

EVENT OUTLINE - Expanding the Frame: Toward a New Ekphrasis

Dean Rader

Heid E. Erdrich

Tess Taylor

Cole Swensen

Biswamit Dwibedy

Traditional notions of ekphrasis often give poet and poem passive roles like observing or reflecting. These poets expand the aesthetics of ekphrasis into active modes of research and documentary, creating works that are not so much products but processes of exploration and interrogation. Fusing the verbal and the visual into a single lens, they go beyond the museum and gallery to elucidate not only other art forms but also the social, political, economic, and linguistic forces shaping all.

Rather than relegating ekphrasis to master texts or the pairing of elite genres, this panel will bring fresh forms into the world. We will discuss how new modes of ekphrasis can liberate our thinking about discourse among and beyond the arts. One need not be versed in painting or sculpture to engage in the new ekphrasis. This panel demonstrates how research-based inquiry, documentary expression, and other forms of aesthetic engagement (like dance and ceremony) breaks new poetic ground.

Dean will talk briefly about ekphrasis, then introduce the panelists, reading a short bio of each participant. Panelists will give a brief talk (10 minutes) that will incorporate some sort of audio/visual component as examples of new ekphrasis. Heid will show a short film, Biswamit will talk about ekphrasis regarding temples, Tess will show photographs, and Cole and Dean will show paintings. After the presenters are done, we will open the floor up to questions and discussion.