

Inscribing Love between Catastrophe and Regeneration (Porto, 6–7 Oct 26)

CLUP, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade do Porto. CLUP - Centre for Linguistics, University of Porto, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto, Oct 6–07, 2026

Deadline: May 31, 2026

Cláudia Pimentel, Senhora da Hora

Inscribing Love between Catastrophe and Regeneration – in Words, Images, and further Materialities

This conference will be the third in the Inscribing Love series, a project launched in 2024 by PD Dr. Annika Nickenig (Freie Universität Berlin) and Dr. Jenny Koerber (University of Hamburg) at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), Hamburg, devoted to the Materialisation of Affects in a Global Perspective. This inaugural event was followed by the second conference in the series, Inscribing Love: The Medial, Multimodal and Material Manifestations of Love from Below and Above, organized by Prof. Dr. Eva L. Wyss and Piera Mazzaglia at the University of Koblenz. This year's conference, Inscribing Love between Catastrophe and Regeneration in Words, Images and Further Materialities, invites explorations of and contemplations on the dual nature of love in both everyday life and times of socio-political upheaval. We propose an investigation of love not merely as an emotion, but as a structural tension, the "order" that sustains human equilibrium and the "disorder" that precipitates internal and external catastrophe.

We seek to examine the "inscription of love" through the lens of those who have mapped its most volatile territories. As Roland Barthes notes in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1977), the amorous catastrophe is an extreme situation: "...a situation experienced by the subject as irremediably bound to destroy him" (p. 48). When the image of the other vanishes, the subject enters a "non-site," a state of factitious mourning where one's very structure as a lover is lost. This vulnerability is echoed by bell hooks, who reminds us that "The practice of love offers no place of safety. We risk loss, hurt, pain. We risk being acted upon by forces outside our control" (2001, 153). If love is a site of risk, it is also the ultimate site of revelation and survival. James Baldwin (1963, 95) observed that "Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within", suggesting that the "catastrophe" of love is often a necessary shedding of the ego. Ultimately, as Viktor Frankl recorded from the depths of the most literal human catastrophes, "The salvation of man is through love and in love... a man who has nothing left in this world still may know bliss... in the contemplation of his beloved" (2006[1959], 37).

In this context, we suggest the concept of catastrophe (*katastrophē*) in its Aristotelian sense, as formulated in the *Poetics*: not as a disaster or calamity, but as the moment of the dramatic denouement in which the sequence of events reaches its final resolution. It is at this culminating point of the action that tragedy also fulfils its cathartic function,

arousing in the spectator emotions of fear and empathy whose experience leads to catharsis (katharsis).

A key aim of the conference is to explore the extent to which the various experiences of crisis and catastrophe, on the one hand, and rescue or repair, on the other, are linked to specific media and materialities of representation and techniques of remembrance.

Barthes, R. (1977). *A lover's discourse: Fragments* (R. Howard, Trans.). Hill and Wang.

hooks, b. (2001). *All about love: New visions*. William Morrow.

Baldwin, J. (1963). *The fire next time*. Dial Press.

Frankl, V. E. (2006). *Man's search for meaning*. Beacon Press. (Original work published 1959)

We invite submissions that analyse the "inscription of love" in the contexts of catastrophe, salvation, and regeneration, across a wide spectrum of genres and media forms, including:

- Digital & Ephemeral: Social media posts, instant messaging, and the "liquid" discourse of modern dating.
- Institutional & Curative: The language of self-help, therapeutic discourse, and the "ordering" of emotional chaos.
- Artistic & Literary: Poetry, prose, photography, visual arts, and material artifacts as sites where the order/disorder dialectic is performed.
- Temporal & Spatial: Exploring and transforming the space "before" and "after" the breakdown, practices of remembrance, projections into the future, measures of prevention or compensation.
- The "Urgent" Archive: Letters, journals, graffiti, and testimonies from contexts of actual physical catastrophe (war, natural disasters, etc.), where love is the final remaining structure.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Target Disciplines: Linguistics, Cultural History, Art History and Visual Culture, Literary and Cultural Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy.

Target Approaches and Methods: Linguistic, visual, and material analysis methods. Abstract

Requirements: 250-300 words; 3-5 keywords; format: MS Word. Abstracts should be sent to: https://easyabs.linguistlist.org/conference/Inscribing_Love/

Presentations formats:

- 20 minutes talk followed by 10 minutes for discussion.
- Short oral communication - 5 minutes.
- Posters.

IMPORTANT DATES

Submission Deadline: 31st May 2026

Notification of Acceptance: 15th June 2026

Conference Dates: 6th - 7th October 2026

Modality: In person

Registration Fees

Registration with paper standard rate: 50.00€;

Registration with paper special rate (post-graduate students): 25.00€; Participation as listener: free of charge and free of registration;

CLUP members: free of charge.

In the case of papers by more than one author and in the case of thematic panels, each member must register individually. Each participant may only submit one contribution.

Organizing Committee: Alexandra Pinto, Ya'ara Gil-Glazer, Cláudia Pimentel

Scientific Committee: Alexandra Pinto, Ya'ara Gil-Glazer, Cláudia Pimentel, Annika Nickenig, Jenny Koerber, Eva Wyss, Piera Mazzaglia, Orli Dahan.

Host Institution: CLUP, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade do Porto. CLUP - Centre for Linguistics, University of Porto, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto.

For additional information, please contact: inscribing.love.porto.conference@gmail.com

Reference:

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