

Establishing an Environmental Humanities Collaboratory - With the Seed Box from Pilot Program Towards Consolidation



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Preface

The Seed Box makes use of Environmental Humanities to address the global challenges that our society currently faces. The tool-box at hand, mainly defined by the humanities and artistic practices, provides a critical complement and counterpoint to natural science perspectives on global environmental change.

The Seed Box has now been active for four years and when The Seed Box is closing its first phase it is obvious that there have been dramatic changes in the global environment, in climate and in views on climate and climate change during these years.

In 2019 The Seed Box underwent an evaluation by an international panel. The panel concludes that the launching of The Seed Box has been “strategically timely” and applauds Mistra and Formas for the initiative.

Four years is a short time in the perspective of the Anthropocene, but clearly the relevance and importance of the The Seed Box mission has increased during this first phase, when The Seed Box has developed from a pilot project towards consolidation.

In the mid-term evaluation the international panel is, first of all, impressed by the high ambitions of The Seed Box. It is demanding to create a world-class research centre characterized by an interdisciplinary, critical, creative and contemporary environmental humanities vision. The evaluators conclude that The Seed Box “has developed into a wide-ranging and ambitious project that is impressive in terms of the sheer breadth of activities involving financed and affiliated researchers and artists”. They also conclude that The Seed Box has delivered output according to plan in research, capacity-building, research communication, and citizen involvement. They praise the global network in The Seed Box and note the establishment of a doctoral program, postdoctoral program, and visiting scholars and artists program. The panel also commend that there are examples of “strong research results produced by some of the individual researchers, postdoctoral fellows and visiting artists involved”. Finally, the panel observes the potential for research-arts collaboration and state their appreciation of the The Seed Box digital platform.

However – the panel also identifies weaknesses in The Seed Box. The evaluators ask for stronger cohesion and leadership of the program, warn for silo-acting and ask for increased artistic involvement. These are the challenges that The Seed Box are facing in the next phase two – in addition to the fundamental and vital mission of The Seed Box – to focus on environmental challenges and engagement in research, education, and artistic practices that bring together people from different fields and creates an interface between academia and other parts of society.

Lars Haikola

Chair, Program Executive Board of The Seed Box



Introduction

Last year, the Intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) again emphasized the urgency of climate change and biodiversity loss and the difficulties of achieving global sustainability goals. Moreover, the severe European heatwaves in the summer of 2019 and the devastating Australian bushfires in the end of the same year served as painful reminders of what is at stake.

2019 was also a year characterized by broad citizen engagement, where concerns of environmental loss and damage entered the public arena with new intensity. School strikes and climate manifestations around the world, a sharp increase in climate-related media coverage internationally (*Nacu-Schmidt et al. 2019, Media and Climate Change Observatory Special Issue 2019: A Review of Media Coverage of Climate Change and Global Warming in 2019*) and a renewed artistic focus on climate and environmental change (*O. Krug: From foil-wrapped glaciers to the Alpine storm cyclist: the artists fighting climate change. The Guardian, 20/2 2019*) are among the examples of recent developments that can influence the landscape for environmental awareness and engagement among various publics. Furthermore, it is increasingly clear that incremental change will not be enough to address global challenges such as climate change, rapid urbanization, biodiversity loss, increasing energy and water demands, and poverty. Civil society actors, international organizations, cities and governments are therefore seeking ways to spur systemic, transformative change across technological, political, economic, environmental, social and cultural domains.

In these rapidly shifting times, the scholarly interest in critical and morally engaged humanities research that can take on complex problems of nature, culture and environment, is steadily growing. The Seed Box program is well positioned to contribute to the continued development of environmental humanities agendas, not the least through its inter- and trans-disciplinary ambitions and its citizen humanities components. Since its launch in September 2015 as an “environmental humanities collaboratory”, The Seed Box has invited explorations of new narratives and imaginaries, and alternative ways of telling, enacting and interacting around environmental stories.

The first phase of The Seed Box extended between 1 September 2015 and 31 March 2020. In the autumn of 2019, we received the good news that The Seed Box will be granted funding from Mistra and Formas for another two years, starting 1 April 2020. We are very excited to continue the research, develop existing collaborations and initiate new ones within the framework of The Seed Box consortium. During its second phase, The Seed Box will build upon and extend the achievements made during the first program period, not the least with regards to the integration of social and environmental justice perspectives in environmental humanities research and artistic practice, that has been an important component of The Seed Box since its start. In Phase 2, The Seed Box will strengthen its artistic focus and broaden its scope of collaborations, in particular in the Global South. Our intention for Phase 2 is to further consolidate The Seed Box at Linköping University as a lively environment for local and visiting researchers, artists and citizen humanities activists; to push transdisciplinary research agendas; and to promote The Seed Box as a voice and an imagination influencing the debate on environmental challenges.





Outputs from the first phase of The Seed Box are reported in the digital Seed Box archive (<https://theseedbox.se/archive/publications-and-activities/>), that includes academic publications as well as events of different kinds, such as art exhibitions, conference presentations, workshops, key note addresses and seminars. Moreover, through its research school and post doc program, The Seed Box has offered training for early career environmental humanities researchers within and beyond the Swedish context. The first two of the five Seed Box PhD candidates successfully defended their PhD theses in early 2020. During its first phase, The Seed Box has organized a guest exchange program involving a number of researchers and artists visiting the program host, Linköping University (LiU), as well as LiU researchers visiting consortium partners. In addition, The Seed Box supported 27 so-called Seed Money projects – pilot projects, collaborative initiatives and explorative efforts to integrate artistic and academic practices – awarded to scholars and artists both in Sweden and internationally.

In this report we give a brief overview of the architecture and outcomes of the first phase of The Seed Box. Since previous annual reports described key outcomes of the first three years of the program (see www.theseedbox.se), this report particularly highlights some of the key events that have taken place during the final year of The Seed Box Phase 1: workshops and symposia organized within The Seed Box framework (p.15), the international conference *Environmental Humanities: Modes of thinking and being ecological* (p.9), and the finalization and public defenses of two Seed Box PhD theses (p.17).

We hope you will enjoy the reading, and we invite you to engage with The Seed Box as the program enters its second phase.





What is the Seed Box?

The Seed Box: An Environmental Humanities Collaboratory is a transdisciplinary pilot program in Environmental Humanities (EH). The Seed Box was launched in September 2015, funded by Mistra and Formas, and hosted by Linköping University.

The long-term goal of the program is to establish an international EH consortium, as well as a research hub at Linköping University – focused on environmental challenges and engaged in research and artistic practices that bring together people from different fields and creates an interface between academia and other parts of society.

The research and the activities linked to the Seed Box program are informed and shaped in response to four pervasive problems in our relationship to environmental issues:

- 1) A popular alienation from issues of environmental concern and a sense of nature's intangibility in affluent, urban or high-tech settings.
- 2) A view of environmental issues as primarily questions of technocratic management.
- 3) A predominantly negative and even apocalyptic framing of environmental discourse.
- 4) The compartmentalization of environmental problems from other salient matters such as the globalization of capital, the speed of technological advance, or new forms of colonialism.

To address these challenges, the Seed Box seeks to:

- Think through, analyze, and read current and emergent ecologies while still being a part of them, not observing them from the outside.
- Challenge and complicate dominating narratives through critical approaches, creative endeavors, justice-oriented perspectives, and other forms of integrative approaches.
- Build bridges between disparate narratives on nature and the environment, and among different fields of knowledge, disciplines, and social communities.



The Consortium

The Seed Box is a collaborative effort. During the first phase of the program, the program has relied on the work of 13 partners organized as a Consortium: six Swedish and seven international universities, all with established and developing competencies in the Environmental Humanities (EH):

1. Linköping University (the host institution)
2. Uppsala University
3. Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH)
4. Stockholm University
5. Örebro University
6. Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)
7. Goldsmith's University of London, UK
8. Queen's University, Canada
9. University of Texas at Arlington, USA
10. University of Sydney, AUS
11. University of Western Australia, AUS
12. Utrecht University, The Netherlands
13. Western Sydney University, AUS

The aim of the Seed Box consortium has been to endorse collaborative efforts between the researchers involved, to promote the establishment of a national centre at Linköping University, but most importantly to support the emergent field of environmental humanities at large. In practice, the Seed Box Consortium functioned as the basic infrastructure for the activities and efforts in the program during Phase 1. In particular, the consortium has functioned as a platform for crucial parts of the program's capacity building efforts: the Swedish based research school, and the international postdoc program.

The Seed Box research school was launched in the fall of 2015 with five PhD students: three at Linköping University and one each at Uppsala University and KTH. Scholars affiliated with the Seed Box – most from the host and consortium universities, but also from outside of those institutions – provided instruction for the Seed Box PhD students and other interested graduate students working on EH topics.

The Seed Box funded five international, consortium-based postdoc positions at select consortium partners: University of Sydney, University of Western Australia, Goldsmiths University of London, the University of Texas at Arlington, and Western Sydney University. In addition, the program has contributed to a PhD Student position at Queens University in Canada. During the first phase of the Seed Box, most of these scholars have – for shorter or longer periods – been visitors to Linköping University.

The PhD candidates and the post docs have contributed to the exchange and consolidation of the consortium during Phase 1 of the program, both through mobility within the consortium and virtually, e.g. through blog reports, published on the Seed Box website.



Capacity Building

The program's capacity building efforts during the first phase have concentrated on a) strengthening networks and collaborative patterns in Environmental Humanities; b) supporting the long term development of a competence base for environmental humanities, particularly in Sweden; c) promoting future senior researchers and research leaders in the environmental humanities, as extending from the Seed Box consortium partnership; and d) stimulating the exploration of new areas, approaches and methodologies in the field of environmental humanities.

- To strengthen collaborative patterns in environmental humanities, and beyond establishing the consortium structure, the Seed Box has organized workshops with EH-environments in Sweden. In addition, an international residency program for visiting scholars and artists joining the work at Seed Box on site in Linköping has been carried out as an integral part of the first phase. Whereas several visitors have joined the program on their own initiative, and with only little, if any, funding from the program, the residency program has been salaried, and with funds for travel and accommodation, and has allowed 13 often monthlong visits to Linköping University, the latest of which were Stephanie Erev, PhD candidate from Johns Hopkins University (2019), senior lecturer Hester Blum from Penn State University (2019), New York based artist Ellie Irons (2019) and Dr. mirko nikolić (2019). After nikolić's residency, he was granted funding from the Swedish Research Council to carry out a three year artistic research project at Linköping University, and accordingly, he will be an important collaborator for the second phase of the Seed Box.
- In order to support the future environmental humanities competence base in Sweden, the Seed Box has carried out a research school, initially employing five PhD students. Due to Linköping University investing additional funding in the environmental humanities, the program could partly fund yet another PhD Candidate, who was appointed in February 2018. The program has also funded two years, from 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2019 of a PhD Candidate at Queens University, Canada. During the first year of the research school, the PhD students followed a joint course program, and later in the training, they have had re-unions, particularly in connection to workshops and meetings with visitors in the residency program.

During the first phase, twelve scholars and artists have visited the Seed Box at LiU within the framework of the visitors' program:

By Invitation:

2016:

PhD Candidate Alexandra Jach,
University of Warsaw
PhD Candidate Gabriela Jarzębowska,
University of Warsaw
Distinguished professor Myra Hird,
Queens University
Poet Laura Watts, Edinburgh/Copenhagen

2017:

Mid-Career Scholar Christina Fredengren,
Stockholm University
Distinguished professor Myra Hird,
Queens University

2018:

Distinguished professor Matthew Fuller,
Goldsmiths
Distinguished professor Serpil Oppermann,
Cappadocia University

Open Call:

2018:

PhD candidate Beatrice del Monte,
State University of Milan and University of Turin

2019:

Mid-Career scholar mirko nicolic,
University of Westminster,
Mid-Career scholar Hester Blum, Penn State,
PhD candidate Stephanie Erev,
Johns Hopkins University
Artist Ellie Irons, New York



- With the aim of training future senior researchers and research leaders in environmental humanities, the Seed Box has made significant investments into postdoc positions, thus allowing recently graduated researchers opportunity to further their research skills and build on their track records. Three 2-year postdocs, and four 1-year postdocs have been part of the program, both at Linköping University, and at selected consortium partner universities: Olga Cielemecka, Linköping University, 2015–2017; Jennifer Hamilton, University of Sydney/Western Sydney University, 2016 – 2017; Anna Kaijser, Linköping University, 2016–2017; Tarsh Bates, University of Western Australia, 2017 – 2018; Isaac Lyne, Western Sydney University, 2018–2019; Simon Pope, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2017–2018; and Edward G. Schaumberg, University of Texas at Arlington, 2018–2019.
- A major part of the Seed Box program has been the Seed Money calls through which the program has distributed 8 million SEK to pilot projects, collaborative initiatives and explorative efforts to integrate artistic and academic practices, thus contributing to the diversity of the field of environmental humanities. In total, the program supported 27 projects, involving scholars and artists both in Sweden and internationally.

During the first phase of the Seed Box, two major events especially focused the capacity building efforts: *Seeds and Citizens – an environmental humanities festival*, 21 – 23 September 2018, and the closing conference of the first phase: *Environmental Humanities - Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological*, 2 – 4 October 2019. Both events drew the program's network and its many components together, inviting the program's leading researchers, postdocs, PhD students, and seed money recipients. Whereas *Seeds and Citizens*, as presented in the 2018 annual report, emphasized the exploration of the citizen humanities dimensions, and the integration of art and research, *Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological* was organized more according to the format of an academic conference.





In Focus: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological

The conference *Environmental Humanities - Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological* was organized with a double aim; on the one hand, the conference was intended as an exchange of ideas and an opportunity for discussing and gaining new perspectives on environmental humanities concerns. On the other hand, and at the same time, it directed attention towards the forms through which the Seed Box has been realized. Through the participation of the program's PhD candidates and postdocs, the research school and the international postdoc program came into focus. The Seed Money model was especially highlighted, with several presentations from Seed Money recipients. The conference also highlighted the ways in which the Seed Box has sought to integrate academic methods and artistic practices.

The conference offered presentations by Karin Bradley, KTH, and Simon Haikola, LiU. Bradley interrogated the notion of *living sustainably*, and explored the different meanings that have been attached to it historically, and Haikola discussed how mining, as a way of conceiving and relating to an environment, is infused with different, and sometimes competing intersections of social, cultural and political interests and imaginaries. Extractivism is also at the center of mirko nikolić's research and artistic practices, and during the conference he invited the participants to a performative sounding/reading of his work.

Seed Box founding director Cecilia Åsberg revisited the challenges the contemporary environmental and ecological situation pose to environmental humanities, and charted biofeminist, curious and creative approaches to the very notions of human and nature as a way to open new futures.



Karin Bradley.



Cecilia Åsberg.



mirko nikolić.



Simon Haikola.



Karin Willén.



Carl Johan Erikson and Karin Willén with Carl Jan Granqvist, member of the Bureau of Meals Academy. Photo by Tage Gabriellsson.

Carl Johan Erikson and Karin Willén, the Royal Institute of Art, gave an account, and an actual taste, of their Seed Money project on cooking food in fire pits in the woods of Forsmark, through which they explore temporalities, toxic embodiment and the entanglement of environmental beauty and unease, using the genre of a cook book as a lens. Their cook book “Kokgropar och andra aktiviteter i Forsmarks skogar” won the prize in Swedish Meal Literature of the Year 2019 in the category “Lifestyle Literature”.

The Seed Box digital platform collects video documentation from most of the conference presentations: <https://theseedbox.se/videos-from-environmental-humanities-modes-of-thinking-and-being-ecological>.



Bengt Karlsson and Dana Mount.



Isaac Lyne.



Åsa Sonjasdotter.



Drawing by Dana Mount.



Project Portfolio

The Seed Box develops research in the field of environmental humanities, attending to both the early traditions such as ecocriticism, environmental philosophy, environmental history, and political ecology, and new horizons opened up by theoretical innovations such as new materialism, post humanities, plant theory and citizen humanities.

The research projects within the Seed Box explore the boundaries between scholarly research and artistic and activist practices; they explore and create new methodologies and ways of communicating scholarly knowledge to the academic community and beyond. Taking the cue from the wider field of environmental humanities at large, which invites researchers to make their work more relevant and accessible to non-academic communities living and working closely with environmental problems, our citizen humanities projects connect Swedish and international communities to cutting-edge academic research. Consequently, the Seed Box research portfolio realizes a citizen humanities approach that is methodologically innovative and engages collaborations across diverse media and areas within the humanities and related interdisciplines, as well as a wide range of knowledge-makers and stakeholders from communities beyond academia.

At the outset of the Seed Box, in 2015, the research and project portfolio was organized in four overarching areas: Deep Time, Deep Earth, Deep Waters; Green Futures; Toxic Embodiment; and Weather and Climate Change. As research trajectories developed and new projects got included in the program, new research areas emerged, and when the first phase of the Seed Box is at its conclusion, the program has eight, often interrelated areas:





Deep Time

This research area focuses on long-term cause and effect and how deep time mattering (natural and cultural) shapes a variety of relational processes and explores new materialism and issues of inter-gendering. It deals with the effects and dissonances around natural/cultural heritage matters and explores alternative ways of thinking and acting around issues of inter- and intragenerational justice and care, and by exploring how issues captured in the term and practice of ‘conservation’ can be revitalized and changed to meet the challenge of living in the Anthropocene.



Deep Earth

Many of the most pressing contemporary environmental challenges are related to the workings of extractive industries. The extraction of natural resources from underground, be it fossil fuels or ores, is creating a growing global threat to humanity and other forms of life, and at the same time is contemporary society heavily dependent on this extraction in almost every aspects of daily life.



Deep Water

Water is a pressing question for the Anthropocene. Ocean acidification, rising sea levels, erratic drought alongside dramatic flooding, plastic contamination, and large-scale hydro-engineering all underscore the ways in which water – necessary for all planetary life is under constant assault from anthropogenic sources. In this thematic cluster, we seek greater understanding not only of these problems, but of the human values, worldviews and imaginaries that led to them in the first place.

Toxic Embodiment

Existential concerns around health today take on a much wider set of issues as we intra-act with antibiotics, nanoparticles and untested chemical cocktails through the food we eat, the make-up we wear or the environments we dwell in. The projects collected under the research area of Toxic Embodiment offers important and under-researched aspects of environmental humanities, the environmental health dimension as a wider concern of transcorporeal effects in humans and across other species.



Weather and Climate Change

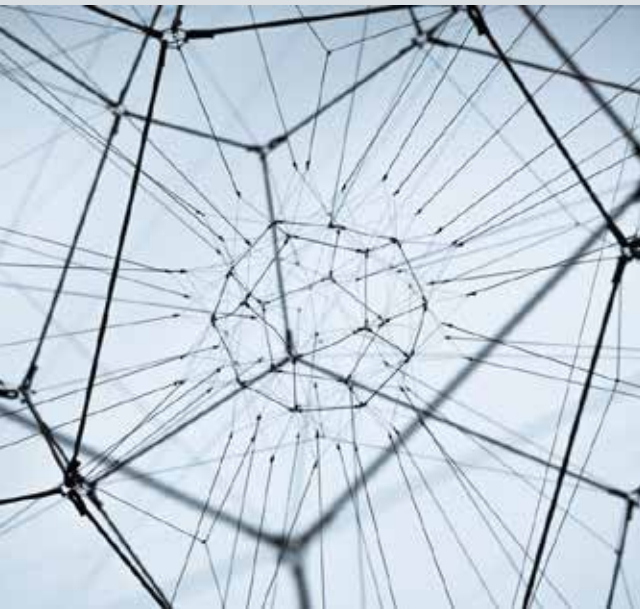
Climate change may be the defining issue of our time, but effective climate governance requires making room for multiple renderings of climate. How can we – as multispecies communities – weather these changes whose scale we might barely comprehend?



Green Futures

For new societal arrangements to materialize, new concepts, dreams, imaginaries, and experiments are needed to make the impossible take concrete form and become possible. In an era of political resignation when potential controversies have been transformed into matters of lifestyle, “the utopian spirit remains more necessary than ever” (Jacoby, 1999) in order to articulate more inclusive and less violent futures. And, given the urgency of present crises, for many that future needs to be now.





Media Ecologies

This area focuses on the specific entanglements of nature and culture that takes shape in the vicinity of technical media, old and new. Partly it engages with how media – the written word, images, and so on – have affected the experience and perception of nature and the environment throughout history.



Multispecies Stories

Multispecies Stories is concerned with the tales we tell about species other than our own. For example, when we name a forest “timber,” we ignore its status as an ecological habitat for thousands of nonhuman species; when we value it for the “ecological services” it provides, we insert it into another capitalist way of knowing the world. How do we transcend these ways of thinking so as to include the more-than-human world on its own terms rather than our own, particularly when we do so primarily through the media of human languages, cultures, and (hi)stories?



Highlights from 2019

In addition to the *Thinking and Being Ecological* conference, the Seed Box has in 2019 also offered several workshops, symposia and conference events rooted in the more specific projects and research areas, and often in collaboration with other initiatives.

Everyday Militarisms

The Everyday Militarisms research collaboratory is based at University of Sydney, Australia, and University of California Davis, US, and brings together researchers, artists, activists and other professionals to generate new perspectives and dialogue on the ways in which militarisms are inseparable from everyday life. In April, The Seed Box funded artist Katja Aglert to participate in the Everyday Militarisms collaboratory. She presented *Rehearsals for Descent 8 ~ X*, an artistic research experiment in three stages. They consisted firstly, of a participatory lecture performance with the collaboratory participants. Secondly, an underwater sound experiment at Cockatoo Island with the idea to get in touch with one of the 'invasive species' of Sydney harbour, the Irukandji box jellyfish. Thirdly, a screening display of video and objects as part of the closing reception of the Everyday Militarisms collaboratory.

Storying Exposure

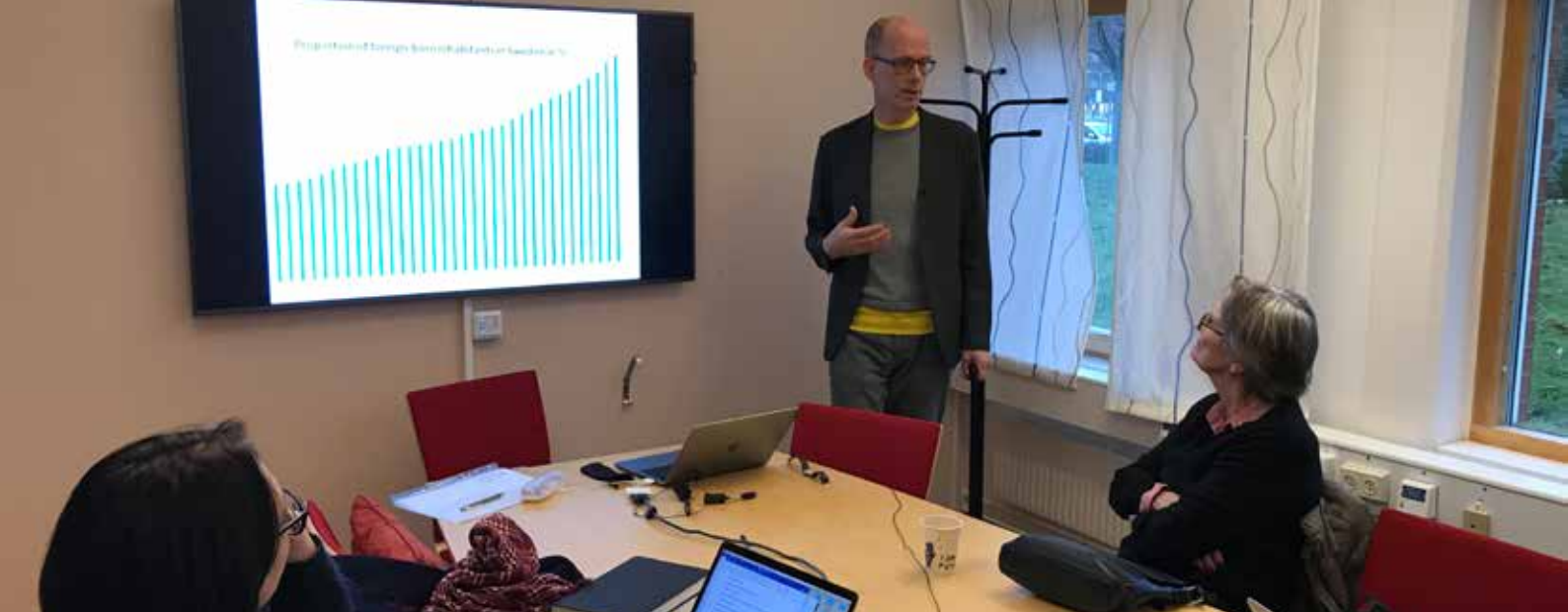
An Experimental Workshop in Environmental Humanities Writing Storying Exposures is a collaboration between Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan and Glasgow University. It operates as a collaborative, interdisciplinary initiative, principally through two intensive, residential writing workshops that occurred in Scotland and Sweden, where international gatherings of Environmental Humanities researchers had the opportunity to enter into concentrated conversation, skill-sharing, and experimental place writing praxis together. The project explicitly challenges the notion that environmental problems are best addressed through technocratic approaches. For academic researchers in the Environmental Humanities, writing creatively and communicating powerfully represent the most trusted means available for 'facing the planetary' (Connolly 2017). Thematically, the project engages with recent theorisations of exposure, toxicity, stress and vulnerability. During May 2019, Storying Exposures held two Swedish excursions, the first to the waste-to-energy plant at Gästads, Tekniska Verken in Linköping, and then to the island of Ytterö (Stockholm), a site of mining and of importance to the history of chemistry.

Rethinking through linking

Workshop on virtual realities, (performance) arts and environmental humanities. In parallel to the development of technology oriented performance work, an increasing number of researchers in the environmental humanities seek to find alternative ways in which environmental issues can be communicated to make it more meaningful to the cultures and values of people's everyday lives. In March, 2019, Seed-box researcher Therese Asplund hosted a workshop with the aim to initiate, develop and strengthen transdisciplinary collaborations and research at Linköping University to explore practices, challenges and opportunities of performance work, Augmented/Virtual Reality and environmental issues. The workshop was held at the Visualization Centre C, a research and science center in Norrköping, Sweden, conducting a unique mix of leading visualization research and media labs, interactive exhibitions and an immersive 3D fulldome theatre.

Illustrator Jenny Soep talks about her work at *Rethinking through linking*.





Colonial Media Ecologies web archive and workshop

Fredrik Thomasson from Uppsala University at
Colonial Media Ecologies – Entanglements of Colonial Environments.

In early 2019 PhD candidate Lene Asp Frederiksen travelled to Ghana on a field trip to visit and document various Danish colonial cultural heritage sites. The trip resulted in a published sound essay in *Nordisk Tidskrift for Informationsvidenskab og Kulturformidling* (NTIK). The sound recordings from the trip, where some are included in the aforementioned essay, will eventually be made available on a website including a multi-media archive documenting her research process. This archive is made possible due to funding received from The Seed Box, as was the Colonial Media Ecologies - Entanglements of Colonial Environments seminar which Lene Asp Frederiksen planned and hosted at Linköping University in November 2019. The seminar brought researchers from the Nordic countries together to discuss aspects of Nordic-Transatlantic colonialism. Documentation from the seminar will also be made available in the online archive when it is launched during 2020.

The First Fossil Free Welfare State? Swedish Petro-Dreams, Resistances, and Coastal Transformations, Workshop by the Shadow Places Network in Lysekil.

This workshop took place in April 25-27 2019 and brought together 15 environmental scholars and artists from Sweden, Australia, Germany and the UK in conversations about the complex and fragile networks of connection and disassociation upon which the Swedish fossil fuel-free transition rest. Informed by Val Plumwood's notion of 'shadow places', the workshop problematized the social, ecological and economic relationships that sustain and make the idea of a Swedish fossil free welfare state possible. During walks and talks in the Lysekil area at the Swedish West coast, the workshop highlighted the complex relations of interconnection and dependence that bind people, places and environments together. Insights and reflections from the workshop have been documented in a blog post available on the Seed Box website (<https://theseedbox.se/blog/the-first-fossil-free-welfare-state-swedish-petro-dreams-resistances-and-coastal-transformations-workshop-by-the-shadow-places-network-in-lysekil-april-25-17-2019/>). The workshop was organized by Eva Lövbrand and funded by Seed Money.

Some of the environmental scholars and artists at the workshop in Lysekil.



Interviews with former Ph.D. candidates

Daniel Andersson and Åsa Callmer

Daniel Andersson has recently defended his PhD thesis, at the Department of Thematic Studies –Technology and Social Change at Linköping University, Sweden.

What is your PhD thesis about?

The widespread adoption of the term “Anthropocene” during the last twenty years indicates the wide acceptance of the view that human activities have become such a powerful driving force for global environmental change that our destructive legacy will be recorded in geological history. Humans now move more rock and soil than all of the earth’s glaciers and rivers combined, fix more nitrogen than microbial activity does, and consume such vast amounts of resources so as to qualitatively alter the very structure of the earth’s geospheres – humankind, it is argued, has come to alter its terrestrial environment on such a scale that the Aristotelean ontological distinction between nature and artifice has lost its salience. The dissertation intellectual-historically examines the genealogy of this collapse of the ontological dualism between the natural vis-à-vis the artificial throughout the development of geognosy into a scientific discipline, as well as in the context of the study of the earth in relation to modern thought in general.



Daniel Andersson.

What can we learn from your work?

First and foremost, the thesis makes explicit the historical particularity of the ontologically flat entanglement of natural environments with technical infrastructures characteristic of the contemporary Anthropocene discourse. One of the consequences of the genealogy, therefore, is to nuance the etiology of the Anthropocene provided by its proponents. This is neither to dispute the necessity of industrialization for the emergence of the Anthropocene, nor the deleterious effects on nature that this term attempts to capture. But the genealogy still indicates that industrialization is neither exhaustive nor sufficient as an explanation for the Anthropocene condition. By historicizing the Anthropocene not as a natural-historical epoch but rather as the product of a scientific paradigm, it serves to remind us that the ontological collapse of the distinction between nature and artifice does not follow from the empirical findings of earth system science, but quite to the contrary, that the scientific facts produced by this discipline is always-already informed by an implicit acceptance of the collapse in question - an ontological condition which is thus not given, but has an intellectual history of its own.

Åsa Callmer has recently defended her PhD thesis at School of Architecture and the built environment, Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, Sweden.

What is your PhD thesis about?

My thesis is about sufficiency as idea and practice - what does it mean and how might it be practiced in today’s affluent consumerist society? The thesis focuses on sufficiency in regard to material consumption and studies two cases of sufficiency-related practices: voluntary reduction of consumption through a “buy-nothing-year” and the decluttering of one’s home and belongings using the KonMari method. It further explores ways of orienting an affluent consumerist society towards sufficiency by identifying potential for and obstacles to such an orientation in Sweden.



Åsa Callmer.

What results would you like to especially highlight?

My research serves to create an understanding for how consumers in an affluent context might develop a sense of sufficiency. It shows that one difference in regard to consumption between the two practices studied is intentionality: whereas the buy-nothing practitioners intentionally *want to stop* consuming, the majority of the KonMariers eventually *cease to want* to consume as a result of their practice. The thesis thus points to the importance of facilitating different kinds of entry into more sufficient consumption practices when developing policies aimed at reducing material consumption. It further discusses a framework for a politics of sufficiency and highlights the rethinking of our understanding of limits, defining clear goals that respect the planetary boundaries, and a cultural shift as central elements of steering a society towards sufficiency.

The Seed Box Management: Program host, Executive board and Management team

Linköping University has been the host of the Seed Box since its launch in September 2015. As the host, the university has appointed a Program Executive Board to ensure the quality and execution of the Program, as well as the program leadership and management, responsible for making programme decisions on a day-to-day basis, and to carry out the daily management of the program. In addition to the decision-making and managerial structures of the program, there have also been advisory and supportive structures. In academic and scholarly matters, an International Advisory Board is available to advise the Board and the Programme leadership. The program director has also had the option to receive advice from a lead team, consisting of Research Leaders, and other representatives for the Host and the Program Consortium.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At the outset of program, the program executive board consisted of four members, including the chair:

- Birgitta Svensson - Nordiska Museet, Chair, until 31 December 2016
- Stefan Mikaelsson – Sametinget, until 30 June 2018
- Annika Elmqvist - Klimatrikssdagen, author, until 31 December 2016
- Steven Hartman - Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies

On 1 January 2017, the board underwent change, as Svensson and Elmqvist resigned from their board assignments, while the following were appointed, in addition to Mikaelsson and Hartman:

- Lars Haikola, former university chancellor (chair)
- Katja Aglert, artist
- Christina Karlsson, ICA
- Johanna Sandahl, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
- Lisa Sennerby Forsse, The Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

During Phase 1, the following have acted as Seed Box programme directors and deputy directors:

Program directors:

2015-2016: Cecilia Åsberg

2017-Aug 2019: Jesper Olsson

Sept 2019-March 2020: Victoria Wibeck

Deputy program directors:

Johan Hedrén (2015), Jesper Olsson (Nov-Dec 2016), Anna Kaijser and Ann-Sofie Kall (Sep 2017- Oct 2018), Björn Pernrud (Sept 2019-March 2020):

SUPPORTING STAFF

Prior to being appointed deputy director, Pernrud had been the program administrator since the start of the program assisting the program leadership in preparing and carrying out the day-to-day decisions and management of the program. Since the start of the program, economy officer Barbro Axelsson has supported the program leadership, as well as executive board, in financial matters. The Seed Box has had two program conveners, promoting program cohesion and supporting incoming guests to the program: first Eva Lövbrand (2015) and then Lauren LaFauci (late 2016 - end of 2017). From 1 April 2018, Per Wistbo Nibell has been the program's communications officer, developing, among other things, visual communication on the program's digital platform: theseedbox.se.

ADVISORY FUNCTIONS

In October 2016, a local program lead team was appointed, consisting mainly of the program's research leaders. The lead team provided advice to the program director in more complex matters, such as the call text in the Seed Money calls, and two calls for visiting scholars and artists. In the end of 2017 the lead team was replaced by a more open invitation to participate in the Seed Box forum, the intention of which was to openly consider possible developments for the second phase of the program. While the lead team and the Seed Box Forum were locally situated meetings, the program has also enrolled an international advisory board, as a resource for advice in cutting edge academic and scholarly concerns. In the first phase of the program, the Advisory Board has made crucial contributions as evaluators in the Seed Money calls, as well as in calls for visiting scholars and artists.

Outputs January 2019 - March 2020

The Seed Box leads to outputs both from projects and events that are funded, either solely from the program or where the program finances e.g. part of the project agenda, or one of several participants in a collaborative project or event, and from projects that are financed by other sources, but nonetheless have connections to the Seed Box. Clearly, in a report of program outputs, it is funded output that is the primary concern as they illustrate what findings and insights the funding has made possible. However, against the background of the Seed Box's ambition to establish and cultivate a milieu for Environmental Humanities, an important part of the program's efforts is to spark and influence other projects and to lay the groundwork for new collaborations, developments and knowledge. In this way, affiliated projects, events and output help to demonstrate the program's networking, connective, and platform building initiatives. For this reason, a list of affiliated output is included below.

Funded output

Between January 2019 and March 2020, researchers who were fully or partly funded by The Seed Box¹ (co-)authored three books, two dissertations, seven articles and two book chapters. The Seed Box has also funded and rendered possible a number of conference events, lectures, exhibits etc. The list below contains basic information about this output. For bibliographic data, as well as a full list of outputs from the entire Phase 1, please see the Seed Box online archive (<https://theseedbox.se/archive/publications-and-activities>)

Articles

- Asp Frederiksen, Lene, "Colonial media ecologies – Resounding the colonial archive with impressions from a field trip to Ghana", *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Informationsvidenskab og Kulturformidling*, Vol. 8, pp. 98-112
- Armiero, Marco, Thanos Andritsos, Stefania Barca, Rita Bra's, Sergio Ruiz Cauyela, Cagdas Dedeoglu, Marica Di Pierri, Lucia de Oliveira Fernandes, Filippo Gravagno, Laura Greco, Lucie Greyl, Ilenia Iengo, Julia Lindblom, Felipe Milanez, Sergio Pedro, Giusy Pappalardo, Antonello Petrillo, Maurizio Portaluri, Elisa Privitera, Aysxe Ceren Sari, and Giorgos Velegrakis, "Toxic Bios - Toxic Autobiographies. A public environmental humanities project", *Environmental Justice*, Vol. 12, pp. 7-11.
- Cielemecka, Olga and Cecilia Åsberg (2019), "Toxic Embodiment and Feminist Environmental Humanities". *Environmental Humanities*, Vol. 11, pp. 101-107.
- Isendahl, Christian, Stephan Barthel, Benjamin Vis, Axel Drescher, Daniel Evans and Arjan van Timmeren, "Global Urbanization and Food Production in Direct Competition for Land: Leverage Places to Mitigate Impacts on SDG2 and on the Earth System", *The Anthropocene Review*, Vol. 6, pp. 71-97.

Karlsson, Bengt G. "Framtiden i en kopp lila te: Tankar om plantager, växtförädling och mobila växter", *Tidens Tecken*, Vol 4.

Kajiser, Anna and Eva Lövbrand, "Run for Your Life: Embodied Environmental Story-Telling and Citizenship on the Road to Paris", *Frontiers in Communication*, Vol. 4:32

Ureta, Sebastián, Patricio Flores and Linda Soneryd (2019), "Victimization Devices: Exploring Challenges Facing Litigation-Based Transnational Environmental Justice", *Social & Legal Studies*, electronically published ahead of print, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663919841121>.

Books

- Biermann, Frank and Eva Lövbrand (2019), *Anthropocene Encounters: New Directions in Green Political Thinking*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Erikson Carl Johan and Karin Willén (2019), *Kokgröpar och andra aktiviteter i Forsmarks skogar*, Jon Brunberg Förlag, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Linnér, Björn-Ola and Victoria Wibeck (2019), *Sustainability Transformations. Agents and Drivers across Societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Book chapters

- Lyne, Isaac and Anisah Madden (2020), "Enterprising New Worlds: Social Enterprise and the Value of Repair". In: Gibson-Graham, J.K and Dombroski, K. (Eds.) *The Handbook of Diverse Economies*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, United Kingdom.
- Lövbrand, Eva (2019), "Beyond Limits: Making Policy in a Climate Changed World". In: Meadowcroft, J. et al. (Eds.), *What Next for Sustainable Development? Our Common Future at Thirty*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, United Kingdom.

Conferences

- Bruhn, Jørgen and Ida Bencke, "Multispecies Storytelling in Intermedial Practices", 23-25 January 2019. Växjö, Sweden.
- The Seed Box, "Environmental Humanities – Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological", 2-4 October 2019. Linköping, Sweden.
- Åsberg, Cecilia "Open-Humanities Lab", 14 – 15 May 2019, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden. <https://posthumanities.net/open-humanities-lab-symposium-new-humanities-the-anthropocene/>

¹ Seed Box funding refers to Mistra and Formas funds, and LiU co-funding.

Dissertations

- Andersson, Daniel (2020), *Artificial Earth: On the Genealogy of Planetary Technicity*, Linköping Studies in Arts and Sciences, 780. Linköping University Electronic Press, Linköping, Sweden.
- Callmer, Åsa (2020), *Making sense of sufficiency: Entries, practices and politics*, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden.

Exhibition

- Bohlin, Anna et al (2019), "Leva med saker", part of the exhibit *Re:heritage* at Världskulturmuseerna, Göteborg, and from mid 2020-2021 also at display in Stockholm.

Film

- Ernstman, Natalia, Arjen Wals, Kelli Pearson, Åse Eliason Bjurström and Anke de Vrieze (2019), "Imaginative Disruptions", <https://vimeo.com/378882648>.

Lectures

- Andersson, Daniel, "Artificial Earth – The Question Concerning Technology in the Anthropocene", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Bohlin, Anna, Staffan Appelgren and Lena Stammarnäs, "Reflections from a Seed Project: Living (with) Things", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Bradley, Karin, "Living sustainably – From buying eco-products to building alternative economies", 2 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Callmer, Åsa, "Making sense of sufficiency: entries, practice and politics", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Erikson, Carl Johan and Karin Willén, "Fire pits and other activities in the woods of Forsmark", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Haikola, Simon, "Politicising the depolitical – Conflicting imaginaries in Swedish 21st century mining", 2 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Husberg, Hanna and Agata Marzecova, "On changing imaginaries and techno(eco)logical sensing of urban air", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.

- Karlsson, Bengt, "Life and Death in the Plantation: Tea and the travel of seeds, plants and science across the Indian Ocean", 4 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Langa, Maria, "Aesthetic Environmentalism: The Play Value of Nature in Urban Gardening Practice", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Lyne, Isaac, "Doing plastic-bottled water differently? The role of social entrepreneurship in delivering community-managed infrastructures", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Mount, Dana, "Animal Care: Administration and Critical Imagination", 4 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Sonjasdotter, Åsa, "Cultivating Stories", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Wilkes, James, "The Law of the Land: Asserting Indigenous Autonomy in Environmental Decision-Making", 3 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.

Seminars

- Asp Frederiksen, Lene, "Colonial Media Ecologies – Entanglements of Colonial Environments", 22 November, 2019, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Wibeck, Victoria, "Concluding Panel Talk", 4 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.

Stage performance

- Nikolić, Mirko, "The arcane of earth reproduction", 2 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.
- Agler, Katja "Rehearsals for Descent 8 ~ X", 24 April 2019, University of Sydney, Everyday Militarism Research Collaboratory, Australia.

Video presentation

- Åsberg, Cecilia, "Biofeminist Environmental Humanities – Cultivating the more-than-human art of curiosity, concern, and care, collaboratively", 4 October, 2019, Environmental Humanities: Modes of Thinking and Being Ecological, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.

Workshop

Isendahl, Christian, Axel Drescher and María Caridad Cruz, “The Resilience of Cuban Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture over the Longue Durée, Workshop II”, 11 February, 2019, Havana, Cuba.

Shadow places network, “First Fossil Free Welfare State? Swedish Petro-Dreams, Resistances, and Coastal Transformations – Walkshop”, 25 – 27 April, 2019, Lysekil, Sweden.

Åsberg, Cecilia ”Storying Exposure”, 8 May, 2019, Stockholm Sweden .

Output affiliated with The Seed Box

In addition to output that Seed Box has funded, there are several examples of publications and events affiliated with, but not directly funded by, the Seed Box. Affiliated outputs reported into the Seed Box archive for 2019 have mostly followed from Seed Money projects, and demonstrate how such projects continue to affect and inspire beyond their formal limits.

Articles

Appelgren, S., 2019. Building Castles out of Debris: Reuse Interior Design as a ‘Design of the Concrete’. *Worldwide Waste: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(1),

Appelgren, S. (2019), ”Creating with traces of life: waste, reuse and design”, *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 10.

Bohlin, A., 2019. ‘It will Keep Circulating’: Loving and Letting Go of Things in Swedish Second-hand Markets. *Worldwide Waste: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(1)

Wilkes, James and Myra Hird (2019), “Colonial ideologies of waste: Implications for land and life”, *EuropeNow* Vol. 27, <https://www.europenowjournal.org/issue-27-may-2019/>

Book chapter

Bohlin, Anna, “The Liveliness of Ordinary Objects: Living with Stuff in the Anthropocene”, *Deterritorialising the Future: Heritage in, of and for the Anthropocene*, Critical Climate Change Series, Open University Press, London, UK.

Conference paper

Pope, Simon, ”Here’s To Thee: some thoughts on what and who sustains a new project”, 2 October, 2019, Toronto, Canada

Film

Andersson, Hampus, Petri Storlöpare and May-Britt Öhman, “When the climate apocalypse comes I’ll make it”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMC3rfXSH-pI&t=313s>, 2019.

Andersson, Henrik, Petri Storlöpare and May-Britt Öhman, “Winds of destruction”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7ZylkDXxe8&t=653s>, 2019.

Andersson, Henrik, Petri Storlöpare and May-Britt Öhman, “Winds of destruction - Indigenous perspectives on ”green” energy production in Sámi territories”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPm5HLp-vWto&t=12s>, 2019.

Seminar

Wiman, Björn, Björn-Ola Linnér and Victoria Wibeck, “Världens största nyhet – eller varför vi har så svårt att föreställa oss framtiden”, 24 January, 2019, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden.



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