



Call for Submissions – Carceral Edgelands

The *Journal for Historical Sociology* (JHS) and the Bureau for Experimental Ethnography are soliciting submissions for possible inclusion in a special issue of the journal on the theme of carceral edgelands. The issue will be a pay-wall free (for a year).

In the fall of 2021, the Bureau for Experimental Ethnography partnered with artist curators Cassils and rafa esparza and their project [In Plain Sight](#) from... The bureau supported their contribution to the 2021/22 Texas Biennial. The *In Plain Sight* project is concerned with the politics and aesthetics of immigrant detention. They are explicitly committed to fighting US cultures of incarceration and to the abolishment of immigrant detention. They describe their project as a mediagenic spectacle.

Our understanding of that project is that it seems to be driven by a fascination with the ways in which immigrants disappear into the bureaucratic-carceral apparatus, tracing routes across the USA from the southern border—the principal site of immigrant visibility in popular media. The invisibility, in plain sight, is the dire object of artistic and activist frustration. Carceral Edgelands seeks to understand the infrastructures of ignorance that contribute to and compound this invisibility. We take our object literally to be the position of the possible spectator of the mediagenic spectacle: to peer up at the sky and see the slowly dissipating clouds of sky-typed messages: ABOLISH ICE, SHAME #defundhate, LA LUCHA LIVES...

We define carceral edgelands as the places around sites of detention where everyday life is on-going while the lives of those detained are stalled, halted, stretched out, stressed out, and crushed. These might be places just beyond representation, which exceed the site of incarceration with its endless

routines and waiting with its labyrinth of halls and cells, showers and cafeterias. Certainly, carceral edgelands are meaningful to some people but by and large they are part of the cloak of indifference cast over the detention center. They are implicated architectures, maybe even part of what military technologists and conflict theorists call *active denial systems*: technologies that master space as zones of control. But they are more mundane than that, too. Sometimes these carceral edgelands may be on the peri-urban fringe, sometime they are fully rural or centrally located in a city. Their limit points are the walls, fences, and streets that signal the obligation of avoidance and aversion, of looking away, casting one's attention elsewhere. The signage that indicates corporate partnerships in for-profit carceral enterprises does little to describe those who are forced to move through these places while waiting for asylum applications. Our attention to these spaces and this rhetorical framing is a way of thinking about *how* invisibilization works. As a way of thinking about the situatedness of anyone looking up to see the sky typing, vaguely aware that there is a detention center on the other side of the mall, the wall, the playground, the fence, or warehouse.

For this special issue we invite essays that explore edgelands, affects of exclusion, stories of encounter, and in-between spaces. We invite works that explore and document indeterminate and ambiguous spaces in the landscape surrounding detention centers. In our commitment to the rights and dignity of immigrants and refugees we seek work that complexifies narratives of justice through an ethnographic and historical attention to place.

Submission Information

This issue, to be published in March 2023, will feature four sections. All contributions will undergo editorial review. Full and mid-length essays will undergo the peer-review process. Images are welcomed as long as permissions are granted (if not author's personal images). Colour images are only published online and greyscale on printed text.

Submission by August 1st for peer reviewing purposes. Reviews will be returned by Oct 1st for any revisions required. Final Submission in December via the ScholarOne platform.

- Mid-length essays. (2000, 3500)
- Full-length essays. (7,000-8,000 words).

In connection with the Bureau for Experimental Ethnography's "Carceral Edgelands Fieldwork Season" there will also be a special section for short compositions of 200 words as well as photographic and written diptychs (also of 200 words). Visit www.bureauXethnography.org for more information.

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