

A Month in the Museum: "Landscape Across the Disciplines"
A Doctoral Student Summer Institute Bridging Science and Humanities

June 2018

This (non-credit) summer institute offers doctoral students from a wide range of disciplines across the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts the opportunity to engage in the theory and practice of integrative, interdisciplinary public scholarship. The institute is offered as a partnership of the MSU Graduate School, The W.J. Beal Botanical Garden (the oldest continuously operated university botanical garden of its kind in the United States), and the MSU Museum (one of the oldest university museums in the Midwest). The Museum, the Botanical Garden, and the associated campus Arboretum are eager to engage in dialogue with doctoral students, who will have the opportunity to help these institutions reimagine interpretive frameworks for installations, exhibits, and public programs. *Our object of study during 2018 is "landscape" as a biological and cultural phenomenon, understood from a range of disciplinary perspectives. How are landscapes produced, transformed, and struggled over through the intersection of biological processes and human projects, both intentional and unintentional?*

Meeting in 3-hour sessions each Monday in June, this group will convene to reconsider critically a landscape site, including the Beal Botanical Garden, the campus arboretum, the Kellogg Biological Station, and the Museum's large-scale dioramas of simulated biomes. In light of shared readings from different disciplinary backgrounds, students will propose novel strategies for analyzing and reinterpreting these materials, perhaps including a segment of a cell phone-based audio tour or a form of digital storytelling that will deepen visitors' engagement with the biological or cultural dimensions of human-managed ecosystems. The institute includes a one-day field trip to observe and reflect on the Kellogg Biological Station in South Gull Lake.

This institute will provide doctoral students opportunities to work in cross-disciplinary teams, to reflect on their own disciplinary assumptions, to communicate their knowledge across fields and to various publics, and to approach important problems in science and society from different perspectives. Participants will engage in broader conversations and learn to bring these conversations back into their disciplinary base. Teams will produce final products that will become part of the public life of the sites with which they interact.

*Please apply with a statement (max. 500 words) indicating why you find this opportunity of interest and how it might productively intersect with your academic interests and other commitments. Each student will receive a \$500.00 stipend that will help support their projects. In addition to the weekly meetings, participants will be expected to arrange other times to work in teams to advance their projects. Please email statements by **April 2, 2018** to Mark Auslander at ausland5@msu.edu. Selected participants will be notified before the end of April.*

Co-conveners: Mark Auslander (Director, MSU Museum) and Judith Stoddart, (Associate Dean of the Graduate School), with Beronda Montgomery (Foundation Professor Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology), and Frank Telewski (Professor of plant biology and curator of the W.J. Beal Botanical Garden and Campus Arboretum).