

Workshop

SCALING, MAPPING,
NETWORKING
THE POLITICS OF ZOOM

Organized by
Birgit Schneider and
Lynda Olman

11 February 2025
15:00–18:00
In English

Discussion, Lecture

GLOBAL FOREST MONITORING
THE ETHICS OF
SPACE POLITICS

With
Birgit Schneider and
Lynda Olman

11 February 2025
19:00
In English

Image credit:
GFW with RADD alerts in the Central African Republic
based on Radar data by Sentinel 1 within 10-meter pixels
(<https://www.globalforestwatch.org/blog/data-and-tools/radd-radar-alerts/>)

An event of the University of Potsdam (IKM/EMW) in cooperation with the ICI Berlin



ICI Berlin | Christinenstraße 18-19, Haus 8 | D - 10119 Berlin
Tel: +49 30 473 72 91 - 10 | www.ici-berlin.org

WITH BIRGIT SCHNEIDER
AND LYNDA OLMAN

Lecture +
Discussion

10 February
2025, 19:00

Universität
Potsdam

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KULTURLABOR
BERLIN INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL INQUIRY

GLOBAL FOREST MONITORING
THE ETHICS OF SPACE POLITICS

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Workshop:
Registration required

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AND LYNDA OLMAN

Workshop

Scaling, Mapping, Networking

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As a starting point, Birgit Schneider and Lynda Olman will provide an overview of their work on global forest monitoring platforms that use satellite technologies to detect forests. The workshop will invite short interventions on ecologies and scale to open up an interdisciplinary discussion on the potential and limits of understanding the politics of zoom. Birgit Schneider (University of Potsdam) and Lynda Olman (University of Nevada) will take responsibility for leading the workshop and supplying reading material.

Short texts will be read in advance.
Please contact info@ici-berlin.org
if you would like to register
for the workshop and receive the texts.

With
Filippo Bosco
Svea Bräuning
Yuri Di Liberto
Winfried Gerling
Paul Heinicker
Marietta Kesting
Lynda Olman
Claudia Peppel
Birgit Schneider

Discussion, Lecture

Global Forest Monitoring

The Ethics of Space Politics

With
Birgit Schneider and Lynda Olman

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Though a powerful tool for both transnational forest product companies and Indigenous activists, global forest monitoring platforms present ethical and political dilemmas. In this presentation, Birgit Schneider and Lynda Olman share their research on Global Forest Watch (GFW), the most popular open-source platform for global forest health monitoring. Some Indigenous activist groups have argued against tools like GFW on the grounds of surveillance and data sovereignty, while others use the tool to prevent poaching and to protect their ancestral territories. A solution to this dilemma can be found in what Schneider and Olman call story-world networks — layered and articulated views of forests at multiple scales and in multiple media, which are capable of empowering the agency of all beings who live with and in them. They will present their analysis of the platform by looking at the history of forest monitoring through maps and interviews with Global Forest Watch end users from Cameroon, Georgia, Indonesia, and Peru, as well as the development team. Based on Olman and Schneider's collaborative research project on Global Forest Watch, which began at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich in 2017, the talk will highlight both the promising and disturbing potential of these tools to transform climate geopolitics.

Lynda Olman (formerly Walsh) is Professor of English at the University of Nevada, Reno. Her primary field is the rhetoric of science, particularly the public reception of visual STEM arguments and of the ethos or public role of the scientist. Her book *Scientists as Prophets: A Rhetorical Genealogy* (Oxford University Press, 2013) traces a dominant strand in the role of the science adviser back to its roots in Ancient Mediterranean prophecy. Her first book, *Sins Against Science: The Scientific Media Hoaxes of Poe, Twain, and Others* (State University of New York Press, 2006), examined the pivotal epoch when science first entered American political life. Her current project seeks a structural vocabulary for scientific graphics in order to help non-experts better interpret them. Olman has also published studies in environmental and non-Western rhetoric; these are connected to her main body of work through an unswerving commitment to archival data, inductive methods, and the interpretation of results in terms of local politics.

Birgit Schneider is Professor for Knowledge Cultures and Media Environments in the Department of European Media Studies at the University of Potsdam. She studied art and media studies as well as media art and philosophy in Karlsruhe, London, and Berlin. After initially working as a graphic designer, she worked from 2000 to 2007 in the research department 'The Technical Image' at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, where she received her PhD. Since 2009, Schneider has researched in the context of fellowships held in the Department of European Media Studies at the University of Potsdam as well as in Munich, Weimar, and Cambridge, UK. Her current research focuses on images and perceptions of nature, ecology, and climate change, diagrams, data graphics and maps as well as images of ecology. She is the founder of the working group 'Eco Media: Media of Nature', co-speaker of the Digital Humanities Network at the University of Potsdam, and a member of the research groups 'Sensing: On the Knowledge of Sensitive Media' and 'Weather Reports: Wind as Medium, Model and Experience'. Her publications include: *The Technical Image* (University of Chicago Press, 2015); *Image Politics of Climate Change* (transcript Verlag, 2014); *Klimabilder. Eine Genealogie globaler Bildpolitiken von Klima und Klimawandel* (Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2018); and *Der Anfang einer neuen Welt. Wie wir uns den Klimawandel erzählen, ohne zu verstummen* (Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2023).