

Materia Abierta is a summer school on theory, art, and technology based in Mexico City. Conceived as a space to reflect on the ethics of the present and future, the program aims to interrogate the political, economic, and ideological forces that condition contemporary cultural production and to favor other forms of action and knowledge.



THE RISE OF THE COYOTE

Under the title *The Rise of the Coyote*, Materia Abierta's 2022 program is curated by Sara Garzón, and it will take place in person in Mexico City from August 1 to August 28. The program is developed with the support from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in coordination with Cultura UNAM, Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC), Casa del Lago UNAM, and Cátedra Extraordinaria Max Aub, Transdisciplina en Arte y Tecnología.

This year's program is an invitation to take a trip back to Earth. Through the invocation of Huehucóyotl, the Aztec deity known as the old coyote, we will search for forms of relationality, reciprocity, and mutuality within the natural, ancestral, and human worlds we inhabit. In order to get closer to these pluriversal paradigms, the program will question the historic tendency of Western technologies to exploit the earth and will explore diverse local practices and sociotechnic conditions where technology reveals itself as the capacity to "cultivate life."

MILPA ALTA AND XOCHIMILCO

Situated in the south of Mexico City, the program will be developed from processes rooted in the Milpa Alta and Xochimilco territories. Specifically, work will be carried out in the vicinity of Teuhtli, a volcano that serves as an identity reference and geographical limit between both municipalities. The activities will take place in venues associated with collectives and community centers such as the civil association Calpulli Tecalco and the collective Mujeres de la Tierra from Milpa Alta, and the Laboratorio Lacustre in Xochimilco. Likewise, over four weeks, activities will be carried out at MUAC as well as in places such as Casa del Lago, located within the Chapultepec Forest, bringing into focus the political tension between the geographical center of Mexico City and its peripheral south.

Historically, these territories have been a refuge for Indigenous knowledge and shelter an enormous biocultural diversity. The people who live in Milpa Alta and Xochimilco, prominently of Nahuatl descent, are incomparable examples of self-organization and struggle against the precariousness derived from phenomena such as industrial gentrification, contamination of the subsoil, the eradication of native languages, forced displacement, and the extraction of natural resources. The program is designed to provoke forms of collective work and intimate complicity with local groups and collectives that inhabit, build, and defend these places through ancestral knowledge and the care for the web of life.

CURATORIAL TEXT

Since the famous 1972 satellite visualization of Earth, *The Blue Marble*, we have engaged in a view of the planet where Earth has been treated as an image, as W.T.J. Mitchell explained. (1) As a result, entering any physical space is like entering a virtual picture where we are only characters on a preconceived stage. Sociologist Rolando Vázquez also wrote about the impact that this photograph, taken by the crew of Apollo 17, has had on our experience of the planet:

This photograph accomplishes the renaissance geographers' dream of reducing planet Earth to an object of representation; it is a moment in which the anthropocentric gaze achieves, as it were, its historical completion, the absurdity of its totality. [...] "Blue Marble" comes to signify the transmogrification of Earth into an object of appropriation, representation, consumption, and waste. It signifies the forgetfulness of earth as grounding precedence. (2)

Following Vázquez's assertion about the loss of land rootedness and situatedness, *The Rise of the Coyote* is an invitation to come back to Earth. Alluding not only to

a renewed perspective on the planet, but to a larger planetary consciousness, our return requires entering into entangled relationalities of mutuality and co-adaptation both with the multiplicities of the soil as interdependent organism and with the communities, grassroots organizations, and bodies that carry out these relationships through quotidian acts of care.

Taking as a point of departure a critique of the self-proclaimed universality of Western technology, this program seeks other paradigms of technological knowing and doing. By contesting Western technoscientific declarations, our exploration will start from local approaches of Indigenous technologies and their sociotechnic expressions that hold a capacity to “cultivate life.” (3) This planetary consciousness delineates narratives and experiences that resist extractivism and extinction, proposing renewed or repaired relationships for our communities and for our bodies. It enables, in short, the end of the one-world narrative encapsulated by the image of the Blue Marble, while simultaneously reorienting us toward frameworks for worlding the world. (4)

The Rise of the Coyote employs Nahua artist Fernando Palma Rodríguez’s celestial and cyborg figure, the Aztec deity Huehuecoyotl, also known as the old coyote. Huehuecoyotl has the capacity to navigate a great number of varied and contradictory worlds and ecosystems. As a trickster of infinite interchangeability, this character stands in as a form of becoming our animal, plant, and sentient other, allowing us to access intersubjective relations within the multiple worlds that we inhabit.

This interspecies engagement will be established in collaboration with grassroots organizations in the outskirts of Mexico City. As a collaborative practice rooted in place, the program will depart from the slopes of the Teuhtli volcano, which is the geographical border between the municipalities of Milpa Alta and Xochimilco. We will commit to listen to local community members and social organizations that fight day to day for social justice, environmental equity, and land sovereignty. Assuming ourselves as cyborg coyotes, we will enter into entangled relationalities with the territory, its soil, and its community to learn from otherworldly visualities and sensibilities.

—Sara Garzón

(1) W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? Essays on the Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

(2) Rolando Vázquez, “Precedence, Earth and the Anthropocene: Decolonizing Design,” *Design Philosophy Papers* 4, no. 44 (2017).

(3) Luis Razeto Milagro, “Presentación,” en *Manos sabias para criar la vida – Tecnología Andina*, eds. Juan van Kessel y Horacio Larrain Barro (Quito: 49 Congreso de Americanistas, 1997), 6.

(4) John Law understands the one-world world as that which was allegedly composed of a single World and assumes to be “the” only world possible, subjecting all other worlds to either its own terms or considering them to be completely nonexistent. John Law, “What’s Wrong with a One-World World?” *Distinkton: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 16, no. 1 (2015): 126–39.

PROGRAM

The program will research the relationships among several thematic axes: Indigenous robotics, plant intelligence, and notions of futurity endemic to the native peoples of the south of what is now the Valley of Mexico. Unlike Western technology, based on the principles of exploitation and domination, the approaches to technology that we will seek to understand are oriented toward frameworks of reciprocity and re-existence. Thought of as a total social fact, these technologies are not based on identity concepts, but on local knowledge systems. Through the figure of the robot, and following artist Paula Gaetano Adi’s provocation, we will seek an alliance with rebellious machines that allow us to embody life forms that blur categorical boundaries between temporalities and species.

TUTORS

Calpulli Tecalco
Black Quantum Futurism
Paula Gaetano Adi
Laboratorio Lacustre
Michael Marder
Chakanetsa Mavhunga
Mujeres de la Tierra
Pedro Neves Marques
Fernando Palma Rodríguez

PARTICIPANTS

Materia Abierta invites applications from people based anywhere in the world and working within any discipline. An academic degree is not a prerequisite.

A group of 25 people will be selected to participate through the open call. Likewise, a limited number of spaces will be awarded directly through institutional invitations. The

intention is to form a diverse, critical, and politically active group of participants who seek to interrogate the hegemonic systems through which dominant culture and knowledge are produced.

Activities are conducted in Spanish and English, with simultaneous translation only on some occasions. Knowledge of both languages is recommended for participation, although the act of collective translation and its challenges are favored as a natural part of the group's social dynamics.

COST

The cost of participation in the program is \$1,800 USD. This fee does not include lodging, transportation, or other personal expenses.

Through institutional support, Materia Abierta will offer a limited number of full and partial scholarships for candidates from the Global South and for people who cannot cover the full cost. Those who wish to be considered for any of these supports must indicate that in the application form, where relevant financial information will be requested. Likewise, we have an additional support fund that allows members of our community to provide resources and support the scholarship program directly. Materia Abierta can issue letters of support to people selected for the program who wish to request external financing to cover the costs of their participation.

CALENDAR

The 2022 edition will be an intensive study program over four weeks. The daily schedule will vary as needed to address the proposed topics with the urgency that this historical moment requires, but there will also be time for reflection, rest, and socializing.

Activities will include reading seminars, public lectures, and group discussions as well as fieldwork in the Milpa Alta and Xochimilco territories, and hands-on workshops — for example, a community mechatronics workshop and another on food sovereignty based on the cultivation of the milpa. Curricular activities will take place on Monday and Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons; Tuesdays and Saturdays will be dedicated to field visits, and Fridays and Sundays will be days off. These times are subject to change based on logistical rearrangements.

APPLICATION

The call will be open from April 20 to May 29, 2022. To apply please refer to the following online form, where among other requisites, the following materials are requested:

Resume or short bio (1 page)
Statement of interest (500 words)
5–10 work samples

Application form

Work samples should be recent and can include images and texts as well as links to websites, videos, and/or audio-based works.

Any questions regarding the application process may be sent to info@materiaabierta.com, with the subject “Application 2022.”

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BIOS

Sara Garzón is a researcher and curator. Specializing in contemporary Latin American art, Sara's research focuses on issues related to decoloniality, temporality, and Indigenous eco-criticism. Her most recent work on Indigenous robotics examines the intertwined relationships between environmental destruction, technology, and coloniality. Sara was a Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow and a Lifchez-Stronach Curatorial Intern at the Museum of Metropolitan Art and an Audience Engagement Associate at the Brooklyn Museum. Her texts have been published in *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas*, *Anamesa: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *DASartes Magazine*, *Ocula Magazine*, and *Hyperallergic*. Sara has been invited to be curator-in-residence at Casa GIAP in Chiapas and at Para Site's Emerging Curators Workshop in Hong Kong. In 2020 she was part of the Science and Technology Society of the Delfina Foundation in London. She has also been the curator of several exhibitions, such as *No todo lo que brilla* at the Museo Antropológico y de Arte Contemporáneo de Guayaquil (MAAC, 2019); *Gestos de poder* at Profound Studio, Brooklyn, NY (2018); and *Nobilitas: Royal Blood and Other Myths* at KB Espacio de Arte in Bogotá, Colombia (2017); among others. She is co-founder of the research group Collective Rewilding.

Calpulli Tecalco is an NGO created for the revitalization and preservation of Indigenous cultures. It gathers and combines knowledge of oral, scientific, social, technological, and artistic tradition through alliances with people, communities, and institutions interested in community work, ancestral cultures, and the environment. In particular, it focuses on the ancestral knowledge that Indigenous peoples of the southern Basin of Mexico have made in their interaction with the environment, creating nature reserves and highly sustainable agricultural systems that today are in danger of being lost. In its 23-year history, Calpulli Tecalco has carried out community actions, projects, and programs in different languages, as well as around 1,500 workshops on agriculture, science outreach, the Nahuatl language, local history, art, robotics, and archaeology, among others. Some current projects are *Adopta una Milpa*, a transdisciplinary laboratory on the restoration of the terraced agricultural system in Malacachtepec Momoxco, Milpa Alta, and *Sobre los pies del Teuhtli Tizcalco: Archaeological Heritage of Milpa Alta*, a project that integrates archaeology, architecture, and earth sciences around the investigation of the Mesoamerican town of Tizcalco, located on the slopes of the Teuhtli volcano in Milpa Alta.

Black Quantum Futurism is an interdisciplinary creative practice of Camae Ayewa and Rasheedah Phillips that weaves together quantum physics, afrofuturism, and Afro-diasporic concepts of time, ritual, text, and sound. Their work focuses

on the recovery, collection, and preservation of communal memories, histories, and futures. Black Quantum Futurism has created a number of community-based projects, performances, experimental music projects, installations, workshops, books, short films, and zines, including the award-winning Community Futures Lab and the Black Woman Temporal Portal. BQF Collective is a CERN Artist Resident (2021), Knight Art + Tech Fellow (2021), Vera List Center Fellow at The New School (2020–2022), Velocity Fund Grantee (2018), Center for Emerging Visual Artists Fellow (2017), Pew Fellow (2017), and A Blade of Grass Fellow (2016). BQF has presented, exhibited, and performed at Red Bull Arts NY, Chicago Architecture Biennial, Manifesta 13 Biennial, ApexArt NYC, Philadelphia Museum of Art, ICA London, Serpentine Gallery, Monument Lab, and more.

Paula Gaetano Adi is an Argentinian-born artist whose robotic projects and scholarly practice draw from studies of technoscience, decoloniality, and artificial life and enact speculative scenarios that stress the power of technological speculation in illuminating new social narratives and new images of the possible. She has exhibited work in both solo and group shows in museums and media art festivals throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas in locales such as the National Art Museum of China, MejanLabs Gallery Stockholm, SECS São Paulo, Vancouver National Art Gallery, Pera Museum Istanbul, Festival Transitio Mexico, and National Museum of Poznan. Among other distinctions, she is the recipient of the First Prize VIDA 9.0, the First Prize 'LIMBØ' Museum of Modern Art of Buenos Aires; and Fundación Telefónica's Art & Artificial Life Award for Ibero-American artists. Gaetano Adi is currently Associate Professor of Experimental & Foundation Studies at the Rhode Island School of Design and a PhD candidate at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. Prior to her appointment at RISD, she served on the faculty of the Electronics Arts program at the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero and directed the New Media Arts program at the University of North Texas. She was visiting scholar at the Center for Research in Engineering, Media and Performance at UCLA and artist-in-residence at EMPAC, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Laboratorio Lacustre is a collective and multidisciplinary space for creative experimentation, founded in 2017 for the knowledge and reflection on the geographical, environmental, and symbolic territory of the perilacustrine neighborhoods of Xochimilco. Its objective is to create proposals for the reterritorialization of neighborhoods through art, design, and research and the generation of various practices and collaborations with the original or neighboring communities for the sustainable use of their territory. Laboratorio Lacustre's theoretical support is the study of urban and rural territories, starting from the so-called Theory of Multiplicities' from the

work of Felix Guatari and Gilles Deleuze, as well as Rogerio Haesbaert's work on deterritoriality and multiterritoriality. In 2021 they published *Manual para el conocimiento, uso y aprovechamiento de plantas lacustres y su contextualización territorial en los barrios de Xochimilco*, the first of three projected volumes. Processes, techniques, and a toolkit were developed in these manuals for the sustainable use of three plants: water lily, duckweed and tule. For the implementation phase of the strategy, a multidisciplinary collective of four members was formed, and a space for collective, participatory, and co-design experimentation was designed and built.

Michael Marder is IKERBASQUE Research Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU), Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain. His writings span the fields of ecological theory, phenomenology, and political thought. He is the author of numerous scientific articles and 18 monographs, including *Plant-Thinking* (2013), *Phenomena—Critique—Logos* (2014), *The Philosopher's Plant* (2014), *Dust* (2016), *Energy Dreams* (2017), *Heidegger* (2018), *Political Categories* (2019), *Pyropolitics* (2015, 2020), *Dump Philosophy* (2020), *Hegel's Energy* (2021), and *Green Mass* (2021), among others.

Chakanetsa Mavhunga is a Professor of Science, Technology, and Society (STS) at MIT currently directing the founding of Research || Design || Build (RDB), a rural community-based research and innovation institute in Zimbabwe dedicated to people-initiated rural development. He is also the founder of the Global South Cosmologies and Epistemologies Initiative, which invites us to trans-hemispheric conversations that are not mediated by, or wired through, Western-and-white referents, that abolish hierarchies of knowing, and that open up a parliament of knowledge where every society is capable of, indeed invents and orders, know-how. Chakanetsa is the editor of the initiative's book series. He is the author of three books on African science and technology: *Transient Workspaces: Technologies of Everyday Innovation in Zimbabwe* (2014); *What Do Science, Technology, and Innovation Mean from Africa?* (editor, 2017); and *The Mobile Workshop: The Tsetse Fly and African Knowledge Production* (2018), all with MIT Press. He has just finished his latest book, *Dare to Invent the Future: Knowledge in the Service of and Through Problem-solving* (2021).

Mujeres de la Tierra, mujeres de la periferia is a collective of women who live in Santa Ana Tlacotenco, Milpa Alta. They work and resist against domestic and labor violence against women, and defend the territory they inhabit with the practices of sowing and the care and protection of seeds. They embrace cultivation and the place of the stove as symbols of their resistance and struggle to achieve financial autonomy based on the traditional kitchen and the promotion of food made from blue corn, beans, and nopal; the practice of planting and

caring for the land; and working through their experiences with violence through support networks. They embrace communitary feminism as a point of departure to change the realities around their work, history, memory, and voice, achieving it via the sharing of knowledge with other women, men, and dissident movements and the sale of the food that they harvest.

Pedro Neves Marques is a filmmaker, visual artist, and writer. Their work has been exhibited internationally in major film festivals and art institutions, having won the Ammodo Tiger Short Competition at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2022 and a Special Prize at the Pinchuk Future Generation Art Prize in 2021, and representing Portugal at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022. They have written on the intersections of art and cinema with ecology, gender, and notions of futurity for numerous magazines, as a regular contributor to e-flux journal, with whom they co-edited the special issue *Supercommunity* for the 56th Venice Biennale (2015). They edited the anthologies *YWY; Searching for a Character Between Future Worlds: Gender, Ecology, Science Fiction* (Sternberg Press, 2021); and *The Forest and The School* (Archive Books, 2015). They are also co-founders of the poetry press Pântano Books, with whom they published their first poetry collection, *Sex as Care and Other Viral Poems* (2020) and translated into Portuguese the work of North American poet CAC Conrad, among others.

Fernando Palma Rodríguez lives in the agricultural region of Milpa Alta, in the outskirts of Mexico City, where he co-founded and runs Calpulli Tecalco, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Nahuatl language and agriculture. His work has been included in exhibitions at the 13th Gwangju Biennale, Korea (2021); Taipei Biennale 2020, Taiwan (2020); the Toronto Biennial of Art, Canada (2019); FRAC des Pays de la Loire, France (2016); Parallel Oaxaca, Mexico (2016); Nottingham Contemporary, England (2015); the Biennale of the Americas, Denver, Colorado (2015); Chopo University Museum, Mexico City (2014); and SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico (2014). He had a retrospective in 2017 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Oaxaca.