

19th-Century Ecocritical Visual Cultures: A Critical Anthology

Deadline: Jun 1, 2017

Maura Coughlin, Bryant University

Nineteenth-Century Ecocritical Visual Cultures: A Critical Anthology

Editors:

Maura Coughlin, Bryant University.

Emily Gephart, School of the Museum of Fine Art at Tufts University.

In the past two decades, ecocriticism has moved into central visibility in the humanities, as a vital, interdisciplinary mode of practice that rises to meet the challenges of our changing world, considering the fundamental interconnectedness between humans and their environments.

The essays in this anthology will consider how art makers, images, and objects had particular ecological agency: they observed, critiqued, created and maintained resilient and biologically diverse local and global ecologies, just as ecological discourses were taking shape.

We welcome proposed 5000 word essays (inclusive of footnotes) by emerging and established scholars whose work integrates the study of nineteenth-century visual culture with ethical and political concerns about fragile global ecosystems, resilient practices and/or nonhuman animal-cultural entanglements, and environmental justice. These essays may span the disciplines of art history, visual and material culture, and the history of science, to articulate and demonstrate engagement with emerging and established critical discourses.

We particularly invite contributions that investigate indigenous and global approaches to the visual cultures of the long 19th century, articulating how eco-materialism may help us re-think traditional historical accounts of spatial and cultural contact, hybridity, and change.

In their proposals, authors should specifically affirm how their research contributes to or intervenes in current theories of ecocriticism/ecomaterialism, and how it aligns with or queries the growing, interdisciplinary fields of inquiry across the environmental humanities.

To address this, authors might also consider:

- What might ecocriticism offer as a new vantage point relative to the study of nineteenth-century art, objects, makers, materials, and practices, and what can art history and visual culture – considered broadly – contribute to enriching the scope of the environmental humanities?
- What might a new canon of nineteenth-century visual culture look like if it were framed by the ecological concerns of the Anthropocene? Put another way, how can eco-critical approaches help us expand the disciplinary limits of what has long been considered the purview of 'art,' aesthetics,

or visual culture?

- How can we better understand the networks of exchange and materialities of objects, representational models, and art-making in the nineteenth century, on both global and local levels, before ecological discourses had a well-articulated language, and before they had taken on their present urgency?
- Apart from “illustrating” a growing popular interest in natural history, how did visual culture participate in and enable scientific thinking about the nascent field of ecology?
- How could artworks or objects invite ecological thinking by engaging the sensory imaginations of viewers, and/or exceeding the limitations of the visual?
- How can the approach you take to your images or objects suggest new avenues of inquiry for other scholars?
- How does the engagement of so many 21st century contemporary artists and critics in ecological art, resilience, global issues of social justice and environmental “slow violence” in the global south encourage new research into art of the long nineteenth century?

Timeline:

300-350 word abstracts and CVs are due June 1, 2017

Preliminary drafts of essays requested of selected participants will be due by December 15, 2017.

Reference:

CFP: 19th-Century Ecocritical Visual Cultures: A Critical Anthology. In: ArtHist.net, Mar 25, 2017 (accessed Apr 9, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/15054>>.