Owman, abstract, SU seminar 230322

From *The More-than-human Museum* to a pile of discarded sheep's wool in exploring sustainable futures

I took the conservator and the museum as a starting point to explore more-than-human aspects of modernity in my thesis The More-than-human Museum. The Conservator's Practice as a Line of Flight in the Museum of Modernity (2021). With a similar methodology I have begun to explore waste, wool and sheep.

The relations between heritage and waste opens up for productive ways of engaging with anthropogenic material-discursive formations. The dump and the museum are both products of and expression of the industrial age, where the ownership and consumption of goods and things is at the core. Furthermore, they are fundamental expressions of our way of dealing with reality. The wool as well as the sheep seem flexible and stretchy, they have blurred and negotiable boundaries, at the same time they are extremely concrete; everyone knows what a sheep is and what it is used for (and the same goes for the museum, or the dump). In exploring sheep and wool I understand them as vibrant boundary phenomena, between nature/culture, animal/human, product/producer, free/enslaved and so on. In this seminar I will talk about my study of the museum and how it has led to seemingly very different subjects, ie sheep and wool. I will argue that these familiar phenomena can stimulate critical thinking about problematic aspects of modernity and inspire discussions about more sustainable futures.