

Dreams of Lands

*Unlearning the modern heritage
for a resilient tomorrow*

Fanny Noel

The Greater Celandine does not live to shine. In the discarded roadsides and polluted lands, she tirelessly grows from seed to flower year after year. Humbly, she offers her four petals' flowers to bees and her seeds to ants. When you break her stem, she releases a bright orange latex, used to heal warts and other skin conditions.

Nobody notices the Greater Celandine; we were no exception to the rule.

The Prinsessegracht courtyard of the Royal Academy of Art of The Hague is internally famous for its bareness. A rectangle of a hundred square meters that seven trees evenly divide. There is no soil. The 'bottom' is filled with stones, apparently rubble from another building, sand, then more stones. A root-proof polyester textile ends to define what is a monument and what is not.

We wanted to do something with that wasted space: regenerate its potential to host life, make it a space to experiment with organic materials, an ecological classroom, or just a nicer space to be in. As a creative community, we were so excited by the potential of the area that we forgot to ask the residents what they wanted.

The courtyard was not empty. There were seven trees, two dead pigeons, some ants, a lot of stones and a growing population of Celandines, mosses and their other invisible plant fellows. Those working behind the scenes are called the pioneering generation. Because they require so little nutrients to grow, they can quickly invade an empty site. Over the years of growing and dying, they will have built a good soil for more demanding, sturdy and perennial plants to grow, which over time will evolve in an ecologically stable community.

The modern human coloniser works hand in hand with the plant pioneer. As he goes on invading and clearing already populated areas, he extracts most of their resources to transform them into deserts and covers fertile lands with thick layers of stones, tar or concrete that only pioneer plants thrive on. Unfortunately, the modern human does not know that they are partners. He often thinks very little of them, gets scared and calls them "invaders," to finally destroy them in favour of the company of rocks.

Fortunately, the Greater Celandine does not hold grudges and keeps on treating the wart that is our courtyard.



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introduction

I feel like what I want to do in life isn't resist anything as much as create more beauty, and I think it is really important we give the new generation something alive rather than all this concrete we are leaving them with.¹

Five years ago, I started a turbulent journey that wasn't asked for. At that time, I was living what most would recognise as a peaceful life. I was working part-time as a studio assistant and part-time for myself in a mid-size town in the south of the Netherlands. Every day, I was working with my hands, building dream-like objects and experimenting with different materials within an international community that was like my family. At some point, I fell into a severe depression. What would trigger such violence within this ideal setting? Firstly, I believe that living in an urban environment never did me much good. I love the wilderness and non-human company, and these elements were clearly missing. And secondly, my life, my time and my care was devoted to creating a world that

1 Sansour Vivien, "The Seed Queen of Palestine," Al Jazeera English, December 10, 2018, documentary, 14:53 to 15:10, <https://youtu.be/XoexxUOeZak>.

wasn't filling my deepest needs. Ultimately, I realised that I didn't want to live in a world filled with objects nor live in a city where the best thing that could happen to you was to become the next -successful designer. I could not resign myself to seeing the living world being replaced by so much human stuff. Depression made me travel up and down the dark well until settling into an apathetic middle ground. Since then, I have been weighing the worth of my life, searching for reasons why I would keep up with the struggle.

When I entered art school I started to learn about the larger social, economic and cultural dynamics which occurred over the last 200 years. I slowly started to understand the complexity of our contemporary world and how most of us have collaborated with the destruction of our future. When you realise that what you are doing is paradoxical you generally stop doing it. Thus, the more information I was getting, the less I was seeing a future for myself. I have now spent three years unravelling the individual and greater mechanisms that partly lead us to our global disaster, looking for a way to live without participating in its violence. In fact, it is difficult in the Netherlands to live as an independent artist without adding commodities and playing along with the rules of capitalism. Many of the mechanisms that fuel global injustice and climate change have settled in the artistic world as much as anywhere else, in such a way that exploitation, waste and speculation inevitably become part of your work.

Why is it so difficult to live without harm? How to make our very being the source of beauty and life? These questions implicitly led my life for the past few years whilst I have re-evaluated my colonial heritage, my Western European culture and the relation I have with non-humans. I used my subjective experiences as starting points for

different research that are collected and compiled in this book. It is still in progress as I am still looking for answers, but I feel better now than I did five years ago. I believe the problem of depression is linked to the many paradoxes modern societies create. I have started to unravel some of them and wanted to share this with you, in case it can help you as it helped me. It is a path that takes many detours; this work is not meant to be read from start to finish as it holds many different components. I am deeply indebted to the many thinkers, writers, artists, humans and non-humans who inspired me and helped me find a better place for myself. Thank you for reading these lines and I hope you will get something out of the adventure.

I *Heritage and acknowledgement of the modern human*

This publication aims at exploring worlds larger than the human one. I am referring to plants, animals, rivers, rocks, winds, and every unknown being that constitutes our planet's ecosystem. It hasn't always been necessary to distinguish humans and non-humans, as humans are made of the same matter as everything else here. In some other places, at different times, humans and non-humans are thought of together, in relation. Unfortunately, the impact of human activity over the previous three centuries had and continues to have so much impact on our co-habitants that we can no longer be grouped under the same term.

When speaking about humans and human activity, I feel like I am falling into a bottomless pit; my senses receive no input, it is only black and void: an environment stripped down for only pure cognitive reasoning. I am thinking about facts, dates, numbers, and names that are not relevant to my life. My under-graduate teaching has been in the abstract realm; I learned languages from grammar rules, historical figures without physical bodies, mathematics as the source of enlightening truth; the fundamentals of life through confined classrooms and heavy books. When we were asked to write, *I* could not express myself.

It is ‘we’, as opposed to subjectivity: an abstract entity not really human, an ahistorical, timeless entity definitely not bound to its organic condition. This is what the Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez names ‘the zero-point of epistemology.’¹ It is a place where you can speak without being situated in any geological, historical, or cultural environment, a heritage of Western modern imperialism.

Learning differently implies learning in relation.² Any form of knowledge produced on Earth, which is called “objective”, has human authors. If our knowledge is written by authors, and these authors are humans, then humans have places, times, cultures, biases, bodies, families, environments, and limitations, there can’t be such a thing as “objectivity” or a truth for all time, applicable everywhere, to everyone. The decolonial thinker and scholar, Rolando Vázquez, defines the acknowledgment of the enunciator as positionality: ‘any claim to knowledge needs to be located. We need to ask who is speaking and where from. [...] Positionality undoes the universal validity claims of non-positioned knowledge and reaches towards a more truthful and plural understanding of localised and contextual knowledge.’³

Now, I can take a step back, and decolonize my mind. It feels like taking an immense breath in. I am urged to dissociate myself from the culture I inherited and understand where the frictions I sometimes feel could come from. I have grown to question how my family’s multicultural background shapes my understanding of the world.

1 Santiago Castro-Gómez, *Zero-Point Hubris: Science, Race, and Enlightenment in 18th-Century Latin America*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2021.

2 Rolando Vázquez, *Vistas of Modernity, Decolonial aesthetics and the end of the contemporary*, Mondriaan Fund, Amsterdam, 2020.

3 Ibid, p. XXVI.

I also started to see what modern Western culture discards from education: the times and places of those who made my existence.

‘Decoloniality implies an awareness of a temporal positionality, an awareness that we could not be alive if we were not in this net of relations that is sustaining us, the Earth that is sustaining us, the community that is sustaining us, and those that preceded us without whom we wouldn’t be here.’⁴

I am a female human, born in a forested part of France in 1993. Like my parents, I am of French nationality even though both of them were born elsewhere. My father was born in Phnom Phen in Cambodia, to a Vietnamese mother and a French father. His parents met in Vietnam in 1950. His father went there in 1941 as part of the French Far East Expeditionary Corps, in the context of the end of the second world war when Vietnam was under Japanese occupation. Vietnam was then part of the French colonial territories together with Cambodia, Laos and Guangzhouwan which was named ‘Indochina’. The official reason for this military expedition was to free this territory from the Japanese occupation, but there was an implicit motive to gain control back of this region. Japan left in 1945 but the French troops remained and fought against the national independence coalition ‘Viet Minh’, created by the Indochinese Communist Party. In this war, my grandfather fought until 1948 and remained in the country as a civilian, working as a treasurer for the royal railways of Cambodia.

My grandmother Louise Nguyen van Rot was of Vietnamese origin. Her grandfather acquired French nationality in 1907 and she received a traditional catholic French education in one of the missionary schools estab-

4 Ibid, p. 156.

lished in the country.⁵ When my father was three years old and his sister five, my grandparents left Vietnam for France in 1956 along with the last remnant of the French military, two years after the Geneva's Conference and Vietnam's declaration of independence. They arrived in Normandy during winter. The whole family later settled in Paris, where my father spent most of his youth. Later, he and my mother moved to the surrounding area of Fontainebleau, a small town surrounded by an old forest, about an hour away from Paris.

My mother was born in Tunis in 1960. Her parents have partial Portuguese, Tunisian and Italian heritage, but were established in Tunis for several generations already. Being of Jewish faith, they obtained French nationality two generations prior to my mother.⁶ From 1881, French had been taught in school together with Arabic language, as France had declared itself the protectorate of Tunisia. They had been living in Tunis for several generations and migrated in 1962, being chased away by the native

5 My grandmother was taught in 'Les Soeurs de la Providence', a school established in Hanoi. They were taught Latin, Chinese, maths, history, geography, rhetoric and catholic faith. These schools were important tools of French colonisation to 'modernise' the Vietnamese population along the universalist way of thinking. Lien Thi Tran, "Les catholiques vietnamiens et le mouvement moderniste: quelques éléments de réflexion sur la question de modernité fin XIX début XXe," Gilles De Gantes and Phuong Ngoc Nguyen, *Vietnam: le mouvement moderniste*, Presse universitaire de Provence, Aix-en-Provence, 2009, p. 117-196, <https://books.openedition.org/pup/6661>, accessed 31 October 2022.

6 Many Jewish Tunisians were living in the mid XIXe under discriminatory rules coming from the Islamic dominant culture. They identified more to French universalism than the Arabic culture, leading many Tunisians of Jewish faith to request French Nationality. They would therefore benefit from social and economical privilege under French colonialism, being at the same time in the ambiguous position of dominating the Arab world and dominated by the French coloniser. Claude Hagège and Bernard Zarka, "Les Juifs et la France en Tunisie. Les bénéfices d'une relation triangulaire," *Le Mouvement Social*, vol. 197, no. 4, 2001, p. 9-28, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-le-mouvement-social-2001-4-page-9.html>, accessed 31 October 2022.

Islamic population several years after Tunisia declared its independence in 1954. They arrived in France during winter as well and settled in the south before moving to the suburb of Fontainebleau. My mother, the youngest of her family of three, was only two years old at that time.

These stories aren't linear and logical. It was important to me to contextualise the personal history within the larger histories of countries, religions, nationalities, and geographies, because when these intersect, one's story becomes complex. Looking back on these stories, I am puzzled by the fact that three out of four of my grandparents had a double or triple culture, and this being an anecdotal aspect of my education. When I asked my parents how they felt toward their cultural heritage, they both identified themselves as French. My father, with pride. My mother, less so, who could feel a certain nostalgia for her native country during family reunions, when discussing the people who remained and those who passed away. Both my parents recognised food as the most important part of their foreign culture.

My family's case blurs the line between nationalities and cultural backgrounds. Despite their different life experiences, their lives were aligned on several shared values: those of the Western modernist vision of the world, such as universalism and progress. Before being French, Tunisian, or Vietnamese, my grandparents' generation wanted to be modern, and everything else disappeared.

In both my father's and my mother's stories, choosing French nationality was a decision. My Vietnamese ances-

tor probably chose French nationality because it would bring them a better social status, as well as my Tunisian ancestor, who would likely suffer less from the Islamic oppression. In this way, it differs from the story of those who were forced to work for the oppressor, were killed, and were deprived of their rights, cultures, lands, and traditions through force and violence.⁷ Once again, stories are unique placed beside each other form a net of absurd complexity.

Today, colonialism and modernity continue to perpetuate devastating policies in all the interstices of life on Earth.⁸ The culture of exploitation, universalism, and progress has spread across the world, continuously erasing the diversity and plurality of every living and non-living creature in its path. 'The worldmaking power of modernity is implicated in the unmaking of other worlds, in the classification of others, in the silencing of voices, in the erasure of worlds of sensing and meaning, in the wasting away of Earth.' Rolando Vázquez compares it to a Vortex "that takes into its hold, extirpating, eviscerating, rooting out all that lies under its sway."⁹

The culture of my ancestor was absorbed in this Vortex, leaving us, the descendants, with only the perspective of modernity to grow within. But as the Vortex devours with pride and haste, it does so in a world of inanimate things, ignoring the resilience of life forces.

7 Here I am referring in particular to the history of French colonialism since 1800. *Colonialisme, une histoire Française*, directed by Hugues Nancy, Agat Films, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hl7nOekoaGE>. Accessed 7 November 2022.

8 Rolando Vázquez, *Vistas of Modernity*, "Decoloniality and Aesthetics," p. 4.

9 Ibid, p. 116.



Unnamed child and woman
America
Undated



Nicole Noël and Anna Nguyen Van Rot (Dang Thi Nhan)
Hanoi, Vietnam
1954



Unnamed woman
America
Undated



Jeanne Noël
Paris, France
1981



Lizzie and Emma Sue Penheimer
Winnemucca, USA
1912



Fanny, Marie-Laure and Olivia Noël
Avon, France
2010



Louise Noël (Nguyen Van Rot), Nicole and Didier Noël
Hanoi, Vietnam
1955



"Grand-mère" Souira, Sarah Lola and Nina Temmam
Tunis, Tunisia
1934



Unnamed child
North America
1910



Fanny Noel
The Hague, The Netherlands
2021



Danielle Ta'Sheena Finn (Hunkpapa Lakota)
Bismarck, USA
2020



Fanny Noel
The Hague, The Netherlands
2021

‘There are songs which seems to touch deeper parts of you than you know. Something get caught in your throat, and your heart weights a ton. Why do I get overwhelmed by Tuvan music and whild open lands?’

When I read Michael Mannusta Garrett’s teachings of the Cherokee Medicine, I felt an immense sense of belonging. Many of my personal beliefs, which I thought were made-up, were actually very close to his writings.

I have searched in my origins for a genetic connection with Native Americans and Tuvans, but as far as 30 000 years ago, there are no traces of shared parents. Still, when I look at their portraits, I see myself.

I know that I am not allowed to do that.

I am the product of French colonial history, the bearer of its reality.

I can see its deaths, oppressions, and exploitations, but also the love, caring and sharing of my own family’s history. I can’t choose to discard one for the other, and now between shame and pride, I don’t take any.

I won’t hurt, I won’t steal. I have been told that I am a white person but I am kind and caring.

Please, let me learn from your culture what is unknown in mine.’

II

The interrelated world

Two years ago, I opened a book that had been in my library for a long time already: *Walking on the Wind, Cherokee Teachings for Harmony and Balance*, written by Cherokee teacher Michael Tlanusta Garrett.¹ For years, I had moved this book from house to house, without ever opening it. Reading it was a discovery of a completely foreign world of sensing and meaning, which strangely also felt very familiar. The book elaborates on Cherokee Medicine. Cherokee Medicine is a way of life that touches on the essence of each of us and all of us together. The term ‘medicine’ differs from our Western understanding of the same word. Garrett defines it as ‘the essence of life or an inner power.’² Humans are composed of mind, body, and spirit. Cherokee Medicine views humans as a whole and aims to guide them to be in harmony with the universe. It is a living world, consisting of relations between all things beings in and on earth. It deeply resonated with me, much deeper than the anthropocentric Western view of the world I have been raised into.

1 Michael Tlanusta Garrett, *Walking on the Wind, Cherokee Teaching for Harmony and Balance*, Bear & Company, Rochester, Vermont, 1998.

2 Ibid, p. 77.

Their ancestral knowledge is rooted in their environment where humans are not at its centre but a component of its whole. It is called 'the Great Circle of Life.' Everything is circular, both in terms of time and hierarchy. No species are considered greater than another as all of them work together for harmonious living.

*You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round... The sky is round, and I have heard the Earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours... Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a person is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves.'*³

The concept of harmony and balance is key. This belief gives rise to the Native American acknowledgement and respect for all the existing forces in this universe and their complex relationship.⁴

Garret mentions four basic beliefs that are common to many tribes, which unite them in their relationship to their environment. These beliefs are also part of the honourable harvest, which is a set of principles for balance

3 Black Elk, Oglala Lakota Medicine Man, quoted by Michael T. Garrett in *Walking on the Wind*, Bear & Company, 1998, p. 75.

4 Here the author defines life as 'animals, plants, rocks and minerals, people, Mother Earth, sky, sun, moon, stars, wind, water, fire, thunder, lightning, and rain,' p. 77.

and restoration between all species:

- 1. never take more than we need;**
- 2. give thanks for what we have or what we receive;**
- 3. use all of what we have;**
- 4. 'giveaway' what we do not need.**⁵

The culture fostered by these four guidelines is one of humility; humbling human life and seeking to keep life in balance with everything else around us, treating our natural surroundings 'with reverence and great care.'⁶ While in Western modern culture humans are seen as the proprietor and extractivist of the Earth, Native Americans envision humans as helpers of Earth's relations.

While writing these four guides here, I am stunned by how the almost exact opposite of each singular sentence could stand together as shared moral values in most contemporary capitalist societies:

- 1. always take more than we need (accumulation of wealth, stock investment);**
- 2. we owe what we receive only to ourselves ("self made-men");**
- 3. don't use all of what we have (waste);**
- 4. throw away/ destroy/ sell what we do not need (mass consumption).**

Of course, this is a quite caricatured and demonised vision of our societies. I could almost laugh at such silly principles. Who would follow rules of underlying exclusion and violence? These make up the guide of the lone human who destroys what surrounds him in a desperate search for meaning and connection.

Potawatomi descendant author, plant ecologist and educator Robin Wall Kimmerer retells the Native American

5 Garrett, *Walking on the Wind*, p. 84.

6 Ibid.

founding myth of Skywoman in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*.⁷ Skywoman fell from Skyworld into what was only water and darkness. Her fall and landing were intercepted by the creatures that were already living on the planet: geese carried her on their feathers and a turtle offered her back for her to rest. Because she needed land, the diverse animals brought her, at the price of some of their lives, a piece of mud from the bottom of the water. Turtle offered to carry the soil on his shell and, in gratitude, Skywoman started to sing and dance, giving thanks to all the animals. The soil started to grow underneath her and expanded until all the land was made. She sowed the seeds she gathered from the Tree of Life and cared for them until they populated the naked land with plants, trees and herbs. Many animals were then able to feed on these new lands and came to live with her on Turtle Island.

What this Creation story depicts is a world founded on caring relationships. The animals cared for Skywoman, who in gratitude cared for the plants, which benefited the animals. This hugely contrasts our Western founding myth, where Adam and Eve are banned from the Holy Garden and forced to live a life of labour on Earth, Native American cosmology grounds human life within Earth itself: not as a punishment, but as a gift. Kimmerer emphasises the importance of original stories as they are a 'source of identity and orientation to the world.' Her dual education as a scientist and a descendant of the Potawatomi Nation illuminates the contrast between two radically different world views. Regarding the difference between European and Native American founding

7 Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*, Penguin Books, London, 2020, p. 3-4. The myth of Skywoman is adapted by Kimmerer from the oral tradition and from Joanne Shenandoah and Douglas M. George's book *Skywoman: legends of the Iroquois*, illustrated by John Kahionhes Fadden and David Kanietakeron Fadden, Clear Light Publishers, Santa Fe, 1998.

myths, she writes 'one woman is our ancestral gardener, a co-creator of the good green world that would be the home of her descendants. The other was an exile, just passing through an alien world on a rough road to her real home in heaven.'⁸ The story of Adam and Eve's banishment strikes by its violence in comparison to Skywoman's loving creation of lands.⁹

The founding myth of Skywoman reveals another fundamental difference in the relation of humans to all other life forms in the universe. In Native American cosmology, humans, the descendants of Skywoman, are entering a populated world. New to this environment, they become humble students of all the forces that were there before them. On the other hand, the Bible Creation story, which greatly influenced European middle-aged cosmologies, tells a story where God created Earth, all the plants, and all the animals to be ruled over by humanity. Humans also came last into a populated world but as masters and rulers of it all. And so, part of the European human found his essence in possession, domination, and exploitation.¹⁰

I recall a particular event from my younger years, around middle school, which made me confront this particular hierarchy between species. As a child, I was fortunate to have the trust of my parents to venture into the nearby forest on my own. I enjoyed spending time among non-humans, and like many young people, I would climb high up in the trees until I felt like I had disappeared from

8 Ibid, p. 7.

9 New International Version, Bible Gateway, Genesis 2:4-3:24, 2011. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%20%3A4-3%3A24&version=NIV>, accessed 21 April 2021.

10 "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground." – Genesis 1:26-28.

the world.

This one day, a kind-hearted passerby, seeing my bag and shoes at the foot of my woody friend, called the local police to make me go down. Upset and ashamed of being pulled out of my world, I told them that I was up there because I liked trees, and found them to be comforting companions. They asked me if I was on drugs or if I was preparing for a circus show. Apparently, the concept of friendship between humans and non-humans didn't exist.

In Western culture, we commonly understand our surroundings as completely foreign to us. Modern science learns from an environment that is permanent, dissected, and classified. It is the study of inert objects by thinking subjects. The inert subjects vary from numbers, light, and physical laws, to atoms, molecules, cells, and ultimately everything that is made of them; rocks, trees, insects, animals, and humans. Maybe the policemen of my childhood also thought of the tree as an object. I can understand them; a kid mistaking a chair for a person might be somewhat funny, and I will probably laugh at someone befriending his car too.

In the chapter *Learning the Grammar of Animacy*, Kimmerer shares her struggle with learning her native language.¹¹ In Potawatomi, there are many 'objects' that are considered beings, holding life and spirit. Therefore, they can't be addressed as passive inanimate things but need to be addressed as persons. Kimmerer takes the example of a bay, which in Potawatomi is the verb 'being a bay.' Being a bay because, she explains, the water could choose to be something else, a sea, a river, or rain. When language designates your surroundings as made of living beings rather than objects, our relationship with the environment is radically different. 'I knew it!' would have said twelve-year-old me. Hopefully, over the last sixty years,

11 Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 48.

Western discourses started to slowly change their narratives to align with views closer to Native American ones.

The French sociologist and anthropologist Bruno Latour has been questioning the scientific method since the 1980's. He proposed an alternative approach to acquiring knowledge from isolated objects, advocating for a method that recognises the multiple agents involved in the study when constructing meaning, including humans and non-humans. He (and other scientists and scholars) called this system the actor-network theory (ANT). For example, in a laboratory, scientific knowledge is not the objective outcome of discovery but instead emerges from the interactions between various actors such as scientists, instruments, and lab technicians. All actors interact with each other, creating networks that vary in their complexity and our ability to understand them. Therefore, the understanding of a single object of study varies greatly depending on social, cultural, geographical, and technological conditions.

I understand this idea in connection to two others. The concept of the network can be linked to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari theory of the rhizome, where social and cultural structures are formed in a non-linear and non-hierarchical way. Following the model of actual rhizomatic plants, meaning emerges in all directions through connections, each expanding in multiple new nodes, with no point of departure or arrival.¹²

I also connected the idea of the multitude of agents to Judith Butler's theory of performative gender. In her text *Gender Trouble* written in 1990, gender is not something determined at birth and definitive, but rather a characteristic that is performed and constructed through the repetition of cultural norms and expectations. Genders

12 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London, 1987.

are therefore constantly redefined according to those who express them through speech, action, and appearance. I believe this theory can be applied to all social and cultural constructs, as meaning is always created by a group of agents in relation to each other. Meaning becomes a fluid entity.¹³

The actor-network theory brings a radical change of perception in the Western culture of the world we thought we were surrounded by. Since the Enlightenment and the concurring emphasis on reasoning for creating meaning, the world was broadly understood as a collection of inert objects which could be possessed and studied from afar. These objects followed the physical laws that science would discover. It was commonly understood that what humans could feel and what they were made of were different from the substance of the world; it did not have agency.

Only recently, Western sciences have been discovering a world made of living beings, such as bacteria and viruses, and have come to understand that they constitute the metaphysical fundament of what the world is made of. Throughout our planet's history, viruses and bacteria have been what have brought about changes and made Earth habitable. We are transitioning from an understanding of the world as composed of inert objects, which can be possessed and studied from afar, to a world comprised of living beings, which possess agency and are connected to all other living forms. It represents the Potawatomi animacy described by Kimmerer, now understood by Western minds through their Western tools, years later.

The nature of the world is changing from a solid and stable matter that adheres to our laws to a fluid, inter-

connected continuous movement; from the modernist cosmology of the subject-object relationship to a vast body where all beings overlap with each other: a world of relationships.¹⁴

This new understanding of planet Earth as an interconnected system had been named and researched by the English scientist and environmentalist James Lovelock in the 1960s. He defines Earth as a self-sustaining global system composed of living forces that evolve with each other to maintain its planetary system viable for life: he names our planet 'Gaia.' Gaia is not the entire planet but is considered to have come into existence sometime after the beginning of life on Earth (between three and four billion years ago). Gaia is thought of as 'a thin spherical shell of matter that surrounds the incandescent interior; it begins where the crustal rocks meet the magma of the Earth's hot interior, about 100 miles below the surface, and proceeds another 100 miles outwards through the ocean and air to the even hotter thermosphere at the edge of space.'¹⁵ This physiological system, with its living entities (plants, animals, bacteria, etc.) and non-living entities (rocks, sands, atmospheres, etc.), is thought by Lovelock to evolve and self-regulate the entire planet in order to maintain an ideal temperature for life (habitability) no matter which life forms happens to be there.

Understanding our world as a living entity went against the belief held by most environmentalists, biologists, and geologists of his time, that the organic elements of the planet only adapt to pre-existing and determined Earth's geological and atmospheric conditions. This belief is mainly rooted in Charles Darwin's theory of evolution

14 Bruno Latour, "Nous avons changé de monde," *Bruno Latour : l'ultime entretien* 1/11, Truong Nicolas, Arte, 2022.

15 James Lovelock, *We Belong to Gaia*, Penguin Random House, London, 2021, p. 1-2.

and its principle of natural selection (the most fitting populations to their environment would be the ones to survive). Lovelock's hypothesis does not deny natural selection but emphasises the ability of organisms to both adapt to and change their environment, thus altering the traditional dualistic understanding of Earth's ecosystem.

His idea, first rejected by the scientific community, is gaining popularity in the face of global warming. Just like trees which change the atmospheric gases by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, thus creating a favourable environment for the apparition of oxygen-thriving organisms, we are currently changing the atmosphere by releasing big and sudden amounts of carbon dioxide and reducing the number of oxygen-releasing entities, thus creating a hostile environment for oxygen thriving organisms. This has the effect of increasing Earth's surface temperature as carbon dioxide (and other greenhouse gases) trap and re-emit the heat that Earth absorbs from the Sun's energy. The rising temperature affects the ability of our planet to sustain life as we know it, and the rate at which the temperature is rising puts Earth's habitability at risk beyond the point of reversibility.

Lovelock, as a geophysicologist, reminds us of the sun's continuously increasing temperature. Earth's ideal temperature was achieved about two billion years ago, and since then it has been steadily overheating. Gaia's system has developed various methods to cool down Earth and maintain a temperature suitable for supporting life. As we know today, Gaia's cooling mechanisms depend largely on the ice caps at the north and south poles acting as reflective surfaces, the oceans containing molecules responsible for cloud formation, and the vegetation that absorbs carbon dioxide. Ultimately, in about one million years, the sun will become too hot for Gaia to endure, leading to her demise from overheating. Gaia is already

struggling and will continue to struggle even more to maintain Earth's temperature due to our recent abuses. It is important to remember that Gaia has no interest in favouring one species over another and judges based on mutual benefit. We should be wary of the consequences of our recent actions. As Lovelock puts it: 'like an old lady who has to share her house with a growing and destructive group of teenagers, Gaia grows angry, and if they do not mend their ways she will evict them.'¹⁶

I believe that these new understandings - of our environment and behaviours in Western cultures - pave the way for humbled and harmonious ways of being human in the world. Gaia's theory enables us to see once again the interconnectedness of living and non-living organisms, as well as the condition of habitability of the planet as a matter for which we are dependent on and responsible for. We must radically change our destructive and harmful ways of living, and if not motivated by altruism, then it should be driven by survival instinct. Native American cosmologies and decolonial discourses allowed me to dream of another way to be human, just as they have been for so many years prior. By re-establishing a dialogue, embracing the world's multiplicity, and becoming helpers, we can move toward a promising future. The seeds of change are already present: it is solely up to us to continue caring for them.

Nick Rosen How to live off-grid: Sovereign
Outside the System

John Clark, The Anarchist Moment:
Reflections on Culture, Nature and Power
1994

David Graeber, Direct action: An Ethnography
2009

Donella Meadows, Leverage points:
Places to Intervene in a System

Michael Smith, The Libertarians and
Education

L'Utopie Thomas More

"To cling to some outdated notion of artistic freedom
autonomy, individualist creative freedom, or transgres-
sive and free avant-garde identity, divorced from any
duty or responsibility for environmental considerations, is
to advocate, intentionally or not, for the status quo of
neoliberal exceptionalism and its destructive ecocide."
p265

political ecology = "thinking environmental crisis
involving relation to the political, economic, and social
structures that mediate them, p266

"How repairing ecological destruction necessitates rectifying
social violence and inequality as a mode of decolonization."
→ "Economic, ethnic, cultural, and gender conflicts, among many
others, lie at the core of the most serious ecological
dislocation we face today." Ruma Bhattacharya -
Environmental 4: From Animal Rights to Radical
Ecology. p33.

Ecology of affluence: Rasmachanda Guha and Soan Mathias-Ahler. Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South.

- Thunay "Social ecology versus Deep Ecology."
- J. Edward de Steiguer "Some Ideas and the Deep Ecology Movement" check Latour's actor-network theory

Nature not as an isolated or pure object nor sth to be used for speculation. → network of relat^s

- Karen Barad, Meeting the universe Halfway

"On Seeds and Multispecies Introduction: Discouraging life" d13.docx

"To some garden might seem irrelevant, small-scale farms displaced by large-scale mechanized agricultural production."

- Steven Sharfman, Trade, Agriculture, and Climate Change

"Seed commons" = nature regenerative fertility - Vandana Shiva - this is the basis of a "living democracy" and "planetary citizenship" - Earth Democracy
Terra Viva: our soil, our Commons, Our Future.
Navdanya international. it

p25: "Ecology defines a method of intersectionality, which insists on thinking, being and becoming at the cross section of multiple fields of social, political, economic and material determinations."

Ude Swensen "Greensward" Ulfy Duckling Presse
2010

der Haag, P

1970's: 1st time "permaculture" express
Tasmania, Australia Bill Hollison and
David Holmgren. permanent agriculture
p33

Foodscape Schilderwijk, Debra Solomon

Sardiniers Cuvillos Detroit

→ The damage of ~~multi~~ monoculture,
logic of exploitation of land

Payson says tane Brasil

Official list of seed allow to be sold,
Catalogue officiel des espèces et variétés

↳ Vandana Shiva

Use of Material - World of Matter

Cardyn Steel Hungry City → food
becomes invisible. ~~be~~

Nichile Salmons, Souffrance des
Paysans Français, L'Harmattan, 1994

check intersection populaire d'Anaca

→ transition pour chapitre suivant
sur le problème social/culturel et
compréhension de la tane

Urban human more productive than the
one in the outside world? things to see &
creation of recreational industry in city to
replace the natural recreation? impossibility
to work in Belgium because nature is too beautiful

"Representing the group shows how the capitalism economy,
and its [world of matter]
fact not ideology of possessive individualism, is in
intrinsic to humanity." p 214

Gavin
Noah
Shares

check: Nancy's Ecology: Materialism and Nature
John Bellamy Foster.

Hedge Flooshtimmer, Peter Norton back:
"Of Multidirectional forces: Interdependence
between Material social and other Resources"

check Kari-Oja II Declaration (2012)

addressing the local is what James Clifford call
"becoming indigenous": Returns: Becoming Indigenous

Contradiction of
by transporting a

"The quiet excitement over urban agriculture does not come out of the blue: it's about added values that we in fact are craving: a connection with the basis of life, with natural processes and with our daily bread; a connection with our living environment with our neighbourhood, with the people who live a little further away; a connection with the meaning of our own lives, with the choices we make, with the impact we have on the environment, on global society"

Nils Norman, ~~Edible Park~~ Edible Park, 2012
Valig, Astrid Vorstmanns i.s.m. Sjoon
der Haag, p 35 ^{ed} by Fransje de Waard

III

Poor lone human

'The colonization of nature, emerging from the Enlightenment principles of Cartesian dualism between human and non-human worlds, situated the non-human world as objectified, passive, and separate, and elaborated a rationalizing, extractive dissociative understanding which overlaid functional experimental relations among people, plants and animals.'

T.J. Demos, *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology*.¹

I intended to narrate a perfectly linear story across 2 022 years of Western history that would explain today's global warming.² It seemed to be an easy and comprehensive

1 T. J. Demos, *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2016, p.14 quoting William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan, *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-colonial Era*, Earthscan, London, 2003, p. 24.

2 "Mastery and possession: these are the master words launched by Descartes at the dawn of the scientific and technological age, when our Western reason went off to conquer the universe." Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*,

line: starting from Aristotle's philosophies, it goes straight to Descartes' dualism, to end at our contemporary use and abuse of natural resources which shapes our Western societies. The argument was difficult to formulate so I asked for the help of the artificial intelligence chatbot Open AI. The chatbot bluntly pointed out that it was oversimplified and quite inaccurate. I was so eager to reproduce Western logics of causality that I bypassed my first wish to weave the traditional great narrative of history into its many smaller histories. As someone who tries to de-Westernise myself, I was quite well answering the requirements of Western argumentation and reasoning.

A week later, after writing this last paragraph, I read a conversation between Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova, *On Other Possibilities for Philosophy and Humanity*.³ Immediately in the first paragraph, Tlostanova points out the falsity of the connection I was willing to make. The article is thrilling and many more arguments forced me to definitively stop trying to straighten history in favour of the fluidity of my argument.

'Teaching philosophy for almost fifteen years I had to act as a trickster, secretly dragging into my courses the non-canonical figures, ideas, voices, perspectives that did not count as philosophy, and to question the legitimacy and objectivity of philosophy as a discipline. I could not help noticing how rigidly "Euromodern" it has remained, how much its structure reflects and reproduces what we refer to in decolonial

trans. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson, University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1995, p. 32.

3 Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova, "On Other Possibilities for Philosophy and Humanity", *EastEast*, <https://easteast.world/en/posts/84>, accessed 3 April 2023.

thinking as "coloniality of knowledge," that is, an operation of hiding the provincial Western European context and origins of knowledge production under false universalist and ethnocentric pretences. (...) The real messy and transcultural history of ideas has been therefore systematically white-washed, sanitized, and Westernised, for instance in forging a direct link between Ancient Greek and modern Western philosophy erasing various "compromising" influences, from Egypt to India, Persia and the Middle East; or ignoring the crucial Muslim Hellenistic Andalusian connection without which many Ancient Greek philosophic texts would be lost for the future generations.'

Forgetting to question the frame, I reproduced the harmful scheme of 'Hegelian progressivist historicism'.⁴ Taking a different path, I decided to make room for all the missing elements. Descartes' influence on our Western mentality is maybe known enough. It actually feels urgent to change the enunciation when we look at the unintended consequences of abstracted European culture. Thinking in abstraction emphasizes the mind, reason, and cognitive activity disengaged from the physical world. Yet, we humans as a specie are made by and dependent on the physical and organic nature we constantly try to distance ourselves from. It is a model where 'the Euromodern subject denies his belonging to nature/animality,' says Tlostanova, 'forgets that he is a technological animal (and not the only one for that matter), thus becoming de-relational from the world and reinstating the objectification of na-

ture as an object of externalised observation or study.’ There is a deep link between the current ecological crisis and this understanding of the human species. In this cosmology, not only humans are separated from the rest of the world and living on their island, but as we consider the worlds that are not us ‘others’, it somehow justifies their abuses and exploitations.⁵

Property

When addressing the human history of nature’s objectification, one particular Western value seems to overlook all types of relation: ownership and individual property. Individual and exclusive propriety is extended to all parts of our modern lives today. It is so fundamental to the European system that it is often claimed as intrinsic to human nature. However, when I started to research the history of this concept, I stumbled upon a curious and actually quite recent shift in its definition. At the end of the 12th century in the lowlands areas of England and most of central and south England, open and common lands started to be divided into smaller areas delimited by fences. It is generally referred to as the movement of the enclosure, which spread all through the United Kingdom and from the second half of the 18th century in Europe. Land, before being the mosaic of individual exploitations we know today, was often shared among several people. The manorial lord, as the owner of the lands surrounding his castle, exchanged agricultural use of his territory for rent or services.⁶ Lands used by peasants would be commonly organised in a three-field year rotation system. The common lands were divided into three parts:

- 5 I am referring here especially to the European colonial history of exploitation, where de-humanizing Natives populations was a systematic element of their exploitations.
- 6 Britannica, “Enclosure”, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/enclosure>.

the spring field, the autumn field, and the ‘fallow’. The three fields were dedicated to different crops which would rotate every year, therefore preventing soil depletion by taking from and amending the soil with different nutrients. For instance, if vegetables would be cultivated in the spring field, wheat, and rye would be cultivated in the autumn field and animals would be grazing in the third one. Vegetables (peas and beans), as well as animal manure, would alternately enrich the soil by either fixing azote in the ground or bringing nutrients to it.⁷ These common lands were divided into long strips which were assigned to individual farmers. Each peasant was responsible for the cultivation of his assigned strips but had to follow the overall scheme of three-year rotation field.⁸

Open fields started to decline at the end of the 16th century with the arrival of the Norfolk four-course agricultural system. This method, also based on crop rotation, would remove the fallow field from this system and alternate four different crops: wheat in the first year, then turnips, followed by barley, with clover and ryegrass undersowed. These last ones were grazed or cut for the animals in the fourth year, while turnips were used in the winter.⁹ Due to the culture of clover and turnips, lands cultivated as such would have increased their overall production, but needed to be fenced off the grazing animals otherwise feeding on the crops. With this method being more proficient, landowners favoured it over the open-field technique and started to surround their fields with hedges or walls.

Meanwhile, during Tudor’s reign in the Kingdom of England (1485-1603) English wool became a highly de-

- 7 Britannica, “Three-Field System,” accessed March 9, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/three-field-system>.
- 8 Wikipedia, “Enclosure,” Last modified January 13, 2023, 17:11, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enclosure>.
- 9 Britannica Encyclopedia, “Norfolk Four-course System,” accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Norfolk-four-course-system>.

manded product. Requested for inland emerging manufactures as well as exports as raw material and clothes, its price almost doubled while grain price stayed low. This dynamic made sheep farming much more profitable than grain cultivation.¹⁰ Moreover, the house of Tudor, owning most of the lands, transformed many of them into pastures for profit. Many landowners followed a similar conversion of their lands. Sheep farming also demanded less workforce than growing food. Landless and jobless, many farmers left rural England for its cities where early industrialization kept on increasing its demand for human labour in manufacturing. In mainland Europe, enclosure only started to happen in the second half of the 18th century. Local governments started to deploy decrees to encourage farmers to shift methods, the new one being more productive. Shifting from common-field to enclosed properties consequently increased the power of the landowner, who, with the development of trade, shifted their production from self-sustenance to market sale.

Rousseau, in his *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men* (1755), describes skilfully the unnatural quality of proprietorship:

‘The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying “This is mine,” and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, “Beware

10 Tudor Times, “The English Wool Trade. Chapter 2: Economics of Sheep Farming”, accessed March 12, 2023, <https://tudortimes.co.uk/politics-economy/the-english-wool-trade/economics-of-sheep-farming>.

of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.” But there is great probability that things had then already come to such a pitch, that they could no longer continue as they were; for the idea of property depends on many prior ideas, which could only be acquired successively, and cannot have been formed all at once in the human mind. Mankind must have made very considerable progress, and acquired considerable knowledge and industry which they must also have transmitted and increased from age to age, before they arrived at this last point of the state of nature.’

What about the last point of nature where we are now? The need for control over national and international food trade led to the transformation of Earth’s most basic communal resource into another commodity. Many agrochemical industries have normalised the commercialisation of sterile and genetically modified seeds, thus obligating farmers to buy new seeds every year while reducing the number of varieties cultivated. The modified seeds promise higher yields than non-modified ones but induce the farmer’s dependency on the industry and international market. The agrochemical firm Monsanto (now called Bayer) is an infamous example of the unfortunate success of these mechanisms. Simultaneously controlling the means of cultivation by giving the seeds exclusive properties (making it, for instance, resistant to their powerful herbicide round-up, or particularly responsive to their fertiliser) and the exclusivity of its seeds on the market, they managed in fifty years to become one

of the most sued and lucrative companies on a global scale.¹¹

We could observe that industrialisation and technical advancement are made to relieve humans from physical and difficult labour. On an individual level, industrialisation is animated by the eternal pursuit and desire for freedom. However, while the intentions are honourable, industrialization and today's virtual revolution continuously fail their philanthropist intentions and instead are establishing new ways to make human lives completely tied to them. The case of mechanised monoculture can be taken as a dramatic example of it. Machines released the farmers from heavy work, communal consensus, and codependency. But the individual is now dependent on his machinery, which itself depends on de-localised resources and knowledge. The lone farmers work constantly on their big fields, moved by the need to reimburse the debts contracted for the purchase or lease of their machine and their fuel, of the certified seeds giving access to international trade, the pesticides and fertilisers with their matching technologies, and their lands and farms, which most of the time can not be their home.¹² The systematic transformation of shared natural resources in monetary value ended up completely dispossessing humans of their right to live without loans.¹³ Consequently, this mode of

11 *The World According to Monsanto*, directed by Marie-Monique Robin, Image & Compagnie, Productions Thalie in coproduction with Arte France, the National Film Board of Canada and WDR, 2008, Watchdocumentaries, <https://watchdocumentaries.com/the-world-according-to-monsanto/>, accessed 16 January 2023.

12 Eline Huisman. "Dans l'idyllique campagne Française, la détresse des agriculteurs," *Courrier International*, 26 Septembre 2022, <https://www.courrierinternational.com/article/reportage-dans-l-idyllique-campagne-francaise-la-detresse-des-agriculteurs>, accessed 28 March 2023.

13 The Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra (MST) in english the Landless Workers' Movement, is a brazilian farmer organisation who is fighting for a fairer distribution of land. "Over the 70 million hectares cultivated in Brazil, almost 40 million hectares are owned by a small number of

farming is completely dependent on wage, technology, delocalised monopoly, monoculture, and global market fluctuation leading farmers to prefer death over struggle.¹⁴

Despite its incredible gain in efficiency, modern mechanised agriculture has not eradicated hunger in the world. Technology and efficiency grew together with the exclusivity of ownership, extending the fencing of the land to the enclosing of the self. Colonialism and extractivism extended the use of commons as a very efficient weapon for population weakening and impoverishment.

The dramatic consequence of the Industrial Revolution was its dependency on the non-renewable resources to make the machines work. You see here again the relevance of the missing link: the machine is a cultural creation that depends on natural resources. The creators of the machines, driven by the conviction that more is better, did not stop for a minute to reflect on the unintended consequences. While more was better for the accumulation of wealth, it was detrimental for the living conditions on Earth, for the human beings living on

large landowners (around 300), while millions of families cannot afford to own a piece of land." *GéoConfluence*, "Sans-Terre, Mouvement des Sans-Terre (MST)," Last modified June 2021, <http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/glossaire/sans-terre-mouvement-des-sans-terre-mst>, accessed 28 March 2023.

14 There is an increase of farmers' suicides across multiple countries like the United States, France, United Kingdom, Australia, and India since the 1980's, reaching today the peak of ten suicides per day in India. For a detailed explanation, see the work of Vandana, Shiva and Afsar H. Jafri, "Seeds of suicide: the ecological and human costs of globalisation of agriculture," in *Sustainable agriculture and food security: the impact of globalisation*, Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, 2002, p. 169-184.

*their exploited labour as well as for the increasing human beings that suffer the consequences of the creation of poverty.*¹⁵

Land impoverishment: a symptom of a culture of exploitation

'Nature can satisfy the needs of the human being, but nature can not satisfy the greed of the human being.'

Vijay Jawandhia, farm activist.¹⁶

I find it relevant to look at our modern intensive agriculture from the perspective of how it came into being. I have been raised with the traditional landscapes of French large wheat fields and open pastures associated with wild nature. They were, in fact, far from being wild and native to the land I happened to be born in. From a non-human perspective, they are equivalent to the Sahara desert. The consciousness of agrochemicals technologies' dark side started to rise in the 1960s. Biologist and writer Rachel Carson published in 1965 *Silent Spring* where she exposes the negative impact of pesticides on our ecosystems. She highlights the interconnectedness of all living things on the planet and denounces the destructive behaviour of humans.¹⁷ Her book inspired many modern ecological movements. For instance, Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess' 'deep ecology' was thought in opposition to 'shallow ecology'. He defines it as the 'rejection of the man-in-environment image in favour of the

15 Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova, "On Other Possibilities for Philosophy and Humanity," *EastEast*, <https://easteast.world/en/posts/84>, accessed 3 April 2023.

16 *White Gold – Killing Seeds*, Frauke Huber, Uwe H. Martin <http://worldofmatter.net/farmers-funeral#path=bhim-bai>, accessed 3 April 2023.

17 Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, Penguin Books, London, 2000.

relational, total-field image. Organisms as knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations.¹⁸

*'Ecologically responsible policies are concerned only in part with pollution and resource depletion. There are deeper concerns which touch upon principles of diversity, complexity, autonomy, decentralisation, symbiosis, egalitarianism, and classlessness.'*¹⁹

Contemporary ecological movements are still following Naess's position, which underlies the necessity to reassess many of the Western modern beliefs to understand and be able to react to global warming.

The third principle of diversity and of symbiosis contests the agricultural norm for efficiency by highlighting Earth's natural diversity as a natural way for systems to regulate themselves: 'diversity enhances the potentialities of survival, the chances of new modes of life, the richness of forms.' The principle of monoculture gained popularity with the development of global free trade and the subsequent shift to cultures of cash crops instead of self-sufficient agriculture. The monoculture principle goes against all logic of any observable natural environment. Vandana Shiva takes the example of agroforestry:

'Scientific' forestry and 'scientific' agriculture, split the plant artificially into separate, non-overlapping domains, on the basis of separate commodity markets to which they supply raw materials and

18 Arne Naess, "The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary," *Environmental ethics: readings in theory and application*, 1994, Cengage Learning, Boston, 2017, p. 102-105.

19 Arne Naess at the 3rd World Future Research Conference in Bucharest in 1972, *Environmental ethics: readings in theory and application*, p. 102.

resources. In local knowledge systems, the plant world is not artificially separated between a forest supplying commercial wood and agricultural land supplying food commodities. The forest and the field are in ecological continuum, and activities in the forest contribute to the food needs of the local community, while agriculture itself is modelled on the ecology of the tropical forest. [...]

In the 'scientific' system which splits forestry from agriculture and reduces forestry to timber and wood supply, food is no longer a category related to forestry. The cognitive space that relates forestry to food production, either directly, or through fertility links, is therefore erased with the split. Knowledge systems which have emerged from the food giving capacities of the forest are therefore eclipsed and finally destroyed, both through neglect and aggression.²⁰

The practice of monoculture disturbs the soil complex equilibrium while actively preventing diversity to naturally re-establish itself. The relation to the land is unilateral: we extract all the resources available beyond their point of renewal and leave behind us deserts too weak, too wide, sterile, and poisonous which can't repopulate themselves. We shouldn't be fooled by the fact that thus far nature managed to overcome our madness. There is a point where the majority of living entities needed to make this work will be extinct and we will hit the point of irreversible change mentioned by Lovelocks.²¹

20 Vandana Shiva, *Monocultures of the mind: Perspectives on biodiversity and biotechnology*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1993.

21 See chapter 2. James Lovelock, *We Belong to Gaia*, Penguin

The culture of extractivism extends today far beyond agriculture and food production. Colonisations of faraway countries by Europeans led to the appropriation of new natural resources such as coffee, tobacco, rubber, precious mineral mines, medicinal plants, spices, and vegetables. The exploitation of the then abundant resources went hand in hand with the exploitation of the people, who were also seen as available and dispossessed of their humanity. White colonialists appropriated the 'discovered' lands and all that was with them. The case of the Louisiana Purchase is telling. After being claimed property of France in 1682, it was traded 120 years later for 15 million dollars to the newly made USA. When gold had been found in what was Cherokee land (renamed Georgia) in 1829, President Andrew Jackson negotiated the removal of the Native populations in the Indian Removal Act. The trajectory of the displaced population was named the Trail of Tears. 100 000 Natives were forced to travel 8 120 km from the east to the west of the Mississippi River. The Native American's perspective on ownership was at that time very different from the American one: according to their cosmology, the land is common and is not to be owned; land owns itself.²² The eviction of the Native population gave free way to intense and abusive extraction of resources, starting from gold to crude oil. The foreign proprietor who does not inhabit the land doesn't bear responsibilities towards it. Its ownership meant its use without consequences. Devoid of its caretaker, what was 'common treasury for all' became exclusive of property and use of some.²³

Books, London, 2021.

- 22 James W. Parins, "The Shifting Map of Cherokee Land Use Practices in Indian Territory", *ELOHI*, 1, 2012, p. 13-19, <https://journals.openedition.org/elohi/197>, accessed 3 April 2023.
- 23 The Land Magazine, "A Short History of Enclosure in Britain", Issue 7, *The Land* (2009), <https://www.thelandmagazine.org.uk/articles/short-history-enclosure-britain>, accessed 10

Overexploitation

The contemporary logic of proprietor and extraction of the resources of the land for the fueling of our modern Western comfort brought us to what Madina Tlostanova calls a total ‘loss of proportionate consumption.’²⁴ The land is seen as at our disposal. In the case of oil extraction, the economic and legal void for the exploitation of this resource is leading our planet to an environmental disaster. As long as Earth’s resources are seen as free, humans can profit from its exploitation. This is of course a misconception; we and the many generations to come will pay the consequences of humans abuses. Because of Western’s eternal pursuit of growth, the modern world keeps on perpetuating people’s and land exploitation. As the source gets larger, the sites of exploitation get further from their operators. The populations which profit from them are separated from the source of their prosperity, made or wilfully ignorant of their responsibility in the funding of global violence.

Who said humans were rational beings? I mistook one man’s vision for the truth and believed myself foolish for standing against it. A week ago, while listening to a French radio interview of two wild plants gatherers, I caught myself being again an excellent student of my Western upbringing. In the show, they invite the reporter to accompany them while they go find their meal in the wild nature surrounding them. The two interviewees describe with care the tenderness of the young dandelion leaves and the beauty of the delicious blackcurrant shoots as they gather them for their salad. I recognise myself in

their wonder, but the thought that it is an inefficient way of living resonates in the back of my mind. ‘Going every day two to three times per day looking for food is an incredible waste of time.’ A stab in my own back. Against all that I am truly believing, there is something in me that rates productivity higher than being in the world.

Truly, everything today is much more highly regarded than being. It is a struggle.

Today, my life feels simultaneously too full and completely empty. I am torn between filling my life with ‘meaningful’ activities in order to gain my peers’ acknowledgement and finding the substance to fill myself and wake up every day. Sometimes, I experience a ‘systems crash’ and I am forced to stop. I then often see myself nervously sifting air, floating above our beautiful world: another lonely human living at a safe distance from the great wide world. In these moments, I make a wish for something to weigh me down, something which could fill me up with the certainty that I belong here.

March 2023.

24 Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova, “On Other Possibilities for Philosophy and Humanity,” *EastEast*, <https://easteast.world/en/posts/84>, accessed 3 April 2023.

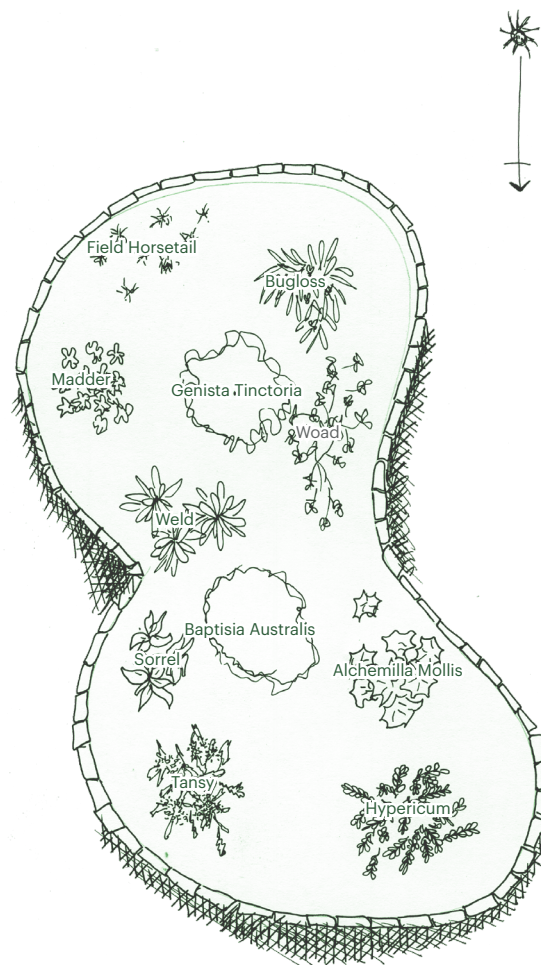


Community gardens and raw materials

The Hague - The Netherlands

IV

Handbook of the artist gardener



Selected ink and pigment plants for the KABK's garden

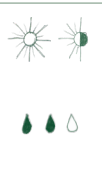
research by Wieneke Bremer
2023

In the art academy it is important to understand where colors come from and what stories and cultural baggage plants have. This project aims to create awareness on the origins of our beloved colors in order to enter a closer relation with the materials we use; to start living with the plants, nature, and earth instead of using them. Knowing how time-consuming is to grow pigments and dyes can change our behavior towards them. The color that is given is more than a color: it tells us the story of a relationship with one another.

Natural dyeing are dyes or colorants from plants, invertebrates or minerals. Colors can be extracted from roots, berries, bark, leaves, wood and fungi. The plants in the following list are chosen according to their ability to grow under Dutch climate. Most of them are "Grand teints," meaning that the color is able to stay visible for a long period of time. The chosen plants have a maximum ratio of 4 times plant material for 1 time textile material. The maximum amount is then 400 gram of plants for 100 gram of textile. Ink can also be extracted from the plants by using less water and thickening the liquid with binders like agar agar or Arabic gum.

Some recipes can be found in the resource list.

	<i>Latin name</i> <i>Family</i> English / Dutch / French	origin	name history	<i>soil type</i> pH	exposition watering	color	recipe
	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> <i>Asteraceae</i> Tansy Boerenwormkruid Tanaïs	Native to Europe	In Dutch the name refers to its use against maggots and intestinal worms. Throwing the plant into fire would protect against evil spirits.	<i>all</i> alkalin neutral	 	Yellow	Use the blooming yellow tops. -400 gram of fresh flowers for 100 grams of wool. For a complete guide, see Sarak Scully recipe: gaghillcrafts.com
	<i>Alkanna tinctoria</i> <i>Borraginaceae</i> Ox tongue/ Dyers Alkanna Ossentong/ Alkanet Buglosse	Native to mainland Europe and a limited part of adjacent Asia. It is not found in the warm south of Europe.	<i>Anchusa</i> comes from the Greek <i>anchousa</i> . Various plants with rough leaves were referred to by this name. The meaning is not fixed.	<i>sandy rocky humus calcareous</i> alkalin neutral	 	Red and purple from the roots. The powder of the dried leaves gives a gold yellow color.	-50 gram for dried root for 100 gram wool (Van De Vrande, 1980) Different red tones can be done by using vinegar and axalic acid. Alkanis can foster blue tones
	<i>Isatis tinctoria</i> <i>Brassicaceae</i> Woad Wede Pastel des teinturiers	Probably native to southeastern Russia, it occurs in the wild in most of Europe, all over the South of France and in other Mediterranean countries.	<i>Isatis</i> in Greek was the name borrowed by Hebrew and found in the Talmud. It was called <i>vitrum</i> by Latin writers, and also <i>glastum</i> from the Celtic <i>glas</i> .	<i>all</i> alkalin neutral acidic	 	Blue	Woad extraction is a multiple step process which require boiling the leaves in water, precipitating the pigments with soda ash, cooling the mixture and slowly cleaning the liquid until getting only the pigment out of evaporation. For a complete guide, see Teresinha Roberts extraction of woad: www.woad.org.uk
	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i> <i>Clusiaceae</i> St. John's wort Sint-janskruid Millepertuis	Found worldwide in a wide variety of habitat. Is considered invasive in humid and sub-humid tempered zones due to its poisoning of livestock.	In the Dutch tradition the plant is called <i>duvelsjacht</i> , meaning <i>devil's hunt</i> and was given the power to chase evil spirits away.	<i>calcareous sandy rocky humus</i> neutral	 	Green Light pink Yellow	Use the whole fresh plant. -400 gram for 100 gram wool. Best moment to harvest is when the flowers are blooming.
	<i>Genista tinctoria</i> <i>Fabaceae</i> Dyer's broom Verfbrem Genêt des teinturiers	In most of Europe. Found fossils in England: York (9th-11th century), Bristol (13th-14th century) and in viking archeological sites.	The botanical name is derived from the Celtic <i>gen</i> meaning <i>small bush</i> . It is also known as <i>royal gold</i> .	<i>sandy rocky humus</i> neutral acidic	 	Yellow	Dyers' broom contains luteolin, the same water-fast pigment as weld and has the same dyeing method. Harvest the plant by cutting branches about two weeks after it started to bloom. If you are not using the leaves straight away, dry and store the cuttings in the shadow or indoor.
	<i>Chelidonium majus</i> <i>Papaveraceae</i> Greater celandine Stinkende gouwe Chélidoine	Native to Europe and Asia.	<i>Chelidonia</i> (Latin) come from Ancient Greek <i>χελιδώνιον</i> meaning <i>swallow</i> . The blooming of the plant was a sign of the birds arrival and departure.	<i>all</i> alkalin neutral	 	Yellow	Harvest when the plant is blooming, use the whole plant with the root fresh. Cook the plant on 100 degree and take the material out. Add the alum mordanted wool simmer on 80 degree for an hour.

	<i>Phytolacca americana</i> <u>Phytolaccaceae</u> Pokeweed Karmozijnbes Raisin d'Amerique	Native to Asia, eastern North America, the Midwest and the South.		clay sandy rocky humus alkalin neutral		Dark red and purple from the berries.	Use the ripe berries. -300 gram berries on 100 gram wool Vinegar or oxalic acid make the dye more red. Letting the wool cool down in the dye pot makes the dye more colour-fast.
	<i>Rumex acetosa</i> <u>Polygonaceae</u> Sorrel Veldzuring Oseille	Native to Europe. Found in Asia until Japan.	<i>Acetosa</i> comes from the latin verb <i>resedare</i> meaning <i>vinegar</i>, due to the sour taste of the plant.	clay sandy humus neutral acidic		Light red/orange with the blooming flowers. Yellow with the green plant. Old pink with dried roots	-50 gram of roots for 100 gram wool. For a complete guide, see Midgaards Have's recipe: midgaardshave.com.
	<i>Reseda luteola</i> <u>Resedaceae</u> Weld/Dyer's rocket Wouw Gaude	Native to Europe and used since prehistoric times. Wild or semi-wild in Europe, North Africa and Eastern Mediterranean.	<i>Reseda</i> comes from the latin verb <i>resedare</i> meaning <i>soothing, healing</i> referring to reseda's capacity to heal cuts and inflammation.	sandy rocky humus calcareous alkalin neutral		Yellow	Use the whole plant, harvest before it gives seeds. Can be use dried and fresh.
	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> <u>Rosaceae</u> Meadowsweet Moeraspirea Reine des prés	Native found widely in damp meadows trough Europe and Asia.	Meadowsweet is also known as <i>queen of the meadow</i>.	clay calcareous humus alkalin neutral		Brown and yellow	Use the whole fresh plant. -400 gram for 100 gram wool. Look for: <i>A trial of Meadowsweet Plant Dye on Wool with Alum, Iron and copper Mordants</i>. (wooltribulations.blogspot.com)
	<i>Asperula tinctoria</i> <u>Rubiaceae</u> Dyer's woodruff Verfbed stro Aspérule des teinturiers	Found all over Europe. Mostly the north part of Europe from France to Russia and Scandinavia.		humus alkalin neutral acidic		Red and orange from the roots.	Use the roots for dyeing. It takes three to five years for the roots to be ready to harvest. The plant is related to madder.
	<i>Rubia tinctorum</i> <u>Rubiaceae</u> Madder Meekrap Garance des teinturiers	Native to the Middle-East and the eastern parts of the Mediterranean. Originally used in India, Turkey and India. Madder is with indigo one of the oldest dye.	In Latin, the name means <i>dyer's red</i>	sandy humus alkalin neutral acidic		Red, warm orange and orange-red.	The plant needs to be at least three years old before being harvested. -50 gram dried root for 50-100 gram of fibre and 500 ml water. Works the best on wool and silk, less on cotton. For a complete guide, see Loes Bogers recipe: class.textile-academy.org.

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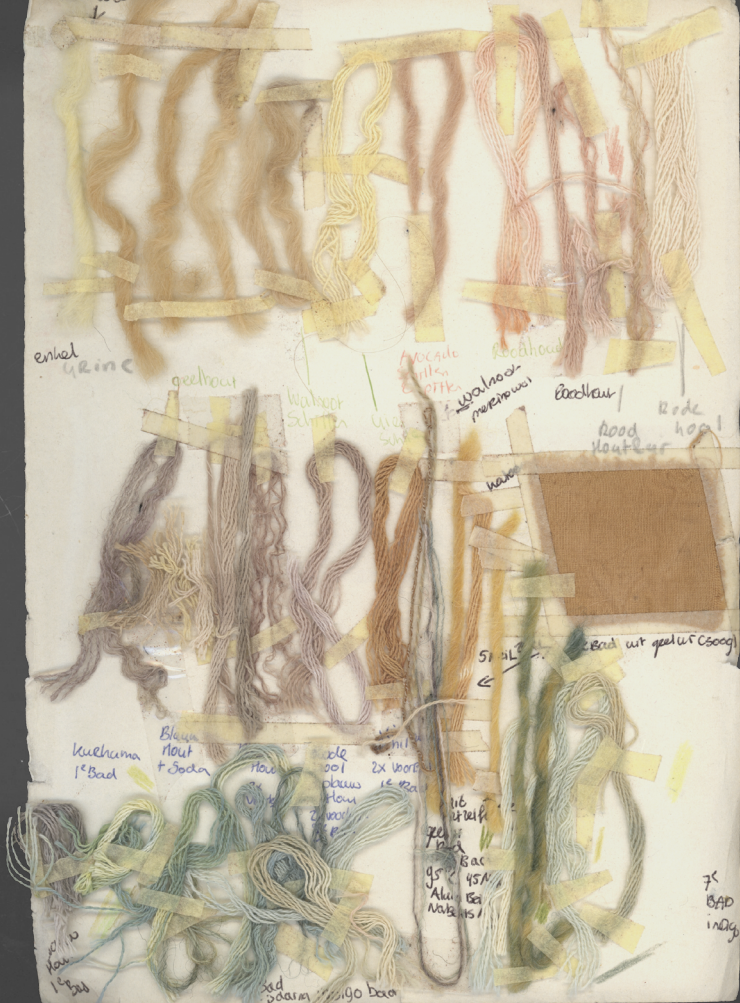
INDIGO 21 Dec 2022

Bad 1 onion
 Bad 2 indigo
 Fruit basis

Bad 1 melk (first bad)
 Bad 2 indig.
 (fruit basis)



21 Dec 2022



fibres

Flax
Hemp

foliages

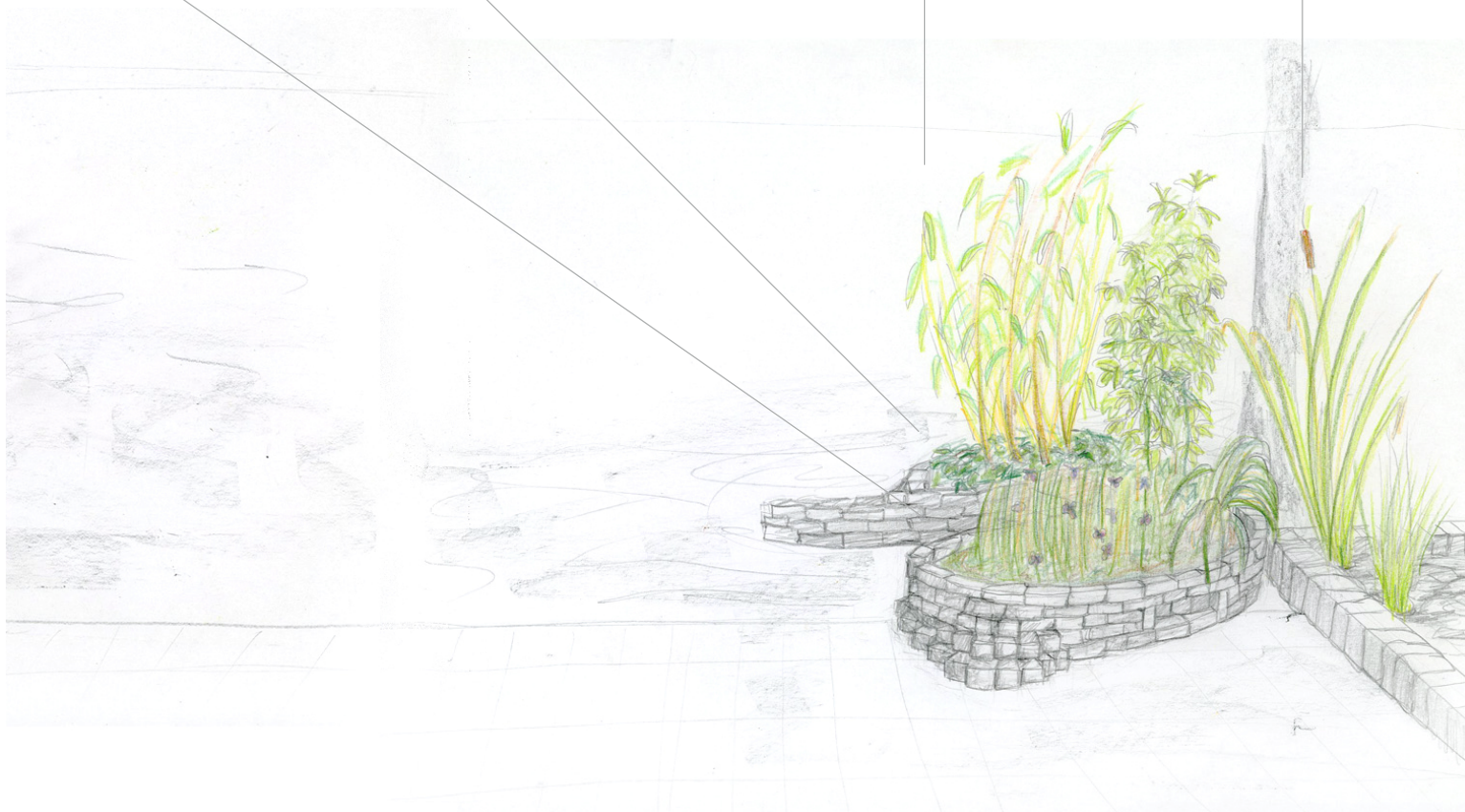
Iris
Daylily
Daffodil
Crococsmia

woody stems

Bamboo
Willow
Bramble

aquatic plants

Cattail
Reed
Rush



	<i>Latin name</i> <i>Family</i> English / Dutch / French	usage	sowing months harvest season	soil type pH	exposition watering
	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> <i>Apiaceae</i> Fennel Venkel Fenouil	• leaves and seeds as condiment • hunger restrainer stimulating	III - VI VIII - IX IV - X	<i>sandy rocky humus</i> neutral acidic	 
	<i>Levisticum officinale</i> <i>Apiaceae</i> Lovage Lavas Liveche	• leaves and seeds as condiment • digestive and cleansing	III - VI VIII - X IV - X	<i>clay sandy humus calcareous</i> alkalin neutral	  
	<i>Taraxacum</i> <i>Asteraceae</i> Dandelion Paardenbloem Pissenlit	• young leaves and buds in salad • old leaves and flowers cooked • diuretic • insecticide	III - VI all year	<i>clay sandy humus</i> neutral	  
	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> <i>Asteraceae</i> Yarrow Duizenblad Achillee mille-feuille	• leaves: to heal cuts and help digestion • flowers: tea and condiment • dye	IV - VII IX - XI VII - X	<i>clay calcareous humus</i> alkalin neutral	  
	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i> <i>Asteraceae</i> Wormwood Absintalsem Absinthe	• anti-inflammatory and pain-killer • insecticide and fungicide • dye	III - V IX - X VII - VIII	<i>clay calcareous sandy humus</i> alkalin neutral	  

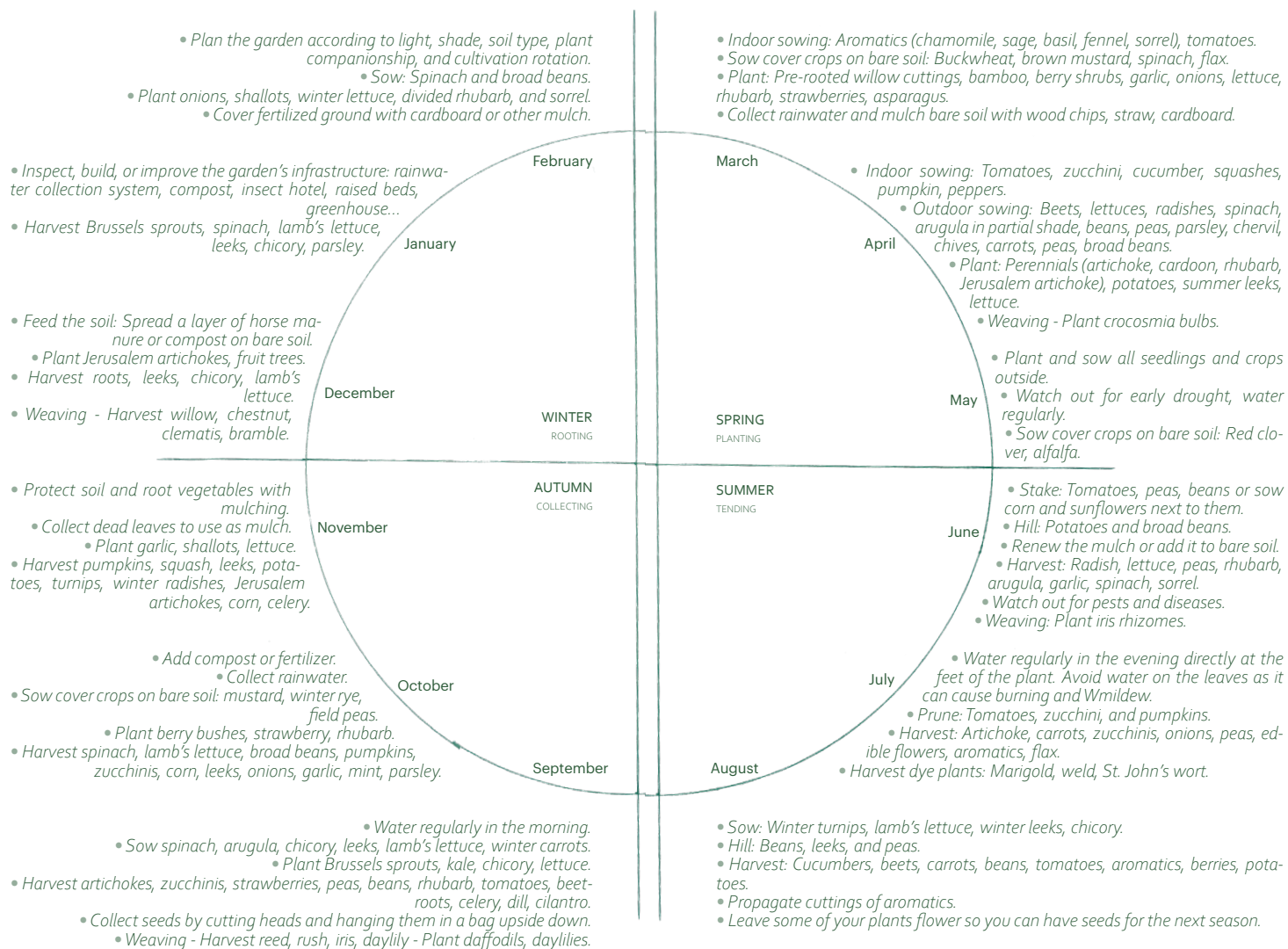
	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i> <u>Asteraceae</u> Cardoon Kardoen Cardon	• stems: cooked • help the liver	IV - V VIII - XII	clay humus neutral	 
	<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i> <u>Alliaceae</u> Chives Bieslook Ciboulette	• condiment • insecticide	III - X IV - XI	humus neutral	 
	<i>Hemerocallis</i> <u>Asphodelaceae</u> Daylily Daglelies Hémérocalles	• buds and flowers: raw or cooked • young tubers can be eaten like potatoes • weaving	III - XI V - XI	all all	 
	<i>Brassica Oleracea</i> <u>Brassicaceae</u> Kale Kool chou	• leaves: cooked or raw	III - X I - V X - XII	clay calcareous humus alkalin neutral	 
	<i>Armoracia rusticana</i> <u>Brassicaceae</u> Horseradish Mierik Raifort	• root pickled as condiment • digestive, cleansing and stimulating • fungicide and insecticide	III - VI IX - X I - IV IX - XII	clay calcareous sandy humus all	 
	<i>Pulmonaria</i> <u>Boraginaceae</u> Lungwort Longkruid Pulmonaires	• leaves and flowers: in teas and tinctures • expectorant, digestive and help the liver	III - VI IX - XI III - V	clay calcareous humus alkalin neutral	 

	<i>Campanula</i> <u>Campanulaceae</u> Campanula Klokje Campanule	• leaves and flowers: raw in salads • ground-cover	III - VII IX - XI V - IX	calcareous rocks humus neutral	 
	<i>Hypericum Perforatum</i> <u>Clusiaceae</u> St John's wort Sint Janskruid Millepertuis	• healing cuts, burns and anti-depression • dye	IV - V X - XII VI - VII	calcareous sand rock humus neutral	 
	<i>Hylotelephium telephium</i> <u>Crassulaceae</u> Orpine/Livelong Hemelesleutei Grand orpin	• young leaves: raw • old leaves and tubers: cooked • healing wounds and internal ulcers	IV - V	calcareous sand rocks humus neutral	 
	<i>Humulus Lupulus</i> <u>Cannabaceae</u> Hop Hop Houblon	• dried female flowers used for beer • young stems cooked • basketry	III - V X - XI VIII - IX	calcareous sand rocks humus all	 
	<i>Lonicera Coerulea</i> <u>Caprifoliaceae</u> Blue Honeysuckle Honingbes Chevrefeuille bleu	• berries: fresh, dried or cooked	II - IV IX - XI V - VI	sandy humus neutral acidic	 
	<i>Hippophae Rhamnoides</i> <u>Elegnaceae</u> Sea Buckthorn Duindoorn Argousier	• berries: fresh, dried or cooked • enrich poor soil	IV - V X-XI X-III	all alkalin neutral	 

	<i>Ribes Nigrum</i> <i>Grossulariaceae</i> Black current Zwarte bes Cassissier	- berries: raw, cooked - anti-inflammatory	XI - III VI - VIII	clay humus neutral acidic	 
	<i>Lavandula</i> <i>Lamiaceae</i> Lavender Lavender Lavande	- flowers: healing, antiseptic and calming - insecticide (aphid)	IV - VI IX - X VI - VIII	calcareous sand rocks humus all	 
	<i>Mentha</i> <i>Lamiaceae</i> Mint Munt Menthe	- leaves: aromatic, condiment - painkiller - insecticide (aphid, mosquito, flies)	all year	clay humus neutral	 
	<i>Salvia</i> <i>Lamiaceae</i> Sage Salie Sauge	- leaves: aromatic, condiment - antiseptic, antispasmodic, healing and stimulating - insecticide (flies, moths)	IV - VII IX VI - IX	calcareous rocks humus alkalin neutral	 
	<i>Salvia Rosmarinus</i> <i>Lamiaceae</i> Rosemary Rozemarijn Romanin	- leaves: aromatic, condiment - antiseptic, stimulating, digestive - insecticide (flies, moths)	III - VI IX - X all year	calcareous sandy rocky humus all	 
	<i>Thymus</i> <i>Lamiaceae</i> Thymes Tijm Thym	- leaves: aromatic, condiment - antiseptic, stimulating, digestive - insecticide (flies, mosquitos, slugs)	III - V IX - X III - VI IX	calcareous sand rocks humus alkalin neutral	 

	<i>Althaea officinalis</i> <i>Malvaceae</i> Marshmallow Heemst Guimauve offi- cinale	- flower, leaves and root: as thickener - soothing	III - V IX - X VI - X	calcareous sandy humus alkalin neutral	 
	<i>Rumex sanguineus</i> <i>Polygonaceae</i> Bloody dock Bloedzuring Oseille sanguine	- leaves: condiment - digestive, laxative, diuretic - sooth nettle rash	all year	clay humus neutral acidic	 
	<i>Rubus</i> <i>Rosaceae</i> Blackberry Braam Ronces	- fruits: raw, cooked, dried - basketry	IX - IV VII - X	sandy humus neutral	 
	<i>Rubus phoenicolasius</i> <i>Rosaceae</i> Japanese wine- berry Japans Wijnbes	fruits: raw, cooked, dried	IX - IV VII - X	sandy humus neutral	 
	<i>Sanguisorba minor</i> <i>Rosaceae</i> Salad burnet Kleine pimpernel Pimprenelle	- leaves: salad and condiment - astrigent, digestive, diuretic, hemostatic	III - VI IX - X all year	calcareous sandy humus alkalin neutral	 
	<i>Tilia</i> <i>Tiliaceae</i> Lime tree Linden Tilleul	- flowers, sapwood: dried in infusion - soothing, calming, draining	IV - V X - XI IV - VII	clay calcareous rocky humus alkalin neutral	 

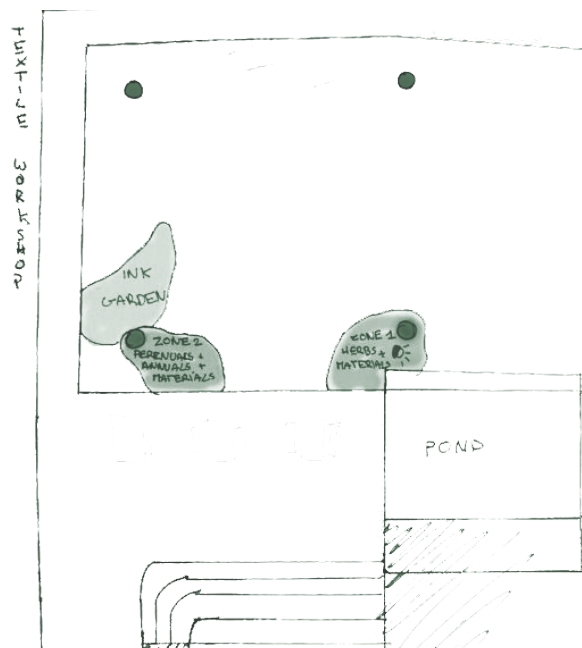




'[...] the practice of Utopia is to reclaim the right to imagine and create a much better world than this one while accepting and congratulating ourselves for its ever imperfection. In fact, the best Utopias are these which are never doable because they are established on the freedom to try open experiences in each aspect of everyday life. Places we want to visit are not postrevolutionary sanctuaries, frozen islands of idealism, far from there: they are places which allow to redefine Utopia as the practice of building the best of world possible, right now. We could call them imperfect paradises, or, like Chris Carlsson calls them, the Nowtopias.'

Isabelle Fremeaux and John Jordan,
Les Sentiers de l'Utopie.

V Making a garden in an institution



In June 2022 the KABK garden group was dismantling the crate garden that had been established for four years in one of the five schools courtyards. The garden, nicknamed ‘Binnentuin’ (inside garden), was a year-round project initiated by the tutor Jonathan Looman in the course Interactive Media Design. Approximately twenty students designed a vertical garden composed of stacked crates, forming a ‘S’ shaped labyrinth of two meters height. I joined their project three years ago, during my second year of the Fine Arts bachelor program. At the time of its removal, the garden was inhabited by wild plants mixed with herbs and salads, pigeons, students, slugs and caterpillars. Although we couldn’t supply the school’s canteen with our food as originally planned, the Binnentuin was cherished by us as a unique learning, social and relaxing environment. In fact, it was the only place in school where you could find solitude and non-human company. Interestingly, out of all the outdoor spaces at the school, it was located in an area with the least favourable conditions for flourishing. There was only a couple of hours of direct sunlight per day, from April to October, no access to direct ground and it was under the threat of being removed by the yearly graduation show. This year, when the graduating student asked for the space to exhibit his work, none of us thought of negotiating the garden’s eviction. We knew that the garden had been able to remain all these years thanks to the leniency of the facility department, and somehow, we thought we had no rights.

As we were emptying and bringing the courtyard back to its original state, Angie and I started to fantasise about the future of all these now homeless plants. We decided to write a proposal for the biggest and sunniest courtyard of the school, situated right under the director office -the Prinsessegracht courtyard- and sent it to the school’s

administration before the summer break. The garden crates got stacked on a couple of pallets and placed in the sunniest spot of the school during summer. Sadly, this summer’s heat broke its all-time record temperature and there was not a single drop of rain the whole month. So, in August of the same year, we had to start anew. With no response from the school facilities and most of the previous members gone, we collectively called for a meeting to discuss our future. Our group of ten had thinned down to five: Pam, Angie, Emma, Ilva and me. We were so enthusiastic about the new project that the conversation expanded to at least ten other projects regarding the school’s ecological transition. At the end of the discussion, we decided to join forces, created a collective and named ourselves the Green Office. Empowered by our newly made activist group, I immediately wrote an email to our school’s new director, Ranti Tjan, titled ‘School versus Global Warming.’

Surprisingly, we received a response that there were already a lot of projects and garden desires circulating around the school. Wieneke Bremer, a textile artist and instructor, was developing a proposal for a tincture garden to allow the textile department to grow its own dyes and pigments. Carl Johan Hogeberg, co-head of the fine arts department, had the idea to create a student-led academy-wide speculative pigment research laboratory. Simultaneously, Erika Sprey, head of the academy-wide Studium Generale, was starting a year-long program on soil. Brecht Hoffmann adopted four fruit trees donated by the city on behalf of our school. Many of the staff members wanted to do something for the sustainability of the school, especially regarding materials and waste. It was just a matter of connecting the dots and taking action.

On the 19th of September, we were invited to a collective meeting with many of the interested parties by the school director and the head of operations, Lizzy Kok.



Good afternoon to all of you!

Thank you for the meeting today, this is the link to the Miro board we presented today <>. Also find Wienekes sketch of the garden in the attachment. So basically we talked about different ideas/projects which are connected but not necessarily the same. [...]

We presented Ranti our idea, which we discussed in the past two garden meetings, of the garden and also the idea of restoring the Binnentuin and bringing mobile gardens into the masters courtyard and the courtyard next to the canteen. One of the issues we discussed were the removal/ moving of the stones, as it would make the garden more durable and longterm and the stones could be reused for pathways. But then there is the problem of cost, which maybe could be solved through funding or asking support from a company that does these kind of operation. Also Ranti mentioned that as they were actually not stones but leftovers from the old building, they might e monumental.

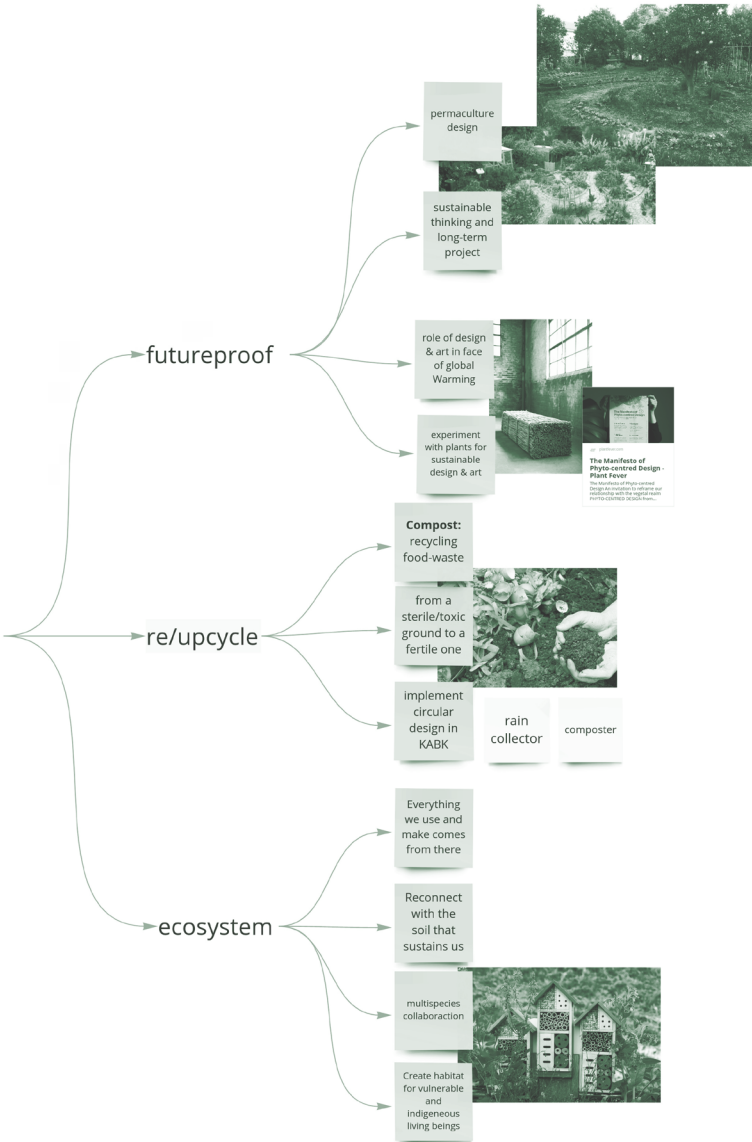
We agreed that Ranti would look into our proposals and think about it. He will get back to us and we will see if the proposal gets approved.

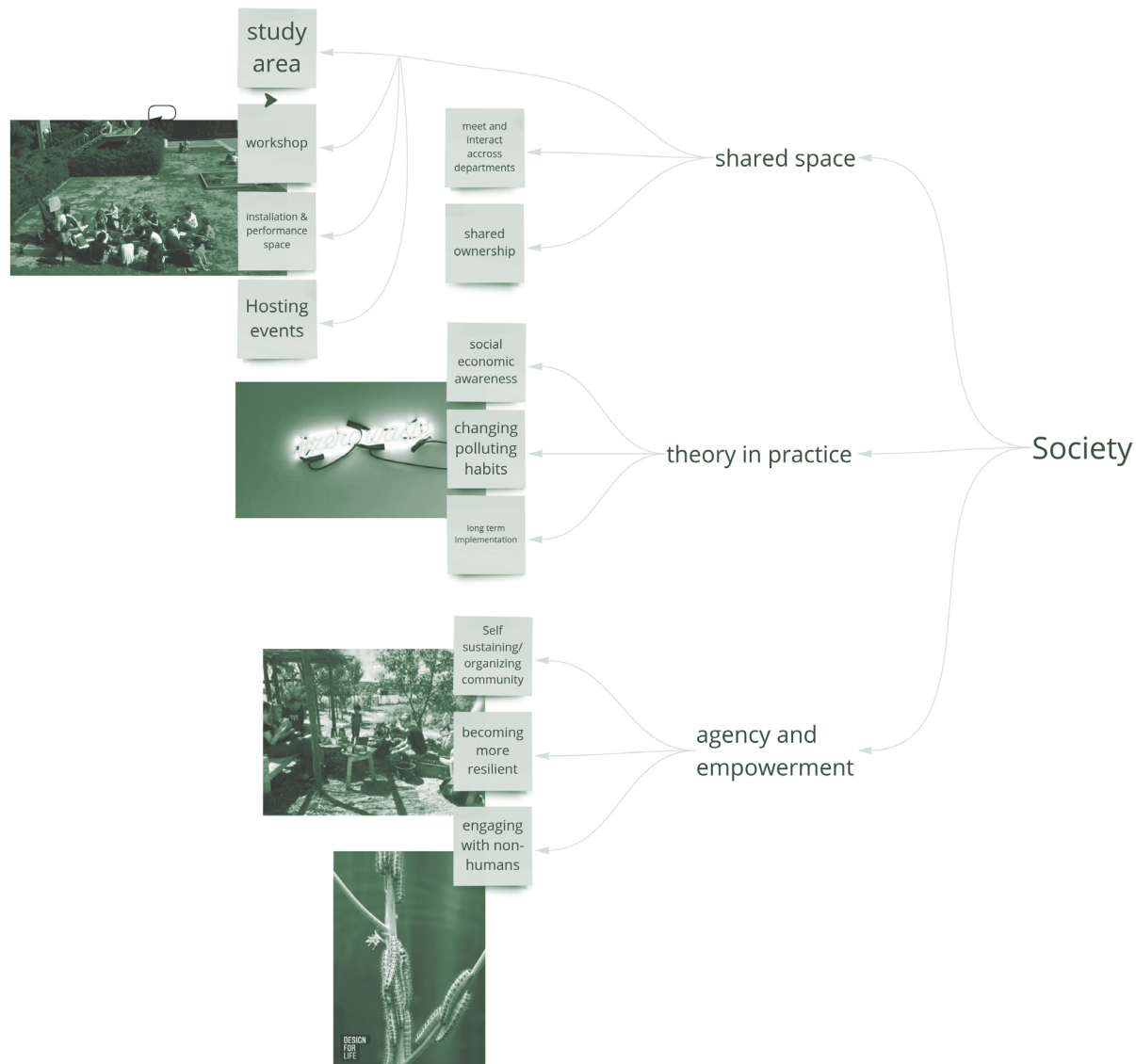
In the meantime we, as the garden group will go on with elaborating the concept (think of how to connect our ideas with Wieneks sketch), consulting experts (the meeting with Carola) and defining who else has ideas or wishes for what the garden should contain. I met Lyndsey for example who did some research about the courtyard and could contribute to the next garden meeting.

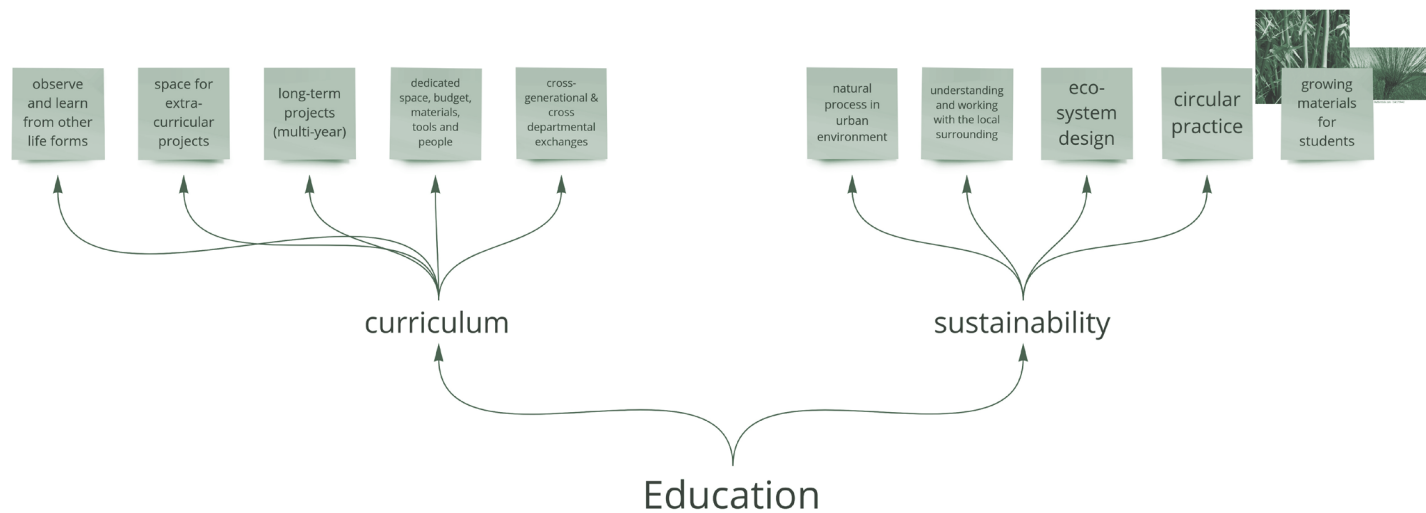
*Best,
Emma*



Ecology

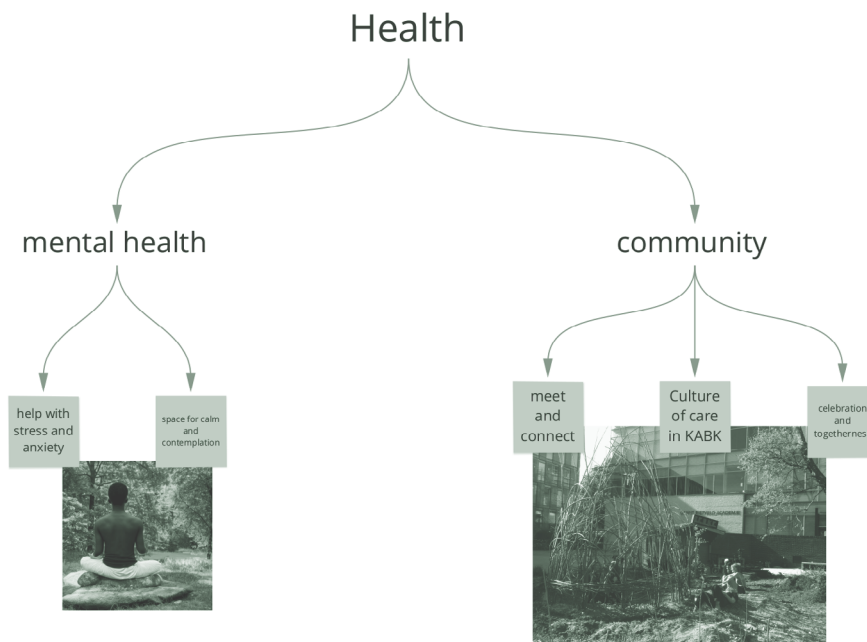








Prinsensegracht Garden





14.09.2022

The path leading to the artwork of Nils Norman is paved with square concrete stones, quite typical in Dutch backyards. My phone is in my right hand, ready to photograph any landscape architecture that would help support my case for the schools' garden. On my right, the cultivation beds are diligently aligned one after another. The nature of the plants they host is explained on rectangular panels of laminated wood: "aromatic herbs"; "vegetables for the winter"; "vegetables for the summer". I pass two rows of French Marigolds and two rows of Indian Cress before a line of huge sunflowers. Behind them, a chaos of mixed-up plants is growing on a maze of miniature dunes: "Saladetuin SLALOM. Project van Permacultuurcentrum den Haag" (salads garden SLALOM. Project from the Hague's center for permaculture). I am there. The density and variety of plants growing here make the air more vibrant.

I hear someone pruning. Even though the garden is only 40 by 20 meters, I can not see through the wild hedge invaded by hops. I enter the garden timidly through a narrow arch. As I walk around the pavilion I try to recognize as many plants as I can: "strawberry, mint, celery, thyme, origano, tomato, leak, iris, brussel sprout." I take another step. Acknowledging the limit of my expertise, I decided to enjoy the beauty and calm of the garden rather than trying to reassure my sense of belonging. I walked into the round pavilion through an open glass door. My sight is immediately caught by the stunning ceiling. A dozen of trunks circle around the building to meet at the top in an open eye to the sky. It smells like a pine forest. The clear and sparkly light falls down in the middle of the room, wrapped in shadows a man sitting behind a computer screen. He is vaguely looking in my direction. Not sure if he saw me or not, I introduce myself awkwardly and explain the reason for my visit. The man stands up and

slowly walks to me, asking if I want a tour of the garden. I accept gratefully and follow him outside again.

"Now the garden is so wild that is difficult to find the edible plants!" says Menno laughing. He points at an incredible number of different plants as we softly walk on the sinuous grass-covered path. The garden is buzzing with diversity and life. About half of the plants have been planted and the other half has been brought by winds and various animals. "Mother Earth is shy and she doesn't like to be naked! She will always try to cover herself." I ask him about the maintenance and how he recognises which plant to leave and which one to take out. "We have two volunteers coming every week. They know what to do. For us, it is like a dance with Mother Earth! The trees are planted with their families around them. They all work together because they have interdependent relationships. Some will come by themselves too. Then we need to decide which ones to keep and which ones not."

After an hour of breathing the air and absorbing the plants names and proprieties, I decide to leave the garden. I throw an inaudible "bye!" to the woman picking tomatoes. She doesn't hear me, and since her back is turned to me, doesn't reply. I walk briskly. I want to prolong the feeling of peace and joy that inhabits me and look for a place to sit. Outside the boundaries of the permaculture garden, Zuiderpark is a regular ornamental garden where plants in squares alternate with empty fields of perfectly mowed grass. I start to feel anxious at the thought that the intimacy I need now could only be provided by the garden I left. I finally find a sunny bench hidden by a herd of severely pruned Wisterias. Five other benches face each other in this circular paved square. My feet are not in contact with the soil anymore and my eyes have nothing to look at. I close my eyes and thank the sun for its warmth.



Menno showing the garden.



The salad garden 'SLALOM.'



Edible Park, September 2022.

Two months later, the school facilities agreed to our garden plans. The original proposal became two. We were permitted to remove the tiles of the old Binnentuin courtyard to set up a permanent garden there and to build three “small” raised beds of about three meters in diameter each in the Prinsessegracht courtyard. It would later become the Makers’ Garden. Each bed is dedicated to a type of activity linked to making: ink and pigment, weaving and building, food and medicinal plants. At the end of November, the four fruit trees that were adopted by Brecht arrived at school. We planted two apple trees and one pear tree in the Makers’ Garden and another pear tree in the master courtyard, thus removing more tiles.

In December, Erika organised a permaculture workshop taught by the great activist and permaculture teacher Alfred Decker. His visit was the kickstart of the makers’ garden. He was planning on teaching and demonstrating how to build raised beds in lasagna style and worm composting, so we provided him with a place where to do it and all the materials needed. In this situation, everyone found contentment in our organisation. I was the intermediate between the theoretical and the feasible, Erika was the connector between the students, the school and the lecturer and Alfred would connect us to the soil. Alfred and I met a day before the workshop. We received three cubic metres of soil delivered by a massive truck crane delivered in the closest courtyard to the makers’ garden. We spent the afternoon talking while building the skeletons of the three beds with chicken wire and metal poles, following the white flour lines drawn on the floor.

The day of the workshop was a blast. A lot of people signed up for the workshop who were not part of our garden group. We went back and forth between the soil bags and the raised beds for a couple of hours, layering soil,

compost and leaves. Even though it was raining and cold, it was great to feel like a community and work together to achieve a common goal. At the end of the day, we all sat together with warm tea and created a new Signal communication channel called ‘Revival of the Gardens.’

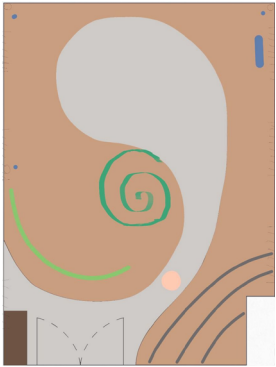
From January on, things started to accelerate. Erika created an elective course at the school around gardening and food which would use the new maker garden as a workshop. The Green Office was officially approved and became a funded part of the school, which meant that Pam, Emma, Angie and I were getting paid for addressing sustainability within its walls. We set up a calendar for gardening and planned to meet every Tuesday afternoon to rebuild the Binnentuin and every two Wednesdays for the Makers’ Garden. Being regularly outside, visible and active helped generate interest in the project. The garden group got joined by students who were pursuing personal projects or research related to gardening or nature, some other who were eager to make the school more sustainable, and some more who just wanted to put their hands in the soil. There was something very powerful in making change for future generations, leaving a positive legacy, and knowing that we were facilitating a need for a new type of education. A month later, Emma, Bodvar and I were invited by the student run *Mushroom radio* to speak about our garden activities on a show about listening. It was such an achievement. A few months prior we didn’t exist; during the show, we were recognised by others and ourselves as a community. The hardest part of the journey was over and the ball could freely roll down the hill, gathering all the snow that had not yet melted.

We are now at the beginning of the wonderful month of May. The days are extremely long and finally warm-

er. Two weeks before, on the 22nd of April, ten gardeners met to celebrate Earth Day on the rainiest Saturday of the month. We planted the pigment seedlings that were raised in the textile workshop by Wieneke, completed building a herb spiral in the Binnentuin, planted two strawberry plants and a raspberry bush and shared some home-baked cakes and noodles. I felt so grateful. Ten people devoting their time to care for non-humans felt like a victory. Whatever happens now, we did something where there was nothing. Even if the school decided to remove all the gardens, we would have shown that making it again would be possible with very few resources. There is now a place to touch the Earth on the ruins of a building: the world can start anew.



Evolution of the Binnentuin, July 2021 to April 2023.





Makers's garden, December 2022.



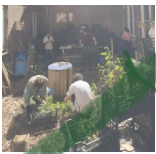
Makers' garden, February 2023.



Makers' garden, April 2023.

green revolution
keep up
abandon
green revolution
keep up
abandon

June
goodbye!
hello!



the first proposal sent

25



meeting with the gardener's group of the Binnentuin: definition of the conceptual lines of the garden project through a shared google document. Wais from facilities is there too and supportive of our initiative.

4

meeting with W. Bremer. We have very different visions and to conciliate them in one project appears more difficult than expected.

8

lecture kindred soil by lectorate and studium generale. Jonathan, Angie, Emma and me meet Erika and start talking about possible collaboration for the gardens.

14

garden meeting, Jonathan, Alina, Lina, E-G, Ilya, Lisa, Emma: finding the community, lots of ideas that are for later stages of the garden but no help preparing the presentation for Ranti

13



meeting with the director and facilities. I am not there but I got a presentation ready. No decision is taken until we have not have a communal vision. The project is on hold.

20

19

meeting concept garden Jonathan, Emma, and some other people

Erika joins the garden group chat. The question of funding for the garden is raised. Teachers want to be paid but we don't have any budget. Janine IMD expresses her desire to make it a larger community and join forces.

23

october

1

first hands-on meet-up to rebuild the small courtyard. We are three moving around the crates and placing back the utilities of rain collector and compost.

11

garden meeting (binnentuin)

Gardening



Hyper from earth Craft



Earth day: collective planting of both courtyard.

21

19

18

gardening Binnentuin.

12

gardening Binnentuin, start of herb spiral with Bødvar and Akash. Müge Yilmaz and the elective students planted corn, beans and peas both indoor and in the makers' courtyard.

4

april

gardening Binnentuin.

5

gardening Maker garden

29

first buds on pear trees and first sprouts from the planting event.



water reserves
compost wheel

21

garden project accepted as graduation project

20

World Forest Day: Akash organised a sowing adoption gathering in the Binnentuin.



15

gardening maker garden

gardening Binnentuin



march - Brick season!

13

gathering bricks from everywhere in the Hague because there is a lot of road work

I start to harvest bricks from the street for the makers' garden: I bring 20 bricks/ weeks by bike. Bødvar is also bringing some.

8

valentines in the Binnentuin. We are in a school break and a lot of people join. We finished removing all the tiles.



1



green revolution

keep up

abandon

green revolution

keep up

abandon

collective sketching of the garden new design.

presentation and approval of the maker's courtyard 3 areas plan to Lizzy. It is not decided yet if we will remove the stones or make raised beds.

visit of the Graftsche Werkplaats pigment garden in The Hague with Wieneke, Ilva, Jonathan and Karo.



Binnentuin design approved by facilities under these conditions:

You let me know who I involved in this project, so I know who to contact, and also to communicate with all stakeholders, so everyone is up to date

You make an overall plan on how you would like to set up this project, so we know what the upcoming steps are

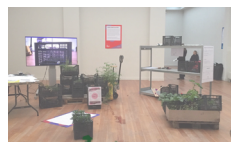
If you need assistance or advise, let me know. For practical questions, you can also contact facilities@kabk.nl

If needed, as KABK we can always stop or adjust the project / garden, if this is necessary for the KABK.

This is of course not our aim. We will always contact you if this is the case.

Let's stay in good contact with each other on this (the garden group and the KABK), preferably with a few meetings per year. I'll plan one in December.

The responsibility of the garden lies with the garden group."



open days, display of the garden/ green office in the entry of the school. We did a livestream of the courtyard diffused in the gallery so we could be both gardening and available for question if people needed. We planted two more trees and discovered a weird structure under the tiles of the courtyard. mixed feelings:

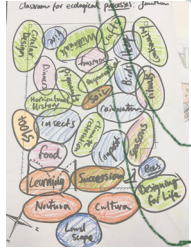
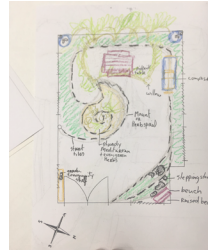
Leaves harvest in the Haagse Bos with Emma and Ilva.



Workshop on permaculture with A. Decker.

Workshop on permaculture with A. Decker.

preparation of the workshop with Alfred Decker. We built the outlines of the beds with chicken wire held by metal poles

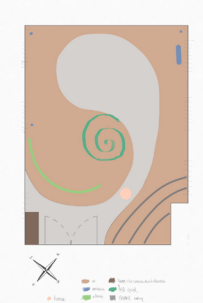


online meeting with Alfred, Leila, erika, Ilva, Jonathan and me.

New chat group created

are we being used by the school for greenwashing?

Trees received at KABK, first pear tree is planted in the maker garden



last garden day before winter break: removing tiles binnentuin and filling the new areas with the crates' soil.

set-up of bi-monthly meet-ups with the garden group on Wednesdays.

january

Creation of the elective course "The garden (un) school" by Erika Sprey in relation to the studium generale lectures on soil, the garden and cooking.

Physical info board built with Bodvar out of old pallets and recycled wooden beams.

Keep on removing tiles with Emma in the Binnentuin

Mushroom radio live with Emma and Bodvar



Meeting with Marie-Isle Bourlanges for possible future collaboration with the garden and her elective course on weaving. She suggests planting flax.



1st official garden day in the makers garden. I start alone and meet Bodvar who helps me collect the leaves under the cantine. We laught a lot.



first attempt of gardening as part of green office dynamic. We meet every Tuesday before our meeting from 16-18. making sure that the Binnentuin keeps on being built.



Pear Tree gets a cat friends who comes to make sure it gets enough nutrients and add if necessary.

Pam, angie and I received our contracts. Gingko green office is officially part of the KABK.

Pear Tree is finally planted in the master courtyard

9

17

19

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2

1

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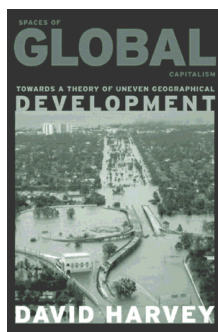
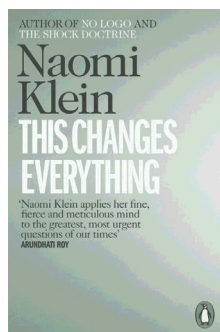
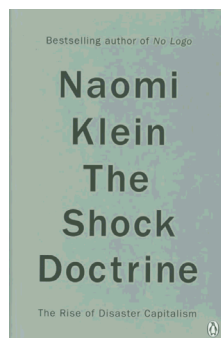
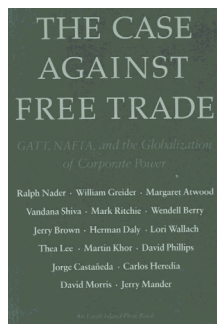
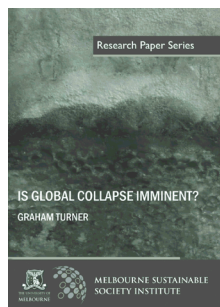
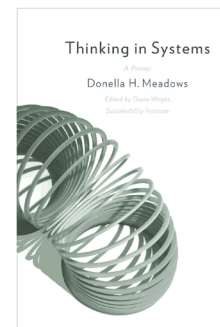
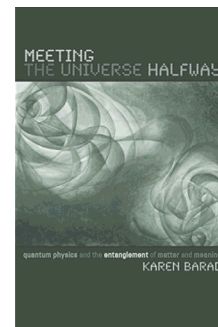
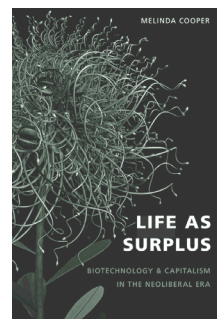
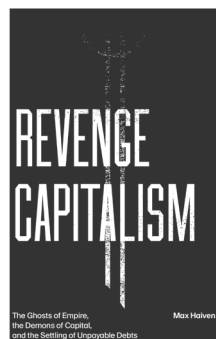
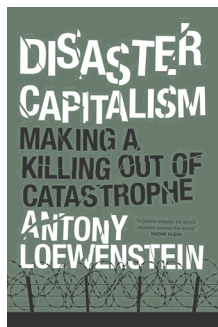
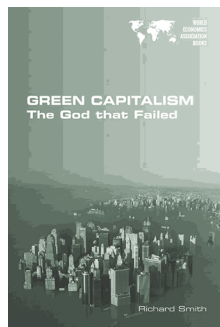
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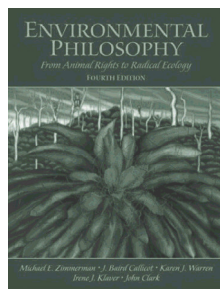
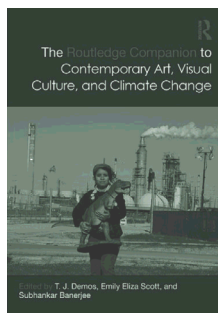
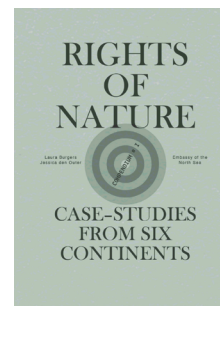
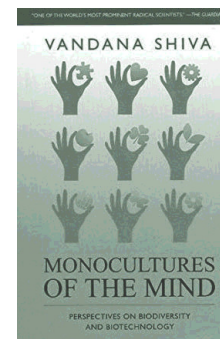
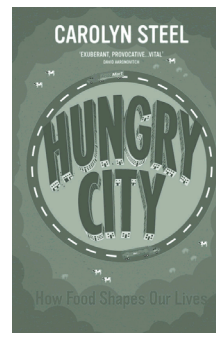
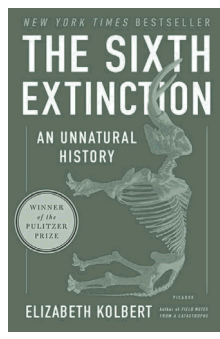
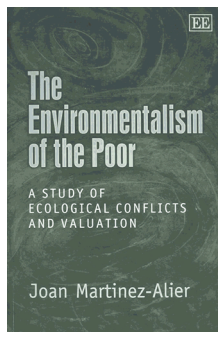
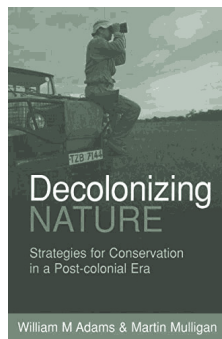
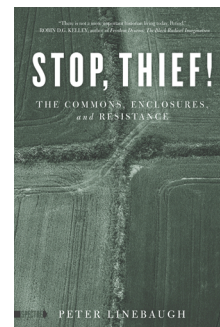
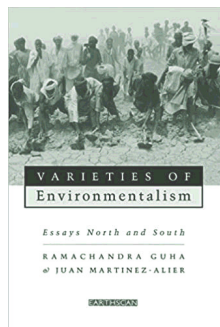
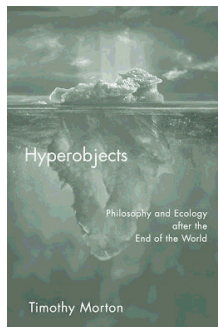
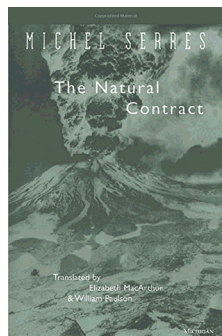
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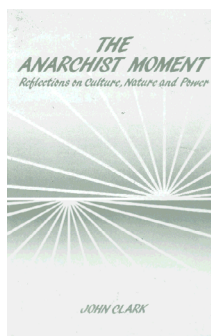
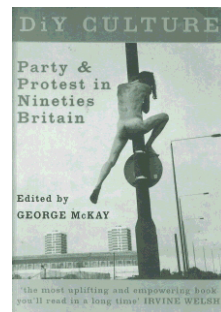
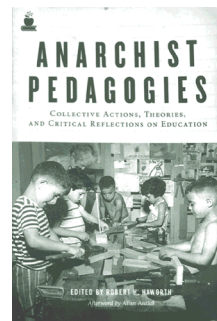
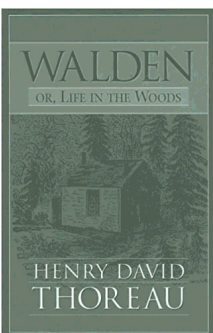
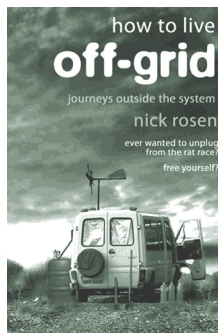
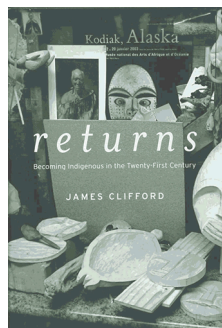
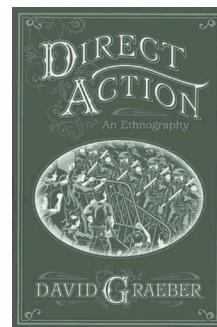
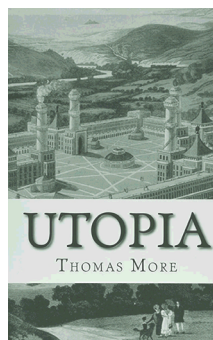
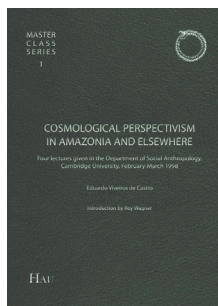
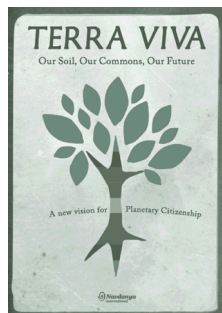
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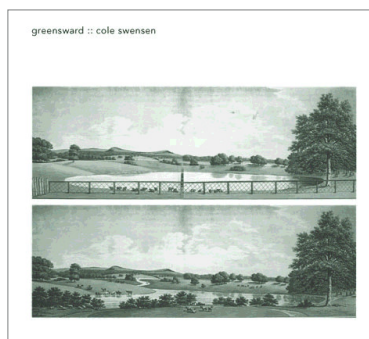
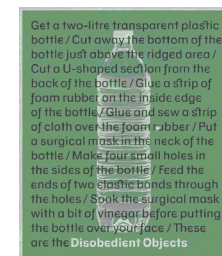
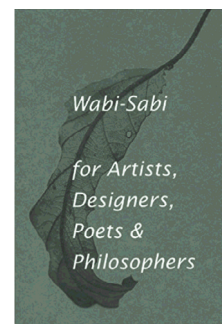
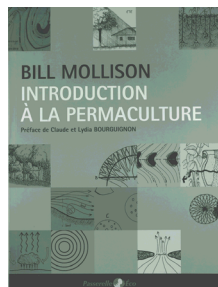
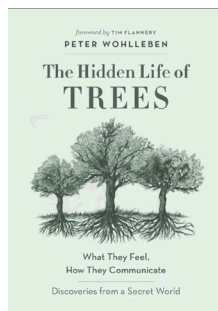
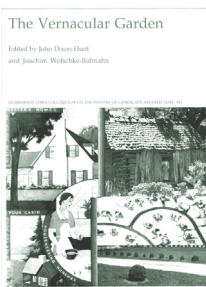
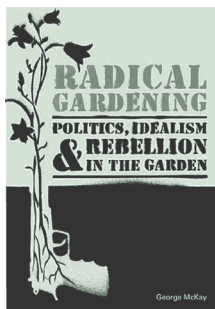
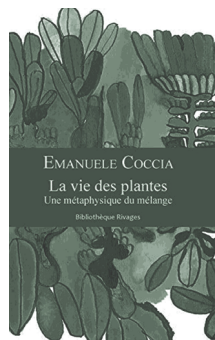
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1. Tuấn Mami (Nhà Sàn Collective), *Vietnamese Immigrating Garden*, Kassel, DE, 2022.



3. Nils Norman, *Edible Garden*, The Hague, NL, 2011.



2. Marija Šujica, Müge Yilmaz and Iris Dik, *Four Sisters*, Amsterdam, NL, 2021.



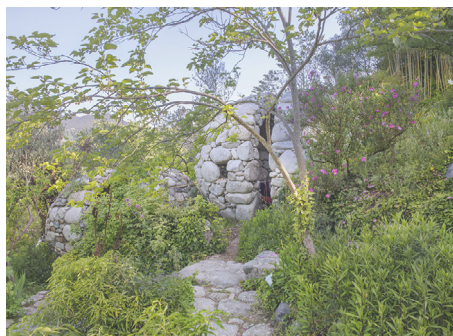
4. Alan Sonfist, *Time Landscape*, New-York, USA, 1965.



5. Ferdinand Cheval, *Palais Idéal*, Hauterives, FR, 1879-1912.



7. Jean Tinguely, *Le Cyclop*, Milly-la-Forêt, FR, 1994.



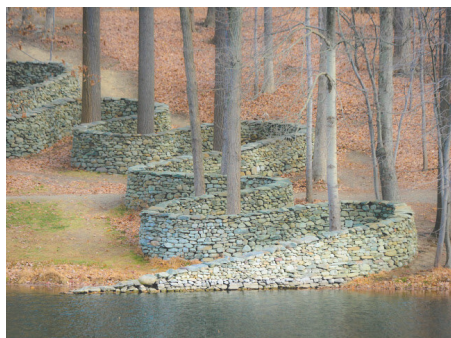
6. Agnès and Nicolas Brückin, *Jardin de Sambucs*, Saint André de Majencoules, FR, 1994.



8. Thomas Hirschorn, *Gramsci Monument*, New-York, USA, 2013.



9. Giuseppe Penone, *Zucche (Courges)*, 1978-1979.



10. Andy Goldsworthy, *Storm King Wall*, New Windsor, NY, USA, 1998.

1. Tuân Mami (Nhà Sàn Collective). *Vietnamese Immigrating Garden*. 2022. Online image. South South. Accessed May 8, 2023. <https://south-south.art/2020-2029/documenta-fifteen-2/>.
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