(INFRA)
(COUNTER)
(CONTRA)
(ANTI)
(ALTER)
(   )

CALL FOR PAPERS

STRUCTURES

Coventry University
Research Centre
Postdigital Cultures

4 - 5 June 2020
Centre for Postdigital Cultures annual conference
Coventry University, UK

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS:
Kreider + O'Leary   **Daphne Dragona**   **Daniel Rourke**

'Infrastructure' has emerged in recent years as the new academic buzzword. From the so-called 'infrastructural turn' in urban and architectural studies, the emergence of media infrastructure theory, to formation of new disciplinary discourses in the nascent critical infrastructural studies, an interest in infrastructural thinking has been widespread. Alan Liu has gone so far as to suggest that "'infrastructure' today can … give us the same kind of general purchase on social complexity that Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams, and others sought when they reached for their all-purpose word, 'culture.'"

What all these approaches to infrastructures have in common is an understanding of infrastructure as a structure of often unremarked power and a system for instituting, distributing, maintaining, controlling but, perhaps also, resisting socio-political, economic and technological worlds. In other words, to notice infrastructures is to pay attention to material and immaterial systems which tend to be unobtrusively invisible, boring and rarely scrutinised, but always present and always inevitably determining how and why we are in society.

This conference takes interest in infrastructures as an invisible system of meaning-making and a mode of structuring people and knowledge, in the institutional contexts and conditions of this structuring, as well as in possible models of intervening in these very structures. By doing so, we hope to interrogate the potential of making infrastructure visible – remarkable – as a means of speaking to power. We are interested in exploring what new ways of understanding, developing, reconfiguring or hacking infrastructures might be possible if we focus on their radical potential. That is, we are not interested in infrastructural hegemonies, but rather in *infra**-structures in and for troubled times (to borrow from Lauren Berlant), and their counter-cultural capacity to create knowledges of, and practices for, resistance and structural transformation. By focusing on infra/counter/contra structures – on the infrared, infrathin (of) infrastructures – we hope to think about (infra)structure as a space ripe for critical intervention and a condition for cooperation, commoning and practices of collective care.

The Centre for Postdigital Cultures invites contributions to its third annual conference which respond to this take on (infra)structures. We welcome conference papers as well as performances, readings, screenings, exhibitions or experimental contributions to the programme. Please submit proposals for 20-minute presentations (title, 250-word abstract, and 100-word bio) to FAH-infra_structures2020@coventry.ac.uk by 1 March 2020. Notifications of acceptance will be circulated by mid-March.

image: Evan Roth, *Red Lines*

infra – from latin 'below'