



Lab ABSTRACTS

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Lab1. Sensory Engagements with Microbes, Interdisciplinary Explorations of Human-Microbe Relation Affordances

Cesar Enrique Giraldo Herrera, Ruth Anderwald, Stefan Schneider

18.09.2025 | Slot 3| 2-0-2

Contemporary relations with microbes have been framed by an objectivist epistemology, and by the understanding that our relations with microbes were either necessarily mediated by instruments or pathogenic, facilitating the war on germs. While developments of microbiome research in the last twenty years have revealed to what degree microbes constitute us, Western epistemology has a long tradition of assuming that the sensorium evolved exclusively to relate to the outside world. Taking inspiration from Amerindian shamanic onto-epistemologies, we explore ways to retrain the human sensorium to facilitate relations with the microbial world within. The laboratory explores how olfaction, entoptic vision, endotic sonocytology, tact, and other senses afford sensory means of engagement to the microbial worlds that populate us, potentially nurturing our dreams and everyday experiences. Thereby, it allows us to imagine alternative futures shaped by the acknowledgement of microbial intelligence, intentionality, and by interspecies communication, yielding a broader understanding of more-than-human society and diplomacy. Drawing from Amerindian perspectivism and Posthuman approaches, this laboratory challenges anthropocentric views by foregrounding microbial agency and questioning human/non-human boundaries. Merging scientific rigour with speculative, experimental, performative, and aesthetic practices, the proposed methodology aims to redefine how we understand and engage with microbial life.

Lab2. Rest as resistance - exploring restorative practice in overstimulating times

Hanne Bess Boelsbjerg, Dorte Bjerre Jensen

18.09.2025 | Slot 4| 2-0-2

In the acceleration of societal speed, finding the grounds for existential renewal and physical rest seems rare. To counter this tendency artists Dorte Bjerre Jensen and Nana Francisca Schottländer initiated "The Resting Labs" in cooperation with the art organisation Metropolis, Denmark. The intention was to provide artists and researchers with a variety of resting practices. Here researcher Hanne Bess Boelsbjerg contributed to the exploration of regenerative ways of relating and being, by proposing to imaging one's final place of rest.

Rest as resistance is the mantra behind The Resting Labs, which is an artistic initiative inspired by The Nap Ministry led by Tricia Hersey, and the SOTA collective (a performance art group seeking perspectives on various social issues) and performer Steve Paxton's collective nap practices.

Dorte works at UC Davis California teaching Rest as Resistance and resilience in a time when everything is falling apart, while Bess explores how people relate to dying as a process of letting go and finding rest.

At this lab, participants will be invited to enter their work, by exploring the questions:

Nature has seasonal cycles of rest, how can we transfer this to human work relations, or do we need to create our own cycles of rest?

How is rest even possible at all in an overstimulating environment?

How would societies be structured which welcome periods of rest?

The lab will evolve around resting practices, notetaking and shared reflections.

So bring a notebook and get ready to rest.

Lab3. Food as a Technology of Care: A Feminist Perspective on Nutrition, Well-being, and Health

Kathryn Burns, Nuria Rossell, Jullia Challinor

19.09.2025 | Slot 3| 4-0-2

This lab explores food as a technology of care through a feminist medical anthropological lens. Building from a working project rooted in ethnographic research within pediatric cancer care, the lab opens up broader, situated dialogue about how food functions as an everyday practice of care—often shaped by gendered labor, cultural memory, and structural inequality.

Drawing on feminist scholarship and liberating structures facilitation methods, this session invites participants to reflect on care practices and the role of food in their own experiences of health and well-being. We approach “nutrition” not as biomedically neutral but rather as an embodied, relational practice entangled with histories of love, caretaking, and hope.

Participants will engage in reflection using storytelling, sensory engagement (eating food together), and facilitated dialogue. Together, we will explore the sociopolitical dimensions of food as a technology of care and well-being—including whose knowledge counts in shaping norms of nutrition and health and what it means to reclaim nourishment as a site of relational healing that considers the body as a materiality that includes emotions and affect as central to well-being.

We aim to cultivate a space for critical imagination and embodied learning, foregrounding participant voices and lived experience. Audio and visual material will be recorded with participant consent to extend the life of the conversation beyond the shared lab conversation.

Lab4. Stitching Meaning: Feminist Textures in Theory and Practice

Maurizia Mezza, Shahana Siddiqui

19.09.2025 | Slot 3| 2-0-2

This laboratory invites participants to reflect on the tactile and epistemic significance of textile practices—such as sewing, knitting, weaving, and knotting—as both metaphors and methods in feminist scholarship. Across feminist science studies, anthropology, and STS, textile metaphors have gained prominence: threads of inquiry are followed, knots are untangled, worlds are woven. But what do these metaphors do to our scholarship? What methodological and theoretical affordances—and limits—do they carry? Why are textile practices so often invoked, and what does it mean to take these metaphors seriously, beyond the figurative?

In this lab, we propose to not only think with but also work with threads and fabrics. Participants will be invited to engage in collective textile practices—knitting, sewing, weaving—as a way of activating reflection on the material, embodied, and affective dimensions of knowledge-making. We will explore how these tactile engagements shape our relations to time, labor, care, and collectivity within feminist anthropological research. This is not a workshop in textile technique, but an open-ended space to experiment with what happens when we thread together thinking and making, method and matter, metaphor and material. By dwelling in the textures of these practices, we hope to generate conversations about the politics of method, the making of re-existence, and the ethics of slow, situated knowledge. Participants are welcome to bring their material (based on the technique they are familiar with). Some material will be provided.

Lab5. Meet Vulvarium and Enter a Gallery of Vulva Statues (V3Part II) - featuring a case study from 'Panel 37: Genital Expectations'

Hannelore van Bavel, Vivien Lou

17.09.2025 | Slot 4| 4-0-4

This interactive workshop brings together art and anthropology to explore vulva diversity through the groundbreaking Vulvarium project. Austrian vulva caster Viki Krug will guide participants through her gallery of vulva statues, creating an educational space that celebrates diversity and challenges cultural taboos.

Organized with anthropologists Dr. Hannelore Van Bavel and Vivien Lou, the workshop bridges academic research (on vulva naming policies, their deliberate silencing, female genital practices, and self-imaging) with the meaningful on-the-ground work of a local practitioner.

Attendees will enter a gallery of vulva statues curated by Viki, pick a pocket pussy or statue to work with, and explore personal reflections through multi-modal methods: a World Café with writing and painting stations, small group discussions, and a plenary conversation to gather our collective insights.

Workshop coordinators will implement safer space facilitation strategies developed through research with Viki, to actively model key aspects of the research findings. This approach offers participants a glimpse into the embodied experience that Viki creates during casting sessions.

The statue gallery creates an inclusive environment, featuring representations of people with vulvas and transgender bodies. Pre-registration is required.

We welcome your participation and look forward to hearing your unique perspectives.

Lab6. Researching and Improving Health(care) Post-Participatory Turn: can Elinor Ostrom's principles for collaborative group working help?

Oli Williams, Glenn Robert, Bertil Lindenfalk

18.09.2025 | Slot 4 | 2-0-1

Increased attention on the roles patients and citizens could play in health research and healthcare improvement led to a 'participatory turn' that has redefined how we understand and promote health and well-being. It increased interest in participatory methods and co-production. This was accompanied by raised expectations within and outside academia for decision-making processes in research to involve multiple stakeholders representing a diverse range of interests, expertise, and lived experience and for these collaborations to have 'impact'.

Attempts to respond to these expectations highlight how challenging this form of collaboration can be. Tokenism, poor practice, and missed opportunities are commonplace. Clearly structures, methods, and resources to support more inclusive, equitable, and effective health research are some way behind calls for a 'participatory turn'. Attending to this, we are exploring the potential utility of Elinor Ostrom's Nobel Prize-winning research on collaborative group working.

Ostrom studied how different groups around the world collectively managed 'common pool resources' (e.g., forests) and found that the presence (or absence) of 8 principles largely determined the effectiveness of collaborative efforts. Ostrom later advocated using these principles as 'a practical guide for increasing the efficacy of groups in real-world settings'. A decade later, their potential utility remains almost entirely untested.

This interactive workshop will: (1) outline Ostrom's theory and its relevance to the 'participatory turn' in health research (2) discuss the challenges of translating Ostrom's theory into practice (3) share our attempts to create user-friendly resources to achieve this aim (4) invite you to engage with our prototypes.

Lab7. Deconstructing devices: A practical laboratory in medical plastics

Alice Street, Millie Marriott Webb

19.09.2025 | Slot 2 | 2-0-2

What is in a medical device? The technological device looms large in medical anthropology. From ultrasound scanners (2022) to contraceptive auto-injectors (MacDonald and Foley 2022) to rapid diagnostic tests (Beisel et al 2016), anthropologists have found devices to be useful objects to follow, critique and analytically deconstruct. But what would we find out if we actually deconstructed them, as in: materially disassembled them, investigated their physical components and analysed their chemical ingredients? This laboratory invites participants to practically engage with a specific subset of medical devices: the single-use plastic device. The health industry is one of the largest growing markets for plastics and a major contributor to global plastic waste and carbon emissions. Yet the presence of single-use plastic devices in places of medicine

and public health is largely taken for granted. This laboratory aims to equip participants with the practical skills to examine what plastic medical devices are made from, investigate where they came from, and consider the damage they might do after they are used and discarded. In doing so, we hope to open up new ways of seeing and relating to medical devices in anthropology, and initiate a discussion about material methods of critique.

Lab9. In Our Own Measure: A FLINTA Workshop on Healing & Embodiment

Anne-Sophie Reichert, Esther Vorwerk

19.09.2025 | Slot 3| 4-0-3

Conventional health care does not educate FLINTA sufficiently about the structures and practices, the history and the ontology of FLINTA embodiment. This is a direct result of medicine's mutual development with patriarchal culture. But what exactly are obstacles for women, queers, intersex and trans people when they try to understand and heal their bodyminds? How are they treated in a world where the standard measure for organizing and regulating people's lives has been the cis male bodymind?

In our lab, we facilitate a gathering around the topic of feminist embodiment, open for all FLINTA. We invite participants to share experiences within the health system, to creatively imagine self-determined processes of healing as well as healthy, care-full utopias. We do this by way of somatic and creative methods that we have developed in our shared artistic practice over several years with kids and adults on the topics of physical and emotional health. We aim to create a space in which a caring, safer and healthier future becomes physically palpable—sedimenting in the form of new feelings, perceptions and thoughts in participants while reminding them of resources already present in their bodyminds.

This workshop is for 11 participants and will take place on site. Participants will engage in a talk circle, easy movement exercises (no experience required), writing and drawing. We aim to work outside if the weather permits. We will need a large room with a closed door if we work inside.

Lab10. Health, Well-Being and Emerging Digital Technologies

Ranjini Raghavendra

18.09.2025 | Slot 3| 2-0-1

The lab serves as a multidisciplinary space for the exploration/discussion of digital health innovations, with the overarching goal of advancing equitable access to healthcare and strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery systems. Digital health is redefining how healthcare is conceptualised, accessed, and delivered with technologies such as electronic health records, telemedicine, mobile health applications, AI-driven tools, clinical decision support systems, and evolving health information infrastructures spearheaded by governments. Further, technologies such as blockchain, smart devices, robotics, health analytics etc, promise to offer tools to bridge systemic

gaps, reduce health disparities, and transform population health outcomes. The proposed lab aims to juxtapose the promise of technological imageries with the narratives of lived digital realities that is patient-centred not just data-driven.

The objective of the lab is to provide a critical and collaborative space for showcasing, discussing, and interrogating emerging digital health technologies and their associated imaginaries—understood as the social, political, and cultural visions that shape and are shaped by technological innovation. Situated within the broader context of global health, the lab seeks to examine not only the technical affordances of digital tools, but also the values, assumptions, and imagined futures embedded within their design, implementation, and impact across diverse health systems and populations.

We invite a variety of submissions, including hands-on experimentation, showcasing prototypes or models, discussion with objects or drawings, photographs, policy briefs, presentations, narratives/stories among others.