



**MASTER OF ARTS
IN CONTEMPORARY
DESIGN**

**Experimental
Design 2023**



Feral
Helsinki

*Making Sense with
More-than-Human Urban Ecologies*

Feral Helsinki

*Making Sense with
More-than-Human
Urban Ecologies*

Feral Helsinki: Making Sense with More-than-Human Urban Ecologies

Experimental Design course, Contemporary Design MA
Aalto University 2023

Creative essays by: Hana Rehorčíková, Saga Rantanen, Luise Elisabeth Arnold, Minchen Stenersen, Mingzhu Fan, João Florêncio Justino, Soli Uuttera, Mattia Anderle, Fanny Kajela, Yutaro Komaki and Dario Aguet

Course led by: Markéta Dolejšová → www.materie.me & Zoë Robertson → www.zoerobertson.ca

Graphic design: Juan Guevara Verjel → www.juan-gv.com

Cover photo: Luise Elisabeth Arnold

Special thanks to the main course partner Uroboros Collective → www.collective.uroboros.design

If you'd like to know more about our feral ways, feel free to reach out to → marketa.dolejsova@gmail.com

-

Unless otherwise credited, all images are property of their respective authors.

This publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

Feral Helsinki


**Feral data from our co-habitation with
other-than-human creatures living
in and around Helsinki**

*Collected during the Experimental Design
course at Aalto University,
Autumn 2023*

Feral Helsinki

Introduction

Markéta Dolejšová & Zoë Robertson

 This zine presents eleven creative essays capturing our practice-based, feral investigation of more-than-human places in Helsinki and its surroundings undertaken during the Experimental Design course at Aalto. Through the seven course weeks, we explored and drifted with these places and their other-than-human creatures – such as trees, crows, sparrows, hobby-horses, abandoned houses, and rock formations – to learn about their daily lives and rhythms, hoping to form new relations and make sense of local ecologies together.

While drifting, we questioned who has the ability and power to produce knowledge and data about local everyday realities, whose interests and concerns are taken into account, and who often remains less visible, un-heard, and un-noticed. On the way, we reflected on our own positions as human creatures and researchers, paying attention to what data are we collecting about/with whom, who can collect data about/with us, and for what ends.

Among the many questions that we set to explore were: What forms and shapes can more-than-human co-creation of knowledge and data take in practice? What possibilities, challenges, and concerns might arise while collaborating with other-than-humans? How can we understand and embody ‘data’ in the context of more-than-human co-creation? How can this data look, smell, feel, sound, taste like?

Our creative, practice-based investigation was guided by so-called “feral ways of sensemaking” that invite open-ended, embodied, sensory-rich, and spontaneous encounters unfolding beyond the bounds of human control. In practice, we experimented with various performative

and imaginative sensemaking techniques including walking, drifting, listening, storytelling, prompting, crafting, baking, noticing, and sometimes simply remembering to collect experiences and co-create feral data artifacts of varied formats. Our creative research process, experiences, and artifacts are captured in the essays included in this feral zine, which you can read through and drift-with in your own feral journeys.

Apart from this zine, we also co-created a series of short feral films that we discussed and watched together, hoping to learn from each others' ways of making sense with local more-than-human worlds. Our films were also presented in the National Gallery Prague, as part of the Uroboros 2023 festival program, and you can always watch them → [here](#).

1 **Hana Rehorčíková** 14
*Beyond Stereotypes:
Feral Beauty of Hobbyhorsing*

2 **Saga Rantanen** 22
My More-Than-Human Balcony

3 **Luisse Elisabeth Arnold** 30
Reciprocal Choreography

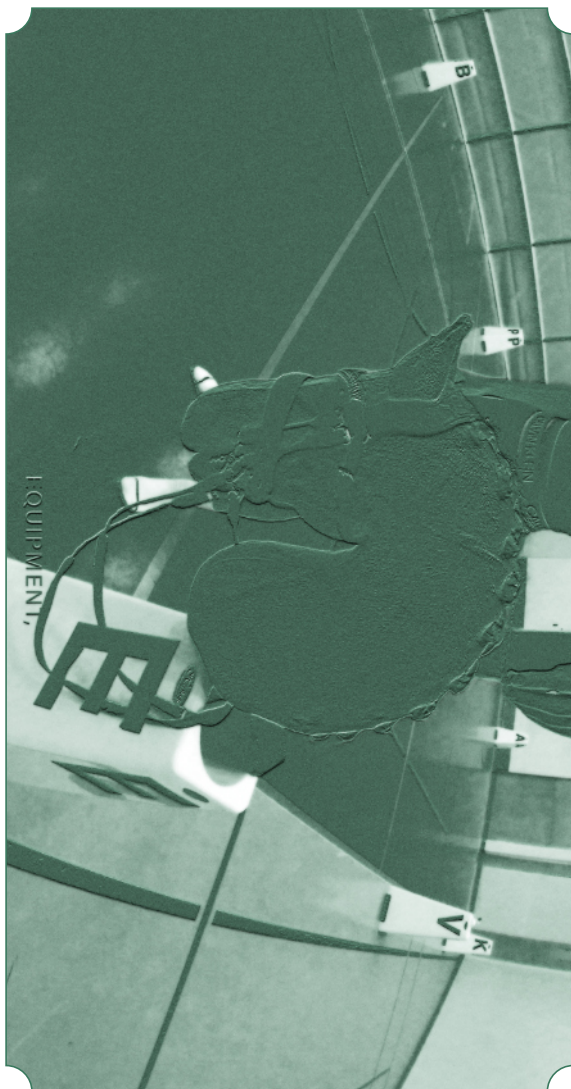
4 **Mitchen Hoga Stenersen** 42
My Feral House

5 **Mingzhu Fan** 50
The Bedroom

6 **João Justino** 58
Nut Bracteates

Table of Contents

7	Soli Uuttera <i>Soli Uuttera</i>	66
	<i>Invitation</i>	
8	Maria Anderle <i>Maria Anderle</i>	74
	<i>Ecosystems</i>	
9	Fanny Kajala <i>Fanny Kajala</i>	80
	<i>House Sparrow</i>	
10	Yutaro Komaki <i>Yutaro Komaki</i>	90
	<i>Seurasaari Bench</i>	
11	Dario Aguet <i>Dario Aguet</i>	98
	<i>Take a Break - Walrus House</i>	



Hana Rehorčíková
Hana Rehorčíková

Beyond Stereotypes: Feral Beauty of Hobbyhorsing

A short film shot in the Sipoon Monitoimihalli arena features highlights from an interview with Alisa Aarniomäki, a Finnish dressage champion and renowned hobbyhorsist. It unveils the unique character of hobbyhorsing, challenging stereotypes and societal norms.

Immersing myself in the hobbyhorse world through a feral sense-making lens, I observed Alisa's training and engaged in a revealing conversation with her. Approaching it as a horseback rider with assumptions, my goal was to genuinely understand this phenomenon.

As discovered, hobbyhorsing has transcended being a mere introduction to horseback riding or a children's pastime; it defies conventional hobby categories. It's a bit of a rebel in the hobby world, akin to horseback riding gone feral. Alisa's interview offers a holistic view of the challenges tied to hobbyhorsing, urging a reevaluation of what defines a meaningful hobby or lifestyle. It also prompts reflection on my role as a designer in this context.

Passion for Horses

Horses, with their majestic presence and the act of riding, have been my passion since the age of 12. This connection led me to explore the equine world of Helsinki as a starting point for my project. However, my journey took an unexpected turn, unveiling a captivating discovery: the phenomenon of hobbyhorsing. Initially approached with skepticism, this unconventional sport caused a shift in my thinking from a humorous standpoint to genuine fascination. During my research, I read a lot about Alisa. Intrigued by her experiences, I reached out for an interview and the opportunity to witness her training. The feral data then took shape through dialogue, capturing the spontaneity and passion that transcend human control.

Hobbyhorsing vs. Horseback Riding

Alisa introduces hobbyhorsing to me through a captivating performance, seamlessly blending dance, cardio, and gymnastics, all synchronized with music. I observe the subtle movements and rhythmic footfalls of a hobbyhorsist.

After her training, she begins talking about a growing trend in which horse stables aim to integrate hobbyhorsing into their events. This aligns with my research on young girls crafting imaginary horses when real ones or riding lessons are (financially) out of reach. Similarly, stables perceive hobbyhorsing as a bridge to real horses. Alisa engages in both hobbyhorsing and horseback riding simultaneously, just like most of the hobbyhorsists.

When wondering how it turned into an officially recognized sport so quickly, Alisa reveals:

“Social media allows us to share our skills and progress, contributing to the recognition of hobbyhorsing as a sport”

**A. Aarniomäki, personal communication,
November 13, 2023**

When I ask about her personal identity while participating in hobbyhorsing, Alisa explains:

“I don’t identify as either the rider or the horse; I’m simply myself engaging in hobbyhorsing. When teaching others about using their bodies in hobbyhorsing and dressage, I suggest imagining the upper body as the rider and the legs as the horse. It helps to find a balance where the upper body remains stable while the legs provide power and movement.”

She highlights that mastering hobbyhorsing requires a unique skill set, drawing inspiration from horses without attempting to replace them. Alisa underscores a crucial difference: hobbyhorsing doesn’t involve living animals. It’s a performance where practitioners must handle every-

thing themselves, using their bodies. The absence of a living animal body in hobbyhorsing emphasizes a unique aspect: a human's body as the medium for expression, not a collaboration with a horse.

Imagination and Individuality

Alisa says that imagination in hobbyhorsing is a highly individual aspect of this hobby. Some perceive the hobbyhorse merely as sports equipment, while others delve deeply into the imaginative aspects, creating personalities. While the hobbyhorsing community welcomes creative diversity in the shapes or species of hobbyhorses, Alisa mentions that she leans towards a more realistic approach when it comes to the shape and appearance of a hobbyhorse. She also notes that, although not everyone may attribute personalities to their creations, naming one's hobbyhorse is a common practice within the hobby.

There are no strict rules; people create them according to personal preferences, as long as they meet basic requirements such as having a stick and reins. Alisa shares her approach, noting that she typically purchases nostalgic horses that were significant during her childhood. She also participates in collective ownership with friends, adding a communal dimension to the hobby.

Challenges and Resilience

However, the feral beauty of hobbyhorsing comes with its own set of challenges. Alisa's revelation about facing criticism, physical violence, and societal misconceptions brings attention to the struggle between the freedom of creative expression and societal norms.

Alisa acknowledges encountering inappropriate comments and being sexualized, especially on social media platforms. She mentions that after the release of the *Hobbyhorse Revolution* movie, her inbox was flooded with disgusting messages from men. She points out that even in conversations with journalists, there were jokes about how she handles the hobbyhorse stick. Online forums have discussed her since she was 14, consistently focusing on inappropriate topics.

She also remembers:

“I lost all my friends during elementary school due to hobbyhorsing.”

Alisa still has to face numerous negative comments, especially online, where the criticism can be particularly harsh. She interprets these experiences as people’s confusion and resistance to understanding something different, deviating from their expectations of how someone her age should behave. To cultivate a positive environment for those feeling insecure about the hobby, she actively deletes such negative comments and also adds:

“I’ve learned to ignore misconceptions and focus on my passion. Just like someone might find football fascinating, the same happened with hobbyhorsing for me. It’s about finding an interest, a community, and sometimes losing one along the way.”

Personal Reflections

Watching how Alisa seamlessly integrates elements of horse movements into her performance leaves me impressed and fascinated. Using a horse’s head on a stick evokes in me an appreciation and inspiration derived from animals’ motion, raising questions about the evolving bonds between humans and non-humans. A fusion of human and animal characteristics also leads to deeper reflections on personal identities. As mentioned, Alisa doesn’t pretend to be a rider or a horse; rather, she shapes a unique form of expression through this hobby, sport, or even lifestyle. By using her body and the hobbyhorse itself, she engages in something that may be hard for many to understand or experience.

Hobbyhorsing also encourages us to reconsider the meaning of leisure and sport today. In this case, who and how determines “the right hobby” and its age or gender appropriateness? It makes me question the conventional view of hobbies for specific groups: is there such a thing as a hobby that “makes no sense” or a hobby that suits one and doesn’t suit another? Regarding gender, Alisa explains:

“In Finland, riding horses is considered a very feminine hobby. And doing hobbyhorsing, which is more creative, it kind of then leans towards the same feminine ideology of your pastime.”

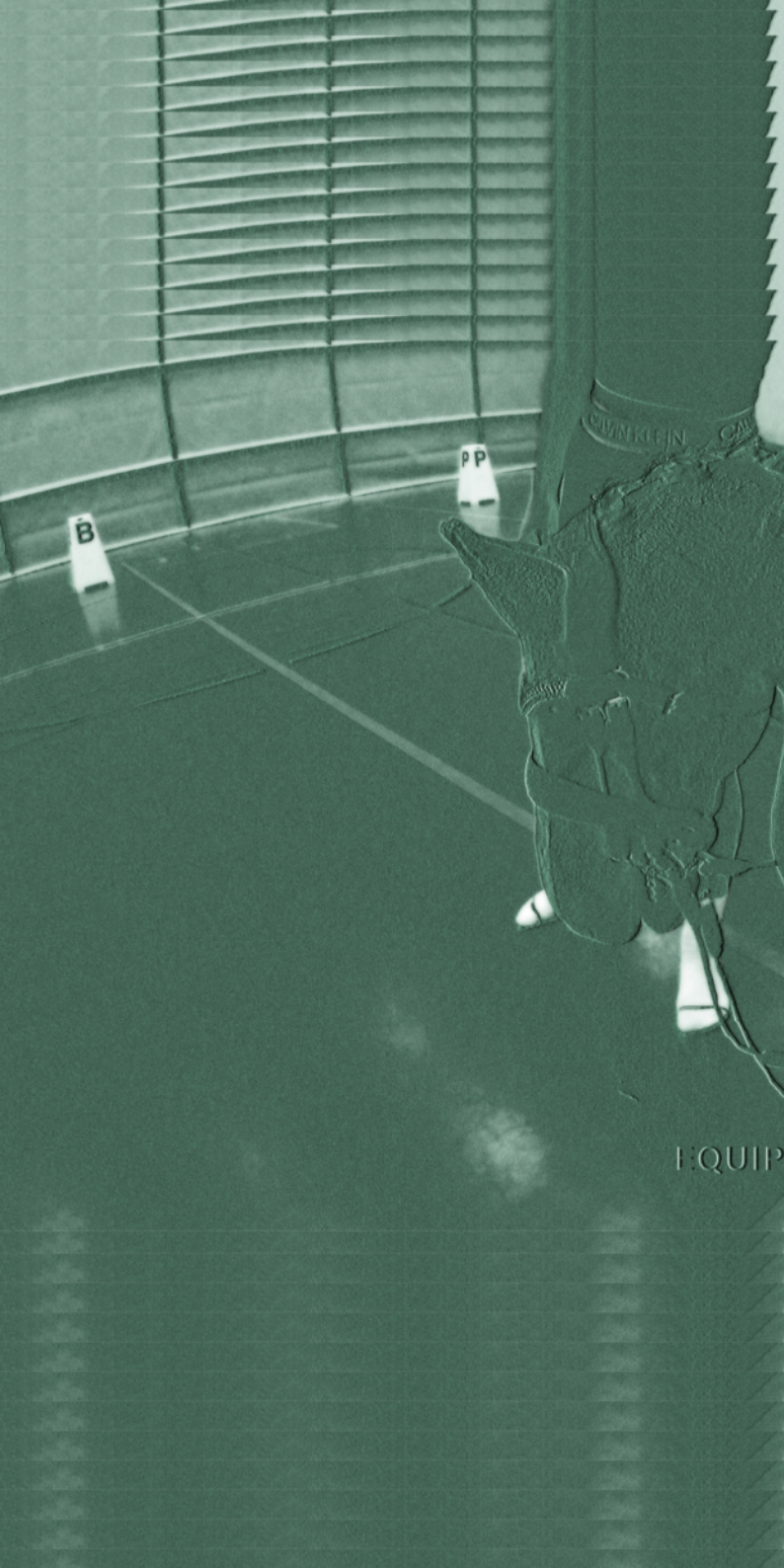
I perceive hobbyhorsing as a feral hobby that has transformed from a childhood pastime into a sophisticated form of performance art or sport. Driven by a passionate community, it challenges several conventional expectations and has evolved into a cultural phenomenon, highlighting a commitment to unique self-expression that is not attainable through traditional horseback riding.

As a design student with a focus on problem-solving, I was initially seeking challenges to tackle. However, this journey led me to realize the importance of not only solving problems but also questioning their origins and whether they truly align with the needs of a specific group I am focusing on. I kept asking questions like, “Is this even a problem, and if so, whose problem is it?”

Considering the design of a non-controversial hobbyhorse, I soon realized the nonsensicality of such an approach because hobbyhorsists might also be viewed as queer figures who are perfectly fine with their hobbyhorses and their looks - neither the hobbyhorses nor the hobbyhorsists pose an issue in this situation; rather, it is the assumptions that do. My journey reflects the realization that addressing societal unreadiness for change is about taking meaningful actions, even small ones.

Through a short film and a personal essay, I aim to foster a willingness to listen and ask. As a horseback rider, I also found hobbyhorsing bizarre at first. However, taking a closer look completely shifted my perspective. I believe others can try it too, for example, just by watching the mentioned short film. Embracing understanding opens us up to diverse viewpoints, fostering closeness and sensitivity. And although I personally don't share Alisa's passion for hobbyhorses because I have my own passions, I now respect and appreciate her authenticity. Small changes like this aren't utopian; they can contribute to creating inclusive environments for non-traditional hobbies or even individuals.

“It's not about becoming a horse or rider; it's about being a hobbyhorsist”.



EQUIP



MENT,



I know that... I just thought I'd make it a little
cosier here, bring some life here. .

Saga Rantanen

My More-Than-Human Balcony



It was an October Sunday morning when I sat all curled up on my 2,6m² balcony, listened to the humming of the traffic down in the street, and stared at the slowly dying family of plants growing in a white bucket. I decided that this would be my more-than-human place that I would set out to observe, understand and create with.

You're back, whispered the concrete floor of my balcony.

Due to the nature of the space, my observations quickly became very personal and in introspective. I was interested in my tendency of growing plants and collecting objects and creatures, almost like memories from the forest, as to create a tiny organic oasis on my balcony in the midst of concrete. This process of rather unconsciously gathering, planting and bringing obscurely meaningful lifeforms was nothing new, and had occurred several times whenever I had had the access and partly control over an outdoor space. Especially during the lockdown, these more-than-human relations on the balcony revealed both their importance and solace to me. I would sit with the plants and feed fruit flies to the spiders. Maybe that state of isolation made visible the companionship that I was craving and forming with these creatures. As if I wanted to create and invite wilderness in my life, even in its tiniest forms.

I looked at my balcony. What kind of life was there, saplings of pine and spruce, dried up lichen, sticks, bark, stones. I had tried to create a little forest for myself. But how was that ecosystem doing and who was it really for? And what would it really need?

Feral



The more I started thinking about the term feral throughout the course and reflecting on it in my personal life, the more it started to feel like the general condition of life itself: surprising and uncontrollable. Oh my hair is an absolute mess! No worries, it's just feral, let it be. That one houseplant that has exponentially grown and taken over

my table, is extremely annoying, well feral, again. But could I learn to live with this plant and moreover with this feeling, that not everything, especially living, should please me?

I want to take care of them but I don't really know how.

My balcony soon became an experiment where I would test my ability to accept feralness, death and decay as inescapable parts of life. I would bring dry leaves from the forest, place the dead basil out for the spiders to weave their webs over. However I also quickly realised how minimal my knowledge in more-than-human needs was. I wanted to care for my pine trees, for the lichen that I had found on a forest path and the seeds that the death basil had left to this world, but I didn't really know how.

AN EXCERPT FROM A CONVERSATION WITH A FRIEND ABOUT MY BALCONY, 8.9.2023

I was thinking about making a school project about how I could design my balcony into an ideally comfortable environment for my pines. If you have any ideas feel free to share light as possible!

Oh ok. Maybe a couple of squirrels and a little bit of moss here and there :D

I would say that protecting that pine's pot during the winter is the most essential here, meaning that it should be isolated with something. Then when you replant it you should select a setting where it likes to grow. And as much light as possible!

Thanks, I must start inviting some squirrels over.

This controversy of wanting to care but not knowing how forced me to shift my perspective to the side of the others. I had planted the pine trees here on my balcony where there was no deep soil for them to sink their roots in for the cold winter. Did the trees actually even want to live here, I didn't know. Did the balcony itself want to become feral in this sense, quite the opposite of what it was seemingly meant for with its straight edges and hard surfaces?

I had reached a point in my process where everything I did was generating more questions than answers. The idea of compressing these observations that I had made of my relationship with my balcony and its habitants into a physical object felt impossible. The idea of co-creating anything else than something that would allow the others to create on their own, felt impossible. This was the moment where I had to learn to let my design process become more feral, personal and embodied, maybe these creatures could help me with that?

Dialogue

The further I observed my relationship with my balcony and the more-than-human creatures inhabiting it, I realised how they had become a remedy for my longing for wilderness in the middle of my 21st century urban life. I had thought that bringing other lifeforms to my personal space would allow me to build a multispecies community. But I now realised that the only way I knew to do it was through captivity and domestication, carelessly placing these creatures into my cube of a balcony, and by doing so forcing them to become dependent on me. I had never really thought how they would feel about being placed in this unnatural environment, where possibly neither of us belonged.

You haven't really thought of anyone else other than yourself.

This realisation and voicing the new observations from different points of view from mine were the first step I took towards my final artefact. The second was allowing myself to express these thoughts in a very personal, speculative and imaginative manner. These steps allowed me to find my way to a final translation, a video *Maybe I wish that you were a forest that presents an imaginative conversion happening between me and my balcony.*

The nature of this dialogue between me and my balcony is of course speculative: it is eventually a conversation with myself, where I explore my relationship to the different creatures that inhabit this more-than-human space. I based my answers as the balcony in how it looked, felt, smelled, and then I imagined. The conversation is feral in the sense that it has no conclusion, other than maybe

none of us belong to a city environment. I was not aiming to present answers, just observations and questions from different points of view. I have no idea where this newly opened dialogue will lead, if me and my balcony will become best friends or end up hating each other. And it is this uncertainty that can hopefully create new ideas, interpretations and paths to explore.

The uncertainty and unpredictability of the feral are aspects that I learned to appreciate during my process and definitely something I take away from this project and hope to apply to my creative practice more. Even when editing the video I started allowing elements to take their place in a more free way, behave wild, and align incorrectly. After all, I am feral as well, as is my mind and creativity, that work in ways I cannot fully describe or control.

I feel quite overwhelmed by the question of how a human relationship with more-than-human creatures could be mutually beneficial and balanced. In my conversation with the balcony the never-ending criticality towards myself as a human becomes obvious: even the balcony is telling me that I am living in a wrong way, wrong place and that my relationship to the more-than-humans is very one-sided. And in this imaginary conversation, as in real life, I am aware and apologetic of my actions, and wish to continue learning to listen, observe, respect and let be.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark, textured sweater, is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She is holding a large, dark-colored pot containing a plant with long, thin, light-colored stems and dark leaves. The background features a window with horizontal blinds, partially open, allowing light to filter through. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a focus on the woman and the plant.

I know that... I just thought
cosier here, bring

Thought I'd make it a little
more interesting here. .





Luise Elisabeth Arnold

Luise Elisabeth Arnold

Reciprocal Choreography

“...we have to learn new ways to tell stories that are simultaneously about human histories, and also about histories of the natural world. Because of the way particular structures of knowledge have dominated the last several centuries, people have managed to separate these histories. The result is that there are particular ways of storytelling about humans, and then there are wholly different ways of storytelling about plants and animals, or rocks and climate, and we don’t know how to mix these up very well. They have different genres, different expectations, and so most of the time we tell stories about humans as if we humans lived in a vacuum. And, in the same way, when we tell stories about plants and animals, or rocks and climate, it’s as if they lived without humans. So somehow, the challenge of the Anthropocene is to figure out how to bring these ways of understanding the world together.”

Anna L. Tsing, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

What are the shapes of encounter between humans and rocks? While the title is carrying a certain provocativeness which is asking for elaboration, I want to first focus on the question followed by it, as the idea of reciprocity will become more apparent later on. What do I mean by shapes of encounter? An encounter one can have with all kinds of actors. While a common definition of encounter describes something unexpected, in the context of this experimental research on shapes, I understand encounter as a planned, physical interaction with certain physical and non-physical side effects. I hereby draw on the ideas and definition of the open/interactive platform “A Feral Atlas” - “The More-Than-Human Anthropocene”, which understands “feral” as the way all kinds of more or less animate agents react to the “extra”, (feral) effects of human interventions and built infrastructures. While Anna L. Tsing (Jesse Bazzul, Interview, Reimagining science education in the Anthropocene, 2021), is mainly referring to more immaterial or harder-to-trace materials and the effect they have on other than human beings, I am however more in-

terested in the physical characteristics of the shapes, which encounters take and what they, purposely or unintendedly, convey. In this regard I am extending the definition of “shape of encounter” from accidental forms left in the rock by infrastructural elements, to deliberately chosen shapes integrated within the architectural site of the parliament, which seek to initiate physical encounter.

The intention, in the following, is to sufficiently link those two categories of a) shapes either left as “accidental” side products and b) a shape intentionally placed as an inviting gesture. The findings of those two categories of the research of the site will result in a physical artifact. The aim of the artifact is to create a scenario of performative encounter that allows engaging with “matter” on a more horizontal and so to say “anthropomorphized” level, to challenge existing narratives and forms of relationship.

Rock formations have a ubiquitous presence in Finland and the Helsinki region. The so-called Finnish Precambrian crust is a shield formation of granite, of which the exposed appearance shapes a large part of the Southern landscape. However, those “Finnish” topologies have undergone a drastic shift, during the course of the past century. In a book about Finnish landscapes and infrastructure (Jaatinen, 1967) I found the following description of two images: “The new road was quarried through rock, and the above sight now replaces the landscape”. Such shifting of topologies is a form of “visual proof” of the entwined histories of the human and the natural world. While humans are “progressing” and expanding, altering, and renovating, matter is shifted and changed in its form, structure, and location. Drastic shifts are rarely questioned and supported even by anthropocentric storytelling. But who is shaping whom? Clear is the unequal distribution of power that defines the human-rock relationship, but what are the immaterial effects rock presence has on “us”? And how is this effect even utilized and planned in, during the process of erecting architectural sites?

The Actor-network theory (ANT) describes that: actors, which can be human or non-human, material or immaterial, come to be how they are through a process of interacting with other actors. During the experimental research, I was interested in how this would manifest itself in physical form. What are these forms of interaction between humans and rocks on a material level?

Materials are something we interact with all the time - so it is something very practical, however, the theories around it, like for example New Materialist (Jane Bennett) ways of thinking, seem to be rather disconnected with the real tangible matter and practices around it. While the majority of material practices are still often lacking in convincingly bridging theory and practice, some individuals in the arts have managed to successfully integrate vibrant matter and their empirical qualities to tell more inclusive stories that are diverging from the normative discourse and agenda around the topic.

Arguably, to co-create with a more-than-human ecology, can provide an attempt to bridge the gap and sufficiently link and work with the reality and agency of matter, with a process of artistic practice, beyond a traditional perception of material properties and their application.

What forms of interplay exist between humans and the matter rock?

How can we work with the material, instead of working on the material?

And what does it mean to build with, to follow the rock?

How can I co-create with a rock? And what shapes would that take?

For my co-creation, I'm equally intrigued by the diverse solutions and forms of coexistence as I am fascinated by the often brutal nature of infrastructural intervention or collision of buildings with the rock. While it can be hard to not perceive those appearances as loss, they certainly and quite bluntly show the reality of the current and predominant forms of relationship we have with matter. How can theories, that challenge the dominant discourse and idea around matter being inanimate and passive, assist a less anthropocentric storytelling? And what would be a physical manifestation and approach to storytelling, that makes one engage with matter in a surprising and unusual way?

Even though the cityscape is still defined by rocky areas, which are often located in a park setting, I felt the need to examine a site that somehow presents a colliding

and connecting of rock in its more or less natural state and that of human-built, infrastructure. Through an investigation of the physical forms of interplay present at the site of the Finnish Parliament building and its adjacent rock formation, I started to dive into the more recent history of Helsinki and how during the course of less than 100 years the appearance of the landscape had changed.

The unusual urban “grid” of Helsinki’s neighbourhood Töölö was supposedly due to its rocky nature, but most rocks that had pierced the ground there, fell victim to the housing developments between the 1910’s onward until the 30’s. The Finnish Parliament is located just at the border of this neighborhood, a symbolic location that was chosen in the first round of the architectural competition. Back then, this part of the city was still relatively undeveloped, and the location was a deliberately chosen spot, not only because of the hillside from which one could look over the city and the city would look back at you, but also because of the large rock formation present at the site. It can be said for certain, that if the parliament would not stand here today, the rock formation next to it would not be here anymore either. However, during the planning and erection of the parliament, following Finland’s independence in 1917, a large portion of the rock had to evade the performative stage of democracy. The drill holes, which were used to place explosives in the process of removing parts of the bedrock, are still visible. Some seemed to have withheld the force of the explosion and are still “intact” canals, with two openings, while others just show as a scraping mark. The drill holes tell a story about the time when the site was prepared to be built on. Much like the brutal cuts and scratches that are visible alongside highways and in the metro tunnels in and around Helsinki.

The location proves also of interest, as it embodies a certain political and representative dimension of rock. The Finnish Parliament building’s massive stone architecture purposely conveys indestructibility. An architectural monument of a nationalistic ideology built to last forever, using stone and archetypes to mark their place in the line of important buildings of history.

While the rock is a continuation of the building, it stays at the same time separate. This is not only due to the rough cut but also the visual appearance of color differences. Granite consists of mainly 3 types of minerals

(quartz, feldspar, and black or pale mica) and can have a varying color, even in two spots of close proximity. The rock formation which extends next to the building is covered with lichen and other flat growers, but it still shows it's mainly brown-toned with a few red spots colored granite characteristics. For the parliament building, however, red Kalvola granite was used, which has been extracted 100km up North, leaving a cavity in the landscape.

Standing on the top of the rock of the "Eduskunta-puisto" (Parliamentspark) allows one to see all those different shades of granite at one glance, creating this visual assemblage of forms of rocks and nuances of colors.

Through performative encounters over the period of the past weeks, and here encounter is to be understood as an intensional act with unpredictable "outcomes", I gained a certain intimate distance with not only the parliament building and the adjacent rock but also with the infrastructure of hostility and selective gestures of hospitality. However, the site around the government building is mainly defined by forms of hostile, infrastructural intervention, signifying clear and mostly exclusive access, while other parts are completely fenced off. This kind of elements of infrastructure creates a contrast to the otherwise more and less homogeneous stone surfaces, only differentiating in their more or less smooth appearance. Their distinct-shaped bodies are often kept in polished optics and always in a metallic finish. It is the same kind of gold and silver, which I encountered inside the building during a guided tour offered to curious visitors (of Finland). The metal parts were used to highlight or accentuate certain parts of the infrastructure of controlled access. One of those parts of the parliament building are the doors, which either allow or prohibit access, but certainly make your gaze stop for a moment.

Since my arrival in Finland, I have been fascinated with the appearance of door handles. I'm not sure whether it is their actual design, the choice of material, or simply the contrasting appearance to the stone-faded "vernacular" of central Helsinki. A door handle as an infrastructural object embodies a form of choreography between matter and (hu)man. Their shape and material are thoughtfully chosen, to signalize and invite for access and with this initiate encounter.

“The surface of an old object, polished to perfection by the tool of the craftsman and the assiduous hands of its users, seduces the stroking of the hand. It is pleasurable to press a door handle shining from the thousands of hands that have entered the door before us; the clean shimmer of ageless wear has turned into an image of welcome and hospitality. The door handle is the handshake of the building. The tactile sense connects us with time and tradition: through impressions of touch we shake the hands of countless generations. A pebble polished by waves is pleasurable to the hand, not only because of its soothing shape, but because it expresses the slow process of its formation; a perfect pebble on the palm materialises duration, it is time turned into shape.”

Juhani Pallasmaa, Architecture and the Senses, The Eyes of the Skin (2012)

The handshake of a building is an object-oriented ontological approach to the infrastructural element of door handles which does not only describe the beauty and care put into this detail of architecture but also uses poetic words to describe that the users (humans) enter a form of choreographical relationship with the building, as soon as they are entering while pulling open its doors. As Juhani describes the door handle of the building as a handshake, giving the building characteristics which “we” can relate to and simultaneously suggests for it to have its own agency, I want to use the same gesture, a handshake, as tool and object for encounter to symbolically enter and represent a form of “reciprocal choreography” (Florenzia Colombo & Ville Kokkonen. The National Museum of Finland. (2018). Man Matter Metamorphosis 10 000 Years of Design, Man Makes Things And Things Make Man) with a rock.

Can I capture a handshake with a rock? And what forms would that take? How would it look, how would it feel to touch? Is it smooth or rough? Would it not always be my handshake, my interpretation of that? Would a too literal translation of a handshake not carry a pathos of something didactic and also create a layer (me), between the viewer/user and the rock itself? What is this handshake really, the moment of interaction? Touching? Is that not the scraping, the exploding?

Would a handshake not be those post-natural forms of the rock, at the points of collision of infrastructure? The feral data, the shape of human impact on the rock?

Questions I have asked myself during the process of prototyping the artifact with the conclusion the final shape might be secular. Important is the gesture and attempt of it, the shift of thought and the idea of the encounter with matter, in a way, we feel emotions primarily through our sense of touch. The idea and meaning of a handshake gained another layer in the context of the political site of the parliament.

What does a handshake embody? What does it mean? What are the politics of representation and what are the limitations of it? Is a handshake a promise of reciprocity?

Every time I was climbing the rock formation, my hands studied the rounded and shaped edges and nooks and crannies of the rock. What does it realistically mean to co-create with a rock? While I was prototyping, my hands were my eyes (Juhani Pallasmaa, 2012). I used my empirical, situated knowledge of materials present at the site and the shapes as a dynamic guide. It is an attempt to simultaneously give a form while also projecting a function into existing, feral, forms. Understanding co-creating as in the incorporation of shapes that are present at the site, while new forms were given through my interpretation of a welcoming gesture of a rock. It could be rightfully argued that a handshake with a rock is difficult to materialize and close to impossible to imagine, but exactly because the artifact portrays also the limitations of human expression of this relationship while embodying a humanizing approach, it strengthens the narrative.

What would be the value in the attempt to portray a handshake with a rock?

A handshake holds strong symbolic value, signifying a form of mutual agreement or simply showing reciprocal liking and care. In order to care, it requires an understanding or acknowledgment of the intertwinedness and entanglement of a more or less plural form of actors. To quote Anna L. Tsing: "...we have to learn new ways to tell stories that are simultaneously about human histories, and also

about histories of the natural world...”.

The idea of a handshake embodies a certain anthropomorphism, a humanizing gesture we are all very familiar with and a form of encounter we usually only have with humans and occasionally with our beloved pets, this gesture blurs hierarchies that are dominant in our anthropocentric worldview and way of storytelling. While the title provokes, as it suggests a form of a dynamic relationship with something we perceive normally as static, the aim of the artifact is to create a scenario of performative encounter, a “reciprocal choreography”, through a handshake. between humans and rock.

References

Juhani Pallasmaa. (2012). *The Eyes of the Skin - Architecture and the Senses*, The Shape of Touch 60.

Florenzia Colombo & Ville Kokkonen. The National Museum of Finland. (2018). *Man Matter*.

Metamorphosis 10 000 Years of Design, Man Makes Things And Things Make Man.

Martín Ávila. (2012). *Devices - On Hospitality Hospitality and Design, Setting Out*.

Henrike Naumann, Angela Schöneberger & Andrea Brandolini. (2021). *Tumbling Ruins* Jane Bennett, (2009), *A political ecology of Things*.

Anna L. Tsing, Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena and Feifei Zhou. (2021). *Feral Atlas - The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*.

Anna L. Tsing & Jesse Bazzul - Interview. (2021), *Reimagining Science Education in the Anthropocene*.

Sanna Helena Berger - *Performance, Berlin*. (2021). *Persona Sonata*.

Yoshinobu Ashihara. (1970). *Exterior Design in Architecture*.

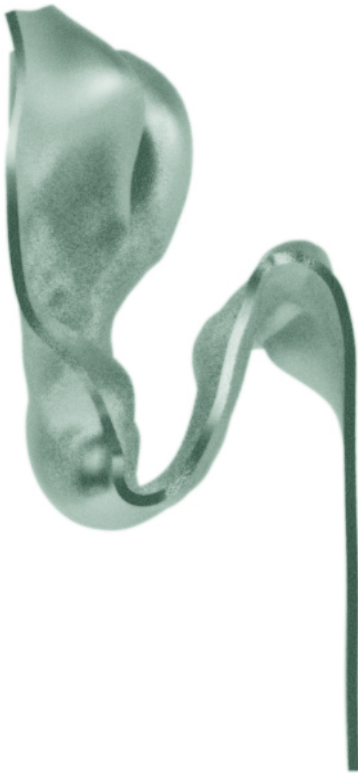
Martti I. Jaatinen. (1967). *Tie Suomalaisessa Maisemassa (A Road in the Finish landscape)*, *Cuttings and Embank-*

ments 68, 69.

Caitlin DeSilvey. (2017). Curated Decay, Heritage beyond Saving, Postpreservation - Looking past loss.

Werner Bläser. (1976). Der Fels ist mein Haus/Le roher est ma demeure/The Rock is My Home.

Parliament of Finland. (2019). Parliaments Building and Art.









Minchen Haga Stenersen
Minchen Haga Stenersen

My Feral House



In exploring this project, I've looked into the possible futures for a historically important Villa in the center of Helsinki. This Villa, which has served many purposes throughout the years, is now falling apart and heading towards an unknown future. By studying both human and more-than-human structures in the area, I have gathered feral data, resulting in a collection of artifacts, primarily centered around the transformation of the house into a more untamed and feral state. These abstract models are made from natural materials found on-site (logs, moss, and twigs) combined with symbolic elements representing the controlled, geometric nature of human creations. Throughout this journey, I've thought about various questions concerning power dynamics, the relationships among different entities, and the potential to rethink the importance and roles of a house beyond human-centered views.

Built in 1890, the house has lived a long life. An institution bought the villa in 1929 and opened a care facility for children with functional difficulties that lasted until the late 1960's. Following that, it served as a tenement for construction workers in the 1970s. Finally, an independent man named Aulis Junes bought the villa in 1980, and has lived there until his passing in 2023. This man is not unknown in the media, as there has been a lasting conflict going on between him and the government concerning the restoration of the villa.

My feral house is nestled among other villas that were constructed around the same time. From a distance, they may look similar. They share the same architectural style, however, my house sets itself apart. Concealed behind large trees and with certain parts of the structure already showing signs of decay and deformation. This mysterious appearance and current condition is perhaps why I laid my eyes on it in the first place. It brought me to a realization that its in a process of transitioning into a state of feralness.

What are the possible scenarios?



This conflict between Aulis Junes and the government poses the question of power dynamics in our society.

Who are the agencies deciding how things should look and when things should change?

An obvious approach to solve the issue of the decaying villa would be to preserve the whole house, or even just parts of it. Several of the surrounding villas are preserved and used by the public to enjoy. In this case, turning the house into something similar could be seen as quite a human-centric solution. I believe it is natural for us to find some sort of function to the structures we care for. The changes that are happening as this house keeps decaying can be seen as a “threat”. If it does not perform as intended, does that mean we are losing something? Could this loss or change of function spark something new and unexpected that could benefit the surrounding more-than-human species?

A Feral Future

Having an experimental approach to feralness as a concept, I have focused on a more speculative approach to a future scenario for this place.

What happens if we completely lay our humans hands off it?

Being located where it is, central and close to a popular walking trail, it is unlikely that such an exposed and historical Villa could just be left alone and change into something beyond the control of humans. Too many unknown factors would play a part. Things like safety and aesthetics. But if we looked past our human need to control and regulate, could we then think of this house as something more than a house? Where the essence and spirit of its lived life still remains, but with new narratives forming.

Human/More Than

Human Structures

During my walks, I payed attention to the interplay between human-made structures and those crafted by more-than-human entities. Structures intended for human needs often display a certain level of order, whether

reflected in their visual appearance or the intended functions they serve. In nature, however, structures appear more woven into their environment, lacking clear order. Trees are allowed to crack and transform organically with other living creatures involved in the process – ever changing and growing.

In my exploration, the feral house becomes a tangible representation of these natural processes. With its gradual decay, the structure becomes an active participant in the ecosystem surrounding it. If we left the house standing by itself – what would then happen to it over time? Will this state of decay allow the house to adapt and align with the state of change in the surrounding more-than-human environment?

A More Than Human Home

The outer part of the house is visible to anyone passing by. Those interested can observe the structural changes happening here over time. It's interesting to consider not only the wild changes that might occur between the house and the surrounding plants but also the potential relationships among different species inside the house if it were an open space. Typically, in our human homes, we control what enters and exits. If ants, spiders, or other insects attempt to settle, we can easily keep them away with human-made tools. From our human viewpoint, this is understandable, as we want our spaces to work well for our own needs.

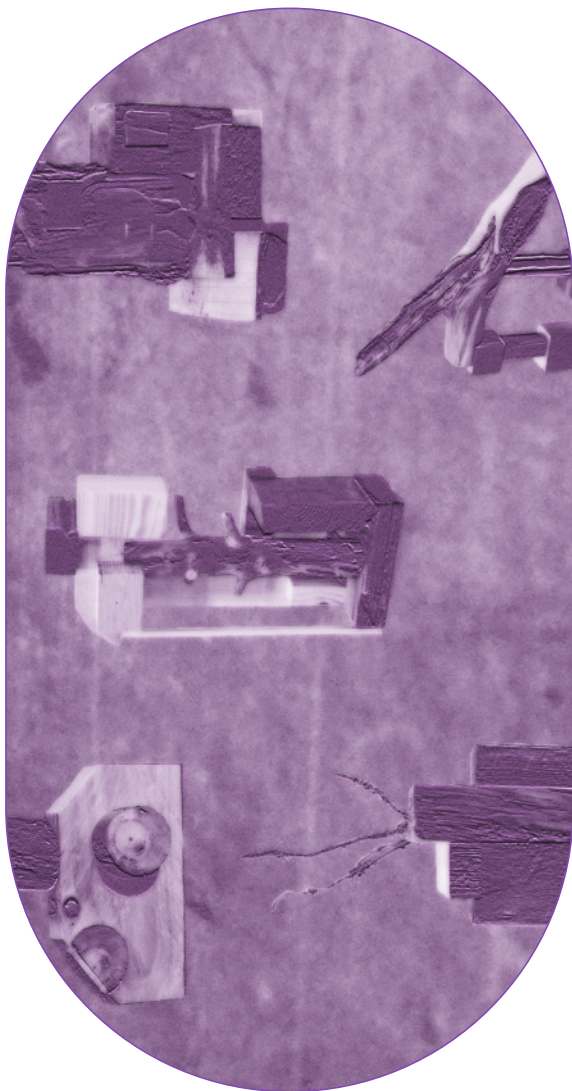
In the absence of humans over an extended period of time, the ecosystem surrounding the property might undergo significant changes and potentially create advantages for the more-than-human creatures in the area. Could there be some benefits for the multi-species to take control over the inside structure of a house like this? I don't know the answers, but thinking about this has made me question what belongs to people and what belongs to other living things.

When do we decide what's purely ours to utilize?

Development of My Artifacts

My intention with the final artifacts was to visualise a speculative future of the feral house and its change in structure as it becomes one with the natural surroundings. The actual making of the artifacts was very much a learning-by-doing experience, where rather than having a specific result in mind, I focused on the process of connecting with the materials found. I used organic material (logs, moss and twigs) that I had found laying around the property as a starting point to develop these models.

This project has helped me discover the significance of understanding and co-creating with more-than-human entities. In a way this process has re-shaped my design thinking and challenged my perspectives. Pushing myself to go beyond my human-centric mind and embracing an openness to experiment with the feral as a method to connect more intimately with my surroundings. To consider the importance of creating mutually beneficial environments for all living creatures and sometimes being able to just let things be. See loss and change as something potentially beautiful. I will bring these new ways of thinking with me further on my journey.









Mingzhu Fan
Mingzhu Fan

The Bedroom

The Bedroom is a sound narrative of a bedroom in the feral world of Espoo. It is presented as a digital interface offering a sound narrative that captures the essence of my personal space. Individuals can immerse themselves in the ambient sounds, providing a glimpse into my untamed environment.

This interface was created by documenting my personal experiences while exploring my surroundings. In this context, sound serves as the feral language for capturing and reflecting on my life. The recorded soundtracks act as diaries, captured spontaneously by various triggers. On the website, these recordings can be played simultaneously, forming a symphony that narrates my life as a resident in the student house located in the coastal area of Otaniemi, Espoo.

My Feral Place


My feral place is my room, located in the Aalto University Otaniemi Campus, at Servin Maijan tie 12, Espoo, Finland. I reside here while doing my exchange semester at Aalto University. The reason behind my selection is the substantial time I've already spent in this familiar space. The place has left me with vivid sensory experiences, creating a personal connection. My window is a bit broken, and my door allows leaks, unexpectedly exposing me to the cold wind and the surprisingly loud rain while lying in bed.

The contrasting comforts and discomforts I've encountered in my feral place have sparked intriguing questions: What brings me comfort, and what causes discomfort? Is there a clear boundary between the two? In essence, these contrasting emotions represent an internal conflict within me. It is a fight between humanity's inherent desire for a stable, cozy dwelling and the innate biophilia (Wilson, 1986) within us. The term "biophilia" has its roots in Greek, where 'philia' translates to 'love of.' Essentially, it conveys a love for life or living organisms. There exists a fundamental and instinctual affection for nature in humans, a deep-seated inclination woven into our DNA. The fundamental questions then become:

How do they fight with each other? And how do they compromise with each other?

To investigate these queries, I have adopted a method of immersing myself in the surroundings and thoroughly observing the details. My approach involves concentrating on my emotions and capturing as much feral data as possible, guided by drifting prompts.

Feral Data Collection

 In the drifting process, the most feral data I've gathered are my sensory impressions, and they were documented by subsequent note-taking or on-site recordings including audio, videos, and photos. Utilizing this data allows me to characterize my feral place, identify my focal points, and potentially address the questions I posed earlier.

I employed drifting prompts provided in the course, such as:

“Close your eyes. Listen to the sounds of the place around you. Map what you hear. Does it sound different than before? Capture it.”

I also drifted with my focus flow, incorporating prompts that emerged as ideas while drifting:

“Try to figure out how the air smelled different in and outside my room; try to pay attention to the direction of the wind; walk in the reeds on the ice-covered water; try to find out how many kinds of fallen leaves on the ground and how many kinds of birds singing, took a walk and made a full audio recording for later reflection; ask a friend film me in the environment and reflect on the video later.”

These prompts enabled me to gather sensory impressions from various perspectives, facilitating a more profound exploration of my feral place. With all the data I've collected, I can certainly use human languages, for example, English, to describe it: “It's located in a coastal area, there is typically cool autumn, the average temperatures in October range from around 5 to 10 degrees Celsius, and there is very possibly some rain, there are

birches, rowans, alders, and maples, and their leaves are falling. There is a group of student houses, in one of which I live. My window is broken and my balcony door is leaky, but luckily, the indoor temperature keeps around 18 degrees Celsius, which is fairly warm.”

During this process of trying to answer my own question about my internal fight, my scope has changed. Every time I revisit the sounds I've recorded, my emotions evolve. Even instances where negative feelings initially triggered the recordings sometimes transform into cherished memories. These emotions extend beyond mere comfort and discomfort; they quietly develop, and documenting them holds profound meaning. Consequently, I've chosen to center my focus on narrating the story of myself and my environment in the most sensory manner possible and share my very personal perspective.

In this narrative, sound emerges as an ideal medium, providing a vague portrayal of the myriad emotions I've captured. Sound is less immediate, requiring time for the comprehension of the stories and emotions carried. This characteristic enhances the storytelling aspect of the cocreation with my feral place. Sound surpasses photos in conveying depth, as it allows people room for imagination. It surpasses text because, unlike text, sound lacks human-created language; it stands as raw, direct recordings of memories, accessible to other-than-human entities. Sounds can also overlap, creating harmonies. And there is a rich resource of sound in my feral place.

This process has essentially fostered a habit of recording my life whenever stirred by emotions, like maintaining a diary through sound. And the act of gathering this data has become an enjoyable part of my routine.

The Bedroom

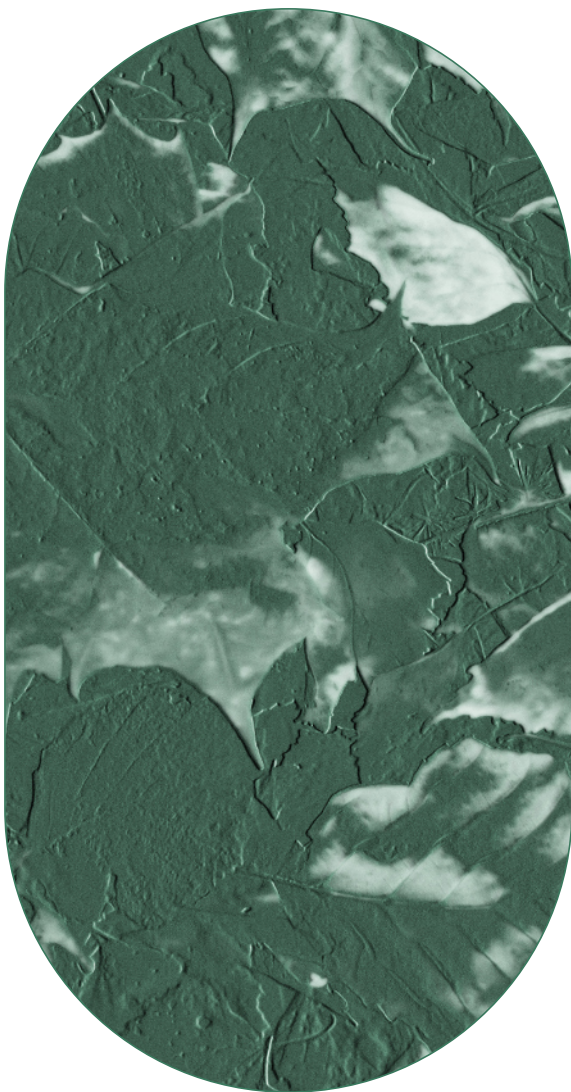
When audio clips have been carefully chosen to offer people an immersive experience of my environment, and these are featured on a webpage. Corresponding to each soundtrack, there are ten intentionally blurred images serving as icons. The audio clips, ranging from 12 to 90 seconds, are set on continuous loops. Users of the webpage can initiate or halt the playback by clicking or tapping the corresponding icon. I intentionally left the

audio files unedited, as I believe the raw data establishes the most potent connection between my feral place and myself. However, the images are deliberately blurred because the narratives within each audio track have already become memories. Presenting them in a blurred form reflects how they resonate in my mind. In my perception, the natural visuals for these sounds consist of blurred experiences, various colors, and nuanced feelings.

On this webpage, my goal is to narrate my deeply personal story and intimate feelings through sound in an interactive manner. The design aims to serve as a link, allowing users to go on a journey to the distinct room of a student at Aalto University, Otaniemi Campus, and for them to connect with and resonate with the sound narrative of my life. This design holds significant meanings for me as it serves as a diary capturing moments from my life. It is a repository of memories, reflecting both the world I've crafted for myself and the collective world we've built.

While the memories embedded in these soundtracks may gradually fade, revisiting them offers a fresh perspective. Listening again and reflecting allows me to carefully perceive these moments anew. The soundtracks were recorded during the beautiful autumn in Espoo, capturing the seasonal changes in the audio. They were recorded in various locations around my feral place, forming a map of the soundscape. When played simultaneously, these tracks transcend the constraints of when, where, and with whom they were recorded.

I strongly feel a sense of being here and now, and the sound serves as a bridge to those who may have never visited this place. A year ago, I couldn't have anticipated the precious time I would spend here in Espoo, and it has left an indelible mark on my memory of living in this space. With the sound, this imprint continues to refresh and develop over time. My hope is that people can enjoy this personal and sensory journey to a coastal bedroom in Espoo, Otaniemi.









João Justino
Feral Helsinki

Nut Bracteates



The interest started in Helsinki after observing the crows roam the city, the fact that it is possible to find them in areas with high human traffic. In Portugal, it's not common to encounter crows at all, let alone co-existing in the same spaces as humans. When I was introduced to the "Feral Design" concept, I had a small idea of what this term could mean. I am fascinated by nature and wildlife, I thought it was an adjective that served to give the connotation of wild, uncontrolled or even pure. Learning the meaning of different feral terms, new ideas and ways of thinking about crows started to form.

As the first exercise of the course, we were asked to choose an other-than-human identity that we encountered in everyday life and that could somehow represent us, and we would like to get to know better. The crows quickly came to my mind, so I decided to pick them and embark in this research. I researched about their behavior, food, origin, similar species and the most curiosities we (humans) found about these birds. I was surprised, a fascinating discovery! Not only that, but I found similarities with crows that I never expected to find - the only idea I had before starting research was that they were very intelligent animals and that they had a very large brain compared to their size.

I discovered that crows are very complex creatures. They live in communities, grouping together in winter due to extreme weather and food conditions. Crows help parents raise new offspring, scare off predators together, and hold funerals for the dead. This demonstrates an enormous level of emotional intelligence. Among other things, these birds can remember faces and communicate them back to their community. It is common for humans to establish a feeding relationship with crows. By exchanging food, crows are able to bring back shiny objects to reward humans. Crows can create ingenious tools for their goals. They create hooks with pine needles to reach insects in more difficult holes, they use the crumbs given by humans as bait to catch fish. I found more in common with this bird than I had initially thought. This creature has a profound intelligence and made me think about how it is possible to have such a negative connotation. It is depicted as a scavenger feeding on scraps, a pest to humans. Through research, I learned that the easiest way to get close to crows

was with the help of food. I researched their favorite food, all types of nuts - peanuts, almonds, walnuts, cashews, acorns, etc. Did you know that crows love eggs, of all types, boiled, scrambled, raw or even in the form of an omelet?

At Aalto University I observed for several days the places where I saw the largest concentration of crows: The oak tree near Väre entrance, on the roof of the Undergraduate center, and the many pine trees that surround A Bloc square. I chose a point that intersected the birds' path through these three sites. My more-than-human place was a humble oak tree that is accompanied by a trash can, two benches and traffic signs. It was easy to interact with the crows without being disturbed by people walking around.

I started to document my interactions with the crows, during several weeks I brought them nuts in the morning. At first the crows were very suspicious of my behavior and many were easily scared until one was the bravest and took the peanut from my hand. I filmed the different interactions and wrote about them. Crows have unique personalities. After some time, a hierarchy became obvious when interacting with several crows. They copied each other by imitating the fastest movements to get to the peanuts. I decided it was time to raise the bar and create some feeders using a plastic bottle. I placed them both suspended from traffic signs that were present at the location. I filled them in the morning. Without any apparent interaction, each time I returned the following day, the peanuts I had left behind mysteriously disappeared. Who is the "peanut monster"? I took a camera and try to record the crows near the feeders and even eating from my hand, but without any success. During this stage the weather conditions were not the best, it rained and when the temperature permitted it snowed. This meant that the number of times I saw the crows was greatly reduced.

The moment I most wanted to document the crows and when I thought I had the necessary tools to do so, I couldn't find any. Am I being sensed by the crows? Do these more-than-human creatures have an even greater intelligence than I have studied? A "sixth" sense? Why don't these birds come just because I left their favorite food?

Even with all the great data I got, I still wanted to know

more about them. It just wasn't enough. We don't live on the same frequency, their ecosystem is much more complex. The crows' rhythm is dictated by more- than-human factors than just a few nuts. My approach reached a point of no sense.

I had to take a step back. Find the higher reason for the knowledge these animals hold. I found a path in Norse mythology. The first depictions of this bird are documented in Norse mythology - Odin, the god of all beings and all gods, has two ravens that co-exist on his shoulders. Odin's human form is incomplete, he needs Hugin (mind) and Munin (memory) to fly over the earth and gather information, the news among humans. Odin releases the ravens every morning, and they always return at the end of the day for dinner. Here we can see the first depictions of symbiosis between a god and an animal, working towards a common goal. What were the reasons for this powerful entity to choose the raven among countless creatures? Could it be that the intelligence of crows belongs to the gods? It refers to a greater intelligence, something that I couldn't understand with my attempts. Are the crows smarter than me?

Between symbols and Nordic mythology discovered the term Fylja, "a supernatural being or spirit which accompanies a person in connection to their fate or fortune." Could it be that the crows are connected to me in some way? Could the crows know more about my meaning? Is it possible to make sense with an animal that has more sense than me?

I reached a new resolution. Crows are more intelligent and complex than I initially thought, their knowledge was lost with time. They live by their rules in their ecosystem. It was futile to think that I could somehow change their day-to-day lives. Despite my efforts, crows live in their own reality and only in the same environment as us, humans. I learned as much as I could from crows, I learned about their food, their intelligence, their meaning, their ecosystem. Unconsciously, these animals taught me more than I could ever teach them, the complexity of things are in the fabric that makes them curious. How can I thank the crows, how can I give back to them? These questions flooded my mind to, I thought greater gesture in the form of gratitude. In my research, I discovered that one of the first depictions of Odin was on a Bracteate: A single sided

gold medal worn as jewelry produced in Northern Europe during the Migration Period. This artifact symbolizes ostentation and served as an ornament for the Nordic people. It was here that I found a way to represent the knowledge acquired throughout the course, an ornament that serves to materialize and symbolize my wanted gesture. How do I transform this object for crow consumption? These birds are unable to wear this pendant around their neck. However, can they perhaps eat it? It was at this point that I went back to the beginning of the research, peanuts, crows love peanuts and all types of nuts. I can recreate this in a form of a peanut-shaped bracteate. I wanted to materialize my gesture of gratitude in a medal that the crows could eat.

The gratitude ritual began. I created an identity that expresses all the emotions I felt when interacting, discovering and co-creating with the crows. This identity took shape in several illustrations that could tell this story in a striking way. I researched the Nordic style and what the ancient illustrations used in Nordic mythology were like, their simple layout characterized by the contrast of color and dramatic strong lines. Based on this, I developed my own style and proceed to create various illustration telling our story. This later become the base for my presentation.

I spent time perfecting the illustration of the crow. The specie that habits in Helsinki are characterized by having two main colors of feathers, dividing their head from the rest of the body, hence the name Hooded Crow, I made sure to have this important detail present. It represents the location, the characteristic that defines them from other species of crows. Crows in mythology are the eyes of the sky, their eyes see everything. Although they are not big in real life, these birds metaphorically see beyond the simple realm of humans. With the illustration of the crow, I created two variations that represent two contrasting sides obvious in this research: The feral side of crows, the domesticated side, the knowledge lost in time, the interpretation of mortals and their ignorance. On the other hand an illustration that symbolizes the mythological, the divine, the meaning without the understanding of humans, the one that looks over us all, the extension of a god in the form of an animal.

To create the nut bracteates, I researched several recipes with natural ingredients where there was no

problem for crows to eat, although crows are designated as omnivores. The recipe chosen was peanut butter cookies made with simple ingredients: peanut butter, butter, flour, eggs and sugar. These cookies do not rise in the oven, which means I can easily stamp my illustrations. 3D modeled and printed in PLA (food safe) a stamp that could leave a mark on these cookies. The process was straightforward, I followed the recipe and mixed the dough by hand without any electronic tool. Does more effort equal more reward? First I mixed the dry ingredients and then the rest. Rolled out various balls and stamped the dough with the crow illustration. They cooked for about 10 minutes. Reflections happened while waiting for the cookies to become hard. Will the crows eat this cookie? Will they like it? Will they feel my effort? Will they understand my act of gratitude? Will their divine intelligence show itself the moment I leave the nut bracteates in my more-than-human place?

The next day I continued with the plan, went exactly to the place where I had interacted with the crows and left my artifact there. On this day, there were no signs of crows, only my place. I left the artifact and move on with my day. Did they eat them? Did they acknowledge my gratitude? Was my effort enough to understand these creatures? I didn't look back, I didn't check, it's not for me, it's for them.







Soli Uttera
Soli Uttera

Invitation

A feral artefact Invitation takes place in a small park Apollonpuistikko in Etu-Töölö, Helsinki. The park is located on top of a small hill and is surrounded by other buildings, one of them being my own apartment. It consists of a small grass field surrounded by a low fence. Around the grass field there is 9 benches in a row that seem to be facing towards the middle of the park. The whole place is filled with straight lines and angular corners, leaving very little space for nature to find its own form. That doesn't seem to be the point though as the park is made to perfectly fit in the centre of the buildings, seemingly offering a piece of nature for the people and dogs living nearby. Sometimes coming off as hostile, mostly because of the simplicity and emptiness while sometimes even welcoming, there is a lot to unravel.

During summer this place is usually filled with people enjoying the warm and sunny days with either neighbours and friends or just by themselves. I have also had my fair share of the place during those times, and I have to say, sitting here in the sun and listening to my favourite podcast, the morning coffee has never tasted better. The same doesn't go for autumn and winter though. As the air is getting colder and colder, the park seems to lose some of that life and vibrance it once had. Changing from a place where people chose to come and spend time to a place they now only pass by leaves me wondering about what is left. To whom is this place for and why is it the way it is?

When you see an empty space what goes through your mind? Are you afraid or do you feel at ease? Is there something missing or is it a pure form of perfection? Maybe you feel your best when you are alone. Maybe your own thoughts are the best entertainment there is. Or maybe you crave connection. The sense of belonging and understanding you can only get from others. Do you want to observe or take action? You can sit here if you want. But you have to make a choice.

Observing

I started to observe and engage with the park; sitting on the bench, walking around the area, observing


how everyone behaves in the space, paying attention to the smallest details. I listened and recorded the sounds and discovered a much boarder soundscape than what I was expecting. Seemingly a tranquil moment in the evening turned into an interesting combination of nearly overheard conversations, constant sounds of the apartment doors from people leaving and arriving, cars driving, wind moving the leaves and a branch falling from the tree to the ground.

I also wanted to know how the place feels. Why is it that we so rarely touch anything in outdoors spaces? And why can I still imagine almost exactly how everything in that park might feel against my hand? Sometimes during the summer we might walk bare foot at the beach and notice how the different rocks feel when we walk over them. Some might hurt because of their hard edges, some might feel pleasant because of their smooth and warm surface. At this park, I wanted to gain a comprehensive sense of the surroundings so I touched the tree, the wooden benches, the grass, the concrete, the fence and the small rocks I never noticed there were a huge amount of.

I observed peoples' behaviour in the park. What did they actually do there and how was the space being used. You could easily spot the ones living right next to the park, some came to sit on the bench with too little clothes for the weather and smoked a cigarette. Some walked their dogs and talked to the phone simultaneously. Many were in a hurry and just passed the park with another destination in their minds. Watching people walk in the park and mapping their routes in my head I suddenly noticed the low fence that surrounded the grass field. Obviously I have seen it countless times before but only now I paid attention to it and its nonexistent purpose. As I was observing the peoples' behaviour, I realised that the fence had a clear effect on how and how much people went to the park. If you wanted to go inside the grass field you had to cross the fence and if you had a dog with you, they had to jump over it. I saw some situations where the owner had to lure the dog to jump or they just simply carried them to the other side. So, why is there a fence marking off the park area and the area where the benches are? Usually parks are made to invite us to come and stay. But this park was surrounded by a fence as if you were never suppose to go there in the first place. Was it an area we were just

suppose to look at from the distance? Suddenly I became aware of all the thing that didn't make sense. The whole place felt like an artificial cube, planted in the middle of an urban landscape.

What Has Been

 searched the history of the place, I thought it would be interesting to see how it has looked before. Maybe it was more in use 100 years ago. Maybe there was a garden that brought joy to everyone that chose to stay there. Maybe there was even more trees that offered shelter from the sun and rain. Or maybe it was exactly the same.

I found these pictures from the archives of Helsinki City Museum. They have been taken from the exact same place in 1970. In the pictures you can see a group of children playing at the sandbox. There is benches around, one old lady sitting on one of them but the place still feels quite inhospitable. A lot of empty space and very little going on besides the children.

I find it interesting how we create these spaces for communal use but in reality they don't seem to meet the needs for connection. A connection between people and a connection between people and nature. Instead, this park is filled with empty space and various norms and restrictions. Everything is shaped to fit inside these tight corners. The bushes behind the benches are shaped angularly, imitating the shapes of the streets and building walls. All the benches are placed in a strict row facing towards the park with nothing but one tree inside. A fence is preventing people and dogs from going to the middle without a clear reason.

All these norms and rules tell us how to act in a space. They tell as which way to go and where not to go, were to sit and where not. It is rare that we break the rules and decide to do something different instead. We might not even notice these rules exists.

The Artefact: Invitation

 wanted to challenge the concept of this park. Could this place be something else? Or could I somehow

bring out the silliness of some of the choices here? What story does this empty space tell?

I created a photograph series highlighting and questioning the relations in this space. They aim to raise questions about to whom a place belongs and what is the purpose of it. I wanted to break the norms and rules we are used to and offer something new to consider. I wanted to create contrast between nature and human-made objects by placing them in unusual ways. How does the meaning of the chair or the tree change in these pictures? What kind of new stories and scenarios does it provoke? Does that empty space tell you something?

I haven't paid much attention to his park before and my guess is – neither have others. In the end, many of us are passive when it comes to our surrounding or things that do not hold any personal meaning. And it kind of scares me. What if no one cares? With small gestures, I wanted to create confusion. Some sort of change to reality as we have come to know it. Change order, structure, pattern. Suggest another option. Send invitation. Leave room for speculation. Do you accept reality for what it is? Do you think reality can be changed? Who decides what is best for you or best for this place? Do you ask questions? Do you give answers? Are you even interested in questions?

I invite you to sit here and look around. What do you see? How do you feel? If this park was an animal, what would it be? What would it say? Would it be satisfied or hungry for more?

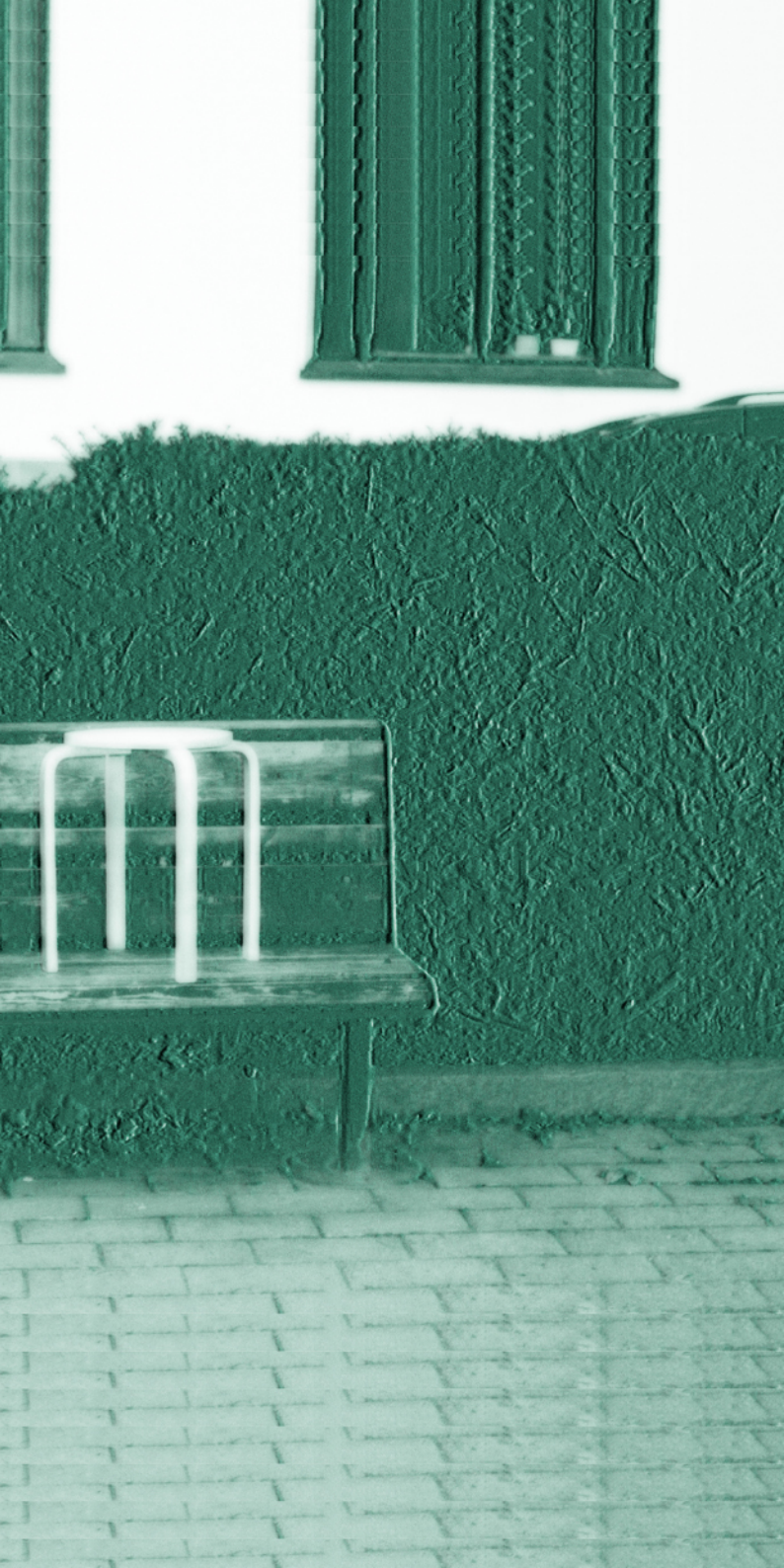
As I was taking the photographs, I noticed some people were observing me from afar. They seemed curious for what I was doing. Children at a playground next to the park gathered in a group and just stared at me. A couple of people walked their dogs in the park but avoided looking directly at me. No one asked me anything. I guess when you are doing something weird some people choose to avoid you.

A couple of weeks after I brought the same chair outside but this time there was snow everywhere and the temperature had dropped even lower. I placed the chair in the middle of the park and sat there for a moment. Reactions from other people remained the same. Nobody really

cared. I wonder what would happen if I left the chair there longer? Would that make a difference? Maybe I could set a new norm everyone would come to follow.










Matia Anderle
Matia Anderle

Ecosystems

cosystems is a research project focusing on different types of environments from a plant's perspective. To do so, I considered three different ecosystem types: the natural one, domestic, and a terrarium. I began my journey by building a terrarium, viewing it as a mix between nature and domestic house planting due to its self-managing structure and mostly independent environment. It exhibits a more balanced routine for plants because of its own rain cycles and the lesser human impact.

However, beyond all of this, it is still a very human construct and artificial object, which made me doubt and think about its ethical background. To explore this, I started thinking about plants more generally. Overall, plants are more than human entities that, during their life cycle and reproduction, expect the intervention of an external entity. The seeds of a fruit are meant to be eaten and spread around by any creature. But when thinking about pruning, watering, fertilizing, and so on, is the concept still valid?

If we think about horses, during their life, they need their hooves to be cut and sanded. Cows need their horns to be trimmed. But is all this human intervention dictated by nature, or are these society-built concepts?

Plants in domestic environments need constant care, watering, and so on. Obviously, the indoor environment is not meant for them; it is much drier, there is no rain, sun, and the seasons do not happen. These harsh conditions push us to continue caring for them, creating a different ecosystem in our houses just to make the survival of these more-than-humans possible. With globalization, it is now common to have a cactus growing in Northern Europe. But is all of this dictated by nature? Is it right? Are we talking about forced survival? Are we unnaturally forcing their development by pruning and fertilizing them? So, is a terrarium natural? Is it artificial? Is human intervention natural? Is nature itself natural or artificial?

I got the idea from watching how plants grow in a park near my house. When I go there, I enjoy the peacefulness away from the busy city. The plants are thriving, birds are singing, and it has that humid and refreshing typical smell of nature. But then, when I hear cars passing by, it reminds

me that even nature spots are influenced by people. The park has fences, wooden constructions, and clear paths. Gardeners probably come here to trim, water, and look after it, making sure everything's just right for the plants

The trees and plants are planted in a regular and rhythmical way, and birdhouses are built on them. The same goes for forests in Finland, they're mostly made by plantations for the timber production. So, even in what seems like wild nature, people play a big part in how things grow. Is it all a matter of upscaling and downscaling? A forest, a park, a house, a terrarium, a pot are all human-controlled environments. What is the element that changes our perspectives? The size? What makes us perceive the natural aspect of a thing? Having all our senses involved might be what makes our experiences special.

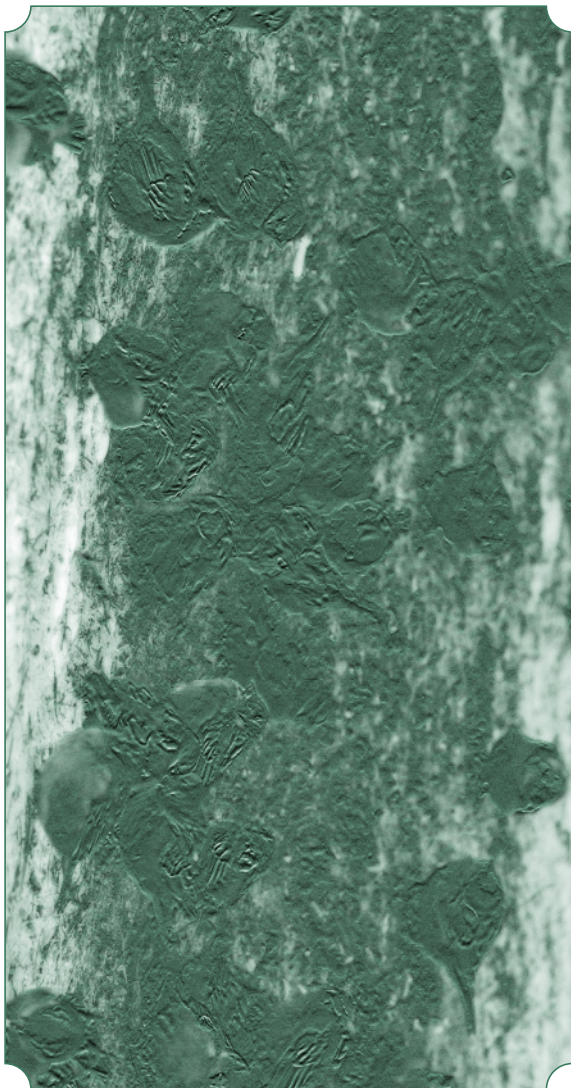
I personally have no answer for this. Mine is not even an attempt to suggest a replacement of attitude. I think, though, that a terrarium in a less human-influenced structure for plants to grow, in which they can independently manage their resources. I created two terrariums in which the smell is a key component to connect with the natural environment. One, with a more direct interaction, lifting the lid makes it possible to smell the fragrance of the ecosystem created inside. The second one is accessible by rotating the spherical cork tap on top, revealing the humidity-soaked side. Doing so makes it possible to scent the fragrance inside the terrarium without bothering the contained humidity.

I am passionate about plants, and having them around makes me feel more connected to nature. My home is filled with lots of plants, and I always keep an eye on how they're doing. I even give them names and care for them like they're my kids. It brings me joy to see them grow, with new leaves or branches sprouting. Taking care of them and creating a terrarium felt very calming and fulfilling. I really enjoyed making a cozy space where they can thrive on their own.









Fanny Kajela
Fanny Kajela

House Sparrow



I am a birdwatcher. This has not been a part of my identity for long but it is something that has enriched my life and made me constantly more aware of my surroundings and the creatures that we inhabit this planet with. In my short time of birdwatching, my instinct has been to go into nature to see the birds. My newfound excitement led me to forests and bays filled with wildlife to search for species I had never seen before. I was so focused on discovering the new that I neglected to look deeper at the birds that had been the starting point of my interest; the birds around my neighbourhood. So, in deciding on a more-than-human place to study and co-create in, I looked to the birds in my neighbourhood and chose to focus on the house sparrow which is abundant in numbers in the hawthorn bushes near my home in Kallio, Helsinki. To me, the house sparrow has always been a very common sight. I see them on the streets huddling under cars for warmth in the winter or at my feet in outdoor cafes looking for crumbs to eat. I never took much notice of them. They always just existed, feeling like a constant in city life. In looking for a more-than-human place to study, I looked at my surroundings and woke up to my lack of knowledge of this creature that I encounter every day. I wanted to learn about their life in the thicket of the hawthorn bushes and understand how this creature fits into the neighbourhood we both share.

Upon choosing the house sparrow as a subject and co-creator for my project, I started to research it and was surprised by what I found. This bird that felt like the most commonplace and resilient creature has been the subject to the biggest population loss of the bird species in Europe. In Finland, its population has declined by 70% in the past 40 years. (Ellilä 2023.) Most likely the house sparrow has lived alongside humans ever since the beginning of agricultural practices 10,000 years ago and it is unknown how it used to live before its residence alongside humans (Saunio 2010).

Because of the house sparrow's evolution to cohabitation with humans, it is sensitive to the changes we make to our human structures and environments. The radical decline in population has been speculated to be caused by changes and repairs made to buildings when eliminating cracks and holes in facades that serve as nesting

spots for the house sparrows. Other reasons have been speculated to be the lessening popularity of hawthorn hedges, which are a crucial safety cover from predators. Bird feeding is important for the house sparrow's survival in the winter because food is not as easily found in cities when temperatures drop. The combination of hawthorn and a bird feeding spot is ideal for a sparrow's winter survival, so the lessening popularity of both is detrimental to the house sparrow population. (Ellilä 2023.)

I had taken these creatures for granted. Their reality was far from what I had perceived it to be just by my daily observations. If I had made this mistake, I can only imagine how many other humans are living in a state of unknowing. In my research on house sparrows, I discovered that the problem with protecting this species is the lack of knowledge of their situation and general disinterest (Saunio 2010). I wonder how much of the apathy towards the house sparrow can be attributed to a lack of knowledge instead of a genuine disinterest in what this creature's future looks like. I believe that knowing is caring and without adequate knowledge of a situation, it can be difficult to want to protect it. I also know that for some, simply knowing is not enough to elicit interest. Unfortunately, sometimes it comes down to the question of "How do I benefit from this?". I am interested in discovering how to make people care even if the benefits to them might not be obvious or even when it seems as if there are no benefits at all. The eternal benefit is seeing nature survive and thrive, no more should ever be needed.

My more-than-human place started as a row of hawthorn hedges that provided shelter for the house sparrows. However, a few days into starting my project, a long stretch of the hedge was cut down to short stumps, just barely rising from the ground. The cutting was done on the cusp of winter, the time when the hedges are most important in terms of providing cover for the house sparrows. I was confused about the reason and later found out that the cutting was done to prepare for a landscaping project that is still nowhere to be seen after nearly two months. I am left wondering whether the sparrows were even considered when their habitat was cut down. Who are these changes truly catering to? These hawthorn hedges were planted by humans most likely solely for decoration, but can we justify cutting down the hedges we planted when they have evolved to house and protect more-than-human

life? Is this a case of not realizing the realities of the house sparrow or willfully ignoring the situation in the face of wishing to make the city's landscape more visually appealing to humans?

In order to learn how the house sparrows behave and occupy our neighbourhood, I set out to observe them and record my observations in video form. As a big problem in the protection of the house sparrows is the lack of knowledge and interest, I wanted to zoom into their world and see what I had missed when sparing them only a passing glance. Video format allowed me to capture their life and show others what I had witnessed in an attempt to generate more interest.

Observing the house sparrows was very special and I believe I learned a lot about them even though I am sure it would require longer than the few weeks I had to observe them to be able to begin to know them truly. While I believe I learned many things, I am left with just as many questions. While filming them I couldn't help but wonder whether they knew they were being filmed. I am sure they were aware of my presence as they quickly flew away upon my arrival but seemed to deem me as unthreatening since they flew back after seconds. I am left wondering if they knew they were intentionally being perceived and whether this possible awareness changed how they behaved. What do they think of us or do they even think of us? Do they know it was us who cut down their home? Do they mourn for it? I know that I can't get answers to these questions since there is no way for me to know their experience as it truly is. I am also projecting my thoughts and feelings as a human onto this non-human being who does not experience life as I do. How could I know whether they mourn for the loss of their home? Did they ever even identify the now cut-down hawthorn hedge as their home? I can only guess.

While my observations and the following questions feel valuable to my process of learning, the most intriguing part of spending time with the house sparrows was my interactions with the other humans of the neighbourhood. During the times I filmed the sparrows, I interacted with more people than I ever had before in the nearly three years living in Kallio. People asked me what I was doing and some stopped to watch the sparrows with me. Some were delighted by the sparrows, some were concerned for

their future and some simply walked past. One person asked whether I was filming rats. They were concerned about the birdfeeders set up next to the hawthorn inviting rats to feed on the fallen scraps. Around the area where the bird feeding is happening in Kallio, there are signs banning animal feeding. This person I met was frustrated by the rules not being followed even when I argued for the importance of properly maintained feeding since it is keeping the house sparrows alive through winter. The concern was not for the benefit of the birds but for the unsavory possibility of bringing forth another creature that we humans have deemed a pest. Who are these rules serving and whose wellbeing is left out of the consideration? Whatever the individual interactions included and however they preceded, the simple act of stopping to observe and film the sparrows attracted people to observe with me or at the least stop to wonder why someone would be inclined to film these ordinary-seeming creatures. I hope some even walked away questioning their own feelings for the house sparrow.

When thinking of the narrative for my video, I wished to highlight what I had witnessed of the house sparrow's life. I wanted to showcase the loveliness I had begun to see which is often missed when taking little notice of them. In showing this creature in a light many have not seen before, I wanted to build interest and appreciation in the viewer. In solely showing charming scenes from the house sparrow's life, achieving an image of an endangered species in need of help would be impossible. The conditions and numbers of the house sparrow don't indicate any sort of stress which is why so many are unaware of the problem in the first place. So, I had to rely on narrative to convey a message. The outward appearance of the sparrows is very active, quickly flying about from place to place with their song sometimes getting so loud it can be heard from a hundred meters away. I wanted to speculate what a reality without this creature, which we often don't even notice, would look and sound like. The video consists of three parts:

1. The sparrows interacting with the environment with the gentle sound of their songs.

2. Hawthorn hedges that have been cut down accompanied by silence.

3. Cut-down hawthorn hedge shown in its entirety by walking the length of it layered with loud sparrow song.

I wanted to play with contrast in all the parts both with sound and how the image is captured. The video starts calmly with soothing images of the house sparrows and their sound that cuts suddenly to silence, both in sound and stillness of the image. In the silence, I wanted to convey the effect of loss of habitat that comes with the disregard for the needs of this species and the suddenness of loss that is often only realized when something is already gone. I wanted to end the video with movement that conveyed both the physical length of destruction of habitat and the human pace it takes to walk the length. I filmed the first two parts with a still camera which allows the viewer to focus on what is happening in the image. I wanted the last part to feel more impactful in a bodily sense, so I filmed it with a hand-held camera, with which hope to create a feeling of movement from the viewer's side as opposed to the the subject of filming being the only moving thing. I layered the movement with a loud sparrow's song to convey their sorrow and anger about the destruction of their environment. I of course am unable to know whether they are feeling these feelings and I am only mirroring my own perception of how it would feel to have my own environment destroyed. While my human lens may never provide a true interpretation of the house sparrow's experience, it may have the advantage of appealing to other humans, hopefully making them feel sorrow and anger which leads to caring and action.

I hope to be able to spread the word on the critical conditions of the house sparrow with this video and get humans to question who is benefitting from the changes made to places deemed as human environments. Should the well-being of other-than-human creatures be considered and measured as equally important? Through this, I hope people will start noticing and caring for the house sparrows and not take them for granted.

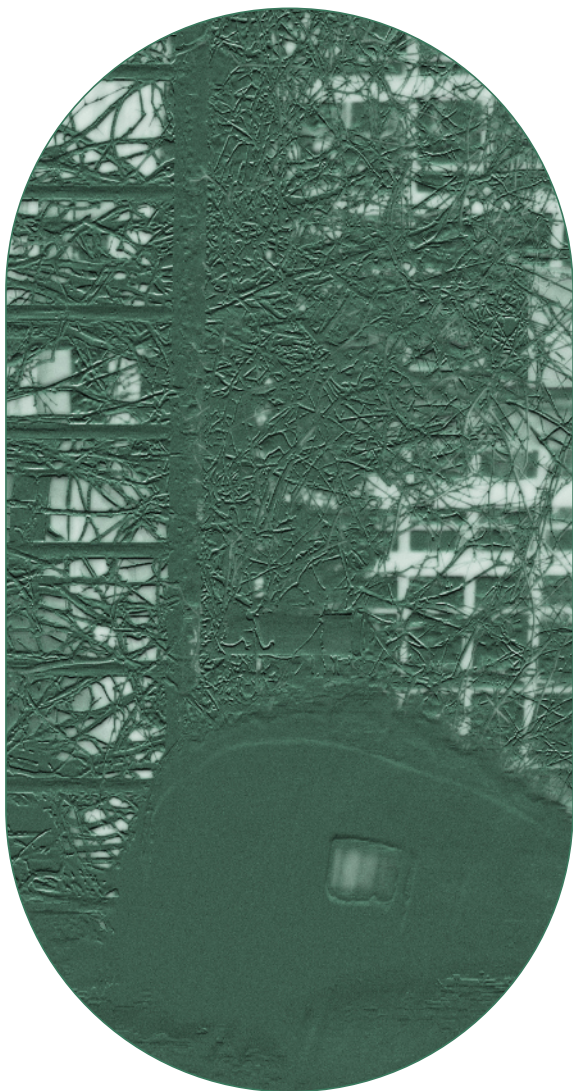
I care so much now I smile whenever I see a house sparrow, feeling a sort go kinship with each one. I feel as though I see them now. I see their beauty and wonder at their ability to survive in an environment constantly being changed without their well-being in mind. I see them connected with the environment that we share. I notice how

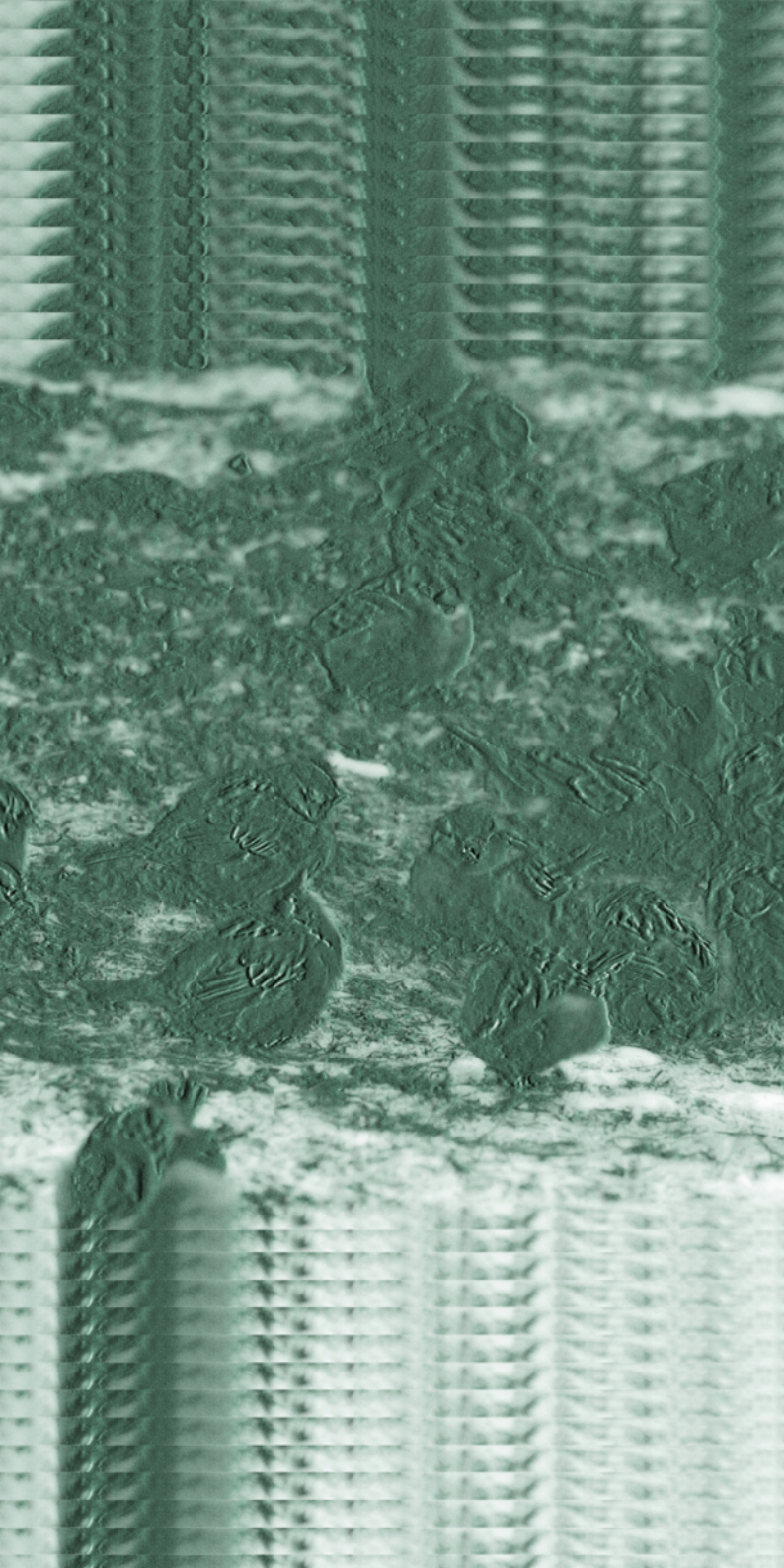
they breathe in the bushes and spread their wings to allow the sunlight to shine through. Instead of only happening upon the sparrows, I now look for them in the thicket of hawthorn and the cracks of buildings.

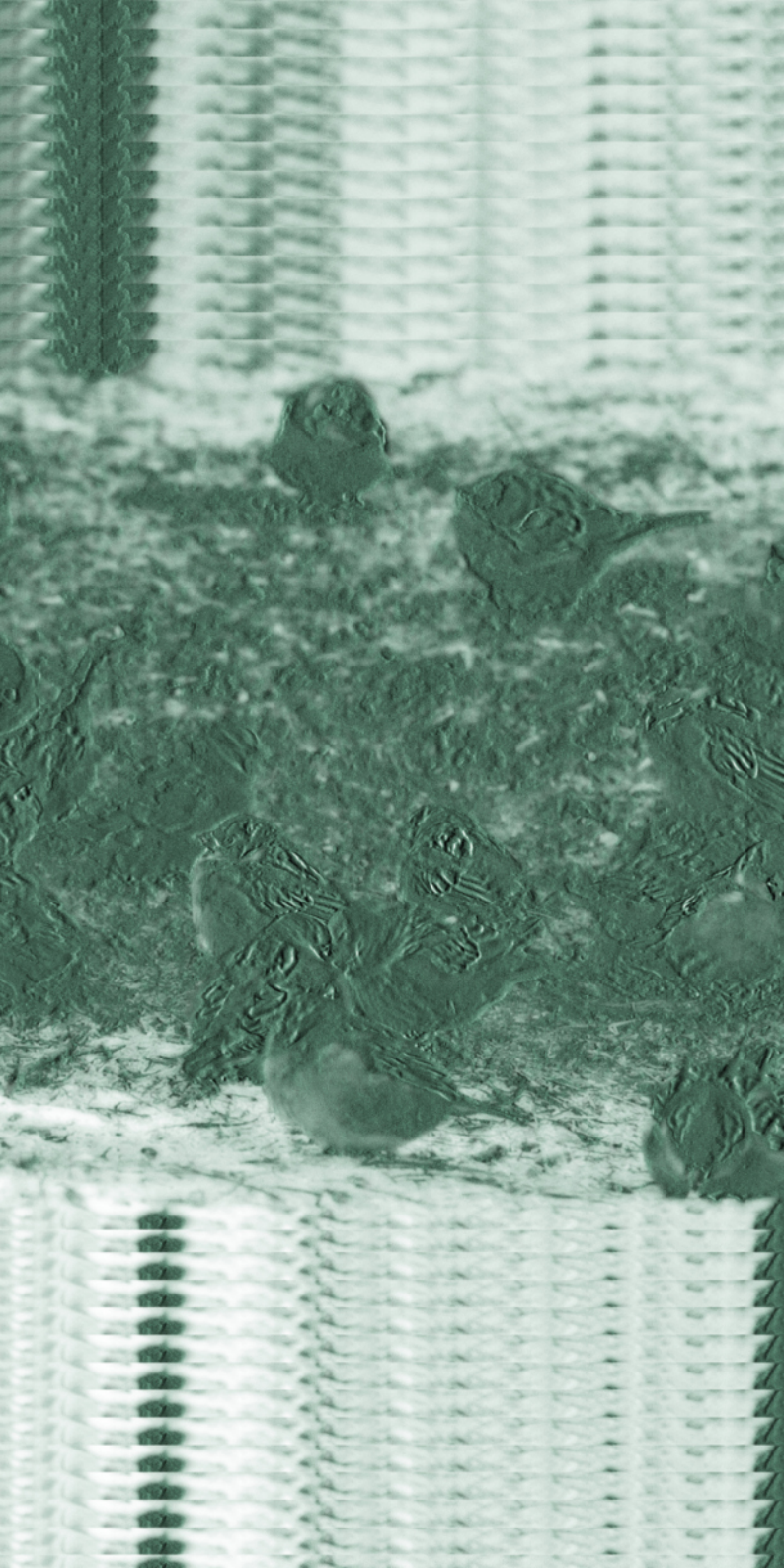
References

Ellilä, Tiina. (2023). Voidaanko enää kohta laulaa rakastettua joululaulua? Varpunen uhkaa kadota Suomesta. Cited: 12.12.2023. Available at: <https://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/art-2000009918095.html>

Saunio, Satu. (2010). Roskalinnusta kaupunkipandaksi - Varpusen suojelun haasteet ja mahdollisuudet. Master's thesis. Tampere University. Available at: <https://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:uta-1-20440>









Yutaro Komaki



Seurasaari Bench

Seurasari

ヘルシンキに来て面白いと感じたことは、島がたくさんあることである。フェリーを使えば、簡単に行くことができる。都会でありながら、生活のすぐそばに自然がある。今回は、ヘルシンキにある島に焦点を当てようと思った。セウラサーリはフェリーを使わずとも、橋を渡れば簡単に行くことができる。ヘルシンキに住む人々は、そこに自然を感じるために訪れ、生活の一部になっている。その島に関わる時間を過ごしたいと思った。その島と良い関係性を持続的に築くことができれば素敵だと感じた。セウラサーリは古い木造の建物がフィンランドの至る所から移築されている。その島には、公園があり、舗装された道、階段、ベンチがある。また、海岸の森、牧草地、豊かな植物相、池、なめらかな岩を持つ森を含む豊富な生息地を持つ。鳥とリスと交流することができる。コウモリの生息地でもある。私は、それは小さい島でありながら、多様な要素の関係性を含んでいることに興味を持った。その島では多様な共創を観察することができる。既に明確な植物と建物の共創があり、建物と植物の関係をリサーチしたいと思った。フィンランドには、たくさんの島があり、それぞれの島がそれぞれの歴史を持っている。その島の歴史を人間を超えた視点からどのように見ることができるのかという視点を持つことができれば、人間を超えた視点で未来を想像できると考えた。古い建物と、古い木があり、時間の流れを感じることができ、タイムライン、タイムスケールを考えることができると思った。

Hay Cabin

僕にとって作ることはいつもモチベーションである。作ることで身体的に物事と関わるすることができる。作ることで素材を理解することができる。私の気持ちに気づくことができる。作ることで私の気持ちを表現することができる。キャビンはその身体的な制作プロセスを見てとることができた。単に想像するだけでなく作ることを通してそのキャビンを理解しようと考えた。作ることに私にとって島と関わるのに良い方法だと思った。このキャビンをスタートポイントとして製作を始めようと考えた。フィンランドでは厳しい気候条件のため、畑での栽培はあまり有益ではなかった。20世紀初頭までは野生の牧草地から干し草を集めるのが一般的だった。芝づくりはとても時間のかかる作業で、牧草地に出かける必要があり、人が小屋に住む必要があった。ラップランドでは針葉樹は育たないので、南から運ばれた。運ばれた丸太と、その場で手に入る素材を使って、その場でできる加工方法で建物を作ったと考えられる。様々な素材と、形、素材本来の性質にアプローチする必要があった。こ

の建物は、初めの場所でどのように作られ、やがてセウラサーリでどのように島の植物と共生するようになったのかを示している。その土地の材料、その場の加工方法で建物を作るプロセスはとても複雑である。それは、様々な経験に基づいた知識が必要である。感覚的な知識、その土地の知識、素材を集める方法の知識、素材の特徴の知識、その土地の天候の知識、その土地の天候の知識が必要となる。これらを考えることは、島の共創をどのように考えることができるのかを考えることにつながる。これらの観点から自分の素材との関わりの方法をドキュメントしようと考えた。建物と島の素材にインスパイアされて構造物を作る。素材を集めるところから製作プロセスをドキュメントする。素材を集めるプロセスもとても複雑である。島を知り、島の植物について知り、島の生態系について知り、素材を触って、その強度、しなやかさ、構造を知り、その素材の特徴から何が作れるかを想像し、予想をつけて見つけることもあれば、偶然見つけることもある。探し回ることで、島の様々な場所を知ることができる。作るプロセスも複雑。素材をよく観察する、素材本来の形から構造を考える、素材の強度、しなやかさを考慮する必要がある。これらの総合的な作るというプロセスから島での共創を考える。

Searching Materials

島を訪れた人が建物に座って会話を楽しんでいた。建物は初めの場所の生活の文脈では使われていないが、人が過ごす場所として良い場所を提供している。もちろん、島の植物の生息場所となっている。植物と人の関わりを生み出していると感じた。人を素材との関わりに誘うようなベンチを作ることを考えた。現在の島のベンチは、植物が共生することは難しい。ベンチにすると良いと感じる素材、それと同時に植物が共生できると感じる素材を探した。島には多様な植物が生息しており、それらと感覚的な関わりを持とうと試みた。倒れている朽木は、座るのに良さそうな高さだった。表面に苔が生えており、座り心地が良さそうだった。その日は雪が降っており、苔を触ると少し凍って通常よりも硬く感じられた。苔は表面が凍って座り心地が変化する。苔の上には落ち葉も散らばっており、その質感の違いを楽しむことができる。朽木の木の皮を触ってみるととても柔らかく、しなりがあり、もしこれがベンチになれば座るのによいベンチになりそうだと感じた。木の皮には苔も住むことができる。植物が共生するのに良い素材だと感じた。石の上には苔や他の植物が生えており、様々な触り心地、座り心地を提供していた。苔の道はどんな絨毯よりも柔らかかった。朽木は水分を含んでおり、凍るので、思っていたよりも冷たかった。島の至る所に、朽木があり、そこは植物、昆虫、キノコの生息場所になっている。朽ちて、生き物の棲家になることを見越して、ベンチを考えることが島で共創することにつながるのではないか。

Collecting Materials

セウラサーリでビデオを撮影しながら素材を集めた。直感的にこれでベンチを作れそうか、これを使うことによって、植物が共生できそうと感じられるものを選んだ。木の皮は、そのキャビンの屋根にも使われているが、柔軟性があり、苔も生えることができる。それらを木から剥がす行為は、素材の成り立ちを知ることができる行為であると感じた。素材を集めているときの音の多様さが面白いと感じた。その音によっても、素材がどのようなものであるかを知ることができる。キツツキが落とした木の皮の中には、キツツキが開けた穴が残っており、キツツキの存在を強く感じた。使いたいと思う枝を見つけるのに苦労した。枝は構造であり、まっすぐの方が良いのか、枝分かれや、曲線を使って何かを作ることができるのか、苔が生えていた方がいいのか。腐ることと、構造を作ることとをどのような関係性で考えればいいのか。

Making Seats

座面としては白樺の皮と朽ちた松木の皮を使うことにした。どちらも既に苔が住んでおり、植物が共生できるベンチになることを想像することができる。人は座るときに苔を感じるができる。木の皮の柔らかさがベンチに適していると感じた。集めた素材はとても壊れやすい。座面にするにはそれを成り立たせる強度が必要である。そこで木の板に釘で打ち付けた。釘を使うことは接着剤を使うよりも、その形状や強度など素材を理解することにつながると考えた。作ることで、素材を破ったり、砕いたり、綺麗にしたり、曲がり具合を確認したりその素材の性質をより理解することができる。

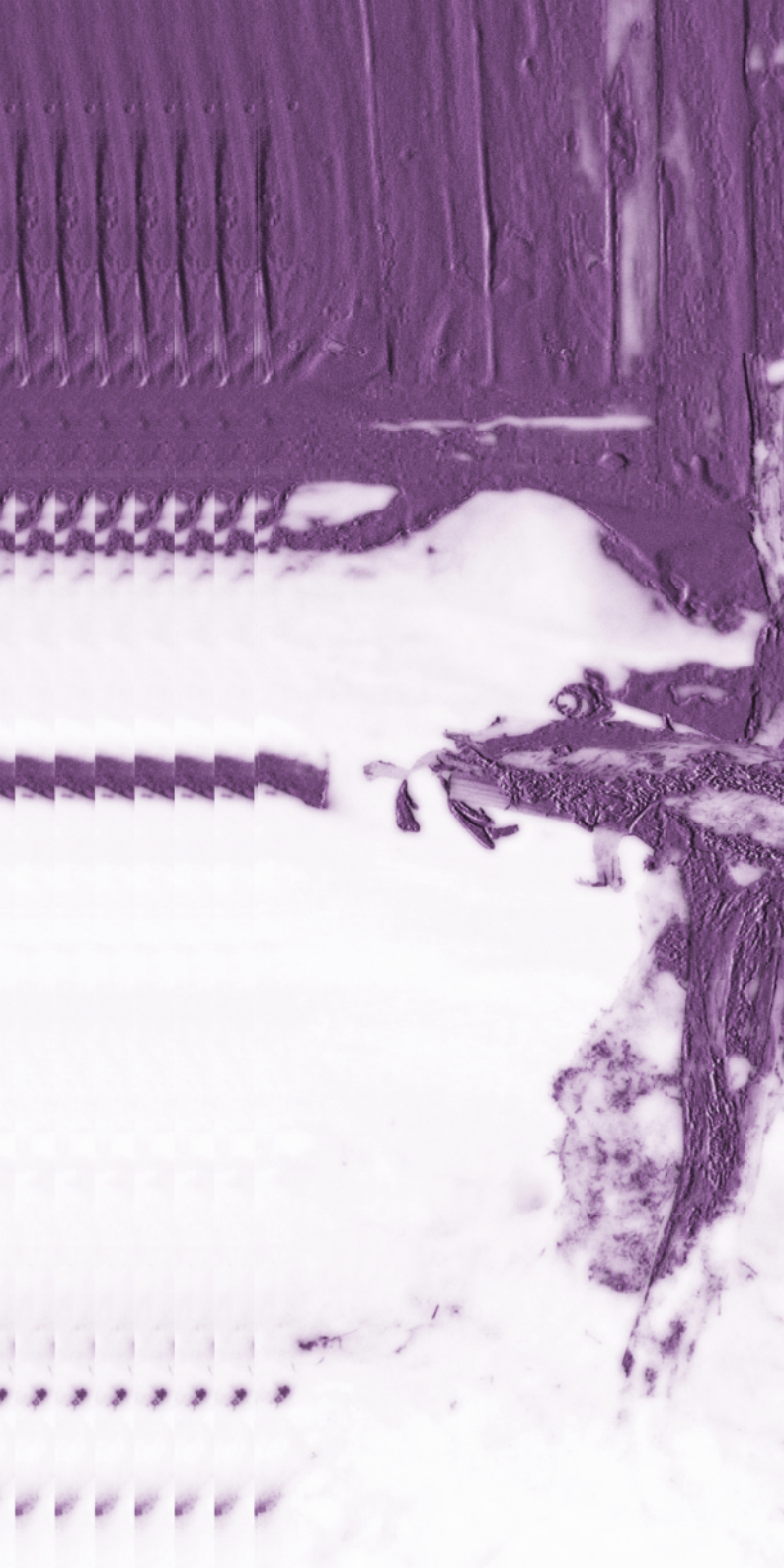
Doing Branch Puzzle

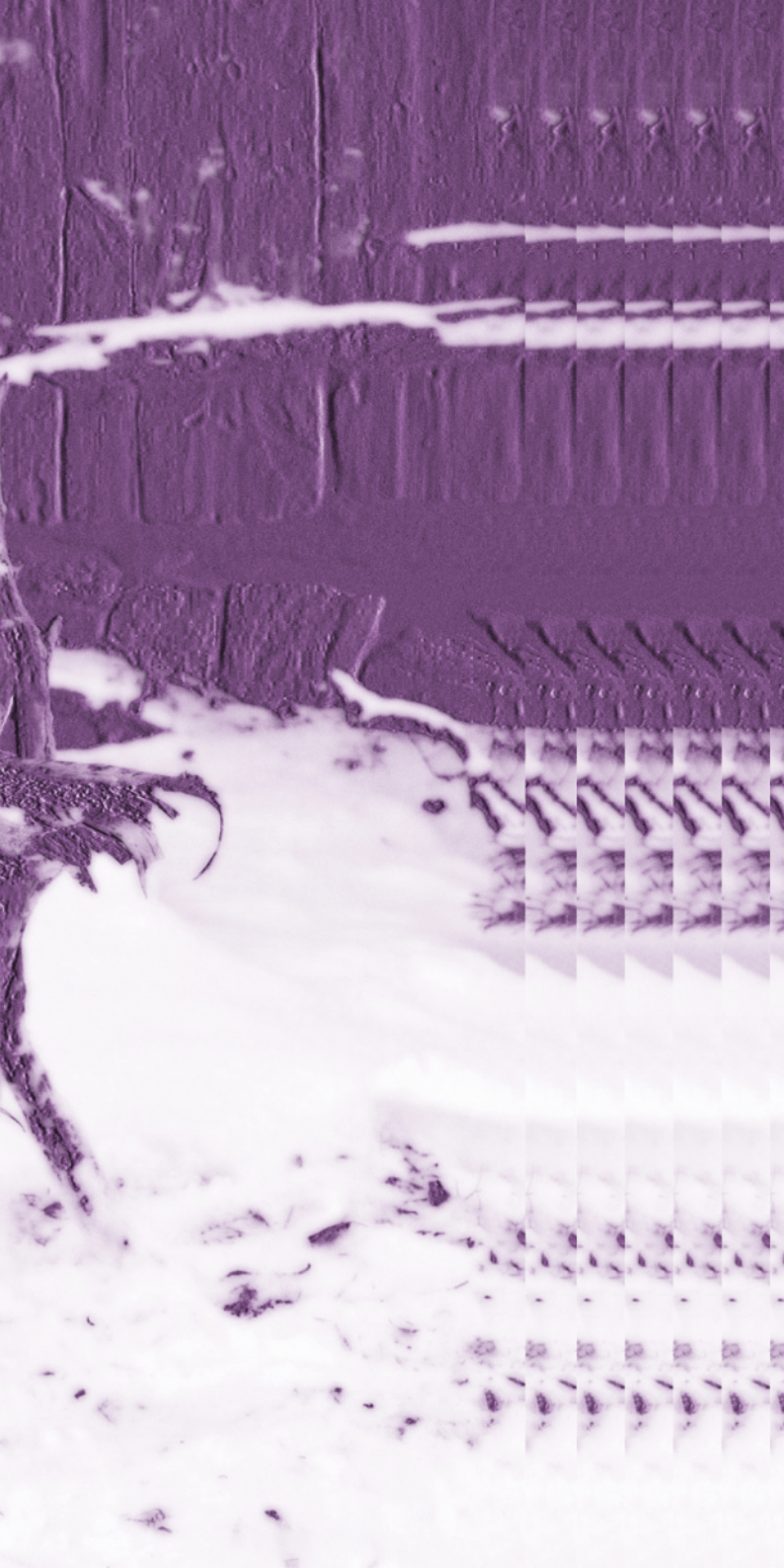
集めた枝で、スツールの脚を組み立てる方法を考えた。キャビンで、枝の分かれ目を使って屋根の丸太を支えていたように、枝の本来の形を使って構造を作ろうと考えた。同じような使い方を実践することで、どのように作られたかを、身体的に理解できると考えた。枝はそれぞれ独自の形を持っている。急なカーブや、緩やかなカーブ、枝分かれしている部分、細くなっている部分、分厚い部分、ねじれている部分。それらをよく観察して、枝の組み合わせを考える。あとは、それらをバランスが保てるように、接地する部分と、角度を調節する。それは、とても感覚的な作業である。バランスが保てた時、それは美しいオブジェに見えたと共に、枝を理解できたと感じた。私にとって単なる枝だったものが、島で出会い、よく観察して、組み立てるという作業をする中で、枝に対する理解が深まっていった。それらの枝は、他の枝とは異なり、私の島との関わり記憶を含んでいる。枝を組み立てるという行為はパフォーマ

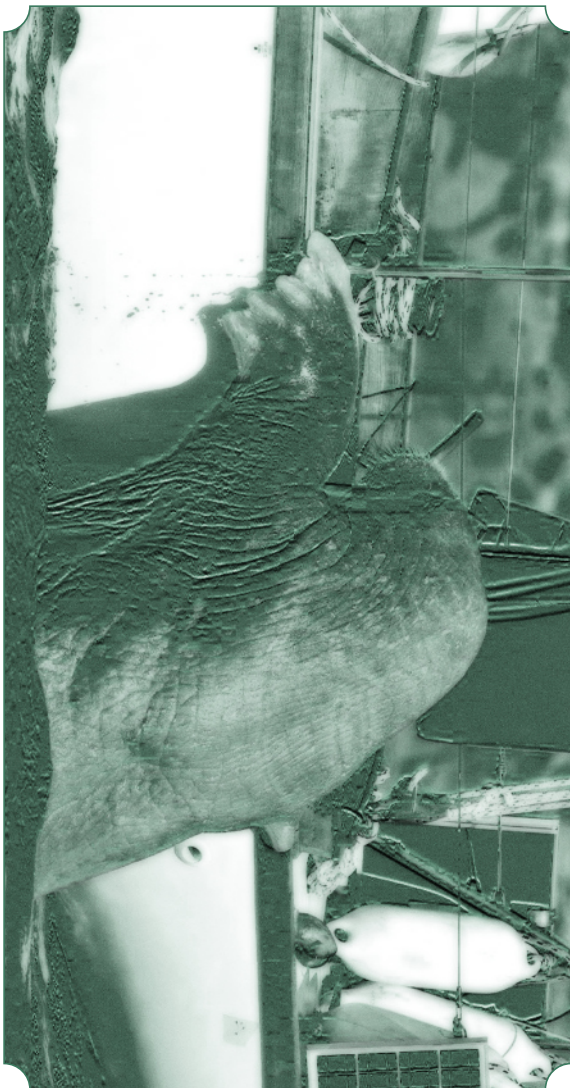
ンスとしても面白いと感じた。植物とどのような関わりをしようとしているのかを、それを見る人が想像することができる。試みが失敗した時の気持ち、何度も繰り返し、やがて完成した時の気持ちを共有することができる。組み立てるプロセスを見せることで私の島での関わり、そこで私の中に生まれた気持ち、それらの記憶を他の人に共有することができる。ベンチを通して、個人的な関わりや気持ちが共有されるものに変換される。

Shooting in Seurasaari

島の建物の隣にベンチを置いて撮影した。キャビンのように島の植物と共生する未来が想像できるような写真を撮ろうとした。建物にインスパイアされてベンチを作ることで、私が建物から感じた作ることを通した人と自然の関わりを、視覚化できたように感じる。構造物がどのように作られたのかは、普通ドキュメントされないので視覚化されない。この小屋がどのように作られたのかを単に想像するだけでは、その時感じた気持ちを共有することはできない。その想像を出発点として、作るプロセスを通して、実際に素材に触れて、形を作る。そのプロセスの一つ一つを写真に納め、その時考えたことを言語化する。時にそのプロセスをパフォーマンス的に見せる。作るというプロセスにドキュメントが付随することで、作ること、つまり関わりの記憶が、共有されるものになる。そのようなものになった時に、作るプロセスから、構築物を人間以上の視点から見直すことができ、その場所での共創を考えることができる。素材を集める過程で、島の様々な場所を知ることができる。この場所は、この島の特徴である滑らかな岩場である。岩の上は木が生えておらず、開けていて、明るい。島の中で過ごすのに良いと感じた場所である。素材を集めるというプロセスによってその場所を知ることができた。その場所に製作したベンチを置くことで、作るということが、島を知る手段になり、より理解のある関わり方ができることを再確認できた。







Dario Aguet
Dario Aguet

Take a Break - Walrus House



Take a Break - Walrus' House is a two-level project: the submerged metal lower part serves as an ocean buoy, easily visible, and the above- water section seamlessly blends with the icy environment. This fusion of human engineering and feral ethics acknowledges the inherent needs of walruses, derived from insights gleaned from documentaries and real live virtual cameras of these creatures. This innovative structure tackles an urgent issue: melting ice has deprived walruses of essential resting spots, especially during the rapid thawing season.

The primary goal of this house is to counteract this situation by offering shelter precisely during crucial ice-melting periods. By ingeniously integrating human-made and natural elements, the "house" stands as a testament to bridge the gap between our constructed world and the needs of these creatures adversely affected by our induced environmental shifts. It signifies the possibility of harmonizing our built environment with the necessities of wildlife impacted by our environmental changes, primarily instigated by human activity.

A Refuge for Walruses in Environmental Change"




In a world marked by rapid environmental changes, Take a Break - Walrus' House emerges as a piece of hope for walruses, combining human creativity and understanding of their needs within the context of climate change. The structure aims to serve as a refuge at a time when their natural resting grounds are diminishing.

Designed to address the critical issue of ice melting and the consequent loss of vital points for migration and the nurturing of their young, this two-level structure integrates its submerged lower part made of metal, like an oceanic weather buoy, with the above-water portion harmoniously blending into the surrounding environment.

The project draws inspiration from fixed camera footage in live streams and documentaries, incorporating these insights into the construction process.

Exploring the “More Than Human Place” of Round Island, Alaska

 In an interconnected world teeming with life beyond the human sphere, I found my “More Than Human Place” within the vast universe of Explore.org. This virtual space, a true digital sanctuary, offers an unprecedented immersion into wildlife through myriad live cameras. My attention was captivated by the fascinating and affectionate community of walruses inhabiting Round Island, Alaska. Focusing on cameras capturing these walruses, I found inspiration for Take a Break - Walrus’ House. This digital artefact is not just a physical structure but an idea born in a digital context that aims to provide a symbolic heaven for these magnificent beings during their resting periods and migrations.

The artefact reflects not only the need for rest amidst climate change but also intimately connects with the dynamics of the non-human community, addressing the challenges of contemporary Antarctica. This project combines human perception with wildlife, acknowledging the innate needs amid climate change. The art of the project lies in striking a balance between our constructed world and the evolving needs of these creatures, addressing the challenges posed by environmental changes.

I attempted to adopt the viewpoint of the walrus, though I understand it’s not easy... I realized one crucial thing: they don’t have the same concept of comfort. Hence, I allowed artificial intelligence to generate the upper part of the buoy, where the walruses will rest. The significance of this project lies in acknowledging that climate change is our fault, and we must act rather than merely observe. While the materials used may not be eco-friendly, I believe the urgency to act and effect change outweighs other eco- environmental concerns regarding its realization.

“I’m not the only one saying this, but there’s no more time. We must act!!”

The experience of immersing myself in the “More Than Human” environment through Explore.org has broadened my perception, emphasizing the need for a broader dialogue between humans and other life forms. The artefact, while of human conception, fits into a larger network of non-human relationships and interactions, opening doors to new connections and understandings. The co-creation with my creature happened over time, after spending a lot of time observing and studying walrus. I asked myself:

How do they perceive change? How do they cooperate with limited space? Do they use human boats and buoys to rest, distinguishing them from their habitats? What feelings do they have about the change?

Unfortunately, I don’t know the language of walrus, so I couldn’t ask them even if I wanted to.” This project stems from a my passion for nature conservation. In conceiving the design, I immersed myself in a world where human innovation merges with the urgent needs of the pinnipeds.

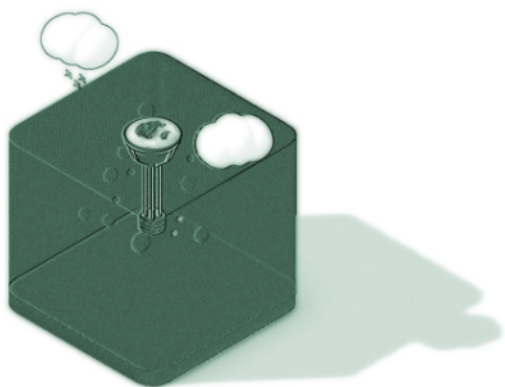
“And perhaps you will ask yourself, is it that simple? The answer is yes, why should it be complicated? We already know how to make buoys, artificial intelligence helps us solve what we cannot see, and we have the equipment.” “So why don’t we start by solving things. Clearly there are many issues behind it, but I wonder why not?”

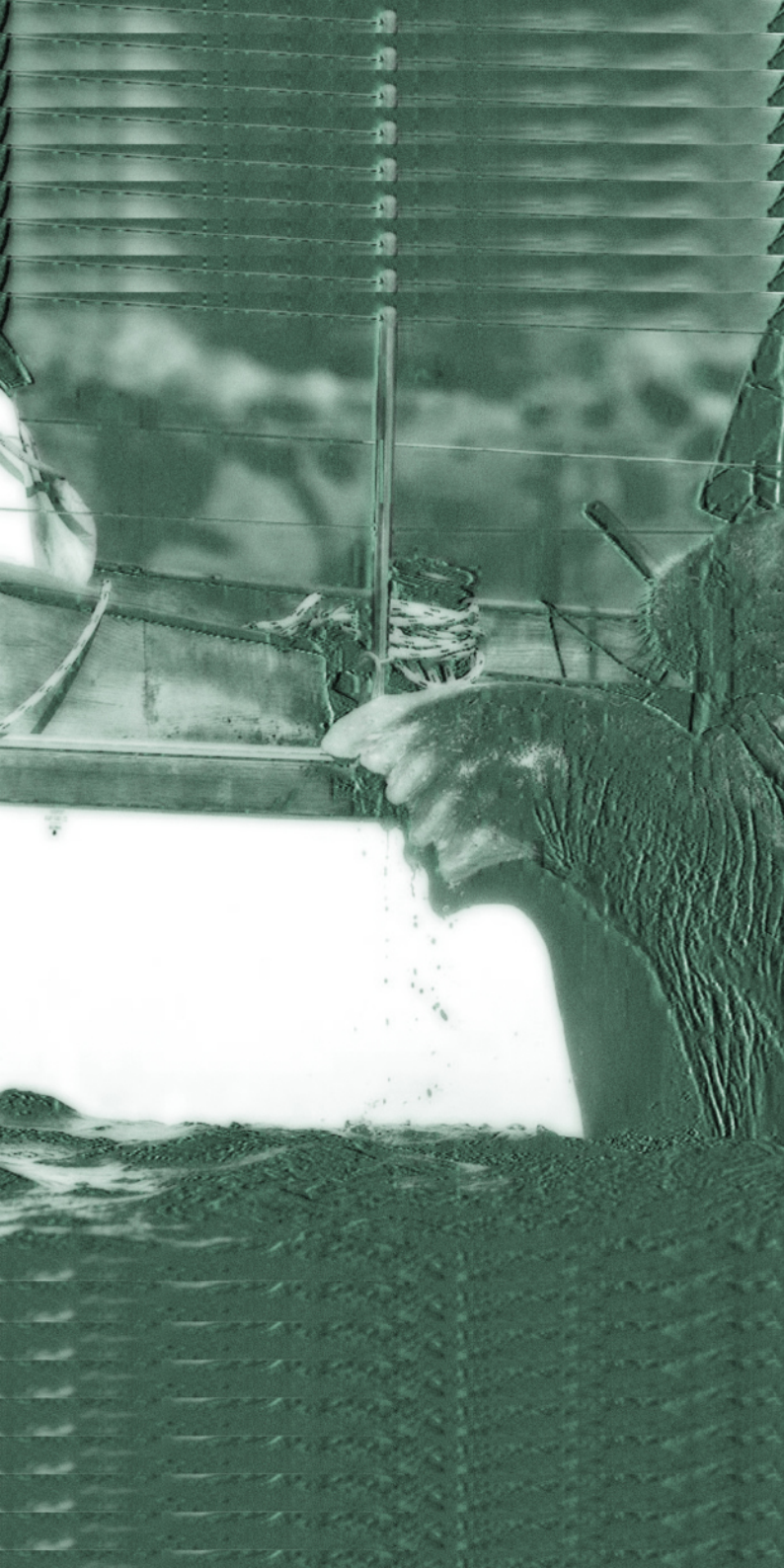
During the creative process, a moment shone through a reflection inspired by a documentary on the impact of ice retreat on walrus. That’s when the urgency of my project surfaced. Personal reflections underscored the responsibility we bear: a duty to act as stewards of our environment and its inhabitants. I have often wondered whether it makes sense to reason about certain issues. However, I am increasingly convinced that taking action is one of the best solutions. But the human collective seems unable to work together to solve any problems.

The process of creating Take a Break - Walrus’ House has been a journey of discovery, intertwining observation,

research and imagination. From a remote spectator to a co-creator of this digital heaven, I've explored the complexity of the relationship between humans and other life forms, opening a window to a world where connection transcends the boundaries of our individual experience. Take a Break - Walrus' House represents the union between human and environmental conservation. As we witness the severe consequences of climate change, this product symbolizes our ability to address urgent ecological issues. It urges us to reevaluate our relationship with nature, prompting us to commit to creating solutions that protect the habitats of all creatures affected by environmental change.

The walrus' house is not just a structure; it's a call to action, a symbol of resilience, and a refuge in turbulent times.







Stay Feral <3

Feral Helsinki
Feral Helsinki

Hana Rehorčíková

Saga Pantanen

Luise Elisabeth Arnold

Mirchen Hoga Stenersen

Mingzhu Fan

João Justino

Sali Duttera

Maria Anderle

Fanny Kajela

Yutaro Komaki

Dario Aguet