

Sria Chatterjee



Seeing in a Climate Crisis

This lecture asks what it means to see in a climate crisis, through the lens of art and histories of climate and colonialism. Sria Chatterjee proposes specific strategies through what she calls ‘critical climate seeing.’ In ‘critical climate seeing’, picturing and seeing assume a symbiotic relationship, both cognisant of the partiality of visualising a climate crisis while at once committed to filling in the gaps. By turning to the work of Guyanese artist Donald Locke and Bangladeshi artist Sarker Protick — two artists working in different media, from different time periods, and different (post)colonial contexts — the overarching question Sria asks is: When the long, leaky, tentacular histories of overlapping systems of extractivism and oppression are difficult to picture, can ‘critical climate seeing’ offer concrete opportunities to disaggregate the gaze, to see with and through form, and into infrastructural and epistemic formations that undergird the climate crisis?

Short bio

Sria Chatterjee is currently Head of Research Initiatives at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art in London, where she also directs the multi-year research project, Climate & Colonialism. An art historian and environmental humanities scholar, Sria specialises in the political ecologies of art and design from the colonial to the contemporary. Sria is currently finishing a book on the relationship between art and an environmental and agrarian crisis. Other projects consider the intersections between the political histories of art and science. Her work is led by the conviction that art historical research and methods can productively be brought to bear on some of the pressing social questions of our time. In 2020, she founded and led the award-winning digital project, Visualizing the Virus, which shows how a pandemic makes inequalities visible. Her work has been supported by the Terra Foundation, the Max-Planck Institute, the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University, among others.

Vera Wolff



Fog sculpture (1970) by Fujiko Nakaya at the Pepsi Pavilion at the Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan.

Delicate Technologies: Fujiko Nakaya's Fog Works and the Cold War

The Japanese artist Fujiko Nakaya has been creating ephemeral fog sculptures since the 1970s, when she was a member of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), a collective of engineers, scientists, and artists involved in the design of the Pepsi Pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka. Yet it is only in recent years that she has gained global recognition. Her ephemeral sculptures are frequently associated with Zen, reflecting a longstanding tendency to interpret Japanese art through the lens of Zen aesthetics. This lecture will challenge this familiar framework by examining the connections between Nakaya's work and weather and climate research during the Cold War period. It will also revisit older visual and cultural histories of steam, clouds, and fog, situating Nakaya's oeuvre within a broader history of artistic and scientific engagements with the atmosphere.

Short bio

Vera Wolff is Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory in a Global Perspective at Leiden University and a Senior Associate Fellow of the documenta Institute. Previously, she was Assistant Professor at ETH Zurich's Chair for Science Studies and an associate member of Zurich's Zentrum "Geschichte des Wissens" (ZGW). She has held fellowships at the IFK – International Research Center for Cultural Studies in Vienna and the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence – Max Planck Institute, among others. At the core of her work are modern and contemporary art and the history of knowledge in global and (post)colonial contexts, with a particular focus on the histories of materials, techniques, and artistic labor.

Anne Jesuina Tobias de Andrade



Film still from Grieving (id) entity (or: the heritage of the Bacon Rebellion) (2023) by Anne Jesuina Tobias de Andrade.

What happens when facts aren't enough? On the role of emotion and embodiment in transforming socio-ecological colonial legacies and our cultural imagination

Anti-disciplinary artist Anne Jesuina embraces the label “woke,” so it is easy to imagine their fury upon encountering an op-ed in *de Volkskrant* titled “Postcolonial Language Is Starting to Sound Rather Hollow.” The article argued that if Europeans are constantly reminded in museums that their prosperity rests on theft and exploitation, they may eventually lose sight of the values they are supposed to defend, until, ultimately, nothing seems worth defending at all. After some reflection, however, Jesuina admittedly recognized a certain hollowness in “wanna-be-decolonial” gallery texts and knew the same emptiness from climate reporting.

In their talk, Anne Jesuina situates this hollowness as a logical consequence of a society that insists “serious matters” must be approached solely from a rational, disembodied perspective. They argue that this creates a situation in which (a) people (shaped by white innocence) are confronted with emotionally challenging and horrifying realities, yet lack the cultural practices and emotional knowledge and tools to process this information constructively.

In their talk Anne Jesuina explores how reclaiming emotion and embodiment, as fundamental aspects of learning and decision-making, offer antidotes to the unnecessary hollowness and stuckness caused by individualistic, rationalist thinking, opening pathways toward collective re-imagination and transformation in times of crisis.

Short bio

Anne Jesuina (Tobias de Andrade) (all pronouns) is an anti-disciplinary artist of Northern Dutch and Afro-Brazilian descent. Their practice explores how the emotional, embodied, and psychological legacies of white and human “supremacy” are reproduced in bodies, politics, and landscapes. Drawing on behavioral psychology, neuroscience, decolonial thought, somatic

abolitionist work, Afro-Brazilian spirituality, and multispecies justice, they develop practices of collective, radical embodied response-ability.

Working across text, music, performance, costume, and experimental documentary, Anne Jesuina uses film as a spatial sketchbook for exploring complex ecological and social questions. They also facilitate personal development from a decolonial perspective, focusing on the emotional dimensions of social and environmental issues.

Anne Jesuina is "Speaker for the Living" at Zoöp Amstelpark, researches emotional dynamics in zoöconomic transitions, and is developing an installation on multispecies justice as part of the School of Doggerbank within the Embassy of the North Sea. They recently started teaching at the Minerva Academy.