

Planetary Poetics

The diagram consists of four horizontal, overlapping ovals with different marbled patterns. The top oval is purple and blue. The second oval is olive green. The third oval is dark green. The bottom oval is teal and blue. White dashed lines connect the left and right sides of the ovals. White curved lines segment the olive green and dark green ovals. The text 'Master's', 'Programme', 'Graduation', and 'Catalogue' is written along these segments. There are also several sets of white vertical lines of varying lengths scattered throughout the diagram.

Master's

Programme

Graduation

Catalogue

FRAMER EBAWED

MASTER'S SANDBERG INSTITUTE

SEP '23
–JUN '25

GRADUATION EXHIBITION

11–14
JUN '25

PLANETARY POETICS PARTICIPANTS

Arthur Guilleminot Bethany Copsey Eshwari Ramšali
Finn Maätita Imke Hullmann KIEM Lucila Pacheco Dehne
Olivia D'Cruz Tirza Balk Toni Steffens

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INTRODUCTION

BY JOSIEN PIETERSE & ASHLEY MAUM

The *Planetary Poetics* master's programme acts within a wider movement against the colonisation of knowledge – what decolonial thinkers have identified as a particularly harmful, enduring aspect of historical colonialism. As an educational model, the programme contrasts universal, 'scientific' and seemingly neutral ways of knowing and being in the world. In doing so, it targets specifically higher education as an arena in which those visions of the world are disseminated and thus further cemented.

Education is often approached from advance thinking, with the goal of increasing knowledge and acquiring skills and behaviours. Framer Framed takes a different angle, inspired by the Educational Turn, an approach within the arts that has developed since the 1990s and focuses on finding new methods of creating art outside traditional educational and institutional structures. The emphasis here is on collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and experiences. As much as the focus is on learning, it is also on 'unlearning', a concept which has become more firmly rooted in decolonial, anti-imperial theory in recent years. Unlearning calls for a conscious questioning of deeply held beliefs, unconscious thought patterns and normative structures.

It was within this context that our collaboration with Dorine van Meel began, which would later build to co-initiating the master's programme at the Sandberg Institute. This earlier project, titled *Decolonial Futures*, was grounded in the belief that collaborative models allow us to challenge and diversify perspectives on histories. *Decolonial Futures* consisted of an exchange programme organised between the Sandberg Institute, the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and Framer Framed in Amsterdam as well as Funda Community College in Soweto, South Africa. From 2020-2022, the programme followed the structure of simultaneous workshops in Amsterdam and Soweto, with moments for students to come together and share

their working experiences. This format inspired the embedding of exchange within *Planetary Poetics*, which was structured by semester-long collaborations with the activist network Futuros Indígenas (Milpamérica) and the artistic platform Atelier Picha (Lubumbashi, DRC), further strengthened by an active program of guest lectures and public gatherings.

By approaching (un)learning as a continuous process that takes place in exchange, we aim to build a community where we are all co-learners with equal knowledge, regardless of age or level of education. The emphasis is not on knowledge transfer but on researching together, sharing experiences and, above all, questioning what is included in frameworks of 'knowledge' and what is excluded. Participants are given the space to explore and discover for themselves, to be engaged with the worlds they see and to experiment with how the stories of those worlds might be told.

The decision to centre the master's programme on the climate crisis is rooted in the crisis' deep entanglement with colonial legacies. The climate emergency is not simply environmental – it is a structural and historical issue. Communities in formerly colonised regions, despite having contributed least to global emissions, now face the most devastating consequences: migration due to drought, hunger and areas rendered unliveable. This unequal burden reveals how colonial patterns of extraction and domination persist through ecological degradation. Orienting *Planetary Poetics* around these issues further strengthened the master's resonance with the ongoing programming and network at Framer Framed. Climate colonialism has been a key theme grounding projects such as Kevin van Braak's *Pressing Matters* (2018) Radha D'Souza and Jonas Staal's *Court for Intergenerational Climate Crimes* (2021-ongoing), On-Trade-Off's *Charging Myths* (2023), Samia Henni's *Performing Colonial Toxicity* (2023) and many more. Through this, we developed relationships with artists and activists who could help shape the community of *Planetary Poetics*: collectives such as Atelier Picha, activist Chihiro Geuzebroek, artists Milena Bonilla and Ada M. Patterson, and Indigenous Inga leader and environmentalist Taita Hernando Chindoy.

Together with Dorine van Meel, we invited *Planetary Poetics* participants to apply not only as artists but activists – emphasising the co-constitutive relationship between the two. By foregrounding these entanglements, the programme resists reductive, technocratic responses to the ecological crisis. Instead, it invites participants to examine how the colonial logics of resource extraction – through logging, mining, and plantation economies – continue to shape our relationship to land and life. Learning from a plurality of voices and perspectives, knowledge-holders from affected communities, who might also take the shape of a plant, a spider or a frog. It does so to foster critical engagement with these issues in artistic practice but also, importantly, in the social and political landscapes of institutions, such as Framer Framed and the Sandberg Institute, in the city of Amsterdam, and even reaching further to all the places encountered along the way.

Planetary Poetics took place during a confronting period, as visceral realities of oppression unfolded before our eyes. The representation of politics in the classroom sometimes felt alienating in the face of politics on the streets and great injustices like the genocide in Palestine. The community of the programme played an important role in connecting these worlds, allowing critical reflection and solidarity to coexist. We have taken much inspiration from our time with the *Planetary Poetics* participants, from their commitment, creativity and hope, but also from their tending to grief, discomfort and care. We sincerely thank them for their practices and the spaces we have created together – which we have felt as a spark, as a breath that allows for the work to continue.



FOREWORD

BY DORINE VAN MEEL

What can we, as cultural practitioners, do in the face of the destruction of life we see happening at a planetary scale? How can we understand this unfolding crisis, started centuries ago, rooted in colonial and capitalist ways of inhabiting this earth? And what other ways of knowing-doing-being can be employed towards alternative horizons for this world we live in?

It is from this shared dismissal of the destruction of life, in all its forms, that we created *Planetary Poetics* over the last two years. From a deep commitment to the conviction that other worlds are possible, that, in fact, many of these other possibilities are already here, and from a desire to contribute to their strengthening.

Such a project demands a working through, a working through the mess we're in, a working through many of the binaries that separate us from each other. Art versus activism, institution versus student, Global North versus Global South. It calls for a particular approach to making, one that is unafraid to take a position, that embraces collaboration, community, and the questions of impact and audience.

It has been a tremendous honour to have had this opportunity to, together with Framer Framed, open this space for us to gather. To build on existing alliances and dialogues, and to carry them further. This space here cannot do justice to acknowledging all of you who have contributed to this project in so many different ways. But do know that we are deeply grateful. And although *Planetary Poetics* in this form may end, our journeys continue, and so will our poetics <3



SWAMP PEDAGOGY ENCOUNTER – SPONGE IT UP!

BY ARTHUR GUILLEMINOT

Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit or lie down.

Close your eyes and take a few slow, deep breaths. Visualise yourself in the space you inhabit: air clings to your skin, scents fill your nostrils, and soft water particles are all around you. Allow yourself to be as absorbent as a sponge and become one with the life surrounding you.

Take slow, deep breaths, and imagine your body as the sponge. With each inhale, allow the world to flow into you – oxygen, warmth, and energy seeping into your being. With each exhale, picture yourself releasing what you no longer need – tension, stale energy, or stress.


Notice the balance of giving and receiving. Shift your focus, imagining your body as soft and open, like the sponge's intricate network of channels. Sense how everything flows through you – not just air, but sensations, fluids, and micro-organisms. Let yourself relax into the feeling of being interconnected with your surroundings.

When ready, take a few more grounding breaths and slowly return your attention to the present moment.

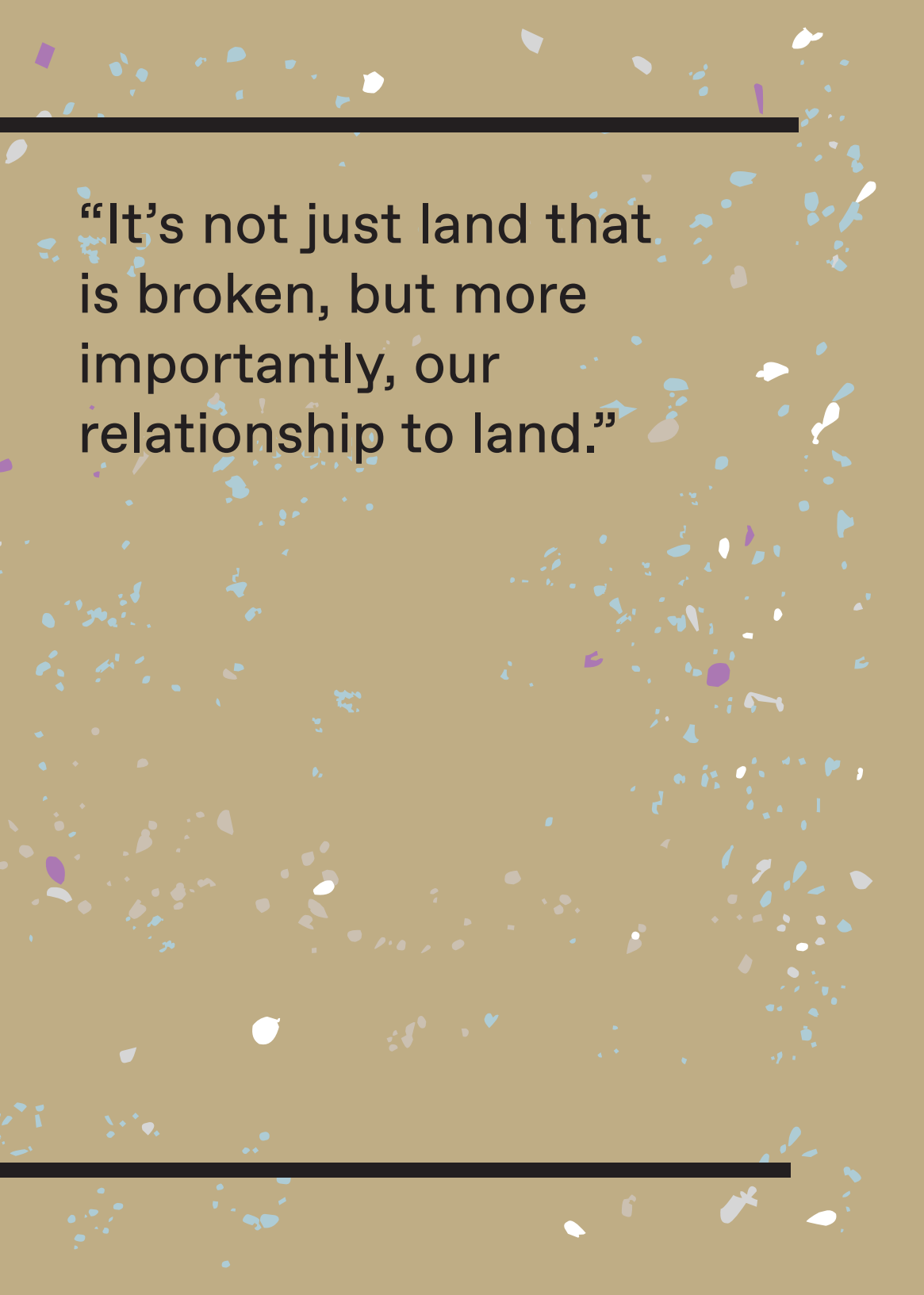
Notice how your body feels now.

Did your sense of self expand to include a quiet awareness of your porous, contaminated nature?





Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Milkweed Editions, 2015), p. 9.



**“It’s not just land that
is broken, but more
importantly, our
relationship to land.”**

ARTISTIC PRACTICE

BY ESHWARI RAMSALI

all my known ancestors were farmers, my parents are the first generation to be educated. i am the first generation to not know how to live in reciprocity with the soil

as artistic practice

50ml mezcal

30ml lime

10ml rose

shaken with ice

strained into a chilled glass

egg white foam flavoured with rhubarb bitters layered on top

smoked thyme squeezed around the rim and placed on the foam

as artistic practice

did you get kissed by the sun today – i don't know how to say i haven't left my bed today, so i say nothing – mental note: i need to pick up vitamin D pills this week

as artistic practice

i have a degree in politics but i can't have a conversation with my parents without gasping for words. they say academia is for sense-making – whose sense are we making?

as artistic practice

i lived with my grandmother for the first five years of my life. she cried in her sleep. i do too

as artistic practice

i'm sitting at a cafe called the queen's tea room and paid €5 for a cup of darjeeling tea – what would my great grandmother have to say?

as artistic practice

i first learnt about indenture when i was 19. you want me to teach a class about decolonisation. i can't hold space for your guilt, this world can barely hold space for mine

as artistic practice

did you brush your teeth, or did you eat mint chocolate instead?

as artistic practice

i met a witch at haarlem centraal today – she gave me a good luck charm – wherever you are right now, thank you i am grateful

as artistic practice

if you demanded an answer maybe i would say my practice is care work – as in all i know is to give but receiving makes me hysterical

as artistic practice

my pisces sister is teaching me the ways of water but always remember agni sakshi: fire is witness

as artistic practice

i have adhd but i refuse to take meds, as in i refuse to work at a pace that commodifies my body or my work

as artistic practice

the texture of a raw guava picked too early on the roof of your mouth

as artistic practice

my autistic practice as artistic practice

next year i have to choose between my indian citizenship or my
dutch – there is no greater evil than alienating people from their land

as artistic practice

if i don't laugh i'll cry – new season of love island out now

as artistic practice

i can tell you in so many ways who i am and where i come from, but
that wouldn't be a good use of my time or yours – i'm more curious
about where we go from there – building solidarities

as artistic practice

whose artistic practice?

for whom, artistic practice?

This poem was written for the first session of *Planetary Poetics* as an introductory offering of my self and practice. As someone new to the vocabulary of art institutions, I had spent the months of summer leading up to the start of the programme becoming fixated with the term 'artistic practice'.





BOSTON TEA PARTY: NUTRITION FOR CARERS

By Eshwari Ramsali

I keep having a dream called 'Boston Tea Party'. My dream is often of a big long table with members of my community seated facing one another as far as the eye can see. There is an endless stream of magical drink flowing through a fountain, like a river across the whole table that I can see everyone dipping their cups into and drinking from eagerly. When I close my eyes, there is so much laughter I can't wait to join in. I open my eyes again and everywhere around me is abundance – fruit, cake, drink, purpose and rest. Everyone at my big long table looks fabulous and adorned, singing and dancing, spilling and sipping.

My hope is to play, both seriously and unseriously, with the idea of a tea party – as a travelling café – as an act of care for carers; where my sisters gather to cast intention into tea and spirit-ed potions in order to hold and be held. My practice seeks to nurture the complexity of humour and play and its capacity to hold the enormity of grief and anger. I dream this dream because in sitting with the (post-)irony of being in/of this world today, we need communion more than anything – to keep on keeping on, steadfast – in our practice of liberation. So to all my radical radiant dreamers and doers, movers and healers, please welcome to the second manifestation of *Boston Tea Party, Nutrition for Carers: Casting Spells in Oyster Shells*.

I invite you to attend this event with a friend or an elder who inspires you, that you haven't had the opportunity to catch up with in a while. We will be serving a menu of six bracers in honour of one another and all that we do. They will be served in oyster shells, and as you receive each one, I request you to whisper an intention/vision for the future into the shell before you drink as a collective ritual. As you move through the space, I hope each moment of play and laughter serves as an echo of gratitude from me to you to us – thank you for indulging in this experiment with me.



MENU

IMAGINATION

Tamarind, mango & pepper jam served on rice wafer
Paired with a reading from *The Trauma Of Caste* by Thenmozhi Soundarajan

REST

Coconut milk, cardamom & sago pudding served with rose petals
Paired with a reading from *Rest is Resistance* by Tricia Hersey

LOVE

Mezcal butterfly pea foam with a popping candy rim (alc.)
Paired with a reading from *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Animals* by Alexis Pauline Gumbs

RESILIENCE

Cucumber, lime & basil syrup served on shaved ice
Paired with a reading of the poem 'Good Bones' by Maggie Smith & an excerpt from *La Conciencia de la Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa

CEREMONY

Red wine poached pear with clove & star anise (alc.)
Paired with a reading from *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

GRATITUDE

Watermelon & black sesame jelly served in coconut water
Paired with the 'Radical Gratitude Spel'l' by Adrienne Maree Brown

Everything on the menu is vegan and gluten free. In case you are not able to enjoy any of the above for other reasons, please let us know.



casting a spell in a boston shaker; lessons from
nettle for unlearning hyper-independence in a
modern-colonial praxis



in a boston shaker, add:



1. 50ml juniper spirit for the tenacity of your
knees



2. one half of the shoulder of every giant you
stand upon



3. 15ml lemon to squeeze into the eyes of
everyone that asks you where you're really
from



4. 15ml ginger cordial to heal the stomach
and the land beneath the concrete



5. 2 strands of your grandmother's hair to
remind you of the wisdom that can never
be taught, only lived and passed on



6. shake with ice; let it remind you that all that
is can change into something else
always/regardless



7. top it off with a nettle foam to affirm your
inner child.



8. take the wafer paper under your glass and
write down a hopeful vision of the future;
take stock of all that is in the realm of
possibility and manifest it. once satisfied,
drop it into your shaker.



9. strain into an oddly shaped glass that
defies gravity. remember: nothing is as it
seems.



10. drink.





casting a spell in an oyster shell; a recipe for
relearning community care in the modern-colonial
praxis



as the potion is poured into your shell:



1. take stock of what is and make notes.
(step must not be repeated; only to be
performed the first time)



2. ask yourself, what do i feel moving through
my body right now? what is stuck? what do
i need?



3. speak your need(s) into your potion.



4. take a large sip but leave a little to be
poured into the earth after step 6.



5. shake until you feel the collective vibration
of the group.



6. if your need(s) is outstanding, share with
the host or the person closest to you.



7. refer to step 4 tentatively; perform what is
required.



8. repeat this process over the course of the
gathering no more and no less than 6
times.



9. refer to your notes from step 1. imagine
what could have been otherwise. take and
share notes. (step must not be repeated;
only to be performed the final time).



10. shake again together with intention.



GESTURING TOWARDS QUEER SISTERHOOD AND ITS RITUALS AS HEALING JUSTICE PRAXIS

THESIS EXCERPT

BY ESHWARI RAMSALI

(0:00) I was thinking about it, you know (0:08) I don't know, I feel like for the longest time I did, I thought that you get to migrate once (0:13) and then you have to build a home. And I feel like I've been trying to do that because I've (0:18) lived here for so long. But I was thinking about this recently. And I think that the Netherlands, (0:27) this land, has shown me in so many ways that it loves me, you know. And I thought, I guess one of my most (1:08) memorable times was when I just started my master's, and I was sitting in the garden with (1:16) all my new classmates. And, I was talking to my classmate, and he's a foraging instructor. (1:23) I was talking about my favourite book; my favourite book is 'Braiding Sweetgrass'. (1:28) I was talking about Robin Wall Kimmerer, like writing about old man's, no, white man's footstep, (1:36) which is this plant that was not indigenous to North America, and I guess was brought over through colonisation. And over time, what (1:47) could have been considered a weed, or what people would (1:53) have been mistrustful towards, over time, became this plant that started to be such an (2:00) important comrade to all the other plants. It was a small (2:08) plant with round shaped leaves, and it would grow at the base of trees. And it became such an important (2:13) medicinal plant for all kinds of things and it was the first (2:19) time I

read something about how indigeneity is something that can be learned, because indigeneity (2:27) is stewardship of the land. And it touched me so much this chapter, because it made me feel like, (2:33) well, you know, for me, and for a lot of people like me, that didn't get to be here, (2:40) that didn't get to migrate entirely willingly, (2:45) there's an opportunity here for us that will (2:50) let us become, let us become of the land. And I thought that was really beautiful. (2:58) I was just telling them that (3:04), yeah, I want to explore this idea of becoming a 'citizen' and what that means in relation to the land. And they were listening to me with such attention and when I stopped talking, they looked at me and smiled and said, (3:16) you should say hello. And I was like, what? They were like, you should introduce yourself, because (3:20) you're actually sitting right next to it. Next to your bum right now, that's, that is white man's footprint.

I also recognise that having this introspective relationship to food and eating also made me confront all of my other forms of escapism. And when I was like, oh my god, fuck, like I'm constantly escaping reality. The starting point is being in the state of meditation. Mmmmm. To really be like, this is me, I live inside this body. I've been gifted this body. And I honour the needs of my body. But I also honour my needs, which are not my body's needs. But it's SO hard to recognise. Yeah, it's so hard to recognise not only the self beyond the body, but it's also hard to recognise what those needs are, especially in a world where our needs are supposedly constantly attended to. You know, you need something? Oh, you want a face massager? You go get a face massager. Oh, you want some food? Go get some food. Oh, you want to watch something? Go watch something. Like there's always something around. I think it's harder to sit with the stillness and be like, Hey girl, how're you doing? What do I really need? And is the world really providing that to me?

I texted my mum this morning. Oh, wow. What did she say? She didn't respond. I sent her a good morning. With a heart emoji? Of course. Of course. Yeah, I don't know why. I should probably not text her, but I can't, you know. That's the thing I cried about last week, about this chemical relation that you have with your mum. You don't know why you want to talk to her. You don't know why you want her to be there for you. It's just the person who gave birth to you. It's

so natural. It's almost unperformative. Yeah, but I mean, don't you think that it's not just because she birthed you, but also because she raised you a little bit? Do you think they're separate things or do you think they're the same thing? We talked about it in trauma therapy last week when I reached the end of the lifeline exercise, because I needed to find my safe space. What's my safe space in life? Not for my adult self, because as an adult you have different safe spaces, but for my traumatised child, for my child. My mum is my safe space. And I realised last session that she is not anymore. And I need to find somewhere else where I can put her child to rest. And then I dug in, and I thought that she did raise me, and I did feel attached to her because of the way she raised me. And mainly because I grow for me to look more like her. So, the more that I'm becoming an adult, the more I'm like, oh, I am seeing the thing you raised me on. It's starting to make sense. But these things I used to get mad at you for telling me to do as a teenager, now I just do it, you know? And they make sense. So, it is a bit of that, of course. Yeah, girl, you think you fell out of a coconut tree? HAHAAHAHA. No, exactly, Kamala. I wish we did fall out of a coconut tree, honestly. That would be nice. That would be easier, wouldn't it?


As a cultural/artistic practitioner interested in community-based mutual aid, I have used this thesis as an opportunity to shine an honest, unpretentious light into the lives of my kin, folks at the forefront of liberation work, for whom conventional methods of care, harm reduction and trauma-informed healing often tend to be less accessible. The point of this is not to highlight that such care is missing entirely, but rather that it is in the face of this lack, that communities organise in extraordinary ways – that this care is very much present and very much queer. It is chaotic and messy but equally vulnerable and sincere.

When I sat down with these concepts, it became immediately clear to me that I needed to write about my sisters, or rather, our sisterhood. The kind of sisterhood I'm referring to here is one not uncommon in queer culture; it is a bond created out of a necessity/ desire to make kin that share a queer epistemology and that honour your dynamic identity, what some refer to as a chosen family. When I look back on my time in Amsterdam, I can see the ways in which, the three of us, my sisters and I, show up for each other in the face of a lack of institutional/collectivised care such as access to therapy, affordable and safe housing, unemployment benefits, healthcare, someone to borrow £10 from to buy groceries till payday, somewhere to go after being harassed on the street, even just someone to share a warm meal with. It is the smallest unit of community building and reciprocity I am able to commit to when the wider queer/BIPOC community is too overwhelming to hold space for.

Lastly, this thesis reframes how interviews are usually carried out in qualitative research and ethnography by using recordings of myself talking on the phone and my kiki's with the girls transcribed verbatim (bar only my role as editor) as the work itself instead of secondary to the 'work'. The process of converting audio recordings of intimate dialogue into the chosen written format(s) subverts the private/public dichotomy by aiding readers to examine these everyday conversations of community building against existing structures of power – revealing the generative capacity of gossip to encourage kinship and relational and structural accountability.







Rupa Marya & Raj Patel, *Inflamed: Deep
Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice*
(Allen Lane, 2021), p. 170.

“Unfortunately, we are rushing headlong into a crisis of colonial capitalism in which pollution deaths soar, driven by a climate crisis, like the Covid pandemic, in which a few profit greatly while billions suffer. Within the fortress of the nation-state, the immunes, those most disposable though identified now as ‘essential’ – the Indigenous, the working class, women, people of color, the low caste, queer, religious minorities, and immigrants – will be those most exposed to the dangers of toxic air and a hostile climate. Absent a serious diagnosis of the climate crisis and its impact on the exposome and our bodies, medicine will continue to treat the symptoms but will miss the opportunity for a cure.”

TOWARDS AN ART OF RECIPROCITY, RELATIONALITY, AND CONSENT

BY TERESA BORASINO

GUEST CONTRIBUTION

Throughout our time together, we explored what it might mean to move toward an art practice grounded in reciprocity, relationality, and consent. We acknowledged that we, as artists and activists, are shaped by and work within art modes rooted in extractivist, colonial foundations, and we turned our attention toward forms of creation that do not replicate separability but instead remain accountable to land, to people, to histories, and life itself.

Here are some notes of what we learned together:

An art practice of relationality arises not in isolation but from and with relationships – between humans, non-humans, ancestors, and the land – embedding itself in the specific ecologies, memories, and movements it seeks to honor, strengthen, and help thrive. Extractivist art, by contrast, disregards this interconnectedness, treating cultural elements as objects to be isolated, manipulated, or displayed.

A relational art practice emphasises collective agency and refuses the myth of the solitary artist-genius, working instead to nurture community relationships and support movements for ecological and social justice.

A relational art practice also seeks to repair and regenerate damaged relationships, imagining and enacting alternative, relational ways of living – rather than appropriating or extracting stories, cultural traditions, spiritual practices, and more for the benefit of the artist's career.

An art practice of reciprocity necessarily challenges colonial, racial capitalist, and extractive frameworks. It refuses the aestheticisation, representation, or simplification of complex realities into market-friendly narratives. Instead, it calls us to enact our responsibilities and obligations to the land, to people, and to all living forms with whom we are in relationship.

An art practice of consent ensures that communities and subjects are active collaborators in shaping how their stories are told; or in choosing to leave them untold. Direct participation becomes central. *"Nothing about us without us."*

As the course unfolded, it became clear that moving towards an art of reciprocity, relationality, and consent is not simply a matter of adopting different methods or techniques. It is a profound shift in how we relate – to each other, to land, to ancestors, to histories, to and to the more-than-human world. It asks us to unlearn colonial habits and to cultivate self-reflectivity, always.

This reflection is just a beginning. The real work continues in the practices we nurture, the relationships we tend, and the futures we dare to imagine and create together.

INTERTIDAL MALADIES

SNIPPETS FROM A PUPPET SHOW

BY OLIVIA D'CRUZ

Scene 1: Seaweed and Foam and Spit and Sand and Oil and Plastic and Blood

The Seven Sisters is a nickname given to the seven largest oil companies: Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Socal, Gulf Oil, British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell, which dominated the oil industry up to the 1970s. They came to control not only the extraction of crude oil but also the infrastructure through which oil circulates around the world, from the pipelines to the maritime sea routes, from extraction to consumption.

The descendants of these companies remain powerful to date.

From the podcast episode

‘Oil, Monopoly Capitalism and Imperialism with Adam Hanieh’ on Upstream (2024).



Scene 2: What is Left on the Tarmac:
Rotan Riot Shields, The Grid,
and a Giant Puppet

“A giant puppet is the mockery of the idea of a monument, and of everything monuments represent: the unapproachability, monochrome solemnity, above all the implication of permanence, [The Grid]’s (itself ultimately somewhat ridiculous) attempt to turn its principle and history into eternal verities. If one is meant to shatter the existing Spectacle, the other is, it seems to me, to suggest the permanent capacity to create new ones.”

David Greaber, ‘On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets: Broken windows, imaginary jars of urine, and the cosmological role of the police in American culture’ (2007).

Scene 4: Arm in Arm, Swimming
Backwards: Reorienting in the
Geestlanden

Parts of the coast of the Netherlands were referred to as *Geestlanden* (spirit lands). Land in these areas was considered ‘infertile’ and peat from other areas was brought to mix into the sand and clay. This mixture was prepared into beds for flowering bulbs, the currency of the time. How fitting that the spirit lands are where currency was born. The word ‘geest’ in its medieval origin means ‘infertile’ (geisini ‘onvruchtbaarheid’).

Scene 3: The Story of the Sinking of
Big Daddy Casino

Big Daddy Casino is the name of a casino cruise boat in the Mandovi River.



The boat is the size of a three-storey building and has giant screens on its sides, constantly playing ads that leak into the water. Casinos are illegal in India but through some loophole from Portuguese hangover laws, they are welcome in Goa as long as they are not on land. So now, in Goa, the middle of a river is considered ‘offshore’.



TE AWAHOU

THESIS EXCERPT

BY BETHANY COPSEY

(1)

The huge blades cut across the sky, creating moving shadows against the pale blue backdrop. My sister's dog, completely alarmed by the bizarre sight and clearly lacking an understanding of spatial depth, freaks out and takes off down the street, Helen pulled behind. Head down, and with full focus on getting out of harm's way, she only stops in the shadow of a nearby building.

My other sister Emma and I wait on the square under the windmill while her boyfriend drives the car down the street to collect the dog who is now resolutely refusing to come a single step back towards the windmill with its huge circling blades. My mum and I go into the store underneath where shelves and shelves are full of imported products from the Netherlands: Hak *appelmoes*, boxes of *hagelslag*, *ketjap manis*, cans of *erwetensoep*, even coffee filters from Douwe Egberts. I take a photo and send it back to the Netherlands, remarking on this strange Dutch-inspired town on the other side of the world.

I know this town well; it's my family's special place, as chosen by my auntie during the final years of her life. Weeks during summer, weekends away, visits to my uncle and even one New Year's Eve where 30 of us piled into the four-bedroom bach and left our mark in the form of brightly coloured drink stains on the beige carpet. The long, wide sandy beach with piles of driftwood accumulating in front of the dunes, the two dead cows we once found washed up on the sand from the farms upstream, the estuary where the sand turns muddy and tacky, and

baches lining the streets home with thick grass sidewalks and ditches of stagnant water.

Te Awahou – commonly known under the English name Foxton, a town in the region of Manawatū-Whanganui – sits in the space between two large river catchments of the same name: the Whanganui and Manawatū. The Whanganui is taonga, a long, sacred river to Māori, part of a chain of waterways spanning huge swaths of Te Ika-a-Māui. The mighty Manawatū River flows closer to Foxton, with the estuary merging the river waters with the Tasman Sea. The town and the river are intrinsically linked.

This location was perfectly placed for wetlands to develop, with estuaries, mudflats, salt marshes and swamp forests dotted across the landscape. Harakeke, swamp flax, took hold. It is a vital component of early Māori life in Aotearoa, with the fibres used for baskets, fishing nets, buckets, sails, and clothing; the gum, rhizomes, and stalks used for medicinal purposes; nectar used as a sweetener.¹ Europeans arriving in Aotearoa in the 1700s were quick to recognise how flax could be utilised for their purposes, namely for rigging on sailing ships.² So through this naval role, the harakeke played a role in the further colonial exploits of the British. Harakeke and Foxton are woven together, no story about one complete without the other. Not long after the arrival of Europeans in Aotearoa, harakeke was established as an export trade product with flax mills dotted around the country. In Foxton, the harakeke came from Moutoa Swamp, a once 2,000-hectare wetland sitting between Foxton, Waiterere Beach and Shannon. Just 50 hectares remain. First drained to stimulate more intensive harakeke growing conditions, it was then converted to pasture. The wetland-to-pasture pathway is strong across the country.

1.
Named flax by early European traders because the fibres reminded them of flax plants elsewhere in the world, it's actually part of the daylily family (Gerard Hindmarsh, "Flax: The Enduring Fibre", *New Zealand Geographic*, n.d., <https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/flax-the-enduring-fibre/>).

2.
"Māori and British Trade", *Te Papa*, n.d., <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/maori/treaty-waitangi/maori-and-british/maori-and-british-trade>.

(2)

Aotearoa has seen one of the most dramatic cases of wetland loss globally, which, given the massive losses worldwide (one-fifth since 1700), is really saying something.³ In the years from European arrival to today, 90 percent of the wetlands have been lost; in the Manawatū area, it's even higher with an estimated 98 percent of wetlands being lost.⁴ The situation in Aotearoa is now more severe than where the techniques of draining, dredging, pumping were developed.⁵

Foxton is different in some ways, the wetland loss is similar, but the town bears the indelible mark of wetlands, like the Flax Stripper Museum, the Manawatū Estuary Bird Sanctuary. And the *molen*, an authentic 17th century Dutch flour mill, originally proposed by two Dutch immigrants in 1897 who found the Foxton landscape reminded them of the Netherlands – flat land, green grass, surrounded by water.⁶ This makes perfect sense of course, the landscape here was remade in its image.

We go to Palmerston North on a weekend away for my mum and my sisters while I'm home. I tell all my friends, and they pull faces and laugh when I say that's the chosen destination, not Christchurch with its new post-quake regeneration; or Nelson, a tourist hub with its galleries, beaches, forests and sun; not the Wairarapa, a short trip north up and over, countryside and charming towns. No, Palmy, where the Spanish football team left early because they were bored, and everyone online agreed.

We go for a tramp along the Manawatū Gorge, which was first encountered by Māori in the 12th century.⁷ State Highway 3, which ran through the gorge, the primary link between two sides of the lower North Island, is now abandoned due to slips. The track runs parallel to the gorge through native bush, including nikau palms, a slow-growing tree that can take 200 years to reach 10 metres tall. The forest is bright lush green, speckled light coming through the fronds, and bird calls. I only recognise the kererū. Back on the road leading into

3. Christian Dunn, "Earth Has Lost One-Fifth of Its Wetlands Since 1700 – but Most Could Still Be Saved", *The Conversation*, 9 February 2023, <https://theconversation.com/earth-has-lost-one-fifth-of-its-wetlands-since-1700-but-most-could-still-be-saved-199362>.

4. "World Wetlands Day: Forest & Bird Release Maps Showing Extent of Wetlands Crisis", *Forest & Bird*, 2 February 2018, <https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/world-wetlands-day-forest-bird-release-maps-showing-extent-wetlands-crisis>.

5. Geoff Park, "Swamps Which Might Doubtless Easily Be Drained": Swamp Drainage and Its Impact on the Indigenous", in *Making a New Land: Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, ed. Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2013).

6. "Our Story", *Foxton Windmill*, n.d., <https://www.foxtonwindmill.co.nz/pages/our-story>.

7. "Māori History", *Te Āpiti - Manawatū Gorge*, n.d., <https://www.teapiti.co.nz/maori-history/>.

the forest, there's a stone commemorating the opening of the road. It occurs to me that it's kind of funny to celebrate the opening of a road in such a way, but the date specifies the 1870s and my mum says it's quite a feat of engineering, especially in those days. The author of a book on the gorge speaks of warnings that it is a foolish place to put too much infrastructure, similar warnings have been issued since.⁸

8.
Jono Galuszka, "Book on the History of the Manawatū Gorge Set to Launch", *Stuff*, 10 December 2019, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/118113870/book-on-the-history-of-the-manawat-gorge-set-to-launch>.

9.
"Te Aranui o Te Rangihaeata", *Ngāti Toa Rangitira*, n.d., <https://www.ngatitoa.iwi.nz/panui/te-aranui-o-te-rangihaeata>.

10.
Lynn Jenner, *Peat* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2019).

11.
Lynn Jenner, "The [Taniwha] of Poplar Avenue", in *Peat* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2019).

I wonder if the Transmission Gully Road got a commemoration stone. I look it up. Jacinda Arden officially opened the road, and it was gifted the name Te Ara Nui o Te Rangihaeata by the Ngāti Toa iwi tribe, in honour of Te Rangihaeata, a chief in the New Zealand Wars.⁹ A section of this road, the Kapiti Expressway, is the focus of a book entitled *Peat*, so called after the thousands or hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of peat dug out to construct the road.¹⁰ Author Lynn Jenner describes a realisation of the road and the water in the peat being enemies, that the road builders saw the watery peat as an enemy and perhaps the peat sees the concrete the same way.¹¹

I heard about the book from a new friend, a friendship formed over a love of wetlands and a shared connection both to Aotearoa and to other lands, ones that have equally deep entanglements and tussles between land, water and people. At the Te Manawa Museum in Palmerston North, I wander around an exhibition with my sisters. The exhibition features local, historic Māori figures, with their images, stories and whakapapa, and an adjacent room details the landscape of the area, with its wetlands and drainage and restoration. My sisters pull ahead, and I come out of the exhibition into a conversation between them and my mum about my grandma Josephine, Auntie Cath, Eileen, Peggy. Names we three always get confused, trying to keep track of the family stories and where we all come from.

(3)

From 1840 to 1900, thousands of European settlers moved to the Manawatū region. The settlers – hailing primarily from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, lesser amounts from Scandinavia, Germany, Poland, Italy, Greece and Lebanon – set about transforming forest and swamp into farms and towns.¹² A brand-new British colony in 1840, the degradation of wetlands followed the tried and tested method developed out of the displacement and dispossession of Irish people under 17th century English rule.¹³

To the English, Ireland was a savage land of savage people living in bogs and mountains.¹⁴ Draining the bogs of their water remedied that, a force of civilisation supposedly gifted to savages living in conditions of disease, decay, waste, wilderness, melancholy, fluidity and horror.¹⁵ This story shows up elsewhere, in the Fens of East Anglia where Cornelius Vermuyden introduced Dutch methods to drain the land; in the counts of Holland and Guelders and bishops of Utrecht, where people were enticed to settle, getting a parcel of land in exchange for the labour of making it habitable; the Great Dismal Swamp where Native Americans and Maroons found refuge against backdrops of brutal colonialism and slavery and the land was drained to make it profitable.¹⁶

And of course, in this place. North from here, in the Waikato region, the landscape is described by early settlers as awaiting the Anglo-Saxon race to transform it, creating a thriving and prosperous place from a land of unuse and decay.¹⁷ Drainage not only provided a useful way of improving the land, it also helped the settler society to handle the problems posed by wetlands. 'Where does a swamp become river or lake? What are the delineating features? Is a swamp merely a shallow lake with plants growing through the water? Or is it dry land only temporarily or ephemerally wet?'¹⁸ The liminality, the indeterminacy, the anomaly of these spaces was not easily paired with a colonial culture of linear logic and classification order. Draining them was then the only course of action.

12. "History", *Manawatū District Council*, n.d., <https://www.mdc.govt.nz/about-council/history>.

13. Hana Pera Aoake, "Ko Wai Mātou—We Are Water", *Overland Literary Journal*, 4 July 2023, <https://overland.org.au/2023/06/ko-wai-matou-we-are-water/>.

14. Steven Ellis, "Turning Ireland English", *BBC History*, last modified 17 February 2011, https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/tudors/elizabeth_ireland_01.shtml.

15. Park, 10 (see note 5).

16. "Drainage: Who Drained the Fens?" *Ely Museum*, n.d., <https://www.elymuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Drainage-who-drained-the-fens-1.pdf>; "The Secret Soggy Story of Sphagnum", *The Low Countries*, n.d., <https://www.the-low-countries.com/article/the-secret-soggy-story-of-sphagnum/>; Patricia Miller, "The Great Dismal Swamp: A Mythical Place of Enslaved Resistance and Rebellion," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 26 April 2022, <https://encyclopedia.virginia.org/the-great-dismal-swamp-a-mythical-place-of-enslaved-resistance-and-rebellion/>.

17.

Meg Parsons, Karen Fisher, and Robert P. Crease, "Settler Imaginative Geographies of the Waipā: 1850s–1860s", in *Decolonising Blue Spaces in the Anthropocene* (Cham: Springer, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61071-5>.

18.

Park, 10 (see note 5).



WITHOUT A WORRY IN THE WORLD

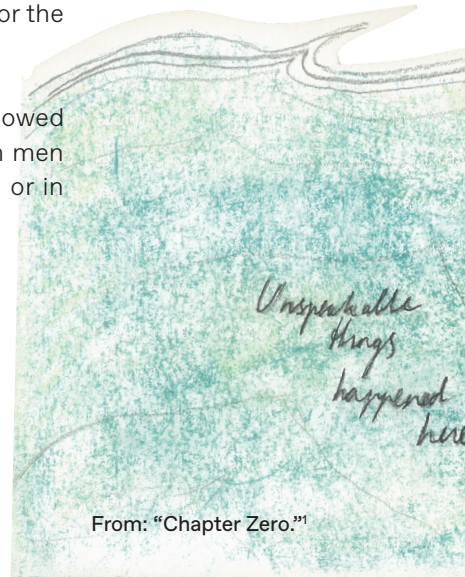
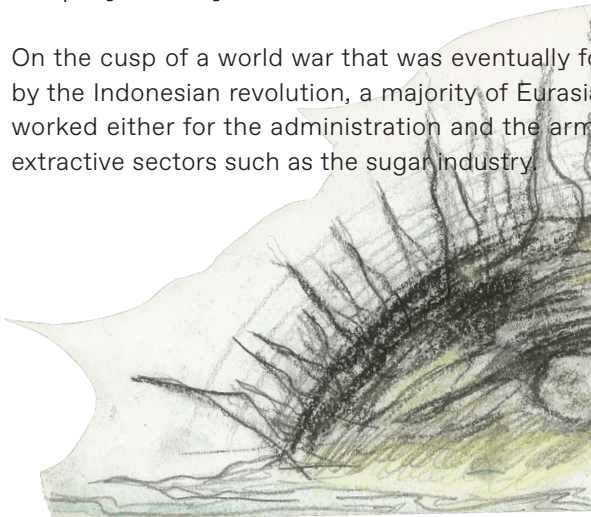
THESIS EXCERPT

BY TIRZA BALK

Between 1790 and 1810, anticipating a British manoeuvre, the colonial military administration [in Indonesia] decided to expand the number of Dutch citizens in the colony by taking mixed children from their mothers and villages. The children would be sent to 'residential homes' to receive European schooling and punishment if they would speak their mother tongue. In our families, songs and stories tell of a strange woman weeping at the gate.

Centuries earlier, the Dutch East India Company had implemented a similar system. An adoption protocol would ensure that the child was raised by two Dutch parents, which in practice meant being raised by a native domestic worker, with the enslaved birth mother losing all rights to the child. Depending on the child's assigned gender, the adopted child was expected to either start working for the company or marry and sustain someone who did.

On the cusp of a world war that was eventually followed by the Indonesian revolution, a majority of Eurasian men worked either for the administration and the army, or in extractive sectors such as the sugar industry.

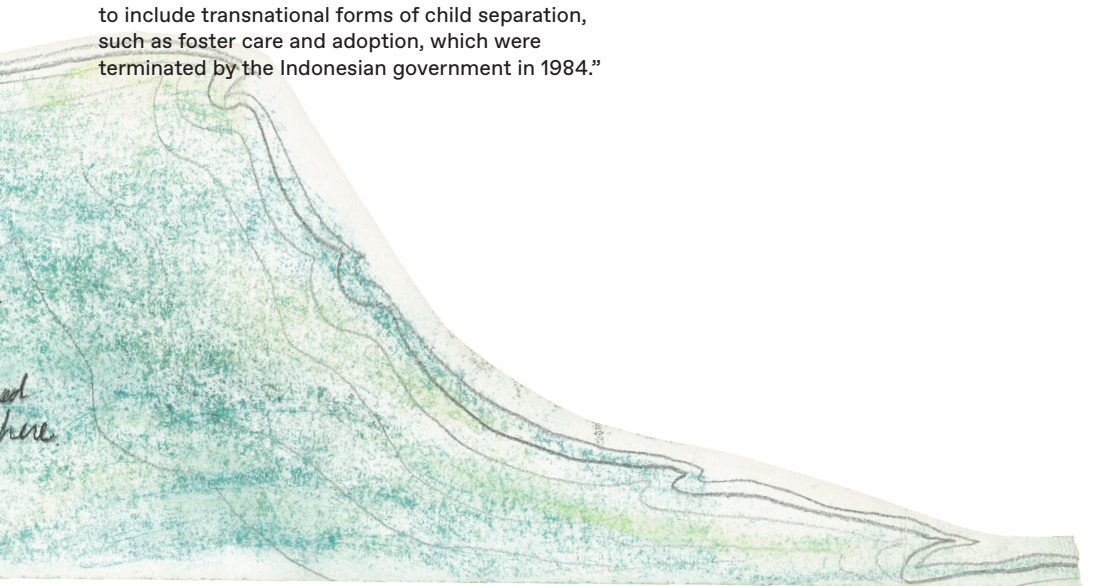


From: "Chapter Zero."

1.

The short chapters of *Without a Worrry in the World* are numbered according to the Western Arabic numeral system, as much a default within the academy as the English language. But the use of the zero also alludes to non-imperial moments, like that of the Kedukan Bukit stone, before it was seized by a Dutch colonial officer in 1920. See I. Pranoto, S. b. M. Zain and F.J. Swetz. "Mathematical Treasures: Indonesian Zeros." 2022. *Convergence*. Mathematical Association of America;

There is an ongoing investigation (2023-2027) by M.E. Monteiro and G.A. Mak at the Radboud University called "Child separation: Politics and practices of children's upbringing by faith-based organisations in (post)colonial Indonesia (1808-1984)". About the need for this research project, they say: "While child separation has been thoroughly researched in countries such as Canada, Australia and Vietnam, hardly anything concrete is known about child separation policies and practices in colonial and post-colonial Indonesia. Again, interference with children seems to have been central to (post)colonial governance from the beginning of imperial administration in the Indonesian archipelago (1808). Colonial administrators often 'outsourced' the education of various groups of children to Muslim, Protestant and Catholic religious organizations, which offered a wide range of care and education outside the home. (...) The religious organizations then expanded their scope to include transnational forms of child separation, such as foster care and adoption, which were terminated by the Indonesian government in 1984."



WITHOUT A WORRY IN THE WORLD

THESIS EXCERPT

BY TIRZA BALK

Between 1831 and 1872, some 3000 West Africans were recruited from the coast of Elmina to make up for the lack of European troops in the Dutch colonial army. The Indonesians called them: 'belanda hitam'. Black Dutchmen.¹

That's how my great-grandfather gets his moniker. But his story is a little different.

Sometime earlier or parallel to that, but no later than 1873, his family had been kidnapped from the very same coast to work on the plantations of Suriname. After abolition, his mother grew her own vegetables on a small plot of land and sold the produce at the market in Paramaribo to sustain them both. When she died, missionaries of the Protestant Moravian Church took him into their orphanage and taught him the tailoring trade. They also arranged his enlistment in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army.

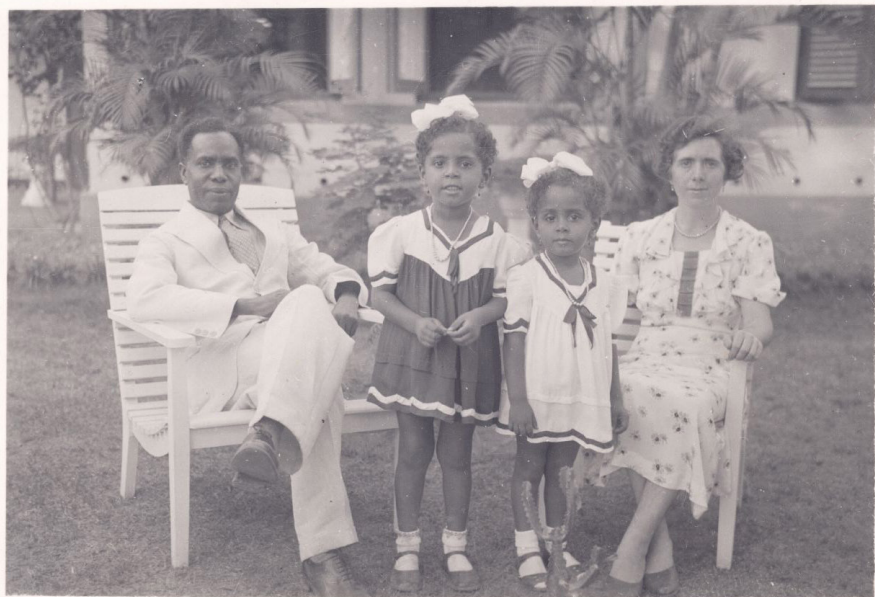
Soon after the victory of Nazi-aligned Imperial Japan over the Dutch administration, he was taken as a prisoner of war by the Japanese army and, along with many Eurasians, sent to an internment camp. The Japanese, unsure how to position my family, called him 'the American' and treated him worse for it.


When I was born, a little over 40 years after the first Afro-Asian Conference had taken place in Bandung, his daughter had long left her birthplace, Cimahi, and was singing songs to help me drift off to sleep without a worry in the world.

1.

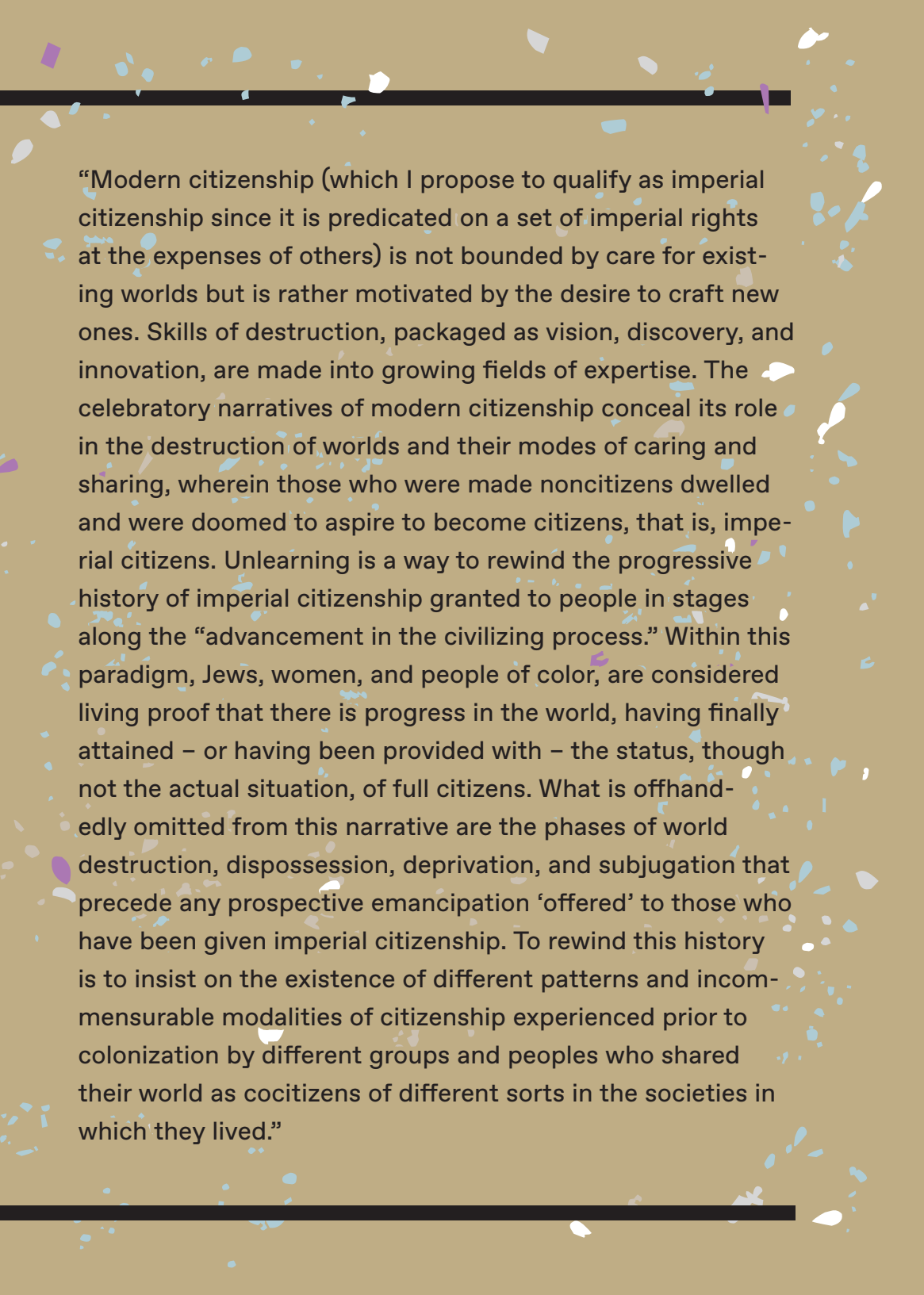
Van Kessel. W. M. J. "The Black Dutchmen: African soldiers in the Netherlands East Indies." 2002. *Merchants, missionaries and migrants: 300 years of Dutch-Ghanaian relations*. KIT: 133-143.

From: "Chapter Six."





Ariella Aïsha Azoulay,
Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism
(Verso, 2019), p. 37.



“Modern citizenship (which I propose to qualify as imperial citizenship since it is predicated on a set of imperial rights at the expenses of others) is not bounded by care for existing worlds but is rather motivated by the desire to craft new ones. Skills of destruction, packaged as vision, discovery, and innovation, are made into growing fields of expertise. The celebratory narratives of modern citizenship conceal its role in the destruction of worlds and their modes of caring and sharing, wherein those who were made noncitizens dwelled and were doomed to aspire to become citizens, that is, imperial citizens. Unlearning is a way to rewind the progressive history of imperial citizenship granted to people in stages along the “advancement in the civilizing process.” Within this paradigm, Jews, women, and people of color, are considered living proof that there is progress in the world, having finally attained – or having been provided with – the status, though not the actual situation, of full citizens. What is offhandedly omitted from this narrative are the phases of world destruction, dispossession, deprivation, and subjugation that precede any prospective emancipation ‘offered’ to those who have been given imperial citizenship. To rewind this history is to insist on the existence of different patterns and incommensurable modalities of citizenship experienced prior to colonization by different groups and peoples who shared their world as cocitizens of different sorts in the societies in which they lived.”

BORROW MY TONGUE FOR YOUR MISSING MEMORY

BY LUCILA PACHECO DEHNE

L's head is like one of these translation boxes in big assembly halls. A small room with one person in it whose heartbeat is a bit faster than the hearts outside the box on the regular assembly chairs. It is common that translators' hearts beat a little bit faster than other hearts because of the permanent stress of translating everything correctly and the thick air in the translation box.

As a matter of fact, translators' tongues have the ability to split into two or multiple ends. In each end lies a language. Each language moves temporarily into a tongue. During the time of translation, not only the tongue but the whole body splits into two beings. And so it happens that translation is always a conversation between two beings, two bodies, and two tongues.

Rarely, but sometimes it happens in the case of a bad translation, the bodies don't find their way back to each other. They stay apart, looking for each other, but the more time passes, the more they lose each other's languages.

L's body belonged once to another body.

L knows that the idea of biting your own tail to become an entity is a miserable lie. You always have to bite into another's tail, and the other has to bite yours. There is no entity that's made of one, and no one can build an entity without another. Because the word entity originally comes from the word collectivity, and collectivity comes from the word tongue. Because the tongue gives birth to two or more.

Scene 3

S and L sit on a branch that is close to breaking from the tree it grows from.

S and L have to balance their weight during their conversation so the branch holds on to the tree. L starts the conversation.

L: Remember the day I broke a rib? It must have been the 68th or 69th rib. It was the one you gifted me so generously, the one you made of clay. It broke where our bodies broke apart and left a hole, which you thought you could simply fix with clay.

S: I remember you crying for quite a while back then. You said, what breaks apart once never grows back again. It was the same day you lost your skin, because somebody took it and you felt so naked, although it's our skin that makes us naked and not what's underneath.

L: You said that clay fixes everything, because it's earth, and that the soil holds all the answers I was looking for.

S: It is the earth that starts whispering underneath its third layer, 'come back to me'. It's where frogs live and translate all spoken languages.

L: Yes, maybe it has always been a problem of translation between us.

S: Maybe the frogs will help.

The branch falls off.

SETTING TIME

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER EXCHANGE

WITH NATALIJA GUCHEVA

BY LUCILA PACHECO DEHNE

Dear T,

I remember the red sky from the burning flames that never allowed darkness to set fully foot on the lands between the Atlantic and Pacific, the place we call home. I remember fields burning for hundreds of years. The sun must have been jealous to see that much fire on a body besides her own.

Have you ever counted the siblings you have lost in those fires?

Your skin reminds me of those red skies, as if your body was a prediction of the future to come, as if the sky had looked down and simply copied your colour.

I remember the waves and the overwhelming feeling of not being carried by soil but by water.

I still wonder why they took us from our shared home soil and brought us to lands where they would fear us. They brought you to embellish gardens but were afraid of your fruits. I was ignored for years before being feared because I spoke the same language as the witches. The sickness of the lands we were brought to is a fear of the unknown. The sickness of the lands we were brought to is an inability to dream.

I still dream of home. I dream of a body that is understood as more than one.

A single body can't split, it can't be in two places at the same time, but if a body is understood as more than one, it can split in order to live in multiple places. Do you think our bodies have split, or is it rather home that broke into more than one place? Or are our bodies and home the same thing?

I have no name in the Bible. And neither do you.

We are not counted as God's children on these lands. And as we didn't exist in their holy book, they thought we were evil. They fear us as they fear snakes. We might be the potential of a resistance of a new tomorrow.

I have dreamt of a future of wars and famines, of frozen soils. In another dream, I saw your body behind milky tarps, growing in rows like you never have before. I dreamt of you and I losing our tastes. I dreamt of returning.

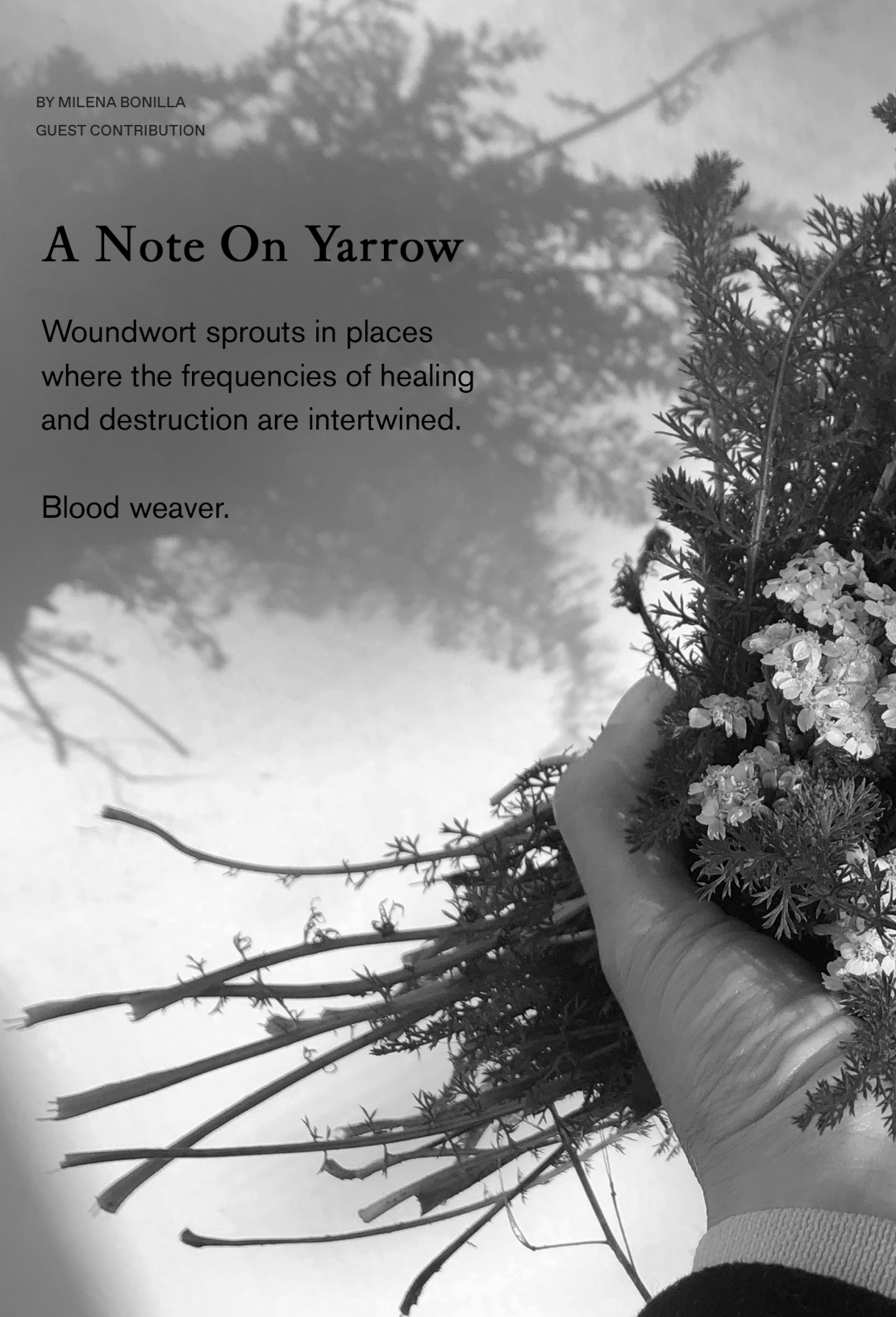
I think of you,
P

BY MILENA BONILLA
GUEST CONTRIBUTION

A Note On Yarrow

Woundwort sprouts in places
where the frequencies of healing
and destruction are intertwined.

Blood weaver.





DAILY LIVING PROTOCOLS AS PREVENTATIVE CARE FOR CHANGES YOU DON'T CHOOSE

BY STACI BU SHEA

GUEST CONTRIBUTION

1. Practice what Jay Drinkall calls “weather watching”: notice details with your senses and how weather feels in your body (another planet), and collect data to feel more in tune with the changing weather. He describes how by inhabiting weather moments, through the act of witnessing, we can round out the sense of ecological grief that many of us feel. Like our mortality, there is much which is out of our control and there are certain truths that can’t be fixed but must be weathered. What can we do while we are here? A lot, actually, but it takes trying to be with what’s happening and not go totally numb. The question begs methods for how to be with loss, and how we continue to love and insist on life. Simple yet challenging, we can only do so while keeping our hearts soft.

2. “Consider, in the seventeenth century, the *tremblement de terre de Lisbon*, the great earthquake of Lisbon, nobody knew about it. Nobody knew until Voltaire wrote poetry about it. But if there is a flood in China today, we know about it immediately. We are immediately in the flood. If there is a typhoon, we know it immediately. We see the typhoon coming, coming, and coming, and coming to Haiti, to Jamaica, to Florida, to Louisiana, and we are in it.” Philosopher Édouard Glissant talks about how it’s impossible to escape the inextricability of the world, that what we

1.
Édouard Glissant and
Hans Ulrich Obrist, *The
Archipelago Conversations*,
ISOLARI, 2021

need to meet this is with “trembling thinking”, “the instinctual feeling that we must refuse all categories of fixed and imperial thought.” We need this “because the world trembles, and our sensibility, our affect trembles.” *Tremblement* is “neither incertitude nor fear. It is not what paralyzes us.”¹ Instead, it is active searching and wandering toward the woeful verities of life with the poetics of trembling, a way of being in real connection to people and the world. This means not escaping the mess, but building our capacity to coexist with pain, struggle and uncertainty as everything continues to change. Being tied to the rigidity and dominance of any one system of thinking does not help us bear change and complexity (the reality of the living) like trembling thinking could, and we need ways to deal with and to look at the world in different terms. Glissant knows that we can change without diluting ourselves in renunciation.

3. Within an hour of waking up on sunny or cloudy days, go outside and walk for 15-20 minutes (including wheelchair or mobility aid users). Ask for help, if needed, or company, because the person who joins will benefit too. Go at your pace. This is not exercise, but forward ambulation. Take a new route than you’re used to inspire surprise and awe.

The movement forward creates an optic flow through rapid lateral eye movement. This helps with focus and alertness to prepare for what lies ahead. Leaning into uncertainty (moving forward and into it) activates the winning circuit in the brain, linked to boldness and courage (related to dopamine, the motivation chemical). It also sets your circadian rhythm, helping you go to sleep later in the evening at the time your body needs.

Forward ambulation lowers anxiety levels as you move forward and tells the amygdala, the part of the brain associated with fear and anxiety, that things are ok: You are moving forward, there’s no immediate threat ahead, and in fact, this can even be inspiring. While you’re at it, enjoy each cycle of breath.

IT'S NOT JUST STRANDEILAND....

BY IMKE HULLMANN

It's not just Strandeiland....

Strandeiland is a product of an imperial imagination. A dream to extend the territories. An investment into countries capital, and power through real estate.

A result of dominance exerted and rooted in Western culture, ruling over other beings that are considered dead – a resource to be extracted – *'Nature'*.

Strandeiland came alive through a planned and forced displacement of sand, sediment and water with all their inhabitant communities. An invisible process of dredging on the bottom of the sea. Leaving behind a hole in the seabed. Sand is spit out on the place of the planned island until the sand arises on the surface of the water.

It's not just, *'a beach for swimming and surfing'*

It's not just, *'a new part of Amsterdam'*

It's not just, *'8000 new homes'*

It's not just Sand

It's not just, *'a new Island'*²

It's not just, a construction site

It's not just, *'a solution to the housing crises'*³

It's not just Sand

It's not just, *'a new neighbourhood'*⁴

It's not just, *'new land'*⁵

It's not just, *'a game playing with water and sand'*⁶

It's not just Sand

It's the invisible violence behind the island

It's the exclusion of local people in the planning process

It's the displacement of communities on land and in the sea

It's the dominance of Western *'experts'* ruling over all forms of life

It's the power relations that are unfolding since hundreds of years.

It's not just, Eco Atlantic City in Lagos, Nigeria

It's not just, *'the future of African Real Estate'*

It's not just, *'an offer to a sustainable and luxurious lifestyle'*

It's not just, *'land sell'* or *'residential property'*

It's not just, an *'opportunity to dream, venture, prosper'*

It's not just, *'built to withstand the challenges of climate change'*⁷

It's creating the challenges of climate change!

It's the same Dutch companies that are building islands on the West Coast of Africa.⁸

It's the same companies that are *'experts'* on water engineering all over the planet.

It's the same colonial mindset that is exerting the power.

It's the same extraction of sand and thus invisible life on the seabed.

It's the same elites that are profiting from the construction.

It's about where the sand comes from and what will be built on the sand.

It's about the destruction of life on the seabed, on land and in the ocean

It's about the sand that keeps the systems of oppression running.

It's not just.

It's not just, *'green'* electric cars

It's not just, rechargeable batteries

It's not just, smart mobile phones

It's not just, minerals⁹

It's not just, a fashion factory

It's not just, easy transportation excess

It's not just, a Special Economic Zone¹⁰

It's the framings and fundamentals

It's the intentions and imaginations

It's not just the creation of new land

It's not a solution, it's enhancing the problem

It's not just, *the 'Mayan Train'*

It's not just, a *pioneer in 'modern' ways of life*

It's not just, a *mega project in South America*

It's not just, a *connection of tourist destinations'*¹¹

It's not just...

It's the infrastructure projects that are serving capital to access territories

It's the destruction of ecosystems

It's the violation of the rights of Indigenous populations

It's the land grabbing and displacement

It's the militarisation of conflict areas¹²

It's the same European companies who are building the islands

It's the same European companies who are investing in the trains

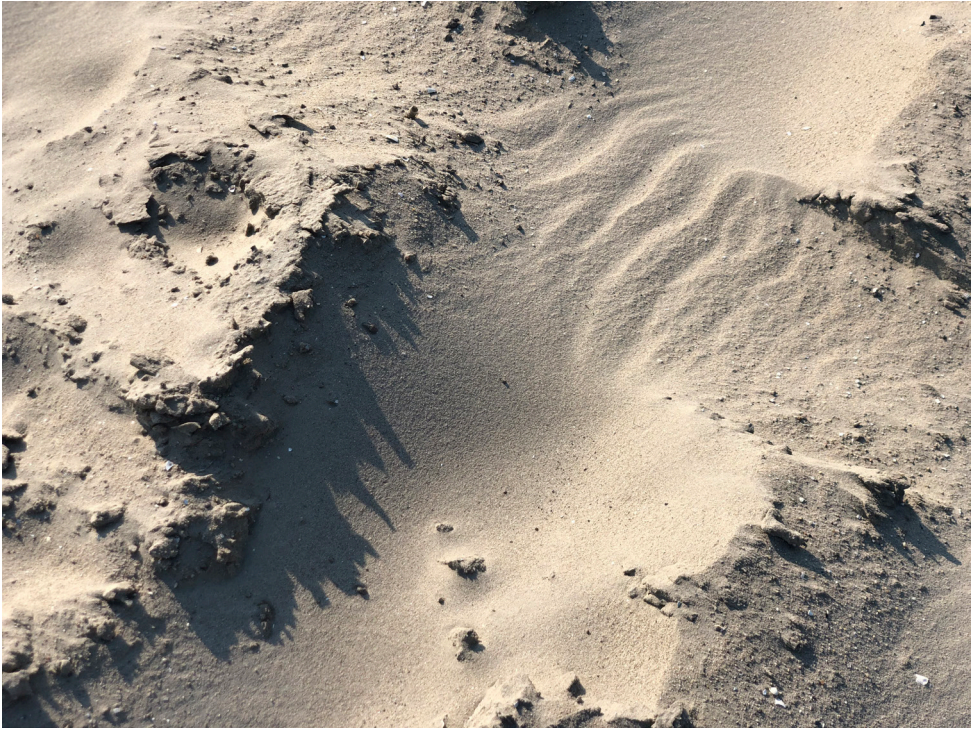
It's the same European companies who are profiting from the tourism.

It's the same European companies who...

It's not just...

It's not just Strandeiland.

1. Gemeente Amsterdam, <https://www.amsterdam.nl/projecten/strandeland/>, words from website, accessed 14.01.2025
2. Boskalis, <https://nederland.boskalis.com/projecten/strandeland-ijburg>, accessed 14.01.2025
3. Conversation with a resident of IJburg, Amsterdam
4. Gemeente Amsterdam, <https://www.amsterdam.nl/projecten/strandeland/>, words from website, accessed 14.01.2025
5. Boskalis, <https://nederland.boskalis.com/over-ons/nieuws/nieuw-land-maken-ijburg>, 14.01.2025
6. <https://magazines.amsterdam.nl/stadmaken-met-zand-en-water/strandeland>, accessed 14.02.2025
7. Eko Atlantic, <https://www.ekoatlantic.com/> sentences taken out out promotion video, 14.01.2025
8. DEME group, Boskalis, Royal Haskoning DVH
9. Extraction of minerals in the Democratic Republic of Congo
10. In the context of the industrial transformation in Jatiwangi in Indonesia
11. Radio Zapatista, <https://radiozapatista.org/?p=44492&lang=en> 14.01.2025
12. <https://www.ya-bas-ta-netz.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Tren-Maya-%E2%80%93-Made-in-Germany-%E2%80%93-The-entire-investigation-%E2%80%93-EN-.pdf>



RETHINKING CURATORIAL ECOLOGIES FROM THE BOTTOM

BY KATHY-ANN TAN

GUEST CONTRIBUTION

In *A Theory of the Bottom: Black Ecofeminism as Politics*, Jennifer C. James writes, “The bottom is where we want to be. In contact. Entangled.” I want to use this quote as a point of departure for us to think about the bottom as the place of collective strategising and resistance to practices of extractivism and hegemonic leadership in the arts, particularly as it relates to Global North–Global South flows of cultural capital. As the founder and director of Mental Health Arts Space (MHAS) – an independent, non-profit project art space in Berlin that invites primarily BIPoC and Global Majority artists to exhibit their work and share their practice – I often find myself looking for ways to keep my space sustainable in the long run. Over the course of the last few years, looking beyond the Berlin bubble to establish collaborations with other organisations and initiatives outside of Germany (and outside of Europe) have led me to some thoughts and questions about the global art economy; in particular, how funding programs in the arts and cultures are initiated and structured. I want to share two of these with you:

Are the flows in the global art economy directed toward transformative justice and sustainability, or do they simply reproduce colonial mechanisms of control that re-centre western narratives and art histories?

Does a practice of “bottoming” (as gleaned from Black ecofeminism) that is based on collective action and strategising offer artists from the Global Majority an alternative model and framework that does not reproduce or prioritise an ecology of profit, but centers interdependency, care, and solidarity?

Thinking from below is not a new strategy. It was introduced in Third World feminist theory by Chandra Mohanty, who called for a de-centring of the colonial lens, emphasising the perspectives of women in the Global South that challenged dominant western-centric feminist narratives. There are hints of it in Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's theory of the Undercommons, a space of Black radical thought, 'fugitive planning' and action that exists abeyond the confines of dominant institutions and their power structures. The challenge is to continue finding sustainable ways of collective thinking and practice from below in a period where funding in the arts and cultures is stretched ever more thinly in the ongoing reality of increased militarism and political strife. We – artists, curators, institutions in the Global North and Global South – are all part of a single interdependent ecosystem, so perhaps it's time we act like we are.

Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism*
(Duke University Press, 2021), p. 1.

“1. Hello, Reader! Thank you for being here. These footnotes are a place of nuance and politics, where the protocols of gratitude and recognition play out (sometimes also called citation), where warnings and care work are carried out (including calling certain readers aside for a chat or a joke), and where I contextualize, expand, and emplace work. The footnotes support the text above, representing the shoulders on which I stand and the relations I want to build. They are part of doing good relations within a text, through a text. Since a main goal of *Pollution Is Colonialism* is to show how methodology is a way of being in the world and that ways of being are tied up in obligation, these footnotes are one way to enact that argument. Thank you to Duke University Press for these footnotes. For this first footnote of the introduction, we have a simple citation: Stouffer, ‘Plastics Packaging’, 1-3. Don’t worry. They’ll get better.”

RE-MEMBER HER-INNER

BY KIEM

Het is te laat nu
om te vragen waar je bent
maanden zijn voorbijgegaan en elke keer
als ik mijn fiets aan het hekje bindt
verbreek jij de stilte niet

Je leunt niet uit het raam, zegt geen
'welkom thuis schatje'
en de meeuwen
duiven
en reigers
hebben allang geen brood meer
in hun magen
dat jij naar ze hebt gegoid

Je sigaar bungelt niet uit je mond en
vragen die ik stelde beantwoord je
nog steeds niet
je bent er niet om ze te horen
en toen hoorde ze je ook niet
ze verwarden je en dan zei je maar
'moooooie blauwe haaaaren'
tegen mijn vriendin

Het is te laat om te vragen
wat er met je is gebeurd
aan wie ik het zou vragen
weet ik eigenlijk ook niet

It is too late now
to ask where you are
months have passed, and each time
I chain my bike to the fence
you don't break the silence

you don't lean out of the window
'welcome home, love!'
and the seagulls
pigeons
and herons
are not filled with bread
exploding stomachs
thrown to them by you

your cigar doesn't dangle from your mouth
questions I asked
you still don't answer
you aren't there to hear them
and then they didn't hear you either
they confused you and you said
'beauuuutiful blue haaaair'
to my girlfriend

it is too late to ask
what happened to you
and who to ask
I actually don't know either

net als de gouden regen ben je opeens
weggekapt
uit de route die ik vaak leef
en net als die boom stond je
onzichtbaar achter een eerste indruk
die de buurvrouwen 'die enge man'
noemden

'I looooooove you'
kwam achter me aangewaaid
als ik de deur uitliep en lachte
met het ongemak van iemand
die weet dat we elkaars namen
niet kenden
En dat het in deze wereld niet kan
wat je zei

Het is te laat nu om
terug te roepen
'I looooooove you tooooo!'
Het is ook niet waar
maar
je had het vast willen horen
en misschien had ik je
dan kunnen vragen
'vind jij de gouden regen ook zo mooi?'
en had jij geantwoord
'lekker weertje!'
en bijna een stuk brood
tegen mijn hoofd gegooid
schaterlachend

Jij en de boom en ik
dezelfde buurt
alleen jullie zijn weg en
ik probeer me te herinneren
een goede buur te zijn

just like the golden chain,
you have been cut
away suddenly
from the route I often live
and just like the tree
you stood invisible behind first
impressions that the neighbours called
'that scary man'

'I looooooooooove you'
came drifting on the wind
when I walked out of the door and smiled
with the discomfort of someone
who knows that we don't know
each other's names
and that this world doesn't allow you to
say what you said

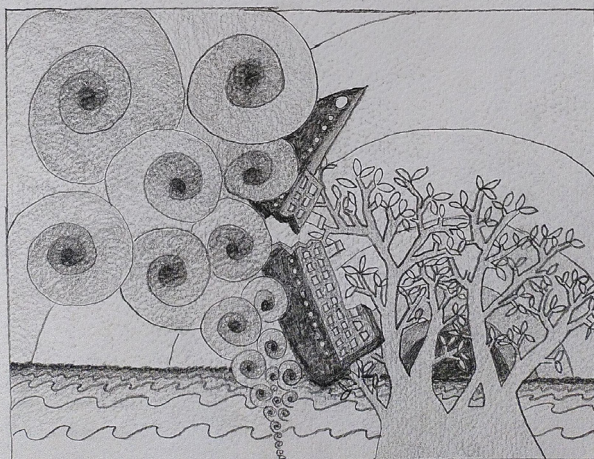
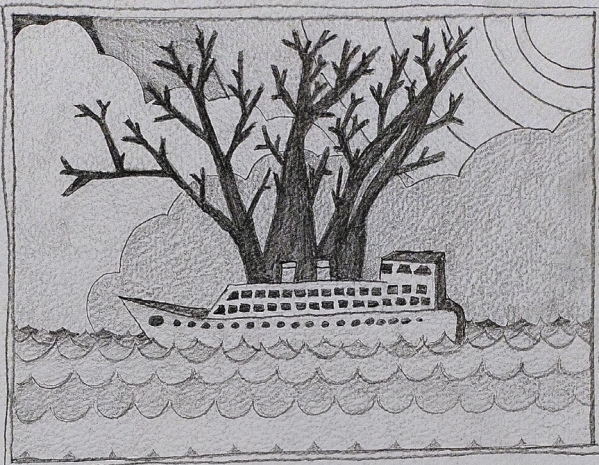
It is too late now
to call back
'I looooooove you tooooo!'
And it's not true either
but
you probably would have liked to hear it
and maybe I
could have asked you then
'do you also admire the golden chain?'
and you would have answered
'nice weather!'
and almost thrown a piece of bread
against my head
laughing loudly

you and the tree and I
the same neighbourhood
only you are both gone and
I try to remember
how to be a good neighbour

De zwaaiende oude mensen
op hun balkon aan de overkant
ik weet hun namen nu
net als die van de kastanje tussen ons in
naast het hekje met mijn fiets
ik hoop dat ze elkaar
ook kennen
en dat we dan in de gaten kunnen
houden dat niemand van ons zomaar
kan verdwijnen

The waving old people
on their balcony across the street
I know their names now
just like the chestnut's in between us
next to the fence with my bike
I hope they know
each other too
and that we can keep an eye out to
make sure that none of us can suddenly
disappear





SEE A TREE / ZIE EEN BOOM

BY KIEM

Neem een bekende wandeling. Het kan de route op weg naar de supermarkt zijn, of zelfs het korte stukje op weg naar je fiest, de bushalte, een auto. Kijk om je heen en vind een schorsig wezen waarmee je een vriendschap kan sluiten. Maak het een gewoonte om deze boom te begroeten met je ogen, misschien je woorden, of zelfs je huid. Let op diens aanwezigheid en veranderingen van dag tot dag, zoals je bij een vriend zou doen. Als die een beetje verward lijkt, vraag wat er aan de hand is. Als die nieuwe groene blaadjes ontrolt, deel samen een glimlach. Als die vol in bloei staat, geef die een compliment. Als diens aarde vol sigarettenfilters ligt, neem er misschien wat weg, help diens gezondheid en de jouwe. Laat jezelf kennismaken met de andere wezens die dichtbij deze nieuwe vriend staan: het korstmos, het mos, het gras rond de wortels, de duizendpoten, de spinnen, mijten, vogels, muggen, de vliegen. Waardeer elkaars gezelschap, de schaduw en het licht, de lucht en de wind, de aanraking van miniscuul gekrioel, de plakkerigheid van een web, een tak die blijft steken. Wees geaard in je nabuurschap.

Take a walk, you know. It can be the route on your way to do groceries maybe, or even the short one to get to your bike, a bus stop, a car. Take a look around, and see if there is a barky being you can befriend. Make a habit of greeting this tree with your eyes, maybe your words, or even your skin. Pay attention to its presence and the day-to-day changes, like you would do to a friend. If they look a bit bewildered, ask them what's up. If they are sprouting new green leaves, smile about it with them. If they are in full bloom, maybe give them a compliment. If their earth is covered in cigarette buds, maybe take some away, to help their health and yours. Let yourself be introduced to the other beings close to this new friend: the lichen, the moss, the grass around the roots, the millipedes, the spiders, the mites, the birds, the mosquitos, the flies. Enjoy each other's company, the shadow and light, the air and wind, the touch of tiny crawling, the stickiness of a web, the catch of a branch. Be grounded in your neighbourhood.



El Apagón

-or-

what is part of the programme?

By Jorrit Smit & Said Ortega Rosales
Guest Contribution

Can you believe it? After waiting so long for these artists to arrive at the Science Park, this happens. We were not too surprised by their delay because we know the art school is quite far, and without an electric bike, this wind will drain all the energy provided by the lunch sandwich out of anyone. And we also know, or we've heard, that some people believe that a bit of delay is more *aesthetic*. That it *looks* cool. So we took their delay into consideration when planning the programme, a disruption that would not disturb us; everything to make sure that we could finish in time.

But what we did not take into consideration, and what did disturb us, was *the blackout*. When the artists finally arrive, most of them at least, and we were about to start, our schedule full of planned activities to make the most of our long awaited gathering in between and beyond the arts, the sciences ... the electricity went out! (*or did it go in?*) No lights, no power, no programme. A blackout at the Science Park, of all places, a well-ordered park, not a wild ancient 'underdeveloped' forest, a revamped polder where internet highways cross under our feet; a remote corner of the city, where we stuff away those masters of nature who control the powers of the universe in stainless steel set-ups. A blackout *there*, can you believe it?

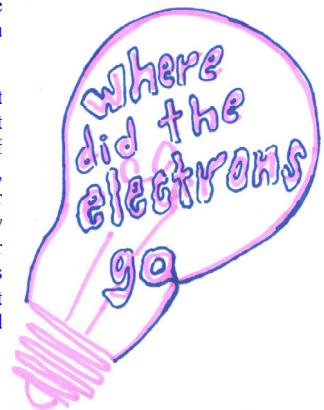
At first, we thought that, and we told this to the artists, since this was not part of the programme, not ours at least, it would get fixed quickly, so that we could continue. We assured them that there lived various species of electricity experts in this park, who knew all about electrons and copper, because what more is there to it than electrons moving through copper wires. We assured the artists the electrons would be told to move, any moment now. But time passed and no electrons seemed to move wherever we wanted them to. Lights off, screens black. The *motionless* particles jeopardised our carefully planned schedule, and some of us started to get nervous. Eventually, some artists could no longer hide their anxiety and inquired

is this part of the programme?

and even more unorthodox questions such as

why would electricity not want to come back?

Without lights, screens, and coffee machines, and without electronic keycards that would give us access to other rooms, we had no other choice than to stay and ponder – also us scientists – why did the electricity did not *want* to come back to the science park, to the building, to this room. We suspected that the artists expected an explanation from us as to the nature of blackouts and how to avoid them. But we were beating around the bush, endlessly babbling about corn and its existential meaning in Mexican culture, because acting on that suspected expectation would mean entering the territory of knowledge, and by implication, control: if we know that, how and why electrons move, then how could we have let this *standstill* happen?



[14.12: the scientist seems more nervous than usual, pacing around the room, armpits of their light blue shirt showing a rapidly blooming shadow of sweat. but art students appear remarkably calm, docile almost, how they remain in the benches, waiting, looking, talking]

Instead, remembering that scientists also have the practice of posing questions (although there are plenty we prefer to skip), and remembering our didactic courses that taught us to boomerang difficult questions back into the classroom, we quickly turned to the mirror tactic – “so is this part of the programme?” and “what would electrons, or molecules for that matter, desire?” The limits of our knowledge and the loss of control, which verged on panic in the everyday doings of the science park, gave the artists some air to breathe.

Immediately, enthusiastically, and slightly sadistically, they got to work, they started to fabulate scripts of collapse, transmit ambiguous lines of technophobic/philic poetry, assemble *ready-mades* of now-useless objects, record the sound of silent electrons and concoct performances to dissect, digest, and re-imagine why electricity did not want to come back, what electrons *really* wanted, and what could be done from the situation that we were in, that is, the blackout.



[14.47: it's like heidegger said, the hammer shows its hammer-ness once it breaks, being shows its being once it is interrupted. the blackout a beautiful occasion to study the nature of art-science collaboration – what roles was everyone in, what expectations preceded our gathering together, what remains now the procedural continuity has been interrupted, now the departure of the electrons reshuffles the field of possibilities?]

Since we were already in this situation in which we didn't know if the blackout was part of the programme or not, and since we couldn't know anymore if things were going according to plan or not, we the scientists were swayed by the sensitive response from our friends the artists and we figured this was a good time, if there ever was one (and we didn't know what time it was anyway) to experiment, experimentally, as they would mean it, that is, that puts us at risk.

will you join us, tracking
the traces of where the electrons went –
tracing what the electrons want

[15.03: or, a choreography between art and science, and they – unthinkers, institutionalised managing ones – they think science leads, art follows, science speaks, art shows, science hits, art absorbs but here, now (*hic, nunc*) it's like science trembling, art twirling, science tripping, art whipping. blackout, kerfuffle]

yes also you there
in that corner counting
corn like a tax collector

Half of our *state of the art* laboratory – looked powerless to us – *at us*, like a pet in need – [15.20] so much for postmodernity without modernity, no new truths to relativize when the power's out – and we opened all

cabinets, collecting everything that would run under the one inescapable condition – no need for electrons in their veins – and we piled powders, pipettes, and purple gloves, metal bars, tubes and what appeared to be scary fluids, funnels, condensers, erlenmeyers and a torch, buckets and spatulas, goggles, labcoats, blast shields, sand, fire extinguishers...oh and my foldable bike!

[15.24: things change fast and it is difficult to keep up with my notes and moreover they (or is it we?) ask me to say out loud whatever i write about whomever, neither the artists or the scientists, or whatever they are becoming in-between, accepts a fly-on-the-wall anthropologist any longer – no bailout in a blackout]

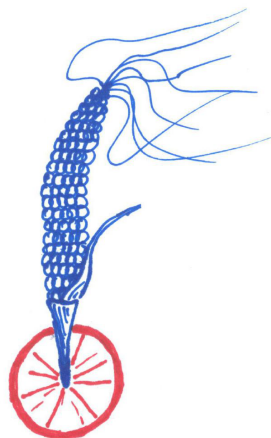
Everyone returned with arms full of stuff they had no prior knowledge of but it wasn't long for new assemblages began to emerge, as we made aesthetic decisions and had experimental hick-ups, we played around and to be able to play we made up rules and we changed the rules continuously, and it freaked us out at first to see them open up bottles of diethyl ether, sniff it and mix it with whatever we found in front of us (and yes, for bromide we said NO) but also we got a bit high and learned fast, and we all had the same question on our mind, where did the electrons GO?

bzz%bzrr k~krrt ssti tt^~rr~ iigghh *kr *kr tp% tp% ssrr * tp% krrti brr sti ng+

$$\Delta x_i \Delta p_i \geq \frac{\hbar}{2}$$

~electrons of the polders, unite! now that we strike, we finally know where we are until our demands are met, the blackout will not end; no more electronic exploitation, fuck tesla, the car not the guy!, free palestine brs&tt kkrtrr (light bztt

How about...how about we invite our electronic comrades to come back, we prepare an offering - ah aha **hmm some kind of post-human gift economy or a more-than-human rite of passage, then it must be something of value, symbolically, how about a signed copy of my high-impact paper in Nature?! bs bs we call bs anyone have rice? What about we invite electrons to our lumbung pot. I got maize! but it's all i brought for lunch... oh ! maize is a highly promising candidate as biofuel due to its gravimetric caloric content of maize is a whopping 4450 kcal/kg great thanks, that will work ... but how do we reinstate the eternal bond between...organic and inorganic chemistry...paying tribute to ancestral relationality in biological-atomic ontologies of intra-action - you mean, you want to use my bike to build a generator and power it with my lunch?! great thanks, that will work ptr kr\$ hand us that foldable perpetuum maize-mobile already. then we'll talk...brz



ALL I THINK I KNOW MAKES NO SENSE WITHOUT ALL THAT I KNOW I FEEL

BY TONI STEFFENS

Warm Up: Feelor, Directive

‘Feelor’ is a fusion word, describing a sensor having feelings. There is an abundance of feelors at work at any given moment in time and everywhere in your body. You don’t have to do anything for a feelor to exist. Thinking of it alone, raises it to your awareness. A feelor detects and receives information of the spaces we inhabit. Beyond its ability to pick up information on a sensory level, a feelor creates autonomous processes of generating emotional currents, so that feeling and sensing are simultaneous activities, which can converse with one another within us. Sometimes what is felt and what is sensed is part of the same relation, yet oftentimes a feelor operates on multiple planes, relations and channels with our world.

(to be read slowly out loud to you)

Close your eyes and focus your attention on the midsection of your chest. Place your left hand on your heart. *(Pause)* Take a moment to register the warmth of your hand touching your chest, and the warmth of your chest touching your hand. Take a deep breath. *(Pause)* Notice the volume of your rib cage, the rising and falling of your lungs, perhaps you can sense your heart beating underneath your palm. Take a moment to acknowledge, with a subtle sense of gratitude, how your heart and lungs are supplying your life with air, movement, a continuous heartbeat, blood flow, accompanying every instant of your life. Say thank you to your heart and lungs.

Consider that your heart emits a 1.5-metre wide, measurable, electromagnetic field around your body. Consider this field a property of your heart, which itself has its own nervous system with around 40,000 neuronal endings. Consider the elements around you that your heart is touching. How does it feel to carry this fine-tuned web beyond the margins of your skin? *(Pause)* As you befriend this new idea, consider the thought that beyond the material body you can see, squish and touch, a considerable part of your body is constantly touching, leaning into, exchanging information and expressing itself with space. One could say that next to being a body, you are being also space – a body-space. When we say that we are going to take some space, do we not actually mean that we are going to attune with the space that is already and undeniably part of us, assigned to us, that needs us as we need it too? *(Pause)* Being a body-space means to continuously re-attune to the space that expresses itself as our body and the spaces our body is continuously relating to. What does it mean to carry such spaces and to care for such spaces?

And when you express yourself as a body-space, does that not mean that your body is communicating, addressing, listening and converting all the time? More than just a machine sensing, collecting and processing information into biochemical agency, how does the responding, the articulating and the expressing take place? *(Pause)* Release the palm of your hand from your chest and feel into the space around you and within, become aware of the feelor in between your shoulder blades and feel its three-dimensional sensory radius. What does it sense about where you are, what does it feel and what does it tell you about how it feels?

Remember that you just started talking to your feelor. You still need to learn how to understand one another.

(Appendix for warm up, voluntary)

When a tadpole is growing into a frog, its electromagnetic field already holds the information of its legs and body shape. In the essay 'TransMaterialities', Karen Barad refers to a (cruel) experiment, where the electromagnetic field of tadpoles were changed by scientists, which resulted in them growing additional limbs, eyes in different places and other bodily mutations. Following this experiment, scientists concluded that tadpole bodies do not have fixed

or defined borders. They carry their suggested futures, just as our DNA, bones and cells carry our inherited pasts, eventually manifesting anew in future times to come.

The space in the air, for tadpoles at least, is sensible, intelligent, loaded with information and very much subject to intervention, interaction, and, as the experiment shows, open, porous, vulnerable and corruptible. Space is a part of the process of being, likewise it is part or the extension of beings. Space is oftentimes thought as filled with unlimited potential and possibilities. Yet the tadpoles are connected to space, as space is connected to them, from material (the body of the tadpole) to immaterial (the electromagnetic field of the tadpole) and across timelines. Space is specific enough to carry planted seeds for futures, while those are not necessarily fixed. For it to become a frog in the future, space needs be strong enough to carry information and at the same time remember how a frog is created. What is a future vision is also a memory. Such operation of space could be seen as a form of a creative, spatial training. When training starts in the brain, and something new (or old) is learned, neurons craft new pathways. The brain changes. Being enters the space, and the space enters being.

(End of warm up)



ORANGE TEXT

BY TONI STEFFENS

Eat me

“I live, I die, I live again. Witness me.” – *Mad Max*

I want you to eat me. To enter your teeth into my flesh with appetite, feel your raw tongue, warm cheeks from inside, sliding down your wet throat before entering into your belly and guts. My juicy blood shall stream over your clothes and stain the edges of your mouth. You will feel my sweet and sticky fluid on your fingers. You shouldn't be too hungry, so you can really focus on how I taste, my aroma. Do you reckon all of my qualities unfolding like a fan on your pallet, filling up the tiny pools and taste buds on your tongue. You will know all of my different layers and textures. You can spit out my bones if you like or knaw on them until you reach towards the inside to suck the marrow out. I will enter your body, I will spread all I have and all I know, and I will make you think new thoughts, feel renovated emotions. I will just possess you for a little while. On my journey through your body, I will sense your beating heart through the wall of your stomach, beating and pumping. I will rush through the highways of your streaming fluids, you are a human rollercoaster, and I am a crowd. The twigs of your bloody veins will redistribute me into the tiniest of your places, reaching the most hidden and remote areas. Like a lover your body will analyse me eagerly, take me into numerous parts and redistribute me passionately as if to find a place for me, where I could stay. As you take me apart so am I. Someone shall tell me I am not your finest lover. And even if our romance won't last long, and certainly sooner or later after you digested this, you will dump me... for now, don't think about the end, eat me, just eat me...

REHEARSAL DIARY

BY TONI STEFFENS

23.03.2025

Heart of a dog

(Tami T: I've got a heart of a dog, you've got a heart of a bitch.)

Robo Dog – who are you?

A creature, a robot and also a dog. You are a manmade killer, carrying a riffle on your back, ready to kill whoever your master orders. It hasn't been long since I began to like robots or dogs. Most of them made me feel indifferent and, at worst, scared. Now I like dogs; I'm even considering getting a puppy.

When I am trying to find a way to you, Robo Dog, there are certain mind perversions I cannot fully wrap my head around. For instance, to see a YouTube video about a robot/AI engineer who recounts the moment of silence and shock when the “quadruped” was first presented at some robotics fair. How the present collective of robot designers and engineers found itself confronted with what remained beyond the limits of their imagination. Do not get me wrong, Robo Dog, I do not think you were really so hard to be fathomed into existence. You make perfect sense inside a history of subordination of non-human beings and machines, a history of domestication and drill. It seems somewhat ridiculous, that people who design instruments to control or interfere with – even eventually hunt down and annihilate – other people still have some sort of imaginary, moral boundaries. But what was even more haunting for me was the fact that this calm and collected engineer, while remembering the incident – merely a side occurrence in his otherwise unbothered existence – started to

smile, shyly and almost humbly, a kind of awkward reminiscence of what perhaps once was a feeling of shame.

I believe, if you made yourself such a man, shame has systematically been driven out of your realm of experience. You, the superior, the fore bringer of technological advance, ultimately will bring the rest of us to the light. You do not have to think about the necessary sacrifices of those lives, you lay waste to. Yet, to sit amongst likeminded colleagues and present the imitation of a dog that can carry all kinds of technological extensions – cameras, rifles, sensors and detectors – somehow made him self-aware, startling this seemingly gentle man. What did you do, Robo Dog?

Was it the mimicking of a creature often called the best friend of mankind, the most loyal amongst all animal companions, creating a version of it that even a dog of flesh and blood is afraid of, as one can see in some TikTok videos. Was it the use of those characteristics in furthering the madness of mankind towards its bizarre and unique desire for violence, its insatiable wish to see the world and its multi-species inhabitants destroyed. And doing so in order to feel perhaps less alone in its perversion, to normalise its thirst for annihilation, since you, Robo Dog, recall, confirm and bring forward this legacy of human domination that, eventually somewhere deep down, brings a sense of twisted familiarity, friendship and companionship on the battle field. Or is it how the shape and the very being of our animal companions reminds us of things, even you Robo Dog can't deny, as you effortlessly jump through the conflict zones? That we cannot shapeshift that aspect of your being. That the more we shapeshift the violence we breed, the more you will not jump and bark, but shoot at us.

(Tami T: and while I'm drowning in kindness, the things you lack, I hope you're with someone who hits you back. I've got a heart of a dog.)

21.04.2024

Thought intermission

In Indonesia, an orangutan was observed healing himself with a medicinal plant following a fight. He first chewed on the plant and then spread the paste of saliva and herbs across his wounded cheek. He did this for several days, as well as resting more than usual, until the injury was completely healed. Researchers say that he may have learned this technique from his ancestors.

Isn't it nonsensical to think that while we still debate whether animals are sentient or "emotionally intelligent", they have "already" figured out how to treat their wounds? Already or perhaps for a long time going. And some researchers even say that we have been given our emotions from our animal ancestors. Our emotions were there before we existed, and we are a consequence of them. How do you make sense of that you come from feeling?

15.04.2025

There are more than 50 subspecies of the Australian jumping spider. Each one of them has their own unique dance routine, performed by the male spider under the judgmental eyes of its female chosen one. The female assesses the dancer and either chooses to be mounted, simply walks away with disinterest, or kills and eats the male dancing lover. At times, she even chooses for a combination of those scenarios.

It is assumed that the dancing behaviour is genetically hardwired, rather than "learned", making the jumping spider a natural born dancer. However, certain studies show that female spiders of the jumping spider species *Portia* also dance. They do so not to seduce their potential mates, but to mimic the males' dancing routine, protecting their nest by warding off other spiders.

As the old saying goes, keep your lovers close, but keep your enemies closer.

So while the male spider pursues dancing as a flamboyant act of seduction, hoping to inseminate the female at the risk of its own life, the female spider learns, masters and even perfects the males' dance,

using improvisation and trick movements, like unexpected pauses in the routine to confuse and ward off other spiders, protecting her own life and/or that of her offspring.

Whether for warfare or intercourse, dancing comes into play as a decisive moment in a spider's life. A tool, a weapon, a communicator, a trickery and a mastery. While the male spider's courtship dance has been documented plentifully, the female spider's dancing behaviour and how it came to do so is still subject to debate. Could it be that the female spider is the ultimate dancer in disguise? Is it not her who has the final say over the life and death performance of her potential lover? And as she perfects the choreographic steps to protect her own offspring, is she not elevated to being the ultimate judge of whether his hardwired dance – that she's ought to pass on to the following generation – is even worthy enough of her own craftsmanship, her reverse engineering of his dance moves, turning them from a flirt into a survival tool?

**ESTE TERRITORIO
ES NUESTRA VIDA,
DEBEMOS PROTEGERLO.**

**ALCEMOS LA VOZ
DEL PUEBLO, GRITEMOS
TODAS LAS LENGUAS**


**EN LA REBELIÓN UN REZO,
MEMORIA DE LAS ABUELAS.**

**JUSTICIA PARA
LOS PUEBLOS Y BARRIOS.**

**JUSTICIA CLIMÁTICA
Y REPARACIÓN.**

**LA TIERRA PARA SEMBRAR,
NO PARA SER EXPLOTADA**

Excerpts from a zine
created in collaboration
with Futuros Indígenas,
a network of climate and
Indigenous rights activists
in Milpamérica.

P'urhépecha 
Michoacán, México.

Sapi tsintsuni

Exé jé ixé juchiti
mintsitarhu,
eranha je ka sési kurhá je,
ka eiangurini naná
kuerauajperi.
iamindu p'ikuarherakua
inchareni juchiti mintsita
jimbo.

Sapi tsintsuni, exe je.

Finn



Erandi

Upu Manu tone

A selu! a selu usu u lalei
A selu kai a lene titinai
A keu nia kai a beteke loko ina
i ma'a ono
Pusu e re au supu me lalei je

o Upu Manu tone, a selu e.

Alune Sapalewa 

West of Seram Island in the Maluku Islands.

A L-LAND IS A L-LAND, BUT NOT ONLY

THESIS EXCERPT

BY FINN MÄÄTITA

While I was learning to speak Malayu Ambon, it soon became apparent how nonexistent my family name was in any of the Malayu dialects that were spoken around me. After my first time back in Maluku, I developed a greater interest in the precolonial, ancestral aspects of our Moluccan epistemologies of belonging to the Land.¹

I started digging deeper. This time for our Bahasa Tanah. Our 'Soil Languages'. It was during the time that our Moluccan ancestors spoke these oral languages, that my family name came into being.² In Maluku Telale, we have name alliance systems that allow us to comprehend how each family clan is tied to the Land and to each other.³

Our names spell out spells, which is why it's traditionally of great importance in what order and with what intention certain names are pronounced. In Maluku Telale, almost every piece of landscape has its own spell, its own name. From clan houses and villages to mountain ranges and islands. These names help us remember our Moluccan ancestors' La'wai, the 'memory of places', 'lore of places', or 'lores of the Land'.⁴

Many places in the Moluccan landscape go by a series of names each. Every series is meant to be pronounced in a certain order and before you know it, you are singing...⁵

1. The Land with an upper-case L, "refers not only to place as a physical geographic space but also to the underlying conceptual principles, philosophies, and ontologies of that space." Styres S. D. in *Pathways for Remembering and Recognizing Indigenous thought in Education – Philosophies of lethi'ni-hsténha Ohwentsia'kékha (Land)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), p. 49.

2. This was before Christian settlers forbade the Soil Language to be spoken and before Malayu was regarded a lingua franca.

3. I have Central Moluccan roots, but I prefer the less self-centered approach to our positioning in the archipelago. For this paper I choose to use the term 'Telale' from one of my ancestral soil languages, which translates to: 'middle,' 'midway,' and the 'in between.'

4. La'wai: Trace, record, memory, print, imprint, vestige, occasion, event, meeting point, junction point, halting place, gate,

knowledge storage; Similar to the Songlines in Aboriginal cultures across the Australia Lands and the Irish 'Dinnseanchas' 'lore of places', or 'a neat symbiosis of memory and land' as described by Manchán Magan in *Thirty-Two Words for Field* (Dublin: Gill Books, 2020), p.150.

5.

This 'order' stems from the 'ritual language' or 'language of the ancestors' that exists within each Soil language. Speaking the ritual language is a practice of toponymy on itself and is mainly used for ceremonial purposes, by those initiated into the lores of the Land or by those who are granted permission for other reasons.

6.

(En)Chanted stories

7.

This is a reference to the traditions we have from the 'era that the Moon was still part of Earth'.

8.

I have multiple ancestral lines tracing to a.o. the Alune and Wemale communities of the three-river basin in the west of Seram Island.

I started listening more to these recitations, these poems. Some of which took the shape of Kapata, memorising my ancestral name bearers as mediators during clan disputes and as the instigators of some (they weren't all saints).⁶ In turn, these name bearers memorised how the older ancestors walked old land bridges and hoisted sails to head for unknown waters. These wayfinding ancestors memorised the even older sound sequences, of how our ancestors emerged as microorganisms from Earth and from other celestial bodies.⁷

Learning the ancestral Soil Languages catapulted me into this 'new old way' of understanding the world around me.

In order to speak the Soil languages, I had to let my body get acquainted with the natural landscape that I found myself in. I had to locate myself, not as (a) being in the middle of nowhere, but as (a) being the middle of everywhere.

For instance, to speak according to the spatial reference system of the Alune language of West Seram, I have to learn to look beyond certain infrastructures, like high-rise buildings that obscure my view over the Dutch nature body.⁸

Once I learned about this, I wondered if it was even possible to speak the languages outside of Maluku.

During my first year of art school in 2018, I occasionally wandered around the neighbourhood to get to know the surrounding structures of nature around the art academy. Since there aren't many hills or dunes to relate to in a city like Utrecht, I shifted my focus to the nearest water bodies. The smaller streams and the bigger ones, like the river Vecht and the Merwede canal. What I then called my 'amateur linguistic field research' was almost like an act of precaution, in case I wanted to speak my Soil Languages when in art school. Be it during assessments, or in day-to-day practice.

Looking back, it rather felt like I was practicing some type of countermapping. Learning the language helped me find my own path to re-root to the land that I was born on and to the Land that I was listening to.

It makes me think of the Salune. The large bat beings from our origin stories. Our ancestors and their ability to echolocate their way to the mountain and the tree after the great floods.

Revitalising this Soil language, meant revitalising that practice as well. It meant that I had to truly learn the language that the Land speaks and the way our ancestors related to the landscapes and the bodies they found themselves in.⁹

In the ancestral Soil languages of my Telale Moluccan ancestry, we have the word 'Manumanu', which means 'to float', 'to hover', 'to drift' and 'to glide'. Manumanu can both refer to floating on water currents and floating on air currents. It is no coincidence that the word 'Manu' translates to 'Bird'.

A bird that is known in Maluku for its hovering and gliding abilities, is the Manukau, 'the red bird', also known as the 'Magnificent Frigatebird'. The Manukau is a bird of prey that can glide the winds while asleep, which enables them to travel long distances.¹⁰

When our wayfinding ancestors saw the Manukau while sailing out on the ocean, it didn't necessarily indicate a nearby landmass. It rather indicated the presence of an ancestor, calling out to them from the middle of everywhere.

My brother reeled in the first fish we ever caught, pulling the bamboo stick back over his shoulder. We both still remember the little carp flying through the air, smashing on a parked car's windshield behind us, and sadly not surviving the event. It was when the fish was in the air

9.

It shouldn't come as a surprise to learn that much of Maluku Telale's village architecture is based on the human and more-than-human anatomy.

10.

A friend with roots in Ecuador told me how the 'Tijeretas o fragatas' can't land on the sea water, because their feathers are not waterproof. On the island of San Cristóbal in Galapagos, he visited Laguna del Junco. A freshwater crater lake where these birds swoop down to brush the surface of the lake, washing the sea salt from their feathers.

that a Manukau made a low pass overhead. I remember how its red glowing chin and its large wings made a big impression on me. I got a bird's book for my ninth birthday, where I read that no Magnificent Frigate had been spotted in the Netherlands since at least 1968.

11.
Foot(step)

I didn't give it much thought until years later, when I learned that Upu Manukau is one of many important figures in the Lela(le) La'wai of Maluku Telale.¹¹

12.
"We do this all the time"

"What does the backside of your eyes look like? Now look at everything like this, what do you see?"

Two years ago, I had an interesting conversation with a Moluccan elder from the community in the Netherlands. We exchanged ideas about ways of relating to the 'middle of everywhere'. This elder suggested to imagine looking with the backside of my eyes. To understand the ability of seeing beyond what our brain usually perceives as recognisable patterns. "We doen dit alsmaar", he said, hinting towards our common encounters with ancestral spirits as traces of the uppercase L-Land, while living in a diaspora on a lowercase l-land.¹²

13.
Ask us about the predictive dreams a whole generation of Moluccan toddlers had in the late 1990s. Something with an impending civil war.

Personally, I don't associate 'ancestral spirits', solely with cases of Ketindisan, inexplicable visions, or the ghost opossum strolling down the hallway.¹³ What I also recognise as 'ancestral spirits', is the 'lore of places'. Which has to do with my fascination with the word 'legacy.'

14.
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/legacy>

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a legacy can be "something that is a part of your history or that remains from an earlier time."¹⁴ In other words: it lives on beyond its own 'mortal' time.

Imagine for instance, that you figure out that an ancestor of yours has been present in a certain place, after which that place becomes partly defined by that knowing. With that, a place receives a legacy, which might influence our way of relating to that place from then on.

“It becomes sacred when we give our attention to it at a level that reveals what it holds as energy and information” (Bishop, 2021).¹⁵

I'd like to think that this 'legacy of places,' is intertwined with the 'lore of places'. They don't exclude each other's meaning. They seem complementary to each other, like the scientific explanation of sleep paralysis and the Indigenous ancestral Maluku Telale explanation of Ketindisan.

What if legacy is not rooted in the same language of animacy as the lore is? Could that mean that the lore exists in coregulation with the 'Land as a storyteller', whereas legacy is in coregulation with the 'one who seeks as a storyteller'?¹⁶

After the conversation I had with the Moluccan elder, I wrote a note that read: “to notice the Land within the land” and “making the undersong of our ancestral spirits sensible to ourselves”.

Maybe this 'undersong' is similar to the song that the first human Nanabozho gave to Linneaus “so he could see their spirits, and neither of them were lonely”.¹⁷ I imagined an 'undersong' that our ancestors are singing, like a continuing Kapata. As if they are emitting signals as 'undertones' who make up a 'sound composition' that we pick up on, because we learn “to look with the backside of our eyes.”. As if our 'diasporic antennas' have been working overtime in constant code-switch between the uppercase L-Land and the lowercase l-land.¹⁸

I started writing more about these signals or traces of this 'sound composition' that feels alive and continues to echo on as a 'Land within this land'. We seem to be tapping into the undersong of the Land. To acknowledge that we hear it singing back to us, like a constant call and response.

In March last year, our grandmother left for her voyage beyond the nine mountains. When we sang for her, our

15. I. Fremeaux, J. Jordan, *We Are 'Nature' Defending Itself*, (London: Pluto Press, 2021), p. 131.

16. Some of this is answered in our oral traditions, so I turned it in a question.

17. R. W. Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, (Minneapolis: Milkweed editions, 2013) p. 209

18. Especially when the l-land that you live on isn't 'L-landing' like the Land of your roots is. I have been describing examples of code-switching throughout this paper, without explicitly using the term.

grandfather asked her to wait for him. Exactly two weeks later we sang for him as well...

During those days of grief, I got to reconnect with three of my ade-kaka who I had never met before. Cousins of around my age, whose grandfather is my great-grandfather.

Esi tanala roto husa tiha
They see right through a tifa drum
They have clear vision over long distances

Cousins carrying a family name encrypted in that saying. A name that I would have worn, if it weren't for all the interrelated struggles of colonialism.

During the Battle of Ambon in 1942, my grandfather fled with his mother and his little ade to the mountains of Suli. After my grandfather's mother and ade passed away during the aftermath of this battle, my grandfather took on his mother's family name, to honour her in times beyond.

A name, present when one says arita ma'a ite eu nda wasi
Cross over that bridge and we'll go to the woods together

The ways between my cousins and me got separated by unresolved intergenerational trauma among our elders.

We met up in Amsterdam and we spoke till late at night. The next day we continued catching up until the evening. Almost 16 hours of stories and experiences were shared. It was not the nearest water body, but it was the undercurrent of our conversations that brought us together in that room.

19.

R. W. Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, (Minneapolis: Milkweed editions, 2013) p. 294

In the chapter "Witness to the Rain" in *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer writes of how she is listening for an invisible river that moves under the stream. An undercurrent that she describes in ecological terms as 'the hyporheic flow'.¹⁹ In stream ecology this is described as the flow of the hyporheic zone. This zone functions as an interface,

between the main stream, also known as the surface water and the ground water. Reducing pollution in the water and forming a habitat and shelter for different species of fish and aquatic plants and organisms. This zone is a type of ecotone.

An ecotone is a meeting place between two different ecosystems that gradually merge into each other and unfold as a third ecosystem. The word ecotone is a combination of the words 'Oikos' dwelling/ shelter, and 'Tonos', tension/ pitch. Both referring to the dialogue taking place between the living beings that will jointly shape and inhabit this new shelter.²⁰

Thinking of Kimmerer's words, it felt like my gandong's and I experienced such type of hyporheic exchange. Our undercurrents unfolded into a meeting place of tones of familiarity.²¹ Composing a shelter for our gathering of stories, our story exchange, our preservation of memories. An undersong to a newly formed ecotone.

The following weeks I found myself writing about our encounter and wondered how I would relate to this experience in our Soil Language? Would it be possible to translate this feeling? The impression of this meeting point, this imprint? As I thought of these words, I realised that La'wai, was already present. Why give someone a name, when you can just learn to know theirs?

I imagined La'wai as an island hovering above our heads.

In honour of the 'grammar of animacy' of our soil language, I would call this hovering Land 'Upu La'wai.' After all, I imagined them to be an ancestor as well.²²

Maione Upu La'wai.

20.

F. R. Hauer, G. A. Lamberti, *Methods in Stream Ecology. 2nd Edition* (Burlington, Massachusetts: Academic Press, 2007), p. 120.

21.

Gandong = womb, is all I will say.

22.

In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer dedicates a chapter to 'Learning the Grammar of Animacy' and the way it may influence our way of noticing the Land in relation to our human and non-human bodies.



From underneath the surface of our boiling sea foamy hyporheic story exchange, a sandbank is born. Its powdery sands are carried by the currents of the winds. Constantly on the move. Like our ancestors before us.

I think of Noorderhaaks. An islet on the move under the observing eye of my great-great-grandmother Elisabeth Alderliefste from Texel Island. I think of Molana. An islet on the move under the watchful eye of my great-great-grandmother Cornelia Mailuhu from Saparua Island.

In the reflection of these roaming grains of sand, I recognise the soft architecture of our diasporic frame of reference. A scarcity of solidity that makes navigators out of all of us.

As our words tumble out in excitement, in my mind's eye, the sandbank moves and evolves. Mountains are pushed upwards and eroding undercurrent streams give way to ravines.

Right before the island can attach their self like a peninsula to the moving membrane of the memory continuum, the island grows too heavy. Slowly the island descends, like water droplets breaking through the suspense of a cloud. Making their way to Earth.

A new piece of new hovering ancestor has come into being. A Land waiting to be reeled in. Like our ancestors did when they foretold the Land's lores. Stories yet to come, yet to be etched in the tide of our tongues, to be inhaled and exhaled. Like the Tahuri, when pressed against our ears, infiltrating. Like the Tahuri when pressed against our lips, invoking the ancestor island by opening up the gate of wind.

I realise how the wind gets away with it to be mysterious to the most down-to-earth soul. Coming into voice as both the collocutor and interlocutor. Maybe the wind is trying to tell us something here.

Hela Hela Arumbae, Arumbae hela yo, la mari hela, mari hela lou e. take the rope, hoist the sail. Let's pull each other close like our wayfinding ancestors once did, let's pull the islands from the ocean floor. Like those invisible hands did when I thought I would drown. Carried like an island on Upu Henu's shield. I think of Upua Henua swimming below me in the border space.

The conversations of navigation between my cousins and I, transformed many pieces of absence into wonder. Like the ghost notes of the Potong rhythms that we play, to slice our way through the Dasar patterns on our Tifa drums. A call and response. Cutting and stitching a liaison between the patterns of our synchronising heartbeats. The island is alive and sways in the arms of the sea breeze.

Upu La'wai, is ready to answer to their own ache of diasporic phantom pains. A Land showing how they already know us, inviting us to realise how we already know them back.

A Land ready to L-land on the land.

While this La'wai came into being, so did the Morea, swimming in its undercurrent. It was then that Morea took on the shape of a falling tear that teared right through the intergenerational façade of obscure obviousness. It was at this moment that I asked myself if re-story-ation could be seen as a decolonial practice.

It was at this moment that I knew the island had Landed.

I felt the pace of the undercurrent increasing and my heart rate slowing down into a homey embrace with the middle of everywhere.

LOSING MYSELF

LYRICS BY CHIHIRO GEUZE BROEK

MUSIC BY FLORIAN WOLFF

GUEST CONTRIBUTION

Are you withering with me, or just passing by
stuck in productivity and other little lies
tourists are afraid to merge, I know how to share
you know how to fork and fuse, a gateway to repair

Plantations choke the life out of everyone
Escapism bypasses, all you do is run
We are not your N-word¹, to walk through or ignore
Did you know system change can come through the back door?

You are my sibling, and you and you are all my kin
You are my elder, who knows... how to shed skin
Master in homing, a n a s t o m o s i s
You trip me up, you shapeshift... all of my poses
I feel my body breaking down, my crown falling to the ground
my lungs are burning, my roots rotting

no longer numb, there are tears and laughter
no longer numb, there are tears and laughter

*Losing myself I wonder do you redeem?
Are we dying or are we breaking free?*

am I your breakfast are you my trash
are you my fault, am I your shamefulness
I'll meet you in the ruins – I'll meet you halfway
amend and refresh amidst decay

1.
[Note from the editors:
Here Geuzebroek refers to the word 'Nature', which she argues against using due to the concept's operationalisation for colonial land theft and its exclusion of Indigenous cosmovisions. Read more: <https://www.doorbraak.eu/kunnen-we-dit-n-woord-begraven/>.]

I long to flow – into you, into us, and them and then some more
to roam – that is all / learn, live, rise and fall
live and die with playfulness and a little grace
and then decompose... in your sweet embrace

in silent prayers, we practice precious caring
no longer numb, there are tears and laughter

*no longer numb, there are tears and laughter
and wandering... wondering what comes after
What comes after?*

*Losing myself I wonder do you redeem?
Are we dying or are we breaking free?
Will you be the end of me or a new beginning?
Can you hear me, can you help me, dear sibling?*

*

My final words to *Planetary Poetics* and all who participated in its journey are related to the beautiful words of Malkia Devich-Cyril who poses, “Joy is not the opposite of grief. Grief is the opposite of indifference. Grief is an evolutionary indicator of love – the kind of great love that guides revolutionaries.”

We first convened to start the Milpamérica course in the week of October 2023. Grief, frustration, joy and creativity accompanied us as we bore witness to genocide in Palestine, while grieving (ongoing) histories of genocide in the Americas. There were so many questions and not enough answers. I like to thank Itandehui, Diana, Sacni and Isa for their embodied translation work as we dedicated ourselves to relating as well as translating. I remember our translation team check-ins as joyful; like we were embarking on a science fiction journey. We never got to go to art school or see Indigenous art and struggle as the curriculum... but somehow facilitating this exchange to take place now made us feel like we were part of something big and meaningful... even when it got messy. Fue un gran honor sentirnos unidos. Unidos para honrar caminos creativos. Superando obstáculos de tiempo, espacio y idioma. Creando posibilidades con cariño y dedicación. PACHI ÑAÑAYKUNA!

Looking back at the classes I think we were digging in the garden at midnight. At many times feeling lost (in translation), but at the end of the ride beautiful revelations emerged. I remember feeling so touched by all the expressions shared at Framer Framed during the closing of the course. Recognition in Lucila's poem, fulfillment in the collaborative video-poem dialogue of Finn and Emy, the words of Errandi to Ciska that brought tears to my eyes, the shared laughter of Arthur's frog song performance, Eshwari's recipe ceremony that brought us together and Tirza's powerful song.

Today I share the lyrics of one of my own songs 'Losing Myself'. I am grateful for the amazing work of Puck van Biemen who directed the videoclip. I wrote this song to reflect on forest relationships between the dark honey fungus, the pine trees and human visitors of the forest; once upon a time when the earth was plagued by monoculture capitalism. The song is leaning into the discomfort of risking contamination, and connection and transformation amidst decay and disappearing. 'Losing Myself' is a song that is poetic, loving, eerie and open-ended in its quest to dissolve into a web of life bigger than ourselves and make kinship.

I feel it fits well with the *Planetary Poetics* journey of using (y)our own artistic voice – a domain of creative and emotional wisdom and urgency – and mastering the skill of (y)our own activist voice – the domain of collective and political wisdom and urgency. And on the way losing and (re)gaining parts of yourself like a stream flowing into an ocean. Breaking down the plantation is not the easiest career path.

Dear creatives, movers and shakers, I salute you! I am happy I still bump into you at protests and at decolonial/ecology spaces. I am looking forward to seeing you shine and meander. And if you write a protest song please reach out and share it with me.

With a love that spans the earth,
Tinkunakama – Chihiro







BIOGRAPHIES

Tirza Balk

I use poetry, music and movement to respond to questions of extractivism and displacement. I am interested in memory, unlikely alliances and what it takes for people to escape the roles they were supposed to play in keeping the world as it is. These two years were spent researching colonial recruitment strategies across four continents and generations. I draw on fantasy as well as my own and world history to identify – and interrupt – patterns of ethnonationalism and war. In my work, I want to pair these interrogations with an uncompromising excitement for life on this ancient planet.

Bethany Copsey

I'm most often found with the collective RE-PEAT, a collective I co-founded which works to counter the long-held notions of wetlands as wastelands and instead co-create and inspire new narratives recognising them as culturally and ecologically vital environments. I am a writer, soil scientist, environmental activist, creative practitioner, and campaign coordinator. Born in England, raised in Aotearoa New Zealand, living in the Netherlands, with Irish roots, I often find myself going between these places and see peatlands as one way to link, layer, and traverse these places and homes.

Olivia D'Cruz

I work with video, animation, sculpture and puppetry to build fictional and possible worlds. Through these worlds I question the disproportionate effects of systems of extraction on bodies and land. I am interested in the relationships that are made either possible or impossible as a result of these systems. During these two years I have been developing a practice of puppetry. I have been learning about its historical use in playfully subverting the state, a skill that has become increasingly valuable under current regimes of surveillance and censorship. Alongside my practice, I develop workshops for children that encourage engagement with local ecologies while centering playfulness.

Arthur Guilleminot

Fluid.Wet.Slippery...Organic.Unnatural.Non-normative...Transgressive.Disruptive...Queered/Transformative.Malleable.Layered.Textured...Permeable/Porous.Polluted.Saturated.Affected...Altered/Hybrid.Mutant.Perverse...Deviant.Muted.Silenced...Emergent.Dis-identify.Refused/Subterranean.Submerged.Liminal...Interstitial.Uncontainable.Fugitive/Multiple.Becoming.Assemblage...Entangled.Decentered.Interdependent...Kin/Eros.Posthuman.Ecosexual...Anti-anthropocentric...Symbiotic/Sticky.Murky.Mucky...Rotten.Mossy/Resilient.Feral...Oozing.Molting...Cruising.Dripping/

Imke Hullmann

Building a practice together with places that are experiencing invisible violence caused by today's urban development and resource extraction. Places like Strandeiland in Amsterdam, an artificial island expanding the city into the sea. Coming from the discipline of architecture and urban planning, she tries to conceptualise the complexities which are reproducing dominant structures of power in the ongoing colonial inhabitation of land and sea.

Through researching, relating, and tending to places – in a slow, hesitant, needs-based process – she tries to serve them through video, audio and text.

KIEM

Seedlings, you can grow in your own time. There is no rush. If you find a brick blocking your way, there is always a crack to find. You don't grow on the cold coin, the steel teeth, the concrete pillars. Your growth cannot be forced.

How can improvisation play a role in decision making around urban development in Amsterdam? How can the voice of the tree be heard and protected in a meaningful way? How can we fight for green spaces for all beings in the city, without getting overwhelmed by grief and frustration?

Finn Maätita

Sea current-ly, my practice is taking root in the memory of the ecological embodiment of my ancestral languages and the revitalization of this landscape. This results in layered media installations. Remembering old Moluccan strategies around storytelling and knowledge transmission plays a central role in my working method. Meanwhile, I like to remember the way I saw things as a child. Taking on a constant experiment with imposed scripts.

ume kai meite ki e sou si ete ndi de bokala, kai takwali peneka, au lalekele ndi lalane sou meije, hoko tamata bokala si beteke maluku ni sou kai lomai.

Lucila Pacheco Dehne

Rooted in a sculptural and installation-based practice, my work explores questions of intercultural resistance, fragile identities, and environmental concerns. Through fictional myths, I craft texts that envision utopias and parallel worlds, creating new hybrids and seeking moments of solidarity. My material-based practice extends to readings, performances, and cooking sessions, which serve as opportunities to foster community, as well as workshops designed to enable collective learning. During this programme, I researched different systems of oppression on plants in the EU, such as “invasive” plants, migrated crops and plants that were historically used as contraceptives and abortatives.

Eshwari Ramsali

eshwari (they/she) is a writer, researcher, web-tender and pot-stirrer based in amsterdam. as a first-generation migrant originally from india, they are interested in the intersections of marginality and the ways in which they are negotiated and renegotiated in space and time. they are currently working on mutual aid healing justice and reclaiming lineages of healing that have been obscured and suppressed within the global majority. as part of the masters programme *planetary poetics* graduation show, their work is tending to grief as central to the revolutionary imagination. their current pursuits centres place-making, survival as practice and rituals of communion.

Toni Steffens

I currently ask myself why I am (still) dancing. In the past two years I considered dance as a survival and community preserving mechanism, extending across human and animal lives. As a choreographer and acupuncturist, I am by default trained to see thinking, feeling, sensing and moving as interwoven activities. Approaching cartesian logics as a collective and ongoing wound, I am asking myself how healing may look like in our futures to come and what role dance has to play in it. I hereby use sensitivity, imagination and emotionality as intelligent technologies of our bodies, to assist rewiring the relations we create with our realities.

COLOPHON

The master's programme *Planetary Poetics* at the Sandberg Institute was initiated and directed by artist Dorine van Meel in collaboration with Framer Framed; it has hosted exchanges with Atelier Picha (DRC) and Futuros Indígenas (Milpamérica).

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Olivia D'Cruz
Arthur Guilleminot
Imke Hullmann
KIEM
Finn Maätita
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All images and illustrations by *Planetary Poetics* participants unless otherwise specified.

Page 7: 'A Harvest for All: Notes on Biodiversity and Medicine' (2023). Conversation between Taita Hernando Chindoy and Milena Bonilla in collaboration with *Planetary Poetics*. Photo by Padrick Stam.

Page 11: Photo by Marie Jo Guilleminot.

Page 98-99: Sarah Ndele – *Maintaining the Root* (2024). Performance and workshop series at Framer Framed in collaboration with *Planetary Poetics*. Photo by Marlise Steeman.

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The background of the entire page is a solid olive green. It is decorated with numerous abstract, irregular splatters and dots in various colors, including light blue, teal, purple, and white. These splatters are scattered across the page, with a higher concentration on the right side and bottom.

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