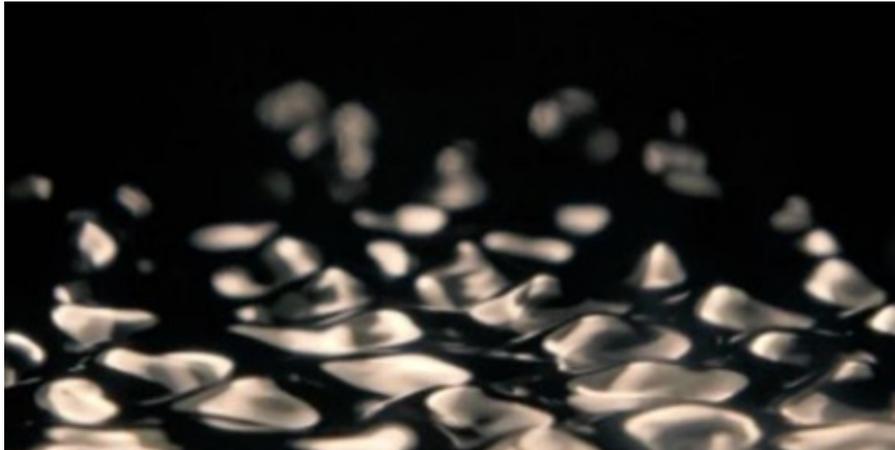


Creative Environments Workshop

Friday 17th September 2021



The Brigstow Institute and the Centre for Environmental Humanities at the University of Bristol present a workshop on the role of creativity in conducting and communicating environmental research. During this one-day event, participants will consider how creative research methods and collaborations between researchers and artists can enrich our understanding of contemporary ecological challenges.

Amid growing scholarly interest in art-science collaborations and in transdisciplinary and co-produced research, what can be learned from existing best practice, and what innovations are needed in order to further cultivate ‘arts of attentiveness’ (van Dooren et al., 2016) to our environments? In seeking to answer these questions, the day’s activities will include presentations from academics and local and international artists, and plenty of time for brainstorming and generating new ideas.

The workshop forms part of the AHRC-funded research project [Reimagining the Pacific](#) (PI Dr Paul Merchant). The event will be held online via Zoom. The workshop may lead to a co-authored publication or other output (format to be discussed at the event).



11:15-11:30 Welcome and Introduction

11:30-13:00 Session 1: Creative collaboration in theory and in practice

The Silent Orchid Festival and Summer School

Camilo Uribe Botta (University of Warwick) and Matt Westbrook

Creative practice ethnography, just transitions, and the heart of Blyth.

Clifton Evers (presenter), Maia Almeida-Amir, Anthony Zito, Mark Ireland, Greg Mutch
(Newcastle University)

Can visual culture protect the Pacific?

Hadas Marcus

Ecocritical cinema, place and ecologies

Szabina Orosz (University of Bristol)

13:00-13:45 Lunch

13:45-15:00 Session 2: Developing principles for art-research collaborations

A collaborative activity for attendees.

15:00-15:30 Break

15:30-16:45 Session 3: Mapping digital environments

Navigating the ontological multiplicity of the páramos around Bogotá through “agro-ecological sounds” and “multi-sensorial maps.”

Hanne Cottyn (University of York), Santiago Martínez (Instituto Humboldt), Ana María Garrido
(Instituto Humboldt)

Map from Coast 2 Coast

Emi Koch, Nicolás Landa Tami and Rosemarie Lerner (Coast 2 Coast)

Live Streams: Connecting Rivers through digital collaborations

Lisa Blackmore, Emilio Chapela and Diego Chocano (University of Essex)

16:45-17:15 Break

17:15-18:45 Session 4: Reimagining the ocean. Four intermedial proposals

A new video essay on the ocean in Chilean cinema

Catherine Grant and Paul Merchant

Waste away coral

Ana Parrodi

Liquid Noise

Dan Pollard

[whalesong]

Xavier Velastín

18:45-19:00 Closing session and future directions

Abstracts and Biographies

The Silent Orchid Festival and Summer School - Matt Westbrook and Camilo Uribe Botta

The Silent Orchid Festival and Summer School (2020) was an online school that emerged from artist Matt Westbrook's art and science participatory research project 'Mr Chamberlain's Orchids' Originally intended to culminate as a campus-wide festival of orchid growing at the University of Birmingham, the online Summer School was developed in response to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Held between May and July 2020, it created an international network of artists, scientists, historians and orchid enthusiasts who took part in weekly creative activities and discussions.

Contextual essays and talks were commissioned to frame discussions and it is from this network that Westbrook and Uribe Botta began collaborating on a new written text that researched the historic scientific and commercial collection of orchids from South America. Together they are

working with Colombian botanical illustrator Lisa Anzellini to visualise lost orchid varieties described in archived accounts of commercial and domestic plant hunters.

This presentation will be divided in two parts. First, Westbrook will present his involvement as an artist on how Mr Chamberlain's Orchids' and the SOFSS merged in an interdisciplinary project and the different projects in collaboration between artists, humanists and biologists and its conceptual approach. Then, Uribe Botta, historian, will present his involvement in the SOFSS as a historian, his historical research on the Nineteenth century orchid hunting in Colombia and his collaboration with Westbrook and other Colombian artists and orchid enthusiasts. MCO and SOFSS results included images, installations, texts and artistic interventions.

Biographies

Matt Westbrook is an artist, educator and founding member of Grand Union Studios & Gallery. He is based in Birmingham and is the fine art course leader for the Art Foundation course at Dudley College. Westbrook's practice is guided by an interest in simulated environments and the role of the amateur in society. Work often begins by observing scientific, engineering or botanical illustrations and processes, breaking them down into components and then reassembling them into new print, sculptural or ceramic narratives. In 2015 he was artist in residence in the Research and Cultural Collections at University of Birmingham in 2015. During this time, he became interested in the history of the 'Old Joe' clock tower and subsequently Joseph Chamberlain himself. Since then he has been researching themes of simulacra and display, exploring connections between Chamberlain's love of orchids and his business and political career. Westbrook's work is in the Deutschebank & Bruntwood collections.

Camilo Uribe Botta is a second-year PhD student in the History Department at the University of Warwick. He holds an MA in History from the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia. His doctoral research centres on the commerce of orchids between Colombia and the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century. He analyses how tropical orchids, understood as a botanical curiosity, a scientific object and a commodity, impacted the economic, scientific and cultural relations between Colombia and Britain and the different actors involved in this trade. In his research he is working closely with botanists, botanical illustrators and orchid cultivators to have a more interdisciplinary approach to his historical interests. His working experience has always been involved with artistic and media institutions, mainly as a historical advisor, in such as museums (Colonial Museum in Bogotá and Birmingham Museum of Art in Birmingham), theatres (Colón Theatre in Bogotá) and TV channels ("Bolívar" tv show for Caracol Televisión and Netflix).

Creative practice ethnography, just transitions, and the heart of Blyth - Clifton Evers (presenter), Maia Almeida-Amir, Anthony Zito, Mark Ireland, Greg Mutch. Newcastle University.

On July 8th, 2021 an interdisciplinary team (cultural studies, geosciences, engineering, public policy) from Newcastle University launched an exhibition in Blyth, Northumberland. We worked with the local community, multiple community art organisations, archives, industry, and government. The context is how coastal communities with an industrial heritage experience resilience and transformation as they face ongoing climate crisis challenges. The challenges include future socio-economic and health well-being, local environmental concerns, and evolving identity given the arrival of new low carbon technologies (e.g., wind turbines, sea cables, battery gigaplant, biomass power plant, waste power plant). Blyth has a long proud industrial history. It is a key location for the UK government's decarbonisation plans. There are many promises. Then again, Blyth has borne the brunt of deindustrialisation resulting in very high unemployment, poverty, and concomitant health and wellbeing challenges. While there is hope there are questions. Who benefits? What power do different stakeholders have? Who is accountable to who? Can you say no? What do locals know? What emotions are being felt? How does what happens here connect to 'over there'? What are the more-than-human considerations? These are urgent 'just transition' questions. In the presentation I (on behalf of the whole team) tell a critically reflexive arts-based story about commissioning 9 artists to help cultivate an 'art of attentiveness' to such questions. I explain our process, show examples of the art, debate an 'arts-based politics of listening', discuss the challenges, and ask for help to further nurture this arguably generative and collectivising research approach.

Biography

Dr Clifton Evers is a lecturer in cultural studies at Newcastle University. Through participatory and interdisciplinary international research he performs creative practice ethnography with communities and nonhumans about environmental issues, such as polluted leisure, blue spaces, as well as just/inclusive transitions. He is also interested in the intersections of masculinities, sport, and pollution.

Can Visual Culture Help to Protect the Pacific Ocean Around Chile and Peru? - Hadas Marcus (Independent Scholar)

The Humboldt Current System is one of the most productive aquatic ecosystems on the planet, yet marine and avian species are threatened due to overfishing, particularly of anchovies, as well as other anthropogenic impacts, such as industrial pollution and climate change. This damage also critically harms the people of Chile and Peru who rely on the Pacific Ocean for their culture, sustenance, and livelihoods. While scientific articles can clearly communicate precise data in graphs and numbers, visual culture can complement this research by illustrating the degradation which humans inflict on the fragile ecosystems of this breathtaking region of the world and its rich biodiversity. This paper will explore feelings of solastalgia (Albrecht) — the grief experienced over altered environments — through photography, film (ecocinema), and art. In collaboration

with science, visual culture can instill greater appreciation of nature while eliciting powerful responses, and hopefully instigate public awareness and action before it is too late.

Pablo Neruda's prolific verses (and the unique house he built on the cliffs of Isla Negra south of Valparaiso) reflected his profound love of the sea and the magnificent creatures that inhabit it. This presentation features selections from Neruda's poetry and scientific texts, as we contemplate visual media depicting the troubled waters of Chile and Peru, and their effect on entire communities. Some examples are Edward Burtynsky's haunting landscapes of copper mines in Calama (toxic waste gets dumped into the Pacific Ocean), the Peruvian documentary *Pacificum*, and images of indigenous birds and other animals in the regional landscapes.

Biography

Hadas Marcus is an animal artist and an independent scholar of ecocriticism who received her Master's degree in Comparative Literature (mostly Latin American poetry) from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in the early 1980s before moving to Israel. She has been an instructor of English for Environmental Studies at Tel Aviv University for many years and currently teaches academic writing to PhD students in the School of Environmental and Earth Sciences. She is an associate fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics and a member of the Human-Animal Bond Research Forum at Tel Aviv University. Hadas is the author and editor of an art book entitled *Bringing the Dead Sea to Life: Art and Nature at the Lowest Place on Earth* (2018). She writes academic articles and book chapters on environmental and human-animal topics, particularly in relation to visual culture and ecocriticism. She also has spoken at numerous international conferences (before the pandemic).

Ecocritical cinema, place and ecologies - Szabina Orosz (University of Bristol)

Ecocritical cinema, place and ecologies The human experience of space and place is not only an effect of physical situatedness but also a sensorial-perceptual experience; a shared subject of architecture, culture and film (Bruno, 2006, p. 23). Both, physically and cinematically, space is created through movement, the changing position and experience of the body and the basis for a haptic understanding of place (Bruno, 2006, p. 24). Contemporary ecocritical films aim to engage this bodily connection by experimenting with film ontology and other ecocritical exploration of cultural and material embeddedness (O'Brien, 2016, p. 7). More than mere symbolic framings, environmental features can evoke different ways of thinking, even require us to adjust ourselves to 'ecological liveliness' expressed in the aesthetics of film (O'Brien, 2013, p. 4). This eco-phenomenological approach to cinema offers an 'arsenal of techniques and affects for disrupting and critiquing conventionalized assumptions about the human– nature dynamic' (O'Brien, 2016, p. 11). How does ecocritical cinema challenge assumptions about human-nature relationship? To what extent is it helpful in making sense of the non-human agency of the natural world? How might creative environmental research leverage the concept of cinematic space? In this proposed contribution, I'd like to take the opportunity to explore the above

questions and demonstrate the potential of ecocritical cinema for creative environmental research; which, I believe, is achieved by situating the experiencing-perceiving body – of participants, researcher and other human and non-human witnesses - within the complex relationality of place and ecologies.

Navigating the ontological multiplicity of the páramos around Bogotá through “agro-ecological sounds” and “multi-sensorial maps.” - Hanne Cottyn (University of York), Santiago Martínez (Instituto Humboldt), Ana María Garrido (Instituto Humboldt)

The highest zones of the northern Andes, situated between the treeline and the snowline, are known as páramos. Today, these landscapes are defined in terms of ecosystems that play a key role in capturing CO2 and providing drinking water to urban areas. They are also home to rural communities which developed an intimate relationship with other páramo inhabitants such as rivers, animals and plants, in the process of making the páramo inhabitable.

In Colombia, páramo zones are subjected to new conservation policies, in an effort to mitigate growing anthropogenic pressures. Perceived by local communities as restrictive top-down impositions, these policies tend to reduce páramos to a singular legitimate definition of what these landscapes can and should be. Through an artistic-research collaboration, we explore the potential of local artistic forms of knowledge production and transmission to challenge and pluralize this imposed singularity.

We will showcase the CD and documentary project “agro-ecological sounds”, and the digital platform “multi-sensorial map of the páramo”, aimed at registering, disseminating and facilitating the exchange of local knowledges and practices that shape rural life in the páramo. Co-created with researchers, activists, artists and community leaders in Bogotá and the páramos of Sumapaz and Chingaza, these initiatives approach song, recipes, storytelling, murals, etc. - what we call “páramo art”- as artistic “practices of care” that defy the limits of conventional conservation. Through these practices, the páramo does not only exist as a strategic ecosystem, but also, and simultaneously, as the home and source of livelihoods for rural families.

Biographies

This contribution is developed in the framework of the NERC-funded research project “Integrating ecological and cultural histories to inform sustainable and equitable futures for the Colombian páramos”, coordinated by the University of York and executed in collaboration with several UK and Colombian institutions. The artistic collaborations presented are developed by researchers Hanne Cottyn, Santiago Martínez and Ana Maria Garrido, in collaboration with Lina Cortés, geographer and historian, cultural manager at the Departmental Institute for the Arts of Bogotá (Idartes), and coordinator of the Colectivo Almanagues Agroecológicos. The website is co-created with the design organisation Rizoma.

The CD and documentary project is a co-creation with ethnomusicologist Marcela Ayala, five rural music bands, and an audiovisual production team (Vivian Vásquez, Jairo Peña, Felipe Otálora, Cindy Marcela Villano).

Hanne Cottyn is a historian, specialising in the socio-environmental history of the rural Andes. She is currently based as postdoctoral associate at the Department of History and the Interdisciplinary Global Development Centre of the University of York (UK). She holds a PhD in History from Ghent University (Belgium).

Santiago Martinez is an anthropologist, specialising in cultural anthropology and multispecies ethnography. He is currently based as a postdoctoral researcher in the “Social Sciences and Knowledges of Biodiversity” Programme at the Instituto de Investigaciones Biológicas Alexander von Humboldt in Bogotá (Colombia). Santiago is trained as a medical doctor, and holds a PhD in Anthropology from the Universidad de los Andes (Colombia).

Ana María Garrido is an anthropologist, specialising in environmental anthropology and ethnobotany. She is currently based as researcher at the “Social Sciences and Knowledges of Biodiversity” Programme at the Instituto de Investigaciones Biológicas Alexander von Humboldt in Bogotá (Colombia), and conducting doctoral research in Anthropology at the University of Florida (USA). Ana Maria is trained as a biologist and holds a Master’s degree in Environmental Anthropology from the University of Kent (UK).

Map from Coast 2 Coast - Emi Koch, Nicolás Landa Tami and Rosemarie Lerner (Coast 2 Coast)

Based in Lobitos, Peru - [Coast 2 Coast](#) is a nonprofit that works with rural students from small-scale fishing villages using transmedia tools and participatory research approaches for young learners to explore and share their communities’ importance for food security, poverty eradication, natural-cultural heritage, wellbeing and sustainable futures from coast to coast.

Often overlooked or undervalued, small-scale fisheries (SSF) account for more than 90 percent of the world's capture fishers. Almost all people -- 97 percent -- involved in SSF from ocean, river, or lake to plate live in developing countries. In Latin America alone, SSF provide vital cash and calories to two million households in communities often marginalized by mainstream policies.

“Map from Coast 2 Coast” combines storytelling with geography to offer an educational and innovative way to discover the world’s coastlines through the experiences and artistic works of youth from rural fish-dependent villages. Students’ audiovisual productions co-created during Coast 2 Coast workshops highlight their communities’ natural-cultural strengths, environmental changes, challenges such as plastic pollution and hopes for the future presented through the imagination of young people and fortified by science. The map offers a collection of stop-

motion animations, short films, and photography series that illuminate social and environmental nuances often undetected through conventional research approaches.

Biography

A former professional surfer who used her sponsorship with Billabong to start her own nonprofit at 19 years old, Emi is a marine social-ecologist committed to positive youth development in small-scale fishing communities around the world through ocean actions sports, participatory transmedia storytelling, and mindfulness workshops. As a Fulbright Fellow and National Geographic Explorer, Emi leverages community-based and youth-driven participatory research approaches to illuminate the impacts of fisheries scarcity on fish-dependent communities' sustainable futures and local stakeholders' perspectives. Emi is also working with the FAO to develop an innovative curriculum for the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication that engages local students in small-scale fishing communities as resilient researchers and skilled communicators, leveraging rural schools as unique, pivotal partners for raising awareness and monitoring implementation of the SSF Guidelines, the first international instrument dedicated entirely to the small-scale fisheries sector.

Live Streams: Connecting rivers through digital collaborations - Lisa Blackmore, Emilio Chapela and Diego Chocano (University of Essex)

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, *entre—ríos*, a transdisciplinary network of artists, researchers, scientists and activists based in Europe and Latin America, has explored the question: How can we establish intimacy and ethical relations with bodies of water (and with each other) at a time when physical fieldwork is not possible? Led by practice-research, the network collaborates to cultivate “response-ability” (Donna Haraway) to more-than-human hydrological cycles. We depart from the urgent awareness that in the Anthropocene our rivers have become sick through intense industrialisation and rapid urbanisation. In recognizing that, in the late capitalist attention economy we have gotten sick too, we ask: How do we heal together and empathise our losses and crises? How do we slow down and share? By embracing the fact that we are mostly water, the body can be thought of as carrying seas and rivers.

Situating the body as a terrain of knowledge that questions the dogma of Western rationalism, our paper will discuss how artist-led, transdisciplinary encounters hosted online create channels to perform the “interpermeation” (Astrid Neimanis) of bodies of water. Focusing on collaborations with artists Genietta Varsi (Peru) and Leonel Vásquez (Colombia), we will contend that breathwork practices, deep listening and meditation exercises performed collectively in digital environments seed communities invested in ecological wellbeing. This presentation reflects critically and analytically on the methods devised to confront the challenge of renegotiating liveness (and liveliness) in an epidemiological present that has confined us to the stasis and stagnation of lockdown.

Biographies

Lisa Blackmore is Senior Lecturer in Art History and Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Essex, UK, working between practice and research on curatorial, audiovisual and editorial projects. Emilio Chapela is an artist and PhD candidate at the University of Plymouth, UK, exploring connections between science, technology and ecology. Diego Chocano is Assistant Curator of the University Art Collections at the University of Essex, UK, researching curatorial practice and decolonial theory. The trio collaborate as co-curators of *entre—ríos*.

A new video essay on the ocean in Chilean cinema

Catherine Grant — until August 2020, Professor of Digital Media and Screen Studies at Birkbeck, University of London, UK — has published widely on theories and practices of film authorship, adaptation and intertextuality, and has edited or authored important collections of work on world cinema, Latin American cinema, digital film and media studies, and the audiovisual essay (see here, here and, most recently, here).

A relatively early and prolific adopter of the online short video form, Grant is internationally known for her pioneering and award-winning work on the audiovisual essay in film and moving image studies, especially in found-footage, first-person and essay-film forms. She has produced well over 200 videos to date, dozens of which have been published in online journals alongside her written reflections on these forms and their emergent role in film and media studies, especially in relation to theories of film spectatorship, material thinking, and psychoanalytic object relations. A leading practitioner as well as theorist in the field, her videos have screened at film festivals and film museums around the world.

Liquid Noise

Dan Pollard has created music and sound for film, TV, radio, theatre, installations, apps and podcasts. He has a particular interest in novel and unusual sound sources and has previously made music from the BBC Natural History Unit's sound archive (30 Animals that Made us Smarter - BBC World Service), instruments from Bristol's slave trade history (Noughts and Crosses - BBC One), hospital equipment (The Cave - National Geographic) and the contents of his house (Algoritmo - Netflix).

He is currently:

- Exploring how cymatics can be used to visualise marine bioacoustics and noise pollution for his installation Liquid Noise.
- Working with PECo Theatre on immersive sound and music for their City of Threads project.
- Curating the Museum of Sound with Matthew Herbert and the New BBC Radiophonic Workshop.

[whalesong]

Xavier Velastín is a British-Chilean performance/sound artist and creative technologist whose practice spans live performance, sound design for theatre, composition and audio implementation for games, expanded and experimental sound poetry, and instrument creation. His work often has a strong focus on utterance, agency, the environment, technology and the physicality of sound.

As a performance maker, Xavier has received substantial support from Arts Council England, the Pervasive Media Studio in Watershed, MAYK Bristol, stage@leeds, Homotopia Liverpool, Theatre Delicatessen and The HopBarn. Watch videos of recent performances [here](#), or listen to live recordings, mixes and compilations of his work [here](#).

As a theatre sound designer, Xavier's work has been heard in the Royal Exchange Theatre, Leeds Playhouse, Vault Festival and for the prestigious Cambridge Greek Play, as well as in dozens of smaller-scale fringe and festival venues. Visit his theatre sound portfolio [here](#).