A [Prolonged] Sobremesa: Lingering as Social, Political, and Transnational Practice

Call for Papers

Sobremesa at CECC

5–6 May 2027 | Católica University Portugal, Lisbon, Portugal

Rationale.

What becomes possible when we stay beyond the meal, beyond the event, and beyond the nation? Who is permitted to linger, and who is compelled to wait? What does it mean to remain together when the promises of hospitality, integration, and belonging have failed?

Sobremesa names the time spent at the table after a meal ends. This conference takes "a prolonged sobremesa" as a temporal, methodological, and political provocation, asking how lingering might reshape our understanding of social relations, cultural practices, and transnational connection.

To that end, the call is to re-examine the table as a site, metaphor, and concept that promised equity but continues to showcase the limitations of the project of integration – of individuals, communities, cultures, and nation-states. Invitations, seating arrangements, service, and departure raise questions about who hosts, who belongs, who performs the labour of hospitality, and who can afford to stay. The promise of conviviality must therefore be considered alongside the exclusions that sustain it: What happens when inclusion collapses into assimilation? When welcome becomes conditional, and the guest is expected to eventually leave? Can the architecture of the table be reconfigured, or must other forms of gathering be imagined?

Lingering also brings different experiences of time into tension. Choosing to remain is not the same as being prevented from leaving. The conference invito contributions that distinguish the pleasures of unhurried encounter from the exhaustion of waiting, while examining their intersections with labour, care, housing, migration, and the unequal right to remain. Whose presence is welcomed, whose is tolerated, and whose is policed? How might staying become a practice of solidarity, refusal, or political claim-making?

Beyond the nation-state, the conference examines how meals, memories, and practices of hospitality travel across borders through diasporic gatherings and digital encounters. Food practices offer a material lens through which to examine how memories, identities, and relationships with place are sustained or transformed across borders. What happens when return is restricted or the material conditions of home are no longer accessible? Against nationalist retrenchment and exclusionary politics, whose transnationalism survives, and under what conditions?

As part of the Sobremesa project's closing symposium, this conference also turns these questions towards research itself. What would it mean to prolong an encounter beyond the interview, workshop, exhibition, or funded project? How can research accommodate disagreement, unfinished conversations, and relationships that exceed institutional schedules? What responsibilities do artists, researchers, and institutions retain towards the communities whose experiences and knowledge inform their work? We welcome contributions that approach sobremesa not only as an object of study, but as an invitation to rethink how knowledge is produced, shared, and sustained.

We invite contributions addressing these questions from across the humanities, social sciences, artistic research, and practice-based inquiry.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

time

Post-meal conversations, care and reproductive labour, slowness, exhaustion, and unequal access to time across social and political differences.

gestures

Conditional hospitality, chosen lingering and enforced waiting, migration and border politics, and the contested right to remain.

narratives

Food, storytelling, diasporic and sensory memory, culinary adaptation, cultural commodification, and transnational solidarities across borders and generations.

inquiry

Artistic and collaborative research practices, reciprocity, community, authority, authorship, living archives, and responsibilities beyond institutional and project timelines.

spatiality

Gastronatonalism, third spaces, everyday sites of gathering and exclusion, and relationships with place shaped by displacement, dispossession, and restricted mobility.

—

Organised by Sobremesa in collaboration with the Research Centre for Communication and Culture (CECC) at the CATÓLICA University Portugal*, this conference forms part of the project's closing symposium (4-8 May 2027). Supported by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, Sobremesa explores migration, cultural identity, hospitality, and belonging through food, artistic practices, and community encounters.*

Keynote Speakers
Hicham Khalidi
Amanda Tavares
Claudio Morelli
Samsara Wiropranoto

Organisers: Dela Christin Miessen | Mariam Alnouri | Mervat Akrmawi | Aishwarya Kumar Iyer

Confirmed Scientific Committee

Diana **Gonçalves |** Peter **Hanenberg |** Alexandra **Lopes |** Adriana **Martins |** Luísa **Santos**

Format and Contributions

Reflecting its title, the conference will bring together paper sessions, extended roundtables, workshops, and post-meal discussions.

We invite 250-word abstracts for individual papers, panels, and practice-based interventions from disciplines including anthropology, sociology, political science, geography, migration and diaspora studies, food studies, memory studies, heritage studies, performance, and design.

Proposals for the Sobremesa Living Archive are also welcome.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit a 250-word abstract to **info@sobremesaproject.com**.

Include your name, institutional affiliation, the title of your proposed contribution, and format of presentation.

File naming format:

- Name_University_ConferencePaper
- Name_University_DigitalArchive

Important Dates

Milestone	Date
Submission deadline	15 December 2026
Selection decisions communicated	31 January 2027
Registration opens	15 March 2027
Registration closes	10 April 2027
Conference	5–6 May 2027

For more information about the project, please visit https://www.sobremesaproject.com/.