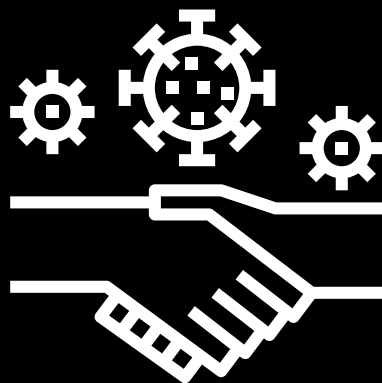


International Interdisciplinary
Online Conference

CONTAGION

Between Contiguity and Community

24-26 May 2023



CFP

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis, with its obsession with protective gloves and face masks, has put into stark relief that **contagion** – as Sria Chatterjee has recently argued – shares etymology with contact and is all about touch (**Latin: con: together; tangere: to touch**). Both about literal touching and about sharing air which penetrates our respiratory tract. The ability or inability to touch and be touched at the time of the pandemic (un)marks the boundaries between human and nonhuman bodies, transforming relations between them. “The distribution of the sensible” (Rancière) becomes literal and produces new environments and forms of being together which are dependent not only on who/what touches and is touched but also on our current understandings of contact. In this context, **contagion** is not only about viruses infecting bodies but rather becomes a pointer to the dynamic of flourishing and spreading diverse and multiple relations across the biological, the cultural and the technological. Thus, it enables us to see how touch and contact plastically shape both new realities and corporealities – new ways of experiencing, understanding and using bodies in constant becoming-with (Haraway) and being alongside (Latimer).

Taking this observation as a vantage point, the international conference **Contagion: Between Contiguity and Community**, organized as part of the project *Epidemics and Communities in Critical Theories, Artistic Practices and Speculative Fabulations of the Last Decades* financed by the Polish National Science Centre within Opus 20 funding scheme (UMO-2020/39/B/HS2/00755) aims to investigate what kind of contiguities **contagion** problematizes and what kind of contiguities emerge through **contagion**. What kinds of relations between various agents can arise from **contagious** contact? Under what circumstances can contiguity result in (more-than-human) community and what kind of community it problematizes? How does this experience of **contagion** refer to experiences of communities living with viruses in the (post)colonial world? And how does the medicalized notion of communicable disease become blurred at the time of the deepening ecocrisis which flaunts traditional modes of causality?

Those questions also incite significant reformulations of the concept of health which remains a shifting but still desired horizon in the times of **contagion**. But, as Elizabeth Povinelli in *The Empire of Love* (2006) aptly demonstrated of "ghoul health", the very notion of health and health system is already producing biopolitical divisions. The body as a bounded entity formed and constructed in the discourse of health is afraid of contact, infection, penetration by the outside world. But the body understood in terms of carnality is always open, in constant touch with environment, in contact with the inside and the outside – its boundary being dynamic and changing. What new conceptions of health may emerge at the time of the **contagion**? What are the carnalities and corporealities of **contagion**? What bodily constellations does it form? And to what extent does it undermine the very concept of an epidemic and the model of community predicated on the idea of nation state?

The conference is structured around 10 interconnected thematic streams. Each of them may be interpreted widely but all are intended to encompass as diverse a historical, geographical, social and cultural range as possible. We therefore invite submissions connected to the following streams:

1. Corporeality and carnality – how **contagion** shapes embodiment.
2. Other bodies, other knowledges – how **contagion** is understood, experienced and lived through in non-western communities.
3. Foggy brains and lost senses – how **contagion** reconfigures the sensorium.
4. **Contagion** and affect – how **contagious** contact influences the body's potential to affect and be affected.
5. Health and illness – how **contagion** challenges received notions of Western medical discourses and practices.
6. Practices of (co)healing – how **contagion** stages modes of recovery.
7. Post-pandemic communities – how **contagion** instigates new socialities, human and more-than-human.
8. Identities and **contagion** – how new **contagious** contiguities influence identity politics, historically and now.
9. Virality – how **contagious** contact traverses natural, cultural and digital worlds.
10. **Contagion** and the Anthropocene – how **contagion** (re)shapes ecological relations.

Proposals are invited for academic papers (20 minutes), artist-research presentations (20 minutes) panels and roundtable discussions (60 minutes) in the online format. Each panel should, in principle, consist of 3-4 presenters and a chair. Each roundtable should consist of around 4-5 participants with shorter statements and discussion.

Abstracts of **250 words** and bio of **100 words** should be sent to the email address epidemicsandcommunities@gmail.com.

Deadline for submissions is **January 31st, 2023**.

Acceptance of proposals until **February 28th, 2023**.

Due to the online format of the event no fee will be required. Collective volume with extended versions of selected papers is planned.

