



Climate Futures, Design and the Just Transition

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9th, 2018

1:30 - 1:45 pm

Introduction

Framing and Welcome: Damian White

1:45 - 3:00 pm

Panel 1: The Labor of Just transitions: Energy Democracy, Trade Unions and Blue Collar/Pink Collar/Green Collar/White Labor

The concept of the just transition has its roots in the labor movement and the international labor movement has been one of the major forces pushing for the adoption of this concept in global climate negotiations. But labor is under attack across the planet--and just transitions beyond fossil capitalism will require the broadest possible alliance of social forces to move us towards a coherent vision of energy democracy. In this session, we explore the opportunities and the tensions around the call for rapid and just transitions. Can the struggles for energy democracy be expanded by thinking more carefully about the alliances that can be built between blue/white collar, green/pink collar conceptualizations of labor? What might be the theoretical and practical opportunities that exist between labor-focused just transitions and movements mobilizing around gendered labor and racial justice? Can the international labor movement become a mechanism for thinking about multi-scalar just transitions?

Moderator: Jonathan Highfield (Graduate Program Director Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies at RISD, President of RISD Faculty Association).

- Sean Sweeney (Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, Miller Center, CUNY) "Labor as a Driver of the Just Transition towards Energy Democracy."
- Alyssa Battistoni (Yale, Political Science/Jacobin Magazine) "Green Jobs, Pink Collars: Revaluing Social Reproduction for Just Transitions."

- Myles Lennon (Yale School of Forestry) “Beyond SolarTopia: Black Respectability and Blue-Collar Code-switching in the Shadows of Greenwashed Panaceas.”

3:00 – 3:10 pm

Break

3:10 - 4:45 pm

Panel 2: Design, Creative Labor and the Just Transition

The just transition implies that we decarbonize our energy systems but also embark on a much broader redesign of our socio-material relations and landscapes. What role can design play in thinking about just transitions? What might the designed landscapes of just transitions look like? Who should be the designers of the just transition? To what extent might a just transition involve a revaluing of the creative labor and design intelligences of many different kinds of people beyond the world of professional designers?

Moderator: Anne Tate (Architecture, RISD).

- Daniel Aldana Cohen (Sociology, UPenn), Nicholas Pevzner “Gramsci Landscapes” (Landscape Architecture, UPenn).
- Namita Dharia (HPSS, RISD) “From Green to Grey: Sustainable architectures and the work of migrant labor in India.”
- Elizabeth Dean Hermann (Undergraduate Concentration Coordinator Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies, Landscape Architecture RISD) “Designing Just Transitions: Urbanizations of Displacement, Climate Change and Natural Disasters in the Surrounds of the Bay of Bengal”

4:45 – 5:00 pm

Break

5:00 - 6:30 pm

Panel 3: Environmental Activism, Social Justice, and the Just Transition

To what extent does the concept of the just transition open the potential to build new horizons for activist movements struggling for environmental justice, housing justice, energy justice and indigenous justice here and beyond? How do local movements, around particular sites of fossil capital, energy grids, housing, and transit, scale up and out, and link up as part of translocal, national, and transnational environmental justice movements? How do these movements orient to capitalism, the state, electoral politics, and other movements not explicitly identified as environmentalist?

Moderator: Timmons Roberts (Sociology/IBES/Climate and Development Lab, Brown)

- Nicole Fabricant (Anthropology, Towson University) “Environmental Justice Struggles in Baltimore.”

- Camilo Viveiros (George Wiley Center) “Struggles for Labor, Economic Justice and Just Transition in Southern New England”
- Kai Bosworth (IBES, Brown) “The climate justice movement in the wake of Standing Rock.”

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10th, 2018

9:00 - 10:30 am

Panel 4: Designing Just Transitions: Green Design and Global Supply Chains

Rapid and just decarbonization of the global economy must occur as soon as possible. Critical scholarship has demonstrated that all things remaining equal, a rapid transition to renewable energy and transportation systems is going to have significant impacts on land use patterns, ecologies and communities all along the global supply chain. Yet, it is also clear that critiques of the material impacts of renewables can take very different forms and be used to bolster very different kinds of political projects from environmental justice activism to ecocentric romanticism, from anti-civilization/neo-primitivist currents, to pro-nuclear ecomodernists and anti-renewables fossil-fuel advocates. In this panel, we seek to explore how critical scholarship on global supply chains can engage fully with hazardous impacts of the big renewables roll out whilst also keeping the door open for reconfigurations and different modes of deployment that open up new possibilities for energy democracy.

Moderator: Thea Riofrancos (Providence College)

- Peter C. Little (Rhode Island College) “Global Copper and Toxic Supply Chain Labor in Ghana.”
- Julie Klinger (Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University) “Rare Earths, Logistics and Supply Chains.”
- Dustin Mulvaney (SJSU) “Environmental Justice, Global Supply Chains and the New Renewables Debate.”

10:30 – 10:45 pm

Break

10:45 am - 12:00 pm

Panel 5: Political Aesthetics and Low Carbon Futures

What might the design aesthetics of a just transition look like? Might it involve a move beyond eco-nostalgia for “the Nature we have lost” and a recognition that we are going to have new relations to new socio-natures and technonatures and designs *with* new natures? How does the struggle for post and decolonial interventions impact who has voice and how is represented in the just transition? Might a just transition involve thinking about futures but in ways that break from older modernist futurings?

Moderator: Damian White (Dean of Liberal Arts, RISD)

- Ijlal Muzaffar (THAD, RISD) “Just Transitions and Post Colonial Perspectives.”
- Anastasiia Raina (Graphic Design, RISD) “Post-Human Polymythology.”
- Jesse Goldstein (Sociology, VCU) “Just Transitions beyond, through and against the Cleantech Surround.”

12:00 - 12:30 pm

Lunch

12:30 - 2:00 pm

Panel 6: Just Transitions, Public Ownership, and Platform Cooperatives

Would a just transition in the U.S. require the implementation of green social democracy? And/or do we need to move forward with new visions of social ownership, plenitude, and platform co-operatives? In this panel we will explore and appraise the range of different visions and proposals that are currently on the table for re-imaging left-green futures.

Moderator: Timmons Roberts (Sociology/IBES/Climate and Development Lab, Brown)

- Juliet Schor (Sociology, Boston College) “The Sharing Economy, Platform Co-ops and their Limits.”
- Johanna Bozuwa (The Next System Project/The Democracy Collaborative) “Public Ownership and Building the Next Energy System.”
- Kate Aronoff (John Jay College, CUNY/ *The Intercept/ In These Times*) “Green Social Democracy and Beyond?” (Title TBC)

2:00 - 3:00 pm

Final Wrap-Up: Long term visions for Just Transitions: Degrowth, Left Ecomodernism, Ecosocialism, or beyond?

The question of whether a long-term vision for the just transition should be premised on Left ecomodernism, degrowth, green growth, a critical and hybrid ecosocialism or some position in between has become ever more intensely debated across the pages of *Jacobin*, *Monthly Review*, *New Left Review* and in many other places besides. From debates around automation/UBI and plenitude to the 100% renewables/green nuclear debates, from the question of whether sustainable agriculture will involve sustainable intensification or new agro-ecologies to debates around the green new deal, the Green Left seems to be increasingly split on key issues. What is a viable long term vision for a political economy concerned with the just transition?

Moderator: Thea Riofrancos (Providence College) + Conference Participants