



FUTURES BEYOND TRANSITION

perspectives from the energy humanities
workshop | 13-14 Nov 2025

organisers

Adam Wickberg, KTH | Bethany Wiggin, U Pennsylvania
Lakin Anderson, KTH | Sebastian Lundsteen Nielsen, U Copenhagen

presenters

Adam Wickberg, KTH | Ask Katzeff, Independent
Aster Hoving, U Stavanger/The Greenhouse | Bethany Wiggin, U Pennsylvania
Daniel Barber, TU Eindhoven | David Lauridsen, Independent
Enrique Mejia, KTH | Eva La Cour-Nielsen, U Copenhagen
Gianfranco Selgas, UCL | Ida Bencke, U Copenhagen
Marianna Dudley, U Bristol | Matthew Ashton, KTH
Megan Eardley, KTH | Nelson Oppong, U Edinburgh
Sebastian Lundsteen Nielsen, U Copenhagen | Tom Turnbull MPIWG, Berlin



ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

The story of an energy transition from fossil to renewable sources seems increasingly the stuff of fiction. Simultaneously, the need to break fossil dependency is undeniably more real than ever. In September 2025, after multiple COPs hosted by petro-states and elections emboldening fossil interests, the tools of transition—from net-zero pledges to negative emissions models and other market “solutions”—seem to be fig leaves for maintaining the status quo. Amidst the collapse of the neoliberal climate mitigation project, its inability to enable a “just transition” becomes increasingly evident.

As scholars and energy activists have shown, the logics of transition are fed by modernity’s foundational myth: progress. Cousin to the neoliberal faith in rational actor theory and the efficiency of markets, energy transition promised a progressive, even frictionless ride into a future in which dirty fuels ceded the stage to clean and green alternatives, all neatly packaged in modelled scenarios and pathways, sometimes even championed by fossil fuel corporations that briefly rebranded as energy companies. It was a future in fact much the same as today, except the roar of gas burning engines had given way to the soft hum of electric vehicles.

This two-day workshop proceeds from the simple insight that we need better stories of better post-fossil futures. We believe such stories should take a critique of the present and its history as starting points. Together, we want to expand upon critiques of transition to consider energy transformations beyond transition.

Relevant concepts for the workshop to explore include:

- Energy accumulation and symbiosis
- Stage-ism and the temporalities of climate mitigation
- Critiques of green growth and sustainability
- Stuckness (from path dependency, stranded assets, regulatory capture, to stuckness in failing systems of governance, to sclerotic concepts, bad stories, and impoverished imaginations)

In a series of pre-circulated, informal papers, we hope to generate a number of stories/provocations/performances responding to a range of considerations about energy transformations:

- How might we conceptualize a renewable turn beyond the failed logics of transition?
- What figures more adequately conceptualize energy histories and futures?
- How is the study of energy being transformed by the increasing recognition that Progress is terror for human and more than human communities?
- How might we imagine fossil free pleasures?
- How might concepts such as managed retreat help recast energy stories?
- How is the urgency of de-fossilization transforming academic habits and energy learning communities and their research outputs?
- What does transformational work (in the energy humanities?) look like?

PARTICIPANTS (not presenting)

Caroline Ektander, Bauhaus University Weimar | Francesca Larosa, KTH
Gus Lester, KTH | Guy Finkill, Tyndall Centre at U Manchester
Lakin Anderson, KTH | Per Högselius, KTH | Rob Gioielli, KTH/EHL
Sabine Höhler, KTH | Sverker Sörlin, KTH

FIELD ACTIVITIES

Energy History Walk, Thursday. Please bring warm clothing, an umbrella, and water bottle. This guided participatory tour begins with a short walk from KTH to the Frihamn area where energy regimes overlap: coal bunkers, gas works, a heating oil (naphtha) refinery, a district heating plant, and a neighborhood rapidly undergoing transformation into an "energy positive" district, [defined](#) as an urban area that produces more renewable energy than it consumes annually. The tour then continues by ferry from Ropsten and passes additional energy infrastructure, giving us the opportunity to think together about how this place is connected to other sites of energy intensive production, distribution, storage, and consumption. We disembark at Saltsjöqvarn ferry terminal to end, and will then travel to the dinner venue.

BECCS Stockholm Tour, Friday. Please bring your passports (or Swedish ID) for identification and sensible clothing for an industrial space (e.g. no shorts or skirts). We need to know if anyone has fear of heights, heart issues or other health problems the hosts need to be aware of prior to the visit.

ABOUT THE CENTRE

The Centre for Anthropocene History is a multi-disciplinary, research-focused centre based at the Division of History of Science, Technology and Environment at KTH Royal Institute of Technology and supported by the Swedish Research Council. We aim to build a novel, integrated approach to the past, present and future of the cumulative anthropogenic environmental transformation of the planet. We contend that modern history is an essential sense-making and navigational tool for the understanding of our contemporary world.

CONTACT

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DETAILED PROGRAM

DAY 1 THURSDAY

Start Location: [Teknikringen 74D](#), Level 5, KTH

Timing: 10 min presentation, 20 min comment + questions

08:30 – 09:00

Arrival, Coffee and Croissants

Session 1: beyond techno-optimism

09.00 – 10.45

Welcome

Bethany Wiggin (University of Pennsylvania) – *Shipwreck, Salvage, and the Energy Humanities: Extra-Critical Practices for Worlds Beyond Transition*

Commentator: Marianna Dudley

Tom Turnbull (Max Planck Institute for History of Science) – *How to blow a fuse: countering technofascist greens*

Commentator: Aster Hoving

Megan Eardley (KTH) – *After Techno-Optimism: towards a history of land, labor, and uranium mining in (post)apartheid South Africa*

Commentator: Eva La Cour-Nielsen

10:45 – 11:00 BREAK

Session 2: carbon modernity and the CO₂ problem

11.00 – 12.30

Sebastian Lundsteen (KTH / University of Copenhagen) – *The (After) Life of Fossil Fuels & Death of Utopia*

Commentator: Nelson Oppong

Enrique Mejia (KTH) – *Rethinking the Green Transition from Mexico: Three Contradictions*

Commentator: Gianfranco Selgas

Adam Wickberg (KTH) – *Notes on the history of climate economy models and carbon removals*

Commentator: Daniel Barber

12:30 – 13:15 LUNCH

Session 3: discomfort

13.15 – 15.00

Daniel Barber (Technical University of Eindhoven) – *After Comfort + Terms and Conditions*

Commentator: Adam Wickberg

Aster Hoving (University of Stavanger / The Greenhouse) – *Transition and the Blue Economy*

Commentator: Bethany Wiggin

Eva La Cour-Nielsen (University of Copenhagen) – *A Letter to the Workshop + Notes on Svalbard*

Commentator: Sebastian Lundsteen

Ask Katzeff, David Birk & Ida Bencke (Independent / University of Copenhagen) – *A Correspondance*

15:00 COFFEE AND SNACK

Ghost energy walk

15:00 – 18:00

Walk through the urban landscape of Stockholm lead by Matthew Ashton, with Bethany Wiggin and Sebastian Lundsteen Nielsen. Participants will travel together from KTH, leaving from KTH at 15:00. The walk will end near the dinner location.

18:00 DINNER

@ Fotografiska Restaurant, Stadsgårdshamnen 22, Stockholm

DAY 2 FRIDAY

Start location: [BECCS Stockholm](#), Jägmästargatan 2, Hjorthagen

Bio-energy carbon capture & storage facility

09:00 Travel to BECCS Stockholm facility, participants organise own travel

09:45 Gather at BECCS and show identification

10:00 Guided visit at BECCS Stockholm begins

11:00 Travel back to KTH, Teknikringen 74D, 5th Floor

12:00 – 13:00 LUNCH

Session 4: the politics of the green transition

13.15 – 15.00

Nelson Oppong (University of Edinburgh) – *“We Can’t Have People Begging in the Street, When We Have Oil”: Moral Entanglements and Gestural Politics of Africa’s Green Energy Transition*

Commentator: Megan Eardley

Gianfranco Selgas (University College London) – *The Oil that Illuminates: Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo and the Critical Political Economy of Venezuela’s Society-Oil*

Commentator: Enrique Mejia

Marianna Dudley (University of Bristol) – *Pockets of wind resistance*

Commentator: Tom Turnbull

15:00

Coffee and informal ideation of next steps, outcomes, etc.

