

## ***An exhibition at the Charles E. Shain Library and the Connecticut College Arboretum***

*Susanne K. Langer: A Kaleidoscope of Ideas* invites visitors to engage with the life and work of a prolific but understudied American philosopher. Langer (1895–1985) became chair of the philosophy department at Connecticut College, her first permanent academic position, in 1954. By that time, she had published numerous articles and several books, including the best-selling *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942), lectured widely on aesthetics and world events, and taught at colleges across the States, assuring her stature—during her lifetime—as a major American philosopher. In the years leading up to her arrival at Connecticut College, she had embarked on intensive research in psychology and the biological sciences for what would become her final work, the three-volume *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*. In *Mind*, Langer set herself the bold task of synthesizing scientific findings into a unified theory of the evolution of human mentality, arguing for the fundamental role of feeling, broadly conceived, in all vital activity.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in Langer’s philosophy and her place in the philosophical canon, most notably in 2020 with the founding of the [Susanne K. Langer Circle](#), an international and multi-disciplinary group of scholars. Its first international conference took place in June 2022 at Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics in Frankfurt, Germany.

This exhibition comprises archival materials related to Langer’s tenure at Connecticut College and her work on *Mind*, as well as never-before-exhibited artifacts from her home in Old Lyme, CT. Visitors are invited to explore the roots of Langer’s creative philosophy both in the Library’s exhibition space and through a self-guided walking tour of the College’s Arboretum. These dual locations represent the exploration of the natural world and the rigorous research that together constituted Langer’s creative practice of philosophy in the last decades of her life.

During the exhibition, a two-day workshop on Susanne K. Langer, organized by the Department of Philosophy, will take place on September 10-11, 2022, at the Charles Chu Reading Room in the Library and Buck Lodge in the Arboretum. The workshop focuses on Langer’s political and social philosophy and her under-acknowledged concern for global politics. Among the speakers are **Paul Guyer** (Brown University), who will talk about Langer’s conception of architecture, **Lawrence Cahoon** (Holy Cross), **Melvin Woody** (ConnColl, emeritus), and **Donald Dryden** (Duke), the author of many well-acclaimed articles on her philosophy. The keynote lecture, “The Symbolic Mind and its Breakings: Psychological Dimensions and Cultural Consequences,” will be given by **Robert E. Innis** (UMass Lowell).

On September 10 at 3 pm in the Library, an exhibition reception attended by co-curators of the exhibition, will take place. Students from the Dance Department of Connecticut College, **Catja Christensen**, **Zion Martin-Hayes**, and **Susanna Procaro-Foley**, are preparing a site-specific performance for the event. The workshop as well as the reception are free to attend and all are welcome. The detailed program will be available at [langer.digital.conncoll.edu](http://langer.digital.conncoll.edu).

*Susanne K. Langer: A Kaleidoscope of Ideas* is co-curated by Carolyn Bergonzo, poet; Tereza Hadravová, Fulbright-Masaryk scholar; Linda Legassie, research assistant to Susanne K.

Langer. The exhibition is organized in collaboration with the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives and the Connecticut College Arboretum. The exhibition and the workshop are made possible by the Frederick Henry Sykes Memorial Lectureship Fund.

Contact:

Carolyn Bergonzo: bergonzo AT gmail.com

Tereza Hadravova: tereza.hadravova AT ff.cuni.cz

Linda Legassie: legassie621 AT sbcglobal.net