



Call for Applications - Workshop

Defining and Using Aesthetics in the Environmental Humanities: An Interdisciplinary Experiment

10-11 April, 2024

ZEPP Library (Room M210)

Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1 80539 Munich

Organizers: Laura Fumagalli^{1,2}; Katie Kung²; Lucia Medici^{1,2}; Alice Murphy³; Floris Winckel²

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Summary:

We cordially invite researchers from any disciplinary background and career stage interested in aesthetics and/or the environmental humanities to our upcoming workshop. Attendees will participate in in-depth discussions and engage in collaborative exercises, all with the aim to increase our collective understanding of aesthetics as an analytical category and its application to practical contexts. No specific research experience in aesthetics or abstract submissions will be required for participation.

To kick off the workshop, Professor [Emily Brady](#) (University Texas A&M) will deliver an opening keynote titled "**Planetary Aesthetics and the Environmental Humanities**". This will be a public event, taking place online on the preceding evening: 10 April, 17:30-19:00 CEST. Registration is open to all (even those not taking part in the workshop) via [Eventbrite](#).

The workshop itself will take place in the LMU main building on 11 April, 09:45-17:30. It will conclude with a closing statement by Professor [Sonja Dümpelmann](#) (LMU/RCC). Afterwards, all workshop participants are invited for dinner. The keynote and workshop will both be conducted in English.

How to register:

Registration for both the opening keynote and in-person workshop through the following link: <https://defining-and-using-aesthetics-workshop.eventbrite.de>.

The deadline for workshop participation applications is 28 February, 12:00 pm CET. Registration for the opening keynote will remain open until 10 April. If you have any questions or difficulties regarding registration please reach out to Lucia Medici at lucia.medici@uni-a.de.

Abstract:

Historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and other scholars broadly aligned with the environmental humanities have built up a sophisticated set of tools with which to examine the values at play in our ways of knowing, appreciating, and engaging with environments. The same scholars often preach the value of interdisciplinary research and collaboration. The organisers of this workshop believe that an essential step towards interdisciplinarity is the creation of common understandings of key concepts employed across disciplines. For scholars working on environmental issues in particular, developing an interdisciplinary understanding of aesthetics is particularly important, because it speaks to a dimension of the environment that the Earth and climate sciences have largely ignored or struggled to incorporate in their models (Warde et al, 2018, 133). If, as Warde, Robin, and Sörlin suggest, environmental humanities scholars want to integrate their expertise with the expertise of such scientists, then having a common framework for understanding and using aesthetics to bring to the table is crucial (Warde et al, 2018, 171-2).

This interdisciplinary workshop aims to bring together researchers interested in aesthetics as an analytical category in the environmental humanities, as well as those broadly interested in the values of climate and environmental sciences. It will build on recent work on aesthetics as an interdisciplinary category (Ryynänen and Somhegyi, 2023), as well as philosophical discussions concerning environmental aesthetics and climate change (Brady, 2023; Mikkonen, 2022) and the role of scientific knowledge in our aesthetic appreciation of nature (Turner, 2019). Most importantly, it will offer the opportunity for face-to-face exchanges and hands-on collaboration between researchers from various disciplines and with various research interests. We not only hope to allow participants to develop familiarity with topics of interdisciplinary interest, but also to strengthen the connections between different departments in and around the region.

Venue:

The workshop will be held in the ZEPP Library:

Room M210

Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1

80539 München

Underground line U3 or U6, bus 58, 68, 153, 154. Stop: Universität

The opening keynote will be held online via Zoom.

Costs:

Both the keynote and workshop are free to attend. Workshop participants planning to use public transport will be able to apply for travel support to cover the cost of attending.

This workshop is supported by the International Doctoral Programme "Um(Welt)Denken" and the Elitenetzwerk Bayern.

Refreshments are provided during the day. Lunch is self-funded, but dinner at a nearby restaurant will be covered for all workshop participants.

Contact:

For any questions regarding the workshop or the keynote, please reach out to Lucia Medici at lucia.medici@uni-a.de.

We look forward to seeing you in April!

Select Bibliography:

- Brady, Emily, 'Cryosphere Aesthetics' in Man, Eva Kit Wah and Petts, Jeffrey (eds.), *Comparative Everyday Aesthetics: East-West Studies in Contemporary Living* (Amsterdam, 2023), pp. 107–122.
- Brady, Emily, 'Environmental Aesthetics and Global Climate Change' in Pellegrino, G. and Di Paola, M. (eds), *Handbook of Philosophy of Climate Change* (Springer, 2023).
- Easterlin, Nancy, *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation*. (Johns Hopkins UP, 2012).
- Mikkonen, Jukka, 'Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature and the Global Environmental Crisis' *Environmental Values* Vol. 31, No. 1 (2022).
- Ryynänen, Max and Somhegyi, Zoltán (eds.), *Aesthetic Theory Across the Disciplines* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).
- Turner, Derek, *Paleoaesthetics and the Practice of Paleontology* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).
- Warde, Paul, Robin, Libby, and Sörlin, Sverker, *The Environment: A History of the Idea* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018).
- Von Mossner, Alexa Weik. *Affective Ecologies: Empathy, Emotion, and Environmental Narrative* (Ohio State University Press, 2017).
- Zapf, Hubert, *Literature as Cultural Ecology: Sustainable Texts* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016).