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## Spring Seminar 2025 · Politics of Curatorship

Escola das Artes, Universidade Católica Portuguesa

May 7-9, 2025

### Timetable

	Wed 7/May	Thu 8/May	Fri 9/May
09h30-11h00			Slot 3
11h00-11h15		Opening	Coffee Break
11h15-13h00		Slot 1	Slot 4
13h00-14h30		Lunch	Lunch
		Mark Peranson 14h30-16h00	Slot 5 14h30-16h15
		Coffee Break 16h00-16h15	Coffee Break 16h15-16h30
		Slot 2 16h15-18h00	François Piron 16h30-18h00
18h30	Screening #1 Sarah Maldoror	Artist Talk Vasco Araújo	Screening #3 Sarah Maldoror
21h30		Screening #2 Sarah Maldoror Cinema Trindade	

All events in Auditório Ilídio Pinho, Escola das Artes (except indicated).



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## FINAL PROGRAM with ABSTRACTS

### **Wednesday, May 7**

18h30 · Film Screening

**Sarah Maldoror, A Life of Poetry and Struggles**

[Session #1 - From the colonial oppression to the liberation](#)

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### **Thursday, May 8**

11h00 · Opening

11h15-13h00 · Curatorial practice and community

– **Marie Theresa Crick (Goldsmiths, University of London)**

*Curating Embodied Communities: Reorienting Maternal Narratives in the Irish Catholic Diaspora*

This practice-based research examines how transgenerational maternal shame—particularly in the mother-daughter relationship—among the Irish Catholic diaspora in London informs innovative curatorial practices that deepen community engagement. Grounded in Luce Irigaray’s concept of “shared air” and shaped by personal experiences of dementia, migration, and Irish Catholicism, my work employs embodied practice with conscious breathwork as its core method. Here, breath serves not merely as a physical act but as a vital medium to navigate the unsayable secrets of maternal shame. By reconfiguring maternal narratives through participatory workshops, performative readings, filmic explorations, and interdisciplinary dialogues, I challenge fixed identities and curatorial paradigms. This research offers transformative insights for curatorship, demonstrating how embodied methodologies centered on breath create immersive cultural experiences that engage contemporary socio-political challenges.

– **Erica Levin (The Ohio State University)**

*A New Rural Cinema: Curating Experimental Communal Forms*

Film curators working outside of traditional exhibition networks are engaging rural areas to cultivate new film communities. Guided by Henri Lefebvre’s suggestion that we attend to the presence of “radical transformations and ancient upheavals” beneath present-day phenomena in rural communities, it considers Sílvia das Fadas’s Cinema Fulgor, a peripatetic



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rural microcinema, as a case study to theorize the utopian impulses that drive this phenomenon. Das Fadas co-founded Cinema Fulgor while making, *Light, Blaze, Fulgor: Auguries for a Non-Hierarchical Framing and Flourishing* (2019 – ongoing), a film about Comuna da Luz, the Commune of Light, established in Alentejo, Portugal, by anarchist António Gonçalves Correia in 1917. Screenings take place at locations proximate to the original site of the commune and are curated in alignment with its political legacy. I argue that Cinema Fulgor exemplifies feminist practices of communal self-determination, improvisation, and collaboration.

– **Andrada Neacsu (UCP-EA, CITAR)**

*Documental gestures, activism and care: The Cinema of Urgency at Doclisboa IFF*

This paper aims to discuss curatorial strategies for documentary film festivals as expressions of care towards audiences, films and their impact. Documentary film festivals have sought to differentiate themselves not only as spaces of documentary circulation, but where the intersection of politics and aesthetics creates tangible cultural experiences and builds community connections (Turnin, Winton, 2017). In 2012, on the backdrop of a financial crisis and multiple manifestations throughout Portugal and abroad against police brutality, the international film festival Doclisboa introduces the Cinema of Urgency film strand as a platform for the interventionist documentary potential. Drawing from Ostrowska's (2025) framework on expressions of care within film festival cultures, the paper aims to assess in which ways the curatorial strategies and the dissemination of the program of the Cinema of Urgency can be considered embodiments of care for films, artists, audiences and communities.

– **Andrés de Santiago Aréizaga (Independent Scholar)**

*Quinqui. Uncurated film genre within mis-curated youth policy.*

In the late 70s – mid-80s Spain, a new film genre rose, peaked and faded, Quinqui cinema. A reflection of the poor socioeconomic context for the Spanish youth of the time, it was a response to community problems inherited from Franco's regime and not tackled during the Spanish Transition, mainly: lack of social housing, limited access to basic education and rife unemployment. Despite the tragic end of many of its stars, Quinqui cinema has experienced a recent revival. New films, novels, and exhibitions have revisited the genre, and screenings have featured at major festivals. 'Quinqui' analyses the origins, evolution and legacy of a



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stochastic genre that defied curation and contextualises its social determinism concerning small communities, the smaller family structure and youth behaviour. Focusing on the city as a continuing curatorial space and de facto curator itself, it explores how societal curation through the arts and alternative practices can relieve the deprived urban sprawl.

## 13h00-14h30 · Lunch

## 14h30-16h00 · Keynote Speaker (moderator: Daniel Ribas)

### **Mark Peranson**

#### *Demystifying Film Curation: Programming at A-Level Film Festivals*

Based on a decade of personal experience, this talk will explore the hidden realities of film programming, touching on a variety of systemic challenges and constraints that together work to undercut the preconceptions and common assumptions of what goes in to putting together a program for a competitive, premiere-based film festival.

## 16h00-16h15 · Coffee Break

## 16h15-18h00 · Critical historiography and curatorship

### – **Lais Rabelo de Andrade (i2ADS – FBAUP)**

#### *Curatorial Strategies and the Formation of Identity in Post-Soviet Europe: Interpol, Manifesta 3, and B-Zone*

This article offers a comparative analysis of three exhibitions that addressed identity formation in post-Soviet and Eastern European contexts: Interpol (Stockholm, 1996), Manifesta 3 – Borderline Syndrome (Ljubljana, 2000), and B-Zone: Becoming Europe and Beyond (Berlin, 2005). In Interpol, identity was constructed through opposition, with works like Oleg Kulik's Dog House emphasizing the "unheimlich." Manifesta 3 examined how political conditions shape identity, exemplified by Šejla Kamerić's intervention, European Union (EU) and Others, which simulated exclusion at European borders. B-Zone explored infrastructures and circulation through research-based projects such as Ursula Biemann's The Black Sea Files. Together, these exhibitions demonstrate distinct curatorial strategies that reflect on identity, belonging, and exclusion within a transforming Europe.



– **Gillaume Sirrois (Université de Montréal)**

*The powerful contemporary art curator: Historical construction and current image*

This paper considers the historical construction of the contemporary art curator to better understand how it strongly colours the current image. It argues that the legendary curator, Harald Szeemann, should be considered a father figure in the field. He rose to fame with his exhibition, *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969), and maintained a high profile throughout his career, with shows still regarded as a turning point in curatorial practices. After presenting his career as a prototype, the paper turns to a contemporary example, the Venice Biennale curators, to show how they might be considered his heirs. This study paints the current image of individuals selected to curate this prestigious exhibition. It shows that curators are consistently portrayed as brilliant minds capable of grasping the essence of our time and translating it into striking visual forms. Such images contribute to establishing curators as powerful figures who can influence artists' career and art history overall.

– **Alexandra Balona (UCP-EA, CITAR)**

*From Curating Performativity to Performative Curating. Towards Other Ecologies of Attention and Radical Relationalities.*

In the art field, recent scholarship focuses on curatorial frames that turn to performativity for its potential to critically negotiate regimes of subjectivation, participation, collectivity, embodiment, spectatorship, attention and immaterial exchange (Lepecki, 2016; Wood, 2022; Spies, 2020). In this “new performance turn” (Costinaş & Janevski, 2018), I aim to discuss strategies of performative curating, its contribution for an embodied criticality (Rogoff, 2006); to mediate social relations; unravel Western ocular centrism, Cartesian dialectics of mind-body, and subject-object that ground Western representation. This paper wishes to critically inquire the efficacy of performative curating in creating reality-making situations that counter today's attention commodification; instantiate processes of becoming; challenges politics of spectatorship in today's era of “disordered attention” (Bishop, 2024) and propose radical relationalities with a societal transformational impact.

– **Isabel Perezmontemayor Cruz (Steinhardt NYU)**

*Recycling the Biennial: The Biennial as a dual site for celebration of cultural specificity and cross-cultural mediation*



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Biennials can be most useful to collectivities as a dual site of celebration of cultural specificity and cross-cultural mediation. While communities might not *need* Biennials, they can be useful when the guiding principles are community care, curating a process, and meeting a specific community's needs. First, I will outline some of the critiques and concerns that have arisen when considering how biennials operate in the era of globalization and within the landscape of the visual arts ecosystem. Second, I will utilize one case study: *Manifesta 15* to consider Manifesta as an arts organization driven by a project for cross-cultural mediation. Third, I will break down how to lessen the risk of transnational corporations utilizing biennials for private gain by funding biennials through governmental institutions, whether it be at a local or national level, or NGOs that aim to utilize art for social cohesion. Finally, I advance that curatorial strategies and programming approaches can be complementary, which would allow to repurpose and recycle the idea of the Biennial as a tool for social cohesion.

18h30 · Artist Talk (moderator: Djamilia Pereira de Almeida)

**Vasco Araújo**

*Critical Metaphor of "O Jardim"* [[+info](#)]

21h30 · Film Screening · Cinema Trindade

**Sarah Maldoror, A Life of Poetry and Struggles**

[Session #2 · Sambizanga](#)

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**Friday, May 9**

9h30-11h00 · Curatorship, education and new technologies

– **David Ocón (Singapore Management University)**

*Navigating Ethics in GenAI-Driven Curatorial Practices*

The paper explores the ethical implications of using GenAI in curatorial practices, focusing on the restoration, reconstruction, and recreation of artworks and artefacts for exhibition. As curators shape presentation and interpretation, GenAI introduces possibilities and ethical challenges, particularly regarding authenticity and cultural fidelity. The study proposes an



ethical framework to help curators navigate these issues. Key concerns include maintaining cultural integrity, ensuring transparency in AI use, respecting intellectual property, and addressing social implications. By examining the ethical dilemmas of GenAI-driven curation, the paper contributes to the discourse on curators as political agents mediating between technology, heritage, and community. It underscores the need for adaptive, ethically informed curatorial approaches that balance digital innovation with cultural and historical values.

– **Manuel Silva, Luis Texeira, João Pedro Amorim (UCP-EA, CITAR)**

*Curatorship in the Digital Age: Mediation, Innovation, and Challenges at Serralves Museum*

Curatorship in contemporary art museums functions as a critical space of mediation between artists, institutions, and audiences, balancing the dual imperatives of preservation and experimentation. The integration of digital technology, such as Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality, is transforming how art is communicated and experienced, prompting significant questions about visitor engagement, the documentation of artworks, and the evolving role of the museums. While enhancing accessibility, they also challenge the value of in-person encounters. This qualitative study, based on interviews with Serralves Museum curators, examines how these tools are perceived and integrated into curatorial practice. It explores tensions between innovation and conservation, their impact on artistic processes, and whether they function as mere communication aids or transformative forces in contemporary curatorship.

– **Suellen de Sousa Barbosa (University of São Paulo)**

*Curating and the collective turn*

Originally tied to museums and the concepts of collection and preservation, the curator's role evolved throughout the 20th century. Curatorial studies expanded the field, merging critical analysis with professional practice. However, curatorial education faces methodological challenges, particularly in Latin America, where many professionals are self-taught. This study examines two Brazilian academic programs (PUC São Paulo and UNB, Brazil) and drawing on Ludwik Fleck's concept of "collective thought" and Ana Mae Barbosa's "collective creativity," this research highlights collaborative and critical curatorial training, integrating social, cultural, and political dimensions in curatorial courses. Connecting professional training with practical action, exploring the shift from individual to collective curatorial



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approaches, it considers the "educational turn" in curatorship (O'Neill, 2010), which highlights the central role of educational processes, while also proposing an analysis of a "collective turn," characterized by the rise of collaborative curatorial projects with decolonial and process-based approaches.

## 11h00-11h15 · Coffee Break

## 11h15-13h00 · Curatorship, the museum and the decolonial debate

### – **Hongjin Li (Royal College of Art)**

#### *The Atmospheric Archive: Curating Aerosol Landscapes in the Age of Climate Crisis*

The air is not empty. It carries extraction, displacement and transformation - an archive of planetary change inscribed in winds, aerosols and clouds. Yet the atmosphere, once a shared commons, is increasingly carved up by power, the turbulence marking the invisible environments that reshape our existence. This study asks: how can curatorship move beyond the tangible and engage the sky as a site of intervention? How might we curate the air to make the atmosphere readable? Atmospheric curatorship means challenging in ways we can barely see - through shifting weather patterns, altered wind currents and invisible pollutants - documenting and revealing these changes through a curatorial methodology that displaces the object in favour of air, turbulence and climate as living records - an expanded practice that treats the territory of the sky as a contested space where power, violence and resistance unfold. "

### – **Maria Gabriela Carvalho (i2ADS/FBAUP)**

#### *Cortaderia Selloana: Strange Partnerships for an Epistemology of Plagues*

The proposal explores the relationship between researcher and the plant *Cortaderia selloana* in the Iberian Peninsula through a multispecies and decolonial feminist perspective. It revisits colonial botany to trace the plant's migration from South America in the 19th century, leading to its classification as an invasive species in Portugal in the 21st century. Drawing on thinkers like Krenak, Tsing, Kilomba, and Anzaldúa, an "'Epistemology of Plagues'" is proposed to act on colonialism, feminism, and resistance within institutions shaped by colonial-capitalist paradigms. Plagues are disruptive forces that challenge these structures, fostering micro-



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transformations. This practice does not seek to provide definitive answers but rather to engage with ancestral wisdom on resilience and survival. We must resist the world's end narrative, as our dreams hold Earth's and our ancestors' memories, inspiring us to imagine beyond a collapsing system.

– **Debasish Borah (Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture, ETH Zurich)**

*How to curate the West? An art of Un-precision*

There is a desire for the 'West' in India, countering the Western desire for India. This desire is both an imperial fact and a contemporary reality, re-contextualized in representations of Western culture in academia, art galleries, and museums. Meanwhile, Indian desire is framed in discourses on migration, development, and conflict. I aim to shift the narrative of Indian desire by focusing on its aesthetico-political understanding, exploring how it attempts to curate the West. I turn to commercial photography studios in India, where painted backdrops of imaginary Western landscapes show how locals repurpose the West within their aesthetic and socio-cultural contexts. These scenes demonstrate how the West is domesticated as a sub-culture within postcolonial experience. India has creatively imagined and curated the West on their terms. Just as the West engages with Indian cultures in museums, Indians engage with the West outside formal institutions, re-contextualizing it locally.

– **Elena Sinanina**

*Curating the infinite past – interdisciplinary practices between research, contemporary arts and community activism*

In my presentation, I would like to discuss, how curatorial work can bring together academic research (Egyptology, Archaeology), critical theory (decolonial theories) with experiments in contemporary art and performative practices. With our projects, we aim to contribute to the critical reflection and reappraisal of colonial violence and dispossessions. In collaboration with museums as custodians of "cultural heritage" we try to explore the potentials for peaceful, plural and just coexistence in the present as means of emancipation and resistance. The aim is to create spaces of shared learning, experiences and appreciation, involving members of affected communities as well as "experts" working for the museums, artists and provenance researchers. Our work can be described as an attempt to connect to



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the ritual practices of ancient history to bring the displaced artefacts into a new context of the living and the common, informed by excluded, marginalized and suppressed knowledges.

13h00-14h30 · Lunch

14h30-16h15 · Critical discussion of curatorial practices

– **Hugo Barata (Universidade Lusófona – CICANT)**

*Constellations\_ \_A Curatorial Research Project Implemented In MAC/CCB*

The Constellations project was implemented in one of the most important cultural institutions in Portugal, the MAC\_CCB/Berardo Collection Museum, from 2010 to 2024. In a series of exhibitions in a span of fourteen years, it challenged conventional stratifications of how to work with a permanent collection, contributing to curatorial theory and practice highlighting the political, ethical, and research dimensions of the unhistorical museum (Groys: 2021). The philosophical concept of constellation, as developed by Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, became a vital framework for rethinking curatorial practices and was the focus of our work with a modern and contemporary collection of great magnitude. After different projects and strategies realized with this institution, we will try to emphasize the non-linear, non-hierarchical models that guided us, aimed at a renewed relevance in curatorial practices today, combining research and practice, a practice of relationality and negotiation.

– **Maria Carolina Nassif (Universidade Nova de Lisboa)**

*Frederico Morais: art as an experimental exercise of freedom*

This proposal addresses three curatorial public art projects developed by Frederico Morais (b. 1936) during the Brazilian military dictatorship. The three projects are as follows: *Arte no Aterro: Um Mês de Arte Pública* (Rio de Janeiro, 1968); *Do Corpo à Terra* (Belo Horizonte, 1970) and *Domingos da Criação* (Rio de Janeiro, 1971). Morais is an art critic, teacher and one of the pioneers of curatorship in Brazil, responsible for several emblematic events in the history of Latin American conceptualist art. The innovative character of these three projects by Morais lies in the appreciation of the viewer's direct participation in artistic creation and in the incorporation of the experimentalism stemming from the late 1960s visual arts in Brazil. Thus, the proposal seeks to analyse these three case studies by understanding how Morais curated



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such proposals countering authoritarianism, under the assumption of art as an experimental exercise of freedom taking place in public spaces.

– **Cristina Filipe (UCP-EA, CITAR)**

*Curating and Overcoming Human Adversity. A Case Study of the 'Cold Sweat' Exhibition*

In 2021, Joao Norton de Matos, SJ, and I curated the exhibition 'Cold Sweat', which explored the body, fear and protection. This paper reflects on how artistic and institutional communities, as well as the public, benefited from this experimental curatorial project at a time of great turbulence, apathy and fear. 220 works created this century by 72 artists from different disciplines, generations and countries — such as Rui Chafes, Daniel Blaufuks, Carla Castiajo, Fernando Brízio and Salomé Lamas from Portugal — were selected and exhibited in the São Roque Museum and Church in close dialogue with their respective collections as well as pieces from the SCML Historical Archive and the Casa Ásia – Francisco Capelo Collection. They invited us to reflect on contemporary art and issues related to the pandemic and post-pandemic period we were experiencing and to find answers to questions such as 'How is the body exposed to danger?' and 'How does fear determine our gestures?'

– **Ana Rito (Colégio das Artes Universidade de Coimbra)**

*THE MUSEUM IS A SCHOOL\_The intersection of academic research and public display*

The partnership between the National Museum of Contemporary Art, the Millennium bcp Foundation, the UmbigoLAB Platform and the Master's Degree in Curatorial Studies of the College of Arts of the University of Coimbra establishes the framework. Joasia Krysa in Exhibitionary practices at the intersection of academic research and public display precisely borders these crossing contexts when she refers: «To position the exhibition as research, necessitates consideration of the various contexts in which exhibition-making takes place and the impact on how meanings are produced». The relationships that are thus established between practice-based research and the expanded concept of exhibition seem relevant to us: understanding the exhibition device not as an arrangement of objects, but rather, and essentially, exercise this time-space interval as an investigation in itself, in an organic way that assumes the constant rhizome and the fluidity of potential interactions.

16h15-16h30 · Coffee Break



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16h30-18h00 · Keynote Speaker (moderator: Nuno Crespo)

**François Piron**

*Curating films exhibitions: the case of Sarah Maldoror*

Shortly after her passing in 2020, the idea of bringing Sarah Maldoror's films into an exhibition started, whilst she had never enjoyed any film retrospective during her lifetime. The transition/translation from the movie theatre to the exhibition room triggered many curatorial questions and decisions, among them the issue of how the immateriality of the projection within the black box can become material in the "white cube", and can start to dialogue with other elements, such as, in no particular order: paintings, sculptures and archival documents. To treat film as material in the physical exhibition space where the visitors' bodies are in motion and they are allowed to speak is a challenge that modifies the relations of time and space, as well as individual and social captures of attention.

18h30 · Film Screening

**Sarah Maldoror, A Life of Poetry and Struggles**

[Session #3 - A Caribbean literary Heritage](#)



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### Organizing Committee

Daniel Ribas (EA-UCP/CITAR)

Luiz Camillo Osorio (PUC-Rio)

Nuno Crespo (EA-UCP/CITAR)

Pedro Duarte (PUC-Rio)

A **joint organization**: School of Arts, Universidade Católica Portuguesa; CITAR – Research Center of Science and Technology of the Arts; PUC – Rio; CAPES Print; Grupo de Arte, Autonomia e Política.



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