

FORAGING MEDIA

NCAD 4-5 NOVEMBER 2024

SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

Kim Knowles

The Sustainability Paradox: Is the Medium the Message?

In this paper, I assess some of the arguments around sustainability and film, particularly in relation to analogue media and cultures of recuperation and recycling. The gestures of resistance that characterise contemporary photochemical practice provide compelling reasons to believe that film is redefining itself as a more ethical and ecological practice in an era of constant technological renewal and disposal. However, these arguments are thrown into question when faced with the paradoxical relationship between the counter-cultural DIY ethos of photochemical film culture and its continued reliance on a commercial product, now manufactured almost exclusively by Kodak. But perhaps this is missing the point. Is the medium really the message when it comes to questions of sustainability? I'd like to put forward some alternative ways of thinking about the relationship between ecology, media and materiality, allowing for a more expansive consideration of what it means to create and communicate sustainably.

Dr Kim Knowles is Senior Lecturer in Alternative and Experimental Film at Aberystwyth University in Wales. She is the author of *A Cinematic Artist: The Films of Man Ray* (2012) and *Experimental Film and Photochemical Practices* (2020), as well as the co-editor of *Cinematic Intermediality: Theory and Practice* (2021) and *The Palgrave Handbook of Experimental Cinema* (2024). She curated the Black Box strand of the Edinburgh International Film Festival between 2008 and 2022 and has presented screenings at festivals and events around the world. In 2015, she established the 16mm lab *Labordy Ffilm Aber* (Aber Film Lab), a research and teaching resource which also hosts artists' residencies, screenings, and workshops. Her current research explores the relationship between experimental film, eco philosophy and theories of the more-than-human.

Cliona Harmey

Solar and Saline: The Unfixed Image

This presentation will use fragments gleaned from practice based experimentation and texts to explore ideas around energy capture, light and early photography's attempts to achieve fixity in images. The quest for a stable image exists as part of a long conceptual continuum and the artist will explore the potentials of embracing the image's material instability.

Cliona Harmey is an artist and educator who works primarily with media technologies. She is currently a lecturer in the Media Department at NCAD where she runs a module called "Critical Making" which focuses on a material led exploration of media practice and which encompasses elements of small scale material making, code, as well as working with re-usable/re-configurable open source hardware. She works at a variety of scales and often makes work which is ephemeral or systems based. Her recent work responds to contexts and situations where the global and local systems intersect (climate, borders, transit, maps).

Radek Przedpelski

Foraging as Decolonial Ecomedia: Small-file Media to Jumana Manna

Drawing on David Graeber and David Wengrow's recent insights on early foraging societies, formulated from a standpoint of evolutionary anthropology, this media-archaeological presentation rearticulates foraging as a decolonial and ecological paradigm of post-digital media-making, as well as a materialist process ontology of the media image itself. The presentation draws a diagram of post-digital foraging practices connecting small-file media, i.e. experimental low-bandwidth video works of no more than 1.44 MB/minute in online transmission proposed by media scholar Laura U. Marks in 2020, and Jumana Manna's newest film, *Foragers* (2022), thematising Palestinian wild herb picking, as well as her other earth-based sculptural installations.

Radek Przedpelski (rah-deck pshet-pe-woo-skee; him/they) is an artist and media scholar lecturing in interactive digital media at Trinity College Dublin. Radek graduated from TCD with a PhD in Digital Art and Humanities. Radek is currently writing a monograph on queering Sarmatism (a Baroque mythology of Eastness) in the works of Polish artist Marek Konieczny (1936-2022). Radek also worked as a researcher for the Slavs and Tatars collective. Radek co-edited a volume on *Deleuze, Guattari and the Art of Multiplicity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020). Radek is a curator, together with media scholar Laura U. Marks, of the annual Small File Media Festival of sustainable media art hosted by Simon Fraser University, Vancouver. Radek's artistic practice explores entanglements between the earth, the cosmos, and sustainable artistic techniques.

Abelardo Gil-Fournier

Imaging in times of an Ecological Aesthetics of Surfaces

If photosensitive surfaces had not been explored and the visual cultures of photography and film had not developed during the 19th and the 20th centuries, the planet's vegetal surfaces would look radically different nowadays. This is one of the arguments of our book, with Jussi Parikka, on *Living Surfaces: an intertwining between photomedia and vegetal growth leads to a broader understanding of imaging, in relation to the environment at multiple scales.* This talk will address this ecological aesthetics of surfaces: through some of the key experiments discussed in the book and a series of practice-based projects, it will raise the question of what a visual culture beyond the human might mean, and what aspects foregrounds the concept of environmental surfaces as part of it.

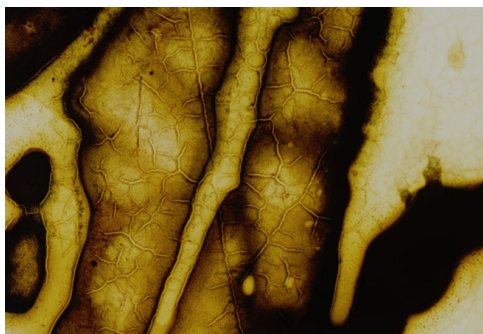
Dr Abelardo Gil-Fournier is an artist and researcher, born in Rabat (Morocco) and based in Madrid.

Originally trained in physics, he holds a PhD in Art from the Winchester School of Art (UK) and has worked as a researcher at FAMU in Prague (Czech Republic). He currently holds a Leonardo scholarship from the BBVA Foundation. His work has been exhibited and discussed internationally, including venues such as Transmediale (Berlin), Fundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia (León), IKKM (Weimar), Fotomuseum Winterthur (Switzerland), Fotocolectania (Barcelona) or Strelka Institute (Moscow). He is the author, together with Jussi Parikka, of the book *Living Surfaces: Images, Plants and Environments of Media* (MIT Press 2024).

Timothy Stott

Chair Roundtable Discussion

Dr Timothy Stott is Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History and Head of the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Trinity College Dublin. Current research focuses on ecocritical art and design history, the visual culture of science, and the contribution of art/design history to the environmental humanities. He is a member of the Trinity Centre for Environmental Humanities and Chair of the Environmental Humanities Working Group at the Royal Irish Academy.



SCREENING AND CONVERSATION 16mm FILMS BY KAREL DOING

The Mulch Spider's Dream

16mm, 14 minutes, colour, 2018

This film attempts to kindle the vision of a spider by using experimental phytochemistry; creating organic shapes, rhythms and colours directly on expired 16mm film.

Phytography

16mm, 8 minutes, colour, 2020

Phytography dives into the rich and varied world of plant chemistry. This collection of organic 'objets trouvés' demonstrates how nature generates multiple creative solutions, each one structured intricately.

A Perfect Storm

16mm, 3 minutes, colour, 2022

A Perfect Storm is a landscape film or, more precisely, a landscape imprinted on the film's emulsion.

Oxygen

16mm, 6 minutes, colour, 2023

Blades of grass are racing across the screen.

Karel Doing is an independent artist, filmmaker, and researcher whose practice investigates the relationship between culture and nature by means of analogue and organic process, experiment, and co-creation. His work has been shown worldwide at festivals, in cinemas, on stage, and in galleries. He was a founder member of Studio één, a pioneering DiY film laboratory. He has invented "phytography," a technique that combines plants and photochemical emulsion. In his new book *Ruins and Resilience: the Longevity of Experimental Film* (Goldsmiths Press, 2024) he explores the "ruins" of cinema and the innovative ways by which the experimental artists, since the end of the 20th century, are trying to keep it alive.

Chloe Brenan is a visual artist working across the languages of motion film, photography and printed matter and ephemera. Her work is attentive to the poetic haptics of daily life and involves close attention to subjects and processes on the edge of perception that call into question boundaries between bodies, environments and wider structures of power. She teaches in the Department of Sculpture and Expanded Practice at NCAD and regularly contributes to the NCAD Access Programme.

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