

Simon Ekström, Professor in Stockholm



Simon Ekström has been affiliated to Stockholm University since 2010, where he has served at the research institute Centre for Maritime Studies (CEMAS) and simultaneously at the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies. He was promoted to Professor in Ethnology in 2020.

Ekström's research covers several fields. Much of his earlier work has centred on the cultural aspects of violence. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on sexual abuse of women during the early post-war years (*Trovärdighet och ovärdighet: Rättsapparatusens hanterande av kvinnors anmälan av våldtäktsbrott, Stockholm 1946–50*, 2002), an analysis of cultural conceptions, attitudes and practices in relation to gender and violence as expressed in police work and court cases. His dissertation about the so-called "murders of honour" (*Hedersmorden och orden: Berättelser av kultur, kritik och skillnad*, 2009) analyses the public debates following the deaths of three young women of Kurdish descent in Sweden. In these studies, Ekström has been interested in the ways such violent acts make sense – for the implicated persons, in public institutions such as the police and the legal apparatus, and in processes forming opinions in the public sphere. In the work on murders of honour, the way in which these events have been conceptualized through public discus-

sions has been especially in focus. A conclusion is that different conceptions of culture lay at the root of the disputes. An interesting dimension in Ekström's analysis is the way experts on culture from various academic disciplines interacted with the wider public opinion, where political issues of immigration and ethnic categorization were at stake. These studies both show the fruitfulness of close reading of text material.

Another field where Ekström has been especially active, is human–animal studies. In *Humrarna och evigheten: Kulturhistoriska essäer om konsumtion, begär och död* (2017) he investigates man's relations with the lobster from a variety of angles and in historical depth. Here the emphasis is on how the animal forms part of material networks: the role lobsters play in various human practices. At a more general level, the lobster studies illustrate how humans relate to animals, as he also shows in the publication *Djur: Berörande möten och kulturella smärtpunkter*, edited together with Lars Kaijser (2018). Here Ekström discusses the boundary between animals and the human species.

In addition to these research fields, he has also studied museums, archives and cultural heritage, addressing questions about the meaning and significance of knowledge of the past and what shapes the messages of e.g. museum exhibitions, or how archive collections may take on new meanings with changing cultural climates.

In his career at Stockholm University, he has played an active part in forming and developing education programmes, and he has been active in several research networks.

It is characteristic of Ekström's research that it has a broad scope; very often, the analysis of empirical material includes a wide variety of contexts. Dimensions of class, gender and ethnicity are always present, as is attention to the role of mediation of beliefs and attitudes, and to genre in the evaluation of source material. At the same time, he has a broad interest in analytical perspectives. These interests are also present in his educational activities, where gender has been an especially important topic.

Hans Jakob Ågotnes, Bergen

Lotten Gustafsson Reinius, Professor in Stockholm



Lotten Gustafsson Reinius has been appointed Professor of Ethnology at Stockholm University. In 2002 she defended her doctoral dissertation about Medieval Week on Gotland, *Den förtrolade zonen: Lekar med tid, rum och identitet under medeltidsveckan på Gotland*. The dissertation was a demonstration of ethnological strength that has stood the test of time. It was defended at Stockholm University, where she gained the title docent in 2009. For much of her career she has been at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, where she was director 2014–2016. From 2016 to August 2021 she was the holder of the Hallwyl Professorship at the Nordic Museum.

A significant part of her scholarly work is based on museums. One of her recurring approaches is to problematize the collections, in terms of materiality, the acquisition context, and the ethical responsibility that today's museum as an institution and its curators as officials have to display. Her work at the Museum of Ethnography

has also raised repatriation issues, and here she has initiated scholarly discussion in several different contexts.

As holder of the Hallwyl Professorship she bore the main responsibility for work on the major exhibition “The Arctic – While the Ice Is Melting”, which also generated the edited volume *Arktiska spår: Natur och kultur i rörelse*, a huge coordinated effort with almost 50 contributors. Here Gustafsson Reinius has taken on the challenge to the humanities, to make significant contributions to today's great existential and political issues, in interdisciplinary dialogue. For ethnology as a discipline it is also an important contribution in that it definitively establishes global environmental issues as a legitimate research field and suggests models for research strategies.

Her scholarly output as a whole is dominated by the article format and other relatively concentrated genres, reflecting both her acute analytical gaze, with an ability to discern fundamental principles and central issues, and her willingness and ability to communicate research to colleagues and the general public.

Artefacts as testimony to history and change, expressive culture, museology, cultural heritage, media history, and colonial history are characteristic features of her scholarly profile. The potential for cultural analysis in studying religion as an interpretative framework and social networks is revealed in many of her works. In terms of theory, she demonstrates considerable breadth. Folkloristic performance and ritual theory, new museology, play theory, ANT-inspired materiality studies, gender theory, postcolonial critique, modernity theory, and posthumanist perspectives recur as her inspiration, orientation, and foundation, not as an end in itself but in constant productive interaction with empirical ethnographic data. Her ability to challenge conventions and provide new and unexpected perspectives is an important asset for the research community.

Alf Arvidsson, Umeå

Markus Idvall, Professor in Stockholm



Markus Idvall was promoted to professor of ethnology in 2021. Idvall has gained long experience at Swedish universities, such as Lund and Stockholm universities, in addition to several years of experience from the research institute Vårdalsinstitutet. During these years, Idvall has contributed to many research fields. His works in the research field of identity, place and boundaries are a continuation of themes in his doctoral dissertation, while his studies in medical humanities represent a completely new research field developed after his doctorate.

In his dissertation, Idvall presents a social constructivist perspective on nations, regions and places, questions what a region is in a societal perspective, and discusses the cultural mechanisms of regionalization processes. Here, historical and tactical preconditions for the emergence of a region, and the region's "cartographic mobilization" are analysed; the aesthetics of the map, which mobilizes and organizes the region; how regions are created in situations where maps are used; how the ethnic mobilization of regions takes place; problematization of the moral component of regional mobilization; and how the use of maps contributed to an increasing regionalization of southern Sweden and the border area Sweden-Denmark in the 1990s. After he completed his doctoral dissertation, this research interest was

further developed, e.g. in "Natur över gränserna: När tyskar, danskar och sydsvenskar delar skog med varandra" ("Nature across borders: When Germans, Danes and southern Swedes share forests with each other"), an investigation of cultural mechanisms behind the "transnational change" that occurs when people with a national background other than Swedish occupy the southern Swedish forest regions. This research theme is also reflected in "Försenade och frustrerade: Öresundsbronns resenärer om Sveriges ID- och gränskontroll" ("Delayed and frustrated: Öresund Bridge travellers' on Sweden's ID and border control"), which is based on the European refugee crisis in 2015. Many of the refugees who arrived in Sweden entered via the Öresund Bridge, which was then subject to ID verification for all travellers. Idvall discusses how the border controls, after the influx of refugees slowed down, continued to affect the privileged and protected travellers, those who were exposed to the controls, but who were also spectators to the drama that unfolded at this time.

One example of Idvall's research in the field of medical humanities is "The Body as a Societal Resource in Transnational Giving: The Organ-Exchange Organizations of Scandiatransplant and Balttransplant". In this study, the focus is on medical personnel in two quite differently structured organizations, one of which (Scandiatransplant) addresses the Nordic countries, and the other (Balttransplant) targets the Baltic countries. Idvall analyses the ways in which transplantation programmes, which in principle relate to national legislation and practices, and to the international transplantation arena, are thus part of a transnational context. Here, too, organ donation is discussed in terms of "gift" (Mauss), "reciprocity", "excessive giving" (Bataille) and "payback".

Another example is the article "Taking part in clinical trials: The therapeutic ethos of patients and the public towards experimental cell transplantations", where Idvall discusses a "therapeutic ethos", or a mixture of ideas, feelings and attitudes that emerge in conversations between lay people (people with and without Parkinson's disease) and medical personnel, on cell transplants for people with Parkinson's disease. Special attention is paid to the conversations about the use of foetal cells in the treatment of the disease, where patients are

more open to this use than non-patients, but where non-patients are more open to the use of stem cell transplantation of embryo material after rejected IVF, than after abortions.

The latter field belongs to a larger research field in ethnology, namely historical and cultural perspectives on health, illness and disease, but at the same time the focus on organ donation and

neuroculture means that the field is expanded considerably in ethnology. Idvall belongs to a small group of researchers who contribute to this expansion of the field. We look forward to further thought-provoking analyses by Markus Idvall, both in medical humanities and in the highly topical field of national borders and refugees.

Tove Ingebjørg Fjell, Bergen

Ingun Grimstad Klepp, Professor at OsloMet



In 2021 Ingun Grimstad Klepp was appointed professor of Sustainability Research on Clothing and Clothing Habits at Oslo Metropolitan University. Here her main research is performed in the environmental research group of Technology and Sustainability at SIFO, where the relationship between consumption and the environment with a broader culture perspective is in focus.

Klepp received her Ph.D. in ethnology at Oslo University in 1996 with the dissertation *På stier mellom natur og kultur: Turgåeres opplevelser av kulturlandskapet og deres synspunkter på vern*. Klepp's dissertation is a large-scale study based on extensive fieldwork on a central ethnological theme. In a well-structured review of how concepts such as nature, landscape and leisure have emerged in Western modernity, she shows how the meaning and content of these concepts was structured by contradictions; leisure gets its meaning as a negation of work, and nature and culture have their meanings shaped by their mutual opposition. With references to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, the theoretical starting point is phenomenological – people's bodily experiences should be understood as culturally mediated. In addition, the dissertation is politically relevant in that it intervenes in the debate about the conservation of nature and culture in Norway. The many studies created in the field of "cultural heritage" since 1996 show that she has

been at the forefront of the topic. With her analysis of people's use of cultural heritage in their landscape experiences she started a discussion on the content of cultural heritage management. And with its solid empirical foundation, her dissertation still has strong relevance.

After her interest in the use of history and nature in the landscape, Klepp turned her attention to research on clothing, textile material and fashion. As a research leader at SIFO she has conducted many interesting projects in a thorough and efficient manner. She traverses boundaries between disciplines, has collaborated across faculty boundaries and has for many years contributed to developing SIFO's research environment as well as the textile research field in general.

One of her interesting books from these years is *Skittentøyets kulturhistorie – hvorfor kvinner vasker klær* from 2006. It is an extensive monograph that addresses several classic ethnological research areas, not only on the importance of cleanliness and hygiene, but also in work and everyday life areas, and not least gender relations. Klepp's analytical input into the cultural history of dirty laundry consists of an interest in studying changes in what is taken for granted. She brings the reader into a world of smells and family life, but above all she wants to discuss why it is always women who wash clothes. This is also an aesthetically appealing book where a lot of work was done on the visual material that has its own action through the book.

Since Klepp has demonstrated both breadth and depth in the textile research field as well as in fashion, it is hard to single out specific publications. However, her textile studies may say something about also other fields in society. In the article "A Louse in Court: Norwegian Knitted Sweaters with 'Lus' on Big-time Criminals" in the book *Fashion Crimes: Dressing for Deviance* she discussed how a sweater can upset media if it is hard-boiled criminals appearing in court wearing a *lusekofte*. She finds that this Norwegian national heritage must not be violated since it forms a distinct part of the Norwegian identity. Here she shows not only how familiar she is with knitting traditions and identity issues, but also with the research field of power and masculinity. A *lusekofte* does not go well together with the hegemonic masculinity of the court.

In a short article “Nisseluelandet – The Impact of Local Clothes for the Survival of a Textile Industry in Norway” in *Fashion Practice* she manages to discuss a big issue starting with a small hat.

Particularly strong in her outreach work is communication to a wide audience, through articles and popularizing books, lectures, and not least media contributions. To develop a better general knowledge of clothing and the environment Klepp has been active in popularizing scholarship with several articles and books. Among the latest books in the field are the trilogy *Letstelt* (2019), *Lettkledd* (2020), and *Lettfiks* (2021) that inspire sustainable clothing consumption. Much can be said about all her popular articles and active media participation. Probably the best expression of this is that she was awarded the prestigious dissemination prize from the Research Council of Norway in 2016, where emphasis is placed on the candidate’s ability to be creative and innovative. She received the prize “for engaged communication on topics such as outdoor life, clothing and housework, environment, clothing habits” and for having “become involved in the political debate on consumption growth and environmental impact. She combines perspectives from natural, cultural, and social science research in lectures, books, and exhibitions.”

Recently Klepp’s increasing commitment to strategic and environmental policy work, with

a focus on sustainability has been aimed more at politicians, administration, and business. She therefore participates in several studies of environmental policy, e.g. with the Nordic Council of Ministers and in the EU context. She is also a member of the Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion, a global network that seeks to influence and change the fashion industry.

Over the years Klepp has developed a strong professional network of contacts at home and abroad, not least through active international publishing and attending congresses. She has maintained a high research profile for many years in the fields of textile, clothing and fashion recently developed with a stronger emphasis on environmental policy.

Not only an excellent researcher, she is also a textile producer. I dare say that we are many people with an interest in fashion who enjoy seeing Ingun wearing her beautiful self-produced clothes and are soothed by watching her knitting during conferences and meetings.

As a full professor, Klepp’s qualities can now come into full bloom, as she shows in new research projects together with others on how sheep rangeland grazing systems can be part of sustainable food and fibre systems and in investigating what is most essential to reduce the environmental impact of clothing.

Birgitta Svensson, Stockholm