BALTEHUMS IV

WORLDS IN RELATION

1-3 DECEMBER 2026
RIGA, LATVIA

FOURTH BALTIC CONFERENCE
ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME
and abstract book

HOSTED AND ORGANISED BY
University of Latvia
Department of Geography, Faculty of Science and Technology · Department of Philosophy and Ethics, Faculty of Humanities

CO-ORGANISED BY
Baltic Studies Centre

VENUE SUPPORT
Latvian National Library

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University of Turku · Tenure Professorship at the University of Latvia (state budget) · Department of Geography at the University of Latvia (state budget) · Baltic Studies Centre

WELCOME TO BALTEHUMS IV

Laipni aicināti Rīgā!

We are delighted to welcome you to Riga for the fourth Baltic Environmental Humanities and Social Sciences Conference, BALTEHUMS IV.

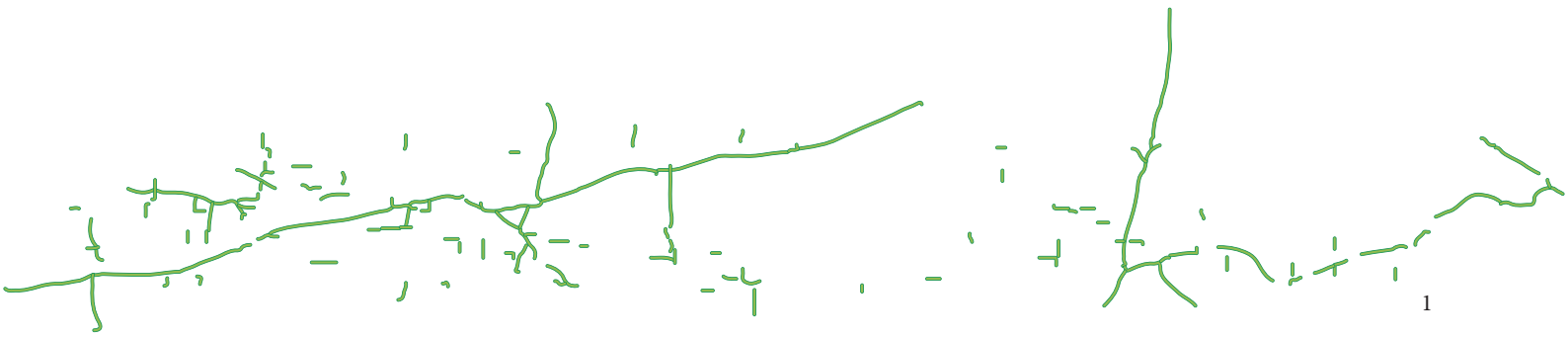
We meet at a time when environmental change is unsettling familiar ways of living and thinking about the world. Climate change and biodiversity loss are transforming landscapes and the relations between humans and other forms of life. Yet these changes do not unfold in isolation. They are part of longer histories through which people have shaped their environments and, in turn, been shaped by them.

The Baltic Sea region offers a particularly interesting setting for exploring these questions. Its landscapes still bear the traces of the last glaciation, while the changing seasons have long influenced how people live and understand their surroundings. The region has also experienced profound transformations through industrialisation, land reclamation, urbanisation and political change. These histories continue to shape the ways people relate to land and water today.

The theme of this year's conference, Worlds in Relation, invites us to consider how different worlds emerge through these encounters. How do people and other beings come to inhabit shared environments? What happens when established relations are disrupted? And how might we learn to live with environmental change without assuming that there is only one way forward?

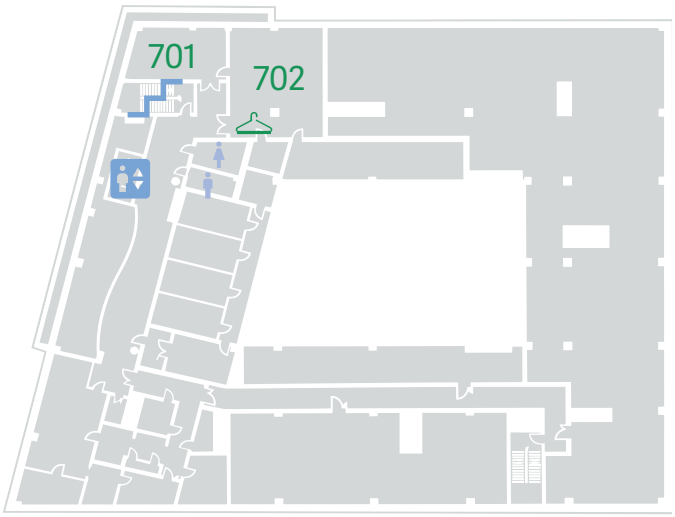
Over the next three days of the conference, we will approach these questions from different perspectives. The programme brings together research on environmental histories, water cultures, human-animal relations and everyday experiences of nature. It also makes room for philosophical reflection and artistic exploration. We hope that the conversations will move beyond disciplinary boundaries and allow unexpected connections to emerge.

Riga welcomes you at the beginning of winter, when the days are short and the Baltic landscapes are settling into their colder season. We hope you will enjoy the conference, find inspiration in one another's work and leave with new questions and ideas to pursue.

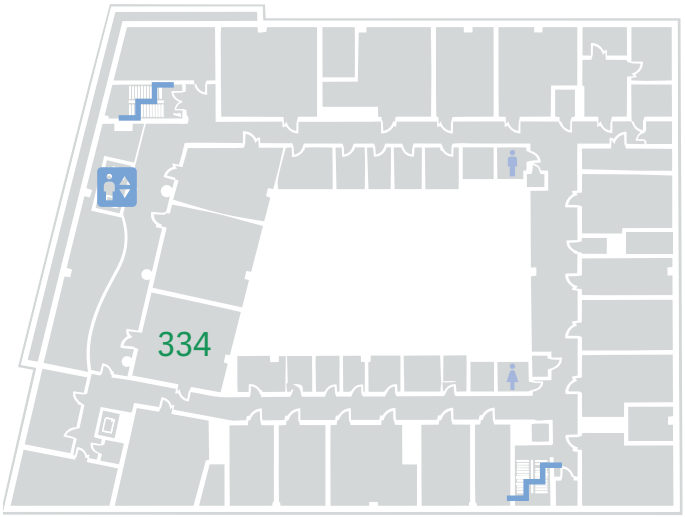


THE HOUSE OF NATURE
Conference Rooms & Facilities

- elevators
- stairs
- restrooms
- coffee breaks & lunches
- 701 conference rooms
- cloakroom
- registration desk
- poster stands



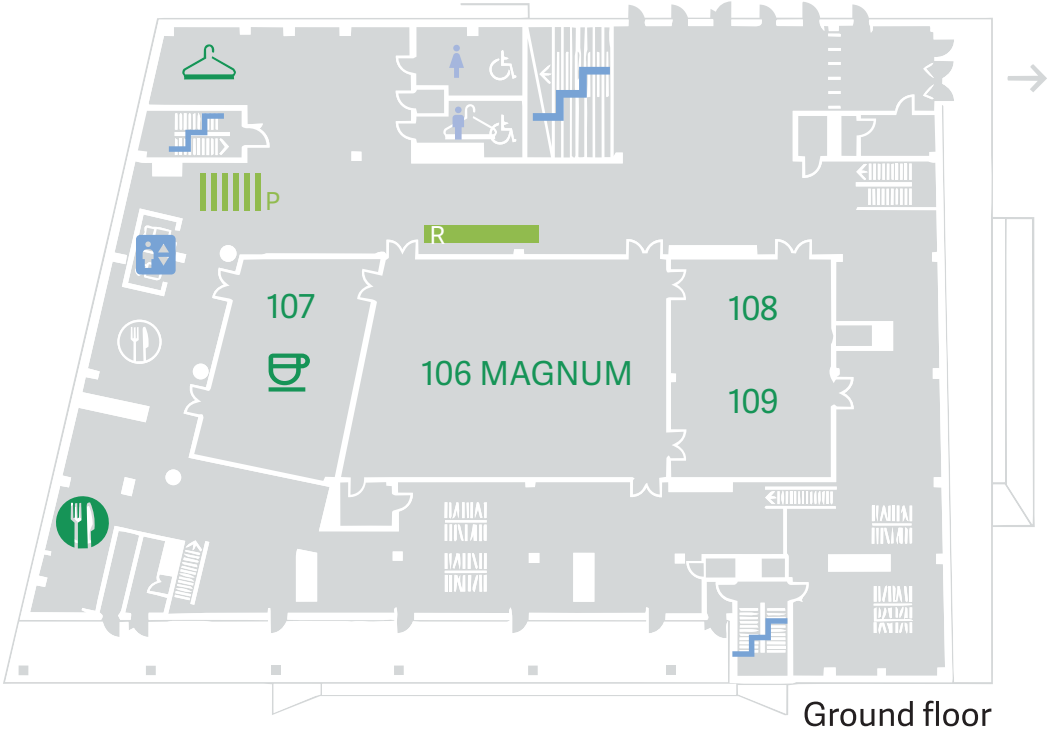
7th floor



3rd floor



4th floor



Ground floor

VENUES & SOCIAL EVENTS

CONFERENCE VENUE

House of Nature, University of Latvia
1 Jelgavas Street, Riga

The conference sessions will take place at the University of Latvia's House of Nature.

WELCOME RECEPTION | 1 DECEMBER

National Library of Latvia
3 Mūkusalas Street, Riga
19:00–21:00 | 11th and 12th floors

We invite you to join us for an informal gathering on the evening of the first conference day.

The reception will begin with welcome drinks and a short talk by Mārtiņš Mintaurs (National Library of Latvia) on the Daugava River and its place in Riga's history.

Please use the library's main entrance facing Uzvaras Boulevard.

CONFERENCE DINNER | 3 DECEMBER

K. K. fon Stricka villa
9 Aristida Briāna Street, Riga
18:30-21:30

Join us for the conference dinner at K. K. fon Stricka villa.

EXPLORING RIGA

If you have some time to explore Riga, we have put together a few suggestions for places to visit, as well as creative quarters and public squares with cafés and restaurants, covering both banks of the Daugava river - close to the conference venue, as well as near the Old Town.
https://ej.uz/rigatravelguide

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

TUESDAY 01/12

13:30	13:45	Opening session	106 MAGNUM
13:45	15:00	Keynote 1 – Simo Laakkonen	106 MAGNUM
15:00	15:30	Coffee break	107 SINISTRUM
15:30	17:00	Parallel sessions 1	
		S02: Imagining, managing and protecting nature	Room 334
		S16: Methods and practices of environmental research	Room 406
		W02: Storytelling workshop: Birch (un)foldings	701 CAELUM
		P01: 'Life by the Sea,' revisited: relational memory, knowledge, community, and taste at the Baltic land-sea interface	702 AERIS
19:00	21:00	Welcome reception	National Library of Latvia

S = session · P = pre-constituted panel · W = workshop · D = discussion · A = artistic intervention

This PDF includes interactive links for easy navigation. Click on a session title in the programme at a glance to jump to the detailed session programme, or on a presentation title to access its abstract and author biography. PDF bookmarks provide quick access to the main sections of the document.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY 02/12

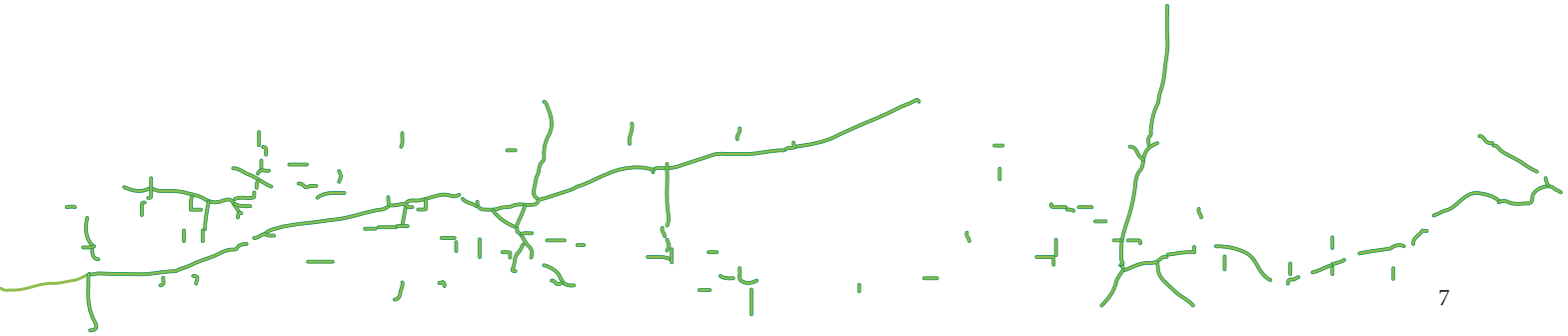
9:30	11:00	Parallel sessions 2	
		S01: Energy transitions and lived landscapes	108 DEXTRUM I
		S15: Environmental imaginaries, bodies and ecological loss	109 DEXTRUM II
		S07: Pollinators, food forests and social-ecological relations	Room 334
		S14: Environmental protection: histories and practices	702 AERIS
11:00	11:30	Coffee break	107 SINISTRUM
11:30	12:45	Keynote 2 – Astrida Neimanis	106 MAGNUM
12:45	14:00	Lunch	107 SINISTRUM
14:00	15:30	Parallel sessions 3	
		P05: Speculative aesthetics: new modes of knowledge and sensibility in the Anthropocene	109 DEXTRUM II
		S11: Contested landscapes: values, change and justice	Room 334
		D01: Living through the cycle: documentary responsibility and Latvian seasonal knowledge in a time of ecological loss	701 CAELUM
		S06: Animal bodies, production and protection	702 AERIS
15:30	16:00	Coffee break	107 SINISTRUM
16:00	17:30	Parallel sessions 4	
		S13: Agrarian transitions, practices and environments	Room 334
		S08: Environmental philosophy, ethics and relational worlds	Room 405
		D02: Stepping off the boardwalk: on (artistic) practices for relating to land/places/sites	701 CAELUM
		S04: Baltic environmental histories: resources, infrastructures and representations	702 AERIS

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY 03/12

9:00	10:30	Parallel sessions 5	
		W01: Relational landscapes: an embodied exploration of coexistence	109 DEXTRUM II
		P04: Regenerative energy relations	Room 405
		P03: Constructing socialist rivers: water, infrastructure and environmental transformation in Cold War East-Central Europe	Room 406
		P02: Black traces: disasters, pollution and the cultural resonance of oil	702 AERIS
10:30	11:00	Coffee break	107 SINISTRUM
11:00	12:30	Parallel sessions 6	
		S03: Water histories and environmental knowledge	108 DEXTRUM I
		A01: Artistic practices and ecological knowing	109 DEXTRUM II
		P06: Women and/as animals: gendered animality and multispecies relations in contemporary literature	Room 405
		S10: Landscape memory, experience and meaning	702 AERIS
12:30	13:30	Lunch	107 SINISTRUM
13:30	14:00	Attended poster session	Ground floor
14:00	15:30	Parallel sessions 7	
		S12: Urban natures, infrastructures and material environments	109 DEXTRUM II
		S09: Artistic and sensory engagements with environments	Room 405
		S05: Animals, care and coexistence	702 AERIS
15:30	16:00	Coffee break	107 SINISTRUM
16:00	17:15	Keynote 3 – Miķelis Grīviņš	106 MAGNUM
17:15	17:45	Closing session	106 MAGNUM
18:30	21:30	Conference dinner	K. K. fon Stricka villa

CONFERENCE SESSIONS



PLENARY SESSIONS & KEYNOTES

OPENING

Room: 106 MAGNUM
Tuesday 01/12, 13:30–13:45

Welcome by the conference organisers and introduction of the conference theme

CLOSING

Room: 106 MAGNUM
Thursday 03/12, 17:15–17:45

We invite all participants to join us for a final conversation about the ideas and questions that have emerged over the course of the conference. What has stayed with us, what has surprised us, and what might we take forward from these days together?

SIMO LAAKKONEN

ON THE COAST: A WALK ALONG THE SHORES OF ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Room: 106 MAGNUM
Tuesday 01/12, 13:45–15:00

What does the historical interaction between land and sea look like when viewed from the shore? What kinds of themes might the environmental humanities uncover if we were to take a walk along the shores of the Baltic Sea? What sorts of subjects might have washed up on these shores—or become buried within them? The examination begins from the perspective of the shoreline and the individual, but gradually expands to encompass some essential elements of the northern coasts. The aim is to survey existing trends in historical research while simultaneously looking toward potential new research themes and horizons. Rather than focusing on the advancement of a specific research agenda, this presentation seeks to engage in what is perhaps the finest, yet often also the most frustrating, aspect of research: the development of new topics—both significant and seemingly trivial—for further inquiry.

Simo Laakkonen is a Finnish environmental historian. Previously he has worked as the director of the Degree Program in Digital Culture, Landscape and Cultural Heritage at the University of Turku. He is currently a part-time coordinator of the History of Winter project, supported by the Research Council of Finland. His main research theme is the environmental history of pollution and protection of the Baltic Sea during the last century.

ASTRIDA NEIMANIS

THICK CONFLUENCE: TO CARE FOR AND TO CARRY WHAT WE CAN

Room: 106 MAGNUM
Wednesday 02/12, 11:30–12:45

Part memoir, part phenomenology, part fever dream: This talk follows currents from my past and traces the rivulets of relation as my family crosses the Baltic Sea, back and forth and back again, across several generations. Anchored in my grandmother's story about a bucket of honey and a bucket of salt, I think through the phenomenology of water, memory and confluence, and about caring, carrying and being useful in times of recursive crisis.

A key figure in the Environmental Humanities, Astrida Neimanis writes about water, weather, and bodies at the intersection of feminism and environmental crisis. Her formative book Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology (2017) is a study of the cultural and philosophical implications of being obligated to our environments through our shared wateriness. How to Weather Together: Feminist Practice for Climate Change (2026), co-authored with longtime collaborator Jennifer Mae Hamilton, describes community-building and shared vulnerability in climate changing times. Neimanis is currently the Professor and Canada Research Chair in Feminist Environmental Humanities at University of British Columbia Okanagan, on the unceded lands of the syilx people, where she is also Director of The FEELed Lab (www.thefeeledlab.ca).

MIĶELIS GRĪVIŅŠ

THE DYNAMICS OF HUMAN-NATURE RELATIONS THROUGH THE LENS OF CHANGING FORAGING PRACTICES

Room: 106 MAGNUM
Thursday 03/12, 16:00–17:15

Traditional foraging for food can hardly be imagined without a deep understanding of surrounding ecosystems, local landscapes, and changing seasons. While foraging has always been part of European culture, each new advancement in modern agriculture has gradually pushed the knowledge and practices associated with it into the background, contributing to a growing physical, intellectual, and emotional distance between humans and nature. Recently, however, the potential of wild food products has been rediscovered. Driven by diverse individual and collective expectations, this renewed interest is reshaping human-nature relations and challenging established perceptions of wild resources and their place in contemporary society. As traditional and emerging forms of foraging coexist, they bring together different motivations, meanings, and practices, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes challenging one another. By comparing these developments across different contexts, the keynote explores how changing foraging practices and the responses they generate offer insights into the evolving relations between humans and nature.

Miķelis Grīviņš is a Research Professor at Riga Stradiņš University and a Senior Researcher at the Baltic Studies Centre. A sociologist by training, his research focuses on agri-food systems, alternative food networks, human–nature relations, and the role of wild edible products in European communities. His work on foraging communities explores the trade in wild products, forager identities, forest governance, and the evolving cultures of foraging in the 21st century.

PARALLEL SESSIONS

15:30-17:00, 1 DECEMBER, TUESDAY

Room 334

S02: Imagining, managing and protecting nature (Chair: Elle-Mari Talivee)

01 Tracing values in media narratives of land use change across four national contexts
Maja Debevec[1], Elīna Dāce[2], Jennifer Kraaijveld[3], Miks Brasliņš[2], Tadej Bevk[1], Simeon Vaňo[4], Peter Mederly[4], Marije Schaafsma[3]
[1]University of Ljubljana, [2]Baltic Studies Centre, [3]Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, [4]Constantine the Philosopher University

02 Nature Reserves along the Baltic Sea Coast in Finland, 1900–1980
Matti O. Hannikainen
University of Helsinki

03 The relations between rural knowledge, citizen science, and nature Protection: the case of Matsalu National Park
Silvia Lotman, Stefan Ottens, Kadri Tüür
Tallinn University

04 The politics of riverscaping in Latvia: between hydrosanitary protection, ecological modernization, and aesthetic ordering
Kristīne Krumberga, Kārlis Lakševics
University of Latvia

Room 406

S16: Methods and practices of environmental research (Chair: Artis Svece)

05 Envirotechnical landscapes method for studying the transformation of coastal entanglements
Kati Lindström
KTH Royal Institute of Technology, University of Tartu

06 Grounding as a writing strategy, an emotional regulation and a semiotic process
Timo Maran
University of Tartu

07 Citizen participation in the circular bioeconomy: a systematic review of everyday practices, drivers, and barriers
Neringa Vilkaite-Vaitone
Baltic Studies Centre

08 Multidisciplinary and experiential teaching in environmental humanities: a case study
Anne Sauka
University of Latvia

Room 701 CAELUM

W02: Storytelling workshop: Birch (un) foldings
Linda Lapiņa[1], Liene Jurgelāne[2]
[1]Roskilde University, [2]New Visions and Rooted Festival

Room 702 AERIS

P01: 'Life by the Sea,' revisited: relational memory, knowledge, community, and taste at the Baltic land-sea interface (Chair: Guntra Aistara)

09 Ninety years of Latvian "Life by the Sea"
Guntra Aistara
Central European University

10 Where waves meet land: navigating Latvia's eroding seascape through memory
Emīlija Anna Bušmane
Stockholm University

11 Changing to remain: continuity and adaptation in coastal fishing in Lapmežciems, Latvia
Anete Valaine
Riga Stradiņš University

12 Reinventing tradition through adaptation: how young fishers sustain coastal heritage in Zvejniekciems, Latvia
Gundars Vītols
Riga Stradiņš University

13 Beyond edibility: round goby and the limits of foodscape transformation in Latvia
Jānis Šabanovs
Riga Stradiņš University

9:30-11:00, 2 DECEMBER, WEDNESDAY

Room 108 DEXTRUM I

S01: Energy transitions and lived landscapes (Chair: Bethany Wiggin)

14 Green transition, grey realities: ethnic identity and energy preferences in Northeast Estonia
Stefan Tung
University College London

15 Wind energy infrastructure and the lived landscape: distributive justice in Saarde Municipality, Estonia
Anu Printsmann
Tallinn University

16 Energy transition and the paradox of participation: the case of district heating and wind power in Denmark
Matthias Heymann, Bue Poulsgaard, Kristian Hvidtfelt Nielsen
Aarhus University

17 The seascape of the Bothnian Bay: territorialisation through off-shore windfarms
Thorsten van der Kooij
KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Room 109 DEXTRUM II

S15: Environmental imaginaries, bodies and ecological loss (Chair: Anne Sauka)

18 The Baltic Sea as a place and as an image in contemporary art
Ieva Astahovska
Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art

19 There are no pearls in the Black Sea
Liina Siib
Estonian Academy of Arts

20 Unlively ecologies: protesting fossil fuels with David Buckel
Sofia Varino
Humboldt University of Berlin

21 Becoming multispecies psychopomps: attending to the loss of animal intermediaries between the living and the dead
Benjamin J. Kapron
University of Western Ontario

Room 334

S07: Pollinators, food forests and social-ecological relations (Chair: Ivo Vinogradovs)

22 Beekeepers at crossroad of socio-ecological networking
Jaan Liira[1], Mare Kõiva[2], Raivo Kalle[2]
[1]University of Tartu, [2]Estonian Literary Museum

23 Bees everywhere: auto-ethnographic reflections on everyday encounters with pollinator imagery beyond the field
Lūcija Ceicāne, Anda Ādamsone-Fiskoviča
Baltic Studies Centre

24 Growing together: food forests as living spaces of food, knowledge and community
Maarja Käger, Maarja Olesk
Institute of Baltic Studies

25 Community food forests: lessons from urban Estonia and rural Spain
Joanna Storie[1], Jekaterina Balicka[1], Gloria Niin[1], Maarja Kager[2], Marina Arias[3]
[1]Estonian University of Life Sciences, [2]Institute of Baltic Studies, [3]University of the Basque Country

Room 702 AERIS

S14: Environmental protection: histories and practices (Chair: Silvia Lotman)

26 Marine environmental protection regimes across political divides
Lars Fredrik Stöcker
Universität Hamburg

27 Environmental protection of the Baltic Sea in interwar Poland. The work of naturalists and the discourse on modernisation
Małgorzata Litwinowicz
University of Warsaw

28 "When small rivers cry": caring for waterscapes in the work of the Latvian Nature and Monument Protection Society (1970s–1980s)
Karīna Ješkina
University of Latvia

29 Dead trees, polluted rivers, toxic air. Oral histories of the ecological disaster in the Polish Western Sudetes in the 1980s
Marek Szajda
Civitas University in Warsaw

PARALLEL SESSIONS

14:00-15:30, 2 DECEMBER, WEDNESDAY

Room 109 DEXTRUM II

P05: Speculative aesthetics: new modes of knowledge and sensibility in the Anthropocene (Chair: Justyna Stępień)

30 More-than-human sensing and modelling of the Baltic hydrobodies in Matterlurgy's artistic practice field casting
Justyna Stępień
University of Lodz

31 A small shift in sensibility: from aesthesis to eco-social relations
Vaiva Daraškevičiūtė
Vilnius University

32 Sporadic ontology for the Anthropocene
Audronė Žukauskaitė
Lithuanian Culture Research Institute

33 Nostalgic atmospheres for lost ecological-technological futures
Aurēlija Džordana Auzere
University of Latvia

Room 334

S11: Contested landscapes: values, change and justice (Chair: Anu Printsmann)

34 From wilderness landscapes to renewable resources: conflicts over glacial rivers and hydropower development in Iceland
Unnur Birna Karlsdóttir
University of Iceland

35 Contested landscapes: mapping value shifts and stakeholder narratives in Kaigu peatland over the last century
Vincenza Ferrara[1], Elīna Dāce[2], Maija Ušča[2]
[1]Stockholm University, [2]Baltic Studies Centre

36 Restoring wetlands, unsettling relations: nature as a terrain of justice in rural Estonia
Marko Uibu
Tartu University

37 Between wasteland and wonderland: evolving meanings of mire landscapes in Estonia
Piret Pungas-Kohv
Estonian Fund for Nature

Room 701 CAELUM

D01: Living through the cycle: documentary responsibility and Latvian seasonal knowledge in a time of ecological loss
Agnese Āboliņa, Conor Gorman
Human Collective

Room 702 AERIS

S06: Animal bodies, production and protection (Chair: Ulrike Plath)

38 Masterminding the herd: animal bodies and the quest for improvement in the late Romanov Empire
Julia Malitska
Södertörn University

39 Tuberculosis, the cattle and child mortality. The relation between humans and cattle in Łódź at the first half of the 20th century
Magdalena Makówka
Museum of the city of Łódź

40 Human-animal relations at sea: livestock transport and animal protection between Estonia and Finland in the interwar period
Karl Hein
Tallinn University

41 Embodied care, structural violence: human–animal relations in socialist animal production (Poland, 1950s–1980s)
Gabriela Jarzębowska
University of Warsaw

16:00-17:30, 2 DECEMBER, WEDNESDAY

Room 334

S13: Agrarian transitions, practices and environments (Chair: Anda Ādamsone-Fiskoviča)

42 From production to environmental stewardship – shifting the role of farmers in our food system and the need for sustainable business models
Natalia Maehle[1], Pia Piroschka Otte[2]
[1]Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, [2]Ruralis – Institute for Rural and Regional Research

43 Trajectories for protein production and diversification in the three Baltic States
Alessandro Monaco, Elīna Dāce
Baltic Studies Centre

44 Winter as a dairy season: English butter markets and agrarian rhythms in Finland
Janne Mäkiranta
University of Turku

45 From manager to apprentice: how everyday practices and individual perceptions reveal semi-natural grassland practitioners' positions along a spectrum of human-nature relationships
Kristīne Estere Lūse[1], Baiba Strazdiņa[2], Solvita Rūsiņa[1]
[1]University of Latvia, [2]Latvian Fund for Nature

Room 405

S08: Environmental philosophy, ethics and relational worlds (Chair: Igors Gubenko)

46 Waste and the self: purity, practices of forgetting and new environmental awareness
Mintautas Gutauskas
Vilnius University

47 Semi-natural ecosystems: naturalness, environmental value, and human–more-than-human relations
Edit Talpsepp
University of Tartu

48 Acting without Archē: towards an environmental anti-humanism
Ivo Vinogradovs, Anita Zariņa
University of Latvia

Room 701 CAELUM

D02: Stepping off the boardwalk: on (artistic) practices for relating to land/places/sites
Convenors and contributors: Franziska Bax[1], Swantje Furtak[2], Lina von Jaruntowski[3], Meleah Moore[2], Soph Boobyer[4]
[1]Stiftung Kunst und Natur Nantesbuch, [2]Rachel Carson Center, LMU Munich, [3]University of Arts Bremen, [4]DASH – Disability Arts Shropshire

Room 702 AERIS

S04: Baltic environmental histories: resources, infrastructures and representations (Chair: Kati Lindström)

49 Fiber and empire: the long lay of Baltic hemp, ca. 1800
Adil Mansure
Harvard University

50 Northern and Baltic fisheries on display at international exhibitions and world fairs in the late 19th century
Julia Lajus
University of Helsinki

51 A silenced riverscape: the transformation of the Nemunas Valley through the construction of the Kaunas hydroelectric power plant
Marius Ėmužis
Vilnius University

PARALLEL SESSIONS

9:00-10:30, 3 DECEMBER, THURSDAY

Room 109 DEXTRUM II

W01: Relational landscapes: an embodied exploration of coexistence

Convenors: Tīna Alise Kalēja[1], Annija Danenberga[1,2]

[1]Collective Fabula, [2]Baltic Studies Centre

Room 405

P04: Regenerative energy relations (Chair: Frederik Frisk Bech)

52 Rugbrødsmotor / rupjmaizes stāsti. Everyday energy intimacies explored through rye bread tasting
Linda Lapiņa
Roskilde University

53 A poetic revolution: practivism, embodied hope and fractal change
Maria Toft
The Royal Danish Academy, Roskilde University

54 Regenerative soils – relational times: how worlds come into being in regenerative farming and permaculture
Kristine Samson
Roskilde University

55 "Nothing comes to my mind": hidden companions of early career general practitioners in Latvia
Inguna Potetinova
Riga Stradiņš University

Room 406

P03: Constructing socialist rivers: water, infrastructure and environmental transformation in Cold War East-Central Europe (Chair: Viktor Pál)

56 From socialist river to continental waterway: reengineering the Danube, 1945–1990
Viktor Pál
University of Ostrava

57 Water for industry or politics? The construction of reservoirs in the Odra River basin in the second half of the 20th century
Michaela Závodná
University of Ostrava

58 Environmental accidents and the pollution of the Odra River from the 1960s to the early 21st century
Petr Popelka, Renáta Popelková
University of Ostrava

59 The question of Czechoslovak transit trade through Poland, 1945–1989
Marcin Szymański
University of Ostrava

Room 702 AERIS

P02: Black traces: disasters, pollution and the cultural resonance of oil (Chair: collective)

60 When oil became visible – and a threat to the Baltic
Jan-Hinnerk Antons
University of Greifswald

61 Refining the future: the utopian representations and toxic realities of Soviet oil in Mazovia in the 1960s
Jan Burek
University of Warsaw

62 Tracing oil in the museum: fossil heritage, petromodernity and the memory of technology
Nora Thorade
Stiftung Deutsches Technikmuseum Berlin

63 Paint it black: oil and art history in the Baltic Sea
Simo Laakkonen
University of Turku

64 Dark petroaesthetics: the crude ghosts of Soviet oil
Maria Engström
Uppsala University

11:00-12:30, 3 DECEMBER, THURSDAY

Room 108 DEXTRUM I

S03: Water histories and environmental knowledge (Chair: Simo Laakkonen)

65 Baltic weatherlands in the seventeenth century: memory between religion and the early enlightenment
Ulrike Plath
Tallinn University

66 Living with an abundance of water: Versuch einer Naturgeschichte von Livland (1777–1791) by Jakob Fischer
Artis Svece, Anita Zariņa
University of Latvia

67 Water impoundment systems of the medieval city of Tallinn
Villu Kadakas
Tallinn University

68 Human-seal relations and maritime landscapes in the Subneolithic Baltic
Aivaras Jefanovas
Lithuanian Institute of History

Room 109 DEXTRUM II

A01: Artistic practices and ecological knowing (Chair: Ieva Astahovska)

69 SENSE: Embodied encounters with deep ecological time through audiovisual data translation
Kaj Boonstra, Emma Little
Studio Metaform

70 Coastal Baltic Boreal meadows as seen by the Machine: plant community classification
Vineta Gailīte, Kaupo Kokamägi, Dmitrii Krasnov, Raul Sampaio de Lima
Estonian University of Life Sciences

71 Purvas / Purvs: the land that still remembers water
Arūnė Baronaitė
Vilnius Academy of Arts

72 To listen, to hear, to feel, to act: cultural legacy, artistic practice, ecological attention, and communication
Helēna Spridzāne
Trejdegsnis, University of Latvia

Room 405

P06: Women and/as animals: gendered animality and multispecies relations in contemporary literature (Chair: Sara Bédard-Goulet)

73 North Pacific elegies in Baltic literatures
Dace Bula
University of Latvia

74 Embodied empathy and feral care in Laura Jean McKay's The Animals in That Country
Rūta Šlapkauskaitė
Vilnius University

75 Specimen & gender in French commissioned museum autotheory
Sara Bédard-Goulet
University of Tartu, Utrecht University

76 The nature of winged bodies: Siiri Enoranta's fantasy novel Nocturnal Lifelines as an allegory for the Anthropocene
Radvilė Musteikytė
Vilnius University, University of Turku

Room 702 AERIS

S10: Landscape memory, experience and meaning (Chair: Hannes Palang)

77 Inhabiting and observing: generational differences in Estonian landscape conceptualisation
Mari Uusküla, Hannes Palang
Tallinn University

78 Landscapes of well-being and memory in uncertain times: nature, memory and belonging in young adults' narratives
Kadri Maikov
Estonian University of Life Sciences

79 The wanderings of a homestead: spatial control, materiality and memory landscapes in Northern Latgale
Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenka
University of Latvia

80 From military frontier to energy landscape: landscape transformation in Skrunda, Latvia
Ieva Garda-Rozenberga, Ginta Elksne
University of Latvia

PARALLEL SESSIONS

14:00-15:30, 3 DECEMBER, THURSDAY

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Beata J. Gawryszewska[1], Anna Wilczyńska[2], Maciej Łepkowski[1]
[1]Warsaw University of Life Sciences, [2]Riga Stradiņš University

82 Pockets of muddy time: entanglements of extracted grounds, bodily ecologies and political imaginaries
Delphine Rumo
Aalto University

83 Lingering lines: infrastructure, absence and urban nature
Maarja Kaaristo
Tallinn University, Manchester Metropolitan University

84 Lingering water: porous embodiment of spaces in-between
Paula Lūcija Lejiņa
University of Latvia

Room 405

S09: Artistic and sensory engagements with environments (Chair: Annija Danenberga)

85 Breathing history: pollen and haunting ecological time
Mélissa Aïnseba
Utrecht University

86 An unpredictable ground: earth sciences in the poetry of the Second Avant-garde in Poland
Łukasz Kraj
Jagiellonian University of Krakow

87 The challenge of constant flux: the historical co-walking method for ecology of memories
Tomas Vaiseta
Vilnius University

88 Agency of waste in ecotheatrical performances for young audiences
Kitija Balcare
University of Latvia

Room 702 AERIS

S05: Animals, care and coexistence (Chair: Anita Zariņa)

89 The world of seabirds reshuffled: the real and imagined cormorants in Estonia
Elle-Mari Talivee[1], Ene-Reet Soovik[2]
[1]Estonian Academy of Sciences, [2]University of Tartu

90 Fluid categories of wild animals and the material politics of coexistence
Juha Kotilainen[1], Anita Zariņa[2]
[1]University of Eastern Finland, [2]University of Latvia

91 Towards a 'seascape of concern' on Poland's Hel Peninsula
Antoni Barc
Central European University

92 Three dilemmas of animal hoarding in Latvia's urban setting
Staņislavs Šeiko
Baltic Studies Centre

POSTER SESSION

13:30-14:00, 3 DECEMBER, THURSDAY

GROUND FLOOR

93 Consolidation of blue humanities in Estonia: state of the art and perspectives for the future
Ene-Reet Soovik[1], Elle-Mari Talivee[2], Julia Kuznetski[3]
[1]University of Tartu, [2]Estonian Academy of Sciences, [3]Tallinn University

94 Restructuring historical thinking: environmental history as a pathway to democratic resilience
Uku Valner
Tallinn University

95 Phenology as relational practice: designing conditions for reorienting attention toward plant life
Keili Koppel
University of Edinburgh

96 Future green careers
Ivana Poláčková
CEEV Živica

97 Scots pine genetic studies of vegetation in southern Lithuania in the Allerød: the case of Pamerkiai
Jurata Buchovska, Linas Daugnora, Algirdas Girininkas
Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry

98 Holocene mire development and environmental change in the Lubāns Wetland, eastern Latvia
Elīna Reire, Laimdota Kalniņa, Normunds Stivriņš
University of Latvia

99 Mapping climate fanfiction on AO3: self-tagging of environmental narratives
Tatjana Menise, Lisa Yankovskaya
Riga Technical University

100 The Aral Sea: solastalgia and cultural responses to ecological loss
Marinika Sadgyan
Sorbonne University, ENSA Paris-Est

101 The transformation of Hoftenberg Manor Historical Park and cultural landscape change in southeastern Latvia
Marika Kuciņa
Daugavpils University

102 How do people value aquatic ecosystems, perceive eutrophication and evaluate different solutions?
Agnese Reķe
University of Latvia

103 Community food forests in Estonia: cultivating food, biodiversity and social-ecological relations through participatory practice
Joanna Storie[1], Jekaterina Balicka[1], Maarja Käger[2], Maarja Olesk[2]
[1]Estonian University of Life Sciences, [2]Institute of Baltic Studies

ABSTRACTS

S02 | IMAGINING, MANAGING AND PROTECTING NATURE

Tuesday, 1 December | 15:30–17:00 | Room 334 | Chair: Elle-Mari Talivee

01| Tracing values in media narratives of land use change across four national contexts

Maja Debevec[1], Elīna Dāce[2], Jennifer Kraaijveld[3], Miks Brasliņš[2], Tadej Bevk[1], Simeon Vaňo[4], Peter Mederly[4], Marije Schaafsma[3]

[1] University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Slovenia

[2] Baltic Studies Centre, Latvia

[3] Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

[4] Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (UKF), Slovakia

Media narratives of land use describe relationships among societies, landscapes, and more-than-human worlds, through which these relationships are articulated and contested. This paper explores how land use change has been framed in the media between 2000 and 2024 across four European contexts: the Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Latvia. Drawing on an AI-assisted qualitative content analysis of 545 media articles, the study is guided by the IPBES Life Framework of Values to trace how instrumental, relational, and intrinsic values are expressed and embedded in public narratives. Rather than treating values as static categories, the analysis examines how media representations shape particular understandings of human–environment relations and forms of coexistence. The findings illustrate that value orientations are not only context-dependent but also shift over time, reflecting broader socio-environmental transformations and changing imaginaries of land use. Across cases, media narratives variously construct land as a resource, heritage, or living system, revealing tensions between economic, cultural, and ecological perspectives. By bringing together environmental humanities perspectives with AI-supported analysis, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions on how narratives mediate relationships between humans and more-than-human environments. It also reflects on the possibilities and limitations of AI tools for engaging with large-scale qualitative material while preserving interpretive depth.

Keywords: Land use change narratives; Societal values; IPBES Life framework of values; More-than-human relations; Media analysis; AI-assisted research

Maja Debevec is a researcher at the University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Landscape Architecture. Her research focuses on settlement heritage and urban revitalisation, participatory practices in spatial planning, integrated spatial planning approaches, regional energy transition, and climate adaptation.

Elīna Dāce holds a PhD degree in environmental engineering and a master's degree in social sciences. Her research work is characterised by multi-disciplinary and integrated application of quantitative and qualitative research approaches to study transition towards circular bioeconomy. She has published widely on modelling and assessment applications to various socio-technical systems as agricultural, forestry, waste management, and energy systems.

02| Nature reserves along the Baltic Sea coast in Finland, 1900–1980

Matti O. Hannikainen

University of Helsinki, Department of Philosophy, History and Art Studies, Finland

In Finland, national parks are considered the pinnacle of nature conservation. All but one of the original national parks established in 1938 were located in the northern part of the country. Located on the southern coast Stora Träskö was the exception. The Baltic Sea and its coast have been an important but, so far, less studied loci of nature conservation. This paper analyses and explains

therefore the creation and role of nature reserves that were established along the Finnish coast between 1900 and 1980. Why were they created, and by whom, and what was their role in the national discourse on nature conservation. By analysing the municipal and regional records, this paper sheds new light on the role of private landowners in Finnish nature conservation. The Nature Conservation Act (1923) divided nature conservation between the state and private landowners including municipalities reflecting the dominant role of state. This paper nevertheless shows that nature reserves created along the coast were originally private and that they were mostly bird sanctuaries. Their aim was to provide shelter for migrating and nesting waterfowl underlining the liminality and seasonality of coastal nature conservation. Curiously, a few areas bird sanctuaries were established as private hunting reserves indicating more ambiguous motives for preserving water fowl. In contrast to remote national parks, the coastal nature conservation areas were created in proximity of major cities, such as Helsinki, Turku, Vaasa and Tornio, which often lead to a conflict between public accessibility and nature conservation ideals. Yet private nature reserves were more numerous than national parks their number reaching 29 by 1970 when they covered nearly 29,400 hectares. Eventually, most private nature conservation areas were recognised both in national and international conservation treaties, such as Ramsar 1971, securing their status whilst their history remains little known.

Keywords: Nature conservation; Bird sanctuary; Landownership; Liminality; Finland

Dr. Matti O. Hannikainen is an associate (docent) at the University of Helsinki. His research interests are environmental and urban history. Recently, he has researched Finnish urbanisation in the 19th and 20th centuries and the history of fishing, notably trash fish, in Finnish society. His current research focuses on private landownership and nature conservation in Finland from the early 1900s to the 1980s.

03| The relations between rural knowledge, citizen science, and nature protection: the case of Matsalu National Park

Silvia Lotman, Stefan Ottens, Kadri Tüür
Tallinn University, Institute of Humanities, Estonia

Our presentation focuses on the historical beginnings of Matsalu National Park in Western Estonia, on the coast of the Baltic Sea. It was officially founded as a State protected area in 1957. However, the idea of establishing a bird protection area on Kasari river floodplains dates back to the 1930s. This ca 25 years' time period between the intention and its realisation is the main focus of our discussion of rural knowledge, citizen science, and nature protection. WWII caused a major disruption in Estonian statehood, nature protection initiatives, and rural settlement. Keeping up the ideas about nature protection and sustainable nature management was only possible on the grassroots level: local people with their knowledge of the ecologically valuable places and landscapes were in many cases able to maintain these through their daily activities. In the presentation we combine the story of Eerik Kumari, the initiator of the establishment of the nature protection area, who grew up as a local country boy in the same area, and the activities of the local men who participated in the network of nature protection trustees in the region both before and after WWII. Our aim is to find out whether present-day nature conservation benefits from the earlier integration of local rural knowledge into the official nature protection measures. This presentation is part of the activities of the HERA/CHANSE funded RURALEX research project.

Keywords: Rural knowledge; Environmental history; National park; Citizen science

ABSTRACTS

Silvia Lotman is a PhD student in Tallinn University School of Humanities in the Department of History. Her PhD supervisors are Ulrike Plath, Kristo Nurmis and Kadri Tüür and the topic of research is "Development of Estonian nature conservation thought in soviet era: role of institutions, popular movements and nature education".
Stefan Ottens is a History MA student in Tallinn University, writing a thesis about Estonian nature conservation trustees during the Soviet occupation. Research assistant for RURALEX. **Kadri Tüür** is researcher in Tallinn University and lecturer of Estonian language and culture in University of Toronto. Her field on research are ecocriticism, environmental history, semiotics of nature (ecosemiotics, zoosemiotics) and geocriticism.

04| The politics of riverscaping in Latvia: between hydrosanitary protection, ecological modernisation, and aesthetic ordering

Kristīne Krumberga[1], Kārlis Lakševics[2]
[1] University of Latvia, Department of Geography, Latvia
[2] University of Latvia, Department of Social Sciences, Latvia

Clean and free-flowing rivers are among the top priorities in contemporary water management and environmental protection policies in Latvia. At the same time, besides the scientific focus on the quality or state of water, the social imaginaries of what constitutes the most ecologically desirable state of rivers as ecosystemic entities, and how this should be achieved, vary across sectoral policies and among the public. Yet the idea of cleanliness and certain practices of clean-keeping remain present in all of them. In line with the perspectives of cultural geography, environmental history, and political ecology, we aim to trace how the idea of cleanliness has historically travelled and been moulded across diverse social, spatial, and sectoral policy contexts in Latvia, thus constituting the contemporary river imaginaries and politics of riverscaping. The study combines an analysis of historical and contemporary discourses on river-related management available in policy and public media sources, as well as insights from the national folk songs. While the multiple practices of clean-keeping and cleaning of rivers have shifted from sanitary to ecological discourse they have nonetheless become legitimated as culturally embedded socio-technical forms of control and spatial ordering. The study highlights that both modern environmental discourses and diverse riverscaping practices linking humans, rivers, and nonhumans have been continuously guided by sanitary anxieties, economic rationalities, and aesthetic ideals. This paper was prepared as part of the project "Water Cultures: A transformative approach for sustainable human-water relationships" (lzp-2023/1-0248).
Keywords: Cleanliness; Hydrosocial imaginaries; Riverscaping; Environmental politics

Kristīne Krumberga is a researcher at the University of Latvia working at the intersection of cultural geography and environmental history. Research explores changing narratives and human relationships with places, landscapes, and environments across their historical, political, technological, and phenomenological dimensions. Currently engaged in hydrosocial research, examining changing narratives, imaginaries, and practices related to water and aquatic environments in Latvia.
Kārlis Lakševics is a lecturer and researcher in social anthropology at the University of Latvia, working in political ecology and environmental humanities. He studies how biodiversity and decarbonisation are lived and contested in everyday life: building renovation and energy sufficiency, eco-social policy, and the governance of water and biodiversity data. He currently researches river governance and water cultures in Latvia.

S16 | METHODS AND PRACTICES OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

Tuesday, 1 December | 15:30–17:00 | Room 406 | Chair: Artis Svece

05| Envirotechnical landscapes method for studying the transformation of coastal entanglements

Kati Lindström
KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Division of History of Science, Technology and Environment, Sweden; University of Tartu, Department of Semiotics, Estonia

Since the 2004 publication of the Great Acceleration graphs, environmental historians have been writing histories of humanity's radical transformation of Earth Systems, yet often focusing on a single indicator at a time. Methodological nationalism, archival realities, and time constraints often lead to histories in which one aspect of the transformation takes precedence, failing to grasp the systemic nature of the Anthropocenic change. This paper proposes the envirotechnical landscapes method as a means to systematically study complex coastal transformations from integrated human and non-human perspectives. Combining envirotechnical systems analysis with landscape semiotics, this approach traces material flows, social organisations, ecological entanglements, and meaning-making processes across local, regional, and transnational scales. Envirotechnical systems analysis, as a historical method, entails detailed mapping of systems and their alternatives at each selected site and the identification of archival collections and oral history informants at each node. By treating landscapes as heterogeneous, contested spaces where forms, functions, processes, and cultural contexts evolve at different rates, the method can account for discontinuities and continuities over time and space. It also allows us to account for the patchiness of the Anthropocene – the fact that the Anthropocene develops unevenly in time and space. Lastly, since landscape analysis does not delimit itself to human agency, it also helps us to examine how fish, molluscs, jellyfish, forest creatures, and other non-human inhabitants have been entangled with the coastal technologies, and how their Umwelts have changed in the process of transformation. The paper will present examples of nuclear and military transformations of landscapes at the Baltic Sea and, in particular, in Estonia, highlighting the fuzziness and unruliness of the notion of the "coast". Although time-consuming, the method can be particularly valuable for locating alternative archival sources for phenomena whose archives remain classified or that never left a substantial archival trace.

Keywords: Envirotechnical systems; Landscapes; Coastal history; Nuclear energy; Military

Kati Lindström is scholar of environmental humanities with a background in semiotics, anthropology, environmental history and geography. She holds a docent degree in the history of science, technology and environment, with specialisation environmental humanities and uses of history from KTH from 2021. Kati has served as the ESEH Regional Representative for the Baltic States between 2017-2025 and has co-organised the BALTEHUMS conferences.

06| Grounding as a writing strategy, an emotional regulation and a semiotic process

Timo Maran
University of Tartu, Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics, Estonia

Emotions related to the environment are essential for developing empathy and a connection with the non-human world. However, they are also linked to more problematic topics such as climate

anxiety, and solastalgia. Drawing on the ambiguity of eco-emotions, this presentation focuses on the concept of 'grounding' as a conceptual tool and a practical approach. The aim of grounding is to connect thinking and emotions with broader regulatory processes and feedback loops of nature-cultures, thus overcoming problems stemming from self-closure. In my talk, I will introduce grounding as a creative writing and literary strategy, as well as a method in mindfulness and physical exercise. I will pay particular attention to the semiotic interpretation of grounding as the process by which the 'semiotic self' becomes interconnected with the multivocal semiotic realities of the earth (Sebeok, 2001; Maran, 2010). The presentation will explore various types and strategies of literary grounding, using examples from the translations of Jaan Kaplinski (2011), a renowned Estonian poet, essayist, and environmental philosopher.

Keywords: Ecosemiotics; Environmental writing; Semiotic self; Nature-culture

Timo Maran is an Estonian semiotician and poet. Maran is Professor of Ecosemiotics and Environmental Humanities at the Department of Semiotics, University of Tartu. His research interests are semiotics of nature-cultures, Estonian nature writing, and biological mimicry. He has published monographs "Mimicry and Meaning: Structure and Semiotics of Biological Mimicry" (2017) and "Ecosemiotics. The Study of Signs in Changing Ecologies" (2020). As a poet, Maran has published six volumes of poetry.

07| Citizen participation in the circular bioeconomy: a systematic review of everyday practices, drivers, and barriers

Neringa Vilkaite-Vaitone
Baltic Studies Centre, Latvia

Citizen participation is increasingly recognised as a necessary condition for sustainability transitions, yet its role in the circular bioeconomy remains conceptually fragmented and empirically underexplored. While the circular bioeconomy is often discussed through technological, industrial, or policy-oriented perspectives, less attention has been paid to how citizens participate in circular practices through everyday behaviours, community engagement, and acceptance of bio-based or circular solutions. This paper presents a systematic literature review of research on citizen participation in the circular bioeconomy and related circular economy contexts. The review follows PRISMA principles and draws on studies identified through Scopus and Web of Science. The search strategy combines three thematic areas: citizen participation, circular bioeconomy/circular economy, and drivers and barriers. The review aims to map the geographical and methodological scope of existing studies, identify forms and levels of participation, and synthesise behavioural, social-normative, and policy-related drivers and barriers. Citizen participation is understood broadly as active involvement of individuals and communities in activities that support circular resource use, including waste reduction, recycling, bio-waste recovery, biomass utilisation, reuse, repair, and engagement with circular products or initiatives. The analysis contributes to environmental humanities and social sciences by shifting attention from circular bioeconomy as a production-centred model toward the social practices and participation mechanisms through which circular transitions are enacted. The paper also identifies conceptual and empirical gaps and proposes directions for developing a more coherent explanatory framework of citizen participation in circular bioeconomy transitions. This paper was prepared as part of the post-doctoral research projec CIRCIPATE (project no. 1.1.1.9/LZP/2/25/324).

Keywords: Citizen participation; Circular bioeconomy; Circular economy; Sustainable consumption; Systematic literature review

Dr Neringa Vilkaitė-Vaitonė is a postdoctoral researcher at the Baltic Studies Centre. Her research focuses on consumer behaviour, sustainable consumption, green marketing and citizen participation in the circular bioeconomy. She has extensive experience in research projects and has published widely in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

08| Multidisciplinary and experiential teaching in environmental humanities: a case study

Anne Sauka
University of Latvia, Department of Philosophy, Latvia

This article introduces an educational approach for overcoming disciplinary limitations in environmental humanities and reshaping learning environments to include hands-on human-environment interaction. The methodological propositions in this article are developed through the case study of the course "Contemporary Approaches to Studies of Places and Environment." This course, currently taught by associate professor Anita Zariņa and associate professor Anne Sauka, is an elective course, mainly attended by geography and philosophy students, as well as earth scientists and students from other disciplines, including Erasmus exchange students. In this course, we challenge the students to overcome their disciplinary boundaries and introduce affective and embodied methods for researching the environment, as well as for reevaluating human-environment relationships. The course consists of 8 lectures and a field trip, where students actively engage with the environment on several hiking trips involving tasks such as affective mapping, "thinking with" the elements, silent walking, and others. In the first part of the article, I discuss the theoretical foundations for implementing hands-on and multidisciplinary practices in learning, in particular, for discussing human-environment relationships in graduate and undergraduate study settings. The second part of the article approaches the challenges and successes of the last three years since the course has been implemented in its current form and considers the benefits of implementing multidisciplinary and experiential teaching in environmental humanities.
Keywords: Interdisciplinary education; Teaching; Environmental humanities; Embodied critical thinking

Dr. phil. Anne Sauka is an associate professor at the Department of Philosophy and Ethics, Faculty of Humanities, University of Latvia. Sauka's research interests are mainly within the fields of environmental philosophy and ethics, biophilosophy, phenomenology of the body and new materialism. Anne Sauka's publications are available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anne-Sauka/publications

W02 Storytelling workshop: Birch (un)foldings

Tuesday, 1 December | 15:30–17:00 | Room: 701 CAELUM

Convenors: Linda Lapiņa[1], Liene Jurgelāne[2]
[1] Roskilde University, Denmark
[2] Independent Artist, New Visions and Rooted Festival, Denmark and Latvia

In this storytelling workshop, we (un)fold birch mythologies to offer love and nurturance for multispecies ecologies. We invite the participants to share and explore birch-human entanglements as relational multispecies practices, examining their (dis-)continuities across place and time, changing political regimes, intergenerational journeys and relationships. We develop the practice-analytical prism of (un)folding to explore the multiple roles of birch—as a tree to be protected in Baltic folklore; as a companion; as a witness; as a friend and an ally. Theoretically, we are inspired

by multispecies studies, Indigenous knowledges, affect theory and feminist new materialisms. Methodologically and empirically, we draw on our situatedness and intergenerational histories with birch as Latvian migrants in Denmark. We also draw on our work with herbalist practices, sounding and performance art with birch (Liene), collaborative autoethnography, memory work, lament and movement practices (Linda), in addition to our ongoing collaborations on sensory plant walks in Copenhagen. Folding together material from Latvian folk songs, performances, sensory walks and our family histories, we engage in storytelling that nurtures and sustains hope for multispecies flourishing—even amidst conflict, violence and inequality. In this artistic presentation and storytelling circle, we will invite participants to share birch (hi)stories from their lives, using prompts and methods inspired by collective memory work. Using creative writing exercises, we will then fold the stories together to create a collective tapestry that enacts intergenerational relationships with birch across space and time. The workshop aims to make visible and share everyday ecological knowledge in engaging with birch, juxtaposing this knowledge with ancestral and intergenerational perspectives.

Keywords: Birch; Multispecies worlding; Environmental storytelling; Artistic research; Everyday ecological knowledge

Linda Lapiņa is an associate professor at Roskilde University in Denmark. Her research is situated within arts-based environmental humanities, with a foundation in intersectional feminist thinking. She aims to cultivate sensitivities in how we relate to ourselves, our ancestries, each other and the more-than-human world. Her key interest is developing participatory, arts-based multispecies research methods, with a focus on urban naturecultures.

Liene Jurgelāne is an interdisciplinary artist, curator, and anthropologist from Latvia, living in Aarhus, Denmark. Her practice weaves together performance art, artistic research, and multispecies collaborations, exploring themes of community, ecological belonging, response-ability and agency in times of intersecting socioecological crises.

P01 | 'LIFE BY THE SEA,' REVISITED: RELATIONAL MEMORY, KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNITY, AND TASTE AT THE BALTIC LAND-SEA INTERFACE

Tuesday, 1 December | 15:30–17:00 | Room: 702 AERIS | Convenor and chair: Guntra Aistara

09| Ninety years of Latvian "Life by the Sea"

Guntra Aistara
Central European University, Austria

How have Baltic coastal fishing practices, culinary heritage, and the sea itself changed in the nearly 90 years since Vilis Veldre published his 1938 book "Life by the Sea"? This introduction to the panel will present ethnographic insights into these changes based on the project "Life by the Sea, Revisited," during which a group of researchers from five institutions organised six ethnographic expeditions along the 500 km of Latvia's coastline and collected over 200 oral histories and interviews from 2023-2025. This paper will introduce the overall themes of our forthcoming edited volume, which will be further elaborated upon in the panel's papers. Coastal residents have long made their livelihoods through entanglements and interdependencies at the land-sea interface, but any change in one element resonates through the entire socio-ecological network. While changes in fishing gear from natural to synthetic materials have made nets less repairable and resulted in a loss and subsequent revival of fishnet weaving skills, actual fishing techniques themselves have changed relatively little. Nevertheless, seasonal temperature, ice, and wind patterns have shifted

due to climate change, and the arrival of new species like the round goby and increase of grey seal populations requires adjusting existing knowledge and shifting fishing rhythms. Fishers may be quicker to adapt, however, than households, where more traditional tastes still make up the culinary heritage. The other papers in the panel will reflects on the malleability and adaptability of memory, knowledge, community, and taste in the making of new Baltic seascapes and emergent ecologies. We will also discuss planned continuation of the project in other countries around the Baltic Sea and welcome collaboration with other researchers in the future.
Keywords: Baltic Sea; Memory; Knowledge; Community; Ecology

Guntra Aistara is an environmental anthropologist whose research lies at the intersection of political ecology, food sovereignty, and environmental justice. Since 2021 Guntra is working on a project on Relational Baltic Sea Foodscapes and Seascapes on the Western coast of Latvia. This project investigates how coastal residents' knowledge, fishing and food production practices, social and ecological relations, and sense of place have been transformed over the last century.

10| Where waves meet land: navigating Latvia's eroding seascape through memory

Emīlija Anna Bušmane
Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology, Sweden

Bordering the open Baltic Sea on Latvia's western coast, Jūrkalne parish is known for its coastline, which forms part of the Strante-Ulmale-Jūrkalne bluff strip, the highest and longest in Latvia. The dramatically changing seascape is a site where environmental phenomena and issues converge, including thousands of years of coastal erosion from constant exposure to wind and the sea's ongoing "gnawing," the disruptive effects of climate change, and plans for an offshore wind park. This paper addresses the coastal environment of Jūrkalne as a seascape, meaning a relationality between sea and land, thereby tackling the ethnographic gap in research on Latvian seascapes, especially regarding their changing and memory dimensions, illuminating their mutability as lived, understood, and remembered amid uncertainty. Based on a multimodal approach, the methodological foundation consists of 10 weeks of fieldwork in the parish between 2025 and 2026, including participant observation, walking interviews, and the collection of audiovisual material. The findings show how coastal erosion is lived and understood through changes that inscribe time into the bluff and the disruption of seasonal rhythms. Furthermore, the impacts of long-term erosion are evident when one turns their eyes to "ghostly" absence, ranging from sentimental memories and shared notions that there was once more land to physical markers of change, reminding one of how much land has been lost. The findings also illuminate how memory and uncertainty shape the local people's imagination of the future, underlining some of the concerns surrounding the planned offshore wind park. As a result, the paper contributes to the emerging oceanic turn in anthropology, further bridging the previously prevalent nature-culture divide in seascape scholarship and highlighting the seascape of Jūrkalne parish as rich in meaning-making.
Keywords: Erosion; Memory; Sensory ethnography

Emīlija Anna Bušmane holds a Master's degree in Social Anthropology from Stockholm University. Focused on environmental anthropology, her recent research examines how a dramatically changing seascape is lived with, navigated, remembered, and contested, with a focus on the eroding coastline of Jūrkalne parish on Latvia's western coast.

ABSTRACTS

11| Changing to remain: continuity and adaptation in coastal fishing in Lapmežciems, Latvia

Anete Valaine
Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia

Coastal communities in Latvia have experienced significant environmental changes over recent decades, including the expansion of grey seal populations, the spread of invasive species such as the round goby, declining fish stocks, and shifting climatic conditions. While these ecological transformations are well documented, less attention has been paid to how local residents interpret and respond to them through culturally embedded categories of belonging and difference. This work will explore how fishermen and other coastal residents in the village of Lapmežciems conceptualize environmental change through distinctions between the familiar and "the other" and the hard division between local and the newcomer in their social relations. Drawing on ethnographic interviews conducted between 2023 and 2025, as well as planned participant observation and further fieldwork in 2026, the study will examine how ecological actors including seals, invasive fish species, and changing marine conditions become entangled with broader social narratives about community membership, tradition, and identity. The study contributes to environmental anthropology and coastal studies by highlighting how ecological transformations are interpreted through local systems of classification and by demonstrating the importance of incorporating community perspectives into discussions of environmental governance and conservation in the Baltic Sea region.
Keywords: Coastal communities; Otherness; Human-environment relationships

Anete Valaine is a Social Anthropology student at Riga Stradiņš University. Her research focuses on small-scale coastal fishing communities in the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea. Through ethnographic fieldwork, she explores how ecological changes, invasive species, grey seals, and broader social transformations shape coastal livelihoods and human–environment relations.

12| Reinventing tradition through adaptation: how young fishers sustain coastal heritage in Zvejniekciems, Latvia

Gundars Vītols
Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia

While many accounts of European coastal fisheries focus on decline and loss, the case of Zvejniekciems, a coastal fishing community in Latvia, offers a more nuanced perspective. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted within the project Life by the Sea, Revisited, this presentation follows two young fishers whose families have lived by the sea for generations and who remain committed to fishing as both a livelihood and a way of life. Rather than resisting change, they actively employ new technologies, European Union funding instruments, and transnational knowledge networks to sustain their profession. The presentation explores how environmental challenges, including growing grey seal populations and the spread of the invasive round goby, have been transformed into opportunities for adaptation. EU-funded seal-resistant fishing gear allows fishers to comply with conservation policies while maintaining economic viability, whereas the round goby has become a commercially valuable species, even creating new trade links with regions around the Black Sea from which it originally arrived through ballast water. The return of grey seals illustrates how ecological recovery can create new challenges for coastal communities. Local fishers recall that seals were present during the Soviet period but largely disappeared for several decades before

returning in significant numbers in recent years. Rather than viewing seals solely as competitors, fishers increasingly rely on new knowledge, technologies, and EU-supported innovations, such as seal-resistant fishing gear, to adapt to their renewed presence. The case demonstrates that coastal livelihoods can be maintained not through eliminating wildlife, but through learning to coexist with it.
Keywords: Baltic sea; Fishers; Traditions; Seal-resistant fishing; EU support

Gundars Vītols is a master's student in social anthropology.

13| Beyond edibility: round goby and the limits of foodscape transformation in Latvia

Jānis Šabanovs
Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia

The rapid spread of the round goby (Neogobius melanostomus) in the Baltic Sea has transformed coastal ecosystems and fishing practices in Latvia. While the species is increasingly promoted as a sustainable food resource and a means of controlling invasive populations, its integration into everyday food practices remains limited. This paper examines why ecological abundance and economic value do not automatically translate into cultural acceptance and culinary incorporation. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted in Latvian coastal communities between 2023 and 2025, including interviews with fishers and households, the study explores how the round goby challenges established understandings of edibility and belonging. The analysis is informed by a biocultural approach, which conceptualizes food practices as emerging through interactions between ecological conditions, cultural meanings, and social relations. By focusing on the tensions between ecological sustainability and cultural acceptance, the paper demonstrates how foodscapes are negotiated through human–more-than-human relations and competing understandings of what counts as food. Although the round goby is ecologically local and increasingly economically important, it frequently remains symbolically foreign within local food imaginaries. Despite being caught in Latvian coastal waters, it often continues to be perceived as "not our fish." The paper argues that edibility is not a biological fact but a culturally produced category shaped by memory, taste, identity, and place. The study shows how the round goby unsettles distinctions between native and invasive, local and foreign, and edible and inedible. In doing so, it contributes to debates in environmental anthropology and multispecies studies by demonstrating how ecological transformations reshape not only ecosystems but also cultural understandings of food, belonging, and human–more-than-human worlds.
Keywords: Human–more-than-human relations; Invasive species; Cultural acceptance

Jānis Šabanovs is a social anthropologist, researcher and PhD candidate at Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia. His research examines everyday food practices in Latvian families, exploring how relationships, resources and social norms shape food consumption. His interests include food and digital anthropology, gender, and coastal communities.

ABSTRACTS

S01 | ENERGY TRANSITIONS AND LIVED LANDSCAPES

Wednesday, 2 December | 09:30–11:00 | Room: 108 DEXTRUM I Chair: Bethany Wiggin

14| Green transition, grey realities: ethnic identity and energy preferences in Northeast Estonia

Stefan Tung
University College London, United Kingdom

Energy transitions in post-communist societies are not only technical and economic processes but also deeply embedded in questions of identity, historical memory, and social belonging. This paper examines how ethnic identity shapes economic attitudes towards the oil shale industry and perceptions of Estonia's energy transition in Ida-Viru County, a multiethnic region where Russian speakers constitute the majority. Drawing on original qualitative fieldwork conducted in 2025 to early 2026, the study is based on in-depth interviews with local stakeholders, including industry specialists, municipal officials, educators, and (Estonian or Russian-speaking) residents. The analysis explores how interviewees construct and articulate their attachment to the oil shale industry, and how these narratives intersect with broader perceptions of the country's environmental policy and the green transition. Particular attention is given to how economic concerns, especially employment security and regional stability, are filtered through identity-based experiences of marginalisation, historical legacies of the Soviet industrial system, and linguistic-cultural divides. The findings show that, for many Russian-speaking residents, the oil shale industry is not merely an economic resource but a core component of social identity and dignity, reinforced by intergenerational labour traditions and memories of socio-economic security during the Soviet period. These identity-based attachments contribute to scepticism towards national energy policies, which are often perceived as externally imposed and insufficiently responsive to local realities. In contrast, Estonian-majority narratives tend to frame environmental protection as part of national identity and future-oriented development. By foregrounding the role of identity in shaping economic and environmental preferences, the paper contributes to broader debates on governance, social cohesion, and sustainability in transitional regions. It argues that successful energy transitions require not only economic compensation mechanisms but also culturally informed and inclusive policy approaches that address identity-based divides.
Keywords: Ethnic identity; Estonia; Oil shale; Energy policy; Green transition

Stefan Tung is a Doctoral researcher at the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies. His research investigates the role of ethnic identity in shaping economic attitudes and policy preferences in Estonia and Latvia. He seeks to explain the divided levels of public support for liberal environmental and welfare policies in these countries, contributing to broader discussions on social cohesion and policy-making in multiethnic societies.

15| Wind energy infrastructure and the lived landscape: distributive justice in Saarde Municipality, Estonia

Anu Printsmann
Tallinn University, Centre for Landscape and Culture, School of Humanities, Estonia

How do relations between people, landscape and energy infrastructure change when an operating wind farm is proposed for expansion? This paper examines wind energy development in Saarde, a rural municipality in south-western Estonia. Rather than treating acceptance as a binary choice or

an automatic consequence of aggregate economic benefit, it asks how lived experience, procedural trust, perceived risks and benefit distribution shape residents' positions. The study used an impact-area-based mixed-method design. A standardised survey produced 106 valid responses from 250 residents and property owners (42.4% response rate). Online and paper questionnaires were complemented by telephone follow-up, six face-to-face interviews with previous non-respondents, and qualitative inputs from businesses and other stakeholders. The results describe respondents within the wind farm's area of influence and are not statistically representative of the municipality as a whole. Opposition to the proposed expansion was the largest position: 54% opposed it, 30% expressed conditional acceptance, 10% supported expansion or accepted it under existing terms, and 6% were undecided. Experiences of the operating wind farm ranged from no substantial disturbance to concerns about noise, shadow flicker, aviation obstruction lights and landscape transformation, alongside uncertainty about turbine siting and long-term responsibilities. Perceived unfairness in benefit distribution emerged as a particularly strong concern, rated a major or very major problem by 64%. Respondents prioritised a fixed low-cost electricity tariff and regular household payments, alongside transparent eligibility rules, effective mitigation, accessible information, credible monitoring and enforceable long-term responsibilities. The Saarde case shows that an energy landscape is not composed of turbines and financial flows alone. Wind development remakes relations among homes, institutions, infrastructures and more-than-human environments. Its legitimacy depends not only on whether benefits exist, but on who receives them, who bears the burdens and whether affected people can meaningfully shape binding conditions.
Keywords: Wind energy; Energy justice; Procedural trust; Benefit sharing; Community acceptance

Anu Printsmann is a human geographer and landscape researcher at the Centre for Landscape and Culture, School of Humanities, Tallinn University. Her work examines human–environment relations, maritime, mining, industrial and energy landscapes, participatory planning, and spatial justice. She combines qualitative approaches, including oral history and lived experience, with spatial analysis, and contributes to both academic and applied research.

16| Energy transition and the paradox of participation: the case of district heating and wind power in Denmark

Matthias Heymann, Bue Poulsgaard, Kristian Hvidtfelt Nielsen
Aarhus University, Denmark

Denmark is today one of the leading countries in wind power use and district heating with a share of 57.7% in 2025 in electricity production from wind and the largest district heating network in the European Union serving two-thirds of Danish households with more than 70% of the heat based on renewable energy. In this presentation we argue that these accomplishments come with a deep paradox. Wind power use and district heating were made possible based on citizen engagement but in the longer term led to a disruption of citizen participation. A unique feature of district heating development in Denmark was the creation of small local district heating cooperatives in the 1950s and 60s (almost 300 by 1972) that helped create a culture of shared heating. Likewise, Danish leadership in wind technology emerged from a cooperative grassroot movement in the 1970s. The oil price crises of the 1970s, on the other hand brought a deep transformation to central governmental energy planning and regulation. The Danish government pursued a systematic expansion of district heating and a shift away from the use of oil (since 1979), a phase out coal (since 1986) and a transition to biomass and waste-to-energy (since 1990). District heating became a vehicle of effective decarbonisation. Central energy governance, on the other hand, disrupted local

participation in district heating creating the 'unengaged citizen'. Likewise, the professionalisation of wind technology disempowered citizens. Local ideals and ownership gave way to extractive commercialisation by transnational corporations with public engagement largely limited to protest by affected citizens. This contribution will show that behind Danish success in decarbonisation and sustainable energy use is a hidden story of disempowerment and marginalisation of citizens.
Keywords: District heating; Wind power use; Public engagement; Disempowerment of citizens

Matthias Heymann is Professor of History of Science and Technology at the Centre for Science Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark. His research focuses on the history of environmental science and technology. His research covers the history of atmospheric and climate science and the history of global resources and energy.

17| The seascape of the Bothnian Bay: territorialisation through off-shore windfarms

Thorsten van der Kooij
KTH Stockholm, History of Science, Technology and Environment, Sweden

The Bothnian bay is a unique part of the Baltic Sea. The northern tip of the Baltic is a subarctic environment with a long history of human-water interactions. Yet the sea is witnessing rapid changes in the wake of a warming climate in conjunction with an increased interest in economic development at sea, captured under the term 'blue economy.' The term blue economy is not without issue however, as it fosters processes of turning marine spaces into resource frontiers, as also captured in the term 'ocean grabbing' (Barbesgaard, 2018). In this contribution, this process of ocean grabbing is further explored with focus on the role of Off-shore Windfarms (OWF) in turning marine spaces into resource frontiers. Prior research has proven how OWF development sparks reconsiderations of the politics of marine territorialisation, development of Marine Protected Areas and human-nonhuman interactions (Boemare 2023; Hung, 2018). Building on discussions concerning hydro-social territories as defined by Boelens et al. (2016), hydraulic infrastructures and assemblage thinking, the contribution seeks to add to current discussions concerning territorialisation processes in marine areas. Through the lens of assemblages, it is seen that OWFs produce a virtual and actual effect in territorializing marine spaces. The virtual effect is clearly illustrated in the planning of OWFs, as they are used as tools of modernity, rendering the Bothnian bay as an energyscape of the future. Consequently, an effect in actuality is brought about, as new legislation is used to demarcate and enclose windfarms as defined human marine spaces. In the end, the results allow us to question how energy infrastructures at sea reshape human-water relations.
Keywords: Blue economy; Off-shore windfarms; Ocean grabbing; Human-water relations

Thorsten van der Kooij is a PhD researcher at the department of philosophy and history at KTH in Stockholm with a focus on the history of Polar geopolitics. In the past, he has also worked on issues of environmental and geopolitics and marine infrastructures in the Baltic Sea.

S15 | ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINARIES, BODIES AND ECOLOGICAL LOSS

Wednesday, 2 December | 09:30–11:00 | Room: 109 DEXTRUM II | Chair: Anne Sauka

18| The Baltic Sea as a place and as an image in contemporary art

Ieva Astahovska
Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Latvia

I would like to propose a presentation on how the context of the Baltic Sea has been reflected in works of art over recent decades, and how this reflection has commented on political, social, economic and ecological relations and their transformations. I am interested in how the Baltic Sea, in contemporary art, reflects and echoes the connection between local, regional and global contexts, issues of belonging and identity, history and engagement with the past, whilst simultaneously addressing present-day problems. In the Baltic region, ecological issues interact with the consequences of socio-political memory, identity, nationalism and Soviet colonialism, and within the context of art, it is evident that this interaction is being explored, incorporating the maritime context as well. By examining the works of several artists (e.g. Inga Erdmane, Karel Koplimets, Oleksiy Radynski) and the approaches to artistic research they employ, in this presentation I would like to analyse them in relation to the concept of 'politics of place' (Adrienne Rich, Astrida Neimanis), which describes the connections and intersections between specific historical, geographical, cultural and socio-political experiences, as well as how these influence the boundaries of the imagination. In the context of a posthuman perspective, this involves both a critical examination of existing reality and an imagination of a world in which nature and the ecosystems around us are much more than merely a resource for satisfying human desires and needs, as our relationships with these ecosystems form a multifaceted and symbiotic network. In my analysis of these works, I also draw on postcolonial and decolonial perspectives on regional interpretations and examine how they reflect issues related to the region's complex political and historical context – not only through human experience, but also through relationships with other natural beings.

Keywords: Baltic Sea; Contemporary art; Ecology; Identity; Memory

Ieva Astahovska is an art scholar and curator who works at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, where she leads research projects concerning art and culture in the socialist and post-socialist period, as well as the entanglements between post-socialist and post-colonial perspectives in the Baltics and Eastern Europe. Astahovska has curated several exhibitions, including Ecosystems of Change (2021) and Decolonial Ecologies. Understanding the Postcolonial After Socialism (2022) in Riga.

19| There are no pearls in the Black Sea

Liina Siib
Estonian Academy of Arts, Department of Graphic Art, Estonia

This presentation will discuss the themes explored in the Soviet film "Amphibian Man" (Lenfilm 1961, dir. V. Chebotaryov and G. Kazansky) in the context of relationships between environment and contemporary audiovisual culture. Late summer 2019 in Narva, I'm on a field trip with my colleagues on the grounds of the former Kreenholm textile factory. Endless stretches of asphalt overgrown with ruderal plants between gigantic, empty old buildings, and the dried-up riverbed on Kreenholm Island. In this setting, the movie "Amphibian Man" comes back to me as a flashback. December

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1974, in a cinema in Tallinn, the final scene of the film plays on the screen: the boundary between land and sea, a sunset, and Ichthyander – a frail, dark-haired, big-eyed young man in a shimmering jumpsuit – giving his last kiss to a dark-haired, big-eyed girl. A pale, pearlescent glow reflects off the young man's limp body, which is no longer capable of living as a human on land. A creature with fish gills and human lungs will spend the rest of his life in the ocean. This film from the era of Soviet Thaw can be read as melodrama, ecological fantasy, science fiction and pop culture, a fairy tale, or queer modernism. It eludes a single genre definition, while it lacks a direct connection to a specific reality – except for the waters off the Crimean coast – it contains social commentary on themes of inequality and bioethics. These afterimages give me an idea to write a screenplay for an artist film inspired by "Amphibian Man" in the context of Narva. In July 2022, when I finally arrive at the Narva Art residency, Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine has begun. I have come to write a screenplay for a film that, under these circumstances, is actually impossible to make.

Keywords: Amphibian-ness; Clash of environments; Bioethics; Cognitive estrangement; Audiovisual culture

Liina Siib is a visual artist, filmmaker and educator based in Tallinn, Estonia. Her multidisciplinary practice is driven by the manifestations of how people's everyday practices and social spaces are experienced and performed. In 2011, her project "A Woman Takes Little Space" represented Estonia at the 54th Venice Art Biennale. Since 2015, she works as the Professor of Graphic Art at the Estonian Academy of Arts.

20| Unlively ecologies: protesting fossil fuels with David Buckel

Sofia Varino
Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany

In the context of necropolitics (Achille Mbembe 2003, 2019) and climate activism, this talk analyses the self-immolation of David Buckel, an American LGBT rights lawyer and environmental activist, as a protest against fossil fuel pollution in 2018. Buckel's protest can be understood as an attack that had deadly consequences for him, while also harming those affected by his death. The action, however, can also be read as a defence mechanism in a response against the deadly effects of fossil fuel pollution on human and nonhuman life forms. I am thus interested in examining Buckel's protest as an act of political autoimmunity, whereby a (singular) living body attacks itself as a protection/defence response against the (collective) extinction of non/human life forms. My analysis is closely aligned with anticolonial ecologies proposed by authors like Max Liboiron (2021), Kathryn Yusoff (2018), Mel Chen (2012), and Rob Nixon (2011), seeking to highlight how the effects of environmental exposure are differentially distributed to deem some (black, poor, queer, disabled) bodies expendable while protecting the liveliness of white, heteronormative ones. Building on my concept of the "unlively," the talk aims to make a contribution to the fields of queer ecology and energy humanities by mobilizing the materiality of fossil fuel pollution to examine non/human extinction.

Keywords: Fossil fuels; Extinction; Slow violence; Climate activism; Energy humanities

Sofia Varino, PhD, is an author and lecturer based in Berlin. With a focus on political ecology, their research and teaching interests include environmental and medical humanities, queer and feminist epistemologies, and transnational American studies. They are the author of The Unlively: Protesting Fossil Fuel Pollution with David Buckel (Routledge, 2026) and co-author of Aquatopia: Climate Interventions (Routledge, 2023). They teach at Humboldt University of Berlin. Website: sofiavarino.com

21| Becoming multispecies psychopomps: attending to the loss of animal intermediaries between the living and the dead

Benjamin J. Kapron
University of Western Ontario, Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism, Canada

In many traditional Baltic belief systems—broadly defined—other-than-human animals play meaningful roles as intermediaries between the living and the dead. Taking these belief systems seriously as sophisticated ontologies and in light of the significant decline of animal populations, this paper explores potential ramifications of the loss of such intermediary animals: how might losing the beings who connect us to ancestors impact cultural memory, foreclose certain relationships, and possibly contribute to a more-than-ecological loss of place and self? Drawing on environmental philosophy, Baltic ontologies, and ecofeminist thought, the paper responds to how, while animal populations are plummeting and an increasing number of species face extinction, the death that defines these crises is largely abstracted, overlooked, and sanitised into statistics, while worries about how the loss of biodiversity may impact humans tend to overshadow care for the actual beings who are dying. Relatedly, Val Plumwood presents an under-examined connection between ontology and ethics – questions of who is deserving of ethical consideration and what ethical relationships look like are influenced by ontological presumptions about the nature of different beings. The influence of ontology on ethics undergirds the lack of ethical consideration afforded to non-human animals and the dead within dominant Western society. The Baltic region, broadly defined, provides a pertinent setting for considering these concerns, which deserve further inquiry. Changes to human-animal relationships in the region have often been marked by broader upheavals, such as those brought about by the Baltic Crusades. Moreover, the region has a notable history of humans attending to non-human dead, including through funerary practices for bears, horses, dogs, and other animals. These practices might offer inspiration and guidance for building ethical relationships with dead and dying animals, helping us to become intermediaries between living and dead animals, just as animals have served as intermediaries between living and dead humans.

Keywords: ***Multispecies thanatography; Baltic ontologies; Funerary practices; Human-animal relations; Environmental ethics***

Benjamin J. Kapron is an early-career, interdisciplinary scholar, working primarily in Environmental Humanities and Field Philosophy. Kapron is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism at the University of Western Ontario. He completed his Ph.D. in Environmental Studies at York University, in Toronto, Canada. His research has been published in Radical History Review and Ecology and Society.

ABSTRACTS

S07| POLLINATORS, FOOD FORESTS AND SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL RELATIONS

Wednesday, 2 December | 09:30–11:00 | Room: 334 | Chair: Ivo Vinogradovs

22| Beekeepers at crossroad of socio-ecological networking

Jaan Liira[1], Mare Kõiva[2], Raivo Kalle[2]
[1] University of Tartu, Institute of Ecology and Earth Sciences, Estonia
[2] Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia

The traditional value of beekeeping has been the production of honey and other products, and pollination services. In recent decades, however, beekeepers have shifted from being simple service providers to ecological stakeholders actively involved in environmental monitoring and nudging towards sustainable land-use management. For example, in the name of honeybees, policy incentives have been developed for farmers to cultivate "beautiful flowers", which in fact, is beneficial for agriculture itself. In this presentation, we represent results of questionnaire among beekeepers about their social network land managers and nature. We assess the perception of small and large-scale beekeepers about the human-animal relationships in contemporary land-use practices and environmental information exchange. We see beekeepers as stewards of multispecies commons.
Keywords: Beekeepers; Honeybees; Multispecies communities; Social-ecological rural network; Sustainable environmental management

Jaan Liira is a broad scope ecologist. Research topics cover various habitat type, taxonomic groups, but also various socio-ecological systems, such as forestry, agriculture and beekeeping. He is an author of ca. 150 international publications.

23| Bees everywhere: auto-ethnographic reflections on everyday encounters with pollinator imagery beyond the field

Lūcija Ceicāne, Anda Ādamsone-Fiskoviča
Baltic Studies Centre, Latvia

This paper traces an unexpected byproduct of sustained immersion in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary pollinator research: the gradual, irreversible transformation of everyday visual attention of involved researchers to their novel more-than-human research object. While participating in a large-scale European wild pollinator restoration project (RestPoll), the authors began noticing notice bees - or forms that registered as bee-like - appearing with uncanny frequency across the textures of ordinary civil life. What started as a wry, private observation became a practice of systematic noticing, and eventually a methodological provocation. This auto-ethnographic paper draws on a personal archive assembled by two social scientists over several years of project involvement: photographs and screenshots gathered from urban environment, street art, packaging, fashion, carnival costumes, social media reels, commercial advertising, as well as own transforming office workplace. Many of these images were not immediately legible as bee imagery to an untrained eye. Yet they registered immediately as bee-like to researchers whose perceptual habits had been shaped by prolonged, yet previously unencountered, fieldwork with pollinators. This slippage - between an image's intended primary meaning and a trained observer's perception - becomes the paper's central analytical object. Rather than reading the archive as evidence of a broader cultural turn toward bees as an environmental symbol, the paper asks a more discomforting question: what does it mean to see bees where others do not notice, or do not pause

to look, and what kinds of knowledge - partial, embodied, species-entangled - does such seeing produce? Drawing on Anna Tsing's arts of noticing, Donna Haraway's accounts of multispecies attention, and Daston and Galison's concept of trained vision, the paper situates researcher positionality itself as a site of ecological knowing. It argues that the porous boundary between scientific immersion and everyday perception is not a methodological liability, but a generative space for environmental inquiry.

Keywords: Bees; Pollinators; Trained vision; Everyday ecological perception; Auto-ethnography

Lūcija Ceicāne, Mg.sc.admin., is a Research Assistant at the Baltic Studies Centre (Latvia). Her work focuses on multi-actor co-creation approaches to pollinator habitat restoration and rural development. Current research examines pollinator habitat restoration practices (RestPoll) and multi-actor approaches to preparing EU-funded agricultural innovation projects (PREMIERE), alongside evaluating the implementation and impact of the Social Conditionality mechanism in Latvia's CAP.

Dr.sc.soc. Anda Ādamsone-Fiskoviča is a senior researcher at the Baltic Studies Centre in Riga, Latvia. She has an academic background in sociology and in social studies of science and technology. Her research interests cover topics related to agricultural knowledge and innovation systems, farmer learning and decision-making, sustainable land use, agroecology, and transdisciplinary collaboration. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anda-Adamsone-Fiskovica

24| Growing together: food forests as living spaces of food, knowledge and community

Maarja Käger, Maarja Olesk
Institute of Baltic Studies, Estonia

The concept of food forests emerged in the 1980s to describe biodiverse agroforestry systems that mimic natural forest ecosystems to produce edible or otherwise useful yields. Like natural forests, food forests are densely planted areas that integrate multiple plant species and vegetation layers, from trees to root crops. By harnessing natural nutrient cycles and ecological succession, food forests form largely self-maintaining systems in which plants, pollinators, and soil microbiomes work together to provide organic, nutritious food for people and animals. There is an emerging interest in Europe in food forests as a way to grow food and reconnect people with nature, combining contemporary scientific knowledge with the wisdom of grandmothers. The FOOD FOREST project explores opportunities to establish food forests both in rural areas and in the middle of cities to meet people's nutritional needs and create green spaces that could bring communities and generations together to grow food, observe nature, and socialise. As part of this work, the project engaged diverse stakeholders in Estonia, Spain, Portugal and Italy in a participatory study examining stakeholders' views, needs and challenges regarding the broader adoption of food forest practices. Based on insights from more than 130 stakeholders, ranging from farmers to citizens, the study found cautious but positive attitudes towards the potential of food forests. While stakeholders questioned whether food forests can offer a sustainable alternative to current food production systems, they regarded food forests as particularly promising in urban and peri-urban settings, where they could serve as multifunctional spaces combining educational, social and ecological goals. This session presents the results of the study and outlines pathways for integrating food forests into farming practices and urban landscapes.

Keywords: Food forest; Biodiversity; Community; Agroforestry; Intergenerational learning

Maarja Käger is a Member of the Board at the Institute of Baltic Studies (IBS), an independent Estonian research think tank. She has worked at IBS since 2011 as a project manager and analyst

on evaluations and applied research in education, youth and the environment. Maarja manages IBS's work on the "FOOD FOREST" project, which develops sustainable food production solutions. Her work has involved stakeholder needs assessment, public engagement and food forest establishment activities.

Maarja Olesk is an analyst at IBS, working on social innovation, stakeholder engagement, sustainable development and digitalisation issues. Maarja has a PhD degree in public administration from the Tallinn University of Technology, where she researched collaborative innovation and co-creation in the context of digital government. Maarja is also working with the Open Government Partnership's Independent Reporting Mechanism to assess countries' Open Government Partnership action plans.

25| Community food forests: lessons from urban Estonia and rural Spain

Joanna Storie[1], Jekaterina Balicka[1], Gloria Niin[1], Maarja Kager[2], Marina Arias[3]

[1] Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonia

[2] Institute of Baltic Studies, Estonia

[3] University of the Basque Country, Spain

Community Food Forests (CFFs) offer a promising model for integrating ecological restoration, local food production, and community engagement in shared public spaces. This paper presents lessons from the implementation of two pilot CFFs: Mustamäe, an urban site in Northern Europe, and Artajona, a rural site in the Mediterranean region. Working through participatory design, stakeholder engagement, and targeted training, the project explored how permaculture principles and food system transformation can be adapted to contrasting socio-ecological contexts. Key activities included delivering Permaculture Design Courses and other training programmes, co-developing site-specific designs with local actors, and initiating on-the-ground implementation. These processes were supported by educational approaches intended to enable long-term stewardship and replication of CFFs in other locations. Despite delays and local constraints, the pilots successfully mobilised diverse stakeholders and built practical capacity for community-led management. The comparative cases highlight both the flexibility and limits of the CFF model. Challenges ranged from Estonia's short growing season to Spain's periods of extreme heat, as well as initial community resistance and misinformation. These were addressed through adaptive scheduling, strengthened communication, and expanded outreach. The findings suggest that CFFs can be effectively tailored to different climatic and cultural settings when ecological design is combined with sustained social processes, creating a robust foundation for future implementation and scaling of community food forests.

Keywords: Community food forest; Permaculture; Resilient food systems

Joanna Storie, Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture, specialises in the bioeconomy and nature-based solutions. Her work focuses on sustainable landscape planning, ecosystem services, and the integration of ecological principles into land use and development. She leads and contributes to interdisciplinary research and applied projects that strengthen landscape resilience, enhance biodiversity, and supports sustainable rural development, connecting academic knowledge and practical solutions.

Marina Arias is a biologist and researcher with over 20 years of experience in plant science, sustainable agriculture and environmental research. She holds a PhD in Biology and currently leads the EU-funded FOOD FOREST project, building a European network of Community Food Forests as Living Labs and educational hubs. Her work focuses on regenerative food systems, nature-based solutions, soil regeneration and climate resilience, combining scientific research with stakeholder engagement and innovation.

Jekaterina Balicka is a landscape architect and researcher at the Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU), specialising in landscape analysis, design and presentation techniques. With expertise in landscape planning, outdoor recreation and nature-based solutions, she contributes to international research and education projects focused on sustainable landscapes, human well-being and resilient environments. She combines academic research with practical design and stakeholder engagement.
Gloria Niin is a landscape architect, educator and researcher at the Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU). Her work focuses on urban forests, recreation, green space planning and nature-based solutions, with particular expertise in participatory GIS and user-centred landscape design. Through research, teaching and practical projects, she contributes to creating resilient, inclusive and biodiverse urban environments that support both human well-being and ecological sustainability.

S14 | ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: HISTORIES AND PRACTICES

Wednesday, 2 December | 09:30–11:00 | Room: 702 AERIS | Chair: Silvia Lotman

26| Marine environmental protection regimes across political divides

Lars Fredrik Stöcker
Nordost-Institut an der Universität Hamburg, Lüneburg, Germany

Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine in 2022 led to the suspension of all environmental cooperation with its Western neighbours, terminating a unique long-term experiment in transnational governance. Starting from the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, which propelled the establishment of the Helsinki Commission for the Protection of the Baltic Sea (HelCom) as a platform sui generis for transnational and transsystemic exchange, the Baltic Sea Region developed into a blueprint for joint marine environmental protection efforts around the globe. While the social science literature has approached transnational marine governance primarily as a post-Cold War phenomenon driven mainly by supranational bodies, this contribution offers a historically informed and agency-oriented approach to the convergence of norms, institutions, and behaviour in the wake of the global rise of environmentalism in the early 1970s, exploring the synergetic interaction of state and non-state actors in East and West to protect the common sea. Framing the environmental turn as a truly universal experience and catalyst of globalisation and European integration, the presentation examines the cross-border dynamics of environmentalist mobilisation across the geopolitical shifts of the late and post-Cold War era, addressing a topic that, again, has gained relevance in view of a new East-West conflict potentially jeopardising the achieved status quo.
Keywords: Maritime pollution; Baltic Sea; Cold War

Lars Fredrik Stöcker is a historian working on the history of Northern, East Central and Eastern Europe at the Nordost-Institut at the University of Hamburg in Lüneburg. His research interests and publications cover the political and economic history of the Cold War, diaspora and migration history, the history of state socialism and maritime history. His publications include the monograph Bridging the Baltic Sea: Networks of Resistance and Opposition during the Cold War Era (Lanham, 2018).

ABSTRACTS

27| Environmental protection of the Baltic Sea in interwar Poland. The work of naturalists and the discourse on modernisation

Małgorzata Litwinowicz
University of Warsaw, Institute of Polish Culture, Poland

With the restoration of independence in 1918, a small stretch of the Baltic coast became part of the Second Polish Republic. The Baltic Sea was immediately assigned numerous functions: defensive, economic, recreational and symbolic. In my paper, I would like to focus on another, in the Second Polish Republic the most neglected yet fundamental dimension of the Baltic: the environmental dimension. I will present the ideas and work of the most important Polish naturalists active during the interwar period: Adam Wodziczko and Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski. They believed that nature should be protected not only for scientific reasons, but also because landscapes, trees, and natural monuments formed part of national heritage and cultural identity. This approach linked environmental protection with historical and cultural memory. Natural objects from Baltic coast were often given symbolic meanings by connecting them with collective memory. I will focus also on the conflict between conservation and modernisation. During the interwar period, the Baltic coast was considered strategically and economically crucial. Railway construction, urbanisation, tourism, military development, and the growth of Gdynia port often took priority over protecting fragile ecosystems. Rare plants and coastal habitats seemed less important than national defence, economic growth, or social needs. In the paper I will shortly discuss fish protection, especially the Baltic salmon, showing that conservation efforts were usually motivated by economic usefulness rather than ecological concerns. Fish migration demonstrated that ecosystems ignored political borders, making environmental protection more complicated. Interwar conservationists recognised the unique ecological value of the Baltic coast, but their efforts had limited influence because the young Polish state prioritised modernisation, nationalism, and economic development. Nevertheless, the work of naturalists like Wodziczko laid the foundations for later environmental protection, including the creation of national parks and coastal reserves after World War II.
Keywords: Baltic Sea; Naturalists; Environment; Conservation

Małgorzata Litwinowicz is a cultural historian and Associate Professor at the Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw. Her recent research traces how Polish and Baltic societies have imagined, inhabited, and reshaped coastal environments since the XIX century, combining literary, ethnographic, and archival sources with attention to vernacular knowledge and everyday ecological practice. Her recent book is „Domestication. On cultural history of Baltic Sea in interwar Poland" (2026).

28| "When small rivers cry": caring for waterscapes in the work of the Latvian Nature and Monument Protection Society (1970s–1980s)

Karīna Ješkina
University of Latvia, Department of Geography, Latvia

During the 1970s and 1980s, environmental concerns became increasingly visible across the Soviet Union. In Soviet Latvia, the Latvian Nature and Monument Protection Society (Latvijas Dabas un pieminekļu aizsardzības biedrība, LDPAB) played an important role in mobilising public engagement with environmental issues through campaigns and competitions dedicated to water bodies. Drawing on archival materials, thematic calendars "Daba un vēsture", and historical periodicals, this paper examines two competitions organised by LDPAB: one focused on the protection of small rivers and another on the preservation and restoration of millponds and reservoirs created through

river damming. Building on care ethics and hydrosocial perspectives, the paper explores a tension at the heart of late Soviet environmentalism: how could caring for rivers mean both protecting them from intervention and promoting interventions into them? Rather than treating care as a singular environmental value, it approaches care as a practice through which relationships between people and waterscapes were maintained and justified. The analysis shows that the two competitions promoted different visions of what rivers should be. Campaigns for small rivers emerged from concerns that many waterways remained insufficiently protected in practice despite the growing institutionalisation of water protection and were increasingly portrayed as threatened by pollution, melioration, river regulation, and neglect. In contrast, initiatives dedicated to reservoirs and millponds framed care through maintenance and improvement, emphasising their value for fisheries, agriculture, recreation, water retention, and cultural landscapes. The paper argues that these initiatives reveal a central tension within late Soviet environmentalism. While both were presented as environmental stewardship, they promoted different ideas about which waterscapes, and which relationships between people and water, were worth sustaining. The paper is part of the project "Water Cultures" (lzp-2023/1-0248).

Keywords: Ethics of care; Rivers; Environmental history; Dams; Hydrosocial relations

Karīna Ješkina is a PhD candidate and researcher in environmental geography at the University of Latvia. Her research explores human–nature relations through ethics of care and other relational approaches, with particular attention to contested landscapes, nature conservation, environmental history, and human–water relations. Using qualitative methods, she examines how care practices, values, memories, and local narratives shape relationships with environments and processes of environmental change.

29| Dead trees, polluted rivers, toxic air. Oral histories of the ecological disaster in the Polish Western Sudetes in the 1980s

Marek Szajda
Civitas University in Warsaw, Poland

Environmental degradation was a visible reality, especially in industrial areas and larger cities, during the late Polish People's Republic. However, these changes were noticed gradually, in the face of actual threats, as exemplified by the ecological disaster in the Karkonosze and Izera Mountains in the 1980s. This influenced various social groups to take action at the local, regional, and national levels. Another environmentally harmful element was the Chemitex-Celwiskoza factory, which had a particularly noticeable negative impact in Jelenia Góra. As a result of bottom-up efforts, the plant was successfully closed in 1989. The aim of this presentation is to describe this ecological disaster through the lens of oral history. The presentation is based on recordings of 31 interviews with people involved in environmental activism. Among the interviewees were employees of various institutions, including the Karkonosze National Park, the National Forests Service, tourist guides from the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (PTTK), university professors, urban planners, and others. The recorded interviews also include individuals involved in shaping environmental policy, such as members of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). A distinct group of interviewees consisted of activists, including founders of the Polish Ecological Club, the "Wolę Być" Environmental and Peace Movement, and anti-communist opposition activists, including members of NSZZ "Solidarność," the Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity, the "Freedom and Peace" Movement, and others. This project is part of research on the social history of the People's Republic of Poland and environmental history. A particular strength of the study is its placement within the context of the "Solidarity Revolution" and the general social revival in the country. The

research will result in descriptions of pro-environmental activities that will serve as examples of the policies of the People's Republic of Poland at that time, as well as of social awareness and activism.
Keywords: Ecological disaster; Poland; Solidarity; Activism; 80s

PhD in history (University of Wrocław, Poland) obtained in 2023. Post-doc in Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński Institute of Sociology, Civitas University in Warsaw since 2026. Earlier researcher in 'Remembrance and Future' Centre in Wroclaw as well as in POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Vice-president of Polish Oral History Association since 2025.

P05 | SPECULATIVE AESTHETICS: NEW MODES OF KNOWLEDGE AND SENSIBILITY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Wednesday, 2 December | 14:00–15:30 | Room: 109 DEXTRUM II | Convenor and chair: Justyna Stępień

30| More-than-human sensing and modelling of the Baltic hydrobodies in Matterlurgy's artistic practice field casting

Justyna Stępień
University of Lodz, Poland

In Hypersea: Life on Land, Mark A.S. and Dianna McMenamian propose a theory on how life transitioned from a marine environment to land, extending the sea beyond its traditional boundaries and introducing the concept of Hypersea. As a biogeological system, Hypersea connects all living organisms, each enclosed within its own bodily systems, variations, in essence, of the sea itself. Water, in other words, facilitates evolutionary processes, accelerates our development alongside other organisms, enables multispecies connections, and generates differentiation. This theoretical perspective prompts a rethinking and reworking of traditional scales and scientific methods used to model sea and water dynamics, which fail to embrace more-than-human relations, thereby fostering further anthropocentric understandings of waterscapes. It highlights the necessity of implementing and promoting novel knowledge models that include, rather than exclude, nonhuman organisms as meaningful producers. This paper explores how artistic practices reconfigure scales and hydrological methods of data collection involved in sea sensing and modelling, thereby contributing to the revision of knowledge about the Baltic. To illustrate this, I will discuss Matterlurgy's Field Casting project, created in collaboration with marine biologists at the Archipelago Research Institute on Seili Island, which investigates how the Baltic Sea is sampled, monitored, and modelled amidst local and global climate changes. Grounded in extensive research and in community workshops conducted during the artists' island residency, the project reworks conventional marine observation practices. The paper demonstrates that Matterlurgy's artistic practice, while renegotiating the conceptualisation of the Baltic through multi-scalar forms and multisensory processes, accelerates the shift away from anthropocentric models of knowledge construction. The project, in fact, encourages us to rebuild our relationship with the nonhuman dimensions of the Baltic Sea and, as Donna Haraway asserts, to "become more answerable for what we learn how to see" (583) in the face of ongoing climate change.
Keywords: More-than-human; Multiscalar; Climate changes; Hydrobodies; Artistic practices

Justyna Stępień is an Associate Professor in Literary and Cultural Studies at the Department of British Literature and Culture at the University of Lodz. Her research engages with ways of conceiving ethical and political action in contemporary art, analysed through the methodological

perspectives of feminist theories, new materialisms, and critical posthumanism. She is the author of Posthuman and Nonhuman Entanglements in Contemporary Art and the Body (Routledge, 2022).

31| A small shift in sensibility: from aesthesis to eco-social relations

Vaiva Daraškevičiūtė
Vilnius University, Faculty of History, (Post)Authoritarian Landscapes Research Centre; Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Philosophy, Lithuania

This paper examines the possibility of transforming human subjectivity beyond anthropocentrism, drawing on the concept of "decolonizing the human from the self" as formulated by anthropologists Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Déborah Danowski in The Ends of the World (2016), and connecting it to the philosophical notion of aesthesis and the artistic practice of Lithuanian artist Eglė Budvytytė. The analysis begins with Danowski and Viveiros de Castro's ontological diagnosis: the modern human, cast as colonizer, does not stand opposed to the colonised but coexists with it within a single figure. Any genuine transformation of eco-social relations, therefore, must begin as an internal process – a decolonisation of the self. Building on Bruno Latour's distinction between the Moderns and the Earthbounds, and further informed by Amerindian perspectivism, the paper argues that the human's claim to exceptionalism dissolves when subjectivity and perspective are understood as distributed across living matter rather than exclusive to the human. The paper then explores how this reorientation toward new eco-social relations is initiated not through reason or political will, but through corporeal sensation. To theorize this bodily impulse, it turns to Alexander Wilson's concept of aesthesis, understood as the phase transition between the uncognised and cognised, and his approach of epistemaesthetics as a non-human aesthetics. This, it is argued, provides a philosophical basis for understanding how a "small shift in the realm of sensibility" can open toward genuinely different modes of relating to the living world. In the final section, these theoretical threads are brought into dialogue with Budvytytė's video work Warmblooded and Earthbound (2024), interpreting it as a somatic enactment of Earthboundness – a rewilding of the body that dissolves the fiction of the autonomous self and suggests more entangled, eco-social forms of existence.
Keywords: Sensibility; Aesthesis; Eco-social relations; Artistic practices

Vaiva Daraškevičiūtė is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Philosophy at Vilnius University, Lithuania. Where she also works as a senior researcher at the (Post)Authoritarian Landscapes Research Centre, as well as on the "Critique of Anthropocene Reason" project. Her recent research focuses on the aesthetics of the Anthropocene, the philosophy of art, and visual studies.

32| Sporadic ontology for the Anthropocene

Audronė Žukauskaitė
Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Department of Contemporary Philosophy, Lithuania

In "Field Guide to the Patchy Anthropocene" (2024), Anna Tsing et al. argue that we live in a "patchy Anthropocene," in other words, in an environmental situation which produces heterogeneous effects across different scales and temporalities. Together with colleagues, she created a "Feral Atlas" (2021), which demonstrates the impossibility of a singular, systematising perspective on Anthropocene environments. In this respect, it demonstrates the need to create a new "patchy" epistemology that would include diverse scales and temporalities while also respecting the incommensurabilities between knowledge systems and the unpredictability of research directions. This sporadic nature of knowledge can be related to Tsing's interest in mushrooms and mushroom

foraging (2015). Mushrooms reproduce by spores, which become important factors in the forest ecosystem, but can also be seen as a model for a scientific methodology. "Spores open our imagination to another cosmopolitan topology. Spores take off toward unknown destinations, mate across types, and, at least occasionally, give rise to new organisms – a beginning for new kinds. (...) In thinking about landscapes, spores guide us to in-population heterogeneity. In thinking about science, spores model open-ended communication and excess: the pleasures of speculation" (Tsing 2015: 227-8). This pleasure of speculation is exemplified in the musical performance "Spores: Mushroom Picking With a Therapist" (2025) by Lithuanian artistic duo Pakui Hardware. Weaving together sporadic movements of performers and spectators with unpredictable interventions of AI, the performance creates a human-technological interface directed by open-ended and sporadic actions. This artistic example makes me speculate that, to define the state of the art of knowledge and sensation, we need to rethink ontology not only as network-, assemblage-, or rhizome-like, but as a sporadic reality driven by contingency, chance, and unpredictability. In other words, the sporadic ontology defines biological, social, and technological modes of existence in the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Patchy Anthropocene; Patchy epistemology; Spores; Sporadic ontology; Speculative aesthetics

Audronė Žukauskaitė is Chief Researcher at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute. Her recent publications include the monographs Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's Philosophy: The Logic of Multiplicity (2011), and From Biopolitics to Biophilosophy (2016). She also co-edited (with S. E. Wilmer) Resisting Biopolitics (2016) and Life in the Posthuman Condition: Critical Responses to the Anthropocene (2023). Her latest monograph, Organism-Oriented Ontology, was published in 2023.

33| Nostalgic atmospheres for lost ecological-technological futures

Aurēlija Džordana Auzere
University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities, Latvia

By taking a closer look at digital atmospheres from the early days of the internet - namely, the aesthetics broadly termed as "Frutiger Aero" - the aim of this paper is to investigate how these visions of the future as a harmonious coexistence between the natural and the technologically advanced digital world are experienced as longing for a lost future. Characterised by glossy surfaces, transparent interfaces, and vivid depictions of natural elements (with water, grass, and blue skies being among the most recurrent motifs) Frutiger Aero articulated an environmental imaginary in which technological progress appeared inseparable from flourishing natural environments. The recent resurgence of these aesthetics can be understood as a form of digital nostalgia. However, this paper asks how Frutiger Aero digital atmospheres generate nostalgia for unrealised ecological-technological futures, not just longing for the past visuals of digital spaces. Through the lens of the aesthetics and phenomenology of atmospheres, I approach Frutiger Aero not merely as a visual style but as an atmospheric mode of inhabiting and anticipating environments. The natural elements embedded within these digital compositions produce affective conditions through which users could experience a future in which digital technologies would amplify, rather than alienate, experiences of the natural world. By asking how Frutiger Aero aesthetics embody a staging of environmentally "harmonious" atmospheric experience, the paper argues that this nostalgic yearning is oriented for ecological futures that promised a utopian and peaceful harmony with natural environments and technology within them.

Keywords: Nostalgia; Frutiger Aero; Phenomenology of atmospheres

Aurēlija Džordana Auzere is a PhD student at the University of Latvia and co-editor in the philosophy journal "Tvērums". Her academic interests involve the current field of atmosphere aesthetics and phenomenology, spatial affectivity, the intersection between phenomenology and non-representational geography.

S11 | CONTESTED LANDSCAPES: VALUES, CHANGE AND JUSTICE

Wednesday, 2 December | 14:00–15:30 | Room: 334 | Chair: Anu Printsmann

34| From wilderness landscapes to renewable resources: conflicts over glacial rivers and hydropower development in Iceland

Unnur Birna Karlsdóttir
University of Iceland, Research Centre in East Iceland, Iceland

Hydro-power projects have sparked major debates and controversies in Iceland in recent decades, and even as early as the early 20th century, this was a contested issue, a clash of progressivism, nationalism, and conservationism. This paper investigates the contested political and ideological meanings of water in contemporary Iceland, a northern context in which glacial rivers have long been central to national debate and controversy. In Iceland, powerful glacial rivers are simultaneously framed as vital renewable energy resources and as fragile ecosystems and emblematic landscapes that support cultural identity, wilderness imaginaries, and tourism-based economies. These competing interpretations have generated persistent conflicts over large hydropower dams and reservoirs, which are promoted as engines of low-carbon growth and energy-intensive industrialisation, yet criticised for transforming highland ecosystems, submerging geologically and culturally significant areas, and disrupting habitats. Focusing on debates surrounding the classification of Icelandic hydropower as "green" energy, the study examines how the benefits and burdens of hydropower development are unevenly distributed and how rural communities and traditional land users are marginalised within formal decision-making processes. By examining policy debates, activist campaigns, and media narratives, and situating these within a wider circumpolar and Northern framework, the article demonstrates that water in Iceland has become a key arena in broader struggles over environmental justice, resource sovereignty, and the configuration of post-carbon futures.

Keywords: Iceland; Hydropower; Environment; Glacial rivers; Green energy

Dr Unnur Birna Karlsdóttir is a research professor and director of the University of Iceland Research Centre in East Iceland. She completed her PhD in history at the University of Iceland in 2010. She has published several articles and two books within the field of Environmental History. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3836-8663

35| Contested landscapes: mapping value shifts and stakeholder narratives in Kaigu peatland over the last century

Vincenza Ferrara[1], Elīna Dāce[2], Maija Ušča[2]
[1] Stockholm University, Department of Human Geography, Sweden
[2] Baltic Studies Centre, Latvia

Our paper explores the use of the Kaigu peatland (Latvia) over the last century, focusing on meanings and values associated with local peat extraction. Within the HORIZON project "Planning Land Use Strategies: Meeting biodiversity, climate and social objectives in a changing

world (PLUSChange)", we combined participatory cartography and historical GIS to reconstruct land use change in these landscapes. The adoption of such a transdisciplinary approach has led to discover that conceptualisations of peat as a natural resource have evolved over time into a fundamental tension between economic dependence and ecological concerns. For centuries peat was manually harvested for local heating and small-scale agriculture. From the early 1920s, and accelerating during the Soviet occupation period (1940–1991), peat extraction intensified and was widely perceived as positive and desirable, as it sustained regional economic development, energy production, agriculture and local livelihoods. State policies and technological advances reinforced this view, framing peat as a valuable and necessary resource. During this phase, peatlands were understood primarily as productive landscapes, and their transformation was associated with progress, modernisation and economic growth. Even disruptive events, such as large fires, were incorporated into narratives of modernity, industrial resilience and continued development. From the late 20th century, the introduction of conservation frameworks, such as Natura 2000, and more recent climate-oriented policies (i.e., the Just Transition Plan), reframed peat extraction as environmentally problematic. Peatlands are now seen as valuable carbon stores and biodiversity habitats, while their exploitation is linked to ecological degradation. This shift has created tensions between the regional economic dependency on peat-related industries and growing environmental concerns, sparking debates on what should be the most sustainable ecological transition for these landscapes. At a deeper level, our work emphasises how adaptive land use strategies should consider layered perspectives and contested meanings.

Keywords: Productive landscapes; Participatory cartography; Ecological transitions

Vincenza Ferrara is interested in the investigation of nature-human dynamics at different spatio-temporal scales, and the implementation of such knowledge to address contemporary environmental issues within a deep time perspective. Within the overall framework of transdisciplinary research, she combines methods from historical ecology, paleoecology and integrated geospatial analysis, mainly focusing on rural areas and the biocultural heritage of their agroecosystems.
Elīna Dāce holds a PhD degree in environmental engineering and a master's degree in social sciences. Her research work is characterised by multi-disciplinary and integrated application of quantitative and qualitative research approaches to study transition towards circular bioeconomy. She has published widely on modelling and assessment applications to various socio-technical systems as agricultural, forestry, waste management and energy systems. **Maija Ušča** holds a degree in Human Geography. Her research focuses on land use, agriculture, food systems, and short food supply chains.

36| Restoring wetlands, unsettling relations: nature as a terrain of justice in rural Estonia

Marko Uibu
Tartu University, Institute of Social Studies, Estonia

How do environmental restoration projects become sites where rural residents negotiate not only human–nature relations, but also power, justice and collective agency? I address this question through the case of the Kikepera wetland restoration project in Saarde municipality, south-western Estonia. The intervention has evolved into a public controversy involving media attention, legal contestation and disputes over water, forests and restoration. Empirically, I draw on 40 in-depth interviews conducted in 2026 with local residents, municipal and state officials, and project organisers. I focus on a triangular relation between residents, nature and state-level institutions. Although the Kikepera restoration is presented as ecological repair, residents often describe it as an external intervention into a lived landscape of forests, drainage systems, roads, berry-picking sites

and local heritage. The conflict therefore concerns the political role of nature itself: which forms of nature are valued, whose ecological knowledge is recognised, and who has the authority to define restoration. Drawing on debates on forest conflicts, restoration politics and peripheralisation (e.g. Nousiainen and Mola-Yudego 2022; Keulartz 2009; Plüschke-Altof and Grootens 2019), I argue that the conflict is shaped by longer regional policies and by the accumulation of other interventions in Saarde like Rail Baltic or wind parks. Together, these produce a regional experience of being acted upon. The conflict intensifies local attachments to nature and activates strong claims about forests, water and local ecological knowledge. In this context, nature may become a symbolic ground through which residents defend the value and agency of a peripheral rural region against external actors, including state institutions, scientific experts, developers and, paradoxically, nature conservation projects. The study forms part of the WaterLANDS Horizon Europe project.
Keywords: Wetland restoration; Local ecological knowledge; Environmental conflict; Rural justice; Conservation politics

Marko Uibu, PhD, is Associate Professor of Social Innovation at the University of Tartu. Drawing on anthropology, sociology and media studies, he explores social change and innovation through communities, dialogue and co-creation. His current research examines local responses to forest rewetting and development projects in Saarde municipality. Other ongoing projects focus on social innovation in the just transition and on health interventions.

37| Between wasteland and wonderland: evolving meanings of mire landscapes in Estonia

Piret Pungas-Kohv
Estonian Fund for Nature, Estonia

Estonians are often characterised as either “forest people” or “coastal people,” yet the country’s historical landscape has been profoundly shaped by wetlands. A century ago, mires covered approximately 22% of Estonia, whereas today only about 8% of mires remains in a relatively natural state. This transformation reflects changing human–wetland relations and reveals how attitudes toward mires, their societal roles, and their cultural meanings have evolved over time. Perceptions of mires have oscillated between viewing them as unproductive wastelands to be drained and transformed, and valuing them as unique environments that support biodiversity, climate mitigation, recreation, and experiences of wilderness. Beyond their ecological definition, mires can be understood as dynamic socio-cultural landscapes in which meanings are continuously negotiated and redefined. By conceptualizing mires as multispecies commons and spaces of sensory engagement, this presentation argues that changing perceptions of wetlands reflect broader shifts in environmental values and social relations across the Baltic region. The presentation examines the evolving meanings of Estonian mire landscapes through the perspectives of environmental humanities and landscape studies. It combines cultural understandings of mires - captured in the Estonian proverb, “There is land, but it is not walkable; there is water, but not navigable” - with ecological definitions of peatlands to propose the concept of the mire-landscape as a framework for understanding the intertwined histories of nature and society. Drawing on 2006 and 2026 human-geographical surveys of the Estonian population, the presentation explores how attitudes toward wetlands have changed over the past two decades. Particular attention is given to subconscious associations, cultural memory, environmental knowledge, and perceptions of mire restoration, a relatively recent concept in the Estonian context. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions on environmental heritage, restoration practices, and the future of human–wetland relations in a time of ecological change.
Keywords: Mires; Perception; Relation with nature; Landscape

ABSTRACTS

Piret Pungas-Kohv is a human geographer and environmental awareness expert at the Estonian Fund for Nature, focusing on mires and their restoration. Her 2015 PhD explored heritage maintenance and sustainability, including changing perceptions of Estonian mires. Her current work combines research and practice, engaging local communities and exploring how people's relationships with mires change over time.

D01 | LIVING THROUGH THE CYCLE: DOCUMENTARY RESPONSIBILITY AND LATVIAN SEASONAL KNOWLEDGE IN A TIME OF ECOLOGICAL LOSS

Wednesday, 2 December | 14:00–15:30 | Room: 701 CAELUM

Convenors: Agnese Āboliņa, Conor Gorman

Human Collective

Drawing on the research undertaken through the making of documentary Latvian Myth, Conor Gorman, Agnese Āboliņa and Masha Segal of Human Collective invite participants to explore how traditional Latvian cultural practices shape our relationships with one another and the wider living world. A short film extract opens a roundtable with Baiba Moļņika, National Library of Latvia specialist and former Secretary-General of the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, and Inese Krūmiņa, folklorist, traditional belt weaver and leader of Latvia's 3×3 movement. Together, we will explore what it might mean to design and organise our lives in greater reciprocity within the living world, recognising interdependence, attending to ecological cycles, and considering how responsibility towards the places and communities we belong to can take shape in everyday life and collective action.

Keywords: Documentary responsibility; Latvian seasonal knowledge; More-than-human relations

Agnese Āboliņa is a creator, systems thinker, and guide, where she bridges deep ecological understanding with experiential design. Driven by a passion for cultivating a felt belonging to the living world, her work activates cultural memory by translating traditional Latvian myth, and seasonal rhythms into pathways for modern decision-making. Whether guiding systemic cycles or shaping environmental narrative structures, Agnese transforms raw curiosity into active ecological stewardship.

Inese Krūmiņa is a Latvian folklorist, educator and craft practitioner with longstanding involvement in the intergenerational Latvian cultural movement 3×3. Her work brings traditional knowledge into everyday life through storytelling, song, craft and seasonal celebrations. A contributor to Latvian Myth, she brings a lived perspective on cultural continuity, belonging and the relationship between people and nature.

Baiba Moļņika is the former Secretary-General of the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO and now works in reading promotion at the National Library of Latvia. Her experience spans education, cultural heritage and international cooperation. A contributor to Latvian Myth, she brings a perspective on how language, storytelling and cultural participation sustain collective memory and connect generations.

Conor Gorman is a filmmaker, co-director of Latvian Myth and co-founder of Human Collective. His documentary work explores culture, community and belonging through human-centred storytelling. His engagement with Latvian traditions brings a cross-cultural perspective to the film, opening questions about how inherited knowledge speaks to contemporary life.

Diāna Vaznele is a Latvian photographer, filmmaker, co-director of Latvian Myth and co-founder of Human Collective. Drawing on her Latvian roots and experience of living abroad, her work explores cultural memory, identity and relationships with place. Through photography and film,

she approaches song, ritual and seasonal traditions as living practices that connect people across generations.
Maria Segale creates spaces that invite people to pause, sense and enter into a deeper relationship with the places. She brings local ecology, craft and cultural memory into experiences of gathering and discovery. Her work explores how the textures, materials, stories and rhythms of a place shape how we feel, remember and belong and how designing with care can make room for new ways of living together. Founder of Sense Ability, a co-founder of Human Collective and co-organiser of this roundtable.

S06 | ANIMAL BODIES, PRODUCTION AND PROTECTION

Wednesday, 2 December | 14:00–15:30 | Room: 702 AERIS | Chair: Ulrike Plath

38| Masterminding the herd: animal bodies and the quest for improvement in the late Romanov Empire

Julia Malitska
Södertörn University, Sweden

Falling global grain prices from the mid-19th century onward, combined with the increasing meatification of human diets, pushed Western European farmers toward cattle husbandry – a strategy later promoted in the Romanov Empire by officials and agricultural experts. As debates over agricultural reform and the modernisation of cattle husbandry intensified, and as agricultural reformers sought to maintain a balance between different agricultural sectors, the need to assess and improve livestock "quality" became urgent. Animal bodies – now objects of modification, transformation, and management – came to occupy a central place in efforts to modernise a husbandry sector widely perceived to be in crisis. The paper examines how the renewed interest in cattle husbandry transformed human–cattle relations in the late Romanov Empire, and how these changes were reflected in the rhetoric and practices of the period. The underlying logics, rationalities, and dynamics of this shift were centred on the idea of bovine "improvement," a perspective that had profound consequences for both animals and local societies. By examining this shift in the context of the Romanov Empire, with a particular focus on the southwestern, Ukrainian provinces, the paper employs the concept of bovine biopolitics as a way to historicise and understand the profound transformations in human–cattle relationships during the late imperial period.
Keywords: Animals; Biopolitics; Cattle husbandry; Agriculture; Ukraine; Russian Empire

Julia Malitska, PhD in History, is a senior researcher at Södertörn University (Sweden). She has published extensively on Russian imperialism, the history of vegetarian activism in the Romanov Empire, and human-animal relations in history.

39| Tuberculosis, the cattle and child mortality. The relation between humans and cattle in Łódź at the first half of the 20th century

Magdalena Makówka
Museum of the city of Łódź, Poland

At the beginning of the 20th century, Łódź was a city with an enormous number of people suffering from TB. At that time, Łódź had about 500 000 inhabitants, and the majority of them were workers in the textile industry with low wages. One of the sources of infection was drinking milk from cows

infected with tuberculosis. This problem was important in the case of children, for whom milk was the main source of nutrition. In 1904, the organisation "Drop of Milk" was established in Łódź. The organisation took care of mothers and children, and one of their main interests was providing clean milk what drew the attention of the medical community to the problem of TB infections caused by contaminated milk. This paper considers how people in the first half of the 20th century perceived the problem of cattle with bovine TB. Were there any proposed alternatives to killing sick animals? I would like to present the change between the treatment of cattle with bovine TB at the first half of 20th century. My goal is to present the sick cattle not only as numbers in bovine TB statistics, but as actors on their own. The goal of this paper is to present the dichotomy between the cattle as a source of TB from one perspective, and as a source of healthy nutrition after the milk's pasteurisation from another. The purpose of this paper is to place this local context within the broader framework of the fight against TB and efforts to improve the living conditions of children from working-class families. The primary sources for this paper are materials collected in the National Archive in Łódź, the reports of the "Drop of Milk", medical journals from the beginning of the 20th century, and pamphlets published in local newspapers.

Keywords: History of the medicine; More-than-human history

Magdalena Makówka is a historian. She earned her PhD in history from the University of Lodz in 2024. Her doctoral dissertation examined Great Britain's relations with the Habsburg Monarchy between 1733 and 1740. Currently her research focuses on the perception of tuberculosis and smallpox in 18th and 19th centuries. Beyond academia she has experience in the cultural sector and currently work at the Museum of the City of Lodz.

40| Human-animal relations at sea: livestock transport and animal protection between Estonia and Finland in the interwar period

Karl Hein
Tallinn University, Estonia

In my presentation, I will examine the maritime trade of live animals across the Gulf of Finland in the interwar period, focusing on human-animal relations and the cooperation between Estonian and Finnish animal protection societies. Animal export formed an important part of Estonia's foreign trade in the 1920s. Live animals – mostly pigs and cattle – were shipped overseas, mainly to Finland and Sweden, where livestock prices were significantly higher. It was a simple and straightforward business model: livestock were bought cheaply in Estonia, transported across the sea, and sold abroad for profit. Transport by sea was inexpensive and technically simpler than shipping processed meat, since almost any cargo vessel could be used for live animals, while transporting meat required refrigerated ships. However, this maritime trade often resulted in severe animal suffering. Livestock awaiting departure in Tallinn harbour sometimes spent days without food, water, or shelter, exposed to rain, snow, or summer heat. Deaths from exhaustion and cold were common. Livestock ships were often overloaded, with animals tightly packed onto open decks. Sometimes the animals were crushed under their weight or washed overboard during storms. These harsh conditions soon drew the attention of animal protection societies in both Finland and Estonia. Animal welfare activists issued protests, demanded reforms, and began monitoring the treatment of animals in harbours and on ships. As a result, the treatment of animals during transport began to improve in the late 1920s and early 1930s. By examining the interactions between animals, traders, animal welfare activists, ships, and harbours, the presentation shows how changing ideas about animal welfare shaped human–animal relations and maritime transport practices across the Gulf of Finland in the

interwar period.
Keywords: Human-animal relations; Animal welfare; Maritime history; Animal transport

Karl Hein is a PhD candidate in History at Tallinn University and a high school history teacher in Haapsalu, Estonia. His doctoral dissertation examines the origins and development of the animal protection movement in Estonia. His research interests include human-animal history, environmental history, the social and cultural history of the Baltic provinces and the history of voluntary associations.

41| Embodied care, structural violence: human–animal relations in socialist animal production (Poland, 1950s–1980s)

Gabriela Jarzębowska
University of Warsaw, Poland

This paper examines everyday human–animal relations in socialist animal production in post-war Poland, focusing on the tension between embodied care and structural violence. Drawing on visual materials (painting, photography, film), archival sources, and oral history interviews with former farm workers, it reconstructs how interspecies relations were represented, practiced, and remembered across the transition from early socialist agriculture to industrialised farming. I argue that in the 1950s, dominant representations - particularly in propaganda and expert discourse - foregrounded intimate, affective relations between workers (often women) and animals, framing care, attentiveness, and emotional proximity as conditions of productivity. These narratives presented animal exploitation as a reciprocal relation, in which animals "returned" human care through increased output. However, from the 1960s onwards, this relational paradigm was increasingly displaced by technocratic and depersonalised models aligned with industrial production. At the same time, oral testimonies complicate this linear narrative. Even within large-scale and increasingly mechanised systems, workers recall persistent forms of attachment, communication, and cooperation with animals - alongside experiences of violence, exhaustion, and moral ambivalence. These accounts reveal a deeply contradictory field of practice, in which affective bonds coexisted with routinised killing and systemic neglect. By bringing together discourse analysis and micro-historical reconstruction, the paper contributes to environmental humanities and animal history by showing that industrial animal production in socialist contexts was not simply a story of de-animalisation, but of unstable, negotiated, and often paradoxical interspecies relations.
Keywords: Human–animal relations; Socialist agriculture; Industrial animal production; Biopolitics; More-than-human labour

Gabriela Jarzębowska, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of "Artes Liberales," University of Warsaw, where she co-develops and teaches in the first anthrozoology degree programme in Central and Eastern Europe. Her research lies at the intersection of environmental humanities, critical animal studies, cultural history, and the history of agricultural modernisation. Her current research explores livestock intensification and changing interspecies relations in socialist Poland.

ABSTRACTS

S13 | AGRARIAN TRANSITIONS, PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENTS

Wednesday, 2 December | 16:00–17:30 | Room: 334 | Chair: Anda Ādamsone-Fiskoviča

42| From production to environmental stewardship – shifting the role of farmers in our food system and the need for sustainable business models

Natalia Maehle[1], Pia Piroschka Otte[2]

[1] Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, HVL Business School, Norway

[2] Ruralis – Institute for Rural and Regional Research, Norway

European agriculture has historically followed a strong productivism approach characterised by heavy machinery and high use of chemical inputs. However, there has been a global shift towards more sustainable farming practices where farmers are viewed as not only food providers but environmental stewards of the land. Part of this development is an increasing focus on soil health. However, many of the soil management practices improving soil health are costly and there is a need for new innovative sustainable business models (SBMs) that reward farmers for increased environmental stewardship. One way of doing this is carbon farming which enables farmers to sequester carbon in their soils and earn credits that external companies can buy to offset their unavoidable emissions. The current study aims to identify building blocks for SBMs to support carbon sequestration in soils. Eleven cases of European and four cases of Australian on-farm carbon credit providers were analysed through semi-structured interviews and secondary data collection. These geographical contexts were selected due to the increasing focus on soil health in Europe and Australia's leading position in this regard. Preliminary results identify several key building blocks for business model design. First, to increase awareness about carbon sequestration and soil health, carbon credit providers engage in educational activities aimed at the general public, farmers, and companies. Second, the informants highlight the importance of carbon measurement, verification and certification services; however, to maintain credibility, these are usually outsourced to external agencies. Third, they indicate an interest in including biodiversity and other ecosystem services in addition to carbon, which is in alignment with the EU commission's roadmap towards nature credits. However, they admit that this requires development of new, scalable measurement tools to quantify biodiversity. Finally, there is strong focus on customer relationships as credibility is the fundamental "currency" in carbon credit markets.

Keywords: Sustainable agriculture; Food system; Soil health; Sustainable business models

Natalia Maehle is a Professor at the HVL Business School, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (Bergen, Norway). She is doing teaching and research in the field of consumer behavior, sustainable food, sustainable business models, and digital economy. Prof. Maehle has been involved in several large international research projects. She is coordinating two European research projects – the Horizon Europe project FOODMISSION and the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership project AQUABALANCE.

Pia Piroschka Otte is a research professor at Ruralis – Institute for Rural and Regional Research. Her research focuses on designing sustainable business models and alternative finance for climate measures in agriculture, with a strong emphasis on soil health. She leads several international research projects and publishes frequently in peer reviewed journals. Furthermore, she has a strong expertise in interdisciplinary research.

43| Trajectories for protein production and diversification in the three Baltic States

Alessandro Monaco, Elīna Dāce
Baltic Studies Centre, Latvia

Reducing dependence on imported proteins and fostering alternative protein industries have become strategic priorities within the European Union (EU). These commitments are reflected in policies promoting domestic production of plant-based proteins and the development of new protein sources. Against this background, this paper examines the trajectories of this protein transition in the Baltic States, analysing Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as interconnected cases of food-system transformation within the broader context of EU agricultural and bioeconomy transitions. The study investigates how European and national agricultural and bioeconomy policies support alternative proteins and protein diversification and assesses whether the sector represents a meaningful pathway for economic upgrading in the agricultural systems of smaller and emerging EU economies. This research also explores the contribution of alternative proteins to food security, strategic autonomy, and food-system resilience in the face of geopolitical, environmental, and market-related challenges. Methodologically, the research combines comparative policy analysis with agricultural and industrial empirical data. The policy review focuses on key national strategic documents, including the Latvian Bioeconomy Strategy 2030, the Estonia Circular Bioeconomy Roadmap 2023–2025 and initiatives such as the Lithuanian Bioeconomy HUB. The empirical analysis draws on national statistics databases and EU-level data on the Common Agricultural Policy. By situating alternative proteins within debates on bioeconomy transition, regional development, and agro-industrial transformation, the paper contributes to the emerging scholarship on the geography of food innovation in the EU. Adopting a political and agricultural economics perspective, it examines how different forms of policy support shape the development trajectories of alternative protein industries across the Baltic States and their capacity to generate economic and strategic value. (CROSSPRO, 1.1.1.9/LZP/2/25/325).
Keywords: Protein transition; Alternative proteins; Bioeconomy strategies

Alessandro Monaco is a postdoctoral researcher at the Baltic Studies Centre in Riga, Latvia, where he is the principal investigator of the project CROSSPRO – CROSSing socio-political barriers in PROtein innovation. The project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (project 1.1.1.9/LZP/2/25/325). His research focuses on food innovation regulation and on how societal perceptions influence policymaking in the food sector.
Elīna Dāce holds a PhD degree in environmental engineering and a master's degree in social sciences. Her research work is characterised by multi-disciplinary and integrated application of quantitative and qualitative research approaches to study transition towards circular bioeconomy. She has published widely on modelling and assessment applications to various socio-technical systems as agricultural, forestry, waste management and energy systems.

44| Winter as a dairy season: English butter markets and agrarian rhythms in Finland

Janne Mäkiranta
University of Turku, Degree Programme in Digital Culture, Landscape and Cultural Heritage, Finland

Agricultural societies have historically organised their rhythms around the seasonality of farming. The commercialisation of agriculture during the nineteenth century reshaped the meaning of seasons in rural life. The nature of this transformation depended on the specific form commercialisation took: which commodities were produced and for which markets. From the 1880s onwards, Finnish producers adopted the Danish model of dairy farming and began exporting butter to England. In the English butter trade, winter was the premium season: the competitive advantage

of both Denmark and Finland rested on developing year-round dairy production. Winter, an idle season in cereal cultivation, was thus transformed into the high season of Finnish commercial dairy farming. This paper examines what this reorientation demanded – from the organisation of cowsheds to the breaking of Baltic Sea ice – and asks why Finnish producers ultimately proved less successful than their Danish counterparts in mastering winter. The reorientation toward year-round dairying connected rural life to the emerging rhythms of an urbanizing, increasingly seasonless society. Where crop cultivation remained bound to the seasons, the biological adaptability of the cow made year-round dairy production possible. Yet the conditions imposed on cattle during the winter created animal welfare problems that remain largely unresolved to this day.
Keywords: Seasonality; Dairy farming; Agricultural commercialisation; Animal welfare

Janne Mäkiranta is a historian specializing in environmental history and the history of science. He has previously worked on the history of environmental health sciences but has increasingly focused on topics relating to weather and climate. He is currently working on the history of weather prediction as part of his postdoctoral project, as well as on historical significance of seasonality in the research project History of Winter, based at the University of Turku.

45| From manager to apprentice: how everyday practices and individual perceptions reveal semi-natural grassland practitioners' positions along a spectrum of human-nature relationships

Kristīne Estere Lūse[1], Baiba Strazdiņa[2], Solvita Rūsiņa[1]
[1] University of Latvia, Department of Geography, Latvia
[2] Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia

In Latvia, as in the rest of Europe, semi-natural grasslands (SNGs) have suffered a dramatic decline. While restoration efforts have intensified, a structural challenge remains: within LIFE projects, restoration is predominantly driven by public bodies and NGOs (Rigo et al., 2022), yet in Latvia – 77 percent of EU priority grassland habitats are privately owned (MoSARD, 2022). Shifting private land managers from passive bystanders into active restoration leaders through formal partnerships is therefore vital for long-term conservation success. Drawing on 18 semi-structured interviews with SNG practitioners across two projects (GrassLIFE and GrassLIFE2), this study investigates why land managers commit to becoming formal partners in SNG restoration and how their accepted roles manifest in their mindsets, decision-making, and everyday practices. We analyse how these individuals navigate their positions within hierarchical relationships between humans and nature – ranging from the traditional "Manager" to the deeply engaged "Apprentice" or collaborative "Partner" (Chapman and Deplazes-Zemp, 2024). The findings illustrate a diverse process of identity formation. Many farmers have firmly rooted themselves in their restoration roles through active engagement and learning, while others remain in a transitional phase, not yet fully associating themselves with the "SNG practitioner" role. Crucially, participants articulate profound personal anchors and relational values – from finding immediate peace among their cattle and the thrill of witnessing a black stork Ciconia nigra take flight, to describing a "mystical love for the land" where grasslands are "already in my bloodstream." Ultimately, this research demonstrates that practitioners' underlying relationships with nature dictate whether they dominate the landscape or partner with it.
Keywords: Social-ecological system; Farmer; Landowner; Formal partnership; Forage rationales

Kristīne Estere Lūse is a PhD researcher at the University of Latvia (Faculty of Science and Technology, Social-Ecological Systems Research Centre). Focusing on human dimensions of ecological restoration, her work explores how everyday practices, socio-ecological constraints, and

long-term economic viability form landowners' forage rationales, and how individual perceptions and relational values shape human-nature relationships in semi-natural grassland conservation.
Solvita Rūsiņa is an Associate Professor at the University of Latvia. Her research interests include environmental geography and biodiversity conservation. She is particularly interested in semi-natural grasslands: vegetation-environment relationships, ecological restoration and monitoring, agri-environmental policy.

S08 | ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND RELATIONAL WORLDS

Wednesday, 2 December | 16:00–17:30 | Room: 405 | Chair: Igors Gubenko

46| Waste and the self: purity, practices of forgetting and new environmental awareness

Mintautas Gutauskas
Vilnius University, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Philosophy and Faculty of History, (Post)autoritarian Landscapes Research Centre, Lithuania

This paper offers a philosophical interpretation of the transformation of waste practices in the Anthropocene, linking it to questions of selfhood, social order, ethics, and morality. The first part analyses the role of waste in our everyday practices. Based on M. Douglas and G. Hawkins, it begins with the spatiality and temporality of waste, showing how waste is a matter out of place, revealing the temporal structure of use-discard-forget, exploring the relationship between symbolic order and purification rituals, and connecting practices of forgetting to practices of the self. It then moves on to the challenges of the Anthropocene, which complicate the inside-outside distinction and practices of forgetting. In revealing the challenges of the Anthropocene, the main focus is on our changing attitude to waste due to awareness of hyper-connectivity and the accumulation of insignificant actions, and on the new environmental awareness emerging with its unique reflexivity, imagination, and responsibility. A new awareness is discussed, one that evaluates everything not according to the functionality of objects, but their potential to transform into waste. Zero Waste practices and new purification rituals will be analysed as examples of this new consciousness, lending a moral dimension to disposal and recycling. Finally, it asks how "old" and "new" awarenesses can coexist, shaping the conditions of everyday life in the Anthropocene.
Keywords: Waste; Self; Reflexivity; Social order; Everyday practices; Environmental awareness

Mintautas Gutauskas is a professor at the VU Institute of Philosophy and a chief researcher at PAScapes. For decades, his research interests were focused on phenomenology, hermeneutics, problems of dialogue, intersubjectivity, and language. His current research interests include environmental humanities, the critique of anthropocentrism and the anthropological difference, the Anthropocene, eco-phenomenology, and the philosophy of waste.

47| Semi-natural ecosystems: naturalness, environmental value, and human–more-than-human relations

Edit Talpsepp
University of Tartu, Estonia

Semi-natural ecosystems occupy a paradoxical position in contemporary environmental thought. Habitats such as traditionally managed meadows, pastures, and restored ecosystems are often valued for their biodiversity and ecological significance, yet their continued existence depends on human intervention. This raises a fundamental philosophical question: if such ecosystems are

considered valuable, what is the source of that value? Is it their naturalness, or something else? This paper uses the concept of the semi-natural ecosystem as a lens through which to examine the notions of naturalness and artificiality in environmental ethics. I argue that the distinction between natural and human-made environments is both empirically and conceptually unstable. Human influence has shaped landscapes, species distributions, and ecological processes to such an extent that the ideal of a completely untouched nature becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. At the same time, attempts to define environmental value through appeals to naturalness encounter well-known philosophical difficulties. Drawing on critiques of the wilderness ideal as well as Hume's is–ought problem and Moore's naturalistic fallacy, I examine several arguments that treat naturalness as a source of normative value. I argue that environmental value cannot be derived from naturalness alone, whether understood in terms of origin, historical authenticity, or evolutionary emergence. Semi-natural ecosystems challenge such assumptions by demonstrating that environments shaped through long-term human–nonhuman relations may possess considerable ecological and cultural value despite their dependence on human management. Rather than treating naturalness as a sufficient criterion of environmental value, I propose that conservation debates should focus on the ecological and ethical significance of biodiversity, ecological functioning, and the maintenance of enduring human and more-than-human relations. From this perspective, semi-natural ecosystems emerge not as anomalies between nature and culture, but as examples of how human and more-than-human worlds are continuously co-constituted.
Keywords: Naturalness; Semi-natural ecosystems; Environmental ethics; Biodiversity; Human-more-the-human relations

Edit Talpsepp is a philosopher of biology and science communicator. She holds a PhD from the University of Bristol and is currently a research fellow in philosophy of science at the University of Tartu. Her main research interests include essentialism and systematics in biology, biology's links to socio-political reasoning, the history of biology, environmental philosophy, and astrobiology. She has also written numerous popular-science articles on philosophical questions in biology.

48| Acting without Archē: towards an environmental anti-humanism

Ivo Vinogradovs, Anita Zariņa
University of Latvia, Department of Geography, Latvia

The environmental humanities have extensively criticized anthropocentrism, human–nature dualism and universal norms. Posthumanist, relational and multispecies approaches also recognize that replacing human authority with the authority of Nature only reverses the hierarchy. Less attention has been paid to how ecological norms acquire authority in the first place, and whether pluralist alternatives escape this mechanism. Relationality, care, ecosystem integrity or rights of nature can still function as ultimate references that settle what ought to be done. Reiner Schürmann's Broken Hegemonies offers a way to examine this mechanism. Schürmann describes how historically contingent referents become principles that make particular orders appear necessary. Latin natura is a central case. Nature described what exists, but it also served as an order assigning beings their proper place. For Schürmann, such principles are never complete. Their claim to universality is always contested by singular existence they cannot absorb. Ecological restoration makes this problem concrete. Selecting reference conditions, desirable futures and acceptable interventions requires consequential decisions. These decisions cannot be derived unambiguously from Nature, ecological science or a plural set of values, yet they must be made. A restored wetland is never simply the realization of a norm, and every decision excludes something

particular. We argue that Schürmann's tension between universalization and singularity does not supply a new foundation. Instead, it clarifies the condition of ecological judgment: acting through norms that are needed, but whose authority remains historically contingent and contestable. We ask how human–nature relations can be inhabited when no principle, human or natural, can finally justify the decisions they require.

Keywords: Reiner Schürmann; Hegemonic principles; Ecological normativity; Ecological restoration

Ivo Vinogradovs is an environmental geographer and leading researcher at the University of Latvia. His work spans landscape ecology, conservation geography, ecosystem services and human–environment relations, combining geospatial and interdisciplinary approaches. His current interests extend to environmental humanities, including questions of antihumanism and changing conceptions of human–nature relations.

Anita Zariņa is an environmental geographer and Associate Professor at the University of Latvia. Her research explores landscape transformations, environmental knowledge and governance, and the politics of ecological change. Her recent work focuses on water cultures, rewilding, and multispecies relations, particularly the contested histories and politics of human–beaver coexistence.

D02 | STEPPING OFF THE BOARDWALK: ON (ARTISTIC) PRACTICES FOR RELATING TO LAND/PLACES/SITES

Wednesday, 2 December | 16:00–17:30 | Room: 701 CAELUM | Convenors: Franziska Bax, Swantje Furtak

Contributors: Franziska Bax[1], Swantje Furtak[2], Lina von Jaruntowski[3], Meleah Moore[2], Soph Boobyer[4]

[1] Stiftung Kunst und Natur Nantesbuch, Germany

[2] Rachel Carson Center, LMU, Germany

[3] University of Arts Bremen, Germany

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This summer, a path—woven by many hands, made from long coils of sedges and reed—slowly grew into the reed thicket of a peatland in North-East Germany. For us, this became a practice of tapping into an ongoing conversation with the peatland—and with each other, in the peatland. In other landscapes too, environmental humanities and artistic research share a desire (urgency) for a shift away from extractive towards relational ways of knowing and living with land/place/sites. But sometimes it feels that the methods/practices available to us serve where we come from more than where we want to go. How can we get to know a place and make it legible (to ourselves and to others) without holding it captive in one approach, one version of its story? What practices of getting to know, relating to and telling about a place do you know, that reach through, to memory, lived culture, feeling? In this roundtable we'll follow site-specific, undisciplined methods and practices that want to navigate complexities rather than reducing to a single strand.

Keywords: Peatland imaginaries; Artistic and practice-based approach

Franziska Bax is a gleaner of stories on peatlands. What cultures, histories, politics, and imaginaries emerge where we live and work with them? She holds an MFA in artistic research as well as environmental humanities and now works as a freelance curator, writer and researcher. She is also a trainee at the soil network Forum Nantesbuch, where she works on finding ways into a relationship with soil.

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Swantje Furtak's background is a BSc in Biochemistry, a journalistic training and a MA in Environmental Humanities. For the last years I have been deeply involved in the field of peatland studies and will begin a PhD position at the School of Geography and Sustainable Development in St Andrews next January. I co-lead the project „Irrlichter" together with Franziska Bax this summer in which we build an uncommon path into the reeds of the restaurant „Moorbauer" in Northeastern Germany.
Lina v. Jaruntowski is a designer, researcher, and educator. She often works with collective editorial and publishing practices. Central to her work is the relationship between affects and technology within ecological imaginaries. She currently investigates dynamics of unfeeling in the ecological crisis within the material context of (knowledge) infrastructures. Her particular interest lies in feminist infrastructures and alternative temporalities, which elude capitalist narratives of progress.
Meleah Moore is a researcher and photographer working across environmental humanities, with a focus on extraction, militarisation, and the communities that live with them. She recently completed a master's at the Rachel Carson Center at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and also holds an MA in Sustainable Development from the University of St Andrews, where she was an editor for Stereoscope Magazine.
Soph Boobyer (b. 1996, UK) works across curatorial research, writing and pedagogy, examining gestures of display through embodied and collective practices. As Associate Researcher with DASH, she explores how exhibition-making and arts education shape encounters, focusing on D/deaf and blind ways of relating. She teaches at Design Academy Eindhoven and co-founded graft with Nikita Sena Quarshie. In 2024, she was Curatorial Research Fellow with Frame Contemporary Art Finland and Van Abbemuseum.

S04 | BALTIC ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIES: RESOURCES, INFRASTRUCTURES AND REPRESENTATIONS

Wednesday, 2 December | 16:00–17:30 | Room: 702 AERIS | Chair: Kati Lindström

49| Fiber and empire: the long lay of Baltic hemp, ca. 1800

Adil Mansure
Harvard University, United States

Indispensable to building and sailing, rope made movement, lifting, and connection possible, yet its ubiquity and perishability have rendered it largely invisible in history. This presentation draws from a larger project on the material and cultural histories of rope in British maritime worlds. Britain's relied on Baltic hemp (Riga and St. Petersburg) for over 95% of its needs, and from 1800 onwards, when political issues with Russia caused supply losses, the very cords binding empire were threatened. This ancient technology, once tacit knowledge, was under the microscope, transformed by not only fibers from across Britain's empire from South Asia to the South Pacific but also mechanisation and steam power. Across materials and techniques, the mechanics of twisting—formalised as torsion—remained vital to rope's ability to absorb and counter environmental force through stored energy. This paper explores those very techniques, especially their transformation as influenced by Sir Samuel Bentham's dockyard reform programme. In 1796, Bentham was appointed Inspector General of Naval Works, but only after spending 10 years building Prince Potemkin's navy and overseeing his factories and workshops in Russia. Tracing from East to West, the paper will show how Baltic hemp was not merely a commodity in a supply chain but a material actor whose specific properties—stiffness, strength, resistance to wear—structured British rope-making practice and, through it, bent material culture and environments across empire toward its own image, crowding

out the elastic, dynamically attuned traditions it encountered from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific.
Keywords: Rope; Material culture; Technology; Britain; Russia

Adil Mansure is a PhD candidate at Harvard GSD, researching maritime histories of technology, architecture, and the environment in the 18 and 19th centuries. His current research traces the cultural and material histories of rope within British maritime worlds—on the mainland, at sea, and across encounters with Indigenous practices in the Indian and South Pacific Oceans. He has practiced as an architect and taught design and the history of architecture at universities in Canada and the US.

50| Northern and Baltic fisheries on display at international exhibitions and world fairs in the late 19th century

Julia Lajus
University of Helsinki, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, Finland

This paper draws on results from a recent project that I began as a Smithsonian Fellow in the United States. It develops a history of governance of northern fisheries by examining how fish and fisheries were conceptualised, displayed, and debated in major international exhibitions. By treating exhibition displays as arenas where knowledge, technology, and economic interests were staged for expert and public audiences, I reconstruct key controversies and priorities in early fisheries management. The analysis is guided by five interrelated questions: Why did fish and fisheries become such compelling objects for experts and broader publics? What narratives did nations and regions attempt to communicate through fisheries displays? How did the circulation of display objects and related knowledge connect scientific institutions across borders? How, and through which actors and media, were "northern regions" incorporated into this expanding field of attention? Finally, how did these exhibitionary encounters translate into concrete practices of governance and business? Empirically, the paper follows a sequence of exhibitions—from the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia through the international fisheries exhibitions in Berlin and London and the 1893 Columbian Exposition, to early twentieth-century exhibitions in the United States and Europe. I show how these events shaped fisheries management, international knowledge exchange, and the commercial infrastructure of fisheries, including food production, canneries, and the growing industries of fish oil. While my earlier work focused primarily on American and Russian displays, this paper expands the comparison to Northern Europe, including Finland and the Ostsee Governorates of the Russian Empire. I conclude by outlining how a new gaze on these materials, including digital methods, could support systematic comparison of exhibition catalogues, object lists, images, and expert networks across countries and events.
Keywords: Fisheries; International exhibitions; Expertise; Technologies; Economics

Julia Lajus is a Core Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland. In 2025 she was a Senior Smithsonian Fellow at the National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC. In 2023 she served as a Visiting Associate Professor at Columbia University in the City of New York. In 2011 – 2015 she served as a Vice president of ESEH. She published intensively on the history of marine and polar environments, related sciences, and resource use, especially fisheries.

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51| A silenced riverscape: the transformation of the Nemunas Valley through the construction of the Kaunas hydroelectric power plant

Marius Ėmužis
Vilnius University, Faculty of History, (Post)Authoritarian Landscapes Research Center, Lithuania

During the construction of the Kaunas hydroelectric power plant (HPP), which took place from 1956 to 1960, the Nemunas riverscape near the newly built HPP was silenced. The concept of silence means that the riverscape was emptied of people and the free-flowing river itself disappeared. One of the most evident changes was that no lock or fish ladder was constructed, so fish could not migrate and boats could not pass through. Some fish species in the Nemunas simply vanished. What emerged—the reservoir—brought about another change as well: people were drawn away from the water, as eroded banks became steep, making the shore difficult to reach. This meant not only an environmental, but also a social transformation because the communities that had lived by the river, with it, and off it could no longer do so. The transformation was social in a second sense as well. The relocated inhabitants could not freely choose where they wished to move. Essentially, they were required to move into the newly formed collective-farm settlements. Although the countryside of occupied Lithuania had already been collectivised by that time, in many places collectivisation in part existed only on paper—people still lived in single-homestead farms or scattered villages and led lives quite similar to before, at least in their domestic surroundings. For some of those relocated, the move into a collective-farm settlement, where people lived more densely and where each resident was more visible to the authorities, brought about a changed way of life as well.

Keywords: Riverscape; Kaunas hydroelectric power plant; Authoritarian landscape; Transformations

Marius Ėmužis holds a PhD in history (2016) and is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of History, Vilnius University, and a researcher at the (Post)Authoritarian Landscapes Research Center (PAScapes). He is currently researching the transformation of the Nemunas River caused by the construction of the Kaunas Hydroelectric Power Plant. He is the author of numerous articles and books; his most recent book examines Antanas Sniečkus, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Lithuania.

W01 | RELATIONAL LANDSCAPES: AN EMBODIED EXPLORATION OF COEXISTENCE

Thursday, 3 December | 09:00–10:30 | Room: 109 DEXTRUM II

Convenors: Tīna Alise Kalēja[1], Annija Danenberga[1,2]
[1] Collective Fabula, Latvia
[2] Baltic Studies Centre, Latvia

Amidst planetary reshaping and the existential weight of the sixth mass extinction, conventional intellectual frameworks often fail to navigate rapidly destabilising worlds. This experimental group session, hosted by FABULA, addresses the crisis of orientation through Relational Landscapes: Navigation, a bilingual pocketbook publication grounded in embodied cognition. Moving beyond romanticised iterations of nature as a harmonious background scenery, the publication offers a composition of interdisciplinary self-guided practices as companions to encourage and cultivate

greater attentiveness to the complex eco-social relationalities we inhabit. Composed by eight international authors from diverse fields of design, anthropology, research, architecture, art, and literature, these spatial, philosophical, and artistic practices reject the reduction of landscapes to mere human instrumental value, reframing them as dynamic assemblages to intentionally engage the senses, emotions, and lived experience towards cultivating deeper socio-ecological knowing. Adapted specifically for an indoor setting at BALTEHUMS IV, the session treats the immediate environment as a microcosm of wider ecological tensions. Utilising a spatial layout that transitions between a centralised, dialogic circle and peripheral boundaries, participants will work through the publication's pre-selected practices in order to relate to (land)scapes as a layered phenomenon, wherein human-made structures and multispecies processes are inextricably bound. The co-creative session offers scholars and practitioners alike a tangible, transdisciplinary methodology to address how "worlds in relation" take shape, providing participants with actionable pathways to address contemporary questions about human-environment relationality. By reflecting a broader understanding of landscape commoning, it demonstrates how creative practice guides can help us navigate, narrate, and tend to our changing worlds. Ultimately, the session provides a theoretical landscape relationality perspective translated into a transferable societal and individual level framework for enduring within the planetary friction of the Baltic region and beyond.

Keywords: Relationality; Socio-environmental coexistence; Guided practices; Polyphony of (land) scapes

Tīna Alise Kalēja is a multispecies storyteller and social engagement designer based in Riga. She is a co-founder of Collective Fabula, holds degrees in Human Ecology from College of the Atlantic (USA) and Design from the Art Academy of Latvia. Her practice explores ecological relations through research, multidisciplinary design and experiential education. She teaches Speculative Design at the Art Academy of Latvia and co-leads educational projects internationally.

Annija Danenberga represents the Baltic Studies Centre and the collective Fabula. Alongside her professional research practice, she develops creative approaches at the intersection of spatial inquiry, strategic planning, environmental anthropology, and landscape design. By providing research-based participatory guidance, she positions landscapes as a dynamic space of human and more-than-human relations, opening pathways towards ecologically just and mutually inclusive living environments.

Project: https://www.collectivefabula.com/projects/relational-landscapes

P04 | REGENERATIVE ENERGY RELATIONS

Thursday, 3 December | 09:00–10:30 | Room: 405 | Chair: Frederik Frisk Bech

52| Rugbrødsmotor/ rupjmaizes stāsti. Everyday energy intimacies explored through rye bread tasting

Linda Lapiņa
Roskilde University, Department for Communication and Arts, Denmark

This performative, interactive paper presentation and food tasting explores the notion of energy intimacy (Carriou, 2017) through collective memory work (Haug, 1999; 2008; Onyx and Small, 2001), sensory experiences and affective circulations (Ahmed, 2004; 2014; Simões and Bonacho, 2026) around rye bread. Theoretically, the paper juxtaposes Indigenous thinking around and with energy intimacy with affect-theoretical perspectives that foreground emotional attachments, longing and "stickiness" of certain objects, and affective communities. Rye bread is a staple everyday food in the

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Baltic Sea region. Many of the conference participants will know rye bread intimately (rupjmaize in Latvian and rugbrød in Danish) from their childhoods and everyday lives. At the same time, rye bread is also a relational object, a complex source of energy, entangled with changing climates, exhausted soils, rising food prices, gentrification, class, and different, sometimes competing, culinary heritage traditions and inequalities. For instance, the typical Danish rye bread has the shape of the "brick bread" (ķieģelītis), a "cheap" type of industrially made bread in Latvia. Rye bread is also an example of inequalities in energy access. The wave of culinary tourism and gentrification in Copenhagen in the recent years has made even rye bread into a luxury source of energy, costing up to 60 DKK a loaf, nine or ten times the price of an "ordinary" supermarket rye bread. Rye bread is also a food that many migrants associate with a taste of home, a food that is embued with longing, nostalgia and claims of authenticity. In this sensory paper presentation, we explore the energy intimacies circulating around rye bread through a shared experience of tasting four different rye breads: two from Denmark and two from Latvia. We tap into food memories and culinary heritage, asking- how do we relate to our everyday sources of energy, and what are the frictions that emerge?

Keywords: Energy intimacy; Energy justice and access; Everyday ecological relations; Foodways and migration; Local and slow foods; Culinary affects

Linda Lapiņa works as Associate professor at Roskilde University in Denmark. Her research is situated within arts-based environmental humanities, with a foundation in intersectional feminist thinking. She aims to cultivate sensitivities in how we relate to ourselves, our ancestries, each other and the more-than-human world. Her key interest is developing participatory, arts-based multispecies research methods, with focus on urban naturecultures.

53| A poetic revolution: practivism, embodied hope and fractal change

Maria Toft

The Royal Danish Academy, Copenhagen / Roskilde University, Department of Communication and Arts, Denmark

This paper explores emerging forms of environmental activism in Denmark that do not only resist ecological destruction or demand institutional reform but seek to embody the worlds they long for. Drawing on my PhD-based mapping of Danish climate and environmental movements, combined with practice-based fieldwork as deputy head of the Danish Climate Movement, the paper investigates a growing practivist landscape of regenerative farms, green neighbourhood communities, cooperative ownership models and local infrastructures of care. Rather than understanding these initiatives as lifestyle politics or retreat from political struggle, I argue that they enact a distinct form of political participation: the poetic creation of new systems and societies in miniature. Through everyday practices of growing, building, caring, sharing and re-inhabiting place, practivists create small-scale worlds that carry within them the pattern of larger transformation. This is what I conceptualise as fractal change: embodied micro-practices that prefigure macro-political possibilities. The paper develops hope as the theoretical bridge between these scales. In dialogue with Joanna Macy's notion of Active Hope and Martha Nussbaum's reflections on uncertainty, vulnerability and the future, I examine hope not as optimism or prediction, but as a political and ontological orientation. Hope becomes the capacity to act from a future that cannot yet be guaranteed, but can be sensed, desired and partially brought into being. Finally, the presentation experiments with "poetic science" by interweaving political theory, empirical analysis and poems from my forthcoming collection Poetic Science. The poems are not treated as illustrations of the argument, but as part of the method: a way of thinking from the body, from relation and from the not-yet-formed. The paper thus asks whether ecological transformation requires not only new

policies, but a poetic revolution in how we know, act and create worlds together.
Keywords: Environmental activism; Hope; Fractal change; Regenerative farming; Intentional communities

Maria Toft is a political scientist and former PhD fellow at the University of Copenhagen's Department of Political Science. A guest researcher at the Royal Danish Academy and Roskilde University, she is completing a dissertation on green communities, care and societal change. She has served as deputy head of the Danish Climate Movement and founded the Danish Movement for a Free Academia. She has written two poetry collections, both in preparation for publication.

54| Regenerative soils – relational times: how worlds come into being in regenerative farming and permaculture

Kristine Samson
Roskilde University, Environmental Humanities, Denmark

How can our livelihoods be regenerated by relating to places and soils with timely care, and how can we understand temporality beyond the human – as more-than human relations coming into being? Through a sensory and interactive engagement with soils, their microbes and their nutritiens the presentation explores the energetic world-making practices of regenerative farming and permaculture. Regenerative farmers and permaculture gardeners work with more-than human relations and how these come into being through understanding of more-than human temporalities. For instance, regenerative farmers experiment with crop diversity over seasonal cycles to regenerate soils and nurture microlife. Likewise, permaculture gardening is a garden system working with perennials and how they grow over time and support each other through their nutrients, by providing shadow and humidity to the soil and by supporting each other over time. Inspired by these regenerative gardening and farming practices, the presentation sketches ideas of how another relational world can come into being through regenerative, temporal processes. Drawing on notions of "relational ontology" and "the pluriverse" (Escobar, de la Cadena and Blaser) and "life-cycle timing" and "temporal relations" (Bastian and Howitt), the presentation will analyse more-than human time relations as a way to cultivate and nurture regenerative practices for our planetary well-being and in our livelihoods.
Keywords: Temporal relations; Regeneration; Life-cycle timing; Relational ontology; Soil cultures

Coming from performance studies and arts-based research, **Kristine Samson** has developed theory and methods to analyse environmental destruction and repair, and to speculate and regenerate environments in world-making practices. She is currently interested in urban and rural placemaking focusing on more-than human co-creation and storytelling. As the instigator of Performative Urbanism Lab and the Earth Lab, she works with arts-based, participatory and co-creative practices of environmental care.

55| "Nothing comes to my mind": hidden companions of early career general practitioners in Latvia

Inguna Potetinova
Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia

Resilience is commonly understood as an individual, anthropocentric capacity — something a person possesses and cultivates through their own inner resources. This article challenges that assumption, proposing an alternative understanding: that resilience emerges through entanglement

with more-than-human actors who often remain unnoticed, unarticulated, and taken for granted. Drawing on thirty semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the study explores the everyday experiences of aspiring and early-career general practitioners in Latvia — a profession marked by bureaucratic burden, insufficient funding, high patient volumes, and systemic precarity. Young doctors face daily struggles with anxiety, burnout, and uncertainty about their professional futures. Yet they do not cope alone. Using Anna Tsing's art-of-noticing as methodological sensibility, the study reveals that GPs' resilience is co-constituted by a broad network of more-than-humans — houseplants tended on windowsills, forest paths and seaside walks, cats and dogs waiting at home, wearable devices tracking sleep quality, and AI tools consulted to "patch the gaps in knowledge." These companions operate quietly yet meaningfully — modulating, balancing, and sustaining everyday life amid structural insecurity. The research introduces a new analytical concept — hidden companions — rooted in Donna Haraway's notion of companion species and emerging directly from ethnographic engagement. It captures those more-than-humans whose presence is vital in sustaining resilience, yet remains largely invisible to the practitioners themselves. The study contributes to resilience scholarship by shifting the lens from an anthropocentric framework toward a socio-ecological understanding, in which resilience is co-created across entangled human and more-than-human worlds.
Keywords: Resilience; Hidden-companions; Health care; General practitioners; Latvia

Inguna Potetinova is a researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Riga Stradiņš University, and a doctoral student in Social Anthropology. Her academic interests centre on structural violence and resilience. She aims to contribute a posthumanist perspective to this body of knowledge, which is also the focus of her dissertation, exploring the role of more-than-humans in fostering human resilience.

P03 | CONSTRUCTING SOCIALIST RIVERS: WATER, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATION IN COLD WAR EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Thursday, 3 December | 09:00–10:30 | Room: 406 | Chair: Viktor Pál

56| From socialist river to continental waterway: reengineering the Danube, 1945–1990

Viktor Pál
University of Ostrava, Czech Republic

This paper examines how the Danube was transformed during the 1940s-1980s from a socialist waterway into an increasingly integrated component of a continental European transport corridor. It argues that this transformation did not result from a single engineering project but from the cumulative coordination of routine envirotechnical practices through which the river was standardised, measured, maintained, and continuously adapted to changing environmental conditions. Drawing on approximately 150 technical documents produced by the Danube Commission and focusing on the particularly challenging Czechoslovak–Hungarian Middle Danube, the article examines gabarit recommendations, reference water levels, threshold surveys, maintenance reports, route books, signalling systems, and hydrometeorological coordination. It shows how these everyday practices gradually translated environmental variability into common technical standards, operational procedures, and systems of interstate coordination that made continental navigation increasingly possible. Although the Danube remained politically divided by

the Iron Curtain and environmentally dynamic, standards, environmental knowledge, information systems, and maintenance practices progressively rendered its different sectors comparable and operational within the planned Rhine–Main–Danube corridor. The article argues that continental transport corridors emerge not only through engineering construction but also through the continual operational work that makes circulation possible. In addition, the article highlights how these practices created a form of infrastructural continuity across politically fragmented space, where coordination mechanisms partially compensated for hydrological uncertainty and infrastructural unevenness. It further suggests that the Danube Commission functioned not only as a technical body but also as a key site where environmental variability was systematically translated into governable infrastructure. The article contributes to environmental history and infrastructure studies by showing how river systems were actively produced as operational environments through repeated technical, administrative, and environmental interventions.
Keywords: Danube; Cold War; Rivers; Environmental history; Expertise; Danube Commission

Viktor Pál is a Lead Researcher at the REFRESH Social Lab, University of Ostrava, Czechia and has published scientific articles in Ab Imperio, Agricultural History, Environmental History, Environment and History, Global Environment, Journal of Contemporary History, Journal of Historical Geography, and other outlets. Viktor is also the author of Technology and the Environment in State-Socialist Hungary (2017).

57| Water for industry or politics? The construction of reservoirs in the Odra River basin in the second half of the 20th century

Michaela Závodná
University of Ostrava, Czech Republic

Using an interdisciplinary approach combining history and geography, this paper focuses on the issue of water management in the Ostrava-Karviná region during the second half of the 20th century. Using historical sources and geographical methods, it examines the extent to which the construction of reservoirs in the Odra River basin was actually driven by the growing demands of the Ostrava-Karviná mining and metallurgical industries, and to what extent it was a political decision dictated by the totalitarian regime. The aim of paper is to verify the hypothesis that the construction of reservoirs corresponded to the water consumption of the Ostrava-Karviná industrial sector was supported by relevant data rather than merely political demands and represented a significant step toward rational water management in this region. Using an interdisciplinary approach combining history and geography, this paper focuses on water management in the Ostrava–Karviná region during the second half of the twentieth century. Drawing on archival sources, planning documents, hydrological data, industrial statistics, and geographical methods, it examines the extent to which the construction of reservoirs in the Odra River basin was driven by the growing demands of the Ostrava–Karviná mining and metallurgical industries, and to what extent it reflected broader political priorities of the socialist regime. The paper investigates the relationship between industrial expansion, water consumption, state planning, and large-scale hydraulic infrastructure. The aim of the paper is to test the hypothesis that reservoir construction corresponded closely to the actual and projected water requirements of the Ostrava–Karviná industrial sector, was supported by technical and hydrological evidence rather than merely political considerations, and represented a significant step toward more rational and integrated water management in the Odra River basin. In doing so, the paper contributes to broader debates on socialist environmental governance, infrastructure planning, and the relationship between political decision-making and resource management.

ABSTRACTS

Keywords: River; Water; Politics; Czechoslovakia; Totalitarism; Reservoirs

Michaela Závodná works at as an assistant professor, her scientific work focuses on urban transport as a complex phenomenon from the mid-19th century to the present. She also works on the history of business, environmental history and the history of everyday life. She has published a number of studies on this topic and participated in a number of conferences. Full CV at: https://ff.osu.eu/michaela-zavodna/12157/ Full Publication at: https://ff.osu.eu/michaela-zavodna/12157/#3-publikacni-cinnost

58| Environmental accidents and the pollution of the Odra River from the 1960s to the early 21st century

Petr Popelka, Renáta Popelková
University of Ostrava, Czech Republic

This study provides a long-term assessment of surface water quality and pollution dynamics in the Czech section of the Odra River basin from the 1960s to the early 21st century. Using continuous monitoring data from 1963 to 2000, the study evaluates temporal changes in water quality and trends in key indicators. The study highlights the causes of changes in the values of the monitored pollution indicators and complex formation of transboundary water management. The results demonstrate that individual water-quality indicators provide a more sensitive measure of long-term environmental change than aggregated water-quality classes, revealing both improvements and persistent pressures. Analysis of 1,526 accidental pollution incidents recorded between 1968 and 2005 further shows that petroleum substances were the most frequent source of accidental contamination and that the Odra basin experienced a disproportionately high incidence of pollution incidents. By combining long-term indicator-based water-quality assessment with accidental pollution analysis, the study demonstrates how industrial development, environmental interventions, and socioeconomic transformation shaped the recovery and persistent pressures of a transboundary river ecosystem.

Renata Popelková works as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Science, University of Ostrava. She specialises in geoinformatics. Her research focuses on spatial and temporal changes in the landscape. She is the author of studies in prestigious journals (e. g. Applied Geography) and co-author of the book Black or Green Land. She is currently conducting research into the pollution of watercourses, trends in pollution and water supply in the Odra river basin (in the Baltic Sea catchment area).

59| The question of Czechoslovak transit trade through Poland, 1945–1989

Marcin Szymański
University of Ostrava, Poland

The foreign trade of landlocked countries presents a complex logistical, customs, and geopolitical challenge. In the twentieth century, Polish-Czechoslovak relations were heavily strained by the difficult legacy of the interwar period; after 1945, however, a political and economic rapprochement was enforced upon these neighbouring states. Historically, the traditional trade routes of Central Europe (including Silesia and the Czech lands) gravitated toward German ports, primarily Hamburg and Bremen. Following World War II, the transit of Czechoslovak goods across Polish territory became an important component of the enforced cooperation within the Eastern Bloc. Prague was interested in transit through the port of Szczecin, but Hamburg was also used. Goods were

transported via two primary arteries: railway mainlines and the Oder waterway. Despite ambitious plans to develop Poland's inland shipping infrastructure, the ultimate balance of this cooperation remained relatively modest. The ports of the Polish People's Republic consistently failed to outcompete German ports (in both the GDR and the FRG) for Czechoslovak transit traffic. What is more, most Czechoslovak goods were transported via railway. This paper argues that the dynamics of Czechoslovak transit through Poland depended not only on the technical state of Communist Poland's transport infrastructure and economic viability, but also different factors, like ties with the West, globalisation and the lack of resources.
Keywords: Socialism; Transit; Transport; Railway; Waterway

Marcin Szymański s a historian, researcher at the University of Łódź and at the University of Ostrava. He studies the economic history of Poland in the 20th century and its environmental aspects. Author and co-author of books about Łódź's history and industrial changes, museum curator, and history populariser.

P02 | BLACK TRACES: DISASTERS, POLLUTION AND THE CULTURAL RESONANCE OF OIL

Thursday, 3 December | 09:00–10:30 | Room: 702 AERIS | Chair: collective

60| When oil became visible – and a threat to the Baltic

Jan-Hinnerk Antons
University of Greifswald, Germany

In the 1950s, the Baltic Sea witnessed the regional beginnings of the oil age as part of the great acceleration. Car traffic grew rapidly and new industrial infrastructures emerged. Refineries were established along its coastline, tankers crossed its waterways, and exploratory drilling for crude oil increased. The petrochemical revolution also introduced plastics into everyday life and the Baltic's marine ecosystem. However, the black, viscous raw material behind all this — crude oil — remained mostly invisible to consumers. Even its strong odour was only noticeable at the central everyday hubs of petro-modernity: service stations that were popping up all over the region. When crude oil did become visible, it was frequently due to accidental or intentional discharge at sea or in rivers, escaping the closed routes of extraction, transport, processing and consumption. It was in this context that oil and its products were framed as a significant environmental threat for the first time. The tourism sector feared for clean beaches, fishermen feared for their catch and thus their livelihood, and public authorities feared for drinking water. This paper analyses how pictures of oil entered public discourse, and how different stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region perceived and framed the environmental threat posed by oil in the decades following the 1950s.
Keywords: Crude oil; Visual history; Pollution; Environmental discourse

Jan-Hinnerk Antons is professor of transnational history at the University of Greifswald. After completing his doctoral thesis on Ukrainian Displaced Persons in the British occupation zone of Germany at the University of Hamburg, he turned his research focus to environmental history and the history of tourism. In his postdoctoral thesis, "Man and the Sea: An Environmental History of Baltic Sea Tourism", he explored the potential of merging these two areas of study.

ABSTRACTS

61| Refining the future: the utopian representations and toxic realities of Soviet oil in Mazovia in the 1960s

Jan Burek
University of Warsaw, Faculty of History, Poland

The discovery of large oil deposits in Tatarstan and Western Siberia in the late 1950s, along with the subsequent construction of the Friendship pipeline, which transported oil to Eastern Europe, significantly changed the energy regimes of the USSR and its European satellites. It not only supplied power for the growing fleet of automobiles, including private cars, but also provided resources for what became known in Soviet terminology as 'chemisation', the process of saturating industry and agriculture with synthetic substances. Chemisation was celebrated as paving the way for both individual and collective welfare, surpassing capitalist states economically and ultimately leading to communism. Based on the analysis of films, showreels, artworks, and archival documentation of the construction of the Mazovian Refinery and Petrochemical Works in Poland (a node on the Friendship pipeline), this paper argues that oil was viewed in the late 1950s and early 1960s not only as a miraculous economic and scientific solution to the problems of consumption and exports that socialist states faced. The production, consumption, and export of oil and oil derivatives were contrasted with Stalinist-era developmental strategies based on coal and heavy industry. They were promoted as a cleaner, more environmentally friendly alternative. However, the materiality of oil quickly challenged this view: air, water, and soil pollution appeared in visual representations of oil refining and petrochemical production. Oil ceased to be a cleaner alternative to coal and was, in some instances, portrayed as dangerous as the nuclear disaster.
Keywords: Chemicalisation; Oil; Petroculture; Environmental history

Jan A. Burek is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw, specialising in the labour and environmental history of post-war Poland. From 2023 to 2025, he was a Research Fellow in Environmental History at the Institute of Advanced Studies, University College London. His research focused on the environmental impact and discourse surrounding the construction of a 1960s petrochemical plant in Płock, Poland, with particular attention to visual representations.

62| Tracing oil in the museum: fossil heritage, petromodernity and the memory of technology

Nora Thorade
Stiftung Deutsches Technikmuseum Berlin, Germany

Technological and infrastructural decisions have profoundly shaped both societies and environments. Questions concerning technology are therefore fundamental to current debates about how a green transition should be envisioned and implemented. This raises a crucial question: which narratives continue to shape our understanding of historical technologies, and how do these narratives influence contemporary responses to environmental change? Starting from the premise that remembering technology is essential for understanding the present and learning from past mistakes, this paper examines the intervention Carbon Culture at the Deutsches Technikmuseum in Berlin. It argues that the technologies exhibited in the museum can be understood as products of petromodernity and fossil-fuel-dependent socio-technical systems. By reframing the museum as a site of fossil heritage, the intervention challenges established narratives of technological progress and draws attention to the material and cultural traces of oil embedded in industrial collections. Approaching the museum through the lens of the fossil fuel age reveals how deeply oil

has shaped modern technological development while simultaneously obscuring its environmental consequences. Rather than treating technological artefacts as isolated achievements of innovation, the intervention situates them within broader histories of energy consumption, resource extraction, and environmental transformation. Building on this case study, the paper explores the role of technical museums as actors in contemporary memory cultures. It argues that museums can make visible the often-hidden fossil foundations of modernity and thereby contribute to a more critical understanding of the relationship between technology and the environment. Finally, it discusses whether a renewed public memory of technology—one that acknowledges its entanglement with petromodernity and its contribution to environmental degradation—can foster social cohesion and strengthen collective engagement in the transition toward a post-fossil future.
Keywords: Petromodernity; Fossil fuels; Cultural heritage; Museum

Nora Thorade is a historian of environment and technology. Her PhD examined the material history of hard coal in the 19th century. She works as a curator at the Deutsches Technikmuseum in Berlin, where her curatorial practice combines scientific research with elements of activism to explore the environmental dimensions of the technological past and their relevance to the present and future.

63| Paint it black: oil and art history in the Baltic Sea

Simo Laakkonen
University of Turku, Finland

Marine art or maritime art is generally a form of figurative art that depicts or is primarily inspired by the sea. Marine painting is a genre that usually depicts ships and the sea and was particularly expressive from the 17th to the 19th century. Most maritime art works from this period are oil paintings. The proposed article aims to discuss oil paintings that depict a particular type of sea, that is, oil-painted sea, and a particular type of ship, that is, oil tankers. The reasons for choosing this perspective are twofold. First, these subjects are rarely addressed in classical marine paintings, and second, oil accidents and oil discharges have a much longer history in the Baltic Sea than is usually presented. Therefore, this presentation will not focus on early oil spills per se, but on the art they inspired, i.e. waves and shores painted in oil. More specifically, the presentation focuses on visual representations of early oil accidents and oil spills in the northern Baltic Sea region and how they depicted the consequences of oil disasters on the coastal environment and societies. The proposed presentation includes visual representations that have been displayed in public, including early posters, newspapers and magazines, and television broadcast material. The presentation aims to demonstrate that the art history of oil has played a significant role in promoting marine conservation in everyday life, in the activities of various authorities and civil society, and in international environmental diplomacy.
Keywords: Baltic; Sea; Oil; Art

Dr. Soc. Sci, Adjunct Professor of Social and Economic History, **Simo Laakkonen**, served as a Director of the Degree Programme in Digital Culture, Landscape and Cultural Heritage at the University of Turku. He has led international research networks on the environmental history of the Baltic Sea in the 19th and 20th centuries. His research interests include urban environmental history, global environmental history of WWII and the Cold War. Currently he studies environmental history of winter.

ABSTRACTS

64| Dark petroaesthetics: the crude ghosts of Soviet oil

Maria Engström
Uppsala University, Sweden

From the heritagisation of oil in the late Russian Empire, where industrial expansion established symbolic legitimacy through corporate imaginaries, to Soviet geological discourse and the visual language of the Severe Style, oil has functioned as a structuring principle of visuality, temporality, and embodiment. These visual regimes produced a distinctive petroaesthetics in which oil became a form of symbolic capital and industrial landscapes emerged as sites of petromodernity. Within this framework, petroaesthetics rendered extractive industries visible and meaningful, linking resource extraction to narratives of progress, labour, and collective identity. This paper examines the transformation of petroaesthetics in the post-Soviet period through the work of contemporary artists Andrei Molodkin (b. 1966) and Aidan Salahova (b. 1964). While Soviet artistic representations of oil foregrounded industrial landscapes, oil workers, and the heroic ethos of socialist labour, contemporary petroaesthetics is characterised by the disappearance of the worker from the visual field. Human labour no longer occupies the centre of representation; instead, artists focus on the materiality of oil itself, the infrastructures of extraction, and the residual traces of human presence embedded within petroindustrial environments. By comparing Soviet and post-Soviet visual cultures of oil, the paper argues that contemporary petroaesthetics marks a shift from the celebration of labour and industrial modernity to an engagement with absence, material residue, and the hidden infrastructures that sustain extractive economies.
Keywords: Petroaesthetics; Russia; Azerbaijan; Molodkin; Salahova

Maria Engström is Professor of Russian at Uppsala University, Sweden. Her current research focuses on post-Soviet intellectual history and environmental aesthetics. Her current project Weaponizing Visual Cultures: Anti-Environmentalism and Neo-Extractivism in Contemporary Petrostates. The Cases of Russia and Azerbaijan (2026-2028) is supported by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies.

S03 | WATER HISTORIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

Thursday, 3 December 2026 | 11:00–12:30 | Room: 108 DEXTRUM I Chair: Simo Laakkonen

65| Baltic weatherlands in the seventeenth century: memory between religion and the early enlightenment

Ulrike Plath
Tallinn University, Estonia

The climatically challenging seventeenth century, framed by two severe famines, brought a significant rise in climate consciousness across the three provinces of Estonia, Livonia, and Courland, which were divided between the political powers of Sweden and Poland. This development was evident both within the predominantly German elite and among Estonian and Latvian peasants. Changing weather conditions, weather memory and local weather-related practices were discussed at different levels of society, giving rise to interesting forms of collaboration across the wider region. In this presentation, I argue that the harsh weather conditions triggered several societal responses, including an increase in the production of books on weather memory, early forms of climate activism, and the emergence of transregional networks through which weather-

related information was exchanged. Whereas sixteenth-century societal responses to changing climatic conditions were often characterised by witch trials and witch burnings, the seventeenth century reveals a clear tendency towards a more discursive engagement with climate and the integration of local Indigenous knowledge into the dominant German cultural framework. The main sources for this presentation are seventeenth-century printed works, including religious tracts, agricultural and gardening manuals, calendars, and the first printed book on regional climate history, published in 1700. The growing interest in weather and climate, as well as the networks that supported it, was disrupted by the Great Famine, the Great Northern War, and the plague around 1700, and was only gradually re-established during the eighteenth century.
Keywords: Climate history; Weather; Early modern times

Ulrike Plath is a Professor for environmental history at Tallinn University. She is working on Baltic-German entanglements with the local environment from the 17th-20th centuries. She has co-organised all BALTEHUMS conferences.

66| Living with an abundance of water: Versuch einer Naturgeschichte von Livland (1777–1791) by Jakob Fischer

Artis Svece[1], Anita Zariņa[2]
[1] University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities, Latvia
[2] University of Latvia, Faculty of Science and Technology, Latvia

Jakob Benjamin Fischer's Versuch einer Naturgeschichte von Livland (1777-1792) occupies an important yet underappreciated place in the Baltic Enlightenment and the region's environmental history. Fischer sought to establish Livonia as a scientifically significant part of European networks of natural knowledge and the Linnean transformation of natural history. Yet his work also reveals how local environments could modify the universal framework of Enlightenment science. Rather than presenting water as a scarce resource to be managed, Fischer describes a landscape where rivers, lakes, marshes, wetlands, humidity, and seasonal flooding permeate everyday existence. Water structures the character of human settlement, mobility, agriculture, health, and the perception of the landscape itself. The boundaries between land and water remain fluid, requiring continual adaptation rather than mastery. Although working within the Linnaean tradition of natural history, Fischer demonstrates that environmental knowledge emerged not only from classification but also from inhabiting a world whose rhythms, opportunities, and vulnerabilities were inseparable from hydrological abundance. The paper argues that this perspective offers a relevant contribution to the region's environmental history and should be considered within the context of contemporary debates in the environmental humanities. While current discussions of water are largely framed by scarcity, drought, and resource management, Fischer invites us to consider the cultural and epistemic consequences of living with an abundance of water. Abundance generates its own forms of vulnerability, knowledge, and coexistence, shaping distinctive water cultures and hydrosocial relations. Viewed from this perspective, Versuch einer Naturgeschichte von Livland is more than an eighteenth-century work of natural science. It demonstrates how Baltic naturalists participated in the universal Enlightenment project while simultaneously asserting that Livonia's distinctive ecological characteristics constituted a valuable contribution to European natural history rather than merely a peripheral exception to it. This paper was prepared as part of the project "Water Cultures: A transformative approach for sustainable human-water relationships" (lzp-2023/1-0248).
Keywords: Abundance of water; Water-cultures; Baltic Enlightenment

ABSTRACTS

Artis Svece is an Associate Professor in Social Philosophy at the University of Latvia, the head of the Philosophy and Ethics Department at the Faculty of Humanities. His main research interest lies in the environmental humanities and human-animal studies. At the moment, he is a researcher at the project "Water Cultures: A Transformative Approach for Sustainable Human-Water Relationships" at the University of Latvia, funded by the Latvian Council of Science.
Anita Zariņa is an environmental geographer and Associate Professor at the University of Latvia. Her research explores landscape transformations, environmental knowledge and governance, and the politics of ecological change. Her recent work focuses on water cultures, rewilding, and multispecies relations, particularly the contested histories and politics of human–beaver coexistence.

67| Water impoundment systems of the medieval city of Tallinn

Villu Kadakas
Tallinn University, Institute of History, Archaeology and Art History, Estonia

Despite the excellent preservation of Tallinn's medieval Old Town, the water systems of that era have disappeared from townscape. In addition to the water supply system, the city had a system of water mills where, by the end of the Middle Ages at the latest, besides grain iron and copper were processed, timber was sawn, and gunpowder was manufactured. A number of watermills were located in the historical suburb, along a small river that was filled in the 20th century, from which Tallinn's industry developed in the Early Modern period. As a rare solution, a cascade consisting of three watermills was situated on the Old Town's moat, where water was supplied via a canal dug from a nearby lake. The remains of some mill buildings have been partially preserved in the Old Town, while others have been discovered from the cultural layers of the historical suburb. The medieval system of reservoirs and water channels, together with the functioning mills, largely shaped the landscape of the Old Town's immediate surroundings until the second half of the 19th century, when it was overtaken by the modern city that spread beyond the city walls following the dismantling of the fortifications. The paper presents results of research based on various types of sources, as well as major problems concerning the reconstruction, development, engineering and study of the system.
Keywords: Medieval; Watermills; Water; Urban archaeology; History of industry; Urban studies

Villu Kadakas is buildings archaeologist, with specialisation on medieval and Early Modern stone buildings and landscape of Estonia, including city infrastructure. Trained in history and archaeology (BA Tartu University), heritage management and conservation (MA Estonian Academy of Arts), PhD in archaeology (Tallinn University). Has led numerous urban and rural field research projects of various historical buildings and sites. Affiliated to Tallinn University since 2012 as a research fellow.

68| Human-seal relations and maritime landscapes in the Subneolithic Baltic

Aivaras Jefanovas
Lithuanian Institute of History, Lithuania

Seals, especially harp seals, were among the most important marine mammals exploited by Subneolithic hunter-fisher communities of the southeastern Baltic. Drawing on zooarchaeological evidence from Šventoji in western Lithuania, this paper examines human-seal relations through species composition, hunting seasonality, and the treatment of seal remains, particularly crania. The seasonal movements and breeding cycles of seals are considered in relation to hunting practices and the use of coastal landscapes, while the modification of seal crania provides a basis

for discussing the broader social, cultural, and potentially cosmological significance of these relations. To explore these questions, the paper brings zooarchaeological evidence into dialogue with anthropological approaches and ethnographic accounts of human-animal relations from the Baltic, Arctic, and northern Eurasian regions. These accounts offer comparative perspectives on animal agency, interspecies communication, and ritualised hunting practices, helping to explore aspects of human-seal relations that are difficult to access through archaeological evidence alone. Such comparisons require critical assessment. Ethnographic accounts cannot serve as direct analogies for Subneolithic practices or establish continuity between distinct historical and cultural contexts. Approaching seal hunting as a relational practice, the paper considers how sustained engagement with seals may have shaped ecological knowledge, seasonal rhythms, and ways of knowing and inhabiting maritime landscapes. It asks how archaeological and ethnographic evidence can be brought into dialogue to explore these relationships without assuming a specific prehistoric cosmology.

Keywords: Human-animal relations; Seals; Maritime landscapes; Subneolithic southeastern Baltic

Aivaras Jefanovas is a postdoctoral researcher at the Lithuanian Institute of History and teaches cultural anthropology at Vilnius University. His research focuses on human-environment and human-animal interactions, Indigenous peoples of northern regions, and hunter-gatherer anthropology. He has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Yakutia. His current research examines the cosmological and economic significance of seals for Subneolithic communities of the southeastern Baltic.

A01 | ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND ECOLOGICAL KNOWING

Thursday, 3 December | 11:00–12:30 | Room: 109 DEXTRUM II | Chair: Ieva Astahovska

69| SENSE: Embodied encounters with deep ecological time through audiovisual data translation

Kaj Boonstra, Emma Little
Studio Metaform, Netherlands

The planetary recomposition brought on by climate change unfolds on spatial and temporal scales that often elude immediate human perception. While scientific data provides crucial evidence of these long-term shifts, its abstract nature, locked in graphs and policy reports, frequently fails to create the visceral connection necessary to reimagine our coexistence with the environment. How can we re-sensitize ourselves to the deep ecological time of our changing world? SENSE is an audiovisual performance and art-science methodology that translates 38 years of environmental data (1987-2023) from the KNMI Cabauw atmospheric research mast into a direct, embodied experience. By scaling decades of temperature and net solar radiation data into MIDI parameters, SENSE sonifies the climate narrative: rising annual temperatures dictate the pitch of a tuba, while intensifying solar radiation determines the velocity of a synthesizer. This sonic landscape is coupled with a tripartite visual stream featuring a live feed of the audience, footage of the scientific mast, and a more abstract colourful layer that visualizes the complex entanglement of human presence and more-than-human data. This presentation proposes a new approach to ecological knowing. By placing the audience directly within a compressed flow of decades-long climate data, SENSE bridges the cognitive gap between everyday experience and macro-environmental change. Aligning with the BALTEHUMS IV theme of "Worlds in Relation," we will conduct a guided audiovisual performance of the data cycle, followed by a discussion on how cross-disciplinary data

sonification can offer alternative ways of making sense of environmental shifts. Ultimately, we argue that translating scientific abstractions into sensory encounters is vital for moving beyond merely "thinking" about the climate crisis to physically and emotionally "feeling" it.
Keywords: Sonification; Art-science; Data translation; Multi-sensory; Embodied experience

Kaj Boonstra is co-founder of Studio Metaform, an art-science practice transforming complex research into emotionally resonant experiences. As architect, sound artist, and filmmaker, Kaj specialises in crafting immersive spatial narratives. He fluidly integrates architectural design, generative AI, and data sonification to build multi-sensory environments that allow audiences to connect with critical environmental issues on a visceral level.
Emma Little is co-founder of Studio Metaform and operates at the intersection of art, science, and societal change. As an environmental engineer with a background in dance, and experience teaching philosophy of technology, she drives the studio's creative research. Emma is dedicated to translating complex environmental data into accessible, actionable, and embodied experiences that create ecological and societal awareness.

70| Coastal Baltic Boreal meadows as seen by the Machine: plant community classification

Vineta Gailīte, Kaupo Kokamägi, Dmitrii Krasnov, Raul Sampaio de Lima
Estonian University of Life Sciences, Chair of Environmental protection and Landscape Management, Estonia

A glimpse into a black box of AI-assisted land cover modelling, visualising complex pixel data from hundreds of geographical datasets (i.e., maps) representing vegetation index calculations derived from the drone-based multispectral and RGB (fundamental colour) aerial survey, which is relabelled into a simplified dataset: a plant community map. A video showcase of residual data from the machine learning process (Random Forest algorithm) used in remote sensing research. The final result is a land cover map representing four plant communities typical in Baltic Boreal meadows: Open Pioneer, Lower Shore, Upper Shore and Tall Grass. The aerial survey had been ground-truthed by on-site biophysical observations, meaning that coastal meadow vegetation species were identified/sampled to create labels for the machine to classify pixels against. The case studies are NATURA 2000 sites. This local heritage meadows (on the island of Hiiumaa, West Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve) is managed by Scottish Highlanders and horses to keep vegetation low and accessible to migratory birds for breeding. An ecological and drone survey took place in the summer of 2025, and the data have been peer-reviewed and accepted for publication. However, the video presents a compilation of raw data, which is not disseminated in scientific articles, but it has a visual aesthetic and provides an artistic take on computer vision during the algorithm's work.
Keywords: Drone-based remote sensing; Semi-natural grasslands; Coastal ecology; Botany; Machine learning

Vineta Gailīte s a junior researcher/PhD student with an interest in semi-natural habitat ecology and drone-based remote sensing applications for planning and monitoring nature restoration, with a creative background and an MSc in Landscape Architecture. Enjoys working with farmers managing protected landscapes; therefore, coordinates an agroecology Living Lab.
Kaupo Kokamägi is a junior researcher and a PhD student, Bachelor in geomatics and masters in Geodesy.
Raul Sampaio de Lima is a research Fellow in Machine Learning and Drone Monitoring for Environmental Sciences at the Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMÜ). He has been working with drone technology, satellite imagery, and spatial analysis to support decision-making in topics

such as fire assessment and agricultural management. His research goal is to build practical, method-oriented solutions that enhance environmental and land-use management through drone technology.

71| Purvas / Purvs: the land that still remembers water

Arūnė Baronaitė
Vilnius Academy of Arts, Photography and Media Art, Lithuania

In Lithuanian, purvas means mud, wet soil or dirt; in Latvian, the closely related purvs refers to a bog, swamp or wetland. This shift from substance to landscape becomes the conceptual ground of the intervention. Purvas / purvs is approached as a threshold condition of the Baltic coastal region: a wet, layered material where land and water, memory and decay, extraction and care remain inseparable. The work begins from drained wetlands and disturbed coastal soils — landscapes that are no longer fully watery, but not yet simply dry land. Mud becomes the matter in which the remains of former wetlands dissolve, filter, sink, merge and transform. It holds plant residues, moisture, sediment, microorganisms and traces of human intervention. It cannot be simply washed away, because it carries what the land has absorbed. Taking the form of a performative audio-visual presentation, this mixed-media intervention unfolds through voice, image, sound and material processes. Rather than representing a damaged place from a distance, it creates conditions in which mud, moisture, photographic matter and time participate in image-making. The work asks how artistic research can remain in relation with damaged landscapes without extracting from them again. Ecological grief is not represented from a distance. It surfaces through contact, staining, decomposition, disappearance and the vulnerability of the image itself. Purvas / purvs becomes a living archive of the Baltic coast — a material reminder that drained land still remembers water, and that what has been pushed below the surface continues to return.

Keywords: Mud; Drained wetlands; Ecological grief; More-than-human image-making; Baltic coastal landscapes

Arūnė Baronaitė is a Lithuanian artist and researcher whose practice moves between photography, bioart and ecological research. Drawing on her background in molecular biology and biotechnology, she works with soil, mud, water and microbial processes to explore ecological grief, damaged landscapes and more-than-human relations. She is an MA student in Photography and Media Art at Vilnius Academy of Arts.

72| To listen, to hear, to feel, to act: cultural legacy, artistic practice, ecological attention, and communication

Helēna Spridzāne
Professional Interdisciplinary Artist (Artist Name - Hele); Non-profit Association "Trejdegsnis"; University of Latvia, Department of Geography, Latvia

The Earth is our Mother, and every living being on it is our relative. This understanding, rooted in many Indigenous traditions, reflects a worldview in which humans are inseparable from nature and bound by reciprocity, respect, and interdependence. This lecture-performance explores cultural legacy and artistic practice as forms of ecological listening. Through field recordings, sound composition, sonic interventions, and traditional knowledge, it engages environmental soundscapes - water, meadows, wind, forests, the sea, and the voices of the beings within them - as ways of sensing and understanding ecological systems, what they reveal and teach us, as well as today's increasingly alienated human impact upon them, which causes environmental vulnerability and suffering. Here,

listening becomes a way of hearing and communicating between and further. The performance considers how sound can reveal often invisible relations between humans, landscapes, animals, and shifting ecosystems. Drawing on examples from my own practice, it examines how field recording and sound composition can cultivate sensitivity and empathy toward environmental transformation, biodiversity loss, and climate instability, and how such sonic dialogue and attunement may lead to action. Alongside the artist's sonic practices, it also engages with living intangible cultural legacy in a broader global context, with particular attention to traditional Baltic and Finnic forms of "more-than-human" communication, imitation instruments, seasonal rhythm and nature-based traditions. These practices are approached as forms of ecological knowledge, where sound functions as a medium of contact, reciprocity, understanding, respect, and interconnectedness. Rather than separating artistic creation from research, the lecture-performance treats sound as a way of thinking with environments - through listening, feeling, and attuning. Bringing together field recordings, vocal and instrumental reflection, and cultural legacy, it asks how listening might foster ecological awareness and shared responsibility in times of environmental crisis.

Keywords: Ecological listening; Cultural legacy; More-than-human relations; Interconnectedness; Nature-based knowledge

Helēna Spridzāne (Hele) is an interdisciplinary Latvian artist working across sound, field recording, weaving, film, installation and other media. Her practice explores relationships between humans, nature, cultural heritage, the intangible and more-than-human worlds, drawing on ecological observation and traditional knowledge. She is a co-founder of Trejdegsnis, focused on natural and cultural values in Latvia and internationally, and is currently pursuing an MA in Geography.

P06 | WOMEN AND/AS ANIMALS: GENDERED ANIMALITY AND MULTISPECIES RELATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Thursday, 3 December | 11:00–12:30 | Room: 405 | Chair: Sara Bédard-Goulet

73| North Pacific elegies in Baltic literatures

Dace Bula
University of Latvia, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, Latvia

The paper examines two literary works triggered by fossils: Regina Ezera's short story "Song about the Last Sea Cow" (1976) and Iida Turpeinen's recent and famous novel "Beasts of the Sea" (2023, translated into more than 20 languages, published in English in 2025, in Latvian in 2026). Both authors were inspired when encountering the skeleton of the extinct marine mammal, Steller's sea cow (Rhytina stelleri), exhibited at the St Petersburg Zoological Museum and the Helsinki Natural History Museum, respectively. While Ezera's story was an early example of ecoelegy in the 1970s, Turpeinen's novel joins the contemporary body of extinction literature, a flourishing genre of the Anthropocene era. Both works form a reverse tandem, with a lament preceding the history of death. Both grounded in the historical reality of species loss, they create different fictional worlds. Turpeinen relies on a documentary-style reconstruction of the succession of events leading to the display of the sea cow's skeleton in the Helsinki museum, spanning more than two centuries. Ezera's story is an elegy in prose, imitating an epic chant and envisioning an apocalyptic loss of biodiversity due to human environmental irresponsibility. Departing from the concept of eco-realism, the paper considers the interplay between realism and imagination in extinction literature.

Keywords: Extinction literature; Steller's sea cow

Dace Bula is a leading researcher in environmental humanities and ecocriticism at ILFA, UL. Research focus: human—environment relationships as represented in both oral and written culture. Recent research explores: a) environmental experience stories and solastalgia in industrial suburbs, published in "Living Next to the Port" (Bula, ed., 2022); b) literary representations of animal subjectivities; see monograph Bula, Dace. "Literary Naturecultures: An Ecocritical Reading of Regīna Ezera Zoo-prose" (2024).

74| Embodied empathy and feral care in Laura Jean McKay's The Animals in That Country

Rūta Šlapkauskaitė
Vilnius University, Department of English Philology, Lithuania

The cultural implications of speciesism for feminist thought have been well documented by a number of scholars (Gaard 1993; Plumwood 1993; Haraway 2007), with Anat Pick's work on creaturely poetics and Erica Fudge's analysis of the history of human-animal entanglements offering additional insights into the contradictions that trouble the ethical integrity of environmental humanities. Staging a satirical intervention into the cultural imaginary of human and animal welfare as threatened by the "zooflu" epidemic, the Australian author Laura Jean McKay's novel The Animals in That Country (2020) draws on the affordances of the picaresque and the speculative poetics of "weird realism" (Macdonald 2025) to reappraise humans' ethical orientation toward the nonhumans and the biopolitical ramifications of interspecies communication under the auspices of medical and ecological emergency. For its conceptual premise, this paper brings together Catriona Sandilands' theorizing of ferality and Vinciane Despret's notion of "embodied empathy" to explore the moral upshot of the narrative means through which the novel figures animal communication in relation to the woman-dingo reciprocity, on the one hand, and social exploitation of nature, on the other. Folded into the intimate, embodied bond between the novel's female protagonist Jean and her dingo companion Sue is the dialectic of human/animal, comic/tragic, violence/care, and life/death, through which McKay negotiates the dynamics of affective agency as a social condition shared by both the human and the nonhuman female subject. By attending to their sensory and sense-making capabilities, this paper considers how the opaqueness of animal "voices" and human-animal encounters in the novel resists typical anthropomorphism and generates effects of discomfort that make us question what is morally acceptable in our engagements with nonhuman kin.

Keywords: McKay; Embodied empathy; Feral care; Animal communication

Rūta Šlapkauskaitė is an Associate Professor of English literature at Vilnius University, Lithuania. Her research interests include Canadian and Australian literature, neo-Victorianism, and environmental humanities. She is currently researching the conceptual affordances of genre in narrating the climate emergency in contemporary Anglophone literature.

75| Specimen & gender in French commissioned museum autotheory

Sara Bédard-Goulet
University of Tartu, Estonia; Utrecht University, Netherlands

This paper explores the relationship between women and non-human animals in contemporary literature through two commissioned French-language works: Fanny Chiarello's Spécimens sensibles (2023) from the series Récits d'objets edited by the Musée des Confluences in Lyon and Éric Chevillard's L'Arche Titanic (2022) from the series Ma nuit au musée edited by Alina Gurdiel. The two works combine intimate narrative and theoretical speculation inspired by museum collections and the scientific discourse surrounding animals: Spécimens sensibles centers on a taxidermied

mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) displayed in the exhibition Espèces, la maille du vivant at the Musée des confluences, while L'Arche Titanic recounts the night that Chevillard spent in the Grande galerie de l'évolution of the National Museum of Natural History in Paris. In both cases, reflection prompted by taxidermied animals contributes to (re)framing gendered human-animal relationship, while also redefining commissioned museum literature (Zampieri and Martens) as life writing in the Anthropocene (White and Whitlock). In this paper, I argue that taxidermy offers a privileged access to oppression of non-human animals perpetrated by the patriarchal system (Haraway) and that the two works present a contrastive gendered perspective on animals through the museum as a site of classification. The comparison speaks to the panel's concern with the intersections of womanhood and animality by showing how contemporary literary encounters with taxidermied animals reveal, contest, and reconfigure gendered modes of representing and relating to non-human life. Mobilizing Foucault's notion of dispositif (apparatus) as developed in literary studies (Ortel), the paper investigates how Spécimens sensibles and L'Arche Titanic differently engage with animal voices through the institutional framework of the museum. Combined with insights from ecofeminist scholarship (Gaard, Haraway, Plumwood) and queer ecology (Sandilands), this critique des dispositifs is attentive to the structural interdependencies between the aesthetic, the biological, the social, and the political staged in the two works.

Keywords: Natural history museum; Contemporary literature; Gender; Animals

Sara Bédard-Goulet is an Assistant Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Utrecht University and a Visiting Research Fellow in Environmental Humanities at the University of Tartu, where she contributes to a research project on the cultural meanings of species extinction.

76| The nature of winged bodies: Siiri Enoranta's fantasy novel Nocturnal Lifelines as an allegory for the Anthropocene

Radvilė Musteikytė
Vilnius University, Lithuania; University of Turku, Finland

This paper analyses Finnish author Siiri Enoranta's eleventh fantasy novel, "Nocturnal Lifelines" (2024, "Keuhkopuiden uni" in Finnish), which considers human and nonhuman coexistence by imagining Homo arboris, winged human- and plant-like beings living in uneasy symbiosis with their life-giving lung trees. The narrative traces the experiences of Katica, a wild-hearted socialite whose morally ambiguous act begins a new era for her culturally sophisticated society that treats wings as a constraining animalistic remnant. The present paper argues that the novel problematizes a dualistic understanding of Nature and Culture by setting up an immersive fantasy world that configures human-nonhuman relations through the estranging corporeality of Homo arboris. Drawing on the rhetorical theory of narrative, this reading centres on three transgressive heroines deployed in the narrative progression to reverse the negative connotation attached to Nature as animality, set against Culture and intellect. As the novel's fantasy world invites both fantastic immersion and allegorical meaning-making, "Nocturnal Lifelines" is read as an allegory for the Anthropocene which requires readers to resolve the Nature-Culture dialectic and rethink their entanglements with the nonhuman. This paper contributes to broader discussions about the variety of Anthropocene fiction that explores ecological relationality in the era of environmental crisis through non-realist literary modes.

Keywords: Anthropocene allegory; Nature/Culture; Animality; Immersive fantasy; Contemporary Finnish literature

Radvilė Musteikytė is a doctoral student at Vilnius University and the University of Turku. Her dissertation explores how contemporary Finnish fictions engage with aspects of the very real environmental issues through non-realist literary modes. Radvilė's research interests include contemporary Finnish speculative fiction, Anthropocene fiction, ecocritical and posthumanist literary studies, and the rhetorical theory of narrative.

S10 | LANDSCAPE MEMORY, EXPERIENCE AND MEANING

Thursday, 3 December | 11:00–12:30 | Room: 702 AERIS | Chair: Hannes Palang

77| Inhabiting and observing: generational differences in Estonian landscape conceptualisation

Mari Uusküla, Hannes Palang
Tallinn University, Estonia

Landscape can be understood both as a lived environment shaped through everyday practices and interactions and as an object of observation, experience, and reflection. As direct engagement with land becomes less central to everyday life, questions arise about how people's relationships with landscape are changing and how these changes are reflected in language. The study draws on qualitative responses gathered from 153 Estonian speakers as part of a broader investigation of landscape vocabulary and perceptions. Participants were asked to define landscape, describe their childhood landscape, and explain how humans relate to landscape. Rather than focusing on quantitative differences, the paper explores the meanings and relationships that emerge from respondents' narratives. The analysis is informed by discussions in landscape studies and environmental humanities, particularly the contrast between landscape as a lived and inhabited world and landscape as a viewed and represented scene. The responses suggest distinct ways of relating to landscape across generations. Older respondents frequently describe landscape as a practical and lived environment shaped by work, agriculture, settlement, and long-term interaction with the land. Their accounts emphasise everyday activities and embeddedness within the landscape. Many younger respondents, in contrast, frame landscape through perception, experience, appreciation, and environmental awareness. Landscape appears as something encountered, interpreted, and reflected upon rather than primarily lived through everyday practices. The paper argues that these contrasting conceptualisations do not represent a simple opposition between traditional and modern understandings of landscape. Rather, they reflect different forms of ecological knowing and different modes of relating to the environment. By examining how landscape is articulated in ordinary language, the study contributes to broader debates in environmental humanities concerning inhabitation, perception, and the changing relationships between people and the more-than-human world.

Keywords: Landscape; Environmental humanities; Generational differences; Human–environment relations

Mari Uusküla is Associate Professor of Linguistics and Translation Theory at Tallinn University, Estonia. Her research interests include lexical semantics, semantic typology, machine translation and AI literacy; cognitive translator studies and translation processes.
Hannes Palang is a professor of human geography, TLU.

ABSTRACTS

78| Landscapes of well-being and memory in uncertain times: nature, memory and belonging in young adults' narratives

Kadri Maikov
Estonian University of Life Sciences, Landscape Architecture Department, Estonia

In times of environmental and social uncertainty, green spaces are increasingly valued for their emotional and social benefits. This paper examines how young adults construct meanings of well-being, memory and belonging through their relationships with forests, parks, gardens and animals. The study draws on written reflections from 156 students across the Baltic Sea region collected between 2021 and 2026. Using qualitative thematic analysis, the paper explores how nature-based experiences are narrated as sources of restoration, safety and connection. The findings suggest that participants do not perceive green spaces merely as physical settings but as emotional infrastructures that help them navigate stress, uncertainty and everyday pressures. Forests and natural trails are associated with mental restoration and relief from fatigue, while parks and community gardens support social cohesion and inclusion. Encounters with animals are frequently described as fostering emotional comfort, presence and meaningful connection. Beyond their restorative role, landscapes emerge as repositories of memory. Participants connect forests, gardens and familiar places with childhood experiences, family traditions and earlier relationships with nature. Several reflections describe the gradual loss of everyday contact with nature through urbanisation and changing lifestyles, alongside attempts to reconnect with these memories through contemporary nature-based experiences. The paper argues that such experiences do not simply enhance well-being but reactivate personal and cultural memories that contribute to a sense of continuity and belonging in a rapidly changing world. At the same time, experiences of nature are not universally positive. Some participants express discomfort with unmanaged or unfamiliar environments, highlighting how accessibility, maintenance and perceived safety shape relationships with green spaces. Landscapes of well-being and memory thus emerge as socially and culturally negotiated spaces where meanings of nature, belonging and human–more-than-human relations are continuously constructed and contested.
Keywords: Environmental memory; Well-being landscapes; Environmental imaginaries; Human–more-than-human relations; Belonging; Baltic Sea region

Kadri Maikov is a PhD landscape architect, lecturer and researcher whose work focuses on healing landscapes, Green Care and the relationship between landscape design and human well-being. Her teaching and research explore evidence-based approaches to creating restorative and health-supportive environments.

79| The wanderings of a homestead: spatial control, materiality and memory landscapes in Northern Latgale

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenka
University of Latvia, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, Latvia

This paper addresses the central theme of BALTEHUMS IV, "World in Relations," by analysing the interconnected histories of human agency, geopolitical regimes, and landscape forces through a microhistorical case study of homesteads in Northern Latgale, Latvia. Drawing on R. E. Adams' theories of political power and spatial control, as well as the "memory landscapes" frameworks developed by D. Drozdzevska, S. De Nardi, and E. Waterton, this analysis demonstrates how regimes restructure rural environments to impose centralised order. At the same time, displaced material remains persist as sites of resistance to complete ideological erasure. The paper traces

a turbulent socio-environmental transformation throughout the twentieth century. Initially, the local landscape exerted a significant, "more than human" influence on the placement of houses following the interwar agrarian reform, which shifted rural life from villages to individual farms. This relationship was later disrupted by successive political regimes. The study documents the physical fragmentation and displacement of the homestead: part of the wooden structure was relocated to a neighbouring plot, and after the family's forced emigration in 1944, the house was entirely uprooted by the Soviet regime and incorporated into the centre of a new collective farm. By 1989, when the exiled family returned, the house had vanished, and the land had been levelled by Soviet agricultural development. This destruction exemplifies Adams' concept of violent spatial reorganisation, prioritizing state infrastructure over the local landscape. However, this control remained incomplete. The only remaining marker was a large boulder that had originally stood beside the house, which Soviet machinery had pushed into the adjacent forest during land clearance. As observed by Drozdzewski and colleagues in their research on landscape memory, this displaced boulder serves as an affective repository, preserving the relational truths of the disrupted local world.

Keywords: Environmental humanities; Spatial control; Memory landscapes; Latgale

Dr. hist. Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenka a senior researcher at the Institute of Latvian History, Faculty of Humanities, UL, and a visiting senior researcher at the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Arts, UL. Research focuses on knowledge creation, the application of historical perspectives to contemporary issues, and the development of ethnography in Latvia. She has examined the current use of former military bases in Latvia and the evolution of kolkhozes and agro-villages, as documented by LSSR ethnographers.

80| From military frontier to energy landscape: landscape transformation in Skrunda, Latvia

Ieva Garda-Rozenberga[1], Ginta Elksne[2]

[1] University of Latvia, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, Latvia

[2] University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Latvia

This study explores how a single place can undergo repeated transformations in response to shifting political, military, and economic agendas, while local communities continuously recreate its meaning through their interpretation, contestation, and adaptation to landscape change. Taking the former Soviet military site of Skrunda in western Latvia as a case study, the paper examines how place identity is shaped and reshaped through successive environmental, political, and cultural transformations. Rather than focusing solely on Skrunda's role as a Soviet military territory, the study approaches it as a multi-layered landscape whose meanings have evolved. The analysis follows four interconnected stages of transformation: the pre-radar landscape associated with rural livelihoods and local ways of life; the period of the Soviet radar station and military town; the post-demolition period, during which the destruction of the radar complex, heritage-making practices, tourism and the Rock for Freedom festival transformed the site into a place of memory and symbolic independence; and the contemporary period, which is characterised by planned wind energy developments and new debates about the future of the landscape. The paper draws on environmental oral history interviews, field observations, archival materials, and visual documentation. Particular attention is paid to local narratives and memories that reveal how residents experienced landscape change and interpreted places that underwent profound political, environmental, and symbolic reconfiguration. By tracing these successive landscape layers, the paper demonstrates that landscape transformation is not merely a material process imposed

from above, but also a process of meaning-making. Skrunda provides an opportunity to examine how place identity is continuously renegotiated as communities respond to recurring cycles of externally driven change. More broadly, the paper contributes to discussions in the environmental humanities on the relationships among landscape, memory, identity, and environmental change in the Baltic region.

Keywords: Landscape transformation; Place identity; Environmental memory; Meaning-making; Energy landscapes

Dr Ieva Garda-Rozenberga is a senior researcher at the Institute of Literature, Folklore, and Art at the University of Latvia. Her research focuses on cultural practices, individual and community identities, the diversity and continuity of (self-)representations, and life stories. In environmental humanities, she examines links between identity, history, culture, and environment, especially place-making and place-narrating among generations and communities in Latvia and beyond.

Ginta Elksne, Mg.sc.soc., Mg.hum., is a sociologist and researcher at the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia and a doctoral candidate at Riga Stradiņš University. Her research interests include migration and remigration in life stories, identity in contemporary society, and the use of biographical approaches in industrial heritage studies. She is a board member of the Latvian Association of Oral History Researchers Dzīvesstāsts (Lifestory).

S12 | URBAN NATURES, INFRASTRUCTURES AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENTS

Thursday, 3 December | 14:00–15:30 | Room: 109 DEXTRUM II | Chair: Kārlis Lakševics

81| Beyond beauty: changing perspectives on nature in contemporary cities

Beata J. Gawryszewska[1], Anna Wilczyńska[2], Maciej Łepkowski[1]

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Contemporary landscape architecture is undergoing a profound shift in the understanding of nature and beauty. Increasing attention is being paid to justice, multispecies coexistence, and the value of vernacular landscapes and spontaneous social and ecological processes. At the same time, climate change has exposed the limitations of highly controlled urban environments, while urban residents have become increasingly detached from natural processes and everyday experiences of wild nature. These developments challenge conventional design ideas based on order, control and maintenance, raising new questions: What constitutes a desirable urban landscape? Is there room for wilderness, informality and ecological spontaneity in contemporary cities? This study explores these questions through interdisciplinary research in Warsaw (Poland) and Tartu (Estonia). Building on the concept of vernacularisation of urban landscapes, we examine how resident-created gardens and spontaneous urban vegetation reshape relationships between people, place and more-than-human nature. Rather than viewing urban greenery as decoration or ecological infrastructure, we approach it as a medium for community cohesion, participation, place attachment and coexistence. Particular attention is given to informal gardens and green spaces, including vacant lots, ruderal vegetation and other spontaneously vegetated sites. Drawing on Visitor-Employed Photography, observations, place inventories and interviews, we investigate how people perceive and interpret these places, exploring what wilderness and informality mean to urban residents and how aesthetic preferences reflect broader understandings of urban nature. Our findings suggest that participants value ecological spontaneity, biodiversity and cultural familiarity alongside visible signs of care and

human presence. Rather than favouring highly maintained or completely unmanaged landscapes, they appreciate environments balancing natural processes with human stewardship. We argue that these preferences reveal an underexplored potential for broader transformations in landscape architecture and understandings of urban nature, contributing to debates on environmental aesthetics, sustainable transformation, urban wildness and vernacular landscapes in the Baltic and Eastern European context.

Keywords: Informal green spaces; Urban gardening; Nature perception; Urban wilderness; Vernacular landscapes

Beata Gawryszewska is a landscape architect and Associate Professor at Warsaw University of Life Sciences. Her research interests focus on the theory of inhabited spaces, and on the design, animation, and urban renewal, with particular attention to the role of greenery in renewal processes. She is the author of numerous projects of public and community spaces developed in collaboration with local communities, as well as publications on garden art, the social foundations of spatial management.

82| Pockets of muddy time: entanglements of extracted grounds, bodily ecologies and political imaginaries

Delphine Rumo
Aalto University, Finland

Along the disrupted shorelines of Helsinki's expanding capital region, dredged soils, blasted bedrock and contaminated terrains accumulate at the margins of building sites. This matter is the surplus of construction economies, the grounds often structurally too recalcitrant to be reincorporated into the designs that produced them. Following Battistoni's (2025) idea of 'ambiguous freedom', this paper considers how responsibility for human-ground interdependencies can become a project of post-extractivist rhythms. I ask what might emerge within what I call 'muddy time', a slow, sticky temporal suspension between embodied encounters and the standardised rhythms of construction. Drawing on walking fieldwork, creative writing, video and self-ethnographic documentation of spontaneous temporal relations, the paper asks what imaginaries emerge when rocks, soils and bodies are thought through ambiguity. The rhythms of extracted soils, blasted rocks, and inner ecologies, particularly the disrupted and slowly repaired rhythms of the gut microbiota, may seem to belong to different temporal registers, generating what Lefebvre (2013) calls 'arrhythmia': a dissonance that arises when conflicting rhythms are forced into proximity. Yet these polyrhythmic arrangements all register the effects of capitalist productivity in forms that remain difficult to value, narrate, or repair. What remains 'after' the disappearance of microbiota or bedrocks, the compulsive monitoring of leachates from harmful substances in remediated landscapes, and the destructive narratives of fast-paced technological fixes? Situated at the intersections of design culture studies, environmental humanities, and political ecology, this paper argues that questions of sustainable relations with soils and rocks can be thought through the ambiguity of muddy time. I propose pockets of deep time reckoning (Bjornerud, 2018) and other alternative temporal imaginaries to dominant chronopolitics of construction. By attending to ground-human relations through time, I aim to reshape accounts of coexistence in the Helsinki region and beyond through imaginaries of ambiguous geological and embodied politics.

Keywords: Soil; Rocks; More-than-human; Time

Delphine Rumo is a doctoral researcher in the Department of Design, Aalto University. She holds a BA in Industrial and Product Design (ECAL, 2009), a BA in Social Sciences (University of Lausanne,

2017), and an MA in Creative Sustainability (Aalto University, 2021). Her work examines the material, temporal, and more-than-human dimensions of industrialised construction.

83| Lingering lines: infrastructure, absence and urban nature

Maarja Kaaristo
Tallinn University, Estonia; Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

Infrastructures do not simply disappear when their original functions end. Former transport corridors, railways, canals, and other infrastructure stay on as material traces within the urban, continuing to organise human and nonhuman mobilities and practices long after the industrial activity has ceased. As Edensor has shown in his research on demolished and ruined buildings, past uses haunt the present through their absence in the city. What lingers in these sites is not only memory but a constitutive relation: the present state of a place is always shaped by the multiple absences that make it possible, so that absence is not elsewhere but here, folded into the present rather than opposed to it. Drawing on Ingold's anthropology of lines, this presentation examines how disused linear landscapes become spaces where presence and absence co-exist and co-produce new conditions for human and nonhuman life. The presentation looks at four sites: the Fallowfield Loop and the Castlefield Viaduct in Manchester, UK, and Putukaväil ("Pollinator Highway") and Kultuurikilomeeter ("Culture Kilometre") in Tallinn, Estonia. Emerging from different industrial and transport histories, these corridors have been reimagined as linear parks, ecological routes or simply as streets or thoroughfares. These cases are not connected by shared design logic or purpose but instead by a shared dynamic: the withdrawal of intensive use and maintenance that has created new conditions for both human and nonhuman use. As I will show in this presentation, absence is not an endpoint but becomes an affordance: a generative condition through which new relations, ecologies, and meanings take shape. Instead of looking at how disused infrastructures are preserved or repurposed, the paper asks what kinds of futures they generate with their intertwining of materialities, ecologies, and everyday practices.
Keywords: Infrastructure; Urban nature; Affordance; Absence

Maarja Kaaristo is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Tallinn University and Senior Lecturer in Tourism Mobilities at Manchester Metropolitan University. She publishes on mobilities, place-making, and qualitative methods, with a particular focus on inland waterways. She serves as Associate Editor for Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics and for Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality.

84| Lingering water: porous embodiment of spaces in-between

Paula Lūcija Lejiņa
University of Latvia, Department of Philosophy and Ethics, Latvia

How do puddles, muddy ditches and crevices filled with drainage water can help cartograph the urban grid of control in the context of the Anthropocene? Modern cities have become the centres for complex multiplicities as more-than-human encounters are ever more noticed - for example the watery rich region of Baltics, emphasizing Riga, where the frequency of intense downpours is slowly increasing. Encounters are mediated by the form of various sizes of temporary pools of water that by lingering invoke the anxieties of the disorderly rhythms of the city, as well as a need for their elimination. Meanwhile hydrofeminism and new materialism process philosophies, based in the research tradition of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, rearticulates the assumption that living in the world is tied to how the world is imagined. This assumption allows us to revise the often-

rigid human-nature narratives by pointing to the porousness of borders and returning to various scales or timelines of watery space that are often uncomfortable for productivity oriented urban environments. Following the materially embedded genealogies of places where water lingers, thinking at the edge of strictly humanist embodiment can reveal water as an already present agent that shapes the rhythmic space of modern city. Therefore, this paper aims at mapping the meeting places of water and human materiality by pointing out the smooth amid the striated spaces of urban landscape. In other words, it turns to various scale puddles as immersive tactile encounters that can serve not only as instances for productive and creative friction, overlooked by dominant modernist narratives, but also as swampy yet common ground for affirmative complex relations with ambiguity.

Keywords: Urban puddles; Drainage water; Hydrofeminism; More-than-human urban encounters; Urban environmental humanities

Paula Lūcija Lejiņa is a PhD applicant of philosophy in University of Latvia, developing thesis on relationalities with materiality – elements of urban space – as a dynamic medium for inquiring alternative forms of coexistence and ethics. Her interests stem from new materialism, hydrofeminism, and Deleuzian process philosophy studies.

S09| ARTISTIC AND SENSORY ENGAGEMENTS WITH ENVIRONMENTS

Thursday, 3 December | 14:00–15:30 | Room: 405 | Chair: Annija Danenberga

85| Breathing history: pollen and haunting ecological time

Mélissa Aïnseba
Utrecht University, Department of Media and Culture Studies, Netherlands

As you discover the Baltic Sea landscape, an amphibious, in-between place, think of what your feet squelch on - the dense, stacked horizontal layers that have formed on Earth since its beginnings. They hold answers to our human and more-than-human entanglements - pollen, specifically, has accumulated and writes deep ecological time into our soil layers. In this presentation, I share how palynology, the study of pollen, holds a key to reading these layers - revealing a story of loss, transformation, and multispecies entanglements spanning millennia. Something seemingly as delicate as pollen acts as deep haunting of our human environmental impact. It saturates both soil and lungs, materializing the deep entanglement of human and more-than-human histories. Pollen, like breath, like sediment, like water and like seasonal cycles, exists in rhythms. It dances alongside spring winds carrying it up to dozens of kilometres, existing through relation to wind, insects, water, mammals. It stains our clothes and flows into our lungs, settles onto soils, ready to be seeped into history. Pollen co-exists with humans and blurs corporeal boundaries. It helps us situate within a web of relations, even as climate-driven shifts in flowering seasons and allergenic loads reconfigure multispecies vulnerabilities. This presentation thinks cross-border pollen entanglements through ethnographic fieldwork across three situated sites - Venice's lagoon, Dutch peat-bogs, and Swedish forests - in turn connecting them to the Baltic Sea landscape. Pollen's haunting reveals how humans and more-than-human worlds continually compose their lives together, inter-scalarly. Pollen is never solitary; it is cross-pollinated, relational, and shared across borders, a granular marker of time as well as a witness of Earth's multispecies relations. Thinking with pollen offers a non-anthropocentric chance perspective to witness how changing relations between humans, more-than-humans, and environments are narrated, negotiated and tended across deep time – one

grain at a time.
Keywords: Feminist posthumanities; Multispecies ethnography; Breath; Pollen; Deep time

Mélissa (Lili) Aïnseba is a PhD candidate at Utrecht University in the ERC-funded project RESPIRE, studying intersectional power dynamics and socio-environmental in/justice through planetary breathing and suffocation. She holds an MSc in applied linguistics and in cultural anthropology. Through situated ethnography in the Swedish forests, Dutch peatlands, and the Venetian lagoon, her field experiences ground a decolonial and feminist ethic of care.

86| An unpredictable ground: earth sciences in the poetry of the Second Avant-garde in Poland

Łukasz Kraj
Jagiellonian University of Krakow, Poland

This paper stems from contemporary humanities' interest in the Earth as a major cognitive challenge (Chakrabarty 2021) and in literature as a cognitive activity, at once embedded in the earthly and capable of approaching it in ways inaccessible to scientific thought (e.g. Elias and Moraru 2015). Building on these insights, I aim to analyse how Polish poets from the interwar Second Avant-garde movement (one of the main artistic movements in the 1930s, and the heart of the Polish catastrophist current) drew on Earth sciences to enhance the aesthetic force of their poetic images and to probe the onto-epistemological implications of the Earth as presented by scientific thought. Firstly, I show how the interwar Earth sciences, circulating in middlebrow scientific magazines and books widely read in Poland at the time, countered the 19th-century mechanistic approach to the allegedly knowable planet and posited the Earth as a dynamic, unstable, and obscure entity that seriously challenged human cognitive faculties (e.g. Uyeda 1978). After outlining this context, I present several examples of Second Avant-Garde catastrophist poetry organised around geophysical and astronomical theories drawn from the aforementioned studies, including catastrophic events such as global cooling, stellar collisions, megafloods, and continental drift. In a brief analysis of the poetic strategies employed to textualise these phenomena, I demonstrate that the second avant-gardists used the powerful planetary-scale images offered by science not only to reinforce their catastrophist poetics but also to emphasise the planet's impenetrable, unpredictable, and dangerous nature, for which a mythical or religious approach emerges as more adequate than the scientific one. Consequently, if the 1930s Polish avant-gardists drew extensively on Earth sciences, they paradoxically did so to enact their mistrust of scientific thought as such and to problematise the limits of scientific cognition with regard to the planet Earth.
Keywords: Second Avant-garde; Earth sciences; Polish modernism; Żagary; Józef Czechowicz

Łukasz Kraj graduated in Polish, French, and Portuguese Studies from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, where he is currently preparing a doctoral thesis in Literary Anthropology. Awarded the best Master's thesis in Polish studies (2022), he published a monograph on the figure of pietà in 20th-century literature. In 2025, he received the Scientific Excellence Prize from the Polish Ministry of Higher Education. He is a member of the Centre for Avant-Garde Studies at Jagiellonian University.

87| The challenge of constant flux: the historical co-walking method for ecology of memories

Tomas Vaiseta
Vilnius University, Faculty of History, (Post)Authoritarian Landscapes Research Center, Lithuania

This paper is based on idea that memory landscapes concentrated within a defined territory can be understood not as discrete places, locations, or objects, but rather as elements of a single interconnected system that together constitute an integral ecology. The term ecology of memories or eco-memory is employed to denote precisely this phenomenon: an ecology of memory landscapes. To stress the idea that memory landscapes are in permanent ongoing flux, Elena Hubner and Peter Dirksmeier gave the name placemories to them (Hubner and Peter Dirksmeier, 2023). They described placemory as „a living organism in which the society, the individual observer, memorial patterns handed down from the past, and material space are relationally interwoven". This paper discusses how this fluctuation and dynamism of placemories and their ecology, that poses significant methodological challenges, could be captured, and in what ways it could be studied. As a possible research method, historical co-walking is proposed, when current walking is compared and informed by similar walks in the same area at other times and by other people. The paper analyses two cases from Lithuania: Birštonas-Prienai, where the construction of a hydroelectric power plant significantly raised the river level and changed the landscapes, including sites of memory, and one district of Vilnius, where a radical transformation from a natural environment to an industrial one took place in less than a hundred years. The aim is to show how historical co-walking can help analyse and understand these changes, how these transformations are reflected or made meaningful in unexpected ways in or through placemories.
Keywords: Memory landscape; Ecology; Placemory; Historical co-walking

Tomas Vaiseta is a Lithuanian writer, historian and associate professor at the Faculty of History of Vilnius University, also head of (Post)Authoritarian Landscapes Research Centre. He published three monographs: 'Society of Boredom' (2014), 'Summerhouse' (2018) and together with historian Valdemaras Klumbys - 'The Little O: Culture of Sexuality in Soviet Lithuania (2022). He is currently working extensively on post-Holocaust and post-violence landscapes topic.

88| Agency of waste in ecotheatrical performances for young audiences

Kitija Balcare
University of Latvia, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, Latvia

As a space for collective imagination addressing the relationship between humans and the environment, ecotheatre has the potential to foster ecological awareness and encourage behavioural change. As sustainability aspects becomes present in theatre, practitioners are changing their attitudes towards the life cycle of performances. The research question is the strategies of the ecoscenography and practical approaches used by theatre practitioners in performances for young audiences, highlighting the issue of waste both in the narratives of the performances and in the scenography. Focusing on ecomaterialism and circular thinking, researcher and scenographer Tanja Beer emphasises the need for an ecologically neutral theatre – there is no such thing as waste in nature, and therefore an ecologically viable theatre should focus not only on ecological issues in its content, but also on ensuring that theatremakers work in a sustainable and socially responsible manner [Beer 2021]. Paper will highlight several case studies from performing arts scene in Latvia: 1) a black cabinet performance for youngest audiences

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"Salmon Stasis" (2024) about the life cycle of salmon and water pollution, where outdated textiles were turned into puppets and props; 2) a workshop-performance for pupils "Plastic Hooligans" (2019), focusing on recycling waste; 3) a documentary performance for teenagers "Whale Song" (2023), where old items became musical instruments in a story about environmental pollution and first love. Theatre makers for young audiences address the issue of waste in various ways. Firstly, waste tends to take an agency on stage, becoming an integral part of the performance in object theatre manner. Secondly, waste can be shapeshifter and take on other roles in the theatrical aesthetics of the play or become upcycled props. Thirdly, theme of waste can be taken offstage for co-creational activities.

Keywords: Ecotheatre; Ecoscenograph; Young audiences; Ecomaterialism; Sustainability in performing arts

Kitija Balcare, Ph. D., researcher at the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia, theatre critic. Research interests include posthumanism, ecocriticism, with particular focus on ecology and sustainability in the performing arts. Lead of the scientific committee for project "Sustainable Theatre Alliance for a Green Environmental Shift (STAGES)".

S05 | ANIMALS, CARE AND COEXISTENCE

Thursday, 3 December | 14:00–15:30 | Room: 702 AERIS | Chair: Anita Zariņa

89| The world of seabirds reshuffled: the real and imagined cormorants in Estonia

Elle-Mari Talivee[1], Ene-Reet Soovik[2]

[1] Estonian Academy of Sciences, Under and Tuglas Literature Centre, Estonia

[2] University of Tartu, Department of Semiotics, Estonia

The official beginnings of nature protection in Estonia reach back to the year 1910 when an official agreement was reached between the Society of Latvian Naturalists in Riga and Kihelkonna church manor on Saaremaa renting the tiny Estonian Vaika islands to the society for the period of six years with the rent of 5 gold roubles then valid in the province of Livonia. It is not only the political world that has noticeably changed since then. Currently, the Vilsandi National Park that has gradually grown out of this venture is still a sanctuary for numerous seabirds – yet not all birds now inhabiting the islands were necessarily there a hundred years ago. The great cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) that used to live in the region approximately during the period 1500-1800 but had become extinct by the end of the 19th century although there are some toponyms in the country that may still be related to the presence of cormorant colonies there in the past. However, since the 1980s the species has been returning with the ongoing climate change, but the return of the species does not seem to be without its problems but is considered rather controversial. On the one hand, the cormorant was elected the bird of the year by Birdlife Estonia in 2025, on the other hand, it has inspired active campaigns against its presence such as oil-spraying of eggs. Drawing on the ongoing cormorant debate in the media, the talk will observe the changes in the environment that facilitate the increase of cormorant numbers and looks at how these birds transform the environment in return. The presentation will also observe the nascent presence of the cormorant imaginary in Estonian literature and compare it with literary portrayals of the species from "cormorant cultures" with a longer tradition.

Keywords: Literary representations; Cormorants; Landscape change; Climate change; Water

Elle-Mari Talivee (PhD) is active as literary adviser at the Estonian Literature Centre. She has worked as a research fellow at the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences and at Tallinn University. In her research, she is interested in literary urban studies, blue humanities and environmental humanities in a broader sense and literature's possibilities of influencing environmental awareness.
Ene-Reet Soovik works as an editor of the academic journal Sign Systems Studies published by the University of Tartu's Department of Semiotics, and is affiliated with the Estonian Research Council's research project "Meanings of endangered species in culture: ecology, semiotic modelling and reception" (PRG 1504). Her research interests include ecocriticism, literary urban studies and topics of space and place in literature.

90| Fluid categories of wild animals and the material politics of coexistence

Juha Kotilainen[1], Anita Zariņa[2]
[1] University of Eastern Finland, Department of Geographical and Historical Studies, Finland
[2] University of Latvia, Department of Geography, Latvia

We explore the political and legal categorisations of wild animals in Finland and Latvia. We specifically investigate how the categorisations are fluid and how the animals are transferred between different categories, such as strictly protected, game, invasive or damage-causing, and analyse the multiple reasons that underlay these transfers. The categories appear in regulations at the EU and national scales. We examine how the categories are constructed to place animal species in different groups that denote their status in terms of biodiversity conservation, utilisation as a resource, or killing for human safety and the protection of rural livelihoods. Depending on the species, in some cases it is the actions of an animal individual of a certain species that is decisive instead of the species as such in how humans are allowed to deal with the animal. We compare how the social and political contexts in Finland and Latvia, both of which are under EU jurisdiction, are related to the categorisations and how the fluidities are similar or different in the two national contexts. We treat categories as discursive and social-material constructs: they emerge through representations of animals and their relations to humans, but they also feed back into practices by directing how humans may act toward animal individuals and populations. At the same time, the material effects of animals' activities, such as predation, crop damage or landscape modification, influence how species are positioned and re-positioned within the classificatory system and treated as comparable to human impacts. We pay special attention to wolf, lynx, brown bear, beaver, barnacle goose and great cormorant that testify to the fluidity of the animal species regarding the categorisations as well as the roles of animal individuals in impacting on how the categorisations are made at the scale of the species.
Keywords: Human-animal relations; Coexistence; Politics of wild animals; Rural livelihoods; Finland; Latvia

Juha Kotilainen is a human geographer and University Lecturer in Environmental Policy at the UEF. His research is focussed on politics of biodiversity conservation and natural resource extraction; urban and rural development and planning; as well as nature conservation and environmental protection from the perspectives of local communities, resilience, social movements, and institutional transformations.
Anita Zariņa is an environmental geographer and Associate Professor at the University of Latvia. Her research explores landscape transformations, environmental knowledge and governance, and the politics of ecological change. Her recent work focuses on water cultures, rewilding, and multispecies relations, particularly the contested histories and politics of human–beaver coexistence.

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91| Towards a 'seascape of concern' on Poland's Hel Peninsula

Antoni Barc
Central European University, Austria

Where the waters of the Southern Baltic meet the Northern Polish land, a particular place emerges from the meeting of those realms. Hel Peninsula, a 35km-long sandy barrier, separates the Bay of Puck from the open sea and has long hosted fisherfolk settlements. It now stands as a critical crossroads, facing dual pressures of ecological degradation and rapid demographic transformation. The Hel Peninsula is defined by progressive depopulation and tourist development, as well as ongoing conflicts over environmental regimes. Fisheries that fostered a characteristic Kashubian culture are now sites of struggle over the future of coastal livelihoods. Research in the region so far has described binary conflicts among actors such as fishers, conservationists, seals, and cormorants. Those accounts fail to convey relational aspects and the interdependence of more-than-human communities at risk as the peninsula's habitability diminishes. Therefore, cohabiting the seascape with other creatures becomes an issue of multispecies justice. This proposed doctoral work views the Hel Peninsula as a relational seascape (Plaan 2019), thereby foregrounding the interdependencies among its inhabitants. The presentation is based on preliminary ethnographic research conducted in the summer of 2026. It aims to establish a "community of concern" (Morizot 2022) on the Hel Peninsula and to map more-than-human stories of cohabitation amidst socio-ecological transformation. This research strives for collaborative knowledge production that incorporates different knowledges and other-than-human ways of living through ethological observations of marine species. Thus, it lays out an agenda for multispecies ethnography on and offshore that reveals hidden ecological interdependencies and examines the narratives and power relations that underlie coastal politics. Ultimately, by centring concern over the peninsula's habitability and exploring alternative ways of being, this research seeks to imagine coastal communities rooted in multispecies justice. Small-scale fishers, seals, and cormorants that remain in the seascape might teach us about possible multispecies alliances.
Keywords: Seascape; Multispecies ethnography; Fisheries

Antoni Barc is a 1st-year PhD Student at the Central European University. He has a background in biology (Bachelor's degree, University of Gdansk), and he holds a joint master's degree in Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management (MESPOM). His research interests focus on the habitability of places from a socio-ecological perspective. His future project will explore relationships between humans and non-humans in the Polish Baltic Seascape undergoing socio-ecological transformations.

92| Three dilemmas of animal hoarding in Latvia's urban setting

Staņislavs Šeiko
Baltic Studies Centre, Latvia

This paper views animal hoarding as a point of dilemma, where human and non-human lives become intertwined in ways that challenge traditional views of coexistence, violence, and care. This paper maps three structural dilemmas through which the phenomenon of animal hoarding becomes legible – and ungovernable. The first dilemma belongs to the hoarders themself: to shelter the animal or not. Hoarders frequently narrate their accumulation of cats and dogs as an act of rescue, extending hospitality to beings discarded by society. Yet this uncontrolled hospitality results in cannibalism, disease, overcrowding, and starvation. Thus, the hoarder maintains a tragic position as a caregiver who harms through the very act of caring. The second dilemma belongs

to the veterinary inspectors: to confiscate the animals or not. When inspectors intervene, they run the risk of both saving animals and morally destroying a person who is already marginalised. Also, confiscation does not address the root causes of hoarding, while animals may end up in overcrowded shelters or being euthanised. The third dilemma belongs to the police officers: to view hoarding as violence against companion animals – and therefore as a matter for criminal code – or to treat it as a question of animal welfare legislation. Since it is extremely difficult to determine the subjective part of the crime – hoarders do not intend harm – the Latvian criminal code does not now recognise animal hoarding as a criminal offence. However, the state of the animals frequently leads to long-term suffering, what state the question: are they legally considered victims? Together, these three dilemmas constitute a grammar of coexistence under strain. They shed light on how both human and animal vulnerability, institutional capacity and moral norms intersect in Latvia's urban setting.

Keywords: Animal hoarding; Animal abuse; Ethical dilemmas

Staņislavs Šeiko has a Phd in Social Sciences. Researcher at the Baltic Studies Centre. His doctoral thesis examined the evolution of animal rights in Latvia through a social science lens, highlighting the discrepancies across different social groups engaged in animal rights advocacy. Also focuses on the examination of interpersonal violence, with the phenomena of radicalisation and strategies for its mitigation, viewed through a sociological lens.

PS | POSTER SESSION

Thursday, 3 December | 13:30–14:00 | Ground floor

93| Consolidation of blue humanities in Estonia: state of the art and perspectives for the future

Soovik Ene-Reet[1], Talivee Elle-Mari[2], Julia Kuznetski[3]

[1]University of Tartu, Department of Semiotics, Estonia

[2] Estonian Academy of Sciences, Under and Tuglas Literature Institute, Estonia

[3]Tallinn University, Estonia

Estonian territory is nested in bodies of water, as two sides of it border on the Baltic Sea and to the east lies Europe's fourth-largest lake; there are also two border rivers – the Narva and the Koiva (Gauja). The those of country's proportionally extensive wetlands – bogs and marshes, exceeded only by Finland, are currently being used in branding it in the image of a nature-friendly nation. So there are deeply rooted historical and cultural relationships with various bodies of water – and atmospheric manifestations of water in connection with the four seasons – that have been marking the population's ways of co-existing with their environment and deserved local academic reflecting on since the early modern times. The poster presentation traces the ways in which the conceptualised field of 'blue humanities' is currently becoming recognised in Estonia in the wake of the early-21st-century hydrological turn in humanities and against the broader background of the looming climate crisis. The consolidation of the work of particular scholars interested in specific water-related topics into seminars and conference panels has recently given rise to the publication of the first explicitly blue-humanities-affiliated collection of articles – a transdisciplinary special issue of the journal Methis. Studia humaniora Estonica, that comprises studies linked to literary theory and history, ethnology, history of ideas and philosophy. The presentation will also outline the presence of blue topics and research objects in Estonian environmental history and propose

an outlook for further, more integrated humanities studies of water in Estonia, asking, inter alia, whether and how human experiences of water encapsulated in various cultural manifestations can serve as an impetus for "thinking with water" (Chen, MacLeod, Neimanis 2013) and enhance water awareness in society required in our era of pressing ecological and social concerns.
Keywords: Blue humanities; Estonia; Environmental history

Ene-Reet Soovik works as an editor of the academic journal Sign Systems Studies published by the University of Tartu's Department of Semiotics, and is affiliated with the Estonian Research Council's research project "Meanings of endangered species in culture: ecology, semiotic modelling and reception" (PRG 1504). Her research interests include ecocriticism, literary urban studies and topics of space and place in literature.
Elle-Mari Talivee (PhD) is active as literary adviser at the Estonian Literature Centre. She has worked as a research fellow at the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences and at Tallinn University. In her research, she is interested in literary urban studies, blue humanities and environmental humanities in a broader sense and literature's possibilities of influencing environmental awareness.
Julia Kuznetski is a professor of English at Tallinn University, Estonia. Research interests span ecocriticism, ecofeminism, new materialism, blue humanities, and critical hope studies. Currently working on a monograph on water as a memory-archive in contemporary transcultural literature (Brill). An investigator in the Estonian Research Agency project "Memory and Environment: The Intersection of Fast and Slow Violence in Transnational European Literatures" (PRG2592).

94| Restructuring historical thinking: environmental history as a pathway to democratic resilience

Uku Valner
Tallinn University, School of Humanities, Estonia

This poster presents the initial roadmap of a planned doctoral research project connecting more-than-human environmental history with civic competence development in the Estonian school context. History education in Estonia continues to rely on simplified conceptions of the past that position humans as separate from the natural world, limiting students' capacity to make sense of the entangled relationship between human activity and ecological systems. At the same, despite high levels of environmental awareness among Estonian youth, this awareness does not translate into climate-conscious action or civic engagement. This doctoral research explores more-than-human environmental history perspectives within history education, arguing that such perspectives require a fundamental rethinking of how history is taught. The research investigates to what extent this restructured historical understanding supports the development of democratic resilience: the capacity to act democratically even in conditions of uncertainty and ecological instability. Through participatory action research in Estonian schools, it asks what kind of new possibilities for civic engagement does it open up, when students move beyond human-centric narratives and consider history through entangled relationships between human societies and the natural world. The original contribution of the doctoral research lies in exploring what is the impact of de-centering humans from environmental historical narratives on how students position themselves as civic actors in the era of the climate crisis.
Keywords: Environmental history; Civic action; Education; Historical thinking

Uku Valner is a doctoral researcher and junior research fellow at the School of Humanities, Tallinn University, working in environmental history didactics. His doctoral research asks whether and

how rethinking history education through a more-than-human environmental perspective can support the development of students' civic competence. He previously worked as a history and civics teacher for eight years.

95| Phenology as relational practice: designing conditions for reorienting attention toward plant life

Keili Koppel
University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom / Estonia

The climate crisis is, at its roots, a crisis of relationships with the living world. Plants are entwined with this world, yet are often reduced to utilitarian functions and rarely recognised as beings with their own histories, temporalities, and relations. Phenology, the scientific study of seasonal biological timings, is one of the few practices through which people attend to plants closely across the years. Volunteers who record and contribute this phenological data for science, at once, also develop local understandings of temporal ecological coordinations around plants (e.g. the emergences or arrivals of interacting species or how growing conditions or wider climatic changes affect timings). Exploring phenology through practice-based design research and environmental humanities lenses, the doctoral project draws on a qualitative study with phenology volunteers to reimagine ecological observation tools and approaches for wider audiences. It develops this reimagining through three explorative studies in Edinburgh with environmental humanities scholars, community groups, and botanical garden visitors: (1) a toolkit of phenological concepts, sensory prompts, and protocols that supports participants to read a single garden visit through the lens of seasonal timing and ecological coordination; (2) site-based observation kit, tested across four weeks of return visits, building temporal knowledge of a specific place through comparison; and (3) plant biographies approach that invited participants to document and narrate the life of a specific plant, drawing on phenological records and knowledge, and embodied approaches to situate it within its histories and entanglements. Through these explorations, it proposes that design, drawing from phenological sensibilities, can create conditions for relational, temporally grounded understandings of local ecologies, and highlights learnings for the new generation of ecological observation tools for knowing and caring for the living world.
Keywords: Phenology; Design; Environmental humanities; More-than-human temporalities; Attention

Keili Koppel is a PhD researcher at the University of Edinburgh, exploring observation and noticing of more-than-human entanglements through the lens of time, with a particular interest in how people relate to plant life. Her project focuses on phenology recording as a practice of attention and care, informed by design and environmental humanities, in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and the Woodland Trust's Nature's Calendar, funded by the AHRC.

96| Future green careers

Ivana Poláčková
CEEV Živica, Slovakia

As global environmental challenges, including the climate crisis and biodiversity loss, continue to accelerate, today's youth are facing unprecedented levels of eco-anxiety. At the same time, the global labor market is undergoing a transformation that is reshaping traditional industries and creating entirely new professional sectors. This paper explores the potential to fill a gap in current education, namely the need for systematic career guidance linked to environmental literacy in schools. The

paper goes beyond the traditional definition of green jobs as specialized environmental sciences, but focuses on future green careers and the spectrum of what they might look like. We will look not only at specialized green roles such as renewable energy engineers or circular economy experts, but also at the greening of established professions such as zero-waste culinary arts, sustainable fashion design, or ethical auditing of artificial intelligence. Drawing on pedagogical frameworks developed in recent transnational initiatives, we present a model of education for educators and career counselors in schools. This model works with five key educational dimensions: emotional (promoting connection with nature), socio-ecological (cultivating global solidarity), educational (analyzing the impacts of employment), transformational (promoting creative visionary thinking), and political (understanding systemic power structures). Central to this model is an active hope approach that provides students with the resilience and systems thinking needed to transform anxiety into constructive, career-oriented action. Ultimately, this paper argues that educators should also naturally transition into the role of career counselors as part of the educational process. By incorporating green skills – such as strengthening critical systems thinking, building resilience and adaptability, and ethical decision-making – directly into the curriculum, schools can support students in seeing their future careers not only as a source of livelihood, but also as an active, everyday contribution to the regeneration of the planet.
Keywords: Green career guidance; Sustainable education; Eco-anxiety; Active hope; Systems thinking

Ivana Poláčková is an environmental manager, educator, and former director at CEEV Živica with over 20 years of experience in climate, biodiversity, and outdoor education. Holding a Master's in Landscape Ecology, she leads impactful environmental projects and advocates for sustainable guidance. In 2025, she and her team won the National Career Guidance Award for Green Career Education project. She is an EU Climate Ambassador and co-author of several publications on green careers and education.

97| Scots pine genetic studies of vegetation in southern Lithuania in the Allerød: the case of Pamerkiai

Jurata Buchovska, Linas Daugnora, Algirdas Girininkas
Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry; Institute of Forestry, Department of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Lithuania

This report presents the results of geological and genetic analyses of Allerød sediments in southern Lithuania based on a studied outcrop on the bank of the river Merkys, which consists of both terrigenous and limnic-biogenic strata. The lower part is composed of glaciofluvial beds deposited during the initial stages of the Late Pleistocene. The glaciofluvial sediments are covered by a ~1 m thick bed of limnic-biogenic strata, i.e. gyttja with interlayers of sand. Gyttja is enriched by numerous remains of terrestrial and limnic flora, including megafossils of Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris L.) and birch (Betula sp., subsect. Albae). The tree megafossils were dated to the GI-1d/GI-1b transition (Vs-3010, 11780 BP). The results of aDNA tests on the wood showed a relatively close genetic association between the P. sylvestris aDNA sample and that of present-day Scots pine typical for wetland populations, suggesting its predominance and corresponding to the palaeoenvironmental regime at the site during the first half of the Allerød warming. Moreover, the results of the genetic survey correlated positively with those obtained during an analysis of Early Holocene Scots pine stumps discovered at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. Genetic studies of wood are particularly important for describing the spatial and temporal vegetation dynamics during the Postglacial, including the identification of refugium areas, migration routes and genetic lineages of

particular tree taxa. Based on the data obtained, the positive correlation of genetic records proves the prevalence of the northern type B haplotype, i.e. the flourishing of the Scots pine from the so-called northern refugium in what is now southern Lithuania during the Lateglacial Interstadial.
Keywords: Pinus sylvestris L.; DNA; Postglacial; Merkys

Jurata Buchovska is a researcher at Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry. Her research focuses on archaeobotany, ancient genetics, and environmental history. She specializes in analyzing plant genetic remains to reconstruct Late Glacial vegetation dynamics and past ecosystems in Lithuania. Her current work integrates genetic data with environmental contexts to understand human-nature interactions in the Baltic region.

98| Holocene mire development and environmental change in the Lubāns Wetland, eastern Latvia

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Since the end of the last Ice Age, nature and humans have interacted for millennia. As the climate warmed, the first vegetation appeared on the shores of glacial meltwater basins, attracting Stone Age communities. Evidence of these processes and long-term environmental changes has been preserved in sediments, especially in bogs, which serve as valuable archives of natural history. Paleoecological methods allow these records to be decoded. This study reconstructs the Holocene environmental development of eastern Latvia using bogs as archives of environmental memory, with the Lubāns Wetlands as a case study. It also evaluates the potential of paleoenvironmental reconstruction for interpreting Stone Age landscapes. The study synthesises existing data on bog development in eastern Latvia and presents a detailed palaeoecological investigation of Vilku bog, comparing the results with other bogs in the Lubāns Wetlands. AMS ^{14}C dating, sediment stratigraphy, loss on ignition (LOI), spore-pollen analysis, peat botanical composition analysis, and plant macrofossil analysis were applied. The results show that climate and hydrological changes strongly influenced bog development in eastern Latvia. At Vilku bog, limnic sediment accumulation began around 6157 cal. BP, while bog formation started around 5811 cal. BP through the gradual overgrowth of a shallow paleolake. Remains of floating Water-nut (Trapa natans) and white Water-lily (Nymphaea alba) confirm the existence of a former lake ecosystem. Over time, Vilku bog developed from a lowland bog into a raised bog, a process completed only during the last 300 years. Pollen data indicate that vegetation changes were driven by both climatic fluctuations and human activity. These findings confirm that bogs are unique environmental archives that enable the reconstruction of ancient landscapes and improve our understanding of the environments surrounding Stone Age settlements such as Abora in the Lubāns Wetlands.
Keywords: Palaeoecology; Holocene; Bogs; Lubāns wetland

Elīna Reire is a geographer and doctoral researcher at the University of Latvia. Her research focuses on peatland formation, palaeoenvironmental change, and human–environment interactions in Eastern Latvia. She has contributed to research on the Lubāns Wetland, Abora Neolithic settlement, and Vilku Bog, and has authored publications on Holocene environmental change.
Laimdota Kalniņa is a Doctor of Geography (Dr. geogr.) and a leading researcher in the fields of Earth sciences, physical geography, and environmental science. Her primary research areas are: human impact on nature and the landscape since the Stone Age; research on peatland development and peat accumulation in the context of climate change; and research and socio-economic assessment of restoration and recultivation methods for impacted peatlands.

ABSTRACTS

99| Mapping climate fanfiction on AO3: self-tagging of environmental narratives

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Digital fanfiction archives, as vast and ever-expanding collections of texts, hide unexpected treasures for researchers. These archives evolve continuously, shaped by internal community dynamics, shifting genre conventions, and changing hierarchies of source texts. In contemporary fan cultures, the category of a "program text" no longer refers only to familiar cultural artefacts such as films, books, television series, or cartoons. It now also encompasses new and unconventional sources, including legal documents, political speeches, and reports addressing complex social issues such as climate change or Indigenous rights. Within this diverse ecosystem, conspiracy functions as one of the most persistent narrative devices. It serves as a tool of creative subversion, allowing authors to twist, expand, or destabilize the meaning of the original text. Yet when fanfiction engages directly with global crises, conspiracy tropes may do more than simply enrich and transform the plot: they can be read as participating in, reshaping, or amplifying broader conspiracy-theory discourse. Using both digital methods and close reading, our research examines English-language climate-crisis fanfiction hosted on Archive of Our Own and explores the role of conspiracy theories within these narratives. We seek to reconstruct and analyse the classic triad of conspiracy logic — "Who," "What," and "Why" — and to trace how fan authors adapt, stretch, or reinvent its components while drawing on diverse cultural sources. Equally important for us are the narrative functions these conspiratorial elements perform: whether they operate as a critique, a coping mechanism, a world-building tool, or as an imaginative response to the uncertainties of the Anthropocene.
Keywords: Fanfiction; Conspiracy theories; Environmental crises

Tatjana Menise is a research fellow at the Department of Digital Humanities at Riga Technical University. Her most recent research activities were conducted during a postdoctoral position in the REDACT (Researching Europe, Digitalisation, and Conspiracy Theories) project, supported by the CHANCE initiative.

100| The Aral Sea: solastalgia and cultural responses to ecological loss

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Eur'Orbem (CNRS/Sorbonne Université) and OCS (ENSA Paris-Est), France

This intervention draws from my doctoral research by project, Archipelago of Memories – the Aral Sea: Memories, Identities and Cultural Responses to an Ecological Catastrophe, which examines the disappearance of the Aral Sea from the perspective of environmental humanities, political ecology, collective memory, and artistic practice. Focusing on Karakalpakstan, in north-western Uzbekistan, the project asks how landscapes affected by ecological collapse become carriers of narratives, identities, and forms of resistance. Drawing on the concept of solastalgia, developed by Glenn Albrecht, I approach the Aral Sea's disappearance as a cultural and sensory trauma. The proposal responds directly to several themes of BALTEHUMS IV: environmental histories, memories and imaginaries; water cultures and hydrosocial perspectives; infrastructures and interventions in land and water; climate change, environmental loss and more-than-human vulnerabilities; and poetic, artistic and sensory engagements with damaged environments. The Aral Sea offers a powerful case for thinking about "worlds in relation". Today, the region is being reframed through art and science-driven initiatives, supported directly by the Uzbek government, which seek to move its image beyond that of an environmental disaster zone and toward that of a site for innovative international projects. This presentation will therefore open a comparative reflection on resilience,

memory, and possible ecological and political recomposition in challenging contexts, in the Baltic region and beyond. The research for this project combines historical and personal family archives, oral testimonies, analysis of cultural and literal productions from 1970s to present day, and field-based observation. It also includes a practical component: a spatial intervention in Karakalpakstan planned for 2027, followed by a post-thesis exhibition. As a second field trip to Karakalpakstan is planned for autumn 2026, the intervention will present both the conceptual framework of the project and emerging field data on how communities remember, narrate, and inhabit the environment after the sea.

Keywords: Environmental loss; Memory studies; Artistic/architectural engagement

Marinika Sadgyan (b. 1990) is a Paris-based architect and researcher. She holds an MA in Performance Design from Central Saint Martins, London, and has spent a decade developing collaborative, site-specific installations and architectural projects with an emphasis on sustainability. Since 2025, she has pursued doctoral research at Sorbonne University and ENSA Paris-Est, examining how memories of built environments and transformed landscapes are preserved and transmitted.

101| The transformation of Hoftenberg Manor Historical Park and cultural landscape change in southeastern Latvia

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Daugavpils University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Latvia

This study shows the fate of the Hoftenberg Manor Historical Park, which was created at the beginning of the 20th century on the picturesque banks of the Daugava River. The study of the park's surroundings reveals changes in the cultural landscape of southeastern Latvia. It analyzes the circumstances of the park's creation, the features of its layout, and the diversity of tree species. The changes caused by agrarian reforms and subsequent socio-economic and political processes in the park's history are also examined. The manor is viewed not only as a historical object but also as an environment in which relationships between people, nature, and landscape developed over time. The study presents the manor landscape as a carrier of cultural traditions and a creator of the rural cultural landscape. Special attention is paid to the changing heritage, aesthetic, economic, and recreational functions of the landscape. The public's attitude toward this cultural and historical heritage is also explored. Based on oral testimonies, archival materials, periodicals, and documents of educational institutions, the history of the park is reconstructed. The study demonstrates how, after the agrarian reform, the park transformed from a private territory into a public space managed by agricultural societies and the local community. The transformation of the park's surroundings also reflects broader social changes, from the era of manors and land reform to the Soviet period and contemporary understandings of cultural heritage. This case allows an analysis of how the cultural landscape adapts and acquires new significance during political and social transformations. The article contributes to discussions on the history of the Baltic region and cultural landscape change. It shows how memories of the historical park provoke discussion and raise questions about the collective memory of nature, culture, and society.

Keywords: Hoftenberg manor; Historical park; Cultural landscape; Agrarian reform; Cultural heritage; Collective memory

Marika Kuciņa is a doctoral student interested in botany, ethnography and cultural history. Earlier research related to the history of crafts. Now attention is focused on research into changes in the cultural landscape. The realities of the transformation of Latgale manor parks are currently being updated.

ABSTRACTS

102| How do people value aquatic ecosystems, perceive eutrophication and evaluate different solutions?

Agnese Reķe
University of Latvia, Latvia

Eutrophication threatens aquatic ecosystem functioning, biodiversity and the benefits that people derive from inland and marine waters. Understanding how people value aquatic ecosystems, perceive environmental problems and respond to potential solutions is essential for addressing this challenge. This study examined public perceptions of aquatic ecosystem services (ES), knowledge of eutrophication and acceptance of nature-based solutions (NBS) for water quality improvement. It draws on a survey (n=2837) conducted in 2025-2026 in Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland within the CREATE project. Although most respondents had no professional or academic connection to waters, 59% reported water-related hobbies and 65% had a particular interest in a specific water body, highlighting personal connections with aquatic ecosystems. Biodiversity support and recreation values were among the most highly valued ES, with priorities varying between inland and marine ecosystems and across countries. Most respondents had observed visual indicators of eutrophication, most commonly algal blooms and excessive aquatic vegetation growth, but familiarity with the term "eutrophication" varied considerably, being highest in Finland and lowest in Lithuania. Despite this, eutrophication was widely perceived as an important environmental issue, with slightly greater concern for inland waters. Familiarity with NBS terminology was limited, yet acceptance was high after respondents received a brief explanation of the concept. The findings reveal knowledge gaps related to eutrophication terminology, as well as some long-term ecological impacts. Targeted awareness-raising could help addressing this gap, while the strong public support for NBS offers a promising basis for their implementation to improve water quality across the Baltic Sea region.

Keywords: Public perception; Eutrophication; Aquatic ecosystem services; Nature-based solutions; Baltic Sea region

Agnese Reķe is a geographer, PhD candidate at the University of Latvia and environmental expert at the Baltic Environmental Forum - Latvia. Her research interests are related to human-nature interactions, cultural ecosystem services and social values of nature, with particular interest in their integration into spatial planning and decision-making.

103| Community Food Forests in Estonia: Cultivating Food, Biodiversity and Social-Ecological Relations through Participatory Practice

Joanna Storie[1], Jekaterina Balicka[1], Maarja Käger[2], Maarja Olesk[2]
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Food forests are increasingly recognised as multifunctional landscapes that combine food production, biodiversity enhancement, ecological restoration and social learning. As diverse agroforestry systems that mimic natural forest ecosystems, they create opportunities for new relationships between people, food and the more-than-human world. Across Europe, growing interest in food forests reflects a desire to reconnect communities with nature while developing more resilient and locally embedded food systems. This poster presents lessons from the EIT Food Forest project through the development of the Mustamäe Community Food Forest in Estonia. Together with a companion pilot in Artajona, Spain, the project used participatory design,

stakeholder engagement, training and practical implementation to explore how food forests can support food production, ecological learning and community stewardship while informing future adoption of the concept across Europe. Findings indicate generally positive attitudes towards food forests, particularly in urban and peri-urban environments where they are valued not only for food production but also for their educational, ecological and social functions. The Estonian case demonstrates how community food forests can support local stewardship, strengthen environmental awareness and create spaces for intergenerational learning and community participation despite challenges associated with climate, maintenance and public perceptions. Training programmes, collaborative design processes and continued stakeholder engagement were critical in building local capacity and ownership. The poster argues that community food forests are best understood as socio-ecological infrastructures that bring together ecological processes, community knowledge and collective care. By examining the Estonian experience within a broader European context, it highlights how food forests can contribute to more resilient and relational approaches to urban landscapes, food systems and human-nature connections.
Keywords: Food forests; More-than-human relations; Ecological learning; Community stewardship; Urban landscapes

Joanna Storie, Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture, specialises in the bioeconomy and nature-based solutions. Her work focuses on sustainable landscape planning, ecosystem services, and the integration of ecological principles into land use and development. She leads and contributes to interdisciplinary research and applied projects that strengthen landscape resilience, enhance biodiversity, and supports sustainable rural development, connecting academic knowledge and practical solutions.
Maarja Käger is a Member of the Board at the Institute of Baltic Studies (IBS), an independent Estonian research think tank. She has worked at IBS since 2011 as a project manager and analyst on evaluations and applied research in education, youth and the environment. Maarja manages IBS's work on the "FOOD FOREST" project, which develops sustainable food production solutions. Her work has involved stakeholder needs assessment, public engagement and food forest establishment activities.
Maarja Olesk is an analyst at IBS, working on social innovation, stakeholder engagement, sustainable development and digitalisation issues. Maarja has a PhD degree in public administration from the Tallinn University of Technology, where she researched collaborative innovation and co-creation in the context of digital government. Maarja is also working with the Open Government Partnership's Independent Reporting Mechanism to assess countries' Open Government Partnership action plans.
Jekaterina Balicka is a landscape architect and researcher at the Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU), specialising in landscape analysis, design and presentation techniques. With expertise in landscape planning, outdoor recreation and nature-based solutions, she contributes to international research and education projects focused on sustainable landscapes, human well-being and resilient environments. She combines academic research with practical design and stakeholder engagement.

BEHIND BALTEHUMS IV

BALTEHUMS IV has been a collective undertaking, bringing together colleagues from several institutions in Latvia and across the Baltic Sea region. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed to shaping the programme, organising the conference and making these few days in Riga possible.

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