

smudge studio
Collection CAE1508

Introduction/Abstract

smudge studio, a collaboration between Jamie Kruse and Elizabeth Ellsworth, pursues the task of “inventing and enabling practices capable of acknowledging and living in responsive relationship to forces of change that make the world. The archive contains press materials, blogs, correspondence, the film titled *Look Only at the Movement*, Limit Case postcards, Repository cards, and the project book titled *Geologic City: A Field Guide to the GeoArchitecture of New York*.

Biographical Note: Jamie Kruse

Jamie Kruse is an artist, designer and part-time faculty at Parsons, The New School for Design (New York, NY). In 2005 she co-founded *smudge*, with Elizabeth Ellsworth, based in Brooklyn, NY. Her work has been supported by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, The New School Green Fund (Office of Sustainability, The New School); New York State Council for the Arts (2010, 2011) and the Brooklyn Arts Council. She has exhibited and presented her work both nationally and internationally. In the spring of 2014 she was a guest researcher for Future North (AHO Oslo). She is the author of the Friends of the Pleistocene blog, (fopnews.wordpress.com) and has co-edited a collection of essays with Elizabeth Ellsworth entitled, *Making the Geologic Now: Responses to Material Conditions of Contemporary Life* (punctum books, 2012).

Biographical Note: Elizabeth Ellsworth

Elizabeth Ellsworth is Professor of Media Studies at the New School, New York. Elizabeth’s research and teaching focus on media and change; the design of mediated learning environments; and documentary media forms. Her scholarship consists of projects and practices that fuse performative research with aesthetic experience and public pedagogy. She translates results of her research into media forms and exhibitions. She is author of *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy* (Routledge, 2004) and *Teaching Positions: Difference, Pedagogy and the Power of Address* (Teachers College Press, 1997). She has served as a consultant on pedagogical design for museums and design schools. She is co-founder, with Jamie Kruse, of a nonprofit media arts collaboration *smudge studio*. *smudge* has received funding from a variety of international foundations to produce and exhibit work on the material conditions of life and learning in the Anthropocene. Elizabeth earned her PhD in Communication Arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Scope and Content

smudge studio, a collaboration between Jamie Kruse and Elizabeth Ellsworth, was founded in 2005. Their work is dedicated to “exploring sites and moments where the human and the geologic converge,” and is grounded in the notion that geologic time should be central to discussions of human and non-human habitation, ecology and ethics, and art and design.

In fall 2012, *smudge studio* (Elizabeth Ellsworth and Jamie Kruse) spent twelve days driving the routes along which nuclear waste is moved in the American West from sites of waste generation to disposal stations. Nuclear waste, which ranges from highly radioactive plutonium to materials such as clothing and tools with only low levels of radiation, has been accumulating in the United States since the beginning of the atomic weapons program in the 1940s. In 1957, the National Academy of Sciences recommended that the

government excavate deep geologic repositories for the waste, which was considered the safest method of disposal.

Locations they documented with a car-mounted video camera ranged from the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, where nuclear weapons research is conducted to Rocky Flats in Colorado, the former site of a plutonium plant. Disposal facilities included the uranium tailings disposal cell at Mexican Hat in Utah and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico. The WIPP facility is America's only deep geologic repository for nuclear waste, where waste is buried 1,250 feet below the surface in a salt dome. WIPP operations are currently suspended as a result of radiological release in February, 2014.

Ellsworth and Kruse also visited the Department of Energy's TRANSCOM field office in Carlsbad, New Mexico. TRANSCOM monitors, 24-hours a day via satellite, the transportation of nuclear waste in trucks between sites. In 2013 the artists produced *Look Only at the Movement*, a two-channel HD video that runs 171 minutes. This research-based art project also included extensive photography and performance-based art by Ellsworth and Kruse along the journey. Field Research for *Look Only at the Movement* was funded in part by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, 2012.

Look Only at the Movement was conceived of as an exhibition relay among four venues between Fall 2013 and Summer 2015, with each venue located near historical and/or contemporary sites and routes that are part of the research and resulting film/photography. As the exhibition was relayed from venue to venue, it re-enacted the route of the research trip, traced the spatial scope and topographies documented in the work itself, and traversed paths that waste materials will continue to travel for the foreseeable future. The venues included Sheila C. Johnson Design Center, Parsons the New School for Design, New York, NY (October 3 – December 5, 2013); Santa Fe Art Institute, Santa Fe, NM (May 12 – 31, 2014); Center for Land Use Interpretation, Wendover, UT (Summer/Fall 2014); Center for Art + Environment, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV (April 11 – July 26, 2015).

Inclusive Dates

2007 – 2015

Bulk Dates

2009 – 2014

Quantity / Extent

.25 cubic feet

Language

English

Arrangement

smudge studio is organized into six series. The first series contains materials about the organization and its founders as well as correspondence between *smudge studio* and Nevada Museum of Art. Series two through six contain project materials, which are further organized by specific project.

- Series 1: Organizational Information
- Series 2: Projects, 2007
- Series 3: Projects, 2009
- Series 4: Projects, 2010
- Series 5: Projects, 2011
- Series 6: Projects, 2012

Related Archive Collections

- CAE1041: *Center of Land Use Interpretation: Wendover Residencies*
- CAE1215: *Mark Klett and William L. Fox: The Half-Life of History*
- CAE1408: *Michael Light: 100 Suns at Burning Man*

Related Publications

Ellsworth, Elizabeth and Jamie Kruse, Eds. *Making the Geologic Now: Responses to Material Conditions of Contemporary Life*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Punctum Books, 2012.

Container Listing by Series:

CAE1508/1 Series 1: Organizational Information, Folders 1-2, 2008 – 2015

Series 1 contains materials created by the organization and its founders. It also contains a list of projects created to date and correspondence between smudge studio and the Nevada Museum of Art.

CAE Box 93

- 1-1 Organizational and Founders Information, 2009 – 2015
- 1-2 Correspondence, 2008 – 2009

CAE1508/2 Series 2: Projects, Folder 1, 2007

Series 2 contains folder(s) of project(s) conceived in the year 2007, whether finite or ongoing project(s).

CAE Box 93

- 2-1 *Limit Case Postcards, 2007*

CAE1508/3 Series 3: Projects 2009, Folders 1-4, 2009

Series 3 contains folders of projects conceived in the year 2009, whether finite or ongoing projects.

CAE Box 93

- 3-1 *Artists + Environments: Generative Practices and Conversations, 2009*
- 3-2 *Signals from the Deep, 2009*
- 3-3 *Sedan East (unrealized), 2009*
- 3-4 *Worlds to Come, 2009*

CAE1508/4 Series 4: Projects 2010, Folders 1-7, 2010 – 2015

Series 4 contains folders of projects conceived in the year 2010, whether finite or ongoing projects.

CAE Box 93

- 4-1 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2010 (1 of 3)*
- 4-2 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2010 (2 of 3)*
- 4-3 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2010 (3 of 3)*
- 4-4 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2011 (1 of 2)*
- 4-5 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2011 (2 of 2)*
- 4-6 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2012 (1 of 2)*
- 4-7 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2012 (2 of 2)*
- 4-8 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2013*
- 4-9 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2014*
- 4-10 *Friends of the Pleistocene, 2015*

CAE1508/5 Series 5: Projects 2011, Folder 1, 2010 – 2012

Series 5 contains folder(s) of project(s) conceived in the year 2011, whether finite or ongoing project(s).

CAE Box 93

- 5-1 *Geologic City: A Field Guide to the GeoArchitecture of New York, 2011, 2010 – 2012*

CAE1508/6 Series 6: Projects 2012, Folders 1-2, 2012 – 2014

Series 6 contains folders of projects conceived in the year 2012, whether finite or ongoing projects.

CAE Box 93

- 6-1 *Repository: A Typological Guide to America's Ephemeral Nuclear Infrastructure, 2012*
- 6-2 *Look Only at the Movement, 2012, 2013 – 2014*