

A photograph of a wooden table with various legs and a tilted top, overlaid with text. The table has a light-colored wooden top and a dark brown wooden base. The legs are made of dark wood and are intricately carved, resembling animal paws. The top of the table is tilted upwards, and there are several other wooden pieces, possibly drawers or shelves, attached to the base. The background is a plain white wall.

British Art Studies

November 2020

British Art Studies

Issue 18, published 30 November 2020

Cover image: Sonia E. Barrett, Table No. 6, 2013, wood and metal.. Digital image courtesy of Bruno Weiss.

PDF generated on 15 February 2024

Note: *British Art Studies* is a digital publication and intended to be experienced online and referenced digitally. PDFs are provided for ease of reading offline. Please do not reference the PDF in academic citations: we recommend the use of DOIs (digital object identifiers) provided within the online article. These unique alphanumeric strings identify content and provide a persistent link to a location on the internet. A DOI is guaranteed never to change, so you can use it to link permanently to electronic documents with confidence.

Published by:

Paul Mellon Centre
16 Bedford Square
London, WC1B 3JA
<https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk>

In partnership with:

Yale Center for British Art
1080 Chapel Street
New Haven, Connecticut
<https://britishart.yale.edu>

ISSN: 2058-5462

DOI: 10.17658/issn.2058-5462

URL: <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk>

Editorial team: <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/about/editorial-team>

Advisory board: <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/about/advisory-board>

Produced in the United Kingdom.

A joint publication by



PAUL MELLON
CENTRE

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

Contents

The Ecological Imperative: Stopping Ecocide, INTERPRT

The Ecological Imperative: Stopping Ecocide

INTERPRT

Authors

Cite as

INTERPRT , "The Ecological Imperative: Stopping Ecocide", British Art Studies, Issue 18, <https://dx.doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-18/INTERPRT>

INTERPRT is a research and design studio dedicated to environmental justice. Working with civil society organisations, we undertake long-form investigations about under-represented environmental violations using geospatial analysis and architectural methodologies.

There is currently no International Criminal Law to protect the environment against ecological destruction and the climate emergency. That is why we advocate for criminalising “ecocide” as part of the Stop Ecocide Campaign. It is within this context that our studio has been exploring legislative and activist history at the intersection of environmental protection and international justice using visual culture.

Broadly speaking, our visual research has closely looked at the few legal precedents where environmental destruction was considered as part of the evidence of war crimes. It has examined how environmental protection in times of peace was excluded in the systematic development of international crimes. And it has tried to chart the counter-history of how civil society has kept alive the hopes of criminalising ecocide in the passionate demand for protecting the planet.

[View this illustration online](#)

Figure 1.

INTERPRT, The campaign to make ecocide an international crime, video explainer, 2020. Digital image courtesy of INTERPRT (CC BY-NC 4.0).

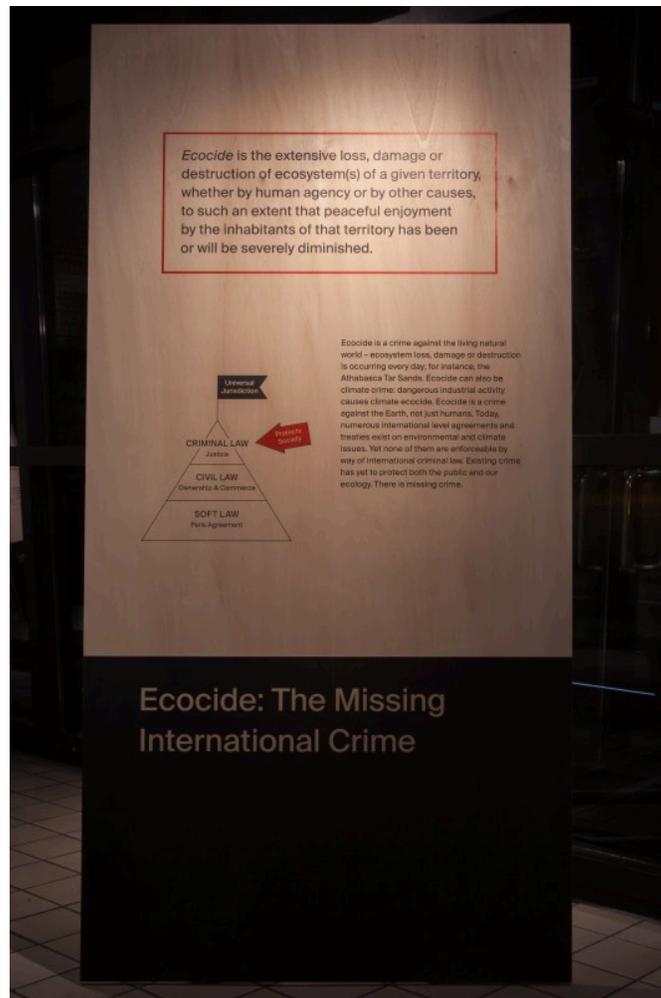


Figure 2.

Earth Law, Museon, The Hague, 2018. Digital image courtesy of INTERPRT (CC BY-NC 4.0). Exhibition and microsite in collaboration with Polly Higgins and Ecological Defence Integrity held in conjunction with the 17th Assembly of State Parties (ASP) of the International Criminal Court (ICC).



Figure 3.
Earth Law, Museon, The Hague, 2018. Digital image courtesy of INTERPRT (CC BY-NC 4.0).

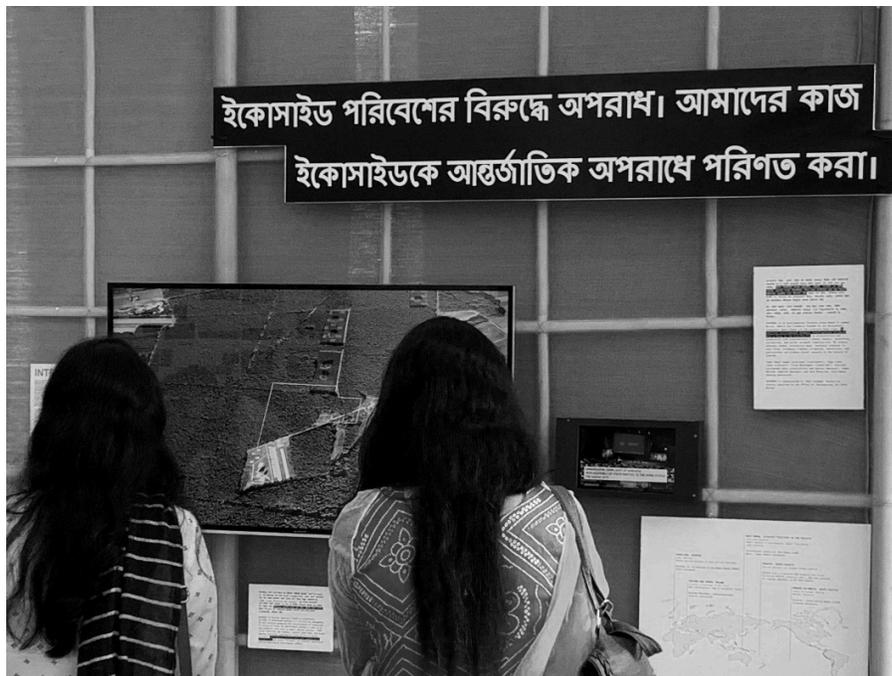


Figure 4.
“Ecocide is a crime against the environment. Our work is to make ecocide an international crime”, Dhaka Art Summit, 2020. Digital image courtesy of INTERPRT (CC BY-NC 4.0).

In 1947, as part of the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC), Poland listed eleven German administrators and foresters as war criminals for the devastation of Polish forests using scientific forestry. Case no. 1307, as it was filed with the UNWCC, sets one of the earliest precedents of

criminal charges for environment destruction. We reconstructed Case no. 1307 combining archival research, interviews, aerial imagery, and LiDAR analysis.



Figure 5.

Race and Forest (Rasa i Las), solo exhibition, Warsaw Biennale, 2020. Digital image courtesy of INTERPRT (CC BY-NC 4.0).



Figure 6.

Race and Forest (Rasa i Las), Warsaw Biennale 2019 “Let’s Organize Our Future!”, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2019. Digital image courtesy of INTERPRT (CC BY-NC 4.0).

Chełmno was the first of the extermination camps of the Holocaust situated near Łódź in central Poland. In 1942, a secret reforestation programme was carried out here with the crushed bones of victims used as fertiliser whose sole purpose was to hide the traces of mass killing. We used airborne 3D laser scanning (LiDAR) that penetrated the trees to reveal the microtopography of the ground underneath, the first such survey carried out at the site. The remote sensing investigation allowed us to better understand Rzuchowski forest as living evidence of the environmental dimensions of mass atrocity crimes and their forgotten histories.

[View this illustration online](#)

Figure 7.

INTERPRT, Living Evidence, single channel video, 12 minutes 14 seconds. Home Works 8/Beirut Art Center, 2019. Digital image courtesy of INTERPRT (all rights reserved).

Archival research about the legal and alternative forums in which the status of the natural environment under international justice was defined, prosecuted, and contested: the United Nations and the International Law Commission; International criminal tribunals and courts; citizen's tribunals, campaigns, and other civil society platforms. Following COVID-19 restrictions, the posters were sent to cultural institutions across Poland.

2019 Papież Franciszek nawołuje do uzna- nia ekobójstwa jako zbrodni międzyna- rodowej i grzechu ekologicznego.

SPRAWIEDLIWOŚĆ SPOŁECZNA obejmuje działania społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, dotąd przeważnie z krajów Globalnej Północy, mające na celu doprowadzenie do włączenia zbrodni ekobójstwa do prawa międzynarodowego. Od burzliwych czasów wojny w Wietnamie po dzisiejszy kryzys klimatyczny, organizacje obywatelskie energicznie zabiegają o ochronę Ziemi na gruncie prawa karnego. To właśnie ten spłót praktyk prawnych dotyczących środowiska i antropocentrycznego międzynarodowego systemu prawa karnego jest punktem wyjścia dla tej osi czasu.



Figure 8.

The Ecological Imperative, Poster series “Civil justice” (in collaboration with Jakub de Barbaro), Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2020. Translation: “Pope Francis calls for the recognition of ecocide as international crime and ecological sin”. Digital image courtesy of INTERPRT (CC BY-NC 4.0).

Licensing

The Publishers of *British Art Studies* are committed to supporting scholarship on British art and architecture of all periods. This publication is made available free of charge at <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk>. We ask users to identify the use of materials made available through this website and to provide an appropriate credit to the author and the publication, so that others may find and use our resources.

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 UK: England & Wales Licence (CC BY-NC 2.0 UK). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/uk/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

The Publishers fully support the protection of intellectual property and are committed to complying with, and strictly adhering to, all applicable copyright law. In many cases, copyright or other proprietary rights may be held by individuals or entities other than, or in addition to, the Publishers. If a work or a photographic image is still protected by copyright, you must cite the relevant copyright information when using the image and comply with all other terms or restrictions that may be applicable to that material.

In some cases, exceptions to copyright that permit limited use of protected works without the permission of the copyright owner may have been applied. We are confident that we have carried out due diligence in our use of copyrighted material as required, but we apologise for any inadvertent infringement of rights.

Digital copies of resources are made accessible for research for one of the following reasons:

- they are in the public domain;
- the rights are owned by the Publishers;
- we make them accessible under an exception or limitation to UK copyright law, as outlined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended);
- we have permission to make them accessible;
- or, there are no known restrictions on use.

If you believe that we have made a mistake and wish for your material to be removed from our site, please contact us at copyright@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk.

Please include the following information with your request:

- Name and contact information, including email address and phone number.
- Identification of the resource for consideration of removal. Providing URLs in your communication will help us locate content quickly.
- The reason for the request.

The Publishers respond promptly, normally within 21 business days. We may remove the resource from our site while we assess the validity of the request. Upon completion of the assessment, we will take appropriate action and communicate that action to you.