

## **Lecture: Canine Futures: Traces of Care, for Cities to Come**

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Cities where living with dogs remains a shared, public practice offer more than a local condition—they open a horizon. Not a question of managing life at its margins, nor of securing mere survival or a “good death,” but of asking what it might mean to sustain a good life together.

This talk turns to Istanbul, where street dogs persist as urban denizens—moving through neighbourhoods, inhabiting thresholds, entering into everyday circuits of attention, care, and response. Here, the human–dog bond does not reside in ownership. It unfolds in the open: in acts of feeding, watching, tending, naming, and mourning. A dispersed and collective relation, held in proximity and familiarity, yet equally shaped by fear, regulation, and exclusion.

This is not a harmonious scene to be romanticized. It is a relation marked by persistent tension—continually interrupted by municipal practices of capture, confinement, and abandonment. These interventions do not belong to the past. They linger, sedimented in space, reappearing in new forms, reorganizing the forms and norms of living with dogs. And yet, violence never fully succeeds. Care persists—fragmented, precarious, and insistently present. In these small, repeated acts, the conditions of coexistence are repaired and reworked. What emerges is not stability, but an ongoing negotiation and contestation: between violence and care, removal and return, rupture and repair, disappearance and endurance.

Attending these relations also means attending to their histories. Archives do not simply document what has been; they hold open what might yet be otherwise. They reveal the infrastructures of violence that shape urban life, and the counter-practices of care through which other forms of living together continue to take place.

In our time of atmospheric violence, impunity, ecological destruction and climate crisis, such relations acquire renewed urgency. Cities are increasingly fragile environments—for all who inhabit them. Within this shared precarity, the everyday practices that sustain street dogs—informal, collective, situated—can be understood as infrastructures of care: binding human and other-than-human urban denizens in relations of mutuality, interdependence and responsibility.

From here, canine futures appear not as something to be designed from above, but as something already in formation—emerging within existing relations of care. Futures grounded not in control, but in proximity; not in ownership, but in cohabitation, living-with and -alongside the rhythms of shared precarities, mutual care and resilience.

**Mine Yıldırım** is an assistant professor (Kadir Has University, Istanbul) of politics, researcher in urban and critical animal studies, and animal rights advocate. She received her PhD in Politics (2021) from The New School, New York, with a dissertation titled

*Between Care and Violence: Street Dogs of Istanbul*, tracing the history and politics of Istanbul's street dogs from the early twentieth century to today. Her research examines urban animal worlds, myriad entanglements of law, politics, everyday practices in the making of trans-species bonds, affective regimes of labor, killing and caring traversing human and more-than-human worlds. Her work, drawing on ethnographic and historical approaches, has appeared in books, journals, exhibits, and radio broadcasts, bridging academic research with community-based animal rights advocacy. Her archive research *Between Care and Violence: Street Dogs of Istanbul* was recently exhibited in *Lives of Animals* (curated by Joanna Zielinska) at Salt Beyoğlu (2025). She is currently preparing a book manuscript of the same title and developing archival and ethnographic research-led curatorial practices to integrate animal rights advocacy to broader publics in contemporary arts, humanities and social sciences.