Across boundaries in times of social distancing
- Launching a new phase of the Seed Box
Preface

When phase 2 of The Seed Box started on the first of April 2020 this was in the midst of Corona phase 1. There is no direct link between the corona-crisis and the ecological crisis, but the Anthropocene forms a credible setting also for the challenge that we meet with Covid-19 today.

The long-term goals of The Seed Box is to establish an international Environmental Humanities consortium, and a research hub at Linköping University. The corona-situation has certainly affected the possibility to reach these goals. It has not been possible to establish a physical research hub at campus, but, during the year The Seed Box has grown and strengthened its international network in Environmental Humanities considerably. Most important is the reach to Global South partners. Perhaps the corona-situation has been an advantage for The Seed Box in this process of spreading to new actors. We have all adapted to and developed our digital communication, and this digital world is in its essence borderless – international. A quick glance at The Seed Box homepage reveals the international character.

Probably the most severe impact for The Seed Box of the closed corona society is the lock down also of research field work, interviewing and travelling necessary for research. Though we have developed master skills in dealing with Zoom and Teams, digital communication can not replace the physical experiences that are necessary in some research. And all research needs a social context – sooner or later. Another severe impact comes from the fact that The Seed Box phase 2 emphasizes the engagement of artists and citizen humanities activism. This engagement is vital for the programme and certainly suffers by lack of physical interaction - to the extent that it threatens the final research conference.

Its also fair to conclude that in many respects the digital work during the year is characterized by higher efficiency. The digital communication is boring – but more efficient. And most important of all – by going digital The Seed Box has contributed to a long-term goal of Humanities less Environmental impact.

Lars Haikola
Chair, Program Executive Board of The Seed Box
Introduction

April 2020 marked the start of the second phase of The Seed Box. During 2020, the program’s participants have been busy starting up and working on environmental humanities research and artistic practice, citizen humanities events and networking. With an international consortium of 14 partner institutes across four continents, The Seed Box Phase 2 is exploring a wide range of topics. Examples include the political aesthetics of the Fridays for future movement, sonic methods and practices in geographical-environmental research, conversations on climate change, ontological security, loss and damage in Pacific Island communities, multispecies futures in the Baltic Sea, feminist and anticolonial approaches to environmental humanities and justice in the Global South, and development of alternative methodologies for environmental humanities in the intersection between critical social science and humanities research and artistic practice.

Since The Seed Box program will end in March 2022, we are entering the homestretch. Preparations are ongoing for several workshops and exhibits, including a collaboration between The Seed Box, Linköping University’s unit of Environmental Change and Arbetets Museum in Norrköping on youth activism for climate justice, and a group exhibition exploring the concept of queer ecologies that will open in December 2021 at Kunsthall Trondheim and display newly commissioned art works. The opening of the latter exhibit will also feature the launch of a new book related to the exhibition, published by MIT Press, and a public program curated by RAW Material Company, Senegal.

Looking back at 2020, it was an exciting year in terms of starting a new phase of The Seed Box, recruiting a new group of postdoctoral researchers, conducting a number of online seminars and workshops, and extending the consortium to include new partners from arts institutions and research departments in the Global South as well as the Global North. One of The Seed Box PhD candidates, María Langa, defended her thesis in November 2020, and a number of papers were published by Seed Box researchers throughout the year. This annual report presents some of these highlights from last year.

However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020 was also a highly challenging year. We have asked The Seed Box participants to reflect on their experiences of conducting environmental humanities research in an international setting during the pandemic. Some of these accounts are included in the report on pp. 10-11.

By dedicating part of this annual report to accounts of how The Seed Box activities have been affected by the pandemic, we hope to contribute to a scholarly conversation on how to manage expanding international research networks remotely, how to encourage cohesion, care, and collaboration in the lack of face-to-face meetings, and how to cope with the uncertainties and new preconditions for doing environmental humanities research that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought about.

We are convinced that in these turbulent times, environmental humanities perspectives are more needed than ever to explore alternative futures and to encourage new environmental imaginaries. We look forward to continuing The Seed Box journey in 2021, and we invite you to accompany us.

Victoria Wibeck
Program Director The Seed Box
What is The Seed Box?

The Seed Box: An Environmental Humanities Collaboratory is a transdisciplinary program in Environmental Humanities, aimed at addressing and understanding the environmental challenges of tomorrow, today, and yesterday. We perform environmental humanities research and creative activity related to pressing environmental problems, across the nature - culture divide.

The long-term goal of the program is to establish an international environmental humanities consortium and a research hub focused on environmental challenges and engaged in research and artistic practices that bring together people from different fields and create an interface between academia and other parts of society.

Since its inception in 2015, The Seed Box has sought to:

- advance the field of environmental humanities in both established and emerging directions, with an overarching commitment to methodological and conceptual innovation
- create a high-quality international transdisciplinary research environment which is intellectually attractive, stimulating and challenging as well as mutually supportive for both senior and junior scholars
- further an applied – yet philosophically advanced – citizen dimension within environmental humanities

During its second phase (April 2020-March 2022) The Seed Box increases its focus on artistic dimensions as well as collaborations with partners in the Global South.

The Seed Box is headquartered at Linköping University (LiU) in Sweden and supported with generous funding from Mistra and Formas.
Highlights from 2020

In 2020, a number of new projects and collaborations were initiated as part of The Seed Box Phase 2. Starting with an internal kick-off in the end of March, the different projects are now up and running. Six postdoctoral researchers have been recruited and Seed Box participants have been engaged in and organized several workshops, webinars and symposia. This is a selection of some of the activities that took place in 2020.

The Seed Box in conversations on impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic

In 2020, The Seed Box participants have engaged in several activities discussing the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the prospects of green recovery and societal transformations. For instance, The Seed Box co-director Astrida Neimanis visited the podcast "Corona under The Ocean". This podcast series by TBA21–Academy and the Art Institute, FHNW Academy of Art and Design in Basel explores the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis on ocean research, as well as its effect on the ocean itself.

Program director Victoria Wibeck gave a keynote speech at Mistra's webinar on green recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic, and participated in a Mistra series of video interviews on the importance of research for a green recovery and a sustainable transformation.

The Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art

The Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA) is an international biennial with a European focus and a strong regional profile, founded in 2016. In July, The Seed Box co-director Astrida Neimanis was invited at RIBOCA2 to give a talk on how water facilitates the gestation of all life between human and non-human as well as elemental and geophysical beings. Her performance was titled WE ARE ALL AT SEA.

The Seed Box at Konstdyget

At Konstdyget, a digital event organised by Sörmlands Museum in October, artists, researchers and philosophers made a joint effort to reflect on the recent months and the Covid19 pandemic that changed the world. Konstdyget was based on Åsa Elzén’s exhibition “Träda – Fogelstad-gruppen och jord” at Sörmlands museum. Åsa Elzén is a member of The Seed Box’s executive board. In addition, The Seed Box program director Victoria Wibeck and The Seed Box’s co-director/artistic leader Katja Aglert participated with a lecture on transdisciplinary collaborations between arts and science.

Experimental Zone 1

Experimental Zone 1: Rethinking Methodologies at Intersections of the Arts and the Humanities was the first in a series of planned events organized by a group of scholars and artists at Linköping University under the tentative and temporary heading Bureau for Alternative Methodologies (BAM). The online event discussed alternative modes and methods informed by dialogues between academic researchers and creative practitioners. The webinar took place in November and included keynotes by Dr Jussi Parikka, Professor of Technological Culture at University of Southampton and Visiting Professor at the Academy of Performing Arts, Prague, and Felicity Colman, Professor of Media Arts at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London. Several Seed Box scholars featured among the invited speakers.

Collaborating Beyond Academe: Disrupting Western Academic Approaches to the Environmental Humanities

The Seed Box Postdoctoral fellow AM Kanngieser participated in "Collaborating Beyond Academe: Disrupting Western Academic Approaches to the Environmental Humanities" in November. This digital event was a conversation between collaborators/co-authors/co-thinkers AM Kanngieser and Zoe Todd, whose academic and artistic labor engages questions of relationality, responsibility, and reciprocity in the face of intertwined challenges of climate change, environmental crises, colonialism, white supremacy, and extractive capital in their respective research relationships in the Pacific and prairie watersheds.

Thick Nature: PhD thesis defence in Uppsala

On 20th November 2020, Maria Langa – one of the The Seed Box Phase 1 PhD candidates – defended her PhD dissertation at Uppsala University. The thesis is called Thick Nature: Morality and Practice in Swedish Urban Gardens. It is the result of a three-year ethnographic study of urban gardening advocacy in Sweden, exploring the production and maintenance of moral valuations related to gardening practices.
The Seed Box Consortium

The Seed Box is a collaborative effort and carried out based on an international consortium coordinated by Linköping University. Since the start of the second phase of the program on 1 April 2020 the consortium has undergone changes in comparison to previous years. Three of the earlier partners have stepped down as partners (Blekinge Institute of Technology, Örebro University and Utrecht University) Instead four new partners have joined, thus broadening the scope of the program with regards to geopolitical concerns and the global south, as well as transdisciplinary crossings between art and research.

Today, the consortium consists of 14 partners who are involved in all aspects of the program, in some cases as project collaborators and in several others with key roles in the program’s capacity building efforts: several of the program’s postdocs are hosted by consortium partners, and the events and activities organized to support networking within the field of Environmental Humanities are planned, carried out and hosted by consortium partners:

1. **Linköping University**, SWE – the host of the program, and home to several research projects, and a large part of the program leadership and management structure
2. **University of Sydney**, AUS – the program’s leadership and managerial node in the southern hemisphere. UoS hosts one of the program’s consortium-based postdocs.
3. **Uppsala University**, SWE – engaging researchers both in sociology and in gender studies, UU contributes specifically to a consortium-based events program of seminars, exhibitions, workshops and symposia.
4. **Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)**, SWE – based in the Division for Urban and Regional Studies, KTH contributes to the consortium-based events program. KTH is also home to the Environmental Humanities Laboratory.
5. **Goldsmith’s University of London**, UK – participates in the Seed Box consortium specifically through the collaboration with the Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, and contributes to the consortium-based event program with events focusing on translation.
6. **Queen’s University**, CA – based in the Waste Matters research forum, QU contributes to the consortium-based event program.
7. **University of Texas at Arlington**, US – contributes expertise in ecocriticism and environmental history, and is involved in the consortium-based events program.
8. **University of Western Australia**, AUS – participates through SymbioticA, an artistic laboratory dedicated to the research, learning, critique and hands-on engagement with the life sciences and contributes to the consortium-based events program.
9. **Western Sydney University**, AUS – based at the Institute of Culture and Society, which researches transformations in culture and society in the context of contemporary global change, WSU is part of the consortium-based events program.
10. **Stockholm University**, SWE – in two different departments, home to two of the research projects in the project portfolio
11. **Mid-Sweden University**, SWE – MiUN is a new partner, and is contributing with a sub-project in the project portfolio.
12. **University of Cape Town**, SA – is a new partner, and is hosting one of the three consortium-based postdocs.
13. **Royal Institute of Art**, SWE – is a new partner, and is hosting one of the three consortium-based postdocs.
14. **Kunsthall Trondheim**, NO – this art institution is a new collaborator, and is hosting one of the project portfolio’s synthesis projects, emanating in an art exhibition.

Trondheim Kunsthall and the Royal Institute of Art champion the arts-based partnerships, which as a key niche role that The Seed Box had built during the first phase, and which now has become more consolidated during 2020. The Royal Institute of Art will host one of the consortium-based postdocs, Camila Marambio, who is formally starting in 2021, and Trondheim Kunsthall is the key collaborator and partner in the development and realisation of the arts-driven environmental humanities exhibition project and synthesis.

Environmental Humanities South at the University of Cape Town is The Seed Box’s first official consortium partner based in the so-called Global South. Given that climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental pollution and other environmental brunts of capitalism, development and globalisation are borne primarily by communities outside of the Global North, this partnership signals a shift in how the Global South is articulated within the field of the Environmental Humanities: not merely as an object of study, but as an important collaborator in identifying, researching and addressing the key environmental issues of today. University of Cape Town is participating as a host for the postdoc researcher Nikiwe Solomon, who started her position in 2020. Mid-Sweden University collaborates on one of the projects in the original project portfolio that is set up for the second phase of the Seed Box.
Who We Are

The Seed Box is hosted by Linköping University, who has the overall responsibility that the program is carried out according to the way it is planned. Linköping University has appointed a Program Board to decide upon the direction and implementation of the program's planning, and to oversee the financial and daily management of the program. Since the start of the second phase of the Seed Box, the board now consists of:

- Lars Haikola (chair)
- Lisa Sennerby Forsse
- Steven Hartman
- Christina Karlsson
- Åsa Elzén
- Per-Olof Brehmer

Elzén and Brehmer are new additions to the board since 1 April 2020. Elzén is an independent artist, based both in Sweden and in Berlin, Germany, and has been active through performances and exhibition for over 20 years. Brehmer is the deputy vice-chancellor for research at Linköping University, with responsibility for, among other things, the university's research collaborations.

For the daily management of the program, a lead team of directors and communications officers is appointed. Victoria Wibeck, professor, Linköping University is the Program Director. She assumed this role at the end of the first phase of the program and continues for the second phase. Björn Pernrud, PhD, Linköping University was appointed deputy program director at the end of phase one and remain in the role also during the second phase. The communications officer Per Wistbo Nibell, Linköping University, was also active in the first phase of the program and is continuing during phase two.

From the start of the second phase, the management structure has also been strengthened in significant and crucial ways. Katja Aglert, independent artist and professor of art at Gender Studies, Linköping University, is co-director and the program's artistic leader, and Astrida Neimanis, associate professor, during 2020 at the University of Sydney, but from 1 March 2021 at the University of British Columbia Okanagan, Canada, is co-director and the program's scientific leader. Susan Reid, postgraduate researcher at University of Sydney, was by the end of 2020 included to become part of a communications team and works especially with communicating the Seed Box through social media, such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.
Capacity Building Activities

The capacity building initiative is a crucial dimension of our efforts to consolidate the Seed Box as a node for Environmental Humanities thought, imagination and practice. We aim to develop collaborative patterns, network relations and routines that will serve as resources for the Seed Box node at Linköping University, The Seed Box consortium, and in the long run, as results spread and competencies develop, also to the field of Environmental Humanities more generally. To this end, consortium partners have received funds for organising events such as workshops, exhibitions, symposia and conferences. Most of these events will take place in 2021. In addition, throughout Phase 2 of The Seed Box, our capacity building efforts seek to prepare early career researchers for playing an active part in the way the field develops theoretically and methodologically in the future.

In 2020, we recruited six new postdoctoral researchers. A postdoc mentoring program forms an important part of The Seed Box Phase 2 activities, offering a digital platform for the postdocs to interact as well as to get advice and comments on their work from senior scholars.

Meet The Seed Box postdoctoral researchers

Frida Buhre, Linköping University:

“I am a rhetorician working at the intersection of climate justice, children’s political agency, and governance. My dissertation, Speaking Other Times, explores how imaginaries of time can be used in political rhetoric to enable agency. At The Seed Box I serve as a postdoctoral fellow in the project Growing up in a Warming World, conducting research on the political aesthetics of the Fridays for Future. I am Co-Founder of the International Rhetoric Workshop, and have spent time as a visiting fellow at University of Washington and Northwestern University. Currently, I am editing a special issue on Bending Time: Rhetoric, Temporality, Power, and working on a book manuscript on the importance of anachronisms in political rhetoric.”

Johan Gärdebo, Linköping University:

“I am a historian of science, technology and environment. I have researched late twentieth century technoscientific expertise, environmental diplomacy, and development aid. My monograph dissertation Environing Technology (2019) analysed the role Swedish satellite remote sensing expert’s played in articulating political imperatives to monitor and manage a global environment during the late twentieth century. I also work on the history of automation and the computation of environmental data. For The Seed Box, I serve as a postdoctoral fellow on the project Fossil fuel entanglements, studying how Swedish industrial towns transition to a decarbonised society.”

AM Kanngieser, University of Sydney:

“I am a geographer and sound artist, working with listening to think more closely with/ in the entanglements of people, time and ecologies. Over the past decade I have been focused on experimenting with sonic methods and practices (including field recordings, radio building and training, sonic ethnographies, oral testimonies, songs, sonifications, composition, sound walks) for environmental-geographical research. Since 2015 I have focused specifically on a Pacific context through Climates of Listening, an ongoing project that amplifies movements for self-determination in relation to continuing colonisation through resource extraction, environmental racism and ecological disaster. Working with mainly LGBTQ people and women, I have sought to emphasise the nuanced and variegated ways that communities and people understand, produce knowledge about, and collectively attend to their lived experiences of ecocide. This has included running podcast production workshops with grassroots groups in Fiji and the Marshall Islands.”
Camila Marambio, Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm:

“I am curator, a private investigator, a permaculture enthusiast, an amateur dancer, and a collaborative writer. In 2010 I founded the nomadic research practice Ensayos on the archipelago of Karokynka/Tierra del Fuego, at the southernmost tip of Abya Yala. Ensayos brings together artists, scientists, activists, policy makers and local community to exercise speculative and emergent forms of eco-cultural ethics at the world’s end.

With my work I strive to support the livelihoods of the communities, water, and lands where I research and live. I define my practice (which is entangled within Ensayos) as nomadic artistic research as I am not bound to medium, or discipline. Rather the unique matters of eco-concern of my research steer the methodologies and lead to the unexpected results. Further, I attempt to create a contribution to the fields of environmental humanities, curatorial practice, Indigenous studies, conservation biology and ecopolitics.”

Nikiwe Solomon, University of Cape Town:

“I am an environmental anthropologist working at the interface of science, technology, politics and urban river and water management. My dissertation research ‘The Kuils Multiple: An ethnography of an urban river in Cape Town’ explores the entanglement of the Kuils River with social, technical and political worlds in the context of urban planning in a time of climate change. I have experience in consultancy and academic work, particularly focused on Green and alternative economies and water socio-techno-political worlds. I have experience in the training of green and social small to medium enterprises, as well as teaching courses on society, democracy, science, economics and politics in the Environmental humanities at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. I am also co-editor of an upcoming book with Prof Lesley Green and Associate Prof Virginia MacKenny with the preliminary title “Resistance is fertile: On being Sons and Daughters of the Soil”. For The Seed Box, I serve as a fellow in the project Feminist and Anticolonial Approaches to Environmental Humanities and Justice in the Global South with research focusing on flows – of currents (water and capital), toxics and cement.”

Stephen Woroniecki, Linköping University:

“Having been educated in ecology and resilience sciences, I have worked in the past with climate change adaptation, specifically on ecosystem-based approaches. In my PhD I sought to understand the social effects of these type of adaptation approaches, using lenses of power and empowerment. In The Seed Box, I work on the project ‘Ontological security in a transforming world’, with project partners in Fiji, New Zealand and Sweden. Using the environmental humanities the project team aims to understand how climate change affects people’s inner life worlds through impacts on society and everyday life, on health, well-being, risk, loss and harm, and how such effects shape societal responses. We use sense-making and phenomenological approaches to analyse focus group and interview data, both in indigenous communities in Fiji and with Pacific Island leaders. Our work aims to provide more nuanced picture of agency in a changing planet and inform Loss and Damage and Transformation debates.”
Researching in COVID Times: Challenges and unexpected opportunities precipitated by a pandemic

Prepared by Associate Professor Astrida Neimanis, The Seed Box Co-Director (UBC Okanagan)

In order to gauge how the pandemic had affected the research plans of our Seed Box affiliates, we surveyed them in February/March 2021, one year into the program. Based on their responses (including responses from postdocs, early career researchers, project leaders, and program managers), we have compiled the following snapshot of The Seed Box research in COVID times.

As to be expected, 2020 meant that many The Seed Box research plans, developed during 2019, had to be modified or changed altogether. This in itself demanded time and energy that was not initially planned for. In some ways these changes and modifications might be detrimental to the research, but in many cases it is too early to tell. For the most part, it has meant that research remains in a state of suspension—unsure of how things will progress and turn out, since 2021 as well remains unpredictable. Overall, this has meant that researchers have had to adopt a stance of responsiveness: being ready to accommodate changing circumstances.

Not all disruptions have been entirely negative. One researcher notes that the cessation of travel has meant a new appreciation of one’s local surroundings. As researchers focused on environmental questions, this has given rise (in this researcher’s words) to “thinking in new ways about concepts like ‘place attachment’ and ‘sense of place.’” Another respondent highlights that although the changes are disruptive, such disruption can also foster innovation and “a wider scope for thinking creatively about how we can work collectively.” Remote work has also enabled unanticipated but beneficial configurations of discussions among different collaborators, on a more regular basis.

Some researchers welcomed the additional time that they have been able to spend on writing; some respondents report that 2020 research highlights include seeing their research labours come to fruition in the form of published articles and chapters, and, for example, finishing a book. Less travel and curtailed field work has translated into the opening up of time and space to focus on desk work (writing, reading) that sometimes can be difficult to prioritise. Other respondents also note that many aspects of the research have not been affected.

These unexpected gains need to be balanced by the concerns that were noted. Indeed, despite these unanticipated opportunities, for the most part, researchers at all career stages report that the pandemic has negatively impacted their research. While not clearly articulated in the survey, anecdotally we already know that many Seed Box researchers are contending with additional pressures outside of work, from childcare and home schooling to increased stress and anxiety. These pressures can substantially interrupt and curtail writing, even if there is apparently more time for it. Strong writing depends on good conditions for its production.

In the context of the survey responses, the main challenges can be grouped into three categories:

Delays/uncertainties:

Many research actions have been postponed or delayed. It is as of yet unclear the extent to which these will be able to be rescheduled in 2021. This has resulted in a general atmosphere of uncertainty. Most strikingly, one respondent notes how this uncertainty and inability to plan has “taken the joy out of collaborative work.” Another aptly puts it this way: “we will never know what we could have achieved.” These uncertainties also affect collaboration—The Seed Box’s cornerstone mode of working. As one respondent writes, “It is difficult to know how colleagues are doing – meetings tend to be instrumental and efficient, while nuances and small talk are left out.” It is precisely these cues in the interstices of ‘official’ business that give us assurance about our work and our relations with others. These cues are now absent.

Cancellation of fieldwork:

A number of researchers have had to cancel or ‘pivot’ in terms of their fieldwork. It is as of yet unclear how this will affect project outcomes.
Cancellation of travel for conferences and other forms of networking and research dissemination:

As noted, one of the key components of the Seed Box program (as different from single project research programs) is the strong emphasis on networking and collaborating across projects, locations, and disciplines. While survey responses welcome new possibilities opened up by ZOOM (e.g. some additional flexibility in scheduling meetings, meeting with people in other locations, increased accessibility for some, and the ecological benefits of less air travel, etc), the value of the in person networking cannot be understated. This will undoubtedly affect the overall impact of the Seed Box Phase 2, although we are trying to mitigate it in various ways. It should also be recognised that moving everything online has brought new forms of fatigue and experiences of overwork that are just beginning to be understood.

It is therefore significant that when asked about what they are most looking forward to for 2021, the overwhelming majority expressed hope for some return to face-to-face activities, whether research, meetings, or public events. Again, we stress that despite the new opportunities afforded by digital meetings, it is clear these are not always a good substitute for in person engagement. One respondent laments the real absence of “spontaneous and in-depth conversations” that cannot occur as part of efficiently organised online communication. For those researchers who were at the beginning of new jobs, this is particularly challenging; one notes the difficulties of “developing friendships in a new city” under these circumstances. We thus need to be careful about fully embracing a new fully on-line research culture: we know that these cultures are fatiguing and alienating in their own ways.

A final interesting observation, based on the survey responses, is the correlation between some of the challenges and opportunities expressed, and the values and principles of the Seed Box EH Collaboratory: namely a focus on gendered and racialized social justice questions, a focus on place-based research, and a focus on experimental methods, including new forms of collaboration. These are all elements that are intrinsic to our research programs, and which we now see being challenged and/or opened up in new ways because of the pandemic. Within The Seed Box, we are thus able to sketch out some provisional responses to questions like the following:

- How are women, caregivers, marginalised and racialized researchers –already disadvantaged within academia-- further affected by these circumstances and what are the related effects on environmental-social justice?
- What particular insights into human/non-human relations can be garnered when mobility is limited? What relations are strained, and which ones are enhanced?
- How does the pandemic affect not only how we conduct environmental humanities research, but also affect the very things (climate resilience, adaptation, multispecies justice) we are researching?
- What new modes of working collectively and sustainably (where sustainability is not only related to carbon footprint but to mental health and good working conditions) might we build on?

We hope this survey, and a similar one conducted at the end of Phase 2, can provide some preliminary insights into these questions, as one unplanned for yet valuable output of the Seed Box Phase 2 research.

From a program management perspective, there are various ways in which ongoing support can be offered include:

a) Continuing to document difficulties and check in regularly with researchers
b) Remaining flexible and responsive to changes in research plans and outputs
c) Exploring alternative means to achieve program goals, and supporting these through redirection of time or funds
d) Identifying positive impacts or unexpected opportunities and supporting their further development and implementation.

The main takeaway from the survey, however, was the urgent need to adjust expectations. A number of researchers express anxiety about being able to fulfil research commitments and plans that are part of the current Seed Box research plan. Management therefore needs to work with researchers to formally adjust expectations, not only for the sake of accurate reporting and accounting, but more importantly, to alleviate the stress associated with these expectations.

At the end of the day, if the pandemic challenges teach us to be more responsive to the needs of our research collaborators, remind us the crucial need for work-life balance, and underscore empathy and mutual care as cornerstones of academic research that will never be adequately measured by impact factors, then the inability to meet certain originally planned research expectations cannot be seen as a “failure.” Conversely, this will have been an important contribution to the ongoing improvement and resilience of our research cultures.
Research Portfolio

The research and project portfolio during the second phase of The Seed Box is organized into three different, but often interrelated work packages. These work packages consist of thirteen different research projects. The three work packages are:

- **Work Package 1: Unruly collaborations: Intersections between Science, Arts, Values and Temporalities in weird times**
- **Work Package 2: Extending the environmental imagination: Story-telling, activism and ontological (in)securities in a transforming world**
- **Work Package 3: Synthesis: Environmental humanities in transformative times – modes of thinking, acting and representing**

In the following text, the three work packages will be described in more detail and more information about the research projects can be found on The Seed Box webpage at https://theseedbox.se/research-clusters/

**Work Package 1: Unruly Collaborations: Intersections between Science, Arts, Values and Temporalities in Weird Times**

*Unruly collaborations: Intersections between Science, Arts, Values and Temporalities in weird times* consists of five projects that explore the intersections between different knowledge domains, recognizing that in a time of rapid and escalating environmental change, nature no longer works as a stable and reliable background to human activity. “We have discovered the unthinkable: how we act matters not just for us but for earth itself” (Harrington and Shearing 2017:16). While the Anthropocene is a troubling concept that calls many modern categories into question (Biermann and Lövbrand 2019) and draws our attention to the deep entanglement of human and non-human worlds, it also opens our attention to a much darker vision of people and planet. Climate change, ocean acidification, and genetic technology supply vivid representation of how modern humanity is shaking up the world and altering the physical, biological and chemical processes of the planet. As proposed by Deborah Bird Rose (2013:1), “(t)ime and agency are troubled, relationality is troubled, situatedness is troubled. We are tangled up in trouble”. This context suggests the urgent need for critical reflection on the state of our environment, on human subjectivity and actions, but most importantly, on their inextricable and reciprocal entanglement.

The projects in *Unruly Collaborations* all in different ways contribute to challenging dominant narratives of the environment. This is done through critical approaches, feminist and justice-oriented perspectives, and creative endeavours including citizen humanities components, that serve to push transdisciplinary and research agendas.

**Research Projects in Work package 1**

Project 1.1. Curating time – Museum Ecologies
Project 1.2. Freethinking, Hesitation, Weirdness: Reconsidering the Anthropocene through History, Literature and Art
Project 1.3. The Values of Repair Practices
Project 1.4. Understanding negotiations: Opening up the black box of conceptualizing complexities and uncertainties in climate sciences
Project 1.5. Queer Ecologies of Extinction and the Multispecies Futures of the Baltic Sea
Extending the environmental imagination: story-telling, activism and ontological (in)securities in a transforming world

Extending the environmental imagination: story-telling, activism and ontological (in)securities in a transforming world consists of five projects that explore ways of embodying, narrating, and acting on environmental change. Acknowledging that climate and environmental change threaten our sense of ontological security, stories are important for understanding and communicating the significance of our troubled times. They are also central for imagining alternative futures that break with modernity’s emancipatory promise and instead foster connectivity, mutuality and respect between generations and towards non-human worlds. In recent years we have seen such stories evolve in multiple political sites, not the least where social groups are resisting unsustainable socio-ecological arrangements and experimenting with political alternatives (Bradley and Hedrén 2014), or in view of emerging or deliberate societal transformations in different parts of the world (Wibeck et al 2019). Rather than approaching sustainability as a universal and distant ideal, ongoing efforts to imagine and practice sustainable ways of life represent a form of ‘concrete utopianism’ (Barry 2012) and practical ethics that starts in the here and now. As such they form the ground for a global politics of local transformations.

The projects included in Work Package 2 seek to explore narratives and images that avoid the apocalyptic and can pave the way for ethically and politically viable modes of living in a transformed world. In doing so, the projects also speak to The Seed Box program’s call for environmental humanities that extend the environmental imagination beyond dominant technocratic narratives of climate change.

Research Projects in Work Package 2

Project 2.1. Entwined: Plants and People, Narratives and Networks
Project 2.2. “Our story” – interactive theatre as a tool for empowering children’s creation of green utopias
Project 2.3. Growing up in a Warming World: The Politics, Ethics and Aesthetics of Youth Activism for Climate Justice
Project 2.4. Ontological security in a transforming world
Project 2.5. Fossil fuel entanglements: (re)making places, subjects and ways of life


Synthesis: Environmental humanities in transformative times – modes of thinking, acting and representing provides syntheses analyses across the four fundamental problem complexes addressed in the Seed Box program: The Problem of Alienation and Intangibility; The Problem of a Dominant Technocratic Approach; The Problem of Negative Framing; The Problem of Compartmentalization. Work Package 3 also expands the Seed Box network in Global South contexts and includes collaborations between transdisciplinary collaborations between artists and researchers.

Research Projects in Work Package 3

Project 3.1. Seeding Arts and Environmental Humanities: Arts-driven synthesis and exhibition project
Project 3.2. Feminist and Anticolonial Approaches to Environmental Humanities and Justice in the Global South
Project 3.3. Making sense of environmental change: communicative approaches to environmental humanities and citizen engagement
Research Output

In 2020, researchers who were fully or partly funded by The Seed Box published one book, fourteen articles and five book chapters. The Seed Box has also funded and rendered possible numerous conference events, lectures and exhibits. The list below contains basic information about this output. For bibliographic data etcetera, see the online archive at www.theseedbox.se.

Articles

Franzén, Carin "Boccaccios corona", Divan, #3-4 2020
Petrescu, Doina, Constantin Petcou, Maliha Safri and Katherine Gibson "Calculating the value of the commons: Generating resilient urban futures", Environmental Policy and Governance, May 2020.

Wibeck, Victoria and Tina Simone Neset, " Focus groups and serious gaming in climate change communication research—A methodological review ", WIREs Climate Change, Volume11.

Blog Post

LaFauci, Lauren and Cecilia Åsberg, ” Is all environmental humanities feminist environmental humanities?”, Seeing the Woods, 16 June 2020, Rachel Carson Center, Kanngieser, Anja. ”To undo nature: On refusal as return” Transmediale Almanac.

Book

Sonjasdotter, Åsa (2020), Peace with the Earth—Tracing Agricultural Memory, Refiguring Practice, Archive Books, Berlin, Germany.

Book chapters

Bohlin, Anna, ”The Liveliness of Ordinary Objects: Living with Stuff in the Anthropocene”, Deterritorializing the Future: Heritage in, of and after the Anthropocene, Open Humanities Press, p.96-119.
Lyne Isaac and Anisah Madden, ”Enterprising New Worlds: Social Enterprise and the Value of Repair”, Handbook of Diverse Economies, pp.74-81.

Conferences

Neimanis, Astrida, ”Bodies Of Water”, On Transversality Conference, 9 December 2020, Online.
Neimanis, Astrida, ” The Missing Keyword", THE CAMILLE DIARIES Symposium, 26 september 2020, Online.

Olsson, Jesper and mirko nikolic, ”EXPERIMENTAL ZONE 1: Re-Thinking Methodologies at Intersections of the Arts and the Humanities”, 19 November 2020, Online.


Dissertation


Edited Volumes


Exhibits


Lectures

Aglert, Katja and Victoria Wibeck, ”The Seed Box - forum för transformativa processer mellan konst, miljöhumani- niora och vetenskap.”, 2 November 2020, Konsthygnet Värld i Träda, Nyköping, Sweden.

Kanngieser Anja, ’Acoustic methods, sound ethnography, climate justice’ invited talk. Oslo School of Environmental Humanities, Oslo University, 14 October.

Neimanis, Astrida, ”We Are All at Sea”, 16 July 2020, RIBOCA2, Riga, Latvia.


Podcast

Neimanis, Astrida, ”Corona under The Ocean 5”, June 2020, Online.


Seminar

Neimanis, Astrida, ”We are all at sea: Collective Care in Untethered Times”, 26 October 2020, Online.


Wibeck, Victoria, ”Fragmenterat, mångvetenskapligt och multidisciplinärt”, 28 September 2020, Norrköping, Sweden.

Wibeck, Victoria, ”Communication for Sustainable Societies in the Anthropocene”, Umeå Transformation Research Initiativ (UTRI) digital kick-off, 30 November 2020, Online.

Stage Performance

Kanngieser A and Todd Z, Listening as Relation, an Invocation. CTM Festival: Discourse Series – Critical Modes of Listening, Berlin. 19-31 January 2021

Kanngieser, AM and Zoe Todd, ”Collaborating Beyond Academe: Disrupting Western Academic Approaches to the Environmental Humanities”, 20 November 2020, Online.


Neimanis, Astrida,” Milk and water”, 22 October 2020, Online.

Neimanis, Astrida and Clare Britton, ”A River Ends as the Ocean: walk the tide out”, 12 November 2020, 13th Shanghai Biennale of Art, Shanghai, China.

TV-apperance


Video Interview

Wibeck, Victoria, ”The Seed Box - The importance of research for a green recovery”, 1 July 2020, Mistra, Stockholm, Sweden.

Workshop

Kanngieser, AM,”Unwelcomed”, 12 August 2020, Online.
Financial Report

In total, the second phase of the Seed Box program spans two years, 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2022, and is financed by Mistra and Formas to the sum of 24 million SEK. Linköping University co-finances the program to the sum of 6 million SEK. This financial report accounts for the income and expenditures during the nine months from the start of the second phase until the end of 2020. After presenting the figures in following table, some comments and explanations are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mistra/Formas</td>
<td>9 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linköping University</td>
<td>3 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>12 000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Management</td>
<td>1 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management travel</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Board</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project portfolio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP 1 Unruly Collaborations</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP 2 Extending the</td>
<td>1 229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental imagination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP 3 Synthesis:</td>
<td>1 189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental humanities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in transformative times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortium based postdocs</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency Program, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and symposia</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theseedbox.se</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect costs and premises</td>
<td>1 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5 375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULT, and Closing Balance</td>
<td>6 625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2020 has ended on a significant surplus, and there are several activities that have not so far caused any costs. There is a combination of reasons for this. On the one hand, the consortium-based Events program takes place during 2021, and the costs are claimed in arrears. Similarly, the costs for the consortium-based postdocs, although the appointments have been made, costs are claimed in lump sums later. On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the finances of the program, by rendering travel and face-to-face meetings impossible.

Board meetings as well as workshops have been organized online without any costs, and the Residency program is at this point unlikely to happen as planned. Financially, this presents a challenge for the program. On the one hand, the funding that may not be possible to spent on travel could be put to important use in the projects efforts to adapt and develop. On the other hand if the pandemic were to abate thus rendering some of the original plans viable again, the program would do well to still have funding available to realize them. As an instrument to handle this duality, previous travel budgets are set aside as a program internal source from which the portfolio projects can apply for support to develop and adapt, in light and consequence of the Covid-19 situation. Importantly though, all funds will not be released at once, but a steadily decreasing portion will be retained for potential travel.