

Art History Graduate Student Association 45th Annual Symposium
Department of the History of Art & Architecture, University of California, Santa Barbara

Call for papers:
“Representation, Materiality, & the Environment”
Friday April 24, 2020

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Daniela Bleichmar, Department of Art History, USC

The graduate students of the Department of the History of Art & Architecture, University of California, Santa Barbara are pleased to announce their 45th Annual Art History Graduate Student Association Symposium: “Representation, Materiality, & the Environment.” This one-day symposium will take place on Friday April 24, 2020 on the UCSB campus.

In 1828, Thomas Carlyle coined the term “environment” to describe natural surroundings as a counterpoint to increasingly industrialized areas. However, artists, architects, artisans, and writers were long fascinated with the natural environment before the Industrial Revolution. From neolithic pottery to early-modern scientific illustrations to eighteenth-century English pleasure gardens and twentieth-century earthworks, the environment, the landscape, and the natural world have been a central subject of human artistic production. Cultural producers have represented nature as a means of various ends: ritualistic, scientific, political, leisure, and spiritual. While the natural world has always interested humans, the ever-increasing awareness of climate change and human impact on the environment has led to an emergence of ecocritical and environmental thinking in scholarly humanities discourses.

Art historians have examined how the natural world has operated as an important factor in the production of objects and images, while architectural historians have analyzed the dialectical relationship between the built and natural environments. This symposium invites papers that consider the role of the natural environment in artistic representation and production across time and space. How has nature been interpreted or imagined by artists, critics, and architects? What role do natural resources and materiality play in the production of objects and visual representations of the environment? How have political, philosophical, economic, social, and historical discourses critically engaged with topics concerning the environment?

This symposium broadly interprets “representation” to go beyond content and the hegemony of vision to include materiality and artistic production, as well as literary and historical approaches to the question of representation. We welcome papers from all disciplines.

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Scientific illustrations
- Curiosity and the environment
- Picturesque landscapes
- Garden cities and sustainable architecture

- The use of natural materials in artistic production
- Earthworks
- Performance art
- Gardens and landscape architecture
- Cartography
- Sustainability
- Climate Change

To apply to present a twenty-minute paper, please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words and a current CV to ucsbHAA2020@gmail.com by Wednesday January 15, 2020. Successful applicants will be notified of acceptance in early February. Please contact organizers Felicity Good and Taylor Van Doorne with any questions at ucsbHAA2020@gmail.com.