

The Art in the Anthropocene cannot be limited to a thematization of the many different dimensions of the current ecological crisis. Both the theory and the practice of art need to address questions of form. While the world is subject to a radical transformation through human interference, traditional categories of knowledge and experience are being called into question. How can aesthetic representation reflect this deformation of the human relation to the world? The talk will address three formal challenges that art faces in the Anthropocene: Latency – the fact that the fundamental processes of environmental change elude perception and representation; entanglement – the fact that humans are caught in the complexities of the Earth system, and scale the fact that we are dealing with objects and processes on scales of magnitude that cannot be directly accessed by human understanding or control.

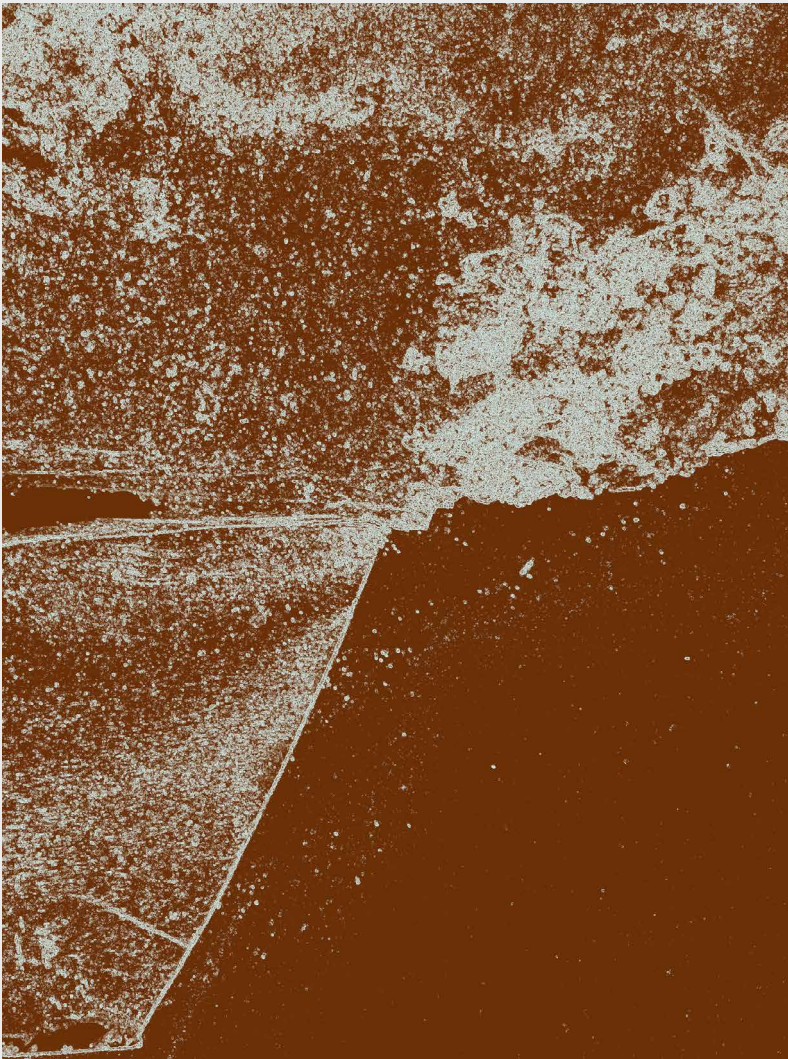
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There is hardly a discipline, field, or discourse within the natural and social sciences nor the humanities that hasn't long been touched and transformed by the notions of milieu, environment, or Umwelt. The recent revival and proliferation of ecological discourses can be understood, at least in part, as a response to the increasingly complete immersion in technologically in-formed environments.

The transdisciplinary impact of these new concepts has not yet been captured, nor is it clear that it can be captured, but while the life sciences play a prominent role in them (having adopted, in the 19th century, concepts from physics and transgressed into the social sciences, for example, as racist discourses and social Darwinism), they don't operate as the leading science in this transformation. Instead, this process appears to be a multidirectional, non-hierarchizable, and errant movement, itself constituting a complex ecology of knowledge.

ERRANS environ/s contemplates aspects of this frequently divergent, potentially errant, and certainly ongoing transformation of not only the sciences or cultures of knowledge, but also cultural and artistic production at large. It will investigate the ways in which an attention to environments can have the effect of dissolving boundaries or making them permeable, questioning clear-cut distinctions, undermining naive ontologies, decentering the subject, folding nature and culture, and producing complex political ecologies attuned to far-reaching entanglements.



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The Aesthetics of the Anthropocene

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