



Desert lawn Action\_ Kathryn Miller and Michael Horn

## NATURES OF NATURE: Toward an Eco-centric Design Practice

Fall 2021

Instructor: Laura Garofalo

This course will question how we perceive, define, represent, construct and reconstruct our world in relation to evolving concepts of “nature” and their manifestation in art, architecture, and landscape architecture. Considering humanity’s world shaping role, we will study the ideas that change not only how we see the world but how we act in it, how we represent and remake it. In doing so, we will address the role of creative agents and environmental critics, notions of care and stewardship, and traditional and emergent cultural constructs that can define an eco-centric practice.

Focused on the intellectual trajectories that address ecology and environment to arrive at an understanding of the paradigm shift that theoretician Donna Haraway has termed *natureculture*, the class will first familiarize itself with historical ways of seeing that have led to romanticizing “nature”. It will then consider the formulation of the landscapes of the Anthropocene and explore the ideas that have structured the shift that defines a post-human territory. Influenced by deep ecology and ecofeminism we will subsequently consider the role of responsive landscapes, hyper-natures, artificial ecologies and other “conceptual tools [that] help us imagine how to adapt and flourish in the face of socioecological adversity” (K. Stanley Robinson, 2019). While these topics will put a critical lens on practices such as land, environmental and ecological art, ecoventions, architectural living systems, biomimicry, biophilia, and urban wilding, the course will endeavor to find not only relevance but joy and even beauty in practices that highlight the relation between desire, responsibility, more-than-human wellbeing, projective ecologies, and ecological justice.

The course surveys texts from a range of topics within the literature of ecological aesthetics, art, architecture, landscape architecture and urbanism as well as environmentally focused philosophy and theory. It is a reading intensive seminar. It includes weekly discussions, presentations as well as visual and written components.