CV | Dr Stephanie Cussans Moran

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W: www.iscri.ai (project archive)

Profile

Dr Stephanie Cussans Moran is a transdisciplinary literary theorist and artist. Her AHRC-funded PhD with Transtechnology Research in Plymouth, UK (2023) in the field of Literature, drew on zoological research and ecological psychology, using cognitive literary approaches to analyse representations of animals in narrative. Her research draws on her experience of painting as an act of multisensory engagement with actors in environments; on critical librarianship and archiving, engaging with collections data and narratives, indexing and cataloguing different forms of knowledge across disciplines and carrying out collections-based research. She works with zoologists, ecologists, data scientists and other animals.

During her PhD, she was a Fellow with John Pfeiffer's Freshwater Mussel Biodiversity and Conservation Lab at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC, in 2022. Her collaborative project, ISCRI, with digital consultancy Etic Lab and art collective 0rphan Drift in partnership with the Serpentine Gallery's Creative AI Lab, speculatively designed an AI that might communicate non-verbally with an octopus in the sea. She is currently a Senior Fellow at RIFS (Research Institute for Sustainability) in Potsdam, Germany. Her project, 'The Rural Cosmopolis', considers what German freshwater imaginaries - including national policy - might learn from Minoan Cretan visual representations of freshwater and freshwater mussels.

Cussans Moran has over twenty years' experience of visual art practice, having exhibited in London, the UK and internationally, organised many group exhibitions and co-founded and run an arts organisation (the Marmite Prize for Painting, 2006-2012) alongside managing public, academic and specialist art collections and archives. More recently, she has spent more than six years doing research and design in industry, working with data scientists across digital and data analytics, tracking and analysing online disinformation and producing reports for public and private sector clients. She has contributed to research and design for technological prototypes, such as AI models, data mining and sociometric tools, as well as working on a startup spinout company.

Education

Doctor of Philosophy in Transtechnology Research, May 2023
University of Plymouth, UK
Director of Studies: Dr. Hannah Drayson
Examiners: Prof Anthony Caleshu (Literature) and Brian Reffin Smith (Digital Arts)
Thesis Title: *Octopoid Optics: A Cross-Disciplinary Investigation of Human Visual Bias in Narrative with Corresponding Writing Experiments Using Animal Focalisations*

MFA Fine Art, Merit, July 2014
Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
Supervising Professors: David Mabb, Dr Ros Gray

Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Arts, July 2003
Cyprus College of Art, Pafos, Cyprus
Supervising Professor: Stass Paraskos

BA in Fine Arts, Sculpture (2:1), July 2000
Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK
Supervising Professor: Prof. Keith Brown

Professional Experience

04/2025-present: RIFS (Research Institute for Sustainability | Forschungsinstitut für Nachhaltigkeit am GFZ), Germany.
Position: Senior Fellow
06/2022-present: Pattrn Analytics & Intelligence Ltd, Oxford, UK.
Position: Consultant Disinformation Analyst
10/2024-02/2025: Brno University of Technology, Czechia. Faculty of Fine Art.
Position: Research Fellow
06/2023-06/2024: Etic Lab LLP, Wales, UK.
Position: Partner
10/2018-06/2023: Etic Lab LLP, Wales, UK
Position: Associate Partner
09/2016-09/2018: Stuart Hall Library at Iniva (Institute of International Visual Art), London.
Position: Library, Archives and Information Manager
09/2016-02/2017: Goldsmiths Library, Goldsmiths University of London.
Position: Associate Researcher
08/2015-08/2016: Goldsmiths Library, Goldsmiths University of London.
Position: Subject Librarian, Art and Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship
01/2012-08/2015: Goldsmiths Library, Goldsmiths University of London.
Position: Night and Weekend Team Leader
01/2009-10/2011: Camden Libraries, London.
Position: Librarian and Senior Officer

Teaching Experience

Brno University of Technology, Czechia. Faculty of Fine Art
10/2024-02/2025: Description: Research Fellow, Painting Studio 3
Teaching: Lectures and workshops on painting techniques, Minoan material culture; mentoring and tutorials
SPUR virtual residency programme, Nottingham, UK (Arts Council funded programme).
11/2020: Description: Invited Lecturer
Teaching: Presentation and workshop on worldbuilding and ecological storytelling.
Goldsmiths Library, Goldsmiths University of London
08/2015-08/2016: Description: Subject Librarian
Teaching: Academic research skills sessions – library searches, citation and referencing, using referencing software
Canterbury Christ Church University, Department of Media, Art and Design
09/2015-07/2016: Description: Artist in Residence
Teaching: Professional practice taught session; mentoring and tutorials

Peer Reviewed Open Access Publications

Hogan, A.; **Moran S.C.**; Hogan K., Barker B., Woodall R. 2024. 'Can websites reveal the extent and degree to which a business's values reflect national policy? A text embeddings approach'. In: 6th International Conference on Advanced Research Methods and Analytics (CARMA 2024). Valencia, 26-28 June 2024. https://doi.org/10.4995/CARMA2024.2024.17801
   - This paper demonstrated a novel application of WebAI, applying word vectorisation to website texts to measure the prevalence and proliferation of values associated with a reference text (in

this case, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) amongst a selected corpus (here, Welsh businesses). It was a proof of concept for using text embeddings to digitalise aspects of evaluation and surveying, to carry them out at scale. This has useful applications in both the public sector and industry, for example enabling much larger survey samples at low cost.

Moran, S. 'What can art do for ecological thinking?' The Ecological Citizen 5(2): 103–8. July 2022.
- This editorial argued that art can be effective as a means of non-verbally communicating ecological thinking, especially in relation to biodiversity and the agency of animals; and, significantly, offering examples of ways artistic projects do this. It was cited by philosopher of animal ethics and communication Eva Meijer, in her open access book *Multispecies Dialogues: Doing Philosophy with Animals, Children, the Sea and Others* (Amsterdam University Press 2025).

Moran, S. Roberts, M. (2021) 'Exploring the Pluriverse: Fictioning, Science and Interspecies Communication', Ecocene: Cappadocia Journal of Environmental Humanities, July 2021. https://doi.org/10.46863/ecocene.26.
- This paper discussed the potential role of visual art mediated by a reinforcement learning AI model for de-anthropocising communication with an octopus. This is significant in generating new, speculative thought about AI and animal ethics.

Christian Tilt, **Stephanie Moran** and Alexander Hogan. 'Visual Democratisation: AR and the Underpass Festival'. Proceedings of EVA (Electronic Visual Arts) London 2019. DOI: 10.14236/ewic/EVA2019.38
- This paper contributed to debates about the accessible development of AR (augmented reality) technologies. It was cited in a systematic review on augmented reality street art.

Invited Presentations

The Marine Biological Association UK, Plymouth.

November 2021:	Description: 'Rethinking Communication with Other Life Forms', *The Marine Biologist Deep Dive*, Youtube interview with Dr Kevin Hogan, Stephanie Moran and Guy J. Baker, Editor *The Marine Biologist* magazine.

FIBER Festival, Netherlands.

November 2021:	Description: 'Strange Relations: Exploring Interspecies Communication through AI and the Arts', with Maggie Roberts.

Goldsmiths Visual Cultures public programme, London UK.

October 2019:	Description: '*KRAKEN?: AI, Octopuses and Alien Intelligence*', lecture with Etic Lab and collective artist 0rphanDrift.

Awards, Fellowships and Funding

Research Institute for Sustainability, Potsdam, Germany.

04/2025-present:	Description: Fellowship Project: 'The Rural Cosmopolis: An imaginary for creatively adaptive post-growth eco-cultures'.

Brno University of Technology, Czechia.

10/2024-02/2025:	Description: Research Fellow. Project: 'The Solar Goddess: Investigating ecological metaphors in image and ritual through Minoan Crete and twentieth century painting'.

The Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC.

01/2021-03/2022:	Description: **AHRC-Smithsonian IPS Fellowship**. Project: 'Using multimedia and AI to investigate nonhuman perspectives in ecosystem conservation and natural history collections', in John Pfeiffer's Freshwater Mussel Biodiversity and Conservation Lab.

University of Plymouth, UK.

2018-2023:	Description: **AHRC PhD full funding** award, through the 3D3 Centre for Doctoral Training for interdisciplinary researcher-practitioners.
	Project: 'Octopoid Optics: A Cross-Disciplinary Investigation of Human Visual Bias in Narrative with Corresponding Writing Experiments Using Animal Focalisations'.

Participation in Industrial Innovation

As an Associate Partner and then Partner at Welsh SME Etic Lab, my PhD industry partner, I have participated in a number of industry innovations, a selection of which are listed below. Currently, as a Disinformation Consultant for Pattrn Analytics & Intelligence Ltd (a spin-out from Oxford University), I contribute conceptually to software developments.

Project Manager and co-author: Hogan et al. (2023). 'Welsh Digital Maturity Survey 2023'. Commissioned by the Welsh Government. This survey deployed sociometric and econometric technologies to survey the Welsh small and medium size business population at scale, contextualized by desk research and qualitative interviews with participants and experts.

Project Lead, ISCRI (Interspecies Communication Research Initiative): a collaborative art-technology project (2018-2022) between Etic Lab and artist collective 0rphan Drift in partnership with the Serpentine Gallery London's Creative AI Lab, who supported and promoted it. This was a speculative project to design an AI that might invite communication with an octopus in the sea, through visual and tactile artwork prompts, with responses mediated through a reinforcement learning system, with the AI model being trained on the octopus responses.

Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) at Kuva: Kuva (2021-2022) was a spinout from Etic Lab, with funding from the Welsh Government and Innovate UK. It was a secure communications platform designed not to collect or store user data, for professionals such as Therapists and Lawyers whose work requires privacy. Kuva was shortlisted in the Wales Startup Awards as one of the top new Welsh businesses and was selected as one of Tech Nation's Rising Stars. I contributed to conceptual design, product development roadmaps and user acceptance testing and was responsible for new product ideas. I worked on a prototype version of the platform for arts professionals, Bivalve, which made the UK Creative Industries Council CreaTech100 list Ones to Watch in 2021. I also had experience of pitching to investors.

Contributor: an eighteen-month Innovate UK-funded project (2018-2020) that aimed to evaluate the application of digital technologies and AI in the UK affordable justice sector. I conducted interviews, contributed to analysing findings and to research and design for prototyping new technological solutions. Key findings and recommendations were presented in the publication *Digital Technologies in the Access to Justice Sector: a Strategic Overview* (Etic Lab Press, April 2020), to which I also contributed.

Academic and Industry Service

2018-present: **Art Editor**, The Ecological Citizen. International open access online peer-reviewed ecocentric journal, published biannually.
2019-present: **Reviewer**, Leonardo Journal
2023-present: **Reviewer**, FWF Austrian Science Foundation
2025-present: **Reviewer**, Grantová agentura České republiky (GAČR) | Czech Science Foundation
2023-2024: **Board Member**, the Innovation Advisory Council for Wales (IACW). Advising Welsh Government on innovation policy.

Recent Conference Presentations

'Octopus Optics and Mussel Memories: communicating and contextualising mollusc conservation research through artistic projects outside the museum', Euromal 2024, the 10th European Congress of Malacological Societies. Heraklion, Crete, Greece.

'Parasitic Visuality: Computer Vision AI and Freshwater Mussels'. POM [Politics of Machines] Aachen 2024.

Selected Artistic Exhibitions, Performances and Workshops

'Interspecies Disco', performance at CGP Gallery Bermondsey, London; part of Skeen Night, with 0rphan Drift and Plastique Fantastique. 2018.
'Swamp Living' immersive interspecies storytelling workshop with Kirsten Cooke, Maggie Mer Roberts, Joseph Walsh and Chris Hind at IMT Gallery, London. 2018.
'Domain of Sensible Knowledge', ASC Gallery, London; co-curator with Cynthia Cruz. 2017.
'Myth Material', TAP / The Old Waterworks, Southend, co-curator with Cynthia Cruz. 2016.
'Autocatalytic Future Games', No Format Gallery, London, curated by Playpaint. 2015.
'Transmètic: Ordonnance', Lewisham Art House, London. 2015
'Hey! Narcissus!', studio 1.1, London. 2013.
'Untitled 1: Glitch', Peacock Yard, London. 2013.
'8 Studios From Here', Deptford X Art Festival, London. 2013.
'studio 1.4' Artandtrade and Papierfabrik, Graz, Austria; Exterritorial Vienna, Austria. 2012.
'Cluster II', SW1 Gallery, curated by Mas Civiles. 2012.
'Civil Twilight: Desire and Difference in Contemporary Painting Practices', Boetzelaer|Nispen Gallery, London. 2011.
'Beyond Fontana', studio 1.1, London. 2010.
'Another Time Another Place', Five Years Gallery, London. 2010.
'Tag: From 3 to 36', Brown Gallery, London. 2010.

Selected Art Publications

Stephanie Moran. 'Eco-Euphoria' (exhibition catalogue essay). Ruth Calland: *This is All the Treasure We Can Have or Hold*, at 20:21 Visual Arts Centre, Scunthorpe. June 2025.
Stephanie Moran and Anna Sebastian. (2022) 'Mantic Staining: the Divinatory Paintings of Ithell Colquhoun' (chapter). *The Fenris Wolf* issue no. 11, Abrahamssom and Sinclair (eds.).
Stephanie Moran. 'Crow Black' (exhibition catalogue essay). *Darkness at Noon*, curated by Ruth Calland at APT Gallery, London. November 2021.
Moran, S. And Roberts, M. (2021). 'Rethinking communication with other life forms', *The Marine Biologist* magazine (Marine Biological Association UK), July 2021.
Stephanie Moran. 'Eco-Sci-Fi Art and Interspecies Technology', *Vector* no. 292, Special issue on Speculative Art (Journal of the British Sci-fi Association), pp.8-11. Fall 2020.

Personal Skills

Native language:	English
Other Languages:	French (A-level - advanced)
	Spanish (A-level - advanced)
	German (currently studying A2 – elementary)
	Greek (currently studying A1 – basic)
	Latin (GCSE - basic comprehension)
Coding Languages:	HTML, CSS (working knowledge, basic coding skills)
	Python (working knowledge, basic coding skills)
Software Proficiency:	Office, Adobe Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Zotero, Endnote
Driving License:	UK Driver's License (Automobile and Motorcycle)