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"Introduction: 'Imagining Anew: Challenges of Representing the Anthropocene'"

Garrard, Greg, Gary Handwerk, and Sabine Wilke

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In this cluster of essays, a group of scholars from different disciplines—History, Comparative Literature, American Studies, and Literature and Media Studies—offers reflections upon a broadly construed question: what does it mean for the humanities to address the concept of the Anthropocene? We have, quite intentionally, included essays that vary with regard to materials and approaches. What they share is a concern with the challenges of *representing* a concept at once wholly abstract and alarmingly material in aesthetically, rhetorically, and ultimately politically efficacious ways. They share as well a conviction that the humanities, in their attention to the creation and critique of aesthetic objects, can play a significant role in heightening public environmental awareness. The problem they collectively address is a curious, but pervasive one in environmentalism: why does it seem that widely accepted science and widely shared framing paradigms have such limited effect on the various public audiences that they attempt and need to reach? How, too, might that be changed? (Text from authors)

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