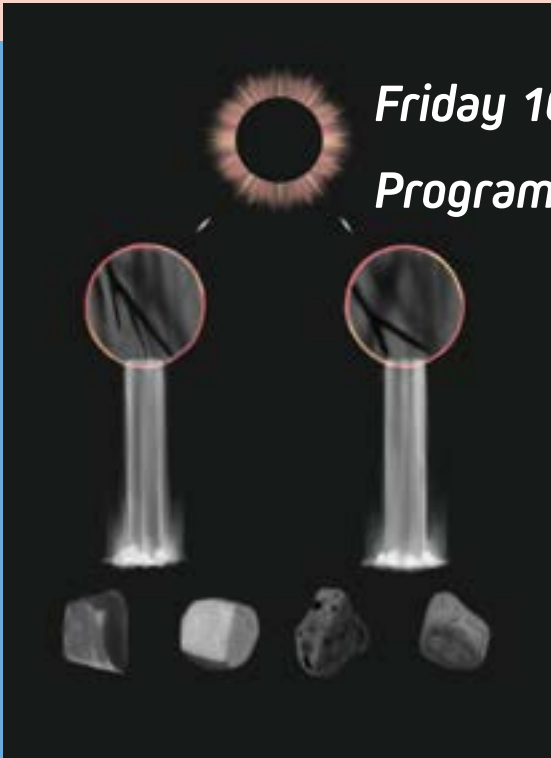


beastly landscapes

Friday 10 September 2021

Programme Timetable



HYLOCEREUS
UNDATUS - Cactus de
pitaya - Helen Blejerman

Butterfly
Dr Usue Ruiz-Arana

morning sessions

9.00 - 9.30

Registration and coffee

with sound installation: Commissioned Artist
Stuart Mugridge "...bestly interruptions..."

9.30 - 9.40

Welcome, introduction to the Symposium

Usue Ruiz Arana and Charlotte Veal

9.40 - 9.45

Welcome from NICAP

Richard Talbot

9.45 - 10.30

Panel: Provocation on Bestly Landscapes

Chair: Ian Thompson

Speakers:

Commissioned Artists: Laura Denning, Stuart
Mugridge.

Contributing Artists: Helen Blejerman, David de la
Haye, Rob MacKay.

Great North Museum: Adam Goldwater.

Academics: Usue Ruiz-Arana, Charlotte Veal.

10.30 - 11.30

Session 1: Beasts and the City

Chair: Usue Ruiz Arana

Dr. Holly Randell-Moon *The mice plague or the
bestly landscapes of regional and rural Australia*

Pui Yan (Emily) Wun *Paws on a busy street: More-
than-human place-making in Hong Kong*

Heidi Svenningsen Kajita *Drawing with Dogs:
Reworking Welfare Landscapes*

11.30 - 11.45

Coffee break

with sound installation: Commissioned Artist
Stuart Mugridge "...bestly interruptions..."

11.45 - 12.05

Poster Presentation Session 1

Chair: Usue Ruiz Arana

Matías G. Rodríguez-Mouriño *On Pierre Huyghe
and the sound of bees*

Stephanie Lyttle *Spirit Collection: A Short Story
Reading and Creative Process Presentation*

Shane Finan *Because the Exchange is Complete:
Sheep, lameness and care*

12.05 - 1.05

Session 2: Beasts, Boundaries and Crossings

Chair: Charlotte Veal

Matt Parker *Sonic spectres and the radiating Hum*

Hazel Barron-Cooper *The Hidden Menagerie*

Jacek Smolicki *in collaboration with Girilal Baars*

Unsound Landscapes, Bestly Soundscape

1.05 - 1.50

Lunch and Exhibition

Facilitator: Catherine Dee

Commissioned Artists: Laura Denning *"We are all
Beasts"*

Contributing Artists: Helen Blejerman*, *"The
Soil Where Women (Dis)appear"*, Rob MacKay, *"
Networking the Flight of the Monarchs"*

*please contact the artist if you are interested in
purchasing an exhibited painting

1.50 - 2.10

Poster Presentation Session 2

Chair: Charlotte Veal

Malgorzata (Gosia) Szarnecka *Zoopraxis:*

Alternative Architectural Practice

Anna Smith *Becoming the Wild Dog – Colonialism,
Verminisation and Language*

Sim Ultra (Arooj Khan) *Sauna, Massage, Jacuzzi*

2.10 - 3.00

Artist led workshop

Jeremy Hastings; *The Beast in the Mountains*

3.00 - 4.00

Session 3: Care and Collaboration

Chair: Usue Ruiz Arana

Nikki Black, Cat Button & Maggie Roe *Bestly
Landscapes: Using representations of the goddess
Bonbibì to understand human-bee relationships in
the sundarbans delta*

Dr Helen Underhill *Caught on camera: bestly
provocations on what is ours to see*

Sammy Weaver *A-Xolat!*

4.00 - 4.15

Coffee

with sound installation: Commissioned Artist
Stuart Mugridge *"...bestly interruptions..."*

4.15 - 5.15

Session 4: Bestly Encounters

Chair: Charlotte Veal

Estraven Lupino-Smith *Coyotes, Crusing, and
Queer Urban Wilds*

Assia Stefanova *Microbial Allies: Bio-design in
changing landscapes*

Nazli Tümerdem *More-than-human landscapes
from my hometown: Joining the pack*

5.15-5.25

Closing Remarks

Maggie Roe

5.30

Symposium Close

5.30 - 6.00

Site Specific Artist Installation, Newcastle University Campus Arches

with contributing artist David de la Haye *"Bestly
Landscapes"*

6.00 - 7.30

Drinks Reception

Northern Stage

afternoon sessions

Laura Denning

presentations

Hazel Barron-Cooper, PhD Researcher, Newcastle University

The Hidden Menagerie

Step within the stone walls of a rural church, sunk deep into the landscape, and we will be surrounded by an array of beasts, fabulous or natural, which have come tumbling from the pages of a bestiary. These creatures are to be found carved in wood and stone, depicted in stained glass or curled up at the feet of a knight. They appear in capitals, corbels, bench-ends and misericords. Woven into intricate textiles, in manuscripts and in paintings. This paper will focus on the fabulous menagerie to be found in a selection of churches and examine their symbolism and connotations.

Dr Nikki Black, Post-Doctorate Research Associate, Newcastle University

Dr Cat Button, Senior Lecturer in Urban Planning, Newcastle University

Maggie Roe, Reader in Landscape Planning Research & Policy Engagement, Newcastle University

Beestly Landscapes: Using representations of the goddess Bonbibi to understand human-bee relationships in the Sundarbans delta

Bees are an important part of the mangrove ecosystem of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Delta and honey is a source of income. Honey is gathered by local people, who face multiple risks within the forest including from Bengal Tigers, crocodiles and sudden changes in the weather. Bonbibi is a goddess who is believed to protect people, in particular honey gatherers, entering these mangrove forests that sit across Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal. What can the enduring focus on Bonbibi tell us about local knowledges of bees and community relationships with the changing delta landscape? This paper considers the artistic representations of Bonbibi in images, stories, folk-traditions, rituals and plays to answer this question. These stories and rituals have a key role in the delta for communicating local knowledges of the landscape's opportunities and dangers and of the relationships between people, landscapes and bees.

Dr Heidi Svenningsen Kajita, Assistant Professor in Landscape Architecture and Planning, University of Copenhagen

Drawing-with Dogs: Reworking Welfare Landscapes

Drawing is a practice – a mundane activity that embroils ethics, values and purposes. But architectural drawings are also material. In this paper, I focus on

four archival drawings first drawn in the 1960s by Ralph Erskine Arkitekter AB. Creatively reworking these drawings; I question how socialities of landscapes may be reorientated from the deterministic rationale underpinning the historical design processes to aspirations for caring more-than-human worlds. On a housing estate today, a resident J. lives with six Chinese Crested dogs. Drawing-with these “beasts,” I copy, transcribe, annotate and embody the historical documents to speculatively guide transformation of landscapes.

Dr Estraven Lupino-Smith, Research Fellow, University of Victoria

Coyotes, Cruising, and Queer Urban Wilds

What is a queer urban wild? Drawing from the experience of tracking coyotes in Montreal and finding myself in several cruising spots, I suggest that some of the places where urban coyotes can thrive without detection are the same spaces where queer folks can connect for sex. The space is shared because both need wild within the city. Cruising and coyotes need a certain kind of wild that provides the possibilities and potentialities for them to thrive. Through sharing these spaces, I suggest the coyote can be seen as a kind of queer cross-species kin.

Dr Matt Parker, Research Fellow, Oxford Brookes University

Sonic spectres and the radiating Hum

During easterly or westerly winds in excess of 30mph, an eerie tone of B flat resonates for miles across the city of Manchester. An example of the Hum, a mysterious, unexplained more-than-sonic presence, emanates from the Beetham Tower's fanned roof, a flawed design which emanates dread from its tallest features, looming over the city skyline. This paper will describe resonances at the core of beastly imaginaries throughout the built environment. It will situate these phenomena as part of a more-than-human set of encounters with invisible energies of transmission or 'Hertzian space'.

Dr. Holly Randell-Moon, Senior Lecturer in Indigenous Australian Studies, Charles Sturt University

The mice plague or the beastly landscapes of regional and rural Australia

Beginning in the spring of 2020, a mouse and rat plague spread across the rural grain belt in New South Wales, Australia. Lasting for almost 10 months, the plague was described by the local media as a 'horror' which 'terrorised' farmers. The representation of mice and rats as a 'plague' signals a disturbance of the 'natural' order of things where the landscape is 'normally' anthropocentrically managed

for monocultural farming. Turning away from the dominant re-presentations of the mice and rats, this paper explores the latter as facilitating a beastly landscape that radically de-centres human control and investment in the environment.

Assia Stefanova, PhD Researcher, Newcastle University

Microbial Allies: Bio-design in changing landscapes

The 20th Century saw major advancements in the world of microscopy, which changed our understanding of the microbial world. It helped us visualize and understand what was previously invisible and shrouded in mystery and fear. Although some of the mystery surrounding that world has disappeared, the fear has manifested as standards of hygiene that dictate the design of antibiotic environments in contemporary culture. This talk is going to look at our historical understanding of microbial landscapes, highlighting the importance of socializing microbial life as a component of bio-design research. It will explore methods of reframing human understanding of life on an inaccessible micro scale through creative practice.

Dr Jacek Smolicki, Artist and Post-Doctorate Researcher, Linköping University .

Unsound Landscapes, Beastly Soundscape

This performative lecture builds on an inconspicuous, yet beastly invention known as UOZ 1. It is a set of loudspeakers designed by a Polish company to create a sonic boundary along the railway as to keep forest animals from crossing the tracks. It is set to broadcast especially designed soundscape composition - a collage made of sound of animals in distress - each time a train approaches a particular part of the forest. This invention is a starting point to discuss what constitutes beastliness if we focus on sound as a vector of power relations between humans and animals.

Dr Nazlı Tümerdem, *Post Doctoral Researcher, ETH Zurich*

More-than-human landscapes from my hometown: Joining the pack.

This paper will focus on a 4-hour walk that was performed on September 22nd, 2018, in Istanbul. The aims of the paper are twofold. Initially, it will portray how the walk that started with 3 human participants unexpectedly ended up being a walk done with a pack of dogs. Afterwards, based on the former personal account, it will describe the ongoing state-led operations taking place in northern Istanbul. Ultimately, by addressing the physical impacts of these operations on the landscape, the paper will not only narrate the story of the more-than-human walk but also the story of this more-than-urban territory.

Dr Helen Underhill, Post-Doctorate Research Associate, Newcastle University

Caught on camera: beastly provocations on what is ours to see

A short video taken from wildlife camera trap footage, with spoken accompaniment from my field notes. Followed by an exploratory paper, posing questions about what is meant to be seen, what is ours to see, and to record, and how we distinguish between these categories in dynamic and contested research contexts. The paper draws out the implications of this process in relation to research ethics and researcher conduct with both human and non-human participants.

Sammy Weaver, Independent Poet

A-Xolotl

Somewhere in the murky, polluted lakes of Mexico City, lurks the neotenic salamander, the axolotl. According to Aztec myth, Xolotl, the god of monsters and deformities, shapeshifted into an axolotl to avoid the wrath of the angry gods. Now critically endangered in the wild, the axolotl population in labs is increasing as scientists investigate their regenerative capabilities so that humans might live longer. Conjured through a human-poet, this re-imagining of the Aztec myth explores the (im)possibility of hearing from a contemporary axolotl's perspective. What is it like to draw into beastly being that which one is not?

Pui Yan (Emily) Wun, Research Assistant, Hong Kong Baptist University

Dr. Lachlan Barber, Assistant Professor, Hong Kong Baptist University

Paws on a busy street: More-than-human place-making in Hong Kong

Human-animal relations are often overlooked in city-making processes. This paper, building on new cultural animal geography, examines the more-than-human everyday place-making in the "global finance capital" – Hong Kong. The study site is Sai Ying Pun – one of the city's oldest but most rapidly changing neighbourhoods – where cats have a prominent presence on the streets and at traditional shops. Through site observation and interviews, the various roles of shop cats are identified to illustrate non-human agency in place-making processes. The paper concludes by discussing the contradictory effects of social media on human-animal relations and place in relation to the status of shop cats in the gentrifying neighbourhood.

posters

Shane Finan, Artist, University of Lincoln with University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Leeds Trinity University, University of Hull, Newcastle University, funded by the Wellcome Trust

Because the Exchange is Complete: Sheep, lameness and care

Can there be a detached touch? Sheep have travelled the surface of the planet, hoof to toe with human colleagues. In these journeys, we have learned from one another. We share vulnerability with one another, and so we also care for one another. Irish artist Shane Finan presents his work being-with and learning-from sheep as part of his work as artist-in-residence with FIELD, a 6-university collaborative project working on endemic animal disease (2018-22).

Stephanie Lyttle, PhD Researcher, Newcastle University

Spirit Collection

Set in a natural history museum's wet specimen collection, "Spirit Collection" merges domesticity and horror as it explores grief and cross-species motherhood. In the refrigerated chamber's eerie landscape, the differing dimensions of the specimen jars become topographical features, and the animals – suspended in coloured liquid and distorted by curved glass – transform into mythical creatures and horror-movie monsters. Against the backdrop of this alien terrain, "Spirit Collection" examines the tension between the real and the unreal, the human and the animal. The creative work is accompanied by a presentation on the artistic process, supported by photographs of wet collections.

Matías G. Rodríguez-Mouriño, Post-Doctorate Fellow, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

On Pierre Huyghe and the sound of bees

Inasmuch as our sense of the world is mediated by human all too human needs and tales, we only see and listen what we are emotionally and epistemologically prepared to see and listen. For the moment we gaze, stare, or even glance at that world around us and see the proverbial abyss, we are indeed in danger or that very abyss gazing back at us. However, we should always bear in mind what kind of "abyss" we want to confront and/or create and why: the human abyss —representational, neurotic, constantly looking backwards—, or the non-human sympoietic landscape surrounding us. For arts in and of the landscape help us care, and remember that nothing "makes" itself, nothing is properly autopoietic

but sympoietic. Arts in and of the landscape help us remember that we are not alone, and that the forms, pleasures, and pains of the world go well us humans. Listening-to is making-with, an 'I-listen' necessarily implies a 'we-do'. We listen to Huyghe's bees, we make with the world, we are (in) the midst of this beastly process, ecosophically worlding-with. It goes —they go.

Anna Smith, PhD Researcher, Kings College London

Becoming the Wild Dog – Colonialism, Verminisation and Language

African wild dogs, cape hunting dogs, painted wolves, hyena dogs... by whichever name you call them, the sociocultural and biopolitical life of *Lycyaon pictus* Temm. is rich, enmeshed in debates around colonisation, verminisation and language. This paper traces the historical reproduction of the species through words and artefacts to provide essential context for current renaming debates and explicate the cultural construction of African wild dogs. This examination of language and representation weaves together taxonomical and colloquial nomenclature to argue that nonhuman animals are both biological and cultural entities, but also explores the evolving symbolism of these creatures as allegorical imaginaries of racial and social segregation in southern Africa.

Malgorzata Szarnecka (Gosia), PhD Researcher, Newcastle University

Zoopraxis: Alternative Architectural Practice

Zoopraxis focuses on the analysis of current design methodology highlighting the anthropocentric approach of the industry and poses questions about the notion of responsibility of care towards the non-human. Focusing on specific elements of professional practice, this project outlines a series of guidelines shaping an alternative architectural methodology, embedded within existing workflows. Allowing designers to experience the city through the eyes of the other introduces an empathetic bond and encourages development of care within personal design methodology. The development of ecological awareness within architectural practice not only leads to a notion of care towards the non-human, it also develops an interest towards subjectivity of being itself.

Sim Ultra (Arooj Khan), PhD Researcher, University of Birmingham

Sauna, Massage, Jacuzzi

'Sauna, Massage, Jacuzzi' is a photo series which critically reflects on the role that sex worker establishments have had in the built environment and its subsequent demise through misogyny, homophobia, respectability politics and

white supremacy, all disguised as gentrification. The complex nature of sex work and its supposed subversion of British morals is represented within the images through the 'human, non-human' – a human form dressed in the quintessential sexual attire, a bondage suit - designed to render the human form void of their identity, formidable yet forcibly submissive to any restrictions laid upon them by a more powerful force.

artists

David de la Haya, Sound Artist - Independent/Newcastle University

As Narcissus stared into a pool of water, what did he hear? Beyond his own reflection did the subtle thrum of aquatic life enchant him?

Freshwater habitats host a variety of sounds, including that of the Water Boatman (Family Corixidae) which can produce the loudest sound, relative to its size, of any animal. Using field recording technology we can augment our senses to explore these intricate yet rarely studied sound-worlds. Scattered widely across our landscapes, I believe ponds provide an accessible way to look beyond our reflection and deeply connect to ecosystems on our doorstep.

Helen Blejerman, Artist, writer and Associate Lecturer, Sheffield Hallam University.

The Soil Where Women (Dis)appear

This artwork explores the idea of transmutation in a point between the human and the non-human. It is based on a site in the Chihuahua desert in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, where women's bodies are dumped or buried after being murdered in an ongoing femicide. I recorded the flowers that grow in that site. I studied forensic anthropology ideas and the process in which the buried bodies slowly mutate into the soil and then into the flowers, and the birds and insects that feed on them. I made eight digital drawings that show 'the soul' of each specimen.

Laura Denning, Independent artist

We are all Beasts

We are all Beasts undercuts notions of the rural idyll by drawing attention to the fraught boundary exchanges of human and nonhuman. Using compelling images

of 'natural beauty' to draw attention to the ways pesticides are adding to the toxic entanglements between humans and non-humans, this short video uses split-screens to synchronise various sequences of vividly coloured smoke rising from a field of bright yellow oil-seed rape. Bees are one of the primary pollinators of this crops. Asking 'who is a pest?' this film explores scales and landscapes commonly understood as part of the modern agri-industrial complex. Ethical complexities that arise from the rights of these non-humans are posed through visual metaphor, and through a sound track that includes laboured breathing, drowsy insects and silence, I hope to evoke this connection.

Dr Stuart Mugridge, Independent mixed-media artist-researcher
... beastly interruptions ...

what? a suite of soundworks created from treated field recordings of bird calls and songs, the effects of wind on vegetation and snippets of spoken word; the sounds will be edited—slurred and blurred—into something that lurks the borders of the recognisable. where? the soundworks will be played in spaces (and at times of transition) throughout the symposium, interweaving with (and modestly disrupting) the familiar terrain of the academic conference: a set of speakers next to the tea urn chirps and squawks while attendees take their breaks and/or sounds plays during transition periods in the main meeting space and/or short sound bursts bookend and punctuate online sessions.

Dr Rob MacKay, Composer, sound artist and performer. Senior Lecturer in Composition, Newcastle University.

Networking the Flight of the Monarchs

Following the Flight of the Monarchs, is an interdisciplinary acoustic ecology project bringing together artists and scientists, connecting with ecosystems and communities along the migration routes of monarch butterflies as they travel the 3,000 mile journey between Mexico and Canada each year. Inspired by Teresa Conors' creative practice, "ecological performativity" enacts a non-anthropocentric model, characterised as the dance of agency between living and non-living systems, human and non-human actors, and the complexity within which they are entangled. This model stems from the premise that artistic practice enables different perspectives of the world and becomes an apparatus for change, promoting what we consider "a long overdue ontological shift in the way we exist in the world"

Jeremy Hastings, Independent artist

The Beast in the Mountains

Whilst crossing contested borders in the high Balkan Mountains on foot for twenty days on my way to the International Encounters Conference. Every day was an encounter as a body in nature. There were imagined fears as well as real beasts predating on me. This was wolf and bear country. Histories and mythologies ran through my imaginings. What happens when the embodied artist walker meets with the reality of landscape? On one descent to pick up water from a stream I encountered a terrible smell, then I saw it. A beast on the mountain, dead and decaying being inhabited by other beasts. These insects were slowly disentangling the bull which would eventually merge into the landscape. I reflected upon thoughts of dismantling reality, as part of the ecology. Becoming more mountain within my beastly encounter.



The non-human turn in the social sciences and humanities has drawn attention to human's entanglement with 'non-human' worlds. This interdisciplinary symposium explores the 'beastly' as the central but under-examined dynamic in this encounter. Beasts have long inhabited our art (Neolithic rock paintings, our landscapes (gothic literature) and our science (inter-species transplants), challenging the limits of what it means to be human in relation to other beings. Beastly captures the messy in-between spaces and uncomfortable, ambiguous relations that characterise human-non-human relations. Scholars have examined the non-humans in terms of their cultural dynamics, looking both at imaginative writings, and real and fantastical creatures. However, artworks themselves, as well as art and performance as metaphors for the beastly have featured little. This symposium develops the intersection between beasts, art and landscape through its multidisciplinary focus, and by providing arts-led interventions into these debates, through dialogue between academics, artists, and cultural organisations. It examines beasts as creative beings that can help us make sense of the world and our place in it, testing the boundaries of the human in the Anthropocene, de-centring human agency, and putting a rein to human exceptionalism.