

Workshop 2: September 9 2021 (9.00 am-1.00 pm)

Role of Creative Practice in Heritage Process: Speculative Pasts from Certain Futures. Past, Present and Future, Which Comes First?



Figure 9. A speculation to re-build the longest pier in the world in Rhyl, North Wales (Jimmy Loizeau).

Workshop 2, in partnership with Jimmy Loizeau & Matt Ward (Senior Lecturers) at Goldsmith's Department of Design, will look beyond human-centered heritage practice and seek to engage with more destabilized ideas of temporality and the more-than-human. The intriguing contradictions and deep timeframes of the Anthropocene potentially help to free us from a human-centered focus, and allow us to step outside of current constraints in comprehending problems and taking action.

"The point of creating futures is to get people to imagine what they want and don't want to happen down the road and maybe do something about it" (Piercy 1976, vii).

We will consider methodological tools for a heritage response to the Anthropocene through a consideration of past, present, and future—which comes first? This will focus on critical speculation (fiction as method), which utilizes the tension between the real and constructed, the factual and fictional, which helps to disrupt the complex choreography of truth production long enough for it to be reimagined into a belief in the reality of newly proposed worlds. This includes time travel, multiverses, projected pasts, retrospective futures, perturbation, retroactive causality, broken worlds, truth, and insouciance, all used as methods for future making/world building in order to move beyond the plausible future and shape preferable futures. This will suggest an insurgent participatory heritage practice that highlights the exclusions, silences, and violences evident in a designation of heritage that "stays with the trouble" of deciding which heritage worlds are being cared for at the expense of which others. Speculations on the nature of authorized practice provide an opportunity to free practitioners from the constraints of their professional discourse by removing the consequences of their decision-making and action-taking in the real world.

These devices are used in heritage teaching and research at UCL and have been applied in the speculative design project: *The Illegal Town Plan* and its *Illegal Museum of Beyond's* exhibition, *Objects of the Misanthropocene*. This recent project involved a time travelling exhibition of objects from the Illegal Museum of Beyond in the University, at the end of the longest pier in the world. The workshop will build into a participatory thought experiment, in which you will be invited to propose your own Department of the MPIWG situated at the far edges of the Anthropocene. This provides a speculative exploration of heritage care for living as well as possible in more-equitable, more-than-human worlds.



Figure 10. Objects of the Misanthropocene, A Time Travelling Exhibition of Insouciant Objects from the Museums of Beyond’s online exhibition, August 2020 (Sully et al. 2020).

Timetable:

9.00-9.45 am A heritage response to the Anthropocene: creative/heritage practice.

9.45-10.00 am Break.

10.00-10.45 am Discussion of the key components of the case study: *The Illegal Town Plan* and its *Museums of Beyond’s* exhibition, *Objects of the Misanthropocene*.

10.45-11.00 am Break.

11.00 am-12.30 pm Thought experiment: “The Max Planck at the end of the Pier.”

12.30-1.00 pm Further conversations.

Design your department of the MPIWG that will operate in the future, at the end of the longest pier in the world, situated at the far edges of the Anthropocene.

what science is this based on?

how does this world function?

what are the statues in the plazas, what statues are to be dumped into the sea?

what relics have been placed in the museum, what has been discarded along the way ?

Reading Resources

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Appendix 2 Glossary of Critical Heritage Terms

Anthropocene

Time is categorised by geologists within different epochs, demarcated by dramatic transformations evident in global strata formation. Recent global environmental changes causing a sustained, irreversible impact on the Earth and its inhabitants, suggest that we may have entered a new human-dominated geological epoch, leaving the Holocene and entering the Anthropocene (Crutzen 2002).

Establishing the Anthropocene as a new geological epoch has demanded increasing academic and popular attention over the past 20 years. The Anthropocene may have started in the 1940s, it may be traced to the cultural development of fire, domestication of plants and animals, expansion of agriculture, deforestation, capitalism, slavery, imperialism, the Industrial Revolution, globalisation, production of greenhouse gases, the Great Acceleration, human produced radioactive isotopes, anthropogenic global warming, technofossils, and more.

Unlike all other geological epochs, the Anthropocene is a geological thought experiment that looks back from a post-apocalypse future that collapses the future into the past, as a contemporary reiteration of the standard apocalypse narrative. Accepting that the future disaster is inevitable and mourning the lost future is part of the Anthropocene.

Atler-cenes: Capitalocene (Hornborg 2019), Chthulucene, Plantationocene (Haraway 2016), Coronacene.

Authorised Heritage Discourse

A term promoted by Laurajane Smith in *Uses of Heritage* (2006) that seeks to understand heritage as a process framed by a set of specific discourses that demarcate the ways in which heritage objects and places are constructed as present matters of concern.

Broken Worlds

Broken world thinking by Steven Jackson in *Rethinking Repair* (2014) is a contemporary world view of uncertainty, decay, fragmentation and breakdown, the antithesis of the modernist dream of progress, advancement and endless development. Tim Mulgan, *Ethics for a broken world, imagining philosophy after catastrophe* (2011) presents a broken future, as a position from which to retrospectively evaluate the philosophical justification of the moral choices made in previous generations that led to this broken world. The intergenerational injustice forces severe moral dilemmas on those who came after.

Co curating

A trans disciplinary collaborative participatory process of assembly (selecting, organising, and presenting) as a valid response to uncertainty and defunct ideas of deterministic management of outcomes.

Colonialism

Colonialism is the economic, military, cultural, religious, linguistic, epistemological dominance of one group over other people or territory. It is mostly an imbalanced relationship in which colonising people benefit from the exploitation of colonised people, land and resources. Colonialism is strongly associated with European Imperialism of the modern period of the Capitalocene.

Creative Practice

The technical, theoretical and applied knowledge that go into the creative process in order to make creative work.

Critical Heritage Studies

A critical perspective that engages the complex ways heritage is entangled within the challenges (socio-political, economic, cultural, and environmental issues) that confront the world today. Heritage is understood a phenomenon embedded in larger social networks. Rodney Harrison in *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (2013) advocates for heritage making to become an active process in assembling & shaping desired futures.

Decolonising

Decolonisation is a process of addressing the legacy of colonial injustices. This moves beyond the physical removal of colonial governance over a territory, to a response in removing dominant discourses & distorted hierarchies that impose cultural, epistemological, institutional, infrastructural, representational imbalances, in order to reclaim what has been lost through alternative or counter-hegemonic participatory action oriented research. Decolonisation offers a powerful tool to critique positions of power and dominant culture.

“The reach of imperialism into ‘our heads’ challenges those that belong to colonized communities ... to decolonize our minds, to recover ourselves”

Tuhiwai Smith, L. 1999 Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples

Ecosociological

An approach that re-integrates the nature-culture divide by engaging with a pluriversity of agents (human, non-human, non-animate) in the cumulative making of the world that can only be encountered in multiple scales of historical, political, economic, temporal, and spatial factors.

Forensic science

More than just the application of scientific method to the investigation of crime, it provides an object-centred analytical approach for an understanding of the world from the traces left by people in the making of the world. Locard's exchange principle ‘every contact leaves a trace’, is a basic principle of forensic science. Through an intimate contact with places, objects and their materials, every intervention is a reflection of its time and place, and its enduring effect on the forensic object will be traceable to our time.

Heritage Conservation

As Mitigating Change: ‘All measures and actions aimed at safeguarding tangible cultural heritage while ensuring its accessibility to present and future generations’ (ICOM-CC 2008).

As Managing Change: ‘The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance’ (HE Conservation Principles Draft 2017/(NPPF).

As Curating Change: Heritage conservation is engaged in assembling certain aspects of the present to be accessible in the making of future worlds, in doing so we make ourselves in making the world around us.

Epistemic Insouciance

A casual lack of concern for the method of truth production, an indifference to the evidence on which beliefs have a basis in reality. Speculative insouciance helps to disrupt the complex choreography of truth production, long enough for it to be reimagined into a belief in the reality of newly proposed worlds. This playful indifference towards the veracity of inquiry and truth production manifests as a defiant challenge to the predatory narratives of authorised knowledge production systems that tend to outcompete the truths of other worlds (Cassam 2018).

Material-based conservation

A conservation approach linked to foundational heritage documents (such as the Athens Charter (1931) and the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964)). These prioritise the materiality or monumentality of heritage as the focus for conservation action. This approach is based on principles of authenticity, and maintaining the historical and physical context of monuments, buildings, and sites. Conservation intervention is limited by concepts of anastylosis, minimum intervention, respect for historic evidence, avoidance of falsification, preservation of the original, and reversibility of interventions.

Material-Discursive Practices

Mutual entanglements of different materialities and non-material elements. These are co-products of human interactions, discourses, things, technical artifacts, possessions, and mobilities, among other things (Barad 2003, 818).

Modernity

The prevailing socio-cultural norms that constitute the modern era. It is a regime of historicity that is linear, causal and homogeneous, yet initiated through a conscious break with the past. The modern world is a total and irreversible invention that radically breaks us from our own past, and substitutes a new civilising future. This is not measured by calendar time, but by epistemological revolutions (e.g. science, technology, economics, religion and politics) in which nothing of that past survives (Latour 1993, 124). As an historical period, it arises with the end of Medieval Europe in the developments of the European Renaissance, Age of Reason, and the Enlightenment. It is associated with the rise of capitalism, its endings linked to the industrial wars of the twentieth Century.

More-than-human

A term widely used in environmental humanities, New Materialism, and Post-humanism to refer to the interconnectedness of human, non-human, and non-animate agencies in the creation of the world. As a hybridisation of culture-nature dualisms, it attends to the worlds of the different beings co-dwelling on Earth.

New Materialism

An interdisciplinary theoretical position related to the post-constructionist, ontological, and material turn (away from linguistic and social constructionist frameworks) in social and natural sciences, led by Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, Jane Bennett, and Manuel DeLanda. It promotes a reengagement with material phenomena, as an active constitutive force in co-producing the world.

Peoples-based conservation

A conservation approach that prioritises the welfare of people over preserving the physical “integrity” of the material past. The artifact of conservation therefore is not the conserved

object/place, but the resilient and sustainable relationships constructed between people and heritage.

People Centered Approaches

An ICOMOS/IUCN /ICCROM approach to the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage (2017 and beyond). This developed from ICCROM's *'Living Heritage Approach'*, which expanded into *People-Centred Approaches to Conservation and Management of Heritage* (2010-2017). This is a response to UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) and the Heritage and sustainable development paradigm. It represents a broader shift from the care of heritage alone, to the pursuit of well-being of peoples and their environments.

Perturbation

A disturbance in conditions causing a pronounced change in a system from its regular, equilibrium, or normal state, caused by an outside influence.

Pluriverse

The infinite set of all possible universes. This concept is used in the critical humanities as a strategic response to the violence of multipolar universalism. Associated with ontological pluralism (Bruno Latour, Isabelle Stengers, Donna Haraway), it advocates for a pluriversal ethical cosmopolitics based on interspecies and multi-natural kinships in the multiplicity of worlds and world-making practices that make up the more-than-human world.

Post humanism

An approach critical of the foundational assumptions of humanism that challenges inherent humanistic, anthropocentric, normative notions of humanness, in order to change the nature of thought about what it means to be human. This engages in dismantling human exceptionalism, and decentering the human and its anthropocentric universals (anthropological, political, scientific) in multiple discourses (evolutionary, ecological, technological). This has ethical implications in expanding moral concern and subjectivities beyond the human, to all inhabitants of the world.

Retroactive causality

A challenge to the concept of cause and effect in linear time, in which effects precede their causes, so a later event affects an earlier one. The use of Dupuy's concept of projected time identifies the only possible future as the future that occurs, rendering all other futures impossible (Dupuy 2007). The consequences of constructing a future so real and so certain, casts a shadow over the present, which creates the conditions for this future to become the preferred reality. Replacing a concept of linear time with time symmetry enables a past to be created, which creates its own conditions for becoming a reality, in the same way that a projected future becomes real. The past is a product of the present, and the present is a product of the future, not the other ways around.

Salvage paradigm

An anthropological term, linked to modernity, that describes the desire to rescue something authentic out of what is left behind in the destructive historical changes resulting from an advancing progressive world system. The authentic remains of the past are assembled to provide evidence of what has been lost, and reflect the absences created in the progress towards a new optimistic future.

Speculative Futures

Possible futures can be seen in terms of what is plausible, probable, or preferable: What could happen-what is *plausible* (from accepted current principles); What is likely to happen-what is *probable* (business-as-usual); and what we want to happen- what is *preferable* (as varied as are our value judgements).

Speculative Methods

Speculative methods are utilised in order to explore ways to move beyond the plausible future and shape preferable futures. These methods for future making/world building are deployed by posing *What if* questions that aim to make reality more malleable. Speculation methods utilise the tension between the real and constructed, the factual and fictional.

Speculative techniques, such as Critical Speculative Design, Design for Debate, Design Fiction, Participatory Speculation, Speculative Insouciance, etc., allow the exploration of the uncertainties of everyday life and emerging worlds, in a new light using 'fiction as method' (Dunne & Raby 2013).

Sympoietic

Haraway's *sympoietic* collective systems are without self-defined spatial and temporal boundaries, unpredictable, dynamic, non-equilibrated, uncertain worlds as the manifestation of the pluripotentialities of the world in formation. They are the opposite of *autopoietic* systems, treated as if they are meta stable equilibrating predictable entities, that can be mastered by human control.

Tautology

A circular argument, where the intended conclusion is contained in the premise of the argument. It therefore assumes the very thing that is meant to be proven, and therefore will always turn out to be true.

Temporality

The continuous changes that translate things from the past into newly fabricated things in the present. An object's relationship with time as a relational coordinate through events in human experience in order to negotiate the enduring present. This goes beyond the linear progression of time (past, present, and future) as an intrinsic property that locates an object. Time is not a general framework defined by a calendar, but a provisional result of the connection amongst entities, as networks that connect beings (Latour 1993,77).

Transcultural

Processes that engage in the transformation of established 'traditional' cultural categories into new fluid hybrid forms of being. This transgresses boundaries around traditional identities between and within nation states.

Values-based conservation

A systematic conservation approach to the management of heritage places and objects, based on an assessment of heritage values and cultural significance ascribed bthrough physical examination, historical research, and community consultation (Kerr 1996). The process consists of three interrelated stages: understanding the significance; developing policy; and managing in accordance with policy. The production of a statement of significance is used to provide a clear reference point from which to consider the impact of proposed conservation actions. This is currently the most broadly applied approach to conservation practice, largely based on the Burra Charter (ICOMOS Australia, 1999).