



ABOAGORA Retreat 2024:

# A De/Colonial Present

**The ABOAGORA Retreat VII: De/Colonial Present invites MA Arts Students and Doctoral Candidates in the arts, humanities, and sciences to reflect together on how the living legacies of colonial histories play a role in the conflicts raging today and, on the other hand, how decolonial practices propose alternative ways out of these battles over territories and words, resources and rights. The Retreat takes place August 25–27 on the island of Seili in the Turku archipelago.**

**ABOAGORA – Between Arts and Sciences is an annual symposium that brings together academia, the arts and society. The 2024 main event Mars, the Bringer of War will be held August 28–30 in Turku.**

The Retreat will be structured around talks, walks and workshops addressing the topic De/Colonial Present from a range of perspectives – ecological, societal, empirical, speculative, institutional – in their many interconnections. It aims to nurture an interdisciplinary address of imperialism and colonialism in their myriad forms, while recognizing anti- and decolonial methods in the study of present-day crises – geopolitical and culture wars, humanitarian and environmental emergencies, clashes between worldviews and values, and struggles for justice.

The Retreat sets out to bring a plurality of research questions, perspectives and methodologies together in a shared enquiry on site: How to approach and understand a particular place in the present, guided by attention to colonial mindsets and practices that are implicit and explicit in a densely layered socio-ecological site such as the island of Seili and the surrounding Archipelago Sea? How the focus on de/coloniality fosters awareness of both the irreducible specificities of a place and its global or planetary interdependencies? How to acknowledge not only urgent crises and revolutionary events, but also attend to structural slow violence and gradual societal transformations? How can research work towards socially and ecologically sustainable futures in the de/colonial present?

These questions call for a range of critical and creative practices that study, trace, and imagine the many pasts and potential futures that meet in the yet undetermined present. The aim of the Retreat is thus to also bridge the gaps between disciplinary boundaries in the sciences and the arts. The changing ecology of the Archipelago Sea and the island of Seili with its complex history of institutions of care and control – from the leprosy colony and mental asylum for women to the current environmental research, nature conservation and tourism – will be allowed to choreograph the discussions.

The Retreat offers a momentary pause in habitual patterns and processes of practice, and space to share, listen and reflect attentively together. It also implies a retreat from the conventions of boundary-making between disciplines and epistemologies, in order to nurture an ecology of practices. It is a great opportunity to converse with artists and researchers from different fields and backgrounds, and a prospect for exciting new collaborations!

## Program

The Retreat is directed by curator and researcher **Taru Elfving** (CAA Contemporary Art Archipelago). The program includes presentations and workshops that offer scientific and artistic insights into the theme, the island of Seili and the Archipelago Sea area, in collaboration with the Archipelago Research Institute. The selected participants are also invited to contribute their own questions to the program in an online introductory meeting in June.

### The retreat is free of charge, and it includes and covers:

- transport between Turku city center and Seili (traveling to Turku is at own cost)
- lodging in Seili on August 25–27
- coffee, snacks, and lunches during the retreat and ABOAGORA – Mars, the Bringer of War
- free admission to ABOAGORA – Mars, the Bringer of War
- accommodation in Turku during ABOAGORA – Mars, the Bringer of War (August 28–30)

Participants will discuss their work in a joint panel session on August 29 at the ABOAGORA – Mars, the Bringer of War event at the Sibelius Museum in Turku. The event brings together viewpoints from social sciences, cultural studies, natural sciences, and the arts to explore the theme both literally and metaphorically. The program will be announced in May.

## How to Apply?

We welcome applications from Doctoral Candidates and MA Arts Students based in Finland, the Nordic countries, and the Baltic countries. **Apply by April 15 via this [Webropol form](#).** Notification of acceptance will be given by May 15.

## What is ABOAGORA?

ABOAGORA brings together academia, the arts and society. This exciting annual event consists of interdisciplinary discussions, sessions and performances that combine scholarly and artistic viewpoints. Since its inaugural year 2011, the Symposium has offered a forum for researchers, artists and the public to establish new dialogues and discover new forms of collaboration. ABOAGORA is a joint effort by the University of Turku, the Turku University Foundation, Åbo Akademi University, the Åbo Akademi University Foundation and the Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Sciences. In 2024, we are launching a new seven-year thematic plan, The Planets, inspired by Gustav Holst's orchestral suite of the same name. For more information, see [www.aboagora.fi](http://www.aboagora.fi).

## Contact

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [aboagora@utu.fi](mailto:aboagora@utu.fi).



UNIVERSITY OF TURKU | Biodiversity

