

TRACES AND ATMOSPHERES OF DISASTERS

20th & 21st
May 2026

Nîmes University
Vauban Campus

Organizers:

Chrome laboratory, Nîmes University

Projekt laboratory, Nîmes University

Koias institute, Kobe University

Invited Speakers:

Bruce Bégout

Bordeaux Montaigne University

Ching–Yuen Cheung

University of Tokyo

Cristina Demaria

University of Bologna

Natalie Depraz

Paris Nanterre University

Mathieu Gaulène

Nîmes University

Béatrice Gisclard

& Pierre Fournier

Nîmes University

Yuho Hisayama

Kobe University

Sophie Houdart

Paris Nanterre University

Yukiko Kuwayama

University of Tokyo

Simon Levesque

University of Quebec in Montreal

Francesco Mazzucchelli

University of Bologna

Carlo Severi

EHESS

Patrizia Violi

University of Bologna

Exhibition “Living Atmospheres”:

Season Lao

Contemporary Artist, Kyoto

Romarc Jannel

Philosopher and Curator, Kyoto

For further inquiries,
please contact the organizers:

Mathieu Gaulène

mathieu.gaulene@unimes.fr

Michela Deni

michela.deni@unimes.fr

Yuho Hisayama

k0121712+hisayama@gsuite.kobe-u.ac.jp



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International Symposium: Traces and Atmospheres of Disasters

What is it like to feel a disaster, and how can the memory of those events be conveyed? This is a common object of investigation for two different epistemological traditions: the semiotics of traces and the new phenomenology of atmospheres. In keeping with Peirce's semiotic tradition, traces of a disastrous event can trigger the feeling and memory of it. It also raises the question nowadays of how memory might be transmitted when traces of the event are absent or have been manipulated. Abduction, the pre-logical inference which makes sense of traces, consciously or not, is at the heart of this reasoning.

A second philosophical tradition emerges to comprehend the atmosphere that emanates from a disaster, with similar questions regarding the possibility of crafting or manipulating these atmospheres. Establishing how an atmosphere was created faces the same difficulties as determining where it originated. At the heart of this aerial or vaporous feeling lies a process situated between the subject and their environment. Beyond the imprints and traces, what floats in the air of a disaster "through-rounding" us?

The ambition of this symposium is to articulate these two notions, traces and atmospheres, coming from distinct epistemological traditions, in discussion with the works of anthropologists, to improve our general understanding of what is occurring under the ill-fated stars.

Exhibition: Living Atmospheres

"Living Atmospheres" showcases important works by Season Lao that constitute an aesthetic meditation on atmosphere, vulnerability, and survival. Positioned in the historic chapel of Nîmes University's Hoche campus, the exhibition features paintings, site-specific installations, performances, and archival documents that explore how devastated landscapes, salvaged wood, mist, light, and silence can serve as the setting for living memory. Rather than considering disaster purely through the prism of loss, this exhibition suggests that places and beings exist in states of ongoing transformation. Through references to Japanese philosophy, the exhibition contends that atmosphere is not merely a backdrop but a shared conditions of existence and survival.

Program of International Symposium:

May 19th **Hoche Campus, Chapelle Hall**

17:00 | Vernissage of the exhibition "Living Atmospheres /
Atmosphères vivantes" in presence of the artist Season Lao

May 20th

Vauban Campus, A3 Auditorium

8:30 **Arrival of participants / Welcome Coffee (H001)**

9:00 **Introduction talks**

Benoît Roig (President of Nîmes University), Yuho Hisayama (Director of Koias and organizer), Patrizia Giannoni & Oscar Navarro Carrascal (Directors of Chrome lab), Michela Deni (Director of Projekt lab and organizer), Mathieu Gaulène (Organizer, Chrome lab)

Layers of Traces and Atmospheres. From Art to the Sea and Back

9:20 **Patrizia Violi**

Atmospheres of disasters, memory and oblivion:
fake traces, false traces and non-traces

10:00 **Yukiko Kuwayama**

Verbalizing Disaster Atmospheres at Minamata Eco Park:
A Phenomenological Critical View

10:40 **Coffee Break**

11:10 **Cristina Demaria**

Atmospheres of a Future Past:
Traces and Memories of the Anthropocene

11:50 **Yuho Hisayama**

Higashi Yuenchi as an Atmospheric Archive:
Toward the Unsayable Memory of the Hanshin–Awaji Earthquake

12:30 **Lunch Break**

Crafting Memories in Space through Traces

14:30 **Sophie Houdart**

Re-membering by Walking.
The Michinoku Coastal Trail as many ways to leave traces

15:10 **Mathieu Gaulène**

On the Authenticity of Traces:
Shifting Atmospheres of Sorrow and Hope in Rikuzentakata

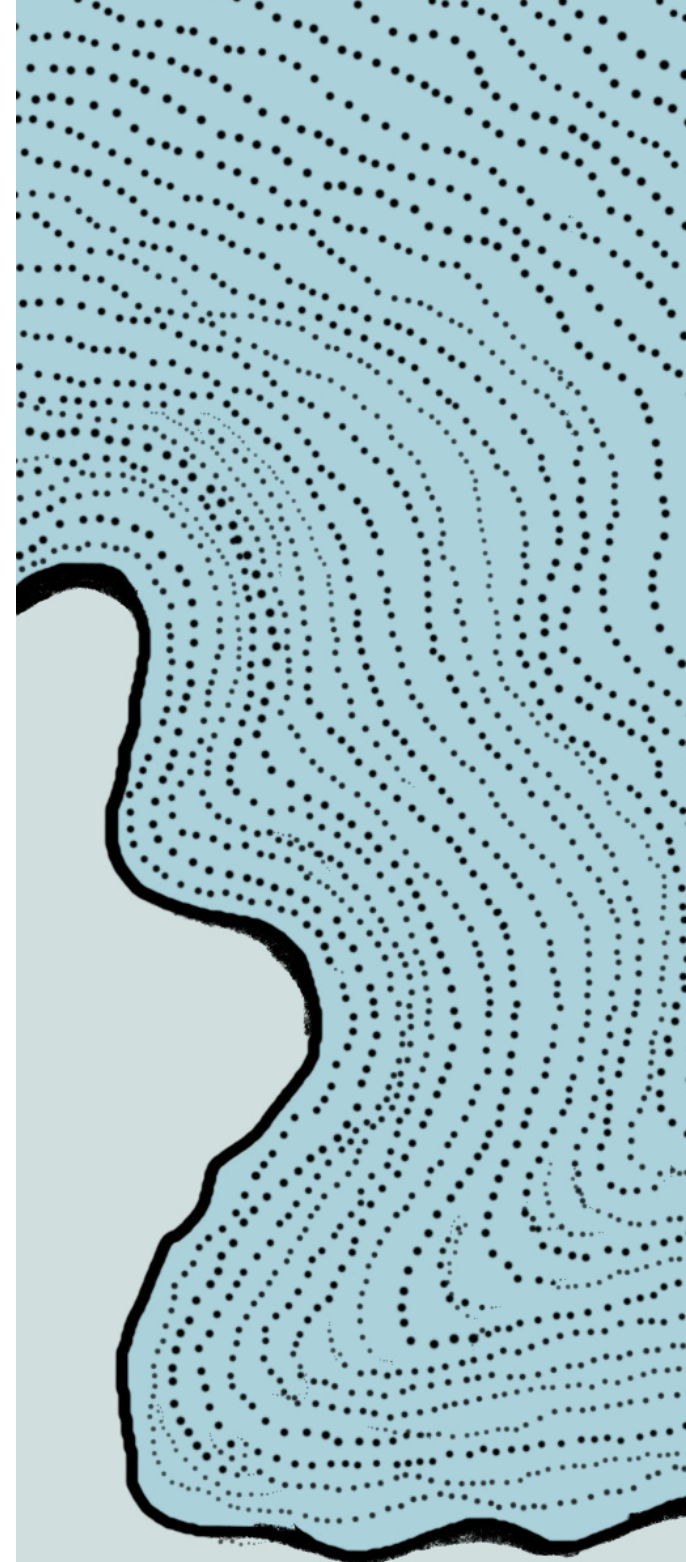
15:50 **Coffee Break**

16:20 **Ching-Yuen Cheung**

Fukushima and atmospheric studies

17:00 **Carlo Severi**

Relational Spaces:
From the anthropology of art to the study of space and form



May 21st

Vauban Campus, A3 Auditorium

8:30 **Arrival of participants / Welcome Coffee (H001)**

Conveying, Coding, and Coping with Disasters through Atmospheres

9:00 **Bruce Bégout**

Atmosphere and Zeitgeist.
Toward an Atmospheric Reading of an Epoch

9:40 **Francesco Mazzucchelli**

Who testifies when humans are not watching?
Regimes of visibility and narrability in a new fog of war

10:20 **Simon Levesque**

The living must carry the dead:
Charlotte Delbo on conveying the deathly atmosphere
and feelings of the Auschwitz concentration camp

11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:30 **Béatrice Gisclard & Pierre Fournier**

Schrödinger's Cat-astrophe

12:10 **Natalie Depraz**

Emotional diffusivity and permeability

12:50 **Lunch Break**

Hoche Campus, Chapelle

Exhibition: Living Atmospheres

15:00 **Season Lao**

Visit of the exhibition "Living Atmospheres / Atmosphères
vivantes" in Chapelle (Hoche Campus)

15:30 **Romarc Jannel**

Non-Determination as a Method:
Silence, Interval, and the Making of Living Atmospheres
Through Asian and Japanese Conceptions
(In the presence of the artist, Season Lao).

