

Visuality and Extraction: Materiality, Interpretation, Power

Centre for Visual Arts and Culture (CVAC) Symposium

16-18 June, 2025

Hotel Indigo, 9 New Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HL

Programme

Monday 16 June

9.00-9.30	Registration and welcome	
9.30-12.30	Keynote Laura Sillars	<p>Mineral Technologies: Tracing the aesthetics of extraction from arts' histories to the digital screen.</p> <p>9:30 – 10:00 Freestyle Crystallography Workshop A tactile, open-ended creative session inspired by crystalline forms and mineral structures. This hands-on exercise grounds participants in the materiality of the subject and sets the tone for collaborative and imaginative inquiry.</p> <p>10:00 – 10:50 The Mineral Image: Artists as Excavators of the Digital A keynote-lecture exploring how contemporary artists engage with the hidden mineral infrastructures of digital technology. Through case studies, visual analysis, and critical reflection, we will examine how artistic practices make extractive systems visible—and thinkable.</p> <p>10:50 – 11:00 Break</p> <p>11:00 – 11:30 Excavating Your Mineral Archive You will be invited to trace your own relationship with mineral technologies through guided writing and visual prompts. What materials power the tools you use daily? What histories lie beneath the surfaces of your devices, studios, or practices?</p>

This session will invite critical reflection as a foundation for the manifesto work to follow.

11:30 – 12:30 A Provisional Mineral Manifesto

In small groups, participants will engage with selected texts from The Crystal World Reader and a wider set of references we will explore alternative approaches to matter, technology, and ethics. Drawing on provocations by artists and policy makers, each group will develop a set of statements for inclusion in a speculative “mineral manifesto.” These may take the form of declarations, poetic fragments, material ethics, or speculative redesigns of extractive systems.

12.30-13.15

Lunch

13.15-14.45

Panel

Rio Creech

Rosalind Hayes

Sophie Piper

Photography

Rubber and Rifles: the role of photography in the fight to dominate the natural rubber industry in late colonial Malaya

Extracting Animals: Creaturely Materiality and Early Photography

Towards an Inclusive Re/visualisation of Women’s Work

14.45-15.15

Break

15.15-16.15

Film screening

Penelope

Anthias

Urukurenda: In Search of the Land Without Evil (Īvī Maraēi)

16.30 – 18.00

Sabina Sallis

How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Planet: A Non-Extractive Approach to Art and Knowledge. Pedagogy Against Extraction: Earthbound Learning as Radical Visuality. (Art walk)

Tuesday 17 June

9.00-9.30	Tea/coffee	
9.30-11.15	Panel	Questions of method
	Sahar Sagha	Instagram as a Digital Mine During the Protest
	Peter Whitton	Extracting academic identity: doors and desks, the social production of personal university spaces
	Megan Kuster and Sarah Comyn	The 'EXTRACTS' project: Fostering collectives of creative-critical practice
11.15-11.30	Break	
11.30-13.00	Panel	Temporalities of Extraction: Narratives of Social and Environmental Violence and Transformation
	Jenny Terry	Sedimenting Black Geologies in Fiction and Art
	Adam Bridgen	Imagining Slow Violence during the Industrial Revolution: Metaphors of Extraction in Labouring-Class Poetry
	Rebecca Macklin	Visualising Relations in the Tar Sands: Extraction, Aesthetics, and Repair
13.00-13.45	Lunch	
13.45-15.15	Panel	Plans, maps, and information
	Mike Crang	'Through the hush'd Chorasmian waste... shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along': from visions of engineering to depictions of disaster, from imaginaries of abundance to emptiness in the demise of the Aral Sea.
	Renwen Xu	Extracting Meaning in Multimodal Museum Spaces: A Cognitive Perspective on Visitor Experience
	Oliver Betts	From Mine to Station to Sea – Extractive Stories in the collections of the National Railway Museum and Locomotion.
15.15-15.45	Break	
15.30-17.00	Panel	Games and exploration
	Simon James	Maps, Male Bonding and Making it Up: Arthur Conan Doyle's <i>The Lost World</i>
	Ladan Cockshut	Did you <i>Factorio</i> that in when you extracted <i>No Man's Sky</i> ?: <i>Minecrafting</i> the visualities of extraction in videogames.
	Inês Barreiros	The 16th hole of Vale do Lobo Golf Resort: plantanoceno, visuality, and ancestral future
17.00-18.30 18.30	Stuart Jones Optional pub + dinner	Geology walk around Durham

Wednesday 18 June

9.00-9.30	Tea/coffee	
9.30-12.00	Keynote David Campbell	'Losing the Play': How Competitive Photojournalism Led to the Wrongful Attribution of an Iconic War Photograph
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-15.00	Round-up and next steps	Open discussion
15.00	Close	