

# Editorial

We are delighted to present the first collection of *Roadsides* – a collaborative online publishing platform designed to be a forum devoted to exploring the social life of infrastructure. We understand the title *Roadsides* as a metaphorical proxy for all sorts of engagements arising alongside roads, rail tracks, pipelines, border fences, airports, houses, dams, and other kinds of infrastructure as they are imagined, contested, constructed, and maintained, and as they fall into disrepair. The platform offers space for reflection, for engaging in conversation with others, and a place to test new ideas before developing them into full-length articles and books.

The aim of *Roadsides* is to consider the work that infrastructure does culturally, politically, and socially, as well as the labour that goes into the making of infrastructure itself. We are also interested in the social biographies of materials, discourses, technologies, and knowledges out of which infrastructure is fashioned. A further aim of this platform is to understand how social relations are articulated through infrastructure, become layered into it, and produce new publics and subjectivities. The ways in which humans engage and disengage infrastructure, as well as how infrastructure (dis)engages humans will be at the core of the debate. At the same

time, we want explicitly to embed infrastructure in topography and climate, and to trace its trajectories through other-than-human temporalities. Devoting space to discussing and further developing an ethnographic methodology of infrastructure research is yet another goal for which we establish this platform.

In addition to providing space for exchange among students, academics, and non-academics, space that is currently still in-the-making, we will publish two curated thematic collections of texts a year, each comprising several individual contributions. The aim of each contribution will be to introduce one central argument or piece of analysis, and to illustrate it with an ethnographic vignette, photographs, drawings, video clips, and the like. The texts are meant to be short – around 1500 words each. As well as texts, we welcome multisensory contributions combining word, image, and sound. The intention of *Roadsides* is to create a graphically pleasing and, format-wise, lighter forum for exchange than a typical academic journal. Calls for contributions to thematic collections will be put up on the website twice a year.

*Roadsides* is a collaborative project. There is no editor-in-chief but an editorial team of eleven peers, among whom the position of managing editor rotates for each collection. The editorial team and guest co-editors oversee an open, double peer-review process to ensure consistently engaging and high-quality inputs, as well as timely publication on the website. *Roadsides* is a non-commercial project. The platform and the e-journal are funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the University of Zurich.

It has been less than six months since we started playing with the idea of creating this platform in the fall of 2018. The process of learning about digital publishing has been highly engaging. After these first few hectic months, we are delighted to present the initial collection of *Roadsides* entitled “Infrastructural Times” and curated by Agnieszka Joniak-Lüthi. For the upcoming collections we have a fascinating line-up of themes relating to infrastructural labour, the sounds of infrastructure, archival lives of infrastructure, logistics, and architecture – so stay tuned and consider subscribing to our publication alert!

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**Roadsides** is an open access journal designated to be a forum devoted to exploring the social life of infrastructure.



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