

The Anthropocene in Museums

Workshop Program

Venue: Alter Seminarraum, Deutsches Museum, Museumsinsel 1, 80538 Munich. At the Deutsches Museum, please use the entrance to the library building (Bibliothek). Inside the entrance, signs will direct you to the room.

Directions to the Deutsches Museum are available here (or just enter its name in Google Maps):

<http://www.deutsches-museum.de/en/information/visitor-information/directions/>

Thursday, 3rd December

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| 10.00 – 10.30 am | Welcome, introductions and opening remarks on workshop themes

Helmuth Trischler, Libby Robin and Kirsten Wehner |
| 10.30 – 12.00 pm | Guided visit to the ‘Welcome to the Anthropocene’ exhibition, Deutsches Museum |
| 12.00 – 1.30 pm | Lunch |
| 1.30 – 2.30 pm | Presentation and discussion on the Welcome to the Anthropocene gallery

Helmuth Trischler & Nina Möllers – Deutsches Museum |
| 2.30 – 3.30 pm | Anthropocene challenges: Waste

<i>Collecting rubbish?</i>
Alexandra Johnson – Science Museum, London

<i>Waste and the Anthropocene from the Ethnographic Point of View</i>
Matthieu Duperrex, Jamie Furniss and Yann-Philippe Tastevin – Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée’ (MuCEM) / University of Edinburgh / “Urbain, trop urbain” |
| 3.30 – 4.00 pm | Afternoon tea |
| 4.00 – 5.00 pm | Anthropocene challenges: Energy

<i>energy.transitions – path to a sustainable energy system</i>
Christina Geyer and Sarah Kellberg – Deutsches Museum

<i>But oil pays my mortgage and feeds my family</i>
Jennifer Martin – TELUS Spark, Canada |

- 5.00 – 5.30 pm Transforming museum institutions in the Anthropocene
- Navigating the museum's purpose towards the needs of the Anthropocene*
Emlyn Koster - North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, USA
- 5.30 – 6.00 pm Break
- 6.00 – 7.30 pm Public lecture and discussion
- Activism, Art and Atolls: Communicating the Oceanic Anthropocene*
Jenny Newell, American Museum of Natural History
- Discussant: Rebecca Hofmann, Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, LMU, Munich.
- 7.30 – 8.30 pm Dinner (cost not included, but we'll locate a suitable restaurant)

Friday, 4th December

- 9.00 – 9.15 am Welcome
- 9.15 – 10.45 am Anthropocene markers: tools and materials
- Deep Time Context for the Future: The Anthropocene as Future Fossil*
Siobhan Starrs – National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution
- Man-made Exo-evolution*
Sabiha Keyif – ZKM, Karlsruhe
- Transforming the Earth: Exploring the roots of the anthropocene*
Chris Wingfield – Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge
- 10.45 - 11.15 am Morning tea
- 11.15 – 12.15 pm Imaging the Anthropocene
- The Accidental Museum*
Alison Pouliot – Australian National University
- Art practices in the Anthropocene*
Alexandra Jach – Museum Sztuki, Lodz / Warsaw University
- 12.15 – 1.30 pm Lunch

- 1.30 – 2.30 pm Re-shaping museum disciplines in the Anthropocene
- Portraying the Anthropocene in transmedia experiences*
Diego Galafassi or Martin Huber– FASAD film
- Post-natural troubles in a natural history museum: The exhibition Tote Wespen fliegen länger/Dead wasps fly further at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin*
Tahani Nadim – Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin
- 2.30 - 3.00 pm Afternoon tea
- 3.00 – 4.30 pm Anthropocene as/through people and environment in place
- The challenges of addressing global environmental topics through site-specific stories*
Liisi Jääts – Estonian National Museum
- Making environmental history at the National Museum of Australia*
Daniel Oakman – National Museum of Australia
- Mild Apocalypse. Exhibiting an Anthropocene Danish Landscape*
Nathalia Sofie Brichet, Mathilde Højrup and Frida Hastrup – University of Aarhus / University of Copenhagen / Moesgård Museum, Denmark
- 4.30 - 5.00 pm Round table discussion on building museum networks in the Anthropocene
- 5.15 pm Close

Participants (Not presenting)

- Indra Lopez Velasco – Ethnological Museum, Berlin, Germany
- Ross MacPhee – American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA
- Melanie Saverimuthu – Deutsches Museum, Munich, Germany
- John Anderson – New England Aquarium, USA (represented by Jenny Newell)

Presentations and Participants

John Anderson | janderson@neaq.org

New England Aquarium, USA

National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation (NNOCCI)

NNOCCI is a collaborative effort led by the New England Aquarium with the Association for Zoos and Aquariums, the FrameWorks Institute, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Monterey Bay Aquarium, the New Knowledge Organization in partnership with Penn State University and the Ohio's Center for Science and Industry. With support from the National Science Foundation Climate Change Education Partnership program, NNOCCI's goal is to establish a national network of professionals who are skilled in communicating climate science to the American public.

Note: John isn't able to attend but Jenny Newell will read a statement on his behalf.

Nathalia Sofie Brichet, Mathilde Højrup, Frida Hastrup | Inf577@hum.ku.dk

University of Aarhus / University of Copenhagen

Mild Apocalypse. Exhibiting an Anthropocene Danish Landscape

An upcoming experimental exhibition at the new Moesgård Museum in Denmark is the focus of this presentation. The exhibition with the working title "Mild Apocalypse" is based on transdisciplinary fieldwork in a former industrial mining site (for brown coal digging from 1940-1970) located in the middle of Jutland, Denmark. In the presentation we qualify what a Danish Anthropocene landscape can look like.

Which visual manifestations might work for a concept like the Anthropocene when fieldworked through a rather insignificant former industrial landscape in Denmark? Anthropocene as a concept is often associated with large-scale catastrophes, such as dangerous radioactivity, massive burning of fossil fuels, heavy pollution from industries, and the resulting rise of temperatures and sea-levels. But wrapped in these global flows, a danger lurks of only associating the Anthropocene with something 'big' and 'global' and therefore a risk of locating it 'elsewhere'. Exactly because of the global orbit of big problems – which are rightly recognized – one might not associate the Anthropocene with practices in for instance Denmark or see the global disturbances as made of a host of local ones.

In light of this, the upcoming exhibition addresses a *Danish* anthropogenic landscape. It engages the so-called Sjøby Brown Coals Beds as a ruined landscape, shaped by the extractive activities that created it less than 70 years ago. A landscape that today cannot be fully mastered and controlled by human beings due to its instability caused by brown coal digging, resulting in water saturated quick sand and landslides).

It is *not* an exhibition about the *big* apocalypse; it is *not* about an irreversible pollution or about an uninhabitable landscape seen from afar – on the contrary, it is an exhibition about a peaceful, seemingly legitimate and silent ruination near a small-scale extraction site, now a recreational area with small ordinary problems; it is about seemingly trivial threats to and possibilities of life in welfare Denmark in the beginning of the 21st century – it is an exhibition of a mild apocalypse!

Nathalia Brichet, PhD, is anthropologist and postdoc with the collective research group "Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene", Department of Anthropology. Her research is focused on

natural goods and extractive industries in Greenland and Denmark. She uses her fieldwork to collect and exhibit anthropological analyses in close collaboration with the people she engages with, and curators and colleagues from museums in Denmark, Great Britain, USA and Ghana.

Mathilde Højrup is an anthropologist and research assistant in “Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene”. She also works as a guide in the archaeological and anthropological exhibits at Moesgård Museum, Aarhus. Her research looks at former brown coal mining sites in Jutland. She studies instability, through the material-discursive practices around landslides, social belonging, and nature management.

Frida Hastrup, PhD, is associate professor in ethnology at the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen. She is the leader of a research project about natural resources by the name of *Natural Goods? Processing Raw Materials in Global Times*, which has exhibition work as part of its output, and which is funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research’s Sapere Aude programme.

The AURA project: <http://anthropocene.au.dk/da/>

University of Copenhagen: <http://naturalgoods.saxo.ku.dk/>

Matthieu Duperrex, Jamie Furniss and Yann-Philippe Tastevin | Jamie.Furniss@ed.ac.uk
Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée (MuCEM) / University of Edinburgh, UK

Waste and the Anthropocene from the Ethnographic Point of View

We propose to discuss some of the challenges raised by an exhibition on ‘waste’ under preparation at the ‘Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée’ (MuCEM) (scheduled from 21 March to 28 August 2017). These include challenges of scale, museography and didactic approach... As well as simultaneously epistemological and practical questions, such as what objects of ‘everyday’ or vernacular culture speak to problems of ‘waste’ in a variety of social settings and, more broadly, to the Anthropocene.

How do the multi-scalar issues of waste and the Anthropocene connect? Can the Anthropocene be seen/shown through waste, notably in a manner that bridges the divide between its visible and invisible dimensions—and what scenographic and aesthetic assemblages allow for doing so? How can we avoid the trap of over-emphasizing visually spectacular phenomena, such as uncollected litter, to the detriment of more difficult to visualize phenomena, such as the dumping of toxics in seemingly unperturbed landscapes? Finally, since the exhibition relies partly on materials derived from fieldwork and collection activities currently underway in France, Italy, Albania, Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, its preparation has required searching for field sites, methods and sources through which contemporary social science—especially ethnographic approaches—and forms of artistic expression can reveal and speak to the Anthropocene.

The MuCEM is the most recent avatar of the *Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires*, established in 1937, which in turn traces its origins back to 1884 when a ‘France Room’ was opened at the Museum of Ethnography in Paris. In keeping with the ethnographic approach at the heart of the MuCEM’s history, preparation for this exhibition relies heavily on fieldwork in contemporary Mediterranean societies. The artistic directors and fieldworkers have been involved in the development of the programme with the goal that a ‘collective’ of commissioners, researchers, and scenographers create original assemblages together, through a process of professional and epistemological collaboration.

Matthieu Duperrex is an artist and cofounder of “Urbain, trop urbain” [www.urbain-trop-urbain.fr].

Jamie Furniss is Lecturer in Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh, and anthropologist and field researcher for the 'Waste' exhibition.

Yann-Philippe Tassevin is Associate Curator and anthropologist at MuCEM / *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS)

MuCEM: <http://www.mucem.org/en/home-page>

Diego Galafassi or **Martin Huber** | diego@fasad.se
FASAD Film, Stockholm, Sweden

Portraying the Anthropocene in transmedia experiences

FASAD Film from Stockholm represents a large-scale artistic and scientific articulation emerging around the project 'Aeterna'. Aeterna is a two-part feature directed by Fredrik Wenzel and Jesper Kurlandsky, produced by Erik Gandini: *Aeterna I* is a contemplative, dialogue-free, cinematic study of how mankind has become the dominant force now shaping the Earth. *Aeterna II* is an art animation weaving multiple knowledge sources to communicate the current global predicament in the context of Big History. In collaboration with a network of artists Aeterna project is developing a transmedia strategy including museum exhibitions and VR experiences. Aeterna is endorsed by UNESCO Patronage and developed in collaboration with Global Action Program and The Resilience Alliance.

Diego Galafassi and Martin Huber are part of Fasad, a production company based in Stockholm. Fasad produces feature films, documentaries, shorts and experimental cinema, aiming to tell stories artistically, truthfully and with a strong grounding in modern society. Its productions have been awarded at some of the top film festivals around the world.

Christina Geyer and Sarah Kellberg | c.geyer@deutsches-museum.de | s.kellberg@deutsches-museum.de

Deutsches Museum, Munich, Germany

energy.transitions – path to a sustainable energy system

A major challenge of our time is to find clean, economically viable and reliable ways of providing energy. Since 2011 Germany has been addressing this challenge with the "energy transition". But Germany is not the only country seeking to transform its energy supply system. Around the world, 144 countries have set renewable energy targets (Renewables Global Status Report, REN21, 2014). The goal is to reduce CO2 emissions and energy costs while eliminating dependencies. A further challenge is the global rise in energy demand.

With the special exhibition *energie.wenden* (*energy.transitions*, opening end of 2016), the Deutsches Museum is addressing this global issue and tie in thematically with the Welcome to the Anthropocene gallery. Our future exhibition focuses on one of the big influence of humans on climate and environment namely the use of energy and how this could be changed into a more sustainable system. It is not concerned only with electric power. It also examines heat, mobility and manufacturing, and focuses on the many possible approaches to a conscious energy transition and challenges visitors to make that transition a reality.

Christina Geyer studied nutritional science at the Technische Universität München with a master of science degree. Since 2012 she works at Deutsches Museum in the conceptual exhibition development. She started as a curatorial trainee in the two exhibition projects *agriculture and nutrition* (planning of a permanent exhibition) and *nutrition* (special exhibition). At the moment she is curating the special exhibition *energie.wenden (energy.transitions)*.

Sarah Kellberg studied physical anthropology, ethnology and history of arts at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz and the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Since 2012 she works at Deutsches Museum in the conceptual exhibition development. She started as a curatorial trainee in the exhibition project *electronics* (planning of a permanent exhibition). At the moment she is curating the special exhibition *energie.wenden (energy.transitions)*.

Liisi Jääts | Liisi.Jaats@erm.ee

Estonian National Museum, Tartu, Estonia

The challenges of addressing global environmental topics through site-specific stories

Gallery “People and environment” is a part of permanent exhibition of Estonian cultural history due to open in September 2016. We have chosen five topics (gardening, epidemics, urban sanitation, war, waterways) of relevance to environmental history. In choosing these topics, we have departed from the history of the site where the museum is situated. For example, part of the museum grounds was a manor garden in the 19th century. During 1950-1990s, the same site was used as Soviet military airport. Thus, by telling the story of the manor lord’s exotic plant collection or the story of pollution left by the military it is easier to approach the broader topics of environmental history. Our aim is to invite visitors to reflect on their own experiences and involvement in human-environment interactions. Partly, we hope to do this by inviting them to explore the environmental history of the place where they are at the very moment of visiting the museum.

Liisi Jääts is a curator at the Estonian National Museum, Tartu. Her fields of study are Estonian environmental history, traditional knowledge and skills relating to natural materials. Her research has focused on the concept of heritage landscapes in National Parks and agrarian history. She is presently preparing an exhibition of environmental history as a part of the new permanent exhibition in the museum in Tartu.

Aleksandra Jach | aleksandra.jach@gmail.com

Museum Sztuki, Lodz / University of Warsaw, Poland

Art practices in the Anthropocene

The subject of my presentation is how the notion of the Anthropocene is transforming art practices and models of cultural institutions. The Anthropocene can be understood as an umbrella term which facilitates transdisciplinary cooperation and leads to long-term projects and re-thinking of conditions in which creativity is produced. I'll be discussing some conclusions from the interviews which I conducted with artists, curators, academics, critics, cultural managers about their work with environmental issues and the Anthropocene. What interested me in the work of these occupational groups was how they mediate their knowledge about the environment for a different audiences. My interlocutors were telling me about creative responses on climate change and biodiversity loss in a cultural field, construction of a new universal ethics and posthumanist perspective. How can museums provide institutional support for ecological practices? What are the limitations of such framing?

Aleksandra Jach is a curator at the Museum of Art in Lodz and is also a PhD candidate at Warsaw University. Her exhibitions include: "Cleaning Carpet" (with Maciej Cholewiński), 2011; "Construction in Process 1981 - community that came?" (with Anna Saciuk-Gąsowska), 2011; "Eyes looking for a Head to Inhabit" (with Katarzyna Słoboda, Joanna Sokołowska, Magdalena Ziółkowska), 2011; "Testing (re)production" (with Katarzyna Słoboda, Magdalena Ziółkowska), 2013; Antje Ehmann and Harun Farocki "Labour in a Single Shot" (with Joanna Sokołowska), 2013; "If Only the Eyes Could Lie", Krakow Theatrical Reminiscences Festival, 2013; Antje Majewski, Paweł Freisler and Fundacja Transformacja, feat. Jimmie Durham, Grzegorz Hodun, Kooperatywa Spożywcza w Łodzi, Miejskie Darcie Pierza, Agnieszka Polska, Piotr Życieński "Apple. An introduction (Over and over again) (with Joanna Sokołowska, 2014; "Avant-garde and socrealism" (with Marta Olejniczak, Piotr Olkusz); "Everything is connected to Everything Else", Festival of Literary Translators in Gdansk, 2015.

Alexandra Johnson | Alexandra.Johnson@sciencemuseum.ac.uk
Science Museum, London, UK

Collecting rubbish?

In summer 2014, the Science Museum developed an installation in collaboration with artist Joshua Sofaer called *The Rubbish Collection*. In full public view and with the help of visitors, Sofaer documented every piece of rubbish thrown out by the Science Museum in a month, and then curated a display of waste materials and items retained from the bins. Sofaer aimed to make us think differently about our waste by subverting the notions and practices of archiving, collecting and exhibiting. When we throw something away, we don't want to think about it any more. However, by treating trash like historic treasures, it invites us to reconsider its value – be that economic, aesthetic or social.

The Rubbish Collection was an unusual and powerful visitor experience, exploring ideas of waste and sustainability – but Sofaer's approach also raises questions about what it means to collect the Anthropocene. How can we find creative ways to capture and preserve the impacts of human activity when they are hidden from everyday view, perhaps because they are invisible, intangible or deeply unpalatable?

Alex Johnson is Associate Curator of Science at the Science Museum, London, with responsibility for the earth science collection. She has worked on a variety of exhibitions, events and installations relating to climate change and sustainability at the Science Museum since 2008.

Sabiha Keyif | sabihakeyif@gmx.de
ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany

Man-made Exo-evolution

Over the course of thousands of years, mankind has created a culture of tools, which has expanded the boundaries of our perception, our capacities to act, and the world. Mankind has outsourced its bodily functions: the hand to the hammer, the spoken to the written word, memory to clay tablets, books and computers, etc. Through technology humans transcend evolution and liberate themselves from the powers of nature. With their tools and externalized artificial organs, they create a man-made exo-evolution, which has initiated the age of the anthropocene.

The Exo-Evolution exhibition shows this new reality, which is shaped by new discoveries in space research, molecular biology, neurology, genetics, or quantum computing. It shows us visions and

solutions for the problems of the twenty-first century, such as separating oxygen from CO2 to combat the climate crisis, or novel organisms, which have adapted to and optimized themselves due to serious environmental pollution.

Sabiha Keyif is Research Associate at ZKM | Karlsruhe und Co-Curator of the exhibition *Exo-Evolution*. She studied German linguistics, literature and media studies and Art from 2004 to 2010 at Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel. She completed her master's degree in Aesthetics and Art History at HBK Braunschweig (2010–2012). Besides she was co-founding and co-curating (2012) the exhibition space *City Gallery des Kunstverein Wolfsburg*.

Emlyn Koster | emlyn.koster@naturalsciences.org
North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, USA

Navigating the museum's purpose towards the needs of the Anthropocene

Featuring the Anthropocene in nature and science museums accelerates the rising dialogue around their need for greater external relevance. Putting theory into practice obliges institutions to navigate from prior contexts and purposes. These are complex journeys with strategies ideally going beyond one exhibition or event to achieve a holistic reorientation.

The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences began in 1879 with a natural history focus. Today, its Anthropocene-mindful mission is to illuminate the interdependence of nature and humanity with a 'what do we know?', 'how do we know?', 'what is happening now?', and 'how can the public participate?' framework.

Major expansions in 2000 and 2012 led to a ROI-minded reflection to maximize the institution's relevance and sustainability. With a generative approach and open communications, this comprised a milestone recall, situation analysis, fresh values, mission and marketing statements, and a new planning approach. Results include overt coverage of climate science, citizen science projects, science cafes and town halls, featured experiences in topical contexts, a navigation app for the vision and hearing impaired, new research topics such as the nexus of human and animal health, and international conference hosting to prod thinking. In 2014, from a national field of 35,000 museums, this institution was among five selected to receive a medal at the White House for outstanding community service.

Emlyn Koster was a field geologist before being at the helm of four major nature and science-technology museums, each on a journey of greater relevancy to rising challenges in society and the environment. 50th anniversary president of the Geological Association of Canada, he is immediate past chair of the global committee for the Association of Science-Technology Centers. An adjunct Professor of Marine, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at North Carolina State University, he has made the pursuit of relevance—relating to the matters at hand—the focus of his museum leadership, publications and activism. He has also contributed to the debate in the geological profession to either formalize the Anthropocene in the Earth's Time Scale or leave it as an informal term. For the International Council of Museums, he is an invited member of its new global working group to update the definition of 'museum'.

Ross MacPhee | macphee@amnh.org

American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, USA

Ross MacPhee is a curator in the Department of Mammalogy at the American Museum of Natural History. His leading interests are paleobiogeography, extinction, and developmental cranial morphology. MacPhee studies recent mammalian extinctions, concentrating on the loss of megafaunal species during the end-Pleistocene in North America and northern Asia. His research seeks to clarify the causal patterns behind these losses, most recently by studying population dynamics of fossil species using ancient DNA methods. He is currently developing a proposal in collaboration with Jenny Newell for an Anthropocene exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History.

Jennifer Martin | jennifer.martin@sparkscience.ca

TELUS Spark, Calgary, Canada

But oil pays my mortgage and feeds my family...

Alberta, the western province in Canada that is home to the “oil sands” bitumen deposits, is at the epicenter of the challenges being faced by our carbon-based energy systems. It is both a producer and a consumer of energy, related technologies, and immediately feels the economic impacts of change in these systems. Recently, the dramatic change in the price of oil has become a significant catalyst for innovation in Alberta. How are Albertans responding to this situation, seen as both a threat and an opportunity?

TELUS Spark, the science centre in Calgary and situated as it is in the Canadian hydrocarbon heartland, has a unique and potentially time-sensitive opportunity to explore the many facets of this local-to-global challenge – one that is intellectual, cultural and technological all at once. This unique position sets this non-profit cultural institution in a position of being able to convene challenging discussions, present competing perspectives, and engage audience in a discussion that is based in scientific evidence while appreciating the civic and economic fears felt by many citizens in our community.

Jennifer Martin has focused her career in the science centre sector. Initially as an undergrad ecologist, she was part of the development and implementation team for Science North, in Sudbury, Canada. From there she studied business, attaining an MBA, and spent 21 years at the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto, through various roles from exhibit developer, to project manager, and finally as Vice President of all exhibits and public programs. Moving to Calgary, Canada she led the development and design of the \$147,000,000 CAD TELUS Spark facility, the first new purpose-built science centre in over 25 years in Canada, where she continues in the role of CEO.

Nina Möllers | n.moellers@deutsches-museum.de

Deutsches Museum, Berlin, Germany

Nina Möllers is head curator of the exhibition ‘Welcome to the Anthropocene: The Earth in Our Hands’ at the Deutsches Museum and fellow of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. She studied history in Tübingen, Palo Alto and Nashville, Tennessee, and received her PhD in 2007 with a dissertation on ‘Creoles of Color in New Orleans’. As part of a post-doc project at the Deutsches Museum she curated the special exhibition ‘Cable Tangle’ on the history of energy consumption in private households.

Tahani Nadim | tahani.nadim@mfn-berlin.de
Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin, Germany

Post-natural troubles in a natural history museum: The exhibition Tote Wespen fliegen länger/Dead wasps fly further at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

The exhibition *Tote Wespen fliegen länger/Dead wasps fly further* was shown at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin (MfN) in spring 2015. It was the outcome of a collaboration between Tahani Nadim, a sociologist of science, and Åsa Sonjasdotter, a visual artist. The exhibition built on Tahani's 18-months ethnographic work, carried out as part of the Fellowship International Museum (German Federal Cultural Foundation), and comprised three interventions: a display and wall installation, a film installation, and theatrical tours through the non-public insect collections. Each intervention took as its starting point an object from the collection: a vial of agave seeds, Volume 14 of the Cosmic Dust Catalogue (NASA, 1994), and a digger wasp collected during a recent biodiversity inventory in northeast Thailand. These objects became protagonists which guided and structured our collaborative inquiries aimed at rendering visible the troubles subtending their histories and presents.

Unlike ethnological collections, natural history museums have remained relatively immune to the representational challenges that arose with postcolonial emancipations. Contrastingly, the nascent demands of the Anthropocene are felt most keenly amidst natural history museum which struggle to give shape to concerns such as biodiversity loss. Our project was thus an experiment to direct institutional critique towards global concerns.

Tahani Nadim studied history of art and completed her doctoral research in the sociology of science ("Inside the sequence universe: the amazing life of data and the people who look after them", 2012) at Goldsmiths, University of London. In 2013 she became a fellow at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin where she ethnographically examined the constitution of "biodiversity" in various museum practices. She is currently investigating the museum's data and digitization practices with a view to crafting an interdisciplinary problem and action space.

Jenny Newell | jnewell@amnh.org
American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA.

Dr Jenny Newell is curator of Pacific ethnography at the American Museum of Natural History, New York. She has previously worked at the British Museum and the National Museum of Australia. Her particular fields of study are Pacific environmental history, museums and material culture; she has published two books: *Trading Nature: Tahitians, Europeans and Ecological Exchange* and *Pacific Art in Detail*. Her current project focuses on exploring the cultural impacts of climate change.

Daniel Oakman | daniel.oakman@nma.gov.au
National Museum of Australia, Canberra, Australia

Making environmental history at the National Museum of Australia

The National Museum of Australia (NMA) has been collecting, exploring and exhibiting the ways that people have engaged with Australian species, places and natural systems since the 1980s. This year, curators with the People and the Environment team began discussing the prospect of a new

permanent gallery dedicated to presenting an environmental history of Australia. This presentation will describe the NMA's changing approach to environmental history and some of the intellectual and political challenges of exhibition making in the Age of the Anthropocene. This presentation suggests that growing understanding of anthropogenic climate change requires a new approach to exhibition making, centered on fostering a kind of ecological literacy that has not been adopted in Australian museums. ...

This presentation will outline some particular case studies currently under consideration for the exhibition and raises questions about how encounters with objects (things that bear traces of active elemental, human and non-human forces) can foster ecological literacy and sensitivity. It will suggest that the NMA is uniquely placed to enable deep understanding of anthropogenic ecological and cultural change. By enabling encounters with particular, material things, and with the people, places and other species to which those things are connected, the NMA's new gallery will have the potential to provide a space for deep comprehension and dialogue, a space for empathy and emotion as well as a forum for hope and action.

Dr Daniel Oakman is a Senior Curator with the People and the Environment team at the National Museum of Australia and is currently leading the redevelopment of the Museum's environmental history gallery. He has curated exhibitions on bicycles, car culture, urban design and economic history. He has an ongoing research interest in histories of movement and human powered transportation, with a particular focus on the ways the bicycle revolutionised the perception of the landscape and challenged understandings of human power and endurance.

Alison Pouliot | alison.pouliot@anu.edu.au
Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

The Accidental Museum

A side-view mirror, strangely non-reflective. Lens-less headlights. A gearstick jammed in reverse. Abandoned vehicles in a winter forest – an Autofriedhof – slowly subside in the leaf litter. Lichens erode complex compounds of car paints and parts. An aesthetic beauty emerges as emulsions and ideologies are eaten away as culture and nature converge. This *Accidental Museum*, arising from neglect, crafted by circumstance, housed hundreds of rusting carcasses before being scrapped due to solvents seeping into soils. What did this corroding collection represent? An ephemeral museum? A Wunderkammer? Novel ecosystem? Ruin porn? Or nostalgic junkyard?

This presentation offers visuals as a way of provoking new imaginings of museums in the Anthropocene. How might the processes of creating, collecting and curating extend beyond human actions? How might we respond to and present other ways of experiencing and revealing the Anthropocene through such collections?

Alison Pouliot is an ecologist and environmental photographer. Her work merges art and science in portraying environmental change and less seen life-forms otherwise. Alison's PhD at the Australian National University delves into fungus-human relationships across hemispheres.

Libby Robin | libby.robin@anu.edu.au
Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Libby Robin is a historian of ideas, based at the Australian National University. She has had a long interest in the history of the Anthropocene and its cultural context. Her work focuses on how

museums enable a broad audience to think about life in the Great Acceleration of changes since the mid-20th century. The 'slow media' of museums - not just exhibitions, but also events that celebrate objects as carriers of intergenerational understanding - is an important counterpoint to the 'instant knowledge' of our times. She has also published widely in environmental humanities, history, and interdisciplinary studies. Her most recent books are *The Edges of Environmental History* (Rachel Carson Center, ed. with Christof Mauch), and *The Future of Nature: Documents of Global Change* (Yale, ed. with Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde).

Melanie Saverimuthu | m.saverimuthu@deutsches-museum.de
Deutsches Museum

Melanie Saverimuthu studied sociology, music theory and history of arts at the Technische Universität Dresden. Since August 2015 she is curatorial trainee for the special exhibition *energie.wenden* (energy.transitions)

Siobhan Starrs | stars@si.edu
National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA

Deep Time Context for the Future: The Anthropocene as Future Fossil

This presentation will share the design evolution and challenges in planning the Anthropocene Gallery within the newly renovated National Fossil Hall at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. Our studies show that putting present and future global challenges in the context of deep time provides visitors with a new lens to examine human impacts and global choices for positive change.

Siobhan Starrs is an Exhibition Developer and Project Manager in the Office of Exhibitions at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, 1999-present. She has managed an array of exhibitions of all sizes, scales, and topics including climate change in the Arctic, atmospheric chemistry, soil science and the forensic anthropology of the Chesapeake region. Starrs has a B.A. in English and History from Virginia Tech and an M.A. in Museum Studies from the George Washington University. She previously interned in the Museum's Anthropology Public Programs Office, the Smithsonian's Office of Sponsored Projects doing grant research and writing, and for Dr. Gus van Beek in the Department of Anthropology working on pottery sherds from the Middle East.

Helmuth Trischler | h.trischler@deutsches-museum.de
Deutsches Museum, Munich, Germany / Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, LMU, Munich, Germany.

Helmuth Trischler is head of research of the Deutsches Museum, Professor of History and History of Technology at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, and co-director (with Christof Mauch) of the Rachel Carson Center. His recent publications include the books *The Anthropocene in Perspective* (2013), *Building Europe on Expertise: Innovators, Organizers, Networkers* (2014, co-authored with Martin Kohlrusch) and *Cycling and Recycling: Histories of Sustainable Practices* (2015, co-edited with Ruth Oldenziel).

Indra Lopez Velasco | i.lopezvelasco@smb.spk-berlin.de

Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, Germany

Indra Lopez Velasco studied ethnology, political sciences and art history at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich und the Universität Trier. Her research has focused on environmental migration, perceptions of climate and environmental change as well as migration studies. During her studies she undertook work experience at the Musée du Louvre, Paris, and at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich. She also served as an advisor for people without residential status or health insurance. Currently Indra Lopez Velasco is scientific museum's assistant in the department of the South Seas and Australia and for the Humboldt-Forum in the Ethnologischen Museum Berlin.

She recently organized a workshop under the title "Thin Ice: Facing the Environment and Climate Change in Ethnological Museums" that addressed similar questions, please see the following links for further info:

<http://blog.humboldt-lab.de/2015/10/11/programm-workshop-umwelt-und-klimawandel-in-ethnologischen-museen/>

<http://blog.humboldt-lab.de/2015/10/16/eroeffnung-workshop-auf-duennem-eis/>

Kirsten Wehner | kirsten.wehner@nma.gov.au

National Museum of Australia, Canberra, Australia / Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich, Germany

Kirsten Wehner is a curator and visual anthropologist with particular interests in how museums can build environmental understanding, new relationships between history and natural history collections and experiment with exhibition design. She is Head Curator, People and the Environment at the National Museum of Australia (NMA), and currently a Visiting Fellow at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, LMU, Munich. Kirsten has produced a wide range of collection, exhibitions and digital projects exploring Australian cultural and environmental history, including, as Content Director, the NMA's *Circa* multi-media experience and the *Landmarks* and *Journeys* galleries. Kirsten holds a PhD from New York University, and her publications include *Landmarks: A history of Australia in 33 places* (NMA Press, 2013, with Daniel Oakman and Martha Sear) and *Curating the Future: Museums, communities and climate change* (Routledge, f' coming 2016, ed, with Jenny Newell and Libby Robin).

Chris Wingfield | cw543@cam.ac.uk

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

Transforming the Earth: Exploring the roots of the Anthropocene

Through a major new project *Shared World, Shared Museum*, the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (MAA) plans to enable visitors to engage with our unique global collections to understand how humans have transformed the planet, engaging with the environment in ways that have given rise to the shared but fragile and dangerous world we now inhabit.

Our collections are truly global, documenting key turning points in human history: MAA holds some of the earliest stone tools from East Africa, collected by Louis Leakey, the archaeological type sequence from Jericho, one of the earliest human cities, excavated by Kathleen Kenyon, and early plaster casts of Mayan monumental stelae, made by Alfred Maudslay.

A major element of the project involves creating two new galleries: one exploring human creativity

through stone, and the other the roots of the 'anthropocene' through a concentration on the notion of 'transforming the earth'. While stone is largely shaped by technologies of reduction such as carving, flaking and polishing, our second gallery will concentrate on later transformative technologies resulting in novel materials that have significantly transformed human life.

The gallery will focus on four main types of material:

- ceramics (currently 33% of the archaeological collection)
- metals (currently 18% of the archaeological collection)
- silicates (glass, faience - 5% of the archaeological collection)
- plastics (not currently represented)

A major challenge in developing these galleries will be building collections to better represent materials that have become widely utilized in recent periods of human history, but also transformations in the uses of older materials such as ceramics and metals.

Chris Wingfield is a senior curator at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge with responsibility for world archaeology. He is leading a new project to transform the museum: *Shared World, Shared Museum*. He previously worked at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery as a researcher and curator.