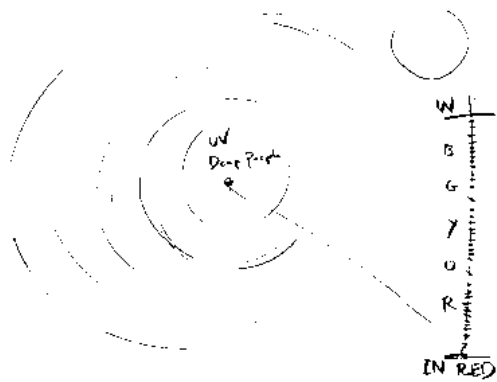
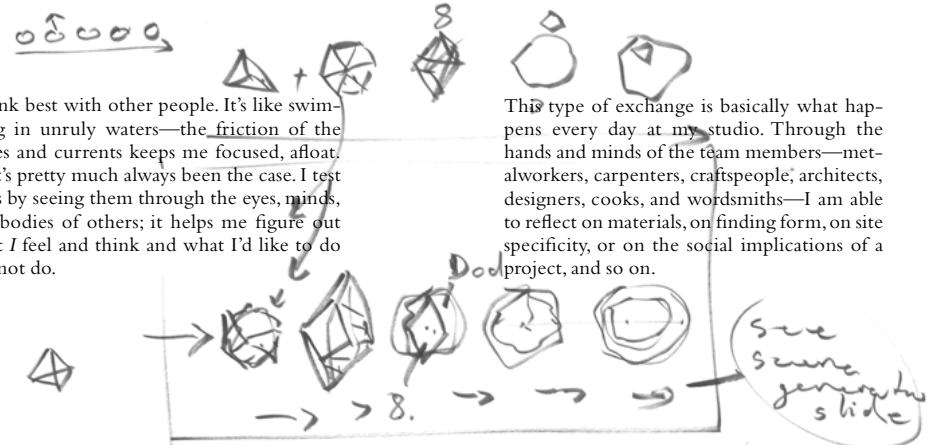


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Felt, experienced, lived!
Olafur Eliasson



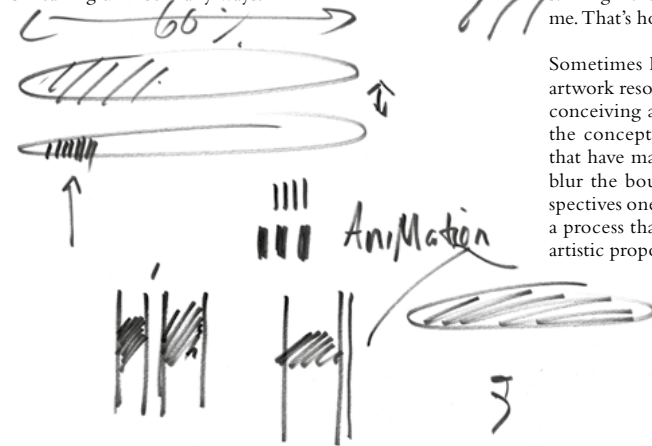
I think best with other people. It's like swimming in unruly waters—the friction of the waves and currents keeps me focused, afloat. That's pretty much always been the case. I test ideas by seeing them through the eyes, minds, and bodies of others; it helps me figure out what I feel and think and what I'd like to do and not do.

This type of exchange is basically what happens every day at my studio. Through the hands and minds of the team members—metalworkers, carpenters, craftspeople, architects, designers, cooks, and wordsmiths—I am able to reflect on materials, on finding form, on site specificity, or on the social implications of a project, and so on.

The first time this became crystal clear to me was in the 1990s. I was hiking from Landmannalaugar to Thórs mörk, in Iceland, for what must have been the tenth time—a route that had become very familiar to me. My partner at the time, the artist Frances Stark, was hiking with me, and her excitement and keen sensorium—her ability to move her attention almost surgically to a stone and to engage in minute exploration of a patch of moss—revealed to me the sheer pleasure of togetherness, of experiencing stuff with, and through, someone else. We bounced what we saw back and forth and explored what seeing actually is. This convinced me that doing things together is meaningful in so many ways.

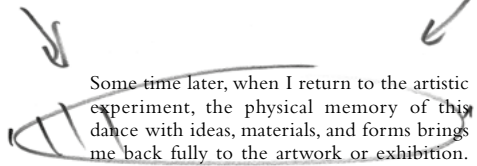
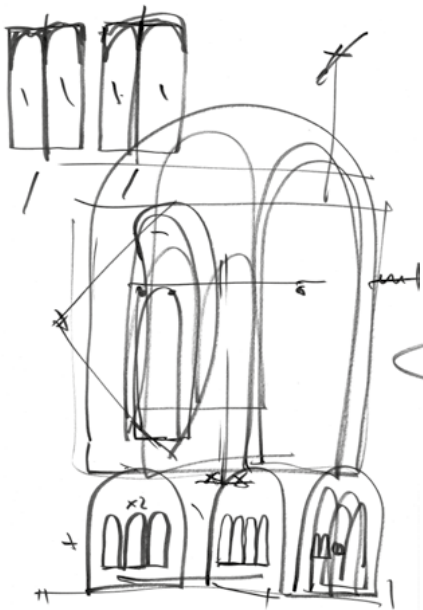
Over the years, I've also long drawn inspiration from an eclectic mix of thinkers, researchers, and scientists—philosophers, anthropologists, cultural geographers, biologists, botanists, dancers, and writers, among others. Reading their work helps me explore my relationships to my surroundings, to the communities I'm part of, and to the society and times I live in. Through them I can work to make these networks and connections visible and felt.

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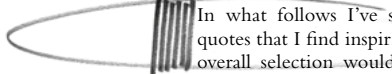


I've never been a great reader, in fact, but I'm good at recalling quotes from texts as images; the shape of a book, the color of a page, where I was standing while reading something striking—these are impressions that stay with me. That's how I arrive at the ideas of others.

Sometimes I make the process of making an artwork resonate with a textual idea. Or while conceiving an exhibition I find space within the concept for ideas that stem from books that have made an impression on me. I try to blur the boundaries and take on plural perspectives one by one, dancing with—and in—a process that could lead to something, to an artistic proposition.

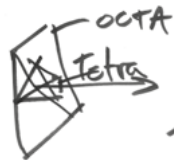
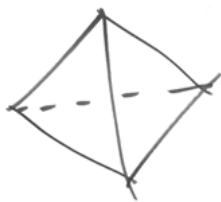


Some time later, when I return to the artistic experiment, the physical memory of this dance with ideas, materials, and forms brings me back fully to the artwork or exhibition. *The embodiment of the idea* is crucial. In that process of being away from and returning to the artwork, I can also fact-check my worldview, examine my blind spots, and embrace my uncertainties, which the actual work in the studio doesn't always allow for.



In what follows I've selected a number of quotes that I find inspiring. Five years ago, the overall selection would have been different. In five years' time, it will surely change again. What you encounter is a slice of the space that I am presently navigating. I move with ideas, I move through ideas, I try to embody ideas in my work and in my practice. It is a kind of temporary architecture of thoughts and concepts—an ephemeral palace with spaces for being, living, and exploring; with pathways and back doors to complement *Nel tuo tempo* and the architecture of Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. Each quote builds a space that is always interconnected with other quotes and other spaces in this palace of embodied thoughts.

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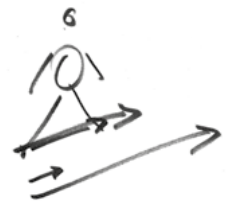


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sphere



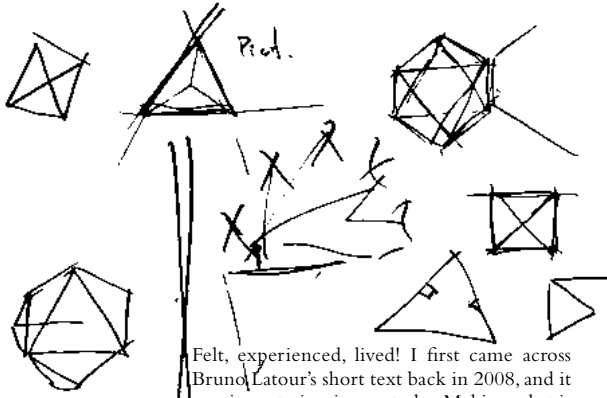
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sphere

At first we feel nothing, we are naturalized. And then suddenly we feel not something, but the absence of something we did not know before could possibly be lacking. Think of the poor soldiers on the frontline, deep in their trenches, the 22nd of April 1915 near Ypres. They knew everything about bullets, shells, rats, death, mud, and fear – but air, they did not *feel* air, they just breathed it. And then, from this ugly, slow-moving greenish cloud lingering over them, air is being removed. They begin to suffocate. Air has entered the list of what could be withdrawn from us. In the terms of the great German thinker Peter Sloterdijk, air has been made *explicit*; air has been re-configured; it is now part of an air-conditioning *system* that makes our life possible.

One could protest that this has always been the case, at least as long as planet Earth has been “polluted” – as Lovelock claimed – by oxygen. Is not air one of the four elements? “Everyone knew” that air was one of the conditions of (aerobic) life. Yet this knowledge was not *explicit* in the sense Sloterdijk wishes to elaborate. Air was not felt, it was not experienced, no laboratory scientist was able to place his laboratory in between ordinary living creatures and air itself. Air did not count as something that had to come to our collective, political attention.

Bruno Latour, “Air,” in Caroline Jones, ed., *Sensations: Embodied Experience in Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2006), 105.

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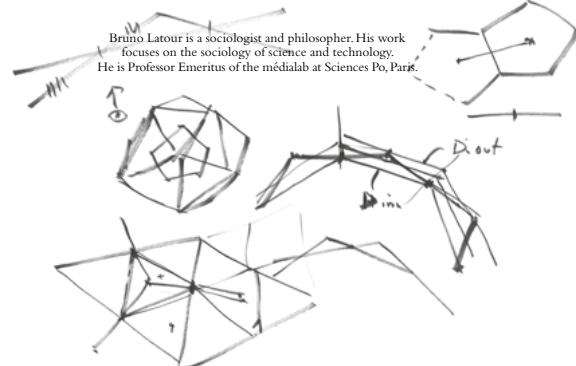


Felt, experienced, lived! I first came across Bruno Latour's short text back in 2008, and it continues to inspire me today. Making what is invisible and naturalized *explicit* is, for me, what art is capable of doing. This process of transformation, which engages our bodies and minds, our feelings of presence and awareness, is at the core of my practice.

When I was conceiving *Nel tuo tempo* for Palazzo Strozzi, for example, I wanted to see this magnificent building not merely as a passive host, backdrop, or container for my exhibition, but rather as a *coproducer* of the exhibition. The artworks I've made will, I hope, make the building seem present, *explicit* to you, the visitors.

Imagine a journey. It does not have to be an epic one; it could be quite quotidian, simply from “here” to “there” – from Manchester to Liverpool, let's say. One way to picture it is as travelling across space. You're moving between two places on a map. Manchester and Liverpool are given; and you, the active one, travel between them. You have a trajectory.

Now think of it another way. For this movement of yours is not just spatial; it's also temporal. So, you're barely out of Manchester, approaching the moors that stretch away, flat, on either side, when Manchester itself has moved on. Lives have pushed ahead, business has been done, the weather, indeed, has changed. That collection of trajectories that is Manchester is no longer the same as when you



Bruno Latour is a sociologist and philosopher. His work focuses on the sociology of science and technology. He is Professor Emeritus of the médialab at Sciences Po, Paris.

Doreen Massey, “Some Times of Space,” in *For Space* (London: Earth Publications, 2003), 110.

left it. It has lived on without you. And Liverpool? Likewise it has not just been lying there, static on the map, awaiting your arrival. It too has been going about its business; moving on. Your arrival in Lime Street, when you step off the train, begin to get into the things you came here to do, is a meeting-up of trajectories as you entangle yourself in stories that began before you arrived. This is not the arrival of an active voyager upon an awaiting passive destination but an intertwining of on-going trajectories from which something new may emerge. Movement, encounter, and the making of relationships take time... The voyager is not the only active one. Origin and destination have lives of their own

Doreen Massey (1944–2016) was a geographer and teacher, whose influential work strove to understand concepts of space and power and their engagement with political change.

What are the futures ahead? What are, in fact, our pasts?

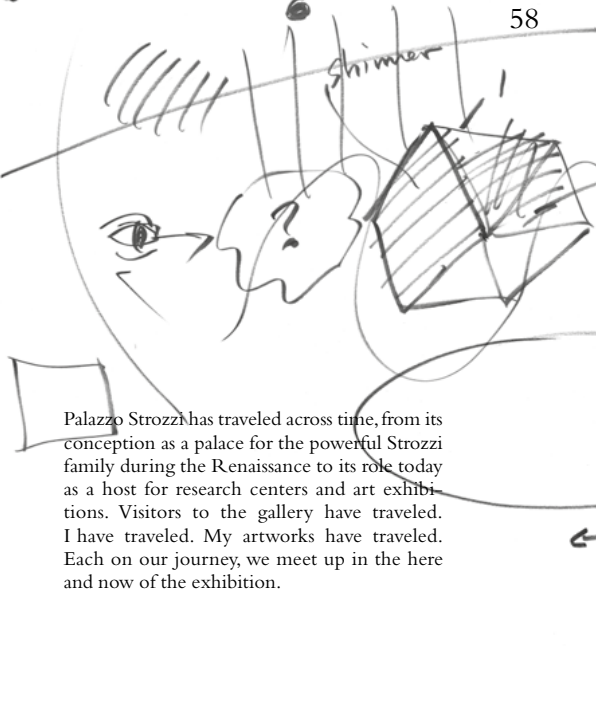
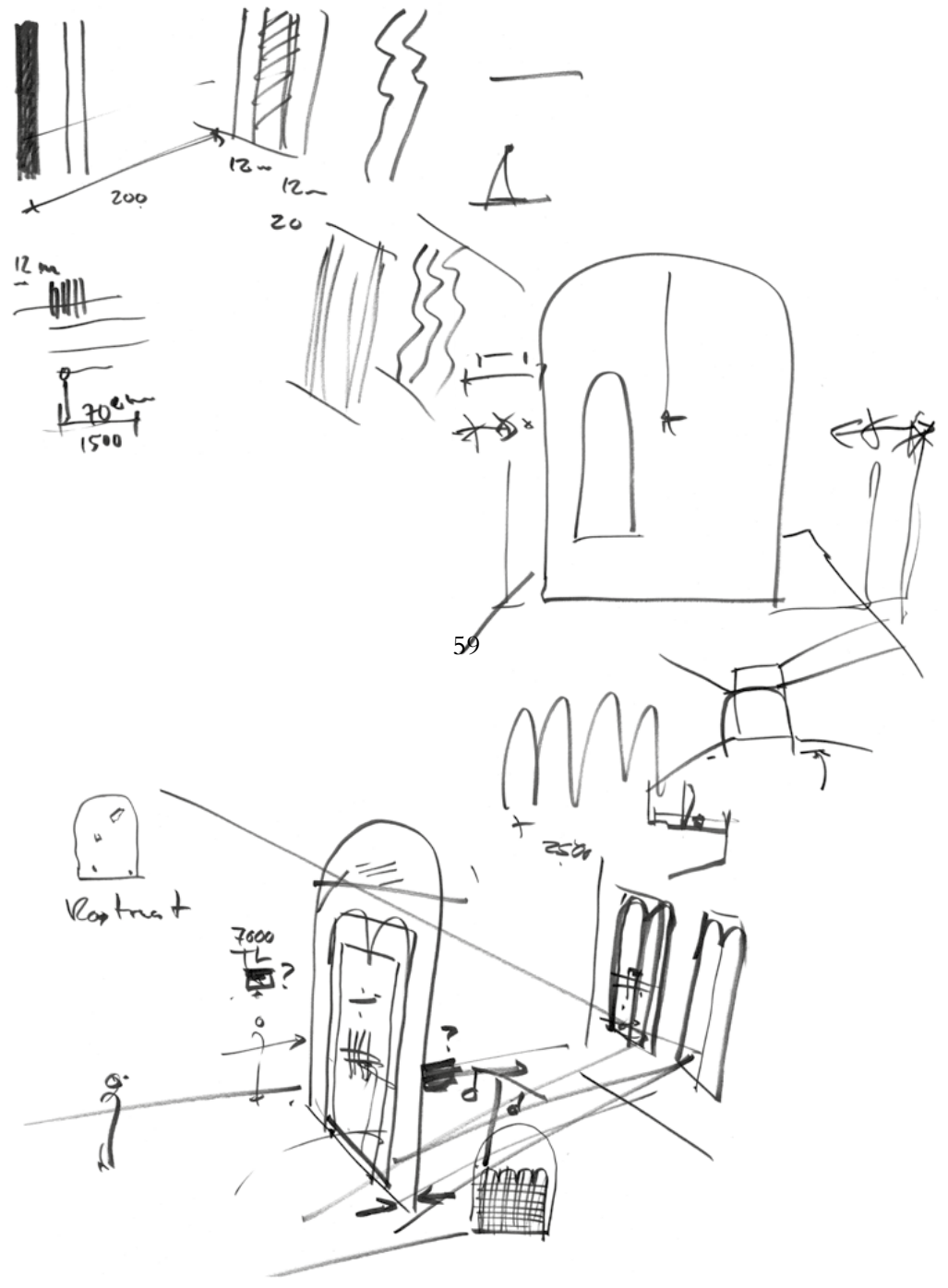
Every generation confronts the task of choosing its past. Inheritances are chosen as much as they are passed on. The past depends less on "what happened then" than on the desires and discontents of the present. Strivings and failures shape the stories we tell. What we recall has as much to do with the terrible things we hope to avoid as with the good life for which we yearn. But when does one decide to stop looking to the past and instead conceive of a new order? When is it time to dream of another country or to embrace other strangers as allies or to make an opening, an overture, where there is none? When is it clear that the old life is over, a new one has begun, and there is no looking back? From the holding cell was it possible to see beyond the end of the world and to imagine living and breathing again?

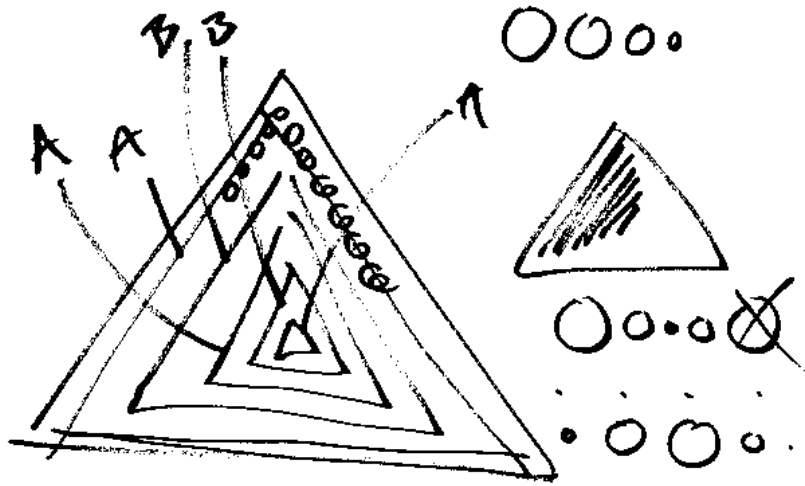
Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 100.

Saidiya Hartman is the author of *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* and *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. She received a MacArthur Fellowship in 2019 and is a University Professor at Columbia University.

I've kept coming back to this passage by Saidiya Hartman ever since I first read it about two years ago, quoted in Kathryn Yusoff's *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (2018), a book that has also influenced me a lot. We choose histories. We fabricate them. Sometimes this fabrication gets lost and ends up looking like solid, nonnegotiable fact instead. But histories do not exist independently; they have roots in particular perspectives. Each sculpture that we encounter in public space, for instance, represents not the past but past ideals. Florence—with its long history of artworks in public space, whether in the Boboli Garden or in the Piazza della Signoria—is replete with powerful stories. Palazzo Strozzi itself narrates a story of architecture as an instrument of power.

Palazzo Strozzi has traveled across time, from its conception as a palace for the powerful Strozzi family during the Renaissance to its role today as a host for research centers and art exhibitions. Visitors to the gallery have traveled. I have traveled. My artworks have traveled. Each on our journey, we meet up in the here and now of the exhibition.

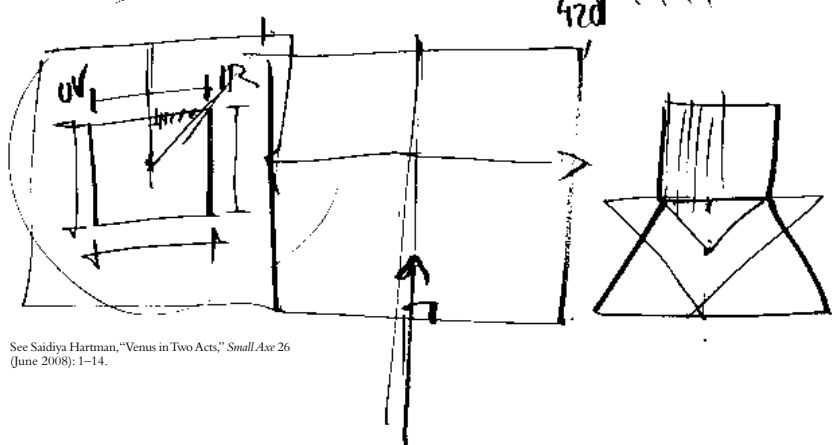
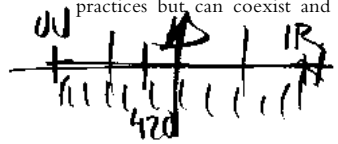




In telling *other* stories, not of Florence but of the transatlantic slave trade, Hartman introduces and makes use of a practice of researching/imagining/writing that she calls "critical fabulation."¹ It was really like a jolt when I first heard about that. It makes so much sense to me artistically. Hartman digs deep into historical archives, not to take them at face value, but to render and bring to life what has been left unsaid. She listens to voices that have been

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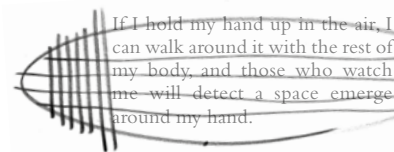
silenced; she makes their absence felt through her fabulation. You can work critically and use your imagination to craft fabulations, rich in somatic knowledge, just like you can be immersed, body and mind, in a situation while reflecting on your immersion, i.e., critically assessing what you are doing while doing it. Criticality and fabulation then—as I understand Hartman to be saying—are not separate practices but can coexist and feed off each



¹ See Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 26 (June 2008): 1–14.

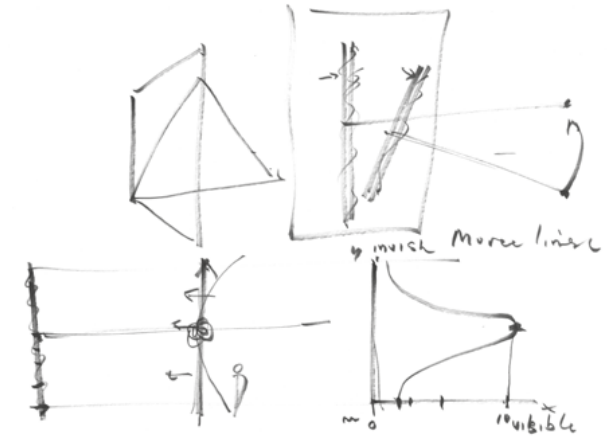
other. To better grasp the space in which experiences emerge requires us to take a closer look at our bodies and what they do. I was a street dancer as a teenager, and when I was about fifteen, I met the fabulous dancer and choreographer Steen Koerner at a youth club in Copenhagen. Steen talked about the difference between the space of street dance and that of ballet and this has stayed with me: in ballet, space is taken for granted as a container of movement; dancers aspire to defeat gravity, to become weightless. Aerial friction is eliminated. While street dance, like miming, can exaggerate friction and make visible what is otherwise invisible: the wind, gravity... This thought helped me with my own street dance and later with my artworks. The idea of rendering space actively with your body, of creating and making space felt, has been key ever since.

The notion of isolation is important. The isolation of movements creates a space – the body causes space to emerge. The difference is between entering a space and starting to dance, and creating space through dancing...



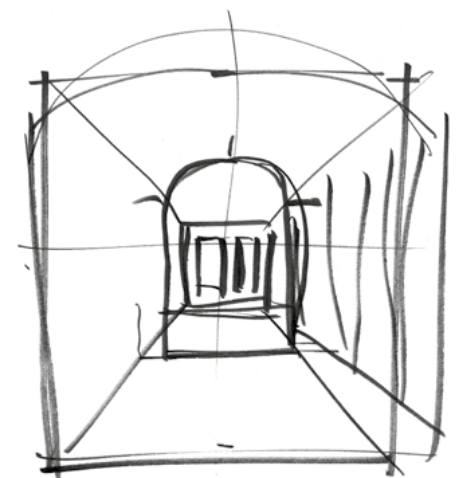
If I hold my hand up in the air, I can walk around it with the rest of my body, and those who watch me will detect a space emerge around my hand.

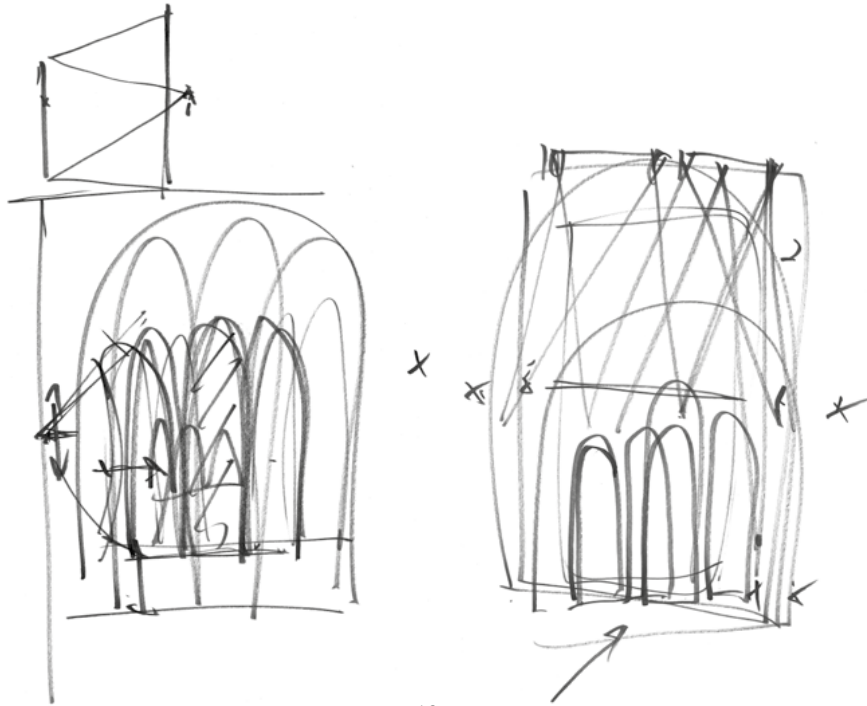
Steen Koerner is a dance director, choreographer, and dancer, well known for his contemporary urban take on classic standards. He started his career as a self-taught robotic dancer in 1982, and later went on to found Steen Koerner Studios in Copenhagen.



Another choreographer who has influenced me is Yvonne Rainer. She made a radical filmic work in 1966 called *Hand Movie*, which I keep coming back to. Rainer conceived it from a hospital bed, working, under a spatial constraint, with one of her hands only. She shares with us that there is no place without potential for artistic exploration, no everyday space too small or insignificant to explore our here and now. The nuances that emerge through the tiny movements of her fingers are absolutely breathtaking. In fact, the film is as much about making time explicit as it is about space. All you need is the courage to let your hand dance.

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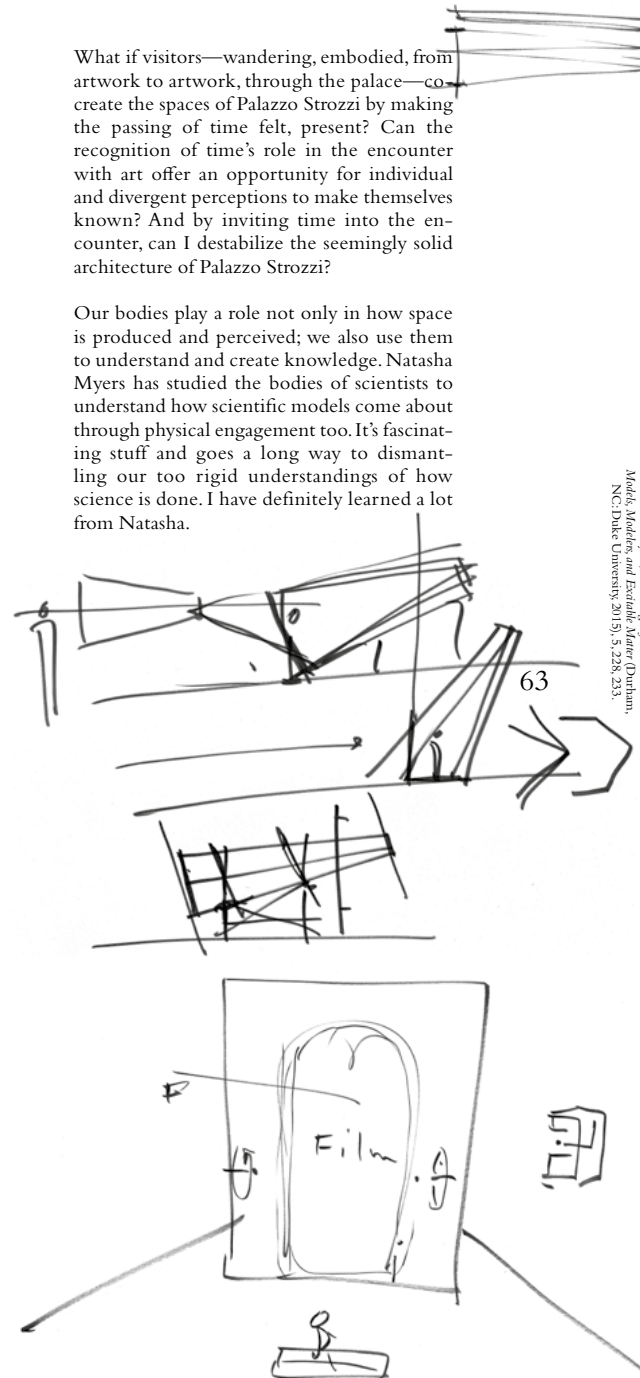


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What if visitors—wandering, embodied, from artwork to artwork, through the palace—co-create the spaces of Palazzo Strozzi by making the passing of time felt, present? Can the recognition of time's role in the encounter with art offer an opportunity for individual and divergent perceptions to make themselves known? And by inviting time into the encounter, can I destabilize the seemingly solid architecture of Palazzo Strozzi?

Our bodies play a role not only in how space is produced and perceived; we also use them to understand and create knowledge. Natasha Myers has studied the bodies of scientists to understand how scientific models come about through physical engagement too. It's fascinating stuff and goes a long way to dismantling our too rigid understandings of how science is done. I have definitely learned a lot from Natasha.



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This anthropological study pays close attention to scientists' modes of embodiment in the construction and propagation of visual facts. It argues that the visual cultures of science must be understood simultaneously as performance cultures. Throughout, it shows how protein modelers' moving bodies and their moving stories are integral to scientific inquiry...

[...]

I was at an annual meeting for protein modelers with Michael Fischer. I was off looking at student posters when Mike told Andres that I was studying how protein modelers "danced" their molecules. Andres confessed to Mike that he had choreographed "a little dance" for one of the molecules that he had modeled. When I rushed up to him having just heard the news, he balked and told me: "I hate dancing, but there was just no other way to communicate the mechanism. I had to dance it."

[...]

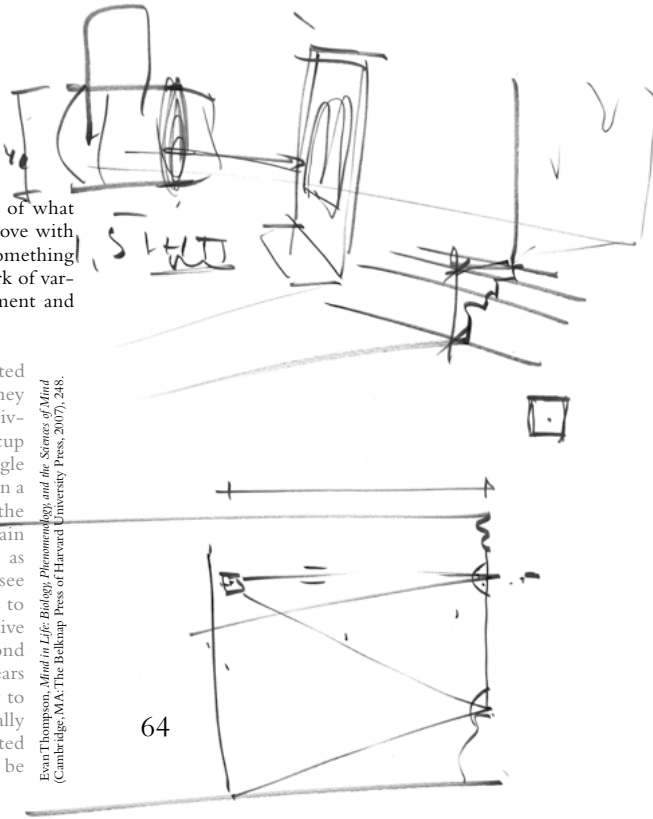
Liveliness is a way of telling stories that refuses to make clean distinctions between organisms and machines, or between vitalism and mechanism. Lively narratives reach toward a world in which thrive barely recognizable forms of life. Liveliness is a relational concept. It hinges on an intra-active conception of agency or *agencement*.

Intra-animacy is generated in contexts where bodies are open to move with and be moved by one another.

Natasha Myers engages art, ethnography, and decolonial ecology to speculate on ways of seeding Planthroposcenes; that is, scenes in which people learn how to conspire with plants to grow livable worlds. She is Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at York University and Director of the Plant Studies Collaboratory.

Natasha Myers, *Rendering Life Molecular: Models, Methods, and Experiments*, Stanford University Press, 2019, p. 228, 235.

That's more or less a condensation of what I work with: "bodies are open to move with and be moved by one another." It's something that I've been inspired by in the work of various people working with embodiment and perception.



Things are perceptually situated by virtue of the orientation they have to our moving and perceiving bodies. To pick up the teacup is to grasp it from a certain angle and to hold and manipulate it in a certain manner. To listen to the radio is to hear it from a certain vantage point, which changes as one moves about the room. To see the wine bottle on the table is to view it from a certain perspective and to see it as within or beyond one's reach. If something appears perspectively, then the subject to whom it appears must be spatially related to it. To be spatially related to something requires that one be embodied.

Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 246.

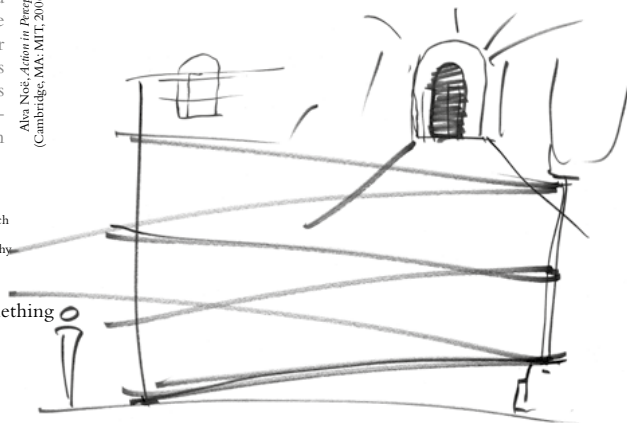
Evan Thompson is Professor of Philosophy at the University of British Columbia. He works on the nature of the mind, the self, and human experience.

Experience isn't something that happens in us. It is something we do; it is a temporally extended process of skillful probing. The world makes itself available to our reach. The experience comprises mind and world. Experience has content only thanks to the established dynamics of interaction between perceiver and world.

Alva Noë, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2006), 216.

Alva Noë is a philosopher of the mind, whose research and teaching focuses on perception, consciousness, and the philosophy of art. He is Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley.

Experience is spatial, experience is something we do, experience is now!



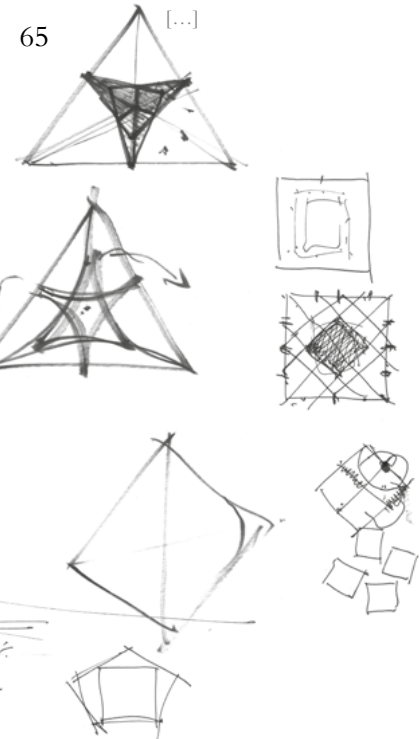
A poetic attitude means to be present. When you read a poem, you are inevitably going to be present. A poem always brings you to the present moment, it brings you into a space where you can observe in whichever way you need to observe, whether it's critically or compassionately or intimately.

Minna Salami, interview in *Evolve*, <https://magazine.evolve-magazine.com/2022/01/22/interview-in-evolve-magazine.html>.

Minna Salami is a writer, lecturer, and social critic. She is the author of *Sensuous Knowledge: A Black Feminist Approach for Everyone*, a book addressing universal concepts from a feminist and Africa-centered perspective.

What happens in this moment of being present when you encounter literature or art? It's a meetup with the unknown—or with something you intuit deep down inside yourself but may not be actively aware of. Or it might seem as if you experience a jolt, a flip of sorts—with things suddenly falling into place. If there's resonance between an artwork and yourself, you may open yourself up to the artwork and the situation in which it is located. Invite it into your space of existence. Be bewildered, touched, moved, held...

Let's return to the idea that experience is something we do. I recently came across the work of María Lugones. While I've worked with perception for decades, encountering her thinking about "arrogant perception" and "loving perception"—based on ideas formulated by the philosopher and feminist theorist Marilyn Frye—was like a tectonic shift for me. Lugones takes her relationship with her mother as a point of departure to analyze what goes on in the act of perceiving other people: to perceive others as objects is to perceive them arrogantly. To perceive them lovingly requires traveling to their world, showing empathy, feeling with them, seeing their world, and being willing to understand it.



María Lugones, "Hybridness, World-Travelling and Loving Perception," *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 3-4.

With Lugones's thinking, all of a sudden, a vital organizational principle of our perception was introduced that I had not properly seen earlier in my long-term interest in sensorimotor perception and in engagement as action. Arrogant and loving perception introduce patriarchal colonial concerns to the very act of perceiving.

As outsiders to the mainstream, women of color in the U.S. practice "world"-travelling, mostly out of necessity. I affirm this practice as a skillful, creative, rich, enriching and, given certain circumstances, as a loving way of being and living. I recognize that much of our travelling is done unwillingly to hostile White/Anglo "worlds." The hostility of these "worlds" and the compulsory nature of the "travelling" have obscured for us the enormous value of this aspect of our living and its connection to loving.

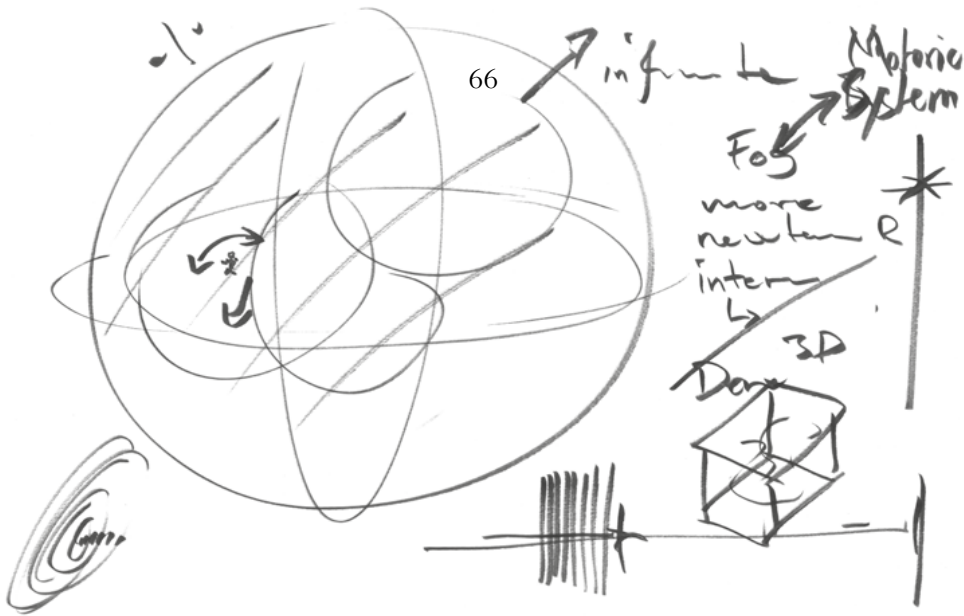
[This] paper makes a connection between what Marilyn Frye has named “arrogant perception” and the failure to identify with persons that one views arrogantly or has come to see as the products of arrogant perception. A further connection is made between this failure of identification and a failure of love, and thus between loving and identifying with another person.

María Lugones (1944–2020) was a philosopher, sociologist, and activist. As a pioneer in decolonial feminism, she contributed to numerous disciplines, from ethics and socio-political philosophy to race, gender studies, and community work.

That, for me, is truly radical—to see this kind of world-traveling as creative and enriching, as central to living, to identifying with others, to perceiving lovingly.



Meeting up with an artwork and a site for an exhibition is also a type of world-traveling. Being invited to work and exhibit in Florence allowed me to travel back in time, not only to the Renaissance, but also to the introduction of the notions of humanity and of humanism—terms that did not exist before the Renaissance and, to some, seem “natural” today. These aren’t concepts of the past, however; nor are they self-evident. And if we use the idea that Latour introduced of taking a thing or a concept and denaturalizing it—not allowing it to stay implicit, unnoticed—then humanity is a term to be urgently revisited and rethought. A number of people have pointed this out recently, including Sylvia Wynter, whose work I encountered a few years ago:



We must now collectively undertake a rewriting of knowledge as we know it. This is a rewriting in which, *inter alia*, I want the West to recognize the dimensions of what it has brought into the world—this with respect to, *inter alia*, our now purely naturalized modes or genres of humanness. You see? Because the West did change the world, *totally*. And I want to suggest that it is that change that has now made our own proposed far-reaching changes *now* as imperative as they are inevitable. As Einstein said, once physical scientists had split the atom, if we continue with our old way of thinking—the pre-nuclear way of thinking—we drift as a species toward an unparalleled catastrophe.

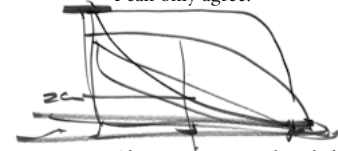
Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKinnick, “Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, Different Future?,” in *Wynter, On Being Human as Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2015), 18.

The argument proposes that the struggle of our new millennium will be one between the ongoing imperative of securing the well-being of our present ethnoclass (i.e., Western bourgeois) conception of the human, Man, which overrepresents itself as if it were the human itself, and that of securing the well-being, and therefore the full cognitive and behavioral autonomy of the human species itself/ourselves.

Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/With Freedom: Or, Toward a Latency of Becoming—Human—,” in *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 260.

Sylvia Wynter is a writer and cultural theorist. Her writings draw from theories in history, literature, science, and Black studies to explore race, the legacy of colonialism, and representations of humanness. She is Professor Emerita at Stanford University.

Wynter summarizes her stance in the title of the text: “Towards the Human, After Man.” She insists thereby on liberating the term human from its intimate connection with white, Western, privileged man. *Human* is a much broader category; its scope must be redefined. I can only agree.



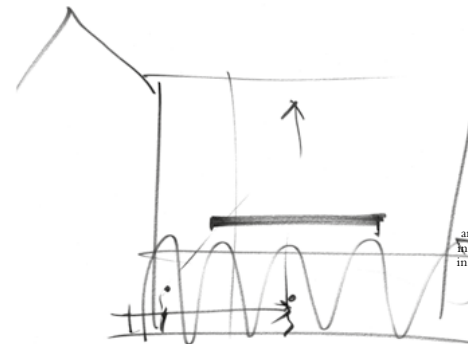
About a year and a half ago, Júlia Frate Bolliger, a former member of my studio, gave me a copy of *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World*, a slim book by Ailton Krenak, which had just been translated from Portuguese into English. It brought the thoughts of Sylvia Wynter into focus for me once again, but from the perspective of indigenous people.

For a long time, we were fed the story that we, humanity, stand apart from the great big organism of Earth, and we began to think of ourselves as one thing, and Earth, another: Humankind versus Earth. We have to abandon our anthropocentrism. There’s a lot more to Earth than us, and biodiversity doesn’t seem to be missing us at all. Quite the contrary.

[...]

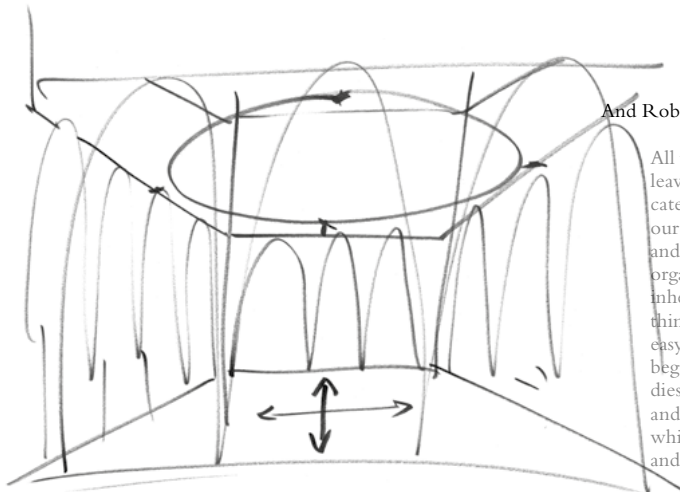
There are hundreds of narratives told by Indigenous peoples who are still alive, who still tell tales, sing, travel, talk, and teach us more than this humanity cares to learn. We’re not the only interesting people in this world; we’re just part of the whole. Perhaps knowing that can put a dent in the vanity of the humanity we claim to be, and reduce the lack of reverence we show toward our fellow travellers on this cosmic journey.

Ailton Krenak is a social-environmental activist, author, and Indigenous leader. His work since the 1970s has been critical in guaranteeing the constitutional rights of the indigenous peoples in Brazil and their ancestral homelands. He was awarded the Order of Cultural Merit by the president of the Republic in 2016.



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Ailton Krenak, *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 2020), 5-6, 35.



And Rob goes on to write:

All taxonomies crumble, but fungi leave many of our fundamental categories in ruin. Fungi thwart our usual senses of what is whole and singular, of what defines an organism, and of what descent or inheritance means. They do strange things to time, because it is not easy to say where a fungus ends or begins, when it is born or when it dies. To fungi, our world of light and air is their underland, into which they tentatively ascend here and there, now and then.

[...]

Certainly, orthodox “Western” understandings of nature feel inadequate to the kinds of world-making that fungi perform. As our historical narratives of progress have come to be questioned, so the notion of history itself has become remodelled. History no longer feels figurative as a forwards-fighting arrow or a self-intersecting spiral; better, perhaps, seen as a network branching and conjoining in many directions. Nature, too, seems increasingly better understood in fungal terms: not as a single gleaming snow-peak or tumbling river in which we might find redemption, nor as a diorama that we deplore or adore from a distance — but rather as an assemblage of entanglements of which we are messily part.

Robert Macfarlane is a writer on landscape, nature, memory, and language. He is a Professor in Literature and the Environmental Humanities at the University of Cambridge.

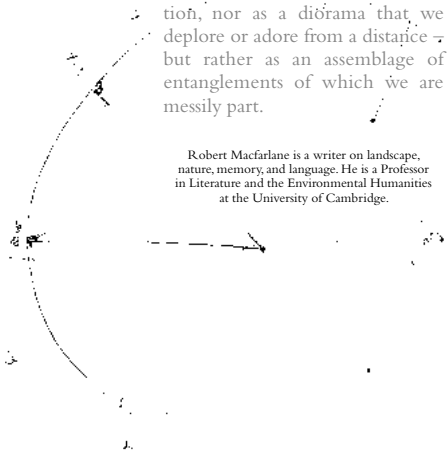
In the past few years I’ve become aware that this cosmic journey is not one for human beings alone, even when we include *all* human beings. It is a more-than-human journey. And this Krenak knows better than anyone.

Recently, I had a series of enjoyable conversations with Robert MacFarlane. We share a vast interest in ice, deep time, and in natural cultural landscapes. Rob has written a brilliant book called *Underland*, from which I want to share a few quotes. They’re about fungi and how fungi challenge categorization. Let’s start by hearing Rob quoting Merlin Sheldrake, a biologist and author:

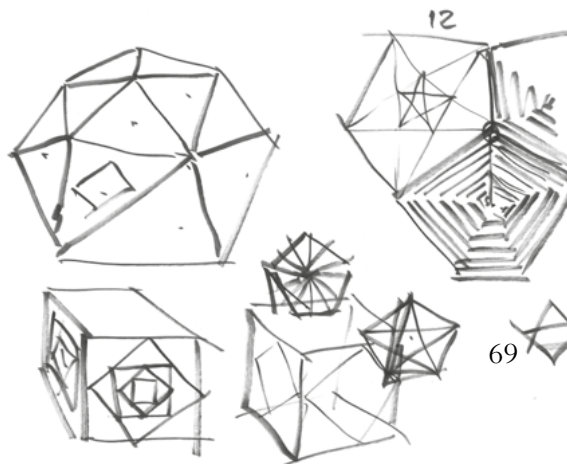
“My childhood superheroes weren’t Marvel characters,” Merlin once said to me, “they were lichens and fungi. Fungi and lichen annihilate our categories of gender. They reshape our ideas of community and cooperation. They screw up our hereditary model of evolutionary descent. They utterly *liquidate* our notions of time. Lichens can crumble rocks into dust with terrifying acids. Fungi can exude massively powerful enzymes *outside* their bodies that dissolve soil. They’re the biggest organisms in the world and among the oldest. They’re world-makers and world-breakers. What’s more superhero than *that*?”

Robert Macfarlane, *Underland: A Deep Time Journey* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 94, 102, 103–4.

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If history is a network of roots and branches, of fundamental entanglements—if it is no longer defined by progress and linearity, where, in fact, might we be going? And who is “we”? I have to remind myself that a “global we” is as far from being self-evident as “the human.” It’s new learning for me, since I have tended to speak in broad terms about a “global we” in various contexts and am realizing that this is something I must reconsider. Often, the “we” is smaller than I thought—and my urge to universalize is larger than what is reasonable.

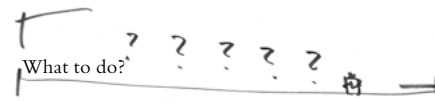


I want to round off by mentioning Walter D. Mignolo, who, in his most recent book, makes the bold claim that the era of Westernization is over. He defines this era as having been dominant from 1500 to 2000—often referred to as the era of modernity.² Let’s take this as a closing idea: modernity is over. I myself still think, live, and work within the frameworks of modernity, but I’m becoming aware of its biases and limitations, which means, basically, that I am unlearning and relearning what it means to see and think. Not only have I come to realize that I have privileges, I have also realized that these privileges were previously invisible to me. This requires a significant

² Walter D. Mignolo, *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations* (Durham and London: Duke University, 2021), x.

recalibration. It requires me not only to think with people I know, but also with those—humans and nonhumans—whom I don’t know, whose cultures I don’t know and maybe even cannot know. Thinking differently about “we” is only a beginning.

Here’s a dream for you: I’ll practice letting go. I’ll float between different worlds. Listen to them. Where am I? In the selfless, meditative space of Buddhism? A more-than-human equilibrium, following the death of human exceptionalism? Suddenly the philosopher Timothy Morton appears in the guise of a whale, swimming—wiggling—to the beat of what might be his own electronic music. I detect a faint backdrop radiation of humanity. I meet the limits of my own imagination, while a small satellite flies by. It seems to emit signals, saying: “Gaia is speaking. Listen to it. James Lovelock was right.” We meet Lynn Margulis, the radical biologist, who believed in the power of symbiosis as an organizing principle in nature. Hilma af Klint, the visionary artist of the early twentieth century, emerges as a colorful cloud, pervaded by spirituality. From this now/here in outer space, signals are sent back to Earth. But Earth has shields in place that filter incoming signs and morsels of planetary wisdom.



I’ll leave you with a tweet by Báyo Akómoláfé:

When you fall apart, don’t forget to love the pieces.

Báyo Akómoláfé (PhD) is a posthumanist thinker, poet, author, and Visionary Founder of The Emergence Network. Rooted with the Yoruba people in a more-than-human world, he is the grateful life partner to Ije, and father to Alethea and Kyah.

Báyo Akómoláfé, March 6, 2022, accessed June 14, 2022, <https://twitter.com/BayoAkola>.
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