

Living Through the End: Affective Lives of Finitude

18 – 19 June 2026

This interdisciplinary workshop explores how people live with experiences of finitude under conditions of ecological, political, and social crisis. Taking climate change and climate activism as its primary point of departure, the workshop examines how endings are lived, interpreted, and negotiated in everyday life. Rather than approaching finitude as a singular catastrophic event, it understands it as an ongoing and unevenly distributed condition that reshapes temporal imaginaries, moral obligations, and forms of collective life.

Over the past decade, climate politics and public discourse have increasingly shifted from narratives of progress and sustainable transition toward concerns with collapse, irreversibility, and loss. Experiences of despair, exhaustion, denial, or non-hope now coexist with continued forms of care, responsibility, and political engagement. The workshop asks how people remain present and responsive when certain futures can no longer be taken for granted. What forms of endurance, solidarity, and ethical commitment emerge under such conditions?

The workshop also extends these questions beyond the climate context. Contributions addressing fields such as hospice and palliative care, disability, long-term illness, colonial devastation, or other forms of living with irreversible transformation are equally central. Bringing these domains into dialogue allows the workshop to approach finitude as a broader social and affective condition that cuts across diverse empirical settings while taking shape in historically uneven ways.

Particular attention will be paid to the affective dimensions of endings: how grief, anger, fear, hope, exhaustion, or non-hope circulate within activist movements, care settings, religious communities, and everyday life. Organized around themes such as futures and responsibility, affective infrastructures, and care under conditions of finitude, the workshop aims to foster interdisciplinary conversations on how collective life is sustained in times marked by ecological crisis and profound social transformation.

Thursday, 18 June at Freie Universität Berlin (“Silberlaube”, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, Room K23/21) and Floating University (Lilienthalstr. 32, 10965 Berlin)

10:15 – 10:30	Arrival and Coffee
10:30	Introduction
11:00 – 12:00	<p>Session 1</p> <p><i>The Accusation of Hopium</i> Arne Harms (Universität Münster)</p> <p><i>The Futures of Ending: Pentobarbital, Assisted Dying, and Life on Death Row</i> Marcos Freire de Andrade Neves (University of Glasgow)</p>
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 – 14:30	<p>Session 2</p> <p><i>No Sense of an Ending: Keeping the Future Open Through Hope</i> Julian Sommerschuh (Universität Hamburg) Michael Schnegg (Universität Hamburg)</p>
14:30 – 16:00	Coffee break and transfer to Floating University (Lilienthalstraße 32, 10965 Berlin)
16:00	Exchange with Floating University
18:30	<p>Public Key Note at Floating University</p> <p><i>Swarming against Apocalypse</i> Larisa Jašarević (independent scholar and author, PhD University of Chicago)</p>
20:00	Dinner at Floating University

Friday, 19 June at Freie Universität Berlin (“Silberlaube”, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, Room K23/21)

10:15 – 10:30	Arrival and Coffee
10:30 – 12:00	<p>Session 3</p> <p><i>Negotiating Finitude: Living with Loss in the Swiss Alps and the Bornean Rainforest</i></p> <p>Michaela Haug (Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg)</p> <p>Antonia Tungal (Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg)</p> <p><i>Living through a Predicted End: Affective Exhaustion and Transitions in Children’s Hospice Care</i></p> <p>Julia Demirdizen (Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg)</p>
12:00 – 12:30	Coffee Break
12:30 – 13:30	<p>Session 4</p> <p><i>The End of Climate Action: Unlearning Hope in the Face of Catastrophe</i></p> <p>Maren Wirth (Freie Universität Berlin)</p> <p>Dominik Mattes (Freie Universität Berlin)</p> <p><i>How to Despair Well: Enduring Endings in Palestine-Israel</i></p> <p>Michal Givoni (Ben Gurion University; Freie Universität Berlin)</p>
13:30 – 15:00	Lunch Break
15:00 – 15:45	<p>Session 5</p> <p><i>Painting Through the End: Ecologies of Loss and Life after Genocide in Napa'alpi</i></p> <p>Tamar Blickstein (Freie Universität Berlin)</p> <p>Fiorella Anahí Gómez (independent artist and activist from Argentina – online participation)</p>
15:45 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00	Wrap-Up