



Call for Papers 11th Dauphine Philosophy Workshop (DPW)¹

The Incomplete Organization of our Times:
When the not (yet) matters in the aesthetic experience of organizing

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¹ The Dauphine Philosophy Workshop (DPW), formerly known as the Dauphine Phenomenology Workshop, was launched in 2017. It focuses on philosophical discussions of organization and organizing, particularly (but not exclusively) in the context of French and continental philosophy. Since 2024, it has included a sub-cycle on negative ontologies of organizing (which will end in 2028). The Organologia Institute of PSL hosts and organizes it, with support from Dauphine Recherche en Management (DRM) and Université Paris Dauphine-PSL.

Organizational life is shaped by things that are unfinished, absent, or do not happen: a project left incomplete, an imperfect product, an empty workspace, a decision repeatedly postponed, an avoided crisis. How do these absences participate in organizing? This workshop invites participants to explore this question through the aesthetics of imagery, form, and craft.

As starting points for clarity, we use ‘incompleteness’ for what remains unfinished or not yet realized, ‘absence’ for what is missing or withheld within a particular situation, and ‘non-events’ for anticipated or possible occurrences that do not take place. ‘Nothingness’ names the broader philosophical question of how what is not there can nevertheless matter. These orientations are provisional and open to challenges. We approach time and space as dimensions of these phenomena: ‘non-time’ concerns interruptions, rhythms, and suspensions of established temporal orders, illustrated by waiting, deferred decisions, and unfilled intervals; ‘non-space’ concerns gaps, exclusions, or unoccupied spaces within spatial arrangements. Neither term implies the literal disappearance of time or space. We ask how such phenomena become aesthetic and managerial resources, including in contemporary capitalism, and how they may also escape or challenge managerial purposes.

The philosophical resources for thinking nothingness are old and rich. Heidegger’s meditation on being and time remains a reference point for thinking about how absence and finitude structure human dwelling and world-making (Heidegger, 1962). Sartre’s phenomenology of nothingness (*néant*) as constitutive of consciousness and freedom offers a further route into thinking the productive, rather than merely privative, status of the void (Sartre, 1956). In organization studies, this philosophical inheritance has been extended to questions of temporality, rhythm, and duration. The organizational aesthetics tradition offers a further, complementary route. Strati (1999) established the aesthetic dimension of organizational life as a legitimate object of inquiry in its own right, irreducible to cognitive or rational-instrumental accounts, while de Monthoux (2004) traced how firms borrow from artistic practice to stage value through aesthetic and even “metaphysical” means. Statler and Roos’s (2007) work on practical wisdom and improvisation in organizations adds a craft-based dimension to this conversation, foregrounding the embodied, situational skill through which actors – and, we would add, designers and platforms improvise with absence, pause, and open form.

Spatially, Augé’s (1995) account of “non-places” identifies transit settings, such as airports and generic infrastructures, through their limited capacity to sustain relations, histories, and identities. Non-place is thus a specific way of interpreting places, rather than a synonym for non-space or a place without physical existence. It offers a starting point for asking whether, and under what conditions, digital interfaces become settings of passage rather than dwelling. Foucault’s (1986) notion of heterotopia, and de Certeau’s (1984) attention to the tactics through which ordinary users inhabit and subvert imposed spatial orders provide further resources for examining how spatial arrangements are designed and negotiated. Temporally, waiting, interruption, and the disappearance of recurring rituals invite questions about how shared rhythms are suspended or reconfigured. Han’s accounts of “non-things” (2022) and the disappearance of rituals (2020) connect these spatial and temporal questions to transformations of experience under digital capitalism.

Contemporary capitalism, and digital capitalism in particular, no longer only organizes presence, production, and accumulation. It increasingly organizes **absence through images and a larger digital esthetics**: interruption, silence, blank space, waiting, buffering, the pause

between notifications, the empty white interface, the minimalist product photograph, the “nothing” that frames the “something” we are meant to desire. Voids, gaps, and interruptions have become aesthetic and managerial resources in their own right — curated, monetized, and put to work.

Dominant managerial imaginaries associated with industrial modernity have privileged visible structures, measurable outputs, and time divided into productive increments. Such imaginaries make some dimensions of organizing legible while leaving others difficult to recognize: pauses, unfinished practices, tacit relations, and possibilities that never become events. The workshop asks how these commitments to visibility, measurability, and completion shape organizational inquiry, and what aesthetic and philosophical approaches can disclose when those commitments are questioned.

A central ambition of this workshop is to open inquiry beyond the dominant Euro-American genealogies without treating “Western” and “non-Western” thought as homogeneous or opposed traditions. The generative account of nothingness already discussed in phenomenology provides one reason to resist that binary. Other philosophical traditions offer distinct resources for questioning how absence, intervals, and incompleteness matter. These include the Japanese aesthetic notion of *ma* (間), the interval that gives rhythm and meaning to what surrounds it; the Zen Buddhist accounts of emptiness (*śūnyatā*); Daoist thought on non-being (*wu*, 無); and the Kyoto School’s inquiries into “absolute nothingness” (*zettai mu*) developed by Nishida (1970) and Nishitani (1982). These concepts should be examined in their specific histories and intellectual contexts, rather than treated as interchangeable versions of a productive void: they offer a conceptual vocabulary in which emptiness is neither failure nor mere negation but a productive, world-disclosing condition. Mobilizing these traditions — carefully, and without exoticizing or flattening them into a decorative “Eastern” counterpoint to Western theory — allows us to denaturalize the assumption that capitalist aestheticization of the void is philosophically neutral or universal. Bringing them into dialogue with organization studies can help question the assumptions through which capitalist imagery and managerial practices appropriate emptiness as minimalist virtue or mindful pause. Critical and decolonial approaches further invite us to ask whose rhythms, silences, and absences are being organized, by whom, and for what ends (e.g., Akbari-Dibavar & Emiljanowicz, 2019). We particularly encourage contributions that allow these traditions to challenge the workshop’s own vocabulary of void, absence, time, space, and organization.

Topics & Objectives

“We put 30 spokes together and call it a wheel; but it is on the space where there is nothing that the utility of the wheel depends on.” – Laozi, Dao De Jing

The opening question concerns how what is absent or unrealized participates in organizational life. Our objective is to connect philosophical inquiry with the concrete practices through which actors encounter, shape, or contest incompleteness, intervals, and non-events. We aim to explore the “negative places” of organizations across both spatial and temporal dimensions: empty or excluded spaces, experiences of non-place, waiting, pauses, deferred decisions, and temporal interruptions. We ask how these phenomena affect organizational form and experience, and whether concepts such as non-space and non-time clarify them or require reconsideration. This

inquiry keeps attention on how organizations are inhabited, sustained, interrupted, and sometimes dissolved.

To do this, we turn to post-structuralist critiques (Derrida, Deleuze, Lacan), Critical Management Studies (CMS), and philosophical and intellectual traditions beyond dominant Euro-American genealogies, including Japanese, Chinese, Indian, African, and South American philosophies, as well as literature. We invite contributors to specify texts, histories, and contexts with which they engage, and to explain how these resources help rethink tempos, rhythms, and absences of organizing.

We welcome contributions that build on, critique, or extend emerging movements in organization studies that prioritize the **incomplete**, the **unrealized**, the **repressed**, the indistinguishable and the **invisible** aspects of management education and organizational design (e.g., de Vaujany, 2025; de Vaujany, Pulk & Lenglet, 2027; Quattrone, 2015).

Suggested Areas of Inquiry

We welcome philosophical, theoretical, and highly unconventional conceptual papers addressing (but not limited to) the following themes:

1. The aesthetics of voids, absences, and non-events

- Discussions around art and **the aesthetics of absence and void**, and what it brings to the conceptualization of organization or organizing as such;
- **Drawing, crafting, designing an aesthetics** of voids and absence for products, services, management and organization(s)

2. Nothingness, incompleteness, and the power of non-events

- **The incomplete organization and “the void”**: How does the “not (yet)” shape the everyday reality of organizing? We invite explorations on how perpetual incompleteness drives processual energy (de Vaujany, Pulk & Lenglet, 2027). How do visual and material practices “govern the void” or map organizational unknowns (Quattrone, 2015)?
- **The ontology of non-events**: Organizational life is packed with things that *do not* happen—canceled projects, avoided crises, silent resistance. How do we conceptualize “nothingness” and “non-events” in theory and management education (de Vaujany, 2025)?
- **The repressed and the Lacanian lack**: Drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, how does the fundamental “lack” (*manque-à-être*) fuel organizational desire, fantasy, and the endless search for a structural completeness that never arrives (Arnaud, 2012; Contu, 2008)?
- **Nothingness and emptiness**: How might Kyoto School inquiries into absolute nothingness (Nishida, 1970; Nishitani, 1982) or Buddhist accounts of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) challenge the workshop’s own vocabulary of “void”, “absence”, and “organization”? What becomes possible when these perspectives question the categories

of time and space used in organizational inquiry, rather than simply supplying additional illustrations of them?

3. Spacing and timing: Non-place, non-work, and deconstruction

- **Non-places of organizing:** Drawing from Augé's (1995) account of non-places, how do experiences of transit, anonymity, and temporary occupation shape organizing in physical and digital settings? How do such places relate to broader spatial arrangements and to the rhythms of passage, waiting, and dwelling?
- **Derridean *différance* and the ghostly organization:** Using Jacques Derrida's ideas of deconstruction, trace, and spectrality (Derrida, 1982) to examine how presence is always deferred in organizing. How do "ghostly" structures and absent actors still organize current practices?
- **Non-work, silence, and escapism:** In Critical Management Studies, how do "empty spaces," "non-work" activities, and deliberate silence serve as subtle forms of survival or escape from corporate colonization (Fleming, 2005; Fleming & Spicer, 2008)?

4. Tempos, assemblages, and rhythms beyond musicology

- **Rhythmanalysis of the everyday:** Building on Lefebvre's (2004) *rhythmanalysis*, how do we capture the embodied, ecological, and everyday rhythms of labor? What do pauses, waiting, and interrupted routines reveal about organizational time? How do such experiences relate to, or challenge, the proposed category of "non-time"?
- **Deleuzian assemblages & lines of flight:** How do Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of *smooth vs. striated space*, *deterritorialization*, and *lines of flight* help us conceptualize organizing as a fluid, nomadic, and non-linear movement of becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Thanem & Linstead, 2006)?

5. Philosophical traditions and decolonizing CMS

- **Daoist *Wu Wei* (无为):** How can accounts of non-action or effortless action inform inquiry into leadership, intervention, and organizational emergence? What assumptions are challenged when *wu wei* is questioned in its philosophical context rather than translated directly into a managerial technique?
- **Andean *Buen Vivir* (Sumak Kawsay):** how do situated accounts of collective well-being question capitalist assumptions about organizing, ecological relations, and community rhythms? What do they invite organizational scholars to reconsider about the relationship between human and more-than-human life?
- **African philosophy and relational time:** How might specific African philosophical traditions – such as *Ubuntu* accounts of personhood as constituted through relations with others – challenge organizational assumptions about individual performance, autonomy, and achievement? How might conceptions of time organized around events, intergenerational relations, or obligations to past and future others disturb dominant notions of linear, standardized and individual time?

- **Southern voices and decolonial critiques:** How can postcolonial theory and “Southern” epistemologies de-center Eurocentric, linear management doctrines (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Jack et al., 2011; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008)?

6. Non-Western literature as an epistemological mirror

- **Alternative narrative rhythms:** How do particular works of magical realism, oral storytelling, or non-linear prose offer other ways of writing and reading organizational lives? How do their narrative forms make absence, interruptions, or unrealized possibilities perceptible?
- **Decolonizing the narrative:** Using fictional archives to expose the silences, margins, and invisible rhythms of colonial and post-colonial organizing.

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Submission guidelines and important dates

We invite abstract submissions (between **500 and 800 words**, excluding references) that clearly outline the theoretical framework, philosophical tradition, and contribution to organization studies.

- **Abstract submission deadline:** 5 February 2027
- **Notification of acceptance:** 18 February 2027
- **Workshop dates & location:** 16 June 2027

Please send your submissions in .docx format to workshopoap@gmail.com stating clearly that your contribution is aimed at DPW (and not OAP or GeoHos).

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