

Ruralities (Barcelona, 29–30 Oct 25)

Barcelona University, Oct 29–30, 2025

Deadline: Sep 2, 2025

Julia Ramírez-Blanco

International Conference Ruralities, Sustainable Developments & New Artistic Ecologies.

At a time of multiple ecological, economic, and social crises, rural areas are gaining renewed attention as spaces of possibility, resistance, and imagination. In contrast to models that concentrate resources in cities, widening the rural-urban gap and subordinating the countryside to urban and industrial growth, new cultural geographies and ecological epistemologies are emerging—ones that revalue rural knowledge, ways of life, and sustainable practices. These rural modalities present alternatives to both the hypercapitalist urban centres and to industrial agro-economies which include factory farming, monocrops and extractivism. Across many territories, especially in the Global South and in peripheral areas of the Global North, there is a genealogy of rural communities that have long developed ways of life based on care, self-management of resources, and cooperation. Far from being residual, these forms of organization are now being reimagined as viable alternatives for envisioning sustainable futures in both rural and urban contexts.

The 1st International Conference "Ruralities, Sustainable Development and New Ecologies" stems from this plural reality to open a critical and transdisciplinary space for reflection on the growing role of ruralities in shaping resilient, diverse, and sustainable futures. The program is organized into three thematic panels, offering complementary lines of inquiry:

Panel 1 · Rural Imaginaries & Translocal Practices explores the symbolic construction of the rural through a translocal lens, examining how links are forged between geographically distant contexts that are nonetheless connected through artistic, cultural, or activist practices rooted in shared approaches to the rural as a site of critical action and creative potential.

Panel 2 · Art, Agroecologies & Institutional Critique investigates the intersections between contemporary artistic practices, agroecology, and strategies of institutional critique. This panel focuses on initiatives that operate in rural contexts to imagine new production models (both cultural and agricultural), rethinking the relationship between art, territory, and sustainability.

Panel 3 · Art & Rurality in the Spanish State focuses on the specific context of the Spanish territory, examining the genealogies of a diverse range of initiatives in art, culture, and research that are reshaping the relationships between centre and periphery, as well as the ways in which rural environments are inhabited and activated through situated perspectives.

Together, these panels offer a complex and multidimensional reading of ruralities—not only as

physical geographies but also as epistemic, symbolic, and political spaces. Through dialogue between researchers, artists, activists, and local agents, the congress seeks to generate situated knowledge and foster collaborative networks that contribute to imagining more just, sustainable, and liveable futures from rural contexts.

__Keynote Speakers

Myvillages. Founded in 2003 by Kathrin Böhm, Wapke Feenstra, and Antje Schiffers, the Myvillages collective questions the urban dominance in cultural production and foregrounds the rural as a space of contemporary relevance. Through collaborative and translocal projects such as Former Farmland, International Village Shop, and The Rural School of Economics, Myvillages reconnects rural communities, artistic practice, and situated knowledge. <https://www.myvillages.org/>

Fernando García Dory / INLAND – Campo Adentro

This collaborative platform initiated in 2007 and formed by Sergio Bravo, Grace Denis and Fernando García Dory proposes understanding “the local” not as a fixed place, but as a relational context. INLAND functions as para-institution that develops a durational rural practices and also adapts to different geographies—publishing books, producing exhibitions, recovering a village and making cheese—while activating new visions for shepherding and political advocacy through the global alliance of nomads it facilitates. <https://inland.org/about/what-is-it/>

Iñaki Estella Noriega. Art historian and tenured professor at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid's Department of Art History. His research has focused on the history of contemporary art in Spain, with special attention to official and marginal narratives, as well as the Fluxus movement, in particular the figure of George Maciunas. Iñaki Estella is co-editor of the project *Desacuerdos*, a critical reflection on the dominant forms of recent art historiography. Among his most relevant contributions is the pioneering study of an artists' colony in Almería during the 1960s and 1970s, a little-explored episode that connects landscape, periphery and avant-garde in the Spanish artistic context. <https://www.ucm.es/historiadelarte/inaki-estella-noriega>

__Scientific Committee: Joaquin Barriendos (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey), Barbara Benish (ArtMill Center for Regenerative Arts, Horažďovice), T.J. Demos (UC Santa Cruz), Martí Peran (Universitat de Barcelona), Isabel Valverde (Universitat Pompeu i Fabra, Barcelona).

__Submission Guidelines

Participants are invited to send an abstract summarizing their research, project or idea. We welcome theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions interested in the intersections of ruralities, ecologies, artistic practices, agro-feminisms, decolonial theory and sustainable development. Interdisciplinary or practice-based proposals are especially encouraged.

Each presentation will have a 15-minute time slot, followed by Q&A. The conference will be held in hybrid format (in-person and online).

Languages will be English and Spanish.

The participation in the conference will be free of charge.

The submissions should specify whether the presentation will be in-person or online and the affinity to the four discussion panels.

Submission deadline: September 2nd, 2025.

Abstract: 300–500 words

Short bio: 100–250 words

Send to: ruralitiesconference@gmail.com

Selected papers will be considered for publication after peer-review in Volume 12 (2026) of the academic journal REGAC Journal of Global Studies and Contemporary Art

<https://artglobalizationinterculturality.com/academic-journal/>

__Key Dates / Calendar

| September 2nd, 2025 | Proposal submission deadline |

| September 15th, 2025 | Notification of acceptance |

| October 29th & 30th 2025 | International Conference, Barcelona |

__Registration and contact

Participants interested in attending can register at the following FORM.

Conference Directors: Anna Maria Guasch (Universitat de Barcelona), Julia Ramírez-Blanco (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Olga Sureda (Universitat de Barcelona).

Organized by: Research Project “Visualidad y Geoestética en la Era de la Crisis Ecosocial” (VIGEO, PID2022-139211OB-I00), Universitat de Barcelona

<https://artglobalizationinterculturality.com>

Contact Information

Research Project “Visualidad y Geoestética en la Era de la Crisis Ecosocial” (VIGEO, PID2022-139211OB-I00), Universitat de Barcelona

Universitat de Barcelona (UB) – Facultat de Geografia i Història

Contact Email

ruralitiesconference@gmail.com

URL

<https://artglobalizationinterculturality.com/conferences/call-for-papers-1st-in...>

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/50394>>.