

Exhibition Ecologies, Public Lectures (Berlin, 27–28 Feb 25)

EXC 2020 "Temporal Communities", Room 00.07, Otto-von-Simson-Straße 15, 14195 Berlin // Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Kohlfurter Str. 41-43
10999 Berlin, Feb 27–28, 2025

Alexa Dietrich | Communications EXC2020

Public Lectures | Exhibition Ecologies.

Organised by Friederike Schäfer, Research Area 2: "Travelling Matters" in cooperation with Mateo Chacón Pino (University of Kassel/documenta Institut).

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 depoliticisation, 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?

This meeting will focus on advancing working concepts and methodologies related to 'Exhibition

Ecologies'. The workshop will be framed by two keynotes, as well as an open reading discussion, to which the interested public is warmly invited.

Programme

27 February | 15:00–17:30 (Location: EXC 2020 "Temporal Communities", Room 00.07)

Exhibition Ecologies: Reading Discussion (including texts in German)

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

27 February | 18:15–19:30 (Location: EXC 2020 "Temporal Communities", Room 00.07)

Public lecture by Hannah Baader (Permanent Senior Research Fellow at Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, Max-Planck-Institute):

Exhibition Ecologies – Exhibiting Ecologies: Some Considerations

At the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz (KHI), Hannah Baader assumed leadership of the Research Group Transregional Art Histories. Spaces, Actors, Ecologies in 2012. Since 2019, she has served as the Academic Programme Director of the Research and Fellowship Programme 4A_Lab. Art Histories, Archaeologies, Anthropologies, Aesthetics, a collaboration between the KHI and the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

Her research focuses on maritime iconology, the histories of naturalisation and culturalisation in the early modern period, the history of aesthetics, as well as theories of taste and portraiture. This work has culminated in her recent exploration of transregional artistic practices. In collaboration with artist Armin Linke, she critically examines the Cultural Possessions at the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, analysing its legal structures, immovable heritage, and historical constitution. The objects held by the foundation reflect complex histories of global origin, trade, and dispossession. While some attract thousands of visitors daily, others remain stored and unseen. This project investigates the infrastructures, procedures, and practices that underpin the foundation. Baader has secured major grants, including one from the Getty Foundation for the project Art, Space, and Mobility in Early Ages of Globalisation (2010–2015), undertaken with Avinoam Shalem and Gerhard Wolf. Additionally, she co-developed the research programme Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices with Gerhard Wolf at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (2013–2019).

28 February | 19:15–20:30 (Location: Künstlerhaus Bethanien; followed by a plant-based, local reception by artistic collective Lucky You)

Public lecture by Shannon Jackson (University of California, Berkeley):

Fragile Ecologies Across Aesthetics and Politics

Shannon Jackson is Cyrus and Michelle Hadidi Professor of the Arts & Humanities and Department Chair of History of Art, and has recently taken on leadership of the Environmental Arts & Humanities Initiative in 2024.

Jackson has been working on a cross-arts theoretical frame for reckoning with ecological materialities and issues, as well as the tacit ecological politics undergirding current conceptions and

strategies of handling different artistic art forms. Within her transdisciplinary research, she bridges a possible aesthetics of climate change and the role of the arts and humanities in climate advocacy within the current political landscape. Her research acts on the fact that it was histories of "human" action and inaction that brought on the current state of fragility of the planet, which is coming ever more apparent in a global increase of devastating fires, droughts, hurricanes, and floods, but that this is met with an increased climate change denial. While scientists, politicians, activists, and policy-makers struggle to sensitise global citizens to the threat of climate change, she addresses how artists, humanists, and cultural critics work to articulate and propel the role of the arts and humanities in climate advocacy and in the re-imagining of the systems of the world. This approach coincides with her latest project on developing "A Counter-Imaginary in Authoritarian Times", conceived together with Judith Butler (UC Berkeley), Debarati Sanyal (UC Berkeley), and Denise Ferreira da Silva (New York University), which was recently awarded a Mellon grant.

27 February–1 March

Internal Workshop (by invitation only)

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Current members of the Working Group "Exhibition Ecologies":

Dr. Friederike Schäfer (Freie Universität Berlin/EXC 2020, initiator)

Mateo Chacón Pino (University of Kassel/documenta Institut, initiator)

Dr. Linn Burchert (Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich)

Dr. Lee Chichester (Ruhr University Bochum)

Dr. Regine Ehleiter (University of Münster)

Dr. Michael Klippahn-Karge (Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich)

Vis. Prof. Dr. Fiona McGovern (University of Kassel)

Magali Wagner (University of Bern/SNF project "Mediating the Ecological Imperative: Formats and Modes of Engagement")

Critical Friends:

Dr. Hannah Baader (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz)

Prof. Dr. Shannon Jackson (University of California, Berkeley)

Prof. Dr. Liliana Gómez (University of Kassel/documenta Institut)

Dr. Maria Bremer (Ruhr University Bochum)

Isabelle Lindermann (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna)

Time & Location

Feb 27, 2025 - Mar 01, 2025

27 February:

Freie Universität Berlin

EXC 2020 "Temporal Communities"

Room 00.07

Otto-von-Simson-Straße 15

14195 Berlin

28 February:
Künstlerhaus Bethanien
Kohlfurter Str. 41-43
10999 Berlin

Please note:

The workshop from 27 February–1 March will be held as a closed event. Participation in the reading discussion on 27 February is possible after prior registration. The public lectures on 27 and 28 February are open to the public, prior registration is not required.

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

Reference:

ANN: Exhibition Ecologies, Public Lectures (Berlin, 27-28 Feb 25). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 24, 2025 (accessed Sep 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/44034>>.