

OPEN CALL FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

## Feral Incursions

11-12 May 2018

Central European University, Budapest

A two-day intensive exploring the polyvalent theoretical and practical facets of the feral through art, politics and ecology organized by the Environmental Arts and Humanities Initiative (EAH) at Central European University, Budapest.



Christian Kosmas Mayer, *The Life Story of Cornelius Johnson's Olympic Oak and Other Matters of Survival*, 2017. Photo Klaus Pichler.

This series of workshops sets out to interrogate the feral as a material and figurative entity that troubles the ordinary realms of arts, politics, and ecology. On the one hand, feral animals and plants are often accused of invading *natural* ecologies and *civilized* spaces, yet the zealous control of these organisms has also provoked tensions between environmentalists, pastoralists and agriculturalists, as well as economic and cultural agencies. On the other hand, the feral designation has often been deployed as a trope for those who cross geopolitical and sexual-racial borders – such as migrants, people of color, and people with disabilities – invoking a necessity to control their mobility, inhabitation and reproductivity.

The feral has however been more affirmatively approached within streams of environmental thought that recognize its agency in reactivating dormant natural processes in denuded Anthropocene landscapes through planned or undirected instances of rewilding. The concept of feralizing has also been invoked as a device to critically reanimate wildness and reclaim liminality in feminist, queer, and other critical social theories. The feral has also been explored in artistic practices as a tactic to uncover mechanisms of fascist and colonial domination, as well as to test out post-capitalist forms of exchange. This kind of reclamation helps us to mobilize the ambivalence and tension that the feral entails as a potential space for transspecies and cosmopolitical reflections and alliances.

This series of workshops led by artists, writers, political theorists and urban foragers investigates the feral as a transgressive force with the power to corrode and infract anthropocentric and patriarchal systems, as well as through the actual entanglements of ferality in the streams of artistic, political and ecological practice. Could ferality be a useful concept for theory and practice against species extinction? How can poetry provide a language to express this loss and imagine more-than-human futures? What is the place of the feral in the urban environment and how can it become a source of physical and spiritual nourishment? Could the excavation of a fragment of intertwined political and natural history trigger a critical stance towards the present? How can ferality be deployed to infiltrate and subvert economic networks? In what way could the concept of feral citizenship allow us to navigate the current political moment?

While there is no charge for participation, workshop numbers are limited, and pre-registration is required. To apply please send a short statement by **Friday 27 April** explaining why you would like to take part and how you would benefit to [eah@ceu.edu](mailto:eah@ceu.edu)

For more information see: [www.ceu.edu/eah](http://www.ceu.edu/eah)

## SCHEDULE

Friday 11 May

9.00 Introduction

9.30-11.30

**The Life Story of Cornelius Johnson's Olympic Oak and Other Matters of Survival, 2017**

Workshop leader: **Christian Kosmas Mayer**

EAH organisers: Maja and Reuben Fowkes

Christian Mayer travelled to LA to find the tree given as a potted plantlet to Afro-American high jump champion Cornelius Johnson, along with all the other gold medal winners, at the 1936 Olympic Games in Nazi Berlin. What could be the future of the saplings that the artist has preserved in-vitro?

12.00-14.00

**Feral Citizenship: Roving the Democratic Terrain**

Workshop leader: **Nick Garside**

EAH organiser: Alan Watt

This workshop examines the intersection between democracy, desire and disruption, exploring feral citizenship as a hopeful and pleasurable way of occupying and creating democratic terrain.

15.00-19.00

**Feral in the City: Exploring the Wild Edges and Valuing the Marginal in a Human-made Environment**

Workshop leaders: **Claude Oprea**

EAH organiser: Guntra Aistara

You are invited on a magical journey of discovery and connection with some of the wild plants in the city of Budapest. What can we learn from their untamed nature, resilience and healing powers to inform our present and write a better story for our futures?

Note: This workshop will take place both on the university site and around the city of Budapest.

Saturday 12 May

10.00-12.00

**Feral Trade**

Workshop leader: **Kate Rich**

EAH organisers: Maja and Reuben Fowkes

Artist and trader Kate Rich has been playing with the nature of the feral in business over 15 years, primarily through the Feral Trade project, an artist-run grocery business trading coffee and other goods over social networks and outside commercial systems (<http://feraltrade.org>). She will report on her findings and invite a conversation into how we might extend the notion of the feral into how we do business more broadly.

13.00-15.00

**Poetry, Birds, and the Feral from Medieval to Modern**

Workshop leaders: **Clara Dawson** and **Petra Bakos Jarrett**

EAH organisers: Hyaesin Yoon and Marianna Szczygielska

This workshop will explore a series of poems across the centuries, which feature birds inhabiting the borderline between human and animal, between the civilised and the wild. What can these poetic birds tell us about how attitudes to the feral have changed across the centuries? The participants will also be invited to respond creatively, making poetic artefacts inspired by the poems and the challenges facing bird species in our current environmental crisis.

15.00-16.00

Feral Intensive Roundup