

# FOSSIL / The Museum of Carbon Ruins (an ongoing experiment in the anticipation of decarbonisation)

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“FOSSIL is delighted to announce a combined exhibition and public accessions event in Oslo, Norway – the first stop outside Sweden on the Museum’s inaugural touring year.

Formally opened in April 2053 by Greta Thunberg, pioneering activist and former Swedish Minister for Decarbonisation, FOSSIL is a museum dedicated to the collection and display of relics and ruins from the closing years of the Age of Carbon. Our curatorial team have been hard at work acquiring, restoring and preserving these sometimes troubling reminders of what may turn out to have been humanity’s greatest and most desperate struggle – a social, technological and political upheaval whose deeper meanings we can only now begin to make sense of.

For us, the didactic museum is another relic of a bygone age, and as such the curatorial team of FOSSIL are pleased to invite the people of Norway (and visitors from further afield) to join us in this great interpretive project – and to bring us artefacts of the Carbon Age for potential accession to the core collection. Our curators and researchers will assist you in the recording of the objects and stories offered, and convene with you the latest instalment in a conversation which, with planetary warming finally capped at 1.5°C, we hope will continue for many more generations to come.”

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This session, much like the project which it simultaneously describes and enacts, is something of an experimental hybrid, involving elements of experiential futures, roleplaying, narrative workshopping, and traditional research dissemination. We see it as touching upon (at least) three of the major participation themes for Anticipation2019: it is an experiment and intervention in the field of performative anticipations; it is concerned with the potentials (and the limits, both practical and ethical) of affective techniques of anticipation and futures production; and it is a demonstration, experiment and autocritique of cutting edge anticipatory methods drawn from the arts, the humanities, and the social and physical sciences.

The Carbon Ruins initiative is part of the Climaginations project, an initiative funded by the Swedish research council FORMAS [<https://www.climaginations.org/>]. As its name implies,

Climaginarities draws upon the growing literature on sociotechnical imaginaries, in particular the work of Jasanoff & Kim (2015) and Levy & Spicer (2013), but also upon the nascent tradition of social futures (as exemplified by the work of the late John Urry, 2016), utopia-as-method (e.g. Levitas, 2013), critical speculative design and “design fiction” (Dunne & Raby, 2013), the ever-broadening intersection of political science and science fiction studies, and many more disciplinary fragments churned up by the academy’s ongoing anticipatory turn, as well as innovative narrative practices such as Nordic LARP and the immersive theatre of Punchdrunk.

Drawing first upon physical science modelling of the global climate and close analysis of a number of industrial sectors and supply chains, the project aims not only to propose technical decarbonisation interventions which might lead to achieving the 1.5°C warming limit, but to also produce plausible and affective narratives of the sociopolitical transitions that will necessarily accompany any such reconfiguration of the global infrastructural system. More plainly, we’re trying to tell the story of decarbonisation as if it had already happened, and telling it from the perspective not of policy-makers and CEOs, but of ordinary citizens.

This session will be dominated by a participatory performance/workshop, during which we will for the most part remain “in character” as the curatorial team of FOSSIL, showing and talking to some of the exhibits we have collected, and inviting audience members to submit artefacts of the Carbon Age (which is to say the present moment in which Anticipation2019 is taking place) for accession into the first museum of Carbon Ruins in the 2050s (which is to say the future in which our performance, and the decarbonisation it anticipates, is ostensibly taking place). Conference delegates are invited to bring examples of Carbon Age relics that they would like the curatorial team to consider for inclusion in the collection; a formal invitation, with some criteria for what we consider a valid artefact and format, will be circulated among delegates nearer to the time.

Toward the end of the session, we will break out of the performance paradigm in order to open up discussion “out of character” around the issues and approaches that the session has highlighted. We are also planning for a “permanent exhibition” in the shared social spaces of the conference venue, where we might leave some of the FOSSIL exhibits on display throughout the event, and thus engage with fellow delegates throughout the conference.

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