



In collaboration with The Tema Genus Higher Seminar Series and The Eco- and Bioart Research Network present:

Mini-Symposium

Becoming with Alien Encounters and Speculative Storytelling

5th April 2018, 13:15 – 16:30

Room: Faros, T-huset,
Campus Valla



Image: Marietta Radomska, *Topoi* (2017)

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Speculative fiction – as an ‘umbrella term’ – refers to a wide range of narrative fiction that employs ‘fantastic’, supernatural or non-mimetic elements. In the times of the climate change and environmental crises accompanied by futuristic ‘technology-will-save-us’ scenarios on the one hand, and visions of ‘doom and gloom’, on the other, speculative fiction has gained a momentum as an alternative way to reimagine the future in the ‘Anthropocene’. As feminist scholar Donna Haraway writes, the ‘speculative’ element of story-telling leads to ‘opening up what is yet-to-come in protean entangled times’ pasts, presents, and futures.’ (2011).

Taking this as our starting point, we see speculative narratives that combine reality and fiction, and philosophy, science and art, as a prolific site for the emergence of different ontological, epistemological and ethico-political possibilities. Through the stories of experimental encounters with alien species, in/organic entities, non/living assemblages and the void, we explore ethico-onto-epistemologies of becoming in a more-than-human world.

Speakers:

Katja Aglert (independent artist and researcher, Stockholm, SE)

Nina Lykke (professor em., Linköping University, SE)

Line Henriksen (lecturer, University of Copenhagen, DK)

Marietta Radomska (postdoc, Linköping University, SE)

Programme:

13:15 – 13:25 Introduction

13:25 – 14:05 Katja Aglert, < > 'Dial: C-A-R-E-T-O-D-A-N-C-E (the first encounter)' > <

14:05 – 14:45 Nina Lykke, *Becoming with Algae. Exploring Speculative Stories of Reimagining the Imperceptible.*

14:45 – 14:55 Comfort break

14:55 – 15:35 Line Henriksen, *From the Void – Speculative Storytelling and Encounters with Nothingness*

15:35 – 16:05 Marietta Radomska, *Non/living Archives of Lichenology: Between Stories of Living and Dying in a More-than-human World*

16:05 – 16:30 Joint panel discussion

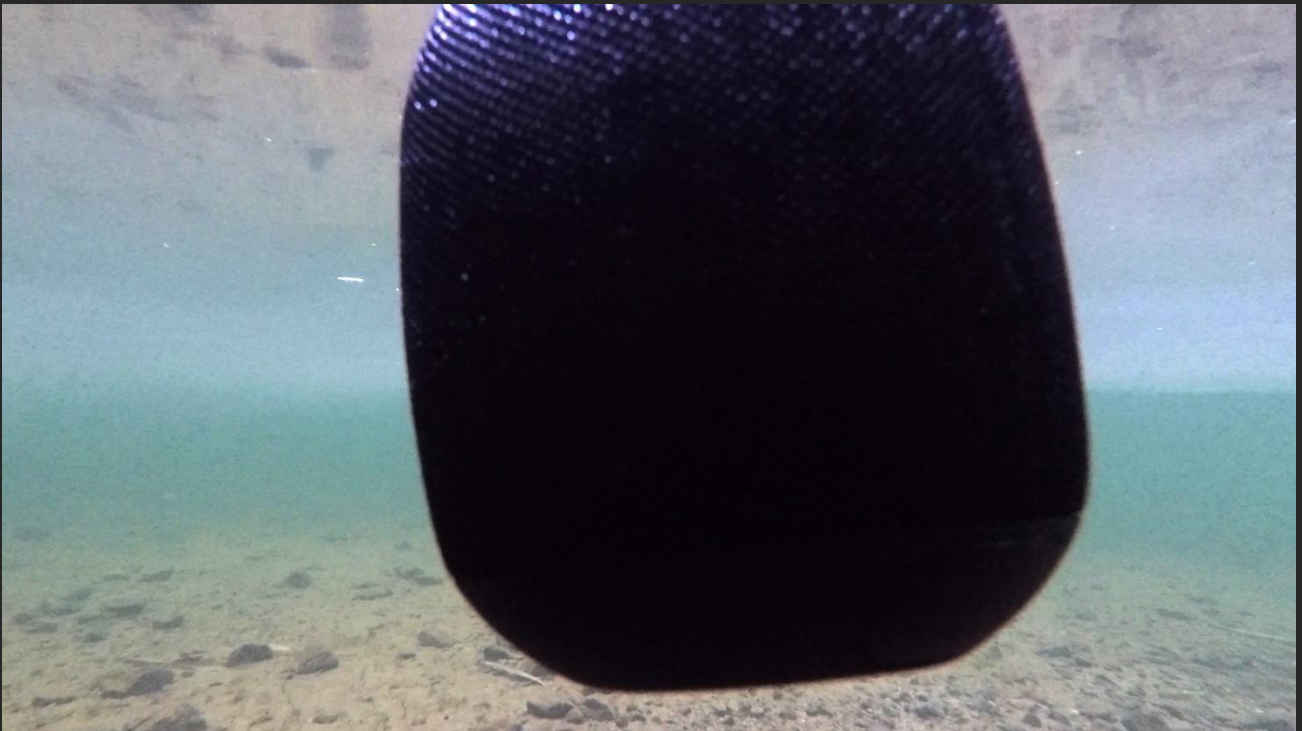


Image: Still from 'Dial: C-A-R-E-T-O-D-A-N-C-E (the first encounter) II', by Katja Aglert (2017).

< > 'Dial: C-A-R-E-T-O-D-A-N-C-E (the first encounter)' > <
by Katja Aglert

This presentation unfolds some of the research related to the artistic project 'Dial: C-A-R-E-T-O-D-A-N-C-E (the first encounter)'. It discusses how speculative forms of storytelling developed through artistic experiments in practice, can become means for new materialisations and worldings beyond the binary views. The project explores possibilities of inter-species communication with alien aquatic beings through sound frequencies in marine environments. Exchange between diverse beings has a rich spectrum and is, amongst other things, related to the preference of speed. In other words, we cannot greet a crab on the same frequency as a clam. Furthermore, will someone reply, and how?

Bio

Katja Aglert is an independent artist and researcher whose practice is transdisciplinary in nature, and includes both individual and collaborative projects. She exhibited widely in Sweden and internationally including solo exhibitions at Polarmuseet, Tromsø, Norway (2017/2018); Biologiska Museet, Stockholm (2016); FLORA ars+natura, Bogota, Colombia (2015/2016) Museum for Contemporary Art, Santiago, Chile (2015/2016); Marabouparken, Stockholm (2014). As artist she teaches regularly at institutions such as Stockholm University, and Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts, and Design. For more info: katjaaglert.com



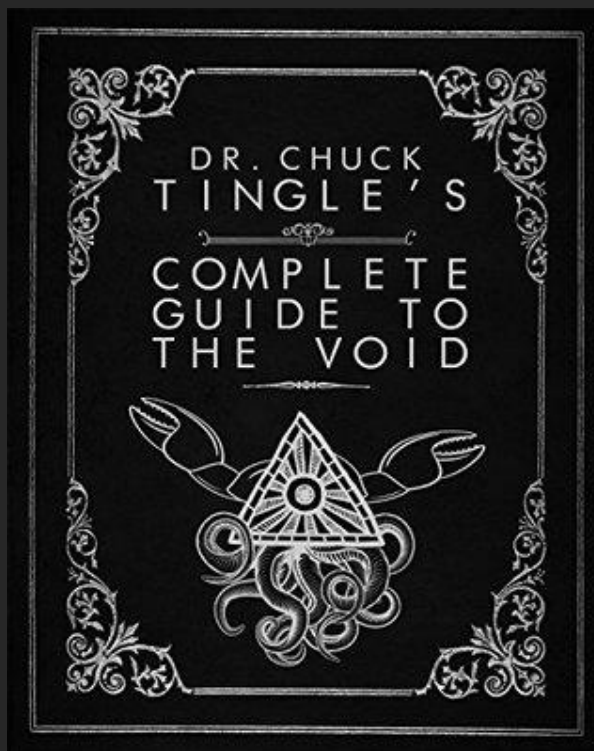
Image: Nina Lykke, Cliffs of Fur built of algae (2017).

Becoming with Algae. Exploring Speculative Stories of Reimagining the Imperceptible.
by Nina Lykke

Diatomite earth is fossilized remains of diatoms, single-celled aquatic algae. In the paper, I use diatoms as lens to ask, what diatomite earth may tell about a flat life/death ontology, and which possibilities for speculative story-telling it may open. My focus is a diatomite cliff formation on the Danish island of Fur – and my life partner’s ashes, spread in the waters beneath. I reflect on my co-becoming with my partner through a combination of poetic, autophenomenographic, and philosophic-cultural reflections on her becoming imperceptible in a Deleuzean sense, and her transforming into a body of ashes, now mixed with diatomite sand. The paper’s analysis is based on examples from these writings.

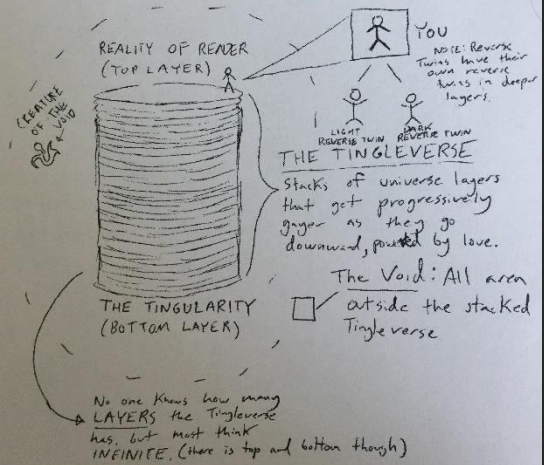
Bio

Nina Lykke, Professor Emerita, Gender Studies, Linköping University, Sweden. Co-founder of Network for Queer Death Studies, and Network for Ecocritical and Decolonial Research. Her current research focuses on queering of cancer, death, and mourning in queerfeminist materialist, decolonial and eco-critical perspectives, and on autophenomenographic and poetic writing. Recent publications: *Queer Widowhood. Lambda Nordica*. 2015:4; *Academic Feminisms: Between Disidentification, Messy Everyday Utopianism, and Cruel Optimism. Feminist Encounters*. 2017:1(1); *When death cuts apart: On affective difference, compassionate companionship and lesbian widowhood*. T.Juvonen and M.Kohlemainen (eds): *Affective Inequalities in Intimate Relationships*. Routledge, New York, London (2018).



LOCATION OF THE VOID

To understand the location of The Void you must first understand the Tingleverse. Included here is a diagram to help with your understanding. As you can see, The Tingleverse is best imagined as a stack of universes that stack on top of one another. These realities are infinite; you might view some of them as good and others as bad, none of



Images from: Chuck Tingle's Complete Guide to the Void (2017)

From the Void – Speculative Storytelling and Encounters with Nothingness

by Line Henriksen

The void is a recurring figure within the genre of speculative fiction. Whether in the shape of the emptiness of outer space or the depths of the sea, the void embodies nothingness as well as the limits of human understanding and imagination. This, the void's associations with emptiness and the 'beyond-human', makes it a favoured antagonist within speculative fiction, but also a space of infinite possibilities – a blank page that is never quite as blank as one expects. In this paper, I explore contemporary speculative tales of nothingness as they relate to questions of storytelling and encounters with the (never fully) blank page.

Bio

Line Henriksen is a lecturer in Gender Studies at the University of Copenhagen and holds a PhD in Gender Studies from the Unit of Gender Studies at Linköping University, Sweden. She has published on the subjects of monster theory, hauntology and digital media in journals such as *Women & Performance* and *Somatechnics*, and her fiction has appeared in *Andromeda Spaceways* and *Tales to Terrify*, among others. She is a founding member of the Monster Network.



Image: Marietta Radomska, *Archives of Lichenology* (2017)

Non/Living Archives of Lichenology: Between Stories of Living and Dying in a More-than-human World

by Marietta Radomska

The ‘Postmodern Synthesis’ of evolutionary biology (Koonin 2009) challenges the paradigmatic ideas of evolutionary decent, reproductive transmission of genes, and the notion of the individual (be it an organism, a population, or a species). As biologist Scott F. Gilbert argues, instead of individuals, we should talk about ‘holobionts’: composite organisms becoming through multiple cooperative processes. This paper, being itself a piece of speculative storytelling, aims to explore what thinking with and through the figure of the lichen – a primary example of a holobiont – can do to the cultural imaginaries and our understandings of the ontologies (and ecologies) of living and dying in a more-than-human world.

Bio

Marietta Radomska, PhD, is a Postdoc at Linköping University, SE; co-director of the Posthumanities Hub; founder of The Eco- and Bioart Research Network, co-founder of International Network for Ecocritical and Decolonial Studies and a founding member of Queer Death Studies Network. Her current research project focuses on ecologies of death in the context of contemporary art. She is the author of the monograph *Uncontainable Life: A Biophilosophy of Bioart* (2016) and has published in *Somatechnics*, *Angelaki* and *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, among others.

Organisers:

The Posthumanities Hub: <https://posthumanities.net/>

The Eco- and Bioart Research Network:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/eco.bioart.research.network/>

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