

Call for participation

Border Environments: Toward a Political Ecology of the Edges of the World
April 3-4, 2020 Cornell University



BY: Dec. 1, 2019

SEND: Title of proposal, indication of which of the five groups it relates to, and a three-sentence description

TO: lelacsithaca@gmail.com

We welcome public-facing work in creative and scholarly formats, including 10 minute read papers (approximately 1000 words), 10 minute creative interventions (poetry, story, music, live performance, video), original artwork, photography, and academic posters.

Selected presentations will be published in *Latin American Literary Review* and on a dedicated website.

“Nature is fluid; walls are not.” With this subtitle, the geographer Margaret Wild recently introduced the readers of *Scientific American* to a perspective on borders that was, until recently, largely invisible in the wealth of literature on their political theories and cultural practices. The incendiary prospect of literally walling the United States off from Mexico has finally brought public attention to focus on an approach to borders that was formerly relegated to a select subset of intellectual communities and interest groups: biologists, geologists, farmers, and conservationists. It is not coincidental that ocelots and elf owls, butterflies and flood plains, riparian forests and horse grazing have begun to feature prominently alongside the minutiae of engineering walls, fences, and surveillance technologies in the numerous lawsuits that have been filed against the emergency declaration to build a physical barrier along large sections of the U.S.-Mexico border.

The U.S.-Mexico border will serve as an exemplary but not exclusive case study of our collaborative effort. Our event will set in dialogue a set of sites rich in possibilities for developing robust theoretical approaches and methodological apparatuses for border environments in comparative perspectives and transnational contexts. Two such spaces include the constantly shifting alluvial borderlands between India and Bangladesh—one

of the most porous borders in both demographic and elemental terms and one of the planet's most closely watched climate hotspots -- and the fluid slate of the Mediterranean basin on which Europe's contemporary migrant crisis is being inscribed and arbitrated.

The event will be organized according to five lines of inquiry:

Communities: human and nonhuman groups, collectives, cultures, identities, experts and laypersons, social identities, social movements, migrations, ecocentrism, environmental justice, activisms, speciesism.

Security/insecurity: practices; symbols; rhetoric; interdependence; vulnerability; culpability; fear; globalization; hyperactivism; marginality; art activism; visuality; performance.

Infrastructures: material and spectral ontologies; zones of surveillance, carcerality, and sacrifice; processes of quantification, standardization, optimization, disembodiment; geo-bio-techno political assemblages.

Waste: cross border flows and impacts of material waste, cultural concepts of waste, and construction of certain bodies (human and nonhuman) as waste.

Materialities: stewardship of land, extractivist logic, quarantine, considerations of scale, change of status of matter, evanescence and spectrality, resistance and performance