

Studies in Remoteness.

Call for Participation | Nordic Summer University 2026 Summer Session | 24-31 July, Saulkrasti, Latvia

Time Work.

Debt, inheritance, and intergenerational practice.



*Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it towards some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head
Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
That is not it, at all."*

T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915)

April 9, deadline for proposals from those applying for NSU scholarship

May 1, deadline for proposals from those with secured funding (institutional, self-funded, etc.)

May 15, deadline for non-presenting participant applications*

June 1, last day for registration and payment

Let's call it "time work": Those practices that negotiate the relations between the living and the dead. Time work is not merely conducted by archivists and historians, but by grave diggers and undertakers, documentary filmmakers and memoirists, knowledge bearers, politicians, war journalists, practitioners of living traditions, speakers of dead languages, as well as by any and all who keep something – a story, a trinket, an heirloom, a song – holding onto it to remember. Time work is not easily done without feeling; It is driven by the weight of mattering, it is attention called by the fact that now – this, 'our' now – is in-part composed by the shadows of what and who came before. Time work is haunting work, it whispers of recurrences (*this happened before*), and implicitly describes the present as a thing pushed to the surface of existence by the collective force of innumerable spent lives, over centuries, over millennia.

In the summer 2026 *Studies in Remoteness* symposium, we explore the ways that time work might destabilise the remoteness of history (its absence, distance, and neglect). How might we describe the work that transforms time into a weighted force that accumulates, persists, and can be carried forward, often across generations? Through what actions is one accountable to the past? What does it mean to hold or

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carry an inheritance? In what ways are people indebted to those who came before, and how might the living “pay the debts” that have accumulated over generations? What kinds of temporalities do different approaches to time work produce, and what social relations are then enabled or foreclosed? Through these questions, the symposium reflects on the entanglement of debt and history, exploring debt as an enduring paradigm that variously informs intergenerational relations, systems of oppression, and historical justice. *We particularly invite proposals that engage with voices and worldviews often marginalized or erased in dominant knowledge systems.*

That place of bad debt, the invaluable thing

Economy is one of the technologies that captures time. Timework (or *Zeitarbeit*) is also a term for wage labour. Since the early 20th century, Taylorism maximized the efficiency of labouring bodies, in part, by transforming work into monotonous, repeatable tasks. In “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism” (1967), E.P. Thompson analysed the industrial imposition of precise, clock-based time measurements on human labour. In models of industrial labour, debt accrues around “wasted time”.

Within time-as-economy, time work can also be rendered into the kind of labour that expedites and standardizes, and thus administrates of the past as the debts and inheritances of the present. But what does it mean to account for history as countable value? In *The Undercommons* (2013), Stefano Harney and Fred Moten provide a model for thinking about remoteness as an anti-efficient site of refuge within the economic capture of time where the “debtor seeks refuge among other debtors,” engaging in practices that work in time to accumulate indebtedness without resolution. They write that, “[t]his refuge, this place of bad debt, is what we call the fugitive public”. Harney and Moten draw from a history of debt wielded a tool of oppression to argue that refuge from debt informs *black study* and other practices of *fugitive planning* that first emerged among self-liberated slaves, or *maroon communities*. And yet,

To creditors it is just a place where something is wrong, though that something wrong – the invaluable thing, the thing that has no value – is desired. Creditors seek to demolish that place, that project, in order to save the ones who live there from themselves and their lives.

Extractive states, corporations, and developers claim that communities are indebted to them for progress delivered and infrastructures that too often devalue precisely what is invaluable to those communities. While the economising of the past as debt informs important reparations processes, heritage work, and protections, remoteness can also point us in another direction – following in the footsteps of the fugitive.

Historical Remoteness: Marooned and unmoored

At the seaside fishing village of Saulkrasti, Latvia, the ruins of the 1960s modernist catering establishment Restaurant Vārava stands marooned amidst the trees in a seaside forest. World War II

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refugees from Pskov and Leningrad, who settled around Saulkrasti after Germans had driven them out of their homes, are shown in photographs digging trenches for the Nazis in that same forest in 1944. An EU-funded project on Baltic military heritage has identified a German WWII bunker in a farmer's field, built with timber cut by refugee hands. Excavations flooded the bunker with groundwater and were reversed.

Saulkrasti's ruins are perhaps not so monumental as Latvia's famous Karosta Northern Forts, falling into the sea, but they speak just as eloquently to histories of loss, survival, forced migration, fascism, war, and economic struggle within Europe's Baltic "peripheries". Like many communities along the North Sea and Baltic Rim, Saulkrasti has been historically shaped by movements over water and its beach has since time immemorial provided a thoroughfare for fish, trade, language, culture, violence, exchange, and upheaval.



How can our time work engage with Saulkrasti as a place where time work is already going on? Hosted within the Nordic Summer University, a mobile institution which holds symposia for interdisciplinary research at different sites throughout the Nordic and Baltic regions, *Studies in Remoteness* invites proposals from all fields to our summer 2026 symposium, and explicitly encourages practice-based and community-inclusive research that takes up the challenge of engaging directly with the site and the seaside, and thus to thoughts that slip into the water with the maroon to contemplate and critique historical narratives of moorage, abandonment, and the uncertainty of being unmoored. What poetic and material threads connect Saulkrasti and Latvian histories to wider emotional and material legacies of remoteness as they flow across time and partake in the patterns of dependency, exploitation, and exclusion structured by legal and economic systems? We are particularly interested in work that draws the site into relations with the long and layered histories of the Baltic rim through ruptures and disruptions and in pasts that remain present – not as something stable or settled – but as partial, affective, and unresolved.

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HOW TO APPLY

The *Studies in Remoteness* summer 2026 session “**Time Work**” will be structured into a series of thematic days based on participant proposals. Applicants are invited to envision research presentations, speaker panels, short workshops, performances, experiments, roundtables, and reading and/or discussion sessions. Applications should include [a] an **abstract** of the proposed contribution; [b] **bio(s)** of the presenter(s); [c] statement describing **financial need** (or institutional support). 1-3 pages total please.

Email applications to: lindsey.drury@fu-berlin.de and helenahildur@gmail.com

Deadlines

April 9, deadline for proposals from those applying for NSU scholarship

May 1, deadline for proposals from those with secured funding (institutional, self-funded, etc.)

May 15, deadline for non-presenting participant applications*

June 1, last day for registration and payment

*Non-presenting participants are very welcome, but we are at this time unable to support their attendance with scholarship or grant funding.

Who can apply?

Studies in Remoteness is dedicated to fostering an intellectually rigorous and practice-inclusive context equally open to researchers, educators, artists, curators, architects, community leaders and elders, activists, students, among others. The project aims to create meeting grounds for collaborative and community-based research work that critically and productively inquires infrastructure, visibility, performativity, and historicity. **Nordic Summer University offers ECTS points to students.**

We welcome proposals on topics including, for example:

- Community-based and civic historical research
- Artistic, performative, or practice-based engagements in time work and historical remoteness
- The body as an archive of historical experience, trauma, labour, or obligation
- Historical theory and method in Black, Indigenous, and/or Feminist research
- Erasure, silence, and absence in archives, narratives, and memory practices
- Affective histories and lasting emotional effects of remoteness
- Intimate encounters with landscapes shaped by history (forests, shorelines, ruins, infrastructures)
- Historical displacement, exile, and forced migration
- Intimate approaches to history, erotohistoriography and queering of historical practice
- Ritual, ceremony, practices of intergenerational memory and inheritance
- How burdens, obligations, or unresolved pasts are carried across generations
- Contemporary forms of debt, dependency, or exploitation as continuations of historical remoteness
- Taylorism, industrial imposition of labour-time, Marxism and temporal reclamation
- Gleaning and other practices of subsistence as artistic and historical practices
- Manuscripts, archival materials, historical texts, and storytelling traditions as sites and traces of historical remoteness and time work
- Material traces of remoteness and their afterlives
- Translation, mediation, and transmission across historical distance

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DATES: 24 July – 31 July 2026.

Participants arrive in the afternoon/evening on 24 July.

PLACE: Minhauzen Unda, Ainažu iela 74, Saulkrasti, Latvia.

COST: Summer session prices include housing and food (full room and board) for the week.

Studies in Remoteness is working hard to fund the participation of those with financial need.

Participants who need funding support should send in their proposal as early as possible and express this in their applications. Nordic Summer University also offers limited scholarships (by application). Additionally, there are a number of travel/conference grants we can recommend to participants to apply to independently.

Participants *without* institutional support (full room and board, July 24-31 2026):

100 €: NSU Scholarship price for full room and board for the week in shared 4-bed rooms

700 €: Full room and board, bed in double room (shared with one other participant)

950 €: Full room and board, single room (not shared)

500 €: Camping with access to shared bathrooms with showers + breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks for the week.

Participants *with* institutional support (full room and board, July 24-31 2026):

900 €: Institutional price for PhDs/any room type

1250 €: Institutional price for employed scholars/any room type

Participants with families* (full room and board, July 24-31 2026):

*Attending children age 4+ are welcome to join the children's circle, with two circle coordinators who plan activities for the kids running the course of the week.

1000 €: Full room and board in a double room for 1 adult and 1 child

1200 €: Full room and board in a family room for 1 adult and 2 children

1500 €: Full room and board in a family room for 2 adults and 1 child

1800 €: Full room and board in a family room for 2 adults and 2 children

Studies in Remoteness Userblog at Freie Universität Berlin:

<https://userblogs.fu-berlin.de/remoteness/>

Studies in Remoteness at Nordic Summer University:

<https://www.nsuweb.org/circle-1-studies-in-remoteness-sensoria-of-absence-distance-and-neglect/>