

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Symposium  
Supported by the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation



# ART IN THE VILLAGE, ART IN THE LANDSCAPE

**19.00 to 21.00 Japan Time, December 7, 2023**

**Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University,**

**In Person and on Zoom**

**Please register from [HERE](#)**







Moderated by

# JOHN WILLIAMS

(Filmmaker and professor at Sophia University)



## OVERVIEW

Four contemporary artists from the UK, Japan, and Norway, who work in rural communities and with nature and landscape, will discuss their work, the landscapes, and communities they engage with, and their ideas. Can art help us to imagine new ways of living and ways of changing the world? What can rural communities teach us about the future of our planet?

This Symposium is part of an ongoing ICC Collaborative Research project, focused on Kitaushima, a village on Sado Island. The project draws inspiration from the people, landscape, environment, and culture of the area, to explore imaginative ways of thinking about the global future.

Supported by  
the Great Britain-Sasakawa Foundation Grant



Organized by John Williams for the [Institute of Comparative Culture Collaborative Research Unit](#) "[Exploring a Japanese Fishing Village Through Art](#)".



# HAZEL BARRON-COOPER

(IN PERSON, TOKYO)

## Presentation abstract

Digging Deep: Art and Community – Hazel Barron-Cooper

“This presentation examines the role of artist as conduit, instigator, and gatherer, working with the local community in rural landscapes. At its core is visual representation of sense of place and the human compulsion to observe, record, and

map the environment. It looks at art as a conduit for this compulsion and ways in which the artist responds to the landscape and local distinctiveness. Can the artist undertake the role of conduit between people and place by instigating community participation working with local people bringing together the threads of material and intangible culture? Is the artist able to assist in revealing and preserving disappearing dialect words, customs, folklore, and other elements which contribute to local at a location in Tynedale, Northumberland and share the method and outcomes. As the uniqueness of a place is unearthed and revealed the local community are involved, consulted, and engaged in the process of revealing the layers of their locale. Local people are interviewed, and events are held at community venues where the public can add to the data gathered about their area. By consulting with the community discovering and documenting oral histories, disappearing words and customs a deeper picture is built of a particular place.” – **Hazel Barron-Cooper**

## Presenter Bio

Hazel Barron-Cooper is an artist based in the North-East of England, whose work focuses on landscape and sense of place. She is currently a post graduate researcher in Fine Art at Newcastle University. At the centre of her work is community collaboration, consultation, and co-production of knowledge. She is examining how the artist-researcher can act as a conduit to enable residents to reveal local distinctiveness, using painting, poetry, audio recording and the collection of objects and community contributions. Is the artist able to assist in revealing and preserving disappearing dialect for the weather, occupations, geographical features, the non-human elements in the environment? Can customs, folklore, place names and other distinctive elements be highlighted and reconsidered through creative practice? Currently she is working around the villages of Beltingham and Bardon Mill situated near Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland. She has taught at colleges in the North-East on a variety of art courses and is currently an educator at Newcastle University's Hatton Gallery. She has also taken part in many art projects and festivals.

<https://www.hazelbarroncooperartist.com>







# MIKE COLLIER

(Zoom Presentation)

## Presenter Bio

Mike Collier is a key figure in the curation and creation of environmental art in the UK. He curated the Wordsworth and Basho Walking Poets art exhibition in Osaka and the UK in 2015/17 and is currently working on a project about birdsong called 'Songs of Place and Time', which examines through a variety of different media the way a dawn chorus is embedded in a community of place. He recently edited the book, 'ENTWINED: Rural – Land – Lives' for VARC (Visual Arts in Rural Communities), which explored through artists' practice what makes a 'place' by revealing the interconnectedness of rural land and rural lives. <https://mikecollier.co.uk/>

## Presentation abstract

The work described in my short presentation results from a series of walks through a Northumberland Dawn Chorus. It explores the relationship between the natural world, its specific cultures and cultural ecologies, and our own sense of culture/s. Transcriptions of birdsong date back to antiquity and imitations of it feature in every culture's music. However, 'hearing music in birdsong' can be little more than a projection of human codes and conventions on to the natural world, avoiding the radical unknowability of this more-than-human world. Working collaboratively with poets and musicians in a variety of media, I attempt to show how individual bird species interact through song in the dawn chorus and

re-imagine ways of visually and musically re-presenting these patterns of cultural interaction in a more-than-human world. I hope to show how we might better understand our complex relationship to a more-than-human world, enabling us to value the whole world (birds, plants, animals, peoples etc) as a living ecology of cultural differences. And in these troubled times, I would like the work to share the joy I experience when listening to a dawn chorus early in a May morning." – **Mike Collier**

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SONGS OF PLACE AND TIME

Birdsong and the Dawn Chorus in Natural History and the Arts



# ELISABETH BRUN

(Zoom Presentation)

## Presenter Bio

Elisabeth Brun (b. 1977, Strengelvåg, Vesterålen/ Northern Norway) is a visual artist, filmmaker and researcher exploring questions of form, of mediation, of knowledge, of the relation between human/ environment. Her work takes different forms such as films, installations and texts, engaging in dialogues between philosophy, the environmental humanities and visual art. The role of art in sustainable place development is of particular interest.

Brun holds a PhD in Media Studies from the University of Oslo, 14 years of experience as a documentary filmmaker/ journalist (for Norwegian public service broadcaster NRK) and a post-master's in public art from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. Her work has been screened internationally at festivals/ venues such as Oberhausen International Short Film Festival (DE), Vienna Shorts (AT), Seattle Art Museum (US) and Montreal Festival du Nouveau Cinéma (CA). Recent grants/awards include Kings College's Ivan Juritz Prize for Creative Experiment 2020, a special mention in the Emerging Artist Award at Mimesis Doc Fest and a Poetry by Video Artist Award at Cadence Video Poetry festival.

Website: [www.elisabethbrun.com](http://www.elisabethbrun.com)

## Presentation abstract



Nyksund Reloaded:  
<https://haiku.as/Nyksund-Reloaded>,  
Elisabeth Brun

"The talk deals with role of art and architecture in developing sustainable places in rural areas. Brun is the founder of the international artistic archive project Nyksund Reloaded, which re-actualises a Berlin-led environmental project of

the 1980-90s in the former fisher village of Nyksund, Northern Norway. Together with the Berlin based media artist duo Katja Pratschke / Gusztáv Hámos she runs the artist collective NODES, the team behind Nyksund Reloaded. In her talk Brun will speak about how she and her collective works with media art, 3D imagery and the materials of the archive in order to create an arena for discussion and creative exploration of sustainable place development in areas considered as "remote". – **Elisabeth Brun**







# ATSUKO NAKAMURA

(Zoom Presentation)

## Presenter Bio

Atsuko is a sculptor and visual artist. She first trained first as an architect and then at the Slade School of Art in London and has exhibited her large -scale sculptures in major Japanese art exhibitions, as well as overseas. She often works with driftwood and makes pieces that are affected by the elements and disintegrate with time. She has a particular interest in working with communities, listening to their stories, trying to understand their histories, and expressing locality and community in her work.

<https://atsukonakamura.com>

## Presentation abstract

"I will present some examples of my site-based work and talk around the ideas of making sustainable art, rooted in community, history, and place. I will discuss the interplay between art and community and art and the environment and art as a different form of memory. I will talk about a piece that I created in the 29th UBE biennale, international sculpture competition inspired by undersea mines in Ube City, Yamaguchi Prefecture. My work attempts to express the existence of the mine workers at that time through the physical movement of digging coal with pickaxes and is inspired by the undersea mines in the area. I will introduce work showing some of my artworks which use natural materials or natural phenomena. I will then talk about my current experiences in the 'Artist in Residence Eiheiji' program in Fukui where artists stay in Eiheiji town for three months and create works inspired by ZEN culture and the artworks there."- **Akiko Nakamura**

