



**Nordiskt Sommaruniversitet**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS for  
TRACES: CONTRIBUTIONS/EVENTS**

The study circle **Cybioses: Shaping human-technology futures**  
invites for contributions and events on the theme of

**FAR HUMAN-TECHNOLOGY FUTURES**

for the

**Nordic Summer University Summer Symposium**  
in distant/dispersed/virtual form

July 26-Aug 2, 2020

**Invitation**

We invite scholars, artists, students, technologists and other professionals working or writing on future technologies to take part in our study circle **Cybioses: Shaping human-technology futures**, a migratory non-hierarchical group of international researchers.

The aim of the **Cybioses** circle is to bring together theorists, artists, practitioners, scholars, and technologists. Together we want to discuss practices of making and the social and cultural impact of future technologies. How can philosophical questions support the development of technologies? How in turn can technological practices and development inform philosophical, aesthetic, and sociological theories? And how can both making and theorizing help us imagining future technologies and their impact on societies? Is it possible to extrapolate from making? Guided by these questions we want to develop a philosophy for makers and a better practice for philosophy.

Our circle takes place within the Nordic and Baltic framework of Nordic Summer University (NSU). Since its inception, the primary aim of NSU has been to provide a forum for experimentation and cross-disciplinary collaboration welcoming members both from within and outside of universities and other institutions.

Due to the current circumstances the summer symposium will find its place in an alternative form: in form of **Traces** submitted by the participants that would be accessible for everyone online as a live event or in a form of a documentation during the Symposium 26 July – 2 August 2020.

## Format - what is a Trace?

Our summer symposium will not be able to take place as a large physical meeting, but will instead happen in distant and dispersed formats of encounter, sharing and connection reflecting on and making use of pleasure and playfulness. This will take the form of small local or online gatherings, which produce traces that can be shared with a wider community. The aim is to enable new forms of sharing and find new possibilities to be a community. In short:

**Trace = event + documentation**

Each trace will take the form of an **event** (in-person or online) that consists of a **collective activity** or multiple **short contributions, documented** by participants in a suitable way.

It could be for example a virtual meeting or mini-conference, a webinar lecture, a podcast session, a workshop, an interview, a virtual performance, a journal article, an anthology, a film shoot, a reading of a play, a local gathering, a joint themed dinner. We are open for experiments: collaborative, participatory, interactive, artistic, performative.

It is a requirement that every Trace is **shareable** somehow and can be accessed freely, not only for other participants, but also for non-members of the NSU.

Since it might not be able to completely realize some *Traces* within the time frame of a single week, there will be some flexibility regarding occasion and duration of the projects.

General criteria for a Trace:

- Sharable and open to all during the original dates of Summer Session.
- An “Invitation” with a picture and a short description of the trace is shared with the general audience before the Summer Session starts (200-500 words),
- Related to the Cybioses topics and themes listed in the call.
- The main language should be English or a Scandinavian or Baltic language,
- The producer/maker of the Trace is/becomes a member of NSU (i.e. pays the membership fee) and that he or she participates in the democratic forums of the NSU (for example by becoming a delegate during the General Assembly).
- The producer provides a brief report including number of participants, goals, etc., of the Trace (forms for this will be provided).

We especially encourage collaborative or interactive proposals. We will select a number of traces to be included in the summer session, based on relevance, feasibility, and quality of the proposal. There is no fixed limit, but it will be at least six. The number is also somewhat constrained by the available grant funding (see below).

The idea of a trace is conceived by Nordic Summer University in the context of Tracing the Spirit, its 70th anniversary project. The traces produced this year will take place alongside commissioned projects exploring Nordic Summer University’s influence and history. Proposals don’t need to be related to this context, but applicants need to follow the above guidelines.

As always, NSU is particularly interested in supporting people who are at the outskirts of the Nordic region – the Baltic (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and the West-Nordic (Iceland, Greenland, Faroe Islands) communities, as well as those with special needs. So please do inform us if your application of a Trace grant falls under the regional support or if the pandemic has had particular financial consequences to you.

## Grants

The Nordic Summer University is making funding available to produce the traces. We have a budget of approximately €5,000 which will be divided between accepted traces. The exact amounts will depend on the number of applicants and the types of proposals we receive.

We would like to use the funds to enable as many participants to contribute as possible and will distribute them accordingly. **The funding is intended to cover costs for events or as grants for people who are not securely employed and are in precarious financial situations.**

Participants who do not wish to apply for a grant are equally welcome to propose gatherings or individual contributions.

The projects should be of a non-commercial nature (no selling; each trace should be freely available for people) and should be open to everyone and shareable.

Participants who would like to participate without producing any Traces are of course also welcome to apply. Once you will receive the approval of your application or confirmation about participation from us, you will be able to register and pay the membership fee for the Summer Session 2020.

## Theme of the symposium

In our previous symposia we have examined improvisation & creativity in relation to technology, and projection and prototyping as key practices of shaping futures. When is improvisation required in making or imagining futures? Can creativity be automated? And how can projecting into the future prevent us from repeating and prolonging what already exists today? What is the infrastructure of the prototype approaches?

For this summer session we invite the participants of our circle, as well as other theorists, artists, practitioners, and technologists to speculate on distant future scenarios and possible human-technology developments, that draws upon one or more of the themes discussed so far.

### Proposals are encouraged within the following topics:

- design fictions and speculative design
- art futures and future art
- art & technology futures
- big/deep history - big/deep future

- future, technology and society
- human-machine future complexities
- future alternative histories
- seeing futures: prediction, anticipation and projection
- visions of creative and artistic futures
- philosophical imaginations of futures
- interaction between philosophy and technological development
- speculative art practices
- prediction and improvisation in future studies
- thought experiments
- techniques and technologies of world building
- the limits of prediction, anticipation, imagination
- comparative futurologies
- science fiction and future science
- ethical design for the future and future ethics
- sustainable far futures
- future making - making futures
- future practices for the production of "originality" and "novelty"
- futures of tech-augmented human and humanity

## Submission

To submit a proposal for a Trace, please, send it via email in PDF format to the coordinators or the circle email (we will confirm receipt of submission within a day): [cybioses@nsuweb.org](mailto:cybioses@nsuweb.org).

For questions, the circle coordinators can be reached at the above address or: Palle Dahlstedt ([palle@chalmers.se](mailto:palle@chalmers.se)), Rafael Dernbach ([rafael.dernbach@gmail.com](mailto:rafael.dernbach@gmail.com)), Maru Mushtrieva ([m.mushtrieva@gmail.com](mailto:m.mushtrieva@gmail.com)).

1. A brief description of the Trace project (circa 200–500 words) with a title and descriptive subtitle. This text should include your trace proposal, its format, its duration, estimation of costs, and how it is going to be carried out and documented.
2. A short bio (max. 200 words).
3. A picture that can be used as an invitation for participation in the Trace.

Deadline for sending in proposals for Traces is 31st of May 2020.

The preliminary program will be announced on July 1st, 2019, on [www.nordic.university](http://www.nordic.university) where you can also find more information about NSU and sign up for the newsletter.

## Nordic Summer University Membership Fee

Participants need to pay the Nordic Summer University's annual membership fee when they register for the symposium. The membership fee facilitates the existence of the Nordic Summer University, which is a volunteer-based organisation.

There are two rates:

Full annual membership fee (for those with secure incomes): **€25**

Reduced annual membership fee (all others): **€10**

Participants decide themselves which rate applies to them. Those who have already paid this year by registering for the winter symposium do not need to pay again.

### Important dates:

Submission deadline: **May 31st**

Acceptance decision and notification: **June 16th**

Payment deadline for membership fee: **July 1st**

### About NSU

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is a Nordic network for research and interdisciplinary studies.

NSU is a nomadic, academic institution, which organises workshop-seminars across disciplinary and national borders. Since it was established in 1950, Nordic Summer University has organised forums for cultural and intellectual debate in the Nordic and Baltic region, involving students, academics, politicians, and intellectuals from this region and beyond.

Decisions about the content and the organisational form of the NSU lay with its participants. The backbone of the activities in the NSU consists of its thematic study circles. In the study circles researchers, students and professionals from different backgrounds collaborate in scholarly investigations distributed regularly in summer and winter symposia during a three-year period.

For more information [www.nordic.university](http://www.nordic.university)

