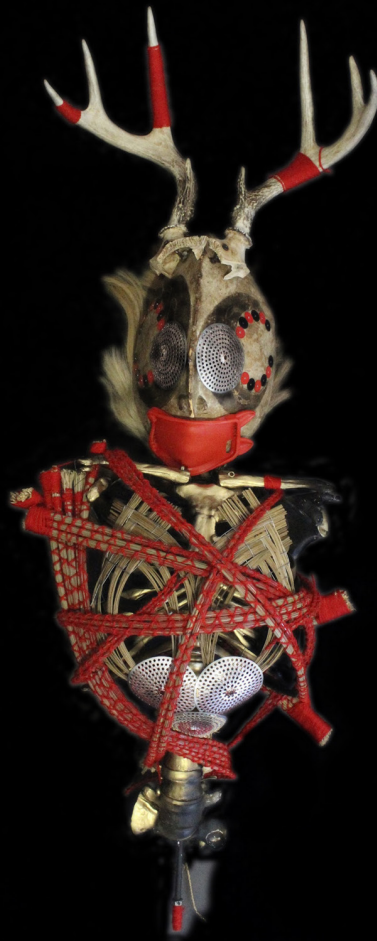


# Multispecies Architectures

Postgraduate Symposium

University of Dundee

1 December 2022



Adejoke Aderonke *Tugbiyele Kidnapped*, 2015.

# Keynote Speakers

Esther Leslie  
Andrej Radman  
Adejoke Aderonke Tugbiyele

## Introduction to the Symposium

Lorens Holm

## Symposium Presenters

Irene Aldazabal  
CJ Barr  
Kirsty Bogle  
Hanna Valsgård Bratlie  
Désirée Coral  
Calum Eccleston  
Katie Hart Potapoff  
Michael Hegarty  
Yimou Huang  
Susie Johnston  
Cheryl McGregor  
Cate Newton  
Matthew Ogden  
Sascia Pellegrini  
Louise Ritchie

Organised by Natasha Lushetich & Dominic Smith

9.15 – 9.20 **Welcome: Natasha Lushetich & Dominic Smith**  
9.20 – 9.30 **Introduction: Lorens Holm *Architecture and Multi-Specificity***  
9.30 – 10.45 **Panel 1: The Threshold**

Chair: Andrew Roberts

### **Lousie Ritchie *On, Below & Through***

As an exploration of the multi-iterative paint-form, *Formation: Blue*, this presentation is an exposition on the architectural structures within painting, specifically the actions of its creation as metaphor for building methods such as composing, choreographing, assembling, and reassembling. While technical drawings express dimensions, volume, and scale, this painting need not give such details. Rather, it embodies an index of pictorial choreography. Paint is applied on, below, and through canvas, as it is folded, and refolded repeatedly throughout its evolution. Arrows and symbols offer a diagrammatic reading of the painting which becomes a spatial mapping of action, thinking, and tinkering.

### **Cheryl McGregor *Corridors – Architecture & Poetry***

This paper examines architecture as an applied metaphor in poetry. Using 'stanza' (from the Italian root 'room') as a starting point, it extends this metaphor to consider stanza breaks, and negative space in poetry more generally, as a 'corridor' – a transitory space that makes room for negative capability in critical analysis. The philosophical and pedagogical implications of this paper suggest that the critic may posit herself as a 'temporary resident' of the poem as a means of resisting canonical and destructive forms of critique.

### **Hanna Valsgård Bratlie *Recycle, Revitalise & Surrender***

This presentation explores architecture as a relation between humans and rubbish. Anthropomorphising the more-than-human has been suggested by Jane Bennett as a tactic to do justice to nature. I will argue that rubbish is not distinct from but a part of nature. Doing justice to nature therefore also means recognising (loving) rubbish rather than hiding it, overlooking it, or turning away from it. By thinking through what anthropomorphising means and expanding this reflection to the concept of rubbish, I will show how rubbish can be used as a concept for rethinking the interrelatedness of humans and more-than-humans.

### **Sascia Pellegrini *The Machine Into the Body: An Architecture of Displacement***

Through an examination of architectonic and spatial relationships, and by extension the techniques of human behaviour, this presentation investigates the relationship between the human body and modern and postmodern machines. The examination includes architectural projects, avant-garde utopias such as Japanese Metabolism, dystopian narratives of the human-machine relationship in films such as Shinya Tsukamoto's *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* as well as experiments in body modification such as Orlan's body art, Stelarc's body prosthetics, and Laval-Jeantet's bio-art. All are part of the vast and uninterrupted architectural and morphological discourse generated by the rhizomatic interconnectedness of *techné*, architecture, and the body.

10.45 – 11.00 Break

11.00 – 12.15 Panel 2: The Tangled Web

Chair: Natasha Lushetich

**Katie Hart *Potapoff Integuments Re-Enchanted***

To cover, wrap, protect, and house oneself is a natural inclination. Beings both massive and infinitesimal are enclosed within integuments; natural coverings of shell, skin, rind, and husk. When inhabitants disembark these enclosures, what remains are disenchanting fragments often discarded in the periphery.

This presentation-as-practice gathers such pieces of detritus, and through interwoven threads of prose and poetry with images of visual artwork, offers them attention as a method of re-enchantment. This performative and reflexive response through iterative artistic processes invites the audience to reconsider how we as humans might choose to house ourselves differently alongside our more-than-human kin.

**Susie Johnson *The Torque of Entanglement: Exploring Architecture as Method***

In paying close attention to materials and what they do, I align with a thinking through making approach to practice. Methods of tinkering, assembling, re-assembling, multiplying, and play are integral to my research. Through direct material engagement, a 'knowing from the inside' (Ingold) and 'passionate immersion' (Tsing) has now led me to Object Oriented Ontology (#OOO) as a philosophy which rejects the idea of privileging human over all non-human worlds. I hope to weave connections between architecture as a method in the realisation of a local earthship and methods I employ in my art practice.

**Matthew Ogden *When Critique Meets Reality: Developmental Hypocrisy in the BioShock Games***

Looking at architecture as the artistic design of a structure, this presentation will extend this definition to the artistic design of video games by discussing the BioShock series. While the games have received critical and academic acclaim, many commentators have also pointed out that, at times, the practices of the developers were directly contradictory to the themes the games discussed. As such, this presentation will focus on how developmental hypocrisy can blur the line between the structure, the audience, and the architect but also has the potential to queer normalised yet detrimental design features.

**Michael Hegarty *How Do Contemporary Information Architectures Influence Our Interpretation of the World?***

In this presentation, I examine the problems of contemporary information architectures, particularly the way they influence how we perceive ourselves and affect our modes of 'relating' in the world. Firstly, I consider the approaches of philosophers of information; I pit Luciano Floridi's approach, prioritising epistemology as first philosophy, against Yuk Hui's ontological conception of informational architectures. I then consider the way informational paradigms tend to form a world in themselves and to influence fundamentally our perceptions of phenomena appearing as temporal objects.

12.15 – 12.30 Break

12.30 – 13.15 Keynote: Andrej Radman *Architecture of Transindividuation*

Chair: Natasha Lushetich

According to the philosopher of technology Gilbert Simondon, the concept of ‘trans-individuation’ cannot be grasped based on the fully individuated ‘I’ or the inter-individuated ‘We’. Rather, it designates the process of co-individuation within a pre-individuated milieu where both the ‘I’ and the ‘We’ are mutually determined. As Simondon’s disciple Bernard Stiegler surmised, transindividuation is thus key to understanding all social transformation and a way of addressing education since the knowledge of individuation is the individuation of knowledge. ‘Architecture of Transindividuation’ will revisit the lesson of GW Leibniz’s *Monadology* that ties sense to sensibility, and matter to manner.

**Andrej Radman** has been teaching Design and Architectural Theory courses at TU Delft, the Netherlands, since 2004. Licensed architect and recipient of the Croatian Architects Association Annual Award for Housing Architecture in 2002, he received his Masters and Doctoral degrees from TU Delft and joined the Architecture Philosophy and Theory Group as Assistant Professor in 2008. Andrej’s research focuses on new-materialist ecologies and radical empiricism. He is currently editor of *Footprint* and his latest publication is *Ecologies of Architecture: Essays on Territorialisation* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

13.15 – 14.00 Keynote: Adejoke Aderonke Tugbiyele *Visible / Invisible*

Chair: Natasha Lushetich

My philosophical leanings have always been to (African/Eastern/Western) attempts to capture the idea of ‘Spirit’. Historical prejudices of religion ‘masking’ the essence of spirit have been a significant factor in the rise of disenchantment in Western thought. In this symposium, the ‘source’ is broadly titled Multispecies Architectures. Simply put, the source is everywhere and, in every thing. Yoruba cosmology deals with various dualities of life as one might find in Buddhist and Hindu thought and within Native American cultures. While these Indigenous knowledge systems have long embraced ‘duality’ and learned how to find balance in the face of mystery/the unknown, the West, in contrast, developed a system of binaries: order/disorder; certainty/uncertainty – which may never overlap. By seeking multiple realities and parallel potentials it becomes ever more apparent that Yoruba cosmology and other forms of Indigenous knowledge systems have always been ‘indeterminate’.

**Adejoke Aderronke Tugbiyele’s** practice is inspired by Yoruba spirituality/cosmology, as well as universal ideas around transformation, flight, and transcendence, but also ‘duality.’ Through the concept of ‘Visible/ Invisible’ she explores multiple dualities including transparent/opaque, industrial/natural, masculinity/femininity, and spirituality/sexuality, all of which one might similarly find within Eastern philosophy and other Indigenous cultures. The ‘double-helix’ is a reoccurring presence in her body of work. With recent works in lost-wax bronze, the majority of Tugbiyele’s sculptures employ metal/wire and palm stems repurposed from traditional African brooms. Tugbiyele is a multi-award-winning, queer, Nigerian-American artist and architectural designer. Her work has been reviewed and mentioned in numerous distinguished publications and can be found in important public and private collections around the world.

14.00 – 14.30 Break

14.30 – 15.45 Panel 3: The Burrow

Chair: Undine Sellbach

### **Yimou Huang *From Harmony to Disharmony***

The position of animals in art has always been a complex one. From the cult of animal sorcery in the Stone Age to animal pattern painting in the Renaissance, the figure of the animal has lived in harmony with the human. Since Dadaism and other avant-garde movements from the beginning of the 20th century onwards, any material and/or medium is an artistic material or medium. Non-human animals have become a medium, too, and the position of animals has moved from harmony to disharmony. This presentation focuses on the transformation in and of the position of non-human animals in contemporary artistic practice, and analyses the relationship between artists and non-human animals.

### **Désirée Coral *Eating the Ancestors***

*Eating the Ancestors* is a research exhibition, a multilayer and multitemporal art installation presented at the CCA Glasgow in 2022. It is composed of several elements such as red ceramic phytomorphed vessels inspired and/or replicated from pre-Columbian designs of domesticated crops in the Americas, compost, and germinated seeds in the process of growing. This presentation discusses the ways in which our ancestors and plants have collaborated for centuries with other ecological beings and elements in order to perpetuate food security for future generations of beings, both human and nonhuman, and to secure their own plant existence.

### **Kirsty Bogle *Learning From Honeybees***

Industrialised societies house honeybees in cuboid boxes – the Platonic Body. The motif of a beehive has come to symbolise rural idylls. Steiner compared bees in a beehive to human society. Cubes are no more ideal for bees than tower blocks are ideal for human beings; their behaviours are modified by the architecture. In this presentation, I will describe the difference between bees' experience in a human-designed hive and a wild honeybee nest in the heart of a tree. I will use this relational enquiry to tease out my own relationship with the non-human world and endeavour to capture a sense of this through drawing.

### **Irene Aldazabal *Earthly Bodies, Subterranean Rhythms: Living Sculptures as Interspecies Assemblages***

*Earthly Bodies, Subterranean Rhythms* (2022) is practice-based research, in which I collaborated with mycelium and roots to construct living sculptures. In my presentation I will firstly focus on the intrinsic interspecies feature of this project; and, secondly, on its conceptual and methodological relations with architecture, as a metaphor for analysing the building procedure used: the assemblage. Borrowing from Jane Bennett (2010) and Anna Tsing (2015), I will reflect on these living sculptures as *interspecies assemblages*. From this perspective, assemblages are more than the sum of their parts: they have the capacity to transform humans through encounters, in an ecology of interactions.

15.45 – 16.00 Break

16.00 – 17.00 Panel 4: The Spiral Staircase

Chair: Dominic Smith

### **CJ Barr *Curating the In-Between***

Analysing the idea of architecture as a metaphor within my practice I wanted to use this presentation to explore the process of creating in the digital sphere. This motivated me to create an impossible space with no boundaries from the experience of gravity. In doing so, I will discuss the difference between architecture and 'non-place' – how narrative can be altered when the occupied space changes from object to viewer. These concepts will be explored in terms of how my experiences in digital curation have influenced the work I want to pursue in the 'real' world.

### **Cate Newton *Unmonumental Statues: The Grief Hyenas***

My research examines the relationship between art practices and philosophies of time. This paper concerns ideas of the monumental and the unmonumental in sculptural forms. Statues are a particular form of public architecture: memorials designed for permanence. Within my practice I have observed an evolution from a formal style of working, using bronze and wood, to what recently has become an expression of the totemic and the unmonumental fetishistic. I will be presenting my current work which uses impermanent materials and anthropomorphic forms as a metaphor to externalise the private experience of grieving.

### **Calum Eccleston *Sculpting Imagined Time***

In archival research, as in life, to negotiate what 'is' we do so through an unstable, subjective lens; we obscure what we seek to know and reveal ourselves in turn. A performative reading, *Sculpting Imagined Time* is the first public-facing aspect of the research I'm conducting in response to the Alastair MacLennan Archive at the University of Dundee. Drawing from a personal correspondence with MacLennan, this presentation explores the relational architecture of embodied knowledge as both real and projected, actual, and interior, responding in particular to the conceptual divisions of 'self' and 'other' and the intangible gaps of cultural memory.

17.00 – 17.15 Break

17.15 – 18.00 Keynote: Esther Leslie *Foam and Form Life and Death Worlds*

Chair: Dominic Smith

What connects the lifeworld of an insect to the concrete proximate cells of a skyscraper? Drawing on biologist Jakob von Uexküll, critical theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, alongside cynic Peter Sloterdijk, this talk explores cellular or foam cell or monadic form as an architecture common to all life, and as a point of exchange between species; for example, in human biomimetic innovations. Foam's presence as model of social form is considered here in relation to death worlds, when it encounters negligent architecture and inhuman social conditions – as for example, in thought, in Horkheimer's skyscraper projection of social hierarchy, and in actuality, in the catastrophic tower block Grenfell.

**Esther Leslie** is Professor of Political Aesthetics at Birkbeck, University of London. Her interests include the imbrications of poetics, politics, culture, and technologies. Current work focuses on turbid media and the aesthetics of turbulence. She has written various studies and translations of Walter Benjamin, as well as *Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant Garde* (Verso, 2002); *Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art and the Chemical Industry* (2005); *Derelicts: Thought Worms from the Wreckage* (2014), *Liquid Crystals: The Science and Art of a Fluid Form* (2016), *Deeper in the Pyramid* (with Melanie Jackson) (2018) and, with Jackson, *The Inextinguishable* (2021). An upcoming book is on dissidence and radio radicalism (2023).



Désirée Coral *Eating the Ancestors*, CCA Glasgow, 2022.



## Presenters' Bios

**Irene Aldazabal** (Argentina) is an MFA Art and Humanities graduate (DJCAD 2022). Living sculptures and fragile assemblages are the main modalities for her work. With a particular emphasis on materiality, temporality, and their transformative aspects, she co-creates across interdisciplinary and interspecies boundaries, exploring notions of coexistence, embodiment, and impermanence.

**CJ Barr** is a visual artist experimenting with layered imagery, created objects, and found materials, exploring how moments can be captured and transformed into a new narrative space. Nodding to the everyday, domestic spaces, landscape, and contemporary collage. Recently exploring deeper philosophical themes of non-place and the in-between.

**Kirsty Bogle** is a PG student, MFA (Drawing) at DJCAD. Kirsty has been looking after bees using bee-centric, natural bee-keeping methods for several years. Her deep involvement with honeybees has informed her Fine Art practice, pushing her to re-view her environment from the viewpoint of other species.

**Hanna Valsgård Bratlie** is an MFA Art and Humanities student at the University of Dundee. She completed her BA Degree in Philosophy at the University of Oslo. Visual art and creative writing are important influences on her philosophical practice, and she has exhibited at student-led galleries and worked with eco-journalism.

**Désirée Coral** is an artist born in Quito, Ecuador. She received her MFA from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago and is currently a doctoral researcher in DJCAD. Désirée examines early global exchanges between the Americas and the rest of the world. She has exhibited at the CCA Glasgow, Green Gallery Botanical Garden's UOD, MOCAD, The Sullivan Galleries, Mana Contemporary, and CAC Quito.

**Calum Eccleston** is a performance artist whose studies and professional experience have seen him contribute to the field of performative engagement with archival histories. He is currently conducting the first practice-led doctoral thesis about the Alastair MacLennan's Archive at the University of Dundee, increasing awareness of a yet underexposed artist's archive.

**Katie Hart Potapoff** (she/her) is an artist and writer completing her PhD titled 'With an Attentiveness Towards Intimacy and Texture: Exploring a Sense of Place Through Creative Practices'. Katie's research projects have received funding from Canada Council for the Arts and Arts Society Fife. Her website is [www.katiehartpotapoff.com](http://www.katiehartpotapoff.com) Insta: @hartofkatie

**Michael Hegarty** is a third year PhD student working on problems in Philosophy of Technology and Information. His research focusses on questions of epistemology and ontology in contemporary technology. Of particular interest is the question of an ought as it relates to modes of life.

**Yimou Huang** is a sculptor who began his studies at the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 2015. He received his BA in Fine Arts in 2020, majoring in landscape sculpture. In 2022 he completed the MFA in Art and Humanities, at the University of Dundee.

**Susie Johnston** is a practice-led artist and post-graduate researcher at DJCAD. She explores metaphoric associations connected to matter and attempts to critically re-evaluate the relationships between human and more-than-human ways of being in the world. She undertakes much of her research at the waste resource Ecopark of Binn Group.

**Cheryl McGregor** is a MLitt student whose interdisciplinary work – both creative and critical – investigates the interactions between Modernist and Contemporary Art and poetry, particularly their shared features of symbolism, collage, metaphor and form.

**Cate Newton** is a part-time PhD candidate who graduated BA (First Class Hons.) in 2016 and MFA Art and Humanities (Distinction) in 2017 from DJCAD. Her sculptures and installations have been exhibited in a number of galleries in Scotland and overseas

**Matthew Ogden** (he/him) is a PhD Student in Law at the University of Dundee, specialising in Cultural Legal Studies with a focus on video games. His thesis uses the BioShock games to discuss the relationship of aesthetics and law with the rise of digital technology.

**Sascia Pellegrini** is a Composition and Integrated Arts Teacher at The School of The Arts (SG) and editor of the Open Space Magazine (NYC). Sascia's expertise is in intermedia and interdisciplinary arts, with a strong background in music composition; he has taught courses at universities in Hong Kong, China, and Singapore, contributing to conferences and journals in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

**Louise Ritchie** examines the ways in which artists experiment and improvise with materials, making processes, and concepts in the creation of artworks. Her practice includes painting, metal-casting, printmaking, and ceramics. Louise is a Lecturer in Contemporary Art Practice at City of Glasgow College/UWS and a PhD Candidate at DJCAD/UoD. @louiseritchiegram