

Making Green Worlds

20th Spring School/École de Printemps in Art History

University of California, Los Angeles, USA, June 12-17, 2022

We invite proposals for *Making Green Worlds*, the theme of the week-long international meeting of the École de Printemps (EdP) to be held at UCLA, June 12-17, 2022. The annual meeting is organized by the *Réseau International pour la Formation à la Recherche en Histoire de l'Art* (RIFHA), an international network that fosters collaboration across dynamic research institutions, grandes écoles, and art history research centers in Europe, Canada, the USA, and Japan: 50 graduate students and professors will convene in Los Angeles for workshops, presentations of papers, and museum visits.



Katsushika Hokusai, *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* (Kanagawa oki nami ura), also known as *The Great Wave*, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (Fugaku sanjurokkei), 1830–32. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (JP1847).

Theme

Making Green Worlds engages with current debates about climate change that are at the forefront of public and academic discourse by reassessing intersections between histories of art, natural forces and materials, artistic invention, and mobility. The theme responds to urgent questions raised for art history by environmental degradation, activism, ecocritical studies, decolonial approaches, and growing interest in “green worlds,” a concept expanded from literary studies (Berger 1988). Green worlds are fabricated by artists, poets, and playwrights who created illusory visions of the natural world; they are also shaped by practices like garden design, agriculture, town planning, and land reclamation. These human-made environments are conceived as second worlds, controlled spaces that vie with nature itself in fashioning artfully designed settings. They advance understandings of the world as humanmade.

Workshops and papers at this EdP will pay attention to on-going creative processes of engagement with the earth, sea, and sky to foreground critical, technological, and imaginative elements of world-making processes. These will be considered in tandem with world-destroying processes, such as environmental devastation unleashed by globalization’s exploitation of peoples and resources.

From Alpine views and painting en plein air, to land art and architectural pavilions, the natural world is a consistent element in the history of art. These representations express human desires to understand and

interact with nature. They may be architectural inventions, depictions of actual places, scientific representations, alterations of natural worlds, and imaginative transformations. These designs generate consideration of how natural and created worlds work in tandem with one another.



<https://dsrny.com/project/blur-building> Blur Building, Swiss Expo, 2002



Natural materials are employed and transformed in works of art. From the mosaic depictions in the fourth-century Villa Romana del Casale in Piazza Armerina, Sicily, to the sixth-century marble floors of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the alteration and manipulation of stone, for example, allows us to consider how constructed places are transformed into green worlds through their pavements and revetments. At the villa, small colored pieces of tesserae create a second world with depictions of children at play, hunting scenes, wild animals, and female personifications thus rendering a world which describes lived experiences of its inhabitants. Once the book-matched panels of Proconesian marble were installed in Hagia Sophia, the veins of the panels were immediately compared to the sea. At these sites, naturally occurring material is altered and manipulated into something other than its initial form. In this process, nature is incorporated into the structure and experiences of buildings.

The Great Hunt Mosaic, Villa del Casale, Piazza Armerina, Sicily, 4th century.

The collecting of artifacts, animals, and plants was an endeavor that demonstrated human curiosity with nature and the need to contain it. In sixteenth-century Bologna, Ulisse Aldrovandi encouraged the construction and founding of the botanical gardens in his native city. His example was followed by his compatriot a century later. Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, a cartographer, geographer, and military man, established the Accademia delle Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna to present his impressive collection of maps, manuscripts, and natural specimens. The collecting and displaying of objects and plants from remote colonies became an aspirational endeavor for British, French, and Spanish monarchs and elites. The nineteenth century witnessed the rise of botanical gardens and the museum thus allowing wider public access to spaces and forms of knowledge. Archaeologists, botanists, taxidermists, and artists extracted and collected resources, unmaking and making worlds.



Nautilus Cup, 1602, Dutch, Utrecht. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.

Green worlds are not solely verdant. Inhabitable and uninhabitable landscapes figure into the imagination of artists and architects. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the lost wonders of the ancient world, was a testament to the power of human innovation. The Mesopotamian desert was converted into a garden oasis, and thus a green world thrived where it should not have. In contrast, the contemporary artist, Murakami Takashi, references the annihilation of Japanese citizens by the detonation of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki through traditional Japanese animation in his paintings. Mushrooms incorporated within his work draw a direct connection between mushroom clouds over civilian populations. In both instances, worlds were transformed.



Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Muren van Babylon*, 1572. Rijksmuseum.

Fictional green worlds also inhabit gallery spaces. At the 1974 exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, Nam June Paik incorporated CRT monitors with living plants into his *TV Garden*. Paik juxtaposes an organic living element with a then-contemporary technology to produce a conceptual artwork that remarks on the conditions of natural and built worlds. In contrast, in Anicka Yi's *Life is Cheap* (2016), the artist attempts to control nature within the confines of the environments she created. Presented in the same museum forty years after Paik, Yi took samples of bacteria from around New York City and put them in controlled spaces where they were allowed to flourish. A colony of ants was provided a predetermined path placed on a mirrored surface, forcing the viewer to engage with the productivity of the ant colony. Both installations at the Guggenheim remark on the ability to contain nature within the museum.



Sea Deities, 17th Century, Roman-Bolognese. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Cornelius Vanderbilt, 1880.

The effects of the sea have also required efforts to manage and contain tenuous relationships along coasts and between land and waterways. Ancient and medieval perceptions of the sea as both a fearsome place and a medium for the acquisition of resources and conquest persisted into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with rapid, global, and unprecedented maritime expansion. Oceans generated increasingly more complex networks of communication, technologies, and wealth, resulting in colonial encounters with what became subjugated peoples, and the exportation of enslaved human beings to exploit natural resources. Sea travel led to scientific discoveries, to experiments in navigation and cartography, and to the management and collection of newly discovered resources. From mythological depictions of sea-nymphs to island books of the early modern period, the sea and its coastline figured into the imagination of artists.

To explore material and visual engagement with earth, sea, and sky, workshops and papers may also consider representations of elemental forces (strata, waves, winds) and diverse material densities (liquidity, transparency, opacity), and processes (cutting, cleaving, cultivating).



Jason de Caires Taylor, *Coral Greenhouse*

<https://inhabitat.com/breathtaking-coral-greenhouse-raises-environmental-awareness-for-the-great-barrier-reef/coral-greenhouse-13/>

We invite participants of this EdP whose dissertation research engages with Making Green Worlds to propose papers/interventions. Potential themes may contend with one of more of the following:

- Collecting, studying, illustrating, and curating natural worlds
- Landscapes, gardens, architectural green spaces
- Indigenous knowledge and lifeways
- Environmental and elemental iconographies

- Design ecologies
- Transcultural spaces: gardens, plantations, waterways, coastlines, moving vessels, maritime architecture, utopias
- Transcultural and trans-geographical interactions: goods, raw materials, cultural practices, diseases
- Seascapes, cosmological diagrams, cartography and astronomical imagery
- Site-specific projects, design ecologies
- Materials and natural processes, elements
- Scientific drawings and prints
- Resource extraction and management – mining, quarrying, fishing, hunting, agriculture, land reclamation
- Labor, tools, manuals
- Enslaved bodies, racialized understandings of environments
- Visual and material forms that embody, employ, or contribute to degradation and renewal
- Phenomena that challenge human experience: mountains, waterfalls, ice, caves, storms, rainbows, earthquakes
- Processes and systems of managing and classifying land and materials
- New methodological and epistemological frameworks

Practical Details and Deadlines

The EdP will allow doctoral and post-doctoral students from various backgrounds and specializations to share their research, their approaches, and their experiences within the framework of workshops which will also involve researchers at a more advanced stage of their careers. Participation in the EdP, with its international dimensions, complements training in art history. All candidates are invited to propose abstracts for papers, whatever the period, geographical area, or form of expression of their research. Each presentation, lasting 15 minutes, will be discussed in the context of a half-day thematic session with participants including art historians from the International Network of the EdP. Presence throughout the EdP is compulsory.

The call is posted on the website RIFHA (www.proartibus.org) and partner establishments. Doctoral students who wish to participate in the EdP will send an abstract for a paper (15 minutes), as well as a short cv that specifies knowledge of languages, to the following address by **Sunday, February 6, 2022**: contact@proartibus.org

Postdoctoral students who would like to chair a session are also invited to submit a letter noting connections of their research to the theme, with a cv.

Abstracts may not exceed 2000 characters or 300 words and should be written in German, English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The proposal must include the candidate's email address, institutional affiliation and place of residence. The proposal and the cv must appear in a single document, the title of which will be worded as follows: "Proposal_Last_Name_Firstname_Institution" (eg. Proposition_Miron_Chloe_UdM). The subject line of the email should include the candidate's name and the country of the institution in which they are registered (eg Chloé Miron Canada).

The organizing team, together with representatives of each country of the Network, will establish a final program. The announcement of the selection will be released in **March 2022**. Within two weeks of a proposal being accepted, participants must submit a translation of their abstract in one of the other official languages of the Network. One month before the start of the school, participants will send the full text of their paper. PowerPoint presentations must be uploaded by **June 5, 2022** to a link that will be provided to participants.

For information about RIFHA and the Ecole de Printemps, please see: <https://www.proartibus.org>

Visits to collections include the Hammer and Fowler Museums, the Getty Center, the Clark Library.



William Andrews Clark Memorial Library and garden, and foyer



Dodd Hall, Department of Art History

The Division of Humanities and the College of Letters & Science at UCLA acknowledge the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to the honuukvetam (ancestors) 'ahiihirom (elders), and 'eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present, and emerging.

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<https://www.makinggreenworlds.net/>



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