



STREAM

# S1. Absence and Its Afterparties

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DESCRIPTION

Absence does stuff in the world. It pushes, pulls, impinges. It orients bodies towards or away from unfinished pasts and unmade futures, producing (and unspooling) its own material-semiotic inventory and strange time-space as it gathers up that which is no longer, has never been, or is not-yet. This panel is an invitation to think with the ways we come to know absence, particularly through affects and materialities that trouble simplistic divisions between here and not-here, and how we respond to all this through practices of knowing and unknowing.

We explore absence as a violent yet seething and generative force that meddles with time, space, and the ways we navigate the overlappings of both. In doing so, we linger somewhere between emergence and dissolution. Absences born of colonial dispossession, ecological destruction, and social violence accumulate as residues in landscapes, logics, bodies, and institutions to unsettle temporality and move us towards the unfinished and uncanny (Gordon 1997, Gordillo 2014; Sharpe 2016; Snaza 2020, Stoler 2013). But absences also lean forward, with promissory narratives, anticipatory modes of governance, and cruel optimisms populating imagined futures with affective investments that consume the present (Adams et al 2009; Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011; Coleman 2023). In this way, dreamworlds of progress haunt the present as a particular con/figuration of ghost (Tsing et al 2017). By evoking 'the afterparty' of absence we consider the non-linear time-space flickering between presence and absence. The Afterparty is where people stay too long, where memories sediment, where time gets strange, and where anything can happen. We consider the afterparty a site of unexpected knowledge production, a potential space for remaking damaged worlds. It is here, dancing with spectres and the speculative, that we can embrace what Avery Gordon (1997) terms the 'something to be done'. The arts and non-

Western epistemologies have long navigated knowledge produced by this time-space much better than conventional academic inquiry. What might it mean to take seriously the methods that these practices offer, departing from inherited ways of seeing, thinking and sensing and placing them alongside affective and new materialist theory/ies that have never neglected the capacities of absence and its myriad cuffs, folds, and tremors? We invite papers on hauntings, premonitions, ruins, decompositions, scars, slipstreams, archives, fermentations, investments, phantom limbs, altars, rot, quantum entanglements, wakes, barometric pressures, half-lives, abandoned mines and much more that explore the following questions:

- How are absences rendered knowable or unknowable?
- What does knowing or unknowing absences do to our navigation through time and space?
- What politics, orientations, practices, make residue or traces more noticeable?
- How are we provoked to know in excess of what is right in front of us? And how is that unknowing/differently knowing required of us in moments like the one that we are navigating now?
- How might knowledge practices and arts of making based in speculative care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), transcorporality (Alaimo 2010), and intra-relation (Barad 2003) help reconfigure trajectories into the past and future?