



The second European Conference on the Fantastic

Karlstad, Sweden

15-17 June, 2027

Keynote Speakers

Jerry Määttä, Stockholm University

Jerry Määttä is Associate Professor in Literature and lecturer in History and Cultural Studies at Stockholm University. A recurring focus of his work is the ways in which popular literature and other cultural forms imagine and negotiate possible futures, particularly futures shaped by catastrophe, social collapse, or environmental crisis.

Karin Tidbeck

Karin Tidbeck is a Swedish author of speculative fiction. They are internationally recognized for a body of fiction that challenges conventional genre boundaries and combines speculative ideas with an intense interest in human experience. Tidbeck debuted with the short story collection *Vem är Arvid Pekon?* (2010) and has since published several works such as *Jagannath* (2012), *Amatka* (2012) and *The Memory Theater* (2021).

Christian Lenz, TU Dortmund

Christian Lenz is an Associate Professor at the Department of British Studies at TU Dortmund University, and has worked on geographical notions in popular literature, erotic fiction, youth culture and the fantastic. He is one of the editors of *Spaces and Places in the Fantastic: Exploring Fantastic Geographies* (2025).

Call for Papers

The Swedish Network for Speculative Fiction is honored to invite paper and session proposals for the second annual European Conference on the Fantastic, with the theme 'Fantastic Spaces and Places'.

How do imagined worlds shape the way we understand the spaces we inhabit? How might they exceed, manipulate, resist, or disengage from those realities? And, conversely: how do real world spaces and places – both social and geographical – influence the realms of imagination? How does the fantastic intervene in real-life spaces, shaping and transforming communities and reading/publishing practices? This conference invites explorations of *place and space* in fantastic and speculative fiction and beyond. Moving past setting as mere backdrop, we seek contributions that foreground spaces and places as dynamic, constructed, and meaningful, whether as sites of political contestation, ecological transformation, or aesthetic and philosophical inquiry.

Speculative fiction has long served as a laboratory for spatial imagination: from ruined climates and fortified cities to interstellar exploration and virtual worlds. While such spaces and places often tie into real-world concerns, they also invite modes of thinking that are untethered from contemporary frameworks. Fantastic and speculative worldbuilding can generate spatial logics, symbolic geographies, and ontological questions that operate on their own terms.

This conference therefore aims to explore both how fictional spaces and places can be meaningfully connected to social, political, ecological, and technological realities, and how space and place can be understood as literary, philosophical, or aesthetic issues in their own right.

Papers might address the questions below but are not limited to them.

- Segregation, exclusion, and spatial justice in speculative worlds; how are borders, migration, and power hierarchies figured?
- How does fantastic fiction employ notions of space and place to interrogate aspects such as ecological transformation, destruction, and ethics?
- How are identity and embodiment represented in fantastic worlds, or in digital and virtual spaces?

- How does fantastic fiction represent and interrogate gendered, racialized, queer, crip or neurodivergent spatial experiences?
- How do colonial/imperial imaginaries function in fantastic and speculative fiction, and what representations emerge in narratives from the Global South and Indigenous communities?
- How do speculative utopias, dystopias, and atopias function to interrogate space and place?
- How are ideas of agency played out in relation to place and space; cities as avatars, agentic environments?
- Temporalities of space; how do memory and haunting interact with spaces and places?
- Worldbuilding; how are secondary worlds constructed as internally coherent spatial systems, and what is the function of invented geographies, maps, and cosmologies?
- How do places and spaces work as metaphors, symbols, and/or narrative structures?
- Sociology of literature; how do spaces and places of literary production and reception function in relation to fantastic literature?
- Literary tourism and the fantastic; what happens when the imagined is emplaced in the real?
- Cross-cultural interactions; what happens to space and place when the fantastic is exported, imported, and translated?

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers to be presented in person; these should be submitted using the [paper proposal form](#). The form asks for a 250- to 350-word abstract supplemented by a list of 5 to 10 primary and secondary references (indicating the works with which your paper will engage) and a 100-word biographical note.

We also invite proposals for full panels and workshops. For full panels, organisers should ask panellists to submit individual abstracts using the paper proposal form, entering the panel name in the appropriate field. Organisers should also submit an overall panel description using the [session proposal form](#). For workshops, please submit the session proposal form, clearly describing your proposed session and listing all contributors (with contact details).

Key Dates

- Abstract submission deadline: 1 November, 2026
- Notification of acceptance: mid-January, 2027
- Conference dates: 15-17 June 2027.

Further details regarding registration, keynote speakers, and program structure will be announced in due course.

For inquiries, please contact: **ecf2027@kau.se**

We look forward to your submissions.