

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Writing Borderless Histories of Art: Human Exceptionalism and the Climate Crisis

*By Claire Farago*

*Published by Routledge, 2025*

### A Bold Call for a Borderless Art History as Climate Action

Routledge is proud to announce the publication of *Writing Borderless Histories of Art: Human Exceptionalism and the Climate Crisis* by **Claire Farago**, Professor Emerita at the University of Colorado Boulder. This aspirational, historical, and critical book offers a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between humans and the rest of nature — a vital perspective in a moment defined by environmental crisis, social justice movements, and global calls for systemic change. Farago advocates for a **transcultural, relational approach** that abandons entrenched structures of domination and embraces ontologies that collapse the binary of nature and culture, recognizing the sentience and interconnection of all living beings.

**This book argues that the modern fragmentation of knowledge prevents us from seeing how art, “race,” climate, and the European discourse on human exceptionalism are deeply entangled. Spanning four centuries of the discourse on human exceptionalism to the present, it offers a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between humans and the rest of nature by recognizing the sentience and interconnection of all living beings.**

*Writing Borderless Histories of Art* draws upon writings from a wide range of fields to offer a fundamental rethinking of the relationship of humans to the rest of nature. Today the ontological divisions between the domains of the human and all other animals, and between the social and the biological, are fluid. Considering that humans are destroying billions of years of accumulated resources and destabilizing the biosphere in a matter of centuries, ESS scientists warn that humans must sustain and foster planetary habitability by viewing themselves as an integral and responsible part of a planetary system. The position of mutual interdependence is also taken by many Indigenous knowledge systems that do not distinguish between the sentience of humans

and other animals and conceive of both within the environment. What if connectivity became the most important consideration at a time when climate change poses an existential threat to all forms of life and neither democracy nor prosperity can be taken for granted? The argument in five historical chapters and three thematic essays examines the epistemological structures and ontological framework of the nature/culture divide of European (or "Western") origin.

## Critical Praise

*"Writing Borderless Histories of Art* is an extraordinary book, as bold as it is erudite. Claire Farago brings to light formative connections that have always existed between art making, climate theory, and transcultural relationships, but which have been overlooked by scholarship in art history. Eloquently written and incisively argued, this is a book of vital contemporary relevance that will transform the field. It deserves to be read by every art historian."

— **Monica Juneja**, Senior Professor, Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies, University of Heidelberg, and Distinguished Professor of Humanities & Social Sciences, Shiv Nadar University, India

"Eurocentrism has a cost far beyond the obvious power asymmetries we see damaging the world today. Claire Farago's erudite and readable book makes that point forcefully in relation to climate transformation and art discourse...

Demonstrating the interrelations among globalization, colonization, disciplinary formations, and the traffic in art objects, she offers refreshing counterarguments that are collective, relational, and 'borderless.' A tour-de-force!"

— **Amelia Jones**, Robert A. Day Professor of Art and Design, University of Southern California

## For Scholars Across Disciplines

While firmly grounded in art history, *Writing Borderless Histories of Art* reaches beyond disciplinary boundaries to engage scholars and students in:

- Visual and Cultural Studies
- Indigenous and Native American Studies
- Ecocriticism and Environmental Humanities
- Museum and Performance Studies
- Science and Technology Studies

Its multilayered, transcultural framework makes it a vital resource for anyone committed to reimagining the humanities in the context of planetary crisis.

## About the Author

**Claire Farago** is Professor Emerita of Art History at the University of Colorado Boulder and a leading voice in transcultural and critical approaches to art history. She is the author and editor of numerous influential volumes, including *Reframing the Renaissance* (1995), *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (2004), and *Art Is Not What You Think It Is* (2012). She currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

## Book Details

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