

4A\_LAB ACADEMY

4 – 8 November 2024, Berlin



Ecological  
Entanglements  
across  
Collections

4A  
LAB

ART HISTORIES  
ARCHAEOLOGIES  
ANTHROPOLOGIES  
AESTHETICS



## Concept Note

### Ecological Entanglements across Collections

# Plant Lives and Beyond

The interdisciplinary Academy *Ecological Entanglements across Collections – Plant Lives and Beyond* builds on the ecocritical turn in the humanities and invites to collectively (re)think human entanglements with vegetal/non-human life—with and against the Berlin collections, with and against their meaning and manifestation as repositories for vegetal/non-human life.

As much as plants have contributed to the making of human worlds, human intervention has also had a deep impact on vegetal ecosystems: the plant-human relationship is one of reciprocal interplay and mutual exchange, with humans existentially depending on plant life. Recent studies have highlighted how these organisms, far from being passive receivers at the other end of the life spectrum, are endowed with active forms of sensory perception. For all these reasons, vegetal life constitutes a privileged field of investigation and

knowledge production, be it in terms of applied technologies, theoretical thinking, or through practices of reciprocity. This new awareness calls for novel paradigms of historical and trans-historical inquiry, focusing on the wide range of interactions between humans and plants across time and space. In particular, there is a need for transdisciplinary and transregional approaches to the interactions of plant biodiversity and human ecologies that can help to retrace the Anthropocene, and think beyond it.

The Academy *Ecological Entanglements across Collections—Plant Lives and Beyond* explores the role of plant life in artistic and aesthetic practices, human knowledge production, and theoretical critical thinking across histories, communities and geographies. It will include public guided tours (in English and German), a live performance by radio artists, and a recital by baroque harp player Margret Koell.

Day one will open the discussions with a critical reassessment of environmental thought as inseparable from religious and political constellations, racial and colonial dominations, the arts, the history of science, and plant biology—reflected in **Discourses, Imaginaries, and Common Sense**. Day two will focus on the critical appraisal of the colonial legacies in **Environmentalism in Contemporary Art after 1970**.

Day three is dedicated to the nexus of **Vegetability, Power and Resistance in and across Asia 1600–1850, as Paradise Drama**. Here, scholars discuss the making of gardens as religious, spiritual, and power structures, in search of resilience, with a special session dedicated on the collections of the Oriental Department of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. Day four will consider communication between vegetal/non-human life forms and **Plants, Sensory Interactions and Language in Early Modern Europe**, that will reflect on perceptions, the senses, sound, smell, music, and feelings in and through plant natures before Modernity. It will lead into the collections of Berlin's Gemäldegalerie and the holdings of the Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung and the Musikinstrumenten-Museum. Day five will be looking into **Plant Photography, Coloniality, and Art in and after the 1920s** and again will include a presentation of selected materials from the collections. A **round table** critically discussing **Disciplines, Systems of Knowledge, and Curatorial Practice** will conclude the event.

Concept and Organisation:  
Hannah Baader & 4A\_Lab team  
in collaboration with  
Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Contact:  
Antje Paul  
4a\_lab@khi.fi.it

# Venues

Day 1

**Forschungscampus Dahlem**

Lansstraße 8

14195 Berlin

Day 2

**Hamburger Bahnhof –**

**Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart**

Invalidenstraße 50

10557 Berlin

Day 3

**Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut**

Potsdamer Str. 37

10785 Berlin

**Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin**

Potsdamer Str. 33

10785 Berlin

Day 4

**Kulturforum (Kunstgewerbemuseum,**

**Staatliches Institut für Musikfor-**  
**schung, Gemäldegalerie)**

Matthäikirchplatz

10785 Berlin

Day 5

**Museum für Fotografie**

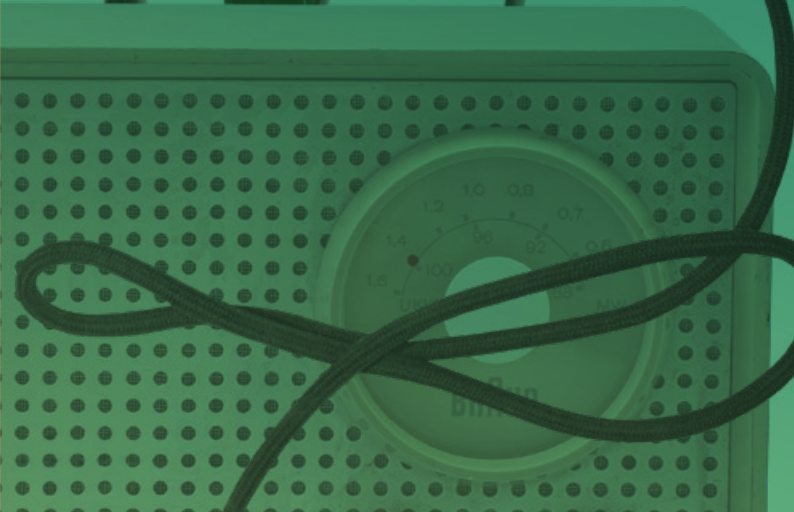
Jebensstraße 2

10623 Berlin

Program

# Monday 4 November 2024

Forschungscampus Dahlem,  
Foyer & Lecture Hall



Events and lectures will take place on-site, are open to the public, and will be mostly accessible online via pre-registration. Events with a limited number of participants are marked \* Please register.

10.00

Welcome & Introduction to the Academy  
by KHI & SPK

With BARBARA GÖBEL

(Director, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Berlin)  
and HANNAH BAADER

(4A\_Lab/Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz,  
MPI)

WORKSHOP

**Ecological Entanglements and Aesthetic  
Practices: Reassessing Discourses,  
Imaginations, and Common Sense**

10.15

Introduction

HANNAH BAADER

(4A\_Lab/Kunsthistorisches Institut in  
Florenz, MPI)

10.30

GIOVANNI ALOI

(School of the Art Institute of Chicago)

Reconfiguring the Botanical Gaze: Fighting  
Plant Blindness to Embrace Rewilding

Moderation and Discussion:

HANNAH BAADER

(4A\_Lab/Kunsthistorisches Institut in  
Florenz, MPI)

11.15

ANNA BLUME

(State University of New York, FIT)

Maya Cloud Forests and Muybridge  
Photographs: A Study of Root Memory and  
the Optical Unconscious

Moderation and Discussion:

JULIA VOSS

(Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin/  
Leuphana University, Lüneburg)



12.30

Lunch Break

13.30

PETER J. SCHNEEMANN (Universität Bern)

The Empty Lot: Of Remediating Brownfields  
and Resisting Vegetation

Moderation and Discussion:

LINN BURCHERT

(Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte,  
München)

14.15

ETIENNE BENSON

(Max Planck Institute for the History of  
Science, Berlin)

Aesthetic Impact Assessment, 1949/1969

Moderation and Discussion:

GERHARD WOLF

(Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, MPI)

15.30

Coffee Break

16.00

Presentation

ANDREA SCHOLZ

(Curator for Transcultural Cooperation,  
Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin) and

THIAGO DA COSTA OLIVEIRA

(Research Fellow, Ethnologisches Museum,  
Berlin)

Curating and Creating Relations between  
Lived Worlds: A Practice-Oriented  
Methodology for Museum Engagements  
with Indigenous Communities from  
Amazonia

*Connect – Comprehend – Communicate:*

*Amazonia as a future laboratory |*

*Vernetzen – Verstehen – Vermitteln:*

*Amazonien als Zukunftslabor*

Moderation: PATRICIA RAHEMIPOUR

(Institut für Museumsforschung, Berlin)

17.00

LECTURE

MONICA GAGLIANO

(Southern Cross University, Lismore)

Ecological Wisdom for a Collective Future:  
If We Listen, Plants Will Teach Us

Moderation and Discussion:

JULIA VOSS

(Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin/  
Leuphana Universität, Lüneburg)

18.00

Reception

Welcome by HERMANN PARZINGER

(President, Stiftung Preußischer  
Kulturbesitz)

19.00

Forschungscampus Dahlem, Lecture Hall

LECTURE PERFORMANCE

Holding Patterns; An Archive of  
Atmospheres

By artists and academics KATE DONOVAN  
(Berlin) and ELLA FINER (London)

An artistic research-exchange project  
across the Ethnological Museum,  
Phonogram Archive, and Natural History  
Museum, Berlin, as well as the British  
Library Sound Archive Library Sound  
Archive and Natural History Museum,  
London.

In cooperation with

MAURICE MENGEL (Head, Berliner  
Phonogramm-Archiv, Ethnologisches  
Museum) and

ALBRECHT WIEDMANN

(Curator, Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv,  
Ethnologisches Museum)



Tuesday  
5 November  
2024

Hamburger Bahnhof –  
Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart,  
Aktionsraum

## Panel I

### Colonial Coordinates of Ecology and Contemporary Art

10.30

Welcome & Introduction

GABRIELE KNAPSTEIN

(Deputy Director and Head of Collections,  
Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der  
Gegenwart, Berlin) and

HANNAH BAADER (4A\_Lab/

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, MPI)

CHAIR

ERIC DE BRUYN (Freie Universität Berlin)

10.45

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS-WYNN

(4A\_Lab)

“A Framework for Control and Change:”  
Coloniality and Ecology at the Centre for Art  
and Communication, c. 1971

11.15

ZACHARY CAPLE

(Aarhus University/Duke University,  
Durham)

A Digested Land: The Industrial Metabolism  
and Auto-rewilding of Bone Valley, Florida

11.45

SRIA CHATTERJEE

(Paul Mellon Centre, London)

Political Plants

RESPONDENT

PETER J. SCHNEEMANN (Universität Bern)

13.00

Lunch Break

CHAIR  
ROBERT STOCK  
(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

14.00

JAMES NISBET  
(University of California, Irvine)  
Illustrating Invasion

14.30

ANDRÉ ROTTMANN  
(Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt/O.)  
Masks and Machines: Notes on AI Ecologies  
and Decolonial Thought

RESPONDENT  
ANNA BLUME  
(State University of New York, FIT)

DISCUSSANTS  
GIOVANNI ALOI (School of the Art Institute of  
Chicago), ANNA BLUME (State University of New York,  
FIT), MONICA GAGLIANO (Southern Cross University,  
Lismore), PETER J. SCHNEEMANN (Universität Bern)

15.30

Coffee Break and Transfer

16.30

COLLECTION VISIT—participants only  
Museum für Naturkunde,  
(paleo-)botanical collection  
Depot, Reuchlinstr. 10–11, 10553 Berlin  
With LUDWIG LUTHARDT  
(Curator (paleo-)botanical collection,  
Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin)

The background is a solid teal color. Overlaid on this are several elements: green leafy branches on the left and bottom; a large, stylized geometric pattern in shades of blue and brown on the right, resembling a traditional textile or pottery design; and a thick, dark brown, curved line that loops across the bottom right.

Wednesday  
6 November  
2024

Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut,  
Simón Bolívar Lecture Hall

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin,  
Dietrich-Bonhoeffer Hall

## Panel II

### Paradise Drama: Vegetability, Power, and Resistance in Safavid Isfahan, Qing Kangxi, and Pre/Colonial Awadh

CHAIR

SINEM CASALE

(Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, MPI/  
University of Michigan)

9.45

MAHROO MOOSAVI (4A\_Lab)

Isfahan through the Safavid Prose and Verse  
Shahr-āshūb(s): From I'jāz-i Hiravī's Rāgh to  
Vaḥīd-i Qazvīnī's Bāgh

RESPONDENT

SUSSAN BABAIE

(The Courtauld Institute of Art, London)

CHAIR

MARGRIT PERNAU

(Max Planck Institute for Human  
Development, Berlin)

10.45

PARUL SINGH (4A\_Lab)

Contested Paradises: Aesthetics of Order  
and Morality in Nawabi and Colonial  
Gardens in Lucknow in the 19th Century

RESPONDENT

SUNIL KHILNANI

(Ashoka University, Sonipat)

11.45

Coffee Break

CHAIR  
SINEM CASALE  
(Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, MPI/  
University of Michigan)

12.00

FENG SCHÖNEWEISS (4A\_Lab)  
The Depth of Surface. The Ecologies of  
Lacquer from Late Imperial China to  
Contemporary Berlin

RESPONDENTS  
BIRGITTA AUGUSTIN  
(Curator, Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin)  
WENYI QIAN  
(Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, MPI)

13.00

Lunch Break

14.00

VISIT – participants only  
Oriental Department, Staatsbibliothek zu  
Berlin, Dietrich-Bonhoeffer Hall  
Presentation by CHRISTOPH RAUCH  
(Head, Oriental Department,  
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)  
Introduction to the Collection of Persian  
Manuscripts at the Oriental Department  
Collection workshop with  
CHRISTOPH RAUCH, MAHROO MOOSAVI  
(4A\_Lab) and  
PARUL SINGH (4A\_Lab)  
Persianate Compilations of the 16th and  
17th Centuries: The Berlin State Library's  
Treasures

15.30

Coffee Break



LECTURES  
Simón Bolívar Lecture Hall,  
Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut

16.00

STEFAN WEBER – remote  
(Director, Museum für Islamische Kunst)  
More than Ornament: Gardens, Scents, and  
Plants in the New Display of the Museum of  
Islamic Art  
Moderation and Discussion:  
SINEM CASALE  
(Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, MPI/  
University of Michigan)

16.45

SUSSAN BABAIE  
(The Courtauld Institute of Art, London)  
Plant Sense. Why do Nomads need Gardens?  
Moderation and Discussion:  
CHRISTOPH RAUCH  
(Oriental Department, Staatsbibliothek  
zu Berlin)

17.45

SUNIL KHILNANI  
(Ashoka University, Sonipat)  
The Indian Cosmopolis  
Moderation and Discussion:  
MARGRIT PERNAU  
(Max Planck Institute for Human  
Development, Berlin)

The background is a solid teal color. In the foreground, there are several green plant stems with leaves. A thick, brown, textured rope is knotted in a complex pattern, looping around the top and right sides of the image. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

Thursday  
7 November  
2024

Kulturforum,  
KGM Lecture Hall

## Panel III

### Plants and the Senses in Visual, Linguistic, and Sound Cultures

CHAIR

STEFAN NEUNER

(Universität der Künste Berlin)

10.15

LEA VIEHWEGER (4A\_Lab)

Capturing Scent? Flowers in Early 16th  
Century German Portraits between the  
Sensory and the Symbolic

11.00

DANIELA HACKE

(Freie Universität Berlin) and

JASON C. J. TERRY

(Freie Universität Berlin)

“We have no words for many”.

Senses and Language in 17th Century  
English Colonial Botany

RESPONDENT

JASMIN MERSMANN

(Freie Universität Berlin)

12.00

ULRIKE G. K. WEGST

(Northeastern University, Boston) and

REBECCA WOLF

(Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung)

Materials and Materiality in Music

13.00

Lunch Break

14.00

COLLECTION WORKSHOP

—participants only

Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung,  
Musikinstrumenten-Museum

REBECCA WOLF

(Director, Staatliches Institut  
für Museumsforschung) and

ULRIKE G. K. WEGST

(Northeastern University, Boston)

*Holz hören / The Audibility of Wood*

*Workshop on the diversity of wood in musical  
instrument making based on the collection of  
the Musikinstrumenten-Museum.*

15.30

Coffee Break

16.00

VISIT AND SOLO PERFORMANCE \*

Gemäldegalerie, Gallery Space

Solo Performance by MARGRET KOELL,  
historical baroque harp

Plant Songs in Renaissance and Baroque  
Music

17.00

PUBLIC GUIDED TOUR \*

& Welcome by DAGMAR HIRSCHFELDER

(Director, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin)

Gemäldegalerie, Gallery Space

Parallel guided tours with

LEA VIEHWEGER (4A\_Lab)

*Nightshade, Men's Fidelity, and Star's Herb:*

Plants in Portraits by Albrecht Dürer and  
Contemporaries

and STEPHAN KEMPERDICK

(Curator, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin)

in English and German

The background is a solid teal color with a pattern of dark green, slightly translucent plant leaves and stems. The leaves are elongated and have visible veins. The stems are thin and brownish-green. The overall effect is a layered, botanical aesthetic.

Friday  
8 November  
2024

Museum für Fotografie,  
Fürstensaal

## Panel IV

### Plants' Photography. Contradictions of Form and Coloniality

CHAIR

CARLOTTA CASTELLANI

(Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo)

10.15

ULRIKE MEYER STUMP

(Zurich University of the Arts)

Plants as Monuments: From Karl  
Blossfeldt's *Urformen der Kunst* (1928) to  
Las Pozas Gardens in Mexico (1962–1984)

11.00

LILIANA GÓMEZ (Universität Kassel)

“The World was my Garden.” Photography  
and Botany's Modern Materialities

RESPONDENT

KÄRIN NICKELSEN

(Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität  
München/Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin)

12.15

Lunch Break

13.15

COLLECTION WORKSHOP

—participants only

Introduction to the Museum's Photographic  
Collection and its Plant Photographies

CHRISTINE KÜHN

(Curator, Collection of Photography,  
Kunstabibliothek, Berlin)

and FRIEDERIKE EDEN

(Research Assistant, Collection of  
Photography, Kunstabibliothek, Berlin)

14.30

ROUND TABLE & CONCLUSIONS  
On Ecological Entanglements across  
Collections. Disciplines, Systems of  
Knowledge, and Curatorial Practice  
With MONICA JUNEJA (Heidelberg  
University), KÄRIN NICKELSEN (Ludwig-  
Maximilians-Universität München/  
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin),  
FRANZISKA NORI (Director, Frankfurter  
Kunstverein), and ALEXIS VON POSER  
(Deputy Director, Ethnologisches Museum  
and Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin)  
Moderation: HANNAH BAADER  
(4A\_Lab/Kunsthistorisches Institut in  
Florenz, MPI)

16.00 End

The background is a solid light pink color. Overlaid on this are several green leaves and brown, textured vines. The vines are thick and curly, creating a decorative frame around the text. The leaves are detailed with visible veins and are scattered throughout the composition.

Events in  
German /  
Veranstaltungen  
auf Deutsch



Mittwoch, 6. November 2024, 15.30

**SAMMLUNGSBESUCH**

Geschwungene Schriften und filigrane Miniaturen: Einführung in die Sammlung persischer Handschriften der Orientabteilung

Geleitet von CHRISTOPH RAUCH (Leiter der Orientabteilung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)

Ort: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin,  
Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Saal,  
Potsdamer Str. 33, 10785 Berlin

Donnerstag, 7. November 2024, 16.00

**SOLO-PERFORMANCE**

Pflanzenlieder in englischer und italienischer Renaissance- und Barockmusik

Solo-Performance von MARGRET KOELL,  
historische Barockharfe

Ort: Gemäldegalerie, Dauerausstellung,  
Matthäikirchplatz, 10785 Berlin

*Zugang nur mit gültigem Ticket für die Gemäldegalerie*

Donnerstag, 7. November 2024, 17.00

**ÖFFENTLICHE FÜHRUNG**

Pflanzenbilder. Sprache, Sinne, Malkunst

Parallel stattfindende Führungen mit LEA

VIEHWEGER (4A\_Lab) und STEPHAN KEMPERDICK  
(Kurator, Gemäldegalerie) auf Deutsch und Englisch

Ort: Kulturforum, Gemäldegalerie  
Matthäikirchplatz, 10785 Berlin

Treffpunkt: Foyer, Eingang Gemäldegalerie

*Zugang nur mit gültigem Ticket für die Gemäldegalerie*

Freitag, 8. November 2024, 15.00

**SAMMLUNGSBESUCH**

Lichtsensibel – Pflanzliches in der Sammlung  
Fotografie der Kunstbibliothek

Geleitet von CHRISTINE KÜHN (Kuratorin der  
Fotografischen Sammlung, Kunstbibliothek)

Ort: Museum für Fotografie,  
Jebensstraße 2, 10623 Berlin

Vorbereitungsraum

### Management/Coordination

Antje Paul, assisted by Tanja Wieczorek,  
Jule Ulbricht, Tina Plokarz, Devin Gökdemir,  
and Nicoleta Certan

### Imprint

4A\_Lab: Art Histories, Archaeologies,  
Anthropologies, Aesthetics

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz -  
Max-Planck-Institut  
Via Giuseppe Giusti 44  
50121 Firenze / Italy

Postal address:  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin -  
Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz  
4A\_Lab  
Stauffenbergstraße 41  
10785 Berlin / Germany

Email: [4a\\_lab@khi.fi.it](mailto:4a_lab@khi.fi.it)  
[www.khi.fi.it/4A-Lab](http://www.khi.fi.it/4A-Lab)

Layout:  
Bijan Dawallu  
[dawallu.de](http://dawallu.de)

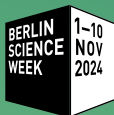
Print:  
Buch- und Offsetdruckerei H. Heenemann  
GmbH & Co. KG  
© 2024



REGISTRATION



[www.khi.fi.it/4A-Lab](http://www.khi.fi.it/4A-Lab)



Kunsthistorisches  
Institut  
in  
Florenz

Max-Planck-Institut



MAX-PLANCK-GESellschaft



Stiftung  
Preußischer Kulturbesitz