

MEAM conference special session on Artful Publishing in Academia

The example of the MEAM publication

The MEAM initiative

Academia and Arts are intersecting at an exponential speed and researchers and artists are collaborating worldwide around a range of pertinent topics – not the least environmental concerns and on more-than-human and multispecies questions. Multispecies ethnography is expanding across a range of different fields, both in research and education, engaging a vast array of analytical frameworks. Multispecies ethnographers increasingly engage in creative and artistic methods, such as different expressions of creative writing, photo and film making as well as drawing, painting and poetry, to capture relations beyond the human. There are ample opportunities for crosspollination between multispecies ethnography and the feminist scholarship tradition of using creative methods to further othered perspectives. **Artful methods are becoming more common in academia proper** and taking up their place in methodological choices even when collaborations with artists are out of reach. **But how to publish creative/artistic/artful expressions in ways that does not do away with disciplinary analytical and methodological rigour?**

The overwhelming response to our online workshop on Multispecies Ethnography and Artistic Methods (**MEAM**) last year encouraged us to form a network and to organise a two-day conference this year. In this online **Special Session on Artful Publishing in Academia**, as part of the larger **MEAM conference** taking place in Liège, Belgium and online during the 3-4 July 2023, we will together ponder this question. We have invited the contributors involved in an experimental and work-in-progress MEAM publication as well as a few representatives of publishing houses who have showed interest in the conversation. This session aims for a discussion on the opportunities and challenges of publishing artful expressions of research in academic presses and journals widely. It is thus not a publication pitch or proposal, but a get-together of scholars, artists and publishers to critically discuss the **lay of the land, possible mirages and potential horizons**.

Here is the zoom link to participate: [link](#)

Questions around publishing Artful Expressions in Academia

We hope for open minded and collegial constructive discussions when we together critically examine the aims, challenges and opportunities we face in our

academic, artistic and publishing endeavours. Our discussion will centre around questions such as:

- What standards might we be aiming for and who sets them?
- Should we always include a peer review processes, and what might it look like?
- Hybrid formats: what technological developments and challenges do we meet?
- Common pitfalls for failed attempts: what examples do contributors and publishers have?
- What lessons have publishers and editors already learnt?
- Collaboration on equal grounds: voices from academics and artists
- What are possible ways forward and how are our interests overlapping?

The MEAM publication initiative as an example

We are a group of multispecies and more-than-human ethnographers who are working together in exploring the possibilities of publishing artful expressions of research as acknowledged and valued academic output. Our call for embarking on this exploratory journey working towards a publication was answered by no less than 15 interested scholars and artists from across the world. We received a diverse collection of contributions, going from more or less conventional papers, to photo essays, films, audio-fragments, drawings, paintings and poetry. Amongst others, the contributions address working collaboratively with other beings, animate and inanimate; describe ways of drawing closer to the life worlds of more-than-human others; and explore ethnographically interspecies life worlds and togetherness by means of artful methods. Moreover, the angles chosen to discuss these topics vary from describing the autobiographical investigative process to showcasing current work.

Session setup

We have a one-hour session together where all participants will participate online on individual screens (even those present in Liège). Only invited participants will be present and everyone's bio is to be found in the Conference Program. We have two representatives joining us from White Horse Press – James Rice and John Ryan - a publishing house who increasingly engage artistic work and recently launched the journal *Plant Perspective*. We also grateful to have a madeine kennedy-mcfoy as a representative from the *European Journal of Women's Studies (EJWS)* join our discussions. EJWS is a journal interested in feminist methodology and that regularly publishes artful work in their Open

Forum section. The Special Session will be moderated by Anke Tonnaer and Andrea Petitt and proceed as follows:

- Short welcome and introduction
- Publisher representatives will be asked to take five minutes each to speak about their perspective on our topic and why they are interested in this discussion.
- As invited representatives of researchers/artists Lee Diegaard and Angela Bartram will have ten minutes to talk about our topic from the vantage point of their work
- Joint discussion