

## THE TIMES OF MAINTENANCE

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### **Abstract:**

As they consist in carrying out for the preservation of things and cultivating their endurance, maintenance practices are a matter of time. Yet, they contrast significantly with most future-oriented technoscientific activities and, more generally, with the modernist innovation-centric timescapes (Jackson, 2016; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2015; Schabacher, 2021). Rather than organizing the world by designating a desirable future, the care of things deals with continuity. It turns duration into a matter of concern. This has important consequences. First, this concern for continuity translates in an irreducible presentism which is notably reflected in the quiet mundanity of recurring cycles of interventions. Predictive, preventive or curative, maintenance is a repetitive ongoing activity, with no expected end. Second, the quest for durability implies a relationship to time which goes beyond what constructivist approaches of temporality generally emphasize. Maintainers, indeed, do not simply "construct" time. They shape duration by composing with, and sometimes explicitly struggling against, the "time of matter" (Barad, 2013), which they experience in different manners and confront to a range of alternative temporalities, such as biographical or organizational ones (Cohn, 2016). In other terms, time is not so much produced or constructed in maintenance practices as it is problematized and negotiated.

This panel aims at investigating these two aspects by exploring the various ways maintenance concretely enacts duration. From heritage conservation to industrial maintenance, ecological preservation and domestic mending, humans' participation in the continuity of things can take diverse forms and is organized in configurations in which both the pace of maintenance and its temporal horizons differ, sometimes dramatically. In order to examine and better understand these differences, the expected papers will be grounded on a rich empirical material, attentive to the singularity of each situation, and may address the following themes, among others:

- How does the multiplicity of times unfold in specific maintenance settings (the times of materials, of organizations, of markets... or planet Earth). How are these different times combined, kept apart, or hierarchized? To what tensions and confrontations does their copresence give rise?
- How are the times of maintenance (and especially the time of the materials things are made of) experienced, measured, and/or organized? What kinds of instrumentation are at play in these processes?
- What kinds of knowledge are elaborated about the rhythms of maintenance and the temporalities of matter? What epistemologies do participate in the problematization of time in maintenance?

Exploring these questions, the panel aims at further understanding the ways in which time is treated as a concern and matter of care in maintenance, and how humans get attached to things in this process, dealing with the always changing composition of their material world.

### **Key words:**

Matter, maintenance, time