Queer Ecology and the Supernatural (Loughborough, 18–19 Sep 26)

Loughborough University, Sep 18–19, 2026
Deadline: Aug 3, 2026

Carina Brand

Queer Ecology and the Supernatural - A Two-day Symposium and Exhibition at Loughborough University 18th-19th September 2026.

Call for Papers and Artworks.

This symposium hosted by the Emerging Ecology and Radical Practice Group will consider the connections and intersections of queerness, feminism, identity, folklore, the supernatural, ecology, natural history and their artistic and cultural manifestations. Tracing the roots of historical politics, statecraft and resistance to societal expectations through the corporeal, spiritual and divergent communities. Witchcraft and pagan activities as surveyed by Arthur Evans in Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture (1978), established sex and the heretical supernatural as a defiance of the hegemonic order, of a feudal and capitalist society. Queer human ecologies and land ecologies are intrinsically linked to tales, coded or otherwise, of magical creatures in folklore, warnings to the curious and speculative visions of, and beyond, environmental change. Jack Halberstam in Wild Things – The Disorder of Desire (2020), delivers an alternative vision of history, tracing wildness and sexuality outside of the established and structured order. Queer activist groups such as The Radical Faeries, active since 1979 have provided contemporary cognisance of queer and feminist connections to ecology-based care and defiance.

Pagan, witch and shaman thought inherently worships nature, the elements, land and ecology. In response to ongoing environmental degradation and capitalist rationality new covens, pagan and folk based groups of queer and feminist eco-driven practitioners have arisen, with census data showing a 30% increase in people identifying with Paganism, Witchcraft, Druidism and Shamanism. What can this tell us about new, burgeoning queer and feminist thought, practice, ritual and its optimistic connections to nature, land and ecology? Yet also in terms of loss, trauma and grief relating to body, land, space and acts of environmental violence, such as fossil fuel extraction, pollution and commerce. The symposium is a two-day event with keynote speakers Catriona Sandilands and Callum Angus, and invited artists and writers. The symposium will be accompanied by an exhibition and performances that will draw on the local significance of the Holywell spring and East Midlands folklore. We are opening the symposium to papers and artworks that relate any of the below themes and areas and are specifically interested in artists and writers that work in local and vernacular queer ecologies that are located on the fringes of the United Kingdom.

Areas of interest but not limited to:

- Queer Ecology
- Weird Ecology
- Feminist Ecology
- Queer Supernatural
- Queer Folklore
- Queer and Feminist Connections to Witchcraft and Paganism
- Art and Extraction
- Land, Enclosures and Histories
- Ecofeminism
- Queer Readings of Natural History
- Art Practice and Connections to Covens and Rituals
- Art Practice and the Supernatural
- Art Practice and Weird Ecologies

For papers, please email a 300-word abstract and 100 word bio.
For artwork's, please email up to 3 images or links for video or performance and a 100-word bio. Please note that we cannot pay for the transportation of artworks, however we can support with some printing and AV to display video, those with substantial physical works will be required to deliver them in person to Loughborough University.

Please send proposals to c.brand@lboro.ac.uk and j.chantry@lboro.ac.uk, by the 3/08/2026.

Reference:
CFP: Queer Ecology and the Supernatural (Loughborough, 18-19 Sep 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 4, 2026 (accessed Nov 26, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/52641>.