

Vibrant Ecologies of Research

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Online workshop March 17th, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm CET

In-person workshop March 29th, from 4:30 to 6:00 pm CET

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides an opening for a wide array of practitioners to contribute to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries. The holistic approach of the SDGs suggests the challenge of transdisciplinary research and practice that may allow for expanded forms of action research and emergent knowledge. Creative inquiry and the arts have a new elevated role within this space of possibility.

Organizations like the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) highlight a growing trend in higher education that the arts not only play a vital role in campus culture but in research and teaching as well. Yet, while all of this discourse gushes on the impact of the arts, there is a lot to be learned about how to cultivate and sustain transdisciplinary research. What are the elements necessary to create a vibrant ecology of research (VER) where art and design inquiry may flourish alongside, within, and out of research in the humanities and social and physical sciences that is so deeply embedded within sustainability initiatives? “Ecology” in this sense focuses on the relationships that bind component parts into ecosystems and may be used to understand a wide array of social and cultural production that may be akin to flows of energy.

VER sessions will focus on deepening our understanding of institutional, social, and epistemological systems that effectively weave arts-based inquiry into the fabric of scientific research. VER calls attention to the complex and nuanced articulations of how institutions, research groups, and organizations come together and what elements allow them to thrive. Session activities will review and workshop how these entangled and productive ecosystems may be understood so that other institutions, scholars, and communities can benefit.

Panel participant bios:

Mary Beth LEIGH is a professor of environmental microbiology and coordinator of arts-humanities-STEMM integration at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She is the founding director of “In a Time of Change”, a collaborative arts-humanities-science program based at Bonanza Creek Long-Term Ecological Research Program in Alaska, and helps to coordinate arts and humanities activities for the U.S. National Science Foundation’s Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) Network. Her scientific research interests include the biodegradation of contaminants in terrestrial, marine, and subsurface environments and biogeochemical cycling in boreal and Arctic ecosystems. Prior to joining UAF in 2006, Leigh earned her B.F.A. in Modern Dance, M.S. in Botany, and Ph.D. in Microbiology all at the University of Oklahoma, and conducted postdoctoral research at Michigan State University and the Natural Environment Research Council’s Center for Ecology and Hydrology, Oxford in the U.K. She co-founded, choreographed, and performed with the Deliquescent Dance Ensemble, and has performed as a cellist in a variety of classical, experimental, and rock ensembles.

Lissy GORALNIK is an assistant professor in the Department of Community Sustainability at Michigan State University. Her qualitative work bridges environmental ethics, experiential learning, and resilience thinking to explore human/nature relationships in conservation and sustainability contexts with a focus on place. She is interested in the ways place relationships facilitate wellbeing and motivate learning, and the ways these outcomes catalyze care for communities and landscapes. Current areas of study include art-science integration, informal science learning, place-based experiential education, creative placemaking, and urban food systems. She has been investigating art-science integration in the Long-Term Ecological Research network since 2013 and is a researcher in both the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest LTER site in the Oregon Cascades and the Bonanza Creek LTER site in Fairbanks, Alaska. Lissy earned a BA in English at Stanford University, an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Idaho, and a PhD in Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University, as well as conducted postdoctoral work in the Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society at Oregon State University.

Genevieve GAISER Tremblay is a new media artist, researcher, educator, curator and cultural extrapreneur. She is an adjunct researcher at Millennium Institute of Coastal Socio-Ecology (SECOS), a new transdisciplinary initiative of Chile’s Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation. There, she serves on an international team of knowledge and

solution innovators for coastal sustainability and is focused on community focused frontier collaborations in art + science and technology.

In 2017, Tremblay co-founded ASKXXI: Arts + Science Knowledge Building and Sharing in the XXI Century, an exchange program fostering US- Chile collaboration in arts, emerging technologies and the ecological sciences. The pilot program, 'Construction of Interdisciplinary Knowledge Art and Science in the XXI Century', was sponsored by the US Embassy, Chile, and hosted at the Center for Research in Biodiversity and Sustainable Environments (CIBAS) at the Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción. She co-led the curatorial development of 'Retícula 2019: Ecology and Art Reimagined for the XXI Century' in Concepción, Chile, an exhibition featured in Chile's first art and science biennial, connecting relevant lines of research (salmon sustainability, invasive species, red tide, land use, etc...) in both regions, igniting wider societal conversations about ecology, natural and cultural diversity. She is currently a Fulbright Specialist and an adjunct professor at Kentucky College of Art and Design. She is a Senior Strategic consultant at Catalytic Innovators Group where she works with corporations, foundations, non-profits, universities, and international development agencies to catalyze new solutions that deliver greater social impact in a global environment. Genevieve received her BFA (Intermedia) from Carnegie Mellon University and her MFA (Studio for Inter-related Media) from the Massachusetts College of Art. She currently resides in Bellevue, Washington.