

ART HUB : ART & RESEARCH : FIVE THEMATIC THREADS

In fall 2020, Art Hub launches a central program called *CONNECTEDNESS – Kinships and Circularity*. By zooming in on five thematic threads, each focusing on a specific phenomenon, we study and investigate artistic research and knowledge production.

The five thematic threads are:

GLOBAL COMMONS focusing on rights

Commons are defined as cultural and natural resources that are accessible (or should be) for all members of a community or society, both human and non-human. Commons can be air, water or land, and also more specifically electricity, soil and food. Over the past five centuries most commons have been enclosed and privatized, and become accessible solely to those who can afford to buy access. This creates and sustains economic and cultural inequalities, as well as inequalities of power and politics. This development has led to new ethical issues, such as the human-induced contamination of various commons, drawing attention to the right to breathe clean air, access clean water or nurture clean soil, as well as issues of responsibility and justice in the context of contamination and decontamination. To explore global commons through rights is about questioning who (or what) is responsible for the emergency, and who is responsible for regeneration and restoration. It is also about how restoration can be implemented and justice articulated.

TOWARDS A NEW AESTHETICS? focusing on circularity

This thread explores new aesthetics that are neither rigid nor monumental in their materiality, and not about the object itself. Instead, new aesthetics focuses on artistic practices that in the midst of colliding crises work with a materiality and aesthetics that is processual, becoming and connects with other disciplinary practices, places and industries. This thread focuses our attention on the aesthetic deconstructions and cartographies of, for instance, an artwork's materials, geographies, mobilities, histories and issues of production – all issues that artistic practices both weave and are woven into, and that can encourage us to pursue more sustainable and livable webs and circularities.

HUMAN-NON-HUMAN CARE focusing on bacteria

This thread is about exploring care as the inevitable, vital, troublesome and ongoing work that upholds the manifold kinships and circularities of connectedness. How care – human and non-human – for 'the other' is performed and received depends on context and perspective. Most often, care is seen as natural and nice, as something significantly feminine and human. But as modernist binary divisions between nature and culture dissolve, it is essential that we explore multispecies and manifold practices of care in the midst of a looming ecological crisis. Exploring care through bacteria – and asking where and for whom bacteria are wild and tamed, good and bad – opens up for new reflections on interspecies care and ecological regeneration.

RE-DESCRIBING TERRITORIES focusing on soil

This thread explores and softens modernist demarcations that have defined and closed countries, cultures and ecologies, as well as thinking, sciences and spiritualities. Deterritorialization is a multispecies decolonization process, through which new delineations and connections can emerge. Soil is a matter that nurtures life and from which it grows, and a matter that humans have extracted as a so-called resource. Humans become soil when they die and decompose, and humans and non-humans alike can also belong to the soil in terms of national politics, etc. To study soil as a multispecies, fertile and troublesome habitat can provide a way to redescribe cultural imaginings of and ecological ethics for territoriality. Different territories, and their different local and global entanglements, must first be described and exposed in order to make it possible to contemplate redescribing territories and their aesthetics and politics.

THE CRITICAL ZONE focusing on air/space

This thread takes Bruno Latour's recent work *The Critical Zone* as its point of departure. The critical zone is the porous atmospheric binding that surrounds the Earth's surface, and that almost miraculously upholds life on Earth as we know it. It is from here we (humans and non-humans) breath – inhale and exhale. If the atmosphere is brought out of balance, life for all earthlings will change. In this sense we are all always and already biologically and culturally connected through breath and what it carries, which is what makes it a political space. The concept 'the critical zone' is borrowed from geoscience and observations of the Earth's defined critical zones. Based on the labelling of our age as the Anthropocene, Latour posits that the critical zone has to be studied for its politics, ethics and aesthetics. Other kinds of citizenship and care for multispecies life forms also need to be studied and observed in order to create new common ground for a livable planet. In this thread we aim to explore the air as an element of the critical zone. The air – fleeting, impressionable, impalpable and unruly – is not only the carrier of what gives life, but also of deadly matters: the carrier of pollen and stardust, as well as pollutants and viruses that inhabit human and non-human lungs, cultures and politics. While we breath, the other breathes, and in doing so we all breath, endlessly, planetary matter. From this perspective, it could be argued that we are not in space, but that together we produce space.

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