

UN/COMMON PLACE(S)

International Conference / February 10th – 12th, 2027
Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany
Organizers: RTG “Practicing Place” in collaboration with the
America Institute, LMU Munich



CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

What occurs when we try to *place* the common, only to realize it is not *there*? The *commonplace* may be understood as a horizon, in that it guides politics, arts and academia, to our everyday ways of perceiving and moving through the world. Yet, trying to reach it, to fix it, the common escapes – becomes strange uncomfortable, ungraspable. Challenging the knowability and delimitability of the commonplace, our conference aims to approach the *un/common place* through moments of dislocation, confronting the fragility of “being part” of something or somewhere, of being “in place”.

Within feminist, Marxist and black studies the challenge of thinking the commons has given momentum to some of the most provoking contemporary scholarship. Silvia Federici’s work (2004, 2018) traces how the enclosure of common land was not merely a historical event but an ongoing process through which women’s bodies especially are dispossessed and subjected to new regimes of reproductive labour. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009, 2023), on the other hand, identify the commons as an emergent force within contemporary capitalist production: immaterial, affective, and linguistic forms of shared life that simultaneously exceed and are captured by capital. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney (2013) push further still, departing from both traditions to articulate an *undercommons* — a fugitive sociality that refuses the terms of inclusion and operates beneath and against institutional common sense. While conceptualizing the (under)commons as possible *places* of resistance and fugitivity, these interventions simultaneously point out how the common is (re)appropriated and (re)articulated in terms of the dominant modes of production and hegemonic ideologies. Here the commonplace shows itself not as the site of political struggle but that which appears already enclosed, the “self-evident”, the “taken for granted”, guiding (and limiting) what can be thought, what is doable and what is changeable.

Calling the finality of that operation into question the idea of “the common” reveals itself not as stable ground but as a site of contestation, displacement, and, at times, radical refusal. Our conference aims to engage with this conflictuality, by relating the common to its constitutive outside, the uncommon: that which resists or exceeds collective appropriation, raising fundamental questions about the boundaries of any “we,” while exposing the violence inherent in establishing the commonplace and respectively its enclosure. The uncommon — as singularity, as refusal, as that which is rare or out of place — does not simply negate the common but makes it possible and unstable at once. Also drawing from artistic approaches, like Arthur Jaffa’s juxtaposition of images “out of place” - of joy, pain and black life in the USA -, or Theresa Margolles foregrounding the fate of the violated bodies inside the morgue of Mexico City, we explore the cracks and fissures that open in the interstices between the common and uncommon. Encountering forms that refuse to be legible, that thrive in motion and states of fugitivity, we ask: Where can the under- and un/common be dis/located?

By critically examining – as well as developing – the un/commonplace, our conference aims to foreground the precarious character of community and the political potentials that emerge when the commonplace becomes unrecognizable. Rather than positing a simple contradiction between the common and the uncommon – grounded in an unambiguous attribution of hegemony and resistance – the slash marks the un/common place as a relation to be inhabited. Addressing a wide array of perspectives from arts and literature, political theory, sociology, philosophy, to geography and history, we also invite contributions beyond the academic context that explore the performative and ongoing

processes through which the un/common is simultaneously constituted and contested, placed and displaced. Uncommon ways of engaging these questions are more than welcome.

Topics may include – but are not limited to – the following subjects:

Staging/ Performing/ Experiencing the *Commonplace*

- How to render a (common)place “uncommon”?
- New or alternative methods in research about place/space

Commonplaces as Embodied/ Shared / Created

- How are “commonplaces” implicitly or explicitly transformed into representational places/ parochial images?
- What is the role of non-human actants in such translational processes?

Violence as/of *Un/Commonplace*

- How violent is violence?
- Aspects of the un/common in the colonial and de/colonial experience
- Limits and advantages of comparisons: Commonplace as juxtaposition of different locations or (life) experiences

Uncommon Communities

- How can the idea of community and its identity with place be rearticulated through the lens of postcolonial, feminist and queer as well as migration studies?
- How can the role of the researcher in fixing communities and places through constructing the ethnographic field be critically examined and further developed?

Commonality / Ephemerality of the *Un/commonplace*

- What is held in common and what will be held as a distinction in the future digital common-spaces?

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Fred Moten (NYU)

Details

The conference is organized by the RTG “Practicing Place” in collaboration with Prof. Dr. Kerstin Schmidt at the America Institute (LMU Munich). It will take place both at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, in **Eichstätt**, and at the Ludwig Maximilians University at **Munich**, Germany, February **10th–12th, 2027**.

Interested participants may submit proposals either for individual presentations or as organizers of a workshop addressing practical aspects such as teaching, research methods, or artistic practices. Please submit, as a single document, abstracts of no more than 500 words along with a short CV to conference_pp@ku.de **by 15th June 2026**. Acceptance will be communicated at the end of August 2026. Travel and accommodation will be covered according to the Bavarian Act on Travel Expenses. In case of question please contact us as at conference_pp@ku.de

For further information about ‘Practicing Place Socio-Cultural Practices and Epistemic Configurations’ please visit us at <https://www.practicing.place/> and follow us on social media: Instagram @grako_practicingplace; Twitter: @GrakoPlace

Works Cited

- Federici, S. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York: Autonomedia, 2004.
- Federici, S. *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*. Foreword by Peter Linebaugh. Oakland: PM Press, 2018.
- Hardt, M., and A. Negri. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Negri, A.. *The Common*. Translated by Ed Emery. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2023.
- Harney, S., and F. Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions / Autonomedia, 2013.
- Museum für Moderne Kunst. “Teresa Margolles.” MMK – Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt. Link: <https://www.mmk.art/en/whats-on/teresa-margolles/>. Last accessed 11 March 2026.
- The Museum of Modern Art. “Arthur Jafa.” New York: The Museum of Modern Art, n.d. Link: <https://www.moma.org/artists/69635-arthur-jafa>. Last Accessed 11 March 2026.