

# 'Islands of refuge, islands of contagion', a special section of *Island Studies Journal*, 17(1), May 2022

Guest editor: May Joseph

Islands have historically been positioned as spaces of exception. Some islands have had a history as places of refuge—such as Manhattan, while other islands have had the distinction of being places of contagion—such as Roosevelt Island in New York City. Certain islands have had the distinction of being geographies of pleasure, such as in the Caribbean, while others have had the distinction of being sites of transit, such as the island of Broad Channel in New York. Some islands have had the aura of being open-ended destinations of respite, such as Venice, while others have had a history of being closed to the outside for military or strategic reasons, such as the Chamorro Islands in the Indian Ocean.

As Covid19 dramatically reconfigures our frameworks of proximity and distance, of island and mainland, of scales of isolation and connectedness, we invite engagements with all the contradictory ways in which both peripheral islands and archipelagic cities such as New York City are forcing a rethinking of some of these historical categories. Some islands have been known to be sanctuaries and others to be sites of contamination, at different points in history. Today, the island city of New York is struggling with the challenges of contagion and the unprecedented experience of being demarcated one of the largest crucibles of contamination in the world.

What are the shifting and morphing notions of refuge, respite, sanctuary, communitas, and infection emerging in light of this paradigm-shifting pandemic? How are islands around the world coping with this moment? What are some of the insights, materialities, strategies, convivialities, cultures of hospitality, ethics of resource, that this moment is presenting for island and archipelago communities across the geopolitical spectrum? What new forms of states of exception are islands being transformed into? How are older histories of islandness informing mainland scenarios of isolation and contamination? What are the implications of the global economic disruption on the Law of the Oceans, and their impact on island livability?

*Island Studies Journal* (ISJ) is a web-based, freely downloadable, open access, peer reviewed, electronic journal that publishes papers advancing and critiquing the study of issues affecting or involving islands. It is listed and abstracted in Scopus and Web of Science (Social Science Citations Index). Selected peer-reviewed papers will be published as a special thematic section in *Island Studies Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1 in May 2022, but individual papers will be published online ahead of print as and when they complete the peer review and editorial process.

Interested authors are asked to submit drafts of full papers the special section editor May Joseph ([mjoseph@pratt.edu](mailto:mjoseph@pratt.edu)) by 30 April 2021. Please use the title *Special Section on 'Islands of refuge, islands of contagion'* as the e-mail subject). The deadline for final submission is 31 May 2021. Manuscripts should be between 5,000–10,000 words and must be written in excellent English (prepared in accordance with the ISJ submission guidelines: [https://islandstudies.ca/guidelines\\_instructions.html](https://islandstudies.ca/guidelines_instructions.html)).

For further information, or if you are interested in submitting a paper, contact guest editor May Joseph ([mjoseph@pratt.edu](mailto:mjoseph@pratt.edu)).