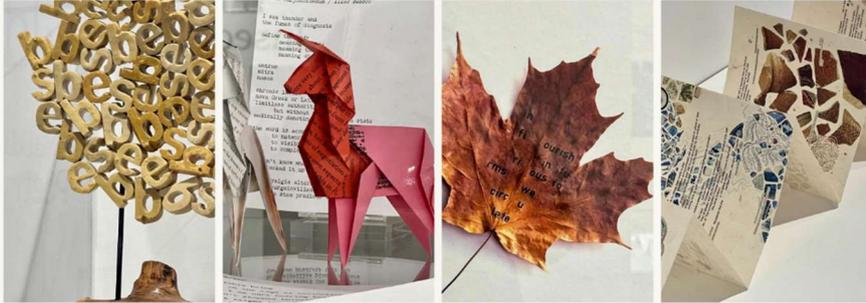


Words and Worlds

Languages and Ecologies Symposium



Friday 22nd March 2024
Royal Holloway, University of London

**Confirmed guest speaker: [Professor Simon Morris](#) (Leeds School of Art,
Leeds Beckett University)**

Call for contributions!

The **Words and Worlds** symposium will explore the possibilities of language as an intermediary between humans, plants, animals, and other nonhuman beings. This event responds to the themes of the **Words from the Wild** exhibition of visual and material eco-poetry at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Eco-poetries and ecopoetics are concerned with closely observing, being with, and gathering from the more-than-human world. They often feature elements that indicate a multiplicity of origins, such as translation, rewriting, sampling, intermedia, and collaboration with nonhuman actors and processes. Adopting these practices in literary and artistic work acknowledges that the world is shared by various beings and agencies that generate meaning-making networks together.

The current ecological crisis brings to the fore how humans, among all other forms of life, are entangled within the biosphere, and several theorists help us to understand the role of human

writing culture within that entanglement. Donna Haraway sees human and non-human life bound together in a process of sympoiesis, a conception of becoming-with and creating together that encourages us to make ‘kin’ with all manner of living beings. Theorists of decolonial ecology (Malcolm Ferdinand, Julietta Singh) underline the importance of bringing questions of environments and nonhuman others into conversation with the impacts of imperialism, settler colonialism, and social injustice.

Contemporary eco-poets seek to question and reimagine human relationships with our earth and its fellow inhabitants. The subjects and collaborations by poets featured in the exhibition range from deer to estuarine flows, bees to branches, pollen to moths, birds to subterranean stems. Their inspirations come from the mid-twentieth-century Concrete Poetry movement, the avant-garde poetics of Gertrude Stein, the experimentations and procedures of Maggie O’Sullivan, Joan Retallack, Kathleen Fraser, as well as earlier traditions, such as medieval poetics and kennings of Old English.

We warmly invite proposals for critical and creative contributions that engage with the entangled possibilities of words and worlds. Possible subject areas include:

- Multi-sensory poetry
- The role of digital media in ecopoetic practice
- Materiality of text-based creative practice
- Creative/poetic engagement with the nonhuman including:
 - Animals, birds and insects
 - Plants, trees and fungi
 - Water, weather, atmosphere
 - Ecosystems and assemblages
 - Mineral and geopoetics
- Alternative modes of publishing poetry
- Language loss and extinction, linguistic diversity
- Indigenous, black, and decolonial ecologies and ecopoetics
- Intersemiotic translation and creative rewriting
- Alternative models to poetic ‘genius’ – poetry as mycelium/rhizome/entanglement

We invite contributions in a variety of formats, including 15-minute papers, 5-minute lightning talks, poetry readings/performances, and roundtable discussions. As Royal Holloway benefits from a wooded campus location, proposals for contributions suited to an outdoor setting (weather permitting!) are also welcome.

If you would like to submit a contribution, please send a 250-word abstract/proposal and short bio to wordsandworlds.symposium@gmail.com by **Friday 9th February**. We will notify successful applicants by mid-February.

To find out more about the symposium and exhibition, visit:

<https://royalholloway.ac.uk/about-us/the-library/the-exhibition-space-at-the-emily-wilding-davison-building/words-from-the-wild/>

This symposium is supported by the Poetics Research Centre, the Centre for Visual Cultures, and the Living Sustainably Catalyst at Royal Holloway.

Pictured works (L-R): Astra Papachristodoulou, *bee swarm*; Caroline Harris and Cat Chong, *Dear / Deer*; Kate Siklosi, *Leavings*; Hannah Harding, *We Who Collect*



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