

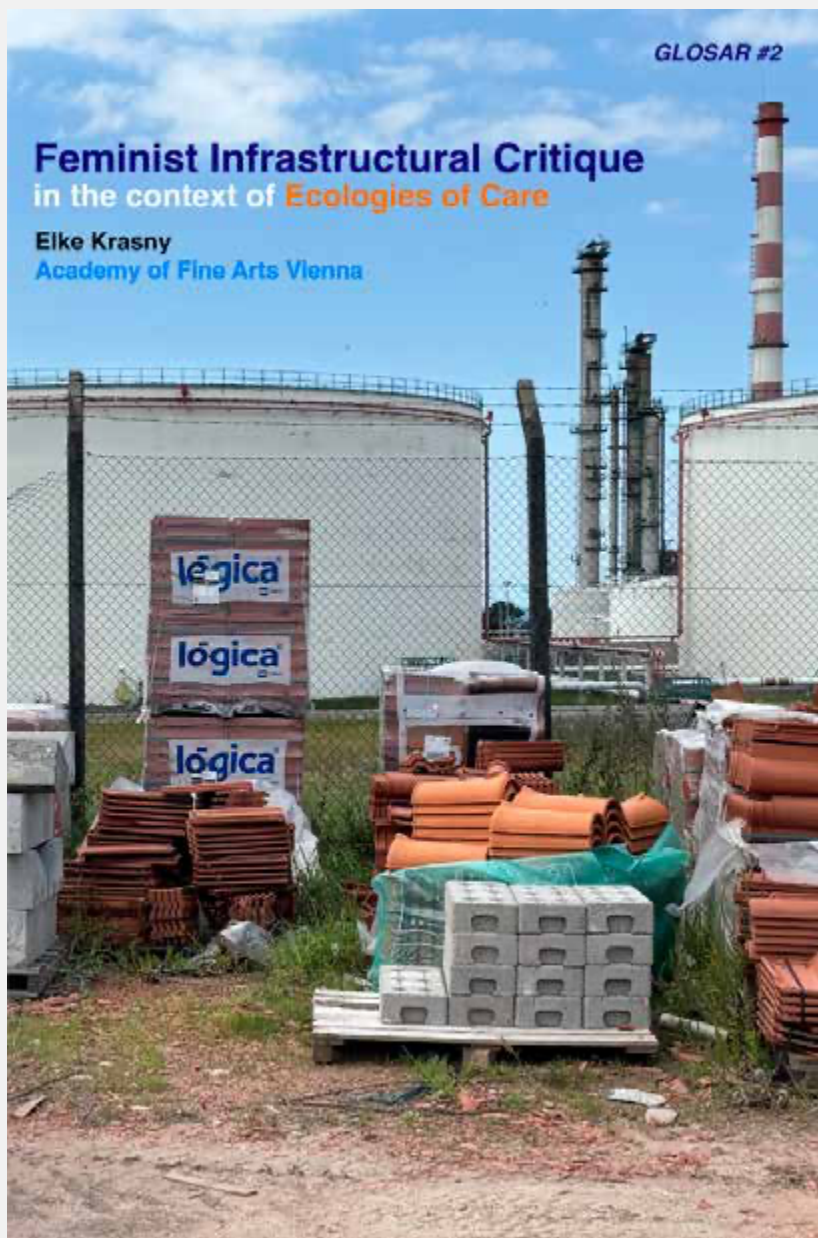
Masterclass Glosar #02: Ecologies and Pedagogies of Care

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Key Concepts and Methods: slow learning, pedagogies of hope, care, care as critical infrastructure, curating as/with care.

In the conference presented by Elke Krasny (2025), three moments can be identified that intertwine and structure her reflective trajectory: the presentation of the Ecologies of Care group, the development of a conceptualization of care, and, finally, the introduction of the publication *Feminist Infrastructural Critique: Life-Affirming Practices Against Capital*, co-edited with Sophie Lingg and Claudia Lomoschitz (Krasny et al., 2024)



Cartaz de Divulgação da conferência GLOSAR #2.
GLOSAR #2 conference promotional poster.

The genesis of the Ecologies of Care group, formed by curators, artists, architects, researchers, and activists based in different regions of Europe, emerged in 2021, amid the profound transformations triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was conceived as an attempt to build a space for exchange, listening, and co-learning in response to the intensification of the global care crisis. Although geographically dispersed, its members share concerns related to curatorial practices, ecology, memory, collapsing infrastructures, and the ways in which care is experienced, contested, or denied across different contexts.

The emergence of Ecologies of Care during the pandemic is not a coincidence, but rather a response to its context: the collapse of health systems, the overload of domestic labor, collective mourning, and social isolation revealed not only the centrality of care for survival, but also the structural precariousness of the conditions that sustain it. How can we respond to this collectively, creatively, and ethically? How can we cultivate transformative forms of care?

“Ecologies suggest ways of knowing and flourishing in many and more than human worlds. Ecologies... is a term related to the environment, from anthropogenic environmental destruction to social justice and ecological activism.” Marsha Meskimmon, *Transnational Feminisms and Art’s Transhemispheric Histories. Ecologies and Genealogies*, 2023, 7. (as cited by Krasny, 2025)

The group's experience of collective learning, which began virtually, expanded into in-person meetings, organized in a self-managed way and outside traditional institutional frameworks. In each gathering, participants are invited to share spaces, contexts, and the questions that traverse their practices and research. It is not only reflecting about care, but about building a way of being-together that itself constitutes a practice, or even an ethics, of and with care. From Krasny's perspective, care can also be understood as a method: a way of producing knowledge, occupying space, and inhabiting time in an attentive, relational, and situated manner.

The meetings promoted by Ecologies of Care are also modes of learning, grounded in what Elke Krasny refers to as slow learning and pedagogies of hope (Freire, 2014). Walking or simply remaining together in a place, attending to its details and atmospheres, reading aloud, bodily occupying historically masculinized spaces, investigating the same territory over several years, sharing doubts rather than conclusions, presenting research still in process, all of this composes a methodological repertoire that not only expands the notion of curating but redefines it as a critical and situated pedagogy rooted in listening, presence, and the collective construction of knowledge.

This curating practice is not limited to organizing exhibitions or working with artistic objects. It becomes a way of researching and being in the world, through a continuous process of reflection,

listening, and shared commitment to specific contexts and their historical legacies, layers of memory, and still-active conflicts. It is a pedagogy that values the unfinished, the time of process, and embodied, relational, and situated learning, in opposition to neoliberal logics of detachment, productivity, competition, and acceleration: the so-called fast learnings, so widely capitalized and promoted in the contemporary world. In this sense, to care is also to slow down, to observe, to remain, to inscribe, and to share ways of producing a different temporality for thought and for life in common.

“Ecologies of Care are concerned with how to relate to naturecultures, infrastructures, toxic heritage, the slow and fast violence of capitalist colonial patriarchy targeting bodies, minds, and territories, anthropogenic and anthropogenic conditions and dimensions of extraction and gentrification resulting in sacrifice zones and social and environmental harm.” (Krasny, 2025)

The gatherings organized by the group in Bucharest, Brussels, Athens, and, at the time of the conference, in Porto, involved visits to sites marked by dense layers of memory, colonial legacies, environmental violence, and spatial regimes of power. Whether an urban forest, an imperial park, an archaeological site threatened by heritage experience policies and gentrification processes, or a refinery undergoing dismantling, each visited place becomes not merely an object of study or a meeting setting, but an active agent

that calls for specific modes of listening, attention, and engagement. What is at stake in these contexts is more than the past inscribed in these spaces; it is also about the ways they continue to be maintained, inhabited, neglected, or contested in the present. Who cares for these places? Who has the right to remain in them? Who is remembered and who is silenced in their materialities? What do they remember — and what do they force us to forget?

Things are made to be forgotten.” (Krasny, 2025)

**“Heritage is not just a territory to be looked at and celebrated, but one of critical working through”
(Krasny, 2025)**

These contemporary legacies, even if not recently constructed, condense in their materiality urgent issues of the present. They are places that continue to operate in the now — whether through the persistence of historical inequalities that run through them or through ongoing disputes over their function, use, and meaning. By shifting the notion of legacy from a fixed past to an idea of persistent presence, something that continues to be built and negotiated in the present, we come to understand that these sites do not merely “hold” stories, but demand forms of engagement from researchers, artists, and educators that are attuned to the conflicts and responsibilities still shaping their existence. In this context, to care does not mean simply to preserve or conserve, but to actively

interrogate which narratives and practices we wish to cultivate from these places and what future we are, with them, committing ourselves to.

Krasny guides the reflection toward a critical investigation of care as a multifaceted concept, with mythological roots, specific materialities, structural contradictions, and transformative potentials. Care is positioned in its complex articulation with the urban, ecological, political, and epistemological structures that shape the contemporary world.

**“Understanding care as knowledge, as labor, as ethics, and as feelings and, at the same time, understanding care as environmental, material, infrastructural, and spatial.”
(Krasny, 2025)**

**“Cura is a Roman goddess who created the first man (homo). The myth of Cura appears in the Fabulae, a poem by Gaius Julius Hyginus, a Latin writer from the year 1 AD. Cura, the name of the goddess, means care in Latin.” The Myths of Hyginus were translated and edited by Mary Grant. University of Kansas Publications in Humanistic Studies, no. 34. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1960.
(como citado por Krasny, 2025)**

Curare

to care for, to take care of, to be concerned about, to listen to; to administer, to command; to treat, to cure, to care for; to maintain, to refresh; to keep in repair, “ (Krasny, 2025)

“Care can be the form control takes.” (Krasny, 2025)

Far from being a neutral or purely benevolent category, care is presented as a field marked by tensions: it can be a gesture of maintenance and solidarity, but also a technique of control, a tool of governance, or even a form of domination and exploitation. There is, for instance, a paternalistic and patrimonial form of care centered on property, authority, and tradition, often associated with the notion of protection. This care-as-power manifests, for example, in the state rhetoric of militarized protection, in surveillance under the guise of security, in forms of urban management that, in the name of the “common good,” promote processes of sanitization and gentrification — or in Western nation-states as a way to protect what is framed as “property” and “identity” over territories, heritage, and bodies, often at the cost of exclusion and violence.



**“Liberating imaginaries of care”
(Krasny, 2025)**

If care has historically been assigned to the feminine, often in essentialist and exploitative ways, how can we reckon with this legacy? In contrast to paternalistic and normative forms of care, there are also practices that affirm it as an emancipatory, relational, and redistributive gesture: care as resistance, as world-making, as a sharing of responsibilities. In this context, Elke Krasny proposes a feminist

Elke Krasny's lecture in the Aula Magna of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto.



epistemological shift, not in a biological or naturalizing sense, but as a relational politics grounded in reciprocity, listening, and interdependence.

When we consider the multiple domains that care can traverse, it becomes clear that care is infrastructural, that is, it is what sustains and makes everyday life possible, even if it often remains invisible or taken for granted. At this point, Krasny revisits the etymology of the Latin term *curare* — to care for, to cure, to maintain, to repair — to show that curating, as an aesthetic and political practice, can be understood as a form of critical infra-structurality: a work of care directed at the systems and contexts that shape collective experience.

In this sense, the assumption that care is restricted to intimate, or private scales is challenged. Instead, what is highlighted is the necessity to care for and recognize the care that underpins the material conditions of existence, from water supply systems to memory infrastructures (such as monuments), from the maintenance of public spaces to the reinvention of ways of inhabiting the world. Care is thus understood as an expanded field, one that allows us to imagine diverse ways of living together on a wounded planet — through

thought, attention, collective practices, and critical actions aimed at repairing historical and symbolic damage. These practices, in turn, become material expressions of our values, conflicts, and possible futures, placing care at the heart of politics, pedagogy, and cultural production.

Krasny also presented *Feminist Infrastructural Critique* (Krasny et al., 2024), a publication that brings together a constellation of authors commit-



Elke Krasny's lecture in the Aula Magna of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto.

ted to critiquing technical, institutional, and urban infrastructures from a feminist, situated, and intersectional perspective. The book collects essays that challenge the technocratic and supposedly neutral conception of infrastructures, proposing instead a reading rooted in practices of care, social justice, and ecological responsibility. Combining theoretical reflection, artistic practices, and situated experiences, the collection outlines an emerging field of infrastructural critique that recognizes technical, institutional, and urban systems as terrains of dispute, violence, and also political imagination. Critique, in this sense, is not limited to denunciation: it also invents ways of staying, sustaining, and persisting — life-affirming practices, as defined in the subtitle of the publication.

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Glosar Program 1:

14:00 – Lecture by Inês Moreira (Arnaldo Araújo Research Centre – Escola Superior Artística do Porto) [**GLOSAR #1**]: Infraestrutural Turn: Artistic and Curatorial Action Involved with Extreme Sites. Auditorium of the South Pavilion – Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto.

Glosar Program 2:

18:30 – Lecture by Elke Krasny (Academy of Fine Arts – University of Vienna) [**GLOSAR #2**]: Feminist Infrastructural Critique. Aula Magna of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP).

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