



ART AND EDUCATION IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

Symposium

November 14-15 / 2022

Maynooth University

With another winter of discontent and uncertainty now upon us, when our resilience and survivability once again take center stage, we invite you to join us in this symposium to consider how art and education should respond to our precarious times. At the forefront of our minds are the energy crisis, cost of living and war. Meanwhile, in the background, the slow violence of climate change continues.

Reflecting on these connections, this symposium is concerned with the urgency of thinking and acting in response to climate change, through art and education. While both fields of practice are often in dialogue, the climate crisis prompts a greater need for artists and educators to join forces around common problems and goals. Staging a trans-critical discussion, this event will address key environmental questions and challenges through the lens of education and artistic practice. This process aims to draw out common and uncommon disciplinary perspectives that can generate new ways of thinking, doing and living in the Anthropocene. Ideas around courage and resilience, life and death, activism and aesthetics, radical theories and radical democracies will be brought to bear on authoritarian capitalisms drive to box liveable life in consumerism and violence.

Together, we are searching for *active* non-violent resistances to the ongoing destruction of our planet and the popular sovereignty needed to live well within it.

PROGRAM

-14/11 /10:00-18:00

-15/11 /10:00-16:15

Room: SE 229. Boardroom located in the School of Education building on the second floor.

Monday 14/11

- **10:00 -10:15 / Opening:** Prof. Carl Anders Säfström and Dr. Glenn Loughran
- **10:15 - 11:00 / Speaker 1.** Prof. Sharon Todd
- **11:05 - 11:50 / Speaker 2.** Dr. Fiona Woods

Lunch. 11:50 – 13:30

- **13:30 - 14:15 / Speaker 3.** Prof. Gert Biesta
- **14:20 - 15:05 / Speaker 4.** Dr. Gráinne Coughlan

Coffee 15:05 - 15:20

- **15:20 - 16:05 / Speaker 5.** Dr. Timothy Stott
- **16:10 - 16:55 / Speaker 6.** Prof. Carl Anders Säfström
- **17:00 - 17:45 / Speaker 7.** Juliette Clara Bertoldo
- **17:45 - 18:00 / Summary:** Prof. Carl Anders Säfström & Dr. Glenn Loughran

19:00 Dinner: Bistro 53. Maynooth

Tuesday 15/11

10:00 - 10:15 Coffee

- **10:15 -11:00 / Speaker 8.** Dr. Glenn Loughran
- **11:05- 11:50 / Speaker 9.** Prof. Leif Östman & Prof. Katrien Van Poeck

Lunch: 11:50 – 13:30

- **13:30-14:15. Speaker 10.** Barbara Knežević
- **14:20- 15:05. Speaker 11.** Dr. Paul O’Keeffe

Coffee 15:05 -15:20

15:20 - 16:10 / Summary & Next Steps

'BLACK SWAN' PEDAGOGY: *REMNANT ECOLOGIES* AND NAVIGATING THE DIFFICULTIES OF DISRUPTION AND LOSS.

Prof. Sharon Todd

Professor of Education, Maynooth University, Dublin

According to ecofeminist artist Aviva Rahmani (2022) 'the best art is always a black swan, a surprising event' (18), a term aptly borrowed from economist Nassim Taleb to indicate a disruptive event that changes fundamental perceptions of who we are. Akin to Jacques Rancière's (2006) idea that art occasions 'a sensible or perceptual shock' that can create new communities of sense and existence, a black swan event offers us a way of moving beyond the nihilism that so often characterises discourses of the Anthropocene. There is pedagogical force in the black swan event that propels a felt experience of something different and unexpected. For Rahmani, one way to create such events is through the staging of 'trigger points': elements of the environment that come together in unexpected ways to precipitate change. Insofar as education is very much about staging encounters with elements of the environment (from books, screens, and maps to trees, water, and earth), how might we understand the nuances of these disruptive encounters in light of our current existential anxieties and environmental losses? That is, how do we educationally curate trigger points that aspire to change, on the one hand, while attending to the feelings of loss that are part of experiencing ecological crisis in the present, on the other? This paper explores John Easterby's recent artwork *Remnant Ecologies*, which focuses on navigating loss and disruption through immersive outdoor installations (most recently at the Botanical Gardens in Dublin), and asks what it has to teach us about our ambivalent connections with the more than human world.

SENSE AND SENSE-MAKING FOR CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN THE CAPITALOCENE

Dr. Fiona Woods

Artist / Lecturer in Fine Art. Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick

This paper contends that the 'sensory, experiential, bodily basis' (Garrison, 2015) of critical thought is threatened by the systemic and sensory violence of the Capitalocene. It argues that aesthetics, as a human capacity to both sense and make sense of the world, and also as a critical practice that enhances sensory attention, supports the emergence of forms of sense-making that transgress the disciplinary norms associated with an increasingly authoritarian form of capitalism, where the under regulation of markets stands in stark contrast to the over regulation of social environments, including education. Taking education as a practice of freedom and subjectivisation (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970; Biesta, 2020), aesthetics is here articulated as a vital component of pedagogies resistant to those conditions. Bodies and minds (particularly those of young people) have recently been subjected to a degree of sensory violence through the hyper-disciplinary strictures of self-isolation and social distancing arising from Covid-19. That sensory violence, compounded by the overwhelming discourse of multiple crises, has unsettling effects on the feeling of being 'at home in the world', which, according to Biesta (2020) relies on a robust capacity for sense-making. When that capacity is undermined, populations may be more susceptible to manipulation by anti-democratic forces and ideologies; Eagleton asserts that 'structures of power must [first] become structures of feeling' (Eagleton, 1992). This paper draws from the discourse of politics and aesthetics, and from the fields of radical pedagogy and body pedagogics, to explore critical, educational practices that work to attune the bodies of students to their environments, and to enhance their capacity to generate forms of sense-making contrary to the perceptual norms of the Capitalocene.

AN UNSUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EDUCATION AND AN UNEDUCATIONAL FUTURE FOR SUSTAINABILITY: A CRITIQUE OF UNESCO'S CALL FOR A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR EDUCATION

Prof. Gert Biesta

Professor of Public Education, Centre for Public Education, Maynooth University, Dublin

Discussions about the future of education in the context of questions about sustainability nowadays often make reference to the UN's 17 sustainable development goals and, more specifically, to SDG4 which reads: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." The fact that both in the headline and in the more detailed targets the phrase 'quality education' is used repeatedly, is already a worrying sign. After all, 'quality education' is the perfect empty signifier (elsewhere I have also characterised it as a 'non-objectionable') because the phrase says nothing about what actually counts as quality and, even more worryingly, also doesn't say anything about what would count as education, but rather operates on the assumption that everyone knows what education is. Of course, serious engagement needs to go beyond a critique of phrases – albeit that the rhetorical force of a phrase such as 'quality education' should not be underestimated. Rather than focusing on the further operationalisations of SDG4 itself – which, in my view, are highly problematic – I wish to focus on a recent document produced by UNESCO's ad hoc Commission for the Future of Education. This document, with the title *Reimagining our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education* (UNESCO 2021), can be taken as one of UNESCO's major efforts to think carefully about education's future, particularly with reference to questions of social and environmental sustainability. While I have been of the opinion that, in the past, UNESCO tended to be the voice of educational reason in a climate increasingly dominated by a neo-liberal economisation of education (on the latter see 2006, 2012; and on the former Biesta in press¹), *Reimagining our Futures Together* is a remarkable exception to UNESCO's reputation,¹ perhaps first and foremost because of its complete and profound misunderstanding of education. I would like to share my initial readings of this report, focusing on how education is (mis)represented. My hunch is that because of this misunderstanding the report not just projects an unsustainable future for education but also a profoundly uneducational future for any serious engagement with questions concerning sustainability.

¹ Biesta, G.J.J. (2006). What's the point of lifelong learning if lifelong learning has no point? On the democratic deficit of policies for lifelong learning. *European Educational Research Journal* 5(3-4), 169-180.

Biesta, G.J.J. (2012). Have lifelong learning and emancipation still something to say to each other? *Studies in the Education of Adults* 44(1), 5-20.

Biesta, G. (in press). Reclaiming a future that has not yet been: The Faure report, UNESCO's humanism, and the need for the emancipation of education. *International Review of Education; Journal of Lifelong Learning*. DOI: 10.1007/s11159-021-09921-x

² Recent publications from UNESCO's Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace and Sustainable Development, particularly the in my view completely disastrous "International Science and Evidence Based Education Assessment" report actually suggest that UNESCO may be heading in a very problematic direction that is the opposite of what it stood for in the past. See [International Science and Evidence Based Education Assessment \(ISEEA\) \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org/en/education/science-and-evidence-based-education-assessment)

EVALUATING SOCIALLY ENAGAGED ART IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Dr. Gráinne Coughlan

Post-Doctoral Researcher, TU Dublin School of Art and Design

Foregrounded by my work researching and developing a new lexicon for the evaluation of socially engaged art, this paper considers the responsibility of evaluation strategies to respond to notions of environment or ecology. While there is a noticeable uptake in social engaged art dealing to some degree with environmental concerns, In Ireland at least, current evaluation frameworks do not address these issues directly. This paper encourages speculation as to what form (if any), future evaluation should take to better account for these issues by exploring the implications of artistic engagement with broad concepts of 'environment'. As part of this redress, I consider possible entry points for environmental concerns in evaluation including: (1) the efficacy of collaborative or participatory approaches to redistribute agency shared by socially engaged art, with "post natural" and "rights of nature" environmental perspectives. (2) How models of environment are enacted particularly in place-based, socially engaged projects. (3) The politics of visual and social aesthetics as reproductions of dominant values or taste as it relates to ecological awareness and ability to act. (4) sustainability of materials and sustainable practice. Reflecting on these topics begins a process of including environmental concerns in evaluation as complimentary to current artistic trends, and the urgency of environmental action.

TEACHING ENVIRONMENTAL ART HISTORY

Dr. Timothy Stott

Department of History of Art and Architecture, Trinity College Dublin

How can we teach an environmental art history? Not just a history of environmental art or eco-art, as one genre or them, but an art history that looks beyond style, biography, provenance, and historicism, to analyse how nature has appeared and mattered (or not) in art of all regions and periods. Art historians, like other humanists, must now think across spatial and temporal scales, extend their attention to nonhuman actors, and measure their narratives against deep time. Given the unevenness of the climate crisis, an environmental art history must also align with world art studies. Whatever innovations such art history might now make in content and methodology – and there are several – as the discipline belatedly joins the environmental humanities, there remain more prosaic, but no less urgent, challenges concerning curriculum design, accreditation, and, of course, pedagogy. For instance, what might be the relevance and urgency of a discipline that is necessarily slow, often gratefully uncoupled from the knowledge economy and the news cycle? These historical strengths of art history often jar with students' sense of crisis or fade under the clamour of solutionism.

This paper considers some of my own experiences of trying to teach environmental art history over the past few years and compares them to best practice across the environmental humanities.

TEACHING TO SURVIVE: EDUCATION BEYOND REPRODUCTION AND THE STATE

Prof. Carl Anders Säfström

Director of The Centre for Public Education and Pedagogy, faculty of Social Sciences, Maynooth University, Dublin

In this paper I will be discussing teaching as a fundamental human affair which includes nature as a realm of equality. In starting with the Sophists understanding of nature as fundamentally founded on equality, I will be establishing an alternative understanding of teaching and education, beyond the dominant views based on science as first philosophy. Science based education is promoted by Platonian/Aristotelian domination over education, inscribing a pattern of inequality as necessary for education proper. Such idea of education is built on two distinct relations which places education in a certain tension with the everyday of people living their life in concert with others in an environment on which they depend. It is the idea that education are a) linking past and future, and b) that education link man to state. Both of those will be discussed in order to move education, and particularly teaching into its proper function of verifying equality in a context of the inequality of police orders (Rancière). As a link between art and education the necessary improvisational character of teaching will be emphasised and its splitting and sharing of the sensible realm which simultaneously unite and divide us (*le partage du sensible*). Such move, the paper will conclude are in itself a 'landing on earth', as Bruno Latour asked of us to do, and which therefore better than before are preparing us for responding to the current climate crises.

LETTING THE DEAD TEACH: THE HAUNTED VOYAGE INTO THE NECROPOLIS

Juliette Clara Bertoldo

Graduate Student, Education, Maynooth University, Dublin

The paper discusses the pedagogical force of Arkadi Zaidēs' collaborative research-based performance *Necropolis*, with the followings question driving such exploration: How do we enter ethically in relation with the dead-other *othered*? *Zaidēs and colleagues present the* ever-expanding cartography of the Necropolis – The City of the Dead – emerging from beneath European topography, constituted by the digital counter-mapping of marked and unmarked graves of thousands of deceased migrants and undocumented asylum seekers, some of which are identified and named, others unnamed, wrenched from their pre-humous identity. The techno-mediated artwork, at once political and aesthetically provocative, is also, I suggest, intensely pedagogical. To argue so, the paper unfolds into three parts, especially drawing attention to the relations between the living/the dead proposed in the opening question. I first rearticulate a conception of death beyond the death/life binary and absolute mortality in the view to moving past conceptions of the dead as the sole product of the survivor's imagination, undermining the possibility of engaging pedagogically with the dead. Then, while looking at the issue of spectrality from a Derridean hauntology, I tease out the material/immaterial and affectively-charged pedagogy of *Necropolis*, revealing the absence/presences of those deemed appropriate by the state and its abusive migration laws to let die. From this standpoint, I turn to Gert Biesta's articulation 'being taught by' to interrogate what the dead-others *othered* confront the living with, what do they ask for, and what do they make us do. Tied to these interrogations of speculative quality, I conclude that Zaidēs' project in performing a gesture of care, may give rise to new relationalities and becomings of human-nonhuman subjectivities, while probing into opportunities to configure an ethics of response and responsibility.

ARCHIPELAGO AS FORM: ART EDUCATION AS INTERVENTION IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Dr. Glenn Loughran

Artist / Lecturer in Fine Art. TU Dublin School of Art and Design

This paper sets out to develop a concept of educational form that is appropriate for the Anthropocene. To think about the form of education is to consider how the spatial dynamics of environment and context shape educational processes and educational subjectivity. Where the human capital subject of modern education remains the ideological blueprint for much educational theory and policy today, recent shifts towards Anthropocene thinking prompt a new conception of educational subjectivity that is entangled with the environment (Chandler & Pugh, 2021). At stake within this shift is an understanding of agency within education that is neither radically autonomous nor infinitely adaptable. Exploring the tensions between autonomy and adaptability, this paper considers how central concepts developed within island studies can be helpful for thinking about these shifts through art education. Utilising the postcolonial concept of 'archipelagic thinking' to navigate the relational dynamics between 'locality' and 'climate change' this paper maps out the co-ordinates of an archipelagic art education for the Anthropocene. This analysis is supported by a reflection on the newly established archipelagic MA Art and Environment, established in West Cork (2020). Emerging out of the BA in Visual Art on Sherkin Island (2004 – 22), the MA Art and Environment focuses on a multiplicity of geographic sites and educational themes appropriate to the Anthropocene. While the concept of intervention in education often implies a shift in the teacher-student relationship, this paper considers how environment(s) act as agents within educational form.

FEMATERIAL PEDAGOGY AND SCULPTURAL ART EDUCATION

Barbara Knežević

Artist / Lecturer in Fine Art. TU Dublin School of Art and Design

In this paper 'Fematerial pedagogy' is defined as a feminist, artistic, embodied practice that engages haptically with materials and draws on ideas of posthumanist approaches to pedagogy in order to arrive at equitable, inclusive and empathic epistemological outcomes. Fematerial pedagogies can be implemented in various disciplines, but is particularly present in sculptural pedagogy and learning. This writing proposes that Fematerial teaching practices advocate for alternative forms of knowledge production that are embodied and sensate, equitable and care-full and not necessarily dependent on language or text. These educational processes and methods are affective, bodily and materially focused modes of engaging with knowledge that may implicate representational methods but that position matter and materials as making meaning in itself, rather than just being engaged as a representational or symbolic tool.

This writing advocates for the potential of fematerial sculptural pedagogy to create empathic and equitable engagements with non-human others; materials and objects, plants and animals, minerals and the planet, allowing for artistic imagining of worlds that are more than human. This writing advocates for the potential of fematerial pedagogy to activate form of interspecies co-making and making-with that challenges binary, patriarchal colonial positions and hierarchal phallogocentric positions in the production of knowledge. In so challenging these positions and conditions fematerial pedagogies may have the potential to foster new

TEACHING AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Prof. Leif Östman

Professor at Department of Education, Uppsala University, Sweden

Prof. Katrien Van Poeck

Associate Professor. Department of Political Sciences. Ghent University, Belgium

This chapter presents and illustrates a methodology for creating knowledge about teaching for aesthetic experiences and artistic expression. We here follow Dewey (1925/2008) who calls immediate, anoetic (non-cognitive) felt qualities aesthetic experiences, where aesthetics has a meaning close to *aisthetikos*, the old Greek term referring to sentient, feeling, sensitivity, etc. We can compare Dewey's conceptualization with the term *affect* where *affect* is something "unfixed, unstructured, and something we do not quite have a language for, something that we cannot fully grasp or express" (Gould 2010: 26- 2–7). *Affect* is a bodily experience that is given; something that we have before we do anything with it. In other words, it is only brutally there as a non-cognitive and non-linguistic experience. Crucial here is that aesthetic experiences are relational.

Generally speaking aesthetic experience occurs through encounters involving the sensory system and the world (Andersson, Garrison & Östman et. al, 2018: 74), but we can in the transactional learning theory (Östman et al. 2019) situate such aesthetic encounters and experiences both in the disturbance of our habits in encounters, and in the inquiry, fueled by the disturbance, coming to an end. The latter is the experience of (non)fulfilment of the process. We are also motivated by Dewey's claim that artistic expressions can be part of any inquiry, and is thus not limited to arts. In an artistic inquiry there is direct care for the subject matter (the cognitive/emotional and physical material that is central in the activity), and the desire to do the inquiry involves a personal vision of expressing yourself. An artistic inquiry is in this perspective always "dependent on our affective, caring, and concerned involvement in the antecedent qualitative situation" (Garrison 1996: 403). Thus, an artistic inquiry always involves "yourself": a personal vision to be expressed through the material being worked with. Climate change, then, becomes something that is aesthetically felt in disturbances brought about by encountering its materialized consequences (e.g. a flood), or how these are experienced either by real people or characters in a novel or play, or even 'facts and figures' in an IPCC report. When an artistic inquiry follows, not only the climate but also the self is at stake.

In the chapter we will look into two different types of artistic inquiries in an educational setting, both started in an aesthetic experience/encounter. One of the inquiry is scientifically inspired and the material used for expression are typically for scientific investigations, for example concepts. The other one is an inquiry where the expressions are using techniques that is used in arts, for example movements. We will use these examples to illustrate our methodology (theoretical models and analytical methods) and the results concerning the outcome of such inquiries. This will be the background for discussing how teachers can become attentive to (intended as well as unintended) aesthetic experiences, how they can stage aesthetic encounters as well as how they can create a teaching setting where students can develop artistic expressions in relation to climate change and connected phenomena such as ecological grief, eco-paralysis, activism, issues of ecological justice, etc.

ART AS PASSPORT FOR CONNECTION AND LEARNING IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

Paul O'Keeffe

Department of International Development, Maynooth University, Dublin

Refugee camps are not known as places that foster creativity, nor are they known as places that encourage therapeutic expression and learning. Deeply traumatised people who have fled unimaginable horrors and sought sanctuary within the strict confines of the international forced migration management system, exist, for the most part, on standby as they wait to resume their lives at home or in third countries. With the average length of stay for refugees in camps being 17 years, most languish in desperate conditions as they try to contend with the meagre rations afforded to them by host countries and camp authorities. Although basic goods and services such as primary education are provided to most children growing up in these camps, little emphasis is placed on the importance of cultural and personal expression within the official infrastructure of the system that governs their lives. With the benefits of creative expression being long-known for helping people to deal with trauma and encouraging innovative progress, the 90 million people living in refugee camps around the world are, through no fault of their own, missing out on opportunities that could greatly enhance their lives. This chapter will explore the use of art as a creative medium of connection and learning for children in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya and aims to add to the growing calls for personal agency to be a valued pillar of the international forced migration management system.

