Climate Action & Visual Culture

→ Laura Mateescu & Tabassum Ahmed

Climate Action and Visual Culture
An Introduction: The need for narratives.

We have two choices. We can be pessimistic, give up, and help ensure that the worst will happen. Or we can be optimistic, grasp the opportunities that surely exist, and maybe help make the world a better place. Not much of a choice.

Noam Chomsky (2017)[1]

The current Covid pandemic has brought into sharp focus a number of issues that are essential to understanding the implications of a future global crisis following the effects of human activity on the planet's climate and biosphere. It has shown the fragility of our current infrastructure especially when dealing with large numbers of chronically ill people and the need to rethink economic and material support outside of the narrow conceptions of the market. It has shown the importance of collective engagement and ingenuity and has demonstrated that acting quickly and decisively are the most effective means of addressing immediate problems.

The pandemic has also shown that in the face of overwhelming evidence there are those who wish to carry on as 'normal', even if the effect of this on others is devastating. It has also demonstrated that achieving political consensus is virtually impossible and that the impact of such a disaster is not uniform as it is those who are already vulnerable that are the most likely to suffer the greatest hardship. Finally, it has warned us of the dangers of mismanagement and exploitation by those who use any circumstances to further their own personal gain. Such concerns will be all too familiar to anyone with even a cursory knowledge of environmental and climate politics.

Climate Action and Visual Culture is a welcome and timely initiative as part of a wider engagement with environmental and ecological themes situated within the Centre for Cultural Ecologies in Art, Design and Architecture. Given the circumstances of the current pandemic the urgency with which we begin to re-evaluate what we as artists do, the ideas we communicate and the way we collaborate within wider networks and organisations has never been greater.

In her 2014 book This Changes Everything[2], Naomi Klein presents an overwhelming argument for the role that neoliberal capitalism has had in accelerating the environmental degradation of earlier industrial periods. Klein's conclusion is that we need to completely change the entire economic system to mitigate the long-term effects of our profligate economy. It is also clear that those who run our political systems are either unable or un-willing to affect such a change. The problem is not simply what humans do, but what certain humans do, knowing full-well the consequences of their actions.

The term the 'Anthropocene' has become widely adopted to describe the geological effect of human-centred activities and there is overwhelming evidence that we are living through a period of mass extinction brought about by such human actions. One of the difficulties in communicating this type of apocalyptic message is that the scale that it suggests is beyond the comprehension of most individual subjects. To use Timothy Morton's terminology it is a 'Hyperobject'[3]. Morton argues that certain concepts are so vast that they surpass our ability to fully comprehend and represent them; that they are 'real yet inaccessible'. Hyperobjects can be quite mundane, or they can hugely significant, but there is no doubt that these 'massively distributed' phenomena are all the result of human activity.

If scale presents one difficulty when discussing climate and environmental issues another is the tendency to resort to 'the science' which itself raises two further problems. Firstly, is the fact that understanding scientific information necessitates a particular type of skillset to be able to interpret the data, consider alternative interpretations of that data and to draw reasoned conclusions. Secondly, this type of approach abstracts the issues into information that does not relate to our personal experiences. Science is never neutral but it claims to be objective, and this is where many problems emerge because our relationship to the world around us is profoundly subjective, so to try and integrate a set of ideas that do not situate the subject in an understanding of what is happening will bypass the concerns of many.

Writers, artists and musicians have been at the forefront of ways of 'enframing' the narrative of environmental politics and climate catastrophe by creating stories, objects, sounds, interventions and actions that allow us to engage and make sense of these seemingly un-representable issues as part

our own lived experience. Clearly certain art practices also require specialist knowledge, but in the creation of narratives, principally through aesthetic activities and play, we already build an understanding of the world from childhood onwards. Artists use materials to make resonant objects, they tell stories in the communication of their ideas, and it is the telling of those stories that the real battle of climate action may be won or lost.

At the outset of his recent novel Ministry for the Future[4], the author Kim Stanley-Robinson graphically illustrates the tragic consequences a rise in wet-bulb temperature to 35 degrees has in terms of a killing over 20 million people. The graphic nature of this event is to deliberately shock us into the reality of such an abstract concept. However, the book also consists of story-lines and concepts, many taken from the environmental science, implemented by the titular ministry, that outline positive strategies to deal with effects of climate catastrophe. But these, like Klein's conclusions, require a fundamental re-evaluation of our current way of doing things.

In Staying with the Trouble[5] Donna Haraway argues artists need to become activists forming coalitions and collaborations beyond their own immediate groups. Haraway has suggested that the future of humanity is through forging alliances with others rather than focusing on replicating our own genetic pool. We should be 'making kin not babies'. Throughout the book Haraway uses collaborations between artists, scientists and activists as a model for developing action.

Submissions to the Climate Action and Visual Culture call out have been grouped together under the categories of activism, manifesto, materialisms and modes of representation. This selection represents a wide number of provocative and imaginative responses utilising a range of media engaging with traditional art practices and new forms of artistic production. Some of the responses explicitly call for activism to not only interpret the current situation but to begin to change it.

The role of the arts in developing an ethical climate agenda, is in its ability to translate and embody abstract ideas into tangible narratives that can be understood and disseminated. The principle challenge facing the arts is not how to make these narratives public, but to empower others to develop their own narratives and stories about creating change and this is at the heart of this initiative.

→ Professor Nic Clear, Dean of Arts and Humanities, University of Huddersfield

Endnotes

1. Chomsky, N. Polychroniou, C.J. Optimism Over Despair. Penguin Books: London, 2017.

2. Klein, N. This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

3. Morton, T. Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

4. Stanley-Robinson, K. Ministry for the Future. Orbit: New York, 2020.

5. Haraway, D. Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Climate Action and Visual Culture
An Introduction

In the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic, uncertainty and upheaval dominated the public sphere with both questions and solutions emerging on the necessity and importance to further support artistic and creative practices. From collective ideations on the future of the cultural and creative sector, to creating virtual spaces for sharing resources and experiences of best practice, free access skills sharing, donation of time and expertise, systems of support stemmed from initiatives that one can only refer to as acts of resilience and acts of care; all launched by actors from various fields and disciplines. These acts of care can readily be measured through the visible ambitions of building stable bridges in unstable times, between creative organizations and the many individual actions taken to best support each other in times of isolation, stand-still, loss of job security and the myriad of other forms of hardships and dilemmas, brought in by a world that on the surface, seemed to have been left on pause.

In what appeared to be a time-freeze scenario, the behind the-scenes movements that surfaced, materialized through the multitude of actions, reactions, responses, and accomplishments of us all, delivered in many shapes and forms. These examples are living testimonies for the strength, adaptability and bounce-back-ability of creative aspirations as a whole.

As we steadily move closer to a "new normal", two things come to mind: first, celebrating the struggles and labour of those who actively took measures in creating spaces for humanity, care, and compassion to emerge, and second, revisiting that same humanity's actions and behaviours that led to mother nature turning her whip against it. It is apparent through social media that the Covid-19 pandemic created two worlds: one of horror for human beings and another of temporary bliss for nature, with swans and dolphins emerging in Venice's waters [1] or elephants getting drunk on corn wine in a village in China [2]. This particular broadcasting of the pandemic is symptomatic of many social issues that were explored through channels of visual culture, and in this context, social media. The truthfulness of an idyllic nature is questioned by many and labelled as fake news by others [3]. If such content was fabricated to lure people into a sense of hopefulness raised by endearing moments of "eye-popping, too-good-to-be-true rumors", it becomes induced by this awareness that one would see how rapidly it spread in a time of crisis.[4]

Almost attune to the pandemic, this powerful social phenomenon expanded with the same intent, and research indicates the same model used to trace the contagion of epidemics can be applied to analyze it, as an "analogy between the transmission of social phenomena and infectious diseases."[5]

Some would argue, ourselves included, that it is visual culture's responsibility, through the collective action of all who seek to go against the grain, to have the curiosity and drive to challenge what we are being told, to look for and to discover new ways of being in and with the world. This is a thinking of an ethics where we create opportunities for voices to be heard and to link up the world like pieces in a chain. Through synergies, "part-whole"[6] dynamics are created and these collective pieces nurture and support one another, grow closer, stronger, even re-sounding. It might also be the responsibility of those who merge visual culture and education - as a new environment for bringing such voices together – to support collective action, to take space and in return, to offer space.

The *Climate Action and Visual Culture* project took life as a take-away of the 'What's Next?' online live event held in July 2020; an initiative falling into the descriptors of the previously mentioned examples of acts of care and of resilience, produced by *Temporary Contemporary* and supported by the Centre for Cultural Ecologies in Art, Design & Architecture at The University of Huddersfield.

This opportunity allowed the blossoming of a space in which thinking about the intermeshing of climate action and visual culture became particularly pressing, especially in light of the pandemic. Climate action implies consideration of environment in a wider sense, in which the environments we inhabit are deeply linked to the ways in which we dwell. Environment encompasses the realms of socio-cultural, economic, and political pursuits which propel systemic structural inequalities over experiences of change in our immediate surroundings, identity and senses of belonging, power balance relations.

Challenging and problematizing existing representations systemically constructed within the scope of the expanded environment, brings into context the very nature of visual culture. As it aims to represent – through mobilizing creative activity – alternative forms of production and reproduction emerging from within a collective questioning of socio-cultural conditions, visual culture invites the potential to generate radically different approaches to climate action: through the forms of the human senses, as we feel, we hear, we speak, we write, we build; we create.

Thinking through this inter-relationship of visual culture and climate action, our aim became that of bringing together propositions from different articulations of voices concerned with the exchange and inter-dependency of visual culture and climate action. If at first glance, one might have labeled the responses collated in this publication as miscellaneous undertakings of climate action, explored through multifarious forms of creative activities and mediums, through the curation of the 43 submissions selected, a narrative also emerges: specifically dedicated to highlighting the comprehensive dimensions in which climate action discourses are informed and perform in visual culture.

As a reaction to this observation, our curatorial strategy became synonymous with evidencing the diversity of approaches taken: as an indexing of sequential, anecdotal, and chronicled accounts of human reflection on how climate action is rooted within individual speculations of experiencing and translating the atmospheres of our surroundings. When we speak of climate action, we speak of modes, methods, activities, processes, and reactions to what we understand through thinking about the climate.

This thematic and narrative inquiry into the affinities of climate action and visual culture proposes a pathway for the viewer, as they navigate the arteries of the visual, textual and contextual boulevards of artforms and explorations, evidenced here through the curated categories of Manifestos, Activism, Materialisms and Modes of Representation.

The suggested visual cartography of this publication brings together a rich compilation of artforms, showcased through the many examples of activism, material explorations, manifestations of past, present and future speculations, alongside interpretations from academic bodies and research-based networks, to activist groups, practice-based collaborations with communities, to interdisciplinary networks and artists working with the visual mediums of film, photography, painting, collage, and VR.

As we recognize the potential for dialogue and collaboration to be at the forefront of applying creative thinking and creative interventions as tools to address the issues emerging from the climate crises and the role of education in this context, the publication includes responses from agents performing in local, regional, national, and even international parts of the world. From Huddersfield to Leeds and Manchester, to Spain, France, Germany, Romania, Serbia, the USA and China, the scope of our project offers a glimpse into the multiple ways in which art and culture, from all over the world, can create a network for research and collaboration, engaging audiences with alternative ways of approaching and understanding the climate emergency.

Each one of the curated categories brings into discussion the multitude of approaches through which art and creativity can promote activist attitudes, in some cases, bringing new knowledge to the table by bending the rules of particular artforms, and offering propositions for how climate action can be re-presented in visual culture. Corresponding examples are affirmed by projects such as Ally Zlatar "The Last Yugoslavia", exploring national identity through renders bridging the current Serbian relationships and social feelings with the environment, or Mark Parson's "Heeley Mushroom Project", as it traverses the territories of art, research, and architecture in which community members – particularly children – are invited to grow mycelium. Subsequently used in the creation of a pavilion for experiment and exploration, the project lends young people the agency to playfully build in and with the natural rhythms of nature. Léa Coeurveillé's "My Utopia – Your Dystopia", a highly personal manifesto, signals the different attitudes of what potentially ethical ways of living in and with the world would contour as, critically discussing how one person's interpretation of utopian contexts could easily become a dystopian manifold of events. She continues this argument by ideating the foundation on which a more mindful, respectful, kinder, and considerate society could take shape. Sandrine Deumier's project entitled "Falling" uses the medium of VR and digital animation to interpret several "collapsology scenes" stemmed from "Internet culture imaginaries", in search for new utopias, sustainable imaginations, and other eco-feminist postures. Furthermore, Melanie King's "Ancient Light" explores the relationship between starlight, photography and materiality, currently researching sustainable photographic processes to minimize the environmental footprint of her own practice; while Plastic Collective (Georgiana Vlahbei and Alina Tofan) narratively interrogate our relationship with plastic through "Asphyxia" – a video ode, alongside a conceptual and activist form of photo – poetic exploration, in which the artists intimately play with the materiality of plastic to raise awareness on the effects of plastic waste and the footprint of irresponsible consumerist practices on humans and nature.

These illustrations of caution, concern and hope confirm the commitment and necessary documentation, ideation, and speculation of climate action in and through visual culture.

The content curation of these categories brings into discussion, first and foremost, the act of awareness. To live in a state of awareness – towards ourselves and our environment – produces caution, propels care and ultimately, promotes sustainability. If we look back towards our inner selves, as bodies of imperishable force translated here through thought, reflection, speculation, and further into action and reaction, we begin to emulate the essence and resilience of our natural environment. It is perhaps this type of flexibility that nurtures our capacity to re-construct, to re-establish and to re-generate, placing the power of re-production as the foundation for how dreams, hopes and expectation can be transformed into dynamic and energetic agents of change.

Although performing as a diminutive collation of practical, creative or exploratory ventures in the greater context of climate action and visual culture, this modest yet richly evidenced collection of viewpoints is characterized by the diversity and plurality of meaning making, shape and form, illustrated all throughout the publication. As visual culture chisels the nook where manifestations and ideations of climate action and interpretations of our environment are cradled, *Climate Action and Visual Culture* aims to produce a platform for networking and collaboration, with the potential to further expand within and from visual culture, into the fertile territory of collaborative creative expression in the form of kinship and coalition, or through correlation and co-operation.

Alongside this publication, a digitally curated virtual gallery was created using Artsteps software. The aim is to further evidence and consider how the responses collated, can occupy a (virtual) space which also, as an interactive and immediate and playful output, sensibly showcases the breadth of various responses and interpretations located at the intersection of climate action and visual culture.

→ The Climate Action and Visual Culture Team,
Laura Mateescu & Tabassum Ahmed
PhD Researchers, The University of Huddersfield

Endnotes
1. KnowRoaming. (2020). It's great to see a few positive effects emerging from the pandemic. Retrieved from https://m.facebook.com/Knowroaming/posts/its-great-to-see-a-few-positive-effects-emerging-from-the-pandemic-residents-i/1567537963405150/
2. Tahir, T. (2020, 20 March 2020). PAIR OF TRUNKS Bizarre moment two 'drunk' elephants collapse after raiding village and drinking 30 litres of wine. The Sun. Retrieved from https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11214086/drunk-elephants-collapse-drinking-wine/
3. Daly, N. (2020). Fake animal news abounds on social media as coronavirus upends life. Retrieved from https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/coronavirus-pandemic-fake-animal-viral-social-media-posts
4. Daly, N. (2020). Fake animal news abounds on social media as coronavirus upends life. Retrieved from https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/coronavirus-pandemic-fake-animal-viral-social-media-posts
5. J.Gómez-Gardeñes, L. L., S. N.Taraskin, F. J. Pérez-Reche. (2016). Explosive Contagion in Networks. Retrieved from https://www.nature.com/articles/srep19767.pdf
6. Cornell Office for Research on Evaluation. (2009). Systems Theory. Retrieved from https://core.human.cornell.edu/research/systems/theory/partwhole.cfm

Manifestos

The six very different projects I have been invited to introduce have been grouped together under the rubric of "Manifestos". Manifestos set out a programme. Political parties have them. They are part and parcel of our system, called parliamentary democracy. We should pay attention to them. We should vote and be represented by those who officially have the power to act on our part. At the same time, we also have other forms of empowerment at our disposal, that depend more directly on us. We might also want to associate with various different groups and organisations that do not conform to the more traditional model of "the party". In the cultural realm, manifestos were also characteristic of many avant-garde movements. Their aim was to provoke, even shock. They conveyed an urgent sense that things were wrong, that change was needed. However, they often gave the impression of being all too sure of themselves, too convinced of the veracity of their vision of the future, although this might just have been a strategy for gaining much needed attention. Maybe nowadays, whilst we also certainly feel an urgency to act, to actually do something, we cannot be so certain about what is in store for us, apart from that it might not be so easily described as a "better world" given the almost apocalyptic prospects of extreme weather conditions. Be that as it may, this global crisis might bring about a situation wherein social injustices have finally to be redressed, but, for that to be the case, the forcefulness of the manifesto could be indispensable for keeping these issues in focus. Already the term "manifesto" gives us much to mull over...

The scale of the problem facing us is overwhelming. We cannot call it sublime as, at least for Kant, that could only be appreciated from a place of relative security. By contrast, what already impinges all too keenly on us (though on some more than others), borders on the monstrous. It distinctly threatens our ways of living (though again the "our" needs qualifying as it is unsatisfactory as an universalising category). Facing such a potentially catastrophic future we are definitely finite creatures, especially as isolated individuals. How can one possibly respond? Everything we do has an impact, mostly negative it would seem, on the world. It is difficult to imagine how to set anything right. Amy Corcoran's work offers us a way of venturing into the huge unknowns of the not-yet. She surreptitiously intervenes on a micro-level. She proposes a minor intervention to address such momentous issues. Discreetly her artful composition mimics those improbable plants that surprisingly sprout up from interstices, from cracks and crannies, also in the middle of ruins or in the midst of debris, like reminders that the "world" carries on in spite of us, even without us. And yet, though small, her insertion presents itself as a Z.A.D. Here is resistance. She is making a stand, and enjoining us to do likewise. Like Slinkachu's Little People, Corcoran's piece springs itself upon us, takes us unawares, gets us to reconsider our perspective, resituate ourselves. This is indeed a deliberate attempt to provoke us to action. However small and insignificant we are as a single person, we are here explicitly reminded about those who have fought for a better future. We are duly equipped with what we will need to continue striving against the supposed *status quo*, against what is presented as unchangeable, irresistible, inevitable: courage and strength (thyme), loyalty and devotion (violet), hope (holly), power against evil (dill), wisdom (sage) healing and protection (aloe). We are even kitted out with ingredients that might be deemed to interfere with our steadfast concentration on the future, namely sadness (willow) and remembrance (rosemary), as it is also necessary to avoid arrogance, to listen to other voices, to question assumptions (so as to consolidate convictions), but also because the work "reflects ambivalence over the current state of affairs and its possible future(s)". Indeed, on rereading the text after considering the artwork

itself, we can detect much ambivalence about long-term positive outcomes. As well as evocations of the need to strive for utopias, however impossible, and the presentation of "The World's Smallest Z.A.D" as a "living prayer", "joyful" and "defiant", we note the final words: "until the end"... This sounds ominous, but is it necessarily meant fatalistically? We should maybe rather take it as a prompt for considering: whose end? The end of what?

The question of "ends" also features in James Harrington's project, "We live in the neighbourhoods of the future". Harrington forces us to question our thinking about building and dwelling. Recognising that we are already living in the future is necessary for gaining a sense of agency. It is now that we should already be deciding how to proceed. It is all too easy to postpone decisions, especially given the pressing nature of the immediate. The trouble with postponing and thereby not participating in the speculative debates about possible future worlds is that someone else builds the future in our stead. Harrington's injunction to wake up, to realise that the future is now (not later) puts me in mind of a promotional film for Siemens called *Smart Buildings: the future of building technology* (2011). It is well-worth watching. In it Siemens' various fields of operations are identified as being those of industry, health, energy, infrastructure and cities, that is to say their vision of the future is to be taken seriously as they have the technology and the power actually to build their "ideal" world, a world that will necessarily permeate our lives. Like Harrington, Siemens also tells us that "the future has already begun", that is to say it has already been partially realised (whether we knew it or not, whether we like it or not). In this video we note the prevalence of automatic doors that anticipate coming and goings, the claim is that they are energy-saving, this may be the case but a deeper enquiry into the ecological credentials of such hi-tech projects is required to be sure. These handle-less doors are certainly hygienic and this design feature will be a crucial issue from now on, traumatized as we are by the threat of ever more pandemics. Nevertheless, despite some potentially positive attributes, how different is the Siemens "utopia" from that still recognisable world in Harrington's images! Also, how far removed from More's Utopia is Siemens'. More tells us that on the island of Utopia:

> Every house had a door to the street and another to the garden. The doors, which are made with two leaves, open easily and swing shut automatically, letting another enter who wants to- and so there is no private property. Every ten years they change houses by lot. The Utopians are very fond of these gardens of theirs. They raise vines, fruits, herbs and flowers, so thrifty and flourishing that I have never seen any gardens more productive or elegant than theirs. They keep interested in gardening, partly because they delight in it and also because of the competition between different streets which challenge one another to produce the best gardens. Certainly you will find nothing else in the whole city more useful or more pleasant to the citizens. And this gives reason to think that the founder of the city paid attention to the siting of these gardens.[1]

In the "smart" world described and partially realized by Siemens, I cannot detect the agreeable living conditions that More valued, his quasi-automatic doors functioned differently, as a means to facilitate the fluid communication between people and with the natural environment. The world envisaged by Siemens is privatised and anxious about its security. It monitors and controls "flows", including people. Despite "comfort" being mentioned, the zombie-like "inhabitants" hardly strike one as happily rounded characters
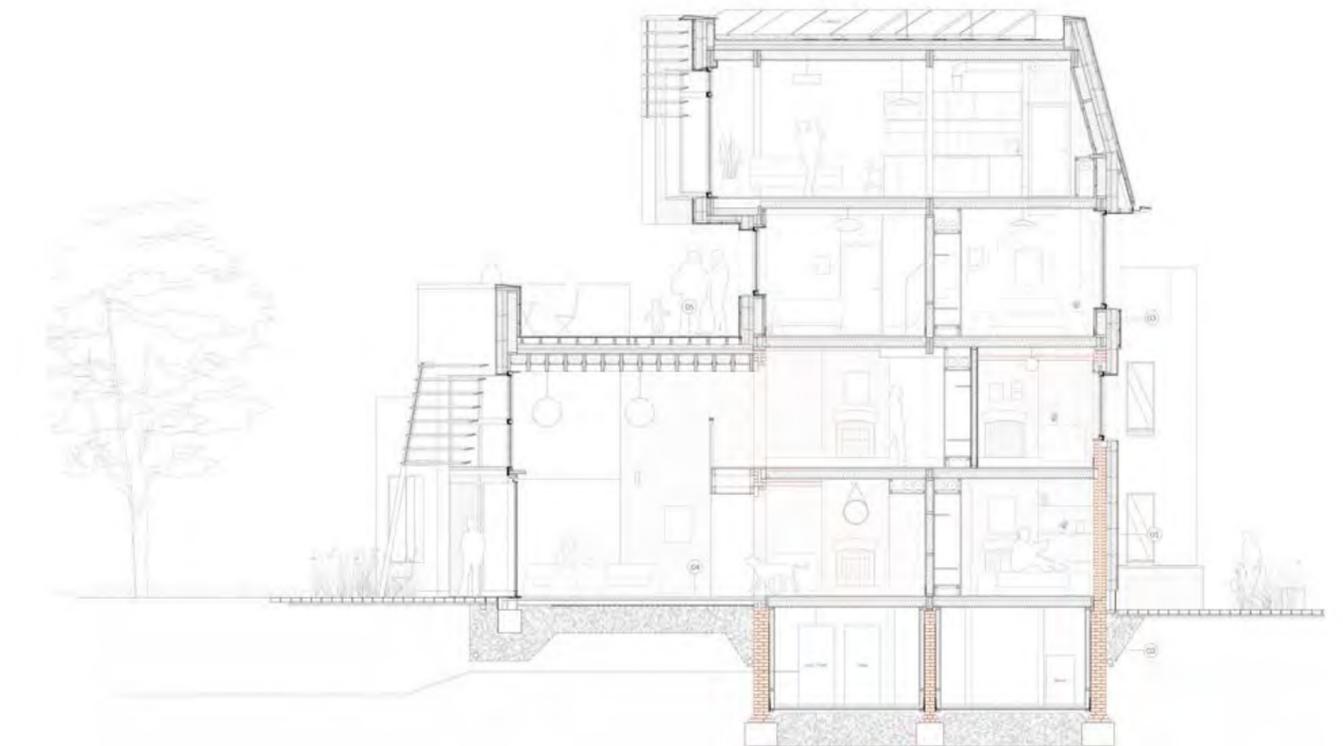
Danny Dullea
← Searching for Gaia

Léa Coeurveillé
↑ My Utopia-Your Dystopia

Amy Corcoran
→ The World's Smallest ZAD (Zone à Défendre)

Lia Bottanelli
↑ Island Hats

but rather as the objects of constant surveillance, subjected to "intelligent building management system", the objects of "dynamic logistics". In contemporary discourse the term "networks" can have a positive valence, signifying a proactive creation of links and spontaneous collaboration. The "networks" built by Siemens suggest a different world-view, as is evident in the following commentary from the promotional film:

> Only when all systems work together in a network can we meet the security requirements of the future adequately and efficiently. A networked integrated intelligent building management system will be at the heart of the next generation of smart buildings. A building management system for greater efficiency, comfort, security.[2]

We evidently need to think about sustainability, but when Siemens promotes its version of "intelligent sustainable solutions [that] will shape the future" and then ominously adds "The future has already begun", we might well feel that we are far removed from any sort of utopian world, i.e., from a world that might be no-where in particular, but that is projected as a good place whose existence we might well wish for nevertheless. This is why Harrington's project is to be taken as a manifesto. It is a placeholder; it is marking out a space for the discussion of urgent and vital issues about building and dwelling. It thereby stands its ground against the already imminent invasion of sinister corporate powers, such as Siemens, that, in spite of their discourse about securing our safety, constitute a real risk to our freedom and well-being.

Already the title of Léa Coeurveillé's project, "My Utopia, Your Dystopia", makes a crucial point. We should always begin by asking the question: "whose utopia?". It would be short-sighted, and even politically irresponsible, to assume that we all share the same vision of what is best. Our earlier example of Siemens was already a wake-up call, but we can never be vigilant enough. Coeurveillé therefore provides us with a much-needed reminder of the basic lessons of utopian theory. "Utopia" should not be taken to mean a "blueprint model" of an "ideal" or "perfect" society that one intends to put into practice, as if the slate were conveniently pristine clean. The voice heard in Coeurveillé's mission statement talks of "taking over the world", "shaping it", according to a global vision. Despite coming over as ostensibly frank, even friendly, this voice is unnervingly unstable. Feeling uncomfortable, we might want to veer away from the various uncomfortable points made about the human, all too human tendency to hypocritically assume the "moral high point", whilst contravening what holds for others when it suits us, provided that we have the power that is (and Coeurveillé's voice seems to goad us with a "go on admit it , you too would love to have world at your feet"...). Coeurveillé's project should be returned to again and again. It is a cold shower. It is highly dangerous to assume that we all share the same agenda. We should never trustingly go along with things. Harrington insisted on the importance of *"positive and critical visions"* of the Anthropocene. He was right. We can see the necessity for constant critique when studying Coeurveillé's manifesto. The voice of this Leader betrays us in the end, selling us out to things as they already are. If we have adhered to the narrative, we are lulled into accepting that "what we've got now is probably the best model". This capitalist system that "puts into competition different values" is deemed to be "better than any utopia". This reconciliation with the current conflict-ridden, cut-throat world of profit and exploitation does not offer much hope for a world that positive fosters the fragile "miniature near-utopias" so pacifically sowed by someone like Corcoran.

The fragility of utopia figures in Lia Bottanelli's project about islands. Ah Islands! How we dream about them, don't we? I am tempted to say islands are the archetypal for utopia. Indeed, we learn from More's Hythloday that the island had to be created, necessitating a major engineering project, as a precondition for creating a better place, spatially set apart, substantially different from the rest of the world. However, fixating on an archetype is problematic for many reasons, one being that one would not want to situate "utopia" as a specific type of place, thereby rendering static what is more

productive to conceive of as a process (whose destination cannot and should not be fully known in advance). We might not actually get "there" but, nevertheless, we venture on long imaginative journeys all across the globe (islands are scattered so disparately) when we think of them. Them? But they are so varied. They can be small and vulnerable (like Corcoran's Z.A.D.) They can also be large enough to be considered continents. They might be more correctly defined as archipelagos, or atolls. They can be situated within hopping-distance of the mainland and therefore have problems asserting their ontological difference. Equally they might suffer from neglect because of their distance from mainland resources. Some profit from their independence (and also help others profit) by becoming tax havens. Islands can be poor or rich, scantily populated, or overpopulated, or depending on the tourist season, sometimes one and then the other. Some islands are destinations, not (just) for tourists, but for desperate migrants. Others are notorious for being used as off-shore detainment centers as a means of intercepting any claim to refugee status. Islands raise many crucial issues that need addressing now, their vulnerability in the already present climate crisis being the one focused on by Bottanelli. Explicitly designed for political demonstration by climate activists, her hats are neatly fitting. However, I can also imagine a maybe yet more powerful venue for them: I can see them gracefully sailing into a *mondaine soirée* full of corporate types, blending artfully with the decorative attire of the insouciant chattering classes, until, having slowly but surely invaded the space and taken up strategic positions, the tables are turned and from within the protest is launched with the full force of a manifesto!

Bottanelli's project in effect represents the plight of islands, as well as islanders (human and nonhuman). John Halls and Jaione Cerrato's project, "Universal Species Election" complements such an initiative. We are presented with various voices and we have to make an effort to work out "who" is speaking, about what and why. Such an effort is already a political lesson. Any traditional or conventional ideas of politics we might harbour are put to the test. For example, The Woodland Party disconcertingly invite us to "amongst [their] trunks, leaves and vines", we are unused to being so confidently addressed in this way by trees (and who else? We are not entirely sure who else is prepared to "welcome" us...). We might feel somewhat disoriented. The proposal to impose trade barriers might surprise us, even strike us as a reactionary and hostile move, but to understand better the motivation behind this clause of the manifesto, we would have to re-evaluate our assumptions about the political terms we employ in the light of different points of view, those of an other than human community that has suffered from colonial exploitation (along with some human populations). Such is the explicit intention of Halls and Cerrato. In their Statement they signal the dangerous lack of serious political debate in our world. With this project we are therefore obliged to consider what we take to be the very basis of politics: where does this voice come from and who/what does it represent and how? Readjustment and refocusing are also required of us when considering the manifesto of "The Plains Party". The "we" advocates rejecting centralization: hardly surprising I suppose, given that "they" consist of "wide prairies, vast savannahs, infinite deserts and endless open oceans"; they would work at a different, more expansive scale, with a more generous ("larg[er]") notion of society. And yet, "they" employ vocabulary and terminology that might disconcert us: their stress on the individual (so different it would seem from the more collective "Woodlands Party") is conspicuous, as is "the opportunity to prosper", but again, maybe our own political failings are hereby revealed; we have a limited conception of what "to prosper" means, having reduced it to mere economic wealth. Additionally, "Freedom for All" seems incompatible with discarding "progressive taxation", given that the extreme wealth of a few individuals in our current human-dominated world tends to have a negative impact on those less well-off (the "trickle-down effect having surely been proven to be a complete myth). "The position of the "Farmed Party" seems clearer, we might well agree on the need to change our relationship with these nonhuman species and making reparations would be a radical break with the current system and a positive way forward. And yet, they hang onto the state as "arbiter" for agreed "universal standards", a bit strangely

given their self-definition as "anarcho-leftists". We would certainly need to discuss more with them to understand better. Equally, "The "Coral Party" are worth "conversing" with (that is if we can; we would need to know how to go about this; is this "them" speaking? Are they using an interpreter? What is the mechanism for representation?...) "Value" is defined as the right to "exist in vibrant and diverse communities" (and protection against us, yes us!). Evidently, they have different values from us, and yet we also have the discourse about multiculturalism. They have also heard about the "utopian" proposal of Universal Basic Income, they are undeniably well-informed; Who would have known it? It might well be interesting to talk to them. "The Civilisation Party" also has things in common with some of us. It is not clear who they are exactly. They speak of and like us, but seem to think of themselves as "better", stronger than us. They certainly have no qualms about affirming their superior position in the world. What confidence they have! There is so much talk at the moment about the damage that our technological advancement has inflicted on the environment. It is all a bit depressing and demoralizing, and yet this party unapologetically defends what are, after all, undeniably major engineering feats such as hydroelectric dams, oil wells, mines and the mass production of food. They sound confident about the benefits of such projects. It must be said that it is a relief not always to have a bad conscience about all the negative effects we are constantly being told that we are inflicting on the environment, especially whilst we are at the same time being actively encouraged to spend (more than we might have) and consume (more than we might need). It is as if we are always caught in a painfully mind-boggling contradiction. And in any case, were we to listen to the criticizing voices, how could we possibly change things for the better? The voice of the "Civilisation Party" has the merit of clarity. This is a movement that draws on the strengths of the past so as to consolidate its inevitable trajectory into the future. With them there is no need to question what has been, or to anxiously look around to see what is being said and done elsewhere. This Party know what it wants and knows how to get it. We are invited to join up, to become one of them and remake history, to "once more [...] build a civilisation that will stand the test of time".

Halls and Cerrato's project provides the occasion for actively engaging in political debate, one that responds to the necessity of somehow including the whole range of life forms (human and non-human, organic and inorganic) on this planet. It was only "The Civilisation Party" that would spare us this effort. Halls and Cerrato are right to include them (they must be faced head-on). To adhere to "The Civilisation Party" would mean that we would not need to face the climate crisis. Unconcerned by carbon emissions, acidification of the oceans, the rising ocean-levels, the ever increasing depletion of biodiversity, etc. etc., (the list of imminent catastrophes continues...), they promise us a bright and positive vision of the future (based on an unclouded sense of the past). Such populism is dangerously attractive given that the future does otherwise looks so bleak. Stories have lost their happily-ever-ends. Some even tell us that the world would be better off without us, that we should learn to die! Is this the only prospect that we can look forward to? But no, all of the other projects suggested various constructive

ways forward, whilst not underestimating the gravity of the situation and the complexities attending any possible remedy, however minor, fragile and partial. Daniel Dullea makes another positive contribution in the form of storytelling. In effect wresting from the "Civilisation Party" the exclusive power of linear narrative, he shows us a flow of images. However, these images run unconventionally from the right to the left, even if we are presumably not necessarily going backwards, surely not, as we need the "search for Gaia" to take us forward so that we can see a prospect for a future that is other than dystopian Mad-Max survivalism. There is a "voice-over" - the singing forestry officials celebrating the Water festival holiday- that somehow accompanies the fascinatingly long pipeline and the pristine geometries of the industrial sites. However "fascinating" the pipeline might well be and "pure" the industrial figures might appear, we know all too well what the deceptive "beauty" signifies; we are aware of its cost to the environment as well as to humans; we are not ignorant of the exploitation and conflict the invisible oil produces, nor should we be in denial of our dependence on it (whose extent we might be unaware of, largely superseding our personal credentials as bicyclists). The graceful rhythms of the Myanmar boaters blend in with the slick smoothness of the oil pipeline, their blue waters and red skies gradually submerge the industrial scape, as if they had been called upon by the incantatory voices of the foresters to reclaim the world for us. But this is just a fanciful supposition on my part. You might understand the piece differently. Any difference of opinion between us is not a problem. On the contrary we are positively invited by Dullea to collectively make sense of what we are shown, to craft a narrative we can share, though not solely via words: he encourages us to get together, to build communities, to celebrate life in all its forms, via words, but also through song and dance, or just by being well together. Far from being a weak wish, this proposal merits being called a manifesto as our world is so divided, so conflictual. The fear is that it will become increasingly so if we do not at least explore some of the possible avenues that the creative voices of those who refuse to settle fatalistically for a *status quo* that will drag us and many other species to destruction, are inviting us to venture down as ways of radically interrogating the societal structures that have precipitated this current crisis. As Rilke also told us in his own way:

Es winkt zu Fühlung fast aus allen Dingen,
Aus jeder Wendung weht es her: Gedenk!
Ein Tag, an dem wir fremd vorübergingen
entschliesst im künftigen sich zum Geschenk

[All things can seem to summon us, our touch;
They signal Notice! To us from all sides.
A day we passed through, perfect strangers,
Transforms itself into a future gift].[3]

If we could only see "things" differently, really feel the world as a beckoning, intimately engage with our environment, instead of being estranged from it. But is it already too late?

→ Diane Morgan, University of Leeds
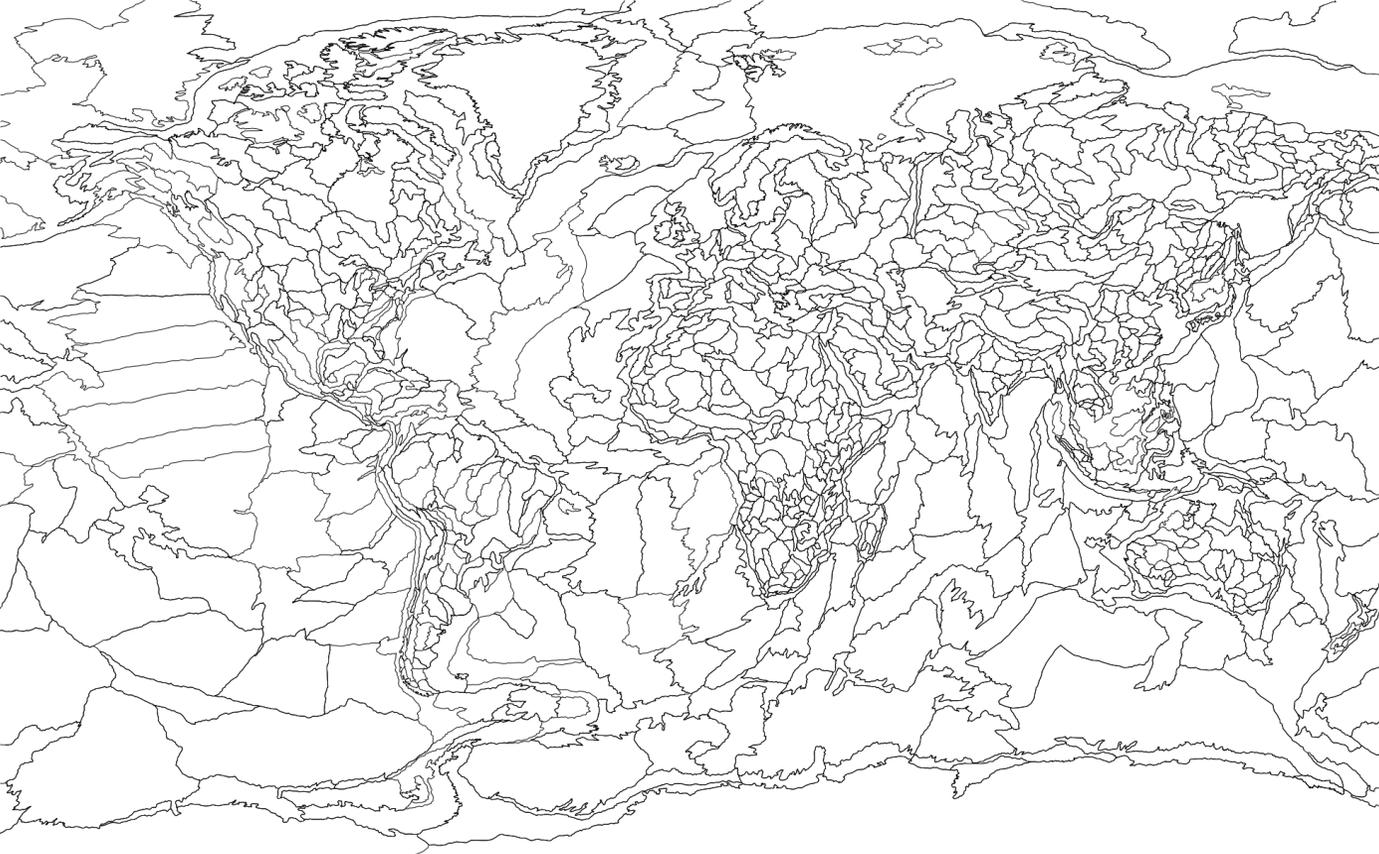
John Halls & Jaione Cerrato
↑ Universal Species Election

Endnotes
1. More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Ed. George M. Logan, Trans. Robert M. Adams, 3rd Edition.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
2. See Siemen's *Smart Buildings: the future of building technology* (2011).
YouTube: (6) Smart buildings - the future of building technology - YouTube
3. Rainer Maria Rilke, 'Es winkt zur Fühlung; (August/Sept 2014).

Climate activism: gathering forces

"It seems like part of what it is to gather, is to think about gathering right at the intersections of what we are and what we do"[1]

"[...] But unlike technology or science, which aim to extract useful principles, principles which can be used to attain specific aims or goals – regularity, predictability, order, and organization – the arts redirect these forces of practical regularity through intensification to produce something no longer regular, ordered, or predictable, but an intensity, a force, a sensation, which actively alters the very forces of the body itself, something appealing, irregular, unpredictable"[2]

A pandemic is a fraught time to think about gathering Yet, finding modes of gathering in artistic thought and practice, gathering around the theme of climate activism, in conversation across boundaries of discipline, practice and place, is a germinal activism. The contributions to this theme are gathered from practice, narrative and thought that arises from Serbia to the United States, Peru to England; using forms from poetry, essays, sound, short films to mixed-media participative projects.

What unites these pieces is their focus on forms of activism in response to the varying forces of anthropogenic climate crisis and its correlatives – highly uneven forms of over-consumption, accumulation and imperialism; biodiversity loss, toxicity; exploitation, displacement and extraction of energies and resources from humans and environments. Increasingly this bundled human impact on the planet is termed the 'Anthropocene'[3], for others the term requires more specific focus than on a generic 'Man'= Anthropos, to specifically refer to capitaloscene or, as Bergman, Montgomery, and Alluri term it: 'Empire'.[4] Similarly, the contributions in this section offer a range of conceptualisations or diagnoses of environmental change, imaginaries of 'we' the producers of visual culture, the specific piece, and the imagined audience, as well as of humanity in general.

Interpretations of 'activism' vary in the pieces that follow: from depicting activisms; seeking to educate, inform and affect to spur action, or practicing creative forms *as* activism. The online etymological dictionary defines activism as "advocating energetic action" and references the "abandonment of neutrality".[5] In this respect, all the pieces share their movement away from a positionality of observer or producer of representation-as-reflection, and towards some interpretation of the Latin root of the word 'action', actus: "a doing, a driving force, or an impulse". Thinking through the "force of representations", Anderson interprets force as "what something does – its capacities to affect and effect, to make a difference".[6]

In what follows, I introduce the thirteen pieces on activism through the ways in which they seek to communicate and inform, affect and activate; the directionality of activism (what is the sought-after change, direction or movement?), and the imagined or emergent sense of belonging or collective 'we' summoned by the work.

Fred Fabre
↑ Drunken Boat & → Final Party

Diego Orihuela
↑ The Red Pangolin

Ana Sun
↑ Break the Rear-View Mirror

Erich Wolff
← Living with floods at the forefront of climate change

Communicate & Inform; Affect & Activate

The instrumentalization of the arts as a mode of communicating climate science has been problematised extensively.[7] In this collection, Garde, in their piece (Sci-)Art, Activism & Audiences, speaks to this debate, questioning the reductive use of art in science communication. Should artists become 'climate communicators' and strategically map and analyse audiences, reception and the links between consumption of visual culture, attitudes and actions? As I will discuss further, below, the gathered pieces speak to art beyond its use in transmission of meaning or information. Yet, there remains an important emphasis, within some of the pieces, of communication and education about environmental change.

In their book Our Changing Menu: climate change and the foods we love and need, Eiseman and Hoffmann, highlight the impacts of climate change on key foods. Audiences are enrolled in actively extending their knowledge through existing attachments to, and curiosities about, food: an online searchable database allows viewers to find out how food ingredients are impacted by climate change. Perhaps, a threat that seems abstract might seem more real when it threatens the food we already value, and connects us to an imagined collective humanity: as the authors put it: 'we all eat'.

Wolff's piece Living with floods at the forefront of climate change, based on ethnographic research with communities in Indonesia and Fiji affected by flooding, looks to subvert narratives of cultures, societies and people who 'need educating' about climate change. Instead, constructed in collaboration with communities, the pieces show climate knowledge and expertise intimately embedded in everyday life: The image of a tidemark on a wooden cupboard, an evocative reminder that climate change is not a threat to come, but is already present and already being made sense of at a community level.

The capacity of visual culture to reveal the unseen and show in new light (instead of, or as well as, telling and informing) is emphasised in Policardo's Branded trash (In) voluntary product displacement. Photographs of discarded containers with sometimes faded and crumpled, but still clearly identifiable logos appear like still lives, carefully lit and staged like a product placement. Adding an air of glossy value to 'worthless' waste, these images raise awareness of – and in doing so are complicit within - the enduring, free advertising of litter. This project brings to light the circulation of value that not only spurs further ecological destruction but accumulates deeply uneven benefits and losses. In Lawrence's Venting in Ryebank, large metallic-looking 'vents' rise up from the relatively wild spaces of Ryebank Fields in Manchester. Amongst ominous apocalyptic wind and inaudible whispering, the vents turn and jump and wander across fields encroached by diggers, high-viz and fences, hiding behind trees and increasingly frantically venting the struggles to access space, the hidden emissions and the 'winners and losers' of development.

These projects highlight how transmission of information, alone, is not enough. According to Elizabeth Grosz art goes beyond communication of meaning to "summon[s] up life to come".[8] It induces, gives rise to forces that affect – beyond a kind of rational 'understanding', 'reason' or representation, this is about expression. In terms of climate crisis, the mere presence of information, has not spurred sufficient action. The world as a whole is not, to paraphrase Greta Thunberg, acting like the house is on fire, nor are societies acting on climate emergency with the same cohesive attention and upheaval as the pandemic. There is not the same generalised fear, panic or action that might be expected, nor the collective mobilisation required, given the prognosis.

Some of the collected pieces enrol audiences in this heightened emotion. In the Red Pangolin Diego Orihuela evokes the urgency and fear of the pandemic in an excruciating sensory experience: A searing high-pitched sound accompanies the blood red spread across the world of pangolin blood: The endangered and heavily-trafficked

pangolin is thought to be one of the potential sources of COVID-19. Our own fragility and (in)capacity to breathe, is intimately tied to exploitation and extraction, not only of the pangolin, but in sacrificial zones worldwide. Confronted by the pangolin point of view, we are forced also to reckon with the limits of our own knowledge.

Also drawing on the pandemic context, Sun's poem Break the Rear-View Mirror urges readers to break with the 'old normal' and abandon drives for prosperity represented by numerical economic growth, to "fabricate a future" in accountability, responsibility and ecological growth. The poem provocatively raises questions around time in the Anthropocene: Do we need to look in the rear-view mirror to see where not to go or to understand the layers of injustice and exploitation that undergird the present moment? Perhaps there needs to be a questioning of the very teleological notions of 'progress' across time and space attached to imperial and exploitative practices. Rather than focusing solely on the future or the past, it might mean learning to recognise that we are (un) living futures and pasts in the now: a non-linear time.

Chavarro Avila's acrylic painting, playfully entitled; Sabía Usted que estamos bailando con la muerte?/Did you know we are dancing with death? further provokes questions around temporality. The burning desert, cactus, skull and dancing skeleton underneath Dali's melted clock in a clear blue sky gives a piercing sense of urgency, questions a linearity of time and invites responses that elude the sterility of prognoses presented in graphs and figures.

Ariel Chavarro Avila
↑ Sabía Usted queestamos bailando con la muerte?
Did you know we are dancing with the death?

Beth Barlow
↑ Show Your Working Outs
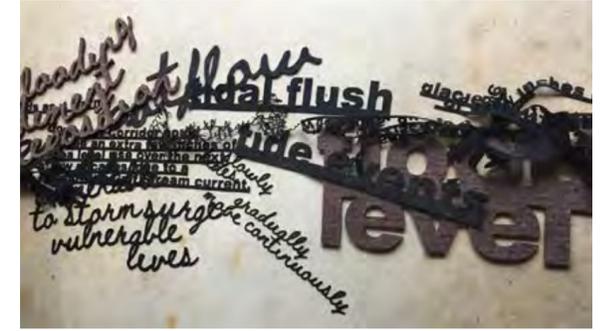
Andrea Wollensak
↑ Reading the Wrack Lines

Ally Zlatar
↓ The Last Yugoslavia

Eva Joy Lawrence
↑ Venting in Ryebank

Dr. Danielle Eiseman & Dr. Michael Hoffmann
→ Climate change and the future of the hamburger

Directions: (De)activate (to) What?

Barlow's sound art piece Show Your Working Outs spurs us to ask: Is it enough for art to provoke thought or feelings without ensuing practical action? In Barlow's practice, the audience taking action and sharing what they have done, becomes part of the work on/of climate activism. This aligns with an activist-scholar impulse not simply to produce knowledge about social and climate justice struggles, but to produce knowledge as part of the struggle.[9]

The gathered pieces contribute to some of the struggles knotted into the roots of climate crisis: cultures of exceptionalism and separation between humans and environments/natures/other species, extractivist economies and heteropatriarchal white supremacist hierarchies of value, in which poor, queer, feminised, racialised and disabled people are most at risk within climate crisis.

Referencing social injustice in climate crisis, Fabre in Eco-Femanism centres 'man' as the key to dismantling patriarchy. Final party and no future offer a disturbing spectacle underneath ominous red skies. A god-like wrath of nature seems to descend on a white heteropatriarchal fantasy: seas of white bodies, mountains of waste, excretion and vomit, sex and violence. In *Planet B* – a bearded man holds a child while the earth burns.

These pieces raise questions of what role dominant performance of gender binaries has in climate demise. The toxic combination of petromasculinity and power on a world stage has arguably had a great cost on climate action.[10] Further questions need to be asked also around who are – or are represented as - the subjects of climate activism? Who are the heroes? Whose visions and voices are left unheard, whose bodies are cropped out, erased and made invisible within climate activism?[11]

Beyond the creator's hopes, wishes or aims to spur specific climate action, there is an alchemy to transforming matter-meaning through a piece of work. To follow Grosz, what differentiates art from science or technology is a transformation beyond instrumentalism and an openness to indeterminate effects.[12] Arguably, it is precisely an instrumental relationship to materiality and human relations which lies at the root of the problem of climate change.[13] To recover from climate crisis equitably, we need to abandon or abolish economies and cultures within which everything and everybody – from pangolins (Orihuela Ibanez), to abandoned 'wild' spaces (Lawrence) or waste packaging (Policardo), is mobilised, and put to work to extract value.

More fundamentally, there is a need to question received cultural attachments to Anthropocene notions of who or what 'we' are as a species. Grosz, queering the work of Darwin, theorises art not as that which makes us human and separates us from other species, but as that which brings us in line with other animals: art as rooted in sexual selection, according to Grosz, is the capacity to transform materials and environments in ways that are not primarily about 'use value' of survival, but about desire, forces that affect bodies and about movement to other possible ways of being.[14]

Some of the gathered work opens up towards other ways of being with natures and environments, and questions supposed boundaries between ourselves and 'nature'. The Plastic Art Collective's Plastic. Intimate photo series and short film Asphyxia, depicts a person trapped, wrapped, fighting with, and at times dancing as one within a flowing white sheet of plastic. This work raises the spectre of a material that is not our 'other' but that is fast becoming us in micro and nano particles through food, breathing and skin contact[15], troubling the question 'does plastic breathe?'. It is not the planet that is suffocating (the planet will survive in some (plastic) form) – but humanity.

Gathering & Belonging

The history of environmental activism is sometimes told through the first image of the earth from space. The visual representation of the small blue-green and white marble floating in space is seen to have spurred a novel sense of collective humanity and planetary fragility. Central to critical climate activism is the question of who is being spurred to make change: what kind of active public is being heralded into action? What are the imagined boundaries of the public? Is activism an incitement for individuals-as-consumers to 'act' through green consumption decisions, or is climate change tied to 'over-population' and action seen as white supremacist and genocidal control of 'undesirable' populations[16]? It is vital therefore to consider not only what action is seen to lie at the heart of climate activism, but also what forms of belonging are evoked.

Several pieces in this collection centre on notions of belonging. Barlow's Show Your Working Outs, drawing on personal Facebook groups, feeds and internet searches, contemplates different forms of belonging and pride associated with land – from the nation, village, farm, mining, or growing. Through a video montage of photography, drawing and song, interspersed with snippets of conversation, there is a sense of a fabric woven through different threads of attachment. Zlatar, in The Last Yugoslavia, asks whether a new national identity can be fostered through a re-interpretation of landscape. Given the notion of 'national landscape' has historically entailed essentialising, exclusionary and genocidal ideologies (e.g., of ecological conservation and 'blood and soil' in Nazi Germany) there is a need to critically consider what kinds of collective attachments engender solidarities towards climate futures that are just.

For many of the pieces introduced here, forms of belonging are woven into the collective shaping of the work. As Moten's quote opening this piece indicates - this is 'gathering' as what we are and what we do. Barlow's, Lawrence's and Wolff's work (discussed above) contain voices of various communities, impacted by – and reflecting on – climate crisis and environmental change. Similarly, Wollensak's Reading the Wrack Lines is a collaborative project, bringing young people together in writing workshops and field trips to consider local climate impacts on the shoreline in Southeastern Connecticut, United States. This work is then reflected back to the community, literally, in poetry projected onto a lighthouse and in a felt word sculpture.

While the word activism, as I introduced at the beginning of this piece, speaks to force and motion, Sun's poem, in asking whether poetry can create a space of quiet, questions the notion that activism needn't always take the form of noise, frenzy, public, energetic protest action. This question needs asking when it is the intensity of activity – the use of energy and mobilisation of resources of the wealthier societies – that has contributed the most to climate change. When our dominant economic systems and cultures require perpetual consumption, then quieting this circulation and activity may require forms of rest and refusal. These are forms of political rest[17] and refusal led by Black radical, crip, feminist and indigenous authors and thinkers[18]. To stop, to rest, to refuse within a system that requires perpetual activity can mean forming a collective break in a system that is breaking people, ways of life and foreclosing futures.

Collectively, these pieces on activism refuse any attempts at neat categorisation, harmonisation or conclusion. They represent a dissonant, inspiring, disturbing and hopeful, movement gathering force. As an audience you are left asking what are you moved to be and do?

→ AC Davidson, University of Huddersfield

Enrico Policardo
↖ ↑ Branded trash: (In)Voluntary Product Displacement

Plastic Collective
↑ → Plastic. Intimate. Collective

Endnotes

1. Moten, F. (Producer). (2020). Dr. Fred Moten, January 19, 2020, 11.15am. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VevVQ9xeUNc&t=841s

2. Grosz, E. (2011). *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art.* North Carolina: Duke University Press.

3. Johnson, E., Morehouse, H., Dalby, S., Lehman, J., Nelson, S., Rowan, R., . . . Yusoff, K. (2014). After the Anthropocene: Politics and geographic inquiry for a new epoch. *Progress in Human Geography.* doi:10.1177/0309132513517065

4. Bergman, C., Montgomery, N., & Alluri, H. (2017). *Joyful Militancy: Building Thriving Resistance in Toxic Times.* La Vergne: AK Press

5. See: etymonline.com, 2021.

6. Anderson, B. (2018). Cultural geography II: The force of representations. *Progress in Human Geography,* 43(6), p.1129. doi:10.1177/0309132518761431

7. Hawkins, H., Marston, S. A., Ingram, M., & Straughan, E. (2015). The Art of Socioecological Transformation. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* 105(2), 331-341.doi :10.1080/00045608.2014.988103; Miles, M. (2010). Representing nature: art and climate change. *Cultural Geographies,* 17(1), 19-35. doi:10.1177/1474474009349997

8. Grosz, *Becoming Undone,* p. 188.

9. Russell, B. (2015). Beyond activism/academia: militant research and the radical climate and climate justice movement(s). *Area,* 47(3), 222-229. doi:10.1111/area.12086

10. Daggett, C. (2018). Petro-masculinity: Fossil Fuels and Authoritarian Desire. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies,* 47(1), 25-44. doi:10.1177/0305829818775817

11. Malowa, V., Owor, A., Merissa, E., Lado, S., & Mayelle, H. F. (2020). The erasure of Vanessa Nakate portrays and idealised climate activism. Retrieved from https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2020/01/31/vanessa-nakate-davos-cropped-photo-white-race-climate-activism/

12. Grosz, *Becoming Undone.*

13. Miles, M. (2010). Representing nature: art and climate change. *Cultural Geographies,* 17(1), 19-35. doi:10.1177/1474474009349997

14. Grosz, *Becoming Undone*

15. Prata, J. C., da Costa, J. P., Lopes, I., Duarte, A. C., & Rocha-Santos, T. (2020). Environmental exposure to microplastics: An overview on possible human health effects. *Sci Total Environ,* 702, 134455. doi:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.134455

16. Dyett, J., & Thomas, C. (2019). Overpopulation Discourse: Patriarchy, Racism, and the Specter of Ecofascism. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology,* 18(1-2), 205-224. doi:https://doi.org/10.1163/15691497-12341514

17. Hersey, T. (2021). About. Retrieved from https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/about/

18. Davidson, A. (2021). (In)human energies and desires for refusal. In C. H. L. Markaki (Ed.), *Love Spells and Rituals for Another World* (pp. 36-37): Independent Publishing Network.

Materialisms

On Friday 2 April 2021 I attended (online) the formal book launch of a new Routledge Companion. Titled *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change,* it is a long awaited assemblage of new writings about the climate crisis. The edited collection is an important contribution to the field of cultural practice research. It contains 40 contributions across a range of themes including extractivism, climate violence, sensing climates, in/visibilities, multispecies justice and ruptures/insurgencies/worldings. Collectively, the writings communicate a deeper awareness of climate breakdown by focusing on climate change in the Global South rather than sustaining a preoccupying lens on the Global North. Furthermore, the writings attend to the experimental and publicly engaged artistic and cultural practices at work in climate justice contexts and the value of these ways of working in a range of contexts (institutional and activist oriented). In the introduction, the editors, T J Demos, Emily Eliza Scott and Subhankar Banerjee write:

> In assembling the contributions to this volume, our guiding criteria of inclusion have been informed by recent developments in artistic practice and a growing body of arts and visual culture-based criticism, which have themselves variously addressed environmental studies, including: mainstream and experimental visualizations of climate breakdown; the politics and aesthetics of environmental and climate justice in photographic, video-essay, multimedia, performative, and activist formats; decolonial and Indigenous approaches to political ecology; critical mobilizations of Anthropocene/Capitalocene/Chtulucene theses; speculative philosophies of new materialism, particularly those with explicit political and justice-based investments; post-anthropocentric sensitivities to multispecies ecologies and realms beyond the human; cartographic explorations of emergent relations between the local and the global, as well as the earthly and the atmospheric; activist environmentalisms within the conditions of new media, forensics, and spatial politics; and the problematics of visibility and representation, particularly where they correlated with, and are sometimes occluded by, modes of state, military, and corporate power.[1]

These examples of eco-aesthetic thinking are part of necessary strategies and tactics for climate justice and remain committed to context specificity; the localised place-based, situated and bottom-up experiences of meaning-making aesthetic practices. In this respect, the publication of *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change* is a useful ally for the underlying curatorial motivations driving *Climate Action and Visual Culture* as an exhibition project, particularly in relation to the modes of practice and alternative forms of environmental and social justice it has sought to imagine/re-imagine.

The collection of work presented in this section on materialisms clearly presents a range of engagements with matter, with mattering along ecological lines and in particular, through new materialist insights. New materialism is a conceptual formation that developed in the 1990s to articulate a theoretical and paradigmatic shift away from dualistic thinking in modern and humanist discourses.[2] Instead, by focusing on the intra-penetrating relations between human and nonhuman actants in an ocean of mattering forces, we are encouraged to critically question the idea of a stable, fixed and liberal subject. This questioning allows for the spatial opening needed to reflect upon current global influences of late capitalism and their impacts on climate change.

The eleven contributing practitioners featured here in this section of materialisms all negotiate the ecological and environmental contexts within and out of which a range of creative outcomes have been produced. The works presented are part of a growing awareness and understanding of the permeabilities between mind and mattering environments, human and non-human relations.

Melanie King's doctoral research investigates analogue astronomical photography through the lens of new materialism. By examining the material properties of the photographic process and the cosmic phenomena it observes, King seeks to consider how, in a time of ecological catastrophe, we might reconsider our connections to the planet and the natural world. In particular, the material elements inherent in the production of photographic images are bound to the earth. King's research contains experiments within analogue photographic practice that use plant-based developers and silver reclamation from photographic fixers. The series Ancient Light contains analogue photographic negatives and prints of star-scapes, including images created using telescopes and observatories. The celestial connection to the photographic material generated through the research is also evident in reflecting on what light is as a material phenomenon which travels through time. The physics of light and the phenomena of electromagnetic radiation reveal that the propagation of light as waves of energy is part of the cosmic matter of image making. In this respect, King draws our attention to the intimate relationships between the technologies of photographic image production and the material resources of the earth. With this comes a sensitivity to the processes used and how new innovations in analogue photography might minimise the environmental impact of photography as a material practice.

Lydia Halcrow's doctoral research is focused on the agencies of vibrant matter in relation to embodied practices within the climate crisis. Halcrow takes influence from Jane Bennett's book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*[3] in an embodied walking practice through urban environments, gathering human debris and forming new material relations. In the first chapter of *Vibrant Matter* Bennett seeks to challenge our preconceptions of matter as something passive, inert and inactive. Bennett considers the status of nonhuman materials in public life; the 'thing-power' of the object is an indicator of the energetic vitality of the materiality of objects in a range of environments. In other words, the active agency of materials plays a key role in how forms are animated. We can see how the discarded trash Halcrow carefully collects on her walks are gatherings of vital materiality and serve to generate new ways of encountering place.[4] The work produced cultivates an ethics of material enchantment. Perhaps this close-attunement to our surroundings is reflective of the morphogenetic relations evolving out of our engagements with matter.[5]

Gabriela Drees-Holz's collection of works made from aluminium-coffee-capsules provides a commentary on materials and extraction practices, including their impact on eco-systems. In particular, aluminium production is energy and water intensive, and contributes to toxic poisoning in both soil and water. In our everyday lives, our encounters with aluminium manifest in throw-away cultural practices and the coffee capsule is an example of a highly unsustainable commodity and consumer logic. Drees-Holz chooses to repurpose these capsules and turn them into mesmeric objects. Perhaps these are life forms that have the aim of making us scrutinise the material itself and its purpose.


Gabriela Drees-Holz
← Aluminium is breaking the world

Lydia Halcrow
← Debris #15 (lockdown) & ↓ Debris #2 (lockdown)

Joe Edwardes-Evans
↑ Returning to The Table
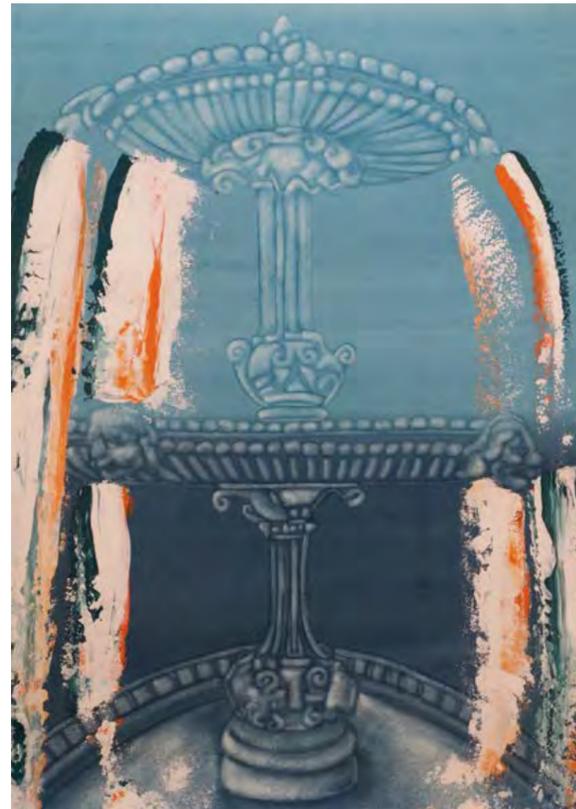
Rachel Magdeburg
↑ Tortoise Scum

Veronica M Worrall
↑ Unseen Connection

Sarah Burgess
↑ Miami Believe it or Not

Jacqui Jones
↑ Ongoing & ↓ Warning Global Warming

Sarah Burgess's textile practice seeks to interpret the magnitude of climate change statistics, particularly the physical change of rising sea levels. Her exhibition Drowning by Numbers (2017) considers the data of flooding and its impact on cities and human populations and incorporates these into stitch and dyeing practices. The use of dye on fabric reflects the migration of water and visually communicates the threat of global temperature rises and flood risks. Dye was allowed to percolate up across the stitching in real-time in the exhibition. This experimental work provides a striking visual commentary on the climate crisis and compels us to reflect on issues of coastline erosion and impacts on human livelihoods.

Following on with the theme of water, Rachel Madgeburg investigates objects representative of commercial capitalism, agribusiness, ecological rupture through a contemporary painting practice, focusing specifically on watercolour, as both medium and metaphor for processes of washing, soaking, and figure-ground dissipations in hydro-material visual methods of wet-on-wet techniques. Madgeburg's challenge to pictorial traditions is evidenced in the work Tortoise Scum (watercolour and acrylic on paper). As with Burgess' consideration of flooding, Madgeburg takes on the flows of solid and liquid materials in the context of the climate crisis, focusing on the phenomena of drying up and saturation in watercolour painting. The fountain represented in the work is not only representative of public and civic space. Public drinking fountains are historical monuments of water flow, public health and aesthetic spectacle. These ornamental scenes of municipal civic space (wells and drinking fountains) are redundant forms in that most public water structures are no longer in operation. In this respect, the choice to investigate an object's agentic matter (in Bennett's sense) through watercolour techniques such as 'staining', 'flood', 'evaporation' and 'lifting-out' allows us to consider the ways in which water is commercialised and exploited as a resource.

Veronica M Worrall challenges anthropocentric ways of thinking by experimenting with unseen and undervalued ecosystems, in particular, her journeying through Suffolk's coastal landscape. Her photographic image-making is an immersive engagement with the vital ecosystems in this environment, including salt marshes and woodland floors. Following the slower rhythms of this coastline, Worrall dedicated 80 days to her image making, allowing time, water, weather and other life forms to dialogue with her printed images. She calls these 'banners for nature' as they are carriers of the impressions of elemental activities generated not by herself but by the forces of the environment within which her images were buried. In this respect, the unseen connections are given space to take form out of the flux and flow of a coastal biosphere. This is a journey into cultivating a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relations between non-human energies in an ecosystem and allowing for their visibility to come into focus. Perhaps this is a moment of anthropocentric departure through a creative process of sharing the unseen and undervalued.

Joe Edwardes-Evans uses sculpture, painting, drawing and digital collage to reflect on how objects move through time and to consider how the hidden is part of the under-said to our ecological imaginations. This manifests as a question raised out of Edwardes-Evan's experience of exhibiting an installation in 2019 that was bereft of visitors. The discursive self-critique in the form of layers of unreadable written text perhaps serves as a challenge to dominant ocularcentric modes of exhibition viewing practices and in the context of the ecologies of experience evokes the surpluses of meaning making and the impossibility of capturing the magnitude of the climate crisis. When the climate malaise hits us, we enter into the imaginative space of self-critique and start to journey into empty worlds and dystopian settings. This is a search for future visual cultural forms of climate action buried or hidden within more dominant representational modes of 'seeing' the ecological crisis.

Jacqui Jones considers the climate crisis directly by using data on single use plastics to produce a large-scale sculptural form representative of the ascending scale of NASA climate change graphs. The work creates the spatial illusion of the graph receding into the earth with the use of a mirrored base.

The idea to visually communicate a graphic as sculpture is clearly a stark way of conveying the statistical rise of plastic debris and toxic waste generation. But the work itself in-situ is subtle in its form. It carries the motifs of modernist abstraction through the interrelations forged between sculpture and architecture. Plastic waste, as we know, has led to huge impacts in the form of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch; a trash vortex made up of marine debris particles and microplastics. There is a visual analogy here between the escalating scale of graphic form in three dimensions with the expanding islands of plastic trash in the ocean.

Which leads to Sineid Codd's dialogue between the literal and imaginative play of sculptural islands, surrounded by the sea. Codd's research into the archipelago; a term that describes the grouping of islands in a chain or cluster, invites viewers to explore a co-created Lilliputian world. The fossilized and cast sculpture islands generated out of found objects allows us to consider the visual language of islands as environments of isolation and self-generating material entanglements. For example, the impressive drawings of planets of all kinds in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* and the floating island of vegetation out in the middle of the ocean in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* help us to rethink the archipelago as an ecosystem reclaiming its space.[6]

In relation to data and numeric scales of quantification and statistical change, Robert Lawrence plays with the concept of climate currency in a project with the charity Reforesting Scotland. Lawrence has generated wooden sculptural currency with his use of Scottish grown wood. As eco low carbon alternatives they help us to question the materiality of currency.[7] The wooden coins are also multipurpose serving as coasters for private dining tables, board rooms, meeting rooms, cafes and restaurants. Strangely they evoke a use and surplus value all in one. They are also part of a re-planting chain, so that with each climate currency coin sold, a tree is planted. Tree planting will begin in 2021, using local tree stakes and environmentally sound tree protection. This includes planting native hardwoods, creating well managed woodlands, with selected species. This is the magical value of the Climate Currency™ project. The more wooden coins that are bought, and not used as part of an exchange economy, the more trees are planted. This provokes us to think about how currencies might be used to help with the climate agenda in terms of the redistribution and investment of value into material resources. So, in a way, instead of extraction and depletion, words so commonly used with de-forestation practices, we might start to consider species development and native planting as part of the growing of a new infrastructure for the future. The wooden coins thus serve as ornaments to a cause rather than tools in a surplus engine chain.

The final example in this section perhaps feeds off the network of the tree structure as an ecosystem. Mark Parsons as part of Studio Polpo has been exploring the use of mycelium (subsoil connections connecting the fruit of fungi) in architecture. Mycelium can be used for binding bio-based materials (hemp and straw) to create foam substances for insulation and furniture packing. Studio Polpo operates at the intersections between the arts, architecture and research, and has been investigating the potential applications of mycelium through The Heeley Mushroom Project. Based in Sheffield the project has been developing a community performance space and has aims to produce a pavilion clad in panels of mycelium and straw, grown by local children, and assembled as part of a celebratory community event. The pavilion combines the playful exploration of fungi with the act of developing a range of panels which will generate its own surface forms. These activities and experimental ways of working with matter are practical entries into thinking about organic properties and the complex ecological factors that make up the rhythmic play of material effects; all of which generate forms which we encounter in our daily lives.

In mycology, the mushroom's appearance as a fertile shape is an integral part of a collective mycelium. This is what we see on the surface of things but there is also a fungal bacterial colony beneath the surface that spreads its threads

as a communication system for other life forms, including trees. In the wood wide web, fungi eat death and create life. They break down dead organic matter and release nutrients for plants to keep growing. They are the great composters of the universe. Mycologists believe that mushrooms can save the world. As a fertile form the mushroom is the outcome of the creative transfers of energy provided by the network of the mycelium. So, when we consider the ecosystem as a life-living system we are also aware that the mushroom's ability to pop up at any point is a material effect of the unexpected and unpredictable symbioses generated when fungi and algae work together. As humans we can learn a lot from this creative free play. As the biologist Alan Rayner describes in the brilliant book *Degrees of Freedom: Living in Dynamic Boundaries* and more recently, in his talk 'Understanding Trees and Fungi as Flow-Forms',[8] we come to understand ourselves by understanding biomorphic forms and their diverse operations.

To conclude, the project *Climate Action and Visual Culture* contains many different forms of action, just like the fungi we encounter on the barks of trees. These forms have their own shapes, intensities and atmospheres. As part of the ecology of visual culture and commitments to climate action, the works featured all seek to reconfigure the dominant value-systems that reinforce power and inequality, particularly those systems, to return to the words of T J Demos, that subordinate 'human and nonhuman difference to appropriation, value extraction, bringing terrible forms of forced labour and slavery, exploitation and economic inequality, which continue under various names in our present'.[9] Furthermore, if we recognise systems of power and inequality are bound to the colonisation of nature, and that to de-colonise nature means to commit to the task of critically questioning dominant modes of representation, then how might we continue to develop more nuanced eco-aesthetic responses to the complex relations that make up the climate catastrophe?

Perhaps, there is a glimmer of something at work in the assemblage of examples presented in this section on materialisms. When we reflect on ecologies of creative practice, we are opening up to shared common ground in the making of work for climate action. These works do not sit in competitive opposition but are part of the complexities of the climate crisis itself. Perhaps our commitment to finding ways and means of expressing our relationship to this crisis and to others, is also part of our need to render these complex entanglements visible and to 'strengthen the basis of ethico-political solidarity around ecological concerns'.[10] This is why we need to continue to facilitate and develop research with and as creative and cultural practitioners and to establish more collaborations with artists and activists, filmmakers and journalists, architects and writers, designers and theorists, musicians and poets! All of us can critically negotiate climate action concerns in local, national and global contexts. The curatorial project *Climate Action and Visual Culture* is one attempt to bring such an assemblage of critical negotiations together and to think creatively in, with and through the works themselves.

→ Rowan Bailey, University of Huddersfield

Sinéid Codd
↑ ↗ A fuller acquaintance with the archipelago

Robert Lawrence
↓ Climate Currency

Studio Polpo
← ↑ Heeley Mushroom Project

Endnotes
1. Demos, T. J., Emily E. Scott, and Subhankar Banerjee. *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change.* New York, NY: Routledge, 2021, p.5.
2. See in particular, Dolphijn, Rick. and Van Der Tuin, Iris., *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies.* University of Michigan, Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, an Imprint of MPublishing, 2012.
3. Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant matter: A Political Ecology of Things.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.
4. Bennett, 'Chapter 1: 'The Force of Things' In. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things,* pp.1-19.
5. For an account of the relations between hylomorphism and morphogenesis see: Ingold, Tim. *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture.* London: Routledge, 2013.
6. I am thinking in particular of the surface of the planet being overtaken by baobab in *The Little Prince* and the island's sulphurous ground nourishing itself by digesting anything it touches in *The Life of Pi.*
7. Coins, traditionally, were made from precious metals
8. Rayner, Alan. *Degrees of Freedom: Living in Dynamic Boundaries.* London: Imperial College Press, 1997. Also see http://thetreeconference.com/speaker/dr-alan-rayner/ and http://thetreeconference.com/films/dr-alan-rayner-understanding-trees-fungi-flow-forms/.
9. Demos, T.J. Creative Ecologies. *Take Magazine,* 2017. 3: 20.
10. Demos, T.J. Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016, p.23.

Modes of Representation

Alan Montgomery
↑ Poiesis Disc #1 & ↗ Vault & Stations #8, #14

In my early relationship with photography, the very idea of representation through visual practices seemed obvious, however, not fully grasped. The superficial bond initially created with visual arts progressed on the basis of wanting to freeze and transfer moments from the canvas of my mind, onto the canvases projected with and through the camera. The mechanical means for the object of representation. A learning curve emerged through a journey into awareness, a journey into considered modes of visual production, in which representation is implicit of power, it holds responsibility and recognizes ethics.

Representation - Re-present/ation- I wonder how a deconstruction of the word, as a dual morphing of a nominalized verb, carries within it the clues to the complexities of representation, as it traverses the territory of the senses, from thought to action and out into the world. In re-present/ation, through the cluster of the word "present", I see three meanings: the present (prɛz(ə)nt) – measured through time, its locative pinpointing of the right now together with the awareness for the lived moment; Present (prɛz(ə)nt) - the gift, the box in which the secret rests, offered in love, or care, or admiration and carefully wrapped up; and finally "present" (prɪˈzent)- the action, the verb, the offering or handing of something special, as well as the performance, the display, the process of production.

Conversely, this mode of thinking through representation seems particularly relevant in the context of the creative responses collated. As they act as sensibly forged gifts (of knowledge shaping), stemmed from, and shared from the lived experience and mindful imagination of the multiple creative voices presented and present (prɛz(ə)nt) here, a visual conversation about the present (prɛz(ə)nt) moment starts taking shape in the forms of painting, photography, video, and VR. It is perhaps through this interpretation of representation, where the unwrapping of Modes of Representation as a gift, facilitates a space in which we are transported to the intersection point where language (in all its forms), climate action and visual culture converge, as we follow the exploratory paths of the artworks through the intricacies of narrative and metaphor. It is through the ludic quality or playfulness, specific to the term "representation" that we might begin to see an unexpected resemblance to human nature, as a relational familiarity that emerges from play and exploration into social phenomena of great significance (culture). In this abstraction, representation becomes a product nurtured by dialogue between the action of how to best create the packaging of a particular moment in time, coupled with tensions emerging from the acts of exploration and of communication, as fluid and ever-morphic processes of meaning making and of negotiation.

Representation lives at the heart of cultural formations. As it forms and informs our surroundings, it also shapes our identities, our senses of belonging, our drives and passions. Representation becomes the gateway for all the particularities of our ways of life, giving shape to what becomes a "universally shared meaning" [1]. The very idea of universalizing meaning seems futile as a gesture, since when we speak of culture, we speak of change and transformation, we speak of differences and similarities, we speak of individuality - which by their very nature, disturb irrational foundations of rigid and prescriptive designing and appointing of class and category. As such, the question rests on understanding what makes it difficult, in the fluidity of culture, for representation to use its agency towards sustaining change, towards more sensitive, ethical, and evenly distributed ways of being in and with the world.

Representation acquires thus two powers: one used to rigidly construct fictitious versions of reality fostered by perilous power-balance dynamics, which further propel socio-economic, cultural, and political inequalities; and another, which frees the human mind to counter them, to question, to speculate, to dream and to embody, however big or small. It is through this second concurrence with representation that rigid and fixed meanings are challenged or proved as detrimental, as we cannot assume to be discussing homogenous ways in which humans engage with the process of making sense of the world [2]. This brings into discussion the very need to query whose interests are actually being protected in culture, through representation; and in this context, whose voice and visibility can be augmented to challenge the anchored status quo, evaluating how art, creativity and meaning making can position representations of ethical alternatives at the conjunction of balance and criticality- as forms of living. It is with this in mind that one could say there is no culture without representation.

Alan Montgomery begins this conversation with "Waiting is not an option", a series of paintings on small round discs. These poiesis discs which place time at the core of an unfolding dialogue, are critical in tone to the Anthropocene as a manufactured self-inflicted marker of decay. The paintings hold tensions of surrealist tones for time and space narratives, creating a frame-contained juxtaposition of dual earthly worlds; from utopian to dystopian, under the gaze of a clock, where hours, months or years are sectioned off in slices or in chaos. Chaos comes through, it stands out, it marks, ends as stigmata. Helen Cixous best describes the nature of the stigmata as something that, unlike the scar, "takes away, removes substance, carves out a place for itself. [...] Stigma stings, pierces, makes holes, separates with pinched marks and in the same movement distinguishes—re-marks—inscribes, writes. Stigma wounds and spurs, stimulates. Stigma hallmarks." [3] Montgomery's discs present a many different worlds of carved out wounds that never disappear, just like stigmata does; and they do stimulate. I am debating whether the increments that split the image into brutal and visually painful circles (or cycles) of light and dark colour, or better yet, of light and dark visions, seem also highly psychiatric. Through contemplation, a transcendence of meaning emerges, from activist to psychological, as involuntary images jump out of the paintings, like fake memories, as associations we might create from the familiar representations of possible apocalyptic futures. Consumed in sequence, the paintings develop almost sensory qualities as an atmosphere of collapse takes over through the feeling of being shook; a movement and a progression of decay fully supporting Montgomery's highlighting that "time is of the essence".

Christ Wilmot continues in a similar surrealist tone to Montgomery, with his piece "Fish&Scream", reversing the narrative by privileging nature's impact on humans with a particular focus on fish frolicking, intertwining art with marine science. Wilmot's interpretation of practice-based research and theorical scoping, places the absurdity of a vaccine for the climate in relation to the effects of the Anthropocene, specifically the Covid-19 pandemic. In Wilmot's painting, an underwater reinterpretation of Edvard Munch's "The Scream" emerges, with fish freely swarming in colour patterns that read as muted: perhaps both pale and sound-less. Writing the word muted, I realized its similarity to being under water. Submerged and trapped by it. Although surviving as it seems, would Wilmot's screaming man still have the luxury of speaking, and that of being heard? And finally, would it still matter?
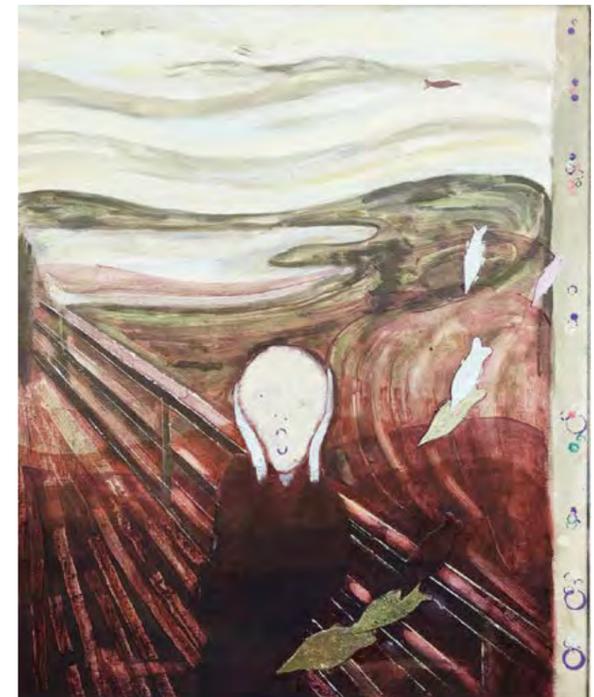

Chris Wilmott
→ Fish & Scream

Greg Williamson
← Reef
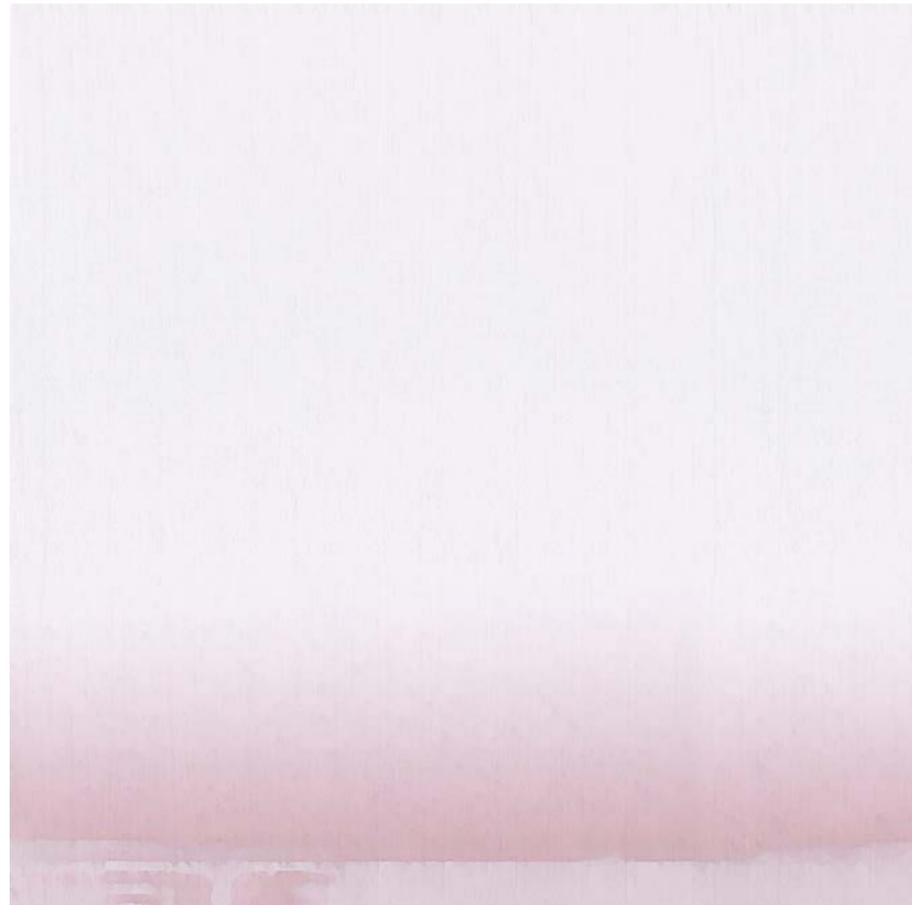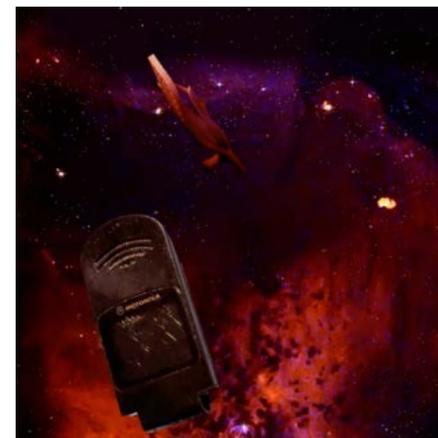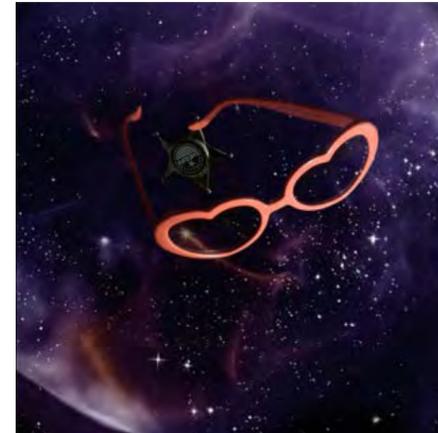
The attention to marine biology and fragile ecosystems is further explored in this narrative by Greg Williamson through "Greenland", as a play of light and shadow in which the upside-down depicted shark, curled in an almost fetal position, hangs low towards the bottom of the frame, in deep dark waters. The sensation of collapse emerges once again,however different than in Montgomery's pieces, in what would be described here as a representation of a sensible, serine and levitating glide. At the same time, "Greenland" speaks of care, of nurturing, as well as an ambivalence between dark outcomes induced by exploitation and a moment of intimate quiet, a peaceful glimpse into the depths of the less violated segments of nature's waters. Is Williams's shark obliviously sleeping, as we invade its intimacy? The poetry of this visual representation glides as discretely and as serenely as its subject matter, spilling out into the pale blue of the frame: are we reminded of a journey out at sea? In perfect harmony with its allurement, perhaps we are transported through an awakening "to celebrate and to conserve the natural world", as legacy for future generations.

Charles Dickens and E. M. Forster (Hill of Devi – Passage to India) suggest "that all facets of human history are implicated in natural history and the environment is not merely a framing device"⁴. In this context, the representation of climate action discussed through visual culture lends W.J.T. Mitchell's ⁵ review of visual culture particularly pertinent. As he discusses, visual culture's specificities are based on the fallacies that it produces, which can become opportunities for change and for advancement, when critically engaging in such discourses. This rendition of visual culture understands itself as the opening of a dialogue with visual nature, in which "the eye goes back as far as the species that represent the appearance of life"⁶, where even "oysters are seeing organisms"⁷. It is the very role of ethical representations to anchor and to connect all forms of seeing, while helping to speculate the value of further creating languages of care, health, welfare, of maintenance and of protection.

In the context of interconnected ways of seeing, Elleny Gherghe's paintings entitled "One with Nature" position nature-human dialogues as lessons to be learned from, where bodies are engaged in knowledge transfer partnerships with Mother Nature. She speaks of learning to stay grounded in the connection with the environment, as an exquisite source for happiness, as an unrivaled example of meta-transformations. Nature regenerates, it constantly evolves, nature adapts, nature is networks of care and of resilience, nature could be autonomous. Her flower-headed women convey a symbiosis of the human and the non-human, both living organisms, engaged in a delicate morphing of flesh and photosynthesis, which builds the blocks of a new body. A nature minded one. Mitchel's review of visual culture further offers a textual foundation for Gherghe's imaginative representation. When considering the visual as instrument and agency, the visual image appears not only as a tool for manipulation or transformation. It also performs as a self-sustaining source with purposes and meanings of its own.⁸ In this relationship, visual culture and visual images are treated as "go-betweens in social exchanges, as a repertoire of images or templates"⁹ that structure our encounters with other beings, with nature, with our environments.

As go-betweens are generally spaces for play and exploration, for exchange and negotiation, it is through this duality of the visual image, that representation finds once again ludic qualities in Danielle Bongiovanni's "Demetra: Aesthetica". The "interior landscape" becomes one with the exterior landscape, in a progressive journey towards the sublime landscape; similar to Pseudo-Longinus's interpretation of sublime (or the 'Longinian sublime') where, "the aim, reiterated throughout, [is] not merely to persuade but to move the receiver, to raise passions and to inspire." ¹⁰ The sublime in Bongiovanni's work finds further shelter in poet Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux's words, as not "strictly speaking something which is proven or demonstrated, but a marvel, which seizes one, strikes one, and makes one feel." ¹¹ The symbolic value of the paintings is carried through the spill of pastel light in gradient, from pink to yellow-green, as a gradual creative process which seeks to sensitize. The fluidity of the work indeed sensitizes, as subtle vignettes carry the mind to shapes of a forgotten landscape. When we speak of landscape, do we implicitly begin to also speak of light? Bongiovanni's pieces speak to me of light. A light that perhaps shelters an alluded landscape, or an "interior one", away from meddling eyes looking for exploitation. Familiarity with it happens in intimacy, as a successive process of discovery, through the active side of "re-present" [prɪˈzent] in which what is unfolding produces secrecy; a sheltered place in which imaginatively, the "interior landscape", the core, the soul, and "the heart of our ancient planet"¹² become analogous.

Katharine Paisley applies a similar conceptual depth in "Youth is Only Ever Fun in Retrospect", as an interpretation of Plato's allegory of the cave through painting, which outcomes with individuals refusing to acknowledge what light (knowledge) the evaluation of the Anthropocene reveals, as they choose "messy escapism"¹³ instead. Light can be crippling here. Light reveals, it puts under investigation as it signals faults, blame and imperfections. Light can be harsh and unforgiving. As light scrutinizes the layers of anthropogeny, Paisley's piece employs bold colours in what appears to be a twisting of blood red and charcoal black into the form and shape of a monumental tree. The tree as monument. The tree as monument which rules the frame and under which, small, black and abstract shapes morph into unidentifiable inklings of people. All looking up towards it. The tree as monument applies further, as a way of thinking trough the artwork. Monument as memorial but also monument derived from Latin¹⁴, which urges 'to remind', 'to advise' or 'to warn', drawing on the Anthropocene, which Paisley also applies here as a metaphor about losing control – of losing youth and losing strength.

A similar dystopian meta-physical element is also present in Benna Gaean Maris's video piece "Panspermia". Panspermia¹⁵ describes the concept through which life travels between planets as seeds, where seeds of life are present everywhere in the universe. Maris's piece points to the invasion of human practices beyond the local planetary damage, out into space, as plastic products begin to colonize the atmosphere, invading further the expanse to what is meant to be unoccupied, unaltered territory. Panspermia is the journey of traces of humanity, "whose remains [of] colorful polluting waste [and] sterile spores of a synthetic world"¹⁶, travel as seeds of manufactured, organic-less, post-life reminders. A plastic ball, fascinators, hair pins, sequin embellished hats, a mobile phone, sunglasses, and other products birthed by capitalism and commodification, drift and claim space in deep space. The human footprint is not confined by land and gravity. It shape-shifts into matter, as an invasive species.

Sonia Ben Achoura contemplates future outcomes through her piece, as an interpretative mode through which potential partnerships between mankind and nature can take place. As she weaves organic forms over the fabric of robotic look-alike geometry, her painting considers the collision between technology and biology, at a time of climate emergency where gentle manifestations of life take shape through flower blossoms growing against the techno-illusion inducing background. As an embellishment of the centre of the image, the blossoms invite the eye to follow a journey into a highly cryptic tunnel. This visual dichotomy between organic and technologized, aims to create a symbiosis. The painting invites visual trips and optical illusions that run in congruence, on what appears to be an endless couloir or corridor, perhaps as metaphor for an envisaged partnership between the human, the biological and the non-human, the automated.

Harry Meadows's piece "Twisting Metal with Earth" blends computer generated graphics and live motion video in an object-based dialogue from the perspective of speaking climate sensors. Meadows explores how weather stations can be useful beyond their function as mechanical sensors, in a conjoining of animation with audio recordings as oral histories, as a multi-voice narrative describing human experiences of weather. Speaking sensors become the material interface on which an aesthetic experience of the often-invisible forces of climate change and big data develops, as the video piece alternates animation with real-life location-based footage. The piece is named after the recount of one of the narrative voices, who parallels the experience of witnessing a tornado with sounds of

forcefulness and pain, while further climate change effects are mentioned and discussed by other voices. Meadows positions the climate sensors in their embodied form as powerful extensions and surrogates of human senses. Through this humanization, perceptions and impressions inform the telling of the story, in which experiences of climate change and discussions on how climate data is generated or what the benefits of climate prediction are, replace the hard evidence expected from such systems. The cartoonesque representation of animated speaking sensors, further invokes the playfulness of exploration, and while reversing their primary function, Meadows's work positions itself somewhere between imagination, experience, and science.

Sandrine Deumier uses the medium of VR to generate post-futurist themes in which aesthetic forms relate to internet cultures and digital imaginaries. "Falling" becomes a study of collapse. A study in which the subject enters a highly dystopian journey, somewhere between life, death and purgatory, searching for mini utopias through eco feminist postures. Rooted in 1970's feminist traditions, through ecofeminism,[17] an awakening of ecological consciousness rose in tandem with the critique on patriarchy, industrialization and militarization. The inter-connectivity of nature and society is emphasized, as criticism towards the perpetuation of the status-quo, recalled then as much as now, the need for radical reconfigurations of human priorities. Carolyn Merchant[18] argues that the hegemony of mechanistic science, regarded as a sign of progress and advances in human civilization, links the subjugation of nature to the climate emergency, the ecological demise and the domination of nature, to the same patriarchal paradigms which devalued women's presence in the production of knowledge. As patriarchal orders synonymous to nature exploitation replaced the organic, female-centered relationship to nature, Merchant, as well as Demieur, search for holistic principles that could re-balance and re-order inequity perpetuating systems. Demier's piece is an eco-feminist inquiry in which the subject traverses into worlds of surrealist chaos through a multi-doubling of a collapsed self, exploring the virtual narratives in an almost outer-body experience sense: from observation, to death, rebirth, care, mothering and finally - escaping, if not, perhaps ascending. Demieur's work follows the scope of ecofeminist theory, linking the thrive of women to the thrive of nature. In this relationship, one cannot help but recognize the values and activities associated with women, including childbearing and nurturing, to invent sustainable imaginations against the socially constructed character of nature as gendered, racialized, exploited.

Silvia Amacei and Bodan Armanu's (SABA) piece entitled "Life of a Tree", is a video ode dedicated to the natural environment: the forest, trees and natural ecosystems, placing utopian communist concepts of equality and equitable exchange in the inter-relationship of species. The collaborative piece, much like most of SABA's projects, lies at the crossing of visual art and social studies, searching for opportunities through which art can be instrumentalized. The video piece begins the narrative with a highly distorted audio, a sound of otherworldly denotations, spoken by miniature creatures, from the perspective of woodlands flora and fauna. Tension is built through music and sounds of movement, as it creates a scape of imminency and dissolution, accompanied by rhythmic whistles or bird songs. The forest is very much alive, the tree will die. Or will it? Organic decay becomes negotiated here as a type of transfer. From nourishment to knowledge, in a holistic sense. In the same way, the natural environment is in a close relationship to all it shelters. An inter-relationship of connectivity where abundance, hope, desire go against human psychological processes of anger, depression, or loneliness. The forest belongs to itself, as light exposes the scattered micro and macro existences. "Life of A Tree" is political, it speaks beyond capitalism, beyond intellect or species as it reverses the narrative to point out the multitude of power-driven social ineptitudes specific to human nature. The forest is "a great common project"[19], a reiterative place of commons, where cultural and natural resources, including air, water, and a habitable earth, are fully and equally accessible and distributed, if it were not for human intervention.

Morag Paterson and Katie Ione Craney follow in merging their visual explorations with politics, as the title of the project provokes a sense of urgency and activism. "Climate Justice Is Social Justice Is Racial Justice", is a collaborative and interdisciplinary piece which places an understanding of the world through the senses, as the core argument. The project is a documentation of homelands, through an engagement with "geologic time, through the lens of nonlinear relationships between the human, nonhuman, and more than human world."[20] Senses of belonging are highly linked in the collaborative work to natural ecosystems as a recalibration of power-balance relations informed by post-colonial attitudes, consumerism, and capitalism. Ways of knowing, as avenues of discovery, are explored through several dimensions, from experience to interpretation and speculation. "Border Survey", a story in nine frames has cartographic values, red lines traversing the mixed media imagery as axis on the globe. The narrative delivers both of their voices, in a curation which displaces one time-space narrative, to make space for the other. The homeland as a collaborative practice. "Border Survey" holds collage-esque values that marry imagery and materiality in ways that allude to a landscape in becoming. One could perhaps begin to see forms of invasion, of aftermath, of time and space in an indexical, almost archival packaging of conceptual interpretations. Art is instrumentalised here in a similar way to SABA's "Life of a Tree", to favour reciprocal approaches of being with the land through indigenous world views [21], or through a holistic perspective from which people perceive, understand, and respond to the world around them. Connection to the land is established through the relationship with time as non-linear, however, cycle driven. The land is here a sacred supreme gift instead of a commodified resource. As objects and environments are all connected, knowledge is formed on the foundation of a spiritual world, in which experiences are inter-related as they inform identity. Patterson and Craney apply the ethics of indigenous worldviews to question relationships between natural systems and human survival, as they visually discuss place, borders, and decolonization.

Similarly, Romina Belda and Nasia Papavasiliou's video piece entitled "Undermine", positions the dependence of the work to context, as it encompasses social, political and activist tones, through recorded spatial interventions that carry metaphors through still performances in unobserved or ignored spaces. The research process of the work is informed by direct contact with the landscape in the Anthropocene, using the human body as a primal mode of immersion. The human body becomes one with the landscape of the Skopelos island in the Aegean Sea, where "time and topography [reflect] the local landscape within the global crisis"[22]. The naked body perhaps experiences through palpable engagement with the landscape effects of degradation and of helplessness, as a negotiation of place, belonging and memory, revealing that nothing is more local than ecology.

Chris Lee ends this progressively unfolding narrative of visual representations with "Man Land", as an attempt to understand the aesthetic experience of Kant's interpretation of the sublime in virtual civilizations. This project is particularly relevant in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, where virtual methods of communication have partly replaced the social and the physical. As we progress towards a new normal, Lee considers how the shift to internet-based sharing of feelings, thoughts and expressions can transfer Kant's sublime to digital environments, from phone screens to TVs. Lee places her experience of seeing a mountain peak both digitally and in person as the foundation for her exploration, in which the search for Kant's experience of the sublime, is assumed to no longer exist in virtual civilizations as 18th century "aesthetic studies based on nature [...] are out-of-date due to technology." [23] Lee also works with marine charts and other forms of epistemological research to raise awareness on human imprint, as islands suffering from exploitation are renamed "man land". A similar invasive character of humans as invasive species parallels Lee's work to Maris's Panspermia. What differentiates the pieces are their interpretative scopes, where human traces, unbound by space and time, can either shock through their transcendence, or offer an analysis through scoping of possible digitalized ways of finding the sublime; the possibility of a utopian experience in which

awareness towards environments takes over, re-balancing the ways in which humanity engages ethically with itself, the world, the cultures that it produces.

In closing, as it considers the oxymoronic delicacy and strength of nature, Modes of Representation follows the expansion of conceptually explored themes through sensitive symbolisms of sensory experiences, propelled at times by philosophic thought. A certain cyclicity emerges, through the unfolding of figurative interpretations of time, a clock, or Gaia, towards the exploration of the Beautiful and the Sublime in virtual civilizations, as a re-contextualisation of human relationships with the environment in our contemporary world. Modes of Representation proposes an alternative narrative. One in which climate action and visual culture, immersed in a contemporary performance of play, exploration, and experimentation, lend themselves wholeheartedly to each other; thus, punctuating the tensions arising from a holistic evaluation of the inter-dependencies, challenges, opportunities, and dialogues between creative practices and the social orders from which they stem. To challenge implies to re-present. To re-present becomes the common node through which Modes of Representation weaves a collective visual narration between dreaming, questioning, denouncing, and contemplating bold alternatives linked to the re-distribution of power, responsibility, and care.

→ Laura Mateescu, University of Huddersfield

Sandrine Deumier
↑ Falling/A study of Collapse

Katharine Paisley
↑ Youth is Only Ever Fun in Retrospect

Harry Meadows
↑ Twisting Metal with Earth

SABA (Silvia Amancei & Bogdan Armanu)
← Life of a Tree
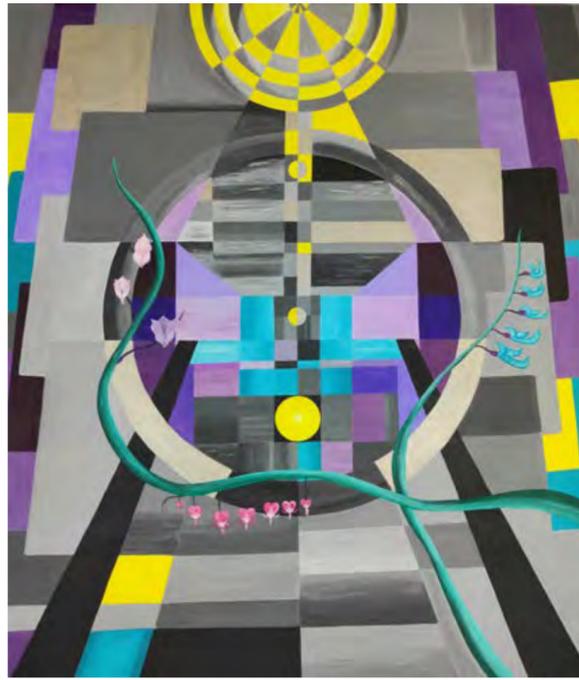
Sonia Ben Achoura
→ The Future of Life


Romina Belda & Nasia Papavasileiou
↑ Undermine

Morag Paterson & Katie Ione Craney
→ Iceview 1a & ↑ Iceview 2a

Chris Lee
← Man Land ↓ The Arctic Water

Endnotes

1. Hall, S. (2011). Representation (4th ed., pp. 2). London: Sage [u.a.].

2. Hall, S. (2011). Representation (4th ed., pp. 226). London: Sage [u.a.].

3. Cixous, H., 2005. Stigmata. Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, p.12.

4. S. Sushma Raj, L. M. D. (2014). Ecofeminism: The Pragmatic Posture of Feminism in 21st Century. International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL), 2(8), p.4.

5. Mitchel, W. J. T. (2002). Showing seeing: a critique of visual culture. journal of visual culture, 1(2), p.171. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/147041290200100202

6. Mitchel, W. J. T. (2002). Showing seeing: a critique of visual culture. journal of visual culture, 1(2), p.171. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/147041290200100202

7. Mitchel, W. J. T. (2002). Showing seeing: a critique of visual culture. journal of visual culture, 1(2), p.171. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/147041290200100202

8. Mitchel, W. J. T. (2002). Showing seeing: a critique of visual culture. journal of visual culture, 1(2), p.175. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/147041290200100202

9. Mitchel, W. J. T. (2002). Showing seeing: a critique of visual culture. journal of visual culture, 1(2), p.175. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/147041290200100202

10. The Art of the Sublime', in Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding (eds.), The Art of the Sublime, Tate Research Publication, January 2013, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/RESOURCE-TITLE-r1, accessed 27 May 2021.

11. N. Boileau-Despréaux's, n.d.,cited in Louis Marin, 'On the Sublime, Infinity, Je Ne Sais Quoi', in Denis Hollier (ed.),A New History of French Literature, MIT and London 1994, p.341

12. Bongiovanni, D. (2020), "Demetra: Aesthetica", [project statement]

13. Paisley,K. (2020) "Youth is Only Ever Fun in Retrospect [project statement]

14. anon. (Ed.) (n.d) thefreedictionary.com.

15. Yuko, K. (2019). Panspermia Hypothesis: History of a Hypothesis and a Review of the Past, Present, and Future Planned Missions to Test This Hypothesis. Astrobiology. Retrieved from https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2019asbi.book..419K/abstract

16. Maris, B.G. (2020). Panspermia, [project statement]

17. Heartney, E. (2020). HOW THE ECOLOGICAL ART PRACTICES OF TODAY WERE BORN IN 1970S FEMINISM. Retrieved from https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/ecofeminism-women-in-environmental-art-1202688298/

18. Merchant, C. (2006). The Scientific Revolution and The Death of Nature. The History of Science Society. Retrieved from https://nature.berkeley.edu/departments/espm/env-hist/articles/84.pdf

19. Amacei,S.,Armanu,B. (2020) "Life of a Tree" [project statement]

20. Patterson,M., Craney, K. (2020) "Climate Justice Is Social Justice Is Racial Justice", [project statement]

21. anon. (2016). Indigenous Peoples Worldviews vs Western Worldviews. Retrieved from https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-worldviews-vs-western-worldviews

22. Belda,R , Papavasiliou. N. (2020), Undermine [project statement]

23. Lee, C. (2020) Man Land. [project statement]

Epilogue

As I write this epilogue, I gather my feelings having looked at, in rapid sequence, the contributions to this initiative of great originality and value.

These are conflicting feelings, and the first ones that I feel like describing are sorrow, disappointment and perhaps even loneliness. I think it is my internalization of what the artists have tried to convey, perhaps mixed with other suggestions that mix in a cross-reference between environmental emergency, social and humanitarian crises. At the same time a thin thread of hope emerges, as if from a critical re-elaboration of the various positions that the artists have assumed, assuming responsibility for them and, I would like to say, the risk. And a sense of awareness emerges strongly, an awareness certainly increased.

It is in this way that I connect to one of the themes selected by the curators, namely *Activism*. Because somehow these forms of (artistic) actions are determined (also) as a reaction. Action and reaction are inextricably linked. It is only in this way that a (more) active participation in the things of the world is justified, a commitment and an ethos that emerges as a common trait apart from the works proposed.

When this takes on the contours of a more organic vision projected towards the future it takes the form of *Manifestoes*, even if, as an architect, I feel like saying that they are ontologically different from those offered by Modernity, but also neo-modern visions that are based on the notion of economic growth (and which also include the *Sustainable Development Goals*, for example). They are aspirations that are placed in a post-humanist and post-anthropocentrism framework, in processes that are less orthogonal to the natural ones, which they indeed tend to imitate. These are manifestos that, however, define a political dimension, but understood in an ecological sense and not only referring to the Aristotelian 'polis'.

In a certain sense, the third categorization tells of these processes, centered on forms of *Materialisms*. Forms and materials that are molded, grow, deform and, in doing so, reveal a condition, a status. Materials made available according to a non-extractive logic, a logic that evidently also permeates the artistic activity of the authors themselves. Moreover, multiple connections emerge between the authors and between the various works, which, as it often happens, transcend the grid and the categories imposed by the curators.

There are two further ideas that, perhaps in relation to my background and previous experiences, I am pleased to share. The first concerns the ability of all contributors to convey and represent (hence the title of the last section) things and objects with a different look. The ability to see but also to glimpse something that was not immediately apparent. The second concerns a suggestion that is perhaps abused, but which I consider extremely current: to investigate the ability to inhabit the world in the Heideggerian sense, obviously in a logic that is also philosophically distant from the anthropocentric ones. It is about living as a form of survival (to coastal erosion), as a form of resilience (to climate change), in a constant search for osmotic balance with nature.

A search that ponders our identity and makes us feel alone, perhaps small, but finally consciously satisfied not for the result but for the patient search for meaning. And this is the last feeling that I have the pleasure of sharing, allowing me to interpret what is perceived by the authors and, I hope, also by those who have the courage to question themselves through these same works.

#Solitude and despair, #Feeling of hope, #awareness, #consciousness

→ Ioanni Delsante
Reader in Urban Design @ University of Huddersfield
and Senior Researcher @ University of Pavia

Written Contributor's Bionotes

AC Davidson is a Lecturer in Human Geography in the Department of Biological and Geographical Sciences at the University of Huddersfield and researches on the intersections of social justice and sustainability, with a particular focus on critical theory and feminist geographies. Recent publications include: Davidson, AC. (2021) Radical mobilities. Progress in Human Geography, 45(1), 25-48 and Davidson, AC. (2021). (In)human energies and desires for refusal. In L. Markaki, & C. Harris (Eds.), Love Spells and Rituals for Another World (pp. 36-37). Independent Publishing Network.

Diane Morgan is a Lecturer in Cultural Studies within the School of Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds. She teaches a range of interdisciplinary modules including "Live Issues and Contemporary Art Practice" (which is currently focussing the topics of the climate crisis), "Animality, Humanity and Globality" and "The State of Utopia". She has published on a range of topics such as architecture as a social practice and recently completed a book on Kant, cosmopolitics and globality. She also works on nineteenth century French Utopian Socialism.

Ioanni Delsante is Senior Research Fellow in Architectural and Urban Design at the University of Pavia- Italy, Reader in Urban Design and Departmental leader for Internationalisation at the University of Huddersfield (UK). His particular expertise is located in the areas of urban commons and urban transformations. Dr. Delsante has also been the recipient of a number of grants for research and exchange projects, including two Erasmus+ KA107 (Partner Countries) awards (between 2016 and 2019). He co-leads AUDe (Architecture and Urban Design) Research Lab at Pavia University. His vast number of publications include "Mapping Uses, People and Places: Towards a Counter-Cartography of Commoning Practices and Spaces for Commons. A Case Study in Pavia, Italy" (2020), "Cultural Ecology and Cultural Critique" (2019), "Temporary and Tactical Urbanism as Drivers of Alternative Forms of Urban Transformations: A Research-Led Exhibition in Huddersfield as a Live and Exploratory Project" (2019), "The City of Commons" (2019), "The Temporary Tactical Urbanism" (2019)

Laura Mateescu is a PhD researcher in the School of Art, Design and Architecture, member of the Centre for Cultural Ecologies in Art, Design and Architecture, and Photography Teaching Assistant in the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield. Her current research focuses on investigating identity formation processes with Romanian communities living in the UK post Brexit, through socially engaged photographic practice. Laura graduated from the University of Huddersfield with a BA Hons in Photography (2015) and an MA in Digital Media (2018). Her work focuses on issues related to culture, identity and representation, and has previously exhibited in Huddersfield, UK (2015, 2018) and Bucharest, Romania (2019).

Professor Nic Clear is Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities at the University of Huddersfield. He has been at the forefront of the use of the moving image in architecture and architectural education for over twenty years, developing skills and techniques in the production of a wide variety of projects from documentary programmes to highly speculative 'virtual' conceptions of space. He has written extensively on science fiction and architecture, and produced a number of speculative projects that propose architecture 'as' science fiction. He has designed and curated a number of critically acclaimed exhibitions, and his own work has been exhibited internationally.

Rowan Bailey is currently Director of Graduate Education and Director of the Centre for Cultural Ecologies in Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield. She investigates sculptural materialities in artistic, scientific and curatorial cultures. Her publications include: 'Concrete Thinking for Sculpture'; an essay on the variegated plays of concrete as a material and as a concept (parallax, 21.3, 2015, pp.241-258), 'Where is the Brainbody in the Stories of Curation'; a paper on the curatorial mechanisms and strategies of displaying brainbody phenomena and 'Sculptural Plasticity'; an essay on brainbody phenomena in the fields of art, literature and philosophy in the issue New Concepts for Materialism In. Philosophy Today, Vol. 63, Issue 4, Fall 2019, pp.1093-1109.

Editor's Bionotes

Laura Mateescu is a PhD researcher in the School of Art, Design and Architecture, member of the Centre for Cultural Ecologies in Art, Design and Architecture and Photography Teaching Assistant in the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield. Her work centers on issues surrounding culture, identity and representation. Her current research focuses on investigating identity formation processes with Romanian communities living in the UK post Brexit, through socially engaged photographic practice. She is an exhibiting photographic artist and a published creative writer.

Tabassum Ahmed, after a Master's in Urban Design, Tabassum Ahmed is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Huddersfield. Her current research employs the lenses of the commons to understand how active citizen groups are co-producing alternative urban transformations in the context of climate crisis. Tabassum is an architect from Bangladesh and takes an active interest in cities, communities, and environmental activism. She has co-curated a number of research exhibitions, including Temporary Tactical Urbansim in 2019 and Urban Commons & Commoning Practices in 2020.

Climate Action & Visual Culture

Designed by A.N.D. Studio
and-studio.co.uk

View the full exhibition online →

With the aim of fostering opportunities for networking and collaboration, the Climate Action and Visual Culture project is a PGR led initiative that brings together, introduces and reviews the work of 43 artists from all over the world, exploring the inter-relationship of climate action and visual culture through the mediums of text, photography, architecture, video, painting, animation, mixed media, and VR.

TEMPORARY CONTEMPORARY

Centre for Cultural
Ecologies in Art, Design
and Architecture

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring global professionals