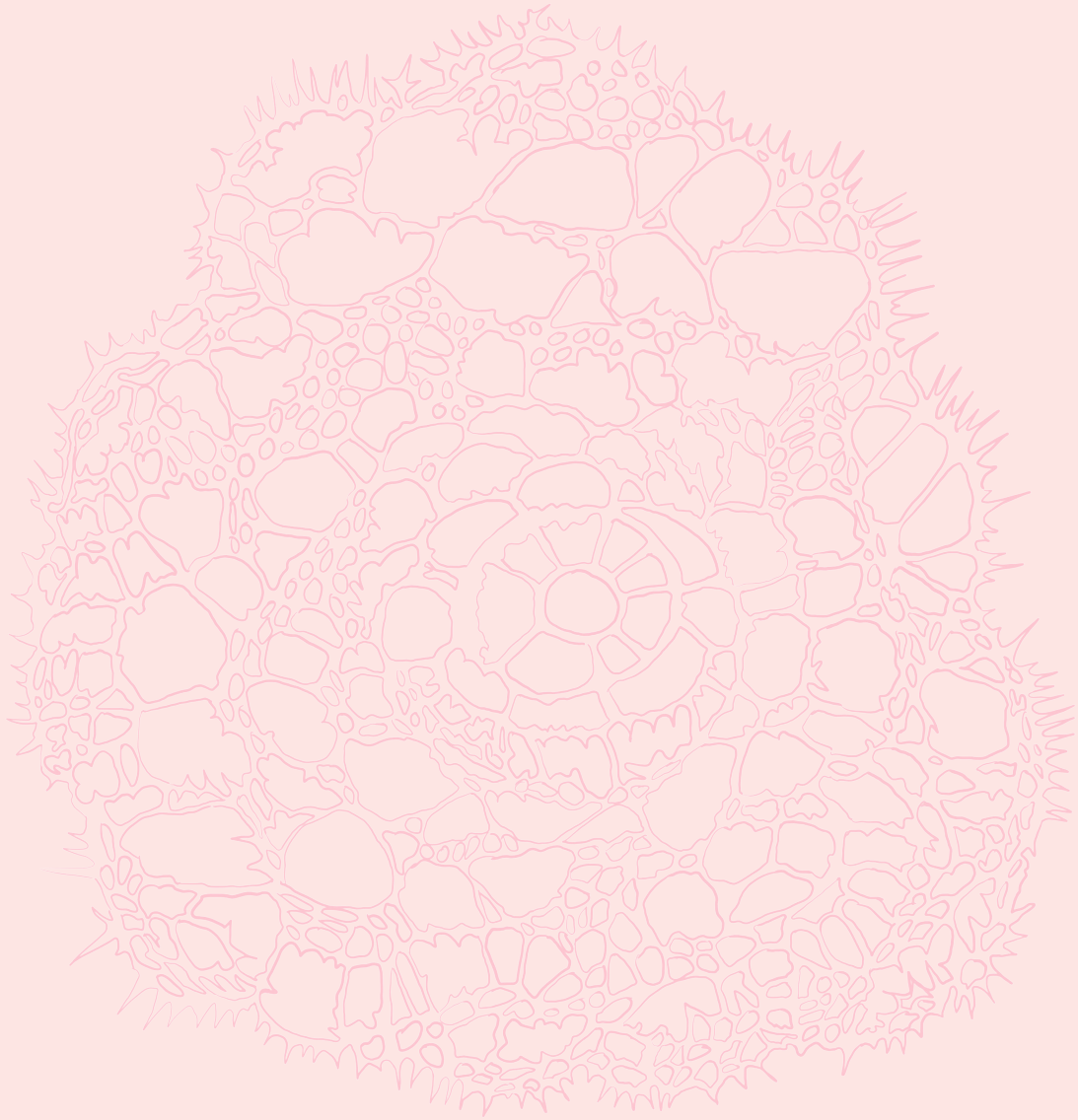


# A T R I L O G Y



**FROM THE INTERIOR TO THE EXTERIOR**

**EYRUN MÜLLER**



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December 2022

# A TRILOGY

FROM THE INTERIOR TO THE EXTERIOR

(S. F. M)

MASTER THESIS

Oslo National Academy of the Arts



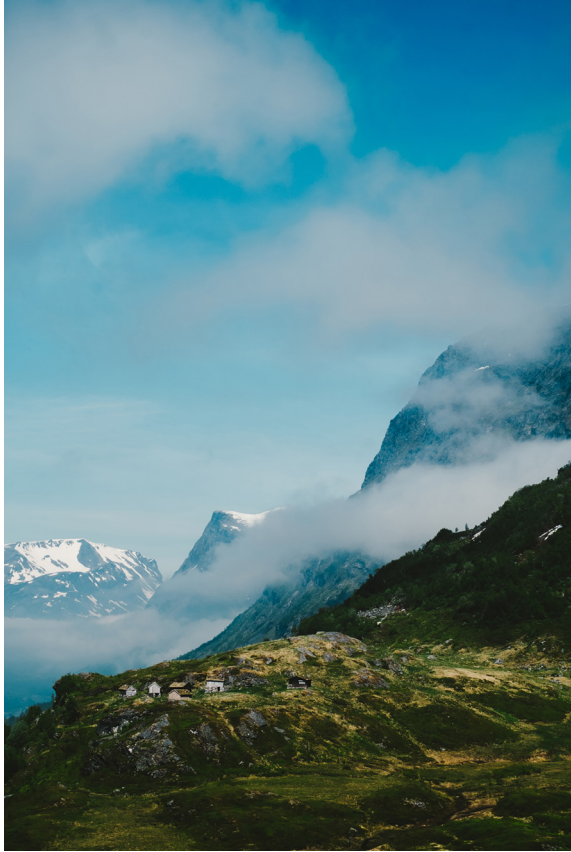






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## **Let us take a Trip**

Imagine you are starting at sea level.

You see the fjord. It is salty, cold, and refreshing. It wakes you up.

You start walking through the dense forest. It is warm and comforting.

The sound of birds, a small creek cheering. The soft grass underneath your feet.

You continue to walk upwards, until you get above the tree line.

The smell of moss and the hardness of the rocks.

Eventually your climb is over, and you are standing on top of the mountain.

Looking down, you might see a city somewhere, and hear the faint noise of bustling urban life. Far away you see the fjord glistening in the sun, you hear the wind ruffling the leaves of the forest. You feel it on your skin. Breathe.

You can breathe. Filling your lungs in that way, feels like the first time you ever did it.

It is a state of total calm. You are a part of all of this. This natural world.

Whatever you left behind, the troubles, the worries, it is all trivial now, it does not matter. Connected.

Finally-

Catharsis...

(Müller, 2022, p.50)

## INTRODUCTION

***Dear reader, I welcome you to join me on a tur<sup>1</sup>.*** A trip that I started a few years ago, vaguely mapping out how to experience and connect with nature by conducting various activities and practicing mindfulness. Turning the nature around me into a place for play, while finding ways to create art through this. Eventually it changed into a dogma-based methodology I chose to live by and create for. At least for the time being. This method was only written down last year, but now I realise, this is something I have done unconsciously since childhood. This way of being, both in and with nature and then creating from it. I have let this now become a more conscious, deliberate act.

As we are entering the Anthropocene I want to invite in and inspire other ways of seeing. This essay takes you, the reader, on a journey through our mind, body, and nature. The trip is in three parts, we start by swimming up from the sea, then we will hike through the forest before we end by climbing a mountain (S. F. M)<sup>2</sup>. I would love for you to accompany me, both metaphorically and physically. While we are on this trip, we will shift our gaze, between the interior and the exterior. What happens within us, what happens when we extend outwards, our physical being in its surroundings. Along the way a material library is built as a catalyst for my artistic practice.

This is a suggestion on how to live, to find a bit more peace from our own minds, take responsibility, and find enjoyment in creation.

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# METHOD



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## IN THE INTERIOR

Read, reflect, analyse, train your creativity, see the magic, practice mindfulness.  
Where is your consciousness?

## IN THE EXTERIOR

Placing oneself in specific environment (S. F. M) Using a variation of tools to change perspective. Changing from mediative and flow states of activity and activeness.

## IN CONVERSATION

Collect people's moments, experiences, stories. Share your stories.  
Look for a mutual connection. Create a bond.

## IN RELATION

Reading theory, scientific research, philosophy, art. Other practitioners in and outside the field of study. Be open about your mission, let everyone be your collaborators.  
Human and nonhuman.

## IN MATERIALITY

Collect trinkets, memories, make photos, write, textile manipulations, experiment.  
Create a material library.

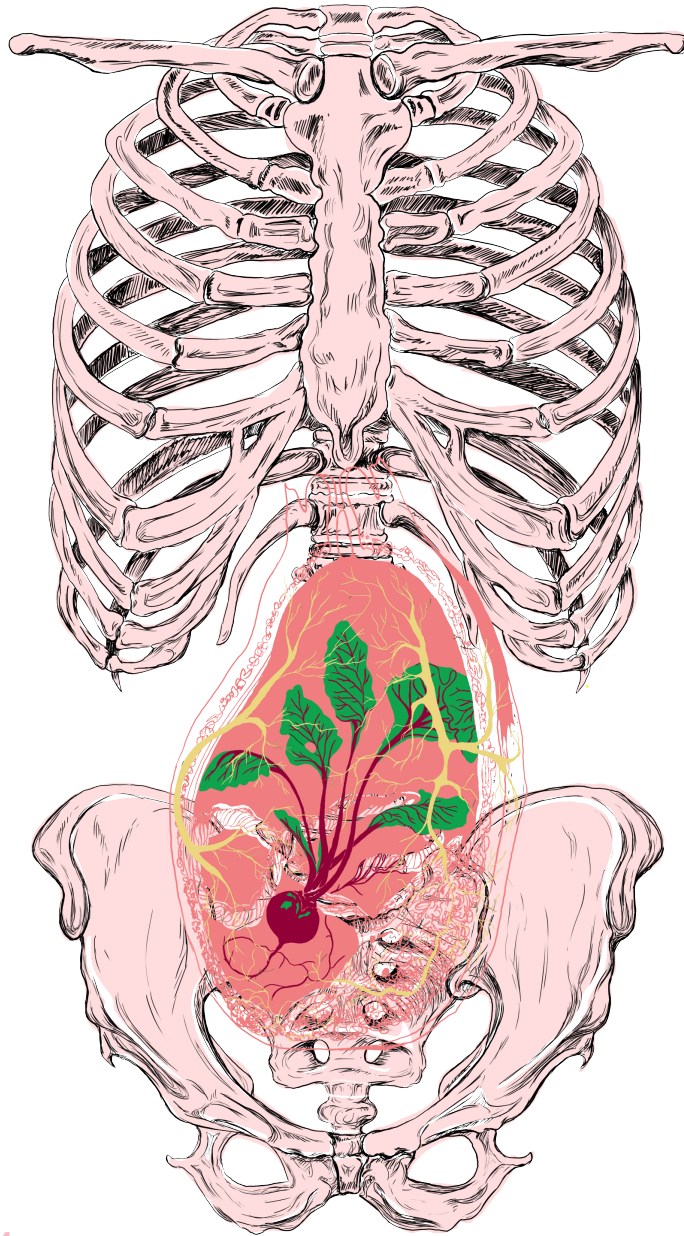


**DOGMAS**

- 1. Place yourself in a natural environment (S.F.M)
- 2. Explore nature and self by using your chosen tool (interior/exterior)
- 3. Be aware of your consciousness, present to the now, reflect
- 4. Be mindful of the spirits inhabiting the S.F.M
- 5. Build a material library; I will receive what is gifted to me
- 6. What you find decides what you create
- 7. Never take the first. Never take the last. Take only what you need
- 8. Show gratitude for your findings, and always give something back
- 9. The material will be transformed, through art to art.
- 10. You are a storyteller, passing on these stories through art is important
- 11. Document and share your experiences, invite others in, inspire them to take a trip,  
none of this should be done in solitude, it is an exercise in togetherness and connectiveness
- 12. Care for S.F.M as if they were an elongation of “you.”
- 13. Find understanding in you as nature
- 14. Always leave some pages blank. The brain is plastic. You will change.  
Come spring you might be someone new.
- 15. ?

**TOOLS**

THE SEA- HAVET	Floating, Swimming, Ice swimming, Kayaking, surfing, Beach Cleaning
THE FOREST- SKOGEN	Hiking, Skiing, Biking, Foraging
THE MOUNTAIN- FJELLET	Hiking, Skiing, Snowboarding, Climbing



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# THE BRAIN IS PLASTIC, I AM FLUID

***Before we start on our physical trip, we will go through to the interior and visit our brain.***

In Cartesian thinking we are just a mechanic body of flesh being operated by the brain, “we”/ the soul does not exist in the mechanical body (Kolstad, 2001, p.152). While the French philosopher Ponty asked the question ‘Am I just a brain that drives around in a meatsuit (cartesian) or is the meatsuit also me? And does that “me” extend even further?’ (Esterbauer, 2019, p.339) Our brain is not just the big, fatty watery organ kept inside of our skull, but the entire suit of flesh. As Toril Johannessen said “My brain is located in several organs. Agents such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, hormones, and drugs impacts my bodily functions, ways of thinking and emotional states. My ability to sleep and focus is regulated by how neurotransmitter molecules, chemical messengers in my body, promotes or prevents communication between neurons.” (Toril Johannessen, 2018) We are a fleshy compound of organic materials, some are human, some are the bacteria and fungi we host.

Using the definition of the self as not just the brain organ, but several compounds that makes up our physical body, plastically changing, we will go even further in. We will learn some new terms and visit the default mode network (DMN), there you can find the posterior cingulate cortex, or in other words, *your egos home address* (Pollan, 2019, p.302-304). This is the part of the brain that deals with your daydreaming, imagination, self-reflection, and the narrative self. Another part of the DMN to visit is the amygdala, the alarm system in your brain, where stressful and traumatic memories are stored like visual images and sensory fragments (Holbæk, 2019, p.37). To make it easy to understand I can say that these are found in the emotional part of the brain, the part of the brain that develops after birth and is formed by our subjective experiences in the world surrounding us. I see it as our trauma gets stored in the amygdala, then nurtured in our ego. (Müller, 2021, p.49) “There is only one core issue for all psychology. Where is the “me”? Where does the “*me*” stop? Where does the “other” begin? (...) The subject was simply “me in my body and in relations with other subjects.” The familiar term that covered this entire psychological system was “ego,” and what the ego registered were called experiences.” (Rozak, foreword by Hillman, 2019, p.xvii) My theory is that if we can weaken our own personal ego through going on a trip, we might tilt our relative perspective.

There is this beautiful metaphor about how we dig these deep trenches inside our own brain through our habitual ways of living. These trenches become so deep that climbing out of them seems impossible. But the brain is plastic, and through changing our behaviour consciously through positive repeated activity we might be able to climb out. Like a fresh new snowfall covers the old trenches and allows us to start again, creating new paths in the snow. (Pollan, 2019, p.384-385) And what if we did just that? Went outside and created our new paths with the small waves behind our kayak, moss giving in from the weight of our feet, or the nice line in the snow behind our snowboard? And from that, created something we could not create otherwise?

There are a lot of these parallels between restoring the earth and healing the mind, because what if the “me” does not stop with the physical body but extends? What if we are a deep part of this organic rooted chain of living and by caring for the whole of the natural world, we would learn to care

for ourselves. Feel a responsibility towards it as a connected part of nature? The Norwegian Deep ecologist Arne Næss suggests that all being is connected to one another and it is not obvious where the “me” ends and the “something other” begins, it is all an extension of the “me” and we as humans will never stand outside looking in (Kolstad, 2001, p.168). ...as feminist theorist Karen Barad asserts, we can’t separate knowing and being: “We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because ‘we’ are of the world.” (Hessler, 2019, p. 24). So let us do that, accept the extension of the “me”, and learn that the “we” are of this world by being in it.

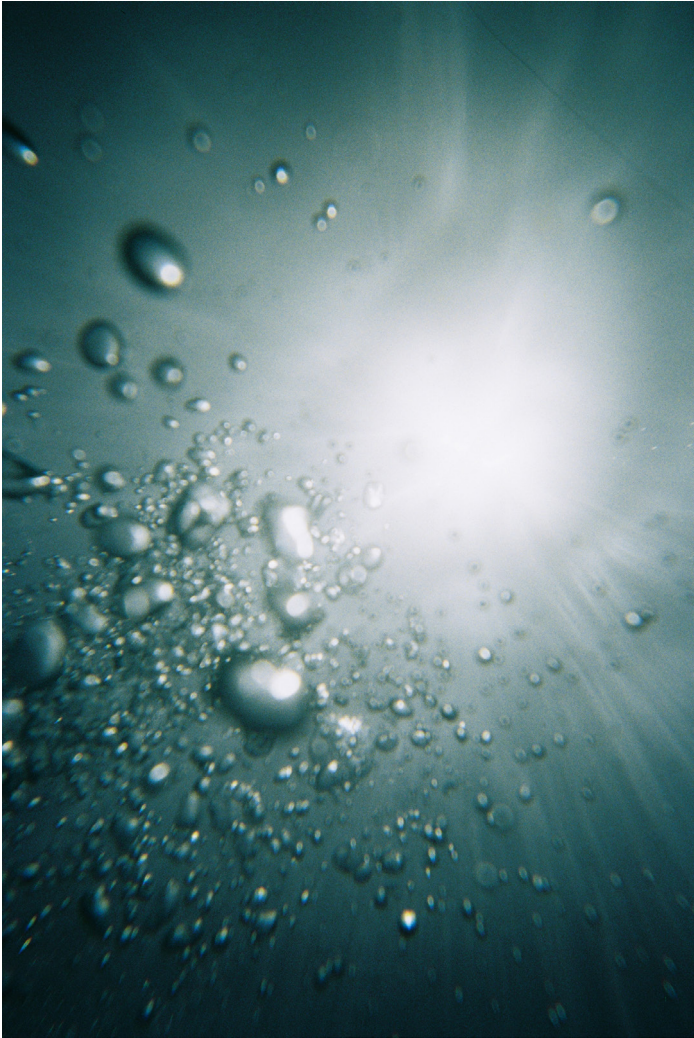
*Let us stand up for a moment, feel the weight of your body resting on your feet. Shift the weight from side to side, take a deep breath in and slowly release. We will now zoom out, shift our gaze. Our **tur** has started, and we are on our way to the exterior.*





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### ***Salt***

Do you know the ocean? Have you felt the waves?  
Can you hear the effervesce?  
Powerful. Humming, buzzing, drumming. Enticing?  
Sucks you in

The drag

Can never fight against the current

Dragged, forced under, swept out, away?

No, beyond

Far out

Everything turns to salt

It stings

Up, down, does it matter?

No

7 No matter where I swim, it is the wrong direction

It is dark

I breathe salt. The skin cracks open along my ribs

Pink flesh

The chest rises and falls, but my nose and mouth are closed

I float up, towards the surface

Or am I sinking?

It doesn't really matter

Now that I have become a part of you.

Salt

# THE SEA

***We are in the ocean now, cold, fresh, and salty.*** This is how all life began, and this is how our journey in the exterior will begin. More than 75% of planet earth is covered in water (Graham, et.al, 2010). Throughout history the ocean has created wonder, fear, and love in us. We have seen it as an endless resource which we have taken great advantage of. It has given us a seemingly limitless source of food, it has been a means for us to travel, discover new places, for trade and settlement. We developed industry around it; building great ships that could transport slaves to the new world. Fishing trawlers that scrape up fragile deep water coral reefs and destroys them forever (Kutti, 2019/2020), an oil industry that emits so much greenhouse gasses that our planet may soon be unliveable (IEA, 2020). The usage of the ocean is stained with blood. The biodiversity of the oceans is severely threatened (Morgana, 2018). Something we once saw as infinite is now dying. It is quite ironic that the ocean is at the same time our saviour. As Bruno Latour explains in his foreword in *Prospecting Ocean* “The oceans are a key topic of what I call the New Climatic Regime. They cover two thirds of the planet and provide half of its oxygen. They absorb the heat of the sun, transfer it to the atmosphere, redistribute it to the continents, and by this process help to regulate atmospheric temperatures. They are key to the Earth system and therefore an integral part of our conditions of existence (“our” referring here to a myriad of humans and non-humans).” (Hessler, 2019, p.11)

Even though we are ourselves made up of 60% water (Kvam, 2019), we may never be able to fully know the sea, but we can familiarise ourselves with it. Like evolutionary biologist Scott Sampson said; Spending more time in and around water can help our “skin encapsulated selves” stay connected with the sensory world (Nichols, 2015, p.100). *By using the method, we will start mindfully, by floating.* The first time we experienced floating was in our mother’s womb as embryos. -Studies suggests that floating in water can be used as treatment for stress related pains, anxiety, PTSD, and ADHD (Nichols, 2015, p.104).

Feeling the weightlessness of my body makes me feel relaxed and free, but I cannot float for too long before I find the urge to turn over and stretch one arm along the water’s surface, then the next, pushing water behind me and build up speed rhythmically moving the full of my body. *Come and swim with me.* The synchronised rhythmic movement of the body combined with a focused breath creates a meditative state. Wallace J. Nichols explains it as ‘swimming is a combination of cognitive effort and aerobic exercise and with that combination it creates a “cognitive reserve” which is the minds resilience to damage to the brain. Kayaking and swimming alike are aerobic exercises and can release the neurohormone oxytocin, endorphins, and endocannabinoids, which reduce the brains response to stress (Nichols, 2015, p .110-128). These exercises are gentle and beautiful in their movements and give time to think and reflect while pursuing them. But what about the more adrenaline driven ones?

As a child my mother used to bring me along to her ice bathing club, we did this believing it was good for our health. Cold water stimulates your vagus nerve (which connects your brain to organs such



as your lungs and heart) and makes the parasympathetic nervous system (PSN) slow our heart and breathing rate down, giving us a sense of wellbeing and relaxation (Glenny, 2020). We did breath exercises before plunging in to slow down our pulse. I splash my face and neck with water to calm my heart rate<sup>3</sup> before I climb down the ladder of the ice hole. My skin screams, I try not to. After less than a minute I climb up again. My body is burning, and I feel like my whole being is lighter.

Surfing is a more dynamic, or even extreme exercise to explore in the sea. Most of my experiences of surfing has been in the cold Atlantic and the Norwegian Sea above the arctic circle. The challenge starts on land, in the freezing winds dreading to go out into the cold waves. Fighting the broken waves<sup>4</sup> trying to get out back<sup>5</sup>

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in a heavy wetsuit. I promise myself that when I finally get out there, I can relax on my board for a while. The relief getting behind the whitewash is enormous. I attempt to play. Adrenaline keeps my senses sharpened as I am scouting for “my” wave. And there it is. Someone shouts – GO GO GO! I paddle fiercely before I feel the wave taking a hold of the board as I try to jump up on my feet. Most times this ends in failure, as the water plunges me down and I end up rolling under water for who knows how long. I let my body go limp as I float back up spitting out saltwater. With a huge smile on my face, I scream –AGAIN!

Activities that boost our happiness needs to be episodic and transient (Nichols, 2015, p. 48), experiencing new things every time we partake in the activity helps us to stay present and curious. Neuroscientist Catherine Fransson argues that aggravating the hormones produced when you are in a flight or fight situation (norepinephrine, dopamine, and cortisol) can be useful when conducting extreme sports, such as surfing or cold-water swimming. These neurochemicals produce a feeling of exhilaration and hyperactive awareness. People who have experienced ongoing stressful situations over time, such as people suffering from PTSD may benefit from seeking these high activity exercises. The amygdala in such cases is hyperactive, which has previously been beneficial for survival, the problem is it keeps acting out when a person is safe. In our daily life there are many stress factors that make us misread a situation and cause us to react in our habitual way. Conducting these sports might be a way of training and exhausting the brain and putting things into perspective and help us to react less to everyday stress (Nichols, 2015, p. 142-43). After 30 minutes of active training, one might experience a runner’s high, or more fitting a surfers stoke<sup>6</sup>, this lasts up to two hours after the exercise and gives a sense of wellbeing (Kvam, 2019).

*As we are returning to land, please do not lose courage.* What we see might break our hearts. It broke mine. What I thought was a serene, untouched landscape has traces of us everywhere. Trash, dead birds, a whale skull. Death and decay. According to EEA there are over 14 million tonnes of



microplastics in our oceans (EEA, 2022), an estimation of only 1.4% of this gets washed up on the shoreline (Booth, et.al. 2017, p.23). *We should get some bags and start cleaning.*

**Everywhere I go there are traces of us.** I remember hiking a small island in the arctic. I had sailed over from another island, hoping to swim in some fairy pools hidden on the other side of the mountain ridge. While walking I started feeling this overwhelming sense of revolt and disgust. I was so far away from anywhere, no one had gone here before me, I thought. As my foot was crunching down on plastic, so well hidden, swallowed up by moss. I thought it was as if, in the end, the moss will swallow all of us, whole, hide our mistreatment of the place we should have treated as our home.

The research on the harm of microplastics is young, but what we have found so far is severe. Sea life eats plastic they find in the sea thinking it is food, the plastic prevents them from feeling hunger and can force them to starve to death. The toxic additives in plastic can lead to hormonal disturbances, if that goes into their blood and tissue, it will disturb their physiological functions. Bigger pieces of plastics like bags and tarps prevents the reach of sunlight to the sea floor and hinders the exchange of oxygen and big pieces of rope and ghost nets left by the fishing industry traps and kills bigger sea mammals (N.Polar, 2021). I have seen a lot of this industries mismanaged trash on the beaches I walk. It is interesting that even an activity like beach cleaning can have a positive effect on the brain. Altruistic and compassionate activities that help others (...) opposes that molecular antipode (expression of disease promoting genes), creating a psychological wellbeing based on a sense of higher purpose and service to others, known as eudaimonia (Nichols, 2015, p. 48). The action of cleaning beaches, or for that matter anywhere you go in nature should be innate with anyone searching to connect with it.

I see the trash as wounds slashed along the sand, needing to be cleansed and to heal. I have filled my pockets with objects for my collection. I am already thinking of how they can symbolise my experiences, and how nature has given me these materials for my art.

*I hope some of that stoke is left, we should at least have hope. We are leaving the shoreline, so let us brush the sand off our feet and start walking up, towards the forest line.*

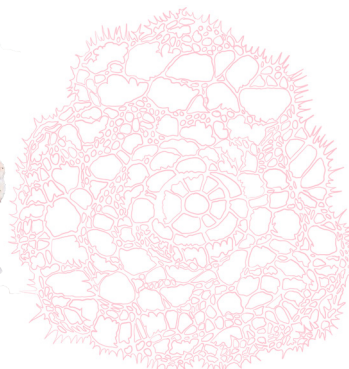
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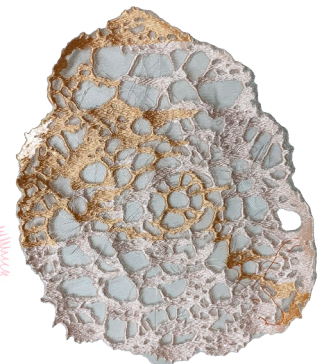
10. MUSHROOM



11. ILLUSTRATION



12. DIGITAL EMBROIDERY





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# THE FOREST

***Fighting the whitewash in big surf or spending hours digging out fishnets while beach cleaning will have exhausted us. Let us start our wander into the forest. Here we will practice more slow and mindful exercises. Catch our breath a little.***

**When I was a child, my mother took me on long walks through the forest.** We would spend the late summer months foraging for berries and mushrooms. Filling up our freezer with food before winter. She loved to take me in to the deep dark parts of the forest with tall spruce and pines trees. Where the trolls lived. She would point at fallen tree trunk and ask what I saw. Who do you think lives there? Don't you think that rock looks like a troll turned to stone? Or how about that branch? Could that be Huldra's tail?<sup>7</sup> (Leistad, personal communication. n.d.) When we hiked towards more open sunlit areas the forest would change. Leaf green trees of birch, twisted and bent by the winter's snow. She would always say that now we were in the elf's forest. We would make them art and small houses. Sometimes sacrifice some of our food. Thank them for keeping us safe. When we walked across the meadows, I was always scared that the Tusse people would drag me down and take me as their own child<sup>8</sup>. But my mom had taught me how to walk correctly. If I run across the meadows only stepping on top of their heads, I would be safe. Their arms are so short they could not reach to grab my leg from that angle. I learnt that every part of the forest was a spirit, and I had to give it my respect. She taught me to never take where there was little, and when I did take, to only take what I need. We always gave something back. This play taught me how to be in nature, to respect and to practice my creativity and imagination in it. And it is something I have brought with me when I take others out in it. Telling them these little stories of wonder, show them what to eat and what to avoid. I always ask them what creatures they see in the trees, the rocks and moss.



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*"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."*  
(Thoreau, 1854/2007, p.91)



We are in the forest now. Moss, marshland, and the gentle tree giants towering above us cleanse the air we breathe (Lindahl, 2016) (Bennet, Turner, 2020). In this organic chain of living, I cannot help but to think about how our brain and nerve cells look like the networks of mycelium, and that new research implies that mycelium has a consciousness (Money, 2022). There are fungi living inside our body. What if we share our consciousness? *Either way, let us use our tools.* Skiing, hiking, and biking are repetitive exercises with the same benefits to the brain as swimming and kayaking. A team of scientists from Chiba university discovered that hiking or forest bathing ‘*Shinrin-Yoku*’ can alter the cerebral blood flow by reducing the amount of haemoglobin in the prefrontal cortex creating a state of relaxation and elevate the mood. And by reducing the stress hormones, it improves our immune system (Selhub, Logan, 2012). There have also been several studies done on children with ADHD where they have advanced their learning abilities through activity and play in nature (Van den Berg, Van den Berg, 2010). I would argue that these episodic activities also advance our creativity. As Tim Ingold theorises that the artist and the hillwalker alike find enjoyment in the exploration of the landscape. How *it* is anything but constant, but something changing all the time. It may be familiar, yet every walk is different. When artists are explaining their research, they are implicitly comparing their practice with the hillwalker (Ingold, 2019, p.2). I believe that going mushroom picking, or any other type of foraging will make you notice new things and stay in focus.

My material library is growing. I become aware of the collections intra-actions<sup>9</sup>. “Sentient practitioners and active materials continually answer to, or ‘correspond,’ with one another in the generation of form” (Ingold. 2013). We will symbiotically create and transform together. I start having ideas about how it can replicate the process of decay of organic matter in textile.

*Let us place our collection nicely in our backpack and strap it on securely. Our journey is at its last stage. Time to use more active tools. We are at the foot of the mountain.*

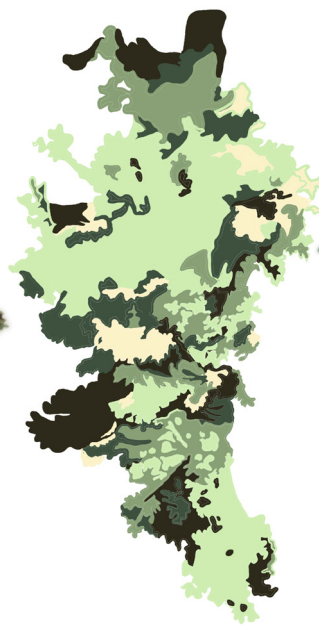
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15. SEA-GLASS



16. MOSS



17. ILLUSTRATION

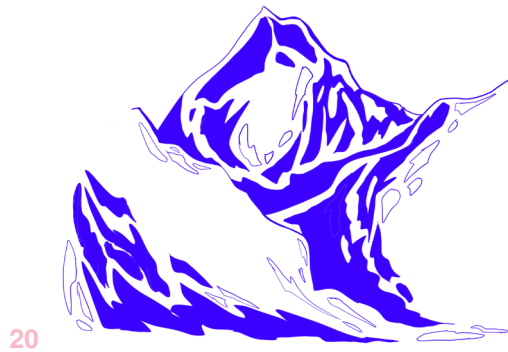


18. DIGITAL EMBROIDERY



***Have you ever heard the mountain speaking back to you?*** It is like a deep, low drum. Sometimes harmonised by the Auroras electric flickering, touching the grounds snowy crystals. The call of the blue hour is fading, darkness. It is cold, my eyelashes are covered in frost. I pull my wool hat firmly down my ears. When I stand on top of this mountain, I feel so incredibly small. I am not important, just part of a big chain of life. My time here is just a glimpse, how many billions of years has not this rock lived? For so long we do not count it as a life, a biological being. Although are we not created by the same atoms? Isn't it funny that even though I am so scared of heights, my biggest fear is that I cannot stop that compulsion to just jump? Just to feel myself weightless flying across the peaks, together with Aurora and the north-westerly wind.





## THE MOUNTAIN

***With carabiners fastened to our harness, or with the board at our back, we are planning the safest route up.*** As with surfing, rock-climbing and back country snowboarding will set off your fight or flight hormones, sharpening the senses. We can use our tools of hiking, skiing, and climbing to travel upwards. In our own pace. Climbing is one of the activities I have noticed that triggers my reward system the fastest. *I want to urge not to be competitive here, we are not here to conquer. But to reflect. Our adrenaline sharpened senses may let us do that. The mountain is not ours to colonise we do not belong here; we are a visitor.*

*Mountains should be climbed with as little effort as possible and without desire. The reality of your own nature should determine the speed. If you become restless, speed up. If you become winded, slow down. You climb the mountain in an equilibrium between restlessness and exhaustion. Then, when you are no longer thinking ahead, each footstep is not just a means to an end but a unique event itself. This leaf has jagged edges. This rock looks loose. From this place the snow is less visible, even though closer. These are things you should notice anyway. To live only for some future goal is shallow. It is the sides of the mountain which sustain life, not the top. Here's where things grow.*  
(Pirsig, 1974/2008, p.246)

The psychologist Nicholas Wolken philosophises beautifully around the perspective of stress, seen from a mountain in the Patagonia video Turn of The Mind. “Moving between big mountains, it really gives you a sense of where we as humans stand, that we are not superior. Down in the valley I slip back into my everyday routines, I start to make excuses, I start to ignore the problem, even though I know better. Why is that? Why do we only see the value of nature as it serves our needs? It’s a bit symbolic, you’re starting off in the valley with all the stuff going on and then you go through the deep gully here, once you get above the tree line and the view becomes clearer and freer. (...) If I want to change, I need to look inside myself, to that intimate connection we all share with this planet. This way, doing the right thing, becomes an act of compassion rather than a moral obligation.” (Wolken, N, Patagonia, 2019)



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This is where I spent my childhood, the things collected here were often not actual objects. The land was barren, covered with fragile tundra or snow. The collecting was done by making pictures, writing small poems, drawing, or collecting conversations with friends. Trying to find a way to visually explain the powerful sense of something, I felt up there. I created a project where I told the story of a snow creature melting away from global warming, through a costume and cyanotype<sup>10</sup>. I tried to let my experiences act as a catalyst for the project, drawing out the essence of how I felt and making it a performance. Because as Bergsson said it (...) *nature has also been a source of enrichment and experience. It has been an inspiration for artistic expression and religious devotion for millennia.* (Kolstad, 2001, p. 156).

*Finally, we are here at the end.* Our feet are weary. The air feels fresh and clean. Through this journey I have never felt as nature's master. Seeing how small we are in perspective to the epic landscape around us can confirm that. *Let us take one last breath in, roll our head from side to side, clench our fists and release, breath out.* I strap on my board and start gliding down the untouched powder. I cannot find my old trenches; the wind must have covered them with snow. I am excited to see what this trip will transform to in creation. What I will make from my collection. And what you will make from yours.

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*"Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them. Introduce yourself. Be accountable as the one who comes asking for life. Ask permission before taking. Abide by the answer.*

*Never take the first. Never take the last. Take only what you need.*

*Take only that which is given.*

*Never take more than half. Leave some for others. Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.*

*Use it respectfully. Never waste what you have taken. Share.*

*Give thanks for what you have been given.*

*Give a gift, in reciprocity for what you have taken.*

*Sustain the ones who sustain you and the earth will last forever."*

(Kimmerer, 2020/2013, p.183)

## MATERIAL LIBRARY

***We are home now. Every free space is filled with things collected.*** The kitchen counter, table, living room floor. In this material library lies memories, stories, and adventures. Ready to be transformed.

In scholarly literature a distinction is often made between (active) collection and (passive) accumulation. In the first case, it is the collector who selects the works, while in the latter it is the objects that have assumed the lead role. It is also common to rank unfinished collections higher than limited series (assortments). (.....) While it is easy to determine the extent and concept of finite series, collections based on contingent dimensions such as history and taste are more difficult to fathom. It is this unfathomableness that paves the way for the Collector, who with exquisite discernment and capital can act as the true artist: the *bricoleur*. (Freuchen et al., 2019, s.8) It is fair to say that it is my objects that have assumed the lead role, as memorabilia of nature.

From the beach I have a blue Russian Soldier. A cheap plastic toy from the Soviet Union. I imagine that it was a gift from a child. For the father to bring as a good luck charm as he went to work on a fishing trawler in the treacherous seas of the arctic. Maybe his ship sank, and the toy got washed up on this shore, hidden by the sand for the last fifty years? And all these nice shells and glass. How the sand and rolling waves have shaped them over time. The seagull skull I found, cleaned by maggots and the microorganisms living in the shoreline. We shift between accepting our relative understanding of times passing, and the time that goes so slow that it is impossible to grasp the changes made by its power. But we can see it. We have worked together, time, nature, and I. "A collection is either allocated 'in perpetuity' in such a way that it already embodies a piece of eternity here and now. Or else eternity is shifted to a point outside the moment so that the collection's present form refers to what is to come. (....) the concept of eternity is then transferred to the collection itself (....) there is talk of an understanding of time formulated as *sub specie collectionis*." (Freuchen et al., 2019, s.19)

Our collaborators, time, and nature have done their work. So how can we transform this material collection, through art, to art? To me, the plastic will remain an eyesore, an ugly reminder of our hurting selves and nature. Bones to remind us that we are of the same matter as these animals once were. Moss and fungi replicated in textile to remind us that we will decompose like all organic matter. Images of mountains as ideas for shapes. The sound of waves as music. The intra-actions between all the actors as a meeting point, starts to form an idea.



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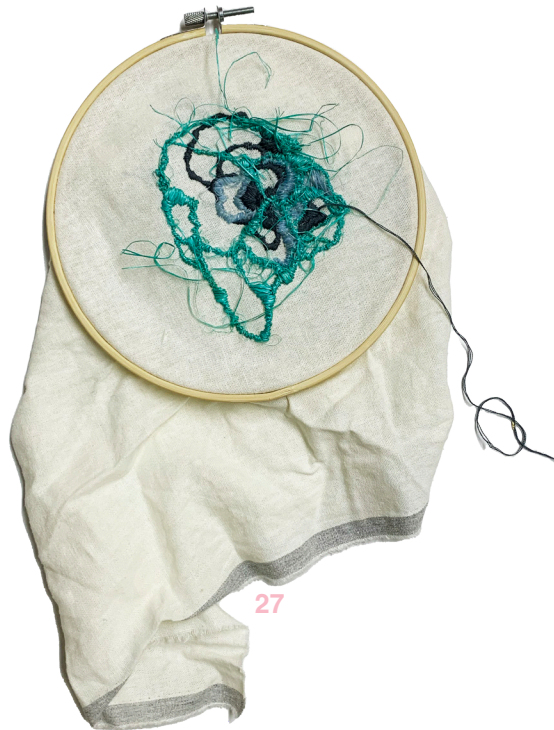
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## CONCLUSION

I have no conclusion yet. This trip is not over for me. The brain is plastic, and I am fluid. Come spring I will be something new. And so will this collection, as we start working together in shaping our project further. I am a costume designer, and I have used this method intentionally for two years to help me build a material library so that I could form three performances. One in the Sea, one in the Forest and one on the Mountain (S, F, M). When I do, I will once again share my journey. What I can say; that by giving myself time to go on these explorations I have found some new paths. I see a possibility for living a life with more care for myself, others, and nature. I have gained many new collaborators of human and nonhuman form and I have been so lucky to have seen many beautiful places on this journey. I feel a strong responsibility to care for it. This way of living does not come with any harsh moral judgements, only to live a bit simpler. Like this quote by Thoreau that both my designer friend Ingrid and I fell in love with (Pettersson, personal communicatio, n.d.) *"I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbours up."* (Thoreau, 2007/1854, p.5) This is what I want with my method. To roost a little. And to invite you to my choir.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 The Norwegian word for Trip.
- 2 The Sea, The Forest, The Mountain
- 3 The diving reflex commonly referred to as the mammalian dive reflex, diving bradycardia, and the diving response is a protective, multifaceted physiologic reaction that occurs in mammals including humans in response to water submersion. (...) the dive reflex is an innate multi-system physiologic response present in all vertebrates that functions to preserve oxygen stores during times of water immersion. (Godek, Freeman, 2022)
- 4 Surfers refers to this as the whitewash
- 5 Getting out back means to get behind the whitewash to where the clean unbroken waves are.
- 6 Surfers stoke is what surfers refer to when they feel a runner's high
- 7 A Norwegian forest sprite, in the shape of a woman with a cow's tail. May seduce men who are lost in the forest. (SNL. n.d.)
- 8 Tussefolket are little creatures living under ground. The word tusse derives from the old Norse word; *purs*, meaning troll. (SNL, n.d.). My mother told me that these creatures would kidnap children walking alone in the meadows and forest.
- 9 Intra-action is a Baradian term used to replace 'interaction,' which necessitates pre-established bodies that then participate in action with each other. Intra-action understands agency as not an inherent property of an individual or human to be exercised, but as a dynamism of forces in which all designated 'things' are constantly exchanging and diffracting, influencing, and working inseparably. (Stark, 2016)
- 10 The cyanotype process uses a mixture of iron compounds, which when exposed to UV light and washed in water oxidize to create Prussian Blue images. (Parallax photographi, 2020)

## IMAGES

1. Mountain view, (Photo: Eliah Lillis)
2. Piece found in a dumpster on a building site, (from material library)
3. Snowboarding in Lofoten, (Photo: Eliah Lillis)
4. Insides, (Illustration: Eyrun Müller)
5. The Beach Cleaner, (Illustration & collage: Eyrun Müller)
6. Beach cleaning in Vesterålen, (Photo: Eyrun Müller)
7. Salt, (Photo/Poem collage: Eliah Lillis/Eyrun Müller)
8. Immersive, (Illustration: Eyrun Müller)
9. Jellyfish, (Photo: Eyrun Müller)
10. Mushroom, (Photo:Unknown-Internet)
11. Jellyfish, (Illustration: Eyrun Müller)
12. Jellyfish, (Digital embroidery: Eyrun Müller)
13. Forest, (Photo: Eyrun Müller)
14. I Wanna Make a Forest Spirit, (Mask: Eyrun Müller)
15. Sea-glass, (from material library)
16. Moss on twigg, (from material library)
17. Moss, (Illustration: Eyrun Müller)
18. Moss, (Digital embroidery: Eyrun Müller)
19. Collage;Winter in Lofoten/ Winter in Røros, (Photo/ Poem: Eyrun Müller)
20. Mountain, (Illustration: Eyrun Müller)
21. A Metaphor, We the Wanderers, (Costume: Eyrun Müller)
22. -..-
23. -..-
24. Objects from a Material Library, (from material library)
25. The Russian Toy Soldier, (from material library)
26. Collage of death and decay, (Collage/ from material library:Eyrun Müller)
27. Future stomach contents, (Hand embroidery using fishnet and rope from material library: Eyrun Müller)
28. Bird flu, (Photo: Eyrun Müller)

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Thank you





