



The Ridge Salon is a series of conversation-meals I host at my home in London. The form of the Salons is inspired by Lois Weaver's 'Long Table', an 'aestheticized social practice for prompting dialogic interaction and public debate' (Heddon in Harvie and Weaver, 2015: 200) as well as an attempt to practice the ethos of 'making kin', acknowledging our interconnectedness and responsibility for each other (Harraway, 2016). For the Salons, I will curate a selection of participants, each with a specific expertise pertinent to the topic of conversation, and we will gather around my table for an evening of food and discussion. During the course of the meal, participants will be invited to share a prepared 'response' to 'calls' (creative prompts) I have sent in advance, focusing the conversation-meal on these 'call and response' exchanges. The responses might take the form of an original artwork/performance/writing, or they might draw on existing theories/concepts/artworks inspired by the call, or something completely different. The responses would be then curated onto an online gallery on my website (with the participants' permission) as documentation of these events, as well as an archive that might later be returned to in development of the ideas and thinking uncovered during the Salon events, for instance an exhibition.

The concept of the Ridge Salon has born out of an interest to challenge, resist and subvert modes and settings in which academic knowledge production and dissemination take place. Facilitating multi-voice conversation (including the voices of the more-than-human participants) around focused research topics in domestic, 'undisciplinary' surroundings is a radical feminist action that acknowledges and pays attention to the relational and non-hierarchical modes through which research often is conducted, but not always explicitly recognised. Formalising the process of this kind of communal discourse not only ascribes value and legitimises it, but the discoveries and knowledges gained (as well as the materials gathered through the conversations and 'call and response' tasks at the Salons) catalyse new embodied ways of knowing, challenging and unfixing entrenched forms of inequality that structure the way we read, think and produce knowledge.

References

- Harraway, Donna (2016). *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham and London: Duke UP.
- Harvie, Jen and Lois Weaver, eds. (2015). *The Only Way Home is Through the Show: Performance Work of Lois Weaver*. London: Live Art Development Agency. Bristol: Intellect.

More information: <https://www.katjahilevaara.com/the-ridge-salon>