

VISUALITY AND EXTRACTION

Abstracts and participant biographies

Keynote: Laura Sillars

Mineral Technologies: Tracing the aesthetics of extraction from arts history to the digital screen.

Laura Sillars is Director of the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA). Her professional research interests circle around issues of art and its relationship to the civic realm. She has spent 20 years working in curatorial roles in art galleries in the UK and abroad including Tate, FACT, MOCAD (Detroit) the New Museum (New York) and Site Gallery. She has worked on major city wide festivals including Liverpool Biennial ('04,'06 and '08), Abandon Normal Devices ('08 and '10) and Art Sheffield ('11 and '15). As a Director, her interests focus around the role of arts institutions within civic and public life.

Her academic research focuses on strategies and tactics employed by visual artists whose work critiques aspects of contemporary civic society. She focuses on a small number of case studies on artists who directly investigate the social, geo-physical and economic infrastructure of technology. The material has clear art historical precedents; it draws from mystical, spiritual and Romantic traditions as well as from material developed within the field of techno-science and popular culture.

Keynote: David Campbell

'Losing the Play': How Competitive Photojournalism Led to the Wrongful Attribution of an Iconic War Photograph

[David Campbell](#) is an educator with a uniquely varied history of research, writing, strategy, and management within academia, government, and non-profit organizations. He thinks about changes in the information economy, political trends, the power of images, what makes for good journalism, and the challenges of visual storytelling.

Since 2021, David has been working with The VII Foundation, where he is the Director of Education, responsible for the foundation's education programs, online and hybrid events, and [Dispatches: The VII Foundation Blog](#).

Rio Creech

Rubber and Rifles: the role of photography in the fight to dominate the natural rubber industry in late colonial Malaya

In this paper I discuss mobilisations of photography by British and US rubber corporations in 1950s in attempts to defeat insurgent forces and maintain control of the natural rubber industry in Malaya [known today as Malaysia]. I focus on Life magazine's advertorial coverage promoting investment in rubber products, sponsored by an organisation called the Natural Rubber Bureau. I show how imagery became a vehicle for promoting capitalist and conservative American values, contextualising this within the framework of the international Cold War and challenges posed to colonial rule throughout the British Empire during the 'Emergency' era [1948-60]. I explore differences between uses of rubber plantation photography between British and US publications. I reflect on the value of photographic history as an entry point into re-framing histories of colonial war, which are often framed as ideological struggles, overlooking the importance of resource/labour exploitation and commodity culture in shaping these conflicts.

Rio Creech-Nowagiel is a postdoctoral researcher currently based in the Department of History at the University of Nottingham, as part of a three-year AHRC-funded project titled 'Resettling the Colonial Lens: Photography and the [Re]making of Malaysia's New Villages'. Rio completed their PhD in 2024 at Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Culture in partnership with Imperial War Museums, which focused imperial images and imaginaries in Britain and the US during the Malayan 'Emergency' campaign. Rio holds an MA in Museum Studies and has experience working within the cultural heritage sector, working closely with object collections and producing exhibitions.

Rosalind Hayes

Extracting Animals: Creaturely Materiality and Early Photography

Photography is an inherently extractive medium. Recent scholarship has shown the extent to which photographic plates, film, and development relied upon the extraction of rare earth minerals and the use of pollutant chemicals. Less commonly recognised is the extraction of materials from animals, such as gelatine, albumen and casein. Labelled as 'byproducts' of the meat and tanning industries, these ingredients are not generally considered as 'extracted' because they are secondary to the intended outcome. This paper will argue that early analogue photography's animal materials were extracted, just like silver and carbon were mined. Gelatine dry plates were popular because they improved the speed and convenience of photography relative to the

medium's formative years. Nevertheless, photographers and technicians faced new problems introduced with the material, which was initially hard to regulate and use in certain climates. By looking at adverts and correspondence in specialist journals which highlight the drawbacks as well as the potential of this material, it becomes possible to nuance photographic histories which claim gelatine ushered in the age of Modern photography overnight. Moreover, the production of dry plates in Britain relied on imports of animal matter from all over the globe, showing the extent of this extractive enterprise. This paper will detail the geographical origins of gelatine, revealing the colonial tradeways which were essential to the production of British photographic gelatine in the late nineteenth century. It is also important to consider how some contemporary photographers are now trying to move away from the extraction of animal matter within their own practices, and instead integrating other organic materials, and in turn reevaluating the purpose of photography today.

Dr Rosalind Hayes is Career Development Fellow in Visual Studies at the University of Durham, UK, specialising in nineteenth-century British art history. Her research interests span animal studies, meat-eating, British imperial history, and art's animal materialities. A book chapter titled 'Photography Needs Animals: Materials, Processes and Colonial Supply Chains of Gelatine Dry Plates' is forthcoming in *Animal Modernities*, ed. Katie Hornstein and Daniel Harkett. She was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (2023-24).

Sophie Piper

Towards an Inclusive Re/visualisation of Women's Work

Women have played an instrumental role in Sunderland's industrial economy, yet their contribution lacks the visibility that men's labour in shipbuilding and coal mining have in official histories and museum displays.

The recent recognition of women's wartime work in the shipyards has included the sharing of archival photographs. However, there are many more female contributions to the city's labour force that remain hidden. The Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens and the Sunderland Antiquarian Society have archival photographs documenting aspects of many of these occupations however they remain largely inaccessible to the public. The museum's material is mostly uncharted, lacks cohesive accessioning and is only partially digitised and the Antiquarian's photographs, although digitised, are not yet visible on their website so can only be viewed sporadically in a newsletter or on social media.

My research seeks to explore and acknowledge the significance of women's work in Sunderland through the mapping, reframing and dissemination of archival photographs to create new visual interpretations.

I will share a collaboration with a group of local artists in which we explored the changing nature of women's work in Sunderland from WWII to 1970. We used Participatory Action Research and collaborative methods to engage with the archival materials, draw on our collective embodied experiences of work and create a visual narrative of women's work in Sunderland.

I will discuss my socially engaged practice and how my methods evolved during the participatory action process, illustrating how mapping played an integral part in developing the narrative. I will conclude with the project's impact and an overview of a new online interactive map of women's work in Sunderland.

My presentation will demonstrate the value of community engagement in reframing archival photographs to enable a multiplicity of voices in the historical visual narrative. "

Sophie is a photographic artist, specialising in portraiture. She was recipient of the Royal Photographic Society Peter Hansell Scholarship in 2017, the NEPN DEVELOP Award in 2016 and was selected as an Emerging British Photographer by the Canadian Publisher Magenta in 2011. She is currently undertaking a practice-based PhD in collaboration with Northern Centre of Photography and Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens.

Penelope Anthias

Urukurenda: In Search of the Land Without Evil (Īvĩ Maraëĩ)

My research examines struggles around indigeneity, territory and the politics of resource extraction in Latin America. This work is grounded in a decade and a half of engaged ethnographic research in Bolivia's Chaco region.

My work is theoretically heterodox and interdisciplinary, drawing inspiration from anti-colonial, Marxist and Foucaultian traditions to offer an empirically-grounded account of how colonial relations are reproduced and contested at resource frontiers, and in struggles over land and property. I have contributed to debates in political ecology, postcolonial geographies, legal geography, anthropology of development, and critical agrarian studies, among others.

At the heart of my approach is a commitment to centring the voices of Indigenous peoples and other racialised rural populations, not only as sources of empirical knowledge but as producers of geographical theory. This has led me to methodological

experimentation, combining long-term ethnography with participatory methods, counter-mapping and, most recently, documentary film-making.

Sabina Sallis

How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Planet: A Non-Extractive Approach to Art and Knowledge. Pedagogy Against Extraction: Earthbound Learning as Radical Visuality.

For Visuality and Extraction, I propose an artistic intervention into the symposium format in which I will take participants outside on an art walk.

In response to an acceleration in new forms of extraction brought about by climate change—this art walk shares an approach to art, pedagogy, and research as an earthbound, non-extractive mode of learning and community building. Drawing on ephemeral land practices, it seeks to reimagine visuality and storytelling as a relational and dialogical, rather than extractive; methodology— that resists the colonial legacies of knowledge appropriation and instrumentalization.

Recontextualising Joseph Beuys' iconic performance *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, and Lygia Clark's *Walking (Caminhando)*-a participatory proposition that embodies process, transformation, and continuous becoming- this art walk re-animates enigmatic gestures from the mystical to the material, from art's symbolic engagement to its potential for ecological renewal. This work invites participants into a conversation with the living world, engaging in slow, durational acts of attentiveness through foraging walk and experimental art interventions. It proposes a departure from institutionalized extractivist frameworks, instead constructing a post-scarcity, land-based practice animated by the possibility of living, loving and working well.

Art here is not a commodity but a commons, a site of speculation, experimentation, and radical pedagogy. This project explores how artistic research—when practiced as an intuitive, embodied, and joyful multispecies encounter—can resist reductionist epistemologies and expand possibilities for knowledge creation. By excavating the esoteric and ecological undercurrents within radical art education, this work critiques technocratic academic paradigms that have marginalized experimental approaches. It asks: Can artistic research cultivate an ethics of care? How can non-linear, multimodal, and multispecies methodologies reshape knowledge practice? This project builds an alternative mode of inquiry—akin to foraging-an open-ended yet rigorous, fostering more equitable, ecologically attuned futures beyond the extractive gaze.

I am an associate lecturer in Fine Art at Newcastle University where since 2019 I have been delivering an innovative strand module *Multispecies Thinking and Making*. I'm the

founder and responsible person for artist led initiative- Albion Row Studios in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

I am an artist, researcher, and educator working at the intersection of land-based practice, speculative world-building, and radical pedagogy. Through expanded art practices, I investigate entanglement of nature-culture and alternative knowledge systems rooted in connection, cultivation, and care- engagement with plants, healing and cosmology.

I graduated with MA from University of Arts in Poznan, Poland (2005) and with a practice-based PhD on the Aesthetics of Sustainability from Newcastle University (2023). I have exhibited nationally and internationally, gaining competitive residencies and commissions for significant projects, e.g. Multispecies Visionary Institute (Berwick Gymnasium Gallery, 2021) and Greetings from the Mother of Herbs (BALTIC, 2022-2023), attracting 80,000+ visitors. I co-founded and co-lead Albion Row Studios in Newcastle. My practice extends into decentralised co-creation with organizations like the International Community Organization of Sunderland and Gem Arts, facilitating experiences that encourage care and multispecies engagement.

Sahar Sagha

Instagram as a Digital Mine During the Protest

Within the visually saturated environment of digital culture, visual narratives shape everyday experiences and moments of collective resistance. However, their role becomes even more significant in times of protest, where images act as invisible threads, connecting individuals emotionally and politically. This paper explores Instagram as a 'digital mine'—a platform that extracts and transforms a narrow range of visual content into potent symbols of protest. This extraction occurs not only in the initial generation of social media content, where specific images are selected and amplified but also within the researcher's methodology, necessitating careful navigation of the vast digital landscape.

By analysing Instagram's role as a repository of protest narratives, I examine how visual storytelling during protests reconstructs human communication, turning acts of viewing, reading, and reinterpretation into processes of collective identity formation. My study also explores the semantic layers Instagram imposes on protest imagery through remediation, where images are continuously reshaped, recontextualized, and circulated to sustain visibility. I argue that remediation functions as Instagram's extraction tool, ensuring that protest narratives remain in an overwhelming flood of digital content while simultaneously shaping and controlling their meaning.

Furthermore, this paper addresses the ethical dimensions of these extractive research practices, questioning how researchers extract relevant material from the numberless quantity of internet images and considering the implications of such extraction on the representation and preservation of protest narratives. This includes critically reflecting on the ethical policies and considerations in analysing and interpreting digitally extracted protest visuals.

"I am a dedicated PhD researcher specializing in photography studies, media, and communication, with a strong focus on the emotional and cultural dimensions of visual narratives. My interdisciplinary work explores how images shape human connections, emotions, perceptions, and social discourse in contemporary media landscapes during protests.

With expertise in visual analysis, cultural studies, and media theory, I investigate the intersections of photography, digital media, and communication, offering insights into how visual culture influences emotions and public engagement. I am passionate about research that bridges theory and practice, contributing to academic discourse, creative industries, and media analysis."

Peter Whitton

Extracting academic identity: doors and desks, the social production of personal university spaces

Recent decades have seen the impact of neoliberal philosophies and free market economics on higher education systems in the UK and worldwide. These forces emphasise increased productivity, efficiency, and standardisation (Abramovitz & Zelnick, 2021) and alignment with market demands and private benefits rather than as a driver broader societal wellbeing and cohesion. Neoliberal practices are enacted through managerialist discourse, action and the social production of university spaces (Whitton, 2018) and their artefacts and are embedded in every aspect of academic life.

This study analyses two sets of academic artifacts, doors and desks, and chronicles the relocation of academic staff working for the School of Education at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) from an historic campus in the suburbs to a purpose build campus in the city centre. It explores the questions of how and why do staff express personal and professional identity in university spaces?

Pictorial and interview data were used to analyse the lived experiences of staff, particularly how spaces in the old campus and the new building were personalised and transformed by some staff to express their own constructions of identity (Tian & Belk, 2005; Ng & Höpfl, 2014) in defiance of management wishes. Photographic images of doors and workstations were used as data. Each image featured items that members of

staff had used to customise their space (for example pictures, postcards, plants and mementos). The contents of each image were recorded, coded and categorised as personal, political or professional items (many items spanned several categories). These data, in combination with interview material, were used to build up a detailed picture of how some staff tactically appropriated space (de Certeau, 1984) as an expression of personal freedom within the tightly regulated space of the new building

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Pete Whitton is a Senior Academic Development Manager in the Durham Centre for Academic Development (DCAD). He leads the Researcher Development Programme (RDP) for Durham's c.1450 PGR students and the Gateway to Academic Practice (GAP) programme he is also Dissertation Supervisor in the School of Education. Before Pete moved into academia, he was a commercial designer working in retail and financial interiors.

Sarah Comyn and Megan Kuster (UCD)

The 'EXTRACTS' project: Fostering collectives of creative-critical practice

This paper reflects on our motivation to enact ways of "relating otherwise" by designing and delivering a critical-creative reading-making group that works collaboratively across disciplines to analyse extractivism, visuality, and the de-colonial. Considering extractivism as a pervasive "syndrome comprising the various pathological effects of political and economic dependency on resource extraction" (Riofrancos, 2020), our project emerges from a motivation to invest in ways of working that counter/exceed/evade extractivist modes of relating. Especially inspired by the Extracting Us Collective (Owen et al, 2023; <https://extractingus.org/>), EXTRACTS

emerged through an iterative processes that centres mutuality and creativity and features short form, exploratory, visual art making-practices as a strategy for collaborative critical analysis. This is the context for the first part of the paper, which situates how EXTRACTS emerged and describes the format, infrastructure, and collaborative elements of the reading-making group and linked podcast series. The second part of the paper reflects on some key insights that have emerged for us through the EXTRACTS project. These include a consideration of what emerges when we bring our discussions of critical frameworks for analysing extractivism into conversation with collective engagement in reflective practices of experimenting with creative techniques that foreground visual culture as mode of critiquing extractivism and focus on the materiality of our tools and created objects. We elaborate on how EXTRACTS has reenergised our research and teaching, fostering relationships and ideas that have shifted how we work within and across disciplinary, institutional, and sectoral boundaries, pushing us to consider how we might cultivate an ongoing community of practice at the intersections of art, extractivism, and critical environmental humanities. The third part of the paper enacts some of these ideas through an interactive craft-making session involving nineteenth- and twentieth-century extractivism texts and colour markers (which will be provided) in which participants are invited to create and reflect on their experience making a “black-out found poem.”

Keywords: reflective praxis; “relating otherwise”; creative collective; visual arts and activist responses to extractivism

Sarah Comyn is an Assistant Professor in School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin. She is the PI of the Research Ireland-funded project, [Minerals](#), which is investigating the impact of the extractive mineral industries on the developing Anglophone literary cultures of the British settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa in the period 1842–1910. She has collaborated with artists across a number of different projects exploring the legacies of extractivism globally. Recent publications include: *Political Economy* (Routledge, 2024) and *Worlding the South* (Manchester, 2021; ed. with Porscha Fermanis).

Megan Kuster is a literary studies scholar and currently the Research Lead in the Humanities Institute at University College Dublin. Her main research interests are the study of environmental humanities in nineteenth- and twentieth-century settler colonial and postcolonial literature, especially around issues of global natural history, mining, and labour; and contemporary collaborative creativity, particularly around practices of regeneration. She has published articles on Katherine Mansfield, and natural history collecting in nineteenth-century New Zealand in *Tinakori: Critical Journal of the Katherine Mansfield Society* and the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*.

Jennifer Terry

Sedimenting Black Geologies in Fiction and Art

In dialogue with Kathryn Yusoff's enquiry in *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, my talk asks 'How is geology an operation of power, as well as a temporal explanation for life on the planet?' Yusoff explores the transactions between (extractive) geology and inhumanism within the material registers of colonialism and capitalism. This allows her to expose what she terms White Geology and multiple and ongoing extinctions or Anthropocenes. In Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* (1987), I will trace the indivisibility of environmental and racial histories, in particular examining Paul D's labour and the significances of stone imagery. I also locate concerns with social violence, energy histories and grand narratives of progress and expansion in works by the contemporary Black diaspora visual artists Lorna Simpson (2016-2024) and Ellen Gallagher (2008, 2016, 2017). Their art addresses extractive logic and enacts forms of 'sedimentation,' aspects that find expression in representations of geological processes, temporal disjunctures and the foregrounding of a suggestive materiality.

Through this mixed media range of material, I seek to insert Black diaspora engagements into North American accounts of environment that have ignored them. The selected works enable us to see the interrelation between the consumption of resources drawn from the earth and the exhaustive extraction of other resources in the form of labour, knowledge, feeling and Black life. Here we can begin to identify the 'new language of geology' for which Yusoff calls.

Jennifer Terry is an Associate Professor of English at Durham University. She works at the intersections of American hemispheric, US and postcolonial studies, with a particular focus on Black and African diaspora literatures and cultures. She has published extensively on the novelist Toni Morrison and other contemporary Black writers. Her book *'Shuttles in the Rocking Loom': Mapping the Black Diaspora in African American and Caribbean Fiction* appeared with Liverpool University Press in 2013. Terry's current research project turns to narratives of futurity in African American fiction and visual art. She leads the new research network 'African Atlantic Lives and Visual Culture.'

Adam Bridgen

Imagining Slow Violence during the Industrial Revolution: Metaphors of Extraction in Labouring-Class Poetry

Slow violence — that is, the gradual, often unperceived effects and unanticipated outcomes of extractivism's disturbance of social and environmental ecologies — has often been presented as a challenge for representation, particularly within the visual

realm. This paper engages with this issue by considering the visualisation of extraction within the late-eighteenth century, and also the countervailing opportunities offered within working-class poetry.

Specifically, I focus on the British ‘shoemaker-poet’ James Woodhouse (1735-1820), who spent seventeen years working as the steward and agricultural improver of the country estate of his literary patron (a landowner and later, Northumbrian coal mine owner). Extracts from Woodhouse’s 1790s verse autobiography — from his early encapsulation of the large-scale iron industries of Shropshire, to his resistance to landscape conventions that idealised and hid the changes defacing British society and culture — reveal how creative strategies were then being developed ‘from below’ to overcome the supposed imperceptibility of slow violence.

Specially, I argue that Woodhouse utilises poetic metaphors — of drainage and deluge — to create a space for imagining the immediate as well as potential future impacts of extractivism. Re-reading this radical articulation of the environmental threats of capitalist improvement offers further pause to the notion of ‘slow violence’. Intervening in contemporary debates regarding the challenges of developing an ‘environmentalism of the poor’, I trace how Woodhouse’s adaptive use of visual metaphors offers a remarkably early and noteworthy example of conceptualising and condemning extractive violence

Adam Bridgen is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Durham University. His research explores the class dynamics of writing on transatlantic slavery, resource extraction, and human-animal relationships during the long eighteenth century. He has published widely on these topics, contributing chapters to *Romantic Environmental Sensibility: Nature, Class and Empire* (2022), *Animal Theologians* (2023), and *Bluestockings and Landscape in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2025). He is the co-editor of *Working-Class and Radical Writing Since 1700*, forthcoming with University of London Press, and is currently finishing a monograph entitled *Antislavery Before Abolition: Labouring-Class Writers and the Poetics of Empire, 1570-1788* for Oxford University Press.

Rebecca Macklin

Visualising Relations in the Tar Sands: Extraction, Aesthetics, and Repair

How do we visualise oil extraction? What logics and beliefs are bound up in the dominant images that we associate with sites of oil production? The tar sands in northern Alberta is often referred to as the largest industrial project on earth. Representations of this space are frequently bound up with the petrosublime, an aesthetic that laments totalising environmental devastation in the name of “Human” progress. Images, such as those by Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky, rarely

include humans or animals - instead they reduce this space to its function as an extractive zone (Gomez-Barris). And yet, in this paper I want to highlight artworks that challenge this representation by rendering the northern Alberta landscape as a living ecosystem: one that comprises an enduring web of relations with human and nonhuman communities that are both alive and ancestral. Drawing on feminist and Indigenous frameworks, I ask what it means to refuse to see this site as one that is beyond repair and instead emphasise the networks of caregiving and reciprocal responsibility that persist.

Rebecca Macklin is Interdisciplinary Fellow in Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity at the University of Aberdeen. She gained a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Leeds in 2020 and was a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Edinburgh. Her research sits at the intersection of Indigenous studies and the environmental humanities and seeks to understand the radical potential of the arts in social and environmental transitions, with a particular focus on gender and feminist practice. She is completing a monograph that explores the relationality of anti-colonial narratives in Native American and South African contemporary fiction.

Mike Crang

***‘Through the hush’d Chorasmian waste... shorn and parcell’d Oxus strains along’: from visions of engineering to depictions of disaster, from imaginaries of abundance to emptiness in the demise of the Aral Sea.* "**

Between around 1960 and now, the Aral Sea, technically an endorheic, saline lake in western Central Asia and once the fourth largest lake in the world, lost some 90% of its area. Often described as the world’s worst environmental disaster, it has the peculiar distinction of being a disaster not merely foretold but planned. A massive increase in extraction of water from the Amu Darya and the Sir Dayra, that flowed into the Aral, from the 1950s was a Soviet realisation of Tsarist dreams and fuelled something like a tripling in cotton output (though of all the less than trusted Soviet production figures, those for Uzbek cotton are perhaps the least trustworthy). Water flowed nearly 1400km down the Karakum canal, started in 1954 completed 1984, into Turkmenistan to grow more cotton and water desert cities. The orderly process of extraction is rendered plannable and visible on hydrological and engineering plans. Plans that in dry technical terms see abundance blossoming in the desert. Plans that also saw the emptying of the Aral, and the creation of the new White desert on its sea bed and its emergence as a series of visual tropes for reckless exploitation of resources. The plenitude of fishing the archipelagic lake is set against ‘ships in the desert’, the ancient oases against modern desert. Without diminishing any of the environmental damage, this paper probes the

imagery being mobilised in different registers to understand the natures and technoscience they imply.

Keywords: colonial; technoscience; scientific diagrams; photography

Mike Crang is a Professor of Geography at the University of Durham. He has worked on heritage and conservation and its flipside decay and despoilation. He has been working on the depiction of environmental damage for nearly twenty years. Previously he has looked at post-industrial landscapes in Europe and the ship breaking beaches of Bangladesh.

Renwen Xu, Boya Zhang, Bingham Zheng

Extracting Meaning in Multimodal Museum Spaces: A Cognitive Perspective on Visitor Experience

Processes of extraction are fundamental to how individuals interpret visual culture within complex, multimodal cultural spaces. Museums, as dynamic sites of visual communication, present multimodal content through which visitors actively extract meaning from integrated visual and verbal modes, both spoken and written. While extensive research has explored museum communication, empirical studies examining the cognitive processes of meaning extraction from multimodal exhibits remain limited.

This study investigates the extraction of meaning within digital museum environments, using The Museum of the World as a case study. Adopting a cognitive approach, the research employs eye-tracking, questionnaires, and interviews to analyse visitors' viewing behaviours and the cognitive mechanisms underlying their engagement with museum exhibits. Findings reveal that visitors predominantly extract meaning through written and verbal elements, which serve as the primary entry point for engagement. Less informative components elicited minimal cognitive effort, while exhibit-related elements required more intensive cognitive processing. Additionally, visitors with prior knowledge allocated significantly greater visual attention to the object than those with less expertise, suggesting that subject-matter expertise enhances the extraction of visual information. Discrepancies between eye-tracking and self-reported data further underscore the complexity of cognitive extraction, revealing divergences between participants' actual viewing behaviours and their perceived engagement patterns.

This study offers empirical insights into interpretive practices within visual culture by examining how visitors allocate visual attention and extract meaning from multimodal museum elements. Through an evidence-based approach, it deepens our understanding of interpretation as a process of meaning extraction within museum experiences.

Keywords: visual culture, meaning extraction, multimodal museum translation, eye-tracking, self-reporting

Renwen Xu is a PhD candidate at the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Durham University. Her research project triangulates eye-tracking technology, questionnaire and interview to investigate the multimodality of museum translation.

Dr Boya Zhang obtained her PhD from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Durham University, and works as a reader service librarian at the Bodleian Libraries, Oxford University. Her research interests include museum studies, visual arts and cultures, and museum translation.

Dr Bingham Zheng is Professor of Chinese Translation at the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Durham University. His research interests include cognitive translation studies, comparative translation studies, and AI and multimodal translations."

Oliver Betts

From Mine to Station to Sea – Extractive Stories in the collections of the National Railway Museum and Locomotion.

Whether of the North-East of England in the Georgian era or colonial southern Africa at the turn of the twentieth century, maps in the collection of the National Railway Museum all tend to show a repeated story – one where railway lines link mines, quarries, and other extraction sites with ports where the raw materials continue their national/international journeys.

Telling these stories is vital for visitors – the Stockton and Darlington Railway, an early key line that began where Locomotion is now situated, was fundamentally linked to coal and iron mining in County Durham and Northumbria. Engines and wagons in our collections were built specifically for extractive purposes, railways transformed landscapes, and enriched companies and investors whilst transforming regions forever. Communicating these stories of environment, purpose, and change are crucial to how we engage with visitors at both our sites.

This paper will explore the varied collections at the museum around extractive industries and the railways, drawing on a rich variety of material, archival, and pictorial. Taking advantage of the museum's 50th anniversary this year, coinciding the national anniversary of 200 years of railway history, this paper will also offer an overview of how stories of extraction have changed since the museum opened in 1975, and what is planned for the future.

Simon James

Maps, Male Bonding and Making it Up: Arthur Conan Doyle's The Lost World

Simon J James is a Professor in the Department of English Studies at Durham University. He has published widely on Victorian literature, including monographs on George Gissing and H. G. Wells, as well as co-curating the following exhibitions at Palace Green Library: *Outrageously Modern! 'Avant-garde' magazines 1884-1922*, *Robots!* and *Books for Boys: Heroism, Adventure & Empire at the Dawn of the First World War*. He curated an exhibition of H. G. Wells books and manuscripts for the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, for Wells's 150th birthday in 2016. He is the editor of [The Wellsian](#), the scholarly journal of the H. G. Wells Society, and has edited Wells's *The First Men in the Moon* for World's Classics. His Current research also includes a monograph on the male bond in *fin-de-siècle* literature, an interdisciplinary project on time, memory and consciousness in Dickens, and an online edition of the states of *The Time Machine*.

Simon was the Principal Investigator for the Durham Commission on Creativity and Education. A partnership between Arts Council England and Durham University, the Durham Commission investigated the benefits of teaching young people to be creative and to think creatively.

Ladan Cockshut

Did you Factorio that in when you extracted No Man's Sky?: Minecrafting the visualities of extraction in videogames.

[Abstract to follow]

Inês Beleza Barreiros

The 16th hole of Vale do Lobo Golf Resort: plantanoceno, visuality, and ancestral future

In 2024 Portugal was voted "World's Best Golf Destination" at the 11th World Golf Awards. The country has been promoting itself as a "golf destination of excellence" for years. According to Portugal's Office of Tourism, there are currently 89 golf courses, with the sport being introduced at the end of the 19th century by the British in Porto. Promoted as an elitist sport by those who have invested in it, such as Donald Trump, the golf course is the place where the golfer-in-chief does his business and where much of the world's geopolitics is designed. Far from its supposed origins in 15th century Scotland when the sport was played in the cheapest of public lands and social classes mingled. Today, the golf course is a classic example of "necropower landscaping", shaping a capitalism that is not only economic, but also cognitive: a carefully crafted

landscape that rehearses an artificial fusion between "Man" and "Nature", at a time when this relationship seems to have eclipsed for good. It is no coincidence that climate activists have been promoting various actions in golf courses, such as injecting concrete into their holes, exposing the ecological threat it poses. In this paper I unfold the golf course as an afterlife of the plantation – i.e. a “model of scalability”. I first focus on the landscape intervention at Vale do Lobo Golf Resort: the accelerated erosion it causes on the cliffs due to the constant use of water – which is what gives the golf course its (ideologically) glossy green appearance. Then, I analyze the hermeneutics of the visuality emerging from Vale do Lobo, which is common to all golf courses and so perfectly clarifies the space occupied by the variable “Nature” in the Plantanocene/Capitalocene equation. Finally, I unfold the “non-scalability” or rather the “ancestral future” encapsulated within the 16th hole of Vale do Lobo Golf Resort.

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