



INTRODUCING THE AESC RESEARCH GROUP

The group identifies art, environment, and social change as key theoretical frameworks to respond to the current ecological crisis through the optics of art, beyond a narrow definition of art as a display of artefact. In so doing, it will develop discourses, strategies to find solutions, suggestions and practices that may allow social change.

Through careful attention to the ways in which environments are shaped by social crises and vice versa, we want to sensitively contemplate, and respond to, current unfolding socio-political situations, for example in Ukraine and Syria. When it comes to 'making sense' of the world, we recognise the necessity (but also the difficulty) of artmaking. With this in mind, we want to ask: what is the 'response-ability' of this research group within its current social context in 2022 and beyond?

RATIONALE

The Art, Environment, and Social Change research group will foster and support the breadth of research interests of its members including PGR students, and consider potential routes for the dissemination and public engagement of research through events such as symposia, conferences, exhibitions, publications, podcasts and 'in-conversation' whilst evaluating possible pathways to impact, and build upon existing individual and collective experience as a strategy to develop possible REF outputs and Impact Case Studies.

The group identifies art, environment, and social change as key theoretical frameworks to respond to the current ecological crisis through the optics of art, beyond a narrow definition of art as a display of artefact. In so doing, it will develop discourses, strategies to find solutions, suggestions and practices that may allow social change. *Current social stratification and inequalities are tied to ecological crisis, and the practice of art, in a wider sense of the term, can potentially play a crucial role.* Through discussions and channelling ideas and researchers' practices into collective bodies of works such as exhibitions and publications, the group aims at accounting the lived experiences of climate change and investigating and responding to the emotional and psychological impacts of ecological crisis. *Providing a platform for the under-represented, the group considers the ways in which the production of knowledge is built on a broad spectrum of groups and a variety of positions.*

Re-assessing the situated-ness of the human subject against the backdrop of the landscape, *the group considers human as well as non-human bodies as affective actors and participants in constituting the landscape.* In so doing, the landscape will be approached intimately, instead of being viewed from afar. Rather than conforming to the dichotomy between theory and practice, Art, Environment, and Social Change research group will devise ways in which theoretical discourses and generative practices are woven together and contribute to the production of affective knowledge.

'PROVOCATIONS'

We asked the group: do you have any questions or 'provocations' that you would like to open up for future discussion?

"In what ways can we imagine, and therefore represent, different configurations of subjectivity, society, ecology and technology. Are current forms of society, politics and economy right for the challenges of the twenty-first century and beyond? How might we aspire towards a different kind of 'being' whereby society, politics and economy places ecology and environment as central to its self-conception? If so, what forms might that take and how might this be envisioned?"

Dr Tom Slevin

In light of the war in Ukraine, I would like to ask an old question, what artists in the broader understanding of the term can and should do? While the art museum in Lviv has been turned into a refugee camp, as Theodor Adorno in his Aesthetic Theory maintained that art should not be explicitly political, but should elucidate social contradictions within art, should we carry on as we have? Alternatively, should art come up with new strategies to respond to the geopolitical and ecological situations that we face? If so, what are the artistic, curatorial and theoretical strategies that are needed now?

Dr Atsuhide Ito

1: "The street has always run into the campus' (Ruth Wilson Gilmore, 'Public Enemies and Private intellectuals')

'The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence...but in active participation in practical life, as a constructor, organiser,, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator...from technique-as-work once proceeds to technique as science and to the humanistic conception of history, without which one remains "specialised" and does not become "directive" (specialised and political)' (Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks)

Taking inspiration from the words of Gilmore and Gramsci, I would like to invite a reflection on our own positionality and responsibilities as researchers and creatives working within a neoliberal academic context, where scholarship is a form of human capital in itself, and an increasing professionalisation tends to isolate intellectuals from social struggles. The question I would like to pose is: how can we, academics in art/design/fashion/cultural studies, develop an effective intellectual praxis, fostering hope and social change?

2: The 'Anthropocene' is a popular notion that punctuates discourses on the environment, ecology, sustainability, popular culture etc. However, according to its critics, it is a catchy notion that makes for an easy story, precisely because 'it does not challenge the naturalised inequalities, alienation, and violence inscribed in modernity's strategic relations of power and production. It is an easy story to tell because it does not ask us to think about these relations at all' (Jason Moore).

Reflecting on current social, environmental and political issues within contemporary society, is it time to problematise and eventually overcome the notion of the Anthropocene?

Dr Flavia Loscialpo

CURRENT RESEARCH

Grotte di Catullo: Dr Jonathan Trayner and Jamie Dyson



"I am developing a series of three video artworks examining historical time and space together with artists Jamie Dyson and Stephanie Dickinson. These films will look at the Roman sites of Grotte di Catullo (Italy) and Silchester (UK), and the modernist railway footbridge outside Harlow Town station (Architects: Hamilton, Bicknell, Fraser, 1959)."

Dr Jonathan Trayner

For a glimpse at the work in progress: <https://youtu.be/XG6HPc9rAVE>

CURRENT RESEARCH

My Father's Car: Nina Sverdvik



Sometimes when he wakes up
he doesn't know where he is

Image: Nina Sverdvik. Stills from My Father's Car, HD video, 4.21 min (2017)

MEMBERS

Please join us! We welcome both established and emerging researchers to become a part of the AESC Research Group. Some members of the group have shared their profiles below:

Dr Jessica Holtaway

My background is in fine art, history of art, and contemporary art theory. My research to date has centred on politically-engaged artworks and performances. I studied for my PhD in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths with a thesis that explored micropolitical art interventions. My current interests relate to the relationship between creativity and crisis. I am also interested in the emotional experience of climate change and discussions relating to climate adaptation.

My book 'World-Forming and Contemporary Art' was published in 2021 by Routledge and explores performances, curatorial practices and institutional practices through reflections on the philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy. I also co-edited, and contributed to, the book 'artWORK: Art, Labour and Activism' (published by Rowman and Littlefield International in 2017).

I'm also a FACE Representative (Fashion Academics Creating Equality), and this focus on diversity and inclusion within teaching relates to a key question that motivates me: how can I contribute to a radical culture of care?

Dr Atsuhide Ito

My research concerns the nuclear Anthropocene, and aeropolitics (the politics of air and poetics of breathing). Despite their invisibility, ironizing radiation and air pollution affect the health. Contrary to the tendency of art to focus on the visible, I am interested in responding to the imperceptible form of violence, including ecological anxiety. In this regard, art is a form of immunity against risks. In my art practice I move across a variety of media: installation, microcomputing, painting, photography, running, video and writing. During the last two years, I have been developing a theory informed science-fiction as a way of situating personal experiences against the backdrop of the larger ecological crisis. My most recent exhibitions are Fully Awake at the Holden Gallery, Manchester, England, 2021 and Autumnism, at Kösk, Munich, Germany, 2021, and my most recent publications are "Translating Slow Violence: The Use of Environmental Data in Art as Un- Forecasting" in Acoustic and Visual Ecology of Damaged Planet, Special Issue of AM Journal of Art and Media Studies, 2022, and "Hauntology of the Machinic" in Steven John Thompson (ed.) Machine Law, Ethics and Morality in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, 2022.



Associate Professor Guy Moreton

Associate Professor Guy Moreton's practice-based-research has sought to address how the nature of specific landscapes have affected the way in which certain philosophers, writers, and artists including Kurt Schwitters, Nan Shepherd, and Ludwig Wittgenstein have been able to think, and in turn, how this dialectic of place, often combined with solitude and retreat, through exile or through choice, has shaped their thinking and praxis. Moreton's commitment in his photographic practice of using large format analogue film seeks to forge a strengthening relationship with the history of drawing and its philosophical parameters of observation, perception and time. The resulting evocative, single images are highly crafted, containing levels of detail that not only describe, but also shape the formal pictorial qualities and engage audiences through their contemplative aesthetic quality. Recent exhibitions include 'Hutopia' at the Neubauer Collegium, University of Chicago; and 'Machines à Penser', Fondazione Prada Venice, Italy, curated by Dieter Roelstraete for the 2018 Venice Biennale. His artworks are in the collections of Southampton City Art Gallery, Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Carlisle, and the Fondazione Prada Milan.



Dr Nicola Foster

Nicola joined Solent University in August 2017 to develop the PhD programme in visual arts, including practice-based research. Coming from an academic background in art practice (Goldsmiths College), Continental philosophy and art history (Essex University), Nicola became actively involved in the debate that led to the establishment of 'practice-based' research in the UK. This led to her early engagement with practice-based supervision and examination of PhD research projects. Nicola taught visual arts and supervised research students at the University of the Arts London, Cardiff University, Arts University Bournemouth, Arts University Norwich, the Open University and the University of Suffolk.

Nicola was a member of the AHRC College Peer Review (2007-2017) and invited to sit on Panel B meetings. She still serves on the AHRC when required. Nicola served as a trustee of the Association for Art History (2011-2017). She was a member of the Editorial Board of Women's Philosophy Review (1998-2004) and the Editorial Board of the European Journal of Artistic Research (2011-2016).

Nina Sverdvik

My research interests encompass portraiture and narrative theory in photography and subjective time or representation of internalised experiences in moving image.

My most recent work, *My Father's Car*, was commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella and funded by The Royal Norwegian Embassy and Film and Video Umbrella London. It was included in the exhibition, *Somewhere Becoming Sea* curated by Steven Bode, Film and Video Umbrella London at Humber Street Gallery as part of Hull City of Culture 2017.

'Tautly composed and hauntingly poignant, *My Father's Car* is a meditation on the images that stay in the mind's eye, and those that, slowly and inexorably, are lost to the passage of time'. (Steven Bode, Director Film and Video Umbrella, London).

I am interested in Southampton's waterways and how they link (and has over time) to the life of the city. I am particularly interested in the river Itchen.

I would like to explore how our relationship to this river may have changed and as such is in flux just like the river itself. There are socio-political implications here due to Southampton's history as a working class and low-economic status city.

The final output will be a moving image work, *Running through* (working title).



Dr Tom Slevin

I have a cross-disciplinary background and interest in visual culture. I have taught and published research across photography, art history, fashion, media, film, and art and design pedagogy. My research interests are primarily concerned with three key, interconnected, areas: i) modernist visual culture, ii) the visual representation of the body, iii) concepts and representations of technology.

Most recently, I have published the article 'Block Teaching in Art & Design: Pedagogy and the Student Experience' in the journal *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education* (2021) and gave the talk 'Art, Science and Technology: The Discovery of X-rays and its Cultures' for Southampton City Art Gallery in 2022. I am currently working on final edits to a book chapter for the forthcoming collection *The Edinburgh Companion to Modernism and Technology* (Edinburgh University Press).



Dr Jonathan Trayner

I am an artist and researcher into the histories of art with a diverse set of research interests that operate broadly between visual culture and radical politics, the outcomes of which fall into the following four areas:

Art Practice - artworks including performances, films, prints etc.

Art and Politics - General writing on the intersection of art and politics.

Print History - Writing on the history of print.

Radical Reformation - Research (both written, and artwork based) on the politico-religious struggles of the 16th century.

The major focus point that informs all of these is the visual culture of Germany in the early 16th century, particularly that which was either produced by/for the radical poor during the various peasant revolts of that period or comments on their political and religious identities. This period is looked at using the historical and aesthetic theories of Jacques Ranciere - who conceptualises "art" and "politics" as acting as dissensual forces within wider society, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the "carnavalesque" - the intersection between the festival and the political uprising, and ideas of the emergence of subjectivity developed by Felix Guattari.

Using these discussions, I produce work that examines either the art and visual culture of the period or current relationships between the image and politics, this fits into the ongoing discourse on the questions of the use and abuse of populism and democracy within our current media environment.



Dr Flavia Loscialpo

Flavia Loscialpo, PhD, is Senior Research Fellow in Cultural Studies and Fashion, within the School of Art, Design and Fashion at Solent. Her background is in philosophy (PhD, Sapienza University, Rome) and curation (MA, University of the Arts London). Through her research and curatorial activity, she has collaborated with several cultural institutions, such as the Barbican Centre, University of Borås (Sweden), London College of Fashion, the National Gallery London, KG52 Gallery (Sweden), the Thayaht-RAM Archive (Italy), Being Human - A Festival of the Humanities (AHRC), working on exhibitions and publications across art, design and fashion.

Her scholarly work is driven by the aim to expand theoretical frameworks for a critical analysis of fashion and visual culture. Her published research has been translated in several languages, and has focussed on: utopias in philosophy, fashion and art; philosophical deconstruction and fashion; the exhibition space as a 'heterotopia'; identity politics and otherness. She is currently working on two book chapters on ethno-racial capitalism within fashion, and the interconnectedness of social, racial and environmental justice. In particular, she investigates labour exploitation, human rights violations and the Uyghur crisis, collaborating with human rights activists, and platforms such as Fashion Revolution. As a representative of the network FACE (Fashion Academics Creating Equality), she is committed to promoting inclusivity, diversity and equality within the fashion curriculum, addressing in particular the cultural studies and visual culture provision for fashion.

Thank you for reading!

To share research, contribute news,
'provocations' or updates, please email:

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