

# Elective: ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

Coordinators: Virginia MacKenny and Dr Ralph Borland

Seedbombing, guerrilla gardening, moss graffiti, audio tours, cleaning rivers and recycling and imaginatively restructuring the detritus of the city are all part of environmental interventionist art that is proliferating across the globe in response to environmental concerns and climate change.

The opportunity to raise issues pertaining to our planet's health in an imaginative and creative way is being taken up by artists in all manner of means. Interventionist art is concerned with engaging directly in the world. Rather than just representing issues, it inserts itself into them. Typically it combines direct action and communication to audiences. Art in this mode become a tool for investigation and the creation of community as well as self-expression. It becomes a means of encouraging conversation, imagining things differently and seeking change.

This elective's application of the interventionist mode to environmental concerns explores and engages the presence of nature in the city. It presents different ways of 'reading' the city, locating nature, questioning what is 'natural', investigating complex environmental issues, working out ways to act on issues and to communicate them to audiences. It encourages the act of noticing things such as patterns of plant life, the movements of birds and animals through the city and hidden rivers (such as Camissa, the original spring for Cape Town now buried under the city, which pumps 2.4 million litres of water into our storm water drains daily). It encourages you to take your artistic practice and use it to connect yourself (and others) with the environment, to contribute to your world and its future.

Final projects can be in any media or form appropriate to your intention. They may be site-specific, materially permanent or ephemeral in nature. They may be works that aim to get issues into the press or start a conversation.

Students on this elective may work collaboratively or individually.

## Overview:

### First session: Laying the ground 28 February – 13 March (2 weeks)

This first 2-week block is focused on research, investigation and modelling of the work you will execute in the 2nd session. *Topics:* environmental issues, urban nature, interventionist art, site investigation, audiences, participants, form and content, documentation and display.

### Second session: Executing work 17 April – 30 April (2 weeks)

The focus of the 2nd session is on executing work. You will be asked to submit a proposal for a final project on the first day of this session.