

# Naturally Hypernatural: Visions of Nature

International Conference, SVA NYC. November 14-16, 2014



Suzanne Anker, *Astroculture (Shelf Life)*, 2011/2014.  
Installation view at *[macro]biologies II: organisms*, Art Laboratory, Berlin.

<http://naturallyhypernatural.sva.edu>

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**SVA**  **NYC**



## Conference

*Naturally Hypernatural: Visions of Nature* is an interdisciplinary conference investigating the fluctuating “essences” of “nature” and the “natural” in the 21st century. Each of these terms carries with it an enormity of philosophical questions ranging from the alteration of life itself to dialogues concerning the notion of the Anthropocene, a term used to describe man’s intervention into the natural world. The talks presented here will focus on contemporary issues in the visual arts as they intersect with the biological and geological sciences, confirming that nature remains an intrinsically mysterious, ever more mutable entity. At the present time, cellular parts are being remixed in laboratories to create synthetic organisms while geological transformations are forecasting wild swings in weather conditions. Human reproduction regularly occurs in Petri dishes while cucumbers are grown in space. The artificial and the natural now combine to form novel entities, never before seen on earth, while animal species dwindle down to extinction every day. Animals and plants are exhibited as contemporary art, while the real is conflated with the imaginary. Technological advances and their theoretical undertones have migrated into art practice producing New Media installations, Bio Art exhibitions and a global community of art practitioners adapting novel productions to cultural resources. In addition, visual art has become a social practice platform with projects that intersect with urban farming, DIY biology and extremes in performance art. *Naturally Hypernatural: Visions of Nature* brings together artists, historians, curators, philosophers and scientists to examine and comment on these ideas.

In addition, there will be an exhibition entitled *Blue Egg: Visions of Nature* with work by students, alumni and faculty, generated through SVA’s Bio Art Laboratory, the first laboratory of its kind in the U.S.A. <<http://bioart.sva.edu>>

**During lunch and coffee breaks, room 301H will function as a lounge with Wi-Fi and video screenings. Computer access available. The SVA Bio Art Lab on the third floor will also be open for visits during these times.**

# Program

## Friday, November 14, 2014

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Conference Registration

5:00pm - 5:15pm

### **Introduction**

Suzanne Anker

5:15pm - 7:00pm

### **Keynote Speakers**

**Dr. Melentie Pandilovski**

*The Biotech Species*

**Lucas Evers**

*Bio Art and creative biotechnology in the Anthropocene - some innovative misunderstandings*

Moderator: Suzanne Anker

7:00pm - 8:30pm

Opening Reception for the exhibition *Blue Egg: Visions of Nature*

## Saturday, November 15, 2014

9:00am - 10:00am	Conference Registration and Breakfast
10:00am - 11:30pm	<b>Panel 1: Conditions of Possibility</b>  <a href="#">Gary Sherman</a> <i>Artificial Sublime</i>  <a href="#">Sabine Flach</a> <i>In the Pursuit of the Magic</i>  Conversation: <i>Spaces of otherness under conditions of possibility</i>
11:30pm - 12:30pm	SVA Bio Art Lab and Digital Lab tours
12:30pm - 2:00pm	Lunch (Room 301H open)
2:00pm - 4:00pm	<b>Panel 2: Water-Bodies: A Relationship of Paradox</b>  <a href="#">Zach Moser</a> <i>Shrimp Boat Projects</i>  <a href="#">Irene J. Klaver</a> <i>Anthropocene Water: Meandering Infrastructure</i>  <a href="#">Sarah E. Durand</a> <i>Newtown Creek - a walled-in waterway</i>  <a href="#">Henry G. Sanchez</a> <i>THE ENGLISH KILLS PROJECT</i>  Moderator: Aimee Morgana
4:00pm - 4:15pm	<b>Launching of Artlink Magazine</b> <a href="#">Melentie Pandilovski &amp; Suzanne Anker</a>
4:15pm - 5:00pm	Coffee Break (Room 301H open)
5:00pm - 7:00pm	<b>Panel 3: Anthropocene</b>  <a href="#">Roy Scranton</a> <i>The Compulsion of Strife: Nature, War, and the Anthropocene</i>  <a href="#">Laura Ballantyne-Brodie</a> <i>A systems approach to ethics: earth system ethics</i>  <a href="#">Janet Biggs</a> <i>Far Afield</i>  <a href="#">Joe Mangrum</a> <i>This is not Sand</i>  Moderator: Daniel Grushkin
7:00pm	Dinner Reception

## Sunday, November 16, 2014

9:00am - 10:00am	Conference Registration and Breakfast	
10:00am - 12:00pm	<b>Panel 4: Dead or Alive</b>  <a href="#">Joanna Ebenstein</a> <i>The "Once-Alive and the Eerily Lifelike" at The Morbid Anatomy Museum</i>  <a href="#">Dana Levy</a> <i>The Poetics of Unwild Things</i>  <a href="#">Nancy Chunn</a> <i>Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear</i>  Moderator: Michael Sappol	
12:00pm - 1:30pm	Lunch	(Room 301H open)
1:30pm - 3:30pm	<b>Panel 5: DIY Biology</b>  <a href="#">Ellen Jorgensen</a> <i>Community Lab as Cultural Nexus</i>  <a href="#">Joseph DeGiorgis</a> <i>The Aquatic Studio: the fine art of using novel and traditional scientific techniques to capture images of life</i>  <a href="#">Adam Stennett</a> <i>The Artist Survival Shack Project</i>  <a href="#">Sebastian Cocioba</a> <i>Genetically modified foods</i>  Moderator: Oliver Medvedik	
3:30pm - 4:00pm	Coffee Break	(Room 301H open)
4:00pm - 6:00pm	<b>Panel 6: Colonizing Nature</b>  <a href="#">Raul Valverde</a> <i>Adapted Landscape</i>  <a href="#">Marco Castro</a> <i>Bus Roots: Nomadic lightweight Greeninfrastructure</i>  <a href="#">Suzanne Anker</a> <i>Lepidoptera, Reptilia and the New Geography</i>  Moderator: Sabine Flach	

# Speakers and abstracts

## Suzanne Anker



Suzanne Anker is a visual artist and theorist working at the nexus of art and the biological sciences. Her work has been shown both nationally and internationally in museums and galleries including the Walker Art Center, the Smithsonian Institute, the Phillips Collection, P.S.1 Museum, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Museum of Modern Art in Japan, the Medizinhistorisches Museum der Charité in Berlin, the International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Cartagena de Indias, and V Art Center in Shanghai, China. Her seminal text *The Molecular Gaze: Art in the Genetic Age* (co-authored with the late Dorothy Nelkin) was published in 2004 by Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. She is currently on the Intermediate Advisory Board of the

Research Master CAST at the Maastricht University in Netherlands and Section Editor of *Reproductive Medicine and Society* (RBMS), in association with Elsevier Ltd. and Reproductive Healthcare Ltd., edited by Martin Johnson (Cambridge, UK) and Sarah Franklin (Cambridge, UK). She is the Chair of the Fine Arts Department of School of Visual Arts in New York since 2005 and currently is chair of the Leonardo Education and Art Forum (LEAF).

### ***Lepidoptera, Reptilia and the New Geography***

Bringing together the natural world with advances in technology, this talk will focus on past, present and future ideas about visualizing knowledge. From the early *Wunderkammer* to “swarm technologies” and its emergent behavioral models, technology has been integrated into a new geography. If understanding geography is in part based on territory, media access and contingent circumstance, what social behaviors emerge when terrorist cells replace nation-states, synthetic biological experiments create never before altered organisms and expeditions to other planets have already begun? We have gone global, where discrete borders have been conceptually transgressed and novel solutions take the guise of the speculative.

## Laura Ballantyne-Brodie



Laura is a conceptual artist, eco-philosopher and activist. Laura works alongside Professor Natalie Jeremijenko in the Environmental Health Clinic at the Steinhardt School of Education and Human Development, New York University. In the environmental health clinic, Laura is the project lead for the TreexOffice and AgBag projects, examples of mutualistic closed systems agriculture specific for urban and high density areas. Laura's background in bioethics, law and energy policy has led to her current interest in systems philosophy, where she explores the crossroads of law, environmental issues, and their ethical dimensions. Laura's research and overall body of work, including an organization she founded, Rent to the World, focuses on these crossroads from this emerging systems approach, that she calls Earth System Ethics.

### ***A systems approach to ethics: earth system ethics***

Earth system science examines our view of Earth as a system involving interactions among the different spheres of the Earth, including the biosphere, lithosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere and the anthroposphere. Our emerging understanding of Earth system science in the context ---of the anthropocene is challenging dominant paradigms of our place on Earth, in its cosmological setting. While current paradigms are failing, new paradigms for action must be designed and proposed that are in line with the physical ability of Earth to house, and maintain flourishing life. These paradigms include views of nature and the natural world (i.e. that nature is benign/ fragile and easily disrupted), and emerging coevolutionary views that challenge mechanistic constructs of life on Earth. Based on emerging views of nature, social ethics and cosmology, this presentation proposes that a new discipline is emerging; one that is based on a (scientific) systems view of the world. Earth System Ethics (ESE) is a discipline that can take account of emerging ecological worldviews, based on a principles approach (principlism). ESE would function as an analytical framework of general norms derived from the common morality to form the starting point of a normative framework. The aim of the new field is to reduce the indeterminacy of abstract norms and generate an action-guiding framework based on a factorial relationship to identified principles. A number of principles are put forward under three distinct categories, including:(1) Synergistics, (2), Planetism, (3) Interdependence, (4), Ecological enmeshment, (5), Realization of Agency, (6) Precautionary Principle, and (7) Solidarity.

## Janet Biggs



Janet Biggs is an American artist, known primarily for her work in video, photography and performance. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She has captured such events as speeding motorcycles on the Bonneville Salt Flats, Olympic synchronized swimmers in their attempts to defy gravity, kayaks performing a synchronized ballet in Arctic waters, sulfur miners inside an active volcano, and a camel caravan crossing the Taklamakan desert of Western China. Solo exhibitions and film screenings include: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; the Armory Art Fair; Tampa Museum of Art; Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art; Mint Museum of Art; Everson Museum of Art; Gibbes Museum of Art; Rhode Island School of Design Museum; and the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Australia.

### ***Far Afield***

The desire to hold onto the notion of earth's blank spaces, awaiting interpretation, has not diminished even as the world has been mapped, surveyed, and mined. Increased knowledge has not replaced endless fantasies of discovery. My work takes me to extremes, the elemental ends of the earth, to witness and explore the connections between a sense of self and its relationship to physical place.



## Marco Castro



Castro is currently Adjunct Faculty at SVA's Design for Social Innovation MFA and acts as the Visitor Experience Manager for the Queens Museum, where he has also worked as a teaching artist focusing on planning and creating interactive experiences for diverse communities. Marco holds a Masters in Interactive Telecommunications from the NYU Tisch School of the Arts. He was a guest contributor to the Rio +20 series to achieve a sustainable planet, TEDx speaker at Cape May, NJ, member of the Climate and urban Systems Partnership and Philips Innovation Fellow. Marco Castro shares ways to creatively nurture urban communities in practical and playful ways, such as he did with his award winning public project - Bus Roots - utilizing plants as a creative medium to increase greenfrastructure in urban centers.

### ***Bus Roots: Nomadic lightweight Greenfrastructure***

Bus Roots is a bus with a garden on its roof. It reconnects urban communities with nature, using plants in a practical and playful way. A public transit bus has a roof surface of 340 ft<sup>2</sup>. The MTA fleet has around 4,500 buses.

If Bus Roots were to be grown on the roof of every one of the 4,500 buses in the MTA bus fleet, we would have 35 acres of nomadic green space in the city.

This would be the equivalent of 4 Bryant Parks in New York City.

Nomadic agriculture can be a solution for nutrient depleted soils, and it can provide plants and food precisely where they might be needed. It can provide ideas and help to continue the conversation around the following issues:

- + Nomadic and urban plant life
- + Mobile agriculture
- + Eating design
- + Environmental remediation
- + New models of life and education
- + Living systems+ Transportation
- + Food deserts in cities
- + Natural pollution sensors
- + Obesity
- + Nutrient depleted and toxic soils
- + Polluted water supply

## Nancy Chunn



Artist. Received a B.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts. In the late seventies she moved to New York and has been represented by Ronald Feldman Fine Arts Gallery since 1985. She has exhibited both nationally and internationally, received two National Endowments of the Arts awards, an Anonymous Was a Woman grant, and the Jennifer Howard Coleman Distinguished Artist in Residence Grant in Painting from Otis College of Art and Design that produced a catalogue and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2009. Rizzoli International Publications published a hardbound monograph of *Front Pages*, a project completed in 1996.

Using rubber stamps and pastels, she editorialized each front page of the *New York Times* for that entire year. Since 2003, she has been working on a painting installation, *Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear*.

### ***Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear***

I began *Chicken Little* in 2003 and have almost completed 10 scenes. Each scene is comprised of numerous canvases in various sizes grouped on a colorful amoeba shape painted directly on the wall. So far the total number of canvases is 477 and has more than 4000 individual missed colors. All works are acrylic and mixed media on canvas.

Scene I: The Garden, 2004, 38 panels

It isn't a rock but a TV that hits *Chicken Little* as she is hoeing in her garden. The scene is set- silly, quaint, absurd- and some environmental fears are exposed.

Scene II: The Bathroom, 2004-2005, 48 panels

*Chicken Little* enters the water-drenched bathroom carefully, avoiding all the electric wires, to check out the awful bump on her head. Product and psychological fears are shown. She needs ice.

Scene III: The Kitchen. 2005-2006. 39 panels

Henny Penny helps *Chicken Little* get an icepack for her head. Disturbing kitchen appliances and food fears abound. *Chicken Little* has to get her hat in the Bedroom.

Scene IV: The Bedroom, 2006, 51 panels

*Chicken Little* greets *Duckie Daddles*, who is entering the room. Her personal fears and nightmares lurk above the bed. Unfortunately she gets arrested for removing the mattress tag.

Scene V: The Jail, Not finished

*Chicken Little* is incarcerated at Rikers Island along with politicians, teenagers, troubled women and products.

Scene VI: The Road, 2006-2007, 64 panels

After her friends bail her out, *Chicken Little* et al pile into her pick Caddy and hit the

road only to become victims of road rage. The ER awaits their arrival.

Scene VII: The ER, 20027-2008, 63 panels

Amid chaos, confusion, anger, frustration, and trauma, Chicken Little arrives at the ER on a stretcher. Henny Penny and Turkey Lurkey wait to be seen along with a hoard of others.

Scene VIII: The Main Hospital, 2009-2010, 61 panels

Ŧuckie Daddles, Goosey Loosey, and other patients await their fate while tucked in their beds. Many are outraged by their bills. The gift shop is loaded with protective and amusing items. All remain unaware of the experimental surgery and nefarious activities in the basement.

Scene IX: The Diner, 2011-2014, 25 panels

Celebrities, religious leader, even the disciples and the general public are seated along with Chicken Little and her friends in a 1950'-style diner beneath replicas of famous paintings. The usual wedge issues are being served: abortion, gay marriage, obesity, gun control, the environment, Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street politics.

Scene X: Poortown, 54 panels

Blame it all on Goldman Sachs and the financial meltdown. Chicken Little and her entourage spend the night surrounded by fears, foreclosures, insecurities, unemployment and accidents.

Scene XI: Fox News, 41 panels

Chicken Little is transformed into a leggy blond Fox New anchorwoman. Her friends work in the newsroom. Disasters, weather, war, Obama, Corruption, healthcare, scandal, etc. are presented as only Fox can do.

## Sebastian Cocioba



Plant Biotechnology researcher with a focus on the production of commercially and industrially valuable plant species. Owner of New York Botanics, LLC, a plant biotech R&D laboratory with a specialization in orchid micropropagation.

### ***Genetically modified foods***

In the advent of social media and the organic movement, genetically modified foods have become very prevalent in the public conscience. Issues concerning health risks, environmental damage, and sustainability are being discussed across all disciplines but public literacy on the topic has yet to surface as a focal point for discourse. The ability to detect certain genetically engineered organisms by way of fingerprinting alien traits or sequences has become very affordable and such a process can be done in a simple high-school laboratory or even at home given the proper equipment and knowledge. With such processes, one could test the foods they consume on a daily basis for any number of the tell-tale signs of genetic modification and in the process also learn about the machinery incorporated into said organisms as well as the functions they beget. The end goal of such an experiment is to empower the consumer of the food in question with the ability and knowledge to formulate a much more educated opinion on a very controversial and sensitive topic.

## Joseph DeGiorgis



Bachelors' degree in Oceanography and Marine Ecology from the Florida Institute of Technology; PhD in Neuroscience from Brown University. DeGiorgis was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the National Institutes of Health and is now a Professor of Biology at Providence College, adjunct faculty in the MBL Cellular Dynamics Program and faculty at the School of Visual Arts. His research focuses on the function of Alzheimer's proteins and uses the squid giant axon as a model system. His art work as been published in magazine articles and on the covers of scientific journals including Molecular Biology of the Cell and Traffic.

### ***The Aquatic Studio: the fine art of using novel and traditional scientific techniques to capture images of life***

Science has created many wonderful tools for understanding -"Life". My favorites are those that involve imaging -the dissecting and compound light microscopes, the fluorescent and confocal microscopes, and the scanning and transmission electron microscopes, among others. What is so intriguing about these engineering marvels is their ability to make invisible or obscure features -visible revealing all of the intricate details of organisms. Even tissues of organisms can be prepared in such a way as to see individual cells and subcellular structures. In this way we can capture images and video of life and biological phenomena as never seen before.

## Sarah E. Durand



Sarah Durand discovered biology at age 5 while walking through a salt marsh with Dad and a red bucket. The bucket had arrived empty but returned with a wild array of invertebrate animals - "pets." When the pets succumbed to the inadequate circumstances of the bucket, ecstasy of discovery gave way to grief, guilt and curiosity: How did they live? What did they need? Sarah ultimately majored in marine biology at the University of Pennsylvania, where she received a dual BA-MA degree from the graduate division of Evolution and Ecology. She began her doctoral studies at Rutgers University as a field biologist studying Herring Gulls, but concluded with a doctoral thesis on the neural basis of vocal communication in doves, for which she received the PhD from the Center for Behavioral and

Molecular Neuroscience. A subsequent post-graduate fellowship award from the National Institutes of Health supported her study of the forebrain vocal system of parrots at the University of Maryland, College Park.

### ***Newtown Creek - a walled-in waterway***

Urban waterways flow through walls of concrete and steel. Newtown Creek is one of these. Pipe outfalls and cavernous openings that pierce its bulkheads have replaced its inflowing streams. Most of the human-constructed outlets are combined sewage overflow (CSO) outfalls that carry convergent flow from toilets and street runoff. When the sun shines, the CSOs are silent. But when rains come, a flow begins that abuses the Creek: raw sewage clouds the water, spilled and dumped oils coat it with a rainbow sheen and the indestructible plastics arrive as "floatables." Plastic bags drift half-in, half-out, with the styrofoam and ubiquitous bottles. The visible is accompanied by the unseen: waste pharmaceuticals, personal-care products, fecal bacteria, chemicals from laboratory sinks. The CSO's particulate waste precipitates to join the bottom sediments, the settling place of the Creek's industrial history.

But the water of Newtown Creek isn't dead. An observation was made in 2009 along the concrete intertidal steps of the Department of Environmental Protection "Nature Walk," site of a long-sought public access point. Within triangular cutouts of the concrete steps were members of a lost community, thriving in the small oases of intertidal sediment deposits; mussels, crabs, worms, shrimp, anemones and small fish were surviving because a small change in the landscape had allowed them to do so.

There is life in the water of Newtown Creek, it needs only a place to live. The vision of how to provide living space now engages biologists, artists, naturalists, and landscape architects. And the vision is unfolding.

## Joanna Ebenstein



Artist, event producer, curator and independent scholar. Creative director of the new Morbid Anatomy Museum in Brooklyn, and founder of the Morbid Anatomy Blog and Library. Co-author (and featured photographer) of *Walter Potter's Curious World of Taxidermy*, with Dr. Pat Morris; co-editor of *The Morbid Anatomy Anthology*; and contributor to *Medical Museums: Past, Present, Future* (edited by Samuel J M M Alberti and Elizabeth Hallam, 2013) She acted as curatorial consultant on the Wellcome Collection's "Exquisite Bodies" exhibition (2009) and has also worked with such institutions as The Wellcome Collection, The New York Academy of Medicine, The Dittrick Museum and The Vrolik Museum. <http://morbidanatomy.blogspot.com>

### ***The "Once-Alive and the Eerily Lifelike" at The Morbid Anatomy Museum***

In a recent issue of *The Financial Times*, reporter Ariella Budick insightfully and provocatively describes the cluster of interests at the core of the new Morbid Anatomy Museum, which include, in her estimation, "surrealist photographs, 17th-century cabinets of curiosity, graphic histories of hysteria, faked photos of seances, studies of conjoined twins, and Coney Island in its tawdry heyday as well as Freud's "concept of the uncanny – what he called a ghastly harbinger of death'" Another cultural artifact which belongs in that list is most certainly taxidermy.

What is it that unites "cluster of fascinations that has only tangentially to do with death?" This heavily illustrated talk by Morbid Anatomy Museum director Joanna Ebenstein--based on her five years experience building a virtual and real community around these interests--will attempt to explore in that question, probably raising more questions than it answers.

## Lucas Evers



Lucas Evers joined Waag Society in April 2007 and is currently leading Waag Society's Open Wetlab. He is actively involved in several projects at the crossroads of locativity and narrativity as well as bio art en design. Lucas Evers has an education as an artist and teacher in the creative arts and studied politics at the University of Amsterdam. He worked at the cultural centres De Balie and De Melkweg in Amsterdam, programming cinema, new media and politics. He organized an extensive programme around the French cinematographer Chris Marker at De Balie and was closely involved at programmes such as 'net.congestion – international festival of streaming media', Next 5 Minutes, e-culture fair, Archeology of Imaginary Media and a number of programmes in the field of the so-called 'life sciences'. Besides his job at Waag Society, Lucas is also an advisor at DasArts, second phase theater and performance education.

### ***Bio Art and creative biotechnology in the Anthropocene - some innovative misunderstandings***

The Open Wetlab of Waag Society is a community laboratory for biological arts, bio design and biotechnology, where the general public is invited to participate in the societal debate about biotechnology by making that technology.

Illustrated by a number of projects the Open Wetlab of Waag Society has initiated or is involved in, such as the Do It Together Bio series, the Bio Art and Design Award, Trust Me I'm an Artist, BioStrike and BioCommons, the still rising popularity of bio design, its complementary bio art and their often misunderstood impact are described. Can art help to alter the further industrialization of our ecology by creative biotechnology or does it end like the bunnies in Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy?



## Sabine Flach



Sabine Flach is currently Professor for Modern and Contemporary Art and Art Theory at the University of Graz and the Chair of the Department of Art History. In addition she is as Professor for Contemporary Art and Art Theory permanent member of the faculty at School of Visual Arts, Department of Fine Arts & Department of Art History, New York City. She specializes in Modern and Contemporary Art and Art Theory.

### ***In the Pursuit of the Magic***

Our world – the ‘reality’ – is mainly understood as factual. What is real, exists. But actually our reality is crowded with creatures that live a strange double life: they exist and do not exist at the same time. And they live at places which are – as spaces – there and not: at the same time. One prominent realm of those spaces is art; which guarantees the well-being of all of these creatures. So it is art that is the space of idylls, fairytales and paradises, which allow dragons and unicorns a safe life.

These places and spaces as well as creatures are not just indispensable parts of our sanity and our capability to imagine but belong to a long tradition in art and culture. There would be no Greek myths nor any Christian storytelling.

But how could we talk about conditions of existence that are here and not at the same time? Starting from Michel Foucault’s concept of “Heterotopia” the talk explores traits of a combination between Foucault, phenomenological concepts of phantasy and imagination and image-theory to understand the double connectedness of nature to reality and imagination beyond the mere distinction between fact and fiction.

## Daniel Grushkin



Daniel Grushkin is a journalist who writes on the intersection of biotechnology, culture, and business for publications including Businessweek, Scientific American, and Popular Science. In 2010, he cofounded Genspace in Brooklyn, NY, the world's first community laboratory. Fast Company ranked Genspace among the world's top 10 most innovative education companies. Grushkin is a former fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and an Emerging Leader in Biosecurity at the UPMC Center of Health Security. [danielgrushkin.net](http://danielgrushkin.net)

## Ellen Jorgensen



Co-founder and Executive Director of Genspace. She is passionate about increasing science literacy in both student and adult populations, particularly in the areas of molecular and synthetic biology. In 2011 she initiated Genspace's award-winning curriculum of informal science education for adults in biotechnology and synthetic biology. Ellen has mentored two college teams in the International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) competition and spearheaded many of Genspace's outreach programs such as the Urban Barcode Project, a collaboration between Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Genspace where high school students pursue projects using DNA barcoding.

### ***Community Lab as Cultural Nexus***

What happens when you give access to genetic engineering to everyone? When we opened the doors of the Genspace community lab in Brooklyn, we had no idea who would walk in. Our mission was to democratize biotechnology by enabling hands-on experimentation by all. The past three years have shown us that these spaces need to exist and are valuable community resources. Artists discover new materials, scientists are exposed to new perspectives, entrepreneurs find a home for their inventions, and students meet DIYbio practitioners from all walks of life. The diversity of users promotes cross-cultural exchange which enriches all parties. Additionally, putting technology into the hands of the end user for experimentation often yields unexpected results. The knowledge flow becomes peer-to-peer rather than us-them, resulting in greater dissemination of trusted information.

## Irene J. Klaver



Director of the Philosophy of Water Project and Professor in Philosophy at the University of North Texas. Her research and teaching focus on social-political and cultural dimensions of water, with a special interest in urban renewal around rivers. She is leading co-editor of the UNESCO book *Water, Cultural Diversity & Global Environmental Change* (Springer, January 2012); Co-Director of the International Association for Environmental Philosophy and member of the Editorial Team of *WIRES Water*, Wiley-Blackwell. Klaver has been Co-Director and Research Specialist of award-winning documentaries, “*The New Frontier: Sustainable Ranching in the American West*”(2010) and “*River Planet*”(2011).

### ***Anthropocene Water: Meandering Infrastructure***

I follow an infrastructural storm water feature, which has become a hyper-natural “Little Lake.” Texas has no natural lakes. Little Lake is a detention pond, a flood control structure, Soil Conservation Service Flood Retarding Pond #16. It is a most unassuming place in an average American small town, the city of Denton, Texas. It was not designed as a technology of engagement, but it has become one. Relatively left by itself, it attracts small wildlife: all sorts of birds; there are foxes, coyotes, skunks, beavers; people occasionally leave their duck-‘pets,’ which then become semi-wild, having to fend for themselves in the pond. People feed the ducks, walk their dogs, fish, play disk golf, enjoy the sunset, take pictures, even have religious ceremonies. Little Lake has become a situation, a place of encounters, between humans, animals, plants, weather, and water. The natural wrapped around the hyper-natural, the experiential boundary between hydrological infrastructure and natural landscape feature has become porous, blending a concrete grey-green hybridity of green infrastructure, creating a public space, a bio-cultural nexus.

I connect this situational specificity with a larger cultural mentality, what I call an environmental imagination, and show how these most mundane places reveal the naturally hyper-natural potential of the anthropocene. I foreground or make visible the capacity of the natural in the technological, and show what can happen if we let a local detention pond meander into a place of encounters. I conclude with exploring the shifts in ideas of efficiency when we follow a meandering model of thought, following the geomorphological characteristics of a river into an epistemological dimension.

## Dana Levy



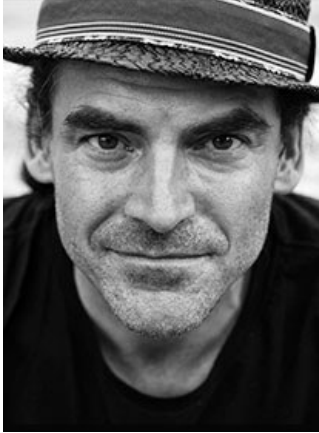
Dana Levy was born in Tel Aviv and lives and works in New York. She completed her Post Grad in Electronic Imaging at the Duncan of Jordanston College of Art Dundee University, Scotland, and holds a BA from Camberwell Art College London. Prizes include 2013 Kolliner Young Artist Award, 2010 Dumbo Arts Festival best studio award, 2008 Young Israeli Artist Award, 2006 Hamburg Short Film festival jury award. She has had solo shows at the Petach Tikva Museum of Art (2014) Israel Museum in Jerusalem (Upcoming 2015), Center for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv Israel; Ron Mandos Gallery

Amsterdam 2012, Braverman Gallery Tel Aviv 2012, Loop art fair Barcelona 2012, Nicelle Beauchene Gallery NYC 2010.

### ***The Poetics of Unwild Things***

Dana Levy works chiefly with video, video installation and photography. Her work investigates historical, social and political situations, while dealing with memory, identity and the relationship between culture and nature, between the wild and the man-made. It explores the various ways that life is taken out of its natural context, uprooted from its surroundings and assigned a place on shelves or display cabinets or on the walls of the museum. The consequences of ecological change that impinge on Western society has triggered inspiration for these works, yet they are not so conceptual as they are visual poems that make room for new personal interpretation. I will show extracts from my videos- *The Wake* (2011), *The Fountain* (2011), and *Everglades* (2014).

## Joe Mangrum



Joe Mangrum is a painter and installation artist who uses multiple mediums. His work explores issues of the urban grid, environmentalism and its effects on the collective psyche. Most recently, since 2009, he has created a series of over 600 spontaneous and intricate sand paintings in public and private spaces of New York City. In 2012, he was featured at the Museum of Arts and Design as part of the “Swept Away” exhibit, he was also included in The Flag Art Foundation’s “Watch Your Step” exhibit and installed at The Corcoran Gallery Rotunda in Washington D.C. [joemangrum.com](http://joemangrum.com)

### ***This is not Sand***

An exploration of sand painting in an urban environment as a vehicle for cultural reboot.

## Oliver Medvedik



Oliver Medvedik is presently an assistant professor of biology and bioengineering at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Arts and Scientist-in-Residence at The School of Visual Arts. He is also the Scientific Director and cofounder of the community biotechnology laboratory, Genspace, in Brooklyn. As an undergrad, he majored in biology at Hunter College, City University of New York. He later obtained his Ph.D. at Harvard University, at the laboratory of Dr. David Sinclair, where his dissertation work focused on genetically mapping pathways that underlie the aging process, using budding yeast as a model system. He also loves mentoring teams for the genetic engineered machines competition (IGEM), where students design and build novel “genetic circuits” and get to program life and also collaborating with artists and designers on bioart related projects.

## Aimee Morgana



Aimee Morgana is an artist whose work blurs the boundaries of art and science. Since 1997, she has been pursuing an experimental conceptual interdisciplinary research project exploring communication with another species, working with the noted African gray parrot N’Kisi. N’Kisi is considered to be one of the world’s foremost “language-using animals”. Her work encompasses trans-disciplinary research, science-art, eco-art, relational aesthetics, social sculpture, and human-animal collaboration.



## Zach Moser



Zach Moser facilitates collaborative and interactive investigations, designed to discover alternative methods of communication and new expectations of human potential. His work focuses on pursuing knowledge, alleviating the critical effects of injustice and participating in creative communities. He is co-founder of Shrimp Boat Projects, Workshop Houston and The Big Parade. He has exhibited his work and projects at the Contemporary Art Museum of Houston, the Glassell School of Art and Diverseworks Art Space. He received the Compton Mentor Fellowship in 2003, the Artadia Award in 2006, the Idea Fund in 2008, in 2011, was an Artist in

Residence at the University of Houston Mitchell Center for the Arts, and in 2012 received a Creative Capital Visual Arts Award.

### ***Shrimp Boat Projects***

Shrimp Boat Projects is an artistic investigation of the Houston region that explores the connection between a region's identity and its native landscape. As the last form of labor wholly dependent on this landscape, shrimping in Galveston Bay is the project's point of departure. The process of the project melds the daily work aboard a commercial shrimp boat, the F/V Discovery, active participation in the local seafood economy, public programming, and cultural production. More of this project can be viewed at the project's website. Workshop Houston provides youth with creative, technical, and educational resources. Workshop Houston's vision is to lay the groundwork for a just society by creating a community that provides youth with support, expanded opportunities and alternative definitions of success. Since its conception in 2002, the Big Parade has become a cherished event in the Oberlin community; bringing residents of all ages together in a homespun, imaginative, community arts event that depends on wide-spread collaboration and team work. Groups involved in the Big Parade work relatively independently, but towards a common goal: to represent themselves and the town of Oberlin in a joyous and spectacular event.

## Melentie Pandilovski



Dr. Melentie Pandilovski is a curator, media art critic and theorist. He is currently Director of Video Pool Media Arts Centre in Winnipeg, Canada. He has curated more than 150 exhibitions and organized numerous symposia, conferences, and workshops, in Europe, Australia, and Canada, such as: "SEAFair" (Skopje Electronic Art Fair) in the period 1997 – 2011; "Toxicity" in 2013-14, "Marshall McLuhan & Vilém Flusser Communication & Aesthetics Theories Revisited", in Winnipeg, Canada in 2012; "Biotech Art – Revisited" in Adelaide, South Australia in 2009, etc. His publications include: "How biotechnology and society co-constitute each other", *Technoetic Arts Journal*, Intellect Ltd. 2012; "Energy, Biopolitics, Resistance Strategies and Cultural Subversion, Skopje, Macedonia (2011); "The Apparatus of Life and Death" (2010), "Consciousness and Electronic Culture", In *Consciousness Reframed* (Catalogue of 4th International CAiiA-STAR Research Conference) (Perth 2002).

### ***The Biotech Species***

Current and past events in the development of Biotechnology point to the great changes we are going through as society and individuals, making it very clear that society and technology co-constitute each other. The ability to code life into symbols, and being able to interpret these symbols has changed the very notion of what we understand as life. And indeed, Biotechnology and in particular the work with DNA allows us to alter hereditary characteristics. This is advanced even further with Bio-informatics and Nano-technology rebuilding on sub-atomic levels, and thus shaping biological life forms. We have also unraveled the codes of life by mapping thousands of genes comprising the human genome, and have become able to genetically engineer embryos and alter the human species in general. Some hope that at the end of this process we will be able to thoroughly re-engineer life and dispose of death.

This extended role of Biopolitics today results with the crucial question of how Biotechnology shapes life, and therefore attains the central role in society. In fact Biotechnology adds a complexity of layers thus radically reconstructing the relations between politics and nature, allowing for a reassessment of how we look at life today. The dualities of power and right, sovereignty and law, do not leave the contemporary Biopolitical discourses for a minute. As a result, the foundations of Biopolitics are altered, for life appears not to be what we have originally assumed that it was, and therefore the regulation of life cannot continue under the premises of what was previously taken for granted.

On the other side of the spectrum, phenomenology informs us that the disclosure of the world through technology represents also a disguise of the relations established continuously by technology. These relations are of course being unconcealed by artists in their aesthetic and epistemic search. However, in order to contemplate the changed notions of life, flesh and the body, artists and critics must surpass the Heideggerian dichotomy between existence and life. And in reality, Biotech artists have responded

with an inquiring enthusiasm as well as with knowledge-related criticism to the development of Biotechnology and the changed role of arts in the 21st c., and have raised questions related to creativity, aesthetics, ethics, Biopolitics, and the general shifting of the attention of our society towards science-technology, as well as in figuring out of the texture of reality in today's world. This changed position of the artists (similar to the Renaissance period and the first decade of the 20th century) is carving out new existential territories for humanity, thus influencing Felix Guattari's taxonomy of the apparatuses of subjectification as pathways of knowledge, pathways of power, and pathways of self-transformation.

## Henry G. Sanchez



Henry G. Sanchez is an interdisciplinary, project based artist and curator. Sanchez's work has been exhibited and screened at Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, NY; Momenta Art, Brooklyn, NY; Greenpoint Film Festival, Brooklyn; Rooster Gallery, NY; Guggenheim Museum, Soho; Pera Museum, Istanbul Turkey; Jersey City Museum; Here Art Center, NY; Pierro Gallery, South Orange, NJ; Rupert Ravens Contemporary and Affero Gallery in Newark, NJ; City University of New York; Taller Boriqua Gallery, NY; Ben Shahn Center, William Patterson University; and Centro de Arte de Sevilla, Sevilla, Spain. His curated exhibitions include AQUA-CULTURE at the McKinney Avenue Contemporary in Dallas, Texas (2014), GEO-LOCO at Outpost Artists Resources and DATA-DADA at Grace Exhibition Space in Brooklyn, NY.

### ***THE ENGLISH KILLS PROJECT***

Henry G. Sanchez has been working on the ENGLISH KILLS PROJECT for the past four years. It is a socially engaged, bio-art project about the English Kills tributary of Newtown Creek, a 2009 designated Superfund site in Bushwick, Brooklyn. He collaborates with the biologist Dr. Sarah Durand, CUNY of La Guardia College and several community groups to develop an alternative bio-remediation plan to construct man-made wetlands that clean and remediate the water quality for portions of Newtown Creek. It aspires to create new viable wetland communities, support the current wildlife habitat of marine life and endangered avian species, and to supplement other types of Superfund remediation that consist of dredging, water aeration, soil capping and other highly disruptive and potentially hazardous process'. The ENGLISH KILLS PROJECT seeks a green, sustainable, alternative remediation process to a grey and carbon based one.

The ENGLISH KILLS PROJECT takes a creative, socially engaged approach to develop an alternative bio-remediation plan by combining community action and public awareness campaigns with video, exhibitions, installations, performance and instigations. Currently, Sanchez is in active dialog with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of New York, to propose creating man-made wetlands and suspended habitats along MTA owned property in English Kills.

The ENGLISH KILLS PROJECT has a imaginative, expansive and inclusive mission: to seek an ecological transformation, create public access to a public, safe and clean waterscape for all of New York City residents and environmental justice for a poor neighborhood of color with the help of its community.

## Michael Sappol



Michael Sappol is a historian in the History of Medicine Division of the National Library of Medicine (National Institutes of Health), Bethesda, MD. He received a Ph.D. in history from Columbia University in 1997. He is the author of *A Traffic of Dead Bodies* (2002) and the editor of several other books, most recently *Hidden Treasure* (2012). His scholarly work focuses on the cultural history of the body; the history of anatomy and medical representations and displays of the body; the history of alternative and popular medicine; the history of medical film. In 2003, he curated *Dream Anatomy*, an exhibition on the history of evocative anatomical illustration and display; in 2006 *Visible Proofs*, an exhibition on the history of forensic medicine; and in 2009 (with Paul Theerman) *Rewriting the Book of Nature: Charles Darwin and the Rise of Evolutionary Theory*. He currently lives in Washington, DC.

## Roy Scranton



Roy Scranton completed a B.A. at the New School and an M.A. at the New School for Social Research before joining the Princeton English department in 2010. Roy's work has been published in *Contemporary Literature*, *Theory & Event*, *Rolling Stone*, *New York Times*, *Boston Review*, *Bookforum*, and elsewhere. With the growing urgency of global warming as a decisive issue for the human species, he has turned toward environmental humanities as a field of research, most notably with his essay in the *New York Times*, "Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene," which was chosen for inclusion in the *Best American Science and Nature Writing 2014*. Roy Scranton co-edited *Fire and Forget: Short Stories from the Long War* (Da Capo, 2013), the preeminent literary anthology from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### ***The Compulsion of Strife: Nature, War, and the Anthropocene***

Conflict burns at the core of all the problems arising from global warming: conflict over oil, natural gas, clean water, and soon food, conflict between rich and poor, between post-industrial and pre-industrial, between new forms of life and old, and between different visions of nature. On the one hand the Pentagon is increasingly making climate change a priority in military planning; on the other, Bruno Latour has suggested that we need to see the politics of global warming through a frame of war--a war of the Humans of the Holocene against the Earthbound of the Anthropocene. My paper will work to think through the relationship between war and nature in the Anthropocene, with distinct attention to what Heraclitus called "the compulsion of strife."

## Gary Sherman



Fine artist; Instructor; Director of operations, BFA Fine Arts Department, School of Visual Arts  
Education: BFA, MFA, School of Visual Arts  
One-person exhibitions: The Phatory LLC, NYC  
Group Exhibitions: Pera Museum, Istanbul; Visual Arts Gallery, NYC; Inwood Hall Park Nature Center, NYC; Meardros Festival, Turkey; The Phatory, NYC.  
Publications: See/Saw, La Vigie-Art Contemporain, The Shark, Greater New York, Web site and CD-ROM Exhibition Catalog, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.  
Bibliography: Robert Morgan, "The 11th International Istanbul Biennial: What Keeps Mankind Alive?", The Brooklyn Rail, October 2009

### ***Artificial Sublime***

The artificial sublime concerns the representation of space in film isolated from any semantic narrative implications. These spaces—the ones created in the editing room by means of montage-- are made "real" by running sequential fragments through a projector to present a false coherence. Space constructed in this manner materializes through time; it cannot be comprehended *in toto*, as in a single establishing shot. For the viewer, the temporal incomprehensibility and formlessness of this accretive upload consciously and acutely underscores the mechanics of the filmic construction—the artificial sublime. Because this illusory experience exists within the hypnotic, oscillating light of the film projection, it is a haven for the "other," a perfect space for the imagination to wander.

Other categories of space that function as a refuge for "otherness" are the heterotopias of Michel Foucault—non-hegemonic spaces that contest and disrupt the continuity and normality of common, everyday places.

Spatial dynamics such as these have become common in our contemporary grab bag of cultural experiences. As a result, traditional notions of space have changed. In an age of digital communication and instant access across the globe, previous concepts of space and boundaries are evolving. Hierarchies are being challenged. Hallowed notions of public versus private have collapsed.

Issues of space—physical, social, or virtual—are never resolved; they merely shift and collide according to tectonic realities.

## Adam Stennett



Adam Stennett creates conceptual works from a post 9/11 perspective, investigating issues that affect our global society and their ramifications on the American psyche. Well known for his exquisite renderings in oil and acrylic, Stennett delved into sculpture and performance with *Artist Survival Shack*, a self-sufficient and off the grid exploration of an artist's necessities eventually installed at Glenn Horowitz in East Hampton. Adam Stennett's work has been featured and discussed in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Frieze*, *Art In America*, *Bomb Magazine*, *BlackBook*, *New York Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *Esquire*. [adamstennett.com](http://adamstennett.com)

### ***The Artist Survival Shack Project***

Based in the artist's struggle to carve out time and space to make artwork in an economically challenging environment, the *Artist Survival Shack* and the works produced within are a study in what is really necessary for an artist to live and thrive. The difficulty of the task is part of its meaning—it plays on the mythology of the artist, and the idea that personal sacrifice is central to the heroic act of artistic creation. At once both serious and absurd, the *Artist Survival Shack* calls attention to the outsider/outlaw role artists have traditionally been accorded by society. The project draws an implicit and uncomfortable parallel between the activities of the solitary artist pursuing his vision and those of the lone madman plotting havoc. It raises varied themes- ranging from environmentalism, green design, sustainable agriculture, visionary states, and utopia, to paranoia, separatism, surveillance, security, economic collapse, and apocalypse- and holds them all in an uneasy tension.

A six and a half by nine and a half foot shack was designed and built over a two year period using a repurposed aluminum greenhouse skeleton, four panel wooden floor/clamshell shack transport crate, solar shower, solar panel with battery system, reflective insulation, parabolic mirror, Fresnel lens, LED lights, fifty-five gallon water collection system, vertical grow wall, vermiculture composting system for solid waste and an eleven gallon urine collection system (for later use as nitrogen rich fertilizer). On August 1, 2013, Adam Stennett began a month-long installation/endurance performance, living and working in the 6.5 x 9.5 foot, self-sufficient, off-the-grid survival shack at an undisclosed location on the East End of Long Island. The supplies, food and water Stennett arrived with were all he had access to, and he did not leave the area for the thirty-one day duration of the performance. A daily journal was kept and can be read at [www.artistsurvivalshack.tumblr.com](http://www.artistsurvivalshack.tumblr.com).

The artist's mission was to survive physically and spiritually, and to create a new body of work that would be exhibited along with the *Artist Survival Shack* itself at the conclusion of the performance.



*The Artist Survival Shack*, in its current state, could remain installed in a gallery or museum setting as a complete and finished artwork. Additionally, at the request of the artist (or owner of the work), the performative aspect of the Artist Survival Shack could be reengaged in another 31-day residency in a new context, public or private, urban or rural. In doing so, the cultural relevance of Artist Survival Shack would continue to evolve with each performance, and the works produced during the residency would remain perpetually attached to the project.

## Raul Valverde



Multimedia Artist. Faculty, School of Visual Arts, Fine Arts Department. Recipient of the Fulbright Scholarship and Fellow of the AIM program of the Bronx Museum of the Arts. Group exhibitions include the International Biennial of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (2014); The Bronx Museum, New York (2013); La Casa Encendida, Madrid (2012); American Museum of the Arts, Washington D.C. (2012); La Casa Encendida, Madrid (2012); Anthology Film Archives, New York (2011); Instituto Cervantes, Milan (2009); Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid (2008) and Royal College of Art, London, (2007). Solo exhibitions include

*Raul would like you to be critically happy*, Centro de Arte Complutense, Madrid (2012) and *Colorear/Editar/ Ocupar*, Museo del Grabado Español Contemporáneo, Malaga (2012). Monographs include *I can reach very High*, (Madrid: Complutense, 2012) and *To look and to look* (Santander: Esete, 2010). [valverderaul.com](http://valverderaul.com)

### ***Adapted Landscape***

*Adapted Landscape* is a site-specific Mediterranean garden facing the Caribbean. It was installed during the 2014 Cartagena de Indias Biennial in Colombia, using flora that originally came from Cartagena in Murcia, Spain. This small landscape was set up in the wall fortification built by the Spanish conquerors around the 16th Century.

The topographic relationship between the two Cartagenas was used as the starting research point for the project –a significant analogy for the early conquistadors that around 1500 renamed the Colombian town after Cartagena in Spain. Both cities were strategic seaports with geographically opposing orientations, east in Spain and west in Colombia. By connecting these two points in time, Raul Valverde explores notions of referentiality and exchange to present an adapted garden. For the construction of this public space, the terrain was divided into fruit, flowers, palms and cacti, working in close collaboration with the Colombian Foundation *Verde que te quiero verde* and many local nurseries of Cartagena. The specimens found are characteristic of the dry Mediterranean climate of the Spanish Cartagena, such as asparagus, lemons, oranges, date palms, olives, grape vines, or prickly pears.