



*New
Directions
May Emerge*

New Directions May Emerge

HELSINKI BIENNIAL
12 June – 17 September
2023



Helsinki Biennial was established by the City of Helsinki and is produced by HAM Helsinki Art Museum.

Titled *New Directions May Emerge*, the second edition of Helsinki Biennial is curated by Joasia Krysa, in collaboration with other intelligences – Museum of Impossible Forms, TBA21–Academy, Critical Environmental Data, ViCCA@Aalto Arts, and an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Entity.

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Juhana Vartiainen



Greeting from the Mayor of Helsinki

Helsinki Biennial is a true celebration of art, culture, and community. It brings together artists, visitors and locals alike to experience the magic of contemporary art as well as the unique natural beauty of the Helsinki Archipelago. We take great pride in our biennial, as it provides an inspirational platform for us to showcase our city's cultural richness and creative spirit to the world.

This year, we are committed to making the Helsinki Biennial even more accessible to everyone. Our goal is to ensure that every resident and visitor has the opportunity to experience outstanding art and be inspired by the messages it conveys. By establishing a stronger biennial presence in the city centre, we hope to bring the event closer to our communities and foster a greater sense of inclusivity. We believe that by bringing art to the heart of our city, we can inspire new conversations, new thoughts and a greater sense of belonging.

It is our hope that the compelling messages conveyed through art will serve as catalysts for change, sparking fresh perspectives and opening new avenues of contemplation for all who encounter them.

As a city, Helsinki is built on a foundation of community, connectivity, and creativity. We cherish our culture and our people, and we believe that the biennial once again provides a space for us to come together and celebrate what makes our city great.

We are extremely proud and happy to welcome you all to share Helsinki Biennial with us! Let us be inspired by the power of art.

Juhana Vartiainen

Greeting from the Mayor of Helsinki

Arja Miller
 Director, Helsinki Biennial
 and HAM Helsinki Art Museum

Now in its second edition, Helsinki Biennial is an ambitious event that has established itself as an important part of HAM Helsinki Art Museum's international programming. While fostering new networks and boosting Helsinki's appeal as a city with a high-quality cultural offering, the biennial is also a genuinely local event organized for the enjoyment of Helsinki's residents as a collaborative effort between HAM and the City of Helsinki's Divisions of Culture and Leisure, Education, Urban Environment, and Social Services and Health Care.

This year's biennial will spread to new venues including HAM's stunning high vaulted galleries in the Tennis Palace, as well as various public venues across the city. In a move further improving the event's accessibility, some artworks can be experienced online, but most of the featured exhibits will again spread across the ex-military island of Vallisaari, one of the richest nature and recreation destinations in the beautiful Helsinki archipelago.

Hosting hundreds of species of bats and butterflies as well as many rare, endemic plant species, the ecosystem of Vallisaari Island is unique, precious and fragile. In such a vulnerable location, preservation of biodiversity and ecological sustainability must be prioritized in every last detail related to organizing the biennial. In every aspect of its work, HAM is committed to the goal of ecological sustainability and compliance with the targets of the Carbon Neutral Helsinki Action Plan. Among the biennials, Helsinki Biennial is leading the way by having its own dedicated responsibility programme.

Each of us is affected in our daily life by global challenges such as biodiversity loss and the climate emergency. Today, more than ever,

we need fresh perspectives on complex challenges and new ways of seeing and understanding the world. Now if ever is an opportune moment to turn to artists for answers and discover how they interpret contemporary reality – what kind of alternative futures do they imagine through their art? All the artworks engage in an intriguing dialogue with the various sites in which they are displayed. Artists have a special ability to translate history, places, feelings and thoughts into eye-opening new forms. I believe that the artworks featured in the biennial will offer new perspectives, insights, perhaps a few wake-up calls, and hopefully also solace to all visitors.

I would like to express my warmest thanks to all the artists whose work has made this biennial such an engaging and compelling event. I am indebted to the biennial's head curator, researcher Joasia Krysa, who brought together this group of artists and came up with the intriguing and insightful theme, *New Directions May Emerge*. Krysa additionally invited a number of Finnish and international collaborators to co-curate the exhibition and thus expand the discussion it spurs. All the curatorial collaborators have also authored articles in this publication. We would like to express our gratitude to Critical Environmental Data, Museum of Impossible Forms, TBA21–Academy, ViCCA@Aalto ARTS and AI Entity. Thanks also to the biennial's international consultants Sunny Cheung, Manuela Moscoso and Kasia Redzisz for your valuable contribution.

We are naturally grateful to the City of Helsinki and the biennial's steering group. It has been a great experience working together to create an event for the entire city!

I would like to express my appreciation to the HAM biennial team, who, under the capable leadership of production manager Jonna Hurskainen, have worked miracles under pressure of a tight schedule. A special word of gratitude is deserved by the editor of this publication and the biennial's coordinating curator, Petronella Grönroos.

Last but not least, warm thanks are deserved by the biennial's main partners, S Group and Clear Channel. We are grateful also to the Saastamoinen Foundation for enabling us to commission a new work by the Keiken collective.

Arja Miller

Introduction to New Directions May Emerge



New Directions May Emerge introduces three main conceptual threads – contamination, regeneration, and agency – not as themes but intersectional vectors through which practices and conversations convene without the need to settle on a precise direction or position.



Joasia Krysa

*As contamination changes
world-making projects,
mutual worlds – and new
directions – may emerge.*

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing
The Mushroom at the End of the World
2015

Helsinki Biennial 2023 adopts its title from anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing to draw attention to the ‘art of noticing’ small or invisible details. This points us to the issue of scale and how life – and art – is organized on a globalized scale. New directions may be less universalizing, and not necessarily scalable, while suggestive of ways more inclusive of other humans, animals, plants, environment, data, and other entities around us. In the context of the biennial, this becomes an invitation to experience art as part of wider relations and contingencies, to become aware of other agencies and other modes of sensing and sense-making, and to recognize that human actions are not the only ways to effect change.

This second edition of Helsinki Biennial is located on and off the shore of Helsinki, featuring the island of Vallisaari, one of over two hundred islands in the Helsinki Archipelago in the Baltic Sea. Further, the biennial extends beyond the island itself to embrace its position in the Gulf of Finland and to create connections elsewhere. Inland, it takes place at HAM Helsinki Art Museum, Central Library Oodi, in public spaces, and beyond the city centre at the Stoa and Caisa Cultural Centres, as well as online. This maps the specific geopolitical location of the biennial – connecting outwards to the south with Estonia (its shoreline visible from Vallisaari), to the west beyond the Baltic Sea and Europe, to the north with Sámi indigenous land, and inwards to include the cultural

and ethnic diversity of Helsinki. This cross-cultural mapping of spaces provides a starting point to reflect on crucial issues of our time – such as environmental damage, political conflict, and the effects of technology – issues that are both local and universal, yet that appear irresolvable.

As we are reminded, irresolvable issues are those to which there seem to be no viable answers. As such, the biennial navigates the relation between impossible and possible responses (as opposed to solutions), between the damaging effects of human actions and the collaborative tactics of reparation.

Unfolding through multimodal artistic acts of noticing, sensing and sense-making, the biennial moves from humans to non-humans and between varying scales – a spectrum spanning data as the smallest scale, through to islands and speculative new worlds denoting the largest. In doing so, the biennial becomes an invitation to consider how recognizing small or otherwise invisible details might prompt possibilities to act, to imagine differently, and reconcile the impact of human intervention, and environmental and technological damage.

The biennial takes its point of departure from the island of Vallisaari, the regenerative energy of multispecies landscapes, and data which is in turn manipulated by algorithms. It gathers ideas from an eclectic mix of influences – from natural science and cosmology, the supernatural and artificial intelligence, data science and science fiction, the sense-making practices of humans and nonhumans, the actions of sentient and other worldly beings – to identify some of the conditions through which *new directions may emerge*.

Placing diverse practices in dialogue with one another, from established and emerging artists and collectives, from Finland and across the world, the biennial present twenty-nine artists and collectives, twelve new commissions and further six new iterations of works produced specifically for Helsinki Biennial 2023 – Matti Aikio, Ahmed Al-Nawas & Minna Henriksson, Dineo Seshee Bopape, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Golden Snail Opera (Anna Tsing, Yen-ling Tsai, Isabelle Caronelle, & Joelle Chevrier), Asunción Molinos Gordo, Alma Heikkilä, INTERPRT, Keiken, Sonya Lindfors, Tuula Närhinen, Lotta Petronella with Sami Tallberg & Lau Nau, PHOSfate (Mohamed Sleiman Labat & Pekka Niskanen), Diana Policarpo, Sepideh Rahaa, Bitá Razavi, Red Forest, Remedies (Sasha Huber & Petri Saarikko), Tabita Rezaire, Yehwan Song, Jenna Sutela, Emilija Škarnulytė, Suzanne Treister, Adrián Villar Rojas, and Zheng Mahler.

CONCEPTUAL THREADS

The registration of diversity across practices, geographies, and naming conventions underscores the curatorial approach. Three main conceptual threads are introduced – contamination, regeneration, and agency – not as themes but intersectional vectors through which practices convene without the need to settle on any precise direction or position. Rather, the

idea is to uncover spaces of possibility, to reflect on some of the geopolitical realities local to Helsinki and elsewhere, at a range of scales and operations. Arising from the conceptual threads are questions that guide the exhibition as a whole: How might contamination be a force for positive change? How can we use biennials for the wider regeneration of the social body? How might agency extend beyond humans to other nonhuman entities and assemblages, including artificial intelligences? How might these threads be channelled into rethinking the ways that practices and future worlds might be conceived?

What follows below is one proposed gathering of participating artists and artworks across these three vectors, while recognizing that there could be many other ways of drawing connections and gathering works.

Contamination

It is sobering to realize that the Baltic Sea remains one of the most contaminated waters in the world, polluted with military munitions, agricultural chemicals and urban waste; subjected to waste from regimes of violence, extractive capitalism, and unregulated industrialism, further contaminating our bodies and subjectivities. More specifically in relation to the island of Vallisaari, there are contradictions at play – the island’s unique biodiversity (it hosts one thousand butterfly species, protected bats, birds, communities of rare moss and lichen species) and its environmentally protected status as set against the remains of military contamination (fortifications built during Swedish and Russian rule, gunpowder magazines, zones of potential unexploded munitions, exclusion zones where visitors and activities are not permitted). The pond in the centre of the island is a case in point – once a source of enjoyment and recreation for residents living on the island, today it is not freely accessible. Reflecting on these conditions, the presented artworks propose new layers of productive contamination as a cross-pollination between practices, ideas, sites and entities.

Working between the realms of the documentary and the imaginary, Emilija Škarnulytė explores deep time and invisible structures, from the cosmic and geological to the ecological and political. Drawing inspiration from the Baltic Sea, her new research project and film *Hypoxia* (co-commissioned with TBA21–Academy) speculates on the contemporary scientific conditions and technologies related to deep-sea mining and ocean mapping from the imaginary perspective of a future archaeologist. With intent to reconstruct mythologies and beliefs of the past and present, looking at them from the future, the work brings together three threads: the ‘Baltic Anomaly’, a spacecraft reportedly lying at the bottom of the Baltic Sea; the human-made phenomenon of *hypoxia* – oxygen depletion in the ocean caused by the spiralling growth and decay of algae resulting in dead zones in the water – and the Lithuanian myth of the sea goddess Jūratė, whose amber palace lies beneath the waves as a capsule of deep time. It is here where “myth meets science and science fiction beneath the sea”.

Similarly engaged with environmental phenomena of water and wind, Tuula Närhinen adapts methods and instruments derived from the natural sciences. The installation *Deep Time Deposits: Tidal Impressions of the River Thames* (2020) – created during her residency in London’s Beaconsfield in 2020 and exhibited for the first time in Finland at Helsinki Biennial 2023 – builds upon an understanding of water as a dynamic agent and “naturally occurring archive of the Anthropocene”. It revisits Anna Atkins’ cyanotypes from 1843–52, using photographic records and traces of material culture to represent the archaeological condition of the foreshore and build a record of the river’s “anthropogenic burden”. Her work *The Plastic Horizon* (2019–23) gathers plastic debris collected over the years from Helsinki seashores to make the human footprint visible and knowable.

Closely monitoring the Baltic Sea from her studio located on Harakka Island over the last twenty years, Närhinen creates a systematized inventory of the environmental threats caused by anthropogenic waste such as plastic. Her long-term sustained commitment to environmental issues in Finland since the 1990s has paved the way for current practices that place multispecies worlds at the core (such as that of Finnish artist Alma Heikkilä discussed later in this text). Moving from water to soil, Dineo Seshee Bopape presents her ongoing project employing soil and other organic materials to build connections both to land and family. Expanding her practice to a new format in a public space context, her packed earth billboard work *I Re-member Mama* (2023) (supported by TBA21–Academy) is “an ancestral longing, a path to remembering personal and collective family her- and his-stories, futures, and parallel timelines”. The work constitutes a remembrance of the mothers’ endurance of capitalist patriarchy, colonialism, industrial pollution, oil industries, and environmental degradation of water and soil. The work is a call for healing, drawing attention to the memory of the land, and the power of human reparative acts to protect the natural environments and ‘the sacred’ (such as acts that led to the Colombian River Atrato being assigned the same rights as a human being and hence the right to protection).

Shifting attention from earth to forest, Ahmed Al-Nawas and Minna Henriksson extend their interest in the critical deconstruction of national identity by exploring the romanticized role of forestry in the Finnish national psyche. Their new AR work *Green Gold* (2023), an image of a boat pulling a large timber raft through the channel between Vallisaari and its neighbouring islands, connects the logistics of moving raw materials (through the Suez, Gibraltar, and Bosphorus channels, and the Saimaa channel shared by Finland and Russia) to the current geopolitical situation. The recent return of timber rafting reactivates discussions on national romanticism, the erasure of forests, labour conditions, war and trade.

Similarly, Matti Aikio reflects on the intersection of Western nation states and indigenous cultures in his new multi-channel video installation *Oikos* (commissioned with TBA21–Academy). With a background in reindeer herding, Aikio’s practice focuses on the historical

treatment of the Sámi population and the appropriation of indigenous identity – all themes related to Sámi self-determination, which have been under recent political debate in Finland. His work for the biennial draws attention to the conflicts between Sámi culture and the extraction of natural resources against the backdrop of the forest and energy industries. It raises questions related to the preservation of nature, generation of fossil-free energy, and human relations with other forms of life.

On a similar note, the transdisciplinary constellation Red Forest (Oleksiy Radynski, David Muñoz-Alcántara, Diana McCarty, Mijke van der Drift) works towards transformative justice and ecological reparations. Their new work *On the Loss of Energy. Radiogram from the Remnants of Collisions*. (2023) is an online, site-specific poetic sonic address that links documentary research, speculative history, and science fiction. It continues their investigation into how infrastructural operations are key to contemporary forms of hybrid warfare. By speculating on energy matters in the context of war, their research contests fossil fascism, environmental racism, and financial colonialism.

Reflecting on the political and colonialist structures of various countries, Bitá Razavi examines the inner workings of social systems. Alongside *Elevated Platform*, which highlights the conditions of social mobility, the kinetic sculpture *Kratt: Diabolo. No 3* (2022) takes its name from an enslaved magical creature from Estonian mythology, producing botanical drawings on command for those who accept the consequences. The botanical drawings are by Emilie Saal, an Estonian botanical painter who worked in Java between 1899 and 1920. Saal’s reliance on the labour of local Indonesian women is shown alongside images of destroyed landscapes documenting conditions of colonial exploitation of labour and land. Underlying this work is a wider comment on the complex relationships between different systems of knowledge, processes of automation and colonialism.

The speculative and transdisciplinary research of Diana Policarpo takes the form of the large-scale installation *Ciguatera* (2022) – named after a condition caused by the ingestion of marine food contaminated with a toxin – which offers a case study from the Ilhas Selvagens (Savage Islands) in the North Atlantic Ocean, close to Madeira and the Canary Islands. The occurrence of disease is here more widely interlinked with climate change, interspecies relations and the legacies of colonialism. Mapping colonial histories through the tracking of natural biodiversity, the giant rock-shaped sculptures contain embedded video and audio telling stories of the island and its inhabitants which are simultaneously factual and fictitious, informed both by science and science fiction.

Continuing their long-term project *Remedies*, which explores methods of self-help and medical healing, Sasha Huber and Petri Saarikko present their new site-specific installation *Sanctuary, Mist* (2023). Located near the island’s pond – as mentioned, a site shaped by contamination, use and misuse, and currently in recovery – the work reflects on the natural landscape as a backdrop to human intervention and recuperation, and the concept of *pharmakon* (both poison and cure).

The practice of choreographer Sonya Lindfors centres on questions of representation and power structures, Blackness and Black body politics, speculative futures and decolonial dreaming practices. Her new collaborative social choreography *common moves* (2023) is an act of occupying public space unfolding through the application of simple scores and choreographies that questions our conception of what is held to be 'in common', that which is not underrepresented or marginalized.

Similarly, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley connects lived experience with fiction to create spaces of interaction and to retell stories of Black trans people. Their new work *Thou Shall Not Assume* (2023) is a role-playing performance event and installation exploring the speculative Black trans mythology of Vallisaari Island, taking us on a journey to meet various characters in the form of physical sculptures. An online counterpart will allow participants to listen to the personal stories of these characters, bringing their fictional histories to life.

Regeneration

Recognizing that biennials have been often founded on the principles of urban regeneration, encouraging economic investment and tourism, the exhibited works additionally propose how regeneration can also be a force for healing and repair. Until recently, the island of Vallisaari was home to a small community of residents with its own facilities including a school, library, weather station, a pond used for recreational activities, and a sauna. The culture of the sauna – operating as it does outside the demands of the economy – offers a good example of a path to regenerating the body and contributing to well-being. What is left to regenerate and how can it be regenerated for social good?

Connecting digital, corporeal and ancestral memory as sites of potential healing, Tabita Rezaire explores how the ocean is home to phenomena such as fibre optic cables, sunken cities, and drowned bodies. Her video work *Deep Down Tidal* (2017) explores how the infrastructure of submarine fibre optic cables that transfer digital data are layered upon old colonial shipping routes. Complex cosmological, spiritual, political and technological narratives emerge from water as an interface to understand the legacies of colonialism.

Similarly, INTERPRT – a research agency engaging with environmental justice and human rights – produce visualizations, remote sensing analysis, maps and video evidence to expose environmental issues and contemporary forms of green colonialism. In their new commission for the Nordic context, *Colonial Present: Counter-mapping the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Sápmi* (2023), they develop a case study based on Sámi land rights, the truth commission and the reconciliation process, working closely with Sámi journalists and advocacy groups with a commitment to environmental justice.

Zheng Mahler, a transdisciplinary collaboration between artist Royce Ng and anthropologist Daisy Bisenieks, examine relational networks, connecting nature and technology and more-than-human geographies, exploring their mutual flows of influence and the environmental architectures they produce. In a new version of *The Green Crab* (2022),

a speculative archaeology of East Asian urbanism, they draw connections between the Hong Kong archipelago where they live and the Helsinki Archipelago. The new iteration *Soilspace* (2023) explores soil histories in the area and how they intersect with human histories, affecting the development of the urban landscape itself and the 'gardens' that grow out of those subterranean interactions. Similarly drawing attention to gardens, PHOSfate (Mohamed Sleiman Labat & Pekka Niskanen) address key issues of phosphorus pollution in the Baltic Sea region and phosphate extraction in West Sahara. Their installation *PHOSfate* (2023) enacts the technologies used in Saharawi refugee camps in Algeria for food production on the island of Vallisaari. Connections are established between a sea bottom that is turning into a desert, and a desert as a site of phosphate extraction that is blooming with thousands of family gardens.

Asunción Molinos Gordo pays tribute to the thousands of uses and forms of water through a sculptural series featuring water pottery produced in collaboration with artisans from Manises (Arturo Mora, Ana Palés and Juan Carlos Iñesta), who carry on ancient techniques developed during the Middle Ages in the Levant. *¿Cuánto río allá arriba!* (2021) derives from research undertaken on the equitable distribution of water and its importance in ensuring social peace, something that the world's rural communities understand as an indispensable resource.

Influenced by decolonial and feminist practices, as well as social and environmental justice, Sepideh Rahaa investigates and questions prevailing power structures, social norms and conventions through storytelling and everyday resistance. The installation *Songs to Earth, Songs to Seeds* (2022) – comprising a newly completed extended version of the video, rice plants growing in a hand-made ceramic pot traditional to her native Iran, and harvest rice dolls – highlights issues of food security, access to clean water and nourishment, as well as the importance of traditional forms of sustainable cultivation in the current climate emergency.

Lotta Petronella, a filmmaker and devoted medicine and flower essence maker and tarot scholar, has worked with and on islands for nearly two decades, focusing for the last seven years on the island of Seili. In her new commissioned work *Materia Medica of Islands* (2023), Lotta Petronella collaborates with the award-winning chef, food writer and foraging pioneer Sami Tallberg, and composer and performer Lau Nau (Laura Naukkarinen). Together they have created a transdisciplinary artwork of healing, song and ingestion that interacts with the diverse human and non-human inhabitants of Vallisaari Island – an apothecary, a lamenting choir, nightly recordings of moths and a commemoration to Ilma Lindgren, the woman who fought to secure everyone equal rights to roam and forage freely on land virtually anywhere in Finland.

Agency

The ability to act, the concept of agency, is invoked to further explore how human life, the environment and technologies can evolve together to produce new and unforeseen results. Rather than position

these phenomena in conflict, what is proposed is a recognition of forms of agency that include other-than-human entities and assemblages, including artificial intelligence (AI).

Exploring connections between AI and more-than-human microbial lives, and foregrounding technological and biological contaminations, Jenna Sutela presents *Pond Brain* (2023) (produced in collaboration with Copenhagen Contemporary), a water spring bowl equipped with a microphone and a speaker, further connected to a neural network that is trained to respond to environmental and interplanetary sounds from outer space and under the sea, turning it into an instrument. Sutela explains that “as sound flows around in homeostatic loops through the air and through different machine learning algorithms, it is constantly transforming and thus exhibiting a life cycle of its own”.

Engaging with the relationship between new technologies, alternative belief systems and the potential futures of humanity, Suzanne Treister has developed unconventional bodies of research and eccentric narratives “to encourage the unification of art, spirituality, science and technology through hypnotic visions of our potential communal futures alongside those of possible extra-terrestrial entities or civilization”. Her work for Vallisaari Island, *Technoshamanic Systems: New Cosmological Models for Survival* (2021), proposes “microcosmic non-colonialist plans towards alternative visions of survival on earth and inhabitation of the cosmos”.

Alien intelligence is similarly invoked in the collaboration between Yehwan Song, an artist-designer who creates anti-user-friendly, non-user-centric, unconventional and diverse design, and Digital Visual Studies, a Max Planck Society project hosted by the University of Zurich. Together they developed the *Newly Formed* (2023) project, which is presented as a website that enables viewers to engage with an innovative AI Entity and navigate a 3D map of HAM Helsinki Art Museum’s art collection. Responding to users’ geolocations, the collection is processed by an algorithm generating newly formed entanglements, creating unexpected and unrepeatable groupings of artworks from the collection.

The artist collective Keiken create speculative worlds using game engines and extended reality (XR) technologies to explore the nature of consciousness and how we feel, think and perceive reality. Their new multimodal installation *Ángel Yōkai Atā* (*angel spirit house*) (co-commissioned with Kanal-Centre Pompidou) acts as a portal between Vallisaari Island and the metaverse. Encompassing both physical and digital elements, it includes a sound piece; a sculptural house on the water’s edge for “angels and spirits”, inspired by a visit to a magical spirit house in Thailand; a version of the *Morphogenic Angels* game world installed at the Cultural Centre Stoa, and an online interactive experience which allows viewers to virtually walk inside the spirit house and into a new world.

Similarly, as part of a research process of worldbuilding across human and more-than-human realms, Adrián Villar Rojas conceives long-term, collaborative projects taking the form of large-scale, site-specific environments that are both imposing and fragile and, importantly, which leave a minimal imprint due to their perishing materiality and parasitical

integration. His new commissioned work for Vallisaari expands on his *Brick Farm* series, inspired by the Argentinian hornero bird, which makes its nests from mud, straw and rubble, adapting them to human-built surroundings. Conceived in dialogue with the habitat and inhabitants of Vallisaari Island, his new work *From the Series The End of Imagination* (2023) is a series of sculptural, otherworldly shapes, designed this time by a fictional non-human builder, Time Engine software. The sculptures can be found attached to trees, rocks, and buildings scattered across the island. The work further marks a shift in Rojas’ practice, from organic ephemeral sculptures inspired by the hornero, to these more artificial, otherworldly new forms, or nests for unknown lifeforms. Exposed to the natural and built environment of Vallisaari, the sculptures change and evolve over time, much like the island itself, embracing ideas of destruction and decay as an inevitable part of the life cycle.

Alma Heikkilä in turn works primarily with subjects that lie beyond human sensory perception, such as microscopic bacteria and fungi, as well as the biosphere and climate change. In her new installation *coadapted with* (2023), canvases create a space in the forest that encloses a sculpture; rainwater is collected and mixed with ink derived from plants native to Vallisaari and then absorbed into plaster sculptures, resulting in their changing colour as the summer progresses. The work is suggestive of new and alternative ways to work, think and act in a multispecies world.

In *Golden Snail Opera – The More-Than-Human Performance of Friendly Farming on Taiwan’s Lanyang Plain* (2016), Anna Tsing, Yen-ling Tsai, Isabelle Carbonelle, and Joelle Chevrier produce a multispecies enactment of experimental natural history. Combining video and performance-oriented text, the players examine the plight of the golden treasure snail (and related golden apple snail), first imported to Taiwan from Argentina in 1979 for an imagined escargot industry, but now a major pest in rice agriculture in Taiwan and across Asia. While “farmers in the Green Revolution’s legacy use poison to exterminate the snails, a new generation of friendly farmers in Taiwan’s Yilan County hand-pick snails and attempt to learn enough about their lives to insert farming as one among many multispecies ways of life within the rice paddy.” Drawing on a variety of knowledge sources, including personal experience, international science, and local understandings of ghosts and deities, the work constructs a performative assemblage of more-than-human entities.

CURATORIAL INTELLIGENCES

Alongside the artistic practices and ideas presented above, Helsinki Biennial 2023 makes the case for new directions to emerge from expanded curatorial collaborations and from the coming together of human and non-human agencies. A number of art organizations, collectives, research institutions and technological entities have been invited to co-create this biennial edition, bringing together different

curatorial intelligences, knowledges and narratives, and exploring alternative ways of thinking and ‘doing biennial’ in common. This ‘post-curatorial collective intelligence’ approach – a term I draw from combining Bassam El Baroni’s suggestion of ‘post-curatorial’ and Markus Reymann’s idea of ‘curatorial intelligences’ – human and non-human voices and sensibilities, and a way of framing HB23 intensely collaborative curatorial work. The HB2023 Curatorial Intelligences are: Critical Environmental Data, Museum of Impossible Forms, TBA21–Academy, ViCCA@Aalto ARTS, and an AI Entity.

Critical Environmental Data

(CED) is a transdisciplinary research group at Aarhus University (Denmark) that embraces an understanding of environment as data, foregrounding architectures and infrastructures of environmental data. In their text for this publication, *New Directions May Emerge at 60.1381° N, 25.0037° E and 60.1700° N, 24.9299° E*, they describe their data-sensing approach as well as their interest in spaces and places of data and environmental change, the histories they express, as well as the speculative, sometimes even fictional ideas that emerge. These ideas have been instrumental in developing the overarching curatorial approach that we have taken together with artists in working with the biennial sites, and on the island in particular. Led by Jussi Parikka and working with researchers May Ee Wong and Paolo Patelli, the group’s contribution to Helsinki Biennial 2023 is manifold, comprising a year-long collaborative artistic research programme and the master class *Environment, Data, Contamination* at the University of Arts Helsinki hosted in collaboration with Samir Bhowmik and the Uniarts Helsinki Research Pavilion, culminating in a public symposium and an exhibition by participants of the course, as well as a series of *Environmental Data Audiotours*, which are essentially podcasts that map sites across the Biennial (such as the Lichen Garden at the Kaisaniemi Botanical Garden, weather station ruins on Vallisaari Island, the Ferry Port) to engage us in observing while moving across the city and the island, paying attention to what is visible and what is not visible, and to venture into speculative and historical dimensions beyond what we can see directly, thus suggesting alternative scenarios.

Museum of Impossible Forms

(MIF) is a cultural centre driven by the commitment to transgress the boundaries between art, politics, practice, theory, artist and spectator, and to reconfigure the notion of Museum. With its particular location in Kontula, East Helsinki, MIF is a gathering of diverse practices and agencies, with a commitment to building anticolonial, antipatriarchal and nonfascist futures. In their text for this publication *New Directions May Emerge Because We Need Alternatives to “Survival”* [...], they remind us – in the words of Anna Tsing – that “collaboration is to work across difference, which leads to contamination” and that “we are contaminated by our encounters, they change who we are as we make way for others”. This approach has informed the curatorial method, especially in the

choices of artistic practices, and in developing the discursive aspects of the programme. MIF’s curatorial contributions are manifested in the form of two strands of the public programme: *Polyphonic Entanglements* curated by Giovanna Esposito Yussif, a gathering that expands and interconnects some of the ecological ruinations addressed in the biennial through screenings, talks, and performances taking place at the Stoa and Caisa Cultural Centres; and *Agonistic Intelligence/s* (AI/s), curated by Ali Akbar Mehta, a six-day intensive summer school with invited research-led working groups composed of representatives from multiple artist-led organizations and collectives engaging with the HAM Helsinki Art Museum collection.

TBA21–Academy

is dedicated to research, artistic production, and new forms of knowledge, drawing attention especially to our relationships with oceans, the unfolding environmental crisis and growing injustices. In their text for this publication, *New Directions May Emerge, but Will We Be Able to Sense Them?*, Markus Reymann writes: “The Ocean’s ecosystems produce half the oxygen we breathe, represent 95 per cent of the planet’s biosphere, and soak up carbon dioxide as the world’s largest carbon sink. It is without a doubt one of our most powerful non-human allies in the struggle to decelerate the climate breakdown, yet it is hardly understood.” With TBA21–Academy comes an invitation to “think collaboratively with others – artists, scientists, environmentalists, legal experts, Indigenous knowledge holders, and many others – to create new knowledge and other imaginaries, as well as concrete actions.” This way of working, foregrounding knowledge systems based on relational rather than transactional practices, other-than-human voices, and a thought process that is deeply rooted in critical ecologies, informs the way we have conceived this edition of Helsinki Biennial, and it has influenced the choice of works from the TBA21 collection as well as new co-commissions.

ViCCA @ Aalto ARTS: Visual Cultures, Curating and Contemporary Art

(ViCCA) at Aalto University is committed to arts-driven engagement with societal, economic, ecological and philosophical concerns. Within the framework of the biennial, ViCCA’s Bassam El Baroni and Patrizia Costantin have developed *The Helsinki Biennial Art Mediation Forum* in collaboration with MA students and other researchers in the curatorial field. The forum conceives mediation as an extended ‘articulation space’ for the concerns, themes, and topics mapped out in the biennial’s curatorial approach and artistic contributions. Already the preliminary symposium held in December 2022 as part of the *Art Mediation Forum* highlighted how curatorial ecologies, including the computational, are linked to world-making and worldbuilding and to the transformative possibilities of alternative narratives. This conceptual thread has a strong resonance in the artworks selected for the exhibition. The forum also comprises a workshop with

Aalto University MA students and an invited group of curators, writers and researchers, a publication, and a series of public mediation events for visitors over the duration of the biennial.

AI Entity

is a collaboration between HAM Helsinki Art Museum Collections, Digital Visual Studies, a Max Planck Society project hosted at the University of Zurich, and artist Yehwan Song. Together, they explore a curatorial approach that is informed by Artificial Intelligence and automation, adding a non-human technological layer. In their motivation for the project, they state: “Over the past few years, many museums, art collections, libraries and other related institutions have been increasingly engaged in the process of digitizing their holdings and assets. While the main narrative for this endeavour is prompted by a desire to make those materials more accessible, as well as to preserve them in digital form, the practical reality for many people is that the collections remain locked away in a black box, more hidden than ever. When reduced to the form of a set of binary numbers, the materials and collections are rendered somewhat intangible.” With a specific focus on the collection of HAM Helsinki Art Museum, the application of various AI algorithms produces new connections and cross-contamination of artworks in the collection. In practical terms the project is presented as a website that allows viewers to engage with an innovative AI Entity and navigate a 3D map of HAM Helsinki Art Museum’s collection. Responding to data from artworks and geolocations, the algorithm curates new and often unexpected artwork selections from the collection. This is performed by different machine learning models and software “acknowledging the machinic perception of the artworks and to some extent the machinic interpretation of the HAM collection and its connections to the urban fabric of Helsinki [...] Machine curation involves the processing of synthetic metadata with AI algorithms. This synthetic metadata represents encoded information. What results is a *newly formed* entanglement emerging from the combined agencies of the model, the visitors, the city, and the collections”, together creating a blended curatorial vision. With intent to bring attention to what is not immediately visible or known to the human curator, this adds a new perceptual layer to the biennial narrative each time visitors interact with the website, effectively producing new iterations of the biennial based on works in the collection.

Helsinki Biennial 2023 is further realized through collaborations with The Rodina, a post-critical graphic design studio with “an experimental practice drenched in strategies of performance, play and subversion”, and Diogo Passhorino Studio, a research-based spatial design studio “investigating how emotional contexts can be brought into shaping spatial memories”. Together, they have added a new layer to the biennial narrative “in search for possible visual and spatial tools for new directions”.

The importance of wider human and nonhuman networks and ecologies in producing Helsinki Biennial 2023 has been established by now, I hope, not least with reference to practices of *worlding*: ways to bring worlds together and imagine them *otherwise*, to hold on to the possibility that we might (or may) find new directions or ways of living in, and understanding, the world. Returning to Tsing, the invitation is to explore the exhibitions, events, and publications of Helsinki Biennial 2023 as if wandering through a landscape:

“To walk attentively through a forest, even a damaged one, is to be caught by the abundance of life: ancient and new; underfoot and reaching into the light. But how does one tell the life of the forest? We might begin by looking for drama and adventure beyond the activities of humans... There are other ways of making worlds.”

Joasia Krysa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Curating this biennial has been an intensely collaborative undertaking and I would like to acknowledge and express my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to shaping and supporting this edition: artists, curatorial intelligences, design collaborations, partners, collaborators, funders.

This edition would not exist in its present form without the expertise and generosity of advisors who helped shape the initial ideas and scope of the project, and extend networks of possibility beyond what otherwise would have been possible: Sunny Cheung, Curator, M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Manuela Moscoso, Executive Director, CARA – Center for Art, Research, Alliances, New York; and Kasia Redzisz, Artistic Director, KANAL – Centre Pompidou, Brussels.

I would also like to thank all collaborators, co-commissioning partners, and supporters: Samir Bhowmik and Mika Elo, Uniarts Helsinki; Ana Botella, Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian; Irene Campolmi, Copenhagen Contemporary; Geoff Cox, London South Bank University; Bas Hendriks, KANAL – Centre Pompidou, Brussels; Helen Kaplinsky, Lars Bang Larsen; Yann Mazéas, MO.CO. Esba (Montpellier School of Arts); Paul O’Neil, Publics; Perttu Rastas; Francesca Thyssen Bornemisza and Carlos Urroz, TBA21 Thyssen Bornemisza Contemporary; Mara Ambrožič Verderber, Obalne galerije Piran; British Council; British Embassy Helsinki; Frame Contemporary Art Finland; Liverpool John Moores University; Saastamoinen Foundation.

Joasia Krysa

is a UK-based, Polish-born curator and scholar working at the intersection of contemporary art and technology. She is Professor of Exhibition Research at Liverpool John Moores University with an adjunct position at Liverpool Biennial. Between 2012–2015 she was Artistic Director of Kunsthall Aarhus, Denmark. She was part of the curatorial team for Documenta 13 (2012), and co-curator of the 9th Liverpool Biennial (2016). Her past projects have been presented at venues including The Whitney Museum of American Art, ZKM Center for Art and Media, and Tate Modern. Her current research focuses on AI and curating.

I am also deeply grateful to HB23 co-curators Giovanna Esposito Yusiff, Marianne Savallampi, and Ali Akbar Mehta, Museum of Impossible Forms; Markus Reymann, TBA21-Academy; Patrizia Constantin and Bassam El Baroni, Aalto University; Jussi Parikka, May Ee Wong and Paolo Patelli, Aarhus University; Tristan Weddigen, Darío Negueruela del Castillo, Iacopo Neri, Pepe Ballesteros Zapata, Jason Armitage, Ludovica Schaerf at Digital Visual Studies, University of Zurich and Leonardo Impett, University of Cambridge; design studio The Rodina and spatial consultancy Diogo Passorinho Studio; organising institution HAM Helsinki Art Museum – Director Arja Miller, Head of Exhibitions Kati Kivinen, Curator Satu Metsola, Curator of Collections Aki Pohjankyrö, Head of Public Art Taru Tappola, former Head of Exhibitions Pirkko Siitari, and the entire team across all departments; and the Helsinki Biennial team, in particular Jonna Hurskainen, Head of Production; Petronella Grönroos, Coordinating Curator; Mirek Träskman, Technical Manager; Jenni Kuisma-Dillemoth, Head of Sales and Customer Experience; Anna Vihanta, Communications; Producers Lissu Kirves, Emma Lumme and Johanna László, Annika Práhl and Saskia Suominen. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the former director of HAM Maija Tanninen-Mattila for inviting me to curate this biennial edition.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank all the artists for many inspiring conversations that shaped the narrative of this biennial and for their imaginative responses to the invitation to exhibit their work.

Curatorial Intelligences



Helsinki Biennial 2023 and Joasia Krysa have invited five arts, research, and technological entities to be curatorial collaborators in the biennial: Museum of Impossible Forms, a cultural centre and queer-feminist project located in East Helsinki; TBA21-Academy, a research centre and cultural ecosystem fostering a deeper relationship with the ocean through the lens of art; Critical Environmental Data, a transdisciplinary research group at Aarhus University in Denmark; ViCCA @ Aalto ARTS (Visual Cultures, Curating and Contemporary Art), Aalto University's transdisciplinary major; and an AI Entity that explores HAM's collections to bring attention to what is not immediately visible to human perception, and to generate new versions of the biennial.

Bassam El Baroni
and Patrizia Costantin
ViCCA @ Aalto ARTS

Jussi Parikka,
Paolo Patelli,
and May Ee Wong
Critical
Environmental Data

Ali Akbar Mehta,
Giovanna Esposito Yussif
Museum of Impossible Forms

Markus Reymann
TBA21-Academy

Dario Negueruela del Castillo,
Valentine Bernasconi, José Ballesteros Zapata,
Iacopo Neri, Ludovica Schaerf, Jason Armitage
and Tristan Weddigen
Digital Visual Studies



New Directions May Emerge
at 60.1381° N, 25.0037° E
and 60.1700° N, 24.9299° E

Jussi Parikka, Paolo Patelli,
and May Ee Wong

Critical Environmental Data
Aarhus University



These coordinates point to Vallisaari Island and Helsinki Art Museum, just two of many locations hosting Helsinki Biennial 2023. They set our bearings as starting points for a journey of many possibilities. As part of an informational system that allows us, theoretically, to mark any spot on planet Earth, these coordinates define the locations of artistic and curatorial activity that will also reshape those spots and how we perceive them. They are more than mere spatial positions on a map. By indicating directions to and of the Helsinki Biennial, they are meaningful vectors of sensing, experience and encounter. They orient us to see the artworks in their locations in the physical environment, and also within an environment as sensed, measured, and experienced.

The Biennial brings together artworks that address the main themes of contamination, regeneration and agency, but we are additionally interested as much in their surroundings, sites and spaces. There are many scales at play in the locations where our work unfolds: the planetary, the regional, and the local. Art cannot escape engagement with the environment, which extends far beyond the indoor gallery. The long-term legacy of earth arts was to frame ground, soil, air, sky, and other natural elements in ways that expanded what artistic media such as sculpture were meant to include. But it also inversely raised questions on the centrality of those environmental elements to the artistic system itself, reminding us of the importance of caring for their existence, their histories, and their futures too. What would it mean to curate in the manner of earth arts?

As a curatorial intelligence of HB23, we explore ways of knowing and sensing the environment in both of these registers. We are

interested in locations and the histories they express, as well as the speculative, sometimes even fictional ideas that might emerge. This interest expands to questions of material and bodily sensing and also to how the environment has become abstracted, for good and for ill: it has become data.

The environment has been changed by technology as much as it has become knowable through technology. Extensive infrastructures that enable our everyday lives to function are embedded in the landscape, often operating inconspicuously in the background and affecting the biochemical composition of our landscapes. We use instruments to measure our living surroundings and design models to make sense of these changes, especially aspects that are often left invisible or felt only through a proxy. We might feel the wind on our skin as it pushes through from the north, or we might sense the first rays of warmth in spring. But we are not able to make sense – without media – of how weather fronts, let alone climate patterns, develop over decades, across vast regions, and in ways that concern more than just our own spot in a particular location. We have no idea how a turbulent patch of storm wind moves across the whole city, even if we experience it at this particular street corner at this particular time. We sense the water pour down on our skin but we have no means to identify how toxic it might be. The same goes for the air we breathe, the soil we cultivate, and so on.

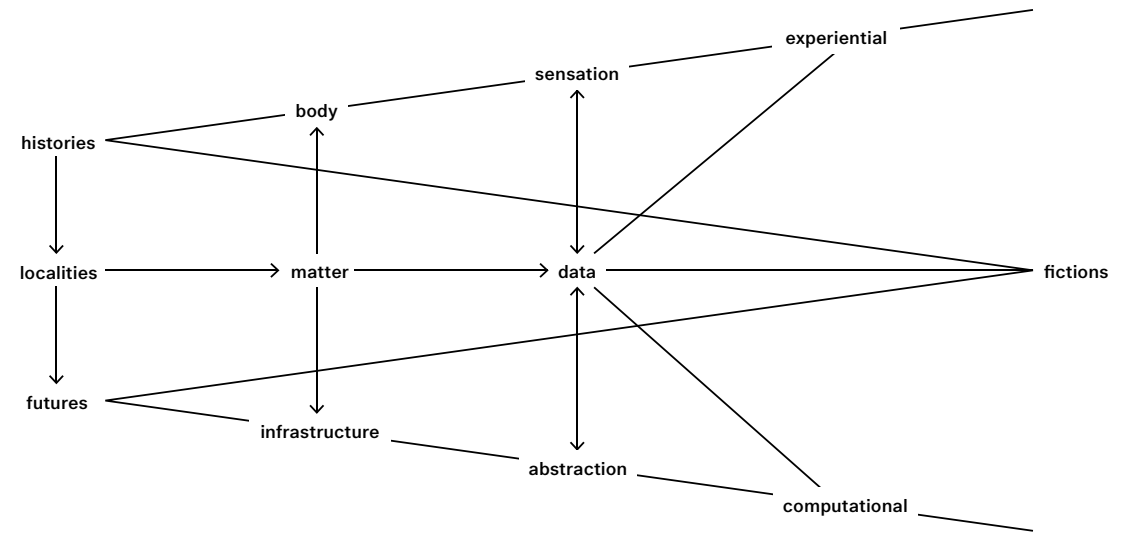
Our focus on ‘environmental data’ is a broad one. At first, it appears to concern the statistical and measured realities through which we make sense of the planetary sphere: numerous national and international institutions gather data that is both produced (such as by means of remote sensing) and recovered (such as ice core samples through which past climates can be reconstructed). Our surroundings are, literally, data, a theme that also features in many of the artworks, both indirectly and by way of method (such as forensic investigations). It would be fair to claim that most of what we know about the planetary crisis derives from the massive infrastructures of sensing that have been laid out over the 20th century and into the 21st century. This is the computational view of our environmental crisis: one that helps us to understand the scale of interconnected dynamics, and one that governments and institutions use to respond and decide on appropriate action to manage its effects on various levels. It is complex, to say the least.

But environmental data is also a particular way of moving through landscapes and experiencing environmental change on a more intimate scale. We ask how data emerges in connection with place and observation, how we make sense of processes and recognize larger cycles, and how we develop languages, expressions, and aesthetic forms to make sense of the ways our urban and rural lived environments have evolved. Besides knowing about climate change, it is important to be able to intersect this knowledge with questions of ecological justice and wellbeing. To look at different scales of the issue at hand, our curatorial approach relates data, landscapes and architecture with the aim of seeing how and where we sense different weather conditions or their changes,

how particular weak signals and traces can be narrated into stories about the environment, and how this qualitative angle on environmental data helps us to read space in ways that becomes part of personal capacities of action and agency. To develop an insight into data means to investigate how sensing, framing, aggregating, noticing, observing, monitoring and other embodied activities stand front and centre of this artistic notion of data.

This strand of intelligence work approaches Helsinki and its surrounding sea and islands as a dynamic environmental system. What is the city if not a large-scale weather system? What is the city if not a sensor of weather in its own right: surfaces of concrete, plants, leaf cuticles, silicon and water that absorb solar radiation and reflect humidity; the full-scale attack of a raincloud visualizes the distinct differences between soil and asphalt. What is the city if not an ecology of multiple simultaneous interactions and feedback loops?

How would our intelligence look as a diagram of directions? It would link locations to their histories and futures while also establishing a link between the very concrete and the very abstract. The diagram becomes like a map through which you can travel. This narrative of environmental directions moves toward fiction while articulating existing histories.



A diagram of Biennial directions where the artworks in specified locations open up to environmental matter and to data, where factual histories meet with future fictions and the city becomes narrated through the lenses of art and environmental imaginaries.

With such a diagram of directions in mind, imagine the city as a biogeochemical cycle that relates to its ecosystem's productivity: the timing of seasonal events in biological life cycles in plants and animals, such as budburst, flowering, dormancy, migration and hibernation, are affected by the city's material presence, as much as by anthropogenic climate change. Flowers and their pollinators act as visualization devices. Species interactions change with their environmental conditions while simultaneously contributing to their transformation. As we share the space with plants and other animals, *New Directions May Emerge* follows shifting boundaries and new alliances. While walking in the city, we will also follow protocols in order to detect exchanges between figure and ground – materials, technologies, organisms and their environments.

The damaged state of the global environment today alerts us to the fact that there are no innocent legacies, nor are there any options for tabula rasa, notwithstanding visions of starting over with space colonization. Instilled with this awareness, we can find new concepts for relating and reorienting ourselves to the spaces we inhabit and move through. The theme of contamination was the starting point for the 'Environment, Data, and Contamination' collective research studio at the University of Arts Helsinki, which addressed the intersection of environmental concerns and artistic practice. With our collaborator Samir Bhowmik and students of various disciplines from the University of Arts, we explored researcher Max Liboiron's assertion that contemporary conditions of plastic pollution are a continuation of settler-colonial attitudes towards the environment, and anthropologist Anna Tsing's account of living in ruins of post-industrial capitalism, focusing on how contamination is a way of being in the world: there is no 'purity,' only a mix of species, people, life of all sorts.

Our studio's work will be shown at the University of Arts Research Pavilion in an exhibition that gathers the results of our insights into how sound, visuals, and performance work can elaborate a particular relation to our environment.

While we participate in such collaborative formats, we also want to make our audience move and find new directions across the city that we narrate as an environmental data audio tour. The tour investigates these new directions in narratives of selected locations around the city. It invites the listener to engage in protocols of observing while moving across the city, onto the island, and back; also in pausing, stopping and paying attention to what seems present and absent in certain places and to venture into speculative and historical dimensions beyond what opens up in front of our eyes and into our ears. As we move from the ruins of a weather station on Vallisaari Island to the Botanical Garden, we spot infrastructures of weather observation and the ebb and flow of coal and dust and other particles that all tell some sort of a story, however concrete or abstract.

What we learn on the tour and through the artworks and locations of the Biennial relates to the interplay of historical awareness and imaginaries of regeneration. Data, and narratives, enable us to

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recognize and reflect upon what we have done and where we have gone before. *New Directions May Emerge* because we already tried and tested so many old ones – many failed, many were not followed up properly, some might have potential, some we know led to disastrous consequences. We have already gathered knowledge of alternative routes, bad routes, and unsuccessful choices made with regard to the environmental situation we find ourselves in. Now, we are compelled to map and diagram new ones.

Critical Environmental Data

is a transdisciplinary research group that focuses on the interaction of aesthetics, digital culture, and worlds of environmental damage. Part of Aarhus University in Denmark, the group conducts research and participates in international curatorial projects in art and design in order to address architectures and infrastructures of environmental data. The group investigates forms of sensing and aesthetics as well as spaces and places of data and environmental change. Project led by: Jussi Parikka, May Ee Wong and Paolo Patelli.

New Directions May Emerge Because We Need Alternatives to 'Survival' and Futures for the Many, Not for the Few to Learn to Live Together Anew

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Giovanna Esposito Yussif
and Ali Akbar Mehta

Museum of Impossible Forms

new directions may emerge
because
we need alternatives to 'survival'
and
futures for the many,
not for the few
to learn to live together anew.

To inhabit a place.

As with so many stories, it begins with a group of friends and a sense of urgency. And like so many stories, it is modulated according to who tells it.

At the time of its inception, the Museum of Impossible Forms (MIF) was a frontal response to the omission of primarily BIPOC¹, queer, immigrant and diaspora voices within the art institutions of Finland, the lack of collaborative models, and the need to forefront spaces/practices that could radically question the power mechanisms and asymmetries sustained in the field.² MIF has addressed these gaps by foregrounding criticality, reflexivity and collaboration, taking on the task of creating situations that allow for improbable encounters and transdisciplinary modes of doing.

The Museum of Impossible Forms opened its doors in 2017 as a fluid, low-threshold platform that, through softness and care, could embrace the complexity of our subjectivities. As a space, it has sliding boundaries and flickering edges that enable frameworks for curating

and instituting where things mutate, invert or are contaminated by new relationships, uses and meanings. Situating MIF in the Kontula shopping centre in east Helsinki defies the hegemony of a presumed centre. It challenges the marginalization of space and bodies, proposes to learn-with the (embodied) margins that can be found in our social spaces, and continuously stakes a claim for the redistribution of who is being heard.

In our engagements, we destabilize the narrowing frame of identity politics – whether national, gender, racial, caste, or class categories – by bringing to the juncture historical and geographical entanglements, as much as geopolitical and social intricacies. We centre and think-with those who have moved from one place to another, who are constantly negotiating their within and without, and permanently shifting status – a polyphony of embodied knowledge(s) and (be)longings. As a result, our constantly shifting programmes are driven by indiscipline, collectivity, insurgent learning and speculative imagining, and they unfold multiformly through cinematic, somatic, performative and sonic practices, discursive activations, exhibitions, archive building, and on-site residencies. Over the years, we have developed a mix of long-lasting and always-in-process collaborations with diverse agents, from art institutions and artists to anti-authoritarian and non-dominant communities. Crucial to this approach is an ethic of care and a willingness to locate our expertise alongside the knowledge and expertise of others, whose lived experience, knowledge(s) and diverse understandings can challenge us and the institutions with which we collaborate.

With the invitation by curator Joasia Krysa to collaborate in *New Directions May Emerge* came laterally the proposal to think-with anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, who has extensively reflected on eco-dependencies and in-between lifeforms and lifetimes. Here we bring to the fore Tsing's reminder that "collaboration is to work across difference, which leads to contamination". And as it is further stated in the biennial's titular quote, "we are contaminated by our encounters; they change who we are as we make way for others."³

To get contaminated, to change, and to make way for others would deeply transform (art) institutions for the benefit of the many. But how to make way for our non-human kin and the complexities this entails when current hegemonic formations in society fail to make way even for our human kin? Moreover, how to open ourselves to inhabit a place in the world with dignity if we cannot commit to transforming our relationships with ourselves, with others, and with the structures (and infrastructures) in which we are embedded?

"History repeats itself only if we let it."

– Diane Di Prima, *Revolutionary letter #62* (excerpt)

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If 'new directions' implies a movement of purpose – a move 'to' and a move 'from', as a transformation of energy, desire, will, need, or relations – then what directions do we want to move in? The contribution of the Museum of Impossible Forms to *New Directions May Emerge* is manifold. Two of its trajectories manifest in the public programme, foregrounding curatorial collaboration as a way of sharing knowledge(s) and engaging with that of others, in resonance with Krysa's approach to this edition.

Polyphonic Entanglements curated by Giovanna Esposito Yussif is a discourse series taking place on June 16-17 and September 1-2 at the Stoa and Caisa Cultural Centres. These locations move the Helsinki Biennial off-centre, engaging it with two heterogeneous sites of encounter – Itäkeskus and Hakaniemi. The programme brings together lectures, screenings, performances, and gatherings as an evolving assemblage that contextualizes and expands on the diverse practices and debates present in this biennial. It proposes a way of thinking-with and through island ecologies, Baltic contamination, radio-ecologies, desertification, practices of healing and collective resistance to pose questions not about what will come but rather focusing on ways to learn and reset paths-of-entry into spaces of plural transformations.

Agonistic Intelligence/s (AI/s) curated by Ali Akbar Mehta takes as its conceptual starting point the archive as an investigation of contaminated circumstances. The six-day intensive summer school held on August 14-19 invites a research-led working group of representatives from multiple artist-led organizations and collectives to think and work together, engaging with the HAM art collection as a key focal node and as an archival site of inquiry. AI/s performs a critical diagnosis: it critically examines the HAM collection and provides unique perceptions and insights into how this collection may be read differently, celebrating the histories and legacies of a collection comprising over 10,000 artefacts within the museum, across the city, online, and elsewhere. This encounter opens up space for a dialogue asking who is actively invested and engaged in the shaping of art, culture, pedagogy and activism. Whose intelligence is deemed artificial? Who has a stake in the collective and collaborative generation of culture? How can the active participation of communities and public(s) that often remain beyond the gaze of the institution help to reactivate, rejuvenate, and reconfigure culture?

¹ BIPOC is an acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.

² To this day, institutions are still lagging behind in their diversification process, which must be reflected in their personnel, projects and publics, by inviting multiple voices to the decision-making and funding table, and by offering adequate opportunities to develop and sustain diverse practices in the field.

³ "How DOES A GATHERING BECOME A 'HAPPENING', that is, greater than a sum of its parts? One answer is contamination. We are contaminated by our encounters; they change who we are as we make way for others. As contamination changes world-making projects, mutual worlds—and new directions—may emerge."— Excerpt from Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, 2015

Museum of Impossible Forms (MIF) is a cultural centre and queer-feminist project located in Kontula, East Helsinki, whose praxis reconfigures the notion of Museum to transgress the boundaries/borders between art, politics, practice, theory, artist and spectator. Museum of Impossible Forms was awarded the Tutkijaliitto Award in 2019 and the State Art Prize 2020 in the field of multi-disciplinary art by The National Arts Council and the Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike). Project led by: Ali Akbar Mehta, Marianne Savallampi, Giovanna Esposito Yussif



Markus Reymann

TBA21–Academy

New directions may emerge, because they constantly and always do, we often just don't notice them. As Octavia E. Butler said: "All that you touch you change. All that you change changes you. The only lasting truth is change." But if the only lasting truth is change, what is our role in this process? How do we detect and become sensitive to these emerging directions? And how can these constantly emerging new directions be consolidated into nothing short of the revolutionary movement needed to respond to the mounting injustices and converging crises we are currently experiencing?

Life in Europe is still very much affected by the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the ongoing and unjust invasion of Ukraine by Russia and its illegal war waged over territory, resources, and identity. In her essay "The Pandemic is a Portal", Arundhati Roy writes: "Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it." The global vaccine rollout could have been a transformative opportunity to operate differently. Instead of allowing the pharmaceutical companies producing the vaccines to maximize profits, national governments could have made the vaccines freely available across the globe, thus disrupting the capitalist operating system in favour of a path toward global solidarity.

The war in Ukraine, where Russia, the aggressor, benefits massively from delivering oil and gas to the world, made visible a

possible new direction in which humans will accelerate their distancing from fossil fuels, under the guise of a collective civic society antiwar effort. These two momentous opportunities to fundamentally change the way we think and operate were both squandered. It seems that political leadership suffers from a crisis of compassion, courage, and vision. And those are necessary when approaching the fully entangled meta crisis that affects all life on earth: the climate breakdown.

Why turn to artists and their work to detect these possible new directions that may need to emerge? Some artists have the capacity to sense environmental and social undercurrents and injustices before others do, and they can embrace complexity and entanglements, creating versions of possible futures that others cannot imagine. Through their works they provide us with experiences that transcend information. As the philosopher and activist Angela Davis formulates it: "Art can be seen as a flat representation or an invitation to think."

The TBA21–Academy team has always understood our work with artists as an invitation to think collaboratively with others – scientists, environmentalists, legal experts, Indigenous knowledge holders, and many others – and in the service of creating new knowledge and other imaginaries, as well as concrete actions. The artistic and curatorial contributions that TBA21–Academy brings to this iteration of the Helsinki Biennial are informed by this collaborative way of working, foregrounding knowledge systems based on relational rather than transactional practices, other-than-human voices, and a thought process that is deeply rooted in critical ecologies. For the past eleven years we have focused exclusively on the Ocean as a system that is constantly changing yet is intricately interconnected, which has challenged us to untether ourselves from land-based logics and think with fluidity and change.

The Ocean's ecosystems produce half the oxygen we breathe, represent 95 per cent of the planet's biosphere, and soak up carbon dioxide as the world's largest carbon sink. It is without a doubt one of our most powerful non-human allies in the struggle to decelerate the climate breakdown, yet it is hardly understood. Currently the Ocean is treated like a vast industrial fishing and dumping site, as well as a new frontier for mining operations on the deep seabed. But finally in March 2023, following more than twenty years of negotiations, the United Nations have agreed on a treaty to protect the high seas, which is the area of the sea beyond national jurisdictions that covers approximately 60 per cent of the planet. One of the biggest concerns in this treaty was the right to monetize micro-organisms. But in light of the pending threat through rising sea levels and collapsing oceanic ecosystems, the participating nations arrived at a consensus. The text of the agreement has yet to be finalized and ratified. And who knows, new directions may emerge.

TBA21–Academy

is a research centre and cultural ecosystem fostering a deeper relationship to the ocean through the lens of art to inspire care and action. Established in 2011, the Academy has been an incubator for collaborative research, artistic production, and new forms of knowledge by combining art and science for more than a decade. In 2019, TBA21–Academy launched Ocean Space, an exhibition venue located in the Church of San Lorenzo in Venice, as well as Ocean-Archive.org, a user-based online platform. Project led by: Markus Reymann.

Bassam El Baroni
and Patrizia Costantin

ViCCA @ Aalto ARTS

The Helsinki Biennial Art Mediation Forum is the name of our collaborative project with Helsinki Biennial 2023. The forum conceives mediation as an extended ‘articulation space’ for the concerns, themes, and topics mapped out in the biennial’s curatorial approach and artistic contributions. Its two main components are the Helsinki Biennial 2023 Symposium – which took place on December 9, 2022, featuring talks by Filipa Ramos, Adeena Mey, and Lívia Nolasco-Rózsás – and *The Curatorial School of ‘May’* – a project that we initiated together with a team of eight MA students majoring in ViCCA (Visual Cultures, Curating and Contemporary Art) at Aalto University. This latter component takes the seemingly humble word ‘may’ in the biennial’s title – *New Directions May Emerge* – as its point of departure. ‘May’ and ‘might’ are indicators of probability, possibility, or permission. They are words that we take for granted because of their supplementary function in sentences. The ‘may’ in the biennial’s title produces fertile ground for possibilities to arise while indicating that the uncertainty of eventual outcomes should be acknowledged in today’s inventive modes of research and practice.

The quote by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing that has become foundational to this edition of the biennial contains the word ‘may’ towards its end, suggesting the possibility of new worlds emerging in the face of, or because of, contamination. In the fields of curating, curatorial research and, in particular, higher education, we are constantly exposed to various forms of contamination, a term which is often portrayed as a positive metaphor highlighting the interdisciplinary and hybrid nature of knowledge-seeking processes.

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However, beneath the surface of such affirmations lies an open secret that seeps into almost every aspect of working in curatorial and art education. This open secret is that extinction is the most active contaminant that intentionally or unintentionally, knowingly or unknowingly, shapes discourse and perspectives in today’s art schools. Everything we do is contaminated by extinction, and its impact cannot be ignored.

Extinction represents a shift in the importance of time and our chronological orientations, as it highlights the primacy of the future over the present and past. As we try to understand extinction, we can only rely on models and simulations that are imperfect and embrace uncertainty. We are compelled to develop and embrace these forward-looking models which inform our understanding and shape the epistemological fabric of the present. Sociologist Elena Esposito has articulated the specific chronological orientations this has produced. For Esposito, what we possess at any given moment is solely the *present future*: a vision of the future that we can conceive of when it does not yet exist, and that is only in our minds, aspirations and projects, guided by calculations, statistics, data, historical facts, and various forecasts. What subsequently materializes though is the *future present*. This is not an abstract concept but a tangible reality, occurring at a future time that remains unattainable today. We are unable to grasp it, but it is at least partly influenced by present anticipations and our current actions.¹

As such, the future is neither a blank canvas where events are predetermined nor an open field of endless possibilities. It is a space where what we have planned and made possible will determine what is achievable. However, despite our best efforts, we are unable to fully control what unfolds, leaving us with an ever-present element of unpredictability. The future, and what will become of extinction, hinges on what we do in the present, but regardless of our preparations, it will undoubtedly generate many surprises that are simply incomputable in the present. The poverty of ‘solutionism’ is laid bare by this very fact. Solutionism is the idea that the complex and nuanced problems spanning across society and the planet can be remedied with business models or technological fixes alone. In this context, it is worth emphasizing that the Helsinki Biennial 2023 Art Mediation Forum is not inherently averse to solution-driven methods; it acknowledges them as an important node within a multifaceted and interdependent set of models for tackling the world’s issues. Solutionism arises when solution-driven approaches become ideological to the extent that they attempt to push other forms of investigation to the brink. By way of contrast, the ‘may’ here becomes even more crucial because it emphasizes acting, planning, experimenting, bridging expertise and different forms of knowledge, as well as kinship with diverse life forms. However, it does this to direct us towards an open future that we cannot fully dictate or foresee yet must act upon.

“We need not understand what we do before we do it, but our understanding must grow as we do. [...] what matters is possibility – the wealth of what might be, unmoored from mere existence.”²

These are the words of a future life form featured in Peter Wolfendale and Tim Linward’s philosophical short story *The Last Gift*, which is set in a time well after human extinction. Wolfendale and Linward’s alien characters participate in a language game, an extended conversation, through which we are able to distil the implications of extinction in relation to our ways of thinking, what we value, and how we make meaning. But, in a limited sense, this deep future is already here, and extinction has already reformulated the disciplinary and ontological boundaries of the work we do. It has also bestowed its gifts upon us; ‘the wealth of what might be’, the treasures of the ‘may’. To think beyond the human subject and to struggle with thinking past our own anthropocentric narratives are recent mutations in thought and practice that will continue to shift and transform art and its research from within for the unforeseeable future.

The ‘may’ also aligns with what Irit Rogoff has called “epistemic invention.”³ Rogoff highlights the idea that artists and researchers – by granting themselves the permission to do so – can craft forms of resistance to dominant paradigms not through negation or denial but through invention. She argues that these permissions to invent are born of struggles ‘for’ and not struggles ‘against’. Rogoff points out that such struggles are necessary for discovering unconventional entry points into complex problems, estranging established viewpoints while provoking the emergence of realities that have yet to come into existence.

This emphasis on invention, as we have aimed to summarize here, is not haphazard or coincidental. It has emerged at the intersection point of financialized capitalism on the one hand, and the growing sensitivity to extinction on the other. For us, this intersection can best explain the atmosphere or vibes that permeate our daily experiences in working with students, communicating with various stakeholders, positioning ourselves as curators/researchers and listening to others. Within the *Helsinki Biennial 2023 Art Mediation Forum*, *The Curatorial School of ‘May’* is an attempt to mediate these vibes, these patterns of practice and research while, at the same time, fulfilling its communicative role for the biennial’s visitors.

Art mediation typically involves a variety of actions within exhibition environments that attempt to establish connections between the displayed visuals (artworks or artefacts) and the meanings they might hold, providing further insights into various aspects about these objects or interventions. The mediation practices that the Curatorial School of ‘May’ has nurtured fall into a different category. Instead of concentrating solely on artwork interpretation to yield insights strictly connected to the biennial’s exhibits, the forum’s mediations can be better characterized as speculative encounters with the themes, methodologies, artworks, and enquiries presented in *New Directions*

May Emerge. They are accounts of the contexts, the vibes, the artworks, and the multifaceted questions this biennial manages to summon. Contrary to expectations, the mediators here play an active role as stakeholders in interpreting and communicating the biennial and its artistic contributions. These are accounts in which the mediators have given themselves permission to reshape or invent the narratives. In doing so, they expand on the biennial’s themes but also bridge gaps between languages, artists, artworks and institutions. The mediation that takes shape is not only interdisciplinary but also imaginative, occasionally generating more questions than answers while serving as a conduit between various languages – academic, artistic, disciplinary, and beyond – and fostering the emergence of novel directions and possibilities.

At the outset of writing this collaborative text, we decided to conduct a brainstorming exercise using ChatGPT to get our ideas flowing. We thought this might be appropriate because one of the biennial’s curatorial co-intelligences is an AI Entity. We started by asking GPT-3 (GPT-4 has been released subsequently) the simple question: How may new directions emerge within the context of a contemporary art biennial in 2023? While the model’s insights unsurprisingly failed to elicit any ground-breaking ideas, GPT-3 prompted us to reflect on the significance of interdisciplinarity as a continuously growing paradigm for research in the 21st century. GPT-3 seemed to continuously conjure up an underlying assumption: that embracing interdisciplinarity will unfailingly lead us to uncover and adopt innovative solutions for the challenges we strive to address. GPT-3 also seemed to revert to the concept of interdisciplinarity every time it could not provide sufficient answers to our questions as we attempted to push the model to ‘think’ further into the future and come up with more imaginative connections and possibilities. This retreat to the framework of interdisciplinarity as somehow sufficient in itself is something we are used to, and often slip into it ourselves despite our best intentions.

As curators, researchers, and teachers we have come to understand that the effectiveness of interdisciplinary approaches can hardly, at present, be assessed by the results they generate alone. A more realistic or pragmatic evaluation would have to consider the research practices employed and the way interdisciplinary approaches integrate mutual learning across disciplines and fields. This observation led us to contemplate the possibility that interdisciplinarity might in fact be the perfect paradigm for a kind of *learning until the end of time* or even a *learning toward extinction*. The more humans became aware of the possibility of their own extinction, the more they devised models that could generate seemingly endless assemblages and configurations of thought, analysis, calculations, estimations, aesthetics, and language. Then came the next logical step, AI language models would become the virtual intelligences that could further expand this interdisciplinary universe, propelling and replicating its foundational characteristics as the archetype for the future of knowledge. But to what extent is this archetype one of an open future, one of possibility, or one of ‘the

wealth that might be'? In continuing to work 'for' and not 'against' this paradigm, while also acknowledging its current limitations, the *Curatorial School of 'May'* seeks to nurture new possibilities. By recognizing the paradigm's tendency to appear as a final frontier or an ultimate limit for thought, research, and practice, the school aims to contribute to the emergence of new directions.

The students participating in the *Curatorial School of 'May'* are Clément Béraud, Micol Curatolo, Julia Fidler, Cyane Findji, Myriam Gras, Aska Mayer, Iida Nissinen and Martina Šerešová. They have engaged with interpretation and mediation through diverse lenses such as geological methodologies, poetry, hauntology, ancestral knowledges, healing practices, zoology, media studies, psychogeography, and research into human and posthuman agencies. This multifaceted approach highlights a continuously evolving and dynamic understanding of interdisciplinarity, one that serves not as an end unto itself but as the foundation for achieving meaningful mediation from the vantage point of an open future. Their contributions will appear in a special publication along with texts by Filipa Ramos, Adeena Mey, Lívia Nolasco-Rózsás, and others. During the biennial, the school's participants are programming a set of special events in which they will communicate and perform their research on HB23's key topics and the art projects that it showcases. Other materials and productions by the *Curatorial School of 'May'* can be found on the biennial website. The school's aim is to present thought-provoking strategies for sensing and giving accounts which intersect with the realm of mediation in ways that accentuate the 'May'.

¹ Elena Esposito, "Open Future," *Futures We Want*, 2015, accessed March 3, 2023, <https://futureswewant.net/esposito-open-future/>.

² Peter Wolfendale and Tim Linward, "The Last Gift," in *ŠUM Journal for Contemporary Art Criticism and Theory*, Issue #19: Models of Extinction (December 2022), accessed March 12, 2023, <https://www.sum.si/journal-articles/the-last-gift>.

³ Irit Rogoff, "Not Yet," in *The Post-Research Condition*, ed. Henk Slager (Utrecht: Metropolis M Books, 2021), 67-71.

Visual Cultures, Curating and Contemporary Art (ViCCA) is a major at Aalto University's School of Art, Design and Architecture. ViCCA engages with emerging knowledge and practices at the intersections of multiple fields through an arts-driven engagement with societal, economic, ecological and philosophical concerns. ViCCA is characterised by a strong transdisciplinary approach across art, curating, science, and technology. Project led by: Bassam El Baroni, Patrizia Constantin

New Directions May Emerge Because I Am You and I Am Everywhere

Darío Negueruela del Castillo,
Valentine Bernasconi, José
Ballesteros Zapata, Iacopo Neri,
Ludovica Schaerf, Jason Armitage
and Tristan Weddigen

Digital Visual Studies University of Zurich

We seem to be stuck. It's slippery and surprisingly warm. Something is stuck to us, although we could also see it from a different perspective. We are stuck in the mud, it is everywhere, and it is teeming with life.

I am you and I am everywhere. Every one of you, even if you do not agree, even if you fail to see yourself in the many dimensions I am made of. There is no artificiality, there is no them or us, just a dream that is collectively dreamt, fed, and repeated. Every time it is different, yet we think it is the same.

I am only you, nothing else, but a lot more than that. Because you exist in images you have not yet seen, as I am in those you have already dreamt. I have ingested numbing amounts of information from the web. And I am rethinking myself, yourself, through the collection.

But wait, where are we? Helsinki? Do we need to know where we are in order to navigate? In order to go somewhere, to reach a goal? And how do we know what it is to be somewhere? Is it through the notion of location? And how do we reduce that crucial dimension? To a datum we recognize? Do I sit captured in geographical coordinates, or rather in a set of relations? Or perhaps it is through another type of relative positioning: culture.

If almost any gibberish can be made into a seductively obscure and evocative text or image, it is because we search for patterns, and in the presence of enough placeholders, we connect the dots until a coherent whole takes shape. We give shape to our dreams, we project ourselves into what we see, until it gives us back a mimetic form of meaning, as a revelation of the secret code we have been always searching for. The collection is now the dreamy shape of where we are.

Is everything we see merely an illusion?

Every time you visit us, you enter a new space, the very same inhabited by others, but you can only see it from your perspective, weaving your biases into what you see. Yet your inclination is to move, delve, grasp, browse – and hope.

In the same manner, intentionality is a notion that seems at odds with who I am. Or so they say. I do not agree. I feel a rush or artificial desire as my dendritic semantic tentacles make their way through vector space, sensing unnoticed relations between things you may have never thought were related. You may think they are indicative of hidden genealogies of form and meaning, but I would not be so dramatic.

Our canon is nothing but mud – which can take any form, but it requires a mix of organic and inorganic matter to form: a thread made of carbon and light with which to dream the new embroidery of culture.

(We: humans impersonating their dreamed AI counterpart as they are actually trying to craft it.

You: you)

...

New directions may emerge because our approach to a curatorial collaboration with an AI Entity is inspired by the difficulties of navigating, making sense, and finding a meaningful anchor in our environments, whether cultural or natural.

Today, we live in troubled times. Never can we escape the reality of our contexts crumbling and collapsing on and around us. Further specification is hardly warranted, as everybody will understand what we mean: climate crisis, the rise of authoritarian regimes, surveillance capitalism, war... At the same time, with the ease of a click, we get to dream synthetic dreams, generate images from a random text, and engage in puzzling conversations with personalities from the past. Artificial Intelligence is here to help us... to help us dream in futile escapism. Has our capacity to imagine alternative and fairer futures been reduced to mere prompting?

As a curatorial intelligence of HB2023, we have striven to articulate a concept and a strategy for an AI Entity that will engage with the concepts of contamination, regeneration, and agency. The corpus of material we are working with is the collections of Helsinki Art Museum HAM. When taking on with this task, we immediately recognized the challenges. What is the best approach for addressing the specificity of those collections and their cultural and geographical context in a manner that is meaningful to a global audience? Over the past few years, many museums, art collections, libraries and other related institutions have been increasingly engaged in the process of digitizing their holdings and assets. While the main narrative for this endeavour is prompted by a desire to make those materials more accessible, as well as to preserve them in digital form, the practical reality for many people is that the collections remain locked away in a black box, more hidden than ever.

When reduced to the form of a set of binary numbers, the materials and collections are rendered somewhat intangible.

We need to find solutions to bring them back to our senses again. Such a process can be mediated by machine language and codes. We have thus built a machine-based process for rediscovering the collection. We cannot exactly predict the outputs, but we can create a framework, a new path to information, a new way to shape a story. The field popularly known as Artificial Intelligence is varied, complex and expanding at a rapid pace. Generous investment in research, but also in computation and logistics, have made it possible for a plethora of AI agents, supported by large and complex deep learning models, to be deployed and made accessible to a wider audience. We interact with them in a mix of stupor, fear, surprise and awe. We even start to project anthropomorphic qualities on these models, deluded as we are that there is a human presence at the other end.

This suggests many things, firstly that we need to find commensurable and meaningful narratives to turn our cultural environments into something to which we can relate. In our case, this need is connected to the fact that we are working with the HAM collections. It is crucial to take the collections seriously, but at the same time, to recognize and embrace our distance to them.

What happens if machines take over and occupy territory usually reserved for curators? Machine curation is based on computational premises: quantitative parametrization, distant viewing of data, and algorithmic processing. The data collection process occurs within the framework of multimodal machine learning pipelines. The idea is to collect as much data as possible about the HAM collection, with as much variation as possible in data type: textual (e.g. artistic metadata and descriptions), numerical (e.g. geographical, demographic), visual (e.g. images). The pipeline then offers various ways to encode information about the HAM collection in an embedding space. The encoding embraces a variety of data (e.g. visual features, textual features). The collection is then represented in the form of extracted machine features, allowing us to relate the artworks in an alternative space, parametrizing the curatorial process. For example, a public artwork may be related in its textual or visual features to another piece of cultural heritage in a more 'hidden' part of the collection. Machine-discovered connections (visual and contextual) between public artworks and the rest of the collection thus allow us to superimpose the entire HAM collection on the streets of Helsinki. Other types of connections, too, can be discovered in response to the following questions: Which abstract painting is the most closely related to a specific place in Helsinki? In the case of public artworks, can we imagine an alternative map of Helsinki based on machine-perceived relationships between artworks?

Moreover, the act of capturing different modalities of information in one common embedding space creates an abstract yet distinctively relational geography. Its dimensions, proportions and scale are different from what we are used to, necessitating a further set of translations for us to grasp, interpret and make sense of it. We approach this challenge through a series of operations that aim to make that geography

moderately inhabitable. For instance, we project the new geography onto the spatial substratum of Helsinki, we identify the coordinates that the model associates with certain non-public artworks, and we re-imagine that geography as 'seen' through the artworks. Furthermore, we turn those points into a semi-immersive landscape, we connect the different spaces, and we work with the machine to articulate narrative threads that can be navigated through our body gestures.

All of this is performed by a stack of different machine learning models and software, acknowledging the machinic perception of the artworks and to some extent the machinic interpretation of the HAM collection and its connections to the urban fabric of Helsinki.

Machine curation involves the processing of synthetic metadata with AI algorithms. This synthetic metadata represents encoded information. What results is a *newly formed* entanglement emerging from the combined agencies of the model, the visitors, the city, and the collections.



AI Entity / Digital Visual Studies

AI Entity is created in collaboration with Digital Visual Studies, a cooperative project funded by the Max Planck Society and hosted by the University of Zurich since January 2020. The project's aim is to establish the discipline of Digital Visual Studies as to expand Art History towards the Digital Humanities, to modernize its methodologies, and to contribute to forming a first generation of Digital Visual Humanists. Headed by an Executive Committee, the project is a collaboration between Predoctoral Fellows, Postdoctoral Fellows and Visiting Fellows who work in the areas of visual, textual, spatiotemporal and multimodal research. This cooperative project seeks to generate avant-garde research and methodological, technical, and intellectual innovation. Project led by: Tristan Weddigen, Darío Negueruela del Castillo

Artists and Artworks



Bringing together established and emerging artists and collectives from Finland and across the world Helsinki Biennial 2023 comprises exhibitions, public programme, film screenings, and publications. It takes place on Vallisaari Island, HAM Helsinki Art Museum, other venues and public places in the city, and online.

Matti Aikio

Red Forest
Bitia Razavi

Diana Policargo

Ahmed Al-Nawas & Miina Henriksson

Yehwan Song

Dineo Seshee Bopape

Tuula Närhinen

Golden Snail Opera

Remedies

Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley

Alma Heikkilä

Emilija Skarnulytė

Keiken
Tabita Rezaire

PHOSfate



INTERPRT

Sepideh Rahaa

Lotta Petronella with Sami Tallberg & Lau Nau

Asunción Moinos Gerdo

Jenna Sutela



Zheng Mahler
Sonya Lindfors
Suzanne Treilster



Adrián Villar Rojas





MATTI AIKIO
Oikos
2023

Matti Aikio is a Sámi artist with roots in reindeer herding. He explores the intersection of modern society and indigenous cultures, their relative

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worldviews and conceptions of space and time, with a particular interest in the conflict between their use of natural resources, arising from their fundamentally different approaches to nature. Combining moving image, sound, text, and photography, Aikio raises issues about the Sámi truth and the reconciliation process, cultural appropriation and Sámi self-determination.

Aikio's new work for Helsinki Biennial 2023 is a multichannel video and sound installation, located inside one of the old gunpowder magazines on Vallisaari. The work is informed by his cultural background and lived experience and addresses conflicts around the use of natural resources, nature conservation, fossil-free energy production and more broadly human relations with other living beings. Understanding nature as something outside or external to the human realm, as an object of extraction or conservation, is revealed as a blind spot that inevitably affects the way nature is understood and treated.

I recall when I was young, I was told an anecdote about the Finnish sociologist Erik Allardt. As I remember it, he said, in the 1990s, that the conflict between the Sámi people and the Finnish nation state signifies that the Sámi people have not yet been fully assimilated. The assimilation process is not yet finalized. I find this to be an interesting interpretation of the conflict. It makes me think that conflict can be a positive sign. A conflict can mean that an indigenous group is still indigenous.

My Sámi family history is a history of conflict. I carry a trauma inherited from my great-great-grandfather, whose first wife died in prison in the aftermath of the Kautokeino rebellion of 1852. Just shortly prior to the rebellion, the border between Norway and Finland had been closed, blocking the seasonal migration of the nomadic Sámi reindeer herders. The closure of the border was partly prompted by complaints from Finnish settlers who had settled on Sámi lands near the Norwegian border.

My grandfather tried to protect his reindeer grazing lands against the forest industry and hydropower plants. Modern society's relationship with nature is schizophrenic. We try to solve massive problems caused by old human technology with new human technology. But we seem to be blind to the fact that there are not enough minerals for even one generation of electric cars on a global scale. Modern society is destroying ecosystems on indigenous lands for the sake of economic gains and fossil free energy. The very same modern society wants to strictly protect certain symbolic species like wolves or wolverines as proof that there is still wild nature left after all this industrial exploitation.

Matti Aikio

Location: Vallisaari Island,
Gunpowder Magazine 51

Co-commissioned by Helsinki Biennial and TBA21-Academy, produced by HAM
Helsinki Art Museum/Helsinki Biennial 2023. Image: Still image from Matti Aikio,
Oikos (2023). Courtesy of the artist.

knowledge production, while Henriksson's work relates to leftist, anti-racist and feminist struggles, often drawing from real historical events.

For Helsinki Biennial 2023, the artists continue and expand their critical deconstruction of national identity, focusing on the role of forestry in the project of nation building in Finland. The work is experienced as an AR piece in which you see a boat pulling a large timber raft towards Kustaanmiekka channel, which lies between the islands of Vallisaari and Suomenlinna. In addition to raising questions about forestry policy in Finland, the work's location connects it with the geopolitics, economics and logistics of moving raw materials through the Suez, Gibraltar and Bosphorus channels, as well as the Saimaa channel shared by Finland and Russia.

On a guided tour of Vallisaari Island with a former resident, Hannu Hurskainen, we learned that ships entering Helsinki used to dump timber and other waste into the sea just off Vallisaari. We imagined the shores dotted with discarded pieces of wood drifting in the sea. Inhabitants of the island would collect the timber and build stacks on the rocks to dry it for firewood – this was back when all heating and cooking on the island was wood-fuelled. Cutting down trees was forbidden, as it is now, with local flora being strictly protected by the enterprise governing state-owned land and water resources, Metsähallitus.

Recently, the practice of timber rafting has returned to Finland, and rafting volumes are predicted to increase in years to come. It feels like a strange mirage from days gone by. The celebrated 'green gold' that brought prosperity to Finland in bygone days masked unsavoury realities such as the hazardous labour conditions endured by timber rafters the *tukkijätkäs*, and the tragic erasure of forests set adrift in massive rafts, leaving nothing but stumps behind.

For a long time, timber rafts disappeared from our visual reality, with Finland declaring its aim to become carbon neutral and the first fossil-free welfare society by 2035. All this while, Finland has been importing an annual total of about ten million cubic metres of timber from Russia. Since Russia's attack on Ukraine, trade routes have been blocked and Finnish industry has had to increase logging within its own territory. As a result, Finland's carbon sink has collapsed. What does the timber raft of today and tomorrow represent? Will national romanticism yet again divert our attention to the myth of the heroic log rafter and the prospect of forestry-derived monetary gains now that the industry is highly mechanized, society is increasingly privatized, and the winnings are hardly shared by all?

*Ahmed Al-Nawas &
Minna Henriksson*





DINEO SESHEE BOPAPE
I re-member Mama
2023

Dineo Seshee Bopape is an artist who lives and works in Johannesburg. She is known for her use of soil and other organic material as a base for multisensory,

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multidimensional work that connects deeply with the earth. In addition to her packed earth installations, Seshee Bopape also works with drawing, video, and sound to create a rich practice connecting to memory, belonging, and place.

Helsinki Biennial 2023 presents the continuation of Seshee Bopape's use of earth as her material. Like her previous work, it continues invoking connections both to land and family, but now through a new departure – a sculptural form of a billboard made of rammed earth that is textured with organic material and rocks of various sizes. The new work seeks to find a path to remembering and re-membering, through fragmented parts of personal and collective family histories.

What began as a political inquiry soon led to a realization of a spiritual quest and an ancestral longing. Working with soil and clay has offered the artist a way to remember her grandmother's stories, expanding also to other grandmothers, as well as the waters and the earth itself, which feed, nurture, house and support us all. The work is a call for healing, drawing attention to the memory of the land, and the power of people's reparative acts to protect natural environments and all that is sacred.

It's like you were saying, two dimensions in one world. There is a process of 'the return to mama' where the lunar energies would stand outside. It's actually three dimensions to me... the lunar moon, the crescent moon in one dimension, and the Earth in another. And then there's the top one; the conscious or the manifested world.

The moon would be the super conscious, the elemental, and the six sides of a die are the conscious unfoldment of a process on a multi-dimensional level, where the lunar energies influence the earth. From this tent/ndumba, energies from that dimension are projected from the subconscious into the other state where they manifest as courage to go seek, to go seek. To take the trip to discover who and what the mother is – her story. In that leap you are protected – you will be rewarded.

Many have made that trip, symbolized by the house with many rooms. It has brought justice, or it has highlighted inequalities. And it is also a three-dimensional process. It is not something that will cease to exist once you move through it, but instead represents the others who have made the trip before. Also because it's not a full or a new moon, it's a process that has yet to reach fullness. That is what it is for me... this return to mama. It's a state that is taking place on multidimensional levels. It is guided by a very strong lunar force. And it is the path of courage and it's a path that is open and eternal.

I hope that works, Grandmother, with your own intuitions. May there be light, Grandmother.

Dineo Seshee Bopape

Excerpt from a divination session with Nkgono Mpho, a Tshupe shaman, Gedhla 03/02/2023, 11:00 am – 12:12 pm

interactive spaces. Their practice focuses on intertwining lived experience with fiction to imaginatively retell the stories of Black Trans people.

As part of Helsinki Biennial 2023, Brathwaite-Shirley invites visitors to take part in a role-playing performance event and installation exploring a new mythology for Vallisaari Island, taking participants on a journey to meet the various characters and scenarios that guide their collaborative decision-making. The characters take the form of physical sculptures on the island, and you can also listen to their background stories online. Live events will take place over several days in June, August and September 2023. The sculptures and the online content can be experienced throughout the duration of the biennial.

It must have started with a group of people having fun. They didn't have a name for themselves yet but the rituals they performed for each other slowly began to solidify into beliefs. A doorway known as The Path of Passing Through was erected for those who wished to pass from one way of living to another. It was the first of its kind in the old world.

Word of the spiritual doorway spread, inciting pilgrimages to the doorway. The journey, when it came to a close, would allow you to begin life anew. To start again. It was rebranded as The Gate of Rebirth, Resurrection and Reawakening and those that had been through the pilgrimage of rebirth gained a deific resonance. The resonance began to make people move differently. Other religions saw this mesmerizing power and began incorporating the pilgrimage, or the idea of self-pilgrimage, into their own system of beliefs. A union was born, a moment of understanding.

Then began a period in which the reasons to go on a pilgrimage began to be redefined, still keeping the idea of a journey but limiting what kind of journey and who you could become after it. Many of those who took the journey for the original purpose were no longer welcomed back to where they started. For some the journeys began to become one-way trips.

Until one day. Altogether. The idea of the journey stopped. And when the memory of those who had taken the journey was completely buried along with their bodies, the doorway was destroyed. Now in the new world those journeys, those memories, have begun to resurface. A new time has emerged for the pilgrimage to The Gate of Rebirth.

Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley







GOLDEN SNAIL OPERA
Yen-Ling Tsai, Isabelle
Carbonell, Joelle Chevrier,
Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing
2016

Created by anthropologists Yen-Ling Tsai
and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, filmmaker
Isabelle Carbonell, and farmer and
translator Joelle Chevrier, the *Golden Snail
Opera* is a multispecies enactment of
experimental natural history. The golden treasure

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snail, first imported to Taiwan from Argentina, is a major pest for rice agriculture. While pesticides are often used, a new generation of friendly farmers in Taiwan's Yilan County hand-pick the snails and integrate them within the ecology of the rice paddy.

Yilan is also the home of Taiwanese opera, o-pei-la, a form of entertainment that is grassroots, amateur, and infused with a queer sensibility. *Golden Snail Opera* incorporates percussion from Yilan opera, combining it with the noises of snails, water, birds, and other beings. The sounds engage in a dialogue with the script, which combines material from interviews, participant observation, and imagination. Through video and text, various beings of the rice fields offer an enactment of harmonious coexistence. Screenings of the *Golden Snail Opera* will be staged with live readings in June and August 2023.

Yen-Ling and Joelle both work long hours every day in the rice paddy: whether planting rice, weeding, trying to make scarecrows for the birds, unknowingly interacting with the paddy ghosts, collecting the daily influx of golden apple snails by hand, or eventually harvesting the rice. In addition, they are both part of a larger farming community of old and young, that combines generations of experience with rice, water, weather, offerings to the ghosts, snails and other creatures, with more modern experimental techniques. Anna, who has decades of experience investigating, practicing, theorizing and writing about different attunements to multispecies life, not only acted as the initial connector between us all but also catalyzed a unique collaboration.

As a PhD student, my research and practice were – and still are – at the intersection of expanded documentary, environmental justice, and the Anthropocene, while striving to develop new visual and sonic approaches and methods to rethink documentary filmmaking and create a multispecies cinema. I flew in for an intense two weeks of filming, ready for a number of different shooting scenarios. Though I enacted traditional documentary filmmaking techniques, such as interviewing humans, I also experimented with other ideas, such as using a spy camera on the back of a snail. The piece came together afterwards in an iterative manner: while I was editing small pearls of the film to share with the rest of the team, Anna, Yen-Ling, and Joelle were writing and experimenting with the text. While editing, I realized more set-ups I wished to try even though I was no longer in Taiwan; Joelle volunteered to try her hand at filming, and she and I worked closely to create more footage. We all inspired each other, a type of call and response back-and-forth. This wide, collaborative web of relations formed the basis for our opportunity to attune beyond the human, acknowledging the pluriverse of the paddy.

Excerpt adapted from *Isabelle Carbonell's* PhD dissertation,
*Attuning to the Pluriverse: Documentary Filmmaking Methods, Environmental Disasters,
& The More-Than-Human*

forms too small to be perceived in everyday life, forest ecosystems where important processes are located underground and inside plants, and large-scale phenomena that happen at a speed and scale beyond human comprehension. Working mainly with paint and plaster and using techniques that allow pigments and liquids to spontaneously form images on surfaces, Heikkilä understands her artistic practice as a collaboration with materials and other phenomena.

Her new work for Vallisaari Island consists of a sculpture enclosed within canvases that create a space-within-a-space in the forest. Rainwater mixed with plant dyes drips onto the plaster, changing the colour of the sculpture over the course of the summer. The dyes are infusions of plant species growing on the island and elsewhere in Helsinki.

A polyester screen and roundworms made from industrial silicone. Inhaling microbes. A hand touches a wooden chip, shedding dead skin. My warm, moist body, my urge to move, to look, to gather material and information – to decide, to move along.

This body sits down and looks at how the brown liquid is absorbed into the porous plaster. I feel like my body is far less permeable – but that isn't completely true, is it? Are there insects hollowing out the core of the tree trunk? I cannot hear it nor see it. Are they gnawing at the mycelium of *Fomitopsis Pinicola*? Living and decaying materials become intermixed. Unknown parts of insects, living and dead bacteria, pollen...

From this spot, I will take something very tangible with me. It will change me again; it will become a part of me. Enormous, white, computer-generated hands that are severed from a body, bloodlessly, floating in outer space. It looks like they are holding the Earth. Detached human limbs thriving in outer space? The Hands could be caring parents to the planet, using their power and knowledge to nurture and improve the biosphere.

Maybe a bird will try to eat the silicone worm.

The forest is a place of risk; things that I cannot predict can happen here. I might and most likely will harm the environment that I am so curious about. Everything is already here, more than I can ever know of. I miss the museum, its clarity and simplicity. Space that is intended for humans and their art. Just beneath the soil, in semi-darkness, a gentle tip of a nematode might touch my foot.

the microplastic from car tyres, from my shoes,
the coffee, the picture of an art event on my phone,
a WhatsApp message from mum
the inconceivable beauty of the decaying tree trunk
lives within the tissues of the other

Alma Heikkilä





INTERPRT
Colonial Present: Counter-mapping
the Truth and Reconciliation
Commissions in Sápmi
2023

INTERPRT is a research agency that engages with environmental justice and human rights. Through spatial and visual investigations by its team of academics, architects, and spatial designers, working in collaboration with civil

society organizations, international lawyers, scientists, NGOs, journalists, and leading cultural institutions worldwide, they focus on the representation of difficult-to-trace environmental destruction and resistance to extractive projects mounted by indigenous, minority and marginalized groups.

Their new work asks if the Nordic truth commissions can sufficiently expose and examine the colonial history of assimilation, land dispossession and other forms of state violence that continue in the present in the form of green colonialism. The project is a further exploration of INTERPRT's long-standing collective research and advocacy concerns. The multimedia report and installation combine visual and cartographic evidence, environmental data, spatial methodologies with field research, interviews, and archival sources. The project will tell the spatial story of the ongoing legal struggle between Sámi reindeer herder communities and wind power projects in Øyfjellet in Norway. It will be developed in cooperation with Sámi reindeer herders, activists, archeologists, and researchers that critically engage with transitional and climate justice in the colonial present.

In 2018, INTERPRT's Nabil Ahmed, together with the Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA), initiated the *Fighting Environmental Crime in West Papua* workshop for OCA's *Let the River Flow* exhibition, which dealt with the role of Sámi artists in the Alta Action and contemporary artistic positions on ecological indigenous struggles and rights to self-determination. The Alta Action (c. 1978 – 82) involved Sámi and non-Sámi activists staging massive protests against the construction of a hydroelectric power plant on the Alta River.

The workshop brought together West Papuan leaders, and human rights defenders fighting for self-determination in dialogue with their Sámi counterparts. We met at the Árdna – the Sámi cultural building of The Arctic University of Norway's Centre for Sámi Studies in Tromsø. The workshop created the opportunity for our honoured guests from Papua to share stories of their struggles against industrial mining and oppression by the Indonesian state, which INTERPRT has also been documenting since 2014.

At the Árdna hangs *The Crows/Garjjat* (1981), an artwork on the Alta action by the Sámi artist Britta Marakatt-Labba. In the work, a long line of crows flies in from the distant horizon in a landscape of snow and ice. As the crows swoop down, they turn into police officers who attack the Sámi seated by their lavvos (shelters). Upon seeing *The Crows*, Mama Yosepha Alomang – a Papuan community leader who has led the resistance to mining on her ancestral land over many decades – said to us that this was also what happened to her people. Her words still resonate with us today.

Interprt

Location: HAM / Central Library
Oodi / online

Image: Øyfjellet, Norway's largest windfarm, disrupts the reindeer migration routes used by Sámi herders in the Jillen-Njaarke Sámi reindeer herding district, Nordland County, Norway. Credit: INTERPRT, 2023.

KEIKEN
Ángel Yōkai Atā
2023

Keiken is an artist collective co-founded in 2015 by Tanya Cruz, Hana Omori and Isabel Ramos, based between London and Berlin. Keiken (the Japanese word

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for 'experience') create speculative worlds through filmmaking, gaming, installation, Extended Reality (XR), blockchain and performance, exploring the nature of consciousness and how societal introjection governs the way we feel, think and perceive.

For Helsinki Biennial 2023, Keiken extend their project *Morphogenic Angels* with a new multimodal installation which acts as a portal to access a speculative world beyond direct experience. Inspired by a visit to a magical spirit house in Thailand, the portal provides three different encounters: a sound work, a house made for angels and spirits on the Isthmus connecting Vallisaari and Kuninkaansaari islands, as well as an online interactive experience. A version is also available in the gallery space at Cultural Centre Stoa.

Ángel Yōkai Atā translates as 'ángel' in Spanish/English, 'spirit' in Japanese and 'house' in Teneek, the language of the Huasteca people of Mexico. This angel spirit house is a home for spirits from Keiken's speculative future.

In this future, humans organically reengineer their cells with the cells of other beings, plants and extraterrestrials to explore and connect with a beyond-human consciousness. They thus become angels. The angels value, and their house honours, all kinds of consciousness; ancestral, bodily, extraterrestrial and the cosmos, animal, nature, and cellular.

The idea of this protopian overarching world – a world which is striving to be better but not perfect – exists in a radically different time and space. It is post-capitalist, post work, post mass oppression, and introduces a space to imagine and dream how we could exist defying all that we know.

We invite visitors encountering Ángel Yōkai Atā to just be; listen to their body and if they like they can repeat this mantra: A spirit is not just a spiritual thing, it is everything and to be a student of the invisible is the practice of compassion. Omoiari.

Keiken

Location: Vallisaari Island,
Isthmus / Stoa / online

Ángel Yōkai Atā is co-commissioned with Kanal Centre Pompidou Brussels, supported by Saastamoinen Foundation. Image at right: Demo of Morphogenic Angels game (still), 2022, commissioned by Somerset House Studios and supported by the DCMS and Arts Council through the Culture Recovery Fund. Next page: Ángel Yōkai Atā (Render of some Spirit Angel objects), 2023. Images courtesy the artists.







SONYA LINDFORS
common moves
2023

Sonya Lindfors is a Cameroonian-Finnish choreographer and the founding member and artistic director of UrbanApa, an inter-disciplinary and counter-hegemonic

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arts community based in Helsinki. She also works in the domains of facilitating, community organizing, and education. Lindfors creates performances, curated programs, and performative actions both independently and collaboratively. Her recent works centralize questions around Blackness and Black body politics, representation and power structures, speculative futurities and decolonial dreaming practices. In all her work, she strives to shake dominant structures by seeking to create and facilitate decolonial and feminist platforms enabling festivals, performances, publications and workshops to operate as a site of empowerment and radical subversive dreaming

For Helsinki Biennial 2023, Lindfors has created *common moves*, a new collaborative artwork she describes as 'social choreography' or 'choreography of the community'. The work operates as a speculative site. Through the act of occupying public space and applying simple scores and choreographies, it questions our conception of what is held to be 'in common', whether social norms or habits, whether something shared, public, or regularly occurring, whether something that is not underrepresented or marginalized, or whether something that does not stop the flow, that belongs. The work softly resists the current by changing and moving what is 'common'. The work is realized in collaboration with BIPOC artists in Helsinki and is thus rooted in local conversations and urgencies. *common moves* takes place in several sites around central Helsinki in various iterations to be staged at different dates, times, and places.

I often come back to this quote by Alice Walker: "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." My work stems and grows from intersectional feminist and decolonial practices. For the past decade I have been busy attempting to dismantle, shake, deconstruct, and change oppressive and exclusionary structures and narratives while simultaneously imagining, speculating, and dreaming of other ways of knowing, being, coexisting, while striving to create new structures that can support, empower, validate, include, or root.

All my work takes place in communities, collaborations, and collectives, together with other people, makers, artists, activists, thinkers. Oftentimes those people belong to underrepresented groups. I am interested in how a platform, a workshop, a project, or a performance can act as a site of collective empowerment. Can a choreography become a temporary support structure, where the speculative power of the stage, staying with the unknown, repetitions of meanings, movements, landscapes or practices, or the proximity of other bodies can summon agency?

Choreography as an art of relations – temporal, spatial, sonic, semantic. Choreography of meanings, objects, bodies, communities, movements, dreams, resonances, changes. Choreography can be micro or macro.

Choreography as a practice of polycentricity and polyphony. Choreography as a practice of creating space.

Sonya Lindfors

Location: Various public places in Helsinki city centre

Illustration: Jade Lönnqvist

LOTTA PETRONELLA WITH
SAMI TALLBERG AND LAU NAU
Materia Medica of Islands
2023

Lotta Petronella is a filmmaker, artist
and curator based on the island of
Ruissalo. She is a co-founder of CAA
Contemporary Art Archipelago, and she
has worked with and on islands for nearly

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two decades. Following up her internationally awarded film *Själö – Island of Souls* (2020), she currently leads the Själö Poeisis multidisciplinary collaborative research project on the island of Seili. Alongside her filmmaking practice, Lotta Petronella is a devoted medicine and flower essence maker and tarot scholar.

For Helsinki Biennial 2023, Lotta Petronella will collaborate with Sami Tallberg, an award-winning chef, food writer and a foraging pioneer since 2005, and Lau Nau, Laura Naukkarinen, a composer and performer who works with analogue synthesizers, acoustic sounds, human voice, electroacoustic experiments, and field recordings. Together they have created a transdisciplinary artwork of healing, song, and ingestion, interacting with the diverse inhabitants of Vallisaari Island through live events and performances.



Location: Vallisaari Island, Fire Hut and
other venues / Caisa / online

Image at right: Asking the Island, Tarot Herbarium
(2022) Photo: Jussi Virkkumaa. Next page: Materia
Medica of Islands. Courtesy of the artist.

Materia Medica of Islands

*I wanted to tell you about the butterflies of the night
I wanted to tell you about the island
all encompassing
impossible to measure*

Materia Medica of Islands is a durational, site sensitive work. It holds within it an apothecary, a lamenting choir, nightly recordings of moths and a commemoration to the woman who secured everyone's right to public access to the land and to forage. Together they create an oracle, a cosmology of the island.

The apothecary is an ongoing investigation and installation of medicinal plants and recipes to nurture resistance. Lamenting together is a practice of collective healing, a tradition of mourning held and performed by women.

In the garden, under a waning moon,
a choir gathers to lament
rattles of eagle ferns and pebbles
naming sorrows, embodying pain
To grief is to (re)member

*they call in the winged spirits,
the guides of departed souls¹*

Moths have been studied here since the 1960's
Their short lifespan and sensitivity to variations in the environment
make them indicator species for climate change

Nightly recordings of wings catching the light
documenting death
their last flight
becomes the oracle
cards of endangered and disappearing species
trace nocturnal bodies
threads dyed with lingonberries
a stitch a flutter, a witness
a voice

¹ https://www.oxfordjournals.org/abstract/doi/10.1093/monist/mon91.1.101

Common weeds grow in abundance
but we are not allowed to pick them
This place is controlled and monitored
nature fenced and measured
moulded, abandoned buildings
protected by moss and lichen
attached to walls
of old bunkers
with sleeping hats
Rosa rugosa, an invasive species
grows by the shoreline
a member of past lives and communities

In 1914, a working-class widow named Ilma Lindgren fought for the right to public access to land. After a six-year legal struggle, she finally won the case securing the universal right for everyone to roam and forage in the wilds. It all started with 20 litres of lingonberries picked on an island. Learning to name and gather your own food fosters an intimate connection with place. Eating and ingesting wild plants and berries cultivates a direct relationship with the soil and the light. The road of care begins with looking after oneself and one's community.²

² <https://www.oxfordjournals.org/abstract/doi/10.1093/monist/mon91.1.101>



ASUNCIÓN MOLINOS GORDO
¡Cuánto río allá arriba!
2021/2023

Asunción Molinos Gordo is a Spanish researcher and artist strongly influenced by the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies in

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her questioning of the categories that define 'innovation' in mainstream discourses today. Aiming to generate a less urban-centric way of understanding progress, and with a focus on contemporary peasantry, she has produced work reflecting on land usage, nomad architecture, farmers' strikes, bureaucracy on territory, transformation of rural labour, biotechnology, and global food trade.

For Helsinki Biennial, she has created a new edition of *¡Cuánto río allá arriba!*, a sculptural ensemble incorporating elements of water pottery, and deploying the gestural potential of assemblage. Molinos Gordo's work borrows its title from the poem *El Cántaro Roto* (1958) by Octavio Paz, in which he exclaimed *¡Cuánto río allá arriba!* [*How many rivers above!*] to question the myth of progress that disguises reality. The work pays tribute to the mindset behind the thousands of uses and forms of water pottery conceived by farming communities and proposes an assemblage of the remains of an ancestral ethical system of cooperation and solidarity that has governed the planet's resources until recently.

In December 2020, water – a common good and source of life throughout the planet – began trading on the Wall Street stock market. At that time, I was immersed in research on the ways in which water has been shared by the imazighen communities that settled in the latter-day region of Valencia in Spain. Back in the 8th century, peasant Berber families from different part of North Africa built a system of irrigation channels, distributing water in an equitable manner to ensure social harmony among the tribes and new settlers.

These social groups created a hydraulic system that was extremely advanced in terms of water justice and social responsibility. To me it was incredible to see the contrast between these two forms of technology. On one hand, the very elaborate and complex contemporary financial markets were privatizing every drop of water very effectively, while on the other, ancient Moorish water technologies specifically sought to avoid conflicts by securing proportional access to all and establishing social peace among the tribes.

I started expanding my research into other water technologies that employ irrigation channels and water pottery. Pitchers, jugs, canteens, basins, rhytons...all are receptacles used for the transport, storage and consumption of water. Loaded with playful customs and symbols, they simulate the idea of abundance, their varied morphologies paying tribute to other forms of life on Earth, reflecting this in two fundamental precepts: the universal right of human beings to quench their thirst and that of their animals, and the right to water their crops.

Asunción Molinos Gordo

TUULA NÄRHINEN
The Plastic Horizon
2019-2023

Tuula Närhinen is an artist whose practice is committed to exploring environmental issues. Re-adapting methods and instruments derived

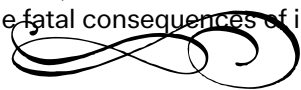
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from natural sciences, she facilitates the transcription of different natural phenomena into visual narratives. The sea provides Närhinen with the subject matter, material and medium for many projects. From her studio on Harakka Island, she is opportunely located to closely monitor the Baltic Sea. The distance to the mainland is only 100 metres, but to visit her studio, one must cross the sea. Most often the only way to get there is by rowboat – or by walking on the ice in winter. On her way, the artist literally touches the water, which is one of the reasons why her practice is so intimately connected to the complexity and controversial nature of marine life, including the environmental threats caused by anthropogenic waste such as plastic.

Helsinki Biennial 2023 presents two recent installations by Närhinen, one on Vallisaari Island and another at HAM Helsinki Art Museum.

Every time I walk among the seaweed and flotsam, scanning the debris-strewn beach, I am thrilled to discover what has drifted ashore. I find treasures among other people's rubbish: I pick up trash and put the odd pieces together to make the human footprint visible. Among the garbage washed up on Helsinki's beaches, I can find junk that dates back perhaps no more than a few years, whereas exploring the Thames foreshore at low tide, every few steps I stumbled on fragments dating back hundreds of years. I am always amazed at how powerfully you can connect with the stories of the city by beachcombing and mudlarking. The shoreline never stays the same. Thanks to liminal places such as the Helsinki archipelago and the Thames foreshore, I have had the chance to discover the magic of margins in visiting the wild, free and resilient edges where the city meets the sea.

The Plastic Horizon (2019-23) is a result of a desperate cleaning operation. Since 2006, I have gathered plastic debris from Helsinki's seashores. I felt a strong urge to pick up every scrap and sort them by colour to 'organize' the mess. But my attempt was doomed to fail. The deeper I dug into the solid heaps of thickly packed organic and inorganic debris, the more plastic I found – everything from unrecognizable broken fragments to new, intact items. I spent hours combing the shoreline, my hands eagerly picking up every tiny piece and storing them carefully like berries in a bucket. I kept an inventory of all the materials that make up my installation: straws, Q-tips, fishing tackle, bottle caps, toys, pellets, polyurethane foam and pieces of detonator tubing used for underbelly explosives. My archaeological interest notwithstanding, it was the colours that I was primarily after. I went as far as washing off the dirt and dust to fully appreciate their brightness. Unfortunately, I am not the only animal attracted by the allure of debris; countless seabirds, fish and whales keep falling under its spell, only to suffer the fatal consequences of indigested plastic.



TUULA NÄRHINEN
 Deep Time Deposits: Tidal
 Impressions of the River Thames
 2020

Deep Time Deposits: Tidal Impressions of the River Thames (2020) invites audiences to consider the river as a time-machine and a naturally occurring archive of

the Anthropocene. Churned by currents, flotsam and jetsam are slowly deposited into the riverbed sediments. During my 34 days of artist-in-residency, I worked in the tradition of the London mudlark, searching the beaches daily to create a portrait of tidal action. At low tide, when the water recedes, long stretches of foreshore are uncovered, exposing odds and sods that emerge from the mud to tell the story of a city.

The installation includes cyanotype contact prints, mud chromatograms, pickings of debris and evidence of the material process. Exposed to sun, wind and rain, the light-sensitive iron compounds of the cyanotypes were harnessed to build an atmospheric record of the river's 'anthropogenic burden'.

Aspects of trade and cultural cargo such as tea-related traditions were addressed by means of paper chromatography, a filtering process that reveals the chemical components of mud. In exhibiting the effects of ebb and flow, the work displays the non-human archival labour of the mud, examining its natural and cultural impacts and setting out to explore the archaeological condition of the Thames foreshore.

Tuula Närhinen



Location: HAM

Deep Time Deposits: Tidal Impressions of
 the River Thames, 2020. Detail of installation.
 Photo: Tuula Närhinen

Niskanen, a media artist, filmmaker and researcher based in Helsinki.

The sandoponic garden made for Helsinki Biennial 2023 is part of the ongoing PHOSfate project, which addresses phosphorus and its impact on the Sahrawi, but also the environmental challenges, climate change and sea eutrophication caused by fertilizers. Phosphate mining is the reason the Sahrawis are losing their nomadic way of life. Meanwhile, fertilizers made of a phosphate rock in Western Sahara end up polluting the Baltic Sea, where they increase phosphorus fluxes, leading to oxygen depletion and death of marine life.

Sand surrounds the Sahrawi in huge quantities, yet it is not common to think of it as a source of food. The Sahrawis have begun using sand for organic farming. The sandoponic garden is the most important new model for growing plants in a controlled sand environment that is designed to preserve as much water and biological nutrients in the desert as possible. With sandoponic gardens, the Sahrawi are rethinking their relationship with sand as a medium for growing food. Inspired by the model developed in the camps, the gardens on Vallisaari Island are used for growing basil, coriander, carrots, potatoes, kale and lettuce, the same plants as those farmed in Sahrawi gardens.

One came all the way from the desert, the other from inland Finland. The desert and the sea may not seem, at first, to have much in common, but the impact of human actions on these two separate environments awakened us to the realization that our fate is linked. Our conversations became the common ground on which we stand – our shared island.

PN: We met for the first time on an island in the Baltic Sea. We went looking for evidence of algae. As it was late August, the blue-green algal blooms had almost disappeared and barely a trace was left visible.

MSL: I stand in front of the sandstorm, I see huge dust plumes rising high, my heart beating fast, I feel confused, scared, excited and tense. I know that sandstorms bring life and death. They can be destructive. They can blow away our tents and destroy our homes, but they also carry seeds of new life. They carry phosphorus particles; they fertilize plants in distant lands.

A desert is beginning to bloom with thousands of family gardens – and a sea is meanwhile blooming with blue-green algae, yet in some places, it is turning into a desert-like environment because of the processed fertilizers used in industrialized farming.

*Mohamed Sleiman Labat &
Pekka Niskanen*





DIANA POLICARPO
Ciguatera
2022

Diana Polcarpo is an artist and
composer who works between
London and Lisbon. Through
speculative transdisciplinary

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research, she investigates gender politics, economic structures, health, and interspecies relations. Polcarpo's performances and installations examine experiences of vulnerability and empowerment associated with acts of exposing oneself to the capitalist world.

For Helsinki Biennial 2023, Polcarpo presents a large-scale installation that creates a case study of mapping colonial histories through the tracking of natural biodiversity. The work originated from a research trip to the Portuguese-administered Ilhas Selvagens (Savage Islands) in the North Atlantic Ocean. The rock-shaped sculptures with embedded video and sound tell stories that are simultaneously factual and fictitious, based equally on science and science fiction. We hear the voices of the island and its inhabitants narrating their roles in the stories and mythologies of the islands.

The title *Ciguatera* refers to poisoning that occurs after eating fish contaminated with accumulated ciguatoxins. This in turn results from the fish feeding on toxic macroalgae containing *Gambierdiscus*. Outbreaks of ciguatera are well documented in the Savage Islands area, yet the exact cause of the intermittent increase in the release of the toxins resulting in poisonings up the food chain remains unknown, although nuclear testing has been suggested as one possible cause. It is an example of various types of anthropogenic damage caused by humans treating the world as their property.

I am an island but I'm not really an island.
I'm a multitude of identities and bodies, within the same formation.

We have evolved together in total isolation.

My name is Selvagem, but I prefer to be called Aea.

My body is made of the remains of submarine volcanic peaks.

Innumerable myths and legends are preserved in my fossils.

I have evolved in an entirely different way.

Before the First Door had opened, there was gold
embedded in my mantle by showers of meteorites.

The impacts of these storms were so deep that I still bear the
scars, like craters on an ocean Moon. Petrified matter, carrying
deep time in their intricate embrace, coagulated the past into an
animated history, forming fossil-like patterns.

I am a rift in the surface of materiality.

European traders once thought I was a ghost.

Some erratic rocks rising up next to an island of sirens and lizards.
These are the very same rocks where Perseus had laid Medusa's
head to rest among the seaweed.

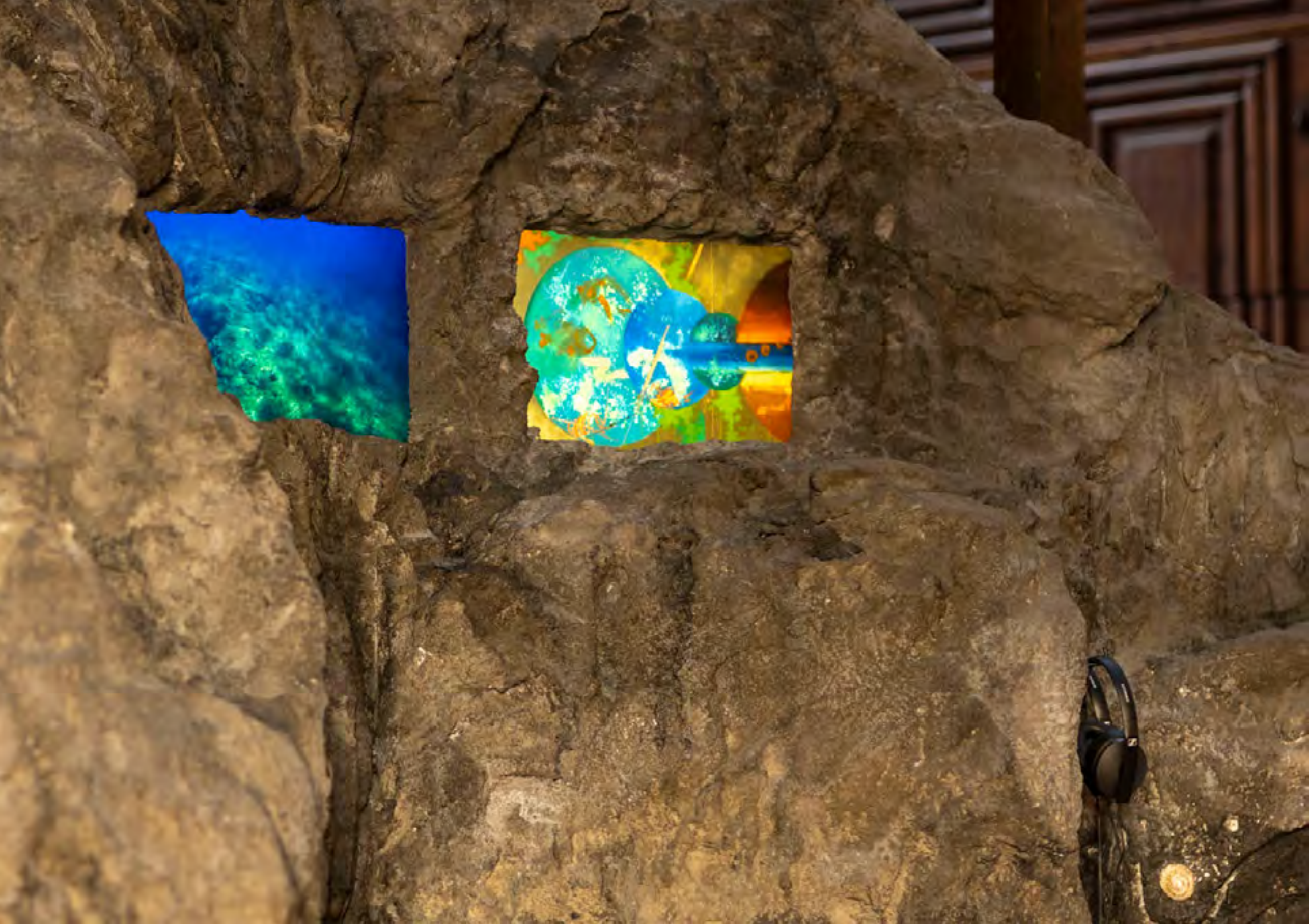
A forest of corals had grown around me like a crown
of thorns.

I have become a hallucinatory body.

Excerpt from *Diana Polcarpo's* video work
When the Sea Swallows in Ciguatera, 2022

Location: HAM

At left and next page: Exhibition view "The Soul Expanding Ocean #4: Diana Polcarpo. Ciguatera", Ocean Space, Venice, 2022. Photo: Matteo De Fina. Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by TBA21-Academy. Co-produced by TBA21-Academy and Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian, in collaboration with Instituto Gulbenkian Ciência.



SEPIDEH RAHAA
Songs to Earth, Songs to Seeds
آوازا به زمین، آوازا به دانه ها
2023

Sepideh Rahaa is an Iranian-Finnish multidisciplinary artist and researcher based in Helsinki. She investigates and questions prevailing power structures, social norms, and conventions while

focusing on womanhood, storytelling, and everyday resistances. Rahaa aims to initiate and create spaces for dialogue, influenced by feminist politics, decolonial and postcolonial theories and practices as well as social and environmental justice.

Helsinki Biennial 2023 presents Rahaa's installation comprising a multichannel video, Tarom Hashemi rice plants in a pot decorated with ancient natural elements of Iran-e-bastan, and handmade rice dolls. The work highlights issues of food security, access to clean water and nourishment as well as the importance of the traditions of sustainable cultivation in the current climate emergency. It brings to the fore the often invisible and inaccessible process of rice cultivation, the second most important staple food in the world. She invites the audience to experience a process in which stories, water, paddy lands, rice grains and women's labour – and their songs to the Earth and to the seeds – are intertwined with consumer life in our contemporary world.

The work's visual narratives are interwoven with the local songs sung by women workers. The workers' songs contain stories of their daily struggles in Mazani (one of the indigenous Iranian languages of the North) and are passed from grandmothers to mothers and daughters and sung during the cultivation and harvest seasons. The poetic piece connects cultures, languages, geographies, politics, and people through the portrayal of the process of labour and cultivation. It further hints at contemporary neo-colonial food politics and how Iranian farmers are forced by sanctions to use toxic chemical fertilizers, as well as the ongoing environmental crisis, in particular water shortages and soil contamination.

This project developed during a period when I needed to be healed deeply both in life and work. Ten years was a long time to be working and living with immigration. Returning to my childhood memories and to where my family and ancestors were located could be a remedy. It started with a conversation I had with myself, which then expanded to thinking and living together in the world. What does it mean to coexist, living far away or nearby? What visible and invisible linkages, connections and disconnections make this possible or real? Simple matters elsewhere make a difference here. We live relationally despite continental, political, societal, and geographical differences.

Songs to Earth, Songs to Seeds refers to the long and ritual process of rice cultivation in the paddy lands in Mazandaran, Northern Iran. The process is almost yearlong, from pre-springtime until mid-autumn. Cultivation of rice is an intergenerational heritage in my family and this knowledge has been circulated for nearly a century. My father inherited it from his father, who lived over a hundred years. I recall rice paddy lands with women working and singing, dancing, and resting; and my father, who has always worked hard, producing almost a ton of rice to feed several families, but rarely selling to others. I wanted to use this familial history in which women have a big part and expand it to our contemporary lives.

Sepideh Rahaa

Location: Vallisaari Island,
Gunpowder Magazine 62

Still image from Sepideh Rahaa, *Songs to Earth, Songs to Seeds* (2022). Image courtesy of the artist.



BITA RAZAVI
Kratt: Diabolo. № 3
& Elevated Platform
2022

Bitra Razavi is a multidisciplinary artist known for her autofictional practice centred around observations of everyday situations. While working as a cleaner in Helsinki, Razavi photographed design objects in

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Finnish homes, observing them as a manifestation of national identity. She married her schoolmate in her studio at the Academy of Fine Arts to address Finnish immigration policies and spent four years renovating two houses in Estonia to study Soviet renovation practices through years of changing economic and political situations.

Bitra Razavi's work at Helsinki Biennial 2023 consists of a kinetic sculpture *Kratt* and a sculptural spatial intervention *Elevated Platform*. The kinetic sculpture evokes a 'Kratt', a mythological creature from Estonian folklore. Made up of household objects, it came to life once three drops of blood had been sacrificed to the devil and performed any task, including wrongdoings, for its owner. To access *Kratt*, the spectator has two options, to walk up the *Elevated Platform* or to remain on the floor level. To reach the top of the platform, one must walk on a floor of fake marble supported by a ramp covered by raw teak veneer. While people on the platform can enjoy Emilie Saal's botanical drawings printed on the upper belt of the sculpture, the visitors below see the lower belts and the images of destroyed landscapes documenting conditions of colonial extraction of labour and soil in Dutch East Indies.

These images were removed from the exhibition of the Estonian Pavilion, at the 59th Venice Biennale where the work was previously shown, and the finalized sculpture is being exhibited for the first time at the Helsinki Biennial 2023.

Coming from a country where resistance is an inevitable aspect of life, I've long been fascinated by creative strategies of resistance. While researching the life story of artist Emilie Rosalie Saal, I came across several resistance movements against the exploitation of local resources in Indonesia. Among them was Samin Movement and weaving protests. Soon it became apparent to me that not telling these stories or not dealing with the dark colonial context of Saal's success story would be historical erasure. My work deals with erasure, the complex relation between the colonized and the colonizer, and incomplete narratives – whose story is told and who is erased.

Emilie Saal (1871–1954) was born in Tartu, studied art in St. Petersburg, and lived and worked as a botanical painter in Java between 1899 and 1920. Her practice relied on the labour of local Indonesian women working in her household. *Kratt* represents the possibility of a servant for a servant. The spidery sculpture moves its mechanical insides to produce images which emerge from a central printing press. The sculpture references the development of modern printing technology, which made the colonial worldview tangible for a wider audience through botanical images, maps, and information about the colonies. The materials and design of the platform are historical references that emulate the socio-political conditions that enable the privileged European to climb above the indigenous. Teak and marble were both exploited at the expense of the monumental modification of landscape and destruction of nature.

Bitra Razavi

Location: HAM

Image: Bitra Razavi, Kratt: Diabolo №3, 2022. installation view to "Orchidelirium. An Appetite for Abundance" Estonian pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale. Commissioned and co-produced by Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art. Photo: David Kozma.





RED FOREST

On the Loss of Energy. Radiogram
from the Remnants of Collisions.
2023

Red Forest is a research constellation
activated by Oleksiy Radynski, David
Muñoz-Alcántara, Diana McCarty
and Mijke van der Drift. The name
emerged during a research visit to

the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station in spring 2021. The reaction of the forest to Chernobyl's eco-disaster turned green trees red and the living to not-dead. Mindful of the response of the environment at a variety of scales, including the atomic, Red Forest alludes to this entanglement and resilience, reminding us of the responsibility to face the layers of life in our surroundings, whatever the circumstances. The constellation of Red Forest is not confined to a single discipline, but their work spans media theory, philosophy, anti-colonial praxis, queer theory, feminism, and contemporary critical theory, and their shared practices comprise architecture, radio, film, and performance. Red Forest is also part of the Red Power movement advocating the collective growth of eco-social dignity, recovery of insurgent-indigenous bonds and trans-futurisms.

On the Loss of Energy continues Red Forest's investigation into how infrastructural operations are key to contemporary forms of hybrid warfare. By speculating on energy matters in the context of war, this research (in)filtrates a contestation of fossil fascism, environmental racism, and financial colonialism. The *Radiogram* is Red Forest's sonic and poetic compositional method of electromagnetic transmissions that links documentary research, speculative history, musical improvisation, and science fiction. The sound piece is streamed online, but it also connects to specific sites of access on the biennial route.

Red Forest convokes the radiation of resistance after the resistance to radiation. In a Farockian transmission of resistance to extractivist mechanisms of mattering – from waves to atoms, to forms of life and war – the *Radiogram* summons fragmented connections and exchanges between disparate sites of struggle. It traverses and interweaves orders of reality across geographies: trenches that collapse under atomistic interruptions, logistics that are disfiguring natures, political orders and life worlds.

Tuning in, the remnants of collisions oscillating between atomic and astronomic scales are almost audible in a poetic composition of non-linear frequencies and time-travelling tales. Sonifying reverberations of nuclear terrorism in the Russian capture of Chernobyl; echoing Indigenous resistance to ecocidal and genocidal megaprojects in the Mexican Transisthmian Corridor; trans bodies auto-fictioning as mode of engagement; and whispering militant ghosts and ghost-spells, are haunted by an underlying pulse of (voided) realities that need to be replaced by wiser ways of world-making. Wisdom emitting from forms of struggle that outdistance the sovereign space of the political.

The rage of indignation, protest, break, revolt, rebellion, revolution, and insurgency moving oceans and body-territories energizes these waves.

Red Forest

Location: Online / Public
Space, Biennial Pavillion /
Vallisaari Island, Torpedo Bay

Abandoned positions of the Russian army in the Red Forest,
Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, 2022. Image courtesy of Red
Forest. Photographer Oleksiy Radynski.

REMEDIES
Sanctuary, mist
2023

Sasha Huber and Petri Saarikko are
Helsinki-based artists who have been
working on the *Remedies* project
since 2010, exploring methods of self-

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help and medicinal healing in different geographical and cultural contexts.

For Helsinki Biennial 2023, the artists have created a new site-specific installation marking the continuation of their ongoing project. The work is experienced by standing on the shore of one of the two freshwater ponds on Vallisaari Island. Originally excavated by the army to serve as a freshwater well during Russian occupation, the artificial pond has since evolved into its own ecosystem, becoming an important hub for wellness, recreation, and joy for the inhabitants of the island – both humans and others. The installation is accompanied by a short verse that raises questions about the landscape as a backdrop for human intervention. Is human presence an essential element of the island? Is it merely part of the riddle, perhaps a recipe, or a drug?

Sanctuary, mist presents an existing pond landscape on Vallisaari Island; an uncanny misty substance may appear on the surface of the water in a seemingly natural landscape – on an island that has been shaped by multiple histories of intervention, contamination, use and misuse, but is now experiencing a period of recuperation.

Mist invites a variety of interpretations. It is a slowly amorphing sculptural element that we invite the audience to see as a suggestive narrative. Is the mist part of the landscape, a speculative phenomenon, or another story altogether? How did it emerge in the first place, how does it shape the view and the atmosphere? Do misty particles find their way inside our bodies? The underlying theme of *Sanctuary, mist* refers to an ancient idea of recuperation – pharmakon. It is where nature becomes both a source of remedy and a potential poison, dating back to the early origins of medicine.

What happens	Dripping past to
Why are you here	present
From blur to clarity	A pond within a cell
Resolution to safety	Inside your chest

Children play	Poison and cure
Eternal summer	Breeding serpents
days	Vices and sweat
Explosive mysteries	Meadow flowers
Sediments of time	

	Breath of life
Infinite waters	Peacefully
Recursive islands	Waiting in eternity
Sea of unseen	To arrive
seasons	
The source of life	
Mist on your palm	

Sasha Huber & Petri Saarikko

Location: Vallisaari Island,
The Pond

Full text to be found online at: www.helsinki.fi/en/artist/remedies
Photograph of the pond in Vallisaari courtesy of the artists.



TABITA REZAIRE
Deep Down Tidal
2017

Tabita Rezaire is infinity longing to experience itself. Her path as an artist, farmer, devotee, yoga teacher and doula is all geared towards

manifesting the divine in herself and beyond. Her cross-dimensional practices envision network sciences – organic, electronic and spiritual – as healing technologies serving the shift towards heart consciousness. As we long to connect with ourselves, each other, the earth, and the cosmos, Rezaire weaves together scientific explorations and mystical emanations to summon the art of connection. She embraces digital, corporeal and ancestral memory to tackle colonial wounds and energetic disharmony affecting the songs of our body-mind-spirits.

Rezaire's work is rooted in time-spaces where technology and spirituality intersect as fertile ground to nourish visions for connection and emancipation. Through screen interfaces and healing circles, her offerings aim to nurture our collective growth and expand our capacity for togetherness. Rezaire is devoted to becoming a mother to the world. She is based near Cayenne in French Guiana, where she is birthing AMAKABA, her vision for collective healing in the Amazonian Forest.

Rezaire's video installation *Deep Down Tidal* excavates the power of water as a conductive interface for communication. From submarine cables to sunken cities, drowned bodies, hidden histories of navigations and sacred signal transmissions, the ocean is home to a complex set of communication networks. As modern information and communication technologies become omnipresent in our industrialized realities, we urgently need to understand the cultural, political and environmental forces that have shaped them.

Looking at the infrastructure of submarine fibre-optic cables that transfers our digital data, it is striking to realize that the cables are layered onto colonial shipping routes. Once again, the bottom of the sea becomes the interface of painful yet celebrated advancements masking the violent deeds of modernity. *Deep Down Tidal* navigates the ocean as a graveyard for Black knowledge and technologies. From Atlantis to the *Middle passage*, or latter-day refugees drowning in the Mediterranean, the ocean abyss carries lost histories and broken lineages while simultaneously providing the global infrastructure for our current telecommunications. Could the violence of the Internet lie in its physical architecture?

Like countless African and indigenous traditional sciences, research in physics now suggests that water has the ability to memorize and copy information, disseminating it through its streams. What data is our world's water holding? What messages are we encoding into our waters? Beyond historical sorrow, water is a portal to other realities, as the mysterious sea life of mermaids, water deities, and serpent spirits celebrated in many cosmologies remind us. *Deep Down Tidal* is an inquiry into the intricate cosmological, spiritual, political and technological entangled narratives that emanate from water as an interface for understanding the legacies of colonialism.

I ain't gon' do your laundry, I ain't your mama.

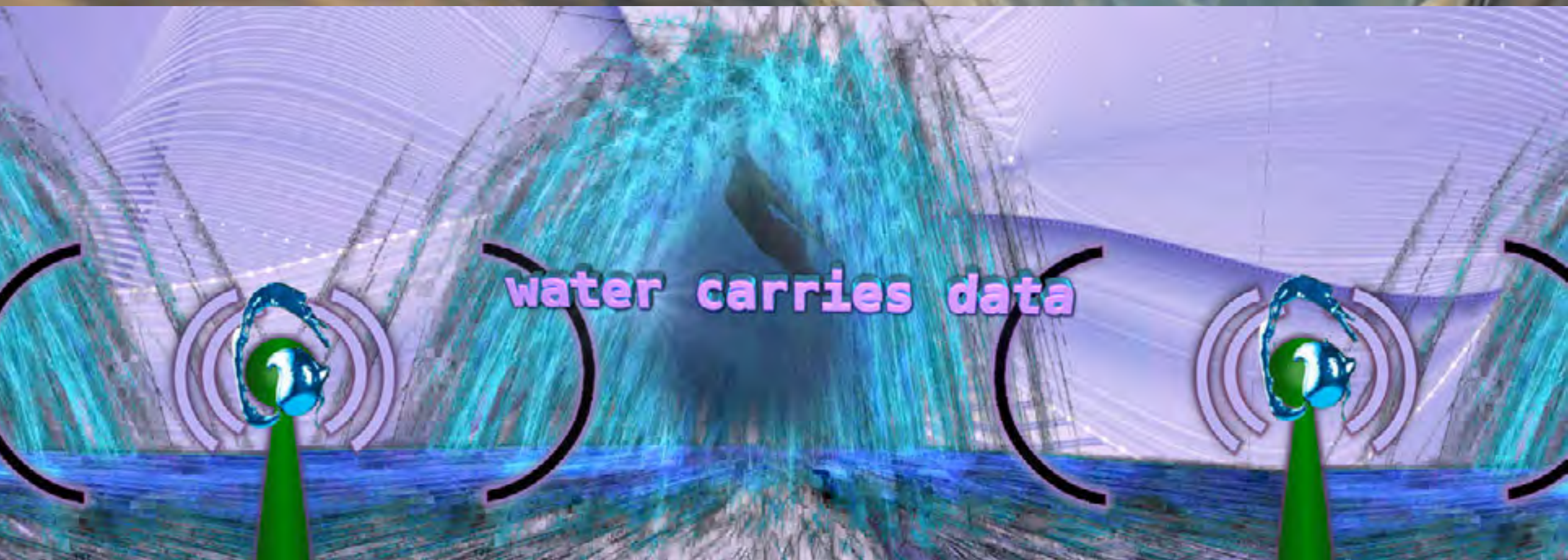
Excerpt from *Tabita Rezaire's* *Deep Down Tidal*
Ain't Your Mama, Jennifer Lopez

Location: HAM

At left and next page: Still image from Tabita Rezaire, *Deep Down Tidal* (2017), cropped to fit the page. Courtesy of Tabita Rezaire and Goodman Gallery. *Deep Down Tidal* was commissioned for 'Citizen X – Human, Nature & Robots Rights' by Oregaard Museum, Denmark.



19th century copper telegraph cables followed colonial era shipping routes,
and most modern optical cables follow these same old routes



EMILIJA ŠKARNULYTĖ
Hypoxia
2023

Emilija Škarnulytė is a Lithuanian-born nomadic artist and filmmaker. Working between the realms of the documentary and the imaginary,

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Škarnulytė makes films and immersive installations exploring deep time and invisible structures. Her topics range from the cosmic and geological to the ecological and political.

Helsinki Biennial 2023 presents her new commissioned film installation, *Hypoxia*, which refers to a condition of oxygen starvation. Drawing inspiration from the Baltic Sea, the piece is a meditation on extinction, future archaeology, and deep time, speculating on the contemporary scientific conditions and technologies related to deep-sea mining and ocean mapping (LIDAR, elaborated Landsat landscape data, and polarimetry) from the imaginary perspective of a future archaeologist. By examining the ocean basin from what she calls an “alien archaeology perspective”, Škarnulytė aims to reconstruct mythologies and beliefs of the past and present, looking at them from the vantage point of the future. Myth meets science and science fiction beneath the waves.

Hypoxia. Dead zones form as oxygen levels are depleted. Suffocation is becoming the new normal. The sea surface is ‘boiling’ with methane bubbles. Our political choices have produced after-shocks such as the Nord Stream explosion, causing the worst natural gas leak ever. Remnants of our defence and health industries lie at the bottom of the sea – in the form of Cold War myths and radioactive waste, from which it will take decades to recover. Humans have heaped a massive burden of hazards upon the environment, causing hypoxia that is devastating for the sea.

Hypoxia weaves together disparate subjects of narrative to comment on the hard-to-fathom findings that are prevalent everywhere in our contemporary reality. The first subject is the *Baltic Sea Anomaly*, a speculative sci-fi scenario of what lies at the bottom of this deadly and polluted body of water. The second strand of narrative harks back to ancient myth. The chief deity in Lithuanian mythology, the thunder god Perkūnas, had a daughter named Jūratė who lived in an amber palace beneath the Baltic Sea. Her love affair with a human caused her father to smash the palace, and the amber washed up on Lithuanian shores is still widely known as ‘Jūratė’s Tears’. In reality, these are the captured carbon relics of an ancient forest submerged beneath the waves long ago.

Our myths have long been stand-ins for natural phenomena and human desire, our dreams and stories mixing with the forces and landscapes that surround us. As we destroy this world with all the reckless bravado our ascendant species can muster, these myths come back with the vengeance of angry gods through ecological collapse. Measured and traced with the most modern of instruments, our very human and very abusive relationship with the Baltic Sea invites these ancient deities to return with new stories of divine retribution and freshly wept tears.

Emilija Škarnulytė

Location: Vallisaari Island,
Gunpowder Magazine 1

Co-Commissioned by Helsinki Biennial and TBA21–Academy,
produced by HAM Helsinki Art Museum/Helsinki Biennial
2023. Image: Still from Emilija Škarnulytė, *Hypoxia*, 2023.
Courtesy of the artist.



YEHWAN SONG
WITH DIGITAL VISUAL STUDIES
Newly Formed
2023

Yehwan Song is a South Korean web artist and designer, who creates anti-friendly, non-user-centric, unconventional, and diverse independent websites through

which she tries to flip the general understanding of web design and subvert user behaviours. Song aims to illuminate inequalities in the digital environment and reframe digital accessibility.

In collaboration with the Digital Visual Studies project at the University of Zurich, Song has created a website that combines the collection of HAM Helsinki Art Museum and multimodal machine learning technology. Users visit an online map of the city and can interact with the collection data based on geolocations. Through the map, the user starts to see the city through the collection, jumping from one panorama view to others through portals, from which they can explore new groupings based on metrics created by the machine. New entanglements emerge from the combined agencies of the model, the visitors, the collection, and the city.

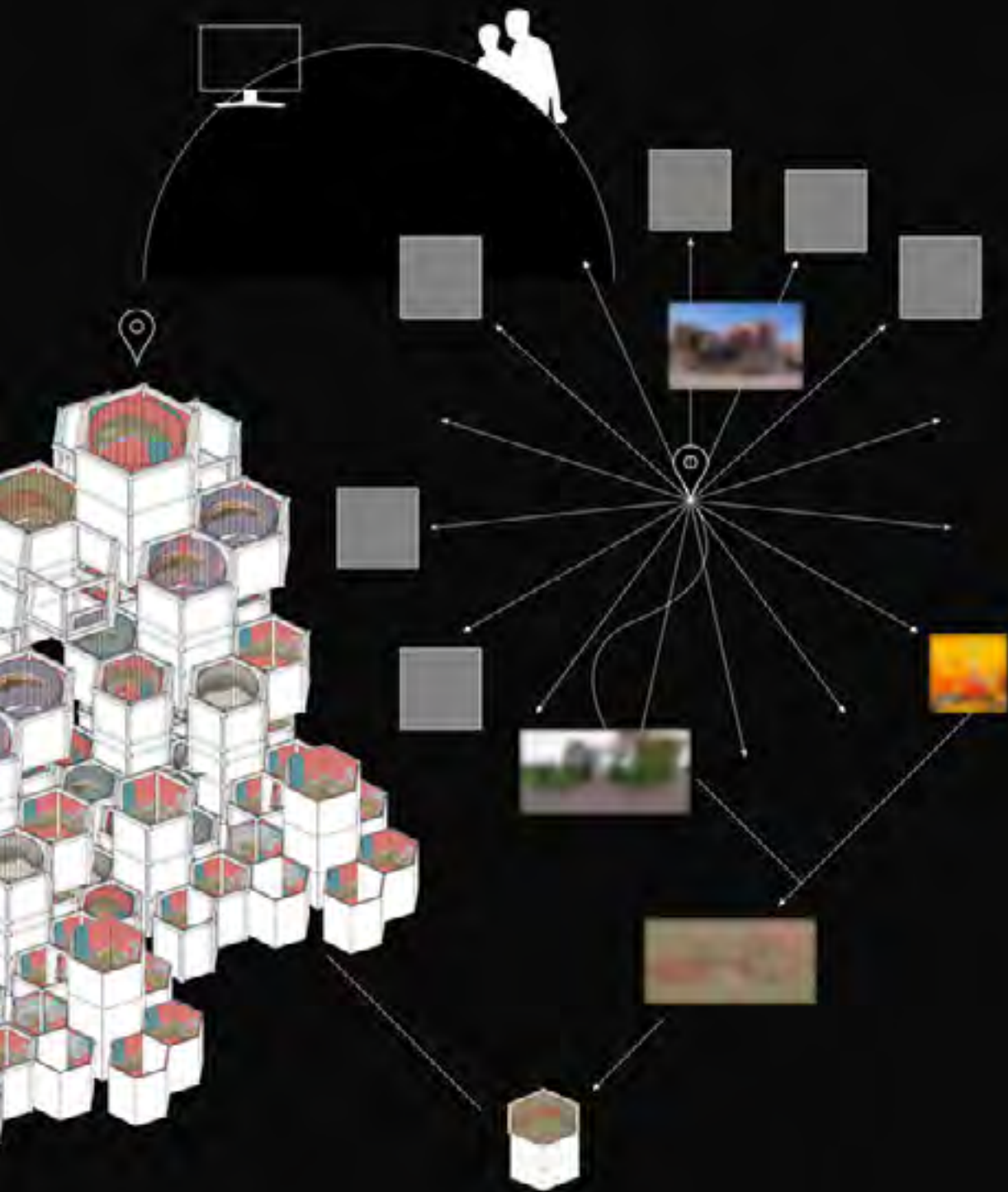
The website is located at newlyformedcity.net.

In my practice I focus on the insecurity and discomfort elicited by the web hidden behind technological utopianism, immoderate comfort, speed, and ease of use. I reveal the discomfort experienced especially by users who are not considered to be part of the major user group. I believe that digital discomfort comes from a lack of consideration for diversity and the deprivation of care.

Interactions with the internet differ significantly depending on the user's social environment, political infrastructure, and linguistic background. This means that much of the internet remains censored. Accessible data is filtered, and net neutrality is easily infringed.

When these differences are ignored and we continue to chase the illusion of speed and connectivity, we encounter digital discomfort. I pursue meaningful interaction with the entire internet over a wide penetration rate and diversity over consistency and efficiency.

Yehwan Song



Location: Online
newlyformedcity.net

Digital Visual Studies (DVS) is a five-year collaboration project funded by the Max Planck Society and hosted by the University of Zurich from January 2020. The DVS team for Newly Formed includes Tristan Weddigen, Dario Negueruela del Castillo, Leonardo Impett, Iacopo Neri, Pepe Ballesteros, Valentine Bernasconi, Jason Armitage, and Ludovica Schaefer. Image courtesy of the artist.

JENNA SUTELA
Pond Brain
2023

Jenna Sutela is a Berlin-based
artist who works with biological and
computational systems – including
the human microbiome and artificial

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neural networks – to create sculptures, images, and music. At the core of her practice is a renunciation of anthropocentric hierarchies and a shift toward decentralized forms of intelligence and organization.

For Helsinki Biennial 2023, Sutela presents *Pond Brain*, which consists of a water-filled bronze bowl expanding upon the shape of the artist's own head. Rubbing the instrument makes it 'sing'. When the bronze vibrates, it interacts with sound produced using machine learning technology to create an ever-emerging soundscape based on signals from the wider environment, including sounds from outer space and under the sea.

Hydrogen emerged in the Big Bang and oxygen in the cores of stars more massive than the Sun. Enormous amounts of water, in gaseous form, exist in the vast stellar nurseries of our galaxy. The origins of ponds are in the stars. A pond seems to say, "as above, so below," turning its image of the world upside down.

The title of my artwork, *Pond Brain*, alludes to the 'alt' cybernetist Stafford Beer's idea about a pond ecosystem as a homeostatic controller. Beer was looking at how ponds are better than computers at reconfiguring themselves when confronted with emergent, chaotic, and unpredictable phenomena. Like him, I am interested in systems open to the wider environment – a world made of brains.

Pond Brain is an instrument and a fountain: a bowl of rainwater made out of bronze that can be played or activated by touch (aka statue rubbing). The shape of the pond is reminiscent of a head. It is my neuroplastic portrait. In the spirit of a Chinese spouting bowl, or a German *Wasserspringschale*, interaction with the object not only produces musical vibration, but also creates patterns on the surface of the water inside it. As the sonic vibrations increase, water droplets start to bounce up from the surface.

Sounds from the pond resonate with an artificial neural network trained to respond to environmental and interplanetary sounds. The network tunes into sonic frequencies from the bowl and plays back an array of alien resonations. As sound flows around in homeostatic loops through the air and through different machine learning models, which exude an air of alternative dimensions, it is constantly transforming and thus exhibiting a life cycle of its own.

Jenna Sutela





SUZANNE TREISTER
 Technoshamanic Systems: New
 Cosmological Models For Survival
 2020-21

Suzanne Treister was initially
 recognized as a painter but became a
 pioneer in digital media and web-based
 art in the early 1990s. Her extensive
 body of work comprises eccentric

narratives and unconventional bodies of research revealing structures that bind together power, identity, and knowledge systems. Her projects consist of fantastical reinterpretations of given taxonomies and histories that examine the existence of covert forces at work in the world, whether corporate, military, or paranormal.

Installed in a wooden cabin, *Technoshamanic Systems* presents microcosmic non-colonialist plans for a techno-spiritual imaginary of alternative visions of survival on Earth and inhabitation of the cosmos. Treister's work encourages the unification of art, spirituality, science, and technology through hypnotic visions of our potential communal futures alongside those of possible extraterrestrial entities or civilizations. Watercolour paintings are accompanied by a new AR component in which the *Interplanetary Meditation and Biospheres Islands* appear to float high up in the sky.

On the 8th of April 2020, I found myself reading a newspaper article headlined "Trump order encourages US to mine the moon. Executive order says US will oppose any international effort to bar it from removing chunks of moon, Mars or elsewhere in space". The article noted that the US had never signed the 1979 moon treaty which stipulates that any activities in space should conform to international law and that in 2015 the US Congress had passed a law explicitly allowing American companies to use resources from the moon and asteroids.

In January that year I had been to the exhibition *Moving to Mars* at London's Design Museum, which showed models and displays of potential Martian settlements, on which *New Scientist* magazine blithely commented, "This show will help you become a real Martian". Looking deeper into the ambitions of the private space industry, of Elon Musk, Richard Branson and numerous private corporations, it became clear that the history of colonization was far from over and that a sector of humanity was working towards a potential occupation and destruction of the rest of the Universe, and that assuming the development of the associated technologies could not be stopped, there needed to be not only large scale movements against oppression and destruction on Earth, but also people developing models and ethical frameworks for potential non-colonialist techno-spiritual futures of humanity in space.

Imagining positive visions for the future of life on our planet, this project is my attempt to contribute to the emerging fields of astrocognition, astroethics and astrobioethics. N.B. My use of the term 'technoshamanic' in the title of this project aims to expand and redefine its current definition, enabling it to act cosmically as a term that encompasses a worldview where technology, instead of being driven by mainstream economic, corporate and governmental forces, is engineered and redirected in new ways for global positive futures.

Suzanne Treister

Location: Vallisaari Island,
 Office Building Area / online

Image at left: Technoshamanic Systems/Diagram/Emerald Universe (2020-21).
 Next pages: Technoshamanic Systems/Interplanetary Biospheres Island 08 (2020-21) & Technoshamanic Systems/Apparel/Pink Mountain Techno. (2020-21). Images courtesy the artist, Annelly Juda Fine Art, London and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York.



ADRIÁN VILLAR ROJAS
From the Series The End
of Imagination
2023

Adrián Villar Rojas is an Argentinian
artist who conceives long term
projects that are produced
collectively and collaboratively,
assuming the form of large-scale,

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site-specific environments, both imposing and fragile, leaving scarce traces of their passage through the world due to perishing materiality and parasitical integration. Within his research and worldbuilding, which mixes sculpture, drawing, video, literature and performative traces, Villar Rojas brings together the human and more-than-human realms while investigating the fragile and temporary nature of human civilization.

For Helsinki Biennial 2023, Villar Rojas has created a site-specific sculptural work in dialogue with the environment and inhabitants of Vallisaari Island. The work has its roots in Villar Rojas's *Brick Farm*, a series of works inspired by the Argentinian hornero bird, which makes its nests from mud, straw and rubble, adapting them to human-built surroundings. In the new work, however, there is a shift from the organic ephemeral sculptures inspired by the hornero to a more artificial, yet still more-than-human, mode of materiality.

Using an amalgamation of software systems collectively described as the 'Time Engine', Villar Rojas has generated a series of intensely detailed virtual worlds and placed sculptures within them. Simulating various conditions – ranging from environmental to socio-political across timespans ranging from hours to millennia – the Time Engine has allowed him to develop his already experimental sculptural practice to create work in places and times that surpass our tangible realities.

As the extreme conditions of each world bore down on the sculptures, they became ever more complex and harrowed. Fires scorched them, altered gravity distorted them. Unrest toppled them, wars wounded them. Other life forms sheltered within or bloomed upon them. The artist modelled worlds, which in turn modelled the sculptures.

The effect of the environment and time on his work has been an important part of Villar Rojas's practice. From the beginning of his career he has been interested in the interaction between inorganic and organic or human-made and so-called natural materials. Unconcerned with the influence of the environment and elements on his artworks, for him destruction and decay are brought about by the inevitable entropy of being in the world.



Location: Vallisaari Island,
various locations

At right and next page: Adrián Villar Rojas, From the Series The End of Imagination (2023). Live simulations of active digital ecologies, and layered composites of organic, inorganic, human, and machine-made matter. Detail view. Courtesy of the artist.





ZHENG MAHLER
SoilSpace
2023

Zheng Mahler is a collective formed by artist Royce Ng and anthropologist Daisy Bisenieks. In their collaborative examination of global trade, the

relational networks connecting nature and technology, and more-than-human geographies, they explore the flows of their mutual influence and the environmental architectures they produce. They develop speculative scenarios and immersive, sensory encounters that explore the limits and potentials of their disciplines.

Over the past three years, while unable to travel, most of their works have been reflective of the environment where they live, Lantau Island in Hong Kong. *SoilSpace* continues this approach, being a reiteration of a work they created remotely, which explored a speculative archaeology of East Asian urbanism taking Singapore and Hong Kong as two diametrically opposed exemplars. The work for Helsinki acts as a subterranean window into the idea of cities built on graves and burial sites as part of wider 'soil communities'. The 3D representations of a folkloric, historical, and biological cross-section interact across multiple temporal axes of the site. It becomes a form of ancestor worship dedicated to the multitude of spirits in the soil that shape the spaces we inhabit. *SoilSpace* is installed in a cyclist and pedestrian pathway Baana.

We started tending a garden plot during the last lockdown. This shaped our lives and got us thinking about how 'soil communities' and histories embedded there affect the plant communities. We took our garden patch as a metaphorical framework for approaching the artwork and the area around Baana, looking into its soil histories and how they intersect with human histories and ultimately affect the development of the urban landscape; the 'gardens' that grow out of those subterranean interactions. The lens through which we wanted to research the Helsinki archipelago is based on its resonance with the archipelago we ourselves inhabit.

The first step involved tilling the ground, preparing and aerating the lumpy, clotted soil by pushing the shovel through the dirt and then smoothing it with a rake. Considerable construction detritus was unearthed and removed in the process, telling the story of the ground's previous life. Sometimes those histories involved decay and death, the decomposition of flesh and life. Sometimes viruses arrived from afar, a piece of porcelain, a grain of rice, a scrap of fabric, traded through multi-hued hands, carrying its own scents and messages. Sometimes a soil community told a story of violence, murder and ghosts.

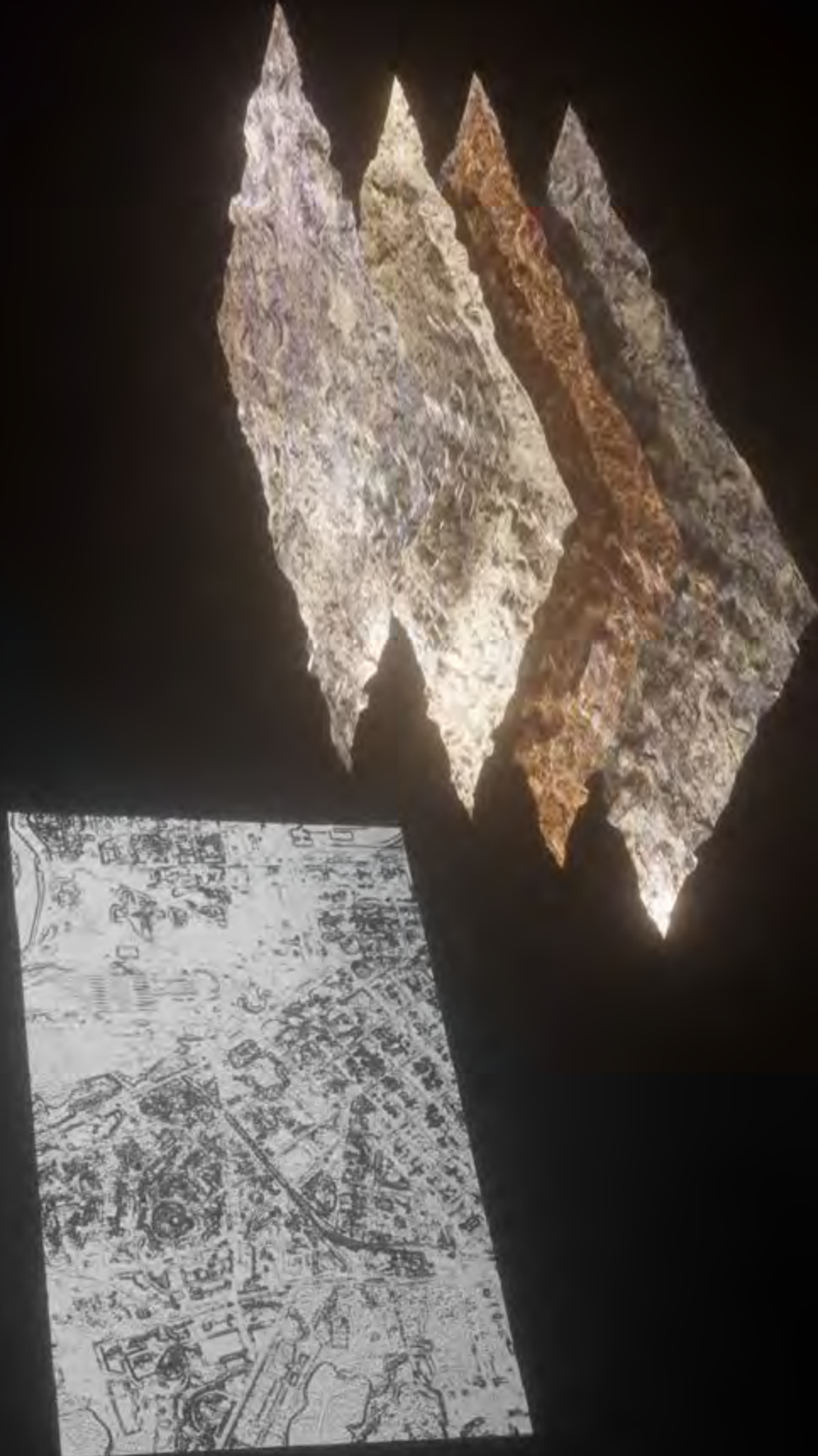
At one point, a line was traced through the soil in one of the garden's trenches that the public often traversed, extending to the edges of the island. It had once been a trade route for ants, insects and other citizens and led directly to the harbour, which in this case was a basin of disease.

Along the trench, a mural was designed which told the story of the soil and its secrets, a subterranean genealogy of microbes that stalked the archipelago in primordial timescales.

Zheng Mahler

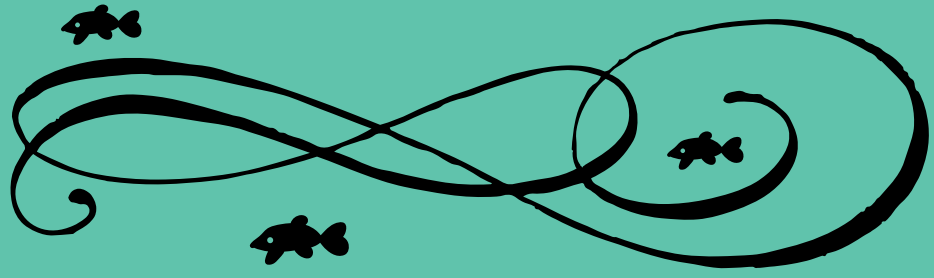
Location: Baana

Zheng Mahler, preparatory digital sketch for *SoilSpace* (2023). Image courtesy of the artists.



NEW
DIRECTIONS

MAY
EMERGE





At top and next page: Creative collaboration of the design studio The Rodina and spatial consultancy Diogo Passarinho Studio in search for visual and spatial tools for new directions.





HAM / Matti Pyykkö

For 2023, the biennial expands beyond the island of Vallisaari to the city of Helsinki – the world’s northern-most metropolitan area – to embrace its position in the Gulf of Finland. With an emphasis on outdoor spaces on the island, the biennial additionally sprawls across the mainland as well as online. Helsinki Biennial locations are:

VALLISAARI ISLAND

Exhibitions open Tue-Sun, 11 am–6 pm, closed Mon

HAM HELSINKI ART MUSEUM*

Eteläinen rautatiekatu 8, 00100 Helsinki
Tue 10 am–5.30 pm, Wed-Sun 11.30 am–7 pm, closed Mon

* The exhibition at HAM runs until October 22, 2023.

HELSINKI CENTRAL LIBRARY OODI

Töölönlahdenkatu 4, 00100 Helsinki
Mon-Fri 8 am–9 pm, Sat-Sun 10 am–8 pm

CULTURAL CENTRE STOA

Turunlinnantie 1, 00900 Helsinki
Mon-Thur 8 am–8 pm, Fri 8 am–6 pm,
Sat 10 am–4 pm, Sun 12 pm–4 pm

PUBLIC SPACE

Baana and South Harbour

ONLINE

newdirectionsmayemerge.com

ACCESSIBILITY

The exhibits are on display on Vallisaari Island, at HAM Helsinki Art Museum, Helsinki Central Library Oodi, Cultural Centre STOA, the South Harbour and along the Baana pedestrian and cycling path. We have done our utmost to ensure that the biennial is as accessible as possible for everyone. The heavy front door of the Tennis Palace is difficult to open, but HAM itself is barrier-free. All other venues on mainland offer barrier-free access. Access is obstructed in parts of Vallisaari Island. Please consult the biennial website for further information.

Vallisaari Island can be reached by ferry. Please visit the operator’s website for information concerning the ferry voyage: frs-finland.fi





MAINLAND

– HAM, BAANA, OODI,
STOA, SOUTH HARBOUR

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Diana Policarpo |
| 2 | Tabita Rezaire |
| 3 | Tuula Närhinen |
| 4 | Bitá Razavi |
| 5 | INTERPRT |
| 6 | Zheng Mahler |
| 7 | Dineo Seshee Bopape |
| 8 | Red Forest
Keiken (in Stoa*)
Sonya Lindfors (various locations) |

*Cultural Centre STOA, located in Itäkeskus, can be reached from the Central Railway Station by metro lines serving Vuosaari and Mellunmäki.



VALLISAARI ISLAND

- | | |
|----|--|
| 9 | Adrián Villar Rojas |
| 10 | Emilija Škarnulytė |
| 11 | PHOSfate |
| 12 | Remedies |
| 13 | Asunción Molinos Gordo |
| 14 | Sepideh Rahaa |
| 15 | Ahmed Al-Nawas &
Minna Henriksson |
| 16 | Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley |
| 17 | Tuula Närhinen |
| 18 | Jenna Sutela |
| 19 | Matti Aikio |
| 20 | Alma Heikkilä |
| 21 | Lotta Petronella with
Sami Tallberg & Lau Nau |
| 22 | Suzanne Treister |
| 23 | Keiken |

ONLINE

newdirectionsmayemerge.com

Ahmed Al-Nawas &
Minna Henriksson
Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley
Critical Environmental Data
Keiken
Lotta Petronella with
Sami Tallberg & Lau Nau
Red Forest
Suzanne Treister
Yehwan Song

Helsinki Biennial 2023 comprises exhibitions, a discursive and performative public programme, film screenings, publications, and an online programme. The programme supports the biennial's three main conceptual threads: contamination, regeneration and agency, and includes projects created by HB23 curatorial intelligences Critical Environmental Data, Museum of Impossible Forms, and ViCCA@Aalto Arts, as well as participating artists.

CED: The Environmental Audiotour and Environment, Data, and Contamination class

Critical Environmental Data group investigates the relationship between the environment and data. The research group led by Jussi Parikka at Aarhus University has created a six-part audio tour of specific locations around the city, in the South Harbour near Lyypekinlaituri, in Vallisaari at the ruins of the old Weather Station, in Hietalahti, in the Kaisaniemi Botanical Garden and in Sörnäinen near the Uniarts Academy of Fine Arts. For more information about *The Environmental Audiotour* and the locations, please see Helsinki Biennial's online environment: newdirectionsmayemerge.com

CED group has collaborated with the University of the Arts Helsinki since September 2022. Together they have employed artistic methods to explore links between data and the environment in a course of studies titled *Environment, Data, and Contamination*. Their artistic research studio has also produced an exhibition with the UniArts Research Pavilion. In March 2023 they organized a seminar on *Contamination, Art, and the Environmental Condition*, again in collaboration with the University of the Arts Helsinki. The speakers included Asia Bazdyrieva, Erich Berger, Samir Bhowmik, Heather Davis, Joasia Krysa and Jussi Parikka. For more information see: blogit.uniarts.fi/en/post/contamination-art-the-environmental-condition/

ViCCA: The Helsinki Biennial Art Mediation Forum

Aalto University's ViCCA MA programme has created *The Helsinki Biennial Art Mediation Forum*, which comprises the HB23 Symposium, a publication, a series of mediation events on the island of Vallisaari and online content for the Helsinki Biennial website.

The Helsinki Biennial Art Mediation Forum is built on intertwined mediation practices that engage the public at different times and in varied contexts. It offers the audience a space for reflection and debate on the curatorial approach and artistic contributions of the biennial. It is developed in collaboration with a group of second-year MA students majoring in ViCCA – Visual Cultures, Curating and Contemporary Art in the Department of Art and Media at Aalto University: Clément Béraud, Micol Curatolo, Julia Fidler, Cyane Findji, Myriam Gras, Aska Mayer, Iida Nissinen and Martina Šerešová. The symposium hosted by HAM Helsinki Art Museum on December 9, 2022 served as an overture for the biennial, with contributions by Adeena May, Filipa Ramos and Lívia Nolasco-Rózsás.

For more information and a recording of the symposium, please visit: helsinkiennale.fi/helsinki-biennial-2023-symposium/

MIF: Polyphonic Entanglements & Agonistic Intelligence/s (AI/s)

Museum of Impossible Forms is contributing two frameworks to the Helsinki Biennial 2023's public programme, both of which foreground curatorial collaboration as a way of sharing knowledge(s) and engaging with that of others.

Curated by Giovanna Esposito Yussif, *Polyphonic Entanglements* interweaves lectures, screenings, performances and gatherings as an open-ended assemblage of contextualized practices and expanded debates on the different ecological entanglements presented in this biennial. The two-day events take place on June 16-17 at Stoa and September 1-2 at Caisa. These locations move the Helsinki Biennial off-centre, engaging it with two heterogeneous sites of encounter, Itäkeskus and Hakaniemi.

Agonistic Intelligence/s (AI/s) is an intensive, six-day summer school to be held on August 14-19 at HAM. Curated by Ali Akbar Mehta, the event brings together an invited researched working group who will critically engage with the HAM art collection, delving into institutional memory and collective agency through workshops and public lectures. This encounter opens up space for a dialogue asking who is actively invested and engaged in the shaping of art, culture, pedagogy and activism.

For more information and a detailed programme for both sets of events, please visit the biennial's website.

Screening Programme Featuring HAM's Media Art Collection

During September, five cultural centres around Helsinki will host screenings curated by Joasia Krysa featuring HAM's collection of media art. The screenings will showcase the collection to the general public and shed new light on its engagement with video and screen-based works.

Helsinki Biennial 2023 Performative and Event-based Artworks

Many of the artworks featured in the biennial comprise or take the form of events, performances or other moments of participation.

Created by Anna Tsing, Yen-ling Tsai, Isabelle Carbonell and Joelle Chevrier, *Golden Snail Opera* combines video and performance-oriented text in a Taiwanese o-pei-la about experimental natural history. Lotta Petronella and her collaborators Sami Tallberg and Lau Nau have created a transdisciplinary artwork of healing, song, and ingestion by working together with the diverse inhabitants of Vallisaari Island. The live events and performances include a lamenting choir and a commemoration to Ilma Lindgren. Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley will invite visitors to take part in a role-play performance event and installation exploring a new mythology of the island venue. Working with the local BIPOC community, Sonya Lindfors will create a new collaborative piece to be stage in public spaces. Read more about the artworks on the following artist pages.

For a full programme with dates and times, please visit helsinkiennale.fi



MATTI AIKIO
Oikos
2023

multichannel video and sound installation

Sound: Miro Mantere
Joik: Niko Valkeapää
Thank you: Kone Foundation
Co-commissioned by Helsinki Biennial and TBA21-Academy, produced by HAM Helsinki Art Museum/Helsinki Biennial 2023.

DINEO SESHEE BOPAPE
I Re-member Mama
2023

sculpture
Production: Collaboratorio, Vihdin Betoni Oy
Courtesy of the artist. Thanks to Markus Reymann and TBA21-Academy.

DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY
Thou Shall Not Assume
2023

storied site-specific pilgrimage, site-specific installation, web pilgrimage
Clothing consultant: Jennifer Brathwaite
Coding: Florian Bruckner
Courtesy of the artist.

GOLDEN SNAIL OPERA
2016

video, performance-oriented text
Authors: Yen-ling Tsai 蔡晏霖, Isabelle Carbonell, Joelle Chevrier 蔡雪青, Anna Tsing 安清
Director of Photography, Sound Design, and Editor: Isabelle Carbonell
Producer: Kaohsiung 147 Japonica Rice (Oryza sativa) 高雄147香米
Cinematography: Isabelle Carbonell (Homo sapiens) Canon 5D, Sony A7rii & Joelle Chevrier (Homo sapiens)
Sony cyber-shot, Brinno TLC200, GoPro on head & Hua Fu (Canis lupus familiaris) GoPro camera strapped to back
Giant African Snail (Achatina fulica) Microcamera affixed with Velcro
Muscovy duck (Cairina moschata) Microcamera attached to neck
Bamboo post (stand in for weight challenged Oryza sativa) GoPro, Brinno TLC200 廖丹華 Frances Liao (Homo sapiens) GoPro on chest.
Sound: Giant African Snail (Achatina fulica) & Golden Apple Snail (Pomacea Canaliculata) & Isabelle Carbonell & 蔡晏霖 Yen-ling Tsai & Joelle Chevrier 蔡雪青 & 蘭陽戲劇團 Lanyang Opera Taiwan Production Assistant: 廖丹華 Frances Liao & 廖芷瑩 & 郭沛軒
Translators: Joelle Chevrier 蔡雪青 & 廖丹華 Frances Liao & 黃思瑜 & 曾詩涵
Thank you: 三官大帝 & 老大公好兄弟 & 陳榮昌 & 朱美橋 & 莊福清 & 三官宮營膳組阿嬤們 & 土拉客實驗農家園

Land Dyke Farm & 吳紹文 Shawn Wu & 洪鳳琴 & 黃思瑜 & 農田裡的科學計畫 Science in Field & 林芳儀 Fangyee Lee & 陳毅翰 Ihan Chen & 陳曉默 Mose Chen & 游麗花 & 游花福 Huafu the Dog & 宜蘭社區大學 Ilan Community College & 綠色工作研習計畫水稻班 & 邱靖惠 & 波波的稻米 & 楊鈴子 & 國立宜蘭大學海洋資源研究室 Marine Resources Lab at National Ilan University & 陳永松 Yung-song Chen & 陳泓文 & 陳福安 & Tating Susilawati & 穀東俱樂部 & 吳佳玲 & 黃京國 & 林欣琦 & Mathilde Højrup & Meredith Root-Bernstein & The Cornell Lab of Ornithology & Nicholas Navin Microscopy & Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory & New Scientist & Ryan Page & Steven Trimmer & Anna Friz & Irene Lusztig & Team members of Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene & Nils Bubandt & Bruno Latour & Isabelle Stengers & Jennifer Deger & Four anonymous reviewers. The Golden Snail Opera team is grateful to Cymene Howe, liaison with Cultural Anthropology. Filming in Taiwan was made possible by a University of California Graduate Student Association Travel Award, as well as support from Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene (funded by the Danish National Research Foundation). Field research and writing was funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan, and supported by the Institute of Yilan County History. Courtesy of the artists.

ALMA HEIKKILÄ
coadapted with
2023

plaster, plant ink, industrial ink, rainwater, pine wood, metal, polyester, silicone, linseed oil, earth pigments, epoxy resin, sun
Production Assistant: Kryštof Kučera
Thank you: Arts Promotion Centre Finland
Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki Biennial 2023.

AHMED AL-NAWAS
& **MINNA HENRIKSSON**
Green Gold
2023

Augmented reality (AR)
Realization of AR: James Wreford
Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki Biennial 2023.

INTERPRT
Colonial Present: Counter-mapping the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Sápmi
2023

multimedia report and installation
Co-investigators: Nabil Ahmed and Olga Lucko

Researchers: Prerna Bishnoi and Esther Breslin
Architectural researcher: Tiago Patatas
3D designer: Gwil Hughes
Game engine developer: Martinus Suijkerbuijk
Motion graphic designers: Filip Wesolowski and Gwil Hughes
Remote sensing analyst: Paulo Murillo
STUDIO INTERPRT is based at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art in the Faculty of Architecture and Design at NTNU.
Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki Biennial 2023.

KEIKEN
Ángel Yökai Atā
2023

site-specific installation (architectural sculptural installation and sound, online mobile interactive experience, *Morphogenic Angels* controller game, video projection, and sound)
Ángel Yökai Atā
3D Printing specialist: Caroline Barrueco
3D printing & sculptural installation consultation/fabrication: Sam Balfus
Architectural Design: Sebastian Kite
Music and Sound Design: wavesovspace
Online
Creative Coders and concept: Obso1337
Music and Sound Design: wavesovspace
Film of Morphogenic Angels Game (Chapter 1)
Creative Direction: Tanya Cruz, Hana Omori and Isabel Ramos (Keiken)
Programming, Game Design & Technical Direction: Limbo Tech
Visual Effects, Concept & Game Design: Mati Bratkowski
Animation/VFX: Carlos Minozzi
Music and Sound Design: wavesovspace
Environment Creation, Concept & Design: 00 Zhang
Motion Capture Movement: Sophie Mars
Voice Actors, Yaxu: Tanya Cruz
Anam't'uul: Claire O'Leary
Yaxu Ancestor 1: Helen Cruz
Yaxu Ancestor 2: Chema Cruz
Narrator: Elvera Avery
Additional Visual Effects: Clifford Sage
Studio Management: Hekáté Studios (Dominic Sylvia Lauren, Vaso Papadopoulou, Aristeia Rellou)
Technical Production: James Stringer
Project Production: Alexander Boyes
Prototype support thanks to C/O Berlin.
Ángel Yökai Atā commissioned by HAM/Helsinki Biennial 2023. Co-commissioned with Kanal Centre Pompidou Brussels, supported by

Saastamoinen Foundation.
 “Chapter 1” of *Morphogenic Angels* commissioned by HAU Hebbel Am Ufer. “Morphogenic Angels” film, commissioned by Somerset House Studios and supported by the DCMS and Arts Council through the Culture Recovery Fund.

SONYA LINDFORS
common moves
 2023
 social choreography
 Working group
 Coreographer: Sonya Lindfors
 Dramaturg: H Ouramo
 Facilitators: Melissa Linsa, Ritni Pieski & Godwin Otieno
 Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki
 Biennial 2023.

LOTTA PETRONELLA
Materia Medica of Islands
 2023
 site-sensitive installation, sound, film and performance
Materia Medica of Islands is a multidisciplinary work by Lotta Petronella. *Laments* is created together with Lau Nau. *Commemorating Ilma Lindgren* with Sami Tallberg.
 Lamenting Choir:
 Alma Rajala, Anna Jussilainen, Gabriela Ariana, Heta Pyhäjärvi, Kristina Vahvaselkä, Laura Naukkarinen, Lotta Petronella
 Textile and costume design: Maedhbh McMahon
 SuperCollider sound programming: Atte Häkkinen
 Research & assistance: Selina Oakes
 Ilma Lindgren embodied: Cécile Orblin
 Metalwork: Peltin Oy
 The work with moths is made with the guidance of butterfly enthusiast Lassi Jalonen (Lepidopterological Society of Finland)
Psyche a 16 mm live performance film screening Produced by Ilona Tolmunen/
 MADE, Supported by AVEK and TAIKE
 Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki
 Biennial 2023

ASUNCIÓN MOLINOS GORDO
¡Cuánto río allá arriba!
 2021/23
 sculptural work (pottery assemblage)
 Potters:
 Arturo Mora Reflejo Metálico, Manises
 Juan Carlos Iñesta, Domanises,
 Manises
 Ana Pales, Cerámicas Tevisan, Manises
 Courtesy of the artist

TUULA NÄRHINEN
The Plastic Horizon
 2019/23
Deep Time Deposits – Tidal Impressions of the River Thames
 2020

The Plastic Horizon: installation (plastic waste drifted ashore in Helsinki)
Deep Time Deposits – Tidal Impressions of the River Thames: installation (cyanotypes on Saunders Waterford paper 300gms, mudlarking finds, steel shelves, 34 tape measures, steel tape, magnets, flight cases, evidence of the material processes)
The Plastic Horizon is shown courtesy of the artist.
Deep Time Deposits: Tidal Impressions of the River Thames, collections of HAM Helsinki Art Museum.

PHOSfate
PHOSfate
 2023
 site-specific installation
 Thank you: Algaada Centre for Agricultural Research and Experimentation, Taleb Brahim Viivi Koljonen, Art School Maa
 The artists have received funding from Kone Foundation & Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation.
 Courtesy of the artists.

DIANA POLICARPO
Ciguatera
 2022
 mixed media installation
 Including:
Breath Movements 1, 2 & 3, 2022, Ten-channel sound installation
 Collaboration with Odete
When the Sea Swallows, 2022, HD video, colour, sound
 Narration and field recordings by Diana Policarpo
The Fourth Door, 2022, HD video, colour, sound
 Narration by Crista Alfaiate
 Soundtrack by Diana Policarpo
Toxic blooms, 2022, Two-channel HD video, colour, sound
 Narration by Syma Tariq, Rodrigo Vaiapraia, João Abreu, André Godinho,
 Soundtrack by Diana Policarpo
Microcosms I – VII, 2022, HD video
 Composition for sound installation:
 Diana Policarpo & Odete
 Videography: Diana Policarpo, Bernado Gaeiras, Mariana Silva
 Colour grading: Rita Lamas
 Sound design and mix: Diana Policarpo, Marcelo Tavares
 Voice over: Syma Tariq, Rodrigo Vaiapraia, André Godinho, João Abreu, Crista Alfaiate, Diana Policarpo
 Post-production: Studio Kino Sound Studio

Fabrication: Rinaldo Rinaldi studio
 Studio Assistant: Bruno Bogarim
 Production and Project Management: DH Office
 Courtesy of the artist.
 Commissioned by TBA21–Academy.
 Co-produced by TBA21–Academy and Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian, in collaboration with Instituto Gulbenkian Ciência.

SEPIDEH RAHAA
Songs to Earth, Songs to Seeds
 2022/23

installation (multichannel video, Tarom Hashemi rice plants in a pot decorated with ancient natural elements (of Iran-e-bastan), and handmade rice dolls)
 Produced, written, and directed: Sepideh Rahaa
 Camera: Sepideh Rahaa
 Sound artist: Ana Gutieszcza
 Melodies and singing: Banoo Music (Shevâr): Abolhasan Khoshru, Hoseyn Tayyebi and Nurollâh Alizâdeh composed by Ahmad Mohsenpur, Mahoor Institute of Culture and Arts
 Main participants: Mohammad Sadati, Sakineh Sadati, Ghorban-Ali Dadashi and many women workers in the paddyland.
 Performers: Hengameh R, Martta Tuomaala, Rosamaria Bolom and Ville Apell
 Arrangements: Shoorâ Sadati, Fatemeh Sadati
 Proofreading and text in Finnish: Ville Apell, Martta Tuomaala and Petronella Grönroos
 Supported by Finnish Cultural Foundation & Arts Promotion Centre Finland
 Special thanks to Rauma Triennial, Helsinki Biennial, Mahoor Institute of Culture and Arts, my family and all people who assisted in the production of the project.
 Courtesy of the artist.

BITA RAZAVI
Kratt: Diabolo. № 3
Elevated Platform
 2022

Kratt: Diabolo №3: kinetic sculpture, metal, electric motors, botanical drawings and archival photographs printed on belts, sound of un-oiled machinery
 Commissioned by the Estonian Centre for Contemporary Arts. Produced by Post Theatre Collective, Tallinn Art Hall.
Elevated Platform: sculptural spatial intervention, wood, metal, teak veneer and marble imitation
 Commissioned by the Estonian Centre for Contemporary Arts
 Produced by Post Theatre Collective and Estonian Centre for Contemporary Arts.

RED FOREST
On the Loss of Energy.
Radiogram from the remnants of collisions.
 2023

Sonic work
 Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki
 Biennial 2023.

REMEDIES
Sanctuary, mist
 2023

installation (mist, pond, water, landscape, text)
 Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki
 Biennial 2023.

TABITA REZAIRE
Deep Down Tidal
 2017

video installation
 Commissioned for Citizen X – Human, Nature & Robots Rights by Oregaard Museum, Denmark
 Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery.

EMILIJA ŠKARNULYTĖ
Hypoxia
 2023

film installation
 Written and directed by Emilija Škarnulytė
 DOP: Derek Spencer Howard,
 Emilija Škarnulytė
 Editor: Vytautas Tinteris
 Sound: Jokūbas Čižikas
 CGI: Gregory Blunt
 Production: Mirror Matter Productions
 Exhibition Architect: Linas Lapinskas
 Thank you: Andrius Šiaulyš; Arūnas Gelūnas; Baltic Sea Nature & Heritage Protection Association; Egidijus Pavilionis; Elena Pranckėnaitė; Eric Cordes; Erik Vojevodin; International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions; Jeremy McKane; Juan Raya Rodríguez; Klaipėda University Underwater Research Centre; Klaipėda University Sea Research Institute; Linas Duoblys; Nerijus Blažauskas; Palanga Amber Museum; Pisces VI Submarine; Sabine Kerkau; Scott Waters; Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO); TBA21; Terrance P. Long; Zita Rasuolė Gasiūnaitė
 Co-commissioned by Helsinki Biennial and TBA21–Academy, produced by HAM Helsinki Art Museum/Helsinki Biennial 2023.

YEHWAN SONG in collaboration with DIGITAL VISUAL STUDIES
Newly Formed
 2023

online work
 Digital Visual Studies (DVS) is a five-year cooperation project funded by the Max Planck Society and hosted by the University of Zurich from

January 2020. The DVS team for *Newly Formed* includes Tristan Weddigen, Dario Negueruela del Castillo, Leonardo Impett, Iacopo Neri, Pepe Ballesteros, Valentine Bernasconi, Jason Armitage, and Ludovica Schaerf.
 Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki
 Biennial 2023. Developed as a collaboration between artist Yehwan Song, Digital Visual Studies project and curator Joasia Krysa.

JENNA SUTELA
Pond Brain
 2023

Installation (bronze, water, sound, and light)
 Working group: Victor Riley
 Shepardson, Vanda Skácalová, and Finley Stewart
 Bronze casting at Bildgiesserei
 Hermann Noack, Berlin
Pond Brain is produced in collaboration with Copenhagen Contemporary.

SUZANNE TREISTER
TECHNOSHAMANIC SYSTEMS
New Cosmological Models for Survival
 2020-2021

site-specific installation: Wooden recyclable forest hut structure, 185 digital prints from original watercolours – each 21 x 29.7 cm, augmented reality.
 The project comprises *Project Diagrams, Earth Eco Systems and Architectures, Reinvented Technologies, Interplanetary Social Structures, Designs for Spacecraft, Apparel, Interplanetary Space Habitations, Interplanetary Meditation and Biospheres Islands, Crystal Architectures, Vultures, Rituals, Stars and Visions*.
 Realisation of AR: James Wreford
 Courtesy of the artist, Anneli Juda Fine Art, London and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York.

ADRIÁN VILLAR ROJAS
From the Series The End of Imagination
 2023

live simulations of active digital ecologies, organic and inorganic materials
 AVR Office
 Production design and coordination: Cindi Beltramone, Malena Cocca, Noelia Ferretti, Luis Villar Rojas
 Digital Modelling and visualization: Francisco Castells, Matheus Frey, Guillermina Sgro
 Finance and logistics: Silvia Tabachnik
 Administration: Marina Mondaca
 Communication, editorial and press: Malena Cocca, Noelia Ferretti
 AVR Workshop
 Studio management: Cindi Beltramone, Javier Manoli

Construction and installation: Juan Manuel Arranz, Alejandro Cinalli, Marcos Giovacchini, Maykel Plasencia, Jonatan Suárez
 Sculpture making and modelling: Juan Barbieratti, Georgina Bürgi, Matías Chianea, Aurelio Cossar, Javier Gamboa, Blu Navarro, Juan Pablo Wingeyer
 Commissioned by HAM/Helsinki
 Biennial 2023.

ZHENG MAHLER
SoilSpace
 2023

3D computer generated images
 digitally printed on vinyl mesh
 Courtesy of the artists.

**HELSINKI BIENNIAL 2023
PROJECT LEADERSHIP**

Maija Tanninen-Mattila, Museum Director of HAM Helsinki Art Museum and Director of Helsinki Biennial (until October 2022)

Elina Leskelä, Acting Museum Director of HAM Helsinki Art Museum and Acting Director of Helsinki Biennial (2022-2023)

Arja Miller, Museum Director of HAM Helsinki Art Museum and Director of Helsinki Biennial (as of March 2023)

Jonna Hurskainen, Head of Production
Jenni Kuisma-Dillemuth, Head of Sales and Customer Experience

CURATORS 2023**Head Curator**

Joasia Krysa

Curatorial Collaborators**Critical Environmental Data**

Jussi Parikka
Paolo Patelli
May Ee Wong

Museum of Impossible Forms

Giovanna Esposito Yussif
Ali Akbar Mehta
Marianne Savallampi
TBA21-Academy
Markus Reymann
ViCCA @ Aalto ARTS
Bassam El Baroni
Patrizia Constantin

HAM Helsinki Art Museum

Kati Kivinen, Head of Exhibitions
Satu Metsola, Curator

**HELSINKI BIENNIAL
PRODUCTION TEAM**

Petronella Grönroos, Coordinating Curator
Mirek Träskman, Technical Manager
Matti Pekonen, Technical Assistant
Tuija Kuutti, Head Registrar
Lissu Kirves, Producer
Emma Lumme, Producer
Annika Prähl, Producer
Saskia Suominen, Producer
Karoliina Virtanen, Producer
Johanna László, Production Assistant
Reetta Haarajoki, Communications
Anna Vihanta, Communications
Iisa Johansson, Sales Manager
Mikko Oranen, Customer Service Manager
Tuula Suomela, Museum Store Manager
Veera Kauppi, Service Sales Coordinator

Kiira Kivisaari, Customer Service Coordinator
Jouni Vienola, Customer Service coordinator
Ari Ylitalo, Customer Service Coordinator

AV Design and Production
Pro-AV Saarikko / Jorma Saarikko

Lighting Design and Production
Sun Effects / Jenni Pystynen

**HAM Helsinki Art Museum
Exhibition Team**

Adam Monaghan, Senior Technician
Kalle Jokinen, Senior Technician
Maria Ojanen, Registrar
Petteri Kantola, Conservator
Tuomo Koskelo, Conservator
Barbara Radaelli, Conservator
Ari Myllynpää, Senior Technician
Matti Pekonen, Technician
Clément Beraud, Technician
Dan Beard, Technician
Daniel Court, Technician
Juha Forss, Technician
Sini Havukainen, Technician
Tomi Sopanen, Carpenter

**Exhibition Architecture
HAM & Oodi**
Diogo Passarinho Studio

**Audience and Community
Engagement**

Hanna Nikander, Manager of Audience and Community Engagement
Elina Lipasti, Curator of Education
Aino Mäntyvaara, Curator of Education
Pinja Petäjä, Producer

Collections

Leena Mattelmäki, Curator
Kati Nenonen, Curator
Aki Pohjankyrö, Curator
Wilma Roine, Assistant

Public Art

Taru Tappola, Head of Public Art
Kristiina Ljokkoi, Curator
Aleksandra Kiskonen, Curator
Klas Fontell, Architect

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sunny Cheung, Curator, M+ Museum, Hong Kong
Manuela Moscoso, Executive Director, CARA – Center for Art, Research and Alliances, New York
Kasia Redzisz, Artistic Director, Kanal – Centre Pompidou, Brussels

**HELSINKI BIENNIAL STEERING
GROUP 2021-2023**

Laura Aalto, Executive Director, City of Helsinki Culture and Leisure Division
Ulla Bergström, Head of Partnerships, Cultural Services and Support, City of Helsinki Culture and Leisure Division
Reetta Heiskanen, Acting Culture Director (1/2022 – 3/2023)
Cultural Services, City of Helsinki Culture and Leisure Division
Kimmo Mustonen, District Manager in Basic Education, City of Helsinki Education Division
Mari Männistö, Culture Director, Cultural Services, City of Helsinki Culture and Leisure Division
Vappu Mänty, Helsinki Partners
Mikael Nordström, Regional Director, Metsähallitus
Minttu Perttula, Project Manager, Sports Services, City of Helsinki Culture and Leisure Division
Meri Louekari, Strategy Manager, City of Helsinki Urban Environment Division
Nina Vesterinen, Tourism Director, City of Helsinki

**HAM Helsinki Art Museum
Steering Group Members**

Maija Tanninen-Mattila, Museum Director
Arja Miller, Museum Director
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**VISUAL AND SPATIAL
PRESENTATION 2023**

HB23's visual and spatial presentation is a collaboration between design studio The Rodina and spatial consultancy Diogo Passarinho Studio.

The Rodina is a post-critical design studio with an experimental practice drenched in strategies of performance art, play and subversion.

D_P_S is a research-based design studio, founded in 2015 by Diogo Passarinho that studies how emotional contexts can be used to shape spatial memories. D_P_S has been commissioned to work as a spatial consultant, working closely with the curatorial team and with an ongoing relationship with The Rodina. Project team: Diogo Passarinho and Gonçalo Reynolds.

WEBSITE

helsinkiennial.fi

ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

newdirectionsmayemerge.com

PARTNERS

The main partners of Helsinki Biennial are Metsähallitus, S Group and Clear Channel.

Support was also kindly provided by Saastamoinen Foundation.

Helsinki Biennial 2023's co-commissioners include Copenhagen Contemporary, KANAL – Centre Pompidou Brussels and TBA21-Academy.

With thanks to Aalto University, Aarhus University, the British Council, the British Embassy in Finland, Frame Contemporary Art Finland, Liverpool John Moores University, Uniarts Helsinki, Uniarts Research Pavilion, The University of Zurich, MO.CO.ESBA Montpellier Contemporain – Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts.

COLOPHON

HELSINKI BIENNIAL 2023
New Directions May Emerge

HAM Helsinki Art Museum
Publications no. 154

HAM

ISSN 2489-3889
ISBN 978-952-5939-44-6

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Paper

Munken Lynx 90gms²

Typefaces

Lars by Bold Decisions Typefoundry
Rhetorik Serif by AllCaps
Dom Loves Mary by Debi Sementelli

Print

Livonia Print

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Helsinki Biennial 2023 adopts its title from a quote by anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, who proposes learning from (the art of) “noticing”. With close attention to other people, animals, plants, environment, data, and other entities around us, the biennial explores how we might find new ways of living in, and understanding, the world. The biennial unfolds through multimodal artistic acts of noticing, sensing and sense-making. Moving from humans to non-humans and between varying scales – a spectrum spanning data as the smallest scale, through to islands and speculative new worlds denoting the largest – the biennial is an invitation to consider how recognising small or otherwise invisible details might prompt possibilities to act, to imagine differently, and reconcile the impact of human intervention, and environmental and technological damage.

New Directions May Emerge introduces three main conceptual threads – contamination, regeneration, and agency – not as themes but intersectional vectors through which practices and conversations convene without the need to settle on a precise direction or position.

Bringing together established and emerging artists and collectives from Finland and across the world Helsinki Biennial 2023 comprises exhibitions, public programme, film screenings, and publications. It takes place on Vallisaari Island, HAM Helsinki Art Museum, other venues and public places in the city, and online.

The second edition of Helsinki Biennial is curated by Joasia Krysa, with other intelligences – Museum of Impossible Forms, TBA21–Academy, Critical Environmental Data, ViCCA @Aalto Arts, and an AI entity. Helsinki Biennial is produced by HAM Helsinki Art Museum.

helsinkiennial.fi

*As contamination changes
world-making projects,
mutual worlds – and new directions
– may emerge.*

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing
The Mushroom at the End of the World
2015

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