

Press Release

Facing Extinction -The Conference

Sat 7th + Sun 8th June 2014, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham Campus

“The art, architecture and design world needs to take a stand against the on-going erasure of species - even where there is little chance of ultimate success. It is our privilege and our duty to be at the forefront of the struggle. There is no choice but follow the path of ethics into aesthetics” -Gustav Metzger

Artist Gustav Metzger, known for his radical approach to political and ecological issues, has collaborated with the Fine Art department at UCA Farnham to host ‘Facing Extinction - The Conference’ on 7th and 8th June. Following on from his thought provoking exhibition Facing Extinction at the James Hockey Gallery in March, the conference will include a series of engaging presentations and performances by artists, scientists, ecologists and specialist academics. Tackling ideas of immediate and long-term action against mass extinction, the conference will pose the question: how can we radically limit the ongoing decimation of nature? With a broad range of distinguished speakers and activists from the fields of science and art, the conference presents a unique chance to listen to and lend your voice in this vital discussion. What is the scale and scope of the problems we currently face? How can we articulate and shape a programme of action? The conference is split into themes over two days: Saturday will be ‘Technology and Resources’ and ‘Global Systems: Food and Water’ and Sunday will look at ‘Climate Change’ and ‘Biodiversity’.

The contributors’ include, Gustav Metzger, Yoko Ono, Polly Higgins, Prof. Peter Head, Michael Pawlyn, Assemble, Ackroyd & Harvey, Cape Farewell, Dr. Joe Ravetz, Prof. Jonathan Rosenhead, Charlotte Couch, London Fieldworks (Jo Joelson & Bruce Gilchrist), Dr. John Fanshawe, Dr. Daro Montag, Prof. Martin Charter and Maria Jose Arceo.

An exciting program of performances are scheduled for Saturday evening from 6-8pm, including Kennardphillipps (Peter Kennard & Cat Phillipps), Simon Watt, Matthew de Kersaint Giraudeau, Ellie Harrison and Carl Gent. There will also be a range of other events during the weekend, including two short artist films by Magnus Irvin and Sarah Jacobs, plus Café of Equivalent\$, an interactive artwork by Kennardphillipps and student interventions and performances.

The conference is convened by Rose Lejeune & Andrea Gregson, in collaboration with Gustav Metzger. It has been supported by UCA’s Research and Enterprise Department.

Tickets for one or both days are on sale now via the website below or directly through UCA online store at:

http://store.ucreative.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?compid=1&modid=1&deptid=25&catid=81&prodvarid=54

NOTES TO THE EDITOR: For images and more information on the exhibition please contact: Andrea Gregson, Senior Lecturer in Fine Art agregson@ucreative.ac.uk (Tel: 01252 892820). For conference updates, programme, information & tickets visit: www.gustavmetzgerucafarnham.wordpress.com

Time	<u>FACING EXTINCTION: Conference Programme</u> <u>UCA Farnham : Saturday 7th June : 10 – 8pm</u>	Room
9.30 – 10.00	Registration in Foyer Tea and Coffee in refectory	
10.15– 10.30	Welcome by Fine Art Team Gustav Metzger - Artist / Keynote Speaker Yoko Ono - Text piece written exclusively for the conference	W02/W612
10.30– 10.50 11.00– 11.20 11.30 - 11.50 12.00– 12.20	<u>Technology & Resources</u> Humans constantly interact, manipulate and exploit nature and this, by definition, has always let us live. The rate at which we procure materials, innovate, and produce new products is, however, increasing and whilst this offers massive positive potential to enhance lives around the world, it frequently exacerbates global inequalities and exploitation as well as irreversibly plundering and depleting natural resources. <i>How might we balance the drive for technological advancement against the need to sustain the long-term survival of our species and our planet? How might we make better and fairer energy and material-resource choices? What are the challenges we face as we continue to try to control and change the natural world?</i> Prof. Peter Head - Founder of the Ecological Sequestration Trust Dr. Joe Ravetz - Co-Director of the Centre for Urban & Regional Ecology Prof. Martin Charter - Director of the Centre for Sustainable Design, UCA Assemble - Design & Architecture Collective	W02/W612
12.30-12.45	BREAK	
12.45 – 1.15	Technology & Resources Panel Discussion chaired by Michael Pawlyn	W02/W612
1.15 – 2.30	Lunch	Refectory

	<p><u>Global Systems: Food & Water</u></p> <p>In combination with steadily increasing global population, oil and fuel prices have experienced a series of crises over the last 10 years meaning that international food prices have reached unprecedented levels with devastating consequences for the world's most vulnerable populations. Eleven percent of the global population remains without immediate access to drinking water. Elsewhere, inefficient consumption patterns and the loss and waste of food represent massive waste in the water system. Food and water, then, appear as global representatives of economic, environmental and social inequality.</p> <p><i>How can we improve food security and equality in the wake of the combined challenges of climate change, demography change, population increase and increasing resource- scarcity? How can we work towards an understanding of the true economic, environmental and social value of water? How can we work towards more equal distribution of these resources?</i></p>	W02/W612
2.30 – 2.45	Magnus Irvin presents his recent film <i>Coral Reef</i> (13 mins)	
2.45 – 3.00	Gustav Metzger - Artist	
3.15 – 3.35	Michael Pawlyn - Architect & Director of Exploration	
3.45 – 4.05	Maria Jose Arceo – Artist	
4.15 - 4.30	BREAK	
4.30 -5.00	Global Systems: Food & Water Panel Discussion chaired by Prof. Peter Head	W02/W612
5.00-6.00	DRINKS	Refectory
	<p><u>Saturday Evening Performance Art</u></p> <p>5.45 Ellie Harrison – <i>Anti-Capitalist Aerobics</i></p> <p>6.00 Carl Gent – <i>Gnats Inside the Wind Transposed for the Proterozoic Eon</i></p> <p>6.15 Simon Watt – <i>Stand-up comedy about conservation</i></p> <p>6.45 Matthew de Kersaint Giraudeau – <i>The Extinction of the Human Race:What Does it Mean for Me?</i></p> <p>7.00 Peter Kennard & Cat Phillipps (artist collaborative) – <i>Demo / Talk</i></p>	Refectory

Time	<u>FACING EXTINCTION: Conference Programme</u> <u>UCA Farnham : Sunday 8th June</u>	Room
9.30 – 10.00	Registration in Foyer Tea and Coffee in refectory	
10.15 – 10.40	Welcome by Fine Art team in W02 Gustav Metzger - Artist Film by Sarah Jacobs - <i>AFTER NATURE: Bestiary</i> (11 mins)	W02/W612
10.40 – 11.00 11.10 – 11.30 11.40 - 12.00 12.10 – 12.30	<p><u>Climate Change</u> The way that we live our lives has caused the climate to change and the planet to warm more rapidly than it might have otherwise. We can already see the effects of this climate change both in the UK and abroad with increasingly frequent ‘freak’ weather and natural disasters. A devastating reality lies ahead of us if we do not act now.</p> <p><i>What are the key issues? How can scientists and cultural practitioners collaborate to communicate the scale and urgency of the problem? How can we facilitate behaviour change? What solutions are there for a sustainable future in the face of such fundamental changes to the world around us?</i></p> <p>Prof. Jonathan Rosenhead – Emeritus Professor of Operational Research LSE</p> <p>London Fieldworks - Artists Jo Joelson & Bruce Gilchrist</p> <p>Dr. Daro Montag - Associate Prof. Art & Environment, Falmouth University & Co-Director of Centre of Contemporary Art & the Natural World</p> <p>Yasmine Ostendorf - Programme Manager from Cape Farewell</p>	W02/W612
12.40-12.50	BREAK	
12.50 – 1.15	Climate Change Panel Discussion chaired by Heather Ackroyd in W02	W02/W612
1.15 – 2.15	Lunch	

	<p><u>Biodiversity</u> Biodiversity is life's only army against the diseases of oblivion. Throughout the 20th century, global biodiversity reduction through agricultural monocultures, human-borne invasive species, climate-change and urbanisation among other factors has increased exponentially. Until now in the 21st century, the rate is nothing short of explosive and its impacts catastrophic.</p> <p><i>What are the visible and invisible impacts of species loss around us? What does effective conservation policy and practice look like? How can we imaginatively create solutions to this problem both on a micro and a macro scale?</i></p>	W02/W612
2.15 – 2.35	Polly Higgins - Lawyer & Advocate for an International Law of Ecocide	
2.45 – 3.05	Charlotte Couch – Botanical researcher, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.	
3.15 – 3.50	Ackroyd & Harvey (collaborative artists) in discussion with Dr. John Fanshawe from Cambridge Conservation Initiative and BirdLife International	
4.00 - 4.15	BREAK	
4.15 -4.45	Biodiversity Panel Discussion chaired Maria Jose Arceo	W02/W612
4.45 – 5.00	Closing Comments	W02/W612