

Post-Pandemic Imaginaries (Liverpool, 5-6 Sep 24)

University of Liverpool, Sep 5-06, 2024

Deadline: May 10, 2024

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Call for Papers.

Post-Pandemic Imaginaries : Space, Culture and Memory after Lockdown.

We are excited to announce a two day conference on the 5th and 6th September 2024, organised by the Centre for Culture and Everyday Life at the School of the Arts, University of Liverpool, UK.

The Centre for Culture and Everyday Life (CCEL) invites contributions to a two-day interdisciplinary conference exploring changes in the experience and imagining of everyday urban spaces following the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the conference is to focus critical attention not on the impact of the pandemic and associated government lockdowns, but on the processes of reimagining, remembering and remapping of everyday culture and experience through a post-pandemic lens.

A key focus of enquiry are the real-and-imaginary geographies of everyday experiences under lockdown where the imagination was put to work in ways that often elicited heterotopic glimpses of a post-pandemic world that may, in the years since, have all but slipped into oblivion. During lockdown, the 'spatial play' (Marin 1984) of the utopic imagination – the interplay of horizons and frontiers as negotiated through forms of everyday social and spatial practice – was galvanised by a collective experience of space and time that transformed the affective contours of everyday living. As physical movements and interactions were compressed into the individualised landscapes of lockdown, alternative, virtual forms of social and spatial relationships were brought into play. Whether by ensconcing oneself in virtual spaces or by venturing anew into the suddenly depopulated landscapes of local urban neighbourhoods, reconfigured forms of individual spatial agency brought with them a corresponding reconfiguring of the everyday urban imaginary.

For some, dystopian scenarios familiar from literature and film were offset by small utopian moments: the impulse of planners and city councils to take the opportunity to engage citizens in reimagining urban space, moments of community and togetherness amid the enforced separations, an absence of traffic noise and pollution, and newly audible birdsong. Videos shared online that showed wild animals roaming the streets, and even memes ridiculing the notion that "nature is healing", may have even offered some momentary respite from ongoing climate anxiety. While for many people, confinement could be experienced as chaotic, overcrowded, and made work-time almost endless, for others it opened up time to reflect, and to pause, to imagine how their lives might be otherwise.

If there was a utopian impulse amid the terrors of the pandemic, what did it look like, and what

traces remain? Is there an ethical and aesthetic imperative to salvage the residual glimpses, fragments, dreams and imaginaries engendered by the pandemic? In what ways, if any, did the projected imaginings of post-pandemic urban futures contribute to substantive changes that are discernible now, four years on? How are the lived spaces and temporalities of cities qualitatively different today from what they were in 2019? Are they different or was it all just a blip? What traces of pandemic behaviour and experience remain in our daily interactions? Has the pandemic brought about a keener awareness and value of the local? How did art and photography respond to the temporary transformation of public and social space? How have forms of everyday mobility changed? Are there post-pandemic spatial stories that reveal a transformation in how people engage with and imagine everyday urban spaces? And if there are, what do these spatial stories look like? What do they say and how might they be traced or mapped? What does re-engaging the everyday mean in a post-pandemic world?

We welcome proposals addressing these issues from scholars at all career stages and a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds.

Keynote speakers to be announced.

Abstract Submission: Please send abstracts (300 words max.) by 10 May 2024 to the conference organizers with your name, title, affiliation (where appropriate) and a short bio (up to 200 words).

Send submissions to: CCELconference2024@liverpool.ac.uk

Please prepare for a 20 minute presentation.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent out by 7th June 2024.

Reference:

CFP: Post-Pandemic Imaginaries (Liverpool, 5-6 Sep 24). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 11, 2024 (accessed Jul 1, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41414>>.