

## Journal of Baltic Studies: Towards a Transnational History of the Baltic Sea

Deadline: Jun 1, 2026

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We invite submissions of scholarly papers for the special issue "Towards a Transnational History of the Baltic Sea: Thinking With the Environment, the Arts and Material Culture"

How do we write the history of the Baltic Sea in a way that combines political and cultural developments with the question of the environment? Environmental approach to the Baltic Sea has until now been marginal as opposed to questions of defence and clashing national interests. Research on environmental processes is often limited to the national level, and in the few examples of the existing transnational perspectives, it only touches on the Baltic Sea region or discusses it partly. Moreover, environment and transnational political developments often tend to be separated from each other. In response to the critique of such limited approaches, the conversation on how to combine the different perspectives has already been started in other, related geographical and political contexts. Our aim is to further and deepen this discussion in relation to the Baltic Sea region. The central concern guiding our inquiry in this Special issue is to build on the insights provided by the more-than-human perspective in connecting the environment with political and cultural histories. This approach also introduces the necessity to think with nature and against human-centered power structures and expand the potential sources, focusing on material dimension and indigenous knowledge, which would allow to open alternative perspectives on a transnational Baltic Sea history.

This special issue will develop a transnational history of environmental movements and development of thought on environmental protection around the Baltic Sea, practices of peace and consciousness building, it will articulate the roles of particular scholars, activists, and artists as their predecessors and offer insights to their development. Ecology has been a pressing concern in the region in multiple ways, for instance in exploitation and restoration of forests and peatlands, in industrialisation and modernisation throughout the twentieth century, with large-scale pollution affecting urban, rural, and maritime areas. These varied environmental concerns require nuanced perspectives sensitive to relations of power and (quasi)colonial hierarchies between different regions, cities and communities.

We approach art, material and visual culture, stored and displayed in museums, collections, and temporary exhibitions in the region as vital resources through which to understand the development of approaches to the environment and their visualisations in the Baltic Sea region. Hence, the issue will bring together work on material culture and art that allow to advance such themes and focuses. Since the 1960s and 1970s marked a wave of advocacy building and establishing transnational connections across the Baltic Sea about the environment in Scandinavia as well as

in the Soviet Union as a part of a broader global trend, this period is part of our particular interest. What were the early developments and forms of environmental protection and consciousness raising about the environment of the Baltic Sea? Who were the key actors? How did the green movement use art in the process of raising consciousness about environmental threats? What kinds of forms and measures did people find earlier on?

Simultaneously, the Special issue seeks to rethink what the sources for writing the Baltic Sea history from a critical perspective could be, including oral histories and tackling the problem of lack of material. Included articles bring together and draw from research in the fields of cultural and art history, environmental history, museum studies and maritime history.

We particularly welcome contributions on:

- Comparative perspectives to museum histories in the Baltic Sea region;
- Theoretical perspectives on materiality and more-than-human worlds with respect to regional history;
- Indigenous perspectives, practices of life and knowledge with a focus on environmental sustainability;
- Early proponents of developing environmental consciousness in the Baltic Sea region and their legacy;
- Histories of the environmental movements in the Baltic Sea region;
- Environmental justice vs lobby of the industries in the Baltic Sea region countries.

The Special Issue will be published in the Journal of Baltic Studies.

Papers should present original previously unpublished research. To submit a proposal please send:

- title, abstract outlining the topic, approach and source material of max. 400 words in a Word document (.doc, .docx)
- short biographical note of author and contact information.

Please send your abstract by June 1st to: [camilla.larsson@sh.se](mailto:camilla.larsson@sh.se)

We will get back to everyone by mid-June and inform the selected authors about the detailed publishing schedule. Papers of 6000 words are due in November 2026.

The Special Issue is edited by Ieva Astahovska (Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art), Marta Grzechnik (University of Gdańsk), Camilla Larsson (Södertörn University), and Margaret Tali (Tallinn University)

Reference:

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