

Hello everyone and good morning.

My name is Kat Caribeaux, I'm a PhD candidate in the Art History Department here at Northwestern and one of the conveners of today's events. I'm delighted to welcome you to the inaugural symposium for *Lime*, entitled *(At)tension: Embracing Indeterminacy through Observation, Attunement, and other Embodied Knowledge-Making under the Climate Crisis*.

*Lime* is the born-digital journal of Northwestern University's recently formed Environment, Culture, and Society Cluster, convened by graduate students dedicated to querying and transgressing the boundaries of the Environmental Humanities. The journal hopes to foster emergent conversations, methods, and mediums on nature, climate, and the environment. Its title embodies two structures of feeling in the Anthropocene: first, "Lime" references the limestone seawall that sculpts Northwestern's lakefill, pointing to legacies of extractive and interventional relationships to land. Second, "Lime" calls community to gather and celebrate better futures through the Caribbean definition of the word, an informal gathering or party. Clear-eyed to the on-going struggle and open to the joys of co-creation, *Lime* invites proposals from scholars, activists, artists, and practitioners of all backgrounds.

I'm going to start— instead of end – today with the long list of thank you's. It's critical to recognize everyone who contributed to about eight months of work and cross-institutional collaboration.

But I also I hope that by the end of these opening remarks, it won't feel like there's a long list of unfamiliar names standing between our wonderful first panel and alleviating the nerves that come with presenting.

So, I'd first like to thank the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities for hosting our symposium in their space today and for being a key clearinghouse of ideas and exchange within this university. I'd also like to extend gratitude to the Buffett-funded initiative Climate Crisis and Media Arts, led by Michael Metzger of the Block Museum and Corey Byrnes from the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures and the Comparative Literature Program. Climate Crisis and Media Arts or CCMA has been a constant collaborator and supporter as we've shaped this symposium and discussed the identity of the journal. Michael Metzger in particular has been critical to shaping a week's worth of events around scholar TJ Demos' visit to

Chicago, capped by this symposium where he has generously agreed to act as the conversational respondent to our keynote. Thank you, TJ.

Many deep thanks to our keynote Claire Pentecost for engaging us with her work as an artist and scholar; after warmly hosting some of us earlier this week for food and the affirmation of community at Watershed Art & Ecology in Pilsen, we are delighted by the opportunity to return the favor by welcoming her into conversation here later today.

I'd like to thank each of our six presenters, as well as filmmakers Erik Nuding and Sasha Tycko, for engaging with our Call for Papers and for bringing their work to bare on the formation of *Lime* in the ECS Cluster. As stated in our Call for Papers, we hope today's proceedings will result in new collaborations, project ideations, and interdisciplinary generosity that will make the first contributions to *Lime*, and further its trajectory as a publication for the both the expansion and deepening of the Environmental Humanities.

Finally, I'd thank our group of conveners and editorial board, whose intellectual and material labors have made today possible: Maria Romanova, Connie Kang, Sarah Nisenson, Jooyoung Cho, Phoenix Gonzalez, and Klaudia Cierluk, as well as our unfailingly encouraging faculty mentors leading the Environment, Culture, and Society cluster, Jacob Smith and Keith Mako Woodhouse. Thank you all so much.

Amidst these thank-yous, you may have caught the confluence of several changes that prompted such coming-together in the first place: the official designation of our Environmental Humanities working group as a funded Cluster, and the consequent enthusiasm for launching a symposium and journal. I hope to emphasize today that the themes of this *(At)tension* symposium are directly correspondent to our efforts in delineating exactly what we hope the Environmental Humanities can come to mean at Northwestern University. Each of us graduate students on the convening committee, at various stages of study and across many different forms of inquiry, expressed the desire to continue precedents within the Environmental Humanities of nimbleness, experimentation, unabashed borrowing, reuse, and recombination. Essentially, we wished to resist what we discussed as "epistemological enclosure," the standardization and institutional legitimizing of emerging methods that can often lead to their political neutralization. We were and remain keenly aware of the imbricated crises that define

our era: most immediately pressing those in Gaza and Sudan, and most local, the historic forcible ceding of traditional homelands from the people of the Council of Three Fires, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa as well as the Menominee, Miami and Ho-Chunk nations, where Northwestern University sits today. Motivated by thinking through these crises towards more just and polyvocal knowledge pursuits, we arrived at the theme of attunement and indeterminacy. To pull directly from our Call for Papers, as it bears restating, “we suggest that it is precisely through ecological, cultural, and political attunement to forms of stasis and change, climatic and atmospheric flux, as well as epistemic and methodological discontents that we may encounter new modalities of praxis and thought.”

In attunement, we of course gesture to a kind of “paying attention.” And yet, to “pay attention” in this way is not to “hold” attention, to retrain or confine it, but to disperse attention according to contextual shifts-- to flit the eye, ear, and hand along with the rhythms of that which calls to it. To respond, to acquiesce, to bend and to push back. Such responsivity rests in an awareness of how one’s own intervention into a problem space, discourse, or environment might effects its pre-existing flows: as social geographers Harlan Morehouse and Cheryl Morse assert in their recent work for the journal *Environmental Humanities*, attunement begins with grounding questions such as “Can I?,” “Am I able?,” “Do I possess the required skills to proceed?,” and “Am I clear?”

But in some respects, these questions arrive almost quaint, particularly now. What is it to deliberate if I, an individual, must have the required skills proceed or if I am clear, when the change I am trying to attune to is unfathomable, violent, unrelenting, global as well as local, and gaining speed? In inviting our speakers here today to share with us their work across various disciplines and practices, we hope to cultivate burgeoning answers by way of reframing the questions:

from “Can I?” to “Can I adapt?”;

from “Am I able” to “Am I able to learn in motion?”;

from “Do I possess the required skills to proceed?” to “Who do I trust with the skills so we may proceed together?”;

and finally, “Am I clear?” to “Am I aiming for the clearing, a break in the weeds, where we might gather together for more open perspectives before returning to the thicket of our work?”

Attuning to the tensions inherent in change, flux, dispersal and coalescing, consensus and discontents, myself and the *Lime* editorial board are thrilled to open the symposium onto our first panel.

Thank you.