

Atmosphere & Place

atmosphereandplace.weebly.com



What makes a location a particular location, a place?

What qualities of a place particular that has no position, size, shape, weight? Atmosphere?

The concepts of atmosphere and place denote concrete material-geographical domains as well as spheres of affect or ambience. One may speak of a place or the atmosphere, but one also has a sense of place; a room is charged with an atmosphere of anticipation; revolution is 'in the air.' Considered in a phenomenological register, atmosphere and place are dimensions of experience modulated by architecture, technology, politics, history, and social practice. At the same time, they are scientific objects delimited and defined by the sciences of geography, geology, ecology, meteorology, climatology and atmospheric physics. In the context of climate change and growing understanding of the profound impact of human activities on Earth systems, the material properties of the atmosphere and the geosphere are urgent matters of concern (cf. Latour 2004). In light of these concerns, a contemporary humanistic approach to atmosphere and place must comprehend how these physical systems simultaneously operate as social, aesthetic and political spaces.

As part of a three-year inquiry into the theme of Atmosphere and Place, the Synthesis Center will explore how we enact and engage environments from the quotidian to the theatrical, the constructed

to the wild and the local to the global. In keeping with the center's transdisciplinary methodology of embedding empirical investigation and philosophical reflection in experimental aesthetic and technological practice, the projects collected under this theme explore how to create, transform and moderate our senses of atmosphere(s) and place(s). The center will cultivate ongoing conversation and creative activities, integrating approaches from conceptual analysis to cultural geography, the construction of computational models and responsive media environments to policies and technologies designed to intervene in the unruly real world. Drawing together practices from responsive media, film and dance, scientific modeling and public deliberation, our research is informed by an ethos of sustainability, minimax design (maximum experiential impact with the minimum engineering necessary) and agential responsibility (cf. Barad, 2007) for our entanglements with/in the environments that we build and study. Atmosphere and Place will bring together local and international artists, humanists, social and natural scientists whose interests bear upon the theme to share their work through seminars, workshops and studio visits and a planning workshop April 16-19, 2015.

Researchers

Brandon Mechtley
Josh Stark
Connor Rawls
Sha Xin Wei
Dehlia Hannah

Scientific Simulations Lead | Synthesis
Student Researcher, scientific modeling | CS
Student Researcher, visual programming | AME
Primary Investigator | Director of Synthesis & AME
Research Curator | Synthesis & Assistant Research Professor AME

Workshop

Oana Seteu
Silvia Benedito
Andrew Harding
Freida Atban
Melissa Bukovksy
Tim Choy
Ron Broglio

Media artist, Montreal
Harvard
ClimateXChange
Goldsmiths
UCAR
UC Davis
English faculty

Paul Coseo
Meredith Hoy
Chris Ziegler
Sha Xin Wei
Dehlia Hannah
Christopher Roberts

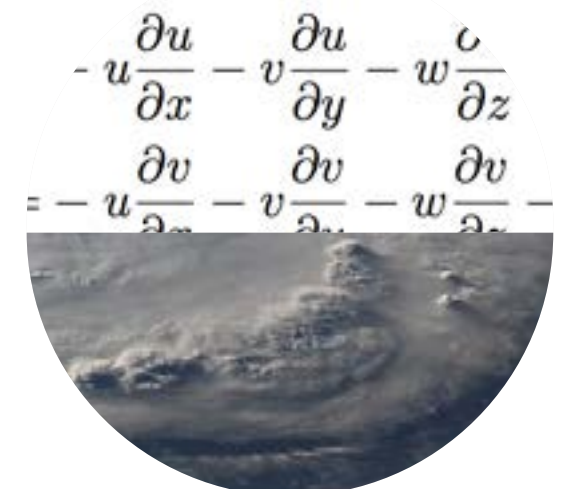
Architecture
Art
AME
Director, Synthesis & AME
Synthesis & AME
Synthesis & AME

Experimental Climate Models

From the weather outside to our internal awareness of our own bodies, our encounters with the world are increasingly mediated by scientific models. Models are where theories about how the world works make contact with empirical data. They narrow our focus and tell us what to pay attention to, enable us to comprehend the world at different scales than we would normally have access to, and to conduct experiments that would be impossible or unacceptable to conduct in the real world. How close are the models to our experience? Can we reconcile what climate models tell us with what we learn through our own senses? Do we have good reason to trust the models when what they suggest is counter-intuitive, unimaginable, or frightening? What would it feel like to be inside a climate model?

The Experiential Climate Models aims to enhance and transform climate modeling practices by creating responsive media environments in which it is possible to experience of vast and complex atmospheric phenomena at an embodied human scale.

Arizona. As the storm moves through the space, the visitor will experience visual and auditory stimuli correlated to the effects that topographical conditions have on the movement of the weather system. For instance, we can represent the way the lift of clouds over mountains tends to lead to precipitation by programming the system to simulate rain conditions when a person in our space raises themselves up over an obstacle on the floor, which maps to the process of physically lifting oneself up to the scientific abstraction of orthographic lift.



Prototype: iMonsoon

As our prototype project, we are building a responsive media environment that allows the visitor to play the role of a storm system moving across the state of