

Death, Materiality and the Origin of Time



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The research question

Death, materiality and time...

The project proposes that human experiences and conceptions of time inherently hinges on the material world, and that time as a socially experienced phenomenon cannot be understood as separate from material form or expression.

What role, then, does death as a material phenomenon play in different conceptualisations of time and in constituting particular time frames and sensibilities towards the passing of human life?

As such, the project does not so much ask 'what is death in itself?' or 'what is time in itself?'. Instead, it enquires into the human need to establish a relationship to death with the aim of finding in this relationship the origin of 'human time'

Cross disciplinarity

For years, anthropology and archaeology have failed to take advantage of their collaborative potential. However, we hold that the relationship between death and time is relevant to people across time as well as space, which enables – even demands – multi-disciplinary exploration.

Why experiments?

The relationship between death and 'human time' is above all a material expression. Thus, our scholarly explorations must be grounded in particular practices and technologies.

Why museums?

1. Rather than seeing the museum as a window display of past research, the project will integrate the research process with public exhibition-making. This engenders a new role for the museum as a cutting edge centre for *knowledge-in-the-making*

2. The social sciences have traditionally relied on words. However, knowledge of death and time is often tacit and not articulated. Thus, experimenting with *non-textual forms of research and knowledge representation* is integral to our interventionary methodology

Interventions

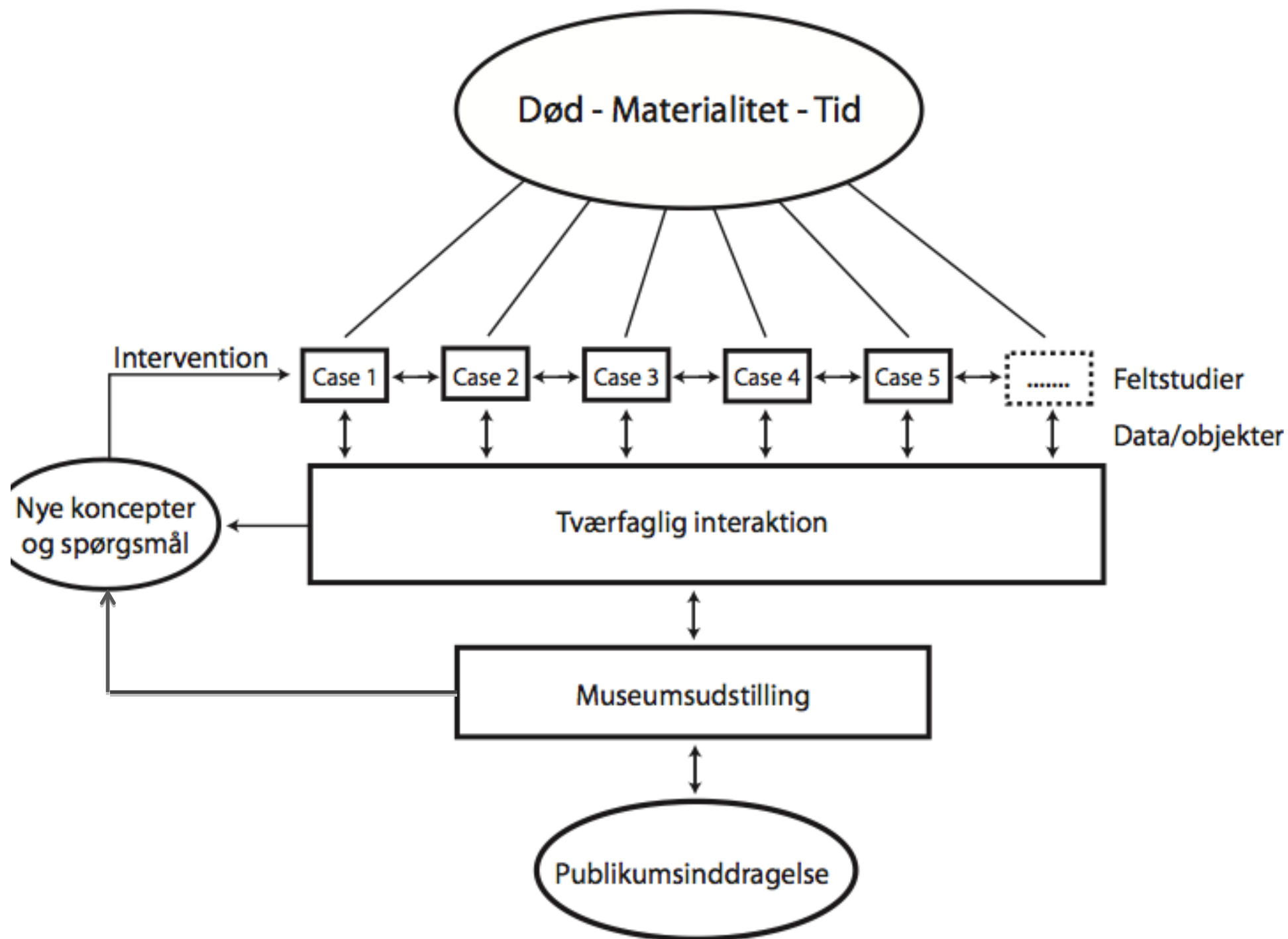
Through interventions researchers, informants, curators and audiences alike, will be forced to reflect on their tacit common-sense knowledge of death, materiality and time.

This involves planned interventions both in the field and in the lives of the museum audiences via *interactive exhibitions*.









Who is involved?

University of Aarhus

- Administrates the grant
- 2 core projects
- A number of externally attached projects

Kulturhistorisk Museum, Universitetet i Oslo

- Centre for conferences and design experiments
- 3 core projects
- Will develop a group in parallel to Aarhus

Externally attached

- International peers
- Researchers
- Institutions in Oslo
- Artists, designers, scenographers

What are we going to do?

Conferences:

- Cairns 2011, 'Value'
- Oslo spring 2013, 'The Materiality of Death'
- Oslo spring/summer 2014, 'Impact'

Publications:

A series of four books to be published at Ashgate

- 'Timing Death', spring 2012
 - 'Mediating and Mediatizing Death', spring 2013
 - 'Materializing Death', spring 2014
 - 'Encountering Death', spring 2015
- + a catalogue on the process to go with the exhibition

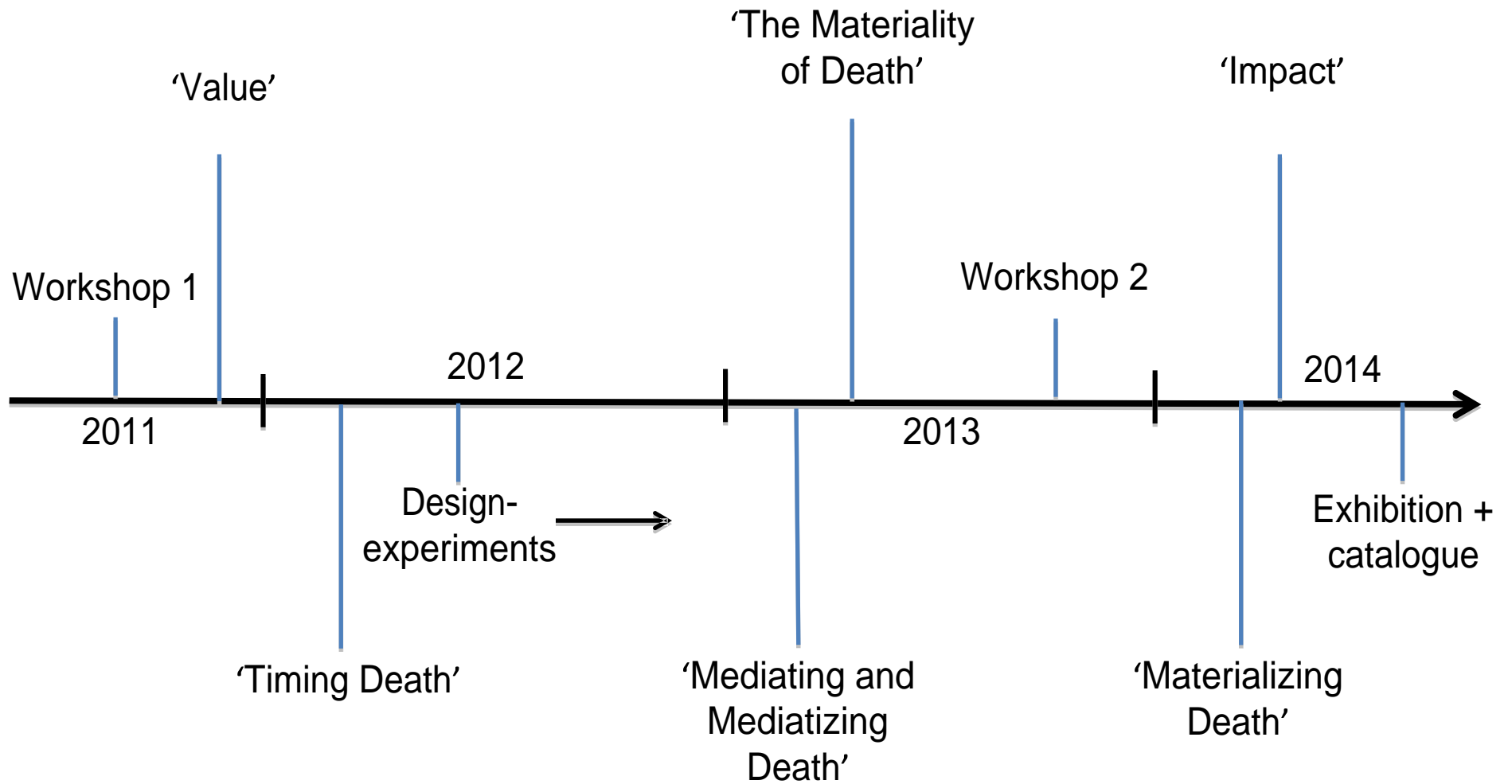
Design workshops:

- A series of workshops leading up to the exhibition in 2014

Magic circles

- Monthly activities in both Aarhus and Oslo – to be exchanged on the website

Time plan



deathmaterialitytime.org



Day 2: First visit. Hadzabe here have stopped hunting and moving. Hunger Heat Hope Even in this dusty dry and bare environment without leafs on the trees the Hadzabe witness the pastoralists overtake of land. Museum dimension gained momentum with a visit to cultural centre. I am concerned and in doubt.

