



Seminar

Understanding Ecology through the Humanities:
From the Wild to Post Collapse
Zürich Botanic Gardens

Symposium

Preparing for Post-Collapse?
Implementing Environmental Humanities
Zürich Botanic Gardens

Retreat

Kurhaus, Bergün

16-22 June 2014



Last month the new Swiss Centre for Environmental Humanities held its inaugural symposium and summer school at the Botanical Gardens in Zürich.



In Spring 2013 a new working group was founded with the aim of strengthening the environmental humanities in Switzerland and more broadly across Europe.



The group aims to hold “periodic meetings and conferences, formulate key research agenda, coordinate and expand EH course offerings at several universities, develop joint publications, and organise public outreach events such as film and lecture series.

The EH Working Group plans to join researchers from the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences from several Swiss universities working on both sides of the Röstigraben” (bridging the differences between French and German language regions of Switzerland).



A PhD seminar for PhD scholars entitled “Understanding ecology through the environmental humanities: from wild to post collapse” was followed by a symposium, “Preparing for post-collapse: Implementing the environmental humanities”.

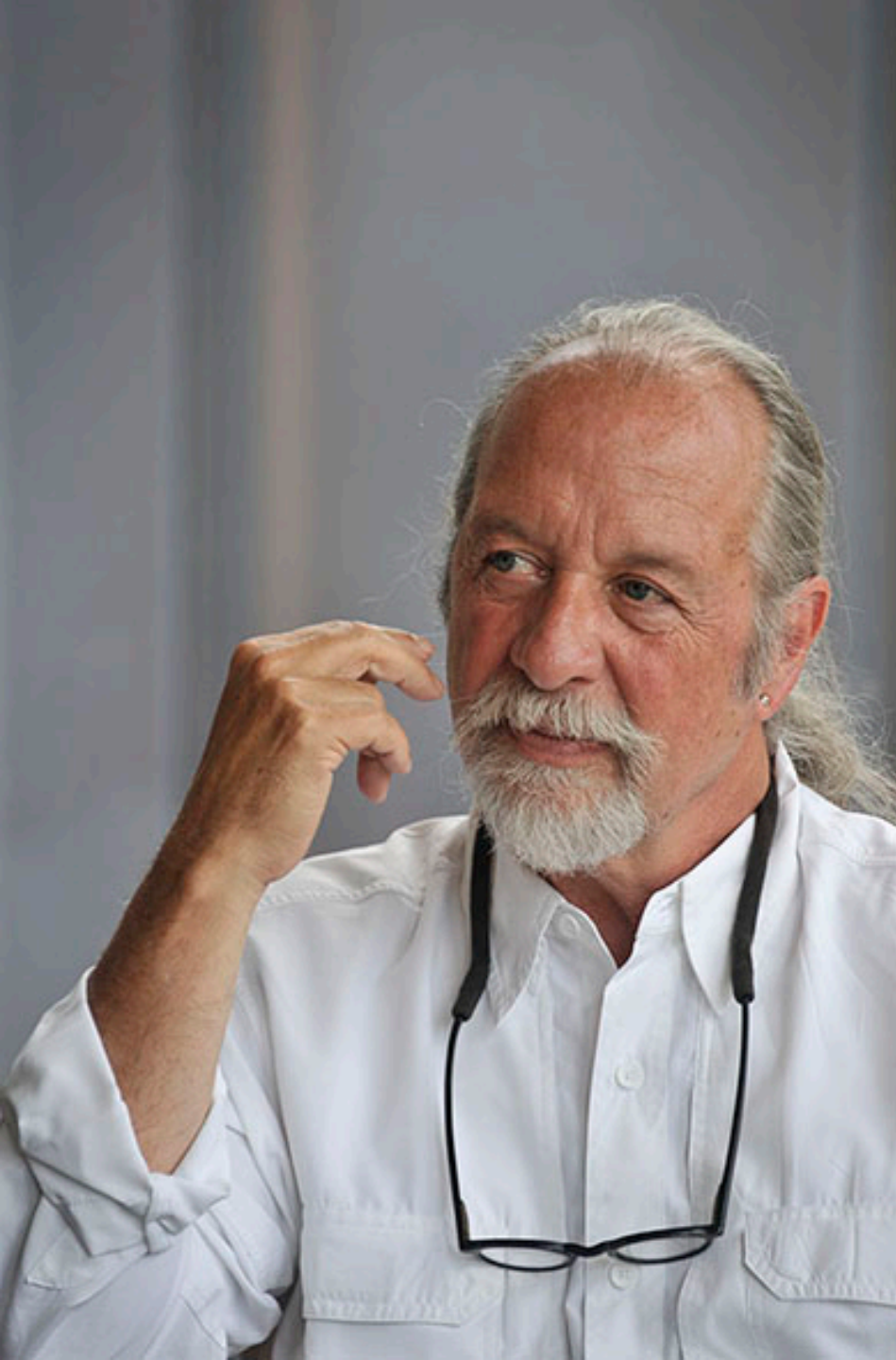
Further to these sessions a weekend retreat to discuss the future directions, plans and actions of the environmental humanities in Switzerland was held in the village of Bergün in Switzerland’s ‘wildest’ canton of Bergün at the Kurhaus.

By combining a graduate ecology seminar with an international symposium in environmental humanities, the meeting brought together natural scientists, social scientist, artists and 'humanists' followed by a community day that drew people from industry and community, to forge links between the academy, industry and broader society.



The aim was to “go beyond typical models of sustainability or resilience, especially by considering the implications of post collapse. All living things today are survivors and beneficiaries of previous collapse, and as we approach future stages or urgent transition, now is a crucial moment to bring together diverse experts into new conversations. Our meeting embraces environmental humanities as a new meta-discipline that can foster these conversations”.





The symposium/seminar was well attended with between 30–60 attending each day to hear seminars and partake in discussions, roundtables and outdoor events.

We were also delighted to have the contributions of future partners Marco Armiero, Director of the KTH Environmental Humanities Laboratory in Stockholm and Christof Mauch, Director of the Rachel Centre for Environment and Society in Munich. The group also plans to extend links further afield to the southern hemisphere.







By Alison Pouliot
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