



STREAM

S4. Affective Oceanic Encounters in the MAKEing

STREAM ORGANIZER(S)

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DESCRIPTION

This panel plunges into oceanic waters to frolic between the boundaries of methods and explore what might happen when we swim away from Knowledge towards an energetics of the otherwise. Inspired by the littoral zone—a shifting space between high and low tides and affected by earth's proximity to the moon—the panel considers watery Methods, Atmospheres, knowledges and Energies. Through its dense, dynamic, permeable, affective atmosphere, the ocean invites an “energetics of the otherwise: for sensing, imagining, and connecting with new found energies, not in ways that ignore the piling up of violence upon violence, but on the contrary in ways that attend to the sparking up of energies within the debris, for thinking and connecting and caring otherwise” (Barad 2025, p 407).

We invite contributions that explore the sea as a space of affective contagion, where the watery potential of swimming-with MAKEs fresh imaginaries to animate and enliven ecological and political entanglements otherwise. Contributions for the panel might be inspired by, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- What forms of "knowing-otherwise" emerge when the human is no longer the apex predator, but a clumsy, displaced visitor, a transient dweller (Oppermann, 2025) in a marine ecology? How might these watery embodied knowledges (with a lower case k) un/make, refresh, reboot, wash through us in unquantifiable ways?
- What political, ethical, ontological and epistemological lessons can be learned from oceanic creatures, and what Stacy Alaimo (2025) refers to as 'creaturely aesthetics' in the ocean? How do they disrupt conventional scientific epistemologies and a colonising environmental gaze? Consider for example practices such as the echolocation of the toothed whale, shapeshifting of cephalopods, sessility of kelp forests, the lateral line of fishes and cleaning stations in coral reefs?

- The ocean can be regarded as a litmus test for ecological planetary damages. How do human activities such as releasing effluent and factory waste into the ocean, deep sea mining and other invasive and destructive acts impact on the planet including the ocean and its creatures?
- What happens when we immerse ourselves and become-with the porosity of the ocean and the shock of cold water? How might such encounters untether humans from conventional notions, such as the bounded self?
- How might group ocean swims or communal snorkeling practices be creatively regenerative for collective capacities to deal with fascist and other contemporary destructive challenges?
- How could affective oceanic encounters queer taken-for-granted assumptions like space, time and matter and bring indeterminacy's radical potential to the fore?
- How do indigenous and local histories of swimming, diving, and navigating unsettle and decentre Western, rationalist paradigms of Knowledge? How do haunted histories of segregation, privatisation of coastlines, fishing livelihoods and generational trauma shape the affective atmosphere of the beach and the ocean for marginalised bodies?