

AFAD International Doctoral Colloquium 2026
Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, Slovakia

January 27th 2026
Room No. 135 + Online MS Teams

Participants:

PhD Program Students (2nd year of study)

Invited critics:

Professor Gordon Hush

Head of The Innovation School
The Glasgow School of Art

Roger Paez, PhD

Director & Research Lab Leader
Design for City Making Research Lab,
ELISAVA Research
FACULTAT DE DISSENY
I ENGINYERIA DE BARCELONA

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AFAD critics and moderators:

Associate Prof. Zuzana Husárová, PhD, Department of Theory and History of Art
(AFAD) in Bratislava, Slovakia

Associate Prof. Jozef Eduard Masarik, PhD, Department of Theory and History of
Art, AFAD in Bratislava, Slovakia

Associate Prof. András Cséfalvay, PhD, Digital Arts Platform, AFAD in Bratislava,
Slovakia

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Invited guests:

Lada Tsymbala, PhD, Associate Prof., Department of History and Theory of Art,
Lviv National Academy of Arts (Ukraine)

Yuliya Babunych, PhD, Associate Prof., Head of the Department of Doctoral and
Postdoctoral Studies, Lviv National Academy of Arts (Ukraine)

Olena Kashshay, PhD, Associate Prof., Vice-Rector for Scientific, Creative and
Innovative Activities, National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture (Kyiv,
Ukraine)

Colloquium opening: Zuzana Husárová, moderator

Mgr. art. Lucia Kupcová

Department of Applied Arts

Experimental trace of drawing in a spatial situation. The process of interaction with other media, techniques and materials

9:00am – 9:10am Presentation

9:20am – 9:40am Discussion

Annotation: Artistic research of the meaning and visuality of drawing through an intermedia approach in the structuring of planar and spatial image situations.

Drawing as a multi-layered medium of planar drawing practices and their extension to processes, where processuality, experimentation and performativity become an important moment of the spatial situation.

Drawing is seen as a dynamic process that can interact with other media, techniques and materials: drawing-action, drawing-sound, drawing-speech, drawing as a testing of materiality.

Mgr. art. Katarína Plačková

Department of Visual Communication

Artistic research on a sustainable circular system for the designing of exhibition projects and exhibition components from the perspective of the practice of visual communication in space

9:45am – 9:55am Presentation

9:55am – 10:15am Discussion

Annotation: Doctoral artistic-scientific research in the field of sustainable circular system of exhibition design and exhibition components in accordance with the development and application of innovative materials in the field of exhibition design will focus on two levels of issues. The first is specific basic research and development of environmentally sustainable solutions using innovative eco-compatible practices and materials. The second is the broader framing question of the nature of complex interdisciplinary approaches in exhibition design as a specific subset of visual communication in space. Doctoral artistic-scientific research thus also focuses on reflection on the medium itself.

Mgr. art. Martin Štefánik (online)

Department of Visual Communication

Post-digital tools in a performative environment

10:20am – 10:30am Presentation

10:30am – 10:50am Discussion

Annotation: The research focuses on acoustic sound objects - musical instruments controlled by software. Additionally, it covers:

- exploring the physical properties and forms of materials in the context of their resonance possibilities in sound creation,
- properties of sound, tonality, color, intensity, and their creation and modeling using physical objects,
- resonance chambers, resonators, generators,

- utilization in creating proprietary post-digital musical instruments, audio-visual performances, installations.

MgR art. Markiian Maksymiuk

Department of postgraduate and doctoral studies

Design

Lviv National Academy of Art, Ukraine

The Role of Design of Urban Green Network Breakpoints in Enhancing User Experience and Spatial Connectivity

10:55am – 11:05am Presentation

11:05 – 11:25am Discussion

Annotation: This presentation examines how design interventions applied to breakpoints of urban green networks can enhance user experience and potentially strengthen spatial connectivity within fragmented urban environments. Breakpoints - locations where green corridors intersect with infrastructural, topographical, or functional barriers - serve as critical spatial thresholds that influence how people move through, perceive, and emotionally experience the city. Their design can shape whether users interpret green systems as continuous or disconnected, intuitive or confusing, inviting or restrictive.

Drawing upon field research conducted in several European cities-including Zurich, Lviv, and Stockholm -the study reflects on a range of breakpoint typologies such as infrastructural intersections, multi-level transitions, linear green corridors situated along or above transport infrastructures, and the adaptive reuse of historical or industrial structures. Across these diverse contexts, design approaches show the potential to transform urban barriers into connective social, ecological, and mobility interfaces.

The analysis focuses on three dimensions of user experience:

- (1) *Perceptual continuity*-how materials, vegetation, lighting, and spatial sequencing help maintain an intuitive flow of movement;
- (2) *Cognitive mapping*-how design supports orientation and legibility in areas with disrupted or complex urban morphology;
- (3) *Experiential comfort*-how accessibility, safety, environmental qualities, and openness may encourage users to favor walking and cycling over motorized transport.

By exploring these dimensions, the study outlines design strategies-such as soft-mobility infrastructure, multi-level integration, landscape-led transitions, and adaptive reuse-that may contribute to both physical and psychological continuity of movement. These approaches offer the potential to reinforce cohesive route identity and support more sustainable everyday mobility.

In broader perspective, this research could provide a conceptual and methodological framework for understanding how human-centered design may reconnect fragmented green networks in cities undergoing post-industrial transformation, rapid urban change, or post-conflict reconstruction. Such insights may inform planners, designers, and municipalities seeking to improve the ecological performance, social cohesion, and lived experience of urban environments.

Tianxia Gu, MSc, M.A.

PhD student at the Tokyo University of the Arts

AFAD – Erasmus+ student at the Department of Photography and New Media

Upon those unseen borders, we stood long in the wind.

11:30am – 11:40am Presentation

11:40 – 12:00am Discussion

Annotation: The story unfolds along two parallel threads. The first thread explores young faces and the frontiers within. I turn my lens toward the youth living in this city, wandering with them through the woods bordering schools, along rolling hillsides, and across overgrown, vacant lots. These are not borders marked on any map, yet on those blustery days, we pretended we were standing upon the very edge of a boundary.

We strolled and conversed amidst the wind, pausing at moments to release the shutter. I would always ask them a single question: "What does the word 'border' mean to you?" Then, I invited them to inscribe their answers on whatever scraps of paper were at hand.

Thus, the colossal geopolitical concept of "border" dissolves into countless intimate definitions: it might be a translucent membrane between individuals, the tension between self and society, or simply that low wall at the end of a childhood yard one never dared to cross. As an outsider, I attempt, through portraiture and text, to explore how the youth residing here perceive the "border": Is it a line? A threshold? A wound? Or perhaps, a form of protection?

The second thread follows my solitary drifting as a stranger. I walk to the physical borderlands where Slovakia meets Austria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. On dense forest paths or across vast wildernesses, the signal would often fade, reducing digital maps to frozen, pixelated blocks. I lost my way time and again, eventually growing accustomed to it. Guided by trail markers, the footprints of others, and occasional moments of intuition, I attempted to perceive this land through a more subjective, visceral experience.

Hermann Hesse wrote in *Wandering*: "The wind is not only the voice of the forest, but also the voice of the Plains, the voice of anything vast."

Roaming along these borders, I, too, seemed to hear this very voice.

12:00 (noon) – 1:00pm Lunch Break

MgR. Olena Derevska

Department of Theory and History of Art

Specialty: Fine Arts, Specialization: Theory and History of Art

National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture (Kyiv, Ukraine)

Nikodem Zubrzycki's artistic heritage and his contribution to the modernisation of Ukrainian art in terms of genre and imagery

1:05pm – 1:15pm Presentation

1:15pm – 1:35pm Discussion

Annotation: Nikodem Zubrzycki, a prominent Ukrainian engraver, was an important figure in the Ukrainian Early Modern art of the 17th-18th centuries, first working for Lviv Dormition Brotherhood, Lviv Bishop Yosyf Shumlyansky, Univ Monastery, Krechiv Monastery (in Lviv and Lviv region), then Pochaiv monastery (in Volhynia), later Kyiv Pechersk (Kyiv Caves) monastery, and finally, in Chernihiv St. Trinity Elijah Monastery. The first major known work of him was a 1688-1698 series of woodcuts prepared for St. Catherine Sinai monastery on commission, under the patronage and at the expense of the Greek trader Hatzikyriakis Vourliotis. The map-like views of Sinai monastery, depictions of St. Catherine and other saints, etc. were printed mainly in Lviv, and passed to Sinai where they were sold to pilgrims and spread with them throughout Western Asia and Europe, serving later as models for many artists. N. Zubrzycki introduced many new iconography compositions borrowed from Western Art (mostly but not exclusively from Lutheran visual sources), expressed in a manner close to Ukrainian national folk art. The artist created many Christ iconography compositions, like Blood of Christ, Christ the Vine, Christ Child as a Fountain of Life, etc. His works have as well Marian imagery examples, like Annunciation, Assumption, Ascension and Coronation of the Virgin. In Pochaiv monastery N. Zubrzycki completed his famous copper engraving "The Defense of the Monastery in Pochaiv" (1704), later copied in the Orthodox and Greek Catholic imagery. His most famous work is 67 emblematic engravings for "Ithica Ieropolitika" (published in Kyiv Pechersk monastery in 1712). The cultural impact of this book was huge, it was republished in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Lviv, Vienna, with illustrations copied from N. Zubrzycki. The book and its illustrations have also been copied in manuscripts (for example, Russian and Romanian "Ithica" illuminated manuscripts are known). "Ithica" engravings served as models for folk paintings, interior murals, icons. In Chernihiv N. Zubrzycki created most of the illustrations of the Apocalypse series, published in New Testament, 1717. These Apocalypse series' illustrations, as it was found by us in 2024, were copied in Kyiv Saint Sophia cathedral oil wall paintings. As it was found previously by different researchers, N. Zubrzycki's Apocalypse series were also copied in the Carpathians (Piyllo village, Ukraine), as well as in Bulgaria (drawings by several artists, wall-paintings in Rila monastery). Throughout his life Nikodem Zubrzycki created woodcuts, copper engravings, and etchings, illustrating several dozens of old print books, producing in total about 400 images (actual number is still unknown). The task of the dissertation research is to present N. Zubrzycki's artistic heritage as full as possible in chronological order and point to his impact on the Ukrainian art (as well as on neighbouring countries' art). The individual work is regularly presented and

discussed at seminars and conferences, both in Ukraine and abroad, as the topic presents the transfer of religious ideas and imagery throughout Europe.

Mgr. Mária Beňačková Rišková

Department of Theory and History of Art

Thinking and Writing about Design in Slovakia in the 20th and 21st Centuries

1:40pm – 1:50pm Presentation

1:50pm – 2:10pm Discussion

Annotation: The research will be devoted to searching, collecting, comparing and interpreting textual and visual sources (magazines, book series, audiovisual sources, publicly accessible databases) that document the development of design in Slovakia. Archival research and searches will allow reconstructing how individual authors have thought and written about design, its own development and its broader context in Slovakia in professional publications and magazines, as well as in the daily press. Equally important will be work with private, personal archives, both textual and pictorial. The framework will be the international context of design research and its intersection with the domestic situation.

MA Damián Cehlárik

Department of Theory and History of Art

Historicism as the only real method of design and architecture?

2:15pm – 2:25pm Presentation

2:25pm – 2:45pm Discussion

Annotation: Design history is important for designers because design is by its nature a redesign. This would mean that every designer and architect is, strictly speaking, a historicist. What are the arguments for and against it?

Mgr. art. Ľubica Segečová

Department of Theory and History of Art

Publishing – interpreting its current and future forms

2:50pm – 3:00pm Presentation

3:00pm – 3:20pm Discussion

Annotation: The topic of the thesis will be the problem of publishing, publication and various forms of making textual, visual and other information available to the public by means of mass media as well as group/community and self-publishing activities. The issue will be both publishing as a mode and form of artistic creation (the autonomy of visual communication) and publishing as a field of action of diverse cultural and social forces (emancipation, control, manipulation: the power of the published), i.e. the heteronomy of visual communication. The object of the research will be the interpretation of diverse forms of publishing and related publishing strategies and practices.

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Mgr. art. Jelisaveta Rapaic

Department of Theory and History of Art

Feminist Interpretations in Contemporary Fiber and Textile Art

3:25pm – 3:35pm Presentation

3:35pm – 3:55pm Discussion

Annotation: This dissertation will explore contemporary feminist interpretations of textile and fiber art. The question is how feminist and gendered thought and practice interpret the processes and outcomes of making, exhibiting, and theoretical reflection on textile and fiber arts. Thus, the research will address both the interpretation of contemporary textile art in comparison to other art media and the diverse interpretive practices and strategies of emancipatory feminist, gender and queer approaches to textile and fiber arts.

Mgr. Linda Nagyová

Department of Theory and History of Art

Architectural and sculptural work of Dušan Kuzma

4:00pm – 4:10pm Presentation

4:10pm – 4:30pm Discussion

Annotation: The theme focuses on the work of an important Slovak architect, professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, which has been studied only in a fragmentary way so far. It requires the study of architectural press of the relevant period, archival materials, correspondence and architectural documentation in cooperation with the pupils of Dušan Kuzma and the Department of Architectural Design at AFAD.

4:30pm End of the second day of the colloquium: Zuzana Husárová, moderator