

UNLEARNING REALITIES REIMAGINING FUTURES

Recent changes have significantly impacted humanity, necessitating a rethinking of established ways of living in the world. Individuals and societies are now at a crossroads: are existing practices sufficient to navigate contemporary realities, or must we unlearn previously accepted notions, findings and frameworks to reimagine the future?

The concept of unlearning is multifaceted and can be approached and explored from a variety of perspectives – whether the emphasis is placed upon an individualist shedding of traditional modes of thinking, as suggested by Heidegger, or upon a collective critical engagement with society, towards reshaping and dismantling existing systems of power, as proposed by Freire. Any approach to unlearning is underpinned by the principle that growth and change require an openness to questioning and challenging preconceived notions.

Embracing a cross-disciplinary approach towards frameworks of unlearning and reimagining, this two-day symposium brings together practitioners and researchers to explore avenues through which the concept of unlearning can lead to innovation for education, the arts and communities.

This symposium is an initiative by LASALLE Learning, Teaching and Research, in collaboration with the *Cultures – Histories and Futures* theme group of Shared Campus.

Symposium Committee

- Wolfgang Muench
- James Félix
- Shannon Sim
- Phoenix Fry
- Damaris Carlisle

LASALLE College of the Arts is the highest ranked specialist arts institution in Singapore and joint top in Southeast Asia for art and design (QS World University Rankings 2023).

The College offers 35 Diploma, BA (Hons) and postgraduate programmes in fine arts, design communication, interior design, product design, film, animation, fashion, dance, music, theatre, arts management, art histories, curatorial practices, arts pedagogy and practice, arts and cultural leadership, art therapy, music therapy, creative writing, and arts and ecology.

LASALLE's faculty is led by a community of award-winning artists, designers, educators and researchers, and their practice-led research sets LASALLE apart as an international centre of excellence. Founded in 1984 by De La Salle Brother Joseph McNally – a visionary artist and educator – LASALLE is a non-profit private educational institution. The College receives tuition grant support from Singapore's Ministry of Education.

LASALLE is a founding member of the University of the Arts Singapore.

www.lasalle.edu.sg

Shared Campus is a cooperation platform for international education formats and research networks established by 13 leading international arts universities, schools and colleges.

The future belongs to professionals who communicate, exchange, debate and critically reflect on ideas within a global framework. Shared Campus establishes connections that generate value for students, educators, researchers and professionals, and enables participants to share knowledge and competencies.

The platform is designed around themes of international relevance with a distinct focus on transcultural issues and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Around our five core themes we co-create a broad scope of activities within education, research and cultural production. These include: Semester programs, summer schools, courses, workshops, networking events, symposia, festivals, publications and a collaborative learning platform.

www.shared-campus.com

SCHEDULE

DAY 1 THURSDAY 5 OCTOBER 2023

15:00 Singapore 7:00 GMT	Welcome and introduction Venka Purushothaman, deputy president and provost, LASALLE Wolfgang Muench, dean of learning, teaching and research, LASALLE
15:15 Singapore 7:15 GMT	KEYNOTE Evelyn Kwok & Michelle Fung The Year of 2084
16:00 Singapore 8:00 GMT	PANEL 1 Blurring STEAM <ul style="list-style-type: none">Jaime Belmonte: Unlearning assumptions: An indigenous ontological turn as a catalyst for decolonisation and musical creativityMahija Mandalika: Blurring boundaries: Science fiction as a method for reimagining realitiesCissie Fu: More-than-human lessons: Unfixing, unforming and unlearning through performative research
17:20 Singapore 9:20 GMT	Break
17:40 Singapore 9:40 GMT	PANEL 2 Dislocating tech <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kenneth Lo: Future of Education: campusX cyber-physical learningTully Arnot: Posthuman and phytomorphic perspectives: Simulation and emergent relationships between plants, humans, technology.Tobias Fandel: Multiplication and diffusion as intrinsic principles in the context of art within a digitised culture, and the consequences for craft and artistic skills
18:55 Singapore 10:55 GMT	Break
19:15 Singapore 11:15 GMT	KEYNOTE Matthew Gardiner Ars Electronica Futurelab

DAY 2 FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER 2023

15:00 Singapore 7:00 GMT	Welcome Wolfgang Muench, dean of learning, teaching and research, LASALLE
15:05 Singapore 7:05 GMT	KEYNOTE Mariana Amatullo The art and power of unlearning for a better tomorrow
15:55 Singapore 7:55 GMT	PANEL 3 Shifting Roles <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sui Fong Yim: Case studies from the Rooftop Institute: Reimagining art learning through artist-led approachesLise Uytterhoeven: Unlearning/relearning creative and pedagogical methodologies: Groove and Krump in the contemporary dance curriculumDebe Sham: From me to we: Unlearning and co-creation in the Collage City participatory art project
17:10 Singapore 9:10 GMT	Break
17:30 Singapore 9:30 GMT	PANEL 4 Media art as a memory system: reimagining in archiving, curating, breathing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Alessandro Ludovico: Unlearning the digital dispositif: (Un)archivingMorten Søndergaard: Reimagining media art: (Un)curatingAna Nacher: Unlearning as pedagogical strategy: (Re)breathing
18:45 Singapore 10:45 GMT	Break
19:05 Singapore 11:05 GMT	ROUND TABLE Reimagining Pedagogies <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mark Ingham: Nomadology: Radically transforming creative pedagogiesFairul Zahid: The relevance of dance performance in tertiary education for the future-readyGan Sheuo Hui: Reimagining futures: Flipping classrooms for enhanced engagement

THURSDAY 5 OCTOBER 2023

KEYNOTE 1

The Year of 2084

Evelyn Kwok and Michelle Fung

Moderator: Wolfgang Muench

One afternoon in 2015, Michelle Fung had a dream. It inspired a lifelong project spinning a fantastical futuristic universe out of pigments, words and images.

The World of 2084 revolves around a grand ecotopian / dystopian space consisting of five imaginary countries (G5, the Great Five Industrial Nations): Contradictoria, Northlandia, Dreamland, the Aristocratic Union and the Republic of Strata.

Weaving the micro-narratives of these countries together, it brought to life a grand narrative of the world in 2084, portraying Fung's imagined futuristic geopolitical world in a way that teases out the nuances in our understanding of the Anthropocene.

Speakers

Evelyn Kwok is a Research Assistant Professor at the Academy of Visual Arts at Hong Kong Baptist University. Her background is in spatial design research and her research explores the intersection of gender, labor and space, focusing on marginal communities in urban spaces and their use of public space. Her teaching integrates service learning into socially engaged art and design contexts in and beyond Hong Kong. She has been creating curricula for unlearning in interdisciplinary and multicultural settings since 2020 within the Shared Campus theme group Social Transformation.

Hong Kong Canadian interdisciplinary artist Michelle Fung's lifelong interdisciplinary oeuvre revolves around a grand dystopian world-building narrative in the year 2084. She had a recent solo exhibition at the Hong Kong Art Centre, Hong Kong (2023), the national museum Art Gallery Boris Georgiev, Varna, Bulgaria as the invited guest artist of the Quarantine Film Festival (2022) and has held recent solo exhibitions at leading artist-run galleries in Australia (2019) and California (2018), as well as the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (2019.) Her works have garnered many local and international awards. Her short films have been selected at many international film festivals and she has participated in many prestigious



Evelyn Kwok



Michelle Fung

Wolfgang Muench is Dean of Learning, Teaching & Research at LASALLE College of the Arts.

PANEL 1

Blurring STEAM

Moderator: Darren Moore

Jaime Belmonte

Unlearning assumptions: An indigenous ontological turn as a catalyst for decolonisation and musical creativity

This presentation introduces a collaborative project undertaken by Sámi musician Anna Näkkäläjärvi-Länsman and Jaime Belmonte, a Western contemporary classical composer. The project explores the possibilities of coexistence and fruitful dialogue between yoik, an Indigenous musical form, and Western classical music while preserving their respective identities. Through a profound study of yoik's musical, cultural, and spiritual essence, strategies were developed to challenge conventional norms in Western contemporary classical music. This reconsideration of Western musical assumptions signifies an ontological turn towards Indigenous perspectives on music creation and sonic creativity, affirming their legitimacy and visibility as valid knowledge practices.

Mahija Mandalika

Blurring boundaries : Science fiction as a method of reimagining realities

In Hindu mythology, a majority of scientific analysis was explained to the general population through myths and stories. This helped in making scientific knowledge more accessible, while presenting facts in an interesting way. In the current anthropological climate, where religion is no longer a learning line for scientific study, there is a need to reimagine the pedagogical methods to further inquisitiveness and enquiry. Science fiction acts as the perfect launching pad for exploration into scientific study without the need for rigorous mathematical proofs. Science fiction and speculation play a major role for furthering scientific thought, and a transdisciplinary approach to speculative thought would create an unrestricted flow of knowledge.

Cissie Fu

More-than-human lessons: Unfixing, unforming and unlearning through performative research

Post-truth complexity calls for new modes and manners of inquiry. Suspending the whithers and wherefores that underlie standardised academic research, this talk proposes an openness to the unknown and the unknowable. Especially suited to art and design education, this provocation assembles matters of concern rather than matters of fact for generative ambiguities and ambivalences to emerge. Shedding unsustainable distinctions between culture and nature, facts and norms, human and non-human let's embrace our post-truth condition by acknowledging interdependencies of the more-than-human, towards a creative epistemic disobedience that can counter colonial historicism with decentralised and inclusive ways of knowing.

Jaime Belmonte, a Spanish-Finnish composer, conductor and doctoral researcher at Uniarts Helsinki, engages in artistic research that delves into the profound impact of cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives on the creative process. His work focuses on understanding how these diverse influences shape the role of a composer, especially within collaborative contexts.

Mahija Mandalika is an interdisciplinary artist and engineer, whose interest lies in science fiction and archaeology. Through the mediums of film, printmaking, sculpture and drawing, Mandalika's practice focuses on materialising and evidencing the passage of time. At the core of her practice, she explores time through various methods of questioning and interrogation.

Cissie Fu (AB Harvard; MSt, MSc, DPhil Oxford) is a political theorist and co-founded the Political Arts Initiative, which invites 21st-century image-nations of the political through digital technology and the creative and performing arts. She currently heads the McNally School of Fine Arts at LASALLE, University of the Arts Singapore.

Darren Moore is a senior lecturer in Music at LASALLE College of the Arts.

DAY 1 SPEAKERS

PANEL 2

Dislocating tech

Moderator: Damaris Carlisle

Kenneth Lo

Future of education: campusX cyber-physical learning

This session describes and reflects on Singapore University of Technology and Design's educational innovation programme, campusX. It aims to address the future of education and develop forward-looking educational models, technology tools and pedagogies for a new form of learning called "Cyber-Physical Learning", where remote cyber students and face-to-face physical students can learn and interact effectively, seamlessly, and synchronously in the same class. campusX involves exploration of various streams of technologies such as immersive technologies, telepresence robotics, and personalised learning.

Tully Arnot

Posthuman and phytomorphic perspectives: Simulation and emergent relationships between plants, humans, technology

My research reflects on increasing engagement with AI, robotics and non-human substitutes for human relationships, proposing an alternative model of deeper speculative relationships with plant-life. I recently undertook a major research project, Epiphytes, working with Gagliano to visualise plant perception in a multisensory virtual reality environment. This research asks what we can learn, or unlearn, from trying to understand the perspectives of artificially intelligent and phytomorphic beings?

Tobias Fandel

Multiplication and diffusion as intrinsic principles in the context of art within a digitised culture, and the consequences for craft and artistic skills

Digital media objects can be multiplied nearly infinitely, losslessly, and almost instantaneously through computational technologies. In conjunction with the disruptive nature of mediated network structures, the echoes of Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility* must be upscaled into a new landscape of technologies which is dominated by automation and, increasingly, Machine Learning applications. This paper traces the aesthetical and creative implications of the post-analogue artistic production and its distribution, situated in a computerised and networked society. Accompanied by visual and sonic examples, I propose a continuation of Hito Steyerl's *In Defense of the Poor Image*, investigating distinct perceptive qualities of digital media artifacts, such as A.I.-noise.

Dr Kenneth Lo is Director of Office of Digital Learning, and Program Director of campusX at Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), which involves educational innovations, pedagogy, and services such as EduTech, Library, and Fabrication Laboratory. Kenneth has experience in technology innovations, predictive machine learning research, and in designing engineering systems.

Tully Arnot's interdisciplinary practice explores models of plant-based multisensory perception as well as how technology mediates our relationships with the natural world, through areas including plant robotics and the simulation of nature. Arnot is a PhD Fellow at the School of Creative Media Hong Kong with Professor Zheng Bo.

Tobias Fandel is a composer and visual artist with a creative interest centered on aesthetical implications of digital culture. He teaches Music at Baruch College and is currently pursuing a PhD at the CUNY Graduate Center. He received his Doctor of Music from The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Damaris Carlisle runs The Learning Centre, providing academic support to students and staff at LASALLE College of the Arts

KEYNOTE

Title TBC

Moderator: Wolfgang Muench

Matthew Gardiner

Description TBC

Dr Matthew Gardiner is head of Art-Science-Research Strategies for Ars Electronica Futurelab.

His research-based practice contexts are team-based research collaborations with commercial and research entities; and his artistic practice which draws on experience extending across aesthetic and interactive experience design, parametric origami design, manufacturing, design of new digital fabrication methods, expert-level origami, curation and code.

Gardiner's philosophy on teaching art and design is based on Art Thinking, Design Thinking and Origami Thinking and seeks to allow students to discover methods that are informed by the naturally occurring relationships between concept, handwork & fabrication and social context.

His artworks works portray a future wherein folding forms the fundamental fabric of life, and his artistic process explores Folding as Code for Matter, creating works that exhibit material intelligence.

He is author of best-selling *Everything Origami*, *Designer Origami* and *Ultimate Origami*.

Darren Moore is a senior lecturer in Music at LASALLE College of the Arts.

FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER 2023

KEYNOTE 1

The art and power of unlearning for a better tomorrow

Mariana Amatullo

Moderator: Wolfgang Muench

In this talk, Mariana Amatullo will draw on her expertise in design for social innovation and arts education to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that intentional unlearning can bring to our art and design practices.

Biography

Mariana Amatullo is vice provost and academic dean of Continuing and Professional Education, and associate professor of strategic design and management at Parsons, The New School. Mariana has a twenty-year-long trajectory in senior executive administration positions in art and design education. She is an experienced strategist, award-winning educator, and practitioner-scholar.

Mariana's research and teaching bridge the art and design education and management disciplines and examine the role of a design attitude as a cognitive approach to social innovation and organisational learning. Initially trained as an art historian and curator, she has been a pioneer in developing the design for social innovation field, where she remains an active scholar globally.

In January 2022, she joined the Board of Aalto University in Finland. Her latest book: *Design for Social Innovation: Case Studies from Around the World* (coeditor, Routledge, 2021), presents an overview of the design field for social innovation through 45 global case studies. Her upcoming publication positions design as a leadership capability for the 21st century. Mariana holds a PhD in Management (Designing Sustainable Systems) from Case Western Reserve University, an MA in Art History and Museum Studies from the University of Southern California, and a Licence en Lettres Degree from the Sorbonne University, Paris.



Wolfgang Muench is Dean of Learning, Teaching & Research at LASALLE College of the Arts.

PANEL 3

Shifting roles

Moderator: James Félix

Sui Fong Yim

Case studies from the Rooftop Institute: Reimagining art learning through artist-led approaches

This presentation explores the transformative power of artist-led approaches in education. In contrast with rigid systems of assessments or evaluations, artist-led education focuses on art's essence in nurturing creativity through inspiration, embracing diversity, and fostering innovation. The key lies in the ability to unlearn - students becoming true learners by valuing process-based approaches, adopting a mutual inspired ethos, and translating ideas into continuous experiential practices. Citing examples from Rooftop Institute and the subsidiary art collective HASS Lab, we will explore the possibilities of a dynamic "student-overriding-teachers" approach. Our recent Special Education Needs (SEN)-inspired programme demonstrates how students' "weaknesses" can turn into powerful insights in visual art learning.

Lise Uytterhoeven

Unlearning/relearning creative and pedagogical methodologies: Groove and Krump in the contemporary dance curriculum

The BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance at The Place, London Contemporary Dance School underwent a radical course redesign in 2020, with a focus on decolonising through the introduction of dance practices from the Global South, including Groove-based foundations and Krump. The team sought to break down existing hierarchies in dance and de-centre the educational model. Rather than emulating a singular aesthetic ideal, dancers are encouraged to make the movement their own, play with ideas, work on call and response, and support and build each other up. The role of spectator has shifted from one that merely beholds the dance as a visual display to that of active witness, vocal supporter and co-respondent.

Debe Sham

From me to we: Unlearning and co-creation in the Collage City participatory art project

The contemporary art landscape has experienced a noticeable transformation thanks to the increasing popularity of socially-engaged art, and particularly through short-run workshops. In the new paradigm, both artists and viewers have undergone a process of unlearning their traditional roles. In this presentation, I will delve into the concept and effectiveness of unlearning and co-creation, using the Collage City participatory art project in Hong Kong as a case study. The aim is to investigate the implications of these concepts on individuals' experiences and their potential in fostering collective engagement and collaboration.

Yim Sui Fong is an artist and educator living in Hong Kong. Many of her activities revolve around questions concerning the concept of the common and artist-led pedagogy. Her work often takes the form of social engagement and collaborative research. She is a co-founder of Rooftop Institute, an organisation dedicated to researching, practicing, and promoting artist-led education in the context of contemporary society and Asian culture.

Dr Lise Uytterhoeven is Director of Dance Studies at The Place, London Contemporary Dance School. Her publications include *Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui: Dramaturgy and Engaged Spectatorship* and a co-authored study guide *What Moves You? Shaping your dissertation in dance*. Lise co-chairs the Society for Dance Research. She will be joined by

- Claire "Shortie Buck" Hough, one of the UK's leading Krump champions.
- Vicky "Skytilz" Mantey, a dancer, choreographer and teacher specialising in hiphop and street dance
- Jess Yeo and Elvi Christiansen Head, two final year students on the BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance

Debe Sham is a Hong Kong-born artist whose projects reimagine the forms of community and community-building, with a particular focus on the nature of human relationships. She is pursuing her Ph.D. in the School of Creative Arts at Hong Kong Baptist University while serving as a board member at 1a Space.

James Félix is a lecturer in Music at LASALLE College of the Arts.

DAY 2 SPEAKERS

PANEL 4

Media art as a memory system: reimagining in archiving, curating, breathing

Moderator: Shannon Sim

In *Statement of Intermedia* Higgins (1967) writes that “the central problem [of media technologies] is now not only the new formal one of learning to use them, but the new and more social one of what to use them for?”

What Higgins is pointing towards is the process of not only unlearning the ‘old habits’ of art, but also (in a more speculative way) unlearning the ways technologies are employed in imagining probable and possible futures.

It is possible to claim that the early foundation of media art is fueled by a call for engaging with the ‘social problem’ of media technologies. Simply to learn how to use them is not enough. This could be said to be the ‘cultural’ problem of media art, leading to a more humanistic question: what do we really ‘learn’ from media technologies? How do we ‘unlearn’ bad habits and avoid constructing new ones?

This panel addresses this question from three critical perspectives, all centered on actual learning situations with international students of (new) media art. Since its early foundations, it is possible to see media art as a memory system that enables us to retrace the processes of formal ‘learning’ and social ‘unlearning’. If we follow these artistic and scholarly traces, a genealogy of shifts and turns appear. Some made it into a more formal ‘art history’, while others only exist as unheard or invisible traces behind screens of a global culture of media-generated attention-economy and (false) consciousness.

So, how might we activate unlearning processes and ask students to reimagine not only the future of the field, but also its pasts?

Alessandro Ludovico

Unlearning the digital dispositif: (Un)Archiving

Morten Søndergaard

Reimagining Media Art: (Un)curating

Anna Nacher

Unlearning as pedagogical strategy: (Re)breathing

Alessandro Ludovico is a researcher, artist and chief editor of *Neural* magazine since 1993. He is Associate Professor at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton and lecturer at Parsons Paris – The New School. He has published and edited several books, and has lectured worldwide. He also served as an advisor for the *Documenta 12* Magazine Project. He is one of the authors of the award-winning *Hacking Monopolism* trilogy of artworks, *Google Will Eat Itself*, *Amazon Noir* and *Face to Facebook*.

Anna Nacher is associate professor at the Jagiellonian University. Her research interests include digital culture, cultural theory, media art, sound studies and e-literature. She currently pursues a research project on the aesthetics of post-digital imagery on a grant from Polish National Science Centre.

Morten Søndergaard is associate professor and senior curator of media and sound art at Aalborg University. He is co-founder, national coordinator and member of the Coordinator Board / faculty of the Erasmus Mundus Master in Media Arts Cultures (with Lodz University Poland, Krems University Austria, and LaSalle Singapore). Since 2012 faculty member of the Media Art Histories master in Krems, Austria. He was curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde curating several sound and media art exhibitions and projects. He has published widely on media art, sound art and the digital archive experience in English and Danish.

Shannon Sim is programme leader of the BA Fashion Media & Industries at LASALLE College of the Arts

ROUND TABLE

Reimagining pedagogies

Moderator: Woo Yen Yen

Mark Ingham

Nomadology: Radically transforming creative pedagogies

In this provocation I propose that we need to radically change the way we teach and learn in our creative universities, by radically reimagining and deterritorialising our pedagogies. Driven by the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, nomadology embraces the notion of constant movement and fluidity, a stark contrast to the static nature of conventional education. This nomadic, rhizomatic structure cultivates an education system teeming with hope and joy. In their pursuit of hopeful and joyful educational transformations, critical creative universities may dare to think differently, to become wildly nomadic.

Fairul Zahid

Relevance of dance performance in tertiary education for the future-ready

Reflective practice, subsequent research, and professional practice - these three ideas help students elevate their understanding in terms of the future and prepare them for a better career in dance. The motivation for my work-based research is to further develop opportunities for dance studies within the higher education sector.

Gan Sheuo Hui

Reimagining futures: Flipping classrooms for enhanced engagement

In our evolving world, traditional teaching methods face growing scrutiny. My pedagogical approach epitomises the unlearning and reimagining that’s pivotal to modern education. While conventional paradigms position educators as the central authority, I’ve transformed classrooms into student-driven exploration spaces. By establishing foundational briefs and readings, I enable students to spearhead their understanding, interpretation, and real-world application. This flipped classroom method, anchored in active engagement and team-based discovery, underscores the pressing need to move away from entrenched methods towards more adaptive and inclusive strategies. In the realm of arts and humanities, these practices encapsulate the essence of reimagining futures.

Mark Ingham is an educator, artist and researcher. His creative pedagogical enquires and are entangled encounters with memory, rhizomatic learning theories, and fuzzy narratives. Reader in Critical and Nomadic Pedagogies, National Teaching Fellow. Co-Chair of UAL’s Professoriate, and SFHEA, co-founder of UAL’s Experimental Pedagogies Research Group.

Fairul Zahid is a lecturer in Dance at LASALLE College of the Arts Singapore. As a choreographer and dancer he has produced performances for tours in Beijing, Los Angeles, New York, Jakarta, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Chicago. He holds an MFA from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, and is currently pursuing his PhD at a Malaysian university, focusing on practice as research in choreography.

Gan Sheuo Hui is a lecturer at the Puttnam School of Film and Animation, LASALLE. Holding a PhD in Human and Environmental Studies (Animation Studies) from Kyoto University, Japan (2008), she has widely published in English and Japanese. Her current book project is on Japanese

Woo Yen Yen is programme leader of the MA Arts Pedagogy and Practice at LASALLE College of the Arts