

# Борщ / borscht and beyond

community kitchen + geopolitical imagination

*A collective project proposal by a group of students from the Master in Critical Studies*

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## 1. Short description of the project proposal

“**Борщ / borscht** and beyond” is a series of community kitchen events and conversations dedicated to the issue of geopolitical imagination. The aim is to create a collective space of care and thought that takes shape while sharing a soup—more particularly, *borscht*. The project arises as a reaction to Putin’s war in Ukraine, the return of Cold War logics, and the racist parameters of solidarity at play, in an urge to come together to engage in collective practices of inquiry and critical learning processes. At the same time, it seeks to reflect on what is left out in the prevailing public discourses on this war, by shifting the focus away from Europe (or the West) and reconnecting the post-Soviet space into a larger landscape of conflict and neo-colonial/imperialist world power relations.

## 2. Description, concept and plan

This project proposal arises from a collective urge to make sense of the current and ongoing geopolitical situation in the post-Soviet space and beyond, and to find ways in which we—a group of students from the Master in Critical Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna—together with a range of initiatives and communities in Vienna, can actively engage and facilitate a space for solidarity and critical analysis of this situation within the cultural field. As the situation develops, the geopolitical landscape changes at fast pace. For this reason, the present document is a work in progress, and we see our programme as one which can adapt to new questions and critical issues that may appear as the situation unfolds.

### *Community kitchen*

We understand “community kitchen” as a way of making community by creating a space where food and other forms of care are provided collectively and in a non-commercial way. We plan to organise these events together with different communities to be able to engage every time with different contexts and perspectives. The programme “**Борщ / borscht** and beyond” proposes to combine the form of a “community kitchen” with a space for engaging in discursive practices and building networks of care, action and solidarity. The conversations will focus each time on a specific aspect of the current context with the help of formats such as panel discussions, presentations, or film screenings.

### *Geopolitical imagination*

A Wikipedia definition of “geopolitical imaginations” says that these constitute “constructed views of the world that reflect the vision of a place’s, a country’s, or a society’s role within world politics. Geopolitical imaginations are constituted by shared assumptions and representations of power relations and conflicts in world politics within a certain geographical territory.” The programme “**Борщ / borscht** and beyond” tries to interrogate how this concept may allow us to make sense of the ongoing situation in the post-Soviet space not only in the complex overlappings of identity, belonging and territorial divisions of space, but also in its implication within a larger context of violence, conflict, and world power relations.

## 2.1. References and cooperation partners

### Queer Base

- <https://queerbase.at/>

### Afro Rainbow Austria

- <https://afrorainbow.at/about-us/>

### Mai Ling

- <https://www.mai-ling.org/>

### Migrating Kitchen

- <https://www.facebook.com/kombinatB/>
- <http://migrating-kitchen.com/>

### Neunerhaus

- <https://www.neunerhaus.at/konzepte/cafe/>

### Ukrainische Jugend Österreich

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tuma.austria/>

### Kulturhaus Brotfabrik

- <http://www.brotfabrik.wien/en/eat-drink/community-cooking.html>
- <https://www.caritas-stadtteilarbeit.at/projekte/alle-projekte/community-cooking>

### Planet 10 Wien

- <https://www.planet10wien.at/about-us/raeume-nutzen-how-to-use-planet/>

### WUK Gemeinschaftsküche

- <https://www.facebook.com/wukgemeinschaftskueche>

### SOHO Ottakring

- <https://www.sohoinottakring.at/en/about-us/>

### KITCHEN Zentrum der Tat

- <http://praxis.postism.org/>
- <https://boem.postism.org/>
- <https://www.blinddatecollaboration.org/about-1/>

### 2.3. Time schedule

#### March – April – May

In the next three months we plan to connect with the different communities and spaces, set up the concrete program and invite our guests and audiences.

#### June - November

The series of 6 events will take place between June and November 2022. The events will be held either in German or in English, each time depending on which language is more accessible for the communities we collaborate with. This is a provisional list of topics:

- Saturday, June 4: Geopolitical imaginations of borscht
- Saturday, July 2: Overlapping of identity and belonging in the Slavic post-Soviet space
- Saturday, August 6: The double standards of humanitarian violence
- Saturday, September 3: Post socialist ≠ Postcolonial?
- Saturday, October 1: Nuclear cultures in the post-Soviet space
- Saturday, November 5: Coordinates and networks of solidarity

### 3. Previous works, portfolios and curricula vitae

**Cristóbal Adam** (Caracas, 1989) is an artist and researcher based in Vienna. His practice engages experimental documentary methods to explore the interrelations between post/neo-colonial extractive geographies, political imaginations of nature, and visual cultures of oil nations — in their entanglement with geopolitics and world power relations. He holds a Master's degree in International Relations from Goldsmiths, University of London, a Bachelor's degree in Audiovisual Communication from Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, and is currently pursuing the Master in Critical Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Besides, he has developed professional roles in the fields of journalism and public relations, and has contributed in the coordination of programmes of experimental film and performance at the Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona. More recently, he participated in the online series of conversations on “Art, Politics and Counterculture” curated by Francisco Carballo, Lizzie Sells and José Luis Paredes Pachó for the Museo Universitario del Chopo in Mexico City.

**Kim Sanou** wurde 1993 in Wien geboren. Sie studierte Kulturarbeit und Kulturwissenschaften in Potsdam, Neapel und Frankfurt. Aktuell studiert sie Critical Studies (MA) an der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien. Zentral in ihrer Arbeit ist das kollektive Schaffen und Bespielen von Räumen. Dabei stehen Aushandlungsprozesse rund um die Themen Kolonialität, Fürsorge und Identität im Zentrum. Sie war bis 2022 Mitglied des Betreiber\*innenkollektivs des Residenzortes Libken und fühlt sich dem Feld der kritischen Kulturarbeit zugehörig.

**Lua Mauff** is a cultural producer and mediator, invested in hierarchy-critical self-organizing, kinship and the creation of spaces for emancipation and deconstruction. Lua's worked in different collective structures and non-commercial associations, most recent running a residency in east-germany. From 2019 to 2021 Lua was part of the production team Disruption Network Lab e.V. for a series of conferences at the intersections of politics, technology and arts. Lua is currently studying in the master critical studies and post-conceptual-art-class of Marina Grzinic.

**Lucía Millet** (1996): Researcher based in Madrid, Spain. After studying Art History (UAM), she completed a MA in Performance Arts and Visual Culture and a MA in Contemporary Art

History and Visual Culture (both programs within the frame of MNCARS), specialized in Art Theory and Criticism. Her research is located in the liminal spaces between theory and practice through a problematization of their aesthetic, emotional and political conditions. In this sense, her work addresses the intersection between knowledge, affect and performativity in the field of art, as well as the contemporary methodologies of artistic labour. She co-funded the [Institute for Postnatural Studies](#), where she develops, together with Lucía Ugena, the project [Composting Fields](#).

**Lucía Ugena** is starting the third semester of MA Critical Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts. She previously studied Philosophy and Law in Madrid. Her research has been focused on knowledge theory and phenomenology and, as she started researching through different materials than language, she became more and more engaged with discourse and space theories. She practices them through the creation of textile bodies. She co-founded the Institute for Postnatural Studies in Madrid where she mediates, together with Lucía Millet, the project Composting Fields, a hybrid archive that aims to give space to young research.

**Mona Rizaj** studiert und arbeitet in Hamburg und Wien. Sie hat bisher überwiegend mit Audio gearbeitet und beschäftigt sich aktuell mit den Themen: Wie ist der Stellenwert des Kosovos in Europa, Vorurteile gegenüber Migration und „dem Ausland“, hier konkret gegenüber dem Kosovo/den Balkan-Staaten, und Diskriminierung (in ihrer eigenen Familie). Dabei hat die Method des Zuhörens, die als feministisch und anti-rassistisch gilt, und das „sich stören lassen“ um die eigene Position zu hinterfragen und zu festigen eine zentrale Rolle. Sie ist teil des Künstler\*innenkollektivs „die Experimentelle Klasse“.

**Tubi Malcharzik** works as a performer, dramaturge and DJ in Hanover and Vienna. In their artistic work they deal with queer memory, Upper Silesian misunderstandings and distorted pop songs. They are also involved in various collectives working to change structures in their respective fields. As part of the *Initiative for Solidarity at the Theater*, they critically examine power dynamics in the work context and give workshops together on allyship. With the collective soft spot they want to open a space for experimental, electronic sounds & queer-feminist politics on and off the dancefloor in Hannover. Besides the local work, the group focuses on exchange with other queer-feminist collectives, most recently with Lokalni Poznańscy Voguerzy (Poznań) & 池糖 Chilldo (Chengdu).

**Sofia Mascate** (\*Abrantes, 1995) is a visual artist based in Vienna, where she's a student in the Master of Critical Studies at the Akademie der bildenden Künste. She holds a MFA from the HFBK Hamburg (Prof. Jutta Koether) and a BFA from the Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa (2017). Since 2016, Sofia Mascate has been exhibiting in group and individual exhibitions in Portugal, Italy, the UK, Germany and Austria. In 2022, she published "Tactical Retraction", a book of essays on still life painting and its echo in contemporary times and discourse.

+ **Isabelle Edi, Lucia Kagramanyan, Moritz Führer, et al.**

#### 4. Annexes