

*The encounter* – the act of meeting, engaging with, or confronting – is a central feature both in ethnography, in art, and in pedagogy, yet in different ways. The idea in the *Encounters* project has been to explore the potential and properties – and the critique – of encounters as methodology, through our practices as educators and students, researchers, and artists. The partner institutions – three higher education institutions and three arts and cultural institutions in Europe, and a US associate partner – set out to meet regularly for joint explorations. Our plans for the period 2019-2022 included summer courses in Lesbos, student exhibitions in Athens, and workshops in Amsterdam, London and Norway.

Like everyone else, we had to change our plans. We acknowledge that not being able to carry out a project as planned is a very small and privileged problem compared to those of sickness, death, loss of jobs or businesses, and the general fear for security, which is the toll the pandemic has taken. However, there are still other, daily-life experiences arising from this situation that might be significant and worth exploring and discussing, both to reflect on and develop our fields of practice, but also to see what these fields might contribute to daily life.

So, we turned to carrying out local explorations of encounters, each in the surroundings where we were able to act; in the confinement of a flat, through digital meetings and spaces of online communication and education, or through experimental ways of being together digitally. Others have explored encounters in places where we were supposedly not allowed to meet, but where life and encounters seeped out anyway. Others experienced encounters through walking, alone or together, or connected online. Some explored attempts at care and self-care, some were experiencing what was happening to our bodies and our social relations. We were rethinking our practices and exploring what *encounters* might mean at all in the midst of this.

This first issue of the *Encounters* editorial addresses these issues from hands-on experiences, and through a multi-faceted and multimodal publication.