

Call for Contributions  
3<sup>rd</sup> International Care Ethics Research Consortium  
Conference

***Care, Aesthetics, and Repair***

University of Humanistic Studies

Department of Care Ethics

Utrecht, The Netherlands

23-25 January 2025 (on-site)

&

30-31 January 2025 (online)

Deadline for abstracts: 30 April 2024

What if, as James Thompson asks in *Care Aesthetics* (2022), care and dependency work were designated as art so these practices might also be understood as having aesthetic qualities? Feminist thinkers have long emphasized that caring involves bodywork, which entails observing, feeling, experiencing, perceiving, reasoning, performing, imagining, narrating, and other modes of creating. Conversely, what if the interactions created by artists of all kinds were understood as works of care? Care is taken through art, by art, and with art. Particularly in scenarios where artists work with people in social situations, such as in

theatre and performance, might such an alternative conceptualization of aesthetics and care, which reimagines the diversity of artistic care and caring art practices, contribute to repairing our world? There is much at stake: the current world is threatened by political and planetary challenges, which are closely intertwined with rampant capitalism and the history of colonialism, as well as the perpetual societal turmoil that is characteristic of contemporary life. In times of multiple systemic crises, how might we approach the significance of artistic creation, and other acts of worldmaking, as modalities of care, and vice versa?

The term “aesthetics” is not only related to art but, according to the Greek concept of *aisthesis*, is initially closely tied to perception and judgment. Just as care is something that not only healthcare professionals do, but on a more fundamental level, is something that all people do to shape their lives and world, and to repair it where necessary, aesthetic experiences are also not confined to lofty contemplative events. Rather, aesthetic experiences can be very small and lift you just a little above the perceptual stream of everyday life, thus becoming an intrinsic part of routine healthcare and ordinary social practices. In other words, aesthetics becomes something for everyone. But how can we capture these basic ways of perceiving, and which methodologies are fitting for this purpose?

Recent scholarship, including contributions by Josephine Donovan (2016), Yuriko Saito (2022), Jacqueline Millner and Gretchen Coombs (2022), and others, demonstrates the burgeoning interest in sites and practices where care, ethics, aesthetics, art, and everyday life meet in co-shaping motion. This conference aims to bring together care ethicists; artists, designers, and other makers; artistic researchers; architects and urban planners; philosophers; methodologists; educators; policymakers; and others committed to exploring the fundamental question: what does it mean to care? Scholars and practitioners from all disciplines within and beyond the humanities and social sciences are invited to submit either an abstract (between 250-300 words) for a 20-minute presentation or a proposal for a work of art/performance on the theme of aesthetics, care, and repair in the context of modern-day society.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Everyday performance and aesthetics of care
- The art of care and the care of art
- Politics and care aesthetics
- Care aesthetics and reparative justice
- Care ethics and postcolonial repair
- Care aesthetics, ecology, and the environment
- Aesthetics and ethics of multispecies care
- Feminist, queer, trans\*, and decolonial care aesthetics
- Care ethics, repair, and disability justice

- Care aesthetics and the subversion of oppression
- Maintenance work and caring infrastructures
- Care aesthetics, public health, and urban planning
- Design thinking and the aesthetics of care
- Care practices in contemporary literature and art
- Caring and the ethico-aesthetics of death, grief, and loss
- Aesthetics of care and democracy in crisis
- The aesthetics of embodied care
- Arts-based methodologies in care ethics
- Care performance as resistance
- Care ethics and decolonial aesthesis
- Artful practices of care and speculative ethics
- Critical and creative pedagogies of care
- Co-creating cultures of care
- Beauty in caring
- Care ethics and aesthetics in times of precarity
- (Post-)pandemic care aesthetics

### **Submission guidelines**

Send your abstract or art proposal for peer review to [cerc.conference.2025@gmail.com](mailto:cerc.conference.2025@gmail.com) by **Tuesday 30 April 2024**. Please type 'CERC proposal' and your last name in the subject line. Individuals may only submit one proposal. In your e-mail, please include a brief biographical note (250 words max) with primary research or artistic interests and institutional affiliation (if applicable).

Please attach a **Word document** to the e-mail that is **anonymous** and ready for peer review. The Word document should contain:

- the title of the presentation;
- the abstract (250-300 words max), which should outline the main arguments of the paper, as well as its theoretical and/or empirical contribution(s) to the existing literature (and a few words on methodology, if applicable);
- presentation equipment requirements (if applicable);
- indicate whether you wish to present on-site (24-25 January 2025) or online (30-31 January); if you prefer to present online, please specify your time zone.

Artistic and performative contributions, as well as poster presentations, may also be proposed to the organizing committee of the conference. In case of artistic or alternative contribution formats (e.g. performance lectures, video or sound papers, embodied social justice workshops, ritual, dialogue, curation, etc.) please clearly describe all **technical and logistical requirements** of the contribution, including equipment needed, whether you are

providing that equipment, space requirements, any special auditory, lighting or other physical needs, time needed for set-up, etc.

Panel proposals will also be considered (please include a brief description of the panel, the abstracts of three papers, and the name of a chair and discussant).

Criteria for the selection of presentations include effective and explicit engagement with the conference theme, clarity of the abstract, contribution to the diversity of presentations, and potential significance for advancing **the field of care ethics**. We cherish transdisciplinary and intergenerational dialogue, and encourage the inclusion of voices, perspectives, and practices that are not commonly heard in academic conferences.

Decisions on the abstracts will be communicated by **Monday 1 July 2024**. Please note that the abstracts selected for our conference will be posted (as received) on our website prior to the conference. All conference presenters must register for the event before the conference program's official release date. Detailed information concerning accommodation in Utrecht and registration costs will be offered on the CERC website in the summer of 2024. For questions about the conference or abstract submissions, please write to [cerc.conference.2025@gmail.com](mailto:cerc.conference.2025@gmail.com).

The CERC 2025 organizing committee,

Sophie Bourgault  
Vivienne Bozalek  
Maurice Hamington  
Louis van den Hengel  
Hee-Kang Kim  
Helen Kohlen  
Carlo Leget  
Alistair Niemeijer  
Inge van Nistelrooij  
Fiona Robinson  
Joan Tronto  
Merel Visse

#### *References*

- Donovan, J. (2016). *The Aesthetics of Care: On the Literary Treatment of Animals*. Bloomsbury.
- Millner, J. & Coombs, G. (Eds) (2022). *Care Ethics and Art*. Routledge.
- Thompson, J. (2022). *Care Aesthetics: For Artful Care and Careful Art*. Routledge.
- Saito, Y. (2022). *Aesthetics of Care: Practice in Everyday Life*. Bloomsbury.