

Ethnographies of  
Outer Space

Leuphana University Lüneburg  
16–18 September 2026

# SITUATING POSTPLANETARY FUTURES

Organized by the Junior Professorship for Methods of Cultural Studies at Leuphana University Lüneburg and team

  
**LEUPHANA**  
UNIVERSITY OF LÜNEBURG

**SSS**  


## **Ethnographies of Outer Space: Situating Postplanetary Futures**

As space becomes an increasingly contested site of extraction, speculation and governance, the need for critical frameworks adequate to the emerging challenges of postplanetary futures is growing. This international conference brings together scholars from the social sciences, arts, engineering, and international space law to think, research and act at the edges of the planetary.

The concept of the postplanetary encompasses the entanglement of Earth's political and ecological systems with extraterrestrial processes in a threefold way: as a critical lens for interrogating how relations between Earth and space are being reconfigured; as a temporal horizon opened by the Anthropocene, considering climate degradation, mass extinction and speculative futures beyond this planet; and as a conceptual move beyond Earth as a self-evident frame for politics, ecology, and community.

Key thematic concerns include emerging extractive economies and their political implications; infrastructures of space practice across their full life cycles, including maintenance, decay, and repair; the governance and legal regimes shaping access to and control of outer space; and the colonial and geopolitical legacies that postplanetary imaginaries both inherit and rework. The conference foregrounds situated, grounded knowledge production, challenging dominant narratives and conventional distinctions between Earth and outer space, surface and volume, proximity and distance.

Bringing together academic papers alongside multimodal, practice-based, and artistic formats – including installations, performances, and film – the conference offers a trans-disciplinary space for exchange.

Organized and hosted by the Junior Professorship for Methods of Cultural Studies at Leuphana University Lüneburg, Anna Lisa Ramella, and her team, Suzanne Schaaf, Rosa Areal M., Lotte Brauer, and Kiera Scherer.

## PROGRAMME

### Wednesday 16 September

12.00 Arrivals and Lunch snack

13.00 – 13.30 – Welcome & Opening Remarks

Anna Lisa Ramella, Suzanne Schaaf, Rosa Areal M. (Leuphana U Lüneburg)

13:30 – 15:00 : Panel 1: Narrating | Curating | Enacting

David (Jeeva) Jeevendrampillai (U Manchester): Curating Earth, curating world

Tara B. M. Smith (U Leicester): Lives Beyond Revelation: Cosmic Conduits and Alien Anthropologists in Spiritualism and Science Fiction

Felipe Cervera (UCLA): Terraformance

Hannah Schmalstich (U Vienna): IRIS-ing in and out: Narrating and performing the bounds of Europe through the IRIS2 satellite constellation

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee

15:30 – 17:00 Panel 2: Imagining | Speculating

Veronika Nowak (Vienna): Imagining Cislunar Futures: A City on the Moon and its Postplanetary Society

Ingrid M. Tolstad, Aina Landsverk Hagen (U Oslo): The speculative space of feminist imaginaries: A science fiction literature intervention towards post-patriarchal ways of organizing society

Jan Beek, Céline Molter, Konstanze N'Guessan (U Mainz): Learning anthropology from our colleagues in speculative outer space

Jake Jansen (U of Texas, San Antonio): Planetary Life Support: Extraterrestrial Anticipation and the Governance of Hostile Environments

17:15 – 18:15 Workshops

Ralo Mayer (Vienna)

Space Acts

A multimodal arts-based approach to meteorites and space mining as un-Earthing

Stelios Lekakis (Ionian U, Corfu)

A Fanfare at the Edge of the World

Object Stories, Heritage Loss

18:30 Reception, Lecture & Exhibition (Kunstraum Leuphana)

Michael Hirschbichler (HafenCity U Hamburg)

Contaminated Cosmologies: Red River – Red Planet

## Thursday 17 September

09:00 – 10:30 Panel 3: Making | Practicing

Feng Schöneweiß (MPIWG Berlin): Lunar Anthropocene with Chinese Characteristics

Pepijn Deroo (U Vienna): The spacecraft behind the screen: modelling as a meaning-making practice in space engineering

Helene Sorgner (U Vienna): “A taxi at the price of a bus ride”: Imagining and constructing the market for future European launchers

Natalie Treviño (Open University, Milton Keynes): Luna Roots: Practices of Everyday resistance to Lunar Colonialism

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Panel 4: RelLearning

Matjaz Vidmar (U Edinburgh): The (Place-)Making of Transplanetary Ecology

Aaron Parkhurst (University College London): Let the Dancer Fly: Sweat Helmets, Skinsuits, Vibrations and Boundaries in Og

Lauren Reid (U Leicester): Lobster Eyes and Petripods: Nonhuman Life and Planetary Estrangement in Space Research

Daniel Irrgang (Leuphana U Lüneburg): Cosmic Rays

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13.30 – 15:00 Panel 5: UnlKnowing

Laura Bullon-Cassis (Graduate Institute Geneva): Accessing the Planet: UN Big Tech Partnerships and the Postplanetary Politics of Climate Adaptation

Anna Szolucha (Jagellonian U, Krakow): The Monsoon and the Magnet: Tactical Accuracy at the Trivandrum Observatory

Brad Tabas (Institut Polytechnique, Paris): The Constitution, and Constitutive Difficulties, of the Postplanetary Episteme

Judith Lange (TU Berlin): Refiguring the Planetary through satellite constellations: Relational spatialities of the infrastructuring of orbital spaces

15:00 – 15.30 Coffee

15.30 – 16.30 Walk and talk

16.30 – 18.30 Panel 6: Audiovisual contributions (SCALA cinema)

Bethany Rigby (Goldsmiths, London): Surface Imaginaries

Sitraka Rakotoniaina (Central St. Martins, London): When Terrain Becomes Ground

Matthias de Groof (U Antwerp): Tantalum: Space colonization from the Congolese mine to Mars

Angelo Vermeulen (Delft U), Diego Maranan (U Philippines), Pieter Steyaert (U Copenhagen), Karine Van Doninck (U Bruxelles) and SEADS: Cultural Immortality and the Alien Other: A Video Essay on Space Settlement Imaginaries

7.30 Dinner

### Friday 18 September

9:00 – 10:30 Panel 7: RelFraming

Julia Bradley (U Exeter): A Gendered Analysis of Artemis II

Eleanor S. Armstrong (U Leicester): Misogyny and Space Research: A View from the Epstein Files

Anne W. Johnson (U Mexico City): Cosmic Diplomacy in the Ruins of the Planetary: The Autonomous International Space Agency as Postplanetary Critique

Anna Bark Persson (Uppsala): Straightening the Post-Planetary Future? Towards a Conceptualization of Space as Queer

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Panel 8: Governing | Postplanetary Politics

Diliara Valeeva (U Amsterdam): For all humanity—or for those who can pay? Moral geographies of outer space exploration

Réka Patrícia Gál (TU Munich) Clocked in Space: Skylab and the Labour Politics of Communication in Orbit

Annika Pohl Harrisson (U Southern Denmark): Bordering More Than Space: UAP and Postplanetary Imaginaries

Christina Zschieschang (Bielefeld U): The Role of the Future in World Politics: A Study on the Case of Deep Space Exploration Politics

12.30 – 14:00 ECR focused Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Business meeting SSOS network (Social Studies of Outer Space)