



HERD *ART*
Ling
Pauline Berger

threads and tissues



Thicket photographed in the Bossche Broek, NL, after arrival in S-Hertogenbosch, 2020.

Dear Reader,

the explorations and approximations you will discover on the following pages started back in winter 2021. Or, more precisely, last August.

Actually, in autumn 2018, the year before as well, but also, when I was six years old imagining a forest in my mom's bedroom. And, of course, I rely on other knowledges outside my own set of experiences. As much as the beginning of this research is hard to be traced back and encircled, the ending is. Because, what is expecting you (other, than what you might expect) is the attempt to pick up certain strings, unravel them in places, join them in others, and to follow some seemingly consistent patterns for a while.

"...I am deeply committed to the more modest possibilities of partial recuperation and getting on together. Call that staying with the trouble."

(Haraway, 2018, p.20)

The somewhat tenable tissue of *herding and arting*, that eventually emerges, nonetheless has an uncountable number of loose threads, spreading into all kinds of directions yet untouched within the limited space and time of this booklet.

Yet, the attitude of attempt and temporal limitation of accuracy towards the findings is not to be understood as arbitrary or vacuous.

It rather reflects on, how the modus operandi of the exploration reflects itself, in itself.

Inspired by Donna Haraway's remarks (2018, p. 20-21) on how string figures can function as a symbol for speculative fabulation of patterns, knowledge transfers, performative relationality, and fluidity, I can very much subscribe to her stating:

"[Although they are among humanity's oldest games, string figures are not everywhere the same game. Like all offspring of colonizing and imperial histories,] I - we - have to relearn how to conjugate worlds with partial connections and not universals and particulars."

(2018, p.24)

It might have been more satisfying to focus on one question and follow a linear way of answering it. But problematizing the very trouble of

marking out one thing, one practice, one way of doing, or being, from the entanglement with the others, seemed, though more hazardous, more honest to me.

Because, as my basic attitude is the constant attempt to give sense to and make sense of, and relate to, the same is true for how I approached this research. That means, that during the process of in-writing exploration, there also has been the constant danger of it all not making sense in the end.

"String figures require holding still to receive and pass on. String figures can be played by many, on all sorts of limbs, as long as the rhythm of accepting and giving is sustained."

(Haraway, 2018, p.20)

So I kindly invite you, to think and wander/wonder along with me, to eventually do underline some areas of relational truths.

Relational, because they endure only as long, as the specific strings at their specific situatedness are interwoven. They would dissolve, relocate and form new meanings, the moment a singular thread is persistently pulled out, unraveled, and followed into another muddle.

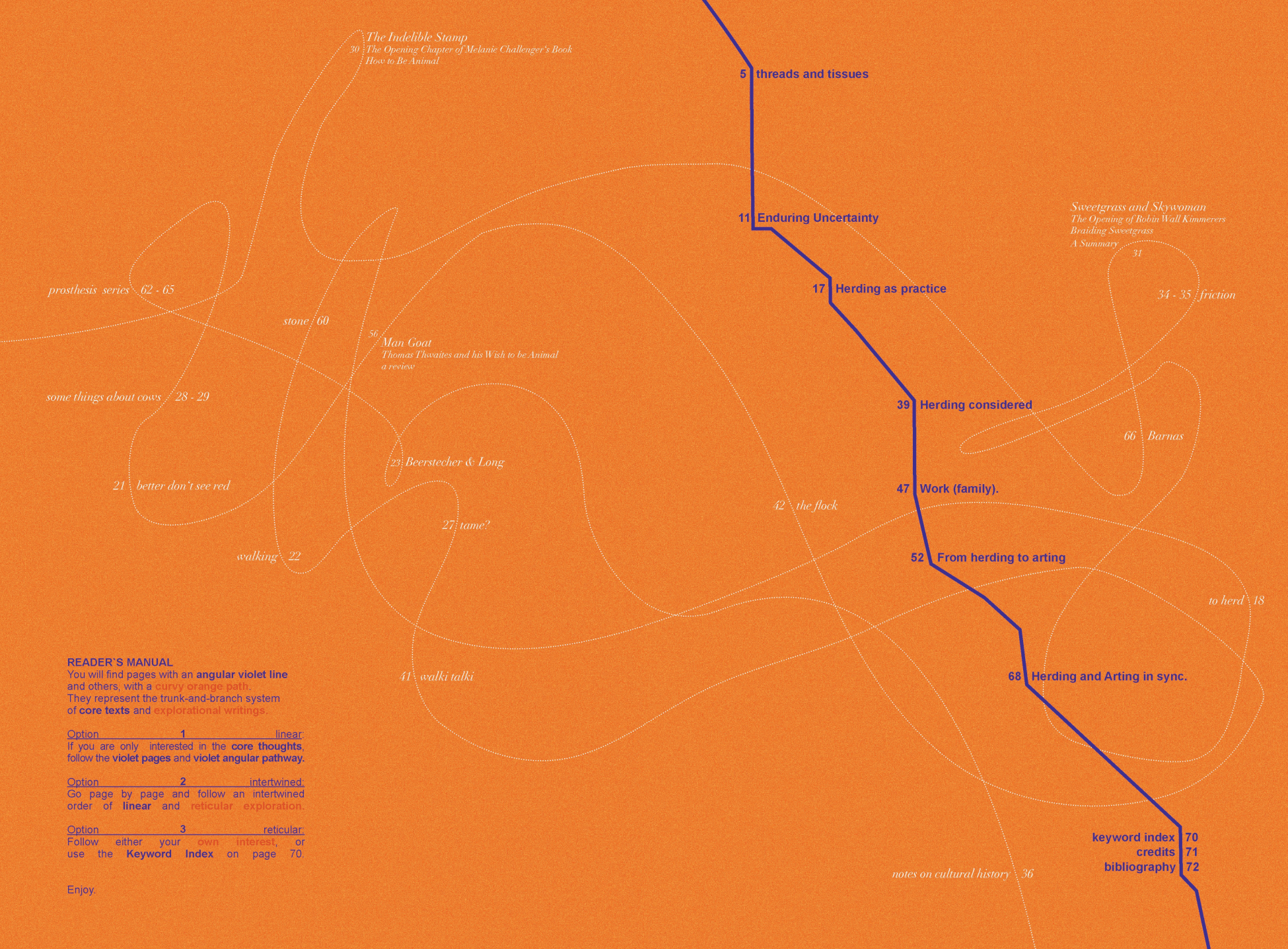
So even if Haraway's muddles seem so much more fertile, diverse, and specific than any of what I am doing across this limited amount of pages, I do want to quote, plus-one her, on the following:

"In the face of unrelenting historically specific surplus suffering in companion species knottings, I am not interested in reconciliation or restoration, but I am deeply committed to the more modest possibilities of partial recuperation and getting on together. Call that staying with the trouble."

(2018, p.20)

So while in the meantime I am not six years old anymore, and August 2021 passed, as has winter, I very much hope, that today you may enjoy thinking alongside me and stay with the trouble together (and in friction) for the time being.

Enjoy, and feel free to use the reader's manual, map, and the keyword index, in case you get muddled up (or stay with the trouble of that, too)...



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READER'S MANUAL
 You will find pages with an **angular violet line**
 and others, with a **curvy orange path**.
 They represent the trunk-and-branch system
 of **core texts** and **explorational writings**.

Option **1** **linear**:
 If you are only interested in the **core thoughts**,
 follow the **violet pages** and **violet angular pathway**.

Option **2** **intertwined**:
 Go page by page and follow an intertwined
 order of **linear** and **reticular exploration**.

Option **3** **reticular**:
 Follow either your **own interest**, or
 use the **Keyword Index** on page 70.

Enjoy.

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Enduring Uncertainty



Collage from series: *Du bist scho recht, du auch, und du bist a fertige Huregeiss*, 2019
Spread on page 8-9: Slope of Alp Tomül, CH place I worked 2018.

For the past 12 years, I have been constantly moving places and occupations. Still, all in the proximity of: Art - Farming - Social.

I often wonder, how these fields, disjunct at first sight, are intertwined, and what their common ground is. In what way is the artist a herder, a herder a friend, a teacher, a craftswoman, caretaker, painter, performer, sculptor, photographer, cook... Entering my Master's Studies, I decided to better understand the relationship between being a herder and making art. It just seemed reasonable, to exploratively write about it and how these practices are related and to use that exploration for an integrating understanding of multidisciplinary.

The question is urgent to me because I have been confronted many times with the demand to narrow down:

What was my brand, product, or core question? This comes from the outside as in specialization generally being framed as the highest form of professionalism and, sadly, also from a brand-and-product-led understanding of art, which is undoubtedly influenced by overall concepts of market, capital, work... Also, there is the still lingering idea of the artist as a genius, which I obviously also don't identify with, because interdisciplinarity comes with constant and chosen amateurism...

But the doubt is intrinsic too: As a kid in school, I never had an answer to the question of what I wanted to become when I grew up and instead started a quite meandering path... Social worker, gardener, cook, dancing school, stage design, agriculture studies, art pedagogy, finally art teacher, sculptor, and herder... The more I think about it, the more it seems, that I rather work around a certain attitude, a way of seeing/doing than a specific statement or product to be seen/done. I came to accept, that there is no way of changing this but rather to understand, how I can still operate within the given environment, and that constant wonder is part of it.

The first name of my thesis proposal was: Enduring Uncertainty.

Indeed, the how and the why of any of my practices are the constant attempt of figuring out.

I am permanently trying to get in touch, understand, and be active, relate with my surrounding, which I perceive as highly complex and multidimensional. So I am trying to make sense of and give sense to.

I remember, as a kid I felt like the world around me was a white 3D map. White, not from emptiness, but as white light, containing it all but overwhelmingly full, up to indifference.

Learning about it, interfering, and getting in touch, I fill the void by filtering out certain colors, shades, and shapes. To familiarize me by rela-

ting and interfering. I think I make art when I have the sensation of getting a grasp on something and want to share that - or to get a grasp on something in the first place.

Even if it's always an approximation only, and through a specific angle. I observe similar doubts among friends and artist peers.

This is also, why I think, my exploration might be valuable for others, too. Because it touches upon wondering about what to believe in, and more importantly: do, if there is always a multitude of perspectives to be considered. I think, to get close to a definition of meaning and from that, derive a modus of acting, is crucial but difficult in a time of uncountable viewpoints.

So when my wondering comes from the fluidity of truths, values- and belief systems, the wandering has to do also with bewildered exhaustion of brand-and-product based self-definitions and the myth of progress and constant growth embedded in globalized capitalistic environments.

A pain sits at the bottom of it: The conclusion, that nothing is absolutely right. As a matter of fact, I can not answer the big question, of how to live, what to do/not to, and what to believe.

But I can at least investigate what I already do and draw conclusions from that. Because, in the end, the attempt matters. The proximity.

*A pain sits at the bottom of it:
The conclusion, that nothing is
absolutely right.*

In a way, the image of the nomadic, that lies within the herding, is matching this experience of wandering wonder. The nomadic is carrying values and valuables along, being in constant motion of observation, interaction, and care.

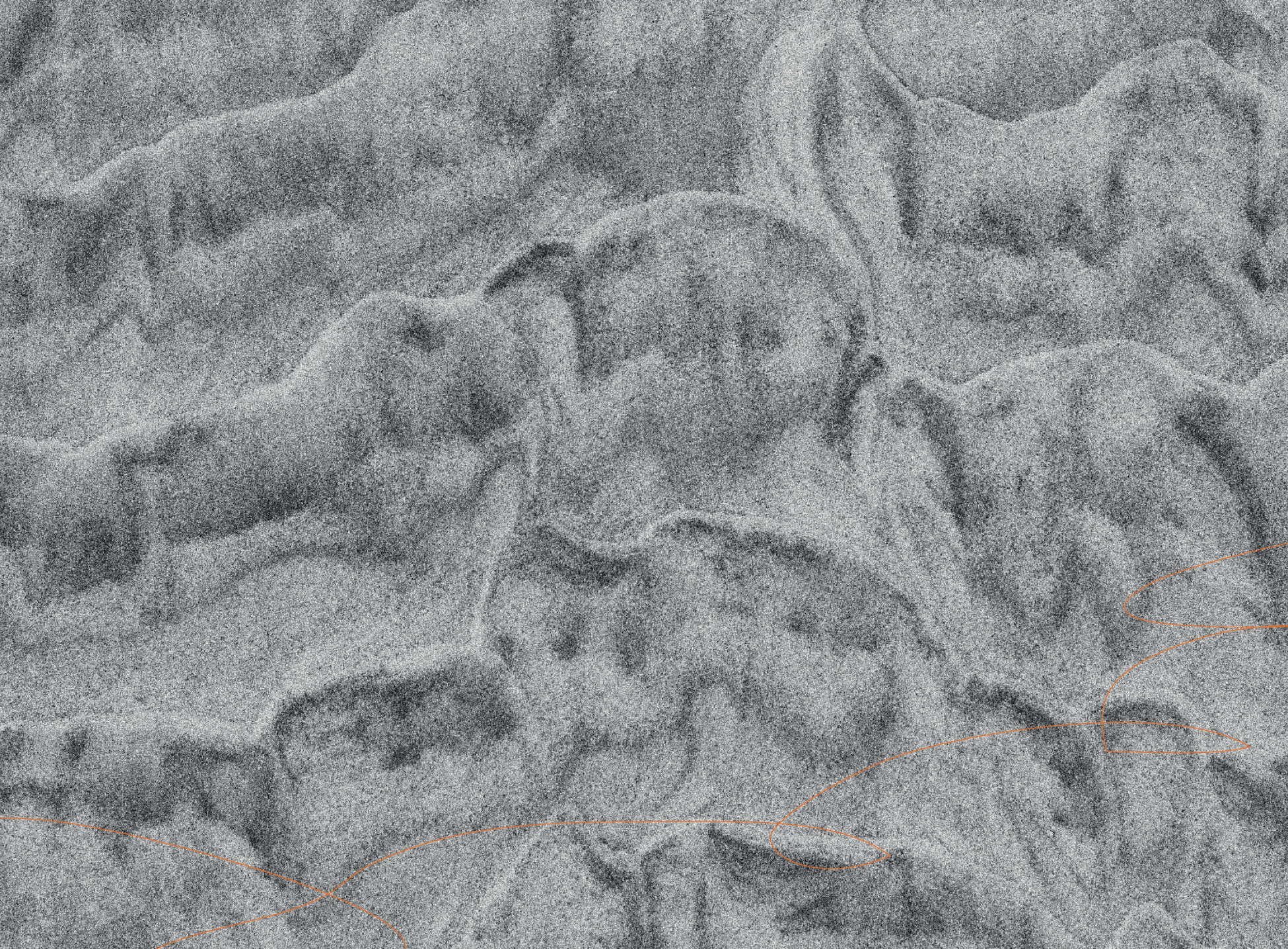
The herder must adapt. It comes with a multi-perspectivity, that still embodies the individual viewpoint. So when I pick *herding and arting* for the thesis, there is, indeed, a layer beneath the question of how these practices are related and how herding can be seen as an art practice.

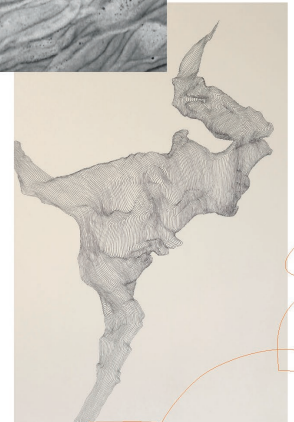
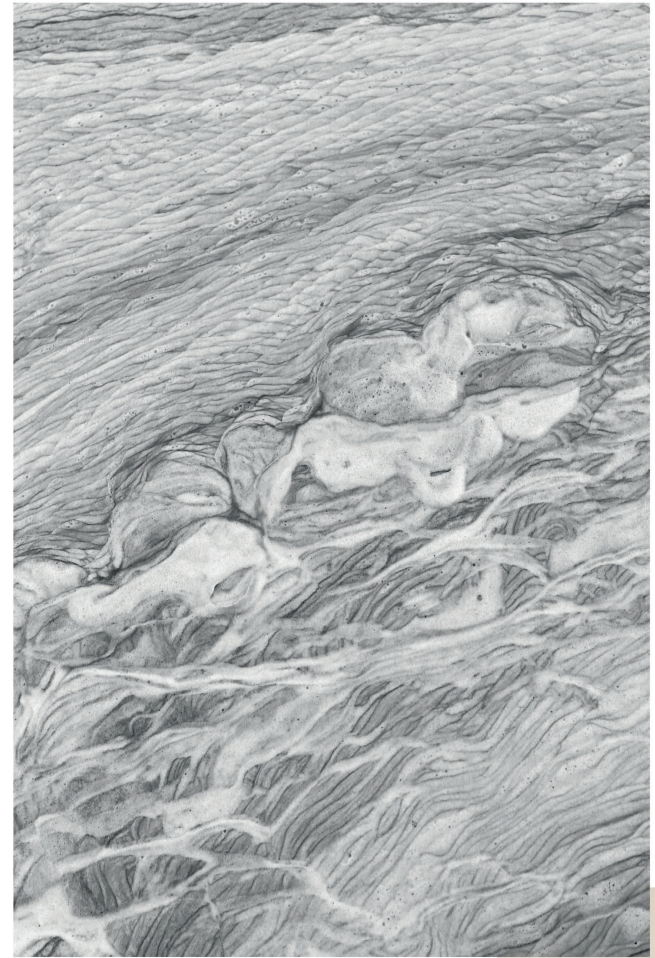
Still, the focus shall be on the bodies of these two practices, to understand them well and find out, if and how they are related. If conclusions may exceed that realm and do indicate something generalizable, I am here for the taking.

So where to start?

A part of how I try to make sense of and give sense to is writing. So the tool for approaching this, the method, is explorative writing (orange) and summative observations (violet).

This publication investigates different aspects of *herding and arting*, trying to offer clues on how they are related, and eventually derive and formulate personal principles of interdisciplinary artishood.





Countless Drawings and Fotos, ongoing explorations on structures and patterns.
Searching for the area inbetween abstract and concrete.
Finding rest in visual occurrences, that are specific, but leaving the mind to w(a)(c)nder.
Looking for results that are consistent in shape while enigmatic in meaning.
Also spread on pages: 12-13

threads and tissues

Enduring Uncertainty

herding as practice



Collage from series: *Du bist scho recht, du auch, und du bist a fertige Huregeiss*, 2019

Working as a cow or shepherd in the Swiss Alps basically means, living in a cottage on a mountain, mostly above tree level, and taking responsibility for a flock of animals, in my case, cows and sheep (but also goats and horses) over the summer. The season usually begins in May or June and ends, depending on the altitude, with the start of fall, in late September. Sometimes milking and making cheese is part of the job too. This tradition exists in the Alpine areas for quite some centuries because the narrow valleys provide little pastures and the areas above tree level are relatively rich over the summer. Because in Switzerland the practice is sustained by federal subsidies, the animals live under conditions quite fine compared to industrial farming (see text: *to herd* p.18). The animals belong to farmers, that traditionally stay down at the farm for other obligations, while handing over their herds to seasonal herders, like me. The work is physically challenging, with early mornings in all weathers, and then sometimes it takes 8 hours of hiking to only find all of them (sometimes we would herd 400 cattle, 500 sheep) and then some more work if ill ones need to be taken care of, or births happen.

I must put in front that, of course, there is a lot of idealizing in every into the wild story and so mine is at risk too. I do not mean to propose a sort of escapist idea, in which living in nature is solving all problems, animals are friends and we need to just go back in time. As opposed to that, I rather believe that the friction, the trouble, has been there ever since and is not to be entirely evicted (see: *Notes on cultural history*, p. 36). So if I go to the Alps, it rather comes from the wish to situate myself within the friction and actively relate to life and life processes. Living in the city, we are organized in a way, that the relatedness of meat to an animal, milk to a

calf, and plants to ecosystems are neatly detached. Nature (a term, however, worth discussing) easily falls apart into disjunct sceneries: The pretty canvas of entertainment and escape, something to long for (just not too much of it, please), and the other, uneasy part, in which something has to die to be eaten and someone has to be born, for milk to be consumed. Interestingly, the attempted denial of our own physicalities, our own dying and being consumed, go along with that too... So to me, herding also means, confronting myself with the actual frictions that come with it being alive among life.

In my experience, the Alps are, of course, overwhelming in exhilarating beauty. But being in them is also very simple, even cruel, merciless, pragmatic. The job as a herder offers flowers and mountain peaks as much as shit, blood, illness, death, decay, of the surrounding as much as of oneself. Nature has one lamb starving to death because their twin doesn't allow him to drink, as much as having a cow taking care of a wounded friend that can't keep up with the herd. And this simultaneity is sometimes hard to grasp.

The job as a herder offers flowers and mountain peaks as much as shit, blood, illness, death, decay, of the surrounding as much as of oneself.

How to avoid making nature look nice and by that, actually, conquer and domesticate it again? How to get past enraptured idealizing on the one extreme, and fatalistic survival of the fittest and be eaten on the other? How to relate to the non-human? How to relate. (relate?). Can I humanimal be situated within, without pretentious denial of a certain exceptionality, that comes with special impact and responsibility?

to herd

The land: a mountain top, wide-spread grasslands, too high in altitude for trees to grow, forests are only reaching the lower edges of the plateaus and highlands. Summer is short up there, the last ice shields are melting only in the late days of June, and August can already surprise us, short-term inhabitants, with sudden snowfalls and frosty nights. Because in Switzerland the valleys are narrow and grasslands are limited, there is a century-old tradition that is still fully vivid. Sheep, cows, goats, and even horses are sent to the highlands during summer, accompanied by a small group or even single herds-women and shepherds.

June. We open the lowest gate and welcome 160 cows with their calves and 500 sheep. We shake hands with farmers, that leave their herds with us for the upcoming three months. We get the simple cabin ready, check some fences that mark out gorges and swamps, and get to know the animals.

As a herder, I spend the next 2 weeks silently walking or sitting between them, observing, talking, offering touch and understanding the social structure of the herd. As I get to know them, they get to know me. I need them to trust me first, so in case I want to heal wounds and check on calves, my touch must be welcome. They know my silhouette in dense fog and recognize my voice and I raise it only to lead them to fresh areas or in situations of danger. People are silent most of the time up there. If I call them and mean it, 160 animals spread all over a huge area, will follow. All the other days I follow them. I find them in whatever far-off place they prefer to take their noontime nap that day. I check on them, we treat wounds, infections, make sure they don't climb too high and fall. That's the "job". The job is, to make sure to get close to every single cow every day, not minding a daily hike of

8 hours in heat, rain, sometimes snow, or thunderstorms. It's not actually sweet and romantic, it's nature in all aspects. Hands sweaty, hands with blisters, hands covered in feces, blood, spring water, amniotic fluid, milk. Animals are born into the palm of the hands and die under them.

Every cow has a name (they literally do...), and with the weeks passing by, I can tell them apart not only by their looks but also by their character, moods, and preferences. I know, who is friends with whom and if someone is a little vain. But not only the domestic animals but also the wild ones become neighbors.

There is a marmot living in that one hill, short above the cabin, that I meet and greet every morning passing by and it doesn't flee anymore. But if we sit inside and hear a whistle, we know, it will only take 5 minutes until some strange hikers pass by or the hawks are out. The marmot never whistles without a purpose.

There is a family of 3 eagles, spiraling between the peaks. Capricorns, stags, foxes, and very rare: wolves. You'll know them because they are the beings you meet, humans are rare.

Areas have names, peaks too and at some point, we know every rock, swamp, and creek.

From a human perspective, it is the loneliest job. Sometimes, one doesn't leave the mountain even once for three months, poor cell-phone reception, not to talk about (non-) internet.

What is happening in the world, we learn from hikers or the little radio, that only works, if the sun charged the batteries of the solar panel. Once, I found myself eagerly consuming newspapers, someone left us for lighting the fire, just to realize after days, that they were years old... didn't that happen before?

Sometimes, at the end of the sun-

mer, the goodbye to the animals, the rocks, rivers, marmots, and swamps is harder than saying farewell to the colleagues.

But also the connection to the humans is somehow of an intimacy; I hardly experienced anywhere else. Its and intimacy of full-on shared responsibility and care. The well-being of the whole microcosmos is the purpose of the relationship. In a fight, I might not rely on the other person liking me for, whatever, my sense of humor...

I rely on them caring as much as I do. And then the liking isn't that important anymore, it seems a vain category.

Because caring is what connects us.

Initially written in 2019, translated to English and edited 2022

Image and Story Board at Wikimedia (2021), wikipedia, seen at 6. November 2021, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Audhumbla>



In Northern Mythology: After the hermaphrodite giant Ymir appeared, so did the cow Audhumbla. She fed the giant with her milk. The world was only ice and fire yet, so she had no food. Three days she licked the salty ice instead of grazing. By that, she licked the ice off the second giant Buri. Audhumbla birthed Buri by licking him out of the ice!



Raja, Alexa, Haldi (Heifers), me, on Alp Tomül, CH-2018



Slope beneath Bärenhorn, Alp Tormal, CH, 2018

Better Don't see e Red.

*Like wine spilled on a table cloth, stains spreading on my colleague's pants.
The steel beam of a bridge, we provisionally set up for sheep to pass the river, has loosened
and retarded its suspense in his knee.
Luminous, on a calf's forehead, a laceration. Then, visible from afar in the afternoon.
The mother, upset by the blood, peeled off the calf's skin with her tongue in destructive
care... Two palms wide of greasy tissue are exposed.
Bright drops on the sheath of a cow, horn blasts from higher-ranking animals have slashed
the skin folds. Tiny beads of blood on the teats of animals plagued by horseflies.
Bloody mucus on arms and clothes, sticky and with a sweetish odor, obstetrics.
Alarming stains all over a fluffy calf. Approaching relief. Just a crowberry nap.
Pulsing brightly from a sheep's suppurating claw.
Lucent color of the mountain patrol jackets. A hiker has long gone missing.
Weeks in fear of finding...
Greasy strands of the undetached afterbirth from another sheath of another cow.
The calf came early and died one hour later. Sinuous thread from a black nostril...
Better don't see red.*

walking

Step after step, after step, after step, 4 hours, 5, 8, sometimes 10 hours a day until walking becomes an action as unconscious as breathing, digestion, pulse. Still, it does have an immediate impact on thinking and by that on emotions.

A lot has been said about the clarifying benefits of long walks, but this is different.

In fact, the permanent, enduring forward movement has an effect, that might be described as a digestion process of all present emotions, memories, and thoughts. That applies to the current, the actual layer first.

But through the monotone pace of shepherding and walking, the upper layers of consciousness are worked and felt through quite soon.

It rather seems, as if, with time, layer after layer was abraded, kneaded, and metabolized.

Through hours and hours, the pace-powered excavator-bucket is digging itself deeper and deeper and reaches the aged, forgotten, repressed, and seemingly overcome.

In the novel "You should have left" by Daniel Kehlmann (2016), the protagonist experiences on an old mountain shack, seen as cursed by locals, the following.

With the desperate determination to leave the overwhelming superiority of the high mountains and the hut encapsulated in them, he and his daughter set out foot their way into the valley. For hours they walk down serpentine by serpentine, to finally, at dusk, arrive at their starting point.

They take the last turn and find themselves standing back in front of the shack.

With a similarly, merciless consequence, the pace-powered mill wheel grinder of thought runs on some days in the high mountains. In its majestically unimpressed presence, the surrounding nature only grants occasional distraction.

Although it offers rising fog banks, circling eagle pairs, and rugged rock edges, from the swirling mass of rising thoughts and feelings, it can not save the hiker. After pausing in amazement of the rushing ibexes, the mill keeps on turning without hesitation.

This inaccessibility of the mountains world may be due to the fact, that nature might evoke feelings such as amazement, fear, trepidation, and awe.

But she herself remains indifferent to her own impact. The mountains leave no doubt that the shepherdess, who walks them for months, means no more (nor less) to them than the fox, the ptarmigan, the peregrine falcon, or the wind.

Other than a human counterpart, they are not empathetic to people's emotional bubbles.

They allow to them be felt, considered, evaluated. But they do not go into an active response.



View towards Tornul-Pass Pasture, CH, 2016

An animal might sense the feelings of the human, even embrace them.

But it won't discuss them through.

But because the human being is so much built on the response and resonance to their actions, feelings, and thinking, the attention of the walker starts to re-direct towards himself, inside.

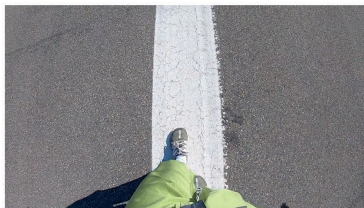
This inevitable reference to only oneself harbors, what might be the most elementary feeling of loneliness. And because this state persists, the whole internal being starts to be constituted on its self-ness.

Because there is no counterpart available, that literally speaks the same language, dealing with thoughts and feelings becomes one enclosed system. The walker kneads himself through all layers of their existence. And that mostly without any ambitious aim. The inner themes and images, shaken up in the paces' rhythm, have sometimes even the arbitrariness and penetrance of a badly run radio station.

The intensity is sometimes casual and amusing, then again overwhelming. Over time the walker performs a profound inventory of their own memories, going through the budget, which may bring unpleasant things to light as well as pure joy.

Ultimately, this creates a basic mood of deep serenity. Because the inside view is beginning to resemble a detailed map.

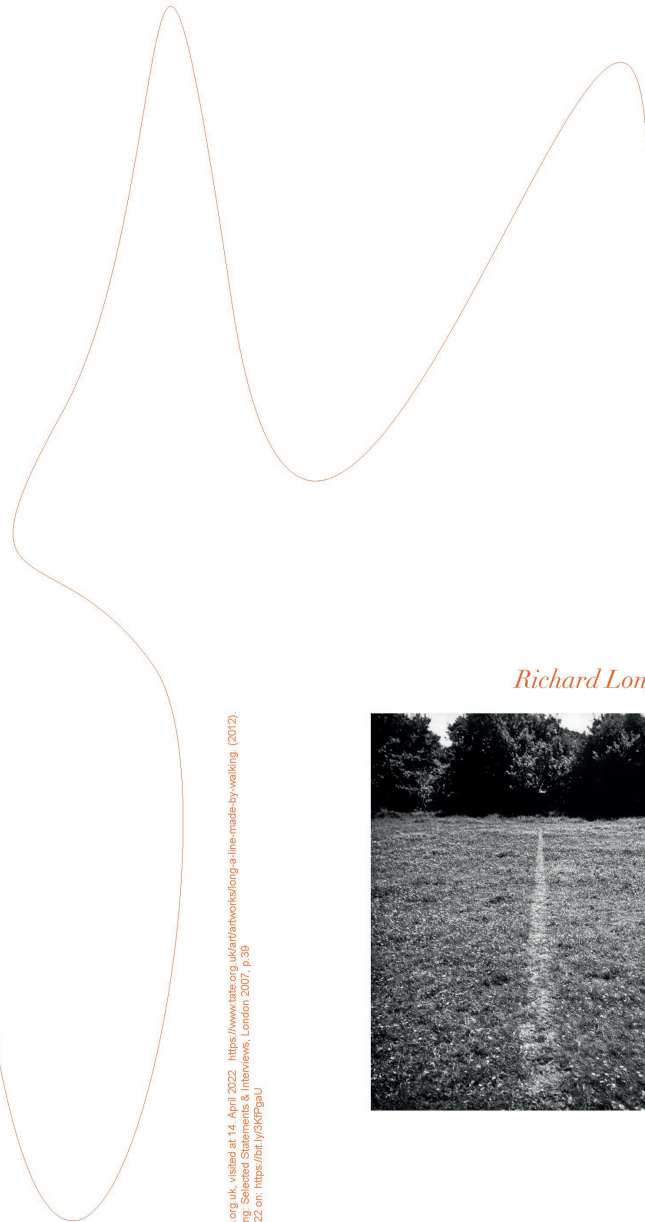
Sure, there might be swamps and gorges, but they are all in plain sight, as valleys and brooks and abundant meadows are.



Daniel Beerstecker walk in time

In 2019 Daniel Beerstecker completed his performance, in which he walked incredibly slow for 6 hours a day over 60 days passing a total of 40,195km. He was monitored with digital equipment and could be joined through a camera and motion tracker. Passing through different cities of the German south at an extremely slow pace, the police had to be holding up traffic and blocking roads for the artist, that practiced meditation routines to create an experience, he describes as very calming for the mind. Acted out in a rural area, the work would have been interesting too, though especially in the rushy daily life of German mid-size cities, the act of walking with no clear intention of arrival gets amplified. Everything else automatically seems fast, unaware, rushing. While in my herding practice, the walking is happening to observe, the surrounding, the animals, my thoughts, Beerstecker turns into the observed himself, and by that creates a relatively resting center within a pulsing surrounding¹.

¹ Image and text from: Daniel Beerstecker, Blog of 10.09.2019 walk in time. (2021). Visited at 21th of May, 22
<https://walk-in-time.de/blog>, visited at 14. April 2022, von <https://walk-in-time.de/blog>



¹ Tate London <https://www.tate.org.uk>, visited at 14. April 2022. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/long-a-line-made-by-walking> (2012).
² Ben Tunwell (ed.), Richard Long: Selected Statements & Interviews, London 2007, p. 39
 Image found at 14th of April, 2022 on: <https://bit.ly/3K1P3aU>



Richard Long a line made by walking

Richard Long walked this line into a patch of grass in 1967, to a photo, and left the place. While the work has been discussed and situated within the wider group of land art, Long stands out with the ephemerality and humbleness, this work portrays. Compared to other interventions of this genre, like the massive spiral jetty by Robert Smithson or de Maria's lightning field, a line made by walking is astonishingly simple, temporary, and unvigorous.

To me, it is the first piece of art I remember, that touched me with its poetic performativity. It highlights the act of walking, without deciding on meditative or manic reasoning. Also, the imprint of human presence, the presence of human thought is as brisk, even destructive as it is volatile and fleeting. The image produced seems to stand proof for an action, a certain attitude within the moment, as well as a relationship between the walker (that left) the environment, time, and the viewer imagining an act in the past¹.

"...my intention was to make a new art which was also a new way of walking: walking as art..."
 Richard Long²

tame?

Image on 14th of April 2022 from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mbs.2021.10.002>.
T. Renger, A. (2021, 10. Dezember). Mythos Europa. bpo.de. visited at 20. April 2022. at: <https://www.bpo.de/kurz/knappheiten/haelde-europalest-beit177121/mysos-europa/>



Europa
Like some other times in Greek mythology, Zeus fell in love with a young woman and had to find a way to be with her without his wife, Hera, noticing. So he turned into a beautiful white bull and abducted the Phoenician (today Libanon) princess to the island of Crete, where they had three sons and marked the beginning of the new continent, Europa!



Emmi on the north-west ridge beneath Barenhorn, CH, 2018

The gray cattle suckler cows themselves don't have much sense for delighted onlookers. They distinguish between friend and foe in a fraction of a second and are not afraid to show the latter their horns. At best, they just don't care.

These „Gentle Grays“ may let one of their calves die when they have twins and the food supply is poor, they fight each other, they deliberately push low-ranking animals through an electric fence to get to the fresh pasture behind without being shocked themselves.

And at the same time, they are incredibly gentle, intelligent, sensitive, and affectionate.

As a herder, one gets a very special contact with them. They build trust, obey when called, allow to be touched, stroked, treated, seek protection, and even sense when one is down and respond kindly. But depending on how firmly one has previously established oneself in the hierarchy, weakness is either lovingly licked or smartly exploited. Because dealing with the herds is based on a successfully and emphatically maintained misunderstanding.

Through violence, conditioning, food, and authority, humans convince animals that they were stronger. Actual physical superiority is then replaced by the power of intention. They sense the determination to rule more, than a shove with a herders staff. However, they are just as sensitive to doubts and insecurities and use them.

In this respect, the biggest challenge on the alp isn't the assembly and dismantling of the kilometer-long fences or the weather.

To herd the herd responsibly, to be able to treat individual animals if necessary, the herder must position himself in the herd.

In concrete terms, this means that every animal in the herd grants touch, they follow the call and on the other hand keep their distance when asked for it. The herder decides about closeness and distance without the animals knowing that this also serves their self-protection.

Nevertheless, there will always be situations in which the illusory nature of human authority over nature becomes obvious.

Domestication, based on trust and superiority through force, is always just an agreement, a distribution of roles that overrides animal instincts.

How tenuous this agreement is, how unstable the authority of man over the animals is, becomes clear in the ordinary, exceptional situations that are always to be expected on the alp. In the Alps, every year hikers are killed by defensive cows protecting their calves. Because, especially when there is danger, inner nature and instinct break through, and then even the experienced herder has no choice but to run as fast as they can.

The Horns of the cow are growing all their lives, and, like a tree, they have rings and changes of color according to age and life circumstances. Also, every birth leaves a mark on the horns. They are used for communication rather than for fights.

A study of the University of Mainz¹, Germany came to conclude, that all of today's millions of domestic cows of around 41 breeds, can be genetically traced back to only about 80 singular female aurochs living in the middle east around 10.000 years ago.

To produce milk, a cow needs to have a calf. Their pregnancy lasts pretty much as long as the human, about 9 months. They are constantly kept pregnant, in most cases by artificial insemination. Only 2-3 months are in between giving birth and being inseminated anew. They are all the time milked and left at rest only for 6-12 weeks before giving birth.

The muzzle is actually nose and upper lip grown together, this makes them smell their food very well and have a very good grip.

Cows form social structures: They have close friends and peers, they do dislike. A healthy herd has a matriarch, who is not necessarily the physically strongest, but a smart and experienced, decisive cow.

Cows have no upper front teeth but a hornet plate instead. Also, there are no sharp teeth on the sides. They have only a row of teeth on the downside of the front jaw, then a long time nothing, and then massive teeth for chewing in the back.

Dairy Cows are drinking up to 80 liters of water per day and can eat around 60-80 kg of fresh grass, around 25 kg of hay in winter, and some cereals too.

Generally, cow is the word for a female of different mammal species (also used for whale, elephant, moose...)
 The bovine family is distinct in:
 Calf: Under the age of 12 month
 Heifer: At least 12-month-old female before the first calf
 Cow: Female with at least one birth
 Bullock: Young male
 Bull: Adult male
 Ox: Castrated male



Cow in stable before milking, Alp Taspegn, CH, 2017

Cows are ruminants, which means, their food is processed by a diverse mixture of microorganisms in different parts of the stomach and re-chewed in between. This makes the cow, and other ruminants, able to actually get nutrients out of plant fibers (cellulose) which for example humans are not. They don't really chew the grass on the first bite, but rather fill up their belly and then lay down and chew it all up later.

¹ based on article at <https://www.deutschesherdbook.de> (2012, 28. Mai)
<https://www.deutschesherdbook.de>, Visited at 29. November 2024, 7:00
https://www.deutschesherdbook.de/files/seminals/seminals-schwarz-schottel/678.de.html?m=article_id=2008977

some things about cows



Cow in fog on Alp Tomül, CH, 2018

A cow's communication is a lot about posture of the head...
 Very slight alterations mean a lot:

Head down with stretched neck, ears back or hanging down:
Scared, in pain.

Same, but with open, floppy ears:
Curious but shy

Same, but grazing: **Just grazing.**

Same, but with pointed ears, and muscle tension, head nodding:
Aggressive, threatening, ready to attack.

Head high, ears pointed, muscle tension, stiff shoulders, stiff, even proud facial expression, looks only towards you:
Aggressive, threatening, ready to attack

Same, and then coming towards you:
Attacking.

Head high, ears pointed, no muscle tension, relaxed face, looking at you but also around:
Interested but relaxed.

Same, and then coming towards you:
Wants to say hello.

The Indelible Stamp

The Opening Chapter of Melanie Challenger's Book *How to Be Animal*

Melanie Challenger begins her book with a phrase of Charles Darwin:

Man with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men but to the humblest living creature, with his god-like intellect which has penetrated into the movements and constitution of the solar system – with all these exalted powers – Man still bears the indelible stamp of his lowly origin.

Charles Darwin
(Challenger 2021, p. 1)

Challenger starts her exploration by giving a short intro on humanities' bio-technical achievements to then point out the state of crisis the "living world" (2021, p. 2) is at. A state of Extinction and destruction caused by humans who, as Challenger puts it "don't know the right way to behave towards life" (2021, p. 2).

She sees the reason for this in the fact that: "we can't decide yet, how other life forms matter or even if they do" (2021, p. 1).

Humanity, Challenger continues, seems to agree only on one assumption: that we ourselves are exceptional. This distinction is delivered in concepts like spirituality and soul, as much as rationality and consciousness. (p. 2). But making that distinction causes problems, Challenger says, because it implies that there was "something non-biological about us that is ultimately good and important." (p. 2 sec. 3).

She does agree, that humans are indeed special, by giving examples such as the ability to make abstract concepts, art, having a sense of identity from an early age on, detailed memory, and the capacity to think about and plan the future...

But for her, all of this only leads to the acknowledgment that "the human mind is an amazing natural phenomenon." to then conclude: "here we have it. The exhilarating oddness of being something so obviously related to everything around us and yet so convincingly different" (p. 3).

She compares humans to the ancient drawings of the Therianthrope, a creature that is "part animal, part god." (p. 4). with a half, that does bleed and age like any other living being, and another one, that is special by the capacity of its mind or "spirit" (p. 4).

Challenger clarifies this inherent discrepancy of the human by stating, that we were animals as we give birth, touch each other, but not, as we are making an oath. We were animals when we would lay on the table for surgery, but not when we discuss matters of justice (p. 4)...

This split, she elaborates might simply lead to the assumption, that humans were better than anything else. But it doesn't end there.

For her, and it makes sense to quote here:

"many of our most common beliefs spring from the underlying refusal to accept that we are organic beings. Our kind of awareness has left us uncomfortable with the facts of an animal life. Animals suffer and die according to random events. Being a creature related to everything from an oak tree to a jellyfish brings with it threats like pathogens, injury physical change, and – for us – moral uncertainty. (...) This is both, frightening and confusing. From this perspective, being animal is an embarrassment. Worse still, it is a danger" (p. 5).

Challenger views the development of technology as a reaction to this truth because mixing and fixing ourselves with machines could be a getaway from the decay that comes with being an animal.

But she does not view the animal part of the human as something bad, on the contrary, she goes on stating, that part of humanity's deepest pleasures and longings as much as fears are rooted in the physical: Childbirth, intimacy, food, relationship, sensory pleasures as well as illness, pain, death, loneliness. But because, in Challengers' opinion, humans are avoiding and denying that, we do live in the constant danger that the cover-up might fail "This is a difficult thing to admit (...) if we are raised on the belief in our distinction" (p. 6)...

While clarifying that this is true only for certain parts of (industrialized) cultures, Challenger sees technological progress as a successful attempt to further distance us from the animal part in us, even treating the "body as the malfunctioning part of us" (p. 7)... For example, she talks about the surprise and avoidance of illnesses as much as the need to control inherently natural processes such as aging, fertility, and reproduction.

Challenger's conclusion on this is, that "what we risk is a runaway process where our fear of being animal causes to hammer out a more frightening world – not frightening in the sense that the world is nastier or more violent, but in a paradoxical reliance on technologies that aggravate the existential fears beneath us". (p. 7).

Challenger ends the opening of her book by taking a stand for the animal part in the human.

She says, that the "animal origin is the story of our place in the world" (p. 9). and refers to a poem by Galway Kinnell, about "how living things must contain a kind of self-love for their own unique biological form" (p. 9). Challenger even sees that as a principle of survival. Galway seems to state that "sometimes it is necessary/ to reach a thing its loveliness" (p. 9).

So her book, "How to be Animal" Challenger concludes, can be seen as an attempt to both getting to know the animal-human better and, moreover, an "invitation to refresh in our minds the loveliness of being animal" (p. 9).



Collage from series: Du bist scho recht, du auch, und du bist a fertige Huregeiss, 2019

Sweetgrass and Skywoman

The Opening of Robin Wall Kimmerer's

Braiding Sweetgrass

A Summary

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a US-American Plant Ecologist and Professor at ESF upstate New York. From her position and background as a citizen of the Potawatomi Nation, she aims to bring indigenous knowledge and traditions into science and by that formulate new paradigms within the relationship of the human with their environment.

Kimmerer opens her second book "Braiding Sweetgrass" (all based on German Version, 2021) by describing sweetgrass, or, in Potawatomi Language, wiingaaashk the "sweet hair of mother earth" (p. 9), and the practice of braiding it as a form of social interaction and ritualized praise for the plant itself. She goes on to say, that because sweetgrass owns itself and can't be given away, she instead

wants to make a braid consisting of three strands: Indigenous knowledge, science, and her own story as a descendant of the Anishinaabe tribe (page 9-10).

What follows is the Creation Myth that all indigenous tribes of the Great Lakes of North America share:

The story of Skywoman.

In this myth, a woman falls through a hole in the heavenly world. While sinking towards the dark waters beneath, she is being observed by the many eyes of the animals. At some point, the geese decide to catch her with their wings. On the water, she is getting too heavy for them and is then carried by a big turtle. The animals agree that Skywoman needs a place to be and some of them remember that they saw soil at the very depths of the waters.

They then proceed to search for it, until a muskrat succeeds to bring some up, not without drowning in the attempt.

Into that tiny amount of soil on the back of the turtle, the Skywoman is planting all the different seeds she had caught while falling past the Tree of Life.

In doing so, Skywoman as a first gardener, together with the animals, creates the earth that then gives home and food to all living things (all on p. 11 and following).

Based on that story, all animals and plants are seen as direct relatives of the human.

Having positioned the human within the environment, by telling the story of Skywoman, Kimmerer goes on to describe that Skywoman needs a place to be and some of them remember that they saw soil at the very depths of the waters. They then proceed to search for it, until a muskrat succeeds to bring some up, not without drowning in the attempt. Into that tiny amount of soil on the back of the turtle, the Skywoman is planting all the different seeds she had caught while falling past the Tree of Life. In doing so, Skywoman as a first gardener, together with the animals, creates the earth that then gives home and food to all living things (all on p. 11 and following). Based on that story, all animals and plants are seen as direct relatives of the human. Having positioned the human within the environment, by telling the story of Skywoman, Kimmerer goes on to describe that Skywoman needs a place to be and some of them remember that they saw soil at the very depths of the waters.



between the human and nature (p. 15). She traces that back to the very different myth of “another woman with a garden and a tree” (p. 16), the Christian creation. While in Potawatomi culture, Skywoman has been welcomed by the animals and then, with their help, created an overflowing garden, and made a home for herself her offspring on earth, the Christian Eva was punished and expelled for tasting a fruit. Being condemned to sore and sweaty labor; painful birthing, and subjugation of all animals and plants, Eva lives in exile only in the hope of returning home to heaven after death. Obviously, Kimmerer observes, this myth within a cultural identity would create a rather hostile understanding of nature, that also includes a hierarchy, where the human is seen as the “crown of creation” (p.19). With the colonialists flooding into the Americas, these two very different stories, and by

that, identifications towards nature started to collide. Kimmerer makes clear, that, of course, there is no going back in time. But she does wonder if the indigenous story about a welcoming and giving young earth wouldn't be able to inspire an understanding in which, in return for these early gifts, humanity was now turning into a savior for the damaged old earth we created. By quoting Gary Nabhan, Kimmerer states, that restoration comes with “re-story-ation” (p.19), a new story-telling and listening into the land, and by that creation of new narratives. While in the Christian tradition, mankind is at the top of the hierarchy, within northern American indigenous understanding humans are “creations little brother” (p.19). Little, because, as Kimmerer explains, humans had the least experience and expertise for life on earth and were to learn from all other beings. This idea of the plants as tea-

chers is then giving the structure of the whole book when Kimmerer is taking observations of specific plants and interweaves them with indigenous knowledge and history, science, and personal stories.

To understand this better, two examples shall be given. In the section about the Aster and Goldenrod (p. 52-62) Kimmerer tells, how she, as a young woman came into college to sign up for forestry and botanics. When the tutor asked her about her choice, she had answered, that she wanted to understand why Aster and Goldenrod looked so intriguingly beautiful together; and why certain plants are good for weaving baskets while others aren't, just to be harshly corrected, that this had nothing to do with science. Within that reaction, Kimmerer says, there was, “...an echo of her grandfather's first day at school (who was put into anti-indigenous boarding school, as described in

other chapters), when he was ordered to leave behind everything of his heritage: Language, culture, family.” (p. 55). Kimmerer talks about a time in which she was very focused to succeed and adapt to natural science as it was taught at University: “Botanics as I was taught, was reductionist, mechanical and strictly objective. Plants were reduced to objects; they weren't seen as subjects.” (p. 55). She describes this as a difficult time, because “My natural desire was to see relationships, to search for the threads that kept the world together, to connect instead of subdividing.” (p. 56). Her surrender to natural science's requirements, lasted until she was invited to an indigenous elder gathering about plant wisdom. There she listened to a woman that made her feel like she knew nothing about plants at all: “...one by one, name by name she talked about the plants of her valley. Where each of them grew, when it blossomed, next to whom they would live, and all their relationships, who ate them, and who covered their nest in their fibers, what medicine they offered. In addition, she spoke about the stories connected to the plants, the myths of origin, and what we could learn from them. And she spoke about beauty” (p.58). Encountering this elder woman inspired Kimmerer, as she explains, in broadening her views and experiences again and include more, than what science could offer: Kimmerer gets back to the relationships between Aster and Goldenrod at the end of the chapter (p. 59-62): She found the reason and beauty within and outside of science: Partly by encountering the biology of the eye, and also by J.W.v. Goethe's writings about colors and contrast. She talks about a point of understanding, that these flowers are so stunning in combination because they form a complementary contrast (yellow and purple). By that, they stimulate the eye extraordinarily: for humans as for bees. Their looks, as Kimmerer explains, make them beautiful and their partnership is evolutionary successful at the same time because together they at-

tract pollinating insects. The second example of how Kimmerer is connecting indigenous ways of seeing with science is her chapter on the pecan (p. 20-33). She starts by telling the reader about her juvenile grandfather and how the pecan saved him and his community from starvation at the indigenous reservation they had been forced into in the late 19th century. While telling about the history of forceful re-situation far away from the great lakes and the so-called education, Kimmerer talks about the Pecan as a welcoming and sort of caretaking plant, that her people were nurtured by at that time. She then goes on to describe the ecological specialty of nut-bearing trees, to simultaneously produce an overflow of nuts, just to gather their powers in the years between. The overflow ensures tree reproduction because animals like squirrels (and humans...) can't keep up with eating and a lot of nuts can grow into trees. Kimmerer situates this within the ecosystem by explaining, how the overflow of nuts creates a sudden increase in the squirrel population, causing a lot of nutrition for foxes and birds of prey. By that, the threes do not only fertilize their own population but give a circular overflow within the region, that decreases just before the next nut year. The nut-bearing plant, in a way, is a key figure in population increase and control. Kimmerer imagines the trees noticing if it gets silent in the forest and that they would whisper to each other; “there are very few squirrels around, maybe this is the time for us to make a lot of nuts?” (p. 27). While indigenous people would ever assume trees were communicating in order to orchestrate that phenomenon, Kimmerer explains, how long it took for science to accept that fact too. Modern science knows about plant communication through aerial pheromone transition or mycorrhiza symbiosis as a root-network underground, which was, in a way, anticipated by indigenous wisdom ever since.

Collage from series. Du bist schon recht, du auch, und du bist a fertige Huregeiss, 2019 Also on the left.



frictions



me hand milking Alma (our only milking cow at Alp Tomül. First thing after waking up at 5.30h, was half sleepingly bringing her and Pinia (that was there just for being her peer) into the stable, feeding some hay, and milking her by hand. Hand milking is hardly done anywhere, but we had no electricity and needed only a bit of milk for breakfast, some white cheese, and Yoghurt and in milk, case, we had abandoned lambs or calves. Also, we had no access to fresh food, because of the altitude, and milk was adding some nutrients to simple meals of mostly durable carbons and canned fruit. Alma, in the beginning, did not like me trying, because I didn't know the steady, calm rhythmicity needed for this. She would move a lot, and at some point, precisely put her foot right into the bucket. My colleague, a tousled old Swiss shepherd, that had done this his entire life on that specific mountain, taught me to be quiet. He would then just stand at the door, some meters away and listen to the rhythm of the milk buzzing and the cow; and then, after days, give me a silent pat of approval on the shoulder. Alma was calm, sometimes make a deep hum, and instead of swatting her tail into my face, rest it in a nearly caring way on my head).

"The sort of holistic ecological philosophy that emphasizes that 'everything is connected to everything else isn't going to help us here.

It's more like everything is connected to something, which in turn is connected to something else. It may be that how they are all connected in the end, but the specifics and degree of proximity of connections matter - to whom, how are connected, and in what ways. Life and death take place within these relationships. Therefore, we need to understand how specific human communities, but also those of other living beings, are interwoven and how these entanglements are involved in both the fabrication of species extinction and the accompanying patterns of extended death."

van Dooren, 2014

For the longer time of human history (around 200.000 years), we were hunters and gatherers, with mostly a nomadic lifestyle (Harari, 2013).

As art and other findings prove, humans would experience themselves very much intertwined with nature (Harding, 2021).

Animals were worshipped, asked for forgiveness, and perceived as equals/relatives (Harding, 2021)

Around 10.000 years ago, the agricultural revolution seems to have started in the Levante area with a settlement called Catalhöyük. There were some singular settlements before that, but most of humanity was living mainly nomadic until then (Harari, 2013)

This period, when humans all over the planet started to stay in one place and mingle around with other animals and plants is called Neolithic Revolution (Harari 2013).

Suddenly, humanity started to take control and try to rule over other living beings (plants were domesticated and animals tamed) (Harari 2013)

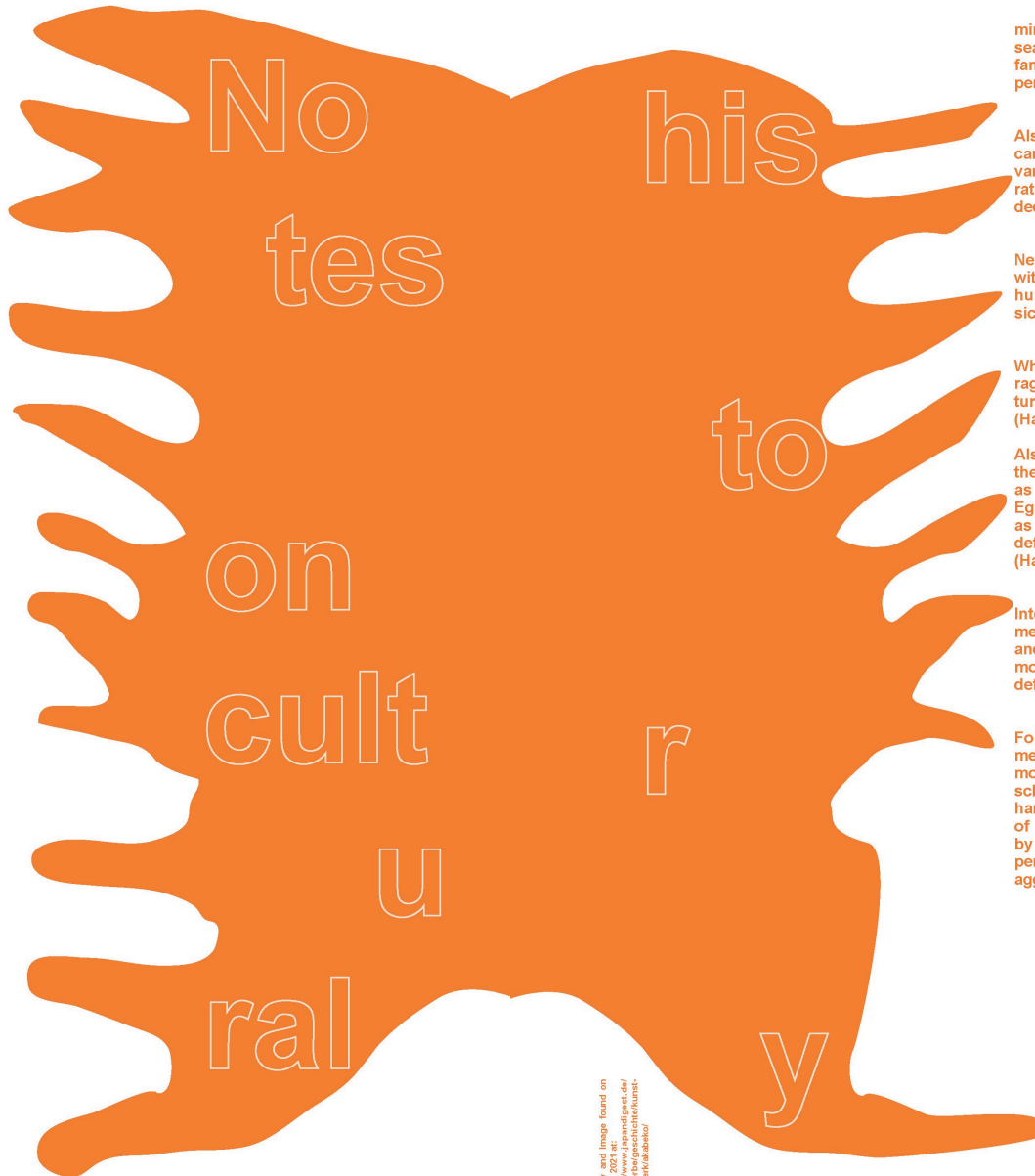
Animals would be fed and protected and in turn, ruled over and used. The first species domesticated were wolves, goats, sheep, and cattle (Harari 2013).

In a way, that was tempting: Crops could be accumulated, it was also the beginning of ownership and capital, steady homes were built and settlements established. Because of specification and centralized decision-making, also social groups and hierarchies started (Harding, 2021).

Interestingly also religious ideas started to change, from animism (everything has a soul) through pantheism to monotheism, where the human is seen as the "crown of creation" made as the son of the one God, determined to rule over all the world (Harding, 2021).

The beginning of agriculture is many times seen as a great victory, independence from nature, and the start of human progress, though it actually is much more ambivalent (Harari, 2013, Harding, 2021).

While nomadic cultures were very adaptable and could just change their place and menu, settling came with a strong dependency on weather and singular species. One problem could cause devastating results, like a fa-



mine after a bad harvest due to an unsteady season, plant vermins, disease (Irish potato famine is just one of endless examples of dependency) (Harding, 2013, Harari, 2021).

Also, nutrition was decreasing, scientists can prove a loss of general health due to less variety in food and an increase in carbohydrates. Lifespan and body height significantly decreased as well (Harari, 2013).

New diseases appeared due to being close with the domestic animals, accumulation of humans, poor sanitation, and harder physical work (Harari, 2013).

While hunters and gatherers worked an average of 4-6 hours a day, maintaining agriculture started to be far more demanding (Harari, 2013).

Also, the Art changes: While animals before the Neolithic Revolution were often shown as superior (like in Lascaux), already the Egyptians started to portray animals either as friendly servants or natural forces to be defeated (wall frieze Mesopotamia) (Harding, 2021).

Interestingly, the actual morphology of domesticated animals became more childlike and harmless. Faces look more juvenile, ears more round and floppy, the expressions more defined and friendly...(Harding, 2021).

Following Y.N. Harari (2013), humans also domesticated themselves: Morphology became more round, and juvenile, as in the puppy scheme. Aggressive behavior was potentially harmful to living in a small space with a lot of people so more wild humans decreased by natural selection (or simply spoken: Were perhaps killed by the community like more aggressive or feral animals among the flock).

1 Story and image found on 20th 11 2021 at: <https://www.japanesegest.de/2021/11/20/akabeko-der-hariri-hambere-akabeko/>



Akabeko
This Japanese legend refers to an earthquake, that destroyed the temple of Enryū in the city of Yanazu in the 17th century. The people were struggling to carry materials for the rebuilt across the waters of Tadem river and the way up to the temple, when Akabeko, a red cow appeared out of nowhere. This cow helped to rebuild and didn't leave until the work was done. Also, it is said, that she also protected the people from illness, and providing health, fortune and happiness.

Introduction

Enduring Uncertainty

Collage from series: *Du bist scho recht, du auch, und du bist a fertige Huregess*, 2019.



herding-as-practice

herding considered

The cows we herd are there, in the end, for human use. And that's so very questionable. The marmot won't miss me, and the land perhaps is perfectly fine without us walking through it. Every time I go back to the mountains and the cows and the sheep, there are moments, when feelings of guilt are haunting me.

I feel betrayal in the compassion I have for the animals I care for. Because, they are food, too. They wouldn't exist if it wasn't for the purpose of consumption. Sometimes, I literally walk my feet off for the sake of finding a lost calf, a sick bullock. While searching, I worry about my fellow animal. So very caring, I am on the run to help, looking after, healing, pamper.

But: I am also keeping them alive for someone else to eat them. I might eat them. Does taking care justify killing? Of course, everything is consuming each other, thriving, fertilizing, starting to rot, age, and die. Be fertile and then fertilize someone else. Kill and eat until being killed and eaten. We have more emotions about killing an animal than a plant, but in the end, being alive always means taking space, taking other life.

Also, these animals exist, and I am making a difference for them at least in the way I do the job? Maybe, it is less about avoiding any harm but more about the relationality of harming and caring?

Donna Haraway describes in *Staying with the Trouble* (2018), the research of Tanya Berokoff on racing pigeons and the pigeon people of California (2018, p. 32). She highlights, how the pigeon people commit to empathizing with the birds, and understand their way of knowing and social practices. Haraway emphasizes, how Berokoff describes, in a very loving language, that the gestures and motives speak for an interspecies partnership, that goes beyond one-sided exploitation and conditioning. She summarizes, that of course, this practice includes parts, that are highly questionable and says "I am not suggesting, that this discourse or this sport is innocent" (p. 32). But she concludes in the relationship between pigeons and pigeon people, there was a "great relational complexity and a powerful *String Figure* practice." (2018, p. 32).

This encourages, to not drop all engaging activity in the field of (domesticated) animals (and leave it entirely up to very real, very exploitive activities), but to empathetically enact relationships beyond mere exploitation for now and stay with, or even get into the trouble of that.

But let's also look into two other women talking about inter-species relations:

While Robin Wall Kimmerer and Melanie Challenger both aim to encourage a more intertwined relationship between the human to their environment, their approach is very different. Challenger takes the human back into their flesh, and by that, into their material connection of being an animal among animals (Challenger, 2021). Kimmerer however, focuses on the meaning humanity attaches to nature (Kimmerer, 2021). Following Challenger, the human must

agree, accept, and embrace their animal side. By doing so, they would finally also face mortality, illness, and death, which they are so desperately trying to avoid, but also be able to fully celebrate intimacy, pleasure, food, childbirth, and affection: All features, that come with us being animal, as she states. Challenger finds it necessary for the human to accept their own physicality to relate to our surrounding physicalities.

She seems to offer a sort of materialist turn, encouraging us to face and embrace our own decays and pleasures and by that also reboot to our surrounding nature. She says, because we feel so different from other living beings, we fail to take responsibility for them and is interested in how we experience ourselves, addresses a change of self-perception and suggests that this would solve many problems of the present time (Challenger 2021, p. 1-28).

Kimmerer however, is focused on how we relate to the other. Her proposal is a relational turn, rather than a material one (2021).

While both women are interested in kinship, Challenger goes through evolution and genealogy, our biology. Kimmerer sees that as anyway obvious, and goes on to talk about relationship, meaning, and mutual caretaking as a definition of being related. She doesn't approach the physicalities of the human but rather the mind, the production of meaning and relationships.

She is aiming for a human, that feels connected to the other living being as their sibling and direct relative. In a way, while Challenger is animalizing the human, Kimmerer could be seen as humanizing nature (anthropomorphism). I think, their approaches combined are very fruitful (All based on Challenger and Kimmerer, both 2021).

In a way, while Challenger is animalizing the human, Kimmerer could be seen as humanizing nature (antropomorphism).

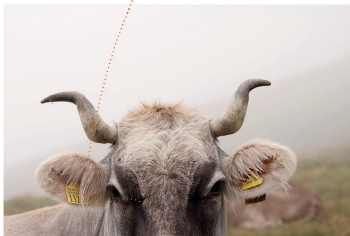
Still, I believe, that the friction, the being in-between is, what we need to embrace most.

I return to the work in the alps is a way of working out those questions over and over again.

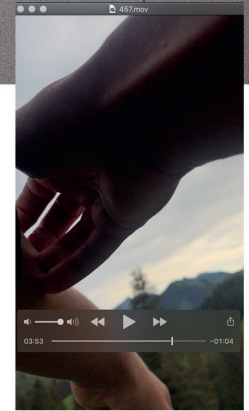
To actively relate, to situate me in the middle of the question. Because, within a middle of strings, the actual relations and situated interactions are knotting up into a tenable set of effectual (even if volatile) values and actions.

Haraway refers to Thom van Dooren by summarizing: "No one lives everywhere; everyone lives somewhere. Nothing is connected with everything; everything is connected with something" (Haraway, 2018, p. 48).

Considering the multitude of perspectives problematized in the opening text *Enduring Uncertainty* p. 11, I find Haraway's and van Dooren's very situated approach to relatedness and care, enabling. It offers and underlines the importance of a specific, individual field of relation and impact, without denying its friction.



Sandra Resi, Lärche, Alpe in fog on Alp Tomül, CH, 2018



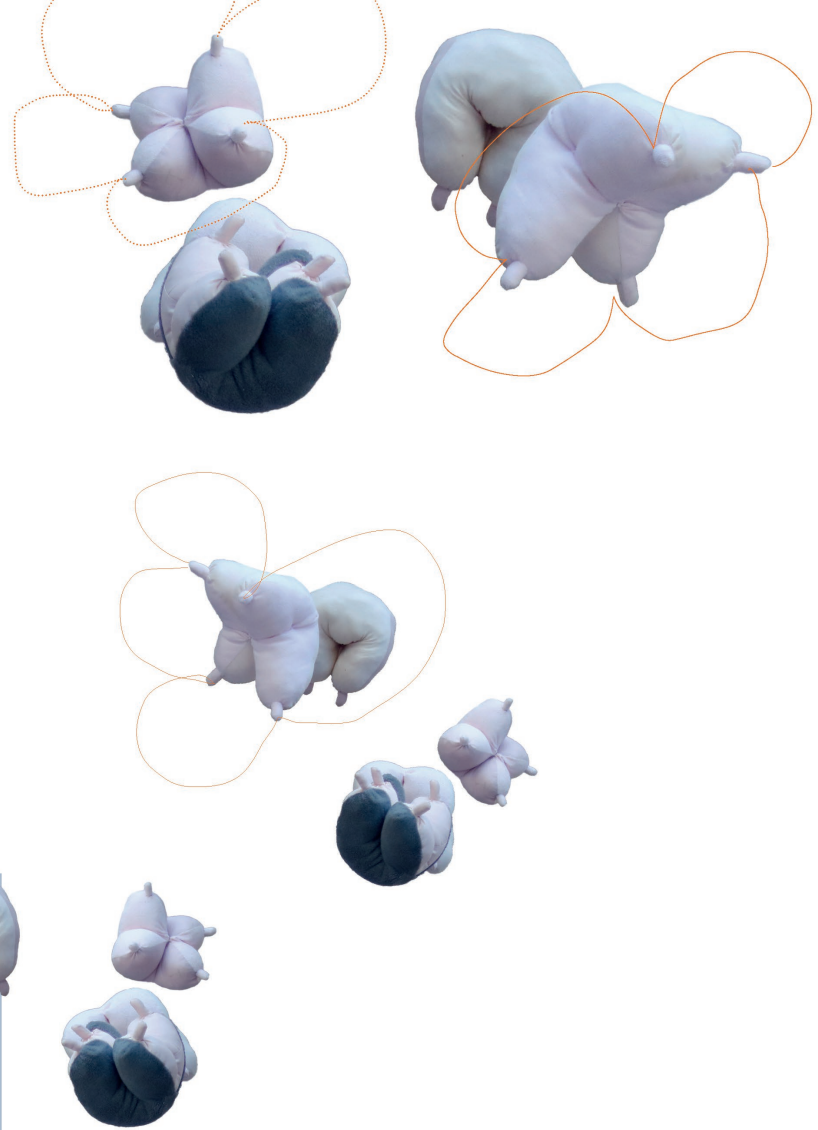
*Cow human dog sheep kid bird
Lamb fox woman?
Asking, if I can I rely on you car-
ing as much as I do, I built this
pace-powered excavator bucket
of thought.
This time, my thoughts on:
Being a herder, walking, us
human-imals and the intimacy
of shared responsibility and care.
Next time, your thoughts, I hope.
Sorry to talk into your ear, if not
silence, then everyone should be
talking into their own ears while
walking, but:
This is not a hike, it's a treadmill.
Enjoy the walk.*

A work made while, through,
and about walking.
walki talki is a hybrid
sculpture consisting of an
electronic treadmill, organic
shapes/handles, sports tape,
a video, and an audio piece.
The video is a rhythmical
close-up recording of my
daily hike as herder, made by
attaching a phone with duct
tape to my belly.
It is a fake experience.
A friendly mock-up of the
walking experience descri-
bed in the audio piece

The running machine can
be seen as a representation
of the increasingly disembod-
ied society we built since
the industrial revolution:
Making physical labor disap-
pear by inventing machines,
up to a point; at which we
invent machines for the
simple cause of mimicking
physical labor again.

The walker actually might
get very aware of their body,
walking rhythm, and feet.
But it's due to the annoying
limitations of the monoton-
ous, limited machine and
disturbing cables, that they
walked cautiously.

walki talki



Herde (the Flock) 19 objects from fabrics, softly filled with upcycled styrofoam granules, between 30cm and 2.5m 2019
 Installation made to interact with and by that make the abundance femininity and softness of the mother cow tangible to the recipient.
 Also, an ironic and slightly humorous play with sensualities and bodily pleasures.
 Questions on objectification and exploitation of that body parts.

the flock



threads and tissues

Enduring Uncertainty

drawing soaked in pigmented beeswax, 2021, from ongoing *pre-intentionals* series



herding as practice

herding considered

work (and family).

After raising 7 kids and 14 grandchildren, my grandmother was picking and canning pears and cutting the bushes of her garden until her late 80ies. My grandfather was a farmhand and a construction worker, behind his house, there was only a very small piece of grass to sit or play on, the rest was all rows of potatoes, beans, strawberries, and tomatoes.

Both my parents were the first-ever and only academics in their family and got there against quite some restraint and obstacles. My first impression of University was when my mother took me to her classes during school's summer holidays. As a single mum, she didn't always find someone to look after us, when she was studying or working. This upbringing gives me a sort of humility in being a student and, even more, in a field like the fine arts. I use a privilege that my family has worked for to provide me with, into a field that is so many times so elite, so not willing or able to translate, contribute and be accessible to people afar from academic urban intellectual bubbles.

I am, at most times, more feeling at home among farmers than in galleries and art talks and I sometimes feel like I sort of owe them to make work that keeps one foot in labor. When I show my portfolio to my uncle, I would

start with works, that are accessible through their materiality, and technique. When I can catch their interest in the craftsmanship and aesthetics of a piece, I can also start talking about the concepts behind them. Among Swiss farmers I worked for, the term "study" is ironically used for someone, who takes a long time thinking about something, while not being able to do the simplest thing. Wherever I went, I had to prove myself against the prejudice of first being a woman and second, being a student, until they would see I was a reliant and hard worker.

Among swiss farmers I worked for, the verb "study" is ironically used for someone, who takes a long time thinking about something, while not being able to do the simplest thing

And, on the other hand, ever since I am in academics, I feel I haven't read enough and don't know enough, and that I just somehow ended up there. In a way, I feel like one of my sculptures, a hybrid. Someone with the arts and academics, modern technology, urban life, but also based in farming and labor, physicalities...



TAPING



PROTO

Filmstills from prototaping series, 2021, ongoing.
Pages before: One out of 13 ceramic sculptures
from *Metamorphosis* series, 2021.

Enduring Uncertainty

Recently friends of mine had their first child. Like all kids, he doesn't have any names, definitions, or concepts yet of what he feels, sees, and encounters, and until a week after being born he didn't even have a name himself.

At a young age, we humans are quite fine with a world stuffed with things we don't name.

Things are simply there or not. Growing up, we learn to recognize and categorize. We learn, culturally specified, to first name and group, differentiate between animate and non-animate, quantities and qualities, and then to attach a whole world of adjectives. We start to name everything.

With years passing, in curious haste, kids perform the incredible shift from a world of the unknown into a world of the familiar. We sense less and think more. We have a concept of what we see within a split second.

We get very fast. We get so fast, that we can even talk about things without them being there. Language is first attached to objects and then starts to run free, we don't even need things anymore but talk about the concepts of the concepts of the concepts...

We learn to think, but seem to unlearn to sense, observe, and stay in the acceptance of the strange.

For a certain time, we still occasionally encounter things we can't categorize.

At some point, everything we see is at least very similar to something. And without noticing it, the last day passes on which we were puzzled by complete confusion about the character and appearance of something in front of us.

We learn to think, but seem to unlearn to sense, observe, and stay in the acceptance of the strange. For me, making art is to confront, enjoy, train the ability to expand the time of observation by delaying the moment of full understanding.

To endure uncertainty.

Uncertainty, not in the sense of fear, but in a sense of acceptance. I believe this ability is a cornerstone for empathy and tolerance. Because it helps to re-evaluate, if we think, we know and have seen it all. In my practice, I search to create

something, that surprises me as much as I find rest and satisfaction in its familiar qualities. It is reminding of something but is not.

I like to make things, that are on that borderland, in which there is still enough to pull the viewer in, but, at the same time, not enough, to easily categorize what is there.

For example, I make works with ceramics, which are combined structures of objects I find on the street and a free gesture from clay attached to it. Together they form a new entity, that functions for itself but also reminds of what it was before (see: prosthesis series). A hybrid. Or I tape my body up, and invent gym props, to investigate the relationship between motion and meaning. Or, as a more storytelling approach, I work with aspects of my life as a shepherd and try to raise perspectives, questions, ambivalences, and aesthetics of the rural into the urban like the relationship of the human to other animals and the environment.

But I won't deliver the full picture or fixed opinion, rather use fragments to open up questions and sensual fields. Because herding is permeated with wonder too.

In this way, the object and viewer are free and unfree at the same time. I create things, that can be sort of abstract, but never unspecific.

The very moment of observing shape, assembling, and distorting shape is fascinating to me.

I am less interested in linguistics than in what it is, which makes us look at something as if listening to music. Picking up the thread about the importance of specific relations from herding considered, artistic practice can be seen as just another way to relate. Because, as simple as it sounds, me making art with and about something I related to, invites the viewer to relate to that as well and the net becomes a little tighter for a while.

Whatever the subject, I try to see enduring uncertainty as a *modus operandi*. Verb-ifying Art into *Arting* signifies the performativity of active situated involvement/relation (as opposed to uncertainty as a contemplating state of passive observation and wonder).

from herding to arting

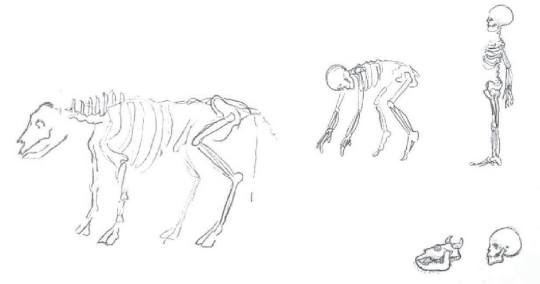
herding-as-practice

herding-considered

work-(and-family):



walki talki, detail, 2021



In the prototaping series, I make experiments and videos while restricting my body with tape aid in various ways. I explore shapes and movement of an altered body constellation, posture, and moveability: What happens if hands become feet, the head goes horizontal, knees can't straighten up, elbows are attached to knee.

I enjoy shifting the shape of my own body and to re-learn how to move with my "new" body.

Becoming a coral, becoming a cow, having paws, being paralyzed. What happens to the thinking when the head is not up and the hands are not free?

Dealing with the fluidity/stability of shapes and meaning. Meaning is created by shape and shape is recognized by meaning? Restrictions of my own body as a method to evaluate the potential of shapeshifting into other life forms. Restriction as potential.

Any shape can be a prototype for another shape. Limitation of habitual motions as a trigger for inventive motions.

Looking at the bone structure of the human being we see, that we are just stretches and compressions away from any other mammal, even most lizards, and birds.

A giraffe has right as many vertebrae in the neck as we do, just, that she stretched, stretched, stretched to get to the highest leaves.

Did the giraffe want to eat those leaves and the neck followed or does she like the leaves because her neck is so long?

What happens to the so exceptional human mind, if the head hangs down and the hands become just another pair of feet?



Man Goat

Thomas Thwaites and his Wish to be Animal
a review of the book "Goat Man", 2016

A London man, a seemingly depressed designer in his early thirties, without the so-called, achievements of a steady job, a steady life a steady self, is living with his dad and contemplating animals and humans.

How blissful a life animals live... If I could gallop and graze the grass and lay in the shade just like any other mammal, he thinks, and get out of thinking of future and past, just be present... (Thwaites, 2016)

While many of us might have had this wish at least at some point in childhood, and back then, mostly for the sake of cooler features than just galloping and grazing, Thomas Thwaites really goes for his wish with the full dedication and precision of a major mandate... (Thwaites, 2016, whole book).

Being funded a decent amount of money, to actually turn into an elephant, and back then, mostly for the sake of cooler features than just galloping and grazing, Thomas Thwaites really goes for his wish with the full dedication and precision of a major mandate... (Thwaites, 2016, whole book). Being funded a decent amount of money, to actually turn into an elephant, he changes his original plan after consulting a danish shaman, who is telling him that a goat would be more suitable. Fascinated by the idea of getting into the unworried state of mind of that ruminant bovid, he leaves hardly anything unconsidered on his journey to become one. In the beginning, Thwaites does also touch upon a rather spiritual connection between other animals and humans, when he investigates different indigenous cultures and their animal dances. But he then moves away from any broader understanding of existing connectedness between living beings, and into a material focus of transformation through technology. With nearly childlike persistence and curiosity, he consults manifold scientists and practitioners and gets them to play a part in a scheme, they all in the beginning are very skeptical about.

Thwaites observes the animal of his desires in a goat sanctuary, and makes a neuroscientist mess with his ability to speak (based on the conviction that language is key for thinking, and thinking is what he wants to get rid of) by using a specialized magnetic field on his brain, builds several exoskeletons, until being supported by professional prosthesis-builders, dissects and examines a complete goat (donated by the very sanctuary, that he convinced to hand over a deceased client) and does that together with a specialist on animal musculoskeletal systems, plans but fails to build a complicated lens system mimicking goatish sight, and builds himself an artificial digestive complex to be able to use grass for nutrition. He ends up in Switzerland on a mountain goat farm, where he wants to spend some time as goat among goats and then cross the Alps, as goat, as he promised to the fund financing his mission.

Having read the charmingly diverting and humorous book he published at Princeton Architectural Press, it is easy to imagine, how he succeeded with curious urgency and persistence to involve a whole variety of skeptical experts in his mission to answer the simple question: Can I be a goat? Page after page one can hear them going from

professional scientific rejection of this impossible, even ridiculous aim, to being charmed into doing their best in helping him to get as close as possible. But does he, though?

With all respect and appreciation for Thwaites, I wonder, if the man in the sophisticated construct, that is trying and struggling to keep up with a flock of goats in the steep mountains, is anything more than a man in a costume. If the essence, that Thwaites was looking for, was the present, unworried state of mind of a goat or any other animal but the human, he proved himself even more human by the way he pursued that prospect.

There is something ironic in doing so much thinking and borrowing from the greatest science and high tech, just to finally get into a state of the very opposite. Instead of just reducing something, Thwaites made a whole fuss about getting into simplicity. He eventually spend months of research and building to then be just a few hours as animal among the animal.

In tend to think, that even though we get quite some interesting facts about the quadruped, Thwaites's inquiry tells much more about being human than about being goat.

Already the articulation of the wish of becoming something else is so deeply human...

While humanimals have been trying to overcome, improve, and change what and who they are for ages, we see other animals pretending to be a different species only in rare cases: Some insects use camouflage as leaves or have big-eye patterns to scare predators away.

Birds may imitate other beings' voices and of course, evolution alters species through adaptation. But seeking satisfaction and enlightenment in overcoming one very self by using all im/possible resources? One can read between the lines the desperate wish to connect with something, that seems to be a bittersweet keepsake/memento to a more animal past (See Melanie Challenger...). Also, the approach is somewhat astonishingly childlike:

Look, I built something (to be someone...((else))). Isn't Thwaites's wish relatable?

The Swiss goat farmer, he visits in the Alps, that obviously is called *Sepp*, however, appears to be rather skeptical about this Englishman, trying to climb a mountain with a trolley case.

"You are from the city, ((he)) says, that's why you are crazy. Up here, you wouldn't need such a crazy idea" (p. 182).

To me, there is something so archetypal and relatable to that scene. An urban designer, has spent months of thinking and building to finally show up at the mountain of his dreams with a costume in a trolley case. I could be both, *Sepp* and *Thomas*, and even if it seems like I devaluate Thwaites's work, I do recognize myself in many parts of his journey.

In a way, I know this problem of wanting to solve a problem within and with the tools of the very



Filmstills from *prototyping series*, 2021, ongoing.

environment that actually produces the problem, instead of taking a step out of it.

Also, there is something hedonistic in the pure urge to be a goat for the expected fun of it, and perhaps also a misunderstanding or at least presumptuous suggestion about the goat's reality. Does the goat have any benefit from the human wanting to be it?

Even though I find Thwaites's journey and book very interesting and fully respect the work done, I can not subscribe to the motives behind it.

When I turn into a quadruped by taping my body for example, or also if I make work about udders and calves, I don't aim for exiting the human perspective, but for broadening it.

Instead of stepping into someone else's body, I slip deeper into my own. To remind me of its existence, in a way, I keep on making the experience, that this sense of being present, and feeling connected is not to be found by escaping the human being but by fully embodying it. This, in my definition, includes being a body, muscles, instincts, digestive system, slime heart-beat, and blood too, as much as thinking.

There is something othering in how Thwaites keeps on ignoring that most of what the goat is, is himself already too. Because Thwaites is already an animal, turning into another one is actually underlining human exceptionalism.

I think this is where my approach differs from Thwaites': I try to understand, what parts of myself are connected with the other animals by exploring my being human-imal. The relatedness is there already, all the time, humans somehow just seem to be able to slip out of their physicality by thinking only with their brain.

Still, what I love about Thwaites is the performativity of his project and the interdisciplinarity he creates. He really manages to set up a scene, involve people, and inspire, question, and interrelate so very different specialists into an overall research that is as well creative, universal, and layered.

It is inspiring to see how one man roaming around with the simple wish to become goat, actually opens up a whole playground and I am sure made a lot of people reconsider their understanding of what it means to be human or non-human. The way, Thwaites connected different sources of knowledge and experience inspires me very much. It seems so valuable to learn from and work with people from so many different fields and function as the invisible table a discussion is held upon.



prototaping



Filmstills from *prototaping* series, 2021, ongoing, and collages based on Filmstills.





My hands in Norway, 2018

stone

My entrance into sculpting was stone and I would describe it as my artistic anchor still.

As first-year students, in my BFA, we would spend 2.5 months together for a Symposium on the secluded farm of my Professor Andreas Kienlin, in Norway, learning how to work with stone and, with each other. I since have spent four springtimes there. Next to the artistic experience, there is a deeply social one, because the group is quite isolated, cooking, living, and working together. And as much as the core sculpting is a rather lonely practice, everything around it requires collaboration, because one can't even really lift or turn around a block by oneself.

So next to the teachings of the stonework itself, which are expanded on below, the experience of collaboration, conflict, collegiality, and care has been crucial in shaping my understanding of arting and work. But let's get to the stone.

Even though it is not the main material of my practice, working with it is like a baseline, the undertone of how I approach research in materiality, as well as in attitude.

Why? Stone is old and old is the human's relationship to it. Next to clay, wood, and bones, it has been the oldest material used for any creative expression and even if it hadn't been the central piece, it has at least been the canvas or tool of it. But working in stone takes time and the results are solid, silent, and somewhat unobtrusive. So in times of multi-media art and inflationary image production on all kinds of channels, it has gotten into a seemingly anachronistic, peripheral position within the visual language of contemporary art.

It doesn't seem to fit our times well, to physically work on a piece of Granite for months, to just get one object out of it, to sometimes have only one artistic "product" from a whole trimester or more. And then there it lies, heavy and quiet... But what does it do, working in stone?

The first time I put a chisel onto one, I felt quite some respect.

The sandstone had been lying amidst a Norwegian forest for at least some thousands of years. After having been part of a prehistorical mountain, it washed off into forming a seabed for another eternity, until cementing back into stone and being pushed back up by some tectonic movement. Just to break apart once more, roll down rivers for some more eternities, to finally falling dry and being covered by soil moss and trees...

And hello, here I come with my chisel breaking open the patinaed surface and changing the shape within just some days. Who am I to make up a better shape, with my juvenile urge to "express myself"?

As quaintly as it might sound, in front of a stone, one can get a sense of the tininess of a human life compared to the lifespan of the planet.

Even, if an idea or an intention is formulated, it has to be proven against strong material resistance. The imprint is made only through the sacrifice of quite some dustiness, sore muscles, cuts, and bruises, especially with the *ikg* hammer of hardened steel, not always precisely hitting the chisel's head...

But if endured, the technique can be mastered up to a point of nearly weightless rhythmicity.

The beginner's misunderstanding is, that the stone must be peeled and pushed and the hit must be hard. But with time, the chisel actually starts to lay loose in the hand, and the hammer is rather falling onto it, bouncing back by itself and the vibration of the stone. The hands are only giving the directions to a rhythmical play, that develops an enormous momentum on the material up to a point, when it feels like the stone was shivering off its shells like an ancient reptile asked to rejuvenate their skin and shapeshift. This state is extremely fascinating to experience, also, because one doesn't really see or focus on the point of impact, but rather in a peripheral view wanders across the surface of the becoming shape. Even the breath takes a part in sustaining the rhythm until the body, hands, and stone are vibrating at the same pace. This makes working in granite without electrical tools extremely meditative.

I have experienced trance-like minutes, where, seemingly effortlessly, massive chunks would shatter of the stone until one thought in a disconnected direction would make me fall out of rhythm and I hit my own hand with full momentum, instead of the chisel.

There have been very similar moments with hours of hiking off track in the mountains, where legs, breath, and ground are starting to pulse together in a way, that walking becomes weightless and the feet will just know where to step without the eye clearly focussing the rocks beneath. Also here the disjoint thoughts can cause injury, a strange thing, that I know myself and have been approved by other herders:

You can run in weightless rhythm down a steep slope (like a goat, actually, *dear Mr Thwaites*) but a strange thought can suddenly break the system and make you fall and strain the knee. But back to stone.

Even if working with an electric tool like an angle driver, this quality can be experienced.

Because also the machine needs to rather hover the stone than press it. If ambition makes the sculptor press the machine into the material, it may jam up and become a weapon against the user.

In the beginning, the work will always look like an injury. One has to succeed to first destroy the shape and then heal the wound into a mutual expression, where human intentionality and natural forces are in balance.

Of course, it is a privilege to take so much time for only one sculpture. But if taken seriously, to me, it is a fundamental training for artistic processes. Because one can learn to endure the insecurity and restraint against the blurry prospect of a materializing idea.

While on paper, it takes seconds to see results and doubt or confirm the idea, a materiality like stone makes the sculptor work hard and wonder for weeks, if the intention is valid. There is something about extending the moment of embodied making, making sense of, reconsideration, and active dialogue with the material, that is reflected in many other artworks of mine but is

rooted in this archetypal stone sculpting process. Next to the internal processes and physical experience, that stone sculpting provides, the material also stands on a borderland between nature and industry, ancient cultural expressions, and high tech.

While I picked the first stones I was working with in the forest, most of the later ones came from quarries.

Now I will go to live inside that quarry with 8 more sculptors over the summer. This industry is extremely destructive to the land.

Humongous machines are cutting and drilling and detonating their way into the rock, leaving a landscape with holes and cuts, while using many times only about 5% of the harvest. In the southern quarries of Norway, between 90 - 95% of the stone is unsuitable for industrial use and is being directly carried on to enormous landfills. From those rocks, we sculptors are allowed to choose for free, an occurrence based on the unlikely friendship between the owner of Norway's biggest stone industry, Thor Lundh, and a Japanese sculptor Makoto Fujiwara. Together they established the Symposium Norge in 1985. Inside one of the most productive quarries, there is a small ecosystem, where artists can work and are provided funding and food, material, and infrastructure to turn some of the invalid stones into sculptures. Invalid for the industry means: Heterogeneous hence interesting in color, structure or shape. One could say, the art in such a place is just a band-aid of whitewashing to soften the exploitation of the land.

But on the other hand, humans have built their homes, streets, and cities with stone ever since and it would be unrealistically and romanticizing to plea for a future in caves and tents.

Also, there is a nearly performative intertwining between the quarry workers and the artist, because, for example, the caterpillar drivers will come over if a sculptor needs to move/turn the block, they are present in each other's daily life sometimes, know each other for decades.

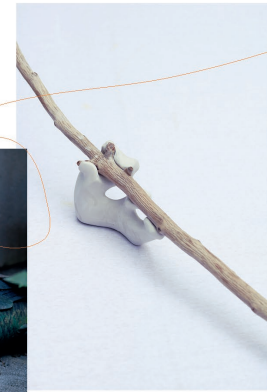
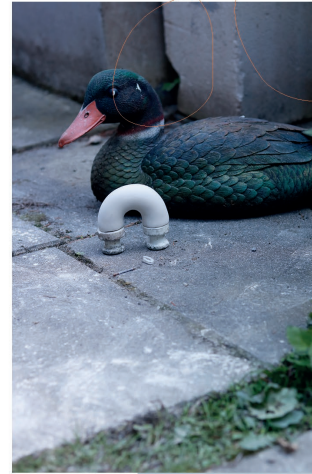
In a way, making some of the stones into pieces of art through intentionality, dedication, hard labor, and creation of meaning, the art situated within the industry can also be seen as a modern, nonreligious oblation. Like in the old days, when part of the prey was given back to the land as a ritual of honoring the given and the giver. It is situating the willful human impact within other willful human impact and in a way, making obvious the ambivalence within that ability of the human: To give shape. To decide to shape. Shape and destruct. And decide about what is what and why.

Similarly as in herding, to me, there is a massive ambivalence, a questioning around the destruction and exploitation.

But as with the animals, I find it interesting to confront this question by situating myself right in the middle of it. Making sense of as action, not as a concept.



prosthesis series



A prosthesis in linguistics means adding a letter or sound to a word without really changing the meaning of the initial word but altering the flow/character of it. In German a Prothese is the word for English prosthesis, an artificial body part, mostly added after loss or malfunction. I gave myself the exercise, to work with objects I find but adding a gesture, a body to them. My last series reminded of bones. But bones are a supporting structure, so I tried to transfer that. Possible starting objects would have to be "open" in some way, which means: Broken, useless, dead, out of use, out of function, some sort of lacking position possibly. There needs to be some kind of loose end. This intention comes from my general search of the specific unspecific. The found object would be interesting in shape but lost in meaning, maybe even lost in shape. By adding a gesture in clay, I would sort of lift them up together into something non-broken but still not expedient.

excerpt from Portfolio, 2022.



Maria Barnas turning corners

Maria Barnas investigates language and shape and investigates if words are at all capable to describe anything in a satisfying matter, and on the other hand, if they can create new shapes, too.

The relationship between image, shape, material, and the language and concepts attached (or: detached) from them, is eminent in her work.

In a conversation I was lucky to have with her during the spring lecture series at MIVC in 2020, I was impressed by her open delicacy and admittedly wondering persistence. I remember feeling encouraged by the conversation to further investigate, how some things can be told in words, others in shape... and that those areas don't always overlap, but that sometimes there is a gap in between and that this gap is intriguing.

Images saved on 14.th April 2021 at:
<https://galleryviewer.com/en/gallery/artist/229/maria-barnas>
<https://www.artsy.net/en/work/maria-barnas-turning-corners-number-3>
<https://www.artsy.net/en/work/maria-barnas-turning-corners-number-3>
Text based on conversation and presentation of Barnas at MIVC, 23th March 2021



Having woven the certainly holey tissue of herding and arting the following chunks did get caught in the fibers and can be harvested as orientation for future projects. They are also crucial occurrences in both herding and arting and by that signify the deeper connection between both fields. The aspects described can function as indicators for a momentary situation of meaningful relation and care, may it be in visual arts, herding, or other(s) future practices...

Whatever the content, form, or situation may be, the attempt to relate, understand relations, and enliven relations is embedded in all (my) wondering wander. In addition to Donna Haraway's idea of staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2018), as a mindset, I would emphasize the physical involvement, and add *getting into trouble* as a modus operandi.

Body Work

Appreciating and looking for physical involvement, and physical knowledges as tools of gaining understanding. The body and materialities are basic conditions in both fields: In herding, the human is challenged as eyes, mind, empathetic being, and as body too, they all need to be present and taken care of. This embodied state is a condition of sculpture as well, and I seek to involve myself, involve the viewer in art with more than a pair of eyes and a brain.

Also: Bridging a gap. Oscillating between labor and craftsmanship and the urban arts sphere, intertwining two needs within myself as much as I try to translate experiences and viewpoints from one place to another (this is transferable to other ways of gap bridging).

As being material that breathes, feels joy and undergoes development and decay I am no longer exclusive among material and other bodies concern me.

Ways of Seeing

As said in the introduction ...*the nomadic is carrying values and valuables along, being in constant motion of observation, interaction, and care. The herder must adapt. It comes with a multiperspectivity, that still embodies the individual viewpoint (p.11).* Peripheral perception, awareness of the surrounding in its interrelatedness,

without neglecting the individual, is the core task of the herder. The artist as a herder, is sensing and straying along (whatever flock the flock is) to interfere out of an embodied multiperspectivity through the individual viewpoint.

Herding as a way of seeing that can function as methodology in art. And/ At the same time, being trained in the eyesight as an artist is enabling for herding. The eye senses patterns, balances, and un-balances in the weather, animals, and self. Arting is a way of seeing that can function as method in herding (and other fields too).

Being Animal

Crucial for the work in the mountains is being aware of and accepting, supporting the animal part in the human: The sweat, the tired flesh, the hunger and the pain, the joy of community, care, and physical pleasure. In my artistic research too I am aiming to encourage the acceptance of being humanimal. Interfering with materialities and bodies of whatever sort. Investigating the parts, that makes us animal, and therefore inevitably alive and connected with our surrounding. In being a body I am equal to my surrounding bodies. We are subjected to the same laws of nature. As being material that breathes, feels joy, and undergoes development and decay I am no longer exclusive among material and other bodies concern me.

Sense

Senses and sensing, making sense of the seen, and staying in active sensation. Horizontal motion, horizontal hierarchy, the pasture is a macroorganism and the herder is its keeper and kept by it too. Also, not being too sure about something, but keeping the attitude of figuring out, is key to successful herding. The same attitude of expanding the moment of figuring out, and making sense of is crucial to arting.

Care

In art, I am useless but create meaning. In caretaking, I am useful, but I mean less than the taken care of. See art as taking care of something too. Making art is sharing with others what one cares for and cares about. Endurance is staying involved within volatile surroundings and values. Enduring physical resistance and actually creating something out of an idea into physical reality is key to artistic practices. Enduring the full dedication for something, that is yet to evolve.

merci.

threads and tissues

Enduring Uncertainty

herding as practice

herding-considered

work (and-family):

from herding to arting

herding and arting in sync.

Arting

5, 11, 12 - 14, 21, 24 - 25, 40 - 45, 47, 50- 68.

Animal

5, 17, 18, 21, 22, 27 - 39, 42 - 45, 54 - 59, 68.

Herding

5, 11, 17, 18 - 27, 34, 36, 39, 41, 57, 61, 68

Domestication

17, 18, 27, 28 - 33, 36 - 37, 39, 56 - 57

Alps

8 - 11, 17 - 23, 27, 39, 41

Alp (CH)

11, 17 - 23, 27, 34, 39, 47.

Suckler Cow

17, 18, 21, 27, 39

Milking Cow

17, 18, 21, 28, 34, 36 - 37, 39, 42 - 45.

Enduring Uncertainty

5, 11, 15, 21, 22, 39, 52, 60, 62 - 68.

humanimal

actually allover.

Other than the noun Art, which tends to have a passive, object-based character, arting as a verb is highlighting the performativity of art as a way of doing rather than a product to be done.

Being that breathes, living being. From Latin anima, breath, soul¹. Predominantly used for non-humans. Interestingly the most common distinction made between Humans and (other) animals is the possession of soul/spirit/self-awareness, a distinction that actually contradicts the etymology of the word...

Generally: Practice of watching and taking care of herds of domesticated animals, many times in non-fenced landscapes, which makes supervision necessary. Interestingly the practice of wandering with herds is also called transhumance. Perhaps from humus, earth, and trans, as in passing by. Transhumance meanwhile is also used for merging the human with high tech.

Process of turning a plant or animal into something more useful and less wild, by taking care of their needs and breeding preferred features. Actually: Breeding into mutual dependency. Harari says (2013), that actually humans domesticated themselves and the process is long from finished, our main features were still programmed to live feral.

Mountain range in central Europe, reaching up to 4800m with the Mount Blanc on French territory.

Unlike the Alps, the term Alp, (in Austria and Germany: Alm) describes a limited space on a mountain that is used for transhumance. Mostly, the land is a common of a group of farming families in a village close by and managed in a sometimes astonishingly democratic and sophisticated manner for centuries. Also, private Alps exist, run by one family only and inherited over generations. There are Alps for sheep, goats, horses, and cows. Many are separated in Cheese Alp where milking cows are kept over the summer and milk products are made under very traditional conditions and non-milking Alp. The latter is used for young cattle or suckler cows with their calves.

Other than cows bred for milking, suckler cows are bred for meat production and are not milked. They are, at least in Switzerland, many times quite unbothered and outside as a herd and form a complex social structure and very close relationship to their calf.

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Cow bred for milking. Inseminated every year and milked twice a day. The average lifespan is around 6 - 12 years. Do not form a relationship with their calf.

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1 found on 14.5th 8th April 22 at etymologonline.com:
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many thanks to:



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Own references:

Some of the explorative writings are based on my portfolio and my ongoing writing practice. All texts have been edited especially for this publication. Texts I started working on, before starting to work on the thesis are:

to herd
Better don't see red
walking
walki talki
prosthesis

All images that are not specifically referenced, are produced by me. The films of the filmstills of prototyping are made with Arvid Jansen. The foto on page 19 is taken by my mother, Sabina Berger. Two Fotos of *the flock* on pages 44-45 are by Jan Hasenauer. The Foto of my hands on page 60 is made by Eva Hermens. The artworks shown for this publication don't represent all of my artistic practice, but a selected variety that reflects on the relation of herding and arting.

Arting

5, 11, 12 - 14, 21, 24 - 25, 40 - 45, 47, 50- 68.

Animal

5, 17, 18, 21, 22, 27 - 39, 42 - 45, 54 - 59, 68.

Herding

5, 11, 17, 18 - 27, 34, 36, 39, 41, 57, 61, 68

Domestication

17, 18, 27, 28 - 33, 36 - 37, 39, 56 - 57

Alps

8 - 11, 17 - 23, 27, 39, 41

Alp (CH)

11, 17 - 23, 27, 34, 39, 47.

Suckler Cow

17, 18, 21, 27, 39

Milking Cow

17, 18, 21, 28, 34, 36 - 37, 39, 42 - 45.

Enduring Uncertainty

5, 11, 15, 21, 22, 39, 52, 60, 62 - 68.

humanimal

actually allover.

Other than the noun Art, which tends to have a passive, object-based character, arting as a verb is highlighting the performativity of art as a way of doing rather than a product to be done.

Being that breathes, living being. From Latin anima, breath, soul¹. Predominantly used for non-humans. Interestingly the most common distinction made between Humans and (other) animals is the possession of soul/spirit/self-awareness, a distinction that actually contradicts the etymology of the word...

Generally: Practice of watching and taking care of herds of domesticated animals, many times in non-fenced landscapes, which makes supervision necessary. Interestingly the practice of wandering with herds is also called transhumance. Perhaps from humus, earth, and trans, as in passing by. Transhumance meanwhile is also used for merging the human with high tech.

Process of turning a plant or animal into something more useful and less wild, by taking care of their needs and breeding preferred features. Actually: Breeding into mutual dependency. Harari says (2013), that actually humans domesticated themselves and the process is long from finished, our main features were still programmed to live feral.

Mountain range in central Europe, reaching up to 4800m with the Mount Blanc on French territory.

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