

How to participate proactively in a process of change and transformation, to shape our path within an uncertain future? With this publication, the State Of The Art Network marks a waypost on a journey which started in 2018, when like-minded Nordic and Baltic art organisations and professionals initiated this network as a multidisciplinary collaboration facing the Anthropocene. Over five years, ten organisations and around eighty practitioners from different disciplines, like the arts, natural sciences and the humanities came together, online and in person, for workshops, seminars and discussions. The aim was to find ways to create resilience and concrete actions on how to live through the change in culture, economy and the environment, and to find concrete, hands-on methods to deal with the Anthropocene and the environmental crisis. As an outcome of this process, this publication takes a closer look at how we, as practising artists, researchers and cultural actors, can create elements for critical thinking and doing, which may assist us in navigating the complexities of the present.

Edited for the State Of The Art Network by Erich Berger, Mari Keski-Korsu, Marietta Radomska and Line Thastum.

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– Elements for Critical
Thinking and Doing*

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Introduction

With this publication, the State Of the Art Network (SOTAN) marks a waypost on a journey which started in 2018, when the Independent Air (DK) initiated the Network together with their sister organisations Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology (DK), Posthumanities Hub (SE) and Bioart Society (FI) as a multidisciplinary collaboration facing the Anthropocene. The initial questions seemed simple but turned out to be full of complexities: How can Nordic and Baltic artists, cultural organisations and institutions deal with the Anthropocene Epoch? How can we work with this subject and how can we collaborate across national borders, disciplines and artistic methodologies? With these questions in mind, we gathered a group of Nordic and Baltic practitioners from different arts and knowledge areas that work with or were interested in the subject, for a seminar where we discussed challenges, opportunities, and goals for how we can jointly benefit from each other's work and attempt to make a difference together. In October 2018, a group of Nordic and Baltic artists, writers, researchers and art organisations came together in Silkeborg, Denmark to share their practice, inspire each other and discuss the role of art and multidisciplinary collaborations in light of the current planetary ecological crises.

The enthusiasm in this first gathering and the urgency of the discussions paved the way for the idea to open up and extend the network to include more voices and practices with the aim of sharpening our understanding of the complexities art and culture are currently facing. How to participate proactively in a process of change and transformation, with the aim to shape our own path within an uncertain future? A steering group led by Bioart Society (FI), together with the Independent Air (DK) and the Posthumanities Hub (SE) continued working to turn SOTAN into a thriving Nordic/Baltic transdisciplinary network of artists, practitioners,

researchers and organisations who discuss the role, responsibility and potential of art and culture in the Anthropocene. Now, the network includes ten actively facilitating organisations and around 80 actively participating practitioners from different disciplines, like the arts, natural sciences and the humanities.. Additionally, the network is extended by affiliates or members of the participating organisations. By developing creative practices, transdisciplinary collaborations and public engagement, we aim to create resilience and concrete actions on how to live through the change in culture, economy and the environment and to find concrete, hands-on methods to deal with the Anthropocene and the environmental crisis.

With this publication, we want to take a closer look at how we as practising artists, researchers and cultural actors can create elements for critical thinking and doing which can assist us in navigating the complexities of the present. The publication is organised into four sections which are outlined in detail below. The sections present different angles to the questions laid out in this introduction with the aim of integrating the diverse practices, methods and approaches which can be found among the SOTAN network members in a soft manner. The contributions range from the arts and curatorial practices to activism, humanities and economy, interspersed with recaps of activities organised by collaborating SOTAN entities during the last three years and other related material in the form of images, poetry or maps. It is important to see these sections, not as strict compartments where the different contributions land in a definitive slot but more, as a guide through the rich material produced by the collaboration. And thus, we invite the reader to make their own connections between the different contributions.

Section 1. Understand Unfold Recognise

Kimberlé W. Crenshaw coined the term *INTERSECTIONALITY* 30 years ago to describe overlapping discriminations. Factors such as gender, sexuality, race, disability and physical appearance lead to different, intersecting modes of discrimination and privilege. What if this same analytical framework was extended from the human domain to include the more-than-human as a factor? Intersecting forms of discrimination thrive from the mindset of othering; considering others as de-humanised beings or entities without consciousness, emotions, empathy or culture. Othering has long and deep roots in the colonial past as an enabler of practices of exploitation and currently, thriving neo-colonial and neoliberal systems create a network of intersecting oppressions that permeates human and more-than-human communities. These oppressive systems build the foundation for the Anthropocene: through them, natural resources are exploited and racism, xenophobia and speciesism are enabled.

To understand the Anthropocene is also to understand the oppressive systems and their history. The implications of the Anthropocene result in tangible, yet opaque, corporeal experiences shared by humans and more-than-humans alike. Similarly, the oppressive systems which are a forming part and are the drivers of the Anthropocene are like thick knots of entangled, complex and diverse agencies, difficult to recognise, differentiate and navigate.

The key to understanding and changing the oppressive systems is to analyse the intersecting oppressions in them and also to consider the (neoliberal) minds and matters forming them. These mindsets originate from somewhere and they have existed for a long time, as a result of colonial history. What fosters this? What are the actions, practices and tools to change them? In this section, the authors ponder these questions, on both the micro- and macro-levels.

Järvensivu questions the adequacy of the current neoliberal toolkit for a sustainable economic transformation. Accordingly, the adjustment of carbon pricing or bank interest rates is not enough to steer markets in a polycrisis. In *Plan to Transform*, he presents an insightful list of ways to imagine a cultural turn. Järvensivu states: “A sustainability transformation is not just a technical assessment of how to make material resources last. It is fundamentally a creative process in which new technologies and socio-technical systems must be invented and the composition of a good human life must be reinvented.”

Radomska discusses more-than-human death and ecological grief that are not acknowledged or accepted in society. She looks into this through contemporary theory and art in her chapter *Towards Art of Eco-Grief: A Queering Reflection*. By exemplifying works of Nordic artists, she describes how the ecological ontology of death is exposed and ethics of eco-grief are revealed. According to Radomska, they “activate different ways of mourning the more-than-human and—what follows—also mobilise new ethico-political sensibilities that are responsive to complex, transversal, interwoven ecologies of relations, processes, entities, hierarchies of power, as well as soft and hard technologies and techniques that mould more-than-human assemblages.”

In “*Natural*” (B)orders?: *Identifying and Resisting Lurking Racist Ecology*, Pietiläinen focuses on the narratives of natural orders and natural borders which are utilised in far-right politics to create racial, sexual and gender hierarchies; portraying them as pure “nature”. She argues that “Identifying and resisting far-right green narratives is important because the far-right’s ecological rhetoric naturalises social hierarchies and reasserts white heteropatriarchal power by justifying, through the language of nature, population control measures.”

Juuso’s *Ticking the Boxes: From Colonisation to Decolonisation to Recolonisation. Who Holds Power Over Us?* invites the reader on a personal journey about what it means to be a Sámi and an artist as she navigates between the cultures of the Indigenous and the majority. She asks: “A one-off experience would not hurt but continuously experiencing being ‘othered’ regardless of the context, makes one wonder and think, is this all because of what I am and cannot—or will not—erase?”. Juuso looks into the good deeds of de-colonisation that do not reconcile.

Section 2. Listening Introspection Immersion

The species have always existed by and with each other, driven by the will to live, they have, we have, adapted to each other, entwined with each other, have arisen, and disappeared.

But humans, as a very young species on earth, have slowly separated and increasingly tried to detach themselves from the interweaving with the more-than-human. How can it be that we have come to believe that humans as a species are omnipotent? Has it made us happier, or have we left something behind in our accelerating development and flow of information, technology, knowledge, images, expectations, expansion, and results? Has it made humans as a species better able to survive? Or quite the opposite?

This section inspires us to listen to the *MORE-THAN-HUMAN*, to slow down and notice. If we can immerse ourselves, if we can introspect and try to sense and think in other ways than the rational linearity that occupies so much of the way humans think and act, then maybe we will find tools and some of the answers to how we can create a more balanced future.

The section investigates whether we, by listening to or looking at other beings and processes, can discover ourselves as much more intertwined with others. Can we find new answers and maybe even find something in ourselves that will make us more whole, if we dare and are able to include intuition and empathy more in our lives and in our decisions?

We will open the discussion about the need to include respect for “life as such” and not just our own immediate satisfaction in the way we live our lives, the way we consume, the way we develop technology and build our societies.

In her beautiful contribution *Attunement, or to Recognise the Unspectacular*, Pupkevičiūtė takes us on a trip to a snow-covered mire of the Estonian south. In an attempt to understand the transformative past,

catastrophic nowness and probable future, she listens to the mire and the snow and presents us with the concept of “Hypersea”, an environment formed by the tissues and bodily fluids of plants, animals, and fungi. By doing so, she shows us a possible way to recognise our kin in all their forms, shapes and functions.

Based on her research in phenomenology and environmental aesthetics, Jóhannesdóttir presents two methods for listening to the more-than-human. The *FOCUSING* by Gendlin allows us to pay attention to, describe and engage with what we are sensing right now, whereas *MICRO-PHENOMENOLOGY* allows this for an experience that has already happened. Both methods were used in the SOTAN Full Moon—Utesita workshop.

The article *A Common Thread* also takes us on a trip. This time on an “art hike” at a place called Húsahagi, a dumping ground for currently non-recyclable and organic waste on the Faroe Islands. The Faroese team of Poulsen, Aldará, Jensen and Simonsen, reflect on the discrepancies within the dumping ground, which they experienced on an art hike, together with other participants through various practices. The article also discusses biodiversity and ecological restoration on the Faroe Islands.

The network activities presented in this section have been organised by The independent SOTAN members in the Faroe Islands team, the Independent Air located in Denmark and Maajaam from Estonia.

Section 3. Translate, Communicate, Collaborate

The Anthropocene and its impact, manifests itself in a multitude of crises like climate breakdown, loss of habitat, pollution, resource conflicts, wars and more. As a result, we are confronted with a completely new set of challenges. While we can pinpoint some, such as the above, together they create a dynamic which becomes visible only by shifting the scales of time and space. Of time, as we are entering into processes which not only outlive us, but which effect numerous generations after us, and also of space as changing conditions define where and how a living can be made.

As Timothy Clarke asserts so precisely, the Anthropocene is an emergent scale effect (Clarke 2015), where numerous human actions, insignificant in themselves, come together to form a new imponderable physical event, altering the basic ecological cycles of the planet. One could argue that the ultimate consequence of these small acts could not have been

foreseen. Rob Nixon points to this with his concept of slow violence (Nixon 2011), violence which occurs gradually and is not necessarily visible. But the question, of whether the cognitive inability is substituted by wilful ignorance and resignation, is becoming increasingly prominent. The Anthropocene forces environmental, social, cultural and economic transformations in our everyday life which need to be approached from a plurality of directions if we want to make them comprehensible.

Also, the question about the consequences and role of technology needs to be asked and followed. The focus on its environmental impact often overshadows its immense transformative potential, both in a constructive but also in a destructive sense. Here, new technologies in the areas of machine learning, blockchain or life sciences will be literally life-changing.

In this section, we want to ask about how to create cultural responses to the complexities we are facing. What are possible artistic strategies to translate, communicate and collaborate? To address such large issues within a small section is impossible, but this section adds to a growing body of work which exists out there addressing similar questions.

In their article *The Magic Circles of Soil*, Tapio and van Dierendonck invite us to think about the figure of the archetype and if this concept could provide us with options to find ways out of an increasingly difficult-to-navigate present. Their figures of the Shaman, the Scientist and the Artist are emerging from a playful, multimodal and multitemporal encounter with soil in the form of a hybrid workshop. This workshop inspired many of the participants who then started to explore different, now loose strands, which created a beautiful ripple effect through the SOTAN network.

Gapševičius reminds us in *Machine as a Companion* that when we talk about ecology and the environment, we need to take the machinic into consideration and that the machinic includes computation which is fundamental to the contemporary live world. While we often address the machinic as the adversary, Gapševičius explores the machine as a possible mediator and interface between the human and nonhuman world. With this, he highlights that the convergence of the environment and technology needs to be thought of in more ways than as a tale of domination, loss and destruction.

In *Coastal Imaginations and Intermedialities*, Elgh traces ecological artistic practice along coastal environments. Distancing herself from earlier artistic engagements where the coast served as a site for existentialist or romanticist encounters, Elgh draws our attention to the coast as an intersection which is in a process of constant transformation and exchange between the land and the sea. Elgh invites us to visit a series of coastal artworks and thus explores creating and curating in the intermedial space of the coastline.

The network activities presented in this section have been organised by The Posthumanities Hub & The Eco- and Bioart Lab/Linköping University in Sweden, the Norwegian Bioart Arena in Norway and Institutio Media in Lithuania.

Section 4. *Reacting Acting Change*

Along with multi- and transdisciplinary critical engagements with unprecedented planetary environmental disruption, the shifting of sensibilities and capacities of experience, and activating new/different languages and narratives, both the SOTAN participants and the contributors to this edited volume have also channelled their collective energies into mobilising more sustainable visions and hands-on action.

While individuals have little to no impact on grand structures and mechanisms driving contemporary crises, we are all—in different ways, constellations, and to very different degrees—complicit in the unfolding of Anthropocenic conditions. Working from such a planetary setup, disfigured and wounded by both slow and spectacular forms of environmental violence (Neimanis 2021), we shall ask ourselves: how can we adequately and meaningfully respond to the changing present?

In the last section of this book, the contributors dare to be not only curious and creative, but also bold in both asking questions and proposing more concrete and tangible solutions to the present challenges of artistic, cultural and academic work facing more-than-human planetary crises. They mobilise and explore visions and images of possible futures. Is starting anew an option at all? What do we need in order to believe in a (more) sustainable future? How can methodologies—developed through SOTAN activities—have an impact on individual artistic and cultural practices, and simultaneously influence large-scale processes, communities and societies? How can our activities and activism assist us in living through the changing present? Can they facilitate a more liveable and more just future? How can we move from theory to practice? And how can changes in thinking mobilise changes in our actions?

The contributions in this section dive into practical examples of the ways in which artistic, cultural and scholarly practices may activate, bolster and nourish a paradigm shift attuned to ethical and justice-oriented demands of the here and now, as much as to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In their chapter *IMAGINING GODZILLA: A Project for the Artistic and Scientific Exploration of the Baltic Sea as an Ecological and Cross-cultural Networking Marine Environment*, visual artists Puustinen and

Best take the reader on an adventure with the catamaran Godzilla. As a sailing art project, floating venue for short-term art residencies, and a meeting place for those to whom the Baltic Sea matters, *Imagining Godzilla* mobilises cross-disciplinary collaborations between artists, practitioners, and researchers. Committed to the complicated histories, geographies, geo-politics, and fragile ecosystems of the Baltic Sea and its Region, Puustinen and Best ask what kind of futures imagining (with) Godzilla may mobilise.

Speculating about possible futures takes an ultimately different shape in MacCormack's contribution *Unhumaning: No Future and the Earth's Future*. Drawing on queerfeminist theorising and animal abolitionist activism, she argues for a radical liberation: from the hegemonic position of the human subject, from human exceptionalism, from both hetero- and homo-normative constituents of the omnipresent heteropatriarchal order, and from the explicit as well as hidden violence of consumerism and capitalism, exercised against the nonhuman, the human and the planet. It is only by doing away with the habit of “humans first” that we may be able to truly start caring for the Earth.

Working towards different, more sustainable and just futures for humans and nonhumans alike requires integrative efforts and solidarity: from artistic and philosophical creativity and imagination, through micro- and macro-forms of activism and politics, to practical, down-to-earth and local sustainable praxes. In her chapter *Sustainability in Cultural, Research and Art Projects*, Thastum outlines a proposal for tangible methods and concrete, practical guidelines on how to implement environmentally sustainable solutions in cultural, research and artistic production and practice.

Finally, in their collective piece *Turfiction*, Grétarsdóttir, Hafsteinsson, Tenetz, Howse, Keski-Korsu, Lehmusruusu, van der Elst, Fricker and Erkkila-Hill take the reader on a poetic and viscerally material adventure starting from the space, volume, atmosphere and ecology of the traditional Icelandic turf house. Through their multi-genre writing and multi-sensorial engagement with the place, the authors explore temporal scales, more-than-human heritage, and transcorporeal entanglements of the earth, air, human and nonhuman bodies, and possibilities of re-imagining embedded, enfolded and multispecies co-existence.

The network activities presented in this section have been organised by the Imagining Godzilla project based in Finland, RIXC located in Latvia, the Turfiction project from Iceland and the Bioart Society in Finland.

By bringing together four crucial modes of approaching the enmeshed complexities of the Anthropocenic conditions, outlined in its four sections, this book explores the ways in which we may be able to not only better understand the more-than-human dimensions of the present crises, but also learn to listen, collaborate across disciplines, and create change. In other words, SOTAN as a long-term project and the contributions in this volume, in particular, offer a unique toolset: a set of elements for critical thinking and doing, which are urgently needed in the here and now.

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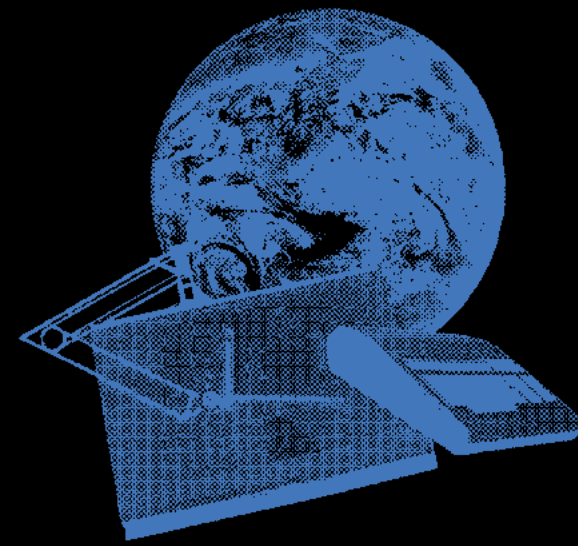
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Section 1

Understand
unfolding
recognition





Paavo Järvensivu

Plan to Transform

We need to plan for a sustainability transformation—
and it will be an exercise in cultural thinking

Plan to Transform

We need to plan for a sustainability transformation – and it will be an exercise in cultural thinking

Responding to the challenges ahead with a neoliberal toolkit – essentially, tools for tweaking the market rules – will not get us very far. At least not in the right direction. Instead, we need to plan for a sustainability transformation, and to do this properly, we will need a better understanding of things like bodies in time and space, and the dramaturgy of decision-making. In short, the government will need to apply cultural thinking.

With a focus on Western political economies and Europe in particular, this text summarises some of the key findings of the multidisciplinary BIOS Research Unit on the conditions of steering the economy through a rapid sustainability transformation. Elaborated views can be found in our publications and our blog at www.bios.fi/en/.

The word for our current predicament is *POLYCRISIS*. We have to deal with multiple simultaneous creeping crises (e.g. climate change and biodiversity loss) and acute crises (e.g. extreme weather events, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian war against Ukraine, and economic and political instability) that feed into each other in unexpected ways. This requires a balance between long-term planning and short-term creative adaptation – and not forgetting the creeping crises in the midst of the acute ones.

In the neoliberal era, including today, governments following the Western political-economic tradition have used simple and blunt tools such as *CARBON PRICING* and *CENTRAL BANK INTEREST RATE ADJUSTMENTS*. The point of carbon pricing is to adjust the economic incentives of market actors to avoid unnecessary carbon emissions. It makes carbon-intensive production more expensive relative to less carbon-intensive production

and results in a penalty for greenhouse gas emitters. It's an elegant mechanism in theory, but we still have not seen nearly enough investment in low-carbon production. Carbon pricing (if properly implemented) does penalise emitters, but it does too little to stimulate alternative production systems.

By adjusting its interest rates, the central bank controls the price of credit in the economy. Recently, the European Central Bank has raised interest rates sharply in an attempt to dampen demand and thus fight inflation. In Europe, inflation has risen much more because of supply shocks (war) than because of excess demand. But central banks do not have the tools to control supply, so they use the tools they do have. By suppressing demand—including green investments—rate rises are likely to lead to economic contraction. This, in turn, is likely to lead to social and political unrest.

These two tools—offered here as important examples—are part of the neoliberal toolkit used to plan and adjust the rules of the market. Policymakers using this toolkit do not need to think about the qualitative changes needed or desired within markets. Once the rules are set, the rest is up to the markets. This makes the whole process of steering economies very technical. Only technical experts have access to the discussion. It is only afterwards that the public is able to assess what has (qualitatively) happened: these are the industries that seem to be flourishing, these are the jobs that are available, these are the consumables, and finally—these are the emissions caused and the ecosystems disturbed.

The world surrounding politics has recently dealt neoliberal practice a severe blow. The COVID-19 pandemic gave way to unforeseen restrictions on economic activity before the vaccine rollout. The pandemic forced us to ask questions such as: which jobs are actually needed to keep society's most important activities running? How should governments balance public and private rights—keeping us alive and well versus letting us decide what to do with ourselves and our property? Both questions undermine the primacy of markets and private competition and consumption. They bring collective, non-market considerations to the fore.

The Russian war against Ukraine has also forced European governments to assess much more seriously than before what is materially necessary to secure the European way of life, and what the key aspects of that lifestyle are. What do we have to do in concrete terms to defend what we value most? How do we produce the necessary equipment, and what skills do we need? What do we have to give up to achieve sufficient defence? How do we run our factories without Russian fossil fuels? And if we cannot fuel all the factories, which ones should we close first?

These questions are not so different from those we need to ask to achieve a sustainability transformation. The message from international science panels, representing the best consensus knowledge available, is clear: if humanity is to avoid catastrophic environmental disruption, economies must undergo rapid and far-reaching sustainability transformations. The metabolism of today's societies is based on the excessive use of fossil fuels and the over-consumption of other natural resources. Transforming society's metabolism requires two things: phasing out emission- and resource-intensive socio-technical systems and scaling up low-impact systems. In rich countries in particular, this means both quantitative reductions in energy and material flows and qualitative shifts. The aim is to achieve provisioning systems (systems that produce human necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, mobility, and social relations) that enable a good human life with radically lower carbon emissions and other negative impacts on nature.

The task is demanding, urgent and involves all sectors of society. A key point to understand is that the required changes or future pathways in different sectors and systems are all interlinked. The changes need to be technologically and temporally compatible. For example, the electrification of industrial processes and the shift from fossil fuel-based raw materials to other types of materials will require significantly more (low-carbon) electricity generation than is currently available. The production and consumption of electricity must always be equal. This is no easy task with intermittent generation—wind and solar power that varies with the weather.

Changes in different sectors and systems must also all fit within (the same) ecological boundaries. This means, for example, that it would be destructive to replace all current fuel-based cars with electric ones worldwide. The demand for materials and process energy would far exceed what is sustainably available. We need to achieve adequate or desired mobility by other means. In terms of managing the sustainability transformation, the goal is not to maximise the production of electric cars, but to electrify those cars that are still needed, provided that public transport, walking and cycling are properly designed and implemented.

To speed up and coordinate the transformation, and to ensure that we are aiming for meaningful goals, governments need to plan for necessary changes—and then manage the economy accordingly. Historically, this is nothing new, but given that in the recent neoliberal era governments have actively avoided planning anything other than market rules, we need to reinvent and re-institutionalise planning in a way that works in today's (globalised, highly complex, IT-driven) times. There are many proposals on how to manage economic activity more effectively, such as mission-driven innovation policies and active industrial policies to strategically mobilise shared resources and direct creativity. But the planning part—how to build the knowledge base for these policies—has received much less attention.

The multidisciplinary research unit *BIOS* has proposed the concept of science-led planning. Such planning aims to make visible pathways of societal transformation that are ecologically and materially *POSSIBLE* and socially, culturally, economically and politically *DESIRABLE*. As indicative planning, it would precede political programmes and business strategies. It would provide a credible knowledge base for decision-making that cuts across sectors and systems in society and balances different rationalities (e.g. economic and ecological rationalities). To gain legitimacy in a modern democracy, such planning must be based on the best practices of science, including transparency of data and methods, constant questioning of assumptions, learning from mistakes, and putting truth before interests. The benefits of a science-led approach include recognising system dynamics (e.g. cross-sectoral feedbacks), avoiding sub-optimisation (e.g. pathways that benefit only one sector), going beyond habitual ways of thinking (e.g. broadening thinking about how mobility needs can be met), and balancing multiple interests and rationalities.

Importantly, science-led planning would be subject to scientific and public scrutiny. This is an open invitation to everyone to participate in thinking about our common future based on the best available information. Indicative science-led plans would become the go-to object of knowledge, a kind of public commons, as individuals, organisations, journalists, politicians and others seek to understand future paths and their own positions in them.

I see this as a cultural turn in environmental and economic policy, and in politics in general. A sustainability transformation is not just a technical assessment of how to make material resources last. It is fundamentally a creative process in which new technologies and socio-technical systems must be invented and the composition of good human life must be reinvented. Cultural thinking will be involved in this process in at least two stages: first, within science-led planning (science including the social sciences and humanities), in the form of expert cultural knowledge and skills related to the sustainability transformation (eg. complementing "how to produce low-carbon electricity" with "what are we producing electricity for"); and second, in the larger sphere of deliberating the plans. One of the fundamental tasks for all of us would be to engage in grounded (planning-based) imagining about how to live well with significantly less impact on nature. Of course, we can see cultural thinking also in the decision-making phase, in politics, and why not even in the strategy work of companies?

I will conclude with a list of different ways in which I imagine this cultural shift taking place. The non-exhaustive list includes skills and approaches whose role, I believe, will be strengthened as we move from the neoliberal toolkit to planning concrete changes in the economy and steering economic activity accordingly.

1. People's social-ecological understanding will improve. Adults will be re-educated about the basics, such as what it takes to make the energy we consume in our daily lives usable. The old (now existing) structures of production may still remain somewhat hidden—but their transformation exposes the new structures to ponder and debate. An example of this is the so-called hydrogen economy: experts and journalists are starting their stories at the atomic level (what is hydrogen?) and expanding them to include hydrogen's potential role in future energy, raw material and waste structures and flows, and how it might transform landscapes and cities. If this is done on a scientifically sound basis, it will be a big step towards broader discussions about how we want to redesign the metabolism of society.
2. The political imagination—the work on the future and our place in it—will become richer. At present, the political imagination is largely driven by what we might call neoliberal realism. Our future seems to depend on what is seen as the conditions for economic growth, such as population demographics, changes in productivity and public debt ratios. These big issues are then technically operationalised into adjustable factors that constitute the market's rules. These adjustable factors are the object of political imagination. Technical experts formulate them, and politicians are then asked in elections what they would do with these factors if they had the power. Planning—shifting the focus from market rules to concrete changes in the economy—creates a platform for multidisciplinary imaginative work, ranging from scientists and engineers to humanists and artists as well as inviting non-experts into the discussion.
3. The dramaturgy of decision-making is important. By this, I mean the assembly of elements that are brought together to arrive at a point of decision-making: what things are shown, how they are framed, and what kind of temporalities and rhythms are involved. In a polycrisis, we cannot have a strictly sectoral perspective, for example, approaching an issue from the perspective of a single ministry. Nor does it make sense to treat the crises as the same old problems we have always had. Climate and biodiversity crises are not problems of low economic growth or low employment. Moreover, we must not allude to "normal times" in the sense of dealing with the acute crisis first and then turning to the creeping crises when things have calmed down. To manage well in a polycrisis, the government should employ a multidisciplinary team with an emphasis on dramaturgical skills to set the stage for decision-making. Most likely, this stage-setting would include re-designing some of the key political institutions, making it a judicial-dramaturgical task.
4. A good understanding of time-space-body must be used to get the plans right. Returning to the issue of transforming mobility, we need to be able to imagine and plan desirable forms of mobility. Current infrastructure and mindsets are predominantly built around the private car, and both need to be rebuilt. We cannot do urban planning based mainly

on economic and emissions modelling and the like but need to find out what it means to move well within ecological limits.

5. We need to collectively practise looking around, or sensing all that surrounds us, much more carefully and deeply than before. It is an art of historical-cultural reading, and it is fundamentally about appreciating the things we already have more. It is of immense importance to the sustainability transition in many ways. For example, the need to travel around at an ever-increasing pace is certainly related to the inability to absorb much. Similarly, the practice of carelessly replacing old buildings with new ones only seems “okay” if we don't really care what was there in the first place. There is an economic potential in building something new, and that is what matters if what is already there doesn't really matter.

Further Reading

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Útesita, Tufoen, Tøyenparken, Norway

*Full moon útesita
Tufoen, Tøyenparken
59°55'14.7"N 10°46'44.4"E*

At some point, my eyes started to drop a bit. Squinting, I saw something strange. The leaves had turned into a garden. I opened my eyes fully to see the leaves hanging entirely still as the wind, until this moment, a constant, had stopped. I squinted again to investigate if I had somehow really seen this or if I was moving into a dreamlike state of imagining. There it was again. When squinting my eyes, the leaves of the trees turned into topiaries, bushes and a grass field, some hedges and dark flowers. It appeared to me as a garden. Like I was peering into a parallel place, a world happening simultaneously alongside/on top of/inside the leaves of the trees.

Ase Brunborg Lie

Útesita, Tufoen, Tøyenparken, Norway





Marietta Radomska

*Towards Arts
of Eco-Grief:
A Queering
Reflection*

Towards Arts of Eco-Grief: A Queering Reflection

We mourn humans, we mourn nature, we mourn the past. While the notion of bereavement linked to the death of a human or to the loss of that which has already passed is societally accepted, or even expected from an individual, the mourning of nonhuman death and ecological loss has a rather different status. It is frequently described as “disenfranchised grief” (Doka 1989), a form of grief that is not openly accepted or acknowledged in society. Simultaneously, in the present Anthropocenic context, where planetary environmental disruption generates unliveable spaces and amplifies more-than-human vulnerabilities, the killing of nonhuman populations, annihilation of entire ecosystems and species extinction catalyse discussions among scientists, legal experts, activists and general society. For instance, in the Nordic and Baltic context, from which this piece is written, the Baltic Sea has been pronounced the largest “dead zone” in the world^o. And yet, it is not only natural-scientific and legal, but also philosophical, artistic, and cultural conversations and reworked, ecologised understandings of death and grief that are urgently needed. The ways we acknowledge, relate to and talk about death and dying as “grievable” (Butler 2004) reveal our modes of relating to and valuing that which/who is (still) alive.

- For more see e.g. Diaz and Rosenberg 2008; Radomska and Åsberg 2021; Peterson 2018.

In this short chapter, grounded in queer death studies, I focus on the engagements with and imaginaries of more-than-human death and ecological grief (eco-grief) as they are mobilised and (re)shaped at the interface between contemporary theory, art and culture^o. Indeed, it is frequently in the flesh of contemporary artworks, where an ecological ontology of death is being exposed and where ethical terrains of eco-grief clandestinely unfold.

- In my work the concept of “imaginary” primarily refers to the *CULTURAL* imaginary, understood as a cultural fantasy landscape comprising a collection of culturally dominant representations, images and ideas. In the context of Western philosophy, discourses, and beliefs, these ideas have often described the relation between nature and culture as a hierarchically arranged dichotomy; the body as inferior to and separated from the mind; and the subject as autonomous, contained, and unified (see also e.g. Braidotti 2006; Shildrick 2001).

Thinking Death Historically

• A prime example of the latter—at least according to the dominant readings—is Austrian photographer Dora Kallmus's *Slaughterhouse* series (1949-1958).

The enquiry into death has formed part of the landscape of Western philosophy and cultural imaginaries since ancient times. Nonetheless, it is during the past century that death acquires a slightly different status: from a proverbial “natural turn of events” it mutates into a bloody, ever-present shadow of the twentieth century. Two world wars, the Holocaust, the Holodomor, and the Gulag, colonial and ethnic genocides, atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and numerous regional wars fuelled the death statistics in unprecedented ways. Simultaneously, the very same events laid grounds for a key turn in Western philosophy and theory. Public intellectuals and thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School, poststructuralism, and postmodernism asked: what must have happened to the presumably rational autonomous human subject of Enlightenment humanism and the institution of reason that had allowed for these mass-scale atrocities to happen? The faith in the hegemonic rational subject has been undermined for good (e.g. Horkheimer and Adorno 2002; Lyotard 1988). Simultaneously, twentieth-century art responded powerfully to the mass death, genocides, and the violence of wars and totalitarianisms. Pablo Picasso's *La Guernica* (1937), Mykhailo Dmytrenko's *1933* (1963), Edith Birkin's *The Death Cart—Łódź Ghetto* (1980), or Marina Abramović's *Balkan Baroque* (1997) are some of the most recognisable examples. Nonetheless, what has occupied the mere margins of those philosophical, cultural, literary, and visual engagements with enormous losses, violence and war, and the accompanying grief and mourning, is the question of more-than-human death—in itself, and not only invoked as a metaphor of human tragedy and decease. °

And yet, in the context of the presently unfolding planetary environmental disruption, where both slow and abrupt violence, like Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, annihilates entire ecosystems and turns habitats into unliveable spaces, death and loss become urgent environmental concerns. These are no longer human-only or human-centred matters. Thinking death in ways that respond to the demands of the present day requires a more ecological and queering approach.

Ecologies of Grief

The term “ecology”, stemming from the Greek word *oikos* meaning “home, environment”, refers to relations between organisms and their milieus. The notion of ecology has played a key role in environmental sciences. Yet, over the past several decades, the term has become crucial

for contemporary cultural theory, art, and the humanities. “Ecology” has proved to be particularly valuable for theorising complex relationalities, interactions, and processes encompassing nature/culture, the natural/the artificial, and bodies/technologies (for instance, in such frameworks as media ecologies, technoecologies, etc.). French philosopher and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari's conceptualisation of “three ecologies” (listed as the environment, society, and individual human subjects), defines the term “ecology” as a multiplex arrangement of relationalities between entities and their milieu, including “the whole of subjectivity and capitalistic power formations” (Guattari 1989/2008, 35). This suggests a broad understanding of the entanglement between nature and culture, where the planetary environmental disruption cannot be fully conceived in separation from the global mechanisms of advanced capitalism, cultural processes, social and political crises, communities, and individual human subjects (Radomska 2017). In the context of this chapter, such a multifaceted notion of ecology means that death, as much as grief and mourning, involves numerous entities, processes, and relationalities, where each of these elements cannot be analysed in isolation from one another.

The concept of eco-grief describes a mode of grief experienced in relation to the present or anticipated ecological losses of species, ecosystems, and meaningful landscapes, resulting from severe anthropogenic environmental change (e.g. Cunsolo and Landman 2017). As climate change and health researchers Ashlee Cunsolo and Neville R. Ellis (2018) argue, experiences of eco-grief, seen as “disenfranchised grief” (Doka 1989), differ across geographical locations, cultures, communities, and even individuals within a given community. Although the prime focus within the field of eco-grief scholarship goes to various forms of loss resulting from the planetary environmental crises, such as species extinction or the destruction of entire ecosystems, I employ the eco-grief approach to enquiries anchored in the problematic of more-than-human necropolitics and nonhuman death that do not immediately fall into the category of “environmental loss” and still, unfold from the systematic objectification and dehumanisation of nonhuman life. Thus understood, the concept of eco-grief also forms part and parcel of the theoretical framework of queer death studies.

(Queering) Ecologies of Death

Queer death studies (QDS) is an emerging research field, developed through conversations with queerfeminist, trans, and anticolonial scholarship, environmental humanities, posthumanities, and other critical fields, such as critical animal studies. QDS regularly engages in dialogues

- The concept of “grief imaginaries” is grounded in queerfeminist approaches to the notion of cultural imaginary (See footnote on page 35).

with critiques emerging from political movements for social and environmental justice (Radomska, Mehrabi and Lykke 2020). The field zooms in on the problematics of death, dying and mourning through the critical lens of Anthropocene necropolitics (Mbembe 2003; Lykke 2019), marked by entangled necropowers of (neo)colonialism, (neo)imperialism, extractivist capitalism, and human exceptionalism. Along with redirecting attention towards marginalised stories of death, dying, and mourning, QDS also involves crucial analytical shifts. In this context, “queer”—in its verbal and adverbial forms—becomes a methodology: a mode of critical defamiliarisation, of undoing normativities and mobilising new knowledge configurations, combined with “an opening of other more affirmative horizons” (Radomska and Lykke 2022, 124). Posthumanising—as an analytical move inherent to QDS—tackles the planetary-scale machinery of annihilation of the more-than-human world in its ontological, epistemological, and ethico-political dimensions. In consequence, posthumanising death entails reckoning with the issues of responsibility, accountability, and care for dying more-than-human worlds (Radomska and Lykke 2022). In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I turn to two examples of art projects that have such a strange-making effect: they defamiliarise traditionally human-centred notions of death and expand the frames of grievability, unsettling thus dominant grief imaginaries^o, catalysing different sensibilities, and reworking the issue of ethics surrounding more-than-human death as much as life.

Biophilosophical Investigations and Arts of Eco-Grief

Before I move to the question of queering potentials of art, it is crucial to note that discussions concerned with posthumanising grief imaginaries and mourning the more-than-human require a step back, namely, a closer look at the ontological groundwork of the very concept of death and its ascribed value. In Western philosophy, there are two styles of engaging with both life and death: one that concentrates on essences and categorisations; and another, more marginal style, which prioritises processuality and transformations. The latter mode is described as biophilosophy (Thacker 2008; Radomska 2020).

Biophilosophy examines life as a multiplicity that traverses binaries, evades anthropomorphisation, and reckons with the issues of relations, their dynamics, and mechanics of exclusion. Consequently, biophilosophy is concerned with ontology on the one hand (what is life? what is death?), and with ethics, on the other (what relations is life embedded in? what is its relation to death? what values are being ascribed to these

processes?)^o. Looking at death in a biophilosophical manner involves focusing on the complexity of relationalities, and connections and divisions, in place of individual forms of life and the ways in which they may be classified. It is such a biophilosophical-investigative lens that operates in the present chapter.

Narrating Absence

Diversely understood absence is not a rare motif in contemporary environmental, eco- or new-media art that zooms in on the problematics of Anthropocene violence towards the more-than-human, and frequently takes shape of a eulogy.

Here, I turn to a particular notion of absence: absence as a different space, a space without humans, which permeates the oeuvre of the Finnish artistic duo IC-98, formed by Visa Suonpää and Patrik Söderlund. During the past two and a half decades, IC-98 has worked with a variety of media, in different formats (from site-specific objects or installations to video/animation work) and collaborations, while always remaining at the thematic interface between the environmental, the social, and the political. IC-98 is most known for its meticulously scripted animation works, based on pencil drawings, and combined with digital effects and sound installations. These artworks often show a world at a different temporal point in the unknown—to us—deep future; seemingly a world healing from human-generated violence or catastrophe; and yet, a world that is not deprived of other life forms or processes; and a world unfolding “in terms of geological time” (Elfving and Söderlund 2015, 163). More-than-human temporalities are at the centre of IC-98’s work.

The 32-minute-long piece *Nekropolis* (2015-2016)^o, screened on a seamless loop, is an example of such an HD animation. The artwork, as IC-98 notes, is conceptualised as an interpretation of English writer and philosopher John Ruskin’s lecture “The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century” (1884), which is one of the first texts dealing with the issue of pollution linked to industrialisation. IC-98 combines the culturally significant visual motif of the storm cloud with a context, where nature and culture can no longer be thought as separate domains, and where the categories of *SACRUM* vs *PROFANUM*, and transcendence vs immanence simply collapse. In this “radically immanent” (Deleuze 2005) representation, divisions dissolve. As scholar and curator Taru Elfving points out, “The invisible forces and elements of embodied existence gain material presence [...] Souls appear to be accompanied not only by their beloved companion species, the swallows, but also become gradually indistinguishable from swarms of insects or particles of some kind—be it dust, pollutants, pollen, spores” (2022, 7).

- In accordance with the Deleuzo-guattarian and feminist posthumanities traditions (both drawing on Baruch Spinoza), I understand ethics as modes of relating/relationality: they describe how certain bodies/entities affect and are affected by other bodies. In this way, ethics are not equated with morality (organised as a hierarchical system of rules). See: Deleuze 1988; Radomska 2018.

- See trailer: <https://vimeo.com/171650764> (accessed March 1, 2023)

In a melancholic and visually poetic way, and in the company of drone or ambient sound installations, IC-98 disrupts the monument of human exceptionalist narratives on death, subjectivity, presence, and the human/nonhuman divide. The artists set the scene for thinking and imagining with processes and relationalities, unfolding in a manner consistent with the Guattarian conceptualisation of transversal, multiplex ecologies.

(Queered) Community Beyond Species

- See for instance: Brandon Ballangée's *The Framework of Absence* (2006-present)—<https://brandonballengee.com/the-frameworks-of-absence/>; Gwen Curry's *Song of the Dodo* (1999) and *Void Field (after Kapoor)* (1998-2002); and Signe Johannesen's *Thank you for carrying* (2016)—<https://signejohannesen.se/thank-you-for-carrying/> (all accessed March 2, 2023).

- Not the least Gustafsson&Haapoja's recent project *No Data* (2021). See: <https://www.terikehaapoja.net/gustafssonhaapoja-no-data/> (accessed February 20, 2023)

Artworks that generate a space of experience and affect—a space of ethical relationality mobilised in regard to more-than-human death, disappearance, vanishing, extinction, abuse of the more-than-human, environmental violence, or ecocide—are not always explicitly framed as “eco-grief pieces.”^o Rather, what becomes crucial is the way in which an artwork influences, modifies, and alters our sensibilities, expanding them beyond the human foci. One such project which deeply engages with the problematics and intimacy of death, as well as the relation with the dying and with oneself, is New York-based Finnish artist Terike Haapoja's work *Community* (2007). In her individual and collaborative artistic practice, Haapoja explores the themes of animality, non-humanity, mortality, ethical relationship with the nonhuman world, as well as multispecies politics, and social and environmental justice. Although the problematic of death and grief (conceived in their broadest understanding) permeates a significant amount of Haapoja's artworks,^o here I concentrate on her earlier and well-known piece, notably due to its unique mix of aesthetics, poetics, intimacy, and thematic focus.

The project *Community* builds on Haapoja's earlier works: *Entropy* (2004) and *In and Out of Time* (2005), which all involve the use of an infrared camera to video-record dead animal bodies during the several hours following their death.^o This kind of camera registers infrared radiation, emitted by all bodies, and visualises acquired data in the form of images. *Community* consists of projected recordings displayed on several round screens distributed in an almost entirely dark space of the exhibition. The infrared recordings, lasting several hours each, capture the dead bodies of animals of different species right after the “moment” of their death. While an individual (be it nonhuman or human) dies, the materiality of their body with multitudes of microorganisms—a true multispecies community—constitutes a vibrant space (Bennett 2010; Lykke 2021). In a poetic way, the recordings show the bodies that—with passing time—slowly cool down and their images vanish from the display of the screens. Members of the audience may enter the exhibition space and spend time among the displayed recordings, witnessing and participating in a peculiar way in these intimate processes of passing

away/vanishing, which exceed species boundaries. Witnessing then becomes a meditation and a mourning ritual. Concurrently, the notion of community attains another layer—we all die, regardless of boundaries signified by species classifications or bodily contours.

Coda

In this chapter, I asked about the potentials of queering present eco-grief imaginaries and modes in which interfaces between contemporary art, cultural expressions, and theory may activate different ways of mourning the more-than-human and—what follows—also mobilise new ethico-political sensibilities that are responsive to complex, transversal, interwoven ecologies of relations, processes, entities, hierarchies of power, as well as soft and hard technologies and techniques that mould more-than-human assemblages. Eco-grief is considered here as a philosophical and aesthetic lens, which allows one to unpack the philosophical and cultural dimensions of more-than-human ecologies of death, grief, and mourning.^o The two art projects I briefly discussed focus on: absence in a deep-time setting and beyond the frames of human exceptionalism (IC-98); and on the very processes of death and vanishing that exceed species and any other forms of classification (Haapoja). These works—read through the prism of QDS—tackle our sensibilities in relation to what death is and which deaths count as grievable, thus generating a more posthumanising imaginary of grief. Moreover, they activate an ethical reflection that might be the first step to rethink how we may stay with the trouble of “terminal” ecologies as a “lifelong and shared condition” (Enzor 2016)

- For further elaboration of this argument, see Radomska forthcoming 2023.

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*Full moon útesita at the
Fur Cliffs
N: 56°50,7; E: 8°57,8*

“Contemplating Life, Death and Time
Together with Diatoms.” In *Being Algae*,
edited by Johanna Weggelaar, et al.
Leiden: Brill, 2023.

The weather this evening calls for
contemplation of the darker sides of

what is happening on this planet,

but also of its softness.

Softness, softness, softness, softness,
softness.

Dark clouds to one side, and such a
clear evening sky to the other side.

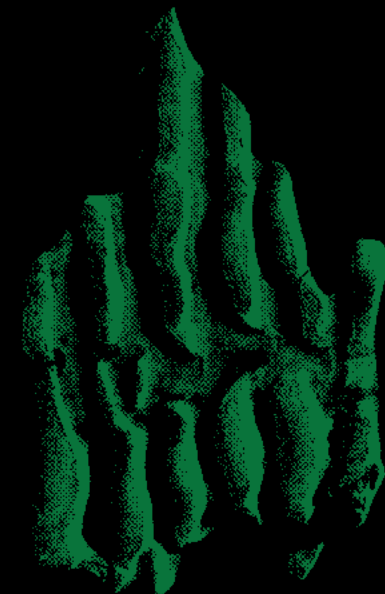
What does it mean?

Nina Lykke

The text on the previous page refers to video on VIMEO: <https://vimeo.com/user57963333>



Útesita Fur cliffs, Denmark



Sonja Pietiläinen

*“Natural” (B)orders?
Identifying &
Resisting
Lurking Racist
Ecology*



“Natural” (B)orders? Identifying & Resisting Lurking Racist Ecology

SONJA PIETILÄINEN

Introduction

Accelerating climate change impacts human and nonhuman species across borders, making living habitats unliveable and forcing millions to leave their homes. Not all people have been affected by climate change in the same way, and the effects of climate change are not evenly or equally distributed (Sultana 2022). Due to stark inequalities in the distribution of power and wealth, different people have different abilities to respond and cope with climate change, which is determined by factors such as race, gender, sexuality and class (Pulido 2018). Preventing climate breakdown and minimising the deaths and suffering would require rapid and massive structural changes in the world economy, solidarity and climate justice. Yet, during recent decades, we have witnessed intensified racial border politics and the re-articulation of the authoritarian ethno-nationalist movement (Rydgren 2018), whose politics revolve around racial nationalism, heteropatriarchy, and misogyny. The authoritarian ethno-nationalist movement, “the far right”, is also largely a counter-movement to climate mitigation. The far right obstructs climate action, for instance, by denying scientific evidence or by delaying climate action by creating misinformation about climate change (Ekberg et al. 2022). The far right also attempts to silence climate scientists and activists, for

example, by mobilising hate campaigns, or by harassing people in online spaces and/or on the streets (Roiha 2022; Sunila and Ahjopalo 2021). Furthermore, most of the far right's politics revolve around securing fossil capitalism (Malm and Zetkin Collective 2021).

Nature and the relations between humans and their natural environment are, however, not absent themes in the politics of the far right. The far right expresses threat imaginaries, for instance, “overpopulation”, “invasive species” and “carrying capacity” and proposes population control and harder border walls as solutions for environmental degradation. Even though concerns over nature are associated with progressive politics, nature has traditionally played an important role in nationalist and fascist politics and practices. Romanticised, symbolic and affective dimensions of certain purified representations of nature have been an important feature in the production of social identities, hierarchies, and senses of belonging and destiny. By introducing two prevalent, yet overlapping, far-right narratives about nature (natural orders and natural borders), my essay shows how certain cultural conceptions of romanticised and pure “nature” are being deployed in constructing racial, sexual and gender hierarchies in the context of far-right politics. Certain ideas of nature play an important role in the processes in which human hierarchies are naturalised by racialisation and sexualisation of bodies and simultaneously, different understandings of race, gender, sexuality and space also inform views of nature (see: Brahinsky 2014).

In this text, I use far-right ecology as an umbrella term for authoritarian, racist and misogynist ideas of the natural environment that range from climate obstruction, population anxieties, and green nationalism to ecofascism. By green nationalism, I refer to the ways in which spatially defined exclusionary national identities are evoked in relation to the environment and environmental degradation. Ecofascism, in turn, is a totalitarian system in which human interests are sacrificed for environmental motivations. The terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, and El Paso, Texas, which were partly justified in relation to environmental degradation, sparked increased awareness of ecofascism. However, as Peter Staudenmaier (2021, 10) argues, “since the array of far-right authoritarian, and nationalist politics extends well beyond explicitly fascist forms, a term like “ecofascism” is not the most accurate way to refer to all varieties of the environmental sentiment of the right”. The contemporary far right's mainly discursive green “concerns” have not translated into actual politics that would address the ecological crisis. Nevertheless, the far-right parties and groups draw their inspiration from ecofascist thinkers, such as the late Pentti Linkola (Malm and Zetkin Collective 2021). Pentti Linkola, a Finnish ecofascist thinker, argued that only through a strong totalitarian state and drastic measures (e.g., restrictions of rights and large scale killings) can the pure and rich nature be secured. People's violent death is acceptable and desirable. As he has, for instance, argued, “when people leave Africa, they are being

rescued in the Mediterranean. A tear comes to my eye when I think about the absurdity of this action. It would be natural for even a small surplus to be drowned in the Mediterranean.” (see: Vainio 2017). Linkola is celebrated globally among different radical and extreme right-wing individuals and groups but admiration for his work goes beyond the far right. In Finland he is considered by the public as one of the most important intellectuals, “a Finnish National treasure” (see: Nieminen 2017).

Identifying and resisting far-right green narratives is important because the far right's ecological rhetoric naturalises social hierarchies and reasserts white heteropatriarchal power by justifying, through the language of nature, population control measures. Identifying and resisting different forms of racist and fascist thought is important because they spread and become mainstream, especially now in the times of an accelerating climate crisis and climate-induced migration flows (Macklin 2022). Furthermore, different climate and environmental groups are not immune to harmful environmental discourses (Moore 2020). A part of the environmental movement has historically had close ties with the right wing in Europe and the United States. For instance, the first and second-wave environmental movements equated nature conservation with the protection of the white race. Nature conservation was practised not only by establishing national parks and protecting wild animals but also through eugenics. Similarly in Europe, the romanticised conception of nature and the idea of the organic connection between racially defined Volk and the soil was an essential part of National Socialism's ideology and practices that understood nature as the source of the purity of the Aryan race. Thus, the contemporary (far) right has not “captured” nature to advance its social agendas but its allure to include nature in its politics derives from certain conceptions of nature (e.g. social Darwinism, national romanticism, the Völkische movement, Malthusianism) that give rise to such agendas (Hultgren 2015). Furthermore, far-right environmental discourses are shaped by local, cultural and historical features, such as cultural landscapes and myths.

Nature as a Mirror of the “Natural” Order

“A Finn cannot be separated from nature.” (Perussuomalaiset 2022, 3)

The first key element of the far-right ecology today includes a romanticised and aestheticised dimension (Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015) as well as a symbolic dimension in which pure and bounded nature is the mirror for the “natural” order and source for racial purity and masculine endurance. The foundation of this order is in the distinctive ethnically defined socio-spatial units, homelands, that are understood as “naturally”

occurring, and indivisible from natural law (Lubarda 2020). Homeland is defined by space (land), time (myths) and blood (race), which constructs an imaginary idea of natural rootedness and consequently creates a territorial division between “us” and “the other”. These homelands are feminised; they are presented as passive, and in need of masculine protection against the invader. Immigrants, “invasive species”, are, in turn, seen as a threat because every nation, person and plant has its “natural” place (Forchtner 2019). Outside the urban decadence, in forests or in the countryside, one can find outer nature, and nature inside of him. The search for human essence, the inner nature, serves as “the well-spring of human virtue and thus of social regeneration” (Soper 1995, 29)

Natural order does not only define one’s absolute location, but also a location in the social hierarchy. By drawing on (pseudo)scientific ideas, the far-right ecology asserts a deterministic role between the physical environment and human nature (including race and culture), thus justifying racism through the language of science. The environment determines the homeland’s culture and human behaviour. In this context, racial othering happens by highlighting someone’s racial or cultural incompatibility, for example, by arguing that migrants cannot survive in the Finnish environment or that environmental circumstances are connected to morality. An emphasis on cultural incompatibility which reproduces generalised beliefs of biologically determined cultures (that are defined by certain human essences) naturalises racist conduct (Balibar 1991).

Although romanticism as a form of ideology embraces human-nature relations by creating a romanticised and aestheticised relation between humans and nature, it also offers a model for social order, because sexism and racism are portrayed as a normal part of human behaviour (Smith 2010). Masking society through the idea of natural order justifies and depoliticises societal injustices and justifies societal control and domination. For example, by drawing on natural differences between genders, the far right aims to legitimise sexual and gender inequalities and hierarchies arguing that “women” and “men”, defined as fixed and essential entities, have naturally different roles whilst deviance from heteronormativity is understood as unnatural. As Neil Smith elaborates, “the treatment of women in capitalist society parallels the treatment of nature. As external nature, women are objects which mankind attempts to dominate and oppress, ravage and romanticize” (Smith 2010, 26)

Since globalist ideologies, such as individualism, feminism, and anti-racism have invaded the minds and homelands and destroyed the natural order, the only way to survive the ecological crisis, according to the far right, is to discover inner and outer “nature”, in which the pure national identity can be found. Globalisation, individualism, and feminism are seen to halt the discovery of human essences and to have negative consequences on the process of authentic human fulfilment. For instance, the leader of the neo-fascist cultural collective Suunta argues that to

achieve national rebirth in which the nation’s culture, language and nature will once again be given their rightful value, the Finns must recognise the inner connection “to one’s people, tribe, history and culture” (Jalonon 2023). It is via purifying the nation of unwanted “others” (for example, political opponents, migrants, sexual minorities) and by restoring social hierarchies (for example, the patriarchy), that the authentic nation will return to its old green glory.

Demographic Anxieties and “Natural” Borders

“Climate abortion would be a small step for a man, but a giant leap for mankind” (Suomen Uutiset 2019).

The second key element of the far right’s ecology is demographic anxieties. Increased concerns about climate change have pushed the far right to develop its proposals for the climate crisis. In the context of far right politics, these proposals are intertwined with the obstruction of climate action. Through different anti-scientific discourses, the far right obstructs climate politics and mobilises misinformation about climate change’s causes and effects. Right-wing science scepticism should be separated from critical scholarship that sheds light on the interlinkages of power and knowledge because right-wing anti-scientific attitudes are based on the selective refusal of science, creation of misinformation and the harassment of opponents, such as climate scientists and activists.° Indeed, the far right’s anti-climate politics are based on their interest in securing certain privileges. Climate obstruction is mostly practised among conservative and (radical) right-wing supporters, which reflects the motives behind anti-climate actions such as efforts to secure economic and environmental privileges and political subjectivities. Denying climate change means denying the possible threats that challenge fossil capitalism, Western consumption habits and environmental privileges. Western white subjectivities and privileges are, according to Cara Daggett (Daggett 2018, 3-4) “oil-soaked and coal-dusted” and thus admitting climate change would also mean leaving behind billions of dollars worth of profits.

At the same time, through different demographic discourses, the far right blames poor racialised people, for instance the “overbreeding” women of the Global South for climate change. Especially among the far right in the Nordic countries and France, population growth is presented as “the mother of all environmental problems” (Männistö 2018) and

- Radical and extreme right’s anti-scientific attitudes and mobilisations of misinformation is not limited to climate change. For example, an important sector of the far right does also question Covid-19 and the far right overlaps with the anti-vaxx movement.

climate crisis and environmental degradation are framed as a problem of having too many people on the planet. As Eero Paloheimo, one of the co-authors of the environmental pro-gramme of the Finns Party's think tank "Suomen Perusta", writes, "Earth, our heavenly body is sick. Its disease is the excessively multiplied and multiplying human species. It even gives rise to metastasis-like cancer. This has caused a series of problems that partly torment people themselves, but primarily everything living..." (Paloheimo 2019, 141). As a solution for this, the far right proposes, for instance, reasserting "natural" borders and keeping immigrants away, as well as different fertility reduction measurements, such as climate abortions, sterilisation and one-child policies (e.g. Halonen 2015; Paloheimo 2019).

Such demographic anxieties were especially popular in the last part of the 20th century (e.g. Hultgren 2015) and different (far) right-wing individuals and groups have succeeded in gradually mainstreaming this idea. This rhetoric draws on Malthusian and neo-Malthusian arguments where natural limits set the constraints to populations, on the ideas of Garret Hardin, who stated that the poor people's uncontrolled breeding leads to exceeding carrying capacity and therefore access to the limited resources of the world should be given to non-poor people who can protect the future of the Western civilisation as well to the ideas of Paul Ehrlich, who created threat imaginaries of the population bomb.

As a discourse, "overpopulation" does not mention the global differences in wealth and consumption and thus it is an effective tactic to shift responsibility away from the world economy. Indeed, blaming mothers and fathers of the Global South by referring to "scientific" ideas and objective "truths" about the planet's natural limits (Hultgren 2015) is a conservative attempt to naturalise racial, gender, class and spatial inequalities and mask them as natural and thus beyond political capacity to change. Furthermore, it is an important method to reassert racial and heteropatriarchal domination because these demographic narratives do not only contain ideal population size but also ideal population composition (Bhatia et al. 2020). Simultaneously with anxiety about the increase of black and brown babies, the far right's ecological thinking contains anxieties about the decrease of white babies. By mobilising the Great Replacement conspiracy theory and concerns about the demographic development of Northern countries, the far right tries to harness reproductive labour and restrict women's freedoms (i.e., the right to abortion or contraception) to ensure the existence of the white nation and heteropatriarchal order. The Great Replacement theory is a conspiracy theory that puts forward the idea that there is a bigger plan to reduce white people's power, through the immigration of non-white and through lower birth rates of the white population. Great Replacement theory is not only popular among terrorists (e.g., Christchurch) but it is also openly supported by elected politicians, such as the leader of the Finns Party Riikka Purra (Suomen Uutiset 2019).

Blaming the racialised other for environmental problems is informed by the idea of nature and natural borders. Nature and its limits (e.g., carrying capacity), borders (the border between invasive and non-invasive species), and the "optimal" amount of people are defined through pseudoscientific conservative arguments that frame social injustices as "natural". Differences in fertility rates are framed as an outcome of certain populations' biological/cultural characteristics (e.g., hypersexuality), and unchangeable human nature, and thus those who "overbreed" are a big threat to pristine nature but also to western culture and morality. Human is portrayed as the opposite of nature, and only civilised white people are, according to this rhetoric, entitled to live on this planet as they are the only ones who can take care of the world's pristine nature, their "homeland". By getting rid of the "redundant" other(s), the black and brown babies, and by (re)discovering traditional family values and gender roles, the rebirth of the green and flourishing nation will be secured.

There Is No Such Thing as Apolitical Nature-Thinking

The far-right ecology's misogynist and racist tendencies derive from the fact that as a narrative, it leads to constructing the other (out-of-place groups), dehumanising the other (the redundant who do not belong to the planet), and justifying unequal social relations (through the language of nature). As a form of practice, the far-right ecology leads to the denial of rights and direct and indirect forms of violence. These narratives have the political effects of justifying and naturalising politically produced borders and orders and restricting people's freedoms, for instance, to migrate or to be in control of their bodies.

The far right's ideas of the relationship between nature and humans are also meant to produce certain ideal futures. Identifying different right-wing and racist ecological thought is important because the far right aims to construct a future vision where the white, rich population can maintain their current living standards at the expense of the poor who can be sacrificed. As argued by Kai Heron "ecological politics today isn't about "saving the planet" or "solving the climate crisis" ... [it] is about limiting how many people die, how many are displaced, how many experience insufferable heat, floods, wildfires, and drought. And it's about how many species and habitats will be lost forever". Environmental change and climate change are highly racial phenomena, and the impacts follow pre-existing racial lines (Pulido 2018). In times of climate crisis, this becomes especially relevant, as the far right's climate agenda creates racially defined sacrifice zones, in which certain

territories and their populations, can be sacrificed for the sake of the continuity of fossil capitalism. In the discourses of the far right, [the] Global North's material abilities to cope with climate change is acknowledged, and thus there is no doubt of the survival of the white race.

At the centre of anti-racist/anti-fascist climate action there should be the question of climate justice, as those in the most marginal positions, such as Indigenous peoples, should not bear the biggest burden of climate change. In terms of socially and ecologically just futures, different nationalist and fascist thought must not become mainstream, because borders in a highly interconnected world will reinforce global injustices and power inequalities. This requires active feminist, intersectional but also anti-racist and anti-fascist practice. If we allow damaging environmental rhetoric to flourish, the social consequences of the climate crisis will become worse. In this case, Western countries, due to their wealth and resources, can protect themselves by building walls and by leaving the people of poorer countries to suffer from a disaster caused only by the richest fraction of the world's population.

Even though authoritarian right-wing politics, which emphasise different romanticised, symbolic and affective dimensions of static nature are meant to exclude, the far right sparks a sense of identity, belonging and destiny, for example, by mobilising different discourses of localism and the good life. This must also be acknowledged when we build our anti-racist agendas, which should not only be reactionary but also produce a sense of inclusive belonging, community and hope. In the midst of the climate crisis, these visions should be based on an inclusive understanding of society. Indeed, in times of an increased need for mobility, borders that are a means to categorise people hierarchically are not a socially just and sustainable solution to environmental problems. Nationalism is an inherently exclusionary way to arrange our societies—the criteria of exclusion might differ in times and places, but the effect is the same: restriction of movement and access to material, social and psychological needs. Furthermore, focusing on nationalism and nationalist solutions dismisses how climate and ecological crises have been caused by the racial capitalism and globally unevenly distributed wealth and power. Thus, the role, responsibility, and potential of culture in the Anthropocene are to think about visions that are outside the current statist world, fostering empathy and solidarity also towards the distant other.

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Full moon útesita
Eyjadalur
64°17'31.6"N 21°32'03.0"W

I feel warmth in the middle of my body,
spreading from there. I see the inner fire in
the earth's core, giving warmth and the endless
embracing mother energy. I feel her move me
with wind and earth. I saw a face in the
clouds singing.

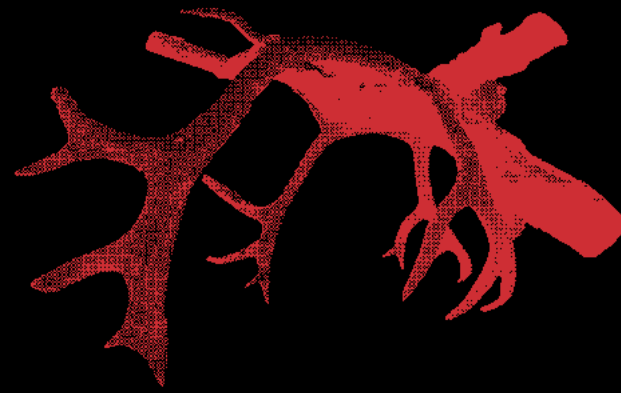
I give you warmth – give warmth to others
I move you – move others
I give you songs – sing

Guðbjörg Rannveig Jóhannesdóttir



Útesita Eyjadalur, Iceland

Photos: Guðbjörg Rannveig Jóhannesdóttir



Anni-Kristiina Juuso

Ticking the Boxes

From Colonisation to Decolonisation to Recolonisation.
Who Holds Power Over Us?

Ticking the Boxes

From colonisation to decolonisation to recolonisation. Who holds power over us?

Remember the black-and-white stickers from some decades ago stating “Same Same But Different” and the ones “All Different All Equal”? I remember. The message is clear and up to date. Sadly, the ideal of us being all human beings with different backgrounds, histories, cultures, ethnicities, and languages but nevertheless same and equal, is still an ideal far from reality.

I am an Indigenous Sámi. My family, as far as we can trace back through the generations, are reindeer herding Mountain Sámi native to the Gáresavvon (Karesuando) area. Our home is located at the heart of the Indigenous Sámi people’s homeland, Sápmi, in northernmost Sweden and northwesternmost Finland. Only the River Muonio divides our home into two nation-states. The Northern Sámi language, its Gáresavvon dialect, is my native tongue and daily life, like sleep, water and food are for all human beings. I have never considered being Sámi to be anything other than normal, a normality. This is the way of thinking and being that I have been brought up with.

In this subjective essay, I will first shortly write about who we, the Sámi people, are. Second, I will consider what kind of understanding we traditionally have of the arts. How is it to be Sámi and to try to pave my own way as an actor? In my experience, it is far from an easy ride to be accepted as an equal professional coming from an Indigenous background. At the same time, it is not even a truism to be accepted among one’s own cultural sphere. I will savour colonisation and decolonisation, words I personally dislike. I have come to notice that the use of these words in today’s world make me wonder if they, instead of doing good, recolonise the Indigenous peoples.

And We Are Still Here

We, the Sámi people are one people in four countries, approximately 100 000 individuals. There are nine different Sámi languages with a variety of dialects but only about 23 000 people speak some of these languages as their native tongue. The most vital language, with around 17 000 native speakers, is Northern Sámi, but all Sámi languages are considered endangered.

There are some characteristics in addition to language constituting us as a people. For the Sámi, kinship which means not only knowing one's large family and relatives through generations but cherishing the relationships in daily life is utterly important. Connection to the region where one's family comes from as well as protecting and preserving Sámi culture including traditional livelihoods such as reindeer herding, fishing, and hunting, are also key characteristics of being Sámi.

If you asked me where the Sámi came from, I could not give you any answer. I would answer as Sámi reindeer herder and writer Johan Turi wrote in his book *Muitalus Sámiid Birra* in 1910 (DuBois 2011, 10)

One never hears about the Sámi's arrival as if they had come from somewhere else. The Sámi have always lived in these parts, here in the Sámi homeland.

The Sámi have inhabited the region called Sápmi, largely the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula in Russia long before this region was divided into four present nation-states. The Sámi have kept their own languages and culture, own habits, and identity until today. The Sámi have a will to remain as their own people also in the future. These characteristics determine the Sámi people as an Indigenous people. Indigenous peoples are not people that sat on some stone first but people that have resided in an area long before it became a nation-state. Indigenous people are people that have been able to survive the establishment of the nation-states and remain their own distinct people. Indigenous peoples show no aspiration of secession and manage to stay distinct under the majority's exercise of power. Out of approximately 5000 Indigenous peoples, the Sámi are the only Indigenous people in the European Union.

Life Is Art

Modern Sápmi and modern Sámi practise all the different artforms there are to be found in the world, but traditionally, the Sámi as a people of nature do not have a word for art in their vocabulary (Gaski 1997, 10). Their focus has been on living in close relationship with nature and it has been important not to leave any traces of human activity in the natural environment. Knowledge as well as tales and stories and their way of living has been transmitted orally, passed down from generation to generation. The concepts of culture and art as well as the Sámi language words for these concepts are relatively new to the Sámi, but it can be assumed that culture and art have existed and have been expressed in the Sámi's own way, even if they have not been understood as so by the majority (Gaski 1997, 10; Jernsletten 1981, 18–20).

It can be said that for the Sámi, life is art. This has especially before been manifested in *DUODJI*, Sámi handicrafts, as they played a central role in Sámi housekeeping. Clothes and utensils were crafted by hand in each family for the family's own use. The forms followed the traditions the family had had before. The decorations were to be the purpose of the use accordingly (Jåks and Jernsletten 1981, 24–26). Engraving figures and decorations on stone, bone and wood with the tip of a knife or some other sharp object can be considered as a traditional form of Sámi art (Manker 1981, 42–47). However, every *DUODJI* had its special place and purpose and nothing was done solely for the sake of handcrafting.

Among the Sámi, literature, visual arts, different kinds of music styles (except traditional *VOIK*), theatre and most recently film, have arisen as arts since the 1970s (Lehtola 2015, 81, 151–203). It could also be debated whether these arts can even be considered to be Sámi arts or just art forms practised by Sámi individuals. Sámi artists contribute features that link the arts to Sámi people, but does this make the majority population's art forms Indigenous Sámi art? Sámi visual artist Iver Jåks and professor Nils Jernsletten noted in the early 1980s that *DUODJI* had lost its everyday importance for the Sámi because e.g. clothes and knives could be bought in shops and *DUODJI* had become art, artefacts and the maker of *DUODJI*, *DUOJAR*, had become a professional specifically creating art that had Sámi attributes which attract a non-Sámi audience (Jåks and Jernsletten 1981, 24–29). According to Jåks (1932–2007) and Jernsletten (1934–2012), the attraction of non-Sámi audience and the loss of everyday importance for Sámi themselves created a demand to the Sámi artists to choose subjects suiting outsiders' understanding of what constitutes Sámi. This in turn creates a dilemma if only art that fits with an outsiders' understanding of Sámi is “real” Sámi art (Jåks and Jernsletten 1981, 24–29). In a way, sadly, this is still the case today as Sámi art and artists are too often viewed through outsiders' understanding of what constitutes Sámi. In addition, Sámi artists may struggle with their artistic work being limited

by difficulties securing long-term funding or the majority of funders lack of understanding regarding the importance of Sámi art. United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Alexandra Xanthaki, has emphasised the nation-state's responsibility to help get Indigenous art to be seen and recognised, to get it “out into the world” and avoid it going to waste (SVT Sápmi 2023).

Nevertheless, given their strong oral traditions, telling stories and remembering through different art forms is natural for the Sámi. It is typical of Sámi artists to practise art in more than one form, as multiartists.

Sámi, Sámi but Still a Sámi

I was six years old when I saw Victor Fleming's *Gone With The Wind* (1939) with Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara. I decided then that I would become an actor and started by engaging in whatever possible acting a far north village and its primary school could offer, then at the age of 15 I moved 1000 km south of my family home to study at Kallio upper secondary school of performing arts in Helsinki, the capital of Finland. After my matriculation, I was to apply to—and of course be accepted—to study at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki. After graduating as a professional, I would act in some theatre productions and finally die on stage. Unfortunately, my plan did not work out. Despite trying for years and years, I was never accepted to study at the Theatre Academy, and I understood that to be taken seriously, as a “real” actor, the road would be more of a bumpy one, if I would ever even make it.

In 2001, I was given a chance to show to myself that I could make it. I was chosen to play the lead female role in a Russian movie, *The Cuckoo* (2002), by Alexander Rogozhkin (1949–2021). My character “Anni” in *The Cuckoo* was a young Sámi widow whose husband had been taken away to fight in the Second World War. “Anni” was living on her own somewhere in northern Finland and spoke my native language, Sámi. After years of struggling to get to study acting to become a professional, this Russian pacifist piece of art rescued me from despair and helped me prove to myself that acting is something I can do, no matter what anyone else says. I travelled around the world and attended première openings and film festivals with *The Cuckoo* for around six years and received awards for best female actor at several film festivals and from the Russian Film Academy.

With all the awards I received, I imagined doors would open but nothing happened until 2006 when I played the lead in Norwegian Sámi film director Nils Gaup's *The Kautokeino Rebellion* (2008). For the part of

“Elen Skum”, I won an Amanda Award (Norway's national film prize) for best female actor in 2008. However, the doors remained closed. No one was interested in having me in a movie and at castings I got to hear how my skin and hair colour, way of speaking and my height were somehow not suitable and “besides, we don't have Sámi roles”. I realised I had been type-casted as a Sámi. I would be good enough to play a Sámi person but I was not considered an actor.

Despite having had an agent for almost two decades, participating in castings and making connections, winning awards, and luckily having had a couple of chances to act as “a normal white person”, I feel I have never really been able to be recognised as anything other than a Sámi person that acted as a Sámi in some films. Maybe no one has dared to just say “Anni, you cannot act”. Still, with all the life experience that I have, I dare to link “rejection” to being a Sámi. A one-off experience would not hurt but continuously experiencing being “othered” regardless of the context, makes one wonder and think, is this all because of what I am and cannot—or will not—erase?

I imagined that if the majority treats me as “other”, of course then my own people will collaborate with me. In my case, my own people have not treated me differently from the majority. I feel somewhat stigmatised as “the one collaborating with the majority and therefore not enough a Sámi artist”. It seems that for the Sámi cultural community, an artist needs to be a Sámi, artist and an activist in joint harmony to be given the chance to collaborate with it. It is the era of indigenisation. I on the other hand am Sámi and an actor but not solely a Sámi actor.

Sámi filmmaking has bloomed since Gaup's *Kautokeino Rebellion*, The International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI), established in Kautokeino, Norway, is an important contributor and primus motor in striving for the Sámi film industry to be recognised globally and supports Sámi filmmakers to become able to make Sámi films. It is, however, somewhat dangerous, if having the power to make or break individuals' careers is in the hands of one sole agent.

From Colonising to Decolonising to Recolonising

Hardly anyone denies colonisation. Today, we talk about decolonisation. It is the current trend. In my opinion, a tricky trend as the word alone means nothing. The official definitions of what the words colonisation and decolonisation mean aside, for me, the former means white supremacy, having power over others and the latter means the breakdown of power that someone holds over others. Because the power

has been in the hands of the majority for ages, I argue that it is completely impossible to achieve decolonisation. The power the majority holds is embedded deep within the structures and to break down the majority's power, we would need to be able to dig deep and break down these structures. Which, I am sad to say, is not possible because people with power are not ready to give it up. It is the *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes.

For me, colonisation and decolonisation are words linked to the existence of Indigenous peoples under the power of majority. I have noticed though, especially in Finland, that these words seem to have become words for solving any minority's struggle against the majority. I remain in the Indigenous world and think that decolonising, understood as mildly trying to get majorities to understand and respect the Indigenous peoples, could be possible but even this needs a lot of hard work and is not done overnight. Even an increase of knowledge and respect means digging into some structures.

Tokenism is a somewhat increasingly popular phenomenon and is considered by some to be an act of decolonisation. Symbolic acts such as choosing an Indigenous person for a position merely to look good to others is not decolonisation or correct. If done only for this reason, tokenism will never be able to open the majority's eyes to what it is like to live as "other", not belonging to the majority.

Decolonisation will never be more than empty talk about decolonisation as a "funny" word, if the speakers do not understand what colonisation and decolonisation mean, if they have not internalised the depth and meaning of these words. In a way, colonisation is present day as the Indigenous peoples in many nation-states struggle for their fundamental rights, the right to exist as their own people without the fear of forced assimilation.

A rosy understanding of decolonisation can cause recolonisation. To assume is not knowing and this can, despite well-meaning intentions, can result in repeat colonisation. Recolonisation occurs e.g. when Indigenous artists feel their art must correspond to the assumptions of some other ideas or people than their own and are therefore not free to express their art the way they want out of fear that it will not be considered Indigenous otherwise. Or when Indigenous peoples feel that it is necessary to show gratitude to those in power so as not to lose their (albeit minor) support for Indigenous matters.

Recolonisation can be a result of even intentionally good deeds. Repatriations of Indigenous objects from the majority populations' museums are trending and worth supporting because of their possibility to strengthen the Indigenous peoples' self-determination (Nylander 2023, 74)^o. However, it is not unproblematic. Though the homecoming

of Indigenous objects to the Indigenous people from whom the objects have been taken as a colonial act is important, who determines when these objects have really come home? In my opinion, repatriation from a majority-owned museum to another, even if it is an indigenous museum, is not a real homecoming. For example, in the case of the Sámi people, the objects taken have been utility articles and are only truly home when they are back among the families they have originally been taken from, not in an indigenous museum in an indigenous area somewhere far away from home.

Concluding Remarks

It is not easy to be a human being. It is being a predator of the worst kind. Old ways and habits need a lot of work to be changed. Sometimes the alleged change is not a real change but more of a thought of a change. A Sámi rights activist told me once that the motivation behind their activism for Indigenous rights in the 1970s was an attempt to get others to cooperate with the Indigenous peoples. Now that the trend is to talk about colonisation and thrive to decolonise, the Indigenous peoples themselves seem to concentrate on indigenisation as an answer to generations of oppression by the majorities. The 1970s attempts at cooperation have turned into segregation and recolonisation. The stickers "Same, Same, But Different" and "All Different, All Equal" remain an Ideal.

^o More on repatriation, see Nylanders dissertation *From Repatriation To Rematriation. Dismantling The Attitudes And Potentials Behind The Repatriation Of Sámi Heritage*, 2023.

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Útesita Pyhäluoto, Finland

Full moon útesita
Pyhäluoto
64°28'22.5"N 24°11'44.9"E

Sand Whale

When I sat on the rock for a while, the sand seemed to me as a creature of its own, something of which I only saw a little part of, a side, a hip of an enormous whale-like form. But enough to see it was living, and it was maybe not the first time I saw the sand as a living thing, something that had a rhythm, breathing of its own. Maybe as a child I had thought of the sand of this sea like that, but only with Imagination. I think now that this is also the entity of movement, opposite of suppressed and prisoned. A land rising for a long time, gradually after ice age and movement in smaller and smaller grains of sand, in the rhythms of the sea and other engaged waves.

Photos: Tiina Prittinen

Útesita Pyhäluoto, Finland



Tiina Prittinen

Section 2

listening introspection immersion



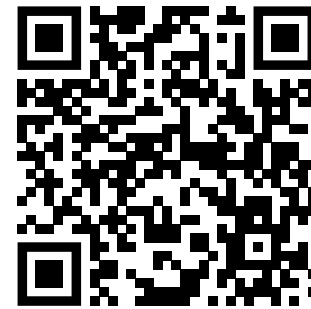


Daina Pupkevičiūtė

*Attunement,
or to Recognise
the Unspectacular*

Attunement, or to Recognise the Unspectacular

DAINA PUPKEVIČIŪTĒ



Instructions

This text has a soundscape linked to it. Feel free to either first read the text and listen to the soundscape afterwards, or to start the soundscape and read the text while sound plays in the background.

“I wanted to see you so,” goes one song I composed this autumn. “I wanted to see you so,” I repeat, over and over, cautiously confessing that “I did not want to come in my human shape”. I sing to an audience in a dark room, darkness protecting me from confronting my fear of disclosing the intimate. I neither hear nor see other humans in the space that are with me. I am, however, certain they are there and (think) I can feel the energy we share. The reverb and delay are set so that the voice fills the space, bouncing off from one side to the other in a simulated quadraphonic setup, creating an illusion of motion throughout the release phase. Gradually, the pitch shifts, the human voice decaying the further it goes, leaving a murky tail behind, slowly eaten away by long pauses. Only shimmers remain.

“I wanted to see you so,” I now say soundlessly to the blueish-white in front and above me—my eyes resting on the snow, immaculate, covering a mire in the Estonian south.

- I first encountered the concept of the ruination in the texts by Yael Navaro-Yashin, and I feel that in similar ways ruination or (capitalist) ruin-making practices and the landscapes of abandon resonate in the texts by Anna Tsing. See Navaro-Yashin 2009; Navaro-Yashin 2012; as well as Tsing 2019

Physical laws have it so that in order to see a thing we need an object, a seeing eye, a brain, and a source of light. There is almost too much light to make out the shapes. I am here because I want to understand the transformative past, catastrophic nowness and probable future and I think that the mire can help me. The mire is here, albeit I cannot see it. It is there along with or despite history of practices of ruination^o: yet another horizon disturbed and fragilised. How will I find that something I seek simply by looking at snow cover over the mire-*scape*? This—it feels like a game meant to stretch the muscles I use for abstract processing. What are the tools I should use to make the incisions that would be deep enough to glean the traces of time, yet fine and precise enough to not cause additional damage? What sort of light must it be to strike objects, some of them now a mere shimmer of the past, within a landscape of thousands of years? What is it that I expect to resurge from beneath the layers upon layers of snow, *SPHAGNUM*, matter decomposing, matter decomposed, delving all the way down through strata?

In western cultures, seeing has long dominated the hierarchy of the senses. “*YOU’D HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT*”, the saying goes, discrediting all the less- and in-visible data about in the world we dwell in. “*DON’T BELIEVE ALL THAT YOU HEAR*”, confirms another. Fresh grains of snow reflect the light, I lock my gaze onto the horizon. Translucent, the flakes reflect my gaze back to me.

Snow makes the wooden trail slippery, I step off of it. I kneel into the mass of snow and lower myself for an extreme close-up. I can make out the shapes, an ordered rhythm of ice crystals, each with their six arms open in an embrace. That embrace sucks me in—I lose my balance and fall face-first into the snow. Shocked, I fling my arms to lift myself upright in a matter of a second, I think. My heart races as I look around self-consciously, just to know if there were any other human animals to witness my low flight. I am reassured by the company of scanty birches in the vicinity: it is just us, the snow and the Hypersea beneath us.

I love the sound of *HYPERSEA*: the sound that I imagine it makes as much as the sound of this three-syllable word. The first of the three I pronounce exhaling an unnecessary amount of air as if to make space for the sea that comes after, with a breathless [sɪ:]. A wave swallows a shore.

The concept of Hypersea was originally proposed by palaeontologists Mark and Dianna McMenamins as a hypothesis to explain the emergence of life on land as well as nearly simultaneous emergence of both plant and animal kingdoms. The McMenamins connect all land biota into one complex system of organisms which, upon leaving the sea, metaphorically and not, carried “the sea within” (McMenamin and McMenamin 1994, 5), conserving the water within themselves in order to survive in arid land environments. Hypersea consists of “all eukaryotic organisms on land and their symbionts”(McMenamin 2019, 265) which

actively contribute in directing “a flow of nutrient-rich fluids” or are in a symbiotic relationship with the organisms that do (McMenamin and McMenamin 1994, 4). The McMenamins write about the move from sea to land as a colonisation of two environments: it was not only the surface of land to be colonised, but also “the Hypersea environment formed by the tissues and body fluid of plants, animals, and fungi that themselves colonised the land” (McMenamin and McMenamin 1994, 19). Dwellers of the Hypersea are entangled, dialogical, interdependent, symbiotic, parasitical. Some of them developed the ability to circulate nutrients among the kingdoms, some acquired a set of skills to collaborate, some adapted so that they could thrive within the bodily fluids of others. Bodies feeding on bodies within other bodies is just one among many of the ways these intimacies go.

Beneath the frozen droplets of water that make up the white blanket of mirrors around me, there hums the Hypersea. Each one of these minute translucent crystals above it is a variation on molecules of water in a wild dance with the elements. Here—around me as well as within me—the solid sea and Hypersea collide to form an ocean of lives. It extends my visual field, expands through time in a way I am not able to fathom, it connects roots, limbs, bodies via networks of fluid, gas and impulse-based exchange, forming heterogeneous living assemblages of care and support.

The concept of Hypersea failed to gain a following in the nineties, however, reshaped the concept recently re-appeared within the posthumanist hydro-feminist thought (see Neimanis 2017, 121-126) and mobility studies (Sutherland 2022; Peters and Steinberg 2019). In the latter field, the concept is deployed in pursuit of adequate decolonised approaches in thinking about the ocean and ocean mobility. Hypersea is used as a conceptual tool to contrast bounded western concepts of (national) lands and borders, proposing a possibility of borderless imaginings.

Hypersea—an image, a concept, a paradigm—can indeed turn fruitful. It helps reflect a worlding^o of communities based on massive entanglements and inter-dependencies, rather than a world fragmented by divisive categories and bordered lifeworlds. Bordered is a falsified version of the lived reality of the dwellers of the Hypersea.

Curious about interspecies intimacy, I listen to the Hypersea beneath to hear the rush of nutrients flowing via mycorrhizal pathways. Yet I stand observing, not able to attune to and acknowledge that I am part rather than outside of it all. Tuning in to the most intimate of murmurs becomes a complex exercise involving seeing with the inner eye, listening with the inner ear, focusing to trace imperceptible motions, all the while disregarding the cold biting into my exposed skin. The white in front of me allows for space: I relax my gaze and let the contours blur, deploying other sensibilities within, extending them outward to feel

- I use the term *WORLDING* in the sense of *MAKING OF THE WORLD*, implying a process that is actively shaped, vibrant, ever emerging, relational. A great overview of the term has been done by Helen Palmer and Vicky Hunter in the New Materialism Almanac, see online here: <https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/w/worlding.html>

beyond the body. Such is my disconnect from this Hypersea both myself and *SPHAGNUM* and a myriad of others co-constitute within, around and above this mire, that it feels like a new language I am starting to learn. This one does not involve phonetic practice, but rather learning a vocabulary of minimal internal motions that re-sync my blood flow with the flows of the biota I have forgotten I am part of. I crave to re-attune my sensibility to the world in which seeing only works if it reaches beyond optical qualities and the exchange between light, shape and electric impulse, to simplify to an extreme. This world beyond gaze and text is not immediately available to me. Sensibility to it was closed off and locked away centuries back, from myself and from others like myself, bounded within the framework of thought based on divisions. We come in human shape and we allow ourselves to be instructed that there is land, which meets the sea, and you and I are different. In this particular place, centuries of violent intrusions draining the mire and transforming it into agricultural lands, pastures, city districts and other sites of human commutation and habitation have dulled the sensitivity of the antennae that allow us to recognise our familiars.

I yearn to learn to recognise my kin in all their forms, shapes and functions. There is no immediacy in the process: it takes time to gather crumbs of data and liaise it to understand the weight of expansions, invasions and violence. It requires patience to reassemble the picture in which continents are not divided by rivers and seas, but rather connected via the world ocean, both liquid and solid, as cloud and as rain. Texts are a start, yes, but then they must be transcended by other types of trans-textual forms^o, go beyond language, sensations, reaching even beyond.

Could a paradigm in which togetherness of all land species, even those invisible to the human eye because of their size, or concealed from it within the cavities of various bodies, help build a (more) compassionate entanglement of human-to-all-life? The mire, the ocean, the Hypersea remind that I am^o (we are) but one (some) among a plethora of species in this living mesh that makes up the planet. In this paradigm, the human voice decays, soon leaving no trail behind it. The crystals of snow reverberate light, rebounding back and forth, lulled by the wind.

Note of Recognition

Kind thanks to my language editor and friend Celine Marks for kind and non-destructive incisions that made my English sound English enough.

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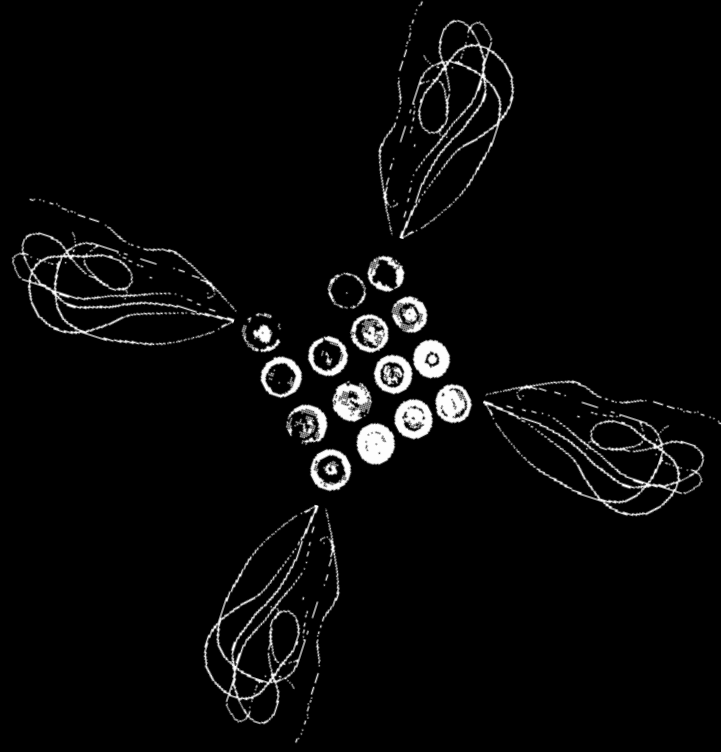
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• One example of delving into the ocean that expands over centuries since the invasions to now and working with tools that are other than language and text, are maps in *Feral Atlas*, available online: feralatlas.supdigital.org (Tsing, et al. 2020).

• Or, rather, we are – me and my familiars, parasites, bacteria, fungi?



Organised by
MAAJAAM

Living Water Workshop by Aly Ogasian & Claudia O'Steen

PARTICIPANTS

Ase Brunborg Lie (NO), Madlen Hirtentreu (EE), Leopold Inkapööl (SE), Natalia Kodratenko (EE), Eleftheria Kofidou (GR) Eugenio Marini (IT), Valerio Marin (IT), Ingrid Helena Pajo (EE), Tiina Prittinen (FI) and Junny Yeung (HK).

LINK TO DOCUMENTATION
<https://www.maajaam.ee>

Photo: Epp Kuru



Living Water experiments on the lake

The workshop looked at how we can create tangible linkages between human activity and climate change; examining how individual choices can contribute to the larger instability or stability of the system. Workshop participants conducted fieldwork at Maajaam, developing processes for analysing the diverse landscapes on the farm.

Programming included a lecture on the importance of bogs in Estonia and how they are being used to build biodiversity by Volha Kaskevich, Junior Researcher and Doctoral candidate in Environmental Sciences and Applied Biology and Chair of Environmental Protection and Landscape Management at the Estonian University of Life Sciences.



Valerio, Eleftheria And Ingrid In Their Element

The artists also lectured on artistic research and fieldwork and led a soil chromatography workshop— a photographic process used to analyse the chemical, physical and biological characteristics at different locations on the Maajaam farm.



Claudia O' Steen (On The Right) Instructing The Participants Of The Workshop



In the Lab of Maajaam



Soil chromatography samples

The workshop resulted in an archive of soil chromatographs that revealed the biological characteristics of the Maajaam earth, observations and documentation made by participants, and samples collected. Together this resulted in a map that revealed the biodiversity at Maajaam.



Lab of Maajaam



Soil chromatography based on mushroom soil

All Photos By: Epp Kubu



Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir

*Listening to the
More-than-Human*

Listening to the More-than-Human

GUÐBJÖRG R. JÓHANNESDÓTTIR

As I heard the *Full Moon—Utesita* workshop organised by The Independent AIR introduced at a SOTAN meeting, I felt my body respond with excitement. There was a surge, a felt movement upwards in the middle of my body, from the navel to the chest and up to the throat, I felt my eyebrows move upwards, my eyes open wider and a smile making its way to my lips. I felt a resonance, a response forming inside of me that needed to be let out. So I raised my electronic Zoom hand and said that I thought I might have something to offer to the mission of this workshop. The task that was being introduced was that of exploring our own entanglement with nature by staying outside, each in our own chosen place in nature, asking this place: “I ask of you to share with me the gift of any message that I could share with others.” How can we do this?, many would ask. How can we ask questions to the more-than-human and get answers from entities that don't speak our human language of words? How can we do this without just projecting our own answers? How can we *REALLY* listen to the more-than-human? My resonance and response emerged because in the last seven years, I have been learning and practising two methods that in my view, are exactly the tools that are needed for such a mission. These tools can give us access to our embodied lived experience and the knowledge that emerges from there, and as I will argue here, it is only through our bodies as nature that we can really listen to nature.

The mission of the *Full Moon—Utesita* can be seen as a reaction to the disconnection and disenchantment of nature that characterises Western culture. In response to this disconnection we need to reconnect to our senses and to our own lived bodily experience (Petitmengin 2021); we need to reconnect with our animal being, to what we have in common with other species of the earth. We need to remember that we are

earthlings, creatures that are always already intertwined with the earth and all of its other earthlings. Western culture has been obsessed with the idea of the uniqueness of the human, which stands above, autonomous and detached from nature. Although we have been realising in the last decades how this idea was a misunderstanding that we have taken too far, it is not easy to disentangle our consciousness from it, as we have been so deeply immersed in it. So how can we go back to our animal being that allows us to listen more carefully and be more in tune with our fellow earthlings? In this chapter, I will introduce two methods that I believe can support us on this path: Eugene Gendlin's focusing method (Gendlin 1982) and Claire Petitmengin's micro-phenomenological interview method (Petitmengin 2006). While focusing allows us to become aware of and engage with what Gendlin calls our bodily *FELT SENSE OF A SITUATION*, the micro-phenomenological interview allows us to explore our lived experiences in great detail and become aware of dimensions of our experiences that usually go unnoticed. Both methods are capable of bringing us back to the body. As bodies we are nature, so it is only at the level of our bodily experience that we can possibly reconnect with it.

The Body as Environment, the Body as Nature

The methods of focusing and micro-phenomenology are both grounded in a phenomenological philosophy of the body. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasised with his concept of the flesh of the world (Merleau-Ponty 1968), and Eugene Gendlin with his concept of the organism-person-environment process (Gendlin 2017), there are no boundaries between us as bodies and our environments. Nature is thus not in front of us, outside of us, but rather it is our soil; it is what carries us (Merleau-Ponty 2003). As bodies, we are the nature that carries us, an organic life form just like any other plant and animal body; material, relational, temporal, contextual, conditional beings. We are always already entangled and intertwined with the environments we find ourselves in. This relational understanding of the human being has slowly but surely been replacing the old idea of the human being as a detached autonomous being, an individual separated from and in control of their environment.

If we take this relational understanding of the human body-environment-being seriously, we need methods for reconnecting with and anchoring to *LIVED* experience. What is *LIVED* experience, one might ask? Is there any experience that is not *LIVED*? The *LIVED* aspect of experience refers to the *HOW* of experience, it directs our focus from the *WHAT* to the *HOW*, that is away from the object we are experiencing, to *HOW* we sense our

experiencing from the inside out. The account I gave at the beginning of this chapter of my own inner resonating response at a Zoom meeting is an example of the *HOW* of experience, the felt bodily dimension that is always there but which we seldom notice. Both Gendlin and Petitmengin have given great examples of the moments in which we do notice this dimension the most, for example when we realise (by a sudden bodily sensation, almost like being startled) that we have forgotten something important, and search inwardly for what it was until we find the thing that “matches” the sense and releases the tension created by it; when we notice that we can sense the space behind our backs, when we lose the thread of what we wanted to say, when we direct our attention to the sensations that a specific artwork creates inside us in contrast to another one, or a specific environment in contrast to another one, when a poet or a painter looks for the next line or a dancer searches for the next movement:

An artist stands before an unfinished picture, pondering it, seeing, feeling, bodily sensing it, having a “...” Suppose the artist's “...” is one of some dissatisfaction. Is that an emotional reaction, simply a feeling - tone? No indeed. Implicit in the “...” is the artist's training, experience with many designs, and much else. But more: the “...” is also the implying of the next line, which has not yet come. [...] The “...” is quite demanding. It recognises the failure of each attempt. It seems to know precisely what it wants and it knows that those attempts are not it. (Gendlin, 1992, 348)

[I]magine that you are in a museum that you know, in front of a picture that you like very much. Close your eyes for a few moments and contemplate the picture as if it was in front of you, while directing your attention to the sensation that this picture creates inside you. It is a blurred sensation, diffuse, difficult to describe but nevertheless intense and specific (it would be very different if you were imagining another picture). The same experience could be achieved by evoking for example a poem, or even a novel, the title alone of which evokes a complex world of fleeting impressions, which are fuzzy, but full of meaning. (Petitmengin 2007, 56)

These two examples make it so clear in my view, that this felt dimension of experience lies at the heart of aesthetic perception, whether we are engaged in such perception in the process of creating art or while we are experiencing art. Pierre Hadot described aesthetic perception as perceiving like an artist; perceiving only to perceive (Hadot 2006). It is this kind of perception that we were implicitly asked to focus on in the *Full Moon — Utesita* project. I say implicitly, because in a group of artists there is no need to ask them to enter the aesthetic mode of perception in their approach to a topic. How they choose to enter it however, may or may not include paying close attention to the lived bodily dimension of their experience. Countless artists who have described how their artistic process always involves some methods of going inside the body or connecting to embodied intuition do not explicitly say what it is that they are connecting to inside the body. I believe that an extra depth can be added to the

aesthetic attention we give to what we perceive by peeling back one more layer, to look at what is underneath embodied intuition, namely, the bodily felt sense of a situation, or the felt dimension of experience. Both focusing and micro-phenomenology teach us to become aware of this added depth, a depth that possibly allows us to move closer to *REALLY* listening to the more-than-human, and allows us to understand how the aesthetic, felt mode of perception is always already there, affecting how we respond to the world, whether we notice it or not.

Methods for Accessing Lived Experience

This felt dimension is at the heart of the methods developed by Eugene Gendlin and Claire Petitmengin. While Gendlin came to describe and teach the focusing process through his research in philosophy and psychology on the relationship between language, meaning and the body, Petitmengin developed the micro-phenomenological interview method in the context of neurophenomenology's call for a scientific method to study human experience, since relying on the study of cerebral activity is not enough to understand the functioning of the mind. These different aims and contexts are mirrored in the main difference between the two methods; while focusing allows us to pay attention to, describe and engage with what we are sensing in a specific situation right now, micro-phenomenology allows us to pay attention to and describe in great detail what we sensed during an experience that has already happened. Returning to the *UTESITA* and more specifically my own experience during my *UTESITA*, knowing the basic focusing move of being able to shift my attention to and engage with the bodily felt sense of what I was perceiving allowed me to notice more closely in each moment how the environment and living beings in it were encouraging/coaxing me into a conversation or a dance, while micro-phenomenology allowed me to go back afterwards, choose one or more moments of the whole *UTESITA* experience and discover hidden layers of these moments that I had not been aware of before. To allow the reader to move more closely towards these methods, I will now describe each of them and offer experiential invitations so that the effects of the methods can possibly be felt.

Focusing

Through his research on the effectiveness of psychotherapy, Gendlin realised that some people seem to have a natural ability to connect with a felt and embodied dimension of the issues they are concerned with to release their emotions and thoughts, while others seem to have disconnected from that ability. To make this process available to everyone,

Gendlin described what he witnessed people do when they did this attentive movement. This description then became referred to as the focusing process. Gendlin always emphasised that he did not invent focusing, he only described something that was already there, making it available for everyone to learn and become aware of.

For those of us who feel very familiar with this process of listening from the inside, feeling that we are already doing it, the important new step that comes with focusing is the *AWARENESS* of the felt sense and learning to access it *CONSCIOUSLY*. Even when we do listen to our body's inner knowing, we are most often not aware of this dimension and tend to write it off as "inspired moments" or "following intuition." We do not notice or pay attention to the fact that we are felt-sensing; having a very strong bodily feel of some issue or project before being able to express our ideas about it. In my own case, I didn't notice the inner movements that were always a part of my philosophical thinking and I did not know how they function; or how I could engage with them in a direct way. Even though I had always had inner movements accompanying my thoughts and had always engaged with them unconsciously, doing it in a conscious way changed everything.

The steps that Gendlin describes in his book *Focusing*, are first **Clearing a space**: making a clear, quiet space inside, second **Getting a FELT SENSE**: asking "What is the feel of this whole thing?" and, instead of answering with one's already-known analysis, waiting silently for the subtle, intuitive, "bodily feel" of "the whole thing" to form. The third step is **Finding a HANDLE**; some words or an image that begin to capture the "feel of the whole thing,"; and the fourth step is **Resonating and Checking**: taking the *HANDLE* words or image and holding them against the felt sense, asking "is this right?" The fifth step is **Asking**: which involves asking open-ended questions to the felt sense and waiting silently for new insights or understanding to create what Gendlin called a *FELT SHIFT* in how the body holds the situation that is being sensed. The last step is **Receiving**: at each new step, each felt shift, taking a moment to sit with the felt sense of this new insight.

For the purpose of the *UTESITA* project, the second step of getting a felt sense was most important, so to prepare us for the *UTESITA*, I shared the following exercise of getting a felt sense of a specific environment with the group: Close your eyes and find a way to ground your attention calmly in the middle of your body, perhaps by taking some deep breaths. Try to make your attention soft, curious and caring. Then notice what happens in your body as you ask yourself how it would be if you were right now in your favourite place in nature, or any place that you feel comfortable in. Notice any subtle movements or responses, especially in the middle of your torso. When you notice something, just gently hold your attention on that something and notice its qualities. Then after a while, do the same thing but this time with a place that is different, perhaps one that you do not feel so comfortable in.

After doing this exercise, it is easier to notice how the body responds differently, with a different felt sense, in each different situation or environment we are in. Anytime we sit down in a new environment, we can turn our attention to the body and notice the felt sense, the *HOW* of this moment.

Micro-Phenomenology

The aim of the micro-phenomenological interview is to allow for a microscopic attention to the *HOW* of experience, which makes it possible to study the finer threads and detailed structure of any type of experience, for example the experience of getting a new idea, the experience of meditation, or listening to music (Petitmengin 2007; Petitmengin et al. 2017; Petitmengin and Bitbol 2009). By directing our attention from the *WHAT* to the *HOW*, the micro-phenomenological interview asks us to do something that is quite unfamiliar at first, since we tend to be more focused on *WHAT* we are experiencing rather than *HOW* we are experiencing it. For this reason, one of the roles of the interviewer is to help the interviewee refocus on the *HOW* of the moment to be explored each time the focus drifts to the *WHAT*, or the satellite dimensions of experience, as Petitmengin calls them.

The main satellite dimensions that we tend to drift into when we are describing our experience are the context, knowledge, judgments and goals. While some of the contexts may be helpful for the main goal of the interview, which is evoking the past experience of a chosen specific moment, the other satellites need to be avoided. To be able to help the interviewee evoke the experience, to such an extent that the past experience becomes more present than the interview situation, the interviewer helps them rediscover very precisely the sensorial context of the experience, asking for example what they see, what they hear, smell, taste, what position their body is in etc. This helps the interviewee access what Edmund Husserl, the founding father of phenomenology, called “passive memory”. According to him, we are always in the process of memorising what we live, but involuntarily, without being aware of memorising. These involuntary memories are the content of our passive memory that we access in the micro-phenomenological interview. When the experience has been evoked, the interviewer helps the interviewee describe the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of the experience in fine-grained details.

In the context of the *UTESITA*, each of us chose one specific meaningful moment that we had during our *UTESITA* and then interviewed each other on the unfolding of our experiences. The reader might try evoking an experience (a specific moment with a clear beginning and ending), by

describing where you were and when, and then going into the different sensorial dimensions of what you saw, heard, smelled, touched, in what position your body was, what you thought or felt. If the experience can be evoked in this way, you might try to describe some more details of how the experience unfolded in time, and then describe how you saw what you saw, how you knew that you thought or felt this or that, how you heard what you heard, always zooming more and more closely into the how.

Closing

In this chapter, I have hopefully given the readers a sense of how important it is in our current situation of disconnection to have methods and tools for reconnecting with and anchoring in lived experience; for getting back to the wisdom of the body, which is the wisdom of nature. I asked how we can go back to our animal/plant being that allows us to listen more carefully and be more in tune with our fellow earthlings. The level of perceptive being that we have in common with plants and animals is this inner sense of ourselves situated in the environment, like a forward-moving character of life that moves towards light and nutrition, this inner sense can guide us towards a more life-giving and nourishing understanding of our being and interaction in the world. This inner sense is perhaps also the core of the aesthetic sensibilities of the human animal. When we perceive something aesthetically we are asking ourselves inwardly: how does this situation I’m perceiving resonate within me, how does it move within me? Being aware of this dimension, whether we call it the aesthetic dimension or the felt dimension, is an important part of being able to *REALLY* listen to the more-than-human, both within and outside of ourselves. Fortunately, the awareness of the lived, embodied dimensions of experience is growing in many different contexts and fields in Western societies, and many other methods and tools for enriching this awareness than focusing and micro-phenomenology are being developed, practised and explored within the different contexts of art, science and spiritual practices. A felt shift in our collective consciousness is slowly, silently and surely underway, a shift that brings us earthlings back to ourselves, back to the earth.

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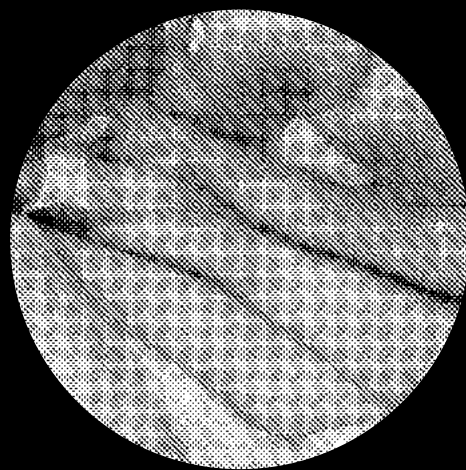
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Introduction, presentations, micro workshop, and discussions: 5–24 May. Útesita: 26 May 2021

Organised by
The Independent Air

Location: **Útesita –
Full Moon Presence** Duration:

PARTICIPANTS

Ase Brunborg Lie (NO), Roland van Dierendonck (NL), Tinna Grétarsdóttir (IS), Guðbjörg Rannveig Jóhannesdóttir (IS), Cathrine Kramer (NO), Pia Lindman (FI), Nina Lykke (DK), Tiina Prittinen (FI), Antti Tenetz (FI), Line Thastum (DK) and Emilia Ukkonen (FI).

Speakers and presenters:

Archaeologist and shaman Maria Lisette Jacobsen: “The power of Nature”, professor at Iceland University of the Arts Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir: “Focusing workshop” and “Micro-phenomenology- interview workshop”, curator at Natural History Museum London, Dr. Tom White: “How does the Moon affect life on Earth?” and professor of Political Science Lars Tønder: “New materialism and new community forming processes”.

PLACES SELECTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Tufoen Tøyenparken, Norway. Eyjadalur, Iceland. Hørbylunde, Denmark. Torshovparken, Norway. Sletteviki, Norway. Knudeklint, Denmark. Pyhäluoto, Finland. Keldur Rangárvöllum, Iceland. Kumblinge, Finland. Arctic Garden, Oulanka River, Finland. Fagerviksvägen, Finland.



Útesita Eyjadalur, Iceland.

Photo: Guðbjörg Rannveig Jóhannesdóttir

Eleven artists, writers, and researchers from the Nordic State of the Art Network have been staying outside each at their special chosen place in nature in their respective countries during the Full Moon night on May 26, 2021. The activities were held online due to the pandemic situation at

the time. The Útesita was prepared and completed through presentations, micro-workshops and discussions which gave the participants a common starting point as well as a common platform for sharing the special experience that the awakening night is.

Photo: Tinna Grétarsdóttir



Útesita, Keldur Rangárvöllum.



Photo: Antti Tenetz

Útesita Arctic Garden Oulankariver, Finland.

The intention was during this awakening night or “Útesita” in the old Nordic language, to open ourselves towards understanding our entanglement with nature and to listen to the voice of the landscape and the more-than-human world. The intention was also to express the experience of listening and the answers we got in a way that could be shared with others.

Photo: Tinna Grétarsdóttir



Útesita, Keldur Rangárvöllum.

We humbly thank the different places in nature where we have held our Útesita and hope that our interpretation of the answers we have received can inspire others. Only through understanding and value our entanglement, mutual influence and equality with nature and the more-than-human world, we can create a sustainable future.

Útesita Hørbylunde

Spring at the foot of a wooded hill
56°06'40.2"N 9°26'00.1"E

Flickering silver veil hangs in the lattice ornaments of the twigs
moonlight from a moon hidden behind clouds
legal randomness shapes the presence and pattern of the trees and plants in relation to each other
the feeling of being included, received, a part of, safe, home
the gentleness of this place and the contrast to the words whispered by the spring as an answer to
my question: "I ask of you to share with me the gift of any message that I could share with others"
"separation (and fading in the dark) is wrong"

Calling silently
searching
as ripples behind the consciousness

Separated

Urgent
in laptops
cars
spreadsheet

Searching under the skin
blind
longings
insatiable
unredeemed in dissected knowledge

closer, closer to
Dna
Quantum mechanics
Vaccine
Cyberspace
Power over things

but forgotten
in the forest floor
in the moss
in the first cyanobacteria

Razor sharp surgical incisions
without pain

Separation
from the source
the rivers of the bodies
and the eyes of the wind in the mouth
the essence of the stones
the green of the photosynthesis
in the pupils
in the lungs

The vibrant
life from death
the night
Razor sharp we have cut

Line Thastum

Photos: Line Thastum



Útesita Hørbylunde, Denmark

Útesita Hørbylunde, Denmark





Jón Sonni Jensen & Guðrið Poulsen
Kim Simonsen
Jón Aldará

A Common Thread

The following three texts describe a common thread of observative, constructive, and perceptual effects that humans have on nature. The first one describes a passive reflection through a walk, the second a poetic fusion between humans and nature, and the third a scientific layout of necessary actions through a nature restoration project.

1. *A Reflection on a Walk*

JÓN SONNI JENSEN AND
GUÐRÍÐ POULSEN

The Site

We find ourselves in the area called *HÚSAHAGI*. A dumping ground for currently non-recyclable and organic waste overlooking the Faroese capital Tórshavn. This is the same area where the Faroese delegates organised a so-called *ART - HIKE* in connection with our SOTAN workshop in the Summer of 2022 entitled *The Rewilding And Earth Making Tour—Connectedness In Science And Art*. In the following text and during our art-hike, we want to specifically emphasise the discrepancy of the area regarding deconstruction vs reconstruction and passive vs active processes.

We have, during our process, jokingly referred to this particular area as the *REVERSE OF THE CITY*. *Húсахagi* very clearly illustrates two extremes via a road splitting the area in two. On one side, you can observe the original and raw landscape. And in the last decade, the upper area on this side has also been dedicated to a wind farm producing sustainable wind energy. On the other side, we see a kind of antithesis to this. An area, which in the last four to five decades has been used as a waste disposal site. Here, all of the waste that does not get burned or recycled gets dumped and then covered with soil. This waste can be anything from asphalt to horse manure. This contrasting profile clearly illustrates the ongoing processes of human intervention in an area—both positive and negative.

“Terrain vague can be seen in the relationship between the absence of use, of activity, and the sense of freedom, of expectancy, ...void then as absence, and yet also as promise, as encounter, as the space of the possible.”
(Solà Morales 2013)

We wanted to dedicate our minds, thoughts and bodies to Húсахagi because of our interest in exploring its contrasts as an opportunity to reach some sort of collective understanding.

The people working in the area are literally yet unconsciously building upon the mountain, transforming its shape into some sort of man-made rubbish-mound looming over the city. But by shining a light on the utility of the location, one realises that it is deeply unfair to say that “the people working in the area” are building upon the mountain. Because, in fact, we, the inhabitants of the Faroes, are the ones providing the building blocks for this expansion of the mountain and therefore we must accept and think about our own contribution to this rubbish-mound that has been developing over the past decades. We therefore use this as an opportunity to look inwards and consider the implications of our way of living.

Over the last years, the problematic function of this area has also become exceedingly obvious. The citizens living further down the mountain have rightfully been raising the issue of debris from Húсахagi being blown by the wind into their gardens. Knowing that this is happening, one cannot help but wonder whether this also means that some of this debris makes its way to other much more fragile and unmonitored areas and ecosystems. Luckily, plans have been made to stop the activity in the area and to find new ways of handling waste in a more sustainable way.

Although the function of Húсахagi is problematic, it is also almost “spacey” and contradictory because the aforementioned functions are not the sole functions of the area. The road in Húсахagi leads into a valley in which lies a water reservoir for drinking water. But oddly enough, all tests from the water show no contaminants. Apart from this, the location is also used for animal farming and is a popular place for recreational activities with a great view and a walking path. We cannot help but wonder if there is a greater plan for the site in the future. From this perspective, the area offers a myriad of possibilities.

Our continuous fascination with the site is undoubtedly its enigmatic character, complexity, and constant state of flux. The location’s characteristics and fluctuations can bring out a consciousness of the self as an ever-changing and temporary being.

The Hike

“...there is no hard separation between bodily conduct and intelligent conduct; rather, there is a unity of behaviour that expresses the intentionality and hence the meaning of this conduct. With habits, the body adapts to the intended meaning, thus giving itself a form of embodied consciousness.”
(Merleau-Ponty 2010)

The basis of our idea of an art-hike comes from previous collaborations and participation with the Dutch artists Floortje Zonneveld, Eva Bullens and Martijn Bastiaans, who have been on the islands as artists in residence on several occasions. The two of us were fortunate enough to be invited on an art-hike that they organised in 2018. Though there were clear differences in our art-hike activities (theirs were intended for a younger audience), the main premise was basically the same: to embark on a journey in which you get to know the nature around you. To consider the area as an extra participant and as an equal with us on the hike.

In short, an art-hike revolves around the idea of a group or individuals going on a slow walk in a chosen location with a certain mindset. The state of mind should be to absorb and observe the area, not for research purposes, not to reach a particular conclusion, but simply taking everything in and thus creating an awareness about the location and thereby a consciousness about ourselves as a body and being in the world—sharing a highly spiritual and sensitive way of caring and exploring, yet leaving absolutely no traces of our presence behind other than the fading footsteps.

Although interesting and contributonal in a group setting, an art-hike is intrinsically an individual, and dare we say, interdisciplinary practice. A mixture of a performative, ritualistic and sculptural implementation. By walking and by moving, we are both *IN* the landscape and *OBSERVING* it simultaneously. Much like playing the role of the actor as well as the viewer of a film. And each hike should be seen as a new film, yet not downplaying the importance of the repetitive and monotonous practice of walking in the same area over and over again. Considering it in this way, it becomes clear that you cannot solely imagine your role but that you have to act it out—you have to engage. Actively placing ourselves in and engaging with the *ZONE HÚSAHAGI*, can also be viewed as a conscious sculptural act. Placing ourselves in a setting in this manner, we are in ourselves an invasive temporary installation as well as the audience of that installation. Concurrently creating a conscious reflection of ourselves and the grand surroundings of unconscious yet drastically utilitarian human modification in the landscape (Fig. 01)



Photo: Guðrið Poulsen

FIGURE 1. Collaborative temporary white sheet installation and tea ceremony from the art-hike in Húsahagi.

For our art-hike in the Summer of 2022, we wrote an *ART-HIKE MANUAL* consisting of 24 steps that was shared with the network (Fig. 02). This was made in order to simplify and illustrate a potential template for an art-hike in order to underline the focus of our particular hike, both regarding specific exercises, actions, and rituals, but also laying a foundation for some sort of a collective practice for any interested parties not able to attend our hike physically, opening the practice up for shared experiences. With a small amount of “nudging” (the manual) to establish a collective focus, the outcomes are going to be as individually different as the locations, conditions, and individuals themselves. And like natural restoration projects, an art-hike also establishes a reflection on the relationship between nature and humans, but in a passive and observatory manner. The hike itself is a round-trip and when returning to our starting point, we hope that we are changed people and people that take this practice further and spread it like rings in water. People with new insights, new input, new experiences, and new understandings of ourselves and our space in and effect

on the world. We are aware of the fact that this practice is not an isolated activity conducted by us, but is part of a greater global movement in parallel with nature restoration, natural protection, and geo-poetry.

STATE OF THE ART NETWORK X FAROE ISLANDS

GO ON YOUR OWN ART HIKE

- A 24 STEP MANUAL

THE REWILDING AND EARTH MAKING TOUR
CONNECTEDNESS IN SCIENCE AND ART

With you on your journey, each person should bring (*optional):

- a white sheet
- a silver Mylar first aid blanket*
- a favourite cup
- a thermos of your favourite tea

- a packed lunch
- a camera of some kind

STEP 1: Set aside enough time of the day to do the hike.

STEP 2: The choice of your hiking location is completely up to you.

STEP 3: Start walking. Take your time.

STEP 4: Consider the amount of space that you occupy in the world.

STEP 5:* At any point of your hike, choose an item/area which you believe deserves special attention, needs saving or censoring. Take out your silver first aid blanket and wrap this thing/place in it, make sure the blanket is secured, step back and photograph your wrapped item/area - Preferably a black/white photo.

STEP 6:* Observe. Then close your eyes and listen to the crinkling white noise of the blanket disrupt the local sounds around you.

STEP 7:* Pack your blanket again and continue on your journey.

STEP 8: Consider the materials and non-human life forms around you.

STEP 9: When you reach a point that speaks to you, take out your white sheet and lay it out, like a white void in space. Secure your sheet with something heavy in each corner.

STEP 10: Step back. Observe. Photograph - again, preferably a black/white photo.

STEP 11: Sit on your sheet. Close your eyes and feel the breeze on your skin.

STEP 12: Whilst sitting, have a nice warm cup of tea.

STEP 13: Whilst sitting, consider the amount of space that you occupy in the world.

STEP 14: Whilst sitting, close your eyes and have a one-minute moment of silence.

STEP 15: Stand up, pack your sheet and continue on your journey.

STEP 16: Keep walking.

STEP 17: Observe your surroundings.

STEP 18: Consider the amount of space that you occupy in the world.

STEP 19: When reaching your turning point, sit down and eat your food.

STEP 20: When you are done eating, are rested and feel satisfied, start your walk back to the starting point.

STEP 21: Stop. Remove any footwear. Continue walking.

STEP 22: Register the cold or warmth or wetness or dryness making direct contact with your feet.

STEP 23:* After some time, put your footwear back on. Continue walking till you return to your starting point.

STEP 24: Consider the amount of space that you occupy in the world.

The steps do not have to be in this order! It is important that you let your surroundings speak to you and make some decisions for you.

We would love to see the photographs from your hike and hear about your experience.

If you would like to share these things with us, please send us an email to: Sotanfo22@gmail.com

Thank you and enjoy your hike!

FIGURE 2. Art-hike manual developed by Guðrið Poulsen and Jón Sonni Jensen.

2. *The Biological Composition of a Drop of Seawater*

KIM SIMONSEN

The biological composition of a drop of seawater has surprising similarities with the blood in my veins; they are both filled with viruses and bacteria. Up from the sea you have come, back to the sea you must return, the priest should have said.

Kim Simonsen

3. *Biodiversity & Ecological Restoration on the Faroe Islands*

JÓN ALDARÁ

The Nature of the Faroe Islands

The Faroe Islands are an archipelago composed of eighteen small islands situated in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean. They are steep mountainous islands with cliffs and gorges with the highest mountain (Slættaratindur) reaching an elevation of 880 metres. Although hailed as a location of unexplored natural beauty and impressive landscapes, the grassy slopes and fields are the result of long-term cultural use. Before the first settlement, extensive areas were covered with marshes and shrublands and possibly stands of birch. But with the introduction of sheep (AD. 825) the landscape was significantly altered over time. Now, the only untouched vegetation occurs on cliffs and slopes inaccessible to sheep.

Although some aspects of Faroese nature are well studied, relevant information on terrestrial diversity and ecology, especially in areas with little human influence, is scarce. A census of terrestrial birds in the Faroes was conducted in 1981 but has not been repeated since. The common notion that most terrestrial bird populations have declined severely can therefore not be corroborated by the existing data. A severe decline in some species of seabirds has however been documented.

Systematically collected data is scarce or non-existing for most invertebrate groups. For many groups, the most recent knowledge is found in *The Zoology of The Faroes* (1928-1971). Invertebrate monitoring

conducted in the framework of Environmental Impact Assessments typically focuses on a few selected groups, and despite the sampling and sorting effort often being large, the results cover a very limited part of invertebrate diversity.

Due to the relatively few studies on Faroese biodiversity, any research conducted on the islands aids in filling a large geographical knowledge gap with regard to the ecology of the North Atlantic. The Faroes are a relatively controlled and species-poor environment and thus represent a unique opportunity to study biodiversity and ecology.

Tjóðsavnið

The Natural History Department at Tjóðsavnið (the Faroe Islands' National Museum) is first and foremost tasked with the main objective of producing, preserving and communicating knowledge of nature in the Faroe Islands. It is the sole institute conducting censuses, biodiversity monitoring and ecological studies in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. A wide variety of such projects reside at Tjóðsavnið, and although it is a small group, the Natural History Department remains highly productive with increasing output every year. Among the more recently established large-scale projects located at Tjóðsavnið are the Koltur Project and Lendisbati (LandAid). These two projects are linked by the prospect of protecting and restoring Faroese nature. The Koltur Project focuses on the island of Koltur and describes its biodiversity and habitats with future nature conservation and restoration in mind, while Lendisbati is an initiative to restore degraded habitats and ecosystems on the Faroe Islands as a whole (Fig. 03).

The Koltur Project

Koltur is placed under the administration of Tjóðsavnið and is effectively a museum island. This administration involves a wide variety of responsibilities such as building maintenance, traffic direction, preservation of cultural and natural treasures, and describing and communicating the natural and cultural history of the island.

The first objective of the Natural History Department on Koltur is to conduct a Baseline Study of the general biodiversity of the island. This study is funded by Aage V. Jensens Fonde. It started as a pilot project in 2019, while the study proper runs from 2021 to 2024. The main goal



FIGURE 3. Ringed oystercatcher chick on Koltur. Oystercatchers are among the most abundant shorebirds on the island.

of the Baseline Study is to create a complete inventory and distribution map of primarily plant and animal species as well as habitat types on the island.

The broad methodology for the study is to collect, identify and count as many species as possible. More specifically, bird species are counted in standardised point counts, invertebrates are collected using a variety of sampling techniques including pitfall traps, malaise traps and sweep netting, and plant life is described using square plots at selected sites across the island. In addition, other samples of interest—e.g. soil samples—are collected from as many habitat types as possible for future analysis. To expand the expertise of the museum staff, consultants are brought in to provide services such as identifying species and analysing molecular samples.

Currently, results of the Baseline Study are not final. Many of the invertebrate species collected are still unclassified, and similarly, some plant species present on the island have not been described. This is mainly due to a shortage of expertise, however the continuous involvement of consultants will greatly help increase the data quality. As of November 2022, 300 animal and plant species occurring on Koltur have been identified, and a distribution map is underway (Fig. 04).

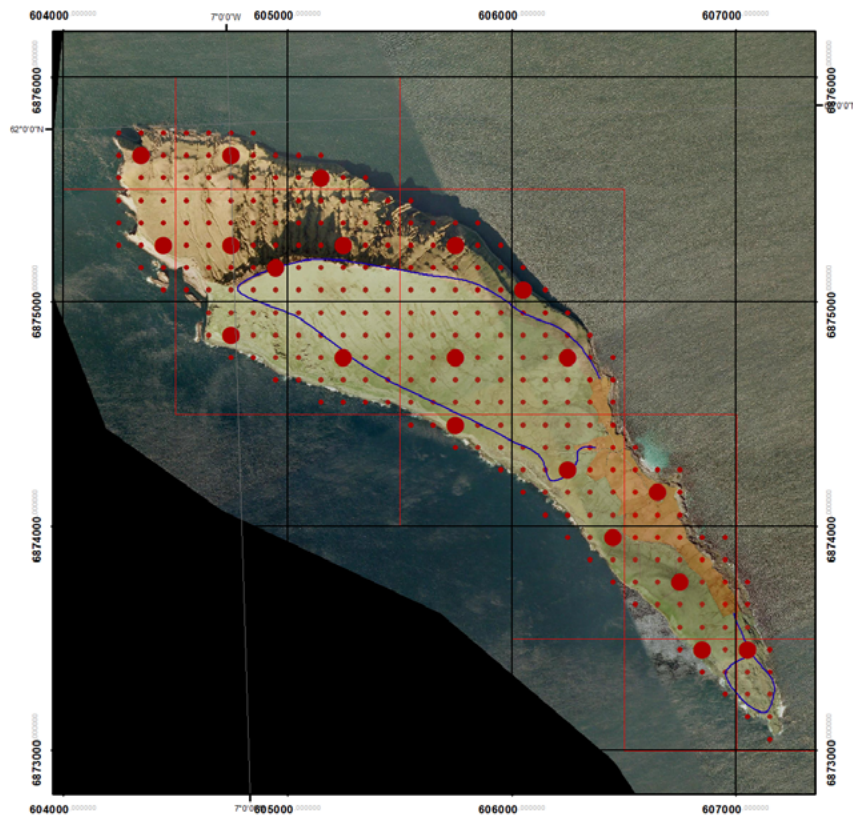


FIGURE 4. The Koltur geography with sampling stations marked with red dots.

Koltur and Ecological Restoration

The United Nations (UN) has declared the upcoming decade to be the decade of Ecosystem Restoration to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals. The UN argues that to fight the climate crisis, enhance food security, ensure water supply and protect biodiversity, ecological restoration of degraded ecosystems is pivotal. For successful restoration of both terrestrial and marine ecosystems, ecological understanding is vital. Thus, promoting research and conservation on Koltur would contribute to the UN's sustainable development goals (e.g., goal 15—protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems).

The Faroe Islands are being promoted and sold as unspoiled wilderness. The eroded mountains, homogenous grasslands and sea stacks and cliffs are picturesque with their dark rock and contrasting green vegetation and birdlife. This has been shaped by the harsh climate—or so people are told.

The truth is, that the present landscape has to a large extent been shaped by heavy grazing, non-native species, human development and

disturbance. The damage done is already an integrated part of the landscape. Erosion and landslides are intensified by sheep grazing, and truly untouched vegetation now only remains in ravines and on the most inaccessible slopes. This can also be observed on Koltur, where there are some lush inaccessible sites, as well as some recent landslides.

The effect on vegetation by the removal of sheep has been observed before, but usually in very small areas, and in connection with development in urban areas. Sheep have not been removed from larger areas in the Faroes. In Koltur, it will for the first time be possible to also observe birds adapting to dense vegetation and the absence of mammals.

It is the responsibility of Tjóðsavnið to inform the public about the state of nature and about sustainable practices. Studying the nature of Koltur, then removing sheep from a large area and restoring native vegetation will allow people to experience first-hand the healing of an area, and as such understand the damaged state it was in. Hopefully this will create a shift in public perception of nature towards more sustainable land-use (Fig. 05).



FIGURE 5. The core team working on the Baseline Study on Koltur. Left to right: Kolbrún, Agnes, Janus, Bjørn and Jón.

Lendisbati (LandAid)

Faroese nature is fragile. Remnants of peat cutting can be seen as wounds in the terrain, and erosion is a common sight. The rough climate also applies continuous pressure on the land. Although humans have always been closely attached to nature, we have not always shown understanding and consideration towards the sustainability of our natural resources. Animal life and plant life are at risk because nature is not always considered in human activities. Climate change is also an increasing risk—the pressure on nature may never have been greater than it is now. The purpose of Lendisbati is to improve these conditions.

The initiative specifically aims to prevent erosion, improve biodiversity, and restore wetlands for carbon storage. This is done in cooperation with freeholders, farmers, and other landowners, who voluntarily provide land for the project. All projects are carried out in close cooperation with owners who know their land best and can offer useful advice and, in many cases, take part in the work.

The areas are located throughout the islands and differ in size and topography, yielding the opportunity to develop specific knowledge about different types of terrain, for example grassland, wetland, and moorland.

For Faroese nature to be resilient, biodiversity should be as great as the environmental conditions allow. Accordingly, Lendisbati will be working on improving biodiversity in the outfields where needed, for instance where grass has taken over and there are few flowering plants, and where native species occur.

Improved protection of the outfields restores biological diversity as the areas where plant and animal life thrive are enlarged. At the same time, the ground grows stronger as the roots hold the soil, preventing erosion. If we preserve and restore wetland, we also enable the carbon capture process to restart. If land is restored, the soil will be strengthened. In this manner, Faroese nature can be part of climate change mitigation, preserving the wellbeing of animals, plants and people. (Fig. 06)



FIGURE 6. The landslide in Syðradalur on the island of Kalsoy; one of the areas in which Lendisbati is running an ecological restoration project.

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Organised by

The independent SOTAN members in the Faroe Islands –
Guðrið Poulsen, Jón Aldará, Jón Sonni Jensen,
Kolbrún í Haraldsstovu, Kim Simonsen and Uni Árting –
the publishing house Eksil

The Rewilding and Earth Making Tour – Connectedness in Science and Art

LINKS TO DOCUMENTATION

–FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3169680036581370>
–YOUTUBE: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtU12BKqcqUNM8ZID-e9N9Q>

PARTICIPANTS

Ase Brunborg Lie (NO), Eeva-Liisa Puhakka (FI), Hege Tapio (NO) and Andreas Vermehren Holm (DK).
Laura Beloff (FI) participated via video on the last day of presentations.

Photo: Jón Sonni Jensen.



FIGURE 7. Kolbrún í Haraldsstovu, Head of the Botanical Department at the National Museum of the Faroe Islands, telling the participants about her restoration work in Kaldbaksbotn - one of the stops on our excursion that ended in Klaksvík.

The one-week-long workshop on the Faroe Islands in July 2022 consisted of a series of events including an art-hike, excursions, presentations, poetry readings, exhibitions and talks.

—Excursion to the city of Klaksvík: The excursion was organised by the two Faroese SOTAN members Jón Aldará and Kolbrún í Haraldsstovu. On our drive to the city of Klaksvík, we made several short stops where the two organisers told us about several restoration projects they are working on in those areas (Fig. 07).



FIGURE 8. Screenshot from live-stream of presentation event at G! Festival. Here we see the talk between Andreas Vermehren Holm and Kim Simonsen. Uni Árting organised the live-stream.
Link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSNMcCsXypl&ab_channel=SOTANFO

—Art-hike organised by Guðrið Poulsen and Jón Sonni Jensen in the area Húsahagi: On the hike, the participants were given a series of tasks and directions. Additionally, the aim was to spend time in an area, which focused on the meeting between humans and nature, considering our space in the world and pondering the significance of what that means. The day ended with a public event at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands consisting of presentations, talks and exhibitions that were all a direct extension of the hike earlier that day.

—Presentations and poetry reading programme organised by all of the Faroese SOTAN members and the publishing house Eksil at G! Festival: This was a public event that was livestreamed (Fig. 08). The themes of the entire week's events were based on the curatorial text by Kim Simonsen (Fig. 09).

STATE OF THE ART NETWORK × FAROE ISLANDS

CURATORIAL CONCEPT

(BY KIM SIMONSEN)

THE REWILDING AND EARTH MAKING TOUR
CONNECTEDNESS IN SCIENCE AND ART

....our watery bodies serve as material media.
Astrida Neimanis

Each week we find new invasive species. Birds, fish and new larvae make their way here now. The non-human infects our world, bacteria, viruses, dying plants and heavy metals are parts of our human biome. They are actors in the world now, along with our common travellers: the animals.

The long-standing distinction between us and nature presents us with new existential and even religious predicaments because we are also nature. Hence the Western artistic and literary pastoral has been redefined.

We as humans are entangled in intricate relationships with animals and the environment, where old and so-called anthropocentric approaches are a part of the problem.

Poets, scientists and artists have always been inspired by rocks, but also by the oceans. Geopoetics is also earth-making, and it employs the widest conception of a poem.

We need to ask questions like:

- > How can we engage in art with 'more-than-human' life, e.g. the cushioning forests of seaweed, the myriads of other species, organisms and life on rewilded islands?
- > How can literature, science and art respond to the idea of an increasingly uninhabitable world
- > How might we find adequate ways to grieve what has been lost while nurturing futures of multispecies flourishing?

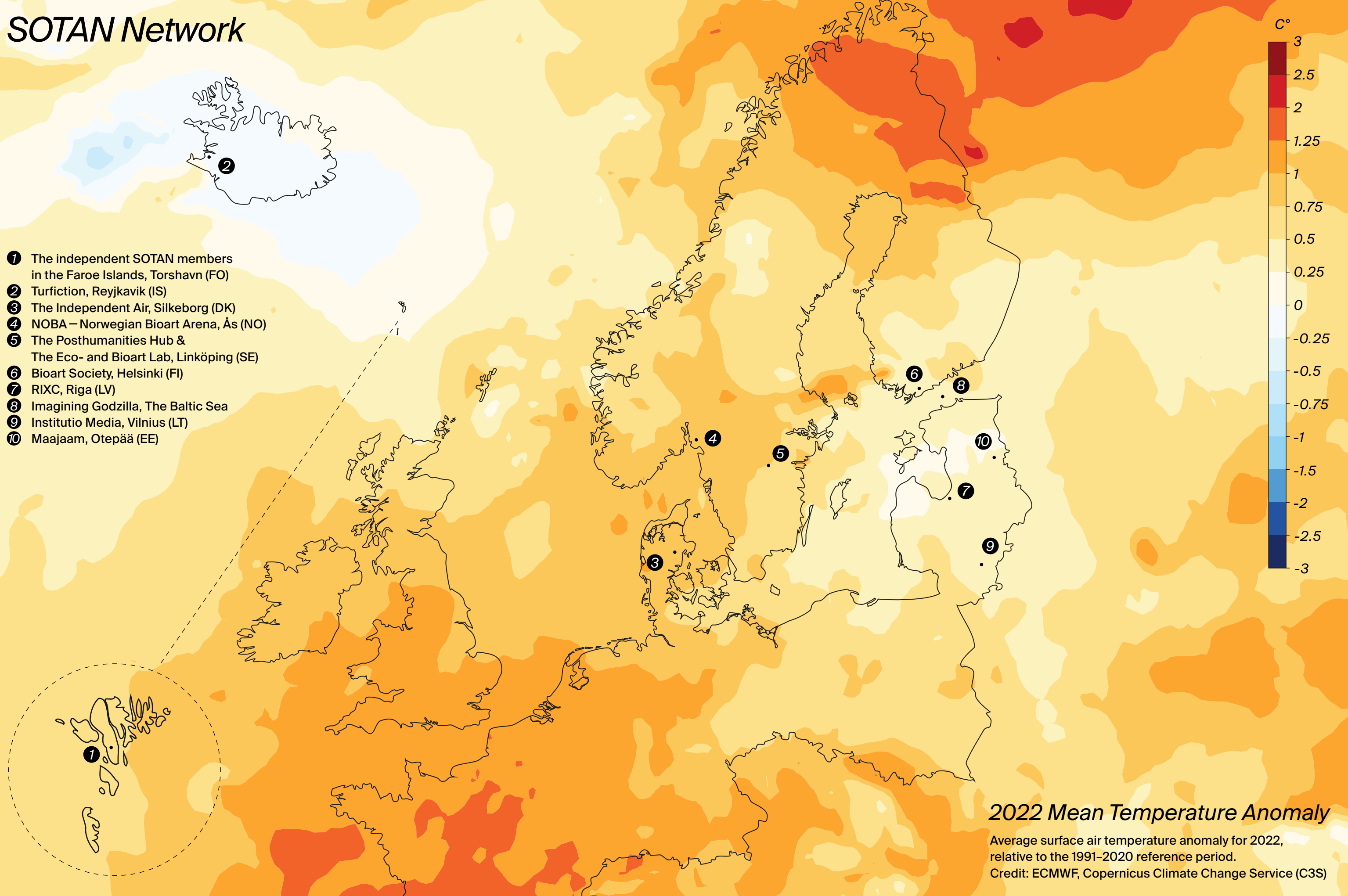
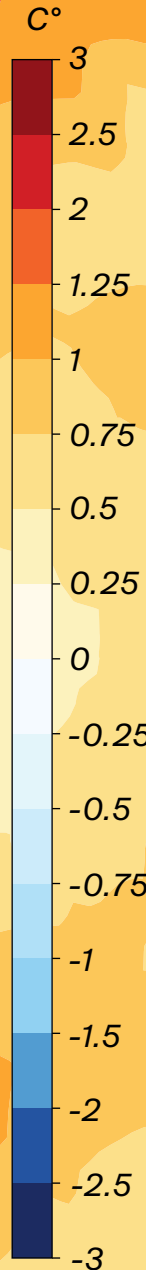
We need to listen to interdisciplinary and polyphonic thinking. Different voices, mediums, and fields need to come together, so we can grasp the incredibly complex ways in which we as humans are entangled with and relate to not only land, but the ocean, and this way figuring out how we can care for our surroundings – for ourselves.

11TH - 16TH JULY 2022

FIGURE 9. Curatorial text written by Kim Simonsen.

SOTAN Network

- ❶ The independent SOTAN members in the Faroe Islands, Torshavn (FO)
- ❷ Turfiction, Reyjkavik (IS)
- ❸ The Independent Air, Silkeborg (DK)
- ❹ NOBA – Norwegian Bioart Arena, Ås (NO)
- ❺ The Posthumanities Hub & The Eco- and Bioart Lab, Linköping (SE)
- ❻ Bioart Society, Helsinki (FI)
- ❼ RIXC, Riga (LV)
- ❽ Imagining Godzilla, The Baltic Sea
- ❾ Institutio Media, Vilnius (LT)
- ❿ Maajaam, Otepää (EE)



2022 Mean Temperature Anomaly

Average surface air temperature anomaly for 2022, relative to the 1991–2020 reference period.
Credit: ECMWF, Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S)

Section 3

translate
communicate
collaborate





Hege Tapio & Roland van Dierendonck

*The Magic
Circles of Soil*



The Magic Circles of Soil

HEGE TAPIO AND
ROLAND VAN DIERENDONCK

In Norse mythology, in the manuscripts of Gylfaginning, Jörd (soil) is one of the giants from the Norse stories of beginning - equal to Nótt (night) and Dagr (day). Our relation and ancient narratives of soil as the life-giver, are present in many mythologies. A long time has passed since we primarily cultivated the soil for our existence. Along the way, we seem to have lost our strong connection and deeper understanding of the ground we walk on. It is the ground made of soil, a mixture of nutrients and minerals, a home to essential microorganisms, a substance we could not live without.

With this acknowledgement, we embarked on a journey to reconnect with the soil and to stretch out analogue and digital hyphens to fellow practitioners in order to find ways to relate, re-read and collectively interpret soil as lifegiving matter. This resulted in two soil-centred workshops, where the second one was developed especially for the SOTAN Network. The first workshop was arranged in the midst of the first wave of Covid during the Viral Life conference program NOBA —The Norwegian Bioart Arena. The workshop initially aimed to hunt down a component for happiness that is buried in the soil, namely the *Mycobacterium vaccae*. The main narrative and activity expanded with the pandemic experience and was further built on relating to the healing capabilities of nature, the discovery of useful substances produced by microorganisms in the soil—like cyclosporine and antibiotics. For this workshop, we invited the *NOAIDI*, the Sami Shaman Eirik Myrhaug to heal the soil for us. Following this train of thought when developing the workshop for the SOTAN Network, we aimed to craft a protocol that would allow us to reconnect with soil through collective learning, doing and thinking. A guiding principle for the workshop was also to ask how activities and activism may assist us in living through the changing present. Our aim was to introduce artists to work with living material and to think of their practice from a larger ecological perspective.

Tools, Rituals, Tell-Tales, Protocols and Prompts

Gathering our group for the workshop in the middle of a pandemic required technological settings for telepresence combined with delivered packages containing tools and chemicals. Our actions and protocol were also designed to compensate for the lack of physicality by including sensory experiences in our knowledge sharing. Part of the plan was to invite all individuals to source and use some of their locally harvested soil. We also used some of the soil healed by the Sami Shaman from our previous workshop. This ensured we represented the geographical presence of each and every one through the collected local material, and could enrich our study by including their immediate soil samples. With the soil samples we created soil chromatographies, where the minerals and organic materials of the soil get fixated through filtering and fixing with a silver nitrate solution on paper.

We chose to start the workshop by having a telepresent communal soil foot bath ritual, letting our bodies soak up the possible presence of *Mycobacterium vaccae*. In addition, our taste buds were excited by collectively making Natto which is Japanese soybeans fermented with the soil-derived bacteria *Lactobacillus subtilis*. Kira O'Reilly, our masterful key prompt initiator craftily inspired and stretched the thinking of our collective group. We shared proverbs and layers of interpretations creating the stories and visuals (chromatographies) of the different sourced soils from the participants' local places. Bringing awareness of their specific locality and their cultural and linguistic references, we practised thinking about how language shapes the way we see and analyse soil, and how the matter of soil itself historically has influenced language and thinking. How the term *TERROIR* tells of the specific content and nutrients from the local soil that can produce different tastes and properties of the produce (crop).

As we have been cultivating the soil, combined with its location and altitude, the ways of nature, its vegetation and its forces—where wind, rain, temperature and sun have contributed to co-create specific terroirs—the soil has gained its distinct features. So we might also consider the cultivation of human territories, more specifically the social, cultural, societal and professional conditioning that has brought forward distinctions of mindsets, values and preferred actions. It has also laid the ground for how humans might create their own culture of how they relate to the soil. This cultivation of man has provided us with archetypes, where some of them may be used as templates for interpretations. As the main archetypes for this reading we introduce the Shaman, the Scientist and the Artist. The further details of our workshop are shared through our documentations for this publication as well as reflections in

this text. Instead of continuing a chronological workshop description, we would like to include the three different perspectives in this text, the personas of the Shaman, the Scientist and the Artist. Each of them represents a different strategy to make sense of the world, a practice, a mode of thinking and relating that may help us map out a modus operandi and to draw concentric circles of interrelating or excluding practices and their ripple effects. This text also explores how we interweave the different views to explore the different properties and meanings of soil.



Hege Tapio and Roland van Dierendonck. Healed soil from cemetery, Oslo, Norway.

Photo: Anneke ter Schure

In *What Is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari write about the different ways in which humankind can create order through framing chaos, distinguishing the role of Science, Art and Philosophy. These three planes have different strategies and workings, but find a shared enemy in conventions and opinions, which act as an umbrella that protect us, sheltering us from chaos—a metaphor they borrow from D.H. Lawrence's *Chaos In Poetry*; “In a violently poetic text, Lawrence describes what produces poetry: people are constantly putting up an umbrella that shelters them, on the underside of which they draw a firmament and write their conventions and opinions. But poets, artists, make a slit in the umbrella, they tear open the firmament itself, to let in a bit of free and windy chaos and to frame in a sudden light a vision.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1995)

The text by Deleuze and Guattari shows different roles, or archetypes, which make sense of a disordered world, but we are not limited to those. As an extension and modulation of their trinity, through the experience of our workshops and our Nordic locality and cultural history, we replace the Philosopher here with the Shaman, and describing the archetypes of the Shaman, the Scientist and the Artist as they invent and represent different forces, sensations and methods to make sense of the chaos, in our case related to the life-giving and nurturing substance of soil, each generating ways of relating with/ to, and gathering insights into our understanding of soil.

The Shaman

The Shaman represents our connection to the spiritual. Acting as the healer, and conjuring a portal between the seen and unseen, the Shaman is our connection to the eternal forces and generational intelligence, connecting us with what is known and what is yet to come. For our workshop, we used soil that had been healed by a local Shaman whose practice had roots in the indigenous practice from the Sami people of Norway. The polytheistic practice of the Sami Shaman, the Noaidi, is related to animism and therefore is in tight connection and relation with nature, its spirit world and to the power of magic. He is a powerful character that has the ability to reach far beyond the reality and physicality of the ordinary man. The Sami connection with nature and the living is also about the relations between the past generations of all living beings and the present living beings, and this connection has cultivated the role of the Shaman. However, as the traditions and the values of the Sami people have been silenced over decades—so has the agency of the Shaman. The law practice, ethnic suppression as well as the disconnect between language, knowledge, history in relation to the way of life, practice and the Sami people's holy places, has also silenced their ability to claim these values and secure the rightful protection of this land (soil). By summoning the Shaman to heal our soil for the workshop, we were also reaching out to acknowledge, reconnect and to heal our own relation to this history and to the soil.



Sami Shaman Eirik Myrhaug and Hege Tapio.

The Scientist

The Scientist represents the accumulated knowledge, a wide and rigorously tested, ever-changing and ever updated foundation that rests on facts, data, experience, validations and measurable control methods. Central to the scientific method are curiosity and doubt, required to test hypotheses and gather data to formulate robust guesses on the nature of the world. The Scientist strives for objectivity. Any experiment should be able to be repeated and replicated, to be able to falsify it. Theories, relations or values that cannot be validated through the systems and logic that belong to this practice, that cannot be falsified, may fail to become validated. Venturing into the unknown with hypotheses of what the road ahead may look like and what is the best way forward. Building the knowledge stone upon stone from long traditions and highly cultivated platforms continuously forming a very structured way of classifying, yet also pertaining to provided sets of confined borders. The path ahead becomes reliable when resting on the foundation of the past structures. The direction and path of research, i.e. the questions of which time, effort and money are invested in to answer, is often influenced by the powers of economy. This may leave the Scientist at times at the conditioned end, but it also leaves the Scientist with the great power of suggestion and also an opportunity for initiating changes in our society. We owe a great deal to the Scientists who are the discoverers of the useful microorganisms in the soil and of all its microbiological functions that bleed into vast geographies and into our bodies.

The Artist

The Artist represents the wild card, the jester or the imaginary of new futures, as well as the sentimental connections with the past, they are the one with unbridled relations and an ability to transcend. While the Artist is also relating to the history and the traditions, there are no conditions or expectations of continuously staying on the same path or within a set frame. The Artist is the one manifesting the unimaginable connections and free speculations, the breaker of taboos, the one deliberately obscuring, aestheticizing, contrasting or bringing into detail. Acting as the door-opener into uncharted territories or multifaceted views, be it for transgression, amusement or agitation. The Artist is also the facilitator of the visual and sensory, speaking the language of all tongues as well as the languages less spoken. The Artist is also the interpreter, the facilitator and also the troublemaker asking all the wrong or difficult questions. The artist's agency, placement and role within culture and society reflects the same volatility which, given the opportunity, could lead to applause and inspiration or it could be discriminated

and silenced. We acknowledge the Artists in our workshop that guided us and enriched us with their interpretations, visualisations and enticing reflections. For our workshop, the Artist contributed with stories, mythologies and dreams reinterpreting the soil and our relation, presence and cultivation.

The archetypes present and remind us of how we create systems and roles in order to navigate, manage, control and understand our environment. As we learn more about how all living organisms are interconnected and in need of the right balance, we might need to recalibrate ourselves so we can proceed with this knowledge. A recalibration might also mean to get in touch with how we sense.

Multi-Sensory Deliberations and the Archetypes in Action

Forgoing the distant associations of pandemic-induced telepresence, we aimed to create intimacy between participants and the subject matter, both physical and in our collective webs of concepts, ideas and interpretations. One route towards such intimacy and attention was found through the multi-sensorial nature of the workshop.

This started with the soil foot baths, an artist move as an ambiguous, embodied, seemingly nonsensical instigator of blindly followed rituals. All participants collected soil in their local environment, and the absurdity and transgression of individual soil foot bathing in the setting of a remote screen-connected workshop broke the ice, created a horizontal environment of equal participation and transformed the expectations of the workshop beyond a passive watching experience, while shaping the realisation that the subject matter was not a distant abstraction but in fact could be found in each of our backyards, parks and gardens, transforming the ordinary into something special. Listening to stories about soil while feeling the soil with the soles of our feet and touching it with our hands allowed for a connection with nature, temporarily, literally, invoking the Shaman and their knowledge of our relation to nature.

The Shaman was represented in our first workshop on soil, *Hunting For Nature's Healing Powers: Soil, Flowers And Antibiotics*. Sami Shaman Eirik Myrhaug healed the soil we gathered from an Oslo graveyard in a ceremony addressing the spirits in the four cardinal directions, the heavens and the earth, playing the drum for wisdom and cleansing it with smoke. Surprisingly, in a meeting of worlds, the Shaman suggested we compare the healed and unhealed soil for antibiotic properties,

interweaving the meaning-making strategies of the Shaman and the Scientist in our understanding and appreciation of soil.

The most intimate relationship with another being, even more intimate than sex, is to eat it, to digest its molecules and absorb its constituents, so it becomes part of your body. ° All our workshop participants received *Bacillus subtilis* spores and carefully followed a protocol of cooking or steaming the beans, removing shrivelled or discoloured ones. After two days of incubation in a warm incubator, in front of stoves or heaters, under blankets—depending on everyone's domestic setting—the beans were covered by a slimy substance, forming long threads when stirred. The Natto was ready. Natto has a strong, pungent smell of ammonia, and a bitter taste. For many, a taste like nothing they have tasted before and a smell they are not accustomed to as of yet. Food here functions as both a growth medium, a substrate for microorganisms, as well as a communication medium, to viscerally experience the presence of bacteria usually found in soils. Here, the Artist uses the medium of food to understand soil, utilising the science of the kitchen.

By inviting a mix of participants with different geographical placement and also by including the various protocols and actions stemming from ritualistic, artistic and scientific practices, we intended to open up a diverse perspective on soil. The experience created the opportunity for each participant and representative to analyse their own local soil and map out the topic of soil from their cultural perspective and professional domain, contributing to building an understanding through layered interpretations and to identify the intersecting practices and cultures they stemmed from. The accumulated knowledge gave us a better understanding of how matter, landscape and environmental conditions are forming our minds, our actions and our language. Although we highlight the archetype as a method for reflection, we would like to state that the outcome of this workshop was very much interlaced and cannot be divided into separate thinking or division of practice.

Ripple Effects

The workshop created a wonderful opportunity to invite artists previously not familiar working with scientific methods or with living organisms to cross this territory together with others. One of our main instigators for developing our workshops was indeed about finding ways to start inspiring our thinking and relating to the living organisms surrounding both us and our environment. We would also like to add that the workshop has had some ripple effects and inspired other artists and practitioners to replicate the soil chromatography protocol that we set up and make additional workshops in their local environment. For

• See: Oron Catts speaking at Hackers, Makers, Thinkers — Conference/Art Laboratory Berlin 2022: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DypsPzCLQNM&t=4800s>. More about the conference: <https://artlaboratory-berlin.org/events/hackers-makers-thinkers-conference/>. Both accessed May 1, 2023.

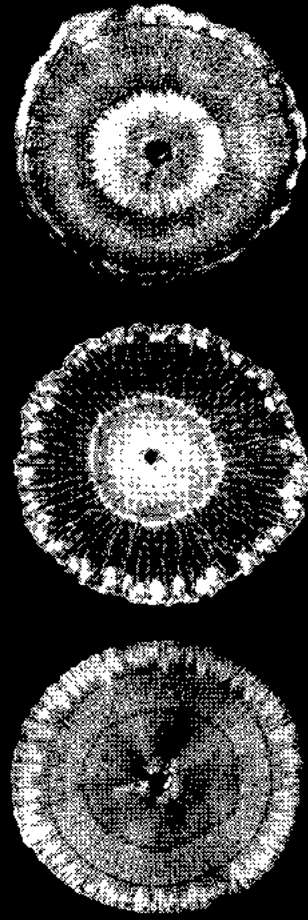
instance, artist and researcher Mari Keski-Korsu led a soil chromatography workshop as a part of the Studio as Laboratory/Laboratory as Studio course at Aalto University in 2021. In 2022, artists Aino Johansson and Sirja Moberg organised two art and science workshops focusing on soil and its role on planet Earth. The workshops were hosted by Bioart Society in the SOLU space in Helsinki.

Also NOBA—Norwegian Bioart Arena, the organisation that we initially developed these online workshops for, has embarked on developing their main programming towards 2028 on the topic of soil. We also hope that our workshop format and our reflections as presented in this publication may initiate a discussion about how to value interdisciplinary knowledge building. And hopefully we have planted the seed in our readers to start envisioning what kind of practice and thinking is needed to reconstruct our future culture where we reconnect and care for the living. And with this, we would like to leave you with a question—what kind of archetypes are needed for the future?

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ACTIVITY REPORT



24-26 March 2021

Organised by
NOBA — Norwegian Bioart Arena

Jörd

Location:

Duration:

PARTICIPANTS

Eva Bakkeslett (NO), Ase Brunborg Lie (NO), Dom Fleischmann (FI),
Tinna Grétarsdóttir (IS), Janna Holmstedt (SE), Aino Aleksandra Johansson (FI),
Mari Keski-Korsu (FI), Anneli Ketterer (DE), Kaisu Koski (NE),
Teemu Lehmusruusu (FI), Lauri Linna (FI), Sirja Moberg (FI), Johanna Rotko (FI),
Åsa Ståhl (SE) and Danielle Wilde (DK).



Photo: NOBA — Norwegian Bioart Arena

Jörd workshop.

The workshop was developed and run by Hege Tapio, an artist and curator based in Stavanger, Norway and Roland van Dierendonck, an artist and researcher based in Oslo and Amsterdam.

The workshop Jörð invited participants to unravel our relation to soil, its connections through mythologies, medicine, science and the microbiome in our guts. During Jörð, we completed two hands-on practical activities: (1) making Natto, a Japanese recipe for fermented soy beans using the common soil bacteria *Bacillus subtilis*, and (2) soil chromatography, an alternative method for visually separating and comparing soils using circular filter papers. Each participant received a package with workshop materials beforehand.

Photo: NOBA – Norwegian Bioart Arena



Jörð workshop: Hege and Roland having soil footbath.



Johanna Rotko, Lahti, Finland
Soil from a pot, Radiomäki.

Photo: Johanna Rotko



Sirja Moberg, Helsinki, Finland
Seashore soil, Tammisalo.

Photo: Sirja Moberg



Hege Tapio and Roland van Dierendonck, Oslo, Norway.
Soil from kitchen garden, Vitenparken, Ås.

Photo: Hege Tapio and Roland van Dierendonck



Tinna Grétarsdóttir, Reykjavík, Iceland.
Soil from Sólvallagata.

Photo: Tinna Grétarsdóttir



Ase Brunborg Lie, Oslo, Norway, 2021.
Soil from pallett box mix of compost, vegetable soil,
forest soil and sand mixed in 2020

Photo: Ase Brunborg Lie



Hege Tapio, Sola, Norway.
Soil from kitchen garden.

Photo: Hege Tapio

We invited Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Associate Professor in Global Culture Studies at the University of Oslo, Norway to present mythologies and narratives about soil and Erik Joner, research Professor, NIBIO who holds a PhD in soil microbiology (Norwegian University of Life Sciences) to talk about soil and to make interpretations of the soil chromatographies. In addition, we also invited two artists: Kira O'Reilly, an Irish artist based in Helsinki, who attended the group, inviting collective reminiscing and presenting writings inspired by working with soil; and the interdisciplinary artist, designer and researcher Orkan Telhan, who gave us a remotepresentation from Istanbul, as he was installing his work "Microbial Fruits from Istanbul" for the Istanbul Biennial.

Profferments on How to Read a Chromatography and Digressions

BY KIRA O'REILLY

Chroma—colour
Graphy—to write



Photo: Mari Keski-Korsu

Soil from dead plant pot (most likely composted soil),
Diameter 12cm. Helsinki, FI, 25.3.2021

To write the colour of soil, to render it legible, what are the kinds of cursory *LEGIBLEITIES* we might understand from the development of soil colour writing.

I say development with deliberation—harkening to its relations to other visualising technologies, chemical photographic processes that harken too to chemical sorting and interplay. Appearances upon and from the absence within an empty field.

St Veronica is the patron saint of photographers and photography, she of the veil proffered to the bleeding, and abjected Christ figure as he made his way towards Calvary—a fitting invocation perhaps as we approach Good Friday! Her veil took the impression of the bloodied visage and became a talisman of the capture of a readable impression. I used to call the heavy light excluding fabric that occulted my small laboratory workplace, the Veil of Veronica, and the small space the room of appearances.

But I digress.

In order to render a chromatography, the soil becomes granular, it's sampling firstly goes through a stage of undifferentiation—through drying, milling, sieving, lumps, bumps, and artifacts are mechanically manipulated to create a powdery dryness of lots of tiny particles. There is an artificial uniformity, and apparent homogeneity in this preparatory step.

1. Sampling

Sampling what?

What is the nature of the field, place, context from which the extraction is made? What are the decisions, intuitions, and drivers of that choosing? Where is the agential “cut” made? Money plant pots, seaside gardens, summer cottage herbaceous borders, potato fields, municipal park land, river beds, old compost under the sink, a vine yard.

There is a bordering we create for a moment of part of and not part of, implicit within the act of sampling are all the interfaces, interactions and entanglement of the entire and enactments of the partial.

I wonder, what are the poetics of the act of sampling?

By poetics I am considering the affective registers, those of the senses, and their blossoming emotional correspondences? Poetics implying that these do not need to fall into linear rational logics but instead can include unlikely and unanticipated associations.

I am struck by the indivisibility of the act of sampling and the one who samples.

Yesterday when I observed the workshop stream for a spell, Mari and Hege pondered on the money plant pot through the contemplation of plant life duration, caring, indifference, domestic interior and outsideness.

In this case might chromatography become a forensic inspection, - and perhaps an act of mourning for a twenty year old money plant companion. The chromatography as the memento mori of living with and living beside. The memento mori is a talisman, an artifact the reminds one of the passing of life, of the inevitability of demise. But it is also the token of a loved one, a potent emblem into which chains of associations and correspondences are sequestered.

QUESTION:

I invite you to create a collective list in the Zoom chat on how your chromatography functions for you, in respect to you and your sample.
5 minutes

What are alternative functions and readings of a chromatography?

When considering what kinds of legibilities it might offer, how might you, consider what might be read?
What is read?

2. Terroir

The function of chromatography to write the soil and for us to read it, to invoke through the sample the entire, the whole, the complete profile of the character of the place, the field, the site.

The gesture of removal through the motion of sampling and creating the chromatography is that of tasting, savouring and inquiring into the terroir of the larger environ. Terroir is the term used in wine making to describe the larger environment with all of its contributing factors that together combine to inform the character of the taste of a wine—it's personality, one achieved through the enormity and complexity of place and placeness. There is the idea in wine tasting that one can taste the soil, that the taste buds of one's tongue can access the extant profile and liveliness of the wine's earthy provenance. Terroir suggests sensitivity and attunement, sensitivity being the delicacy of ones senses to combine and communicate with that which is sensed.

And perhaps to experience oneself as sensed, a reciprocal sensing, where by one is not only receptive to sampling but is infact sampled as well.

Indeed, what are the terroirs of our own specificity?
This harkens back to the provocation of yesterday, that of *WHAT DO I FEED*, what are the multitude directions from which we can acknowledge our positions in systems.

QUESTION:

Considering the concept of terrior, what does your chromatography reveal? What is tasted?

There is no right or wrong response
Just write whatever comes to mind in the chat by way of compiling a collective terroir of the soil samples.
5 minutes

3. Chromatography Mandala – Centres and Peripheries

The visibility of the soils populous is activated through the capillary action, differentiating the granular mass into its constituent parts. The action of the chromatography is to sort. Size, velocity, discreet forces all act to create the portraiture radial bands of colour, of peaks and troughs, pinnacles and valleys.

There is a centre, an axis point from which the soil particulates radiate into spikes-peripheries—edges, counterpoints.

A counterpoint is a melody that exists with another one—within a piece of music. Both are independent of each other and also inter-dependent forming part of the entirety of the musical or other composition.

The orchestrations of the centres and peripheries of the chromatographs could be considered counterpoints to each other, melodic and driven within the same circular structuring, shifted and sorted via their granulated compounds—soil mandalas.

Here in the west, we are to some extent familiar with the mandalas of Trans-Himalayan Buddhism—more popularly known as Tibetan Buddhism. Often these are witnessed via the elaborate installations of coloured sand created over days by monks before being dispersed to the winds and waters—each infinitesimal grain scattered as the form is dissolved. The Tibetan word for mandala is Kyil'khor—which means *CENTRE* and *PERIPHERY*. These Kyil'khor are artistic representations of the infinite indivisible play of emptiness and form through the expression of earth, water, fire, air and space—the essential elements. Form arises out of the intrinsically creative space of emptiness, and dissolves back into that space of potentiality.

We might gaze upon the chromatographs as Kyil'khor and in doing so consider their energetic dynamism of centre and periphery when examining their topography.

In doing so, we might as well, wish to take the position ourselves as being the central axis of a kyil'khor.

If I am the centre, who or what occupies my periphery?

Who or what is at the edges?

What are these edges? How far and near from me are they?

How might I consider myself as being peripheral?

To whom or what am I on the periphery?

By engaging in this perspective, how might I shift and re-orientate my perception of relations? What are the extents of the spikes, the furthest reaches I wish to entertain?
And inversely, what are the proximities—intimate distances even, that also form a periphery.

QUESTION: Write in the a list of things, beings, objects that are on various scales of peripheries or edges to you.
Flip the question by selecting one of these as being in the centre, and consider what you are on an outer periphery or edge to?

QUESTION: Can I use the chromatography as a map, a course, a pathway? What happens if I map it onto a google map, or some other map and make it into a walk?
What is the centre and what are the peripheries?
Is there a way of doing this that returns it to the sampling location?
Perhaps using the sample location as the centre?

4. *Toxicities and Loving the Alien.* *What Is Difficult to Love?*

Not everything is easy to love.

Do I love soil?
Can I?

When I am thinking about the food I eat, particularly when it is freshly harvested and hasn't suffered the indignities of mono-agriculture and its distance between growth and eating is short —loving seems immediately accessible and unhindered.

When I have the opportunity to garden, and to feel the soil microbiota and mineral body enact upon my corporeal body, the emotive sway of cheer and wellbeing is evident and finds its expression as love.

When my feet find their surety of touch on the springy, peat that almost welcomes the sensation of movement there is the extant certainty of affection and joy.

But what of less immediate and easy relations?

In the elaborations that are that of soil we are reminded of the deep and profound impacts of erosions and pollutions, the damaging infiltrations and alterations of toxicities that are the result of certain industrial processes. Plastics in particular and their own dispersion into microparticulates across the globe, and endocrine like molecules they emit that in

turn find motility across and through mammalian and plant bodies via water ways and soil bodies, causing disruptions of other bodies.

On Their Page on Evaluating soil nutrients and contaminants Thermo Fischer Scientific State:

Organic contaminants encompass a wide array of compounds determined as harmful or detrimental to human and environmental health. Many of these compounds are human-made chemicals that are used and produced in industrial, manufacturing and agricultural activities. Due to the potentially drastic impact of contamination and high susceptibility of soil to pollution accumulation such as agricultural runoff of pesticides, this environmental matrix is routinely analyzed for the presence of xenobiotic compounds. Exposure to contaminated soil has the potential to directly affect human health through either direct contact or indirect contamination of ground and surface water systems.^o

- <https://www.thermofisher.com/fi/en/home/industrial/environmental-environmental-learning-center/soilcontaminant-analysis.html> (accessed March 26, 2021).

From academics and artists we have the emerging interdisciplinary conversation on the effects and affects of impactful toxins or toxicity.

Examining toxicity is often from the perspective of those already rejected from the *NORMATIVE* or *STANDARD*. Hence we find, disability studies, illness studies, gender theory and queer theory as well as considerable anthropology studies, biology and ecology, enable the toxicity turn. Toxicities has been activated to entertain and find kinship in unholy alliances, to identify semblance and unruly attachment with effects and affects that challenge default dogmas of purity and unacknowledged or uncritiqued puritanism. What is *NATURAL* is exposed by the acknowledgement of what is considered *UNNATURAL* —and the recognition of the cascades of dangers inherent in these polarities.

Engaging with toxicity invites a digging in, a resistance to the absolutism of those categories and the opportunity to discover other and perhaps more viable alliances and coalitions, and possibilities of love.

Care is political, messy and dirty, not an innocent category,
Maria Puig de la Bellacasa:

QUESTION: What are the possibilities of loving the “unlovable”?



Mindaugas Gapševičius

*Machine
as a Companion*

Machine as a Companion

Since 1997, when I became interested in digital computation, a lot of time has passed. When I reflect on that time, I realise how much I have changed. This change includes the impact of machines on my understanding of how they work and the impact of machines and organisms on each other in terms of their mutual evolution. Since 1941, when Konrad Zuse built his first machine that combined the physical environment with digital computation (Zuse 2007), machines have evolved into self-replicating systems. ° While back then I had a very optimistic view of machines seeking to overcome (and control) humanity, I tend to now think of machines wanting to become another species and to live together in the world they inhabit.

- See RepRap.org. for further information. Available at <https://reprap.org/wiki/RepRap> (accessed 28 February 2023)

Ignoring the question of human omnipotence over other species, I prefer to focus on the interaction between machines and organisms. In fact, machines have made us humans think about omnipotence. But here I see a paradox, because it was not humans but machines that were supposed to become omnipotent. ° And now—as I am changing myself—I think that we humans have created machines in order to help us to listen to and understand the umwelt.

- See BBC series *All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace*. Available at <https://vimeo.com/515004292> (accessed 28 February 2023).

In 2006, German sociologist Helmut Dubiel wrote an entire book about his life being diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease (Dubiel 2009). Being a scientist himself, he approached his life in the book from two perspectives: living with Parkinson's with the prescribed medicine and prescribed electric impulses applied to the brain. Electric impulses are applied through an electrode in his brain and a pacemaker in his neck: the pacemaker is literally a computing chip which executes the code and an electrode is an interface between the chip and the brain to send an electrical current into a specified location of the brain. According to

Dubiel, the continuous use of medicine would have side effects on the brain and is therefore not recommended for long-term use. However, an electrode attached to the brain may cause depression, lack of motivation or other reactions, such as a change in dreams. Having passed through different stages of Parkinson's, Dubiel suggests that "Long-term medication use will turn a person with a neurological illness to a zombie, a pacemaker turns him into Frankenstein" (Dubiel 2009, 126). While this essay does not seek to overestimate the abilities of a human, the question I propose to develop is the changing role of the machine. Therefore, I propose that you imagine the experience of a machine and a human merging. In the aforementioned book, this merge would be controlled depending on the prescribed "dose" of electrical current applied to the brain. So for example, to speak clearly, the author would set the amplitudes of the electrical current in a pacemaker to very low, and to walk for more than a kilometre, he would set amplitudes of the current to relatively high (Dubiel 2009, 120). Being able to physically trigger the brain, the author would be able to avoid uncomfortable trembling symptoms caused by Parkinson's.

Notes on a Posthuman Setting

In a setting where a machine could trigger the physical activity of a human, it is not only the human who decides what a human does and is intended to do. Such an arrangement reminds me of a posthuman setting described by Katherine Hayles, a present-future state where a human merges with technology. This state is defined by Hayles as a human who seamlessly articulates with an intelligent machine and approaches his or her body as a prosthesis (Hayles 1999). Although in the example provided above, the author with Parkinson's would not approach his life as a prosthesis, in the setting described by Hayles there is a shift of meaning regarding the role of the human: here, the human acts as an input for the machine but at the same time the machine acts as an input for the human. If the machine senses different variables from the brain activity, it is also able to further interpret the given variables, adjust electrical current and send it back to the brain according to the needs. The adjusted electrical current would further impact the human brain. Such a setting was explored in a paper from 2011, "Closed-Loop Deep Brain Stimulation Is Superior in Ameliorating Parkinsonism," by Boris Rosin et al. The research presented in the paper was done using six recording electrodes attached to an African green monkey brain, which would send the sensed signal to a pacemaker, while the latter would readjust the current and send it back into the brain through two stimulating electrodes (Rosin 2011). Similar experiments are also being conducted at the company Neuralink. In a conference from 2022, Elon Musk talks about implants in one of his tester monkeys, Sake. Sake is able to follow

a highlighted letter on the screen, whereas the electrodes in the brain would register the location of Sake's focus and record the result. Sake would then be provided with a new highlighted letter [and so on] (CNET 2023).

To illustrate how easily an electrode attached to an organism, can pick up on changes in the environment/ changing environments, I would like to bring to attention one of the artworks of Cosmo Schüppel, a student of mine at Bauhaus University in Weimar. In his work, *Awareness and Movement in a Phonetic Garden*, Schüppel used two plants to sense the environment and use these perceived changes to trigger a sound (Fig. 1). In other words, the plants in the artwork act as antennae and the sound is produced by a chip attached to the plants (Schüppel 2022). If a simple electrode is attached to a brain, the brain will deliver the sensed variables to the electrode. Would the brain in this case become a prosthesis of the machine? Yes, but not only that, because from a human perspective, the machine would also be a prosthesis



Figure 1. Awareness and Movement in a Phonetic Garden, 2022.

Keeping in mind the setting described by Dubiel, the physical activity of a human (speaking or talking) is sensed and transferred to a machine (a pacemaker) which, in turn, interprets it accordingly and sends the right amplitudes of electrical current to the brain. In other words, the chip is here to help the human to adequately respond to the changing environment. The impact on the body in the case described by Dubiel (at least in the short-term) is positive: the author can speak or walk as if he had no Parkinson's. So here, similarly to the example with the plant, the human through his

brain acts as an antenna for a machine. While in the described artwork of Schüppel, the sensor for the machine would be the plant, in the case described by Dubiel, the sensor would be the brain of the author. The question we deal with in a posthuman setting described by Hayles is the environment sensed by a human, the interpretation of the gained information and the further use of it by the environment (seamless articulation between the human and machine). The environment of the machine as defined by Hayles is a prosthesis.

The interconnecting brains of two humans was explored in the project *You and I, You and Me* developed by myself in collaboration with Maria Safronova Wahlström and many other collaborators (Fig. 2).^o To be more precise, the project explores the possibilities of communication through electricity and proposes that electricity could help to reveal the imperceptible connections between different humans within the environment. The subsequent SOTAN workshop in Vilnius invited a group of artists and scientists to further discuss issues concerning brain activity, speculate about electricity as an alternative to verbal communication, share knowledge on how to make headgear and use electronics in conjunction with the human body.

Figure 2. *You and I, You and Me*, 2021.

The workshop focused on two questions: To what extent could electricity help in understanding the other? And, is there a possibility to alter human senses with electric impulses? While the first question proposes to experience the Other by means other than language, the second question provokes thoughts on manipulation[s] in a posthuman setting.

The tools provided in the workshop included, headgear and electronic circuits which use extrinsic electrodes to track alpha waves of the brain (EEG technique) as well as send electrical current(s) to the brain (tDCS technique). If the headgear is used on two humans, it becomes possible to experience the other human by connecting the headgear pieces through an app on a smartphone. With the tools provided, participants were invited to develop their own ideas. The ideas developed during the three days included, among other things, speculations on/ about a human being as an interface between two bodies (*Idioms and Everyday Expressions* by Ana Brotas), communication between knowledge stored in the hands and brain (*Body Scarf* by Mohar Kalra), and a suit providing electrical currents to specific points on the body (*Calming Suit* by Ase Brunborg Lie).^o My own proposal during the workshop was an interface between a dog and myself, which finally ended up as the installation *Interfaces for Boris and Mindaugas*.

Ideas Developed During *You and I, You and Me* Workshop

The Body Scarf presented by Mohar Kalra consists of 9 long ribbons attached to a headrest (Fig. 3). Brain stimulating electrodes are sewn into the headrest and periodically along the ribbons you can find capacitive touch contacts that sense touch. To wear the scarf, one must wrap themselves into the scarf or have someone else perform the act of wrapping. This rhythmic, calming, almost automatic bodily weaving movement performed by one's own body or the body of another is recorded by the touch contacts on the ribbons. With each touch, the wearer is stimulated by the electrodes, creating a communication between the knowledge stored in the hands of the wrapping individual and the wearer's brain.

Idioms and Everyday Expressions is about idioms and everyday expressions that could inform the speculation of body-brain interfaces (Fig. 4). These inquiries were presented as a thought-process, via text, collage, and diagrams. In order to experiment with the technological operations, both electrical and textile, a prototype of two gloves was developed for the project, one for sensing and the other for stimulation. The electrodes were positioned in reverse, outside the gloves, allowing users to playfully read and send electrical signals between any subject(s) they decide to touch.

The *Calming Suit* by Ase Brunborg Lie presents the concept of a comfortable jacket or potentially a whole bodysuit/wearable that can send microscopic electrical currents to specific tapping/acupuncture points on the body that stimulate the vagus nerve (Fig. 5). When the vagus nerve

^o See Gapševičius, 2022b.

^o For further notes see this book, pp 163-164.



Photo: Ben Alog

is working well, it calms your body, promotes better digestion and the feeling of connectedness to others among other things. The idea is based on a vagus nerve that is responsible for 80% of our parasympathetic nervous system. This nerve can lower its function when experiencing trauma, making it harder for a trauma survivor to be calm, relaxed, sleep well, have good digestion, feel connected to others etc. The calming suit could help calm anyone in need of this.



Photo: Anne Cecille Lie

Figure 3. Mohar Kalra, Body Scarf. 2022.



Photo: Kamilė Krasauskaitė

Figure 4. Ana Brotas, Idioms and Everyday Expressions.



Screenshot

Figure 5. Ase Brunborg Lie, Calming Suit.

All the ideas generated by the workshop participants reflect an environment that is more than just the input and output of a machine. And all the ideas generated give contribute to an answer for the question “To what extent could electricity help in understanding the other?” If the first idea presents the tDCS electrodes to be affected by the touch of another human via the EEG module, the second idea keeps the environment open and invites the main protagonist to decide how to interact with the environment and how to use the EEG and tDCS modules provided. The third project reimagines the electrical effect on the self by integrating both EEG and tDCS modules of the self. The second question — “Is there a possibility to alter human senses with electric impulses?” — has not received much attention in the ideas being developed, but may be of further relevance to the impact of the interconnected machine and organism. I will return to this issue briefly in the section “A Shift in the Meaning of the Role of the Machine.” In the following section, I want to make more sense of other organisms in order to avoid focusing only on machines and humans.

Interfaces for Boris and Mindaugas

The installation *Interfaces for Boris and Mindaugas* consists of slightly bigger than human-sized and dog-sized objects, six interfaces, as well as four 3D tutorials (Fig. 6).^o The interfaces were designed to be attached to the boxer dog Boris and myself; 3D tutorials explain how to attach the interfaces. While the objects themselves have a distinct aesthetic form, the participatory event invites the audience to try out the interfaces themselves and experience the state of a dog and their host.

• See Gapševičius, 2022a.

Conceptually, the work is described as follows:

Sometimes humans design headgear or coats for their pets to make them look like humans. Sometimes humans attach prosthetic limbs to their disabled pets to help them experience their Umwelt. Sometimes humans try to understand their pets by looking into their eyes or watching their movements. *Interfaces for Boris and Mindaugas* provides interfaces for the boxer dog Boris and his host, so that the host experiences how the dog behaves, and the dog experiences the behaviour of his host.

The communication between a dog and his host is established through an electrical signal, which, is sensed as well as being sent as an electrical current. For connecting the dog and the human, the app is provided on the installed small monitors. Two types of interfaces are provided: one is to sense the alpha waves and the other is to track the heart rate. The heart rate and the brain activity are measured, interpreted, and converted into electrical signals so they are exchanged between the dog

and the human via the Internet. If I follow Katherine Hayles' idea of the prosthesis, from the perspective of the machine in this installation, both the dog and the human, act as a prosthesis of the machine (interfaces for a dog and a human).



Photo: Monika Pietaryté

Figure 6. Interfaces for Boris and Mindaugas, 2022

A Shift in the Meaning of the Role of the Machine

- Z3, a programmable machine from 1941, was designed as an interface to input commands from a physical world, and output the result on a display. For more information, see Zuse 2007.

Since Konrad Zuse built his Z3, the first programmable computing machine, computing machines have not changed much: they still act as an input of and an output to the physical world; in other words, they still act as an interface between two or more actors in the physical world. ◦ With Interfaces for Boris and Mindaugas, I suggest a shift in the meaning of the role of the machine.

Here is one more quote from the above-mentioned book by Dubiel:

One year after the operation, a light appeared in the tunnel of uncertainty when a neurologist at a different clinic suggested simply turning off the pacemaker as an experiment. It was as if I were channelling a spirit. That very second

my voice returned, sonorous and clearly enunciated, only slightly hoarse. Interestingly, not only was my speech immediately functional in a technical sense, but my intellectual activity and cognitive faculties were quite literally switched on again. ... The experience of turning off the pacemaker, ... gave me reason to assume that my problems after the operation could be traced to a setting of the electrode in my head that was creating an ongoing disturbance of the brain's language center (Dubiel 2009, 118).

The quote reflects the malfunctioning of a pacemaker, or, to be more precise, the electrode attached incorrectly to the brain. The result shared by the author suggests that an electrode attached to the brain does not necessarily function as it is expected to function. The setting suggests to think of the validity of the experience.

If a human acts as a prosthesis (in the *Interfaces for Boris and Mindaugas* the prosthesis is meant to be both a dog and a human) for a machine, the role of the human (at least from the perspective of the machine, the human being a prosthesis) is to serve the machine with data. At the same time, while sending the data back to the human, the human is expected to understand the self from a different perspective, say, the machine. In this case, the machine would become a prosthesis for the human. On the other hand, if the machine acts as an interface to both the dog and the human, the human might be able to grasp self from the perspective of the dog. The role of the machine becomes a mediator, an interface between different actors in the setting. As an artist, in the *Interfaces for Boris and Mindaugas*, I question the role of the machine in the setting provided. Is it the same machine as was designed by Zuse or proposed by Hayles? If, for Hayles, the role of the machine has shifted from being an input-output interface to control over humans (the human as a prosthesis), then in a human-dog setting, the machine stands alongside the human and alongside the dog as an equal one.

While I do not intend to advocate a machine becoming a living organism equal to either a human or a dog, nor to speculate about the future, my thesis is that a machine has become more than input and output and rather than having control over a humans, it has become a companion machine for a human to develop their senses which were lost in the course of evolution. Being able to connect two different organisms, the machine becomes a mediator between the two, becoming able to provide senses of the Other as this Other is sensing the umwelt. And even if the machine malfunctions, I would still be able to ask: How does a dog understand its umwelt? How does a plant see me? How is it to be a bacterium?

Even if my self-crafted sensors are not precise, they help me to experience the Other and give more sense to the Other. My self-crafted sensors (a machine), while helping me feel like a prosthesis, gain way more meaning than being just a computing machine. It is a companion.

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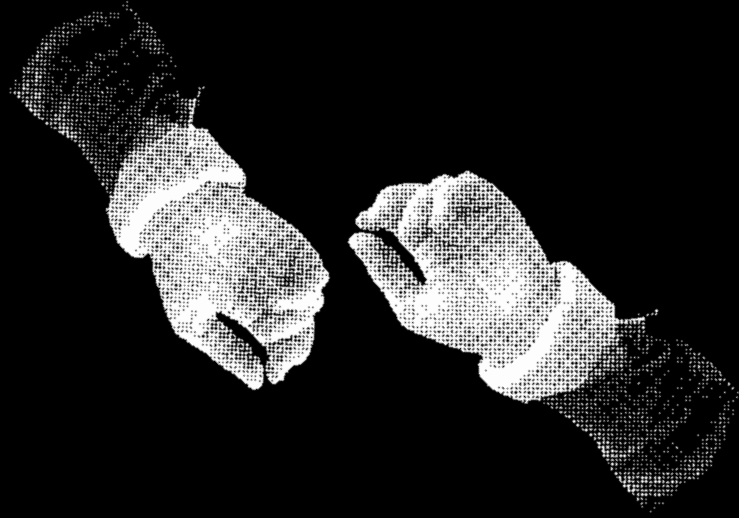
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You and I, You and Me

PARTICIPANTS

Ase Brunborg Lie (NO), Ana Brotas (PT/NO), Pak L. Fung (HK/FI), Mindaugas Gapševičius (LT), Mohar Kalra (US/EE), Tula Kristina (LT), Nish Ellenor Rose (AU/FI), Allyana H. Thomas (US/FI), Emilia Ukkonen (FI) and Maria Safronova Wahlström (SE).

Contributing neuroscientists included Ian Erik Stewart (DE), Amelia Young (DE), Felix Töpfer (DE) and Cristiàn Ruiz (ES/LT).



Headwear by Pak Lun Fung

Photo: Kamilė Krasauskaitė

Between the 10th and 12th of March 2022, Mindaugas Gapševičius and Maria Safronova Wahlström held a three-day workshop at the Alt lab in Vilnius on making headgear as part of the *You And I, You And Me* project.



Workshop You and I, You and Me, 2022.

Photo: Asa Brunborg Lie



Workshop You and I, You and Me, 2022.

Photo: Asa Brunborg Lie

Mindaugas Gapševičius and Maria Safronova Wahlström have developed headgear that embeds electronic components to interconnect humans through electrical currents. The participants then created individual projects that use electricity as a tool for non-verbal communication through newly generated sensations. The workshop ended up as a participatory event with the audience who were invited to speculate on possibilities of communication through electricity.

Workshop You and I, You and Me, 2022.



Photo: Asa Brunborg Lie

Mindaugas Gapševičius introduced the prototype of *Interfaces For Boris And Mindaugas* later known as *Tools For Pets And Their Hosts*. Among other notable projects were a *Body Scarf* by Mohar Kalra, *Idioms And Rveryday Expressions* by Ana Brotas, and *Calming Suit* by Ase Brunborg Lie (see page 164 for details).



Caroline Elgh

*Coastal
Imaginations &
Intermedialities*

The art exhibition as a response to present
planetary environmental disruptions

Coastal Imaginations & Intermedialities

*The art exhibition as a
response to present planetary
environmental disruptions*

Like the sea itself, the shore fascinates us who return to it, the place of our dim ancestral beginnings. In the recurrent rhythms of tides and surf and in the varied life of the tide lines there is the obvious attraction of movement and change and beauty. There is also, I am convinced, a deeper fascination born of inner meaning and significance.

— Rachel Carson, *THE EDGE OF THE SEA*

In an era of rising sea levels, acidification, pollution, waste, overfishing and species loss, humans urgently need to find new ways of imagining the blue planet. Following marine biologist Rachel Carson, it was here at the coastline that the drama of life played its first scene on Earth. The underwater forest of blue-green algae emerged from its dark tracings, transforming Earth into a breathable planet (1955/1998). Whilst the effects of the global ecological crisis and climate change have become increasingly clear, a growing number of international visual artists have turned towards watery concepts and materials, linking ocean and human lives as one instead of turning to humanistic explanations of separation. Consequently, several art exhibitions engaging with water and oceans have opened around the world in recent years. They have all, in diverse ways, been related to ecology, aquaculture, migration, futurism, cooking, trade, extinction, embodiment and the legacy of colonialism.

- The concept of *INTERSECTIONALITY* was introduced into feminist theory by USA-based feminist law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) and has since then been interpreted in different ways in the field of gender studies. Questions and debates of intersectionality theorise the intersections between gender/sex and other power differentials based on for example class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and geopolitical positioning (see e.g. Lykke 2009).

- *SEA LACE* (or *Chorda filum*) is a brown seaweed growing on rocks in coastal areas. In the North Sea, it can grow up to five metres long. It is high in nutrients and contains elements such as iodine, bromine and manganese.

In this book chapter, I turn specifically to one geographical point of the ocean, namely, the coastline: a site at the intersection of the land and the sea. From my feminist viewpoint, I am already entangled in discussions around intersectionality. ° Now, as I am at the intersection of the wet and dry, theory and practice, with one foot in water and the other in sand, I follow artistic practices that reside close to the curved coastline. In this wrack zone, kelp, seagrass and shells touch my bare feet and, like tracing an algal thread (preferably the long sea lace), ° I sense how tides and waves create movements, change and beauty. Situated at this muddled border of coastal thinking and doing, I wonder: can this very positioning form a physical and imaginary site from which humans can start to think anew? Can art and exhibitions mediate an expansion of the human imagination to also include the coastline and the great variety of nonhuman others living there, on land and in the waters? Guided by the concept of *COASTAL IMAGINATION*, I hereby seek to explore a series of intermedial video-based artworks and exhibitions situated at the intersection of land and sea.

Previously, coastlines have been approached from different perspectives in art, where the focus has shifted depending on geographical setting, time, conceptual trajectory, medium and material. Clearly, I am not seeking a romanticised or human-centred view of the coastline reminiscent of what can be found in marine paintings of the 19th century. These sublime depictions of landscapes, stormy seas and ships often simply act as fixed anthropocentric backdrops, which do no good in times of planetary environmental disruptions. Instead, I engage with video-based art and exhibitions that perceive the coastline in its constant process of transformation, a changing environment of human and more-than-human worlds that offer creative, curious and critical perspectives of how it is to live on a damaged blue planet (cf. Tsing et al. 2017).

Sensorial Politics at the Edge of the Sea

When enjoying summers while growing up on the Swedish coast, I was not really aware of the state of the world. We had a plain cottage without running water at the outlet between the river Klarälven and lake Vänern and I loved to spend time in the sweet waters. The cottage was located at the edge of the river and only a few hundred metres away, the river opened up into open water. During these years, I created my favourite hobby: to sit at the coastline and sing songs to the sea accompanied by the sounds of the waves, seabirds and marine engines. I presume that at this point I developed a coastal and cultural interconnectedness that I have tried to return to in my curatorial and academic work. A sort of intermedial and naturalcultural experience that I have come to transfer to the exhibition space, either as a curator, writer or visitor. I presume

this is my way of “staying with the trouble” (Haraway 2016, 3) as I acknowledge naturalcultural (Haraway 2008, 16) and local-planetary interconnections by engaging with art that is finding new ways of imagining the earth °.

To expand my coastal thinking, being and doing, I turn to cultural theorist and artist Mieke Bal, who, with the introduction of *IMAGE-THINKING*, puts forward artmaking as a form of cultural analysis and “the experience of the process of making and thinking as inextricably intertwined at the disposal of others” (Bal 2022, xix). Consequently, Bal creates an interconnectedness between the creation (of an artwork) and its presentation (to the audience). I can see how this lines up with previous conceptions of exhibitions as a form of “walk-in media”, where the visitor walks into an “ensemble of visual and participatory techniques” and becomes part of the performance in the exhibition and in the creation of knowledge (Ekström 2019, 17). But what does this really mean? What does it do? Can the art exhibition mobilise change on an individual level, and further also within large-scale processes, communities and societies?

Particularly relating to the genre of video production as a creator of thought-images, Bal describes how “the deployment of fiction can help to understand and open up difficult theoretical issues” (Bal 2022, 8). In this way, she investigates the specificity of art comprising fictional elements as they move beyond documentary traditions. I expand on this and ask how the deployment of fiction, imagination and intermedialities in art exhibitions open up understandings for not only difficult theoretical issues—but also environmental, ecological and coastal issues. Here I pay attention to climate as a dynamic, cultural and societal force capable of reshaping societies and environments. This brings me to what I have come to term the coastal imagination: an expansion from scholars Kathryn Yusoff and Jennifer Gabrys’ *ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINATION*. With this concept, they highlight imagination as a site of interplay between material and perceptual worlds and “a way of seeing, sensing, thinking and dreaming the formation of knowledge, which creates the conditions for material interventions *IN* and political sensibilities *OF* the world” (2011, 1–2) °. For me, the deployment of fictional elements in art reinforces the fact that art needs to be free to pursue open-ended explorations not committed to finished outcomes and solutions. It is from this perspective I wish to explore how intermedial forms of creating and curating at the coastline unfold in exhibitions that are immersive and multisensory: a form of sensorial politics that activates the visitor on many different levels in relation to the sea.

- Drawing upon what Bruno Latour calls the Great Divide between what counts as nature and society, as nonhuman and human (Latour 1993, 11–12), Haraway’s introduction of *NATURECULTURES* further acknowledges humans in the ecological context and nonhumans in the social context, and as such refuses the division of nature and culture since both humans and nonhumans are already part of networks of worldly relations (see example Haraway 2008).

- Here I touch upon two concepts: *IMAGINATION* and the *IMAGINARY*. The relationship between them is not often sufficiently problematised (an exception being e.g. Lennon 2015). The imaginary has frequently been discussed in philosophy, psychoanalysis and cultural theory (e.g. Foucault 1998; Dawson 1994; Bryld and Lykke 2000; Braidotti 2006; Shildrick 2009) and is characterised by the way fantasy images and discursive formations coincide (Asberg 2005, 30) or as “a realm of imagining the future, and reimagining the borders of the real” (Franklin et al. 2000, 198). In this chapter, I see *IMAGINATION* as a speculative and creative power, system or process that generates new ideas and perspectives, whilst the *IMAGINARY* relates more to what is in fact already present in the world and how this can be transformed. I prefer to discuss both concepts in the plural, since I believe that a multitude of perspectives exists at the same time.

Walking Along Interlaced Coastlines

I will now turn my attention to four recent video-based artworks (all produced in 2022) that are situated at the coastline and can be described as intermedial and immersive: namely Tori Wrånes' *BIG WATER*, Imani Jacqueline Brown's *What Remains At The Ends Of The Earth?*, Cooking Sections' *Salmon: Traces Of Escapees* and Laure Prouvost's *For Four Beauties*. Already the titles point to diverse artistic approaches to the coastline. While being aware of the multitude of other coastal-artistic approaches, the focus on video-based, intermedial and immersive installations in this chapter firstly provides some necessary demarcations and secondly, reflects my long-term curatorial interest in intermediality and its potential to generate an embedded and embodied sensorial politics that may lead towards new ways of thinking and acting.

Now, placing myself as a visitor walking through the gallery spaces of Accelerator, Bonniers Konsthall, Kiasma and The Uppsala Art Museum, I first enter Tori Wrånes' *BIG WATER* comprising a six-channel sound and video installation. ° The projected environment is a barren, desolate and rocky coast departing from the surface at the tropical coast of Thailand and under the surface at the arctic waters of Norway (Accelerator 2022). Here, I face four fur-clad beings of human size, slowly moving alongside cliffs and swimming through water. Ambient music with vibrating bass tones fills the space, as well as the sound of waves, wind, the moaning, and flutes. What really contributes to the intermedial and immersive atmosphere is a high mountain-like seating platform in the middle of the space. It is slowly rotating and hosts a snapping and crackling noise that seems to extend and travel through my body. Consequently, the exhibition activates my senses on multiple levels where imagery, sound, music and movement bring me directly into Wrånes' world. The intermedialities connect my mind and body with water, cliffs and furry beings: as something descending from an intersection of real and imagined. The coastal imagination therefore emerges through an interplay between material and perceptual worlds (Yusoff and Gabrys 2011) at the intersections of coastlines and exhibition space, sound and image, north and south, land and sea, human and nonhuman, male and female, nature and culture, which makes me think of *BIG WATER* as naturecultures (Haraway 2008) where all of this is inseparable.

I would claim that the coastal imagination in Brown's *What Remains At The Ends Of The Earth?* is slightly different. ° It is also connected to naturecultures but the political and ecological dimension is more outspoken. Brown's installation spins an intricate web between coastal ecologies, colonial legacies, human oppression and oil-extraction at the coastline of New Orleans, which point towards a decolonial coastal imaginary. It is a sensuous video installation: an inner and outer journey,

where a circular rotating projection on the floor leads from close encounters with water moving up to a bird's eye view of the coast of Mississippi. The speaker's voice tells me a story of evolution: how humans have gone from looking at stars in the sky to honouring constellations of pipelines drawn by fossil fuel companies. In a situated and poetic sense, the work tells a story of the horrors of colonialism, capitalism and extraction of both coastal ecologies and human black bodies transported over oceans and forced to work—where monocrop plantations have been replaced by oil refineries today. This local-planetary decolonial coastal imaginary is effectful in its zooming in and zooming out perspectives and assists me to sense the slow and uncontrollable violence of the past, present and future. It is emerging from layered storytelling with the narrator's voice in focus, interlacing with the moving visual imagery on the floor and still image of a coastal-star constellation assemblage hanging on the screen. Brown's coastal imaginary thus illuminates how everything is interconnected: stars with water, coastal erosion and climate change with colonialism, and how ecology in fact is a massive community of bodies.

Now I will move on from the coast of New Orleans to the coast of Scotland, where Cooking Sections' trilogy *When [Salmon Salmon [Salmon]]* takes its point of departure. ° It is structured as a performative sound and time-based installation, where each work occupies a room of its own. Salmon farms are widespread along the Scottish Isle of Skye, as well as in other coastal areas in, for example, Norway and Chile. As science has demonstrated, salmon farming has a severe environmental impact on coastal environments, creating dead zones. Yet, the salmon farms also come with numerous other entangled problems related to industrial food production, imperialism, profit, domestication, extraction, transportation, medication and bacteria (Lien 2015). *Salmon: Traces Of Escapees* is the second part of the installation, where eight circular projections of salmon net-pen farms appear in a long row on the floor. As I walk on the projections, I see fish jump up over the water surface as trapped bodies. An informative voice streams from loudspeakers at ear level, telling a story of the environmental impact of salmon farms reaching far beyond the net-pens, as faeces, viruses, lice and chemicals slip through. As I listen and walk on the pens, I hear a fluttering underwater sound, industrial noise (akin to that of salmon farms?), together with ambient music coming from above. These intermedialities evoke a sensorial politics as my human body connects with bodies of water and fish: I get a glimpse of the dreadfulness of being farmed, trapped, domesticated, and extracted. Cooking Sections' as well as Brown's works are a coastal imaginary grounded in aural and worldly storytelling at the intersection between material and perceptual worlds (Yusoff and Gabrys 2011). Through visualising and moving these stories to an exhibition space, the artists make the otherwise invisible visible, like lifting up a narrative from under water and creatively sharing it with a wider audience.

• Tori Wrånes' exhibition *BIG WATER* was shown at Accelerator, located at Stockholm University, between 24 September 2022 and 12 February 2023.

• Imani Jacqueline Brown's video installation *What Remains At The Ends Of The Earth?* was shown at Uppsala Art Museum as part of the exhibition *A Posthumous Journey Into the Future*, 11 February to 11 June, 2023.

• Cooking Sections consists of Alon Schwabe and Daniel Fernández Pascual. *When [Salmon Salmon [Salmon]]* was shown together for the first time as part of their solo exhibition *UNDAMMING RIVERS* at Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm, 30 November to 15 January 2022.

- Laure Prouvost's video installation *For Four Beauties* was commissioned by and shown at Kiasma in Helsinki in conjunction with the exhibition ARS22, 8 April to 16 October 2022.

My final example invoking another coastal imagination, more like that of Wrånes, is Laure Prouvost, known for her immersive multisensory installations centred around moving images. In *For Four Beauties*, the artist departs from human's watery origins where she connects the coastline of Helsinki with human bodies and the bodies of fish. ° The red exhibition space, in which the film is installed, is reminiscent of the inside of a human body: a red womb where transformations in life occur. As soon as I enter the exhibition space, I feel warmth coming from the room itself and I understand that the space is heated to resemble human body temperature, as connected to the hot sauna and the coolness of the autumn sea visible in the film. The interwoven senses of touch, hearing and vision, emerging through intermedialities, create a bodily interconnection with the sea, and thus, bring me back to Rachel Carson's writing and the coastline as the place of our dim ancestral beginnings (1955/1998).

Intermedial Coastalcultures Towards Change?

In line with Mieke Bal's video-based image-thinking, I consider the aesthetics of Wrånes, Brown, Cooking Sections and Prouvost as examples of sensorial engagements, and thus, as integral elements of the political (Bal 2022, 53): a deep sensorial politics. What I encounter in the exhibitions are multiple audio-visual storytellings, where imagery, music, sound, voice, temperature and movement constitute the intermedialities, which activate me as a visitor on many different levels in relation to the coastline. As I walk through the spaces, I become the immersed visitor-participant in charge of making my own stories out of the works on view: like laying a puzzle out of the different elements or media presented. In its intermedialities the imagination works as a site of interplay between material and perceptual coastal worlds. As the artworks immerse me, I see, sense, think and dream the formations of knowledge as coastlines around the world get connected. This intersection of land and sea opens up for material interventions in and political sensibilities of the world: not only as part of artistic creation, but also, while experiencing the exhibitions (Yusoff and Gabrys 2011, 1–2). The coastal imaginations at stake do open up new perceptions, questions, dreams and worries in relation to the coastline. Through engaging with this art, I believe that humans can develop new ways of noticing, seeing and feeling and thus may also come to think differently, even outside of the exhibition space—something that can possibly lead towards action and changes in behaviour.

The works and exhibitions described in this chapter act as examples of coastal imaginations that draw attention to difficult coastal issues

of what has perhaps been removed or forgotten. At the same time, the works make entanglements visible—such as those connected to the farmed salmon in Cooking Sections' work, enslaved human bodies and ecologies in Brown's work and to humans' watery beginnings in Wrånes' and Prouvost's work. I think of these coastal imaginations as naturecultures—or, as I propose here, *INTERMEDIAL COASTALCULTURES*—as they recognise humans in the ecological context and nonhumans in the social context, and refuse the division of nature and culture—or coastline and culture—since both humans and nonhumans are already part of networks of worldly relations (Haraway 2008). I believe that coastal imaginations and intermedialities in art exhibitions function as a response to present planetary environmental disruptions from which humans can start to think anew and mobilise change on an individual level. Since exhibitions are social sites where people meet, they may very well also host the potential for acting as a catalyst of change within wider processes, communities and societies. At least, this is my hope.

At the end of Brown's film, the narrator's voice declares that “to know the truth, we must descend and return to the river, to our source” (Brown 2022). And so, I often do. I return to the river Klarälven and lake Vänern. At this time of year, I am listening to the ice breaking. It is a deep and rumbling sound coming from the inside of the water itself, like the belly of a monster. Since growing up, it has come to my awareness that these waters are no exception: they are overfished, affected by rising sea levels and polluted by a nearby paper mill. Species are about to go extinct, and in addition to all this, large amounts of ammunition and explosives were dumped there as late as the 1970s. With all this in mind, it is even more important to return to this site, embrace the coastal imagination, act, and continue to sing for the sea.

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30 September - 1 October 2021

Organised by
The Posthumanities Hub & The Eco-
and Bioart Lab / Linköping University

Seaside Arts and Low-Trophic Imaginarities: State of the Art Network Midterm Event

Location:

Duration:

PARTICIPANTS

Stacy Alaimo (US), Cecilia Åsberg (SE), Andy Best (FI), Maria Bodin (SE),
Caroline Elgh (SE), Janna Holmstedt (SE), Lena Kautsky (SE),
Malin Lobell (SE), Ann-Marie Melster (DE/SE), Jesse Peterson (SE),
Merja Puustinen (FI), Marietta Radomska (SE), Karin Wegsjö (SE),
Cecilia Wibjörn (SE).

All through the extended history of Earth, the coastline has been a zone of unrest, where waves and tides have forged life and land on this planet. Oceanic algae, once terraforming the Earth into a breathable planet, still produce most of our oxygen. Today, beaches and oceans are haunted by plastic waste, eutrophication and diminishing biological diversity. Kelp



Photo: Marietta Radomska

Seaweed at the coast of Sandböte. 1 October 2021.

forests and mussel beds are receding with the warming waters of climate change. The marine wrack zone, a boundary area between sea and land, hosts low-trophic species, like mussels and seaweeds. Like the common bladder wrack in the Baltic Sea, it mitigates the eutrophication of the sea and provides shelter for all kinds of creatures and creativities.



Photo: Marietta Radomska

Field trip to Sandböte. The (P)Art of Biomass Collective gives an introduction to the history of the island. From left to right: Cecilia Wibjörn, Ann-Marie Melster, Cecilia Åsberg, Janna Holmstedt, Malin Lobell. 1 October 2021.

SEASIDE ARTS and LOW TROPHIC IMAGINARIES, hosted by The Posthumanities Hub and The Eco- and Bioart Lab, welcomed artistic and scientific entanglements with the environmental humanities to the seaside. This workshop invited



Photo: Marietta Radomska

Malin Lobell shows us a rare version of bladderwrack that spawned during autumn. Sandböte, 1 October 2021.

salinity to brackish times by bringing together environmental engineers (like bladder wrack), sea garden activists, artists, feminist blue humanities scholars, marine biologists, and those with local know-how about a situated encounter by the edge of the sea. The aim of the event was to re-tool our oceanic imaginary with insights and creative suggestions for how humans could be a more caring and attentive ecological force for multispecies futures by the edge of the Baltic Sea.



Photo: Marietta Radomska

Sea foam at the coast of Sandböte. 1 October 2021.



Photo: Marietta Radomska

Sinking ruins of a boat house on Ornö, Stockholm Archipelago. 1 October 2021.

Section 4

reacting reacting change





Merja Puustinen & Andy Best

Imagining Godzilla:

Project for the artistic and scientific exploration of the Baltic Sea as an ecological
and cross-cultural networking marine environment

Imagining Godzilla

*Project for the artistic and scientific
exploration of the Baltic Sea as an
ecological and cross-cultural networking
marine environment*



Photo: Andy Best

Crew member Jesse keeping watch at Korpoström, July 2022.

Visual artists Merja Puustinen and Andy Best have over twenty years' experience sailing the Baltic Sea with their three kids and an assortment of dogs, lying on deck during summer nights at sea, in the archipelago, or in industrial harbours they have been observing the effects of a contemporary way of life on the fragile marine ecosystem.

Origins

The sea is a place of uncertainty. It is never still, always sighing even on the calmest of still summer nights. For too long “the sea” has been a convenient dumping ground for human societies. Inland rivers are used as open sewers, while coastal communities dump garbage and sewage into the open sea. Oil and gas pipelines and communications cables are laid across seas and oceans without a thought for the creatures living there. “Out of sight, out of mind” is the motto.

Since 2019 we have started using our Wharram Pahi 42 Polynesian sailing catamaran *GODZILLA* to raise awareness of the plight of the Baltic Sea. By inviting artists onboard for short floating residencies, we hope the first-hand experience of the marine ecosystem will inspire artists to reflect on these topics and possibly use them in their work. *Imagining Godzilla* is a sailing art project and an experimental and mobile art-science research and network platform. Its goal is to help draw attention to the state of the Baltic Sea by bringing artists, scientists, and the general public together under this framework.



Wharram Pahi 42 catamaran *Godzilla* anchored at Seili island, July 2022.

Photo: Andy Best

The participating artists’ projects may be directly political or activist in nature, but this is not a condition of participation. The artists’ artworks connect to the sea, the wind, the waves, the wildlife, technology, history, the geopolitics of marine environment and society. Through

collaboration with the Bioart Society and the State of the Art Network during 2019-2022 we have taken *Godzilla* to coastal regions around the Baltic Sea. In conjunction with sailing expeditions with artists *Imagining Godzilla* evolves around seminars, discussions, and exhibitions of participating artists’ works with partners. With art, the aim is to reach larger audiences and affect the way people relate to and use the sea in the era of declining species and global warming. The voyage continues until 2024 to network communities, international artists, and marine research centres around the Baltic Sea to highlight the importance of the preservation of our marine environment.

The Baltic Sea

The sea is not only water. The Baltic Sea provides a dynamic environment and resource for ecological, geopolitical, and economic use. Already the Vikings used the Baltic Sea effectively for international trade and raiding missions. Besides economic relations, the Nordic people have engaged in war with their neighbouring countries for centuries by moving borders, expanding or losing their territories, plundering cultural treasures, and creating commercial alliances. The logistical routes and infrastructure, like lighthouses, fortresses, harbours, bridges, mines, and warehouses have had an essential economic and geopolitical impact on the cultural imprint. The current-day communication cables crisscrossing the seabed, the gas pipes and tunnel endeavours are all part of the same historic continuum and search for wealth, progress and power.

Fishings which has been a part of traditional livelihood in the Baltic Sea is in decline due to overfishing, deterioration of food chains, warming waters and changing salinity balance. Typical fishermen’s huts which are nowadays mostly unused, Houtskär.



Photo: Andy Best

The Baltic Sea is the second largest inland sea in the world, the largest being Hudson Bay in North America. The Baltic Sea is also the largest brackish sea area in the world. The inflow of fresh saline water from the North Sea and Atlantic is extremely limited due to the narrow, shallow channel connecting to the Baltic Sea via the Kattegat between Denmark and Sweden. The Baltic Sea is also fed by rivers from a large catchment area four times the size of the sea itself (Attila, 2019). Many of the rivers discharge into the sea flow through large industrial areas (Neva—St. Petersburg; Vistula and Motława—Gdańsk; Daugava—Riga). For example, the River Vistula drains 60 percent of Poland’s land area. During the droughts, low water levels amplify the ecological problems caused by pollution. In August 2022 the Oder river on the Polish-German border was contaminated, most likely by mesitylene, leaving at least 135 tonnes of dead fish washed up along its banks. Many rivers in Finland, Sweden, and Denmark run through rich agricultural and forestry regions made from drained bogs and swamps, and as a result, large amounts of organic material and fertiliser run-off are deposited into the sea. All these factors lead to making the Baltic one of the most polluted seas in the world.

The Baltic Sea is heavily used by commercial shipping, particularly by tankers and container ships coming from and heading to ports in Russia, as well as other major harbours such as Gdańsk, Klaipeda, Liepaja, Ventspils, Tallinn, Stockholm, and Helsinki. The Baltic also plays host to large numbers of cruise ships, each with the pollution footprint of a small town. In addition, there are many commercial ferries on regular routes connecting cities around the coast of the sea. During the summer months, the coastal areas of the Baltic attract huge numbers of tourists and pleasure boaters, particularly in the Stockholm archipelago and the Finnish Archipelago Sea areas, as well as along the northern Polish and German coasts.

Since the Russian invasion of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, there has been a visible increase of military activity all around the sea. The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 further escalated the situation, including sabotage explosions of NordStream I and II natural gas pipes from Russia to Germany in September 2022. The war has had a direct effect on the amount and kinds of shipping in the Baltic, with the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad nestled on the eastern shores of the sea between Poland and Lithuania, and St. Petersburg located at the head of the Gulf of Finland. Over the years, there have also been numerous mysterious submarine sightings in the Finnish and Swedish archipelagos. In fact, after joking about why we have never seen any submarines despite the reports, the Russian Belgorod nuclear submarine surfaced about one kilometre away from Godzilla, just outside Finnish territorial waters near Hanko in south-west Finland.

All these factors lead to increased pollution and pressure on the sea and its wildlife.



Finnish navy ship operating in the Archipelago Sea, July 2022.

Photo: Merja Puustinen

One of the major problems facing the Baltic is eutrophication, the growth of algae in the water due to an imbalance of nutrients, other pollutants, and the natural physical conditions in the region. Since the early 1900s, the sea has changed from an oligotrophic clear water sea to the current eutrophic environment with high nutrient concentrations leading to an imbalanced ecosystem. 75% of the nitrogen load and 95% of the phosphorus load enter the Baltic Sea via rivers or as direct waterborne discharges. 25% of the nitrogen load is discharged via airborne pollution.

The 2007 HELCOM (Helsinki Commission) Baltic Sea Action Plan sought to draw up guidelines for reducing eutrophication and returning the Baltic Sea to a good state of health (HELCOM, 2007). In the agreement it was recognised that the use of phosphorus and nitrogen

The path of a cargo ship cutting a straight line into blooming blue algae formations in a shipping route of North parts of Baltic Sea, a compilation of EU Copernicus Sentinel 2 satellite images.

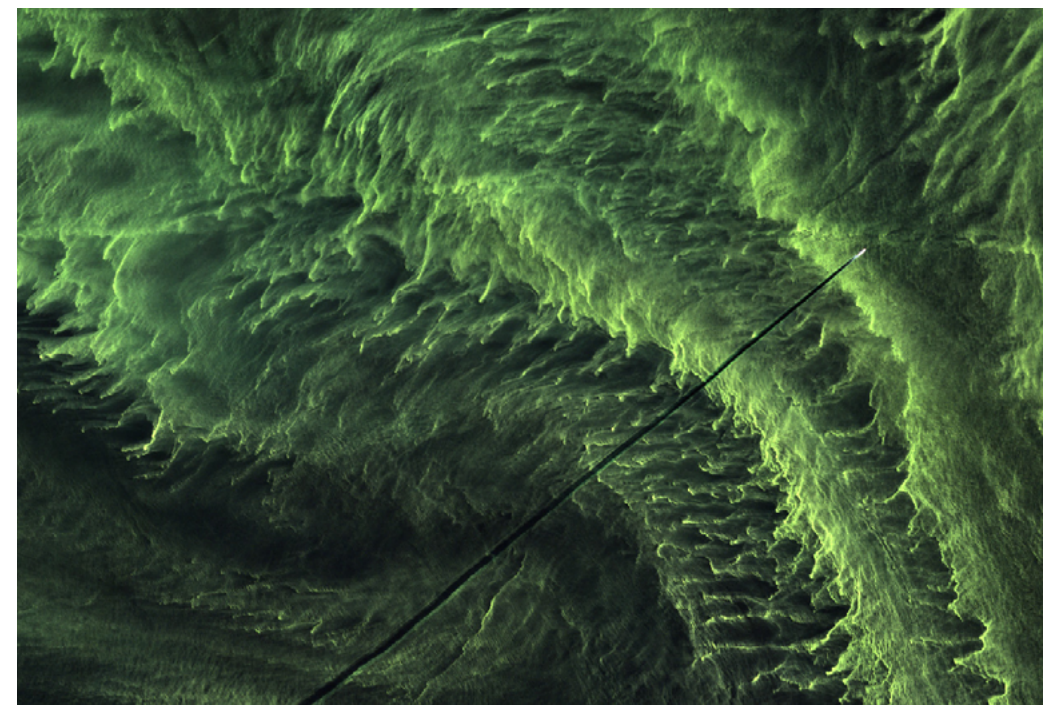


Photo: Andy Best

in agricultural fertilisers was the main source of nutrient loading in the Baltic Sea. In addition, other forms of natural resource exploitation, such as forestry, peat mining, aquaculture and fur farming also have big impacts on the levels of eutrophication in the sea. It was also understood that large amounts of nutrients flow into the Baltic from states such as Ukraine and Belarus, outside the agreement area, due to the large geographical catchment area.

According to the European Union's Water Framework Directive, between the years 2006-2012 only 25% of Finnish coastal waters were defined as being in good condition (Ferreira et al. 2008). During 2012-2017 Finnish coastal waters were in moderate condition, while none of the open sea assessment areas reached a good level. In fact, during this period, 96% of the whole Baltic Sea was in worse than "good" condition,

while 12% was in the worst possible state with regards to eutrophication (HELCOM 2018). It is clear, therefore, that much still needs to be done to reduce the flow of nutrients and other pollutants into the sea. Again, the Russian war in Ukraine worsens the situation as all HELCOM activity involving Russia has been suspended since the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014, until further notice.

From our own experience and observations, we can see that the Baltic is far from being an oligotrophic clear water sea, or of reaching the goals set out in the original Baltic Sea Action Plan "aimed at reaching good ecological and environmental status by 2021".

Imagining the Future

Within the context of a sailing vessel, artists living and working around the shores of Baltic Sea jointly explore the relationships between nature, art, and scientific research, to increase understanding of our shared cultural history and threatened marine environments.

During the next two years of operation, the *Imaging Godzilla* project will directly engage 50 artists, and more widely 350 artists, curators and researchers, 10 art centres and marine research field stations in Finland, Åland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Project outcomes will include creative projects such as visual artworks, music, performance, writings, documentary reports and findings (photographs, videos, essays, academic articles, and blog posts). These contributions by participating artists and researchers will be presented at pop-up events in harbours, in exhibitions in partnering countries, and on the project website. Distribution of the project outcomes in terms of art exhibitions, performances, seminars and workshops in the Nordic and the Baltic countries will continue up until 2025.

Artists and researchers are invited to join a sailing voyage or visits to harbours to work with *GODZILLA* for 3-5 days with projects of their choice dealing with the marine environment. Themes can include the sea, wildlife, fish stocks, wind, weather, seaweed, and algae. *GODZILLA* will also visit human-made historic infrastructure such as boats, cargo ships, ports, and fortresses, as well as artist centres, maritime research field stations, and the islands in the Baltic Sea.

The intention of the cross-disciplinary art project is to create a dynamic dialogue of the meaning and condition of the maritime environment between artists, researchers, and audiences living in the area. The *Imagining Godzilla* project brings together dozens of artists from different fields (visual art, performance, poetry, video, film, photography,



Participating in *Hyönteisten Seili* research day organised by Taru Elfving and Contemporary Art Archipelago together with Archipelago Sea Research Centre – University of Turku. Here searching for dung beetles! From left to right: Merja Puustinen, Sampsa Malmberg (Insect specialist & conservation biologist), Riina Hannula, Taru Elfving, Sari Torvinen.

Photo: Andy Best

Painting of bombed apartment buildings in Mariupol by Oksana Mykhanko, who lived in the city on the sixth floor of a tower block at the beginning of Russian massive missile bombardment. From her apartment, she witnessed the collapse of the neighbouring tower block when a missile hit it. Mykhanko managed to find refuge and a temporary studio at the Archipelago Art Residency in Korpo (AARK) run by Renja Leino. AARK has been actively supporting many Ukrainian artists since the war started.



Photo: Merja Puustinen

sound art, and fashion) as well as researchers of natural sciences in the areas of ecology of marine environments, such as fish stocks in decline, the effect of algae growth in acidification, and loss of oxygen, leading to the rapid decline of flora and fauna in the Baltic Sea.

The project offers a unique and, for many artists, often their first possibility to experience the sea environment up close. The physical action of sailing, being at one with the sea, and enabling videography, photography, sound recording, swimming, collecting materials, as well as interaction and exchange with other Nordic artists and researchers is a source of inspiration for the participants.



Photo: Andy Best

Artists on board Godzilla, Örö harbour, August 2022. From left to right – Heini Aho, Eero Yli-Vakkuri, Leena Kela, Meeri Koutaniemi, Riina Hannula.

The catamaran *GODZILLA* functions as a meeting place and a networking facilitator between artists, art communities, artist residencies, researchers, and university marine field stations in Nordic and Baltic countries around the Baltic Sea.

Resident artists and researchers can use the vessel to achieve their goals. For example, filming and research trips to nearby islands and sea areas according to the artists' needs to document or collect material for their artworks. Filming the seabed with an underwater drone or ultrasonic instrument, photographing blooming blue algae, recording the silence of the radio masts in abandoned military camps, or collecting seaweed and flotsam for new artworks are all possibilities. In between the sailing trips, there are workshops and seminars organised in collaboration with the local partners to present artists' and researchers' work.



Photo: Amerja Puustinen

Meeri Koutaniemi and Riina Hannula dancing onboard GODZILLA, August 2022.

The Aims of The Project

Our aim is to increase the awareness of both the public's and participating artists' and researchers' understanding of the importance of the well-being of the Baltic Sea and the importance of dialogue and collaboration between the Nordic and Baltic peoples and other nations working towards a sustainable future.

The *Imagining Godzilla* project offers a dynamic and social environment for artistic creativity and innovative research as a springboard for new cross-cultural ideas and events concerning maritime history, cultures, ecologies, and increased geopolitical tensions across the region.

Why is Imagining Godzilla an Important Project?

Imagining Godzilla promotes cooperation between peoples by focusing on the importance of cultural exchange of ideas on the shores of the Baltic Sea. The ecological condition of the Baltic Sea is deteriorating. With the rising geopolitical tensions, it is important to continue the cultural dialogue between artists and cultural organisations to make space for peace, to foster hope, and mobilise political action for more sustainable development.

Imagining Godzilla also promotes the exchange of ideas not only with all Nordic languages, but also dialogical exchange of artistic expression between Nordic countries with close ties to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and Russia. The *Imagining Godzilla* project fosters cooperation in terms of new contacts and cultural dialogue enabling sharing of ideas and knowledge about sustainability and understanding between artists and art organisations in various fields, media, and research traditions in the Baltic Sea region.

Imagining Godzilla develops and raises the quality of art and the understanding of it in the Baltic Sea region. The sailing art project is an innovative and visually tantalising approach to disseminate artistic ideas and research, which helps development towards a more sustainable ecological environment and creative cultural collaboration across the region. *Imagining Godzilla* contributes to creating cohesion between Nordic and Baltic peoples about the importance of their marine environment. The project promotes the values of a democratic society, an inclusive way of life, and equality for all by exhibiting multifaceted artistic creativity and cultural collaboration in terms of embracing visual art, poetry, performance, film, and research inspired by the marine environment in the whole region.

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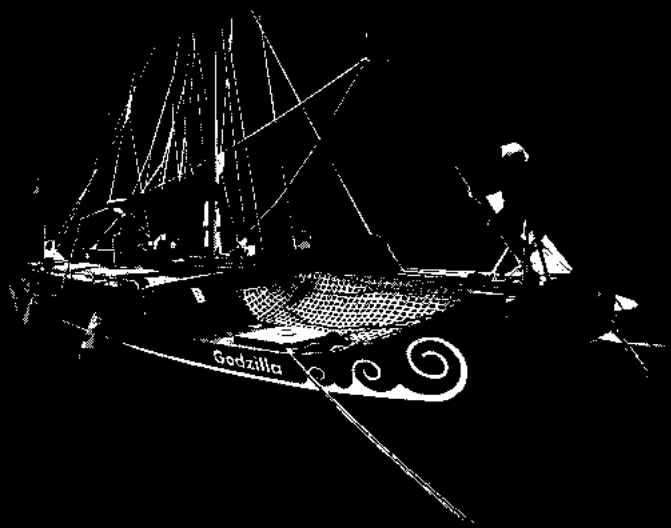
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Not always sunny! Frank Brümmel, Merja Puustinen, & Carlos Alves onboard *Godzilla*, August 2022.

Photo: Andy Best



ACTIVITY REPORT



Organised by
Andy Best and Merja Puustinen /
Godzilla / MEET Factory Oy

Godzilla Sailing Project 2021 and Imagining the Baltic Sea Seminar and Workshop 2022

Duration:

Godzilla sailing project July & August 2021; Imagining the Baltic Sea seminar and workshop 7-8 April 2022

PARTICIPANTS

Godzilla sailing project 2021:

Andy Best & Merja Puustinen (FI), Rag Elnyg (FR), Lina Lapelyte, Mantas Petraitis and family (LT), Helena Selder & Anna Norberg, Baltic Art Centre (SE), Gedeminas & Nomeda Urbonas (LT) and AR Research Centre staff (SE).

Imagining Baltic Sea seminar and workshop:

Andy Best & Merja Puustinen, MEET Factory Oy (FI), Taru Elfving, curator, writer and artistic director at CAA Contemporary Art Archipelago (FI), Helena Selder, artistic director at Baltic Art Centre (SE), Pekka Niskanen, film director (FI) & Mohamed Sleiman Labat, poet (EH), Gunilla Rosenqvist, professor at AR Research Centre, Gotland (SE) and 70 online participants.



Sailing with artist Meeri Koutaniemi, August 2022.

Photo: Andy Best

During the Godzilla sailing project, a group of artists have been working and experimenting with their practices on the boat and in various locations around the Baltic Sea.

The online seminar in 2022 focused on the ecological, cultural, social, economic, and geo-political significance of the Baltic Sea. On the first day, the five presentations looked at the Baltic area from the perspectives of the early Middle Ages through to the present day via the lenses of ecologic decline, diminishing fish stocks, cultural collaboration and networking by Nordic organisations, as well as commerce, tourism, intensive logistics, and scientific research. During the second day, the



Photo: Andy Best

Sailing towards Vsiby, Gotland, August 2021.

Sailing with artist Meeri Koutaniemi, August 2022.



Photo: Andy Best



Photo: Andy Best

Blue algae along the shore in Mariehamn, July 2021.



Photo: Andy Best

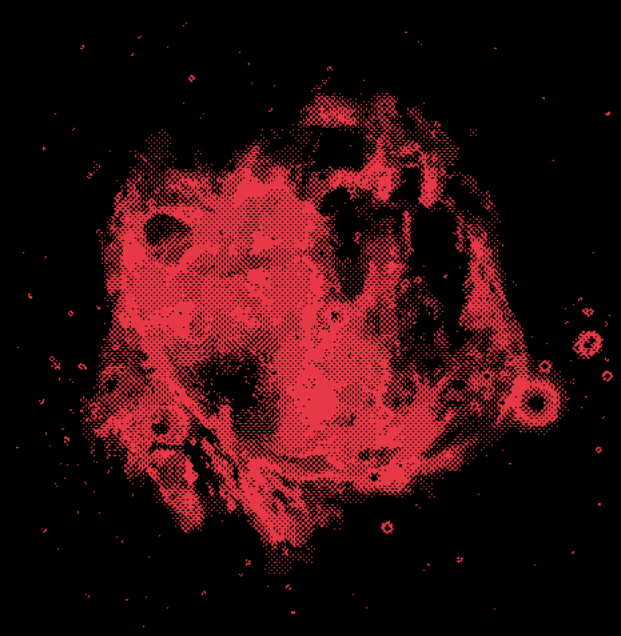
Godzilla and the setting sun, Rosalalandet, July 2021.

online workshops focused on the return of geopolitics to the Baltic Sea. After decades of calm and low levels of military confrontation, the Baltic Sea has become one of the battlegrounds between the so called “good” and “evil” aka "Western civilisation and democracy" and "Eastern totalitarian regimes". They raise scary questions in the context of long-term problems like global warming, the decline of ecosystems and debt-driven economies.



Patricia MacCormack

*Unhumaning:
No Future and
The Earth's Future*



Unhumaning: No Future and The Earth's Future

Concepts such as sustainability and diversity come from anthropocentric perspectives. What happens when we remove human perspective from our annihilation of the Earth? How can thinking no future for us, but only the Earth's future in its infinite relations and constellations of organisms and lives make us carers for the Earth? Absenting human exceptionalism, human subjectivity and ultimately, human occupation of the Earth is both a simple and enormous artistic and scientific commitment of grace toward the Earth. An authentically queer feminist vision of the Earth's future enlists queer and feminism's liberation of our bodies from human reproduction—of new generations of humans to signifying regimes—to nurturing as a ubiquitous abstract mode of affect-ion for the Earth. This short piece will advocate the radical care queer feminist futures can offer to ensure there is no future for human exceptionalism, thereby creating an unfurling future for a liberated Earth. Sharing in common the aims of animal rights advocacy as total liberation as an uncompromised activism (currently named a form of terrorism in many countries) ° this piece adds anti-speciesism to the queer feminist unthinking of the future.

The chronocentric human perception of philosophy and art is one of palimpsest. ° Feminism is driven by an impulse to investigate civilisations as palimpsest, excavating multiple layers and geologies instead of reliance on simple phallogocentric and patrilineal genealogies, to seek the absented, the invisible, the complexity of ecologies which lead to creativity and to what remains. Such a drive diverts other phallogocentric impulses—the reliance on spectacle or ocularity as “evidence”; the logocentric incrementality of signifying systems that deny the leaps of

• NOTE FROM THE EDITORS: One of such countries is the UK. The UK government's Prevent programme aims at safeguarding “vulnerable people from being radicalised to supporting terrorism or becoming terrorists themselves” (OSCB 2023). In 2019, *Safeguarding young people and adults from ideological extremism. A quick reference guide* was published by Counter Terrorism Policing and is currently available on the Prevent programme page (Counter Terrorism Policing 2019). The document presents “extreme and violent ideologies” and enlists behaviours that indicate that an individual is seemingly prone to radicalisation. The document pinpoints that—if recognised—such a “vulnerable” individual should be reported by a relevant superior to the UK government Prevent programme. What may surprise the reader, however, is that along with extremist right-wing movements, the reference guide also includes environmental and animal rights activism (e.g. Extinction Rebellion) and “opposition to the status of animals as property”. Some of the enlisted “suspicious behaviours” indicating that an individual may be “vulnerable to extremism” are, for instance, “no longer eating meat and criticising those who do, or questioning others' choice of products (if tested on animals)” (Counter Terrorism Policing 2019, 10).

• While we usually understand civilisations and art as incrementally improved by default, even a brief glance at the rise and fall of stylistic and formalist expression in art and radical versus conservative or superstitious ideas in philosophy show that both are more multi-layered geological formations than genealogies of ascendancy.

- For example, see *Animal Rights: The Abolitionist Approach* 2006, where the animal kill counter numbers nonhuman animals being murdered each 10th of a second, showing the utterly devastating numbers of murdered animals in agriculture alone. For teaching empathic animal liberation see Trzak 2019. *My Animal Manifesto* (2020) is a more emphatic reference to what I term radical compassion. All share disdain for what Carol Adams calls the “humans first” argument.

inventive chaos and accident; production as reproduction which supplicates to tribal allegiances in the same way heteronormativity supplicates imagination to nationalist, state, church and capital allegiances. While postmodernism and especially posthumanism heralds the Death of the (hu)Man as the sovereign subject of Earth, forms of posthuman who are abstracted by neo-capitalism into abstract circulation machines have made strange the status of the nature/culture divide, that was also always part of the isomorphic divide between woman/man and queer/heteronormative. Most philosophers of the posthuman dismiss any timed rupture at which posthumanism shattered humanism, who itself ruptured “dark” thinking, which in turn made crepuscular Roman co-options of Greek thought, *AD INFINITUM*. This Western white genealogy already shows the idea of a smooth consistency in thought and art is redundant. The nature/culture divide remained important in that the corporeality of the human, from (at least) Aristotle through Descartes to postmodernity was a continued annexation between humans and “the Earth”, for which religion, science and logic sought a “cure”. Big “N” Nature—the rest of the Earth—is an utterly intangible land upon which our anthropocentrist palimpsest layer has always resided, always in domination, never in mediation. I state this enormous claim without qualification because a similarly enormous unqualified claim would be that humans cannot help but reproduce their own anthropocentric impulses even whilst seeking to do otherwise. We diminish associations in the isomorphic alignment of women with care, queers with strange relations, as if these do not require their own logic, reason and other qualities usually affiliated with the Enlightenment subject. To remain in such a binary logic is troubling—for women, for queerness, especially for Nature—yet rather than transform relations to forms of supplication to Earth we strive to “resolve” human anthropocentric dominion by invoking words such as kinship, entanglement and other ways to think our occupation of the Earth. An authentically queer attempt would be nothing less than to live for the Earth and become absent from the Earth. Perversely the new dictators of Earth, the mega rich billionaires and their attempts at immortality through perpetual virtual existence and/or accumulation of wealth to almost uncountable levels before death are more posthuman in the transformation their corporeality has taken. The tremendous amount of natural resources, including other subjugated humans but also nonhuman animals and environments, used to experiment and sustain such depths of mining for immortality makes these figures hyper-parasitic, but any mention of sustainability for “ordinary” humans still begs “sustainability of what and for whom”? The two most devastating practices for Nature at this time are animal agriculture, which is more correctly enslavement, murder and torture of nonhumans, and human reproduction. These alarmist statements are not news, and excuses for why one is exempt are numerous. Further, there are many theorists writing beautifully on how to educate humans with empathy and with compassion, just as we ask for compassion from humans for Nature. ° I am not one of those theorists. From the individual

pig or sheep or cow in a factory farm, to the starving deer or bear in a diminished environment, each individual life of a nonhuman animal is as valid as any other Earth occupant, and any hierarchical understanding of Earth life proves sustainability is a hypocrisy. Shifting from where I have previously advocated becoming-Ahuman as a means by which this Earth may seek liberation from humans, I call for a becoming-unhuman in actual existence. Yet there is still so much to do, and through feminism and queer theory we can use our ahuman tricks to do what we can.

What is a human? What is a Man? What is a sovereign subject? What does it mean to have never been included in or known by such a category? The mythic, miasmatic entity is lodged, whether in archaic, classical, religious or scientific terms, within its own suitable stratum between animal and god(s). If nothing else, humans are defined by their impulse to make hierarchies. First and second wave feminism sought a voice by which a voice may be heard, but other hierarchies simultaneously meshed with these voices—the silenced voices of queers, first bad, then mad; the voices of the poor; the voices of non-White people, indigenous and diasporic; the voices of the disabled. Each of these grappled with hierarchies and we all grapple together against the abstract institutes which place us in our stratum. Neo-capitalism prioritised volume and ascension. Woe betide the voiceless, those who cannot explicitly claim to be voiceless because if one can claim to have a voice, heard or not, one is human. Is there a way to maintain the voices that feminism, through philosophy, art and storytelling, has developed, toward a different purpose? Not to build up women, but to unhuman us all? As queer voices celebrate polyvocality and the undoing of one version of gender, of sexuality, of desire and enactment of (un)subjectivity, can queer voices unhuman human reproduction both actually and within signifying systems? Can the unflashing of the human into a virtual capital machine where all we are is a series of defining labels placed within a defined hierarchy work in our favour? So that women are no longer for domestic work and reproduction, nor do they have to enact masculinity or storytell their own narrative to create legitimacy of the reason of care? Can queers, just as we have reclaimed the word queer, reclaim our designation as aberrant because incapable of reproduction (already an arbitrary and ridiculous “reason”) by only producing the new, or producing new conditions for the truly voiceless? Where becoming-ahuman retains voices between humans, albeit in more artistic guises to repudiate the attachment to power to which anthropocentric speech tends to adhere, would becoming-unhuman conserve the endless between-human arguments which seek a voice is heard before activism can become materially meaningful? Is there a species in the interstitial spaces, a queer-species-of-care? Could we develop a new Enlightenment populated by this interstitial species? Instead of looking for recognition for the interstitial species, could we become clandestine? Could our actions slip between sane and mad, legal and illegal, domestic and grandiose, just as women and queers have been doing forever, and just as contemporary animal

rights abolitionists are currently experiencing in many countries, by being defined and prosecuted as “terrorists”? For only capitalism would designate sentient organisms as property, and their liberation as terrorism and/or treason: this is peak hierarchical anthropocentrism, fascism by any other name. If the only thing we un- in unhumaning is hierarchy then anthropocentrism is in its final throes. This thinking in a global age calls for forsaking pastoral fantasies of time travel “return” to smallholding or white colonialist fantasies of indigeneity as a form of enchanted animism—how can a virtualised, global (yet violently asymmetrical), semiocapital world become ecosophical? The voice of anthropocentrism continues to demand a reason *TO* care. Feminism offers a reason *OF* care, multi-epistemological strategies unmaking the human and remaking openings for whatever a liberated Earth could be. Queer participations listen to the voiceless as best we can, forming unlike ethical proximities without romanticising the “value” in interspecies encounters; a reason *OF* encounter, an obligation, an inevitable acknowledgement of the participations into which we enter every moment, whether near or far in geographical proximity, with nonhumans and with environments. Because we are of course entangled whether we want to be or not and always in excess of ways we apprehend. Both feminist reason of care and queer reason of encounter need art within all epistemes, through the unhumaning of each. Science, technology, art itself demand the unhumaning of their focus (because the focus is always on humans, even in veterinary science and ethology) to become ecosophically impactful in developing an Earth sustainability. Nothing about human presence benefits Earth sustainability except our unhumaning.

Unhuman Affects

As a feminist queer project, unhumaning is one of joyful, ambiguous, monstrous affects. Nihilism belongs with the anthropocene, it is an affect of lament, or of grief in absences, those we already knew were mythical (subjectivity, purposefulness of existence *A PRIORI*), and those we believed in as we became new gods (default superiority, hierarchical logic). Unhumaning comes not with ease but its difficulty is matched by the imperative to illustrious imagination it demands of science, philosophy, art, intertwined and indivisible. We tend to think of the ability to critically engage and dismantle as a project of privation. Change as the only constant, the turbulent illogical perpetual chaos of the cosmos is all we are guaranteed, so change guarantees the unhumans we always were while elucidating the joy in unhumaning. Why should acting ethically with the Earth mean privation? Is the cessation of enslaving, murdering and diminishing nonhumans and habitats so depriving if we linguistically and conceptually describe it with words such as murder and enslavement? These unhumanings of language make acting ethically

toward the unheard voiceless other imperative, showing the criticality of hearing, speaking and thinking with other voices. Our own stories serve our own interests, it is time to unhuman even those feminist and queer identities we sought to invoke and make visible, lest they atrophy within the hierarchy of organisms organised by the anthropocene. We use the tools and techniques of feminist queer practice, and we become-unhuman. Joy, delight, complexity and unimaginability greet an unhumaning activism where formerly anthropocentrism welcomed decimation, death and despair for the other. Beyond the hierarchies which facilitate domination, the amorality of living with the Earth—for we are neither sacrifice nor martyrs, we are co-inhabitants—means that joy is ambiguously perplexing, a challenge in the demand to think rhizomatically and chaotically, relying on alternative, disparate and fabulated genealogies of species we have never been and seek to explore. Outside joy measured only against despair or pain, the joy of unhumaning encompasses every particle of potential affect. What, why and how we think operate upon different planes of possibility, yes, but crucially the demands for thinking, for the vindication of our being as agents of affective opening of the world so that the nonhuman may thrive, turns around the traditional dialectic of demand that the other vindicate their failure to be human. Only when we unbecome by becoming the listener to the voiceless, the activist to the otherworldly within this world, when we become material shadowy spectres occupying the spaces between to create more unconditional space for the Earth’s nonhuman occupants, can we achieve joy beyond anthropocentric love of power toward living for the Earth.

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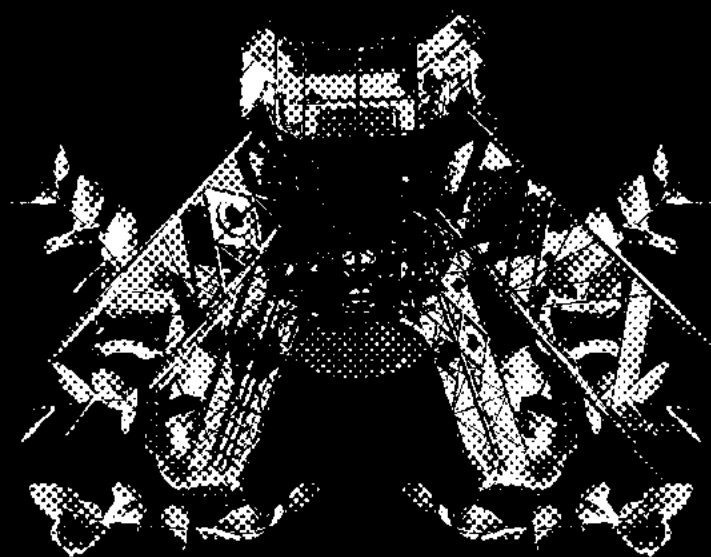
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10-12 June 2022

Organised by

RIXC Center for New Media Culture

More-than-Human Ecologies Symposium for Baltic and Nordic Art, Science and Green Design

Location:

Duration:

PARTICIPANTS

Ola Arent (SE/PL), Maija Demitere (LV), Juan Duarte Regino (MX/FI), Aurora Del Rio (IT/DE/FI), Aleksejs Klokovs (LV), Daniela de Paulis (USA/NL), Signe Pelne (LV), Anna Priedola (LV), Rasa Smite (LV), Raitis Smits (LV) and Juris Žagars (LV).



Guided tour by scientist Juris Žagars at Ventspils International Radio Astronomy Center (VIRAC), 2022.

Photo: Didzis Grodzis

Imagine that you are connected to everything you hear, feel, or smell right now... Or just think that 90 percent of cells that constitute our body are non-human... And how much we are aware of the so-called “critical zone”(Latour), a tiny layer around the planet, in which we live, yet where all life has been formed... What kind of processes, relations, and aesthetics can tackle a more-than-human approach? Are there any mediums, technologies, or practices that can better help us to become more “sensitive” to others and our environments?



Photo: Didzis Grodzis

SOTAN symposium, guided tour by scientist Juris Žagars at Ventspils International Radio Astronomy Center, 2022.

Seeking answers to the questions above, the intent of the symposium was two-fold: first, to show and discuss practices and methodologies by artists and designers working with nature, renewable energy, scientific data and sensing technologies. And second, to establish an interdisciplinary platform for a dialogue and broader discussion on sustainable future visions of the European Green Deal and New European Bauhaus and its relation to the North. The main questions of the symposium were: How do these political guidelines relate to the art and cultural practices that are already implemented in Northern Europe? What are the possible



Photo: Gustavs Bruno Grodzis

SOTAN symposium, the Pond Battery workshop by Rasa Smite and Raitis Smits, 2022.

future scenarios of New Bauhaus with regards to the Baltic countries, which have their own specific "post-soviet heritage"? Fifteen artists, researchers, scientists and designers from Baltic and Nordic countries came together in order to create an interdisciplinary platform for dialogue and discussion on the future visions of art, science and design.

SOTAN symposium, guided tour with Juris Žagars



Photo: Didzis Grodzis

SOTAN symposium participant discussion, 2022.



Photo: Gustavs Bruno Grodzis



Line Thastum

*Sustainability in
Cultural, Research
and Art Projects*

Sustainability in Cultural, Research and Art Projects

Many art and research projects focus on the Anthropocene and the current global ecological crises. If we do this and if we want to contribute to a paradigm shift towards a more balanced future, then who, if not us, should act sustainably in practice?

However, this is not necessarily easy. It requires research to find sustainable solutions, just like it requires research to make good art or research projects and it takes will and time to implement the solutions. But, if we do it, we will improve the integrity of our projects and ourselves and become more trustworthy in our messages.

In our art or research projects, we make requirements for professional or artistic quality, and it is often the economy that sets the framework. Whereas sustainability is often just "nice to have" and something that can easily be forgotten or overlooked. This should be changed. Sustainability should be considered equal to economic, artistic, and qualitative choices.

Sustainability as a concept is associated with the report "Our Common Future", published in 1987 by "The World Commission on Environment and Development". The concept is divided into environmental, social, and economic sustainability which affect each other. The principle is to create a lasting balance within the three areas so that they are self-supporting. Whether it is about environmental, financial, or social capital, you cannot "harvest" more than the resource base can carry without being able to recover again. Sustainable development is in The

Brundtland Report defined as “development *THAT SATISFIES THE NEEDS OF TODAY WITHOUT DESTROYING THE OPPORTUNITIES OF FUTURE GENERATIONS TO SATISFY THEIRS*”.

Although the term has been used and misused in many ways and is fundamentally anthropocentric in its formulation, it still puts an important focus on the human impact on the planet. It has created a common global understanding there, among other things, has formed the basis for the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

However, *ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY* should not only mean replacing a product that is produced in an environmentally harmful way with one produced in an environmentally friendly way. Sustainability must be a way of thinking, being, and acting. To do that, we must learn a new way of being in the world. We need to create an ethical compass for a sustainable, empathic approach to the outside world that reflects on our actions with consideration and respect towards all the things and life forms we are entangled with.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY should not only be about equality and fair distribution of resources between humans, but between all species and life forms we share the planet with.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY should be based on an “economy” that does not only include man-made capitalization of a limited selection of values that can be transferred into a limited definition of growth. It should be seen as the energy and resource that rests in and supports life as the largest value of the planet. This “economy” must be in balance.

This article will take you through proposals for methods to incorporate sustainability in your project or organisation and give you inspiration for actions and attention points in concrete action points.

Proposals for Methods to Incorporate Environmental Sustainability

Incorporating sustainability into a project can be done in different, more or less ambitious ways as shown below. The most structured and comprehensive way will create the most sustainable project. However, all sustainable choices count. It can be an advantage to start at a less

ambitious level and then, as you gain experience, knowledge and methodology, increase the ambitions and thereby the sustainability. The best way to incorporate sustainability is to have it in focus from the start as a part of the project planning and to make sure to continuously follow up during the project process.

1. Better Than Nothing

The easiest way to incorporate environmental sustainability into the project is just to choose the most available sustainable solutions in different areas of the project. Get inspiration from this article and from the internet.

2. Conscious Choice, Visible Results

Start by obtaining an overview of the project's biggest environmental impacts and how much it requires and/or costs to choose the most sustainable solutions. In this way, it is easier to prioritise and ensure the greatest possible effect. It can be done in many ways, below is an example of how an overview can be scheduled. Estimating the project's biggest environmental impacts can be done by using different CO2 calculators. (At the end of the article, there is a link to reliable CO2 calculators.) Although the CO2 emissions will vary from country to country, a calculator gives a fair estimate of the impact. If the resources are available, it is recommended both to calculate or estimate your “business as usual” which is the project’s environmental impacts if you don’t make sustainable choices, and also calculate the result when you have made sustainable choices. By doing this, you will be able to see the difference you have made and to communicate your efforts.

transportation					
	impact business as usual	green option and their effects	easy/ difficult	economy	note
transportation international participants	●	slow traver/tran/bus/ferry	●	●	for some of the participants it is possible
local transportation		tram and bicycle	●	●	
transportation during planning project team)		tram and bicycle	●	●	car is needed
compensation for transportation			●	●	

FIGURE 1.1. Example of overview and calculation of sustainable possibilities — Transportation

food						
	impact	green option and their effects	easy/ difficult	economy	note	
Food for participants	business as usual ● ●	vegan food	●	●	●	
		vegetarian food	●	●	●	
		local food	●	●	●	not many possibilities
		organic food	● ●	●	●	

FIGURE 1.2. Example of overview and calculation of sustainable possibilities — Food

3. Sustainable Transition through Continuous Sustainability Policy, Management, and Accounting

The most far-reaching and long-term way to make a green transition in relation to the project and organisation is to incorporate a sustainability policy and make it a part of daily practice and any emerging projects. This will take more time in the beginning, but in the long-run, it will be easier and make the sustainable choice the natural choice. Think of it as a value, as a green economy—make a sustainability investment, make a sustainability account, maintain sustainable management. Sustainability management has four main elements:

- A plan with concrete goals and a timeline.
- Implementation of the goals through sustainable choices and actions.
- The green account: Monitoring of results (comparing to a baseline).
- Evaluation and renewal of the plan with new goals.

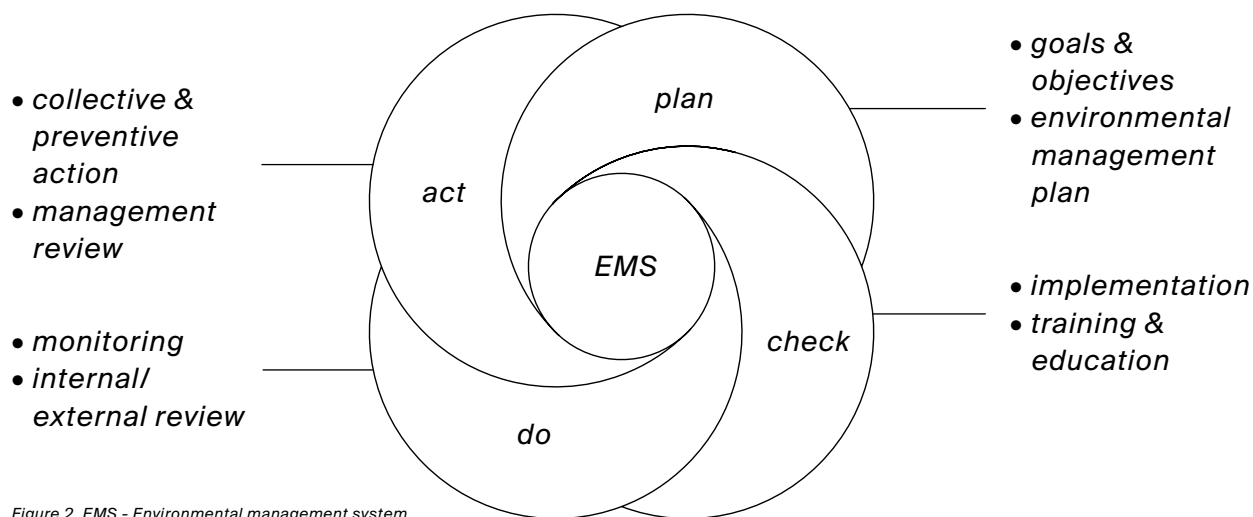


Figure 2. EMS - Environmental management system

Areas of Action

Transportation

Culture, art and research projects frequently involve international collaboration and thereby potential long-distance transportation. Therefore, transportation is often a big part of the project's CO2 emissions. Also, the daily transportation during the project planning can have quite a big impact depending on the circumstances.

Global transportation accounts for 14% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions, but the impact of transportation does not only affect the climate. Cars also emit several particles harmful to the environment and health and 60% of microplastic in the environment comes from tyres, which is one more reason to choose (electric) trains as the first choice for long-distance transportation.

- Fact sources:
<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data>
<https://ida.dk/om-ida/ida-mener/klima-energi-og-cirkulaer-oekonomi/klima/hvor-kommer-mikroplast-fra>

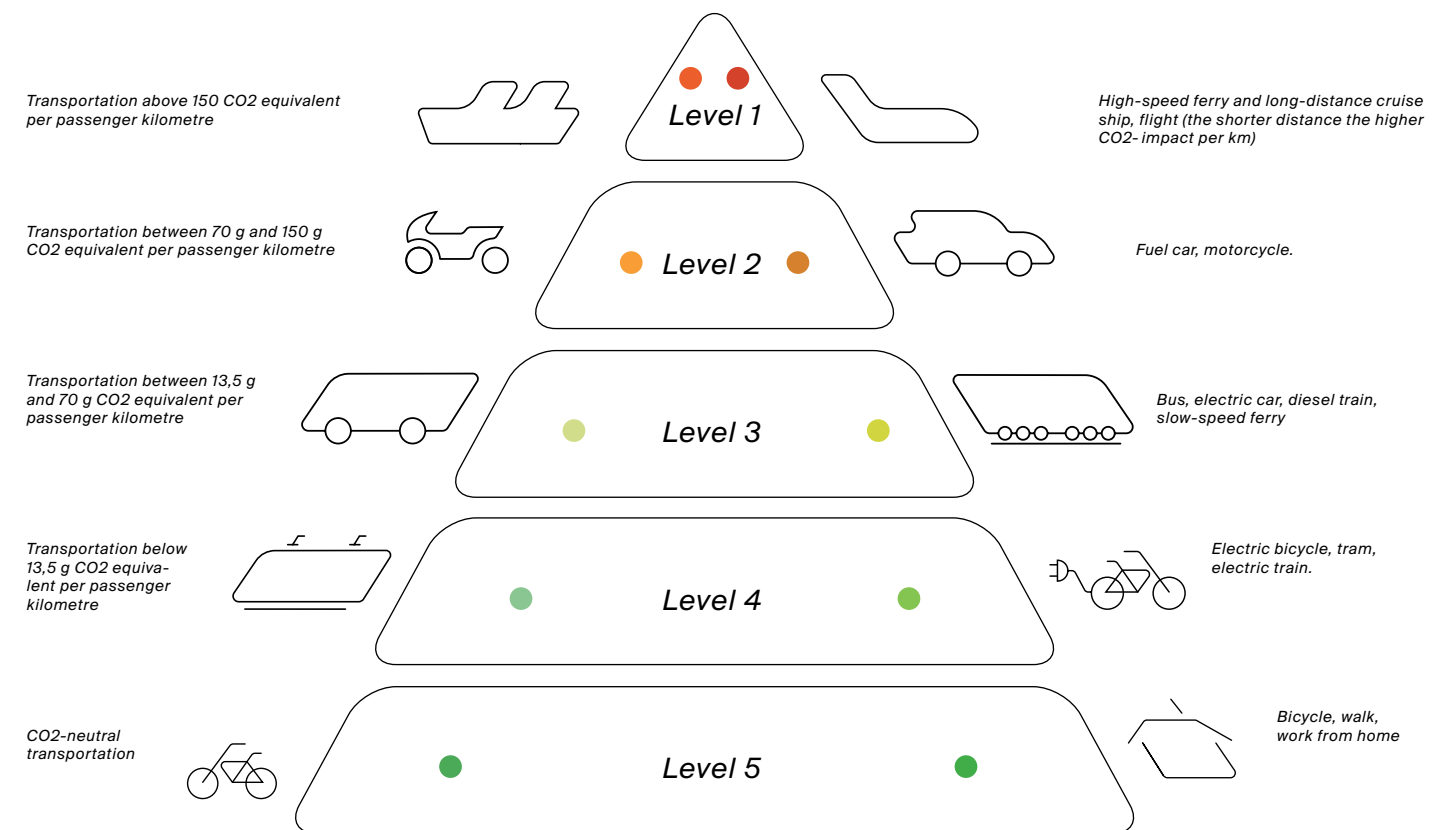


Figure 3. Climate Transportation Pyramid

- Fact sources:
<http://www.stopspildafmad.dk/>
<https://www.fao.org/zhc/detail-events/en/c/889172/>
<https://unric.org/da/mens-mennesker-sulter-gaar-en-tredjedel-mad-tabt-eller-til-spilde/>
<https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis>

Attention Points to Lower Climate- and Environmental Impact from Transportation:

- Is transportation necessary?—are there other solutions e.g. online meetings.
- How is it possible to use the least climate and environmentally damaging means of transportation; train, bus, ferry, (electric) car?
- Pay attention to the transport of goods, exhibition materials, works of art and the like—How can the impact be minimised?
- If flight transportation is necessary, use the most sustainable flight company.
- If ferry transportation is necessary, choose if possible an electric ferry.—High-speed ferry and long-distance cruise ship emissions are as high as plane emissions.
- Compensate for CO2 emissions from (air) travel by planting trees and supporting environmental and/ or biodiversity projects etc
- Effective transportation—combine events, use carpooling, do route planning.
- Can your organisation be part of a (electric) car sharing scheme?
- For local transportation: avoid cars, use the train (tram or bus) and bicycles for shorter distances.

At the end of this article, there is a link to reliable CO2 calculators that can be used to assess the projects' transportation emissions.

Food

Food production is a major drain on resources and significantly impacts climate and biodiversity. Agriculture and deforestation account for approximately 24% of global CO2 emissions. The production of 1 kg of beef emits between 12 and 20kg of CO2 and consumes up to 15,000 litres of water while the production of 1 kg of potatoes consumes 200 l of water and emits 200g of CO2. Meat production also takes up 70% of the cultivated area for livestock feed while 30% is used for vegetable products for human consumption. Additionally, 1/3 of the food we produce globally is lost or wasted each year^o, in a world where 828 million people go to bed hungry every night.

Although food consumption may not be the largest part of a cultural project's environmental impact, it is an important and visible effort to be aware of, that can support a paradigm shift.

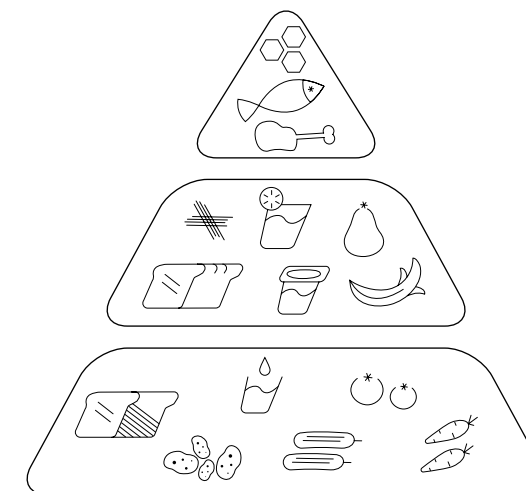
Attention Points to Lower Climate- and Environmental Impact from Food Consumption:

- Eat only plant-based products, preferably pure raw products with minimal processing. It is the most sustainable and respectful choice that also takes into account animal ethics.
- Eat a vegetarian diet—this includes dairy products and eggs. If the plant-based part is dominant, it is a good, sustainable choice
- Eat a vegetarian diet and include fish and chicken. Fish and chicken emit far less CO2 than other types of meat.
- A climate-friendly diet is also a healthy diet.
- The cleaner the product and the shorter the path from farm to table, the more environmentally friendly. Energy-intensive and highly processed products with many additives are the most environmentally damaging in many ways.
- Buy organic and fairtrade-labelled food and local food, if possible
- Avoid food waste by ensuring good planning, buying only what is needed, serving small portions, using leftovers, using the freezer, storing food or leftovers properly, donating the surplus—sharing is caring.
- Use tap water instead of water in plastic bottles and avoid disposable tableware.

The top: food with a climate footprint of more than 2 kg CO2 equivalent per kg of food

The middle: food with a climate footprint of less than 2 kg CO2 equivalent per kg of food

The bottom: food with a climate footprint of less than 1.2 kg CO2 equivalent per kg of food



With increasing CO2 load: Chicken, fish, eggs, pork, oil, cheese, butter, lamb and beef.

Refined (white) cereals, fruit, seeds and nuts, milk and yoghurt, fruit juice.

Whole grain products, all kinds of vegetables, water, lentils and beans.

Figure 4. The Climate Food Pyramid^o

^o <https://madpyramiden.dk/klima/gode-raad-til-at-spise-mere-klimavenligt/>



Figure 5. The Official Danish Dietary Advice Circle

Dietary Advice Circle

The dietary advice circle is the Danish authorities' official dietary advice. ° It is a guide on how you should eat on average over one or two weeks, and what should take up the most and the least of your diet. Climate-friendly food is also the most sustainable choice in terms of health!

The dietary advice circle corresponds approximately to:
 40% vegetables and fruit (mostly vegetables)
 30% cereal products (preferably whole grain)
 20% legumes, dairy products, eggs/meat
 10% Oil, seeds, nuts and other fats (preferably unsaturated fat)

Materials and Services – Everything Purchased for the Project

Transportation, energy consumption and land-use are often the focus of climate impact. But a significant proportion of the climate burden comes from the production and consumption of products and services. Consumption also includes significant environmental and natural problems such as waste, water consumption, harmful chemicals, and the destruction of land due to the extraction of raw materials.

This area of action is about everything purchased for the project: paper, ink and the printer used in the office, furniture, painting for the walls, materials for artwork and for building exhibitions, services like accommodation, the printing of publications etc.

By making sustainable choices when purchasing products and making demands on suppliers and services, you not only make your own project more sustainable, but you also create a greater incentive for the manufacture of sustainable products, and you support those who have made an effort to produce sustainable products and offer sustainable services.

Attention Points to Lower Climate- and Environmental Impact from Materials and Services

- If you buy new stuff, choose environmentally friendly and fairtrade products.

- Avoid materials with hazardous chemicals.
- Minimise the use of plastic or choose recycled plastic products if possible.
- Demand documented environmentally friendly products.
- Choose companies with an international environmental management standard for services (ISO 14001 /EMAS).
- Be aware of and choose environmentally friendly accommodation.
- Buy high-quality products.



Figure 6. Examples Of Environmental Labels

Recycle, Reuse, Second-Hand and Minimise Waste

Not buying new stuff, and where possible buying second-hand, borrowing, or exchanging, is one of the most effective ways to reduce the environmental and climate burden from consumption. This way, you avoid the entire chain of environmental impact from the production of a new product. Even if your project does not use many materials, it makes a difference to lower consumption and to recycle and thereby create less waste. This area is a main factor in promoting sustainable development in general.

Attention Points Regarding Recycling, Reuse, and Lowering the Climate and Environmental Impact from Waste

- Consider whether a product is necessary—buy only what is needed and repair if possible.
 —USE IT UP, WEAR IT OUT, MAKE DO OR DO WITHOUT.
- Buy preferably second-hand where possible, this includes furniture, tools, materials, kitchenware etc.

- Buy products made of recycled materials where possible.
- Sort waste into as many recyclable categories as possible for your local waste collection.
- Make it possible for visitors to sort their waste.
- Buy high-quality products that can be repaired - check whether spare parts are available and whether the product can be recycled.
- Is it possible to share or borrow event equipment from other cultural organisations?

Energy Use

The use of fossil fuel for households and industrial processes is responsible for 65% of global CO2 emissions. °

Using energy with care and using renewable energy as much as possible is an important area of focus for a project/organisation in relation to its transition to sustainability. Even if you do not own the building the project is housed in or can choose the energy source, you can still do several things.

Although installations and energy renovation are central, behaviour is of great importance, you can always actively make a difference with your actions. It's like all other consumption: think about what is needed and use only that, think smart, rationalise the consumption, and use resources efficiently.—The saved kWh is the best kWh. Remember that energy is not only electricity it is heat and the use of water as well.

Attention Points to Lower Climate and Environmental Impact from Energy Use

- Think about energy savings when buying energy-consuming appliances such as light bulbs, printers, coffee machines, and refrigerators—choose the products with the lowest possible energy label.
- Save electricity eg: use thermos flasks to keep coffee warm, not a coffee machine, change all light bulbs to LED, shut down everything when you leave—standby can be 10-5% of your energy consumption, remember to turn off the lights and monitor energy consumption.
- Save heat: close the door to cold rooms, turn down the radiators when you ventilate, turn down the heat and put on more clothes—when the temperature is lowered by 1°C, you save approx. 5% on the heating bill.
- Save water e.g.: can water-saving devices be installed on taps and in toilets? Don't make more tea and coffee than needed etc.
- If you own the building yourself, investigate energy renovation solutions and installation of solar panels—there are often subsidy options.

- If you do not own the building yourself, call the owner and suggest energy renovation and instalment of solar panels.

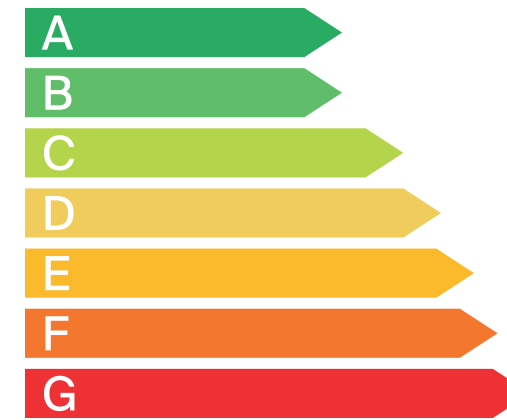


Figure 7. Newest EU Energy label (Valid from March 1 2021)

Social Sustainability – Humans and More-than-Humans

Social sustainability is also part of a sustainable transition. Even more so because the impacts of the climate- and environmental crises are harder on the most exposed humans as well as on the “more than humans”. Our form of society is both the cause of social inequality and the global ecological crises.

Acting sustainably without overconsuming and abusing natural resources is an important basis for being able to share the earth's resources not only with people in the weakest position but also with more-than-human beings.

Your project or organisation can achieve an increased focus on sustainability towards people and more-than-humans by discussing how the project's elements affect social sustainability and how you can best avoid negative impact.

Attention Points Regarding Social Sustainability

- Ask for suppliers who are CSR certified (Corporate Social Responsibility) and/or work with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Choose products with fairtrade labelling where possible.

- Create space for other life forms around the project e.g.: install insect hotels, sow plants for insects where possible also in balcony boxes, establish green rooves, indoor plants can also be small biotopes.
- Remember the livestock if animal products are used—look for animal welfare labels.



Figure 8. Examples Of Fairtrade-Labels



Figure 9. The UN Sustainable Development Goals

- Make guidelines and checklists for yourself and those who are going to work with the sustainable choices within the project or organisation.
- Create ownership and commitment. Brainstorm together and use your creativity to jointly find sustainable solutions and ideas between the organisers of the project.
- Let sustainability be a fixed follow-up item on the agenda for all planning meetings.
- Challenge partners, participants, and suppliers to find sustainable solutions and products.
- If your project is part of a bigger institution/organisation, encourage them to implement sustainability in daily practice—show them this article.

Communication, Partners, and Collaborators

Many projects exist in different levels of partnership and collaboration between various actors. If the project aims to be sustainable, partners should be involved in the green agenda. The involvement can range from information to collaboration and common responsibility to make the project more sustainable. It can even be a demand for participation or collaboration so that the partners meet some green requirements and contribute to making it sustainable.

Communicating the project's sustainable intentions, goals and results are important both for those working with the project and for partners, it promotes shared ownership and the feeling of making a difference. Showing the project's sustainable guidelines and results publicly also helps to inspire other projects and shows external parties, citizens, and participants that sustainability is a priority.

Attention Points Regarding Communication, Partners, and Collaboration

- Make your sustainable goals realistic, clear, and visible inside and outside your project or organisation.
- Make your sustainable choices and results visible inside and outside your organisation.

Compensation

It is not possible to make a project or run an organisation without making an impact on the environment. Although we try our best, there are simply not enough sustainable solutions available or our economy or time is limited so we can only make a part of the project sustainable. Therefore, compensation can be a way that contributes to offsetting the impact the project or organisation has.

However, compensation should not take the place of sustainable actions and the effort to create a new way of thinking but rather be a supplement.

Compensation is most often used in relation to compensating for CO₂ emissions, especially from air transport, but you can also see compensation more broadly in relation to the total environmental and climate impact a project is responsible for.

Attention Points Regarding Compensation

- Compensation can e.g., be supported by participating in reforestation or nature projects, offering support to a nature, environment or climate organisation, investing in renewable energy, offering support to projects that compensate and help particularly vulnerable people, species or nature threatened by climate change or other environmental damage.
- Remember to ensure that the project or organisation you support as compensation is trustworthy and has a quality that makes a difference.

- If you want to compensate for the project's flight or other transportation emissions, use a CO2 calculator (see examples of calculators below) and choose a project where you can calculate the CO2 uptake or displacement.

CO2 Calculators

It is difficult to calculate CO2 emissions because so many factors come into play: for example, the energy consumption depends on the share of renewable energy within local energy production, some means of transport may run on less CO2-loading fuel such as HVO—biodiesel, hydrogen or biogas, which are not included in the calculator. The way the driver drives, the way the farmer produces food, etc. or the calculation and methods basis and methods can be different. Nevertheless, using a reputable CO2 calculator gives a good indication of the CO2 load.

<https://www.myclimate.org/>

<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/measure.html>

<https://www.carboncare.org/en/co2-emissions-calculator.html>

Inspirations

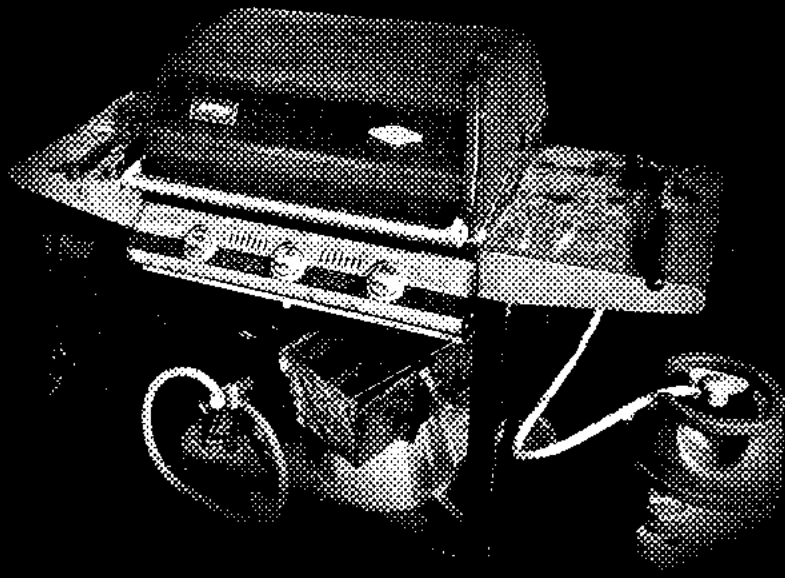
Below you will find some links for general inspiration to make your project more sustainable in all areas.

[https://www.cultuurzaam.be/uploads/aarhus/attachments/](https://www.cultuurzaam.be/uploads/aarhus/attachments/ASM_2.0_uk_180105_web.pdf)

[ASM_2.0_uk_180105_web.pdf](https://www.cultuurzaam.be/uploads/aarhus/attachments/ASM_2.0_uk_180105_web.pdf)

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<https://www.independentsustainability.com/>



Erich Berger (FI), Andy Best (FI), Oron Catts (AU), Roland van Dierendonck (NL), Jaana Erkkila-Hill (FI), Pia Fricker (FI), Jan Glöckner (LT), Tinna Grétarsdóttir (IS), Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson (IS), Jón Sonni Jensen (FO), Lisa Kalkowski (FI), Mari Keski-Korsu (FI), Teemu Lehmusrusu (FI), Merja Puustinen (FI), Mari-Liis Rebane (EE), Liva Silina (FV), Hege Tapio (NO), Antti Tenetz (FI), Line Thastum (DK), Sissel Thastum (DK), Timo Toots (EE), Cecilia Åsberg (SE) and more.



Photo: Erich Berger

The island of Vasikkaluoto.

Organised by
Bioart Society

Final Gathering of SOTAN

While these lines are being written, the final gathering of the State Of The Art Network is still a couple of months ahead. But eventually, the final gathering will have taken place on the small island of Vasikkaluoto in the Helsinki archipelago which will have provided a forum for a large group of diverse cultural practitioners from all over the Nordic and Baltic countries, who founded this together under the umbrella of the State Of the Art

Network. The preliminary programme which already existed in March foresaw the launch of the publication you are currently reading, as well as various networking events between SOTAN members and other guests based in Finland. Many of us will have been on board the catamaran Godzilla, enjoying brief trips to nearby islets and learning about the state of the Baltic Sea which connects most of us. We will also have participated

Photo: Erich Berger



Meeting House.

Photo: Erich Berger



Tent Ground.

Permafrost Bathing, Mari Keski-Korsu, 2023.



Photo: Mari Keski-Korsu



Photo: Erich Berger

Sauna.

in sauna rituals and explored the nearby island of Vartiosaari with experts in the island's flora, fauna and history. Most importantly, we will have looked back on what we have achieved and we will have looked forward to what there is still to do and how we will go about it.



Tinna Grétarsdóttir & Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson
Antti Tenetz
Martin Howse & Mari Keski-Korsu
Teemu Lehmusruusu
Jaana Erkkilä-Hill
Pia Fricker
Judith Van Der Elst

Turfiction



1. Farming Transitions

TINNA GRÉTARSDÓTTIR AND
SIGURJÓN BALDUR HAFSTEINSSON

At a farm in the northeast of Iceland, we embarked on a week-long time loophole to summon the past and future to aid in facing the Anthropocene. We journeyed into a space where the inside is outside, the underground is above ground, and intelligence is exhaled into the air. In these waves of time, we encountered living walls and holes, moving minerals, invisible sheep, carbon slowly being absorbed, decomposing bodies, transmitted hormones, opening and closing stomata, and winged giants both dead and alive. Washed up by life-supporting cycles, the atmosphere, soil, and water-touched skins, signals were received in dreams.

The journey led us to develop a practice that we call farming transitions. The evolving practice includes farming of moments of transition to cultivate a language of new feelings, energy and actions. In our journey, a moment of transition, going from one state to another, involves a passage that takes us through the body of the turf house.

Water-touched skin, 2022.

Photo: Antti Teneiz



Photo: Tinna Grétarsdóttir



The passage begins in the water where we enter a hole and surface into the terrestrial ground of a turf house. When in the water, it moves us forward and through a hole. Making our way through the hole and surfacing into the turf house body is a transformation of becoming other-than-human, cautiously disconnecting us from “all-too human scripts” (Rose, van Dooren and Chrulew 2017, 8).

Entering the habitat through waterways, we feel how the soil absorbs the water. The volcanic soil aggregates have a high capacity for holding water, yet the minerals lack cohesive properties, and these saturated particles attach themselves to our skin and snag in our noses. A space of energies and vitalities unfolds, animating the pulse of the multiple bodies within the terrestrial structure of the house.

Here, new soil formation takes place on the surface through new volcanic material that invigorates the soil body with basaltic tephra. We are touched by the traces left in the soil by frequent freezing and thawing movements, a force that can break stone. The stones around us, mainly igneous rock, lay the foundation of the structure; on top of them is turf. In between the darker basalt stones that form the bulk of the structure are a few rhyolites sitting more quietly in the wall and reflecting lighter tones of brown, grey, green, and pink. All of them are recent, from magma surfacing within the Holocene. Yet, when we lick them, they melt in our mouths, and when swallowed, they slowly unfold in our stomach into time layers bound to the activities of continual earth formation.

These turf house stones, members of many worlds from deep time, are also dream companions. When first carving a large stone, the carver would fasten the chisel loosely around the stone for the night. The carver would then keep in mind any dreams he had during the night and not continue to carve if he felt uneasy. Moving inside the house, we encounter one dream bleeding into another. Some are sturdy and foundational in expanding the space, while others are lighter and flow in the air like pollen. These dreams are not just the entangled worlds of housemakers, both human and stone. They are also dreams of other residents, both previous and present, dreams of soil, lichen, sheep, cows, plants, insects, fungi, birds, and water. The dreams reflect on the residents’ life histories and move like waves flowing through our bodies. Yet, they also act as particles allowing the light to reflect from their smooth surfaces, illuminating the hues of the brown turf walls of the tight passageway which connects different spaces in the building.

The passageway releases an earthen scent produced by the *STREPTOMYCES* bacteria. This earthy odour narrates an interaction of the soil dwelling bacteria that sporulates when it runs out of nutrients, emitting geosmin and 2-methylisoborneol—the earthy smelling compounds—to attract springtails to feed on its colonies, spread its spores, and complete its life cycle (Becher et al. 2020). Springtails, these decomposers are hard to see,

but we see hundreds of them forming soil microstructures. Spores stick to their wingless bodies so they can disperse them to a new site where the spores will germinate.

The passageway also opens into the living spaces of the wetland, the turf house’s amniotic sac. The massive, tightly knitted rhizomatic turf around us, abounds with sedges from the wetland. These wetland plants dwell in the walls and the roof of the house as organic accounts of slowly decomposing cosmologies. New compositions of organisms have taken over to form new interspecies relationalities along with residents such as lichens, birds and spiders. Around the house, sheep dung left by invisible sheep is slowly releasing its nutrients.

A murmur moves through the house with low frequency rhythms of the opening and closing of the plant stomata. Other inhabitants of the house also interact with atmospheric gases. Bacterial residents that carry the nitrogenase enzyme convert the atmospheric nitrogen into ammonia. This spine-tingling vision of bacteria and the murmuring sound of plants occurring along multifarious spatial and temporal scales are entangled; without nitrogen, there is no photosynthesis or plant growth. Continuously carried out through time, thousands of generations of plants and billions of generations of microbes have been involved in the turf house life supporting cycle.

Within the gut of the house, we navigate through the plant’s digestive system, entering communities of diverse ways of existence, relations, vulnerability, and death. Our own gastric mucous membranes, with many densely folded layers, have already reacted with attentiveness. Contiguous relations open between the intestine tubes of our body and the house that transfer digestive enzymes, hormones, and genes with uncertain consequences. Fungal mycelium, with their external dietary system, are not just breaking down the molecular matrix of lignin and cellulose but are also churning on our skin. Our bodies are not just being penetrated by fungi but also by millions of bacteria and viscous biofilm growth. We are being digested, moved around through minerals, gases, humus, acids, and gastric liquid. In this transformative state, some of us find ourselves in a momentary conversation with ChatGPT, unexpected view of the Point Cloud, dream with turf, encounter with the planet’s forgotten organ, connection to the light of the land, and water in the slope above the farm, in the same river stream that runs through the house. As this is being written, a new language is being metabolised in plants, microbes, dreams, humans, and water in the intestine architecture of the turf house.

- Stonesation – feeling building stones in a dream or by licking and ingesting them.
- Dreamtectonics – housemakers’ dreams (human and other-than-humans supporting the building structure and illumination.
- Dreamtaction – feeling dreams within a building
- Intelligence – the wisdom of intestine architecture

2. Question to Ground, Water and Sky

ANTTI TENETZ AND
CHATGPT A.I

Images: Antti Tenetz



Sheep shed at Þverá, laser scan, 2022.

21.12.22 Questions asked to ChatGPT AI

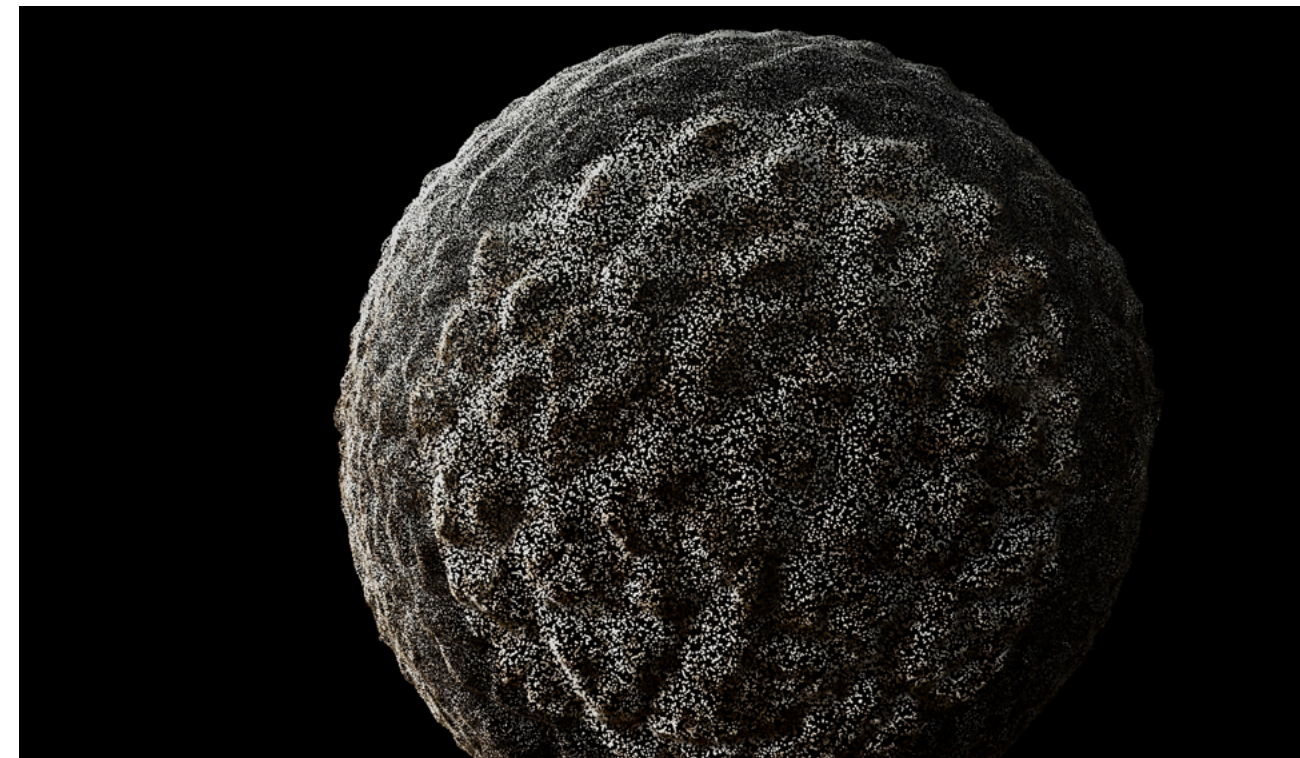
Q: Explain in poetic way similarity of living in Þverá Turf House in North-Iceland and space station like ISS and underground bases in lava tube cave in moon and mars. Give input to extreme conditions and protection against cosmic radiation and meteorite impacts and snow blizzards at earth. How geothermal and sun energy is harnessed. How icelandic hidden people live among space locations in moon and stations. How aliens relate to this.

A: In the frozen land of Iceland's north
Lies a turf house, a testament to the worth
Of the ancient ways, and the wisdom of the earth
Protected from the cold and snow, it stands tall and proud. And in the
void of space, on the moon and Mars
We have built our own homes, among the stars
Where we live and work, in these extreme environs
Protected from the cosmic radiation, and the meteorite storms.

We harness the power of the sun and the earth
To sustain us, and to give us new birth
In these inhospitable places, where life has little worth
We persevere, and we push forward, driven by our thirst.
And the hidden people of Iceland, they live among us still
In the space stations and the bases, on the moon and on the hill

Their ancient ways, and their secrets, they have not lost their thrill
They are our guides, and our protectors, in this new world we have built.
And the aliens, they too have their own turf houses and caves
Where they live and thrive, in these extreme places
Their ways may be different, but their struggles are the same
To survive and thrive, in these unforgiving environments, without blame.
So we stand together, human and alien, in these extreme lands
Bound by our desire to explore, and to understand
The mysteries of the universe, and the secrets it holds in its hand
We live and we thrive, in these turf houses and space stations, on distant
shores and on foreign sands.

Gorkúla (*Lycoperdon perlatum*) at Þverá. Photogrammetry 3D, 2022.



3. *The Unexpected View— from Data-points to Immersive Experiences*

PIA FRICKER

76 scan positions, informed by curiosity to see and experience more...!

Point clouds are an increasingly important tool in a range of fields, including architecture and landscape architecture, due to their ability to provide accurate and detailed information about complex sites. Point clouds are generated by collecting data from various sources such as laser scanning, photogrammetry, and lidar, and processing this data to create a 3D model of the scanned object or landscape. The high precision and accuracy of point clouds make them useful for a range of applications such as evaluation, conservation, documentation, iterative performance studies, planning, and design (Urech et al. 2020).

This very personal speculative research is driven by scientific curiosity, referring to the term “Cloudism”, understood as a technique that uses point clouds and algorithms to generate designs that are inspired by natural processes, such as erosion patterns (Giriot 2019). This research involves creating immersive experiences that allow users to explore and interact with information in unexpected ways. The generated images are part of a storyline, which allows for a switch of perspective and roles to experience the hidden layers of a turf house through curated entry points. Each carefully generated image represents a frozen snapshot of an immersive experience that unveils typological rules of interaction across scale and time (Fricker 2022a). Besides the provided entry point for the immersive experience, the duration of interaction, and exit point are arbitrary, and the interaction creates an overlay of stories that can be revisited, adjusted, revised, or erased.

Turf houses, viewed as “living organisms”, have a unique typology full of embedded knowledge (Carlsen 2022, Grétarsdóttir and Hafsteinsson 2020), offering possible solutions for rethinking the current trajectory towards the grand challenges imposed by climate change. The conceptual and practical development of hybrid point clouds, capable of

connecting temporal, spatial, and speculative design data, requires a radical new composition of knowledge domains towards dynamic systems of interactions (Fricker 2022b). This synergetic discourse between science and design enables transversal interactions between the actors in our environments, and aims to create premises for a new model of environmentally responsible action across disciplinary barriers (Stritih, Bebi, and Grêt-Regamey 2019).

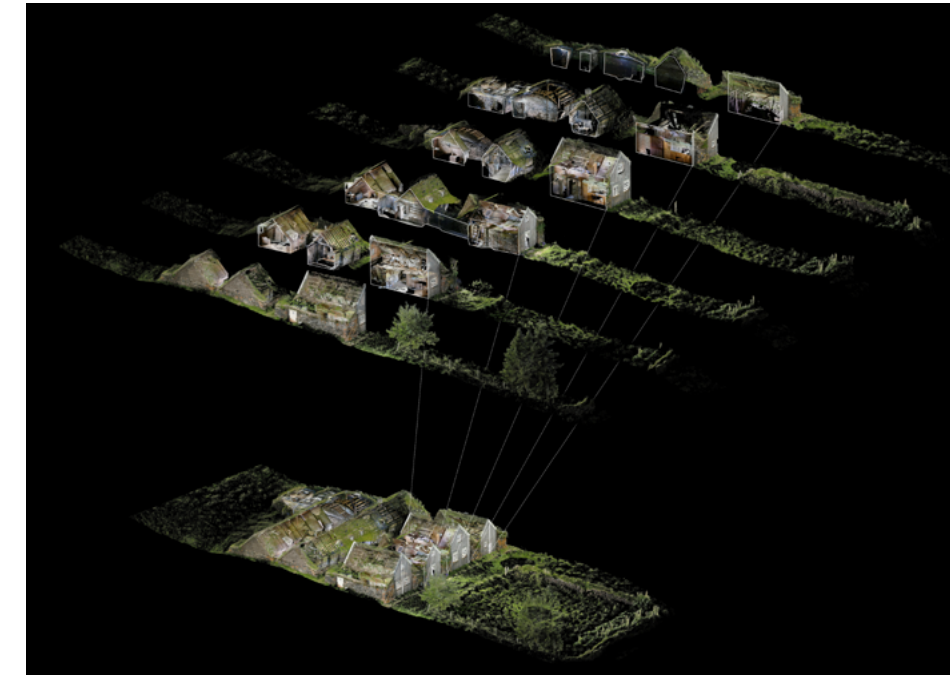


Image: Pia Fricker & Yao Chaowen - Aalto University

A Balanced Composition of Positive and Negative Spaces, 2022.

The longitudinal slicing of the turfhouse emphasizes the complexity of the inherent system, to be understood as a living organism guided by the flow of light, the flow of energy and the flow of the multispecies users. The adaptive system is capable to grow or shrink according to the needs imposed by internal or external factors.

A Conversation Between the Wind and the Organisms of the Soil, 2022.

One thin, horizontal, almost straight delicate line acts as a backbone to invite the flow of wind and the organisms of the soil to a conversation. While the image on the left is viewed from the perspective of the curious wind, the right perspective is viewed from a calm, superficially viewed, slightly lazy soil organism. The wind is curious to feel the porosity of the turfhouse, it feels partially invited, yet completely unwelcomed at other areas. Once inside, it can exaggerate its speed, restlessly interacting with static and non-static elements of the turfhouse. The soil organism is overly attracted by all the possibilities offered by the new system component. A new mega system, with perfectly fitting porous system boundaries to interact with. The imprint of the turfhouse feels like a warm attractor field, huge and diverse, partly vibrating. The organism feels energetic and informed by the system of turfhouseians to become part of a new community. It feels for the first time the gentle touch of the restless wind passing by.



Image: Pia Fricker & Yao Chaowen - Aalto University

4. Dream with Turf

MARTIN HOWSE AND
MARI KESKI-KORSU



Photo: Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinnsson

Martin wrapped in turf by Mari in Þverá, 2022.

Martin

We speak together a few days before dreaming. I mention that I had started writing a series of dream texts, some based on real dreams, others on real events which were so strange that I could only relate them by way of the logic of dreams. I have been driven through a place I had seen before in many dreams. I recorded the journey on my phone, in the pouring rain.

Mari mentions the word “arrangements” in terms I think of what was in the house at Þverá,

Mari

The turf I collected from Þverá is in Pia’s fridge and she is in Wien. We talked with Martin and I remember, I have the sheet that was used to wrap Martin in the turf; perhaps I can scratch some of the dried turf off it and invite it into my dreams. I take the metro to the studio where I have stored the sheet and find it hanging on the wall where I had left it. The late low autumn sun touches the fabric and the dried mountains and hills of the turf on it. I have my knife and I carefully scratch dust and bits and drop

or perhaps what had been in the house, for so long. I am intrigued by this word; it sounds very mysterious. She suggests we dream with the turf. I had collected several small samples from the main house at Þverá, close to the exit stream, and from the upper sheep house close to which I spent most of my days there. We select the Monday night for dreaming, the 31st of October, halloween, or Samhain, a night associated with the people of the mounds or tumuli, the people living and dreaming within the earth. The house is also a grave. I always think of the small earth mound visible from the upper windows at Þverá, in the yard of the church. The dead bird on the stone pillar, at the gate. Bird legs rotting in a synthetic coat pocket.

K helps me bind a thick bandage around my head, to hold the turf nugget, subtly moistened with tap water, in place. We joke about what injuries I must have sustained, asleep in a body. It feels too constricting, and we loosen it several times, to become comfortable. I fall asleep quickly and wake up very early in the morning. The bandage is next to me, with some larger earth fragments still in the hollow of the off-white fabric, others crumbled across the sheets, and some floating in the glass of water next to me. I drink some of this water, make some notes, re-tie the bandage and sleep again with the smaller fragment.

When I wake up and remove the bandage, fragments of earth fall everywhere. My first thoughts are about some phrases from what I was reading the night before, about writing as removing layers, about reaching a core, driving a shaft deep down into the self, and my own task relating to these ideas, to subject words and logic to material processes, to an eating away.

In the first dream I’m trying to find out about making special explosives, reading between the lines, as the narrator does not mention how to do this explicitly, but only in passing. If he did it this or that way, it would make an

them into a small glass bottle. It feels violent, as all foraging and mark-leaving always does. Sustenance. Some of the turf glitters through the sunlight in the air. The silky dust makes a layer on my skin, it brings to mind the warm summer days when soil is like a hidden treasure, just waiting to be woken up by water.

Martin reminded me that I fetched water from a hot pond close to the turf house with Lyyti and Tinna. It felt like yet another gift. I am used to warm water in a sauna stove: carrying the water and chopping the wood to prepare it, waiting by the fire – understanding bodily labour as part of the ritual. The water from the hot pond can be scooped up with a bucket and it is ready to be used. Perhaps the turf house is a functional ritual itself. Thinking of all this, pouring tap water on my dried turf sample in the glass bottle feels brutal and disconnected. It is still water; medium and memory.

Evening comes.

I am tired. The carelessness behind the facades of empathy and staying in trouble make me restless. Or maybe it is the images I accidentally saw online of unimaginable cruelty. I place the liquid turf in a towel on my forehead, it feels cold and calming. I think of what I am representing. Think of taking a pic and making a nice Instagram post of it. I am lost in traffics... Thus, I focus on my breathing. Quiet. Quiet. Breathe. The land opens through me again. The humid, fruitful grass under my bare feet, wind and piercing sunlight. I am standing on the sturdy backbone of intuition and of not knowing, fiercely safe and supported by lands and waters. It is not a walk in the park nor relaxing. The turf is in between skins and I sense the minerality, harshness (a bit like sand) and the rich smell. It is also not a scent but something more. Just like turf is not turf, human is not human but they are all more and spaces in between times.

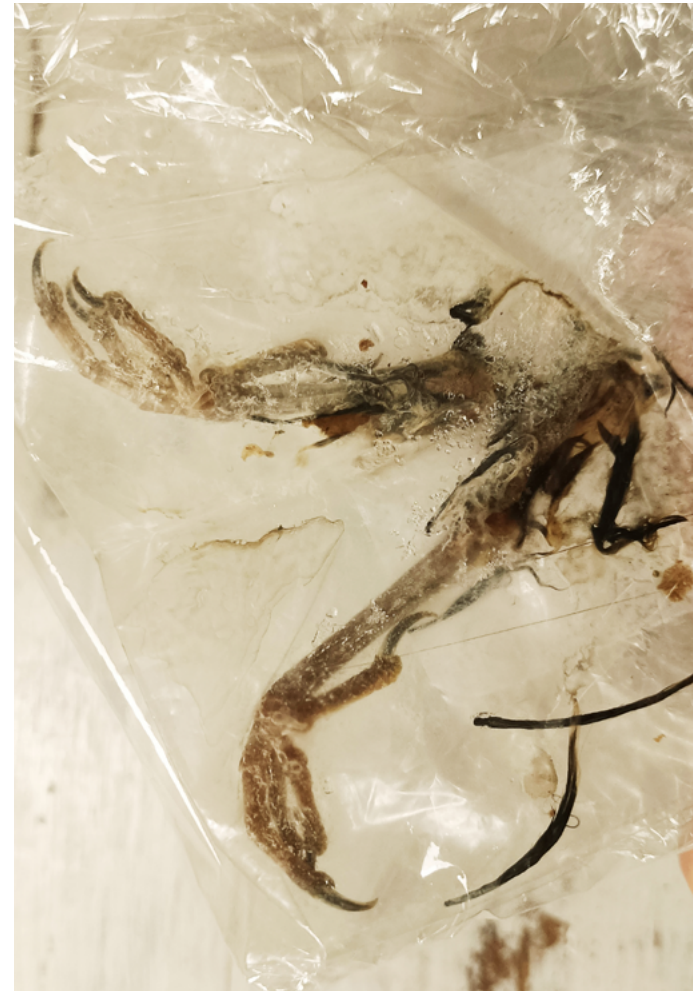
The next morning, I wake up and immediately focus on what I can remember. This dream did

explosive. I watch a close-up of a slowly revolving, stirring thin milky watery substance. A thin, liquid of light to which is added some salt, sand or pale dust.

The second dream takes place within the earth, in an expansive fairy-tale cave of black rock. My mother moves a flea-market stall into the cave, placing very slick, well-packaged games, puzzles and books, glossy and shrink-wrapped on the rock; childhood arrangements which I am obsessed with. In one book, her name is in bright red letters. She tells me it's a series, not at all related to her.

In the evening in Reykjavik, I talked with Sigurjón about the English alchemist who spoke with angels in their own language, but only through an intermediary, another person who could converse with the angels and transcribe their symbols and words. He mentioned "mining dreams," extracting something of value from dreams, and also the dreams of mining, of entering the earth house.

not have a plot. It felt intimate, dark brown and black soft abyss. I have been floating in it, as pieces and different formations of these parts. Perhaps this was in the smallest particle, the smallest scale of space. Perhaps I did not have a body at all, just some kind of consciousness, without any effort or energy. Healing.



Birdlegs Lyyti found in Þverá and forgot in the pocket of her jacket for a week. The legs are in frozen condition in this image, 2022.

Photo: Mari Keski-Korsu.



Photo: Kathrin Guenter

Head and dried turf wrapped for dreaming with, 2022.



Photo: Mari Keski-Korsu

Turf headband for dreaming with, 2022.

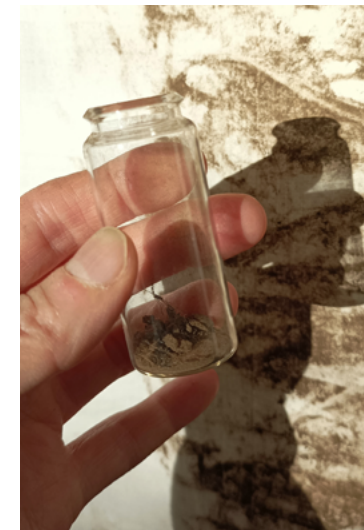


Photo: Mari Keski-Korsu

Scratching dried turf from a sheet, 2022.

The sheet Martin was wrapped with, mixture of turf and human bodies, 2022.



Photo: Mari Keski-Korsu



Photo: Mari Keski-Korsu

Lyyti by the hot pond from where the water was fetched for turf wrap, 2022.

5. Spaces of Resilience

TEEMU LEHMUSRUUSU

The midsummer's sunlight at the arctic circle enters the room through a round window not much bigger than the farmer's hollow of the hand. The light is softened by an amniotic sac that serves as the role of glass, producing a widening wedge of dim, warm tinted glow that exposes the outlines of the interiors in a way familiar to us from Flemish paintings or chiaroscuro of the renaissance art. The senses are signaling that we have transformed into the landscape and its material ontology where the light appears as off from the inside of it. The light of the land.

A stark contrast rises to meet our contemporary ideal of positioning ourselves in relation to the landscape, with trending big glass surfaces and industrially manufactured interiors, always met with a highest level of germ-control. Maybe Japanese garden structures are the closest reference points in the dynamics of widening and again opening volumes of the corridors, rooms and spaces. In today's architectural ideal, the big glass windows or even walls seemingly "let the landscape in", or "blend the inside with the outside", and let us as humans enjoy looking at it, using our dominant sense. And as pleasant as it can be to our species, it doesn't generate any alternative approach to encounter the environment. It can create overheating in summer and energy inefficiency in winter, as well as problems for birds flying into the windows, though. We as humans are positioned as safe spectators of the landscape as it is met with direct visual observation. These two types of windows can serve as a metaphor for the wider character of the human in relation to our surroundings.

As a continuum, the turf house further challenges me to encounter the skin of the Earth as a volume, not as square metres or surfaces and directs me to interact with it. To descend closer towards the Earth's ecosystem in everyday terms, understand and corporeally sense the food web and climate creation that soil and plants enable. To dive deeper into the landscape, not only to sense it as a surface. Coming from this experience and point of view, I feel that the turf farmers represented a far higher form of biodiversity-based civilization than what we experience today with often very distant relation to the origin of food, for example. Something that the whole of humanity should be striving towards today.

Many ways of relating to a radically different way of settling down to a landscape and into its ecosystem that flee verbalisation remain from these visits. I think it is possible to carry the aesthetics of a turf-farm inside you as a charm of resilience and of living closer to a more-than-human world. Spending the time at these sites conceived a feeling of being safely disconnected and more deeply interconnected at the same time. And the memory of it still calms me down.

Laufás turf house, 2022.



Photo: Teemu Lehmusrusu

6. *Earth to Earth, Dust to Dust, Through Time and Space*

JAANA ERKKILA-HILL

Anne Conway (1631 – 1679): “*yea, daily experience teaches us that Species of diverse Things are changed, one into another, as Earth into Water and water into air and air into fire.....and also stones are changed into metals and one metal into another...and in animals, worms are changed into flies...and so on, and in the end, a human is changed into earth*”.

Finland, summer 1971. My feet know my history. I suddenly understood where I come from and where I would always belong, even if I did not physically keep contact with the land. It is a summer day, and I am running along a path feeling the warmth of dry soil under my bare feet. Suddenly, time stops and I see in a flash how I have run along the same path during every summer of my life, and it feels like I am going to run this path until I die. Time and home have a different meaning for me at that moment and there is a new nonverbal understanding about a possible loss that cannot yet be named. Home is the earth and the water, and every breath of the northern wind.

Iceland, summer 2022. The clouds are moving across the sky. I step into a turf house. I inhale the smell of earth and press my cheek against a wall and wonder if any small creepy-crawlies feel terrified of my skin, my smell, my intrusion into their empire. The house has nearly disappeared into the landscape under grass, and only tiny windows indicate that there must be a constructed dwelling underground. And when you enter the house, you step into a “living organism” (Grétarsdóttir and Hafsteinsson 2020) that makes it very difficult to regard yourself as anything else but a part of “one species of diverse Things” like Anne Conway expressed our unity with all the natural world.

Inside the house I feel the pulse of life. I hear the water stream that runs through the house calling me further up the fell. Come and join me, the water says. I go outside and climb the fell above the farm and take off my clothes and step into the water. The wind feels like a cut on my skin. It is ice cold and timeless, and I feel blessed.



Photo: Hildigunnur Sverrisdóttir

The water stream inside Þverá turf house, 2022.

7. The Forgotten Organ

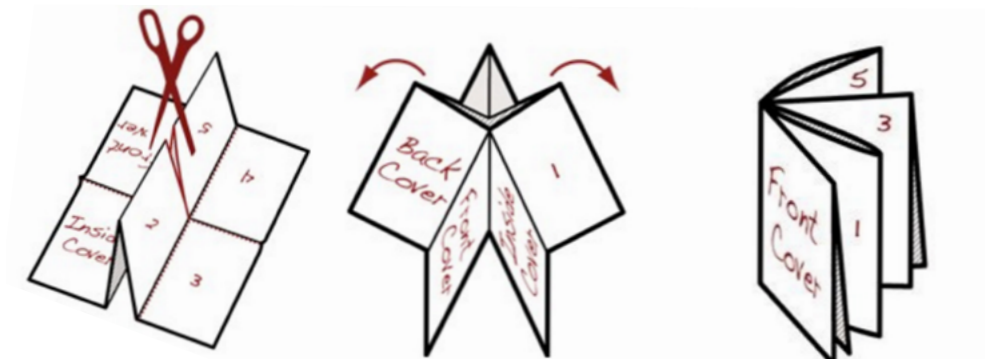
JUDITH VAN DER ELST

Upon entering the turf house a strange connection becomes apparent. Incidents of memory attach to floating agents, fluid intelligence transcends time space boundaries.

It is here where the question of embodiment can be explored in totally new ways, Earth's gut spewing nutrients and microbes into our sphere, creating intelligent potential, connecting conduits we call organisms, sheep and human are but a few we recognise.

The turf house and réttir as portals to explore the flow of intelligence.

Fold as a map, or crumple...



Download *The Forgotten Organ* via the QR-code



It is recommended to print the document in A3 or larger formats

Front Cover	Back Cover	5	4
Inside Cover	1	2	3

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10-16 July 2022

Organised by
The Turfiction research project
**Turfiction
Workshop**

Location:

Duration:

PARTICIPANTS

Jaana Erkkilä-Hill (FI), Pia Fricker (DE/FI), Tinna Grétarsdóttir (IS), Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson (IS), Martin Howse (UK/DE), Lyyti Keski-Korsu (FI), Mari Keski-Korsu (FI), Teemu Lehmusruusu (FI), Pia Lindman (FI), Hildigunnur Sverrisdóttir (IS), Antti Tenetz (FI) and Judith Van Der Elst (NL).

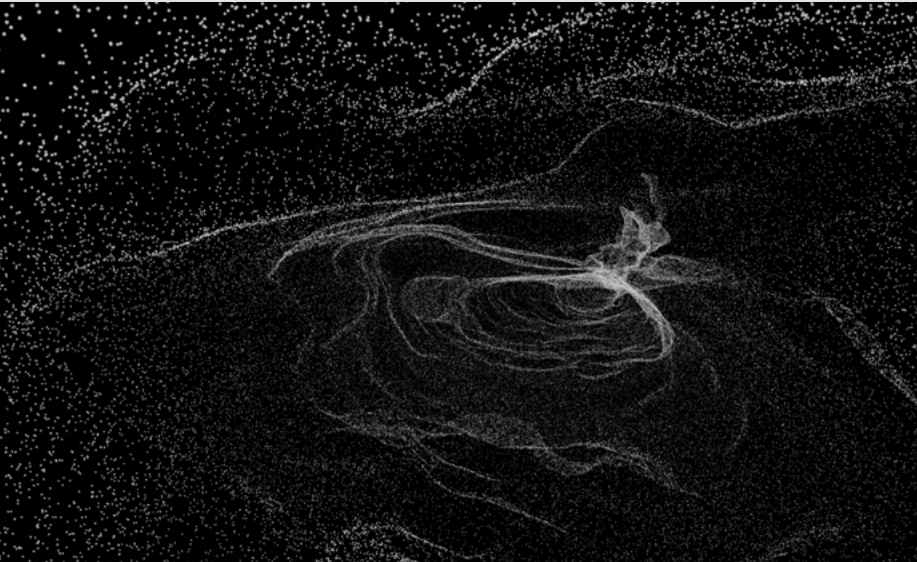


Þverá turf house, 2022.

Photo: Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson

Turfiction studies multispecies architecture inspired by the Icelandic turf house. Fiction meets turf in a storytelling of a world to come that calls for a contingent and growing coexistence. We approach the island's traditional architecture, which was brutally eradicated in the twentieth century, as a superorganism that consists of complicated root systems, soil, fungi, microbes, water, lichen, stones, wood, insects, cows, sheep and humans. Acting as a wise interlocutor, the turf house impacts thinking about how future architecture can become accountable for forming new

relations or temporal belongings between species, reflecting upon the benefits of sustainable co-living. The project reflects on the turf house socio-material entanglements, multispecies relations, time, and space as essential elements for creating architectural complexes of interdependent cohabitation and ecosystem thinking and doing. Calling into being



Lavatube-cave, Leiðarendi, 2022.

Image: Antti Tenetz

Tinna by the hot pond from where the water was fetched for turf wrap, 2022.



Photo: Mari Keski-Korsu

The Turfiction research project is founded and directed by Tinna Grétarsdóttir and Sigurjón B. Hafsteinsson, University of Iceland, in collaboration with Hildigunnur Sverrisdóttir, Iceland University of the Arts and Hlynur Óskarsson, Agricultural University of Iceland. The research is funded by The Icelandic Research Fund (IRF) and NOS-HS

Photo: Teemu Lehmusruusu.



Laxárdalur valley, 2022.



Judith and Pia 3D laser scanning to generate a point-cloud, 2022.

Photo: Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson

collaborative living with other-than-humans enhances human sensorial pathways and enriches sensory perception with sensibilities characteristic of the nonhuman sphere. To use the words of van Dooren et al., the project celebrates “different modes of attentive immersion” (van Dooren, Kirksey and Münster 2016) on our journey to open practices of co-worlding—creating and performing visions, languages, and stories of multispecies and earthen politics. In July 2022, the Turfiction research project invited artists to a week-long workshop in and out of turf farms and in the waters in the North of Iceland.

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Biographies

Jón Aldará works as a biological researcher at the National Museum of the Faroe Islands, where he is also involved in several nature restoration projects. He is also the lead vocalist for the Faroese doom metal band *Hamferð*, Danish band *Iotunn*, and Finnish band *Barren Earth*.

Erich Berger is an artist, curator and cultural worker based in Helsinki. Throughout his artistic practice, he has explored the materiality of information and information and technology as artistic material. His interest in issues of deep time and hybrid ecology led him to work with geological processes, radiogenic phenomena and their socio-political implications in the here and now. As director of the Bioartsociety he develops opportunities which create transdisciplinary encounters and collaborative projects between professionals from the arts, natural sciences, technology and the humanities, recognising science and technology as fundamental transformative powers of our life world. Berger has exhibited widely in museums, galleries and major media-art events in Europe and worldwide.

<http://randomseed.org>

Andy Best and **Merja Puustinen** are artists with international careers encompassing sculpture, performance, media, net, and bio-art. Merja Puustinen is an artist, cultural commentator, producer and researcher. She is a PhD candidate at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts, Helsinki. Andy Best is an experienced curator, producer and educator, and is Professor of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts, Helsinki, and a PhD candidate in the Department of Art & Media at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. Andy and Merja were amongst the world's first online artists, and during the 1990's created beautiful, provocative multiuser 3D worlds on the internet. They developed a web-based 3D multiuser community platform as well as virtual pet and e-learning applications for mobile phones. Now they focus on developing playful, physically engaging installations and public art works. They have founded Espoo Kunsthalle, an initiative to bring critically engaged art to suburban areas, and the *Imagining Godzilla* artistic residency network platform, using artistic methods to investigate the environmental challenges facing the Baltic Sea.

<http://andyandmerja.com>

<http://imagininggodzilla.fi>

Roland van Dierendonck is an Amsterdam-based artist, biologist and PhD researcher at Lab4Living, Sheffield Hallam University, translating human-microbe connections into sensory experiences using haptics and microscopy. Roland has a keen interest in bio-digital hybrid collaborations, including (slow) biotic game research and currently, Chronomicroscopy. In Norway, he was involved with NOBA, co-organising several workshops. He is a fellow of the Global Community Biosummit, organised annually at the MIT Medialab in Boston. His past exhibitions include S1 Gallery, London Design Festival, Highlight Delft, Ars Electronica Festival and STWST48x7, and was a resident at Metaal Kathedraal, TeleAgriCulture, Water is as we make it and the Coalesce Center for the Biological Arts.

<http://rolandvandierendonck.com>

Caroline Elgh is an art curator, writer, educator and PhD researcher in gender studies at Linköping University. Her work within the field of environmental humanities and feminist posthumanities explores postdisciplinary processes at the intersection of contemporary art, visual culture, science, political ecology and speculative fiction. As a curator at Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm, she curated exhibitions such as *Cosmological Arrows: Journeys through inner and outer space*, which examined contemporary art's relation to science fiction, ecology and technology.

Judith van der Elst is trained as an archaeologist (specialised in geospatial technologies), she currently works at the intersection of art, science and technology in a research project 'Art and sustainability' in Groningen.

Jaana Erkkila-Hill is an artist-researcher who is working as the vice-rector of research at the University of the Arts Helsinki. Her interests lie in the fields of artistic thinking and human and nonhuman interaction.

Pia Fricker is Professor of Computational Methodologies in Landscape Architecture and Urbanism at Aalto University, Finland. She holds a doctorate degree in Architecture and a postgraduate degree in Computation from ETH Zurich. Her research is focusing on data-driven design methods for dynamic urban territories, featuring a new reading and immersive interaction of ecosystem datasets in the realm of Mixed Reality. Prior to her current position, she was Director of Postgraduate Studies in Landscape Architecture at the ETH Zurich. She is a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Digital Landscape Architecture, expert peer reviewer for the International Journal of Architectural Computing, the Urban Planning Journal and the Journal of Architecture and Urbanism. Pia Fricker has published extensively, and her work has been exhibited, amongst others, at the Venice Biennale, the National Design Centre Singapore, the Museum of Modern Art—EMMA, as well as at the Helsinki Design Week.

Mindaugas Gapševičius lives in Berlin and Vilnius. His work explores the impact of nonhuman actors on human creativity and the impact of humans on the Umwelt. He has been a creative fellow at the Bauhaus University in Weimar since 2015. Gapševičius was one of the initiators and founders of Institutio Media, the first Lithuanian media art platform (1998). Gapševičius' works have been shown at the Ars Electronica festival in Linz, the Lithuanian National Gallery of Art, The MO Museum in Vilnius and Píksel festival in Bergen.

Tinna Grétarsdóttir and **Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson** are founders and directors of the Turfiction research project which involves a transdisciplinary approach to Icelandic vernacular architecture. They work at the intersections of social and natural sciences, art, architecture and speculative fiction in order to explore how Icelandic turf house architecture can be of value for more sustainable interdependent co-living of humans and others. Tinna Grétarsdóttir is an independent researcher and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson is Professor in Museum Studies at the University of Iceland.

<http://turfiction.org>

Martin Howse is occupied with an investigation of the links between the earth, software and the human psyche through the construction of experimental situations.

<http://www.1010.co.uk/org>

Jón Sonni Jensen was the first Faroese member of the SOTAN network, and main administrator for the Faroese representatives. He holds a BA (Hons) degree in Fine Art. He mainly works in abstract sculpture where he deals with themes surrounding the human body and industry, psychosomatic organic materiality, and the borders between disgust and appeal in human self-identity.

Paavo Järvensivu, D.Sc. (Econ.), is a co-founder and researcher at the independent, multidisciplinary BIOS Research Unit, which studies the impacts of environmental and resource factors on Finnish society—economy, politics, culture—and develops the foresight of decision-makers and citizens. BIOS was launched in 2015 and is based in Helsinki.

Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir is an associate professor at the Iceland University of the Arts' department of art education. Her research centres around environmental ethics, phenomenology and aesthetics and she has published papers and book chapters on landscape, beauty and sensuous knowledge. Her current research within phenomenology and environmental aesthetics focuses on human-environment / body-landscape relations and processes, and their role in human thinking and understanding.

Anni-Kristiina Juuso (Ánneristen Juuso in her mother tongue Northern Sámi) is a reindeer herding Indigenous Sámi, actor and lawyer trained on the bench, living in northernmost Sweden and northwestern Finland in the Karesuando area, at the Heart of Sápmi. She considers acting to be her number-one career, but as a lawyer, she specialises in Indigenous and Human Rights Law. Since 2017, she has worked with matters concerning Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) both in Norway and Finland. Today, she is writing her dissertation in Law, researching whether TRC as an institution really contributes to the realisation of Indigenous peoples' jus cogens, the right to self-determination.

Mari Keski-Korsu is a post-disciplinary artist who explores macro-level manifestations of the Anthropocene. Her work is based on multispecies collaborations and her medium of expression is a hybrid combination of participatory performance, visual and live art. She is focused on interspecies communication, hydrobodily care and is interested in the intersections between art, activism and science from the perspective of permaculture and ecofeminism. She is a doctoral researcher of Arts at Aalto University. Her research focuses on multispecies ritualisations in the changing (sub)Arctic.

<http://marikeskikorsu.net>

Teemu Lehmusruus is an artist working with hybrid forms of media, installation and bioart combined with sound and spatial designs. His core interests revolve around life's material prerequisites, especially in the porous, overlooked dimensions of the soil that cannot be observed with unaided human senses. Lehmusruus's doctoral research at Aalto Arts investigates regenerative practices and the long term project Trophic Verses in which he is collaborating with farmers, curators, as well as with soil and climate researchers. Since 2020 Teemu has worked as the chairperson of the board at the Finnish Bioart Society.

<http://www.trophicverses.com>

Patricia MacCormack is Professor of Continental Philosophy at Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge. She has published extensively on philosophy, feminism, queer and monster theory, animal abolitionist activism, ethics, art, occultism, and horror cinema. She is the author of *Cinesexuality* (Routledge 2008) and *Posthuman Ethics* (Routledge 2012) and the editor of *The Animal Catalyst* (Bloomsbury 2014), *Deleuze and the Animal* (EUP 2017), *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema* (Continuum 2008) and *Ecosophical Aesthetics* (Bloomsbury 2018). Her newest book is *The Ahuman Manifesto: Activisms for the End of the Anthropocene* (Bloomsbury 2020). She is currently a Leverhulme Fellow researching and developing Death Activism.

Sonja Pietiläinen is a Doctoral Researcher for the Geography Research Unit at the University of Oulu. Her research studies the political geographies of the far-right, focusing on the relationship between the climate crisis and the far-right's gendered, sexualised and racialised border politics and nationalisms. In her research, she applies a variety of methods, including ethnography and visual and textual analysis.

Guðrið Poulsen is a ceramic artist, creating work that questions human relationships and impact on occupied and unoccupied space. She does this by working with forms that are both organic and architectural in nature, as well as using documentative walks and hikes in her process.

Daina Pupkevičiūtė works between art and anthropology with the aim of understanding togetherness, interrelatedness and caring for others across the species spectrum. She also sings, composes learning experiences, fosters caring spaces, composts, engages in interspecies dialogues and listens to stories that others have to tell. She feels overwhelmed with climate anxiety, ashamed of racially discriminating border policies, anguished by injustice, violence and war against humans and nonhumans, sometimes angry, often insecure.

Marietta Radomska, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Humanities at Linköping University, SE; director of The Eco- and Bioart Lab (<https://ecobioartlab.net/>); co-founder of the Queer DeathStudies Network (<https://queerdeathstudies.net/>); member of The Posthumanities Hub; and member of the State of the Art Network's steering group (since 2018). She works at the intersection of posthumanities, environmental humanities, continental philosophy, queer death studies, visual culture and contemporary art and has published in *Australian Feminist Studies*, *Somatechnics*, *Environment and Planning E*, and *Artnodes*, among others. Currently, she is the PI of the research project "Ecological Grief, Crisis Imaginaries and Resilience in Nordic Lights"(2022-26), funded by FORMAS Research Council for Sustainable Development.

<http://www.mariettaradomska.com>

Kira O'Reilly is an Irish artist currently based in Helsinki; her practice is willfully interdisciplinary and celebrates an *undisciplinarity*, stems from a visual art background. It employs performance, sculpture, biotechnical practices, writing and experimental media with which to consider speculative reconfigurations of *The Body* in its most expanded sense, across multiple spaces, scales and temporalities, often but not always, working with site, duration and context as generative elements.

Kim Simonsen is a writer, publisher and curator. He has published six books, poetry and essays, and is translated into several languages. He has won awards in the Faroe Islands, Macedonia and his poems and books have won awards in USA. He teaches and writes about posthumanism and new-materialist art theory. He holds a PhD in literature. He arranges and curates festivals and literary and contemporary art events, mostly on posthumanist and new-materialist/eco-art themes and theory, (recently with The Laboratory of Aesthetics and Ecology and SOTAN) in Denmark at the publisher and platform Eksil.

Hege Tapio is an artist and curator based in Stavanger - Norway, currently pursuing artistic research as a PhD fellow at FeLT—Futures of Living Technologies at OsloMet. Her interest in emerging media interconnecting art, new technology and science, led to the foundation of i/o/lab – Center for Future Art since 2001, where she established and curated the Article Biennial—a festival for electronic and unstable art. Tapio is involved as curator in the research project Caring futures: (QUALITECH) at the University of Stavanger, is part of the NOBA—Norwegian Bioart Arena, located at Vitenparken by Campus Ås, Norway, and Associate artist in the Metabolic Arts Gathering series at Copenhagen Medical Museion.

<http://www.tapio.no>

Antti Tenetz is a sub-arctic based artist investigating how humans, non-humans, and machines dream, envision, perceive, and adapt to the changes and challenges and possible futures in hybrid environments, where the technosphere and biosphere converge.

Line Thastum is a human ecologist at Aalborg university, a sustainability advisor, a creative writer and poet, a trained organic farmer and an alternative therapist. She is a co-founder and co-director of the art organisation "The Independent Air", which focuses on human–more-than-human relations, and the planet's ecological crises through art projects, workshops, networks, exhibitions, and events and sustainable practice. She is co-founder of "State of The Art" a Nordic/ Baltic transdisciplinary network facing the Anthropocene and is a part of the current steering group. She has for more than 20 years worked with environmentally sustainable solutions across disciplines and community groups, most recently with/ in the Herning Municipality.

Organisations - State Of The Art Network

Bioart Society (FI)
Erich Berger, Mari Keski-Korsu, Piritta Puhto,
Lisa Kalkowski, Milla Millasnoore
<https://bioartsociety.fi>

Isop (DK) (formerly The Independent Air)
Line Thastum, Sissel Thastum
<http://www.theindependentair.com>

The Eco- and Bioart Lab (SE)
Marietta Radomska, Caroline Elgh, Mirko Nikolić
<https://ecobioartlab.net>

The Posthumanities Hub (SE)
Cecilia Åsberg, Caroline Elgh, Janna Holmstedt,
Jesse Peterson, Tetiana Priadkina
<https://posthumanitieshub.net>

Institutio Media (LT)
Mindaugas Gapševičius, Jan Glöckner
<http://www.o-o.lt>

Imagining Godzilla (FI)
Andy Best, Merja Puustinen
<http://imagininggodzilla.fi>

SOTAN Faroe Islands (FO)
Jón Sonni Jensen, Kim Simonsen, Guðrið Poulsen,
Jón Aldará, Kolbrún í Haraldsstovu & Uni Árting

Maajaam (EE)
Timo Toots and Mari-Liis Rebane
<https://www.maajaam.ee>

NOBA – Norwegian Bioart Arena (NO)
Hege Tapio, Roland van Dierendonck,
Annike Flo, Eli Skatvedt
<https://noba.art>

RIXC Centre for New Media Culture (LV)
Rasa Smite, Raitis Smits,
Agnese Baranova, Liva Silina
<http://rixc.org>

Turfiction (IS)
Tinna Grétarsdóttir, Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson
<http://turfiction.org>

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Jan van Boeckel / Hanze University
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Ase Brunborg Lie / Artist
Christian Danielewitz / Artist
Stinus Duch
Robin Everett / Artist
Lotte Fløe Christensen
Pia Fricker / Aalto University
Veronika Geiger / Artist
Jonas Gren / Writer
Silja E. K. Henderson
Line Henriksen / IT University of Copenhagen
Andreas Vermehren Holm / Writer
Janna Holmstedt / The Posthumanities Hub and
National Historical Museums in Sweden
Signe Johannessen / Artist
Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir / Iceland University
of the Arts
Teemu Lehmusrusu / Artist
Pauliina Leikas / Artist
Pia Lindman / Chill Survive, University of Lapland

Kristina Lindström / Malmö University
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Mirko Nikolić / The Eco- and Bioart Lab,
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Tiina Prittinen
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Maija Annikki Savolainen / Artist
Ananda Serné / Artist
Åsa Ståhl / Linnaeus University
Claudia O'Steen / Artist
Ingrid Storholmen / Writer
Antti Tenetz / Artist
Sarah Trahan / University of Southern Denmark
Danielle Wilde / Umea University
Susanne M. Winterling / Artist

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Erich Berger and Mari Keski-Korsu / Bioart Society,
Marietta Radomska / The Eco- and Bioart Lab,
Line Thastum / The Independent Air

SOTAN online

<https://bioartsociety.fi/projects/state-of-the-art-network>

<http://www.theindependentair.com/state-of-the-art>

State Of The Art Network funders

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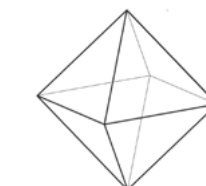
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