



Rebuilding Laboratories

Institute of Advanced Studies workshop

19th November 2019 – Lodge Room, Edgbaston Park Hotel

Workshop Leaders: Dr Julia P Myatt (LANS, University of Birmingham) and Dr Urszula Pawlicka-Deger (IAS Vanguard Fellow, Aalto University, Department of Media)

Workshop Summary

Over the past years, laboratories have popped up in spaces which had never been designed for such purpose: in the city, libraries, and the humanities departments. The concept of the laboratory includes not only research and teaching labs but also open spaces and collaborative networks. There is not one lab model but many different types of labs, which have their own architectures and practices. The spread of laboratories has begun a new chapter in the *history of the laboratory*. Laboratories are thus rebuilt and relocated; however, their core values remain unchanged. One reason for turning various spaces into laboratories is to apply the laboratory ethos: collaboration, experimentation, and innovation. Laboratories in the humanities, therefore, raises many yet unanswered questions of reconceptualizing the role of laboratory, transforming research and teaching practices in a laboratory environment, and changing the position of the humanities in society.

This workshop will bring together UoB's experts in the field of the history of science and medicine, digital humanities, interdisciplinary studies, and knowledge production as well as UoB's heads of labs to initiate the first discussion on laboratories from an inclusive and interdisciplinary perspective. Laboratories and other types of lab-based knowledge spaces will only grow along with the intensification of interdisciplinary and collaborative practices and the understanding of the meaning and the organization of laboratories and their role in empirical knowledge production is a prerequisite for designing a better infrastructure for scientific and scholarly research and teaching, and consequently, for developing the knowledge. The aim is to provide an intellectual discussion on the role of labs in supporting interdisciplinarity and enhancing the empirical knowledge and to stimulate the exchange of experiences between different disciplines.

Agenda

9:30-10:00 Tea and coffee

10.00 - 10.10 Welcome/ meeting opening

10.10 - 11.15 Keynote talk

Dr James Smithies, King's Digital Lab, King's College London, "Digital Humanities Labs & Global Cyber-infrastructure"

11.15 - 12.00 I session

Laboratories across Places and Disciplines: How to Develop a Common Language to Discuss their Significance?

- Prof Jonathan Reinartz, Institute of Applied Health Research, "The Emergence of the laboratory in British medical education"
- Dr Vanessa Heggie, Institute of Applied Health Research, "Exploring laboratories: temporary and travelling labs in extreme environments"
- Dr Urszula Pawlicka-Deger, Aalto University, IAS Vanguard Fellow, LANS, "Discussing Laboratories for the Humanities"

12.00 - 12.30 Group discussion

12.30 - 13.15 Lunch

13.15 - 14.00 II session

Laboratories and Collaboration: How to Build an Interdisciplinary and Shared Environment?

- Prof Jonathan Seville, School of Chemical Engineering, Academic Director of the Collaborative Teaching Lab, "'Collaborative' Teaching Laboratories and the CTL in Birmingham"
- Prof Henry Chapman, College of Arts and Law, Digital Humanities Forum, "Reflections on interdisciplinary laboratories"
- Dr Julia P Myatt, LANS, School of Biosciences, "The LANS Lab: Applying the structure of a scientific research lab to interdisciplinary research"

14.00 - 14.30 Group discussion

14.30 - 15.15 III session

Laboratories, Possibilities, and Limitations: How to Imagine Laboratories of/for the Future?

- Dr Ilija Rašović, LANS, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, "Making Materials, Cooking Chemicals & Funding the Future"
- Dr Matthew Hayler, Department of English Literature, Co-director of the Centre for Digital Cultures, "Imagining Digital Cultures Laboratories"

15.15 - 15.45 Group discussion

15.45 Concluding remarks