

Seasonal shifts are affected by climate change, causing challenges for multispecies inhabitants in their ecosystems. How can the designed living environment be turned into a site for multispecies flourishing?

This collection modestly proposes seasonal designing to link design processes with seasonal changes. Seasonal designing entails working located with the resources at hand, treading lightly, asking for help and scaling deep and out from the near-by household to planetary household. Householding through difference is a performative and caring community economies approach for socio-ecological change that prioritises the flourishing of livelihoods over economic growth.

The stories build on design experiments in, around and beyond a Tiny House on Wheels, that has become centrepiece in the artistic research project Holding Surplus House. Together, they demonstrate that these design-driven responses integrating research, education and collaboration with citizens in everyday life provide ways to gain embodied experience of listening to, reflecting on, understanding, and acting in the current polycrisis.





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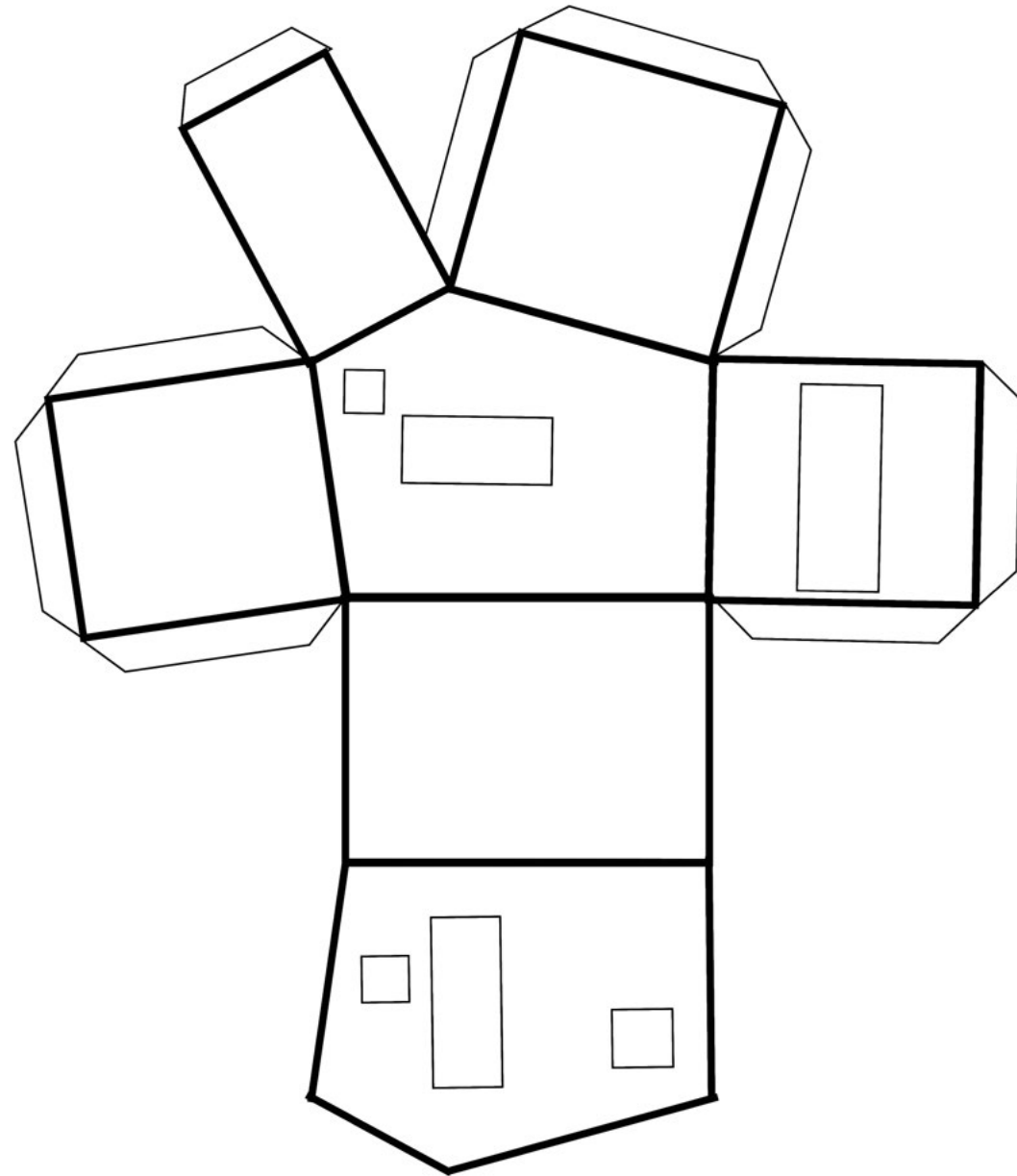
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Letters to You and a Tiny House on Wheels

Dear reader,

You are now stepping into something that can be held within a Tiny House on Wheels (THoW). At the same time, it surpasses the walls of the THoW and extends into planetary realms. Simultaneously you are stepping into the world of the artistic research project Holding Surplus House and its kins.

You are holding a publication that shares experimental examples of ways of knowing and learning that take seasonality seriously. This means turning away from controlled premises for experimenting and learning. This also means working in designerly ways of iterating and responding to local circumstances. Often, it means hanging out, being fully present in situations with an open curiosity and activating deep listening to a plurality of stories and questions.

Furthermore, seasonal designing means that ways of knowing and ways of making worlds overlap. We build on the knowledge of others, and we offer shape, form and organisation for experiences that can be felt in the everyday and in the extraordinary.

Not many are responding adequately to what for example the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) tell us is urgent. But everyone can start where one

is and try to modestly take care of what is at hand. Located accountabilities (Suchman 2002) are just as relevant as is acting on an understanding of the planet as one household (Gibson 2015).

From a dominant design perspective you might be looking for the new solution that can be multiplied and put on the market to take care of intersecting crises that span social, cultural, economic and ecological spheres. However, that is not what you are holding here.

We ask you to ask: Given that design has developed to tickle our desires and has contributed to the dire socio-ecological state we are in, what resources do we have for reimagining our relationships with knowledge, science, technology, energy and desires? Where can we step into embodied experiences where we do not rush to solutions?

And so we turn to address a new companion that has learnings to share:

Dear Tiny House on Wheels,

You gradually came into the world, built to explore householding with resources. We became with you.

This publication is a way of making you live on in another format and of focusing the work with, around and related to you on the topic of Seasonal Designing.

Your life and this publication are prototypes (or should we call them provotypes to emphasise that some get provoked), meant to inspire reflections and change that spirals from close-by, mundane and ordinary householding to planetary householding.

These are also ways of saying goodbye for now, at a time when funding runs out.

This publication gathers some of the actors that have become with you, Tiny House on Wheels, into what you have become so far. The publication shows that there are many we. Some of them will be mentioned here, others will be mentioned throughout the publication. And we hope that everyone who contributed to making you - whether it was done through play, experimenting, learning, resting, or inquiring – can feel our gratitude.

Many questions have been directed towards you, dear quirky Tiny House on Wheels. Not all of them have been curious. Some of them have been generatively critical and others have been demeaning and belittling.

The latter questions are typical for change-work that does not centre progress in its narrow, modernist idea of smartness performed through digital technologies.

Rather, on your and our behalf we have been asking for help and being asked for help. It is a robust way of initiating collaborations and keep on flourishing together.

As the contributions show: seasonal designing is not at all necessarily connected to the THoW. We have learnt from and been in dialogue with other versions and other approaches, like following cues from a children's book and designing imprints on the bodies through the forces of the sun.

Some have collaborated; some have been distanced allies. Indeed, several contributors write about the possibility to step into the THoW, not only on location, but also through imagination.

Åsa Ståhl



Växjö konsthall has nurtured a relationship with Holding Surplus House since it started and has primarily worked for establishing relationships between our exhibiting artists, involved researchers and the project's tiny house on wheels. We have also been able to offer a place that the project can return to and use as a hub outside the university area.

This way of working and conducting research has opened new ways to co-create and generate new knowledge. For an organization like ours, which wants to contribute to a constantly evolving cultural sphere and living environment in a - both for the cultural sphere and increasingly living environments - challenged era, Holding Surplus House becomes a fine example of what experimental knowledge seeking can look like.

Ragnhild Lekberg
Curator
Växjö art gallery

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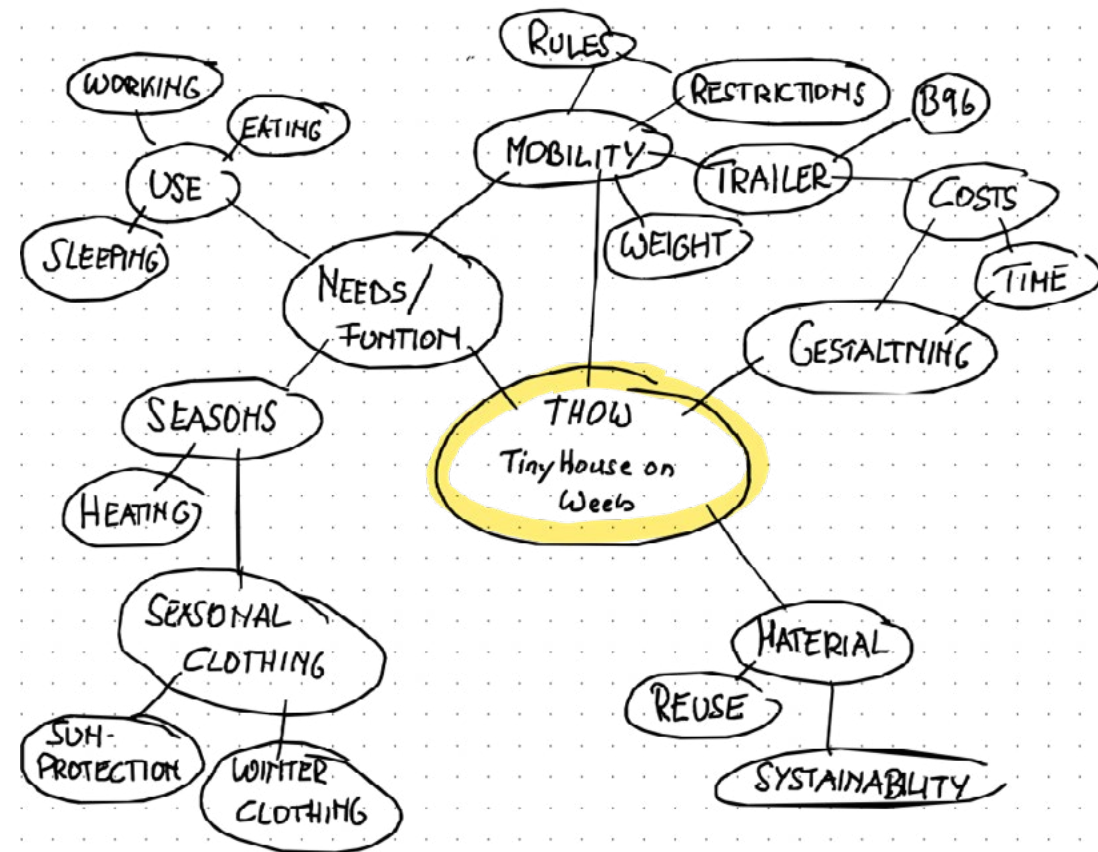
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Building a Tiny House on Wheels (THoW) ***- a process description***

The process of designing and constructing our Tiny House on Wheels was, like many design processes, non-linear and often messy.

We had identified a set of needs based on how we imagined using the house, both in terms of its functions and mobility. The house needed to work as a workspace for 3–4 people, accommodate 6–8 people for dining, and provide sleeping space for 3–4 people. We wanted to be able to move the house relatively easily over longer distances using a regular car. We aimed to use as much reused material as possible, for example, materials we had gathered at the university. Any additional materials we needed should be as environmentally friendly as possible.

These needs, along with our budget limitations, were the starting points for the design process. The biggest challenge was the weight—or rather, the uncertainty about how much the house would weigh. We decided to buy a trailer that could carry slightly more than a standard one, which meant we needed a so called B96 driving license to tow it.



Seasons

To save on weight and space, we decided early on that the house would be built mainly for three-season use, and would require extra clothing if used in winter.

The structure of the trailer naturally limited the interior layout. Traffic regulations and the need for the house to withstand being driven at 80 km/h—and remain sealed during transport—influenced the construction and the design of some exterior details.

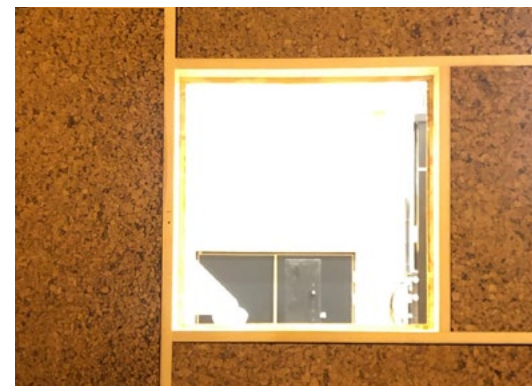
A simple yet flexible interior made it possible to meet almost all our intended needs. A basic wood stove allows us to stay warm and cook during the colder seasons. The relatively generous interior ceiling height creates a cozy atmosphere that invites conversation.

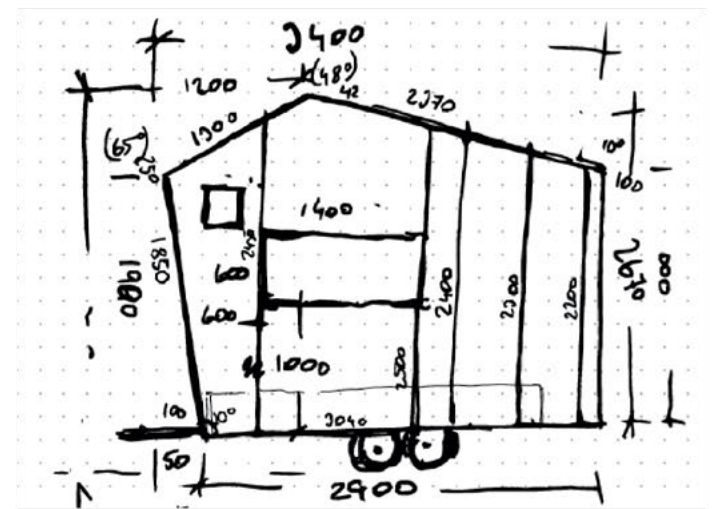
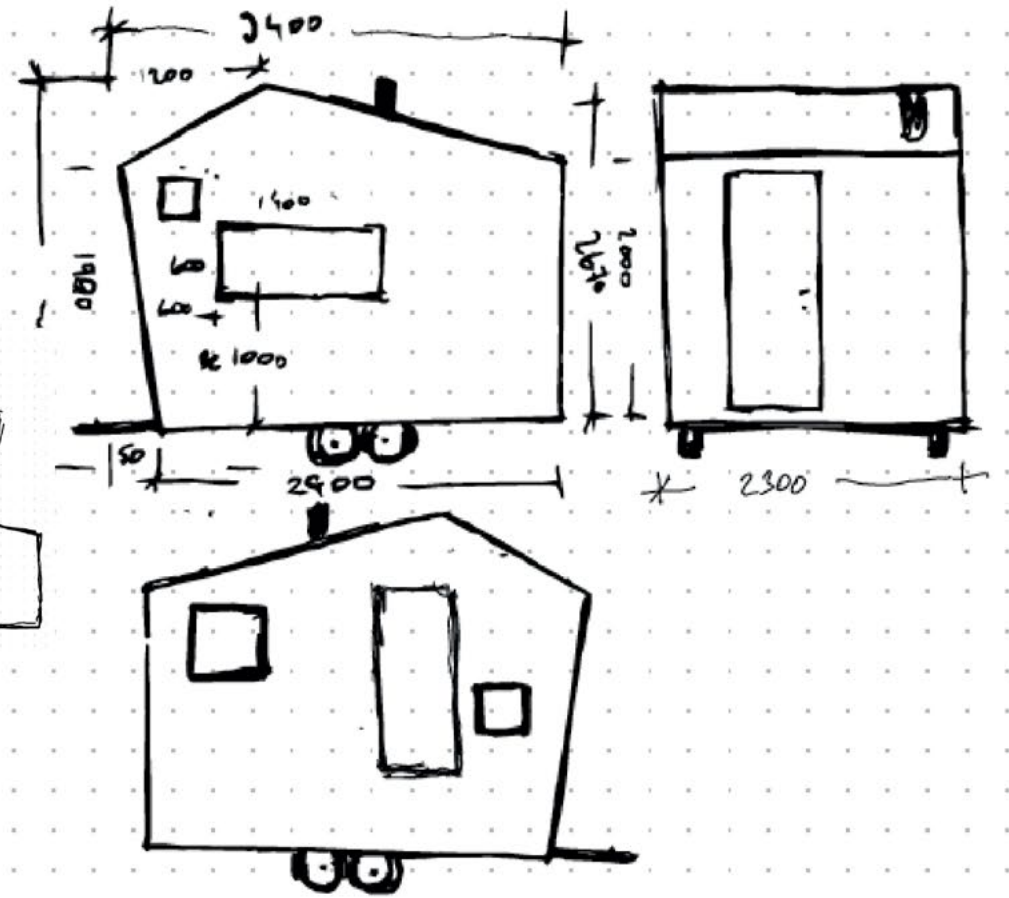
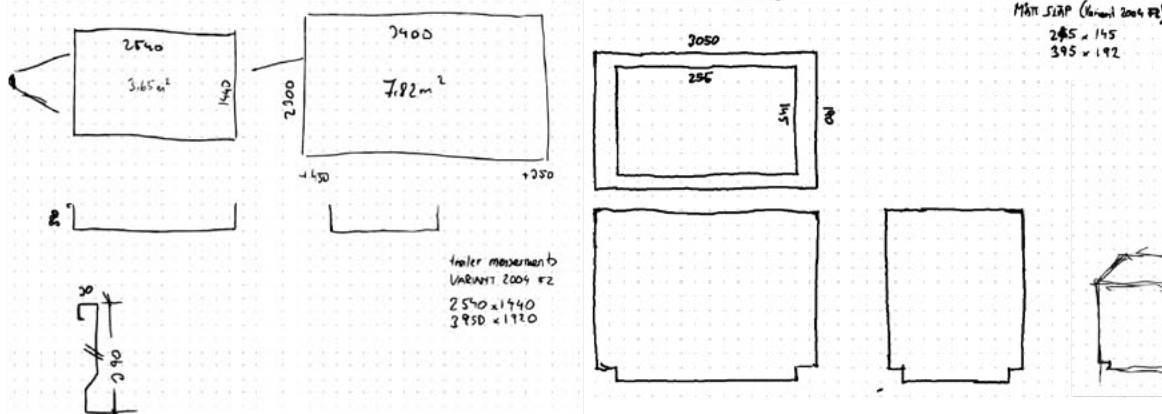
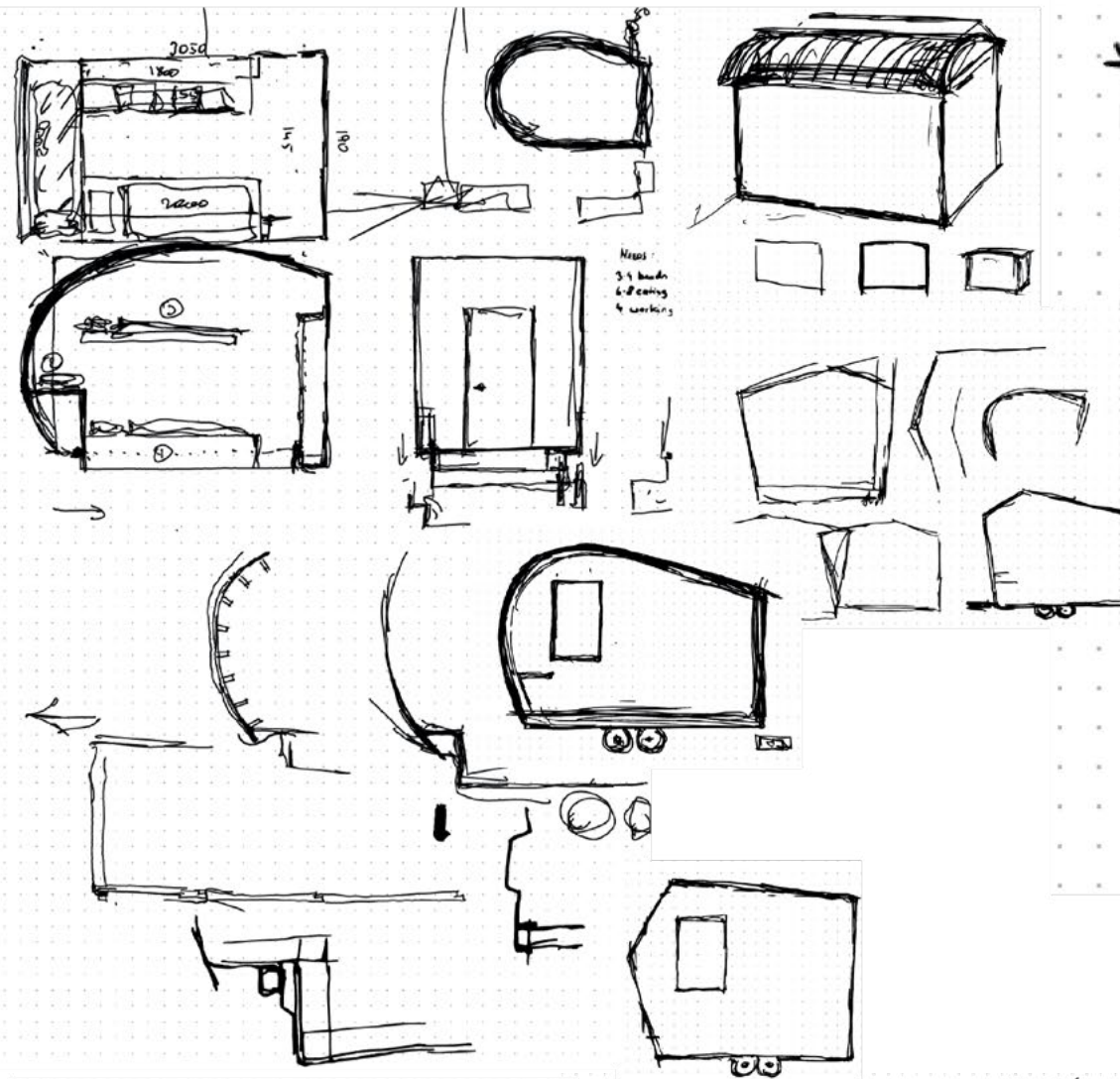
We realized quite early in the process that the house—and the people staying in it—would not be completely self-sufficient. Instead, it is designed to function in collaboration with its surroundings. This means that anyone using the house will need to rely on support from nearby resources and people. For example, the house does not have its own water supply, permanent electricity source, or built-in toilet. As a result, the house encourages interaction and cooperation with others, rather than complete independence.

Over the course of the years, we have adapted the house to different circumstances as the needs have changed. For example, we have built structures for a window exhibition while we have been working in a community during a participatory budgeting process (see Olofsson Bergström and Ståhl, forthcoming).

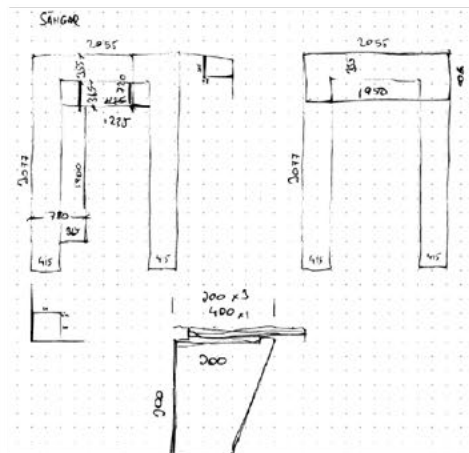
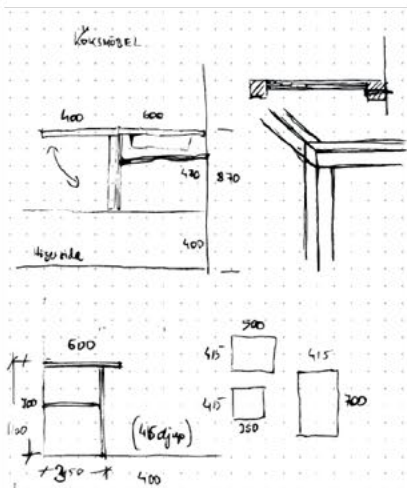
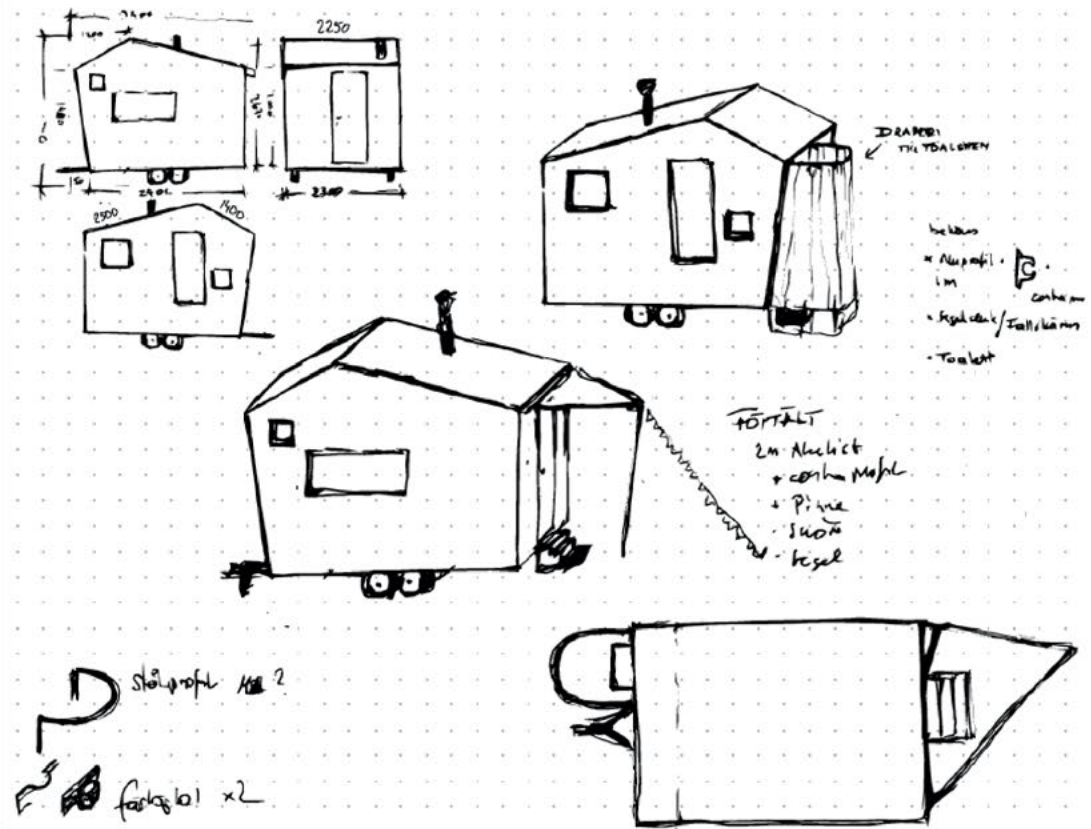
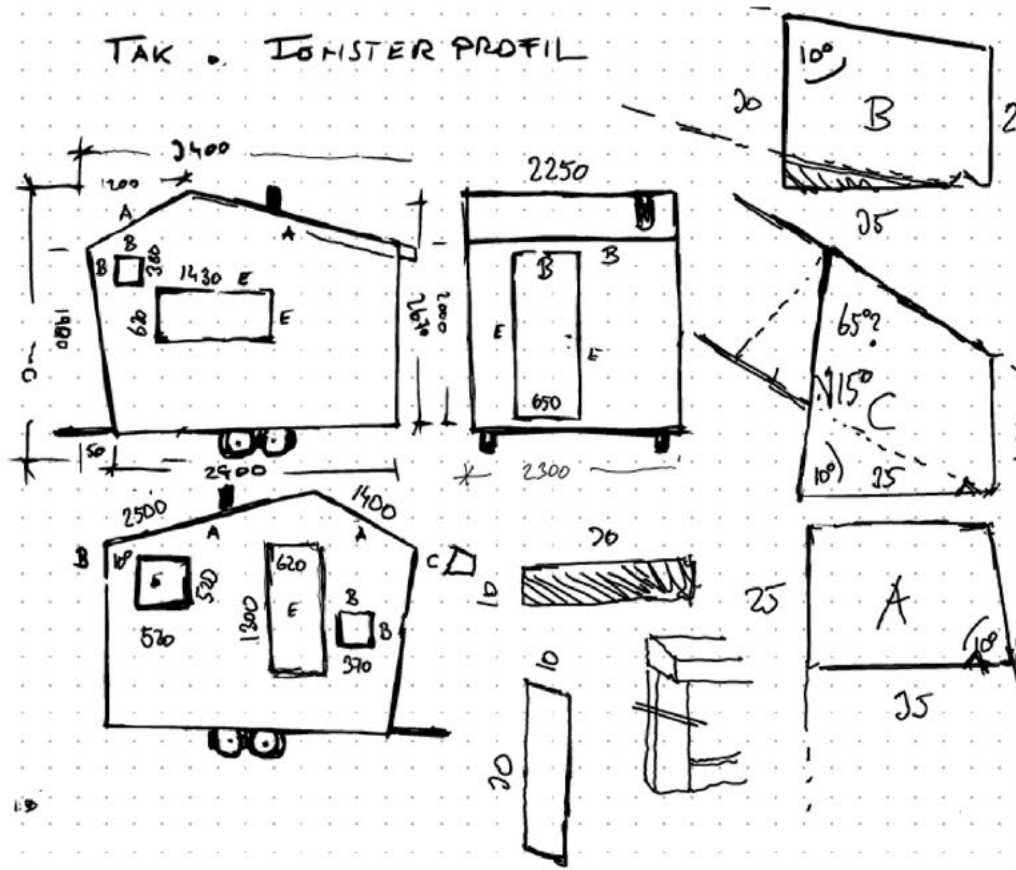
More particularly, to fit the seasonal experiments, we have adapted the floor on several occasions. When we decided to grow barley grass we had long discussions about different alternatives on how to make the floor support the growth and at the same time protect it from, for example, mould. Eventually, we ended up putting in a temporary plastic coverage. We repeated the temporary plastic coverage on the floor when we did the flooding of the floor for the winter seasonal experiment with puddle and ice.

All needs and seasons are located and situated, and yet inspiration and learnings can be drawn from the accompanying sketches. Very welcome to circulate and use them in an open knowledge approach!





TAK • IONISIER PROFIL





Design and householding

Design and householding throughout seasons

The nights are short in June in southern Sweden. The Tiny House on Wheels (THoW) is parked next to a community house and a forest. I go to sleep while the shadows of nearby tree branches show their subtle movements on the inside of the walls. It is a soothing environment after a long day of engaging in imagining and practicing householding with municipal resources in a local community. As I sum-up the day to myself before falling asleep, I think back at how we started to make a welcome sign to the THoW. Would it have been more appropriate to make a letter box? After a few hours of rest, the early morning light wakes me up. There is no toilet, running water or source of electricity in the THoW. But we have asked for help from the community house, and they generously let us plug in a lead into their infrastructure. We have also gotten a key to their toilet. In return, we are engaging in a participatory budgeting process that entails communal decision making for the common good, based on a part of the municipal investment budget (Olofsdotter Bergström and Ståhl forthcoming).

Mid-summer heavy rain is providing a rhythm and then trickles down from the roof to the windows of the THoW. The raindrops are pooling together into a stream. I see it through a window blind that we made by growing barley grass on the floor of the THoW (Keune and Ståhl 2025). The root system provided a textile structure. Brittle, but enhanced by mending. The grass itself was juiced. On its own, the juice almost made me vomit. Mixed with apples, I could enjoy the surplus.

Outdoor co-working space

Mid-August is humid at dusk and dawn, but midday can still be very warm. A rural community exploring outdoor co-working space is gathering in the THoW. I give a performative lecture on householding with a surplus. With an open door, the space is expanded. The lecture is streamed on a social media platform. Some join remotely.

On this day, the community members do not come together to do individual work, but to listen, share and reflect on input on differing, but responsible and adequate answers to planetary limitations as well as potential cultural change in tune with what science says is required to stay within planetary limits. After the lecture we have lunch together in and around the THoW. One of the participants says that the lecture strengthens her in making change. She refers to an example I gave of a community that is practicing collective householding with resources through sharing a freezer. Freezers were introduced in the 1940's in Sweden as a technological innovation. They were a shared resource in a space that a community collectively cared to be able to store surplus from one season to another. A feature, or can we call it smartness, of this technology was that it required collective organisation. It was not until later that the freezer became individual and moved from shared space to individual domestic space (Marshall 2023). Some communities keep the practice of communal freezers alive to this day. Just like the co-working

space, the collective freezer performs an alternative economics.

Two participants discuss change work as a matter of subtracting rather than adding technological solutions. One participant says she will commit her change-work to not just do additive moves. Another one says that his observation is that, regardless of motivation or amount, everybody who is downsizing seems to be experiencing improved life quality.

Performing economy

Creative householding among differing householders in households is an understudied site of change according to Raven et al (2021). A household is often taken as a black box onto which new technological innovations are pushed. Raven et al (Ibid.) suggest an open box understanding of households; a site, populated by creative actors, that is connected through infrastructures. The example of imagining an outdoor co-working space is testament to creativity and exercising agency together. I take it to perform an economy that challenges the individual, autonomous, rational, masculine Homo economicus subject through getting organised around needs and desires of planetary and individual health. It thereby performs a form of economy that prioritises mutual flourishing (Kember 2024).

Entrepreneurship beyond GDP-growth

November autumn days in southern Sweden are short, dull and often without sunlight. To mitigate that, electric lights are installed into the THoW. They are plugged into the grid, shining brightly. It might be a welcome light therapy for me and my fellow humans, but the lace-wing that is flapping its transparent wings on one of the walls of the THoW seems to be experiencing distress. Chocolate is melting from the heat of the fire. The THoW becomes hot like a sauna. In contrast, a month later, on the day of winter solstice, we gather in the THoW to



Stepping into the The Tiny House on Wheels. Photo: Åsa Ståhl

learn from each other about entrepreneurship, social economy and social innovation. To begin with, the winter chill is eerie. Then the tea water starts to boil on the stove top, and heat spreads. The early twilight of the shortest of the days provides tranquillity. We let candle lights and the fire in the stove be the only sources of light. It makes it easy to reflect on and help each other navigate in insights of struggle within and beyond organisations that strive to prioritise liveability rather than GDP-growth (see Mugnaini et al 2025). We make finger drawings on the steamy windows.

On a late January afternoon, we open the door of the THoW at a cultural night event organised by the town of Växjö. The town is buzzing with events and lots of citizens are on the lookout for experiences. This time the public is invited to sit in the twilight and share dreams.



Experimenting with outdoor co-working space. Photos: Åsa Ståhl

The invitation reads: “Welcome to our Tiny House on Wheels to sit in togetherness! We’ll be reconnecting with times when the twilight was a moment of dreaming and sharing insights and when light was a costly resource”. Some asked if they could come back later in the evening. That would be difficult. The twilight cannot be controlled by human desires. From what I recall we said: no, the twilight is now.

Surplus

Throughout the life of the THoW we have experienced that when coming together with kins of all species, we were generating a surplus. At the same time, we have repeatedly received comments and questions about an assumed lack of, for example, running water, and thereby not providing full comfort. Or, that the tiny house is not insulated enough and thereby not meeting expectations. Other belittling comments concern not asking research questions that can be answered with technological solutions that the market recognises as innovation to profit from. As a strategy, the Holding Surplus House research team has sought to meet these questions with curiosity and creativity. We have noticed a pattern that when design overlaps

with radical sustainability it is often “dismissed as irrelevant, overly complex, and unhelpful for solving ‘real-world’ issues” (Kiesewetter 2024, p. 3). Other critical ways of knowing and making worlds face the same kind of comments (Ibid.).

Method for householding

The THoW has, since its conception, been a companion for inquiring into householding. Does that make the THoW into a method? Yes, if we understand method as ways of generating data or information and ways of trying to get to know something. The house has been an incremental way of both asking and answering questions, through materials, practices, organisation, words and imaginaries.

Simultaneously, the THoW is much more than a method. It is a performative example that makes worlds, however modest.

During its lifetime, it has been sheltering numerous species – including humans. It has also been an experimental space; a space for experimentation; a workplace; a kitchen; a pedagogical space; a classroom; a living room; a gallery; an exhibit; a greenhouse; a structure rendering shadow; an ice rink; a place to clean, an imaginary space; a vehicle for thought; a resource; using resources.

This non-exhaustive list is testament to the liveliness and possibilities of the THoW.

World-making in planetary household

The THoW inquiries build on the premise that there are many ways of making worlds and futures. Design can build environments and make things. The dominant way, providing techno-scientific solutions to fit everywhere and all the time, is only one possible way of designing. However, it has been so dominant that, as Gibson puts it: “The hab-

itat in which we belong has become increasingly inhospitable, and it us that have made it so. Indeed, it appears that our economy is the culprit, that is, the ways in which we have managed or ordered our habitats/households” (Gibson 2015, p. 314). She suggests actions from the premise that the world is one household and that our local households connect with the planetary one: “We need to attend to the specificity and geography of habitats and can do most if we start where we are, in our own ‘high energy, high consumption, and hyper-instrumental societies’” (Ibid, p. 316).

Seasonal designing prioritising interdependence

Seasonal designing that includes experiments on householding means exploring an economic model that prioritises mutuality, relationality and radical interdependence (see for example Gibson-Graham and Miller 2015, Raven et al 2021, Wall Kimmerer 2024, Kember 2024, Raven et al 2025). Kember states the conflict-line of this care-taking economic model: “Householding is antagonistic to mastery, extraction and exploitation” (Kember 2024, p. 2). To be able to see the dominant versions of world-making and imagine alternatives we have been drawing on research from disciplines ranging from environmental science, biology to economics and humanities. We have observed, listened and moved across geographies, times and worldviews, taking seriously ancestral knowledges passed on from generation to generation (Ståhl 2023).

The above examples and other examples in this publication are not covering the full breadth of the work that has been done in and with the THoW, but they gesture towards attempts at making householding a felt experience that spirals from the local to the planetary along these movements: on an individual level (all of the examples), organisational level (entrepreneurs), community level (outdoor co-working space), municipal level (participatory budgeting), and planetary level (all of them and beyond).



Practice of collective freezer kept alive. Photo: Åsa Ståhl

With seasonal designing we have been seeking opportunities in what is at hand and by looking for what more is possible. We have taken it to be a performative worlding-approach that does not assume singularly bounded, essentialist entities, but rather one with a commitment to solidarity across species, spaces, and times.

Changing seasons, changing forces, changing circumstances. Mutual becoming is ongoing.

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Twilight as a moment of dreaming. Photo: Åsa Ståhl

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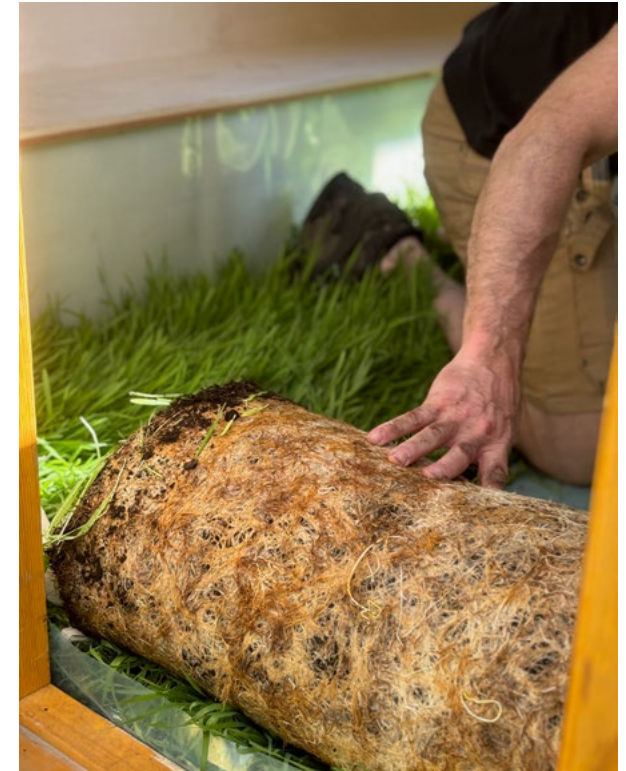
Creativity and Seasonal Designing

Inspired by the presentation of the paper “Learning from Seasonal Interventions: A Seasonal Designing Frameworks” (Keune and Ståhl 2025) at the Nordes conference, Lara and Svenja had a conversation online about their perspectives on Seasonal Designing.

Lara: How did you come to designing with seasons?

Svenja: The seasonal approach was something I brought with me as a result of my PhD “On Textile Farming” in which I have worked with textiles and plants, and also built and moved into a Tiny House on Wheels with a Greenhouse attached, to provide a better environment for the plants and myself. This setup made me feel the differences of the seasons a lot and I adjusted my ways of working accordingly. I would design and weave textiles in winter and spring, set up the experiments with plants, observe and care for them over spring and summer and harvest the insights, reflect and work on new iterations in autumn and winter. In which ways is your work relating with the seasons?

Lara: My PhD is based in regeneration, which draws from permaculture, economics and indigenous thinking, to explore designing with the planet. During the talk you and Åsa gave, I noticed that I’ve been



Harvesting the grass carpet. Photo by Åsa Ståhl

unconsciously trying to integrate seasons into my research through when and how co-designed workshops will be happening, but I had not explicitly thought about the seasonal framing before.

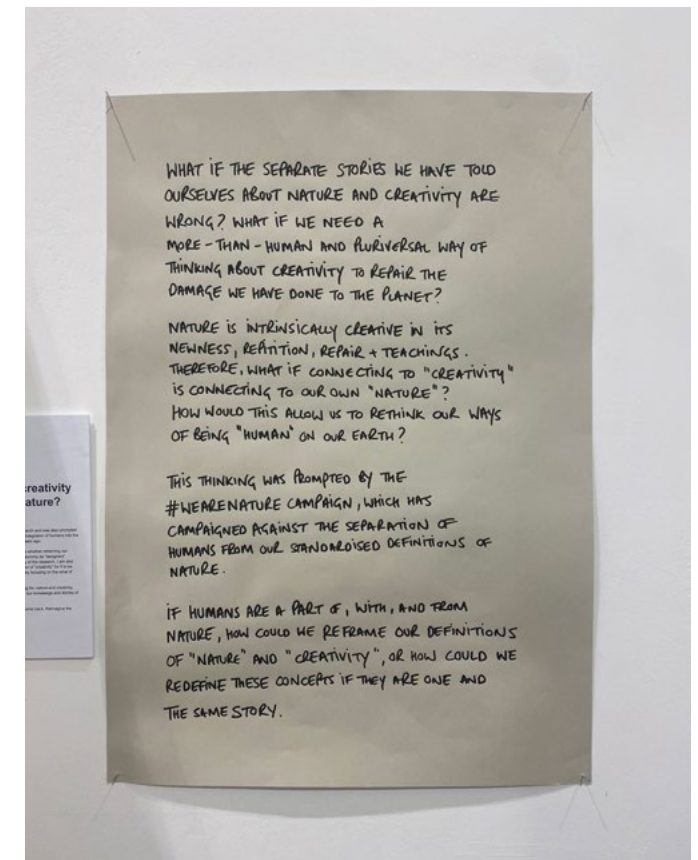
Svenja: Our Tiny House on Wheels in the Holding Surplus House project is also very influenced by weather and seasons, so we aligned our project plan with the four seasons in southern Sweden. We became curious to design interventions that are possible only during certain times of the year. Some of these interventions would last longer and maybe span from one season to the next, as with the “Growing a window blind” intervention, while some projects or

ideas were set up just for a day and then after reflection inspired a different intervention for the same season. This was the case for the interventions in winter which started with an idea for a sauna and instead inspired the Light Café intervention and then led to “Kura Skymning: Dreaming in the dark”. In our last winter we finally managed to set up the “Living with a Puddle/Frozen Floor” idea that led to the intervention “Living with heated uncertainties”. This one was set up once for Växjö culture night and once on campus where we carefully monitored the weather forecast and aligned the intervention to a week with minus degrees in order to explore a frozen floor.

Lara: That sounds amazing.

Svenja: What I like about the seasons is that they provide a certain framework for creativity to flow. The “no boundaries” and “everything possible” attitude is not only detaching creative work from local contexts and resources, but also doesn’t necessarily bring about more creative ideas. Having a framework to work within really helps and provides directions for which materials to use, which issues to work with, which environment of working to choose, which energies to harness, and even where the work could be showcased.

Lara: I also think our creativity flows in a similar way to the seasons. A reason for reaching out after their presentation was to ask whether you and Åsa could suggest any references on the interconnection between the seasons and creativity, which could support my research. In the initial email to you both, I shared an image of a provocation which I had written as part of Earth Week at the University of the Arts London in April 2025. It asked what the possibilities could be if we reframed our understanding of the relationship between nature



What if nature is creativity and creativity is nature? Earth Week, April 2025. University of the Arts London. Photo by Lara Rodgett

and creativity through a more-than-human and pluriversal approach. I am not sure yet where this exploration will weave into the PhD – but it feels important. Again, after your presentation, I realised that the question around nature, the seasons and creativity has been reappearing at various points and in different disciplinary spaces for me over the last few years. So many noticings!

Svenja: How do you work with seasons in the context of governance, are there ways to align the workshops you do to the seasons? Are there seasonal activities in governance... that could somehow align

to the seasons in nature? What kind of benefits or implications could seasonal work have in the context you are working with?

Lara: These are all really valid and important questions that I haven't considered yet. I feel the needs and wants of nature have been lost from governance and climate policy, and seasonal design, as you say, is an easy way for people to understand the value of nature and its resources. I think this is why I related so much to the ThoW, and its ability to allow people the space to question their perceptions by opening up different ways of doing and thinking in different surroundings.

Svenja Keune, Anna Lidström, Helga Halldórsdóttir,
Åsa Ståhl, and Stephan Hruza



Seasonal Clothing for the Tiny House on Wheels

What if houses could be dressed up to be warm in winter, sail across the road in an autumn storm, and reflect sunlight in summer? During a workshop and further activities, we investigated the potential seasonal relationships that our Holding Surplus House could have with the sun and the air.

We engaged in sessions of making, dressing up, and speculating about alternative ways of engaging and living with built environments.

Swedish School of Textiles, University
of Borås and Röhsska Design Museum,
February 2024

Meeting the Tiny House on Wheels

Poetic engagements with the
house as a more-than-human en-
counters



We first met
in Copenhagen,
on a rainy day
in July, 2023
I dreamed of you
since I have learned
about you
The magical tiny house,
that can help us transform
our imagination
on householding
we snuggled in you,
because it was cold
and rainy outside
refuge

I held a meditation in
a beautiful garden
maybe for you and maybe for us
but it was raining so heavily
people could barely hear
my voice
the raindrops bashed
on the tent roof,
as if saying
you might just have to
speak louder.



Next, we met
in Gothenburg
in March 2024
You help us imagine
How dressing
not just ourselves
But also our homes
could-should-might
change things

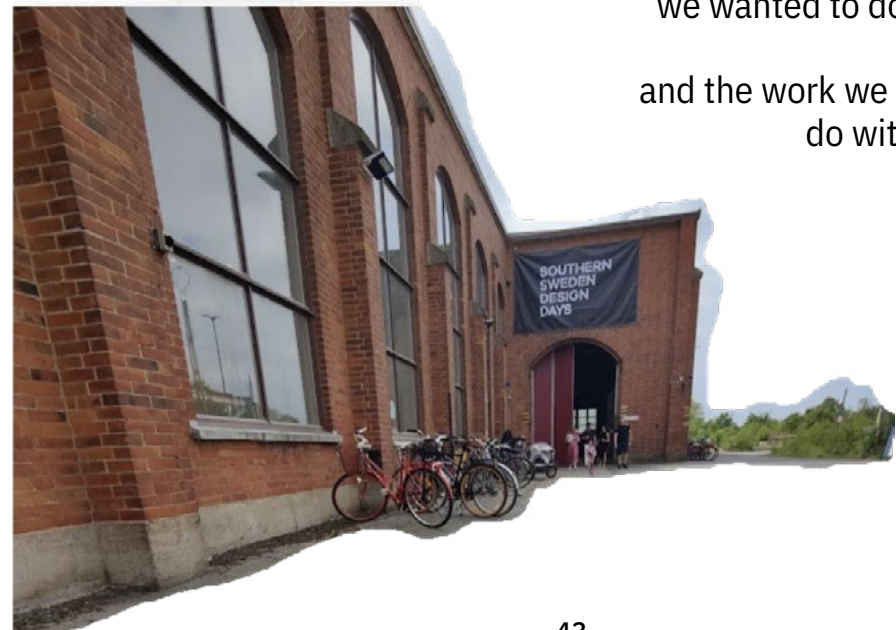


We used
our human clothes
Our human bodies
To embrace
The uncertain futures,
which will
require
Changes
from all of us



In May
2024 we met
in Malmö
it was so hot

That the feeling of
melting
spilled over to the work
we wanted to do with
you
and the work we could
do with you





The last time
we encountered each other
In Stockholm, September
2024
Was again imaginary

But this time, a shared imagination
You were not there - but you were also there
An outline on the floor
An image hanging on a thread
Walls built in our heads
Just so we can reach in
And reach to each other

On how to unlearn
On how to re-learn
Transform
Our ways of being
Householding
Together holding



Thank you
for the encounters
I have learned a lot



Svenja Keune, Åsa Ståhl, Stephan Hruza, and Mathilda Tham



Living with heated uncertainties

During the Växjö Kulturnatten we let the weather decide if we can ice-skate in our Tiny House on Wheels, or need to wear rubber boots. The intervention aimed to generate experiences of the big impact that just a few degrees more or less can have in our lives. A few weeks later at Linnaeus University campus, we repeated the intervention after a week of lower temperatures.

Växjö Culture Night and Linnaeus University Campus, January 2025.



Photos by Svenja Keune

It's a Monday in February

The sun pushes gently through a thick blanket of grey.

At lunchtime, I often take a walk around campus – to clear my head, breathe fresh air, catch glimpses of other people. To feel that I am part of the flock, before returning to my work.

Today, I've heard something is happening in the little house on wheels. I turn down the slope. Smoke curls from the chimney. Is someone inside? Yes! Stephan and Svenja. Smiles and a warm “welcome in.” The floor is slick with water frozen into bumpy, knobbled ice.

“Want to try skating?”

Of course I do.

A flutter of excitement – from the speed, from the act of balancing, and from the sheer absurdity of skating at lunchtime inside a tiny, mobile house. We talk as I go back and forth, our conversation weaving through ecosystems and seasons. Our conversation feels both important and joyful.

I'm feeling the weight of the blade slide over the uneven ice, listening to its voice – skrtt-skrtt-krkk-skrshh.

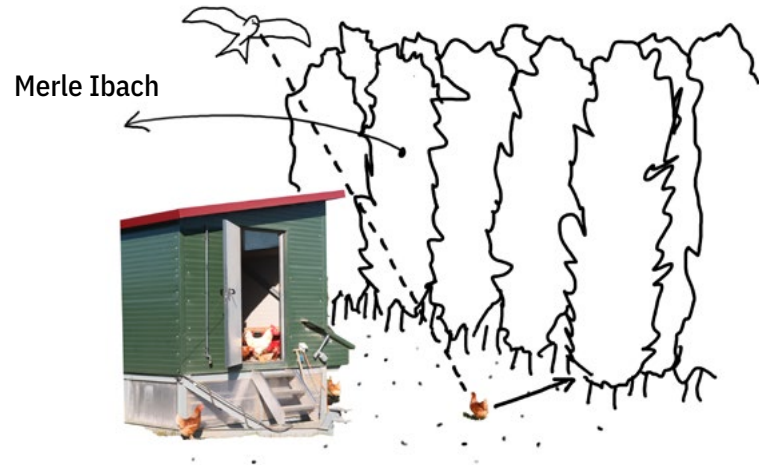
Suddenly it's 12:55. Time has flown by. “Thank you, my friends” I say as I leave Stephan, Svenja, and the little house on wheels for now. There is community I think. And hope.



Ice-skating in the Tiny House on Wheels on Linnaeus University Campus, January 2025. Photo by Svenja Keune

To turn a quarter turn – in body and in thought – and in the same motion see things from a new perspective feels amazing. It sharpens the question: What truly holds value? What gets valued, how, and by whom? How do we value experiences like this?

On a structural level: what infrastructures support informal learning environments that nourish curiosity and creativity? That, through practiced care and presence, can provide energy for meaningful transformations? Not as visions – but in reality. During a lunch break?



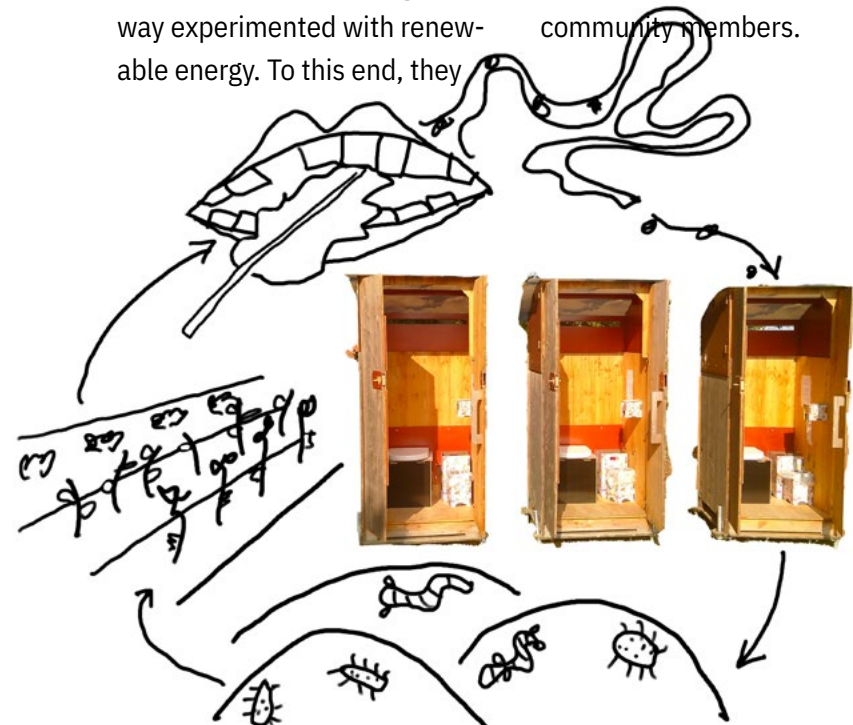
Digesting Design Research

Dear THoW,
I have heard so much about you, though fate never allowed us to meet. It may sound amusing, but one of the reasons was the seasons—the mismatch of temporality, place, and seasonal forces*. My research on prototypes of alternative futures carried me to remote places, and by coincidence, our paths crossed several times as in Malmö, in Gothenburg, in Copenhagen, and in the discourses around sustainability and design research. Yet never once were we in the same place at the same time. And still, despite this absence, I feel close to you.

For my ethnographic study, I refurbished a small van and made it my temporary home. In doing so, I suspect I came to share experiences not unlike yours. And I would like to tell you about them.
First, I want to mention that the people I met along the way were not designers in the conventional sense—no product designers, no communication designers. Yet each of them designed and built prototypes. In doing so, they wove weather, organisms, and human activity* into the very fabric of their sustainability practices.

For instance, a little community-supported agriculture took principles of permaculture and translated them into the design of a chicken coop. The coop was mobile and faced a poplar grove that was planted specifically for the chickens. The chickens roamed freely, and when a raptor came near, they hid among the trees. The trees also protected the community from the strong west wind and supplied them with wood for heating in winter. Chickens, trees, and people formed a symbiotic relationship. Other people I met along the way experimented with renewable energy. To this end, they

designed an open-source solar box, with construction plans available for free download on the internet. Others lived in tiny houses, off the grid from the municipal water supply. So they built a system of pebbles and plants to purify the wastewater. Living with one's own remnants also inspired other communities. They built all kinds of compost toilets, which used microorganisms to turn excrement into nutrition-rich fertilizer. As you can see, the environment was not only a resource, but its actors became true collaborators* and community members.





But there is one more thing I would like to share with you, because it surprised me and made me question my own research practices. Through all the encounters during my field research, I grew more attentive to the shifting relationships between time, place, and seasonal forces. My theoretical work became profoundly influenced by my experiences. I learned that building theory is not an abstract exercise of the mind, nor simply generated by monitoring the environment. It is rather a metabolic process in which experiences, local conditions, encounters, and moods – the

resources of local place and seasons* – are digested. (Here, I refer to Annemarie Mol's amazing work on "Eating in theory".)

One evening, I noted in my field diary:

I lie on the bed in my van, green curtains fastened with magnets over the windows, the light from the community house dimmed to a faint glow in my cave. I am exhausted from the day, so many conversations and new impressions. My body is heavy, my stomach filled with dinner, my mind overflowing with thoughts.

I hear crickets and frogs, and footsteps crunching on gravel as people pass, speaking softly. I smell the beech wood of my handmade interior, and from the fabric ceiling, the faint traces of past owners over twenty-five years. I feel the weight of the down blanket, and the cool, fresh air slipping through the half-open sliding window. From time to time, a truck roars down the country road.

The night, I realize, belongs to field research as much as the day. It is a time for solitude, for quiet, for sorting and reflection. Thinking happens not only in the head, but with the world around us. And so, lying here, I digest, together with my surroundings, the material and immaterial impressions of the day.



* This piece is very much a response to the paper by Svenja Keune and Åsa Ståhl: Learning from seasonal interventions – A seasonal designing framework (2025). Therefore, I integrated some explicit references in my contribution to review my study notes.

Memories from a Forest Garden

In July 2023 I found myself in an unexpected space of overlapping worlds. I was hosting two side events to the UIA World Congress of Architecture in Copenhagen and the days unfolded around me as a flow of parallel universes slowly beginning to melt together into surprising constellations.

A few days before the main conference programme began, a handful of people streamed into my forest garden to help prepare for the side events. The last time I had seen them was during an intense I.N.S.E.C.T research camp week in the Danish nature area Hvalsø one year before. Here we had nerded out on insects, multispecies design and more-than-human relations. Now, a year and three seasons later, some of the camp members were here, back in Denmark, but in a different setting — my private garden, the place where I usually spend hours in deep green silence: Picking berries, collecting figs, apples and then walnuts, clearing paths, listening to birds, or simply watching frogs grow from eggs to tadpoles to miniature beings that suddenly leap away when I enter moist corners with low vegetation. This quiet multispecies garden was suddenly filled with colleagues, peers, and newcomers, dropping in, helping arranging chairs and wovnen art pieces, spreading good vibes and excited voices among

the old trees, over the wild growing grass, beyond flowering bushes and the little pond.

Together we raised a light grey tent, its textile canopy stretching five meters into the sky on a single pole. It was the same tent I had celebrated my late-summer wedding in the year before, now repurposed to host a gathering of people from across the world. Another layer of worlds melted together: Personal memory and professional collaboration, intimacy and publicness, woven into one fabric.

In the following days, my forest garden became a stage for encounters with visitors curious about urban biodiversity, insects, and more-than-human design. Professors arrived, an old neighbour dropped in by coincidence, dear research colleagues came from as far away as Singapore and New Zealand, a local Copenhageners peeked in. Each encounter added another thread to the growing tapestry of relations.

And in the middle of all of this happening, just outside my wooden garden gate, a tiny house arrived. Parked on the street, it stood as both guest and host. Its inhabitants joined an unplanned veggie dinner in my greenhouse dining room, where family life blended with Swedish tiny house researchers and international PhD colleagues. Candlelight flickered, eyes glimmered, and conversations entangled in ways that made the evening very special, and unforgettable.

One of the most vivid memories from hosting the UIA side events is the moment our co-creative dialogue circle in the garden moved into the tiny house. We had spent hours under the sky-high tent exploring how to engage with biodiversity in diverse environments, including a

short but heavy summer rain hitting our textile roof. Then, entering the wooden structure of the tiny house on wheels, something shifted. Around the tiny table, on the tiny benches, we clustered close together. Close, close, close. The atmosphere condensed: From a loose gathering of strangers workshoping in a forest garden, we became a temporary community. Heat, laughter, and energy rose, bouncing off the square walls. The tiny house wrapped around us like a hug, holding us in closeness. I remember thinking: I love my forest garden, but a tiny house has its own magic — it can weave people quickly into community, stitching together strangers into something warm and collective.

This interplay of scales and spaces evolving in a specific seasonal atmosphere was at the heart of our events, which we called DUSK. In Scandinavian summer, dusk is the threshold between light and dark, a time of calm openness, curiosity, and exploration. We invited participants into that threshold, into spaces where worlds could meet: Forest and city, human and more-than-human, private and public, intimate and global, wild and wooden. Through sensory tours, conversations, film screenings, exhibitions, and even the making of “seasonal clothing” for the Tiny House on Wheels itself, we explored what it means to design with time, seasons, and shifting states of being.

The tiny house, the forest garden, the sky-reaching tent, and the gatherings of people and species together became a living experiment in seasonal designing. Together, we explored how spaces can change atmosphere, how memories can layer into new meanings, and how small interventions can open large possibilities for co-experiencing and co-living — across scales, worlds, and species.





Workshopping at Dusk in the Forest Garden

As dusk settled over the forest garden, conversations unfolded beneath the tall tent tucked in amongst trees and bushes. Here, in the soft threshold between day and night, we explored new ways of engaging with urban biodiversity and multispecies life. Ideas and voices intertwined with the sound of summer rain falling and the quiet presence of a rainbow above. Soft textile objects crafted by Svenja Keune swayed gently in the breeze, offering the garden's insects – and its human visitors – an alternative experience of multispecies design. Photos: Lotte Nystrup Lund





Workshopping at Dusk in the Tiny House on wheels

Just opposite the wooden garden gate to my home and forest garden, a small house had arrived and parked. The Tiny House on Wheels stood as both a guest and a host, announcing a mix of co-creative evening events on the public street, and sparking curiosity among locals. Neighbors passing by were warmly invited to step inside, to explore this mobile home of research and imagination, and to join the co-creative gatherings unfolding in the garden just beyond. Photos: Lotte Nystrup Lund

Matilda Falk

Feet Felting

With a suitcase full of carded Swedish wool and hemp fibers, felting tools and a few books, I arrived in Växjö in the morning an early summer day. Svenja and I started to prepare for the Feet Felting Workshop in The Tiny House on Wheels, that were parked in front of Linnaeus University. During the workshop, about 15 people came to felt the wool and hemp with their bare feet, using movements, water and soap to entangle the fibers.

The most valuable outcomes of the day were the feelings and reflections evoked through the participants' material meetings and the collective felting practice. Some people seemed scared to get their feet wet or to interact with the fibers, while most were excited to explore the splashing and tickling sensation of feet felting. During the felting, we discussed the value of local resources, what waste really is, the use of sheep for city park maintenance and much more. It was a joyful day full of curious encounters.

Thank you, team Holding Surplus House, for letting me arrange this workshop with you!







Undyed knit



Dyeing process



Dried knit



Aged colors

Growth and Decay in Textiles

Exploration of changeability in textile design through natural dyeing in relation to tricot forming

UV-light alters the chemical structure of natural colorants, which is a common reason people avoid naturally dyed textiles. To reveal a new perspective on the subject, Matilda Falk explored the aging of natural dyes as a design variable and sunlight as a design agent in the master's degree project *Growth and Decay in Textiles*. Depending on where sunlight struck during two months with high exposure, the color became duller and lighter in convex areas and remained saturated in concave areas of knitted and crocheted pieces. This means that color can age in relation to the three-dimensional surface of textiles, where color and form emphasize one another since UV-light aesthetically integrates color with form through time. Considering that all materials transform through usage and material deterioration, the project discussed how textile designing can involve material aging as a design concept to emphasize circular values in textile expression.

Fast-aging natural dyes in a big-scale knitted textile, *Wavy* (Falk, 2021).

Åsa Ståhl, Svenja Keune, and Stephan Hruza



Kura Skymning

During winter in 2023/2024, we invited colleagues and other audiences to sit in togetherness and relate to the winter seasons in different ways. As a response to our Light Café, we engaged the Swedish tradition of Kura Skymning, re-connecting with times when the twilight was a moment of dreaming and sharing insights and when light was a costly resource.

Winter 2023/2024
Växjö konsthall



Photos by Svenja Keune

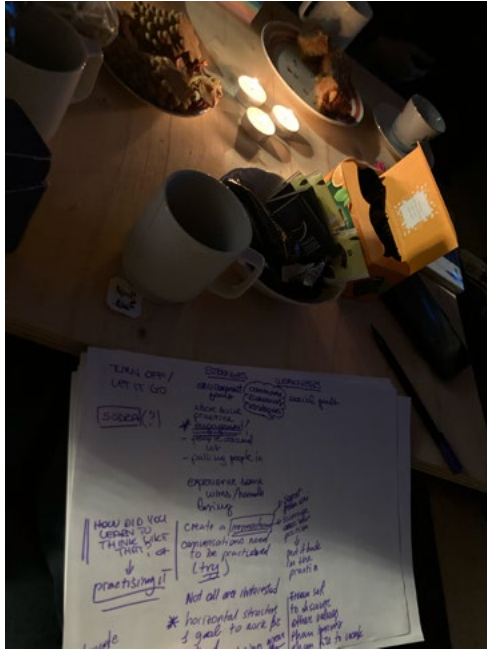
Twilight Learnings on cooperative ways to drive sustainability transformations

In the second year of my PhD, I moved to Sweden for six months to research cooperative ways to drive sustainability transformations. One way Seasonal Designing came alive was in a workshop we called Twilight Learnings: Seasonal experiments in our Holding Surplus House. On December 19, 2024 — the eve of the winter solstice — we gathered with the HSH research group inside their Tiny House on Wheels, parked on the Växjö campus of Linnaeus University. Me and Åsa Ståhl co-facilitated the session, with Svenja Keune and Stephan Hruza joining as participants, alongside three local organisations.

After lighting a fire in the wood stove, heat and steam filled the room in contrast to the cold Swedish winter wind blowing outside. The Tiny House on Wheels, not being self-sufficient in artificial light, switched to darkness, and participants helped themselves to candles and unexpectedly an outdoor streetlamp that lit up. Participants discussed the theme of transformative change, accompanied by the Swedish cultural ritual fika: homemade chokladbollar and apple pie, pepparkakor (traditional Christmas cookies), tea and coffee were served.



The workshop took place during the winter solstice, a particularly heartfelt time in Swedish culture as it combines with the darkest days of winter. For this reason, the meeting ended with the practice of kura skymning, which consists of sitting together in the darkness, in silence, dreaming, sharing key points about the challenges and joys of change work, expressing gratitude, and making plans to sustain newly formed relationships. The Tiny House on Wheels functioned as a host space for doing research in a different way, thanks to the socio-material circumstances it created. Building a collective research practice with organisations who are already making new worlds I took into consideration that methods are productive, they help to make social realities. I, thus, worked from the perspective that research for social transformation needs to be paralleled by changes in the methods of social inquiry. So, I experimentally



designed research in a way that would assure that knowledge was co-produced by acts of experiential and reflective collaborations. In these encounters, organisations and people could tap into their own capacities for change — at personal, collective, and systemic levels. This attention created an experience of conviviality and inviting atmosphere which led to openness in the dialogue between the participants.

One participant reflected upon the experience afterwards: “the combination of the place, this inviting atmosphere and the openness of the dialogue – 100% convinced me that even if we had had the same place, the fire, the fika the same people, without you Silvia or you Åsa it would have never happened in this sense, so in that sense it is the lead that keeps it here – that’s what makes the entire experience

and methodology. I feel different, I guess you follow your method and that’s part of it”.

The immediate, warm insights from the workshop were that we are living in a momentum. To harness this momentum for required change, conversations need to be practised, and people need to be pulled in, starting from the ones around us.

One strategy is to make allies with people who see the same problems. We need also to accept that not all are interested. Then, what is needed is to approach people from their perspective (talk their talk) by using ambassadorship skills to bring our own core values and narrative to appeal to different societal structures. When possible, one should turn the structures with counter narratives to pave the way for others, saying it with confidence, leveraging research.

The world is performative, and the system is us. Harnessing this momentum is a dance between personal, collective, systemic, institutional, political and legislative work.

For a longer version of the seasonal design experiment Kura Skymning see our article in Gateways (Mugnaini et al., 2025).



Photo by Svenja Keune

Seeding Ritual: Growing a Window Blind

During the opening of the Garden Futures Exhibition at Vandalorum, we were seeding the floor of the Holding Surplus House (HSH) with barley grass to grow a window blind for the summer.

Vandalorum, April, 2024



Photo by Svenja Keune

Seasonal Clothing: Dress rehearsal for changing climates

What if we would grow our curtains on the bathroom floor, and leave the window open for pollinators to feed from the blossoming cover? We brought our Tiny House on Wheels to the Southern Sweden Design Days and opened it for participatory interventions with grown materials and to address Seasonal Clothing. We invited visitors to take part in creative and reflective sessions to speculate about householding, sharing of resources and habitats with human and more-than-human neighbours.

Southern Sweden Design Days,
Malmö, May 2024



Photos by Åsa Ståhl



Photo by Svenja Keune

Surplus, seasons, and the care of soil-making communities

I met Holding Surplus House a morning on an excursion to Malmö during my first ever artist residency. I had been introduced to Svenja not long before by a common colleague. The idea that I was doing an artist residency composting food scraps and Tired Architecture, was aligning with the seasonal design and surplus concepts of the little house on wheels. I came with a ready made bokashi composting bin. It was filled with bokashi bran and a plan of involving people at the Malmö design fair Southern Sweden Design Days (SSDD) in composting elements of their lives along with composting surplus organic matter from food we ate.

At the time, I was myself composting a complete collapse due to burnout. Meeting the consortia of efficient microbes in bokashi composting in my apartment, had become a way to surrender to the process of life and climb out of exhaustion with the help of the warmth and support from soil and microbes I couldn't see. I had created a speculative art platform for myself called Tired Architecture, which I defined as "an exploration of home and human settlement in times of exhaustion and burnout". My work with the platform had received a small grant from the Danish Arts Foundation. At the time of the

Malmö design fair, I was halfway through a three-week residency at the performance art organisation Metropolis Kbh by Trevor Davies. The residency was a way of exploring how my affective experience of bokashi compost techniques and my warm relationship with soil microbes could be shared with others.

Bokashi

Bokashi composting is a two-step composting process, which can be done entirely as an indoor ecosystem in an urban apartment. This made me initially call my project "composting in awkward spaces", as indoor composting at first seemed a bit awkward. I was also dreaming of moving to the countryside and work with a garden and land-based permaculture. An advantage is that the indoor ecosystem allows for a very intimate relationship with the processing of nutrients. These collaborators are householders that help you break down and reconfigure the organic matter. Thereby an intimate relationship with the surplus produced and reproduced in the household is made possible.

The first step in the process is putting your left-over organic matter from cooking into an airtight container from which you can drain the liquid and supply it with effective microbes in the form of inoculated bran every time you add a layer of organic material. After letting the microbes work with fermenting the food scraps for at least two weeks without opening the lid and just draining excess liquid, you can then mix the ferments with equal amounts of worn-out soil in an open container. This is the soil factory.

After just a few days, it feels good to massage the ferments with your hands in the soil and thus mechanically help their breakdown. You surrender to the organic matter, you surrender your hands, you surrender whatever you need to leave with the consortium of effi-



cient microbes in the ferments and in the emerging super enriched soil. After a couple of months of curing, you can give the soil to your plants. But do not give too much too soon, to avoid fertilizer burn from all the microlife having a hot party.

Warmth

The experience of one day putting my hand into the soil factory in my basement, feeling warmth as strong as the radiator upstairs, took me so much by surprise that I felt an enormous spontaneous joy bubbling up from my hands. I allowed my body to really sense the warmth the microbes in the soil were creating. I felt it vibrate and spread to my throat and my stomach, making me sigh and relax and making any tension I was carrying disappear. I wanted to share this very moment by creating sensory compost workshops. I also wanted

to share the way in which I was being taken care of by my consortium of microbial colleagues – a consortium I couldn't even see. I wasn't at the time thinking so much about the concept "seasonal design". When reflecting upon it now, composting is of course a form of balancing the season of growth, with a season of decomposing and recomposing to start another growth cycle. There are potentially many kinds of seasons involved in this work, many concepts of time, of growth, of age, life and death. Working very closely with soil making and developing affective relations with your colleagues, the soil microbes, as they warm you in your soil factory, you learn a lot about time, collaboration and regeneration. You become physically aware of the complete inability to distinguish growth and decay, as nutri-

Photo by Form Design Center.



ents recompose and reconfigure themselves, both dead and alive at the same time, in the compost. Who eats and who is being eaten?

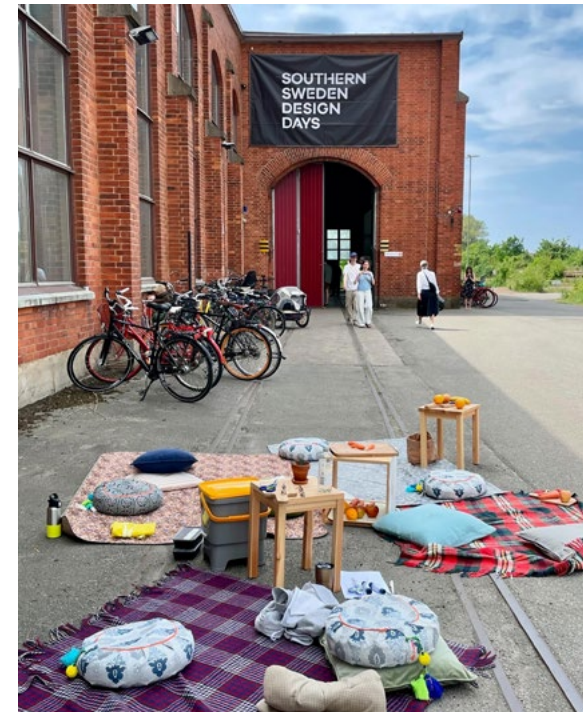
Surrender

The new black, crumbly soil, still contains some clearly distinguishable elements from the washed-out soil from indoor plants, including wood chips and perlite which are used to increase the drainage and air for the plant roots. It contains elements of food waste that only with great difficulty break down, like eggshells and remains of seeds and nuts. Also, onion peel and the almost wooden little stem on the banana, break down extremely slowly. Corn cobs at some point suddenly pulverize when you touch them, after for a long time remaining recognizable in the soil factory.

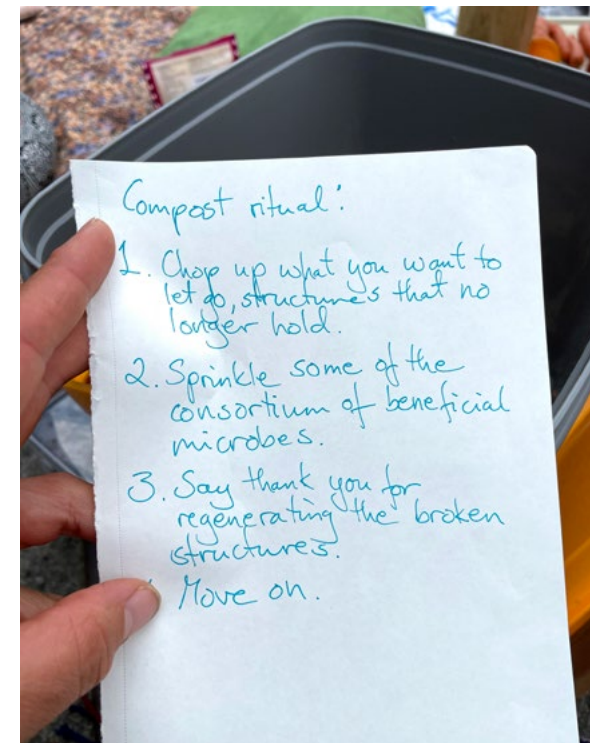
You can rest with your hands and eyes exploring the soil, help break elements down and feel the new structures. As you do this, you feel the surplus soil from the season of regeneration in your own home. It is the regeneration of structures that no longer serve you. I suggest that we engage in composting structures that no longer serve us to reconfigure worn-out elements into new nutrients in many different contexts needing renewal. This should be a widespread socio-technical practice applied across whole spectra of society, across politics and organic matter.

The art of crafting new soil means decomposing-composing, reconfiguring new symbioses in a compost pile. By doing this you honour the seasons of needing rest, of reusing worn-out matter, of allowing things to die at the same time as giving birth to the new. In seasons of rest, microbes are still creating warmth, still producing surplus, while growth above the soil may be on hold.

You can surrender to this. You will be taken care of.



Bokashi snack and compost station by the entrance to South Sweden Design Days. Photo by Silje Erøy Sollien.



You can develop your own compost ritual or follow this general recipe. Photo by Silje Erøy Sollien.



Organic material that is left over from human food making, is a feast for the consortium of efficient microbes who make soil. Photo by Silje Erøy Sollien.

Mending by Design *Taking seasonal cues for repairing needs*

I was excited to participate in harvesting the barley grass that grew on the floor of the Tiny House on Wheels (THoW) house in the spring of 2024. On a sunny day, we cut the barley grass close to the soil to extract juice and removed the soil beneath to expose the roots, which we planned to use as a window blind. I focused on working the soil away from the roots, eager to discover the intricate and lacy network that lay beneath. The collective harvesting allowed for new discussions on what was surplus and what needed to be added. We saw the grass as a valuable source and put it aside for juicing.

We let the soil and seed husks that we had removed from the roots fall into the grass below, as we did not have a use in mind. We quickly discovered that exposed roots lacked the potential as a shade system, as they were too thin to block out light and reduce heat inside the tiny house. Many spots were brittle and crumbled, especially in areas where mold had developed in the shallow soil in which they grew. The idea of brokenness continually popped up in conversation, as we discovered that the roots were too fragile to hang without some support.



Barley grass juice and foam. Photo by Donna Maione.

A window blind would provide privacy while reducing light and temperature in the THoW during the long summer days, ideally creating a seasonal cycle from grass to blinds. However, by shifting from a root system that anchors the living plant and stores water and nutrients in a symbiotic relationship with microbes to a new system that provides shade in its dried roots stage, we realized it would need some intervention. We began to discuss ways to augment the thin roots.

Mending evokes possibilities for redesigning items that change over time and with use. Motivated by immediacy and near-future needs, these mending episodes frequently align with the seasons' temporalities. For example, a woolen sweater may develop moth holes in the summer, a sock with thin heels, and a torn knee in a pair of pants from the fall, all of which invite engagement for redesign around, through, and within the material needs. Techniques such as darning, weaving, felting, and patching may appear to be simple tasks requiring repetitive sewing actions, but these methods can be complex. The repair material and supplies, as well as the future requirements of the damaged object, each have a bearing on the cloth's future life.



Cutting the grass and keeping it for juicing. Photo by Donna Maione.

Questioning our intervention

Unlike worn clothing, these roots were never broken from wear. You can see the roots—now fragile as a result of our intervention. If we left them in the soil, they would thrive. It is our intervention that is breaking the system. Considering the delicate nature of the roots, we were careful not to further damage them. I felt a sense of stewardship over the root system. Now

that the material was exposed to air, I began to think more like a caretaker, aiming to preserve the integrity of the webbed material we were handling, since it was clear that our intervention was not part of the natural plan and that our actions fell outside the natural cycle. As we continued, we began to think about how to intervene to maintain, care for, or repair the damage we had caused to the roots.



Removing the soil from the roots and allowing the surplus to fall to the grass below. Photo by Donna Maione.



The root system with weak spots. Photo by Donna Maione.



(Left), mending materials used; and (Lower), techniques used to support the grass root. Taking inspiration from nature, I attempted to create intertwined patterns with wool fibers in the same way that a bird might build a securely walled nest out of twigs and scraps. Photos by Donna Maione.



During the Southern Sweden Design Days in Malmö in May 2024, we collectively reflected on the roots while continuing to discuss our experiences of the intervention of mending.

From fashion seasons to soil seasons

Seasonal mending as a design principle has its foundation on bioregional design. Mending and maintenance offer a counter-narrative to hyperconsumerism, which prioritizes disposability over care and stewardship,

and can connect us with the materials that come from and rely on Earth's resources. We can emphasize Earth's pace as relational design by repairing and mending seasonally, which strengthens our connection to the Earth's rhythms and reminds us that the true seasons are found in the soil, not in fashion collections, by working on the root cloth as seasonal mending, it reminds me of the relational rhythm that prepares for seasonal changes and to care for our made items.



Living with an Insect Tunnel

In summer 2024 I set out to physically investigate the idea of installing a tunnel across the ThoW. I imagined a tunnel similar to wildlife corridors, tunnels under or bridges across motorways for example. How about having such corridors through buildings as well? Corridors for wind, birds, and flying insects, corridors for above ground dwellers and underground creatures. Maybe humans could share some resources with them and observe how they are taken care of by others?

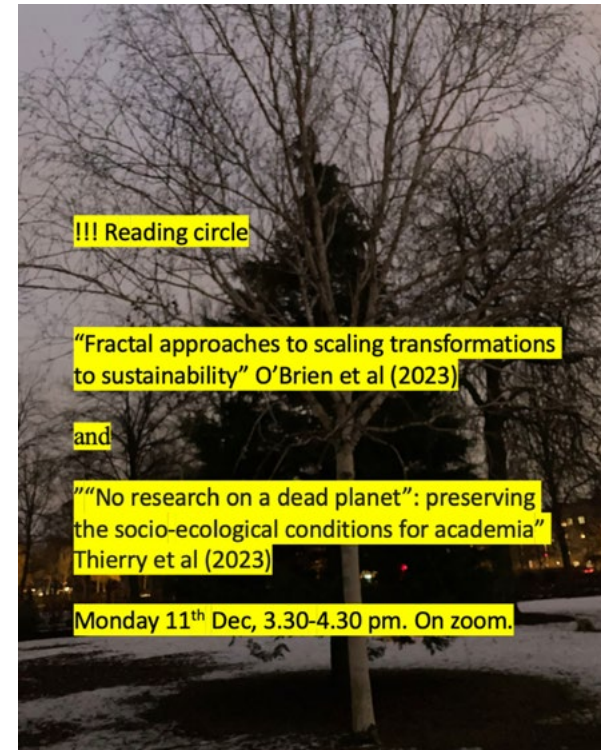
July 2024, Toftahult



Holding Surplus House and Bauhaus Correspondence

While I lived and studied in Dessau for a while, the quiet Bauhaus city of Germany, I checked in with Åsa and the Holding Surplus House (HSH) project from time to time. Somehow, we found funny ways in which the Bauhaus, the Tiny House on Wheels, householding practices from pasts and futures and our personal lives all intermingled.

In an online HSH seminar I learned about the idea of fractal scaling and scaling as a relational concept. The paper we discussed explained that “a fractal approach [...] is designed to ‘move the whole’ by generating patterns of change that scale” (O’Brien et al. 2023, 1452). Something clicked! This idea suddenly explained something that was already central to my life, my research and my practice. I became aware of many scales I was constantly bridging, from geographical to epistemological. And I found the idea of fractals so beautiful: if I can find a way of relating to the world that aligns with my values, then can I scale it fractally into other areas, perhaps create transformation that goes further than my own life but remains aligned with it?



The first leap I took was bridging the temporal scale, relating my student life to that of the original Bauhausers. In the iconic school building by Walter Gropius, it is not hard to feel how they must have felt, a sensation that only intensifies as seasons come and go. Thanks to the famous glass curtain, the workspaces are ice-cold in winter and melting hot in summer. I experienced that it is not a place designed for the real world and its real-world weather changes. I wrote my thesis in the former metal workshop which became a suffocating space in the heat of summer. I am certain it would not have been the same research if it was written in another time of the year. For the Bauhausers, I can only imagine the influence of the building’s temperature on their designs and the extra heat generated by metal machinery.

Photo by Luna Apley



Here I
am!

Finding layered practices to bridge
temporal scales between 1931 and 2023.

Åsa's visit to Dessau later on sparked some interesting thoughts on what householding meant for the Bauhaus, a school so influential in the ways we live today and a project that definitely managed to scale out. I also started thinking about what householding meant for me in a small place where I was still building my community. Becoming curious, I researched what the Bauhausers ate on a daily basis, how they played (or complained) about food, how being a hungry student in Dessau in 2023 compared to being one in 1927. While the Weimar Bauhaus students cooked with fresh vegetables from communal garden, the more 'modern' Dessau canteen introduced canned foods that surpassed seasonal scales. These meditations became a little correspondence with the HSH project.



In my current research, scaling and even bridging scales through correspondence have taken on an important role. I'm working with Living Labs understood as both experimental spaces and a methodology. I have been asking myself how far a Living Lab can reach, how broad the communities can be that we reach, what knowledges are produced or valued and how to climb up a scale and connect Living Labs together through that same methodology (so, fractally)! I take with me the idea of correspondence for inviting in, reaching out and scaling further.

Reference

O'Brien, Karen, Rosario Carmona, Irmelin Gram-Hanssen, Gail Hochachka, Linda Sygna, and Milda Rosenberg. 2023. *Fractal Approaches to Scaling Transformations to Sustainability*. *Ambio* 52 (9): 1448–61. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-023-01873-w>.



Visual for
Bauhaus
Correspondence
with HSH

Mesting and Rending with Holding Surplus House

Mesting and Rending, the entangled practices of mending and resting, emerged alongside the HSH Framework. Although the practice was never situated within the framework or the Tiny House on Wheels, our work resonates with and overlaps with the relational and seasonal approaches that HSH centers. Throughout our master studies in Design + Change at Linnaeus University, we have had opportunities to explore how, as designers, artists and human beings, we can inhabit and experiment with and through the household of a Tiny House on Wheels. On one occasions, our cohort invited others to take part in a “Failed Fika” during the Southern Design Days in Malmö in 2024. We performatively immersed the audience in the practice of failing within the premises of the THoW.

During our final semester, as we unfolded our final projects, we intuitively leaned into collaboration with HSH. Our processes were intertwining with the seasonal relations HSH was experimenting with. In the project Mesting and Rending we unfolded seasonal relations, rhythms and disruptions of our bodies and clothes. Together with other students and HSH, we met weekly to share our processes, ideas, and overlaps. As the meetings passed, we found that we had



too many iterations to handle. The practice of Mesting and Rending could have been situated directly within the HSH framework and/or its physical platform, the Tiny House on Wheels. However, the process ended up taking us in a different direction, resulting in a type of collaboration that none of us had imagined.

What do we give and take?

This was one of the questions that kept coming up during our process. It also arose when we realised that the Mesting and Rending practice was not going to be embedded in the HSH framework. Although subtle and unseen, the collaboration was crucial for our practice. HSH provided a space for exchange and sharing of knowledge, enabling the emergence of other ways of being and living. for the emergence of the other and practicing the otherwise. HSH enabled practices to create other ways of being and living. We hold one another, co-creating broader network of resonating practices.

If you want to engage more with our work you can access our thesis

“Mesting and Rending: An Exploration Of Resting And Mending As Entangled Practices Of Resistance And Reciprocity” (Lutzenberger and Maximová, 2025) on <https://designportfoliolnu.se/studentwork> and diva-portal.org





joanneke van duijn

Surplus in Shadowed Soil

Title// Surplus in Shadowed Soil part of the Messy Edge Exploration

Medium// landscape installation

Date// march - june 2025

Location// LNU Växjö lawn

Artist// joanneke van duijn

Collaborators// Holding Surplus House, soil, seasons

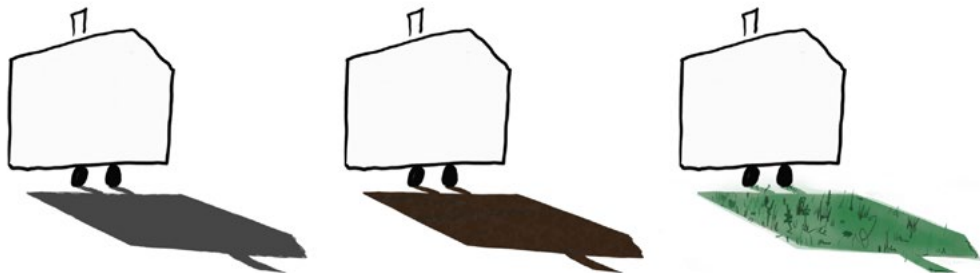
**Outpaced by construction or
overshadowed by concert flora
finds a way to pop up.**

*To symbolise this, the shadow of Holding Surplus
House is carved out into a campus lawn.*

*The area welcomes feral aesthetics of nature
and challenges the norms we maintain in urban
green spaces.*

*What plants and organisms move in when we let
go and give them space?*

project plan



i. house with shadow

ii. house with dug out shadow shape

iii. house with growing shadow shape



march 2025. project set up



march 2025, set up



may 2025, keeping mower away.
Photo: Åsa Ståhl



april 2025. regrowth in the edges

FIELD NOTES

Spades are great.
Find existing places to explore with.
Waiting for something to grow requires patience.
Working with nature takes patience. Collaboration takes patience.
'Signs of Care' (notice board, logos, borders) make things look more official and less likely to be disturbed.



june 2025, full mini meadows and moving on
Photo: Åsa Ståhl



We can no longer design a system that dissociates us from our ecological home.
- Toa Orion

A shift is happening to include more greenery into the urban landscape.

- Basel (Switzerland) has financial incentives and building regulations that have scaled up green roofs throughout the city.
- Mexico City (Mexico) has been retrofitting 1000 highway pillars into vertical gardens.
- Seoul (South Korea) freed the Cheonggyecheon Stream from its concrete cover after decades of being a freeway. The area now supports 639% more biodiversity.

Cities should prioritise incorporating more biodiversity, not only ornamentally, but functionally and freely. It's more than putting a tree on top of a skyscraper. As a concept, wilderness in cities has so much potential for social change, cultural engagement, and interaction with the political environment.

**There is a long way to go.
The colour green ≠ sustainable.
There is more to ecology than its looks.**

Nature is not an aesthetic for us to subdue. It's an aesthetic that invites interaction and understanding.

Nature is not out of place in the city and we must embrace nature's will power and let it flourish.

Nature is not separate to us, we are in its web.

Integrate the chaos of nature to the wilderness of cities to create deeper harmony.



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Beauty of solar energy

To me it was an eyeopener to experience the workshops with the Tiny House on Wheels.

I think it connected to past generations of women sustainable household habits and values. This knowledge or maybe more fair to call it wisdom has been forgotten and the surplus house put it into a modern context.

At the opening of the exhibition Sun in My Backyard on 14th August 2024 at Vandalorum Museum of Art & Design, I gave an inaugural speech to perspectivise solar energy into a systemic holistic way of thinking. An excerpt below, translated from Swedish by human (Åsa Ståhl) and machine:

Solar energy is perhaps the most profitable crop that a farmer can have on his field.

It is a rational choice if by rationality you mean return in terms of money.

But rationality from a system perspective is something else. It is, among other things, about rationality in the negotiation process between the bodies that will become and exist on the earth.

[...]

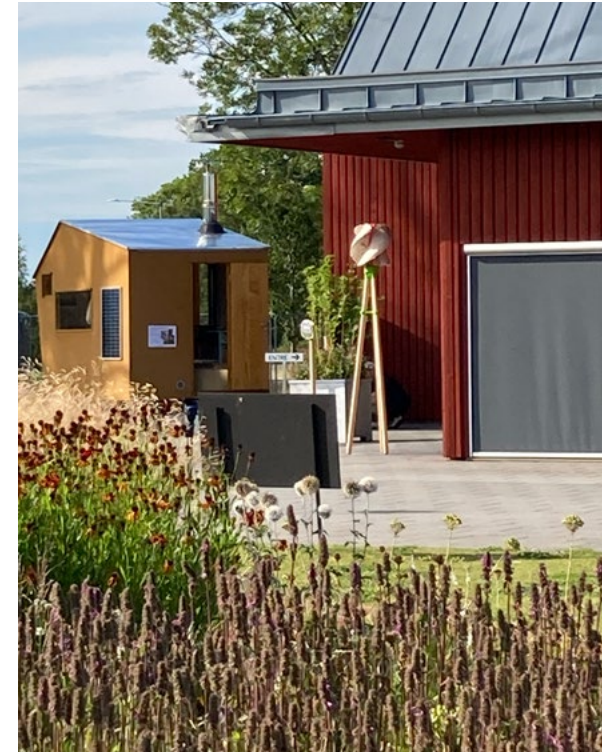


Photo by Åsa Ståhl.

Whether you believe that nature is animate or not, it can be rational to spend time thinking about tree spirits.

There are studies where researchers have looked at how different indigenous tribes look after the biodiversity of their area.

They found that those who worshipped tree spirits took better care of their land than those who followed official guidelines for land management.

And whether or not you believe it's true that tree spirits exist, that worldview helped people create the environment that was good for them and others.

I have a strong desire for more people in our modern society
to think more like tree spirits.

And to make sure that negotiation works for a given area of
land.

In our thinking, we have opportunities to travel in time and
take new perspectives.

As we go through our daily lives, we can try to choose a tree
spirit perspective from time to time

And to make sure that the negotiation for a certain land area
is fair.

What would a tree spirit say about what I see and what I am
about to do right now?

The day you write poems about how beautiful solar energy is
in the landscape:

That is when we have succeeded.

Svenja Keune, Åsa Ståhl, Stephan Hruza, and Mathilda Tham



Living with a Forest Floor

During a trip to Stockholm in November 2024, we explored how a Tiny House filled with autumn leaves inspires poetic reflections about the forests and our ways of interacting with resources.

Ten Research Projects on Art in Designed Living Environments – Final Conference at ArkDes and Moderna Museet, 15 November 2024.

Exploring Poetic Imagination with Fire, Water, Air and Earth Symposium at Stockholm School of Economics, 12-14 November 2024.

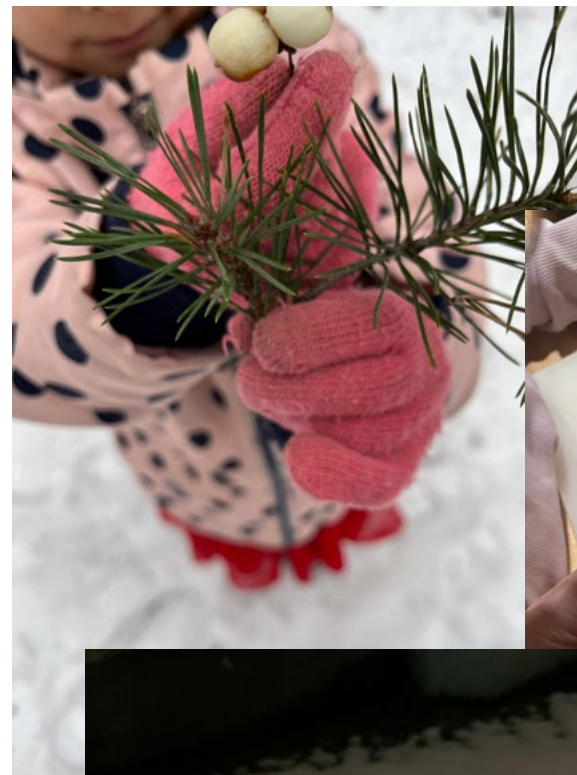


Karey Helms

*The wonder of
seasonal crafts
with children*



In September, we picked rowan berries to string into a necklace, which was lost at preschool and hopefully found by another.



In January we made ice lanterns with twigs, flowers, and pine needles. We watched them glow in the snow and melt in the sun.



In March, we collected seeds and planted them, yet were never sure if what grew was because of us.



In May, we made natural perfumes from homemade essential oils, fresh fruits, dried flowers, and spices. They were shiny and colorful, but lost their glamour when they began to mold.

These are examples of seasonal crafts from the children's book *Året runt med Pettson och Findus* (my translation: All year round with Pettson and Findus, Nordqvist et al 2023), adapted to fit a place, its weather, and our interests. During a year of eleven months, we month-by-month completed forty activities from the book. In our twelfth month, we moved to a new home and started a new year. Not all materials were found, some were bought, and not all of materials were natural, we also used glitter. Yet we undoubtedly encountered awe, curiosity, uncertainty, disappointment, and hope. This work methodologically

draws upon seasonal design, and more specifically, seasonal crafts as everyday activities for people to learn about local ecosystems and seasonal temporalities through making with natural materials. They foreground amateur craft practices and the vibrancy of seasons, alongside novelty and joy over rigor and mastery. These qualities prioritize place and invite people often excluded from environmental care, such as children, to explore human interdependence alongside the pursuit of wonder.



Seasonal memories: designing the Solar Souvenir

Designing a product is imbuing functional and aesthetic qualities in mind and matter. The product's functional requirements can be "hard", objective and strict. Its aesthetic values can be "soft", subjective and loose. But in a world of changing values, new climate realities and insisting old habits, perhaps another way is needed to navigate the change by purposefully blending the two.

In 2013, the designer was approached by the "its all, oh so souvenir to me" platform to design an affordable souvenir exhibited and sold within its retail ecosystem. Posed with the question "what would Greece be, if it were a souvenir?" the designer added a few more, themselves:

Can nature give rhythm to a product design?

Can a product design be completed by the sun?

Can the sun collaborate with a leather armband?

Can a leather armband leverage the trend of tattoos?

Can tattoos make sense to a person temporarily visiting a land – a tourist?

Can a tourist take away a souvenir from their **holiday**?

In our prevailing travelling culture, the last question is the most

straightforward. Thinking on travels and time to recreate away from our regular surroundings, a holiday is not just about a different generic place to be, but more about the experience this geography has to offer – the tastes, smells, sights, stories, landmarks, people, habits and so much more. And as posed by the questions above, a product serving as a memento can be designed to be the mediator between "nature" and a "holiday", if this is the creator's intent.

The artefact designed in response was a Solar Souvenir: a range of leather armbands which, as a stencil, allow sunrays to pass through and tan a tattoo on the wearer. Coming in five different designs with their own semiology, a Solar Souvenir curates the tan of the wearer, accompanying their holiday memory creation, because:

a tan can be the evidence of spending time under the sun,

a tan can be part of the experience of a summer holiday,

a tan can be an inadvertent impact of another open air activity,

a tan can be an embodied memory, destined to decay.

While designing the Solar Souvenir range in spring 2013, the designer was focused on creating a locally manufactured, affordable and meaningful product, with the belief that it would function as intended. After all, the memory of a wrist watch tanning a mark on their arm was all too familiar. However, the "spring sun" under which the product was developed, was not necessarily the default "summer sun" meant to complete the product experience and therefore valid testing could not be supported.

Yet, despite functional uncertainty, the Solar Souvenir range was produced using standardised CAD files, printing and cutting machines, only to be assembled and packaged by hand. With approximately 500 pieces entering the market in five consecutive "tourist

seasons”, the product provided insights to the designer on its seasonality via communications with friends and purchasers. These lead to the following Solar Souvenir product FAQs:

Q1: How fast will I see the stencil mark created by the sun?

A1: It depends on how fast you tan, how long you sit under the sun, how long you can withstand the sun, how long it is safe to sit under the sun, how sunny it is, which part of the world you are getting tanned in, what time of the year it is.

Q2: If I have to use my Solar Souvenir in consecutive days, how do I place it on the exact same spot?

A2: You can choose to not take it off. In case you do, or have to reposition it, try, in the first place, to strategically place it on your skin in relation to an identifiable spot such as a birth mark, a mole, a joint, a part of your body that feels repetitively comfortable.

Q3: I’ve worn my Solar Souvenir for a while, but instead of a crisp stencil from the sun I see a smudge. What is happening?

A3: You’ve probably done some things right. You’ve used a good sunscreen, moved around to avoid constant direct sun exposure and been active through the day. These activities can create a smudging effect on your sun tattoo, due to leather thickness and differentiating sun-ray angles.

Q4: My friend and I are using the same Solar Souvenir, but we have different results on our skin. Is this normal?

A4: Of course. You are different people, with different skin types and skin complexions, moving differently through the day. Every sun tattoo is unique to each of your bodies and movements.



The Heart – for those loving Greece with all its sharp edges

Q5: Can I use my Solar Souvenir in the winter?

A5: Yes, there is no reason why not to. However, the results might differ, and you might want to try mounting it on a part of your body that can be exposed to the sun, despite the cold weather.

These FAQs, though originally layed out to help sales, where pivotal for human wearers to comprehend what it means to coexist with the non-human and for the designer to understand designing for the more-than-human, giving away control to nature. They are a popularised way of discussing seasonality in design under the auspices of body enhancement, personalised product experience and memory creation. They open up user acceptance to non-expected and unprescribed product use outcome, flexible temporalities, co-creation with nature, geographic use implications and unintentional functionalities.

Through these, Solar Souvenir lays out a path where product promises are allowed to have blurry and soft borders by negotiating prevailing deterministic and standardised development approaches, and loosens strict product functional qualities by strengthening aesthetic and narrative values.

It may well be part of a seasonal approach to design.

* After so many years, there are still no images of stencil marks made by Solar Souvenirs, no matter how these have been tried to be assembled. It always seemed that the human wearers were not available for the long periods necessary to tan, either due to their schedule, endurance to the sun, location or cloudy whereabouts.



The Anchor – for those striking their best power pose



The Wave – for those loving the sea and archaic patterns

The Inscription – for those wanting to showcase where the tanning took place



The Cloud – for those still preferring gloomy weather

Seasonal design for seasonal teaching

The seasonal as situated, sensitive, searching in Copenhagen

The first time I encountered the Tiny House on Wheels (THoW) was as a teacher. Coming with a group of students, harbouring the familiar feeling of responsibility – being attentive to the student's experience and learning, sending out precise description of how to get there, giving them texts to read in advance. Those sorts of things, teacher-things, preparing. In these situations, I often have a meta-track running parallel to the interactions and here-and-now-presence with the students. Simultaneous evaluation of the group, the space – does this work? Should I speak higher? Who is speaking too much, how do I let in the others? Alertness and awareness. In this state of mind, I entered THoW.

We were a small group, squeezing on the benches along the wall. We shared things to drink and eat. I do not remember what, but I used to bring edible things to teaching situations like this one. Maybe I brought elderflower drink, and some nuts? Åsa had brought locally grown lentils.

A few months beforehand, Åsa and I had exchanged emails – mu-

tually trying to tailor the best learning experience for the students. And now, here we were, in the THoW. Åsa had prepared a lecture on ecofeminism and householding, and gratefully I could hand over the teacher-role. I allowed myself to indulge, listen and take in. Åsa stood by the door and gave us an analogue lecture – flipping through printed A4 sheets. In the meantime, the lentils were cooked soft at the stove. Åsa invited us to share lunch, slowly shifting the lecture over to questions, conversation, to preparing lunch, and sharing a meal. We stayed for hours, beyond the scheduled time.

My attentiveness changed course; I didn't focus so much on the students. Instead, I became curious on the interplay between the space, the props and the teaching. Entering the THoW with the students was like stepping into a dense pedagogical web, where the small scale and detailing, the wooden material, the lentils cooking, and the physical slideshow, together created an intimate and bodily space for sharing food, thoughts, and knowledge. In other words: through the lecture, we learned about ecofeminism and householding. And through the THoW, we experienced how this had to do with architecture – through the spatial framing and practices unfolding.



Did I mention that I am a trained architect, and that the students were studying architecture? Sometimes I forgot this myself. Since I insist on architecture being inherently interdisciplinary and entangled in economics, politics, material cultures etc., my teaching is not always “pure”. This can create confusion for some students, including myself. What has this to do with architecture? and What is the role of the architect? are very common questions, destabilising and nurturing at the same time.

Many times, when preparing teaching, I have leaned into my memories of these few hours. It manifests in concrete yet minor actions. Presenting a printed slideshow on the top of a hill in wintertime. Insisting on accompanying lectures and seminars with drinks or snacks. Sitting amongst the students, not being separated. But foremost, the hours in the THoW are more like a resonance, a kind of guide or recipe. Reminding me that the planned and intentional aspects of teaching must be balanced with spontaneity and sensitivity. Seeking to be open and curious, always saying yes when lentils are offered.

A note on seasonal edibles:

Students are often not picky when it comes to snacks. It is the generous gesture that counts. However, it has proven successful to provide drinks and edibles that reflect the season. Elderflower drink in June, hot drinks and oranges in the winter.



Grounding Resilience: seeds of security for uncertain times

We first met the Holding Surplus House team when we co-exhibited during the Southern Sweden Design Days in 2024. Working by the Tiny House for a month, it became our good friend, offering us a tiny shade, big ideas and a cozy spot to hang out at. Getting to know the group behind the Tiny House taught us about surplus sharing, sustainable householding and seasonality. The weekly conversations we shared during the past semester were an amazing platform for knowledge sharing and cross-pollination, supporting the development of our master thesis.

This community project is a local initiative situated in the rural and active village, Visseltofta. By looking around the environment to find potential to build resilience from within, we ended up waking up an overlooked resource in the village, the jordkällare (the root cellar). Through conversations and growing relationships we turned it into a food sharing space as a concrete step towards resilience and a possibility to practice seasonal routines. One can view the space as a mirror of seasonality through people's action and connection to nature by following the change of the surplus and the gatherings in the jordkällare rooted in nature's rhythm.



BYNS JORDKÄLLARE: waking up shared resources that have been asleep

What is Byns jordkällare?

an introduction into this gathering series

This abandoned space, which is often explored by curious children, holds a strong potential in our eyes. Our aim was to try to turn it into a food sharing space, where people can store and swap their oversupplies. Its transformation from being overlooked, to taken care of can become an example for taking a concrete step towards becoming more resilient. This action was a series of three gatherings. It started with an afternoon we called "Väcker upp byns jordkällare" where Visseltofta-bo, cleaned up the space with us and shared ideas for its possible uses. Despite its initial state, within an hour, with tools, teamwork, and a sense of shared care, we had cleared leaves, dust, trash, unused materials, and even put the door back. This helped us to get to know the space, and reconnect with it.

The second gathering focused on creating a welcoming space. We had a long afternoon filled with the sound of drills, lively conversations and children playing and helping. By building and thinking together, the jordkällare got an inviting welcome sign, painted by Visseltofta bo, greeting all who decide to stop by. The space got "dressed up" with two shelving units, crafted from reused material, ready to begin their new life of storing food to share.

The third gathering was a celebration of the now awakened jordkällare and looking ahead at the future directions Visseltofta is moving in, with relationships and projects growing forward.

Benefits and values

what makes it a great step

one small action can activate a chain of others

marks a concrete step

highlights the potential of overlooked resources

sharing surplus helps to maximize the use of all resources in a community

it helps imagining futures together



Experiencing together

step by step guide to try out this method in your community

- Find a place in your village that hasn't been used and could be turned into a community space
- Discuss what purpose this place should fulfill to serve the needs of the community the best way
- List the things in the space that has to be renovated, or the furniture and equipment it needs to serve your needs
- If possible, turn these chores into collective actions, gathering over fika to work and talk together
- Discuss roles and responsibilities of engaging with this new space

Guiding questions:

What would make this space feel like it belongs to everyone?
What kind of activities or services could bring people together here?
What local talents, skills, or materials can we use instead of buying everything?
Are there any safety issues to consider before using the space?



Experiencing individually

an activity to try this step with your friends and family

Look around your home to find objects that no longer serve you, but are still in good condition. Invite your family, friends or neighbours to a swap party. You can swap food, clothes, books, toys...etc. If you'd like to make it seasonal it could be a good idea to choose a theme that fits the time of the year.

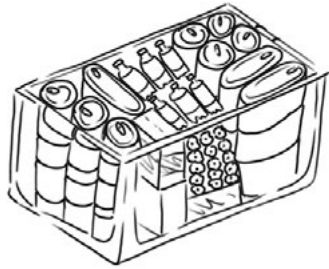
Seasonal ideas:

- fruits and vegetables harvested from the garden
- seasonal clothing
- christmas or easter decoration
- seeds



preparedness

evokes urgency and reaction



resilience

means maintenance and a permanent state in time



Charlotte Moore

Keeping Step with the Cadence of the Seasons

The first time for me in southern Sweden –
an Autumn afternoon, unseasonably warm.
I walked towards a ‘cabanon’ house on wheels,
three wooden steps waiting.
Leaves still clung green to branches,
others scattered, crisp, beneath my too-warm boots.

Inside, the air thick with steam and voices.
Colleagues gathered, their discussions drifting
like domestic echoes through curtains not yet grown.
Afterwards – fika shared on the lookout,
a foraged spread and wet clay mingling,
cups held warm between our palms.

*Åsa reminds us that the role of the seasonal designer is like that
of a gardener: attuned to weather, light and the shifting lives
of plants, animals, fungi. It is a non-dominant approach, one
of guidance rather than control, where research activity bends*



Autumn in southern Sweden – students and colleagues gathering near the Tiny House on Wheels, fika shared, and conversations drifting out. Photo: Charlotte Moore.

*and adapts to the season rather than imposing itself upon it.
This sensibility lingered in the house, in our conversations on
the lookout – design informed through responding to seasonal
resources, a way of keeping step with cycles rather than mas-
tering them.*

Parallel to my own work,
I listen for the seasons inside the city,
where rhythms can feel lost, muted.
Retrofitting architectural ceramics has become a way of
marking time:
temperature shaping pace,
rituals and process repeating –
making hay in the summer, slowing, softening in the winter.

Attuned to cyclical working, *subsistence gardening*, but
through clay narratives,
the seasons are never only four.
They fracture, shift, micro-seasons slipping past like birds in
flight –

Japan names seventy-two of them.

Each carries a gesture: the first drip of meltwater, wood
anemones carpeting the forest floor before the leaves close
the canopy, the last hum of the mosquito.

In dialogue with the ephemerality of THoW – my work freezes
these gestures,

precisely archiving the momentary story of the season,
A plant pressed, used as a tool, its mark left behind, a guide
etched into surface.

Collecting botanical material everyday for use as tools,
I learn that plants grow according to their own inherited
rhythms,
not conforming to your idea for a design, informing your lan-
guage.

Intangibility and fragility become teachers,
each moment in time unrecoverable,
never regained until the next year, as promised.
When, even so, surprises may occur.

Learning from THoW's experiments, gestures, lessons,

I come to see seasonal design as both ephemeral and con-
stant in nature,
an educator in aesthetic language, in functional resources,
yet constant in the quiet endurance of ritual.

And always, the season moves on.



Seasonal design like a gardener's practice: listening, adapting and responding to
weather, light and living materials as key resources – a way of keeping step with
cycles rather than attempting to ignore them. The photo above references a perfor-
mative seminar held with Maria Saeki for students at the Linnæus University, Växjö,
in Autumn 2022 using locally-available seasonal resources after visiting the Tiny
House of Wheels. Photo: Charlotte Moore.

Eric Snodgrass

Regenerative Energy Communities and Holding Surplus House



Surplus. Never to be taken for granted, collective energy-giving yields of soil, sun and stewardship. A scale and community of relations navigated back and forth in pursuit of a horizon of abundance.

Invitation. Come, feel this seed and little bed of dirt, their handful of dreams. Sense the surplus, tiny intuitions of energy to trace together.



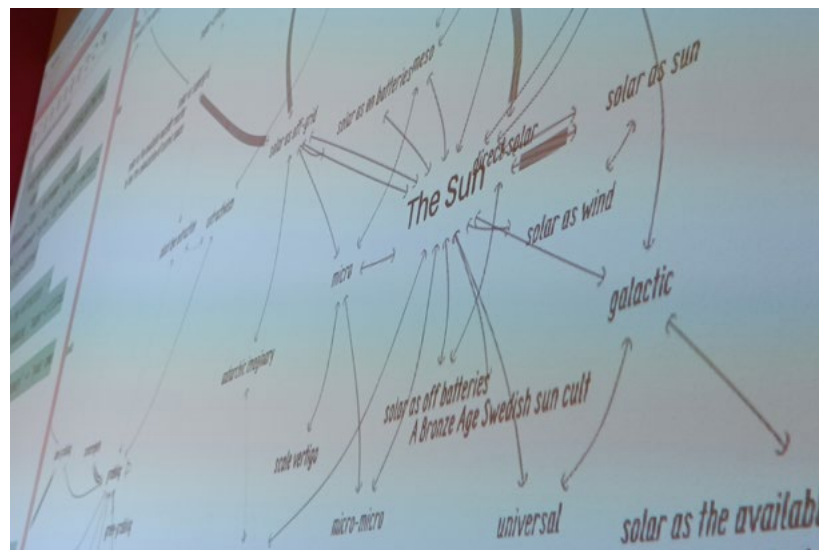
Learning with our hands at Holding Surplus House's soil carrying ritual, Värnamo, April, 2024



Spinout event, Brände Udde farm, June 2025

Weather. The rains let us down. The winds lifted us up. The cold, our returning neighbor, nestled up against the walls, whispering in between rituals of wooly socks, tea, accountancy, the hums and scuffles of hearth. Mud, morning dew, hands frozen and thawed. Elements, materials and energy levels in dialogue.

Sun! It's rhythms, companionship, creativity. Energy for days.

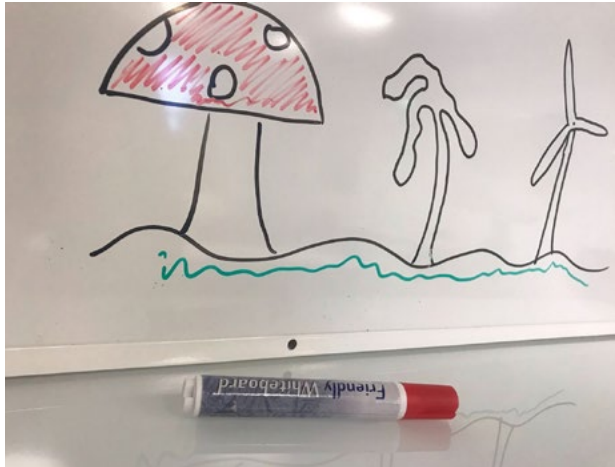


Collective energy diagramming during Energy Crafting - Grow your own Solar Cells! workshop, Switzerland, September 2023



Testing of DIY solar cells at Energy Crafting workshop, Switzerland, September 2023

January, February, March, April. In and out of designs. Plans raveled and unraveled. This prototype. No, this one. Or, maybe, this one. Can it take hold? Did it take hold? What if it takes hold? Preparing ourselves as best we can.



Whiteboard doodle from discussant at the “Soils as sites of emergency and transformation” panel, Gothenburg, June 2022



Mycelium wind turbine blades, Växjö, June 2023

May, June, July. The busy season. Planting, growing, taking root. Rapture of making. Nematode, earthworm, mosquito. Days extending into night.



Feral circuits workshop for Nonagon music festival, Svävö, July 2023.

Autumn. Lingering energies. Garlic drying in a shelter's supportive shade. Leaves alight. Held breath of harvest. Will it hold? Gathering what is there. Appreciating the works of others. Acknowledgement.



Picking chamomile for upcoming workshops on energy and agriculture. September 2022

Winter. Housed and hunkered. In need of light therapy.



"Bring warm clothes on tuesday. our house is cold and the outdoor temperatures are dropping. maybe slippers?" Visit to Anna Wactmeister's "sol-ciala matdunge" permaculture farm, Visseltofta, December 2023





The recently planted Vandalorum garden in bloom again. August 2024

A cycle is regenerative and instructive in the sense that we find ourselves here again, anew. The grounding seasonal return. Its charge that slows us down and speeds us up. Along oaks, asphalts, hyphae, table settings and composts, a sustained proposal for regenerating ourselves from one season to the next.

Thank you to Jorge Zapico for time spent in cultivating collaboration and Åsa, Stephan, Svenja and friends for the invitation, exhibition assistance and collective crossings.



Regenerative Energy Communities and Holding Surplus House at Vandalorum. August 2024. Photo by Åsa Ståhl

Tiny House on Wheels holds Change

A portable and internalised carrier of change

About to sit down at my desk to write this text, I realise I can write from inside the Tiny House on Wheels. In reality – in the historical and geographical dimension – it is many miles and also many hours away. Yet, my mind and heart have constant access to the tiny house after these years of hanging out at its outskirts or perhaps threshold, as a researcher with a tiny percentage on the project. The house, now part of me, fills me with joy, playfulness and hope just as it did the very first time I set eyes on it. It is a carrier bag for change (after LeGuin, 2024); a vessel radically different from the carrier bags of shiny technology, complex data visualisations, tense meetings between top leaders, that perhaps ‘sustainability’ often conjures up. The small and humble frame of the Tiny House on Wheels both holds and makes portable and moveable the very large, complex, important and urgent questions of change AND prototypes how to hang out with – not universally solve – these challenges.

Languaging change and opening new spaces for thought and action

Overlapping with the Holding Surplus House project, Åsa Ståhl and I have worked with the project Earth Logic Design* which explores

designer roles, practices, and indicators for success from an earth logic perspective, meaning creating healthy relationship with people, other species, place, Earth and self. (After Fletcher and Tham, 2019) To me, the Tiny House on Wheels, makes an especially important contribution in its earth logic meta practice of languaging change. Languaging is about how words, stories and imagery can open (and close) thinking and action spaces. (After Maturana and Varela, 1987) By embodying dilemmas, and generously prototyping responses to them The Tiny House on Wheels has offered new words, imagery and stories of change that are not reductive and simplistic – nor inaccessible, but approachable, curiosity inspiring and fantastically practical.

Radical dependence – and the acceptance of friction in change work

I remember a sunny autumn day in Småland in 2024, students scattered on sofas and chairs, and in the middle Åsa Ståhl standing inside the outline of the floorplan of The Tiny House taped on the carpeted floor. Åsa easily stepped into the house, made some imaginary tea, and then told the students that water, electricity and eventually peeing, depended on the help of a willing and temporary host – maybe the local community centre, sports club, village shop? It felt like the antidote to dominant buzz-words such as ‘stand-alone’, ‘seamless’, ‘independent’ – what we had here was clearly none of this, and in fact this, in essence having to ask for help, was accepted and recognized as a strength. This day spent inside and outside the taped outline of the Tiny House of Wheels together with students stands out to me in the raw honesty of what change work for lives that can fit within Earth’s limits actually takes. It’s not about heroics, master plans, perfect solutions. Instead, the authentic work for change is constant and sometimes messy relational work.

Altogether, the Tiny House on Wheels exemplifies a kind of grounded imagination (Fletcher and Tham, 2019), simultaneously super situated and super radical. The inherent dependency on others of the Tiny House on Wheels – it only works in relation with others – is a huge leap from the dominant, economic growth logic paradigm of independence and individualism. Its inherent situatedness – i.e. patching together utilities etc according to the context and season – is an equally sharp distinction from a dominant belief in universal and scaleable solutions. With the absolute requirement of knocking on neighbours' doors, The Tiny House on Wheels makes change work deeply personal, and demonstrates that the ability to ask for help - admit vulnerability, perhaps be inconvenient – are necessary lessons in accepting friction in change work.

The Earth Logic Design project forms part of the programme InKuiS – Innovative Cultural Entrepreneurship in Collaborative Co-creative Research funded by the Kamprad Family Foundation. <https://lnu.se/forskning/forskningsprojekt/inkuis/delprojekt/earth-logic-design/>

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Seasonal Design and the challenge of designing in the lee

I read on a blog of a Belgian green activist, writer and nephew Jan Mertens; *“People have destabilised seasons and in that way have destabilised the rhythm that can provide us with safety and comfort (...). We need seasons to make us feel at home in this broken world. The winter demands our trust, a ‘leap of faith’, asks to let the cold in, because soon spring will arrive. In spring you can feel the change, the new life. The summer should be the warm safe space that only can exist because the days become shorter. The summer has the other seasons in it, like we can not do without ebb and flow. But people have disturbed the seasons and destabilise with it the rhythm that can provide us with safety (Mertens, 2025)”*.

In urban planning processes - taking long periods of time, with often a large spatial scale and complexity - there have been many discussions on the fact that design processes can not be too rigid and linear, but they need to be dynamic, similar to the seasons mentioned above (Huybrechts et al, 2020). While this dynamism

has been accepted by most designers of urban transitions, it seems that lately they are continuously caught in a turbulent storm. Climate crises are disturbing our landscapes, asking for urgent depavement, greening and making space for blue. People inhabiting spaces are expressing uncertainties via protests against new developments that disrupt their known ways of being: their space for cars, their individual dwellings and others. As designers we risk getting paralysed by questions like: what can we do and is what we do the right move? To go beyond a sense of paralisation, we explored in the last years what it means to design away from the storm by exploring what is underneath or in-between, in the lee. This enables us to rediscover what feeds the dynamic of the seasons: the care of people for each other, their environment, the water, the trees, but also their tendencies to withdraw from care in certain periods in the year or their lives.

Design process in the storm

The project “North-South Limburg” is a storm that has been raging since the 1970s—with occasional lulls. This storm is related to a road that needed to be rebuilt to improve the quality of life, with fewer cars, more public transport, more green space and fresh air, and reconnecting villages on both sides of the road. Every step that was supposed to provide a way out of the storm was repeatedly blocked by citizen protests. To the left of the road, middle-class neighborhoods protested against an alternative route through their neighborhood. To the right, nature organisations protested against an alternative route through nature. On the road, the merchants protested because of road works that risked putting them out of business. The challenge, therefore, was not so much the choice of the location of the road, but the lack of a sense of safety of the community during a storm, a major decision on their environment.

Design in the lull

Our role in this contested project was, after years of storms, to reinitiate a participatory process with residents, schools, businesses, and other stakeholders on the ground. The strategy we developed was to reverse the idea of participation in a storm towards participation in the lee. We delved into the depths, into life itself, doing work under the radar. We intensely watched, listened, and felt, cycling through the terrain on a tandem bicycle for a year, filming and drawing our experiences.

By working in the background, in the daily environment, we could move away from the perspective that it was everyday life that - through protesting - hindered the design process. We could rather grasp where the design hindered daily life, but especially where it could strengthen it, reorganise inequalities, and increase biodiversity. Working in the sheltered environment, on the ground, was our fundamental approach, while of course sometimes a major moment arose—a storm, a decision-making process, a public consultation. This required moments of additional structure, strategy, and communication in the form of installations, neighborhood workshops and so on. That storm subsided more quickly, because there was confidence that participation would not stagnate afterwards.

Our quiet work didn't stop over the past six years; we gradually continued to speak, watch, listen, and build together the future of the North-South project, which would ultimately find its place on the road itself in a renewed form. In recent years, we've also begun working on spaces in the community that can help facilitate this transition: where debates and actions around sustainable space, mobility, and housing are developed within the community. In this

way, we're collaborating in shaping a community space in Helchteren, a place they themselves wanted to design as a transition to a sustainable village center, both in the concept phase as in the construction process. We explore how we could create new community infrastructure by utilising the remains of homes and buildings disappearing along the redesigned road.

Design as seasonal

Through this working in the lee, we discovered more nuanced seasons beyond storm and lee. We could again tap into the design process as a season: some periods more calm and rough, some more vivid and others stormy. Year after year the seasons became more articulated, and we became more adapted to it, which provided us and the other participants with a sense of safety.

In autumn and winter we made the deep dive, we made “a leap of faith” and entered into the deep pleasures and depths of the field. During these periods we were off the radar from more public appearances, which also benefited the sometimes difficult periods of formal decision making at the end of and beginning of administrative years. These were often characterised by public consultancy that demanded clear propositions and clear possibilities to reject or accept them by the public.

Then there are periods in the year where we start to shape collectives around seeds we felt or heard or observed in the field. The seeds discovered in the previous period were brought into bloom. This is, for example, how the theme of working in circular ways with materials from disappropriated houses emerged: materials, trees and plants were harvested from houses that would disappear and

reused in the rebuilding of a community house together with the community. Simultaneously, the schools in the environment became seeds for spaces to work around road safety, slow roads and cycling.

After a short break of a month (the typical Belgian “construction leave” in the first summer period), the silence before the storm, a period of action and storm emerged. Right after summer, each time in the last two weeks of September, a festive two weeks of Live projects emerged, where we built live with the community some of the seeds into full-fledged designed artefacts, scenarios or installations, and celebrated our common achievements with hyperlocal festivals.

This is then followed by periods of sustaining and institutioning these insights, packaging them in reports, visualisations, design and policy guidelines that can bridge the autumn period, towards a new iteration of the field work.

Seasonal Design

This rhythm has grown by slowly adapting to the contexts of the work situations in the field, our own university, community organisations, municipalities, the Flemish government and the design agencies. This adaptation to a local rhythm and pace, also makes it possible for the actors in the studied context to take over the seasonal work, after years of participating: the fieldwork periods of seeding, the harvesting in collective work, the collective breaks and the live projects have become part of the work of many actors, and not only of our own research team. This required directed design labour.

First, to achieve this seasonal design work, we needed partners on the ground, in all periods of the year. The role of our university as a

facilitator of this continuous presence is important. Universities are stable institutions who can build sustainable networks in locations (Dobson & Owolade, 2025). They, themselves, can be the activators of seasonal work, but they can also become the home for other design agencies or researchers doing seasonal work in their region.

In seasonal design, researchers are continuously discovering and making partners for collective work in seeding, blooming and harvesting, but they also have to be able to let go of what is not blooming, that what can not or should not be harvested. Today, the municipality, university, schools, the Flemish government and different architectural offices are for instance partners in the sustainable circular codesign process of the pastorie. Together with rebuilding materials, they also rebuild a broken society with a stormy history in an impactful transition. There are groups we have not been able to connect to, such as the refugee centre close by, because of administrative barriers. However, they might be taken up in next steps. To be able to pick up or at least remember these connected and missed threads over time, the human and more-than-human partnerships and the design processes that are sown, broken and repaired, need to be remembered via digital platforms, archives, etc.

Seasonal work requires particular capabilities. It requires a move from work in the storm to the lulls, the work in the field. This requires nurturing capabilities to observe, feel, hear, sustain labour in the field. It also requires capabilities to make networks in the background, with the inhabitants, but also the companies, the farmers, the public administrations. Not via stormy workshops, but via on the ground engagements of walking, speaking, sketching. The challenge in this work is to remain connected, in the same modest ways, with

institutional decision-making processes: not only via official reporting or meetings, but via engagements in their daily work. Seasonal work can also not absorb the researcher. It thus needs to remain an engagement “in-between”, digging deep but also taking distance and reflecting ethically, with care and attention for what is done and what is lacking. Finally, it requires capabilities to sustain the work: who will and how will we continue the observing, listening, feeling, collaborative decision-making after us?

A reflection in the lull

In a broken world, there is value in grounding us back in the seasons. On the one hand, trying to detect them on the ground: what are the local seasons, how can we get to know them, how can we adapt to them and intervene in them? It is also becoming aware what disrupts these seasons: the lack of social cohesion, water connections, green spaces and caring for and repairing these disruptions in the lull with those involved. Being caught in the storm and only responding to the storm is from that perspective not productive, it is reacting to something that is out of balance and that can potentially strengthen this disbalance, leading to a common exhaustion by all involved. Seasonal design is then about revealing, feeling, travelling with and repairing or rethinking seasons in design processes. In the case of Noord-Zuid, surrendering to the seasons was a leap of faith for many involved, raising questions like: can working in the lull lead to the needed results in a project that is high on the public agenda? Is it visible enough? What will it bring? The challenge for these types of high profile urban planning projects, is that seasonal design takes time before things bloom from it. However, the process demonstrated that what comes out is often a renewed energy, balance and feeling of safety while “staying with trouble” (Haraway, 2016).

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Biographies

Åsa Ståhl, PhD, leads the research project Holding Surplus House and the 6-year research environment Design after Progress: Reimagining Design Histories and Futures together with Kristina Lindström and Li Jönsson. Ståhl and Lindström started the Un/Making Studio. The studio is built on two decades of collaborations between the two of them and others. Ståhl is also part of the research team in the Earth Logic Design project, led by Mathilda Tham. For publications and research projects: <https://lnu.se/personal/asa.stahl/>

Ragnhild Lekberg is the current curator at Växjö konsthall, with a background in research, writing and curating regarding social movements, art and design. Now working in good company with assistant David Geindenmark, curator of pedagogy Andrea Karlsén and curator of public art Pauline Blom Ekengren. Växjö konsthall is a municipal art gallery in the heart of Kronoberg county. Since about thirty years contemporary art has been shown and supported here, through exhibitions with international, national and local artists, lectures, events, workshops, pedagogical projects, public art and other happenings of absurd, emotional, intellectual and craft orientated character.

Stephan Hruza is a trained furniture designer and cabinetmaker, currently working as a teacher and researcher at Linnaeus University (LNU). His recent research has centered on issues of waste, resources and material reuse across various contexts.

Stephan's professional practice is characterized by a strong focus on sustainable material selection and circular design principles. In addition to his academic responsibilities within the Design + Change program at LNU, he also has his own interior design studio Koncepteriet, which is committed to environmentally conscious practices and the use of locally sourced materials.

Svenja Keune, PhD, is a senior researcher at the Swedish School of Textiles, University of Borås, and is working on several research projects that deepen her work with co-creation in community and combine human and more-than-human inclusion in design. She is founding member of Insect Worldings NGO, hosts the I.N.S.E.C.T. Summercamps and coordinates the VIBRA Research Network.

Lara Rodgett is a multi-disciplinary designer, design researcher and PhD student at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. Her work and research are based in regeneration and care, which are explored through accessibility to knowledge and opening up spaces for dialogue.

Katerina Cerna, PhD, is an educator, designer and an aspiring artist focusing on how to enable deeper connection to green nature. With a strong background in facilitating learning and education, she uses design ethnographic and participatory approaches to understand how to enable people to take the actions they need in the more-than-human world. More specifically, she develops further understanding of enabling participation in design, both human-centered but also the implications for more-than-human and embodied design.

Helen Hägglund, Operational manager of The Cultural University, Linnaeus University. Dedicated to supporting meaningful encounters between art and science at Linnaeus University through exhibitions, residencies, and collaborative projects.

Merle Ibach is a design ethnographer exploring ecological and social transformation through participatory and post-anthropocentric methods. Her current postdoc at the Bern Academy of the Arts investigates how cultural probes can contribute insights into contemporary Swiss building culture.

Lotte Nystrup Lund, PhD, is a strategist, writer, and curious explorer of how we can live in positive synergy with a rich and robust nature. With a background in biodiversity action research and regenerative design, she founded the passion-driven company Futurista (helping decision-makers understand and work with biodiversity), initiated the NGO Gregorios (creating a multi-species outdoor learning space for school children in her neighborhood), and co-founded the community Biomagine, which supports farmers in creating biodiverse farmscapes. lotte@futurista.dk | futurista.dk and biomagine.dk

Matilda Falk is a textile designer who started her doctoral studies at the Swedish School of Textiles in December 2024. By working with historical textiles in the cultural sector and innovative manufacture in the textile industry before her doctoral studies, Falk has a broad understanding of textiles' role in society. By using this knowledge in her research, Falk explores regenerative design practices intertwined with local society, aiming to expand sustainable design thinking in all processes of textile creation.

Silvia Mugnaini has a PhD in Education Science and Psychology from the University of Florence. Her research interests are situated in

participatory design to enhance sustainability transformations and especially co-designing with organisations and communities who are making new worlds.

Silje Erøy Sollien, Ph.D, Architectural Researcher at the Royal Danish Academy and explorer of composting and tiredness as the creative platform Tired Architecture. Workshops and talks about working with soil and composting in awkward spaces.
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Donna Maione is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Design, Linnaeus University, funded by The Bridge. As a designer, educator, and artist, she works at the fringes of textile decay as a post-discipline practice. She addresses how the neglect of design principles results in waste, surplus, and the entanglement of social, environmental, and public health crises. Donna explores reparative practices across multiple scales—from fibers and threads to broader systemic interventions—as spaces for transition toward a just and safe world.

Louise Mazet is a feminist participatory design researcher with a multifaceted background in communication, media, philosophy, gendering practices and design research. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at Hasselt University on the topic of scaling participatory design through regional Living Labs. Find her on Instagram @loui_zet

Bodil Karlsson, PhD, is a researcher at RISE, Sweden, focusing on the human psyche in relation to designed living environment. She is the coordinator and project leader of Sun in My Backyard where solar power has, for example, been explored in relation to seasons and societal systems. SIMBY, overlapped with Holding Surplus House at the Design Days at Röhsska Museum of Design and Craft, Gothen-

burg, in spring 2024 and at Vandalorum Museum of Art & Design, Värnamo in spring and summer 2024.

Anna Lutzenberger and Alexandra Maximová are the unreliable bodies, habitats for the migraines, the pains, at times the coffee-driven human beings. They collaborate in-between their bodies, conditions, coffee mugs on explorations of Mesting and Rending and beyond, on adventures, crushes, foraging walks...while aiming for building resilient communities, practicing reciprocity and fostering care. They are graduates from MFA Design + Change of Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden, where they met the HSH project and the community that was build around it. lutzi.anna@gmail.com @annalutzenberger axmaximova@gmail.com @akonecsrandy

jojanneke van duijn is a mixed media, eco social practitioner interested in public space, food systems, performance arts and ecology. jj.vanduijn20@gmail.com

Karey Helms is an associate professor at Umeå Institute of Design. Her research centers on situations where design is often considered out of place, such as intimate settings of care or outdoor environments, to investigate the inclusion of people and more-than-human ecologies in care.

Costas Bissas is a design researcher, practitioner and educator. His research interests lie between design, technology, wellbeing and culture, working with public organisations, businesses and groups to envision alternative realities. He has lived for 2.5 years by the Loch Ness, but never managed to locate the monster.

Beata Hemer is a trained architect, currently Ph.D.-researcher at the RDA, School of Architecture in Copenhagen. Her professional

background is grounded in self-organised work and activism, spanning from critical mapping groups to self-built housing. The past eight years, these experiences have been channelled into teaching and pedagogy – as a teaching assistant professor and program responsible at the master program PACS at RDA. Her current research concerns everyday maintenance practices in a Danish social housing context, looking into both the material as well as political consequences of these practices, and how they potentially challenge dominant narratives of technology, care and democracy.

Iris Schaumberger, a tiny product designer with a big heart, and **Réka Kocsis**, a “happy puppy” with a background in design culture, came together through this project. Along the way, they found friendship, support, and a sense of safety in each other. Though the journey was sometimes bumpy, they feel lucky to have walked it side by side, growing memories, connections, and a whole lot of resilience together. Feel free to engage with their work if you’re curious, it’s available on diva: <https://lnu.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1978446&dswid=5572>

If anything resonates or you’d just like to reach out, don’t hesitate: irisschaumberger@gmail.com and annareka99@gmail.com

Charlotte Moore (London/Cornwall, UK) is an architectural ceramist whose practice explores how botanical life reclaims and adapts to post-industrial and climate-stressed landscapes. Her research has been supported by international residencies, including Art Nouveau as a New EUtopia in Aveiro, Portugal, where she investigated ornamented facades as potential sites of cohabitation between humans and other organisms in collaboration with Feral Mälmo. Through the Food Ecologies residency, undertaken with Maria Saeki via IASPIS × Linnaeus University, she encountered the tiny house as a framework for ecological and architectural speculation. Her current

project for the British Ceramics Biennial 2025 traces speculative plant community mutations arising from the increasing prevalence of wildfires in Cornwall. Combining ceramic archiving, scent and digital wildflower modelling, she develops installations that translate ecological data into spatial forms – speculating on the possible futures of human and interspecies communities.

Eric Snodgrass participated as a team member together with Miranda Moss, Daniel Gustafsson and Helen Pritchard in the recently completed Regenerative Energy Communities project (<https://regenerative-energy-communities.org/>). His research and teaching is interested in practices that work to imagine, materialise and sustain forms of change, but he is conscious of how such work can often end up in unregenerative timeframes and workloads. During a team tea break, Helen described this as a need for cushions and stargazing.

Mathilda Tham is Professor of Design at Linnaeus University and affiliated with Goldsmiths, University of London. Her metadesign research develops uncompromisingly systemic and holistic approaches to sustainability, including new ways to meet around the infected forest issue, rituals to integrate different generations, recipes for making homes within Earth's limits, professional designer roles, policy and media initiatives. She is co-creator of + Change education and research environment, co-author of the Earth Logic Research Plan and co-founder of Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion. Currently she leads Earth Logic Design research project within InKuis. <https://lnu.se/en/staff/mathilda.tham/>

Liesbeth Huybrechts is Professor in the areas of participatory design, design anthropology and socio-environmental transformation processes in the research group Civic and Policy Design, Arck, University of Hasselt, Belgium. She has developed a research interest in the design for/with participatory exchanges between human and the material/natural environment and the “politics” of designing these relations in just ways.

