# On Waters, Migration and Ecological Transformation (Athens, 1–2 April 27)

Goethe-Institut Athen, Athens, Apr 1–02, 2027
Deadline: Oct 30, 2026

Curatorial Matters Team

Curatorial Matters returns for its second iteration, relocating from Helsinki (PUBLICS, 2025) to Athens (Goethe-Institut Athen, 2027). Building on the symposium's commitment to the curatorial as a situated, relational, and research-led mode of knowledge production, this edition approaches the Mediterranean not as a fixed geography or a coherent cultural identity, but as a contested epistemic field: a space of movement, exchange, conflict, and transformation that exceeds inherited geopolitical, colonial, and territorial boundaries. In dialogue with critical Mediterranean and postcolonial thought, including Iain Chambers and Marta Cariello's postcolonial rethinking of the Mediterranean as an entangled, tri-continental space, and recent artistic and curatorial research the symposium engages with imaginaries of mobility, memory and relation that frame the region within and beyond Eurocentric projections.

Resonating with Astrida Neimanis's hydrofeminist thinking, water is understood as a way of thinking through relation, permeability, embodiment, vulnerability, and shared yet uneven exposure. At the same time, the Mediterranean Sea is not only a space of circulation and encounter. It is also a militarised, juridically fragmented, and environmentally transformed space: a zone of surveillance, obstruction, extraction, non-assistance, and death. Forensic Oceanography has shown us how the sea itself becomes an evidentiary archive of border violence and political abandonment. From this perspective, migration can be understood as an ongoing condition through which cultures, languages, memories, and forms of belonging are continually negotiated.

Ecological transformation further exposes the shared yet uneven realities of climate breakdown, resource extraction, water scarcity, pollution, coastal change, and environmental injustice across Mediterranean contexts. Building on T.J. Demos's decolonial ecology, the symposium asks how artistic and curatorial practices might address ecological crises without reproducing universalising narratives of the Anthropocene that obscure historical responsibility. The symposium is also informed by recent artistic and curatorial research that has approached the sea as archive, medium, border, commons, infrastructure, and more-than-human ecology, including Barbara Casavecchia's Thus waves come in pairs, Chiara Cartuccia's Neither on Land nor at Sea, Stefanie Hessler's Tidalectics, and Territorial Agency's Oceans in Transformation.

The symposium brings together artists, curators, researchers, writers and educators from across and beyond the Mediterranean to develop a plural and situated dialogue across practices, disciplines and geographies. Exhibitions, artistic research, public programmes, archives, pedagogical experiments, performative formats, and counter-forensic practices are invited as sites of transla-

tion, opacity, and relation—echoing Federica Bueti's recent thinking through Sabir, the Mediterranean's historical lingua franca—as well as activation and kinship, bringing together situated knowledge while remaining attentive to the asymmetries, tensions, and histories that shape them.

We invite 20-minute presentations (papers, visual essays, performative contributions, etc.) grounded in practice and/or theory, asking what becomes possible when plural approaches to the Mediterranean are brought into dialogue, and what new alliances, questions, or forms of solidarity might emerge. We particularly encourage proposals from early- and mid-career curators, artists, and researchers.

Keynotes:
Maria-Thalia Carras, Director & Curator, Tavros, Athens
Reem Shadid, Independent Curator

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, curatorial approaches that engage with:
- The Mediterranean as a contested epistemic field within and beyond European frameworks
- Water as method: hydrofeminism, hydropolitics, and curating across fluid borders
- Migration as an ongoing condition of cultural negotiation and belonging
- Ecological transformation, climate breakdown, and environmental injustice in Mediterranean contexts
- Situated and relational methodologies for curatorial and collective research
- Cultural memory, archival politics, and alternative modes of transmission
- Solidarities, alliances, and world-building practices across the Mediterranean

Please send a single PDF or Word document including a 250-word abstract, presentation title, five keywords and a 150-word biography to curatorialmatters2025@gmail.com by 30 October 2026.

Applicants will be notified by early December 2026.

This programme is realised in collaboration with Goethe-Institut Athen, with support from the Department of Art and Media, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Aalto University, and Leeds Arts University.

Please note that we are unable to cover contributors' travel costs; invitation letters can be provided in support of funding applications.

Publication
We intend to develop an edited volume and/or special issue featuring extended versions of selected contributions; further details will be shared following the symposium.

Organisers:
Dr Patrizia Costantin (Lecturer in Curating and MA Art and Media Programme Director, Aalto University)
Dr Marianna Tsionki (Associate Professor & University Curator, Leeds Arts University / IKT Member)

References
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Neimanis, Astrida. Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology. Bloomsbury, 2017.
Terranova, Tiziana and Iain Chambers, “Technology, Postcoloniality, and the Mediterranean”. Eflux Journal. Issue #123, December 2021.
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Reference:
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