

Lurid Space – Ecology Beyond Organisms

PhD Course in Art History, University of Oslo

1-2 November 2018

The relationship of the subject to the environment is a vital, recurring trope in aesthetic and ecological philosophies. From landscape theory to Darwinian natural history, from von Uexküll's *umwelten* to notions of mimetic immersion, *stimmung*, and atmosphere, the interest in drawing the limit, or lack thereof, between the organism and its milieu has been of continual significance to spatial thinking.

This seminar proposes a move to the outer fringes of this quandary, in order to examine notions of radical depersonalisation through assimilation to space. From our present ecologised ontology in which the nature-culture binary has supposedly collapsed, we wish to probe ways of thinking that rethink subjective and objective space and reformulate notions of environment, ecology and milieu. What kinds of movements, conceptualizations, and ontico-aesthetic practices reconfigure, alter, and perhaps erase, the fringes between the subject and the environments? How has work on membranes, atmospheres, hyperobjects, the death drive, materialism, radical ethologies, and modes of inertia contributed to such an endeavour? We wish to seek out and explore historical precursors and theoretical models that have problematized or experimented with the boundaries between the organism and its surroundings in critical, aesthetic and spatial modes of thinking. Is there such a thing as space purified from subjectivity and what ecology might it give rise to? Is there a continuum between human beings and their environment? What would an ecology without organisms possibly look like? And how have artists, theorists, and writers adopted critical positions in order to respond to, attack, or intervene in the pressing ecological configuration?

The seminar will explore the triangulation of space, the environment and the subject through multiple disciplines, such as art history, architecture, environmental humanities, comparative studies, and science. A reading list will be made available a month before the seminar and will include texts of Roger Caillois, Gregory Bateson, Timothy Morton, Spyros Papapetros, and Catherine Malabou, among others.

Topics might include but are not restricted to:

- Theories of membrane, interval, or surface
- Critical investigations of the concept of “ecology” and/or “the environment”
- Historical case studies of spatial depersonalisation
- Theoretical attitudes towards the notion of the inorganic
- Design, visual arts or architecture as political ecologies
- Death and extinction
- The intersections between possession and dispossession
- Love, sex, and eroticism

Keynote speaker:

Spyros Papapetros, Associate Professor of History and Theory of Architecture, Princeton University

Relevant publications for this seminar:

On the Animation of the Inorganic: Art, Architecture, and the Extension of Life (2012)

Retracing the Expanded Field: Encounters between Art and Architecture (2014, co-editor)

Space as Membrane, by Siegfried Ebeling (2010, editor)

Formal requirements:

The course will give 3 ECTS and the participants are asked to:

- 1) Prepare a working paper (5 pages, times new roman 12, spacing 1,5) that presents the PhD project and discusses the project in relation to the topic and the reading list. Before the seminar, the participants are required to read each other's papers.
- 2) At the seminar, the participants will give a short presentation of 15 minutes that contextualises and problematizes their work in relation to the topic. A reading list will be sent out in due time and it is expected that the presentation reflects on issues that are discussed in the literature.

Application Process:

Those who would like to attend should submit a short abstract of their paper by the 15th of August latest (300 words). If the number of applicants exceeds 12, a selection will be made on the basis of relevance, affiliation and status of PhD training; beyond that, early applications will be prioritized. Papers to be presented must be submitted by the 15th of October latest. After this date papers will be made available to the participants.

Application deadline: 15 August 2018

To apply, send a brief abstract to ingrid.halland@ifikk.uio.no

www.luridspace.com

Convenors

Emil Leth Meilvang & Ingrid Halland, PhD Research Fellows

Aron Vinegar, Professor

Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, University of Oslo