

MAKING ECOLOGIES

CRAFT
MATERIAL
**SITUATED
PRACTICE**

Call for contributions

V&A

MAKING ECOLOGIES

CRAFT, MATERIAL, AND SITUATED PRACTICE

Interdisciplinary symposium, at
V&A Storehouse, funded by the
London Arts and Humanities
Partnership.

Wed 20 May 2026

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

From raw materials to finished objects, making is shaped by the environments, traditions, and knowledge systems that surround it. Making Ecologies: Craft, Material, and Situated Practice is a one-day interdisciplinary symposium that invites participants to reflect on how craft and material practices engage with ecological, cultural, and situated ways of making.

Contributions are invited to unpack how craft practices, both historical and contemporary, engage with material and technological innovation, meaning-making, and embodied knowledge. Collectively we will explore making as a relational and situated process, where knowledge emerges through connection and embodied experience.

Donna Haraway's call to "stay with the trouble" and Gregory Bateson's ecology of mind are offered as starting points to probe how materials, ancient and living practices, and knowledge can inform what we make, framed through interaction, care, and context.

We welcome a wide spectrum of responses - from scientific methods to ancestral craft, material practices, digital fabrication, and conservation techniques - highlighting how diverse ways of making can offer alternative ways to think, narrate, and design. We invite scholars, researchers, practitioners, artists, designers, conservators, and curators from across institutions to share their responses to one or more of the following themes:

Material Ecologies

How do materials hold histories, values, and constraints, that shape the practices of making across different temporal and cultural contexts? Material practices that engage with the environmental and social lives of materials, including ways in which making can blur, negotiate, or rework the boundary between the natural and built environment.

Craft Assemblages

How can historical and contemporary practices of making relate to ecological, technological, and social conditions? Modes of fabrication that cultivate sustainability, locality, and care, and how collective forms of knowledge, participatory design practices, and transdisciplinary ways of working can reimagine fabrication.

Situated Practices

How is ethical and creative making shaped by place, context, and lived experience? Drawing on situated and embodied knowledge and considering how narratives and storytelling shape understanding of materials, practices, and future possibilities.

Who can apply

- LAHP doctoral researchers
- V&A staff members
- PhD and postdoctoral researchers not LAHP affiliated
- Practitioners, artists, designers, conservators, and curators

We welcome applications from across institutions, at all career levels. Interdisciplinary and practice-based contributions are especially encouraged.

Submission details

Please email a single PDF with the following information to h.auerbachgeorge@vam.ac.uk with the subject line Making Ecologies Proposal:

- Project title
- Five keywords
- A 250-300 word proposal
- 100 word presenter bio
- Your preference for a 10 or 30 minute presentation slot

Format

Contributions may take the form of short presentations, practice-based reflections, case studies, or methodological discussions. There are two options for presentation length, 10 minute project overview or 30 minute deep dive. Please indicate if you have a preference and we will try to accommodate. Sessions will be organised thematically.

Key dates

16 Feb 26 Call opens
16 Mar 26 Submission deadline
27 Mar 26 Notification of acceptance
20 Apr 26 Accepted proposals finalised
20 May 26 Symposium

Organisers

Nikoletta Karastathi, The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL
Hannah Auerbach George, Centre for Material Science and Culture, RCA, V&A
Alicia Gonzalez Lafita, Design Studio, V&A