URBAN WATERSCAPES WORKSHOP
CITIES, SPACE AND POLITICS WORKING GROUP
JUNE 8TH – JUNE 9TH, 2018

CONVENERS
Elana Zilberg
Matilde Córdoba Azcaráte

FRIDAY, JUNE 8TH

All sessions will be held in the Media Center and Communication Building (MCC 133)
See abstracts below

Session One (9:00-10:30)
- Matthew Vitz, "A City on a Lake: Urban Political Ecology and the Growth of Mexico City"
- Kevan Malone, "An Irresolvable Conflict? *Tijuana, South San Diego, and the International Sewage Crisis, 1931-1997*"

Session Two (11:00-12:30)
- Stephanie Kane, "The Politics of Staging a Controlled Breach: the Assiniboine River Flood of 2014"
- Matilde Cordoba Azcaráte, "Fueling Ecological Neglect: Disaster mapping and environmental art in tourist Cancun, Mexico"

Lunch (12:45-1:45)

Session Three (2:00-3:30)
- Nancy Kwak, "Dangerous Waters in Modern Manila"
- Elana Zilberg, "Bridging Divides at the Los Angeles River: An Aesthetics of Integration | A Politics of Refusal"

Session Four (4:00-5:30)
- Ameeth Vijay, "Inhabiting the Edgeland: Brownfield Regeneration in the 'Thames Gateway'"
- Irene Klaver, TBA

SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH

10:00-12:30	Fieldtrip to Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve
1:00-2:30	Lunch in Imperial Beach (Please RSVP by Monday, June 4th to ezilberg@ucsd.edu)

Tentative

3:00- 6:30	Fieldtrip to Tijuana with Kevan Malone
7:00	Dinner in Tijuana (Please RSVP by Monday, June 4th to ezilberg@ucsd.edu)
9:00	Cross back into the U.S.

ABSTRACTS

Matilde Córdoba-Azcárate
Fueling ecological neglect: disaster mapping and environmental art in tourist Cancun, Mexico
This paper turns a critical eye on Cancun, a leading Caribbean beach tourist destination and battered epicenter of anthropogenic climate change. It explores a series of risk maps elaborated as responses to international demands on coastal disaster mitigation and beach erosion & the adoption of anthropogenic narratives on environmental degradation as tourist attractions in Cancun's Underwater Museum of Art. The paper aims to reflect on the tacit paradoxes that plague efforts to imagine alternative environmental politics and sustainable tourism urbanisms outside neoliberal trends.

Stephanie Kane
The Politics of Staging a Controlled Breach: the Assiniboine River Flood of 2014
This chapter focuses on a press conference staged in the initial hours of the 2014 state of emergency that was triggered by a worsening forecast due to rains coming from the west. I analyze the event as a chronotope, a carefully controlled representation of emergency space-time. I show how officials deftly balance uncertainty and deliberative action at the material and emotional interface between human and river. This balance is accomplished in discourse by dividing up the collective communique into distinct *temporal* jurisdictions even as they differentiate between their expertise-specific roles. My experimental method here relies on the construction of visual images that divide the press conference transcript into textual packets defined by timeframes and categories of referential meaning (related to river, action and uncertainty). The method of dividing text into temporal and semantic packets is inspired by water engineering, i.e., the forecasters' reliance on cfs, cubic feet per second, the small, abstract units of water volume used to estimate river flow in flood forecasts. My goal is to empirically capture the negotiation of uncertainty among engineers who are participating in and witnessing hydrological surprises that (as always now) may or may not be symptoms of climate change. The press conference, I suggest, provides a window into the governance as an aspect of geo-culture and local TV as a crucial medium for negotiating the space of political engineering. (I create the term as an infrastructure-rich offshoot of political ecology.)

Nancy Kwak
Dangerous waters in modern Manila
Water has created space for newcomers to Manila - space otherwise unavailable to families with little money or legal claim. For multiple generations, urban dwellers have built over the city's expansive shoreline along Manila Bay and above the many esteros threading through the city; for generations, the poorest class has used the waterways as ad hoc sewage and garbage systems. In the past few years, however, the government has adopted policies indicating its intention to reclaim these spaces, observing in particular the ways in which the informal use of waterways has endangered the city as a whole, subjecting the entire city to devastating flooding and the spread of disease. In this talk, I will discuss the idea of dangerous water, and propose alternate frames for understanding vulnerability in the city.

Kevan Malone
An Irresolvable Conflict? *Tijuana, South San Diego, and the International Sewage Crisis, 1931-1997*
The current Tijuana-San Diego sewage crisis is not a recent development but rather a continuation of a problem that began during the period of American Prohibition, when the Mexican border city took root as a vice resort. My presentation accounts for a major part of this

history, examining the political ecology of binational metropolitan growth in the lower Tijuana River basin from the first major transborder sewage spill in the early 1930s to the construction of the International Boundary and Water Commission's state-of-the-art South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant in the 1990s. I show that private enterprise and public policy in both countries fueled rapid and often informal urbanization on Mexico's northwestern frontier, that population growth continually outpaced the development of sanitary infrastructure, and that, as a result, untreated effluent and industrial wastes constantly contaminated American properties and public spaces downstream. The Tijuana River, after all, recognized no international boundary. Bilateral responses to these ecological crises highlighted a central paradox of the US-Mexico border: that the need for shared sewerage and waterworks drew the "twin" cities of San Diego and Tijuana into an increasingly interconnected conurbation during a period in which the United States was erecting barriers on the international boundary between them. At every stage of metropolitan growth, considerations of national sovereignty complicated questions of public health, resource conservation, and wildlife protection, challenging the basic governability of this binational population center. Ultimately, my presentation highlights the Tijuana basin's unique lessons for sustainable urbanism in international border zones.

Ameeth Vijay
Inhabiting the Edgeland: Brownfield Regeneration in the 'Thames Gateway'
Declared by the Blair government a prime site of 'regeneration' given the high number of brownfield sites, the Thames has become defined by new-build private development. This talk asks what kinds of rhetorical and economic violence accompany the designation of a site as a "brownfield" -- in a state of decay, ruin, neither a site of production nor an object for consumption.

Matt Vitz
A City on a Lake: Urban Political Ecology and the Growth of Mexico City
This paper will outline the principal arguments as well as theoretical, methodological, and historiographic contributions of Vitz's recently published book, *A City on a Lake*, a political and environmental history of Mexico City.

Elana Zilberg
Bridging Divides at the Los Angeles River: An Aesthetics of Integration | A Politics of Refusal
The intersection of the Sixth Street Bridge and the Los Angeles River is the site of two large infrastructural projects – the revitalization of the river, and the construction a new iconic bridge with a 12-acre park below. It is a site of charged political intention where a diverse set of actors converge and diverge around an intricate knot of concerns including neoliberal urbanization, cultural and ecological gentrification, environmental racism, displacement, and the politics of transportation and watershed management. A range of pressing methodological and political questions arise in trying to understand these entanglements and their stakes in engineering or *imagineering* "The New Los Angeles." The presentation focuses on the clash of two forces - an aesthetics of integration (here largely associated with urban renewal) with a politics of refusal (here largely associated with anti-gentrification activists and watershed advocates).