

Critical Futures: States of Erosion

MARCH 19-20, 2027 | INDUS VALLEY SCHOOL OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE, KARACHI



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Contemporary violence increasingly operates as a chronic state in which the distinction between war and its aftermath dissolves into something harder to name and far harder to escape. This prolonged condition spreads across territories and timelines, accumulating in the body and the landscape over time, and resulting in the destruction of human habitations and ecologies. The violence diffuses unevenly across populations and generations, and embeds into the ordinary textures of daily life.

The second edition of the Critical Futures Conference at IVS, organized in collaboration with Anthrofuture*, extends its inquiry into sustainability by situating it within the entangled conditions of contemporary states of war, ecological violence and territorial instability across regions in the Global South. Sustainability – and its language of efficiency, ecological stewardship and other constrictions – potentially circumvents the challenges of an era in which the climate emergency and war often intersect but are viewed separately. We instead approach these questions through a range of intertwined perspectives and practices: from narratives of war and ecological collapse, to the emotional and affective dimensions of these crises, and the ways in which space and 'home' are increasingly in a state of flux.

Through panels, artworks, workshops, and conversations, Critical Futures brings together creative practitioners and theorists working across territories marked by instability. Without directly seeking resolution, the conference focuses on practices that operate within these conditions – where resistance, care, and forms of maintenance emerge as situated responses to ongoing change and where sustainability is practiced as a set of provisional and adaptive engagements with an uncertain ground.

* Anthrofuture is a European Research Council (ERC) sponsored project titled 'The anthropology of the future: an art world perspective', hosted by the University of Vienna Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology. It uses multimodal methods to examine how understandings of the future are generated through art in South Asia and the Gulf. <https://www.anthrofuture.com/>

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

We invite you to submit a 350-500 word abstract for one of the following categories:

- Paper presentation
- Exhibit/Installation
- Short film/documentary

Your proposal should be relevant to any one or more of the thematic areas listed below.

Abstracts must be submitted by August 15, 2026 at 11:59pm to the following email address:
criticalfutures@ivs.edu.pk

THEMES:

- **Creative practice as resistance:** protest, activism and artistic responses to the violence of climate crises and wars.
- **Digital worlds:** the internet as an important site for climate and antiwar activism, solidarity, and political mobilisation, but also new forms of warfare, AI-generated content and disinformation.
- **Narrating loss:** storytelling and oral histories as modes of recording, transmitting, and contesting knowledge about disrupted landscapes, often excluded from dominant frameworks.
- **War economies and the reorganization of space:** the entanglement of conflict with real estate and resource extraction, with the weaponization of the environment and reconstruction/revaluation of territories.
- **Fantasy, dystopia, and speculative fictions:** tools to engage uncertain futures and reframe the limits of sustainability under conditions of instability.
- **Shifting homes:** displacement and the emotional geographies of belonging, forced migrations and the reorganization of populations, with home and identity being continuously negotiated.
- **Atmospheres of war/wars on the atmosphere:** sites, artifacts and ecologies that show the impact of military operations on the environment as well as the atmospheres of feeling they create.

TIMELINE:

June 20, 2026 - Open call for proposals

August 15, 2026 - Abstract submission deadline

August 25, 2026 - Abstract selection announcement

February 15, 2027 - Final submission deadline

March 19-20, 2027 - Conference weekend

VENUE:

Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi

