

Tuesday, March 21, 2017
4th Interdisciplinary Colloquium



OCEANS FLOODED WITH PLASTIC: MYTH OR REALITY?

SYNOPSIS

For its 4th colloquium, **W4W** remains true to its ethical and interdisciplinary approach to focus on a new problem affecting water, a vital resource.

Like the pollution of aquifers, invisible underground, ocean pollution seems to be a very abstract problem to us in Switzerland.

But wouldn't we be directly concerned if, by misfortune, our favorite seafood were to become polluted with tiny plastic particles, forcing us to change our eating habits in the not too distant future?

Explore these issues at W4W, an interactive colloquium open to the general public.

Registration by e-mail only, before Friday, March 10, 2017: evelyne@fiechter.name
Limited seating. Free colloquium open to the general public.

Geneva's History of Science Museum • Parc de la Perle du Lac, 128 rue de Lausanne - 1202 Geneva
Via public transport: Busses 1 and 25 (Sécheron), Tram 15 (Butini), Mouette M4 (Chateaubriand)

Program

9:00 Welcome and distribution of documentation

9:30 **Welcoming Remarks**

Laurence-Isaline Stahl Gretschi, curator of Geneva's History of Science Museum

Facilitator Presentation: Benoît Girardin, former Swiss ambassador

9:45 **Introduction**

Humankind struggling with ocean garbage patches: observations in the Pacific

Evelyne Fiechter-Widemann, founder of W4W

10:00 **Part I: Myth and Reality**

1. Consider the depths: the role of myth in ethical action

Sarah Stewart-Kroeker, assistant professor of ethics

2. Myth of the huge oceans garbage patches

Pascal Hagmann, founder of the Oceaneye association

3. Plastic pollution of the food chain

Annie Balet, doctor of ecophysiology

11:00 **Coffee Break**

Demonstrations with water-related instruments in the Museum collections

11:45 **Discussion**

12:15 **Lunch**

Option to eat at the Perle du Lac Restaurant

Registration by e-mail only: evelyne@fi.name

Limited seating

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

2:00 Part II: Findings and Solutions

1. Environmental impact of microplastics

Vera Slaveykova, director of the F.-A Forel Department
of Environmental and Aquatic Sciences at the University of Geneva

2. Ocean Governance

Daniela Diz, University of Strathclyde, Scotland

3:00 Coffee Break

Visit the Oceaneye exhibition

3:30 1. Race for Water Odyssey and original solutions

Frédéric Sciacca, Chief Technology Officer at the
Race for Water Foundation

2. Citizen science study of pollution of the ocean surface

Pascal Hagmann, founder of the Oceaneye association

4:30 Ethical Perspectives

Benoît Girardin, former Swiss ambassador

5:00 General Discussion

5:30 Appetizer Buffet

Free and open to the general public.

Biographies



Doctor of ecophysiology at the Orsay Faculty of Sciences (Paris-Sud), **Annie Balet** has worked on plant ultrastructure and metabolism in reaction to environmental problems. She has also taught biology at the secondary-school level, where she educated students about environmental problems and related humanitarian issues, and helped set up week-long class trips on sustainable development.



Daniela Diz is a member of the Centre of Environmental Law and Governance at the University of Strathclyde exploring the evolution of the international law of the sea and its relationship with other policy and legal instruments contributing to coherent oceans governance. Daniela has an interdisciplinary background in international environmental law, marine science and ecosystem-based management, and first-hand experience of international environmental law-making processes.



Evelyne Fiechter-Widemann is a member of the Geneva bar and holds a master's degree (MCJ) from New York University. After earning a doctorate in theology from the University of Geneva in 2015, her current research focuses on the global ethics of water. She served as a deputy judge on a judicial commission of CRUNI (Geneva's administrative court) and taught Swiss and international public law at Collège de Genève. She was a foundation board member of the Swiss Church Aid (EPER) and the International Museum of the Reformation.



Benoît Girardin is a professor of political ethics at the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations, a university institute. He has extensive international experience, having been responsible for Swiss cooperative development efforts in Cameroon, Pakistan, and Romania, then later for evaluation, finally serving as ambassador to Madagascar. Initially, he had earned a doctorate in theology at the University of Geneva in 1977.



Pascal Hagmann studied at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) where he obtained a Masters in Mechanical Engineering. Initially he worked on the development of new technologies in the medical sector, and since 2015, he has been focusing on water treatment. Deeply committed to the marine environment, he founded the Oceaneye association in 2010, while pursuing his engineering career, to contribute to the study and awareness of the problem of marine pollution by plastic waste.

Speakers and Participants

As an environmental engineer specialized in water treatment from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), **Frédéric Sciacca** worked for several years as consultant in circular economy and resource efficiency. He started as scientific advisor at the Race for Water Foundation with the launch of Odyssey 2015 in order to coordinate scientific work and consolidate scientific partnerships. He is also in charge of waste-to-energy pilot projects implemented to create a value chain around mismanaged plastic waste.



Vera Slaveykova is a professor of environmental biogeochemistry and ecotoxicology at the University of Geneva and director of the F.-A. Forel Department for environmental and aquatic sciences. She works on the development of new tools and concepts to study the basic processes governing the behavior of trace elements, nanoparticles and nanoplastics in aquatic systems, processes that are highly relevant to water quality and environmental risk assessment.



After studying at the University of Geneva, **Laurence-Isaline Stahl Grets** spent fifteen years as an archeologist specializing in prehistory, both in the Jura Canton (for construction related to the Trans-Jura freeway) and at the University of Geneva. Following the defense of her dissertation in sciences, she joined Geneva's History of Science Museum, which she has headed for eleven years. In 2009 the museum staged an exhibit on hydropower in Geneva.



Sarah Stewart-Kroecker is assistant professor of ethics at the University of Geneva. After earning her doctorate at the Princeton Theological Seminary in 2014, she undertook a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of British Columbia. Since her appointment at the University of Geneva in August 2016, she has been working on a project that addresses the aesthetic dimension of human action on climate change.



W4W is an apolitical civic-minded interdisciplinary platform that has the following goals:

- Conceptualize and explain the ethical dimension of fair and sustainable water management in a globalized world;
- Contribute original thought likely to foster an environment conducive to the implementation of international development commitments.

The proceedings of the previous colloquia are available in English at
<http://www.fiechter.name/firm/page.php?id=14>

