

gd:c Summer School 2026 - Worlds in the Lab (Munich, 20–24 Jul 26)

Munich, Germany, Jul 20–24, 2026

Deadline: Mar 1, 2026

Clemens Finkelstein

Call for Participation:

WORLDS IN THE LAB -

EXPERIMENTAL SITES OF DIS:CONNECTIVITY

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gd:c Summer School 2026 organised by

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Käte Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect

Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

Munich, Germany – 20–24 July 2026

The Käte Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect (gd:c) invites master's students and doctoral candidates in the humanities, as well as creative professionals at any career stage, to participate in a week-long summer school in Munich, Germany. There are no participation fees. Accommodation and travel expenses will be covered for all participants coming from outside Munich.

About gd:c / Summer School

gd:c examines the dynamic, co-constitutive relationship of global integration, absent connections, and disintegration in current and historical processes of globalisation. Central to this approach is the concept of dis:connectivity, which foregrounds how connections are actively made and unmade, interrupted, unevenly distributed, or strategically withheld, and how such dynamics shape the production of knowledge, power relations, and material environments across temporal and spatial scales.

The gd:c Summer School provides a platform for interdisciplinary exchange and transdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together international students, scholars, and creatives to engage deeply with a focused theme. For more information, please visit: globaldisconnect.org

gd:c Summer School 2026 - Theme

Worlds in the Lab explores laboratories as spaces where worlds—and their fragments—are reconfigured. These are experimental sites of dis:connectivity in which the 'global' is disassembled into analysable parts, imaginaries of planetary conditions fabricated, or alternative futures modelled, rehearsed, and resisted. Laboratories range from scientific observatories and sensor-equipped environments to landscapes, archives, exhibition spaces, cultural institutions, and art/design/film

studios. Across these diverse settings, elements of the world are isolated, scaled, narrated, simulated, transformed, or imagined otherwise. Such experimental conditions open possibilities for new forms of inquiry and speculation; they also produce distortions and expose the limits, exclusions, and dis:connections that arise when complex environments are translated into manageable forms. Rather than treating laboratories as self-contained scientific spaces or metaphorical abstractions, the summer school approaches them as experimental infrastructures through which environments, ecologies, bodies, and planetary conditions are constantly re/made.

Building on recent scholarship in the environmental humanities, science and technology studies, the history of science, global history, media and visual studies, art/design/architectural theory, anthropology, and decolonial and Indigenous studies, the summer school explores how worlds-in-the-making emerge through laboratory practices such as modelling, prototyping, display, simulation, and field experimentation. It brings the laboratory—as a concept, practice, and space—into dialogue with the spatial, visual, and material cultures of world-making, including e.g., archives, lieu de mémoire, planetary analogues, atmospheric observatories, geoscientific proxies, environmental monitoring infrastructures, and exhibition architectures.

What happens when “the world” becomes a laboratory object, a test setting, a scenario, or a speculative prototype? How do laboratory sites mediate between global and local scales, between human and more-than-human realms, and between imagination and material constraints? What frictions, asymmetries, and disruptions may arise? Which affordances, knowledge, and opportunities can be drawn from these experimental sites of dis:connectivity?

Programme & Format

Worlds in the Lab is built around experimental pedagogical formats that front-line collaboration, situated learning, and creative inquiry. Participants are asked to bring their own research or artistic projects to the summer school to develop and interrogate them through collaborative experimentation. Over the course of the programme, participants engage in hands-on exercises, conceptual studios, and field excursions to Munich’s scientific, technological, and cultural laboratories—places where knowledge is produced, mediated, and contested.

Through these interdisciplinary encounters, we will collectively examine how laboratories function not only as controlled environments for experimentation but also as world-making devices. Blending critical reflection with experimental practice, the summer school fosters a shared space of inquiry in which participants can question existing research conventions, explore new methodological repertoires, and co-develop approaches that speak across disciplines, media, and modes of knowledge production.

A faculty of international scholars, designers, and artists will guide the sessions by offering conceptual provocations, leading site-based activities, and supporting participants’ work throughout the week. Participants share their projects as works-in-progress, whether through short presentations, poster sessions, performative or speculative interventions, material or visual experiments, or brief media-based formats that meaningfully integrate into the summer school’s experimental environment.

Possible Approaches

Projects should probe the core question of Worlds in the Lab: how do laboratories—across sci-

ences, technology, arts, and humanities—construct the worlds they aim to study as experimental sites of dis:connectivity? We invite participants to consider the laboratory not only as a site of experimentation but also as an epistemic fiction, a method, a performance, a metaphor, a design space, and a political technology. Projects may explore how laboratories assemble or simulate worlds, how they facilitate or constrain speculation, and how they unsettle boundaries between object and environment, model and reality, or human and more-than-human.

We welcome proposals from any field that critically engages with laboratory practices—empirical, historical, conceptual, artistic, or speculative—not only to show what laboratories have been but to test what they might yet become. The summer school will operate as a meta-laboratory, a space for collective experimentation with the boundaries and futures of laboratory thinking across the humanities, arts, and environmental research. This may include:

(1) artistic and curatorial practices that treat the laboratory as a world-making device, such as Arts at CERN, where artists probe the spaces between matter and meaning; Black Quantum Futurism, whose temporal laboratories reconfigure lived histories and possible futures; or Forensic Architecture, who reconstruct environments as investigative and evidentiary worlds;

(2) humanities-based experimental initiatives that engage the laboratory as a site of narrative, visual, and conceptual intervention, such as historical re-enactment, experimental literary practices, or sensory and experimental archaeology (including reconstructions of past soundscapes, smells, and material environments), Donna Haraway's speculative fabulation practices, Anna Tsing's worlding experiments, or the media laboratories of the Harun Farocki Institute;

(3) historical, theoretical, and digital engagements with ecological, technological, or scientific infrastructures as world-making laboratories, such as glaciological research stations that stage the cryosphere as experimental terrain; quantum-technology labs where new sensing paradigms redefine the limits of environmental detection; machine-learning platforms such as Google's AlphaEarth, which construct computational Earths through predictive modelling;

(4) decolonial and community-based approaches that foreground plural epistemologies and contest the politics of experimental space-making, such as the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR), which develops feminist and anti-colonial protocols for community-led scientific practice; the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative (EDGI), which builds activist infrastructures for monitoring environmental data and political accountability; or the Center for Native Futures, which advances Indigenous world-making through art, relational knowledge, and speculative design.

Application Materials

Please send the following documents (in order), compiled into a single PDF file titled YOURLAST-NAME_gdc-summer-2026.pdf, by 1 March 2026 (23:59 CET) to clemens.finkelstein@lmu.de:

- Cover Letter (max. 300 words) detailing your disciplinary background, your motivation for participating, and how your current research or artistic practice relates to the frameworks of the gdc Summer School 2026.

- Project Proposal (max. 500 words) describing the research or artistic project you wish to further

develop through your participation and the format in which you envision presenting it during the Summer School programme.

- CV (max. 2 pages) or Artistic Portfolio (max. 5 pages, or links to other media).

We particularly encourage applications from individuals and regions that are underrepresented or marginalized in global academic/artistic discourses. If relevant in your case, please mention this in your Cover Letter.

Reference:

ANN: gd:c Summer School 2026 - Worlds in the Lab (Munich, 20-24 Jul 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 8, 2026 (accessed Mar 18, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/51430>>.