

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: ART, PRESENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGAGEMENT AT LOCH LOMOND, SCOTLAND

Applications are invited for an AHRC-funded PhD studentship opportunity (3.5 years, full-time), which will examine environmental engagement through place-based artwork at Loch Lomond Nature Reserve, Scotland. The studentship will be undertaken in collaboration with RSPB Scotland and is an opportunity made available through the Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme of the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities. Due to begin in October 2019, the studentship project will be supervised by Dr Emma Cardwell, Dr David Borthwick, Professor Hayden Lorimer (University of Glasgow) and Dr Katherine Jones (RSPB Scotland).

For more detail on the studentship, see the end of this proposal.

How to Apply

Applicants should have a good undergraduate degree in Geography, Art and Design, English Literature, Environmental Studies, or another relevant discipline/subject area, and, a Masters-level degree that satisfies AHRC eligibility requirements for advanced research training; or equivalent professional/occupational experience. Preference may be given to candidates with prior experience of working on projects related to nature/wildlife/environment, though this is not essential.

First Phase: Applicants should submit (i) a Curriculum Vitae, including contact details of one academic referee, (ii) a sample of academic writing (approx. 2000-3000 words in length), and (iii) a 2-page covering letter outlining your art practice or ethos, suitability for this particular studentship project, and for doctoral research more generally, to:

Dr Emma Cardwell, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ (Emma.Cardwell@glasgow.ac.uk) no later than **Monday 17th December 2018**.

Interviews are scheduled to take place at the University of Glasgow on **Wednesday 9th January 2019**.

Second Phase: Interviewing will enable the identification of a candidate who will liaise with the supervisory team and complete a full CDA PhD studentship application form by **13th February 2019**, for consideration and final evaluation by SGSAH.

For any enquiries concerning the project, please contact Emma Cardwell (Emma.Cardwell@glasgow.ac.uk)

For further information about SGSAH, the CDA scheme, and studentship residency requirements see:

<http://www.sgsah.ac.uk/>
<http://www.sgsah.ac.uk/prospective/dtp/cda/>

For further information about PhD research in Geographical and Earth Sciences at University of Glasgow go to:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/ges/researchandimpact/>

Further Project Information - Close Encounters: art, presence and environmental engagement at Loch Lomond, Scotland

Drawing on academic and non-academic supervisory expertise, the student will develop an interdisciplinary understanding of human/nature relationships, ecosystem and climatic connections, and relationships between art, science, affective and embodied experience, and environmental values in the context of UK nature reserves. The student put this into practice by designing, developing, installing and evaluating two experimental arts interventions (either self-produced or curated) in different media (such as sculpture, sound, poetry, film or performance) to investigate productive interactions between art, science, affect and environmental values at Loch Lomond nature reserve. Themes could include (but are not limited to):

- the relationships between embodied interactions, practices, scientific knowledge and environmental/conservation values
- multispecies patterns of presence and absence, alongside wider processes of climatic, ecosystem and social change
- connections between Loch Lomond and wider environments, both local (e.g. urban Scotland) and global (e.g. Greenland and Senegal, via migratory birds)
- how new social connections with nature, and the nature reserve, can be forged beyond the physical bounds of the reserve.

Recent advances in the geohumanities, ecocriticism, and science and technology studies have unsettled simplistic conceptions of the intersecting relationship between nature, scientific knowledge and human experience. The nature reserve is a useful test-site for thinking about these issues. It can be configured not only as a place for protection and recreation, but also where meaningful *connections* are made, at personal, ecosystemic and global scales. Connection can also be understood as patterns of multispecies presence and absence. For example, the presence of hidden wildlife that may require some prior experience or scientific knowledge to identify, or the likelihood of encountering charismatic species only seasonally resident, shaping visitor experience. At Loch Lomond, 'star species' are seasonally migrant birds: osprey, wood warbler and redstart in summer; white-fronted geese in winter. Bird-size and seasonality mean visitors are not always guaranteed to have the 'species-experience' they expect, traditionally based on permanent interpretation panels, and connection with other species present at the site (such as lampreys) relies on scientific knowledge about habitats and behaviours. How best can interpretation balance scientific communication, creative engagement and affective experience to foster environmental consciousness?

Project Impact

This practice-based research PhD has the potential to theorise new methodologies for deploying arts as modes of environmental-scientific intervention, while for RSPB and wider nature conservation communities it will inform new models for visitor engagement and education.

The student will work in close collaboration with RSPB. Significantly, although RSPB has supported many science PhDs, this is their first in the arts and humanities. RSPB want to use this PhD to help them explore how to inspire people to begin a life-long passion for nature through experience of nature reserves. 'Interpretation' of relevant scientific understanding is an important way to create understanding and meaning for visitors. Traditionally RSPB have used information panels to communicate with visitors, as well as some active engagement tools such as natural play areas and self-guided packs. By engaging more directly with the arts, RSPB hope that this project will help them explore how to create meaningful connections between reserves and people. The project will have the dual advantages of creating artwork at Loch Lomond, which will benefit visitors to the reserve, as well as fostering learning which will impact on our network of 80 reserves in Scotland and 200 UK-wide.

Why you should apply

The student will join an internationally recognised Human Geography Research Group, in the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences (GES) and its dynamic community of PGR researchers whose work is advancing theory and practice in the Creative Geohumanities. Supervisory input from the University's School of Interdisciplinary Studies (SIS) means the student will be supported across the creative, theoretical, practical, scientific and cultural ecocritical aspects of the research proposal. The student will benefit from the wide range of research training and career development opportunities offered by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities. The studentship project will, in turn, further strengthen a current cohort of existing and new PGR students in GES and SIS undertaking arts-led place-making research, as well as fostering new research connections between the University of Glasgow and RSPB, the largest wildlife conservation charity in Europe. The RSPB local office is very close to the University of Glasgow, allowing the student to move easily between partner organisation and university.

The student will gain experience in two professional settings: with RSPB Scotland, and the University of Glasgow. They will be exposed to differing, but complementary, forms of expertise. Through a practice-centred and applied project methodology the student will be able to develop skills as an advanced researcher and as a creative practitioner in a conservation setting. The student will conduct sited, practice-based research on the Loch Lomond reserve, collaborating closely with RSPB staff in the regional office in Glasgow and the local team at Loch Lomond. The mix of project partners and supervisors will enable the student to develop in the emergent interdisciplinary and internationally recognised field of the Geo and Environmental Humanities.

Meet the Team

Principal Academic Supervisor Name: Dr Emma Cardwell, *University of Glasgow, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences*

Emma is a human geographer interested in relationships between science, lived experience and the environment, particularly conservation. She has worked on a range of partnership conservation projects with Greenpeace, Pew, Barra and Vatersay Community Trust and Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall's Fish Fight and Landshare campaigns; offering the candidate support with partnership working

and academic theory on relations of experience, science and conservation. She has also curated arts events at Modern Art Oxford, contributed to collaborative arts events at the Tetley Gallery, Leeds and Art Jericho, Oxford, and written for a range of media outlets (including Guardian, New Statesman, Ecologist, BBC).

Co- Academic Supervisor Name: Professor Hayden Lorimer, *University of Glasgow, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences*

Hayden is a cultural geographer whose work addresses questions of place-making, landscape study and environmental change in Scotland. In previous research he has examined traditions of animal study in the field sciences and arts, exploring human relations and encounters with the grey seal, red deer, reindeer, crossbill and snow bunting. He has co-supervised AHRC CDA/CDP studentships with a range of non-HEI partners (Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park; Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society; Royal Geographical Society; Royal Society; Glasgow Life). He has written for The Guardian and has diverse broadcasting experience with BBC radio and television.

Additional Co-Supervisor: Dr David Borthwick, *University of Glasgow, School of Interdisciplinary Studies*

David undertakes research in the interdisciplinary environmental humanities. His work is concerned with modern and contemporary ecocriticism, particularly literary responses to the environment, focusing on poetic responses to landscape and place. He is currently co-editing a collection of essays entitled *Walking: Landscape and Environment* (Taylor and Francis, 2019) and runs the MLitt Environment, Culture and Communication. He has experience in supervising creative writing doctoral students as well as AHRC CDP studentships. He has worked with a range of artists on projects exploring site specific responses to place; and can support the candidate in integrating creative practice and academic work.

Partner co-supervisor: Dr Katherine Jones, *RSPB Scotland*

Since her PhD in ecology, Katherine has worked in the environmental sector in Scotland, spending 10 years at Scottish Natural Heritage covering interpretation, community engagement and education. Katherine now covers all aspects of people-work for RSPB in the South and West of Scotland including media and publicity, education, membership and community fundraising with a special interest in interpretation and visitor experience on reserves. She will act as key liaison for the candidate within RSPB and ensure the PhD work is properly integrated into, and fully supported by, the partner organisation.



You can read a short blog of our activities at RSPB Scotland Loch Lomond over the past few years [here](#)

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