

# From science to art & back again: the pendulum of an environmental anthropologist

**MONDAY**  
**OCTOBER 5TH**  
**3:30 PM**

Biological Sciences Bldg  
6270 University Blvd  
Room 2000

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Over a forty-year career in environmental anthropology, I have found myself drifting inexorably from an engagement with science to an engagement with art. This was also a period during which science increasingly lost its ecological bearings, while the arts increasingly gained them. In this lecture I trace this journey in my own teaching and research, showing how the literary reference points changed, from foundational texts in human and animal ecology, now largely forgotten, through attempts to marry the social and the ecological inspired by the Marxian revival, to contemporary writing on post-humanism and the conditions of the Anthropocene. For me this has been an Odyssey — a journey home — to the kind of science imbibed in childhood, as the son of a prominent mycologist. This was a science grounded in tacit wonder at the exquisite beauty of the natural world, and in silent gratitude for what we owe to this world for our existence. Today's science, however, has turned wonder and gratitude into commodities. They no longer guide its practices, but are rather invoked to advertise its results. The goals of science are modelling, prediction and control. Is that why, more and more, we turn to art to rediscover the humility that science has lost?



Tim Ingold is Chair of Social Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen. He has carried out fieldwork among Saami and Finnish people in Lapland, and has written on environment, technology and social organisation in the circumpolar North, on animals in human society, and on human ecology and evolutionary theory. His more recent work explores environmental perception and skilled practice. Ingold's current interests lie on the interface between anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture. His recent books include *The Perception of the Environment* (2000), *Lines* (2007), *Being Alive* (2011), *Making* (2013) and *The Life of Lines* (2015).

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