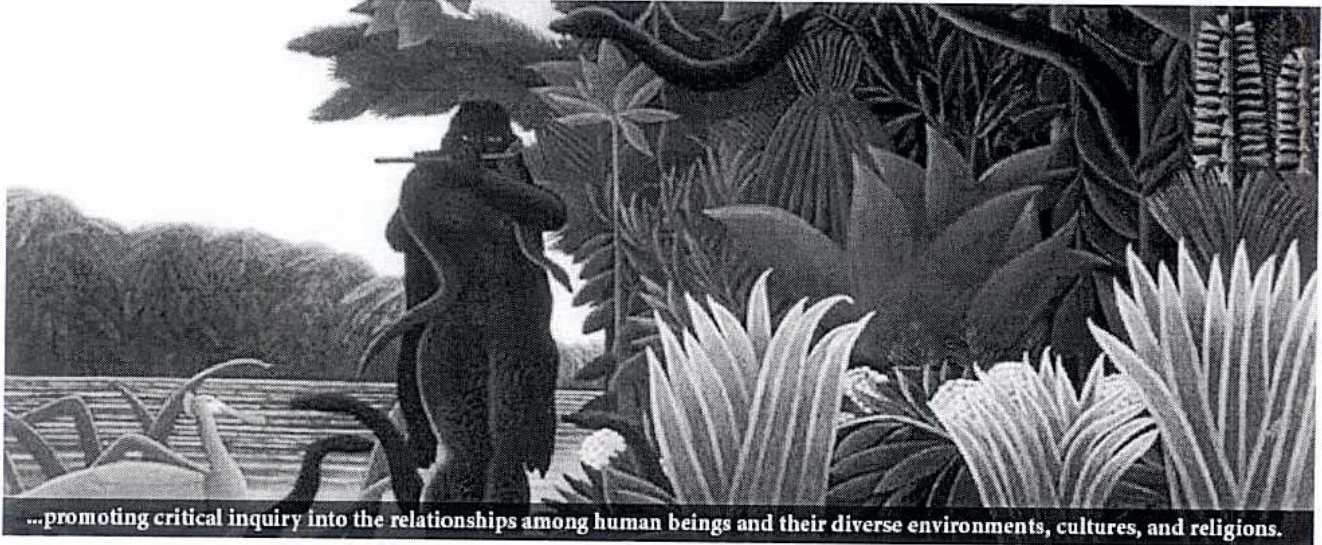


“Religion, Nature and Art”

Vatican Museums’ Ethnological Museum & International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture October 13-14, 2011



...promoting critical inquiry into the relationships among human beings and their diverse environments, cultures, and religions.

Schedule

All events take place in the Vatican Museums

Katherine Aigner (Australia), Laura Hobgood-Oster (United States), Nicola Mapelli (Vatican State)
Conference Co-Directors

Thursday 13 October

10:00-10:30	REGISTRATION AND COFFEE	Reception Area
10:30-11:30	INAUGURATION AND WELCOME H.E. Giovanni Cardinal Lajolo – President of the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City State and the Governorate of Vatican City State Antonio Paolucci – Director of Vatican Museums Prof. Fr. Nicola Mapelli – Director/Curator of the Ethnological Museums, co-coordinator of Conference Prof. Kocku von Stuckrad – President, ISSRNC	Auditorium
11:30-12:45	KEYNOTES – WHAT IS ART IN THIS CONTEXT? 11:30 Prof. Arnold Nesselrath 12:00 Prof. Kocku von Stuckrad : "The Entanglement of Religion and Art: Joseph Beuys, Shamanism, and Ritual"	
12:45-13:30	Lunch Break	Cafeteria

13:30-15:00 **Session I (Concurrent)**
European Contributions, Sarah Pike Presiding **Auditorium**
13:35 Thomas Heinzl
13:55 Yme Kuiper
14:15 Kristine Ogle
14:35 Eva Rita Gyertyanos

Museum Room
Australian Indigenous, Mark Peterson Presiding
13:35 Asmi Wood
14:00 Mary Zeiss Stange
14:30 Helga Griffin

15:00 Coffee Break

15:10-16:55 **Session II (Concurrent)**
Christianity, Laura Hobgood-Oster Presiding **Auditorium**
15:15 Jan Boersema
15:35 Teresa Canepa
15:55 James Watkins
16:15 Violeta Puscasu
16:35 Sasha Chaitow

Museum
Representations and Conceptions of Nature, Rick Stepp Presiding
15:15 Nathalie Pilard
15:40 Joel Stoker
16:05 Jonas van Mulder
16:30 Fred Simmons

17:00-18:00 **Session III**
East Asian Traditions, Mark Peterson Presiding **Auditorium**
17:00 Dan Smyer Yu
17:20 Aming Tu
17:40 Sangmu Thenup

18:15-20:00 **“Rituals of Life: The Culture and Spirituality of Aboriginal Australians”**
Exhibit Tour, co-curators Nicola Mapelli and Katherine Aigner
Day One Concludes

Friday 14 October

9:00 **Coffee Break** **Reception Area**

9:15-11:30 **Session IV** **Auditorium**
Global Indigenous Perceptions and the Sacred World, Laura Hobgood-Oster Presiding
9:20 Peter Wilson
9:40 Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja
10:00 Alison Kahn
10:20-10:30 *Break*

Participant Information

Keynote Speakers, Coordinators, Presiders

Katherine Aigner

Co-coordinator of “Religion, Nature and Art”

Australian National University

Katherine Aigner is a filmmaker, curator and post-graduate student in the area of indigenous studies at Australian National University. Her documentary film project, “Australian Atomic Confessions,” will be shared with all participants in the conference. She is co-curator, with Nicola Mapelli, of “Rituals of Life: The Spirituality and Culture of Aboriginal Australians.”

Laura Hobgood-Oster

Co-coordinator of “Religion, Nature and Art”

President Elect, International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

Hobgood-Oster is Professor of Religion and Environmental Studies at Southwestern University in the United States. Her areas of research interest include animals and religion, nature in the history of religions, and ecofeminism. She most recently published *The Friends We Keep: Unleashing Christianity's Compassion for Animals*. Her other books include *Holy Dogs and Asses: Animals in the Christian Tradition* and *The Sabbath Journal of Judith Lomax*. She was a contributing editor to *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Dr. Hobgood-Oster is founding co-chair of the Animals and Religion Consultation of the American Academy of Religion and is deeply involved in dog rescue and animal activism.

Nicola Mapelli

Co-coordinator of “Religion, Nature and Art”

Director/Curator of the Ethnological Museums, Vatican Museums

Father Nicola Mapelli is Curator of the Missionary-Ethnological Museum. He is co-curator, along with Katherine Aigner, of “Rituals of Life: The Spirituality and Culture of Aboriginal Australians.”

Arnold Nesselrath

Director for Byzantine, Medieval and Modern Art, Vatican Museums

Mark Peterson

Treasurer, International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

Mark C.E. Peterson (PhD Toronto) is Professor of Philosophy with the University of Wisconsin Colleges. Dr. Peterson began his career working on Hegel's natural philosophy and the history of science and technology. His conference and invited papers have centered mainly on the topics of ecofeminism, social ecology, and radical environmental ethics but, more recently, years of practicing taijiquan and kundalini yoga have pushed his research interests in the direction of how the relation between practice and theory can be used to unearth unexamined assumptions in our scientific, philosophical, and spiritual relationship to nature.

Sarah Pike

Board of Directors, International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

Sarah M. Pike is Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Humanities Center at California State University, Chico where she teaches courses on North American religions. Pike is the author of *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves: Contemporary Pagans and the Search for Community* (University of California Press, 2001) and *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America* (Columbia University Press, 2004). She is currently working on a book about religion, youth culture, and radical environmental and animal rights activism.

J. Richard (Rick) Stepp

Board of Directors, International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

Rick Stepp is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies at the University of Florida. He is a core faculty member of the Tropical Conservation and Development Program and the Land Use and Environmental Change Institute. He is also an affiliate faculty member of the School of Natural Resources and Environment and the Florida Museum of Natural History. For the last decade he has conducted ethnobiological research with the Tzeltal Maya in Highland Chiapas, Mexico. He currently coordinates an interdisciplinary research program in the Maya Forest of Belize, Guatemala and Mexico. He recently received funding from the National Science Foundation for a comparative project with Q'eqchi' and Mopan Maya communities in Southern Belize. He also works with Garinagu in coastal Central America. His research explores persistence, change and variation of traditional ecological knowledge and ethnobotany. Other research interests include medical anthropology, visual anthropology, GIS and land use change and human ecosystems theory. He is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-STAR and David L. Boren fellow.

Kocku von Stuckrad

President, International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

Kocku von Stuckrad is a professor of religious studies and head of the department of comparative and historical study of religion at the University of Groningen. He has published extensively on esoteric discourses in Western culture, astrology, shamanism, and on topics related to religion, nature, and science. His monographs include *Das Ringen um die Astrologie: Jüdische und christliche Beiträge zum antiken Zeitverständnis* (2000); *Schamanismus und Esoterik: Kultur- und wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (2003); *Einführung in die Religionswissenschaft: Gegenstände und Begriffe* (2003, with Hans G. Kippenberg); *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge* (2005); *History of Astrology from Earliest Times to the Present; Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Esoteric Discourse and Western Identities* (2010). In 2006 he edited *The Brill Dictionary of Religion*. He is co-editor of the *Journal of Religion in Europe* (Brill), the 'Religion and Society' series (Walter de Gruyter), the 'Numen Book Series' (Brill), and the 'Gnostica' series (Equinox). He has served as chair of the Critical Theory and Discourses on Religion Group of the American Academy of Religion. Currently he is president of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture, as well as secretary of the Dutch Association for the Study of Religion.

Bron Taylor

Founding President, International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

Taylor is Professor of Religion and Nature at the University of Florida, and a Fellow of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich Germany. His research focuses on the emotional, spiritual, and ethical dimensions of nature/human relations. His books include *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (2010), the award winning, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (2005), and *Ecological Resistance Movements: the Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (1995). He is also the founder of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture, and editor of its affiliated *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*. For more information see www.brontaylor.com.

Presenters and Abstracts

Jan Boersema

Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM) VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Man and Nature in Edward Hicks' Paintings of the Peaceable Kingdom

The painter Edward Hicks (1780-1849) had a penchant for the story of a Peaceable Kingdom as told by Isaiah (chapter 11:6-10). In these vibrant paintings Hicks often included historical scenes such as the signing of a treaty by William Penn with the Lenape Indians in 1682. In Hicks' view peace between the settlers and the indigenous tribes could not be seen apart from peace between man and the natural world. I will give first credit to Hicks and his North American background. Secondly I will discuss the relevance of the theme to the present debate on biodiversity loss and nature conservation.

G.A. Bradshaw (with Elizabeth Oriol)

The Kerulos Center, Oregon, United States

Pacific Northwest Indigenous Artwork of Wolves Reflects Cosmology that Parallels Complexity Theory

Carnivore and predator conservation is one of the most controversial topics today. Wolves are considered key and "strongly interactive" because of how their behavior and life cycle influence many species. However, wolves have been extirpated in many regions of North America and Europe because they are regarded as "pests" or dangerous. In contrast, indigenous societies have held a very different view of wolves and predators, seeing them as ecologically and spiritually integral to the complex tapestry of the natural world. Visual representations of wolves and other carnivores by Pacific Northwest indigenous people reveal such interweaving relations among species, a paradigm of connectedness, reciprocity and eco-centrism instead of anthropocentrism.

Francis Brassard

Independent Scholar, Canada and Croatia

The Nature of the Buddhist Contribution to Environmental Ethics

Buddhist doctrines have been suggested as alternatives to views believed to be responsible for the current ecological crisis. These doctrines, however, are sometimes more problematic than useful. Consequently, it is believed that they should be adapted to fulfill their new purpose. In this presentation, I will firstly argue that this approach may be compromising the integrity of these doctrines. Secondly, I will show that the Buddhist contribution is not so much about bringing new ideas to a long ongoing debate as helping us understand the process by which a vision becomes part of one's way of interacting with the world.

Teresa Canepa

Independent Researcher, Ph.D. Candidate, Leiden University, The Netherlands and United Kingdom

Image of Nature on Namban Lacquer for the Portuguese and Spanish Missionaries

Namban liturgical lacquers, made according to the Jesuit missionaries' requirements, display a fascinating combination of Western form and Japanese decoration. This paper will discuss the images of nature on these hybrid lacquers, which depict dense compositions of flowering plants, exotic birds and animals, usually incorporating the 'HIS' monogram, or more rarely, Christian iconography. It will also examine the naturalistic compositions on namban liturgical lacquers commissioned by missionaries of other religious Orders, as well as those on a group of secular namban lacquers preserved in monasteries and convents in Portugal and Spain that were used for Christian devotional practices in Europe.

Sasha Chaitow

University of Exeter, Director of Phoenix Rising Academy, United Kingdom and Greece

Hieroglyphs of Nature: The Renaissance Emblematic Worldview

Count Michael Maier (1568-1622), royal physician, diplomat and alchemist, authored several richly illustrated tracts exploring alchemy as a healing and spiritual art. His *Atalanta Fugiens* (1618) was the first "multimedia production," combining art, music, allegorical poetry and text in a self-initiatory handbook designed to guide the reader to a deeper knowledge of Nature and the Divine. With Maier's work as a case study, this illustrated

presentation will outline the significance of Nature and its signs for Renaissance humanists in their search for a *philosophia perennis*, tracing the elaborate interconnections between this “emblematic worldview” and Renaissance art and esoteric thought.

Adele Chynoweth

National Museum of Australia, Australia

“Art has always saved me”: The crucifixion motif in the work of Rachael Romero

Rachael Romero is a multi-disciplinary artist living in New York, USA, and one of 500,000 Forgotten Australians, who, as children, experienced institutional ‘care’. Romero’s art features crucifixion motifs to convey her experiences of incarceration and slave labour in the Good Shepherd Sisters’ laundry in Adelaide, South Australia. In this paper, through Romero’s art, I will discuss conflicting notions of the nature of adolescent women: the State’s need to curb a perceived threat of female juvenile delinquency versus Romero’s needs at the time for nurturing and self-expression.

Željka Čorak

Institute of Art History, Zagreb, Croatia

Dialogue with Infinity

Three works by contemporary Croatian architect Nikola Bašić stand as an example of the spiritualization of space. The “Sea Organ”, the steps on the coast of the town of Zadar, contains a system of sensors turning the movement of the sea into human music. The “Greeting to the Sun”, a big glass circle on the shore ground with the calendar of Zadar’s ancient liturgical ceremonies marked on its rim, captures the sunlight and using the same sensor system opens up a dialogue between Sun rays and the human structuring of time. The third work is the “Monument to the killed fire-fighters”, the huge stone crosses which lay down on the ground and are made in the ancient dry-stone technique, turning the landscape into a sanctuary.

Violeta Cvetkovska Ocokoljic

Faculty for Culture and Media, Megatrend University, Serbia

Hortus Conclusus as Religious and Mystical Allegory in the 15th Century

The topic of this paper is structural analysis of the mystical scene: The Virgin and Child in the ‘Hortus Conclusus’ (15th century). The icon contains a specific alchemical symbolism as an allegorical response to the awakened interest about nature in the 14th century as well as symbolism derived from religious texts. The paper concentrates on the interpretation of symbols and perspective with symbolism of colors and light. A special analysis is dedicated to the interpretation of the icon: The Virgin and Child in the ‘Hortus Conclusus’, icon of the anonymous German artist (1410), now placed in Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

Heather Dalton

University of Melbourne, Australia

The parrot in the picture: a Sulphur Crested Cockatoo in fifteenth century Mantua

The *Madonna della Vittoria* by Andrea Mantegna was commissioned by Francesco Gonzaga to celebrate his victory over the French at Fornovo in 1495. In the alterpiece, Gonzaga kneels before the Virgin, flanked by saints and enclosed within a pergola featuring coral and pearl hangings, flowering citrus and exotic birds. This paper explores how and why the earliest European image of an Australasian Sulphur Crested Cockatoo is present in this fifteenth century painting. Moreover, it considers how the bird's colour, or rather lack of it, appears to have given it the edge over other parrots when it came to symbolising holiness.

Richard Davey

Nottingham Trent University, England

Living in a Liquid World: The natural world as a space of sacred encounter

This paper addresses the work of English artists Louise McClary, Sarah Gillespie, and Lisa Wright, whose paintings provide insights into the experience of living in a sacred world; one full of ‘thin places’ that offer a space of encounter with the Other. It will show how their paintings provide a vision of the world as a ‘liquid’, interconnected space; where the borders between tangible and intangible are porous and fluid.

The visual theology of these works provides unique insights into the nature of reality, and highlights the devastating significance of treating the world as a solid rather than liquid space.

Gabrielle Marie Genovese

George Mason University, United States

Fallingwater and the Spiritual Response to the Natural World

Fallingwater stands as a paragon of man's creative response to the beauty of the natural world. In this architectural masterpiece, we experience an intimate communion between Earth and Art, which serves to foster a spiritual encounter through a powerful involvement with nature. It is a place of sanctuary, a home intended to encourage spiritual retreat, and a setting in which domestic space experiences a metamorphosis into sacred space. Here, Frank Lloyd Wright attempts to lift the mundane world to the spiritual realm—thus evoking a blur between the Earthly and the empyrean.

Gerald Greenfield

University of Wisconsin, Parkside, United States

Drought and Deliverance in the Brazilian Northeast

Narratives of the Brazilian Northeast emphasize its hostile natural environment, one marked by recurring droughts in the backlands (sertao) that have sparked massive outmigration. The suffering of these migrants is a major theme in Brazilian culture, one portrayed in novels, film and art. My paper will focus on representations of the impacts of drought, linking these to popular "folk" Catholicism and the veneration of Cicero Romao Batista (1844-1934), parish priest in Juazeiro do Norte, a town in the interior of the northeastern state of Ceara. Folk Catholicism regarded drought as a divine punishment. Father Cicero is an iconic figure, known for his compassion to the poor and his efforts to provide refuge and respite for the people of the backlands. His story entered the region's oral tradition and became a major subject for popular poetry known as the cordel literature, the covers of which had a woodcut illustration.

Alexandra Grieser

University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Forms of Art in Nature: Aesthetics of re-enchanting nature and science in Cameron's 'Avatar'

Film director David Cameron explicitly understands his enormously successful movie "Avatar" as a contribution to environmental activism. The film addresses religion by sketching out an ideal form of natural spirituality practiced by the indigenous people on the planet Pandora and by telling the well-known story of an apocalyptic catastrophe, averted by a savior-hero in Hollywood-Christian style. But less obviously the film uses and produces aesthetic figurations of a re-enchanged nature, and these figurations are deeply connected to the modern history of religion, art and the re-enchantment of knowledge.

Helga Griffin

Australian National University (retired), Australia

This is My Body and These are His Souls (Aspects of Animism in Buin, Bougainville)

In pre-colonial Melanesia and indigenous Australia part of the natural environment were sacralised, sometimes associated with the human body and its transcendental possibilities. In Buin, South Bougainville, notions about transubstantiation and immortality abounded. One poetic mantra, "This is my Body," linked the singer with a landscape, while skulls decorating a chief's hall served their lord as spiritual warriors. Agents of colonialism played havoc with holistic spirituality. They suppressed rituals and removed objects of cultural significance to foreign collections. The writings of the anthropologist, Richard Thurnwald (1908-1912) provide a neglected window on Buin's indigenous culture, a largely vanished past.

Eva Rita Gyertyanos

University of Szeged, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Hungary

“Roses or spring flowers: symbolic background of a floral attribute”

In this paper I discuss the iconographical relationship between Saint Elisabeth of Hungary and the flowers. Roses have been among her most prevalent attribute for a long time: they refer to a miraculous episode of her life. Sometimes in her mantle we can see not only red or red and white roses but also spring flowers, according to the version of the related text. In my paper I would like to call the attention to this lesser-known particular. By means of representative examples I try to define the symbolic background leading to the variety of the floral attributes.

Thomas Heinzl

University of Erfurt, Religious Studies, Germany

The pursuit of harmony: the White Brotherhood in Bulgaria and its Paneurhythmy ritual

This paper will focus on a ritual in which religion, nature and art meet: Paneurhythmy, a kind of religious dance practiced by adherents of the White Brotherhood in Bulgaria. This religious movement espouses a holistic, esoteric worldview with strong emphasis on harmony between man and nature – Paneurhythmy is one of the methods used to achieve this goal. My aim is to shed light on the religious background of Paneurhythmy, outline Brotherhood discourses concerning its functions and role, and demonstrate how the ritual practice interacts with natural sites like the Rila Lakes south of Sofia.

Dennis Hirota

Ryukoku University, Japan

The Japanese Tea Ceremony (Chanoyu) as an “Art of Being in the World”

Drawing on Buddhist-influenced writings from the formative period of *chanoyu*, I will discuss ways in which this traditional art provides a model for everyday life informed by care for the natural world inclusive of the human. Such life is characterized by the cultivation of attentiveness to all that enables human life and creativity in harmony with other forms of life. Thus, *chanoyu* is a discipline in which the things of the world, while encountered in their roles in quotidian life, come to be nurtured and perceived not merely as implements or materials, but in the fullness of their intrinsic beauty.

Alison Kahn

Linacre College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

From the River to Rome: Transformations of Art and Nature in Father Franz Kirschbaum's Sepik River Collection at the Vatican's Ethnological Museum

Father Franz Kirschbaum S.V.D. lived and worked in the Sepik region of New Guinea from 1909 until his death in 1939. He was a missionary and a collector of ethnographic objects long before Pope Pius XI announced his intention to ask missionary orders around the world to contribute to the Pontifical Exhibition of 1925. Kirschbaum's understanding of the Iatmul people of the region aided visiting anthropologists to the area by giving them great insight into their languages, religions, and the artistic and symbolic significance of the material culture he knew so well. This paper explores the transformation of the aesthetic and religious meaning of Kirschbaum's collection from the “River” to Rome.

Yme Kuiper

University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Myth and Memory of the Mountain of Truth: on sun worship, body culture and art as search for purity

The rise of colonies of idealists, vegetarians and artists in western and central Europe around 1900 were closely associated with the Lebensreform movement. One of the most famous communities of colonists in European cultural history was the one on Monte Verita (‘Mountain of Truth’), near Ascona, Switzerland. This presentation is a discourse analysis of the construction of the myths and stories that gave Monte Verita its fascinating reputation. Special attention will be paid to the crucial role of writers (Tolstoy, Hess), painters (Diefenbach, Hoppener) and dancers (Von Laban, Wigman).

Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja
South Korea and Finland

Connotative and aesthetic tributes to indigenous beliefs in gods and nature among Toraja and Sami

In Torajan myth, the cosmos is divided into heaven-earth-animal, and Aluk combines law, religion, and tradition. Toraja is well-known for funeral rites and burial site, ancestral house and colourful carvings which express social and religious concepts as cultural manifestation and way of life. In Norway, according to the Sami, the world is inhabited by spirits which had supernatural powers. People search for consultation from them by hiring shamans and his drums. My paper investigates the relationship between religion, nature and art by examining Torajan carvings and Sami drums, underlining how art/design strengthened beliefs in gods, warning against damage to nature.

Claudia Marchesi (co-author, Aedeen Cremin)
Australian National University, Australia

Colonial depictions of Aboriginal spirituality: Images of the corroboree

This presentation links the concept of nature, religion and art through the analysis of Australian Aboriginal ceremonial dances, as perceived by British colonisers between 1788 and the 1840s. We can observe European reactions from written accounts but more tellingly through early colonial paintings which go well beyond the romantic or picturesque to imbue the viewer with a sense of awe. Several paintings are considered in the light of what we know today about Aboriginal religion and its interconnection with dance.

Jonas van Mulder
University of Antwerp, Belgium

“boschachtich, berchachtich en[de] zeer woest”. Sacred geography in seventeenth and early eighteenth century miracle books from the Low Countries

In this lecture, fitting in a bigger research on late medieval and early modern religious culture in the Netherlands, I will focus on the functioning of notions of ‘nature’ and ‘wilderness’ in a selection of seventeenth century pilgrimage books printed in the Southern Low Countries. How did the authors represent sacred landscape, a notion challenged by protestant reformers? What is the symbolical charge of trees, mountains and (holy) wells? What is the function of ‘wilderness’? Drawing on recent findings in religious geography, anthropology and cultural studies, I will explore the relationship between sacred space, landscape aesthetics and spiritual experience in post-Tridentine Europe.

Kristine Ogle
Latvian Academy of Art, Latvia

Representation of Nature Spirits, Deities and Gods in Latvian Art

The paper discusses Latvian artworks that reveal appearances of the neo-pagan concepts. First turning to these sources can be noticed in the beginning of century when, inspired neo-romanticism, several Latvian intellectuals strived to revive boundaries with nature. Then artists often felt free to invent new deities, thus expressing their subjective understanding and sentiments. The second wave comes two decades later when there became topical the aspiration to define the uniqueness of the national religion – and in these cases the most intriguing is the choice of artistic methods by which one is to be assured that the rendered beings, dressed in the national costumes, indeed do represent gods.

Elizabeth Oriel (with G.A. Bradshaw)
The Kerulos Center, Oregon, United States

Pacific Northwest Indigenous Artwork of Wolves Reflects Cosmology that Parallels Complexity Theory

Carnivore and predator conservation is one of the most controversial topics today. Wolves are considered key and “strongly interactive” because of how their behavior and life cycle influence many species. However, wolves have been extirpated in many regions of North America and Europe because they are regarded as “pests” or dangerous. In contrast, indigenous societies have held a very different view of wolves and predators, seeing them as ecologically and spiritually integral to the complex tapestry of the natural world. Visual representations of wolves and other carnivores by Pacific Northwest indigenous people reveal such

interweaving relations among species, a paradigm of connectedness, reciprocity and eco-centrism instead of anthropocentrism.

Nathalie Pilard

University of Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom

Tarot cards: When Art plays with Religion and Nature and not Religion with Art and Nature

Renaissance painters did not suddenly become pagans by exalting Ancient Gods. Art continued to serve Religion and utilized the elements of Nature to glorify the Divine. Yet some powerful families commissioned works of Art and displayed not only the evil taste of enjoying Art for itself but also showed the debauched manner of buying artists for ... games. Centuries before feminism, the Visconti played with Tarot cards of the Popess, and female Knights and the artists used Nature to serve their beauty. I will present some of these cards next to my contemporary Tarot deck, which mixes Nature and Religion to play with Art with collages.

Violeta Puscasu

University of Dunarea de Jos Galati, Romania

Romanian Religious Landscape Materiality

The study is based on analyzing the distribution of over 600 existing monasteries throughout Romania's territory (an orthodox country). It starts from the observation that although there are in scope balanced distribution of the three levels of relief, the territorial distribution of monasteries is totally uneven. If this is added, the differences in architectural typology or even their structural is, in part, due to all the natural differences. We find the existence of spiritual relief as a correspondent with real relief, although the gap between the two, generated from social and historical development, is not missing. In the alternative, another two groups of relationship in landscape are detached arising from the research approach – interdependence between the natural area and the architectural expression (as “monasteries in wood, stone, or reed field”) and the net asset value and the spiritual.

Greta Refsum

Adjunct Professor, Oslo National Academy of Art

The Way of Christ – The Way of the Dao: An Artistic Interpretation of the Liturgy of the Mass in an Interreligious Perspective

The artwork, *The Way of Christ – The Way of the Dao*, made by the author (2006-2008), deals with religion and nature, spirituality and food. It represents a religious-based resistance to moral conflation and environmental destruction. This artwork is apologetic; it aims at contributing to an interpretation and discussion of Christianity as ideology and practice, relevant to the challenges of our time. The intended recipients are practicing Christians, cultural Christians and non-Christian Chinese.

Benedikt Schwoll

Maastricht University – ICIS, The Netherlands

Gardening in the Renaissance – An intellectual and spiritual journey to the Loire Valley

Already in the antiquity gardening was considered to be an art and reserved for noblemen. In the Renaissance, this tradition was revived in a number of ways. The Loire Valley in France is known for its unique castles and their wonderful gardens. The *Château de Villandry*, a castle that dates back to the 16th century, and its magnificent garden exhibit many typical features of the time period. When recreated in the 20th century by Dr. Joachim Carvallo, spiritual and historical interest merged to sculpt the domaine into what it is today.

Fred Simmons

Yale Divinity School, United States

Theological Aesthetics and Contemporary Conceptions of Nature

I contend that the modern life sciences give Jews, Christians and Muslims reason to attribute disvalue to nature, for these sciences show that ecosystems must thwart individual organisms to sustain life as a whole. I then develop an aesthetic account of this disvalue, and explore how it could prevent ascription of disvalue to nature from subverting the goodness of God or creation, or exonerating human evildoing. I conclude that aesthetics

may thus enable members of the Abrahamic religions to reconcile their principal theological convictions with contemporary understandings of nature while also preserving ethical commitments that are fundamental to their faiths.

Mary Zeiss Stange

Skidmore College, United States

Tracking the 'Whole Lot': Aboriginal and Bushmen Hunting, Art and the Re-enchantment of the World

This paper counterbalances the “nostalgia” in anthropological work on aboriginal hunter/forager groups, exploring the religio-cultural significance of the living traditions of indigenous peoples, represented in art forms which are timelessly rooted in the spirituality that arises from their intimate relationship with land – a spirituality of key relevance today. Using the idea of tracks and tracking as its root metaphor, this study will oscillate between two comparative foci – ancient Aboriginal and Bushmen rock art, and contemporary Aboriginal and Khoi-San painting and printmaking – toward rediscovering in transcultural terms what one Aboriginal artist has called “the enchantment of being what we are.”

Joel Stoker

Arizona State University, United States

Sacred Grove, Sacred Art: Divinity within the Trees of Upstate New York

Across numerous religious traditions, ancient sacred grove narratives exemplify the sanctity of nature. A modern sacred grove narrative emerges with the Mormon site of origination, the Sacred Grove of Upstate New York. Over the last two centuries, the site has become a place of pilgrimage, giving rise to numerous canvassed landscapes, immersive poems, stirring musical pieces and illuminating stained glass panels depicting the Grove. Such Sacred Grove art manifests the innate divinity, magic, and mystery of nature. The artistic culture of the Mormon Sacred Grove site illustrates the transformative power of nature-themed religious art on the collective Mormon nature ethic.

Sangmu Thenup

Jawaharlal Nehru University and Sikkim University, India

Importance of nature in early Buddhism and its representation in early Buddhist literature and art.

This paper will assess the importance of nature in early Buddhism and its representation in early Buddhist literature and art. It will focus on nature, plants, animals and natural habitat in Buddhism to understand the ways in which the relationship of these elements to human beings has been visualized within this tradition. Buddhism is a religion which had its origin in India around 2600 years ago. It is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. The early Buddhist literature and art is replete with representations of nature, animals and plants.

Aming Tu

Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taiwan

Zen, Nature and Public Art

An acronym standing for “Zero,” “Energy,” and “Nature,” the Z.E.N. research project of the “Nature” aspect is conducted outdoors in a “meditation garden”. Based on the Buddhist philosophy of spiritual nature and environmental protection, the meditation garden includes “Zen Spring” and “Water Harp”, which helps individuals to relax by allowing them to make music by playing with the water as if it were a harp. Ultimately, individuals are able to move about freely in nature, actively participating in all of the activities and learning to practice Zen in daily life with the aid of the public art installation.

Jules de Waart

University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Art, magic and religion of Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor, 1576 – 1612

Opinions about Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor, 1576 – 1612 range from a benign Maecenas of the arts and sciences to a melancholic madman and sorcerer. What kind of a man was he? What were his beliefs, his religion? A famous painting by Giuseppe Arcimboldo depicts him as the Roman God Vertumnus, with a face composed entirely of painted fruits and vegetables. Rudolf loved it because Vertumnus was mythologically

related to hermeticism, alchemy, astrology and magic, subjects close to his heart. Suitable images and objects could be intermediaries between this world and the stars and a possible (magical) source of knowledge and power.

James Watkins

University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom

Andy Goldsworthy, Incarnation and the Environment

This paper argues that the creative practice of sculptor Andy Goldsworthy embodies an incarnational ethic of love. Goldsworthy is a contemporary land artist who works in a variety of environments (field, forest, river, urban, gallery, etc...) and locations (Scotland, Japan, France, etc...). Exploring the way that Goldsworthy's creative practice reflects the Christian idea of the incarnation can help us to reflect more deeply upon the ethics of humanity's relationship to the environment. In particular, his work presents a vision of the human being as a servant of and collaborator with the land.

Ulrike Wiethaus

Wake Forest University, United States

Toward a Cinematographic Semiotics of Indigenous Identity and Art as Nature Embedded

The paper argues that US films chronicle four positions of aligning articulations of Indigeneity with religion, nature, and art. After World War Two, Hollywood staged the conflation of nature and artless art ("baubles") with Indigenous identity as a continuation of the European colonial dismissal of Indigeneity. The second cinematographic moment is defined by art objects that have acquired high exchange value through developing art markets and ecotourism. The third position constitutes a post-colonial moment of irony and mourning. A fourth visual space marked by activism, hybridity and fragmentation reflects a rising presence of Indigenous art and artists in Euro-American art markets and museums and activist efforts at repatriation copyrighting of Indigenous art.

Peter Wilson

Nepean H.S., Canada

Ontology Revealed: Religion, Art, and Nature in the Indigenous Peoples of the Northwest Coast of the Americas

The unity of man and nature is recognized as an essential facet of the belief system of the indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast of the Americas. Transformation stories, art, and religious ceremonies re-enact creation, which is based on a precept that nature, including animals and landforms, are descended from people. Transformation masks, which depict a post-transformation creature, are opened during rituals to reveal an inner mask, the essential human face behind the outer mask. This paper proposes that this common ancestry places people as the *prima materia* of our world and maintains the inseparable connection between man and nature.

Asmi Wood

Australian National University, Australia

Indigenous Spirituality Viewed from an Abrahamic Framework

The interaction with "Western faiths" in Australia has affected the evolution of indigenous spiritual traditions. The proposed paper will explore some indigenous cosmologies and how some indigenous creation stories co-exist and can find synergies within the broader Abrahamic religious landscape. The paper explores the pre-life existence of humans and the similarities and differences between the "pre-life" concepts particularly in Islam and some indigenous cosmologies. "Creationist" aspects are compared with what in the West is often referred to as the "totemic" system of connection with animals, the land and the minerals of one's traditional country.

Ina Wunn

Universitte Hannover/United Nations of Religion, Germany

Aby Warburg's "Schlangenritual" – Towards a new Understanding of the Origin of Religion

Especially the words of the art-historian Aby Warburg (1866-1929), who developed new concepts in the understanding of the cultural expression of human consciousness and behavior, gain groundbreaking insight in the origin and development of religion. Influenced by Charles Darwin's "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals" (1872), Warburg was able to trace human expression back to animal reactions deriving

ultimately from fear, which not only finds a form of expression in religious art, but as a consequence triggers every form of cultural activity. Warburg's ethological (biological) approaches to the study of religions finally have helped to gain insight into the ways multiple cultural systems and religions are related to the biology of the human species.

Dan Smyer Yu

Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany

An Earthwork of Home, Sentience and Spirituality: Eco-Aesthetics of Sambha Village in Amdo Tibet

The creativity of the Earth has inspired countless artists across the different continents of the world. The emergence of earthworks in the 1960s has further highlighted the interweaving creative forces of the Earth and humanity. This paper explores eco-aesthetic meanings of the intersections of natural landscape, religious practices, and homemaking in a Tibetan farming village nestled on an alluvial fan of a dried tributary of a large river. The paper treats the built-environment, the natural but humanized surrounding landscapes, and the greater contour of the village as an earthwork in its broadest sense not only as an art form but also as works of geological forces and indigenous civil engineering with a spiritual orientation.

M. Dane Zahorsky

Motuv [Movement of the Unified Voice]

Towards a sustainable enchantment- Sublimity and the human animal

I will examine the dual histories of the west and how they interacted with the sacred through art as ritual, rite of passage, and sacred space. Examining the Greco-Roman and then the physical storied history of native North America which it subsumed. I will trace our modern disconnect from the western notion of the sacred itself and discuss the land arts movement as an attempt to revive its native ancestor. I will finally look at makers/activists working towards physical and mental pan, and non-denominational space in the hopes of fostering unity between both ourselves and our biosphere.