (accessed Nov 23, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/41033>.