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The Mundania Files (Imagine Clouds)

Robert Willim

Presented at: *In The Clouds*, Stavanger, January 2019.

I will take the point of departure in my work as an artist and a researcher. As an Associate Professor of Digital Cultures at Lund University, I study the way everyday life is enmeshed with technologies and the role of Infrastructure Imaginaries. To fuel this research, I use my artistic practice to probe the field of study.

Theoretically I have developed the concept of *mundanisation*, which describes how utterly complex technological systems are entangled with people's everyday lives and how the incomprehensible become part of mundane practices (see: Willim (2017) *Imperfect Imaginaries. Digitization, Mundanisation and The Ungraspable*. In: Koch Gertraud (Ed.), *Digitisation: Theories and concepts for empirical cultural research*. London: Routledge). Incomprehensible complexity is obscured by mundanisation, hidden beyond what I speculatively propose as the walls of *Mundania*. Part of these obscured incomprehensible technological assemblages are digital infrastructures often referred to as clouds.

My work is inspired by John Durham Peters' ideas about Elemental Media, developed in his book *The Marvelous Clouds - Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (2015), by the thoughts about technological complexity developed by James Bridle in *New Dark Age* (2018 etc.), and I want to address the ways that media technologies are part of social, material as well as ecological processes.

During the workshop I would like to present my work with the art probes of the project *The Mundania Files*. These are short speculative and visually multi-layered videos. The videos are crafted to move between the expressive and the subtle. The style is intentionally gritty and dense, with tensions between visuals and sound, evoking the elemental and the role of blur and ambiguity. I have developed this style through a number of earlier artistic works. The Mundania Files are coupled to research in the project *Connected Homes and Distant Infrastructures*.