CALL FOR PROPOSALS

THE POWER OF RITUAL: ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

NORDIC SUMMER UNIVERSITY'S ARTISTIC RESEARCH CIRCLE IS PLEASED TO INVITE PROPOSALS FOR A SUMMER SYMPOSIUM:

24 JULY – 1 AUGUST 2026 IN SAULKRASTI, LATVIA

NORDIC SUMMER UNIVERSITY

Theme of the summer symposium 2026

Rituals and ceremonies have long been sites of resistance to colonialism and carriers of deep ecological and spiritual wisdom. This symposium will explore how contemporary artistic practices engage with ritualistic forms to reconnect with spiritual knowledge and challenge dominant narratives. Drawing on modern and traditional ritual theories, we will examine how rituals function as dynamic sites of cultural reinvention and transformation in response to the crises of the Anthropocene.

Rituals are not only something from the distant past or from specific cultural traditions. They are also part of everyday life today: the ways we gather, create, mourn, celebrate, care for one another, or mark change and uncertainty. This symposium invites artists, researchers, and practitioners to explore how rituals—both ancient and modern—shape how we understand the world, ourselves, and our shared future in a time of ecological and social crisis.

We will look at how contemporary artistic practices use ritual-like actions, gestures, and gatherings to reconnect with spiritual knowledge, question dominant worldviews, and imagine alternatives. Some rituals draw on ancestral or traditional knowledge, while others emerge through art, activism, community practices, or daily habits. All are welcome as meaningful ways of making sense of life in the Anthropocene.

Through talks, performances, and workshops, participants will explore how ritualized artistic practices can help build community, process ecological grief, and support healing and collective action. Rather than seeing ritual as fixed or exclusive, we approach it as something living and adaptable—something we can all participate in, shape, and reinvent together.

About NSU's artistic research circle

The study circle "Decolonising the Anthropocene through Artistic Research" invites participants to explore creative, decolonial practices and the pressing challenges of the Anthropocene—climate change, biodiversity loss, and the marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems within art and research. It encourages more sustainable and equitable visions for the future, drawing on the principles of decolonial thinking to reimagine how we interact with the world. As the Anthropocene highlights the consequences of human actions on the planet, it also reveals the imbalance in knowledge production, where Western perspectives often dominate, sidelining alternative worldviews that could offer valuable insights into addressing global crises.

Over the course of three years and six symposia, the circle will focus on decolonial methodologies, engaging with art-making and research practices that aim to disrupt colonial legacies and rethink the intersections of history, science, sociology, and philosophy. Through a blend of practice-based approaches and interdisciplinary strategies, participants will delve into how artistic inquiry can reshape our understanding of the Anthropocene—the current era defined by human impact on the Earth's ecosystems.

Format of the event

The gathering will take place over one week of creative coming-together. We welcome both academic and non-academic ideas, workshops, interventions, presentations, performances, conversation starters and experiments that engage and depart from ideas and concepts involved in embodied knowledge and decolonial artistic efforts towards a "a better Anthropocene", answering to our theme.

Participation Fee

The cost include membership of the Nordic Summer University and an opportunity to take an active part in the democratic functioning of the organisation, accommodation for the week, 3 meals and 2 coffee breaks a day, and access to the full NSU program and activities, including voting, during the summer session.

100 euros Scholarship [x2 per circle] in shared 4-bed rooms with shared bathroom
1250 euros Institutional price/any room type
900 euros Institutional price PhD/any room type
950 euros Single room
700 euros Bed in double room
1000 euros Double room 1 adult 1 child
1200 euros Family room 1 adult 2 children
1800 euros Family room 2 adults 2 children
1500 euros Family room 2 adults 1 child
500 euros Camping

To apply

Please send you application and any questions that may arise to heidiannika@hotmail.com

In your application, please add:

- **In short, describe your offering, project, practice or presentation (Max 1 page).**
- **Add in a short description of the project for the final programme to be published (max half a page)**
- **CV AND Biography (Biography will also go into the programme as you send it)**
- **Whether you need financial support to attend the event - Keep in mind that the scholarship suggests a discounted price, not full coverage of the participation (prices are listed above). Unfortunately we do not offer travel grants.**

Deadline for applications: 1 April 2026

Criteria of evaluation for scholarship receivers to be found **here**

Academic Credits

For those interested, we can provide a certificate of participation: 1 ECTS point for taking part in the Session and 1 additional point for contributing with a topic (presentation, workshop, other formats).

About Nordic Summer University

Nordic Summer University (NSU) is a Swedish non-profit organisation. Since 1950, NSU has been an independent academic institution, which organises winter and summer symposia that draw international participants across disciplines in the Nordic and Baltic regions. Particular attention has been paid to crossdisciplinary areas not yet targeted by larger research institutions. The practice of NSU addresses two fundamental premises of a knowledge-based welfare state: production of knowledge based on academic freedom and democratic practice of self-governance.

www.nsuweb.org