Future Heritage Research Residency

A joint initiative of the Allard Pierson and the Institute of Advanced Study

About IAS

The Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) of the University of Amsterdam stimulates cutting-edge interdisciplinary research that addresses complex scientific and societal challenges. We bring together a collaborative research community in a vibrant and inspiring environment to stimulate imagination, exchange and new collaborations across all disciplines. We help incubate nascent interdisciplinary teams by giving them a physical home base and embedding in a larger community to inspire new conversations, methodological integration and theory development. In addition, we host fellowships and residencies for researchers - both from the UvA and other/international research institutions - as well as policymakers, artists and (science) journalists who typically spend several months at IAS to work on a project in the realm of our mission, in collaboration with the larger IAS community.

At IAS we believe that achieving our mission to addresses complex scientific and societal challenges requires not only inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration, but also imagination and the willingness to question established ways of doing things. We want to inspire asking new questions, seeking new perspectives and cultivating openness of the mind, learning from the past, orienting our gaze towards the future.

About the Allard Pierson

The Allard Pierson (AP) collects and manages relevant cultural heritage collections from antiquity to the present. It promotes these collections by making them available for students, researchers, artists and all interested audiences through exhibitions, research facilities, lectures, presentations, conferences, fellowships, residencies and more. The Allard Pierson is situated in the heart of Amsterdam and is part of the University of Amsterdam.

The more than 1000 collections of the Allard Pierson are hard to categorise but they are organised around seven major clusters: 1) History of the book, literature, graphic design and illustration, 2) History of science, including the Artis Library 3) The performing arts, 4) The history of Western religion, spirituality and Jewish culture, 5) Amsterdam and the world (cartography, travel, gastronomy and colonial histories), 6) Archaeology and 7) the History of the University of Amsterdam.

The Residency

Together, IAS and AP have created the *Future Heritage Residency,* a space where research and science meets art, where heritage helps us imagine the future and where the UvA's research community and collections meet the public.

This is an opportunity for an artist (collective) to join the IAS an AP communities, collaborate with researchers, curators and other artists for up to 6 months to explore together, and create work

relating to *Nature under Pressure*, the upcoming Allard Pierson exhibition opening in April 2024. Please see below for more detailed information about *Nature under Pressure.*

We seek to stimulate artistic engagement with the collections and contribute to a deeper, more nuanced, imaginative and emotive public engagement with the themes of the exhibition. We hope to see our heritage enrich the present conversation and imaginative horizon of researchers as well as the public at large. We particularly welcome socially concerned artistic practices and a future-oriented perspective that adds to and works with both the collections and current research to imagine future possibilities and question established ways of doing and seeing.

For whom?

- Independent artist (collectives) residing and working in The Netherlands with a relevant portfolio and demonstrable interest in collaboration with researchers.

We offer

- Access to AP collections and reading room
- Access to shared office workspace at IAS
- Network support connecting to relevant researchers
- Organizational and communication support to organize activities at IAS/AP
- Invitations to community events and daily complimentary lunches at IAS
- Collaboration with AP curatorial team
- A stipend of 3.500 EUR per month as a lump sum

We expect

- Openness and curiosity to connect to researchers and scientists
- Collaboration with the curatorial team and researchers
- Availability to be present at IAS /AP (at a minimum 2 days a week)
- Active participation in research and community events
- Commitment to creating (the concept for) an artwork relating to the theme of *Nature under Pressure*
- Acknowledgement of the fellowship in artistic work/publications resulting from the fellowship
- Participation in internal and public conversations

Timeline

Application deadline: 1 October 2023

Envisaged fellowship period: 1 Nov 2023 – 1 May 2024 (fellowships can last from 3 to 6 months)

Exhibition (preliminary dates): 23 April 2024 – 1 September 2024

Application procedure

Selection we will done by a committee consisting of Huub Dijstelbloem, Hans Mulder, Stijn van Rossem, Els van der Plas and Julia Hoffmann.

Please send below materials to ias@uva.nl (subject: *Future Heritage Fellowship*):

- Cover letter
- Short outline of artwork proposal, including relationship to *Nature under Pressure* and relevant IAS research themes (max 3 A4)
- CV
- Portfolio

About the exhibition: Nature under Pressure

With this exhibition, we show how Western Europeans in particular dealt with nature between 1500 and 1900. What were the consequences and what value do discoveries of the past have for the challenges of our time? We look back at how nature was once studied and imagined.

The starting point of this exhibition is the collection of the Allard Pierson Artis Library, full of books, drawings and prints. The collection is a testament of the deep admiration for nature and at the same time illustrates all that has disappeared at the hands of humanity. In this way, we try to use the natural history heritage collection to raise awareness of the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss on society. The worrisome impact of human actions on nature is illustrated with work by contemporary artists. But with the presentation of initiatives that attempt to turn the tide, there is also room for hope. The exhibition is organized along the lines of five themes:

Theme 1: Collected

During the sixteenth century, studying animals and plants received an extra boost from the Reformation, which gave an impetus to the study of God's creation: the book of nature. This new knowledge could easily be shared with a large audience thanks to the printing press. With the discovery of areas new to Western Europeans, animals and plants unknown to them were brought home where they could be studied. Nature was collected on paper and in cabinets of curiosities. Moreover, living nature was also collected: in menageries and botanical gardens.
What questions do we want to ask?

- Why did people start collecting and studying? Who did (not)?
- What did collections look like and why?
- What were the consequences?

Theme 2: Named (taxonomy)

From the moment animals and plants were described, it becomes apparent that they are named differently. Conrad Gessner (1516-1565) tried to overcome that problem by naming the animal he was describing in as many languages as possible. After all, names are needed to distinguish one species from another. Several scientists have addressed this problem, including Francis Willughby, John Ray, Georges-Louis LeClerc de Buffon and Carolus Linnaeus. The binomial system (genus and species name) developed by Linnaeus is still in use today. The Allard Pierson holds one of the largest collections of Linneana in the world, including a painted portrait of Linnaeus and the first edition of his *Systema naturae* (Leiden, 1735). Here the story is told of how this

classification of nature came about, what it was based on, what was right and wrong about it and how it is determined today.

What questions do we want to ask?

- What is taxonomy?
- Is it important to make distinctions?
- What are the dangers of naming species and suggesting hierarchy?

Theme 3: Change (evolution)

During the eighteenth century, it became increasingly clear that life had not been put on earth unchanged. Although in the sixteenth and even into the seventeenth century it was thought that fossils found in the earth had been put there by God to test the faith of humans on earth, more and more researchers began to doubt that hypothesis. Well before Charles Darwin came up with his theory, there were already suspicions about the change of species.

What questions do we want to ask?

- What does evolution based on natural selection mean?
- What does evolution based on sexual selection mean?
- What preceded and what happened after Darwin?
- What role does evolution play now?

Theme 4: Intertwined (ecology)

Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) was the first to describe and depict life, in this case of caterpillars and their foodplants, in context. She has therefore been called the first ecologist, even though that is an anachronism (the term was first used only in the late 19th century). The person who really made the interconnectedness of life visible was Alexander von Humboldt. His many years' journey captured the imagination of the society of the time, his work *Ideen zu einer Geographie de Pflanzen* and especially his magnum opus *Kosmos* went through many editions in many languages.

What questions do we want to ask:

- What is ecology and what is biodiversity?
- How does life interconnect?
- Why is this understanding so important?
- How do you make climate change visible?

Theme 5: Disappeared

A room with animals and plants that have become extinct in the last five hundred years, mainly at the hands of humans. Here, the message should come in that all the wonderful things shown in the previous rooms may suffer the same fate. It is the representation of another wave of extinction. Example: the dying of the coral, and the chain reaction this causes. Showing how the extinction of one species, the dodo, causes the extinction of a plant species whose seeds were dispersed by the dodo. The room (‘mausoleum’) is filled with the song of the last Kauai o'o, a bird species from Hawaii that went extinct in the 1980s.

What questions do we want to ask?

- What are the consequences of the extinction of one species?
- What makes this extinction wave different from previous ones?

- What are the consequences for humans?
- What may come after the anthropocene?