

Climate – Crisis – Collaboration (Düsseldorf, 5–7 Oct 26)

Haus der Universität (University House), Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Oct 5–07, 2026
Deadline: Feb 22, 2026

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Climate – Crisis – Collaboration. Cultural Dispositives in Relation

The conference intends to examine the concepts of climate, crisis and collaboration as interrelated cultural, epistemic and aesthetic dispositives of the Anthropocene, and invites contributions that critically reflect on their intersections across disciplines and practices.

The concepts of climate, crisis and collaboration not only structure current social debates, but form autonomous epistemic fields that encompass historical, cultural, aesthetic, political, and ontological dimensions. Intertwined, they shape contemporary attempts to confront multiple and interlinked planetary crises and the question of their (historical) causes. Within the critical debates surrounding the Anthropocene, these categories have generated new ecological, technological, social, religious, and aesthetic dynamics that call for critical assessment.

We are aware that these broad terms circulate widely in daily politics and the media as buzzwords, while simultaneously being theorized in highly specialized and often disconnected disciplinary scholarly and artistic contexts. The Call therefore invites participants both to interrogate the conceptual content and (inter-)disciplinary relevance of the terms themselves, and reflect on how affiliated emerging research positions, institutional structures and aesthetic practices are transforming epistemic frameworks and cultures that allow us to collaborate and respond to crisis, especially when the whole planet is concerned. The conference aims to address the great challenges and opportunities presented by the increased interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary engagement with climate, crisis and collaboration as urgent topoi of our time.

We explicitly encourage a dialogue between the humanities, the arts and adjacent fields, and seek to create a space for shared reflection on methods, vocabularies and forms of collaboration.

The aim of the conference is not to standardize the concepts of climate, crisis and collaboration, but rather to highlight their productive differences, historical dimensions and relational effectiveness.

We understand them as elements of a heterogeneous structure of discourses, practices, institutions, affects, media, images, historical narratives, and material conditions: Climate does not appear here as an exclusively scientific variable or purely environmental factor, but as a culturally shaped order of perception and interpretation. Crisis is not seen as a singular event, but as a recur-

ring diagnostic, narrative structure of the Anthropocene and its critique. Collaboration is not a method, but an aesthetic, social and ethical practice, often occurring in response to the other two concepts.

We are particularly interested in contributions that combine theoretical reflection with concrete case studies, artistic practices or institutional experiences. Possible topics for contributions may, but need not exclusively, address the following questions, matters, debates:

- How do ideas about climate, crisis and collaboration figure in literature, art, religion, design, pop culture or the natural sciences?
- How do the concepts and terms of climate, crisis and collaboration interrelate?
- How do concepts such as climate, crisis and collaboration relate to the highly differentiated international debates on the term “Anthropocene” in relation to alternative terms and concepts that strengthen transcultural and intersectional perspectives (e.a. “Chthulucene”, “Capitalocene”, “One Billion Black Anthropocenes or None”...)?
- Which cultural images or narratives of climate, crisis and collaboration shape perception and action and how have they changed over the last decades?
- What kind of temporalities, visions of the future, practices of remembrance, regional, planetary or generational perspectives are activated?
- What forms of agency, participation, community, and care are formed in collaborative processes that respond to the planetary crisis?
- Institutional, educational and social dimensions: What tasks, limitations and potentials arise in art, museum, university, and media related mediation? How can crises be made tangible, negotiable and collectively conceivable?
- How does religious normativity frame ecological questions? What notions of responsibility, common good, care or futurity emerge from (spiritual) reasoning? How are they interpreted today? What tensions arise between strongly normed preservation and lived religious practice regarding planetary crises?
- How are poetics in the Anthropocene described, communicated, aestheticized or remembered?

Organized by scholars from Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf in the fields of literary studies, art history, art mediation and cultural management, transcultural studies, as well as cultural studies (Jewish studies):

Lisa Bosbach, Dr. phil., Research associate in the Master's program Art Mediation and Cultural Management at the Institute of Art History. Her current research focuses on contemporary art that critically engages with the global ecological crisis, especially planetary tipping points, and its social implications.

Jasmin Grande, Dr. phil., Managing Director of “Moderne im Rheinland.” Center for Rhineland Studies. Her research is interdisciplinary and transmedial, focusing on questions of the regional as a transcultural space of memory.

Franziska Koch, Dr. phil.: Art historian and senior lecturer of transcultural studies. Institute of Cultural Studies. Her current research focuses on contemporary art that fuse (auto-)ethnographical, gendered narratives and imaging technologies to explore worlded perspectives in search of planetary futures.

Farina Marx, Dr. phil.: Research associate at the Institute of Jewish Studies. Her work focuses on rabbinic literature and close textual analysis of Jewish interpretive traditions.

Lara Jade Schumacher, M.A., Research associate at the Institute of Art History, her focus lies on how artistic and exhibitionary practices shape epistemologies of the future through speculative modes of understanding.

Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words for a 20-minute paper, along with a brief CV (100 words) to klimakrisekollab@hhu.de by February 22, 2026.

The conference will be taking place from October 5-7, 2026 at Haus der Universität (University House), Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, NRW, Germany. Travel expenses might be covered depending on funding approval. A hybrid panel is planned, allowing participants to join remotely, if needed.

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Reference:

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