



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Rethinking landscape for societal transition

A German-Scandinavian dialogue

13th Workshop of the
AK Landschaftsforschung
24–26 September 2026
Uppsala, Sweden

Deadline for submission **30 april 2026**

► workshop-landscaperesearch@slu.se



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► Theme and aim

The prevailing model of life and the economy in the Global North has caused or exacerbated climate change, the decline of biodiversity, and social inequalities. These challenges necessitate substantial societal transformation. However, such a transition can only be realised through numerous small-scale changes in various spatial and temporal contexts. Landscapes can be understood as the arenas in which, on the one hand, these global developments and their consequences can be experienced. On the other, they can be seen as places where change can happen, where people can develop and negotiate new, less exploitative relationships with each other and with the more- or other-than-human world.

Over the past decade or so, research and scholarship exploring how landscapes can contribute to mitigating the challenges of global change has emerged – within different fields, with different approaches, and from various perspectives (e.g. Bartolini & DeSilvey, 2021; Burlingame, 2025; Janssen et al., 2022; Langston et al., 2025; Qviström, 2025; Siani, 2024). In 2022, the AK Landschaftsforschung's [Landscapes for Future?](#) workshop in Kassel explored landscapes as living labs for socio-ecological transformation, and the contributions made at the workshop have been collected in an [anthology](#) of the same name (Leibenath, Gailing & Birnbaum, 2024).

This year's workshop will build upon these explorations and delve deeper by using landscape theory to examine how landscapes and landscape studies

can contribute to global sustainability transitions, asking:

How can we rethink the concept of landscape and reimagine landscape practices to foster societal transformation?

With this question, the workshop reclaims the original focus of the AK *Landschaftsforschung*, which has been to apply approaches from the social and political sciences, as well as the humanities, to address timely and pressing societal landscape-related concerns.

The workshop will take place in Sweden with the aim of fostering closer ties between Swedish and German-speaking landscapes researchers. There used to be a strong flow of ideas between German language and Scandinavian scholarship. This changed after World War II, when Scandinavian landscape research turned to the Anglophone world, facilitating exchange and inspiration (Galtung, 1981; Ward, 2000). This call for abstracts is based on the working hypothesis that this development has led to different intellectual traditions in German-speaking landscape studies and the Scandinavian research community respectively (Ehlers, 2004; Germundsson et al., 2022; Korf, 2021). While the lines between these discursive traditions may be eroding due to the rise of international English-language journals, this workshop aims to facilitate dialogue between landscape researchers in the German-speaking and Scandinavian communities, as there is much that they can learn from each other.

The 13th workshop of the AK Landschaftsforschung aims thus to foster dialogue between landscape scholars and practitioners in Germany and Scandinavia by

jointly exploring how landscape concepts and practices can be re-theorised and reimagined to promote (or hinder) societal transformation.

► Possible contributions

Subthemes

Under the broad umbrella of the workshop theme, a variety of sub-themes can be addressed. These may be sorted under the following headings that are meant to inspire, not to limit possible contributions:

- 1. Rethinking landscape:** This strand invites contributions that explore how conceptualisations of landscape have been challenged, or need to be developed, in the light of contemporary environmental and societal struggles. We welcome a range of different contributions, from historical studies, to case studies or conceptual discussions, with a specific focus on the notion of landscape, its capacities and constraints.
- 2. Landscape as arenas for transitions:** The sub-theme emphasises the roles of landscape as an arena for deliberation, be it as a boundary object for interdisciplinary conversations, or as a platform for public participation, or as an arena for decision-making. This, however, also raises questions of scale, geographically and in terms of governance: is landscape a local arena, and only for the locals? How could wider societal issues be incorporated in a landscape approach?
- 3. Landscapes of societal transitions:** Landscapes are struck by flooding, drought, fire and other disasters which cause not only ecological but also social upheaval. It is crucial that landscape scholars document such events, to chronicle for instance landscape loss and emerging conflicts, but also to mobilise such stories and imaginaries as a means for societal change. This strand invites papers discussing how landscape change can be captured and communicated to effect change, whether through artistic methods, societal interventions, or other means.
- 4. Landscape, change and populist contestation:** Today, many progressive approaches to landscape transformation, inspired by an ethos of universal morality and ›justice on one planet‹, are challenged by discourses produced by right-wing populists. These populists invoke ideas of local tradition, a homogeneous populace and historic landscape images. Researchers are therefore invited to elaborate on the tensions between transformation and preservation, between planetary demands and local landscape qualities, and between humanist, democratic approaches to landscape development and authoritarian right-wing populism.

We particularly encourage contributions that engage with **approaches from the social and political sciences, as well as the humanities**, which aim to explore ideas and concepts of landscape, develop novel landscape practices, or consider the interplay between the two.

Types of contributions

Both students and junior researchers are very welcome to participate, as are more senior researchers and professional practitioners.

There are two formats to choose from:

A. **Speed talks lasting a maximum of 10 minutes**, during which practical projects, student research projects or conceptual ideas can be presented and discussed with the other participants.

B. **Regular presentations lasting a maximum of 20 minutes**. This format offers the opportunity to present comprehensive studies or project results.

► Workshop format

The primary aim of the workshop is to facilitate joint learning and encourage dialogue between all participants. Through paper sessions, keynote sessions and more

experimental formats, as well as a one-day excursion, we aim to create opportunities for dialogue.

► Dates and deadlines

30 April 2026

Abstract submission

Please send your abstract (max 1,500 characters) and indicate whether you prefer to present your ideas as a speed talk (**format A**) or a regular presentation (**format B**) to workshop-landscaperesearch@slu.se

29 May 2026

Notification of acceptance

19 June 2026

Binding registration

24–26 Sept. 2026

13th Workshop of the AK Landschaftsforschung, with a whole-day excursion on Saturday, 26 September 2026.

► Venue and organisers

The workshop will take place in Uppsala, Sweden, and is hosted by the Department of Urban and Rural Development, SLU.

It is organised by Vera Vicenzotti, Mattias Qviström and Andrew Butler. Please reach

out to us with any questions regarding the workshop by emailing:

workshop-landscaperesearch@slu.se.

We look forward to welcoming you to Uppsala!

► References

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