

## Art History, Theory and Practice for an Ecological Emergency (online, 14 Apr 21)

online / Association for Art History, Apr 14, 2021

Registration deadline: Apr 13, 2021

Olga Smith, London

Session at the Association for Art History annual conference 2021 AAH

How can we align art theory, history, and practice with an ontology that refuses to see human life as fundamentally set apart from nature? Art historians have recently started to respond to global environmental concerns with eco-critical approaches. Yet with the effects of abrupt climate breakdown already apparent, art history can afford neither to repeat the theoretical debates over the representation of nature explored in literary studies since the 1990s, nor to conceive the ecological as a transitory 'turn' or an additional category of analysis. Instead, a global existential crisis demands a wholesale rethinking of how art historians and practitioners write, curate, make, and teach. This interdisciplinary session builds on recent work across the environmental humanities, in moving towards an integrated ecological art history that is oriented towards the future, even as it examines the past. Key questions we will explore include:

- How might the reality of environmental breakdown provoke us to rethink our traditional aesthetic categories?
- How might artworks enable their beholder to imagine more-than-human ways of seeing?
- How do different artistic media offer crucial sites for thinking in, and with, the environment?
- While some museums have recently divested from fossil fuels, how can art institutions go further in resisting norms that are damaging the planet?

Panel Organisers:

Andrew Patrizio (Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh) [a.patrizio@ed.ac.uk](mailto:a.patrizio@ed.ac.uk) and Lucy Whelan (University of Cambridge) [lww23@cam.ac.uk](mailto:lww23@cam.ac.uk)

Speakers:

Ecological Listening: Calder Harben's Bodies of Water  
Chanelle Lalonde (McGill University)

Fish Against the System: Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison's Portable Fish Farm (1971)  
Francesca Curtis (University of York)

The Work of Art in the Age of Ecological Exposability  
Lucy Steeds (University of the Arts London)

Realism in Fragments: Wang Youshen's and Birdhead's Urban Ecological Mosaics

William Schaefer (Durham University)

Material Communities: Living 'with' the landscapes of the Anglo-Scottish Borderland

Ysanne Holt (University of Northumbria)

Landscape Representation and Sublime in the Age of Anthropocene

Olga Smith (University of Warwick)

For abstracts and programme, please visit the AAH website:  
<https://eu-admin.eventscloud.com/website/2065/art-history,-theory-and-practice-for-an-ecological-emergency/>

Reference:

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