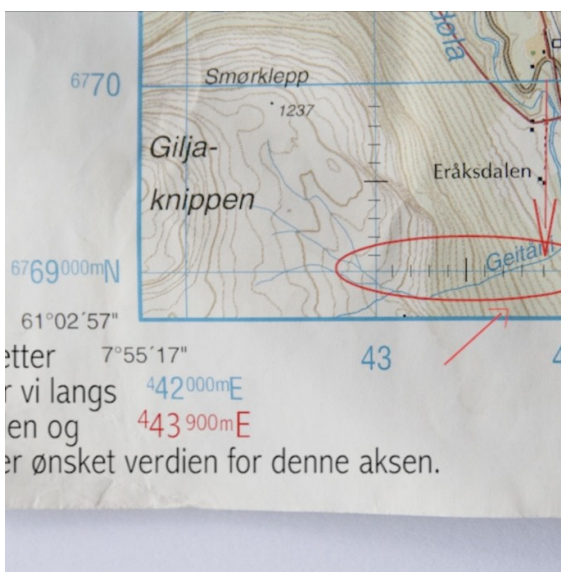


Steinar Laumann (1973). Selected works: [Digitus revolution](#), [Jeg går en tur med kua](#), [Teppe](#), [Ice that ticks](#), [How long is the coast of the brain?](#), [Av is kan det også vokse blomster](#). All works from: <https://www.steinarlaumann.com>

This handout is called LAUMANNs because it is dedicated to Steinar Laumann—at the occasion of his 50th birthday—and the variety of his different projects, in which I have contributed to *some*. I would like to use this occasion to look back at a *sample* from these: leaving the artistic aims and purposes aside, and instead viewing them as *essays of ecosophy*. The reason I want to make this attempt is that I want to see, as Arne Næss claimed, that between the personal philosophies (ecosophies) formulated in each of Steinar Laumann's projects, there is a *deep ecology* in store.

I want to see is possible to discover this *deep ecology* by sampling from his projects (here seen as ecosophical *attempts*). Many of his projects are rooted in *walking*: walking and making, making while walking, if only a bit of deeply rooted conversation. I have seen a wolf walking alongside windy trails in the *forest*. I have seen an eagle with fangs of steel teaching others to walk, work

and be on the *glacier*. I have seen a seal floating on the sea. I have also seen the attempts to tame these animals—including Laumann's attempts to tame himself: failed attempts, I must say for the most part. But not by the works left behind by this shaman on a ride with the art-field.



In routine-work he becomes like an animal trapped in a zoo: an unnatural natural specimen. As a sociable creature, however, he gladly invites others into his work, and is sympathetic at their attempts of doing each their bit. But offices have a smell of death. These are the projects that I have been variously involved in: [Whiteout](#), [The course of the glacier](#), [Digitus revolution](#), [Jeg går en tur med kua](#), [How long is the coast of the brain](#), [Kart of kompasskurs](#), [Installasjonsforelesning](#).

Aside from that conversations on the subject matter of walking, stray encounters with [Vegard Ulvang](#), sound from the Jewish cemetery of Marrakech sent to Laumann walking his treks in Greenland. Our way of being together and working, so far: walking and only walking, nothing else, producing futures.

From Steinar Laumann's work: [Kart of kompasskurs](#). He here explores the dual meaning of the word *course*, which is found more than one place. For instance the course of the glacier.

An anecdote: while walking with Laumann by Fortjensbråten/Nordmarka, we met with [Vegard Ulvang](#). Laumann was in the middle of a sentence when we passed him (as he was moving in the opposite direction), so I didn't say anything. After 300 meter or so, I asked: "Did you see who that was?"—No, Laumann said. "It was Vegard Ulvang"—really? He asked. Darn! I need to talk to him about some [woollen underwear](#) for our next trek on Greenland. He went into silence. After having walked for about 1,5 hours he said...*that reminds me of*: and he continued where he had stopped.

This is *deep ecology*. As walk in the forest—sometimes talking, sometimes silent, resting and eating—the connections between topics are *not* time-local. They are deep and durable. Criss-crossing like mycelium. I suspect that Laumann's projects (which he often is working on more than one alongside) are connected in the same way. Here we are: two dudes in the forest, or the mountain, or by the sea shore. And it works like this. I could stop here. Because it is actually a bit fantastic. But on the other hand, it really has a common side to it too: like rope/walking-buddies.

Which is why I will now make a quantum-leap to his *cow-walk*. I visited for few days (with the task of e.g. reading to his two companions—the cow Grålin and her calf Sølvi). It was during those days that I became fascinated with a mental experiment, inspired by *quantum physics*, called: *Laumann's tent*. Obviously, it is a parallel to Schrödinger's cat. In mind-experiment Schrödinger's cat, we are confronted with the following puzzle: a cat and a poisonous gas are placed in two compartments of a box, a 50% chance of the gas being released, 50% chance of killing the cat.

In quantum physics the principle of *superposition*—of two opposite states—would imply that the cat would be *dead and alive at the same time*. As a mental experiment, Laumann's tent has some structural similarities: Laumann owns a tent with two compartments. One compartment contains the logistics of the walk (goods, cooking gear, clothes, electronic equipment). In the other compartment Laumann himself sleeps. It is a *mental* experiment, since Laumann and I don't have the kind of relationship where we would visit in each other's tent. We have an *outdoors* relationship.

The mental experiment: when the tent is zipped locked for the night, how can we know whether Laumann is on a *walk*, or if he is working on an *art* project? The question has a basis in actual reality since the project was conceived and funded as an art-project, while most of the time was spent on the logistics of walking. When the perimeter of the camp was set, tents were up and we had our fill it was time to sleep. So, what went on in the tent? Was he on a walk, or doing an art project? The point being that there is no simple answer to that: art- & walk-work *superposed*.

The *two-cow* project is a bit atypical compared to his other projects. Most of the remainder, that I know of, are about *catching one's ground* and *gaining a new footing*: there are often maps, sound and video-footage involved. And people. But in this project there were *other kinds* of creatures than wolves, eagles and seals involved: cows! The heavy audio-visual apparel became too heavy to bear: the cows had to come first. He also banked on the learning capability in cows: the willingness to engage into discovery, for instance. But these processes are very different in cows than in species such as wolves, eagles and seals.



So, while I was stuck with my *mental experiment*. Laumann decided that he had to write about this. And, at this, was generously assisted by his arts-matron Bente Øien. After launching his book in Jostedal, where he had been working as a guide for 15 years, he finally got accepted as a local. He then decided that it was time to leave. He settled in Risør a gentle coastal town on Skagerrak. Where he practices *floating*. Here he proposed to involve me in a project where he is going into the woodwork of a building.

Steinar Laumann—selected works. [Den anti-oseanske følelsen](#), [Gamasjer og potetmos](#), [Steam party](#), [Hvor skal du nå](#), [Ginungagap](#), [Boyd bord](#). All works from: <https://www.steinarlaumann.com>

Of course, I said yes. But on one condition: we had to sleep in it, live and work there before it is demolished. *For the first time* in my 10 year buddy-relationship with Laumann we are attempting to gain a foothold, and catch our grounds, by going *outside-in*. Has the walk come to an end, or has it come to new juncture? Will we be doing art, or will still be on a walk? *No guessing*. In two years we will find out. The problem with mental experiments is that they are *not* experimental.