

New Companionships

Designers, craft artists, and art teachers have traditionally placed the conditions and needs of human beings at the core of their practices. But what happens when the central role of the human is being questioned? What can be done for/with a world filled with ever changing entanglements composed of humans (with or without power), other animals, plants, things, matter, techniques, weather, and sites? What are the consequences for society when we not only learn how to pay attention to nonhumans' abilities to act and create change, but also acknowledge their rights?

The exhibition *New Companionships* presents eight projects by HDK students and alumni who have all expressively or intuitively employed posthuman perspectives and concepts in their works.

Participants:

**Amanda Selinder, Anton Vikström, David Chocron,
Karin Granlöf, Kim Björnson, Luca Mariotti,
Sara Eva Samuelsson, and Tina Lehnhardt**

Curator:

Thomas Laurien

New Companionships team:

**Dr Christine Hansen, Dr Kajsa G Eriksson, Dr Tom Cubbin,
and Dr Thomas Laurien**

The exhibition is organized in collaboration with GUEHN
Gothenburg University Environmental Humanities Network

Amanda Selinder

Intertwined Bodies

BA Textile Art 2016 - Degree Project

How am I a part of the biofilm and the biofilm a part of me? What happens when my body is a part of the growing process? Am I leaving a part of myself in the bath or is there really a boundary between what's my body and what's not? Are we all, non-human and human bodies intertwined into each other without an end?

In my degree project I've been growing and exploring a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast; or with other words a cellulose-based biofilm. What fascinates me with biofilms is that they exist everywhere around us and in us. It can be found above the ground, on our teeth, underwater or on implanted medical devices in our bodies. It has even been found growing on minerals and metals. Spending time with the biofilm has been a really important aspect in this research. How does it change over time? How does it feel, smell and taste? It's through this matter I have another approach to the materials I'm working with in my artistic practice today. It's also been significant when it comes to question my own bias of what it really means to live as a human being on earth today.

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Anton Vikström

The Tree Hugger

MA Child Culture Design 2017 - Degree Project

I made the tree hugger for the tree lovers. It is a seat crafted to be the link between the human and the tree. I wanted to highlight the biggest public space we have in Sweden: the massive forests with all the trees. This public space is not made of concrete, benches or streetlights: it is made of living organisms. I believe the forest is worth more as an attraction and an area for recreation than as a resource for our consumption. This artifact is just an indicator and an index of how we can interact and reflect with the forest, it's meant to travel between different trees, different areas and to be shared and experienced with other tree lovers.

But do we actually need this artifact to share our favorite spot? The tree hugger could also be a state of mind, just pure imagination and a silent voice for the trees.

You can see more parts of my thesis project '10m² Forest' in the OW BAMA exhibition at Röhsska.

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David Chocron

Music for plants

Commissioned for *New Companionships* (2017)

In the nineties researcher M.J. Canny proved that plants and animal tissues are the same, and that plants response to stimuli similar to that of our nervous system. He also confirmed that music increases plants to grow.

Music for plants is furniture I designed with the only meaning to give musical indulgence to a particular Avocado plant. The piece is also a tribute to Mort Garson's musical odyssey Mother Earth's Plantasia, "warm earth music for plants and the people who love them" from 1976. The album was dedicated to the gestation of plants, "Full, warm, beautiful mood music especially composed to aid in the growing of your plants."

Tracklist:

Plantasia

Symphony For A Spider Plant

Baby's Tears Blues

Ode To An African Violet

Concerto For Philodendron & Pothos

Rhapsody In Green

Swingin' Spathiphyllums

You Don't Have To Walk A Begonia

A Mellow Mood For Maidenhair

Music To Soothe The Savage Snake Plant

Karin A. H. Granlöf

Redet / The Nest

BA Ceramics 2017 - Degree Project

How does art change an everyday space that is usually only seen as practical? Do we need art in these kinds of spaces? I believe that art and craft should be corporate in our ordinary chores and workspaces. That art should be seen and be available for all people. Not only in the big cities in white galleries. But also in suburbs or on the countryside.

My degree project is about joining art and ceramics with animals and food preparation. I can be happy, because I have my own hens in a henhouse at my childhood home. They are outside most of the day, but now and then the hens go in to lay an egg. In the darkest part of the henhouse the hens crawl into a nest. They choose it with care and remain for about an hour until they have left a beautiful egg in the straw. Because the hen stays so much in the nest, I think it should be created with care. Why not in ceramics?

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Kim Björnson

Materials as Processes

BA Design 2017 - Course Project

The initial inspiration for this project came from geology; the traces of a distant epoch etched onto the surface of a changing earth. As the project grew it also came to include an interest in the marks left by tools used, and how these marks can be seen as a language, as a poetry of its own.

When translating thoughts on geology into a new temporal perspective, I couldn't help but to think of plastic bags and takeaway cutlery trapped in-between rocks. I got fascinated by the idea that everything is in motion: that materials flow into each other. When materials are understood as processes, what does the human imprint communicate? This question led me to investigate the combination of different materials, and to mimic forms produced outside of direct human intervention and control.

Luca Mariotti

City-Vass

MA Design 2017 - Course Project

When Gothenburg was founded in 1621, the city was surrounded by a large swamp. The swamp's presence is still detectable in the names of areas like:

Gullbergvass, Tindstandvassen or Lundbyvass. The suffix “-vass” (“-reed” in Swedish), is the proof that the reed had been a legitimate inhabitant of the territory.

I made the last reeds in the city the subject of a design intervention. I started questioning the local value of this material and how it can affect the people in the context. To let the reed survive, it is necessary for the community to reconsider the value of the plant itself. In a symbiotic and cyclic relationship, the plant can survive by being used for our needs, while also benefiting the territory. The stem is a renewable material that will grow stronger if it is removed in winter. The plant also cleans the water and gives shelter to many species. As a designer, my role was not just to design furniture, but also to design a mutual interaction between human and local materials.

Sara Eva Samuelsson

Move(ment) and Change (25% new character)
MA Art Pedagogy 2017 - Degree Project

Move [verb]: “Change the place, position, or state of. Make progress; develop in a particular manner or direction. Depart; start off. Take action. Arouse a strong feeling, especially of sorrow or sympathy, in (someone).” - (Google word search)

This is my exam project for which I collaborated with Nebras Yas, a professor in language and literature from Baghdad, Iraq. The project is a dialogue about the theme moving from one place to another: What do we bring with us and what do we leave behind? How do the things we treasure (or not) change in a new environment?

Over eight meetings we planned and built a common home, and imagined us moving together into this space. Our ideas about building the house were different, and the material we used made us take new ways. To paint the wallpaper in beige became a dialogue of its own that included struggle, new connections and an (ex)change of experiences.

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Tina Lehnhardt

Puddles

MA Design 2017 - Course Project

While visiting Frihamnen over the course of several weeks, I realized I took many pictures of puddles. I saw them growing and disappearing. While tracking their shapes they seemed alive for me. Every time they looked different, but they stayed more or less in the same position. What if they are like birds that are travelling across the globe? What if they just take a rest here?

Puddles are made out of water and so are we. They are in us and we are in them. Are we connected? What if we have membranes around us that communicate with each other? What if they feel, suffer and remember just like us? As there aren't many people in Frihamnen anyway, maybe it is a place for puddles. Why did they choose to come here? How can we connect with them without disturbing them? We could go puddle watching and observe their full beauty.

Do we need our body to have a dialogue?

Tom Cubbin

Natural ----- Unnatural
Gothenburg Design Festival, 2017

What do we mean when we say something is natural or unnatural? How does the material, colour, shape and history of a thing lead us to think of something as a natural or unnatural object? The line will be activated in a workshop where participants will position various objects and materials on this continuum in order to reveal how we interpret the quality of 'naturalness.'