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Panel 60. Assemblages of the Broken World

Convenor:

Minna Vigren, Lappeenrannan-Lahden Teknillien Yliopisto

Keywords: Broken world, care, maintenance, repair

The concept of the 'broken world' suggests that a more sustainable future lies in commitments to repair, maintenance, and care of existing systems. Following the invitation by Jackson (2014), this panel invites scholars to "take erosion, breakdown, and decay, rather than novelty, growth, and progress" as starting points for their presentations. This shift in perspective requires us to acknowledge the limits of our fragile world and recognize the importance of reimagining what needs to be studied and how amidst all the brokenness.

The presentations of this open panel can explore the configurations of the broken world and related practices of repair, maintenance, and care in research settings, research methodologies, and eventually research ontologies and epistemologies. Different types of presentations from provocations to research papers and from research ideas to work-inprogress are welcome.

Proposals may respond to, but are not limited by, the following themes:

- failures and fixes of digital infrastructures;
- resilience and vulnerability in broken systems;
- consumerism, repair and maintenance;
- technological obsolescence and sustainable innovation;
- imagining beyond brokenness;
- cultural narratives of breakdown and repair;
- ethics of care in research and knowledge production;
- indigenous knowledge and traditional practices of repair;
- urban decay, renewal, and community care;
- art, aesthetics, and visualizations of brokenness and repair.

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ID 260 - Sustaining Science: Repair, Maintenance, and Everyday Innovation in Laboratories

Federica Zanardi, Università degli Studi di Padova

Keywords: repair, maintenance, care, innovation, ethnography, scientific laboratories, vulnerability, creative solutions, knowledge production

In the context of increasing technological fragility and resource constraints, the concept of the "broken world" (Jackson, 2014) urges a shift in focus from novelty and growth to repair, maintenance, and care as fundamental pathways to innovation. This perspective is particularly relevant in scientific laboratories, where the daily practices of repair and maintenance not only sustain research infrastructures but also foster various forms of innovation. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted within the Neuratron project – a collaboration between an Italian university and the National Research Council (CNR) – this study investigates how these practices contribute to scientific developments. The Neuratron project, which integrates fields such as physics, biotechnology, and neural networks, illustrates how scientific work heavily relies on continuous maintenance. While laboratories are often perceived as hubs of cutting-edge technological advancement, their functioning depends on seemingly mundane yet essential activities: cleaning microscope lenses, replacing worn components, and recycling materials to prevent equipment failure. Far from being incidental, these practices are foundational for ensuring instruments' functionality and, consequently, for maintaining the stability of scientific practices. Through participant-observation, four main types of innovation emerging from these practices were identified: machine innovation; problem-solving innovation; operational innovation and methodological innovation. Machine innovation manifests in the gradual improvement of scientific technical apparatus (e.g. microscopes; microchip; oscilloscopes), through regular maintenance and the optimisation of existing scientific materials and tools. Problem-solving innovation arises when researchers face equipment failures or experimental errors, prompting creative solutions to overcome specific challenges. Operational innovation involves the inventive reuse of everyday objects, such as repurposing kitchen thermometers or polystyrene foam to create tools essential for experiments, thereby challenging the notion of technological obsolescence. Methodological innovation stems from the continuous adaptation of scientific procedures based on experience and the demands of maintenance, driving a constant evolution of research methods. This research contributes to discussions on resilience and vulnerability within broken systems, challenging the traditional view of technological progress as linear and growth-oriented. Instead, repair and maintenance practices emphasize continuity, adaptation, and care as essential elements of scientific work (Latour, 1987; Knorr-Cetina, 1999). By examining the daily maintenance work, this study invites a rethinking of how innovation is conceptualised, suggesting that breakdowns and failures can be transformative, offering opportunities for renewal and reconfiguration. In conclusion, repair and maintenance are revealed as foundational practices for sustaining scientific systems, demonstrating that innovation does not solely emerge from revolutionary breakthroughs but also the ongoing, often invisible labour of care. By focusing on the "broken world," this research calls for a revaluation of scientific progress, viewing fragility and decay not as obstacles but as opportunities to reconsider knowledge production.

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ID 840 - Mission critical – dialectic reparative imaginaries

Cecilie Hilmer, University of Manchester

Keywords: Missions, coproduction, dialectics, repair, utopia, crisis

Europe is facing multiple, entangled crises. The Horizon Europe research and innovation (R&I) programme acknowledges challenges such as climate change, environmental breakdown, population health, migration and waning trust in democratic institutions, and unfulfilled promises of past Research and Innovation (R&I) policies. In response, the European Commission suggests a mission-oriented approach to public R&I fund-

ing in Europe aimed at driving societal transformation. The five proposed EU missions aim high, for example to "improving the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030 through prevention, cure and for those affected by cancer including their families, to live longer and better" (European Commission). R&I plays a central role as missions imagine Europe's social crises as transformable into technoscientific problems, actionable through policy infrastructure, and justifiable through a universal common good. In doing so, this paper will argue, the missions imagine a Europe that transcends its broken reality. The paper explores missions as a sociotechnical imaginary (STI) (Jasanoff and Kim, 2009), taking a dialectical co-productive approach to missions that focuses on the tensions that emerged in the first years of their implementation. The tensions reveal underlying contradictions with a long history, such as the conflict between economic growth and climate change, and directed and disinterested science. These contradictions, I argue, are part of the torn fabric of Europe that missions seek to leave transcend. I will outline how contradictions regarding progress, territory and sovereignty are imagined as transcendable while ignoring their roots in colonial modernity. These contradictions are not appropriately addressed within mission-work - they aim to transcend the fractures of modernity rather than holding them in tension. Drawing on black abolition feminism scholarship on utopia and reparation, I tentatively suggest a reparative approach to missions which holds these fractures open to acknowledge and repair them. This is an approach which does not reproduce the need for (violent) optimism and progress in an ever more dystopian experience of the world; but learns to accept its brokenness to work towards loving repair. A dialectical and reparative approach to coproduction turns our focus towards contradictions inherent in sociotechnical imaginaries, revealing not only where power lies and how it operates but also why, enabling a deeper political analysis.

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ID 423 - Disassembling the Good: Design, Power, and the Daimonic Unknown in a Broken World

Francesco Galli, IULM University

Keywords: Power, Unknown, Negative Knowledge, Education, Creative Leader

The imperative to assemble, repair, and sustain assumes that brokenness is inherently negative – something to be fixed or optimised. However, this paper challenges the constructivist determinism underlying the notion of "Technoscience for Good," questioning whether disrupting and disassembling paradigms may be more generative than repairing them. Drawing on Byung-Chul Han's Non-Thing (2021) and Carl Sagan's The Demon-Haunted World (1995), it proposes a radical rethinking of brokenness, negativity, and indeterminacy, using the Daimonic (Δαίμων) as a bridge between reason and mystery.

Modern design education and leadership reinforce positive constructivism, assuming that progress is linear, knowledge accumulates, and innovation leads to improvement. This epistemic determinism prioritizes measurable, evidence-based methodologies, restricting the potential of negative knowledge, uncertainty, and rupture as intellectual and creative tools. Perhaps the problem is not what we can fix, but what we are willing to leave broken.

Three Critical Disassemblies

- **Breaking the Constructivist Paradigm**. The dominant model of "good" in technoscience and design is based on optimisation, coherence, and problem-solving. However, not all systems should be repaired – some demand rupture, disintegration, and unmaking. True epistemic transformation may arise not from fixing but from breaking, allowing disorder and uncertainty to reveal new pathways of thought and action.
- **The Demon and the Daimon: Reclaiming the Negative**. Sagan warns against a world ruled by certainties, where the demonisation of the unknown suppresses critical inquiry. Yet, the Greek Daimon (Δαίμων) was never purely evil; it was a force of intellectual and creative motivation. By rejecting negativity, ambiguity, and disruption, design pedagogy risks closing itself off from the very conditions that foster innovation. The unknown, rather than being feared, should be embraced as a

productive space of engagement.

- **From Soft Power to Negative Knowledge**. Design education, increasingly a site of soft power, frames itself as a human-centered, problem-solving discipline. Yet, true leadership in a broken world demands an epistemology of negative knowledge – the ability to unlearn, resist closure, and engage with the speculative and indeterminate. Rather than seeking resolution, pedagogy should cultivate intellectual discomfort and speculative curiosity, training designers to navigate complexity rather than control it.

A Speculative Conclusion: Toward a Pedagogy of Disintegration. Instead of focusing on repairing the broken world, this paper proposes a pedagogy of disintegration, where not knowing, breaking, and embracing the daimonic unknown become fundamental to the education of creative leaders. The world does not need another generation of designers who seek to fix problems within a deterministic framework of "good." Instead, it needs thinkers, makers, and leaders who can engage with uncertainty, rupture, and negative knowledge – seeing the demon not as a threat, but as an invitation to explore the unknown.

11 JUNE 2025 14.30 - 16.30 **SESSION 1**

ID 642 - Boxes and brokenness: experiments in creative reparations in transdisciplinary research methods

Róisín O'gorman, University College Cork

Keywords: creative reparations, use. uselessness, wax moulages, categories

This presentation emerges from a transdisciplinary research group, Living Well with the Dead Collective, at University College Cork in Ireland. Since 2019 we (scholars from archaeology, law, social science and theatre) have been exploring the legacies and lineages of colonial complicity which form and inform the contemporary university. More recently this on-going collaborative medical humanities project has been working on an archival trove of medical wax moulds which were made at the end of the 19th century. These remains flicker across representational, ethical, and performative epistemologies as they were cast from very particular bodies of the socially disenfranchised, those suffering advanced stages of disease (most often syphilis). Individuals' body parts were cast with plaster, from which wax moulds were made (moulages) and these circulated to medical schools across the West. The moulds were offered as an effective technology for rendering pathologies in specific detail and they are readily celebrated as artefacts which contributed to the establishment of the field of dermatology.

Our project seeks to find other ways to engage with the legacies and performative webs these objects offer to our social and medical imaginaries. Rather than recuperate the institutional 'good' of these obsolete technologies of science, our work resonates with Jackson's acknowledgement of the broken world (2014). While certain kinds of documentary work can elaborate on the social and medical details of the ensemble of those cast in the name of science, this paper will specifically reflect on how embodiment based arts practice research opens up new investigative modes of responding to the fraught legacy of these objects. The paper argues for modes of arts practice that attune to the ways in which these objects were made, how their impressions can form new ways of understanding the histories and legacies of medical touch and gaze. This attention to methods will focus on the material and metaphoric work of boxes, the ways in which the broken world is boxed up, sorted out, sorted away, memorialised or left to moulder. It further extends Jackson's arguments through Kondo's lenses of reparative creativity, where "[r]eparation – what I call reparative creativity-reconfigures the shattered world into a mobile, always incomplete, integration." (2018: p212). Thinking through the propositions of brokenness and reparation in this way, we can attend to the lowly box and the habits and affordances of tidy categories. However, the box too is a space of the imaginary, the black of theatre, of a camera, flight recorder, document ongoing flights of fancy. In this space of imaginaries (social, aesthetic, political etc.) brokenness offers space for potential play in the empty, left over disused boxes or spaces of our institutions and culture.

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ID 396 - Interstices of the broken world. Doubt, Technoscientific Infrastructures and Care in an Autoethnography of Illness

Giuseppina Pellegrino, Università della Calabria

Keywords: breakdown, technoscientific infrastructures, care, illness, autoethnography

Breakdown can start from and bring out breaches in the invisible texture of infrastructures, which can be compared to the obvious and routinary structure of everyday life characterised by the Schutzian epoché, for which the doubt of the otherwise is suspended. What is broken suddenly puts to the fore the ordinary, mundane and continuous processes of maintenance, repair and care, otherwise neglected.

In this contribution assemblages of the broken world are interpreted drawing on an autoethnography of illness (Pellegrino, 2021), from an inadvertent but performative positionality of STS researcher-not naïve patient, immersed in different organisational cultures of research and healthcare, where multiple infrastructures are at work and subject to contingency and vulnerability. The aim is to frame the concepts of breakdown and repair through three key concepts: doubt, technoscientific infrastructures, and care.

First, doubt. Doubting sheds light on the opacity of classification systems and infrastructures, which are not ordinarily accessible to sight and scrutiny. Doubt can be a resource to better understand the dynamics of breakdown and vulnerability; concurrently can hinder the assemblage of the broken world, showing an ambivalent potential. In my illness story, doubting was the key to understand the multiple breakdowns (e.g. relapses) intervening in the path.

Secondly, technoscientific infrastructures. In illness and medicine, where classifications and information infrastructures shape diagnoses and therapies, (Bowker and Star, 1999) technoscience is the core of research and care. Multiple vulnerabilities in my illness trajectory arouse from an inadequate or lacking articulation of infrastructures (e.g. an incomplete and wrong diagnosis; sclerotisation of the clinical protocol).

Third, care. Care is a logic (Mol, 2008), and "a form of tailoring, appropriation and resistance" as much as "an important moral and political terrain" (Jackson, 2014, 231). Care is also the key to maintain and repair the horizon of everyday life disrupted by illness, demanding an order occurring in the interstices of routine and breakdown (Denis and Pontille, 2019), when doubt can make a difference and orient towards temporary recovery and transformation.

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11 JUNE 2025 17.00 - 19.00 SESSION 2

ID 156 - Algorithms for which good? Friction, breakages and value resonance in algorithmic systems in the Finnish public sector

Antti Rannisto, Aalto yliopisto

Keywords: values, breakages and repair, public sector innovation, artificial intelligence

The algorithmisation of society seems to spark only little political friction among citizens in Finland. In the Netherlands, for example, things are very different with the childcare benefits scandal from 2018 making obvious the potential dangers of automated societies, gradually generating a public problem to the degree of prime minister Mark Rutte's cabinet eventually resigning from office in 2021. Similar debates around discriminatory fraud detection algorithms in social insurance have started to surface in Sweden and Denmark in late 2024 following reporting by Lighthouse Reports and Amnesty International. To understand differences in how the deployment of uncertain algorithmic technologies in society sparks public interest and political awareness, I propose the concept of value resonance. The approach that I propose situates values within a processual conception of action and studies them within the dynamics of action processes. I start by complementing and extending Steven J. Jackson's (2014) suggestion of focusing on cracks and decay of technologies (see also Ananny 2022) by laying out a pragmatist conception of action (Dewey 1922; Kilpinen 2000; Joas 1996) and values (Joas 2001; Dewey 1939; Westbrook 1991). According to this approach, value resonance – and through that: value articulation – can be seen as happening during moments of friction, crisis, and breakage of habitual conduct in interaction with algorithmic systems. These frictions and crises of habit are moments of uncertainty where reflexive and creative agency is called for, for generation and valuation of possible paths for future action, and finally to repair habit. As Hans Joas, drawing on Dewey, provocatively puts it: "values only exist when problems of action arise" (Joas 2001, 107), corroborating Westbrook's (1991, 410) account according to which "[v]alue judgements [are] at bottom appraisals of means" for resolving problematic situations in processes of action. To better understand when and why certain situations are especially prone for value resonance, I propose combining complementing elements from the theory of moral intuitions by Jonathan Haidt (2012) with the theory of pragmatic regimes of engagement and cultural forms of common good by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (2006; Thevénot 2001; Ylä-Anttila 2013). This enables to formulate a socially stratified approach to value resonance from individual to cultural levels. After this theoretical framing, I will outline my ethnographic fieldwork following value resonance in action in and around a highly esteemed Innovation Team working in the Finnish public sector to support the design, development, and piloting of generative AI tools to be embedded in their processes. For 18 months I closely followed the team encounter anticipated and unanticipated frictions and breakages as well as creative repair to tackle problems faced. I will share my preliminary findings on how value resonance is enacted, how values are discovered and articulated as navigational devices in these problematic phases of Finnish public sector technology innovation and development.

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ID 497 - The Broken World of Digital Excess

Minna Vigren, LUT University
Olli Pyyhtinen, Tampereen yliopisto
Tero Karppi, University of Toronto

Keywords: digital excess, digitalisation, broken world thinking

The world we live in is broken: the impact of human-made crises are increasingly evident and far-reaching, displacing communities and destroying entire ecosystems. Technology is often perceived as the most viable solution to the crises. Yet, the accelerating technological development and digitalisation are also largely liable for the brokenness of the current system. In the presentation, we explore how the generation and accumulation of what we call digital excess undermines such endeavours of seizing an open future of

progress and possibility. Our take on digital excess is inspired by the work of philosopher Georges Bataille. By bringing it into dialogue with the so-called broken world thinking (Jackson, 2014), we reflect the brokenness of our digital society, fundamentally built on ideas of excess, and the related processes of breaking. We portray digital excess as a condition of technological a priori that defines contemporary digital existence beyond the experiences of subjects, affecting not only social relations and the production and uses of technology but ultimately also planetary systems. Ultimately, by focusing on digital excess, the presentation critically contests ecomodernist and solutionist perspectives which perceive digital technology as an enabler and driver of green transition and ecological sustainability.

11 JUNE 2025 17.00 - 19.00 **SESSION 2**

ID 294 - Breaking Down 'Breakdowns': Using a More-Than-Human Approach to Understanding the Role of Technology and Care within Activist Assemblages

Antonio Starnino, Concordia University

Keywords: social movements, relationality, Research-creation, breakdowns, care,

Social movement scholars and practitioners have shown that relationships and embracing relational ontologies are the foundation of successful outcomes for activist assemblages. Due to the voluntary nature of these groups, internal tensions can erode these relationships, causing the assemblages to break apart before achieving their goals. Much of current social movement research explores this dynamic through human-to-human relationships. However, what can be learned by understanding the role of non-humans in this dynamic? How does the technology mediate these relationships and maintain the assemblage's functioning? How do they support groups that experience these tensions or amplify these fractures?

In this paper, I will interrogate these questions through an ongoing research-creation project, Active Objects. This project draws upon my positionality and experiences as an activist working within non-hierarchical and digitally mediated groups and critical designers, seeking to explore the impact of digital tools on mediating the internal relationships of activists. Drawing upon what Tharpe and Tharpe define as discursive design, Active Objects represents a series of digital/physical sentient artefacts whose function is to intervene and introduce what Arturo Escobar refers to as breakdowns in an activist group. The provocative nature of Active Objects can be seen as a form of anticipatory repair, a concept from Behamin Sims as a way of instigating 'breakdowns' in a 'controlled setting.' Rather than viewing breakdowns as negatives, it aims to show how fractures emerging within activist groups can hold what Jackson calls 'world-disclosing' properties of breakdowns. In doing so, it also seeks to position the role of technology within activist assemblages as a 'matter of care', holding an agency within the group. This paper aims to spark general conversations among social movement scholars and activists on themes of relationship, care, internal practices and the 'active' role of tools mediating those interactions.

11 JUNE 2025 17.00 - 19.00 **SESSION 2**

ID 696 - Solar Poetics of Repair: Care, Maintenance, and the Affective Dimensions of Intermittent Infrastructure

Benedetta Piantella, New York University

Keywords: care, infrastructure maintenance, intermittence

This presentation explores how care and maintenance emerge as everyday practices of repair in Solar Protocol, a planetary network of solar-powered web servers that operate intermittently based on sunlight availability. Rather than striving for seamless operation, these servers function according to planetary rhythms, making their dependencies on the environment and human stewardship explicit. Through interviews with stewards, this research highlights the affective relationships that develop in their ongoing

engagements with these infrastructures – acts of tuning, troubleshooting, and waiting that challenge dominant imaginaries of always-on digital connectivity.

The network's intermittence foregrounds an ethic of care (Tronto 1993; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), where computing is no longer abstracted from material conditions but experienced through cycles of presence and absence, function and failure. Unlike mainstream cloud infrastructures that obscure their extractive logics and demand constant availability, Solar Protocol requires small, recurring acts of repair that cultivate attunement to energy rhythms, seasonal patterns, and computational limitations. Stewards describe a shift in their relationship with infrastructure: from passive users to active caretakers, where downtime is not failure but a reminder of shared dependencies with the environment.

To translate these experiences into an embodied form, this project presents solar-powered "I poems": poetic fragments distilled from interview transcripts using The Listening Guide (Gilligan et al. 2003). Hosted on miniature solar-powered servers, the poems flicker on and off with the availability of energy, requiring audience members to engage in small acts of care (like adjusting positioning toward light and waiting for energy to accumulate) in order to reveal their contents. These poems serve as both documentation and a provocation, offering a material-discursive representation of infrastructural care.

These works and this research engage with broken world thinking (Jackson 2014), shifting focus from progress-oriented narratives of innovation to the everyday labour of keeping things operational. It wants to argue that, rather than resisting breakdown, we can and should learn from infrastructural failure by attending to its rhythms, working with its limits, and finding meaning in small, sustained acts of care. By bridging STS scholarship on care and maintenance (Denis & Pontille 2015; Mattern 2018) with experimental infrastructure studies, this work calls for deeper engagement with the lived experiences of maintaining digital systems in an era of ecological precarity. What does it mean to care for computational infrastructure? How can digital systems acknowledge their dependencies rather than obscure them? Rather than optimizing for efficiency, what happens when we optimize for care?

11 JUNE 2025 17.00 - 19.00 **SESSION 2**

ID 391 - Politics of Mundane Materiality: An Ethnography of Elevator Brokennes in Underground Stations in Munich

Yigit Ülker, Technische Universität München

Keywords: elevators, brokenness, infrastructure

This study positions itself at the intersection of STS and critical infrastructure studies by studying elevators in their social and spatial contexts. It seeks to establish conversations about visualisations, daily experiences, and representations of elevator brokenness in public transportation systems. This aim is produced and justified by elevators' untapped and undertheorized qualities as sites of mundane technologies with different kinds of social and material configurations. To bring out these perspectives, this research examines elevators' distinct spatial and social roles in the underground metro stations in Munich, Germany, focusing on brokenness. Fieldnotes are generated by conducting semi-guided observations and talking-whilst-walking ethnography (Anderson, 2004) in Munich U-Bahn stations and analysed through script theory (Akrich, 1992; Latour, 1992) and technological mediation theory (Verbeek, 2006). The analysis reveals that elevators showcase instances and boundaries where material prescriptions come to reality, get disregarded, and create new scripts of human-materiality engagements. More importantly, elevator brokenness is perceived in various ways (elevator design choices, understanding re-appropriation of elevator space as "brokenness", etc.) and not only in the face of technological failure. Moreover, different ways local communities cope, protest, and find alternatives are illuminated in everyday life of brokenness. In all cases, elevators arise as sites where the assumptions, spatial arrangements, and human-materiality engagements are hosted and transformed. They create discourse and a unique field of research, which opens further possibilities for study at the intersections of STS, cultural studies, ethnography, and infrastructure studies.

11 JUNE 2025 17.00 - 19.00 SESSION 2

ID 792 - Transformational Disruptions in Rome

Marco Ranzato, Università Roma Tre

Keywords: urban disruption, urban tangle, Rome

It is too easy to say: Rome is broken. For those who come to the city and have the opportunity to spend some time in its surroundings, this condition strongly infiltrates the urban image and experience. In this vibrant landscape of archaeology, this ever-present disturbance hammers at the head. It is as disturbing as it is breathtakingly creative. It may sound dystopian, but the possibility of knowledge and rethinking that disruption brings suggests that it is sometimes even desirable.

Stephen Graham's powerful idea is that disruption is a heuristic device. I think this is what I find most triggering about the disrupted landscape of Rome. Revealing the often-invisible massive complexes of contemporary urban infrastructure carrying energy, communication, transport, and water, disruption also unmasks the social control of nature operated throughout technology. Abruptly, overflowing water floods us, we protect ourselves from the cold because the heat is off, we resort to fire for light because electricity is cut off, and so on. Disruption accelerates the change which global warming data and forecasts should lead us to during our lives. Disturbing as it may be, disruption seems to be the closest thing to what Tim Ingold defines as knowing from the inside what we generally find bound up in a technological apparatus that is inscrutable and taken for granted. As a window on the circuits that underpin our modern lives and our relationship with nature, disruption is highly political. It moves us into action and to seek a novel correspondence with the world. In disruption, change is no longer a forecasted figure far away in time. Instead, change is bodily experienced in all its substance. Disruption is a "transformative place" opening up to new possibilities of being.

But to be transformative, disruption should inhabit our everyday lives and transcend the mere observation that Thomas Hirschhorn's ruptures offer in museum halls. This is what happens for example in Brussels where, the Marias Wiels, a railway-side pond created by the leakage of groundwater following excavations for real estate transactions, is now a park where you can learn about horticulture and the multispecies overlayers that inhabit the vacant lot. Almost the same happens in Rome, at the Ex-Snia Lake. Yet these places are oftentimes isolated, marginal and only for counterculture.

This contribution wishes to legitimise Rome's Broken Landscape, literally making disruption the proudest image and innovative sign of Rome, at its most luminous and generative level. To this end, some of the urban disruptions of Rome, known for the recurring annoyance they cause to their inhabitants and a reason for stigmatisation by those passing through or visiting who notice them, are discussed together with the possibilities of knowledge that the disruption brings, the possibilities of habitation, repair and care.