

SOCIETY FOR ATMOSPHERIC STUDIES
INAUGURAL CONFERENCE



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS
24-26 SEPTEMBER 2026 · KOBE, JAPAN

The background is an abstract watercolor wash. It features a mix of warm colors: light beige, golden yellow, and soft pink. These colors are blended together in a fluid, organic manner, creating a sense of movement and depth. The edges of the color washes are irregular and feathered, typical of watercolor painting. The overall effect is a textured, artistic backdrop for the text.

*NEW FRONTIERS AND
POSSIBILITIES IN
ATMOSPHERIC STUDIES*

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

SOFAS

Society for Atmospheric Studies

INAUGURAL CONFERENCE

24–26 September 2026

Kobe University
ANA Crowne Plaza Kobe

Organized by:

KOIAS

Kobe Institute for Atmospheric Studies
神戸雰囲気学研究所

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

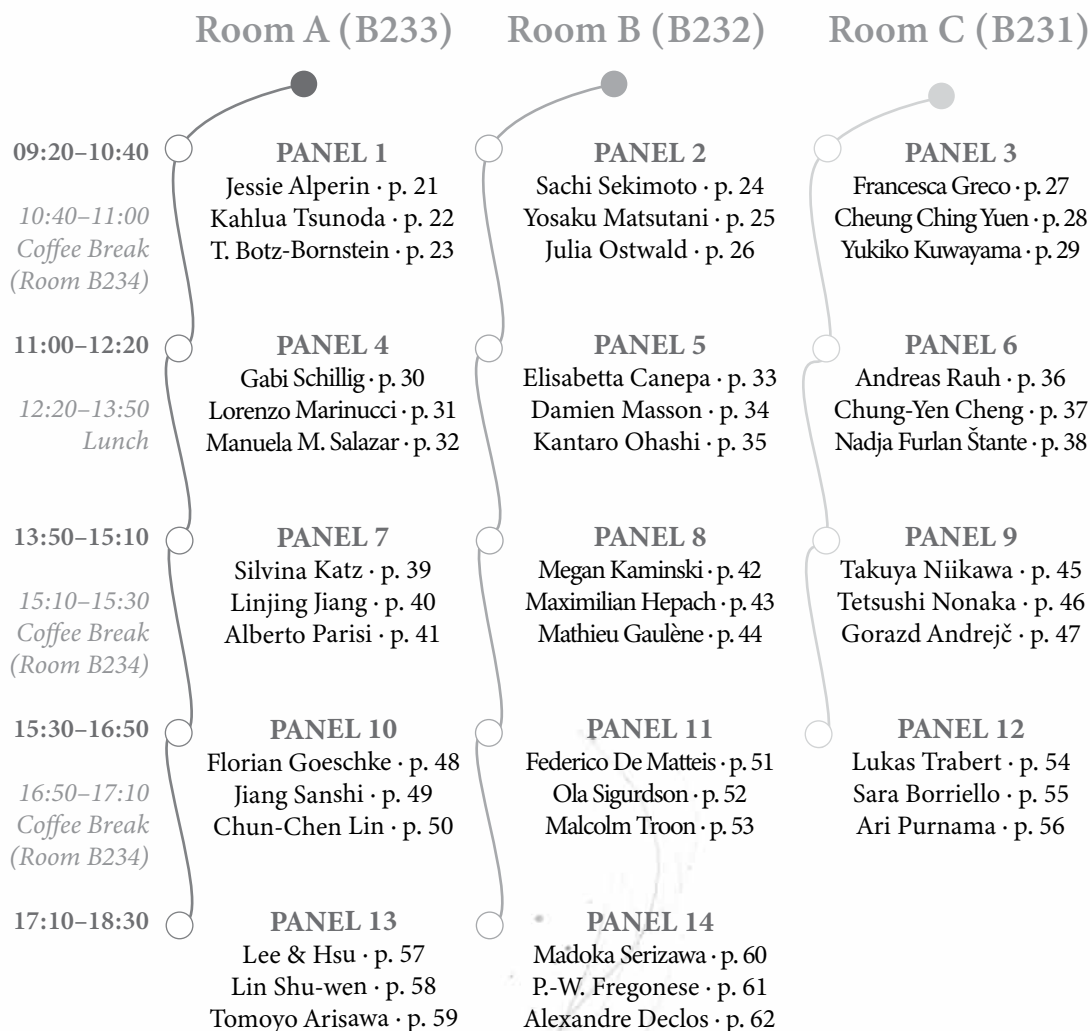
THU 24 • FOUNDING & PLENARY

ANA Crowne Plaza Kobe • Rosemary Room • 9th Floor

09:00–10:00	○	SOFAS Inauguration & First Meeting Greetings • Regulations • <i>Atmosphaerica</i> • ASK	
10:00–10:15	○	Rie Koderä, Romaric Jannel, Season Lao Introducing Season Lao's exhibition	p. 64
10:15–10:30	○	katrinem and Sam Auinger Atmospheric Listening / Breathing In	p. 63
10:30–11:00	○	Talk 1 Tonino Griffëro	p. 9
11:00–11:30	○	Talk 2 David Howes	p. 10
11:30–12:00	○	Talk 3 Lenart Škof	p. 11
12:00–13:00		Lunch • ANA Crowne Plaza Kobe	
13:00–13:30	○	Talk 4 Bruce Bégout	p. 12
13:30–14:00	○	Talk 5 Shanti Sumartojo	p. 13
14:00–14:30	○	Talk 6 Nicolas Rémy & Evangelia Paxinou	p. 14
14:30–15:00		Talk 7 Paulo Gajanigo	p. 15
15:00–15:20		Coffee Break	
15:20–15:50	○	Talk 8 Birgit Breidenbach	p. 16
15:50–16:20	○	Talk 9 Kerstin Thomas	p. 17
16:20–16:50	○	Talk 10 Fabian Heubel	p. 18
16:50–17:20	○	Talk 11 Purushottama Bilimoria	p. 19
17:20–17:50	○	Talk 12 Shinji Kajitani	p. 20
19:00–21:00		Dinner • ANA Crowne Plaza Kobe	

FRI 25 • PANELS • Choose your route:

Kobe University • Graduate School of Humanities



ALSO ON FRIDAY

10:00–16:30 • Exhibition · p. 64
Season Lao • Yamaguchi Seishi Memorial House

10:30 or 15:00 • Exhibition Tours •
With Kodera & Jannel • 30 minutes • Sign-up required

13:20–13:50 • Campus Soundwalk · p. 63
With Sam Auinger & katrinem • Optional

16:50–18:30 • Scent and Logos Workshop · p. 65
With Lorenzo Marinucci • Room D (B235) • Sign-up required

18:45–19:00 • Venti Journal Aperitivo •
with Jessie Alperin, Rie Kodera, Mao Matsuyama, and
Yuho Hisayama • at Kobe University Cafeteria

SAT 26 • CLOSING

ANA Crowne Plaza Kobe • Jasmine Room • 9th Floor

09:00–09:30 • Plenary
KOIAS Partnerships and other announcements

09:30–10:30 • SOFAS General Assembly
with voting

10:30–10:45 • Break

10:45–11:15 • KOIAS Fellows
Early-Career Roundtable

11:15–12:00 • Closing Plenary:
The Future of Atmospheric Studies

Final Greetings

katrinem and Sam Auinger
Atmospheric Listening / Breathing Out

Atmospheric Studies: A Plural Field of Possibilities

Yuho Hisayama 久山雄甫

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS

When I began working on cross-cultural phenomenology of atmosphere at TU Darmstadt under the supervision of Gernot Böhme, there was no broad platform bringing together the different strands of research on atmosphere across cultures and disciplines. There were important traditions and initiatives, but no common forum in which they could readily meet. To work on atmosphere then was, to an extent, to work alone. Yet one conviction was clear: atmosphere was a subject of real importance, and one that could be adequately explored only across cultures and across disciplines.

Many years later, this inaugural conference in Kobe marks the founding of precisely such a platform. Scholars, artists, and practitioners from different backgrounds are gathering to establish the Society for Atmospheric Studies (SOFAS). That so many are coming together here from far and wide—and that others are joining us online across many time zones—is something we do not take for granted, and something for which we are deeply grateful.

The theme of our first meeting is “New Frontiers and Possibilities in Atmospheric Studies.” Atmosphere is not simply one more object to be added to the existing catalog of research. Atmospheric experience unsettles several of the distinctions on which modern institutionalized scholarship has long relied, and its intellectual promise lies precisely in that unsettling.

Consider first the distinction between subject and object, beginning with a familiar question: Is an atmosphere a private feeling, or does it belong to the surrounding world? A tense atmosphere may be sensed by several people in a room at once, and yet be experienced bodily and differently by each. Atmosphere belongs neither wholly within us nor wholly outside us. We do not stand before atmospheres and observe them; we find ourselves “always already” affected by and involved in them.

It likewise exceeds the familiar division of the senses. The conventional model of the so-called “five senses” is historically and culturally specific. A “bright voice,” a “heavy silence,” a “cold atmosphere”: such expressions suggest that atmospheric perception often operates synaesthetically, before or across its division into separate senses. To study atmosphere is also to ask how lived-bodily perception is organized at a more fundamental level.



It also unsettles the separation of space and time. Atmospheres are commonly understood in spatial terms: they surround us, fill rooms, settle over landscapes. Yet they are no less temporal. A coming storm may already be present as *kehai*, a Japanese word for the felt sign of something that is not yet there or is no longer there—something approaching, or something that has departed but still lingers as resonance or trace. Atmosphere belongs to a lived time-space, a “thick present,” in which anticipation and withdrawal are woven together.

And it complicates the distinction between sensibility and intellect. What we feel is shaped by what we know, remember, and expect—consciously or unconsciously. The atmosphere of a historical place, for example, may be profoundly shaped by our knowledge of what happened there. Feeling and understanding are neither clearly divided nor opposed; in atmospheric experience they are often inseparably intertwined.

Atmosphere thus repeatedly crosses these boundaries. Part of the conceptual elusiveness of atmosphere lies precisely in its refusal to remain within these divisions. Various strands of what is often called postmodern thought have sought, in different ways, to unsettle or move beyond such divisions. The study of atmosphere, however, allows us to pursue this effort through the concrete textures of everyday experience. Atmosphere brings us to the threshold between what can be described and what can only be sensed.

Along similar lines, breath is one place where the literal and lived senses of atmosphere meet without being merged. In the rhythm of inhalation and exhalation, we take in the air that sustains the body and find ourselves in the mood of a room, a city, a season. To breathe is already to be exposed to what surrounds us, and to share in something that no one privately owns. In this way, breathing reminds us that bodies are porous, and that this porosity is not a failure of boundedness but a condition of atmospheric experience.

Atmospheres, however, are not only matters of comfort, harmony, or beauty. We may be carried by them, absorbed into them, manipulated through them, even governed by them. Political, economic, social, and technological life is shaped by forms of atmospheric power, including, in some contexts, what has been called atmospheric violence—forms of power that are especially difficult to recognize because they often work indirectly: invisibly, seductively, or under the appearance of ease and gentleness. Atmospheric Studies must therefore be descriptive and critical at once, asking how atmospheres orient behavior, distribute attention, exercise power, and shape inclusion and exclusion. Such knowledge can move readily from analysis to design, and that passage

calls for critical reflection on the purposes, conditions, and consequences of shaping atmospheres. This is, in the end, a question of agency: how can we sustain the possibility of responsible action without returning to the fiction of a subject wholly detached from the atmospheres that affect us, sustain us, and at times overpower us?

Nor is it incidental that this society is being founded now. We meet at a time when international cooperation itself has become fragile in many parts of the world. We meet as artificial intelligence and virtual environments make it increasingly possible to generate and personalize immersive environments—and with them to modulate atmospheres—by design. And we meet while the physical atmosphere in the most literal sense—the air we breathe and the planetary conditions that sustain life—is undergoing profound transformation. Of course, these are very different phenomena. Yet each reminds us, in its own register, that what surrounds us is never merely a passive background. Atmospheres shape how worlds become perceptible, habitable, desirable, threatening, or shared. The mood of a political moment, the engineered environments of digital media, and the changing conditions of the planetary atmosphere all pose, in different ways, the question of how human and more-than-human life takes place within conditions that both exceed us and act upon us. At such a moment, the study of atmosphere is not a luxury. It is a way of asking how we inhabit a shared world, and how that world is being transformed.

SOFAS should not bind Atmospheric Studies to a single worldview. The plural in “Atmospheric Studies” is far more than a grammatical choice. It expresses a methodological and institutional commitment to multiplicity and polyphony: to a field that grows through different perspectives, traditions, practices, and forms of knowledge, and through the encounters—and sometimes the disagreements—between them.

We want SOFAS to be cross-cultural. Our vocabularies of atmosphere are themselves historically situated and culturally inflected, and there are many terms through which atmospheric or respiratory experience can be approached: *Atmosphäre*, *Stimmung*, *ambiance*, *mood*, *qifēn*, *fun'iki*, *qi* and *ki*, *prāṇa*, *pneuma*, *spiritus*, *Geist*. These terms are not equivalents, nor do they belong to exactly the same conceptual register. That is precisely why their differences, asymmetries, and partial untranslatability can become resources for thought. Even the Japanese name of this society, *Fun'iki Gakkai*, is not a perfect equivalent of its English name; that non-equivalence is not a defect to be corrected, but something to think with.

Now I am using English, and much of our work together will be conducted in it. This is a practical necessity, not a claim of linguistic priority. English, like every language, brings with it particular ways of articulating what can be felt and said. Some of us, myself included, are speaking in a language we did not grow up in, and some of what matters most will be easier to say in another. Let us be patient with one another—with hesitations, with words left in their original form, with meanings that arrive slowly—and treat the effort of translation as part of the work itself rather than a preliminary to it.

We also want SOFAS to be cross-disciplinary. Of course, it does not begin on empty ground, for it takes its place within a rich intellectual landscape shaped by New Phenomenology and the aesthetics of atmospheres, somaesthetics, everyday aesthetics, research on architectural and urban ambiances, Sensory Studies, Respiratory Philosophy, affect theory, enactivism, environmental humanities, and many neighboring fields and initiatives in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences alike. Its purpose is not to replace these traditions or networks, but to create a shared space in which they can encounter one another across disciplinary boundaries.

The contributions gathered at this inaugural conference already show how broad this field can be: from philosophy and phenomenology to literature, visual culture, sound, performance, and digital media, including video games; from architectural, urban, and ecological atmospheres to political, technological, medical, and historical questions; and from martial arts, calligraphy, and other embodied practices to theoretical reflection. The programme also moves across forms, from written scholarship to the exhibition and performances that accompany our meeting. What holds these approaches together is not a single theory, but a shared willingness to take atmospheres seriously: as dimensions of experience, as forces that shape our relations with the world and with one another, and as occasions for rethinking established forms of knowledge. Together, they invite us to attend more closely to the tenuous yet forceful dimensions of our shared worlds.

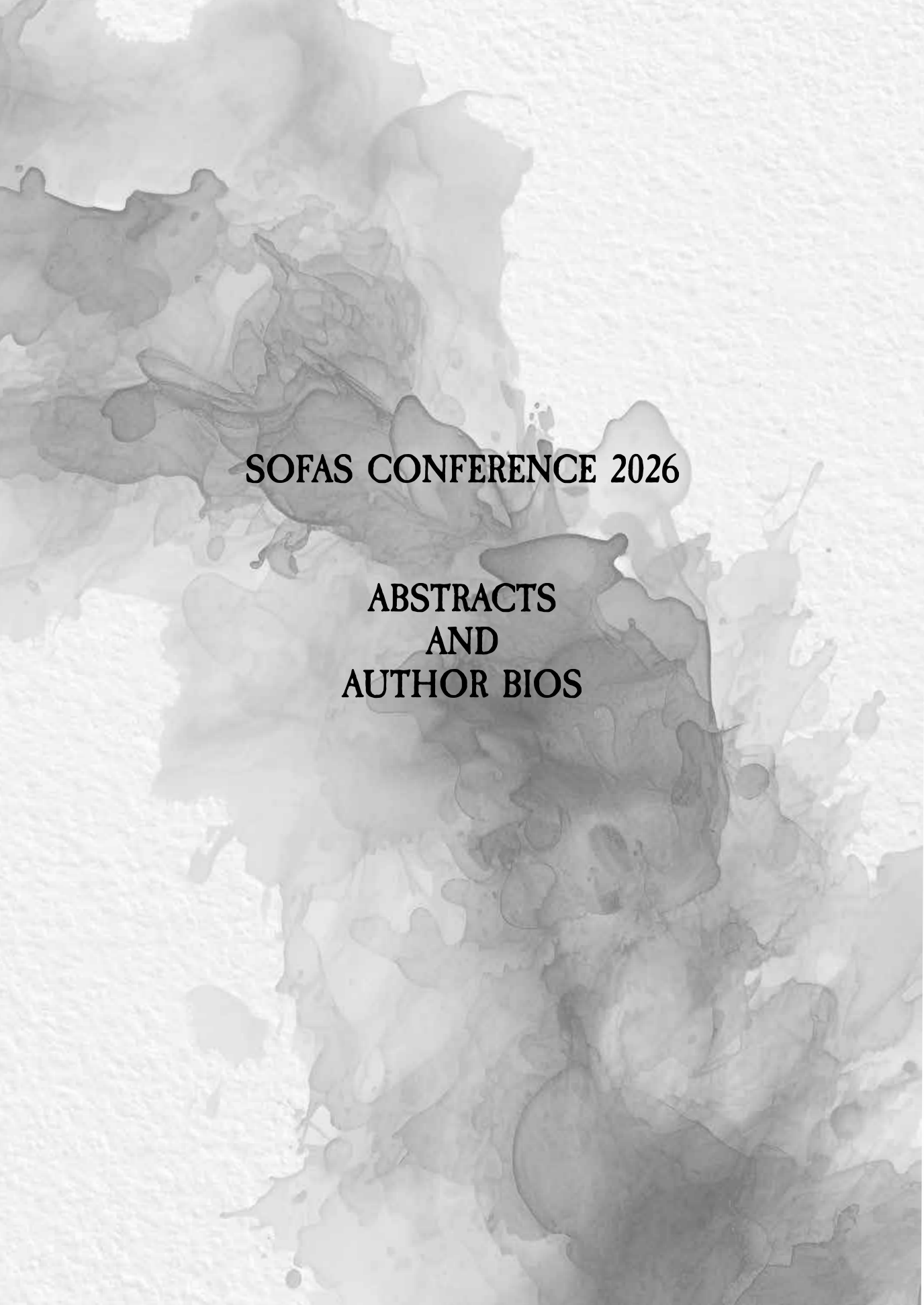
A society, however, is not only a way of thinking; it is also a set of practices. Over these days we will adopt our regulations, introduce our yearbook, *Atmosphaerica*, hold our first general assembly, and give the floor to early-career researchers whose work will carry this field further than any of us can now foresee. The Kobe Institute for Atmospheric Studies, KOIAS, is pleased to offer a home for this first gathering, which has been made possible by the JSPS Core-to-Core Program and by the generous support of our sponsors and partner institutions. To all of them we are sincerely grateful. But SOFAS belongs to no single institution, country, tradition, or discipline. It belongs to those who take part in it. Our hope is that the circle beginning here will continue to widen: across cultures, disciplines, and generations.

Against the relative isolation of those early years, the sight of such a community gathered here is nothing short of extraordinary. Thank you so much for coming, for sharing your work, and for helping to bring SOFAS into being—a mode of being that could hardly be anything but atmospheric, hopefully in the best possible sense.

Welcome to Kobe.

Welcome to SOFAS.

Yuho Hisayama 久山雄甫 is an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Humanities, Kobe University, and Director of the Kobe Institute for Atmospheric Studies (KOIAS). He holds PhDs from TU Darmstadt and Kyoto University and has received the JSPS Ikushi Prize. His research spans German literature and philosophy, the history of ideas, and Atmospheric Studies, with particular interests in Goethe, the concepts of *Geist* and *ki*, and cross-cultural approaches. His publications include *Erfahrungen des ki* (2014), alongside numerous works in Japanese, German, and English. In 2026, he guest-edited the special issue “Atmosphere and Breath in Cultural Diversity” of *Sophia* (Springer Nature).

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SOFAS CONFERENCE 2026

**ABSTRACTS
AND
AUTHOR BIOS**

The Unresolved Problems of Atmospherology: Cornerstones or Challenges?

Tonino Griffero

University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy | Atmospheric Spaces

The paper, building on the now extensive interdisciplinary debate on atmospheres, aims to offer a concise discussion of some unresolved problems within the atmospheric approach. To mention just a few examples: whether it might be preferable to propose both ontological taxonomies of different kinds of atmospheres and phenomenological taxonomies of different modes of encountering them; whether atmospheres can themselves be intentionally generated or whether one can only produce the conditions of possibility for their emergence; whether atmospheres are perceived as thematic objects or rather function as conditions of possibility for more focused perceptions; whether they legitimately exist only from a first-person perspective or can also be translated into a third-person framework; whether the “between” they bring into being is relational or pre-relational (fusional) in nature; whether atmospheric qualities are linguistically conditioned; whether the felt-bodily resonance they elicit in the perceiver is wholly passive or may also involve reactions of resistance and critical overcoming; whether, within a conception of existence that grants primacy to pathic experience and befallness, a “critical theory” capable of taking distance from negative or toxic atmospheres remains possible. And so forth. The paper ultimately asks whether the often antithetical perspectives arising from these issues represent genuine theoretical advances, potentially capable of overcoming the prejudices of dominant ontology and their reflections in common sense, or instead reveal tensions that—unless resolved through a more univocal theoretical stance—threaten the coherence and sustainability of the atmospheric turn itself, reducing it to an overly generic discourse, devoid of critical incisiveness, on the affective qualities of perceived space.

Tonino Griffero is full professor of aesthetics at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, editor-in-charge of book series such as *Percezioni. Estetica & Fenomenologia*, *Sensibilia*, *Atmospheric Spaces* and the e-journal *Lebenswelt*. Recent books: *Atmospheres. Aesthetics of Emotional Spaces* (2014); *Quasi-Things. The Paradigm of Atmospheres* (2017); *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres. A Pathic Aesthetics* (2020); *The Atmospheric “We”. Moods and Collective Feelings* (2021); with M. Arbib, *Atmosphere(s) for Architects* (2023); *Being a Lived Body. From a Neo-Phenomenological Point of View* (2024). Co-editor with G. Moretti, *Atmosphere/Atmospheres. Testing a New Paradigm* (2018); with G. Francesetti, *Psychopathology and Atmospheres. Neither Inside nor Outside* (2019); with M. Tedeschini, *Atmospheres and Aesthetics. A Plural Perspective* (2019).

Sensing environmental Qualia: A Report on a Multisite Sensory Ethnographic Exploration of Select Sensescapes of Montréal

David Howes

Concordia University, Canada | Centre for Sensory Studies

This presentation will report on a research project that utilizes the human person-centered methodology of sensory ethnography to examine the atmosphere of select neighborhoods in Montréal, with a particular focus on the sensible qualities of said neighborhoods. Typical environmental assessment studies focus on measuring the atmosphere: for example, “air quality” is assessed in terms of concentrations of particulate matter, or in decibel levels in the case of acoustic phenomena, or in lumens in the case of light. We maintain that a purely quantitative approach, relying solely on the use of such monitors, would fail to capture the contingencies and sociocultural specificities of “the sensible.” Hence, rather than measuring the air by means of sensors, this project involves sensing the air ethnographically, and in so doing directs attention to the “sensescape” of the neighborhoods selected for this study. We are particularly interested in investigating the influence of socioeconomic status (or habitus) on the participants’ perception and evaluation of the sensory qualities of the neighborhoods in question. 60 research subjects have been recruited for this project. There are two field sites. One study (involving 30 subjects) centers on the divide between the City of Westmount, an affluent neighborhood, and Saint-Henri, a working-class neighborhood in the borough of Le Sud-Ouest in Montréal. The second focuses on the Chabanel District (formerly known as the Garment District, also known as District Central) in the borough of Ahuntsic-Cartierville, a neighborhood undergoing rapid gentrification. Procedure: At an agreed-upon date, one of our research assistants will meet a group of 3–4 participants and lead them on a 3-hour sensory walking tour of one of the field sites, drawing their attention to pre-selected sensory features of the sites, and recording their impressions. Each sensory tour sets out from and terminates at a local community center. There, at the completion of each tour, we engage in small-group and whole-group discussions centering on what sense the participants made of the sensory cues they encountered in the course of the walk and how they evaluated these sensations. A preliminary analysis of our findings will be presented at the SOFAS conference in Kobe, Japan this coming September. Some of our findings include: reports of “Proustian moments” by certain of our research participants; some difference along class lines in the apperception of the atmospheres of the targeted neighborhoods; and the modal hybridity to the valorization of certain perceptions, such as “vibrant calm” and “prospect refuge.”

David Howes is Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology and Co-Director of the Centre for Sensory Studies at Concordia University, as well as Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Law at McGill University, Montréal. His research focuses on the anthropology of the senses and the development of Sensory Studies as an interdisciplinary field. He co-founded *The Senses and Society* (2006), the Sensory Studies website (2010), and the Centre for Sensory Studies (2012). He has authored, co-authored, or edited 16 books, including *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991), *The Sensory Studies Manifesto* (2022), *Sensorial Investigations* (2023), and *Sensorium* (2024). His work also spans legal anthropology, design, material culture, and cross-cultural aesthetics. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2024 and received a DLitt from the University of Oxford in 2025.

Philosophy of Breath and Atmospheric Ontology

Lenart Škof

Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia

This presentation proposes the foundation of an “atmospheric ontology” rooted in the primordial act of breathing and human ethical relationality. The author posits that the human ontological situation begins within an internal atmospheric envelope, establishing an inherent ethical co-relationality and a delicate co-presence of the Other. Drawing upon Ettingerian matrixial theory, this primordial openness dictates that humans are atmospheric beings, always already ethically touched and situated within larger life-worlds. A central component of the paper is a critical examination of Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), focusing particularly on the theories of Graham Harman and Timothy Morton. The author challenges Harman’s object-oriented philosophy and his reduction of pre-Socratic elemental thinking, such as Anaximenes’s concept of air, to mere present-at-hand objects and tangible properties. Against OOO’s dismissal of materialism and its evasion of intersubjectivity, the text argues that air and breath transcend traditional subject-object divides. Instead, they operate within a “mesocosm” that connects microcosmic bodies with macrocosmic nature, aligning with Hegel’s observation that Anaximenes marks the transition from natural philosophy into the philosophy of consciousness. While acknowledging Morton’s concept of hyperobjects as a useful framework for understanding coexistence, the author argues that OOO fails to adequately capture the rich, non-objectifiable essence and fluidity of atmospheres. To transcend these ontological limitations, the article integrates perspectives from the phenomenological and feminist studies within the philosophy of breath (from Levinas and Irigaray to Ettinger and Škof), atmospheric phenomenology, including Böhme’s conceptualization of atmospheres existing in the intermediary space between subjects and objects, and Hisayama’s notion of the “pansphere.”

Lenart Škof is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Head of the Institute for Philosophical and Religious Studies at the Science and Research Centre Koper (Slovenia) and Dean of Faculty ISH at the Alma Mater Europaea University (Ljubljana, Slovenia). An expert in the intersections of American pragmatism, Continental philosophy, and Asian philosophies, Škof has authored several books, including *God in Post-Christianity: An Elemental Philosophical Theology* (SUNY Press, 2024), *Antigone’s Sisters: On the Matrix of Love* (SUNY Press, 2021), and *Breath of Proximity: Intersubjectivity, Ethics and Peace* (Springer, 2015). He is editor-in-chief of the *Routledge Critical Perspectives on Breath and Breathing* series (with Magdalena Górka).

Time and Ambiance. The Sense of Passing

Bruce Bégout

Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France

Our approach aims to clarify the temporal nature of atmospheres. Indeed, we usually associate atmospheres and moods immediately with the spatial dimension. An atmosphere is an emotional tone that spreads around us and envelops our entire environment. But atmospheres are also—and just as fundamentally—temporal phenomena. They emerge, develop, and fade away; they have different rhythms and durations, and can span both brief moments and extended periods. Our phenomenological work will seek to explore these various temporal dimensions of atmospheric phenomena by linking them to the spatial forms with which they resonate.

Bruce Bégout is a full professor at the University of Bordeaux-Montaigne, a member of the SPH research team (Sciences, Philosophy, Humanities—UMRU 4574), and an associate member of Germanic Countries (the “Husserl Archives” team—UMR 8547). His work is rooted in the tradition of phenomenology. As a specialist in Edmund Husserl—to whom his dissertation is dedicated—he focuses on exploring the urban world, commonplaces, atmospheres, and everyday life.

Ineffability, Atmospheres, and Human-World Connection

Shanti Sumartojo

Monash University, Australia

This presentation shares work-in-progress on a concept of ineffability as it relates to atmospheres. It argues for ineffability as a connective force—one immanent in our daily encounters with our spatial contexts, our memories and imaginations, and other people and creatures—and explores the power of experiences that can be difficult to put into words, but that help us remain connected and committed to the world around us. Like atmospheres, it is part of the external world that we dwell in, but also contingent on our participation in making and being made by our own distinctive ways of worlding. Treating ineffability as a felt force, the paper considers its connection to thinking and sensing through embodied and attentional encounters with the world—encounters that include atmospheres. If ineffability is evident when something distinct not only comes into view, but when we feel it indescribably, then we need to learn how to notice it. Taking inspiration from Jane Bennett's (2001: 4) call "to hone sensory receptivity to the marvelous specificity of things," the second part of the paper turns to practice experiments with prompting attention and honing sensory attunement to what is happening around us. These experiments offer a way of placing ourselves and others within the specific conditions of our dynamic surroundings, inviting the direction of attention and reflection on what might be sensed, perceived and understood by doing so. The paper connects these experiments to Stewart's (2013) ideas of the "compositional node"—"momentary affective composition of materiality, sensibility, selfhood, and emergence"—to show how attentive approaches might engage with atmospheres. This opens a perspective on the world that moves beyond description, and instead uses an attentional anchor in our surroundings to help us feel part of them. Overall, the paper seeks to develop a concept of ineffability for use in design, architecture and other creative practices, using it to link the contingent and subjective apprehension of atmospheres to a powerful force of human-world connection. It argues that we need this concept not only to forge meaningful connection to our surroundings, but to enable the possibility of change.

Shanti Sumartojo is Professor of Design Research at Monash University, Australia. Grounded in cultural geography, she leads creative and collaborative work that investigates how people experience the spaces, encounters and technologies of their everyday lives. This includes designing workshops intended to shift perspectives in aid of systems change. To support the value of experiential knowledge, she develops new concepts and creative and ethnographic methodologies in projects applied to diverse contexts. In addition to multiple publications on atmospheres in architecture and design, she is a co-author of *Atmospheres and the Experiential World: Theory and Methods* (2019).

The Suspended Step of the Stork— Ambiance as Hospitality of Modes of Existence

Nicolas Rémy

University of Thessaly, Greece

Evangelia Paxinou

Grenoble Alpes University, France |

CRESSON

This proposal builds on Ecosonologies, a research-creation project at the intersection of architecture, environmental sciences, sound studies, and artistic practices. Ecosonologies serves here mainly as a starting point for a fundamental question in ambiance research: if ambiance conditions our sensitive relation to the world, what does it allow us to perceive, make “visible,” and ultimately transform? The suspended step of the stork, borrowed from Theo Angelopoulos, gives an image to this question. Neither a completed movement nor immobility, it keeps several possibilities open for a moment. From Lake Karla, a territory deeply transformed by human intervention, we explore this suspension through two movements: suspending characterization and suspending intervention. The first movement questions how ambiances come into appearance. Ambiance involves a sensitivity to the world that conditions how we perceive situations and act within them (Thibaud). Its appearance takes place in an in-between, between what remains unnoticed and what has already become a perception (Augoyard). A mersive approach to ambiances (Bégout) works from within situations; we focus more specifically on what appears, disappears, or remains only weakly perceptible. Suspending characterization means remaining attentive to what appears without immediately identifying or stabilizing it. In Angelopoulos’ *Landscape in the Mist*, a tree gradually emerges from the fog: the tree was already there; what appears is its presence. This attention to appearance connects with lesser existences: fragile or weakly established existences that gradually acquire presence through time, attention, and a relational milieu (Souriau; Lapoujade). The suspended step then leads to a second movement. Suspension no longer means only delaying the characterization of what appears, but also delaying intervention. Architecture cannot decide which relations will emerge, but it can maintain and shape the conditions in which different relations remain possible. Hospitality is understood here not as a definition of ambiance, but as an architectural and ethical attitude: keeping open the spatial, temporal, and environmental conditions that allow human and more-than-human existences to acquire presence and enter into relation. At Karla, listening may then become a first architectural gesture: a suspended step that delays intervention and keeps open the conditions that allow fragile human and more-than-human existences to gradually acquire presence, enter into relations, and allow different modes of existence to compose a shared world.

Nicolas Rémy is a physicist by training and Associate Professor in Building Physics and Architectural Technology at the Department of Architecture, Polytechnic School, University of Thessaly, Greece. His research focuses on architectural and urban ambiances, sound environments, building acoustics and environmental design. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, he explores how listening, sensory experience, and an understanding of human and more-than-human environments can inform architectural and building engineering practice.

Evangelia Paxinou is an architect and associate researcher at AAU-CRESSON, Grenoble School of Architecture, Université Grenoble Alpes. Her work focuses on architectural ambiances, public spaces, and the relationships between architecture, perception and lived experience, exploring how ambiances emerge through negotiation, conflict, sympathy and coexistence between human and more-than-human actors. Her recent work on Sympathy in Architecture, Resounding Ruins and Sympathy Radio develops methodological tools for more-than-human, ecological and sensitive architectural practices.

The Digital and the Emergent

Paulo Gajanigo

Fluminense Federal University, Brazil | no.ar: Laboratory for Research on Everyday Life and Technology

This presentation examines the affinity between the digital and the emergent, proposing a reading of the contemporary relevance of Raymond Williams's concept of structure of feeling for understanding new media. The renewed interest in this concept—and in related approaches such as Atmospheric Studies—reflects how sociotechnical dynamics shape collective affect today. Originally developed to grasp social experience before the rise of intensive technological mediation, Williams's notion described how shared sensibilities could emerge even without direct communication, revealing latent cultural formations. In the digital context, this idea acquires new significance: scholars such as Rebecca Coleman and Richard Grusin demonstrate that media not only express collective affects but also render them perceptible and modulate their circulation. Coleman's concept of infrastructure of feelings and Grusin's premediation illuminate how affective anticipation and processuality define the atmosphere of digital culture. The emergent now occupies the center of cultural forms, as digital technologies intensify attention to what is arising and transform political and affective communication through datafication. Bachmann-Medick and Tygstrup observe that political articulation increasingly operates through affect, visible in the codification of moods on social platforms. This reduction of emotions into polarized valences—happy/sad, positive/negative—poses methodological challenges for researchers seeking to study the emergent beyond hegemonic data forms. Recent work by Bennett and de Sabbata proposes mixed quantitative and qualitative methods to recover marginalized affective traces, revealing how Williams's structure of feeling can critique dominant “technologies of emergence.” By revisiting Williams through contemporary media theory, this presentation argues that the emergent is not merely a site of resistance but the very terrain of digital culture—an atmospheric condition of ambivalence, anticipation, and continuous flow that shapes collective attunement to what is coming into being.

Paulo Gajanigo is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Fluminense Federal University and member of the Graduate Program in Political Sociology at the State University of Northern Rio de Janeiro (UENF). He holds a bachelor's degree in Social Sciences and a master's degree in Social Anthropology from the University of Campinas, and a PhD in Social Sciences from the State University of Rio de Janeiro. He completed postdoctoral research at the University of Sussex. He is the coordinator of no.ar: Laboratory for Research on Everyday Life and Technology. His research is funded by the Young Scientist of the State of Rio de Janeiro Program.

The Atmospheric Metaphor

Birgit Breidenbach

University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

In this talk, I will explore the conceptual history of atmosphere, with a particular focus on atmosphere's metaphoricality, in order to explore the concept's interdisciplinary and critical potential. As is commonly known, the term "atmosphere" was metaphorically transferred from the realm of natural science to that of the social and, subsequently, to the aesthetic: from planets' gaseous envelopes to lived experiences of social situations to the experiential dimension of various types of artworks. But even its scientific origin relies on an act of metaphorical transference: the first known use of the word "atmosphere" in the English language appears in John Wilkins's *The Discovery of a New World, or, a discourse tending to prove, that 'tis probable there may be another habitable World in the Moone* (1638). In it, Wilkins, a natural philosopher, surmises that the moon might be enveloped by a sphere of vapors not unlike those that surround Earth, an "*Atmo-sphæra*." Related terms—like *Stimmung* or "ambiance"—similarly tend to hinge on musical or spatial metaphors, suggesting that it is easier to articulate what atmosphere is *like* than it is to express what it *is*. What do we, as scholars of atmosphere, stand to gain from—and lose to—these acts of metaphorical transference? In what ways does the metaphorical origin of the term "atmosphere" enlighten, or obscure, phenomena that are variously designated as "atmospheric"? What dimensions of these phenomena might the atmospheric metaphor highlight, and what features might it conceal? By tracing the palimpsestic, multidisciplinary metaphorical history of the concept, I aim to show to what extent different disciplinary, historical and cultural interpretations of "atmosphere"—as well as a return to the term's metaphorical and speculative origins—can help us edge closer to unlocking the concept's full critical potential.

Birgit Breidenbach is a Lecturer in Literature and Philosophy at the University of East Anglia, UK. Her research focuses on mood, atmosphere and collective forms of feeling in literature and philosophy, alongside modern and contemporary literature, comparative literary studies, and the broader interdisciplinary relations between literature and philosophy. She is the author of *Aesthetic and Philosophical Reflections on Mood: Stimmung and Modernity* (Routledge, 2020) and the co-editor of the interdisciplinary volume *Mood: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, New Theories* (Routledge, 2019).

Painting Air: Atmosphere in French Landscape Painting Around 1800

Kerstin Thomas

University of Stuttgart, Germany

Atmosphere has been a central concept in French painting since the late eighteenth century. The term “atmosphere” originally stems from the field of scientific research. Specifically, it refers to the layer of air that envelops the Earth and other celestial bodies. If one summarizes the various definitions, it becomes apparent that while different laws are attributed to the atmosphere, by the end of the century its property of encompassing, as a whole, the concrete living conditions of all organic matter as well as the conditions of existence of inorganic matter was regarded as a quality that transcends physical laws. Even though the atmosphere is a concrete and physically measurable layer, its properties are characterized by the fact that by affecting and influencing all living beings it also connects them within it. The idea of a unifying fluid fascinated thinkers around 1800 and led to a further extension of the term to social and aesthetic phenomena. This becomes particularly clear in the context of painting. In French art, in particular, parallel developments can be observed both in practice and in the discourse on landscape painting, which assign a central role to the atmospheric. In my lecture, I would like to examine this transfer of the concept of atmosphere to painting. I wish to show how, in their efforts to visualize atmosphere, artists developed new techniques for representing air. Air is thereby made perceptible not as mere empty space, as nothingness, but as a medium that represents connections. In the art criticism of the time, too, painting is elevated as a medium that renders visible the invisible yet perceptible. Central to this rise of the concept of atmosphere in painting is also the associated elevation of the role of emotion in the perception of nature. Atmosphere serves this purpose, as it conveys a deeper impression of nature in which the precise observation of the surroundings is combined with emotion. Alongside the task of depicting nature comes that of depicting the emotional impressions associated with it. An elevation of nature as a subject of painting precludes its schematic representation. Through the depiction of the air, the feeling that nature evokes is also intended to be conveyed to the viewer. It becomes clear to artists that the atmosphere is changeable and difficult to capture. If, therefore, the air is to be rendered as atmosphere, artists must hone their powers of observation and grasp the changes in nature. Likewise, they must expand the scope of their subject matter. The lecture explores these strategies by examining the means of depicting air, mist, dust and light in painting.

Kerstin Thomas has been Professor of Modern Art History at the University of Stuttgart since 2016. In 2022, she was appointed chair of the German Association of Art History. She studied at Goethe-University Frankfurt, receiving her PhD with a dissertation on mood in post-impressionist painting, published in 2010. Kerstin was scientific assistant at the Centre Allemand d’histoire de l’Art in Paris (2006–2009). From 2010 to 2015, she directed the research group Form and Emotion at Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz. She is specialized in nineteenth-century French art, emotions in art, and on concepts of form in the twentieth century.

The Ontological Unlocalizability of Atmospheres or Toward an Aesthetic Cultivation of the Between

Fabian Heubel 何乏筆

Academia Sinica 中央研究院, Taiwan | Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy

From the perspective of the aesthetics of atmosphere, Gernot Böhme develops a critique of the one-sidedness with which philosophy is fixated on (conceptual) determinations. For Böhme, “atmosphere” indicates “something indeterminate, difficult to express.” Speaking of a concept of atmosphere leads Böhme to the seemingly paradoxical task not only of determining something indeterminate conceptually, but also of incorporating the indeterminate into the concept of the concept itself. If it is the demand for determination that has shaped ontology since Parmenides, then the concept of atmosphere lacks philosophical legitimacy. Böhme therefore speaks of the necessity of overcoming the “ontological unlocalizability” (*ontologische Ortlosigkeit*) of the discourse on atmospheres. In the context of his aesthetics of atmosphere, Böhme thus raises the question of the conditions of possibility of an aesthetic philosophy of Being: How is an aesthetic ontology possible? The aesthetic philosophy that emerges here is concerned with the relation between determination and indeterminacy, with the back-and-forth between the two. What is decisive in Böhme’s conception of aesthetics as a “general theory of perception” is therefore precisely the possibility of overcoming the ontological unlocalizability or lack of ontological place of the Between by thinking the Between aesthetically, and opening up possibilities of an aesthetic cultivation of the Between.

Fabian Heubel 何乏筆 is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, Taipei (since 2013). From 2023 to 2025, he has also served as Guest Professor of Classical and Modern Chinese Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, Free University of Berlin. He is currently working on a book with the tentative title *Being and Way*. His publications include *Das Dispositiv der Kreativität* (2002), *Chinesische Gegenwartsphilosophie zur Einführung* (2016), *Gewundene Wege nach China: Heidegger–Daoismus–Adorno* (2020), *Was ist chinesische Philosophie? Kritische Perspektiven* (2021), *Self-cultivation and Critique: The Late Foucault in Transcultural Perspective* (2021, in Chinese), as well as two edited volumes on transcultural *Zhuangzi studies* (in Chinese). His recent book, *Schlucht und Atemwandel: Zur Philosophie des Weges* (2025), is a philosophical experiment inspired by chapter six of the *Laozi*.

Altered State of Breath: Pedagogical Contours of *Prāṇa*, *Prāṇayāma*, and *Kuṇḍalinī-Yoga*, with Ramifications for Cross-cultural Atmospheric Studies

Purushottama Bilimoria

University of San Francisco, USA | University of Melbourne, Australia

It has been reported that “Recent research into breathwork confirms it is one of the fastest, non-pharmaceutical tools available for altering human consciousness, lowering clinical anxiety, and shifting the autonomic nervous system.” (www.star-telegram.com) But there are also some dangers associated with unregulated breathing, such as hyperventilation and anoxia or hypoxia (low oxygen); such breathing can disrupt the delicate balance of gases in the blood, causing physical symptoms like dizziness, lightheadedness, and even fainting. The Indian tradition developed various exercises and mechanisms for controlled and regulated breathing, known as *prāṇayāma*—which has been central to the practice of yoga since earliest times. In this presentation, I map the beginnings of yoga, but more significantly, the role of breath, breathing and its moderation through the *nāḍīs*—the subtle channels through which *prāṇa* or life force energy flows—and chakras—the spinning vortexes of energy into which these channels intersect. Together, they form an intricate network in the inner body that connects the physical body with the mind and soul. In passing, the paper will make comparative remarks on the equivalences of *prāṇa* found in other cultures and the attendant exercises prescribed for similar practices. In the final part, the paper will delve into the role of breathing as *prāṇayāma* in the esoteric art of *kuṇḍalinī-yoga*, a spiritual practice designed to awaken dormant creative energy at the base of the spine. It combines breathwork with dynamic movements (*kriyās*), chanting, and meditation, so as to move this energy upward through the chakras to expand self-awareness, balance the nervous system, and achieve a higher (altered) state of consciousness.

Purushottama Bilimoria specializes in Indian & Cross-Cultural Philosophy, Global Critical Philosophies of Religion, and Yoga Research. He teaches at the University of San Francisco and is a Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne (Australia). He is also the Editor-in-Chief, *Sophia* (Journal of Philosophy & Traditions), *Sophia Studies in Cross-cultural Philosophical Traditions*. He has been elected to European Academy of Arts, Sciences; and was formerly Professor of Law and Global Ethics at O P Jindal University (India). He has received the following awards: Nehru-US Fulbright Fellowship (twice); John Templeton Foundation; Harvard Divinity School; Public Scholarship @ Emory University. He has co-edited the following volumes: *Routledge History of Indian Philosophy* (2021); *The Routledge Companion to Indian Ethics: Women, Justice, Bioethics and Ecology* (2024); *Mind, Body, Self* (2024); *Engaging Philosophies of Religion: Thinking Across Boundaries* (2025); and wrote the article on *Hindu Ethics* for *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2027).

The Communality and Normativity of Emotion as Atmosphere: The Scope of Schmitz's Theory of Legal Feeling

Shinji Kajitani 梶谷真司

University of Tokyo 東京大学, Japan

A distinctive feature of Hermann Schmitz's concept of emotion as atmosphere is that he demonstrates that emotions are shared between individuals or within a community, and that they can, in certain cases, acquire a normative character. This normative emotion—legal feeling (*Rechtsgefühl*)—appears in two primary forms: anger (*Zorn*), which indicates that an injustice (*Unrecht*) has occurred, and shame (*Scham*), which indicates that one has fallen into a state of injustice (*Unrecht*) oneself. By combining these two legal feelings, or by linking them with other phenomena such as fore-feeling (*Vorgefühl*), respect, or taste, Schmitz is able to explain an extremely wide range of aspects of human life and to analyze differences in normative structures across historical periods and cultures. Although his theory of legal feelings has so far received little attention in research on Schmitz's phenomenology, it possesses considerable potential and is highly significant for atmospheric studies as well. This presentation discusses the fundamental significance and possibilities of this theory. The main points are as follows.

- 1) Communality and Universality of Moral Judgments: Traditionally, emotions have been regarded as personal and unstable, and thus unsuitable as a foundation for moral judgments that require publicity and universality. However, emotions understood as atmospheres are, in Schmitz's sense, objective, shareable within a community, and capable of possessing a certain durability, like background atmospheres. From the standpoint of Schmitz's phenomenology, therefore, emotions can be recognized as having a public and universal dimension that may serve as a basis for judgments of good and evil.
- 2) The Connection Between Being and Ought: According to the so-called "Is-Ought Problem," one cannot derive an ought from an is. Heidegger, in understanding the being of entities through significance (value and purpose), already implied a connection between being and ought. According to Schmitz, the situations in which we live are always imbued with emotional nuances, and emotions, as part of factual experience, possess a motivating force that directs us toward particular actions.
- 3) Subjectivization of Norms: If norms were understood solely through rational comprehension, they might indeed be universal, but their universal applicability could render them neutral or indifferent for individuals. It is through emotion that things first become existentially pressing and personally meaningful; norms are embodied and taken up as one's own only through emotional involvement. Without this, human beings would not act for the sake of good or evil.

Shinji Kajitani 梶谷真司 is a Professor of Philosophy and Intercultural Studies at the University of Tokyo and the Director of the University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy (UTCP). He completed his PhD in Human and Environmental Studies at Kyoto University. His main research fields are phenomenology, cultural studies, and medical history. In recent years, he has been engaged in activities to create "places to think together" in schools, companies, and local communities, pursuing a new genre of "inclusive philosophy." His main works (in Japanese) are *Basic Problems of the Phenomenology of Hermann Schmitz* (2002), *The Adventure Diary of Philosophical Dialogue: We Think, Therefore We Are* (2023), and *Childrearing as Thought: A Historical Philosophy of Knowledge and the Body* (2026).

PANEL 1:

Far Above and Below the Depths: Imagining Ecological Seeing in Odilon Redon's *The Red Screen*

Jessie Alperin

University of Chicago, USA | KOIAS Fellow

This paper examines Odilon Redon's 1906 folding screen *The Red Screen* as a site of what I term "imaginative ecological seeing," with particular attention to how the work renders atmosphere as both subject and medium. Commissioned by Dutch collector Andries Bongers, the screen's radical abstraction and disorienting aerial perspective present an impossible suspended view of the Earth from above, collapsing distinctions between atmospheric, geological, and oceanic environments into a single decorative object. Drawing on Alexander von Humboldt's conception of atmosphere as an "aerial ocean," alongside the ecological thought of Ernst Haeckel and Timothy Morton and Gibson's theories of visual perception, I argue that Redon's screen makes legible what exceeds human sensory capacity: the invisible forces, depths, and expanses that structure ecological life. Like the domestic aquarium that brought oceanic depths into Victorian interiors, *The Red Screen* transports an otherworldly atmospheric view into the intimate space of Bongers's home, proposing the folding screen as a mediating object through which the boundaries between air, water, and earth dissolve. In doing so, Redon suggests that imagination is not opposed to scientific or ecological understanding, but is instead the very faculty through which what is atmospherically and environmentally invisible can be sensed, if never fully seen.

Jessie Elizabeth Alperin is a dual doctoral candidate in the Committee on Social Thought and the Department of Art History at the University of Chicago. She is the founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Venti Journal*. Her research focuses on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European art, with particular emphasis on the intersections of sculpture, the decorative arts, and drawing, as well as Franco-Japanese artistic exchange. Her work explores how objects and environments shape embodied experiences of space, with particular attention to materiality, intermediality, and atmosphere. She will be a KOIAS Fellow from September to October.

PANEL 1:

Between the Visible and the Invisible: Reconsidering A. G. Bragaglia's Theory of Photography

Kahlua Tsunoda 角田かるあ

University of Tokyo 東京大学, Japan

Fotodinamismo futurista (1913) by Anton Giulio Bragaglia (1890–1960) is widely regarded as the key theoretical text on photography within early Italian Futurism. In this work, Bragaglia formulated a theoretical framework for Photodynamism, an experimental photographic project developed with his brother Arturo Bragaglia (1893–1962), by situating it in relation to chronophotography and Bergsonian philosophy. Shortly after the publication of *Fotodinamismo futurista*, however, Bragaglia turned toward psychical phenomena and spirit photography, addressing these subjects in two essays published later in 1913: “I fantasmi dei vivi e dei morti (The Ghosts of the Living and the Dead)” and “La fotografia dell’invisibile (The Photography of the Invisible)”. This paper reconsiders Bragaglia’s conception of photography through an examination of these three texts. In *Fotodinamismo futurista*, Bragaglia criticized instantaneous photography and chronophotography for their inability to capture the continuity of movement. Instead, he presented Photodynamism as a means of registering *stati d’animo* (states of mind) as they manifest themselves in the trajectories of movement. In the two essays published later that year, by contrast, he discussed such phenomena as doubles, auras, etheric bodies, and spirit photographs, arguing that photography possesses the capacity to record phenomena that are invisible to the naked eye. Rather than treating these writings merely as evidence of Bragaglia’s growing interest in occultism, this paper argues that they should be understood as successive stages in a coherent inquiry into a broader question: what can photography make visible? Particular attention is paid to Bragaglia’s claim that photography records not the invisible itself, but the moment at which it becomes perceptible. From this perspective, photography emerges not simply as a device for reproducing reality but as a medium capable of extending the limits of human perception. By tracing the continuity between *Fotodinamismo futurista* and the two essays published later that year on psychical phenomena, this paper reconstructs Bragaglia’s theory of photography as a sustained inquiry into what photography can make visible. In doing so, it offers a new perspective on how photography may render perceptible atmospheric phenomena emerging at the threshold between the visible and the invisible.

Kahlua Tsunoda 角田かるあ earned her PhD from the Graduate School of Letters at Keio University. She is currently a Project Researcher at the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, the University of Tokyo, and a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Her research focuses on modern painting and photography, with particular attention to Italian Futurism and photographic theories of movement. Her recent work includes “Photography as Envisioned by Futurist Theorist A. G. Bragaglia” (*Design History*, 2022).

PANEL 1:

Toxic Kitsch: The Atmospheric Paintings of Thomas Kinkade

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein

Nanzan University 南山大学, Japan

Thomas Kinkade's (1958–2012) aesthetics is frequently cited as a paradigmatic case of kitsch. It is unmistakably grounded in atmospheric manipulation. Kinkade described himself as a “painter of light,” which is to say, in effect, a painter of atmospheres. Kinkade's art is deeply embedded in the “atmosphere capitalism” (Böhme)—a mode of production that took off in the 1980s, precisely when Kinkade began his career. Research into Kinkade permits the crystallization of the “bad” atmosphere, that is, of toxicity. Not only can kitsch be toxic, but the toxic itself can take on the form of kitsch. First: the preferred materials of kitsch are often synthetic polymers or plastics, which are not only cheap and artificial but also environmentally and physically harmful. Second, kitsch tends to proliferate and invade environments, spreading in a manner analogous to toxic gas. Third, kitsch operates through the manipulation of atmospheres, a practice that has prompted critics to reject it for more than a century. Kinkade's art is supposed to be uplifting and is, above that, linked to the American positive thinking movement. Kinkade renders human feelings exuberant and expressionist via an approach that I would call “abstract” as opposed to concrete. His work is an example of toxicity based on the absence of signifiers because voidness is supposed to produce an excess of meaning. In his most characteristic works, people disappear altogether, and “emotion” is symbolized by an exaggerated, glaring light that seems to blaze from within houses, shops, and churches. Clichéd, generic, and hyperbolic, Kinkade's images today invite comparison with AI-generated popular art, particularly that produced by platforms such as Midjourney. By editing away people, Kinkade negates human suffering or the possibility of suffering. Critics have used the words “sick” or “sickening” when describing Kinkade's disturbingly idyllic effects of warmth and luminosity. “Sickening” can be likened to toxic. The combination of clichéd humaneness with utmost desolation makes these sceneries scary. The best label for this mixture of uncanniness and forced positivity is toxic positivity.

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein was born in Germany in 1964, did his entire undergraduate studies in philosophy in Paris, and received a PhD in philosophy from Oxford University in 1993. As a postdoctoral researcher based in Finland, he undertook research for four years on Russian formalism in Russia and the Baltic countries. He has also been researching for three years in Japan on the Kyoto School and worked for two and a half years for the Center of Cognition of Zhejiang University (China) as well as at Tuskegee University in Alabama. From 2009 to 2026 he worked at the Gulf University in Kuwait as a full professor and director of the Global Studies Center. He is now Associate Researcher at Nanzan University in Japan.

PANEL 2:

Aeroception: The Cultural Technique of Reading the Air

Sachi Sekimoto 関本幸

Minnesota State University, Mankato, USA

In this presentation, I explore *kūki* (air) as a quasi-object (Latour, 1991) that circulates and infiltrates social interactions, cultural spaces, and embodied subjectivities. Drawing from the cultural practice of reading the air (*kūki wo yomu*) in Japan, I elaborate on how we breathe life into culture and communication through regulating the microclimate of perceived air. As a quasi-object, air mediates and materializes ideas, affect, and social relations. I analyze “reading the air” as a cultural technique of perception that shapes what a cultural group perceives they can do to, with, and through air. The culturally specific ways of doing things with air reveal implicit worldviews about agency, relationship, and subjectivity. The presentation also touches on the term *kūkikan* to explore how the sense of air—or aeroception—may be established as a synaesthetic (Farman, 2025) and cross-modal sense. The goal of this presentation is to explore the possibilities and implications of integrating aeroception into the study of culture and the senses, much like how sensory studies scholars have explored the senses of touch, taste, smell, vision, and hearing (Howes, 2026). What does approaching aeroception as a sense do to the way we understand the ethics and aesthetics of sensing the world? The presentation follows air as it invites us to form knowledge at the crossroads of the natural, social, and atmospheric.

Sachi Sekimoto 関本幸, PhD, is a professor and chair in the Department of Communication and Media at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She is the co-author of *Race and the Senses: The Felt Politics of Racial Embodiment* (Routledge, 2020). Her most recent work “Reading the Air: Toward Multisensory Literacy for the Anthropocene” was published in *The Senses and Society* (2025). Her scholarship explores the intersections of culture and the senses from critical and phenomenological perspectives.

PANEL 2:

Breathing as an Aesthetic Method for Perceiving the Environment: A Case Study of Asthma

Yosaku Matsutani 松谷 容作

Otemon Gakuin University 追手門学院大学, Japan

This presentation focuses on asthma as a particular mode of breathing and embodiment. Although asthma is commonly understood as a biomedical disease, it emerges through the entanglement of diverse environmental, social, and political conditions, including labor in polluted construction sites, exposure to mold and microorganisms associated with deteriorating housing environments, transformations of seasonal rhythms driven by climate change, urban air pollution, and healthcare infrastructures. Rather than treating asthma solely as an individual pathology, this presentation approaches it as a mode of embodiment situated within naturecultures, where bodies and environments are continuously co-constituted beyond conventional dichotomies such as nature/culture, body/environment, and human/nonhuman. Asthma also offers a distinctive perspective on sensory relations with the environment. Through organs that remain open to the outside world, asthma heightens bodily awareness of atmospheric conditions: the texture and density of air, odors, humidity, pollen, dust, and seasonal fluctuations become perceptible as embodied experiences. In this sense, asthma may be understood as a condition of porosity, a corporeal aesthetic interface through which environmental forces are sensed, negotiated, and lived. Such experiences involve forms of attunement that render otherwise imperceptible environmental relations tangible and affectively present. Drawing on artistic and expressive practices, this presentation examines this mode and this interface.

Yosaku Matsutani 松谷 容作 is currently a professor in the Department of Sociology at Otemon Gakuin University in Osaka, Japan. He specializes in aesthetics, art and media theory, and visual culture studies. He works on problems of art practices since the aesthetic turn, the relationship between science, technology, and art, and the sensibilities common to various beings. He also collaborates with artists, curators, and designers on projects involving the environment and energy. Recent articles include “Art as decomposition: Soichiro Mihara’s Making Soil,” and co-authored “Two Approaches to Human-decentred Design: Between Life and Matter.”

PANEL 2:

Mise-en-Scent: Choreographing Air as Atmospheric Practice**Julia Ostwald**

University of Arts Linz, Austria

Scenography constitutes the paradigm for Gernot Böhme's theory of atmosphere, as stage design would emphasize that atmospheres are something that is "made" by "certain agents" (2016, 2). Being situated between production aesthetics and perception aesthetics (2013, 3), according to Böhme, atmospheres, like scenography, operate as staged and perceived aesthetic phenomena. Through the lens of dance and performance studies, my contribution challenges this aestheticized understanding of atmospheres and its underlying theatrical metaphors by analyzing exemplary cross-historical performative artworks that make use of air and smell. Approaching atmosphere as the interplay of air and bodies, I draw on historical meanings of the term in both a meteorological and medical sense as "a theater of strange fermentations and transmutations" (Corbin 1986, 13). Aligning this understanding with feminist notions, such as Stacy Alaimo's concept of transcorporeality, and recent scholarship on smell, breath, and atmospheric studies (e.g., Hsu 2020; Górska 2021; Konrad 2025), reveals that atmospheres emerge not as aesthetic phenomena but as material conditions. Moreover, they are intricately bound to the sense of smell and its multimodal relations. While the aesthetic, but rather dematerialized, understanding of atmosphere has drawn on scenography and theatrical terminology, contemporary and historical olfactory artworks practice a materialist—meteorological, sensorial, corporeal—approach to atmosphere within the field of aesthetics.

Julia Ostwald is a dance scholar and postdoctoral researcher in the ERC consolidator project OLFAC: Exploring the Intervening Performativity of Smell at the University of Arts Linz (Austria). Situated at the intersection of dance, performance and sensory studies, her research currently centers on choreographies of air from early modernity to the present, with a focus on sensory politics, capitalist history, and environmental concerns. Julia held positions at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, the University of Vienna, and at Salzburg University, from where she also earned her doctorate in Dance Studies. Her most recent publication is the chapter "Choreographing Magnetism: The Performance of Knowledge in the Ethereal Field of Forces," in *Performing Magnetism: The Theatrics of Persuasion in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Eleonora Paklons et al. (Leuven University Press, 2026).

PANEL 3:

Ki* (気/氣) and *Aiki* (合氣) in the Japanese Martial Art of *Aikidō* (合氣道): A Contribution to Bodily Relationality and Atmospheric Studies*Francesca Greco**

University of Hildesheim, Germany

The aim of my contribution is to explore the experience of atmosphere through the bodily relationality trained in the Japanese martial art of *aikidō* (合氣道) and the philosophical significance of *ki* (気/氣) and *aiki* (合氣) within it from an intercultural perspective. After clarifying the connection between atmosphere and relationality, my analysis will examine the multilayered attunement taking place in the practice of *aikidō* and make explicit the structural dimensions of the atmosphere in the cultivation of *ki* and coordination of *aiki* during practice. In this context *ki* is considered neither as an internal psychological state nor as an external quality of the environment, but rather as an unsubstantial force in motion shaping bodily interaction in experimental settings as well as in everyday life. Following a brief introduction to the bodily and spiritual practice of *aikidō*, I will discuss the universal phenomenality of *ki* and the bodily coordination of *aiki* as constitutive elements of *aikidō* practice. These elements are closely linked to breath and air—both considered as possible translations for the expression “*ki*”—which undermine the sharp distinctions between body and mind, subject and object, inside and outside, and individual and universal in the general “co-presence” (Gernot Böhme) of subjects and environments. Finally, I will connect the dynamic and conflictual nature of the complex interplay observed in the “atmospheric between” (Tonino Griffero and Yuho Hisayama) between practitioners during practice with the notion of “active intuition” (Nishida Kitarō), with the intention to open up new frontiers and possibilities in atmospheric studies for the relation between ontology and everydayness.

Francesca Greco is currently a PhD student in Philosophy at the University of Hildesheim in the field of intercultural philosophy and aesthetic practices. She is also vice president of the European Network of Japanese Philosophy (ENOJP) and has been a research member of the DFG-Project “Histories of Philosophy in Global Perspective” (2019–2024). Her areas of specialization include Japanese philosophy, ontology, phenomenology, and the history of philosophy from a global perspective and her main interests range from negativity and relationality to bodily practices and everydayness. Her last publication is *Breath and Air* (氣) in Martial Arts. A Phenomenological Study of *Ki* (気/氣) and *Aiki* (合氣) in *Aikidō* (合氣道) (Springer, 2026).

PANEL 3:

Fūdo in the Air: Connecting Atmospheric Studies and *Fūdo* Studies

Cheung Ching Yuen 張政遠

University of Tokyo 東京大学, Japan

This presentation explores the implications of the Japanese philosophical concept of *fūdo* by bringing *Fūdo* Studies into dialogue with the emerging interdisciplinary field of Atmospheric Studies. Drawing on the foundational work of Watsuji Tetsurō, *fūdo* should not be understood simply as “climate” or as an objective natural environment. Rather, it is a structural factor of human existence, in which natural phenomena are inseparable from human experience and subjective life. Augustin Berque further suggests that translating *fūdo* as “climate” is misleading, since the term expresses a non-dualistic relationship between human beings and their environment. His concept of milieu seeks to capture this relational dimension. I argue that Watsuji’s philosophy can be understood in terms of “Being-in-the-*Fūdo*.” However, this does not mean that human beings exist in harmony with their environment. In monsoon regions, for example, wind, water, and soil sustain life while also producing typhoons, floods, and other destructive forces. Human existence consequently involves responses of reconciliation, adaptation, and perseverance. Besides, I propose a distinction between “Climate Change” and “*Fūdo* Change.” Climate change primarily describes transformations in the physical environment, whereas *Fūdo* Change concerns the transformation of the integrated totality of natural, cultural, social, and historical relations. Such an approach rejects environmental determinism and understands nature as inseparable from human existence. The crisis of *Fūdo* Change becomes particularly evident when a community’s *écoumène*—its inhabitable and meaningful world—is transformed into an *érème*, an uninhabitable space, as in the cases of wars and disasters. What is threatened is not merely physical habitation but also collective history, memory, and identity. Addressing this crisis therefore requires narrative practices capable of connecting personal trauma with collective memory and restoring the wind and soil. Atmospheric Studies, with its attention to *fun’iki*, translated as “atmosphere,” “air,” “mood,” or *Stimmung*, offers a valuable complementary perspective. While Atmospheric Studies can be understood as approaching the felt atmosphere of a place, *Fūdo* Studies asks how such atmospheres are embedded in a larger, natural and cultural, ever-changing world. Together, these approaches offer a promising framework for addressing the crises of Climate Change, *Fūdo* Change, and *fun’iki* change.

Cheung Ching Yuen 張政遠 was born and educated in Hong Kong and received his PhD from Tohoku University. He is currently Professor in the Department of Area Studies and Director of the East Asian Academy for New Liberal Arts at The University of Tokyo. His research focuses on Japanese philosophy and phenomenology, and his publications include books and journal articles on Nishida Kitarō and *monogatari*. He is one of the series editors of *Tetsugaku Companions to Japanese Philosophy* (Springer), an editor of the *Journal of Japanese Philosophy* (SUNY Press), and Editor-in-Chief of *Kitetsu Magazine*.

PANEL 3:

The Role of Atmospheres in the Praxis of Psychoanalysis

Yukiko Kuwayama 桑山裕喜子

University of Tokyo 東京大学, Japan | KOIAS

The term “psyche” can seem taboo when we focus on Hermann Schmitz’s neo-phenomenological approach. Yet Schmitz’s approach to the indescribable in our experience of (emotions as) atmospheres, by becoming aware of our felt-bodily being/feeling (*leibliches Befinden*), can and should be applied to thematize the experience of atmospheres within psychoanalytic praxis as well. Under this motto, this presentation will thematize the role of atmospheres within the praxis of psychoanalysis. The question concerns the role of atmospheres, which undoubtedly plays a part in every session of the psychoanalytic praxis. It begins as soon as one arrives at the place/house of the analysis: one hears a kind of silence, and one feels the presence of something indescribable in front of oneself. To greet one’s analyst, who feels like being on the other side of a huge river, is something one does every time right before the beginning of each session, and to say goodbye after each session always feels like a new experience. Or every drastic transformation of the atmosphere that was occupying the place when receiving a question from the analyst can and should also be treated. Except for “anxiety” (*Angst*), neither Freud nor Lacan (to whom the methods of psychoanalysis this presentation will refer) addressed “atmospheres” thematically in their discourses. Yet it seems possible to discuss the role of atmospheres, as well as something atmospheric, from within the place of praxis in psychoanalysis as well. The presentation will have two parts: 1. To introduce descriptions of atmospheres of the psychoanalytic space experienced both by the analysant (“visitor” or “patient”) and the psychoanalyst, manifested in the in-between of the felt-bodies situated in a concrete room. 2. To focus on the transformation of atmospheres during the analytic praxis: Both analysant and analyst use words, speak in a certain way, and the analyst poses questions that can manifest a new horizon of atmospheres or transform the atmosphere the analysant was feeling in a felt-bodily way. The first part concerns the affective space both shared and partially made by the analysant and the analyst, manifested in the couch room. The second part concerns the transformation of atmospheres experienced at the felt-body of the analysant through verbal and vocal exchanges in the couch room. Through the key terms “transfer” and “resonance,” the presentation seeks to highlight the place of the transformation of the so-called “self” and the “atmosphere” right in the middle of both verbal and felt-bodily communication in psychoanalytic praxis.

Yukiko Kuwayama 桑山裕喜子 studied philosophy at Sophia University in Tokyo, and later translation studies at the University of Bonn. She wrote her doctoral thesis in philosophy at the University of Hildesheim in Germany. During and after her graduate studies in Hildesheim, she taught Japanese at INALCO in Paris. Since summer 2023, she has continued her research at the University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy and has taught German and contemporary philosophy at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo, since April 2025. Her research focuses on perception, feeling, emotion, and atmosphere in Merleau-Pontian phenomenology, Schmitzian New Phenomenology, and Japanese philosophy.

PANEL 4:

Agencies of Softness— Atmospheres of Co-Existence

Gabi Schillig

Berlin University of the Arts, Germany | Studio for Dialogical Spaces

This presentation unfolds artistic works developed within my ongoing research *Topologies of Softness*, in relation to atmosphere. My artistic practice approaches space not as a stable or pre-given condition, but as a fluid field of relations in which atmospheric conditions are produced and shared. Rather than assuming an already constituted “we,” I ask how forms of togetherness emerge—through shared perception, movement and situated action. Co-existence, proximity and distance are not conditions that precede experience, but are situations continuously negotiated in the making. Who, then, is this “we”? Who is included in its formation, and which bodies are allowed to matter, appear, and belong within a given spatial and atmospheric arrangement? In resonance, for example in reference to the relational objects of Lygia Clark (Brazil, 1920–88), my work shifts attention away from the (art) object as a fixed entity toward the relational field, a (soft) space activated between bodies. The between is a dynamic condition in which perception, affect and relation take shape. Space operates as a proposition for encounter – situations that invite participation, attentiveness and metamorphosis. Through my artistic practice I understand atmosphere not as a background condition, but as something actively produced through relations between bodies, materials and spaces. *Topologies of Softness* frames these propositions as spatial and relational situations that are re-shaped through interaction and communication. Softness is not only a material quality but a mode of relation, one that foregrounds permeability and responsiveness. Fragile glass, soft textile structures, permeable situations and environmental conditions such as air, wind or the existence with other living beings introduce vulnerability as a constitutive condition. Materiality shapes the ethical and sensory parameters of interaction. Fragility requires slowed attention, care and an ongoing negotiation of proximity, touch and distance. Material thus becomes an ethical agent, conditioning how bodies can act, respond and coexist. Vulnerability is not framed as a deficit, but as a generative condition for relation, enabling responsiveness, permeability and constant mutual attunement. My artist talk reflects on how such agencies of softness can be understood as atmospheric formations: subtle and emergent conditions that shape how co-existence is sensed and enacted. It considers artistic practice as a way to rethink relationality not as a fixed category, but as an ongoing, situated and materially grounded process of becoming-with—with individual and collective responsibility for shaping spaces and atmospheres at its core.

Gabi Schillig’s work explores experimental, dialogical spatial structures, their relationship to the body and spaces of communication. Central to her artistic practice are the relational concepts of space, body, materiality and fragility developed further in her research on topologies of softness. Her work has been presented internationally in exhibitions and collaborative formats and is closely linked to an extensive network of residencies and artistic research activities. She has been artist-in-residence at institutions including Akademie Schloss Solitude, Van Alen Institute New York, KHOJ New Delhi, Largo das Artes Rio de Janeiro, and Nida Art Colony / Vilnius Academy of Arts, as well as multiple sites in Japan. She is Professor at the Berlin University of the Arts.

PANEL 4:

*Is Kawaii an Atmosphere?***Lorenzo Marinucci**

Tohoku University 東北大学, Japan | KOIAS

There is growing research on Japanese aesthetics, language, and culture from the perspective of atmospheres. Most of this reflection, however, focuses on what would be considered “high culture”: philosophy, literary masterpieces, and premodern works of art often connected to Buddhist heritage. In a walk through a contemporary Japanese city, however, one would be more often surrounded by a very different aesthetic pattern associated with the word *kawaii*, “cute”: colorful mascots, pastel colors, plushies, sparkly accessories, animal and cartoonish motifs, high-pitched voices and music. Cute is a universal phenomenon whose appeal is often explained by appeals to neoteny and the mammalian baby schema, but *kawaii* managed to become one of the pillars of Japanese soft power and a gargantuan economic force in the global landscape of late capitalism. In my presentation I will ask whether *kawaii* and cuteness are the same and what the cultural specificities are of this Japanese aesthetic category turned global. My first take is that *kawaii* is fundamentally different from an aesthetic judgment, as it is based on a “postural impregnation” (Wallon) between subject and object. The interaction and proximity with things that are (noematically) sweet-soft-small afford us a momentary return to our infant consciousness, a state centered on the oral sensorium and a lack of distinction between subject and object. This oral quality is evident in the way in which *kawaii* is not meant for visual contemplation, but for a variety of forms of taste-touch: to be hugged, squeezed, worn, eaten, and consumed. Moreover, this interaction with the object also acquires its meaning through a different stance of the self, a condition that is (noetically) explored as nostalgia, innocence, and whimsical play and is heavily gendered as feminine. Doi Takeo’s research on *amae*, a “sweet state of infantile dependency” that is conditionally enjoyed as adults and that, according to Doi, is a keystone of the Japanese collective psyche, is another important element to understand *kawaii*. But the issue might also be reversed, reflecting through *kawaii* culture on the implicit Western bias against childishness and dependency, in philosophy and outside philosophy. The atmospheric paradigm of Japanese aesthetics is active in *kawaii*, and the cultural heritage of Japanese art and religion is alive in *kawaii* through its animistic tendencies, the game of looking-as (*mitate*), and the interest in expressive stylization over realism. If *kawaii* is an aesthetic exploration of infant consciousness as atmospheric consciousness, the notion of atmosphere itself needs to face its connection to this infantile substratum of our sensitivity.

Lorenzo Marinucci is an associate professor of aesthetics at Tohoku University, Japan. His research themes include phenomenology, atmospheres, Japanese philosophy, and intercultural aesthetics. He has been an active translator of philosophy (his translated authors include Kuki, Nishitani, Watsuji, Ogawa) and poetry from Japanese and from German (among others, the essay collection *Atmospheres* by Hermann Schmitz). His first monograph, *The Sense of Scent: Japanese Olfactory Culture and Global Philosophy*, will be published by Routledge. His current research includes an intercultural analysis of *kawaii*, understood through the phenomenology of atmospheres.

PANEL 4:

Staging Vibes: Atmosphere as an Aesthetic Proposition

Manuela de Mattos Salazar

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS Fellow

Vibe can name the felt character of people, places, images, encounters and cultural moments. Corey Miles describes it as “a way to name relational processes” (Miles, 2022, p. 373), while Robin James theorizes vibes as alignments or orientations that make perceptual contents more palpable. Other accounts address aesthetic coherence, mediation and algorithmic association. Together, they describe something diffuse, difficult to locate, situated between bodies and environments, and capable of being staged—qualities long central to theories of atmosphere, mood and *Stimmung*. Yet their engagement with Atmospheric Studies and New Phenomenology remains limited. This paper asks what becomes visible when vibe is approached directly through its spatial, sensorial, embodied and aesthetic dimensions. The argument develops from my research into cosy vibes on Instagram, where I framed cosiness as an atmospheric aesthetic category emerging between photographed arrangements, embodied experience and collective understandings of what cosy looks and feels like. Drawing on Böhme’s aesthetics of atmospheres, I described creators as aesthetic workers with practical knowledge of the means necessary to stage an atmosphere through objects, light, textures and spatial arrangements. “Cosy vibes” named neither a private feeling nor simply a visual style, but an atmospheric relation anticipated between creators, images and viewers, whose effects could be encouraged but never guaranteed. Moving from cosy vibes towards vibe more broadly, I read the relational processes, perceptual orientations and forms of coherence described by Miles, James and others as dimensions of atmospheric experience. In this sense, a staged vibe is an aesthetic proposition: an arrangement made in anticipation of an atmospheric response that others may share, resist or experience differently. Vibe itself does not name a predetermined feeling; it can make different affective and social qualities atmospherically salient, including comfort, affinity, tension, danger and exclusion. As staged vibes circulate across images, commodities, interiors, music, personalities and platforms, atmospheric character itself becomes a source of social and commercial value. Vibe, I suggest, names a contemporary mode through which atmospheres become not only felt but also interpreted, deliberately staged, circulated and sought, without losing their relational and indeterminate character.

Manuela de Mattos Salazar is the inaugural KOIAS Fellow at Kobe University (2025–2026) and a Research Associate at the University of Sussex, where she completed her PhD with the thesis *Cosy Vibes: Cosiness as an Atmospheric Aesthetic Category*. Her research approaches Atmospheric Studies as a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary field, with a particular focus on vibe. She is a member of no.ar: Laboratory for Research on Everyday Life and Technology (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil). Through no.ar, she co-edited a special issue of *Mediações* on climate, mood and atmosphere in Brazil and is co-editing the forthcoming reader *Emergent Feelings*, which seeks to foster a Brazilian research community around affect, mood and atmosphere. She is the author of *Mundo-Mosaico* (Kotter, 2018) and the forthcoming chapter “Keywording the Comfort Zone,” in *Cozy Media* (Bloomsbury, 2027).

PANEL 5:

The Space In-Between

Elisabetta Canepa

University of Genoa, Italy

Architectural atmospheres emerge from the dynamic interplay between material configuration and lived perception. Thresholds, surfaces, shadows, and sensory cues shape the affective identity of space, influencing how we sense, remember, and inhabit it. Rather than an elusive or ineffable phenomenon, atmosphere appears as an embodied experience co-generated through spatial articulations, transitions, and contrasts, leaving emotional traces on our bodies. Within this framework, aura captures a condition of heightened intensity and perceptual density: a threshold effect through which the tacit qualities of atmosphere become momentarily explicit, pronounced, and engaging, while also suggesting new design possibilities. Enactive and embodied theories of cognition, neuroscience-informed research, and design knowledge derived from a typological study of residential entryways together clarify how subtle architectural variations orient emotions, memories, and behaviors across the narrative sequence of in-between spaces that compose the city, namely liminal spaces at building entrances, suspended between opposing realms: interior and exterior, private and public, domestic and urban, physical and symbolic. The aim is to distill recurring configurations that afford specific atmospheric impressions into design principles, guiding strategies in which atmosphere is approached as an intentional dimension of architectural sensibility.

Elisabetta Canepa is an architect and researcher in the Department of Architecture and Design at the University of Genoa. After completing the RESONANCES project (2021–2024) as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, she became the principal investigator of the EU-funded AURA project (2025–2028). Her research lies at the intersection of architecture, aesthetics, and cognitive science, studying spatial atmospheres through design-oriented, theoretical, and experimental approaches. Elisabetta also collaborates with the Departments of Architecture at Kansas State University and Florida International University and serves on the Advisory Council of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture (ANFA) in San Diego.

PANEL 5:

Unlayering the Thousand Leaves of Ambiances

Damien Masson

CY Cergy Paris Université, France

Developed within Francophone research, architectural and urban ambiances establish a paradigm that enables the examination of situations in their sensory, interactional, and spatial depth. This mode of apprehension bridges social sciences, engineering sciences, and the architectural discipline, understanding the singularity of an atmosphere as a relational synthesis. Phenomenologically inspired, this framework gives rise to two complementary, practice-oriented, and situated currents. The aesthetic approach to atmospheres characterizes atmospheric phenomena, the modalities of their production within the architectural and urban realm, and ordinary aesthetic competence. Conversely, the pragmatic approach considers atmospheres in terms of their affordances, particularly regarding sensitive, perceptive, and praxeological dimensions. In both currents, the central challenge lies in articulating two facets of experience: that which proceeds from the perceived and the represented, and that which pertains to feeling, to the intensities that traverse us and configure our ways of being in situation. Consequently, atmospheres, as conceived within this framework, are conceptualized at a local scale, their extent corresponding to the field of sensitivity of lived experiences—the *Umwelt* of participants—with their field of application encompassing material, architectural, and urban spaces. However, social and political matters, while they may allegorically evoke an idea of atmosphere, cannot be readily apprehended through the theoretical framework of architectural and urban ambiances due to the limitations imposed by the initial scope of its object. For instance, how might one approach a historical and political climate within such a framework? Or, how can one account for the subjectivity and social positionality of the subject experiencing the world when understanding an ambiance? This paper aims to propose theoretical outlines of a “more-than-ambient” approach to ambiances. In other words, it seeks to explore the potential utility of the concept of ambiance for analyzing situations characterized by uncertain spatial and temporal contours, and whose phenomenality exceeds the here and now. Drawing upon research concerning atmospheres related to the terrorist threat and anti-terrorist measures in European cities, we propose the conceptual triad of ambient climate / infra-ambient / meta-ambient, which accounts for a multi-scalar approach to ambiances. Using metaphors, this framework enables the representation of the ambient and atmospheric conditions of a situation, a state of mind, and affects, while simultaneously positioning them within their historicity and accounting for individual modes of apprehension.

Damien Masson is an Associate Professor of Urban Studies at CY Cergy Paris Université. He serves as co-director of the International Ambiances Network (www.ambiances.net) and deputy director of the PLACES research group. His research focuses on the sensory dimensions of ordinary experiences within urban spaces and daily mobilities. Drawing on a theoretical and methodological framework rooted in architectural and urban ambiances, the geography of affective atmospheres, and urban geopolitics, his work explores the bodily, social, and cultural implications of contemporary urban planning policies and security or surveillance management strategies.

PANEL 5:

The Theory of Ambiance in the Works of Jean Baudrillard

Kantaro Ohashi 大橋完太郎

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS

Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007), the French philosopher known for his concepts of “simulation” and the “hyperreal,” developed in his early work a concept of “ambiance” grounded in Marxist theory. This argument, elaborated in *The System of Objects* (1968), was subsequently rewritten in *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (1970) as a theorization of the image of the world, before receding into the background of his hyperreality thesis in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976). This presentation aims to trace the trajectory of these variations in Baudrillard’s theory of ambiance, and through that tracking to reflect on the relationship between the theory of ambiance and the concepts of simulation and hyperreality.

Kantaro Ohashi is a Professor at the Graduate School of Humanities, Kobe University. He holds Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from Kyoto University, and a PhD from the University of Tokyo. His research explores eighteenth-century French Enlightenment thought and literature through the lens of contemporary philosophy, with a particular focus on thinkers such as Diderot and Buffon. His scholarly interests span philosophy, aesthetics, and theoretical frameworks concerning animality, monstrosity, and formless beings. He also engages with contemporary philosophy addressing post-truth epistemology and conspiracy theory. He is the author of *Diderot’s Materialism* (2011) and has translated key works of contemporary European thought into Japanese, including Quentin Meillassoux’s *After Finitude* and Mark Fisher’s *Post-capitalist Desire*.

PANEL 6:

Co-presence and Actuality: Atmosphere Theory and New Materialism

Andreas Rauh

Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg, Germany | Human Dynamics Centre (HDC)

This presentation examines the ontological status of atmospheres in educational settings by bringing phenomenological atmosphere theory into dialogue with Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). Classrooms, lecture halls, studios, and other pedagogical spaces are never neutral containers of learning. They are shaped by light, sound, smell, furniture, surfaces, temperature, bodies, gestures, expectations, and institutional arrangements. These elements do not merely form a background to education; they co-produce the felt reality in which teaching and learning take place. Starting from Gernot Böhme's theory of atmosphere as the felt co-presence of subject and object, the paper asks whether atmospheres can be understood as objects in their own right. OOO, especially in Graham Harman's formulation, provides a productive counterpoint because it insists on the autonomy and withdrawal of objects beyond their relational effects. The tension between atmospheric co-presence and objectal withdrawal becomes the central theoretical problem of the paper. While atmosphere theory foregrounds relational, felt-bodily presence, OOO reminds us that things never exhaust themselves in their perceptual or pedagogical use. The presentation proposes the concept of "effective objects" to mediate between these perspectives. This perspective has consequences for educational theory and practice. Teachers, educators, and learners can be understood not only as subjects acting within spaces but also as co-creators among effective objects. Pedagogical professionalism therefore includes an attentiveness to materiality, spatial arrangement, and atmospheric resonance. By combining phenomenological sensitivity with ontological precision, the presentation argues for a pedagogy that takes seriously the co-presence, resistance, and proper being of human and non-human participants in educational situations.

Andreas Rauh, PhD, has been the managing director of the Human Dynamics Centre of the Faculty of Human Sciences in Würzburg since 2014 and, in addition to many areas of responsibility at the faculty, is also responsible for the qualification program for doctoral students. He is currently working on his habilitation on the topic of Affectability and Materiality at the Institute of Education at the University of Würzburg. His research interests include: aesthetics, atmospheres, corporeality, materiality, perception.

PANEL 6:

Rethink Atmospheric Attunements: Bodies as *Qi* and More-Than-Human Narratives

Chung-Yen Cheng 鄭中彥

Durham University, United Kingdom | KOIAS Fellow

Geographical research on atmospheric attunements has contributed to understanding how particular communities learn to become more sensitive to certain sensations due to immersion over a long time (see Ash, 2013). Although such research tends to be empirical, it is inspired by a unique blend of two strands of philosophical thought. The first consists of Martin Heidegger's writings about *Stimmung*, which is often translated as 'attunement.' Second is New Phenomenology, especially Gernot Böhme's works on atmosphere. However, I argue that geographical studies of atmospheric attunements deviate from their inspirations in two problematic ways. First, they tend to treat atmospheres as something that human bodies attune to rather than something that is already mingled with bodies. This diverges from Heidegger's (1995) argument that attunements are something 'which in advance determine our being with one another' (p. 67). Some geographers who are inspired by Respiratory Philosophy may have avoided this pitfall by arguing for a gaseous body (see Engelmann, 2015), but they still rely on the human subject to narrate their attunement to atmospheres. Therefore, they risk reducing attunement to a subjective experience, which deviates from the promise of attunement and atmosphere to overcome subject-object distinction. I argue that to correct these two deviations, geographers should look to Zhuangzi's (1962) conceptualization of all beings as temporary sedimentation of *qi*. This indicates that human bodies are inherently atmospheric. Furthermore, Zhuangzi's *qi* and Böhme's atmosphere have a shared sensibility: an appreciation of the diffuse, affective, and vital qualities of existence that resist subject-object distinction (see Lai, 2019). Conceptualizing bodies as *qi* further makes human senses atmospheric during attunements, thus enabling more-than-human narratives to emerge. This would come in handy when describing spiritual experience, which *qi* and atmosphere have been associated with (see Eisenlohr, 2022).

Chung-Yen Cheng 鄭中彥 is a Human Geography PhD student at Durham University, working with Dr Marijn Nieuwenhuis and Dr Mike Crang. His research is on people's experience with *qi*-based holistic medicine in Northeast England and Taiwan. He uses ethnography as a method and focuses on the following three aspects of *qi* experience: attention, body, and wellness. He will be a KOIAS Fellow in September 2026.

PANEL 6:

Ecological Atmospheres: Ecofeminist Perspectives and Global Inequities

Nadja Furlan Štante

Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia

This paper employs an atmospheric approach to ecotheology to investigate how affective, sensory, and relational dimensions of environments shape ethical and spiritual responses to ecological crises. Rather than understanding ecological degradation through scientific indicators or policy frameworks, the concept of atmosphere foregrounds the embodied perceptions through which individuals and communities encounter environmental change. Atmospheres emerge through interactions among human and nonhuman actors, material conditions, cultural narratives, and ecological processes, offering a framework for examining the moral and spiritual implications of climate disruption. Drawing on ecofeminist theory, the paper argues that ecological atmospheres are not experienced equally. Environmental degradation, climate vulnerability, and ecological suffering are distributed unevenly, reflecting structures of colonialism, patriarchy, economic exploitation, and injustice. Ecofeminist scholarship has demonstrated that the domination of nature is linked to the marginalization of women, Indigenous peoples, and vulnerable communities. By integrating ecofeminist insights with atmospheric thinking, this study highlights how ecological crises are embodied and perceived differently in the Global South and the Global North, revealing asymmetries in exposure. Particular attention is given to the ways in which climate-related phenomena—such as droughts, floods, pollution, and biodiversity loss—generate atmospheric conditions that shape emotions, spiritual practices, and commitments. Communities in the Global South experience atmospheres marked by precarity, displacement, and loss despite contributing little to greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, societies in the Global North benefit from industrial development while remaining insulated from the immediate consequences of environmental degradation. The paper further explores how ecotheological reflection can contribute to a just and compassionate response to these realities. An atmospheric perspective encourages attentiveness to interconnectedness, vulnerability, and relationality, fostering forms of spiritual care that acknowledge both human and nonhuman suffering. By recognizing atmosphere as both a medium through which ecological crises are felt and a metric through which inequities become visible, the study advances a framework for ethical engagement grounded in ecological justice, global solidarity, and care for the more-than-human world. Ultimately, it argues that ecotheology, informed by ecofeminist perspectives and atmospheric sensibilities, can offer resources for addressing the unequal burdens of climate change and imagining more equitable ecological futures.

Nadja Furlan Štante is a Principal Research Associate and Full Professor of Religious Studies at the Science and Research Centre Koper (ZRS Koper), ISH (Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis), Alma Mater Europaea University, and the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor. Her current research interests include women's religious studies, ecofeminism, religion and ecology, interreligious dialogue, and the ethical, social, and theological implications of artificial intelligence. She is particularly engaged with questions concerning the green and digital transition, exploring how religious traditions and ecotheological perspectives can contribute to addressing contemporary environmental challenges and the transformative impact of emerging digital technologies.

PANEL 7:

Literary Atmosphere: Translating Silvina Ocampo's Fiction through the Body

Silvina Katz

The Open University, United Kingdom

This proposal examines how literary atmospheres are experienced and transformed across linguistic borders, using the short fiction of Argentine writer Silvina Ocampo as a case study. It argues that atmosphere in literary translation is not a secondary or impressionistic concern but a primary textual effect that can be systematically accessed, analyzed, and recreated if the translator's embodied, somatic experience of reading is restored to its epistemological significance. To that end, the paper develops what is termed sensory hermeneutics: a three-stage methodology that positions the reader-translator's body as the first instrument of atmospheric interpretation. Atmosphere, here, is understood as existing in an intermediate zone between subject and object, neither purely material nor purely psychological, a tuned space in which affective qualities suffuse a text before conscious interpretation occurs. In literary contexts, atmosphere emerges not from isolated features but through the density and distribution of sensory signals across a narrative. In translation specifically, atmosphere is constituted through the phonetic, syntactic, and lexical texture of the source language and is therefore irreducible to semantic transfer alone, making it one of the most pervasive and vulnerable dimensions of literary translation. The framework brings together phenomenological accounts of bodily affectivity, somatic translation theory, and models of reading that understand textual experience as active and durational. Sensory hermeneutics repositions existing work in cognitive poetics by shifting analytical emphasis from textual foregrounding devices to the reader-translator's pre-reflective somatic response. Rather than beginning with linguistic features presumed to generate experiential effects, this methodology begins with bodily being-affected itself and only subsequently traces the textual sources through which that response emerges. The sensorium thus functions not as an externally imposed taxonomy but as a heuristic for articulating what has already been registered bodily. The methodology operates through a three-stage sequence. Stage one dwells in the felt somatic response. Stage two locates its textual sources through corpus-assisted reading. Stage three labels the response by sensory modality—visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile—as provisional analytical divisions within a unified sensorium. Together, these stages produce what is termed the sensory fingerprint of a text: its distinctive perceptual signature accumulated through the interplay of sensory registers across the narrative. Through comparative analysis of Ocampo's stories and their English translations, the paper demonstrates how this atmospheric signature may be attenuated at specific translatorial decision points and how attention to first-order bodily response can assist translators in recreating the affective world of source texts.

Silvina Katz is an Argentinian researcher and practicing translator based in the UK. She holds a PhD from The Open University (2024), where she investigated sensory perception and atmospheric effects in the translation of Silvina Ocampo's short fiction. Her research interests encompass sensory linguistics, corpus stylistics, phenomenology, and the sensory construction of atmosphere in literary translation. Her work engages with international debates in translation studies, sensory studies, and phenomenological approaches to literature, with particular attention to cross-linguistic and cross-cultural questions of affect and perception. Silvina contributes to both academic and professional communities concerned with experiential translation, literary atmosphere, and sensory methodologies.

PANEL 7:

The Letter H in Schumann's *Myrthen***Linjing Jiang** 姜林静

Fudan University 复旦大学, China

In September 1840, on the eve of their wedding, Robert Schumann presented the song cycle *Myrthen* (Op. 25) to his bride-to-be, Clara Wieck, symbolically placing upon her a sacred nuptial wreath. Yet Schumann embedded a subtle enigma within this gift: he entitled the cycle *Myrthen*, retaining an apparently superfluous “h”, rather than adopting the spelling *Myrten*. Taking this silent “h” as its interpretive point of departure, this paper offers a reading of the cycle from both poetic and musical perspectives. In German, the letter “h” occupies an unusual position between sound and silence. It may be audibly articulated as a breath sound, as in “*Hochzeit*” (wedding); it may remain entirely silent, as in “*Ehe*” (marriage); or it may form an inseparable part of a complex grapheme, as in “ch” and “sch”, without receiving an independent phonetic realization. Alternately audible and silent, manifest and concealed, the “h” in *Myrthen* evokes one of the most elemental conditions of life: *Hauch* (breath, exhalation, breeze). Through *Hauch*, human beings give voice to lament and praise alike; breath thus becomes a medium in which suffering and joy converge. This paper argues that, through the seemingly superfluous “h” inscribed in the title, Schumann confronts Clara, with an almost cruel clarity, with a vision of the future of their love. Love as lived experience remains vulnerable to suffering, fracture, and loss; yet love mediated and sustained through art can become *Hauch*: a breath capable of suturing what has been broken and of transforming suffering into the possibility of healing. The silent “h”, therefore, is not merely an orthographic anomaly but a structural and poetic key to the cycle as a whole.

Linjing Jiang 姜林静 is an associate professor at Fudan University. She holds a PhD in German Language and Literature from Heidelberg University. From 2023 to 2024, she was a visiting scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary. Her research interests include political philosophy and political theology in German literature, the interrelations between classical music and literature, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century German poetry. She has published widely on literature, religion and the arts in Chinese, German and English. She also serves as a core member of the Shanghai Translators Association.

PANEL 7:

Respiratory Poetics: Breath, Atmosphere, and Poetic Form between Europe and Japan

Alberto Parisi

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS | Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia

It is not easy to speak of breath and poetry together, for a very simple reason: the two are intrinsically connected but we have forgotten why. More than with breath or air, European and globalized culture has come to associate poetry with the spirit, with the spiritual expression of human beings. It is as hard to speak of poetry and atmospheres, and for very similar reasons: while since at least Romanticism poetry has been seen as the place of the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (Wordsworth), such feelings were understood for the most part as internal states of a subjective spirit, called at times soul, mind, or subject. As Respiratory and Atmospheric Studies show, these two processes have worked together within European culture across the last two millennia: 1) the transformation of *pneuma* and *spiritus*, namely the ancient Greek and Latin words for, at the same time, breath and the substance of reality and thought, into an immaterial substance having nothing to do with material air any longer—the divine and human mind or consciousness; and 2) the interiorization of emotions and affects into that same mind. One of their joint results was the Romantic understanding of poetry as a spiritual art—spiritual because it has to do with the emotions and *Stimmungen* of a subject, which lyric poetry, in Hegel’s account, is able to sublimate into absolute spirit. Through a philosophical and cross-cultural approach, this paper wishes to lay the basis for a respiratory poetics—one able to read the poem as a respiratory and atmospheric event—beyond the spiritualist biases that have shaped the understanding of poetry until now. It does so by juxtaposing two poems, one European and one Japanese, each famous in its own tradition and widely discussed also by atmospheric scholars: Goethe’s *Über allen Gipfeln* (1780) and Bashō’s “*kane kiete*” *hokku*. Read one beside the other, they show that, not only in Europe but across cultures, “modern” poetry has made of breath and atmosphere its central problem from the outset. For what these poems open onto is not, as has long been supposed, another realm of thought and emotion beyond this world of matter and breath, but a specific enveloping air, an atmosphere—and they open onto it at a determinate point in their own poetic form, which the Japanese device of the *kireji* helps us conceptualize.

Alberto Parisi is Special Project Assistant Professor at the Kobe Institute for Atmospheric Studies (KOIAS) of the Graduate School of Humanities of Kobe University, Japan, as well as a researcher at the Institute for Philosophical and Religious Studies of the Science and Research Centre Koper (ZRS), Slovenia. He received his PhD in Comparative Literature from Harvard University with a dissertation titled “The Intention of the Spirit: Breath, Air, and Voice in Modern European Poetry and Philosophy” and soon to be published by Routledge. He is the co-editor of *Philosophy of Breath: A Critical Reader* (with Lenart Škof, Bloomsbury 2027). His research lies at the intersection of comparative philosophy and literature, focusing on the history of ideas of breath, air, voice, and atmosphere in poetry and philosophy across European and Japanese traditions.

PANEL 8:

Tender Ground: Weathering, Deep Time, and the Felt Atmosphere of Land

Megan Kaminski

University of Kansas, USA

Atmospheric studies has developed a rich account of the felt body in space—a room, a cityscape, a passing weather event—but largely in the synchronic register of the present moment. This talk turns that concept toward duration: toward ground itself as something we weather, and that weathers us, across years rather than instants. Drawing from *Tender Ground*, a memoir-in-progress woven from a decade of embodied relationship to the Kansas tallgrass prairie, I take up the body not as a thing that stands in weather but as a thing made and unmade by it—an archive, thick with retained pasts and anticipated futures, holding the record of what it has moved through. Neimanis and Walker, building on thinking from Deleuze (via Bergson) and Barad, refer to this layered chronology as “thick time”; I bring it now to ground specifically, and to the particular patience of ground-time, which is slower, more retentive, less fickle than the wind. What does it mean to dwell, neurodivergent and healing, within a landscape whose own repeated durations of fire and regrowth become a kind of second felt body? I propose grace, rather than responsivity or possibility, as the ethical register this weathering asks of us: the insistence that a body—human or otherwise, prairie, ground—is worthy of care not because it has earned it, but simply because it is here, weathering, alongside us.

Megan Kaminski is a poet and Professor of Earth, Energy, and Environment at the University of Kansas, where her teaching and research move between poetic practice, environmental humanities, and community-engaged ecological work. She is the author of three books of poetry—*Gentlewomen* (Noemi Press, 2020), *Deep City* (Noemi Press, 2015), and *Desiring Map* (Coconut Books, 2012)—and is completing a three-book cycle rooted in the Kansas tallgrass prairie: *Blazing Star* (poems, Noemi Press, 2028), *Prairie Oracle* (essays and oracle deck, University Press of Kansas, 2027), and *Tender Ground*, a lyric memoir in progress braiding personal narrative, natural history, and contemplative practice. Her place-based poetry, sound, and art installations have appeared at museums, gardens, and libraries nationally, alongside a long practice of community poetry walks, workshops, and public readings.

PANEL 8:

From Zodiacs to Cyclones: A Brief History of Medical Meteorology

Maximilian Hepach

Durham University, United Kingdom

Does weather affect health and wellbeing? For much of human history, the answer to this question was “yes”. However, the specific nature of this effect and the general nature of weather itself were understood in different and frequently incommensurable ways. This talk revisits and reconstructs this history across three scales: the celestial, the synoptic, and the subcutaneous. The first scale, the celestial, traces the history of medical meteorology back to the much older medical astrology or iatromathematics, which sought to insert the human body and mind into zodiac relations between the sun, moon, and stars. The second scale, the synoptic, turns back to the emergence of medical meteorology as a scientific discipline in the early twentieth century. The pioneering work of the Bergen school of meteorology provided key concepts for medical meteorology, namely cyclones, weather fronts, and air masses that came to replace the zodiac as an interpretive key for atmospheric medicine. The third and final scale, the subcutaneous, focuses on the history of one specific part of weather, light, and how it functioned to stabilize racialized social orders by reaching under the skin. Viewed together, these scales reveal renewed attempts throughout human history to emplace the human body and mind in the atmospheric environment and its changes. Each attempt reveals not only the identification of some unique mechanism by which weather was thought to impact health and wellbeing, but more fundamentally how understandings of weather, body, and mind developed in close relation to and conversation with each other. This talk develops a theoretical framework to make sense of this co-production of weather, body, and mind through the work of Michel Serres and Jacques Derrida. By foregrounding weather’s aleatory and spectral nature, in particular in relation to health and wellbeing, this framework makes sense of the basic difficulty any science of weather and health faces. This difficulty found its expression in twentieth-century medical meteorology, where the field was called a *Grenzwissenschaft*, a boundary or borderline science. Medical meteorology’s liminal nature is twofold: it operates at the boundary between two scientific disciplines, meteorology and medicine, and at the very limit of what is still considered science as opposed to superstition or folk wisdom.

Maximilian Hepach is Assistant Professor in Geography and Wellcome Trust Early Career Fellow at Durham University after completing his PhD at the University of Cambridge. As a historical and cultural geographer, his research focuses on the physiological and psychological impacts of unprecedented weather, working across the environmental and medical humanities. His current project, “Under pressure: A historical and cultural geography of meteorosensitivity”, is supported by the Wellcome Trust. It examines our evolving understanding of the effects of weather on health and well-being.

PANEL 8:

Conveying the Invisible Radioactive Atmosphere of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster

Mathieu Gaulène

University of Nîmes, France | Chrome Laboratory | Pompeu Fabra University, Spain

In a Peircean pragmatist approach, human perception of the environment is based on an abductive faculty that enables action. Abduction is a “reasoning process” which constructs hypotheses by linking, on the one hand, certain imprints perceived in the environment and, on the other, what we can call a codex—a memory that is both collective and individual. But abduction is also an insight close to what Peirce calls “instinct” or “sentiments.” It belongs in the Peircean phenomenology to the realm of firstness, a relation to the world of pure “qualities of feeling”; the world as it is before any distinction, a “pre-logical” and “synesthetic” world. “It precedes all synthesis and all differentiation,” writes Peirce; “it has no unity and no parts. It cannot be articulately thought; assert it, and it has already lost its characteristic innocence.” In a word, abduction proceeds through an atmospheric feeling of a place. In that case, how is it possible to feel and convey the radioactive atmosphere of a place where the imprints and codex are lacking? Is the artificial creation of traces of the event possible through memorials, and what are the atmospheres conveyed in those places? This question is particularly crucial in the case of an imperceptible disaster, such as the one following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident and the dissemination of low doses of radiation into the environment. Low-dose radioactivity is undetectable by human senses. Only mediated imprints remain, made detectable through radiation measuring instruments, along with indirect imprints that signify through absence or emptiness—such as the ghost villages of Fukushima, evacuated after the accident and lingering for a brief period in the landscape. While some indirect imprints exist for a while, artificial traces of the event are generally constructed to transmit a new collective memory of the radioactive disaster. Here we will compare the memorial of Futaba with the one in Tomioka, manipulating different traces of the same event to convey different atmospheres to the public. Ultimately, we will question whether a collective atmosphere of a disastrous event is possible, and why it is necessary through a shared and negotiated “air-in-a-space.”

Mathieu Gaulène is an Associate Professor at the Chrome Laboratory at Nîmes University, and a Researcher (MSCA) at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona. He holds a PhD in Anthropology and Semiotics, and spent several years researching the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, addressing social, political, and cultural aspects. He is also conducting ongoing research on the memorialization processes of 3.11 disasters in Fukushima and Rikuzentakata, a project initiated during his JSPS Postdoctoral fellowship at Tōhoku University. In this context, he is interested in how Peircean semiotics can contribute to our understanding of atmospheres.

PANEL 9:

Atmosphere and Wellbeing

Takuya Niikawa 新川拓哉

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS

This paper examines how atmospheres are related to wellbeing. The concept of wellbeing is aimed at capturing how well our lives have gone, are going, and will go (Lin 2022a). This paper focuses on two kinds of wellbeing, affective wellbeing and capability wellbeing. Affective wellbeing is characterized in terms of affective experiences such as pleasant and unpleasant experiences (Crisp 2006; Bramble 2016); capability wellbeing is characterized in terms of concrete things that are good for the agent, such as mobility, health, and social interaction and the agent's capabilities to achieve them (Sen 1985, 1993; van der Deijl 2020). For atmospheres, this paper adopts the potentiality theory of atmosphere, according to which atmospheres are high-level nested relations of agent-environment joint potentialities within a place, where these potentialities are grasped corporeally, holistically and affectively (Fernandez Velasco and Niikawa, 2025). It naturally follows from the potentiality theory of atmospheres that an atmosphere consists of various types of dispositions for us to feel and act in certain ways (dispositions that fit with the potentialities of the environment). Given this, we will argue that atmospheres significantly contribute to both our affective and capability wellbeing by showing that (1) atmosphere is a fitting cause of mood and that (2) atmosphere in part constitutes our capabilities to do what we want to do. This clarifies why we should intervene on the atmospheres of places if we want to improve the wellbeing of people living in the places. The focus on atmospheres would be significant in many contexts, but especially in the contexts of care and education. Further experimental research is needed to explore how to effectively intervene in the atmospheres of care and education-related places. The limitation of this paper is that it focuses only on affective wellbeing and capability wellbeing. These two types of wellbeing provide clear avenues of how atmospheres contribute to wellbeing, but we are pluralists, and we are very open to other avenues to increasing wellbeing. It is thus a topic of further research to address how atmospheres are related to other conceptions of wellbeing, such as desire-based wellbeing and objective list theory of wellbeing.

Takuya Niikawa 新川拓哉 is an associate professor at Kobe University. He works on the analytic philosophy of mind, in particular focusing on the nature of consciousness. He also studies experimental phenomenology. His selected publications include "Atmospheres and the Intentionality of Moods" (co-authored with Pablo Fernandez Velasco) in *European Journal of Philosophy* (2026), "Consciousness is Sublime" in *Ergo* (2025), "Naïve Realism, Imagination and Hallucination" in *Phenomenology and Cognitive Sciences* (2023), "Functions of Consciousness: Conceptual Clarification" (co-authored with Hiroaki Taiyo Hamada, Satoshi Nisida and Katsunori Miyahara) in *Neuroscience of Consciousness* (2022), and "Illusionism and Definitions of Phenomenal Consciousness" in *Philosophical Studies* (2020).

PANEL 9:

The Reciprocity of the Agent and the Environment

Tetsushi Nonaka 野中哲士
Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan

A defining feature of agential systems is that they strive to control their encounters with the environment, obtaining beneficial encounters (i.e., preferred states) while avoiding harmful ones. To perceive the “affordances” of things is to perceive what encounters with them would afford. In so doing, agents become coordinated with a particular scale of nature at which meanings and problems reside, their behavior a constant function of what encounters with the environment would afford. Any effort to understand agential systems therefore requires describing the world at the level into which their perception and behavior fit; otherwise it is like watching a tennis match with half of the court occluded from view. What a thing affords an agent is determined by what it is—an invariant combination of properties of the thing, such as its material substance and passive dynamics, its resistance to stress, stiffness, viscosity, and size—taken with reference to the agent. Affordances, so conceived, are neither subjective values unidirectionally projected onto a meaningless physical world nor scale-independent properties of bare matter viewed without a point of observation; they are real properties of the environment, perceived through the lens of the agent’s first-person perspective. In this talk, taking my cue from James Gibson, I discuss an explanatory strategy in which the dynamics of an agent’s control of its encounters with the environment are explained by appeal not to the components of the agent, but to the unfolding of the larger system of agent-plus-environment. This strategy provides a principled way to frame the rich informative invariants in the environment—patterns in ambient energy arrays that specify persisting properties of the surroundings—to which perceiving agents can flexibly tune their behavior. These informative patterns are obtained rather than imposed: it is the agent’s own activity that brings them to the fore. Bringing the necessary reciprocity between agent and environment into focus, I suggest, could be a transformative step toward closing the persistent gap between “what a thing is” and “what a thing means.” Such a reorientation may open new avenues of inquiry and yield fresh insight into the agent’s perception of its environment.

Tetsushi Nonaka 野中哲士 is Professor at the Graduate School of Human Development and Environment, Kobe University, Japan. His research explores how humans learn to use affordances that are fundamental to human econiche. For his work on flexible action control in the body–environment system, he received the JSPS Prize in 2017.

PANEL 9:

Wittgensteinian Moods, Disenchantment and Scientific Objectification

Gorazd Andrejč

Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia | University of Groningen, Netherlands

There is a telling similarity between Wittgenstein's treatment of religiously significant experiences on the one hand and his phenomenology of moods on the other. Using the phenomenological category of "existential feelings" (Ratcliffe 2008), we can plausibly interpret both, seeing the world as a miracle, i.e., the Wittgensteinian experience of "wonder that the world exists" (Lecture on Ethics), as well as a mood in which "everything strikes us as unreal" (RPP I, 125–126), as dawning of aspects of the world or reality "as a whole". Importantly, existential feelings such as these can "feed" religious world-pictures, but can also be related to a loss of a religious world-picture and experiences of disenchantment. Wittgenstein also contrasts seeing as, or seeing an aspect of the world (interconnected with moods, as explained above), on the one hand, and "the world as objectively construed" on the other (Baz 2020). In this paper, I will explain why the interpretation of religious and non-religious world-pictures along these lines presents us with an interesting question: Does Wittgenstein's contrast between seeing an aspect of the world, and "the world as objectively construed" (Baz 2020), imply that adopting the atheistic world-picture is an acknowledgment of the objective world which is not related to any particular existential feeling/mood, or is adopting the atheistic world-picture related to the existential feeling/mood of experiencing the world as disenchanting/godless? I will address this question with the help of Bas van Fraassen's distinction between religious stance (affirming an "abiding wonder") and empirical stance (maintaining an "objectifying attitude") (van Fraassen 2002) and argue that, while seeing and experiencing the world in both a religious and a non-religious way is not possible at the same time, it is possible to affirm both a religious stance and the empirical stance even if this involves psychologically difficult attitude-switching.

Gorazd Andrejč is a Lecturer in Philosophy of Science and Religion at the University of Groningen, and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Philosophical and Religious Studies, Science and Research Centre Koper. His work is in epistemology of religion, philosophy of science and religion, philosophy of technology and religion, and Wittgenstein.

PANEL 10:

“Like the Weather”—Toward an Atmospheric Organology

Florian Goeschke

University of Arts Linz, Austria

Grounded in repeated visits to the Lagoon of Venice since 2023 and a research stay at the University of Iceland in winter 2026, my presentation traces theoretical frameworks and artistic explorations that conceptualize time and movement as foundational elements of immersive sound interaction. Drawing on Norbert Wiener’s famous distinction between reversible Newtonian and irreversible Bergsonian time, my contribution suggests a rereading of the dominant epistemes built into sound spatialization tools that—as I argue—inherit an astronomical epistemology rooted in a history of maritime navigation, military technology, and Cartesian thought. Against this backdrop, I propose a meteorological understanding of sound that treats sound as a turbulent, threshold-dependent, and environmentally coupled force—much like weather itself. How might we gain such a weather-like understanding of sound as the medium we listen in (Ingold), rather than as a soundscape we listen to? And how might such a notion of atmospheric sound help reconfigure this technology-driven understanding of immersive sound, restoring its material, relational, and inherently meteorological dimensions for the design of post-digital musical instruments?

Florian Goeschke is an artistic researcher, sound artist, and lecturer currently navigating his PhD at the Institute of Fine Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Arts Linz. His academic background spans Sound Studies / Sonic Arts at Berlin University of the Arts and electroacoustic composition at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. His work has been shown at Ars Electronica, the Architecture Biennale Venice, MAK Vienna, Vooruit Ghent, Concertgebouw Brugge, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin, among others. He has presented at international conferences and symposia such as NIME, SMC, TEI, Audio Mostly, and the RITMO Centre in Oslo.

PANEL 10:

Atmosphere, Nature, and Ink Art— Biographical Reflections

Jiang Sanshi 蔣三石

Independent Artist

My ink art practice has always been inseparable from nature. To me, nature is not an object to be observed or represented, but a mode of being that interweaves with both body and mind. For many years, I have been working in the ravines and mountain streams of Xindian in northern Taiwan, as well as in the forests of Eppstein in central Germany, situating both myself and my work directly within the changing environment of mountains and woods. As a result, the lines, ink traces, watermarks, and blank spaces in my works have gradually moved beyond the depiction of visible scenery and become closer to the traces that remain after breathing, sensing, and undergoing body-mind transformation within nature. My creative process does not begin with predetermined sketches nor does it follow a fixed procedure. Rather, it unfolds through sensing and responding to the changes of nature within a particular moment in time and space. Climate, temperature and humidity, light, the sound of water, the textures of stone surfaces, the calls of birds and insects, and the plants that emerge through different seasons all directly or indirectly influence the formation of brush-ink. Each encounter with a blank sheet of paper is a new beginning. I set aside the gestures and atmosphere of the previous day, allowing my body to re-enter the present moment and reconnect with its surroundings. Because of the inherent natural qualities of ink-art materials—water, ink, brush, and paper—subtle interactions arise not only among these materials themselves but also between the artistic process and the surrounding environment. Within this process, the distinctive use of blank space in ink art creates a space through which breath may circulate, allowing the work to breathe and enabling the myriad forms of nature to emerge and transform within it. The aesthetic principle of *qiyun shengdong* (“breath resonance and life-movement”), traditionally regarded as a criterion for evaluating ink painting, suggests that brush-ink is not merely a matter of technical skill, but a manifestation of the movement of breath. Therefore, the ink art I pursue is not a representation of nature’s outward appearance. Rather, it explores how, through the generative process of brush-ink, body, breath, and the flowing forces of heaven and earth may become interconnected, revealing the ceaseless vitality of life that emerges between them.

Jiang Sanshi 蔣三石 holds a BA in Philosophy (Fu Jen University) and an MA in Oriental Humanities (Huaan University). Since 1999, she has developed a unique style of contemporary ink painting. In Europe and Taiwan she has turned stream rocks, forests, or beach sand into her painting table, and grass, leaves or branches into brushes, while light, clouds and natural sounds all participate in a responsive process of creation. She has held solo and group exhibitions in Taiwan, on the Chinese mainland and in Germany.

PANEL 10:

Awkwardness and *Qi*: The Generative Body and Atmospheric Experience in Chinese Calligraphy

Chun-Chen Lin 林俊臣

National University of Tainan 國立臺南大學, Taiwan

Chinese calligraphy has long regarded *zhuo* (拙, often translated as “awkwardness,” “artful clumsiness,” or “unadorned simplicity”) as an important aesthetic ideal. Modern scholarship, however, has often interpreted *zhuo* either as an anti-technical visual style or as the outward manifestation of the calligrapher’s moral cultivation. This paper argues that its significance lies elsewhere: *zhuo* should be understood as a mode of embodied generation through which the relationships among body, material, movement, and time remain open and continually unfolding. Drawing upon the *Daodejing*’s notion of “great skill appears awkward” (*da qiao ruo zhuo*) and the *Zhuangzi*’s idea of “listening through *qi*” (*ting zhi yi qi*), I argue that *zhuo* is not the absence of technique but a state that transcends technical mastery without abandoning it. Rather than displaying perfected control, it allows the act of writing to preserve hesitation, contingency, and the living traces of bodily movement. Through selected examples from the works of Fu Shan, Ryōkan, and Xu Shengweng, this paper examines how highly accomplished calligraphers deliberately retain the immediacy and vitality of everyday writing. Their brushwork does not merely represent *qi* as an inner spiritual substance; instead, *qi* emerges through the dynamic interaction between the writer, the brush, ink, paper, bodily gestures, and the viewer. From this perspective, atmosphere is not an external quality added to an artwork, nor simply a subjective emotional projection. It is a relational field continuously generated through the event of writing itself. By reinterpreting the relationship between *zhuo* and *qi*, this paper seeks to place Chinese calligraphy into contemporary discussions of atmosphere, embodiment, and phenomenology, demonstrating how calligraphy creates a shared aesthetic experience through the ongoing interplay of body, materiality, and perception.

Chun-Chen Lin 林俊臣 is Professor in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at National University of Tainan, Taiwan. He is also a calligrapher and curator whose research focuses on Chinese calligraphy aesthetics, modern East Asian calligraphy, Japanese avant-garde calligraphy, Chan (Zen) aesthetics, embodiment, and phenomenology. His recent work explores the bodily dimensions of writing, everyday calligraphy, and the aesthetic experience of atmosphere, while examining the cultural significance of calligraphy in the age of artificial intelligence. He curated the exhibition *Calligraphy in Motion: From the Scholar’s Desk to the Public Street*, which investigated the evolving relationship between calligraphy, artistic practice, and contemporary society.

PANEL 11:

The Climate of Spaces

Federico De Matteis

University of L'Aquila, Italy

My presentation discusses the concept of climate in relation to architectural space. By elaborating on the notion of atmosphere, which today permeates a wide range of architectural research, I intend to expand its relevance by outlining a relationship between atmosphere and climate analogous to what occurs in meteorological studies. While climate represents a rather stable (if evolving) cycle of recurring conditions, atmospheric events are fleeting and less predictable. Equally, architectural spaces can establish a general climatic scaffolding that increases the possibility of particular atmospheres unfolding, without however evolving into a deterministic cause-effect relationship. By addressing and comparing philosophical notions and architectural questions, I intend to formulate a novel theorization as a useful tool for both criticism and design.

Federico De Matteis is an architect and full Professor of Design at the University of L'Aquila, Italy, where he serves as deputy chair of the Department of Civil, Building-Architectural and Environmental Engineering and as chair of the PhD program. His research work focuses on the affective dimension of space and the corporeal resonance between the experiencing subject and architecture, and on the possible tools to express this relationship. His recent books are *Affective Spaces. Architecture and the Living Body* (Routledge, 2020), *I sintomi dello spazio. Corpo architettura città* (Mimesis, 2021), *The Affective City: 1. Spaces, Atmospheres and Practices in Changing Urban Territories*, and *2. Abitare il terremoto* (edited with S. Catucci, LetteraVentidue 2021 and 2022).

PANEL 11:

City as Biotope: On the Atmospheric Experience of the Urban

Ola Sigurdson

University of Oslo, Norway

In my paper, I wish to address a philosophical issue in the wake of urbanization, namely how we, as human beings, experience our constitutive spatiality, especially in the experience of the city. What does it feel like to live in a city? What are the essential characteristics of such an experience? According to well-known philosophers of the urban, such as Georg Simmel and Richard Sennett, the experience of the urban might be characterized as an experience of heterogeneity and alienation. However, the question of how these two concepts should be understood is still open. The early tradition of phenomenology, including, among others, Martin Heidegger and Otto Friedrich Bollnow, has a tendency to interpret heterogeneity and alienation as entirely negative experiences, as a being-in-the-world characterized by inauthenticity. One might suggest that there is an anti-urban bias in some phenomenological accounts. Instead of inauthenticity, I will argue that the experience of urban heterogeneity and alienation should be understood as liminal experiences, i.e., experiences of an in-between that might entail possibility as well as danger. I use Rahel Jaeggi's formal account of alienation as a "relation of relationlessness" as well as Hartmut Rosa's account of alienation as a lack of resonance to argue two things: first, that although there certainly are malign forms of urban alienation, the indifference of depersonalized urban relations might also give rise to a certain freedom; second, that the question of alienation implies questions of modes of relationality, or of how the subject is configured in urban experiences: as active, as passive, or as mediopassive or medioagentic. I use Jaeggi and Rosa as counterpoints to argue that the experience of the city is both passive and active and that there is a certain form of urban alienation that might even be termed beneficial in its freedom. Furthermore, a central aspect of the experience of urban alienation is the experience of urban heterogeneity. If the experience of the urban is not just an experience of strangers but also of unknown places, even of non-places, this experience includes, by necessity, experiences of the insignificant and of the alien as features of the built city itself. With the help of urban morphology, as well as Hannah Arendt and Jane Jacobs, I shall show how this heterogeneity is always negotiated by liminal transit zones. The urban experience, then, is an experience of alienation and heterogeneity, but neither as entirely negative nor as entirely positive. Rather, it is an experience of the in-betweenness of a negotiated relation to the other.

Ola Sigurdson is professor of systematic theology at the Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, Norway, and also a member of the Royal Academy of Letters in Stockholm, Sweden. His academic interests lie in the intersection between theology, phenomenology, and the arts. The author of more than thirty books in Swedish and English, his most recent publications in English include *Atmospheres in Everyday Life: On Existential Spatiality* (Mimesis International, 2024) as well as *Thresholds and Places: On Existential Spatiality 2* (Mimesis International, 2026). He is also active as a cultural journalist in Sweden and Norway.

PANEL 11:

“Auditory Asides” –Listening Prismatically**Malcolm Troon**

WaterBear College of Music | Falmouth University, United Kingdom

From the perspective of sound studies through auditors’ listening methods, I will present new ideas regarding sonic cognition through ambient atmospheric interpretation. I will challenge traditional axioms that assume listener apprehension as a singular and linearly chronological pursuit. Ultimately, my research investigates sounds as properties of resilience and endurance, opposing tropes of sounds as purely ephemeral and brief. As such, through observing subjects (and myself) within novel sensory atmospheric conditions, my research has developed the notion of the “auditory aside.” My presentation will examine three primary examples of listeners’ sonic landscapes and atmospheres and their strategies of capturing them through the auditory aside framework. I will document visits to Great Dixter Gardens, Sussex, England, for its multi-layered dawn chorus, examine a ferry journey across Istanbul’s Bosphorus Strait for its daytime sonic cacophony and the mountaintops of the Isle of Rum in Scotland for the intensely sonic nocturnal arrival of thousands of Manx Shearwater seabirds. These examples will unearth sonic chronologies as embedded in their atmospheric conditions, as being unbound by strict linear temporality. The auditory aside sees the listener subconsciously extracting a sound (or sounds) from their ongoing environment where it is atmospherically housed so to speak. The sound is paused and placed aside while they examine the sensory conditions that surround it. When that atmospheric housing has been reviewed, the sound’s context, atmospheric affect and ontological meaning, resulting use or role is generated, and it is then reintegrated back into the wider picture. Why this process and what is its value? Once we understand sound’s atmospheric context, we can understand that sound’s meaning. Atmosphere when approached from this viewpoint perpetually pivots at the meeting point of our interpretations that we project into a space and the characteristics that we receive from a space. Listener experience is not single lane traffic, or even one way. They are concurrent chronologies, prismatic and multi-directional, if you will. Therefore, questions regarding notions of the past, present and future tenses are raised when we integrate these sideward and backward auditory glances. So, I argue that the order in which a listener might organize their experience of a sonic environment seldom matches the flow of time on which the sounds are received by their ear, and one method to accommodate this is the auditory aside.

Malcolm Troon is a professional musician, teacher, and lecturer. His ongoing research examines sounds as properties of resilience and permanence, challenging tropes of sonic ephemerality and brevity. He continues to develop a new fluid conceptual framework called ‘Sound Tenses’, in which the past, present, and future tenses plot the life of extended sounds as they morph between different forms. Such an approach allows detailed auditory examination of diverse demographics, and it facilitates advancements in sensory research. As a musician, he continues to work as a session player, and as an instrumental teacher. As a composer, he continues to exhibit audio-visual material.

PANEL 12:

Hermann Schmitz and his Analysis of Atmospheres**Lukas Trabert**

Hermann Schmitz Research Center, Germany

Hermann Schmitz (1928–2021), the founder of New Phenomenology, pioneered the philosophical analysis of atmospheres. His work has been taken up in many other disciplines, translated into over ten languages and further developed by younger philosophers (including Gernot Böhme, Jürgen Hasse, Guido Rapp, Michael Großheim, Tonino Griffero, Wang Zhuofei and Yuho Hisayama), with the theme of atmospheres receiving particular attention. Since the 1960s, Hermann Schmitz has, within the framework of his New Phenomenology, philosophically explored the key concepts of felt body (*Leib*), space, feeling, situation and atmosphere, as well as the connections between them. He understands feelings as forces that grasp us felt-bodily and that are embedded in atmospheres. His analyses of feelings such as awe, despair, shame, anger, grief or joy understand these as atmospheres felt-bodily. With particular attention to the dimensions of narrowness and vastness, Schmitz describes, among other things, the atmosphere of a room, a city, a landscape, but also the bodily atmosphere of a person or collective atmospheres. The lecture consists of three parts: Firstly, central theses of New Phenomenology are presented. These imply a fundamental critique of Western thought over the last 2,500 years, which is characterized by the division of the world into a private inner world and an empirical external world. Due to this separation, the Western civilization successfully achieved a high degree of world- and self-control, but at the price of devaluating phenomena which did not fit in with the new paradigm, e.g., the feeling of atmospheres. In the second part, the theory of atmosphere developed by Schmitz is outlined and the terminology he devised for it is explained. This aims to provide a phenomenologically nuanced description of the in-between of the external and internal worlds, of object and subject, of body and soul, as well as the elusive nature of “quasi-things.” In the third part, these approaches are illustrated through a series of manifestations of the phenomenon of quietness or silence. Schmitz himself provides numerous examples, ranging from experiences of nature and interpersonal situations to the sublime silence found in sacred spaces.

Lukas Trabert, born in 1961, worked as a publishing editor after studying philosophy, German literature, and Chinese studies. From 2001 to 2020, he was publishing director at Verlag Karl Alber, a leading publishing house in the field of philosophy in Germany. Among other things, he has edited 19 books by the philosopher Hermann Schmitz and is co-editor of the Hermann Schmitz Complete Works as well as a member of the Hermann Schmitz Research Center in Rostock. Since 2021, he has also been working as a Philosophical Practitioner in Freiburg. He has been traveling regularly to Japan for 25 years.

PANEL 12:

Atmospheres and Value: On Nature and Moral Significance

Sara Borriello

University of Vienna, Austria | KOIAS Fellow

The relation between value and nature is one of the central questions in contemporary philosophy, and it runs across a number of fields, especially environmental ethics. To ask what it means to attribute value to nature is not only to ask about the ontological status of value, but also about how value shows itself in experience. In this sense, the question of value is inseparable from broader reflections on nature as a field of appearance and significance. In environmental ethics, value plays a central role as it provides the criteria through which nature is taken to be morally relevant, whether in anthropocentric, biocentric, pathocentric, or ecocentric frameworks. These approaches tend to treat value either as extrinsic, depending on human interests and forms of sensitivity, or as intrinsic, attributed either to living beings or to ecological wholes, without fully addressing the phenomenological conditions in which it appears. In this talk, I turn to the concept of atmosphere in order to rethink this relation between value and nature. Atmospheres are understood here not as subjective states, but as modes in which the natural world is given as already carrying an affective and axiological tone. In this regard, and following Schmitz's description of atmosphere as a "positivistic substitute for the atmospheric" (Schmitz 2023: 51), an atmospheric conception of value can be seen as a way of moving beyond the opposition between objective property and subjective projection. What I suggest is that this perspective shifts the focus from the attribution of value to its experiential manifestation, understood as a pre-reflective dimension of how the world becomes meaningful. It also opens up possible epistemological implications for environmental ethics, especially regarding how nature comes to be experienced as morally significant.

Sara Borriello is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Vienna, and previously held a postdoctoral position at the University of Rome Tor Vergata. From October, she will be a KOIAS Fellow for a three-month research stay. Her research interests include atmospherology, weather aesthetics and its intersections with contemporary aesthetics, as well as value theory and phenomenological realism. Her publications include the monograph *Arie e luoghi* (Mimesis, 2024), "Weather, Atmospheres, and Everyday Life: Towards an Integrated Framework for Aesthetic Inquiry" (forthcoming in *Contemporary Aesthetics*), and the entry "Weather Aesthetics" in the *International Lexicon of Aesthetics* (2026).

PANEL 12:

What *Rāsā* Offers Atmospheric Studies

Ari Purnama

Utrecht University, Netherlands

Building on my chapter “The Primacy of *Rāsā*: Atmospheric Affordances of Intensified Visual Darkness in Contemporary Indonesian Cinematography,” forthcoming in the *Oxford Handbook of Moving Image Atmospheres and Felt Environments* (Hven and Yacavone, 2026), my presentation deepens the conceptual relationship between *rāsā* and atmosphere by approaching atmosphere as a form of taste within Southeast Asian aesthetic thought. My paper adopts *rāsā* as its operative concept of atmosphere. Rather than treating atmosphere as mood or *Stimmung* understood as a diffuse, pre-reflective condition, *rāsā* frames atmosphere as a culturally cultivated, multisensory capacity through which environments are sensed, evaluated, and savored. Drawing on Javanese affect theory, where *rāsā* integrates sensory perception, emotion, and intuition, I argue that cinematic atmospheres are not only felt but tasted, involving discernment, judgment, and affective calibration. This definition is placed in dialogue with cognate concepts such as ambiance and *Stimmung*, while foregrounding *rāsā*’s epistemological specificity. The theoretical lineage of this approach draws from Southeast Asian aesthetic philosophy, ethnomusicology, cultural geography, and film theory, rather than from New Phenomenology alone. Methodologically, the paper extends atmospheric studies by foregrounding cinematography, and especially film lighting, as a primary site where atmosphere is actively generated. I focus on intensified visual darkness, defined as a tonal condition in which shadow and void dominate the image and visual detail is partially or fully withheld. In contemporary Indonesian cinema, darkness functions not as lack or negation, but as an atmospheric affordance that heightens sensory awareness, intimacy, and affective resonance. Through a case study of *Sang Pencerah* (Hanung Bramantyo, 2010), and the work of Javanese cinematographer Faozan “Pao” Rizal, the paper examines how darkness mobilizes a specific variant of *rāsā*, namely *lemeng*, an aesthetic quality associated with depth, restraint, and atmospheric density. The analytical added value of this atmospheric approach lies in its ability to account for how atmosphere in film and screen media is culturally mediated, multisensory, and environmentally shared, rather than purely psychological or universal. By conceptualizing atmosphere as taste and extending atmospheric studies through Southeast Asian aesthetic philosophy and Javanese artistic practices, the paper contributes to the pluralization and decolonization of atmospheric studies, expanding the conceptual genealogy of atmosphere and its analytical reach beyond Euro-phenomenological origins, particularly for the study of film, performance, and Global South media contexts.

Ari Purnama is an Assistant Professor of Film and Screen Media Studies at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. His research centers on three key areas: transnational screen media aesthetics and production cultures—particularly in Southeast Asia and East Africa; interracial narratives in global film and television; and the role of screen media in shaping youth mental health and wellbeing, both in content production and audience reception. He is a Fellow of the Society for Cognitive Studies of the Moving Image (SCSMI), an international organization promoting interdisciplinary research in moving image history, theory, aesthetics, cognitive science, and the philosophy of mind and art. In addition to his academic work, Ari is an active filmmaker and a committed practitioner of creative practice as research, seeking to bridge theory and practice within screen media studies.

PANEL 13:

Bodies in Flight: The *Wuxia Gest* in Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

Yu-lin Lee 李育霖

Academia Sinica 中央研究院, Taiwan |
Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy

Shan-Hui Hsu 徐珊惠

National Cheng Kung University
國立成功大學, Taiwan

This presentation examines Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) through Gilles Deleuze's concept of the *gest*, a mode of corporeal expression that exceeds narrative function and action-driven causality. In his Cinema books, Deleuze locates the *gest* (*attitude de corps*) primarily within the fractured, alienated spaces of post-war European modernism, where the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema forces the body to confront time directly. Conversely, this paper argues that the highly stylized, kinetic conventions of *wuxia* cinema—specifically the weightless, gravity-defying choreography of *qinggong* (輕功)—serve as an equally potent, cross-cultural manifestation of the *gest*. By analyzing the film's most iconic sequences, including the rooftop chase and the bamboo-forest duel, I demonstrate how the heroes' airborne movements suspend the conventional link between action and reaction. Suspended between earth and sky, gravity and weightlessness, these fighting bodies become immanent sites where pure affects, desires, and non-chronological temporalities are presented. Their movements reveal a bodily expressivity that is utterly irreducible to psychological motivation or linear narrative progression. Ultimately, reading these sequences through the Deleuzian *gest* proposes a new methodological approach to martial arts cinema. It shifts the critical focus from what martial arts bodies do in terms of plot progression to how they expressively inhabit and territorialize the world. In doing so, this presentation reclaims the kinetic physics of *wuxia* not merely as spectacle, but as a profound, localized mode of cinematic thought.

Yu-lin Lee 李育霖 is a Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy at Academia Sinica, Taiwan. He formerly served as President of the Comparative Literature Association of the Republic of China. His research interests include literary theory, modern Taiwanese literature and cinema, ecocriticism, translation studies, and Deleuze studies. He is the author of *Digital Phantasms* (2023, in Chinese), *The Fabulation of a New Earth* (2015, in Chinese), and *Translational Liminality* (2009, in Chinese). He has edited and co-edited numerous books, including *Sinoglossia* (2023) and *Deleuze and Asia* (2014). He is also the Chinese translator of *Deleuze on Literature* and a Chinese co-translator of *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts* (2016).

Shan-Hui Hsu 徐珊惠 is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA) and Professor at National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan. She serves as Editor-in-Chief of NCKU Press and sits on advisory committees of Taiwan's Ministry of Education for gender equality and physical education teacher certification. Her research explores embodiment, gender, and cultural representation through sport and cinema, examining how moving bodies negotiate meaning, atmospheric presence, and gendered identity. In her current work on sports cinema, she investigates how bodies perform and transmit cultural atmospheres through rhythmic gestures and movement, tracing the interplay between bodily rhythm and environmental resonance. Her analysis of martial arts cinema examines how physical virtuosity, gender expression, and atmospheric *qi* converge in dynamic communion.

PANEL 13:

Utensil (器), *Dao* (道), and Technique (技): The Aesthetic Practice of Tea-Walking

Lin Shu-wen 林淑文

National University of Kaohsiung 國立高雄大學, Taiwan

Facing the crisis of the “Anthropocene,” where nature is radically objectified and commodified, this paper centers on the aesthetic practice of “Tea-Walking” (茶行) to re-examine the intertwined relationship between “Utensil (*Qi*), *Dao*, and Skill (*Ji*).” Diverging from traditional views that treat tea culture simply as leisure or anthropocentric appreciation, this research integrates the transcultural perspectives of Lao-Zhuang philosophy, planetary thinking, and new materialism (the ontological turn). By treating tea, mountain-water landscapes, and utensils as vibrant, non-human actors, the study investigates how humans and all entities can develop a relational ethics of “co-living and co-walking” (共生共行) amidst an unpredictable nature.

Lin Shu-wen 林淑文 is a researcher and practitioner specializing in transcultural philosophy, environmental ethics, and aesthetics. She holds a PhD in Philosophy from National Central University and has served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Academia Sinica and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the National University of Kaohsiung. Her academic research deeply engages with Lao-Zhuang philosophy, phenomenology, and contemporary planetary thinking. Her ongoing project “Tea-Walking” explores feminine thinking and ecological co-living through immersive tea rituals in natural landscapes.

PANEL 13:

Creating a Design Atmosphere in “*Edo Gesaku*”

Tomoyo Arisawa 有澤知世

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS

The term “*Gesaku*” refers to a body of entertaining works penned playfully by literary figures from the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth century; those produced specifically in Edo are known as “*Edo Gesaku*”. As these works were often published and reached a diverse readership, they frequently incorporated sophisticated design elements intended to enhance their commercial appeal. This presentation focuses on instances where “*Edo Gesaku*” designs adopted visual styles reminiscent of other genres—such as contemporary textbooks or practical manuals—and examines the atmosphere created by these design choices. In the early modern period, publications varied in size, shape, and design according to genre, allowing readers to gauge the nature of a book before even reading its contents. By effectively leveraging the shared perceptions associated with the bindings of serious works, “*Edo Gesaku*” designs created a deliberate contrast with the actual content and the playful nature of the genre itself, thereby shaping the reader’s experience.

Tomoyo Arisawa 有澤知世 holds a PhD in Literature and is an Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Humanities at Kobe University and at the Kobe Institute for Atmospheric Studies (KOIAS). Her research focuses on early modern Japanese literature, particularly *gesaku* (popular fiction) and the taste for antiquarian scholarship from the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, with special emphasis on Santō Kyōden. She is the author of 『山東京伝研究 —考証・意匠・戯作』 (ぺりかん社, 2025).

PANEL 14:

Playing the Wind: Embodied Wind in the Works of Jenova Chen

Madoka Serizawa 芹澤 円

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS

Anaximenes famously argued that air (*aēr*), which he described as *apeiron*, or boundless, is the fundamental principle (*archē*) of all things. Everything that exists or comes into being, including human beings, souls, and even the gods, originates from air. For Anaximenes, both the creation and the preservation of the world depend upon air, whose condensation gives rise to wind. More recently, Leichter (2022) examined the representation of wind in video games from both meteorological and aesthetic perspectives. Through the analysis of several titles, she explored the relationships between players, avatars, and the presence of wind within game worlds, connecting these dynamics to the broader concept of atmosphere. Building on these discussions, this presentation examines *Flower* (2009) and *Journey* (2012), two games designed by Jenova Chen, in which players either embody the wind itself or control an avatar whose movement and agency evoke the qualities of wind. It investigates how wind, traditionally understood as an environmental condition that shapes atmosphere, can instead become an operable atmosphere: a medium through which players actively engage with, perceive, and inhabit the game world. In doing so, the presentation argues that Chen's atmospheric game design transforms wind from a passive environmental effect into a central mechanic of embodied experience.

Madoka Serizawa 芹澤 円 holds a doctorate in German Linguistics and Literature from Gakushuin University in Tokyo and is an assistant professor at Kobe University. Specializing in film and gender studies, she co-authored a Makoto Shinkai biography with P. W. Fregonese and edited the collective volume *Zombie Studies* (Suiseisha, 2025), which examines social issues through horror media.

PANEL 14:

The Aesthetic of Emptiness and Fullness in *Shadow of the Colossus*

Pierre-William Fregonese

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS

Shadow of the Colossus (2005, PlayStation 2), directed by Fumito Ueda, exemplifies what Ueda himself calls “design by subtraction”: immersion achieved not by addition but by removal. The game withholds most of the genre’s usual apparatus (chatty non-player characters, an inventory, a quest log, a bestiary, loot, teleportation) and reduces its interface to two contextual gauges, health and grip, that surface only when needed. This talk argues that such subtractive design operationalizes, at the level of gameplay, the Japanese aesthetic category of “*ma*” (間), theorized in the 1930s by Masakazu Nakai. Japanese aesthetics has long celebrated the gap, the in-between: not emptiness as lack, but as a space that makes room for presence. In the game, this is carried above all by the horse Agro, whose companionship fills the silence of the Forbidden Lands, by a score that stays largely silent during exploration and swells only at moments of danger or wonder, and by a calligraphic art direction favoring gesture over fixed outline. This aesthetic of emptiness is set against the fullness of the *colossi*, gigantic beings roaming a figurative architecture indebted to the imaginary landscapes of Calvino, the contemporary engraver Gérard Trignac, and Piranesi. Its subterranean ruins hover between the real and the unreal, and the work as a whole sits between Romanticism and Surrealism. As the protagonist accumulates victories, he is gradually rendered intangible, a metaphysical shadow in the sense of both de Chirico and Tanizaki. The talk concludes that a paradoxical presence emerges from this interplay of emptiness and fullness, one that outlasts the fiction: players report the game’s silences and losses as still affectively present long after the console is switched off.

Pierre-William Fregonese holds a doctorate in political science from the University of Paris-II Panthéon-Assas and teaches comparative cultural history at Kobe University. Previously a research fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) at Kyoto University of the Arts, he is the author of several books about soft power, popular cultures, and colors.

PANEL 14:

Atmospheric Cartographies: The Aesthetics of Videogame Maps

Alexandre Declos

University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland

The atmosphere of a videogame is shaped by the interplay of many elements: visual design, music, narrative, level design, and gameplay. I suggest that the atmosphere of a game is also shaped by the way it uses maps—understood in their cartographic sense as visual representations of a territory and its spatial relations. Maps often play a crucial role in games. They orient players, provide information, facilitate navigation and planning, and sometimes enable or constrain gameplay. But their value is not purely functional. Maps can themselves be objects of aesthetic appreciation through their visual design, their relation to the game's fiction, and the ways in which they shape players' experience of the game world. In this presentation, I examine how maps contribute to videogame atmospheres. I distinguish several dimensions along which maps vary: they can be complete or incomplete, static or dynamically evolving, interactive or passive, and diegetic or extradiegetic. These differences, among other relevant ones, matter for how game worlds are experienced. An incomplete map generates curiosity and contributes to the player's sense of discovery. An evolving map can alter the perceived structure of a space. A diegetic map reinforces immersion and the reality of the game world. A stylized map can evoke particular moods. Even the absence of a map can shape experience by making exploration and the construction of a mental map part of the game. Maps, I will argue, should therefore be understood not simply as functional or cognitive interfaces. They are aesthetic devices that contribute to the atmosphere of a game. I illustrate these claims through examples drawn from *Dark Souls*, *Elden Ring*, *Hollow Knight*, and *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*.

Alexandre Declos is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland. His primary research interests lie in metaphysics, aesthetics, and the philosophy of games, with recent work addressing epistemological and ontological issues raised by digital technologies. His recent publications include: "The Ontology of Videogames" (Synthese, 2024), "Spectating Games Can Be a Form of Gameplay" (*The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 2025), and "Toy Stories: A Metaphysics of Playthings" (*The Philosophical Quarterly*, 2026). He is currently finishing a monograph titled *Is Philosophy a Game We Are Playing?* (Routledge).

Thinking with Your Ears

The Artistic Research Method of katrinem and Sam Auinger

Atmospheric Listening / Breathing In / Breathing Out (Thursday 24 and Saturday 26 at ANA Crowne)
Campus Soundwalk (Friday 25 at Kobe University Campus)

katrinem and Sam Auinger

KOIAS visiting artists

For SOFAS 2026, katrinem and Sam Auinger will present *Thinking with Your Ears*, a series of performative and participatory formats that invite conference participants to experience urban space through sound, movement, and situated attention. For more than fifteen years, katrinem and Sam Auinger have been developing this form of artistic research as a basis for both their collaborative and individual art projects. Their investigations often take place in urban environments and begin with a simple yet fundamental question: How do I feel in this place? From this starting point, they explore how atmospheres emerge through the interaction of sound, material, architecture, weather, movement, social rhythms, rules, and the listening body. Their 2024 residency with KOIAS in Kobe and Nishinomiya marked an important continuation of this long-term practice, allowing them to apply and further develop their methods in relation to the specific acoustic and atmospheric qualities of these places. This research will continue through related exhibitions featuring sound installations in Kobe at KIITO (September 29–October 4) and in Tokyo (October 16–18). At the conference, their contribution will be framed by a short opening and closing performance. Between these two moments, they will offer guided sound walks in the vicinity of the conference venues. These walks are not tours in the conventional sense, but shared, site-specific experiences. Through simple instructions, changes of pace, moments of stillness, and attentive listening, participants are invited to notice acoustic details that often remain below the threshold of everyday perception: reflections, resonances, drones, footsteps, signals, voices, surfaces, and the subtle transitions between atmospheres. An optional Saturday afternoon program will include a visit to the Nunobiki Herb Gardens followed by a sound walk through historic Kitano led by the artists. The project is accompanied by the booklet *Pause and Listen*, developed together with **Mao Matsuyama** (Okayama Prefectural University 岡山県立大学 | KOIAS) and shared with the public in September 2026. The booklet is not limited to a specific route or location. It offers general listening invitations that can be applied anywhere: to take time, pause, listen, walk again, change pace, notice surfaces, return, write, draw, and compare what has changed. In this sense, it functions as a portable score for everyday listening and as an invitation to develop one's own way of encountering place through sound—and to begin thinking with the ears.

katrinem and Sam Auinger are artists and researchers working at the intersection of sound, space, walking, and perception. Their collaborative practice explores how listening and movement can reveal the atmospheric, social, and architectural qualities of places. Through site-specific performances, sound walks, installations, scores, and workshops, they create situations in which everyday environments become fields of artistic experience and shared attention. Their recent work includes research-based projects in Kobe, Boston, Berlin, and Linz, focusing on urban soundscapes, embodied listening, and the relationship between acoustic environments and public space. From September to October 2026, they will be at KOIAS as visiting artists.

Mao Matsuyama 松山聖央 is an associate professor at the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Design, Okayama Prefectural University. Her research spans Environmental Aesthetics, Everyday Aesthetics, and Atmospheric Studies. She is a member of KOIAS, where she curates the KOIAS Art Project, bringing artistic practice into dialogue with research on atmospheres. Her recent publications include “Aesthetic Evaluation of the Atmosphere in Everyday Environments — A Case Study in Ashiyahama Seaside Town, Japan” (Contemporary Aesthetics, 2024).

Season Lao 劉善恆 at the Yamaguchi Seishi Memorial House 山口誓子記念館

Exhibition · September 25 · 10:00–16:30

Exhibition Tours · 10:30 or 15:00 · Sign-up required

Romarc Jannel (Curator)

Ritsumeikan University 立命館大学, Japan

Rie Koderä 小寺里枝

Kobe University 神戸大学, Japan | KOIAS

This exhibition at the Yamaguchi Seishi Memorial House focuses on the artwork of Season Lao and features a piece by Kōju Takahashi. Like haiku, the creation of pictorial art, especially photo-painting, is largely a solitary act. Nevertheless, the artist does more than simply capture elements of the world. They allow these elements to exist again while simultaneously becoming something else. Each piece is the result of a unique combination of elements that cannot be anticipated or repeated—light, humidity, mist, snow, and time coming together in a configuration specific to that moment. Still, the artist attempts the impossible gesture of capturing an instant that has already passed. What remains is not the instant itself but rather an experience that unfolds differently for each viewer. These experiences encompass atmospheric phenomena and elements both inside and outside the frame, expressing the spontaneity and ephemerality of life itself.

Season Lao 劉善恆 is an artist based in Kyoto and Fukuoka, born in Macau in 1987. He graduated from Macao Polytechnic University. In 2009, his video works about communities in Macau gained acclaim. This led to the preservation of historic buildings, including his birthplace, previously scheduled for demolition as people re-evaluated their importance. This inspired Lao to pursue his artistic work further. From 2010 to 2020, Lao was based in Hokkaido, Japan. His work during this time focused on the concept of *Engi* (縁起) or Dependent Co-arising. His artwork sought to capture the “interdependence of emptiness and reality (虛実相生)” in natural phenomena such as snow and fog. These works have since been exhibited around the world. Lao has been based in Kyoto since 2020. During the pandemic, he created site-specific works exploring the law of included middle (容中律) in places such as Pure Land Buddhist temple gardens. His installation works seek to dissolve the boundary between subject and object, re-exploring the relationship between human nature and the external world.

Romarc Jannel serves as Program Director at the Collège International de Philosophie (Paris) and as Visiting Researcher at the Research Center for Intercultural Phenomenology at Ritsumeikan University. He is also a board member of the Japan Society for Global System and Ethics. His publications include papers and translations on Japanese philosophy, with a particular focus on Yamauchi Tokuryū, Miki Kiyoshi, and Imanishi Kinji. He is the author of *Yamauchi Tokuryū (1890–1982): Western Philosophy and Buddhist Thought* (2023, in French) and has edited an issue of the French academic journal *Philosophie* dedicated to the Kyoto School. He is currently working on the philosophy and ethics of AI. In this field, he recently coauthored a paper with Professor Jonathan Tallant titled “Trustability and trustworthiness: conceptual foundations and the case of AI.”

Rie Koderä 小寺里枝 studied Art History and Aesthetics and obtained a PhD from Kyoto University in 2022 with a thesis titled *La peinture fœtale : pensées sur l'art et pratique artistique de Jean Dubuffet des années 1910 aux années 1950*. Currently, she is an associate professor at Kobe University, working mainly in the fields of the history and theory of art and aesthetics. Her research interests include the notion of “art,” the history and theory of painting and drawing, as well as the relation between image and word. Her recent research has also engaged with these questions, particularly in relation to cross-cultural perspectives. Recent publications include: “Experience of in-between: Isamu Noguchi’s Stone Sculpture and his Idea of ‘The Art of Space,’” in *Sophia*, “Atmosphere and Breath in Cultural Diversity” Special Issue, Springer, December 2025.

Scent and Logos: A Workshop on Japanese Incense Culture

Workshop · September 25 · Kobe University · 16:50–18:30 · Sign-up required

Lorenzo Marinucci

Tohoku University 東北大学, Japan | KOIAS

The workshop is a historical, philosophical, and practical exploration of Japanese olfactory culture. How does one think with the nose? What is the role and the meaning of the invisible and fleeting world of scents, one in which we are constantly immersed but mostly unconscious of? And how do we describe and express a dimension in which language meets its origin and crisis? First, the participants will have a chance to mix their own fragrances in the style of the Heian court, comparing them in a game of self-expression and blending (*takimonoawase*). Then, we will explore together aloeswood and the paradoxical scent-memory games (*kumikō*) developed in the Muromachi and Edo periods, possibly the first atmospheric art form in world history. The participants will receive all necessary materials. If you are joining this workshop, please avoid strong deodorants or perfumes.

Lorenzo Marinucci is an associate professor of aesthetics at Tohoku University, Japan. His research themes include phenomenology, atmospheres, Japanese philosophy, and intercultural aesthetics. He has been an active translator of philosophy (his translated authors include Kuki, Nishitani, Watsuji, Ogawa) and poetry from Japanese and from German (among others, the essay collection *Atmospheres* by Hermann Schmitz). His first monograph, *The Sense of Scent: Japanese Olfactory Culture and Global Philosophy*, will be published by Routledge. His current research includes an intercultural analysis of *kawaii*, understood through the phenomenology of atmospheres.



ABOUT SOFAS

The Society for Atmospheric Studies (SOFAS) is a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary academic network dedicated to establishing and advancing Atmospheric Studies. It brings together diverse cultural, linguistic, and intellectual approaches to atmospheres—often hidden yet powerful phenomena that shape our emotions, environments, social interactions, and lived-bodily relationship with the lifeworld.

Rooted in the humanities while fostering connections with the social and natural sciences, SOFAS seeks to create new possibilities for collaboration and inquiry across conventional disciplinary and cultural boundaries.

www.org.kobe-u.ac.jp/sofas

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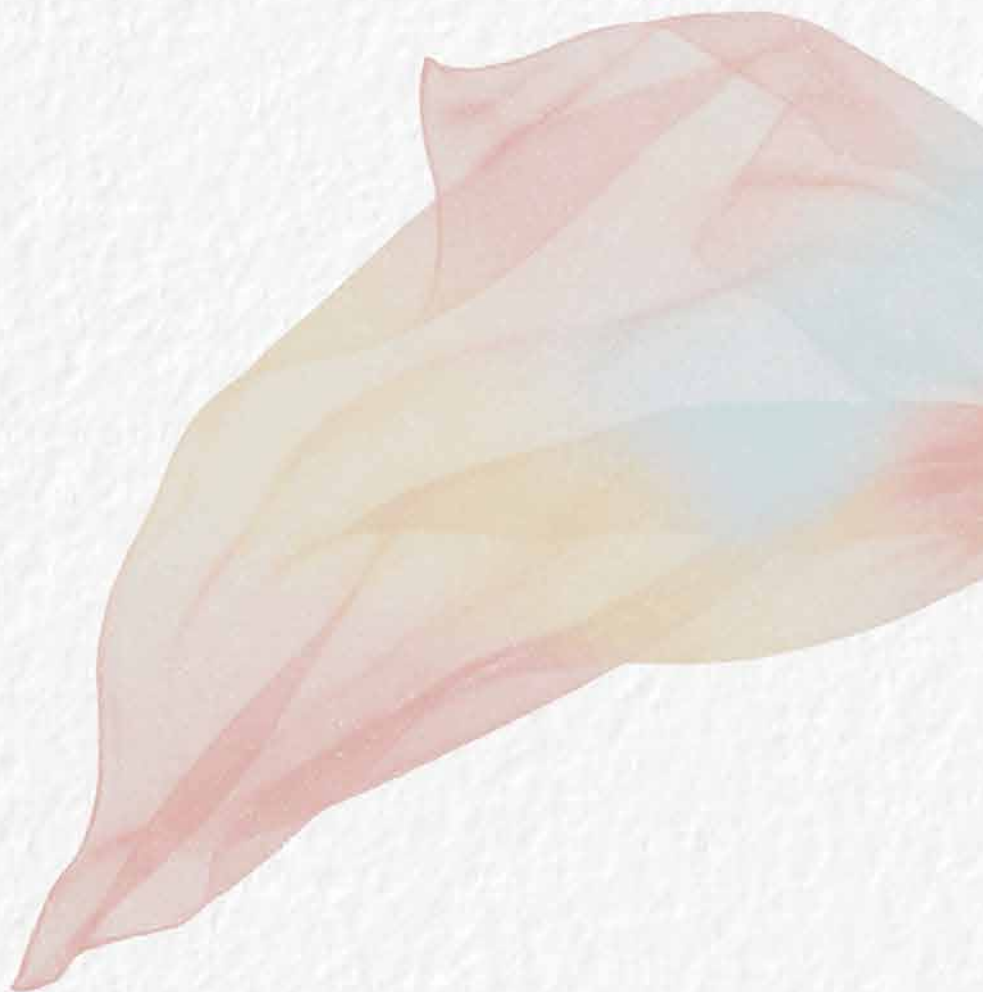
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