

# ART, ENVIRONMENT, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

RESEARCH GROUP  
NEWSLETTER 2



Image: Jamie Dyson and Jonathan Trayner, Grotte di Catullo, a still from *After the Rain*

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### **Screening of the artwork 'After the Rain' by Jamie Dyson and Jonathan Trayner**

From footage originally shot at the Grotto di Catullo (Italy) after a torrential downpour Dyson and Trayner overlay an exploration of these Roman ruins with a burgeoning soundscape of initially subtle birdcalls that rhythmically pulse and build through digital manipulation, eventually creating dissonance and disharmony, echoing the contradictory relationship humans have had historically with their environment. Referencing the Romantic history of the modern repurposing of antiquity and nature as an ideological prop and the tradition of the sublime, the artists invite the viewer to consider the absurdity of such concepts in the face of ecological collapse.

Please book [HERE](#) to attend. The screening will be in Lecture Theatre 1 in the Andrews Building on Tuesday November 8th at 13:00 - 14:00. It will also be possible to attend online.

### **Round table discussion: 'Ecologies of art-making: exploring the relationship between theory and practice'.**

Thursday, November 24th online. Details [HERE](#).



FRANKIE KNIGHT.

*THUDDING.DIRECTORS.STRIDES*

FROM **HAVANT THICKET:**  
**LOSING A LANDSCAPE**

# PREVIOUSLY...

## Dislocating the Human

Last semester we explored two topics through round table discussions. In May, Dr Tom Slevin and Nina Sverdvik responded to the theme of 'dislocating the human' through discussions on human relationships to technology and ecology, particularly with relation to rivers. Tom flagged up questions of how we might imagine 'different configurations of subjectivity, society, ecology and technology'. Nina discussed our relationship to waterways, drawing from her recent work 'My Father's Car' which reflects on the passing of time and the power of memory. We considered how immersion in a place can renew engagement with sounds, smells and textures that allude to layers of history. Engagement with our environments also can reveal underlying issues relating to ownership and power. Simultaneously, technology can help us visualize the environmental impacts of our consumptions. Discussions about the complexity of space, paved the way for the second round table discussion in July on 'Contested Spaces'

## Contested Spaces

When ecology and politics collide, conflated interests begin to manifest. Often, those signs are not immediately perceptible, and thus, sensing is the first task before responding to situations. Once contestations become visually manifest, artists and creative practitioners begin their work.

In July 2022 the AESC Research Group received funding from the Enhancing Research Culture fund to host a roundtable discussion on 'Contested Spaces'. We invited cultural worker Dr Jason Waite, artist Freya Gabie and academic and creative practitioner Dr Paula Serafini. We approached the topic through an understanding that 'contested' spaces are those shaped by complex power dynamics. We asked: how can art open new perspectives/ possibilities within these spaces?

Among those key sites of contestations, Dr Jason Waite has co-curated an exhibition *Don't Follow the Wind* in the exclusion zones in Fukushima, soon after the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011. While the exhibition is largely inaccessible, it highlights the imperceptibility of radiation and the necropolitics of nuclearism. *Don't Follow the Wind* is also a publication, coedited with Nikolaus Hirsh and published by Sternberg Press.

Responding to a very different contested space - the border between Mexico and the USA - artist Freya Gabie has made work responding to the landscape, history and politics of the border in her solo residency exhibition *Duet* (2022). From detailed drawings of the Chamiza plant (which grows along the border and has been long used by indigenous communities), to photographs taken along the route of the Rio Grande River and through a sculptural installation featuring cast rocks from either side of the border, Freya talked about how interactions between humans and landscapes characterise this charged space.

Offering perspectives on yet another type of contested space, Dr Paula Serafini shared her recent research into spaces of ecological devastation in Argentina where wealth accumulation has taken precedent, simultaneously eroding lands and rights. Paula also discussed her recent book: *Creating Worlds Otherwise: Art, Collective Action and (Post)Extractivism* (Vanderbilt University Press 2022) in which she examines 'the narratives that subaltern groups generate around extractivism, and how they develop, communicate, and mobilize these narratives through art and cultural practices'.

We hope to continue to build on these ideas through further discussion, and sharing of texts and images. Please contact Dr Atsuhide Ito or Dr Jessica Holtaway if you would like to contribute to work developed under this theme of 'contested spaces'.



EMMANUEL BOATENG

*WEAVING IN PRACTICE AND THEORY IN  
RESEARCH, EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE TWO*

# COMING SOON...

## 'Ecologies of art-making: exploring the relationship between theory and practice'

"Like an unfamiliar city, theoretical ideas can be initially confusing and disorienting... The relationship to theoretical reading is summed up beautifully by one contributor as 'the difference between getting information out of a text and living in it'."

Les Back in *Academic Diary*, 2016

"For the ancient Greeks, Theoria meant a group of delegates who travelled to Delphi to witness the oracle and carried back their speculative interpretations to respective villages."

Atsuhide Ito in "Towards a Theory of Cavernous Porosity", 2016

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES WHEN  
EXPLORING THEORY THROUGH PRACTICE?

**HOW DOES PRACTICE SHAPE THEORETICAL  
UNDERSTANDING?**

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY  
AND PRACTICE **FOR YOU?**

Frankie Murdoch (a lecturer and graduate of Solent's Critical Creative Practice MA) and Emmanuel Boateng, (a PhD student in Fine Art at Solent) will begin the discussion on relationship between theory and practice. This will be an online round table event on Thursday, November 24th at 6pm. Event details and booking [HERE](#).

Please come along and share your ideas and questions.

Thank you for reading the AESC newsletter! To share research or contribute news, please email:

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