

CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PUBLIC ACTION

Problems proliferate. From income inequality to climate change, from failing schools to failed states, from exiled histories to foreclosed futures, our present is beset by challenges. Many of these entrenched and emergent problems seem just beyond the scope of a liberal arts education. What might it mean to more directly orient the liberal arts around these complex problems, not just in contemplation of them but with a deliberate aim to intervene in them? How can artists, scholars, and scientists collaborate and contribute to finding effective solutions to these problems? How can the classroom be expanded to foster new linkages between thought and action, the classroom and the outside world? What new insights and capacities are now needed to enact meaningful change?

The Center for the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA) at Bennington College responds to the urgent problems of our current world, discovers what one needs to know to understand them, and acts to implement solutions. Rooted in the liberal arts with a commitment to public action, CAPA teaches the essential capacities needed to develop an educated and emboldened citizenry. Through initiatives and curriculum, CAPA leverages the classroom as a new kind of studio for innovation and informed change. With engaged scholarship, community partnerships, and creative problem-solving strategies, CAPA addresses the issues of our time from a novel vantage point: action.

CURRENT INITIATIVES:

Art in the Public Realm | Environment & Public Action
Forced Migration | Human Rights & Peacebuilding
Incarceration in America

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BENNINGTON COLLEGE

VOLATILE
FUTURES/
EARTHLY
MATTERS

CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF PUBLIC ACTION
BENNINGTON COLLEGE

MAY 26-27, 2017

**VOLATILE
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Where and when does the Anthropocene come to matter? As questions of planetary injury come to drive theoretical debates and reframe social research, this conference inquires into the conditions of possibility for recognizing emergent scales and temporalities of earthly volatility. Engaging ecological instability as a lived condition, this

conference documents those experiences that find intuitive articulation on planetary scales and those contemporary inequities that do not. As the figure of planetary crisis gains moral authority to order and orient the present, such inquiries imply a rising need for new forms of understanding and critique. It is becoming clear that the expenditures, sovereignties, and forms of objectivity that helped tilt earth systems beyond the fixtures of modernist life can no longer provide the basis of critical reflection and political action. What kinds of unruly language, historical alliances, and insurgent solidarities are now needed, if not to tame planetary volatility than to navigate more equitable ways of living through it?



Lisa Sanditz, "Cleared Lot" (2010)

A conference hosted by the Center for the Advancement of Public Action at Bennington College, and organized by **David Bond** (Bennington College) and **Joseph Masco** (University of Chicago).

FRIDAY, MAY 26

10:00 am **Welcome and Introductions**
David Bond and Joseph Masco | CAPA Symposium

10:15 am ***Between the Planetary and the Personal***
Amy Moran-Thomas (MIT):
"Pennsylvania Salient: Standard Fracturing and Mine"

Joseph Masco (University of Chicago):
"Living in the Psychozoic: On Planetary Stress"

Discussion

11:45 am **Coffee Break**

1:00 pm ***The Storms Already Among Us***

Alex Blanchette (Tufts University): "Living Dust, Fecal Storms, and the Labor of Antibiotic Resistance"

Kristina Lyons (UC Santa Cruz): "Chemical Warfare in Columbia, Evidentiary Ecologies, and Senti-Actuando Practices of Justice"

Discussion

2:30 pm **Coffee Break**

2:45 pm ***Sensing an Unruly Beyond***

Andrea Ballesterio (Rice University): "Lithic Architectures, Sympathetic Sensing, and Underground Drift"

Andrew Mathews (UC Santa Cruz):
"Sensing Disaster and Transformation: Modeling Italian Forest Futures"

Discussion

4:15 pm **Coffee Break**

SATURDAY, MAY 27

9:45 am **Welcome Back**
David Bond and Joseph Masco | CAPA Symposium

10:00 am ***Breaking Away***
Adriana Petryna (University of Pennsylvania):
"Inside Runaway Change"

Nicholas Shapiro (Chemical Foundation): "Never Broken Enough"

Discussion

11:30 am **Coffee Break**

11:45 am **Lunch | Yellow Room, Commons Dining Hall**

12:45 pm ***Living In and Against Planetary Crisis***

Juno Salazar Parreñas (Ohio State University): "Between Epochs and Seconds of Orangutan Temporality: Recalibrating Time in the Anthropocene"

Lucas Bessire (University of Oklahoma): "Running Out"

Discussion

2:15 pm **Reception**