

# For the time being - temporality, ethics, aging

Conversations between anthropology, art and philosophy

International Symposium // Aarhus  
April 27-29, 2022



## **For the time being – temporality, ethics, aging.**

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*Humans are time beings* - beings who have perceptions of past, present and future. We care about time and we work on our experience of time. We plan, we hope, we regret, we reflect upon the past, we worry about the future, we cherish the moment, we lose track of time. With old age, do temporal horizons change and what kinds of 'time-work' do elderly engage in?

*Humans tend to forget that everything is temporary* – that what happens now is just 'for the time being.' We try to remind ourselves and others that things will change, but is it the case that experiences of impermanence and finitude increase with aging? In old age, one may be living with chronic diseases that have a certain stability, but one's body may also change dramatically. Frailty appears and disappears; people around you die – a reminder that living is temporary and that death is part of life and will come also to you.

*Is there a gift 'for the time being' in old age* – the experience of another way of being in time? A present of the present, a gift of time? Can we explore good old lives not as successful and active aging, but as meaningful decline without falling into romanticizing stereotypes? Might new forms of suffering that arise also fracture or destabilize earlier understandings of a meaningful life?

In this symposium, we ask: How do temporal perspectives on lived time and time left change with old age and what are the roles of inter- and intra-generational dynamics in elderly's perspectives on past, present and future life challenges and horizons? How does historicity play into experiences of lived time, worries about the future, and time-work in old age? And how may explorations of temporality, ethics and aging inform ongoing theoretical discussions in the anthropology of ethics and morality, philosophical anthropology and responsive and critical phenomenology?

The symposium is organized around the research project "Aging as a human condition – radical uncertainty and the search for a good (old) life" where philosophers, artists and anthropologists have been exploring four themes: the mindful body, home space, intimate others and lived time. In this symposium we explore the fourth theme – that of time. The uncertainties that emerge with old age are not only those of bodily function, financial means, and social and medical support, but that of time itself - how much is left, how to fill it, how to keep it moving ahead and how to live with human finitude.

The project is funded by VELUX FONDEN, with contributions from AU, AIAS and VIVE. The project exhibition "Growing Old" at Moesgaard Museum will be part of the symposium.

**Invited speakers:**

[Joel Robbins](#) (Cambridge University), [Anne O'Byrne](#) (Stony Brook University), [Robert Desjarlais](#) (Sarah Lawrence College), [Susan Reynolds Whyte](#) (Copenhagen University), [Cheryl Mattingly](#) (University of Southern California), [Lawrence Cohen](#) (Berkeley University), [Jason Danely](#) (Oxford Brookes University), [Tine Gammeltoft](#) (Copenhagen University), [Natasche Lemos Dekker](#) (Leiden University), [Thomas Schwarz Wenzler](#) (Aarhus University), [Tine Rostgaard](#) (Stockholm University and RUC), [Anne Marie Pahuus](#) (Aarhus University).

# For the Time Being. Temporality, Ethics, Aging

April 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> 2022

Venue: AIAS, Høegh-Guldbergsgade 6B, 8000 Aarhus C

**Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>**

09.30 Registration & coffee

10.00 – 10.15 Opening Remarks: Lone Grøn, VIVE.

## **Session 1: TEMPORALITIES AND ETHICS**

Chair: Rasmus Dyring, AU

10.15 – 11.00 **Joel Robbins, University of Cambridge**

*On the Prospects for a Comparative Study of the Good: Beyond the Bad and the Ugly in Anthropological Relativism.*

11.05 – 11.35 **Lotte Meinert, Aarhus University**

*Seer of the Sun and the ID plastic card: Mountain Ethics and Temporalities in Uganda*

11.40 – 12.10 **Lone Grøn, VIVE - The Danish Center for Social Science Research**

*Presents in Dementia – Exploring Temporality and Ethics at a Danish Dementia Ward.*

12.10 – 12.40 **Discussion**

12.40 – 13.40 **LUNCH**

## **Session 2: SPECTRAL AND IMAGISTIC TIME**

Chair: Mette-Louise Eskildsen Johansen, VIVE

13.40 – 14.10 **Lawrence Cohen, Berkeley University**

*Enemies: the estrangements of home in late life.*

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14.15 – 14.45 **Maria Louw, Aarhus University**

*Specters of possibility.*

14.45 – 15.15 **Discussion**

15.15 – 15.45 **COFFEE**

Chair: Harmandeep Gill, Oxford Brookes University

15.45 – 16.15 **Maria Speyer, artist**

*Drawing the Figure as Presence and Response*

16.20 – 16.50 **Robert Desjarlais, Sarah Lawrence College**

*These Images Burn: An Afterword to "Imagistic Care: Growing Old in a Precarious World"*

16.50 – 17.20 **Discussion**

17.20 – 18.30 **Book and Wine Reception: Imagistic Care: Growing Old in a Precarious World**

## Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>

### **Session 3:                    GENERATIONAL AND HISTORICAL TIME**

Chair: Lotte Meinert, AU

10.00 – 10.30 **Anne O'Byrne, Stony Brook University.**

*Aging in Generational Time.*

10.35 – 11.05 **Cheryl Mattingly, University of Southern California**

*Natality, Historicity, Errantry*

11.10 – 11.40 **Thomas Schwarz Wentzer, Aarhus University**

*Ghosts from the past – German elders and the presence of World War 2.*

11.40 – 12.10 **Discussion**

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12.10 – 13.10      **LUNCH**

Chair: Laura Emdal Navne, VIVE

13.10 – 13.40      **Tine Gammeltoft, Copenhagen University**

*“Contingencies and cosmologies of care: How elderly people in Northern Vietnam live generatively with a degenerative disease.”*

13.45 – 14.15      **Rasmus Dyring, Aarhus University**

*“Older than Being”: For a Critical Phenomenology of Aging and Generationality.*

14.15 – 14.45      **Discussion**

14.45 – 15.15      **COFFEE**

Chair: Maria Speyer, independent artist, Sydney

15.15 – 15.45      **Susan Reynolds Whyte, University of Copenhagen**

*Still Here: Age and Generational Time.*

15.50 – 16.20      **Anne Marie Pahuus, Aarhus University**

*Meaning of the Past in Human Interaction and Human Interdependency.*

16.20 – 16.50      **Discussion**

16.50 – 17.00      *Grab a glass of wine and come back*

Chair: Lone Grøn, VIVE

17.00 – 18.00      **Tove Nyholm, artist and curator**

*Growing Old. A Film about an Exhibition at Moesgaard Museum*

19.00                      Conference dinner (speakers only).

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# Friday, Thursday April 29<sup>th</sup>

## **Session 4: INSTITUTIONAL TEMPORALITIES**

Chair: Maria Louw, AU

09.30 – 10.00 **Jason Danely, Oxford Brookes University**

*Doing Time in Deviant Spaces: Aging and the Carceral Condition in Japan.*

10.05 – 10.35 **Harmandeep Kaur Gill, Aarhus University**

*“Setting off from the Mountain Pass”: Facing Death and Preparing for the Journey Ahead*

10.40 – 11.10 **Natache Lemos Dekker, Leiden University**

*Negotiating divergent temporal horizons in euthanasia with dementia: Timing, Responsibility and Subjectivity*

11.10 – 11.40 **Discussion**

11.40 – 12.10 **COFFEE – SANDWICH**

Chair: Mikka Nielsen, University of Copenhagen, VIVE

12.10 – 12.40 **Tine Rostgaard, Roskilde University**

*Time and temporality in long-term care for older people in the Nordic Welfare states.*

12.45 – 13.15 **Janelle Taylor, University of Toronto**

*The Clock-Drawing Test: Reading Temporalities of Dementia from Clinical Chart Notes*

13.15 – 13.45 **Discussion**

13.45 – 14.00 **Closing remarks: Lone Grøn, VIVE**

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