



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



CEH

CENTRE FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

Call for Papers

Remaking the Museum: Curation, Conservation, and Care in Times of Ecological Upheaval

**Centre for Environmental Humanities, Aarhus University, Denmark,
December 6 and 7, 2017**

Confirmed keynote speakers include: Dehlia Hannah (University of Arizona), Noriko Aso (University of California, Santa Cruz), Sharon Macdonald (Humboldt University of Berlin), and Timothy W. Luke (Virginia Tech).

Please send abstracts (200 words) and enquiries to Michael Vine (mdv27@cam.ac.uk) by November 1, 2017.

In this time of entangled social and environmental crisis, the need to not only reimagine but remake the museum has acquired new urgency. In response, this two-day conference will bring together leading scholars and practitioners to investigate the opportunities, challenges, and limits of the museum as a catalyst for social change in this geological epoch of our making: the Anthropocene. From the museum's early modern origins to the development of today's highly heritage saturated public culture, the capacity of museums and their objects to perform particular relationships between nature, culture, and history has always been important—inviting critique from a variety of political and theoretical vantage points. The emergence of the Anthropocene as both a contested concept and concrete reality adds new layers of complexity and intensity to this story.

What modes of collecting, classifying, conserving, and curating are called for amidst this moment of unfolding change? How to actively reshape our relations with contemporary ecologies of loss, profusion, and transformation in a way that is both more affirmative and more just? What alternative practices of curation and care flourish in the margins of official heritage projects? How can we differently actualize what Tony Bennett long ago called “the exhibitionary complex” in light of contemporary issues? And finally:

Given the museum's problematic history, can it be salvaged as the vector of its own remediation? Working across a wide range of historical, geographical, and disciplinary contexts, scholars and practitioners will come together in Denmark's Moesgaard Museum to consider these important questions. Our aim for the conference is not only to critique and deconstruct—important tasks in their own right—but also chart a path forward for the museum as a powerful force for world-making.

The conference organizers invite proposals for papers that address the following or any related themes:

- **Hacking the museum:** Inspired by the hands-on, experimental approach of the makers movement, we invite papers that chart past cases or future potential with regards to the practical transformation of museum spaces and approaches. In what ways are the institutional, political, and physical boundaries of the museum being punctured and rearticulated in this time of social and ecological upheaval?
- **Ontological frictions:** How are the different ontological commitments and epistemic demands of art, science, and history museums being recombined in light of the notion of the Anthropocene? How are the museum's traditional divisions between nature, culture, human, nonhuman, life, and death being muddled—whether intentionally or not—and with what consequences?
- **Curating change:** What alternative and experimental curatorial practices are taking shape in response to the entangled social and environmental crises of the present? How do these move through and beyond the museum? And how are contemporary museum imaginaries making space for today's temporalities of loss, profusion, and transformation within their approaches?
- **Contestations:** In what ways do museums materialize questions of environmental in/justice and drive forward projects of social change? How does the emergence of the notion of the Anthropocene reflect, refract, or otherwise rechannel these questions and projects?

We welcome papers from across the environmental humanities and beyond. Please send abstracts (200 words) or enquiries to Michael Vine (mdv27@cam.ac.uk) by November 1, 2017.