The Multispecies Salon
Environmental Humanities Dialogues
presents

Chemical Species:
From the Surreal to the Sublime

Featuring a discussion with Nicholas Shapiro (Chemical Heritage Foundation) with special guests: Alison Kenner (Drexel University), Jennie Shanker (artist), Ian Bourg (Princeton’s Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering) and moderated by Eben Kirksey, Visiting Professor of Anthropology and PEI Barron Visiting Professor.

October 22, Thursday
Lunch & discussion: 12:30pm-2:00pm, Guyot 100

Chemical species change quickly. Formaldehyde will only remain, as a species, for around 6 hours in the sun before shifting shape. This event will depart from an essay written by Nicholas Shapiro, “Attuning to the Chemosphere: Domestic Formaldehyde, Bodily Reasoning, and the Chemical Sublime,” and will also explore an art exhibit he curated: “Chemical Species.” Jennie Shanker will discuss her artwork, “Marcellus Shale Experiment,” which involves pottery made with materials caught up in the fracking controversy. It is possible to ethnographically track formaldehyde from the shale pores from which its precursor is siphoned, a mile below the earth’s surface, to abandoned homes decomposing into the rural landscape. This event will address the question-- What does the good life look like in an engineered world that subsidizes our standard of living while ever-so-slowly smothering us?

Artworks in an exhibit curated by Nicholas Shapiro will be on display at Princeton from October 22nd until December 4th in the Anthropology Department, 2nd floor atrium, Aaron Burr Hall. Opening reception Oct. 22 at 6pm following a lecture by Stuart Kirsch (University of Michigan).

Please register online to receive reading materials for this event @ http://www.princeton.edu/pei/events/multispecies-salon