



Mingle at the Lise Meitner seminar



Erik Andersson (right), Research Coordinator at the Department of Design Sciences and the LTH Profile Area Aerosols. Photo: Kennet Ruona

During the mingle following the Lise Meitner seminar 2025, we spoke to some of the participants about role models.

Erik Andersson – Research Coordinator at the Department of Design Sciences

What did you think of the seminar?

– The group from Automatic Control spreads such joy and positivity. You can tell that they enjoy working together. They have done a wonderful job with the exhibition and the entire project. It reminds me of when Lise Meitner was brought into the spotlight about ten years ago and people began to recognise her and her scientific contributions. And the project stretches all the way to the present day. I noticed, for example, that Françoise Lamnabhi-Lagarrigue has already become Professor Emeritus.

Do you have any role models?

– Like they talked about in the panel discussion, it's something I've mostly reflected on afterwards. I don't have any nowadays, but looking back, I'd say that Hasse and Tage (two famous Swedish comedians) have been my role models in terms of being, or how one could strive to be, as a human being.

Elin Anna Topp – Head of the Department of Computer Science

Do you have any role models?

– I enjoy reading biographies of women, about people like Lise Meitner and Marie Curie. Although they are perhaps more like idols. They showed the way in the fight against the idea that "women can't do this, women can't do that". For me however, role models are more about personal qualities than specific individuals.

Is it important to have role models?

– Yes, it's important to have someone to relate to. They can also be negative role models. It can be discouraging if they're too much of a "superhero", who can do anything and manage everything. You need to be able to relate to the person. That was a good point made in the panel.



And visibility is definitely important. One example was when we advertised a PhD position in Computer Science and Robotics with two female supervisors. Of the 190 applicants, about 25 percent were women, which is unusually many in our subjects.

Carolyn Beck – Lise Meitner professor at the Department of Automatic Control



Former Lise Meitner professor Margret Bauer (left) and recently appointed Lise Meitner professor Carolyn Beck (right). Photo: Kennet Ruona

What did you think of the seminar?

– I really liked it, especially since it's my field. I was familiar with some of these women, but many of them I didn't know before. It was very interesting, a real eye-opener. They did a great job with this. I've seen the roll-up exhibition before. Hearing their personal stories was great.

Have you had any role models in your life?

– I didn't have one key role model, I had many, and I've realised only in hindsight who they were. Like my mom. She instilled in me a sense of curiosity. "When you stop learning you stop living", she would say. Like my math and physics teachers in school who were both females, and they kind of normalised it for me, that this line of work is open to women.

And then I had a professor here, a colleague there. It's not one person only, but people in your work and everyday life who inspire you with their personal qualities, and when you see how they handle various situations.

Codina Cotar – Lise Meitner professor at the Department of Mathematics



What did you think of the seminar?

– It was inspiring to learn about some historical stars in STEM. I hope this will be the norm of the next generation. Excellence should be seen and acknowledged, no matter if it's male or female.

Have you had any role models in your life?

– My father. He was passionate about mathematics, although he wasn't a mathematician but an economist. He encouraged me to see math everywhere. “Your nose is a triangle, and your eyes are circles”, he would say. I was fortunate to have a couple of great mentors over the years who guided me and believed in me, which is so important, to be encouraged to go into science.

More pictures from the mingle

Photos by Kennet Ruona.



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