

Forces of Nature (Leeds, 21 May 25)

Henry Moore Institute, Leeds

Deadline: Mar 14, 2025

Kirstie Gregory, Henry Moore Institute

"Forces of Nature: New Perspectives on Art and Changing Environments".

This conference accompanies the exhibitions SUNLIGHT: Roger Ackling and Sarah Casey: Negative Mass Balance, which will be on display at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds from 3 April – 22 June 2025. For fifty years Ackling consistently made objects by burning wood – focusing sunlight through the lens of a hand-held magnifying glass to scorch repeated patterns of lines on the surface of card and wood. Best known for his work on driftwood collected from the beach at Weybourne near his home on the North Norfolk coast, later works feature discarded or low value materials of a more recent industrial past. Casey's recent work responds to the precarious nature of glacial archaeology, using sediments released from melting ice and drawings that are erased by the heat of alpine sun. Both artists explore the relationship between humans and their environment: between the earth-shaping forces of time, weather and geology and the agency of artists whose work is produced in collaboration with these processes.

Recent years have seen an efflorescence of art practices that engage with climate and the creative and destructive forces of nature. The art and activism of Imani Jacqueline Brown, Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg, and Jenny Kendler variously addresses the unequal and technologically mediated bond between human and 'wild' ecologies. Meanwhile Mary Mattingley, Otobong Nkaga, and Michael Pinsky offer sculptural and interdisciplinary approaches to our reliance on the non-human for forms of shelter, sustenance, and societal wellbeing. The work of these artists is hugely diverse both formally and conceptually, dealing with subjects as disparate as colonialist geographies, climate change, the biodiversity crisis and the complex relationship between science and nature.

For this one-day conference we invite contributions from the fields of art, art history, philosophy and the sciences that explore how artists have responded to the processes and forces of environmental change.

Possible topics might include but are not limited to:

- the role of the artist in relation to the forces of nature
- engagement with environment and place under constantly changing conditions
- political history and art-making
- scientific history, innovation and the environment
- Site-specific sculpture
- Non-human agency
- Scales of time

- Art in action: socially engaged practices
- Climate and collectivism
- Climate and colonialism

Applicants are kindly asked to submit a brief abstract (no more than 250 words) and a short biographical note (100 words)

The deadline to apply is 5pm Friday 14 March 2025.

Please email your proposals to: research@henry-moore.org

Speakers will receive an honorarium of £100, and travel and accommodation costs within the UK will be reimbursed.

Reference:

CFP: Forces of Nature (Leeds, 21 May 25). In: Arthist.net, Jan 19, 2025 (accessed Aug 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43724>>.