

Collaborative Volume: Worlds Drawn from the Earth

Deadline: May 15, 2026

Joris van Gastel

Worlds Drawn from the Earth: Art, Extractivism, and Climate Crises in the Iberian Global Empires.

Proposed collaborative volume to be submitted to Brepols (with other presses also under consideration), edited by Juan Pablo Gil-Osle (Arizona State University) and Joris van Gastel (Leipzig University).

Recent scholarship has called for a reassessment of early modern Iberian expansion within the broader histories of climate and ecology. In *Exchanges, Crisis and Climate: Readings on Early Modern Iberian Globalism*, Juan Pablo Gil-Osle highlights the convergence of the Age of Discovery and the onset of global climatic instability, emphasizing the environmental consequences of imperial ambition. While a direct causal link between expansion and climate change remains hypothetical, the ecological impact of colonial extractivism is undeniable. Iberian imperial networks relied on the large-scale appropriation of human and nonhuman resources, transforming environments across Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas through the circulation of enslaved peoples, animals, plants, and materials such as silver, gold, dyestuffs, coral, pearls, tropical woods, and precious stones—resources that, in turn, profoundly shaped artistic and literary production.

This expansion unfolded during the climatic volatility of the Little Ice Age, a period of demographic, economic, and psychological upheaval. Writers and artists responded with representations of turbulence—meteorological, emotional, and political. Storm imagery in Cervantes or El Greco reflects shared cultural anxieties and a dialogic aesthetic in which text and image converge. In Spain and beyond, this sensibility may be tied to an overarching aesthetic forged in the tension between unprecedented imperial wealth and irreversible environmental and human loss.

Recent global and ecocritical approaches further reveal how artistic representation, scientific inquiry, and extractive practice were intertwined—from Andean mining imagery and cartographic visions of fertile colonial landscapes to transpacific exchanges linking Iberia, the Americas, and Asia. Yet early modern art history and literary studies have only begun to integrate ecological perspectives into analyses of materiality and empire. This volume seeks to bridge that gap by examining intersections of visual arts, literature, ecology, climate, and colonialism in the Iberian world from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries.

We invite proposals that address topics including, but not limited to:

- Theoretical approaches linking art history, environmental humanities, global history, and colonial studies.

- The ecological histories of artistic materials within Iberian imperial networks. Extractivism, mining, and the environmental impact of artistic production.
- Climate instability and visual or literary cultures of crisis. Dialogues between text and image in representing environmental upheaval. Storms, disaster imagery, and meteorological symbolism.
- Cartography, landscape, and the ideological naturalization of empire.
- Indigenous and non-European environmental knowledge and artistic practices.

We welcome submissions from art history, literary studies, and related disciplines, including environmental history, visual and material culture studies, anthropology, global history, and colonial studies. Transregional, transoceanic, and comparative perspectives are especially encouraged.

Selected papers will form the basis of a peer-reviewed collaborative volume to be submitted to Brepols, though other publishing houses may also be contacted.

Proposal submission guidelines

For your proposal, please, submit the following in a single PDF file:

- Working Title (max. 15 words)
 - Abstract (max. 150 words)
 - Short bio (150 words), including current affiliation and year of PhD completion
- to both Juan Pablo Gil-Osle (jgilosle@asu.edu) and Joris van Gastel (joris.vangastel@uni-leipzig.de) by May 15, 2026.

Selected papers and format

Selected papers of between 30.000 and 60.000 characters will be due in early spring 2027 and will undergo a peer review process. To publish with Brepols we anticipate that the format required will be aligned with the MHRA Style Guide: <https://www.mhra.org.uk/style/>

Reference:

CFP: Collaborative Volume: Worlds Drawn from the Earth. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 1, 2026 (accessed May 21, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52113>>.