

ICE(ST)AGES 2: PRESENTATIONS AND SPEAKERS

Klaus Dodds

From Scott to Thwaites

Ever since Lisa Bloom published her pioneering volume on *Gender on Ice* in 1993, it has been recognised that Euro-Western discovery, exploration, and colonisation of the polar regions was overwhelmingly carried out by white men. The intersection of gender, race and nationalism produced and sustained public interest and professional practices with the polar regions that were deeply exclusionary. This is particularly pertinent for the Antarctic and the British imperial encounter with the ice. Captain Scott's Terra Nova expedition famously arrived at the South Pole in the aftermath of the Norwegian party led by the distinguished explorer, Roald Amundsen. The failure of Scott's party to safely return to basecamp was judged to be a national tragedy, with a series of commemorative events and acts of memorialisation designed to recognise their achievements. The ice was a performative state of and for imperial masculinity. As Leonard Darwin, the then president of the Royal Geographical Society, said in the aftermath: "They mean to do or die – that is the spirit in which they are going to the Antarctic... Captain Scott is going to prove once again that the manhood of the nation is not dead... the self-respect of the whole nation is certainly increased by such adventures as this". There I pursue an examination into how ice, in the British national-imperial context, has never been self-evident nor divorced from wider cultural and geopolitical circuits. We might usefully identify ice in overlapping contexts: as a geopolitical substance; as productive of scientific collaboration; as environmental activism; and as complicit with doomsday visions for Antarctica. Using the time frame 1945-2021, ice is and was deeply entangled with geopolitical practices and planning such as mapping, surveying, and probing beneath the ice sheet which was designed in part to consolidate the UK's grip on the Antarctic Peninsula and surrounding islands. And thereafter the signing and entry into force of the Antarctic treaty played a crucial role in mediating the British encounter with ice, which was reimagined as a site for trans-national activity and flows of information. By the 1980s, ice became increasingly an 'informed material', mediated and storified by other agents beyond national governments and state-funded science agencies. Notably, environmental organisations such as the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) and Greenpeace were proving highly effective in staging other encounters such as exposing inadequate waste management around science stations and mobilising concerns that Antarctica faced imperilment via mining. Climate change was not part of that engagement.

Finally, with reference to 'Thwaites', we turn to an ice body that has been repeatedly framed as a 'doomsday glacier', with the inference that if Thwaites disappears then there is a danger that much-larger ice mass will be vulnerable to destabilisation. The spectre of sea level rise has been used to radically reframe ice as dangerous to humanity because of its ability to state0-change as water. Within a hundred years, therefore, ice has been re-framed and re—presented as either unknowable/dangerous for those who encountered it to a state where its composition is held to be complicit with doomsday visions and material change brought about by unsustainable energy-resource systems.

Klaus Dodds is Professor of Geopolitics at Royal Holloway University of London and Director of Research for the School of Life Sciences and Environment. He completed his PhD at the University of Bristol (1994) and subsequently worked at the University of Edinburgh. In 2005 he was awarded the Philip Leverhulme Prize in Geography, which is funded by the Leverhulme Trust in the UK. He has held visiting fellowships at the University of Oxford, University of Canterbury in New Zealand and most recently at the University of Loughborough and acted as external examiner for the Scott Polar Research Institute at University of Cambridge, University College London, and University College Dublin. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and is Honorary Fellow of British Antarctic Survey. In his work outside the academy, Dodds has served as a specialist adviser to the UK Parliament to two enquiries into the Arctic (2014-5 and 2018) and is one of the two UK representatives for the IASC's Human and Social Working Group. He worked for the UK government department DEFRA on their COVID-19 advisory group (2020-21) and continues to work with other organisations such as WWF and NATO on polar matters. He is a trustee to the Royal Geographical Society and Regional Studies Association, and is editor of chief of *Territory, Politics, Governance*. He is a visiting professor to the College of Europe (Warsaw) and will be teaching a new course on the geopolitics of dis-information and mal-information. In his academic work, he has spent the last 25

years working on a variety of topics including polar geopolitics and governance and more recently, an emerging field called ice humanities. Recent book-length publications include: *The Arctic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press 2021, with Jamie Woodward) and a co-edited collection called *Ice Humanities* (Manchester University Press 2022 with Sverker Sorlin). His next book will be with Yale University Press addressing contemporary and future iterations of Arctic geopolitics.

Lisa Bloom

Antarctica and the Contemporary Sublime in Feminist Art Practices

The paper addresses Antarctica exclusively and focuses on three women artists: American Judith Hersko, and New Zealanders Anne Noble and Joyce Campbell. In a region lacking a native human population and one that excluded all women until the 1960s, these artists link regional issues of climate change to gender, the relation of the human to the non-human, questions of territory, knowledge production, and empire. They shake viewers out of routine assumptions about the natural world and invert the tourist gaze using the strategies borrowed from postmodernist art, speculative fiction, and the Gothic horror genre. Their provocative aesthetic approaches enable an understanding of the complex entanglement of nature and culture in the context of a modern visual tradition still unduly influenced by the masculinist imagery of sublime wilderness from the Antarctic Heroic Age of Exploration (1884-1922).

Lisa E. Bloom is the author of *Gender on Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions* (1993, University of Minnesota Press). Her other books include: *With Other Eyes: Looking at Race and Gender in Visual Culture* (University of Minnesota Press) and *Jewish Identities in U.S. Feminist Art: Ghosts of Ethnicity*. (Routledge, London). More recently, she has written extensively on the polar regions. Her new book *Climate Change and the New Polar Aesthetics: Artists Reimagine the Arctic and Antarctic* will be coming out in 2022 through Duke University Press. She has taught at numerous universities over the years including Stanford University, the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), and Josai International University in Togane-shi, Japan. She is currently a Lecturer in the Media Studies Department and a research scholar in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies at University of California, Berkeley.

Hanne Nielsen

Walking the Wide White Stage: Antarctica in the Theatre

Antarctica is a remote and extreme continent that is visited by few. Nevertheless, the idea of the place is alive in peoples' imaginations all across the world. This imagined version is not static - rather, it responds to the values and priorities that dominate at different times. Antarctica has been variously framed as a place for heroes, as a place of extremes, as a place of purity, and as a place of fragility. Such framings emerge across a range of media, including literature, music, and theatre. This paper examines the ways Antarctica has been depicted on the stage, using theatrical performances as a lens through which to better understand both the changing face of the hero and the range of cultural framings of the ice itself. Antarctica remains a backdrop in earlier plays, where Heroic Era narratives are foregrounded (Reinhard Goering's *Die Südpolexpedition der Kapitän Scott*, 1929). Those same narratives have then been used to challenge the notion of the hero (Howard Brenton's *Scott of the Antarctic, or What God Didn't See*, 1972) and to cast Antarctica as a challenge that is analogous to the many challenges people face back home, such as unemployment (Manfred Karge's *Doe Eroberung des Südpols*, 1985) or aging (Patricia Cornelius's *Do Not Go Gentle...* 2011). More recent productions have seen the continent come to the fore, where it is treated as part of a global web of connections (Lynda Chanwai-Earle's *Heat*, 2008), and implicated in wider colonial histories (Mojisola Adebayo's *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey*, 2008). As the focus on a staged Antarctica moves from the heroes who act upon the landscape to the landscape itself, the agency of the ice becomes more apparent and wraparound aspects of production, including sustainable energy sources, become all the more important.

Finally, this paper considers the implications of performing in Antarctica, taking as examples recent expeditions that have set out "in the footsteps" of Heroic Era explorers. The ice that has been staged back home in order to tell and retell stories of Antarctic heroes once again becomes the canvas upon which familiar hero narratives are reprised, subverted, and cast anew. These plays and performances are presented as a series of case studies that are representative of wider trends, illustrating a

progression in how Antarctica has been represented upon the stage – a progression that parallels how we have viewed and valued the icy continent of Antarctica in general.

Hanne Nielsen is a Lecturer in Antarctic Law and Governance at the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, University of Tasmania. Her research focuses on representations of Antarctica in popular media, including in theatre and advertising material; polar tourism; and Antarctica as a workplace. Having spent 5 seasons working as a tour guide in the Southern Ocean, Hanne has a particular interest in the contemporary practices of polar tourism as well as the Antarctic imaginaries that people carry south. Hanne was recognised as an emerging research leader as the first HASS-based researcher to be awarded a Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) Fellowship in 2017, to visit colleagues in Sweden. She is a past President (2017-18) of the international Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the SCAR Standing Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences (SC-HASS). Hanne tweets @widewhitestage.

Lim Wesley and Michelle Ho

Hyperathletic Artistry: Nathan Chen and Yuzuru Hanyu Performing Asian Masculinity and Heroism on Ice

The skaters Asian-American Nathan Chen and Japanese Yuzuru Hanyu have been introducing more difficult quadruple jumps into their programmes since 2014—surpassing the number and type done since the early 2000s. Their jumping prowess has instilled what we call a “hyperathletic-artistic turn”: recognising the almost superhuman and heroic jumping ability along with an equally developed artistic side. This paper performs close readings of Chen’s and Hanyu’s 2018 Olympic performances using a three-fold approach exploring their costuming, music, and choreography to carve out emerging forms of Asian and Asian-American masculinity in the predominantly white sport of figure skating. Their programmes are inspired by and situated in skating practices of the past and current popular culture. While both maintain hyperathleticism and heroism skating for their countries, Chen’s “return of the dancer” aesthetic espouses a maverick instead of macho mode, and Hanyu’s “soft masculine queer turn” draws from the queerness of Johnny Weir and the confidence of Evgeni Plushenko.

Michelle H. S. Ho is an Assistant Professor of Feminist and Queer Cultural Studies in the Department of Communications and New Media (CNM) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She has held visiting positions at NUS, MIT, and the University of Tokyo and holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies and Advanced Graduate Certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies from Stony Brook University (SUNY). She is currently at work on a monograph exploring trans/gender issues through an ethnographic study of *josō* (male-to-female crossdressing) and *dansō* (female-to-male crossdressing) cafe-and-bars in contemporary Tokyo, Japan. Publications from this project are in *Asian Anthropology* and *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (forthcoming). More information can be found at: michellehsho.com.

Wesley Lim is a Lecturer in German Studies at the Australian National University. His research analyses representations of and discourses on dance and the moving body in German and Austrian literature and film from the nineteenth through the twenty-first century and has appeared or forthcoming in publications like *German Studies Review*, *Dance Research Journal*, *Feminist German Studies*, and *TDR: The Drama Review*. His first book project *Dancing with the Modernist City: Metropolitan Dance Texts around 1900* deals with interpenetrating representations of dance and city space in modernist texts. And his latest project addresses East German figure skating culture.

Kirsten Thisted

Un-shaming the Greenlandic Female Body. The Indigenous Nude in Performance Art

Indigenous people have been investigated, described, photographed and even showcased in exhibitions. Today, their descendants confront this (not necessarily distant) past in order to face their pain and redirect the shame to its “rightful owner”: the Western gaze that turned the bodies of indigenous people into objects for curious inspection. In ethnographic collections and on the Internet, there are copious images of naked or almost naked indigenous people.

Drawing on cultural theorist, literary critic, and feminist scholar Sianne Ngai’s concept of ‘ugly feelings’, this paper focuses on two Greenlandic artists, Pia Arke (1958-2007) and Jessie Kleemann

(born 1959), who use their own naked bodies in order to renegotiate these images. In particular, Ngai's notions of 'animatedness', and 'stuplidity' seem useful for describing the emotions the two artists evoke in their viewers, and which are also an integral part of their performances. In preparation for this talk, please watch the "Life Performance 2021" here:

<https://jessiekleemann.com/performances/>.

Kirsten Thisted is an Associate Professor at Copenhagen University's Institute of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, Minority Studies Section. Her research focuses on minority-majority relations, cultural and linguistic encounters and post-colonial relations. She has published extensively on Greenlandic literature, culture and politics. Her most recent book in English is: Thisted, K. & Gremaud, A.S. (eds.), *Denmark and the New North Atlantic. Narratives and Memories in a Former Empire*. Aarhus University Press, 2020. See also: "De-framing the Indigenous Body. Ethnography, Landscape and Cultural Belonging in the Art of Pia Arke". *Nordlit*, 29, 2012, 279-98.

<https://septentrio.uit.no/index.php/nordlit/article/view/2318>. And: "Blubber Poetics. Emotional Economies and Post-Postcolonial Identities in Contemporary Greenlandic Art and Literature." In: Aarnold Svein; Elin Haugdal; Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen (eds.): *Sámi Art and Aesthetics. Contemporary Perspectives*. Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2017, 267-297.

Anne Hemkendreis

Heroes in Miniature: Denmark's Mythical Thule

This presentation focuses on five postal stamps which travelled from 1935 to 1936 between the trading post of Thule (the Danish name for the settlement of Uummannaq in Greenland, today Thule Air Base) and the "Cape York" post office in Copenhagen. These migrating objects, or "image vehicles" as Aby Warburg named them, not only concentrate and visualise the complex colonial history between Greenland and Denmark, they also dynamised and preserved historical power relations by making them physically tangible to this day.

This paper addresses the survival of the image of mythical Thule in the stamp set by focusing on the history of heroic polar exploration and especially on Knud Rasmussen's memorial legacy. The stamps are regarded as everyday objects with an agency of their own due to their mobility and practical use. What is more, the series is understood as a miniature stage for the distribution and anchoring of power relations that are still noticeable.

In their travels to or from the icy North, the stamps re-enacted Rasmussen's famous Thule exhibition and thereby kept the notion of an Arctic Wilderness alive. As active and culture-creating entities, these stamps show individual episodes of the Greenlandic and Danish colonial relationship and reveal a constellation of views in which a hidden political power structure is intertwined into the complex process of communication.

Anne Hemkendreis works as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the research collaboration (SFB 948) *Heroes – Heroizations - Heroism* at the University of Freiburg (Germany). Her current research project examines the aesthetic and affective dimension of ice and snow in paintings, artistic performances and installations. Starting with the peak of the North Pole conquests around 1900, her project is dedicated to the development of snow- and icescapes as an independent genre of art and its aesthetic changes in today's climate debate. Prior to this, Anne's PhD thesis explored the visualisation of privacy in Vilhelm Hammershøi's interior paintings (Fink Verlag, 2015). Anne also worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow and Research Assistant at the Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg of Greifswald, the Klassik Stiftung of Weimar and the Leuphana University of Lüneburg (all in Germany). She functioned as a Lecturer at different institutions, including the University of Arts in Berlin.

Shane McCorristine

Flying over Arctic Ice in Nineteenth-Century Culture

Nineteenth-century exploration narratives used the language of dreams in their descriptions, particularly in relation to mobility through ice in the Arctic seas. The channels through this maritime space were frozen over for most of the year and only navigable for a few months each summer. To describe such a challenging environment, some Arctic narratives, especially following the disappearance of the Franklin expedition after 1845, imagined this space as labyrinthine. Although the use of the labyrinth theme has been noted by some historians (see, for instance, Williams 2002; 2009),

a fuller examination of it will reveal the way that notions of a spectral Arctic were made and circulated. In this paper I also highlight the fantasy of aerial flight above this Arctic labyrinth through ballooning and, taking a literary case, the Arctic reverie in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. I conclude that the passages of explorers, at home as well as in the Arctic, through ice-fields, frozen territory, and air, demonstrates the usefulness of thinking of exploration as a composition or assemblage of different forces.

Shane McCorristine is a Lecturer in Modern British History at Newcastle University, UK. An interdisciplinary historian, his research focuses on the 'night side' of modern experience. Drawing approaches from cultural history and the medical humanities, he explores social attitudes toward dreams, ghosts, death and the supernatural. He is the author of *Spectres of the Self: Thinking about Ghosts and Ghost-seeing in England, 1750-1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), *Spiritualism, Mesmerism, and the Occult, 1800-1920* (Pickering & Chatto, 2012), and *William Corder and the Red Barn Murder: Journeys of the Criminal Body* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Past positions include fellowships at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich, the Institute of English Studies at the University of London, and the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. His most recent book, *The Spectral Arctic: A History of Dreams and Ghosts in Polar Exploration* (UCL Press, 2018), explores ideas of the far North as a haunted and haunting place.

Mariele Neudecker

There Is Always Something More Important (Artist Talk)

The Arctic, water and ice have been part of my research process as an artist since the early 90s. In this presentation I will try to clarify my interest in the visual representation of research as well as how I work with scientists, other artists and technology. Landscapes are charged with history, politics and ideas that cut deep into our consciousness. My presentation will consider our perception of the Arctic from a Western European perspective and explore how and why artists, writers and scientists can embark on what has the potential to be mutually beneficial work.

I will discuss some of my experiences and methods that lead to my 'Arctic works', specifically in relation to two trips to Greenland, as well as brief examples from other contexts and landscapes. My focus on the North is layered, and continuously changing. I look at the perception and understanding of the Arctic through images, and their significance, by also taking metaphorical readings of what 'the Arctic' might be into account. I am interested in critically exploring coinciding realities and narratives that are often viewed from a Western perspective and focus on 'heroic, white men'.

With my work, I am keen to challenge and engage the viewer by making the invisible, inaudible, remote and unknown accessible in some way. I often rely on the friction between the familiar and the extraordinary and I work with both the physical and spatial. I reflect upon how circumstances can be literally translated when they are transposed into installations in specific, mostly indoor locations. The title *There Is Always Something More Important* refers to the difficulty and dilemma of prioritising environmental questions, when personal commitments can always 'get in the way' and diffuse the importance and urgency 'to act'.

Mariele Neudecker, born in Düsseldorf, Germany, is an artist and now lives and works in Bristol, UK. Her work explores the interphases and overlaps of the two and three-dimensional, as well as the analogue and digital. She uses a broad range of media, and working across sculpture, video, painting, as well as sound. Her practice investigates the relationship between art and science and how we construct natural and technological worlds within a Contemporary Sublime today. Mariele often uses technology's virtual capabilities in order to reproduce a heightened understanding of landscape, thus addressing the subjective and mediated condition of any 'first-hand encounter'. She has worked with scientists and engineers and their methods and research. For her, technology both enables and limits the perception and experience of the worlds we inhabit. Mariele is a Professor at Bath School of Art where she runs the research cluster *Making | Art | Science | Environment*. She is on the *Arts at CERN's* Guest Program, the European Commission's *JRC SciArt Advisory Panel* and the steering committee of *Centre of Gravity*, UK.

Mariele's solo exhibitions include *Until Now* at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham; *Over and Over, Again and Again* at the Tate St Ives and Tate Britain; *Hinterland* at the Kunstmuseum Trondheim in

Norway; *Some Things Happen All at Once* at the Zeppelin Museum and *Plastic Vanitas* at the Thomas Rehbein Galerie, both in Germany, as well as *Echo Chamber* at the Gallery Pedro Cera in Portugal. Mariele's recent solo exhibition *SEDIMENT* was on view in Limerick City Gallery of Art (Ireland) and will tour to Hestercombe Gallery (UK) in August 2021. Mariele works with the Galeria Pedro Cera in Lisbon, the In Camera Gallery in Paris, and the Thomas Rehbein Galerie in Cologne. Mariele has also shown widely in international group exhibitions.

<https://www.mariele-neudecker.co.uk/>

<https://www.pedrocera.com/artists/mariele-neudecker/>

http://www.incamera.fr/spip.php?page=rubrique&id_rubrique=47

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