



Image: Azadeh Nitchiani  
From the serie «Fragments of the World, Putting the pieces back together» (2024-2025)

# Symposium Care Aesthetics, Democracy and Digital Arts

Organized by Barbara Formis

Saturday, February 8, 2025  
9:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Paris time.  
Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

In hybrid form  
Salle 6 of the Centre Panthéon, 12 place du Panthéon, 75005 Paris  
+ online

## Overview

At a time of political and ecological crisis, aesthetics can provide a framework for understanding the impact of imagination, cultural difference and artistic practice on the political realm of action. We propose to explore the ways in which artists use the digital and technology to address political issues. Aesthetic naturalism should not be understood as a binary and antagonistic relationship with new technologies. There is in fact a dynamic, two-way relationship between technicity and the natural modality of life: digital technology has become an integral part of our ordinary way of life.

Our hypothesis is that digital artistic practices could help the process of deliberative democracy tools and provide simulations for developing empathy. Artist-created digital spaces could help citizens and policy makers collaboratively design and refine policies using creative tools; digital art installations or interactive experiences that educate citizens about political processes and issues; virtual reality experiences designed by digital artists to foster understanding of diverse perspectives on political issues.

The process of problem-solving through collective intelligence and experimentation fits well with the potential of digital art and technology: digital platforms can facilitate large-scale collaboration, enabling citizens to engage in creative and deliberative processes. Artistic, collaborative and digital practices can be seen as spaces of action where the principles of equality, collaboration and sharing are exercised and reinvented, in terms of both production and use, criticism and interpretation. This leads us to rethink the relationship between art and democracy, and to get rid of fixed or institutionalized (politically and culturally) definitions, in

order to organize them pragmatically around effective, shared values, practices and forms of life.

Although the potential is great, there are challenges: firstly, the existence of a digital divide: unequal access to digital technologies can exacerbate existing inequalities; secondly, the difficulty of dealing with misinformation: as digital spaces become more central to democratic processes, it becomes crucial to guarantee authenticity; third, the balance between democracy and aesthetics: while careful aesthetics can enhance the user experience, it is essential to maintain the political functionality and effectiveness of digital democratic tools. By integrating care aesthetics, creative democracy and digital technology, we can potentially create more engaging, inclusive and effective democratic processes. This approach not only addresses current challenges to democracy, but also opens up new possibilities for civic engagement and political problem-solving in the digital age.

## Themes

- Non-judgmental aesthetic experience
- Participatory and socially-based art
- Aesthetics in relation to issues of racism, gender inequality
- Attentiveness to the aesthetic qualities of everyday objects and environments
- Digital Empathy: exploring how digital art can foster empathy and care in online democratic spaces.
- Collaborative Governance: investigating how digital platforms can facilitate co-creation in policy-making and democratic processes.
- Care-based Digital Design: Applying care aesthetics principles to the design of digital platforms for civic engagement.
- Situatedness, situated knowledge and relationality
- Immersive, multisensory, imaginative and affective attention.
- Co-creation and engagement
- Conversation, reciprocity and togetherness

## Practical information

- **This day will be held in English and French**
- **Public:** The symposium is open to researchers, artists, and students.
- **Free registration is required for participation :**
- <https://evento.renater.fr/survey/care-aesthetics-democracy-and-digital-arts-71mcwnat>



## PROGRAM

**9:30–10:00:** Opening remarks

**10:00–11:00** Keynote address

**Yuriko Saito**, (Rhode Island School of Design, USA)

Practicing the Aesthetics of Care in the Age of Digitalization

Moderation : **Barbara Formis** (Université Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne)

**11:00–11:20** Coffee break

**11:20–12:45** Panel 1 — Spaces, Maps, and Co-Creation

Moderation : **Miguel Almiron** (Université Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne)

**Elisabetta Di Stefano** (Université de Palerme, Italy)

Imagining Cities: Aesthetics of Care and Digital Democracy in Tactical Urbanism

**Azadeh Nilchiani** (Dem'Arts, Université Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne)

Sound maps of the world, listening and co-creation: aesthetic and digital intersection

**Xavier Boissarie** (artiste)

Rôles de danse : danser sous la conduite d'une IA

**12:45–14:15** Lunch break

**14:15–15:15** Panel 2— Health, design and co-conception

Moderation : **Yann Toma** (Université Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne)

**Marie Coirié** (designer)

Établir la co-conception en design à l'hôpital psychiatrique comme processus émancipatoire

**Sarah Roshem** (artiste)

Helpyourself and Stillight: Two examples of digital care programs created by artist company SR lab

**15:15–16:15** Panel 3— Critical contexts and collaborative practices

Moderation : **Camille Salinesi** (Université Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne)

**Tatsiana Zhurauliova** (ERC, Demoseries)

Safety in Art: Collaborative Practices and Aesthetics of Care in Eastern European Art in the Face of War

**Lisa Giombini** (Univ. Roma 3, Italy)

Inanimate Things: Why Should We Care?

**16:15–16:30** Break

**16:30–17:30** Conference

**Richard Shusterman** (University Florida Atlantic, USA)

Somaesthetics and Care

Moderation : **Sandra Laugier** (Université Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne)

**17:30–18:00** Final remarks and acknowledgments