



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

**Researching Environmental Change:  
Workshop exploring the contribution of arts and humanities research**

**Venue: Royal Horticultural Society Conference Centre, London.**

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

**Agenda**

- 9.30-10.30 Registration
- 10.30 Welcome – Gary Grubb, Associate Director of Programmes, AHRC
- 10.35 Introduction - Stephen Daniels, Director of AHRC Landscape and Environment Programme
- 10.40 Keynote – Mike Hulme, Professor of Climate Change, University of East Anglia  
*Last Words or First Thoughts? Exposing Climate Change to the Arts and Humanities*
- 11.00 Case study – Ben Cowell, Assistant Director, External Affairs, The National Trust  
*'For ever, for everyone': the National Trust and environmental change*
- 11.20 Case study – Kathryn Yusoff (Lecturer in Human (and Non Human) Geography, Exeter University) and Jennifer Gabrys (Lecturer in Design, Goldsmiths)  
*Zero Degrees: Arts, Sciences and Climate Change*
- 11.40 Living With Environmental Change Programme - Andrew Watkinson, Director
- 11.45 Questions
- 12.00 Lunch
- 13.00 Facilitated session exploring the following themes:
- Histories of environmental change
  - Representing environmental change
  - Knowledge and value
  - Material culture and sustainability
- (session led by May Cassar, Director of AHRC/EPSRC Science and Heritage Programme)
- 15.00 Tea
- 15.15 Plenary
- 16.00 Close

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**Introduction**

There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the arts and humanities that can be brought to bear upon the environmental change debate including, for example, through exploring cultural values, creativity, ethics, aesthetics, critical reflection and historical perspective. Further work however is required in order to explore specific themes in order that the dimensions and dynamics of human livelihood are fully embedded in future discussions and considerations of the consequences of environmental change. By considering different themes, this workshop will provide an opportunity to highlight:

- what arts and humanities can contribute intellectually to this area;
- what the challenges are to engaging arts and humanities research in this area; and
- where are the creative meeting points between the arts and humanities and other domains in physical science and social science in research on environmental change.

The workshop is an opportunity to bring together researchers from many disciplines within the arts and humanities, (including practice-led) and may also be of interest to researchers from other disciplines.

This one-day workshop is supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, working through two AHRC-funded funding initiatives – the [Landscape and Environment Programme](#) and the [Science and Heritage Programme](#). This workshop will also contribute towards the cross-Research Council programme, [Living with Environmental Change](#).

**Themes and sub-themes for facilitated session:**

**Histories of environmental change**

- How can histories of environmental change engage effectively with current concerns about recent events and future scenarios? These include histories tracing continuity as well transformation over the long term as well shorter term histories focussed on specific, perhaps extreme, environmental events.
- How are environmental histories produced, at an academic and popular level? What are the issues of evidence (including oral and archival sources) of explanation (including narrative and diagrams) and position (including the particular sites on which histories are based and the venues in which they are produced)?

**Representing environmental change**

- How can perspectives of arts and humanities scholarship focussed on rhetorical and representational strategies, engage effectively with current issues of environmental change ? This includes the framing of literary and art historical issues in environmental terms and the critical analysis of how environmental change is imagined in past and present scientific and policy documents
- What can research in the practice-led creative and performing arts (including design and exhibition curation) contribute to our understanding of environmental change, both at the level of explanation and communication?

### **Knowledge and value**

- How can we ensure that the complex philosophical and cultural issues of human value, authority and responsibility are represented in current discussions on environmental livelihood and sustainability?
- What are the key challenges and opportunities arising from the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of environmental change?

### **Material culture and sustainability**

- What are the implications of environmental change concerns for organisations, infrastructure and events related to the arts and humanities, including the curation of museums, libraries and archives, management of endangered heritage sites and organisation of large scale travelling exhibitions?
- Is there a role for organisations related to arts and humanities, including museums, libraries and archives, of engaging communities with current and future environmental change by explaining the everyday interaction of historic materials and assemblages with their environment?