

Precarious futures

Towards ~~the~~ (un)known (un)knowns

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Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We are also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter that tends to be the difficult ones.

Donald Rumsfeld (2002)

Dangers [also] lie in the “unknown knowns”—the beliefs, suppositions, and practices we pretend not to know about, even though they form the background of our values

Slavoj Žižek (2009)

virtual

The PGR Studio[^] conference | Friday 9th July 2021

Faculty of Arts, Design and Media | Birmingham City University

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

in 2002,

Rumsfeld famously divided the world into known knowns (the things we know we know), the known unknowns (the things we know we don't know), and the unknown unknowns (the things we do not (yet) know that we don't know). For him, the latter is where the most interesting, yet difficult, events take place. Away from Rumsfeld's contentious turn-of-the-century politics, his statement arguably encapsulates the precarious state(s) of knowledge and being in a world littered with current and future unknowns more than ever.

Known knowns, known unknowns, unknown knowns and unknown unknowns are all precarious states but also vital aspects of the research process. This one-day conference seeks to interrogate, provoke, explore, unpick, expose the various nuances of precarity, the (un)known and the complexities of how these states manifest and are conceptualised in arts, design, media research. **Precarious Futures** invites a range of responses to these 'difficult' events and states as a platform to expose and articulate their potential, vitality and challenges that bring into question disciplines, paradigms, and methods.

(un)known Unknown unknown

How might we frame and/or utilise precarity and the (un)known in our research?
Can we give these concepts a language and what forms do they take?
How might research(ers) adapt to this precarious landscape and account for the yet (un)known (un)knowns?
How might we disrupt precarity and the con/divergence of the known and unknown?
What does a state of uncertainty mean for disciplines?
How might this work methodologically, epistemologically **and conceptually**?
What are the implications for our futures in and outside of research?

↓
and
otherwise

Precarious Futures invites contributions that engage with these broad themes and questions as they stem from and inform your research practice(s). Rather than providing exhaustive answers to these pressing questions, we hope that the conference will elicit new ways to critically explore precarity, future(s) and (un)knowns as they relate to arts, design and media research. Proposals from researchers at all stages and fields, including from those outside and at the edges of the arts or humanities are welcome that include the following:

- Short and focussed insights into your research | up to 5-minutes
- Presentations, expositions or provocations | up to 20-minutes
- Panel discussions or interactive workshops | up to 60 minutes
- Contributions in a form yet unknown to the conference organisers

Unknown

Please submit proposals to precariousfuturesconf@gmail.com by 7th June 2021 that include the following:

- **TITLE** | The title of your presentation/panel/session/unknown
- **ABSTRACT** | Outline your proposed contribution and how it relates to the conference themes in under 300 words (plus any relevant images and links)
- **FORMAT(S)** | Clearly state the preferred format that your contribution will take