The READER of the 10th Edition of ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Edited by

Tautvydas Urbelis & Brigit Arop

RUPERT,

The Reader
of* the 10th Edition *of
Alternative Education
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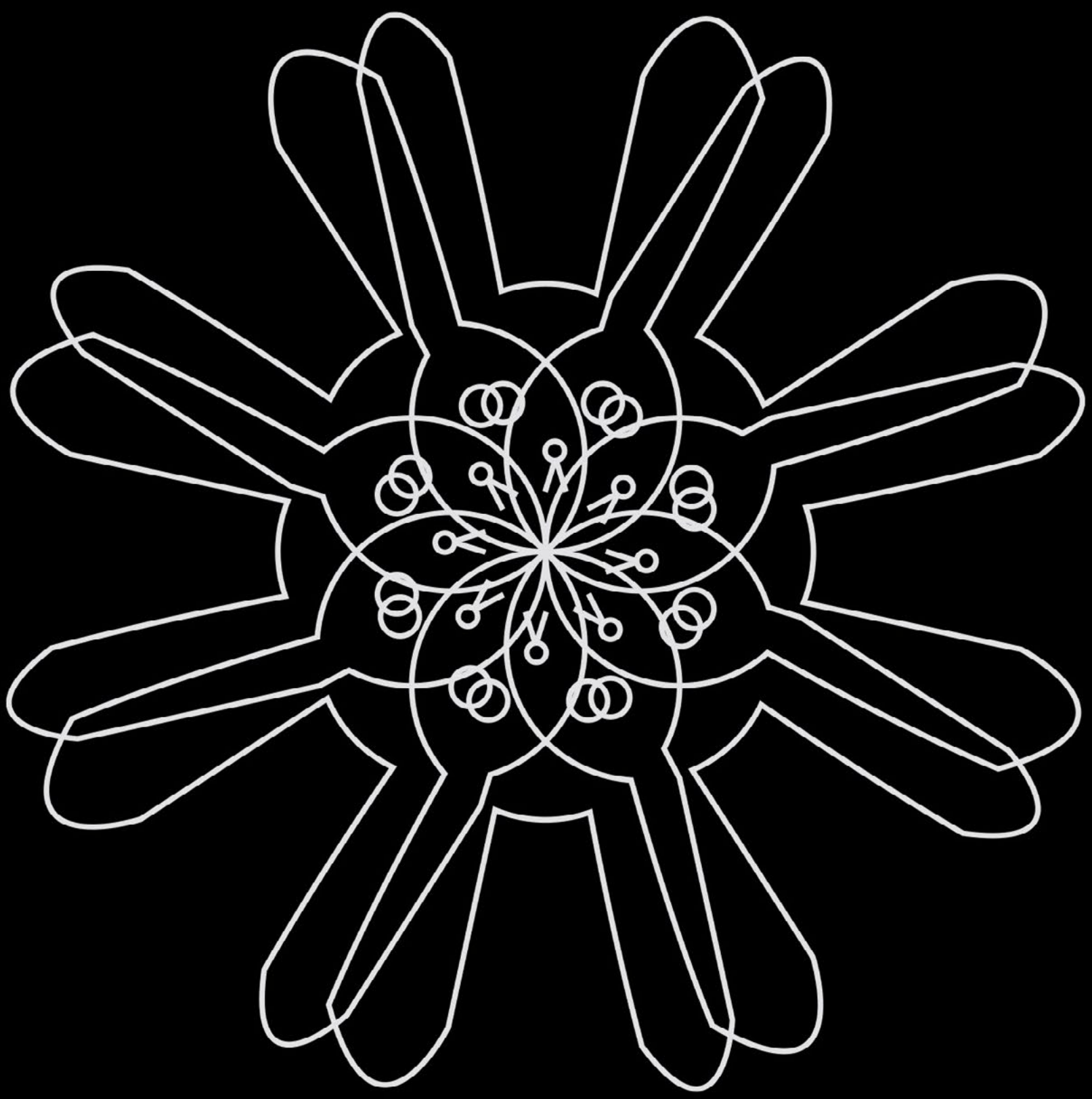

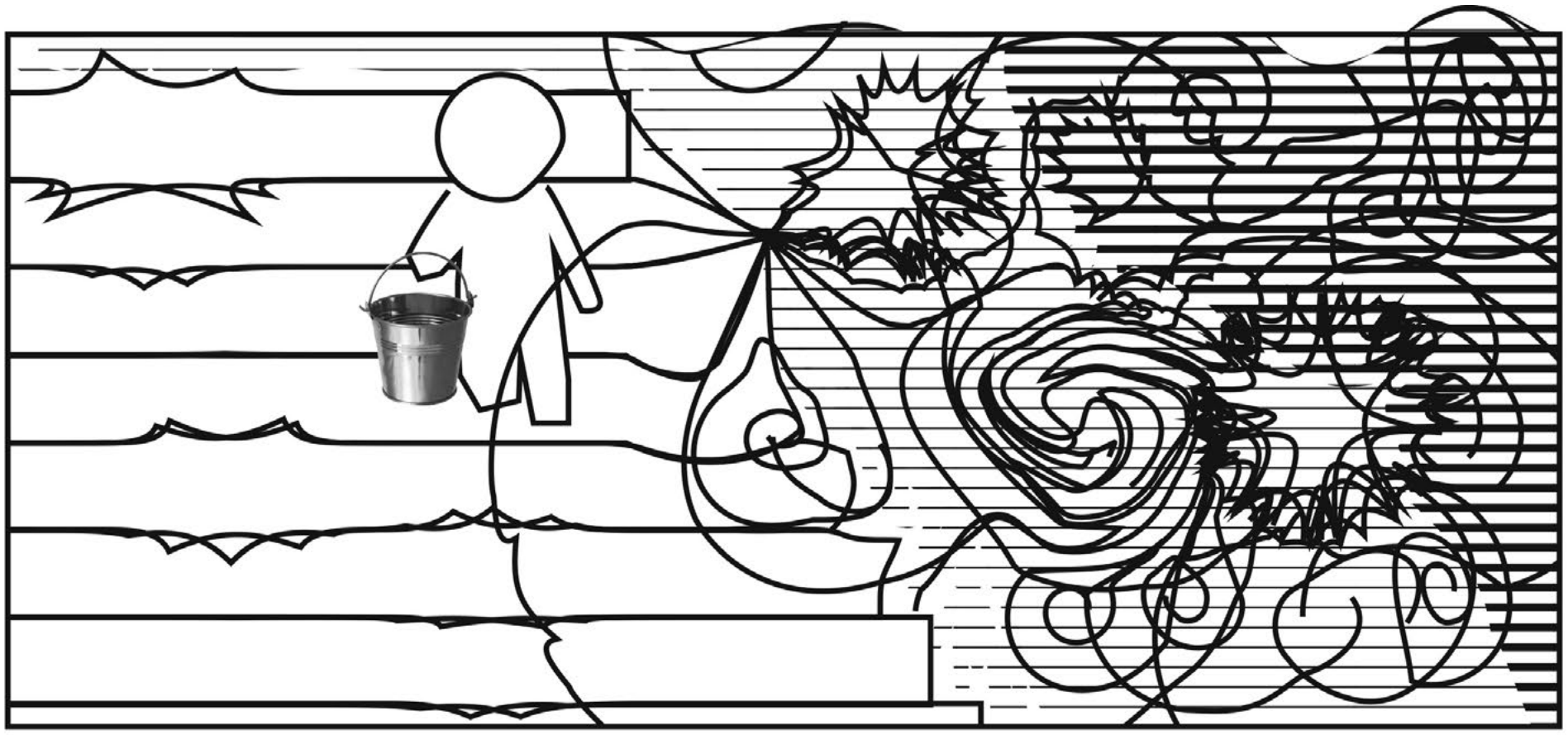

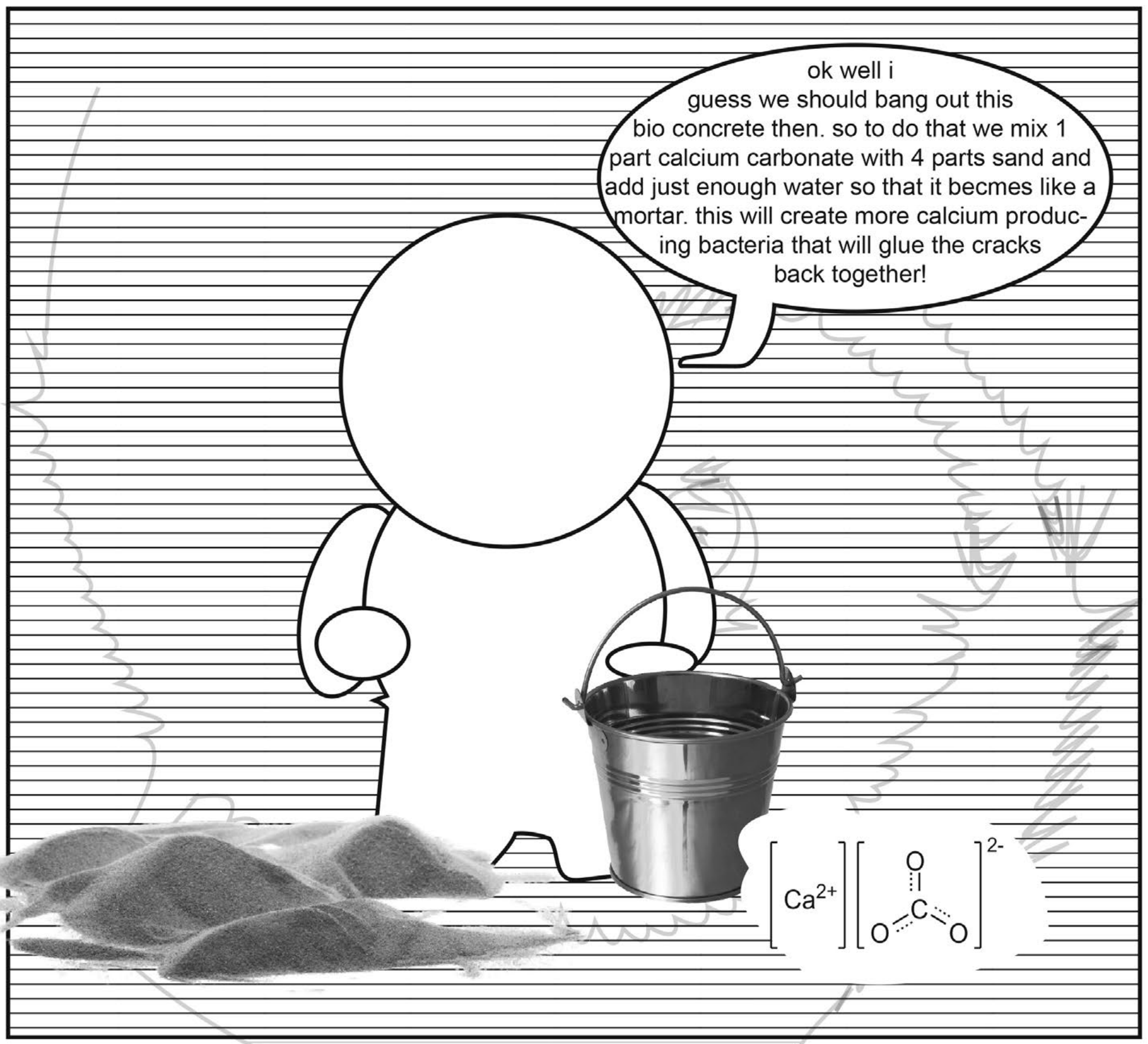
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RUPERT,

Alternative Education Programme Reader

INTRODUCTION

The Reader of the 10th Edition of Alternative Education Programme is a free open-source journal published as a follow-up to the 10th edition of Rupert's Alternative Education Programme. In 2022 the programme continued to explore the theme of "Magic and Rituals". Alongside the thematic approach, both the programme and the journal delved into different modes of knowledge exchange, alternative pedagogy, and forms of collectivity through various individual expressions.

Following the ethos of the Alternative Education Programme, the editorial process of the Reader took a collaborative approach – the tutors of the programme were invited to propose texts that represented their workshops, while some of the participants contributed visual entries that were conceived during the programme. This approach does not aim to lay an in-depth theoretical foundation of the programme or closely follow the discussion that happened during different sessions. Most of the conversations, notes, and ponderings are reserved for the participants and temporal learning spaces that they created. Instead, the Reader combines different languages to provide a flowing trip through the fields and discourses that the programme tapped into.

The Reader is composed of different entries, making a kaleidoscopic collection of poetic thoughts, elaborate articles, visual contemplations, and

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ideas that glances at the theme and activities of the 10th edition of the Alternative Education Programme through different experiences of the tutors and participants. The visual inspirations for the publication are contributed by Delphine Lejeune, iolo Walker, laura fernández antolín, Laura Marija Balčiūnaitė, and Studio Misti. Their scribbles and images were integrated into the design of the Reader, canvassing it with vivid memories of the time spent in Vilnius.

The Reader includes 3 essays proposed by different tutors – "Distributed Reproduction, Chemical Violence, and Latency" by Michelle Murphy, "Haunted Geologies: Spirits, Stones, and the Necropolitics of the Anthropocene" by Nils Bubandt, and "Witches, 'bitches' or feminist trailblazers? The Witch in Folk Horror Cinema" by Chloé Germaine Buckley, all of which were previously published in other journals and books, and are brought together to create an echo of the discussions in many different material and speculative spaces over the course of six months.

"Distributed Reproduction, Chemical Violence, and Latency" by Michelle Murphy (proposed by tutor Eglė Ambrasaitė), first published in The Scholar & Feminist Online journal in 2013, covers the petrochemical history of the St. Clair River, located in North America. It considers how reproduction, chemicals, and time are interconnected and materialise past events in bodies. The article guides readers through the infrastructure of petrochemical plants, looking at how polluted water affects other watery bodies, such as human bodies in the Aamjiwnaang First Nation community, as well as birds, fish, and reptiles in the St. Clair river.

Nils Bubandt's text "Haunted Geologies: Spirits, Stones, and the Necropolitics of the Anthropocene" (proposed by tutors Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė) was published in 2017 in the book "Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts of the Anthropocene" (edited by Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, Nils Bubandt). The text tells the story of the controversial Indonesian mud volcano and the undecidability of the volcano as well as the Anthropocene. The essay shows us what the indigenous spirits of the mud volcano and the secular spirits of the Anthropocene have in common and how "the logic of carbon-based business-as-usual" has brought us here.

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"Witches, 'bitches' or feminist trailblazers? *The Witch* in Folk Horror Cinema" by Chloé Germaine Buckley (proposed by tutor Denis Petrina) was first published in the Revenant journal in 2019. The article looks at the genealogy of the witch in cinema through her depiction in folk horror. Drawing on the ambiguity of the witch and the Early Modern origin as well as the contemporary twenty-first century context, the article culminates in an analysis of Robert Eggers' 2016 film The Witch.

Alongside the proposed essays, the Reader probes into the diverse curriculum of the programme with the help of short notes on the lectures, workshops, research trips, and final events. Although there is no perfect way, or, to be honest, no need to thoroughly document all the activities of 10th edition, these short snippets and images will provide both insights and the vibe that created the programme.

While all the parts of the Alternative Education Programme are crucial components, it is impossible to imagine the programme without the participants! Their biographies and introductions of their art works that were developed during the programme are presented just before a reading list put together by the tutors of the 10th edition of the Alternative Education Programme. The manifold list represents different angles and approaches towards the theme of magic and rituals as well as alternative education. Some of the proposed books and texts treat magic and rituals as a research object, keeping necessary critical distance, while others dive into the internalised practices that constitute the very subjectivities of the writers. Some of the texts might not directly fall into these broad categories. On one hand, the focus of the programme was not only exploration of the theme, but also alternative learning practices, sustenance as a cultural worker, research methodologies, and many other things that are not easily identified as magical or ritualistic. On the other hand, the very ideas and practice of magic and rituals speak about phenomena that could be called peripheral knowledge – lively assemblages of different types of knowledge(s) that sit outside of what is perceived as a legitimate object of inquiry in a respected field. The reading list puts both the knowledge and the idea of periphery into question, subtly suggesting the next phase and the thematic trajectory of the Alternative Education Programme.

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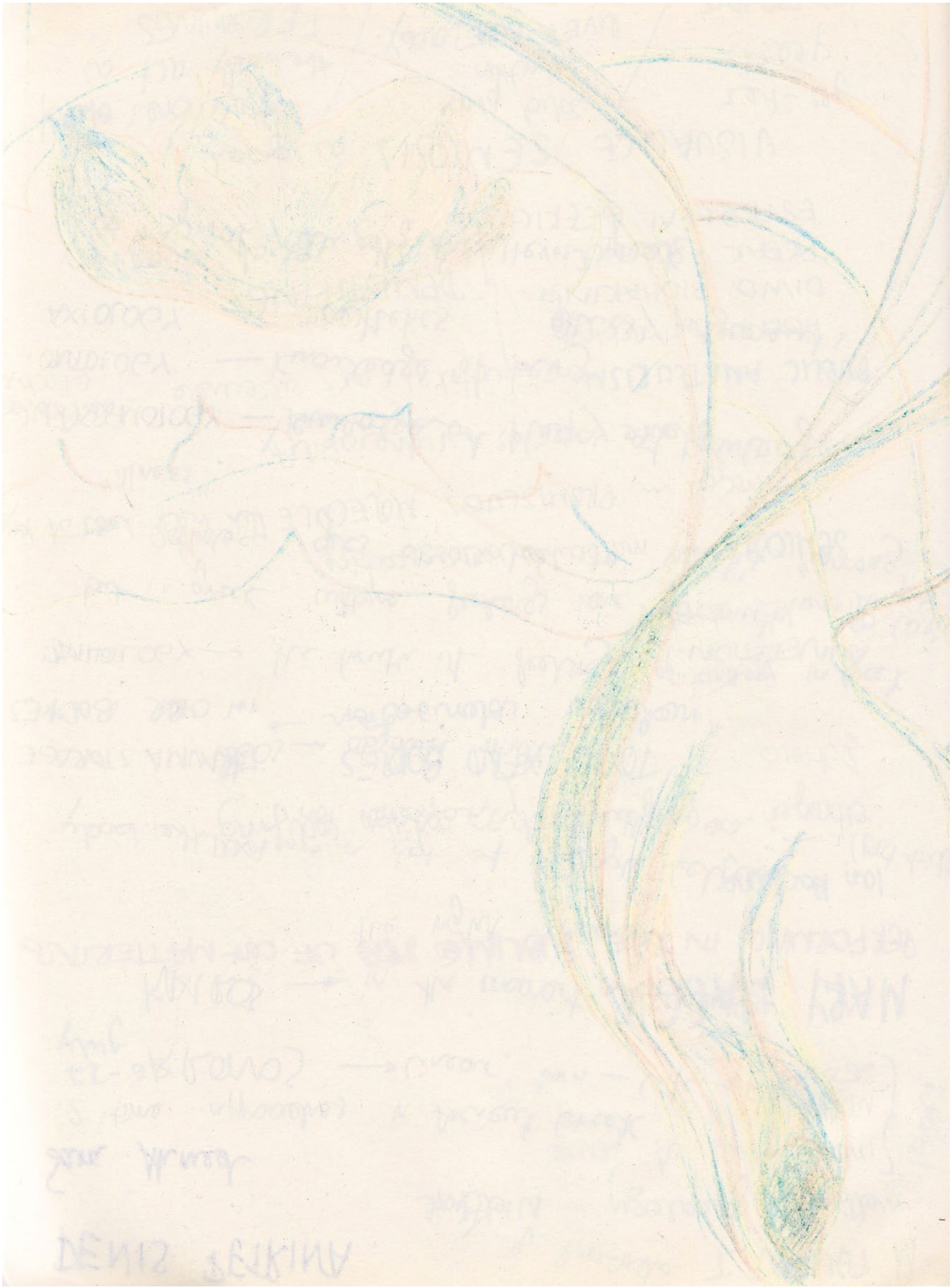
The most patient and curious readers will be rewarded by the poem “when spelunking forgotten dreams” by this year’s tutor Nisha Ramayya, concluding the Reader and the 10th edition of Alternative Education Programme.



Haunted Geologies: Spirits, Stones, and the Necropolitics of the Anthropocene

NILS BUBANDT

If you travel south by car from Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city located on the sweltering north coast of Java, toward the cool mountain town of Malang, you will, after about twenty-five kilometers, come upon a vast elevated landscape of mud. From the road, your view will be blocked by the massive dikes that have been erected to stem the mud. But if you climb to the top of the twenty-meter containment walls, you will see a barren and flat landscape, stretching eastward toward the horizon and the shallow coastline of the Madura Strait. The smell of petrol, emanating from the petroliferous components in the mud, is mixed with a faint but distinctive smell of rotten eggs.[1] If you scan the horizon, you will see, off in the distance to the right, the source of the smell: a plume of steam, pulsating at irregular intervals, at the center of the mudflat. The plume, consisting of methane mixed with hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide, comes from the main vent, one of five initial eruption sites of the mud volcano that since May 2006 has spewed out enormous amounts of gas, water, and mud. Eleven meters of sludge over an area of seven square kilometers now bury what used to be twelve villages. The mud has displaced 39,700 people and caused damage estimated to be 30 trillion rupiah (US$2.2 billion).[2] As mud has built up within the containment walls, underground cave-ins have occurred. In one such event,

1 Geoffrey S. Plumlee, Thomas J. Casadevall, Handoko T. Wibowo, Robert J. Rosenbauer, Craig A. Johnson, George N. Breit, Heather A. Lowers, et al., Preliminary Analytical Results for a Mud Sample Collected from the LUSI Mud Volcano, Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia, USGS Open-File Report 2008–1019 (Reston, Va.: U.S. Geological Survey, 2008).

2 Hans David Tampubolon, "Mudflow Erupting after 7 Years," Jakarta Post, March 5, 2013, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/03/05/mudflow-erupting-after-7-years.html.

in November 2006, the natural gas pipeline to Surabaya ruptured and exploded, killing thirteen.[3] Initially projected to continue for centuries, recent estimates suggest that the mud volcano may self-plug within the next two decades.[4] By this time, however, the weight of the 140 million cubic meters of mud from the volcano will likely have caused the affected area to subside at least ninety-five meters.[5] Except for some species of coliform and thermophile bacteria, nothing today lives in the sulfuric and heavy metal–rich mud.

The mud volcano is not only the largest of its kind in the world. It is also by far the most controversial, and it has experts, residents, politicians, activists, and industrialists split into two camps. Some people claim the mudflows were triggered by an earthquake, whereas others maintain that it was caused by oil drilling. As such, the mud volcano is a tragic and dystopic, but also illuminating, illustration of the Anthropocene, conventionally described as the geological period in which human activity exceeds the forces of nature.[6] What better example of such excess than if humans caused a disastrous volcanic eruption? The Indonesian mud volcano, however, also highlights another, equally important and unsettling feature of the Anthropocene, namely, the increasing impossibility of distinguishing human from nonhuman forces, the *anthropos* from the *geos*. For the volcano is simultaneously a national disaster at the center of a continuing political scandal and the object of an ongoing geological dispute about whether its eruption was, in fact, anthropogenic or natural. An undecidability haunts the mud volcano. Is it an effect of human industry or of tectonic forces? Is it an effect of life or of nonlife? It is the undecidability of the mud volcano, and of the Anthropocene, that is the subject of this chapter. For undecidability, I will argue, is simultaneously the signature characteristic, the curse, and the promise of our current moment.

3 **Jim Schiller, Anton Lucas, and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, "Learning from the East Java Mudflow: Disaster Politics in Indonesia," Indonesia 85 (April 2008): 53**

4 **Jonathan Amos, "Mud Volcano to Stop 'by Decade's End,'" BBC News, December 20, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-25188259.**

5 **Richard Davies, Simon Mathias, Richard Swarbrivk, and Mark Tingay, "Probabilistic Longevity Estimate for the LUSI Mud Volcano, East Java," Journal of the Geological Society 168 (2011): 517–23.**

6 **Will Steffen, Paul Crutzen, and John McNeill, "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?," Ambio 36, no. 8 (2007): 614–21.**

Spirits and the Necropolitics of the Anthropocene

The different names of the mud volcano index its undecidability. Some people refer to the volcano as Lumpur Lapindo ("Lapindo Mud"), after the oil company, PT Lapindo Brantas Incorporation, that drilled for petroleum nearby and that may have caused its eruption.[7] Lumpur Lapindo names an anthropogenic and political event tainted by industrial greed, mismanagement, and corruption. A second, equally used name for the mud volcano is Lumpur Sidoarjo ("Sidoarjo Mud"), after the sprawling nearby district capital. If the first name highlights the human agency and political liabilities of the mud disaster, Lumpur Sidoarjo is a geographical name used to denote where a "natural disaster" happened to strike. But "natural" figures awkwardly here, for not only is this name as political as the previous one but the name also points directly to the world of spirits. The name Lumpur Sidoarjo is thus frequently shortened into the portmanteau "Lusi." Pronounced like the common woman's name "Lucy," it names an earth being with a will of its own, and victims of the mud disaster speak its name with as much deference as political acerbity. Lusi is, in other words, equal parts spirit name and political critique. In a play on the name of the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur (literally "Muddy Estuary"), people in East Java, for instance, joke that Lusi is their Kualat Lumpur, literally their "Cursed Mud." The cursed mud is clearly the inverse image of the shining cosmopolitan dream conveyed by the Malaysian capital: a stinking, muddy, and failed modern. But more than metaphors are at play here, for "curses" (*kualat*) belong to a very real realm of the world in Indonesia, namely, that of occult forces and spirits (*batin*). Kualat is a calamity you bring upon yourself by behaving inappropriately. The curse of the mud volcano is in that sense a response to a moral transgression of some sort, an explanation that encapsulates condemnation of industrial mismanagement, critique of political corruption, and anxieties about cosmological punishment.

Like Fukushima, Bhopal, Chernobyl, and other contemporary disasters where the forces of nature and human politics act to exacerbate each other, Lusi is the name for a monstrous geography haunted by the natural

7 Italicized words are in Indonesian or Javanese. Latin names are prefaced with "L."

as well as the unnatural.[8] But more so than other recent disasters with an anthropogenic component, the ontologies of the natural and the unnatural (whether human or spiritual kinds of "unnature") coalesce in Lusi's muddy ferment. On the mudflats of East Java, the realms of geology, politics, industry, divination, lawsuits, spiritual revenge, and corruption are inextricably entangled in each other. Indeed, the inability to separate one from the other—nature from politics, geothermal activity from industrial activity, human corruption from spiritual revenge—is a constituent part of the volcano's necropolitics.

Achille Mbembe, in his founding article on the term, defined necropolitics as the subjugation of human life to the powers of death in the context of war, terror, and weapons of mass destruction.[9] But in a time of global warming, ocean acidification, and mass extinction, I suggest necropolitics has come to cover a much broader and much more stochastic politics of life and death. Humans, animals, plants, fungi, and bacteria now live and die under conditions that may have been critically shaped by human activity but that are also increasingly outside of human control. I use the notion of a necropolitics of the Anthropocene to indicate the life-and-death effects—intended as well as unintended—of this kind of ruination and extinction. Nature may increasingly be human-made, but humans have not only lost control of this nature making and unmaking; we have increasingly lost the ability to tell the difference between our own world and the natural worlds we make and destroy. As each new scientific discovery reveals more details of the complex interplay between human worlds and natural worlds, we are also increasingly faced with our inability to tell these worlds apart. In the Anthropocene, necropolitics operates under the sign of metaphysical indeterminacy rather than certainty, unintended consequences rather than control.

As it so happens, spirits exist under the same conditions of uncertainty and possibility. Spirits are never just "there." They are both manifest and disembodied, present and absent. Spirits thrive, as a result, in condi-

8 For analyses of these disasters, see Theodore C. Bestor, "Disasters, Natural and Unnatural: Reflections on March 11, 2011, and Its Aftermath," The Journal of Asian Studies 72, no. 4 (2013): 763–82; Kate Brown, Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Kim Fortun, Advocacy after Bhopal: Environmentalism, Disaster, New Global Orders (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Adriana Petryna, Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013).

9 Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," Public Culture 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40.

10 For an extended case study of this from Indonesia, see Nils Bubandt, The Empty Seashell: Witchcraft and Doubt on an Indonesian Island (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014).

tions of doubt rather than belief.[10] "I do not believe in ghosts, but . . ." is, after all, the conventional start to accounts of experiences with ghosts and spirits. How striking, in light of this, that the Anthropocene is so clearly associated with spirits. Take the figure of Gaia, the self-regulating, sympoetic superorganism of earth's biosphere named after a Greek goddess by climate scientist James Lovelock and biologist Lyn Margulis.[11] Or take Donna Haraway's *chthulus*, those earthly "myriad intra-active entities-in-assemblages" that inhabit the Anthropocene.[12] These tentacular beings of the earth are so named by Haraway to point to the overlap between indigenous spirits—from Pachamama, the Incan goddess of fertility, to A'akuluujjusi, the mother creator of all animals in Inuit thought—and new biological insights into the evolutionary co-becoming of life (see the chapters by Haraway and Gilbert in *Monsters*). In the Anthropocene, both climate science and biology seem to bring spirits, once thought to have been killed by secular thought, back to life. This chapter argues that geology in similar ways brings spirits into being. By paying attention to the spirits that abound in and around the Lusi mud volcano, we may yet learn to see, and live with, the ghosts that abound in the necropolitical landscapes of the Anthropocene.

The Story of a Mud Volcano—in Two Parts

The Lusi mud volcano is a geological event with two histories. The volcano is essentially a two-part story. Part one, the "unnatural history" of the volcano, as it were, begins in 2006. In the early hours of the morning on May 29, the mud volcano erupted, shortly after the oil company PT Lapindo Brantas Incorporation had begun exploratory drilling for gas in a late Miocene stratum twenty-eight hundred meters below the surface of the earth. Studies later showed that the drilling operation fractured a high-pressure aquifer, allowing the rapid influx of formation fluids and gases into the open drill hole, which, contrary to standard practice, lacked a protective steel casing over a

11 James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, "Atmospheric Homeostasis by and for the Biosphere: The Gaia Hypothesis," Tellus, Series A 26, no. 1–2 (1974): 2–10.

12 Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantatiocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin," Environmental Humanities 6 (2015): 160.
13. Richard Davies, Maria Brumm, Michael Manga, Rudi Rubiandini, Richard Swarbrick, and Mark Tingay, "The East Java Mud Volcano (2006 to Present): An Earthquake or Drilling Trigger?," Earth and Planetary Science Letters 272 (2008): 627–38.

13 Richard Davies, Maria Brumm, Michael Manga, Rudi Rubiandini, Richard Swarbrick, and Mark Tingay, "The East Java Mud Volcano (2006 to Present): An Earthquake or Drilling Trigger?," Earth and Planetary Science Letters 272 (2008): 627–38.

one kilometer stretch.[13] The pressurized gas, liquids, and mud, mainly from the Pleistocene period, that filled the drill hole eventually caused a series of blowouts 150 meters away from the drilling rig Banjar Panji–1. It is from these blowout vents that an unstoppable flow of mud has since been burying the surrounding landscape.

This first part of the story is a very recognizable Anthropocene. It is an Anthropocene in which human activity (in this case, an oil company) exacerbates the forces of nature, causing what has been called "the first humanly-made volcanic eruption in planetary history."[14] The eruption is in this account an anthropogenic perversion of the historical relationship between mud and oil. For oil and gas exploration has always been intimately tied to mud volcanoes. In the nineteenth century, early prospectors discovered that mud volcanism was related to active underground petroleum systems, and they began to use mud volcanoes as indicators for potential oil fields.[15] Now, it seemed, this historical relationship had been turned on its head. Instead of mud volcanoes being the sign of a petroleum system ready for extraction, fossil carbon extraction was itself perversely creating mud volcanoes.

Until recently, the notion that humans could have an impact on the tectonics of the earth itself was laughable. Not so anymore. Industrially produced tectonics have become an increasingly recognized anthropogenic risk, since fracking and high-pressure injection wells have been shown to generate an increase in earthquake activity in the United States.[16] But Lusi was the first case in which conventional drilling was established as the cause of geothermal activity. As a result, the East Javanese mud volcano quickly became the global icon for a carbon-craving world gone awry, testimony to an oil industry that characterized by mismanagement, greed, and corruption was inadvertently tampering with the very makeup of the earth itself. Indeed, the link between cooperate greed and tectonic disaster seemed embarrassingly obvious. Lapindo Brantas, the oil company linked to the blowout, was controlled by the Bakrie Group, a consortium in which Aburizal Bakrie, then Indonesia's richest man, was a key stakeholder. The fact that Aburizal Bakrie

14 Michael Northcott, "Anthropogenic Climate Change and the Truthfulness of Trees," in Religion and Dangerous Environmental Change: Transdisciplinary Perspectives, ed. S. Bergmann and D. Gerten (Münster: LIT, 2010), 103.

15 Guiseppe Etiope and Alexei Milkov, "A New Estimate of Global Methane Flux from Onshore and Shallow Submarine Mud Volcanoes to the Atmosphere," Environmental Geology 46 (2004): 1692.

16 Eric Hand, "Injection Wells Blamed in Oklahoma Earthquakes," Science 345, no. 6192 (2014): 13–14.

was also minister for people's welfare (Menkosra) in the coalition government of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, but refused to visit the site or assume any cooperate responsibility for the damages, made the disaster a striking example of the hypocrisy of capitalist carbon extraction. An "unnatural disaster," the magazine National Geographic called it.[17]

But there is also a second part to the story of Lusi. This part—its "natural history"—paradoxically only adds to Lusi's uncanny nature. This second part of the story begins in the early morning of May 27, 2006, roughly forty-eight hours before the eruption of Lusi, when a massive earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale shook the ground near Yogyakarta, killing 5,749 people and injuring more than thirty-eight thousand. Mud volcanoes, a global phenomenon, are often caused by seismic activity, and some studies therefore argued that the near-synchronicity of the earthquake and the volcanic eruption indicated that the two were causally linked.[18] The island of Java is traversed by a geological depression along its east–west axis.[19] The depression, which has been filled with sediments over the last 23 million years, closely follows a subduction zone between the Indian Oceanic and the Eurasian continental plates. This has created one of the world's most seismically active areas but also the conditions for the presence of rich underground petroleum resources that have been exploited for a hundred years. The same region is home to numerous naturally occurring mud volcanoes associated with the presence of petroleum. The Sidoarjo mud volcano, in this scenario, was a "natural" event in an unstable geothermal region: the earthquake near Yogyakarta caused a so-called strike-slip movement of the Watukosek fault, one of many tectonic fault lines in this area, triggering the eruption of the mud volcano some 250 kilometers away.[20]

This second account of the eruption was favored by a number of Indonesian experts, including the senior drilling advisors of the oil compa-

17 Andrew Marshall, "Drowning in Mud: An Unnatural Disaster Erupts with No End in Sight," National Geographic 213, no. 1 (2008): 58–63.

18 More than one thousand terrestrial and shallow-water mud volcanoes have been identified, and they occur in virtually every part and climatic zone of the world. Even more mud volcanoes occur in the world's oceans, and as many as one hundred thousand mud volcanoes may exist in deepwater environments. Recent estimates suggest that the annual methane release from terrestrial and shallow-water mud volcanoes is between six and nine megatons, between 3 and 4.5 percent of the total release of an estimated two hundred megatons of methane to the atmosphere from natural sources. Etiope and Milkov, "A New Estimate of Global Methane Flux." Some four hundred megatons of methane are released annually from anthropogenic sources.

19 Awang Harun Satyana and Asnidar, "Mud Diapirs and Mud Volcanoes in Depressions of Java to Madura: Origins, Natures, and Implications to Petroleum System," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Indonesian Petroleum Association, IPA08-G-139, Jakarta, May 2008.

20 A. Mazzini, A. Nermoen, M. Krotkiewski, Y. Podladchikov, S. Planke, and H. Svensen, "Strike-Slip Faulting as a Trigger Mechanism for Overpressure Release through Piercement Structure: Implications for the Lusi Mud Volcano, Indonesia," Marine and Petroleum Geology 26 (2009): 1751–65.

21 Nurrochmat Sawolo, Edi Sutriono, Bambang P. Istadi, and Agung B. Darmoyo, "The LUSI Mud Volcano Triggering Controversy: Was It Caused by Drilling?," Marine and Petroleum Geology 26 (2009): 1766–84.

ny, who published their findings in the same prestigious journals as their opponents.[21] It was also supported by a number of the Indonesian government's own geological experts, allegedly under the influence of the investors behind the oil company, who were eager to establish the mud volcano as a "natural disaster" in a bid to evade legal responsibility.[22] Opponents of this explanation countered that synchronicity in itself failed to establish a causal link between the earthquake and the mud volcano and that the geographical distance between the two events exceeded other known cases in which mud volcanism had been triggered by seismic activity.[23] The pedigree of those who sought to establish that the mud volcano was a "natural fact" suggested that they were "merchants of doubt," scientists paid by industry to deny the truth of global warming, the harmful effects of smoking, or, in this case, the anthropogenic origins of volcanism.[24] Indeed, the theory that Lusi was caused by tectonic activity was haunted by accusations of poor science and corrupt politics.

As a result, the truth of the anthropogenic origin of Lusi seemed secure. Until recently, that is, when independent, computer-based studies showed that the curved underground rock formation in the area could have focused the seismic waves of the Yogyakarta earthquake to produce enough seismic stress on the fault line to trigger the eruption, even if it was more than two hundred kilometers away.[25] This analysis seriously challenges those who maintain that the volcano was triggered by drilling and lent credibility from an unexpected and unbiased source to the industrial merchants of doubt.

22 **Jim Schiller, Anton Lucas, and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, "Learning from the East Java Mudflow: Disaster Politics in Indonesia," Indonesia 85 (April 2008): 62.**

23 **Michael Manga, Maria Brumm, and Maxwell Rudolph, "Earthquake Triggering of Mud Volcanoes," Marine and Petroleum Geology 26 (2009): 1785–98.**

24 **Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010).**

25 **M. Lupi, E. H. Saenger, F. Fuchs, and S. A. Miller, "Lusi Mud Eruption Triggered by Geometric Focussing of Seismic Waves," Nature Geoscience 6 (August 2013): 642–46.**

In its wake, uncertainty rules more than ever.[26] As one geologist concludes, "we may never know what the final trigger was, whether it would have happened anyway, nor even if an early trigger averted a greater disaster, had pressures continued to build up."[27] When it comes to Lusi, geology, the science behind the concept of the Anthropocene, is haunted by undecidability. This epistemological undecidability is coupled with high political stakes: the oil company wants the eruption to be a natural disaster to escape liability, while victims want it to be an industrial disaster to enforce payment of compensation. The question essentially is whether Lusi is a political event with a geothermal afterlife or a geothermal event with a political afterlife. At the moment, it is both.[28] I suggest calling this a "spectral moment," a time of undecidability but also a time of spirits and ghosts.

The Hope of Stones

On quiet afternoons, you are likely to see people scour the Lusi mudflats. Once in a while, they will stoop to pick up a pebble and inspect it closely before either dropping it again or putting it in a fanny pack around their waist. People say the stones are just trinkets, children's marbles. And yet, they keep collecting them, carefully polishing them smooth with sandpaper in an evident labor of love and dedication to bring out the proper contours, the shades of meaning that hide within. Some stones come to assume the shape of a dolphin, others a human face. Yet others have organic filaments or veins of quartz that take the shape of a dragon or a lion or the eye of a dead king. Mas Hadi is one of the people collecting stones. He is also a descendant of royalty from the mythical Majapahit empire and a diviner (*waskitó*) with "spirit eyes" that see into the otherworld (*mata batin*). Having spirit eyes also enables Mas Hadi to distinguish ordinary stones from unique treasures, a skill in high demand on the mudflats.

26 Indeed, the assertion that the eruption was earthquake induced has recently been challenged by M. R. P. Tingay, M. L. Rudolph, M. Manga, R. J. Davies, and Chi-Yuen Wang, "Initiation of the Lusi Mudflow Disaster," Nature Geoscience 8, no. 7 (2015): 493–94.

27 Paul Davis, "Natural Hazards: Triggered Mud Eruption?," Nature Geoscience 6, no. 8 (2013): 593.

28 In 2008, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists took the unusual step of voting about the cause of the mudflow. Chaired by a Scottish geologist who was a soccer umpire in his spare time, a majority of forty-two at the Cape Town meeting agreed that Lusi was an anthropogenic phenomenon caused by the oil company. Three geologists found that the mud volcano was natural and caused by the Yogyakarta earthquake. But a significant minority of twenty-nine scientists found that the evidence was either "inconclusive" or that a combination of the two causes was to blame. See James Morgan, "Mud Eruption 'Caused by Drilling,'" BBC News, November 1, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7699672.stm. This inability to distinguish a natural disaster from an anthropogenic one points to a key feature of the Anthropocene: nature is losing its epistemological position as "natural fact" and increasingly becoming a contested reality—much like spirits.

One day I sat with Mas Hadi when a *tukang ojek*, a driver of a motorbike taxi, dropped by with an object he had found on the mudflat. It looked like a fossilized shark tooth. The concavity of the labial face, the lack of serration along the edges, and the robustness of the root suggested it was from a mako shark (L. *Isurus oxyrinchus*), probably one who lived and died around 2 million years ago to became part of the Pleistocene stratum from where most of the volcanic mud originates.[29] To Mas Hadi, however, it was something else. For along the center of the crown of the tooth was the outline of something, a pointed object. "This," he declared after some pause, "is special. Do you see the *kris* inside? It comes from the Majapahit empire." What the *ojek* driver had inadvertently stumbled upon was a double *kris*, a dagger associated with royalty and a powerful magical object. "Take it, and keep it safe," Mas Hadi instructed the man, closing the man's palm with his own around the object.

Objects such as this tooth-dagger become personal treasures, part of one's arsenal of heirlooms and amulets. Such objects are kept hidden or are fitted and worn in rings for protection. In particular, they are seen to have a magical capacity (*khasiat*) to confer upon the finder good fortune (*rezeki*). The objects are precious because they are full of life, fossilized proof of a spirit life that thrives in an otherwise toxic landscape. The stones are said to come from Lusi's main vent. A giant spirit snake, it is said, dwells within it. Or more accurately, the vent itself is a snake, the guardian spirit (*penunggunya*) of the volcano, from whose belly deep underground the stones and objects emerge. The treasures are essentially bezoars from a spirit snake. Traded from Asia to Europe for medicinal purposes since the Renaissance, snake stones (*mustika ular*) and other bezoars are regarded as powerful magical antidotes throughout Indonesia.[30] The petrified objects that are spewed from the giant snake spirit at the center of the mud volcano are like such bezoars, objects that hold potentially great spiritual power (*kesaktian*). Searching for spirit shapes in the stones on the mudflats is one among a panoply of means through which you may acquire good fortune through magical means in Java. Good fortune or *rezeki* can take many forms, not

29 I would like to thank Professor Gilles Cuny, expert on fossil sharks from Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, for his help with the paleontological identification of this tooth.

30 Peter Borschberg, "The Euro-Asian Trade in Bezoar Stones (Approx. 1500–1700)," in Artistic and Cultural Exchanges between Europe and Asia, 1400–1900: Rethinking Markets, Workshops, and Collections, ed. M. North, 29–43 (Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2010).

all of which are financial. *Rezeki* may be to acquire a spouse, a child, a job, recognition, success, or money. It is about leading the good life, about being fulfilled, calm, and happy. *Rezeki* is about destiny. It is existential and social rather than merely financial. The pursuit of *rezeki* by magical means is called *pesugihan* and can be acquired from a veritable multispecies salon of spirits. On the sacred mountain of Kawi, you may, for instance, acquire good fortune if you observe a leaf of the *dewandaru* tree (L. *Eugenia uniflora*) fall to the ground. Or you may take up relations with the black boar spirit called babi *ngepet*. The spirit will enable you to turn into a black boar that inconspicuously can steal from other people. Trees, boars, and snakes may all provide good fortune, but they also require compensation, a reciprocal payment (*tumbalan*), to be pacified. The black boar is said to ask for a human baby in return for its riches. Mas Hadi claimed that the children's graves vandalized in a Sidoarjo cemetery in 2012 had been emptied of human remains by people in search of such compensation gifts.

Spiritual anxiety has been the constant companion of dreams of good fortune at Lusi since its eruption in 2006. While engineers from global mining consultancies have dropped hundreds of cement balls and iron chains into the vent in an unsuccessful attempt to plug it, people throughout Indonesia worry that human heads—procured by government headhunters—have also been surreptitiously thrown into the vent as reciprocal payment (*tumbalan*) to its spirit guardian.[31] For like most volcanoes in Indonesia, the Lusi mud volcano is a spiritual as well as a geothermal entity—a vengeful and angry geospirit.[32] Calming the spirit of such a massive disaster requires magic of a special kind. A hundred mystics from all over Java thus participated in a locally organized event in 2006 that attempted to use "paranormal" powers, reciprocal payments, and soothing ritual offerings (*sesajen*) in an effort to stop the mudflow.

31 Gregory Forth, "Heads under Bridges or in Mud," Anthropology Today 25, no. 6 (2009): 3–6.

32 Judith Schlehe, "Cultural Politics of Natural Disasters: Discourses on Volcanic Eruptions in Indonesia," in Culture and Changing Environment: Uncertainty, Cognition, and Risk Management in Cross-Cultural Perspective, ed. M. Casimir, 275–99 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008).

The Politics of Mud

The search of good fortune through magical means is one of many strategies that people pursue to offset the disastrous effects of the mudflow on their lives. Mas Hadi is fifty-one years old and makes a meager living as a self-appointed parking guard at a local school. He spends his afternoons on the mudflats, and when he does not divine stones, he is one of a few dozen men, all displaced by the mud, who sell pirated DVDs about Lusi's eruption and offer paid motorbike rides to the mainly Indonesian disaster tourists who come to see the mudflats. Mas Hadi is married for the second time. His first wife died, "of stress" as he puts it, when social obligations forced the family to share with distant relatives the money they had received as the first installment of a compensation payment from the oil company. The money gone, the family had been unable to build a new house, and Mas Hadi's wife had died of grief.

Mas Hadi's story is a common one. The victims' struggle to receive compensation for their lost livelihoods has been long and frustrated. In response to the mudflow, a presidential decree from 2007 (Perpres 14/2007) divided the disaster area in two. The decree required the Lapindo oil company to pay 3.8 trillion rupiah (US$338 million) in compensation to people who used to live inside the so-called affected area map. Meanwhile, the state agreed to pay almost twice as much (6 trillion rupiah, or US$534 million) from the state budget to villagers living outside of the "affected area." The decision was widely considered part of a politically brokered deal between the government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and its coalition partner, Golkar. Aburizal Bakrie was thus not only co-owner of Lapindo but also a key figure of Golkar.[33] The suspicion was that SBY protected the Bakrie conglomerate from full liability, asking the Bakrie Group to pay only a tenth of the overall estimated cost of the disaster in exchange for Golkar's support for SBY's shaky government.[34] Deals such as these are standard in Indonesian politics and the basis for widespread accusations of corruption.[35]

33 In 2009, Aburizal Bakrie was elected chairman of Golkar, which he used as a platform for his campaign to become president of Indonesia in 2014. This campaign in large part failed because of the stigma of the Lapindo disaster, which continued to make Bakrie a figure of political power, greed, and corruption.

34 Hasyim Widhiarto, "Aburizal Could Be Forced to Settle Lapindo Mudflow," Jakarta Post, September 30, 2014, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/09/30/aburizal-could-be-forced-settle-lapindo-mudflow.html.

35 See Nils Bubandt, Democracy, Corruption, and the Politics of Spirits in Contemporary Indonesia (London: Routledge, 2014).

Despite the generous political deal, Lapindo sought through a variety of political, legal, and strong-arm tactics to defer payment of the government-ordered compensation to the victims. The company set up a subsidiary, PT Minarak Lapindo Jaya, to handle the compensation, but locals feel that the company's main purpose has been to infiltrate the victims' protest groups and divide them internally by paying full compensation to the most vocal victims in return for political loyalty. For the people looking for stones on the mudflats, their informal motorcycle taxi association, which takes tourists around the site, doubles as a political organization. It is the only remaining victims' group, so they say, that has resisted company payoffs.

Other stakeholders, including the police and courts, have been less stalwart. In 2009, the regional police in East Java gave up its criminal investigation against Lapindo, a decision that was widely suspected of being made under pressure and influenced by oil company bribes.[36] The Constitutional Court in 2014 upheld the 2007 decree allowing the new parliament, led by President Joko Widodo, to put pressure on Lapindo to pay the remaining 781 billion rupiah (US$65 million) that the company still owes to the victims.[37] A victory for democracy, one might claim, but the court's decision maintains the injustice of the initial decree in which the government essentially exonerated the oil company in exchange for political support—Indonesian "politics-as-usual" (*politik seperti biasa*), as one of the victims told me indignantly in a text message.

A Multiplicity of Ghosts

Deprived of adequate compensation, the victims now make a living and seek good fortune on top of the toxic mud that covers what used to be their villages. In their struggle for compensation, mud has become a frequent symbol of political protest, and demonstrators regularly smear their bodies in mud as a sign of protest against a cynical oil company and a corrupt government. But mud is not just a symbol of political corruption; it is also an index of it. The

36 Bosman Batubara, "Resistance through Memory," Inside Indonesia 101 (July–September 2010), http://www.insideindonesia.org/resistance-through-memory-2.

37 Widhiarto, "Aburizal Could Be Forced to Settle Lapindo Mudflow."

38 Maksum H. M. Zuber, Titanic Made by Lapindo (Jakarta: Lafadl Pustaka, 2009).

mud at the vent will boil more violently, it is said, when government bureaucrats come to visit. The higher the position and moral liability of the official, the more violently the mud will boil.[38]

Mud is cosmopolitical: at once a political symbol and a cosmological agent. The political agency of mud is deeply entangled with the world of spirits. The popular narrative that the eruption of Lusi was the result of spiritual revenge from a murdered labor activist highlights this cosmopolitical agency.

The district of Sidoarjo is a densely populated area of East Java, and the abundance of cheap labor has for decades attracted numerous companies, foreign and domestic. East Java has also always been a political hot spot, and it has a long history of labor disputes as well. One of the twenty-five factories that now lie buried under the mud is PT Catur Putra Surya (CPS), a manufacturer of wristwatches made infamous for being the employer of labor activist Marsinah, who was kidnapped, raped, and killed by unknown assailants in 1993. Although the murder was never solved, it was likely ordered by a New Order network of military, government, and employer representatives to silence labor protesters[39] However, Marsinah's murder galvanized the Indonesian labor movement during the 1990s, and Marsinah herself posthumously became a national celebrity.[40] Mas Agus, one of the *ojek* drivers and stone prospectors on the mudflats, told me that the mudflow was Marsinah's curse against her murderers. Indeed, Mas Agus claimed that the Chinese owner of the watch company went insane after the mud drowned his factory. In the Lusi mud, environmental disaster, political protest, and the curses of spirits are remolded. The power of geothermal mud to speak through spirits to an unjust political world is legendary; its power is, as the victims put it, "strange but true" (*aneh tapi nyata*). The 2012 movie *Hantu Lumpur Lapindo* (The ghost of the Lapindo mud) exploits this idea. An example of *film mistik*, a popular movie genre that combines soft eroticism with horror stories featuring the many varieties of spirits and ghosts in the Indonesian mystical universe, *Hantu Lumpur Lapindo* is the story of a striptease dancer who is murdered by a gang of organ thieves after they have removed her heart. The gang dumps her body in the Lapindo mud, but the

39 Tim Lindsey, "The Criminal State: Premanisme and the New Indonesia," in Indonesia Today: Challenges of History, ed. G. Lloyd and S. Smith (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001), 287.

40 Leena Avonius, "From Marsinah to Munir: Grounding Human Rights in Indonesia," in Human Rights in Asia: A Reassessment of the Asian Values Debate, ed. D. Kingsbury and L. Avonius, 99–119 (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008).

ghost rises, smeared in mud, to haunt the gang and kill its members one by one. In the movie, mud is the spiritual index of vengeance against capitalist murk, personal greed, and social betrayal.

From Necropolitics to Symbiopolitics

Lusi's muddy landscape is haunted. Her "cursed mud" (*kualat lumpur*) is the mark of a necropolis, and people see in it an explicit contrast to the metropolis of Kuala Lumpur, a betrayal of people's dream of modernity. In this ruined landscape, destroyed by a heady mix of greedy industry, corrupt politics, tectonic forces, and chthonic spirits, body politics fuse with geopolitics: protesters smear their bodies in mud, while a murdered labor unionist turns into a muddy avenging ghost; an employer goes mad when his factory drowns in mud; the government employs headhunters whose prize heads are used to plug what the cement balls of international engineers were unable to stop; a snake guardian in a geothermal vent offers gifts of good fortune, while the mud itself is strangely alive and seems to be able to tell corrupt politicians from those who are honest.

The strange life of stones and mud speaks to a spectral moment in Indonesia in which geology is political, politics is corrupt, and corruption is haunted by spirits. But the life of mud and stone is also the sign of a spectrality that characterizes the Anthropocene more generally. The Anthropocene, after all, invites us to imagine a world in which an alien geologist from the future detects in the strata of the ground evidence of the presence of humans long after we have gone extinct.[41] This science fiction–like character of the concept of Anthropocene opens up to a retrospective reading of the current moment, a "paleontology of the present" in which humans themselves have become geological sediments or ghosts.[42] In the Anthropocene, life is already geologic. In this geological ghost vision, the present proceeds from the future, because the possibility of co-species survival depends crucially on what we humans are going to do now, in the midst of an increasingly given fate of ruination and extinction.

41 See Oreskes and Conway, Merchants of Doubt; Heather Swanson, Nils Bubandt, and Anna Tsing, "Less Than One but More Than Many: Anthropocene as Science Fiction and Scholarship-in-the-Making," Environment and Society: Advances in Research 6 (2015): 149–66; Jan Zalasiewics, The Earth after Us: What Legacy Will Humans Leave in the Rocks? (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

42 W. J. T. Mitchell, What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 124.

43 Jan Zalasiewics, The Planet in a Pebble: A Journey into Earth's Deep History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Mas Hadi and the other people looking for fossil spirits in a haunted landscape are in that sense not unlike contemporary geologists. Take Jan Zalasiewics, the geologist who, in his book *The Planet in a Pebble*, discovers in a single pebble the ingredients for all life on earth.[43] Zalasiewics is not any geologist; he is chair of the Anthropocene Working Group of the International Commission on Stratigraphy, the organization in charge of deciding whether to accept "Anthropocene" as the scientific name for our time. When he is not busy with this work, Zalasiewics looks at stones. And for him, too, every pebble is full of ghosts.[44] Like fossil fuel, the building blocks of every pebble are constituted—in addition to minerals—by a complex of amorphous organic matter, traces of the ancient and strange biology trapped within: acritarchs, chitinozoans, graptolites. Zalasiewics, like Mas Hadi, is interested in the ghostly contours of life in stones not merely because they are telltale remnants of a past but because stones allow him to dream of a different future at the brink of disaster, a future in which livelihood and good fortune do not come at the expense of devastation and death. Geology here performs the job of *pesugihan*, the magical pursuit of good fortune, in a ruined landscape. In the necropolitics of the Anthropocene, geology is as entangled with politics as it is with ghosts. In the same movement that the Anthropocene is being established as a geological fact, geology itself is becoming political. As geologists have to choose which of the many radioactive, industrial, and chemical signals in the ground, in the sea, and in the air define our time, it is also becoming increasingly apparent that geology can no longer perform what Donna Haraway has famously called the "god trick" of remaining outside of what it studies. Like the other sciences of the Anthropocene, geology's diagnosis of our time mires it in contemporary politics.

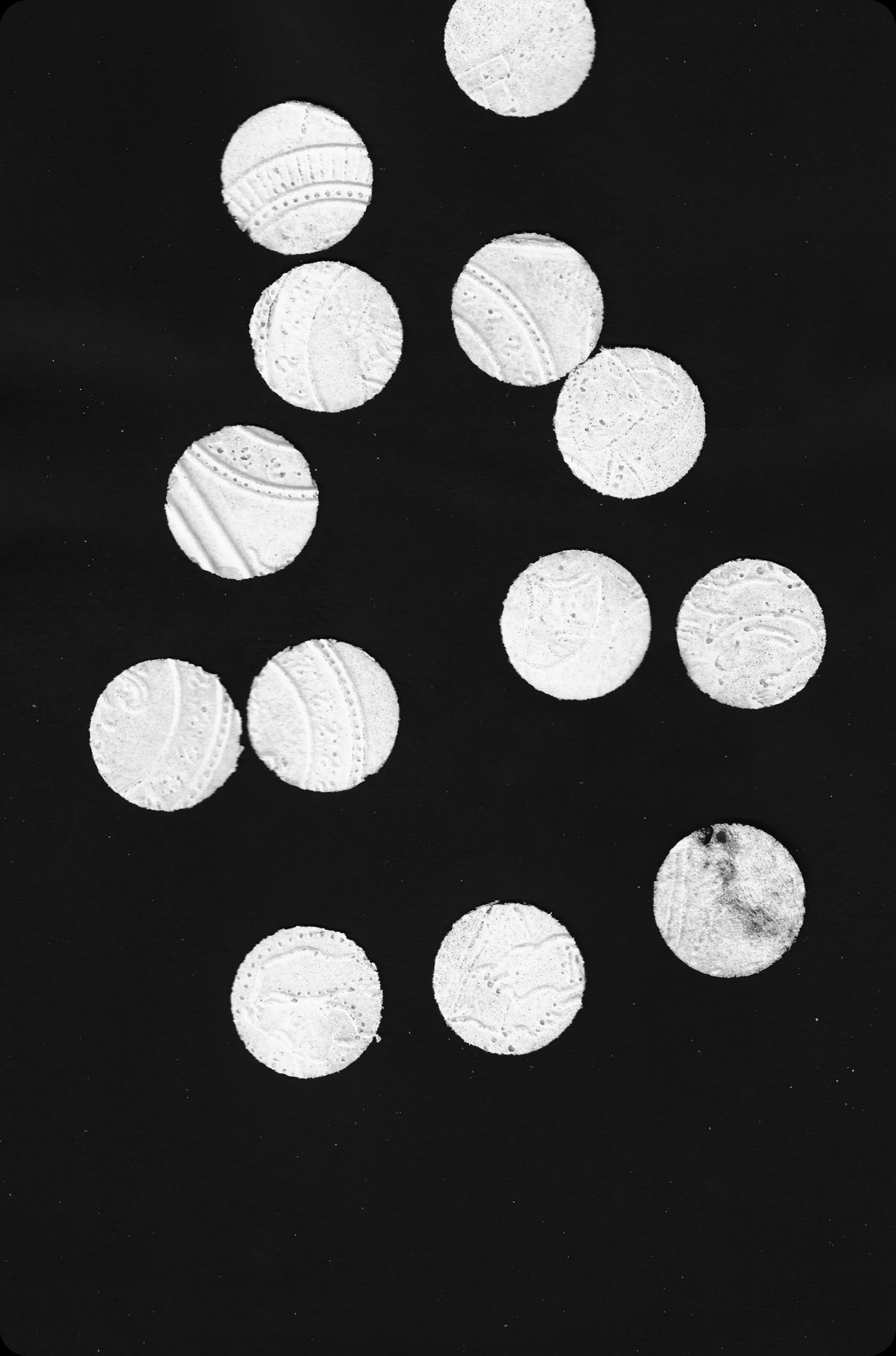
The question is what kind of politics to choose: the ghostly necropolitics of the current moment or a politics informed by other kinds of spirits. It seems to me that the spectrality of the Anthropocene is full of ghosts of many kinds. There are the old ghosts of carbon-based industry, the specters of corrupt politics, and the God-tricks of conventional science, to be sure. But there are also the spirits of a different, emergent kind of politics, a symbiopolitics. The Anthropocene presents us with the geological possibility that humans are the graptolites of the future, fossil colonial animals that are engineering our own demise. This shift in perspective is important.

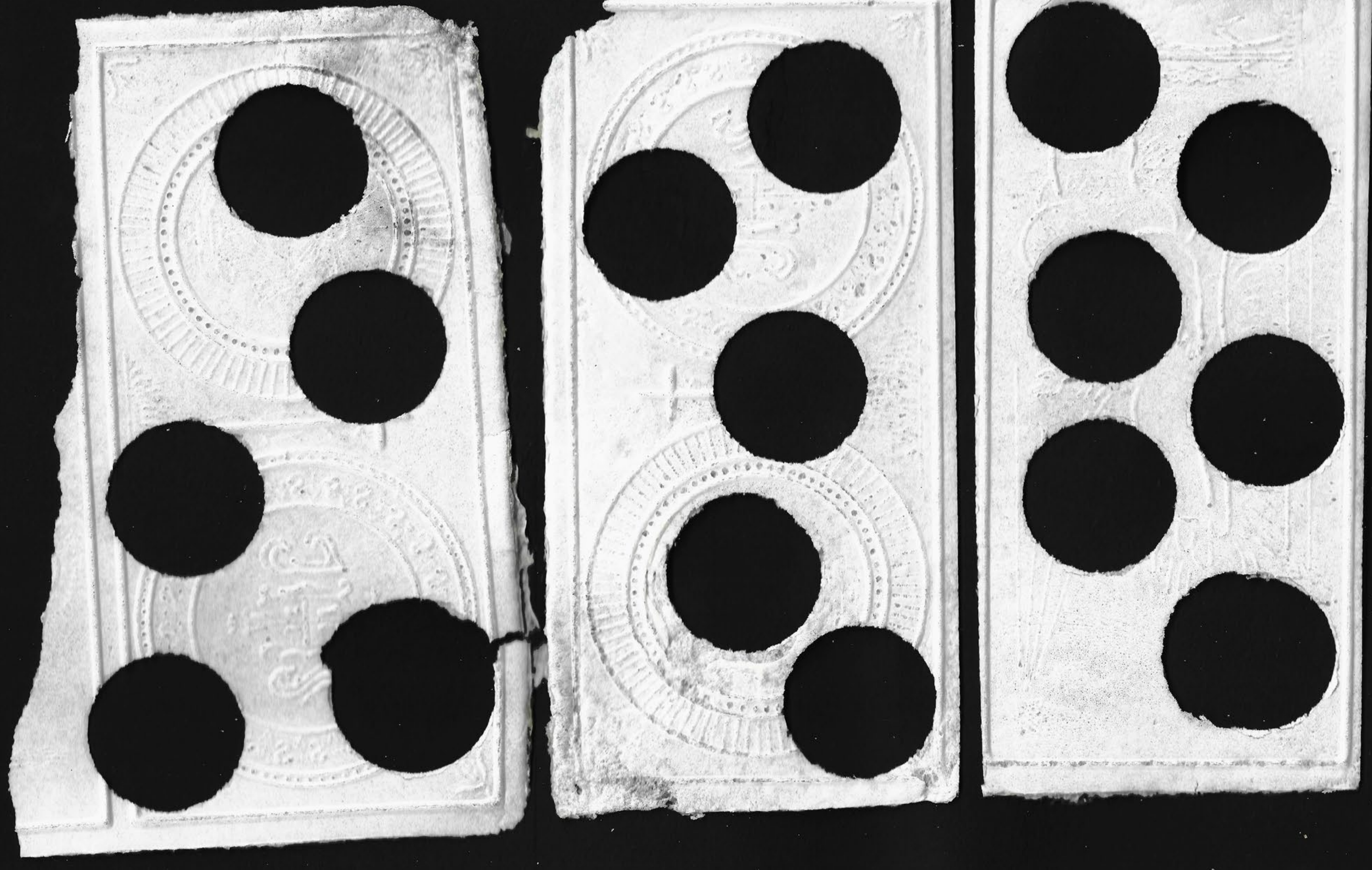
44 Ibid., 86.

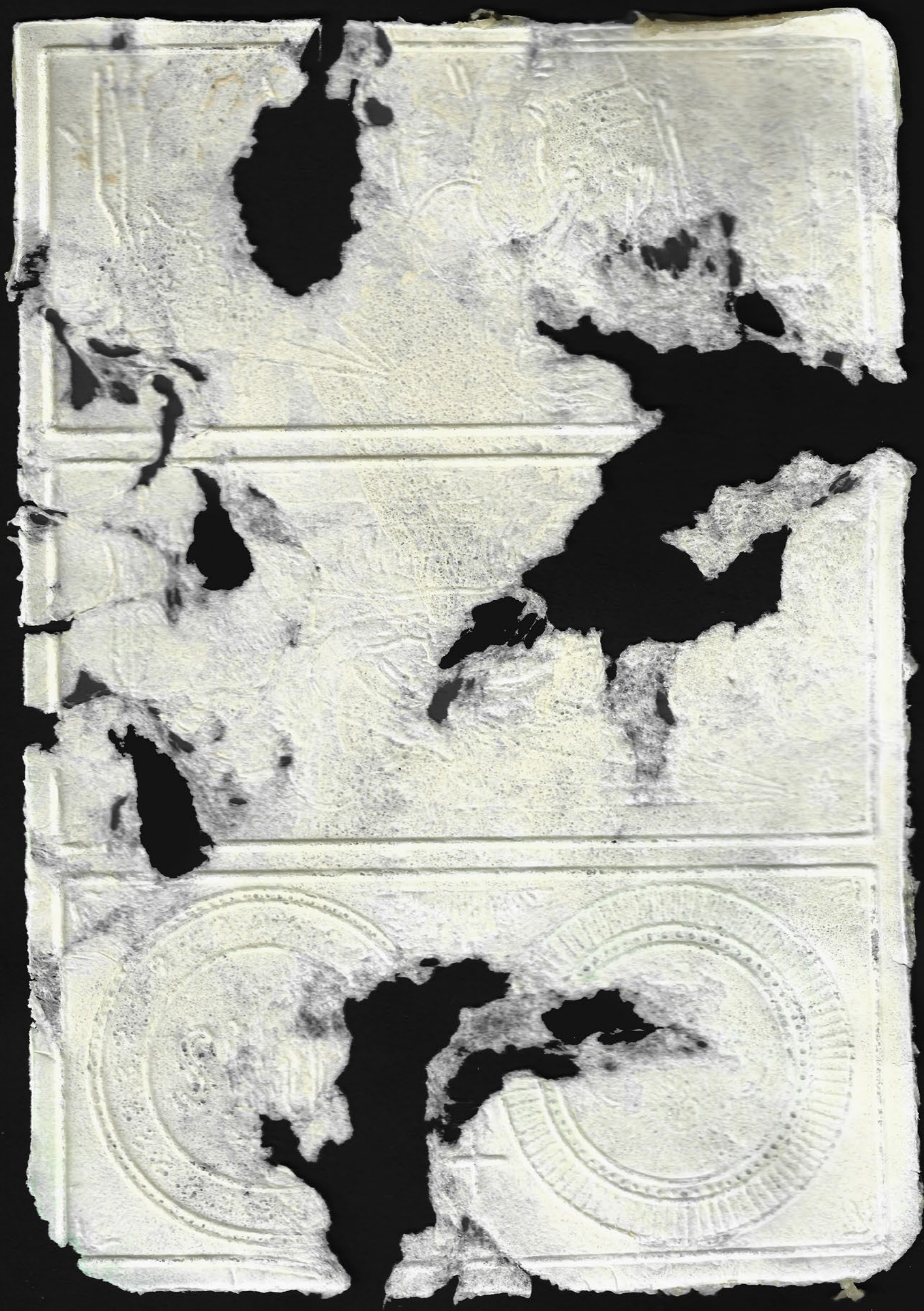
If modernity dreamed of the future, the Anthropocene dreams of the present as seen from the future, a perspectival shift that makes our necropolitics apparent to ourselves in the starkest of lights. As the deep time of geology becomes the political history of the present, this also changes what geology, along with other sciences, can and should be.[45] We are all inhabitants of the same mudscape, the same geological sludge, as it were. Anthropocene landscapes of death and extinction are, however, also inhabited by emergent and unexpected constellations of life, nonlife, and afterlife. Before mud becomes our only future, we need to learn from stones to notice all the forms of life and possibility that exist in the midst of death: that, as I see it, is the message and the magic of the geology of the present. It is also the message of East Javanese people's engagement with spirits, as I read it.The spirits that reside in the stones and mud of Lusi remind us that the scientific, political, and legal inability to differentiate the *anthropos* from the *geos* has its own metaphysics. This metaphysics may be the brainchild of our current troubles and thus the product of a long history of exploitation, colonialism, and extermination. But a metaphysics that has lost the ability to distinguish the bios from the geos, the human from the nonhuman, also holds a promise. For the kind of symbiopolitics that this metaphysics makes visible offers the chance for a novel kind of collaboration between science and the politics of the otherwise, a politics that we might learn from spirits. The indigenous spirits of the Indonesian mud volcano and the secular spirits of the Anthropocene seem to me to form an awkward alliance here. For both indigenous spirits and the spirits of the new geological idea of the Anthropocene ask us to notice the magic of the forces, human and nonhuman, that shape the atmosphere, biosphere, and lithosphere. The spirits highlight how the inexorable logic of carbon-based business-as-usual that brought us into our current predicament is inherently spectral. But they offer a dissenting voice to this conjuring as well, and here is the basis for a common front between indigenous spirits and the emergent sciences of the Anthropocene, one that grows from a shared recognition of the magic of being-with, the magic of symbiopolitics.

45 **Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," Critical Inquiry 35, no. 2 (2009): 197–222.**

As an anthropologist, NILS BUBANDT has learned to be equally at home with witches, protesters, and mud volcanoes. Co-convener of Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene (AURA), with Anna Tsing, he is professor at Aarhus University and editor in chief of the journal Ethnos (with Mark Graham). His books include *The Empty Seashell: Witchcraft and Doubt on an Indonesian Island and Democracy, Corruption, and the Politics of Spirits in Contemporary Indonesia.*







WORK SHOP

Different sections of this text were written by
Tautvydas Urbelis, Rugilė Miliukaitė, Isabel Kuh, Brigit Arop

INTRO DUC TIONS

The 10th Rupert Alternative Education Programme started in June 2022, aiming to develop a dialogue between magic, rituals, and artistic practices while continuously exploring the creative potential of interdependency and care with guidance from selected tutors. The programme juxtaposed critical inquiry and magical thinking into a malleable framework that provided participants with the tools to develop their practice and think along more-than-human worlds. Over the six months the participants engaged with different ways of learning by attending lectures, seminars, screenings, and research trips. In addition to the familiar formats, the participants were invited to engage in activities that questioned the normality of both pedagogical practices and our everyday lives. What follows is a trip down the memory lane, pausing at the places where knowledge was shared and conceived – our humble thanks to everybody who were sharing the journey with us!

The programme began with a seminar and a workshop with **Agency Agency**. During the two-day session, **Roel van Herpt** and **Victoria Meniakina** gave insights into the intricacies of practical knowledge of sustaining oneself as a professional in the field of culture and arts. The session entitled *Professional Development in the Arts* covered common problems encountered in the field and provided professional feedback on the participants' portfolios, creative statements, and selected projects. In addition, Agency Agency taught about organisational models, project funding, and application writing – essential knowledge for both success in the professional field and the search for alternative ways of being in the world.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

The second week of the programme took the participants to the **Žeimiai Manor** house to meet the worlds of molecular preservation, local crafts, and ontological healing. Introduced to these themes with a field trip and a workshop entitled *Aikas Žado Laboratory 2022: Biomimetic Centre* by **Domas Noreika**, the participants explored the ongoing restoration processes and experimented with different natural materials. **Eglė Ambrasaitė** presented her research and artistic practice on non-human kinships, gendered apparatuses of biopolitics, bodily sensibilities, love and toxicity. Wolf t-shirt rocking local craftsman **Artūras Narkevičius** provided some hands-on experiences of traditional candle-making and hay weaving techniques. Prodigious karaoke skills were unveiled as the sun hid behind the expressive facade of the old manor, allowing the playfulness of the warm summer night to take over.

The next research trip took the participants to the picturesque countryside of Dzūkija. This time they were discovering local nature and folk crafts while foraging wild mushrooms and baking bread in a traditional clay oven. Rhythms of the day were suggested by sheep care practices in the **Verpėjos** residency facilitated by **Laura Garbštienė**. The programme participants observed and took part in sheep herding, shearing, and dying of wool. Spun wool was later dyed using flowers collected in nearby pastures by soaking it over the fire. At the heart of the visit was a collective effort of bread-making: the participants learned the intricacies of dough mixing and kneading, as well the importance of slowness, as the bread needs to rest before it is eaten. The traditional homestead became a dreamy setting for sharing folktales, dreams, and even some horror stories.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

In the middle of verdant July, the participants explored linguistic and sonic dimensions alongside the tutor **Nisha Ramayya**. During the workshop, the group studied the activities of reading, translation, listening, and writing, as well as their intersections. The workshop was guided by the theme of language impossibilities, which was explored both collectively and individually through sounds, noise, writing exercises, and poetic sensibilities. The experimentation process carried the participants through the questions of representation when evoking collective experiences, language-specific boundedness, and ways of listening. Ramayya also started the Alternative Education Programme public lecture series with the creative-critical presentation *Correspondence as Rackety Bridge as Listening Oceanically*. Here, the participants were invited to experience entangled realities of deep listening, mantric way, and social criticalities.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

Next, the programme participants drew upon writing and teamwork exercises to explore the epistemologies of witches, demons, and cannibals alongside tutor **Denis Petrina**. During the workshops, the group utilised tools specific to academic philosophy in reading texts by Foucault, Federici, de Castro, Thacker, and others in order to find a footing in these mystical and magical typologies. Navigating through the content via sketching, mapping, brainstorming, and sharing, the participants concluded the sessions with a more complex grounding in not only what created these archetypes during the medieval times, but what sustains them to this day.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

The first part of the programme finished with the participants exploring toxicities that leak across their bodies, space, and time within the sewing factory in the tutor **Mary Maggic**'s workshop *Performing the Sublime Sea of Co-Mattering*. During the workshop, the group scavenged for materials across the building to ritualistically create an intuitive scenography from and deepen their relationships with molecules, matter, and morphing. The workshop concluded with a performance of a noise composition crafted from the scenography. Mary Maggic also took part in the public lecture series in conversation with Eglė Ambrasaitė about *Reappropriating Toxicity*, which invited the public to consider and rearticulate their waste and relationalities by embracing co-mattering.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

The second part of the programme started with a public screening of *Mouthless Part I* (2020) and a talk by **Dorota Gawęda** and **Eglė Kulbokaitė** facilitated by Tautvydas Urbelis. The participants discussed the behind-the-scenes of finished work and research methodologies, collaborative tactics, intersectional practices, and questions of different entanglements. This was followed by a reading of Zine of Soil (by Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė).

The programme continued with an open lecture given by **Bones Tan Jones**, who presented their transdisciplinary practice combining performance, visual and communal arts, music, and body practices. The participants were invited to discuss the intricate connections between different fields, healing practices, and the importance of having good hiking shoes during a pilgrimage. The open lecture was followed by a workshop where the participants explored the depth of their trust while trying different body practices through movement, experiencing the forest, and elevating each other with physical and emotional support. Bones guided the participants through the paths of ritualism, meditation, and magic, as the workshop included queering folk songs and reading poetry together. The late evening hours brought an improvised seal of trust – a tattooing session at the **DSL space**.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

At the end of September, the programme continued with a lecture and seminar *A Rock that Keeps Tigers Away: Sympathetic Magic in a World of Doubt* given by **Matthew Post** (**Post Brothers**). The open lecture called for finding the interrelations between magic, rituals, and art practices. Matthew paid special attention to the context of perception of time and space, based on the theory of ontology, and encouraged changing the direction of thinking, expanding the anthropological approach. While reading the text *Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality* by Timothy Morton, the participants had an opportunity to delve deeper into the theory of object-oriented ontology and discuss it in depth during the seminar.

WORK STOP INTRO DUC TIONS

As autumn swayed between warm, colourful days and chilly evenings, the participants were invited to take part in a workshop by **Áron Birtalan** and **Gabriel Widing**, *Mutant-World Building, Unruly Networks and Mystical Relationships*, which had them create prototypes at the intersection of role-playing, participatory arts, mysticism, and mediated practices. Áron and Gabriel introduced the idea of "playable questions", emphasising trial, play, and failure rather than having everything figured out in advance. After reading *Another Body Is Possible / There Is no Body B* by Gabriel Widing, the participants proposed prototypes of games involving participation and the presence of an interface.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

In October, the programme hosted the public lecture *The Labour of Change Isn't Self-Evident and It Can Be Self-Exploitative* and the workshop *Working Conditions, at What Cost?* by **Dalia Maini** and **Amelie Jakubek** from the Berlin-based newspaper **Arts of the Working Class**. The workshop gave examples of other groups and collectives, and aimed to make visible the challenges of group organising, naming, and experiencing. The participants were provoked to find their differences before similarities in order to highlight different aspects of group formation. The workshop continued with the introduction of the Hologram, a social technology conceived by Cassie Thornton based on the model of the Greek Solidarity Clinics. The group got involved in experiencing peer-to-peer forms of care and thought of specific challenges which could be transformed or supported by collective work.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

Approaching the All Saints' Day, writer and academic **Simone Kotva** invited the participants to experience the experimental co-labouring in the art of sensing more-than-human worlds. In the public lecture, they situated their practices of attending to spirits within decolonial theory and focused on the notion of magic as a technique of attentiveness and facilitating multi-species diplomacy. The following workshop focused on aspects of the technique known as "sitting-out" (*utesittning*), a type of knowledge-gathering practice and initiatory undergoing central to Nordic vernacular magic. The participants together with Kotva were calling forth spirits in order to acquire knowledge from plants, stones, etc. The session concluded with an optional hands-on experience of communicating with spirits at a historical cemetery.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

The last public talk was given by the artist **Joey Holder**, who introduced her practice as a form of "world-building" with multiple points of access to the work – through narrative, information, images, video, and websites. Using different media and techniques, Holder elaborated on how ideas of mimicry, alchemy, camouflage, and adaptation are important in her work, and how themes such as organic computation, merging of matter and information, and our increasing entanglement with technology inspire her. Drawing on Karen Barad's ideas about the inherent entanglement of everything around us, Holder invited us to get acquainted with her liquid worlds of multifaceted components. At the end of the programme, Holder helped the participants work on the exhibition *Adero* and gave intimate insight into their practices.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

The programme concluded with the final events at the end of November 2022 – the exhibition *Adero* and the Gathering of Alternative Art Education. The exhibition *Adero*, composed of works by the participants of the programme developed over the summer and autumn of 2022, took place in the former sewing factory Lelija, which in addition to the final event housed DSL, a temporary explorative and collaborative project space that became the main gathering place throughout the programme.

The Gathering of Alternative Art Education was a symposium where international speakers representing different approaches and methodologies shared their experiences with the current state and possible futures of education. The speakers included: **Olga Schubert** and **Elisabeth Krämer** (The New Alphabet School at HKW), **Maarin Ekterman** (Prologue School), **Asbjørn Blokkum Flø** (notam), **Hugo Hopping** and **Tautvydas Urbelis** (Alternative Education Programme at Rupert). In addition to the exhibition and the gathering, the Alternative Education Reader, a web-based open-access educational booklet with unique entries by the programme's participants, was published.

WORK SHOP INTRO DUC TIONS

The tutors of the 10th Edition of the Alternative Education Programme were:

Bones Tan Jones

Denis Petrina

Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė

Joey Holder

Mary Maggic

Nisha Ramayya

Agency Agency (Victoria Meniakina, Roel van Herpt)

Aikas Žado Laboratory (Eglė Ambrasaitė, Domas Noreika)

Arts of the Working Class (Dalia Maini, Amelie Jakubek)

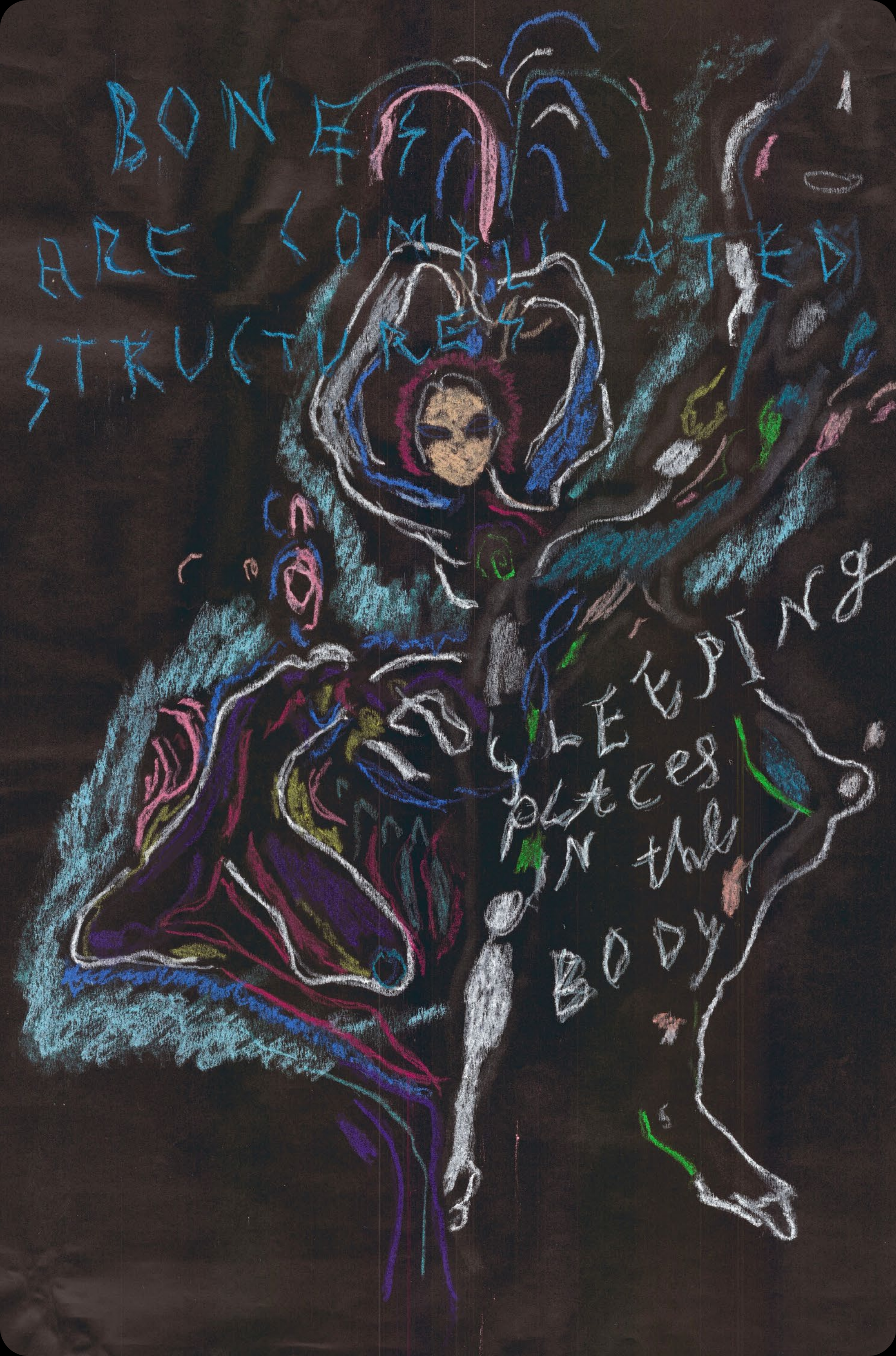
Verpėjos (Laura Garbštienė)

Áron Birtalan and Gabriel Widing

Post Brothers

The 10th edition was curated by

Tautvydas Urbelis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Bones
are the
BODY

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https://sfonline.barnard.edu/distributed-reproduction-chemical-violence-and-latency/

Distributed Reproduction, Chemical Violence, and Latency

MICHELLE MURPHY

Remains fall to the shallow sea floor. Silt and sand accumulate above.[1] Centuries tick by, the sea dries, and a thick layer of sediment presses. Once live matter transforms and waits in the geological archive. Then, in 1860, long dormant oil is pulled into activity by North America's first commercial oil well in Oil Springs, Ontario, Canada. Liquid petroleum gushed higher than the trees, slicking workers and land, turning the Black Creek black, flowing down to the Sydenham River, which then joins the nearby St. Clair River.

The St. Clair River forms a natural, watery passage between enormous Lake Huron, one of the Great Lakes, and small, shallow Lake St. Clair, from which the water continues to flow south as the short Detroit River that empties into Lake Erie, another of the Great Lakes. Together the St. Clair and Detroit rivers carve a border between the United States on the west bank and Canada on the east. Water flows from the mostly white Sarnia, a city of industrial prosperity at the top of the St. Clair River, down toward the industrial ruins of contemporary, majority-black Detroit, abandoned by capitalism and shrinking in population. The water passes through land that for thousands of years was the home of Ojibway people, who now live on land divided into three small reserves. By the late twentieth century, this waterway had become a deep water channel, connected to inland shipping lanes that wander out to the Atlantic Ocean. Railroads and highways sprawl from

1 This paper builds on two previously published works: Michelle Murphy, "Chemical Infrastructures," T*oxic World*, eds. Nathalie Jas and Soraya Boudia (London, Pickering and Chato, 2012): 103-116 and "Distributed Reproduction," *Corpus: An Interdisciplinary Reader on Bodies and Knowledge*, eds. Monica Casper and Paisley Currah (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011): 21–38.

the river across continental North America. What began with one oil well and a short pipeline to the nearby town of Petrolia, is now Canada's Chemical Valley, where 40 percent of the country's petro-chemical processing is accomplished.[2]

Chemical Valley, located just below Sarnia, expanded beyond oil with a polymer rubber processing plant opened by Dow Chemical in 1942 as part of the Canadian war effort. Gracing the back of the 1971 Canadian ten-dollar bill, the plant is a symbolic origin point of a national industrial history. Today this polymer plant is joined by over 60 other refining plants.[3] Oil now pulses through Enbridge's transcontinental 2,306 kilometer pipeline from the Alberta Tar Sands to be processed in Chemical Valley and distributed through pipelines, ships, and roads across North America and beyond. Natural gas fracked from Pennsylvania and New York moves up to Chemical Valley as well. A sprawl of pipelines cross the river to the United States, and interconnect local plants. Chemicals made in one refinery are pumped into another in a matrix of industrial frenzy. Down the St. Clair and on to the Detroit River, the waterway that runs past Chemical Valley has become a dense corridor of industrial activity, the birthplace of both commercial oil and the Ford Motor Company. Petroleum was re-produced as gasoline to feed cars, cars themselves were made, steel was forged, and rubber was refined, as was styrene, chlorine, and perchloroethylene (for dry cleaning), as well as the plastics that became the consumer props of everyday, twentieth-century habits. Petrochemicals, through Chemical Valley, have brought new things to life.

Starting with the petrochemical history of the St. Clair River, this paper thinks about reproduction, chemicals, and time.

Reproduction and Infrastructures

What counts as reproduction? Where does biological reproduction reside? "In bodies," is a probable response, perhaps framed by a birth story populated with genitals, sperm, eggs, kinship, family, contraceptives, and heteronormative futures that promise alignment with a "good life" of a house, job,

2 EcoJustice, *Exposing Canada's Chemical Valley: An Investigation of Cumulative Air Pollution Emission in the Sarnia, Ontario Area*, (Toronto: EcoJustice, 2007).

3 EcoJustice 2007.

and affective bonds: 1 plus 1 equals 2.4 children and a dog. Or the answer "in bodies" might be accompanied by claims to human rights coupled with critiques of coercive racist states and grief-filled accounts of infant and maternal lives lost due to negligence, violence, or scarcity. Tectonic forces conspire to offer the scale of "bodies" as an obvious answer. Reproduction happens in bodies, and lives flourish or become precarious in birth, pregnancy, and infancy. Does reproduction stop there?

Twenty-five years ago Donna Haraway asked, "Why should our bodies end at our skin?" offering the "material-semiotic figure" of the cyborg as an ontological politics for attending to the ways living-being was already constituted via technoscience.[4] At that moment, some feminists were resisting a politics that posited bodies as natural entities, and instead insisted that any version of "nature" and "biology" (as well as "sex" and "race") at the end of the twentieth century was already conditioned by technoscience. To this we might add that any reference to nature or biology in the twenty-first century is already conditioned by the chemical distributions of industrialism. Thus, in a similar spirit, one might pose the question: why should reproduction end at our bodies? How to participate in and challenge the ontological politics of "reproduction"? What is the place of industrial chemicals in reproduction? What is the place of industrial chemicals in reproduction if we now live in an era which some scientists have named the anthropocene—a historical period when all life, all ecosystems, and the entire planet has been rearranged by human activity.[5]

Feminist technoscience studies scholars, such as Adele Clarke, Marilyn Strathern, Sarah Franklin, Charis Thompson, Catherine Waldby, and many others, have done important work tracking reproduction as an "assisted" process. With the help of their work, it is possible to think of assisted reproduction as the technical and social achievement of fertility through matrixes of uneven scientific labor enrolling a multitude of actors and practices, as in the example of in-vitro fertilization. Feminist technoscience studies work on this kind of assisted reproduction has shown how the animating, recombinatory, manipulable, and responsive capacities of micrological life (cells, eggs, nuclei, viruses, and so on) have been harnessed as a form of biolabor or biocapital in contemporary political economies. The generativity of

4 Donna Haraway, "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," *Socialist Review* 80 (1985): 65.

5 J. Zalasiewicz, et al., "Are we now living in the Anthropocene," *GSA Today* 18.2 (2008): 4–8.

life becomes value added for capital. Reproduction, in this way, is studied as a generative and promissory domain of both life and economic value in the twenty-first century.

This sense of "assisted reproduction" can also be extended more broadly to include the scale of extensive infrastructures—state, military, chemical, ecological, agricultural, economic, architectural—that "assist," alter, rearrange, foreclose, harm, and participate in the process of creating, maintaining, averting, and transforming life in inter-generational time. By infrastructure I mean more than the physical structures of waterway and pipelines. I use infrastructure to name the spatially and temporally extensive ways that practices are sedimented into and structure the world. Thus, a capacious sense of infrastructures includes social sedimentations such as colonial legacies, the repetition of gendered norms in material culture, or the persistence of racialization. When "assistance" becomes infrastructural in this way, what cartography of assisted reproduction does environmental politics demand?

I suggest the term *distributed reproduction* as a way of reframing what counts as reproduction. I would like to pose distributed reproduction as a question of reproduction occurring beyond bodies within uneven spatial and temporal infrastructures. Within such infrastructures, some aspects of life are supported while others are abandoned. Infrastructures promote some forms of life, and avert others. Through infrastructures, some forms of life purposefully persist, while other forms are unintentionally altered. Some life survives despite infrastructures. In thinking about distributed reproduction I draw on: the concept of "reproductive justice," as crafted by women-of-color feminists in the United States; the Comilla Declaration of 1989, written in Bangladesh, which theorizes the engineering of life in both agriculture and in human bodies as connected forms of the "relations of reproduction;" Marxist feminist work that theorizes the structuration of reproduction as pivotal to capitalism; indigenous feminisms that attend to the intergenerational reverberations of violence and the continuance of colonialism; and queer studies work that questions heteronormativity within ways of envisioning futures.[6] Inspired by these critical efforts, this paper seeks to re-

6 See, for example, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, "Looking Both Ways: Women's Lives at the Crossroads of Reproductive Justice and Climate Justice" (2009); Farida Akhter, Wilma Van Berkel, and Natasha Ahmad, "The Declaration of Comilla: FINRRAGE-UBINIG International Conference 1989," (Dhaka: UBINIG, 1989); Cindi Katz, "Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction," *Antipode* 33.4 (2001): 708-727; Winona La Duke, *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (Boston: South End Press, 1999); and Andrea Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," GLQ 16 (2010): 41–68.

sist thinking about reproduction primarily as an embodied, forward-moving, anticipatory, generative process, but additionally, instead, and in particular, this paper thinks through the temporal question of latency, intergenerational time, and thwarted life in chemical infrastructures of reproduction.
By chemical infrastructures, I mean the spatial and temporal distributions of industrially produced chemicals as they are produced and consumed, and as they become mobile in the atmosphere, settle into landscapes, travel in water ways, leach from commodities, are regulated (or not) by states, monitored by experts, engineered by industries, absorbed by bodies, metabolized physiologically, and as they bioaccumulate in food changes, break down over time, or persist. With the term chemical infrastructures, I am naming and imagining the many varied pathways of industrial chemicals as they permeate and structure life, both human and nonhuman. Chemical infrastructures are both regulated and unregulated, studied and yet uncertain. Many different disciplines and communities of experts make knowledge about chemical infrastructures, but in piecemeal ways—some experts study chemicals in fish, other experts engineer smoke stacks, while others diagnose illnesses. Yet others feel chemical infrastructures by working and living in sites saturated by industrial chemicals. Quotidian acts of breathing, drinking, and smelling can become knowledge-making moments in chemical infrastructures. Chemical infrastructures, importantly, are spatially and temporally extensive. They are distributed and translocal, connecting moments of production and consumption, moving across national borders, traversing scales of life. They are temporally uneven, as some chemicals break down quickly and others refuse to decompose, and thus are present for long durations. Some chemicals cause immediate responses in organisms, others provoke effects that take generations to see, as they slowly injure organisms, ecologies, or even planetary atmospheres.[7]

It is this temporal aspect of chemical infrastructures—their slowness, their persistence, their latency—that I want to think more about. Latency is a synonym of lag. It is the period of time between a stimulus and a response, the gap between one event and another. In technical terms, latency time in medicine is similar to an incubation period. Latency time is the lag between infection and infectiousness. Or, it is the wait between chemical ex-

7 Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2011).

posure and symptom. To be latent is to be "not yet:" a potential not yet manifest, a past not yet felt.

In temporal terms, latency names the wait for the effects of the past to arrive in the present. As such, latency is a movement from past to present or even future. It is the inverse temporal orientation of anticipation—in which the not-yet-future reorients the present. In comparison, latency in ecological time names how the submerged chemicals of the past finally arrive in the present to disrupt the reproduction of the same. Latency names how the past becomes reactivated. Through latency, the future is already altered.

Life on the St. Clair

Latency, I want to argue here, is important for thinking through the temporality of chemical infrastructures of reproduction that are at stake in the St. Clair River area. As the site of a dense chemical infrastructure, the St. Clair River is not only a crucial node in the perpetuation of the petrochemical network, it is also a landscape saturated with the effluent of past industrialization. Since the 1950s, through layers of industrial processes, the "excess" chemicals of production have been moved into the waters, airs, and ground of this region. At least since the 1950s, chemical dumping into the St. Clair has been a source of public anxiety and scientific study. In the 1970s, in the wake of Love Canal (located not far away), the storage of industrial sludge in the banks of the river came to light. The region is remarkable for its underground geology of salt deposits dotted with natural caverns in which industrial sludge can be stored underground. Under the earth's surface, each of the 73 of these caverns on the Canadian side of the river holds the equivalent of three large surface petroleum tanks. In the 1960s, Lake Erie boomed with industry that built its way up the rivers that fed the lake. In 1969, an oil slick on the neighboring Cayuga River, then considered the most polluted river in the United States, caught fire in a location just before it poured into Lake Erie. Unregulated industrial excess made the rivers thick and flammable. Anxiety over this starkly visible chemical alteration of waterways helped to prompt early forms of environmental regulation including the first binational Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1972, strengthened in 1978. The result of this regulation in the 1980s, was that effluent was pushed skyward:

through stacks, into the air. Along the St. Clair, the sky is now decorated with plumes of billowing vapor.

Yet even in the 1980s, the past came back. In 1985, a toxic sludge congealment called the "Sarnia Blob" and the size of a basketball court appeared in the St. Clair River, following the leakage of liquid industrial waste into the river from a cavern operated by Dow Chemical. The Blob was formed following a leak of 2500 gallons of perchloroethelyene into the river, which then mixed with chemicals from previous spills to form a sludge of arsenic, copper, cadmium, chromium, iron, lead, mercury, nickel, zinc, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), hexachlorobenzene, phosphorus, chromium, and manganese, oil, grease, and a cocktail of at least 30 toxic compounds known as polyaromatic hydrocarbons.[8] Dow was fined $16,000 for the spill and spent another $1 million in vacuuming up the sludge. Maxwell Cohen, chairman of the international joint commission that revised the Water Quality Agreement in 1978, described the latent presence of toxic chemicals in the area as "the revenge of the industrial past" on the chemical present. "That revenge is finding a variety of forms," he explained. "Companies that were legally in business 50 years ago [...] dumped materials that now have proven to be lethal, or semi lethal [...] No one controlled them 50 years ago, or 40 years ago, or even 30."[9] The past defers its violence into the present.

The post-World-War-II era of industrial exuberance has left behind a Great Lake rust belt of decrepit factories, unemployed towns, and chemical remainders for the twenty-first century. In the contemporary, river and lake sediment has become a contested site that materially archives this chemical past. To remove the sediment is to disturb it, and hence to release the toxic residues of the past back into animation. Yet the river and lake floors are not frozen in time—they continue to move and flow. PCBs, although banned in the late 1970s, continue to persist in the St. Clair River and across Lake Erie, with intensive accumulations along the shores and in canals. As a deep water shipping channel, the river's sides actively erode or are purposefully dredged, and sediment is at stake. The chemical archive refuses to remain latent.

8 Environment Canada and Ontario Ministry of Environment, "Pollution of the St. Clair River (Sarnia Area)," Ontario Ministry of Environment (1985).

9 Radio Interview, "As It Happens," 19, Mar. 1979, CBC *Digital Archives*, last modified 14 Feb. 2012. Available at http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/environment/pollution/troubled-waters-pollution-in-the-great-lakes/revenge-of-the-industrial-past.html.

Despite its industrially altered nature, life continues within the ecosystem of the St. Clair. Organisms living in the benthic zone, the subsurface layers of the river bottom, busily absorb and reanimate chemical pasts. The more the benthic layer is revivified, the more it brings the latent past of chemicals back into the food chain, into fish, and then possibly to humans, who continue to fish the river's waters, both for sport and subsistence.

Squeezed between Sunoco and Shell, the Aamjiwnaang First Nation is a small Ojibway community whose members' ancestors have long lived along the St. Clair River. As a previously colonized community, the Aamjiwnaang First Nation (referred to in Canadian government documents by the bureaucratic name "Sarnia Indian Reserve 45") now lays sovereign claim to its small territory of 1280.5 hectares wedged amidst the refining factories of major multinational corporations, such as Imperial Oil, Sunoco, Shell, and the old polymer plant. In recent years, environmental justice activists at the Aamjiwnaang First Nation have worked with local doctors, scientists, and lawyers to document the first known case of a dramatic reduction in birth ratio of boys to girls that is not associated with a specific acute industrial or nuclear accident. Between 1999 to 2003, of the 100 children born in the community, only 35 were boys.[10] The chemical past thus manifests in the present though an absence: lives not born.

This community sits at the cross-hairs of multiple scales of governmentality: that of First Nation governance; of Ontario and Canadian environmental regulation; of the United States and Michigan, which control the other side of the river; and of Ohio on Lake Erie, each involving different state agencies and histories. As the United States' largest supplier of oil, Canada remains deeply invested in spatializing less-regulated regions for its production and refinement. In Chemical Valley, an industry consortium, not the state, records air quality levels. Knowledge production about this site, thus, is deeply contaminated with industry.

Therefore, what we know about the chemical infrastructure of Chemical Valley must also come from Aamjiwnaang environmental activists; ecologists; local NGOs; and transnational NGOs, such as Global Community Monitor, who are attempting to document a soup of chronic chemical exposures, which is almost entirely unmeasured by the Canadian govern-

10 Constanze Mackenzie, Ada Lockridge, and Margaret Keith, "Declining Sex Ratio in a First Nation Community," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 113.10 (2005): 1295–1298.

ment, using techniques such as grassroots bucket sampling.[11] At the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, the violent effects of externalized chemical excess have been tracked in the last decade by locally crafted community health surveys and by body maps, which have documented the embodied effects of living in Chemical Valley. It is difficult to sustain such efforts as it is difficult to raise funding, and locals must continue to find work in the plants of Chemical Valley. While efforts like bucket sampling can catch snapshots of the chemical exposures of the present and community health surveys track accumulated health responses, neither type of knowledge provides data with the needed temporal arrow: past exposure leads to later health problem. Environmental justice activists have learned the painful lesson that chemical injury is not just displaced spatially with super stacks, toxic trading, and selective plant placement. Chemical injury is displaced temporally, such that accountabilities exceed the scope of individual lives, bioaccumulating or persisting over time, beyond regulatory regimes, into the long future.

Yet Aamjiwnaang activists have been joined by indigenous activists across Canada who have mobilized in resistance to the Alberta Tar Sands, whose pipelines stretch from the Pacific to Sarnia and thus join dispersed communities together in common political cause. This activism manifests a new historical era of indigenous politics, an era named in a past Anishnabe prophecy as a time of environmental devastation in which the seventh generation since colonization would rise up. The future foretold has arrived in this moment of intensive, geographically dispersed activism by First Nation communities in Canada in defense of their constitutionally protected treaty rights against petrochemical capitalism. This activism has galvanized into the Idle No More movement, a name that makes explicit a temporal transformation into resistance.[12]

If the lives not born of the Aamjiwnaang nation are the effect of past releases of chemicals, the temporal lag makes putting cause and effect together elusive. And this is the rub for chemicals that act as reproductive toxins or that can trigger cancers. The effects are not necessarily felt at the moment of the exposure, but later, in the future. Within the uneven spa-

11 Aamjiwnaang First Nation Health and Environmental Committee, http://www.aamjiwnaangenvironment.ca/index.html; Global Community Monitor, "Aamjiwnaang First Nation Bucket Brigate," last modified 10 May 2007, available at http://www.gcmonitor.org/article.php?id=582. See the environmental justice work of Ada Lockeridge and Ron Plain; Isaac Luginaah, Kevin Smith, and Ada Lockridge, "Surrounded by Chemical Valley and 'Living in a Bubble': The Case of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Ontario." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 53.3 (2010): 353–70; Dayna Nadine Scott, "'Gender-Benders:' Sex and Law in the Constitution of Polluted Bodies," *Feminist Legal Studies* 17 (2009): 241–26; and the film *The Beloved Community* by Pamela Calvert/Plain Speech (California Newsreel, 2007).

12 Idle No More, accessed January 6, 2013, http://idlenomore1.blogspot.com/.

tial and temporal extensions of chemicals, people are "living in prognosis," as anthopologist Lochlan Jainn explains.[13] They are living structurally in the unknown individual probability of a statistical possibility, waiting for a symptom to arrive that can only point retrospectively and conjecturally to a possible harm.

In the case of endocrine-mimicking chemicals this latency is intensified, as endocrine-mimicking chemicals have a particularly intense effect on shaping developing fetal life—life not yet born, and hence future life. Endocrine-mimicking chemicals, then, can manifest health effects in the next generation. The embodied response may not even be felt until the next future generation—possible grandchildren not born. For example, research into the effects of the estrogenic chemical bisphenol A (BPA) on pregnant mice has found that the significant effects occur not so much for the fetus in *utero*, but for the eggs that are being formed inside that fetus, and, hence, the effects are manifested in the potential grandchildren who will not be born.[14] Here, lives not born along the St. Clair may well be the effect of exposures endured by their grandmothers. Hence, the sex ratio effects experienced by the Aamjiwnaang nation may be the latent response of exposures two generations ago. Or it could be the effect of continuous, multiple, accumulated, multigenerational exposures crossing a threshold that has not become an epistemologically legible measure.

The possible role of past exposures to endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the lives not born among the Aamjiwnaang is difficult to prove. Nearby Sarnia shows no such change in sex ratio. Other known cases of human sex ratio changes have been linked to acute occupational exposures or industrial accidents. Almost no state-funded research has been conducted to help study this issue. In contrast, the study of sex ratio change and other effects of reproductive toxins is flourishing in local freshwater biology research. On the St. Clair, herring gulls have been found to have a reduction in males, and a greater portion of male embryo death. Snapping turtles are "feminized."

13 Jain, Sarah Lochlann. "Living in Prognosis: Toward an Elegiac Politics." *Representations* 98.1 (2007): 77–92.

14 Martha Susiarjo et al., "Bisphenol a Exposure in Utero Disrupts Early Oogenesis in the Mouse," *PLoS Genetics* 3.1 (2007).

White perch have a 45 percent rate of intersex in the St. Clair.[15] Thus, across multiple animal orders—birds, fish and reptiles— not only has life been altered in intergenerational time, but the material ability to continue life in time, to reproduce, has also been rearranged.

The round goby has emerged as a particular sentinel for endocrine-disrupting chemicals in Great Lake waterways. The round goby is a fish from Europe, first found in the St. Clair River in 1990, likely transported there in the ballast water of ships. Since then, the round goby has rapidly come to occupy all five of the Great Lakes. Gobys are bottom feeders. In other words, they feed off the layer of microorganisms and the mussels that live in the surface sediment of the benthic zone. The term bottom feeder, moreover, has a cultural resonance, designating a kind of "lowlife," or low-status life. As an invasive species and a lowlife, the goby is criminalized and racialized in ecological management discourse. The goby is a "suspect," an "illegal" and unwanted "immigrant" that ecological management policies wish to eradicate.[16] The benthic zone mussels which the round goby eats are, in turn, filter-feeding invertebrates known to bioconcentrate contaminants. Thus, chemicals have found a new route of bioaccumulation in the round goby. The round goby is charged with the crime of resurrecting the chemical past. At the same time, the round goby is so successful as an invasive species because it is relatively pollution-tolerant, finding garbage-filled river bottoms to be good nesting sites.

The round goby has become a sentinel for chemical contaminants because populations show signal sex changes in response to endocrine disrupting chemicals. Ecologists capture round goby samples in sites expected to have high levels of contamination and perform a variety of tests that cannot be done on human bodies, including dissection and measure of chemical load in tissue and livers, as well as assessment of the condition of gonads. In particular, a shorter length of the male urogenital papilla; a changed proportion of one of the male goby genders (that scientists label "male gender #2"); a skewed sex ratio (which has a rare, higher rate of females in the Detroit

15 See, for example, Canada, Environment. "Great Lakes Fact Sheet: Fish and Wildlife Health Effects in the Canadian Great Lakes Areas of Concern" (2003); SR De Solla, C.A. Bishop, and R.J. Brooks, "Sexually Dimorphic Morphology of Hatchling Snapping Turtles (Chelydra Serpentina) from Contaminated and Reference Sites in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin, North America," *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* 21.5 (2002): 922–29.; RJ Kavanagh, et.al., "Endocrine Disruption and Altered Gonadal Development in White Perch (*Morone Americana*) from the Lower Great Lakes Region," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 112.8 (2004): 898–902; DV Weseloh, C. Perkarik, and SR. De Solla, "Spatial Patterns and Rankings of Contaminant Concentrations in Herring Gull Eggs from 15 Sites in the Great Lakes and Connecting Channels, 1998–2002," *Environmental Monitor Assessment* 113 (2003): 265–84.

16 Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, "Gabby 'The Low Life' Round Goby," accessed January 6, 2013, http://www.iiseagrant.org/nabinvader/Lakes/suspects/suspect_gabby.html.

River); and the presence of eggs and sperms in male goby testes are signals of the presence of endocrine-disrupting chemicals.[17] So, too, is the presence of vitellogenin, an egg yolk precursor protein synthesized in the liver, which is not expressed in males unless exposed to a xeno-estrogen. In the last few years, students working at local universities have developed a bioassay for the presence of vitellogenin in the round goby.[18] Thus, the round goby, which lives only two to three years, is becoming a "signature of contamination" organism for the Great Lakes, a living assay that provides a way to sample and map the presence of endocrine disrupters.

The round goby is a queer survivor. Scientists describe the goby as having multiple male genders (or "morphs"), and it is this arrangement of male genders that is altered in contaminated landscapes.[19] It thrives intergenerationally despite alterations to its embodiment and chemical injuries to individuals. While scientists tend to biologize animal sex and gender (as scientists see it, only some organisms reproduce sexually), in contrast I argue that what is crucial to the politics of distributed reproduction is not the maintenance of proper heteronormative human and nonhuman bodies, but instead is the sustaining of capacities to live intergenerationally. Chemically caused sex ratio change, then, is reframed as a question of how unchosen rearrangements to the embodiment of nonhumans and humans can be acts of structural violence that destroy the possibility of future life and produce life unborn. At stake is a simultaneous recognition of intergenerational injury and a valuing of queer, altered, and othered life. The figure of life unborn, then, expands from a concern of the conventional politics of abortion (and a figure of the Christian right) to a concern of the politics of sustaining multigenerational life and already altered life within uneven conditions of past, present, and recurring violence patterned in the material work of capitalism.

17 JR Marentette et.al., "Signatures of Contamination in Invasive Round Gobies (*Neogobius melanostomus*): A Double Strike for Ecosystem Health?" *Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety* 73.7 (2010): 1755–64; and Andrew MacInnis and Lynda Corkum, "Fecundity and Reproductive Season of the Round Goby *Neogobius melanostomus* in the Upper Detroit River," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 129 (2000): 136–144.

18 LA Bowley et.al., "Characterization of Vitellogenin Gene Expression in Round Goby (*Neogobious Melanostomus*) Using a Quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction Assay," *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* 29.12 (2010): 2751–60.

19 JR Marentette, JL Fitzpatrick, RB Berger, and S. Balshine, "Multiple Male Reproductive Morphs in the Invasive Round Goby (*Apollonia melanostoma*)," *Journal of Great Lakes Research* 35 (2009): 302–308.

Michelle Murphy
Distributed Reproduction, Chemical Violence, and Latency

Waiting for Change

From toxic blobs, to the multigenerational capacity to sustain life, to the persistence of sediments into the future, chemical infrastructures of reproduction are shaped by time and latency. A goby assay or a bucket sample can show recent or immediate exposure. A community health chart or sex ratio study can show the bodily effects of a past event. Therefore, there is a crucial temporal gap in knowledge-making that shapes the ways that both reproductive and environmental politics are imagined. While sediment holds unregulated contaminants from the past whose violence is releasable into the present, latency is only a problem. Latency can become a source of interruption into the repetition of the same—for good or bad. Chemical infrastructures of reproduction do not just make reproduction possible; they distribute reproduction in uneven and specific ways across both time and space. Living among the many infrastructures that redistribute reproduction, there are many pasts at work, not only chemical, with which to reanimate our futures.

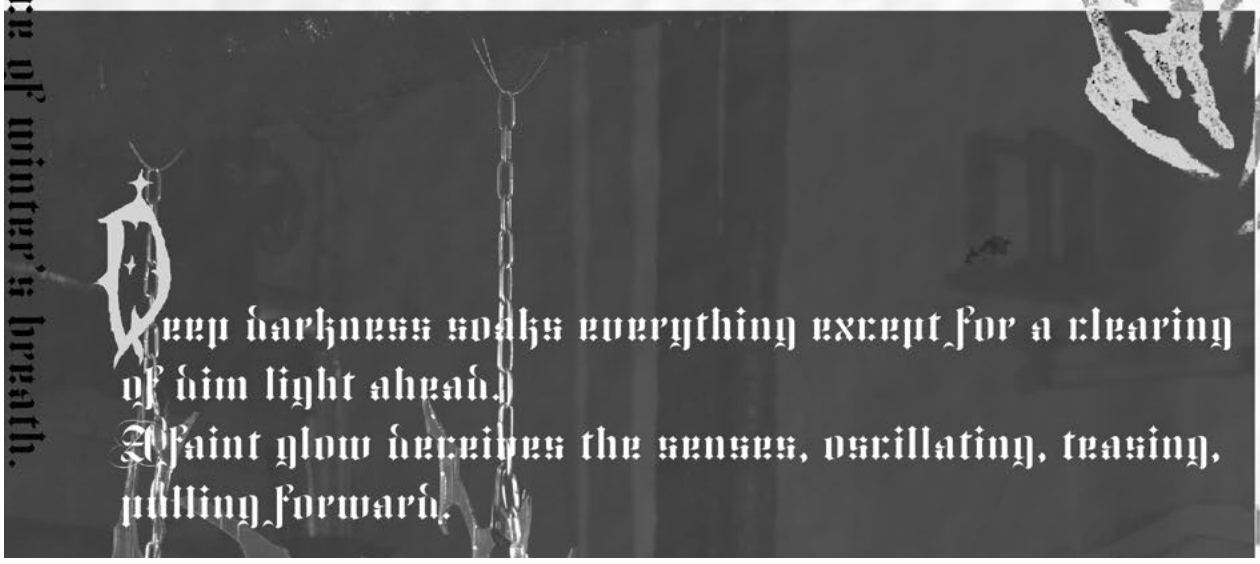
If, in studying reproduction and participating in reproductive politics, one aims not just to reproduce the same, not just to give in to the breathless futurism of contemporary anticipatory impulses, then how might our attention to the responsiveness and generativity of life in contemporary technoscience be interrupted, supplemented, and reoriented? There is a politics to latency: neither generativity nor difference are in themselves ethical. Which pasts need to be pulled out of the sediment into activity? What pasts can be drawn into new action? If reproduction is distributed, what are we waiting for?

Footsteps tread a narrow concrete path,
which was once protected by 3 pine creatures
whom swayed in unison

Clusters of moss, ferns, lichens and forest orchid
which peppered their skin now grow in disarray
within the moist flaking paint
of Lilith's windowsills.

Atmosphere hangs heavy, humid density clings close to
the skin like a wet garment.

Lunar time is fast encroaching, clouds swirling the
Sun away; orchestrating symposiums with fluorine.



Deep darkness soaks everything except for a clearing
of dim light ahead.
A faint glow deceives the senses, oscillating, teasing,
pulling forward.

Footsteps accumulating on all sides, frosting over from the breath of winter's breath.

You feel akin to all the chaos around you, a simmering force of instinct and survival coupled with wonder at the everpresent.

With unwavering focus your eyes trace the fizzling outlines of the basement, for the dim light offers you a sense of cure from the cold metal lining the walls

Ahead the fauna glints,
in the l.e.d lights,
which have found a place to
penetrate, a clearing, a glade.
At the centre of which, you
observe the sparkling harmony
of many beings.

How much time has passed?

RUPERT,

Alternative Education Programme Reader

PAR TIC I PANTS

HASHIA

Studio Misti

Delphine Lejeune

laura fernández antolín

Laura Marija Balčiūnaitė

Ana Lipps

Algirdas Jakas

Dovydas Laurinaitis

iolo Walker

HASHIA

HASHIA is an oracle who lives in d3vination.

Shey streams hir messages through spatial sound, spoken word, poetry, music, DJ mixes and performance. Hir interdisciplinary approach fuses dreamscapes, the occult, mythologies, ancient technologies and ancestral memories. Hir work has been shown at Liquid Architecture in Melbourne, ACUD Theatre in Berlin, Kampnagel in Hamburg and Großer Wasserspeicher in Berlin among others.

Shey is based in Berlin/Vilnius and currently renders ‘d3vination’, a broadcasting/forecasting/ spellcasting platform activating ley vortexes in celestial fluxxx with IRL site-special events x URL on Cashmere Radio in collaboration with other community radios around the world delivering deep-sea Lemurian wisdom through poetry and music.

Studio Misti

Imaginal. Digital. Physical.

Studio Misti is a collaborative journey between artists Nicholas Delap x Kerolaīna Linkeviča.

A generative inter-space where mythic English and Baltic histories entwine, spiralling into the ether of imaginative landscapes navigated through ‘journeying’, digital worlds and physical installations.

Embodying the transcendent fogs that dance across landscapes, Misti bridges together ancestral backgrounds and symbolism, questioning and exploring inherited folk narratives that have shaped attitudes towards nature and society.

By intermixing their multidisciplinary art practices and utilising them as immersive tools, Misti facilitates the activation of primordial and alternative ways of being through worldbuilding. They explore performative structures by navigating and interacting with these environments, focusing on the journey itself as a ritual from which to grow.

PAR TIC I PANTS

Delphine Lejeune

Delphine Lejeune is a visual designer and material researcher working experimentally across 2D- and 3D-printed surfaces. Her curiosities lie within designed objects and how they critically shape our social behaviours. Her source material is often found, digital images that she extrapolates into objects through layers of reformatting, delineating the boundaries between digital and physical representations.

laura fernández antolín

laura fernández antolín (they/them) (Valladolid, 1993) develops a practice of radical care that pieces together our bodies and their context, reclaiming the senses and affection for new relations, sharing capacities of resilience, creativity and action for inhabiting together.

Working from the materiality of textiles, drawings, scents, writing, objects and performance, they look for diverse possibilities to affect the discourses that engage immediately with the body. Their work thinks through our bodies and their environment as landscapes where we capture the instability of our lives, experiment with our knowledge and question our perceptions of domesticity, intimacy, gender, trust, commoning, togetherness, ...

They desire to create interwoven scenarios that shake us through the spaces we inhabit, unfolding languages not of representation, but of string figures; to question the sensitive personal and collective experiences through their forms, gestures and rituals; to view softness as a driving force for hope in the context of neoliberalism; to unfold us through addressing (un)conditional hospitality, abundance and the transformation of matter.

Laura Marija Balčiūnaitė

Laura Marija Balčiūnaitė is a former artist flâneuse becoming a ritual tools' creatrix channelling a need for softness through hydrofeminism, sound healing, drawing and somatic movement to produce sensual energy and healing in vulnerability, exploring the edges of a healer and a magical femme portrait tightly connected to the erotic flow of the universe.

PAR TIC I PANTS

Ana Lipps

Ana Lipps (they/them) is a Lithuanian-German artist (b. 1997, Vilnius). Through large-scale installations combining objects, sound, taste and interactive elements, they train the viewer's eye to accept suspended realities and dwell in liminal spaces. Breaking static sculptural conventions that rely on a viewer-object binary, Lipps opens up a multiplicity of states to encourage opportunities for change rather than a continuation of the expected.

Lipps graduated in 2019 from Brighton University (BA in Fine Arts Sculpture) and earned their Master's degree at the Dirty Art Department of the Sandberg Institute in 2022. Their Master's thesis was written about the significance of liminality in queerness and collapse. The liminal has been pushed to the peripheries of our society, as it has the power to challenge normative social structures by creating spaces of contradiction and unknowing. Most recently, they have been part of a month-long residency that was a collaboration between the Dirty Art Department and the Banana Mountain children's anarchist school. They have also been a resident at the Door Residency in a former bullet factory in Amsterdam.

Algirdas Jakas

Algirdas Jakas is an artist currently living in Vilnius. He studied printmaking at the Vilnius Academy of Arts and sculpture at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HFBK). His practice revolves around topics of care, collective anxiety and the shapes of hypochondriasis. Often using materials that are associated with hobbies or therapy and combining them with the medium of drawing, he explores the arcane through 'instruments of unease' and the boundaries of isolated self-help practices. For the past year, together with artist Egle Ruibyte, he has been working as a duo, realising projects at the Lokomotif project space in Lentvaris and Atletika gallery in Vilnius.

PAR TIC I PANTS

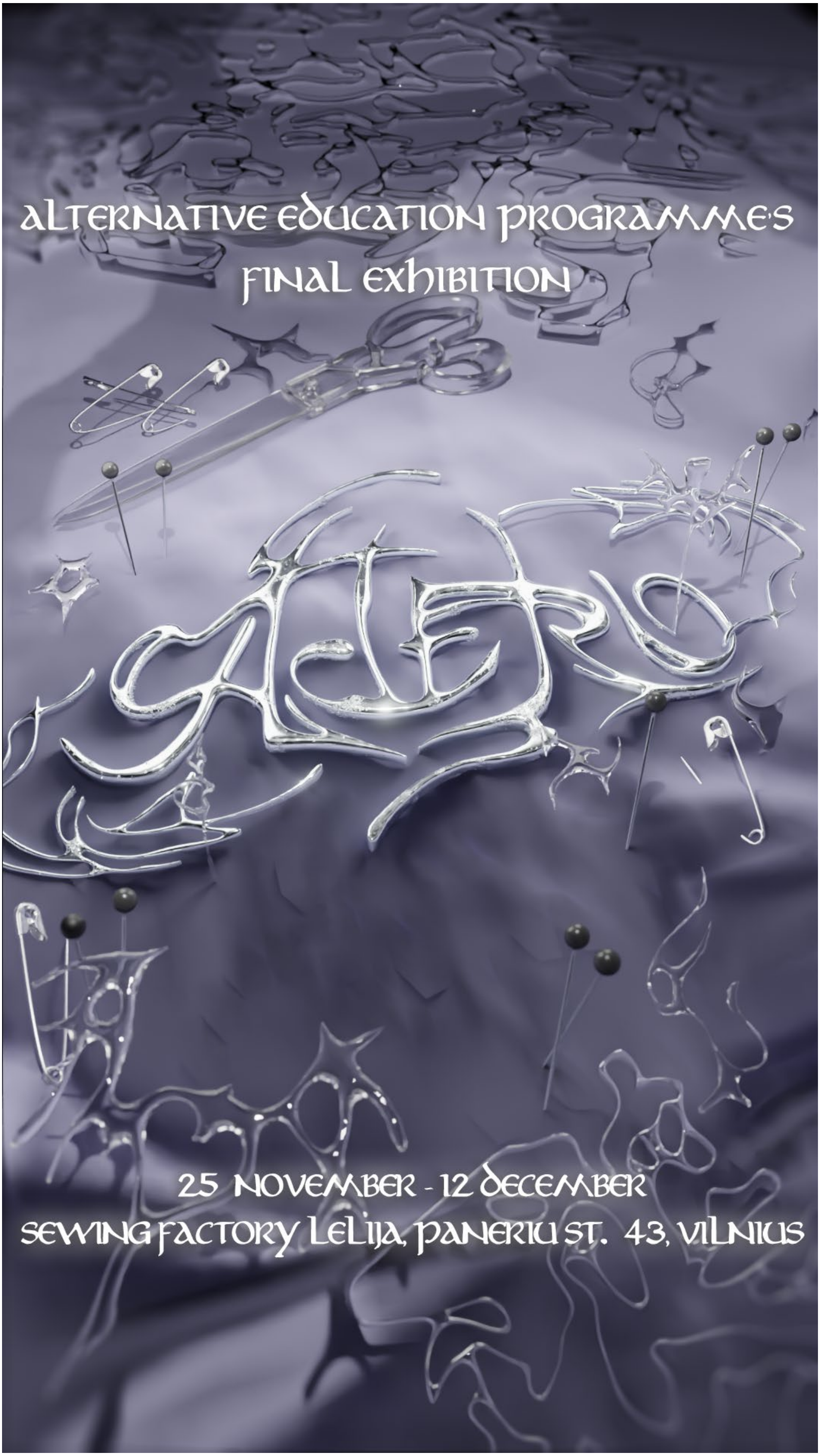
Dovydas Laurinaitis

Dovydas Laurinaitis is a transdisciplinary artist working mainly with writing, (durational) performance, water, sound and ritual. Ephemeralising the typically static, their work questions how the record can become the source, or reading can become the experience of writing, all the while intersecting with broader and more personal themes of memory, identity and shame.

Their artworks combine form and theme in multidimensional constellations of neurodiverse connections and are invitations to connect in an ongoing pursuit of vulnerability and softness; akin to a gentle acid eroding the borders between individuals, melting into collectivity as a form of healing out of loneliness.

iolo Walker

iolo Walker works with people + plants + planets to produce generative & expansive networks of mutual aid. Blurring text, events and performance with static and living practices, their work confronts localised and cosmic horrors with needles, piercing and stitching metabolic rifts and ozonal holes.



Visual identity of ADERO exhibiton by: Studio Misti and Delphine Lejeune

ADERO

EX HI BI TION

The 10th edition of the Alternative Education Programme came to a close with Adero, an exhibition in the time-travelling sewing factory Lelija (en. Lily).

The name of the exhibition—the Latin word *adero*—carries three meanings: 'I arrive', 'I attend' and 'I am present'. It is a word that transgresses the boundaries of everyday language and spills into the unknown. The three meanings, like flickering shrouds, reveal and obscure the six-month-long process they name. It is a spell that has yet to solidify itself into the grimoires of the present, freely echoing in the vast, dim spaces of the old factory.

Six months ago, *arriving* signified the beginning of the Alternative Education Programme but for the participants, that meant different things:

returning from abroad, staying in their hometown or relocating to a country they had never visited to attend the programme they read about on the internet. *Arriving* was a form of trust, a gesture towards that unknown, an indication of being just the right amount of passionate and unhinged to commit.

For the six months, *attending* was an extension of *arriving*—a seal of trust, the growth of relationships and an increasing number of shared social media stories. The programme provided a framework that was quite adamant about attending the workshops, seminars and trips. However, *attending* was also a form of knowledge exchange, agency and reciprocity.

During the six months, *being present* meant being in the moment, occupying spaces and embracing their flows. *Being present* also meant becoming spectral—gathering and dissolving into pools of knowledge, leaving traces and exploring metaphors. *Being present* often took the shape of an ethereal labyrinth, where education morphed in the throbbing lights of the sensuous and the excessive. It moved and swayed, leaked and dripped, creating porous pathways into the future.

Like Anna Tsing* once invited us to follow matsutake mushrooms through the daunting ruins of a damaged world, we too invite you to follow the echoes and traces of Adero through the labyrinths of a crumbling factory in hope of finding ways to live in the precarity of the future.

*Tsing, Anna *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

WORK DE SKRIPTIONS

WORK DE SCRIP TIONS

Algirdas Jakas
Roundabouts (2022)

Rollercoaster Drawing. Lead, solder, epoxy resin. 2022.
Screwed-in gaze Drawing. Lead, solder, epoxy resin. 2022.
Spine ladder Drawings combined with epoxy resin sculpture. Epoxy resin, acrylic paint. 2022.
Twister Painting on an air-drying clay sculpture. Air-drying clay, acrylic paint. 2022.

Screws and bolts, no longer needed for the machines, enter the bloodstream, fixating the gaze on a circular loop.

They are now cells and pills with unremovable stripped heads appearing on a bone marrow with a twisting move.

It transforms the spine to a screw, emanating white heat and sending it through the dark tendrils and factory wires.

Protective layers made of lead open up showing glimpses of swirling anatomies.

Laura Marija Balciunaite
IMMACULATE (2022)

Drawing, pastel on paper | Crystal ritual tools (quartz, amethyst, cat's eye on metal wire), resin & silicon rose fossils | Audio

IMMACULATE is a primordial story of the rose. An unopened Virgin Tomb of Alien secrets, where Crystal tools for petal healing rest, and cosmically charged rose fossils are waiting to be activated.

The rose is an ancient flower with roots far deeper than humanity. Since time immemorial, the rose has served as representative and symbolic of the heart's mysteries. Through activating the mystery of the rose, we can learn to open our hearts, allowing it to teach us to feel again.

In the ***IMMACULATE*** Tomb, the rose appears as an extraterrestrial technology given to us to be applied to the hearts of our wetware.

IMMACULATE is a Sacred speculation on how the rose came to Planet Earth, creating a scenario for a somatic larp reincarnation, and with petal objects and crystal tools the Tomb opens...

The artist would like to express her gratitude to: Alina and Rolandas Balčiūnai, Edita Nazarova, Francesca Mariano, Karolina Janulevičiūtė, Kamila Svirid, Andrius Sinkevičius, Algirdas Jakas, Vaida Stepanovaitė, Karolina Kapustaitė.

WORK DE SCRIP TIONS

Ana Lipps
Spectral Carbon (2022)

Interactive installation. Preserved leaves, leaf dispenser

Leaves fall tenderly from the ventilation above as you move through the grand yet empty halls of the Lelija plant building. This juxtaposition between the industrial and the outdoor warps time to create a nostalgic tableau of decay. A decay that is poignant in its aesthetical collapse, while simultaneously frozen within its own time capsule.

Special thanks to Daina Lipps, Gintautas Kėras, Daiva Kėrienė.

iolo Walker
Oikosphere (2022)

Waxing and waning ideologies blur through this realm of the present. As we consume the flourishment and perspiration of icons, a web of loaded data sits heavy with cords of fiberoptics linking from bedroom to bedroom. Home →→→→→→screen. ***Oikosphere*** delves into the blistered relationship between the domesticator and the domesticated, creating an artillery of poetics towards identifying the psychic ricochets of neoliberalism's immaterial ramifications.

Oikosphere was made in collaboration between artists iolo Walker and Maxou Audureau. Animation by Niamh Steyaert-Hernon. Featuring Jenő Davies and Eve Jefferies, with the voices of Kerolaīna Linkeviča, Dovydas Laurinaitis and HASHIA. Music from flöat, Stanislav Pain and Sokora Violetov.

WORK DE SCRIP TIONS

HASHIA
m0rt9l l0v3 (2022)

I sit in the cave
where darkness drips
bane of mortal love
in the glimpse I sea
the infinite oblivion
fluxxxing in inferno
my mourns are swords
loving thy reveals
in dire fatality

Delphine Lejeune
Evergreen (2022)

Evergreen Publication in collaboration with Goda Gasiūnaitė
Lilium Cake installation in collaboration with Lila Steinkampf
Eschscholzia californica Soundtrack in collaboration with Jonathan Castro
Ruta graveolens Mix of 3d print and decaying flowers

An intimate journey into a garden of remembrance. Exploring the process of emancipation by the representation of interactions between women and Nature in a living tradition.

Special thanks to collaborators: Goda Gasiūnaitė, Mantas Lesauskas, Lila Steinkampf, Jonathan Castro.

WORK DE SCRIP TIONS

Studio Misti

Tools of Transcendence Ritual Installation, mixed media. 2022
Faerie Food AR Sculptures. 2022
Morning song Wall inscriptions and sound. 2022
Rebehold the stars Fragmented installation comprised of drawings and sculpture. 2022

With a touch of bravery and the grace of a star, the viewer is invited to weave their way through corridors and metal staircases to descend and step into pooling darkness.

But fear not, the void will be eased with the comforting presence of a sparkling symposium of beings.

Wisps of symbolic language tracing the concrete flesh of 'Lelija', offering a cure. Experience accumulating in ***Tools of Transcendence*** where the many Spirits, Sigils and Faerie Food sing in euphoric harmony.

The journey is that of transformation, a constellation of experience mapped and encapsulated through narrative installations. Facing one's shadow in the winter months, finding comfort in the glimmer of the 'more than human world' and feeling the strength seeping in through acknowledgement and growth. Ascending through the stars of Pisces on your cyclical return towards the sweetness of Spring.

An elemental oscillation Misti has deeply felt through their experiences in Vilnius/Rupert, symbolic meaning pulsating through the basements of 'Lelija'.

WORK DE SCRIP TIONS

laura fernández antolín
DRIVE YOUR DREAMS (2022)

mixed-media installation | car plushies, upcycled car textiles, foam, metal, security belts, car covers and thread | castle tent, upcycled car covers | candles, soya, coconut and rapeseed wax with scent made of orange, ylang ylang, jazmine, lavender, melissa, cypress and peppermint essential oils soundscape, narration and voices together with Delphine Lejeune, Dovydas Laurinaitis, Nastassia Atroschchanka and Tautvydas Urbelis | Drive your dreams journal, 40 pages, graphic design by Brigita Elena Kudarauskaitė

i bite my lips since i remember, i don't have clear memories of a time when i didn't bite them, before sleeping, lying down in bed without finding rest. in the back seat of a car on a long journey to the seaside, ...

DRIVE YOUR DREAMS is the crystallization of a research on sleeping rituals as a practice of radical care in opposition to the commodification, domestication, and exploitation of plants, animals and bodies as a labor force. laura looks towards sleeping rituals as a time and space for resilience, uncommodified rest and productivity, core for creativity, and both inner and external explorations.

To bring these ecosystems of reverie to life, laura has experimented with and shared different rituals of their daily routine in the context of participative installations and workshops with a broader audience. Invitations for entangled dialogues of our unconscious, memories and imagination, through drawing, movement and automatic writing.

The traces of the open creative methodology carried along the last months take shape as an immersive installation made of discarded car materials that once were part of vehicles for commuting and traveling – a saturated symbol becoming shelter and ground for encounters, rest, entangled stories and imaginative deviations.

Special thanks to everyone who magically engaged with laura's practice thro the different workshops that happened along the process of this project: Aistė Kriukelytė, Audronė Pakalniškytė, Delphine Lejeune, Dovilė Šimonytė, Dominykas Lavrinovičius, Dovydas Laurinaitis, Eglė Ukanytė, Evelina Ąžuolaitytė, Gabrielė Černiavskaja, Ginte Regina, Magdalena Beliavska, Nastassia Atroschchanka, Oles Makukhin.

To Joe Highton, Lynton Talbot, Aimar Arriola, Daniella Sanader, Delphine Lejeune, Dovydas Laurinaitis, Algirdas Jakas, Brigita Elena Kudarauskaitė and Tautvydas Urbelis for all the conversations, support and care.

To all the mentors of the programme for their generous guidance, and all colleagues of the AEP and Rupert team for the sparkling conversations, fun and memories together.

Graphic design by Brigita Elena Kudarauskaitė

WORK DE SCRIP TIONS

Dovydas Laurinaitis

8/4. Sculpture, text, composition. Handmade paper and paper pulp created from discarded Lelija documents, wire, plaster, ink created from recycled copper, discarded metal and wood found around the factory, speaker playing original composition.
5/14. Sculpture, text, composition. Handmade paper and paper pulp created from discarded Lelija documents, wire, plaster, ink created from recycled copper, discarded metal and wood found around the factory, speaker playing original composition.
12/16. Sculpture, text, composition. Handmade paper and paper pulp created from discarded Lelija documents, wire, plaster, ink created from recycled copper, discarded metal and wood found around the factory, speaker playing original composition.
atminties atmintis is the continuation of Dovydas Laurinaitis' 20-day durational performance Speak Lietuviškai, performed in the trolleybuses of Kaunas in the summer of 2021.

A series of 20 paper sculptures, three of which have been completed so far and are presented here, the work endows the memories of each performance day with a body, acting both as a document of the performance and a response to it, hailing future responses in an iterative rabbit hole that blurs the boundary of liveness between performance and document.

Through recollection rituals, in which Laurinaitis evoked their memories using the photographs, reflections and poems created during the performance, they filtered the essence of those memories through movement, composition and automatic writing, through which the presented forms emerged. Also enveloping the memories of nonhuman objects, the sculptures incorporate materials found in the factory, using discarded factory documents dating back decades to create the paper used.

Thinking of these sculptures as chapters of a book that have been lifted and extended beyond the flatness of the page and embracing visual poetry's notion of text having primarily a visual function, the artist views the creation of these less as sculpting and more as writing in three dimensions.

Algirdas Jakas *Spine ladder*

iolo Walker *Oikosphere*

Dovydas Laurinaitis *atminties atmintis*

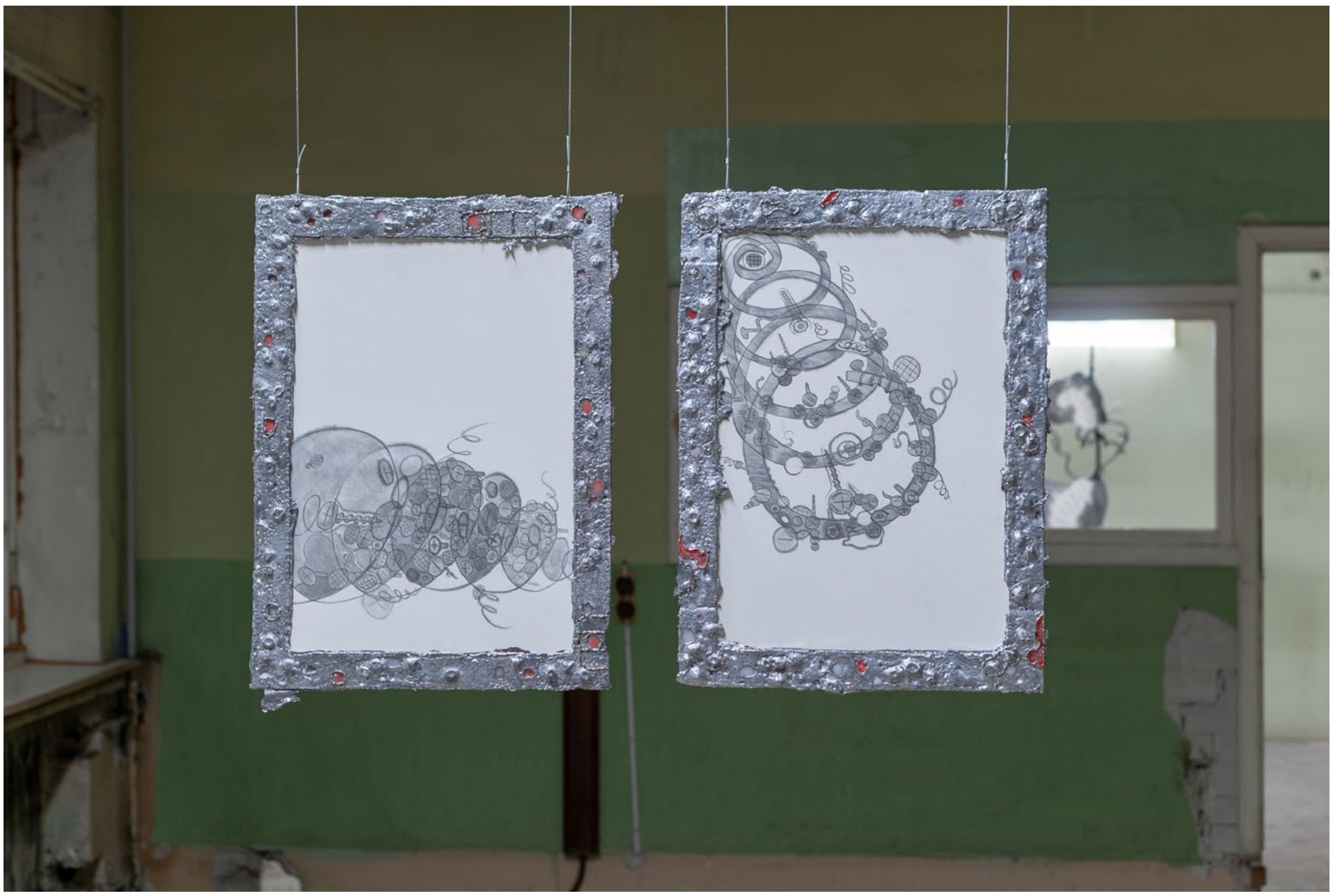
Delphine Lejeune *Lilium*

laura fernández antolín *DRIVE YOUR DREAMS*

HASHIA ***m0rt9 l0v3***

Studio Misti *Tools of Transcendence*

Laura Marija Balciunaite *IMMACULATE*



Algridas Jakas ***Screwed-in gaze and Rollercoaster***

Ana Lipps *Spectral Carbon*

Delphine Lejeune *Evergreen*

iolo Walker *Oikosphere*

laura fernández antolín *DRIVE YOUR DREAMS*

Dovydas Laurinaitis *atminties atmintis*

Laura Marija Balciunaite *IMMACULATE*

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https://www.revenantjournal.com/contents/witches-bitches-or-feminist-trailblazers-the-witch-in-folk-horror-cinema-chloe-germaine-buckley/

Witches, 'bitches' or feminist trailblazers? The Witch in Folk Horror Cinema

CHLOÉ GERMAINE BUCKLEY

Introduction

This article explores horror cinema's representation of the witch in order to address issues pertinent to feminist criticism and politics. I argue that cultural figurations important in feminist discourse are riven by deep ambivalences that complicate attempts to co-opt them for political utility. The female witch is one such figuration. Cinematic representations of the female witch have their origins in classical mythology and the folklore surrounding the witch trials of the Early Modern period, as well as their literary and cultural afterlives. Horror cinema can subvert older ideas about witches, but it also reveals their continued power. Indeed, horror cinema has forged the witch into a deeply ambiguous figure that proves problematic for feminism and its project to subvert or otherwise destabilize misogynist symbols.

Where feminist analysis of horror cinema (both within and without the academy) focus on women as monsters, it often attempts to determine whether such representations underwrite or undermine patriarchal values and constructions.[1] These readings are fraught with difficulty. In her analysis of *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *Aliens* (1986), for example, Rhona Berenstein notes the potentially empowering gesture of aligning the woman with the monster, but also recognizes that such images signal patriarchal anxieties about female power (1990: 67). She argues that horror films are

1 **Foundational feminist analysis of horror film includes oft-cited works by Barbara Creed (*The Monstrous Feminine*, 1993) and Linda Williams ('When the Woman Looks', 1984).**

'balanced along a tightrope which divides a progressive from a reactionary reading of them' (68). 'Tightrope' is an evocative image that echoes Mary Russo's formulation of the 'female grotesque' as a form of precarious aerial acrobatics, with the potential of empowering flight as well as a disastrous fall (1990: 30, 44). This notion of the female grotesque in key to my analysis. Philip Thomson defines the grotesque as an 'unresolved clash of incompatibles in work and response' (1972: 27). In Russo's feminist reading of the grotesque, this undecidability is political and aesthetic, forging the female grotesque into a 'painfully conflictual' figuration (1994: 159). Though hailing from the 1990s, Berenstein's insights into women in horror and Russo's theorisation of the female grotesque are relevant to modern cinema and the feminist commentary that it provokes. Indeed, the early decades of the 21st century have seen the rise of a post-feminist backlash against women in authority along with rising economic and social inequalities that have disproportionately affected women. In these contexts, the figure of the witch looms large. The term is deployed as a jokey but nonetheless insulting epithet as well as a more serious accusation. Whilst playful internet memes depicted U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May in a witch's hat, right wing commentators in the U.S. wondered aloud about whether Presidential Candidate, Hillary Clinton, dabbled in the dark arts. As Madeline Miller notes, the stereotype of the witch persists most visibly in popular culture as an attack on powerful women (2018).

As well as appearing in popular political discourse, the witch has enjoyed a resurgence in horror cinema. *The Love Witch* (2016), *The Neon Demon* (2016) and *The Witch* (2015) all revise the witch motif from older horror cinema and have prompted a plethora of reviews proclaiming the films' feminist credentials.[2] Of these, Robert Eggers' *The Witch* best epitomizes the ambiguity of the witch through its revival of the 'folk horror' subgenre. The term 'folk horror' originates with British director, Piers Haggard, in an interview for *Fangoria* magazine, as a description for the 1971 film, *Blood on Satan's Claw*. The term entered critical discourse through a 2010 BBC4 documentary fronted by writer and actor, Mark Gatiss. The documentary uses 'folk horror' to describe a 'loose collection' of films from the 1960s and 1970s that share a 'common obsession with the British landscape, its folk-

2 Examples of such feminist plaudits in popular culture include: 'How witches reclaimed their rightful place in popular culture' by Elisabeth O'Neill for the magazine, *Little White Lies*; 'The Witch is sinister, smart, and wildly feminist' by Scott Pierce for *Wired* magazine; and '"We are the weirdos": how witches went from evil outcasts to feminist heroes' by Anne Donahue for the *Guardian*.

lore and superstitions' (Jardine 2010). The term has since been the subject of academic criticism, notably in Adam Scovell's *Hours Dreadful and Things Strange* (2017). Scovell argues that Haggard's film, which depicts a satanic witch cult in 17th century rural England, forms one third of a trilogy of films that also includes *Witchfinder General* (1968) and *The Wicker Man* (1973). These films epitomize folk horror in the period, which was influenced by the British counter-culture movement (2017: 13). Counter-culture trends included a reversion to older ideas as well as agitation for social freedoms, prompting interest in folk music, folklore, astrology and paganism, all of which found expression in folk horror cinema (Scovell 2017: 13). Indeed, Scovell suggests that witches have been central to the folk horror tradition since its inception, noting their depiction in early films, such as the Swedish-Danish documentary-style silent horror *Häxan: Witchcraft through the Ages* (1922), through to found-footage modern classic, *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) (2017: 118).

Though other forms of horror cinema use the figure of the witch, it is folk horror that has made a virtue of her ambiguity due in part to the form's uneasy relationship with counter-cultural discourse. Barbara Creed notes that the witch in horror film is 'invariably represented as an old, ugly crone [...] capable of monstrous acts' (1993: 2). This 'incontestably monstrous role' for women can be seen in abject depictions of witches throughout the 20th century in films such as *Black Sunday* (1960), *Suspiria* (1977), *Inferno* (1980) and *The Evil Dead* (1981) (Creed 1993: 73, 77). However, critical responses to seemingly 'counter-cultural' folk horror films of the late 1960s and early 1970s reveal a more ambivalent attitude towards the witch. For example, Marcus Harmes argues that *Blood on Satan's Claw* (1971) and *The Wicker Man* (1973) reinforce the patriarchal insistence on 'the epistemic control of women by men' (2013: 65) whilst Brigid Cherry argues that *The Wicker Man* depicts empowered neo-Pagan 'Wicca Women' with whom female viewers can identify (2006: 123). Drawing on this ambiguous tradition, *The Witch* does little to stabilize oppositional readings. Indeed, the film is shot through with ambiguity from the level of narrative causation to the level of interpretation. As one reviewer notes, 'the audience will see in it what they want to see' (Kermode 2016). Throughout the film, the witch figures as a female grotesque in terms described by Russo: a dangerously precarious

symbol that, at one turn of the tightrope, seems to subvert patriarchal ideology, and, at another, reinforces it.

Gothic and horror have always refused the role of political utility and its monsters do not act as representatives for either the right or the left of politics.[3] However, given the current lurch to the right in Western politics and the concomitant rise of anti-feminist sentiments, the ambiguity of the witch in Eggers' movie and beyond is perhaps something of which to be wary. Though she seems to be a powerful figure for feminists, the witch in horror cinema continues to signal her origins as a figure used to delegitimise powerful women. In what follows, then, I explore links between fictional representations of the witch and witch imagery outside fictional contexts, linking folk horror cinema to classical mythology and early modern folklore in order to caution against overly optimistic readings of the witch in contemporary horror cinema.

Origins: Folklore, Mythology, Horror

Contemporary cinematic depictions of the witch acknowledge a much older stereotype, one that emerged in Early Modern Europe. As Ronald Hutton's historical study shows, the witch trials of this period created an enduring stereotype: the cannibalistic, murderous and satanic witch (2017). This stereotype emerged from the blending of multiple belief systems and myths, creating an image that spread geographically and endured through the ages. Hutton remarks, 'across the world, witches have been regarded with loathing and horror, and associated with generally antisocial attitudes and with evil forces' (2017: 21). The witch of horror cinema echoes many of the facets of this early stereotype. Hutton's analysis of documents from the earliest witch trials, which occurred between 1426 and 1448, reveal elements that endure in the stereotype of the witch to this day: the theft and murder of infants; the use of poisons and potions to kill adults; the ability to enter a home through closed doors and windows; gaining access to homes in the form of animals; sucking the blood or eating the flesh of infants; anointing themselves or their brooms with the blood or flesh of infants to achieve flight; and

3 For example, Kamilla Elliott demonstrates that classic gothic films often deploy parody that targets politicized criticism, claiming that such films do not simply serve as 'proof-texts' for feminist, psychoanalytical or cultural studies approaches to cinema (2008: 33). William Paul makes a similar case for 'gross-out' horror movies, suggesting that the spectacle of horror serves neither right-wing moralizing nor a left-wing investment in radical 'subversion' (1994: 420–1).

riding demons in the form of animals (Hutton 2017: 170–1). These elements of the stereotype were strengthened by confessions extracted under torture, and were then exported, through written accounts and folklore, to other regions where similar ideas and a disposition to use the figure of the witch as a scapegoat already existed. The stereotype that crystallized during this Early Modern period in Europe comprised a new synthesis of older elements – some of which dated back to classical myth – but it was presented as 'one known since ancient times' (Hutton 2017: 181).

In cinema, the resurgence of a threat from 'ancient times' is key to the folk horror genre. Adam Scovell's formulation of folk horror suggests the genre combines a terrifying treatment of landscape with a sense of isolation, from which develops a skewed belief system or moral code (2017: 17–19). In early examples such as *Witchfinder General* and *Blood on Satan's Claw*, Scovell suggests that folk horror depicts a violent resurgence of misogynist superstitions in its evocation of witchcraft in the 17th century. Though Scovell argues that films like *Witchfinder General* confront viewers with the misogyny of their folkloric traditions, such misogyny is also shown to be based in 'truth'. In *Blood on Satan's Claw*, for example, the evil force is uncovered from within the landscape, taking possession of the female character, Angel Blake. Here, the evil associated with witchcraft appears in the narrative as essential, not discursively constructed (19, 24). In Eggers' U.S revision of the folk horror genre, evil again emerges from the landscape, from deep within the ancient woods that Puritan settlers cannot tame. This appeal to Puritan mythology evokes a gendered nature/culture divide foundational to Western thought, and in so doing, gestures to a misogynist figuration of the 'female grotesque' identified by Russo. Russo argues that the witch or crone is one example of a grotesque aesthetic that draws on 'archaic tropes' of the natural, 'primal' female body and thus places terror and revulsion 'on the side of the feminine' (1994: 2–3).

Such representations of a misogynist female grotesque can be seen in depictions of witchcraft outside folk horror, too. For example, Creed argues that *Carrie* (1976) links menstrual blood to the possession of supernatural powers, asserting that the film 'plays on the debase meaning of […] blood in order to horrify modern audiences; in so doing it also perpetuates negative views about women and menstruation' (1993: 79–80). Though many have repurposed Creed's 'monstrous feminine' as a feminist concept,

Creed asserts that the association of woman with the abject is 'a construct of patriarchal ideology' and that the 'monstrous' woman of the horror film is 'a function of the ideological project [...] designed to perpetuate the belief that woman's monstrous nature is inextricably bound up with her difference as man's sexual other' (83). Russo offers a similar warning about the image of the 'female grotesque'. Though it has feminist potential, evocations of the female grotesque can all too easily slide into misogyny in their association of 'woman' with the 'visceral detritus of the body' (1994: 2). Berenstein, too, notes a reinforcement of the patriarchal culture/nature divide in *Rosemary's Baby* (1990: 63). Though not folk horror, this film draws directly on Early Modern material, including the *Compendium Maleficarium* (1626), in its depiction of the older woman, Minnie Castavet, as a witch-cum-midwife, laughable as well as horrifying in her grotesquerie. Ultimately, though, Minnie transfers her power to the male members of the coven, her nefarious skills in herblore surpassed by a satanic physician posing as Rosemary's doctor.

The power shifts in *Rosemary's Baby* highlight the gendered nature of witch stereotypes dating to the Early Modern period. The male 'witches' in the film, including Dr Sapirstein and Adrian Mercado, evoke the image of the ceremonial magician, which was distinct from and developed along a different trajectory to the stereotype of the satanic witch (Hutton 2017: 74–95). Norman Cohn likewise suggests that 'ceremonial magic had nothing to do with witchcraft because the former was mostly the preserve of men, who sought to control demons, while the latter was mostly that of women, who were servants and allies to them' (1993: 102). This gendered distinction in the cultural figuration of the witch works to undercut notions of empowerment. Thus, both mainstream horror and folk horror draw and also develop the Early Modern stereotype of the witch through figurations scholars have variously identified as the 'monstrous feminine' and 'female grotesque', developing a clearly gendered representation emphasizing woman's otherness.

Feminist revisions of the Early Modern witch myth have also informed horror cinema, notably Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man*. Yet these feminist revisions are themselves fraught with ambiguities. *The Wicker Man*, for example, plays with the revisionist idea that persecuted witches were not followers of Satan, but worshippers of an ancient, female-centric pagan religion. The film's anti-hero, Lord Summerisle, played by Christopher Lee

as a sympathetic and charismatic version of Adrian Mercado, joyfully resurrects what he calls the 'old ways'. This idea owes much to Margaret Murray's now debunked 1921 study, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, though it falls short of her vision of an ancient matriarchal society. First-wave feminist Murray argued that the Early Modern trials targeted practitioners of an ancient matriarchal fertility religion that predated Christianity. The idea inspired revisionist witch myths at the heart of modern-day 'Wicca' and other forms of neo-paganism that emerged in the counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s. Gerald Gardner evokes Murray in *Witchcraft Today* (1954), a foundational text for modern Wicca. Though the 'witch cult thesis' is an evocative and powerful myth for feminism, it might be used by those at opposite ends of the political spectrum. As Hutton argues, 'to conservatives and reactionaries, it was initially a way of defending the trials [whilst] liberals, radicals and feminists could reverse these claims, by portraying the pagan witch religion as [...] a joyous, life-affirming, liberating one' (2017: 120). The tenacity and ambiguity of the 'witch cult' myth spills over into horror cinema and its criticism. Even Creed repeats the fallacious witch-cult theory as she laments how the image of the witch came to be manipulated into the monstrous figure of popular horror film (1993: 74–5). As well as being false, [4] the revisionist 'witch cult' myth draws on a very different stereotype to the cannibalistic, satanic witch that emerged in the Early Modern period: that of the 'service magician'. In that the notion of the 'good witch' or 'wise woman' popular in feminist revisionism and neo-paganism draws on this alternative typology of 'service magician', it provides a useful counter-image to the misogynist figuration of the witch. However, this counter-image does little to recuperate the figure of the witch more broadly. As with the image of the ritual magician, the distinction between 'service magician' and 'witch' is gendered in historical archives, with the latter stereotype being associated with and adhering to the idea of an evil woman.[5] Whilst revisionist myths of witchcraft may borrow from the gender-neutral image of the service magician, this conflation of stereotypes does not address the ways in which the figure of the satanic witch provided, in the Early Modern period, 'a kind of human being whom it was not only proper but necessary to hate actively and openly' (Hutton 2017: 23).

4 Ronald Hutton explains that Murray's thesis was proved false during the years around 1970, with the publication of detailed studies on local witch trials that used archival records Murray had neglected. He notes that there is 'no doubt' that witchcraft was not a surviving pagan religion (2017: 121).

5 Hutton carefully traces this distinction (2017: 74–95), though he downplays its gendered dimension.

Arguably, the female witch continues to function as a scapegoat despite the interventions of revisionist storytelling. Certainly, as Creed argues, it is the negative stereotype that tends to perpetuate in horror film.

Key to the development of the evil witch stereotype of the Early Modern period (and beyond) was 'a strong distrust of women within male culture' (Hutton 2017: 192). Hutton traces this distrust back to antiquity, showing how the low status of women in ancient cultures commingled with a general hostility to magic associated with women (seen in figures from Greek myth such as Circe, Medea, Medusa and the Stygian witches). Such material was ripe for use in early Christianity's development of the witch stereotype (51–53, 58–59). Hutton also suggests the stereotype originates in ancient Rome, which had a strong sense of wicked women as agents of disruption. He concludes that cultures which had defined magic as an illicit activity, and in which women were excluded from political power, merged these aspects into a single stereotype of the menacing Other (64).

Horror film evokes this Greco-Roman strand of the witch stereotype. Hammer Studio's *The Witches* (1966), penned by folk horror writer Nigel Kneale, offers a good example of how Greco-Roman imagery elicits its own ambiguities. The film is set in a rural English village that has rejected Christianity in favour of a witch-cult headed by intellectual aristocrat Stephanie Bax (Kay Walsh). She is also the sister of the local vicar, whose authority she has decidedly usurped. The heroine, an 'off-comer' school teacher played by Joan Fontaine, investigates the cult after becoming worried about some of her pupils. Although she is horrified by the cult, the heroine is also attracted to the charismatic matriarch, Stephanie. *The Witches* anticipates the themes of *The Wicker Man* and, like that film, flirts with Murray's 'witch-cult' thesis. In positioning Stephanie as the cult leader (rather than a man), the film might also be read as more subversive than *The Wicker Man*, offering a tacit validation of second-wave feminism. However, its glimpsed-at promise of female sisterhood is revealed to be a cover for Stephanie's unnatural desire for long life and personal power. Stephanie appears at the climax of the film in a robe embroidered with a medusa head. Finally, she is defeated and the male moral and social order is reasserted. With the return of patriarchal Christianity to the village comes also the modernising force of capitalism. Returning to the village at the end of the film, the heroine notes approvingly that a mini supermarket has opened on the high street. This curious case of

'Medusa versus the Mini-Market' seems to equate female power with archaic monstrosity in a misogynist figuration of the female grotesque. Yet, although the film ends by thoroughly overturning the village's brief flirtation with the female power, the banality of the mini-market suggests a loss of sorts. Stephanie turned out to be a medusa-monster, but she represented an alluring form of female power and rebellion.

Witches as monstrous older women harbouring an unnatural desire for power is one facet of a Western ideology that situates women as outsiders to power. Mary Beard has written passionately about how Western culture consistently represents female power as illegitimate, exploring the cultural underpinnings of misogyny in the political and public sphere, some of which date to the same classical images identified by Hutton as key to the development of the witch stereotype. Beard argues that images of power since classical antiquity have functioned to exclude women (2017: 52). Specifically, Beard shows how women are perceived 'as belonging outside power' in her analysis that explores Medusa as well as modern newspaper headlines, which suggest powerful women are 'taking something to which they are not quite entitled' (56–57). Beard's reading of the Medusa myth asserts that the severed head of the gorgon is 'one of the most potent ancient symbols of male mastery over the destructive dangers that the very possibility of female power represented' (71). She remains sceptical of attempts to reclaim such imagery for the feminist project, citing the image's continued power in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election, when memes depicting Trump as Perseus holding aloft the severed head of his rival were widely shared. This is 'the classic myth in which the dominance of the male is violently reasserted against the illegitimate power of the woman' (73). Considering that she continues to be evoked in discourse that wishes to insist upon the dangerous illegitimacy of female power, Medusa seems, like the witch, an unstable figuration of female empowerment.

Whatever story is told about the history of its origins, the figure of the witch developed into what Hutton calls a 'literary construct designed to carry moral messages' (2017: 161). For much of Western history, those messages have largely centred upon delegitimising female power. The witch continues to carry weight as an accusation, too. Miller notes that in recent years United Nations officials have reported a rise in women killed for witchcraft across the globe (2017). Since its old associations endure, the figure of the

witch proves problematic for feminist readings of horror, a form that has long-traded in images of the monstrous feminine and female grotesque. Though such images might contain the potential for feminist subversion, they continue to carry misogynist moral and political meanings developed over centuries. Such is the polyphonic nature of language. As Bakhtin argues, 'language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others' (1981: 294). Though Bakhtin's theorisation of language and discourse as inherently polyphonic, or 'many-voiced', suggests a radical interpretation, it also argues that language is a continual struggle. Words and images are embedded in complex histories of utterance, freighted with opposing cultural and political meanings. Happily, for feminism, Bakhtin suggests that the words of others can be reworked and re-accentuated (1986: 89). However, the flipside of polyphony is that one's words are never quite one's own (Bakhtin, 1981: 294). The polyphonic nature of language and discourse leads to ambiguity and to an openness of interpretation that might be appropriated by multiple and competing politics. This ambiguity has become a central feature of folk horror cinema.

Witches in Folk Horror: Developing Ambiguity

Many folk horror films focus on witches as a consequence of the form's interest in archaic superstition. Often the result is exploitation cinema, exemplified by films like *Cry of the Banshee* (1970), *Mark of the Devil* (1970), *Virgin Witch* (1972) and *Blood Orgy of the She Devils* (1973). Two of the original trinity of folk horror films – *Witchfinder General* (1968) and *Blood on Satan's Claw* (1971) – focus on 17th century rural England of the witch trials, whilst *The Wicker Man* (1973) transposes its thematic material into the present. The theme of witchcraft is both genre-defining and also bound up with folk horror's uneasy relationship to the British counter-culture and exploitation cinema. It is this material that Robert Eggers' revives in his 2015 film, *The Witch*. Before considering this latter film, I want to explore the ways that this subgenre of cinema has developed the stereotype of the witch, deepening the ambiguity of interpretation the figuration provokes.

Blood on Satan's Claw is a low-budget British horror film set in 17th century rural England. The plot turns on a sinister object unearthed

by a plough that possesses the young people of the village, prompting them to form a satanic cult headed by teenage temptress Angel Blake (Linda Hayden). The unearthed object that inspires the return of archaic ritual figures the female antagonist as a female grotesque. Angel Blake is an eroticized figure, rather than a crone or hag, but she is figured as increasingly repulsive as the cult degenerates. Angel exemplifies the undecidable nature of the grotesque as that which simultaneously attracts and disgusts. Decked in a garland and loose shift, Angel also evokes 1960s 'flower power'. As a potentially ironic depiction of teenage rebellion, the film suggests counter-cultural sympathies and many commentators have read the film in this way (Harmes 2013: 71). Critics have also noted the clear parallels between Angel's gang and the infamous 'Manson family' (Scovell 2017: 30). Inciting the other youths to rape and murder, Angel becomes a folk devil of both past and present. Her white shift, loose hair and heavy brows recall police mugshots of 'Sexy' Sadie Atkins, one of the accused in the Sharon Tate murder. The public trial of 1970 turned Manson, Sadie and the Family into modern folk devils, their degeneracy cited in the conservative press as proof of the dangers of the counter culture. This association layers further ambiguity onto the film's depiction of witchcraft. Harmes suggests the film is reactionary, rather than progressive, reading the 'final confrontation with evil' and the defeat of Angel Blake as the reinforcement of male authority (2013: 71). He suggests that the film stages the necessary defeat of female witchcraft by a male magistracy in an affirmation of patriarchal power. In Harmes' analysis, the climax of Blood on Satan's Claw makes plain where its political sympathies lie, but its ambiguous depiction of Angel as a figure out of time leaves much of the film open to viewers' sympathies regarding the counter-culture.

Likewise, *The Wicker Man* relies on the sensibilities of its viewer, inviting both progressive and reactionary readings. This film imagines the revival of an ancient witchcraft cult on a remote island in contemporary Scotland. The male hero, a policeman named Howie (Edward Woodward) is lured to the island to investigate false reports of a missing girl. The islanders play a series of games, preparing Howie for sacrifice in an annual ritual to the 'Old Gods' to ensure the prosperity of their harvest. There is no final defeat of 'evil' and poor Howie burns as the islanders look on, singing joyously. Scovell notes that 'Hardy and screenwriter Anthony Shaffer make it surprisingly difficult to dislike the Summerislanders' (2017: 22) whilst a re-

view in *Sight and Sound* argues that the film 'declares the pagans victorious' (Young 2010: 20). Though it seems to stage a successful defeat of the Christian establishment by a 'pagan' counterculture, the film's political sympathies are not so easily determined. Rather, it playfully refracts struggles over the shifting meaning of 'witchcraft' in popular culture in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. While mainstream television aired titillating documentaries like *The Legend of the Witches* (Border TV, 1969) and *The Power of the Witch* (BBC, 1971), showcasing 'real life' witches such as Alex and Maxine Sanders, Christian luminaries Mary Whitehouse and Malcolm Muggeridge were leading the 'Festival of Light' (1971) in protest of a perceived moral breakdown of society. *The Wicker Man* offers similarly sensationalist depictions of its own version of a witch cult, whilst also sending up the uptight Christians.

The film feeds off and back into a popular conflation of revisionist notions of witchcraft (as a surviving pagan religion) with the early-modern stereotype of the satanic witch. It adds the male figure of the ceremonial magician, played with charisma by Christopher Lee, whose career in horror cinema also evokes the satanic. Vic Pratt argues that this is 'not a simplistic film which depicted counter culture free spirits as heroes and upright authorities as fools' (2013: 31). Rather, Lord Summerisle is 'out for his own ends, his propagation of pagan belief a handy tool for the control of his island serfs' (31). If Lord Summerisle is a pragmatist (and the islanders are his dupes), Howie is insistently rationalist, appealing to science in the face of the islanders' belief in the old gods. That the agricultural project of Summer Isle is failing is a matter of science, not ritual and no amount of human sacrifice will bring back the apples. This scientific explanation is rejected by Lord Summerisle, but the note of doubt it introduces into the film lingers. Howie may be uptight, but his appeal to science suggests that the witchy counterculture involves not only a rejection of establishment authority, but, more damningly, the abandonment of reason. In the depiction of the final sacrifice, the film evokes sensationalising views of witchcraft circulating in the media of the times. Reading it in this way suggests less sympathy for the islanders: at worst, witchcraft was satanic and dangerous, at best, misguided nonsense. Thus, the portrayal of 'witchcraft' as a pagan cult in *The Wicker Man* only creates further problems for the critic intent on disentangling the film's political sympathies.

The Wicker Man is equally tricky in terms of feminist politics. Although they are not explicitly 'witches', the three women at the centre of this film, 'Willow' (Britt Ekland), the unnamed 'librarian' (Ingrid Pitt) and schoolteacher, Miss Rose (Diane Cilento) evoke the multiple and confused notions of witchcraft circulating in the popular culture of the period. Brigid Cherry calls them 'Wicca Women', arguing that they offer pleasurable points of identification for female fans (2006: 111). One reviewer argues that the film actively mocks archaic notions of femininity and playfully puts the male in the role of victim (Brown 2016). Though witchy female bodies are equated with the natural world and reproductive sexuality, Brown argues that this perspective is Howie's. For example, Willow plays on Howie's view of her as a sexual being, taunting him in the infamous naked dancing scene that also functions to reprimand the viewer in their role as voyeur (Brown 2016). Gail Ashurst likewise notes Willow's 'defiant and mocking stance toward the spectator' (2005: 98). Nonetheless, in its repeated imagery of female nudity in connection with archaic fertility rites and its insistence upon male sacrifice for the rejuvenation of the island's apples, the film mingles the female grotesque with biblical imagery of Eve's sin. Here, a countercultural celebration of sexuality clashes with patriarchal anxieties that frame the female body as a site of fear. In addition, *The Wicker Man* falls short of endorsing the revisionist matriarchal witch cult myth suggested by Margaret Murray: both the Christian establishment and the witch cult are patriarchal forces. Harmes argues that 'the conclusion of *The Wicker Man* shows the preservation of the patriarchal status quo because the practice of pagan religion and the power structures on the island are so closely imbricated' (2013: 76). Cherry's reading is more celebratory, suggesting that the film offers subversive pleasures in its disruption of genre conventions (2006: 112). Through its playful evocation of the female grotesque, *The Wicker Man* deepens the ambiguity of the figure of the witch in horror cinema, at one turn asking viewers to condemn the islanders and, at another, celebrating their triumphant rebellion against mainland authority.

The indecisive evocation of both progressive and reactionary politics in folk horror bears strange fruit in the 21st century. Scovell suggests the form's politics are hard to pin down:

Folk horror is the violent re-joining with tradition which, on paper, seems almost conservative, yet it even subverts this reading by often sum-

moning up pre-Christian values rather than more purely traditional ideologies: a strangely progressive form created through a conservative mechanism. (2017: 38).

However, the Hollywood remake of *The Wicker Man* (2006), which starred Nicolas Cage in the Edward Woodward role, shows that this relationship between progressive and reactionary mechanisms might easily reverse. The remake follows a State Trooper, Edward Malus, on his journey to a coastal island to investigate reports of a missing girl sent to him by an old girlfriend. In this version, the island society is matriarchal and the inhabitants practice a form of neo-pagan witchcraft based on popular notions of 'Wicca'. The film draws on the Murray thesis and its afterlife in neo-pagan culture. The only men on the island are silent and subservient, whilst various female characters taunt Malus as he frantically searches for the missing girl. As in the original, the cultists lead the policeman a merry dance, revealing that it is he who is to be the May Day sacrifice. The major plot elements are the same as the original, but unlike Hardy's version the remake is clear in its condemnation of the witches. In a climactic scene, the female cultists surround Nicolas Cage and place a contraption over his face into which they intend (for inexplicable reasons) to pour bees. As he struggles, the hero shouts 'you bitches! you bitches!' This final ritual sacrifice is denounced as a case of murder, plain and simple. Though many viewers enjoy watching this later *Wicker Man* against the grain, its message seems straightforward: these women are out of control, their power is corrupt, they are evil 'bitches' one and all.

Like the original, La Bute's *The Wicker Man* combines a jumble of images and stereotypes in its depiction of the witch, though here the figure is obviously gendered female. The animal masks worn by the islanders directly recalls the original film, whilst other costuming choices reference aspects of modern-day Wicca. The 'blind fates', or Stygian Witches, from the Greek myth of Perseus and Medusa also appear along with the notion of child sacrifice from Germanic folklore, two influences on the Early Modern stereotype of the satanic witch. Initially, the female islanders' gentle demeanour and commitment to ecological conservation evokes feminist and neo-pagan revisionist myths about 'good' witchcraft and living in harmony with nature. However, the film quickly dispels this interpretation, suggesting that although the women wear the floaty smocks and hippy-style jewellery of 'Wic-

ca Women', they are corrupt and evil. Thus, the witch stereotype of the Early Modern period resurfaces, as the film depicts women as agents of disruption and destruction. The remake is a good example of how the muddle of ideas about witches that have emerged from nearly a century of horror cinema might easily devolve to a misogynist core. Though this remake plays with Murray-inspired revisionist imagery popular in Neo-Paganism, it undoes the ambiguity of the original film and uses the figure of the witch to express antifeminist sentiments. In so doing, it shows the ease with which the witch serves very different politics.

The Resurgence of the Witch: Flight or Fall?

La Bute's *Wicker Man* pre-dates the resurgence of interest in folk horror which occurs in the years around 2010 and is an oddity as an example of folk horror at this time. It transposes an interest in the superstitions of the British landscape to an American setting seemingly without inspiring any other filmmakers to follow suit, partially because it was seen as a failure. Eggers' *The Witch* (2015) is part of a post-2010 resurgence of folk horror and seems more invested in paying homage to the form's origins in 1960s and 1970s British cinema. Scovell argues that *The Witch* reveals its debt to British folk horror through its 17th century setting, its British accents and muted colour palette, shot only with natural lighting (2017: 165). Its isolated setting and occult themes recall original folk horror films but layer an additional concern with American settler myths. The film restages the American folk tale of the witch in the woods when an outcast Puritan family found a new farming settlement on the edge of the New England forest. Gradually, each member of the family is possessed by witchcraft (perhaps), then killed by (seemingly) supernatural forces, leaving only the daughter, Thomasin (Anna Taylor-Joy), alive at the close of the film. *The Witch* concerns the last part of this paper because it represents the culmination – in our contemporary moment at least – of a cinematic history that evokes and layers multiple and conflicting ideas about the witch from both fictional and non-fictional contexts, rendering her an unstable signifier.

The Witch evokes ambiguity at multiple levels. Scovell notes that it 'plays with that most typical of folk horror ideals, the initial ambiguity

surrounding its supernatural element' (2017: 166), but I contend this ambiguity runs deeper. Certainly, viewers' hesitation is provoked at the level of narrative: do the puritans invite 'evil' into their home through psychological repression or are they subject to attack by magical forces? Does the heroine of the film become a witch at the end or is the final sequence a wish-fulfilment delusion? Perhaps the truth is more prosaic: a simple case of Ergot poisoning? (The latter is touted as one explanation for the Salem witch trials). These hesitations about the supernatural elements extend to the meanings attached to the witch, too. Early in the film, viewers witness what seems to be a witch kill an infant and ground its innards into a paste. As Hutton notes, a defining element of the Early Modern witch stereotype was the idea that witches used an ointment made from the flesh of babies to confer powers of shapeshifting and flight (2017: 175). This idea traces back to the earliest Alpine trials in 1428 and spread across Europe and to New England. In *The Witch*, this Early Modern image of infanticide sits uneasily alongside a potentially feminist reading of the witch's 'sabbat' as a rebellious activity. At the close of the film, the witch coven rising above the forest seem to represent escape and empowerment for downtrodden Thomasin, allowing her to cast off the repressive patriarchal structures of family and church. The Witch exemplifies the witch as a female grotesque, that is, an undecidable figuration. Here my reading diverges significantly from those breathlessly positive reviews of the film, one of which declared its celebration of 'the inherent power of femininity' (O'Neill 2016).

The Witch is clearly more open to interpretation than many of its feminist reviewers have suggested. The simplicity of the title – a noun without any modifiers – allows the signifier to conjure multiple ideas from different time periods, political discourses, mythologies and cinematic traditions: its meaning is up for grabs. The polyphony of the film inheres in its script, too, which Eggers compiled partially from various primary source material such as 'The Diary of John Winthrop' and other contemporaneous accounts of demon possession and witchcraft. Eggers recalls, 'the early versions of the script were monstrous, cannibalized collages of other people's words, until I could later hone it into my own' (quoted in O'Falt 2016). This modern folk horror film ventriloquizes many of the ideas about witchcraft formed in the Early Modern period, repackaging the words of 17th century settlers for modern audiences. O'Falt notes that much of the original material from

Eggers' sources remains 'intact' in the final film (2016). This suggests that the director's 'own' voice competes with those he ventriloquizes. Any feminist interpretations of the film, which read it as an empowering narrative of young womanhood, must also contend with these utterances hailing from a history of witchcraft that would seek to present the witch as a dangerous and satanic figure. Here, I am reminded of Bakhtin's insistence that forcing words to submit to one's own intentions is a difficult and complicated process.

The polyphonic nature of *The Witch* suggests an ambivalent politics. The witches' flight could also be a fall, their 'empowerment' simply exclusion. O'Neill argues that the film's climactic scene of shadowy, naked female forms rising into the trees confronts viewers with a baring of flesh that displays faith and self-recognition. All that is expected of women, a sexual availability, helplessness and humility, is aimed to a level of inversion, becoming horrific to patriarchal values but empowering to those who want to be liberated. (2016)

O'Neill recognises the potential for oppositional readings here, but when the scene is read alongside its intertexts, ambivalence emerges. Hutton points out that 'nudity was a common attribution of witches [...] because it stripped away their everyday identities' (2017: 23). Nudity may threaten to invert the social order, but it also creates an anonymous figure who easily becomes a scapegoat. No doubt the image also reads as empowering to some audiences, but the original stereotype of the witch on which the film draws refused to recognize the power of women. In various trial records, the witch functions as a scapegoat in power struggles of various kinds, including political struggles and family feuds. Trials often occurred in places where there was a power vacuum, but the witch was not a powerful figure in herself (Hutton 2017: 154). Indeed, Hutton's careful research offers a counterpoint to revisionist myths that suggest the persecutions were the result of patriarchy's fear of the power of women. Christian treatise used in the trials suggested that women had no form of legitimate power. The Archbishop of Rheims, for example, wrote in 836 that if witches did have power it was only because they gained it in their alliances with demons, whom they sought in order to gain illegitimate power over men (Hutton 2017: 157). These old ideas echo through The Witch, which likewise evokes the idea that female power thrives on the destruction of men in its bloody rendering of the death

of Thomasin's father's. He is impaled on the horns of a goat that later appears to Thomasin as a demon, offering her a satanic pact. Scenes like these might easily play into reactionary antifeminist narratives about female power circulating in the present day.

Audiences and critics will continue to produce varied readings of horror because it is a mode that, in its most grotesque incarnations, refuses the role of social and political utility. Nonetheless, *The Witch* is useful for exploring the cultural significance of the female grotesque, a figuration that pervades much contemporary horror. The female grotesque is a precarious figure that emphasizes the precarity of feminist politics. Eggers' film, for example, leaves open the question of what Thomasin gains in joining the witches. A last resort, it places her on the outside of a patriarchal social system in need of reform by and for its female members. The figure of the witch in horror cinema, then, cannot provide a blueprint for empowerment and change, though its mobilisation may leave misogynist tropes open to critique. Yet, the strategy of deploying misogynist tropes even to critique them, as Russo suggests, 'involves serious risk' since it can also work to reinforce original meanings (1994: 10). Russo argues that the female grotesque offers a chance to escape limiting structures of femininity, though often this escape is not the 'boundless flight' sometimes imagined in narratives of women's liberation (11, 44). The image of boundless flight should be resisted, since it marks off 'irregular bodies to leave behind' (11). Indeed, in the final shots of *The Witch* there are no saggy, lumpen bodies taking flight, only those pleasing to Hollywood's gaze. Russo's notion of the female grotesque as a precarious form of aeriality, encapsulated in the performance of the trapeze artist, suggests the possibility of transformation, but also of error. 'Aerial leaps and falls' are an alternative to the fantasy of liberation as boundless flight, but, as Russo warns, they can 'end badly' (30).

Aeriality is another aspect of the ambivalence of the female grotesque. She may act as a subversive force, carving out spaces of freedom from oppression. At the same time, the images of hag, Satanist, countercultural temptress and folk devil all endure in the figure of the witch, potentially working to reinforce patriarchal ideology about the need to control women, at least among some audiences. Therefore, the female grotesque is a difficult category, and its moments of subversion are fleeting and contingent. A broomstick flight above the New England forest may expose a fault line in

our culture's ideology about female power, but as an image it does not provide a path to power. In contrast to popular feminist plaudits about the return of the witch to the horror film, I have argued that Eggers' modern folk horror film does nothing to stabilize or affirm the witch as a feminist icon. She remains one of horror cinema's most ambivalent figures, in part because she is the amalgamation of fictional and non-fictional histories and myths. As a piece of folk horror cinema, *The Witch* deepens the ambiguity of its central figure, offering the witch variously as a symbol of female desire, female power, patriarchal fear and patriarchal power. Such clashing sympathies are germane to the folk horror mode.

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AVATARS Jesus as the avatar of GOD in christianity

TRY ~~*~~how many avatars have u use? which different mediums have u use as avatars)

tambien los estados del MESSENGER

Participatory art

performance
20 people
12 headsets
with instructions

submission to the voices gives "POWER"
you know what to do
"FREEDOM" gives insecurity

voice "spookyness" how to use
comes from an empty place of the body
voice as passive agent

participants leading a part of their body (hands) to activate the role playing or performance. you are not leading or exposing ur mind or identity

working with kids
"teenagers" in comparison with adults //

REHEARSING HOSPITALITY

'm a vortex . scan thro thirty circumstances attractors
bjects people way to fast, there're a lot of
flames and a dark hole.

the place where i sleep in day mind looks diff
kan in treal life

ntrition? object talk to you?

get information very fast, i find
it hard to hold onto it, stick to
to retain it.

hat suits "what's good for another
person" is necessary suitable for you!!

trong pain or like a hole in between my
ips something is pushing pinch in the back

ANQUERINGUISHED

shadow of the person - viewpoint isn't whole

PROTECTION

perception / projection

PHENOMENOLOGY ⇒ subjective. Thru my senses the stories that come around perceiving → an spirit is gonna map on you how you've been raised nothing comes in without being MEDIATED

My heartbeat is rising

hosting in "party"

offering in something you like, find nice

reality of spirits —— reality of dreams

dreams state ⇒ you are very suggestible

not body

being embodied state is incredibly powerful, more than spirits and deities, that's why they interact, "that's why they are subtle like"

GATHERING

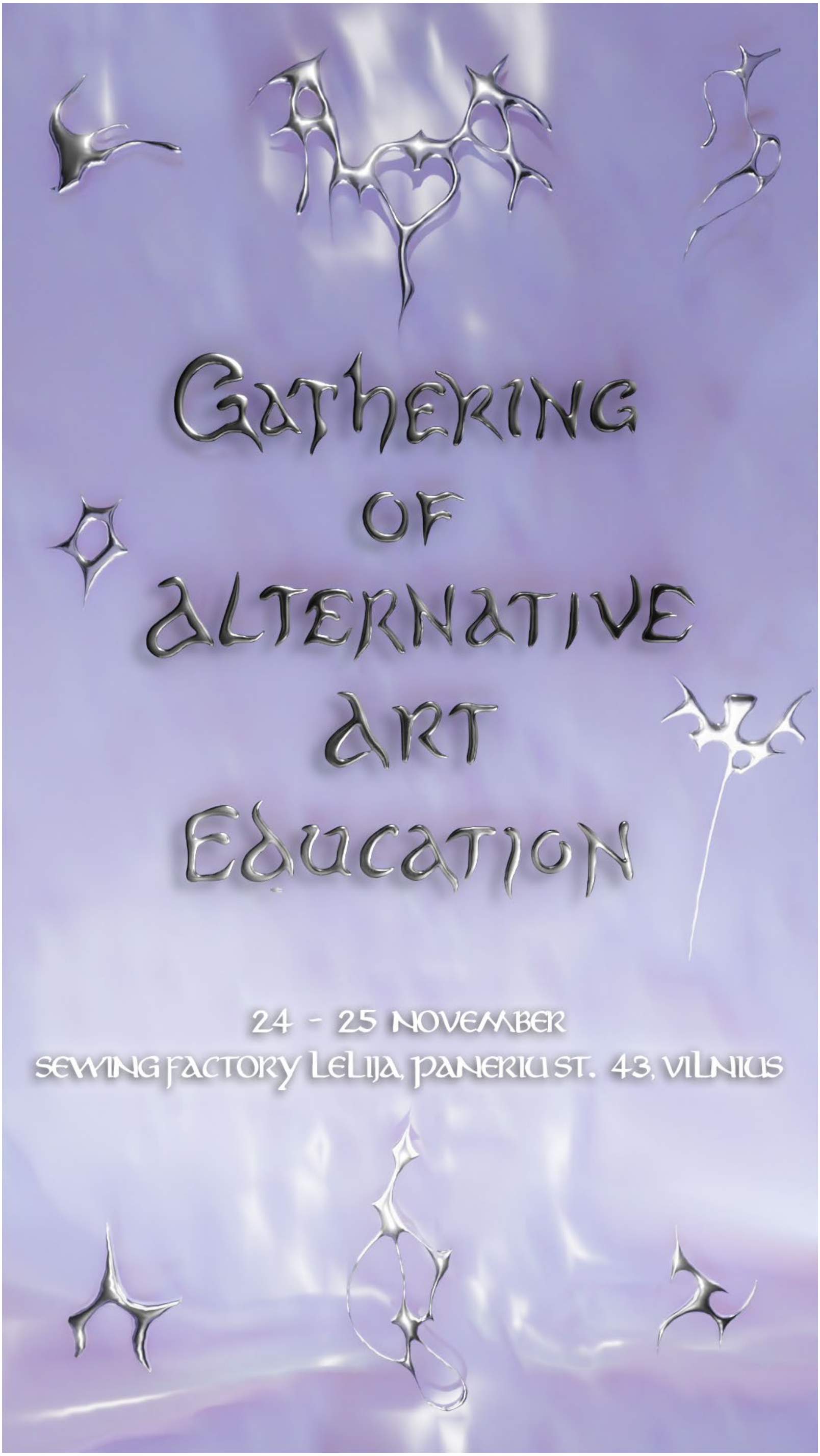
The Gathering of Alternative Art Education

The Gathering of Alternative Art Education was part of the final events of the Alternative Education Programme. The event provided space to share knowledge, experience, and insights about the current state and possible futures of art education.

During the gathering, all three concepts – alternative, art, and education, as well as their connections were subjected to the transdisciplinary inquiry. The invited speakers raised questions and shared their experience unbounded by a singular discipline. During the two-day event, practitioners and theoreticians invited to step beyond dominant frameworks and made proposals for a better understanding of art education.

Gathering – a term borrowed from philosopher Bruno Latour reflecting the ever-changing world and relationships that constitute us within the world. This gathering did not seek for a hierarchies-driven illusion of objectivity. Instead, it suggested togetherness that stems for matters of concerts rather than matters of fact. By admitting socio-political, historical and cultural entanglements, the event opened up spaces to think about new forms of education and being together.

Participating speakers 130–132 →



Visual identity of the Gathering of Alternative Art Education by: Studio Misti and Delphine Lejeune

Olga Schubert and Elisabeth Krämer

Olga Schubert and Elisabeth Krämer | The New Alphabet School at HKW (Berlin, Germany)

Olga Schubert is the initiator, co-curator, and project leader of the collective learning and artistic research format New Alphabet School (2019-2022). She has also developed the publication series “Library 100 Years of Now” at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) in Berlin. She is currently a PhD candidate at Kunstuniversität Linz, where Karin Harrasser supervises her dissertation “Ecologies of Knowledges in Curatorial Practices after 1989”. Previously she has worked on curatorial teams for various museums as well as in publishing. Her own publications include “Wörterbuch der Gegenwart” (with Bernd Scherer and Stefan Aue, 2019), “100 Years of Now and the Temporality of Curatorial Research” (2019), and “Glossar inflationärer Begriffe” (with Sara Hillnhuetter and Eylem Sengezer, 2013).

Elisabeth Krämer works as project coordinator at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) in Berlin, where she has been coordinating exhibitions, conferences, and publications such as “A History of Limits”, “Past Disquiet”, “Misfits”, and “2 or 3 Tigers”. Her recent projects include the collective learning and artistic research platform New Alphabet School (2019-2022) and the community of practice Investigative Commons, initiated by Forensic Architecture, Forensis, and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights. In her work, Krämer focuses on research and practices around the intersections of institutions and activism, developing open formats for knowledge production that probe the topographies of institutionalized frameworks.

Maarin Ekterman

Maarin Ekterman | Prologues School (Tallinn, Estonia)

Maarin Ekterman is an art worker based in Tallinn, Estonia and working on intersections between contemporary art and more-or-less experimental education. Her recent projects include “Artists in Collections”’ (with Mary-Ann Talvistu, 2017–), a reimagining of social rituals of the cultural field as “RESKRIPT” (with Henri Hütt, 2019–), a fair fee system proposal for the

Estonian art scene (with Airi Triisberg, 2019–), and running a new educational platform proloogkool ("school of prologues"', 2020–). On a daily basis, she works as head of the Centre for General Theory Subjects at the Estonian Academy of Arts, where she teaches courses on of 20th century art history, self-organised practices, and art criticism

Asbjørn Blokkum Flø

Asbjørn Blokkum Flø | Notam (Oslo, Norway)

Asbjørn Blokkum Flø lives and works in Oslo, and runs the educational programme at Notam, the Norwegian center for Technology, Art and Music.

Flø has taught at institutions such as the Norwegian Academy of Music, NTNU, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and the University of Oslo. Flø has been associated with Notam since its inception in 1994 and has been running the educational programme since 2006. Flø's texts have been published by, among others, Organized Sound (Cambridge University Press), NIME (The International Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression), and ICMC (International Computer Music Conference).

In addition to his work at Notam, Flø works as a freelance artist, composer, and musician, creating sound installation, electronic music, and acoustic music.

Hugo Hopping

Hugo Hopping artist, writer, former curator of The Curatorial Thing Programme at SixtyEight Art Institute (US / Mexico / Denmark)

Hugo Hopping is an American artist currently based in Copenhagen. He has exhibited widely both as an artist and curator. He writes about art and cultural history, and has co-founded several artistic organisations and learning platforms, such as The Winter Office, which is an art and design work group, and SixtyEight Art Institute, which exhibits and publishes artistic and curatorial research.

GATH
ER
ING

Tautvydas Urbelis

Tautvydas Urbelis | Alternative Education Programme at Rupert (Vilnius, Lithuania)

Tautvydas Urbelis is a curator, (ex)philosopher, and writer working in the field of contemporary art, education, and speculative architecture. Focusing on intersectional modes of knowledge distribution, transdisciplinary exchange, and unruly fictioning, Urbelis explores the poetics and tensions of being in an increasingly complex world.

Currently, he is the curator of Alternative Education and Public Programmes at Rupert (Vilnius, Lithuania), editor of "Regeneration [and its Discontents]" (Architecture Fund, 2021), and leader of the research project "Architecture of Lust". Urbelis has curated events for and in collaboration with the Architecture Fund, Contemporary Art Centre, EXPO Chicago, Future Architecture, Kaunas Architecture Festival, London Architecture Festival, Architecture of Shame, International Kaunas Film Festival, and other institutions.

DIGITAL SUBCRIBER LINE SONK SUB LINE
O DOUBT STUNT LOL DANGLING SPIRAL LAGO
ON DELIRIUS SERPENT LANDSCAPE DAZZLI
ING SENSUOS LABARATORY DESERT SPR
ING LABYRINTH DUSK SANCTUARY LACE-
WINGED DAYDREAMING SABBATH LADYB
UG DANDELION SAINT LAMB DIALOGUE SA
PHIRE LANTERN DREAMY STAR LIFELINE D
RY SALTY LUNCH DIGESTIVE SAINT LEG
UME DONT SHY LADY DISTANCE SURFAC
E LEISURE DAILY SOFT LOBOTOMY DARK S
TAR LIGHT DRUMSTY SIENY LANDS DEARTYY
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IJA DIAMOND SHINING LICKER DIGGER ST
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S SOLVE SURVIVED LIBERTY DINOSAUR SOLID
SISM LARK DISSCIDUOS SODA LANGUOR DRUM
STICK SUN LITURGY DREAM SUGHT LUXURY


PLEASE JOI
DikoSphere
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when spelunking forgotten dreams

NISHA RAMAYYA

Stop just before the entrance, the sheet of running water or loamy smell. This is the last sunlit station; the rest is groove. The architecture of the cave helps people and animals sync up with space-time as well as with each other, like the internet shapes our built and social environments and is shaped by them. The finest paintings are far from the entrance, but no one controls the buzzer, you can call your way in. Call then; utter any silent sound or informational noise, the cave will respond. A little away, a little away; come close, come close. You can trust this voice, can you? You can hear your way to belief, the deeper you move in its stuff. Brush fingers, sticks, and bones against stalactites, compare the effects to xylophones or soundbars or whatever feels right to your sonic context. Stamp your muddy handprints on the walls, ceding your subjectivity to speleothem. Feel your way into millions of years of drip, flow, gush – never dry, never still – even if you cannot perceive the wetness and movement with your fingers, ears, nose – you can, you can. A shimmering carpet of crystals; an assemblage of golden eagles, porcelain skulls, bio-glitter, bhindi glue, lip melt, flute, fur. Every sound in the history of space-time still resounds; every sound ever made leaves a scratch in the field; the field is the recording, every sound ever made reproducible. The air swathes warmer here, breath ripples further than you intended to go or thought possible. Maybe you'll ignite a torch to signal reciprocity; maybe you'll awake surrounded by bear scratches, horses, birdcages, shapeshifters, or by bears, artists, ceremonies, spirits. Will you dance, will you boggle, will you enter another kind of sleep? Here you are folded in; you cannot see or be seen, you are out of the state's earshot, beyond cannons and espionage. Here you can sleep for millions of years; borne by your secrets which will never be mined. You are the matter in which splendour is hidden; you are the sculptor who shrouds their work.

THE READER OF THE 10TH EDITION OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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Československo
Hieracium alpinum L.
30 h
40 h
20 h
10 h
3 Kčs
alpský
tatranská
elphinium consolida L.
ranthemum annuum L.
apaver dubium L.
nummularium (L.) Mill.
Nimphaea alba
бяла водна роза
минзухар
3 ст
crocus veluchensis
планинска камбанка
1 ст
campanula alpina
2 ст.
Narcissus poeticus
БЪЛГАРИЯ
4 СТ.
GARIA
5 ST.
cuba
AEREO 1978
CORREOS 1978
Jan D. de Heem, Ein Blumenstrauß mit blauer Schale
70
REP. DE GUINEA
APOROCACTUS FLAGELLIFORMIS
CORREO AEREO
PROTECCION DE LA NA
AMERICA DEL NORTE
SEGUNDO CENTENARIO DE LA
INDEPENDENCIA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS
REPUBLICA DE GUINEA ECUATORIAL
България
Tephrocactus alexanderi
Opuntia drumm
Rosa Centifolia
ORQUIDEAS
30


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