

Conviviality After Landscape

3 + 4 September 2026

Research Unit “Infrastructure: Aesthetics and Supply”, Project 1

3 September: 14:00 – 20:00

4 September: 10:00 – 16:30

Künstler*innenhaus Dortmund, Sunderweg 1, Dortmund

With:

Yasmeen Al-Qaisi

Claudia Bosse (Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH))

Club Real

Sandra Jasper (Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg (FAU))

Marijke Lukovicz

Sam Nightingale (Ruhr University Bochum(RUB))

Christina Pinsdorf (Institute for Science and Ethics (IWE), University of Bonn)

Maria Cecília Rocha (Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil)

Carlina Rossée (Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology & Anthropocene Commons)

Jörn Etzold (Ruhr University Bochum(RUB))

Jana Kerima Stolzer (Ruhr University Bochum(RUB))

Attendance is free of charge.

Mining, industrialisation and monoculture have had a pervasive impact on living environments and communities on a global scale. Since the late 1950s, conventional coal mining in Europe has gradually come to an end. The remaining active mining areas are set to close within the next decade. The aftermath leaves behind places whose aesthetic conveys the passing of an era of prosperity. However, these places are also characterized by degraded soils, decaying infrastructure, and contaminated areas. In the Ruhr region, the transformation process began at an early stage, 'reprogramming' these places, as Rem Koolhaas put it. The transformation of the ruins into a cultural landscape, achieved by converting old mines into museums and theatres, as well as venues for the service sector, was intended to foster a sense of pride and identity in the region, while also attracting a new labour force.

Where this process is delayed by contaminated land, however, unique ecosystems emerge whose flora and fauna have adapted to the often heavy-metal-laden soils. In such contexts, the concept of 'landscape' as an aesthetic category becomes obsolete, highlighting the need for innovative and resilient forms of coexistence and solidarity. These places are characterised by loss, yet they also stimulate contemplation of an alternative mode of coexistence.

Taking place at the Künstler*innenhaus Dortmund, a former pithead building at the Westphalia coal mine and part of the operational infrastructure of the mining industry, the symposium invites participants to reflect on the possibilities for cross-disciplinary collaboration and participation offered by an environment shaped by extraction. Within the framework of the concurrent exhibition project *Unheimliche Verschiebungen* by Urbane Künste Ruhr, the symposium will facilitate interdisciplinary discussions on the

potential of industrialised landscapes, particularly those affected by past use and awaiting redevelopment.

The symposium will explore artistic research and participatory approaches interwoven with theoretical research. Can a landscape devastated by industrialisation ever become a place of solidarity, rather than conforming to the Romantic conception of nature?

Could the transformation from an industrial landscape to a cultural landscape occur without reproducing extractivist patterns of thought and action? We will consider what we can learn from new ecosystems on brownfield sites and what rights we must grant to nature and its non-human agents after anthropogenic destruction and 'un-landscaping'.