

Seminar Week

Fall 2023, 21-29 October 2023

Chair of the History of Art and Architecture

Prof. Philip Ursprung

Cost category: F

OREGON

VIBRANT MATTER IN THE PACIFIC NORTH WEST

On its way to the Pacific, the Columbia River cuts through the volcanic Cascade Range and spans a large desert. Its basin, inhabited for more than 15,000 years, attracted Euro-American settlers in the mid 19th century. Ever since, mighty Douglas firs and Ponderosa pine trees travel downstream as raw material, first for the Gold Rush building boom, then for global trade. Once the largest salmon producing river in the world, the Columbia today drives hydroelectric power plants, its waters cool nuclear reactors and data centers. During the seminar week, we will drive and wander along the Columbia River and past volcanoes, cross a desert and the Cascade Mountains, bathe in hot springs and make a bonfire. We will meet and travel with artists, architects, film makers and activists. We will hear tales of production and resettlement, of successful engineering, lost habitats and natural restoration, of extraction and spirituality, of railways, fish ladders and dark fiber, of saw mills, fungi and dynamic meditation, of tribal history and globalization. Along the way, we will study and practice photography (with Tobias Wootton).

Image: Wildfire, from the series The Quiet of Dissolution © Sonja Braas