

A Topological Approach to Cultural Dynamics

Conference Handbook

Changing Cultures: Cultures of Change

December 10-12 | 2009 | Barcelona

*Organised by: Goldsmiths, University of London & University of
Barcelona*

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA



Contents

Conference description.....	2
On Arrival.....	3
Hotel Accommodation.....	4
City and Travel Information.....	4
Event Overview.....	4-5
Internet Access.....	5
Lunches.....	5
Social Events.....	6
Conference Programme.....	6
Instructions for Presenters.....	7
Instructions for Chairs.....	8
Additional Events.....	8
Partners.....	10
Acknowledgements.....	11
Conference Organising Committee.....	11

Conference Description

Across disciplines, topological or intensive approaches to the study of culture treat change as normal and immanent rather than exceptional and externally determined. In these approaches, cultures are defined by the possibilities they offer for change rather than by their size, location or essence. These approaches thus provide a set of ways to think about different levels and kinds of change – learning, transmission, innovation, adaptation, self-organisation and evolution. This conference asks: what is the potential of topological and other intensive approaches to culture and space for thinking about change? It explores the value of thinking about culture as a privileged site or mechanism for change, but it also asks how and why the question of change is being posed in relation to culture today. This question is especially important at a time when calculation and complex technical systems have become ubiquitous elements of human life, in specialised sites of scientific enquiry and in everyday life. In contemporary society, numbers do not just describe but they construct and – in topological thinking - take on virtual properties, building abstract spaces of calculation and opening up the possibility of new perspectives on the questions of cultural predictability and innovation.

What are the concepts, techniques and artifacts of thinking topologically about cultural change? What spaces do they make? How can the current development of a material culture of topological thinking be taken into account, reflexively, as a research topic? What are the cultural implications of the growth of technical systems, quantitative calculation and ideas and procedures concerned with number, counting, and logic, the increase in lists and registers, and the rise of logistics, of innovations in thinking about linkages and technologies of address, and the combination and organization of these operations into systems in everyday life? What kinds of engagement are adequate to the task of thinking and acting in response?

Finally, the conference will also address issues of method, and in particular examine the current interest in the use of quantitative methods to investigate and understand qualitative change. Can anything – or everything – be measured in numbers? What role do modeling, simulation and experimentation have in the study of culture? How can we understand cultures of quantification? What are the implications of studying culture for the uses and meanings of numbers?

Participants have been invited to explore these questions in relation to four broad areas of cultural change, though other domains are not excluded:

Media – networks, digital methods, interface, algorithm, ubiquity, emergency, trash and spam, identification, communication and interaction

Markets – models, probability, crisis, performance, devices, cultures of quantification, noise, financialization.

Migration – movement, state spaces and spaces of passibility, lines and borders, flows, blocks and stoppages

Mind – consciousness, language, the human, imitation and evolution.

On Arrival

General Information

The conference will be held at the Faculty of Philosophy , University of Barcelona, from 10 December to 12 December 2009.

Location of Conference venue

The Faculty of Philosophy is located in the centre of Barcelona, opposite to the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona and the Museum of Contemporary Art. The address is Facultat de Filosofia, Montalegre, 6, 08001 Barcelona.

Contact Details

The contact details for the Faculty can be seen on the following page:

[://www.ub.edu/organitzacio/facultats/facultatfilosofia.htm](http://www.ub.edu/organitzacio/facultats/facultatfilosofia.htm)

Tel: +34 934 037 722
+34 934 037 721
+34 934 021 100 - Informació UB
Fax: +34 934 037 726

For a location map of the Faculty of Philosophy, please see map 1. enclosed with this booklet.

Transport

Metro: lines 1, 2 and 3 (Catalunya and Universitat) FGC and RENFE

Bus routes: 7, 9, 14, 16, 17, 24, 38, 41, 50, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 64, 66, 67, 68, 91, 120, 141, L94, L95, Tombús, Aerobús

Car parks: Plaça Castella, Carrer dels Àngels, Plaça Catalunya.

Registration

Conference registration will take place on Thursday 10 December from 08:30 hrs – 10:00 hrs.

The Registration Desk will be open at the following times for registration and conference information:

Thursday 10 December:	08:30 – 17:00
Friday 11 December:	08:30 – 17:00
Saturday 12 December:	08:30 – 17:00

The delegate pack will consist of a delegate badge, a Programme and Abstracts book (also mailed electronically in advance), a Conference Handbook (also mailed electronically in advance), a list of restaurants in the area, a map of Barcelona and an Exhibition catalogue.

Conference delegates – badge with black necklace
Conference support team member – badge with red necklace
Conference Organising team member – badge with grey necklace

Hotel Accommodation

The conference hotel, Catalonia Ramblas (****), is situated approximately 5-7 minutes walking distance from the conference venue and in the historic centre of Barcelona, near the Ramblas and a few metres from Plaza Catalunya.

Address : Pelayo, 28
08001 Barcelona
Tel: +34 93 316 84 00
Fax: +34 93 316 84 02

Internet and Wifi access is available in the hotel.

For a location map of the Hotel and instructions on how to get from the hotel to the Faculty of Philosophy, please see map 2. enclosed with this booklet.

City and Travel Information

How to Get There

[://www.bcn.es/turisme/english/turisme/welcome.htm](http://www.bcn.es/turisme/english/turisme/welcome.htm)

City of Barcelona

[://www.bcn.cat/english/ihome.htm](http://www.bcn.cat/english/ihome.htm)

Barcelona Airport

[://www.barcelona-airport.com/eng/transport_eng.htm](http://www.barcelona-airport.com/eng/transport_eng.htm)

The airport is situated approx 13 km from the city. The above link contains information about transport from Barcelona Airport to the city by taxi, metro, bus and car.

Event Overview

Event

Wednesday 9 December

Student Day, 10:00 – 17:00

Location

Arts Santa Monica

Thursday 10 December

Conference Registration, 08:30 - 10:00

Faculty of Philosophy, 4th Floor,
University of Barcelona

Coffee/Tea, 09:00 -10:00

As above

Conference Opening and Plenary session 1, 10:00-12:00

As above

Parallel Sessions 1, 12:00-13:30

As above

Parallel Sessions 2, 14:45 – 16:45

As above

Conference Reception, 18:00 – 19:00

Palau March

Plenary talk by Professor Luc Steels & Exhibition Opening,
from 19:15

Arts Santa Monica

Friday 11 December

Registration Desk opens, from 08:30

Faculty of Philosophy, 4th Floor,
University of Barcelona

Conference Parallel Sessions 3, 9:30-11:30

As above

Coffee/Tea, 11:30-12:00

As above

Plenary session 2, 12:00-13:30

As above

Conference Parallel Sessions 4, 14:45–16:45

As above

Public lecture, 18:00-20:00

CCCB (Centre for Contemporary
Culture Barcelona)

Conference Dinner, 20:30

Attic Restaurant

Saturday 12 December

Registration Desk opens, from 08:30

Faculty of Philosophy, 4th Floor,
University of Barcelona

Plenary session 3, 09:30-11:30

As above

Coffee/Tea, 11:30-12:00

Faculty of Philosophy, Canteen

Conference Parallel sessions 5, 12:00-13:30

Faculty of Philosophy, 4th floor

Conference Parallel sessions 6, 14:45-16:15

As above

Coffee/Tea, 16:15-16:45

As above

Plenary session 4, 16:45-18:45

As above

Conference Finish, 18:50

Cultural Policy Event, from 17:00 hrs (start time tbc)

Arts Santa Monica

Internet Access

Internet access is available to conference delegates in the Computer room, 4th floor, Faculty of Philosophy.

Passwords and usernames will be made available onsite. Wifi internet access is also available in the larger lecture theatres.

Lunches

Please note that lunches are not provided as part of conference registration. A selection of hot and cold lunches on Thursday and Friday can be bought in the Cafeteria situated on the ground floor of the Faculty of Philosophy. The Cafeteria is not open on Saturday.

Please note that students will be using the Cafeteria on Thursday and Friday and that some queuing should be expected. There is a variety of cafes and restaurants in the Raval area where the Faculty of Philosophy is situated and a list of restaurants / cafes in the proximity of the Faculty is provided in delegate packs.

Social Events

Conference Reception, Thursday 10 December, Palau March, 18:00 – 19:00 hrs.

The conference reception will start at 18:00 hrs at the Palau March, Rambla Santa Monica, 8, 08001 Barcelona. The building is located just opposite Arts Santa Monica where the exhibition opening and the lecture by Luc Steels will take place at 19:15 hrs.

A selection of cold buffet food and drinks will be served. **The conference reception is reserved to conference participants only.**

Delegates are advised to arrive on time. Delegates should make their own way to the conference reception and a location map is included on the next page of the handbook. A meeting point in the Catalonia Ramblas Hotel foyer at 17:30 hrs will be organized by the organizers for those who wish to be taken to the venue (further details can be obtained at the conference registration desk).

The organizers would like to acknowledge generous support from the Generalitat de Catalunya, Department de Cultura i Mitjans de Comunicacio and Arts Santa Monica.

See map 3. enclosed for location of the conference reception and Arts Santa Monica.

Conference Dinner, Friday 11 December, Attic Restaurant, from 20:30 hrs.

The conference dinner will take place at the Attic Restaurant on Friday 11 December, 20:30 hrs. The restaurant is located on Las Ramblas 120, Barcelona.

A place at the conference dinner has been pre-booked for those participants that have reserved a place through the organizers at the time of their registration for the conference. **Please note that the conference dinner list is now closed and that participants will not be able to book a place at place at the dinner onsite.**

Delegates should make their own way to the conference dinner; see map 4. enclosed for location.

Conference Programme

A conference programme can be viewed in the Programme and Abstract book distributed in the delegate packs.

Instructions for Presenters

The lecture theatres are equipped with the following audio-visual equipment:

- Data projector
- PC (Windows XP Professional – Windows XP and Office 2003, Adobe Acrobat Reader)
- wifi access (Magna Aula, Sala Gran lecture theatres only; organisers will confirm the set up in the other rooms)
- sound system

Oral presentations

Speakers should ensure that they arrive to their lecture room at least 15-20 minutes before the session start. Speakers are requested to bring their presentation on an USB memory stick and preload it onto the PC located in the lecture theatre before the start of their session. **Speakers should save their presentation on the D:drive of the PC, not on the C:drive or the desktop.** Saving your presentation on C:drive or on the desktop may result in loss of data after the computer has been switched off.

Please note that the University cannot provide any Mac computers, so speakers should ensure that their presentation is saved in an alternative format that is PC compatible.

Direct connection of laptops to the data projector (with set up in the break prior to the corresponding session) is a possible but not a recommended alternative. Presenters should inform the organizers in advance if they wish to use their laptop. UK and non-Europe to Euro converter plugs will not be provided on site, so speakers are advised to bring this piece of equipment with them.

All presenters are asked to prepare their talks to match the allocated times which will be strictly enforced by session chairs:

Plenary presentations – 30 minutes plus 15 minutes for questions

Oral presentations – 20 minutes plus 10 minutes for questions

A member of the conference support team (wearing a badge with a red ribbon) will be offering assistance to speakers every day between 09:00 hrs and 16:45 hrs with downloading their presentations to the desktop prior to their session or at another convenient time in the programme. No assistance can be offered to presenters after 17:00 hrs.

Poster presentations

Posters will be on display during the conference in the foyer area, 4th floor. Each poster board is 1.5 m wide and 1.2 m high. Delegates should make sure that they bring pins for their poster (the boards are not velcro compatible).

Each presenter is responsible for ensuring that their poster is displayed on the board allocated. Posters can be displayed from Thursday morning 10 December to Saturday afternoon 12 December. All posters should be removed by 16.00 hrs on Saturday 12 December.

Presenting a paper for the first time

Some useful instructions on what is required and how to prepare a paper can be downloaded from the Programme page of the conference website (www.atacd.net) in advance of the conference.

Instructions for Chairs

Chairs

Session Chairs are expected to introduce presenters and facilitate questions and are not expected to moderate the discussion. They are also responsible for ensuring that each session runs exactly to time and according to the programme publicized. In case of a non-show, the chair should ask the next speaker to present their paper.

Each session chair will be assisted by a member of the conference support team (student helper) who has received training in how to handle the audio-visual equipment in the room. The student helper / member of the organizing team will make themselves known to the chair at least 15-20 minutes before the session starts. In case of a technical problem, the student helper will request technical assistance from the technician. The student helper (both Spanish and English speaking) will also bring a session sheet to the chair in advance of the session listing the names of the presenters, as well as the audio-visual equipment requested in the room.

Technical Support A technician will be available on call during the whole of the conference. If you need assistance please ask one of the members of the conference support team (wearing a red ribbon) or a member of the organising team (wearing a badge with a grey necklace).

Additional Events

Student Day, Wednesday 9 December 2009, Arts Santa Monica, La Rambla 7, 00002 Barcelona

[://www.artssantamonica.cat/ang](http://www.artssantamonica.cat/ang)

Organised by: the ATACD postgraduate student research network

Attendance at the Student Day is free of charge and participants should have pre-registered in advance of the event. **Please note that the Student Day list is now closed.**

Keynote speakers

Rosi Braidotti, *University of Utrecht, The Netherlands*

Workshop by Professor Xin Wei Sha

Programme

Morning Session

09:30 Registration

10.00-11.30 Opening and workshop

11.30-12.00 Tea / coffee

12.00-13.00 Workshop session with Professor Xin Wei Sha

Afternoon Session

14.30-15.45 Introduction and keynote presentations

14.45-16.15 Tea / coffee

16.15-17.00 Discussion of keynote presentation

Exhibition: Cultures of Change, 9 December 2009 – 28 February 2010, Arts Santa Monica, La Rambla 7, 00002 Barcelona
[://www.artssantamonica.cat/ang](http://www.artssantamonica.cat/ang)

Curators: *Josep Perelló and Pau Alsina*

Conference participants are invited to the Exhibition opening on Thursday 10 December, Arts Santa Monica, from 19:00 hrs. The Exhibition opening will be preceded by the conference reception and will be followed by a lecture given by Professor Luc Steels.

For further details about the Exhibition, please see the Exhibition catalogue included in the delegate packs.

Cultural Policy Event: Topology, Innovation and Cultural Policy, Saturday 12 December 2009, Arts Santa Mònica

Organised by: *YProductions in collaboration with Goldsmiths and University of Barcelona*

In recent years the concept of innovation has been introduced into the cultural sphere, importing some of its meaning from management and economic theory but also acquiring a new dimension as a consequence of the peculiarities and singularities of the sphere. An alternative approach to innovation has emerged in the last decade that presumes that the cultural sphere is a space in which knowledge is produced in processes of collaboration. This collaboration takes place in spaces in which agents are actively connected to each other, in which public institutions, universities, cultural agents and private firms create virtuous networks aimed at sharing and transferring knowledge, ideas and objects between each other. Innovation is understood as a context rather than as an output, and is to be found in the creative basins that lie at the heart of the city's life. The role of policy-making agencies seeking to support this form of innovation is unclear; how can policy promote emergence rather than designing top-down cultural schemes? This form of innovation is inspired by movements such as free/open software, and encourages forms of cooperation as opposed to competition. It implies self-organization, encourages new ways of measuring value and gives autonomy to cultural agents. All these changes present important challenges to policy makers who are used to defining culture as a static element or completed work that needs to be preserved and protected. In this new scenario, the aim is to maximize the circulation of objects and ideas in ways that enable collaboration.

This panel will address the problems that come from trying to apply this dynamic view of culture to the design of concrete measures or institutional structures aimed at managing culture.

Cultural policy has traditionally operated with a notion of culture understood as a set of closed artifacts. Many new agencies are challenging this notion and are designing policies aimed at reinforcing cultural networks, promoting the emergent properties of cultural production and designing complex spaces of interaction between institutions, technologies and cultural producers. The following debate aims to analyze the extent in which these experiments can help to redefine cultural policy and how can these ideas be transformed into specific measures.

This half-day event will run for 3 hours, after a brief presentation carried out by YProductions each speaker will do a 20 minute presentation followed by a 15 minutes Q&A. The event will conclude with a 30 minute round table with all the speakers.

Invited speakers include:

Monika Fleischmann (Bonn, Germany)
Ronaldo Lemos (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
Ramon Sanguesa (Barcelona, Spain)
Jose Luis de Vincente (Barcelona, Spain)

Partners

Alex Adriaansens | Rosi Braidotti | Steve Brown | Florian Cramer | Martin Fuglsang | Vittorio Loreto | Emilio Luque | Celia Lury | Ruth Mace | Sandro Mezzadra | Fabian Muniesa | Josep Perelló | Richard Rogers | Andreas Roepstorff | Urs Stäheli | Yannis Scarpelos | Luc Steels | Tiziana Terranova | Ivan Tchhalakov | Mihail Zervos

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University of Barcelona



Arts Santa Monica



Generalitat de Catalunya, Department de Cultura i Mitjans de Comunicacio and Arts Santa Monica



Conference Organising committee

Conference Chair

Celia Lury

ATACD Project Manager & Conference Organiser

Jasmina Bolfek-Radovani

Exhibition & Local Organisation

Josep Perello

Chair of the ATACD Conference Work Group & Student Day Organiser

Steve Brown

Cultural Policy Event

Jaron Rowan, yProductions

Student Day Organisers

Beatrice Ferrara, Alessandra Marino, Carolin Gerlitz, Ann-Cristina Lange