Press Release

SERPENTINE PODCAST
SEASON 3: BACK TO EARTH

Listen here: https://playpodca.st/serpentine

How can art respond to the climate emergency?

This nine part podcast series follows artists and an art organisation developing projects, interventions and campaigns at the crossroads of art and the climate emergency.

Presented by artist Victoria Sin with Serpentine’s curator of General Ecology Lucia Pietroiusti, plus special-guest hosts throughout, the Back to Earth podcast series brings together conversations, sound commissions, music and field reports, tracking the journey of an arts institution dedicating itself to artist-driven approaches to ecology, technology and equality.

This podcast is part of a wider Back to Earth project, which invites 65+ artists to devise an environmental campaign or intervention to respond to contemporary ecological crises. Back to Earth will run throughout the Serpentine Galleries’ programmes onsite, offsite and online, in 2020 and beyond. Bringing together voices across disciplines, the series offers a vital opportunity to join the research and discussions that inform the Galleries’ activities at such a critical time of planetary-scale human and ecological emergencies.

Participating artists include Cecilia Vicuna, James Bridle, Karrabing Film Collective, Black Quantum Futurism, Ayesha Tan Jones, Brian Eno and many more.
Episode schedule:

1. Back to Earth: *How do we get there?*  3 April
2. Back to Earth: *Sowing the seeds*  17 April
3. Back to Earth: *A drop makes an ocean*  1 May
4. Back to Earth: *By Leaves We Listen*  19 June
5. Back to Earth: *Tracing the Roots*  26 June
6. Back to Earth: *Systems and Sprouts*  8 July
7. Back to Earth: *Standing with the Forest*  7 August
8. Back to Earth: *Queer Ecologies*  28 August
9. Back to Earth: *Episode 9*  4 September

Episode outlines:

**Episode 1**
**How Do We Get There?**
3 April 2020

How can art respond to the climate emergency? How can the Serpentine, in its 50th year, contribute to discourse around the climate crisis in a meaningful way? Hosts Victoria Sin and Lucia Pietrojisti welcome you to a new season of Serpentine Podcast, back in the studio to reveal how a radical new programme for the Serpentine is being shaped.

- Artistic director Hans Ulrich Obrist explains how his personal actions are inspired by artists.
- Climate Justice campaigner Suzanne Dhaliwal describes a decolonised view of climate activism
- London-based art duo Cooking Sections share a rich archive of environmental campaigns throughout history with contributions from students from the Royal College of Art’s School of Architecture.
- Sound design by Brian Eno. Additional sound by Cooking Sections.

**Episode 2**
**Sowing the Seeds**
17 April 2020

How are artists developing campaigns for the Earth? How can an artwork reconnect us with the environment? Can we “feel” the speed of climate change, or hear the sounds of a seed? Episode 2, hosts Victoria Sin & Lucia Pietrojisti welcome Ayesha Tan Jones, James Bridle & Cecilia Vicuña, three artists participating in Back to Earth, to begin to sow the seeds of their multifaceted campaigns.

- Artist, musician and witch Ayesha Tan Jones shares their plans to bring balance and harmony through singing in sacred and un-sacred sites. Artist and writer James Bridle speaks about trees as
"very slow animals" and suggests a simple way for measuring the speed of climate change in your own home.

- The episode also features Seed Songs by Cecilia Vicuña, recorded in the foothills of the Andes mountains, Chile, in 2015, as well as excerpts from the opera Parasites of Pangu by Ayesha Tan Jones.

**Episode 3
Drops Make an Ocean
1 May 2020**

In Episode 3, hosts Victoria Sin & Lucia Pietroiusti dive into one of the core ecological principles of Back to Earth: we are all interconnected, smaller pieces of a larger whole. Featuring conversations with Brian Eno and Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Elizabeth Povinelli of Karrabing Film Collective, as well as sound works by Tabita Rezaire and clips from Karrabing’s 2018 film, The Mermaids, or Aiden in Wonderland.

**Episode 4
By Leaves We Listen
19 June 2020**

How can botanical knowledge support practices of ecological and personal healing? In episode 4: By Leaves We Listen, hosts Victoria Sin and Lucia Pietroiusti are joined by Emma Nicolson, Head of Creative Programmes at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Emma moderates a roundtable with artists Keg de Souza, Nabihah Iqbal and botanist Greg Kenicer. Featuring sound works by Rachel Pimm and Keg de Souza.

The episode is a programming collaboration between Serpentine and Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

**Episode 5
Tracing the Roots
26 June 2020**

What does design look like when it begins from a position of ecological responsibility? What does designing with and for the non-human mean?

Host Victoria Sin is joined by Rebecca Lewin this week, for a dive into everything from eco-design led exhibition making, to asking questions about the future of design education and ecological practices. Lewin is joined by Formafantasma, Dunne & Raby and sound work by Black Quantum Futurism.

If changes in design attitudes begin with education (of the public, of companies, of governments and of designers), what moves can be made within institutions to prompt these shifts?

- Formafantasma talk about their exhibition at the Serpentine Galleries, Cambio, and the ways in which the project will be intertwined with the Masters course they are initiating at the Design Academy Eindhoven in 2020.
• Dunne & Raby talk about their relationship to speculative design, the importance of teaching in their practice as designers and the role of museums to communicate radical design thinking.
• Black Quantum Futurism’s Temporal Technologies sound work is part of a series seeking strategies for survival for marginalised peoples in a “high-tech” and oppressive, linear space-time.

Episode 6
Systems and Sprouts
8 July 2020

How can artists pave paths for new technologies that are still in their early forms? How can technology support an imagined or speculative process that is un-tied from profit?

Systems and Sprouts is a new episode with host Victoria Sin and Victoria Ivanova exploring technology, its interconnectedness with imagination and systematic links to profit. Together they think about how artists can support technology to be more speculative and less focused on problem solving. Join them in exploring why embedding artists at the heart of technological innovation is so crucial.

• Jakob Kudsk Steensen talks about the ways that artists are working with (new) technologies, and how those interactions can create new models for what innovation should be able?
• Yasaman Sheri delves into the role of innovation as part of society and our relationship to it, and why it is so important for art to be embedded as part of it.

Systems and Sprouts focuses on the relationship that artists have to technology and future thinking, they amongst others are part of a larger ecosystem. You can read more about this relationship, and gain strategic insights to practitioners and organisations across art, science, technology and policy, in a new publication Future Art Ecosystems https://futureartecosystems.org/

Episode 7
Standing with the Forest
7 August 2020

In partnership with Flourishing Diversity, this episode focuses on cultural and biological diversity, and more-than-human relationships. Released on the occasion of the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples 2020 (9th August). With contributions from Elaine Gan, an artist-scholar who teaches at XE: Center for Experimental Humanities & Social Engagement at New York University where she also directs the Multispecies Worldbuilding Lab with support from NYU Office of Sustainability; and Jerome Lewis of Flourishing Diversity.

Episode 8
Queer Ecology
28 August 2020

Is environmentalism inherently queer? Tracing and traversing boundaries and categorisations with host Victoria Sin and guest host Kostas Stasinopoulos, Assistant Curator, Live Programmes at Serpentine to explore queer ecologies and worldmaking.
Episode 9
4 September 2020
So, eight episodes in, how does an art gallery support artist-led approaches to environmental justice and respond to the climate crisis? In what ways does art participate in – and may find agencies within – alternative worldmakings? Some future thoughts and responses from artists and practitioners within and outside of the Galleries.

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Notes to Editors

Back to Earth Series credits
Katie Callin, Radio Producer, Reduced Listening
Lucia Pietrouisti, Host
Holly Shuttleworth, Producer, Serpentine Galleries
Victoria Sin, Host
Steve Wyatt, Mixing
Guest Hosts: Rebecca Lewin, Victoria Ivanova and Kostas Stasinopoulos

Serpentine Galleries
Championing the possibilities of new ideas in contemporary art since opening in 1970, the Serpentine has presented pioneering exhibitions for half a century, showing a wide range of work from emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists of our time, providing a place for them to experiment and an open platform for them to be seen and heard.

Victoria Sin is a London based artist concerned with the experience of the physical within the social body. Their work explores desire, identification and objectification within systems of looking and reification of ideal images within technologies of representation. They work across performance, moving image, writing, installation, and print, and use drag as a tool to challenge expectations and attitudes on femme identities and how images and iconography of femininity are produced, inscribed, and performed.

Their long-term project, Dream Babes, explores speculative fiction as a productive strategy of queer resistance, invading existing narratives around naturalised states of sex, gender and race, imaging futurity that does not depend on existing historical and social infrastructure.

Lucia Pietrouisti is Curator of General Ecology at the Serpentine Galleries (London) as well as the Curator of Sun & Sea (Marina) by Rugile Barzdziukaite, Vaiva Grainyte and Lina Lapelyte, the Lithuanian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale, 2019, awarded the Golden Lion for Best National Participation. She is the curator (with Filipa Ramos) of the durational festival on interspecies consciousness, The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a
Fish (2018-19) as well as the research, publication and performance project, PLANTSEX, on erotics and botany. Since 2013, she has programmed and produced research projects, artist commissions and performances, as well as film and collaborative partnerships, at the Serpentine Galleries. Pietroiusti was the co-curator of the 2018 (Work), 2016 (Miracle), 2015 (Transformation) and 2014 (Extinction) editions of the Serpentine’s yearly Marathon festival of art, science and technology; and the co-curator (with Kay Watson) and co-presenter (with Victoria Sin) of The Serpentine Podcast. Previously, Pietroiusti has been Assistant Curator at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (2007-2009) and Associate Editor of the journal of the arts and letters, Boulevard Magenta (2008-2010). Pietroiusti is currently researching more-than-humanism, ecology, interspecies consciousness, species extinction, plant intelligence, botany and myth.

Reduced Listening produces award-winning original podcasts for the BBC, Google, Audible, The Financial Times, Serpentine Galleries, Frieze, Somerset House and Manchester International Festival. They also make the experimental music show Late Junction for BBC Radio 3, as well as documentaries and culture focused speech radio.