



Center for Creative Ecologies <tdemos@ucsc.edu>

Welcome to our 3rd Newsletter! Spring 2016

1 message

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Mon, Apr 18, 2016 at 8:37 AM

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the center for creative ecologies

Welcome to our 3rd Newsletter! Spring 2016

During Winter and early Spring 2016, the [Center for Creative Ecologies](#) generated a number of events, pushing forward its environmental arts and humanities agenda:



- On January 25, 2016, we organized *COP 21: A Critical Assessment* at UCSC's Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems. The seminar, led by Summer Gray, UC President's Postdoctoral Fellow at UC Santa Cruz, considered critical reviews of the UN Climate Conference in Paris during December 2015. We discussed the Paris agreement, including the inadequacy of the so-called INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions), which, as non-binding and thus unenforceable, are the reason why leading activist-scientist Dr. James Hansen described COP 21's result as a "[fraud](#)" and critics Danny Chivers and Jess Worth as an "[epic fail on a planetary scale](#)."

- On Feb 18, 2016, the CCE held a salon-style dinner discussion with UCSC anthropologist Jim Clifford on the topic of "Becoming Indigenous," a term mobilized by Clifford in his 2013 book *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century*. In addition to proposing ways to parse the multiple meanings of Indigenous becomings in relation to the uncertain postcolonial, media-networked forms of native life today, we considered how the phrase might also relate to the conditions of people living locally with ethico-political consciousness. We also asked how the suggestive term might also characterize becoming-local at a time of global uprootedness, migration (forced and voluntary), and virtual presence/absence, sending down



roots when nature, nativity, and nationality—and thus the nature of locality—have all begun to break down, at least as uncomplicated, uncontested words. Can we consider “becoming-local” as an ecological act, linked to solidarity with assorted Indigenous becomings in an era of destructive extractivism, climate chaos, and growing political inequality? (Image credit: Luxembourg Gardens, by Jim Clifford)



- On March 8, 2016, Swiss video artist and political ecology researcher Ursula Biemann presented a screening and discussion of her recent videos [Subatlantic](#) (2015), [Forest Law](#) (2014, with Paulo Tavares), and [Deep Weather](#) (2013). Addressing her speculative SF video essay [Subatlantic](#), we

considered Biemann’s imaging of an interdisciplinary ecotone of geology, assembling a climatology merged with human history, storytelling, and creative imaging. Set in the Shetland Islands, Greenland’s Disco Bay and on a tiny Caribbean Island, and coming at the end of the 2,500 year old Holocene epoch, the video’s relational environmentology captures moments of aquatic flows through invisible ocean streams and melting Arctic icescapes. Meanwhile, *Forest Law* and *Deep Weather* picture disparate geographies of petrocapiatalism, as in Ecuador’s Amazon and Canada’s Tar Sands, the climatological effects felt in Bangladesh’s delta where inhabitants battle rising seas, and in South America where Indigenous activists invoke the rights of nature. (Image credit: Ursula Biemann, still from *Deep Weather*)

Embedded in the Department of History of Art and Visual Culture (HAVC) at UC Santa Cruz, the Center for Creative Ecologies studies the intersection of art, culture, and environment. The aim is to develop useful interdisciplinary research tools to examine how cultural practitioners—filmmakers, new media strategists, photojournalists, architects, writers, activists, and interdisciplinary theorists—critically address and creatively negotiate environmental concerns in the local, regional, and global field. These concerns include anthropogenic climate change and global warming, and relate to factors such as habitat destruction, drought, species extinction, and environmental degradation. Drawing on such wide-ranging fields as visual culture and art history, political ecology and economics, Earth jurisprudence and new materialism philosophy, Indigenous cosmopolitics and climate justice activism, the Center energizes the formation of the emerging environmental arts and humanities.



Resources

The Center website continues to grow its Resources page, with a regularly updated list of freely downloadable references, texts, and videos that address cutting-edge research in the environmental arts and humanities. Currently, we are also featuring results from a [questionnaire](#) formulated by CCE members Amber Hickey and T.J. Demos to artist-activists who organized creative interventions at the recent COP 21, which remains an ongoing focus of CCE attention. Respondents to the questionnaire include the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination and Mel Evans of Liberate Tate and Art not Oil, the latter celebrating Tate’s recent discontinuation of BP oil sponsorship funding following a multi-year activist campaign in London.

Questionnaire:

1. How were you involved in art activism during the COP21?
2. What did you or your organization/collective accomplish during COP21? And how do you measure the success of that accomplishment?
3. How did you respond to the limitations put in place by the French government during the “state of emergency”? How did these limitations affect the actions you took part in or planned?
4. What was the goal of art activism during the COP21? What role might it play in the broader context of the growing prevalence of government-imposed “states of emergency” during key times of convergence?
5. What alliances did you build? And were any across divisions of race, class, and gender? Did you form alliances with NGOs, Indigenous activists, or other organizations



Mondays/Wednesdays, 5-6:45pm as listed
Media Theory (MATH) Theater Arts Center, UC Santa Cruz
Free Public Lecture Series and part of the CCE/AMC 7, Professor: T.J. Demos

<p>Wednesday, March 23 David Sontz Gary Alan Oppenheimer's Right to Climate Justice and Activism</p> <p>Wednesday, April 15 Amy Rubin Climate Justice, Cultural Politics, and the Anthropocene</p> <p>Monday, April 18 Emily Elizabeth Scott Spaces of Aesthetics and Activism</p> <p>Wednesday, May 4 Clara Portocarrero The Good and the Ugly</p>	<p>Monday, April 18 Ravensrd Bily The Earth Moves First!</p> <p>Monday, April 25 Ashley Dawson Collection and the Future of the State Environment Conference</p> <p>Monday, May 2 Rick Art Aronson Environmentalism and the Politics of the Anthropocene</p> <p>Monday, April 18 Jameson Bala Environmentalism and the Politics of the Anthropocene</p> <p>Wednesday, May 4 Clara Portocarrero The Good and the Ugly</p>	<p>Monday, May 9 Georgi Rayner Left Turnout: Military Activists for Climate Justice</p> <p>Monday, May 18 Ricardo Dominguez Justice in the Street: Stop Speculation // Stop Speculation</p> <p>Wednesday, May 10 William Wilson Anti-Invasive Planting</p> <p>Wednesday, May 25 Ben Stuchlik and Arnie Sperling How Come the Ecological?</p>
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 HISTORY ART VISUAL CULTURE
 CENTER FOR CREATIVE ECOLOGIES
 For more information, visit <http://arts.ucsc.edu/lectures>

Recent / Upcoming Events

Spring 2016: Lecture Series: Climate Justice Now! Art, Activism, Environment Today, UC Santa Cruz, Organized by T.J. Demos. As climate change threats grow more severe, and in the absence of government leadership, artists and activists are inventing creative strategies of consciousness-raising, bearing witness, mass mobilization, institutional liberation, and ecologically sustainable thinking and living. This class and public lecture series, joined by a diverse array of guest speakers, all leaders in the area of climate justice and cultural politics, explores current imperatives for making a just transition to a post-carbon future. View recent [publicity here](#). Download [Climate Justice](#)

beyond your own?

6. What are the lessons of COP21, and where do we go from here?



[Now Poster](#) and class [syllabus](#). And check out the [Sonic Climate Justice Playlist](#), accompanying the course. All guest presentations will be videotaped and uploaded onto the [CCE website](#).

Schedule:

David Solnit

Monday, March 28

Using Arts Organizing to Fight for Climate Justice and More

Amy Balkin

Wednesday, April 6

Climate Justice, Cultural Production, and the Atmospheric Commons

Emily Eliza Scott

Monday, April 11

Specters of Aridity: Desertification in California and Beyond

Reverend Billy

Monday, April 18

The Earth Wants YOU!

Ashley Dawson

Monday, April 25

Extinction and the Future of the Global Environmental Commons

Not an Alternative (Beka Economopoulos and Jason Jones) and Yates McKee

Monday, May 2

Institutional Liberation and Climate Justice

Claire Pentecost

Wednesday, May 4
The Quick and the Dirty

**Gopal Dayaneni / Movement
Generation**

Monday, May 9
Just Transition: Visionary
Solutions for Climate Justice

Ricardo Dominguez

Monday, May 16
Lines in the Sand:
Geo-Aesthetics []
Geo-Disturbances

William Wilson

Wednesday, May 18
Auto Immune Response

**Beth Stephens and Annie
Sprinkle**

Monday, May 23
Here Come the Ecosexuals!

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