

Re-enchantments: Toward Relational Architectural Futures

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Abstract

Footprint 38 positions Africa as a site for thinking and theorising worlds to come. Drawing on Achille Mbembe's understanding of re-enchantment as a mode of restoring relational vitality and imaginative possibility, the issue gathers a collection of situated writings that explore forms of attachment and worlding across African peoples, places, and objects. This editorial interprets these contributions through the framework of relational ontologies, identifying and tracing the transversal theoretical and methodological resonances which inform the four overlapping and interweaving thematic lines of the issue: infrastructural futuring, diasporic subjectivities, speculative futuring, and cosmotechnical relationalities. Across these interpretive trajectories, the conceptual and material foundations of our field are reworked. Architecture emerges as an assemblage-in-becoming, a mode of re-enchantment, through which socio-ecological, -technical, -economic and -political relations are activated and mediated.

One sentence summary

The editorial outlines a set of transversal theoretical and methodological modes of re-enchantment that position Africa as a site of thinking and theorising worlds to come.

Keywords

Re-enchantment, relational ontologies, Africa, architectural futures, memory

Thinking architecture from the margins

In *Brutalism*, critical theorist Achille Mbembe draws on the monolithic form and uncompromising materiality of brutalist architecture to explore how contemporary capitalism remodels humanity into mere matter and energy.¹ He justifies this conceptual borrowing by suggesting that both politics and architecture are, at their core, concerned with the arrangement of bodies and materials. Unsurprisingly, Mbembe finds in our field a language for the planetary operations through which brutalism is enacted: the occupation, depletion, disassembly, and demolition of territories, bodies and imaginaries. Against these forces and their foreclosure of alternative becomings, Mbembe affirms the radical potential of Afro-diasporic thought to cultivate a counterpolitics of hope – of dreams.² At the risk of cliché, *Footprint* 38 takes up this call to dream. It positions Africa as a site of thinking and theorising worlds to come. As such, it offers a bold, polyphonic response to the 'epistemic silences' regarding non-Western, particularly African, discourse within the journal's output.³

These silences reverberate within the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at TU Delft, which has a rich yet largely under-theorised history of engagement with the Majority World through education, research and curatorial practice. Researching and teaching between the Netherlands and southern Africa, our academic practice is situated within this genealogy.

Alongside recent faculty- and student-led initiatives, *Footprint* 38 repositions and critically reappraises this institutional tradition in relation to knowledge ecologies beyond what Ramón Grosfoguel terms the 'westernised university'.⁴ Following Karen Barad, we privilege capacious intra-actions between theory and praxis from the South.⁵ Thus, we pursue not a closed map of African discourse but an operative cartography through which relations are traced and continuously modulated.⁶

Such cartographies are vital if, as Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni urges, we are to 'rethink thinking itself'.⁷ By this, he means unsettling the historically determined configurations of centre and periphery that characterise Western thought and perpetuate the domestication of non-Western knowledges. The enduring effect of these asymmetries, Amina Mama notes, is that 'most of that which is received as knowledge about Africa is produced in the West'.⁸ Within such epistemic (de)formations, Africa is conceived either as a pathological condition, framed through indices of population growth and unemployment, or as an extractive testbed for Euromodernity, in which notions of informality and incremental urbanisms are rehearsed.

In *Footprint* 38, we aim to break with these tropes and the narrow theoretical responses they elicit. Instead, we offer a collection of situated writings that explore forms of attachment and worlding across African peoples, places, and objects. Tracing these onto-epistemological relationalities within and beyond the continent as a bounded territory, the featured contributions mediate the processes of fluidity and fixity that shape African lifeworlds.

Re-enchantment through relational ontologies

The displacement that emerges from this interplay is brought into sharp relief when Tunde, the main character in Teju Cole's *Tremor*, encounters a *ci wara*, a Malian headdress, in a New England antique shop.⁹ He ponders its transfiguration from ritual artefact into a decorative curio – or the possibility that it was deliberately fabricated as an imitation. Unable to determine its provenance, Tunde feels compelled to reclaim the *ci wara*: 'to bring it closer to home, closer to his own home where it can be seen by kinder eyes, by eyes that place authenticity elsewhere'.¹⁰ His desire to know the object differently, to recover the multiplicity of meanings it holds, constitutes what Mbembe would call an act of re-enchantment. Here, Mbembe echoes Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's commitment to 're-membling' forms of kinship – with nature and with others – weakened by historical and contemporary régimes of earth mastery.¹¹

Re-enchantment thus emerges as a productive mode of resistance to the brutal logics that render vibrant worlds inert. The scholars and practitioners gathered here approach this possibility through what Arturo Escobar calls

relational ontologies: knowledge produced not about, but from intimacies with the material and non-human world.¹² Our initial invitation to authors – to think through people, place, and object – has yielded imaginative encounters with diverse milieus. These sympoietic entanglements are offered here as 'dreams': co-constitutive practices of imagination rooted in Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick's insistence that we are a 'storytelling species' – and that our stories have the capacity to move us.¹³

Dreams take on different forms in this issue: articles, visual essays, image-based narratives, and what we term dialogues. The latter warrants some elaboration. Crossovers and imbrications among proposals submitted in response to the call for abstracts presented us, as editors, with an opportunity to experiment with this format. We therefore invited authors – previously unknown to one another – to orient their individual enquiries toward each other: to think and write, in Donna Haraway's words, 'tentacularly', as accidental but enthusiastic collaborators.¹⁴ The three dialogues featured in the issue, appearing as two review articles and an interview, reveal the potential (and limitations) of knowledge developed along collaborative, multidirectional axes.

Similarly, as the editorial process evolved, a constellation of transversal theoretical and methodological resonances emerged among the contributions. We invite readers to engage with the issue through four overlapping thematic lines, which we elaborate on below: infrastructural futuring, diasporic subjectivities, speculative futuring, and cosmotechnical relationality. Whilst these threads are not explicitly reflected in the organisation of the issue, they are offered here as vectors of interpretation through which readers can trace the circulation, intersection and transformation of ideas across contributions.

Infrastructural futuring

Infrastructural futuring remodulates terrains familiar to architectural discourse – global commodity, technology, labour and knowledge flows – from Afrodiasporic positions.¹⁵ Drawing on fieldwork in Ghana and Morocco, Costanza Franceschini and John Hanna's visual essay traces Sino-African infrastructural entanglements, shaped by financial speculation, debt regimes and political cycles. Through photographic sequences and ethnographic observations, they show how 'big' infrastructure projects operate as socio-political projections of promise and (post-colonial) progress. Infrastructural futures thus emerge not as signs of African lack or developmental failure, but as expressions of the libidinal economy in which desire operates as a material and productive force within socioeconomic systems.¹⁶ As such, unfinished and suspended projects, understood as a 'production of desire', continuously defer to a promised future.

In dialogue, Piero Medici and Anna Kintsurashvili approach architectural 'performance' in modernist architecture from different but intersecting perspectives. Piero reappraises the 1957 issue of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* magazine, titled 'Afrique Noire', as an aestheticised instrument of postcolonial domination. He shows how the dissemination of Western climatic design principles and technologies, through print media as an epistemic apparatus, maintained Africa as a laboratory for Euromodernity, even as many countries on the continent achieved formal independence. Through the mediated framing of African climates as a technical problem and European comfort as a universal standard, modernist architectural experimentation and Western resource extraction were legitimised. Conversely, Anna Kintsurashvili examines how the Uganda National Cultural Centre and Theatre, designed for Kampala's expatriate community, performs as a site for the collective rehearsal and enactment of postcolonial imaginaries. Here, 'performance' defies colonial hierarchies by foregrounding embodied storytelling as a form of knowledge production. Kintsurashvili's account rejects object-based heritage preservation in favour of architectural meaning and value that coevolves with memory, understood as a productive epistemic force.

The dialogue between Abdullah Ogunsetan and Olorunfemi Adewuyi, of the design and research collective OMI, and Eytan Mann examines virtual environments as memory infrastructures that exteriorise and accumulate experience through technical systems.¹⁷ Through their work in Lagos, Nigeria and Haifa, Israel, respectively, OMI and Mann present digital models and speculative reconstructions as epistemic methods that actively reconstitute incomplete and contested histories. Mann compares his digitisation of an erased Palestinian neighbourhood with OMI's models of tropical modernist architecture, describing both as 'unfinished propositions' which sustain indeterminacy as generative conditions through which material futures are collectively re-authored. Their conversation thus explores virtuality beyond representation, as an immanent, participatory field in which the future remains open and productive.¹⁸

Diasporic subjectivities

Diasporic subjectivities foreground the embodied and situated practices through which African and Afro-diasporic communities individuate and inhabit space.¹⁹ In their visual essay, Ana Barone and Tainã Dorea draw on the work of poet and theorist of Afro-Brazilian performance Leda Maria Martins to examine how bodily movement and oral expression construct diasporic archives in São Paulo's Zona Leste (East Zone).²⁰ They argue that samba and slam poetry operate as transgenerational epistemes that reterritorialise the city through a concatenated grammar of embodied, oral and

spatial practices.²¹ They illustrate how memory and place are continually produced and transformed through performance, with the body acting as both archive and analytical medium for worlding the city otherwise.

Thinking with Christina Sharpe's concept of 'the weather', Khensani Jurczok-de Klerk turns to Zurich, where she reinterprets the Swiss city's distinctive fog as a metaphorical ecology of racial-sexual violence.²² Through 'the fog' as a technicity, and its associated phenomena of condensation, floating and grounding, Jurczok-de Klerk examines how anti-Blackness is spatially organised and lived in Zurich. Oral archives and biographical accounts offer situated perspectives of how the particles that compose Zurich's metaphorical fog – migration policies, gendered labour regimes, bureaucratic procedures, and racist media – condense unevenly around Black foreign women. Within this hostile atmosphere, Jurczok-de Klerk theorises floating as a tactical mode of inhabiting the suspension and disorientation produced by the fog, and grounding as a means of cultivating proximity and collective presence within it.²³ The article constructs a genealogy of Afro-diasporic counterpublics and feminist strategies of endurance within anti-Black European climates.

For Anusia Govender-Elshove, Indian classical dance – like samba and slam poetry – serves as a form of 'presencing' against the invisibilisation of othered bodies in colonial and apartheid South Africa.²⁴ Govender-Elshove's autoethnography of her matrilineal family's dance practice foregrounds, to paraphrase Deborah A. Miranda, the body as a sensing, breathing, moving archive.²⁵ Through choreographic practice, counter-spatialities and counter-histories of Indian South African indenture, migration and displacement are rehearsed and activated.²⁶ Govender-Elshove therefore shows that memory is neither stable nor complete but moves, exteriorised through embodied and technical practices re-inscribed across space and time.²⁷ In resonance with the other contributions, she positions bodily movement as an onto-epistemological praxis of resistance, which unsettles static conceptions of space and foregrounds the body as a central medium through which architectural knowledge is produced.²⁸

Speculative futuring

Speculative futuring emerges through experimentation with autoethnography, narrative writing, and forms of historical speculation as modes of theorising. These methods reject detached knowledge production, privileging what Donna Haraway calls 'situated knowledges', which mark the partiality of subject and object.²⁹ Reading Haraway through Walter Mignolo's 'geopolitics of knowledge', Christopher Clarkson draws on the genre of critical memoir to explore how autobiographical encounters yield epistemologically

generative, immanent methods.³⁰ Rebutting Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* (1902) with his own *Not So Stories*, Clarkson critiques Euromodernity's fabrication of false binaries – the guardrails of colonial epistemologies. Against the universality and presumed certainty of authoritative narratives, Clarkson experiments with methods that unsettle Enlightenment divisions of inside/outside, nature/culture, and self/other through minoritarian experiences and perspectives.

Similarly, Hélène Frichot foregrounds the 'minor gestures' and 'minor spaces' that perforate and subtly subvert the spatial hierarchies of colonial plantation ecologies. A descendant of Seychelles plantation owners, Frichot draws on Saidiya Hartman's method of critical fabulation to weave personal narrative with ecofeminist theory, recomposing the fragments and scraps of spatial memory gleaned from her family.³¹ In doing so, she traces spatial operations of creolisation that cross and renegotiate the dimensions of colonial power across the plantation architectures and spaces lived by her family and plantation workers. Frichot's article develops a reparative historiographic method, revealing the plantation as a porous site where racial and gender hierarchies are, as she writes, 'leaking, crossing, and recomposed', and where past and present cross through geontological folding.

Across these methodological approaches, the archive emerges as an incomplete and actively reconstituted epistemic field. It is conceptually closer to what Brian Massumi describes as the anarchive: 'a repertory of traces' of events that are 'reactivable'.³² Both Clarkson and Frichot are cognisant of the limits of the histories they engage with. They use speculative and interpretive research practices not to verify or reconstruct these histories, but to multiply and thicken them with displaced and marginalised experiences. Here, knowledge is produced in dialogue with the constellation of memories and orientations which, to paraphrase Carine Zaayman, characterise the experience of being-in-the-present but cannot, by definition, be archived.³³ These stories move us toward new narratives and future imaginings.

Cosmotechanical relationalities

Cosmotechanical relationalities extend architectural thought beyond the human. Coined by philosopher Yuk Hui, the neologism 'cosmotech' is taken up to foreground the technical practices that unify and mediate non-Western relations to the cosmos.³⁴ Within this framework, authors approach technological objects and multispecies ecologies as assemblages of becoming, 're-grounding technics' within specific cultural and cosmic relations rather than a universal technological order.³⁵ Revisiting selected pre-colonial African domesticities, Liana Psarologaki and Arinola Adefila develop a paraontology – a desedimented and partial

ontology – of the broom.³⁶ Combining ecofeminist and new materialist theory with poetry and oral history, they position the broom-body assemblage as an eco-technical ritual that initiates and mediates relationships between domestic space, inhabitants and their environments. Thus, through the embodied act of sweeping, conceptualised as an architecture of care, ecosocial relations are transmitted.

Cosmotechanical thinking guides Courage Kpodo and Kathryn Chesebrough's dialogical exploration of arboreal architectures in the Upper West Akim region of Ghana and riparian environments of Nairobi, Kenya. Drawing on Akan cosmology, Kpodo proposes a series of speculative design interventions informed by cultivation traditions of the Avia tree along a path established by colonial cocoa producers. In these interventions, tree planting nurtures expanded forms of land stewardship that thicken and slow the path, reconnecting ecological and spiritual systems while multiplying spatiotemporal relations.³⁷ For Chesebrough, human-tree relationships organise networks of socioenvironmental care in Nairobi's flood-prone Mathare Valley, the second-largest urban informal settlement in Kenya. Citing the tacit knowledge through which youth-led organisations cultivate and maintain riparian sites, she speculates on the potential of designed arboreal infrastructures as a response to urban environmental risk. Together, the authors reposition architecture as a mediated coupling between human and non-human actors, in which ecological systems, spiritual practices and urban-rural processes are brought into dynamic relation.

Killian O'Dochartaigh provides a critical reflection on the counter-spatialities of the indigenous Twa who inhabit the Virunga Forest and Mountains, spanning Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Through participatory action research, he reveals the vibrant, unbounded forest-life ontologies through which the semi-nomadic Twa resist the colonial imaginaries that produced static national borders and exclusionary conservation regimes, which persist in state-led visions of the future. With the Twa, O'Dochartaigh explores countermapping as a collective eco-ethical praxis that intersects indigenous cosmologies with architectural drawing and animation. Through these 'hybrid relational ontologies', the Twa are reinstated within Virunga and 'new, if uneven, forms of dialogue between people, land and power' are initiated.

Architectures of relation: thinking and inhabiting the world otherwise

Across the contributions to this issue, Africa operates not as a site to which theory is applied but, echoing Mbembe's call, as a generative locus from which to imagine renewed forms of architectural thinking and practice.³⁸ Taken together, the entanglements of peoples, places, and

objects traced by the authors do not resolve into a singular epistemology, but instead constitute a heterogeneous field of situated perspectives and practices whose divergences are as productive as their resonances.³⁹ Through these lines of flight, the issue reworks the conceptual and material foundations of architecture. Architecture emerges less as a fixed object than as an assemblage-in-becoming through which socio-ecological, -technical, -economic, and -political relations are activated and mediated.⁴⁰ The boundaries between architectures, environments and bodies thus appear as thickened zones of negotiation – thresholds within which these relations are continuously recomposed.⁴¹

Within these shifting configurations, movement and performance emerge as central modes of epistemic production. From domestic rituals that transgress conventional notions of interiority in favour of embodied socio(ecological) practices that perforate colonial hierarchies and regimes of visibility, the authors demonstrate how movement contests Euclidean space. In place of stable geometries, they foreground spatio-temporal fields of relation in which anticipation, suspension and incompleteness function as technicities of futuring – of dreaming.⁴² These potentialities are generated through the synchronisation, offsetting and crossing of multiple temporalities, from financial cycles and human lifetimes to arboreal growth and geological time. This orients the issue to considerations beyond the human, as authors centre multispecies partnerships and new materialist socialities in which agency is unevenly distributed across complex ecologies.⁴³

The line between past and present is treated as similarly porous. Across the contributions, memory operates not as a fixed record but as an active, generative force.⁴⁴ Through archival practices, storytelling and autoethnography, authors reconfigure the status of history, unsettling its authority while opening it to reinterpretation.⁴⁵ In this way, *Footprint* 38 positions re-enchantment not as a return to lost wholeness, but as an ongoing attunement to the fluid proximities between people, place, and object – an invitation to think and inhabit the world otherwise.⁴⁶

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Notes

1. Achille Mbembe, *Brutalism*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Duke University Press, 2024).
2. Here Mbembe echoes longstanding calls for endogenous knowledge production advanced by, among others: Paulin Hountondji, ed., *Endogenous Knowledge: Research Trails*, trans. Ayi Kwesi Armah (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997); Claude Ake, as described by Jeremiah O. Arowosegbe, 'Endogenous Knowledge and the Development Question in Africa', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 29, no. 2 (2016): 611–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2015.1060692>; and Archie Mafeje, as described in Jimi O. Adesina, 'Archie Mafeje and the Pursuit of Endogeneity: Against Alterity and Extroversion', *Africa Development* 33, no. 4 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.4314/ad.v33i4.57349>.
3. Walter D. Mignolo, 'Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom', *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, no. 7–8 (2009): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275>.
4. Recent initiatives include exhibitions such as *Diversity? You tell us* (2023) and *Indigenous Intelligence: Ancient knowledge* (2025); workshops and seminars focused on *Urban Futures Otherwise: Feminist and Southern Perspectives* (2025), and *The Role of Positionality and Decolonial Perspectives in Research* (2024); courses such as *Architecture and Colonialism* (2025) and the accompanying exhibition *Reclaiming Space/Reclaiming Narrative* (2025) (which were highly contested); student initiatives such as the symposium *Reframing Colonial Memory in the Public Realm* (2026); Ramón Grosfoguel, 'The Structure of Knowledge in Westernized Universities: Epistemic Racism/Sexism and the Four Genocides/Epistemicides of the Long 16th Century', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 11, no. 1 (Fall 2013): 73–90.
5. Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 33, 132–188. In Barad's agential realism, matter and meaning are co-constitutive, and entities do not pre-exist their relations; rather, they emerge through relations. Intra-action, as a technical ontological claim, describes how phenomena are the primary units of reality, where relations precede relata, produced through 'agential cuts', which are not given in advance.
6. Gilbert Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. Cécile Malaspina and John Rogove (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 170, 177. For Simondon, modulation is the process through which information operates. It is ongoing, context sensitive and dependent on metastable conditions where structure emerges through continuous interaction.
7. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Decolonization, Development and Knowledge in Africa: Turning over a New Leaf* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2020), 34.

8. Amina Mama, 'Is It Ethical to Study Africa? Preliminary Thoughts on Scholarship and Freedom', *African Studies Review* 50, no. 1 (2007): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2005.0122>.
9. Teju Cole, *Tremor* (New York: Random House, 2023).
10. Ibid., 7.
11. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Re-Membering Africa* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2009).
12. Arturo Escobar, 'Thinking-Feeling with the Earth: Territorial Struggles and the Ontological Dimension of the Epistemologies of the South', *AIBR, Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana* 11, no. 1 (2016): 11–32, <https://doi.org/10.11156/aibr.110102e>.
13. Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick, 'Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?: Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations', in *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*, ed. Katherine McKittrick (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 25.
14. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 30–58.
15. Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 141. For Stiegler, technics constitutes a system of 'tertiary retention' through which temporal experience is mediated, producing a future that is always deferred, incomplete, and conditioned by externalised memory. Citing André Leroi-Gourhan, he says it is 'tekhne, that invents the human', thus, technics goes beyond 'tools' or 'technology' and is not something external to the human, but is constitutive of the human through material exteriorisation of inorganic matter as technical accumulation that stores epiphylogenetic memory: 'the human invents himself in the technical by inventing the tool – by becoming exteriorized techno-logically'. Also see Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, 170, 177.
16. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 31–32, 37, 63, 151, 230, 288; Daniel W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 160–74, 175–88. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is not a lack but a productive force immanent to social and economic systems. As Smith explains, 'libidinal economy and political economy are one and the same thing... identical in nature' (*Essays on Deleuze*, 162), such that 'affects or drives form part of the infrastructure itself' (ibid., 183, 323; *Anti-Oedipus*, 63). Desiring production and social production 'are the same machines ... but not at all the same regime' (*Anti-Oedipus*, 288), with desire operating at a molecular level through 'immanent syntheses' (*Essays on Deleuze*, 163) that generate new relations and flows. Thus, desire is machinic; it connects flows and produces relations, 'always implanting itself back into its production, such that "desiring-machines" function only on the condition that they are constantly breaking down' (*Essays on Deleuze*, 163; *Anti-Oedipus*, 31–32, 37, 151, 230), meaning desire is unstable, generative, and constantly reconfiguring.
17. Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 1, 19. Stiegler understands technics as the exteriorisation of memory through 'organised inorganic matter', producing temporal relations and collective knowledge (*Technics and Time*, 19). He describes this as epiphylogenesis: the accumulation of experience outside the body in technical systems.
18. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 23, 208, 212, 260, 264; Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953–1974*, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 11–12. Deleuze defines the virtual as 'fully real in so far as it is virtual', opposed not to the real but to the actual (*Difference and Repetition*, 208). Virtual multiplicities function as differential structures whose actualisation proceeds through divergence rather than resemblance (*Difference and Repetition*, 212, 264), preserving the openness of what is to come. The virtual designates a field of real but non-actual potential, thus the imaginary is not opposed to the real but precedes it, forming a pre-individual field whose relations generate the real, since 'the real, the imaginary and their relations are always engendered secondarily by the functioning of the structure' (*Desert Islands*, 11–12). Therefore, problems are not merely questions in thought; they are 'extra-propositional' structures (virtual) that exist independently of their solutions (actual), acting as the genetic power that generates sense.
19. Deleuze, 'Chapter II: Repetition for Itself', in *Difference and Repetition*, 70–129. For Deleuze, habit is a 'passive synthesis' that 'contracts' repetition into a lived present; it is ontogenetic (it produces being since it is pre-reflective and forms the subject) such that the subject is not the ground of habit, but habit is the ground of the subject. Similarly, it is temporal and immanent, since it constitutes the present as duration. Thus, inhabiting space is not the expression of a prior subject but the local stabilisation of a pre-individual field of forces. This departs from Bourdieu's concept of inhabiting space, which reflects a socially structured habitus (durable dispositions shaped by position in a field), since for Deleuze it designates how subjects themselves are produced through immanent contractions of repetition rather than through the reproduction of already constituted social structures.
20. Leda Maria Martins, *Performances of Spiral Time*, trans. Bruna Barros and Jess Oliveira (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478061434-003>.
21. Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 3: Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 8–78; Bernard Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy: Volume 1: The Future of Work*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 1–70; Bernard Stiegler, *Automatic Society, Volume 1: The*

- Future of Work*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 19–40. Grammaticisation, as developed by Bernard Stiegler, refers to the process by which continuous flows of experience, such as gesture, speech and movement, are discretised into reproducible elements that can be recorded, transmitted and recomposed, allowing memory to be organised, iterated and transformed, in line with his broader account of tertiary retention as the technical exteriorisation of experience. For background, see *Technics and Time*, 1 and *Technics and Time*, 3: *Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*. This is formally developed in *For a New Critique of Political Economy and Automatic Society* vol. 1.
22. Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 102–24, <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373452-004>. For Sharpe the weather is the total climate; and that climate is antiblackness as ‘the singularity’ (106).
 23. Gilbert Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 19–20, 29–30, 275–77. Following Stiegler’s account of technics as a milieu of tertiary retention that conditions perception and subjectivity, ‘fog’ may be understood as a diffuse technical milieu through which social, political and racialised relations are mediated, while ‘floating’ describes a situated mode of navigating the disorientation produced within such milieus. Drawing on Simondon’s conception of the ‘individual-milieu coupling’, where ‘individuation is ... ontogenetic only insofar as it is an operation of the complete being ... a partial and relative resolution that manifests in a system which contains potentials and includes a certain incompatibility with respect to itself’ (3–4), individuation unfolds within a metastable equilibrium: a relational field of policy, media, labour and race, rather than among isolated entities. Such fields condition perception, movement and affect. Atmospheric formations such as fog can thus be read as relational milieus through which social and perceptual conditions are co-constituted, while ‘floating’ designates a mode of inhabiting the pre-individual, sustaining indeterminacy rather than resolving it into fixed form.
 24. Gail Lewis, ‘Questions of Presence’, *Feminist Review* 117, no. 1 (2017): 4, 8, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41305-017-0088-1>.
 25. Deborah A. Miranda, ‘When My Body Is the Archive’, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 42, no. 2 (2018): 125–26, <https://doi.org/10.17953/aicrj.42.2.miranda>.
 26. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 1, 105, 208. Here, Deleuze argues that ‘the virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual’ (208). Memory is immanent – a non-representational, embodied becoming re-actualised through repetition: ‘not generality ... repetition and resemblance are different in kind’ (1). The body is not a container but a site of intensities and repetitions (208), and ‘we do not repeat because we repress; we repress because we repeat’ (105).
 27. Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 141. For Stiegler, memory is always a technical and prosthetic process of exteriorization, such that ‘the human invents himself in the technical by inventing the tool – by becoming exteriorised techno-logically’.
 28. Simondon, *Individuation*, 19–20, 29–30, 275–77. Read through Simondon’s account of individuation as metastable and processual, memory can be understood as performative rather than archival: the body operates as an an-archival medium through which memory is continually re-enacted rather than stored. Brian Massumi, ‘Working principles’ and ‘Materializations of the anarchic: anarchival propositions’ in *The Go-To How-To Guide to Anarchiving*, ed. Andrew Murphie (Montréal: The Senselab, 2016), 6, 45–46. For Massumi, the concept of the anarchic is extended through embodied practices in which the body becomes a site of inscription and transmission. ‘It is activated in the relays: between media, between verbal and material expressions ... a kind of event derivative, or surplus-value of the event’ (6), such that memory persists through variation and continuous becoming. What emerges is a conception of distributed, processual technicity, synthesising Stiegler’s account of technical memory, Deleuze’s notion of becoming, and Simondon’s individuation with an anarchival logic of activation and transformation. Also see Marie Topp and Emily Jeffries, ‘Collective self-interview: the body as anarchic’, in *The Go-To How-To Guide to Anarchiving*, 77–79.
 29. Donna Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective’, *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.
 30. Walter D. Mignolo, ‘Prophets Facing Sidewise: The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference’, *Social Epistemology* 19, no. 1 (2005): 111–27, <https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/02691720500084325>.
 31. Saidiya Hartman, ‘Venus in Two Acts’, *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14.
 32. Massumi, ‘Working Principles’. A reactivatable ‘repertory of traces’ and carriers of potential; ‘not inert ... [but] triggering events, not documentation of a past ... [but a] feed-forward mechanism ... never contained in any particular archive or object ... [but] made of the formative movements going into and coming out of the archive ... made of formative tendencies; compositional forces seeking a new taking-form’.
 33. Carine Zaayman, *Anarchival Practices: The Clanwilliam Arts Project as Re-Imagining Custodianship of the Past* (Berlin: ICI Berlin Press, 2023), 13–14.
 34. Yuk Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2016), 19–20, 29–30; Yuk Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019), 29. Hui defines cosmotechnics as ‘the unification between the cosmic order and the moral order through technical activities’ (*Technology*

- in *China*, 20; *Recursivity*, 29), arguing that 'technics is always cosmotechnics' (*Technology in China*, 19). Against the universality of modern technology, Hui insists on a plurality of 'multiple cosmotechnics in different cultures ... necessary to reconstruct the genesis of technicities ... with their own cosmic specificity'. Drawing on Simondon, he describes cosmotechnics as a 'reattachment of the figure to the ground', not as a return to unity but as a bifurcation into 'a multiplicity of cosmotechnics with different relations to different grounds' (*Recursivity*, 29-30).
35. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 42-50, 166-83; Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 3-27, 122-45. For Deleuze, becoming is a process without fixed endpoints, defined by continuous variation rather than stable identity. It unfolds through relational assemblages and multiplicities – between bodies, systems, and environments – such that 'there is only desire and the social', produced by desiring-machines that distribute states of being and becoming across intensities (*Anti-Oedipus*, 183; *Essays on Deleuze*, 124), between whole and parts, an ongoing 'processes of becoming, and returns' (*Anti-Oedipus*, 42), a proliferation and accumulation of bifurcations (*Essays on Deleuze*, 26, 124). Within such assemblages (e.g., broom-body, tree-land), 'desiring-machines ... never exist independently of the ... social formations that they constitute', and, as they function within social machines (*Anti-Oedipus*, 183), ritual operates as a cosmotechnical transmission of becoming.
 36. See, for instance: Nahum D. Chandler, 'Paraontology; or, Notes on the Practical Theoretical Politics of Thought', Society for the Humanities Annual Culler Lecture in Critical Theory, 15 October 2018, 1h 59 min, <https://vimeo.com/297769615>; Fred Moten, 'Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 4 (2013): 737-80, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-2345261>.
 37. Hui, *Recursivity*, 275. Here, the cosmos is not external to technical practice but operates as an organic order, analogically related to the body and enacted through cultivation. The 'cosmos is organic insofar as it is analogical to the body'.
 38. Mbembe, *Brutalism*.
 39. *Decolonization*, 34; Mama, *Is It Ethical to Study Africa?*, 4; Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', 575-599; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Mama critique the dominance of Western epistemologies and call for a plurality of knowledge systems grounded in diverse historical and geopolitical contexts, while Haraway rejects universal epistemologies in favour of partial, embodied, and context-specific perspectives.
 40. Simondon, *Technical Objects*, 170, 177. For Simondon, modulation describes the continuous transformation of relational systems through which structure emerges from metastable conditions rather than fixed form. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 33, 132-88. Barad's theory of intra-action holds that relations are not external connections between entities but the very processes through which entities emerge.
 41. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 88. 'On the one hand, it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand, it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies'.
 42. Wynter, *On Being Human as Praxis*, 25. Wynter frames storytelling and imagination as practices through which new forms of life and social reality are actively produced. Her work on Black geographies demonstrates how racialised subjects produce alternative spatial practices that disrupt dominant, abstract spatial logics. She argues that new futures emerge through the re-narration of the human, where storytelling and imagination function as foundational modes of world-making.
 43. Escobar, *Thinking-Feeling with the Earth*, 11-32; Hui, *Technology in China*, 19-20, 29-30; *Recursivity*, 29-30, 275.
 44. Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 1, 141.
 45. Massumi, 'Working principles' and 'Materializations'. Anarchival practices treat archives as sites of activation and reinterpretation rather than fixed repositories of truth. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o conceptualises memory as a process of 're-membering' that actively reconstructs relations disrupted by colonial histories, advocating for relational modes of knowing that foreground interconnect-edness between people, place, and material worlds. Hartman's method of critical fabulations combines archival research, critical theory, and fictional narrative to reimagine the lives of people whose stories have been silenced or erased by history. Ngũgĩ, *Re-Membering Africa*.
 46. Mbembe, *Brutalism*, 5. Mbembe describes re-enchantment as a mode of restoring relational vitality and imaginative possibility against reductive material logics: 'in Afrofuturism, the invention of a new world is a vibratory act. This act proceeds from what we could call radical imagination. The vibratory act is characterized by its straddling and going beyond the given and its constraints.'

Biography

Gert van der Merwe was born and grew up in Namibia. He moved to South Africa to study, graduating from the University of Pretoria with an MProf Arch (2014), where he subsequently established a practice and taught until 2020. In 2022, he returned to Namibia, where he teaches at Namibia University of Science and Technology. In 2023, he became a research associate at the Gobabeb Namib Research Institute and enrolled at TU Delft for a PhD titled *Water: Flow, Code and Stock – A Rhizomatic Genealogy of the Political Ecology in Namibia*, and in 2024, he joined the editorial board of *Footprint*.

Serah Calitz examines mining's design of water, energy and food in twentieth-century South Africa for the MineLives project, a bilateral research grant between the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at TU Delft and the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand. She completed her professional degree in architecture with distinction at TU Delft in 2018. Serah has worked in professional practice for MVRDV and OMA and has exhibited work at VI PER Gallery (2025), Lisbon Architecture Triennale (2025), International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (2022), and Dutch Design Week (2019).

