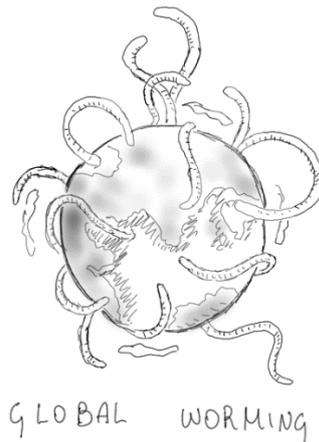


PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES, SUMMER TERM 2019

HOPE, DISQUIET, LOSS. AFFECTIVE ENCOUNTERS IN MORE-THAN-HUMAN  
WORLDS

FILIPPO BERTONI, NATURKUNDE MUSEUM BERLIN

"SOILING MARS: EARTHWORMS AND DREAMS OF TECHNOSCIENTIFIC PLANETARY  
AGRICULTURES"



28 May 2019

16:15 –18:00

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY  
SEMINARRAUM 014  
LANDOLTWEG 9-11, 14195 BERLIN

**Abstract:** This presentation explores the materialsemiotic traffic between earth and Earth, or between soil and planet. Following an experiment meant to test the potential for off-Earth agriculture on Mars at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, I will dig out some episodes in the history of the technoscientific grounds that soil and Earth share. This will allow me to highlight the defining importance of a biogeochemical logic to ground these modern versions of the universe. Following the experiment closer, though, it will become apparent that another logic is necessary, so as to heed the critiques of decolonial and multispecies literature, and resist the imperialist and hegemonic unifying push of western modernity and its version of the planet. The earthworm, central to the experiment because of its role as a soil ecosystem engineer, plays a role in this: considering it closely, it becomes possible to dig out its concrete and eventful forms of life, and how they 'soil' the neat epistemological apparatus of western knowledge production constellations. In this way, the worm will offer another logic to mobilize against the planetary centripetal force of the biogeochemical hegemony: soiling. Rather than closing down matters of concerns, this logic promises to open up different questions, and to challenge the dreams of off-Earth farming the experiment is part of.

**Filippo Bertoni** obtained his science studies PhD from *Amsterdam University (UvA)*, using earthworms and their intimate materialsemiotic relations with soil as a probe to uncover the making of contemporary western politics of nature. After his postdoctoral research with the *Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene (AURA)* project, he joined the *Museum fur Naturkunde* in Berlin to explore the changing practices of natural history and chart the data ecologies that ground them. His practice grows from the interstices between natural and social sciences, non-disciplinary approaches, and artistic plays with genres, media, and formats.