

Practising the Pluriverse

Film Screening of
This Is Also Ukraine

and

Workshop on Art,
Hope, and
Coexistence



Curtin University, Perth, Australia

Friday 13 November 2026

Morning: Building 204, Room 125

Afternoon: Building 211, Room 222



Curtin University

Practising the Pluriverse: Film Screening of *This Is Also Ukraine* and Workshop on Art, Hope, and Coexistence

This event is a partnership between the Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab at Curtin's School of Built Environment and the Art of Peace project at Curtin's School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry. The two projects are seemingly very different; however, they both challenge the idea that any of us can exist in the world as detached observers. The *Earthbound* exhibition, organised by the Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab, argues that human living depends on being-with and within ecological systems, while the Art of Peace project is concerned with giving voices to the experiences of those who experience conflict and post-conflict conditions.

Practising the Pluriverse, then, orbits around two events: the *Earthbound* exhibition in Fremantle and the screening of the Ukrainian film *This Is Also Ukraine*.

Earthbound opens up discussions on ecological futures, sustainability, material practices, and creative experimentation. *This Is Also Ukraine* presents the lived experiences of young people near the front line through their own perspectives rather than through external media narratives. In both cases, knowledge emerges from situated experience rather than distance.

A second connection is their emphasis on everyday life amidst uncertainty. *Earthbound* explores transformation, emergence, and living with forces beyond human control and other-than-human agencies through materials such as soil, feathers, clouds, and decomposing textiles. *This Is Also Ukraine* similarly depicts teenagers navigating friendship, creativity, identity, and belonging while living with the ongoing reality of war, over which they have no influence. Rather than focusing solely on crisis, both reveal resilience, adaptation, and care.

Both projects also foreground creative practice as a means of imagining futures. *Earthbound* uses artistic research to explore ecological participation and alternative relationships with the more-than-human world. *This Is Also Ukraine* was created collaboratively by young people, using filmmaking to express hopes, fears, and possibilities for the future.

The program for this symposium and workshops, *Practising the Pluriverse*, encourages participants to engage with artistic processes and with alternative ways of understanding environmental relationships.

We welcome you to this day of ideas and discussion and hope you enjoy the day.

The Organising Committee
Practising the Pluriverse



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

Art of Peace: New perspectives in visual art on peacekeeping from the 1990s is an Australian Research Council Linkage Project funded by the Australian Government through a grant of \$435,984 (2023-2025) (LP210300068), led by Curtin University, in partnership with the Art Gallery of Western Australia and National Trust (NSW), in collaboration with University of New South Wales, University of Melbourne, University of the Arts London and California State University.

Program: Friday 13th November 2026

Time	
9.00am	VENUE: Building 204, Room 125 Arrival and Registration
9.30am	Introduction and Opening: Professor Kit Messham-Muir, Curtin University
9.40am	Film Screening: <i>This Is Also Ukraine</i> (duration 47:44)
10.30am	Break
10.50am	Keynote: In Conversation with Veronika Skliarova, founder and director of Art Therapy Force, Ukraine
12.00pm	Lunch (not provided)
1:00pm	VENUE: Building 211, Room 222 Workshop on Art, Hope, and Coexistence facilitated by the <i>Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab</i> <i>includes an Afternoon Tea at around 2:30pm</i>
4:00pm	Workshop end

NOTE: Program is subject to change without notice.

Film Screening: *This Is Also Ukraine*

Daria, Hanna, Kira, Olexa, Rost, Sasha, Vlada, Vlada, Vesna and Zakhar are ten teenagers who like Radiohead, making art, swimming, dating, watching films and spending time with their friends. They also live close to the front line. *This Is Also Ukraine* is a poetic, patchwork film that offers a view of their lives from their own perspective: unfiltered, ordinary, and extraordinary all at once.

In spring 2025, these ten young people began filming, writing, singing, dancing, hugging, laughing, crying and meeting up to make a film about their lives, supported by a team of Ukrainian and British artists, psychologists and producers. Through the process, they explored questions of identity, belonging, friendship, love, anger and resilience while living with the realities of war and uncertainty.

This Is Also Ukraine reveals the hopes, challenges and everyday experiences of being a teenager while conflict continues around them. It offers an intimate glimpse of lives and perspectives that are often overlooked in international coverage of the war. It is also, at times, wonderfully funny because even in difficult circumstances, joy and silliness remain important parts of life.

Join us for a screening of the film followed by a discussion with Keynote **Veronika Skliarova**, Director of Art Therapy Force. Veronika will discuss the making of the film, the role of collaborative arts practice in supporting young people, and the experiences of creating cultural work during wartime.

Trailer: [Watch the trailer](#)

Credits

A film written, filmed and edited by Daria, Hanna, Kira, Olexa, Rost, Sasha, Vlada, Vlada, Vesna and Zakhar, with mentoring from director James Leadbetter aka the vacuum cleaner, **Oksana Chyzh**, **Mariia Felenko**, **Anastasiia Kosodii**, **Kateryna Krokha** and **Andrii Ptitsyn**.

Producers: Anna Burdina (The Independent Cultural Initiatives), Jenna Omeltschenko, Catherine Herbert and Kateryna Krokha

Senior Editor: Kateryna Krokha

A project by **the vacuum cleaner**

Made in collaboration with **Art Therapy Force**, Veronika Skliarova and Natalia Shapovalova.

Keynote: Veronika Skliarova



Veronika Skliarova is the founder and director of Art Therapy Force project, a Ukrainian NGO developing arts-based approaches to trauma recovery and health. The project mostly works with the war-affected communities, children and youth, using a multimodal approach in art intervention for psycho-emotional and social support. She is the author of the WHO report "Mapping Culture and Health Assets in Ukraine," produced as part of the Building Arts Capacities for Health (BACH) project for the WHO Regional Office for Europe. An adviser to the WHO on arts and health, she co-developed the Trauma-Attuned Arts Framework with King's College London.

Photo: Angela Kennedy

Practising the Pluriverse | Workshop on Art, Hope, and Coexistence

Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab – Workshop

Following the screening of *This Is Also Ukraine*, this workshop takes up the film's quiet insistence that ordinary things matter. The most modest things might become initiations into worlds otherwise, gateways to other, better worlds coexisting within a pluriverse, as the Colombian scholar Arturo Escobar suggests. Can we practise the pluriverse into a tangible reality?

The Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab (Curtin University) invites participants into conversation with materials from Pia Interlandi's Textile Decomposition Database, which has so far tested over eighty materials used in fashion across burial, composting and alkaline hydrolysis, tracing what materials become when they re-enter biological cycles. Each sample carries a history of ideas and connotations, and each has moved beyond its designed end into processes that exceed human intention.

Participants each choose one material from the database and engage with it across four movements. In the first, they are asked to provide a scientific description of the material. This is the frame through which we habitually encounter matter: as an object of explanation rather than as an agent. In the second, they speak about the stories that come with the material, such as the cultural connotations that coexist with it. In the third, they reframe their material as a character, perhaps from a fable or from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. What does it know that we do not? What did its de/composition reveal? What does it want? In the fourth, participants form groups of three and bring their characters into relation. What can they make possible together that none could alone?

The workshop closes with a shared conversation on how everyday things, attended to with care, might open paths toward worlds worth living in.

Organising Committee: Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab



Dr Monika Lukowska-Appel

PhD | MFA | MA

Lecturer

Master of Design Course Coordinator

Co-lead Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab
School of Design and the Built Environment

Dr Monika Lukowska-Appel is a creative practitioner, researcher and academic at the School of Design and the Built Environment, Curtin University where she lectures in Design and coordinates the Master of Design program. Her creative practice explores the intersection of digital technologies and traditional print media, investigating how emerging technologies shape creative processes and contemporary printmaking. Her work engages with materiality, place, ecology and human experience through experimental, site-responsive and interdisciplinary approaches. Lukowska-Appel's work has been exhibited internationally across Australia, Europe, Asia and the United States, and has been supported by numerous grants, awards and residencies, including Fulbright Graduate Student and Curtin Strategic International Research scholarships. She holds an MA from the E. Geppert Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Wroclaw, an MFA in Printmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute, and a PhD from Curtin University.



A/Prof Claudia Westermann

PhD | Dipl. Ing. Arch., PgC Media Art

Associate Professor

Co-director Graduate Research

Co-lead Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab
School of Design and the Built Environment

Claudia Westermann is an artist researcher, licensed architect, and Associate Professor of Creative Practice, co-lead of the Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab and co-director of graduate research in the School of Design and the Built Environment. Claudia Westermann is Vice President of the American Society for Cybernetics (ASC) and co-editor of Technoetic Arts. Claudia Westermann's projects have been widely exhibited and presented, including at the Venice Biennale, the Moscow International Film Festival, ISEA Symposium for the Electronic Arts, and the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) in Germany. She has received awards for her practice and teaching, including two provincial and three national awards. For her visionary engagement fostering systemic research and practice through education, she received the Margaret Mead Prize from the American Society for Cybernetics in 2024.



Andreas Pfeifle

Associate Lecturer

Coordinator of the Master of Sustainability and Climate Leadership

Member Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab
School of Design and the Built Environment

Andreas Pfeifle is Associate lecturer at Curtin's School of Design and the Built Environment and course coordinator of the Master of Sustainability and Climate Leadership at CUSP. He has a chemical engineering background, with research experience in numerical ecology, environmental modelling, multivariate data analysis, computational fluid dynamics, and microbial systems engineering. His interests include the urban water cycle, nature-based solutions, environmental governance, ecology, economics, and sustainability pedagogy.



Jo Li Tay

Senior Lecturer

Associate Head of School & ISOLT Co Director

Member Ecologies of Imagination Micro Lab
School of Design and the Built Environment

Jo Li Tay is a designer, educator, and researcher with over a decade of industry experience across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, followed by a career in higher education. Research focuses on interactivity, aesthetics, experience design, learning and design thinking. She is an award-winning educator recognised for innovative teaching in design thinking. Curator of two international exhibitions – *ROYGBIV: A Celebration of Colour* and *Communication Design from Around the World*.

Organising Committee: Art of Peace



Prof Kit Messham-Muir

BVA Hons I (Usyd) GCertPTT (UoN) PhD (UNSW)

Professor in Art
Lead Chief Investigator, Art of Peace
School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry

Kit Messham-Muir is a Professor of Art at Curtin University in Perth. His expertise is in contemporary art and visual culture, focusing on conflicts, including political violence, terror, and war. His books include *Double War: Shaun Gladwell, Visual Culture and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Thames & Hudson, 2015), and co-author of *Images of War in Contemporary Art: Terror and Conflict in the Mass Media* (Bloomsbury, 2021) and *The Trump Effect in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture: Populism, Politics, and Paranoia* (Bloomsbury, 2022). He is co-editor of *Art After War and Genocide* (forthcoming Bloomsbury, 2027) and *The Politics of Artists in War Zones: Art in Conflict* (Bloomsbury, 2024). He is the lead Chief Investigator of *Art of Peace: New perspectives in visual art on peacekeeping from the 1990s*, an Australian Research Council Linkage Project, which focuses on post-conflict art from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda and Timor-Leste, and as part of that project was lead curator of *Art of Peace: Art After War* at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (1 Feb – 29 June 2025). His recent research awards include winner of the 2026 Curtin Faculty of Humanities Initiating and Sustaining Research Award and, with the Art of Peace team, 2025 winner of Research Team of the Year in the Curtin Research Excellence and Impact Awards.



Loretta Tolnai

BA (UNE), MPhil (UoN)

PhD Candidate Curtin
Research Assistant, Art of Peace
Research Assistant, Art, Politics and Donor Agendas in Timor-Leste

School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry

Loretta Tolnai is completing a PhD in Creative Writing, comprising an exegesis and the memoir *The Jewel Thief's Daughter*, which explores inheritance, belonging, and the enduring influence of family silences. Her writing combines historical research, personal reflection, and creative nonfiction to examine how silence can both conceal and communicate meaning. Alongside her creative practice, Loretta's doctoral research examines silence in contemporary women's memoir. Drawing on political scientist Michael Freeden's taxonomy of silence, she analyses how memoirists navigate trauma, memory, identity, and disclosure. Her research focuses on the relationship between silence and storytelling, arguing that memoir can function both as a narrative form and as a strategic act of unsilencing.