



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
University College Cork, Ireland

ECO-HUMANITIES RESEARCH GROUP

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES AND EVENTS SPRING- SUMMER 2026



Organised with the support of the UCC Sustainability Institute and the Future
Humanities Institute

ECO-HUMANITIES RESEARCH GROUP PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES 2025-26

These lectures and events are open to all, and you are warmly invited to attend.

For further details about the lectures and events listed below, including abstracts and speaker biographical information, please see pages 3-6 below.

Thursday 12th March 2026: 4.00-5.15pm: in person lecture

Venue: ORB 2.12 (Room 2.12, 2nd Floor, O’Rahilly Building), University College Cork main campus.

Kelly Salchow MacArthur (Michigan State University)

Engaging Visual Culture: Eco-Activism Through Graphic Design

Thursday 26th March 2026: 3.00-4.00pm: in person workshop and nature walk

Venue: North Wing Council Room, Main Quad Building (1st floor), University College Cork main campus.

Kelly Salchow MacArthur (Michigan State University)

Haptic + Biophilic: Green Collage Workshop

An event organised jointly by the Eco-Humanities Research Group and the Green Campus Committee for Green Week. An optional nature walk at 2.30pm will take place before the workshop – meet outside the Glucksman for the nature walk.

Thursday 7th May 2026: 4.00-5.15pm: in person lecture

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Venue: CACSSS Seminar Room, ORB G27 (Room G27, Ground Floor, O’Rahilly Building), University College Cork main campus.

Gert Hofmann (University College Cork)

Prophaneti theos. Hölderlin’s trans-cognitive poetic of nature.

Thursday 12th March: 4.00-5.15pm (in person lecture)
Venue: ORB 2.12 (O’Rahilly Building 2nd Floor, Room 2.12), UCC Campus

Kelly Salchow MacArthur (Michigan State University)

Engaging Visual Culture: Eco-Activism Through Graphic Design

Eco-activist design aspires to contribute to (and sway) the ongoing dialogue of environmental urgency that is often met with inaction. Utilizing powerful tools of visual communication, urgent responsibility rests on the shoulders of designers to prioritize critical topics through clear and inspiring messages for the public. Design can serve as the conduit between science and society, abstraction and clarity, singular work and collaborative systemic effort, and inaction and action. My teaching, research and practice over the past 20 years has explored various communication design strategies—humanistic appeals to reconnect oneself with nature, disturbing statistics meant to instigate response, logical calls to action, aesthetic presentation of biophilia, visualization through concrete poetry, community mapping in partnership with an ecological organization, making through green processes and foraged materials, etc. The body of work varies in method, message, and material—yet maintains the commonality of environmental principles and goals of resilience. This lecture will present an arc of environmentally focused creative research which aspires to demonstrate benefits and impact, while instigating future cross disciplinary collaboration and cooperation.

The lecture will lay the groundwork for a subsequent event which will take place on Thursday 26th March for Green Week, **Haptic and Biophilic: Green Collage Workshop**, jointly organised by the UCC Eco-Humanities Research Group and the Green Campus Committee.

Kelly Salchow MacArthur is a Full Professor of Graphic Design at Michigan State University (MSU), a 2-time Olympic rower, a 2-time Olympian Artist, and a Member of the IOC's Culture and Olympic Heritage Commission. She is an Honorary Visiting Researcher in UCC's School of Education through June 2026. She received her Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design with Honors from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and Bachelor of Science in Graphic Design Magna Cum Laude from the University of Cincinnati College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning. Before joining the faculty at MSU, she taught at Kansas City Art Institute, RISD and The College of New Jersey.

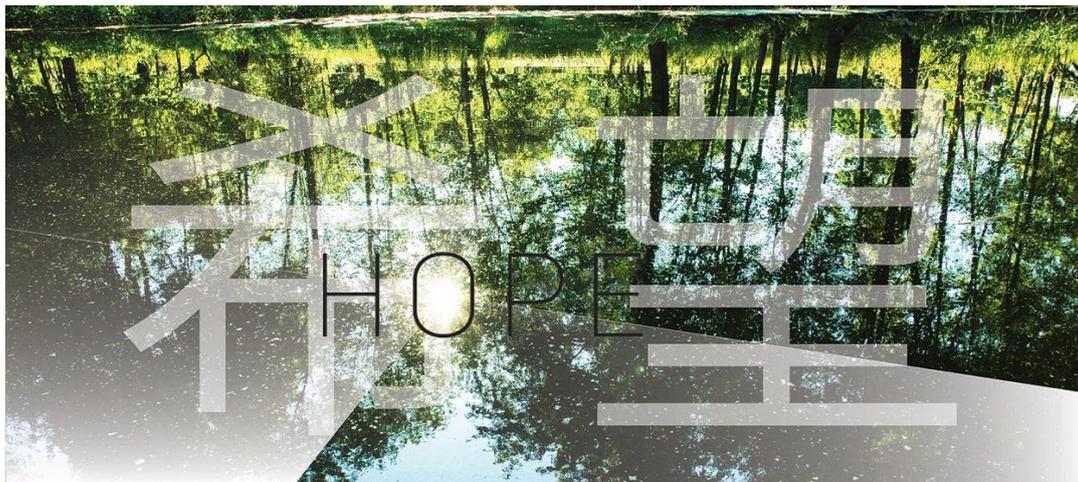
Kelly’s graphic design practice and creative research focuses on environmental awareness, advocacy and action. Her work has been disseminated internationally through exhibitions, design awards, conferences, and publications, and is included in several permanent collections. She is President Emerita of the international design organization, United Designs Alliance (based in South Korea) and AIGA Detroit. She is a former member of the UCDA Design Educator's Advisory Committee, and CAA's Committee on Intellectual Property. Kelly initiated the AIGA Get Out The Vote: Empowering the Women’s Vote national poster initiative to commemorate 100 years of the women’s vote in 2020. She is a recipient of MSU’s Distinguished Partnership Award for Community-Engaged Service for her green mapping projects with Monroe County.

Thursday 26th March 2026: 3-4pm
Venue: North Wing Council Room, Main Quad Building (1st floor), UCC main campus

Kelly Salchow MacArthur (Michigan State University)

Haptic + Biophilic: Green Collage Workshop

An event organised jointly by the Eco-Humanities Research Group and the Green Campus Committee for Green Week



3.00-4.00pm: This hands-on workshop (venue: North Wing Council Room, main Quad Building – 1st Floor) will present a sequence of making meaning through collage. Participants should come with at least 10 pieces of ephemera from nature: printed photographs (b+w laserprints), foraged flora and fauna, rubbings of surfaces, drawings, notes, etc. Capturing these images and traces will rely on a biophilic experience—spending time in nature, sensing through sight, touch, smell and sound to truly forge a connection between self and natural space. Additional materials and prompts will be shared at the event.

2:30pm: Optional nature walk preceding the workshop. Meet outside the front entrance of The Glucksman if you would like to join a group walk. Participants should come with their collage materials that have been collected beforehand, but you may also collect more during this walk.

Kelly Salchow MacArthur is a Full Professor of Graphic Design at Michigan State University (MSU), a 2-time Olympic rower, a 2-time Olympian Artist, and a Member of the IOC's Culture and Olympic Heritage Commission. She is an Honorary Visiting Researcher in UCC's School of Education through June 2026. Kelly's graphic design practice and creative research focuses on environmental awareness, advocacy and action. Her work has been disseminated internationally through exhibitions, design awards, conferences, and publications, and is included in several permanent collections. She is a recipient of MSU's Distinguished Partnership Award for Community-Engaged Service for her green mapping projects with Monroe County.

Thursday 7th May 2025: 4.00-5.15pm: In person lecture
Venue: CACSSS Seminar Room, ORB G27 (O’Rahilly Building Ground Floor, Room G27), UCC main campus.

Gert Hofmann (University College Cork)

Prophaneti theos. Hölderlin’s trans-cognitive poetic of nature.

In the context of his reflections on aesthetic theory around 1800 Hölderlin suggests that humanity, despite all their artistic and cognitive ascent, need to respect the “spirit of nature”, “for as much as they have accomplished, [they] cannot create living beings.” For Hölderlin life is the primordial matter of nature and human existence. The human intellect can embark on life’s trajectory. It can benefit from life as the driving force of all organic metamorphoses of nature, but it cannot take possession of life for its own self-centred purposes.

Hölderlin’s reflections on the relationship between *nature* and *art* unfold as the core structure in his critique of the contemporary philosophical discourse – known as the discourse of German enlightenment and idealism – namely of Schiller’s theory of artistic “play”. Hölderlin depends on Immanuel Kant’s transcendental *Critique of Reason*, which divides the world into two ontological spheres: that of *being*, or nature, and that of *volition*, or morality and human moral action. An ontological abyss gapes, according to Kant, between the world of human praxis and art, and the world of natural being. It was the philosophical ambition of idealist thought to synthesize this Kantian antagonism between natural being and volitional human action. Hölderlin, however, aimed at establishing a *third* intellectual force supplementary to both. It was meant to attribute new significance to the *aesthetic* mind, thus trying to establish a third domain of ontological truth, one that would enable human awareness of *life*, supplementing the two Kantian domains of *being* and *praxis*, and reconciling humanity with nature in a new approach of poetic awareness.

In our presentation we will trace poetic perceptions of nature in Hölderlin’s unfolding discourse on aesthetic theory. They defy the submission of natural life under human intellectual potencies as it prevails in contemporary discourses of Kant’s enlightenment and Schiller’s idealism.

Gert Hofmann teaches German Literature in UCC’s German Department. He previously held faculty positions as Assistant and Full Professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul and Leibniz University, Hanover. He was invited as a guest scholar to the University of Pennsylvania, University of Washington, and Université de Montréal. His research focus is on (eco)critical theory and the border areas of literature and philosophy. He just completed his third monograph entitled *Poetik des Leibes (Poetics of the Body)*.