



MASTERCLASSES CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

We are seeking applications from PhD Students and Candidates and Graduate Research Students in Architecture and allied fields in Canada and abroad to participate in one of three MASTERCLASSES held at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, on Wednesday, October 22, 2025 from 10h00 to 18h00 EDT. The masterclasses are led by Dr. Aya Nassar (Durham University), Dr. Samia Henni (McGill University), and Dr. María González Pendás (Cornell University), as part of the international symposium, [*Mediating Matter\(s\): Architecture and Bodily Affects*](#).

Mediating Matter(s): Architecture and Bodily Affects brings emerging, mid-career, and established scholars and researchers together around the question: How does the mediation of matter(s) through architecture and by architects (broadly understood) normalize certain modes of being while undermining others? Expanding contemporary discussions on how the scales, movements, animacy,¹ and vibrancy² of matter unevenly affect and act on, through, and between diverse bodies as well as how such bodies are objectified, thingified,³ reduced, and transformed into a labour force, our goal is to engage in a conversation that probes architecture's complicity in rendering "some beings as more human than others,"⁴ and marking all of us who "cohabit in the space of the undercommons,"⁵ as ontologically empty. Over the course of the symposium and its ancillary programming, we hope to explore how architecture's "orderly arranging of materials and bodies"⁶ affirm the discipline's violent legacies of exclusion and how bodies that fall beyond dominant norms of the human disrupt these configurations through non-normative entanglements with matter.

The masterclasses are an opportunity for doctoral and graduate research students to receive feedback on their ongoing research. Graduate students whose research topics align with the symposium's themes and the research areas of the keynotes are especially encouraged to apply.

Dr. Aya Nassar is an interdisciplinary scholar working in between politics, urban and political geography, and Middle East studies, and is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Geography at Durham University. Her research focuses on questions of memory, archiving, (geo)poetics of space, infrastructure and affective and material aspects of cities. Nassar's doctoral research included investigating the archives of national Egyptian architects who were designing plans for post-colonial/post-independence Cairo and her post-doctoral research has focused on the aesthetics and poetics used to represent and depict Arab cities after 2011, neighbourhood storytelling and memory in Coventry, and space and memory work in Egypt. She has co-convened the Warwick Political Geography Group and co-initiated the Geography and Middle East North East Network with Dr. Olivia Mason in Durham and Newcastle Universities.

¹ Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

² Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

³ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1950), 42.

⁴ Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Humanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 4.

⁵ Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe and Port Mason Watson, New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), 6.

⁶ Achille Mbembe, *Brutalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2024), XII.

Dr. Samia Henni is a historian of the built, destroyed and imagined environments and Assistant Professor at the Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture at McGill University. She is the author of the multi-award-winning *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria*, which received the 2020 Spiro Kostof Book Award from the Society of Architectural Historians, and *Colonial Toxicity: Rehearsing French Radioactive Architecture and Landscape in the Sahara*, and the editor of *Deserts Are Not Empty* and *War Zones*. She is also the maker of exhibitions, such as *Performing Colonial Toxicity, Discreet Violence: Architecture and the French War in Algeria*, *Archives: Secret-Défense?* (ifa Gallery, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, 2021), and *Housing Pharmacology* (Manifesta 13, Marseille, 2020). Currently she is the co-chair of the University Seminar “Beyond France” at Columbia University, and a member of the Editorial Boards of the *Journal of Architecture*; *field: journal*; *Descamino*; *Manazir*; *Tamazgha Studies Journal*, and of the Academic Board of the African Futures Institute.

Dr. María González Pendás is an architectural historian of modernity and coloniality of the Spanish transatlantic world and Assistant Professor at Cornell AAP whose research explores the intersections of aesthetics, technologies, ideologies, and power through the built environment. Her current book manuscript, *Holy Modern: Technocracy, Theocracy and the Architectures of Hispanic Fascism*, studies the architectural workings of fascism, technocracy, and the imperial figment of Hispanidad in the second postwar and through the lens of Spain. Other projects have investigated relations of labor and race in México; the coloniality of concrete technologies and innovation across the South Atlantic; and the relationship between technology, religion, and secularism in global modernity.

Application process

To apply for one of the masterclasses, please send a 200-word abstract of your dissertation or thesis topic, a short bio, your ranking by preference of which of the three sessions you would most like to participate in (Dr. Aya Nassar’s masterclass, Dr. Samia Henni’s masterclass, or Dr. María González Pendás’ masterclass,), and whether you plan to attend the masterclass in-person in Ottawa or remotely to cripticcollab@gmail.com by 23h59 EDT on Monday, June 30, 2025. We will be able to accommodate a maximum of 3 students per workshop. Participants will be notified of selection by Wednesday, July 30, 2025.

Format and preparation

Drawing on their own research and in alignment with the thematics of *Mediating Matter(s)*, participants are asked to prepare and give a 10- to 15-minute presentation before receiving 30 minutes of feedback from the scholar leading the masterclass. Selected participants will be asked to submit an updated presentation abstract and full paper (between 2,500 and 3,000 words) by Wednesday, September 10, 2025. The presentation and discussion will be held on Wednesday, October 22, 2025 from 10h00 to 18h00 EDT, in English at Carleton University. Participants are also encouraged to attend the Agora III international symposium: *Mediating Matter(s)* programming, which takes place on Thursday, October 23 and Friday, October 24, 2025 at the same venue.

Masterclass Working Schedule

10h00 to 12h15: Dr. Aya Nassar’s masterclass
 12h15 to 13h00: Lunch
 13h00 to 15h30: Dr. Samia Henni’s masterclass
 15h15 to 15h30: Break
 15h30 to 17h45: Dr. María González Pendás’s masterclass



Timeline

June 30	Deadline for applications (abstract)
July 30	Notifications of acceptance
September 10	Paper Submissions (2500–3000 words)
October 22	PhD Workshop 10.00–18.00 EDT