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TRANS DISCIPLINARITY AND TRANS FORMATION

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Future Earth

“...such as what type of alternative futures are considered desirable and possible, whose visions count and the politics and social conflicts surrounding decisions and actions concerning transformations to sustainability.”



UNLIKE A DRAWN LINE - A WALKED LINE CAN NEVER BE ERASED

WALKING IS THE CONSTANT - THE ART MEDIUM IS THE VARIABLE

THE WALK IS THE ART

WALKS ARE FACTS FOR THE WALKER AND FICTION FOR EVERYONE ELSE

A WALK HAS A LIFE OF ITS OWN - A BEGINNING AND AN END

AN ARTWORK MAY BE PURCHASED BUT A WALK CANNOT BE SOLD

ALL MY WALKS ARE RELATED FROM THE FIRST TO THE LAST

WALKS ARE LIKE CLOUDS - THEY COME AND GO

Who am I?


- Participation
 - Collaboration
 - Interdisciplinarity
 - Producer for public art in health contexts working with NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Ginkgo Projects, Wide Open
 - Producer and writer on ecological art including working with Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison on *Greenhouse Britain: Losing Ground, Gaining Wisdom*
 - Established *ecoartscotland* in 2010
 - Producer on *Nil by Mouth* an art science collaboration focused on food and farming
-



Discipline(s)

- Ante – ‘before’ ante-disciplinary would be like pre-disciplinary
 - Extra- ‘outside’ extra-disciplinary might be amateurism?
 - Anti – ‘against’ anti-disciplinary i.e. against discipline(s). alternatives would be ‘contra-’ and ‘un-’
 - Auto- ‘self’ so auto-disciplinary might be how disciplines control themselves
 - Dys- ‘dysfunctional’ so dysdisciplinarity would be ...
 - Hyper- ‘too much’ i.e. too much discipline
 - **Multi-** ‘many’ i.e. multi-disciplinarity is many disciplines
 - **Inter-** ‘between’ i.e. inter-disciplinarity is between disciplines
 - **Trans-** ‘across’ or ‘connecting’
 - Post- ‘after’ (probably along with Pata- ‘beyond’)
-

Basarab Nicolescu

- Disciplines
 - Multi-disciplinary
 - Inter-disciplinary
 - Trans-disciplinary (as in transcendence)
 - NB this is not a sequence 'good, better, best'
- 

Nicolescu cont.

“Usually, transdisciplinarity is seen as a means of collaborative research and joint societal problem solving, involving various stakeholders such as academics and representatives of private industry, governments, and societal interest groups.”

Dieleman 2017

Nicolescu *cont.*

- Trans-disciplinary is between levels of reality

“By the word *reality* I mean everything which resists our representations, descriptions, images. I mean by the word *level* a group of systems which is invariant under the action of certain laws. Finally I maintain that two levels of Reality are different if the passage from one to the other involves a breakdown of laws and a breakdown of fundamental concepts (such as causality, for example).”

Nicolescu 1993

Nicolescu cont.

- Levels of reality
 - includes imagined worlds, subjectivities, place based ways of knowing, i.e. intersects with a post-colonial epistemology
- Reality is plastic
 - The stories we tell ourselves of what constitutes a good life matter enormously
 - We need to be highly self-reflective and aware of our own biases





But

- Both inter- and trans- have versions which focus on the unity of knowledge
 - Hence post-disciplinarity
 - “Ultimately, the speciality they [the Harrisons] have is not to have one. Basically, they see their process not as inter-disciplinary but as post-disciplinary. They reason that any new work may require an investigation of a new discipline or a deepening of an understanding they have of an existing discipline. Therefore, disciplines themselves are simply seen as aids in addressing the subject matter they work with.”
Jane Ingram Allen (2008)
-

*Helen
Mayer
Harrison
and
Newton
Harrison*

“We have come to believe that inconsistency and contradiction are generated by the processes of cognition, thinking and doing, and have the important role to play of stimulating and evoking creativity and improvisation, which are inherent in the processes of the mind that have led us to do this work.”

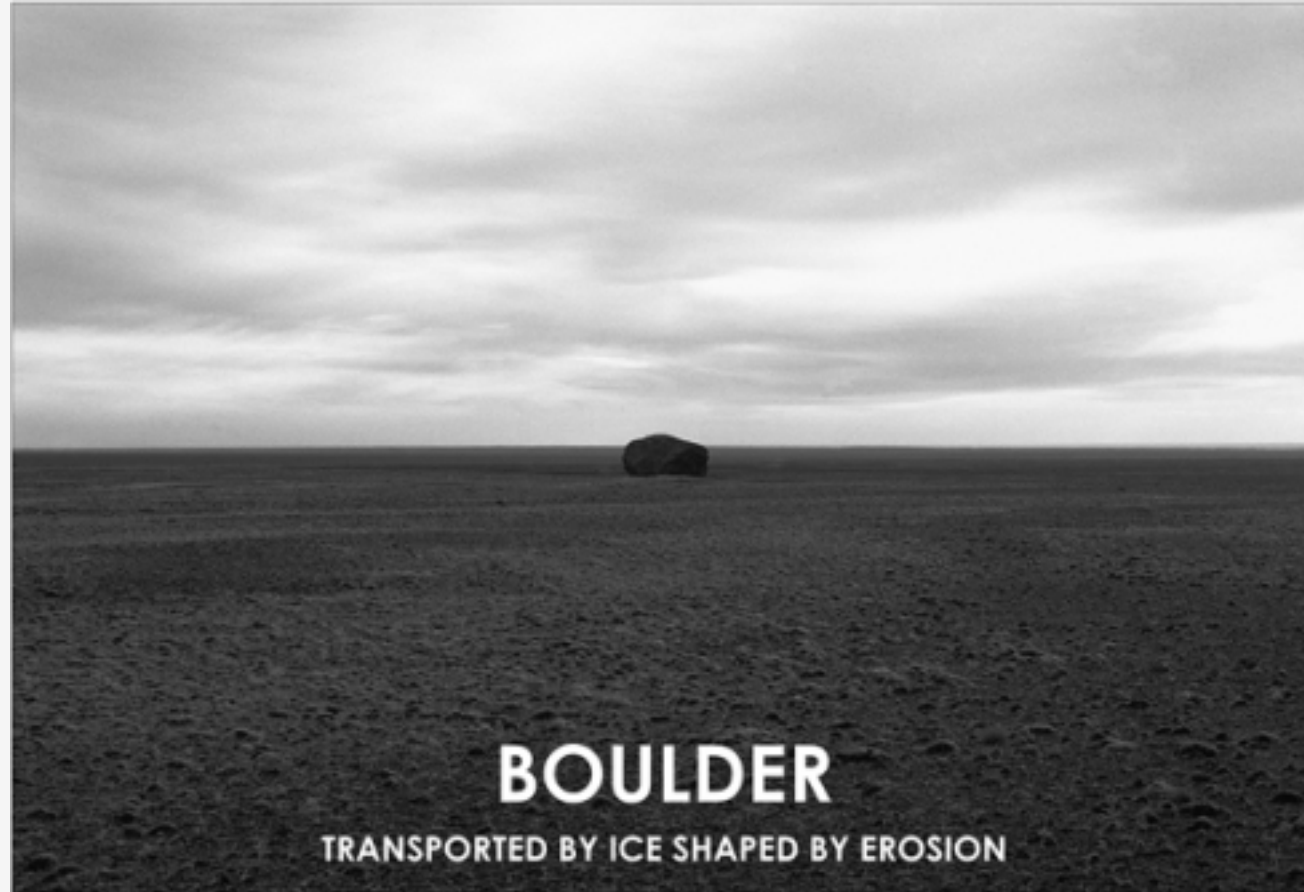
Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison (2007)

*Where do
we need
this?*

Kingsland (2004) says,

“The development of the ecosystem concept was an outgrowth of decades of ecological study and increased emphasis on the quantitative measurement of these exchanges.”






BOULDER

TRANSPORTED BY ICE SHAPED BY EROSION

WALKING CAMPING FOR SEVEN NIGHTS 28 FEBRUARY – 6 MARCH 2013 MÝRDALSSANDUR ICELAND



Practical advice

- We need to understand each others' languages – through this we will begin to understand each others' cultures
 - We need to understand each others' urgencies – what we really care about and where/how we are under pressure
 - Take time to introduce our practices to each other,
 - Start early and have an 'open brief',
 - Define 'hosts' – people who are willing to take the time to do introductions and make connections,
 - Make sure people are paid at commensurate rates,
 - After a little while stop and reflect. That is a good time to make a plan.
- 

Practical advice cont.


Tim Ingold (2017) argues,

- science is focused by methodology, experiment, objectivity, factual accuracy
- in contrast to art where the focus is method, experience, observation and truth



Practical advice cont.

Artists usually start from experience, i.e. going for a walk

- Walking is levelling,
 - Walking is informal,
 - Walking can draw out expertise,
 - Walking is tuned to our ability to pay attention (stopping, looking and discussing),
 - Walking exposes us to the sorts of experiences that help us pay attention (Attention Restoration Theory),
 - Walking can be a political act (Jarrow Marches),
 - Walking can involve trespass.
- 

NO TALKING FOR SEVEN DAYS

WALKING FOR SEVEN DAYS IN A WOOD FEBRUARY FULL MOON CAIRNGORMS SCOTLAND 1988

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