OBOE Journal, No. 7: From the Fringes

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From the Fringes. Contemporary Curatorial and Creative Practices.

Guest editors Flavia Loscialpo and Alessandra Vaccari.

In recent years, questions of centrality, access, and legitimacy have grown increasingly urgent across global cultural fields. From the proliferation of ‘off programme’ exhibitions during major biennials to Indigenous-led curatorial projects that refuse Western exhibition paradigms, and from the strategic positioning of collateral events in the Venice Biennale to the rise of grassroots biennials across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, practitioners are actively renegotiating what it means to work at, from, or toward the margins.

These shifting dynamics open up critical questions: what possibilities emerge when curatorial or creative practice positions itself at the fringe?How do margins generate their own centres of gravity and innovation? And what can the study of fringe practices reveal about power, visibility, and agency within contemporary exhibitionary and cultural landscapes?

This special issue explores the transformative potential of curatorial and creative practices that emerge from, operate within, or deliberately align themselves with cultural fringes. It examines how exhibitions, biennials,
archives, fashion projects, and other curatorial or cultural interventions function as ‘contact zones’ (Pratt 1991; Clifford 1997) where marginalised knowledges, suppressed histories, and alternative imaginaries are produced, negotiated, and contested.

Building on bell hooks’s conceptualisation of the margin as a ‘space of radical openness’ (1989), this issue treats the fringe not simply as a site of exclusion, but as a locus of critical, aesthetic, and political possibility.
We seek to understand how practices situated at – or strategically inhabiting – the margins operate as spaces of opposition, negotiation, or tactical coexistence in relation to dominant institutions and discourses. How do such practices navigate regimes of visibility, legitimacy, and cultural and economic power? What kinds of publics, imaginaries, or forms of agency do they enable or prevent?

The concept of the ‘fringe’ is understood here not only as a spatial, geographical, or institutional position but as a critical stance – a mode of curating, making, and organising that works across, against, or alongside hegemonic structures.

OBOE Journal’s seventh issue, guest edited by Flavia Loscialpo and Alessandra Vaccari, invites

contributions that examine how practices from the fringes mediate, disrupt, or reconfigure institutional and disciplinary boundaries. Contributions may address critical points, case studies, or theoretical propositions. It also turns attention to the fringes of large-scale cultural events – collateral exhibitions, off-sites, informal networks, fashion interventions, and self-organised initiatives that surround and, at times, contest biennials and other major exhibitions. These parallel and peripheral spaces illuminate questions of dissent, complicity, resilience, and imagination in contemporary curatorial and creative practice.

We welcome proposals that engage critically and creatively with the notion of the fringe across curatorial, artistic, fashion, and other cultural practices.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:
- Acts of revolt in art, design, and creative industries (e.g., Biennale del dissenso, 1977; ANGA, 2024).
- Disobedient aesthetics and strategies of reimagination across artistic, curatorial, and fashion practices.
- Margins as mediators: practices that negotiate with institutions and industries without assimilating into them.
- Non-commercial, autonomous, and anti-institutional forms of cultural production.
- Archiving the ephemeral, the unofficial, and the marginalised.
- Shifting fringes: when marginal practices infiltrate, reshape, or unsettle dominant systems.
- Theories of margins, liminality, and polycentrism as sites of resistance and creativity.
- Borders, thresholds, and in-between spaces as conceptual, curatorial, and lived loci.
- Institutional critique, politics of display, and curating otherwise.
- The fringe as a space of radical potential, imagination, and world- making.
- The role of exhibitions: Does the act of exhibiting (making visibile) counter or fuel the radical openness of the fringes?

We invite contributions from scholars, curators, artists, designers, and cultural practitioners whose work critically engages with the theme of the fringe across exhibitionary or creative practices.

Typically, submissions may include scholarly articles (5,000–8,000 words, including references) alongside visual or curatorial essays, case studies, interviews, or experimental formats that expand conventional academic and curatorial methodologies (3,000-5,000 words).

Abstracts of 400 words should outline the focus, key arguments, and methodological or creative approach of the proposed contribution. Please include a short author bio (150-200 words) with institutional affiliation, if applicable.

Abstract deadline: March 1, 2026
Notification of acceptance: March 17, 2026
Paper submission: July 15, 2026
Issue publication: December 2026

Abstract and bios should be sent to info@oboejournal.com
All submissions should follow the journal's style guide and referencing format available at

https://www.oboejournal.com/index.php/oboe/information/authors

Please note that the publication of the text is subject to double peer review in case of scholarly papers and single peer review for shorter texts.

Reference:
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