

Call for Papers
Radical Hope:
Inspiring Sustainability Transformations
Through Our Past

Rachel
Carson
Center

Date: July 3-4, 2017

Conveners: Rachel Carson Center, University of Texas, Queens University

Location: Rachel Carson Center

We seek papers or presentations for an interdisciplinary workshop that will address the following question: How can we encourage hope for the future and foster human resilience and creativity as we grapple with potentially dramatic changes to our environment, our core social frameworks, and associated practices and values?

Potential participants from a wide array of fields are invited to submit papers or presentations that engage with narratives of **the past** (How have humans responded to major traumas and transformations such as the Black Plague, the AIDS epidemic, the “killing fields” of Cambodia, the Holocaust, as well as more nonspecific transformations associated with the effects of ecological imperialism, famines, mass extinction events, and natural or human-made disasters?); **the present** (What kinds of narratives of the environment currently permeate our everyday lives? What kinds of policies and practices are emerging in response? How are human-nature relations conceptualized and enacted?); and, **the future** (What will our planet, societies, food production methods, transportation networks, and technology—or even humanity itself— look like in 50, 75, or 100 years from now?).

This workshop aims to bring together people from different disciplines and professions: scholars, scientists, architects, urban planners, poets, community activists, politicians, filmmakers, artists, policy makers, faith communities, and business leaders to spark conversations about the past, present, and future of the environment (from local to global) and our relationships with it.

The workshop aims to avoid overly pessimistic, trite, or sentimental conceptualizations of what it means to be hopeful; rather, it seeks to provide a space between naïve “wishful thinking” on the one hand, and “realistic dystopianism” on the other. We are interested in how realistic or even radical hope can: 1) reframe contemporary discussions, and 2) influence sustainability transformations that can help us think about how to be reactive and responsive in shaping those transformations in ways that are both feasible and hopeful. To quote Raymond Williams, “To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing.”

The conference will be global in scope; we encourage scholars with expertise in any region of the world or field of study to submit proposals.

Scholarly papers or written descriptions of other kinds of projects (4,000–5,000 words, not including footnotes) will be precirculated for discussion. Selected papers will be eligible for inclusion in a collection of essays that we aim to publish with a university press.

Applicants should send a **one page abstract of their proposed paper or project** and a **curriculum vitae** (no longer than two pages) via email to: conferences@rcc.lmu.de by **November 1, 2016**.

Accepted panelists will be notified in early **January 2017**.

Organizing Committee:

Erika Bsumek, University of Texas, Austin

John Barry, Queens University, Belfast

Christof Mauch, Rachel Carson Center, Munich

