

[CFP: Mountain Aesthetics and Ecology: The Conceptual Heritage of Alexander von Humboldt in the Americas \(UNAM, Mexico City, Sept. 18-20, 2019\)](#)

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

September 18, 2019 to September 20, 2019

Location:

Mexico

Subject Fields:

Latin American and Caribbean History / Studies, Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Geography, American History / Studies, Environmental History / Studies

Call for Proposals

Travel Grants for PhD students and recent PhDs

Mountain Aesthetics and Ecology: The Conceptual Heritage of Alexander von Humboldt in the Americas, an international, transdisciplinary colloquium, will take place in Mexico City at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) September 18-20, 2019 (plus an optional, half-day thematic excursion to museums and sites). Co-organized by the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas and the Terra Foundation for American Art, this colloquium will convene academics and curators, as well as geologists, artists, and philosophers to share recent work and analytic models for engaging with the legacy of Alexander von Humboldt.

For a brief description of the concept, format, and a list of confirmed speakers see below.

As part of this project, funding is available to offset the costs of travel for advanced PhD students and recent PhDs working in this field of art history, focused on geo-aesthetics and eco-criticism. Grant amounts will be calculated based on the travel needs of successful applicants. Travel grant recipients will also have the opportunity to share a ten minute presentation on their own work.

Applicants are invited to submit a current CV and a 500 word proposal outlining how participation in this colloquium relates to and would benefit their current research. Please send application materials via email no later

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than July 26, 2019 to:

Peter Krieger, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas
Research Professor (investigador)

Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
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Concept, Format, and Confirmed Speakers

Alexander von Humboldt is the founding father of a global “Mountain Geo-Ecology”. His geological and botanical explorations of the mountain regions in the Spanish colonial Americas was guided by an aesthetic understanding of landscapes. He inspired many contemporary landscape painters in the Americas, and he also innovated the graphic representation of scientific research related to the botanical and geophysical conditions of mountains. With the differentiation of disciplines that split the sciences and the humanities at universities during the nineteenth century, the application of Humboldt’s transdisciplinary, global, and critical model of environmental research was dispersed across the academy and eventually dismissed altogether.

This colloquium inspires a close reading of mountain landscapes and geological formations in different cultural epochs and regions. These readings will primarily focus on images of the Americas, but will include comparative studies from Europe, Australia, and other parts of the world. One goal of the colloquium is to foster transdisciplinary research concepts and innovative knowledge production related to the debates on the Anthropocene with its expressions of crisis such as landscape alteration by hyper-urbanization (Mexico City being a paradigmatic showcase), infrastructural impact, erosion, pollution, and other phenomena. Indeed, Humboldt was the first important critic of climate change caused by anthropogenic impacts. Though shaped by an early nineteenth-century worldview, Humboldt’s ways of seeing and conceptualizing bear an epistemological potential, a “conceptual heritage” for current eco-aesthetical and critical research in art history and *Bildwissenschaft* (visual studies). With the aim of understanding the production and reception of visual schema representing mountain sceneries, and a special focus on the discursive impact of art works (and other types of images) in the natural sciences and in environmental politics, this colloquium seeks to re-establish and stimulate dialogue between the sciences, the humanities, and the visual arts.

Speakers will give 25 minute talks devoted to the close analysis of a single object (a painting, print, photograph, diagram, etc.) dating from the eighteenth- to twenty-first centuries. These talks will be interspersed with moderated roundtable discussions with geologists, biologists, and environmental historians. The colloquium's languages will be English and Spanish, with simultaneous translation. A publication will be prepared based on the results of the colloquium, to be co-published by the Terra Foundation for American Art and the UNAM Press.

Confirmed speakers include:

Dr. Jens Baumgarten

Professor of Art History
Universidade Federal de São Paulo (UNIFESP)
São Paulo, Brazil

Dr. Alan Braddock

Ralph H. Wark Associate Professor of Art History and American Studies
The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia

Dr. Carles Canet

Research professor of Geology
UNAM
Mexico City, Mexico

Luis Carrera-Maul

Artist
Mexico City, Mexico

Dr. Silke Cram

Research Professor of Geography and Director of the Ecological Reserve at UNAM (REPSA)
UNAM
Mexico City, Mexico

Dr. Rachael DeLue

Professor of American Art
Department of Art & Archaeology

Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Dr. Eduardo García Alonso

Architect and Professor
Pachuca, Mexico

Dr. Eleanor Harvey

Senior Curator
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Washington, DC

Dr. James Nisbet

Associate Professor, Art History
University of California Irvine
Irvine, California

Dr. Omar Olivares

Postdoctoral Researcher at the GRI
Mexico City, Mexico

Dr. Peter Schneemann

Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History
Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Universität Bern
Bern, Switzerland

Dr. h.c. George Steinmann

Artist
Bern, Switzerland

Dr. Veronica Uribe

Chair, Department of Art History
Universidade de Los Andes
Bogota, Colombia

Dr. Humberto Urquiza

Research Professor of Environmental History
UNAM
Mexico City, Mexico

Dr. Christoph Wagner

Professor of Art History
Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Universität Regensburg
Regensburg, Germany

Dr. Gerhard Wolf

Director and Professor of Art History
Kunsthistorisches Institut Florenz
Florence, Italy

Contact Info:

Please contact co-organizer Peter Krieger via email with your submissions:

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