

*Call for Papers*

# Multispecies Storytelling in Intermedial Practice

*Conference in Växjö, January 23-25, 2019 (from Wednesday 1- pm to friday 1 pm)*



*This transdisciplinary conference is hosted by the Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies, Linnæus University, Sweden, in collaboration with the Laboratory of Aesthetics and Ecology, Copenhagen/Berlin. It is generously funded by Seedbox. Deadline for abstracts: 15 August 2018.*

We face an unparalleled historical situation of global multispecies suffering, variously known as the Anthropocene, or the New Climatic Regime, and signalled by alarming states of exposure and precarity in more-than-human worlds. The question of how to nurture liveable futures for 'us' – while also asking who and what might be included in this 'us' and with what consequences – depends on our abilities and willingness to re-negotiate means of entering into relations and, indeed, conversations with nonhumans, be they other species, microbes or machines.

This conference will explore speculative fields of more-than-human articulations and collaborations in transdisciplinary terrains that teem with what Donna Haraway calls 'multispecies storytelling'. The conference seeks to investigate the problems and potentials of multispecies storytelling in intermedial practices for contemporary theory, art, music, literature and dance, attempting to negotiate nonhuman others as sometimes eloquent, and sometimes diffuse co-authors of (hi)stories.

Other species have always occupied a prominent space within the human cultural imagination. Whether transformed or overwritten by metaphorical devices, or constituting spaces of negativity as silent, and indeed silenced, bodies outside of language, the question of how to handle interspecies alterity has prompted both crisis and innovation. Recent efforts within posthumanism, animal studies and biosemiotics have contested the semiotic exceptionalism of the speaking and thinking human subject. Multispecies stories challenge anthropocentric narratives that tend to depict the bodies of other species as rhetorically passive resources for human appropriation, whether as consumptive commodities in global economies, or as metaphors and symbols in aesthetic media.

Within the last decades, scholarly fields such as New Materialism and Ecocriticism have come to embrace questions of how to (re)present more-than-human agencies, collectives and collaborations.

Multispecies ethnography offers theoretical and methodological tools for studying entanglements in emergent ecological assemblages. Work by ethnographers in contact zones where binaries like nature/culture, human/animal break down have helped generate broader interdisciplinary initiatives in the Environmental Humanities. Transdisciplinary endeavours combining insights from (post)humanities and science provide deconstructive insights into anthropocentric identity, pointing to human nature itself as an interspecies relation.

Concurrently, contemporary art has seen a so-called 'non-human turn' employing multispecies agents as part of lively artworks. Utilizing other species as a means of display or critique of anthropocentric structures often runs the risk of enforcing the same hierarchies one wishes to challenge. However, experimental art-science collaborations have also proven promising in the invention of various kinds of interfaces that enable "response-abilities" -- philosopher Karen Barad's term for rendering one's own apparatuses, and those of others, more capable of response.

Such trans-, inter-, or multidisciplinary endeavours elicit crucial questions such as: What is (a) language in multispecies storytelling? Who and what may be able to represent itself and/or an environment within multispecies assemblages? How are we to articulate and narrate multispecies encounters of work, violence, care and play? Who and what may also speak, when the human is not privileged as the only possible author? How do we recognize and possibly translate such articulations, while acknowledging that they manifest in multisensory ways, in and through signs, visual shapes, sounds, and sensory cues, and that they may elude homocentric understandings of language?

The last question points to the necessity of approaching some of these issues from an intermedial or multimodal point of view, drawing on disciplines that specialize in registering and investigating translations and transportations of form and content from one medial constellation to another, or even from the 'hard' sciences to aesthetic dimensions. Consequently, the conference inaugurates a collaboration of the curatorial platform the Laboratory of Aesthetics and Ecology (Copenhagen and Berlin) and Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies at Linnæus University, Sweden.

We welcome papers and other forms of presentations from a broad variety of fields dealing with questions of multispecies narration and (re)presentation in more-than-human landscapes. We encourage transdisciplinary methods and experimental formats.

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### **Confirmed keynote speakers, additional keynotes TBA**

Vinciane Despret, Department of Philosophy, Université de Liège

Eben Kirksey, Department of Anthropology, Deakin University

Adam Dickinson, Department of English Language and Literature, Brock University

Karin Bolender, artist and poet, Oregon, USA

### **Participating artists (Växjö Konsthall)**

Katja Aglert (SE), Signe Johannessen (NO), Dance for Plants (DK, DE, FR, BE), Åsa Ståhl and Kristina Lindström (SE), Karin Bolender (US), Kultivator (SE)

The official language of the conference is English. Each paper will be allotted 20 minutes for presentation and 10 minutes for discussion. Proposals for both individual papers and preconfigured sessions of two or three papers are welcome. As our goal is to attract participants from a broad spectrum of research, papers and sessions with a marked interdisciplinary approach will be prioritized.

Researchers using artistic forms or artists are strongly encouraged to reply to this CFP with suggestions of presentations in media other than the conventional conference paper. We also welcome proposals for workshops. The conference will offer child-care facilities.

For paper proposals: please submit an abstract of 250 words as a Microsoft Word file, along with a brief bio. For workshop proposals: please include a description of the workshop (250 words), along with any logistical requirements and facilitation information, as a Microsoft Word file, along with a brief bio.

For film/video submissions, please submit the file as a MOV or MP4; if it is available to be viewed online, you can also send us a link to the video with any required passwords to view. Please provide us with the artist name, title, length, and any other pertinent media details, including screening requirements. Please submit a brief bio along with your submission, along with a brief description or artist statement about the work (250 words).

For all other arts submissions, please submit up to 10 images of the body of work you are proposing as JPEGs, along with a brief description or artist statement about the work (250 words). Please submit a brief bio along with your submission.

Please direct all submissions and questions to: [multispecies@lnu.se](mailto:multispecies@lnu.se)

The conference website will provide you with more information and a link to the Linnæus University Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies.

The conference fee is 200€ (40€ for students or independent scholars and artists) which will cover a reception and a conference dinner. We offer a few travel bursaries for students, independent scholars and artists. Please send alongwith your conference submission a short statement on why you will need a travel bursary (max 150 words).

Welcome!

The conference committee

Ida Bencke, Laboratory of Aesthetics and Ecology and Jørgen Bruhn, Linnæus University Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies.

Timetable

Deadline for abstracts: 15 August 2018.

Notification of acceptance: 15 September 2018.

Publication of preliminary conference program: 1 December 2018.

Deadline for registration and conference fee: 15 December 2018.