

Call for Papers
Endometriosis (R)Evolution: Making the Invisible Visible
University of Graz, Austria
May 23, 2024 - May 24, 2024

Endometriosis is nicknamed “the invisible illness.” In (bio)medical literature, the invisibility refers to diagnostic difficulties: the inadequacy of medical imaging devices, insufficiency of hormone blood tests, ambiguity of symptoms, as well as the fact that the condition is not externally visible. This invisibility, however, also translates to a cultural and social context. The direct connection between endometriosis and menstruation makes endometriosis a tabooed subject by association. Those affected by endometriosis are silenced by the stigma that surrounds menstruation and female reproductive health. The gender-bias at work in medical systems plays a big role in the erasure of female pain and the dismissal of female ailments. Furthermore, people with endometriosis themselves lack visibility in social context: not being visibly ill makes their status as chronically ill and/or disabled invisible, they are seldom addressed in social discourse, and they are largely under-represented in both political and cultural discourses.

In recent years, this imposed silence has been recognized and challenged, with patient advocates, activists, and artist actively working on breaking it by creating visibility and supporting patient-driven research.

Endometriosis (R)Evolution: Making the Invisible Visible aims to gather scholars from different fields who are able to offer a contemporary view on the medical, social, and cultural realities of endometriosis. This conference aims to highlight work which deals with the deconstruction of medical gender-bias and cultural taboos which directly affect the treatment, care, and life experiences of those affected by endometriosis.

We are accepting papers including, but not limited to, the following fields of study:

- Narrative Medicine/Medical Humanities/Health Humanities
- Cultural Studies
- Gender Studies
- Literary Studies
- Social Science
- Film, photography, and media

Relevant topics include, but are not limited to:

- The effect of gender-bias in medicine on treatment received by endometriosis patients
- Endometriosis and quality of life
- Endometriosis activism
- Endometriosis representation in the media, popular culture, and the arts
- Menstruation, taboo, and hysteria
- Endometriosis and the LGBTQ+ community
- Endometriosis and menopause
- Endometriosis in a historical framework

How to apply:

Please send an abstract no longer than 200 words as well as a short biography written in third person (150 words max) as an attached Word document to the following email address: cirac@uni-graz.at

Submission deadline: February 1, 2024

Notification of acceptance: February 29, 2024

We are accepting proposals for panels (maximum three papers per panel). We are also accepting proposals for interactive workshops (creative writing, arts and activism are welcomed topics).

Conference details:

Organizing institution:

Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Aging and Care - CIRAC

University of Graz, Austria

Duration of conference:

May 23, 2024 - May 24, 2024

Location of conference:

University of Graz, Austria

[Forum Stadtpark](#)



Type of conference:
In-person presentations and attendance

Program outline:

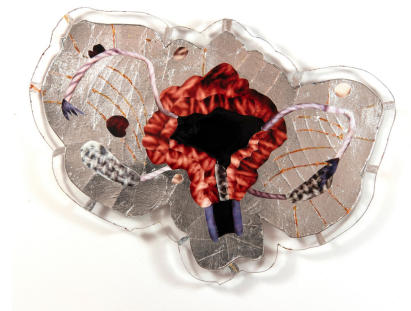
May 23, 2024 - Keynote lecture and art exhibition from Rachael Jablo

May 24, 2024 - Full day conference: paper presentations, an interactive workshop, coffee breaks, catered lunch

Conference fee:

There is no conference fee

Keynote Speaker: Rachael Jablo



Rachael Jablo is a chronically ill Berlin-based US-American artist who works with photography, installation, and collage. Dealing with issues of the feminine, the body and mythology, she joins analog photographic techniques with collage, as well as the occasional traditional photography.

Rachael Jablo will be holding a keynote lecture and opening the exhibition of selected pieces from her work "The Hysteria Project":

"The Hysteria Project is a one-on-one storytelling project dealing with menstruation, reproductive, and pelvic disorders, illustrated by individual portraits of participants' reproductive organs based on their stories. These life-size, intimate works start in a traditional darkroom where I use lace instead of negatives to make color prints that I cut up and collage onto a gold leaf background. The exhibited works are mounted in gilded laser-cut plexiglass frames.

The process of actively listening to people tell the narrative of their bodies, sometimes for the first time, is as vital as the actual artworks. This is listening as activism. Many storytellers have suffered silently for many years. Some had never talked to anyone, because in many cultures menstruation and illness are taboo. And the thing that virtually all of us share is having our experiences dismissed by the medical community.

The online archive of stories and artwork is searchable by symptom, diagnosis, and keyword. People with gynecological disorders can thus read stories and see that they are not alone in their experiences. Moreover, doctors and future medical practitioners can learn from our lived experience and become better, more compassionate caregivers.”

Taken from The Hysteria Project website, www.hysteriaproject.org

This event is part of the In/Visible Endometriosis: Menstruation, Menopause, and Narrative Medicine project carried out at CIRAC. The project is sponsored by the Elisabeth-List-Fellowship-Programme for Gender Research.

For further information, contact us via email: cirac@uni-graz.at

Sincerely,

The *In/Visible Endometriosis* team:

Prof. Dr. Ulla Kriebnerneegg

Prof. Dr. Anita Wohlmann

Alekszandra Rokvity, MA

Laura Sigmund, MA

Art pieces on previous page by Rachael Jablo, in the following order:

Macarena (she/her, 42, Latina, in Chile), with deep infiltrating endometriosis, adenomyosis, and fibroids,

Jessica (she/her, 41, White, in US), undiagnosed,

Alex (he/him, 21, White, in England) with endometriosis

