

Underworlds – Sites and Struggles of Global Dis/Ordering

Call for Papers

Engagement with practices of global ordering is often guided towards specific locations and legacies: the sovereign state, the formal sources and standards of international law, the intricacies of global diplomacy, the historical juncture and its (anti-)heroes, the international palaces of hope in Geneva, New York, or The Hague. These explorations entail ideas of where power resides and where it is to be unmasked or undone – ideas implicitly grounded in modernist geographies, temporalities, and subjectivities. Starting from the limits of these familiar perspectives, we organised a [lecture series](#) that traces the multiple ways in which these sites, actors, and events are cabined, crossed, and cut apart by alternative material arteries, lineages, and languages of global dis/ordering.

The series takes as starting point that authority and order are not fixed properties of specific actors or institutions, but the result of ongoing material processes of ordering and world-making. As such, it traces unconventional forms and sites of global dis/ordering – from raw materials to projections of hope – as material, infrastructural, and discursive compositions that shape patterns of power. The encounter between old- and new materialist, Marxist and decolonial methodologies and modes of critique is one of the key objectives of this series. Its aim, however, is not only methodological: it aspires to inspire new ethical and political openings that attend to our inevitable complicity in taking part in these processes, and reveal new modes of resistance and refusal, of struggle and sociality. These interventions are not narrowly targeted at the old nemeses of critique – the state, the truth, the universal – but work from within both entrenched and emergent material sites and practices of dis/ordering: [oceans](#), [oil / coal](#), [breath](#), [debt](#), [commons](#), [frontier\(s\)](#), [waste](#), [hope](#), [wild / feral](#), [vessels](#).

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In the context of this series, we are organising a **workshop / conference / gathering** in London on **15-17 May 2024**. For this occasion, we invite abstracts of papers or projects that take the theme of *underworlds* onto new terrains and in different directions. Which material processes, infrastructural forms or discursive patterns does your work identify as salient sites of global dis/ordering? What are the methodological approaches best attuned to mapping and engaging these spaces of authority and power? How can we study and evaluate their emergence and effects? Which political projects of resistance and refusal, of struggle and sociality, do they engender and enable? Which critical (or post-critical) practices and sensibilities are available in the encounter with the forces of dis/ordering that you foreground (and how do these build on or depart from critical work in international law)?

We invite abstracts that intersect with themes already explored in the [series](#) as well as projects that go in entirely new directions. For accepted abstracts, we will not ask for extensive papers but for a short essay on the sites and struggles of global dis/ordering that figure in your work (around 2000

words). We aim to bundle these essays – and visual materials or artworks you might want to relate to your project – for a collected volume on *Underworlds – Sites and Struggles of Global Dis/Ordering*. Duke University Press has shown interest in this book project.

Practically, we invite abstracts of no more than 500 words to be submitted by **12 January 2024**. You will be notified of our decision by **26 January 2024**. The deadline for submission of the essay will be September 2024. The event will be convened at Queen Mary University of London (with the support of the Law Department, the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (IHSS), and the Centre for Law and Society in a Global Context (CLSGC)) and the London School of Economics (with the support of the LSE Law Department). For those who cannot benefit from institutional support, we have some budget available for travel expenses and accommodation. We will prioritise early career researchers and scholars from the Global South in allocating these funds.

Please send your abstracts to m.petersmann@lse.ac.uk and d.vandenmeerssche@qmul.ac.uk.