

SUELO

HEIZHAUS

Ufer Studios

BERLIN-WEDDING

2022

EN

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The Suelo Methodology Residency took place in Heizhaus Uferstudios, between April and June 2022. Invited by the PSR Collective, Ela Spalding (founder and creative director of Estudio Nuboso) took the opportunity to implement the Suelo Methodology on the Heizhaus space with 15+ guests, who contributed different aspects of the Suelo tools: the suelo profile or timeline, soil associations or uses and the spheres of engagement that soil allows.

The participants, who (for the most part) also contributed to this publication were:

Moss Beynon Juckles
Rosalind Masson
Florian Ruland
Silvia Noronha
Ignacio Jarquin
Georg Reinhardt of Club Real
Ian Warner
Lisa Stewart and Florence Freitag
Jared Gradinger
Ka Rustler
Ulrike Bernard
Martina Kolarek
Maicyra Leao
Rob Prideaux
Zabriskie Bookshop - Jean-Marie Dhur and Lorena Carràs
Regine Rapp of Art Laboratory

There were quite a few audio outputs from the residency which we have uploaded as a playlist onto the Estudio Nuboso website. Whenever you see the icon below, you can find a corresponding recording on this link: <https://estudionuboso.org/en/sueloheizhaus/> You can go there now and try the Suelo Meditation if you like!



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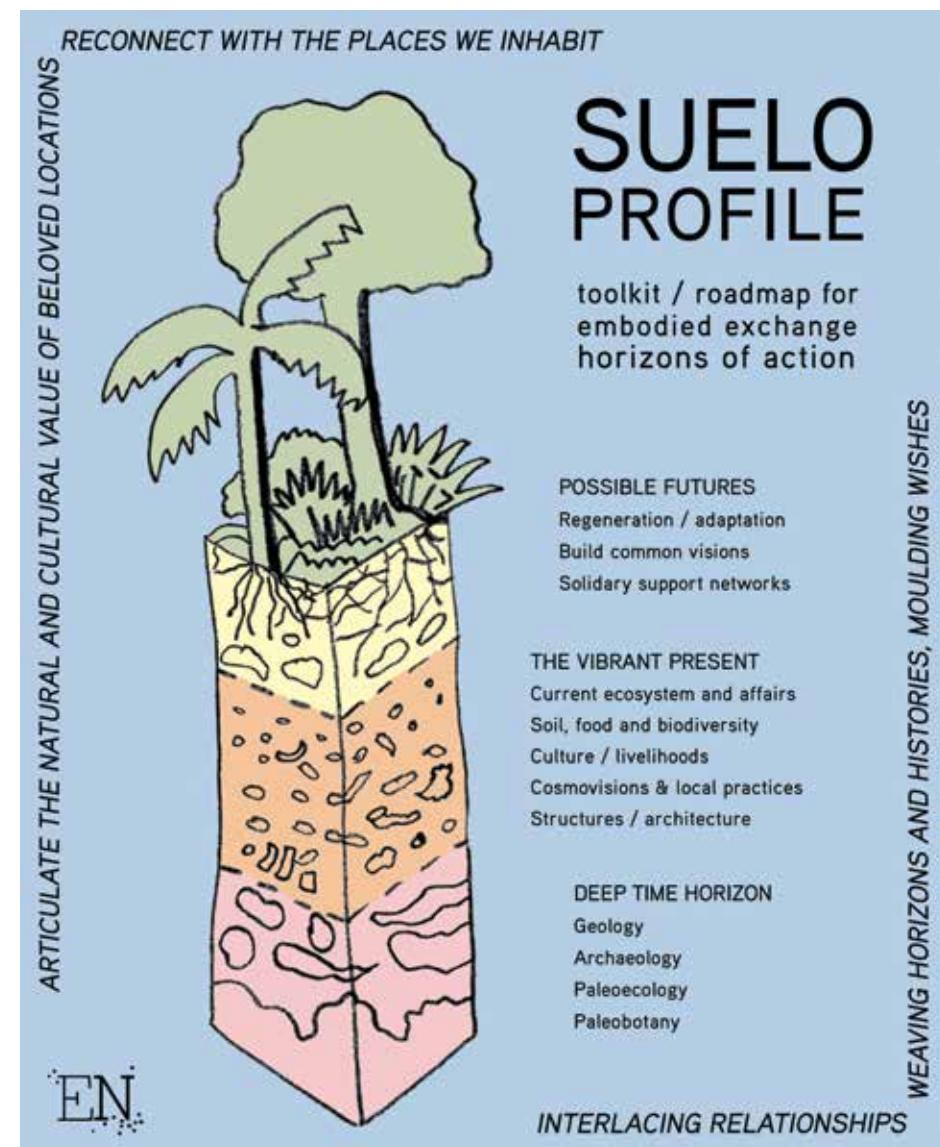
THE SUELO (soil) METHODOLOGY

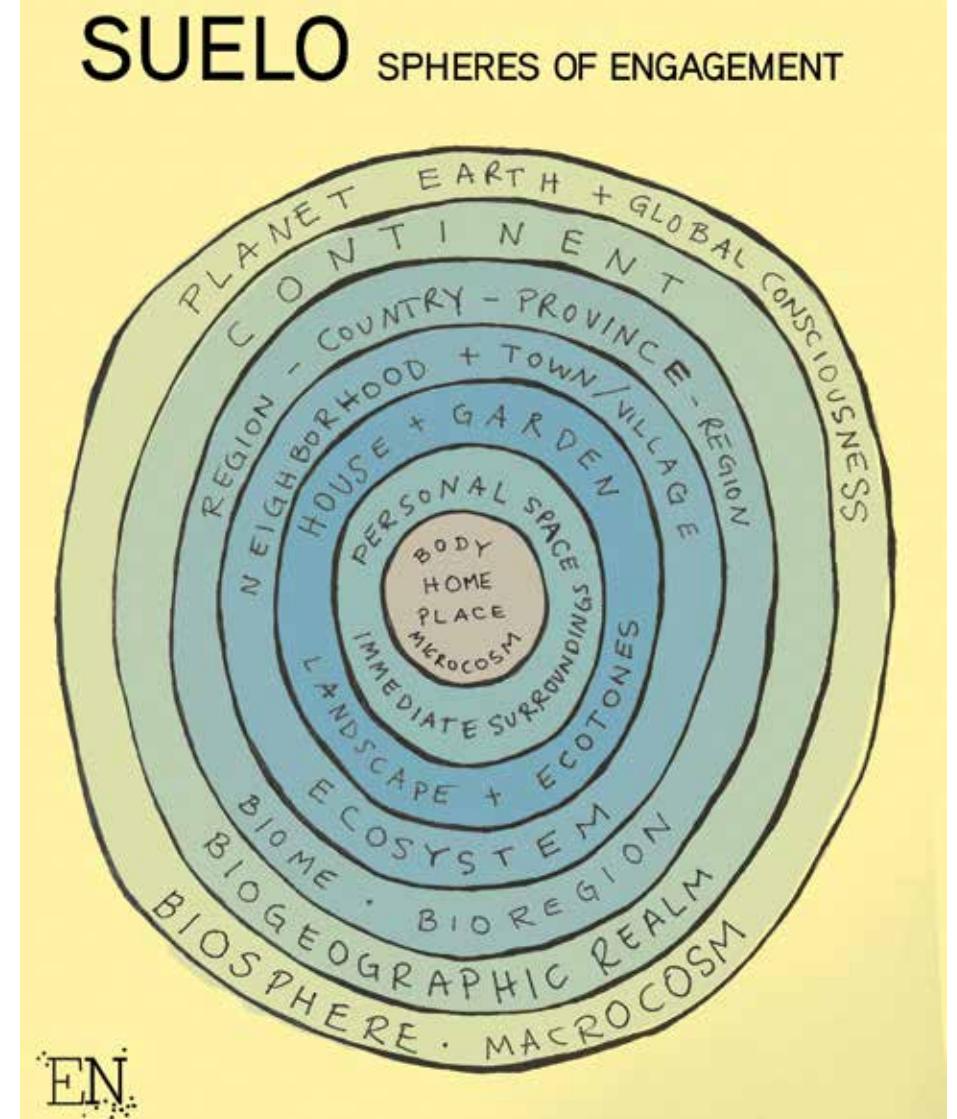
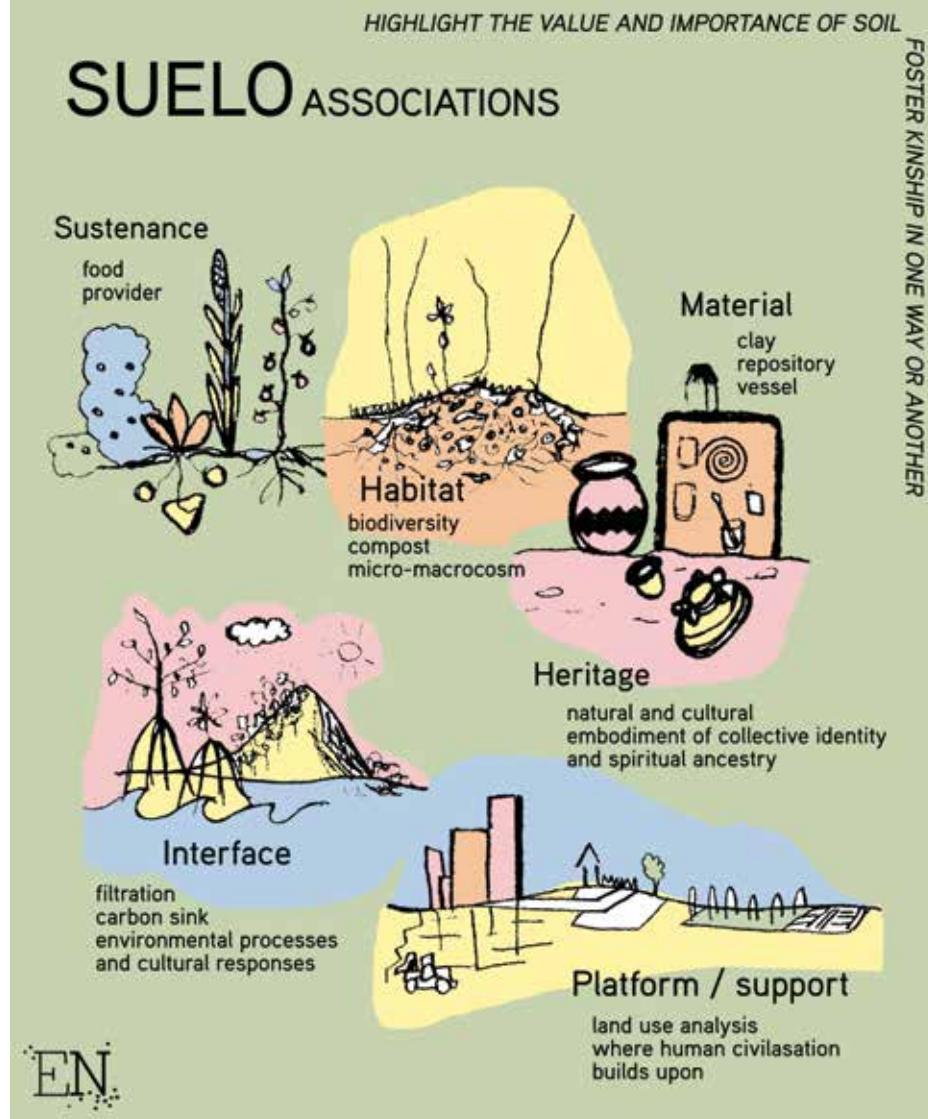
Suelo (soil) is a methodology designed to reconnect with the places we inhabit. Through the concept, metaphor and materiality of soil as sustenance, home, land, and territory we can re-articulate the natural and cultural value of a selected location and engage with practices of collective worlding.

The methodology uses the image of a **soil profile** to reveal the layers of history and present of a place, upon which the future is created. It addresses the various **associations**, uses and multifaceted effects that soil has on our lives, culture and livelihoods. It takes note of the widening **spheres of engagement** that are possible - from the micro to the macrocosm; from the body, home and garden to the planetary. These tools help the facilitator or implementor of the methodology to design a path of inquiry (for themselves, a group or community) that will take place over a chosen period of time.

The practice of Suelo takes the form of a horizontal Experiential Expertise Exchange, based on the premise that every single person is an expert in their own life, and that we all have different ways of learning. The activation of our different areas of interest can create connections that drive us and others to care for something – in this case soil, land, place, territory. The exchange is encouraged to be in the form of storytelling, embodied/hands-on experiences, kinship-building exercises, and informal encounters such as meals or walks. The knowledge shared can also be found in elements of the ecosystem, not only humans.

The results can be seen through workshops, installations, shared experiences, physical or audiovisual documentation. They can be also felt through the network of community support that begins to manifest itself, in the interweaving of knowledges and kinship. Ideally, the result is that the participants of Suelo and residents of the selected location feel an increase of love and understanding for the natural and cultural value of the place they inhabit. Where possible, that seeds be planted for harmonious socio-ecological relations, with ideas and avenues for a vibrant economic and cultural life in a fair and well distributed way.





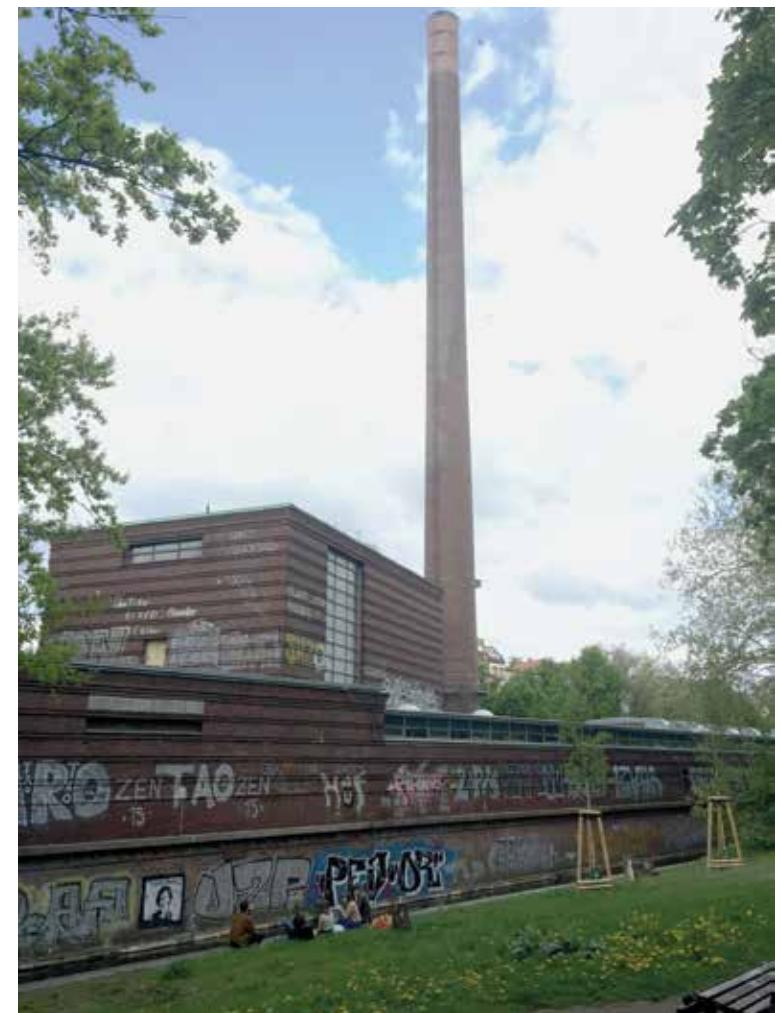
SUELO at Heizhaus - Uferstudios

Heizhaus, within the Uferstudios complex in Berlin-Wedding, as its name suggests, was a heating facility in connection with the public transport services that the structure was initially built for in the late 1800s: horse stalls for the Great Berlin Horse Railway, followed by a way-ahead-of-its-time electric tram depot, and after WWII it was a workshop for BVG buses. Travel back 250 years and surrounding it was a free-flowing Panke river, which is to this day the remnants of a great sub-glacial stream. Nearby was the Gesundbrunnen, which as the name also suggests, was a source of healing water, with a regal infrastructure around it to host many visitors. Now, and since ten+ years, the complex has been repurposed for contemporary and postmodern dance through various partners under Uferstudios GmbH. The PSR Collective, who manage the Heizhaus since 2020, seek to open doors to other perspectives, communities, disciplines and practices that integrate more with the life that surrounds the space. That's how we ended up here!

In thirty days, spread out over three months, the Suelo Heizhaus Residency set out to see what would happen when we applied the methodology in, for and from this urban place. In the spirit of Estudio Nuboso - bridging art, ecology and community - we wanted to connect with Heizhaus and its role within the context. As a vessel and fantastic performance space, what else is possible here? from here? and what can it offer regarding a regenerative future in the face of the environmental (and other) crisis we are facing?

As you will experience while reading this publication, we dove into body-based practices in relation to our surroundings; seeked out the green spaces and initiatives that are making space for existing biodiversity to thrive. We embedded ourselves in landscapes while reading, digging soil, harvesting and eating; shifted our perceptions away from our individual timelines and pathways, and into organic feedback loops between seemingly unrelated topics and practices. We co-created a score for a Hot Compost Choir, and we started mapping a nature-culture corridor that Heizhaus could be a part of. As the city develops and grows, the only way we can truly advocate for urban spaces and their healthy transformations is through strong community and solidarity.

Suelo is in fact a methodology in the making since its pilot version in 2014, which was also the pilot for Estudio Nuboso as a multi-disciplinary and nomadic platform for art and ecology in Panama. As the founder and creative director of this organization, with my homebase in Berlin, it is a pleasure to finally have the opportunity to put my work into practice here, in this way, and to feel how this methodology indeed works! It has given me a grounding and connection with this city that I didn't feel until now. I hope you will enjoy and find resonance with the contributions in this publication and make your own interlacing links between them.



Heizhaus-Uferstudios from the River Panke banks



alongside the Federal Intelligence Services, looking northwest



A Meltwalk-Image Reflection on the Panke

From an ice-age sub-glacial stream to the medieval water mills; from the dyeing and brewing industries to an open sewer and then reinvented as a popular bathing location ... gently runs the Panke through Berlin, through history. A gentle tributary to the river Spree, gentrified but also renaturised and rejuvenated.

opposite page top: alongside the Federal Intelligence Services, looking south

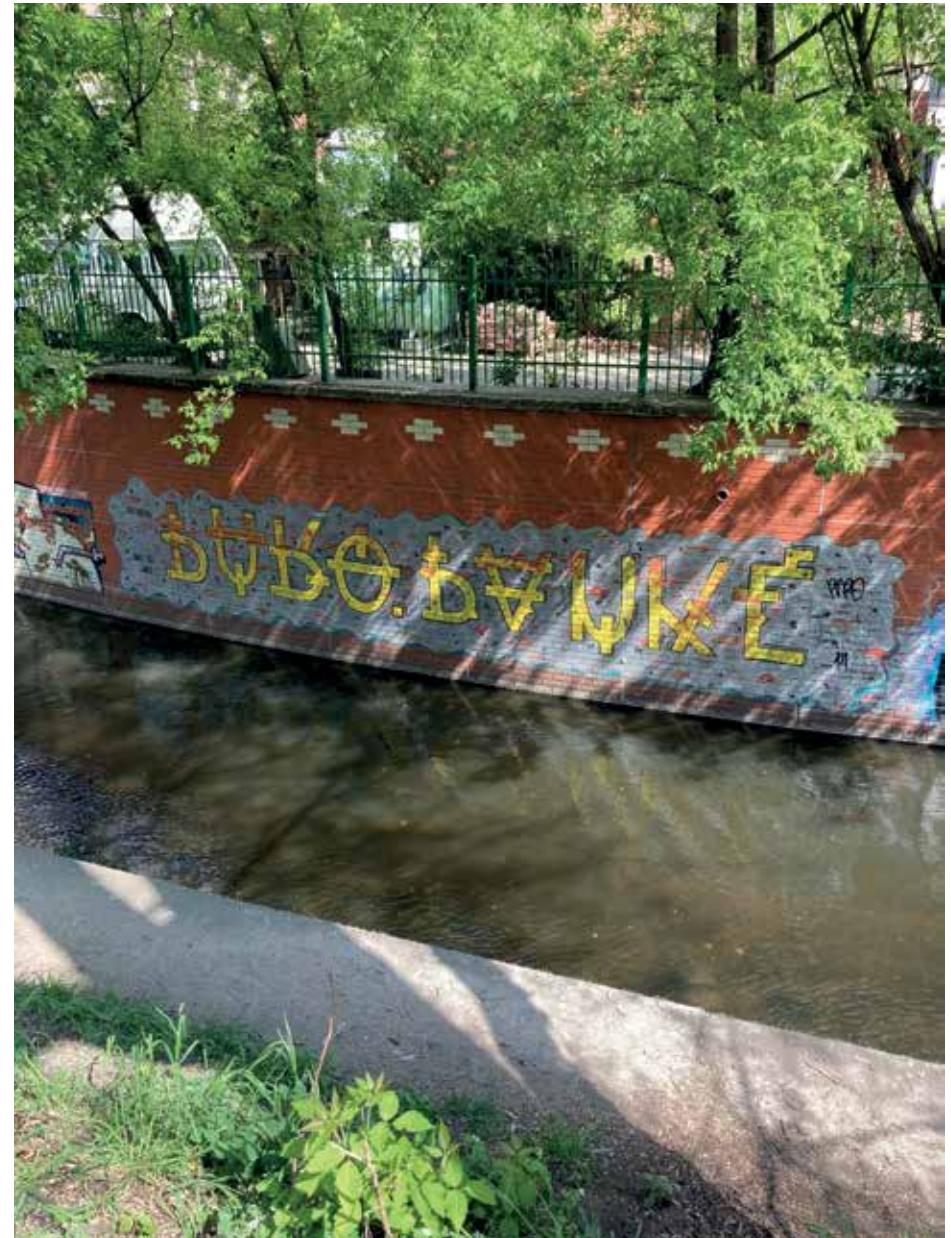
opposite page bottom: looking southwest along Ida-von-Arnim-Straße, with the Panke valley clearly visible as a dip in the street

all photos taken 2.5.22





close to Gerichtstraße, looking north



close to Pankestraße, looking northeast



The Myth of the Goddess Fonte Salus

Part fact, part fiction, an old myth for a new paradigm

It is said that once upon a time a terrible catastrophe occurred near the grounds between Gesundbrunnen library and Badstrasse. Before the aforementioned locations were established there was a miller who discovered a small fresh water spring. The miller's daughter had an apparition, she warned her father that the Goddess Fonte Salus cleaned the spring and made it flow and that they must share it for free to anyone in need.

One day the king came to the miller having heard about the spring and offered to buy the land from him. The miller agreed against the orders of his daughter who wept inconsolably and said that the Goddess will curse them.

The King came and the miller's daughter told the king of her sorrows and that every year the people must gather around to worship the

Goddess Fonte Salus. He took pity on the girl and listened, however he had a hearing impediment and decided she said The Water Spirit Falus.

The colonists came and made a city around the Water Spirit Falus. The miller's house was turned into an expensive health spa. The people gathered around the fountain every year and sang to the Water Spirit Falus instead of the Goddess Fonte Salus!

The Goddess in her rage awakened the curse and the miller's daughter, never knowing why, lost her mind and was buried alive by a falling star. The miller went mad. The health spa was turned into a Sanatorium and he remained trapped inside.

The tanniers came and polluted the river. The doctor Carl Meyer tried to save the spring, had it running like a tap in the sanitorium and let the commoners in for free water, but another tragedy availed and soon they were all buried alive by a fault in the infrastructure of plumbing in the roof. The colonists left and the industrialists came, parties and entertainment amusement and excursions soon replaced the uneasy story and the people forgot. It's just residential housing now. No one knows the location of the spring. It is said that anyone who lives in these walls today are likely to go mad if water doesn't flow, if the soil remains toxic below; because every evening at sunset the onset of the sound of the weeping miller's daughter and the later GP Meyer wailing in sadness keep the residents awake and pushes them closer to madness. And they will take anything, meds and smack, just to resume their sleep, while the cycle remains stuck in perpetual tragedy.

The woman one flat below me died and no one noticed for two months. Her head was eaten off by her cat when they found her. A storm of police raided the hall keeping off dealers as it was a local mafia hunt. The only liquid flowing there is alcohol. I nearly lost my mind and left after two months.

So when you visit the site of madness make sure you sing and move for the Goddess Fonte Salus! Let the spirits of the water free for they stand for basic human needs like free access to clean water, and that was buried alive.

Spring Revival Tour

Awakening the Goddess Fonte Salus - A Street Action exploring embodied myth and meritocracy on Badstrasse, Wedding - Berlin, 24.06.2022

Industrialisation left its imprint in the way of toxic soil in the Gesundbrunnen, Badstraße, Uferstudios locality. This action aimed to combine mythologising the area's history with urban ritual, to embody environmental connection and create a human nature corridor that deviated from normal behavioural pathways and also invited locals to Heizhaus.



Still shot from video by Daniel Dietz

Instructions:

* Employment Hire Station-Set up a recruitment spot on Badstraße. Advertise €50 for 1.5 hours physical labour and guided Art tour. Find people in 30 minutes. Start at 17:00

* Spring Revival, begin the tour to the lost spring by the public library trash, tell them the story, evoke some attention, invite them to be part of a movement ritual to awaken the buried water Goddess Fonte Salus, be the fountain fool and embody the Goddess.

* Reroute & Payment. Take the people back to the Heizhaus. Sign contracts and pay the fee. Introduce them to the installation of Suelo Heizhaus-Uferstudios by Ela Spalding & Friends - entangled with each other as sensing humans, holobionts and remember how our very existence is a constant shifting paradigm of polyspecies interplay.



Meeting the core of the earth

Meeting the core of the earth (2022- on going) is an artistic practice that takes place through a Play-Action with Soil collected from the underground in different places and environments. During the Play-Actions the artist observes different connections and relations between people and the collected Soil, through these observations she looks for paths to overcome classical ontologies and forms of domination, exploitation and control over the earth beyond rational meanings.

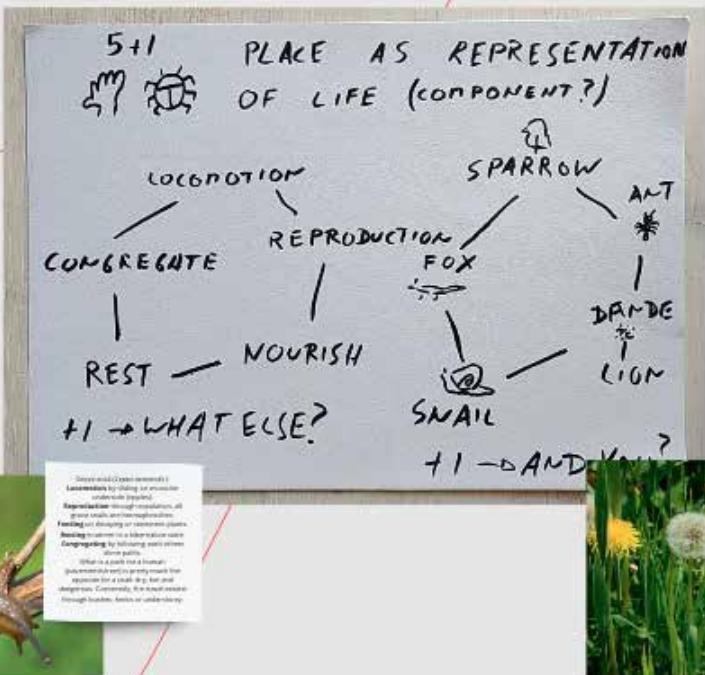
The elements that belong to the subterranean soil: earth, clay, sand, construction debris, stones, metals and others are seen as archives of time and arranged to be used by children and adults for free modeling. A deep observation and contact with the soil is proposed and the communication is characterized mainly by action, movements and the free contact - modeling of the materials. The actions are oriented towards a process and do not rely on spoken language. During this experiment, the similarities between people play a more important role than the differences; the methodology used favors the development of skills such as intuition, improvisation, and adaptation of the participants.

For the residency 'Suelo Methodology' local soil was collected in front of Uferstudios at a depth of 4 meters from a site of Berlin city repair works in summer 2022. Two Play-Actions took place as part of PLAY AT ACaU!. This program is dedicated to children from Ukraine war refugees and their parents, and is organized by volunteers of Soy Division Berlin and neue häute e.V. Currently, it is a regular event on Sundays at Anaconda am Ufer Café, Uferstudios Tanz Berlin.



Images on the previous, current and next page are courtesy of Silvia Noronha





Ecology of Place



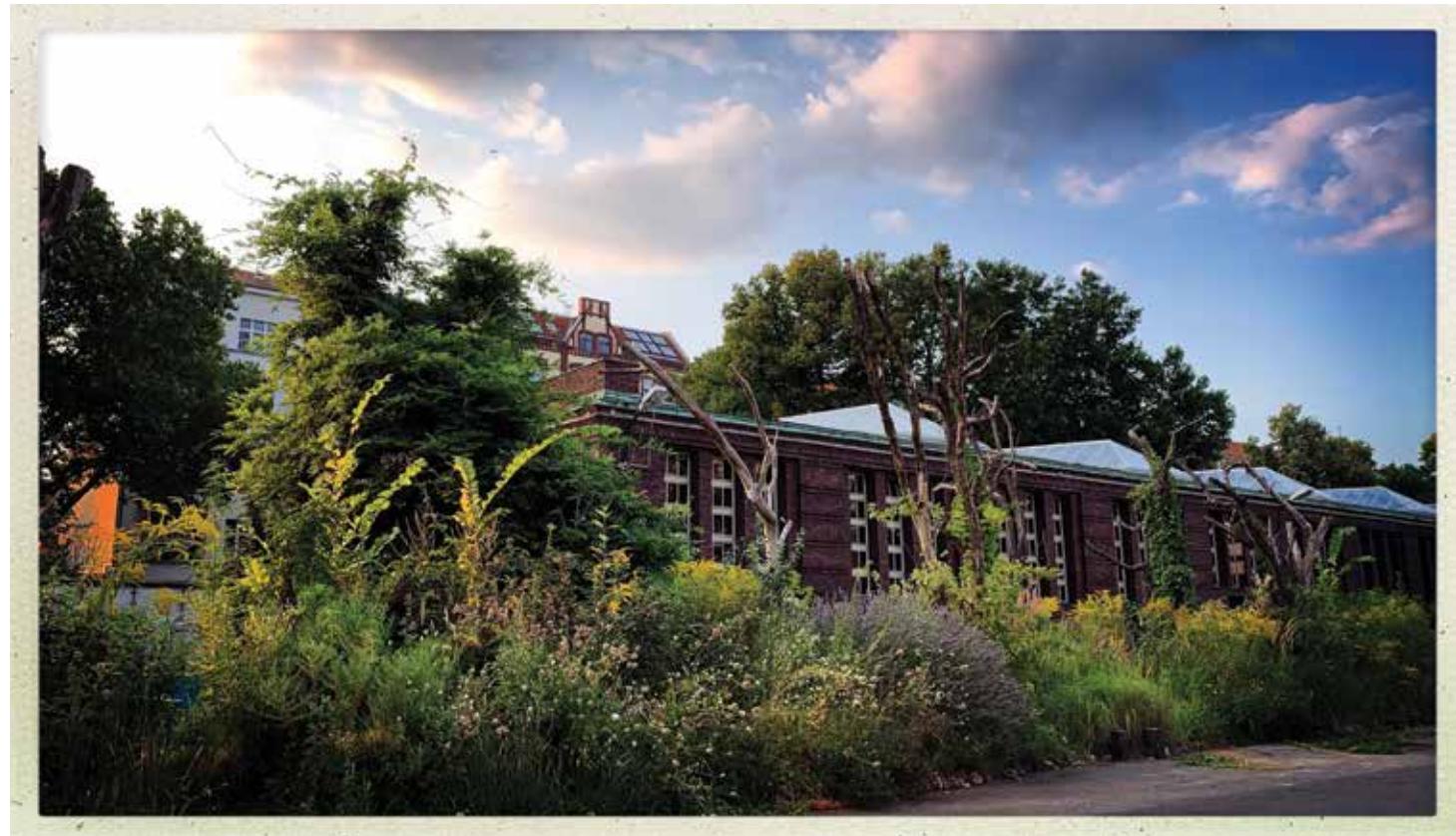
Ecosystems are networks of species that enable each others' existence. Cities offer novel ecosystems of coexistence for all kinds of plants, animals or fungi in habitats created or shaped by humans.

An ecology of place looks at what the spatial components of the habitats are and to which vital behaviour these places are linked. The same place can have different meanings for different species. The same lawn where dandelions grow can be a place of exploration and feeding for the ant. Humans live in dense colonies in cities and each have their own network of important places. Where to eat, where to sleep and where to meet. It is a rewarding way to reconnect with the place(s) you inhabit to look at other organisms and how they coexist with you in their own way. The wall covered with ivy that you cross on your way to the store is full of congregating sparrows or foxes have their nightly excursions through the park you cross on your way to the bus stop. Actually, our spatial representation of the city can shift for a moment once we take the position of another species. For a snail, our network of streets and pavement is the opposite of a network of paths. Especially on a hot or dry day, these concrete surfaces are like vast deserts replete with giants and enormous machines that can crush you. Moist shrubbery – uninviting and difficult for us to cross – are the paths of a snail.

Just sit back and think for a minute about your most precious places and with who you might share them.

Some Thoughts from The Impossible Forest

The Impossible Forest is a garden, teacher, partner, classroom, meditation, laboratory, public place, place for encounter and creation. The garden is first and foremost dedicated to the non-human beings that make up the garden and to nourishing co-creative acts between humans and nature. Initiated and maintained by Jared Gradinger in partnership with Nature in 2017, the garden is supported with care from Michelle Filzi, Florence Freitag and Lisa Stewart.



As translated by Lisa Stewart 28.7.2022

I am one, I am also many.
Through me flows an artery connecting to vaster bodies of me.
Wild spaces.
Tended spaces.
Forgotten spaces.
Waiting spaces.
Growing~Always.
Here~Forever.

Also beneath me are passageways made from stone and concrete.
Chambers of stagnating air and dirty waters.
A run-off of city grime and careless thought matters that chatter on
long after they were discarded. I see these flow all around me. I see
them pass like little flies clouding an otherwise vibrant core.
But it is fine.
I accept that these aspects exist within our shared ecosystem and
regardless, I am unswayed. I hold my resonance like I have held it for
an eternity.

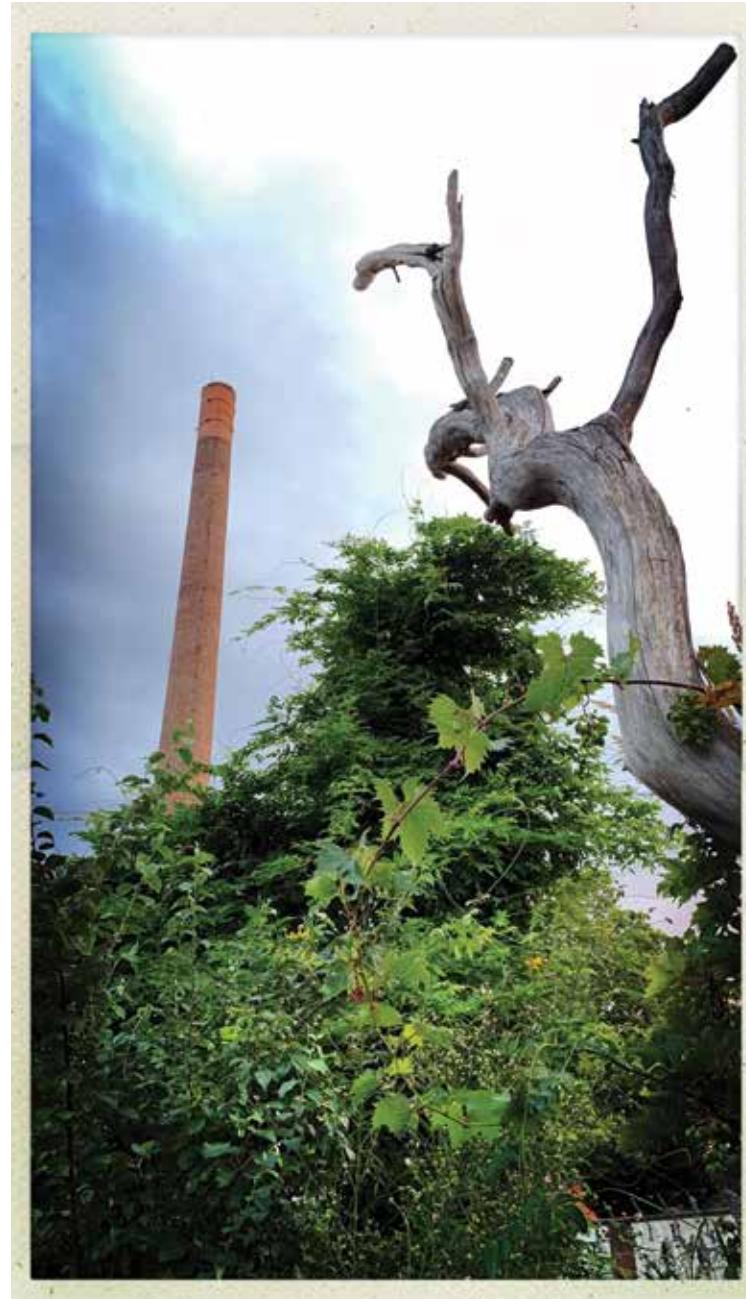
Reflections on the Suelo Residency 2022
through The Impossible Forest
by florence freitag

what dies never dies, but transforms
we are not ready to talk, i hear myself thinking
"transform" they said and i was resistant
at first. how ?
maybe the whole thing was less about moving
away, breaking out, cutting cords, letting go and
ever so on...
but about letting in
about dissolving some of your human form
into the circle

grün, nass, erdig riecht es, fast schon nussig.
eine vertrautheit im geruch und im gefühl meiner
füße auf dem boden, die sich aufdroselt wie ein
fächer.
ich bin wir geworden und wir waren eigentlich
nie weg.

~~
looking up into the sky of the forest
there are tree trunks reaching into the blue
dead, some might call them
home for growth and life, we could call them, too

curl and curl and curl and curl
like a fern.
an unfurling that reminds us both of intestines
and ear shells.
listening out and in
at the same time.
bee swarms and birds play
a pear-tree with a story of metamorphosis
a wise wisteria that shelters us before we even
know her name
a lavender, that in itself is the embodiment of
resistance



aber haben wir das multiversum verstanden?
wir sind zu gast, liegend neben den
brombeersträuchern, während um uns herum
ein wirbel an asphaltierter produktion entsteht
keine Zeit, ruft er uns zu und mein Kopf sinkt
zurück zum Boden.
wir bleiben noch eine weile hier.
~~

The "forest" - a place that can take many shapes - we met in, is a microcosm of the universe, a teacher, a place of un-learning and un-winding, visible to those who want to see it, invisible to others. Some days before meeting we had just emptied the compost from last year and scattered it throughout The Impossible Forest, creating new patches, making new ways together, asking the grass where they would like to expand.

We enter the world and so called gardens with plans and ideas, desires and requests and what we then pick up from the ground is bringing us so far down to the soil that we meet ourselves. We are all residents of that soil, we are all composed of one other.

The possible in the forest is what may come into being, may be done; it's an option, a choice, a compost that is hot and resonating, stretching matters and bodies long before and after.

Images courtesy of Jared Gradinger



How are we symbiotically connected to plants?

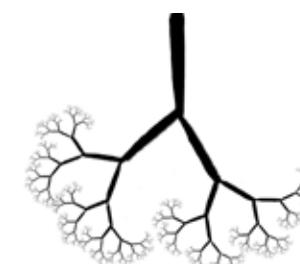
Perhaps one way is through interspecies respiration, it's like a form of circular breathing. The trees exhaling the oxygen we breath in and us exhaling the carbon dioxide they breath in. An awareness of breath which embodies our interdependency. I invite you to sit next to a tree of your choice in the garden you find yourself in. Note the definition of garden can be loosely defined. You may even be inside your apartment and looking out of the window, or with no trees available you might choose instead to meditate on a potted plant or blade of grass. But ask yourself first if you know it's name: Oak, Cherry, Maple, Chestnut, Beech, Elm, Pine, Willow, Birch or Rowan, just some examples. See what you are drawn to. Once you have identified and located a tree or plant, find a place next to it where you are comfortable either sitting or standing.

Give yourself a moment to take in it's full structure from any visible roots in the ground to the tips of the leaves. Now look at the picture which accompanies this text. Are there similarities between it and the structure of the tree which you see before you? The leaves are absorbing carbon dioxide and with energy from the sun, water and minerals drawn up from the earth, the plant cells inside the leaves are photosynthesising, releasing energy for growth and respiring oxygen. The surface area of the plant is designed with maximum capacity to capture light and carbon dioxide. This is similar to the surface area of your lungs which are designed with maximum capacity to allow oxygen to flow into your blood stream and carbon dioxide to flow out.

Now look at the same picture. When it's upside down, which organ does it remind you of? Place the palms of your hands to your chest and sense the movement of your chest as you gently breath in and out. Air is flowing into your body, into the tubular structure called the trachea, and branching off into the bronchioles, the bronchiole and the smaller nodules called alveoli which permit the transfer of oxygen into your bloodstream. This oxygen powers the creation of energy or ATP in your cells. Through this process of cellular respiration, you exhale carbon dioxide which flows back into the atmosphere. Can you visualise the inner chambers of your body: the lungs expanding and contracting and the oxygen continually passing across the cellular walls of the alveoli into the bloodstream?

As the capillaries reach out across the organs, like root systems through the soil, the oxygen from the bloodstream moves from an area of high concentration to an area of low concentration. The same is true for the carbon dioxide coming back into the bloodstream and making its way through the veins to the heart. This alchemical ebb and flow which transmutes across permeable boundaries is continuous and immanent. As we respire, so the sweat from our pores evaporates pervading the atmosphere around us. This ethereal yet tangible and measurable exchange is the breath of no breath. A constant state of being in mutual reciprocity. From body to airspace and to tree as entity; from entity to tree to airspace to body.

Like Bonnie (Bainbridge Cohen) says, the muscles aren't (just) flexing and extending. The cells of the muscles are condensing and expanding in a spiralling motion. A multi-dimensional experience. You exhale carbon dioxide which the stomata, the small pore-like structures on the underside of the leaves of the trees, capture. The trees respire oxygen which you inhale, without this exchange we would cease to exist. Interspecies spiralling, condensing and expansion. The mutual process of respiration of which we are symbiotically entangled does not begin with the inhalation and end with the exhalation but rather ripples in energetic, transformative waves which vibrate the watery cells in our respective animal and plant bodies.



Images by Chell Young

The Suelo Readings

For the Suelo Readings, we (Lorena Carràs and Jean-Marie Dhur, founders of Zabriskie Bookshop - a specialized bookstore focusing on nature, ecology, countercultures and visions) selected a series of books that offer insights into the connections and relationships between humans and the more-than-human-world. Ela's illustration "spheres of engagement" served as the starting point for the book selection. These spheres range from planet earth/macrocosm to body/microcosm. In between are five others, including region, neighborhood, and garden. During the reading, we sat in Jared Gradinger's Impossible Forest Garden, an enchanted green spot surrounded by tarmac, amid ants, spiders and other creatures, under a quince tree, and shared texts by BKDN BKDN PRESS on Deep Listening and Immersive Ecological Entanglement, by DEREK JARMAN on pharmacopoeia and the beauty and power of plants, and by MIRIAM TOLA on Pachamama.

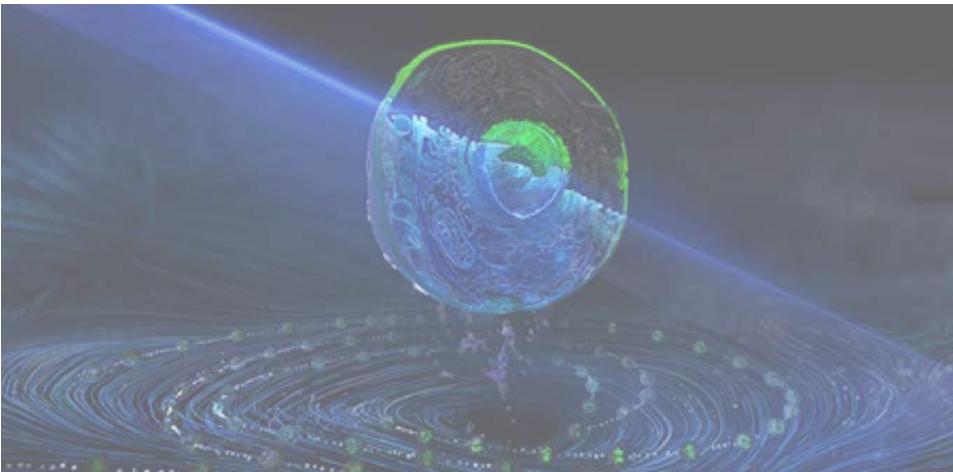
BKDN BKDN PRESS is a micro-publishing house run by Brett Bloom that publishes small and beautiful booklets on climate breakdown, deep listening, sound meditations, and sonic ecology.

DEREK JARMAN, filmmaker extraordinaire and visionary artist, lived the last years of his life, after being diagnosed HIV positive, in a cottage on the surreal desert coast of Dungeness. Around his cottage, he created the most enduring of his projects - his garden. Amidst flotsam, stones and pebbles, he planted flowers, medicinal and other plants that provided the company he needed during this difficult time. The garden was his therapy and medicine. His observations and thoughts are collected in several books, including the recently published "Pharmacopoeia." And his garden at Dungeness is also featured in the wonderful book "ON THE NECESSITY OF GARDENING - An ABC of Art, Botany and Cultivation" published by Valiz. The book reflects on the garden as a metaphor for society, on concepts such as botanomania and capitalocene, from Guerilla Gardening to Queer Ecology and Zen Garden.

MIRIAM TOLA is an assistant professor of Environmental Humanities at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. Her research explores the intersections between gender, colonialism, and materiality in political ideas about the environment. She is one of the contributors to the Ecotopian Lexicon, published by the University of Minnesota Press,



which offers ecologically productive terms - that do not yet exist in English - to inspire responses to fossil-fueled neoliberal capitalism. Miriam Tola wrote the essay on the Quechua term pachamama that we read in the Suelo readings.



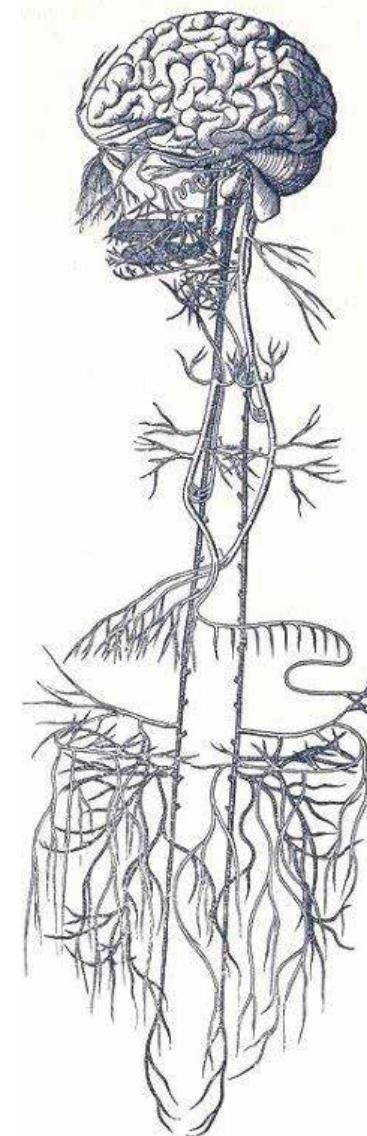
Cells, Earth & the Vagus Nerve

Life on this planet vibrates and pulsates around a basic unit of cells. Even the smallest unit of life, the cell, breathes. In this Suelo residency, I shared my research on the dynamics and cycles of cellular creativity, expression and diversity.

Our cells, the space within and around (us) provide the possibility of change, regeneration and transformation. Especially in current times of changes in societies and culture worldwide the ability to adapt and resonate (fast) is ever more important. Like in society, multicellular organizations in our bodies merge individual autonomy with social interaction. All cells communicate along their membranes taking on numerous forms, transitioning from crystalline solid to gluey and smooth between receptivity and expression, listening and speaking.

Soil and water are a matrix of intelligence. Fluids in our bodies consist mainly of water. Flowing through our membranes, water changes its chemical content, quality and thus information. Working with those different qualities and textures of cellular tissues and fluids through (self) touch and movement one can use and recalibrate the cellular matrix and its multifaceted connections in body and mindset. Through the body we encounter our beliefs, our histories, our biases, our assumptions, our understandings and misunderstandings. The potential of change and range of resonance we discover with lightness and curiosity in improvisational scores and guided movement rituals and explorations. A unique past, present and future supporting an emerging process of movement engaging the cellular to the global.

We also worked on specific exercises to tone the vagus nerve and its connection to our social engagement system. The vagus nerve regulates and balances our parasympathetic nervous system, our fluids, our immune system and is involved in all aspects of how, what and when we eat and digest. The vagus is vital for our survival, keeping us healthy, energetic and vibrant.



The vagal nerve starts in the brainstem and travels through the jugular foramen continuing down and branching out on each side of the neck, along the artery, behind the clavicle into the abdomen. "Vagus" is Latin for 'wandering through the body, networking the brain with the stomach, liver, and digestive tract, the heart, lungs, spleen and kidneys. Parts of those vagal fibres are involved in facial expressions, our voice and resonance to other people's voices, our eyes and even our ability to resonate with other people's expressions and being able to interact socially. 80% of those fibres are sensory fibres and send information from the body to the brain.

Operating beyond the conscious brain, the vagal system is an essential part of the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for calming organs after an intense experience of adrenaline response to conflict, stress or danger. Operating beyond the conscious brain, each one of us achieved and learned specific reflexes, patterns, behaviour and conflict strategies. How we function and respond to our environment is a survival system deeply embedded in our nervous system over millions of years and inherent in all of us. *How I regulate myself, meaning how fast I can relax again after a stressful situation and or finding different solutions relates to my vagal activity. This also responds to my vagal tone.*

The Ecology of the Singing Voice

In my work as a singing teacher, I am mindful of what I call "the third intelligence". It is the innate intelligence of the vocal tract, with its complex interaction of organic systems, fascial network, strong reflexes and extremely sensitive and responsive structures needed to produce the voice. My first job is to get my pupils acquainted with this organic intelligence, how it works and teach them to trust it. The aim is to get them to listen to their own voice, make friends with it and get them to build a successful, long lasting partnership. This is the beginning of an ecological process and it is great fun.

First and foremost, listen to the voice. Every sound lets you know what is going on inside and what is needed for it to grow and get into a better state of balance. The ears are the eyes of the voice. Listening to one's own voice is not as straightforward as it sounds. The singer has to learn, while singing, how to make the synthesis between the vibrations being heard inside and the voice resonating in the room.

Once the singer experiences the neurological connection between the ear and the voice box provided by the 9th cranial nerve, where the ear literally moves the voice without the singer's conscious intervention, things get much more interesting. All vanity disappears. A real sense of awe, joy and respect emerges towards that voice living inside

themselves which effectively has its own, independent ways; with a real interest to get to know "her" closer. The terrain can now be explored through a learning process that necessitates time, patience and love.

Only when the pupil stops being fixated on the end product, can the parasympathetic nervous system be called upon, and enter the next phase of learning: eliciting reflexive responses. These reflexes, related to swallowing and breathing, are embedded into the fascial network that constitutes the finest and foremost sensorial organ in our bodies and is in charge of the movement of all internal structures of the vocal tract, including cartilages, muscles, tendons and mucosa. It is thanks to these automatic reflexes that we can stimulate the voice and listen to its marvels.

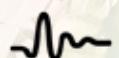
Trying to exert external control over this fine tuned natural organism is like attempting brain surgery with a hammer and chisel. Instead, listen to it attently and follow its messages. Literally learn from the voice itself how to enhance its environment and how to fine tune the stimulus - that's all, the body does the rest. The singer produces lucious sounds, fully expressive with a generous homogeneous range, light and shadow in the tone, with ease and great versatility. Very much like any ecological environment that has been rebalanced, my job is done when it is self sustainable.



This is a proposal for a musical, performative, visual, durational piece built upon the unravelling and deep listening between participating individual's skills and life stories and the respective personalised 'stations' that interact with each other.

"Life is matter that chooses" (Lynn Margulis)

We are Holobionts, we survive and evolve because we are the host to, and comprise of a community of interdependent organisms, with many interacting genomes. Each human being is in itself an ecosystem, the flora in your armpit is a different community of flora than on your neck. Can we visually, sonically and somatically grasp how we are entangled with each other as sensing humans, holobionts and remember how our very existence is a constant shifting paradigm of polyspecies interplay, we are CONSORTIA.



Hot Compost Choir

A collaboration between artist and soil scientist Martina Kolarek aka DIE BODEN SCHAFFT and artist~facilitator Ela Spalding.

In winter 2021 Ela and Martina met for the first time at the Floating University, a site for experiential and collective learning in Berlin Kreuzberg. Spalding was researching for her Suelo Methodology residency at Heizhaus-Uferstudios and DIE BODEN SCHAFFT was planning her first Open Soil Day on Soils & Senses in June 2022 at the rainwater retention basin of the Tempelhof airport in Berlin. When they found out, that both are not only making soils but also making music, the idea of a compost choir cooperation was born.

Singing is a wonderful way to connect with each other and the world we are living in. At the Suelo Methodology residency in May 2022 Spalding offered the idea of a kinship exercise, so that each participant had the opportunity to connect to the hot compost process as a compostable or other necessary element such as air, water or clay. DIE BODEN SCHAFFT provided the expertise to develop the hot compost choir score, which was co-created with various of the residency participants.

It turns out that this kinship exercise is a perfect method to (re-)connect with living soils and the process of compost making. When practicing the score, the hot compost choir goes through the phases of chopping, mixing, layering, heating up, cooling down and resting. It's easy for the singers to follow the steps for a hot compost with their voices and empathies. DIE BODEN SCHAFFT painted the score on six meters of unbleached linen. Ela made an accordeon book version.

At the Open Soil Day in June the Hot Compost Choir was the last of nine encounters – from soil sensing sessions and radical empathy with soil organisms, to a hypnotic tour into the magic world of soils. DIE BODEN SCHAFFT invited visitors to participate spontaneously in the choir's open rehearsal which Ela was leading. Those who joined had a wonderful and unique collective sound experience while improvising together through the working steps of the hot compost process. At the end one of the participants mentioned: "I'll never forget this process again."

<https://www.book2look.com/embed/978-3-8186-0078-5>

<https://floating-berlin.org/programmes/open-soil-day/>

Images by Katharina Geist



A NATURE-CULTURE CORRIDOR OF SOLIDARITY

We started mapping green, cultural and kindred places with a social, cultural and/or environmental consciousness. Starting with the surroundings of Heizhaus-Uferstudios, we nod at the potential to expand to other parts of Berlin, Europe and the world. Some places we visited, others we still plan to connect with. We invite people to interact with the map, make it their own and expand it. It's a work in progress.



community centers

- Das Baumhaus
- Fabrik Osloer Straße e. V.
- Neighborhood House Prinzen...

gardens/green spaces

- Prinzengarten - Gemeinschaf...
- Wilde17 Gesundbrunnen
- Bellermannsgarten
- Himmelbeet
- floodable area Moss showed ...
- hochbeet garden from the na...
- Gartenarbeitsschule und Frei...
- Schul-Umwelt-Zentrum inter...
- Inklusiver krauter garten Doh...
- Rote Beete Gemeinschaftsga...
- Organisms Democracy
- Hoops Garden
- ElisaBeet

art spaces

- Colony Wedding e.V.
- Bärenzwingen im Köllnischen...
- Werkhalle Wiesenburg Berlin ...
- Lobe Block
- Callie's
- Floating University
- Art Laboratory Berlin
- silent green Kulturquartier
- SAVY Contemporary: The L...
- panke.gallery
- MüllMuseum Soldiner Kiez

historical locations

- healing Gesund brunnen
- Mitte Museum Berlin-Gesun...

Image: Daniel Kula



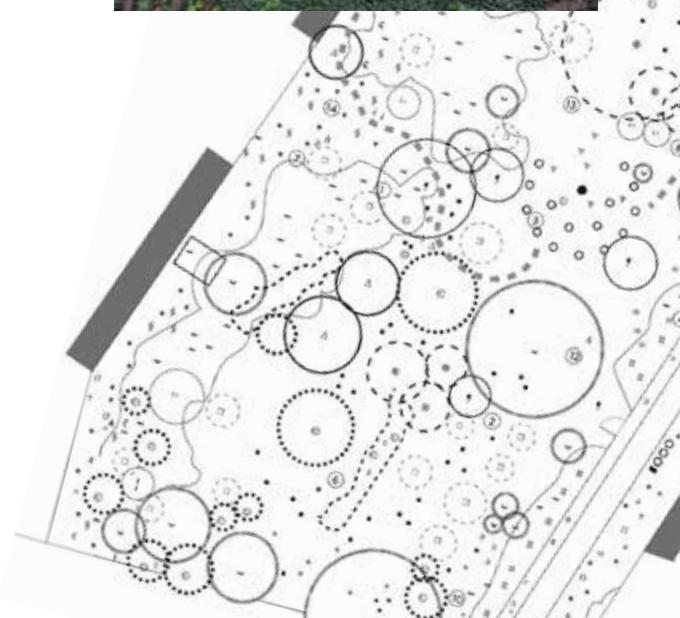
Beyond Nature_Organisms Democracy

Who do our cities belong to? Who gets to decide what happens? Since 2019 Organisms Democracy in Berlin's Osloer Str. between No 107 and No 108 provides radically different answers to these questions. All living beings sharing this space – from Snails and Ash Maple Trees right up to Root Nodule Bacteria – have the same political rights.

In the Parliament of Organisms human representatives fight for the concerns of the species they represent and democratically pass government resolutions which are implemented on Garden Executive Day. In the context of the Constitutional Court the current government period is being critically scrutinized. The visitors of the court hearing become the judges deciding on two lawsuits filed by citizen species.



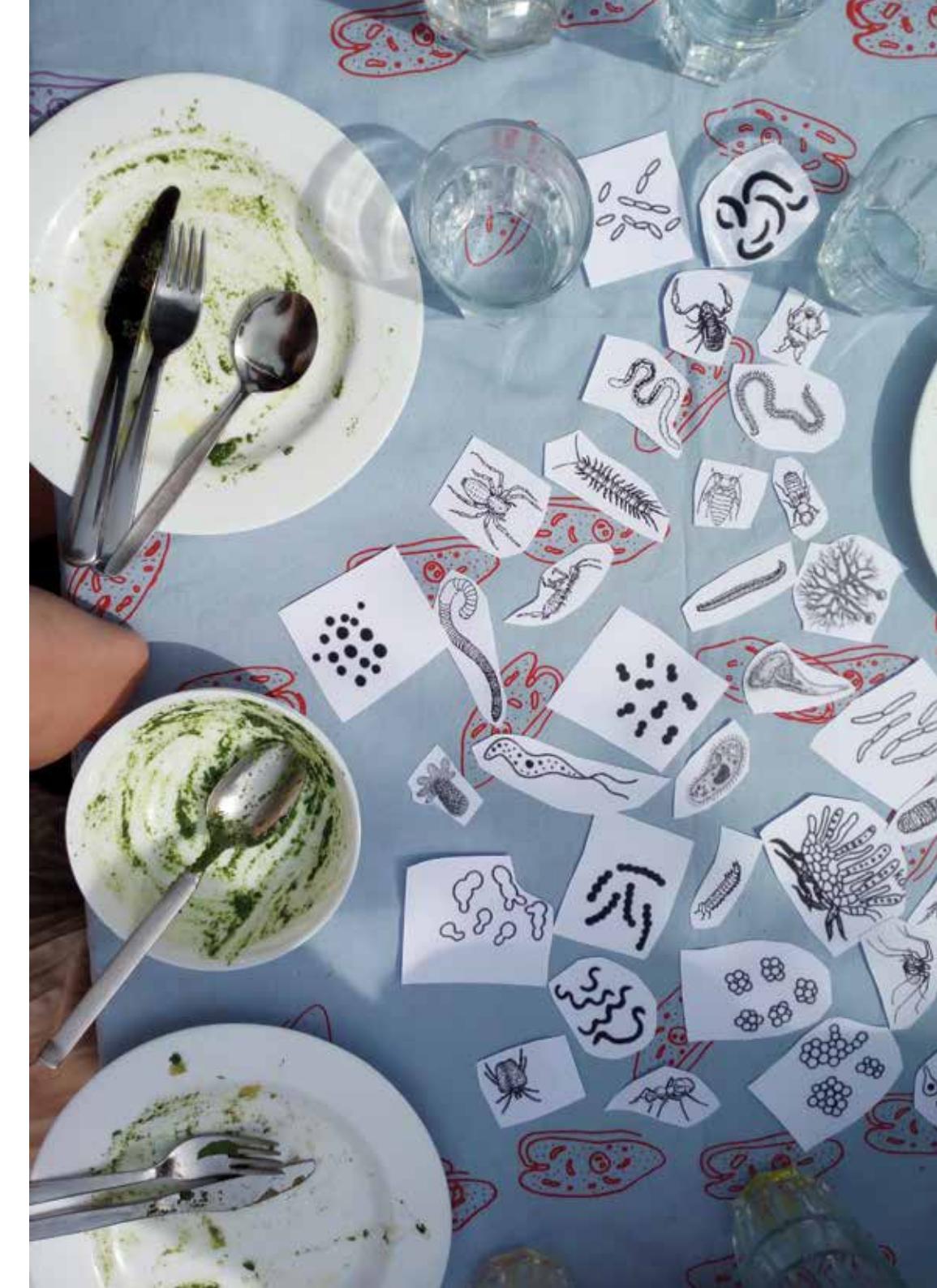
Picture of their public space by Ela Spalding
Map of the organisms on Osloerstr. First
Session of the Constitutional Court,
at Ballhaus Ost, by Manuel Miethe 2019



THE PERMACULTURE GARDEN AT LOBE BLOCK



ART LABORATORY EXHIBITION AND PROJECT SPACE



Resonances and the Gartenarbeitsschule

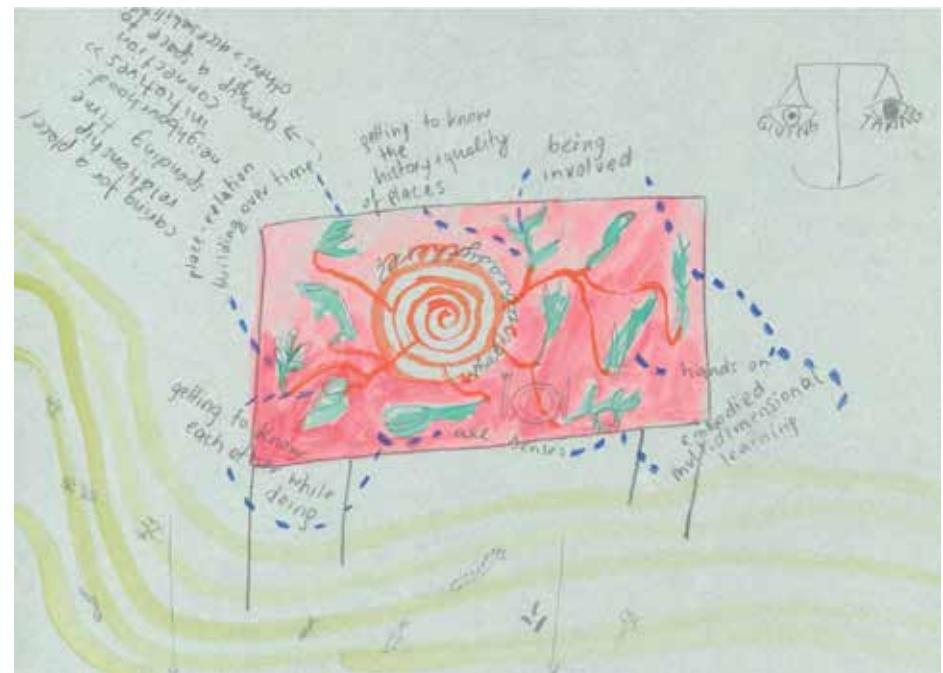
For me, the Suelo Methodology centers on this question: what is already there, how can I sharpen my perception of it in order to then connect with it? This can be encountering a place, an initiative or living beings.

In relation to this, on one day of the residency I invited Suelo participants to look closely at what is there right now. With nettles we created a soup, a salad with goutweed, and a pesto with garlic mustard. Together we did this in a 100 years old Gartenarbeitsschule, a huge green class room, an oasis right behind the highway in Tempelhof – Schöneberg. Since some years I host environmental workshops accompanied by artistic methods there. In this conglomerate of school gardens and biotopes, I invite different groups from young to old. This place allows me to reach out to neighborhood initiatives, sticking my hands into the soil, harvesting and cooking together, caring for place over time. It feels coherent to meet here, with our hands on. In some way, I experience that my involvement in this garden school, being host and learner, created a deeper sense of being part of the city I'm living in for a while now. What exactly creates this quality? Involvement, continuity, contact? Suelo, with its focus on ecology, is creating a testing field for this question and the answer might have many vivid forms.

I enjoyed getting in touch with the practice of some of the participants of the Suelo residency by visiting a few of them in their spaces of action or accompanying them on exploratory tours. Engaging in an exchange without forcing a direct outcome, trusting that connections will emerge - that feels like a living way of learning to me and reconnects me to the transformative image of the garden.

(previous page) Cooking session with Suelo participants at the Gartenarbeitsschule-Tempelhof Schöneberg, Tablecloth with the print of Euglena by Ulrike Bernard, covered with soil animals.

Right: Rhinoceros beetle found at Gartenarbeitsschule in Tempelhof - Schöneberg. Ten centimeters long, the larvae of the rhinoceros beetle can grow, and take up to five years to develop in the compost.



Some parts of the Suelo Methodology are directly connected to my approach at the Gartenarbeitsschule (educational garden).



From garden to table, Cooking workshop with kids, using seasonal herbs and vegetables.
All images on this and the previous two pages by Ulrike Bernard

It's a Forest / No Man's Land excerpt

While going through the Suelo process, Rosalind and Ela found that the threads of research and practice move in non-linear ways; that we intuitively manifest things one day which come to make sense years later. They decided to weave in an old collaboration that they had never had the opportunity to perform live together - this felt like the right context and time to do it.

In 2019, Rosalind commissioned Ela to adapt a song of hers for her solo show "No Man's Land". Ela then created a 9 min. version of "It's a Forest" which is now part of a collection of songs in her forthcoming artwork/album titled Forces.



Images: Daniel Kula

If our selves are partly composed of a myriad of experiential imprints, what is the eco-socio-political context that creates or determines those imprints? Using the body as a site of conflict between outer and inner space, she explores the no-man's lands between print and imprint, vessel and void, form and content which compose our human lives.

It's a Forest

Music and lyrics by Ela Spalding

It's a forest

It's a forest what I have coming out of my head

It's a forest

It's a forest what I have coming out of my hands

It's a jungle, it's a desert

It's a sea full of coral

It's a cliff, it's a meadow, it's a valley

It's a cliff, it's a meadow, it's a valley

It's a river spilling out of my body

It's the ocean

It's the whole wide ocean in my eyes

It's the ocean

It's the gold

It's the flow

It's the flow

It's the glow

It's the gold in the centre for the Earth

It's the gold in the centre for the Earth

Burning hot, molten rock, in the centre of the Earth

It's a forest

It's a forest what I have coming out of my head

It's a forest

It's a forest what I have coming out of my hands

It's the ocean

It's a meadow

It's the whole wide ocean

It's a forest

It's a sea full of coral



re-References



To close the experience of this publication, it is fair and important to recognize a few of the many references which have influenced, in both small and large ways, the creative and facilitation process of this residency. Some of these references have been present for longer and some are very new, but as remarked a couple of pages back, the threads and resonance we need to weave our paths and alliances come to us in non-linear ways. May the subtle connections between the insights shared here resonate with you, and bring you closer to this (or another) place and your place within it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANK YOUS

Thank you to Sandhya Daemgen for inviting Suelo to Ausufern, and to PSR - Sheena McGrandles, Simone Willeit and Lea Martini - for offering me this very generous residency and all the flexibility to structure it as we did. The format allowed me to invite a number of contributors, to whom I am massively grateful for their inspiring contributions and time shared: Rosalind and Moss, both performers with whom I had just finished a period of parallel research along the lines of ecology and embodiment; Florian, an ecologist with whom we've been joyfully collaborating on these topics since 2021; Silvia, an artist experimenting with different types of earth and earthly elements and their temporalities; Ka, my favorite Body Mind Centering guide; Ian, a designer and initiator of the Berlin Meltwalks which trace the ice age history of this city through the "what's in a name" phenomenon that is so telling and interesting; Ulla, an artist and more-than-gardener with whom we'd been talking about a Suelo in the 100 year old Gartenarbeitsschule Schöneberg; Martina, soil scientist with whom I found a common interest in creating a compost choir; Jared, for his beautiful artwork; Maicyra for our common interests and her grounding presence; Zabriskie for our kindred spirits and love of books. To the rest, who were either invited by others in the group or joined as we embarked on the journey, your presences were also immensely appreciated - Lisa, Florence, Rob, Ignacio, Georg and Regine. A special thank you goes to Rachel Taylor, for taking care of Camilo Sol on most days of the residency and even stepping in last minute so that I could finalise these pages.

If you would like to learn more about Suelo please visit www.estudionuboso.org or www.elaspalding.com where you can also find contact info.

articulating ~reconnecting ~interlacing~weaving narratives

THE PLANTS, THE BIRDS
THE SOUNDS, THE FUTURE

BODIES IN MOVEMENT

INDUSTRIAL MOVEMENT

HEALING FOUNTAINS

ICE AGE STREAMS

