

Call for Papers

“Global Mountains”

July 5-6, 2018

University of Cambridge

Mountains have long been sources of fascination, inspiration and despair, productive of distinctive ways of thinking and acting among inhabitants, administrators, scientists, travellers, and distant readers and viewers alike. ‘Global Mountains’ will be a two-day conference bringing into conversation scholars from a range of disciplines working on diverse engagements with and imaginations of mountainous regions. Geographical features, especially oceans, rivers, and islands, are now frequently deployed as productive spaces in which to reorient older national or colonial narratives. Mountains, long on the peripheries of states and empires as well as scholars’ attention, are beginning to receive deserved similar consideration. They are increasingly recognised as providing valuable lenses through which to examine political, social, and aesthetic issues. As areas of unusual ecological prominence and environmental agency, they are also vital locales for working through the more-than-human histories so urgently needed in the Anthropocene.

This conference will bring together conceptions of mountains as both subjects of enquiry and the settings of unique human and beyond-human stories across Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Key themes to be addressed include the importance of verticality in the history of scientific practice, the reciprocal effects of mountain environments and human cultures, and the roles of mountains as borderlands between states and empires (and thus as spaces that complicate national and regional boundaries). ‘Global Mountains’ will focus on uplands in contexts that transcend traditional area studies units, paying particular attention to issues of scale and exploring how high places became, and continue to be, units of long-distance theorisation and comparison. This conference aims to historicise and specify the means by which mountain spaces have been perceived and acted upon in ways that render them distinct from lowland settings. It will also investigate how social sciences and humanities might develop ways of ‘thinking like a mountain,’ generating models and modes of expression that place uplands at their heart rather than conceiving of them as aberrations from norms derived from plains and oceans. Through these elements, ‘Global Mountains’ will seek to reorient understandings of global connections and processes from the flat to the jagged, and from the horizontal to the vertical.

We aim to facilitate discussion around, but not limited to, the following thematic sessions:

- ❖ Mountain Environments
- ❖ Mountain Societies
- ❖ Mountain Imaginaries
- ❖ Mountain Sciences
- ❖ Mountain Politics

This two-day conference will take place at the University of Cambridge on July 5-6, 2018. We invite scholars at all career stages to apply, and very much welcome interest from graduate students and early career researchers. We encourage submissions from scholars working on mountains in any related discipline. All speakers will be asked to submit their papers for pre-circulation in advance of the event, in order to facilitate in depth discussion, and with a view to publication. Please send an abstract (300 words or less) and a current CV to globalmountains2018@gmail.com by **15 January 2018**.

Organised by Lachlan Fleetwood (Cambridge) and Thomas Simpson (Cambridge)

Background Image: “Tableau Comparatif et Figuré de La Hauteur des Principales Montagnes et du Cours des Principaux Fleuves due Monde” (1836), www.davidrumsey.com



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