



Understanding Our Climate Emergency Through Art and Aesthetics

October 21st and 22nd

Sala de Graus Albert Calsamiglia, 40.035

Campus Ciutadella, Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27
08005 Barcelona

Online (Zoom - no registration required)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85267232406>



Information: <https://www.upf.edu/es/web/iuc/humanitats@upf.edu>

➤ Thursday, October 21st

- 11.00 : Welcome Isabel VALVERDE and Santiago ZABALA
- 11.30 : Jaume CASALS, Professor of Philosophy and Former Rector of the UPF
Memòries sobre Planetary Wellbeing
- 12.15 : Debate moderated by Isabel VALVERDE and Santiago ZABALA
- 15.30 : Amanda BOETZKES, Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory,
University of Guelph (Guelph, Ontario)
At the Moraine of the Greenland Ice Sheet: Thinking with Glacier Melt
- 16.30 : Diane BURKO, Artist and Activist
My journey from Landscape Painter to Environmental Artist/Activist
(online)
- 17.15 : Debate moderated by Libera PISANO, UPF

➤ Friday, October 22nd

- 9.30 : Andrea CONTE, Artist and Environmental Engineer
"Climate art Project" Art, science and activism at the time of eco-social crisis
- 10.30 : Debate moderated by Pol CAPDEVILLA, UPF
- 11.30 : Santiago ZABALA, Professor of Philosophy, ICREA/UPF
Why the Greatest Emergency is the Absence of Emergency? A Philosophy of Warnings for the 21st Century
- 12.30 – 13.30 : Closing Debate with all Participants

This conference gathers philosophers and artists working on our environmental emergency through art and aesthetics to widen the horizons of our University Planetary Wellbeing Project implemented by the former President of the UPF, Prof. Jaume Casals.

This conference is not only meant to show how the prevailing techno-economical approach has not managed to reduce a dramatic environmental emergency that has now reached levels of no return, but also to propose alternative transformative actions to counter this condition.

Art, as well as the humanities broadly understood, can provide us with a different conceptual platform to address these issues outside the techno-economical approach we are framed in. Scientists and organizations, for example, repeatedly foresaw the recent pandemic, but little was done to prepare ourselves for its impact. We believe that if politicians, governors, and society at large would have been persuaded by their explanations we would not find ourselves in this condition now.

This conference rests on the belief that art now works better than science as a way to express and bear emergencies. This is evident in the difference between the facts that scientists use to explain our climate crisis and the artists' works of art. The difference is not one of kind but rather of degree, intensity, and depth. Scientific photographs of the Antarctic can be truthful, but rarely as powerfully as a photographic work of art or an art installation of the same. Knowledge is not enough to understand climate change: feeling, emotions, and senses also play an essential part. The problem is not that science has a communication problem that art can solve, but that we have only listened to science to solve an issue that requires also art.

Artists Diane Burko and Andrea Conte, as well as philosophers Amanda Boetzkes and Santiago Zabala, have been working for decades on these problems and will contribute by providing the public with a different theoretical and cultural approach to offer alternative transformative actions.

AMANDA BOETZKES is Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory at the University of Guelph (Guelph, Ontario). Her research focuses on the aesthetics and ethics of art as these intersect with ecology and visual technologies of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. She is the author of *Plastic Capitalism: Contemporary Art and the Drive to Waste* (MIT Press, 2019), *The Ethics of Earth Art* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), and co-editor of *Heidegger and the Work of Art History* (Ashgate, 2014).

DIANE BURKO is a painter and photographer who focuses on monumental geological phenomena. Her practice, at the intersection of art, science and the environment, is devoted to the urgent issues of climate change. Her work has been exhibited throughout the USA, found in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Chicago Art Institute, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts among others. Speaking about art's role in climate discourse is integral to her practice. She appears at universities and conferences such as the American Geophysical Union, the Geological Society of America, and the Arctic Circle Assembly. Her exhibition *Seing Climate Change. Diane Burko: 2002-2021* is currently on view at the American University in Washington DC. (www.dianeburko.com)

Front: *Diane BURKO*
Sphere 4, 2019. Mixed media on canvas, 20 x 20 in.
Collection of Ivy Silver, Steven Leshner.

JAUME CASALS has been Rector of the Pompeu Fabra University from 2013 up to 2021. He is Professor of Philosophy at the Humanities Department of Pompeu Fabra University and senior fellow of the Institute for Catalan Studies (Institut d'Estudis Catalans). His main lines of research include the Greek genesis of modern and contemporary thought, philosophy and literature. He has translated and edited works by Montaigne, Montesquieu, Berkeley and Bergson, and is the author of 40 articles and several books including *¿Qué sé yo? La Filosofía de Montaigne* (ARPA, 2018), *El pou de la paraula* (Edicions 62, 1996), and *L'experiment d'Aristòtil* (Edicions 62, 1992) among others.

ANDREA CONTE AKA ANDRECO is a visual artist and environmental engineer with a PhD specialized in sustainable resources management in different climate conditions. His works have been shown at the Venice Biennial of Architecture, Saatchi Gallery, Macro museum, Glastonbury Festival and has given talks at the Universities of Rome (La Sapienza), Paris (Sorbonne), Bologna (Unibo) and New York (Columbia University). (www.climateartproject.com - www.andreco.org)

SANTIAGO ZABALA is ICREA Research Professor of Philosophy at the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. He is author of many books, including *Being at Large: Freedom in the Age of Alternative Facts* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020) and *Why Only Art Can Save Us: Aesthetics and the Absence of Emergency* (Columbia University Press, 2017). His opinion articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Al-Jazeera*, and *The Los Angeles Review of Books* among other international media outlets.