

ZACHARY HORTON

Assistant Professor of English
University of Pittsburgh

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Assistant Professor of English, University of Pittsburgh, 2016-present
Affiliated faculty: Film and Media Studies program, 2016-present
Founding Director, Vibrant Media Lab, 2018-present

EDUCATION

Ph.D., English, University of California, Santa Barbara; September 2015

M.F.A., Film Directing, American Film Institute Conservatory; June 2005

B.A., *Summa Cum Laude*. Majors: Philosophy, Visual Arts (With Highest Departmental Honors),
University of California, San Diego; June 2003

BOOK

The Cosmic Zoom: Scale, Knowledge, and Mediation. Chicago University Press. September 2021.

PUBLICATIONS

“Viral Zoom: COVID-19 as Multi-Scalar Immune Failure” *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*. 16:3, 319-340 (December 14, 2020)

“A ‘Total Play and Learning Experience’: The Magnavox Odyssey’s 1972 Dream of Media Convergence” *Continent*. 8, no. 1 (September 17, 2019): 76-86–86.

“Written on the Sky: Inscription, Scale, and Agency in Anthropocenic Semiotics” *Literary Geographies*. Volume 5, No. 1. 2019. 54-71

“Toward a Particulate Politics: Visibility and Scale in a Time of Slow Violence” *Electronic Book Review*, December 1, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.7273/9wr4-k121>.

- “The Trans-Scalar Challenge of Ecology” *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. Volume 26, Issue 1. Winter 2019.
- “Creative Accounting in Hollywood: Faulkner's Transmedial Ledger” in *Picturing Faulkner: The Visual World of William Faulkner*. Edited by Randall Wilhelm. University of Tennessee Press. (Accepted, book under review)
- “The Guattarian Art of Failure” in *Ecosophical Aesthetics*. Edited by Patricia MacCormack and Colin Gardner. Bloomsbury Press. 2018.
- “Composing a Cosmic View: Three Alternatives for Thinking Scale in the Anthropocene” in *Size and Scale in Literature and Culture*. Edited by Michael Travel Clarke and David Wittenberg. Palgrave Macmillan. 2017.
- “Going Rogue or Becoming Salmon?: Geoengineering Narratives in Haida Gwaii” *Cultural Critique*. (Fall 2017)
- “Ant and Empire: Mediating Trans-Scalar Territoriality and the Problem of Reciprocal Becomings” in *Deleuze and the Animal*. Edited by Patricia MacCormack and Colin Gardner. University of Edinburgh Press. 2017.
- “Toward a Speculative Nano-Ecology: Trans-Scalar Knowledge, Disciplinary Boundaries, and Ecology's Posthuman Horizon” *Resilience*, Volume 2.3. April 2016 (58-86)
- “Collapsing Scale: Nanotechnology and Geoengineering as Speculative Media” in *Shaping Emerging Technologies: Governance, Innovation, Discourse*. October 2013. IOS Press.
- “Can You Starve a Body Without Organs? The Hunger Artists of Franz Kafka and Steve McQueen” *Deleuze Studies*, Volume 6.1. February 2012.

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2020 Pitt Momentum research grant. University of Pittsburgh (2020-21)
- 2019 Pitt SEED Grant for “Vibrant Media Lab.” University of Pittsburgh (2019-21)
- 2019 Year of Creativity grant for “Game Design Initiative.” University of Pittsburgh (2019-20)
- 2019 Humanities Center Faculty Fellow. University of Pittsburgh (2019-20)
- 2019 Special Initiative to Promote Scholarly Activities in the Humanities. University of Pittsburgh.
- 2018 Curricular Innovation award, for project “Critical Making in the Humanities” (with Elizabeth Pitts). University of Pittsburgh.
- 2017 Third Term Research Stipend. University of Pittsburgh.
- 2017 Consuming Nature, paid faculty workshop participant (*Collecting Knowledge Pittsburgh* [museum and archive collective] and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation) (Summer 2017)
- 2014 Inaugural Graduate Fellow, Environmental Humanities Center, UCSB (2014-15)
- 2013 Mellon-Sawyer Research Grant (Mellon-Sawyer Seminar: Sea Change) (2013-14)
- 2013 Graduate Fellow, Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (www.ihc.ucsb.edu)

- 2013 Arnhold Graduate Fellow, Department of English, UCSB (2013-14)
- 2012 Graduate Fellow, Transcriptions Center, Department of English, UCSB (2012-13)
- 2011 Fellow, Center for Nanotechnology in Society, UCSB (through Summer 2012)
- 2010 Princess Grace Special Project Grant (for project, *Collaborative Media Commons*)
- 2010 Dean's Matching Grant, College of Letters and Science, Humanities and Fine Arts Division, UCSB (for project, *Collaborative Media Commons*)
- 2009 Arnhold Graduate Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara (2009-10)
- 2005 Silver Bear (Festival of Nations, Austria, for film *Salamander*)
- 2002 Cary Grant Film Award (Princess Grace Foundation; national award) (www.pgfusa.com)
- 2002 Princess Grace Undergraduate Scholarship (national award) (www.pgfusa.com)

TALKS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Book Duet: Zach Horton and Robert Batterman”
Humanities Center, University of Pittsburgh. February 3, 2022. Virtual.
- “Scale and Coronavirus: COVID-19's Medial and Natural Ecologies”
Society for Cinema and Media Studies; Annual Conference. March 2021. Virtual.
- “Circuits of Play: Early Video Games As Spatial Topologies” Humanities Center Colloquium, University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, PA. October 28, 2019.
- “The Recursive Zoom: Trans-Scalar Identity and Surveillance Media”
Society for Cinema and Media Studies; Annual Conference. March 2019. Seattle, Washington.
- “Ecology Between Scales” Environmental Humanities Colloquium, Carnegie Mellon University. Pittsburgh, PA. February 13, 2019.
- “On Becoming a Scanner: Database, Algorithm, and Scale in Scan Culture”
Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts. November 2018, Toronto, Canada.
- “Resolving Ecological Difference: Scanning and Algorithm in *No Man's Sky*”
Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA); Annual Conference. April 2018. Pittsburgh, PA
- “Scanning to Remain the Same: (Media) Ecology and Scan Culture in *No Man's Sky*”
American Comparative Literature Association; Annual Conference. March 2018. Los Angeles, CA
- “Writing on the Sky: Element, Sign and Scale in Geoengineering and Chemtrail Aesthetics”
Association for the Study of the Arts in the Present; Annual Conference. October 2017. San Francisco, CA

- “Utrecht in the Cosmos: Kees Boeke's Cosmic View and the Problem of Resolution”
American Comparative Literature Association; Annual Conference. July 2017. Utrecht, The Netherlands
- “No Man's Sky and the Cultural Logic of Ubiquitous Scanning”
Society for Cinema and Media Studies; Annual Conference. March 2017. Chicago, Illinois.
- “Lost and Found in the Cosmic Zoom” Pittsburgh Film Colloquium, University of Pittsburgh.
Pittsburgh, PA. March 16, 2017.
- “Reconciling Virtualities: Deleuzian Actualization and Network Culture”
Aesthetics and the Political in Contemporary India: Deleuzian Explorations. Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Mumbai, India. February 16, 2017
- “The Virtual as Creative Practice”
Aesthetics and the Political in Contemporary India: Deleuzian Explorations. Invited expert seminar. Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Mumbai, India. February 15, 2017
- “Sky Writing: Chemtrail Conspiracy Media as Toxic Cartography”
Modern Language Association; Annual Conference. January 2017, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- “Opening Conversation” panel
Composition Across/Between Edges, Surfaces and Materialities symposium, organized by Miriam Posner, Elika Ortega, and Patrik Svensson; December 9th, 2016, University of California, Los Angeles.
- “Scale and Capital: Henri Lefebvre's Production of Space Reconsidered”
Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. November 2016, Pasadena, California
- “Scaling Laws and Disciplinarization”
Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts. November 2016, Atlanta, Georgia
- “Powers of Ten as Trans-Scalar Ecology”
Society for Cinema and Media Studies; Annual Conference, March 2016, Atlanta, Georgia
- “Nineteenth Century Geoengineering: The speculative climatology of John Ruskin and Jules Verne”
Modern Language Association; Annual Conference, January 2016, Austin, Texas
- “Across Modalities and Scales”
Unflattening and Enacting Visualization; Critical Visualization Event organized by Patrik Svensson, January 2016, CUNY Graduate School, New York, New York
(<http://patriksv.net/2016/04/critical-visualization-event-at-gc-cuny-on-june-9-2016/>)
- “Toxic Cartography and the Trans-Scalar Subject: Geoengineering Conspiracy Theory”
Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts; Annual Conference, November 2015, Houston, Texas
- “Networking the Cosmic Zoom”

European Society for Literature, Science and the Arts (SLSAeu); Annual Conference, June 2015, Valletta, Malta

“Re-Writing and Geoengineering: Haida Salmon Stories as Neoliberal Palimpsest”
Modern Language Association; Annual Conference, January 2015, Vancouver, Canada

“Producing a Cosmic View: A Network Reading”
Modern Language Association; Annual Conference, January 2015, Vancouver, Canada

“Geoengineering as Particulate Imaginary: Russ George and Haida Narrative”
Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts; Annual Conference, October 2014, Dallas, Texas

“Can We Think Nano-Ecology?”
Society for the Study of Nanoscience and Emerging Technologies, Annual Conference, September 2014, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Karlsruhe, Germany.

“Particulate Paranoia: Globalization, Geoengineering, and Nano-Conspiracy Media”
Society for the Study of Nanoscience and Emerging Technologies, Annual Conference, November 2013, Northeastern University, Boston, MA.

“Scalar Erasure and Speculative Media: The Nanotechnological Imagination Goes Planetary”
Society for the Study of Nanoscience and Emerging Technologies, Annual Conference, October 2012, University of Twente, Netherlands.

“Swerving to the Future: Collaborative Media Production in an Academic Context.”
Center for Nanotechnology in Society, Public Lecture Series, July 11, 2012, UCSB

“Existential Risk and Logarithmic Reward: Plotting Humanity's Future in Silicon Valley”
Speculative Futures Conference, Spring 2012, University of California, Santa Barbara

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS (PROJECT LEAD)

2019-present *Glowing Games*. Media archaeology (and “circuit archaeology”) project to research and rebuild, using vintage components, the first vacuum tube based video games from the 1950s through the early 1960s. Ongoing.

2017-present *OdysseyNow*. Digitization, preservation, study, and public dissemination of materials associated with the Magnavox Odyssey, the world's first home video game console (released 1972). Includes development of a public-facing website, complete digital archive, and video documentation exploring these media artifacts. Also includes the coding of a full system emulator and circuit archaeological development of unreleased hardware and games for the system. Ongoing.

2019-2020 *Mehen*. Reconstruction of a 5,000 year old boardgame from Egypt. Included both a reconstruction of rules and reconstruction of its unique spiral board design. Promoted through a Kickstarter campaign and website. Produced in a deluxe wooden edition in

collaboration with fellow Pitt instructor Jeremy Boyle as well as a downloadable, “print and play” edition. www.pandora-games.com

- 2015-present *Scale Explorer*. Online tool for aggregating user uploaded, scale-tagged image sets as “speculative ecosystems” that can be explored on several scalar axes as interconnections and dependencies between objects at different scales. www.scalaralterity.com
- 2015-2016 “*Song of Myself*” *Object Ecology Visualization*. Digital humanities study of Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," presenting three views of the poem: as an interactive, categorical set of nested objects presented in an interactive sunburst visualization, as a set of object distributions over the length of the poem (visualized as a series of time-based graphs), and as marked-up text. <http://transliteracies.english.ucsb.edu/zhorton/whitman/index.htm>
- 2014-2016 *Vulnerable Earth Media*. Curated, annotated database and media archive of films produced in the United States thematizing the vulnerability of the earth as a system. Included preliminary work in large-scale image analytics (Earth imagery) and data visualization of genre, aesthetic, and thematic trends over the history of American media.
- 2012-2014 *Scanner Praxis*. Collaborative open innovation project to build and help develop the hardware and software for a DIY book scanner, as well as critically evaluate the protocols, assumptions, and practices of print media digitization. Project designer; co-lead with Jeremy Douglass. <http://transcriptions.english.ucsb.edu/scanner-praxis/>
- 2012- 2014 *Humanities Workstation*. Student designed and built open source humanities computing platform, including full suite of student-tested software and pilot image analytics project analyzing the entire corpus of *The Simpsons* episodes in in collaboration with experimental English upper-division course. Co-Lead with Jeremy Douglass.
- 2010-2015 *Swerve*, Collaborative film project exploring academic work through narrativization. Collaboration between faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, and film industry professionals. 10 chapters, approximately 22 minutes each, HD and 8mm film; black and white, color. www.swerveinterface.com Project Lead.
- 2010-2015 *Solar Futures*. Interdisciplinary study of the cultural narratives and global dynamics of next-generation solar technologies and the innovation ecosystems that have attempted (mostly unsuccessfully) to make them available to the public. Included the production of an academic documentary film on this subject. Project supported by the Center for Nanotechnology in Society, UCSB. Co-lead with Christopher Newfield.
- 2009-2012 [Innovate.ucsb.edu](http://innovate.ucsb.edu) Site containing extensive overviews, summaries, and reviews of key innovation literature, with a particular focus on emerging nano-solar and other renewable energy technologies. Webmaster and primary content creator.

2010-2011 *Collaborative Media Commons*. Media pedagogy project. Worked with faculty in the Department of English to develop and implement media production components in undergraduate courses. www.cmcommons.org Project Lead.

TEACHING

New Courses Developed at the University of Pittsburgh

ENGFLM 2493: Media/Ecology (graduate seminar)

ENGLIT 2020: Scale (graduate seminar)

ENGLIT 1355 / FMST 1765: Virtual Reality

ENGLIT 0732: Post-Digital Gaming

ENGLIT/ENGFLM 812: Media/Ecology

ENGLIT/ENGCOMP 1201: Digital Narrative and Interactive Design (co-developed with Annette Vee)

ENGLIT: Cosmic Pittsburgh

ENGLIT/ENGCOMP/ENGFLM 0712: Critical Making

ENGLIT 0520: Scan Culture

ENGLIT 0702: Intro to Game Studies

ENGLIT 1002: Game, Story, Play

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Founding Director, Vibrant Media Lab. Interdisciplinary humanities research lab at University of Pittsburgh. (2018-present)

Co-Developer (with Annette Vee) of new interdisciplinary major: Digital Narrative and Interactive Design. First major to span the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Computing and Information. Developed 2017-19, implemented Spring 2020.

Senate Library Committee pro tem member, University of Pittsburgh, 2019-2021.

Literature Curriculum Committee, Department of English, University of Pittsburgh, 2018-2021.

Chair, Placement/Careers Committee, Department of English, Pitt. 2017-2018, 2021-2022

PhD Admissions Committee, Department of English, Pitt. 2016-2017

Placement/Careers Committee, Department of English, Pitt. 2016-2018, 2021-2022

Peer reviewer, *Applied Geography*, *NanoEthics*

Project Lead, Undergraduate Video Testimonial Project, Department of English, UCSB, 2014
Student Advisory Board member, Graduate Center for Literary Research, Comparative Literature Department, UCSB, 2013-present. (www.complit.ucsb.edu/gclr/)
Project Lead, Graduate Publicity and Outreach Project, Department of English, UCSB, 2013
Co-organizer, *Mediating the Nonhuman*, conference and Research Slam, March 15-16, 2013, UCSB.
Keynote: N. Katherine Hayles.
Mentor: Internships in Nanosystems Science, Engineering and Technology, UCSB (Summer 2012)
Representative, Council of Graduate Students, Department of English, UCSB. 2009-2015
Graduate Student Representative to Technology Committee, Department of English, UCSB. 2009-2010

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts
Modern Language Association
Association for the Study of Literature and Environment
American Comparative Literature Association
Center for Nanotechnology in Society (Former Fellow and Researcher)