



Image: *Earthrise*, taken on December 24, 1968, by Apollo 8 astronaut William Anders from the lunar orbit. Credit: NASA.

A Two-Day International Symposium

Out of Scale: From “Miniature” Material Cultures to the Anthropic Principle

16 - 17 June 2025

The Courtauld Institute of Art, Vernon Square

Introduction

Scale—the relative dimension, magnitude, or scope of objects, and their proportional relationship to the observer—is often perceived through visual and cultural assumptions. As terrestrial beings, we interpret the scale of landscapes, built environments, material artifacts, social structures, and historical events through the lens of our bodies and shared paradigms. Across time, philosophical and religious traditions have long pondered humanity's place and purpose in relation to both natural and supernatural realms. Yet technological advancements—from maritime navigation to space exploration, from telescopic and microscopic investigations to the detection of cosmic microwave background radiation, and from embodied physical spaces to seemingly boundless digital spheres—have continually pushed us to reconceive the scale of our existence.

This conference brings together studies that examine the art historical, historiographical, and ideological significance of micro-scale and small-format designs, sites, and events. It pursues three key aims: first, to deepen inquiry into the sensorial, spiritual, intellectual, and technical implications of scaling; second, to explore how scale—of originals, reproductions, interfaces, or interpretive paradigms—has shaped the centrality or marginality of specific topics within art historical discourse; and third, to bridge investigations of human creativity with meditations on human existence through the conceptual lens of scale.

Across the global history of visual and material cultures, creatively re-scaled objects have played a central role in conceiving and simulating worlds that surpass our optical and epistemological thresholds, evoking resonances that are profoundly out of scale. By exploring how humans have persistently shifted scales to orient themselves within and across realms, this conference reflects on our inherently limited yet endlessly imaginative perspective—and envisions new pathways for launching beyond boundaries.

Organised by Wenjie Su, PhD researcher, Princeton University/CASVA
Yizhou Wang, Research Assistant Professor, Hong Kong Baptist University
Stephen Whiteman, Reader in the Art and Architecture of China, The Courtauld

This symposium is held in collaboration with the Academy of Visual Arts, School of Creative Arts, at Hong Kong Baptist University, with additional support from the Kingfisher Foundation, the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University, and the Courtauld Trans-Asias Research Cluster.

Co-organiser



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Programme Monday 16 June 2025

- 9.00–9.30 **Registration opens**
The Courtauld Institute, Vernon Square Campus
- 9.30–9.45 **Opening remarks, and introduction to the day**
Wenjie Su, Princeton University; Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art.
- 9.45–10.45 **Keynote** Wei-Cheng Lin, The University of Chicago
- 10.45–11.15 **Refreshment Break**
- 11.15–13.00 **Panel I – Paradoxes of Creativity**
Chaired by Hugo Shakeshaft, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art
- David Mulder**, University of Pennsylvania,
'Bite Size: Precision and Predation in Sumerian Cylinder Seals, ca. 2500-2334 BCE'.
Rachel Alban, The Courtauld,
'"Miniature" Resistance: Timurid and Safavid Manuscript Paintings and Defying
Intelligible Dimensions'.
Tingting Xu, University of Rochester,
'Is Photography a Miniature World? Exploring Scale in Late Imperial and Early
Republican China'.
Filipp Bosco, ICI Berlin,
'Drawn to Scale. Sketches, Projects, and Other (Small) Paper Practices in Contemporary
Art'.
- 13.00–14.30 **Lunch break** *Provided for speakers and organisers only*
- 14.30–16.00 **Panel II – Resounding Whispers**
Chaired by Christine Stevenson, The Courtauld.
- Henriette Marsden**, University of Cambridge,
'"A Token of Love and Affection". Miniature Bazaar Stalls and Victorian Models of Giv-
ing'.
Annemarie Iker, Princeton University,
'Big and Small in Catalan Modernisme'.
Dalia Iskander, University College London,
'Miniature Antidotes: The Healing Effects of Crafting Across Scales'.
- 16.00–16.30 **Refreshment break**
- 16.30–17.30 **Panel III – The Measures of the Other**
Chaired by Tom Young, The Courtauld.
- Rachel Hunter Himes**, Columbia University,
'Circumscribed Citizenship: Boizot's *Les Noirs Libres* and the Place of Black Persons in
the Early Republic'.
Lina Koo, University of Brighton, 'Miniaturising Korea: The Development of Korean
Dolls in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century'.
- 17.30–18.30 **Drinks reception**
Open to all

Programme Tuesday 17 June 2025

- 9.00–9.30 **Registration opens**
The Courtauld Institute, Vernon Square Campus
- 9.30 **Welcome and introduction to the day**
- 9.30–10.30 **Panel IV - Tiny Gateways to Sacred Realms**
Chaired by Sujatha Meegama, The Courtauld.
- Yi Zhao**, Hong Kong Polytechnic University,
'A Path to Paradise: Reevaluating Pure Land Belief in the Northern Dynasties with the Nine-Buddha Halo Miniature Shrines'.
Elena Calvillo, University of Richmond,
'Scale as a Devotional Catalyst: Giulio Clovio and the Challenges of Judgment'.
- 10.30–11.00 **Refreshment break**
- 11.00–13.00 **Panel V - When the Overlooked Loomed Large**
Chaired by Sussan Babaie, The Courtauld.
- Vanessa Alayrac-Fielding**, University of Lille,
'Global Miniatures: Sensing the World with Fans and Snuffboxes'.
Yizhou Wang, Hong Kong Baptist University,
'Intimate Enchantment: Scale and Affect of Fans in Ming-Qing Literature and Visual Culture'.
Sally-Yu Leung, Tracing Patterns Foundation,
'The Material Culture of Traditional Chinese Embroidered *Hebao* (Purses) in the Context of Scale'.
Matthias Krüger, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München,
'The Souvenirs of the Eiffel Tower, 1889'
- 13.00 – 14.30 **Lunch Break** *Provided for speakers and organisers only*
- 14.30–16.00 **Panel VI - Small Black Mirrors**
Chaired by Yizhou Wang, Hong Kong Baptist University.
- Matthew Westerby**, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, 'Music in Miniature: Musical Notation and Digitized Choir Books'.
Camille Bellet, University of Manchester, and **Liz Hingley**, University of Southampton, 'Sensuous Scaling: From Gigantic to Miniature Textures of the Digital Portable Cow'.
Barbara Mennel, University of Florida,
'Miniature's Large Installations: Pandemic Curation in the Shelter in Place Gallery'.
- 16.00–17.30 **Refreshment Break**
- 16.30–17.30 **Panel VII - Our Landing Spots**
Chaired by Stephen Whiteman, The Courtauld.
- Gonzalo Munoz-Vera** and **Shaun Rosier**, Virginia Tech,
'Miniature to Monumental: The Resulting Overlapping Scales of Coal Extraction and Human Inhabitation in Amonate'.
Bhawana Jain, Central Saint Martins,
'Ecopoiesis and the Politics of Scale: Land Art, Climate Action, and Embodied Memory in Ladakh'.
- 17.30 – 18.00 **General discussions & closing remarks**
Chaired by Wenjie Su, Princeton University/CASVA.

Abstracts & Bios

David Mulder, University of Pennsylvania,

'Bite Size: Precision and Predation in Sumerian Cylinder Seals, ca. 2500-2334 BCE'.

The rise of dynastic kingship in southern Mesopotamia has often been narrated as a story of mounting scales—e.g., of material accumulation, of martial and sacrificial violence, and of monumental buildings and artworks. Some of the most intricate and intriguing pictorial artworks of the first dynasties of the Ur and Lagash city-states, however, are the miniature renderings of scenes of human-animal combat on cylinder seals of high officials and members of the royal families. These seals and their impressions had outsize impacts as administrative tools and as projections of the identities and agencies of their users, and they prompt a reconsideration of the nascent institution of kingship in its minutest manifestations.

The animal combat images executed in the “court styles” of these early city-state dynasties push the extremes of miniaturization, highlighting the dexterity and precision of expert seal carvers. The remarkable care and delicacy of carving may appear to be in tension with the exertions of brute force and untamed energy depicted in the combat scenes, but the emphases on actions of biting, scratching, and piercing in the images invite us to draw comparisons between the lethal sharpness of teeth, claws, and weapons and the well-honed tools and techniques of the seal cutters. The animal combats in miniature thus hint at the interconnections of craft skill and corporeal violence in creating spaces of affective intensity and ontological fluidity, within which the sovereign power of royalty might find its fullest expression.

David Mulder is a PhD candidate in the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania. He received his BA from Wake Forest University in 2020 with an interdisciplinary major in Ancient Near Eastern Studies. His dissertation concentrates on the animal combat motif on seals and seal impressions of the Early Dynastic period in Mesopotamia (ca. 2900-2334 BCE), combining new theoretical priorities in critical animal studies and zoopolitics with thorough reexamination, documentation, and recontextualization of the glyptic finds from the main urban centers of ancient Sumer. He has also participated in ongoing excavations at the site of Tell al-Hiba (ancient Lagash) in southern Iraq and is currently working towards the final publication of archival data from the 1970-1971 NYU/Metropolitan Museum of Art excavations at the same site.

Rachel Alban, The Courtauld,

“Miniature” Resistance: Timurid and Safavid Manuscript Paintings and Defying Intelligible Dimensions'.

The labelling of Persian manuscripts as “miniature” has often been rejected on two counts. Firstly, as a technical term to denote a figurative manuscript illustration, the label has been resisted for its Latinate origins and the lack of an equivalent Persian word. Secondly, the implication that Persian manuscript paintings might be “miniature” in terms of size and scale has also been shirked as somehow pejorative: early scholars such as Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray argued vehemently that their ‘small scale is not in the least essential to them’. This presentation will contend that in the 15th and 16th centuries, a miniaturised aesthetic was, in fact, paramount to the so-called “classical” style of Persian painting. Their miniaturisation can be measured in terms of pictorial scale, miniaturised marks of making and a cult of detail and intricacy, and is attested to in several written sources.

After outlining the ways in which Persian paintings may, and may not, be understood as “miniatures”, this presentation will turn to the potential problems and inapplicable assumptions embedded in Western-oriented frameworks of miniature theory, particularly where miniaturisation is seen as productive of intimacy, human control and increased comprehension. Existing analyses of miniaturisation in Persian art have followed the theories of Levi-Strauss’s argument that a miniature ‘compensates for the renunciation of sensible dimensions by the acquisition of intelligible dimensions’. However, far from appearing ‘qualitatively simplified’ and ‘accessible’ (Thomas Lentz), Persian paintings grew increasingly complex and aimed to widen the gulf between image and viewer. By comparing these paintings to popular literary riddles or *loghaz*, pictorial miniaturisation can be understood as a means of creating cognitive resistance, defying anthropocentric modes of tactile and intellectual possession.

Rachel Alban is completing a CHASE-funded PhD at The Courtauld Institute of Art, foregrounding the role of miniaturisation in Timurid and early Safavid manuscript painting. This research focuses on text-image relationships in illustrated manuscripts and the interpretative, material and experiential effects of size and scale. After a BA in English from Oxford University, Rachel completed an MA by Research on the Tudor portrait miniature, thereby igniting an enduring fascination for all things minute. Rachel also pursues issues of ornamentation and the functions of detail, which became the subject of a colloquium on 'The Art of Detail in the Middle Ages' at The Courtauld, which she co-organised in 2022. She has been an Associate Lecturer at SOAS on the Persian arts of the book, a shortlisted BBC New Generation Thinker, and recently published an article exploring the ontological implications on the razor-thin pictorial frame (or *jadval*) in Persian manuscripts.

**Tingting Xu, University of Rochester,
'Is Photography a Miniature World? Exploring Scale in Late Imperial and Early Republican China'.**

"Miniature" is not simply small; it is, first and foremost, a relative concept. It is simultaneously a self-deception, where something isn't perceived as small, while creating a grand illusion for others. In late Qing and early Republican China, much discussion revolved around the scale of photography. Its freedom of size adjustment, particularly the ability to present distant, larger objects in a small scale, seemed a magical phenomenon to people at the time. For example, the landscape and gardenscapes in photographs could evoke the Eastern Han immortal Fei Changfang's theory of "shrinking the earth" (*suodi shuo*), or, as in the case of photographic reproductions of ancient paintings or collectible scrolls, images could easily alter the size of original objects to make them more suitable for viewing and dissemination. Small signified something to be played with, possessed, and made present, whereas large signified something distant, unreachable, and unapproachable. At the same time, collectors began using small photographs to express and display their ownership, understanding, and engagement with their collections. They photographed themselves with their objects, sometimes even mounting small photos within larger handscrolls. At other times, small photographs were mounted and stamped in the same manner as large hanging scrolls, deliberately obscuring their original scale. In this deceptive play of scale, the photographs connected the ancient and the modern, the Chinese and the foreign, the external and the self. Through these examples, this paper proposes a new perspective on early Chinese photography from the lens of scale: miniature is not about appearing small but about experiencing the large, embodying the vast within the small, and encountering the grand through the tiny.

Tingting Xu is Assistant Professor of Art History at University of Rochester in the United States. She is a historian of Chinese art with a focus on medium, format, and the related discourses. Her research interests include the history of Chinese photography, the philosophy of visual technology, the theory and historiography of Chinese painting, and the relations between image, ekphrasis, and imagination. She is currently preparing a book manuscript on the practices and ontologies of early Chinese photography undergirding the transitions that took place in the late imperial and early Republican eras. Her second book project is about the accordion folds in Chinese art and beyond

**Filipp Bosco, ICI Berlin,
'Drawn to Scale. Sketches, Projects, and Other (Small) Paper Practices in Contemporary Art'.**

The phrase "drawing to scale" refers not only to specific graphic techniques in architecture and geography, but also to their structures of power and control: mapping, monitoring, and zooming, all undergo critical scrutiny in the context of the Anthropocene, from Bruno Latour to Joshua Di Caglio. But what if drawing were understood as a reductive practice, linked to a smaller, more diminutive scale—one that is materially anchored to the hand and the page? My research explores this perspective by focusing on private sketches made in notebooks, index cards, or other small paper supports by contemporary artists whose public works expand across space, social performance, or virtual platforms.

This paper examines the materials of drawing as "small," highlighting how the reductive format influences the strategies of planning / projection / diagramming as relational constructs between two scales: one controllable (and also mobile and transportable), and the other beyond human or environmental reach. Specifically, I will analyze contemporary examples, such as Lucy Lippard's use of index cards as catalogs for early Conceptual art exhibitions, Connie Zehr's eco-feminist notes for installation, up to Heike Kabisch's sketches on found paper fragments, and others. I will also attempt to

frame the cases within a gender perspective and to trace their lineage to historical typologies of small-scale drawing, as well as to categories of art historical analysis of such materials.

Filippo Bosco is a post-doc fellow at ICI Berlin for the focus "Scale". He received his PhD from Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, in 2024, with a dissertation on Italian conceptual drawing in the 1970s. He has held various research positions in Germany and the United States, including fellowships at the Menil Drawing Institute, Houston, and at the Center for Italian Modern Art, New York; and a direct-exchange scholarship at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Bosco's interests and publications include 20th century Italian art and contemporary drawing. His first book (on Giuseppe Penone's early practice) has just been released (Prearo, 2025). He recently contributed to various exhibition catalogues (Fratino, Prato, 2024; Galli, Goldsmiths CCA, London, 2025) and to the 'Drawing' issue of The Burlington Contemporary (2023). He collaborated with the Civic Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, the Castello di Rivoli and the Cerruti Collection in Turin.

**Henriette Marsden, University of Cambridge,
"A Token of Love and Affection". Miniature Bazaar Stalls and Victorian Models of Giving'.**

In this paper, I will explore how the production of miniature bazaar stalls in Victorian Britain complicated notions feminine charitability. Cropping up across the country since the 1810s, charity bazaars became an important way for women to raise funds for a wide variety of public causes. This culture of charity bazaars saw women recreationally produce formally intricate and whimsical works, including miniature versions of the stalls they were presiding over. Usually, these miniatures consisted of a singular bazaar stall covered in a vast number of small-scale, handcrafted goods, the sale of which was supervised by a doll or two.

This paper will study how the particular aesthetic affordances of miniature bazaars allowed them to become models of gendered virtues. A particular emphasis will be placed on the ways in which miniature bazaars advanced a formal language of feminine charitability that reached beyond the specific context of charity fairs. To this end, this paper will draw on a miniature bazaar that was produced by two young women in 1856 as a wedding present for a German knife manufacturer and his wife (Ill. 1). Through a close analysis of this miniature, it will be shown that the formal properties proper to this object as a miniature allows for a complication of the Victorian 'separate sphere' ideologies that regulated women's philanthropic ventures. It will be shown that it is through miniature bazaars' multivalent play between the poles of engagement and enclosure, proximity and distance, society and solitude that they traversed the various scales of women's charitability within and beyond the domestic sphere.

Henriette Marsden completed a B.A. in art and visual history as well as classical archeology at the Humboldt-University of Berlin in 2021. Following this, she graduated with an M.St. in history of art and visual culture from the University of Oxford in 2022. Since completing her master's degree, Henriette has worked as a pre-doctoral research scholar in art history at the a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School at the University of Cologne while teaching cultural studies as an associate lecturer at the University of Potsdam. In October 2024, she started her Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge, working on the social history of women's recreational crafting in Victorian Britain. Generously, her current studies are being fully funded through the Vice-Chancellor's and Newnham College Scholarship, which is being provided by the Cambridge Trust. Her previous degrees were supported by scholarships from the German Academic Scholarship Foundation as well as the a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School at the University of Cologne.

**Annemarie Iker, Princeton University,
'Big and Small in Catalan Modernisme'.**

Can an artwork keep a secret? This question fascinated Santiago Rusiñol and the Catalan *modernistes*, a group of understudied artists, writers, architects, and designers who introduced vanguardism to Spain. At "Out of Scale," I propose examining a series of daylong cultural festivals organized by Rusiñol and his colleagues during the 1890s. Comprising art exhibitions, poetry readings, and chamber concerts, the "Festes Modernistes" ("Modernista Festivals") were intended to be small in size, short in duration, and intimate in scale. But throughout the decade, they grew larger and longer, a development that attests to competing imperatives at work in Catalan modernisme. Initially, Rusiñol and his collaborators used the immediacy and transience of events to foster creative experimentation and social solidarity.

Yet over time, they put these same qualities to different uses as they sought greater cultural influence in Catalonia. In my paper, I account for the ways in which the Festes Modernistes gave form to questions that preoccupied their organizers: Who was Catalan modernisme *for*? Should the modernistes direct their art to one another, or to wider audiences in Spain, Europe, and the Americas? Put simply, how big or small should their vanguard movement be? I argue that Rusiñol and his colleagues experienced conflicting impulses toward revelation and concealment, and inclusion and exclusion. By attending to these conflicting impulses as problems of scale, I offer new insights into the practice, theory, and reception of Catalan modernisme in Barcelona and beyond.

Annemarie Iker: A scholar of modern European art specializing in artists, artworks, and arts institutions in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain, Annemarie Iker is a Lecturer in the Writing Program at Princeton University, where she earned her Ph.D. in Art & Archaeology in 2024. At present, she is adapting her doctoral dissertation on the form and function of secrecy in Catalan modernisme into a book manuscript. Her recent publications include *Pablo Picasso: Boy Leading a Horse* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2025) and “Un ‘secret de polichinelle’: l’Els Quatre Gats et le modernisme Catalan (1897-1903),” *Revue de l’Art* (2024), and her research has been supported by the Custard Institute for Spanish Art and Culture, the Mellon Foundation, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies.

**Dalia Iskander, University College London,
‘Miniature Antidotes: The Healing Effects of Crafting Across Scales’.**

This talk will illuminate how and why crafting miniature worlds (‘Miniverses’ as some makers call them), brings with it beneficial effects to makers’ bodies, social relationships and wider contexts, in ways they describe as ‘healing’. Through the presentation of ethnographic data that documents the practices, experiences and affects involved in crafting miniature dollshouses, dioramas and dolls, I will draw on insights from chaos theory to shed light on how the production and circulation of tiny material objects can act as antidotes to an array of health and social issues in contemporary Britain, ranging from grief and depression to discrimination and marginalisation. The talk is accompanied by an online exhibition, *Miniature Antidotes*, that showcases the diversity and richness of contemporary miniature practice and the significance of it for makers and wider society.

Dalia Iskander is an Associate Professor in Medical Anthropology at University College London. She is interested in the connection between creativity, craft, hand-work and health. Her latest project, *Crafting Small, Grasping Big*, explores miniature craft practices in the UK. She has been working with a range of people who make dollshouses and other miniatures in order to better understand the social, political, economic, affective and technological relations that shape this craft, and the impact the practice has on makers lives, social relations and wider society. UCL Profile: <https://profiles.ucl.ac.uk/15024-dalia-iskander>

**Rachel Hunter Himes, Columbia University,
‘Circumscribed Citizenship: Boizot’s *Les Noirs Libres* and the Place of Black Persons in the Early Republic’.**

In 1794, the year the National Convention abolished slavery in the French colonies, Sèvres marked legal emancipation by producing a small biscuit porcelain sculpture. Designed by Louis-Simon Boizot and recorded in the manufactory archives as *Les noirs libres*, this group shows a seated black man and woman adorned with revolutionary emblems. The accompanying inscription, in diminutized French, reads: “Moi égale a toi. Moi libre aussi,” or ‘Me equal to you. Me free too.’ Unlike the similarly-scaled Wedgwood anti-slavery medallion, this work has received little attention. In the absence of any permanent revolutionary monuments, however, *Les noirs libres* invites us to consider the contradictions – and eventual reversal – of French abolition. This paper explores the literal and conceptual miniaturization of anti-slavery politics and its subjects, engaging, alongside Boizot’s abolitionist biscuits, Jean-Antoine Houdon’s transformation of his monumental *ancien régime* sculpture of a black serving woman into a tiny bust commemorating slavery’s end. Drawing on archival research, I discuss *Les noirs libres*’ incorporation into the tabletop decoration known as the *surtout*, where viewers encountered this work alongside Sèvres’ popular porcelain *enfants*, considering the implications of the coincident appearance of black figures and children playing at adult occupations for the project of emancipation in the French

colonies. Engaging the dynamics of miniaturization, materiality, and decorative identity, and interpreting *Les noirs libres* in relation to a previously unconsidered pendant work, I show how this small sculpture yields an image of the circumscribed and racialized freedom accorded black *citoyens* and *citoyennes*.

Rachel Hunter Himes is a PhD candidate in the Department of Art History and Archeology at Columbia University. Her research focuses on representations of race in the decorative arts and material culture of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France. She holds a BA in Religious Studies from Brown University and a BFA in Illustration from the Rhode Island School of Design and has worked in the education departments of the Cleveland Museum of Art and The Frick Collection, and in the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she provided curatorial assistance to the exhibition *Fictions of Emancipation: Carpeaux Recast*. Her research has received the support of The Huntington, the Decorative Art Trust, and Columbia's Office of the Provost. Her writing has appeared in *n+1*, *The Nation*, *The New York Review of Architecture*, and the *Journal of Museum Education*.

**Lina Koo, University of Brighton,
'Miniaturising Korea: The Development of Korean Dolls in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century'**

This paper examines the history behind the development of Korean dolls in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and their roles in miniaturising Korean people and culture, especially for foreign gazes. The late nineteenth century was one of the most turbulent times in Korea's history, marked by the influx of new people, objects, materials, and ideologies. Korea—then known as Joseon—was often referred to as the "Hermit Kingdom" due to its strict policies toward foreign nations. However, this changed in 1876 when Korea was forced to sign an unequal treaty under Japanese military pressure, opening its trade and travel routes. Soon after, treaties were signed with other countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Qing China. As a result, foreigners began travelling to Korea for business, diplomacy, and missionary work.

Against this historical backdrop, dolls depicting Korean people began to be created in response to the demand from foreign visitors—primarily Euro-Americans and Japanese—who wished to take home cultural souvenirs as tangible memories of their time in Korea. Before this period, dolls in Korea were not commercialised. Instead, dolls were primarily made for religious rituals, funerals or puppetry. Korean dolls newly developed in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries were distinct from religious figurines or burial statues traditionally found in Korea. Instead, they serve as epistemic objects collected by individuals and institutions with the mission of understanding Korea's society and culture. By studying Korean dolls from the period, the research highlights how miniature dolls were conceived differently by local makers and foreign consumers and explores the object biographies in the context of imperialistic tourism and anthropological expeditions.

Lina Koo is a PhD candidate in History of Art and Design at the University of Brighton. Her PhD research is an object-based study of Korean ethnic dolls from the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries with a cross-cultural analysis of dolls in East Asia. Previously, she worked as Curatorial Assistant for Korean Art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and Research Assistant at the Denver Art Museum. Lina Koo earned her MA in History of Art and Archaeology of East Asia at SOAS University of London and her BS in Art History and Museum Studies at the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York.

**Yi Zhao, Hong Kong Polytechnic University,
'A Path to Paradise: Reevaluating Pure Land Belief in the Northern Dynasties with the Nine-Buddha Halo Miniature Shrines'**

Miniature bronze shrines with a seated Buddha figure with a nine-Buddha halo on the front and delicate reliefs on the back have not been properly studied, yet appear to be an important type in the Northern Dynasties (386-581). I identified sixteen such shrines which I divided into three subtypes, dateable to 420-450, 450-500, and 500-550, according to the typology of the Buddha's linear flame-patterns. Based on stylistic comparisons with sculptures at Binglingsi and Maijishan, I associate this type of shrine with the region of southern Gansu and Shaanxi. Moreover, by identifying the two seated figures on the top

of the back relief as beings “reborn on lotuses,” I argue that the top register represents Sukhāvatī. If so, it would be the earliest existing representation of Sukhāvatī in China. The bottom register shows two Buddhas preaching in a niche, representing the *Treasure Stupa* chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. As sūtras are written records of Śākyamuni’s oral lectures, I argue that through visually constructing the eight Buddhas in the middle register as a shared audience for the two lectures represented above and below them, this relief transformed the practitioners who read the *Lotus Sūtra* into the audience of Amitāyus in Sukhāvatī. This transformation expresses the “causal relationship between ‘hearing the *Lotus Sūtra* and cultivating oneself according to its instructions’ and ‘ascending to Sukhāvatī,’” as stated in the *Bodhisattva Bhaiṣajyārāja* chapter of the sūtra. The shrines offer new materials to reevaluate Pure Land Belief which was traditionally considered unpopular until late Northern Wei.

Zhao Yi is an Assistant Professor of Chinese Art and Buddhism at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He obtained his PhD in Art History from the University of Kansas in 2023. He is the winner of the Best Graduate Research of 2022 from the Early Medieval China Group. His articles appear on journals such as *Archives of Asian Art*, *Artibus Asiae*, *Religions* and etc. He is currently working on a book tentatively titled: “Resonation between Tombs and Temples: Art, Beliefs and Practices of Heavens and Pure Lands in Early Medieval China (2nd to 6th century).”

**Elena Calvillo, University of Richmond,
‘Scale as a Devotional Catalyst: Giulio Clovio and the Challenges of Judgment’.**

This paper proceeds from new work that I have published on the Croatian miniaturist Giulio Clovio’s mastery of scale (Calvillo 2019) and the epic mode of the sixteenth-century *maniera moderna*. Taking a few folios from the Farnese Hours (Ms. 69, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York) and Soane Pauline Commentaries (Ms. 143 Sir John Soane Museum, London) as case studies, the paper considers the phenomenological aspects of the devotional book--the viewing of its images as intellectual and spiritual prompts, as aligned with but different from the phenomenology of reading. The stark shifts in scale in these works, from vast landscapes to faux cameos and medallions, and the use of figures to provide a touchstone for size suggest the ways in which Clovio spurred devotional labor from his viewers. Although substantial differences in scale exist in his compositions for single page devotional miniatures, as seen in a *David and Goliath* of the Musée Marmottan made for Margaret of Austria, Duchess of Parma, or the *Risen Christ* recently given to the Museo del Prado, there are not the same opportunities for comparison and the assessment of size as in there are in the framework and central images of his illuminated books. This paper thus analyzes the dynamic between the act of viewing and reading in these works and how cognitive faculty for proportional reasoning and understanding of scale aid the reader/viewer in the intellectual, exegetical and devotional experience.

Elena Calvillo is an Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Richmond (Virginia, U.S.). Her research and writing focus on artistic service and imitative strategies in sixteenth-century papal Rome. She is broadly interested in theories of representation and cultural translation and brokerage in Italy, Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century. She is completing a book on the Croatian miniaturist Giulio Clovio (Brill) and has written several studies on Clovio’s contemporaries Francisco de Holanda and Sebastiano del Piombo. With Piers Baker Bates, she co-edited a volume on the Early Modern technique of painting on stone supports, *Almost Eternal: Paintings on Stone and Material Innovation in Early Modern Europe* (Brill, 2018). Her research has been supported by the Villa I Tatti the Harvard University’s Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, the National Gallery’s Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, and the American Philosophical Society.

**Vanessa Alayrac-Fielding, University of Lille,
‘Global Miniatures: Sensing the World with Fans and Snuffboxes’.**

Eighteenth-century fans and snuffboxes were crafted out of a wealth of natural and organic materials and offered a vast array of iconographic subjects. On Asian fans, John Gay argued, consumers could admire how “Indians all their art employ” to depict “their dress, their customs, their religion” (*The Fan* 1713), which made the fan a miniaturised space and a contact zone scaled to fit into the female hand. The dissemination of imperial ideology found a prime conduit of expression in the material reception of imported objects of adornment and fashion. The use of exotic materials sourced from various parts of the globe (such as ivory, tortoiseshell and precious gemstones), the extra-European origin of many

objects, together with hybrid motifs blending chinoiserie, turquerie and European scenes of *galanterie*, transformed these fashionable accessories into artistic and material miniaturisations of the world. Drawing upon a selection of snuffboxes and fans evoking a global outreach, this paper will explore the visual and semantic significance of fans and snuffboxes seen as microcosmic representations of the world. I suggest that when handled, displayed, fluttered or opened, fans and snuffboxes were reconfigured into metaphors of imperial politics while also standing as emblematic signs of social identity. Art historical scholarship has shown how fans and snuffboxes represented the evolving tastes and fashions of the century. I suggest that the scale of these “toys” invites us to think through and with them in a phenomenological perspective, and to consider them as “a narrow gate, [that] opens up an entire world” (Bachelard). Adopting an interdisciplinary approach here, I will use a joined body of texts - such as John Gay’s 1713 poem *The Fan*- and objects to unearth and conceptualise the interconnectedness between cultural identities, imperial politics and global trade embedded in these small-sized objects.

Vanessa Alayrac-Fielding is Professor of British History at the University of Lille. Her research focuses on eighteenth-century British art and cultural history, visual and material culture and orientalism. She is the author of *La Chine dans l’imaginaire anglais des Lumières (1685-1798)* (2016), edited *Rêver la Chine: Chinoiseries et regards croisés entre la Chine et l’Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (2017) and co-edited *Cultural Intermediaries* (2015) with Ellen Welch and *Les Réseaux de sociabilité dans la culture des Lumières: Circulations, échanges et transferts* (2022). She is a contributing author to *Interiors in the Age of Enlightenment: A Cultural History* (2024) and is currently preparing a monograph on a cultural history of snuffboxes.

Yizhou Wang, Hong Kong Baptist University,
‘Intimate Enchantment: Scale and Affect of Fans in Ming-Qing Literary and Visual Culture’.

Paintings and calligraphy on fans of imperial China have often been discussed, yet how they were used and handled as material objects in social spaces has not been thoroughly considered. This paper focuses on painted folding fans, a fashion of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) for both men and women, competing with circular fans that had a long tradition. It examines the impacts of the fans’ changing scales and materiality on their use in specific social occasions, particularly in intimate interactions.

Through the analysis of fans in both literary sources and visual materials—mainly scrutinizing various fans in the late Ming erotic novel *Jin Ping Mei* and those painted by courtesans with poems in real life and written records—this study reconstructs the contexts in which folding fans were used to transmit intimate information in Ming-Qing literary and visual culture. I argue that the miniaturization and flexible scales of folding fans reinforced the objects’ social functions in daily life as messengers of intimate relationships, particularly to evoke emotional experiences associated with passionate and illicit love. Furthermore, folding fans adorned with paintings and calligraphy can be considered gendered material embodiments of women, such as courtesans and concubines. Compared with other small objects and personal accessories, such as hairpins and embroidered sachets, folding fans possess a unique mobility that allows them to be passed from one hand to another and appreciated in public social interactions. Their mechanism of presenting flexible scales also enhances their efficacy as they fluidly transition between public and private spaces.

Yizhou Wang is a Research Assistant Professor at the Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University. She also lectures on Chinese art history at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She holds a PhD in East Asian Art History from Heidelberg University, Germany. Her research focuses on the history of Chinese paintings, Ming-Qing visual and material culture, gender studies, courtesan culture, plant representation, and early East Asian photography on/by women. She has published peer-reviewed articles in *Ming-Qing Studies*, *Research on Women in Modern Chinese History*, *Chung Cheng Chinese Studies*, and edited volumes. She is currently writing a book tentatively titled *The Mediated Portraiture: Courtesans and Regressive Metonymy in Gendered Representations, 14th-17th Century China*.

**Sally-Yu Leung, Tracing Patterns Foundation,
'The Material Culture of Traditional Chinese Embroidered *Hebao* (Purses) in the Context of Scale'.**

As a scholar of Chinese material culture and decorative arts, I have always been fascinated by how small objects can carry great meaning. Traditional Chinese *Hebao* (embroidered purses) are a perfect example—despite their diminutive size, they played a vital role in daily life, social customs, and artistic expression for centuries. More than just decorative accessories, *Hebao* took on many forms and functions: money purses for men, document holders for officials, scent pouches suspended from bed valances, fan holders, and even spectacle cases introduced after the arrival of eyeglasses in China. Women often embroidered *Hebao* as personal gifts for husbands, family members, and loved ones, making these objects deeply intimate expressions of emotion and tradition.

In this talk, I will explore *Hebao* through the lens of scale, considering how such micro-sized objects transcend their size to reflect much larger social and philosophical ideas. Like Japanese netsuke or European snuff boxes, *Hebao* functioned as portable expressions of personal identity. However, as textiles, they were often dismissed as women's craft, revealing how small-scale artifacts have been historically undervalued. Today, as museums and scholars re-evaluate the significance of these objects, we must ask: What can *Hebao* teach us about creativity, tradition, and human connection? Through this discussion, I hope to show that *Hebao* were more than just pouches—they were objects that connected people to social roles, artistic traditions, and even political systems. Small in form but vast in meaning, they invite us to reconsider the power of miniature artifacts in shaping everyday life and cultural history.

Sally-Yu Leung is an author, researcher, and curator specializing in Chinese material culture and decorative arts. She is the founder of the James Cahill Asian Art Study Center at the Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley. A dedicated advocate for textile and Asian art studies, she has served as a Trustee of both the Textile Arts Council of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive.

Currently, Ms. Leung serves as the Cultural Ambassador for the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and conducts research for the Tracing Patterns Foundation, USA. Through her scholarship and curatorial work, she continues to foster a deeper understanding of Chinese art and cultural heritage.

**Matthias Krüger, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München,
'The Souvenirs of the Eiffel Tower, 1889'.**

Even before the Eiffel tower had been inaugurated at the World Fair of 1889, miniature reproductions of the edifice flooded Paris. And as the Eiffel tower became the main attraction of the fair, these copies became the most popular souvenir. My presentation will focus on the relationship between the Eiffel tower and its small reproductions. While the reduction in scale is typical of a souvenir, in the case of the Eiffel tower it constitutes a paradox, as the miniaturization deprives the monument of the very feature that made the Eiffel tower so unique: its exceptional height of 300 metres, that back in 1889 made it the highest edifice of the world (a paradox alluded to in the caricature above). The relationship between the tower and its souvenirs is further complicated by the fact that the tower was very often criticized for its lack of function, while many of the souvenirs were adopted to a vast variety of purposes – serving as watch fobs, paper weights, brooches or other accessories. Those who detested the tower and demanded its dismantling – most of these were part of the intellectual elite of their time – usually denounced such souvenir items as frivolous trinkets and their popularity as a bizarre obsession. In my paper I would like to show, however, how these miniature reproductions of the Eiffel tower not only attest to its enormous popularity, but also helped to engender this popularity in the first place.

Matthias Krüger: I received my PhD in art history from Hamburg University and my Habilitation from Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. I held several temporary professorships in Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt, Venice and Graz. My current position, held on a temporary basis, is as professor of premodern art at the Ludwig-Maximilian-University in Munich, though my main field of research is modern art, especially the art of the long 19th century. The proposed paper combines two of my current research topics: my interest in souvenirs alongside my interest in size and scale. I co-organized a conference on the size, shape and scale of painting at Frankfurt University in October 2023 (<https://arthist.net/archive/40091>); I have also recently participated in a conference on scalability and its limits in Munich.

(https://arthist.net/archive/39693/lang=de_DE). For my research on size, see also my article on the small-scale paintings of Ernest Meissonier in the exhibition catalogue "Praised and ridiculed. French painting 1820-1880" (Kunsthaus Zürich).

Matthew Westerby, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, 'Music in Miniature: Musical Notation and Digitized Choir Books'.

The relative scale of musical notation in medieval and early modern European choir book miniatures provides a vital context to understand how illuminated manuscripts were used. After a choir book is broken apart into single leaves or cut down to extract the colorful and gilded miniatures, horizontal lines of musical notation may be the only surviving evidence for the original size of the lost "parent" manuscript. When cuttings from choir books are digitized and presented online as deep zooming images, the relative scale of these artworks is further decontextualized.

In this paper I explore the phenomenon of relative scale in choir book miniatures and the creative ways in which illuminators used metapictorial devices to represent people and places relative to the scale of musical notation. I also explore the how choir books are collected and displayed in museums. As museums digitize artworks and share collections online, the physical dimensions of choir book miniatures become vital data points for reimagining the human scale of these objects. I will touch on the affordances of the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) as a tool for re-presenting choir book miniatures both in and out of scale. IIIF-compatible image viewers and Augmented Reality (AR) applications can dynamically re-scale choir book miniatures to approximate or explode the relative scale of these artworks.

Matthew ("Matt") Westerby is Digital Research Officer in the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. Matt is the principal investigator for Ciiipreses, a collaborative project to reimagine the makers, users, and patrons of illuminated manuscripts in late medieval and early modern Seville. In 2017 he contributed to the catalog *The Medieval World at Our Fingertips: Manuscript Illuminations from the Collection of Sandra Hindman*. Currently he is co-chair of the IIIF Museums Community group and a member of the Digital Humanities and Media Studies committee of the Medieval Academy of America. A digital medievalist and humanist, he received his PhD in Art History and Medieval Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Camille Bellet, University of Manchester, and Liz Hingley, University of Southampton, 'Sensuous Scaling: From Gigantic to Miniature Textures of the Digital Portable Cow'.

This paper examines and experiments with scale and the materialities of scale as world-making practices that shape human-cow relationships in dairy farming. Through camera interfaces installed in cow barns, farmers carry their cows with them wherever they go—miniaturised and embedded in their mobile devices. Here, we approach the digital portable cow's materialities not merely as structural properties of the photographic subject but as surface conditions, where the scale, resolution, textures, and technical affordances of digital imaging actively mediate human-cow relations. As farmers pan, tilt, or zoom their cameras, the cow—reduced, augmented, fragmented, and reconfigured on the screen—generates new relational systems in which her digital materialities and textures shape how she is perceived and engaged with. Challenging dominant historical visual representations of cows in the food industry, this paper explores how the material and textural conditions of digital imaging—its resolution, depth, scale, and sensorial qualities—reshape the meanings of cows in dairy farming. Drawing on archival research, ethnographic fieldwork with dairy farmers in France and the United Kingdom, as well as *Portable Cow*, a limited-edition 3D-printed artwork that began as a miniature exhibition of images and objects in a box before being enlarged on a gallery wall, we examine how the textures and sensorialities of digital cow images function not as mere representations but as active agents in human-cow relationships. By foregrounding the photographic materialities of cow scale, we reveal how textural and technological specificities inscribe new modes of care, perception, and control in contemporary dairy farming.

Camille Bellet is an interdisciplinary scholar specialising in posthumanist research and an Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of Manchester. Trained as a veterinary practitioner and epidemiologist, Camille was awarded a Wellcome Trust Research Fellowship in Humanities and Social Science in 2020. Her research sits at the intersection

of the environmental and medical humanities, sensory studies, and Science and Technology Studies (STS), and draws on sensory methods and approaches from history, ethnography, and the arts. Her work aims to foreground non-human animals' perspectives in knowledge production and explores human relationships with non-human animals, including their social, political, and ethical dimensions. She co-founded the Non-human Animals in the Medical Humanities Network (NAMHN) in 2022.

Liz Hingley is an artist and anthropologist with a participatory practice shaped by her experiences living across Europe and China. Blending photography, sculpture and workshop methods with ethnographic research, Liz's research focuses on the tools and rituals of belonging that transcend political borders. She is the inaugural Honorary Artist at Migration Mobilities Bristol and a Leverhulme Doctoral Scholar on the Programme for Interdisciplinary Resilience Studies. Liz has held positions at Kings College London, The Migration Research Centre, University College London and SOAS University. Between 2013 and 2017, she was a visiting scholar at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Liz has authored five books, including *Under Gods* (Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2010) and *Sacred Shanghai* (Washington University Press, 2019). She founded The SIM Project in 2017, which was exhibited at the V&A, London, in 2024.

**Barbara Mennel, University of Florida,
'Miniature's Large Installations: Pandemic Curation in the Shelter in Place Gallery'.**

Based on my book project on the return of miniatures in the digital age, my presentation focuses on exhibitions in Eben Haines's Shelter in Place gallery. Haines created the small-scale gallery during the pandemic when museums closed, and artists were unable to visit their studios. Haines located the gallery on his table in his apartment and circulated images of exhibitions only on the social media platform Instagram, where it garnered a substantial following. He regularly announced weekly exhibitions and presented stills and videos on the social media platform. A unique curatorial practice, Shelter in Place embraced the hybridity of small-scale art that circulated only digitally. The lilliputian format enabled a relatively high number of women and sexual minorities to participate.

The small size and its digital mediation led artists to create illusions of gigantic installations. Many addressed the pandemic, often with a focus on a renewed awareness of space, especially domesticity and women's labor. Others reused and recombined dollhouse furniture into new ways of seeing. They also responded with the selection of materials, such as latex, or embroideries of images that invoke human touch reflecting its loss. My analysis is part of my larger project on the reemergence of miniatures in the digital age, which argues that the viewing of visual culture on the cell phone has created an audience accustomed to scalar readjustments.

Barbara Mennel holds a joint appointment in the Departments of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and English at the University of Florida. She is the author of six books, two co-edited volumes, and one co-edited special journal. Her most recent books are *Mädchen in Uniform* (BFI Film Classics Series, 2024), *Su Friedrich* (University of Illinois Press, 2023), and *Women at Work in Twenty-first Century European Cinema* (University of Illinois Press, 2019). During the academic year 2016-17, she was a Marie Skłodowska-Curie FCFP Senior Fellow at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Study in Germany. In summer 2013, she was the Paul Mellon Visiting Senior Fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study in the Visual Arts in Washington, DC. She directed the UF Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere from 2017-23. Her current book project is tentatively titled "The New Tiny: The Reinvention of Miniatures in the Digital Age."

**Gonzalo Munoz-Vera and Shaun Rosier, Virginia Tech,
'Miniature to Monumental: The Resulting Overlapping Scales of Coal Extraction and Human Inhabitation in Amonate'.**

The paper investigates the spatial and scalar dynamics of coal mining in Amonate, VA, emphasizing the distinct yet interconnected inhabitation logics at human and industrial scales. Steven Stoll (2017) posits that Appalachia's socio-economic issues arise not from individual choices, racial backgrounds, or the region's terrain but from the differing scales at which these spaces have been appropriated since the mid-1800s. During the American Industrial Revolution, Appalachia was exploited for coal extraction to fuel factories, ships, and economic expansion, with operations controlled by absentee Atlantic Coast elites. Meanwhile, the mining workforce resided in company towns, perpetuating economic extraction

by exploiting residents for daily needs and establishing controlling political and labour structures (Dinius & Vergara, 2011; Roller, 2018). Large-scale land ownership practices facilitated this control over space, material, and capital, which seized Appalachian environments at monumental scales from local inhabitants.

Although extensive ethnographic and archaeological studies have been conducted on coal mines and camps, there has been less focus on their spatial, scalar, and affective dimensions. Company towns appropriated the surface at a human, miniaturized scale, distributing houses leisurely along valley floors, compared to how coal mines appropriated the underground through stratified room and pillar structures at an industrial, monumental scale, enforcing working conditions with limited natural light and air. This paper examines the overlapping scales and distinct inhabitation logics in Amonate and the adjacent mines. Through fieldwork, analysis of historic and contemporary maps and mapping practices, the study aims to unpack and interrogate the complexities of the scales involved in mining the Pocahontas Coal Seam.

Gonzalo Munoz-Vera is an Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture at Virginia Tech and PhD candidate at McGill University School of Architecture. Since 2005, he has studied the influence of images as a globalizing tool for shaping cultures and cities through aesthetics and appearances. His doctoral research studies the role of visuals in the construal of cities and cultures in a nineteenth-century Western visuality installing the foundations of current seeing conventions. In his research and teaching, he has explored the Atacama Desert (Chile) as a site to study the history of our current technological society and as a laboratory for future reparative architectural designs. Gonzalo has been the recipient of the Becas Chile Doctoral Scholarship from the Chilean government, Fulbright, and the Schulich Excellence Fellowship at McGill University, among other awards. He has been a Guest Lecturer and Studio Instructor in architecture schools in Chile, Colombia, and Canada.

Shaun Rosier is a landscape architectural and urban designer from Wellington, New Zealand. He previously taught at Victoria University of Wellington's Landscape Architecture Programme and received a Practice-based PhD in Landscape Architecture. His primary creative practice, research, and teaching interests revolve around interrogating design and design-research methods through explorations of technique, method, and representation. Central to this is affirming the capacity of design-research, specifically design as a means of knowledge generation and critique. This work revolves around a close and sustained engagement with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, particularly their notions of affect and assemblage, alongside Alfred North Whitehead and contemporary New Materialist thinking. At present, this work has been paired with an interrogation of urban aggregate reclamation strategies. Specifically, how landscape architectural and urban design can be inserted significantly earlier into the extraction process is formulated through creative practice works, traditional scholarship, and industry partnerships.

**Bhawana Jain, Central Saint Martins,
'Ecopoiesis and the Politics of Scale: Land Art, Climate Action, and Embodied Memory in Ladakh'.**

This paper explores my artistic engagement with Ladakh's fragile high-altitude ecology through site-specific land art installation, challenging the dominant paradigms of monumentality and miniature in environmental discourse. Informed by ecopoiesis, the creation of ecological meaning through artistic acts, my work interrogates the scale of human intervention in the context of climate crisis and resource extraction. Through ephemeral interventions and community-driven projects, I highlight how small-scale artistic gestures can evoke planetary consciousness. Positioned within the vast Himalayan landscape, these micro-interventions contrast the seemingly imperceptible impact of individual actions with the overwhelming scale of ecological collapse.

Drawing from local material traditions and oral histories, my work resists the erasure of indigenous knowledge imposed by industrial modernization and colonial legacies. The paper situates these artistic practices within broader discussions of scale, particularly through the Strong Anthropocentric Principle (SAP), which posits that human existence and cognition are integral to the cosmos. By rethinking scale both physically and epistemologically, I argue that my art in Ladakh not only documents environmental change but actively shapes ecological narratives. Integrating embodied memory and place-based performance, the work engages viewers in a collective ecological consciousness.

This paper also addresses the tensions between global and local responses to climate change, using Ladakh as a microcosm for exploring how art mediates between personal, communal, and planetary scales. By prioritizing temporary, site-specific, and participatory art, my work reframes the politics of scale within the context of survival, resilience, and cultural preservation, contributing to the broader discourse on climate action and sustainability.

Bhawana Jain is a multidisciplinary artist and researcher exploring the intersections of ecology, memory, and systemic structures. She is currently completing an MA in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. Her practice spans land art, drawing, film, and community engagement, with a focus on themes of ecopoiesis, vulnerability, and the politics of scale.

Bhawana's work engages with landscapes as both material and metaphor, particularly in regions facing environmental precarity. Her recent project in Ladakh employs ephemeral site-specific interventions to challenge extractive paradigms and highlight indigenous ecological knowledge. She has exhibited internationally and conducted workshops addressing social and environmental change.

Her research interrogates the role of small-scale artistic actions in reconfiguring dominant narratives of environmental collapse. Through embodied and participatory practices, she seeks to evoke planetary consciousness and reimagine the possibilities of human agency within fragile ecosystems.

Notes