

Posthumanism and Ethics

The Research School doctoral Symposium

10–11 October 2016

Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg



Organized by Valand Academy's doctoral students

In preparation for the symposium, read:

1. Karen Barad *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, chapter one and two, p. 39-96.
2. Heather Davis *Art in the Anthropocene*, introduction "Art & Death: Lives Between the Fifth Assessment & the Sixth Extinction", p. 3-31 and "Life & Death in the Anthropocene: A Short History of Plastic" p. 347-359.

For an introduction to/navigation within posthumanism and new materialism:

3. Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* from, "The Transversality of New Materialism", p. 93-101
4. Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, "Introduction", p. 1-12.

Links to download publications:

[Karen Barad](#)
[Heather Davis](#)
[Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin](#)
[Rosi Braidotti](#)

NB! Paper versions of the books *Art in the Anthropocene* and *Meeting the Universe Halfway* can be collected for free at Anna Frisk's and Kanchan Burathoki's office. There are 15 copies (of each) available.

Additional reading:

[Interview with professor of anthropology Anna Tsing](#)

[Humanities for the Environment \(hfe\)](#)

[Cecilia Chen; Janine MacLeod; Astrida Neimanis, *Thinking with Water*](#)

Symposium Schedule: Day 1

MONDAY 10 October

X- Library, Akademin Valand, Vasagatan 50

10.00 – 10.50

Introduction: reports, hellos and info about the coming days

11.00 – 12.00

Presentation by Heather Davis: *Molecular Critique*

NB! Get the paper version of her book *Art in the Anthropocene* free at Anna Frisk's and Kanchan Burathoki's office. There are 15 copies available.

12.00 – 13.00

Lunch

13:00 – 14.00

Presentation by Heather Davis continues

14.00 – 15.00

Presentation by Eva La Cour

15.00 – 16.00

Presentation by Ariana Amacker

16.00

Mingle-time (wine + snacks!)

18.30

Dinner (place to be announced) - Confirmations required

Symposium Schedule: Day 2

TUESDAY 11 October

X- Library, Akademin Valand, Vasagatan 50

10.00 – 11.00

Presentation by researchers from The Seed Box – an Environmental Humanities Collaboratory at Linköping University

11.10 – 12.00

Presentation by researchers from The Seed Box continues

12.00 – 13.00

Lunch

13.00 - 13.50

Presentation by Imri Sandström: *Reflexivity's preoccupations as a problem for the whole lake*

14.00 – 15.15

Conversation regarding chapter one and two, p. 39-96 of feminist theorist and physicist Karen Barad's *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. This conversation also serves as a preparation for the coming meeting the doctoral student's will have with Barad:

Saturday October 22, 2016.

NB! Get the paper version of the book free at Anna Frisk's and Kanchan Burathoki's office. There are 15 copies available.

15.20 – 16.00

"Closing" discussions and conversations regarding the organization of the next doctoral symposium.

Abstracts:

Ariana Amacker:

In this exercise we will explore the intricacies of our bodily sensations through micro-moments of movement and how our "thinking" is aesthetically shaped through that movement. This comes from my research-practice that is theoretically framed by the anti-dualistic stance of Classical Pragmatist philosophy and methodologically informed by movement improvisation practices. It has a practical aim of contributing to design methods that work with the somatic experience of *being present*.

The Seed Box

Anna Kaijser and Martin Hultman are connected to The Seed Box: an Environmental Humanities Collaboratory, hosted by the Department of Thematic Studies, Linköping University. They are both engaged in the political relevance and implications of posthumanist ideas, and the role of posthumanist interventions in face of severe environmental crisis. In their presentation, they will introduce the Seed Box and their respective projects. They will also share examples from their own experiences with embodied and collaborative research, and the linking of academic research to art, music and activism.

Heather Davis: *Molecular Critique*

“Our lungs inhale, pulling into our bodies the chemicals that are pumped out into the atmosphere by industry, warfare, and leisure. Similarly, the water that sustains life is increasingly anthropogenic – filled with pharmaceuticals, microplastics, and agricultural runoff. Our understanding of these toxins is built upon the framework of the molecular, described through the knowledge of biochemistry and chemical engineering, and often undetectable to our bare senses. Similarly, gender is increasingly defined through the molecular, through the presence or absence of hormones such as testosterone or estrogen. And, indeed, the core of our contemporary identity is composed through a molecular imagination in the figure of DNA. Drawing upon the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Beatriz Preciado and Karen Barad who each foreground the molecular as a useful rubric and analogy for critique, I will address a ‘molecular imagination’ offer insights and limits our understandings of ourselves and our environment within feminist and queer theory.”

Eva La Cour:

In this presentation I will present a very fresh material from a recent fieldwork on the high Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, while reading a paper that draws on particular edgeworks within the field of more-than-human-sociality of anthropology. My aim is to let the reading propel a reflexive questioning of Svalbard as a valued site for narratives of knowledge production, national territory and the environment.

Imri Sandström: *Reflexivity's preoccupations as a problem for the whole lake.*

The presentation consists of parts of a coming chapter concerning questions of reflectivity and diffractivity. I will perform parts of the webpage *The Pages* and expand on these notions/practices. Drawing upon works of (amongst others) literary researcher Harald Gaski, anthropologist Johannes Fabian and Karen Barad, I seek to problematize reflexivity's preoccupations and open for a discussion about how a diffractive practice might differ.

Bios:

Heather Davis is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for the Arts and Humanities at the Pennsylvania State University where she researches the ethology of plastic and its links to petrocapiatalism. She is the editor of *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies* (Open Humanities Press, 2015) and *Desire Change: Contemporary Feminist Art in Canada* (MAWA/McGill Queen's UP, 2017). Her writing can be found at heathermdavis.com

Anna Kaijser is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department for Thematic Studies: Environmental Change, at Linköping University. She has a background in Social Anthropology, Gender Studies and Sustainability Science. In her research she engages feminist postcolonial theory and intersectionality to explore social and cultural dimensions of environmental matters, and especially how power dynamics play out in environmental politics and discourse. Her publications include the PhD thesis *Who is Marching for Pachamama? An Intersectional Analysis of Environmental Struggles in Bolivia under the Government of Evo Morales*; the article *Climate Change through the lens of Intersectionality* published in the journal *Environmental Politics*, and articles in the Swedish gender journal *TGV* and Spanish journal *Ecología Política*. Since 2010, she has given lectures on gender, power and climate change to a variety of audiences, and combines her research with personal environmental engagement. At the moment, she is studying environmental activism in Sweden, and exploring walking as a method for discussion and reflection.

Associate professor **Martin Hultman** work as lecturer at Linköping University. As a scholar and citizen he is involved in local environmental politics in forms of ecotourism, ridesharing, rights of nature, transition movement and public seminars also being co-ordinator of *Environmental PostHumanities* and *SweMineTech* research networks. He has edited special issues about environment in the leading gender journal *TGV* in Sweden as well as on ecopreneurship in *Small Business Journal*. Publications include *Posthumanistiska Nyckeltexter*, *The Making of an Environmental Hero: A History of Ecomodern Masculinity*, *Fuel Cells and Arnold Schwarzenegger*, *Discourses of Global Climate Change* and *A green fatwā? Climate change as a threat to the masculinity of industrial modernity*. His current research revolves around issues such as posthumanities ethics, ecofeminism, environmental utopias and ecopreneurship historically as well as contemporary. At the moment he is writing a book together with Paul Pulé regarding *Ecological Masculinities*.