



MAX AND IRIS STERN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 16

MORE THAN HUMAN, MORE THAN NATURE: BEYOND THE LIVING BEING

Guest curator: Bénédicte Ramade

The concept of nature has never been as fiercely debated as it is today, in the wake of decolonial deconstruction and the advent of the Anthropocene (the temporal framework that challenges the great modern division between nature and culture). And although linguistically specific terms such as *le vivant*, commonly used in French, do not find encompassing equivalents in English, many philosophical projects also deplore the anthropocentrism of notions of “non-human” or “more than human,” prompting us to find new ways to “make” Earth (*faire terre*)—to live and make meaning in a world beyond our comprehension.

By bringing together philosophers of plants and artificial intelligence, artists, and exhibition curators, the sixteenth Max and Iris Stern International Symposium proposes to further deconstruct these concepts and take up fresh semantic, philosophical, and artistic paths. Drawing inspiration from David Abram’s thoughts on the “more than human” and transposing them to the exponential capacities of machines and the diversity of the living world, we will speculate on unprecedented forms of relationship building and examine the potential political agency of museums—notably through the very structure of this symposium, which is designed to encourage more intimate and situated exchanges among participants.

April 12-13, 2024
Paul Desmarais Theatre, Canadian Centre for Architecture

 **MAC**

PROGRAM

The lectures will be in French and in English.
Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

2:30 p.m.

WELCOME

Francesco Garutti, associate director, programs, Canadian Centre for Architecture

Catherine Julien, director, philanthropic development and major campaign, Fondation du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

François LeTourneau, curator and head of public programs, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Bénédicte Ramade, art historian, art critic, and exhibition curator

3:00 p.m.

ECOFEMINISMS [in French]

Lecture by:

Julie Crenn, art historian, art critic, and exhibition curator

Followed by individual conversations with:

Marie-Eve Beaupré, director at the Guido Molinari Foundation and curator of the exhibition *femmes volcans forêts torrents*, presented at the MAC

Kama La Mackerel, artist

Michèle Magema, artist

5:30 p.m.

OPENING LECTURE [in French]

Emanuele Coccia, associate professor, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris

6:30 p.m.

SPEAKERS' BOOK LAUNCH AT THE CCA BOOKSTORE

Cover:
Malena Szlam, *Archipelago of Earthen Bones* (still), 2024.
16 mm film; multi-channel video and sound installation, colour.
Courtesy of the artist.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

10:00 a.m.

MAKING COMMON GROUND [in English]

asinnajaq, artist

Giovanni Aloï, author, educator, and exhibition curator

11:00 a.m.

MORE THAN HUMAN, MORE THAN NATURE: BEYOND THE LIVING BEING [in French and English]

Conversation among:

Giovanni Aloï, author, educator, and exhibition curator

asinnajaq, artist

Emanuele Coccia, associate professor, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris

Stéphanie Posthumus, professor of European literature, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, McGill University, Montréal
Mod. **Bénédicte Ramade**

12:00 p.m.

LUNCH

2:00 p.m.

CURATORIAL INVESTIGATIONS [in French and in English]

Jennifer Carter, associate professor, Department of Art History, and director of the graduate museology program, Université du Québec à Montréal
Soren Brothers, Allan and Helaine Shiff Curator of Climate Change, Royal Ontario Museum

Robert Wiesenberger, curator of contemporary projects, Clark Art Institute, and lecturer in the Williams Graduate Program in the History of Art, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Aseman Sabet, art historian, curator, lecturer, author, and researcher
Mod. **Mojeanne Behzadi**, curator, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

4:00 p.m.

BREAK

4:15 p.m.

FILM PROJECTION

Capucine Vever, *Ô Diryanké*, 2023. 4K video, 22 min, sound. Voice of Wasis Diop. Music by Valentin Ferré.

16 h 45

CLOSING ADDRESS [in English]

T.J. Demos, professor, Department of the History of Art and Visual Culture, University of California, Santa Cruz

The Musée d'art contemporain thanks the Max and Iris Stern Foundation, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and the Consulate General of France in Quebec for their support.

PARTICIPANTS

GIOVANNI ALOI

Giovanni Aloï is an author, educator, and curator specializing in the representation of nature and the environment in art. He is the editor-in-chief of *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture*. Aloï is the author of *Art & Animals* (2011), *Speculative Taxidermy: Natural History, Animal Surfaces, and Art in the Anthropocene* (2018), *Why Look at Plants? The Vegetal Emergence in Contemporary Art* (2019), and *Lucian Freud – Herbarium* (2019), and the editor of *Posthumanism in Art and Science* (2020), *Vegetal Entwinements in Philosophy and Art* (2023), and *Estado Vegetal: Performance and Plant Thinking* (2023). He has contributed to BBC radio programs, worked at Whitechapel Art Gallery and Tate Galleries in London, and is currently the American correspondent for the magazine *esse*. He has curated exhibitions in the US and Europe and is co-editor of the University of Minnesota Press series *Art after Nature*.

asinnajaq

asinnajaq is from Inukjuak, Nunavik, and lives in Tiohtiá:ke (Montréal). Her work includes photography, filmmaking, writing, and curating. She co-created Tillitarniit, a three-day festival celebrating Inuit art and artists. asinnajaq wrote and directed *Three Thousand* (2017), a short sci-fi “documentary.” She co-curated Isuma’s exhibition in the “Canadian” pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale. In 2020, asinnajaq was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award. She co-curated INUA, the inaugural exhibition of the Inuit art centre Qaumajuq (2021), and programmed the 2022 Fall Flaherty NYC series *Let’s all be lichen*. In her work, asinnajaq is interested in sharing tools for navigating life’s journey.

MARIE-EVE BEAUPRÉ

Art historian and field practitioner Marie-Eve Beaupré was appointed executive director and chief curator of the Guido Molinari Foundation in spring 2023. Over the last twenty years, she has collaborated with museums, galleries, and artist-run centres as a curator, author, administrator, and jury member. She was curator of the collection at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal (2016–23) and curator of contemporary Québec and Canadian art at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2014–16). She has also contributed to exhibition, acquisition, and research projects with the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (2010–14) and the Galerie de l’UQAM (2004–12). The enriching exchanges that she has developed with artists over the years and her inventorying work in the studios of Edmund Alleyn, Sylvia Safdie, John Heward, Betty Goodwin, and Guido Molinari provide the basis for her knowledge, comprehension of and respect for the art ecosystem in which she works.

MOJEANNE BEHZADI

Mojeanne Behzadi is a curator at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal. Based in Tiohtiá:ke/Mooniyang/Montréal, she holds a master’s degree in art history from Concordia University. Over the last ten years, she has worked at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), AGAC, Galerie Hugues Charbonneau, and Artex. She has also directed the Lillian and Billy Mauer art collection, for which she helped to develop *Art Speaks*, a series of international conferences on contemporary art. As an independent curator, she designed and hosted *Trajectoires*, a podcast created for the MMFA in 2022, and organized the exhibition *Vers la liberté* at Projet Casa in 2023.

SOREN BROTHERS

Dr. Soren Brothers is the Allan and Helaine Shiff Curator of Climate Change at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. He is also an assistant professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Toronto. In his research, he examines the effects of climate change on lakes, and how changes in aquatic systems can influence their greenhouse-gas emissions. More broadly, he is interested in understanding how feedback loops and the transdisciplinary study of lakes can help us better understand and predict global tipping points that may accelerate anthropogenic climate change. He has worked on lakes in a diverse array of environments around the world, including the Nunavut tundra, Québec’s boreal forests, and the Great Lakes.

JENNIFER CARTER

Jennifer Carter is an associate professor in the Department of Art History and director of the graduate museology program at the Université du Québec à Montréal. In her research, she investigates the global phenomenon of human rights museums and considers how historical and social justice are negotiated curatorially and pedagogically in cultural institutions dedicated to human rights in different geopolitical and cultural contexts around the world. She is the author of *Human Rights Museums: Critical Tensions Between Memory and Justice* (2023), in which she analyzes the work of a range of human rights museums in transitional justice and social justice contexts in countries around the globe through a series of single- and co-authored case studies. Her recent engagement in the Climate Disaster Project furthers a newer research axis dedicated to climate justice at the intersection of narrative ecology, museology-expography, and environmental humanities. Carter is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Coalition of Museums for Climate Justice. She has presented her research internationally and published widely in English and French. Her essays have also been translated and published in journals in Mandarin and Portuguese.

EMANUELE COCCIA

Emanuele Coccia is an associate professor at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris. He has been a guest professor at Buenos Aires University, University of Munich, University of Venice, University of Tokyo, Weimar University, Columbia University, and Harvard University. He is the author of *La vie sensible* (2010), *La vie des plantes* (2016), *Métamorphoses* (2020), and *Philosophie de la maison* (2022). His books have been translated into several languages. He has written books on photographic theory with the Dutch photographer Viviane Sassen (*Modern Alchemy*, 2022) and with Paolo Roversi (*Lettres sur la lumière*, 2024), as well as a book on the relationship between fashion and philosophy with the former creative director of Gucci, Alessandro Michele (*La vie des formes. Philosophie du réenchantement*, 2024). He has contributed to the production of animated videos such as *Quercus* (2019, with Formafantasma) and *Heaven in Matter* (2021, with Faye Formisano). With Yuko Hasegawa, he is co-curator of an exhibition on art and ecology at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan.

PARTICIPANTS

JULIE CRENN

Julie Crenn is an art historian, art critic, and independent exhibition curator. Since 2018, she has been associated with the programming at Transpalette – Centre d'art contemporain de Bourges. In 2005, she earned a master's degree in historical research and art criticism at Université Rennes 2; her thesis was devoted to Frida Kahlo's art. Continuing her research on feminist and decolonial practices, she received a PhD in arts (history and theory) at Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux III. In her dissertation she reflected on contemporary textile practices (from 1970 to the present). Since then, she has been conducting intersectional research on bodies, memories, and forms of art activism.

T.J. DEMOS

T. J. Demos is the Patricia and Rowland Rebele Endowed Chair in Art History in the Department of the History of Art and Visual Culture at University of California, Santa Cruz, and founding director of its Center for Creative Ecologies. Demos is the author of several books, including *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today* (2017); *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology* (2016); and *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary During Global Crisis* (2013), winner of the College Art Association's 2014 Frank Jewett Mather Award. He co-edited *The Routledge Companion on Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change* (2021), was a Getty Research Institute Fellow (spring 2020), and directed the Mellon-funded Sawyer Seminar research project *Beyond the End of the World* (2019–21). His new book, *Radical Futurisms: Ecologies of Collapse, Chronopolitics, and Justice-to-Come*, was published by Sternberg Press in 2023.

KAMA LA MACKEREL

Kama La Mackerel is a multilingual Mauritian writer, visual artist, performer, educator, and literary translator who believes in love, justice, and self- and collective empowerment. Their practice blurs the lines among traditional art disciplines to create hybrid aesthetic spaces from which decolonial and queer/trans vocabularies can emerge. With wholehearted engagement in ocean narratives, island sovereignty, transgender poetics, and queer/trans spiritual histories, their body of work challenges colonial notions of time and space as these relate to history, power, language, subject formation, and the body.

MICHÈLE MAGEMA

Bon in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1977, Michèle Magema is a French-Congolese visual artist who works in video, performance, photography, and drawing to create mixed-media installations. She is interested in articulating a lasting exchange among individual narratives, collective memory, and history. Her work has been exhibited in international institutions and is in the collections of AfricaMuseum in Brussels, the Museum Rietberg in Zurich, the FRAC Centre-Val de Loire and the FRAC Réunion, the Sindika Dokolo Foundation in Luanda, and the Attijariwafa bank Foundation in Casablanca. She received the first prize at the Biennale de Dakar in 2004 and has been cited in numerous articles and publications on contemporary African art, including *Artistes africains : 1882 – aujourd'hui* (2021) and *Congo as Fiction* (2020). Magema is currently a doctoral student and a lecturer at the School of Visual and Media Arts at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

STÉPHANIE POSTHUMUS

Stéphanie Posthumus is a professor of European literature in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at McGill University in Montréal. Her research areas bear on contemporary issues such as ecological thought, the animal question, plant studies, and posthumanism in French and francophone literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Her articles have been published in *Mosaic*, *French Studies*, *Contemporary French & Francophone Studies*, *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature and Environment*, and *Green Letters*, among others. She has been co-editor of three collected works: *French Thinking about Animals* (2015), with Louisa Mackenzie; *French Ecocriticism: From the Early Modern Period to the Twenty-First Century* (2017), with Daniel Finch-Race; and *Mouvantes et émouvantes: les plantes à travers le récit* (2023), with Rachel Bouvet. Her book *French Écocritique: Reading Contemporary French Theory and Fiction Ecologically* (2017) lays the groundwork for an ecological approach to contemporary French literature.

BÉNÉDICTE RAMADE

Bénédicte Ramade is an art historian, art critic, and exhibition curator who has been specializing in environmental issues since the late 1990s. Her book *Vers un art anthropocène. L'art écologique américain pour prototype* (2022) was nominated for the Prix Pierre Daix in 2023. Drawing on her research on the anthropoceneration of knowledge and art practices, she is currently developing her expertise on the emotions related to climate change in contemporary art. She is an associate researcher with the Chaire CREAT at the Université de Montréal and with CELAT and FIGURA at UQAM, and she teaches at both universities.

ASEMAN SABET

Aseman Sabet holds an MA in art history from the Université du Québec à Montréal. Over the past fifteen years, she has worked in the field of contemporary art as a curator, lecturer (Université Laval/UQAM), author, and researcher, specializing in interdisciplinary issues in art and science and in sensory studies. She has contributed to numerous contemporary art publications. She also sat on the editorial board of *Espace* and is an active member of Molior's artistic committee. From 2022 to 2024, she served as director of development for the Société des musées du Québec. She lives and works in Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal.

ROBERT WIESENBERGER

Robert Wiesenberger is curator of contemporary projects at the Clark Art Institute and a lecturer in the Williams Graduate Program in the History of Art, both in Williamstown, Massachusetts. His recent exhibitions focused on ecology include *Humane Ecology: Eight Positions* (2023) and *Lin May Saeed: Arrival of the Animals* (2020), both at the Clark. He holds a BA in history and German from the University of Chicago and a PhD in art history from Columbia University.

Since 2006, the prestigious international symposiums held by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal have been known as the Max and Iris Stern International Symposium. From the time the Musée was founded in 1964, Max and Iris Stern contributed significantly to its growth by enriching the Collection with many gifts, including works by Hans Arp, Paul-Émile Borduas, Emily Carr, John Lyman and Jean-Paul Riopelle. The goal of this annual event is to provide a public forum for research by practitioners and theoreticians working in diverse fields, in connection to the Musée's programs. Through this commitment, the Musée wishes to foster a greater understanding of contemporary art and pay tribute to the Sterns by carrying on their vision on the international scene.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

April 12–13, 2024

Paul Desmarais Theatre, Canadian Centre for Architecture
1920 Baile St., Montreal, QC, H3H 2S6

The lectures will be in French and in English.
Simultaneous translation will be available.

To receive full details on symposiums and lectures at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, simply add your name to the mailing list for the Musée's e-newsletter, at www.macm.org.

Information: info@macm.org

Purchase your tickets online:

Tickets are sold through the MAC's electronic ticket office.
No partial or full refund will be granted in case of absence from an event.

<https://macm.org/en/activities/max-and-iris-stern-international-symposium-16/>

Tickets:

Regular: \$25 (including taxes)
MACarte: \$20 (including taxes)
Students: \$10 (including taxes)
Tickets give access to both days of the symposium.
