

Since the startup of AURA in 2013 there has been an increasing focus in the media on the Anthropocene and the problems that abound on a planet shaped by humans. AURA contributed to this important public debate, among other things through a full front page article in Jyllandsposten January 29, 2015 and a ten pages feature story (see attached Anthropocene_JP.pdf).

2014 was also the year when project activities really got started with the hosting of a big international conference in California during the spring and guest lectures and an international workshop in the autumn in Aarhus. Most of AURA's team also fell into place during 2014 with the position as Art Director, two new PhD and two post.doc positions were filled.

Arts of Living Conference, Santa Cruz, May 8-10 2014.

In May AURA in collaboration with the University of California, Santa Cruz hosted an hugely successful interdisciplinary and international conference, entitled "Anthropocene: Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet". The research question was: "Can humans and other species continue to inhabit the earth together?" The conference attracted a great number of researchers from a wide range of disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, biology, ecology, environmental studies, philosophy etc., as well as hundreds of non-academics with an interest in the Anthropocene. Keynote speaker was the famous Science Fiction author Ursula le Guin who attracted an audience of more than 800 people on the opening evening of the conference. The following days with presentations by recognized researchers had an average attendance of more than 300 guests.

All the presentations were video-taped and are available at <http://anthropocene.au.dk/arts-of-living-on-a-damaged-planet/>

Most of the researchers have agreed to contribute to the forthcoming book: "Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Stories from the Anthropocene" that will be published by Island Press. The book is currently being edited by Anna Tsing, Nils Bubandt, Heather Swanson and Elaine Gan.

Donna Haraway & Scott Gilbert Guest visit in Aarhus, October 2014.

The eminent internationally acclaimed professor in feminist theory and techno-science Donna Haraway, UCSC, and professor in biology Scott Gilbert, Swarthmore College, visited Aarhus in the autumn of 2014 to give an AURA Open Lecture and participate in an international workshop organized by AURA as a follow up on the guest lecture. Workshop presenters were Peter Funch (AU), Annemarie Mol (University of Amsterdam), Andreas Hejnal (University of Bergen), Michael Thomas-Poulsen (KU) and Nils Bubandt (AU). Both events were very well attended and drew an audience of about 150 researchers from a broad range of scientific disciplines.

Both the Open Lecture as well as the workshop had a strong trans-disciplinary focus on co-species landscapes ranging from the positive effect of bacteria on childbirth (Scott Gilbert), the symbiosis between a lobster and an microscopic aquatic organism living in its mouth (Peter Funch), the relationship between spirits, mining and other geological phenomena in Indonesia (Nils Bubandt), the ways humans interact with animals (Annemarie Mol), etc.

The successful visit of the guest professors ended with an excursion to the project's fieldstation at the brown coal site in Søby where also a joint Methods Workshop with the AURA team was conducted.

Expansion of the AURA team

AURA expanded substantially in 2014 with the employment of AURA's Art director, two new PhD students of anthropology and two new post.doc positions in anthropology and biology. Furthermore AURA has been granted external funding for two guest PhD's from UCSC who joined the team in the autumn of 2014. The scientific employees are working together across disciplines in the AURA Lab Group that continues AURA's previous fieldwork at the fieldstation in Søby.

AURA publications

In 2014 the AURA team published 20 articles, 8 contributions to books, 4 monographs and the "More than Human: AURA Working Papers vol. 1+2" that can be read online: <http://anthropocene.au.dk/more-than-human-aura-working-papers/>

More working papers are under development.

