

OPEN CALL

International Forum Citizenship through Aesthetics

São Miguel •

Azores •

16-18

October 2025

We call for interventions that transform thought into public act.

We are inspired by practices that occupy the public sphere with words that divide opinion and demand a stance — from the joint work of Andrew Hewitt and Mel Jordan in the Free Art Collective (slogans, posters, publications that dispute the shaping of public opinion), to mobile structures and pop-up kiosks activated in different contexts to provoke conversation and assembly. We seek brief, direct proposals with critical density — capable of opening common space, here and now.

"art, culture and politics flow together."

Esther Leslie

"Without this invisible mass, the ranks of middle and lower level arts administrators would be depleted."

Gregory Sholette



international
forum
**citizenship
through
aesthetics**



Think Action – prepare and submit:

A short proposal (max. 1 page) that simply and clearly shows:

|| Your idea about the dialogue between Citizenship and Aesthetics.

|| Mature thinking: simple but solid, thought-provoking, and critically grounded.

|| We ask for proposals that function as speech acts: more than describing ideas, they must be interventions that, when spoken or shown, already perform an action in public space. Each intervention will be a critical and poetic gesture that, in just a few minutes, can declare, question, or provoke. An action in which your act of speech summons those present. (max. 15 minutes).

The approach is free, and we provide logistical support.

For those who join

|| Selected projects: we offer travel support, accommodation, and meals covered + gift bag + ticket for the closing performance of the POP Festival (May B, Maguy Marin).

|| All applicants: we offer gift bag upon arrival + special conditions for accommodation and meals during the Forum.

Deadlines

|| **Submissions: 8 October**
|| **Selections: 10 October**
|| **Public Actions: 16 October · 17h–20h · Ponta Delgada (São Miguel, Azores)**

Submit to:
internationalforum@aestheticivitas.org

More info:
www.aestheticivitas.org

production



funding



GOVERNO
DOS AÇORES

International Forum Citizenship through Aesthetics

Ponta Delgada and Lagoa, São Miguel, Azores – October 2025

From October 16 to 18, 2025, the island of São Miguel, will host the first edition of the International Forum Citizenship through Aesthetics — a new space for gathering, thinking, and acting at the intersection of art, politics, imagination, and community.

The International Forum Citizenship through Aesthetics is an international gathering that brings together artists, scholars, curators, journalists, museum directors, programmers, and cultural and civic agents, with the purpose of exploring the relationship between aesthetics and active critical citizenship.

The proposal stems from the idea that the aesthetic field is not only a domain of symbolic representation or disinterested enjoyment, but also a space of political inscription and meaning-making. Within this framework, artistic practices that emerge from cultural belonging, collective memory, or gestures of resistance also become acts of citizenship.

Program

PUBLIC SPEECH ACTS

17:00 16th OCT

City Center, Ponta Delgada

**Open debate at a local tasca
(traditional Portuguese tavern)**

17:00 17th OCT

City Center, Ponta Delgada

**Art and Resistance
Community and Utopia**

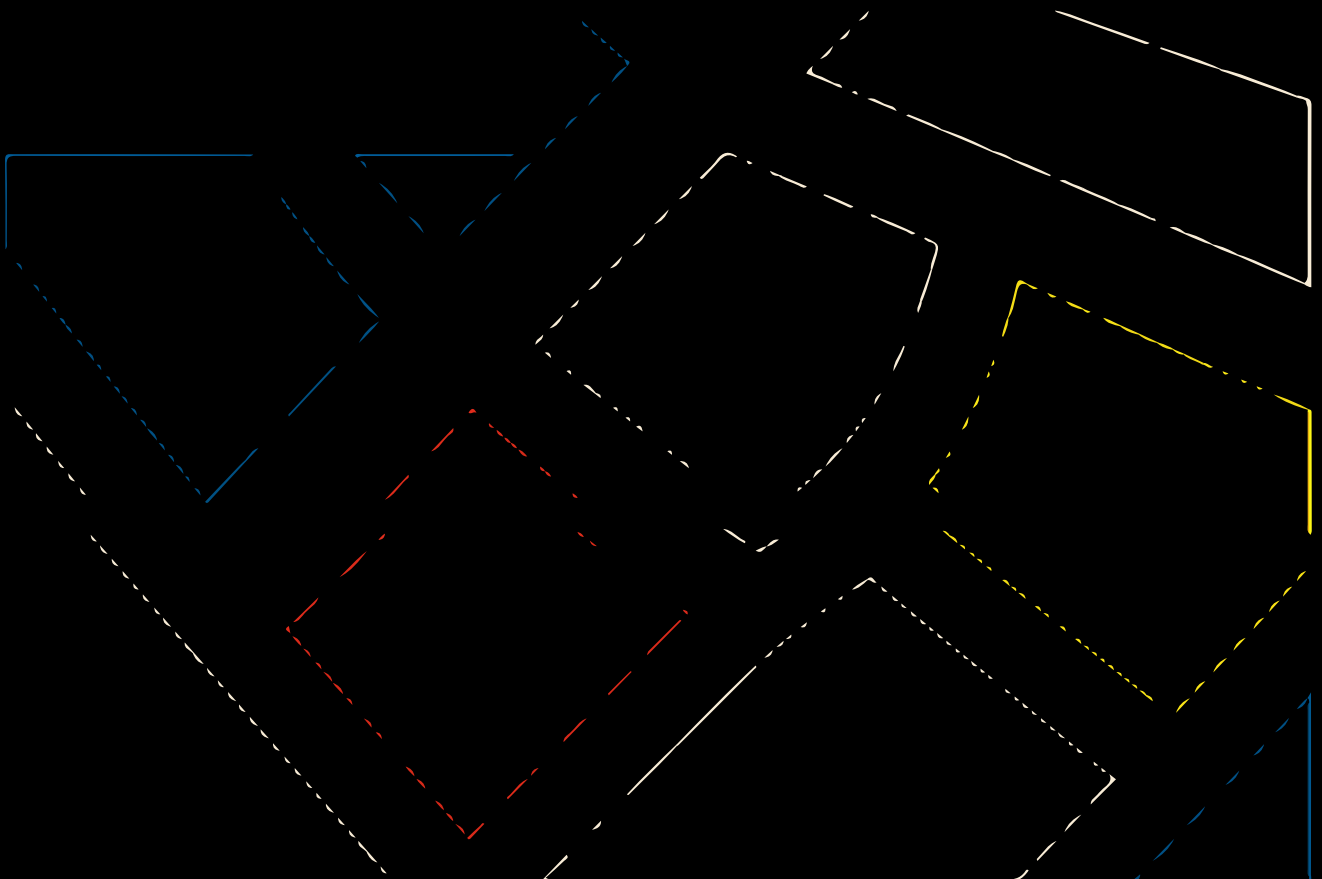
10:00 18th OCT

**Cloister of Santo António Convent
Lagoa**

**Aesthetics and Power
Community is Utopia**

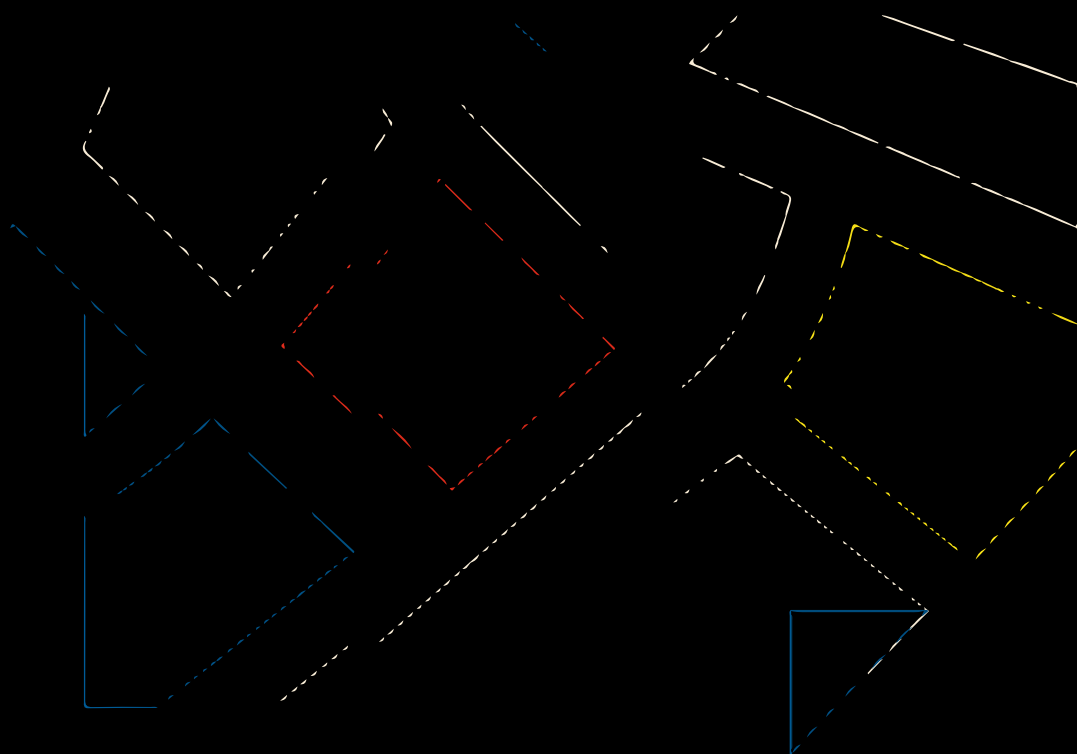
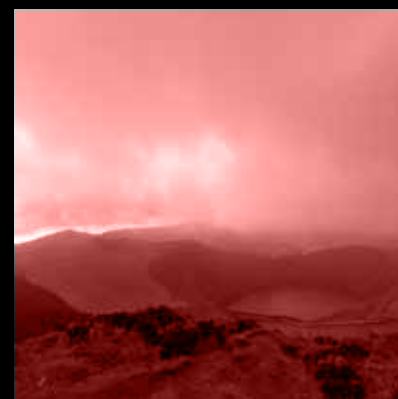
17:00 18th OCT

**Mercado da Graça — Public Market
Ponta Delgada**



The creation of this Forum reflects the will to question artistic creation processes and their relationship with the public, to multiply formats of participatory artistic practice, to challenge preconceived notions about this type of community-engaged project, and to broaden the meaning of community art initiatives. More generally, it seeks to sustain an active critical perspective on aesthetic production and its relationship with the development of processes of citizenship. The appropriation and expansion of the concept of Aesthetic Citizenship, coined by Emine Fisek, is here extended to encompass the whole of aesthetic production, and a concept of citizenship understood less as a legal bond than as an ongoing process — a collective construction aimed at the gradual realization of a more just and solidaristic society.

The Azores, through their geography, history, and culture, become a privileged space of encounter and contemplation — a true beacon in the middle of the Atlantic, inspiring those who look at us from afar in time and space. The isolation of the islands is understood here as an opportunity: for listening, sharing, depth, and reinvention.



Invited guests

Alexandre Pascoal — Alexandre Pascoal (b. 1976, PT) is a cultural programmer and manager, Director of Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts Center since 2025. Former Director of Production at Teatro Micaelense, he has promoted connections between contemporary art, territory, and community.

Andrew Hewitt — Andrew Hewitt (b. 1965, UK) is an artist, researcher, and lecturer at the University of Northampton. Co-founder of the Free Art Collective and the Partisan Social Club, his work shifts art into the public sphere as a site for debate and civic participation.

Esther Leslie — Esther Leslie (b. 1964, UK) is Professor of Political Aesthetics at Birkbeck, University of London, Fellow of the British Academy, and author of influential works on Benjamin, Adorno, and critical theory, exploring intersections between aesthetics, politics, science, and technology.

Gregory Sholette — Gregory Sholette (b. 1956, US) is an artist, writer, and Professor at Queens College (CUNY), where he co-directs Social Practice CUNY. He is the author of *Dark Matter* and *Delirium and Resistance*, key references on socially engaged art, citizenship, and cultural resistance.

João Paulo Constância — João Paulo Constância (b. 1962, Coimbra) is a biologist and museologist, Director of the Carlos Machado Museum since 2021. He holds a degree in Biology from the University of Porto and a postgraduate in Museology, and has been part of the museum since 1991, linking science, heritage and art with the Azorean community.

Maria João Gouveia — Maria João Gouveia (PT) is a choreographer, teacher, and cultural programmer. She is Artistic and Pedagogical Director of Estúdio 13 (Ponta Delgada) and dance curator for Ponta Delgada 2026, promoting training, creation, and international networks.

Mel Jordan — Mel Jordan (b. 1966, UK) is an artist and Professor of Art and the Public Sphere at Coventry University, where she directs the Centre for Postdigital Cultures. Co-founder of the Free Art Collective, she researches how art can reimagine citizenship and democratic participation.

Olga Kopenkina — Olga Kopenkina (Minsk, Belarus) is a curator and art critic based in New York. She writes for ArtMargins, Hyperallergic, and e-flux, and her work focuses on art, politics, and memory, with an emphasis on post-Soviet contexts and cultural resistance.

Raquel Ermida — Raquel Ermida (PT) is a researcher and lecturer, PhD in Art Theory at NOVA FCSH/IHA (Lisbon). Her research addresses contemporary art practices, collectives, and micro-politics, combining theory, artistic experimentation, and civic engagement.

Ricardo Alexandre — Ricardo Alexandre (b. 1971, PT) is a journalist, writer, and cultural programmer. He was Deputy Director of TSF Radio (2018–2023) and is currently International Affairs Editor. He is also the founder/programmer of the Noites Ritual festival (Porto, 1992–2012) and the author of *Esta Vida de Marinheiro*, a biography of João Aguardela.

Vadim Yurievich Gololobov — Vadim Yurievich Gololobov (b. 1964, Saint Petersburg) is a theatre artist, lighting designer, and curator. A central figure of Engineering Theatre AKHE (General Director 2010–2022), he has presented work at leading festivals including Edinburgh Fringe, Diaghilev, and Mimos. Recipient of international awards, he is now based in France, continuing his work with AKHE in exile.

