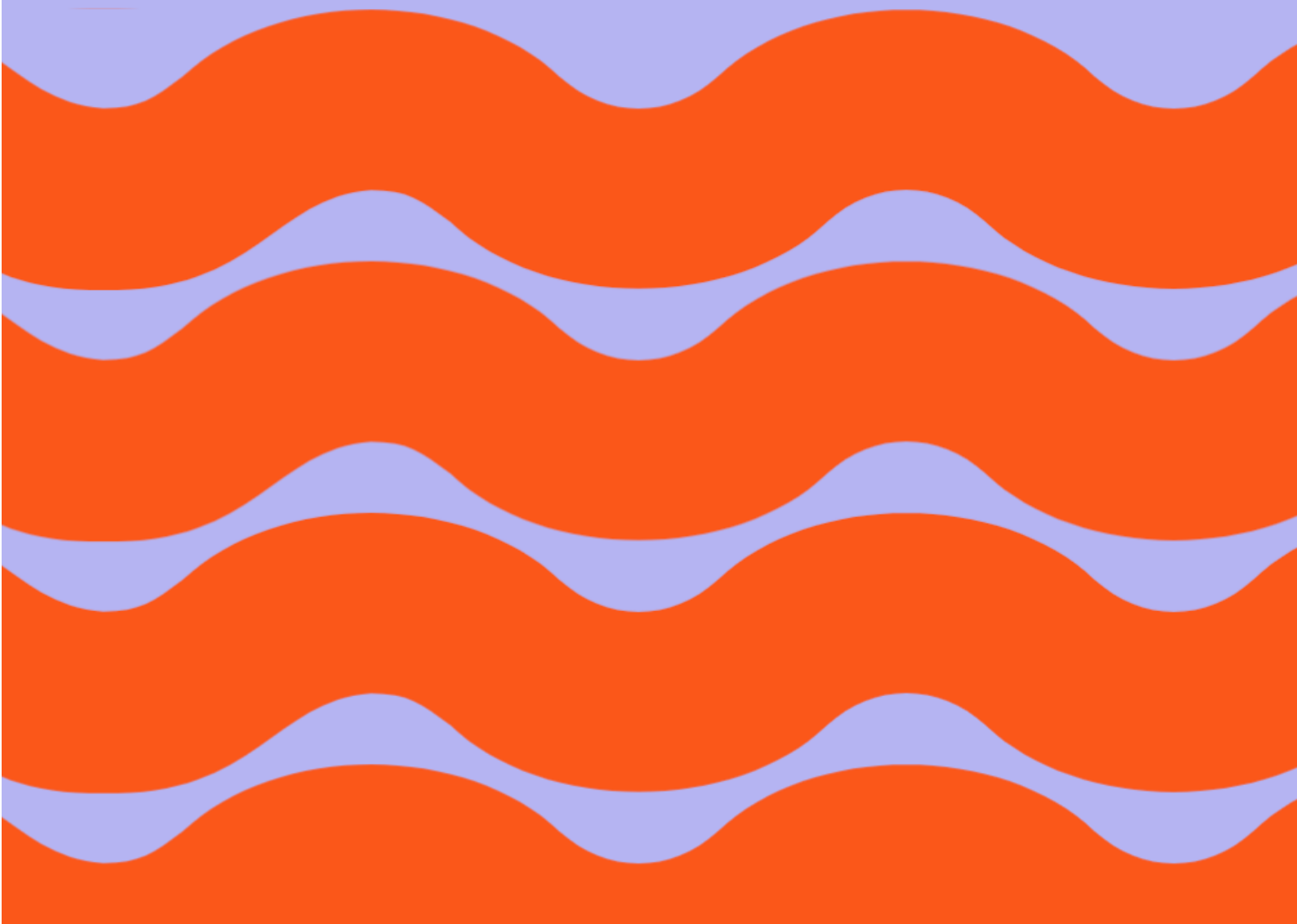


natureculture lab.



NATURECULTURE LAB, January 27-29, 2025

HKB | Bern Academy of the Arts

This international workshop aims to bring together in a hybrid format experts of conservation in two domains: on the one hand, art and cultural heritage conservation; and on the other hand, nature conservation. In both domains the “things”, “items”, “objects” or “sites” conservators and conservationists care for are increasingly recognized as natureculture hybrids. While art conservation, especially in its earlier guise of restoration, primarily considered artworks as the outcome of human—and especially the artist’s—intentions, the field of art conservation has increasingly recognized that the materials of artworks undergo unintentional, and sometimes unexpected, changes and are subject to loss and decay well outside human control. At the other end, while inspired by ideas of pristine wilderness, nature conservation in its earliest instances was primarily geared towards the establishment of national parks and nature reserves fortified against human intervention, conservationists have come to value humans as inherent to the ecosystems they care for. Given that the “things” and “sites” for which (art) conservators and (nature) conservationists hold responsibility are interplays of human and non-human agencies and thus natureculture hybrids, both fields and communities consider ontologically similar objects, and should exchange views.

The workshop will explore questions such as, How should conservation practices in both nature and art be redefined in light of the inevitable and sometimes desirable changes to the material make-up of objects, landscapes and environments? How can new conservation theories that embrace change and transformation, particularly those emerging from contemporary art, inform and reshape traditional conservation approaches that prioritize permanence and stability? Who gets to decide where and how conservation occurs, considering the historical silencing and displacement of human voices in both ecological restoration and cultural heritage conservation? How can the field of conservation expand beyond top-down expert models to embrace decolonizing community engagement, thereby raising questions about the future role of experts?

The current global challenges of the climate, environmental and, in parts of the globe, humanitarian crisis create a strong urgency to intensify the exchange between the fields of art and nature conservation. To cope with these challenges, nature and culture heritage conservation requires alternative ontologies and distinct epistemologies. Ontologically, both fields require approaches that can deal with change and the dynamics accelerated by the climate crisis. Epistemologically, both fields need to develop more inclusive models of decision-making, in their turn, questioning the role of experts in conservation. This workshop will bring these two communities together not because we are under the assumption that one field has the solutions to the problems the other field is confronted with, but because both fields confront similar problems. Rather than transferring ready-made solutions from the domain of art and culture to nature, or vice versa, and simply having one community learn from the other, the workshop will offer a platform for both communities to learn together facing the global challenges mentioned above.

CONTRIBUTORS: Ravi Agarwal, Lotte Arndt, Jacob Badcock, Marjolijn Bol, Sven Dupré, Josephine Ellis, Noémie Etienne, Rodney Harrison, Hanna B. Hölling, James Kuboja, Felicity Lunn, Emilie Magnin, Daniel Margoscy, Laura Martin, Julia Robles de La Pava, Christian Rosset, Munyaradzi Elton Sagiya, Friederike Schäfer, Anna Schäffler, Maartje Stols-Witlox, Aga Wielocha, Jerylee Wilkes Allemann and Glenn Wharton.

REGISTER [HERE](#) FOR THE PUBLIC PART OF THE WORKSHOP.

Schedule

NATURECULTURE LAB DAY 1

Monday, January 27, 12:30-19:00

12:30-12:45 Arrival, with coffee and fruit. HKB Grosse Aula, Fellerstrasse 11, Bern

12:45-13:10 Welcome: Sebastian Dobrusskin, Hanna Hölling and Sven Dupré. HKB Aula

PUBLIC LECTURES AND Q&A

13:10-14:00 Laura Martin: “Restore / Rewild: Collaborating with Non-Human Species,” public lecture and discussion. Moderated by Sven Dupré. Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

14:00-14:50 Maartje Stols-Witlox, Sven Dupré and Glenn Wharton: “Inspired by Nature: Reflections on Cultural Heritage Conservation Through Restoration Ecology,” public lecture and discussion. Moderated by Hanna B. Hölling. Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

14:50-15:40 Ravi Agarwal: “Rethinking Nature— From Fishing Communities to More-than-Human Relations,” public lecture and discussion. Moderated by Jerylee Wilkes Allemann. Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

15:40-16:30 Break, with snacks

NON-PUBLIC DISCUSSION GROUPS

16:30-17:30 Three working groups will be formed, comprising all in-person workshop participants, to discuss three key questions:

1. How do we deal with change?
2. Who decides where and how conservation occurs?
3. Who is considered an expert?

The discussions will be led by Glenn Wharton, Anna Schäffler, and Sven Dupré, with co-moderators Marjolijn Bol, Friederike Schäfer, and Aga Wielocha. The working groups will convene at the HKB Studio, HKB Small Meeting Room, and Aula.

17:30-18:00 Convenience break

18:00-18:50 Group leaders feedback to forum, plenum discussion follows. Moderated by Hanna Hölling and Sven Dupré. HKB Aula

18:50-19:00 Conclusions Day 1 and overview and tasks for Day 2. HKB Aula

NATURECULTURE LAB DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28, 12:00-19:00

12:00-12:15 Arrival, with coffee and fruit. HKB Grosse Aula

PUBLIC LECTURES AND Q&A

12:15-13:05 Lotte Arndt: “Bees, Bugs and Beyond,” public lecture and discussion. Moderated by Anna Schäffler. Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

13:05-13:55 Daniel Margoscy: “The Challenge of Conservation: Worms, Timber and Deforestation,” public lecture and discussion. Moderated by Christian Rosset. Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

13:55-14:45 Marjolijn Bol: “Making Things Last? / Futuring in the Past: Durabilities and Anticipatory Making in the Arts.” Moderated by Josephine Ellis. Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

14:45-15:30 Break, with snacks

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

15:30-17:20 Moderated by Felicity Lunn

Julia Robles de La Pava: “Beyond the Culture of Reason in Conservation: Art and Eco-Cosmology in the Patagonian Wetlands,” [16:00-16:30] Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

Anna Schäffler: “Preservation in the Atomic Age: Practices Anticipating Artistic and Environmental Futures,” [15:30-16:00] Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

James Kuboja: “Community Based-Conservation in Tanzania: Its Efficacy and the Position of Culture,” [16:30-17:00] Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

Rodney Harrison: “Beyond Natural and Cultural Heritage: Rethinking Heritage Conservation Practices in the Carbocene,” [17:00-17:20] Hybrid: HKB Aula and online.

17:20-17:45 Convenience break

17:45-18:45 Discussion with all speakers of the second block, moderated by Aga Wielocha followed by a Plenum, moderated by Jerylee Wilkes Allemann with all in-person participants. HKB Aula

18:45-19:00 Conclusions Day 2 and preview Day 3. Hanna Hölling and Sven Dupré. HKB Aula

NATURECULTURE LAB DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29, 12:45-19:00

12:45-13:00 Arrival, with coffee and fruit. HKB Grosse Aula

PUBLIC LECTURES AND Q&A

13:00-13:45 Munyaradzi Elton Sagiya: “Beyond Wildlife: Re(imagining) conservation of protected areas in Zimbabwe,” public lecture and discussion. Moderated by Christian Rosset. HKB Aula and online.

13:45-14:30 Jacob Badcock: “‘Conserving ‘Sodom and Gomorrah:’ Nature, Urbanism, and Technology,” public lecture and discussion. Moderated by Noémie Etienne. HKB Aula and online.

14:30-15:15 Josephine Ellis: “Situating the Conservation Object, or the New Object of Conservation,” public lecture and discussion. Moderated by Emilie Magnin. HKB Aula and online.

15:15-16:00 45-minute break, with snacks

NON-PUBLIC DISCUSSION GROUPS

16:00-17:30 Three working groups will be formed with all in-person workshop participants to discuss three key questions, following a similar approach to Day 1 but with participants arranged in distinct groups. The discussions will be facilitated by Glenn Wharton, Anna Schäffler, and Sven Dupré in collaboration with Marjolijn Bol, Friederike Schäfer, and Aga Wielocha. The groups will convene in the HKB Studio, HKB Small Meeting Room, and Aula.

17:30-17:45 Mini convenience break

17:45-18:30 Plenum with all participants. Group leaders feedback to forum, plenum discussion follows. Moderated by Hanna Hölling and Sven Dupré. HKB Aula

18:30-19:00 Conclusions workshop and discussion of tasks for the writing retreat for selected participants. Group leaders, with Hanna Hölling and Sven Dupré. HKB Aula

Organization

Natureculture Lab has been organized by Hanna B. Hölling (HKB Bern Academy of the Arts) and Sven Dupré (Utrecht University/University van Amsterdam) with the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation Scientific Exchanges Grant, the Bern University of Applied Science Network Grant, the Institute Materiality in Art and Culture at HKB Bern Academy of the Arts and the Center for Critical Conservation.



Natureculture Lab, January 27-29, 2025

ABSTRACTS AND SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

Ravi Agarwal: “Rethinking Nature - From Fishing Communities to More-than-Human Relations”

This talk explores how the concepts of “nature,” “conservation,” and “expertise” are deeply tied to historical biases, colonial legacies, and social inequalities. Drawing from years of work with fishing communities and researching more-than-human beings like vultures and river dolphins, it challenges the conventional concept of nature as static and pure. Instead, it proposes nature as a lived space, co-produced through relationships that reflect dynamic social and political contexts.

In this talk, I will address, as a research-based artist and environmentalist, community-led interactions with the world outside, specifically how fishing communities occupy built heritage, and engage with rituals, and cultural practices as an evolving expression of their lived values, rather than as fixed historical artifacts. I will focus on underlying environmental justice and power dynamics which exist, by examining the colonial and racist underpinnings of national parks and the parallels between purity/pollution hierarchies in environmental and caste systems in India. Finally, I will propose that we reconfigure terms like “nature,” “conservation,” and “expert” by foregrounding local practices and creating a new glossary that reflects the entangled naturecultures of human and more-than-human worlds.

Ultimately, I will advocate for listening deeply to community practices and starting from the ground up to create new, inclusive, and transformative conversations about the topics at the heart of this workshop.

Ravi Agarwal (Delhi, 1958) is an artist, environmental campaigner, writer and curator. He addresses entangled questions through an interrelation of art, research and activism, focusing on the subject of nature and its futures. His work has been shown at major museums in solo and group exhibitions, and at international biennales. He has co-curated large public art exhibitions, including the *Yamuna-Elbe project* (Hamburg and Delhi, 2009) and *Embrace our Rivers* (Chennai, 2018). More recently he curated *New Natures, A terrible beauty is born* at the Goethe Institute and CSMVS Museum, Mumbai, and *Imagined Documents* at the Les Rencontres d’Arles 2022. Agarwal is also the founding director of the environmental NGO Toxics Link and the founder of The Shyama Foundation, which engages with art and ecology practices in India. He has both written and edited books and journals, including *The Crisis of Climate Change* (Routledge, 2021) and *Marg Journal of the Arts – Art and Ecology* (Mumbai, April 2020). Agarwal is the convener of the 2025 Bergen Assembly.

Lotte Arndt: “Bees, Bugs and Beyond”

As part of natural history museums, entomological museum collections sit at the intersection of disciplines, and add as naturecultures to further trouble the blurry divisions and “animacy hierarchies” (Chen 2012). Mostly stored in natural history departments in post-imperial metropolis and former colonial museums across the world, their provenance relates many of the collections to colonial contexts. While the collections aim to conserve formerly living insects as natural specimen, insects are also among the threats to this endeavor: as “heritage eaters” (Florian 1997), they challenge the well-kept drawers and showcases. In order to better control their behavior, specialized laboratories cultivate different insect species. The talk weaves a thread through artistic work developed in and beyond (entomological) museum collections.

Lotte Arndt (Paris) is assistant professor at the Cultural and Social History of Art (HiCSA) research center at the University of Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne. Between 2021 and 2025, she has been working on the international research project *Reconnecting Objects. Epistemic Plurality and Transformative Practices in and beyond Museums* (Technical University of Berlin). Between 2014-2021, she taught at the École supérieure d’art et design Valence Grenoble. Her research focuses on

toxic collections, extractivism and conservation in so called ethnological and natural history museums. More broadly, she accompanies the work of artists who question the postcolonial present and the antinomies of modernity from a transnational perspective.

Jacob Badcock: “Conserving ‘Sodom and Gomorrah:’ Nature, Urbanism, and Technology”

In July 2021, the Ghanaian government demolished the Agbogbloshie scrapyard, a notorious e-waste processing zone located along the Korle Lagoon in Accra, Ghana. Often referred to as “Sodom and Gomorrah,” this site was known for hazardous informal recycling practices, which posed significant risks to human and environmental health. These practices, which include manual disassembly using hand tools and open-pit fires, have polluted air, water, and soil, and are linked to numerous severe diseases among workers and residents.

The demolition of Agbogbloshie may seem justified due to its environmental impact, but the approach of the Ghanaian government overlooks how the informal e-waste trade extends the lifespan of the used consumer through the repair, resale, and recycling of e-waste, which is dismantled for their base component parts and then reintegrated into the supply chain. Rather than alleviate workers and the local environment from harm, the demolition of Agbogbloshie has exacerbated it. Echoing historic slum clearances by colonial governments under the guise of sanitation, it has displaced and undermined the livelihoods of migrant workers who are already disproportionately exposed to pollution, poverty, unemployment, and homelessness. Furthermore, it has done little to halt the continued export of e-waste into Ghana from the Global North, nor to prevent environmentally harmful burning practices from taking place elsewhere in the city of Accra.

In this paper, I explore Agbogbloshie at the intersection of three conservation areas: nature, urbanism, and technology. I pose the question: Why, if Agbogbloshie was responsible for significant environmental pollution, might it be socially and ecologically responsible to conserve it? How, in the case of informal settlements like Agbogbloshie, can social and environmental conservations and care be enacted in the interests of both human and non-human actors?

Jacob Badcock is a final-year PhD candidate in the History of Art department at University College London (UCL). His research focuses on the ethics of photography in environmental crisis zones. In particular, he explores how photography has been utilised to document pollution and to rationalise state violence in response to said pollution, using Agbogbloshie-Old Fadama—an infamous e-waste processing zone in Accra, Ghana—as a case study. His work has been published in journals including *The Burlington Magazine* and *The Journal of Visual Culture*.

Marjolijn Bol, Making Things Last? / Futuring in the Past: Durabilities and Anticipatory Making in the Arts

The field of future studies has become increasingly important during the last few decades, especially to conceptualize how to preserve our planet for future generations. As a field that similarly engages with what is to come through the science of making heritage objects “durable”, there are important parallels with conservation. Historians have documented how conservation and restoration practices became institutionalized in western Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries - partly determining which heritage is maintained, deemed to have value, and represent the pasts that “matter”. Under western paradigms of permanence and stability, questions of durability have long been dominated by histories of collection, preservation, and repair.

But what of the initial impulse to make things that last? How did artists explore durability as a making practice before it became an institutionalized measure of an object’s conservation status? This paper attends to this earlier history of durability to show that in artistic practice, durability is characterized by looking forward; by materially imagining the futures in which man-made objects were meant to “endure”. Through its focus on anticipatory aspects of making, this paper brings futurity back

to artistic practice to bring it into conversation with contemporary issues in art and nature conservation.

Marjolijn Bol is Associate Professor in Technical Art History and PI of the ERC Project Dynamics of the Durable (DURARE). Trained as an art historian, her research intersects with historical studies of craft, knowledge, and the environment with a special focus on performative methods (reconstruction) and written sources on art technology. Her DURARE project investigates a long-term history of durability in art from the perspective of artisans and patrons. Two recent publications include *The Varnish and the Glaze* (University of Chicago Press, 2023) and *The Matter of Mimesis* (Brill 2023). Marjolijn is on the editorial boards of *Studies in Art & Materiality* (Brill), a peer-reviewed book series dedicated to innovative scholarship about the relation between art, materials, and making and of *Art Matters*, an international journal for Technical Art History. She is a member of The Young Academy of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

Josephine Ellis: “Between Nature and Culture: Situating the New Conservation Object”

As a complex, social phenomenon, what does conservation actually mean—and what does it mean to conserve? How does conservation constitute its objects—and how do objects constitute conservation? Beyond its being an artwork, the object of conservation is also constructed in and through the means by which it is made to last. Since its modern origins to today’s cultures of contemporary art conservation, the conservation object has been made, not only by means of physical intervention or other, more expanded practices of continuity. Arguably, at their crux, these gestures have tended to be orientated by broader, historically situated theoretical contestations with matter, if at first matter’s passivity, then now increasingly, its activity. Situated in discourses of the conservation object, this presentation probes how the object of conservation has and continues to be positioned—whether implicitly or explicitly—at the interstices of natural and cultural worlds. Drawing on artworks considered static on the one hand and changeable on the other—and ultimately, complicating these boundaries—I speculate on and tease out the implications of a conservation object that might take seriously the growing critical import of “active matter.”

Josephine Ellis is a PhD candidate at the University of Bern and based in the research project Activating Fluxus, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation at Institute for Materiality in Art and Culture, Bern Academy of the Arts. Her research focuses on intermedial artworks from the 1960s onwards situated at the interstices of histories and theories of art and conservation. She obtained her MA in History of Art from University College London and her BA in History from the University of Durham.

Rodney Harrison: “Beyond Natural and Cultural Heritage: Rethinking Heritage Conservation Practices in the Carbocene”

The problems arising from the ontological and practical separation of culture and nature in conservation practices have long been noted. This paper reflects on a number of research projects which aim to explore the phenomenon of conservation practices empirically and comparatively to explore the possibilities that arise for and from more integrated approaches to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. Drawing particularly on recent examples from Europe and beyond, the paper provides a number of case studies which explore how such integrated approaches might be put into practice, and the importance of doing so in the present moment to build more sustainable future worlds.

Rodney Harrison is Professor of Heritage Studies at University College London. He is author/editor of 20 books and edited volumes and over 100 articles and book chapters, a number of which have been

translated into Chinese, French, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish language versions. He has conducted research in Australia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, North America, South America, the Middle East, UK and continental Europe. He is founding editor of the *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology*. His recent books include *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices* (UCL Press 2020), *Reimagining Museums for Climate Action* (UCL, 2021), *Deterritorialising the Future: Heritage in, of, and after the Anthropocene* (Open Humanities Press, 2021) and *Critical Heritage Studies and the Futures of Europe* (UCL Press, 2023). He is regularly consulted and works with policy makers to translate the results of research into heritage and museum policy and practice. In this regard he has recently collaborated with Council of Europe on their *L.I.N.K.E.D. - Guiding principles for an integrated approach to culture, nature and landscape management* (2024), with ICCROM on capacity building on heritage and climate action in China and other LMICs, and with the South Korean government on their integrated natural, cultural and intangible heritage management system. www.rodney-harrison.com

James B. Kuboja: “Community Based-Conservation in Tanzania: Its Efficacy and the Position of Culture”

Tanzania is one of the countries in the world that struggles to ensure sustainable conservation of wildlife resources. This is because such resources contribute a lot of money to the government coffers; for instance, before Covid 19, 17% of the country’s GDP and 25% of the foreign currency came from the wildlife sector (Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, 2022). That is one of the reasons why the country adopted a Community based Conservation (CBC) approach in the 1980s in a bid to rescue wildlife resources threatened by the erstwhile conservation approach - fortress conservation. Despite the introduction of the CBC practices in Tanzania, little is known about its efficacy in the conservation of wildlife resources. Informed by both historical and contemporary data collected through archival, secondary and oral sources, this study evaluates the efficacy of the CBC in Tanzania, especially reflecting on the extent to which cultural aspects have been affecting its performance. The findings reveal that, even though CBC registered some successes than the previous approach, it is still not effective enough to ensure sustainable conservation of wildlife resources in the country. Part of its failure is attributed to the continued manifestation of ‘detrimental’ cultural practices by some Tanzanian societies and the inability of the CBC itself to accommodate some of such practices. James Benedict Kuboja is a PhD candidate at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) - Tanzania, who is about to defend his PhD in History thesis titled, “A History of Wildlife Buffer Zone’s Conservation in the South-western Serengeti, Tanzania, 1951-2022”. Mr. Kuboja is also a faculty member in the Department of History of the UDSM since 2021. Before that, he worked as a secondary school teacher employed by the government of Tanzania from 2007 to 2020. He holds a Master’s degree in History (2019) and a Bachelor’s degree in Arts with Education (2011), both from the UDSM. His areas of research interests are environmental, social and political histories. Following his expertise and research in the area of environmental history, he has published several papers related to wildlife conservation and did several consultancies related to environmental conservation in Tanzania.

Dániel Margócsy: “The Challenge of Conservation: Worms, Timber and Deforestation”

This talk examines how the concept of conservation has long enabled the circulation of ideas and practices between art conservation, heritage conservation, biodiversity conservation and physics. Inspired by a conference and a forthcoming edited volume on *The Challenge of Conservation*, funded by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Cambridge, it offers a historical overview of these confluences by highlighting a series of case studies from the period between 1600 and 1850. The aim is to examine the development of forest conservation when timber and tree-based products were of primary importance across many areas of human activity. The talk traces connections between concerns about the preservation of timber in seafaring ships, in bookbinding, or

in panel painting, and the disappearance of forests across various parts of the world. Attention is oriented towards worms and other parasites that attacked trees and all wood-based products with unparalleled intensity, and the various methods applied to prevent the damage they caused. Geographically, the talk will primarily focus on the Netherlands and its colonial world in Southeast Asia, with some discussion of developments in Germanic lands. It is argued that the emergence of concerns about the conservation of force in nineteenth-century physics can be productively understood in the context of these developments.

Dániel Margócsy is Professor of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine at the University of Cambridge. His current research focuses on the relationship between European colonial expansion, the development of modern science, and the long-term history of environmental transformation. A 2024 Guggenheim fellow, and the recipient of a British Academy Senior Research Fellowship, he received his PhD from Harvard University, and his BA from University College Utrecht. Margócsy has been a fellow at the New York Public Library's Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, the Descartes Centre for the History and Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, and the Herzog August Bibliothek. He is the author of *Commercial Visions: Science, Trade, and Visual Culture in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), and, with Mark Somos and Stephen N. Joffe, *The Fabrica of Andreas Vesalius: A Worldwide Descriptive Census, Ownership, and Annotations of the 1543 and 1555 Editions* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), which won the Neu-Whitrow Prize.

Laura Martin: “Restore / Rewild: Collaborating with Non-Human Species”

Given the biodiversity and climate crises, many wild species will not survive without acts of human care. What should that care look like? Can wild nature be designed? In this lecture, Professor Laura J. Martin will venture answers to these questions using the history of ecological restoration as a guide for the future. Today ecological restoration is a global pursuit: governments, nonprofits, and corporations spend billions of dollars each year to remove invasive species, to build wetlands, to reintroduce species, and, increasingly, to sequester carbon. But restoration began in the early 20th century as the pursuit of naturalists and landscape architects. This lecture will overview the history of the ecological restoration movement and how practitioners distinguished themselves from the conservation and preservation movements. Early restorationists strove to respect the world-making, and even the decision-making, of other species. Routinely, however, restorationists failed to respect the decision-making of other people, grounding their work in white supremacy and colonialism. As more resources are put toward restoration, it is critical to ensure that restoration projects are socially just. And as the rewilding movement gains traction alongside the restoration movement, this lecture will reflect on the political and aesthetic distinctions between the two.

Laura J. Martin is a historian and evolutionary ecologist who studies how societies shape biodiversity. She is the author of *Wild by Design: The Rise of Ecological Restoration* (Harvard University Press, 2022) and numerous articles on just solutions to the global biodiversity crisis. Her research and commentary have been featured in the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *TIME*, *The Atlantic*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and other major media outlets. She is an environmental studies professor at Williams College and a former fellow of the Harvard University Center for the Environment, the Stanford Humanities Center, and the American Council of Learned Societies. She is currently working on a book about how synthetic herbicides have reshaped life on Earth.

Juliana Robles de la Pava: Beyond the Culture of Reason in Conservation: Art and Eco-Cosmology in the Patagonian Wetlands

Several perspectives on the conservation of nature, biodiversity, and art have been grounded in actions aimed at maintaining, caring for, preserving, protecting, and saving. Many of these approaches are based on an ontology that hierarchizes different modes of existence, with human beings—particularly

those aligned with Western reason—positioned as the highest and most important point in the chain of life. But can we rethink care, protection, and preservation from a perspective that displaces hierarchies and challenges the distinction between the human-cultural and the other-than-human-natural? What conception of humanity might prompt us to question these value oppositions? This presentation explores certain theoretical and practical implications of thinking about conservation beyond the culture of reason. Using the example of the Patagonian wetlands, known in the Mapuche language as “mallines,” the argument of this paper is that the intersections between artistic and aesthetic practices in the region and the eco-cosmological actions of indigenous communities in South America open up possibilities for an ontological and epistemological transformation of Western and colonial notions of conservation. Thus, this paper seeks to contribute to a reimagining of conservation that transcends expert models of “science” and makes room for the cosmologies, mythologies, ethics, and aesthetic entanglements that take place in territories marked by political, historical, and ecological struggles.

Juliana Robles de la Pava is an art historian whose work intersects with the fields of environmental humanities and art theory, focusing on Latin America. With an academic background in Curatorial Studies and Philosophy, she is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Käthe Hamburger Kolleg, Centre for Advanced Study | *inherit*. heritage in transformation at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her research at *inherit* centers on the aesthetics and material practices of South America, adopting an ecopolitical and ethical perspective. Juliana addresses issues related to the micropolitics involved in transforming biospheric materials into works of art within colonial contexts of exploitation and extraction. As a fellow at *inherit*, she participates in the collaborative project *Muddy Measures: When Wetlands and Heritage Converse*. Juliana has worked as a Teaching Assistant at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and earned her PhD in History and Theory of the Arts from the same institution, with a thesis on the material ontology of photography. She has been a member of the research team and a doctoral fellow at the Centro Materia of the UNTREF in Argentina.

Munyaradzi Elton Sagiya: “Beyond Wildlife: Re(imagining) conservation of protected areas in Zimbabwe”

Protected areas in Africa and beyond are often designated as 'nature' territories, focusing primarily on wilderness and wildlife, while their cultural significance is frequently overlooked. Even when cultural heritage is included in conservation frameworks, it typically receives less funding and priority. In this talk, I aim to position the conservation practices in Zimbabwe within the broader discourse on the interconnected eco-cultural worlds, highlighting the need for approaches that recognize the integration of natural and cultural heritage. The current conservation practices in national parks and other protected areas are constrained by a nature-culture dichotomy, perpetuated by institutions, policies, and professionals. Through a case study of three national parks, I will examine the implications of separating heritage into distinct natural and cultural categories. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) manages national parks with a primary focus on flora and fauna, while the conservation and management of cultural heritage sites fall under the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ). Although the ZPWMA effectively protects wildlife and natural resources, cultural heritage sites remain vulnerable to wildlife, natural decay, and neglect. These sites often suffer from poor conditions, inadequate access, and a lack of visitor facilities, despite their cultural importance to descendant communities whose ancestors were displaced during the establishment of national parks. This neglect underscores the urgent need to address the imbalances in conservation priorities and to recognize the cultural dimensions of protected areas.

Munyaradzi Elton Sagiya holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and Museum Studies (2009, Midlands State University), a Master of Arts in Heritage Studies (2014, University of Zimbabwe), and a Ph.D. in Archaeology specializing in the governance of archaeological

heritage (2022, University of Zimbabwe). He is a lecturer in Culture and Heritage Studies at Bindura University of Science Education in Zimbabwe and currently a visiting research fellow (October 2024 – June 2025) at *inherit. heritage in transformation*, Kate Hamburger Kolleg| Centre for Advanced Study at Humboldt University of Berlin. Before his academic career, Munyaradzi was a curator of archaeology at the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe from 2010 to 2021. His research interests are diverse and includes decolonizing archaeological heritage conservation through African indigenous perspectives that decenter Western ways of knowledge and doing. He has published book chapters and journal articles on African archaeology, heritage conservation, and museum curatorship. In 2020, he received the Young Professionals Forum Emerging Skills for Cultural Heritage award from the Centre for Conservation and Restoration, Italy. He has participated in TheMuseumLab, served as a visiting researcher at various institutions, and is currently on the Editorial Board of the Journal of the Institute of Conservation.

Anna Schäffler: “Preservation in the Atomic Age: Practices Anticipating Artistic and Environmental Futures”

The historical beginning of contemporary art is often dated to the event of the dropping of the first atomic bomb and the end of World War II in 1945. Against the backdrop of these turning points, performative, process-based, and ephemeral art practices emerged more prominently, emphasizing temporality as a central aspect of contemporary art. This shift required rethinking conservation practice in the last decades beyond its traditional focus on physical durability to align with the evolving nature of contemporary works. Constant new interpretations are temporalizing the works, ensuring their contemporaneity with changing historical and cultural contexts. Preservation, therefore, transcends mere material conservation; it becomes an active, time-bound process. Increasingly important in this context is the challenge of enabling the transmission of procedural knowledge and contextual information. Passing on these legacies to future generations requires new approaches that anticipate the changing dynamics through time. The potential of artistic methods through which this can be practiced over a long period of time is also discussed in the context of developing models for long-term communication concerning the afterlife of nuclear waste. Relating artistic to environmental practices at this intersection will be essential for the preservation of culture and nature in the atomic age.

Anna Schäffler is an art historian, author, and curator specializing in the preservation of contemporary art and cultural assets. Her work bridges art history, conservation, and curatorial practices, addressing both theoretical and practical challenges. Collaborating with media conservator Andreas Weisser, she provides strategic advice to artists as well as public and private institutions on long-term preservation strategies. Anna’s research focuses especially on transmitting artistic practices, artists’ estates and the role of commons in art, activism, and urban development. In recent years, she has initiated and led projects that explore the current paradigm shifts in contemporary art preservation. These include *Art Doc Archive*, a pioneering prototype for archiving social media and websites from Berlin’s art and culture scene, and *Networks of Care*, which examined collective, decentralized, and sustainable preservation strategies. She curated the exhibition, *Anna Oppermann. A Retroperspective* at Bundeskunsthalle Bonn in 2023/24. And she has published extensively on contemporary art preservation, with titles such as *Die Kunst der Erhaltung. Anna Oppermanns Ensembles, zeitgenössische Restaurierung und Nachlasspraxis im Wandel* (Munich, 2021) and *Networks of Care: Politics of Preserving and Discarding* (Berlin, 2022). For further details on her research and projects, visit her website at www.annaschaeffler.info.

Maartje Stols-Witlox, Sven Dupré and Glenn Wharton: “Inspired by Nature: Reflections on Cultural Heritage Conservation Through Restoration Ecology”

Following a 2022 workshop at the Lorentz Center in Leiden titled “Conserving Art and Nature,” the authors of this presentation are investigating parallels between restoration ecology and cultural heritage conservation. The two fields use similar terminology, such as *preservation*, *conservation*, and *restoration*, yet analysis reveals different historical employment of the terms and an interesting convergence in recent years. In their early histories, both fields avoided community participation. However, in response to a change of view on conservation objects, which are increasingly seen as networks or ecologies/ecosystems, more recently both fields have adopted new models of engagement. Restoration ecologists increasingly work with people whose lives are intertwined with land and natural resources, while cultural heritage conservators increasingly work with artists, and community members whose ancestors created and used objects and sites in their care.

The growing recognition of the importance of traditional knowledge in sustaining ecosystems is accelerated by the climate crisis we face. Practices such as revitalizing traditional land management and traditional care for cultural heritage often rely on local, low impact resources rather than resource-intensive systems such as dams and HVAC systems. Increased participation of artists and community members forces a recognition that power structures have to change. Balancing Indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge is a contested topic in both fields.

In this presentation the authors point to emerging theory and practice in nature conservation that can benefit cultural heritage conservation. For instance, in nature conservation new subfields such as *ethnoconservation* combine traditional and scientific knowledge. Another example is the development of *reference system models* that include living organisms and nonliving components to serve as guidelines for future land management. These and other innovations in restoration ecology can inspire cultural heritage conservators to further advance their own field.

Maartje Stols-Witlox is Associate Professor of Conservation at the University of Amsterdam’s Programme in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, and director of this programme. From a background in art history and paintings conservation, she is an expert in the use of performative methods in conservation (a.o. reconstruction/replication of historical painting and conservation methods), and is increasingly broadening her research scope towards ethical and methodological considerations in conservation decision making. Maartje is task leader in the EU Horizon CL 2021 project *GoGreen – green strategies to conserve the past and preserve the future of cultural heritage*, in which she focuses on green thinking in conservation decision making and on the relevance of historical low-tech conservation methods as greener alternatives to current treatment strategies. With Sven Dupré and Katrien Keune, in 2022 Maartje organized the workshop *Conserving Art and Nature* at the Lorentz Center in Leiden.

Sven Dupré is Vice-Dean for Research and Impact at the Faculty of Humanities and Professor of History of Art, Science, and Technology at Utrecht University and the University of Amsterdam. He led the ARTECHNE project (2015–2021), supported by a European Research Council grant, and previously served as Professor of History of Knowledge at the Freie Universität and Director of the Max Planck Institute’s research group on art and knowledge. He has held fellowships at institutions such as the Institute for Advanced Study (University of Warwick), the Center for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH, University of Cambridge) and was Robert H. Smith Scholar in Residence for Renaissance Sculpture in Context at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. His research has been supported by visiting fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and at the Sydney Centre for the Foundations of Science at the University of Sydney. Dupré is a founding editor of the *Journal for the History of Knowledge* and the Routledge series *Knowledge Societies in History*. He is a member of several advisory boards, founder of the ArtLab at Utrecht, and collaborates with artists like David Hockney and Claudy Jongstra.

Glenn Wharton is Professor of Art History at UCLA and Chair of the UCLA/Getty Interdepartmental Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage. His experience in cultural heritage conservation includes developing MoMA's time-based media conservation program, founding *Voices in Contemporary Art* (VoCA), co-directing the *Artist Archives Initiative* based at New York University, and serving as Conservation Director for the Japanese Institute for Anatolian Archaeology in Turkey. His publications cover a range of initiatives in contemporary art conservation, the anthropology of public monuments, artwork identity, and enhancing sustainability and social justice through conservation research and intervention. He is the Principal Investigator for a National Endowment for the Arts initiative titled *Embedding Sustainability in Cultural Heritage Conservation Education*. He is also an editor of a forthcoming book in the Getty Conservation Institute's *Readings in Conservation* series titled *Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Contemporary Art*.