

# Manifesto of Rural Futurism

**1.** “Rural futurism” is a challenge raised to the current discourses about rurality as authentic, utopic, anachronistic, provincial, traditional and stable, and the binaries that support such discourses: belonging vs. alienation, development vs. backwardness.

**2.** A critical approach to rurality is necessary, today more than ever before, to imagine other futures for rural communities, territories and places beyond the “otherness” vs. “identity” dichotomy.

**3.** It becomes apparent that rurality today cannot be seen merely as a geographical space; rather, it has to be seen as an expression of “positionality”, in terms of an actual political position.

**4.** We need to understand rural areas as complex spaces actively immersed in the dynamism of encounters, flows and fluxes of contemporary geographies, and critically question modern discourses of capitalism and metropolitanism in which rural territories are marginalised and considered as doomed to oblivion.

**5.** “Rural futurism” addresses the complex dynamics between rural territory and urban space through technoculture, encompassing a range of issues such as “generation” and “time” within local communities (depopulation, movement, resilience and cultural heritage) and the peculiar geophysical characteristics of the place (remoteness, wind, energy, infrastructure and/or lack thereof).

**6.** Different (human and non-human) life forms exist and insist on a territory, any territory, and they are mutually implicated in one another. Sometimes, they co-exist together peaceably; at other times, they are in conflict with each other. Conflictual coexistences are valuable too, as they generate “grey zones” within a rural territory, which can productively challenge any inherited notion of “environment”, “nature”, and “ecology”. Through its co-existences (and conflictual co-existences), the rural territory can in fact be approached otherwise, leaving aside contemplative, romantic or decadent clichés about “rurality”.

**7.** Even if dominant narratives insist that rural spaces should be relegated to a space-time that can only undergo involution, there are many practices — theoretical, artistic, agricultural and technological — that attest to rurality’s potential resistance.

**8.** “Rural Futurism” is a critical perspective, in which multiple points of view (and listening) converge: art, and techno-culture(s) more specifically, provide new and striking ways to rethink what ‘rurality’ is (and could be). In this way, rural areas become places of experimentation, performativity, critical investigation and change. It is possible to create future scenarios, starting from the assemblage of the seen and the unseen, of human and non-human elements. These objects, materials, speech, relational infrastructures and technologies give form to (and are formed as) specific modes of governance.

**9.** Through the practice of listening it is possible to get a sense of the complexity and dynamics from which the territory reveals itself in unexpected ways and different perspectives. This emphasizes the value and the values of “deep listening” to feel the different topologies of a rural territory. Tones, harmonies and dissonances vibrate while these processes take place, and that can be registered through an “acoustemological” approach.

**10.** In its materiality, sound invites us to experience rural locations and abandoned places as spaces in which to question our approach to history and landscape, our sense of living in a specific place and the relationship that we have with it. The sound of environments, spaces and landscapes reveal the challenges and territorial transformations that inform the ideological, infrastructural and biological ecosystems to which we form a part. In this sense, listening practices are deployed as a way to critically traverse the “border territories” of rural territories, challenging persisting notions about “inescapable marginality”, “residuality” and “peripherality”.