



Call for Participation
Deadline: November 15, 2024

Winter Symposium 5th to 9th of March 2025: Olaus Magnus travels to the North (Sigtunastiftelsen, Sweden)

Our CFP in Brief

We warmly invite applications to our Study Circle “Praxis of Social Imaginaries” Winter Symposium in Sigtuna Sweden. This community operates within the Nordic Summer University and sets out to foster a platform for trans- and inter-disciplinary research. By bringing people together from various different disciplines and fields of artistic work into shared laboratories of praxis, we aim to create a transformational learning environment. This winter, our praxis together will center on the travels of Olaus Magnus to the North and particularly his encounter with Sami peoples and Finns.

This study circle has visited texts dealing with the Mongol empire, Asia, Africa and Central America. We now turn our gaze towards Indigenous homelands of the North. The text of this Winter Symposium was selected as it was written by a theologically schooled clergyman who later served as archdeacon and archbishop of Uppsala, Sweden: **Olaus Magnus** (1490-1553). He travelled in the Nordic region, and once he was exiled to Rome due to the Reformation by the Swedish King Gustav Wasa, he decided to write a book about his “home”. The *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555) is a compilation of 22 books dealing with everything from brewing beer and making cheese and descriptions of flora and fauna to reports of local culture. The text is still today a valuable repertory of much curious information of Scandinavian customs and folklore. It was translated into Dutch (1562), Italian (1565), German (1567), and English (1658). Abridgments appeared also at Antwerp (1558 and 1562), Paris (1561), Basel (1567), Amsterdam (1586), Frankfurt (1618) and Leiden (1652). The compendium’s popularity was increased due to its numerous woodcuts of people and their customs as well as the making of a map with vivid illustrations, which spread across all of Europe.

For this particular Symposium we will be focusing on the sections on the Sami Indigenous people, their customs and cultural practices. Together with the artistic project *Spirit Land* created by Emma Göransson and Frank Berger and a dialogue lead by Sami theologian Åsa Viridi Kroik, special sessions will give us material for discussing Sami cosmologies and the differences in social imaginaries between past and the present. In addition, our focus in the reading sessions will be on sections dealing with music, games and play and ritual customs. Thus our invitation to participation goes out to anyone doing research or artistic practice within these themes and topics, but also practitioners in transdisciplinary research more generally.

In this symposium, we will be reading his Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus - A Description of the Northern Peoples, which Olaus Magnus wrote in 1555. Also the Carta Marina created in 1538, will be featured in our sessions. The days will be organised in themes depending on the contributions and workshops suggested by the participants.

To learn more about our transdisciplinary approach and approach to Indigenous-centered research ethics, please see the section "About Our Study Circle" below.

How can you participate?

Send us a short bio with your name, information about yourself, your home institution/organisation, your artform or area of research and a short motivation as to why you want to participate. If you would like to facilitate a session or present artwork during the study circle, please include further information in your email about your plans. The options for participation are as follows:

Lead reading sessions in a workshop format

Give us a small idea about how you would want to lead a reading session of either 30 minutes or max 1,5h.

Lead an intervention or artistic presentation for our community that is connected to the topic of this symposia or transdisciplinary learning

Give us a short description of your proposed performance talk or workshop related to the themes of Olaus Magnus writings and/or our working methods.

Student Participant

You can also participate in this transdisciplinary reading, listening and storytelling work by being an active member of the community. Please indicate if you intend to work towards credits or if you are part of the students and researchers from Åbo Akademi that are taking part in the course Social Imaginaries and Transdisciplinary Learning.

When sending in your bio, please indicate which kind of participation you are wishing to contribute with and what your practical needs with this setup are.

Scholarships and Grants

Please also let us know if you will have institutional support for participation, accommodation and traveling costs or if you would want to be granted a scholarship. The earlier you send in your request, the better the chances will be for us to work with you to secure scholarships! People with institutional placement in the Nordic/Baltic region are given priority in scholarships as we have funders supporting Nordic collaborations.

For the students, researcher and artists coming from Åbo Akademi University there is a special grant that will cover travel, accommodation and food. You will need to pay the membership fee to NSU and a small participation fee. (Please indicate at an early stage if you need support for these)

Scholarship and grant applications are due **November 15**.

- Scholarship: exclusively for Nordic/Baltic students
- Grant: inclusive for all other students and people in need, also non-Nordic participants.

If you would like to apply for a scholarship and/or grant, the relevant documents need to be sent to coordinators at the email praxis.social.imaginaries@gmail.com with the following:

- Full name, e-mail and citizenship/country of residence
- Current academic status and affiliation (if applicable)

Include a preliminary budget for your travel costs to and from Sweden with public transportations. (We do NOT support flying when other means of transportation are available) **Remember that all travel grants work with a system of reimbursements AFTER participation in the symposia is complete.** You will need to send in a travel form and valid receipts (including VAT) on the factual costs you had.

Who can participate?

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is open to all who want to engage in transdisciplinary and mutual learning under the values of equality and openness. You can be a student at bachelor's, master's, or doctoral level, and you can be a researcher, a scientist, an artist or work in a cultural or other third sector organization. Our study circle is explicitly open to people of all faiths. As a community investigating historical and living cosmologies, we are welcoming to Indigenous and artistic research with spiritual dimensions.

What do we offer?

First and foremost, we offer a platform for learning and collaboration.

For scholars, we plan for joint publications in open-access peer reviewed journals. And for artists and academics who want to collaborate, we will organise events where your works can be disseminated to the public. We have partnered up with forums like *aboagora* for presenting arts and science collaborations.

For students, we can offer: **5 ECTS points.** If you are an MA or PhD student, active participation in this Winter Symposium can afford you 5 ECTS points. If you further study at Åbo Akademi University (or any other Finnish university under the JOO sopimus) this event will be accounted for as the following course (TE00CS16 Social Imaginaries and Transdisciplinary Learning, 5 sp) in the minor-subject [Social Justice and Sustainability](#) which can be taken through Åbo Akademi University. If this is your option, make sure to also register for the course through Peppi and look at the examination requirements on the Moodle platform.

Where?

The Winter Symposia takes place at the [Sigtunastiftelsen](#) from Wednesday the **5th of March** to Sunday the **9th of March, 2025**. Arrival to Stockholm needs to happen in the morning so that we can start swiftly at 11:00. Departure on Sunday from Sigtuna is at 16:00.

We will all be living together in the refugium and share rooms with other participants. If you wish to have private accommodation in a single room arrangements need to be made separately. Let us thus know of this as soon as possible.

Prices:

The participation fee includes membership in NSU, lodging, meals and the program. There is one price range for those that have institutional support and another one for those who do not. Please indicate which option you will be choosing when you send in your call!

- **FULL Participation fee: 155€** (includes full membership in NSU 40€)
- **Reduced price** for people without institutional support **85€** (includes membership in NSU 25€)

About our Study Circle

The Nordic Summer University study circle Praxis of Social Imaginaries: Cosmologies, Othering and Liminality invite all who are interested in joining our group to investigate the praxis of reading together, the praxis of listening and the praxis of telling stories. We welcome applications from researchers, scientists, and artists, as well as students at bachelor, master, or doctoral levels. As a community investigating historical and living cosmologies, we are welcoming to Indigenous as well as artistic researchers (and others) who engage with spiritual practices. Our study circle is open to people of all faiths.

About Our Approach to Transdisciplinary Research

In transdisciplinary research scholars create collaborations with artists and activists in ways in which all are equal partners in a joint endeavor to study and change complex problems. In interdisciplinary research, scholars come together with researchers from other fields than their own, in order to establish collaborations where complex phenomena can be approached from various angles at the same time. Both trans- and inter-disciplinary research requires time and in-depth work in order to become truly fruitful. This study circle wants to provide room for these kinds of processes. The central method toward that end is the reading of medieval traveling accounts. We follow European theological elites as they and their learned scholarly communities encounter “Others” on their borders as well as within their lands. We will also be studying the Indigenous epistemologies, relationships to lands, nature and cultures, and social change.

About Our Incorporation of Indigenous-centered Research Protocols

In alliance with the ethical guidelines of Indigenous research this study circle is guided by the principals of Respect, Responsibility, Reciprocity and Consent that are formulated in the imagineNATIVE document ON-SCREEN PROTOCOLS & PATHWAYS: A Media Production Guide to Working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities, Cultures, Concepts and Stories (2019) as well as the OFELAS - The Pathfinder Guidelines for Responsible Filmmaking with Sámi Culture and People (2021) by The Sámi Film & Culture Advisory Board. In the latter it is specifically articulated that culture, aesthetics, music, language, stories, histories and traditional cultural expressions are not things that can be the personal property of individual people nor given away as open resources. Rather, stories, languages, people, connection to space and place as well as specific crafts or arts are all interconnected and belong to a community which also includes ancestors and non-human kin (both spirits and animals). One of the aims of this study circle is thus to explore how we can approach historical documents and transdisciplinary research that respects Indigenous epistemological practices and wherein traditional forms of seeking knowledge are given space, time and resources.

The reading material at the center of our work is filled with depictions of cultures, peoples, lands and religious, artistic, culinary and sacred practices from times and places different from our own. Questions we envision will come up during the sessions are: What happens when we practice standing, sensing and listening with another in our explorations? What can we learn from encountering worldviews and scientific perspectives different from our own? What are the various media through which we can engage with texts and stories written hundreds of years before our time? What do we do if and when we find passages that are disturbing to us? How do we remain ethically grounded in practices that open for dialogue and critical scrutiny yet do not shut down or close off the possibilities of learning from what is uncomfortable? And how do we do all of this together with people from various different fields of study and cultural backgrounds that also have their own perspectives and contributions to how we can learn and explore together? These are some of the thematic questions we will pursue through-out this study cycle.

Ongoing research

In parallel with the different symposia of this study circle ethnographic fieldwork and artistic research is happening within the project ***Praxis of Social Imaginaries - a Theo-artistic Intervention for Transdisciplinary Research***. The aim of that study is to follow and examine the processes of trans-disciplinary research that arise from the circle meetings as well as investigate the texts through transdisciplinary methods of engagement. Participation in the events of the study circle does not require participation in the ongoing research. However, due to GDPR regulations we want all the participants to be aware that research is conducted in collaboration with these events. We will thus also ask all participants to sign agreements on [data collection](#). For those that are further interested in being collaborators in the ongoing investigation on trans-disciplinary research processes, [informed consent](#) agreements will be part of the procedures.

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Contact us with questions and send your application to:

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<https://www.nsuweb.org/study-circles/circle-3-the-praxis-of-social-imaginaries-cosmologies-othering-and-liminality/>

<https://scalar.usc.edu/works/praxis-of-social-imaginaries/index>