

In This Brief Time: Art, Environment and Ecology

Saturday, 24th November, 2018

Emmet Theatre, Arts Building, Trinity College Dublin

Registration: 11.00

Symposium: 11.30 – 17.00

Artists' responses to the physical environment have long been complex and contested, but perhaps never more so than in the last few decades of increasing confrontation with the nature of the human relationship with the ecosystem. While history reveals an intricate pattern of engagement over many centuries, it is particularly since the start of what has been defined as the Great Acceleration, from c. 1945, that the impact of human-engendered activity has been identified as a threat to the survival of the environment on which the species depends.

This symposium is about the art produced in response to the current epoch, whose proposed designations, such as *Anthropocene*, are intended to reflect the nature of human activity, whose traces are embedded within the geological layers of Earth's structure.

A selection of distinguished contemporary artists, whose work explores a range of aspects of human relationships with the physical environment, will discuss how their work expresses dimensions of this engagement. The range is considerable, from the complex emotional attachments to the mundane and familiar, ancient and recent, and related issues of identity, nostalgia, and displacement, through to the catastrophic consequences of exploitation of limited and fragile resources. While some artists develop a clear and focused agenda, others reflect on the uncertainties and anomalies in attempting to make sense of conflicting debates. Methods of expression include various time-based media, painting, photography, drawing and print, three dimensional materials of all kinds – traditional, experimental and found – and mixed media; anything can be conscripted to the service of giving expression to the ideas.

Each talk will include images and excerpts from the artists' own work. There will be opportunities to raise questions and engage in discussion.

Note: The title of this event, 'In this brief time ...' begins a sentence in Simon L Lewis and Mark A Maslin, *The Human Planet; How we created the Anthropocene* (Pelican, 2018), p.3. The authors use this phrase in discussing the extremely short time span of human presence compared with Earth's 4.5 billion-year history and the extent of human impact in that brief period.

11.00 Registration

11.30 Launch by Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Trinity College Dublin

Introduction: Dr Yvonne Scott, Director of TRIARC, and Associate Professor, History of Art and Architecture, TCD.

12.00 Keynote: John Gerrard

Exhaust: Art, Simulation + Accumulation

Questions/discussion

13.00 Lunch break

13.30 Viewing of Vera Klute: *The Grand Scheme*

13.45 Artists contributors

Vivienne Dick

In the Blink of an Eye

Clare Langan

The Floating World

Siobhan McDonald

Hidden Monuments + After Nature

15.00 Short break

15.10 Artists contributors

Deirdre O'Mahony

Re-Membering Landscape: an aesthetic of head and hand

Geraldine O'Neill

Many Worlds

Garrett Phelan

'HIDING THE TRUTH'

16.25 Questions and discussion

Conclusion of Symposium

17.00 Symposium ends