



STREAM

S24. The Making of an Affective Cosmos: Between Art, Science, and Philosophy

STREAM ORGANIZER(S)

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DESCRIPTION

A combination of knowledge and atmosphere, this stream is oriented to the very literal manner in which the cosmos, the cosmic, and cosmology have infused our conceptions of knowledge and reality and how these themes have enjoyed a resurgence of sorts in multiple fields (for instance, affect studies, new materialism, Deleuze Studies, process philosophies, environmental studies) which seek to re-potentialize and rethink the relation of affect to bodies, earth, and universe. How can cosmological thinking expand our understanding of, and sensitivity to, affect? What new affects are unleashed when we turn our theoretical attention to the cosmos, allowing perhaps that we must traverse the boundaries between philosophy, art, and the sciences to do so? Cosmological questioning is also a resource for great imaginings, from different worlds, to the reconfiguration of space and time, when we challenge ourselves to think beyond the human, beyond even the earth, to the outward bounds of reality, we open possibilities for rethinking our ethics, our politics, and our very modes of existence. This is where the creative spirit of affect studies takes hold, producing a new and fecund atmosphere for thinking and being anew. We challenge contributors to this stream to use the powers of the cosmos, the open-ended questioning that has always infused thought and philosophy as pertaining to the ineffability and expansiveness of this topic, to think differently and create new concepts which challenge the boundaries between the sensible, the intelligible, and the affective.

One may find an authentic cosmological sensibility in much recent continental philosophy, namely for thinkers like Nietzsche, Whitehead, Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger, Axelos, as well as Deleuze and Guattari, yet the tradition of looking to the stars, contemplating the atmosphere, and imagining brightly the ineffability and possible significance of the cosmos is baked into the deepest deposits of human thought. This stream invites participants to address this history through any variety of the compendium of thinkers whose work addresses the cosmic, but to do so with fresh eyes, through the

lessons and interventions of affect theories which have expanded our understanding of the vitality and variety of materialities and challenged the priorities of the purely human. This stream also provides the opportunity to entertain the confluence between the sciences and philosophy of cosmology. Our scientific knowledge of the strange phenomena of the cosmos, from the molecular to the macro, has yet to find home in our conceptual frameworks. Creating bridges between these areas of conceptuality, philosophy, and science is crucially needed in our quest to reimagine the world and our place in it. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that some of the most fecund and productive spaces in which a cosmological sensibility has been engendered is in the artworld itself. How can art inspire thought and offer tools for helping us understand the affective nature of the cosmos? Papers in this stream might include topics such as:

- The ways by which contemporary artworks strive to grasp non-terrestrial forces that are affecting the world's materiality
- Abstraction in art as an expression of natural entities being affected by c(ha)osmic forces
- The challenges in expressing artistically invisible, cosmic forces that are affecting materiality
- The affects involved in recent theories in scientific cosmology (chaotic universe, fractal universe, relativity, string theory, loop quantum gravity, etc.)
- The status of affects in speculative cosmology
- The (in)compatibility of human experience with scientific cosmology
- Cosmic affects as connectors between the human experience and vast, impersonal structures
- How might philosophy contribute to newer cosmological questionings at the crossroads of art and science
- The reassessment of the relation with the Earth in light of the affective turn