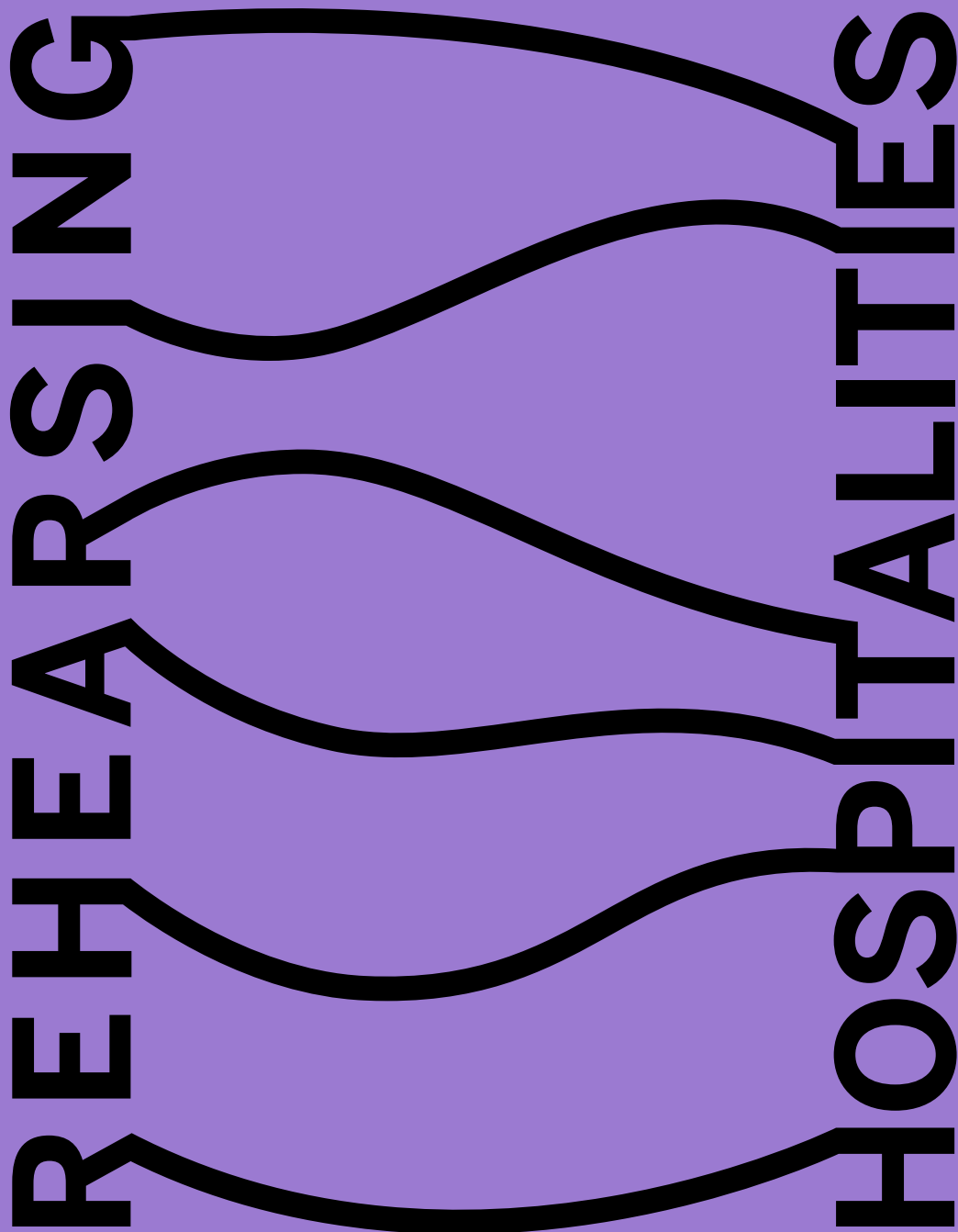


# REHEARSING HOSPITALITIES







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<b>end ending beginning beginning</b> Camille Auer	<b>7</b>
<b>Preface</b> Raija Koli	<b>19</b>
<b>Introduction: re-turning hospitalities</b> Yvonne Billimore and Jussi Koitela	<b>25</b>
HOST NOTATION I Situated accesses – Jussi Koitela	43
<b>Archival absurdity, or a walk in the park</b> Annet Dekker	<b>47</b>
HOST NOTATION II Access to nature-culture in Finland Yvonne Billimore and Jussi Koitela	65
<b>Walking in the lake</b> Laura Soisalon-Soininen	<b>67</b>
HOST NOTATION III From access to potentials for action Minna Tarkka	79

**If hospitality, then the duty is to repair  
and to foster** **83**

Denise Ferreira da Silva

**Distance education as access to one's  
own language and roots: education in  
Sámi throughout Finland** **93**

Hanna Helander

HOST NOTATION IV **101**

Access intimacy and limits of the institution  
Jussi Koitela

**Gáiddusoahpahus láide iežas gillii ja  
ruohttasiidda: oahpahus sámegielas  
miehtá Suoma** **103**

Sámi translation Arla Magga

HOST NOTATION V **109**

Who is welcome? Thinking hospitality  
as Museum of Impossible Forms

Ali Akbar Mehta and  
Marianne Savallampi

**From exceptional accommodations to  
Disability Justice design: ways of thinking  
about accessibility as hospitality** **113**

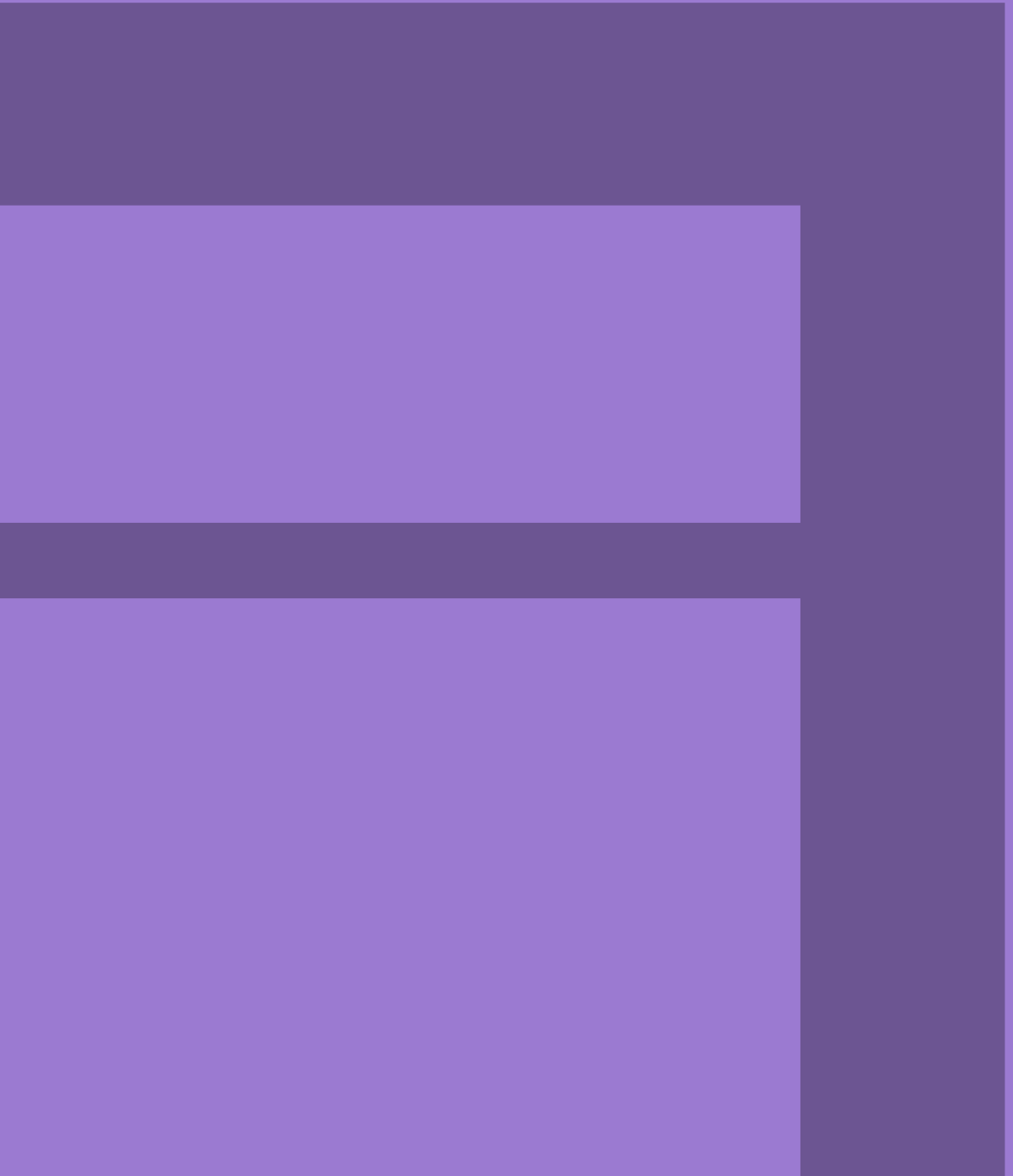
Aimi Hamraie

<b>Kulttuuriset valtasuhteet ja anti-hierarkkiset mahdollisuudet koronaepidemian aikana</b>	<b>127</b>
Marianne Savallampi ja Touko Vaahtera	
<b>Cultural power relations and anti-hierarchical possibilities in the epidemic era</b>	<b>140</b>
Marianne Savallampi and Touko Vaahtera	
 HOST NOTATION VI	 153
Languages of hospitality – Yvonne Billimore	
<b>Viral queerings, amplified vulnerabilities</b>	<b>155</b>
Marietta Radomska	
 HOST NOTATION VII	 173
Re-turning touch – Yvonne Billimore	
<b>The body is the site of climate catastrophe</b>	<b>175</b>
Astrida Neimanis	
<b>Contributors</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>Rehearsing Hospitalities 2020</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Reading List</b>	





**end ending beginning beginning**  
**Camille Auer**





this is the end this is the end  
 this is the end this is the  
 end is this the end the end  
 the end is this this is  
 the end of what is considered the  
 considered end the considered  
 end this is considered the beginning  
 end in the case we were  
 to consider this the end  
 this is the end in  
 consideration of considering beginning  
 the end of considering  
 this the end ending  
 here this ends here ends  
 considering ends consider beginning  
 ends ending consider ends  
 in relation to turns of  
 events in relation to peaks  
  
 in relation to who has evolved  
 and who is the main character  
 who is the main character  
 is the protagonist is the  
 special individual is the  
  
 exception to the norm is the  
 norm is the norm is the norm  
 normative exception to the norm middle  
 exception to the exception special  
 individual succession of events

unfolding unfolding events in  
succession norm unfolding  
hero is heroic heroically  
exceptionally accepting the norm  
by seemingly transgressing the

norm is who is doing that  
who is doing what is doing  
theory theory theory theoretical  
theory theoretically in theory  
dramatics dramaturgically drama middle  
poetically poetics poetry  
narratively narrating prosaically  
prose non-fiction non-fictional  
theoretically dramatic  
this is the end in the  
sense that the end happens  
here in this sense here is super middle  
the end

the end begins

and the beginning of the end  
ends and the end gets the end  
further in its progression  
the middle of the end  
is rarely discussed the  
middle of the end is overlooked  
the end of the end is just  
the end even though it's  
also the end of the end

the end is the culmination  
of dramaturgy this is  
the end  
the end  
is  
this

this is ending the beginning  
of the middle is rarely discussed  
the beginning of the middle is  
overlooked  
the succession of  
events unfold

the norm

unfolds the norm unfolds in  
the succession of the events

the norm embodied in the  
figure of the protagonist

the protagonist unfolds in  
the succession of events unfolding

through the norm the norm  
unfolds as the structure  
the structure clicks  
we  
click

into

place

this  
is how

things  
unfold this  
comes  
now then  
comes is  
then comes  
how then  
comes things  
then comes  
unfold and  
unfolding takes place  
and that is the structure  
and this is the direction of  
progress is the direction of  
success

and no one wants to go  
backwards

even though there is a contradiction because it's conservative now to  
want to sustain the structure of  
progress and progressive to want to dismantle it but no one wants to go  
backwards

and here is the end this is the  
end ending the middle of the  
middle is rarely discussed  
the middle of the middle is  
overlooked

darkness is a darkness is a darkness is a little bit of light coming in

under no circumstances under  
under no circumstances should we  
under  
under no circumstances should we  
under no circumstances

the death of the death of the death  
of the

how are we to see how are we

how are we to see how

how are we

how are we to see how is

beginning beginning middle beginning beginning beginning middle  
beginning middle

peak zenith crescent ascent present

the death of present

narration narrates the death of present

narration narrates anthropocentric individuation  
narration narrates eurocentric subjectivity  
narration narrates a centrifuge of who matters

the past the present the future the beginning the middle the end the end  
the present the future the past the beginning the middle the thing that  
comes after the thing that comes before the thing that comes before the  
thing that comes after this separates the thing we are from the thing we  
become from the thing we were from the thing we aren't from the this  
from that from self from other object from subject losers from winners  
oppressors from oppressed oppressed from oppressors violence out of  
sight within the language below the radar

how much is violence

how much is violence a product of narration of narrative structures

beginning beginning where is the beginning  
when will we get there  
every moment  
is  
the  
end  
of history  
and the beginning  
of the future

every moment is the end of future and the beginning of history  
it used to be the next minute then it became this minute second  
millisecond nanosecond picosecond then it became the previous one  
and so on



that's where it comes in and  
boom it was that coming  
in and now it's in and that's  
how it happened

every time every time  
comes across  
every time every time

“

The door is open as well as closed.  
The door is open.  
As well as closed.

”

—Gertrude Stein, *How to Write*, 1931

the beginning beginning beginnings beginning the beginning of a beginning  
of a life of a death of a life of an end of a middle of a beginning of an end  
of a beginning of an end of a beginning of a middle of a death of a birth  
of a path of a life of a human-size understanding of linearity  
birth life death  
life death birth  
death birth life  
life birth death  
death life birth  
birth death life end  
but death is continuous  
and becoming is a continuous birth  
and life is a becoming of death and linearity end

in dramatic structure is the basis of an anthropocentric  
understanding of existence of existence of existing understanding existing  
as a verb

as     an     act     as  
a     becoming     as the middle

as the beef in the burger

but     a     middle  
is     not  
a     verb

a middle is a zenith

a moment  
where becoming has become  
ends becoming  
and begins to come undone

a middle is  
nothing  
a middle is  
a void  
a middle does  
not  
exist  
and  
we  
are  
always  
there

in the middle



# **Preface**

**Raija Koli**



*Rehearsing Hospitalities*, Frame Contemporary Art Finland's public programme for 2019 to 2023, connects artists, curators and other practitioners in the field of contemporary art, and beyond, to build up and mediate new practices, understandings and engagements with diverse hospitalities. It fosters critical discourse, pluralistic sharing and collaboration between (artistic) practitioners in contemporary societies. *Rehearsing Hospitalities* takes the form of yearly autumn gatherings, public dialogues, a series of publications, and peer-to-peer learning situations. Through this collaborative process we hope to support the emergence of new paradigms and methods for cultural hospitality.

*Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2* is the second in a series of readers published by Frame and Archive Books, which accompany this five-year public programme. The series is a resource for making visible the processes, dialogues, and influences that shape the content and relations within the wider *Rehearsing Hospitalities* programme. Through practicing transparency and sharing our influences, the publication series becomes a place to make the knowledges we gather through the programme more open and accessible. Simultaneously, it invites practitioners to contribute to the shaping of this discourse by responding to and contaminating epistemologies of hospitality.

The 2020 edition, *Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2*, came into formation during a time weighted with multiple intertwined global crises: the COVID-19 pandemic (exasperating inequalities and a mass scale public health crisis), the continued racialised crisis of discrimination, violence and police brutality towards Black, Indigenous and People of Colour across the globe (resulting in the 2020 strengthening of the Black Lives Matter movement) and the ongoing climate and ecological emergency (made all the more explicit by the 2019 to 2020 extreme bushfires across Australia). It is in these times that a host of practitioners generously agreed to contribute to this edition and to re-visit, re-turn and re-configure worlds of hospitalities with us.

The ecology of knowledges assumes that all relational practices involving human beings and human beings and nature entail more than one kind of knowledge. —Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*, 2014.

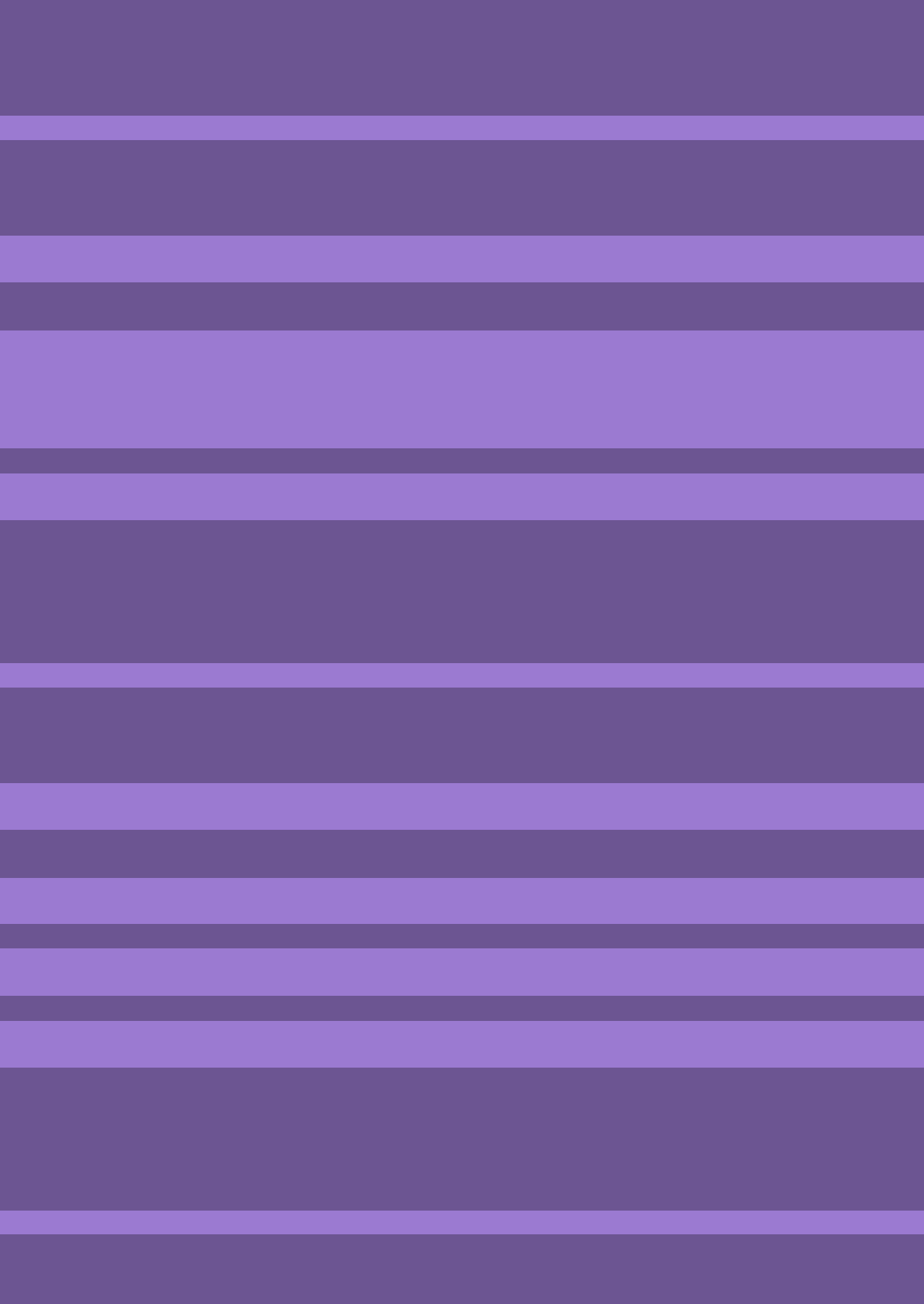




*Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2* is a site for hosting and gathering, for coming together through and in our differences in disconnected times.

*Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2* is comprised of contributions from artists, curators and thinkers: **Camille Auer, Annet Dekker, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Aimi Hamraie, Hanna Helander, Astrida Neimanis, Marietta Radomska, Marianne Savallampi & Touko Vaahtera, and Laura Soisalon-Soininen.** With comments and reflections throughout from *Rehearsing Hospitalities* partners and collaborators **Minna Tarkka** from digital culture and collaborative art agency m-cult and **Ali Akbar Mehta** and **Marianne Savallampi** from anti-racist and queer feminist project Museum of Impossible Forms, as well as Frame's programming team **Yvonne Billimore** and **Jussi Koitela.**

Raija Koli, Director Frame Contemporary Art Finland



# **Introduction: re-turning hospitalities**

**Yvonne Billimore and Jussi Koitela**

I want to begin by re-turning—not by returning as in reflecting on or going back to a past that was, but re-turning as in turning it over and over again—iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime-matterings), new diffraction patterns. —Karen Barad, *Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart*, 2014.



As a departure point, the *Rehearsing Hospitalities 2019* programme focused on the potential of art and cultural institutions to facilitate and mediate different “epistemic hospitalities”.<sup>1</sup> Responding to sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santo’s concept of “ecologies of knowledges”,<sup>2</sup> it asked how contemporary art might become more hospitable towards diverse and interconnected knowledges. During the first year of the *Rehearsing Hospitalities* programme it became obvious that working towards ecologies of knowledges was not enough without considering the various power relations and structures that determine who can access and participate in the production of knowledge. In the same way that it is important to rehearse different hospitalities towards different ways of knowing, it is important for art institutions to explore what boundaries and barriers limit access to a diversity of knowledges and to cultural production in general. So whilst attention to diverse ways of knowing and knowledge production remains central, the 2020 programme aims to expand on understandings of access and accessibility within ecologies of knowledges.

It is critical that all cultural institutions begin to address issues of access and their complicity in structural exclusionary practices. Interlocking systems of colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy have ensured that certain people remain institutionally uninvited, have limited access, or commonly experience exclusion even when they are invited in.

Amongst many other things, epistemologically this has created a kind of closed loop system in which a limited number of people are accommodated and control the production and dissemination of knowledge. It is not the case of simply welcoming those often kept out, suddenly becoming accommodating. Institutions must prepare themselves: their premises

<sup>1</sup> Epistemic hospitalities refers to the programmes emphasis on knowledge hospitality. *Epistemic Hospitality* was the title of the first event in Frame’s programme *Rehearsing Hospitalities*.

<sup>2</sup> For *Rehearsing Hospitalities* fostering “ecologies of knowledges” is about bringing together different knowledges/ways of knowing and positioning them without hierarchy. For further thought on “ecologies of knowledges”, see: Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2014).

It can be said that the university merely put up with the arrival of “new comers”, for whom university knowledge is not their just due, but rather an adventure to an unknown land—first: the arrival of girls, next: youth from “less privileged” classes, and then immigrants. If there was a collective preoccupation, it has not been the transformation of the arrival of young people who were not pre-formatted “heirs” into a dare, by offering them knowledge that would be worthy of them, or that which would open horizons other than that of joining the “elite” as it has been defined without them or even against them. Rather, the preoccupation has been the threat of a “lowering of the standard”. You are welcome and your presence is normal, for we are “democrats”, but on our terms, so that nothing changes. You are welcome as long as you do not make a fuss... —Isabelle Stengers and Vinciane Despret, *Women who make a Fuss: The Unfaithful daughters of Virginia Woolf*, 2014.



and their practices, to create safer environments for a range of bodies to inhabit them and have the opportunity to lead in reforming them. Frame of course is not outside of this, we know we have a lot of work to do. To begin, we must start to untangle the layers of structural injustice which we—directly and indirectly—participate in.

As stated in the inaugural year, *Rehearsing Hospitalities* (2019 to 2023) is intended to function as a critical intervention for Frame, a lens through which we can begin to embed the learning from our public programmes into the internal structures of the institution, ensuring that discourses and relationships are not thematic but are assiduously ingrained in all of our work... in all of our hospitalities.<sup>3</sup>

Through various practices of hospitality, *Rehearsing Hospitalities* looks beyond normative and institutionalised understandings of access. Rather than reduce hospitality to assimilative processes of inclusion, the 2020 programme addresses art and the institutional potential to facilitate plural and decentralised forms of knowledge production and accessibility. In collaboration with artists, curators and partners, the programme considers a range of approaches for complicating perceptions and relations of knowledge and access.

These begin to inform an ecology of access. This long, entangled and incomplete list of approaches reaches across physical, social, cultural and knowledge-based access barriers:

- access/rights to commons or civic spaces  
(city, land, parks, archives, cultural institutions)
- different bodies ability/inability to access  
and move through spaces/borders freely
- access to “nature” and conservation sites

<sup>3</sup> Yvonne Billimore and Jussi Koitela, *Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 1* (Archive Books & Frame Contemporary Art Finland, 2019): 25.

- normative and ableist cultural structures which restrict access for all
- access to institutions which generate knowledge
- access to marginal or non-hegemonic forms of culture/ knowledge
- access to localised, traditional, situated knowledges
- access to digital technologies and support for learning
- the accessibility/inaccessibility of language, translation and modes of communication
- access to care
- access across and between different disciplines
- ways of sharing knowledge from community to community, human to more-than-human, body to matter.

## **Rehearsing Hospitalities in these times**

*Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2* is the second in a series and extends the invitation to share different approaches for thinking-with and practicing diverse forms of hospitality. Rather than accompanying our annual event *Gathering for Rehearsing Hospitalities*, as the first in the series did, this edition becomes a site for gathering in itself.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Frame's *Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion* publication series functions as a partner for the programme. The first in the series, *Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 1*, gave particular attention to providing a wider context for *Gathering for Rehearsing Hospitalities*—a cultural gathering in Helsinki during September 2019. The publication was two-fold: a complimentary guide for those attending the *Gathering*, accompanying a series of talks, performative dialogues, interventions, screenings; and an expanded resource existing beyond and outside the immediate context of the *Gathering*. It hosts a collection of essays, drawings, reading lists, invitations, exercises, and dialogues, giving insight to a range of interpretations of diverse hospitalities.



As bodies of water, ‘we’ are all in this together (Braidotti 2002), but ‘we’ are not all the same, nor are we all ‘in this’ in the same way. —Astrida Neimanis, *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*, 2017.



This particular edition came into formation during the extraordinary circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic, a time of deep uncertainty and increased precarity of life/living, when the possibilities for “gathering” were greatly restricted and policed. Notably these were not new or extraordinary conditions for many in society, only that the global emergency created by COVID-19 made more visible and tangible the fragility, inequality and interconnectivity of the systems in which we live and depend—particularly within a globalised world.

Tasked with planning for the “unknown” in arts and public programming—immediate and further futures alike—led us, as institutional art workers, to question our approaches and practices, our dependencies and our complicities. In these times we felt a commitment to re-assess and re-address some of the foundational questions and practices in the *Rehearsing Hospitalities* programme, as they now become increasingly loaded within new global contexts and meanings. Now more than ever, we feel a need to be consciously (re)considering diverse forms of hospitalities, and ways of being together. We realised it is not an option, nor our response-ability, to continue as “normal” or return to production under the guise of “business-as-usual”, particularly in recognising the interconnecting relationships emerging between the COVID-19 pandemic and ecological crisis.

There is a new sense of urgency in which forms of cultural production and gathering now need to be re-thought, perhaps long overdue. But we might also wish to resist the pressures to respond immediately with “new” or “innovative” ways of accessing audiences and producing content, especially if it means thoughtlessly transferring everything online without considering what the long term impacts of this culture might be. Approaches for accessing cultural activity need diversifying; rather than one way to access, an ecology of access points is required. How to become more hospitable to, and attuned to, differing access needs is something we are *rehearsing* in our public programme by experimenting with formats

for gathering and hosting opportunities to engage in person or remotely. With the uncertainty for physical public gatherings ever-present, this publication provides a place to meet with others around our existing lines of enquiry, for inviting international guests and for working with the *Rehearsing Hospitalities* discourses by reflecting on pasts, processing presents, and imagining reconfigured worlds of hospitalities. As editors, we propose the *Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2* publication to be a site for gathering: for holding thoughts, insights, tools, provocations, responses on/for/with expanded hospitalities and access in these times. Collaboration in this process is pivotal and we are delighted to host contributions from a wide range of practitioners doing highly inspirational work. The invitation to these contributors was not to provide answers, solutions or even direct responses to the current conditions—in the arts, or more worldly—but to begin to re-visit and re-turn matters of hospitality with us.

### **Our Companions**

**Camille Auer** begins at the end. With her text “end ending beginning beginning” she insists you read to a rhythm. Moving along her lines you must read them and re-read them—“re-turn” them—as she takes you along a path of repetition and distortion. This path needs to be trodden time and time again, to each time gain further meaning and guide new forms of thinking. This is a poetic work that reflects Camille’s voice performances and resists binary and hegemonic forms of narrative, language and punctuation. We strongly urge you to read it aloud and listen to the vocal reverberations!

**Annet Dekker** leads us along another path: down the garden path and into the park. Her contribution, “Archival absurdity, or a walk in the park”, takes us on a journey from her childhood garden with sweet berry bushes to her new allotment garden, and further onwards to

think-with a speculative project based in Helsinki Central Park. *Allotment Archives* is a project which mirrors a real project (*Central Park Archives*<sup>5</sup>) but remains a fictional thinking exercise.

After introducing us to Anne Geene's unconventional (but with it's own sense of logic) processes of documenting, collecting, catagorising, and archiving, the plants of her allotment plot no.235, Annet's fictitious project *Allotment Archives* invites us to consider different approaches for commons archiving. For one character, the artist-activist, "archiving turns into a process of co-learning and co-developing, and thus co-archiving". For another, the federative-archivist, "archiving becomes the co-creation of a script, or of multiple narratives, held together by the system and structures in place, which have their own stories to tell." As a collection of anecdotes, speculative and lived, Annet and her characters rehearse stories for cultivating collective and accessible knowledges, without hierarchy and beyond the regime of the expert.

**Laura Soisalon-Soininen** invites us to enter her solitary process of enquiry. *Walking in the lake* is a visual essay constructed from a sequence of images which follow Laura's passage through the city of Helsinki. The images document a series of articulations during the process of her artistic commission at Frame Contemporary Art Finland's office space, commissioned in the context of *Rehearsing Hospitalities*.

Her work can be read as an idiosyncratic mapping of the city where traces and reconfigurations of sites are situated alongside intimate personal memories. Contemplating each step, meticulously counting grasses, arranging and re-arranging materials, calculating formulas and using her body as a measuring device, Laura is searching for ways to know the world through her own body. Knowing the world in this way is not commonly encouraged in Western education, in most

<sup>5</sup> Central Park Archives is project by m-cult, a digital culture and collaborative art agency, presented in the context of *Rehearsing Hospitalities 2020*.

cases embodied knowledge is strongly discouraged in favour of so-called “validated” and “non-subjective” ways of knowing. While Laura’s process seeks to simultaneously access internal and external knowledges of the city, it is also contingent on her right of passage through the city: the freedom to loiter and the ability to pursue sensory place-based research without surveillance, suspicion and/or interruption—perhaps the kind of access not granted to all co-inhabitants of the city.

In her text, “If hospitality, then the duty is to repair and to foster”, **Denise Ferreira da Silva** speaks to the importance of acknowledging difference and the disparities existing in who is afforded access to shelter and hospitality. From COVID-19 to a myriad of interconnecting global crises (global capitalism, financial, refugee and climate crises) Denise insists we begin to address that while they may be global, they are not universal. Disrupting a COVID-19 platitude, “We are all in this together”, she explicates, “we are not all in this in the same ways”. How we are exposed to and affected by crises are marked by inequality and racial differences—a consequence of centuries of colonialism and racial subjugation. Denise raises the point that racialization is deeply entrenched in politics and philosophies of access and hospitality as she calls for their reconsideration: “This time around the call to hospitality is not about offering shelter but about making the planet a hospitable place for those for whom modern thinking has prescribed death”.

“Distance education as access to one’s own language and roots: education in Sámi throughout Finland” by contributor **Hanna Helander** traces the unfoldings of the pilot project *Distance Education in Sámi Languages* initiated in 2018 by the municipality of Utsjoki and the Sámi Parliament. Informed by her work on the project, Hanna’s essay gives insight into the significant challenges for the provision and preservation of the Sámi languages in Finland. We are exposed to the multiple barriers that Sámi people face in accessing education in their own language whether through geographical distances, living outside

the Sámi native region, disparities in regional educational policies, and the increasing lack of opportunity for intergenerational Sámi teaching.

Sámi people in Finland now have the right to access their education in their own culture, but after generations of colonial oppression and restrictions on Sámi peoples right to learn and speak their native languages, their languages and culture remain in peril. As Hanna articulates, “Sámi education is not just learning a language, it is also getting to know one’s own roots”. Through embracing digital technologies and distance learning can Sámi languages, and therefore Sámi culture, be revitalised for a younger generation? The essay is translated into Northern Sámi by Hanna’s colleague on the project **Arla Magga**.

In their essay, “From exceptional accommodations to Disability Justice design: ways of thinking about accessibility as hospitality”, **Aimi Hamraie** also speaks to an “emergent” hospitality towards distance learning and remote access. Whilst reminding us that, although disabled and chronically ill people have been depending on and creating their own systems for years, “remote access only became a thinkable, actionable option when the majority of able-bodied people suddenly found themselves vulnerable to debilitation or death via the COVID-19 pandemic”. The pandemic has not had the profound and radical change in hospitality and inclusion one might have hoped for but instead in many cases has reinforced existing inequalities and ableism. Using the pandemic as a setting, Aimi’s essay draws out the long and problematic histories present in current accommodationist approaches to access and how they have informed certain ways of “knowing” disabilities.

Aimi’s essay continues through the lens of a project they call “access-knowledge” which has its roots in “knowing and making access for disabled people”. While they reflect on access-knowledge as a historical phenomenon, with its long lineage of inhospitable projects, they introduce how new progressive forms of access-knowledge are emerging from within the Disability Justice movement. Rather than simply creating

In what he calls a ‘sociology of absences’ legal sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls for ecology of knowledge/s that enables alternative ways of knowing and scientific knowledge to coexist, and argues that there can be no global social justice without global cognitive justice. At the heart of this engagement in social justice and indigenous research are questions about knowledge, education, participation and development. There are enduring questions about power relations, about agency and structure, ethics and methodologies. Research is simply one site at which these issues intersect. Research is important because it is the process of knowledge production; It is a way we constantly expand knowledge. Research for social justice expands and improves the conditions for justice: it is an intellectual, cognitive and moral project, often fraught, never complete, but worthwhile. —Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2012.



design solutions to assimilate disabled people for the sake of productivity, the access-knowledge projects which Aimi describes position how “accessibility can be more than just functional or assistive. It can be conceptual, artful, and world-changing.”

As with Aimi Hamraie, and echoing back to Denise Ferreira da Silva, both Marianne Savallampi and Touko Vaahtera’s and Marietta Radomska’s contribution reflect strongly upon the conditions they were written within—that of spring 2020 in the emergent stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our invitations to contribute to the publication were also shaped by the weight of this time, inviting practitioners to consider “reconfigured worlds of hospitalities” within these times of great uncertainty and vulnerability. Their essays help to illuminate that the conditions experienced in “these times” are not necessarily new. Many bodies (human and more-than-human) have long been living with conditions of restricted access, unknown futures, and everyday uncertainty.

**Marianne Savallampi and Touko Vaahtera’s** contribution appears in Finnish alongside an English translation. Through the course of their in-conversation titled “Cultural power relations and anti-hierarchical possibilities in the epidemic era” they unpack deep seated forms of ableism and normativity prominent in mainstream cultures. In this correspondence they share their experiences of witnessing the coronavirus epidemic in Finland unfold and a “criticism towards a culture that values able-bodiedness” which became common discourse. While pondering how issues such as conditions of work, labour values, access to cultural activity, and anti-capitalist practices, became increasingly points of concern in the public sphere, they question whether this shift in attitude and consciousness will be sustained.

With our invitation to *turn over* (re-turn) hospitality in these times **Marietta Radomska’s** response combines her own research within the emerging field of Queer Death Studies<sup>6</sup> with a detailed reading of the coronavirus disease pandemic. In her essay, “Viral queerings, amplified



vulnerabilities”, Marietta seeks to subvert normative and simplified understandings of our present. Following the thread that the pandemic affects some bodies more than others, Marietta highlights how “the exploitation and degradation of nature mixed with intensifying socio-economic inequalities directly contribute to the emergence of zoonoses”. Untangling the myth of the containable body and human-exceptionalism, Marietta challenges which lives are considered grievable drawing our attention to “more-than-human necropolitics”. In queering the pandemic she asks us to “reimagine the ways we relate to human and nonhuman others, perhaps in a more hospitable register”.

Astrida Neimanis’s essay “The body is the site of climate catastrophe” can almost be read as an epilogue. It is a humbling reminder that “these times” are not just haunted by COVID-19 but by a myriad of human/more-than-human crises. Whilst speaking to the sentiments of a number of the texts appearing before her in this publication, Astrida situates her contribution in dialogue with who she has been reading during the devastating times of the 2019–2020 “Black Summer” bushfires in Australia. Issues of hospitality and access are innately embodied through a constellation of writings presenting the body as a host of climate catastrophe.

Astrida’s writing allows us to access the complex entanglements of the world, such as those of climate catastrophe, by bringing them back to the intimacy of the body. Her deeply emotive text surges through your body as you read it, as if it already knows what you are reading, as if the memory of climate catastrophe is lodged “not only in something we might call mind or psyche, but in the wet fabric of our flesh”.

<sup>6</sup> Queer Death Studies “tries to over-come the problems of traditional Death Studies by addressing issues of death, dying, mourning and afterlife in a queering, relentlessly norm-critical mode, questioning ontologies, epistemologies and ethics, as well as bio- and necropolitical agendas, while affirmatively looking for alternatives” (Marietta Radomska, Tara Mehrabi and Nina Lykke Radomska, *Queer Death Studies: Coming to Terms with Death, Dying and Mourning Differently. An Introduction. Women, Gender & Research* 3-4 (2019): 3-11.)

She asks us to access our internal registers, our sensory, lived and embodied knowledge, as a way to read and know the changes of the world through our bodies in order to imagine a “different kind of ethics and politics”.

### **Ways for reading**

#### **Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2**

There is not one way to move through this publication. Its layout mirrors the concept of an ecology of access where different approaches and fragments interconnect but can also be read apart from one another. Rather than to confuse readers, we hope this complex entanglement of contributions, notes, and references, can provide multiple points of entry. Readers can choose to read cover to cover, back to front or short sections at a time.

The contributions themselves perform access on different registers. It is not without purpose that there are a range of writing styles and approaches—from poetic embodied writing and visual essays to academic style texts—each allowing us to enter the discourses of this publication in multiple ways.

In addition to the invited contributions, there are a series of short “host notations” to encounter as the reader meanders through the publication. These are thoughts and reflections on hospitality, knowledge, and access, composed by ourselves, the editors, and our *Rehearsing Hospitalities 2020* partners and co-hosts: **Minna Tarkka** from digital culture and collaborative art agency m-cult and **Ali Akbar Mehta** and **Marianne Savallampi** from anti-racist and queer feminist project Museum of Impossible Forms. Rather than acting as commentaries or definitions, these notations articulate the importance of our different readings, experiences, and knowledges, which we bring to this year’s *Rehearsing Hospitalities* programme.

These numerous possibilities leave La mestiza floundering in uncharted seas. In perceiving conflicting information and points of view, she is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders. She has discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behavior; these habits and patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. La mestiza constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than exudes. —Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 1987.



The publication is further populated with a collection of contextual references which have been informing *Rehearsing Hospitalities*. Some of these references can be found inhabiting the pages of the first publication too but reappear in this edition in response to re-turning, re-thinking, re-contextualising, and rehearsing our relationships with hospitality. Amongst others, quotations from **Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Lisa Duggan, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Jack Halberstam, Donna Haraway, Alison Kafer, Achille Mbembe, Walter D. Mignolo, May-Britt Öhman, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and Jenni-Juulia Wallinheimo-Heimonen**, can be found throughout this publication and with the contributors references inform an expanded *Rehearsing Hospitalities 2020* reading list, which is located at the back of the book.

We welcome the *Rehearsing Hospitalities* readers to be used as reading lists, insight into practices, reflective spaces, and as notebooks for the inclusion of personal thoughts, drawings, or annotations. Please contaminate these pages with your own thoughts too.

*The Rehearsing Hospitalities 2020* programme draws many of its ideas from current discourses and practices of disability studies, crip theory,<sup>1</sup> and feminist thinking. In various ways, these discourses can be used to challenge the tendency towards universalism and representationalism in art and cultural production, as well as ways of knowing in general. The production and experiencing of art (and the knowledge production and mediation that comes with it) happens from within our own situated and relational, cultural, and socio-political positions. This means that the boundaries and barriers, as well as privileges, for accessing knowledge, artistic expression, or life itself, are situated and relational too.

Researcher in disability studies and feminist theory Rosemarie Garland-Thomson states: “knowledge emerges in the form of differing bodyminds moving through environments together, navigating barriers, and finding pathways, both materially and metaphorically.”<sup>2</sup>

Garland-Thomson helps us to see that knowledge emerges in specific conditions that are different for each subject depending on their bodyminds<sup>3</sup> and social, cultural, and economical backgrounds. Knowledge is not something that can be accessed only through the removal of barriers or “obstacles”, it emerges from situated experiences and through the entanglement with these obstacles. It might be useful to expand Garland-Thomson’s statement towards access itself, whereby different accesses and access-knowledges<sup>4</sup> emerge from moving through and navigating different barriers and pathways. This engagement is not simply an act of peaceful navigation but also political, social, material, and physical struggle, where differing bodyminds demand equality, justice, and the right to live.

How can arts organisations and institutions treat access not as general or universal policy, but instead understand access needs as coming from plural and decentralised ways of knowing and experiencing the world? —Jussi Koitela, Frame Contemporary Art Finland

**1** Reclaimed from the derogatory term cripple, people with disabilities and chronic illnesses began to take ownership of this term through disability activism in the 1960s. Crip theory grew out of this movement. See Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); and Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

**2** Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Proliferating Cripistemologies: A Virtual Roundtable”, in Robert McRuer and Merri Lisa Johnson (eds.), *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 8:2 (January 2014): 149–169.

**3** The term “bodymind” challenges the divisions generally made between body and mind in Western thought. It is a term often used in disability studies to emphasise that the body and mind are inseparable and interdependent: “According to this approach, because mental and physical processes not only affect each other but also give rise to each other—that is, because they tend to act as one, even though they are conventionally understood as two—it makes more sense to refer to them together, in a single term.” Margaret Price, “The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain”, *Hypatia* Vol. 30:1 (2015): 269.

**4** For a history of access-knowlege see Aime Hamirae’s essay in this publication “From exceptional accommodations to Disability Justice Design: ways of thinking about accessibility as hospitality”. For further reading see: Aime Hamirae, *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

The call to place “crip” at the beginning or the center is not a call to add disability to an intersectional matrix of race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, religion. It is a call to step aside, provisionally, to imagine theory and politics from the capacious “standpoint” of disability. This is a moment in the formulation of new ways of thinking and acting politically, not an endpoint. Disability is not to be separated from other social formations; indeed it cannot be. But in order to think in new ways, for just a moment, we place “crip” at the starting/central place in our imaginings. —Lisa Duggan et al., *Proliferating Cripistemologies: A Virtual Roundtable*, 2014.

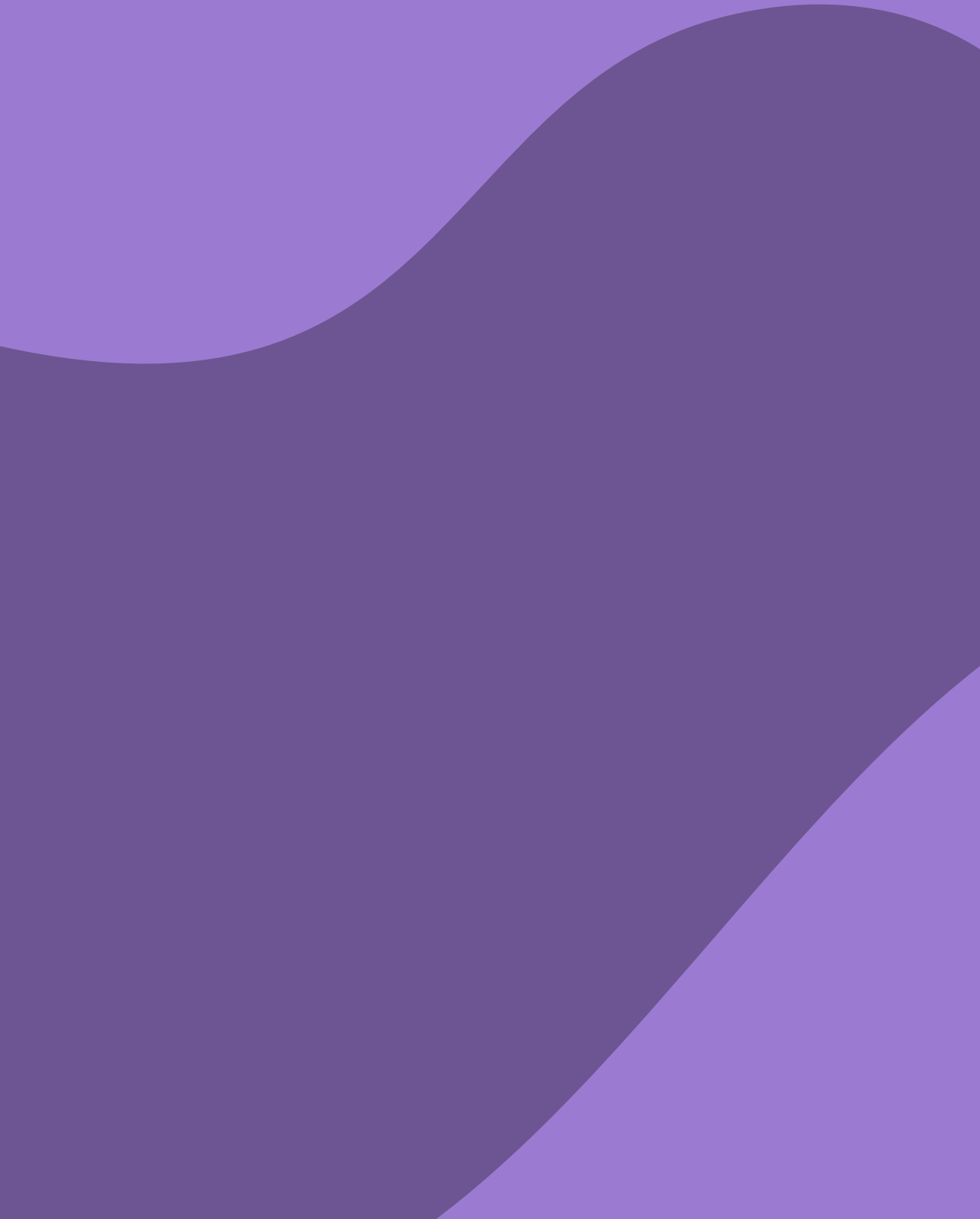






# **Archival absurdity, or a walk in the park**

Annet Dekker





I grew up in a small village. We lived in an old converted farm in the middle of the town with a large but narrow garden in the back, about 4 metres wide and 30 metres long. The garden had three plum trees: “Reine Claude”, “Victoria” and “Marjorie’s Seedling”. At the far end were shrubs bearing redcurrants and blackcurrants, and one gooseberry, never my favourite. At the height of summer, I spent many moments stuffing myself with the soft sweet fruits. A line of various types of trees separated us from the neighbours on the left, and a low fence on the right demarcated our garden from my aunt and uncle’s. Our garden was all grass, no flowerbeds, no herbs, and no vegetables. My parents had a shop in which they sold all types of electrical goods, and had little time to tend gardens. I loved the grass. The soft and sometimes prickly or moist blades of grass beneath my feet always felt like summer. There was an additional perk: mowing the lawn was rewarded with a few cents to buy ice cream. Some of my friends lived in the countryside on small farms with large swaths of land around them where we never got bored. The mother of one of my best friends had a large vegetable patch where they grew most of their own food. Come harvest time, strawberries, cherries, elderflower, redcurrants, blackcurrants, gooseberries, raspberries, blackberries, plums, grapes, apples, pears, tomatoes, onions and cucumbers would be sorted, washed, and cooked into jams or fermented in jars. The hissing and bubbling of the large glass demijohn filled with slowly fermenting grapes or plums is still one of my favourite sounds. Yes, you can still wake me up for any fresh fruit, but I never got into gardening.

Living in the inner city didn’t help of course, with fresh groceries next door and one of the most picturesque Amsterdam canals in front of the apartment, it didn’t even cross my mind. After living in city centres for over 30 years I moved to the suburbs two years ago, and now I own a garden. Lacking the experience or drive, the first year we were there we simply tossed out the overgrown blackberries and the abundant nettle, and sowing several packages of mixed seeds saw to it that we

enjoyed a summer amidst a field of wild flowers. The bees were happy, and so were the weeds, nettles and horsetail that quickly engulfed the “wild” yet fragile annuals. The second year, the “Garden Women” lent a hand and cleared a path through the green mishmash. We planted a tree, the freshly planted perennials kept most of the weeds back, and the bees were still happy.

Over the years several friends had asked me if I might be interested in setting up a small vegetable garden, a green enclosure on the outskirts of the city, a place to relax or do some weeding, but most of all to enjoy the freshness of home-grown greens. I never really felt the urge. Despite having been raised in the countryside I’m not keen on growing my own food, perhaps because I had experienced—or indeed, witnessed from a distance—the hard work, the disappointment of losing a crop, and the frustration of lice, ants, snails, caterpillars, grubs and leaf miners, to name but a few. I love nature, I love animals in nature, green and blue are my favourite colours, but despite my outdoor heritage I am disinclined to turn nature to my liking—well, at least not in the sense that it requires continuous labour.

Then “corona” happened. Forced to stay put and work from home I started noticing the garden, and before I knew it, I was hooked. I began looking at (other people’s) plants, spent countless hours online looking for a specific flowering type, read about garden design, more flowers, bushes, trees, climbers, ground coverers, cat attracters, snail lovers or repellents, how to line up a (mini) herb garden without it being infested by unwanted insects, various textures, leaf shapes, and different shades of green. I bought second-hand gardening books, especially rare ones that were hard to obtain and contained a wealth of insights and possibilities. I even discussed gardening with fellow green-lovers. I finally understood why people over the years had tried to lure me into the delights of an allotment.

In 2010 Dutch photographer Anne Geene published *No. 235 / Encyclopaedia of an Allotment*.<sup>1</sup> Geene is a keen observer, with a great sense of curiosity and an idiosyncratic way of looking at nature. She studies and extracts information about animal and plant life from literature and science. She collects and prepares leaves, small critters and flowers to document, delineate and categorise, and finally makes her findings known to the world in a publication. Unlike many other taxonomic works, she doesn't focus on the conventional aspects of plant and animal life such as garden plants, mammals or insects; instead, she tries to provide a complete visual overview of a specific location, in this case, allotment garden no. 235, which is part of the allotment garden association "Eigen Hof" (Own Courtyard) in Rotterdam.

In her investigation she looks for all kinds of patterns and phenomena, and depending on the situation she creates alternative categories to classify her observations. *No. 235* is divided into three parts: part one provides a geographical delineation of Google Earth photos, a map of the Eigen Hof terrain, and a photographic montage of the plot including its four topographical borders, as well as an overview of the impact of the different seasons on the garden, the highest living species, a black-backed gull, and the lowest living species, a death's-head hawk moth cocoon, and finally the most widespread plant—the seven-leaf, and the most common animal—the woodlouse. Part two consists of observations, including the species in order of observation, prepared specimens, forms, colours, patterns, behaviour, traces (from animals to garden tiles), clouds and skies, various water surfaces (e.g., on and below the surface of a pond), multiple puddles, and types of rain. Part three contains all kinds of measurements, such as the effects of sunlight on leaves, and their transparency, the group behaviour of snails, the speed of swimming ducks, the camouflage of frogs, the variety of pigeon silhouettes when

<sup>1</sup> Anne Geene, *No. 235. Encyclopedia of an Allotment* (Rotterdam: De Hef Publishers, 2010).

observed in flight, and the impact of sunlight on earthworms. Geene's approach is akin to a scientific biologist, yet her science is based purely on visual similarities, patterns or contrasts. At times idiotic and absurd the conclusions are also insightful and surprising. Delving into her world shows the results of the meticulousness and fastidiousness of human intervention in nature that can be perceived in the microcosm of the allotment, albeit that the human influence is obscurely represented through animals, plants, behaviours, forms, colours, patterns, traces, and other topological features. Her depiction of this world presents a space where all kinds of species live, yet—and befitting the encyclopaedic method—seemingly function independent of each other.

After observation comes documentation, followed by organisation, interpretation, and finally categorisation. This is how Geene depicts the world around her. In the preface to *No. 235* Geene states that it is not her intention to provide a complete determination of plant or animal species—something that is abundantly present in other works—rather her work is a detailed visual study of the plant and animal kingdom on a human observable scale. While she is interested in objectivity and categorisation, she primarily explores and shows the different meanings an image can convey. As she mentions, “you can move with contexts and information. I see photography mainly as an information carrier with which different stories can be told”.<sup>2</sup> Photography in this sense is an archive. In addition to being a documentation device, the apparatus—the framing, the camera position, the way the light enters the aperture—is an archival medium. Rather than “archive fever”—Jacques Derrida’s claim that people have an uncontrollable urge to collect—in her observations and consequent encyclopaedic efforts Geene wants to invert perception. She shows that it is possible to capture a world in images, texts or sounds, but she asks, what does such a record actually represent? In other words,

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/en/pcprofile/anne-geene/>

while using universal strategies of categorisation and standardisation, Geene also denies the existence of objectivity, or at least she questions it. Her focus and ways of classifying seem absurd—how important is it to know about the impact of the different intensities of sunrays on earthworms, or the group behaviour of various species of snails? Her idiotic system, however, transcends logic and opens up the imaginable, confronting readers with their own thinking—observing the image of snails forming a networked trail forced me to reconsider snails not as loathsome enemies who are after my precious lettuce, but as interesting nodes in a community that perhaps move according to certain unknown (at least to me) rules. The irregular, disturbing or abnormal are key in a heterotopic<sup>3</sup>, and while this works well in an art project, how can a system that is based on absurdity be implemented into “regular” archiving? Moreover, when following “archival absurdity” could such a method also become a way to (re)structure the world, similar to how by structuring a world, archival practice can also sometimes have the effect that a world starts to behave like the archives that are maintained of it?

Allotments are busy places teeming with living creatures trying to do the thing they are best at: growing and multiplying. The battle of the fittest is often disturbed by human interference, bushes are trimmed, hedges tamed, weeds eradicated, and flowers picked before their seeds or roots can disperse to conquer new soil. Pesticides minimise the damage caused by unwanted bugs, and after fruits and vegetables are harvested and eaten, their precious seeds and pips are carelessly tossed into the garbage. From a human perspective maintaining a garden

<sup>3</sup> Heterotopic is a reference to Michel Foucault's idea of heterotopia, which can briefly be described as “worlds within worlds”, where a multitude of relationships, meanings and juxtapositions are contained within a space but which perhaps do not immediately meet the eye. For example, a garden. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York, NJ: Vintage Books, Random House Inc, 1994[1970]).

Any cripistemology worth its name should identify modes of not knowing, unknowing, and failing to know. If conventional epistemologies always presume a subject who can know, a cripistemology will surely begin and end with a subject who knows merely that his or her ability is limited and that the body guarantees only the most fragile, temporary access to knowledge, to speech, to memory, and to connection. If we were to imagine a politics based upon such negative forms of knowing, it would not be an identity politics at all and would not consist of action or knowers or doers—a cripistemology should give rise to a politics of radical passivity, a refusal to inhabit the realm of action and activation at all. —Jack Halberstam et al., *Proliferating Cripistemologies: A Virtual Roundtable*, 2014.





is about creating a thriving ecology. Brightly coloured marigold flowers add zest to green salads, but when planted in a vegetable garden also ensure that ants, whiteflies and other vermin avoid young vegetable sprouts. If marigold plants sense the presence of microscopic worms known as nematodes, they release a toxin into the soil and any of the devouring-root-worms that are too close perish.

The dynamics of gardening is a good example of how gardeners, artists and archivists could start to think together. For a gardener, the challenge is paying attention to sudden changes: an unexpected turn in the weather may ruin crops. For an archivist, the challenge is noticing that there are always other factors, including human and non-human, which—sometimes at unanticipated moments—may influence the record keeping process. The call for generalisations can hinder an archivist's attention for the particularities of change and process or their ability to hear other voices. For an artist, the challenge is observing the minute details and finding a way to translate them such that they appeal to the imagination. What the three share is a first step towards the “arts of noticing”, which as explained by anthropologist Anna Tsing, means that rather than merely looking and seeing, sniffing and smelling, touching and feeling, or listening and hearing, implies a subtle shift: to notice is also to realise there is a change, that the past is different from the present.<sup>4</sup>

Similar to Geene, Tsing uses a metaphor to describe society at large—for Geene it is the microcosm of her allotment, and for Tsing it is the significance of the *matsutake*, an expensive mushroom and Japanese delicacy, which due to its root system and symbiotic relationship with certain types of pine trees cannot be cultivated. By tracing the

<sup>4</sup> Anna Tsing, “Arts of Inclusion, or How to Love a Mushroom”, *Manoa*. Vol. 22:2 (2010): 191–203. Similarly, Stengers makes a plea for a slow science which she characterizes as “the demanding operation that would *reclaim* the art of dealing with, and learning from, what scientists too often consider messy, that is, what escapes general, so-called objective, categories”. Isabelle Stengers, *Another Science is Possible: A Manifesto for Slow Science*, trans. Stephen Muecke (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018[2013]): 120.

various sources of the *matsutake* Tsing reveals the human, fungal and arboreal relationships, and how they are entangled with global social and economic processes. So, what happens when using the concept of noticing as a model of creating and fostering ecologies in which humans and non-human alike may thrive?

As a speculative thinking exercise, let's take another allotment adventure. This time to a perhaps unexpected place: Finland. Thinking of Finland and allotments may seem contradictory; the country's large expanses of forest, numerous lakes and sparsely populated countryside seem at odds with the need for an allotment garden. The first Finnish allotment garden, however, goes back to the time before the country's independence. As elsewhere city-people find their moments of relaxation in these small plots of land. The oldest and still thriving allotment association can be found in Helsinki's Central Park: Ruskeasuon siirtolapuutarha (Brunakärr koloniträdgård) which was founded in 1918. Just a few years earlier, in 1911, as a unique piece of urban forest Helsinki's Central Park was established and developed as a public park. Central Park is 10 kilometres long and extends from the city centre at Töölönlahti Bay up to the northern border, crossing many of the city's districts.

Central Park has a significant value for Helsinkians, it provides space for daily exercise, nature observation, and all kinds of other recreational activities. Its vastness can be witnessed in the abundance of wildlife: from elks, badgers, foxes, arctic hares, brown hares, weasels, raccoon dogs, muskrats, to the rare flying squirrels, as well as various species of birds, such as the black woodpecker, gold crest, Eurasian jay, tits, dunnoek, garden warbler, wood warbler, and red-breasted flycatcher. And of course, it is now also home to several allotment associations, which are designated open and free recreational areas. The season starts around the end of May, by which time any fallow, uncultivated or deserted allotments will be redistributed to new gardeners. However, parts of the green centre of the city are under threat, this time not from

Can we imagine a crip interaction with nature, a crip engagement with wilderness, that doesn't rely on either ignoring the limitations of the body or triumphing over them? In asking these questions, I am motivated by a desire to write myself back into nature even as I unpack the binary of nature and self, nature and human. Discussions about the practicalities of access—such as Whole Access's advocacy for universally designed trails—is certainly a necessary part of this work; the sooner we recognize that all trails are built interventions on the landscape, and as such can be reimagined or reconceived, the sooner we can make room for a fuller range of bodies, including but not limited to disabled people. Equally important, however, is a willingness to expand our understanding of human bodies in nonhuman nature, to multiply the possibilities for understanding nature in and through our bodies. If, as Catriona Sandilands argues, queer ecology means “seeing beauty in the wounds of the world and taking responsibility to care for the world as it is,” then perhaps a feminist/queer/crip ecology might mean approaching nature through the lenses of loss and ambivalence. —Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 2013.



negligent caretakers but the bureaucratic establishment, which is plotting new housing and an urban boulevard that will replace some of the green meadows, bushes, and flower fields. To defend the park, a group of alarmed users of the park emerge and want to connect the multiplicity of lived experiences, micro-histories, struggles, changes, and future visions of the park. The group, under the name “*Allotment Archives*”<sup>5</sup>, is driven by the fear that the bureaucrats will appropriate parts of the park to further their agenda of housing and urban development, to circulate capital within their institutional networks, and to rationalise environmental policies, without considering local needs, dependencies, or wishes. In an attempt to change the direction and highlight the ethical tensions between the different parties, *Allotment Archives* wants to emphasise a more emancipatory way of working by focusing on layered narratives and the language of advocacy that might in the end enable a discussion between different stakeholders.

The final goal of *Allotment Archives* is to create a commons of shared archives and a set of sustainable archiving practices around the park, in close cooperation with local communities and individual users. This idea is based on federative and grassroots archives whose contents are created, shared and networked via online open data infrastructures. In this way, the project wants to focus on facilitating plural and decentralised forms of knowing and making that knowledge accessible. The notion of “conceptus” becomes leading, as it emphasises a consensus-based concept in which everyone can represent their own trajectory.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> While *Allotment Archives* may share some similarities to the existing project *Central Park Archives* (an m-cult project presented in the context of *Gathering for Rehearsing Hospitalities* 2020: <https://www.m-cult.org>), any direct resemblance is coincidental. However, in exploring the speculative thinking-exercise around *Allotment Archives*, I am indebted to conversations with Minna Tarkka, Susanna Änäs and Ali Akbar Mehta whose preliminary experience and ideas have inspired this imaginary *Allotment Archives*.

<sup>6</sup> Conceptus literally means an embryo with all its surrounding tissues, but Minna Tarkka used the term to describe the alignment of various interests into a conceptual consensus in the early phases of a collaborative process.

Thinking with *Allotment Archives* two different perspectives that are common in similar situations are interesting to highlight: the “artist-activist” and the “federative-archivist” approach.

Without much training or mentoring an artist-activist is keen to explore the multiple facets of the park: the community, neighbourhood, suburb, forest, park, site-of-redevelopment, site-of-disrepute and space-in-flux, with the aim of transforming the conventional structures into platforms for dialogue. Although the intention is to work closely with the residents surrounding the park, due to specific circumstances it is impossible to have close or intimate contact, resulting in a slow and intermittent process of data collecting. In time, the understanding of the project and the comfort level among the residents to partake increase. The data from the residents are retrieved or copied and digitised. Some have large historic photo collections that show the changes in the park, others made recordings of various types of birds, there are also videos of rare species such as the flying squirrels who have chosen the park’s spruce trees as their westernmost habitat on the globe (a development that could well be used to advance political causes), as well as documentation of the demonstrations and struggles against the proposed changes to the park. At the same time, methods with a low participatory threshold are considered to make more residents enthusiastic about the project. All the data is merged, overlaid and combined with existing city planning documents, zoning maps, and other cartographic data in an open source map on a dedicated website that everyone involved can access and maintain.

For an artist-activist, the aesthetic vision and framework are secondary to the conceptual framework of commoning and the notion of conceptus. Archiving turns into a process of co-learning and co-developing, and thus co-archiving. The one-way stream of information gathering and data collecting, with participants providing information without receiving much in return, is now proliferating—information moves in every direction.

While everyone retains their own data and experience, once all is submitted, viewed or experienced collectively, the data defragments, it starts to grow, multiply and diversify, and at times is brought together again. Narratives emerge through various ways of access: overlapping stories, micro- and macro stories tumble one over the other, yet each is distinct. A reciprocity emerges in which the artist-activist becomes—if only for a moment—also an archivist-creator-participant. Yet, regardless of the name, the core of this practice is a process of relation making that may lead to endless multiplication. As described by philosopher Isabelle Stengers, such:

**subtle interlocking of disparate remnants witnessing and taking their consistency the one from the other, contributes not only to more knowledge but also to apprenticeships in new ways of narrating various pasts.<sup>7</sup>**

The federative-archivist *treads* the data carefully, being fully aware of the impossibility of completeness—the suggestion alone could raise anxieties and hamper the goals—while trying out different ways to organise the data, the residents, the communities, the locations, the times, the themes, and the media. Perhaps the specific opportunities for discovery, exploration, and experiencing are more mechanically perused. A shared interface for access to co-curated materials is developed and peer-learning workshops on co-archiving are organised to collaboratively fill the holes and plant the seeds for future enquiries. Existing documents,

<sup>7</sup> Stengers, *Another Science is Possible*: 69.

formal records from city archives and informally created documentations through interviews, soundscapes, historical imagery and imagination, provide a mesh of information extending the scope of investigation. Yet all are testimonies of the residents' relations with the nature in the neighbourhood. The archive tells the stories of these relations between nature and residents; as such archiving becomes the co-creation of a script, or of multiple narratives, held together by the system and structures in place, which have their own stories to tell. This time rather than a project website, the choice is for a Wiki system.

Finding a coherent and structured way to organise and control data and its revisions is at the core of archival practices. The use of a Wiki matches the goals, as it has several advantages: it provides a collaborative working method, the open structure can be created by multiple users, and it is based on a simple version control system, which means that any change to the site can be retraced by anyone in the site's "history". Moreover, combined with Wikidata and/or Wikidocumentaries<sup>8</sup> it can become a federated Wikibase in which data from different Wikis is synced. Such a structure, also known as the portmanteau "fedivers" (a combination of "federation" and "universe"), allows different levels of decentralisation and interoperability in terms of network architectures and data circulation. As mentioned by researchers and artists, Aymeric Mansoux and Roel Roscam Abbing, "federation is a concept derived from political theory in which various actors that constitute a network decide to cooperate collectively. Power and responsibility are distributed as they do so".<sup>9</sup> As such, and perhaps in addition to an archive, a fediverse

<sup>8</sup> Initiated in 2018 by Susanna Ånäs, the Wikidocumentaries platform builds a bridge between micro historical materials and the open infrastructures of global cultural heritage. See <https://wikidocumentaries-demo.wmflabs.org/>.

<sup>9</sup> Aymeric Mansoux and Roel Roscam Abbing, "Seven Theses on the Fediverse and the Becoming of FLOSS:" in Kristoffer Gansing and Inga Luchs (eds.), *The Eternal Network: The Ends and Becomings of Network Culture* (Amsterdam/Berlin: The Institute of Network Cultures/transmediale e.V. 2020): 125.

connects disparate efforts and converges diverse projects into a shared network in which the participants share some similar goals. In other words, it develops and amplifies different perspectives while working towards conceptus. Without having to be partisan or privileging certain stories over others, a fediverse-archivist recovers agency through the structures that are developed and enacted. While “wiki” means quick in Hawaiian, a name chosen to reflect the need to facilitate quick and easy communication between software developers, here the quickness is countered by the slowness of negotiation, meetings and endless revisions that are at the heart of Wiki. Such slowing down means:

**becoming capable of learning again, becoming acquainted with things again, reweaving the bounds of interdependency. It means thinking and imagining, and in the process creating relationships with other[s].<sup>10</sup>**

It could also be said to be performative, wherein the agency of the different users (residents, archivists, artists) collides with the system; moreover, they define each other and their prosperity determines the progress. Obviously, such a process does not happen without friction or conflict. For one, Wikis are notorious for their rules and regulations as well as their attention to detail, creating a dense “history”, which to many archivists may seem utterly absurd. In this case, absurdity can be traced in the content of uploaded data as well as in the system that sustains it.

<sup>10</sup> Stengers, *Another Science is Possible*: 81.



The forms of archiving I have explored in this essay are diverse, perhaps even contradictory. Despite the fact that Anne Geene and *Allotment Archives* are both concerned with accessing and opening perspectives, their methods differ. *Allotment Archives* uses the potential of vernacular science, encouraged by the participation of those who enjoy the park. They collaborate directly with the residents to liberate knowledge creation and dissemination from the rule of experts.

For Geene, the human connection operates on a different level: while interested in human intervention, it's not the creator she's interested in but rather the resulting process and how her encyclopaedic rendition offers the chance to provide more insight between human/nature ecologies. For her, the efforts to re-sculpt, as happens in an ordinary allotment, provide a metaphor to also make a broader statement about the evolving processes of humans and nature. In the end her proposition may lead to a better understanding between the two.

Both interventions contrast with the hegemonic, plant-animal-nature science, as well as archival practice, which both strive towards generalisations, universal categorisations and standardisation. In their aim to control human and nonhuman landscapes, archival science, and for that matter most other sciences, certainly the bio-sciences, specialists, managers, directors and researchers make the decisions: what is included and what is excluded, what system is used and what is not, etc. While providing access to their decisions is one of the top priorities for any archive, its users are hardly ever consulted. If they are, it's mostly to confirm the standard, not to create a new system, or even to expand existing categories and develop other ways of working. Such interference is less appreciated. Indeed, as mentioned by Tsing, in most cases, "love does not flow between expert and knowledge-object".<sup>11</sup> In contrast, I have tried to emphasise how advocacy for nature can lead to subversive archival projects,

<sup>11</sup> Tsing, "Arts of Inclusion, or How to Love a Mushroom": 201.

while at times it may also lead to archival absurdity. It's a passion for gardening, even if only recently discovered, and socio-natural ecologies more generally, that makes these projects possible. At the same time, the examples show how the act of noticing encourages passionate immersion in and with the subjects under study. Using collaborative tools and opening the imagination may lead to layered ways of archiving, but rather than merely critiquing conventional methods they cultivate a critical reflexivity and a learning with others as well as acknowledging such accumulated knowledge.

Being close to “nature” is an important part of Finnish national and cultural identity and for many access to natural sites is considered a basic right for the benefit of health and wellbeing. Helsinki as a city is very much known and promoted as a “green” city full of natural areas, teeming with city parks, forests, rocky outcrops, islands and watery sites, including those of the biodiverse archipelago. Many of these areas are protected as natural and cultural heritage sites. It makes Helsinki an interesting place in which to explore nature-culture relations—the tension between human and more-than-human worlds, and their entanglement. The inaugural Helsinki Biennale, set to open in 2021, is one such example of a site where these relations, between nature-culture, will be thrown into sharp relief. The biennale will take place on a historical maritime seafort and site of natural conservation accessible only by boat. What kinds of nature-culture relations might the biennale accommodate? And with whom?

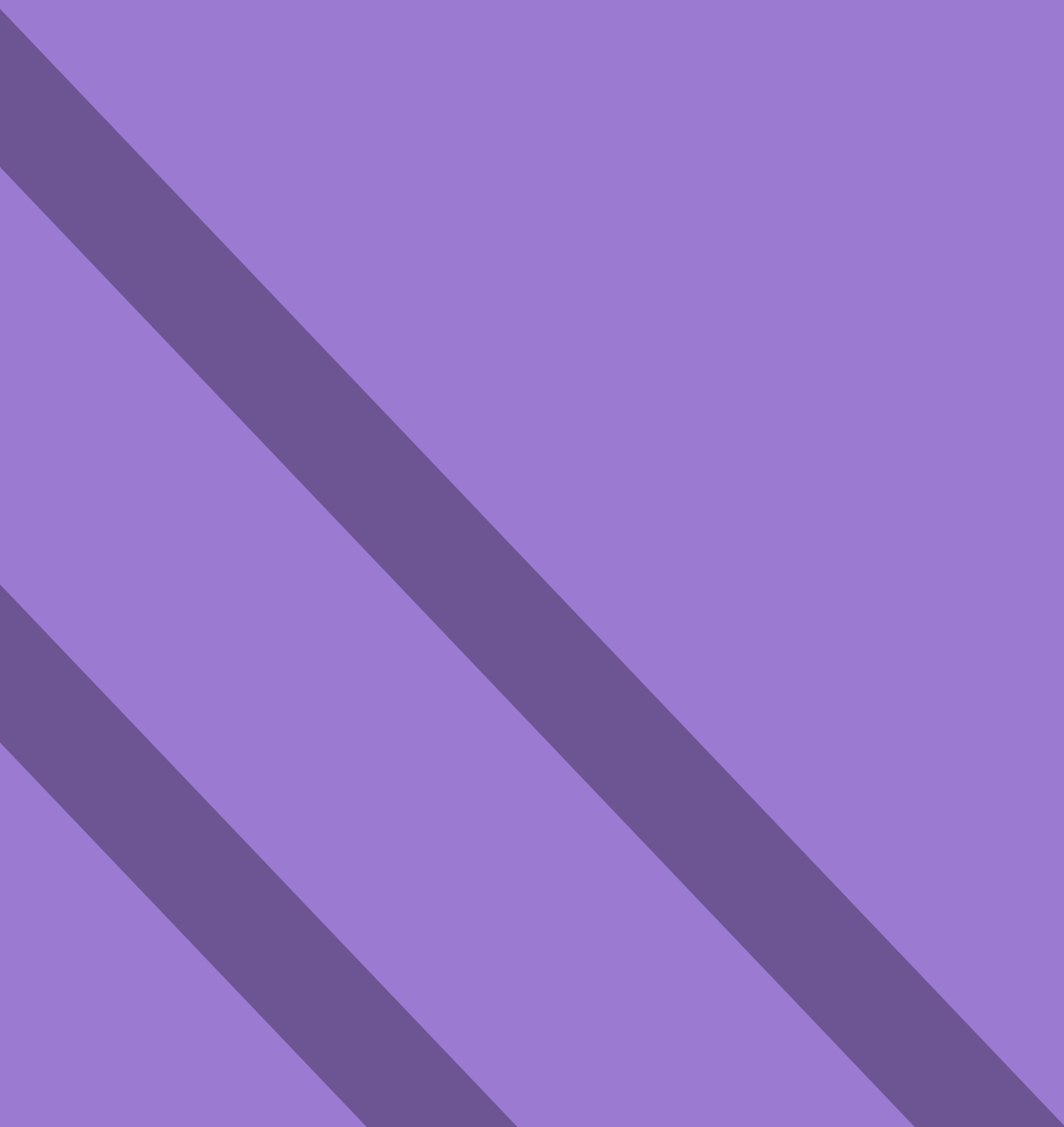
Not all cultures are afforded the same access to sites of nature-culture or can safely inhabit them, some are even purposely kept out. In the case of the Sámi people who have been kept from their very own sites of nature-culture, often in favour of the extraction of natural resources for profit.

Could access to nature-culture in Finland be read through issues of host and guest relations? It might be useful, particularly for those of us in cultural institutions, to ask: which cultures are encouraged to be in close connection with nature? Who is afforded access to natural and/or cultural areas? What kind of bodies and minds are produced and reproduced within these sites? And who or what is benefiting from contemporary art production and presentation that takes places in these sites? —Yvonne Billimore and Jussi Koitela, *Frame Contemporary Art Finland*



**Walking in the lake**

**Laura Soisalon-Soininen**







I have been hiking around the Helsinki area and the countryside within Uusimaa, the “new land”. I have observed the plants that grow along the paths and collected a few different species to learn from their flowers, seeds, leaves and roots, their heights, and patterns of distribution.

As a child, I used to come to the Ratakatu block with my mother to buy medicine for my ear infection. We lived 3–5 blocks from the pharmacy on the corner, behind the church (of Johannes) and a shop from where we bought the best round doughnuts with jam and pink sugar topping.

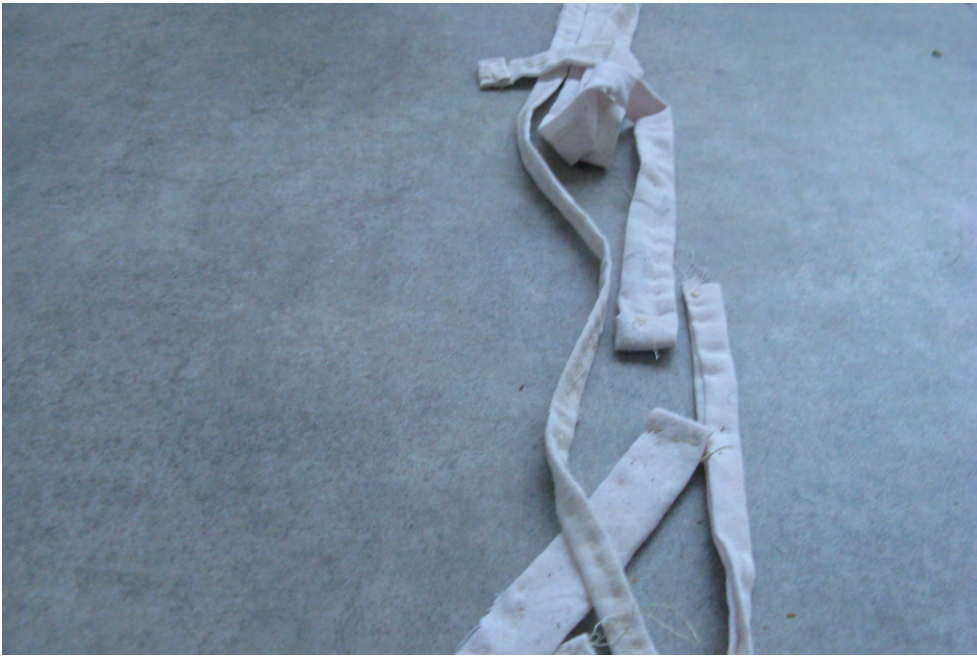
At the park next to the church my brother and I ate the doughnuts by a red see-saw.









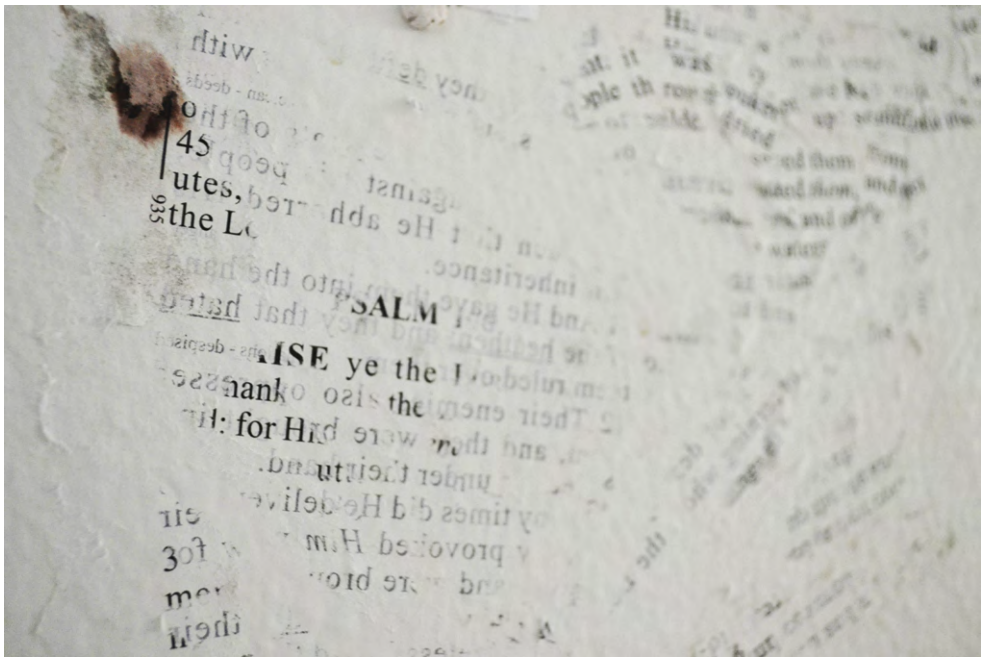




I walk upstairs to the office and lay down the first hay. I count the steps of the stairs. I circuit the block. The office floor seems to follow the level of the highest treetop in the opposing park. I will use the floor to map my access in and through this block. I will direct my movements toward a blind spot made visible, and investigate the entryway to the office while taking note of the hay's change in height and it's ability (or inability) to find, access, and respond to it's change in conditions.



76







Vektorien yhdenmuotoisuuslause (11-372)

Olkoot  $\vec{a}$  ja  $\vec{b}$  vektoreita  $r \in \mathbb{R}$ ,  $r \neq 0$

$$\vec{a} \parallel \vec{b} \Leftrightarrow \vec{a} = r\vec{b}$$

huom!

$$\vec{a} \uparrow \vec{b} \Leftrightarrow \vec{a} = r\vec{b}, r > 0$$

(MLK on sarkana vektorit)

Vektorien välinen kulma

$\vec{a} \uparrow \vec{b} \Rightarrow \vec{a} = r\vec{b}, r > 0$

$$|\vec{a} \uparrow \vec{b}| \Leftrightarrow \vec{a} = r\vec{b}, r < 0$$

(huom. nollavektori ei kuulu kumpaankaan suuntaan)

Diagram: Two vectors  $\vec{a}$  and  $\vec{b}$  are shown.  $\vec{a}$  is a solid arrow pointing right.  $\vec{b}$  is a dashed arrow pointing right, shorter than  $\vec{a}$ . A third vector  $\vec{c}$  is shown below  $\vec{b}$ , pointing up and to the right. A small vector  $\vec{r}$  is shown pointing left from the tip of  $\vec{b}$  towards the tip of  $\vec{a}$ .

$r = 1$   
 $r = 0,4$   
 sarkana  $r$  on demassa.  
 $r_c = 0$   
 $-1,1$

(huom. nollavektori ei kuulu kumpaankaan suuntaan)

aluksi



As humans reshape the landscape, we forget what was there before. Ecologists call this forgetting the “shifting baseline syndrome”. Our newly shaped and ruined landscapes become the new reality. Admiring one landscape and its biological entanglements often entails forgetting many others. Forgetting, in itself, remakes landscapes, as we privilege some assemblages over others. Yet ghosts remind us. Ghosts point to our forgetting, showing us how living landscapes are imbued with earlier tracks and traces. —Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing et al., *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, 2017.





As an organisation specialising in public forms of media and art, m-cult has addressed issues of access in practices ranging from open source culture to citizen media and collaborative art. Years of presenting art outside of institutional art contexts—in public spaces of the city and on the internet—have taught us that access and participation have to be actively produced by creating and maintaining a dialogical social context.

In our residency programme at Helsinki's Maunula neighbourhood<sup>1</sup> this dialogue takes shape in facilitating the collaborative process between the artists and local participants. It is a work of translation, not only between languages but between discourses and practices. Hospitality becomes a process involving common meals, workshops and discussions, as well as decision-making sessions and contracts to allow the attribution of collaborative authorship. The dynamic of the process shifts from the provision of access to art towards agency-building, a shared political imagination, and a commons of local resources and practices.

For the *Rehearsing Hospitalities 2020* programme, m-cult presents the collaborative project *Central Park Archives*.<sup>2</sup> Initiated with artists Susanna Änäs and Ali Akbar Mehta, the project documents the histories, changes and future visions of Helsinki's unique urban forest, the Central Park (Keskuspuisto). By connecting a multiplicity of lived experiences, micro-histories and struggles, the project aims to create a commons of shared archives and a set of sustainable archiving practices. Realised in close cooperation with local individuals and communities, the project is conceptually based on a federation of grassroots sub-archives and online culture resources, networked via open data infrastructures.

Besides playing with the analogy between the commons of land and information, *Central Park Archives* may open up perspectives to access and hospitality via the notion of *affordances*. As introduced by psychologist J.J. Gibson, affordances are about “a process of perceiving value-rich ecological objects”<sup>3</sup> where the environment presents various potentials of action for the perceiving subject. Traditionally used in contexts of visual perception and usability design, the concept of affordances also yields more affective and political interpretations.

Revisiting the park's histories we realise how the biopolitics of health have formed its uses, from the early idea of reproduction of

able worker bodies<sup>4</sup> to the social distancing of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. We witness the dance of conflicting affordances of the pixel units of city general plans vis-a-vis the citizens' protest mappings and the territories of the Siberian flying squirrel. We mourn the destruction of old spruce trees, so hospitable towards the *lps typographicus* parasite. Moving across the forest, we imagine an archive to be sustained within "networks of care",<sup>5</sup> becoming a site of agency and hospitality. —Minna Tarkka, m-cult

1 See <https://m-cult.org/context/maunula-collaborations>

2 See <https://m-cult.org/productions/central-park-archives>

3 James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979): 127.

4 Maunu Häyrynen, *Maisemapuistosta reformipuistoon. Helsingin kaupunkipuistot ja puistopolitiikka 1880-luvulta 1930-luvulle* (Helsinki: Helsinki-seura, 1994): 210.

5 Annet Dekker, *Collecting and Conserving Net Art: Moving beyond Conventional Methods*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2020): 91.

We seek not the knowledges ruled by phallogocentrism (nostalgia for the presence of the one true Word) and disembodied vision. We seek those ruled by partial sight and limited voice—not partiality for its own sake but, rather, for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible. Situated knowledges are about communities, not about isolated individuals. The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular. —Donna Haraway, *The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*, 1988.





**If hospitality, then the duty is to  
repair and to foster**

**Denise Ferreira da Silva**



**We have seen how the virus does not discriminate, but its impacts do—exposing deep weaknesses in the delivery of public services and structural inequalities that impede access to them. We must make sure they are properly addressed in the response.**

**We see the disproportionate effects on certain communities, the rise of hate speech, the targeting of vulnerable groups, and the risks of heavy-handed security responses undermining the health response.**

**Against the background of rising ethno-nationalism, populism, authoritarianism and a pushback against human rights in some countries, the crisis can provide a pretext to adopt repressive measures for purposes unrelated to the pandemic. —Antonio Guterres, *We are all in this Together*, 2020.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Antonio Guterres, “We are all in this Together: Human Rights and COVID-19 Response and Recovery,” *United Nations COVID-Response*, (April 23, 2020). Last accessed on July 30, 2020. <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/we-are-all-together-human-rights-and-covid-19-response-and>

**[A]bsolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. The law of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality by right, with law or justice as rights. —Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 2000.<sup>2</sup>**

When most of us finally paid attention to news reports about a new coronavirus infection traced to a food market in the Wuhan province of China in late 2019, it was probably too late to contain its spread. However, as many public health experts and pundits remind us almost every day, it was not—and is not—too late to control the spread and mitigate the effects of what came to be called SARS-CoV-2 virus. Eight months since a Wuhan hospital notified their local public health centre of an unknown pneumonia, this now global pandemic has infected more than 16.5 million and killed over 600,000 people across the planet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000): 25.

<sup>3</sup> "Covid-19 MAP", Corona Virus Resource Center, Johns Hopkins University. Last accessed on July 29, 2020. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

Knowledge is not anymore considered a discrete human affair that filters an objective world out there; it is embedded in the ongoing remaking of the world. In this world of imploded frontiers, there is no way to think sentimentally about purportedly pre-technoscientific pasts and no way to think epistemologically straight. But as blurred boundaries deepen entanglements and inter-dependencies, the ethico-political demand persists and maybe intensifies for elucidating how different configurations of knowledge practices are consequential, contributing to specific rearrangements. Even more than before, knowledge as relating—while thinking, researching, storytelling, wording, accounting—matters in the mattering of worlds. —María Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care. Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*, 2017.





Back in February, as it became certain that the new coronavirus had spread beyond China, public health officials in the United States and elsewhere rehearsed a mantra “we are all in this together”. Which would have a certain catch to it, had it not become obvious when the data regarding infection rates and number deaths in New York, sometime in late March, started showing that that whilst we are all this, we are not in this in the same ways. Black, Latinx, and Indigenous peoples in the United States have been the hardest hit by COVID-19: because of the prevalence of underlying health conditions (high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity) that renders their bodies less able to resist the infection; because (as it turns out) they are employed in the named “essential services” that could not be stopped; because they lacked the financial cushion (savings) that allow some to take a break from work; and/or because their housing conditions do not allow for social distancing and other sanitary measures necessary for containing the spread.<sup>4</sup> It is, we know, too early to tell. Those of us sheltering in places outside of government and big pharma decision-making rooms do not have enough information to gain a sense of how the post-COVID-19 global context will set in place.

However, one thing we can do, as of now, is not to be satisfied with redeployments of the human, the universal, and liberal theories of exclusion and inequality. For this time around, it is not a matter of opening doors—borders—to those escaping extraction and drug-trafficking related conflicts, the effects of global warming, or the daily ravage caused by global capital. This time around the call to hospitality is not about offering shelter but about making the planet a hospitable place for those for whom modern thinking has prescribed death. If hospitality is

<sup>4</sup> See Christine Ro, “Corona Virus: Why some racial groups are more vulnerable”. *BBC* (April 20, 2020). Last accessed on July 29, 2020. (<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200420-coronavirus-why-some-racial-groups-are-more-vulnerable>); and “Coronavirus is not the ‘greater equalizer’ – race matters: U of T expert”. *U of T News*. Last accessed on 29 July 2020 (<https://www.utoronto.ca/news/coronavirus-not-great-equalizer-race-matters-u-t-expert>).

the concept guiding the needed ethical move, and if it must be sustained by the notion of duty, as Jacques Derrida seemed to believe, if it alone can obtain the force of necessity, then this concept should not refer (as it has been designed by Kant to do) to a transcendental reign of ideas.<sup>5</sup> The global crises that will design global existence in the years to come—global warming and the COVID-19 pandemic—requires a distinct basis, one that both acknowledges and demands the repair of the effects of old and current deployments of raciality and colonial strategies of governance, both of which are characterized by the authorisation of total violence.<sup>6</sup>

What concerns me is how even when the news feeds started displaying the racial map of this global pandemic many of us were not caught by surprise. Still, as it has been in the cases of the previous global crises of this century, the global financial crisis and the refugee crisis, most contemporary critical commentary does not consider these global events as such. Let me put it differently. Expectedly, most commentaries on the COVID-19 pandemic indicate the immediate response was to locate the crisis within a context that fits their theoretical frameworks.<sup>7</sup> However, as the infection numbers started to show, around early April 2020, like any event affecting the human population on this planet, the COVID-19 pandemic is racially mapped. Not much has been said beyond the

<sup>5</sup> The point I am making here is that no corrective, substantive social justice measure has been sustained without necessity, without a juridical or scientific statement that it ought to be done in order to protect a higher good or because it was mandated by a higher authority, be that the divine author and ruler or the state (here the referent is right or law).

<sup>6</sup> The argument is that raciality is a post-Enlightenment political-symbolic arsenal, the function of which has been to justify otherwise unacceptable deployments of total violence. For an elaboration of this argument see Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> See Giorgio Agamben et al., "Coronavirus and philosophers". *European Journal of Psychoanalysis* (<https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/coronavirus-and-philosophers/>); and Emmanuel Prado, "Three Brilliant Minds give us what to think during the Pandemic crisis". *Medium* (March 27 2020) (<https://medium.com/illumination/three-brilliant-minds-give-us-what-to-think-during-pandemic-crisis-6225ac86b5a9>); and Lorraine Daston et al., "Posts from the Pandemic". *Critical Inquiry*, University of Chicago Journals ([https://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/posts\\_from\\_the\\_pandemic/](https://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/posts_from_the_pandemic/)).

acknowledgement of the correlation, as I mentioned above, between skin colour, underlying conditions, housing conditions, income and jobs which renders COVID-19 deadlier to Black and Latinx populations in the United States, BAME population in the UK, and the majority of Brazil's population—in particular economically dispossessed Black and Indigenous Brazilians in general.

What else can be said? The issue is not what is said but the premises. The overall onto-epistemological and ethical grounds of the statement which effectively activate racial difference—even if it is not named—to explain away that which is constitutive (and not incidental) to what is being addressed. This is the case of the UN statement quoted above. It hits all the right notes; however, it retains (implicitly) the assumption that the figure of the human provides ethical support against recrudescing fascism and ordinary racial subjugation.

My point is, for almost one hundred years now, sociologists have demonstrated the correspondence between socio-economic circumstances and colonial and racial subjugation. However, this correspondence is explained as being due to individual and institutional practices of discrimination and exclusion, which violate the ruling ethical principles (liberty and equality) and the foremost ethical figure of post-Enlightenment thought, namely, humanity. What has been needed for many decades now are descriptors of the global political architecture that takes seriously humanity's constitutive violence. For about 500 years, those living elsewhere on the planet have not been strangers to Europe, thanks to commercial capital and its need for commodities, lands, and labour. For almost 200 years, humanity and raciality have cohabited in the post-Enlightenment ethical text. To which the latter has added accounts of racial subjugation that explain its mechanisms as an effect of the non-European physical and mental attributes. When doing so, they pre-empted any consideration of how this set of impossible relationships inaugurated by conquest precisely because the latter is predicated by

the necessary disappearance of the conquered and the enslaved. That raciality as an ethical device and the mechanisms of coloniality now operate in support of global capital there is no doubt.

In the face of the ravages caused by global warming and the carnage effected by the new coronavirus global pandemic, the notion of hospitality will have to contemplate a global right to shelter in place. No longer a matter of simply welcoming the foreigner, the duty (if duty is to be maintained) now is one of repairing the effects of coloniality and raciality, as well as of the environmental and human destruction produced by global capital's extractivist, exploitative, and expropriative mechanisms. It is a matter of dismantling the political (economic, ethical, symbolic, and juridical) architecture that facilitate and perpetuate them. And to recompose global conditions of existence so as, instead of predicating and perpetrating total violence, the political architecture of the global present work towards making the planet a hospitable space. One designed to restore and foster human and more-than-human existence wherever it happens to be.

**If hospitality, then the duty  
is to repair and to foster**

I find an escape from the dualisms and a way to argue how important it is that I—May-Britt—tell my history through my yoik method. It does matter whose bodies provide the stories and in what languages they are told. Colonialism matters, indigeneity matters, bodies matter, landscapes and waterscapes matter. My Sámi body, with all its aspects, matters. —May-Britt Öhman, *Techno Visions of a Sámi Cyborg: Reclaiming Sámi Body-, Land-, and Waterscapes After a Century of Colonial Exploitations in Sábmme*, 2016.





**Distance education as access to one's  
own language and roots:  
education in Sámi throughout Finland**  
Hanna Helander

**Gáiddusoahpahus láide iežas gillii  
ja ruohttasiidda: oahpahus sámegielas  
miehtá Suoma**  
Sámi translation Arla Magga

I understand that many of us are living our lives re-existing, although we (the many of us) do it following different paths; paths each of us found by reflecting both on living our lives enduring the system of classification (foundational of the colonial matrix of power) and from/on our disciplines. Even when each of us does, thinks, and acts beyond the academy, the common ground of our doing is disciplinary, epistemic, and aesthetic (sensing, emotioning) disobedience. That is, decolonial.

—Walter D. Mignolo, *Decolonial Body-Geo-Politics at Large*, 2016.





The pilot project *Distance Education in Sámi Languages* arose from parent's requests: year after year the Education Office of the Finnish Sámi Parliament received questions from desperate parents living outside Sápmi (the Sámi native region) who were seeking Sámi language education for their children. In 2018, the municipality of Utsjoki, together with the Sámi Parliament, acquired funding for the pilot project to help improve access to education in Sámi languages outside of the Sámi native region. Throughout the country, the project organises distance education in Sámi languages for two hours per week for basic education and upper-secondary students that complements basic and upper-secondary education. The pilot project began on 1.8.2018 and will run until 31.12.2021, and is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Using distance learning and online connections, the project aims to make education in Sámi accessible for as many children and youths with Sámi backgrounds as possible. Furthermore, through the results and experiences of the pilot project, it aims to develop and create better conditions for the establishment of distance education in the Sámi languages on a national level. So far, we have mapped the current situation and the need for education in Sámi languages outside of the Sámi native region, developed pedagogical and technical solutions for distance education in Sámi languages, and created a suitable curriculum for distance education in Sámi languages.

### **Why distance education?**

The Sámi live in the territory of four states (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia) and speak nine different Sámi languages. There are three different Sámi languages spoken in Finland: Inari Sámi, Skolt Sámi, and Northern Sámi. Each of them has its own form of written language and orthography. The Sámi languages have an official status in Finland in the

Sámi native region which is comprised of Enontekiö, Inari and Utsjoki, as well as the northern part of Sodankylä. There are about 11,000 Sámi living in Finland, but under the pressure of the dominant languages (Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian), many Sámi have lost their mother tongue. Nowadays up to 70 percent of the Sámi children and youths live outside the Sámi native region. This brings new challenges for the provision of education in the Sámi languages. Finland's Basic Education Act (628/1998) ensures teaching in Sámi languages for pupils living in the Sámi native region, but elsewhere education providers can decide whether they want to offer teaching in Sámi languages.

Education providers, usually municipalities, purchase the *Distance Education in Sámi Languages* programme from the municipality of Utsjoki. The Sámi Parliament supplies the learning materials. Education providers can apply for state funding to partially cover the costs. In addition, the schools that receive distance education organise the equipment needed and adult supervision for the lesson themselves. In the school year 2019–2020 altogether 63 pupils in 21 different municipalities and 36 schools studied in the project. Northern Sámi studies had 22, Inari Sámi 23 and Skolt Sámi 17 pupils. The effect of the pilot project has been huge for the smaller Sámi languages, Inari and Skolt Sámi, as previously their teaching was only organised occasionally outside the native region as a club activity. The number of students studying Sámi languages outside the native region has doubled since the project started. It is expected that the student numbers will increase further as distance education becomes more established, and knowledge of it spreads.

Sámi education in Finland faces several challenges. There is a clear need to develop new methods that are based on distance and online connections. In this way, we can better provide high-quality education for the whole Sámi population of Finland, who are increasingly moving to all corners of the country. For most of the Sámi children living outside the Sámi native region, distance education is the only possibility to learn

## **Distance education as access to one's own language and roots: education in Sámi throughout Finland**

Sámi since there is not enough pupils nearby to form a study group or any teachers available. Sámi people live in 230 municipalities around Finland and the resources for education in Sámi are scattered all over the country. In order to better ensure the Sámi population's rights to education in their native language, and to guarantee the vitality of the Sámi-speaking community, it is especially important to better coordinate these resources to those areas where they are needed.

### **Experiences of the distance education**

Sámi education outside the native region is a new thing in Finland. It has only been available since the end of the 1980s mainly in the biggest cities where Sámi live, as in Helsinki, Oulu and Rovaniemi. Outside the native region, Sámi education is a complementary education, which means that students do not get a degree or a diploma. It also means that the education providers do not have an obligation to offer Sámi language education. In addition, the education providers often assume that education in Sámi language is part of a mother tongue teaching. Sámi is rarely a mother tongue outside the native region, rather a second language or a family language (a mother tongue of parents or grandparents). Therefore, most of the pilot project's pupils start learning Sámi from the basics. The Basic Education Act, which recognises only a mother tongue or a foreign language, reinforces the idea that Sámi should be the students' mother tongue to receive any teaching. The state funding for the complementary Sámi education, however, does not require this to be the case. Due to this misunderstanding some Sámi children were left out of the education. The pilot project has informed the education providers of the situation regarding Sámi languages and the purpose of complementary Sámi language teaching in the basic and the upper-secondary education. Some of the education providers have refused to purchase the distance

education because they think the costs are too high. In spring we received funding for the project for the following year. In the past, the funding hasn't covered teachers' salaries but they are covered by tuition fees. This time we managed to negotiate with the Ministry of Education funding for the teachers' salary too. Next year we can offer the distance teaching for free. This has resulted in an increased number of students. Schools will still need to organise the equipment and the supervision for the lesson.

Distance education is a new thing also for the schools and the pupils, at least it was before this spring. It has shown there is a lack of technical devices available and that the pupils and their assistants lack IT-skills. Some of the pupils find it difficult to concentrate for 45–90 minutes on the screen, some are too shy to speak to the microphone, or to switch their web camera on. It requires good motivation from the pupils to study in distance education. Distance education also requires special pedagogical skills from the teachers. The lesson must be planned so that the activities vary, and the pupils have the chance to get up and move about. The pupils' study motivation grows if they have the possibility to influence the activities in the lessons. Especially in distance education it is important that the students get to know each other and form a group.

In discussions with the teachers they have pointed out that the teaching should be based more on children's interests. Language can be a gateway to a culture, but above all, children want to learn a language they can use. For example, "shoe hay" (hay used as insulation in a traditional Sámi fur shoe) might interest children occasionally, but they want to learn vocabulary that concern their everyday lives such as "slide" or "skateboard". Learning a language, however, increases interest in culture and traditional knowledge. Therefore, Sámi education is not just learning a language, it is also getting to know one's own roots. One of the reasons to learn Sámi is to be able to talk with grandparents or cousins in their native language. This has come up in discussion both with the parents and the children.

## **Distance education as access to one's own language and roots: education in Sámi throughout Finland**

Even though in the beginning of the pilot project everybody was unexperienced in distance education, the feedback collected after the first and the second year of the project has been positive. Both the parents and the children were satisfied with the distance education. According to the pupils, the best thing in the lessons was learning Sámi (80 percent named). The second-best thing was the teachers (53 percent named) and the third-best thing was the using computers (50 percent named). Occasional technical problems were named as drawback. The parents wished for more communication between the parents and the teachers. The parents and teachers also wished for 45 minute lessons. So, in the school year 2019–2020 we tried 45 minute lessons. During the pilot project, we have learned that experimenting, good communication, and openness with cooperation with the partners and the stakeholders is important. A good arena for hearing the parents is distance “parents’ evenings”.

The training that teachers commonly receive does not prepare them for the challenges of distance education. The project has networked with some other distance education providers, organised training for our teachers, and the teachers have learned by doing. The teachers have requested time and space for exchanging experiences and during next semester we will be trying monthly learning cafés, in distance of course.

### **Developments**

While it is important that the children and youth get education in the Sámi languages, they also need possibilities to use the language outside the lessons too. There are rarely possibilities for that outside the Sámi native region. It is typical that a language is learned by exposure to it, hearing and seeing it written. There are not that many possibilities to expose yourself to Sámi languages. That is why we have two plans to increase our pupils study motivation. Next school year we are organising

group meetings for the pupils studying in the project. In addition, we are planning a mobile phone game that provides a language arena for leisure. Plans are in the starting pits, but I wish we could encourage our students to keep in touch with each other in Sámi.

What is essential in distance education? We have noticed that qualified and committed teachers, reliable technology, and technical support especially for the teachers leads to success. The schools are motivated to participate in distance education when the teaching provided is of high-quality. The costs of the distance education should be as low as possible to make it widely accessible and encourage participation. In the end, it comes down to the question of how to access and practise one's own culture, after all the Finnish constitution gives Sámi people across the whole country this right.

Predominantly access is understood as “assimilative inclusion”, forcing those entering the institution to change their actions or bodies in order to “fit” in. Access becomes a process of letting “others” enter the institution and use its resources but only within the terms of the institution itself. Inclusion, as such, easily becomes just a policy or a protocol that serves the institution—through changing political contexts—but does not actually benefit those who have been excluded. Artist and writer Raju Rage gives us a blistering account of his experience of “inclusion” in the arts:

Words like “inclusion” have been rehearsed and performed, chewed and spat out. Just like many of us entering into and trying to survive (arts) institutions. Sometimes the words are ingested, but most of the time a lack of empathy and lived experience obstructs digestion. This hinders understanding and caring enough to do something. Our experiences get reduced to policy, and jargon words that no one really feels anymore.<sup>1</sup>

*How might we treat inclusion (and exclusion) with more care? To look into this more closely Rage points us towards writer, educator and community organiser Mia Mingus, who writes about access intimacy:*

Access intimacy is that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else “gets” your access needs. The kind of eerie comfort that your disabled self feels with someone on a purely access level. Sometimes it can happen with complete strangers, disabled or not, or sometimes it can be built over years. It could also be the way your body relaxes and opens up with someone when all your access needs are being met. It is not dependent on someone having a political understanding of disability, ableism or access.<sup>2</sup>

Rage, in response to Mingus and the idea of access intimacy, helps us to think further: what does it mean to go beyond being accepted, to be loved and cared for?<sup>3</sup>

**What is needed is critical self-reflection on where the limits of current Western art institutions lie. We urgently need institutional practices that place acts of empathy and love as core values instead of creating policies and protocols for inclusion and representations for proving it. Is it possible for arts institutions to care and love beyond policies and protocols?** —Jussi Koitela, Frame Contemporary Art Finland

**1** Raju Rage, “Access Intimacy and Institutional Ableism: Raju Rage on the problem with ‘inclusion’”, *Disability Art Online* (2020). <https://disabilityarts.online/magazine/opinion/access-intimacy-and-institutional-ableism-raju-rage-on-the-problem-with-inclusion/>

**2** Mia Mingus, “Access Intimacy: The Missing Link”. *Leaving Evidence* (2011). <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/05/05/access-intimacy-the-missing-link/>

**3** Rage, “Access Intimacy and Institutional Ableism”.



**Gáiddusoahpahus láide iežas gillii ja  
ruohttasiidda: oahpahus sámegielas  
miehtá Suoma**

**Sámi translation Arla Magga**

*Sámegielaide gáiddusoahpahusa* pilohttaprošeakta badjánii vanhemiid hálus: juohke jagi Sámedikki skuvlen- ja oahppamateriáladoaimmahakkii bohte jearaldagat fuolastuvvan vanhemiin, geat ássat sámiid ruovttu-guovllu olggobealde ja geat háliidedje oahpahusa mánáidasaset. Jagi 2018 Ohcejoga gieldda, ovttasbarggus Sámedikkiin, oaččui ruhtadeami pilohttaprošektii. Dan ulbmilin lea buoridit vejolašvuoda sámegielaide oahpahussii sámiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde. Prošeakta fállá sámegielaide gáiddusoahpahusa miehtá riikka guokte vahkkodiimmu vuodđooahpahusa ohppiide ja logahaga studeanttaide vuodđooahpahusa ja logahatskuvle-jumi dievasmahtti oahpahussan. Pilohttaprošeakta álggii 1.8.2018 ja dat joatkašuvvá 31.12.2021. Prošeavtta ruhtada oahpahus- ja kulturministeriija.

Prošeavtta mihttomearrin lea láchčit sámegiela oahpahusa gáiddusoahpahussan nu mánnga sámehoahppái go vejolaš. Dán lassin prošeavtta bohtosiid ja vásáhusaid vuodul hukset eavttuid sámegielaide gáiddusoahpahusa stáđasmahttimii olles riikkas. Dán rádjái mii leat čielggadan oahpahusa ja oahpahusdárbbuid dálá dili sámiid ruovttu-guovllu olggobealde, ovddidan pedagogalaš ja tehnikkalaš čovdosiid gáiddusoahpahussii sámegielaide oahpahusas ja ráhkadan sámegielaide gáiddusoahpahussii oahppoplána.

### **Manin gáiddusoahpahus?**

Sápmelaččat ássat njeallje riikkas (Norga, Ruoŋa, Suopma ja Ruošša) ja hupmet ovcci iešguđet sámegiela. Suomas hupmet golbma sámegiela: anárašgiela, nuortalašgiela ja davvisámegiela. Juohke gielas lea iežas čál-lingiella ja ortografii. Sámegielain lea virggálaš stáhtus Suomas sámiid ruovttuguovllus, masa gullet Eanodaga, Anára ja Ohcejoga gielddat ja vel Soađegili gieldda davvioassi. Suomas leat sullii 11 000 sápmelačča, muhto váldogielaide (suomagiela, ruoŋagiela ja dárogiela) deattu vuolde mánegasat sámiin leat manahan iežaset eatnigiela. Dál badjelaš 70 proseantta sami

**Gáiddusoahpahus láide iežas gillii ja  
ruohttasiidda: oahpahus sámegielas  
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mánáin ja nuorain ássat sámiiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde. Dát buktá hástalusa sámegielaide oahpahusa ordnemii. Suoma vuodđooahpahusláhka (628/1998) addá sámegiela oahpahussii vejolašvuoda sámiiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde, muhto muđui oahpahusa fállit sáhttet ieža mearridit, háliiditgo dat fállat sámegiela oahpahusa.

Oahpahusa fállit, dábálaččat gielddat, ostet sámegielaide gáiddusoahpahusa Ohcejoga gielddas. Sámediggi fállá oahppomateriálaid. Oahpahusa fállit sáhttet ohcat stáhtaveahki, mii gokčá oasi goluin, mat šaddet oahpahusa ordnemis. Dán lassin skuvllat, mat oassálastet gáiddusoahpahussii, ordnejit rusttegiid ja rávesolbmio, gii gohcá gáiddusoahppodiimmuid oahppi luhtte. Gáiddusoahpahusa mearkkašupmi lea leamašan stuorámuš hubmiidlogu dáfuš unnit sámegielaide, anáraš- ja nuortalašgillii. Daid oahpahus lea ordnejuvvon dušše deivvolaččat sámiiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde ja riekkesdoaimman. Sámegiela ohppiidlohku sámiiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde lea lassánan guovttegeardásažžan proševtta álggaheami maŋnel. Vuordimis lea, ahte ohppiidlohku ain lassána, go sámegielaide gáiddusoahpahus ovdána ja diehtu dan vejolašvuodas leavvá.

Sámeoahpahussii Suomas laktásit iešguđegelágan hástalusat. Lea čielga dárbu ovddidit odđa vugiid, mat vuodđuduvvet gáiddusoktavuođaide. Dáinna ládje lea vejolaš fállat alla dási oahpahusa buot sápmelaččaide Suomas, geat leat ásaiduvvan Suomas ain viidát. Eanaš sámemánáide, geat ássat sámiiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde, gáiddusoahpahus lea áidna vejolašvuolta oahppat sámegiela, daningo iešguđet báikkiin eai leat doarvái sámehoahppit eaige oahpaheaddjit oahpahusjoavkku álggaheapmái. Sápmelaččat ássat 230 iešguđet gielddas Suomas ja sámegiela ja sámegiela oahpahusa resurssat leat biedgguid miehtá riikka. Daid koordineren ja čujuheapmi guovlluide, main oahpahus dárbbášuvvo, lea erenomáš dehálaš. Dáinna ládje sihkkarastojuvvo vuoigatvuolta sámegiela oahppamii ja vejolašvuolta oažžut sámegiela bargiid ja doaimmiid sámeservošii maiddá boahhteáigge.

## Vásáhusat gáiddusoahpahusas

Sámeoahpahus sámiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde lea ođđa ášši Suomas. Dat lea leamašan vejolaš easkka 1980-logu loahpas stuorámus gávpogiin, gos sámit ássat, dego Helsset, Oulu ja Roavvenjárga. Sámiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde sámegiela oahpahus lea dievasmahtti oahpahus, mii mearkkaša dan ahte oahppit eai oaččo das dutkosa eaige merkejumi iežaset skuvladuodaštussii. Dat mearkkaša maiddái dan, ahte oahpahusa fálliin ii leat geatnegasvuohta ordnet sámegiela oahpahusa. Dán lassin oahpahusa fálliit dávjá navdet, ahte sámegiela oahpahus lea eatnigiela oahpahus. Sámegiella lea hárve oahppi eatnigiella sámiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde. Dán sadjái sámegiella lea sidjiide eambo nubbi giella dahje bearraša giella (vánhemiid dahje áhkuid ja ádjáid eatnigiella). Vuoddooahpahusláhka, mii dovda dušše eatnigiela ja vieris giela, nanne dan jurddašemi ahte sámegiella galggalii leat oahppi eatnigiella, vai son oaččolii das oahpahusa. Stáhtaveahki oažžun dievasmahtti sámegiela oahpahusa ordnemii ii goittotge gáibit eatnigielmáhtu. Dán boasttoipmárdusa dihte soames sámi oahppi lea báhcán oahpahusa haga. Pilohttaprošeakta lea rávven oahpahusa fálliid dán dilis, mii guoská sámegiela ja vuoddooahpahusa ja logahatskuvlejumi dievasmahtti sámegiela oahpahusa. Moattis oahpahusa fálliin leat liikká biehttalan oassálastimis sámegiela gáiddusoahpahussii menddo alla goluid dihte. Giddat mii oaččuimet prošeaktii joatkkaruhtadeami čuovvovaš jahkái. Dán rádjai ruhtadeapmi ii leat gokčan oahpaheddjiid bálkágoluid, muhto dat lea baicce gokčojuvvon oahpahusa ordnemis berrojuvvon mávssuin. Dán háve mii lihkostuvaimet ráddádallat oahpahus- ja kulturministerijain, nu ahte basttáleimmet gokčat ruhtademiin maiddái oahpaheddjiid bálkágoluid. Boahte jagi mii fállat gáiddusoahpahusa nuvttá. Skuvllat galget dás fuolatkeahttá ordnet rusttegiid ja gohcci oahppodiimmuide.

Gáiddusoahpahus lea ođđa ášši maiddái skuvllaide ja ohppiide, goittot dán giđa rádjai. Leat fuomášán, ahte tehnikkalaš rusttegat eai

leat leamašan álo doarvái ja maiddáí ohppiid ja sin gohcciid teknihkalaš máhttu lea leamašan váilevaš. Muhtin ohppiide lea hástaleaddji vuojulduvvat 45–90 minuhta dihtora ovddas, muhtimat leat menddo ujut hupmat mikrofovdnii dahje coahkkalit iežaset web-kámera nala. Oahppit dárbbášit buorit motivašuvnna vai sii sáhttet oassálastit gáiddusoahpahussii. Gáiddusoahpahus gáibida maiddáí oahpaheddjiin erenomáš pedagogalaš dáidduid. Oahppodiimmuid galgá plánet, nu ahte doppe leat iešguðegelágan doaimmat. Dalle ohppiin lea vejolašvuohta maiddáí čuožžilit ja lihkadit. Ohppiid motivašuvdna lassána, jos sis lea vejolašvuohta váikkuhit oahppodiimmuid sisdoaluide. Erenomážit gáiddusoahpahusas lea dehálaš, ahte oahppit oahpásnuvvet guhtet guoibmáseaset ja sis šaddá oktilaš joavku.

Oahpaheaddjit leat mitalan, ahte oahpahus berrelli vuodduvvat eambo mánáid beroštumiide. Giella sáhtá dihkádit bálgá kultuvrii, ja mii vel deháleamos, mánát háliidit oahppat giela, man sii sáhttet geavahit. Ovdamearkka dihte “gámasuoinnit”, soitet boktalit mánáid beroštumi duollet dálle, muhto sii háliidit oahppat sátneráju, mii guoskkaha sin juohkebeaivválaš eallima, ovdamearkka dihte “čelasan” dahje “skate-fiellu”. Giela oahpahallan lasiha beroštumi kultuvrii ja árbevirolaš dihtui. Nuba sámeoahpahus ii mearkkaš dušše giela oahppama, muhto dat láide maiddáí iežas ruohttasiid dovdamii. Okta sivva oahppat sámegiela lea gulahallat iežas ádjáiguin ja áhkuiguin dahje vilbeliiguin ja oambeliiguin sin árbegillii. Dát bealli lea badjánan ságastallamiin sihke vanhemiiguin ja mánáiguin.

Vaikke pilohttaprošeavtta álggus buohkaide gáiddusoahpahus lei ođđa ášši, de máhcahat vuosttaš ja nuppi jagi manjel lea leamašan positiiva. Sihke vanhemat ja mánát leat leamašan duđavaččat gáiddusoahpahussii. Ohppiid mielas buoremus ášši oahppodiimmuin lea leamašan oahppat sámegiela (80 proseantta vástideddjiin). Nubbin buoremus ášši ledje oahpaheaddjit (53 proseantta vástideddjiin) ja goalmádin buoremus ášši lei dihtora geavaheapmi (50 proseantta vástideddjiin). Heajos beallin

namuhuvvojedje teknihkalaš váttisvuodát, mat dáhpáhuvvet duollet dálle. Vánhemat sávve maiddá eanet gulahallama oahpaheddjiiguin. Vánhemat ja oahpaheaddjit sávve maiddá 45 minuhta oahppodiimmuid. Dán dihte lohkanjagi 2019–2020 mii iskkaimet 45 minuhta oahppodiimmuid. Piloht-taprošeavtta áigge mii leat oahppan, ahte iskkadeapmi, buorre gulahallan ja rabasvuohta vánhemiiguin ja eará čanusjoavkkuiguin lea dehálaš. Buorre árena vánhemiiguin gulahallamii leat “gáiddusvánheneahkedat”.

### **Ovddidanbargu**

Seammás go lea dehálaš, ahte mánát ja nuorat ožžot oahpu sámegielas, de sii dárbbasit vejolašvuodaid geavahit giela maiddá oahppodiimmuid olggobealde. Sámiid ruovttuguovllu olggobealde leat hárve vejolašvuodát geavahit sámegiela. Dábálaččat giela oahppá go dan gullá, ja oaidná go dat lea čállojuvvon hámis. Dán dihte mis leat guokte plána, mainna movttiidahttit ohppiid giela oahppamii. Boahte lohkanjagi mii lágidity deaivvadeamiid ohppiide, geat oassálastet prošeaktii. Dán lassin mii leat pláneme digitála spealu, mii fállá astoáigge giellaarena. Mii leat váldán plánain easkka rievssatlávkkiiid, muhto mii sávvat ahte mii sáhttit arvvosmahttit min ohppiid gulahallat guhtet guimmiideasetguin sámegillii.

Mii lea deháleamos gáiddusoahpahusas? Mii leat fuomášan ahte gelbbolaš ja čatnašuvvan oahpaheaddjit, luottehahtti teknologijja ja teknihkalaš doarjja erenomášit oahpaheddjiide láidejit buriide bohtosiidda. Skuvllain lea hálgu oassálastit gáiddusoahpahussii, go oahpahusas lea alla kvaliteahtta. Gáiddusoahpahusa golut galggale leat nu unnit go vejolaš, vai dat livččii buohkaid olámuttus ja arvvosmahtálii oassálastit. Loahpa loahpas dás lea gažaldat das, mo fállat vejolašvuoda ja beassama iežas kultuvrii, go Suoma vuodđoláhka addá sápmelaččaide dán vuoigatvuoda olles riikkas.

**Gáiddusoahpahus láide iežas gillii ja ruohttasiidda: oahpahus sámegielas miehtá Suoma**

The word hospitality has been much scrutinised in the last year—especially as it becomes the “buzzword” for most art and cultural practitioners. Hospitality as both a term and a performative gesture has evoked on one hand the idea of *hospe*—the host and the guest, of hospitality as an extension of caregiving, curating, of the selective action of editing, bread and food making, of feeding and freedom from economic relationship constraints, of institutional care, community care, self-care, and burnout from self-care. While on the other hand, hospitality as *hostis*, the idea of the stranger, the other, the one who seeks hospitality, the migrant and the paperless as the epitome of those strange aliens and unsolicited guests who need countries and bureaucracies to be hospitable, and therefore on the power relation between the host and the guest. In a post-Covid world (i.e. *post* its introduction, not its exodus), the word hospitality has taken on new meanings of precarity, but we must remember that its old complications have only intensified and become more acute.

For us at Museum of Impossible Forms, issues of hospitality and fantasy are inextricably linked—the promise of equality has always been weighted against the counter mechanisms of right-wing populist politics, neoliberal capitalism, fanatic strains of ethno-nationalism, and its older more virulent strains of memetic concepts, namely patriarchy, misogyny, cissexism, and its pseudo-scientific offspring, race, class, and caste. On the basis of a distinction between reason and unreason (passion, fantasy), late modern criticism has been able to articulate a certain idea of the political, the community, the subject<sup>1</sup>—a *biopolitical agency*,<sup>2</sup> one that inherently above all else is *able to*.

Museum of Impossible Forms frames the questions posed by *Rehearsing Hospitalities 2020* through the lens of ableism and the often normative invisibilised forms of segregation that ableism facilitates, we ask:

How to care for the pain of others? How to inhabit this world, a world that professes an impossibility of sharing it with others? Where in philosopher Achille Mbembe’s words, “Never have hospitality and hostility been so directly opposed.”<sup>3</sup> —Ali Akbar Mehta and Marianne Savallampi, Museum of Impossible Forms

**1** Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 2019): 67.

**2** Michel Foucault coined the portmanteau of the words Bio (life) and politics (*The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures At The Collège De France, 1978–79*), as a term to rationalise the will to reshape governments in providing “best governance”, to “manage life” in a liberal society, and to ensure a quality of life and living conditions to “the people”—its own people, its citizens. This ensuring of life and living conditions for “own’s own”, necessitates the core question of hospitality, where our gaze must be shifted to those it excludes: the non-citizen, the foreigner, the immigrant, the paperless and undocumented, the guest, the other. Foucault also speaks of biopower, which overlaps with his notion of biopolitics. According to Catherine Mills, Foucault’s concept of biopower combines the notion of disciplinary power he developed in his book *Discipline and Punish*, and the form of power he calls biopolitics in “The Will to Knowledge” (*History of Sexuality: Vol I*). For Foucault, biopower operates in two axes of power: the controlling and optimizing the individual human body and the control of population, the species body. This transformation subjected life and biological existence to political techniques and regulation. This regulation or management is at the core of both the duality of hospis/hostis, as well as to the conditions of ableism.

**3** Mbembe, *Necropolitics*: 65.



When we have to think strategically, we also have to accept our complicity: we forgo any illusions of purity; we give up the safety of exteriority. If we are not exterior to the problem under investigation, we too are the problem under investigation. Diversity work is messy, even dirty, work. Diversity work too generates sweaty concepts, concepts that come out of the effort to transform institutions that are often not as behind that transformation as they appear to be. —Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 2017.





**From exceptional accommodations  
to Disability Justice design:  
ways of thinking about accessibility  
as hospitality**

**Aimi Hamraie**



**From exceptional accommodations  
to Disability Justice design:  
ways of thinking about accessibility  
as hospitality**

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, technological transitions have taken place to facilitate remote participation and access. For example, the March 2020 closures of university campuses and museums shifted many courses and exhibitions online. Social relationships, too, found new digital spaces in video conferencing calls. These mainstreamed forms of accessibility were made available very quickly, and with them the opportunity to participate digitally without the need for physical or simultaneous presence became a momentary norm. For many, the option for remote access appears as a form of hospitality, an affordance of the current technological age and the constraints of pandemic times. But to frame the easy adoption of remote and digital participation as a given would be to forget that many disabled and chronically ill people have been adopting this practice for years in spaces of organising, social relations, and mutual aid. Precisely because remote access was previously unavailable within mainstream cultural spaces and institutions, cultural spaces of disability have often adopted video conferencing, integrated captioning, image descriptions, and opportunities for slowness as ways of facilitating access.

But outside of spaces designed by and for disabled people, such as spaces of employment or public accommodation, requests for remote access have often been denied.<sup>1</sup> As the Twitter hashtag #AccessibilityForAbleDs has sought to demonstrate, remote access only became a thinkable, actionable option when the majority of able-bodied people suddenly found themselves vulnerable to debilitation or death via the COVID-19 pandemic. Even further, the mainstreaming of remote access required a specific way of knowing vulnerability: not as an exceptional experience shared by a few misfitting bodies, but as an experience shared by the entire population.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See for example, Alice Wong, "'Normal' Was Actually Not Great for a Lot of People", *Esquire* magazine (June 15, 2020). <https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a32474779/alice-wong-interview-coronavirus-covid-19-lessons/>

<sup>2</sup> Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Misfits: A feminist materialist disability concept", *Hypatia* 26:3 (2011): 591–609.

Depiction of disability is almost always produced by physically privileged people and based on imagination of how it would be like to live with impairment or become disabled. When repeated regularly, the stereotypical fantasies also affect our definitions about ourselves. Prostheses based on multi-million dollar research are presented with sentimental stories that try to convince the general public to believe that technically advanced societies are some day able to get rid of disability.

—Jenni-Juulia Wallinheimo-Heimonen, *Your feet are not your feet*.



The collective and shared vulnerability to COVID-19 has not, however, mitigated ableism. Rather, it has produced new and insidious forms of it. In the United States, systems of medical triage that de-prioritise elderly people, intellectually disabled people, people with chronic illnesses, and people who are deemed medically overweight are reminiscent of the eugenicist projects of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Nor has the COVID-19 pandemic invited a more radical approach to inclusion and hospitality. Instead, the “accommodationist” approach to accessibility continues to prevail.<sup>4</sup>

Accommodationism defines accessibility as an exceptional affordance, rather than a practice with broad usefulness and appeal. With great irony, and despite the quick and widespread availability of remote access in the spring of 2020, many universities are turning back toward face-to-face teaching and working in the fall 2020 semester.<sup>5</sup> Those seeking remote access must apply on an individual basis for exceptional access to online teaching, often by disclosing medical information to campus accommodation offices, which determine who receives access as a “reasonable accommodation” without placing an “undue burden” on employers. Legal scholars characterise the accommodationist model as an access-as-exception approach to inclusion, which frames cost to employers as more significant than matters of equity or structural justice.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Lisa Tilley, “Saying the quiet part out loud: eugenics and the ‘aging population’ in conservative pandemic governance”, *Discover Society* (6 April 2020). (<https://discoversociety.org/2020/04/06/saying-the-quiet-part-out-loud-eugenics-and-the-aging-population-in-conservative-pandemic-governance/>); Marina Tsaplina and Joseph A. Stramondo, “#WeAreEssential: Why Disabled People Should Be Appointed to Hospital Triage Committees”, *Hastings Bioethics Forum* (May 15, 2020). (<https://www.thehastingscenter.org/weareessential-why-disabled-people-should-be-appointed-to-hospital-triage-committees/>)

<sup>4</sup> Aimi Hamraie, “Beyond Accommodation: Disability, feminist philosophy, and the design of everyday academic life”, *philoSOPHIA* 6:2 (2016): 259–271.

<sup>5</sup> Accessible Campus Action Alliance, “Beyond High Risk: Statement on Disability and Campus Re-Openings” (June 2020). [https://docs.google.com/document/d/11RlcYNb-4EV1ikpBeqO8RY-Dup-2kT\\_ioCf\\_8sxV1MU/edit#heading=h.c01n87ui4kcx](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11RlcYNb-4EV1ikpBeqO8RY-Dup-2kT_ioCf_8sxV1MU/edit#heading=h.c01n87ui4kcx)

<sup>6</sup> Ruth Colker, “ADA Title III: A Fragile Compromise”, *Berkeley Journal of Employment & Labor Law* 21:1 (2000): 378.

This model finds its articulation in laws, such as the Americans With Disabilities Act, as well as in dominant approaches to workplace accessibility that emerge from the field of vocational rehabilitation. Access, in other words, is meant to create more productive workers, not to equalise the number of disabled people in the workplace, because to do so would mean challenging the very conditions of labour and value.<sup>7</sup>

But accommodationism is also rooted in specific ways of knowing disability as a medical problem that access can solve, rather than a collective vulnerability with shared ethical and political stakes. Thus, in addition to its political commitments to productivity and individual rights, the accommodationist model is also an epistemology, a way of stating that what a disabled person needs can be reduced to medical evaluations of the ability to complete specific tasks. This epistemology, in turn, has its roots in a twentieth-century project of knowing and making access for disabled people. This project, which I call “access-knowledge,” points to the hybridity of knowing and making.<sup>8</sup> Designing accessible environments has required historically, geographically, and politically-specific ways of knowing (or claiming to know) disabled people’s needs and preferences in order to design in their name. As a regime of knowing-making, access-knowledge was thus a site of epistemic politics, a set of negotiations, elisions, and declarations about valued and recognisable forms of knowledge that came to constitute standards and benchmarks for accessibility.

Access-knowledge is a “non-innocent” project, meaning that it simultaneously holds the conditions of and resistance to normalisation.<sup>9</sup> With regards to the former, in the twentieth century, one thread of access-knowledge emerged from within the military-industrial fields of

<sup>7</sup> Aimi Hamraie, *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017): 70.

<sup>8</sup> Hamraie, *Building Access*: 6.

<sup>9</sup> “Non-innocence” is a term I borrow from Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Women* (New York, NY: Routledge 1991).

**From exceptional accommodations  
to Disability Justice design:  
ways of thinking about accessibility  
as hospitality**



Within societies that continue to multiply the measures of separation and discrimination, the relation of care toward the Other has been replaced by a relation without desire. Explaining and understanding, knowledge and recognition, are no longer essential. Never have hospitality and hostility been so directly opposed. —Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 2019.



rehabilitation engineering, industrial engineering, and anthropometry. Knowledge bases from these fields were used to measure and quantify the thresholds of accessibility for returning disabled bodies to functional, productive labour. University programs for disabled veterans, military and civilian research projects, and design standards organisations intersected in the making of accessibility standards and checklists.<sup>10</sup> Many of these knowing-making projects considered disability as a deficiency to be addressed through the restoration of functionality, with accessible built and social environments serving as tools for social integration. But even as access-knowledge projects sought to produce standards for wheelchair ramps and accessible kitchens, they often participated in and ignored the impacts of dominant systems structuring which bodies could be in spaces: systems of racial segregation that kept Black people out of both public spaces and the design professions, and systems of gender normativity that defined disabled women's needs according to the technologies of homemaking.<sup>11</sup> In many cases, accessibility was portrayed as a form of charity extended toward disabled people, rather than as a form of solidarity. In addition to normalising disabled bodies through appeals to productivity, military-industrial access-knowledge also adopted the capitalist politics of individuation. By making disability civil rights a matter of case-by-case accommodations, these approaches reduced accessibility to the function of individual bodies and de-emphasised collective or creative approaches. Thus, it became possible for employers and institutions to regulate the types of inclusion disabled people would receive, regardless of the equalising impact of such inclusion on the broader landscape of disabled people.

<sup>10</sup> Hamraie, *Building Access*: 76.

<sup>11</sup> Hamraie, *Building Access*: 78.

## **From exceptional accommodations to Disability Justice design: ways of thinking about accessibility as hospitality**

Whereas military-industrial and medical access-knowledge sought out accessibility as a way to restore function to disabled bodies, another thread of access-knowledge challenged norms of the body outright. This phenomenon, which I call “crip technoscience,” first emerged from disabled people’s work to hack and tinker with the existing built environment, rather than to allow non-disabled experts to do it for them.<sup>12</sup> At first, people with lived experiences of disability, along with their families, designed tools, ramps, bus lifts, and mutual aid systems, which in some cases, they shared with others with similar disabilities.<sup>13</sup> These skills of adaptation and resourcefulness scaled up to activism against systems of compulsory normalisation. With the emergence of a radical, counter-cultural disability movement in the 1960s and 70s, crip technoscience extended from do-it-yourself design to disabled design-as-activism. Activists famously took sledgehammers to sidewalks and used bags of cement to pour curb cuts during protests.<sup>14</sup> They also learned skills of software hacking, carpentry, wheelchair repair, and ramp design that could be used in community advocacy. At protests, such as the month-long “504 Sit-in”, activists used their design skills to build refrigerators from spare parts and create other technologies that enabled the protest to continue.<sup>15</sup> These design tactics emerged from anti-assimilationist ways of knowing disability as a valuable form of difference around which more inclusive and liveable worlds can cohere, rather than as a productivity deficit in need of fixing.

Neither normalisation nor anti-assimilation became the dominant form of access-knowledge. Rather, the two threads have often woven together, passing back and forth through cultural discourses and debates over legal standards for disability inclusion. As activist demands

<sup>12</sup> Hamraie, *Building Access*: 103.

<sup>13</sup> Hamraie, *Building Access*: 104–108.

<sup>14</sup> Hamraie, *Building Access*: 95.

<sup>15</sup> Hamraie, *Building Access*: 126.

for civil rights laws became successful, for instance, accessibility became a measurable and standardisable quality of built environments, prescribed and enforced through legal bureaucracies.<sup>16</sup> Simultaneously, accessible products entered the market geared toward disabled consumers. Disabled citizenship came to be defined by the right to enter into public or private spaces as a consumer and a worker, even while disability itself continued to be devalued.

Contemporary accommodationist frameworks thus draw from long histories of military-industrial and medical approaches to accessibility. Not only do these frameworks make accessibility an issue of technical compliance with the law, but they also allow universities and other employers to require disclosures of certain forms of knowledge (a physician's notes or affidavits testifying to the existence of medical problems in need of accommodation) while devaluing others (such as lived experiences of oppression and exclusion). In response to the dominant disability rights framework of accommodationism, however, a new thread of access-knowledge is emerging from within the Disability Justice movement.<sup>17</sup> An alternative to liberal disability rights approaches of previous decades, Disability Justice centres the leadership of disabled people of colour and queer disabled people. It shifts the focus of accessibility back to anti-normalisation and anti-capitalism. But even further, Disability Justice prioritises intersectionality and principles of collective liberation borrowed from the transformative justice and abolitionist movements.

For Disability Justice, access is a collectively-produced phenomenon, forged through solidarity. Consider, for instance, the #AccessIsLove campaign by Disability Justice organisers Alice Wong, Mia Mingus, and Sandy Ho.<sup>18</sup> This campaign reframes accessibility for disabled people as

<sup>16</sup> Hamraie, *Building Access*: 132.

<sup>17</sup> Sins Invalid, "Skin, Tooth, and Bone – The Basis of Movement is Our People: A Disability Justice Primer" (2019).

<sup>18</sup> Disability Visibility Project, "#AccessIsLove". <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2019/02/01/access-is-love/>

**From exceptional accommodations  
to Disability Justice design:  
ways of thinking about accessibility  
as hospitality**

an act of hospitality. Its theses—that to create access for one another is to enter into intimate political relations, that access is an extension of kindness and generosity, and that access is an ongoing political project for which we must be willing to struggle in the name of love—are both simple and revolutionary. For so long, accessibility has been treated as an after-thought, a burden, an add-on to existing built arrangements. By shifting the discussion from accessibility checklists and codes to the affective and intimate registers of hospitality, #AccessIsLove also invites potential access-makers (including allies and non-disabled people) to conceive of hospitality as a political technology for materialising anti-ableist worlds.

#AccessIsLove and its reframing of access as hospitality respond to the “why” of disability inclusion. Why produce a more accessible world? Because it is an act of love for the most vulnerable people. Unlike earlier disability rights frameworks, which were shaped by imperatives for capitalist productivity, #AccessIsLove reflects Disability Justice principles of solidarity and mutual aid such as “Collective Access” and “Collective Liberation”. Likewise, #AccessIsLove contrasts individual-centred accommodationist approaches with mutual aid and solidarity. To this end, the #AccessIsLove social media campaign has raised funds for organisations for racial and trans justice, claiming solidarity between Disability Justice and the projects of anti-racism and queer liberation.

Informed by Disability Justice and disability culture, new digital and pedagogical accessibility practices enable the use of “critical design” methodologies, which in turn produce new access-knowledge. Artist Shannon Finnegan’s *Alt-Text as Poetry* project uses the accessibility method of image description for blind people as a tool for producing creative poetic texts that challenge visual-centric norms of artistic representation.<sup>19</sup> Media projects, such as the Critical Design Lab’s *Contra\**

<sup>19</sup> Shannon Finnegan, *Alt-Text As Poetry*. <https://shannonfinnegan.com/alt-text-as-poetry>

*Inclusion requires that disability is tolerated as long as it does not demand an excessive degree of change from relatively inflexible institutions, environments and norms of belonging. In particular, the degree to which disability does not significantly challenge the aesthetic ideals of a national imaginary dependent upon fantasies of bodily wholeness and, if not perfection, at least a narrow range of normalcy. —David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *The Biopolitics of Disability: Neoliberalism, Ablenationalism, and Peripheral Embodiment*, 2015.*



podcast, use disability cultural practices such as audio transcription and Simple English summaries to showcase the work of disabled artists, designers, and curators on the topics of crip technoscience and critical design.<sup>20</sup> As the podcast introduction segment explains, “accessibility can be more than just functional or assistive. It can be conceptual, artful, and world-changing.” Another Critical Design Lab project, the Remote Access dance party, features live DJ-ing, participatory image descriptions, captioning, sound descriptions, and “access doulas” to facilitate collective access within a Zoom call.<sup>21</sup> This project, spearheaded by Kevin Gotkin (also known as DJ Who Girl), puts crip histories of nightlife events into contact with contemporary access technologies, creating spaces of aesthetic and communal pleasure for and by disabled people. By treating accessibility as a creative and open-ended process, these approaches to access adopt an ethos of hospitality as a collective project. As the protocols underlying such practices are adopted and applied in other contexts, however, even creative approaches to accessibility run the risk of becoming standardised and institutionalised, particularly if not guided by a Disability Justice commitment to centring the most marginalised disabled people.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, these two approaches to accessibility—the accommodationist approach and the Disability Justice approach—will likely continue to co-evolve. But as the latter reminds us, accessibility is not simply a matter of legal compliance. Rather, it is a commitment to more just and ethical ways of knowing as touchstones for radically hospitable world-making.

<sup>20</sup> Critical Design Lab, *Contra\** Podcast. <http://www.mapping-access.com/podcast>

<sup>21</sup> Critical Design Lab and DJ Who Girl, *Remote Access*. <https://www.mapping-access.com/remote-access>





**Kulttuuriset valtasuhteet ja anti-hierarkkiset  
mahdollisuudet koronaepidemian aikana**

Marianne Savallampi  
ja Touko Vaahtera

**Cultural power relations and anti-hierarchical  
possibilities in the epidemic era**

Marianne Savallampi  
and Touko Vaahtera



kuttaa jokapäiväisen elämän käytäntöihin.<sup>1</sup> Aluksi tuntui, että ihmiset olivat hiljaisia ja pelokkaita, odottaen jonkin tuntemattoman uuden ajan alkavan. Ihmiset hamstrasivat koteihinsa vessapaperia kertakäyttöhansikkaissa. Toiset (tai mahdollisesti samat) ihmiset postasivat huvittuneina kuvia kauppojen tyhjästä hyllyistä sosiaaliseen mediaan. Kohta monet aikuiset siirtyivät etätöihin ja lapset kotikouluun. Alettiin tehdä päiväkävelyitä tuttavien kanssa turvavälein. Monien oli välttämättöntä vähentää työhönsä kohdistuvia vaatimuksia uudessa tilanteessa ja osalta loppuivat palkkatyöt kokonaan. Helsingin Sanomat julkaisi 24. huhtikuuta uutisen, jonka mukaan monet ihmiset eivät enää haluaisi palata kiireiseen arkeen, jossa he elivät vain muutamia viikkoja aiemmin.

Epidemia, tai pikemminkin yhteiskunnalliset reaktiot siihen, alkoivat heti muuttaa kulttuuria. Epidemiatilanteessa se ei ole sinänsä yllättävää. Kulttuurin muuttaminen ihmisten arjen käytäntöjä säätelemällä liittyy olennaisesti epidemioihin vaikuttamaan pyrkivien toimijoiden menettelmiin. Esimerkiksi yhdysvaltalaisen historioitsijan Nayan Shah'n (2001) mukaan yhteiskunnan kyky reagoida epidemioihin tehokkaasti, vähentää kuolleisuutta ja muokata kulttuuria tavoilla, jotka voidaan yhdistää hygienian lisääntymiseen, ovat olleet merkittävä osa modernia ideologiaa. Sen nimissä ihmisryhmiä on määritetty vähemmän kehittyneiksi, eli rodullistettu.

Koronaepidemia myös paljasti rasistisia rakenteita ja asenteita Euroopassa. Samanaikaisesti on noussut esiin kritiikkiä kyvykkyyttä ihannoivaa kulttuuria kohtaan. Ehkä elämä, myös yhteiskuntakritiikkiä tuottavilla aloilla, on niin läpeensä tehokkuutta korostavaa, että sen muuttuminen rauhallisemmaksi on ollut monen toive jo pitkään. Mitä se kertoo kyvykkyyttä ihannoivasta kulttuurista? Tekeekö vasta tappava

<sup>1</sup> Päätimme käyttää tässä tekstissä puhekielistä termiä "koronaepidemia". Valintamme ei ulosslu-je epidemian luonnetta pandemiana, vaan arkistoi sitä, kuinka pandemiasta puhuttiin keväällä 2020.

epidemia mahdolliseksi edes hetkellisen tehokkuusvaatimusten höllentämisen? Voisimmeko miettiä kyvykkyyshanteita ylläpitävää kulttuuria koronaepidemian kontekstissa tarkemmin?

**Marianne Savallampi**

Vaikka kriisi vaikeutti monella tapaa myös omaa elämääni,

olen samalla silti vähän vahingoniloinen nähdessäni “länsimaisen ylemmyyden” joutuvan koetukselle. Yleensä kun täällä uutisoidaan “kehitysmaissa” tapahtuvista kriiseistä ja epidemioista, saa lukea kommentteja siitä, miten vastaavanlaisessa tilanteessa täällä osattaisiin tilanne hoitaa paremmin, ja koko kriisi olisi ohi viikossa. Sen pohjalta oli mielenkiintoista nähdä, miten kuvitelmat yhteen hiileen puhaltavista ja talkoohenkisistä suomalaisista haihtuivat heti alkumetreillä savuna ilmaan ja todellisuudessa ihmiset hamstrasivat peruselintarvikkeita pelkkien huhujen perusteella. Ehkä tästä opitaan jotain ennen kuin seuraavan kerran kritisoidaan muun maailmaan konfliktinhallintakykyä. Kyynisenä ihmisenä kuitenkin epäilen sitä.

Toki myönnän, että kriisi nosti esiin myös uudenlaista solidaarisuutta. Muodostettiin naapuriverkostoja, nähtiin julkisen terveydenhuollon arvo, perustettiin hätäapurahoja kulttuurialan toimijoille ja todettiin ettei työnteon elinehto ole toimistolla oleminen. Itseasiassa koko arvokkaan työn käsite tuli potentiaalisesti uudelleen määriteltäväksi. Esimerkiksi hoitajien palkoista on puhuttu vuosikausia, mutta asia tuli vasta nyt kunnolla vastaan. Lisäksi alettiin kyseenalaistaa hyvän työn edellytyksiä. Pitääkö kaikkien oikeasti istua aina sama aika toimistolla, että saadaan tuloksia aikaan? Miksi oletamme, että kaikkien pitää sopeutua samaan työrytmiin ja asetelmaan ollakseen työsuhteen arvoinen? Mihin tarvitsemme sortavia kyvykkyyshanteita miettiessämme tehokasta työntekoa?

Because a body always/already exists within a specific material context, its capacities—the things it can and cannot do—are always contextual and relational. Therefore a list of these capacities will necessarily be ongoing. The capacities of a particular human body, for example, will be radically different depending on whether it is underwater, in space, on horseback, online or offline, rich or poor. This focus on context-dependent capacities also applies to non-human bodies. For example, we do not ask the essentialist question “What is a pencil?” (“a writing implement comprised of wood and graphite”) but rather “What can a pencil do?” (which suggests an ongoing list of context-dependent capacities: “it can write, it can stab; it can be burnt as firewood ...”). —Michael Feely, *Disability studies after the ontological turn: a return to the material world and material bodies without a return to essentialism*, 2016.



**TV** Facebookissa kiersi ensimmäisen koronaviikon aikana ihmisten itse tekemiä, erilaisten arkisten sisustuselementtien ja muiden tavaroiden avulla aikaansaatuja versioita tunnetuista maalauksista. Voi ajatella, että normaalitilassa (eli tilassa, jota yhteiskunnassa pidetään normina) ihmisen täytyy myydä työvoimaansa ja käyttää energiansa jonkun toisen suunnittelemaan toimintaan. Nyt poikkeustila saattoi hetkellisesti antaa mahdollisuuden sellaiseen hassuttelevaan luovaan toimintaan, johon muuten ei jää energiaa. Elämää, jonka keskiössä on palkkatyö, eikä esimerkiksi luova toiminta, voi ajatella nimenomaan historiallisesti rakentuneena normina.

Brittiläisen kulttuurintutkimuksen pioneerit, kuten Stuart Hall ja Raymond Williams korostivat, että yhteiskunnalliset arvostukset, työn ja kulttuurin muodot sekä se miten päivästä toiseen eletään ovat ennen kaikkea historiallisten tapahtumasarjojen tulosta. Heidän marxilainen asenteensa kulttuuriin kiinnittää huomion sen monimutkaiseen taloudellisiin valtasuhteisiin. Vaikka kaikki sosiaalisessa mediassa tehdyt julkaisut ovat vahvasti kiinnittyneitä alustakapitalismiin (esim. Paakkari 2020), alustat, kuten Facebook, ovat myös merkittäviä elämämme järjestäjiä. Voimme käyttää niitä myös palkkatyönormia kyseenalaistavaan toimintaan, vaikka julkaisumme hyödyttävätkin alustakapitalistisia yhtiöitä. Samanaikaisesti voimme myös pitää mielessä, että on paljon olemassa olevia kulttuurinmuotoja, jotka asettuvat vahvasti poikkiteloin kapitalistisen tehokkuutta ja kyvykkyyttä korostavan kulttuurin kanssa. Oletko ollut mukana kulttuuriprojekteissa, jotka ovat haastaneet kyvykkyysihanteita ja kapitalismia?

**MS** Aloin miettiä miten poikkeustila toi saataville ennennäkemättömän määrän taidetta ja kulttuuria. Yleensä maksumuurien takana olevat arkistot ja materiaalit tulivat poikkeuksellisesti kaikkien nähtäville, ja kun galleriat eivät olleet enää määrittämässä mikä taide pääsee esille,

tuli myös taiteilijoille painetta saada työnsä muutoin esille. Tietenkin tämä on potentiaalisesti haitta taiteilijoiden toimeentulolle, mutta se koskee yhtä lailla kovan rahan taidetta. Taiteen portinvartijuuden poistuminen loi tilanteen, jolla oli ainakin hetkellinen demokratisoiva vaikutus vallitsevaan taiteeseen ja kulttuuriin. Tai ainakin se toi paremmin näkyviksi rakenteita ja hierarkioita, joita on pidetty muuttumattomina, ja osoitti, että tietyt rakenteelliset ongelmat, joista on valitettu vuosikausia, voisivat hyvin olla toisin. Esimerkkinä apurahajärjestelmä, jossa taiteilijan on täytynyt päätösten keston takia suunnitella elinkeinonsa vuosien päähän. Nyt kuitenkin Taiteen edistämiskeskus sai käsiteltyä parissa viikossa neljätuhatta hakemusta.

Useimmissa kulttuuriprojekteissa, joissa olen ollut mukana, on haastettu kapitalismia ainakin siinä mielessä, että ne ovat olleet epäkaupallisia ja niissä on huolehdittu, että hinta ei ole este osallistumiselle. Tietenkin tämä on vasta lähtökohta. Ihannetilanteessa myös projekti olisi sisällöltään kapitalismikriittinen, mikä on helpommin sanottu kuin tehty. Harrastan erityisesti näennäiskapitalismikriittisen taiteen vihaamista; sellaisen, joka tiivistyy johonkin isojen brändien logoille irvailuun, ollen enemmän laiskaa koulupoikahuumoraa, kuin vakavasti otettavaa kritiikkiä. Väitän ettei myöskään pelkkä talouskritiikki riitä, vaan se pitää liittää laajempaan sorron rakenteiden kritiikkiin, johon myös kyvykkyykskriittisyys kuuluu. Osaatko nimetä tällaisia hankkeita?

**TV** Minä olen mukana Slow Academy -kollektiivissa. Se on tutkijoiden ja opiskelijoiden ryhmä, joka pyrkii haastamaan akateemiset tehokkuusideaalit ja olemaan turvallinen paikka yhdessä ajattelulle ilman kilpailullista ilmapiiriä tai oletusta akateemisen uran edistämisestä. Järjestimme syksyllä 2019 pienen konferenssin. Siellä jatkoimme

keskustelua uusien ihmisten kanssa kokemuksista ja tunteista, jotka kytkeytyvät kilpailulliseen, yrittäjämäiseen mentaliteettiin kannustavaan akateemiseen kapitalismiin. Konferenssin kutsuun kirjoitimme:

**[H]ierarkkinen kulttuuri vääristää yliopistomaailman ihmissuhteet. Haluamme luoda vaihtoehtoista akateemista kulttuuria, joka perustuu kilpailun sijaan keskinäiselle tukemiselle. Sen sijaan, että keskittyisimme suoritusten laskemiseen, kuten julkaistujen artikkeleiden määrään, suoritettuihin opintopisteisiin ja arvosanoihin, haluamme pitää huolta itsestämme ja toisistamme.<sup>2</sup>**

Haluaisin, että hitaan akatemian ajatus leviäisi laajemmin. Siihen tarvitaan kuitenkin yhteiskunnallinen muutos. Vaikka tutkijat voivat visioida antikapitalistisia utopioita kaupallisissa kansainvälisissä julkaisussa, joissa mukana oleminen hyödyttää heidän yliopistoaan ja omaa urakehitystään, haluaisin enemmän antikapitalistisia käytäntöjä, jotka myös mahdollistaisivat toisenlaisia tapoja elää.

**MS** Pidin Slow Academyn ideasta todella paljon. Olen nimittäin huomannut alkaneeni vältellä akateemista maailmaa oikeastaan juuri siksi, etten koe voivani vastata sen tämänhetkisiin tehokkuuspaineisiin. Akatemiaan tulleet uusliberaalit tulostavoitteet surettavat. Tutkimus pitää väkisinkin

<sup>2</sup> <https://slowacademyconference.wordpress.com/2019/09/17/about-slow-academy/> (Linkki tarkistettu 2.6.2020.)



kääntää numeroiksi ja tutkijoilta oletetaan tiettyä määrää julkaisuja per vuosi, jolloin huomio kääntyy määrään sisällön kustannuksella. Luin artikkelin fyysikko Peter Higgsistä, joka on tullut tunnetuksi hänen mukaansa nimetyn alkeishiukkasen, Higgsin bosonin, olemassaolon tieteellisestä todistamisesta. Higgs huomauttaa artikkelissa, ettei hän luultavasti olisi kyennyt siihen nykyisessä akateemisessa maailmassa, sillä hän työskentelee hitaasti, eikä julkaise artikkeleita. Nykyään sellaiseen tutkimukseen ei luultavasti saisi rahoitusta. Minusta se kuvaa hyvin, miten kapitalistinen tehokkuuslogiikka toimii mahdollisesti jopa esteenä tieteen edistymiselle ja kuinka perusteellinen työ vaatii lopulta hitautta.

**TV**

Entä sitten taidemaailma? Minkälaisia kyvykkyyshanteita sinun näkemyksesi mukaan liittyy suomalaiseen taidemaailmaan?

**MS**

Kysymystä voi lähteä avaamaan aika monelta kannalta.

Kun mietin taidemaailmaa ja sen saavutettavuutta, tulee ensimmäisenä mieleen luokkasidonnaisuus ja instituutioiden valta. Yleensä taiteilijana menestyminen vaatii jo lähtökohtaisesti resursseja omasta takaa ja oikeiden koulujen käymistä. Jos taas sivuutetaan kokonaan taloudellinen puoli, avautuu myös muita kyvykkyyshanteita, sillä taiteellinen prosessi itsessään on perinteisesti varsin kehollista toimintaa. Koen että edelleen nykytaiteessa korostuu tietty maskuliininen fyysisyys, joka on peräisin ajalta jolloin ihanne oli Jackson Pollock räiskimässä maalia kankaalle. Nykyisin näen tätä perintöä ehkä eniten katutaiteessa sekä erilaisia ”tempauksia” ja performanssia harrastavien taiteilijoiden keskuudessa.

**TV** Taiteilijuus ei ole siis todellakaan vain yksilöllistä lahjakkuutta, vaan myös yhteiskunnallisten etuoikeuksien mahdollistamaa toimintaa. Toisaalta taide voi olla myös paikka, jossa kriittisesti käsitellä normeja ja yhteiskunnallisia valtasuhteita. Ajatuksella taiteellisesta toiminnasta vapauden toteuttamisaikana on kiinnostava aatehistoria. Ajattelen sitä, miten Raymond Williamsin (1983 [1958]) mukaan brittiläiset 1800-luvun yhteiskunnalliset ajattelijat yhdistivät kulttuurin idean vapaaseen toimintaan, jossa kyseenalaistetaan tavanomaisia tapoja elää. Konventionaalisten käsitysten kyseenalaistamiseen sisältyi myös ajatus yhä kultivoituneemmaksi kehitymisestä. Erityisen kiinnostava on brittiläisen koululaitoksen kehittäjän Matthew Arnoldin idea ”parhaasta itsestä” (*best self*), joka uinuu latenttina jokaisessa ihmisessä, mutta joka voidaan herättää kukoistamaan ihmisen kehittyttyä niin paljon, että hän kykenee ajattelemaan vapaasti ilman, että hänen luokka-asemansa värittää hänen ajatteluaan. Arnoldin ”paras itse” on valtasuhteista näennäisen riippumaton positio (Logan 2009). Jos nykyäänkin taiteilijoiden kykyä vapautuneesti kyseenalaistaa kulttuurisia normeja ihaillaan kritiikittömästi, saatetaan olla lähellä yksilöllistävää vapaan toiminnan ihailua, joka jättää yhteiskunnalliset valtasuhteet huomiotta.

Vaikka ihmisen kukoistaminen ja kehittyminen parhaaksi itsekseen ovat ymmärrettäviä toiveita, voidaan silti kysyä, minkälaiset tavat elää unohtuvat tässä toiveessa? Voiko siinä olla kysymys elämästä, jossa CV on tärkeämpi kuin hetkeen keskittyminen? Ehkä kukoistaminen täytyisi merkityksellistää toisella tavalla. Se voisikin olla sitä, että voi elää epätäydellisyyksien ja ristiriitaisuuksien kanssa; ”en tiedä” ja ”en jaksa” tuntemusten; epäröintien, hitauden, epäonnistumisten; monenlaisten ja ristiriitaisten halujen ja pyrkimysten kanssa. (Näitäkään fiiliksiä ei pitäisi itsestään selvästi asettaa merkeiksi ihmisenä kehitymisestä, koska silloin meillä olisi vain toisenlainen kehittyvän ihmisen normi.) Olen kiinnostunut näkökulmista, joissa kehityksen idealisointi voi purkautua. Minkälainen olisi sellainen psyykinen todellisuus ja kulttuurinen kokemus, jossa ei

olisi itsestään selvää suuntautumista kehitykseen? Kysymys kytkeytyy myös kehitysideoiden rooliin rasismissa, kun muistetaan, miten kehittyneeksi tai vähemmän kehittyneeksi nimeäminen on ollut keino rakentaa hierarkioita ihmisryhmien välille. Kulttuuri merkityksessä edistyksellinen sivilisaatio on nimenomaan toiminut rodullistavana ideana.

**MS** Kun ajattelen kulttuuria terminä, yhdistän sen helposti juuri kulttuuri-imperialismiin. Eli siihen miten kulttuuria on käytetty aseena historioiden ja identiteettien tuhoamiseen, ja kuinka sillä on perusteltu vähemmän kehittyneiden maiden valtaamista. Nykyisin kulttuuri-imperialismin käsite on ehkä hyödyllisin käsiteltäessä kolonialismin historiaa ja sen kauaskantoisia vaikutuksia. Kuinka sorrettujen yhä oletetaan nousevan sorrosta, mutta silti mukautuvan valtavirran tapoihin ja ihanteisiin. Tämä tulee näkyväksi edelleen kulttuurialan homogeenisuudessa, sekä usein varsin aggressiivisessa integraatiopolitiikassa.

**TV** Kulttuurinen yhtenäistäminen yhteiskunnallisena kysymyksenä, joka on myös yhteydessä psyyken reaktioihin, on tärkeä. Yhdysvaltalainen kulttuuriteoreetikko Lauren Berlant (2011) korostaa affektien, eli subjektin sisäisen ja ulkoisen maailman yhteyksiä säätelevien voimien, yhteiskunnallista luonnetta. Berlantin ajattelua mukaillen affektiiviset reaktiot ovat yhteydessä yhteiskunnallisiin tapahtumiin, mutta ne eivät todellakaan ole minkään yhteiskunnallisen tahon määrittämiä. Näkökulma, jossa affekteja voidaan pitää muina kuin vain yksilöllisinä reaktioina ja silti ymmärtää ne moninaisina ja epäkoherentteina reaktioina yhteiskunnallisiin tilanteisiin, on nähtävissä myös Raymond Williamsin ajattelussa. Analyysissään brittiläisistä teollistumisen ajan romaaneista Williams (1983) tuo esiin niiden kuvaamia ristiriitaisia affektiivisia kokemuksia siitä, miltä tuo ajanjakso tuntui eri ihmisistä. Näin hän horjuttaa myös

oletuksia konfliktittomasta yhtenäiskulttuurista kansallisvaltion sisällä. Samaa ajanjaksoa, ja ikään kuin samaa yhteiskunnallista tilannetta, ei koe-ta samalla tavalla. Tätä voisi ajatella myös koronaepidemian yhteydessä.

**MS** Ehkä tässä on hyvä hetki pohtia nimenomaan etuoikeuksia. Oletus että epidemian myötä työt muuttuivat etätöiksi, tarkoittaa ettei työn määrä oikeastaan vähentynyt. Joten keitä ovat he, jotka onnistuivat hiljentymään ja rentoutumaan? Entä ne ihmiset, jotka eivät ole pystyneet siirtymään etätöihin alun perinkään? Mietin esimerkiksi lastenhoitoa ja opetusta, joka nyt pitää hoitaa itse; eikö se muka ole työtä? Ehkä aitoa helpotusta omaan elämään on tuonut ainoastaan sellaisen pakollisen sosiaalisuuden loppuminen. Sellaisen, jota ei oikeasti haluaisi ylläpitää, mutta joka on “pakollista” joko työkontaktien tai sukulaissuhteiden takia.

**TV** Ehkä ihmiset, jotka ovat nyt helpottuneita siitä, että heillä on oikeutettu syy ottaa rauhallisemmin, ovat pystyneet (ainakin jollain tavoin) toteuttamaan yhteiskunnallisia tehokkuusvaatimuksia ennen epidemiaa. Onkin oltava valmis kysymään kriittisesti, minkälaiset kehot, mielet ja yhteisölliset kokemukset nostetaan esiin näennäisen itsestään selvästi, kun koronaepidemiaa artikuloidaan kollektiivisena kokemuksena (Mietola & Koskinen 2020). Kuinka sosiaalisen etäisyyden vaatimukseen suhtautuvat esimerkiksi ihmiset, jotka eivät voi valita pitävänsä etäisyyttä, koska tarvitsevat apua toisilta ihmisiltä jokapäiväisessä elämässään (Mietola & Koskinen 2020). Koronaepidemia on yhteiskunnallinen ja kollektiivinen kokemus, mutta ei yhtenäinen. Myöhemmin on mahdollista kartoittaa, minkälaisia toiveita, unelmia, pelkoja ja konflikteja epidemia on tuottanut kulttuuriseen muistiin.

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**Cultural power relations and  
anti-hierarchical possibilities  
in the epidemic era**

**Marianne Savallampi  
and Touko Vaahtera**

**Touko Vaahtera** It felt that almost immediately after coronavirus officially spread to Finland, it started to affect the practices of everyday life. At first it seemed like people were quiet and afraid, waiting for the beginning of some unknown era. People wearing rubber gloves were hoarding toilet paper. Other (or perhaps the same) people were amusedly posting photos to social media of empty store shelves. Soon many adults shifted to working remotely and children to being home-schooled. We began to take socially distanced walks with friends. Many people had to limit the usual demands of their working life while others lost their jobs entirely. According to an article published in *Helsingin Sanomat*—the largest daily subscribed newspaper in Finland—on April 24th, many people no longer wished to return to their previous hectic everyday lives, although having been fully accustomed to them only a few weeks prior.

The epidemic, or more likely the public reaction to the epidemic, began to change culture. During an epidemic this is not, as such, surprising. Understanding culture as malleable is essential also to those who aim to influence an epidemic by regulating people's habits. For example, according to the US historian Nayan Shah (2001), the ability of a society to react efficiently, to reduce mortality, and to amend culture in ways that can be associated with improved hygiene, is a fundamental part of modern ideology. In the name of which, different groups of people have been deemed less advanced and racialised.

The coronavirus epidemic revealed racist attitudes and structures in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Yet at the same time, criticism towards a culture that values able-bodiedness has emerged. Perhaps our lifestyles, also within the fields involved in cultural criticism, are so efficiency based, that many had already for a long time wished for a calmer life.

<sup>1</sup> We preferred using colloquialisms “coronavirus epidemic” and “corona epidemic”. These terms do not exclude the dimensions of this epidemic as pandemic. The point is to archive how the pandemic emerged in everyday conversations during the spring of 2020.

What does this tell us about a culture that values able-bodiedness? That only a deadly epidemic makes it possible to loosen our efficiency demands even for a moment? Could we, in the context of the coronavirus epidemic, consider further how our culture maintains ableism?

**Marianne Savallampi**

Despite the crisis having negatively impacted me in many

ways, I cannot help but to also feel slightly satisfied when witnessing a decline in the certainty of “Western superiority”. Usually Finnish news reports on crises or epidemics in so called developing countries are met with a certainty of how if anything similar happened here, we, “the sophisticated”, would handle it in a matter of days. So, it was interesting to see how the imagined solidarity and unity of the Finns disappeared like smoke in the air, and the reality was your fellow citizens hoarding basic goods on the basis of rumours alone. Perhaps this is something to be reflected on the next time we feel like judging the rest of the world for their conflict management. Yet I somewhat doubt this will happen.

Still, I admit the crisis also created new forms of solidarity. Mutual aid networks were formed, public healthcare was praised, grants for art workers were provided and the necessity of a controlled office environment was questioned. In a matter of fact, the whole concept of meaningful work was placed under further analysis. For example, fair income for healthcare professionals was finally a real issue again. Even the structures of work itself began to be questioned. Is it really necessary that everyone works the same hours, at the same time, in the same place in order for things to get done? Why do we assume that everyone needs to adjust to an identical daily schedule in order to be worthy of employment? How much does



As postcolonial disability theorist Nirmala Erevelles argues, liberal citizenship is a historical-material arrangement produced through political economies, not a pre-given or natural category. Because slavery, for instance, built nation and its industries, liberal individualist values of citizenship, defined by “productivity, efficiency, and autonomy” are intimately wedded to histories of white property ownership, the “racial division of labor” and other material arrangements that, in turn, rely upon norms of able-bodiedness (and able-mindedness) to decide “who could or could not be a citizen”. —Aimi Hamraie, *Building Access Universal Design and the Politics of Disability*, 2017.



The host is the habitat for the parasite, the condition of life and ongoingness for the parasite; this host is in the dangerous world-making contact zones of symbiogenesis and sympoiesis, where newly cobbled together, good-enough orders may or may not emerge from the ever so promiscuous and opportunistic associations of host and parasite. —Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 2016.



one even really need to be physically present? To conclude, why do we need these ableist ideals to consider work valuable?

**TV** During the first week of quarantine people were sharing on Facebook recreations of famous paintings they had made using everyday objects and household items. One might consider that under normal circumstances (as in what is considered a norm in society) people have to sell their labour power and use their energy in activities according to someone else's plans. Yet now, during a public emergency, one could momentarily have the chance to experiment with playful and creative activities that there would usually be no time or energy for. One might consider that life formed around labour and not creativity is a result of specific historical processes.

Pioneers of British cultural theory, Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, emphasised that societal appreciation, forms of work and culture, as well as the practices of daily life, are primarily the result of historical sequences. Their Marxist readings of culture set the focus on complex economic power relations. Even though posts made on social media are tightly linked with platform capitalism (Paakkari 2020), sites such as Facebook are also significant organisers of our lives. They can also be used in activities that disrupt the norm of waged labour, despite our updates also benefiting platform capitalist corporations. Similarly, we can keep in mind that there already exist many forms of culture that are in direct opposition to the logics of capitalistic efficiency and ableist culture. Have you taken part in a culture project that challenges ableism and capitalism?

**MS** This made me consider how in fact the state of emergency made an unprecedented amount of art and culture widely accessible. Meaning that content usually kept behind paywalls, such as archives and libraries, were exceptionally made available for all. And as galleries were

no longer defining what art gets to be seen, it also created pressure for artists to make their works available to the public in other ways. Of course, this can also negatively affect the livelihood of artists, as work is more unlikely to be sold this way, but at least this challenged the prevailing status quo. What I am trying to say is that it seems the epidemic had a democratising effect on the art field through momentarily removing its gatekeepers. Or at least it brought into question the necessity of structures and hierarchies in the field that have been mostly considered immutable; and that certain structural problems, which have been pointed out for years and years, are in fact solvable. I am alluding for example to the current grant system, which forces artists to plan their livelihood for years in advance due to extremely slow decision processes. Yet this spring the Arts Promotion Centre (Finnish governmental arts fund) managed to process nearly four thousand applications in only a couple of weeks.

As for addressing capitalism, many cultural projects that I have been involved with have been conscious of class differences in the sense that events are kept free or cheap and are fundamentally non-commercial. However, this should not be only the basis of forming economically accessible events. Ideally the content and production process should also be anti-capitalist. Yet, I am still very sceptical of any art claiming to be “politically anti-capitalist”. At least of the type of thing that was still popular in Finland until a few years ago, which stereotypically was something like a parody of a company logo or mascot, and could often be described rather as immature and lazy than politically conscious. Also, art that focuses solely on criticising the economy in which it exists usually feels somewhat empty. One could argue that ideally this criticism should

be more intersectional, pointing out the extent of the structural oppressions produced by capitalism, including ableism. Can you think of any projects that would have addressed this?

**TV** I'm a member of the Slow Academy collective. It is a group of researchers and students who aim to challenge academic ideals of efficiency and create a safe space for thinking together without the pressures of a competitive atmosphere or assumptions of advancing one's own academic career. We organised a small conference in the fall of 2019. There we continued this discussion with new people, sharing experiences and feelings around the competitive academic capitalism that is pushing an entrepreneurial mentality. In the invitation for the Slow Academy Conference we wrote:

**[H]ierarchical culture distorts human relationships within the universities. We want to create an alternative academic culture that is not based on rivalry but on mutual support. Instead of focusing on performance, like the number of academic publications, study credits and grades, we want to care for each other and ourselves.<sup>2</sup>**

I would like this idea of “slow academy” to spread wider. Yet that would require a societal change. Even though researchers may envision anti-capitalist utopias in commercial international journals, publishing in

<sup>2</sup> <https://slowacademyconference.wordpress.com/2019/09/17/about-slow-academy-in-english/> (Accessed June 2, 2020)

them still benefits their universities and personal careers. I would like to see more anti-capitalist practices that also make it possible to live a different way of life.

**MS** I very much liked the idea of Slow Academy. In fact, I have noticed myself starting to avoid the academic world precisely because I feel I can no longer survive its competitive pressures and expectations. It makes me sad that the academy has been subjected to harsh neoliberal logics, where everything needs to be translated into numbers and researchers are expected to produce a set amount of publications per year. The emphasis has shifted from quality into quantity. I read an article on physicist Peter Higgs, the Nobel Prize laureate for discovering the subatomic particle Higgs boson. In it he stated how he probably would not have been able to do that in the academic world today, as he works at his own pace and rarely publishes articles; and no-one would hire such a researcher these days. To me this represents how potentially (and perhaps ironically) the attempt to become more efficient can lead to less scientific significance. As dedicated and thorough research is often slow.

**TV** How about the art world? What type of ableist ideals do you think exist in the Finnish art field today?

**MS** One might approach this question from many angles. When I think of the art world and accessibility my thoughts go first to questions of class and the power of institutions. Usually success as an artist requires personal financial resources to start off with, and being able to get into art school. But if we leave this aspect aside for a moment, and look elsewhere,

then of course there are also ideals of able-bodiedness. Artistic practice in itself is still very much considered a physical practice, and I can recognise masculine physicality still being the epitome. This probably goes all the way back to ideas of the “artist genius” and to times when the ideal image of that was Jackson Pollock aggressively throwing paint on the floor. These days this legacy remains perhaps strongest in the realms of street art and with certain performance artists who consider themselves as some type of pranksters.

**TV** So being an artist is definitely not only about individual talent, but equally a practice formed by systemic privilege. On the other hand, art can also be a place for critically examining societal norms and hierarchies. This idea of artistic practice as a site of liberation has an interesting history. I am thinking about Raymond Williams (1983 [1958]), who paid attention to how British cultural critics in the 19th century associated the idea of culture with an act of liberation, where conventional notions of behaviour were questioned. This included the notion of becoming increasingly cultivated. Particularly interesting is the concept by Matthew Arnold, the developer of the British school system, of the “best self”, which according to him is latent in everyone, but only awoken once a person becomes so developed that they are capable of free thought, unaffected by their class mentality. The “best self” of Arnold is a position seemingly independent from power relations (Logan 2009). If we nowadays uncritically admire artists for their ability to freely challenge cultural norms, it can take us close to admiring individualistic liberation, while remaining oblivious to power structures in society.

As much as personal development towards flourishing and becoming your best self is a reasonable goal, we can question which modes of living are forgotten in the pursuit of this aim? Might this be a way of life where building a C.V. becomes more important than enjoying

the moment? If so, we need to define flourishing in another way. It could also mean living with imperfections and contradictions, with thoughts and feelings of “I don’t know” or “I’m too tired”; with hesitation, slowness, failure, as well as varied and contradictory needs and desires. (Although these feelings should not either be considered as necessary for growing as a person, to avoid just replacing one set of norms with another.) I am interested in concepts where the ideals of progress unravel. What would the psychological reality and cultural experience, where orientation towards progress was not the focus, be like? This question is tied also to the impact that ideas on progress have had on racism, as we remember how declaring others less advanced or less developed has been used to build hierarchies between people. In fact, the very idea of a progressive civilization has been a tool for racialisation.

**MS**        Indeed, when I think about the word culture, I often think about its relation to cultural imperialism. As in how culture has been used as a weapon to destroy histories and identities of indigenous people, and as an excuse to justify conquering “less developed” nations. Nowadays the term cultural imperialism is perhaps most useful when discussing colonialism and its long-term effects. One can still today see how the oppressed are expected to escape oppression by their own means, as well as assimilate to mainstream culture and habits. This is apparent for example in why the art world is still so homogenic, as well as the reasoning behind aggressive integration programs.

**TV**        The strive for cultural hegemony, with its psychological impacts, is important as a societal question. American cultural theoretician Lauren Berlant (2011) emphasises the role of affects, the forces that shape the relations between that which is internal and



which is external to a subject. According to Berlant affects are connected to events in society, but are not defined by any societal governing body. This way of looking at affects, as not mere individual reactions, but as complex and incoherent reactions to situations in society, is also apparent in the thinking of Raymond Williams. In his analysis of British industrialisation era novels Williams (1983) found that they described conflicting affective experiences in different people on how it felt living in those times. In this way he subverts presumptions of a uniform and conflict-free culture within a nation state. The same time period, or similarly a shared public moment, is not experienced the same by all. This should also be considered in connection to the coronavirus epidemic.

**MS** Perhaps this is a good moment to further discuss privilege. Considering that during the epidemic those who could work remotely, still worked, the amount of work did not go down. So, who are these people who suddenly had the time to relax and enjoy? And what about those who could not work remotely, but had to remain in their workplaces and carry the risks? I am also thinking about childcare and schooling that was supposed to be done by the parents while also working; should that not be considered as having even more work? For me perhaps the only true aspect of relief was that there was now an excuse to avoid compulsory social occasions. Those that one does not want to attend, but feels compelled to, due to work contacts or family connections.

**TV** Perhaps those people who were relieved that they had a legitimate reason to take things easier had managed to (even in some ways) maintain efficiency demands required by society before the epidemic. We need to remain critical on what types of bodies, minds, and social experiences are discussed as seemingly ubiquitous when

articulating the corona epidemic as a collective experience (Mietola & Koskinen 2020). For example, how are the demands for social distancing experienced by those individuals who cannot isolate due to requiring regular or daily care from others (Mietola & Koskinen 2020). The corona epidemic is a societal and collective experience, but not a unified one. Perhaps later we are able to map more specifically what kinds of hopes, dreams, fears, and conflicts the epidemic ended up producing in the cultural memory of our society.

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**Cultural power relations and anti-hierarchical possibilities in the epidemic era**

***What might languages of hospitality have to offer in re-figuring more hospitable worlds?***

Throughout this publication and the *Rehearsing Hospitalities* programme, a language and vocabulary of hospitality have been taken up as a way to explore what might constitute various forms of hospitalities. This language/vocabulary is often experimental, uses word-play, and attempts to expand limitations of language. Often we pluralise and combine terms in order to open them up to new possibilities and understandings.

Admittedly, this can be confusing and we understand this approach can be as equally excluding as it is including. Particularly if it feels important to find the “correct” way to know something. We also take note that this vocabulary and discourse primarily takes place in English, a (hegemonic) vehicular language in many cases but still largely exclusionary. This particular edition hosts two contributions in Finnish and Sámi, as a prelude to more languages and we might do better to integrate different languages and ways of accessing this publication series in our future programming.

Whilst we must acknowledge the limitations of who can participate in complicating languages of hospitality, our intention is to find value in multiple meanings, ways to access, and ways of knowing. We hope that thinking-with a multitude of different terms and meanings might open more doors than it closes. —Yvonne Billimore, Frame Contemporary Art Finland



# **Viral queerings, amplified vulnerabilities**

## **Marietta Radomska**



In such a highly individualistic society as the one we belong to here, it is very comforting for a reader to consume difference as a commodity by starting with the personal difference in culture or background, which is the best way to escape the issues of power, knowledge and subjectivity raised. —Nancy N. Chen and Trinh T. Minh-ha, “*Speaking Nearby:*” *A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-ha*, 1992.



## Writing from the now...<sup>1</sup>

On 31st December 2019 the World Health Organisation (WHO) and US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were informed via official channels about the imminent epidemic situation caused by a novel SARS-like (severe acute respiratory syndrome) corona virus in the Hubei province of China. On 20th January 2020 the first human-to-human transmission of the new virus was confirmed; on 30th January the disease caused by the virus was deemed a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by WHO and on 11th March, a pandemic. On 11th February the virus received its official name “SARS-CoV-2” (severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2) and the disease it causes was pronounced “COVID-19” (corona virus disease 2019). By 22nd June 2020, as this essay is being written, the official global statistics showed over 9 million confirmed cases and more than 470 thousand deaths (Worldometer 2020). Several studies published between March and May this year indicate that, as a zoonotic virus, SARS-CoV-2 must have evolved at some point during autumn 2019, “jumping” from bats via an unidentified intermediary host onto humans (van Dorp, et al. 2020). Various research teams all around the world keep on searching for the intermediary host in whose body the reshuffling of the viral RNA must have taken place before the coronavirus made its way to

<sup>1</sup> In May, June and July 2020 Creative Europe project *Biofriction* runs the Braiding Friction initiative, encompassing a series of working groups and online events focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences for the cultural sector and beyond (see: <https://biofriction.org/news/announcement-e-working-groups/>). The group “Non/Living Queerings” (consisting of Terike Haapoja, Margherita Pevere, Markus Schmidt, Mayra Citlalli Rojo Gómez and myself), of which I have had a privilege to be the host, has worked with questions linked to the ways in which the current pandemic intensifies or amplifies the processes, inequalities, various forms of exploitation, and vulnerabilities which have already been in place for years (if not centuries). One of the group members, scientist Markus Schmidt suggested that SARS-CoV-2 itself could be seen as an “amplifier”. The group has worked with the idea of the COVID-19 pandemic as an amplifier of already ongoing processes as one of its four core themes of concern. I am grateful for the discussions we have had and I include the intensification/amplification perspective also in this essay.

humans (e.g. Tiwari, et al. 2020; Mallapati 2020; Liu, et al. 2020). The issue remains unresolved, pointing at what the humanities scholars see as the desire for an origin story (Lykke & Marambio 2020) that could explain the background of the present situation, giving this a sense of certainty, some rationale or a foundation to work from, as well as, potentially, an entity (“the Other”) to blame for the pandemic.

While this search is undoubtedly an important piece of the virological puzzle, its media coverage forms part of a wider landscape of narratives that seek to “explain” the pandemic and its consequences, among which one may also find an array of conspiracy theories ascribing the pandemic to an “evil will” of individuals, groups or nations. All those not-so-innocent attempts to find a rationale for the world-as-we-know-it turning upside down are grounded in a desire for clear answers in a time, place and situation where but one thing is certain: uncertainty.

In the following sections of this essay I seek to dig deeper into that which the pandemic or the “corona crisis” (as some prefer to call it) is a symptom and an intensification of, rather than a source. Furthermore, in order to better understand the complex and perverse entanglement of the phenomena and processes which activated the crisis in the first place, I turn to Queer Death Studies (QDS), an emerging interdisciplinary field that challenges cultural imaginaries, norms and normativities surrounding death, dying and mourning, as well as the “creation” of liveable lives and grievable deaths.<sup>2</sup> In doing so, I employ the concept of “queer” as an analytical device: a verb or an adverb that refers to the processes of undoing, subverting and going beyond given norms (e.g. Chen 2012; Sandilands & Erickson 2010; MacCormack 2020). As queerfeminist theorists Noreen Giffney and Myra Hird put it, to queer means “to undo normative entanglements and fashion alternative imaginaries” beyond an exclusive concern with gender and sexuality (Giffney and Hird 2008, 6).

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Radomska, Mehrabi and Lykke 2019; Radomska, Mehrabi and Lykke forthcoming 2020.



We are not all humans, or not human to the same degree, not if by ‘human’ you mean to refer to the dominant vision of the Subject as white, male, heterosexual, urbanized, able-bodied, speaking a standard language and taking charge of the women and the children. Many of us belong to other, more marginalized categories or groups: non-white, non-male, nonheterosexual, not urbanized, not able-bodied, not speaking a standard language, not in charge of the women and the children. The world itself is not human, but teems with organisms and lifeforms parallel to but distinct from our species. Those who are other-than-human, or otherwise human, cannot claim full allegiance to the dominant vision of the human subject: their belonging is negotiable at best. —Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphic Others and Nomadic Subjects*, 2014.



Queer will thus operate here as a critical tool that troubles, unpacks and undoes seemingly fixed categorisations and divisions in order to shed light on the complexity of our present and reimagine the ways we relate to human and nonhuman others, perhaps in a more hospitable register.

### **Amplifying vulnerabilities**

The current pandemic situation has revealed several factors pertinent to our present, which, while remaining crucial, usually go unnoticed. Firstly, both Europe and the US have enjoyed decades of peace and relative prosperity (though, to varying degrees, of course). The global trauma of WW2—let alone of WW1—feels distant; although for some the experiences and fears linked to the Cold War arms race and the tragedy of the Yugoslav Wars from the 1990s still seem vivid, for the most part the idea of uncontrollable danger or situation is perceived as something “elsewhere” in geographical, socio-cultural or temporal terms. In a similar vein, recent decades grounded most of the Western countries in a false assumption that epidemics are events happening “far away” (with the exception of the swine flu (H1N1) pandemic from 2009 to 2010 and the HIV-AIDS global epidemic), which only contributed to the ongoing neoliberal deconstruction of healthcare systems, welfare structures and other institutions. Such an assumption is of course problematic in itself, proving yet again the persisting but not always openly admitted, idea of Western exceptionalism and “supremacism”, in its “mild” version perfectly exemplified by the slow adaptation of face masks in most of the Western countries in the context of COVID-19.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Initially, when the cases of COVID-19 were only starting to appear in Europe and the US, mask wearers (especially of Asian origin) faced racist violence in many places on both continents. It has taken months for the WHO to recommend the general public use of face masks (to be precise, the recommendation was issued on 5th June 2020). Some countries still questioned this.

There are no universal criteria for what constitutes a crisis; its definition is always historically and geopolitically context-specific with different investments and stakes from different parties involved. Calling a situation, a crisis or “critical” (both from the Greek word *krinein*, “to separate, decide, judge” (Harper 2020) involves power to decide, which is a privilege that is not given by default to all. For the (most) disadvantaged groups or populations critical living conditions may actually be the essence of everyday reality, only intensified by the current pandemic. The latter, as statistics from all around the world show, does affect some more than others, amplifying already existing vulnerabilities: the proportion of positive cases and deaths among people of colour in the US and the UK (APM Research Lab Staff 2020; Campbell & Siddique 2020), and the globally rising amount of cases of domestic violence linked to lockdowns are some of the examples. While I have no space here to go into details, in her text “Viral/Species/Crossing: Border Panics and Zoonotic Vulnerabilities” written in the context of the swine flu pandemic, gender studies scholar Melissa Autumn Wright reminds us how, in the context of epidemics, “bio and necropolitics in shared nationalised spaces” converge and intensify, creating “political institutions and acts of governance that allow an effectively striated humanity (of citizen-subjects and noncitizen-others) and manufacturing of ‘disposable populations’” (Wright 2010, 121) and lives.

For instance, in Sweden the (infamous) national epidemiologist Anders Tegnell, when asked about the said recommendation, responded that it does not fit the Swedish strategy, which says that one should stay home whenever experiencing symptoms, ignoring the fact that approximately 40–45 percent of those infected never develop any symptoms (Oran et al. 2020). The resistance towards the use of face masks in the general society is motivated by the idea that “a mask gives little protection to the wearer”, which completely dismisses the key premise of the use of face masks in places where they have been used for years (not least because of the experience of the SARS epidemic in 2003), i.e. protecting those around you.

Worlds seen through care accentuate a sense of interdependency and involvement. What challenges are posed to critical thinking by increased acute awareness of its material consequences? What happens when thinking about and with others is understood as living with them? When the effects of caring, or not, are brought closer? Here, knowledge that fosters caring for neglected things enters in tension between a critical stance against neglect and the fostering of speculative commitment to think how things could be different. —María Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care. Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*, 2017.



## **Pandemic (and other death) matters**

Yet, the pandemic as such should not be seen as much of a surprise as some would like to have it. As Wright notes, the idea of a global pandemic has been in the air since 1997 and the outbreak of avian influenza in Hong Kong at the time; in 2005 WHO issued a general pandemic alert after working with the development of early viral response capacities and structures since 2002 and following the SARS epidemic from 2002 to 2004 (Stephenson & Jamieson 2005, cited in Wright 2010, 121).<sup>4</sup>

Simultaneously, disease ecologists, biologists, virologists and environmental scientists have been pointing out for years that the ongoing anthropogenic environmental disruption (in other words, global environmental crises) is the key reason, circumstance and ground for the emergence of zoonotic diseases, and any potential (or, in fact, actual) epidemics. Back in 2008 British biodiversity and ecology scientist Kate Jones and her team identified 335 emerging infectious disease “events” (i.e. the appearances of new infectious diseases) that took place between 1940 and 2004 (Jones, et al. 2008). Over 60 percent of those are zoonoses (and 71.8 percent originate from wildlife). As Jones underlines in a conversation with *The Guardian*, zoonoses (and one might add, by extension, caused by those epidemics) are:

**a hidden cost of human economic development. There are just so many more of us, in every environment. We are going into largely undisturbed places and being exposed more and more.**

<sup>4</sup> See also: <https://www.who.int/ith/diseases/sars/en/> (accessed June 26, 2020).

**We are creating habitats where viruses are transmitted more easily, and then we are surprised that we have new ones (Vidal 2020).**

Currently Jones and her team look at how species in degraded habitats are likely to carry more viruses which can jump over to humans. As she emphasises, “simpler systems get an amplification effect” (Vidal 2020).

Researchers working at the intersection of public health, virology and environmental science are not surprised by the current pandemic and nor should anyone, really. As disease ecologist Thomas Gillespie notes, “Pathogens do not respect species boundaries... The majority of pathogens are still to be discovered. We are at the very tip of the iceberg” (Vidal 2020). At the same time, the slaughter of nonhumans, killing off of entire species, destruction of biodiversity and natural habitats, and degradation of landscapes continue as “business as usual”. The global north does not cease its quest for minerals, wood and other resources often extracted from the global south. This also includes wildlife: elephant ivory, rhino horn, sturgeon caviar, and so-called “bushmeat” (the flesh of primates, antelopes, rodents, birds and reptiles) are smuggled to Europe and North America (Sun Weiler & Sheikh 2013; Jabr 2020). The exploitation and degradation of nature mixed with intensifying socio-economic inequalities directly contribute to the emergence of zoonoses (Gosalvez 2020): “Whenever you have novel interactions with a range of species in one place, whether that is in a natural environment like a forest or a wet market, you can have a spillover event”, as Gillespie emphasises (Vidal 2020). The more of such spaces we purposefully manufacture, the greater potential for spillover events we generate. In other words, as science writer Ferris Jabr recently put it:

**Our ceaseless rearranging of ecosystems loops back to alter our health in even more circuitous ways—in ways many people would never consider... We cannot blame the bats, mosquitoes and viruses. We cannot expect them to go against their nature. The challenge before us is how best to govern ourselves and stymie the flood we unleashed (Jabr 2020).**

For the record, it is not only wet markets (which sparked a lot of different commentaries from various sides) that are at the source of any potential epidemic/pandemic; the entire animal agriculture and other structures enabling the exploitation of nonhuman animals broadly speaking are to blame (e.g. it suffices to recall the outbreaks of BSE or swine flu, which did not involve wildlife). But most importantly, both slaughterhouses and wet markets where living animals are kept, killed and sold—or to put it differently, where “bare life” (Agamben 1998) is exploited and butchered with impunity, because it is constructed as such, a mere object to (ab)use—are places where excruciating pain, suffering and death are manufactured on a mass scale. In the context where outbreaks of infectious diseases happen in abattoirs (as it took place in the cases of avian and swine flu in the past, and currently in the times of COVID-19),<sup>5</sup> the killing itself becomes “the product” and the animal bodies are deemed either “excessive” or “not suitable for consumption” and therefore killed and destroyed.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.bbc.com/news/53137613> (accessed June 26, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> See e.g.: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-livestock-insight/piglets-aborted-chickens-gassed-as-pandemic-slams-meat-sector-idUSKCN2292YS> and <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/14/business/coronavirus-farmers-killing-pigs.html> (accessed June 26, 2020).

During the present pandemic, the shortage of staff who could “process” the to-be-slaughtered animals created a “backlog” of livestock. As political theory and critical animal studies scholar Lisa Warden writes about this situation:

**industrial farms are culling millions of animals, now classified as waste, on site. The culling methods specified by the American Veterinary Medical Association’s guidelines for ‘depopulation’ include gassing, suffocation with foam, and induced hyperthermia achieved by turning up the heat and switching off ventilation systems (Warden 2020).**

Simultaneously, the everyday cruelty and brutality of the slaughterhouse reality (in regular circumstances, let alone under the pandemic) is accompanied by the precarious conditions and situation of abattoir employees: these are often temporary, foreign and undocumented workers, not necessarily speaking the language of the country they work in, and thus also afraid of losing their jobs; workplace injuries are frequent; work conditions render the staff more prone to various diseases; and the trauma linked to the character of the work has further consequences for their mental health and well-being, often resulting in desensitisation and increased cruelty both in and out of workplace, leading to an even more extensive spiral of violence (e.g. Warden 2020). All this is nothing new, really. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic seems to both intensify and shed light on the perversity of what has already been there for a very long time and what most of us prefer to ignore.



## **Viral queerings**

Let us take a closer look at the entity that seems to have catalysed the major global changes of the past six months: from deaths and (short as well as long-term) illness, through massive lockdowns, domestic violence and impact on people's mental health, to the exposure of precarity, insufficient healthcare and welfare structures, institutions and mechanisms, as well as structural and environmental violence. SARS-CoV-2, like any virus, lingers in an ambivalent space of the non/living (Radomska 2016; 2017): not quite a form of "life", and not a "non-life" either. From a philosophical point of view, the virus challenges the very conceptual boundaries of what life is. It emerges itself as an enmeshment of processes that defy (or queer) straightforward classifications and binaries. Looking at the virus through a biological lens, it does not fulfil the four basic criteria of life (the entity has a body; it metabolises; it reproduces; it is capable of movement). Here, the criterion of reproduction (combined with the passing on of hereditary information) is not necessarily valid because, in order to replicate, viruses need a host cell. In this way, we may speak of an "actant" (Haraway 1992) that disrupts clear-cut categories and simultaneously exerts a great impact on (both human and nonhuman) organisms and systems.

In the context of COVID-19 there has been a lot of discussions around the potential agency of the virus (from blogs, via critical commentaries and online lectures, to internet forums).<sup>7</sup> These debates bring us back to the not-so-new disagreements between new materialist arguments for nonhuman agency and more conventional standpoints committed to the human-centric notion of agency. While for the latter the

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7276839/> ; <http://lab.cccb.org/en/reimagining-the-human-virus-entanglement/> ; <https://nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-2004/msg00016.html> (accessed June 25, 2020).

essential characteristic of agency is intentionality (and what sometimes follows, responsibility), the former define agency as a mere capacity to act or have an impact, without the necessity of intentionality. In this way, a potential conflict between the two camps consists, in fact, in talking about two different things.

However, both various forms of posthumanities (see e.g. Åsberg & Braidotti 2018) and new materialism (e.g. Bennett 2010; Coole & Frost 2010) have taught us that the hubris of human exceptionalism (more often than not fashioned on the image of the white heterosexual male) does not remain limited to questions of agency or inertness. Human exceptionalism stands behind the judgement of what counts as “human enough”; valuable enough; deserving respect and protection; sentient; liveable; and last, but not least, grievable. This issue constitutes itself a separate discussion, which I will not dive into here. However, the human-exceptionalist trust and confidence in the anthropocentric governing and control over everything deemed worth-less (which often means everything and everyone marked as “nature”) can at times turn upon itself, pointing at uncontainability, uncontrollability, excessive and queering potentials at the very core of the non/living (Radomska 2016): organisms, entities and processes that essentially and ontologically defy fixed and sterile classifications and binary categorisations. They evade the illusion of human control and the mould of “inert matter”. This comes to the fore repeatedly in each instance of “contamination” in any bio-scientific laboratory context. Undoubtedly, it has been exposed by SARS-CoV-2 as well. Talking about viruses or other nonhuman entities as “agents” or actants does not automatically mean that one sees them as endowed with intentionality and a set agenda of “nature taking its revenge on humans” (though, that might be an interesting metaphor); rather, it suggests a form of epistemological and ontological modesty that involves taking multiplicitous differences, processes, potentials and capacities to affect (other entities) seriously.

## **Epilogue: terminal ecologies, queer(ing) death, rethinking care**

In this context, we may ask: what then can the events of the past several months teach us also in philosophical terms and beyond “the obvious” that has been discussed in the previous sections of this essay? If the very “essence” of the non/living is queer(ing), in the sense of going beyond and disrupting given normativities and classifications, can our modes of thinking and theorising not only life but also death (which itself became a constant of any discussions around both the COVID-19 and the environmental crises) be queered? And if so, can that help us to imagine more hospitable forms of relations to others?

To address these enquiries, I turn to Queer Death Studies as a theoretical space that offers tools which question conventional, human-exceptionalist, often Eurocentric (or Western), hetero- and otherwise normative approaches to death, dying and mourning. Drawing on the fields of posthumanities, queer theory, decolonial approaches, feminist studies, and conventional death studies, among other avenues of philosophy and theory, QDS attends:

to issues of diverse cultural, socio-political, historical and economic conditions; to entangled relations between human and the environment in the context of the Anthropocene; and to differential experiences of marginalised communities and individuals excluded from hegemonic discourses on death, loss, grief, and mourning (Radomska, Mehrabi and Lykke 2019, 5).

Such a care-full approach implies: the de-exceptionalisation of human death and its ascribed value, rethinking thus both human and nonhuman death in a more ecosophical manner; decolonisation of the conventional patterns of epistemology; and queering of boundaries and categorisations.

Western cultural imaginaries tend to draw a firm dividing line between humans and nonhuman others, particularly visible in the context of death. There, dying is seen simultaneously as a process common to all creatures and as an event that discerns the human from other organisms (e.g. Heidegger [1953] 2010). The human is thus constructed as “privileged” by having an afterlife, either, in the form of an immortal soul (Christian tradition), or as a posthumously memorised subject (in secular terms). This privilege, however, is conditional and applies to the deceased that have not been expelled beyond the “boundaries” of what is deemed grievable (Butler 2004) in terms of citizenship, migrant status, geopolitical positioning, racialisation, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, and species, etc.

The current pandemic seems to have drawn attention to the ongoing more-than-human necropolitics, vulnerability, un/liveability and un/grievability in ways that slow violence (Nixon 2011) and environmental disruption have not managed—all due to human hubris. Perhaps, instead of fixations on futurity, our goal could be to rethink our present, which at times requires “palliative” care. Along with responsibility for the protection or preservation of life, literary and queer scholar Sarah Ensor suggests, we may turn to “acknowledging the end as an extended temporality that we already inhabit, rather than we are working to prevent” (Ensor 2016, 51). In her ecocritical work, the concept of “terminality” refers to a “lifelong” (Ensor 2016, 54) and shared condition, characterised by the potential for relations, non-linear temporality, and an ongoing responsibility for and accountability towards the harmed, the ill, the perishing, and the dead environments, ecosystems, living creatures and other entities. Perhaps, if we are to learn but one lesson in this situation,

it should be taking seriously: the harms we have been perpetrating; the queering and uncontainable potentials of “nature”, and the call for a more caring and hospitable world.

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Let's take a moment to re-turn touch, a subject and practice that was visited frequently in the previous years publication and programme. Situated in tension with knowing at a distance (a typically violent and colonial project for gathering knowledge), knowing through tactility, contact, our bodies, and being in touch, is something we have purposely given attention to in the programme.<sup>1</sup> And something we strive to host opportunities for during our gatherings. Yet now, touch is restricted. At least in our most common comprehensions of what it might mean to touch and be *in touch* with. In a strange turn of events (those of a pandemic), now to practice distance rather than touch becomes an act of care. Perhaps still there is a need to (re)consider touch?

At the same time physical touch has become untenable, we can no longer come together in the intimate ways we once could, it's notion has also expanded, visibilising an interconnecting world where everything is very much in touch. But what does this mean for thinking-with and knowing through touch? Is it increasingly at threat in favour of distance learning or is it being reconfigured at different levels? Rather than retracting entirely from touch, how might we give it more attention to better understand the multiple ways our bodies exist in touch with others (physically, socially, politically, ecologically...). And with this, the consideration of the consequences for bodies beyond our own if we do not take touch seriously. How might we learn to move with increased consciousness and response-ability in a world where everything is in touch? —Yvonne Billimore, Frame Contemporary Art Finland

**In an important sense, in a breathtakingly intimate sense, touching, sensing, is what matter does, or rather, what matter is: matter is condensations of response-ability. Touching is a matter of response. Each of “us” is constituted in response-ability. Each of “us” is constituted as responsible for the other, as being in touch with the other. —Karen Barad, On Touching—The Inhuman That Therefore I Am, 2012.**

**1** For further reading on touch and knowledge see the first publication in this series: *Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 1* (Archive Books & Frame Contemporary Art Finland, 2019).





**The body is the site of climate catastrophe**  
**Astrida Neimanis**





The 2019–2020 “Black Summer” bushfires in Australia were in many ways unprecedented, even as this is a land grown of flames. Exacerbated by historic drought, the country started burning in June 2019 while the final fires were not extinguished until March 4, 2020. More than 46 million acres of land were devastated, including 80 percent of the Blue Mountains World Heritage area in New South Wales, and 53 percent of the Gondwana World Heritage rainforests in Queensland. At least 3,500 homes and buildings were destroyed and 34 humans died as a direct result of the fires. One to three billion animals were burned. The smoke circled the globe for a quarter of a year.

*If climate catastrophe is a phenomenon that we track through hockey stick graphs, sea level rise and PPM’s of atmospheric carbon dioxide, it is also written on, smouldering, coursing through, our bodies. “Pick up again the long struggle against lofty and privileged abstraction,” wrote Adrienne Rich, and begin “with the geography closest in—the body”.<sup>1</sup>*

*But what does it mean to say that the body is the site of climate catastrophe, when we already understand bodies to be excessive of their own containers, extended through deep time and into deep futures—in short, when we are always more than ourselves?*

*What does this mean, when climate catastrophe is also already colonialism, white body supremacy, heteropatriarchy, ableism and hatred of the poor, and where the trauma of catastrophe is not only individual but social, intergenerational, and multispecies—and when it is pervasive as weather?*

*If the body is the site of climate catastrophe, ~~what are we to do~~ how are we to feel?*

<sup>1</sup> Adrienne Rich, “Notes towards a Politics of Location,” *Blood, Bread and Poetry* (New York: Norton, 1986).

## 1. Bodies are always in excess of themselves.

The fact of embodiment lays bare the fallacy of a masculinist, self-sufficient, and exceptional human subject. Human bodies are implicated in, dependent on, composed of and constituting worlds. We are already everything; everything already is becoming us.

News reports beamed around the world spoke of a whole country set alight. The extent of the bushfires was difficult to fathom: no state was missed and the wreckage amounted to an area larger than entire countries. Yet on New Year's Eve, fireworks were still ejaculated from Sydney Harbour Bridge and intoxicated urban humans jostled for the money shot. Less than 100 kilometers away from that crowded quay others struggled to trace the shape of unbearable loss.<sup>2</sup> This is the wiliness of any geography, where a flat map is in fact a striated and cratered territory that, like a magician's pockets, harbours ever-expanding and incommensurable worlds. We are all here, now, but how do we enter each other?

Before, when the fires still felt far away, I accidentally read "Dry Spell," a short story in a collection from the 1940s by Australian writer Marjorie Barnard.<sup>3</sup> This strange tale of cli-fi *avant la lettre* deposits the reader into a dystopian Sydney plagued by encompassing drought ("even the deep feeders, the black butts and the like, were dying"). The narrator stumbles with other Sydneysiders and displaced rural inhabitants, all of them trying to escape the fires in the countryside, all of them trying to reach the ocean. The story ends with a few fat drops of rain. "Feel that?" someone standing next to them asks the narrator, but the narrator refuses any meteorological redemption. "Nothing would come of it now," the story concludes; "We must take up the burden of remaking the world."

<sup>2</sup> Danielle Celermajer, "The Tragedy of Two Australias: A lament for New Year's Eve", ABC Art & Religion (December 31, 2019). <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/the-tragedy-of-two-australias-lament-for-new-years-eve/11835086>

<sup>3</sup> Marjorie Barnard, "Dry Spell", *The Persimmon Tree and Other Stories* (Sydney Clarendon Publishing Co., 1943).

In January I walk along the river under the piss-yellow sky and think about everything those waters are washing out to sea, carried from somewhere just beyond my field of vision. The mullets, like other fish that feed along the bottom of eutrophic waterways, have learnt to utilise atmospheric oxygen. They leap, sometimes two feet out of the water, trying to catch a breath. As ash from the fires settled into the waterways, bacteria started to eat the ash-borne carbon. This means eating up the oxygen, too.<sup>4</sup>

Now, half a year later, when the filter-out-the-smoke masks have become guard-against-the-droplets ones, the yellow sky still hangs in my lungs.

## **2. We need to talk about our feelings.**

Embodied knowledge, while often denigrated and disavowed within the modern colonial episteme, confirms that Western scientific validity comprises only one kind of knowing. Manifest through poetics, aesthetics, and other bodily attunements, sensuous knowledges open to alternative modes of relation.

In confirming the body as site of climate catastrophe, we must simultaneously devise and hone tactics for living that resist categorical imperatives and rational logics; these will not be sufficient guides through our current dilemmas. A sensory, embodied, affective, and imaginative relation to the world opens to a different kind of ethics and politics.

Trying to become better read in the field of trauma studies, I learn that “the body keeps the score”: both personal and intergenerational traumas are lodged not only in something we might call mind

<sup>4</sup> Jo Kahn, “Our drinking water, rivers and fish will feel all the impact of bushfires, experts warn”, *ABC News* (January 9, 2020). <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-09/freshwater-ecosystems-water-catchment-bushfire-impact/11850826>

or psyche, but in the wet fabric of our flesh.<sup>5</sup> I am reminded of Sandor Ferenczi's thalassal hypothesis, which suggests that dreams of water recall not only the trauma of birth as we are expelled from our mothers' wombs, but also the phylogenetic catastrophe of the drying up of the seas.<sup>6</sup> Tetrapods were finally forced "to adapt themselves to a land existence, above all to renounce gill-breathing and provide themselves with organs for the respiration of air." Ferenczi posited this "phylogenetic recognition of our descent from aquatic vertebrates" as an embodied collective memory across deep time, whereby loss, sociality, desire and grief circulate through our cellular structures—a biological unconscious.

When places like Mallacoota on the South Coast were overtaken by fire, everyone made for the beach.

### **3. Climate change is all the changes, and all the nothing-really-changes, too.**

While the Black Summer fires may have been unprecedented, they did not arrive unannounced. "Indigenous peoples around the world have warned of colonial mismanagement of land, water, skies and people," writes Hannah Brontë, a Wakka Wakka and Yaegl artist, in her text that accompanies a photography and video work called *tellus terra* (2020).<sup>7</sup> The series depicts five women ("some traditional owners, others visiting from lands connected and affected by rising seas, droughts and volcanic eruptions") holding children on, beside, and inside their bodies. The women, like the scorched trees in the forest in which they stand, are

<sup>5</sup> Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (London: Penguin and Random House, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Sandor Ferenczi, *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality* (London: Karnac Books, (1938) 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Hannah Brontë, *tellus terra* (2020). All About Women Commission. Sydney Opera House Sydney, Australia. <https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/digital/articles/art/hannah-bronte-tellus-terra.html>

wrapped in black. Out of the blackened bark new branches sprout incandescent green. “How will I water my children while our country is on fire?” Brontë asks.

As far as I can tell *tellus* and *terra* mean the same thing: country, land, mother, earth. In an interview about another work called *Heala*, Brontë reminds us:

**Most women have been sexually assaulted. I don't want to continue to make that all ours to wear. We all carry it around secretly, it feels so cyclic and insane. But it's a fact, a story like anything else.<sup>8</sup>**

The ABC reported that during the bushfires domestic violence rates will spike, as they have in former bushfire disasters, one crisis slipping into another.<sup>9</sup>

(Two words can mean the same thing and neither might be a lie. But we still have two words, and what are we to do with that?)

“The capitalist patriarchy that enforces white supremacy is on fire,” writes Brontë.<sup>10</sup> The video soundtrack in *tellus terra* is water, only water.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Brontë and Anne Loxley, *Heala* (2018): Artist's Text. <https://www.the-national.com.au/artists/hannah-brontë/heala/>

<sup>9</sup> Hayley Gleeson, “A new bushfire crisis is emerging as experts brace for an imminent surge in domestic violence”, *ABC News* (February 24, 2020). <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-24/domestic-violence-anticipated-spike-bushfires-crisis/11980112>

<sup>10</sup> Hannah Brontë, *tellus terra* (2020).

#### 4. Everything and everywhere is not every-same.<sup>11</sup>

We keep telling the nine-year-old that in Sydney we are safe. She points, incredulously, to the trees that surround our little rented house on the river: *why those trees but not these?*

To say that *our bodies are already becoming everything already becoming us* feels too dangerous in its expansiveness. Total subsumption. We selectively siphon up the weather, some bodies storming, others keeling: patterns emerging. As one expression of this, cultural theorist Denise Ferreira da Silva offers us the idea of difference without separability. On this understanding, “difference is not a manifestation of an unresolvable estrangement, but the expressions of an elementary entanglement.”<sup>12</sup> Bodies differ because they are constantly finding new ways to manifest a subatomic, fundamental constitution. Ferreira da Silva’s is an invitation into:

**the World as a Plenum, an infinite composition in which each existant’s singularity is contingent upon its becoming one possible expression of all the other existants, with which it is entangled beyond space and time.<sup>13</sup>**

I finally can name some of the trees that line the path along the river: *mangrove, jacaranda, casuarina, Illawara flame tree*. Hannah Brontë writes:

<sup>11</sup> “Everywhereness is not an everysameness.” Tess Lea, “‘From Little Things, Big Things Grow’: The Unfurling of Wild Policy”, *e-flux* 58. (2014). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/58/61174/from-little-things-bigthings-grow-the-unfurling-of-wild-policy/>

<sup>12</sup> Denise Ferreira da Silva, “On Difference without Separability”, *Incerteza Viva (Live Uncertainty)*. Catalogue of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Bienal de Sao Paulo (2016): 57–65.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*



Colonising plants don't know the fire, they weren't born of flames. They don't know the intricate veins that run far below the surface. It would be impossible for them to feel that deep. Slowly and carefully the native greens settle into the soft terrain, taking up space just like she should.<sup>14</sup>

Many oceans brought me to this place, but that does not mean I was invited. In this “surfeit of such ecological catastrophes, intertwined with personal ones,”<sup>15</sup> I whisper into the rain, always still louder than me: *who am I to feel this trauma?*

*(Who are you, breathing in the ash of one and a half millennia of white body supremacy, of witch hunting and holocaust, of slavery and colonialism and persistent incandescent survival in the wake;<sup>16</sup> who are you, breathing in all that is wasting and worlding at the bottom of the sea; who are you not to feel this? This is also what made you. The rain whispers back.)*

Climate catastrophe is like weather: everywhere and always, the lifeworld made sensible. But the metaphor reverses and literalises itself too because climate catastrophe is also just weather.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Hannah Brontë, *tellus terra* (2020).

<sup>15</sup> Catriona Sandilands, “Losing my place: landscapes of depression”, in Ashlee Cunsolo and Karen Landman (eds.), *Mourning Nature* (Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 2017): 244–268.

<sup>16</sup> This phrase is a direct reference to the work of Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake* (Durham: Duke UP, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> This observation references Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved*: “By and by all trace is gone, and what is forgotten is not only the footprints but the water too and what it is down there. The rest is weather. Not the breath of the disremembered and unaccounted for, but wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather.” Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Alfred Knopf, 1987): 275.

## 5. Climate catastrophe is a structure of feeling.

*bones strong*  
*eyes averted*  
*fascia strained*  
*waters spilled*

All the pieces may be pulled apart (splayed, pinned, inspected) but a structure of feeling can only be discerned by looking at the “lived experience” in its entirety. It is not contained in any part but seeps through them all. A structure of feeling will “saturate the lifeworld in complex ways, as mood, attitude, manners, emotions, and so on.”<sup>18</sup>

*blood rushing*  
*breath shallow*  
*heart broken*  
*heart full*

I take pictures of the river everyday over the course of the Antipodean summer, trying to be present to its tiniest politics. Dany writes to me in March or was it April: have you read Jenny Offill’s book?<sup>19</sup> We discuss the project of writing a novel where climate catastrophe is the unremarked backdrop.

Last year, I read *City of Trees* by Australian writer Sophie Cunningham, a collection of essays about extinction and our connection to non-human worlds.<sup>20</sup> The chapters consider what gets lost, and what gets saved, what we let go of and what we keep; trees bear witness to this all.

<sup>18</sup> Ben Highmore, “Formations of feelings, constellations of things”, *Cultural Studies Review* 22:1 (2016): 144–167.

<sup>19</sup> Jenny Offill, *Weather* (Granta Books, 2020).

<sup>20</sup> Sophie Cunningham, *City of Trees* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2019).

Near the end of the collection, Cunningham picks up a thread she has woven through previous chapters about her two fathers, and their deaths, and sets her complicated sadness over these events alongside the story of Rane, an Indian elephant gifted by the King of Siam to the Melbourne Zoo in 1883. When upon reading her draft manuscript one of Cunningham's friends suggests that the essay is "repressed grief" about her fathers' deaths, Cunningham is "horrified": "Not because she was wrong," Cunningham explains, "but because I don't want to suggest that the natural death of a parent is in any way akin to the grief that we may soon live in a world where there will be no elephants left in the wild."<sup>21</sup>

I still don't understand this part of the book. Cunningham asks us, rightly, to resist the levelling of all catastrophes. She is also properly wary of the urge to personalise these more expansive deaths, because to do so is also to metaphorise them. But I want to know: how else are we to feel them, if not as the lump in our own throats? Writing about his own father's death amidst a world of extinctions, Australian cli-fi novelist James Bradley suggests that:

a lifetime is an ocean and an instant. It does not matter whether something happened a week ago, a year ago, a decade ago: all loss is now. Grief does not stop, or disappear. It suffuses, inhabits us. [...] What is lost remains with us, felt in its unpresence.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cunningham, *City of Trees*: 287.

<sup>22</sup> James Bradley, "An Ocean and an Instant", *Sydney Review of Books* (2018). <https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/essay/an-ocean-and-an-instant/>

Interviewed in the first days of January, a dairy farmer from around Cobargo in southern New South Wales describes “a raging ocean that went through”.<sup>23</sup> I think a lot about this slip-slide in the farmer’s imaginary: *blanket of flames thrown across the country becoming ocean*.

To find poetics in a disaster may not be at all “to give in to the siren song of a resolved narrative,” as Cunningham feared and resisted.<sup>24</sup> It might be instead to insist on the incommensurable connectedness of things whose holding-together we almost cannot bear—a work that only poems and bodies know how to do.

## **6. We are all bodies of water.**

As bodies, we are also always almost gone: flesh to food, bone to earth, water to water. To be a body of water is also to know that we, that I, will ultimately dissolve. Dissolving into other oceans, we are physically but also chemically transforming. While climate catastrophe demands of us a reckoning with so many worldly dissolutions (of bodies, species, entire lifeworlds), it also takes seriously the work of dissolution as a way of reorienting ourselves to these times:

*What can we stand to relinquish?  
Of what should we let go?*

On the evening of the summer solstice in December we are on Helen’s dead mother’s porch and we scrawl messages on small pieces of paper,

<sup>23</sup> Julie Power, “Despair and Destruction in Cobargo: ‘Most People are Running Dead’”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, (January 15, 2020). <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/everything-is-black-and-burnt-it-was-like-a-raging-ocean-20200115-p53ro3.html>

<sup>24</sup> Cunningham, *City of Trees*: 287.

then set them on fire in a large bowl. I don't remember what I wrote, but I remember the quiet transgression of lighting a match and burning something, even though the porch was enclosed and the floor was concrete.

This is an argument neither for retention (memory) nor for dissolution (forgetting)—it is rather a question about difference without separation. When our bodies no longer remain, and all the worlds have been unworlded and then worlded again, there is still the weather.

Your body is the whole ocean. My body is the droplet, or the spark, forming below your tongue.



# Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2

## Contributors





Camille Auer is at a loss. She doesn't know what to do. This is what she does know: she's a poet and an artist. She has an MA from Aalto University. She's trans and bisexual. Why is that something she writes in her bio. Maybe because she used to say dyke and she used to need to make sure people don't make false assumptions about her gender and now it's a habit. She has to write her bio every now and then for work stuff and she almost always does it again, because what she writes always eludes what she thinks of herself the next time a bio is required. She is a precarious art worker. She loves it, but it's also very stressful. She wouldn't know what else to do. It's the basket she has put all of her eggs in. She lives in Turku and loves dogs and theory.

Yvonne Billimore is an artist-curator, currently working as associate programme curator at Frame Contemporary Art Finland. Previously she worked at Scottish Sculpture Workshop in rural Aberdeenshire, where she developed and produced a programme of residencies, projects, workshops and public events. Her work facilitates situations for collective learning, exchange and experiences with particular attention given to feminist and ecological practices.

Annet Dekker is assistant professor Media Studies: Archival and Information Studies at the University of Amsterdam and visiting professor and co-director of the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image at London South Bank University. She has previously been Researcher, Digital Preservation at Tate, London and core tutor at Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam, and Fellow at Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam. Alongside being an independent curator, she worked as web curator for SKOR (Foundation for Art and Public Domain) and curator/head of exhibitions, education and artists in residence at the Netherlands Media Art Institute.

Denise Ferreira da Silva is director and professor at the University of British Columbia's Social Justice Institute (GRSJ) and a 2019 Wall Scholar. She is the author of *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (2007) and *A Divida Impagavel* (2019). Her artistic work includes the films *Serpent Rain* (2016) and *4Waters-Deep Implicancy* (2018), in collaboration with Arjuna Neuman; and the relational art practices *Poethical Readings and Sensing Salon*, in collaboration with Valentina Desideri. She lives and works on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəyəm) people.

Aimi Hamraie is associate professor of medicine, Medicine, Heath, and Society and American studies at Vanderbilt University, where they also direct the Critical Design Lab. They are author of *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

Hanna Helander is a project manager of a pilot project on distance education in Sámi languages run by the municipality of Utsjoki and the Sámi Parliament. She works also as a part time researcher at the University of Lapland's ADVOST-research project. She is currently a doctoral student of the University of Oulu where her thesis focuses on the pedagogical use of Sámi traditional storytelling.

Jussi Koitela currently works as head of programme at Frame Contemporary Art Finland and as an independent curator. Lately his curatorial work has entangled art, embodied research methodologies, feminist philosophy of science and materiality in different exhibitionary

forms and modes of knowledge production. His curatorial projects have been presented among others at Konsthall C, Treignac Projet, Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (EKKM), De Appel Arts Centre, SixtyEight Art Institute, Trøndelag Centre for Contemporary Art and Kiasma Theatre. Koitela was a participant of De Appel Curatorial Programme in 2015/2016.

**m-cult** is a Helsinki-based agency which develops and promotes media art and digital culture, with a focus on cultural and social aspects of media and technology. m-cult: works across the fields of media and collaborative art and open source culture; supports artists in the creation, presentation and reflection of socially engaged/technically experimental art; brings together international networks and local communities; engages in cultural policy, documentation and archiving of media art.

**Ali Akbar Mehta** is a founding member and current artistic director of Museum of Impossible Forms, Helsinki, and artistic producer at M-cult media residency, Helsinki. He is also pursuing a Doctoral Research programme at the Contemporary Art Department at Aalto University, Helsinki. Through his research-based transmedia practice, he creates immersive archives that explore collective memetic histories, narratives of memory, identity, violence, and conflict.

**Museum of Impossible Forms (m{if})** in Kontula, Helsinki, is a culture centre founded in 2017 by a group of artists/curators/philosophers/activists/pedagogists as an antiracist and queer-feminist project. m{if} manifests itself through its multilingual

libraries, an ongoing archive, and events. It is a para-museum space representing a contact zone, a space of unlearning, formulating identity constructs, norm-critical consciousness, and critical thinking.

**Astrida Neimanis** is feminist writer and teacher interested in bodies, water and weather, and how they can help us reimagine justice, care, responsibility and relation in the time of climate catastrophe. Her most recent book is *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*. She is also co-editor, with Jennifer Mae Hamilton, of the *Australian Feminist Studies* special issue on feminist environmental humanities, and co-convenor of the *Composting Feminism and the Environmental Humanities* reading and research group. She currently works as a senior lecturer in Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney on Gadigal Land, in Sydney, Australia.

**Marietta Radomska, PhD,** is a postdoc at Linköping University, SE; co-director of The Posthumanities Hub; founder of The Eco- and Bioart Research Network, co-founder of Queer Death Studies Network and International Network for ECOcritical and DECOlonial Studies; author of *Uncontainable Life: A Biophilosophy of Bioart* (2016) and has published in *Australian Feminist Studies*, *Somatechnics*, and *Women, Gender & Research*, among others.

**Marianne Savallampi** is a curator and art historian based in Helsinki. Currently she is co-artistic director at Museum of Impossible Forms culture centre. Her practice works within the cross-sections of art, queer, feminism, and activism.

Laura Soisalon-Soininen lives and works in Helsinki and graduated with an MA from the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki in 2020. Her work has been exhibited at the Exhibition Laboratory in Helsinki, Artifex Textiles Galerija in Vilnius and Treignac Projet in Treignac.

Laura's works can be experienced as material traces of embodied measurements with places she has spent time. Her works connect local materiality and language through repetitive actions such as walking (in rivers), sewing, weaving, and crafting from raw materials.

Minna Tarkka director of m-cult, has worked as critic, educator, producer and curator of media art and culture. She has been active as a founding member of several media art organisations and in establishing university curricula relating to media art, including the Media Lab Helsinki, where she was professor from 1996 to 2001. At m-cult she has conceptualised and managed ambitious collaborative programmes involving international and local partners.

Touko Vaahtera, PhD, is a queer-disability studies scholar based in Helsinki. Their research interests include disability studies, queer theory, methodology, affect theory, cultural studies, and post-colonial studies. Their new research project focuses on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and disability studies.

What the books taught me, I've practised.  
What they didn't teach me, I've taught myself.  
I've gone into the forest and wrestled with the lion.  
I didn't get this far by teaching one thing and doing another.

—Lal Ded, *I, Lalla: The Poems of Lal Dēd; Naked Song: Lalla*, from Vidha Saumya's Reading List Companion: a short guide to accompany the mural, 'Reading List', painted at the Frame Contemporary Art Finland's office space in 2019, as the first artistic commission in the context of *Rehearsing Hospitalities* public programme for 2019 to 2023.



# **Rehearsing Hospitalities 2020**

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Collated from a selection of references and quotations which appear throughout Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2.



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REHEARSING  
HOSPITALITIES

frame contemporary art  
finland



Now more than ever we need to be consciously (re)considering diverse forms of hospitalities and ways of being together.

In these disconnected times marked by global crises, this edition of the *Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion* series turns towards questions of hospitality and access. Looking beyond normative and institutionalised understandings of access, this publication considers access from a manifold of approaches, perceptions, and relations.

With contributions from Camille Auer, Yvonne Billimore, Annet Dekker, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Aimi Hamraie, Hanna Helander, Jussi Koitela, Ali Akbar Mehta, Astrida Neimanis, Marietta Radomska, Marianne Savallampi, Laura Soisalon-Soininen, Minna Tarkka, and Touko Vaahtera.

*Rehearsing Hospitalities Companion 2* is a site for hosting and gathering, for coming together to re-visit, re-turn and re-configure worlds of hospitalities.