

CALL FOR PAPERS

Minding the Present: Bodies, Places, Matter in and between Australia and Europe

17-19 September 2025

Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies, University of Padova
(Via Vendramini, 13, Padova, Italy)

We are pleased to announce the call for papers for the conference *Minding the Present: Bodies, Places, Matter in and between Australia and Europe*, to be held on 17-19 September 2025, at the University of Padova (Italy). In this conference we aim to explore the demands of the present, the actions and interactions we are all bound to set into motion in order to engage in political and art-activistic practices to start caring for and curing our vulnerable planet and our insecure standing on and with it.

Central to our exploration is the ontology of the present—the *hic et nunc* (here and now)—together with the concepts of present orientation and the re-figurations of time/s. We will focus on how, through discourse, art, literature and geopolitical praxis, we can experience, and potentially reshape both our perception of time, particularly in relation to the present moment. We are especially interested in investigating the present as a dynamic space situated between archives of the past (Hall, 2001) and what P. Saint-Amour has defined as traumatic anticipations of the future (Saint-Amour, 2015), taking into account nonlinear, non-Western and Indigenous cosmologies and heterotopias. In this way, we assert that, as Hodgson suggests, “the present moment is not... a static fixed coalescence but a super complexity, the dynamism of which determines its ability for anticipation” (2013, p. 31).

We seek to examine the shaping experiences, identities, and perceptions of the present as a catalyst to urgent action both in Australia—with a special alertness to the very rooted cultures of Indigenous Australia—and in the complex relations between Europe and Australia. The conference particularly welcomes contributions from literature, linguistics, the performing arts, anthropology, cultural geography, memory studies, political and legal studies. We also encourage interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches.

Among the questions that contributions may address, we would be interested in the following ones:

1. How are traditional notions of past, present, and future being reshaped in contemporary contexts? How do these reconfigurations manifest in cultural, social, and political spheres?
2. How do ‘we’ negotiate between historical archives and future anticipations? How is this tension made readable and visible in/via art?
3. Relationality: how do Indigenous epistemologies challenge and expand Western notions of the time, especially the concept of the present?
4. Rootedness and ‘inauguration’ (see M. Augé, “Starting again is living through a new beginning, a birth” *The Future*, 2014): How do individuals and communities maintain a

sense of rootedness in the face of global changes? How does rootedness interact with our orientation in the present?

5. Caring/Curing: How do practices of care and healing manifest in the present moment? How do they shape our understanding and orientation of bodies, places, and matter?
6. The ontology of the present: How do we understand and conceptualize the nature of our current reality, especially in its entanglement with the vulnerable, powerful, meaningful places, matter and shapes of more-than-human and human life that inhabit Australia and Europe and the spaces in-between them?
7. How can our understanding of the present moment inform and inspire concrete actions and interventions? Is there hope in the present tense, and how might melancholic epistemologies be transformed by, for example, Indigenous cosmologies?
8. How does the anticipation of future events, changes, or challenges shape our present experiences and actions in the connections between Australia and Europe?
9. How do historical traumas continue to influence the literary and cultural relations between Australia and Europe?

We invite contributions that address the following topics (but are not limited to them):

- The role of cultural, literary, artistic archives in shaping present understandings and future projections
- Temporal re-configurations in literature, performing arts, anthropology and politics
- Anticipatory practices and their impact on literature and art
- Nonlinear and alternative conceptions of time in artistic, cultural and literary practices
- Present-oriented practices in various disciplines and contexts
- Performing arts as a medium for exploring and transforming the present
- Corporeality and embodiment in relation to time and cultural contexts
- Geographies of the present: making and claiming places and spaces in and between Australia and Europe
- Migrations and diasporas: bodies in motion through time and space
- Resurgence of Indigenous knowledge systems and practices, including temporal philosophies, relational cosmologies, and storytelling
- Regeneration initiatives: rethinking time in ecological contexts and texts
- Relationality: how do Indigenous epistemologies challenge and expand Western notions of the time, especially the concept of the present?
- Ecologies and environment: comparing Australian and European perspectives on orientation, the immediate present, care, and rootedness
- Environmental resurgence and regeneration initiatives as forms of immediate care and reorientation
- Cultural and literary approaches to the ontology of the present
- Activist strategies and calls for action in contemporary Australia and in Australia-Europe relations
- Collective memory and forgetting and their role in shaping present anxieties and actions

We particularly encourage papers that explore the interplay between archives of the past, the present moment, and anticipations of the future, examining how these temporal dimensions

interact in the Australian and Australia-Europe contexts, especially those that draw from literature, the performing arts, anthropology, postcolonial studies, gender studies, trauma and disability studies, politics and legal studies.

References:

Augé, M., *The Future*, London, Verso, 2014

Hall, S., "Constituting an Archive", *Third Text*, 15(54), 2001, pp. 89–92

Hodgson, A., "Towards an Ontology of the Present Moment", *On the Horizon*, 21(1), pp. 24–38

Jameson, J., *A Singular Modernity. Essay on the Ontology of the Present*, London, Verso, 2002

Saint-Amour, P., *Tense Future. Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015

Deadlines:

Abstract (300-400 words) and a short bio-note (200 words): **8 June 2025**

Notification of acceptance: **20 June 2025**

Registration (please note that panelists must be or become regular EASA members):

Early bird by **31 July 2025** 200 euros

between **1 August and 10 September 2025** 280 euros

PhD students: 100 euros

Students and PhD students of the University of Padova: no fees

Fees include coffee and lunch breaks, plus a conference set.

The conference dinner will take place on 18 September (more info on costs and the location will be offered at a later stage on the dedicated website).

Scientific Committee: Dany Adone, Valérie-Anne Belleflamme, Salhia Ben-Messahel, Matthew Graves, Marie Herbillon, Irma Krčan, Maggie Nolan, Claudia Novosivschei, Marilena Parlati, Iva Polak, Geoff Rodoreda, Astrid Schwegler Castañer

Organising Committee: Maria Renata Dolce (University of Lecce), Eleonora Federici (University of Ferrara), Francesca Mussi (University of Pisa), Marilena Parlati (University of Padova)

The Conference website is under construction, more information will be posted on the EASA website.

The Conference is meant as an **in-person** event for accepted **speakers**, but the conference will be available on zoom for external attendees.

Contact: marilena.parlati@unipd.it (for proposals, please use the heading “EASA 2025 Padova”)