



## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Artistic Research | Performing Heterotopia

study circle invites proposals for contributions and events on the theme of

### **Pleasure and Playfulness in Times of Crisis**

**Artistic Research | Performing Heterotopia**

**Summer (Dis-)Symposium**

**26 July – 2 August 2020**

**Distant and Dispersed**

We invite artists and researchers from all fields to take part in our artistic research circle, a migratory non-hierarchical group of international participants. We welcome participants from all geographical, artistic, cultural and academic contexts and backgrounds, both outside and within universities and other institutions.

The circle is developed within the framework of Nordic Summer University, which consists of thematic study circles that meet twice a year on a three-year cycle. Our 2019–2021 cycle is called Artistic Research | Performing Heterotopia and this summer symposium will be the fourth of six symposia taking place during this time period. The circle aims to share ways artistic research can explore, experiment with, critique, create and perform heterotopias, which are spaces, temporalities and practices that disrupt the continuity and the norms of ordinary reality. We hope not only to engage with heterotopic concepts, but to be a heterotopic space.

#### **Theme**

After departing from *Elsewhere*, passing through *Absences and Silences* and arriving at *Disorientations*, this summer we wanted to ask about new beginnings through pleasure and playfulness.

The global crisis intervened in our plans. But perhaps in these circumstances of increasing anxiety and isolation the topic is more necessary than ever.

At a time when all our habitual and familiar ways of communicating, interacting, moving, living and being are put into question, we want to find new forms of encounter and togetherness.

We still see pleasure and playfulness as heterotopic states and modes of being and as forms of purposeful activity that can generate new knowledges. All our linear notions of time, space, embodiment and subjectivity are challenged at the moment. In what ways can we maintain our spaces as sites of pleasure and playfulness?

We are interested in pleasure and playfulness as strategies and processes not just of research but living in general. We're interested in way that they give us access to knowledges and practices unapproachable by "serious" means.

We want to embrace their lightness and follow the paths they open up towards multiplicity, plurality, indeterminacy and surprise. We are interested in their capacity to enable a response to disruptions of familiar categories and unsettlements of habitual practices and

thoughts. We would like to explore their possibility as refusal and resistance, and their potential as liberation.

We want to know how we can play with weighty and serious things, especially in times of crisis. We'd like to perform and improvise, and ask about performance and improvisation as activities using pleasure and play.

We also want to provoke discussion about how we understand pleasure and playfulness, from whose perspective, according to whose experiences – and who is excluded. Whose pleasure matters and who is allowed to play? What kinds of exploitations and displacements are often behind our enjoyments and sites of pleasure? In what ways can pleasure and playfulness be forms of violence as well as knowledge and joy?

We encourage work in progress, incompleteness and unfinished work, partial and fragmented efforts, lost or missing elements, especially when they reflect on forms and uses of pleasure and engage in playful subversions.

Our plan was to invite proposals taking departures from issues such as the following. We are still interested in pursuing these points and lines of thought, but with specific relevance to our current situation. What new meanings, significances, resonances, potentialities and powers can pleasure and playfulness take in times of crisis?

- pleasure and playfulness as methods and strategies of artistic research
- the meaning of play and playfulness within artistic practice and research
- the role of pleasure in knowledge and practice
- the body and its relationship to pleasure and playfulness
- non-hierarchical and non-competitive forms of playfulness and play
- playfulness as a way of embodying plural selves and inhabiting multiple worlds
- pleasure and playfulness in performance and improvisation
- the role of pleasure and playfulness in challenging socio-political hierarchies
- feminist, decolonial and queer theories and approaches to pleasure and playfulness

## Format

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.

## 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.

The Nordic Summer University is making **funding** available to produce the traces. We have a budget of approximately 5,000 Euros which will be divided between 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.**

## We invite proposals for one (or both) of the following:

1. A short individual or collaborative contribution (up to 15 minutes) – a small gesture of sharing – that could take the form of a talk, a performance, a reading, a short podcast or video, an experiment, or any other form of personal expression. It should be created specifically for the summer session, or started, developed or produced that week.

or/and

2. An online or local gathering. This could be a walk, a workshop, a reading group, a discussion, a meal, a collectively-produced publication, video or podcast, or any other kind of communal activity. Gatherings should not be focused on individual work, but aimed at bringing together, sharing, connection or collective production. We encourage group proposals for local gatherings (for example, from participants living in the same geographical area). We also encourage participants in locations remote from others to propose online gatherings.

We will aim to combine gestures and gatherings to create a programme of local and online events during the week of the symposium. To make this possible, we may need to ask participants to make slight adjustments to their proposals. If you would like to be involved in hosting or coordinating the programme in your area, please include this in your application. We would like to plan small-scale events that don't require commercially-hired facilities, and can happen in free public or communal spaces, institutional spaces that participants have access to, or even in someone's kitchen or garden.

We are very open to suggestions, ideas and possibilities that we haven't included or considered. Our hope is to create a series of events that enable new forms of encounter and togetherness, and explore alternative forms of interaction and community-building.

Please bear in mind that no one can know at this moment what will be possible in July/August, so be prepared to be flexible and adapt your ideas to whatever the circumstances may be.

Please do not make more than one proposal of each type.

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

Gatherings can involve collaboration with other study circles or people outside Nordic Summer University, but the organiser needs to be a member of the Artistic Research | Performing Heterotopia study circle.

The idea of a trace is conceived by Nordic Summer University in the context of *Tracing the Spirit*, its 70<sup>th</sup> 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 guidelines stipulated by the Nordic Summer University. **Each trace should:**

- be sharable and open to all during the Summer Session time frame (this means that you need to produce some form of documentation of your event and make it publicly available; the event itself does not need to be public);
- come with some promotional material before the Summer Session, such as a picture and short description (200–500 words).
- Those who receive a grant to produce a trace must be a member of the Nordic Summer University (pay membership fee) and participate in the democratic forum of Nordic Summer University (for example, by becoming a delegate for the virtual General Assembly meeting – more information on this will be provided).
- Those who receive a grant to produce a trace will need to provide a brief report of the trace to their coordinators (including number of participants, goals, etc.) after the trace has been produced. A form for this will be provided by Nordic Summer University.

- Traces must be related to the circle's theme, fit with Nordic Summer University's overall goals, aims and vision, and use English or a Nordic or Baltic language as the main language.

**The deadline to submit proposals is 31 May.**

**To apply, please submit the following via the online form**

[<http://nordic.university/study-circles/7-artistic-research-performing-heterotopia/pleasure-and-playfulness/summer2020-application>]

1. A written proposal of no more than 350 words.

This should include a title, a description of your proposed contribution or gathering, and its format.

and

2. A short bio in three sentences.

Applications to participate without contributing are also welcome. In this case, please submit a short statement of interest in the application form instead of a proposal, together with a three-sentence bio.

Final decisions about grants will be made by the Nordic Summer University on the recommendation of coordinators. We expect the results to be confirmed on 15 June and will get back to everyone as soon as possible after this date. There may also be a waiting list. We'll publish the programme [on our website](#) in early July.

### **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.

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

Decisions about the content and the organisational form of the Nordic Summer University lie with its participants. The backbone of the activities in the Nordic Summer University is 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.

The Nordic Summer University is committed to the principle of sustainability. At our symposia we offer vegetarian/vegan food only and aim towards zero waste. We thus invite members to bring their own reusable coffee cup and water bottle to the symposia and to consider carefully the carbon footprint of their travel choices.

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