Refract Vol. 6, "Collectivities"

Refract: An Open Access Visual Studies Journal
Deadline: Nov 15, 2026

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What brings people together? What makes a collective possible? How do artists and cultural producers gather, organize, think, feel, and create together while working within and against institutions of power? What new forms of representation and material practice emerge through collective modes of creation? What tensions and power relations shape collective work?

For Volume 6 of Refract, Collectivities, we invite contributions that critically examine the spaces, labors, and affects that mediate collective, or otherwise collaborative, practices. We are interested not only in what collectivities produce, but also in the infrastructures and relationships that sustain them. These might include: the shared attachments that animate collective forms of research and preservation; the visible and less visible labors of skill-sharing and consciousness-raising that enable materials and knowledges to circulate, and artists to mobilize; and the spaces—official, provisional, or clandestine—that serve as both backdrop to and object of collective artistic and political intervention.

While we embrace the generative potentials of collective practice, we also recognize that collectivities are rarely uncomplicated. They can give rise to tensions and imbalances that challenge efforts to move together against the status quo; at the same time, productive contestation can reorient these efforts toward new ends. As such, we are also interested in the ways that conflict and difference fuel, hinder, or transform collective practices.

We invite submissions that explore, but are not limited to, the following themes:
- Collaborative artistic, archival, and curatorial projects
- Collective spaces of skill-sharing and creation, including studios, workshops, digital platforms, and outdoor spaces
- Artist collectives, networks, coalitions, and labor unions
- Community archives, libraries, and art registries
- Visual and media activism
- Artist engagements with mutual aid, solidarity, and movement work
- Artist engagements with assemblies, people’s tribunals, public forums, and more-than-human assemblages

We accept submissions that emphasize visually-based research from a range of fields, including

visual studies, film and media studies, art history, architectural history, anthropology, museum studies, archival studies, abolition studies, critical race and ethnic studies, and queer, gender, and feminist studies. Academics and artists at all stages in their careers, as well as independent scholars and cultural practitioners, are encouraged to apply. We particularly encourage submissions by graduate students.

We invite full submissions for the following:
Written/scholarly submissions (3,000–7,000 words) can take the form of single- or co-authored essays, artistic-scholarly projects, interviews, and roundtables for anonymous peer-review.

We invite proposals (300-words) for the following:
Creative/artistic submissions, including visual art, media, sound/audio, photography, creative writing, and other formats that complement a digital publication (up to 15 images or work files with a 1,200-word project statement).
Exhibition, film, or book reviews (700–1,000 words). In your proposal, please include your object of review, your approach, and how you think it relates to the theme of the issue. Undergraduate students are especially encouraged to submit a review.

Also required for submissions:
-Your proposal or submission (as Word doc)
-100-word bio
-Work samples (up to 5; for creative/artistic submissions only)
-Contact information: name, institution, program & year (if applicable), and email

Be sure your submissions are accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We recommend using built-in software as found in Microsoft Word and/or Adobe Acrobat.

All submissions and proposals are due November 15, 2026. For selected proposals, contributions must be completed by January 11, 2027. Please send submissions here: https://journalpub.escholarship.org/refract/submissions/
To learn more about Refract or our open access publishing platform, eScholarship, visit our website (https://escholarship.org/uc/refract) or email us at refractjournal@ucsc.edu.

Reference:
CFP: Refract Vol. 6, "Collectivities". In: ArtHist.net, Oct 6, 2026 (accessed Nov 9, 2026),
<https://arthist.net/archive/54552>.