

SHIFTS

Photography,
Environment,
Action



Image: Untitled (Pollard), 2019 from *The Weight of Arts in the World* © Michele Allen

24-25 June 2021
Online Event
northeastphoto.net

SHIFTS

Photography, Environment, Action

Thursday 24 June 2021, 6.30pm

Friday 25 June 2021, 9.30am-4pm

Online Event

Join us across two days for talks and discussion exploring the role of photography in communicating the environmental crisis and approaches to sustainable practice.

We hope to stimulate discussions about photography radicalism and activism, including its relationship to aesthetics, sustainability and ecology, impact and reach, collectivism and voice.

Produced by NEPN with photographic artist and researcher Marjolaine Ryley.

This event will be convened via Zoom.

If you have any access requirements please contact:

nepn@sunderland.ac.uk

Thursday 24 June 2021, 6.30pm

Radical Futurisms: Insurgent Universality, Solidarity, and Worlds-to-Come

Join us for a talk by leading cultural theorist and art historian T.J. Demos.

With reference to three international examples of contemporary art – those of Thirza Jean Cuthand, The Otolith Group, and Black Quantum Futurism – this short talk discusses current modellings of radical futurisms and worlds-to-come that refuse surrender to capitalist realism. Where radical imagination meets radical praxis is in the material forces of solidarity, the political form of belonging, more than ever necessary today in the collective battle against international fascisms and global neoliberalisms.

While acknowledging the bankruptcy of Eurocentric universalisms, this presentation defends approaches to insurgent political formations beyond identitarian fragmentation, including a political aesthetics of abolition – ultimately of racial and colonial capitalism.

Chaired by Professor Mike Collier, University of Sunderland.

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81884680844?pwd=YlU5U2UzTkZDSmlRZmx2MHNQcGZKQT09>

Meeting ID: 818 8468 0844

Passcode: 968092



T.J Demos

T. J. Demos is the Patricia and Rowland Rebele Endowed Chair in Art History in the Department of the History of Art and Visual Culture, at University of California, Santa Cruz, and founding Director of its Center for Creative Ecologies. Demos is the author of numerous books, including *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today* (Sternberg Press, 2017); *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology* (Sternberg Press, 2016); *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary During Global Crisis* (Duke University Press, 2013) – winner of the College Art Association's 2014 Frank Jewett Mather Award – and *Return to the Postcolony: Spectres of Colonialism in Contemporary Art* (Sternberg Press, 2013).

Demos co-curated *Rights of Nature: Art and Ecology in the Americas*, at Nottingham Contemporary in January 2015, and organized *Specters: A Ciné-Politics of Haunting*, at the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid in 2014. During 2019–21, with the Center for Creative Ecologies, and as a Getty research institute scholar, he's working on a Mellon-funded research project, art exhibition, and book project dedicated to the questions: what comes after the end of the world, and how can we cultivate futures of social justice within capitalist ruins? His new book, *Beyond the World's End: Arts of Living at the Crossing* was recently released by Duke University Press.

Friday 25 June 2021, 9.30am - 4pm

Photography, Environment, Action Symposium

Join us for a day of presentations and discussion with photographers and artists *Hannah Fletcher, Edd Carr, Sabina Sallis, Michele Allen and Shahidul Alam.*

We aim to provoke discussion and ask questions about practice and sustainability - materials and materiality; radicalism and activism; and the role of photography and the image in visualising the environmental crisis.

What could sustainable photography look like? As a sector, as a practice - concepts, aesthetics, ethics and materials.

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82948198541?pwd=ODVTQ1FRT2tlTnBoUjZZbzVYenVNUT09>

Meeting ID: 829 4819 8541

Passcode: 110175



Image: Clay based lumen print © Hannah Fletcher

Programme



Image: Climate Refugees © Shahidul Alam/Dirik/Majority World

9.30am

Introductions

Amanda Ritson, Programme Manager of NEPN.
Marjolaine Ryley, Senior Lecturer at Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland and PhD Researcher at Newcastle University.
Alexandra Moschovi, photography curator and writer and Associate Professor at the Northern Centre of Photography (Chair).

9.45am

Edd Carr – Artist and Film-maker, Director of the Northern Sustainable Darkroom

10.20am

Hannah Fletcher – Photographic Artist, Director of London Sustainable Darkroom

11.00am

Break

11.20am

Sabina Sallis – Artist and Researcher

11.55am

Q&A with morning speakers

Chaired by Alexandra Moschovi.

12.20pm

Lunch

Programme (cont.)



Image: Thought World (video still) © Sabina Sallis

12.30pm

Grab your lunch and take part in a short (optional) workshop with either Sabina Sallis or Marjolaine Ryley

Sabina Sallis – VPA: *Vitality Principle Accumulator*

In this impromptu presentation, artist, Sabina Sallis will show you some of the seasonal plants and preservation techniques she works with that promote her own vitality and wellbeing. She will show examples of plants that can be foraged from her own urban forest garden in Newcastle and how, for her, they bring a deeper connection to the land she lives on and an uplifting of her mind and body.

Marjolaine Ryley – Plants and Protest

A taster of a workshop Marjolaine will be delivering at Dilston Physic Garden in July and Berwick Visual Arts in August.

Discover how growing and gardening can be an act of resistance, protest and hope. First, is a brief introduction to artists working with living materials –with humour, innovation and insight–in areas of ecology, growing and sustainability. This will be followed by a practical demonstration on how to develop skills in basic growing/ horticulture. This will include –how to compost successfully (even on a small scale), a guide to growing micro-greens and an introduction to plant propagation (i.e. how to make plants for free!).

Programme (cont.)

1.10pm

Introduction to the afternoon talks

Carol McKay, NEPN and Team Leader Arts at University of Sunderland.

1.15pm

Michele Allen, Photographic Artist

1.50pm

Shahidul Alam, Photographer, Activist and Curator

2.25pm

Q&A with Michele Allen and Shahidul Alam

Chaired by Carol McKay.

2.50pm

Discussion groups – join for informal conversation and observations

3.20pm

Feedback from groups and summation

Led by Mike Collier, University of Sunderland.

4.00pm

Close



Image: © Edd Carr

Speaker Biographies

Hananh Fletcher

Hannah Fletcher is a London based artist, working with cameraless photographic processes, founder of The Sustainable Darkroom, Co-director of London Alternative Photography Collective and a facilitator of sustainability within the arts. Hannah Fletcher's work intertwines organic matter such as soils, algae, mushrooms and roots into analogue photographic mediums and surfaces. She does this while simultaneously exploring environmentally and ecologically-focused issues. Working in an investigative, pseudo scientific and environmentally conscious manner, Hannah combines scientific techniques with photographic processes, creating a dialogue between the poetic and political.

<https://www.hannahfletcher.com>

<http://www.londonaltphoto.com/sustainable-darkroom-about>

Edd Carr

Edd Carr is an artist and researcher from North Yorkshire, UK, working with moving image and photography to explore our anxieties around the ecological crisis and the mass extinction of life.

His moving image work has been exhibited worldwide, including Holland, Australia, Germany, and the UK. He received the Innovation Award at Wild Film Fest (2017), and his work has featured in publications across the UK.

Carr's most recent research papers - *The Ecology of Grain: An Ecological Analysis of Gelatin in Analogue Photography* and *Stare Into the Caffenol to Reveal Your Future* - discuss sustainability in photography, and the need for a green photographic revolution. In this, he leads the Northern Sustainable Darkroom, a research facility experimenting with sustainable alternatives to photographic processes.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341517376_Stare_into_the_Caffenol_to_Reveal_Your_Future_A_Sustainable_Vision_for_Analogue_Photography

<https://www.instagram.com/northernsustainabledarkroom/?hl=en>

Sabina Sallis

Sabina (based in Newcastle upon Tyne) grew up in rural Subcarpathian Poland; an area rich with stories within stories, a land of fantastical tales that tell of the interconnectedness of all things. Her upbringing has had a profound influence on her arts practise and her understanding of 'Multispecies Worldliness'.

She is currently completing a practice-led PhD at the School of Fine Arts, Newcastle University that investigates the entanglement between the human mind, knowledge and more-than-human worlds and speculates about an evolving aesthetics of embedded sensitivity towards life. She focuses on sustainable land practices, permaculture, re-indigenizing with local ecosystems through engagement with herbs, the beehive, earth-based metaphysics, healing practices and biomimicry of trophallaxis as cultural praxis. Sabina has a multifaceted approach to arts provision as a researching, collaborating, exhibiting artist and as a curator. She uses video, photography, drawing, performance, sculpture and speculative narrative in a multimedia, trans-disciplinary way that interweaves fact and fiction.

Sabina works under auspices of *Multispecies Visionary Institute* exploring the human embodied potential and complex, transformative aspects of sustainability aligned with an ethics of flourishing and care. *Multispecies Visionary Institute* project is on at Berwick Gymnasium Gallery from 10 July - 5 September 2021, supported by Berwick Visual Arts.

<http://www.berwickvisualarts.co.uk/whats-on/2178/sabina-sallis-multispecies-visionary-institute>

<http://www.berwickvisualarts.co.uk/whats-on/2179/sabina-sallis-multispecies-visionary-institute-events-programme>

Speaker Biographies (cont.)

Michele Allen

Michele Allen is a multimedia artist and researcher based in North East England, working with photography, sound and video. Her work deals with environment and sense of place and is often made in response to specific sites working in collaboration with community groups, environmental experts and academics from disciplines such as history, geography and social science.

*'Since 2018 I have been working on a long term project *The Weight of Ants in the World*, which focuses on an ancient woodland in the centre of an industrial estate in North East England, thinking about the wood as a witness to industrialisation. The project includes, photography, sound, archival research and video to intensely explore this ancient ecosystem and has also taken on a degree of activism. The work aims to manifest this site in other spaces, to mobilize the woods, thinking about their mass, fragility and endurance at a time of advanced climate crisis and species loss. As a result of the project the woods have been surveyed and designated as a local wildlife site and in February this year they were protected with a Tree Preservation Order. It is this mixture of art, activism and just being there which I hope to share with you in this event.'*

<https://www.michele-allen.co.uk/theweightofantsintheworld>

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/391572312/5d835a8773>

<https://vimeo.com/160539895>

Shahidul Alam

For over four decades, Shahidul Alam has pursued a vision to change representation of the 'Majority World' and to exploit the power of photography to affect social, environmental and political change. Former president of Bangladesh Photographic Society, Alam set up the Drik agency, Bangladesh Photographic Institute, Chobi Mela Festival, Majority World agency and Pathshala, the South Asian Media Institute, considered one of the finest schools of photography in the world. Drik, established by Shahidul in 1989, is a key partner in the Citizens Platform for Climate Change.

Shahidul's work has been shown across the globe and he has won several international accolades. In 2018 he was the recipient of the Lucie Award and named Time Magazine's Person of the Year. In 2019, he received the ICP Infinity Special Achievement Award and he was the 2020 recipient of the CPJ International Press Freedom Award.

Shahidul's book *The Tide Will Turn* published by Steidl, with photographs by Alam and pioneering Bangladeshi photographers and text by Arundhati Roy and Alam was in the New York Time's list of "Best Art Books of 2020". Alam's retrospective *Truth to Power* is currently touring the US to critical acclaim. Shahidul is a long-standing Visiting Professor at the Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland and a long-term collaborator of NEPN.

<http://www.shahidulalam.com/>

<http://drik.net/>

<https://www.citiplat.org/>

Marjolaine Ryley

Marjolaine is a Senior Lecturer in Photography at the University of Sunderland and a PhD researcher in Fine Art at Newcastle University. Her practice encompasses photography, creative writing, plant-made imagery and participatory practice to explore the horti-counterculture, politics and collaborative plant-human encounters in the vegetal world. She is currently Artist in Residence at Dilston Physic Garden and has an RHS Level 2 qualification in Horticulture.

She enjoys getting muddy in her experimental allotment/laboratory.

<https://www.marjolaineryley.co.uk/>

<https://dilstonphysicgarden.com/artist-in-residence/>

Chair Biographies

Mike Collier

*Chair of T.J. Demos talk and Symposium
Rapporteur*

Mike Collier is a lecturer, writer, curator and artist. For the last 18 years he has worked in education and is currently Professor of Visual Art at the University of Sunderland. Mike's research and practice focuses on art, walking and a phenomenological examination of the environment.

<http://mikecollier.co.uk/>

Alexandra Moschovi

Alexandra Moschovi is associate professor of photography and digital media in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries at the University of Sunderland. As an academic scholar, art critic, curator and educator, Alexandra seeks to situate photographic practice within broader art historical, museological and visual culture debates, combining theory and practice, whereby practice takes the form of curation.

Carol McKay

Carol McKay is Team Leader for Arts at the University of Sunderland. As a photography and art historian, curator and writer, Carol's interests are in commissioning practices, the 'networked image,' photography and the archive and innovative photographic pedagogies. Carol is academic lead for NEPN, having strategic and operational input into its programme for over 10 years.

Produced by NEPN

NEPN (established 2009) uniquely works across Higher Education and cultural sectors to create a critically engaged context for photographic activity. It has commissioned over 35 projects, delivered innovative talent development programmes, curated exhibitions and critical dialogues, developed regional national, international partnerships for the presentation of new works.

NEPN aims to respond to sector needs, providing support, access and investment in practice, at all stages of a photographer's career.

NEPN is an initiative of the Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland.

<http://www.northeastphoto.net>

These events were programmed by Amanda Ritson, programme manager of NEPN with Marjolaine Ryley. For over 10 years, Amanda has worked in close collaboration with colleagues to develop and curate exhibitions (recently Observe Experiment Archive at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens), symposia and festivals and offered advisory, developmental sessions to practitioners within the photographic community.

Partnership Events

Plants and Protest: Or How to Grow your Art and Eat it! Marjolaine Ryley

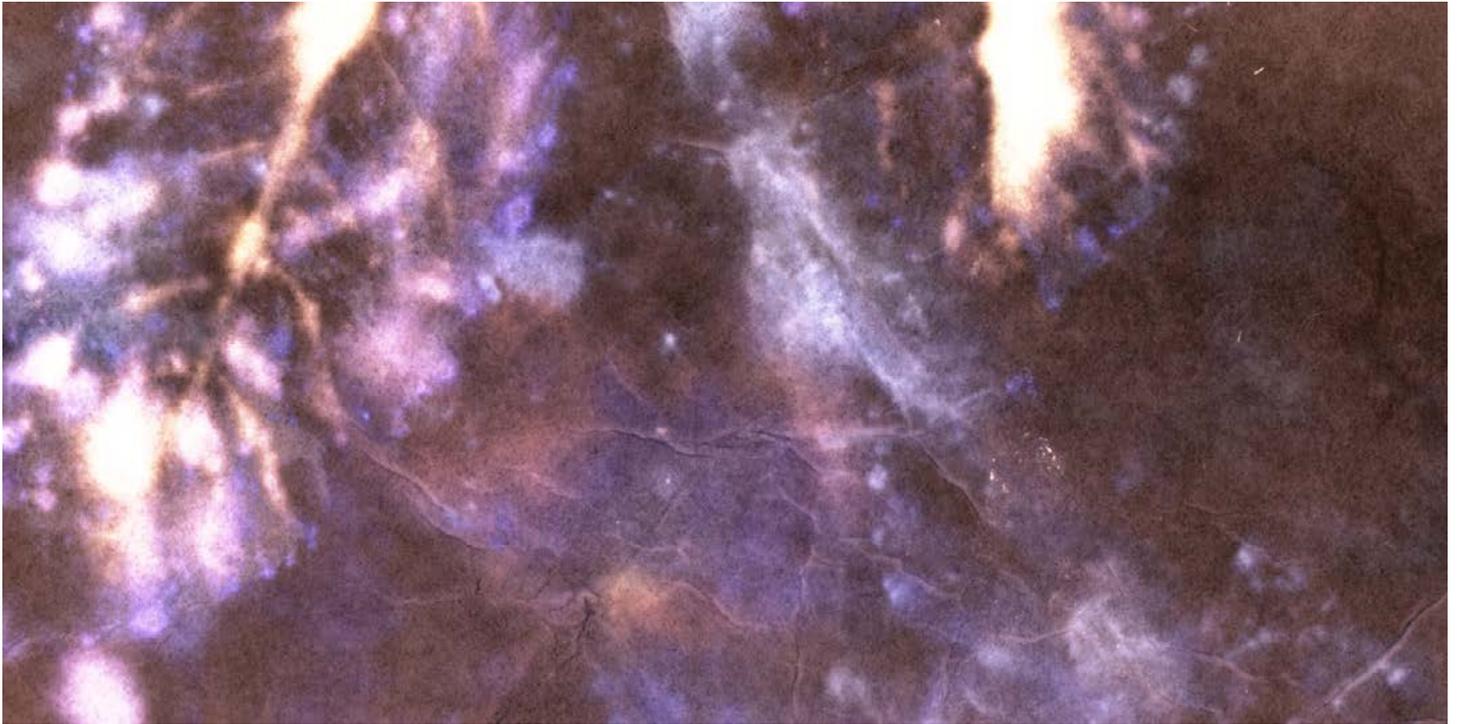


Image: Sorrel © Marjolaine Ryley

Dilston Physic Garden,
Saturday 3 July 2021,
1pm-5pm

Ignite your imagination into the incredible potential of plants – discover how growing and gardening can be an act of resistance, protest and hope.

Attendance:

£20 with all proceeds to
Dilston Physic Garden

Booking:

<https://dilstonphysicgarden.com/event/plants-and-prints/>

First, is an introduction to artists working with living materials – with humour, innovation and insight – in areas of ecology, growing and sustainability. This includes the artist's own practice-based PhD research – 'A Delicious Garden' with vegetal interspecies encounters.

Then, enjoy practical demonstrations on how to develop skills in basic growing/ horticulture. These include – how to compost successfully (even on a small scale), getting started with veg, a guide to growing micro-greens and an introduction to plant propagation (i.e. how to make plants for free!). Some micro-greens and seeds will be available to take home.

Be empowered with the knowledge and skills in horticulture – one of the most useful and hopeful gifts at this time. The session is planned to include practical demonstrations underpinned by horticultural theory – be inspired to take the first steps!

Photography in the 21st Century Museum

Wednesday 7 July 2021, 1pm

Online Event



Image: Panos Kokkinias, Yiannis (2016). Archival Inkjet, 80 x 122 cm
© Panos Kokkinias, courtesy of the artist and Xippas Gallery, Paris, Geneva, Montevideo.

This short discussion, convened on Zoom, will examine the shifts affecting the programming, commissioning and collection of photography by art and photography museums, in the UK and internationally.

On the occasion of the publication of Alexandra Moschovi's monograph *A Gust of Photo-Philia: Photography in the Art Museum* and in the context of NEPN's SHIFTS project, invited curators will explore how their institutions address current developments in photographic and curatorial practice and the ways museums can engage diverse publics and support photographers.

Confirmed speakers: Alexandra Moschovi, Associate Professor of Photography and Digital Media, University of Sunderland, Marta Weiss, Senior Curator, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Thomas Seelig, Head Curator and Director of Photography, Museum Folkwang, Essen.

Supported by the University of Sunderland and Arts Council England

FREE Registration:

See website <http://www.northeastphoto.net/>



**University of
Sunderland**



LOTTERY FUNDED

Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

northeastphoto.net