

Exhibition Ecologies (Berlin, 27–28 Feb 25)

Freie Universität Berlin, EXC 2020 "Temporal Communities", Feb 27–28, 2025

Friederike Schäfer

Working Group "Exhibition Ecologies": Workshop & Public Lectures

Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in research both in exhibition studies and in environmental humanities, particularly at the intersection of art and ecology. However, a cohesive interdisciplinary field combining these two areas has yet to be fully established. The Working Group "Exhibition Ecologies" was founded in 2024 with the aim of examining exhibitions through the lens of ecological perspectives and creating an international research network of scholars dedicated to this topic. The group responds to the urgent need for developing suitable methodologies and theories to address the intricate intersection of exhibitions and ecologies, focusing on aesthetics, epistemologies, infrastructures, and ideologies.

The conceptual framework of Exhibition Ecologies explores the multifaceted relationships between exhibitions and ecologies, resources, aesthetics, media, and technology as a global phenomenon. These interrelations are understood as a multiplicity of ecologies within and surrounding exhibitions—encompassing the material, systemic, political, and historical conditions that constitute exhibitions. Furthermore, the framework considers the temporal, intellectual, and aesthetic dimensions of exhibitions, positioning them as cultural practices that shape and mediate ecological and planetary understandings.

Drawing on the biological term "ecology" and its recent transdisciplinary interpretations and applications, the working group is reflecting critically on how these discourses can be transferred or adapted to the context of exhibitions. The workshop will address, amongst others, the following questions: To what extent can exhibitions themselves be regarded as ecological systems? Do ecological narratives expand the concept of art and of exhibition formats? In what way do these serve as an institution-critical tool, or are they merely strategies of alleviation? How might they, in fact, perpetuate depoliticization, as well as greenwashing and resource consumption? Hence, to what extent can the concept of Exhibition Ecologies serve as a critical methodology that transcends current trends and addresses the deeper systemic issues within exhibition-making?

The Working Group Exhibition Ecologies will convene on February 27 and 28, 2025, at the Cluster of Excellence "Temporal Communities" at Freie Universität Berlin. This meeting will focus on advancing working concepts and methodologies to develop a program for Exhibition Ecologies. The workshop will be framed by two keynotes, as well as a reading discussion, to which the interested public is warmly invited: on Thursday, Dr. Hannah Baader (KHI Florence) will speak at Freie Universität Berlin in Dahlem, and on Friday, Prof. Dr. Shannon Jackson (UC Berkeley) will present at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Kreuzberg.

LECTURES.

Thursday, February 27, 6.15 – 7.30 PM.

“Exhibition Ecologies – Exhibiting Ecologies. Some Considerations”, Dr. Hannah Baader (KHI Florence).

Freie Universität Berlin, EXC 2020 Temporal Communities, Otto-von-Simson Straße 15 (Room 00.07), 14195 Berlin.

Friday, February 28, 7.15 – 8.30 PM (followed by a reception).

“Fragile Ecologies Across Aesthetics and Politics”, Prof. Dr. Shannon Jackson (UC Berkeley).

Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Kohlfurter Str. 41-43, 10999 Berlin.

WORKSHOP.

Thursday, February 27, 3.00 – 5.30 PM.

“Exhibition Ecologies: Reading Discussion” (includes texts in German).

With registration only: Please contact Mateo Chacón Pino for the reading list (mateo.chaconpino@uni-kassel.de).

The lectures will be held in English and are open to the public. Registration is not required and admission is free of charge. The reading discussion can be attended only with registration.

For further questions, please contact Mateo Chacón Pino (mateo.chaconpino@uni-kassel.de) or Friederike Schäfer (f.schaefer@fu-berlin.de).

For further information, please see <https://www.temporal-communities.de/events/2025/workshop-exhibition-ecologies.html>.

Freie Universität Berlin, EXC 2020 Cluster of Excellence “Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective”.

Current members of the Working Group “Exhibition Ecologies”:

Dr. Friederike Schäfer (FU Berlin/EXC Temporal Communities, initiator)

Mateo Chacón Pino (U Kassel/documenta Institut, initiator)

Dr. Linn Burchert (ZI Munich)

Dr. Lee Chichester (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

Dr. Regine Ehleiter (U Münster)

Dr. Michael Klippfahn-Karge (ZI Munich)

Vis. Prof. Dr. Fiona McGovern (Kunsthochschule Kassel)

Magali Wagner (U Bern/SNF The Ecological Imperative)

Critical Friends:

Dr. Hannah Baader (KHI Florence)

Dr. Maria Bremer (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

Prof. Dr. Liliana Gómez (U Kassel/documenta Institut)

Prof. Dr. Shannon Jackson (UC Berkeley)

Isabelle Lindermann (Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien)

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