



Faculty of Arts
& Social Sciences

2024 Global Mobility Humanities Conference (GMHC)

Organised by the Academy of Mobility Humanities (Konkuk University), the International Institute for Asian Studies (Universiteit Leiden), and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (National University of Singapore)

“Mobilities, Aspirations and Affective Futures”

24 ~ 26 October 2024 (hybrid)

Konkuk University, Seoul

Call for Panels & Papers

Aspiration has recently entered the lexicon of various branches of mobilities studies. At the individual scale, scholars have examined the ways in which the term has become an important subjective frame for (especially young) migrants to understand their personal mobility projects (Robertson et al., 2018; Paul, 2019). At a broad societal level, others have been concerned with the way aspiration has been deployed by capital, urban managers and state actors to undergird various political and economic agendas, such as in diasporic formations, infrastructures, technologies, and (urban) future imagineering. Writing about creative labour, Jian Lin (2019), for example, argues that the identification of a ‘new’ transnational Chinese workforce engaged in the arts and cultural industries is umbilically tied to state aspiration to use creativity as the next growth engine for the economy (see also Ho, 2011). Elsewhere, the building of flagship airports and the parade of gleaming aircraft at airshows have long been considered a tactic to conflate infrastructures and technologies with symbols of aspirational modernity (Bok, 2015; Fritzsche, 1992; Koch, 2010).

Aspiration is, in this sense, a productive currency that can radically shape mobilities. More than that, it does so on an exceptionally broad, if sometimes indeterminable, time horizon and loop, invoking different temporalities that necessarily span the present (hope), past (contrast) and future (expectation). As Lin et al. (2023) argue, aspiration seeks to project that which is enchanting and magical forward in time, and promises a (hegemonic) future of what is good and desirable (see also Knox and Harvey, 2012). It carves out a problem space to be (re)solved and mended, making mobilities of the now and then in (urgent) need of remedial actions narrowly defined through certain prescriptions, instruments and courses of action. From moral concerns like the climate crisis, to the elevation of technology and automation, to the introduction of certain debt and financing mechanisms (like in the Belt and Road Initiative), mobilities are moulded by forces that are typically already imbued with highly contentious meaning and politics that deserve further unpacking.

Concomitantly, aspiration is also a highly affective idea and concept. It entrains a series of evocative values revolving around dreams, desires, longing, yearning, breakthroughs, redemption and emancipation. In this context, it is no surprise that the language of development

– especially with regards to infrastructure building – is often laced with expressive tropes of triumphant arrivals, new identities and ‘mythologies of the future’ (Datta, 2019). In colonial times, examples in this regard can be found in the way various transport technologies were affectively mobilised to rally people. Foster’s (2005) work on the Cape-to-Rand railway in South Africa, for instance, exactly depicts a dramaturgic sense of (White) aspiration and destiny inscribed onto the bodies of, and narratives surrounding, the train. Indeed, as Appel et al. (2018: 26) aver, mobility ‘[i]nfrastructures excite affects and sentiment’. How and *whether* these affects do eventually emerge, amid fleeting urges of hope, expectation and disappointment, is potentially another realm of (micro)politics for further interrogation (see Bissell, 2016; Bosworth, 2023).

This conference invites proposals from different disciplines within mobility studies, including, but not limited to: literary and cultural studies, philosophy, history, art and design studies, anthropology, geography, media and communication, architecture, urban planning, technology, tourism, transportation, education, Black and Indigenous studies, gender and sexuality studies, and others. It will present an opportunity for scholars to share their ideas and inquiries at the intersection of mobilities studies and humanities, transcending the conventional divide between the social sciences and humanities and the arts. We accept proposals for papers and sessions on one or more of the following topics/areas:

- Aspiration and mobility infrastructures or technologies
- Migration experiences and aspirations
- Tourism, retirement and aspirations for life and wellbeing
- Aesthetics and aspirational forms of travel
- Digital nomads, social media and aspirational dreams
- Aspiration and intersections with modernity and development in mobility
- Climate change, the Anthropocene and ethical mobilities
- Race, coloniality and mobile aspirations
- Capitalism, circulation and the affectivities of production/consumption
- Mobilities of the future
- Aspiration and mobilities in literary, cultural, and artistic narratives
- Philosophies of aspirations and (im)mobilities
- Other related issues

Proposals can be for individual papers, panels, artworks, posters, and other creative formats, as outlined below. We welcome relevant contributions from any academic perspective or discipline. Beyond scholars, this includes professionals, policymakers and practitioners in the transport, traffic, and mobility field, as well as artists and creative professionals, designers, engineers and educationalists in the art and humanities.

The conference language is only English.

The conference is organised in a hybrid format.

Key Dates

20 May 2024 Deadline for the submission of abstracts and full, pre-organised sessions

17 June 2024	Notification of acceptance for abstracts and sessions
17 June 2024	Early Bird registration opens
21 July 2024	Early Bird registration closes
1 September 2024	Registration closes
6 October 2024	Deadline for the submission of Artworks, Posters, and Other Creative Formats
24-26 October 2024	Conference

Submission formats

Individual Papers: Individual submission of a paper consists of an abstract (300 words) and a brief biography (100 words), including contact information. Papers will be grouped thematically by the programme committee and may become part of a 7/7, debate, or panel session.

Sessions: A full, pre-organised 7/7, debate, or panel session. A session submission should include a title, a summary of the session theme and the method chosen for facilitating discussion (300 words), as well as abstracts for each contribution/presentation (300 words). A short biography of each presenter is also required (100 words), with contact information.

- **7/7 sessions:** This means seven slides and seven minutes for each presentation (max 7 papers). The sessions will have plenty of time for discussion. This will be supported by having a chair who might also act as a discussant. Presenters shall focus on their main argument in order to avoid overly complex presentations.
- **Debate sessions:** Debate sessions have a maximum of five presenters. Each gives a five-minute focused input to the topic, and this should be followed by a discussion involving the audience. Led by a chair.
- **Panel sessions:** Panels consist of a chair, three to four paper presenters, and one discussant (optional). Panels should include time for audience discussion. Each presenter has 20 minutes (15 min + 5 min for questions); papers are grouped thematically.

Artworks, Posters, and Other Creative Formats: They are great ways to exhibit artwork and to discuss early, exploratory, or creative work at the conference. A submission consists of an abstract (300 words) and a brief biography (100 words), including contact information. The full artwork, poster, and other creative format are due by 6 October 2024.

After **Acceptance**, all abstracts will be published on the conference website.

Submit your paper, session proposals, and /or poster to: 2024GMHC@gmail.com

For any questions, send an email to: 2024GMHC@gmail.com

Registration

All participants must register and pay the registration fee via the conference website (details to follow), with only one submission per person.

Individual fee is for regular researchers.

Reduced fee is for PhD students, researchers from the Global South, and retired scholars.

Early Bird registration before 21 July 2024

Individual fee: 200 Euros

Reduced fee: 150 Euros

Online participation: 80 Euros

Registration after 21 July to 1 September 2024

Individual fee: 250 Euros

Reduced fee: 200 Euros

Online participation: 100 Euros

The registration fee will cover the costs for the conference materials, coffee/tea breaks, two lunches (Friday and Saturday), and two dinners (Friday and Saturday)

Please email the Organising Committee (2024GMHC@gmail.com) with the subject heading “2024GMHC Inquiry” if you have any questions or concerns.

Conference Committee

Programme Committee

Taehee Kim (Konkuk University), Jinhyoung Lee (Konkuk University), Weiqiang Lin (National University of Singapore), Benjamin Linder (International Institute for Asian Studies), Paul Rabé (International Institute for Asian Studies), Inseop Shin (Konkuk University)

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