



AHC

Symposium
Finite Future.
Accountability and Sanctuaries

13 June 2025

Symposium

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On June 13, 2025, AHC invites to a symposium in two parts under the shared title *Finite Future. Accountability and Sanctuaries*. It is based on the artistic research of Michala Paludan and Ghost Agency (Anni Garza Lau and Gro Sarauw).

The symposium engages the themes of accountability and justice through a discussion of artistic method: how to make abusers of social or planetary space accountable, whether they are human and/or systemic? How to articulate and address harm, also inside of movements or projects that seek justice? How to constitute processes of accountability?

Crucially, the question of temporality ties together the two parts of the symposium. That is, how to think and act in relation to futurity – to events that haven't taken place, and to agencies and temporalities that do not necessarily exist yet.

Michala Paludan and Ghost Agency are Micro Institutes at AHC.

ABOUT MICRO INSTITUTES

Practice-based research touches on structural aspects of contemporary art, including the development of methods, the role of the artist, and new arrangements of knowledge-making.

The Micro Institute is a unique, experimental format for practice-based research. It consists of a one or two-year research residency for an artist or a curator, alone or in collaboration. The format is built from the assumption that the artistic process creates a surplus of aesthetic experience through a diverse processing of knowledge, language, and exchanges with others – including researchers and social communities. But not all the elements of this process are used in, or wholly represented by, the final form of the work and the artist's signature.

The experiment with the micro institute lies in the attempt to make this multiplicity of the artistic process itself the pivot of a research framework, developed with relevant publics, partnerships and communities, and thus contribute in new ways to the production of artistic and collective experience.

PROGRAMME

- 12:30: Welcome by Lars Bang Larsen, Head of Art & Research, AHC
- Symposium: *Making Nature, the death of us*
- 12:40: Presentation by Michala Paludan, artist, and Kerstin Stakemeier, writer & educator, Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg.
- 13:20: Presentation by Max Fox, writer, Pinko Collective
- 13:45: Presentation by Josephine Berry, writer & tutor, Royal College of Art
- 14:10: Panel discussion
- 14:40: Coffee break
- Symposium: *Digital Sanctuaries*
- 15:10: Introduction by Lars Bang Larsen
- 15:15: Presentation by Ghost Agency, Gro Sarauw & Anni Garza Lau
- 15:45: Presentation by Christina Varvia, Forensic Architecture
- 16:15: Presentation by Nicolay Boyadjiev, architect, ANTIKYTHERA
- 16:45: Panel discussion moderated by Marisa Cohn, researcher, ETHOS Lab
- 17:15: Final reflections
- 17:45: Drinks for all participants

PRACTICAL INFO

13 June 2025
12.30 – 17.45

Art Hub Copenhagen
Thoravej 29
2400 Copenhagen NV

Tickets for the symposium are 50 kr. and include coffee, tea and drinks after the symposium.
[They can be bought through Billetto here.](#)

Please notice that the seminar will be in English.

[Accessibility at Thoravej 29 can be found here.](#) The symposium will be interpreted into CART and tele loop will be available.

ABSTRACTS

Part 1: *Making Nature, the death of us*

This symposium investigates questions of futurity seen through the gaze of knowing that nature will be the death of us. The reification of nature and the idolization of alienation have consistently instituted the modern 'human' as colonial not by exception but by rule, and catastrophism might yet be but another (self-) dramatization within this scenario. The matter that was made to be 'nature', to figure as the outside of us, for use, for degradation, for externalization, will lose its humanized form, but it will not lose its life when we lose ours.

How does this knowledge reflect on our present and how can we think about accountability within this scenario? We want to discuss accountability, a concept originating from the violent deadlocks imported into political organizing by the societal powers that this organizing opposes, within the horizon of imperial extractivism: accountability as a way of addressing a harm that is both inflicted and received throughout. Can accountability processes help to find an understanding of ourselves as being implicated in but no less averse to the imperial endings we are facing? How can we imagine time passing within a horizon of finite futurity? And for whom?

With Michala Paludan, Kerstin Stakemeier, Pinko Collective and Josephine Berry.

Michala Paludan & Kerstin Stakemeier: *No Photos*

Michala Paludan and Kerstin Stakemeier will present their joint research from the past 6 months. With a starting point in Paludan's project *No Future (photos for toddlers)* their presentation will touch upon: climate change, children, needs, fieldwork, autofiction, photography and mistrust of the image.

The Pinko Collective: *Accountability without community*

In recent years, the semi-formalized tradition of community-based processes of accountability for harm has taken a leap from small, left political scenes to wider institutional prominence, reaching a sort of culmination in the 2020 anti-police uprisings which posed the question of holding the state itself accountable for the harm it carries out against the people. The seeming failure of that moment and its coincidence with a number of simultaneous failed accountability processes drove the Pinko Collective to undertake an investigation into the history of the concept and practice. Our investigation led us to confront the impasse which motivates the need for these processes in the first place: the absence of meaningful community in the sense of a human collectivity which is able to self-consciously determine the conditions of its own existence.

Josephine Berry: *Planetary Aesthetics not Animal Citizens*

If accountability implies rights, and rights depend for their enforcement upon the exclusionary outline of the citizen, then how could either be extended to all earthlings? At the limits of the logic of rights we encounter the contingency of the rights-bearer whose individuality is traversed by numberless symbiotic interchanges. Instead of advocating for the unenforceable protection of all lifeforms under rights, this talk will consider how aesthetics/aesthesis can suggest a different principle of ethical relation and how this might connect to eco-socialist ideas of degrowth.

Part 2: *Digital Sanctuaries*

Justice-oriented practices are typically known for their post-crime research methods with which state and corporate violations are analysed retrospectively and based on evidence. By contrast, Ghost Agency adopts an explorative and preventative stance focusing on present and future injustices to pre-empt their manifestation as crimes — what can be described as pre-crime aesthetics.

This raises vital questions: Can justice-oriented practices extend into proactive domains of future scenario planning and designs towards change? How to comprehend human agency in relation to a reframing of systemic violations and systemic change? Can the present be reclaimed through the proposal of digital sanctuaries?

With Anni Garza Lau, Gro Sarauw, Nicolay Boyadjiev, Christina Varvia and Marisa Cohn.

Ghost Agency (Anni Garza Lau & Gro Sarauw): *Black Boxes and Digital Sanctuaries*

Ghost Agency will introduce their work reflecting on their artistic research practice through their primary project in Mexico, and how their practice intertwines social approaches to technologies and 'present actions' with gender and environmental (in)justices in Mexico. Among others, they will unfold how they adopt an explorative, theoretically preventative stance, to focus on present and future injustices to pre-empt their manifestation as crimes, that allows for technological divergence and for communities to establish sanctuaries and agencies in the digital age.

Nicolay Boyadjiev: *Parallel Practice, or the Post-Awareness Institution*

The climate crisis is fundamentally a crisis of institutions; the manifestation of our worldviews embedded in legal or governing structures that shape our built environment. As such, the continuous versioning and redesign of organizations must become the default mode of operating in the 21st century. This shift necessitates rethinking not only how we design individual projects, but the very institutional frameworks and protocols that enable new relationships between our pressing social needs and their underlying ecological foundations. In this short talk, architect Nicolay Boyadjiev will share practical examples of his "parallel practice" over the last decade, and attempt to frame the outlines of a new emerging type of "post-awareness" institution.

Christina Varvia: *Three Timelines*

Presenting three Forensic Architecture projects through three key drawings that document Forensic Architecture's investigative methods. The first demonstrates the form a counter investigation takes utilising a variety of political forums, the second reveals the cacophony of state denial, and the third captures patterns of digital terror. Together they suggest some of the ways research takes place at the Investigative Commons.

BIOGRAPHIES

Michala Paludan is an artist who works with how power is produced and negotiated across networks and movements, through media such as video, photography and installation. In her Micro Institute at AHC (2023-25) Paludan has explored the material implications of automation and AI, focusing on how these technologies shape discourse and affect social reproduction, particularly in relation to gendered labour in the domestic sphere. By engaging senses beyond sight, such as touch, her projects have investigated the distribution of behaviour and embodiment between humans and machines, subjects and objects, and representations and their referents. The outcomes have included the exhibition *I am Your Body, Chapter 1 - Automation* at Kunsthall Aarhus and the publication of the artist book *The Unposed (EoAT)*. Kerstin Stakemeier has acted as mentor for Paludan's Micro Institute since the fall of 2024 and together they have been exploring questions of futurity seen through the gaze of knowing that nature will be the death of us, and how to create images of the present with this knowledge in mind.

The work of **Ghost Agency** – Gro Sarauw and Anni Garza Lau – revolves around gender and environmental injustices. Central to their effort of pursuing accountability is a focus on how power misuses technology to manipulate time as a medium for the perpetuation of injustice and impunity. The result of this manipulation is temporal dissonance, in a society that neither acknowledges the present reality nor engages meaningfully with its past or future. Rooted in the specific context of Mexico, they investigate how gender violence and techno-impunity converge in systemic patterns of abuse and explore how the present might be reclaimed through the proposal of digital sanctuaries. In this way, Ghost Agency operates at the intersection of artistic practice, digital technology, and humanitarian inquiry between Mexico, the U.S., and Europe. Ghost Agency has exhibited in Mexico City, Tecate (MX), Los Angeles, San Diego, Barcelona and Copenhagen. Aside from developing cybersecurity technologies and literacies with their team in translocal settings, they lecture and teach at art schools and universities.

Lars Bang Larsen is a writer, curator, and art historian, and Head of Art & Research at Art Hub Copenhagen (AHC). He has researched the histories of politics and aesthetics as they have played out in exhibition-making, and in encounters between art and countercultures in the 19th and 20th centuries. His PhD was on the subject of psychedelic concepts in neo-avant-garde art (2011). He has (co-)curated exhibitions such as *documenta: Politik und Kunst* (2021) and *Mud Muses. A Rant About Technology* (2019/20), and his books include *The Model* (2010) and *Arte y Norma* (2016) and been affiliated with institutions such as Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Haute École d'Art et de Design – Genève, and the Bienal de São Paulo.

Kerstin Stakemeier is an educator and writer who lives in Berlin and teaches in Nuremberg. With Anselm Franke she curated *Illiberal Arts* (Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin, 2021), with Bill Dietz she authored *Universal Receptivity* (2021) and with Marina Vishmidt *Reproducing Autonomy* (Mute, 2016). Her monograph *Entgrenzter Formalismus. Verfahren einer antimodernen Ästhetik* (2017) came out with bbooks. Stakemeier writes a.o. for *Mousse Magazine*, *Berliner Review* and *Cura* and works with Devin Fore on the "Fantasies of the People. Historically there were never any others", starting from a conference at Princeton (March 2025).

The Pinko collective is based in New York and Philadelphia and dedicated to thinking gay communism. It publishes irregular print magazines, books, and zines, as well as hosts essays, archival materials and translations on its website.

Max Fox is a writer, translator, and editor of Pinko Magazine. He is the editor of Christopher Chitty's *Sexual Hegemony: Statecraft, Sodomy, and Capital in the Rise of the World System* (Duke University Press, 2020), the translator of Guy Hocquenghem's *The Amphitheater of the Dead* (Guillotine Press, 2018), and a former editor of the *New Inquiry*. He is a graduate of the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Josephine Berry is an art theorist, writer, editor and tutor at the Royal College of Art. She has a background in aesthetic politics, focusing on the intersections between art, site and (bio)power. She has researched and written on art's relationship to globalisation, digital networks, neoliberalism and climate crisis. She is currently researching 'aesthetic degrowth'. Her latest book, *Planetary Realism: Art Against Apocalypse* (Sternberg 2025) considers art's ability to turn societies away from 'capitalist realism' and towards Gaia, our crisis rocked planetary home. Her book *Art and (Bare) Life: A Biopolitical Inquiry* (Sternberg 2019) asked how autonomous art became such a pliant tool for neoliberal governance.

Christina Varvia is a Lecturer at the Centre for Research Architecture, at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is a member of the Forensic Architecture agency since 2014 and formerly acted as its Deputy Director. Currently, Christina is completing her PhD at Aarhus University where her research focuses on feminist notions of the human body within a context of investigative practice. She is a founding member and the chair of the board of Forensis, and the co-founder and co-director of the Forensic Architecture Initiative Athens (FAIĀ). Her work on airstrikes, detention, right-wing, police, and border violence has been submitted to courts and parliamentary inquiries, exhibited and awarded internationally.

Forensic Architecture is an interdisciplinary research agency based at Goldsmiths, University of London, that investigates state and corporate violence using architectural and multimedia tools and methodologies. The agency works together with affected communities on cases of human rights and environmental violence and presents the evidence in courts, political inquiries, people's tribunals, through media campaigns and exhibitions.

Nicolay Boyadjiev is an architect and creative director based between Sofia and Mexico City. He is currently the Design Director of antikythera, a philosophy of technology think tank hosted at the Berggruen Institute. He was formerly the director of the Practice Lab at re:arc institute in Copenhagen, where he oversaw research, strategy and new explorations prototyping alternatives models for philanthropy in architecture, and co-director of Strelka Institute's influential postgraduate program in Moscow where he led "The New Normal" and "The Terraforming" interdisciplinary design-research programs. Prior to this, he has worked as a designer and strategist at internationally renowned studios ranging from boutique consultancies to large architectural offices. Academically, he lectures regularly at various institutions across Europe / North America and holds a Bachelor of Science and Masters in Architecture from McGill University (2011).

Antikythera is a think tank focused on the reorientation of planetary computation as a philosophical, technological, and geopolitical force. It takes its name from the first known computer - the antikythera mechanism - which was also an astronomical instrument used for navigation, prediction, and planning. The name serves as inspiration for investigations of computational technologies that reveal and accelerate planetary intelligence. Antikythera was founded in 2022 and incubated at the Berggruen Institute, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with offices in Los Angeles, Beijing, and Venice.

Marisa Leavitt Cohn is an interdisciplinary researcher with a BA in Anthropology from Barnard College and a PhD in Human-Computer Interaction from UC Irvine. Cohn combines ethnographic and research-through-design approaches to explore the chronopolitics of computational media and labor. Her work examines cultural dimensions of infrastructural decay, software maintenance, and technological obsolescence. She is an Associate Professor of Anthropological Approaches to Data and Infrastructure at the IT University of Copenhagen, member of the Nordic Critical Fabulations network, and a founding co-director of the ETHOS Lab.

Based at the IT University of Copenhagen, **ETHOS Lab** is an experimental space for digital methods and critical inquiry, founded within the Technologies in Practice (TiP) research group. TiP is internationally recognized for interdisciplinary work across STS, infrastructure studies, and digital culture. ETHOS was selected in 2024 as a best practices case in Horizon Europe's Shaping Europe's Future initiative for knowledge valorisation in the social sciences, humanities, and arts.