

Biocultural Heritage and Climate Adaptation in Arctic Cities

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ILLUQ
PERMAFROST
POLLUTION
HEALTH

Theme 2: Cultural Heritage as a Resource for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

ARCA Biocultural Heritage in Arctic Cities: Resource for Climate Adaptation

36 months, 2024–2027



THE GEORGE
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1. The George Washington University (GWU)
2. The University of Vienna (UV)
3. Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Center (NERSC)
4. The Art Science International Institute (ASCI)

ARCA: University of Vienna

- Team: Olga Povoroznyuk, PI; Peter Schweitzer, Co-PI; Klara Gmeinbauer, research assistant
- WP2 “Arctic communities and biocultural heritage: transformations of green spaces and ecological knowledge”
- Focus: local values and uses of urban green spaces as landscapes for cultural resilience and climate adaptation

BRIDGING SCIENCE, ART AND COMMUNITY

COLLABORATION BETWEEN USA, AUSTRIA, NORWAY AND FRANCE

ARCA

Biocultural Heritage in Arctic Cities: Resource for Climate Adaptation?

Research framework

Research area

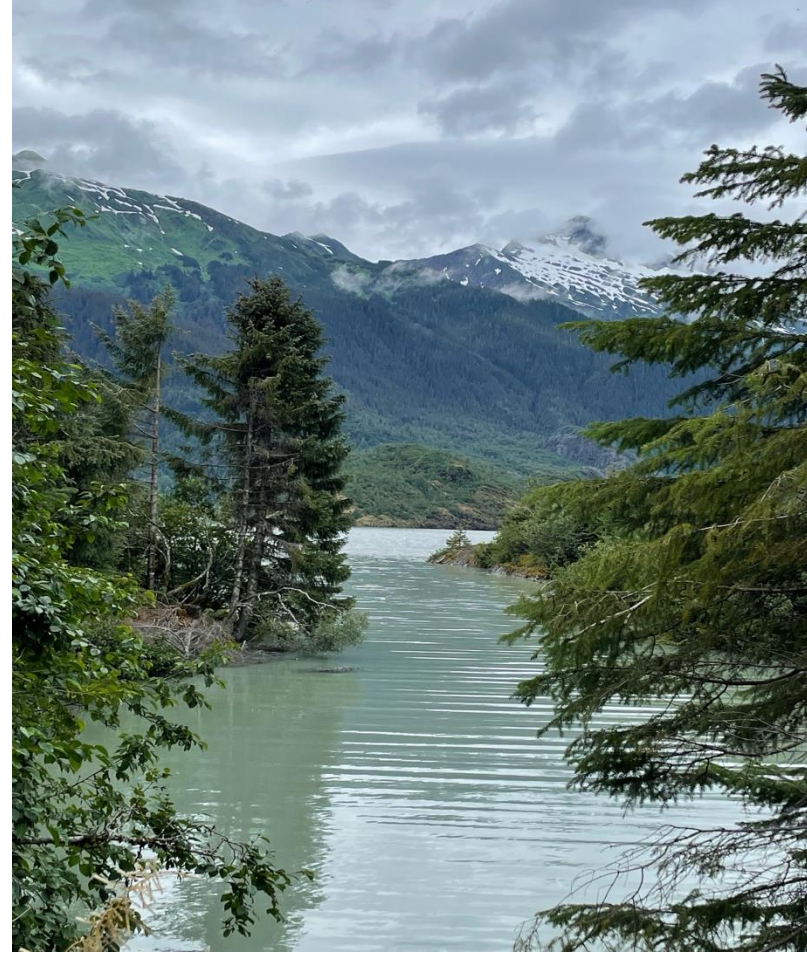
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RQ and Tasks

Can biocultural heritage situated in urban landscapes contribute to climate adaptation and mitigation?

- To understand and document (bio)cultural heritage as defined by local and Indigenous communities
- To trace transformations of cultural landscapes (including urban green spaces) and associated forms of knowledge
- To explore the role of biocultural heritage in local responses and adaptations to climate change processes



A glacier lake,
Tongass National Forest, Alaska

Methodologies

- Community engagement
- Research - art collaboration
- Co-production of knowledge
- Survey
- **Co-creative workshops**
- Interviews
- Focus groups/talking circles
- Participant observation
- Photodocumentation



Fish camp cabins, Alaska

Research Site 1: Kirkenes, Norway

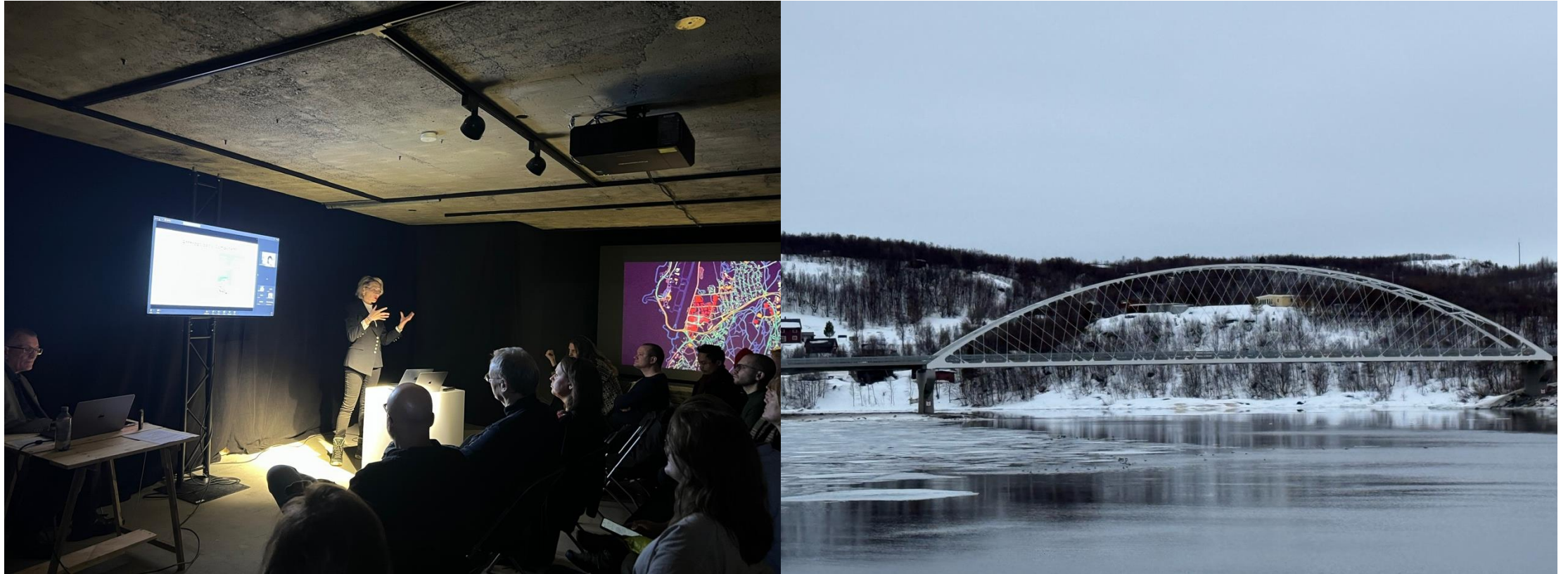


A city park with a lake, Kirkenes



Pasvik River Valley marking the border with Russia

Workshop and Fieldwork, February 2025



Community workshop at a regional festival©V. Miles

Jarfjord, a weekend destination for Kirkenes residents

Research Site 2: Anchorage, Alaska, USA



A small park in the city center



Cambell Creek Park, one of the most popular urban green spaces

Workshop and Fieldwork, October 2025



Panels, break-outs and a participatory art project attended by researchers, planners and artists

Preliminary Results

- BCH: Indigenous and local concepts vs. UN frameworks
- Urban green spaces:
 - Part of historically shaped culturespaces
 - Urbanization, population, human-nature relations
 - Connected to wilderness and subsistence
 - Contribute to adaptation, health and cultural resilience

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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ARCA website: <https://ksa.univie.ac.at/forschung/forschungsprojekte/laufend/arca/>

ARCA portal: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e3198c89c92344139a7dc39a55786305>