

10 – 12th September 2025

HYPE STUDIES CONFERENCE

*Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
Barcelona*



Programme

(Don't) believe the hype!

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Welcome to the Hype Studies Conference!

The Hype Studies Conference is an experiment in collective thinking and doing. As researchers, designers, and practitioners, we are all curious about hype, not just as exaggeration, but as a force that composes and directs attention, markets, politics, emotions, and imaginations. We're here to share our ideas about how hype shapes technologies, economies, and cultures, with real consequences for how the future is imagined and acted upon.

As you'll see, the programme brings together a heady mix of talks, a keynote, a plenary panel session, workshops, video art, and installations. Through these sessions (as well as through informal moments and exchanges), we hope you'll be able to explore hype as a performative force, reflect on its mechanisms and effects, and share ways of understanding (and intervening in) the politics of hype.

The idea of this event is to provide an open space, whether you're an academic, student, artist, policymaker, technologist, journalist, student, or just hype-curious: We welcome you to join in, connect, contribute, and experiment with us.

This document is here to serve you as a general conference guide. It includes some words on the philosophy of the conference, housekeeping, conference and party venue information, as well as tips on where to eat and hang out, and key contacts should you require any assistance. For a quick overview of the full schedule, go to page 17! For a deep dive, make sure to download the booklet of abstracts.

The Spirit of the Hype Studies Conference

This gathering is going to be a little bit different from your usual academic event. Built on a DIY spirit, it's a primarily volunteer-run, a little experimental, and sometimes delightfully improvised.

The programme organizers run the conference on minimum funding. This gives everyone participating great academic and creative freedom – but bear with us: things may not always go exactly to plan. We rely on a common spirit to make this a fruitful, insightful and fun conference.

Our motivation to host this conference under these principles also comes from an observation of crisis. The organizers felt alienated by the contemporary academic conference business which asks for high participation fees and huzzling 7-min pitches piled up one after the other. We do not believe that these are sustainable conditions for fruitful and inspiring exchange.

The Hype Studies Group strongly believes that our generation can do better. With this conference we want to create an inspiring off-space. *(Don't) believe the hype?! is a non-commercial, not-for-profit event. It is completely free for everybody as we want to aim for maximum inclusivity. We are committed to horizontal, inclusive and transparent decision making practices – and of course: Want to be playful and have fun.*

When we disseminated the call for papers we were overwhelmed by the great creativity, quality (and quantity!) of contributions. We dearly hope to have crafted a programme that reflects this diversity in backgrounds and different experiences and we look forward to spending three exciting days together.

The success of the Hype Studies Conference depends on the energy, generosity, and creativity of everyone involved. Let's make this a space where we can learn from one another, try things out, and enjoy the unexpected! We are grateful to each of you for being part of this.

Key Contacts

For general inquiries, please contact us over criticalhypestudies@posteo.com. For urgent matters, please contact the following people (all of us are on Telegram, some are also available over WhatsApp).

We also have a [Telegram channel](#) where you can chat with us and the other people attending the conference (open for both virtual and in person attendees).

Building orientation / tech & equipment onsite: Andreu Belsunces (+34645791744).

Accessibility / inclusion support / awareness: Jascha Bareis (+491632152169) and Ola Michalec (ola.michalec@bristol.ac.uk).

Registration; schedule, workshops and art installations logistics: Isa Luiten (+31649956280).

Social media and the panel: Vassilis Galanos (+447506887026).

Telegram Channel communication: Wenzel Mehnert (+4366478588501) and Pierre Depaz.

Coffee breaks logistics and the keynote: Dani Shanley (+31611409083).

Please note that photography and video will be taken throughout the conference. If you wish to be excluded from any photography or footage, please let any member of the organising team know, ideally at the registration desk.

A Hybrid Conference

(Don't) believe the hype?! is a hybrid conference. Each room has its hybrid equipment and the online links can be accessed below. We work with google meet as it is for free and stable (no, we do not like to rely on BigTech but we do not have the money to buy open source alternative licenses).

Telegram: Join the conversation on Telegram to exchange and discuss with peers during the conference: hypestudies.org/telegram.

Wi-Fi: Eduroam connection is provided for existing and guest users across the premises of the University. For instructions, please consult relevant posters at the venue or ask any member of the organising team.

Day 1 – 10th september

DotCom Room – U1.1: <https://meet.google.com/ytg-veen-xiw>

Nanotechnology Room – U1.14: <https://meet.google.com/vhy-tctu-ptn>

Internet of Things Room – U1.5: <https://meet.google.com/rpb-hpvy-jbe>

Metaverse Room – U1.6: <https://meet.google.com/roi-eygn-jyh>

Web 3 Room – U1.7: <https://meet.google.com/ufy-mbak-mir>

Keynote: <https://meet.google.com/mcb-qmsi-cxx>

Day 2 – 11th september

DotCom Room – U1.1: <https://meet.google.com/ytg-veen-xiw>

Nanotechnology Room – U1.14: <https://meet.google.com/vhy-tctu-ptn>

Internet of Things Room – U1.5: <https://meet.google.com/rpb-hpvy-jbe>

Room – U1.6: <https://meet.google.com/roi-eygn-jyh>

Room – U1.7: <https://meet.google.com/ufy-mbak-mir>

Day 3 – 12th september

DotCom Room – U1.1: <https://meet.google.com/ytg-veen-xiw>

Nanotechnology Room – U1.14: <https://meet.google.com/vhy-tctu-ptn>

Internet of Things Room – U1.5: <https://meet.google.com/rpb-hpvy-jbe>

Metaverse Room – U1.6: <https://meet.google.com/roi-eygn-jyh>

Web 3 Room – U1.7: <https://meet.google.com/ufy-mbak-mir>

Locations & Accessibility

The conference will take place at the

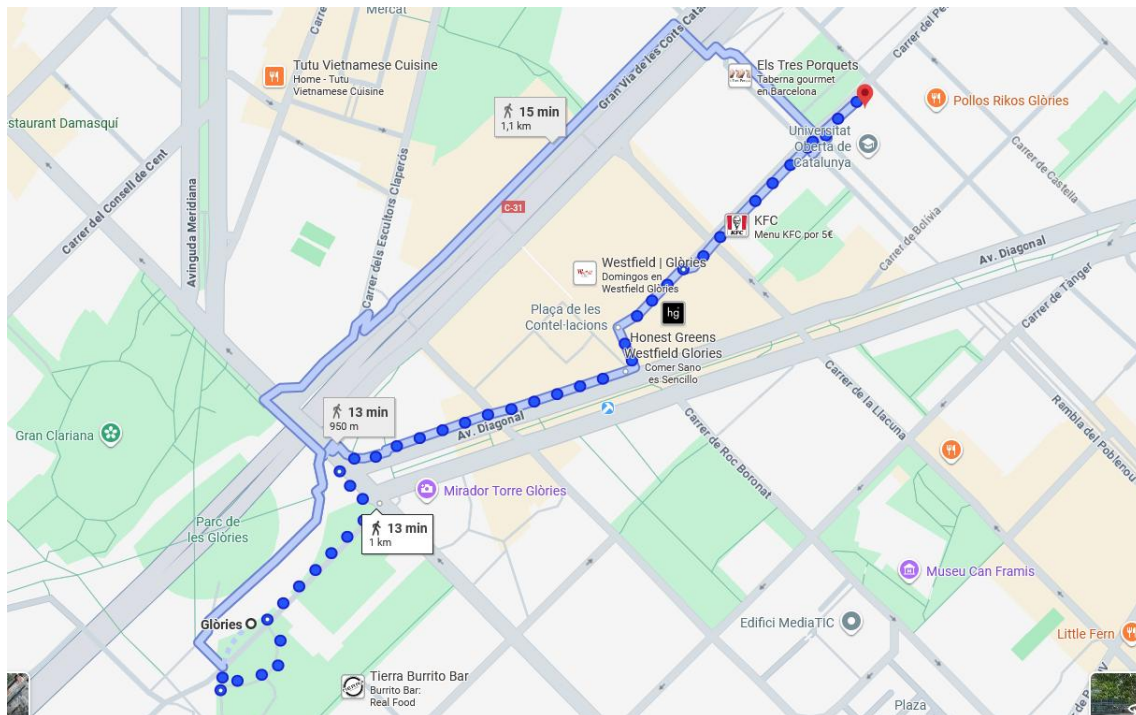
U building of the [Universitat Oberta de Catalunya](#) (UOC), in the city of Barcelona.

The Address: Can Jaumandreu Building (Building U), Calle Perú, 52, 08018 Barcelona

Front entry to the conference venue



Easiest way to get to the UOC: Follow the factory building “Can Jaumandreu”, which leads you to the conference venue.



You can also take tram T4 and get off at the station ‘Pere IV’



Registration area: UOC – Can Jaumandreu – entrance hall

Exhibition room: U1.14 (Virtual Reality Room), open during the entire conference

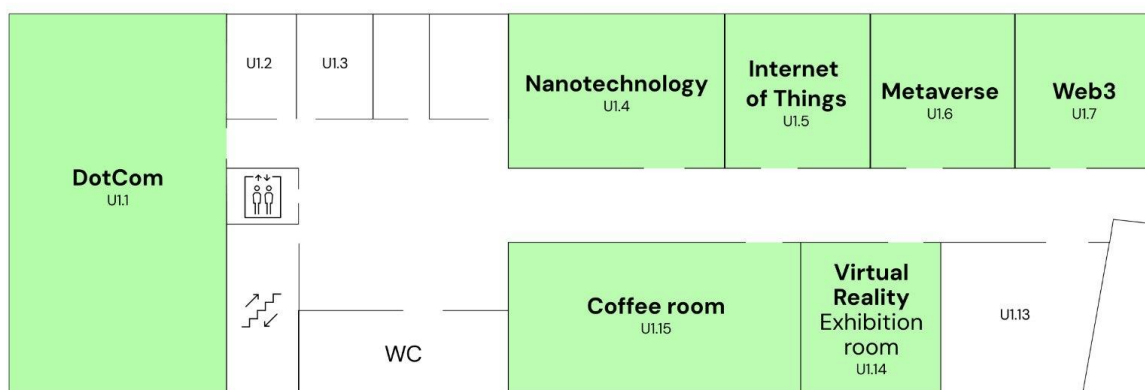
Coffee room: U1.15

Note that the rooms have been renamed after various waves of hype.

Party Venue: Sala Taro ([c/ Rossend Atús, 9](#))

Before the party we'll have an **informal gathering** at [Plaça Osca](#)

The entire conference will be on the first floor with the exception of the keynote that will take place in the ground floor:



Recommendations for lunch/coffee

There will be coffee and drinks available throughout the event (please forgive us if we run out – we're running on a limited budget). We will find our ways to improvise in that case.

You will need to find your own lunch during each day. Below you'll find a few suggestions for spots to go when you're in need of extra caffeine or a bite to eat.

Lunch near conference venue

[Silva Bar](#) – c/ Peru 58 – Nicely typical, working class, good menu restaurant.

[Morgentau](#) – c/ de la Llacuna, 114 – Tasty brunch-style hipster vegan restaurant

[Rikos Pollos](#) – c/ de Sant Joan de Malta, 119 – Peruvian restaurant. Amazing chicken and ceviche

[Els tres porquets](#) – [Rambla del Poblenou, 165](#) – Tapas bar with a personal touch

[Yoshinoia-8](#) – [Rambla del Poblenou, 153](#) – Japanese buffet, decent food

[Unaimon](#) – c/ [de la Llacuna, 142](#) – Good ramen noodles, vegan options

[Shogoin](#) – c/ [de Bolívia, 91](#) – Fusion peruvian japanese. Great food

[L'Actiu](#) – c/ [de la Llacuna, 162](#) – Good menu, good food. Nice veggie options

[Healthy Poke](#) – c/ de la Llacuna, 118 – The typical hipster poke bowl

And you have also this [shopping mall](#) with plenty of restaurants

Coffee - Sweets

[The Garden Brunch Café](#) – Rambla del Poblenou, 147

[El Fornet](#) – c/ Gran Via 942

Dinner - at the city center

[Espai Puntal](#) – [Plaça de Sant Cugat, 1](#) – Great local ecological food, great transition design project

[La Pachuca](#) – c/ [de la Carabassa, 19](#) – Amazing mexican food, great micheladas

[Teresa Carles](#) – c/ de Jovellanos, 2 – One of the oldest vegetarian restaurants in town. Delicious.

[Na Mindona](#) – c/ de la Riereta, 8 – Traditional food from Menorca. You'll feel like at home.

[Bar Fidel](#) – c/ de Ferlandina, 24 – Sandwich bar. Affordable and good.

[Bar El Pollo](#) – c/ del Tigre, 31 – Great tortillas, it was recommended by Rosalia. Needs reservation

Do's and Don'ts

During the conference a great mix of people with different backgrounds will meet and engage with each other. From students to established professors, from journalists to artists, from locals in Barcelona to interested hype scholars from all around the world.

We want this to be a kind, supportive, and encouraging environment. To help make that possible, we ask everyone to:

- Listen generously, be considerate in discussion, and acknowledge diverse perspectives.
- Be curious and ask constructive questions.
- Be open-minded and respectful.

Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected, if anything arises that makes you or others uncomfortable, please reach out to the organizers directly, we are here to help. Numbers for the awareness team can be found above in the contacts (page 5).

When you chair a panel...

As chair, you are responsible for moderation and time-keeping – and enabling a nice discussion climate in the room. Be aware that all presentations will last not more than 15 minutes. Please be strict about time keeping as we want there to be enough room for discussion. Regarding the exact schedule of the two hours, we would suggest that after every presentation, you leave 10 minutes for questions, and in the end allocate 20 minutes to have a more general discussion and connect all presentations with take-aways. But we leave it up to you to schedule the panel as you see fit. Additionally, we ask you to prepare back-up discussion questions so that might the room fall silent, you are prepared to initiate a discussion.

Very important: As panel chair, please make sure that your panellists send you their presentations in advance over email. You will have to upload it to this [online folder](#). Make sure that all slides are allocated in the right folder, corresponding to your panel slot and room (see the programme details below).

This will be the only way of accessing the presentations. As we do a hybrid conference, we need to centralize the files for desk sharing.

When you are presenting...

Very important: please make sure to send your slides to your panel chair in advance via email. If your chair hasn't contacted you before the 8th of September, please contact us.

Each panel is two hours. We ask that your presentation is **no longer than 15 minutes**. The detailed schedule of the panel will be up to the chair, who will contact you about this. We encourage the chairs (and yourselves) to centre around discussion, so think ahead about questions and discussion points on your own as well as your fellow panellists' topics.

Additionally, we ask you to go through our [resources page](#) and think about how your presentation contributes to hype studies.

Lastly, we do not expect you to hand in a full paper or your slides, though we do welcome these documents after the conference to put on our website on the [resources page](#). Please also let us know if your presentation might be controversial or triggering, then we will make sure to provide a content warning in the programme booklet.

Art Exhibits & Video Screenings

Come along the art hall to have a look at our hype exhibits (*Virtual Reality room*). Creative minds and designers crafted their very own interpretation of the different facets of hype. Across the conference venue they will showcase objects, illustrations, pictures and installations. They will all be attending the conference, so feel free to ask them about their work.

Many video artists have also submitted their artworks to the conference. A collective video screening is scheduled on the 13th of December, 12.15–13.00 (*DotCom room*).

Shared Literature Desk

Do you want to share the paper you presented? Do you have a magazine, zine or art collective related to hype you want to present? Bring your papers, flyers and stickers along! No matter if sample pieces or copies for free – we will set up a dedicated space in the conference floor to exchange and browse what your fellow hypesters work on!

The Party!

Venue: Sala Taro

[c/ Rossend Atús, 9](#)

Subway stop: Plaça de Sants (blue and red line)

Sala Taro, in the heart of Sants, is a small but lively venue that combines an avantgarde music program with casual parties for the neighbourhood. Sants itself has a long history of cooperativism and social movements, and today it is a hub for the social and solidarity economy in Barcelona. In this context, Sala Taro has become a meeting point for young local musicians experimenting with new sounds, while also keeping a warm, familiar atmosphere where neighbours gather to celebrate and connect. We are joined by three DJs specialising in music that evokes and dismantles hype simultaneously. Prepare your dance moves or nerdy conversations.

Line-up

20:30–22:30: DJ FOMO is interested in UK sounds for the last 10 years and centered on rhythms, dance, and kuduro. DJ FOMO will be there to provide a careful selection aimed at having a good time without expectations.

22:30–00:30: DJ **onesecafterthelaughter** will blend eclectic sounds at the dub/indie rap/drum'n'bass/prog rock spectrum. Has been DJing since 2007 and resurfaced after a 10-year hiatus recently.

00:30–02:30: **Wenzel Mehnert** will be finishing up with deep techno.

02:30–03:00: **Mash-up** and curfew.

Before the party we'll have an informal gathering at [Plaça Osca](#), the liveliest square in the neighbourhood of Sants, full of restaurants and bars. Plaça Osca is 5 minutes from Sala Taro. We plan to grab a quick bite, have a drink, and then head to the party venue.

Bars where we can eat and drink before the party

[Vermut i a la Gàbia](#)

[La Mestressa](#)

[Restaurant Simbad](#) (Palestinian restaurant, 5 min from Plaça Osca)

[Fenicia](#) (Very good lebanese, 5 min from Plaça Osca)

Conference Co-Chairs and Scientific Committee

Andreu Belsunces Gonçalves is a sociologist of design, technology, and imagination. His research practices engage empirical, speculative, design-led and artistic methods to explore how material futures emerge through the interplay of technology, industry, policy and finance, particularly in relation to uncertainty, hype and fiction. He is a lecturer in Science and Technology Studies, as well as critical and speculative design, across several BA and MA at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), ELISAVA and ESCAC among others. He is co-founder of the design futures studio [Becoming](#) and member of the ecosocial transition design cooperative [Holon](#). He is currently a PhD candidate at the research group [Tecnopolítica/CNSC](#) at UOC, where he develops the notion of sociotechnical fiction and explores its agencies in relation to cyberlibertarianism. His artistic research is presented at [engineering-fiction.org](#).

Jascha Bareis is a Political scientist, STS and Media scholar. His passion lies at the crossroads of questions of normativity, political communication and futures. Currently, he analyzes and comments on the politics of AI, tech oligarchy, and the field of autonomous weapons. Other fields of expertise include technology assessment, trust in technology, and democratic theory. He is senior researcher at the University of Fribourg, joining the [HUMAN-IST](#) institute to research the performativity of AI. Further, he is scientific staff at the Institute of Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis ([ITAS](#)), research group Digital Technologies and Societal Change.

Pierre Depaz is a researcher and programmer with backgrounds in political science, game design and comparative literature. [His work](#) gravitates around software—how it represents the world and how it redistributes agency to its environment, with a specific focus on source code, programming languages and protocols as mediating forces in human discursive interactions. He is a researcher in media philosophy at the [HfG Karlsruhe](#) after defending a [PhD thesis](#) at Paris-3 Sorbonne Nouvelle on the aesthetics of source code.

Vassilis Galanos, SFHEA is Lecturer in Digital Work at the University of Stirling, investigating historico-sociological underpinnings of AI and internet technologies, and how expertise and expectations are negotiated in these domains to generate profit out of hype. Recent projects explore risks of Generative AI in journalism and its role in Higher Education, artist-data scientist interactions, and community-led digital innovation. Vassilis co-founded the AI Ethics & Society research group and the HaPoC's Working Group on Data Sharing and acts as Associate Editor of Technology Analysis and Strategic Management. Abstains from meat and has jammed with the Sun Ra Arkestra. [More info](#)

Isa Luiten is a research assistant at the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). She is currently

pursuing a master's in Science and Technology Studies at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, building on her background in Cultural Anthropology. Her research explores the intersection of infrastructure studies and policy, with a focus on how governmental organizations structure emerging technologies. In her thesis, she examines policy as infrastructure in the European space sector, analyzing the ways in which conferences, funding schemes, and institutional networks shape the development of the 'hyped up' NewSpace imaginary.

Wenzel Mehnert is a futurologist focusing on the imaginaries of new and emerging technologies. He researches, writes and teaches experimental methods of futurology. In his work, Wenzel Mehnert focuses on the intersection between speculative fictions and the evaluation of new and emerging sciences and technologies (e.g. A.I., SynBio, Internet of Things, etc.). He worked as a researcher at the Berlin University of the Arts, co-founded the Berlin Ethics Lab at the Technical University of Berlin and currently lives in Vienna, where he works at the Austrian Institute of Technology and the ethics of new and emerging technologies.

Ola Michalec is a Lecturer in Digital Futures at the Bristol University Business School and Bristol Digital Futures Institute. Ola's research interests revolve around understanding how experts from diverse fields resolve tensions between maintaining and innovating critical infrastructures, with a particular focus on energy systems. Her current project explores the ebbs and flows of hype in the context of developing digital twins in the UK. Ola plays an active role in several communities such as [the Research Institute for Sociotechnical Cyber Security](#) or the Advisory Board for the Alan Turing Institute Digital Twin Network+.

Dani Shanley is an Assistant Professor in the Philosophy Department at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University in the Netherlands. Dani's expertise is mainly within science and technology studies (STS) and the philosophy of technology, with a particular focus on reflexive, participatory design methodologies (or, responsible innovation), such as social labs and value sensitive design (VSD). Dani currently works on AI and robotics, thinking with and through the lenses of responsibility, hype, and bullshit.

Illustrations by Alex Wifi – alexwifi.com

Graphic Design by Maria Antunes – mariaantunes.com @maria.v.antunes

HYPE STUDIES CONFERENCE

(Don't) believe the hype!? | 10-12th of September | Barcelona

Final Programme

Day 1 | 10.09.2025

9.30 – 13.30: Registration desk open

10.00 – 11.00: **Welcome and programme presentation** (*DotCom Room*)

11.00 – 11.30: Coffee break

11.30 – 13.30: **Panel session 1**

1. *DotCom Room*: AI Hype: Between Power and Resistance
2. *Nanotechnology Room*: Energy Hype: Green Futures and Controversies
3. *Internet of Things Room*: Commodification, Libido and Emotions in Hype
4. *Metaverse Room*: Internet of Things Room: Hype, Entrepreneurship, Venture Capital, and Emerging Technologies
5. *Web 3 Room*: Hype in Science and its Histories

13.30 – 15.00: Lunch

15.00 – 16.30: **Workshop (and Panel) session A**

1. *DotCom Room*: After Hype (hybrid book presentation)
2. *Nanotechnology Room*: Shitpublishing Workshop (in person workshop)
3. *Internet of Things Room*: A Quantum of Hope: putting quantum science & tech on the theater stage (in person workshop)
4. *Metaverse Room*: Hype, Human Flourishing™ and its Discontents" (online workshop)
5. *Web 3 Room*: (STARTS AT 14:00!) Exploring metaphors of AI: Visualisations, narratives and perception (online panel)

Virtual Reality Room: **Arts Exhibition**

16.30 – 17.00: Coffee break

17.00 – 18.30: **Keynote** by Gemma Milne: Hype and the Age of Badness (in room UO.2, ground floor)

Day 2 | 11.09.2025

9:00 – 13:30: Registration desk open

9:00 – 11:00: **Panel session 2**

6. *DotCom Room*: Socio-Ethical Dilemmas and Health Hype
7. *Nanotechnology Room*: Political Communication and Disinformation
8. *Internet of Things Room*: Decoding Scripts and Rituals of Hype
9. *Metaverse Room*: Hype, Emotions and Panics
10. *Web 3 Room*: What Hype Obscures: Hidden Labour and Environmental Impacts

11:00 – 11:30: Coffee break

11:30 – 13:30: **Panel session 3**

11. *DotCom Room*: Materiality and Infrastructure of Hype
12. *Nanotechnology Room*: Awards, Fashions, and Social Dynamics
13. *Internet of Things Room*: Hype, Culture & Identity
14. *Metaverse Room*: Music, Aesthetics and Theatre
15. *Web 3 Room*: Governing through hype: Politics & Legitimacy

13.30 – 15:00: Lunch

15:00 – 16:30: **Workshop session B**

6. *DotCom Room*: Locating Hype: Digital qualitative methods across sites and forms (an in person open discussion)
7. *Nanotechnology Room*: Humbling Tech Hype: Assessing Change and Continuity (in person workshop)
8. *Internet of Things Room*: A collective critical cartography of hype (in person workshop)
9. *Metaverse Room*: Investigating Datasets – The underbelly of the AI Hype (hybrid workshop)
10. *Web 3 Room*: Hype Was Here: Tracing the ghosts of collective excitement (in person workshop)

Virtual Reality Room: **Arts Exhibition**

16:30 – 17:00: Coffee break

17:00 – 18:30: **Plenary Panel discussion** with Christo Buschek, Ola Michalec, Oksana Dorofeeva, Jack Stilgoe and Gemma Milne. Moderated by Vassilis Galanos. (*DotCom Room*)

19:00 – Party warm-up: informal gathering for food at *Plaça Osca*

20:00 – Whoop: **Party** at *Sala Taro!*

Day 3 | 12.09.2025

9:00 – 10:00: Registration desk open (**Reminder:** grab your own coffee for this morning!)

10:00 – 12:00: **Panel session 4**

16. *DotCom Room*: AI in Daily Life: Affective and Everyday Interventions
17. *Nanotechnology Room*: Hype, Education, and Public Communication
18. *Internet of Things Room*: Intervening with the AI Hype
19. *Metaverse Room*: Hype and Resistance: Alternative Futures
20. *Web 3 Room*: Towards New Theorizations of Hype

12:15 – 13:00: **Video screening** (*DotCom room*)

13.30 – 15.00: Lunch

15:00 – 16:30: **Workshop session C**

11. *DotCom Room*: Queering Hype: A Playable Workshop for Trans/forming Predictive AI (in person workshop)
12. *Nanotechnology Room*: When Hype breaks the City (online workshop)
13. *Internet of Things Room*: Detectives of Hype: Surfacing Bias and Worldviews in Our Sensemaking Processes (in person workshop)
14. *Metaverse Room*: I want to be a Caring Trickster! An Emo Hype with Potential? (online workshop)
15. *Web 3 Room*: Digging into Hype: Multiplayer Mining for Meaning (online workshop)

Virtual Reality Room: **Arts Exhibition**

16:30 – 17:00: Coffee break

17:00 – 18:00: **Closing of the conference** (*DotCom Room*)