Introduction /
Naturing Affairs

Mihye An

Nature

In all things of nature,
there is something of the marvellous.

Aristotle

Whilst the abstract question occupies
your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete
to be solved by your hands.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

'Nature' is a vast ground to think with. It is a subject matter that is both trendy and aged, abstract and concrete, fantastic and overwhelming. The relationship between nature and us seems to present itself every time anew with "undiminished interest to every human being on earth."[1] What comes up are the basic questions and convictions on the fundamental ways of grounding, living, transcending one's condition in relation to nature. So it is not just a trending topic, though it may often appear so; nature has a long history of upheavals in the positions between monism and dualism, materialism and idealism, theology and

science. However one defines, inverts, and reinvents nature, we are inevitably connected to it.

And one may arrive there along different paths. The outset of this project was to provide an autonomous theoretical ground for 'media architectures', while understanding architecture in the broad infra-structural context of our increasingly 'medialised' environments. For more than half of the research it was focused on rethinking the notions of infrastructure and media. But I realised at some point that all our infrastructural efforts relate to the ways of affecting 'reality' in very particular ways. Let us call it a 'larger reality', a larger context, or an intellectual 'training ground'. Nature.

It is, among many others, the extraordinary writings of John Durham Peters and Ralph Waldo Emerson that facilitate such an understanding of nature and its mediality. John Durham Peters is an American media historian and philosopher, who wrote *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (2015). In this book he eclectically explains the concept of media that was connected to nature long before it was connected to technology, and argues that media theory should take this 'abundant zone of meaning'—nature—seriously.[2] In all things nature—from clouds to ether—there is something of the 'marvellous'. Peters adopts Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1803–1882) tradition, along with a number of others such as Martin Heidegger's and Marshall McLuhan's. Emerson is an American philosopher and poet, who heavily influenced Friedrich Nietzsche, Lewis Mumford, and pragmatism, to name but a few. For Emerson nature is 'a discipline' of the understanding in intellectual truths, through which one cultivates spirit, embraces 'the invisible', understands the world: "nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us."[3] Nature is not something constant or pre-given. It is always changing, because we are connected to it, while we work on our spirit.

This book intends to grasp our current architectonic endeavours—be they metaphysical or technical—in such a larger context. This does not necessarily mean that we will revisit the much-discussed dialec-tics of nature and culture, or nature and technics, but we will freely explore some of the infinite other conditions for knowledge, such as nature and meaning, nature and thought, nature and architecture.

Naturing

If it yearns after primordial truths,
the spirit destroys itself;
if it weds the earth it thrives.

Max Jacob[4]

Finding ourselves afresh in this 'training ground', let us imagine nature as a verb. A larger reality changing, coming into being. But how? Who is 'naturing'? And in what ways ? Here are some examples of naturing:

From Vedas to the Big Bang theory, the creation stories that cast abstract frames onto the world that we inhabit.

Logistical 'kindling', from 0 and coordinate systems and calendars to digital infrastructures and social media.[5]

Horse whispering—one of the natural horsemanship techniques—and human-canine relationships, through which the communication between different species is co-natured.[6]

Mathematics in general, especially in number theory, for example an imaginary number i, defined by its property $i^2 = -1$, lives by its 'abstract' trade and bridging ability: "What is actually so odd is that you can really go through quite ordinary operations with imaginary or other impossible quantities, all the same, and come out at the end with a tangible result!"[7] Or, the fact that complex numbers became proper 'citizens' of the number world by Descartes' Cartesian analysis.[8]

Numerous universes of gardens—from English to Baroque—which encapsulate certain orders and ideals through varying degrees of 'naturalness' in composition.

A new abstraction, a new object, a new entropic horizon, a new disposition.

Naturing is *not* naturalising.

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It is a constant enabling of symbolic worlds. The mediality engendered by naturing 'lifts us up' out of time and space, being an architectonic leverage.[9] It lifts us up from the physical constraints and ambiguities, from the ordinary, and from the self, by crafting of drama, logic, geometry, continuity, body, harmony, image, perspectivity, knowledge, and skills. Naturing is about uniting with nature, 'wedding' the world, in an inventive way.

Affairs

Tao gives life to all beings
and *Te* nurtures, grows, fosters, completes,
matures, rears, and protects them.

Tao Te Ching, Chapter 51

So we live in a multitude of symbolic worlds, readily and steadily becoming native to any abstract nature. But what do we do—*à faire*—living in such realities? Can we say something is happening? What keeps these worlds going?

Most of the time, it is as simple as kneading.

Gaston Bachelard talks about a 'cogito of kneading'—*un cogito pétrisseur*—in his *Earth and Reveries of Will* (1948). There is a 'dreamy' hand, working on the paste of flour—imagine a soon-*brioche* or a soon-*Zopf*—folding it infinitely inside out, mixing in some oil, mixing in some water, punching down, knowing instinctively when it becomes the perfect dough. Steven Connor puts it beautifully: "The action of kneading makes the material alive because it invests it with energy. [...] A lump of worked dough is a negentropic niche in things. Time has folded into it along with work and air, and so, having undergone a transition from an in-itself to a for-itself, it has a future."[10] Let us call it an 'affair' of kneading.

The 'negentropic energy' invested in this affair—whether kneading, dancing, or writing—would relate to what Henri Bergson calls a 'mind-energy' or 'human intelligence'.[11] No affair would occur without a *cogito*, a special sense of self, a mind-energy, a consciousness, a mode of being.

However, this does not mean *cogito* be domineering or dignifying. Ancient Chinese philosopher Laozi claims that the highest *Te*—*Te* being 'inner power' or 'inner order'—is without control, effortless, in tune with nature of its own accord.[12] Refraining from a direct moralistic take, we can see *Te* as an indeterminate 'mediator' for our understanding of the nature of things.

This aligns with what Emerson calls 'Imagination': "the Imagination may be defined to be, the use which the Reason makes of the material world."[13] Here, an individual Imagination together with Reason would create 'a whole' through the material world.

In the digital world, we observe a plethora of *Te*, imaginations, modes of being, and ways of action blended like a dream, fictitious and uncongealed: Scheherazade, Big Brother, Orlando, 'The Last Leaf', 'Morel's Machine', God, Pets, Connaisseurs, Oracles, Ghosts, Bubbles;[14] affairs of connecting, unwinding, engendering, catalysing, stretching, grammatising, drinking, absorbing, invigorating, inflating, filling up, saving in a loop, circumfusing, planetifying, wrapping, and so much more.[15]

Naturing Affairs

So, naturing and affairs depend on each other. The new infra-existential leverages offered by all kinds of naturing are not only complemented but also intimately intertwined with our own affairs, articulated in individual forms. Through the idea of 'naturing affairs', accordingly, we will look into our ways of being when living with symbolic infrastructures, at a "confluence of knowledge that defies the old split of *Geist* and *Natur*."[16] It is a question of coexisting with the world of diverse materialities and agencies by communicating with our inner

world—which has been one of the ever-rusting questions in architecture, too. Thus, the mediating role of architecture brought forward, various contributions in this book aim to heighten one's architectonic sensitivities on a basic level.

Naturing Affairs Through the Trivium

The skeleton of this book heavily benefits from the faculties of the Trivium: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. Instead of asking what is media, what is infrastructure, or when and where is the digital in architecture—which might pre-frame the object of the inquiry from a secure disciplinary distance—we ask what grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric—the integral 'perspectivities'—could mean today by looking into the complexity of naturing affairs.

The Trivium is part of the seven faculties of the Liberal Arts, the other four being the Quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. 'Faculty' means ability and capability, a means to enable one—be it human or nonhuman—to organise thoughts and affect reality. It is an abstract prism, an intellectual mind that one can carry with oneself. The Trivium is known as the 'art and science of the mind', dealing primarily with the question of how to articulate symbolically, whereas the Quadrivium—the 'four subjects'—concerns itself with how to articulate quantitatively.

We may not be familiar with these faculties today, since we are living in the high season of the Servile Arts—such as medicine, law, engineering, chemistry—that are meant to have profitable functions in the world. Liberal Arts, on the other hand, cover the realms that can't be legitimised in this way, aiming at developing general intellectual abilities, and to 'liberate' a person into rational and civic life.[17]

Some of the media theorists in the last century who most closely engaged with technology have trained with such integral modes of

thought, too.[18] Marshall McLuhan, in particular, nurtured his bodies of thinking from the Trivium, more than twenty years before he became known as a 'media guru' later in the 1960s and 70s. The title of his dissertation written in 1943 at Cambridge University was *The Classical Trivium: the Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time*. In this work he makes an extensive analysis of the multiple traditions—grammar, dialectic, rhetoric—and their controversies, ranging from antiquity to the Elizabethan age. It was a huge project. In his later works one can see the traces of the 'broad perspectives' that recast various subjects. McLuhan's works are at times criticised for not being scientific, but it is precisely not about that. It is about 'understanding', not evidence, just like in the title of his book, *Understanding Media* (1964).

This book deeply shares such a spirit, keen to transcend traditional means of discourse, with "no underlying theory to attack or defend."[19] It is, nevertheless, no easy avenue to pursue. Gaining a holistic understanding of a subject without flattening things into pragmatically, politically, and academically drawn conceptual frameworks is one thing; communicating it is another.

While reaching out for potential contributors of this project, there was a strong need for a 'medium' in order to share the enthusiasm in a succinct, yet open manner. A 'mini-atlas' of naturing affairs—which is now split up to form the opening sections for the three parts of this book—provided some sharable levels of attention and discernibility, by gathering vivid examples of naturing affairs from recent times. We could jump into any part of the atlas that one finds most fascinating or is familiar with, then we could easily move on to the neighbouring ones, eventually hoping to grasp a big picture. This way, the mini-atlas could act as a sort of body of communication, indeed without directly attacking or defending existing theoretical frames.

Back to the Trivium, what does it really offer us?

Through the faculty of grammar, one learns how to organise thoughts by inventing and using symbols. For example, when we formulate an idea through any written and spoken language, we use letters and words to form a sentence; a sentence has a subject and a predicate; then there are verbs, nouns, adjectives, and other grammatical qualifiers that serve certain purposes by distinguishing and bundling thoughts. In sum, it is about formal organisation of data into a coherent body,

systematically. Grammar, beyond the narrow sense of speech or sentence structure, is the "art of interpreting all phenomena."[20]

Dialectic is, to put it simply, the mechanics of thinking. It has to do with analysis and synthesis of grammatically organised thoughts. One can, for instance, mentally take things apart (deduction), mentally put things together (induction), or mentally lead things away (abduction). Dialectic is in the realm of pure abstraction, preceded by an individual question, a question that often does not and cannot have a definitive answer.

By thinking through rhetoric, one encounters various ways of communication and actualisation for higher levels of understanding the world. It pertains to medialising an idea, a knowledge as well as selecting means of so doing. In classical terms one would learn, for example, how to appeal by *logos*, *pathos*, *ethos*; or what type of discourse to produce in relation to time, such as future, past, and present tense. Rhetoric actually has had many ups and downs since the ancient times, in the worst case mocked as "cosmetics and cookery," or a "distemper."[21] But architecture being concerned with affecting the reality through any possible means of communication, it is hard to think of architecture without any rhetorical sophistication. Yet, it is not something easy to learn. It is a form of knowledge, too.

The three folds of naturing affairs—breeding, breathing, inhabiting—are the tentative results of training with the faculties of the Trivium, therefore, tentative propositions to the question of living with information infrastructures today and how they can be best understood. The contributions are gathered in the loose form of a 'lexicon'—a lexicon of naturing affairs—together with intermezzos, meditations, and speculative experiments.

The challenge to the reader is to gain an encompassing perspective on all of this as a whole, not splitting them apart. One may find all three aspects—grammar, dialectic, rhetoric—inside many of the contributions, observe some intriguing transitions along with the chapters.

BREEDING

The first fold of naturing affairs has much to do with bringing things into being, so that they can be active, have an effect, behave, and get operational. The basic challenge is how to breed it by medialising 'nature'—be it a field of bananas, a computer-mediated social world, or any abstract phenomenon.

The word 'breeding' has two slightly different meanings. The first one is about giving birth, reproducing, hatching, or procreating, like in the following sentence: "Through genetic manipulation, I am breeding a species of super-dogs to take over the world." The second meaning falls around raising, upbringing, training, educating domestically, as in: "The young man clearly has breeding," or "Her good breeding shows in her exquisite manners." What is interesting about the second meaning of breeding is that it differs from 'education'. The manners, behaviours, and 'code' resulting from breeding can have a powerful range of impact on one's personality and worldview.

The two meanings of breeding, then, clearly seem to share the root of *brod-*, meaning 'fetus'. So it is all about coming into 'being' in one way or another: biologically, behaviourally, cognitively, intellectually.

Natural Poems

Instead of drawing these concepts alone, I have worked on a series of poems that initiate a personal 'entering' to the three folds. I would like to call them 'Natural Poems'. The adjective 'natural' here can openly orient to what nature can be and how we relate to the natural world, rather than denoting 'coming from nature.' It is, therefore, not to be confused with 'nature poems' that typically honour the natural world, or affect one's conscience towards a naturalist stance. Natural poems in this book will not take one to the breathtaking landscapes and encourage to find peace in God's gifts. Instead, they want to provoke different kinds of sensibility, or forms of awareness, in thinking what the natural world could be like. They are speculative compositions. For such a

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mission, each poem has its distinct form and content, uses different kinds of literary technique. Minimum explanations are offered inside this introduction, however, I strongly recommend them to be read first on their dedicated pages (43–44, 119–120, 247–248). They are meant to be intuitive 'entrance tickets' to each chapter.

The first Natural Poem, BREEDING goes as follows:

hello world, swirling pond thunderbolts hiccup! wind and storm at this yellow green, yellowing of an old fruit found amidst the waves for the joy in a field alone?

soyez discret—

hello storm angel swirling pond thunder salts hiccup! wind in storm a this yell a-green and on the high yel-lowing confounded in the midst of the waves for the joy in a field a way a lone a last a love a long n

freeze—

  b
bundles for bunches
a
manners on matters
            n
a good breeding
     ADxy
first day of orientation
a
and formation
            n
how to throw impulse?
a
set fire!

cooking begins—

banana omelettes, banana sandwiches, banana casseroles, mashed banana moulded in the shape of a British icon rampant, blended with eggs into butter for American toast, squeezed out a pastry nozzle across the quivering creamy reaches of a banana blanc-mange to spell out the French words … tall cruets of pale banana syrup to pour oozing over banana waf-fles, a giant glazed crock where diced bananas have been fermenting since the summer with wild honey and muscat raisins, up out of which, this winter morn-ing of a new decade, one now dips foam mugs-full of banana mead … it is flamed in ancient brandy inside the Jackfruit's internal Internet … the sunny coloured power-jam painted all over the cross … fruitful

the first *mâtt-re* speaks—

peel the world: shake out the gaelstrom and the mudstorm: alter my home: play me paranoid android

outside space, time, and banana

This one oscillates between prose and poetic structures. In the beginning we are in a field, assumably watching some fruits that are shaking in a stormy weather. There are a couple of 'logistical' protocols, which seem to call out 'banana'. What is important to notice is that this banana is 'b a n a n a', a virtual one. The idea of this virtual banana is mediated and even cooked[22] by this very matter called language. We tend to forget that these words and letters are also some 'physical' areas covered black (or in any other discernible form). They are all too generic themselves. And this genericness powerfully medialises not only the material world but also abstract and non-existing matters.

Tókos, Voluminous Calli, Swiss Psychotropic Gold, Proteus,
Alice_ch3n81, and ...

The main body of BREEDING opens with Riccardo M. Villa's intriguing idea of *Tókos*—offspring, interest of money—a species that is non-referentially produced, that is thereby capable of naturing. David Schildberger's *Voluminous Calli* presents the role of protocol and 'media' in getting in touch with nature—plant cells—through the case of lab-cultured callus. An artistic project *Swiss Psychotropic Gold* by knowbotiq and Nina Bandi is very much concerned with the technics and protocols as well—molecularisation, dispersal, diffraction, derivatisation—to make the 'generic' gold speak, by fabulating the intertwined conditions of gold. Helen Palmer's *Sensorium* introduces various strands relating to 'intra-sensory sensory entanglements'—from R. D. Laing's poem to the cases of octopus and spider—that defy ocularcentrism. *Sirens and Organs* is Palmer's own speculative taxonomy writing, which delves into the manifold sensory world of Blackpool, England. *Proteus* is an artistic research project by Maria Smigielska and Pierre Cutellic, a communication ground to establish a 'personal grammar' between matter (ferrofluid) and human attention. Christophe Girot's *Cloudism* is a new approach to landscape design based on point cloud modelling, which allows one to accommodate the overwhelming 'simulacrum' of physical reality.

We then listen to a creature, an intelligent entity, an author, who contemplates on its 'natural' condition, in Sebastian Michael's *Being* (the first of *Three Pieces of Mind*). Alice_ch3n81—a sort of *Tókos*—bred by a multiplicity of bodies reveals itself through *A Letter to a Character*.

Petra Tomljanovic's *Noise, Clinamen* celebrates Lucretius' idea of 'clinamen'—swerving atoms—through which things happen into being, in differentiation, displaced from equilibrium, and from which 'dispositions' can arise. Helen Palmer's *Scales as Spectra* is a banquet of 'breeding' affairs in six squares from a hormone symphony to an intimate look at ridged sand.

BREATHING

In the second fold, the mind grapples with transcending all kinds of linguistic categories, through which one is used to think. One is faced with antinomies, paradoxes, limits, and ambiguities; one has to accommodate the unattainable; one is to learn how to put things together symbolically, model them, take them apart, test them out, in order to grasp a kind of 'consistency' in relation to one's question.

This consistency, straightforwardly, has a lot to do with the notion of 'information'. Information, according to Norbert Wiener, is neither energy nor matter; it is a third thing. One may call it 'vertical stabilities' in a horizontal machinistic stream.[23] Information signifies something, however, it is not itself content; it is indeterminate, yet invariant. McLuhan would say, it is 'the meaning of meaning' that we experience and breathe.

Here comes the second Natural Poem, BREATHING (p. 119–120).

O dreary Northern wind, why blow again
A dash of liveliness, I feel, is running low!
Christ, pain in the fibres from joint to joint
Now I in my bed again
Beneath the bones, I am told, it must flow!

The waves, must I collect to recover?
Inhale, when her palm channels the vibrant energy
The corpuscles, must I shake to changeover?
Exhale, when the balm infiltrates the surgery

But, the hand becomes warm in delivery
When it reads and gives, it heals
Then, have a hand in the artery
When it reaches and gauges, it seals

The hand is I am the lizard is the breath
Acting natural, hands-down
Palpation and ambulation in highland
Let me breathe in your arms

And I see, on the one hand, a pure move
I hear, on the other hand, splashing love
The care is alive indeed
Remember that I did believe

Ah! the holointraphysicalchiswingtantiality!
Yet still, a symtransintentionaldedormapathy

Miratus, where am I now?
In the Terr, mine a sea, github, A chure anew, up jack TV tea?
Indeterminacy, gift of nature, a new object-ivity!

It is lyrical this time. It develops from the wild, unbreathable, northern air. It elevates the trouble of the body. But something transforms in the course of the symmetries: body and energy, waves and corpuscles, subjective perception and physical movement, the healer and the healed, being and becoming. The composition departs from the perfect end rhymes (such as *low* and *flow*), then moves onto the imperfect ones (such as *delivery* and *artery*), and as the 'hand' penetrates and acts on different levels of meaning we enter the so-called 'eye rhymes' (such as *move* and *love*), which are not on the level of sound. Before the last two lines come back to the cryptic, phonetical symmetries—'holorhymes'—there is a short meditational intermezzo, an unbaked stream of consciousness—the *holointraphysicalchiswingtantiality* and *symtransintentionaldedormapathy*—which express something indeterminate, yet intelligible.

Worlding, Counter-Dancing, Gardening, Foaming, Savouring, Excavating, Donning, and …

Likewise, one will find in BREATHING many symmetries of thinking as well as the great joy and challenge of embracing them together. The first parts manifest so through many a verb. *Worlding* is an idea central to Ian Cheng's *Emissaries Trilogy* (2015–2017)—live simulations created using a video game engine—a practice of constructing a World and 'enacting its ongoingness' (*A Brief History of Infinite Games (and Worlds)*). Riccardo M. Villa's *imaginal*—a 'constructed' domain between intelligible realities and mundane sensible ones—is a space of *Gardening*, which has a lot to do with 'domesticating' entropy. Shintaro Miyazaki's *Counter-Dancing* is an exercise, which relates itself to a number of formulations from the past, in an attempt to stay sovereign in dealing with present problems.

For Jorge Orozco, *Foaming* is an act of producing 'panoramas' out of a fertile ground of movies—a *vidéothèque*—using a private search engine. Sebastian Michael's *Object*—the second of *Three Pieces of Mind*—is an architectonic meditation on giving a lively and maturing home, a temple, a cathedral to 'a thought'. David Schildberger's *Savouring a Viand* takes a step further to Michael's meditation by offering a rare blind tasting of a 'CCCC'. Scaling up to a gigantic object, Benjamin Dillenburger and Michael Hansmeyer write a reverse-chronological design logbook of *Digital Grotesque*, while *excavating* information

that lives on a multitude of levels from the technical and structural to the semantic and more. Christina Jauernik's *Stillness in the System*, *Breathless*, and *Anti-Ekstasis* are delicate exercises and reflections from the artistic research project *INTRA SPACE*, where one can practise 'otherness' between human and engineered beings, visible and invisible, actual and virtual. Ian Cheng explains the role of *Emissaries*—narrative agents, or, different models of mind—who give a sense of order between deterministic stories and chaos (*What Are Your Responsibilities as Emissary?*).

The last parts take a wider breath encompassing nature, abstract form, intelligence, and architectonics. Diana Alvarez-Marin explores a dynamic notion of 'atlas' through the works of Aby Warburg, Gerhard Richter, and Michel Serres. *Hand Book* by Emma Moberg is a 'handy atlas' of its own kind that lays out multiple viewpoints to think on and with nature. Ludger Hovestadt offers an extensive insight on the wealth of our 'intellect', urging a rethink on the notions of *Artificial Intelligence, Cogito*, and *Architectonics*.

INHABITING

The third fold arrives at the various questions concerning how we can choose to affect reality: by making a new composition, by characterising things that are already forming the basis of our 'natural world', by medialising ideas, by reordering our habits. 'Inhabiting' in such a context has a lot to do with making a new form of 'life', or a new area of meaning, which could possibly offer higher levels of understanding of the world we live in.

Here comes the last Natural Poem (p. 247–248). This time it is close to fiction, somewhat satirical and partly absurd; it is using language in a more playful manner. Let it appeal to you with its own movement and rationality.

once more, a boy snores with his pipe
in the deep valley of Confoederatio Helvetica
he is catching the surface-bodies, floating on water
a toblerone, melting ice, a ghostbuster, goooooogle;
a girl wonders now and then—
why do people go snorkelling
into the Pool of Form of Pool;
a man must go down the watershed
difficulty in fresh breathing there
lungs can't let the moisture in, unless you imagine it
but the mind is relentless, you gotta know
the *See* sees *Seele*
no, I've never said I can swim
bubbles in the body part!;
listen under,
you, the white Leptomedusae, a.k.a. Thecate
hydroids—
a personal Memo arrived for you
I have collected some favourite jelly and stuff
the Matthew hydroids comes with its gleaming eyes
let me seeeee
it has germinated long ago
let me transfix water
or, let me consume the jelly first
let me slitscan the jelly and water
let me dip into the chewy vapour
let me be able to change your lifestyle soon

let me cool the snow
let me spit it out
let me spray them up, or what?
careful, hail means death
worry not about the depositions
no, we didn't know
give me some gentle endorsement
give me some updrafts
give me that!
now:
snow is cooled, alive, points fall
#blessed #powerful;
a dog looks out the rimed and fogged windows
liquid nose, mouth closed
it smells the rejuvenating firn of the Alps
it thinks, is this radical and foolish enough?;
a son wonders now and then—
why tears in my ice cream
wasn't it Swarovski last time
when will I go snowcooling again?
above the Swirling Nimbostratus;
a daughter sees the point-falls impress
let it snow, I know
a thing so miraculous as water
shall I dream about a snow volcano?
as a matter of course,

Multiple things are happening here. There is, obviously, something to do with water and snow, which are basically made of the same thing, and which are in a cycle. One can observe a certain complexity in 'characterising' water. Then there's the cooling of snow, spitting it out, spraying it as point clouds. Lots of techniques can be involved, in other words, lots of different ways of having affairs with water can be imagined. Additionally, there is a sense of generation in time, something unfolding, and water unfolding in different memories and perspectives.

XWB, Rose Painting, Approximation, Patterns of Activation, Pulverisation, and ...

As you approach INHABITING you will first find a series of works that materialise our intimate affairs with 'the world'. Yngve Holen and Katja Novitskova—artists of the same generation—outstandingly offer articulations of their own *approximations*, techniques, wit, and architecture. Yngve Holen uses multiple techniques for giving a 'soul' to industrialised objects such as car rims, supermarket chicken, a cow carcass: by 'running it over', by 3D scanning, by scaling up, by cutting and gutting. Katja Novitskova channels and composes iconic canons —*Patterns of Activation*—that circulate our current 'natural world': an overabundance of animal images on the Internet that incessantly activate our attention to look at them. Approximating what the world can be from a different angle, Valle Medina and Benjamin Reynold's *Paris Hermitage* takes one to a cloistered place made of pulverised quartz crystals, organised in oscillating time, in order to know oneself by re-affecting our sensibilities. In a similar vein, Natalie Hase's *The Ignoramus Palace* is a speculative 'architecture', an infrastructure for experiencing and grasping the 'highest reality'.

   A Lobster Quadrille consists of four *Generic Poems* that are not 'written' but composed by Alice_ch3n81, out of a plentiful of books. Jorge Orozco's *Engendering* gives life to the daily 'panoramas' of two architects in conversation, based on hundreds of Russian and Brazilian movies. *A Celebration of Boring Daily Life* by Noa Nagane is a 'life-affirming' architectural manifesto in search for a new 'quality' that resides in our mundane daily life. Giacomo Pala's *Design as Allegory* is concerned with an 'allegorist' approach to design wherein recomposition and activation of heterogeneous realities can possibly

lead to a new locality of meaning. In *The Mozartian Chemistry*—a production note by Romeo Castellucci for his unconventional opera *Magic Flute or The Song of the Mother (La Flûte enchantée ou le Chant de la Mère)*—we hear his way of inhabiting and bringing 'the Mozartian potion' to its maximum around the *Mother (The Queen of the Night).* Sebastian Michael's *Thought*—the third of *Three Pieces of Mind*—speculates upon the 'connexum' that allows one to 'empathise' with one's world, thereby allowing the Thought to be lived.

1   Thomas Henry Huxley, 1836; In Carl Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence* (Penguin Random House LLC., 1977), 238: "The question of all questions for humanity, the problem which lies behind all others and is more interesting than any of them is that of the determination of man's place in Nature and his relation to the Cosmos. Whence our race came, what sorts of limits are set to our power over Nature and to Nature's power over us, to what goal we are striving, are the problems which present themselves afresh, with undiminished interest, to every human being born on earth."

2   See the interview between Brían Hanrahan and John Durham Peters, 'The Anthropoid Condition' (2015); https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-anthropoid-condition-an-interview-with-john-durham-peters

3   Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature", Chapter VI. 'Idealism'; in *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Random House, Inc, 1950) 28.

4   Max Jacob, *Philosophies, No. I* (1924); in Ulrich Conrad, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-century Architecture* (The MIT Press, 1975) 89.

5   John Durham Peters talks about 'logistical media' such as the zero, money, 'AD' and 'CE', which pretend to be neutral and abstract; *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (University of Chicago Press, 2015) 176.

6   For horse whispering see science fiction writer Bernard Werber's speculative account, in *L'Encyclopédie du savoir relatif et absolu* (Le Livre de Poche, 2011). For the human-canine relationship, there is, of course, Donna Haraway's *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003).

7   Robert Musil, *Young Törless* (Pantheon Books, 1955), 106–107: " [...] in a calculation like that you begin with ordinary solid numbers, representing measures of length or weight or something else that's quite tangible—at any rate, they're real numbers. And at the end you have real numbers. But these two lots of real numbers are connected by something that simply doesn't exist. Isn't that like a bridge where the piles are there only at the beginning and at the end, with none in the middle, and yet one crosses it just as surely and safely as if the whole of it were there? That sort of operation makes me feel a bit giddy, as if it led part of the way God knows where. But what I really feel is so uncanny is the force that lies in a problem like that, which keeps such a firm hold on you that in the end you land safely on the other side."

8   Only by René Descartes' Cartesian form—a mathematical 'therapy', a salvation—were complex numbers representable by a point (a, b) on a real plane, that is, on the horizontal axis of real numbers and the vertical axis of imaginary numbers. Complex numbers now confidently stand on top of all the others by their great abilities. They have all the properties of a real number, the roots of all the equations are always in the range of complex numbers, and they are also electrical engineers' nearest kin, being able to smoothly move along the Polar form.

9   See, for example, John Durham Peters: "Media lift us out of time by providing a symbolic world that can store and process data, in the widest sense of that word." *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (University of Chicago Press, 2015) 50.

10   Steven Connor, *Topologies: Michel Serres and the Shapes of Thought*, Anglistik 15.1 (2004).

11   See his *Mind-energy: Lectures and Essays* (1920) and *Creative Evolution* (1907).

12   This is a concept of *wuwei* from *Tao Te Ching,* meaning "inaction" or "nonaction". *Wuwei* can be understood as a subtle 'art' of being in the world, that is, being in and with *ziran* (a concept often translated into "nature", literally meaning "self so").

13   Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Nature', Chapter VI. 'Idealism'; in *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Random House, Inc, 1950) 29.

14   See Mihye An's *Atlas of Fantastic Infrastructures: An Intimate Look at Media Architecture* (Birkhäuser, 2016) for "Scheherazade, Big Brother, Orlando, 'The Last Leaf', 'Morel's Machine', God"; for "Pets, Connaisseurs, Oracles, Ghosts, Bubbles", see Mihye An's *Species of Media Architecture,* presented at Memories of the Future Conference (London, 2014) https://vimeo.com/94532725.

15   Ibid.

16   John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (University of Chicago Press, 2015) 27.

17   Sister Miriam Joseph and Marguerite McGlinn, *The Trivium: The Liberal Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric* (Paul Dry Books, 2002).

18   I am referring to Marshall McLuhan and Friedrich Kittler: McLuhan for Trivium, Kittler for Quadrivium. Interestingly, they both worked on the 'quadrivic' faculties in their final years: McLuhan on "Tetrads", Kittler on "Music and Mathematics".

19   Marshall McLuhan and Eric McLuhan, *Laws of Media: The New Science* (University of Toronto Press, 1992) 7.

20   W. Terrence Gordon, Editor's Introduction; In Marshall McLuhan, *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of His Time* (Gingko Press, 2009), xi.

21   Whereas Artistotle regarded rhetoric as techne, Plato compared it to "cosmetics and cookery." Desiderius Erasmus wrote a rhetoric textbook *De Copia* (1512), while Francis Bacon (1561–1626) referred rhetoric to "the first distemper (illness) of learning when men study words and not matter."

22   The banana cooking paragraph is borrowed and advanced from Thomas Pynchon's novel *Gravity's Rainbow* (Vintage, 2013), 12.

23   Ludger Hovestadt, 'Mastering the Generic'; in *Atlas of Fantastic Infrastructures: An Intimate Look at Media Architecture*, Applied Virtuality, Vol. 9. (Birkhäuser Basel, 2016) 7.