

Fig. 1—Nataliia Tsyu Korotkova (JREX fellow at the Tokyo University of the Arts, [GAP](#)) has used stethoscope, industrial sound detection equipment along with instruments of her own making to synthesise soundscapes boiling water, fish bones, search radar, wind, fire in an artistic research project on sonic affordances in exploration of Ainu caves (Hokkaido)

In Nataliia Tsyu Korotkova's ongoing artistic research on two Ainu caves in Hokkaido (Fig. 1), she works with a variety of media which—like all media—are contingent to the *primary* signifier (S_1) that are under investigation: through the multiplication of affordances that already exist within (S_1), the caves and their hinterland, she works to draw upon what contingencies potentially can do. To establish a kind of signifier (S_2): that is, *signifier of the signifier*. Her methodology will be readily comprehended if compared to the use of wax-rubbing in archeological investigations (Fig. 2).

When I tag her research materials with these two level signifiers—the signifier (S_1) and the signifier of the signifier (S_2)—it appears consistent with her objective: which is *not* to determine the *contents* of Ainu meanings, but rather to the fact *that* they do mean, and bring a memory material to the currently waning awareness of it. The two levels of signification (S_1 and S_2) are *contingent*: but while S_1 is a signifier of the *past*, (S_2) is of the *present*. Contingency (from *con-tingere*) means alongside and touching, colouring/dyeing or rubbing. Which is why her method features a “multi-media rub”.

With this kind of basic setup—which is typical of the [investigative aesthetics](#) of artistic research—the venture in experimental archaeology on the past (S_1), includes a media-archaeology of the present (S_2). In Korotkova's artistic research the extends the trend of archaeology without excavation to a domain of investigation in which it might be seen as essential that *excavation* does *not* take place: (1) the caves are *barred* from access because the entrances are have become blocked (access has not been maintained), (2) in the Ainu culture the two caves were *sacred*.

The Ainu name for the places is—アフンルパル, [アフン]. That is: *enter*; [ル] - *way*; [パル] - *mouth*.

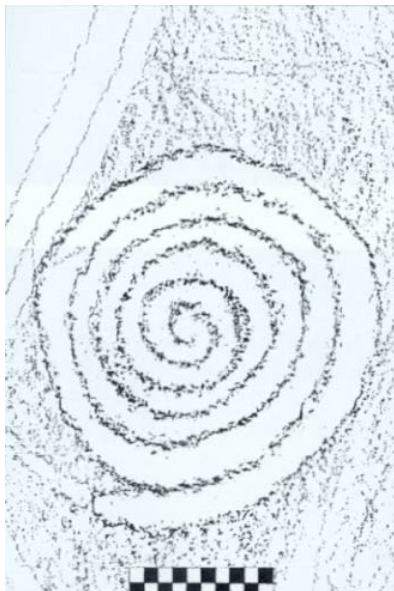


Fig. 2—“In his 1999 British Prehistoric Rock Art, however, Beckensall explained that “there has been a real problem with this spiral. I have made a time-consuming wax rubbing of it, the spiral appeared, but I have not been able to see it on the rock itself!” [3, p.125].” Daz-Andreu, M. and Brooke, C. and Rainsbury, M. and Rosser, N. (2006) “The spiral that vanished : the application of non-contact recording techniques to an elusive rock art motif at Castlerigg Stone Circle in Cumbria.”, Journal of archaeological science., 33 (11), pp. 1580-1587.

Which is why the principal sensorial vehicle of Korotkova's investigation has been the *sonic*, while her focus has been on *fermentation*. Defining fermentation according to some broad criteria, specifying these according to the parameters afforded by the variety of investigative media (with which she carries out her “rubs”). For instance, sound-recordings from the cave, are conveyed as signifiers (S_1) by making sound-recordings from fermentation of available items on *Hokkaido* such as Bear fur, Ainu sake, sea salt, soil, tobacco, rice, sand and roe. Items with a bearing on social awareness of the site in present time (S_2).

The article that we are planning to co-author (working title: *Resonance with depths—step by step convergence with the sacred Ainu cave*) accordingly investigates the resonance between different sonic samples constituting a *variety* within which resonance—conceived as a step-by-step convergence on a load of meaning of the past—within the present idiom of public awareness: featuring a *requisite variety* (of “rubs”) when it works. By conjoining (S_1) and (S_2) in the investigation Korotkova integrates the performative dimension of *ritual*; which I here define in [Edmund Leach](#)'s terms as an *aspect* of all human behaviour, namely the *communicative* one.

Her *two-tiered* model of investigation—combining *experimental* and *media* archaeology—she moves from assuming to assigning an *immersive* methodology, to articulate contingent layers that operate through ways of resonance across layers: articulating the variety of

resemblance which will always exist in processes of establishing resonance (i.e. a step-by-step convergence). That is, *this* variety: sameness, similarity, difference and otherness. Difference is distinctive (related), otherness is separate (unrelated). In sum: the parameters of mapping.

Examples of ritual: recording of the sound of ashes in bonfire; the use of the イタド plant (*itadori*)—クッタラ (*kuttar*) in Aino—or in Korotkova's verbatim (field-notes): “クツタルシ (*kuttar-us-i*) means the place the plants live a lot. When written イタドリ *Itadori* (Japanese) in Kanji, it's 虎杖 which is the same as Kojo-hama 虎杖浜 (浜 means beach).” The ritual extending through *contingency*: “through a series of rituals (ex: burning ashes of materials collected during fieldwork) - conducting performances - as sound recordings of Ainu places (Hokkaido) the field notes (sound circulation) listening notes 50 - sound - mapping - drawings, + library - audio (website), performance [score-cards](#).

Currently the field of investigation is located between two small towns on Hokkaido: Noboribetsu and Shiraoi. A *liminal* space in which immersion is given with the sacred at *one* end (the caves) and purification (*itadori*) at the *other* end. A ritual lingo reflecting that the contingency between the present and past will bleed into each other—becoming contemporary for a tad, in Agamben's [sense](#)—extended by an exit-procedure (purification with *itadori*), iterating the *location* by the beach. Something has changed, but what? Indeed, a kind of flowering manifesting a *site-awareness*:

“Taking a step outside the cave we perceive ourselves as part of some sort of unified common landscape: the sound circulates beyond the cave, beyond us. The escaping sound vibrations are absorbed by the cracks of the monumental rocky walls, some of them going deep into the stone, some of them remaining on the surface and becoming a reflector of the echo of the movement. With each step towards the ocean, we move further and further away from the trap spaces where the sound memory is being held. Can we trace this invisible memory line of a time in which we did not exist? Will this memory be a touchstone on the social consciousness of indigenous landscapes?”

What I intend to bring to Korotkova's materials—which she has shared in the purpose of initiating a co-authored article—is *anaptúxis* (ἀνάπτυξις): which in Greek means unfolding, developing and explaining (in the sense of explanation which is *not* added but emerging from the unfolding and development as such [which is gathered in the notion of *flowering*]). The method I intend to use is to work as a sounding-board for Korotkova's, based on elements from the [DASart feedback method](#). Specifically: (1) *what works for me is x, y, z*; (2) *from perspective P I need more clarity on...*

If Dragos Gheorghiu, as the Archaeopress book editor, to ask Korotkova's *an occasional open question* (specific with no leads, and not yes/no question), she would come to a point in the article writing—in which she is the principal author—to state specifically *what she needs feedback on...* (from Gheorghiu and myself). This process, as I hope has been demonstrated here, can be quite economical. As I have made some statements of *what works for me* (and on which terms), and I will conclude by making a statement of *what I need more clarity on* (not necessarily from Korotkova, but likely *co-generatively*).

How her process draws on alternating between *field-walks* and *mounting exhibitions*, and if (and if then how) the said *flowering* comes about through such alternation. I am anticipating that between the field-walks and mounting exhibitions (or, more heuristic line-ups) partial insights of *what works for...*, and *more clarity needed* can end be gathered in a *model of process*. That is, an *active* model of the kind that does *not* intervene directly with the authoring nor the conclusion of the project but generatively with *editing* the research.

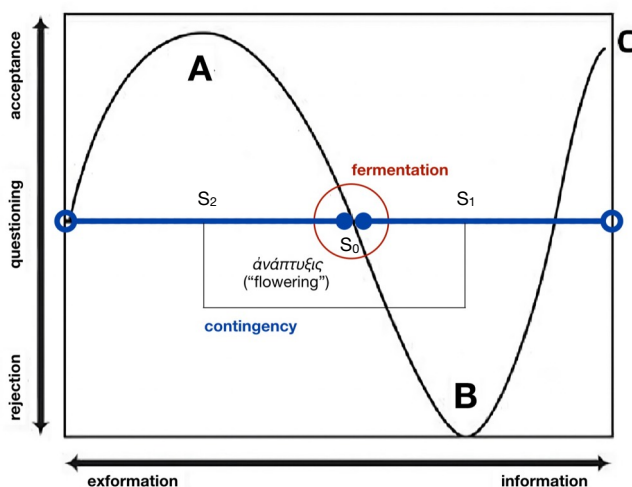


Fig. 3—Diagram redesigned (Theodor Barth) from [Michael Lissack's](#) article (Truthies, Sloppy Science, Small Samples, and the Dangers They Pose to Public Health 2023), for the purposes at hand: the transposition of the harvest of *exformation* from information at S_1 (cave/signifier) into the harvest of information from exformation at S_2 (mediations/signifier of signifier), seeking a balance at S_0 , where a flowering can emerge even as we are restricted by our divided subject $\$$ (Lacan) and the cause of the desire a (the inaccessible sacred) in the depth...