

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

TROPICAL FORESTS

Metrics, Technics, Power, Money



MAY 21 • 2026

Keynote Lecture • 16h—18h

Eduardo Romero Dianderas

McGill University

AMPHITHÉÂTRE BACHELARD

17 rue de la Sorbonne 75005

MAY 22 • 2026

9h—18h

Scientific Workshop

JARDIN D'AGRONOMIE TROPICALE DE PARIS

45 Avenue de la Belle Gabrielle 75012

PRESENTATION

A strategic carbon sinks and stocks, biodiversity hotspots and iconic objects of global environmental stewardship, tropical forests have become crucial sites of intense technoscientific investment and experimentation in recent decades. Today, as new methods are devised to monitor and curb deforestation, measure carbon stocks, and finance biodiversity conservation, tropical forests increasingly concentrate financial, technological, and intellectual resources. Yet, paradoxically, these efforts unfold amid intensifying threats — infrastructural development, agricultural expansion, land speculation, organized crime, mining, violence, and changing climate conditions — that continue to endanger their very survival.

This workshop brings together a diverse group of STS scholars working on the politics and knowledge practices associated with tropical forests in various regions of the world. Our goal is to share our perspectives, research questions and theoretical commitments in order to examine to what extent the idea of “tropical forest” emerges as a global signifier agglomerating distinctive modes of governance, statecraft and knowledge-making. In such a way, we aim to explore the commonalities and differences that articulate tropical forests as a distinctive kind of technopolitical object today.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

- Nassima Abdelghafour
- Mady Barbeitas
- James Christopher Mizes
- Eduardo Romero Dianderas
- Véra Ehrenstein

PROGRAM

**THURSDAY, 21 MAY
2026 — SEMINAR**

AMPHITHÉÂTRE BACHELARD, LA SORBONNE

16h

Introduction of ForeSTS

- James Christopher Mizes — *Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, IRD*
- Véra Ehrenstein — *CNRS, UMR CEMS, EHESS*

16h15

Keynote Lecture

When Forests Become Documents: Legal Verification and the Grammar of Legality in Peru's Tropical Logging Regulations.



Eduardo Romero Dianderas — *McGill University*

In the last decade, a subtle epistemic shift has taken place in international tropical logging regulations. In policy circles concerned with securing the legal origin of tropical timber, policymakers are calling for a paradigmatic transition from “document-based” to “fact-based” regimes of legal verification. This idealized transition imagines international trade verification systems as moving away from the dubious authority of paper-based national bureaucracies and toward transnational digital verification systems that decenter the authority of timber-producing states. Importantly, the push toward fact-based verification thus emerges as the latest iteration of a longstanding skepticism toward documents as mediators of knowledge, with digital systems aspiring to establish an unmediated correspondence between regulatory centres of calculation and the tropical rainforests they seek to know and regulate. And yet, in the context of Peru’s tropical logging regulation, the movement from document to fact has underpinned a rather paradoxical institutional project: the rise of forms of expertise that recast tropical rainforests themselves as documents to be read.

In this presentation, I examine this shift through the figure of OSINFOR, Peru's primary institution responsible for supervising tropical logging operations. Created in 2008 with the explicit mandate to enforce legal verification amidst growing international pressures to enhance transparency in Amazonian forest governance, OSINFOR's capacity to determine the legality of logging operations has come to rely on the contentious deployment, over the past fifteen years, of a standardized grammar through which inspectors seek to read events directly in the rainforest, rather than rely on state-issued paper documentation. In this context, OSINFOR has become the epicenter of a double process of recursive institutional suspicion and hermeneutic convergence, with diverse actors and institutions involved in rainforest governance ardently debating over the interpretive value of different kinds of occurrences, from the rottenness of old stumps to the spatial distribution of fallen canopies to the volumetric variability of trees.

By critically engaging with this process, I show how the rise of OSINFOR stands in explicit tension with longstanding moralizing views of Peru's Amazonian rainforests as landscapes resistant to traditional forms of expert documentation. More critically, I also demonstrate that the emergence and enforcement of these forest grammars have not displaced the malaises traditionally associated with documentary mediation. On the contrary, these have produced rainforest landscapes whose very readability reproduces the epistemic and political tensions inherent to the documentary form, with undecidability, deferral, and corruption continuing to haunt efforts to enrol Peru's tropical rainforests in transnational projects of sustainable rainforest governance.

18h00

Apéro dînatoire

FRIDAY, 22 MAY 2026 — PRESENTATIONS

 JARDIN D'AGRONOMIE TROPICALE DE PARIS

9h—9h15

Introduction

- Véra Ehrenstein — *CNRS, UMR CEMS, EHESS*
- James Christopher Mizes — *Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, IRD*

9h15—
10h45

Session 1 – Tropical Forest : Sciences

Discussant: Nassima Abdelghafour — *IRD, UMR SENS*

- The Amazon as a Microcosm of the Anthropocene: Transnational Science and the Making of a Global Rainforest — André Felipe Cândido da Silva (Fiocruz, Brazil)
- A New Atmosphere for the Amazon “Climate-Forest” (1970-2000) — André Bailão (Fiocruz, Brazil)
- The Pantropical Gaze — Véra Ehrenstein (UMR CEMS, EHESS, France), Georges Macaire Eyenga (UMR CEMS, EHESS, France) & Alexandre Gaudin (AgroParisTech, UMR SENS, France)

10h45—
11h

Coffee Break

11h—12h

Session 2 – Tropical Forests: Protective Policies

Discussant: Bruno Turnheim — *INRAE, UMR LISIS*

- Counting the Rainforest: Numbers, Cuambas Monkeys, and Extinction in an Amazonian quilombo — Barbara Abrahão (School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford, UK)
- Mapping Understandings of Success in Mangrove Restoration — Maud Borie (IRD, UMR SENS, France)

12h – 14h

Garden Tour & Lunch

14h00 –
15h30

Session 3 – Tropical Forests: Extractive Practices

Discussant: Maurizio Esposito La Rossa — *EHESS, UMR CAK*

- Contested Forests in the Cambodian Upland Frontier: Deforestation, Dispossession, and Indebtedness — Phasy Res (University of Paris I – Panthéon-Sorbonne, France)
- Composite Ecology: Engineered Heterogeneity in Sustainable Tropical Forestry — Aida Arosoaie (Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, US)
- Understanding Contemporary Issues in Gabonese Forestry through Ethnography, between Government, Governance, and Governmentality — Etienne Bourel (Leiden University, The Netherlands)

15h30 –
15h45

Coffee Break

15h45 –
17h15

Session 4 – Tropical Forests: Futures

Discussant: Enrique Aliste Almuna — Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

- Governing the Futures of the Brazilian Amazon? Sciences, Institutions and (the Lack of) Epistemic Plurality — Taís Sonetti-González & Marko Monteiro, (Science and Technology Policy Dept., University of Campinas, Brazil)
- A Vernacular Technology: Making Global Instruments Local — Cindy Lin, (School of Interactive Computing, Georgia Tech, US)
- Digital Platforms & Land Grabbing Practices in the Brazilian Amazon: Tentative Hypothesis of an Abandoned Research Project — Pierre-Louis Choquet (IRD, UMR PRODIG, France)

17h30—
18h

Closing Words and General Discussion

- Nassima Abdelghafour, IRD, UMR SENS

VENUES



Amphithéâtre Bachelard, La Sorbonne

17 rue de la Sorbonne 75005 Paris



BUS

21, 27, 38, 63, 86



Jardin d'Agronomie Tropicale de Paris

45 avenue de la Belle Gabrielle 75012 Paris



BUS

113, 114, 120, 210



Supported by Transatlantic Research Partnership, a program of Albertine Foundation and the French Embassy in the United States, and by the project FOREST-HUB (ANR-24-PEFO-0002)

Hosted by the UMR Développement et Sociétés, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

