

CONFRONTING COLONIALITY:

TRANS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS IN THE FAROE ISLANDS AND BEYOND



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Trans-Cultural Connections in the Faroe Islands and Beyond

Seminar in the Nordic House of the Faroe Islands 3.March 2023

The Faroe Islands occupy a precarious position in discussions of coloniality. This seminar invites speakers and participants to join a dialogue regarding the possibilities and limitations of the Faroe Islands as a starting point for questions around colonialism, coloniality, and the arts. Hailing across the Faroe Islands, Kalaallit Nunaat, Denmark, and beyond, speakers include curators, poets, filmmakers, artists, and researchers. Each speaker will provide short introductions to their work and/or perspective followed by panel conversations on themes such as landscapes, artistic practices, film, and art exhibitions. The seminar strives to foster a space where we can meet and learn from each other on pressing issues of the ongoing entanglements of Nordic colonialism and coloniality, both past and present. We meet in Tórshavn specifically as a space to forge new connections—for some, it may be their first visit to the country—and to understand what coloniality looks and feels like from diverse Faroese, Kalaallit, and other Northern and Arctic perspectives.

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PROGRAM

10-10.15: **Welcome**

Introducing the Nordic House
Gunn Hernes (Director)

Introduction to the Seminar
Vár Eydudóttir, Bart Pushaw, Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen

10.15-11.15: **Positionality**

In Celebration of My Identity
Kalpana Vijayarathan

Creating Creatures
Laila Mote

Exploring Coloniality and Ideas of Race in the Faroe Islands
Vár Eydudóttir

11.25-12.25: **Exhibitions**

Atlantikumi
Nivi Christensen

Ideas behind the exhibition "Conversations About Fog"
Kinna Poulsen

(Trans)National Galleries in the North
Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen

12.25-13.10: **Lunch**

Including the possibility to see the exhibition Sápmi Stories

13.10-14.10: **Entanglements**

DISH – A Place of Family History and Ruins
Jóhan Martin Christiansen

Faroe Literature from a Postcolonial Perspective
Malan Marnersdóttir

Kalaallit Coffee and Blue Puffins
Bart Pushaw

14.20-15.20: **Landscapes**

Cryospheric Collaborations Around the Circumpolar North
Isabelle Gapp

The Colonial Reception of the Poetry Collection Sólgarðurin
Beinir Bergsson

The Network of all Living. A New Notion of Nature in Faroese Art. The Landscape after the Dissolution of the Notion of Faroe Art
Kim Simonsen

15.20-16.05: **Coffee and film screening**

Call of the Cold (2021, dir. Temi Odumosu and Nina Cramer)

Half&Half (2014, dir. Aká Hansen)

16.05-16.50: **Films**

Call of the Cold
Nina Cramer

Films and Decolonization
Aká Hansen

ABSTRACT & BIOS

The Colonial Reception of the Poetry Collection Sólgarðurin

Beinir Bergsson

In this presentation, there will be a reading from the poetry collection Sólgarðurin. Afterwards, I will examine the reception of the poetry collection and its Danish translation in Danish media, alongside examples from Danish articles and reviews.

Beinir Bergsson (1997) holds a master in German language and literature and is based in Tórshavn. Beinir has published two collections of poems – one named Tann lítli drongurinn og beinagrindin (2017) which is translated to Icelandic and Greek. The other one, Sólgarðurin, was nominated for last year's Nordic Council Literature Prize. In 2018, Beinir received the literary Ebba-award.

DISH – A Place of Family History and Ruins

Jóhan Martin Christiansen

The work DISH was presented at the Nuuk Nordic Art Festival in 2017 and revolves around stories and physical traces from Nordafar, commonly referred to as Føroyingahavnin (The Faroese Harbour), a fishing port 50 km south of Nuuk. It is a place once very important to the Faroese fishing industry, and also a place closely connected to my family. Today the place has been left as a ruin. In my presentation, I will be revisiting and taking a closer look at the personal and political aspects of the work and exhibition DISH.

Jóhan Martin Christiansen (b. 1987, the Faroe Islands) is a visual artist working and living in Copenhagen, Denmark. He holds a MFA in Visual Arts from Malmö Art Academy (2014). He works mainly with sculpture and video, examining how to handle materials within a specific context – physically, emotionally and philosophically – and how this relates to subjects such as natural and constructed environments, language/translation, queer body as well as the baroque and pop music.

(Trans)National Galleries in the North

Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen

This presentation asks what happens to a national gallery when the transnational connections rooted in Scandinavian colonialism are taken into consideration. Rather than fixed answers, I contemplate questions for the future of collaborations across institutions in the North Atlantic.

Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen is an art historian based at Statens Museum for Kunst (SMK) and Aarhus University. In her current postdoc project, she studies the role of national galleries in Denmark and the North Atlantic.

Call of the Cold

Nina Cramer

Call of the Cold is an experimental video essay conceptualized by Temi Odumosu and Nina Cramer with production by Laura Hae Na Blankholm for Nuuk Nordic 2021. We follow the traces and archival impressions left by Black explorers who travelled to Greenland and witness their radical hope under extreme conditions: harsh weather, prejudice, and coloniality. Working with Saidiya Hartman's concept of "critical fabulation", alongside Anne Gilliland and Michelle Caswell's "imagined records", the video essay functions as an unfolding proposition, testing out how multiple narratives and archival materials might be recomposed to produce a shared record – a Black Arctic Record that articulates emancipatory dreams and resonates through space and across time.

Nina Cramer (she/her) is a PhD student at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen as part of the research network "The Art of Nordic Colonialism" which focuses on the contact zones between art history and colonial histories connected to the Nordic. In her research she examines formations within contemporary art of the Black diaspora in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

Exploring Coloniality and Ideas of Race in the Faroe Islands

Vár Eydnudóttir

How can notions of race and whiteness be understood in a Faroese context of Nordic colonialism? This was the main impetus of Vár's master thesis that she wrote in the spring of 2021. In her presentation Vár will present an extract from her continued work on exploring coloniality and racialisation in the Faroe Islands.

Vár holds a master degree in Modern Culture and Cultural Dissemination. In her studies, Vár has been particularly interested in cultural encounters, languages, coloniality and artistic expressions. Her hope is to be able to continue researching, communicating, and sustaining a critical and reflexive perspective on Faroese society, culture, and identity.

Film and Decolonization

Aká Hansen

What is the role of artists in the decolonisation movement? And how is the system working for and/or against these rebellious artists. I will talk about my own experience working with decolonisation in art and film in Kalaallit Nunaat

Aká Hansen works as a film director, born in 1987 in Aarhus, and raised both in Kalaallit Nunaat and Denmark. Hansen is an educated film producer at Super16 in Copenhagen (2015-18) and has worked with film and TV in Kalaallit Nunaat since 2008. Among Hansen's most recognised works are the experimental short film Half&Half (2014) and the LGBTQ+ short film Ajornavianngilatit (2021). Hansen has received the Greenlandic film award Innersuaq twice (2013 and 2019).

Atlantikumi

Nivi Christensen

This presentation focuses on the exhibition Atlantikumi that was shown at the Nuuk Art Museum in 2021 and subsequently at Nordatlantens Brygge (Copenhagen) in 2022-23. The exhibition focused on artists that worked with the Atlantic Ocean as a place that has both connected and separated people and cultures—a place with countless colonial paths and a place where people and colonial power structures collide.

Nivi Christensen is Director of Nuuk Art museum since 2015. She is a regular writer and commentator on Greenlandic art on, for example, the website kunst.gl and the magazine Neriusaaq.

Kalaallit Coffee and Blue Puffins

Bart Pushaw

This presentation juxtaposes two paintings made around 1840, one in the Faroe Islands, and the other in Kalaallit Nunaat. It explores how “pioneer” artists express global connections in their depictions of local themes.

Bart Pushaw teaches art history at the University of Copenhagen, where he is affiliated with the international research project “The Art of Nordic Colonialism: Writing Transcultural Art Histories.” His research focuses on issues of race and coloniality in Inuit and Arctic arts and their connection to the Black Atlantic since the 18th century.

Faroese Literature from a Postcolonial Perspective

Malan Marnersdóttir

For centuries, the official spoken and written language in the Faroe Islands was Danish, whereas the people talked Faroese. This changed with the ideas of the national movement and its patriotic songs in the late 19th century. In the 20th century, a literature in Faroese caught up with the literatures on the continent, filtered through Danish literature, news, and journals. But the culture remained double, Faroese and Danish. Danish was the 'evil other' in the debate about Faroese society and culture to the extent that Faroese authors writing in Danish were excluded from the canon. At the turn of the 21st century, a new mixed language literature emerged that I present here with a couple of examples.

Malan Marnersdóttir is Professor, Dr., Lic.phil. in literature at Fróðskaparsetur Føroya, Føroyamálsdeild.

Creating Creatures

Laila Mote

This presentation offers a personal insight into the experiences of growing up in a predominantly white society as a woman of colour in a Faroese context, discussing the issues of alienation and belonging. Throughout the presentation I will be showing some of my artworks as a reflection of my personal journey and as a method to provide a means of communicating my experiences and perspectives with a wider audience.

Laila Mote (1994) is a visual artist and architect born and raised in the Faroe Islands with roots from Kenya. She holds a master's degree in architecture from The Royal Academy in Copenhagen (2022). Since graduating in the summer, she's been working within the fields of visual arts, graphic and architectural design. Through her work, she seeks to challenge the dominant narrative and to create a space for marginalized voices to be heard.

Ideas behind the exhibition "Conversations About Fog"

Kinna Poulsen

This presentation is about an exhibition and lecture at the Nordatlantens Brygge (2020-21) that was created to give an honest overview into the diversity of contemporary Art in the Faroe Islands – and to problematize the simplistic Danish view on the same subject.

Kinna Poulsen is born in Tórshavn where she lives and works as teacher, curator, critic, and writer. She has curated over 70 exhibitions and is editor and owner of the Faroese art site lista-portal.com

The Network of all Living. A New Notion of Nature in Faroese Art. The Landscape after the dissolution of the notion of Faroe Art

Kim Simonsen

This talk seeks to examine how Faroese visual art is associated with national identity and romantic nationalism, how visual art contributes/has contributed to the maintenance and continued construction of Faroese national identity. I also explore how the concept of "Faroese art" has slowly been replaced among younger artists by other relations to nature, from new materiality and ecocriticism and with a new notion of nature.

Kim Simonsen is an award-winning writer, his works have been translated to an array of languages. He is also a publisher and a curator of festivals on art and literature with Eksil. PhD and mag.art and a one-year course in a writers' school (2021). Currently, he teaches at the University of the Faroe Islands writing line. He has worked at the University of Amsterdam and been an associate professor at the University of Bergen, visiting scholar at Oxford University, Columbia University and Stanford University.

Cryospheric Collaborations Around the Circumpolar North

Isabelle Gapp

As an environmental art historian particularly interested in glaciers and the cryosphere more broadly, my research engages the interdisciplinarity of ice studies to offer alternative and timely ways of visually framing our frozen environment. I work collaboratively between disciplines and communities, and across national boundaries to explore the visual history of glaciers, adapting scientific terminology to the processes of visual analysis, incorporating western and Indigenous perspectives, and recognising the glacier's own agency within its respective social, cultural, and environmental contexts. With this a glaciological ecocritical art history exists as an opportunity to communicate both the elemental qualities of ice and the social, cultural, historical, and climatic implications of the cryosphere.

Isabelle Gapp is an Arts & Science Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Art History at the University of Toronto. Her research considers the intersections between landscape painting, gender, environmental history, and climate change around the Circumpolar North, from 1800 to the present day. She is the co-lead of the Visual Cultures of the Circumpolar North working group at UofT and is an editor for the Network in Canadian History and Environment (NiCHE). Her book, *A Circumpolar Landscape: Art and Environment in Scandinavia and North America, 1890-1930* is forthcoming from Lund Humphries in late 2023.



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