

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Artful Bodymind

enlivening transformative research methodologies

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**Artful Bodymind:
Enlivening transformative research
methodologies**

By

Miche Fabre Lewin

PhD

October 2019



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Enlivening transformative research
methodologies**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the University's
requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy**





Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

Miche Fabre Lewin

Project Title:

Stage One Fieldwork in South Africa

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

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Synopsis

I am. Who am I? Where am I? How do I know who I am? How do I know where I am? How do I know what to be, what to do, how to act? How do I know my 'I'?

The body and its lived experience have been actively subjugated as a knowing subject within Western research cultures. The epistemicide of the body's multiple intelligences is in tandem with our severance from an extensive relationship with food as well as highlighting the disconnection from the art of ritual as part of life's dynamic forms and processes.

My thesis is a response to calls for artful, holistic and embodied research that encompasses personal and collective liberation for social and ecological justice. I situate my research within performative and transformative research methodologies which, in their embrace of a relational approach to knowing, respect the serendipitous, the intuitive, the unknown and the emergent. I innovate the concept of the artful bodymind as a remembering of the senses and multiple intelligences of the interconnected body and mind. My artful bodymind evolves with and through my biography and life encounters, my ritual arts practice and my research inquiries, all within a continuous exchange with people, matter and habitats of place.

The field of my Performative Action Research took place within an Artist Research Residency in South Africa entitled *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture*. Based on my proposal, the research design was co-evolved with the Sustainability Institute, Lynedoch and the University of Stellenbosch. Within this Residency I devised Ritual Workshops that make visible the living food cycle within conditions which foster a sympoietic sensibility and offer the experience of participatory consciousness through skills-sharing with artisan, culinary and regenerative food-growing practices.

As an exploration of the artful bodymind within a contemporary ritual form, my Practice-as-Research reconnects and reintegrates art and ritual for naturalcultural living. My contribution to knowledge is a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology that creates the conditions for the artful bodymind to experience participatory consciousness. These convivial encounters with food cultures through the artful bodymind are the ground for cultivating an ethics of care in the everyday.

To my mother Cecile Madeleine Fabre and my father Gerald Reg Lewin.

You gave me life, laughter, love and liberation.

Sadly, you will not be holding these pages in your Earthly hands.



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My heartfelt gratitude goes to my Director of Studies Professor Michel Pimbert and my supervisor Dr Patricia Gaya. Deep appreciations to Dr Rika Preiser my advisor from Stellenbosch University, South Africa, who joined my supervisory team along the way. With me throughout the journey Dr Chris Seeley has been my supervisor, at first from her home Folly Cottage and subsequently her guidance came from the other side. Beyond words is my honouring and respect of the artful collaboration between myself and Dr Flora Gathorne-Hardy, who was my Thinking-Listening partner throughout my research.

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Gratitude to the Genius Loci

UK

The Abbey, Sutton Courtney; Create Centre, Bristol; The Five Valleys; Studio OPS; Folly Cottage; No. 84, Lilburn; Hawkwood; Rock Cottage; The Painswick; Star Anise; Alde Cottage; Shingle Street; Darsham Nursery Café; Wentworth Hotel; Brudenall Hotel; White Lion Hotel; Unruly Pig; Timberyard; River Thames, London.

Netherlands

Sittard

Sweden

Ytterjarna

Denmark

Thrymshøj

South Africa

Garden Cottage Spier Farm; Nature's Valley; Bainskloof; Sustainability Institute; Millwood Cottage.

ORIENTATION

Challenge of our times

I write this thesis during a time when artificial intelligence and the electronic ecosystem lure us with technological promises for better lifestyles and faster futures free from the flaws and failings of the human body. This technological sophistication is starkly silhouetting against our disconnection from our environment. This is evidenced in the degradation of our planetary habitat, multiple oppressions, human poverty, damaged soils, denatured food, polluted air, poisoned waters, dis-eased bodies and the accelerating loss of species.

Research home

My academic home is within the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR) at Coventry University. CAWR's research in the natural and social sciences actively develops alternatives to industrial food and farming. Within a humanities, arts and transdisciplinary culture CAWR is committed to democratic co-production of knowledge with diverse groups of people. For my doctoral research, South Africa serendipitously became the setting for the primary fieldwork. During 2016 and 2017 Stellenbosch University and the Sustainability Institute in Lynedoch Valley, near Stellenbosch were the habitats of my research. My doctorate is the first Practice-as-Research PhD within CAWR.

The practice and art of sympoeitic living

In our industrialised communities, we have divided our minds from our bodies, nature from culture, and art from science. This thesis is a remembering of a participatory consciousness and the interconnected co-making of our human selves within the sentience of other-than-human worlds. *Rta*, the Sanskrit origin of the word 'art' and 'ritual' translates as the dynamic flow of movement from which all arises. Similarly, 'sympoiesis' is the biological concept defining the cooperative, interlinking and dynamic behaviours of ecosystems (Dempster 2000). My Performative Action Research with an ecological food practice unfolds through the processes and forms of art and ritual as restoration of this participatory and sympoietic worldmaking.

Artful bodymind

I conceive the concept of the 'artful bodymind' to embrace art as a practice in living, where the 'artful' is a tuning into the senses and multiple intelligences of the interconnected body and mind. I inhabit this imaginary of the 'artful bodymind' in recognition that my beingness unfolds within an interdependent and participatory ecology of life. The artful bodymind is in a sympoietic dance between the psyche, the somatic body, the archetypal imagination and the other-than-human world. My artful bodymind is my divining instrument for being-with and knowing the world.

Transformative and performative research

My Practice-as-Research thesis situates itself within performative and transformative research paradigms, where awareness and experience of selfhood and the lived inquiry of the researcher are integral to cultivating an ecological consciousness that is socially engaged. It is research that contributes to transformative cultures as a liberatory, embodied and poetic practice which enhances human flourishing and respects the other-than-human realms. In South Africa my Performative Action Research introduces an innovative approach to diversity work that cultivates a sympoietic sensibility. It was a timely challenge to co-create such intercultural and transformative research that intervenes with food as a practice in participatory consciousness. For myself it was a profound opportunity to be in a meaningful and daily engagement with my dedication to an aesthetics of liberation.

Artful collaboration

For my research to be an ethical practice and contribute to sympoietic worldmaking, I invited my long-term collaborator Dr Flora Gathorne-Hardy to accompany me for the duration of my research. The continuity of her presence as my Thinking-Listening partner and chronicler cultivates the ground for a co-operative culture of research methodologies. Within an academic setting which privileges the individual author, this collaboration encourages new forms, and new norms for collective inquiry and ways of coming to know. Through the thinking-feeling-listening presence and wit(h)ness of another, entwining with the matter and processes of art-making, we are co-operating in the co-creation of sympoietic knowledgemaking. My collaboration with Flora been an experience of evolutionary presence and enhanced the scope and depth of my research inquiry, as well as enriched Flora's art, selfhood and research practices.

Artist Research Residencies

The primary empirical research was conducted as a three-month Artist Research Residency *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture* at the Sustainability Institute. Within this Residency I conceived, co-ordinated and curated a series of three Ritual Workshops to introduce the living food cycle – composting, growing, harvesting, cooking, food sharing and thanks-giving. These skills-sharing workshops were convivial encounters to cultivate embodied and reflective encounters with an ecological food practice of naturally grown and locally sourced produce. Working in post-Apartheid South Africa offered a meaningful context for a liberatory research inquiry with food.

Elements of my Practice-as-Research thesis

My Practice-as-Research doctoral thesis comprises two interconnected elements: firstly, the **Complementary Writing**; and, secondly, the **Performative Installation and Ritual** accompanied by the **Artist Film**. The Complementary Writing gives the context and orientation for the practice element of my performative work, and defines the purpose, theory and research activities of my doctoral inquiry. The Performative Installation and Ritual formed the other half of my thesis, which I hosted on 3 April 2019 at Ryton Gardens where CAWR is based. Within a choreographed environment, participant-researchers were offered an encounter within my artful research, as well as sharing a food ritual within the Cook's Garden. The Artist Film *Art of the Everyday* made in collaboration with Benjamin Cook documents this practice element of the Thesis. As a cinematic choreography the film is faithful to a poetics of embodied transformative research. The film can be accessed from www.touchstones.earth website.

Constellative form

The Complementary Writing engages my bodymind in the process of responsive and emergent thinking to unfold its narrative. Within the diversity of the matter of my research, I have evolved a constellative form as an evocation of this process of 'becoming-with' my research inquiry. I use the word 'Constellations' to describe how the assembling of diverse experiences, practices and encounters becomes a cyclical and iterative expression of the interdependent entwining of practice and theory.

Becoming-with the image

The well-furrowed artistic medium of complementing text with image is one that, as a multi-media artist, I have inhabited prior to and throughout my doctoral research. Within the Complementary Writing, the artmaking images, the photoworks and the photographs are as much the 'texts' as the scripted form, which together document the sympoietic dance of my research experiences. In respect of these imaginal works, I invite the reader to encounter deeply, to pause, muse, feel into, hold curiosity and dwell-with the visual, the image-text and the archetypal.

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CONTEXT AND RESPONSE

Some materials have been removed from this thesis due to Third Party Copyright. Pages where material has been removed are clearly marked in the electronic version. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Figure 1. The Temptation of Shakyamuni Buddha by Mara.

‘The Earth is my authority’ declared Buddha as he resisted the temptations of Mara to draw him into the conditioned existence of delusion and attachment. Buddha reaches to touch the soil with the fingers of his right hand in a humble gesture of Earth-witness.

Introduction

The sacred image of the Buddha with the physical gesture of his own body touching the Earth illuminates how ethical conduct against injustice draws its consciousness from an embodied experience with life on this planet. In resonance with the Buddha's gesture, I draw from *Duino Elegies Nine*, a poem by 20th century German poet Rainer Maria Rilke. In his lament, Rilke calls to us humans 'to be at one with the earth.' Here, below, I select extracts from this poem:

But *truly* being here is so much; because everything here
Apparently needs us,
this fleeting world, which in some strange way
keeps calling to us.
Us, the most fleeting of all.
Once for each thing. Just once; no more. And we too,
just once. And never again. But to have been
this once small, completely, even if only once:
to have been at one with the earth, seems beyond undoing.
...
Here is the time for the *sayable*, here is its homeland.
Speak and bear witness. More than ever
The Things that we might experience are vanishing, for
What crowds them out and replaces them is an imageless act.
...
Earth, isn't this what you want: to arise within us,
invisible? Isn't it your dream
to be wholly invisible someday? – O Earth: invisible!
What, if not transformation, is your urgent command? (Mitchel 1982: 199-203)

These pictorial and poetic images are a confirmation that this is 'the time for the sayable'. They guide me to the purpose of my doctoral research, which is to be heeding the callings of the world, and to be reconnecting our kinship within a participatory consciousness with the Earth (Berry, T. 1999; Cashford 2010; Macy 1991). For us humans to be speaking out, to be bearing witness, to be discovering what it means to be *truly* here, is to reconnect with embodied knowing through the body, for this is how we can become-with 'The Things that we might experience'.

In attending to the health of the psyche and physical well-being of the human body, my practice as an art therapist attuned me to processes of liberation. I was inspired by the materiality of art therapy and how it cultivated consciousness through interactions with matter and the sensing body. As I wrote in *Revisiting Feminist Approaches to Art Therapy*:

Through our bodies we experience the world. It follows that our body's interrelationship with the world is essential to becoming conscious, and that we cannot think ourselves into liberation alone: we need to enact our way to freedom through the body. (Fabre Lewin 2012: 220)

Action researchers Chris Seeley and Ellen Thornhill write of the need for a radical shift in our relationship with knowing and interacting with the world (Seeley and Thornhill 2014). Such a shift comes through and with the body, for here is where our consciousness arises. In their co-written report, *Artful Organisation*, they appeal for 'a change in our consciousness ... with more intuitive, embodied sensing and knowing' (Seeley and Thornhill 2014: 9). In *Person/Planet*, Theodore Roszak considers the 'severe distortion of human nature' and identifies the alienation from ourselves, each other and our communities as caused by the urban industrial system and our severance from the natural world (Roszak 1977: xx). He writes:

Those who refuse to submit to that distortion must do more than challenge the integrity of their society's politics; they must call into question the going standard of sanity, the established criteria of knowledge, our collective state of soul. At their hands, the whole human personality, body, soul, and spirit, must be brought into the arena of dissent as a critical counterpoise to the diminished experience to which urban industrialism limits our awareness. In brief, they must create a politics of consciousness. (Roszak 1977: xx)

In 2018, Professor of Sustainability Dr Jem Bendell presented his paper 'Deep Adaptation: A Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy' in which he surveyed the current research on climate change (Bendell 2018). He offers Deep Adaptation as a conceptual map for socio-ecological resilience and proposes fourteen recommendations for human societies and the future of the planet. These principles engage with how our valued norms and behaviours address how to be living beyond what he calls 'collapse-denial' (Bendell 2018). He invites us to be exploring afresh the idea of consciousness and his recommendations include: being connected to a group, being in spaces where we can

create, play, practise love and compassion, cultivate activities which ground us in emerging awareness, seek opportunities for self-reflection, sensemaking and positive vision-making.

What kinds of experiences are we seeking to enable our capacity to be heeding the ‘urgent command’ of the Earth (Mitchell 1982: 203) and to take up Roszak’s call for creating a ‘politics of consciousness’ to counter this amnesia (Roszak 1977: xx)? What kinds of encounters might offer us the opportunity to be embodying Bendell’s map of Deep Adaptation, that is exploring approaches which inspire a wonder at life, a sense of faith in our cultures and species? What grounding activities might refresh our consciousness, stimulate self-reflection and offer positive visions for our human cultures and bio-diverse cultures? How to be cultivating the capacities for interacting with our world through embodied sensing and knowing?

Practising a life

In response to these calls for new norms and transformative experiences that reconnect us to the animate world, here is an autoethnographic journey of the many ways in which my own physical body has been coming to know thus far in my own existence. I share some of the experiences and encounters that shape my own consciousness as a human being and artist-researcher within a participatory universe. What are the practices, the processes and the principles that have influenced and prepared my thinking, my values, my being and behaving in the world?

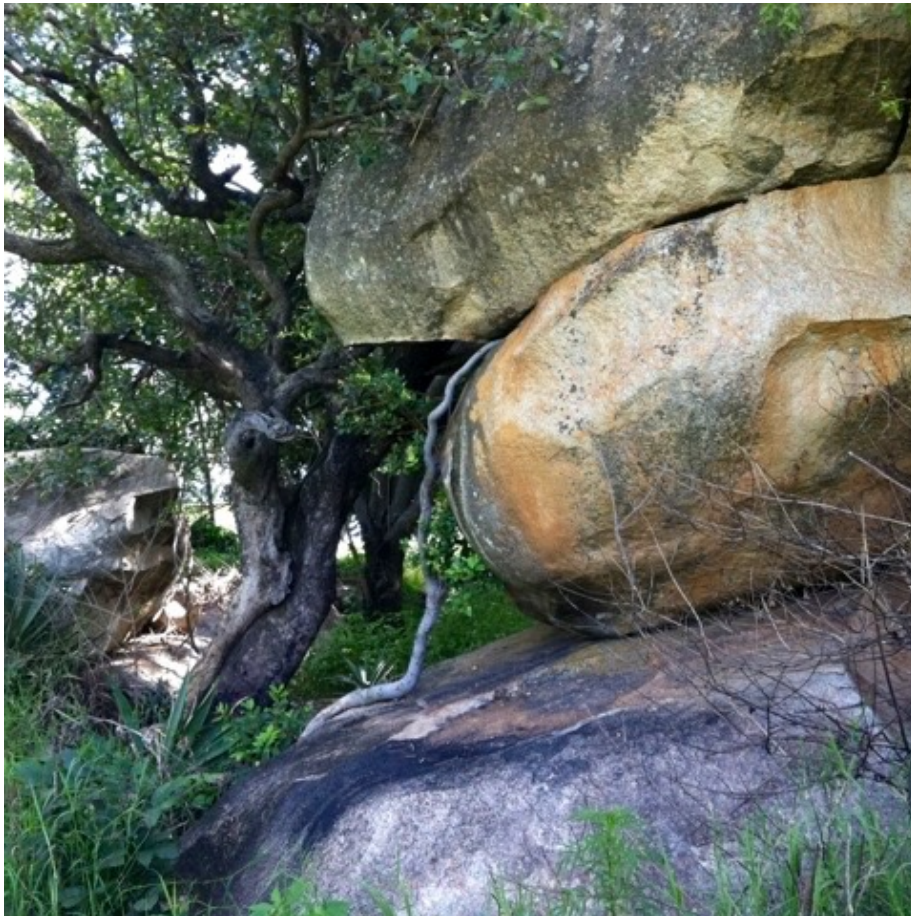
I am.

I am a white African, born to a Jewish Zimbabwean father and French Catholic mother. I was raised in a house designed and built with local materials of granite and reed. My home nestled on the shores of a man-made lake in the savanna bush of Zimbabwe. Amidst the towering boulders of weather hewn granite known as the balancing rocks, which were a feat of balance and a sight of awesome beauty, my body scrambled over and climbed many a kopje discovering rock paintings, sitting high and still, wide-eyed with wonder at the bird’s eye view over the reaches of the lake and the animals that roamed within the game reserve that surrounded its shores. Those stones are in my bones, and my blood courses with the dry, baking heat of sun and the moist smell of a

steaming rain-soaked soil, torrential downpours quenching a thirsty land. My African history, my youthful geography, inhabits my body – it is cellular knowing. (Personal Journal January 2016).

This was colonial Rhodesia. At a distance from my family home, further down the dirt road and up the hill, lived the families of black fishermen who were employed within my father's fishing business, Tiger Bay Fisheries. This village, known as the 'compound', was a clustering of mud and grass huts sheltering between granite rocks. As a white 'European' child too young for recognising the boundaries of racism, I played with the black children surrounded by the pecking chickens and the crowing cockerels, the drying racks of barbel fish and the women fishing with long rods at the water's edge. This was a natural geography of a playground within the granite rock and swept earth hearths. Here, too, I experienced the richness of embodied, indigenous rites of passage and seasonal celebrations that were always accompanied by song, dance and food sharing.

Figure 2. A beloved granite rock near my lakeside home.



In reflecting on my childhood home I am aware that it was built on a whaleback of granite. To this day, when I return to granite landscapes, its magnetic effect on me emotionally and psychologically is powerful. In her book *A Land* printed in 1951, Oxford Professor of Archaeology Jacquetta Hawkes reflects poetically of how becoming conscious is in response to the environment and how whole-bodied living comes through the physical and the imaginal (Hawkes 1951). She eloquently writes of 'consciousness traced back to the rocks', 'stone-sensed', with thoughts as 'rocks, silently forming' (Hawkes 1951 cited in Macfarlane 2015: 272). My own body is a threshold for knowing-as-becoming – a continuous, relational process that is a process of flow and dissolution. My consciousness grows through movement, through interaction, through touch, through being-with, through attraction and deflection, and through the relationship with objects and with others. This relationality arises through and with place – with *topos*. My biography is intertwined with my topography, what I refer to as my topobiography.

Encountering the works of Freud and Jung, throwing the I Ching and reading books on Buddhism, alchemy, and other esoteric manuscripts, all stimulated my teenage mind. Jung's *Man and his Symbols* fired in me an awakening to the potency of images and symbolism, and the power of metaphor (Jung 1964). These teachings tapped into the processes of the psyche and tuned me to the collective unconscious as a source for knowing through imaginal and archetypal sensibilities (Jung 1964). Here lay the foundations for my initiation into an expanded understanding of the breadth of the imagination and what art offers for personal and political transformation within a participatory consciousness (Berry, T. 1999).

In the late 1970s, I came to the UK and my growing identity as an artist continued to be shaped within my student days in Norwich at the University of East Anglia. The 20th century aesthetics of Dada and Surrealism awoke in me a sense of awe and wonder. These artworks, composed of unfamiliar juxtaposition of artefacts, imagery and text, were intended to evoke dreamscapes and provoke happenings as cultural interventions. I was fascinated by the co-mingling of matter and metaphor as a means for inspiring visionary and political action – an alchemical medium for conversations between mind, body, soul and spirit.

During this time, I was exploring my own liberation as a woman through recognising how the personal is political. In developing my literacy to my own oppression, I became conscientised to my unwitting role in black oppression as a young white

person with a colonial heritage (Bagelle 2012; Fanon 1983; Freire 1970). How to address the harming? From my late-twenties onwards, I actively sought to counter these power imbalances, and I educated myself in how systemic power structures influence our individual ways of being and thinking in the world. It was during this time that I began training, practising and leading in a form of liberation peer counselling devised by Harvey Jackins and taken into academe within Action Research by John Heron (Heron 1992; Jackins 1987).

During my early thirties, convinced by the imaginal, healing and liberatory potential of the arts, I trained in art therapy and later began working professionally as an art therapist. I worked dedicatedly on my own internalised white racism and developed leadership skills in facilitating individual and group work to address multiple forms of oppression that restrict our individual and collective healing and freedom. In 'Transcultural Issues: considerations on language, power and racism', I wrote about the potential of art therapy as a practice in liberation politics (Fabre Lewin 1990). For a more egalitarian and just society, our responsibility is to be working on our identities and to own and face our personal and social wounds and the related emotions. As I wrote:

We need to start looking within ourselves, questioning our own sense of culture and value system, examining our own self-images, and the internalised oppression which dominates our own conscious and unconscious landscape. (Fabre Lewin 1990: 15)

This was a rich time of studying. The lived experiences and teachings of art and therapy offered my bodymind formative experiences for my future arts practice with ritual. Elements of this therapeutic learning included: creating a secure base for clients and patients with protocols in place with safe conditions to promote healing; confidentiality; respect of time boundaries; the importance of cohering comfortable and beautiful physical spaces; listening practices to offer empathy; and the medium of matter as metaphor. The therapeutic arena also equipped me with a sensibility for tuning into the unconscious processes and archetypal dimensions of the bodymind, as well as giving me a great respect for the potency of the image and the metaphor of matter. The role of therapy also illuminated the absence of natural cultural rituals in our consumerist cultures, rituals that were the foundation for health-giving practices for personal and collective healing. These were all foundational principles for my later work and research with food and the Ritual Workshops.

Figure 3. Thinking-with the matter of books.



Engaging with the politics of contemporary discourses on food culture, 2001.

Alongside my therapeutic work, I was continuing my exploration of food and healing and becoming more aware, through attending food and farming conferences and by studying nutrition, of how essential the health of the living soil was to human health. As Roszak writes, 'the needs of the person and the needs of the planet have become one' (Roszak 1977: xix). These agricultural experiences and ecological teachings were deeply enhancing to the evolution of my practice as an artist and my dedication to the arts as a transformative and visionary force. In 1993, I was invited to an artist residency at Shave Farm in Somerset, UK. This was a time for musing, experimenting and letting all ideas flow amidst a collective group of other artists. On a walk one day, I asked myself the question, 'what kind of artist am I and how can my art serve the planet?' Here are my Journal notes from this time:

How can I live a life that inhabits the multidimensionality of my existence?
 How to be living life passionately, intuitively and authentically, and following its lead, trusting in the unknown and cultivating integrity and ethics in the everyday? How to bring my desire for justice, truth, beauty and peace into an all-encompassing occupation for an existence of freedom? (Personal Journal January 1993).

Practising an art

The answers to the questions I asked during my Shave arts residency, about what kind of artist I sought to be, unravelled themselves over the next years. I worked part-time as an art therapist, whilst keeping up my arts practice. During my art therapy education I came across the work of evolutionary biologist Ellen Dissayanake who calls for tuning into the channels of artmaking as part of our daily experience (Dissayanake 1997). She defines art as integral to life and that it is through art that we mediate our participation in the world (Dissayanake 1997). Within my art therapeutic discipline I was drawn to ecopsychology and engaged with ecological and radical therapists whose work pointed to the interconnections between personal, cultural and environmental healing (Macy 1991; Roszak 1977). As humans, we are, as founder of Deep Ecology Arne Naess so poetically states, in and of nature (Naess 1989). Deep ecology, eco-psychology and eco-feminism view human life and the living earth as an interconnected system (Mellor 1997; Cashford 2010; Drengson and Devall 2008; Fox 1995). The physical and biological processes that are in continuous motion within the interior of our bodies are in a dance with the environment outside of our bodies. This concept of interdependence seeks to value, support and enhance the ecological and cultural diversity of living systems. This is the entanglement of the naturalcultural that supports life and makes for our existence (Haraway 2016).

My own arts practice, underpinned by this concept of interdependence, was aligning itself within the socially-engaged and ecological artists' movement whose practices engages with revitalising processes for living well with the Earth. Writing on socially engaged art, Gretchen Coombs defines it as:

A process of exchange which is relational, interventionist and activist in nature. It is art that is engaged in the broader world, work that is conversational, interactive, temporal, and performative. (Coombs 2013: 2)

Academic and ecological artist David Haley writes of ecological art as a socially engaged practice that has the possibility of ecologically transforming the material world (Haley 2016). Affirming his viewpoint, the EcoArt Network of international artists, founded in 1998, offers this definition:

Ecological Art is an art practice that embraces an ethics of social justice in both its content and form/materials. EcoArt is created to inspire caring and respect,

stimulate dialogue, and encourage the long-term flourishing of the social and natural environments in which we live. It commonly manifests as socially engaged, activist, community-based restorative or interventionist art. (EcoArt Network 2016)

The emergence of a global art and ecology movement is well documented by curators, theorists and artists. (Lane 1990; Gablik 1992, 1995; Spaid 2002, 2017; Andrews 2006; Stewart and Giannachi 2005; Carruthers 2006; Barbican Art Gallery 2009; Royal Academy 2009; Miles 2014; Demos et al 2016). These ecological arts projects are place-based solutions to human interactions and conflicts which are adversely affecting our ecosystems. They include ecological systems-restoration as well as socially engaged, activist and community-based interventions that address politics, culture, economics, ethics and aesthetics.

The following selection maps the contributions of social arts to the realm of culture and ecology and I identify anthologies, research centres, environmental arts resources, conferences and exhibitions which are testimony to the momentum of this movement with its socially engaged practices in collaboration with nature. Artist theorist Suzi Gablik provides context for the debate in *Conversations Before the End of Time* in which she addresses the purpose of art in dialogue with nineteen artists, writers, philosophers, ecologists and scientists (Gablik 1995). The Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World (CCANW) was set up in 1997 to explore our changing relationship with nature through the arts. In 1998 the Social Sculpture Research Unit (SSRU) at Oxford Brookes University was launched to promote an expanded conception of art that includes dialogue processes, transdisciplinary research and connective practices for social and ecological justice. EcoArt Network was founded in 1999 as an affiliation of artists working across the art-science boundary. Shortly after, the Greenmuseum is launched in 2001 by an alliance of American artists who design an online arts organization as a free resource in support of artists working with social and environmental practice. Art.Earth, convened a creative summit *The Home and the World* in 2012 to gather artists and activists to explore new responses to the challenges of our world. The three-year art and research programme *Soil Culture* began in 2012. It hosted artists residencies addressing our relationship to soil and culminated in 2015 as *Soil Culture at Create*, a multimedia celebration of the UN International Year of Soil. Most recently, in 2017 at De Dominen museum in Sittard, Sue Spaid curated *Ecovention Europe: Art to Transform Ecologies* to give an overview of this ecological movement spanning 60 years (Spaid 2017).

Within this emerging eco-arts movement I found my tribe of ecological practitioners, activists and visionary thinkers – a gathering of soulkin who gave me a political as well as spiritual orientation for cultural transformation and ecological restoration.

Ecological artist Sam Bower writes of art as consciousness work that animates a reciprocal and healthy relationship between nature and culture (Bower in Whittaker 2009). Defining myself as an ecological artist was the tuning fork for an arts practice as a vital medium and channel for reconnecting with ourselves and the other-than-human world (Naess 1989; Abram 1997).

Re-cognising ritual

The re-orientation of my life's practice came after the death of my mother in 1995 where I had an epiphany that my life was to be a dedication to a life practice as an artist in service of the planet. I slowly released myself from my art therapeutic profession. Inhabiting my art was a decision to develop my consciousness, and my arts practice became the trajectory for cultivating processes of freedom within my own being and life. This entailed a dedication to working on the attitudinal patterns and emotions that thwarted my integrity and authenticity as a human being.

My own research journey into ritual began during my arts therapy training and practice in the 1990s. During this time, I began to muse on whether the occupation of therapy as a cultural form for individual healing might be evidencing symptoms arising from a cultural malaise with much wider and deeper social and environmental roots. Was this degradation and desecration of our beautiful planet affecting the health and wellbeing of our own human bodies? James Hillman and Michael Ventura's book *We've Had a Hundred Years of Therapy - And the World's Getting Worse* offers a powerful testimony to the limitations of therapy as a cure-all for our cultural dis-ease. It alerts us to the need to attend to the wider environmental malaise (Hillman and Ventura 1993).

Might restoring embodied and ecological rituals offer a solution to this malaise of disembodied living and disconnection from the animate world? The question of 'what is ritual?' tapped into my childhood experiences in Zimbabwe. During my doctoral studies, Masters student Caer Smyth sought to study my ritual arts practice as a case study for her research around new materialism. For one of our sessions at my Studio OPS in Stroud we investigated the meaning of ritual for us all. Here, below, an excerpt from my response in which I was able to draw on my childhood memories:

I always felt safe – I love the word ritual. Perhaps because I was brought up in Zimbabwe where rituals were ancestral, as well as present in everyday life – food gathering, hunting, rites of passage of birth and death. They were about community cohesion, honouring the sacred, and respecting animals, weapons, the environment, the place, as well as the artefacts and the people. Rites of passage, threshold spaces, acknowledging of the season of the human being. Artefacts, costumes, masks, music, special places, feasting were all part of what it meant to be honouring the sacred and the totemic and the tribe. It was always convivial. Song, dance, drumming, trance. That is what ritual evoked for me. These tribal rituals were more earthy, natural, outdoors, engaged with the elements, more spontaneous and improvised and more vocal in sound and the movement of bodies – noise, colour and costume, mingling of young and old, with the young being at ease and not being controlled. A huge trust in the community's capacity to be an organism. (Conversation Exchange with Caer Smyth, 27 June 2016).

As I share with Caer, the role of ritual and art are vital for keeping alive our dynamic relationship within the ecosystem. The impulse of art and ritual encourages the practice of gratitude as well as nurturing the sensibility for a feelingful life. Ritual-making and art have been embedded within the making of nature-cultures since the birth of humanity (Grimes 2015.) Both choreograph forms, gestures and processes through the handling of matter and artefacts, and both stimulate the movement of the body. In our contemporary and commodified 'electronic ecosystem' cultures, ritual offers a channel for restoring the lost wisdom that we humans are naturalcultural creatures participating in an animate, sentient world (Naydler 2017, Haley 2016).

Artists, eco-therapists and eco-psychologists identify the absence of ritual in industrialised cultures as part of the cause of alienation in individuals (Macy 1991; Moore 1992; Ayot 2015). Through this loss of nature-based ritual we risk not only our mental health and emotional well-being, but also our essential psychological connection to each other and the living Earth. From this perspective, separation from nature leads to suffering both for the environment and for humans. Restoring encounters with living and dynamic ecological processes encourages humans to experience the connection between ourselves and the other-than-human world and this becomes a healing process (Macy 1991; Abram 1997; Naess 1989).

Suzi Gablik writes of a 'remythologizing of consciousness through art and ritual as a way that our culture can regain a sense of enchantment' (Gablik 1991: 48). It is in a recognition of the dynamic participation of the concept of *Rta*, where art is the practice of living in the flow with living processes, that I come to work with ritual (Haley 2016). As David Haley and Ronald Grimes concur, ritual was the primal activity, the 'ur' from which our diverse art forms emerge (Haley 2016; Grimes 2015). It is in the making of ritual that we practice consciousness and respect our interdependent origins with the Earth. Healer, theorist and ritual-maker Malidoma Patrice Some discovers in his healing workshops and seminars in Europe and North America that people are longing for connection, there is a hunger for community (Some 1998). In his book *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding life purpose through nature, ritual and community* Some writes that 'participation in a community is a pre-requisite for true ritual healing, for a sense of belonging that satisfies, and for a rewarding understanding of Spirit' (Some 1998: 294). For the regeneration of human cultures, he frames a cultural practice where we can be dwelling in radical ritual for healing (Some 1998: 294). In a dialogue on ritual, scientist Rupert Sheldrake and theologian Matthew Fox explore the value of ritual and its role as a new and radical cosmology of interconnectedness. Fox wonders how to get it 'into our bloodstream' as a visceral experience in which ritual is the means to 'learn the source of our existence and therefore the basis of our morality' (Sheldrake and Fox 1996: 146). Fox continues:

All healthy ritual is an invitation to doing things together, not being spectators watching someone else do something, but inviting people to truly participate with their own bodies, their own images, their own breath and their own visions. (Sheldrake and Fox 1996: 147)

Sheldrake and Fox highlight the cohering role of ritual in society. They write of ritual as a form of education and celebration that 'draws on collective memories, myths and ancestral wisdoms by awakening images in us by which we connect to the whole' (Sheldrake and Fox 1996: 146). Grimes affirms this view of ritual as a participatory practice of life within the Ritual Studies Lab where, during the 1980s, he was exploring the interface of ritual and the arts. Researching ritual and ritual process, Catherine Bell writes that 'the motivational dynamics of agency' of ritual are essential for navigating social conflict and the systemic forces of opposition. For Bell, ritual practice has the potential for 'engaging our capacity and will to act' (Bell 1992: 92). Ritual offers a critical juncture for bringing together diverse and intangible elements of culture and life (Bell 1992; Rappaport 1979). Grimes writes of the ecological role of ritual as 'the

basic social act, the fabricator, the device for world-and meaning-making’ which is an active and reflexive process (Grimes 2015: 2). After his decades of studying in the field Grimes reframes ritual as a process of reinvention:

[P]eople were busy inventing it; the other was that they were busy evaluating it ... creating and critiquing. Ritual processes include order, tradition, and prescribed actions but also innovation and creativity, improvisation and randomness. (Grimes 2015: 3)

How do secular rituals maintain personal and social cohesion? Ritual forms and process can offers practices which choreograph time and space in ways that give attention to the body’s relationship with matter and its role in cohering human and social relations (Turner 1969; Van Gennep 1960). At the core of all ritual is a practice that has elements enabling the body to experience itself with ‘words uttered, gestures performed, objects handled’ (Levi-Strauss 2015: 3). As Geertz conveys, to know our mind, we need to know how we feel, and that it is within practices such as ritual that we come to know how to act because we know how we feel (Geertz quoted in Grimes 2015: 1). Systems theorist and holistic healer Joanna Macy has drawn on ritual practice to engender a heightened sense of relationship to one’s inner emotional life, to each other, and to the other-than-human world of which we are a part (Macy 1991).

Ritual, with its forms and interactions, offers an embodied environment for the interaction between feeling and knowing as it connects site and psyche, mind and body, nature and culture and the cycles of past, present and future – a practice of enlivening participatory consciousness. Whether celebrating its potency, or lamenting its loss, rituals can cohere time and space to give attention to the bodymind’s sympoietic relationship with matter and objects, as well as working with the physical and psychological experiences of being within oneself and others. Approaching ritual as a dynamic, holistic and health-giving practice for the individual, community and the other-than-human world inspires me to carry it forward as a contemporary form of co-creation and inquiry. Here in ritual we can be inventing and cultivating cultural forms and processes which have structure and intention and yet encourage improvisation and intervention. My arts practice became an evolution of regenerative, health-giving rituals – forms to support and revitalise the practice of everyday life as the lifeblood for cultures.

Inhabiting the living food cycle

Food became a focus in my life for my own healing and as a medium for my art after a serious car accident in my late twenties. Engaging with Eastern and Asian philosophies enriched my explorations of culinary healing food. These food traditions view the human body as a microcosm of the universe and respect the matter of food as sacred. Zen Master Dogen writes in 12th century Japan that ‘when one is identified with the food one eats one is identified with the whole universe; when we are one with the whole universe we are one with the food we eat’ (Dogen cited Curtin 1992: 127). Years later, at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, I read *The Hermetical Banquet* a small vellum-backed, alchemical volume, so fragile and precious it needed me to wear white gloves. Its author, Thomas Vaughan, highlights the interconnection between the body and the society. He identifies the stomach as the microcosm’s kitchen and writes that if the stomach is polluted, the society will be sick (Vaughan 1652).

In the late 1990s I was invited to support a friend cooking on a Zen retreat in Wales. So began my contemplative cooking practice within the Chan Fellowship Buddhist retreat. Here, in the rural Welsh hills in an old, off-grid farmhouse, I was a regular Zen artist-cook for over twenty years. My research around Eastern healing food wisdoms became a lived and embodied inquiry. I experienced a slow and deepening awareness of the sacred practices of preparing wholesome food, gaining insights into my own eating behaviour and discovering ecological food traditions. These spaces of retreat helped reveal how food affected my own body’s mental and physical well-being and those of the retreatants. In the silence of the retreats and the spacious flow of the kitchen, I reflected on how food decisions impact on the environment, every day, every mouthful. This contemplative cooking was a practice in consciousness – my bodymind in a daily becoming-with, a coming to know the world, and contributing to worldmaking through food.

Figure 4. Food as a connection to a participatory consciousness.



The opening lines of Dogen's grace shared at Chan Fellowship retreat in Wales.

Figure 5. Inner and outer environments at the Maenllwyd retreat.



Path beyond the backdoor, the kitchen and dining space.

Over time, food sourcing, preparing and cooking becomes a devotional and ethical practice central to nurturing my bodymind. In 2000, while living in Oxford, I was asked by a friend to share some of my cooking practices. From this invitation I developed *Kitchen Ritual* as culinary workshops for cooking with the senses from local, organic and seasonal produce. These I hosted in a diversity of community and domestic settings over the next seven years.

Figure 6. Cooking with the Senses 2000.



Kitchen Ritual Workshops culinary artefacts and vessels. Bare, awakening vegetables.

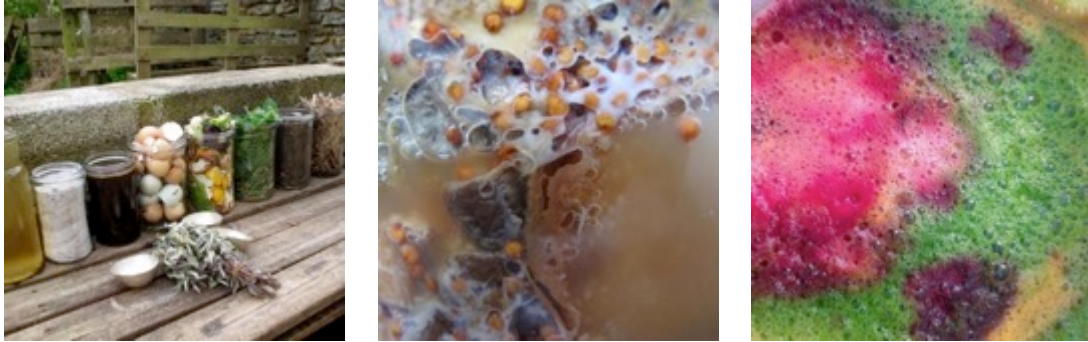
Here is an extract from one of my *Kitchen Ritual* fliers in 2007:

Kitchen ritual is about whole body cooking, working in the kitchens with our bodies rather than just our minds. Being present, recovering our senses, our intuition, our imagination, preparing vegetables and cooking by feel, improvising with colours, tastes, textures, shapes. Being in a continuous flow and conversation with a diverse and seasonal palette of organic ingredients.
(*Kitchen Ritual* flyer, June 2007)

Kitchen Ritual was culinary activism, and, as an artwork, intervened in the industrial farming model with a four-hour collective ritual form of making, improvising and sharing food together. Through an holistic encounter with the senses of artisan hands-on cooking practices using seasonal, locally grown and organic food, this skills-sharing interaction within a hosted and choreographed space was one for raising consciousness that eating is an agricultural act (Berry 1993). At the same time, and as part of my own healing, I was experimenting with ecological food practices such as

food composting, fermenting of vegetables and juicing, all of which enhanced the beneficial nutritional elements of food or supported the living communities of soil – practices which were feeding body, soul and soil.

Figure 7. Inquiring with the living food cycle.



Exploratory practices with the matter of compost, fermentation and healing food processes.

In the lead up to my 2012 TedX talk in Soweto, *Cooking Culture and Conversations*, Mikal Lambert, Change Agent at Goedgedacht Farm, South Africa wrote about my work:

Ritual makes the mundane sacred. And what could be more sacred than the food which will become our body. (Email exchange with Mikal Lambert 18 October 2012)

It was during my *Renaturing the City* artist residency, Johannesburg, in 2012 that I was developing the diagram 'An Ecology for Living Cultures'. It illustrates the relationship between my ritual practice and the living food cycle with its interrelated activities and processes, demonstrating how food can be experienced as both the medium for inquiry, a powerful agent of change as well as a connection to the sacred.

It gives an overview of how the living food cycle, as a convivial thanksgiving practice, supports the regeneration of biodiversity and cultural diversity by fostering the interconnected relationships that support ecological resilience.

Figure 8. An Ecology for Living Cultures.

AN ECOLOGY FOR LIVING CULTURES

The Living Soil, Food & Water Cycle



Thanks-giving food rituals stimulate convivial points of personal and community exchange for holistic education for transformative action.

Food as a performative medium

My dedication to re-integrating art within everyday cultures has guided the emergence of my food ritual practice. As a performative ritual practice, my site-specific work generates experiential interventions with food and agricultural processes and skills. I locate this arts practice within a global movement of ecological and socially-engaged artists, as it is within this wider engagement with socio-ecological restoration that my ritual work emerges. To give a context to how food becomes a medium for social and ecological justice, I now trace a pathway through a selection of the food art projects that have influenced and provoked my practice.

I came across the work of the German artist Joseph Beuys during my art therapy training. In the 1979 film *Everyone is an Artist*, Beuys speaks of and demonstrates the practice of foodmaking - washing, chopping and peeling vegetables to prepare a wholesome meal - as an artwork and political act of consciousness. Lemke terms this a 'gastrosophy' - a philosophy of food where art is reframed as an aesthetics of everyday

life (Lemke 2007: 53). As part of this on-going lineage of art and food culture, I went on to discover the work of Leslie Labowitz, who performed *Sproutime Farmers Market* in New York between 1980 and 1981 (Lampert 2013). Within a greenhouse as a sculptural space, Labowitz grew sprouts. Labowitz saw her artistic activity with sprouts as beneficial for health as well as a consciousness-raising practice. A more extensive approach to bringing food into the heart of the city was the work of Agnes Denes, who, in 1982, prepared *Wheatfield - A Confrontation: Battery Park Landfill* in downtown Manhattan (Denes 2003). This agricultural project of hand-sowing seed on a landfill site and harvesting two acres of healthy golden wheat was one that offered a potent symbol of food as prosperity, as well as foregrounding issues of waste and world hunger.

In 1992, Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija converted a New York Gallery into a kitchen and served Thai curry and rice for the audience, who completed the piece by eating the art and having conversations. English artist Lucy Orta's concept of 'alternative living' unravels through week-long interventions of culinary skills-sharing - bread-making, recipe sharing, gardening, food tasting and dining - all created in collaboration with local farmers and chefs to honour the agricultural relationships within a particular town. A pertinent example of her work *70 x 7 The Meal* took place in the French rural town of Dieuze in 2001. Jim Denevan's US initiative *Outstanding the in the Field* similarly works with the practice of large-scale dining that honours all the hands that feed us within a particular place – a culinary caravan that takes its restaurant to the source of food and offers the meal as a universal human conversation. Olafur Eliasson revolves his artistic and research practice around tracing the connections between food, the energy of humans and the energy of the sun within in *The Kitchen*, his Berlin Studio (Studio Olafur Eliasson 2016). Here, we see the domestic sphere of foodmaking brought into a research dimensions with the audience invited to participate in the art as eaters – completing the work by ingesting food through their own bodies. A larger scale public installation is the work of Spanish artist Alicia Rios, whose work with the 'cult of daily life' includes embracing food as theatre (Zeldin 1995: 87). In 2006, she co-created *Eat London* as an edible model of central London made out of food from different cultures, which I was able to taste along with hundreds of others who were encouraged to have a relationship to the city by consuming it.

To illustrate the significance of this culture of food permeating the arts as a matter for intervention and research, Richard Gough edited the 1999 issue of *Performance Research Journal* 'On Cooking' – a publication I came across in 2006 (Gough 1999). It features the

work of multiple artists, performers, chefs, filmmakers, food historians, and scholars, all working with food and cooking as an embodied aesthetic medium for social and environmental justice. In amongst this food and art trajectory, I was able to experience and be touched by other edible projects in London and Oxford. In 1997 I was given a taste of the art, activism, education and research practice of Platform London. Within *Carbon Generations*, James Marriott shared a multi-media performative installation while Dan Gretton prepared a *Feast of Many Courses*. This artwork merged the biographical, the political, the conversational and the spiritual together in the multi-sensory experience of a meal cooked in the studio. Here, the food sharing brought in the familiar and domestic into a political sphere of addressing our addiction to fossil fuels. In 1998, I participated in Shelley Sacks' *Exchange Values* political installation and collaboration with Caribbean banana farmers. In this social sculpture, which included dried banana skins and recorded interviews with the farmers, Sacks made visible the lives of small banana growers and conscientised visitors to the realities of exploitative banana trade relations.

As with all these artists, it is food and agricultural practices that becomes the performative medium to awaken us to social and ecological issues. I, too, draw on the substance of food as both matter and metaphor with the intention of intervening in an industrial consumerist food system that degrades land, denatures soil, disconnects agriculture from culture and impoverishes communities. My own work has also manifest within a diversity of spaces from fields, churches, bridges, schools, urban pavements and parks, as illustrated in Figures 8-10 below. Theorist Suzi Gablik describes such work as nurturing a 'connective aesthetics' and reframing consciousness as a relational experience (Gablik 1992b). In this spirit of nurturing relationship, my desire is to reconnect eating habits, farming practices and ecologically regenerative cultures, highlighting art as a political practice for sustaining life. In this way, the reviving of cultural practices of cooking and eating transform consumers into participants – what I call active food citizens. As Goodman writes:

Given the embodied nature of food, whether eaten, grown or husbanded, different practices and different ways of 'being with food' provide the space for different food relationalities that then give rise to possible, transformative political openings. (Goodman 2013: 2)

Dorothea von Hantelmann reflects on 'the experiential turn' as a performative artistic shift, making embodied experiences central to the artwork's conception (von

Hantelmann 2014: 2). Artists devise performative situations for people to become aware of their own experiences – what Rosalind Krauss calls the ‘lived bodily perspective’ (Rosalind Krauss n.d. cited in von Hantelmann 2014: 2). This revaluation of experiences and the performing of inter-subjective encounters holds potential for the transforming of cultural, social and economic activity. Von Hantelmann goes on to ask:

How could ‘experiences’ become something like an artistic medium in contemporary art? How are experiences created, shaped, and reflected in artworks, and how do they produce meaning? (von Hantelmann 2014: 2)

We discover, through food, our intimate and life-giving connections to each other and the more-than-human world. What distinguishes my work is the particular ritual form and the way it creates a dedicated time for inquiry through embodied skills-sharing. My commitment to sharing an extensive relationship to food encourages what contemporary theorists describe as an ethics of care in the everyday (Curtin 1992; Eliason 2016; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). The ritual form becomes convivial in both the political sense of inviting people to work collectively, and in a wider sense, invites in a sympoietic encounter that embraces life as a sacred web of interconnectedness. As Illich writes, conviviality is ‘the autonomous and creative intercourse amongst persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment’ (Illich 2001: 17).

The experience I seek to share is one of participatory consciousness, where my ritual-as-performance allows people to taste and sense with the artful bodymind. Food politics scholar Michael Carolan writes that we are eating food which is detrimental to our health not because of knowledge deficiency ‘but because we are experience-deficient’ (Carolan in Goodman 2014: 273). In my rituals with food, the invitation to reflect on this experience is integral, and we are given space to sense, to consider, to become aware through the taste, the touch and the feelings evoked. This is the liberatory potential of embodied encounters with food. As Mara Miele writes ‘taste has emancipator powers’ (Miele cited in Goodman 2014: 272). In this way, the experience of the ritual form is devised to create the conditions for people to enliven their own selfhood directly through their bodymind in an authentic relationship to food. This is what Gablik describes as the feeling of belonging to a larger whole (Gablik 1992).

A ritual practice with food

As outlined in my biography, I began to consciously work with forms of ritual process in the late 1990s within my artistic practice *Kitchen Ritual*. The title of this culinary activist project was purposefully chosen, with the words ‘kitchen’ and ‘ritual’ seeking to name and acknowledge absences in our cultures. These were, namely: the role of the kitchen as integral to agri-cultural food practices; and what ritual offers within culturemaking in respect of a consciousness and gratitude for our relationship with the land, with each other and to the ecosystems we inhabit. From this hosting of *Kitchen Ritual*, my own food performance work since 2001 has been to choreograph contemporary thanks-giving food rituals that involve participants in an encounter with an environment and an experience of the living food cycle.

Across cultures, thanks-giving traditions are celebrated with food offerings. Food rituals, in particular, offer sensuous and collective experiences whereby we can remember, reconnect and respect our place within the ecosystem. These are rituals that keep us in a continuous exchange with the cycles of nature. First Fruits ceremonies, which honour our relationship to the Earth by enjoying the new harvests, are evident within thanks-giving rituals and are an appreciation of the bounty of nature across the globe. These are food rituals which are a way of bringing individuals together in community. In biodynamic agriculture, there are seasonal song rituals that invite the audience to sing to the farm animals as a blessing and thanksgiving for what they bring to our lives. There is also the symbolic role which food can play as part of story telling to keep alive the history of a people. During the Jewish Passover Seder, a ritual plate, laid on the table containing six foods with symbolic meaning, tells the story of the ancient Hebrew exodus from Egypt. Among these foods, horseradish recalls the bitter suffering, the roasted egg represents renewal, and the salted water symbolises the tears and sweat of enslavement.

My own arts practice with food rituals is in resonance with an artistic food movement that transforms the material substances of gastronomy into an emancipatory practice for personal and collective healing. What has evolved is an ecological arts practice around food that has the potential of revitalising people’s food cultures through direct engagement with processes and nourishing offerings which are fresh, colourful and abundant with a sensuous physicality. This body of food ritual work has manifest in public projects such as *Conversations with the Earth* (2009), *Bread of Belonging* (2010), *Deep Soup Ceremony* (2009), *Sacred Mayonnaise* (2010), *Edible Love Poem* (2010), *Love Leaven*

Hearth (2011), and *Living Soil Shrine* (2015). Below are examples of such food rituals within rural and urban environments selected from 2001 – 2012. All these rituals have in common a devised encounter within a place and an invitation to engage in an experience of being with food that benefits person and planet.

Figure 9. *Coming to our Senses* Intervention with plate, apron and bell, 2001.



Culinary activism during panel with Jose Bove and Helena Norberg-Hodge, London.

Figure 10. *The Raw and the Cooked Food* ritual, 2002.



Installation with local organic vegetables for 'Future of Farming' Conference, Oxford Brookes.

In my portfolio to accompany my PhD proposal, I describe my political food practice:

Each ecologically inspired food ritual, devised as a participatory and inclusive event, sought to make visible the interconnected relationships between food and agriculture, nature and culture. This 'extensive relationship to food' invites in a consciousness of what food is and where it comes from (Curtin 1992: 129). At these convivial events, the bodily intelligence of the senses, emotions, memory, imagination and intuition are all awakened and valued as

fundamental to understanding each other, the natural world and ourselves.
(Portfolio to Accompany Practice-as-Research PhD proposal 2015)

Figure 11. Examples of my food rituals from 2008 to 2012.



Taste the Farm, making visible the living soil-food web through geology to gastronomy. As part of Earth Machine Music with Oxford Contemporary Music, Coldharbour Farm, Oxon, 2008.



Sacred Mayonnaise, the art of making mayonnaise by hand in rhythm with the river Thames. Thames Festival, Southwark Bridge, London, 2009.



Soil is Our Gold shrine to introduce *Eat from the Earth Pavement Banquet*. *Renaturing the City*, Bag Factory Residency, Maboneng, Johannesburg 2012.

My contemporary ritual work as a practice in conviviality revolves around the everyday actions of harvesting, cooking, eating and food composting. As such, it connects with other artists working with ritual forms. During her artist residency from 1978–80 with the New York Department of Sanitation, Mierle Laderman Ukeles created *Touch Sanitation Performance*. This performative piece making visible to the public the life-sustaining work of sanitation workers included the *Handshake Ritual* to show gratitude for their indispensable and unrecognised work. Ritual practice as a public artform has been present in Britain since the 1970s, as illustrated by the 2013 retrospective show *Between Worlds: Rituals and Pagan Rites*. Bruce Lacey's shamanic work on soil begins with ritual diagrams and large scale earth goddess paintings. As part of his work he tunes into the elements of earth, air, water and fire, thus valuing the interconnectedness of the whole. *Lacey Rituals* is his film of the everyday domestic rituals that took place in the family home. Similarly, it is everyday rituals that inspire Grayson Perry. His tea-making is a call to attend to our relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm with the inscription of 'I am a planet/I am the future/To love me is /To love your next life' on a teapot (Buck 2013: 1).

What defines my own practice is that I offer participants, within the bounded space of a contemporary ritual, an embodied experience in skills-sharing that includes a dedicated time for group reflection and self-inquiry. This ritual form is a way of exploring a personal relationship to the diverse elements of the living food cycle where thinking-with and becoming-with the matter of food encourages an ethics of care and response-ability (Puig de la Casa 2017). As referred to previously, the concept of ritual originates within the Sanskrit word *Rta*, the dynamic, interconnected flow of the cosmos. Through re-enculturing the arts as a practice in the everyday, my performative rituals seek to cultivate a renewed experience of these living processes to enliven an awareness of this compresence of flowing energies and encounters.

Participatory consciousness

In *The Great Work* Thomas Berry speaks of a participatory consciousness where 'we participate in the intimacy of all things with each other' (Berry, T. 2006: 137). Geneen Haugen, writing on the work of Berry, defines a participatory consciousness as 'a heightened, world-reshaping awareness of participation with the visible and invisible' (Haugen 2011: 3). Complementing my readings on participatory consciousness, I came

upon the biological concept of sympoiesis pioneered by Canadian biologist Beth Dempster where she elaborates how ‘sympoiesis’ derives from *sym* (with, or together) and *poiesis* (to make, create, or produce). For Dempster this concept defines a system that comes into being through a ‘making with’ or co-producing and this she develops to define the characteristics of an ecosystem (Dempster 2000). Sympoiesis, she writes, ‘emphasises linkages, feedback, co-operation, and synergistic behaviour rather than boundaries’ (Dempster 2000: 4). Dempster suggests that complex systems such as ecosystems require a sensemaking heuristic which defines a world that comes into being through collective production rather than one which is autopoietic or self-producing. Donna Haraway, a feminist philosopher of science, further illuminates sympoiesis and frames her own approach to this concept:

Sympoiesis is a simple word; it means ‘making-with.’ Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing ... We are worlding-with, in company. The radical implication of sympoiesis is that it tunes us into the complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. (Haraway 2017: M25)

Sympoiesis offers an approach to knowing and understanding that is congruent with participatory consciousness as it defines a world that comes into being through collective production and making-with. Humanity exists entangled with the other-than-human. This perspective resonates with Haraway’s concept of naturecultures, where we are living systems embodied through and with a world of becoming-with, of companion-species. We are naturecultural (Haraway 2016: 40). Sympoietic worldmaking and naturecultural work offers a pathway into experiencing a participatory consciousness. All three concepts define a relational knowing of self, each other, matter and place.

As Dempster proposes, sympoiesis offers a lens to view economic, social and cultural systems and can guide us in behaviour that is sustaining for ourselves and for the planet (Dempster 2000). My personal investigation within my doctoral studies of my topobiography – my Zen cooking, art therapy, art and ritual practice – has been an experience of sympoietic worldmaking. My profound conviction is that knowing is an embodied experience; my consciousness arises through my body and it is through experience and practice that I come to know. Food as a substance and ritual as a form, are uniquely positioned within a set of potential relationships which can animate a participatory understanding of consciousness. By inhabiting ‘an authentic presence to

food’ we are cultivating an extensive relationship to food, thus amplifying that the act of eating is always in relation to others and the environment (Curtin 1992: 124).

Research proposition

My contemplative and convivial practice with food is a form of artful knowing with the potential for ‘dissolving boundaries between the polarities of mind-body, practice-theory, nature-culture, art and academe’ (Seeley, 2011b: 89). Being and becoming-with food is a way of knowing. Food is a bridge to the artful bodymind, and my food rituals are a process of enactment that interconnects the social and the ensouling, the aesthetic and ethics for worldmaking. These are approaches that look to ‘*apprehend* rather than *represent* the world’ and invite the senses, and evoke ‘the character of being in the world that is always becoming’ (Rycroft 2005 cited in Beyes and Steyaert 2011: 102).

My proposition is that through and with the artful bodymind we can be remembering and inhabiting the lived experience of our relational and participatory consciousness entwined with sympoietic worldmaking. The artful bodymind is the compass, the instrument of consciousness, through which we experience and know the world. To know is to be experiencing, and to be experiencing is to know. In the everyday practice of inhabiting our bodies it is possible to choose how to dwell within our participatory consciousness. Through the artful bodymind in co-existence with the animate and sentient living Earth we are in a natural and ethical conduct of responsiveness.

Research question

My proposition leads to my research question:

How is my research with the artful bodymind creating the conditions for experiencing participatory consciousness and how does this enable the enlivening of transformative research methodologies?

Research contributions

In musing on the contributions of my research with the artful bodymind, I unravel the following thoughts in Flora's presence:

Today is dark moon, new moon. I have awoken with the epiphany of knowing how to define what is my contribution! It is a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology. What does that mean? My Sympoietic Ritual Methodology is the choreographing of safe habitats, or *refugias* which I host – they cultivate our artful bodyminds for practising sympoietic worldmaking with the matter of food.

It is a methodology which invites a physical space in time, such as a forum, a Workshop where people come together to experience participatory consciousness, to experience the biodiversity of ecological farming with the living food cycle, to encounter cultural diversity, to be with each other in an encounter of becoming-with artefacts, substances, food, with living processes in order to inhabit sympoiesis, this participatory consciousness or *Rta* the flowing dynamic of the universe where art is a practice of living.

At present we are not living in a sympoietic world because we are fragmented and because we have reduced and dualised our lives, we are living according to scientism, which is a myth of control and separation – and sympoiesis is a story of re-integration, of regeneration, of co-operation – what Suzi Gablik calls a living mythology. Now, we are dying in a mythology of alienation, fragmentation, desecration.

What a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology does is to craft a natureculture habitat, a *refugia*, within fragmented cultures – it stimulates a wholeness of re-integration and re-alignment, of reconnection to the interdependent nature of humanness in entanglement with the other-than-human world and multi-species sentience. As a researcher it is within these refugia that I nurture my artful bodymind as a way of being and knowing-with the world. (Conversation Exchange with Flora 30 August 2019)

As part of a global ecological imaginary, my Performative Action Research unfolds within an Artist Research Residency with food cultures and seeks to re-enculture art

and ritual in the everyday. My research takes a poetic approach that recognises sentience and consciousness as arising within the relationship between the observer and the observed – a field of participatory consciousness (Berry 1999; Mindell 2012). Such an approach counters the alienation of human life from the animate world. As an arena for a politics of consciousness my research offers a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology as a contribution to knowledge. This methodology cultivates a sympoietic knowing through the artful bodymind. It manifests within the Ritual Workshops where a skills-sharing practice reconnects us with ecological and artisan food cultures and processes. Within the encounter is the potential for personal and collective inquiry which engages us in a politics of consciousness (Roszak 1977: xx).

In summary, my contribution to knowledge is a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology that provides the transformative conditions for us to reconnect our artful bodyminds within a participatory consciousness through encounters with the living food cycle.

Overview of the Constellations

In addressing my Research Proposition with its Research Question, my Complementary Writing takes the following form:

PART I is Context and Response: the introduction that amplifies the definition of terms outlined within Orientation. It provides the context within which my research with the artful bodymind arises and shares with the reader an overview of my research response. I conclude with my Research Question and my research contributions.

PART II contains the four constellations: Poetics of Re-Search, Curating the Convivial, Rituals for Encounter and Practices in Freedom. As a sympoietic re-searcher, it is through this constellative form that I seek to convey the cycle of responses to my Research Question and cultivate a relationship with the research material within in a continuum of becoming-with. These four realms of embodied research activity combine the interweaving of practice and theory, image and text, matter and metaphor, and the voice of place and people. Each constellation proposes a contribution towards enlivening transformative research methodologies.

PART III is Ecologies of Care. This is the final concluding section that traces how my re-search with the artful bodymind, in an encounter with the matter of food, has guided me towards an ethics of being between human and other-than-human worlds. I reflect on my research in South Africa, within the context of diverse, divided and fragmented communities. I summarise the four Constellations and draw together the quality criteria for enlivening transformative research methodologies that weave across all four – conditions that together inspire and manifest practices for a politics of consciousness that is sympoietic. Finally, I summarise the contributions my research is making to knowledge and the fields within which my Sympoietic Ritual Methodology has relevance and application.

Figure 12. Map of the four Constellations.



A word on the imageful act

As an exploration of a poetics of embodied and artful knowing, my research calls on the imaginal and sensuous power of the visual image with its multilayering dimensions of meaning and interpretation. Throughout the Complementary Writing, I have chosen to combine image and text. It is through the juxtaposition of words and illustrations that the generative potential of the unknown is manifest and influences my coming to know. These text-ural illustrations are faithful to the dance between practice and theory, between the embodied experience and its representation. As a method, it is congruent with the multiple sensibilities of the artful bodymind and is an expression of how my re-search comes into its knowing and sensemaking through imagery of diverse kinds.

This collage method has been central to my arts practice for many decades. Its lineage can be traced to the 1920's Dada artists who provoked dream dimensions by entwining visuals, texts and found objects to evoke multiple meanings. In my own practice, I have been drawn to the work of Kurt Schwitters and his Merz psychological artworks, which were composed of photographs, typography and daily ephemera (Megan 2013). Many other artists have developed such experimental art combining text and image. From the 1980s, American artist Barbara Kruger was working with silkscreen prints as a political critique of consumerism, capitalism and patriarchy (Linker 1996). These provocations were composed of found photographs and illustrations from popular magazines overlaid with texts.

The image-text compositions as multilayerings of photographs, commentaries and related texts have a twofold purpose. The first is a way of manifesting the potency of how the meaning of language becomes amplified when allied with the source of its origins - the experience of an embodied event. Secondly, these artworks are a testimony to the potency of multiple interpretations that a dynamic interpenetration between text and image can fruitfully yield – an exchange which offers many approaches to its viewings. This method articulates a sympoietic sensibility that arises out of the interconnecting of practice and theory. It respects, amplifies and enlivens many ways of knowing through encompassing the diverse imaginal expressions of mind, body, soul and spirit.

POETICS OF RE-SEARCH

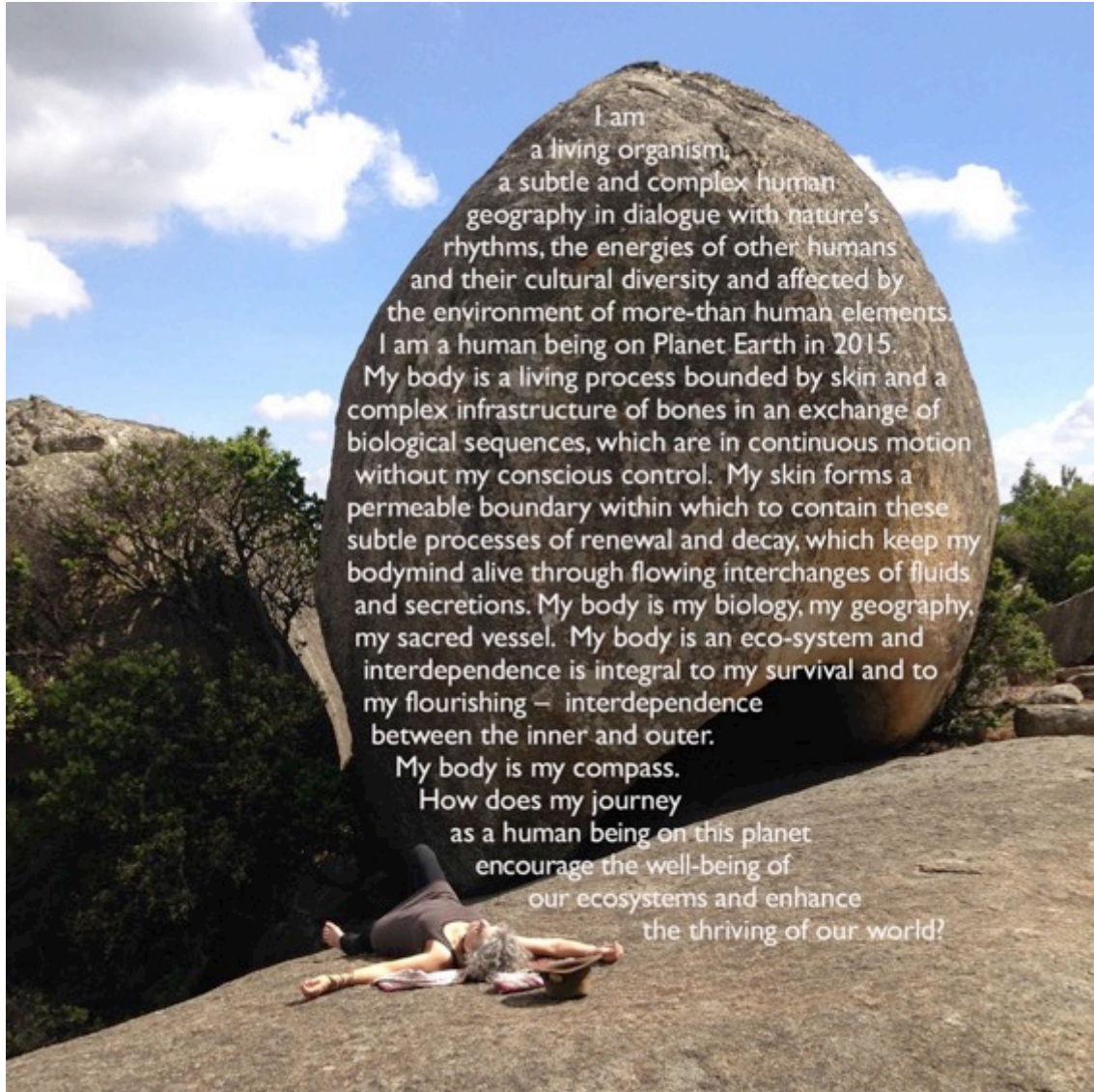


Figure 13. My body is an ecosystem.

My bodymind communing with body of granite at the ceremonial site, Paarl Rock, South Africa, December 2015. This vast granite seam extends to Zimbabwe and connects to the granite outcrop on which my childhood home was built.

What value and respect do we give to our bodies? What uses do we have for them? What relation do we see, if any, between body and mind, or body and soul? What connections or responsibilities do we maintain between our bodies and the earth? (Berry, 1993: 19)

There is a need for new forms emphasising our essential inter-connectedness rather than separateness, forms evoking the feeling of belonging to a larger whole. (Gablik 1992: 5)

Introduction

My research is a practice in seeking to be in a responsive entanglement with the whole-bodied living experience of being human. As an artist practitioner contributing to transformative research, my own body and biography entwine in a dynamic dance with the research process and its form. As farmer, activist and writer Wendell Berry asks, how can we be maintaining the connections and responsibilities of the body and its relationship to the earth (Berry 1993)? How, as researchers, do we inhabit the senses and multiple intelligences of the body, thus enlivening our capacity to respond – cultivating our ‘response-ability’ (Haraway 2016: 34)?

Over the last few decades, I have been generating a grammar of embodied practices that tune into the body’s knowing and respect it as belonging to the larger whole. In exploring the nature of my own artful research, I am drawn to the concept of ‘poetics’. Poet Robert Sheppard uses poetics as an interventionist tool to disrupt literary and poetic genres (Sheppard 2018: 2). As he notes, poetics plays with and enlivens its own form. In seeking to enliven transformative research methodologies, I am inspired to inhabit a heartfelt and sensuous research as an embodied practice. In Sheppard’s ‘Necessity of Poetics’ he writes of his ‘metapoetics’ (Sheppard 2018: 2). Below, I riff with selected lines from his writing as they offer me creative provocations (Sheppard 2018: 2-6):

Poetics is born of a crisis – the need to change ...

Poetics offer a generative schema ...

Poetics is mercurial ...

Poetics is the active questioning about how does,
how should, how could art be made ...

Poetics breathes creative potential into uncreative material ...
Poetics is an invasion into other realms overflowing the bounds of genres ...
Poetics is a way of questioning what we think we know ...
Poetics is the dialogue with the activity of making ...
The making can change the poetics; the poetics can change the making ...
Poetics composes, decomposes, recomposes. (Sheppard 2018: 2-6)

My thesis has grown from a desire for a change in what 'we think we know' (Sheppard 2018: 2). As a researcher, I am looking for a poetics of re-search which 'breathes creative potential into uncreative material', which 'composes, decomposes, recomposes', a poetics of research which is in 'dialogue with the activity of making' (Sheppard 2018: 2-3). This is research that attends to the body, notices experiences, dwells with imagination and opens to participation in a sympoietic world. I write in my Personal Journal:

I am re-searching for the body, for healing, for the becoming-with of life. My food ritual practice is a gastrosophy, a philosophy of food, that engages the body in a relationship with the matter of food and the field of agriculture. I am seeking to afford an encompassing encounter of the artful bodymind in sympoietic relationship with the more-than-human world. (Personal Journal November 2018)

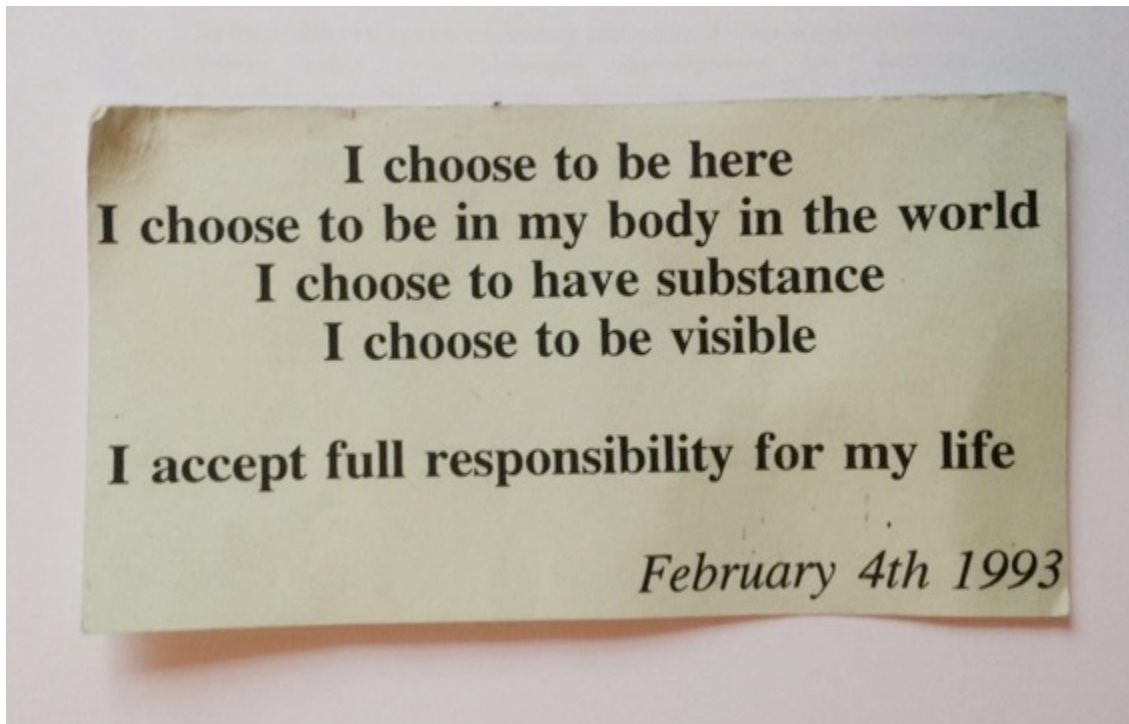
Archetypal psychologist Robert Romanyshyn in his book *The Wounded Researcher* defines 'a poetics of the research process' that offers an imaginal approach that 'makes place for subtle and non-traditional ways of knowing' (Romanyshyn 2007: 216). He writes: 'Research with soul in mind is re-search, a searching again ... for something we have already known, however dimly, but have forgotten' (Romanyshyn 2007: 4). Drawn to the concept of a poetics of re-search, the work of biologist-philosopher Andreas Weber calls to me with his concept of a 'poetic ecology' which encourages our fragmented selves 'to find our place in the grand whole again' (Weber 2016: 3). In *The Biology of Wonder* he writes about enlivenment which addresses 'the disastrous dissociation between the thinking mind and the feelingful body' (Weber 2016: ix). A poetics of re-search thus becomes an enlivening quest to address the wound of our disconnection and find ourselves within an embodied 'poetic ecology'.

Remembering the bodymind

My arts practice with food addresses an epistemicide that reigns within industrialised cultures, which is the negating of the body's intelligences. Feminist ecologist Mary Mellor urges that all theories need to recognise that through our bodies we humans are embedded in the environment. The essential feature of our human existence, she writes, is to notice that 'human beings as human animals have bodies which must be developed and nurtured' (Mellor 1997: vii). To address this erasure of our multiple ways of knowing we need to restore our relationship with the body and embrace a poetics of re-search which is a remembering of the self and integrates the 'thinking mind and the feelingful body' (Weber 2016: ix). As I note to myself:

This morning, Sublime Saturday, I pass the mantelpiece in my bedroom and the little green card, typed up by myself in 1993, calls to me. It has become a daily reminder to me about cherishing my body and living authentically and true to my potential in this mortal Earthly world. (Personal Journal, January 2018)

Figure 14. Being in my body.



This epistemicide of the body as a knowing subject has implications for the health of the human body and its relationship within the physical, psychological and spiritual

dimensions of life. Finnish architect, Juhani Pallasmaa, advocates for embodied human experience, and writes:

All our senses, in fact our entire bodily being, directly structure, produce and store silent existential knowledge. The body is a knowing entity. (Pallasmaa, 2010: 20)

To experience this knowing through our body as a whole we need to cultivate practices that value the rigour of the body's multiple sensibilities. In preparing my personal statement for my PhD proposal, I reflected with a friend on how the arts has been my pathway to such embodied knowing:

My first encounters with the arts left me feeling a sense of its miraculous power as a medium for cultural and social transformation and the impact it had to reflect and motivate change. Through my own body I experienced its sensuousness, a visceral knowing. This led me to dedicating my life to the arts, as it encompassed expressions of mind, body, soul and spirit. (Personal Journal June 2014)

Philosophers George Lakoff and Mark Johnson write that our minds are 'embodied in such a way that our conceptual systems draw largely upon the commonalities of our bodies and of the environments we live in' (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 6). In this understanding that our minds are embodied and interconnected with our habitats, I am looking to re-enliven the bodymind, a concept that conveys this reunion of the mind and body. To trace the origins of the mindbody unity is to gain a glimpse into its history within ancient traditions of healing and medicine. In 4th century BC, physician Hippocrates recognized the interplay between the mind and the body. Within the Eastern philosophies, mind and body are integrated and the human body is interconnected with the natural world. Modern European thinking has also recognised the need to re-integrate body and mind, or soma and psyche, as is well documented within the social and natural sciences (Bateson 1972; Ho 2008; Laszlo 1996; Naydler 2017). Neuroscientist Candace Pert refers to the 'bodymind' in *Molecules of Emotion*, her ground-breaking research which confirms that 'mind does not dominate body, it becomes body – body and mind are one' (Pert 1997: 187).

Knowing comes through relationship, and we become who we are through interactive encounters. As philosopher of science Ervin Laszlo confirms, participation in life is

fundamental to the nature of our human being. For it is from the bodymind's experiences – the feeling-thinking, the handling, the witnessing, the observing, the experimenting, the imagining – that the engagements of mind, matter and body grow into ideas, concepts and form theories by which we live. Without the bodymind there are no practices, no experience, no way of knowing, no theory, no life. Knowing comes through the body, and we have forgotten this simple and profound wisdom.

Rae Johnson, a scholar in somatic studies and social justice, describes in *The Artful Body* her experiences in artmaking and how they capture the feeling of being fully alive in her body (Johnson 2009). Artmaking is an expression which catalyses an 'altered state of consciousness' – an experiential embodying of 'the meaning and essence' of what it means to be human (Johnson 2009: 7). Embracing art as a practice in living and the 'artful' for tuning into our senses and multiple intelligences, I conceive the concept of the 'artful bodymind'. I inhabit a new imaginary of the 'artful bodymind' in recognition that my beingness unfolds within an interdependent ecology of life. My artful bodymind is my divining instrument for being-with and knowing the world. The artful bodymind is in a sympoietic dance between the interconnected processes of psyche, the somatic body and the archetypal imagination. It is through the artful bodymind that I can be in an integrated encounter within the processes of a participatory consciousness.

Performative Action Research

In retrieving the etymology of the concept of theory, philosopher Nicholas Davey reminds us that for theory to emerge we are participators in its making (Davey 2006). Theory has its roots in the ancient Greek conception of 'theoria' and 'theoros' – theoria defines contemplation, and 'theoros' participant. Davey continues that 'the ancient notion of theoria emphasises the act of witness which contributes toward the emergence of the event participated within' (Davey 2006: 20). Thus, in contributing and constructing knowledge we are restoring the notion of a reciprocal relationship between practice and theory, between mind and body. Both the Performative research paradigm and the Action Research approach arise out of what Robin Nelson defines as 'theory imbricated within practice' (Telephone communication with Robin Nelson, 13 April 2018).

Action Research is a research approach whose methodologies arise from this understanding that theory emerges out of practice. The co-creation of knowledge requires a continuous and dynamic engagement between cycles of experience and action, research and reflection. I came to Action Research through my relationship with Dr Chris Seeley, a pioneer who was dedicated to enlivening Action Research with Artful Inquiry. Action Research as a living inquiry is participatory and aims to ‘link practice and ideas in the service of human flourishing’ (Reason and Bradbury 2008: 1). In my Personal Journal I reflect on my emerging sense of what Action Research as a research orientation was offering me:

Multiple forms and simultaneous knowing / meaning completed by the beholder / imagination / well-spring of personal biography / experience for inquiry / truth to materials / different media / material offers metaphor and symbol / trust in the unknown / visual image allowing many interpretations / resonance across difference / intuitive and retrospective and forward knowing – projects to future-forward days / integrated with cultural expression and social trends offers pleasure / harmony / invites in the senses and other forms of intelligence. (Personal Journal, August 2015)

Seeley’s concept of Artful Inquiry inspires more inclusive and expansive ways of knowing for humans to ‘actually live and be in ways which invite the artful and the intellectual, the embodied and the theoretical, the hearty and the heady with equal thoroughness and enthusiasm’ (Seeley 2011a: 1). Seeley advocates that it is through these diverse and fuller ways of knowing that we can act responsibly against ecosystemic destruction (Seeley 2011b). A few weeks before Chris died, I was in a conversation with her about the scope of my ritual work with food and our shared Action Research inquiry, *Food as Homecoming*. She reflected that I was ‘taking on board a systems approach, attending simultaneously to somatic, soil, landscape, regional, cultural and planetary perspectives’ (Conversation with Chris Seeley, 22 October 2014). She continued: ‘If the food is alive, so am I, so is the soil, the earth, our planet ... ecosystemic flourishing’ (Conversation with Chris Seeley, 22 October 2014).

Figure 15. *Sacred Mayonnaise* co-inquiry at my Studio OPS, Stroud.
Content removed on data protection grounds.

Co-inquiry with Chris Seeley and researchers from Crossfields Institute and Alanus University Advanced Research Forum.

Michael Jones' *Artful Leadership* refers to the artful as a 'gradual awakening of attention' where the artful is an aesthetic which extends beyond the arts and is 'grounded in the universal practices of noticing, listening, speaking and improvising' (Jones 2006: x). Johnson reflects on the transformational and political potential of artful knowing through and with the body:

I learned that I was an agent of personal and social change, and that my body was the locus of those transformations ... Through my body, I generated new understandings and knowledge, and if I was willing to risk being fully present in my own body, the art I produced could serve as a catalyst for further

transformation. ... I understand being fully and artfully embodied as a form of political activism. (Johnson 2009: 11)

Judi Marshall, in her dedication to research as an everyday practice in consciousness, affirms that it is through living a life as inquiry that we become aware of ourselves not as separated entities but connected through cycles of exchange to the world around us (Marshall 2016: 11).

Theorist Stephen Kemmis is committed to the practice of Action Research as a philosophy of life. As he notes, the etymology of philosophy pertains to the love of wisdom, and it is wisdom sought for living in a correct and just way. To be living a philosophical life, Kemmis writes, is a matter of practice (Kemmis 2009: 463). To be living a 'logic' is to be 'thinking and speaking well and clearly, avoiding irrationality and falsehood'; to be living a 'physics' is to 'be acting well in the world, avoiding harm, waste and excess'; and to be living an 'ethics' is to be 'relating well to others, avoiding injustice and exclusion' (Kemmis 2009: 465). Kemmis theorises the meta-inquiry of Action Research as the dance between the 'sayings', the 'doings', and the 'relatings' (Kemmis 2009: 463). He writes:

Transforming our practices means transforming what we do; transforming our understanding means transforming what we think and say; and transforming the conditions of practice means transforming the ways we relate to others and the things and circumstances around us. (Kemmis 2009: 463)

It is within these co-ordinates of Action Research as a philosophy of ethical living that I enter into the political dimensions of inhabiting a participatory consciousness. This is the 'politics of consciousness' that Roszak urges us to cultivate and is one I am seeking with my own poetics of re-search (Roszak 1977: xxix). With this orientation, I accord with bell hooks who muses on theory that contributes to non-oppressive ways of being (hooks 1994). It is in theory that she finds a refuge for inhabiting new stories and new ways of being. For theory to be healing, hooks is clear that there is no gap between theory and practice:

Our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation ... Indeed, what such experience makes more evident is the bond between the two – that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other. (hooks 1994: 61)

It is in alignment with this call for research to be attending to the lived and liberatory aspects of research that artist-scholar Brad Haseman conceptualises 'Performative Research' (Haseman 2006). Haseman elaborates that practice research not only expresses the research, but also in that expression becomes the research itself where the research findings 'perform an action and are most appropriately named Performative Research. It is not qualitative research: it is itself' (Haseman 2006: 6). As a form of practice research, Performative Research accords with Action Research, for both embrace the subjective and embodied dimensions from which research is felt, experienced and interpreted. Practitioner-researchers 'do not merely 'think' their way through or out of a problem, but rather they 'practice' to a resolution' (Haseman 2010 cited in Nelson, 2013: 10). As Tim Ingold writes, practice research takes an approach of 'knowing from the inside' where decisions made are from 'one's own body and background' (Ingold 2013: 3).

As my intention is to be inhabiting an ethical and philosophical life that encompasses a healing and liberatory practice, I am in resonance with both the orientation of Action Research and the Performative Research paradigm. In their article 'The ontological politics of artistic interventions', Timon Beyes and Chris Steyaert consider how the contemporary arts might be performing Action Research (Beyes and Steyaert 2011). They outline artistic interventions as the ground for interconnecting the social and the aesthetic as a 'political act of worldmaking' (Beyes and Steyaert 2011: 101). Such an approach engenders new ways of thinking and seeing. In recognition of my liberatory and self-reflexivity practices with the artful bodymind, the concept of 'performing action research' offers me a frame for an embodied research practice where an arts practice enables a common sphere of experience 'for making the world come alive in different ways' (Beyes and Steyaert 2011: 103). I am inspired to consider myself a Performative Action Researcher whose practising of political acts of worldmaking enhance the conditions for a participatory consciousness entangled with other-than-human worlds.

As a Performative Action Researcher I am searching out approaches to embodied inquiry that are liberatory, healing and heartfelt. In his book *A Methodology of the Heart*, Ronald Pelias calls for research that seeks to address the 'lack that resides in my body as a wound' (Pelias 2004: 1). It is research that recovers the body as a 'site of feeling' (Pelias 2004: 2). This is a 'sensuous scholarship' (Pelias 2004: 10) that 'fosters connections, opens spaces for dialogue, heals' (Pelias 2004: 2). Such a 'methodology of the heart' embraces research from the body that 'invites identification and empathic

connection, a body that takes as its charge to be fully human' and to act on behalf of others (Pelias 2004: 1). Pelias' embracing of research from the body aligns with Romanyshyn's dedication to research with soul in mind. This is a process of returning to look anew, a re-searching for the self, for the researcher (Romanyshyn 2007). Research with soul in mind begins 'by being summoned by the work' with the researcher present and speaking out on behalf of the research 'on behalf of those for whom the work is being done' (Romanyshyn 2007: 228). Here my musings with Flora on sensuous scholarship and research with soul in mind:

MFL: So how does this all relate to sensuous scholarship? If we need to engage with a world that is interconnected, the research needs to show the qualities of that interconnection and that being-with quality. Sensuous scholarship is about reconnecting to the senses. The heart brings in shadow and soul and archetypal. I have discovered that if we talk about empiricism, it is about measuring things through the senses, through observation. But what does it mean to open that up to a sensuous encounter? Because qualitative research is not without the senses ... yet the senses are much more than just instruments for receiving information.

It is not just about receiving in order to re-present. It is the notion of being the actant, that you are engaged in a process of experiencing and engaging with an encounter, or knowing as an encounter through that physical experience. So my research is about introducing a sensuous empiricism that is not just about observing and recording. It is about receiving and returning, about opening up to another kind of consciousness, another awareness, that builds a capacity for different ways of being-with and ways of living-with and becoming-with that opens up to body, mind and soul. Our encounters are not just to do with people. They are to do with the space between oneself and an object, with other organisms, with oneself and another human being, and what is that? That is something about the sensuous and the soulful. I call this a poetics because it has liveliness to it – it is an enlivening of those who participate in the research and also myself as the researcher. That is part of what the re-search invites. This poetics of re-search, this becoming-with, can be transformative. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy 8 August 2018)

Inhabiting fieldwork in South Africa

As Kemmis reflected, for Action Research to fulfill its liberatory orientation it needs to animate transformation through the sayings of how we think and speak, the doings of acting well, and the relatings of living justly in the world. As a Performative Action Researcher I now look to share with the reader my own dance with my research practices and their unfolding within the encounters and conditions of my research practice 'in the field'. At the start of my PhD in 2015, funding provided through CAWR offered me an opportunity to visit Stellenbosch University and reconnect with my Southern African roots. Through a series of exchanges and encounters I was invited to conduct my field research in a continent that has profoundly shaped my own biography and arts practice. I now invite the reader into the evolution of my research 'in the field' as it unfolded within South Africa.

What emerged from my initial contact with Stellenbosch University was a sequence of Artist Research Residencies over an eighteen-month period. The first was a pilot residency with Stellenbosch University named *PULSE* that took place between December 2015 and February 2016. *PULSE* manifested as a week's programme of installations, encounters and exchanges at Stellenbosch University that included the sharing of a *Deep Soup Ceremony* with staff and students from the Visual Arts Department as well as Masters students from the Sustainability Institute (see *PULSE* poster below). This first residency formed a crucible of relationships with people engaged in food and farming within the locality and led to an invitation for me to host a second residency at the Sustainability Institute, Lynedoch, located a few kilometers outside of the city of Stellenbosch.

Figure 16. *PULSE* poster.

PULSE 8-12 February 2016
Join Touchstone collaborations and partners for a convivial week of food sharing, soil practices, skills exchange and conversations inspiring food citizenship every day every mouthful

“Eating is an agricultural act” Wendell Berry

DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS QUAD
Stellenbosch University, Neelsie entrance off Victoria Street

Tuesday 9th February DEEP SOUP & BREAKING BREAD
6pm - 9pm Celebrations, Artisan Food, Bread Stories, and Night Projections to inspire Food Citizenship

soil land art water food

become a food citizen every day every mouthful

GUS GALLERY Old Lutheran Church
Corner of Dorp and Bird Street, Stellenbosch
Wednesday 10th February SOIL, SOUL & SOCIETY
4 - 5.30pm *Why become a Food Citizen* with the Sustainability Institute, Touchstone collaborations, and Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute
6 - 8pm *Tasting Nature* with Liesl Haasbroek and Eduardo Shimahara
Thursday 11th February CULTIVATING FOOD CITIZENSHIP
11 - 3pm *Art meets science in exploring intuition through the body* hosted by Department of Conservation Ecology and Entomology, Stellenbosch University. Enjoy a food offering as part of the exchange
4 - 5.30pm *Meet the Green Road Farmers* and discover what it means to be a food citizen. Taste the region's organic and seasonal harvest
6pm - 9pm *Films, Music & Poetry with Food (R)evolution*, Touchstone collaborations, and others
Friday 12th February SOIL INDABA & LOOKING FORWARD
2 - 5pm *What is the living soil?* Conversations with students, growers, farmers, cooks, artists, scientists, food citizens and soil guardians

All events are free

www.touchstonecollaborations.com touchstone collaborations 079 309 4279
soil@touchstonecollaborations.com saskia von diest 082 863 2245

AgOrmus Agroecology Academy; Biodynamic Agricultural Association of South Africa; Bio-Wheat Stoneground Flour; British Society of Soil Science; Bread re; Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University UK; Wendy Crawford; Enlourini Research Centre; Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute; Eve's Kitchen Food (R)evolution; Green Road; Niel Jonker; Schoon De Compagnie; Soil Culture; Spicer; Sustainability Institute; Tyisa Nalunye Food Garden; University of Stellenbosch Department of Conservation Ecology & Entomology; & Department of Visual Arts; Welgevallen Food Garden.

photographs by Gwen Meyer and Touchstone collaborations February 2016

Figure 17: *Deep Soup Ceremony* within the Visual Arts Department Quad.

It was to the Sustainability Institute that I returned later in August 2016 to conduct my primary field research within an Artist Research Residency which I named *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture*. Between August and October 2016 I hosted three Ritual Workshops within this *Living Cultures* residency. The evolution of the Residency mapped itself out through a spacious and artful research poetics of listening and responding to where my body found itself. In my dedication to exploring my ritual arts practice as a research practice, I was exploring the question, ‘what is here?’ It was a process of noticing, and being receptive to the ecology of relationships I was living within, of following a rhythm of invitations, a heeding of an expression, a tuning into conversations, a gradual building of trust and mutual respect through shared exchanges. The unfolding of the research design was in essence an artful inquiry, a serendipitous drawing to itself of a spiral of inspiration, intuitive callings, spontaneous encounters, conversations, long-distance communications, openness, trust, goodwill and generosity.

As an emergent process, it was an improvisation within the everyday matter of my own being and aspirations – the slow, considered co-evolution of ideas in a dance with my bodymind, its instincts and desires, following a rhythm of encounters with people in connection to a geography. As I reflected within one of the Ritual Workshops, ‘there is a plan – I plan to be responsive’ (*Food for the Earth* Food Ritual Workshop, 17 August 2016). Here my thoughts on this emergent approach shared in a Listening-Thinking exchange with Flora:

None of my research work has come out of requiring some function or task to be met. Every encounter has been part of an organic, sometimes serendipitous, following through invitations, listening to clues, noticing what is happening in an environment, or being attentive to somebody sharing some experience or

person that they know. Every experience has come out of the emergent, improvised and a trust in the unknown ... the approach that I have to my life. (Listening-Thinking with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 28 June 17)

Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture

The form and intentions of the *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture* Artist Research Residency at the Sustainability Institute took shape through such cycles of encounter and exchange. The first was a series of conversations towards the end of my *PULSE* residency with Jess Schulschenk, Director of the Sustainability Institute. There followed a flow of skype calls and emails between myself and team members of the Sustainability Institute, which established practicalities, such as accommodation for a month at their Guest House and the use of a room as a studio within the main building. We also mapped out the intention of the residency, which was for me to explore rituals-as-research through a cycle of three Ritual Workshops. Here, below, Jess reflects back on the ways in which the form of my research emerged:

JS: In meeting you, I had no idea what it would turn out to be. And I was very aware that it would be perceived as different. But there was a very strange resonance that this was what was necessary. And that I think is where the trust comes from, it is from the resonance. There is sincerity, integrity, boldness so you can't do this work without being bold. But also openness to the feedback. And so I think that that is a unique combination and because of that constellation it invoked in me a very high trust that it was both necessary but also possible. So I think that is maybe my reflection on it, to go with your gut. When your gut says that there is something here, you might be able to retrospectively sense-make it, but in the time there is no sensemaking, just a sense of there is something here we can't yet fully make out. (Conversation Exchange with Jess Schulschenk, 10 May 2017)

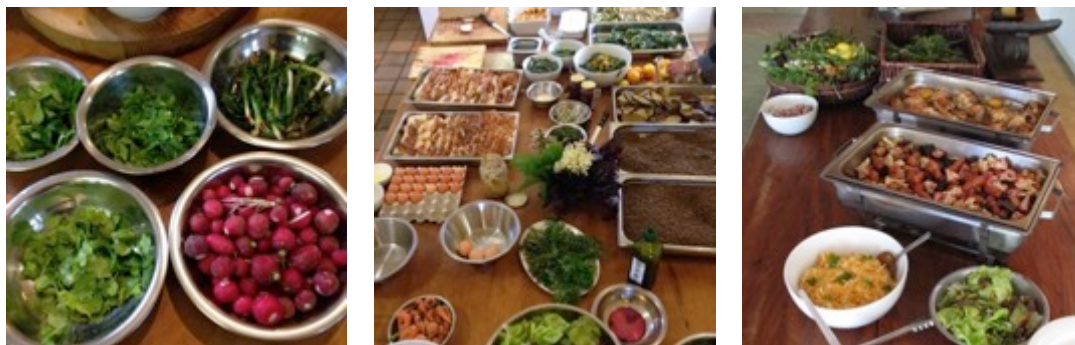
Through these exchanges, *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture* Artist Research Residency became co-ordinated around three consecutive Wednesdays in August 2016, interweaving a morning session of hands-on kitchen and garden experiences with staff and students, the sharing of a Food Citizen Lunch cooked in-house with staff, students and guests, and followed in the afternoon by a Ritual Workshop. These comprised a three-hour experiential research inquiry with a

self-selected group. The themes of the Ritual Workshops were based on practices of a sustainable food culture that had been identified in conversation with the Sustainability Institute and were entitled *Food for the Earth, Wild Cultures* and *Honeycomb Conversations*.

Figure 18. Preparing and sharing the Food Citizen Lunch.

Content removed on data protection grounds.

Masters students gather vegetables from the garden and prepare them for cooking by myself and the Head Chef.



The Head Chef and I improvise to create dishes from the garden.

Content removed on data protection grounds.

The Head Chef introduces the ‘menu from the garden’ and Masters students share their responses to the experiences of eating the food.

Each Ritual Workshop session provided a time boundary to give a sense of safety and which was long enough for a meaningful experience, and yet limited enough to be

digestible. As experiential forms for inquiry, they offered artful, choreographed encounters for skills-sharing as a way of enlivening our ways of knowing through our bodyminds – an engagement through handling, touch, sight and smell. Free and open to anyone interested in attending, the Ritual Workshops were advertised through a flyer, which was shared on the Sustainability Institute website, in public spaces at the Institute and within the networks of people I had met during *PULSE*. Participants who attended the Ritual Workshops are listed in Appendix C.

Figure 19. Flyer for the Ritual Workshops.



With consent from all participants, the Ritual Workshops were photographed, recorded and transcribed by Flora. I then followed through with Conversation Exchanges with participants in January and May 2017. Those who were engaged in the Conversation Exchanges were invited to represent a diversity of voices, genders, and experiences from each of the Ritual Workshops. Each Conversation Exchange took place in a mutually agreed venue with no pre-determined time frame and with the intention to explore the question 'What did you experience?' Here I reflect with Flora on why I framed these as Conversation Exchanges:

This is to do with presence. The idea of the Conversation Exchange as a term came up for me very precisely when I thought about how to engage with people who had been part of the Ritual Workshops. I was looking to continue the mode within which we had entered into a relationship by asking how the experience had been. I was not trying to extract something from them, I was looking for a relational conversation about how was their life going, how was their work going, what they had experienced within the Ritual Workshops, and how it was meaningful to them in their lives. So it was about continuing and encouraging, a cultivating of relationship that was beyond the research. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 9 February 2018)

Figure 20. Conversation Exchange with the Head Chef of the Sustainability Institute.

Content removed on data protection grounds.

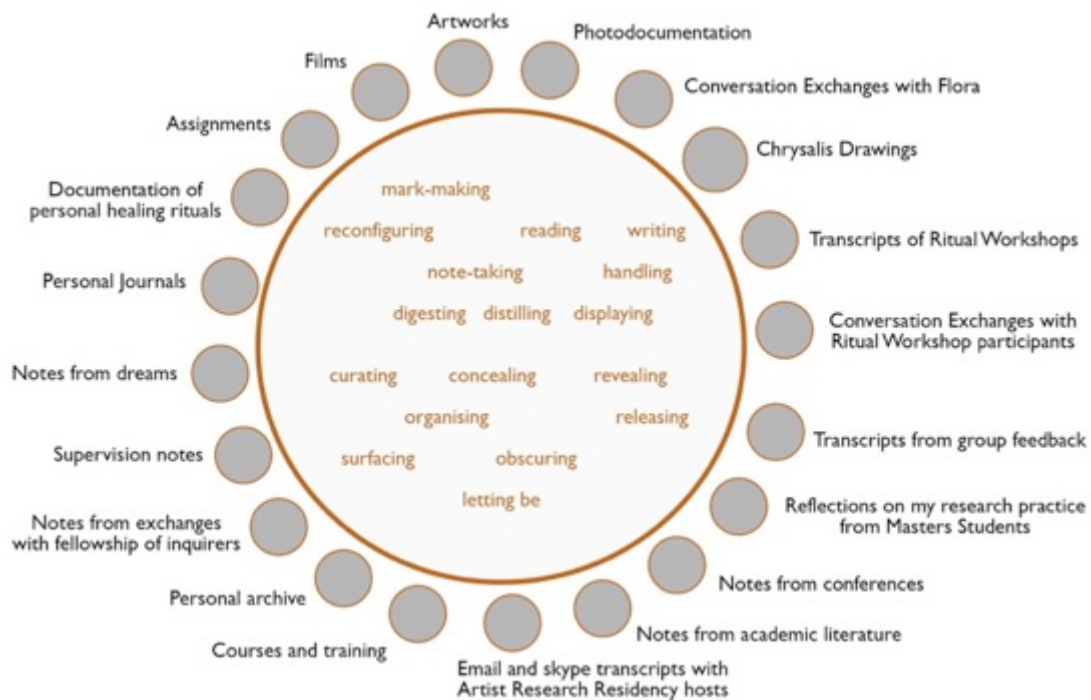
Becoming-with the matter of the research

As a researcher I have been both a generator of material during my *Living Cultures* Artist Research Residency as well as a guardian of this valuable material. Haraway's reflections that 'it matters what knowledges know knowledges' has been core to my

practice (Haraway 2016: 39) and great care and attention is required for the processes through which I order and interpret my research material.

For the period of sensemaking from June 2017 - October 2018 I began by focusing on handling, organising and curating the different forms of material that I had gathered during research engagements in South Africa. The diagram below illustrates this rich diversity of research material. Here in a condensed form is an endeavour to position and cluster all the diverse inquiries, activities, practices, exchanges and documents within a circle in preparation for processes of sensemaking.

Figure 21. Being-with the matter of my research.



The cycles of engagement with the harvested research material have been continuous. For my research to be enlivening research methodologies, such sensemaking practices need to be ones that invite a different form of engagement with and through my artful bodymind that go beyond subject-object transactions. My desire has been to dwell with the richness of the research material to elicit the insights being offered and shared with me – a dedication to being openhearted and letting the matter guide me in how best to discover what it was seeking to yield. This approach of letting the matter speak to me is congruent with the poetic nature of my research and its intention to respect and

To do this, I have been called into a radical patience with this harvest of diverse material, becoming responsive rather than claiming, determining, fixing. Romanyshyn defines a research with soul in mind as one that engages the researcher in imaginal processes of sensemaking (Romanyshyn 2007). It is an approach that invites the researcher to surrender to the practice of the research. In this way, the practice is seen as the 'text' to be interpreted and the researcher is in a process of discovery, seeking what in the work is asking to be found and named. The act of interpretation begins with listening and allowing myself to be questioned by the text (Romanyshyn 2007: 234). This aligns with John Heron's call to cultivate new forms for expressing 'a unitive discourse of psyche-world interpenetration' and he encourages researchers:

22. Gathering and handling the physical matter of my research.



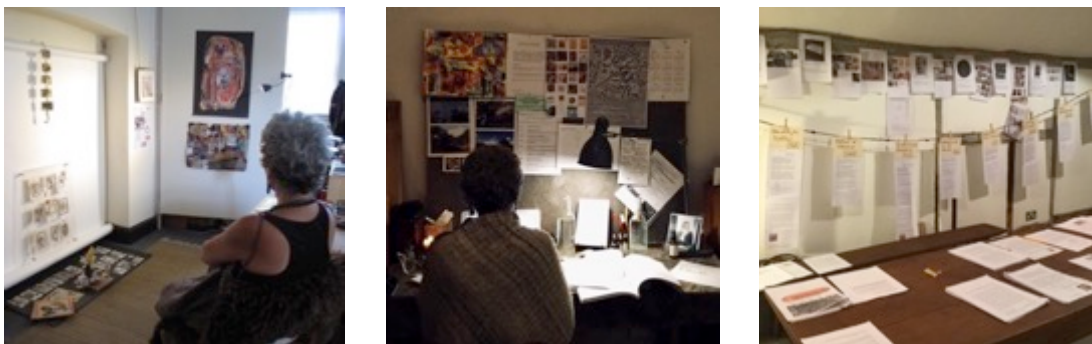
Personal writings and dream sequences, automatic writing and transcriptions of Food Ritual Workshops and Conversation Exchanges.



Arranging photographs, listening to recorded memos and displaying hand-written and typed notes.

Heron's idea of compresence supports my surrendering to being-with my research material in order to know with-it. My encounter with the matter and my participation in a process of discovery with the material is where I come to know what it is offering. It is through compresence, through conversations with the data, that the work 'declares itself and its nature to me through its immaterial qualities, which permeate its perceptual form' (Heron 1992: 164). As Freya Mathews writes in *For the Love of Matter*, I have sought to be engaging with this material and its subjectivities in ways that 'will induce it to reveal the meaning it has for itself' (Mathews 2003: 83).

Figure 23. Curating the matter of my research.



Musing with artworks, writing with text and images and exploring sequences of ideas.

Figure 24. Re-searching at the kitchen table in Chris Seeley's home.



Figure 25. Thinking-with the matter of my research and the *genius loci*.



Engaging in my home garden, at a café and with the North Sea coast.

A diffractive sensibility

My explorations of the poetics of re-search have been guided by my dedication to create the conditions for practising participatory consciousness. It was within theoretical writings on diffractive methodology that I found a map with which to convey this dynamic interplay between the different forms of the research matter – a metanarrative that is true to my embodied process of coming to know. The writings by physicist Kate Barad and biologist Donna Haraway explore diffraction as a quantum metaphor that engages with entanglements, correspondences, interferences and consequences. Such a diffractive methodology resonates with my desire to be faithful to the inter-relationships between the diverse and sensuous harvestings from my research, namely my artful and autoethnographic notes, the Ritual Workshops transcripts, encounters with place, Conversation Exchanges, Chrysalis Drawings, photo-documentation, emails and whatsapp messages. Barad writes of the method of diffraction as a fruitful approach for contemporary forms of theoretical inquiry. In her words this concept refers to:

A method of diffractively reading insights through one another, building new insights, and attentively and carefully reading for differences that matter in their fine details ... Diffractive readings bring inventive provocations; they are good to think with. They are respectful, detailed ethical engagements. (Barad 2012: 50)

It is within these theoretical writings about diffraction that I am enlivened by 'inventive provocations' that engage me in 'an ethics of entanglement' between my artful bodymind and the matter of my research (Barad 2012: 50). Inhabiting this diffractive sensibility is to be fostering new ways of interacting with the material in all its diversity and to be valuing all forms of expression, whether visible or not yet manifest. It is a sensemaking process which embraces many ways of knowing – the visual, the written, the felt, the known, the conceptual, the imagined, the instinctual – and is faithful as a mode of living inquiry for a relational ontology within which processes of life are interconnected and interdependent and happening simultaneously.

To illustrate my own diffractive sensemaking process, I share my immersion within a dedicated two-day retreat in October 2017 at the Centre for Future Thinking at Hawkwood in Stroud. Here, in this sanctuary of deep focus, I am in a listening space,

surrendering to the process of my own research. It is a time of being in an encounter with the multitude of experiences, materials and expressions of my research in an attitude that is soulful and attentive to the material. It is to be 'content to dream with the text', to be 'loitering in the vicinity of the work' in order to be giving spaciousness for the imaginal and unconscious processes to emerge (Romanyshyn 2007: 223).

Figure 26. In residence at the Centre for Future Thinking.



During this time at Hawkwood, I ask myself 'what is the new paradigm that my research is contributing to?' In the presence of Flora and inspired by a blackboard in my Hawkwood studio, I begin a two-day drawing process with a set of coloured chalks to explore this question. The drawing below, 'Methodology of the Intuitive', unravelled an entangled poetics of concepts and practices that give value and meaning to my own life as an artist human. This process of coming to know with my artful bodymind ends with my words 'What is missing? What is forgotten? What is lost?' Here my reflections on the drawing:

MFL: My process of drawing seeks to make sense of all the complexity by writing in the middle of the board 'Art of Ethics in the Everyday'. This gives a clue to what my research is offering in the enlivening of the artful bodymind. Then begins the layering of concepts and practices that come through me as I contemplate and move with my bodymind in a trance of inquiry about what is the new paradigm. (Personal Journal, October 2017)

This blackboard drawing was an exploration of my contribution to transformative research methodologies. The action of making these marks within the process of an embodied scripterly expression of the drawing was itself a deciphering of the

conditions for participatory consciousness. My artful bodymind, in this matter of making and making with matter, is in a becoming-with and coming to know.

Figure 27. *Methodology of the Intuitive blackboard drawing.*



Flora photographing the emergence of my chalk drawing.



Here is Flora's second-person response to watching the process of me creating this blackboard drawing:

FGH: In exploring your methodology you have set up the conditions to explore how you come to know by engaging with the matter and the mystery of art making. That is your synthesising and sensemaking. Your art making is the alchemy which turns all you have experienced, read, had reflected, touched, sensed, remembered and felt through your bodymind. This is where you allow it to surface. This is the alchemy, the transmutation from a complexity of three

years work. The drawing has been a freeing of yourself to allow your work to make sense of itself with you, with a witness, and with the matter of what is in the room. You have given yourself the freedom to allow that coalescing and sensemaking to organically emerge and for your whole psyche to make a decision about what is important. This feels like a Chrysalis Drawing process because there is a liquid phase of unaccountable impressions and experiences and emotions that are all within you and you have created the right conditions with bounded time for this mysterious process of something emerging which has form, direction, coherence, and agency in the world. It has flight. It has got wings. It is whole, what is created and comes through you, it has a gestalt and it has integrity. That for me feels like what you have done here. This is an archetypal artistic process of creation. Something has happened here which has integrity – there is something new in the world’ (Conversation Exchange with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 31 October 2017).

What has been illuminating from Flora’s description is the generative nature of her witness as my collaborator and co-inquirer. Over the two days, Flora attends to my research inquiry with her own reflexivity in deep focus with my thinking process and mark-making actions. As documenter, she photographed the phases in the drawing process as well as scribing my musings on what was unfolding. In this way, Flora’s consciousness made visible and midwived my sensing and ‘coming to know’. Her witness is a ‘withness’ itself, her noticing the unfolding intra-acting relationships of my living thinking in a sympoietic dance with the matter of the blackboard, the colour of the chalks, the qualities of the space, the floral arrangements from the garden, all embraced within the safety, beauty and nurturing of the daily rhythms of Hawkwood.

A community of collaborative practitioners

Collaboration is integral to cultivating ethical relationships as it is a participatory engagement that contributes to the interdependent nature of life. My research exchange with Flora arises from my dedication to collaboration as a political gesture and daily practice that seeks to be countering the dominant myth that we humans are in control of ourselves, each other and of nature. The quality of expansive, visual and embodied thinking-listening that occurs within a truly collaborative partnership enhances our capacity for interdependent and integrated worldmaking. Indeed, in 2015 at the outset of my doctoral research, Flora and I took on the dedication as

collaborators to frame our practice as a permanent *Residency for the Earth*. It was to Gaia's call we would respond as we seek to think-with each other and become-with matter in relationship to an animate world.

I have been inspired by other artist collaborations whose practices are in service to a holistic and interdependent world and who are seeking collective approaches for living empathically and resourcefully on Earth. Such partnership collaborations occupy everyday encounters between the intimate and the political, the scripted and the imaginal, the academic and civic realm, the arts and sciences. One such example is the New York-based artists Helen Meyer and Newton Harrison who began collaborating in 1970 with *An Ecological Nerve Center*. For decades their Harrison Studio was a hub of experimenting with art as knowledge processes that can inform social and environmental justice. Their *Survival Pieces* 1970-72 contributed to the design of sustainable food systems with productive environments for animals, fish and fruit trees. Through navigating performance art with scientific research and combining self-reflexive introspection with mixed media technologies, the Harrisons have pioneered new epistemologies and ontologies of academia and civic life. Yoko Ono and John Lennon were another creative partnership that shaped a ground-making practice of art, music and performance. During 1969 their *Bed-Ins for Peace* within hotel bedrooms provoked encounters and conversations around peace and social change. Their performance was a practice within the everyday that offered a space for protest and awareness raising – a domestic medium for stimulating a politics of consciousness.

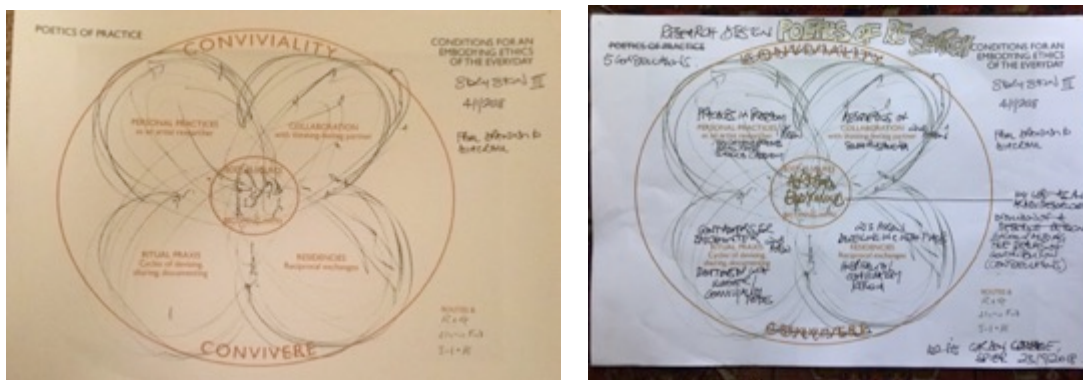
Between the life-commitment collaborations of the Harrisons, and of Ono and Lennon, there are resonances with my artlife practice with Flora. We seek to be true to our own identities and approaches in amidst dialogues through mark-making such as the co-creation of Chrysalis Drawings, where there is neither dissolving nor dominance of either of our personalities. As with the Harrisons, the Thinking-Listening practices call for a careful attending to the terrain of each other's inner landscapes through encounters with words, marks, writing, recordings and conversations. In resonance with Ono and Lennon, Touchstones collaboration shares a particular dedication to creating integrated lives that seek to dissolve boundaries between work and play. We work with the matter of emotion and imagination as practices in the everyday and as part of a commitment to nurture our own consciousness and work with and through the effects of imperialism, sexism and racism. For us, life is experienced as a continuum in ways that embrace mystery, the emergent and the unknown.

Summary

As Thiele writes ‘there are no innocent starting points for any ethico-political quest, because ‘we’ are always/already entangled with-in everything ... a primary implicatedness which calls us to cultivate ways to think-practice difference(s) that really might make a difference’ (Thiele 2014: 213). Within the fertile ground of the unknown, and in the supportive space of my collaboration, I came to the analysis of the research data. Here I sought to loosen and gather and disentangle the material rather than separate and dissect. By dwelling-with the matter I was dedicated to knowing through ‘withness’ and to navigating this material for a glimpse into its interiority. To come to some understanding of what was being found and un-observed through the process of research was to encounter all the documentation of the research with my artful bodymind. To do justice to the diversity of research cycles and exchanges within which the research unfolded, I was called into a deepening of attention, a becoming-with, an encounter in order to have a relationship rather than a functional, analytical explanation. For this I needed to immerse myself in the matter of it all.

In time, this process of surrender and trust to the not-yet-known crystallises into insight and forms which take the inquiry to the next level. The blackboard drawing paved the way for a greater understanding. The contributions emerged from attending to the experiences of the artful bodymind within its different yet interconnected realms of inquiry. In exploring how to be conveying the intertwined contributions, the series of drawings ‘Story Skins’ emerged in January 2018.

Figure 28. *Story Skins* as the depiction of how the Constellations evolved.



With these clarifying images I came to an understanding that to give form to the diffractive sensemaking, to convey a relational ontology and engage with a 'poetics' of research, the Complementary Writing needed an artful form which was cyclical and interconnected. This birthed the concept of the Constellations as a vessel within which I would be able to faithfully assemble, reveal and communicate how the practice emerges theory.

CURATING THE CONVIVIAL

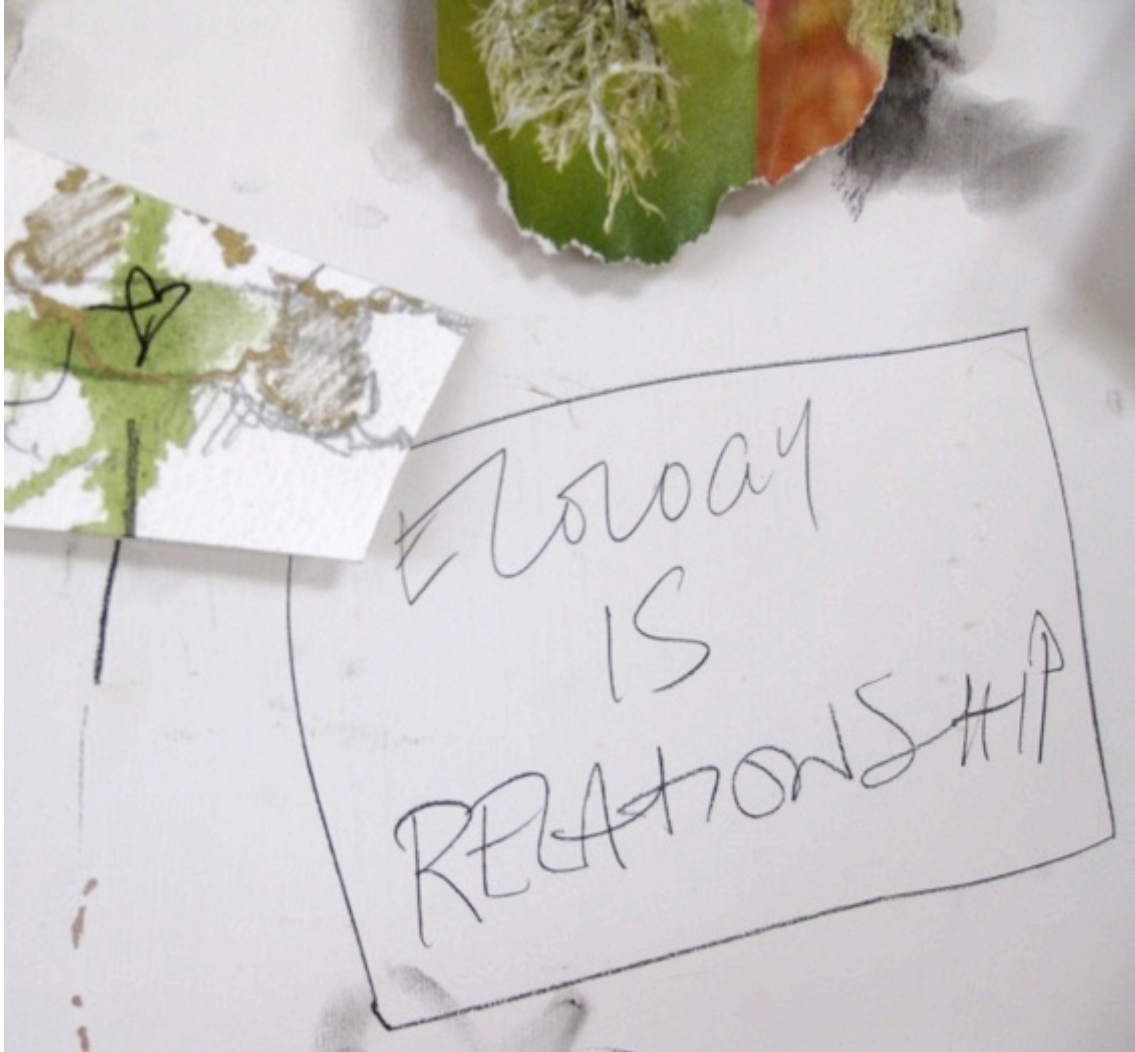


Figure 29. Detail of a wall-based visual inquiry into my practice.

Caring ... involves material engagement in labours to sustain interdependent worlds. (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 198)

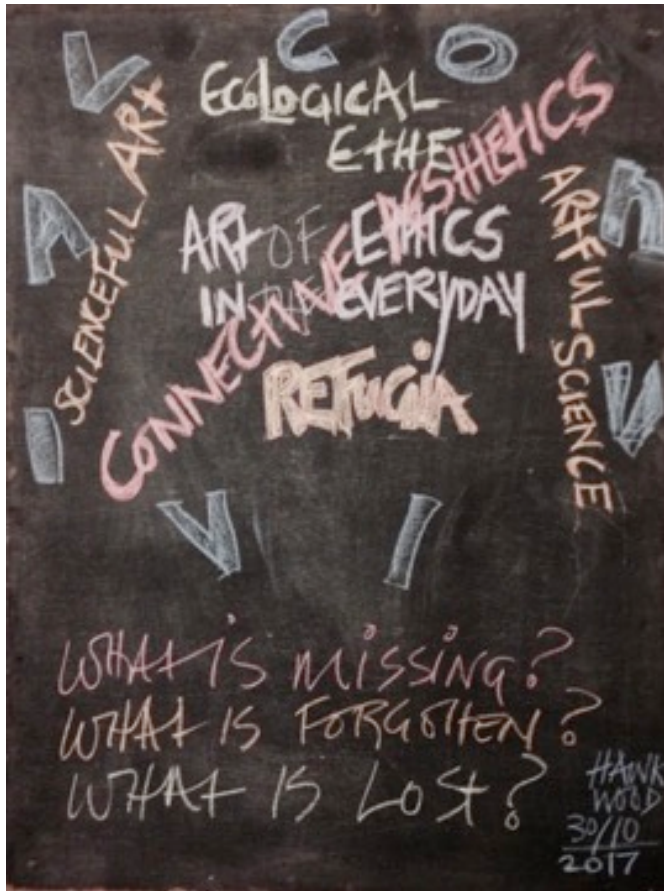
If aesthetic engagement offers us a remedy for our sealed-off, self-seeking purposiveness, it will do so by reconnecting, integrating, enabling wholeness and the recognition of oneness. Further, we must be involved in active process with art and with the natural beauty. (Charlton, 2008: 141)

Introduction

Conviviality with its Latin roots of *con* 'with' and *vivere* 'to live' defines a way of interrelating – to be convivial is 'to live with and together'. In reflecting on their research in Amazonia, anthropologists Joanna Overing and Allen Passes write of conviviality as denoting 'amiable, intimate sets of relationships which carry a notion of peace and equality' (Overing and Passes 2000: 14). These are relations that they propose are akin to how a biological system sustains life. Convivial sociality underlies the embodying of both cognitive and affective capacities so that 'to live a moral, social existence requires that there be no split between thoughts and feelings, mind and body' (Overing and Passes 2000: 19). This echoes Illich's concept of conviviality that is rooted in interdependence and, as such, is an intrinsic ethical value (Illich 2001). For in this concept of the convivial we discover how leading a convivial life is one of an 'autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of the persons with their environment' (Illich 2001: 86).

As seen in my 'Methodology of the Intuitive' blackboard drawing created at Hawkwood in October 2017 where I am exploring the new paradigm, I complete this drawing with an encircling of the word-image with the individual letters C O N V I V I A L. Here my spoken words as I reflect on the blackboard drawing:

MFL: Convivial has got to be much bigger. It has really got to stand out. Because that is it really. Convivial. All the research – if you are with each other you feel better. You have courage and you have will. *Con-vivere*. To live well together. That is all we are here on this planet to do, to live well with each other, is that not right? (Personal Journal, October 2017)

Figure 30. Detail of *Methodology of the Intuitive*.

What is this blackboard drawing encouraging me to be ‘seeing’? What are the letters in their formation as well as in their meaning seeking to reveal to me? In deepening into the structure as well as the content, I discover how the word ‘convivial’ is containing and surrounding the entanglements. What this visual exploration has un-obsured for me is discovering how curating the convivial has been core to my practice as an artist working with the medium of food. The concept of the convivial has afforded me a crucible, a safe container for engaging with and enlivening the artful bodymind within the entangled processes of sympoietic worldmaking.

Dwelling in place

Dwelling is a word that brings together the everyday with place, evoking both the image of shelter that is intimate and arising from its surroundings, as well as the notion of actively communing or being-with a place. Life is an embodied, embedded and relational process of unfolding. In my own life and practice, I have experienced the

word dwelling as holding within it a sense of honouring, of being responsive, alive to and humble towards the matter of what is here, what I find in place. To be dwelling is a way of defining an active engagement as an artist with the care or curating of place. 'Dwelling' Owain Jones writes, 'approaches life as a process of being-in-the-world which is open to the world' (Jones, O. 2009: 266). He continues:

Human and non-human life is read as in an immediate, yet also enduring, relational process of bodies-in-environment ... which are mobile, sensing, engaging, responding, exchanging, making, using, remembering, and knowing. (Jones, O. 2009: 266)

The word curate has its roots in the Latin *curare* and defines a practice of caring for, a capacity for preserving heritage and things of value. Artist-curator Hans Obrist seeks to expand the notion of curatorship, whereby the power of art affords a way of looking at the world afresh, by creating environments for participants to have an extraordinary experience (Obrist 2014). This notion of curating complements Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's notion of care that engages us in material practices and activities to sustain our interdependent worlds. Sam Bower also writes of the role of art in animating the work of culture and nature, culture and agriculture. He speaks of art as practical consciousness work that supports a reciprocal and healthy relationship between nature and culture by generating enthusiasm, energy and inspiration (Conversation with Sam Bower in Whittaker 2009). Within my own arts and research practice, the concept of conviviality is one that necessarily engages the bodymind in a participatory consciousness. Through the material practices of a culinary activism and the respect for an ecological gastronomy that connects us to place I am in a role of curatorship which cultivates the convivial. In this way, my artful practice with food seeks to reconnect to an ethics of care in the everyday as the locus of transformation (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017).

Rae Johnson, a scholar in research for embodied social justice, writes in an email exchange about the potential of the lived experience of everyday practices with food as a liberatory arena to inspire a politics of consciousness:

I am convinced that the everyday 'home arts (like food and ritual, as you say) provide a path to self-actualization and poetic liberation that feminists and social activists have largely bypassed en route to a goal of macro-level institutional change. In other words, I see the project of bringing the poetic

body back into the lived experience of simple things as potentially catalyzing political as well as personal transformation. (Email exchange with Rae Johnson, 14 January 2018)

Here, below, some of the elements integral to my process of curating the convivial through a practice with food and ritual that I noted to myself at the outset of my *Living Cultures* residency:

Ritual arts practice: Intentions, attitudes, form and criteria

These include: responsive to place, theme and community; co-evolved; dedication to natural farming methods; respect for provenance; honouring seasonal rhythms; artisan artefacts; traditional food methods; skills-sharing; slow time, pace and spaciousness; devised choreography of infrastructure; creating safety through clarity of purpose, flow of movement, and making beautiful environments; framing with opening and closing sequences; threshold space for inspiring diverse relationships with the sacred; inclusive and hands-on, celebratory, positive, affirming. (Personal Journal August 2016)

Artist Research Residency

Artist residencies are a well-established concept and many exist across the world. The concept of an artist residency is open and fluid, encompassing a broad spectrum of activity and engagement from a mixture of reflection, research, presentation and production. The emphasis is on experimentation and the multi-layered nature of the exchange, whereby the artist can explore their practice in the context of, for example, new materials or a new location and its communities. They can be transdisciplinary, involving artists, scientists, and professionals from a range of disciplines and sectors, or those working within defined communities on specific themes. There are also contemporary artist residencies that are oriented towards research, offering the artist time and space to develop knowledge and understanding aimed at benefitting society.

Residencies can be incorporated into larger institutions, or events, and can become part of a longer-term partnership with the host. The financial models also vary very widely. The *EU Policy Handbook on Artists' Residencies* states that artist residencies can provide cultural enrichment of the community in a number of ways:

By providing a platform for collaboration with the creative process, by participating in events or by being the audience for work or work in progress ... help to develop awareness, knowledge and understanding between different groups in society. (European Commission 2014: 38)

Prior to my doctoral research, I had experienced artist residencies as potent ways to explore and call in a depth of interconnection and intimacy with people and place. These living relationships within artist residencies became the ground of experience, from which the focus and form of my performative rituals emerge. They have offered time, space and resource within which I as an artist can inhabit and share practices within organisations committed to cultural change. Experiences such as *Renaturing the City* artist residency in 2012 with the Bag Factory offered an immersion for my artful bodymind with place, with a community of people, allowing my practice to be truly responsive to expressed needs and aspirations. Such socially engaged residencies encourage forms of ecological thinking that invite ways of 'living in the world oriented towards co-habitation; it acknowledges the dynamic construction of relationships within and across locations and between people as constituting knowledge and values' (Ryan, Myers and Jones 2016: 11). Curator Sue Spaid affirms in her exhibition *Ecovention Europe: Arts to Transform Ecologies 1957-2017*, that a transformative art is a practice of 'taking action on real ground within the landscape rather than resorting to a placeless, political aesthetics' (Spaid 2017:10).

In my own practice as an artist, artist residencies have offered containers for my artful bodymind to dwell and become-with the people, matter and *genius loci* of place in the everyday. Here is action which embeds through being in a landscape. What has always been important for me is for residencies to arise through invitation. Hancock reframes ethics as situated in a spirit of 'embodied generosity' – an ethics of reciprocity (Hancock, 2008). This is an attitude that seeks a genuine openness to difference, creativity and the conviviality of an ethical organisational life (Hancock 2008: 137). Hancock's concept of generosity resonates with my sense that it is only through invitation that my bodymind is receptive to, and able to undertake, a residency. For it is in these reciprocal gestures of shared interest and exchange that both myself and the host are in an encounter based on trust and experimentation. As my South African adviser Dr Rika Preiser reflected to me in an email, 'I can see that you only work in places where you are invited to, seeing that these are safe spaces and marked by trust, that allow experimental practices to develop and grow' (Email from Dr. Rika Preiser, 2 November 2016).

Overview of Living Cultures

The invitation came from Dr Jess Schulschenk, the Director of the Sustainability Institute, to return after *PULSE* for a dedicated residency with the Sustainability Institute. The choice of the title for the residency evolved as *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture*. We agreed to describe it as an Artist Research Residency because it was founded on the understanding that my research would be responsive, and co-created within the culture and geography of communities gathered around the Sustainability Institute. Living Cultures encourage an understanding that the research embedded as it was within the culture of the Sustainability Institute was a liberation project for sympoietic encounters between many cultures and communities – micro-organisms, ethnic groups, food cultures, agri-cultures, plants and animals. Below is an excerpt from my conversation with Jess before leaving for the UK:

JS: I am seeking the residency to be a holding space so it is important to keep checking in with each other. The Sustainability Institute is now more about knowledge transformations and alliances. I am cautious about the history of initiatives that have not taken root in the kitchen.

MFL: We need to understand why they have not worked. We could see the residency as a context for co-inquiry for organisational change. I always work with what is here, in conversation. It will be about the quality of time with people, in the kitchen, in the garden and teaching spaces. (Conversation Exchange with Jess Schulschenk, 1 March 2016)

In later email exchanges we formally agreed that the Artist Research Residency would be of mutual benefit and ‘fulfill my PhD research purpose and living inquiry, and be a meaningful project for the Sustainability Institute’ (Email exchange with Dr Jess Schulschenk, 23 April 2016). Through a series of correspondence (emails, whatsapp and skype conversations) between us we co-evolved a proposal that was an engagement with the food culture and Masters programme at the Sustainability Institute. Themes identified for the Ritual Workshops embodied Wendell Berry’s phrase ‘eating is an agricultural act’ and provided practices with ecological food traditions and artisan processes as a counter to the industrial food system which creates amnesia about where our food comes from.

Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture began at the Sustainability Institute

in August 2016. Here below I share a short photo-essay illustrating the diversity of experiences and encounters that I initiated, choreographed and hosted within this Artist Research Residency.

Figure 31. Manifesting the convivial in the everyday within *Living Cultures*.



Exploring ideas for food composting with the kitchen team, collecting food for recycling and cooking in the main kitchen.



Shrine of artefacts offered to me as gifts or found on site; meetings in the Studio; developing ideas for a Ritual Workshop with Neil Graham, farmer at the Sustainability Institute.



Exploring design ideas for the new food recycling system with Neil Graham; sharing fermenting skills with the Head Chef and hospitality team leader and sharing my research with kitchen, garden and finance teams.



Creating a food compost shrine.



Sharing the Ritual Workshops, visiting the farm of an Agroecology Academy student, introducing the hospitality team leader to the local Green Road Hub.



Harvesting vegetables with Masters students.



Preparing food from the garden with Masters students.



Preparing food from the garden with Masters students and the Head Chef.



Sharing a Food Citizen Lunch and the plate of food.

Voices, experiences, insights

How did *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture* create the conditions for people to experience participatory consciousness with and through their artful bodyminds? To be discovering answers to this question I am looking to share the voices of those who experienced the Artist Research Residency as well as those who participated directly within the Ritual Workshops. The reflections quoted below are all from people who work at the Sustainability Institute and who experienced the Food Citizen Lunches, informal skills-sharing and my dwelling at the Sustainability Institute. The voices represent men and women, students and staff, older and younger people, and people from different ethnic identities. Some people asked to be referred to by their initials.

Jess Schulschenk, Director of the Sustainability Institute

Here are words from Jess Schulschenk in response to my question ‘what did you experience during *Living Cultures*?’

JS: Your work hasn't been overly defined, but yet it has been incredibly impactful, these cycles of engagement. This notion that there is fast work or that there is easy work; it is just still stuck in the space of superficiality. Your work is not in the presentation, it is in what the presentation symbolises as intentional thought and a considered approach. So listening. Welcoming. Moving. Moving yourself into it. Experiencing. This is what I saw you doing. So this idea of this walking as a movement. You need to step into it, your practice. (Conversation Exchange with Jess Schulschenk, 10 May 2017)

Jess refers to ideas of people's active engagement and how the making of a space as a welcoming and safe hearth creates inclusivity.

JS: There is no space for passivity. But it is not frightening and it is not threatening. It is actually incredibly welcoming. That is something we miss in a lot of movements. And so this warmth of the heart and the hearth, the sense of coming together and sitting across. (Conversation Exchange with Jess Schulschenk, 10 May 2017)

Jess also reflects on the changes she perceived in other Sustainability Institute team members with whom I worked alongside in the kitchen and who formed new relationships to their cooking practices:

JS: In terms of feedback from my team, I am more interested in the quiet ones. So a quiet voice for me was RL presenting vegetables in their fullness, that that's where the integrity lies, in the wholeness of something, in its shape. And really appreciating that it tastes better. So that was a beautiful soft voice. And it wasn't even him *saying* it; it was just him doing it.

Another was with EW inviting you to her home, where they now braai butternuts. I think what saddens me is that you can sit in a class and talk about how South Africans need to eat more healthily. There is all of this theory about how if only we had this integrated food security policy and a piece of paper that would somehow make everyone better. And then imagine if you took all that energy put into cooking butternuts. (Conversation Exchange with Jess Schulschenk, 10 May 2017)

Towards the end of our Conversation Exchange, Jess reflects on the Food Citizen Lunches as an intercultural space of conviviality:

Putting food first is what we have been trying to do in the food gardens. The Food Citizenship Lunches are something we have continued to try to do. Do you know what South Africa's issues are? It's that we can't come around the table and share a meal. We are all so busy talking about why we can't that no-one is just sitting down and doing it. (Conversation Exchange with Jess Schulschenk, 10 May 2017)

Jess's words are an acknowledgement of the political dimensions of working in South Africa, a fragmented and inequitable society. Offering Ritual Workshops with the matter of food within this context is a theme I return to in *Ecologies of Care*, where I further reflect on how this ritual methodology is seeking transformative and liberatory practices which engage with social and economic oppression.

After the Living Cultures residency, the model of the Food Citizen Lunch continued for the Sustainability Institute community to meet and eat together, and to invite guests to experience the Institute.

Figure 32. Food Citizenship Lunch held after the *Living Cultures* residency.



EW, part of the Kitchen Team at the Sustainability Institute

EW was in the kitchen while I was preparing food with RL the chef. For the first Food Citizen Lunch she chose not to taste the food. On the second Lunch she helped serve and for the third lunch she joined all the Sustainability Institute team to share in the dishes and eat a plate of food. After my feedback presentation to the kitchen and

garden teams EW asked to have a private meeting with me in my studio. These were her words:

EW: The first time I met you I didn't know you could cook like that. You cooked the normal vegetables just with salt and pepper. That first time that you made lunch for us I didn't want to eat it. But when I taste it I loved it. My culture, where I live, my community we don't cook food like that. We chop the butternut and put lots of butter, we put in sugar, we add a lot of sugar, and cinnamon.

I loved it. It was lightly roasted and your vegetables had flavour. So I didn't just leave the stuff here, I took the stuff home, and shared with my people, what happened here and how the food was cooked. I actually want you to come to my community and show my people how to cook fresh vegetables and prepared the healthy way. Yes because you really, really inspired me.

Yes my husband liked the butternut. My husband, he usually doesn't like butternut. So I told him 'uh huh, you must taste it'. My boy doesn't eat butternut but he did eat. You see your stuff, what you showed us, I didn't just keep it in mind. I took that knowledge you told us and taught me. I was busy there in the kitchen but I was watching you also cooking there. Cutting the stuff and everything – I was watching you. I am actually doing cooking your stuff now. In the oven and stuff, the carrots and stuff. It is healthier than the spicy food. Normally we always make on a Sunday fried chicken with lots of spice. We braai it. Now I am doing every weekend the butternut. I love it.
(Conversation Exchange with EW, 30 September 2016)

Figure 33. Butternut squash for the Food Citizenship Lunch.



Roasted butternut squashes prepared in the kitchen; EW sharing the third Food Citizenship Lunch and EW visits me in the studio to share her experiences of cooking and eating together.

What was significant was that the sequence of three Food Citizen Lunches had an impact on the life of a young woman and her family and community through food. Because of being in residence, and having continuity of exchange and experience, EW had an opportunity to find her own way, in her own time, to meet my arts practice. And because I was a familiar sight around the Guest House and the Sustainability Institute she had the courage to come and share her experiences with me in private and at length.

RL, Chef at the Sustainability Institute

My experiences with the Sustainability Institute chef were very rewarding as I came to share with him my approach to creating a ‘menu from the garden’. From what seemed like a challenging and new way with food, it became a way that RL could add to his cooking experiences. By the third Food Citizen Lunch, he had the confidence to craft his own unique gastronomy and risk improvising a seasonal menu from vegetables brought from the garden. Here RL’s response to my invitation to share what he experienced:

RL: The experience started with this new way of doing things. Cooking from the garden, planning the menu from what you have in the garden, things like that. It was quite a challenge for me at the beginning because it is not something that I am used to. I like things to be planned days and days in advance. But it was kind of something I enjoyed doing because, I mean, this is the way that I want to cook, I want to cook it, cook from the soil, to cook from what I have got, to bring out the best from the ingredients that I have got. So, I think it combined very well my way of cooking, that I am trying to bring forward.

So, the experience for me was a good one. It opened my mind to other things; it opened my mind to a different way of cooking. It made me believe that food doesn’t have to be just what people like. You must open their minds to what else is out there; do you know what I mean? People are used to eating the kind of normal things, what you can buy in the supermarkets now. But food is also something you can teach them about, what they can get from the garden and

what they can eat on a daily basis. (Conversation Exchange with RL, 10 May 2017)

Figure 34. Cooking a menu from the garden with the Head Chef.



RL was open to the new because I had gained his trust by being around and taking interest in his kitchen. In his words:

RL: At the beginning I was lost ... but as we got to know each other and as I worked with you in the kitchen, it all came out quite easily. (Conversation Exchange with RL, 10 May 2017)

As with EW, being in place, creating a relationship to the kitchen and garden and working alongside RL helped build these relationships of exchange.

Neil Graham, Farmer at the Sustainability Institute

Neil Graham and I met before *PULSE* and worked closely together to explore ways in which the large amounts of food waste generated at the Sustainability Institute could be recycled for compost to return to the garden. Together we evolved a bokashi food composting system. Neil participated in all the Food Citizen Lunches and also contributed to the first Food Ritual Workshop *Food for the Earth*. Here Neil reflects on his experience of *Living Cultures* residency.

NG: You bring something new that is being learnt, or taught. Old. The ritual base approach is very important because it is not religious, it is not spiritual. It is ritualistic to a human action. You can read it as you want. To light a candle is to light a candle, the reason for lighting the candle is what becomes important.

So it doesn't matter where you come from or what it means to light a candle in your culture. This reason for lighting this candle means this, and that is what connects us all. (Conversation Exchange with NG, 4 May 2017)

Vanessa von der Heyde, Masters Tutor at the Sustainability Institute

After the first Ritual Workshop, *Food for the Earth*, I was invited to compile a short photo-documentation of the day for Dr Vanessa von der Heyde who was teaching Master's students. The next day, as a resource for a discussion on social innovation, Vanessa used this documentation with her class of students who had experienced the harvesting, preparing and eating of the Food Citizen Lunch. In an email to me, Vanessa describes how the sharing of these images stimulated her exchange with the student community:

VH: We defined social innovation as a change in social relations that include new ways of doing, new ways of knowing, new ways of framing, and new ways of organising ourselves. We also talked about transformative social innovation – to what extent does the social innovation challenge and transform the societal context it is situated within, specifically the dominant institutions.

The Food Citizen Lunch was a great discussion topic on the above, and we discussed whether this could be categorised as a social innovation. It definitely creates new ways of relating to one another (through food). New ways of doing include everything from getting all the food from one's own garden to how the food is prepared and served. New ways of knowing include the knowledge of farming, the time it takes to grow your own vegetables, when they are in season etc. New ways of framing include seeing ourselves not just as consumers - consuming food that was produced by farmers (producers), but actually producing and consuming at the same time. It was nice to have a practical example to use in class that all the students themselves experienced. (Email exchange with Vanessa von der Heyde, 21 August 2016)

What comes through Vanessa's email is the grounding of discussion within a practical example, a real encounter with food and its local provenance which students had tasted and experienced directly through their bodymind. The feedback illuminated how the Food Citizen Lunch was a 'great discussion topic' and as Vanessa elaborates further, this opened up conversation of how ecological food inspired 'new ways of

relating ... new ways of doing ... and new ways of knowing' (Email exchange with Vanessa von der Heyde, 21 August 2016). Here evidence again of how an extensive relationship to food can help to reframe ourselves and our communities.

Theo Oldjohn, Director of the Agroecology Academy at the Sustainability Institute

Theo Oldjohn and I met on the first evening I arrived at the Sustainability Institute Guest House. We both experienced each other's practices at Stellenbosch University during *Living Cultures*. Here Theo reflects on his experience of my practice:

TO: For me, I think I can see how your work would fit to diversity, because in all cultures, food is part of the celebration, you know across cultures. Food brings people together, you know. So for me, that is what I hope to see at some point, where your culture of food and bringing of people together will emerge more strongly.

It does help to bring people together, to bridge people and it does help to build that trust. And so for me I think what I have seen is this bringing of people together. A gardener, or someone who would be called a gardener, a cleaner and a programme manager coming together to a level of sharing with one another. I think then this is very important to building communities. Part of the conversation is around that, how do we build this community at the Sustainability Institute and your kind of work, the food, the ritual, is helping to build that. (Conversation Exchange with Theo Oldjohn, 15 May 2017)

Theo's words resonate strongly with the root of conviviality in the concept of living well together. He adds:

TO: What causes this fragmentation in terms of communities and societies is hierarchy, you know, and those cause deep divisions and so for me if you look at your work it is helping to bring people together. (Conversation Exchange with Theo Oldjohn, 15 May 2017)

His words also touch on my arts practice with food as a medium and share how he experienced it in relation to consciousness:

TO: For me, your food is about interaction, it is about the other, and it is all of that. That is the art for me. Art is about holistic. It is about inclusivity. It is about understanding not one, but many messages. Art is to bring consciousness and awareness. It is to raise what people may not necessarily be aware of. It is not having this one perception about something, but really broadening my horizons in terms of my interaction with the food. So, for me, your work is an art in the sense that it is holistic and it speaks to individuals. (Conversation Exchange with Theo Oldjohn, 15 May 2017)

Summary

My Artist Research Residency *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture* at the Sustainability Institute wove its intentions, rhythms, emergent engagements and choreographed encounters around the living food cycle. In her 2018 research paper 'Designing convivial food systems in everyday life' Emily Ballantyne-Brodie determines 'a form of human scale praxis' which can be 'extended out to the way we creatively and autonomously live, work and relate to each other in the everyday life' (Ballantyne-Brodie 2018: 1034-5). Ballantyne-Brodie's conceptualising of conviviality as a praxis confirms my own research with food within *Living Cultures* residency as a practice of living with life. What I believe is especially significant is the diversity of transformative experiences that arose from the Artist Research Residency, and how these represent many different ways in which people can engage with their artful bodyminds within a participatory consciousness. For some, it was the tasting of food, for others a sense of building community, as well as practice in consciousness. Curating the convivial within the frame of the Artist Research Residency model offered me the opportunity to enliven an embodied understanding of our extensive relationship to food. This is the gastrosophy or food philosophy that Harald Lemke refers to in his reference to the food art of Beuys (Lemke 2007). Here, within this material, practical and daily encounter with the medium of food, there is the potential for becoming awakened to our relationships with each other and the other-than-human world – the conditions for the experience of a participatory consciousness.

RITUALS FOR ENCOUNTER

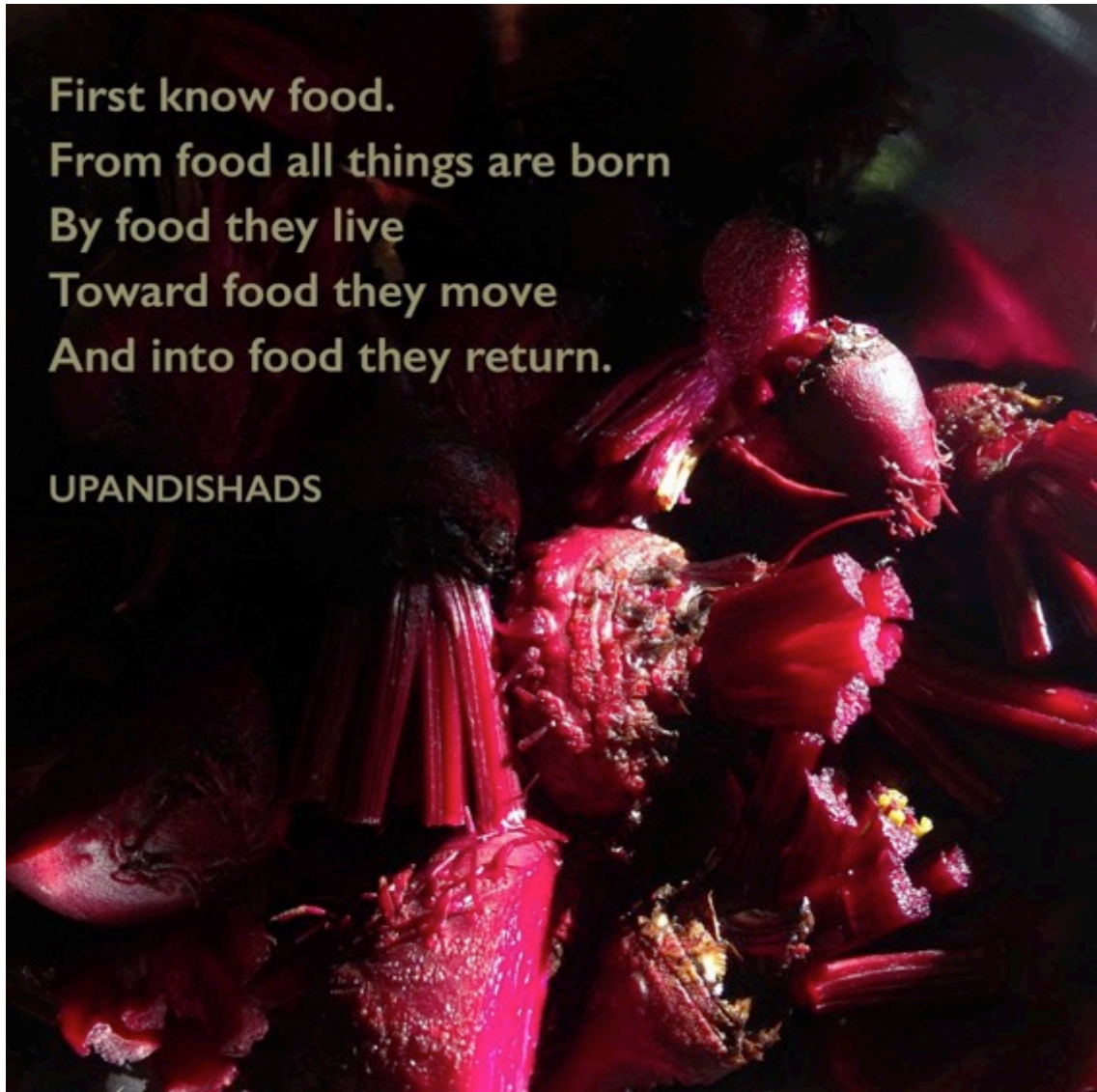


Figure 35: Fresh beetroot being prepared at the Sustainability Institute.

An encounter between my bodymind and baby beetroots. Here is an expression of 'my knowing food' through tender handling by washing, preparing and pickling plants which were lovingly grown and handpicked by farmer Neil Graham from his organic market garden.

Every action we take, every posture we assume, now becomes an interaction with a responsive world: all activity, whether epistemological or otherwise, is a form of interactivity. (Mathews 2003: 88)

It is not enough for an artist or philosopher to create and express ideas. They must also awaken the experiences which will make the idea take root in the consciousness of others. (Merleau Ponty 1945: 8)

Introduction

The philosopher-writer Jeremy Naydler writes of the alienation and self-centredness of ‘onlooker consciousness’ and the need for us to be restoring our participatory consciousness (Naydler 2017: 24). Or to put it this way, recovering our relationship as part of sympoietic ecosystems. In searching for spaces for such recovery and restoration I came across the ecological concept of *refugia*. Within the field of forest ecology, *refugia* are places where relict species have found shelter and survival during periods of stress, such as forest fires or inclement climate (Barthel, Crumley and Svedin 2013: 1142). The concept of bio-cultural *refugia* extends to places which store and revive cultural knowledge and practices for food security, as well as transmitting memory of agricultural biodiversity and ecosystem stewardship (Barthel, Crumley and Svedin 2013: 1142). Referring to the work of Anna Tsing, Donna Haraway explores how such bio-cultural *refugia* are places of ‘naturalcultural’ resurgence that have been lost in our contemporary cultures (Tsing 2015 cited in Haraway 2015: 160). Haraway argues that for renewed generative flourishing, we need to rebuild such *refugia* ‘to make possible partial and robust biological-cultural-political-technological recuperation and recomposition’ (Haraway 2015: 159-161). Sympoiesis, Haraway suggests, offers a way of thinking about such rehabilitation ‘amid the porous tissues and open edges of damaged but still on-going living worlds’ (Haraway 2016: 33).

I am looking to explore the ways in which my Ritual Workshops might offer a form of *refugia* by creating safe havens for experiencing participatory consciousness through food practices. My choice of a bounded ritual form brings time and space to remember the bodymind and give attention to its relationship with matter and objects, as well as attending to the observation of the physical and psychological experiences of being-with oneself and others. Within the Ritual Workshop, my intention is to offer a contemplative space that restores a sense of belonging to a participatory world as well

as offering experience for gaining new knowledge and fresh skills. Here my reflections in a conversation with Professor Peter Simpson on this form:

Ritual spaces are a methodology in my life as a human being. The Ritual Workshops are places and spaces of focus of attention and intention with others and clarity of purpose without knowing quite what will happen in that time. You are in a conversation with the environment, but there is something about the energy of that containment that creates a luminous quality of beingness. (Conversation with Peter Simpson 4, August 2017)

Here, a year later, I share free-flowing questions and notes from my Personal Journal on my choreographing of the Ritual Workshops:

What are the containers – physical, metaphoric, spatial, temporal?
Intentions – to remember we are part of sympoietic worldmaking.
To give people an encounter with this relationship through reconnecting kitchen culture with agriculture. How – Food Ritual Workshop – a new pace and a rhythm. Conscious reflection with the bodymind and its experiences. (Personal Journal, December 2018)

These reflections and notes weave into my proposition that the Ritual Workshop form offers the potential of re-valuing our essential interconnectedness by experiencing an extensive relationship with food through forgotten, or neglected artisan practices. They become spaces for enlivening the artful bodymind through the senses, for ‘stirring ourselves again and again to an inwardly alert and selfless looking, listening, smelling, tasting and touching’ experiences true to our participatory consciousness (Naydler 2017: 24).

The Ritual Workshops

As described in *Poetics of Re-Search*, each Ritual Workshop within my *Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture* Artist Research Residency was of a three-hour duration. My aim was for this time to be bounded so as to offer a sense of safety, be long enough for a meaningful experience, be contained enough to be accessible to people with busy lives, and to offer an arc of engagement that would be digestible for the participants. The continuity over a three-week period created a rhythm and sequence, which offered

a focus and clarity of purpose and also allowed participants to return to more than one Ritual Workshop.

The interconnecting themes for the Ritual Workshops – *Food for the Earth*, *Wild Cultures* and *Honeycomb Conversations* – were devised as experiential forums for co-inquiry as a means of experiencing a participatory consciousness. In *For the Love of Matter*, Mathews writes of how ‘a mode of address, rather than of representation or explanation, is now required in our approach to reality, and such address should be integrated into all our social and personal practices’ (Mathews 2003: 88). These artful, choreographed encounters and skills-sharing practices invited a new ‘mode of address’ as a way of enlivening our ways of knowing through our bodyminds – an embodied engagement through handling, touch and sight and smell (Mathews 2003: 88). Such skills-sharing practices provide containers of safety for cultivating fuller ways of knowing, and were offered in the spirit of what Mathews refers to as ‘encountering’ (Mathews 2003: 77). She expands:

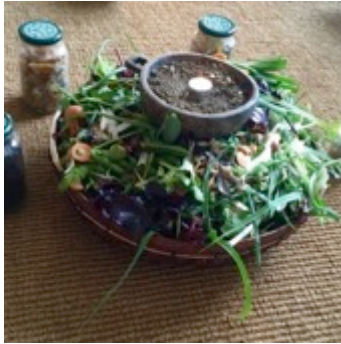
Encountering is to approach another subject with whom it is possible to have a relationship ... encounter involves contact with the subjectivity of the other and the allowance of a glimpse into its interiority. (Mathews 2003: 77)

What were the particular encounters that unfolded within each of the Ritual Workshops?

Food for the Earth

Food for the Earth began by being-with the source of food, namely the living soil. In this first workshop, I worked closely with Neil Graham, the Head Gardener at the Sustainability Institute. Together we sought to offer participants an experience of Bokashi compost practices which turn kitchen food waste into fermented ‘food for the earth’. This fertile cycle of transformation allows food to return back into soil to feed the growing plants that are in turn harvested to feed us. To make the link between the kitchen and the food garden, a large basket of the food waste from the Food Citizen Lunch was placed in the centre of the Studio space.

Figure 36. *Food for the Earth Ritual Workshop.*



Content removed on data protection grounds.

Basket of food waste from the Food Citizens Lunch, participants filling out consent forms within the studio, Neil Graham introducing participants to Bokashi composting.

Content removed on data protection grounds.



Participants listening to each to hear about their experiences of making compost, feeding back their experiences within the group, a final round of exploring our experiences of ritual.

Wild Cultures

The second workshop *Wild Cultures* took place in the Guest House at the Sustainability Institute and introduced people to the skill of making fermented cabbage. As with the food composting, it was not just about the physical substance of cabbage mixed with salt and stored in a vessel over time, but also about the metaphor of transformation. As Andreas Weber writes on our relationship to micro-organisms:

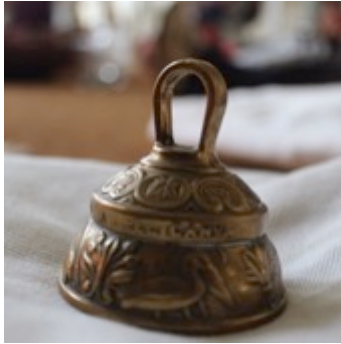
The other beings incorporated in this colossal web ... they are literally part of us. They form parts of our bodies and we participate in theirs. We are part of their metabolism, and they partake of ours. We *are* the living world. We are connected to it in a way we cannot untangle. (Weber 2016: 255)

Thinking-Listening with Flora, I reflect on this potential for fermentation to be a metaphor for personal and political transformation:

MFL: My reference to 'biodiversity in a bowl' captures the essence of what it means to live within a locality, what it means to live within the nexus of potential given by people and processes and products and purpose. So, biodiversity is about what a habitat is and how a habitat is sustained by very many different principles and practices and pathways that come out of what does a vegetable need, what does a plant need, what does an animal need to create its own environment. It is that proliferation of that interaction between many diverse consciousnesses and diverse energies and diverse purposes that brings life to a place, to a geography, to an ecosystem. For *Wild Cultures*, the biodiversity in a bowl was matched by the cultural diversity in the room. All the different aspects and elements of what brought people to that place to learn about fermentation and from each other.

That was another metaphor of transformation, where the fermentation process was about putting us all together in a room to see what happens out of a practice and what might come from such skills sharing, knowledge bearing, and self inquiry, self questioning. It was called *Wild Cultures* very determinedly. It was about wildness, the indigenous, about cultures that are cultures of people, as well as cultures of processes, of micro-organisms, cultures of potential, cultures of growing, cultures of art and science. Fermenting cabbage is political and contributes to a cycle of transformative thinking and action. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 31 October 2017)

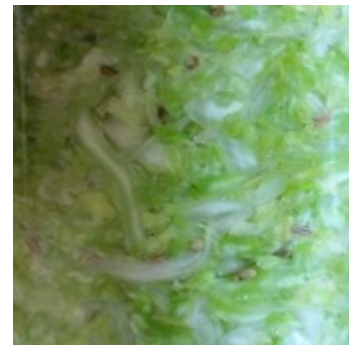
Figure 37. *Wild Cultures Ritual Workshop.*



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The ritual bell used to open and close the Ritual Workshop and participants preparing the cabbage for fermentation.

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Participants exploring their experiences of the workshop in pairs and within the group, and a jar of fermenting cabbage.

Honeycomb Conversations

In this third Ritual Workshop, *Honeycomb Conversations*, I was looking to work with the substance, the matter, of honey as a way of introducing the essential role of the honeybee as pollinator of food plants. It was also intended to be ‘an education through the senses’ about the medicinal value of honey. During the Ritual Workshop, participants were also invited to explore the garden where they were offered a hands-on experience with a bee-friendly hive designed to support the health and ecological life of honeybee colonies. In the Studio, participants had a taste of honey from a miniature spoon and shared their experience firstly with a partner and then within the group. This tiny amount of honey represented how much of this precious matter is produced by a single worker honeybee in her lifetime. The purpose of this experience was to provoke an awareness of the profound role the honeybee plays in our food cultures through a sense of spaciousness, the attention of another, and the intimacy of tasting. The invitation was for a personal awakening through a physical

encounter with and through the bodymind – for the tasting of the honey to become an embodied experience of coming to know. I also sought for us all to be encountering the question of the bees at a metaphysical level by considering the question, ‘what is a human being?’ This question added another dimension to the skills-sharing, opening up new perspectives on human organisation and cooperation.

Figure 38. *Honeycomb Conversations Ritual Workshop.*



The Studio with honeybee prayer flags, a circle of introductions and a detail of the shrine.

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Participants tasting a spoonful of honey with the witness of another and people listening to each other's experiences in pairs.

Sensemaking with the artful bodymind

John Paul Lederach writes in *The Moral Imagination* that ‘the key to complexity is finding the elegant beauty of simplicity’ (Lederach 2005: 66). As a way of introducing my diffractive sensemaking of the Ritual Workshops as pathways towards simplicity, I share here an extract from a co-inquiry with Caer Smyth that took place in 2016. As noted above, Caer was researching methods of new materialist ethnography within the Law Department of Cardiff University and requested to use my practice and my collaborative work with Flora as her research case study. She was keen to experience some of our collaborative research processes as an inquiry into the question, ‘what are

our beliefs and how do we live by them?’ I suggested we engage with her question through an experiential practice of artful inquiry through a form of collage-making I call ‘visionnairing’. This hands-on process of collage-making invites a witness with matter and an enlivenment with the artful bodymind.

In her dissertation, Caer reflects on this visionnaire process and the ways in which it revealed how my relationship to my artful bodymind is the red thread guiding my approach to research:

CS: On the visionnaire-making day, Miche chooses the ball of thread as her object to guide her visionnaire-making. Miche titles her visionnaire ‘*Becoming*’. It reflects her belief in interconnectedness and complexity. The ball of thread is her bodymind; ‘just follow the line of thread and you will be okay’. Miche had previously described her strong capacity for intuitive thinking as a thread, stating that she goes ‘mute with the severance of my own beautiful thread’ when asked to explain rationally a decision made intuitively (Journal notes, 1 June 2016: 2). We see in this relationship between Miche and the ball of thread Miche’s attentiveness to material objects, and that it is her belief that material agency works with her, inspiring and guiding her practice. (Notes from Caer Smyth’s Draft Dissertation I, June 2017, which includes Caer’s own journal notes)

In her writings on Artful Inquiry, Seeley reflects how we need to recover the sense of *connaître* (in French) or *kennen* (in German) (Seeley 2012: 85). *Connaître* is a witness knowing rather than a knowing about (*savoir* in French or *wissen* in German). As she writes, *connaître*, *kennen* or *witness* knowing is ‘this more hidden knowing which enables us to navigate our practical lived relationships with each other and other species’ (Seeley 2012: 85). This is knowing by becoming acquainted with in order to discover the more hidden understandings – a gesture resonant with Mathews’ writing on encounter (Mathews 2003: 77).

How does my artful bodymind become acquainted with, encounter, gather, organise and find the appropriate methods with which to ‘analyse’ the harvestings from so organic a research journey – one that has emerged through practice and experimentation, with its interwoven cycles midwifed from the serendipitous, the improvised and the intuitive? How to make sense of a process of research that manifests very diverse experiences of co-inquiry within the Ritual Workshops?

How did I come to knowing what was occurring with the Ritual Workshops and to acknowledge and respect the complexities and simplicities it revealed?

As described in *Poetics of Re-Search*, I have sought to embrace a diffractive and embodied form of analysis for the delicate and elusive process of un-obscurifying what the research findings were offering to me. Such an approach is founded on the recognition that human thought ranges between the conscious as well as more unconscious dimensions of the bodymind. As Lakoff and Johnson write:

There is no Cartesian dualist person with a mind separate from and independent of the body ... capable of knowing everything about his or her mind simply by self-reflection. Rather, the mind is inherently embodied, reason is shaped by the body, and since most thought is unconscious, the mind cannot be known simply by self-reflection. (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 5)

Here my notes from my journal during this period of coming to know with the research matter generated from the Ritual Workshops. These reflect this dedication to invoking both conscious and unconscious realms of sensemaking, an embracing of bodymind and soul:

Multivalence of connections, diversity of encounters, and spaces to think with in – physical, social, cyclical, artisanal. Exploring different levels and forms of engagement to understand the matter of these encounters. Working with and through the red thread of my artful bodymind in relationship to the matter of the research within a diffractive conversation of the holistic environment of life and the everyday. Letting research be my life and becoming-with it. Take time to curate and not determine any outcomes, even during the sensemaking. To not know and to be in the becoming-with the matter of the research – to surrender to the bounty of the harvest and discover with the artful bodymind how to make sense of this and what it seeks to yield. Create the conditions for laying bare the research material in all its complexity. None of this attunement and attention to the unconscious dynamic of the work can unfold without a surrender to the practice, an embracing of the essential quality of spaciousness of time, and a capacity for unknowing and a deep trusting in the process. (Personal Journal, June 2016)

Guided by these dedications to follow the red thread of my bodymind in order to become-with the matter of my research, and, over an eighteen months process of on-going engagement, my diffractive explorations coalesced into four eddying forms of analysis.

These four forms which I go on to share below include:

Dwelling-with the Ritual Workshop transcripts over four cycles of reading, musing, letting-be and note-taking.

Imaginal interpretation through the creation of text-image collages.

Divining ritual sequences with Chrysalis Drawings within an artful collaboration with Flora.

Sympoietic compresence with the research material where I share my own intuitive process of coming to know within a participatory consciousness.

Dwelling-with the Ritual Workshop transcripts

The first cycle of listening-with the transcripts of the Ritual Workshops was in mid-2016 in my Studio OPS in Stroud. Having printed the transcripts on return from South Africa, I hung them in long strips on my studio *Thinking Wall* with no conscious decision to either engage or not engage with the reams of words. I experienced them through light touches of engagement at times when I was called to read particular words, or notice resonances and rhythms between the transcripts. As part of communing-with the transcripts, I shared them with my supervisor and fellow researchers. For me, they were ‘in a conversation with themselves’, and when I was called to look at them, I heeded. This living alongside the transcripts and tuning in through moments of encounter to stir up the stories, connections and mysteries aligns with Romanyshyn’s call to loiter in the vicinity of the work so it shares its meaning to me the researcher (Romanyshyn 2007: 223). Gradually, the transcripts revealed what was of value via the conscious and reflective thought-making processes of my bodymind entangled with my unconscious and daily activities in my Studio. This

approach gave central place to my bodymind as the site of 'the dance' between the researcher and her work and made possible my own receptivity to voices of soul in the work (Romanyshyn 2007: 235).

My second round of listening-with took place in July 2017 in my new home in Suffolk. Here I undertook to go through all the transcripts to carefully draw out and note patterns and themes.

The third listening-with space was in May 2018 in a cottage at Shingle Street by the North Sea in Suffolk, where I read the transcripts and took notes while looking out over a vast open ocean view.

In December 2018, within my new Studio in Suffolk, I came into a listening-with process that included both the transcripts and the photographic images of the Ritual Workshops that had come together serendipitously on my desk during a process of unpacking.

This returning to and revisiting the transcripts surfaced different points of entry and unravelled new insights. The first engagement helped me discover what were the main themes and subjects that appeared across the different Ritual Workshops. The second listening-with yielded an understanding of how the matter of food was offering a nexus for transformation. The third focussed my attention on personhood, and the wider experiences of participants within the space. The final listening-with showed what was occurring beyond food and beyond personhood, and how my work was engaging with sympoietic interconnectedness – what I came to frame as the metanarrative of creating the conditions for participatory consciousness.

Imaginal interpretation

This second diffractive engagement shares with the reader a dynamic between the words I used to introduce each of the Ritual Workshops, photographic images of the Ritual Workshops and participants' responses to a particular question I asked within each workshop. My intention is for this layering of intention, image and response to convey the diversity of participants' responses to the experience of the Ritual Workshops. I am allowing my intention, a question, people's responses, the environment, the theme, to integrate and re-present the complexity of encounter

as a whole to give the opportunity for multiple interpretations.

Here, my introduction to *Food for the Earth*:

MFL: My method of research is this Ritual Workshop. We are in a conscious, reflective inquiry together. We all make it. We are tasting this new way of knowing, right now. This is an engagement and exchange between the inner and the outer of the garden. I am looking to be receptive with you, reflective with the witness of another. I believe this recognition allows something to take seed. (Transcript of *Food for the Earth* Food Ritual Workshop, 17 August 2016)

Within the Ritual Workshop, I ask the questions: 'What brings you here? What is your passion?' (Transcript of *Food for the Earth* Food Ritual Workshop, 17 August 2016)

Below, images from the Ritual Workshop overlaid with participants' responses to these questions.

Figure 39. *Food for the Earth* word-image collage.



Here below, I share my introduction to *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop:

MFL: This is about presence – what does it mean to be present? This is an invitation to reflect and deeply focus. What happened? What did we experience? What was it like? Reflect on our own. Write from the heart, the hands, the senses. It can be of any quality. It just needs to come from your own being. You do not have to share this with anyone. If you chose to share it, that is also fine. What did you experience? Or what experienced you? (Transcript of *Wild Cultures* Food Ritual Workshop, 24 August 2016)

I ask the question: ‘What was your experience?’ (Transcript of *Wild Cultures* Food Ritual Workshop, 24 August 2016) As above, images from the Ritual Workshop are overlain with participants’ responses to this question.

Figure 40. *Wild Cultures* word-image collage.

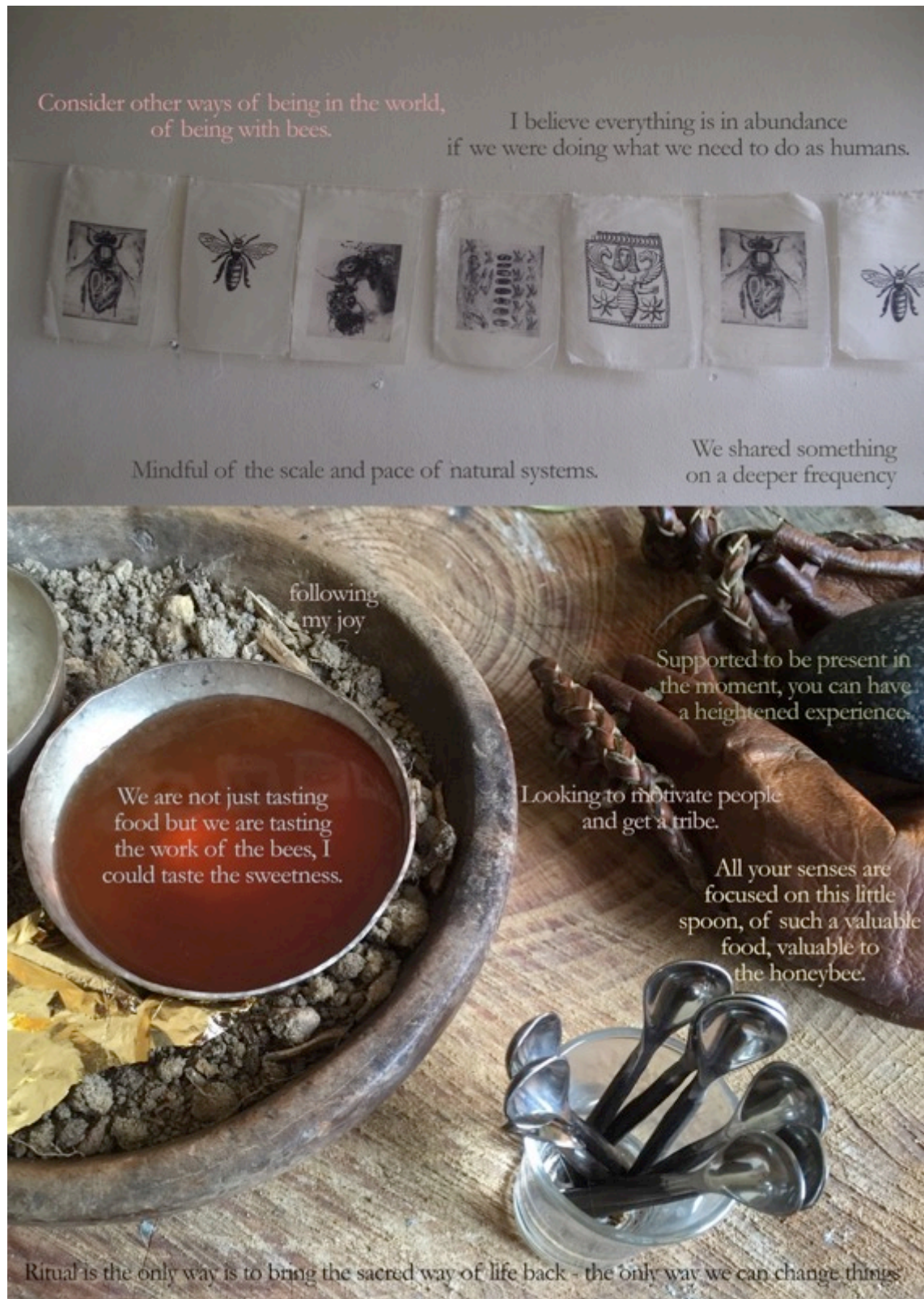
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Finally, here below my introduction to *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop:

MFL: I am seeking for this ritual to be a sanctuary space to reflect on our relationship to bees, water, soil ... to drop into another way of being. Not to have a solution, but to have another way of discovering our relationship to bees, in this particular workshop. We have such a wide and expansive way of knowing and engaging with, that maybe we want to find other ways of knowing that are not just about information. As practitioners and researchers, it is with the hands and the hearts and whole bodies that we come to know. Today, I am looking to draw in with you what is it to remember our power of our imagination, our intuition, our solidarity, our challenges, to feel and experience some of those wide-ranging emotions, which we are not often given time to explore in our cultures. (Transcript of Honeycomb Conversations, 31 August 2016)

Within the Ritual Workshop, I ask the question: 'How can we be true to our own human natures as a way of taking care of the planet?' (Transcript of Honeycomb Conversations, 31 August 2016). Below are participants' responses laid over images from the Ritual Workshop.

Figure 41. *Honeycomb Conversations* word-image collage.



Divining ritual sequences with Chrysalis Drawings

Within my diffractive explorations, the third arena of encounter was with my collaborator Flora. Flora's visual interpretations through her spontaneous scriptings – what we describe as Chrysalis Drawings – add another layer of response and interpretation to the Ritual Workshops. Her perspective informs my research in ways that enhance the breadth and validity of my own inquiry, helping to manifest the tacit and often unconscious dimensions of my research praxis.

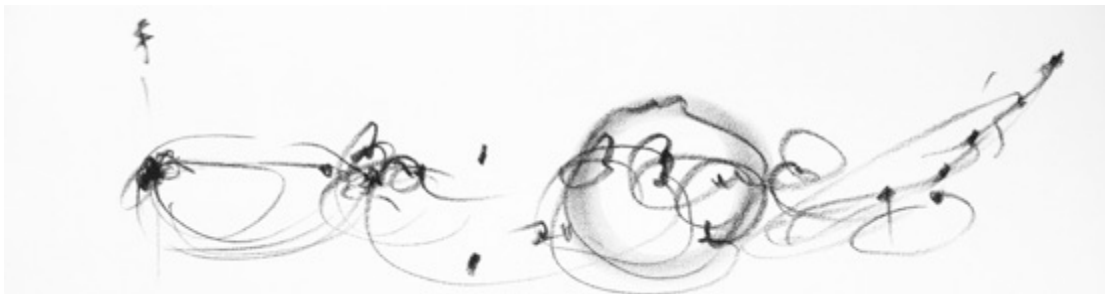
I invite the reader to engage with her drawings. As an introduction, I share an extract from a Conversation Exchange between us where Flora gives context to the Chrysalis Drawings as an interpretative practice:

FGH: With the Chrysalis Drawings, I experience something, or a cumulative sense of things – participation in a ritual, encounters, conversations – in relation to your research processes and then there comes a moment when I feel full and that I need to draw. It's an uncomplicated emotion of needing to express something that needs to be made visible. Something feels formed just beneath my conscious thinking. I take a pencil or graphite or piece of charcoal – a drawing tool – and begin. The gestures are often quite swift and the forms are always unexpected. The drawing has its own time and there is a definite moment when it is finished. It ends and I know that there is no need to add any more.

Immediately after finishing the drawing, some kind of name can come through which gives a clue to what has emerged. I always try and take a photo of it at this un-annotated stage. I then share the drawing with you, letting you know anything that has come through and then we investigate it together in more depth. What is central is that I feel I can only make sense of it when we talk together. They are never confusing, although some areas stay mysterious. This arc of experience, first expression, this sharing, can then feed into new drawings, new marks. Every cycle of reflection feels like a sacred encounter with knowing. It feels like every drawing reveals something of value, through the eyes of another. (Conversation Exchange with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 23 February 2017)

A few months after the Ritual Workshops, Flora was moved to make three Chrysalis Drawings. After she had completed them, we spent time exploring what they represented. Through this co-inquiry, it emerged that the three drawings on the single page represented each of the three Ritual Workshops.

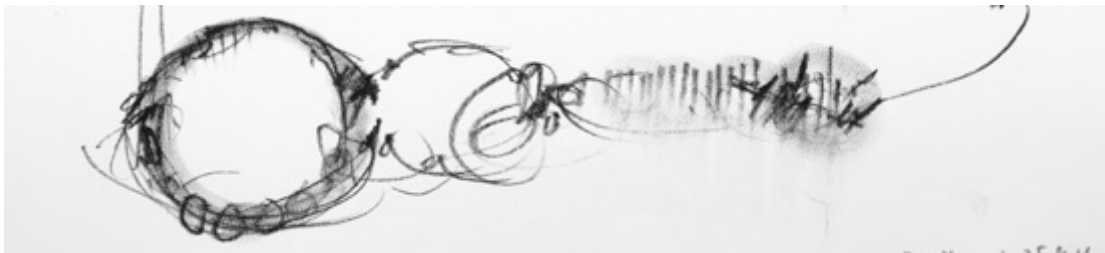
Figure 42. Co-inquiry into the sequences illustrated with Flora's 'Ritual Workshop' Chrysalis Drawings.



The top drawing representing *Food for the Earth* Ritual Workshop



The middle drawing representing *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop



The lower drawing representing *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop

Together, we saw that, while each Ritual Workshop had its distinct 'signature', there were also gestures and patterns within the mark-making that recurred across these different choreographies. Through further investigations of the drawings and through a cycle of Conversation Exchanges with Flora, a series of sequences common to the three Ritual Workshops came to light. These I have chosen to name as: firstly, the threshold of welcome and safety; secondly, the matter of encounter; thirdly, the heart space of self and other; and, finally, closure of the Ritual Workshops. These four stages essentially define a form that took on its nuanced expression within the particular context of each Ritual Workshop. Here, below, each of these four sequences are illustrated alongside photographs taken during the Ritual Workshops, and extracts from my Conversation Exchange with Flora about what is unfolding within each stage.

Threshold of welcome and safety

With Flora, I reflect within our Conversation Exchange on how I come to set up the conditions for the welcome and safety:

FGH: How do you compose and think about the space?

MFL: With the Studio space, it was prepared with a washing line, a table, a glass water jar. There was a shrine with soil, which was a constant. It was there like an anchor, a reminder that was implicit and explicit. It had artefacts on it like a bell, soil in little glass vessels, plant materials, things from the place, gifts that had been given, a candle. It was a real mix. The shrine was a place for gratitude, sharing of troubles and struggles, a place to come together to share news and celebrations.

Two of the Ritual Workshops began in that Studio space. It was set up to have cushions on the floor so we were all at an equal height, unless there were those who needed a different kind of comfort. It always had blossoms. So the space that people entered into was one of coherence and colour. It had my books and the washing line was always hung with pictures true to the workshop. So there were things for people to engage with, to feel welcomed in, to be nurtured by ... there were dates for people to eat and be sustained by. And the aesthetic was always thought about and prepared for so there was order and clarity, so people could be comfortable and dwell in the space, and feel at home.

Wild Cultures was up in the Guest House. It began in the living room and we went into the café dining area where the skills sharing and fermentation took place. Again, the seating was all in the round so people could see each other. It was diverse and the co-ordinating of the room for the fermentation was thought about in terms of the flow, how people could see and be around boards, bowls, jars. A lot of preparation goes into getting a feel of what is going to work as a flow.

FGH: Why does this attention to the look and feel of the space matter?

MFL: It is about welcome, comfort, ease, external order and clarity that will influence a sense of calm and coherence in a person and a group. It gives a sense of pleasure to the eye and creates a certain sense of safety. It offers a confidence that someone has been thoughtful and careful and that, for me, translates into each person being respected and attended to. And that will give them a sense of familiarity and maybe able to take some risks.

So, the physical environment offers a sense of security and peace and trust, even if it is not necessarily familiar to a culture. Bringing plant life and sustenance, again, helps us remember that we have bodies and that the senses can be enlivened through a different relationship to space. It is about encouraging a psychological intimacy through physical proximity.

FGH: What about the dimensions of beauty? How do you understand beauty?

MFL: It is about order, about how the furniture is arranged. It is about colour. The washing line, the books, where the tables were. Beauty for me is also flow and ease of access and not controlling the space. Personal comfort. Appealing to the senses and sustenance. The water, the flowers, the shrine. A beautiful arrangement of compositions and elements created a sense of welcome. Hillman talks about beauty, the need for beauty to help us remember. Safety, trust, ease and how the group actually sits in the round and that there is space, so people don't feel cramped and yet there is also being close.

FGH: How does a ritual begin?

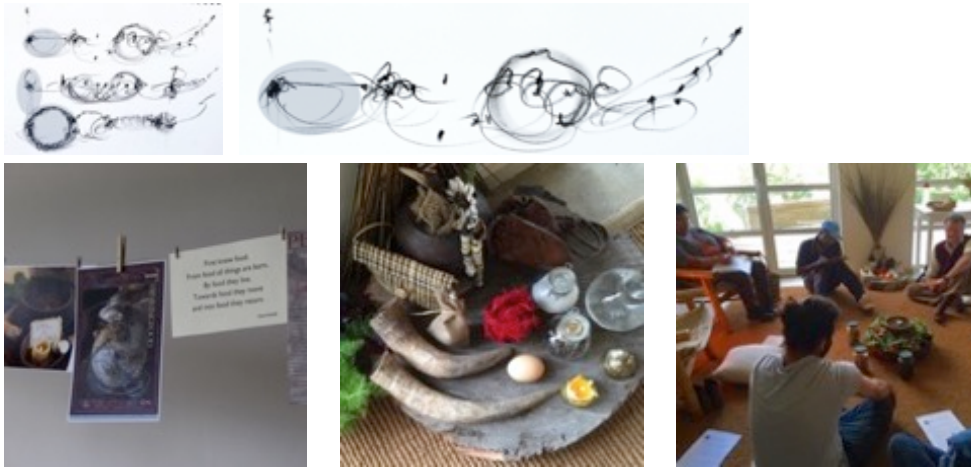
MFL: I sit. I hold the space for a while. I guess before that I smile and I welcome. I am very relaxed. I am receptive. It is about what is going on inside me. I feel at ease. I feel welcoming. I never don't know what to do. I just wait until something comes. Usually it is a welcome and a thank you and a looking around the room, enjoying what I see. I feel very honoured that everyone is in the place, that it is quite something to have got there. I think I say something like that. Notice we are here, that our bodies brought us here, notice our will, our intention. Notice us. And I feel privileged to be all together in a space to go on a journey of knowing together. So I guess I create a container of safety and inclusion. Everybody feels part of it.

And then I share the consent forms as a way of defining my Ritual Workshops and what I was doing as a researcher. I made it clear that this research was belonging to all of us and we were making something together. It is creating comfort and ease and security. And solidarity with each other. A sense of community, of common purpose. The consent is the idea that we are all agreeing to go on this journey together. It was a good way to introduce what I do and making the consent process deeply part of the workshop, not an added formality. The ethics was communicated and conveyed as an introduction to the workshop. We were all there to look after each other, for each other, not just me – we were making something together.

I speak slowly. And I wait for words to come. And then, when everyone is consented, we had our rounds of sharing where I invited everyone to introduce themselves in different ways in the different workshops. (Conversation Exchange with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 25 February 2017)

Here below are photographs illustrating this first sequence of creating conditions to offer welcome and safety.

Figure 43. Threshold of welcome and safety.



Preparing the Studio space, the shrine and signing consent forms within *Food for the Earth* Ritual Workshop.



Preparing the Guest House, signing the consent forms and introducing ourselves to each other within *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop.



Preparing the Studio, the shrine and hearing each others' names in the round for *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop.

The matter of encounter

Continuing my Conversation Exchange with Flora, I share how I choreograph skills-sharing experiences as encounters with the matter of the living food cycle (Conversation Exchange with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 25 February 2017):

FGH: How do you introduce the themes of the workshops?

MFL: It depends. With the compost, it was in the middle and it came from the lunch, so people walked into the physical presence of the theme. It is always by matter, because even with *Honeycomb Conversations* the shrine was there in the middle of the space with a bowl of honey on it. That was it. And with the cabbages, the cabbage head was there to introduce the theme. It is always the matter that must be present. And it's always hands on. People touch. There is always touch and experience.

FGH: Why is there always skill-sharing within the rituals?

MFL: Because it is a way of knowing and handling the material in order to experience the process and the practice so it lives inside the body. It is a way of people regaining skills that have been lost, of sharing in the skills so we can be helped and reminded by another. It is creating a community of resource and remembrance. The choice of the themes was political. It was about regenerative agriculture, and food sovereignty and food security and understanding that if we are to look after the Earth then that is political. How we maintain the soil. How we look after food. It's not just that we do the skills, it is the way they are brought into the research process. They become a research process for environmental education. People aren't just going away saying they can do fermenting cabbage, they are invited to reflect on it.

It is a very carefully chosen skill given the context of food politics, the cabbage fermentation, which was picked up by one of the attendees. There is the fact that it is communal, that they reflect on their experience with themselves, and then with another, and they then share that in the group. It's not a demonstration. It has the intention of research behind it and because I am going to find out after the event, then four or six months later, how meaningful was

it? In what way was it experienced? These were skills that are for an enduring culture. (Conversation Exchange with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 25 February 2017)

Figure 44. The matter of encounter.

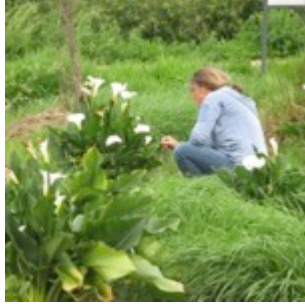


Jars of food scraps and soil, introducing the bokashi compost technique, and participants building a compost heap together during *Food for the Earth* Ritual Workshop.



Selecting a cabbage, cutting the cabbage, and preparing the cabbage for packing into jars within *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop.





Looking for honeybees in the garden, tasting honey with a miniature spoon and witnessing the tasting of the honey in silence within *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshops.

Heart space of self and other

The third sequence of the Ritual Workshop form is entitled 'heart space of self and other'. Here, I respond to Flora's questions about the qualities of this sequence (Conversation Exchange with Flora Gathorne-Hardy 25 February 2017):

FGH: What is the significance of people being able to share their feelings?

MFL: There is time and space. We have entered into a bounded time of three hours. That is the agreement, which creates a security. And people have the liberty to share as much or as little. And maybe what I share of myself gives permission. I share personal experiences; I put myself right in there.

FGH: The listening you invite, what kind of listening is it?

MFL: I don't think there are many opportunities for deep, receptive, interested, respected listening. So that is another space that is made. It is quite structured actually – another form of freedom and boundaries. It is just as hard for someone to be listened to as it is to share. It is a practice in giving and receiving. There is also the importance of being with the material as a parallel to being with each other. People don't often have time or space to be with matter or with each other.

FGH: What does that allow?

MFL: It allows the space of imagination, memories, feelings, and intuition, to surface. Remembering. Why this is all political is because it is a practice in

being attentive to what is around you in presence and this is what it means to become conscious of the ecological self.

FGH: Can you say a little more about how the rituals help this consciousness of the ecological self?

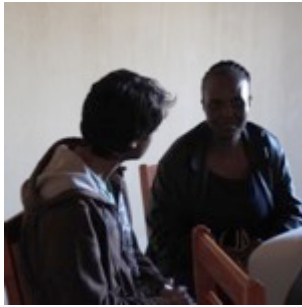
MFL: These rituals, as is true of an anthropological space, are threshold spaces – a space where someone can leave behind something of their past and their old habits, and inhabit another way of being or seeing in this space that is time out of time. Things are a little different from the ordinary, everyday. So the rituals are a space for re-cognising, re-orienting, renewing, respecting what one has a sense of something that is not yet known fully. They are a way of presenting what is not yet known or not yet felt, but is there, inside us. So that is being conscious of the ecological self. You are not having to learn it, only remember it, because we are not separate. (Conversation Exchange with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 25 February 2017)

Figure 45. The heart space of self and other.



Reflecting with paper and pencils, listening in pairs and feeding back experiences to the group within *Food For the Earth* Ritual Workshop.





Solo reflections, listening in pairs and hearing to responses as a group within *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop.



Reflecting with self, listening in pairs and feeding back experiences to the group within *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop.

Closure of the Ritual Workshop

Flora completes the Conversation Exchange between us by asking me about the final stage of closure of the Ritual Workshops (Conversation Exchange with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 25 February 2017):

FGH: How do you close a ritual?

MFL: The closing – what is important is to orchestrate that there is always enough time. It depends on what we have been doing, what has come up. For one, it was clear that we were going to close around the candle, and I invited someone to complete and they offered their own way of doing this, which was wonderful. They always finish on time because that is respectful. And the self-reflection and reflection within the closure part is key to being inclusive, an egalitarian quality. Everyone has a voice, as much or as little as they chose

so each person has equal space. People don't choose to share the same amount of things, but everyone is able to articulate, be present, share. That is a role I play. It is very important that the beginning and the ending always allows room for everyone to have enough space to share.

Figure 46. Closure of Ritual Workshop



A participant closes the workshop by extinguishing the candle with a pinch of soil at the end of *Food for the Earth* Ritual Workshop.



Closing the workshop by assembling jars of fermenting cabbage and talking through practical questions about the fermentation process as part of *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop.





Symptotic compressence

To be true to my poetics of re-search of becoming-with and the enlivenment of my own artful bodymind, my fourth arena of sensemaking is by thinking with my artful bodymind within the naturecultural habitat of a man-made lake. It describes an afternoon in June 2018 by a body of water, which I called Lily Lake. It is located on the farm where I live in Suffolk. The hours by this body of water illustrate an experience of my bodymind in a sympoietic encounter with the transcripts of the Ritual Workshops and with the life of a water-edge habitat. The first section of writing below is my summary of the afternoon's experiences, while the second excerpt was written while I am in the experience of being with the lake environment and its multiple inhabitants. During these heat-filled hours, I am musing on the new structure of the Complementary Writing, reading the transcripts, and awakening to what is unfolding within the research in relation to its true purpose.

Here, first, my writing that reflects back on the day:

Go to Lily Lake to set up with seating, shelter, shade and food with transcripts from the Ritual Workshops. What better way to be with this work while in the company of an English body of water which reminds me of my birth home in Zimbabwe and the Lake at Tiger Bay. I am respecting the voices of the workshop participants while being in the presence of birds, fishes, insects and a diversity of plant life on water and on land. And the colonies of lily pads flower me into my new reorientation with a grace and beauty that takes my breath away. I am fish, I am bird, I am invisible, and in a sanctuary home with my lake-tribe. (Personal Journal, June 2018)

Figure 47. Thinking with nature at Lily Lake.



Here, the second piece of my writing while at the lake:

5pm: Sitting by Lily Lake. Thoughts on Barad in the night and wondering where to next with the Complementary Writing? Why did she arise in my thoughts I wonder ? What have she and Haraway been affording this PhD? The concept of diffraction, of becoming-with, of knowing that it matters where we think and who and what we think with. The condition within which we find our questions and how we go about addressing them.

While I muse on these questions brought to me throughout the day, and resurfacing as I sit in this sanctuary of water, natural heat and light, I am in the presence of fish, and birds and insects. Listening to the chirruping, cheecheeing, whirring, twittertwittertwitterings and peerpeering trills of birdsong, the crickchicking crickets, the splashing of leaping fish, the hum of a solar panel farm, the distant sonic sound of an aeroplane and the occasional kisses from giant dragonflies fanning past me and landing on my knees keeping balance with their translucent wings. This is living thinking, thinking with the *genius loci* of a water body and with the natural fauna and flora. In compresence with its communities. All in keeping with why I am writing a PhD which is to remember humbly who we are in the presence of fellow creatures and the energies of the elements which keep us thriving.

I am creating the structure of my reconceptualised thesis that is no longer about the power of food as an agent of change but about the power of thinking which is embodied and brought into enlivenment through an attention to the place, the people and the matter with which we think. This is diffraction as a methodology. It is about discovering that I have a methodology that has form, the Ritual Workshop as a vessel, a container for experimenting with a way of being which is in exchange with matter and subjects. In the environment of this

container there is a special quality of time and connection and there is an invitation to be in the presence of objects that are actually subjects with whom we engage. In this exchange between ourselves and matter, we are in a communication with ourselves and each other and the material and processes with which we are engaging (soil, compost, cabbages, fermentation, and honey tasting). These are not incidental processes or functional material exchanges. Rather, they afford a practice that is ecological in nature and substance and thus cultivates interactions that contribute to remembering and restoring relationships with ourselves, with each other and the living world of our planet Earth. These are diffractive and sympoietic moments of interconnecting and intra-acting. And now to bathe my bodymind in this benign body of water and allow the next process and sequence of thoughts to rise. (Personal Journal, June 2018)

Opening to participatory consciousness

In each Ritual Workshop there were a variety of skills and activities being shared. I sensed that the skills dimension held significance on many levels and was an area which I sought to understand more deeply. To discover what kind of learning was being offered in the Ritual Workshops I turn to the work of Gregory Bateson who theorised levels of learning in his dedication to searching for how we as humans might come to live more full-bodied lives (Bateson 1972). Within his quest to understand what is fundamental for human consciousness, he theorised four levels of learning (Hawkins 2004). Engaging with Bateson's theorising on learning helped me come to a recognition that many levels of learning were being stimulated by the diverse activities and skills-sharing which I hosted and introduced within the Ritual Workshops. From participant responses, it becomes possible to apprehend what the space, vessels, skills and interactions were providing as a learning environment.

Below, one participant, a young agroecological student, takes the level one skill of learning the practical art of cabbage fermentation into a second level where it attunes him in ways in which this skill becomes a map for social change:

The workshop brought to me a solution to some of the problems we have had. Look at our townships. We are slowly but surely losing the art of cooking. People are catching a train at 6 in the morning and 7 at night. They don't have

fridges. By looking at this process I looked at myself as a solution. People can grow their own stuff, ferment it, and know it. (Reflections from AM from Transcript of *Wild Cultures* Food Ritual Workshop, 24 August 2016)

Another participant reflects on how the practical experience of the Ritual Workshop transformed her values and ways of relating with the world:

I have an understanding that my understanding is practical. My mind has been stretched, my beliefs, my perceptions. (Reflection from SF from Transcript of *Food for the Earth* Ritual Workshop, 17 August 2016)

The third level of learning takes the learner beyond the character of the self. It is where the learning can be understood as evoking and enabling transformation of consciousness. At this level, the learning is beyond oneself and society; it breathes into a deeper relationship within a participatory consciousness. Here words from two participants whose experiences resonate with the qualities of this third level of learning that tunes us into our deeper perceptions:

From the compost, I found a picture of layers, new connections, regenerative and potent, of things combining slowly, or quickly, being transformed, flourishing. This, for me, is akin to this process of knowledge and of becoming conscious. (Reflection from TvT from Transcript of *Food for the Earth* Food Ritual Workshop, 17 August 2016)

Our bodies know we belong to nature, our mind forgets. This is helping our minds remember we are part of our bodies and our bodies are nature. (Reflections from CC from Transcript of *Wild Cultures* Food Ritual Workshop, 24 August 2016)

These reflections reveal how engaging with the artful bodymind through the senses and in relationship to matter are enlivened within the Ritual Workshop form. An illustration of such enlivenment is the role of vessels and spoons and how they help make visible and accessible multiple aspects of a theme. So, rather than inviting participants to address an abstract concept of soil, I presented soil in a silver vessel. This ‘framing’ of the soil helps people engage with their senses, with touch, through visual associations and memories, as well as with spiritual dimensions of encounter.

Here, below, two participants reveal ways in which cultural objects opened diverse pathways to connection and transformation:

In this environment, we are not just tasting food but the work of the bees. I could taste the sweetness on the spoon. I became more aware of how amazing the bees are, that they can create something so sweet as this honey. I wanted to be here in my entirety. (Reflection from FD from Transcript of *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop, 31 August 2016)

This ritual is participatory, it brings out an emotion in people that they wouldn't have attached to what is happening and the way you carry your rituals there is always a thought. Rituals sort of bring up the things you don't normally talk about so maybe the rituals help you to deal with the emotion. It's really nice to be able to sit down, take your time, ring a bell, light a candle – that is a ritual. It is love, no? (Reflection from Neil Graham from Transcript of *Food for the Earth* Ritual Workshop, 17 August 2016)

What I believe these responses point towards is an understanding of how particular forms of artisan skills-sharing can help to build personal and collective transformation that continues to evolve *after* the workshop. My intention was to select and craft the skills-sharing process so that participants could carry on exploring, regardless of their personal and economic situations. For this, I sought to simplify elements of the Ritual Workshops, paring back to familiar and affordable elements, such as a knife, salt, cabbage and board for *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop. The honey-tasting ritual needs only a little finger, not even a spoon.

Here three participants explore the theme of how the experience of the Ritual Workshop might radiate outwards in their lives:

There is a reflection from my experience of the honey bowl to the outside. There is a ripple every time everyone takes a spoonful. By being supported to be present in the moment, you can have a heightened experience with less quantity that can also translate to our extractive life-style, our consumptive economic system. (Reflections from AP from Transcript of *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop, 31 August 2016)

I got to learn something that no-one can ever take away from me. For some

people, it may be like just something, but it is something that is in me now. There is no way it can get out of my system, I know how to do it. (Conversation Exchange with ZN, 4 May 2017)

When I was young, I appreciated nature much more than now. It came to my mind, why did I forget to do this? I used to touch everything, I remembered this today. (Reflections from JZ from Transcript of *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop, 31 August 2016)

In *Feelings and Personhood Psychology*, John Heron asks the question, what are we needing knowledge for? (Heron 1992). His response is that we need knowledge for living life well. This, I believe, is what the skills-sharing element of the Ritual Workshops offers as a dedicated and bounded time and space to experiment with life practices. The hands-on dimension of knowledge-creation and the multiple levels of learning it enables bring a particular potency to this intention. Here, two participants touch on how this experiential encounter with matter and place tunes them into coming to know with their bodyminds in ways that connect them to a wider participatory consciousness:

The lime in the compost reminded me of my childhood. Ritual changes us, we learn new stuff. The memory of the past is inside. I identify with all that has been said and the practicals. I can put myself into it. I can identify myself with lime because my house is made with lime and my memories of lime - and this makes me part of something big. (Reflection from RvN from Transcript of *Food for the Earth* Ritual Workshop, 17 August 2016)

My work is about fighting the industrial system but it is a bit 'out there'. So I can now bring it more to my own practice. Ritual is the only way to bring the sacred way of life back, this is the only way we can change things. Even if we are ashamed of our culture, let's create our own rituals. (Reflections from EPS from Transcript of *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop, 31 August 2016)

People came to the Ritual Workshops in response to an invitation on a flyer. I suggest from participants' responses that they came to discover new skills as well as to experience deeper levels of learning for inner and outer transformation. Here the words of two participants on what they felt the Ritual Workshops brought to their lives in relationship to an animate world:

This is about alchemy and transmutation, internal and external. (Reflections from Theo Oldjohn from Transcript of *Wild Cultures* Food Ritual Workshop, 24 August 2016)

Being so quiet, being so focused, how much you take, what you take off the spoon, all your senses are focused on this little spoon, of such a valuable food, valuable to the honeybee more than to us. When you see them specifically choosing one flower, we taste the food, we taste the nectars. What flowers are in this honey, how many trips did it take to make this honey? (Reflections from KS from Transcript of *Honeycomb Conversations* Ritual Workshop, 31 August 2016)

During my *Living Cultures* Research Residency I was approached by Megan Lindow who, having experienced two of my food rituals, was looking to interview me about my research practice. Megan's Masters thesis was looking at the food systems of the Western Cape and engaging with the collective processes of storytelling as a means of restoring socio-ecological resilience. For Megan, her encounter with my rituals highlighted the limitations of the old stories and revealed the need for re-imagining the new ones. In reflecting on the interview, Megan writes 'through resisting telling the known stories (either the beautiful or the apocalyptic stories), you are allowing that space to be filled by connection and embodied experience' (Email from Megan Lindow, 25 October 2016). For Megan my ritual practice was an opportunity for re-storying food practices, 'where space is created for new patterns of thinking and questioning to surface – the ritual space as a life-giving, evolving, generative space' (Email from Megan Lindow, 25 October 2016).

Summary

In offering solutions to our fragmented cultures, Some conjectures that the regeneration of our communities requires healing ritual spaces within which individuals will emerge answers for themselves (Some 1998). His work confirms how we will need new models which fuel imagination and creativity, forms which can be adapted and woven into our lives and cultures (Some 1998: 294). Andreas Weber writes of the 'enlivenment approach' where through practical action and exchange we

can build new realities and can be ‘blending the interests of the individual and the whole’ (Weber 2019: 111-112). The Ritual Workshops are generative spaces, offering a model to experience enlivenment and practice new ways of being and knowing within a collective dimension. With its kinship to a biocultural model of *refugia*, the Ritual Workshop is a form which provides safe arenas to experience, imagine and inhabit new stories for it restores artisan food practices where participants can experience the artful bodymind within a participatory consciousness.

PRACTICES IN FREEDOM



Figure 48. Ritual Suitcase.

Pigskin suitcase found in a charity shop in Norwich, UK during my undergraduate student days at the University of East Anglia. This suitcase became part of my arts practice and the vessel for a ritual practice. It inspired a collaboration and the ritual *Heart Habitus* performed between Oxford, Cape Town and my childhood home in Zimbabwe.

In passion and action, detachment and attachment, this is what I call cultivating response-ability; that is also collective knowing and doing, an ecology of practices. (Haraway 2016: 34)

We have this potential to relate to each other so richly, and wildly, and poetically. And really, that's what environmentalists and artists should be talking about – enriching ourselves. (Manes 1997: 100)

Introduction

It is in *Person/Planet*, that Roszak identifies and considers our human alienation from ourselves, each other and our communities. His impassioned call invites us to create 'an arena of dissent' where we can challenge this 'severe distortion of human nature' and the cultural amnesia imposed on us by the urban industrial system (Roszak, 1977: xx). For this, we must question 'the going standard of sanity, the established criteria of knowledge, our collective state of soul' (Roszak 1977: xx). By what means can I be challenging the conventions that diminish the experience of ourselves and our entanglement within sympoietic worldmaking? How to expand my and others' awareness through practices which connect the inner with the outer, ones which are connective forms of knowing and engagement and link the aesthetic to the ethical? Within this cultural amnesia, how do I counteract this distortion and awaken myself to position myself as a human being with a political and ethical consciousness? My research explores convivial interventions that counteract this distortion, 'arenas for aesthetic and ethical acts' as defined by Hayes (Hayes 2003: 6).

My responsibility as a Performative Action Researcher requires a commitment to immersing myself in experiences and activating practices that are healing and ecological, ones which address my own 'distortion' as well as choreographing arenas of encounter for sympoietic worldmaking. Action Research theorists Patricia Gaya, Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury write how the integration of theoretical perspectives and life experiences is the ground of 'personal paradigms'. These help frame and explain an action researchers' ways of being and acting in the world (Gaya, Reason and Bradbury 2008: 16). Roszak also writes of the need for 'a personalist paradigm that unites the knower and the known in a vital reciprocity' (Roszak 1977: xxx). To nurture the emergence of my own artful bodymind, I have sought to attune my life to practices that create the conditions for transformation and enhance the dynamic of reciprocity

between how I come to know and what I know (Roszak 1977: xxx). As Romanyshyn writes:

In listening to what addresses us, we are obedient to something other than ourselves, and we obey when we listen to what addresses us ... this obedience is in service to the soul of the work. (Romanyshyn 2007: 230)

To be 'cultivating response-ability' (Haraway 2016: 34) and a 'politics of consciousness' (Roszak 1977: xx) are both dedications to recovering wholeness in relationship with others and the sentient world. Since my Shave epiphany, where I recognised that as a human being I chose my service as an artist, the intention for my practice has been to salvage the forgotten wisdom of the body with its multiple intelligences as our source of knowing. My doctoral research is an endeavour towards *anamnesis*, a re-collection of what has been lost or forgotten.

Arenas for transformation

For collective freedom, Gramsci writes in *Prison Notes* that one needs to begin by personal freedom and this requires making an inventory of the self (Hoare 1998). Here I look to sharing the arenas I have evolved for cultivating a participatory and political consciousness that arises from 'aesthetic and ethical acts' (Hayes 2003: 6). These sustain my own vitality, health, will and emotional intelligence and attend to my unconscious. These are regular and enlivening activities which inspire a dance between body and psyche in conversation with people, matter and place – all in support of sympoietic worldmaking. Illich writes that an ethics of being is encompassed by individual freedom realised in personal interdependence (Illich 2001: 18). These arenas include:

First know food – fostering an ecological gastronomy in the everyday with food as a medicine, and a contemplative cooking practice that is in support of natural farming.

Artful collaboration – engaging in second person inquiry with the presence and witness of another that cultivates an ethics of thinking-feeling-being within a participatory consciousness.

Imaginal encounters with matter – valuing first person inquiry for my own healing and transformation through studio practices as well as ritual processes with matter and place.

First know food

Food has been central to my life's journey. It has motivated the healing of my body damaged in a car accident; it has been the medium for my culinary activism; and it has engaged me as a contemplative practice that embraces the sacred in the everyday and honours the living food cycle. Wherever I am, I look to source natural, freshly-grown food from living soils. My first encounters with a place are through discovering organic and biodynamic land and meeting food growers and artisan food producers. By supporting their livelihoods, I am engaging in a political act with an ethical intention to respect the Earth as well as my own bodymind.

Figure 49. My bodymind engaged in the living food cycle.



In 2010, I began exploring how my practice with food rituals might more explicitly investigate the relationships between food, culture, politics and the sacred. Within this stream of inquiry, I emerged my project *ThinkingFood* with its question ‘How can we think differently about food and how can food help us to think differently?’ (See Appendix F for my *ThinkingFood Manifesto* written in 2011 as part of a collaboration with Ruskin Mill Trust who were seeking to integrate food into the everyday life of their teaching programmes).

Within this *ThinkingFood* question is the understanding that food provides a medium for lived relationships with the wider animate world. In *Cooking, Eating, Thinking*, Dean Curtin and Lisa Heldke introduce a food-centred philosophy which proposes food as an epistemology (Curtin and Heldke 1992). Food is a way of knowing the world. For it is through food that we can be engaged in interconnected experiences and relationships. Curtin and Heldke write:

Taking the production and preparation of food as an illuminating force, we might formulate a conception of the person which focuses on our connection with and dependence on the rest of the world. (Curtin and Heldke 1992: xiv)

In cultivating such an extensive understanding of our relationship to food, we inhabit new perspectives on ourselves for living with others and the environment. Food as an epistemology thus becomes the bridge for my own well-being, a practice in care towards others and the other-than-human world.

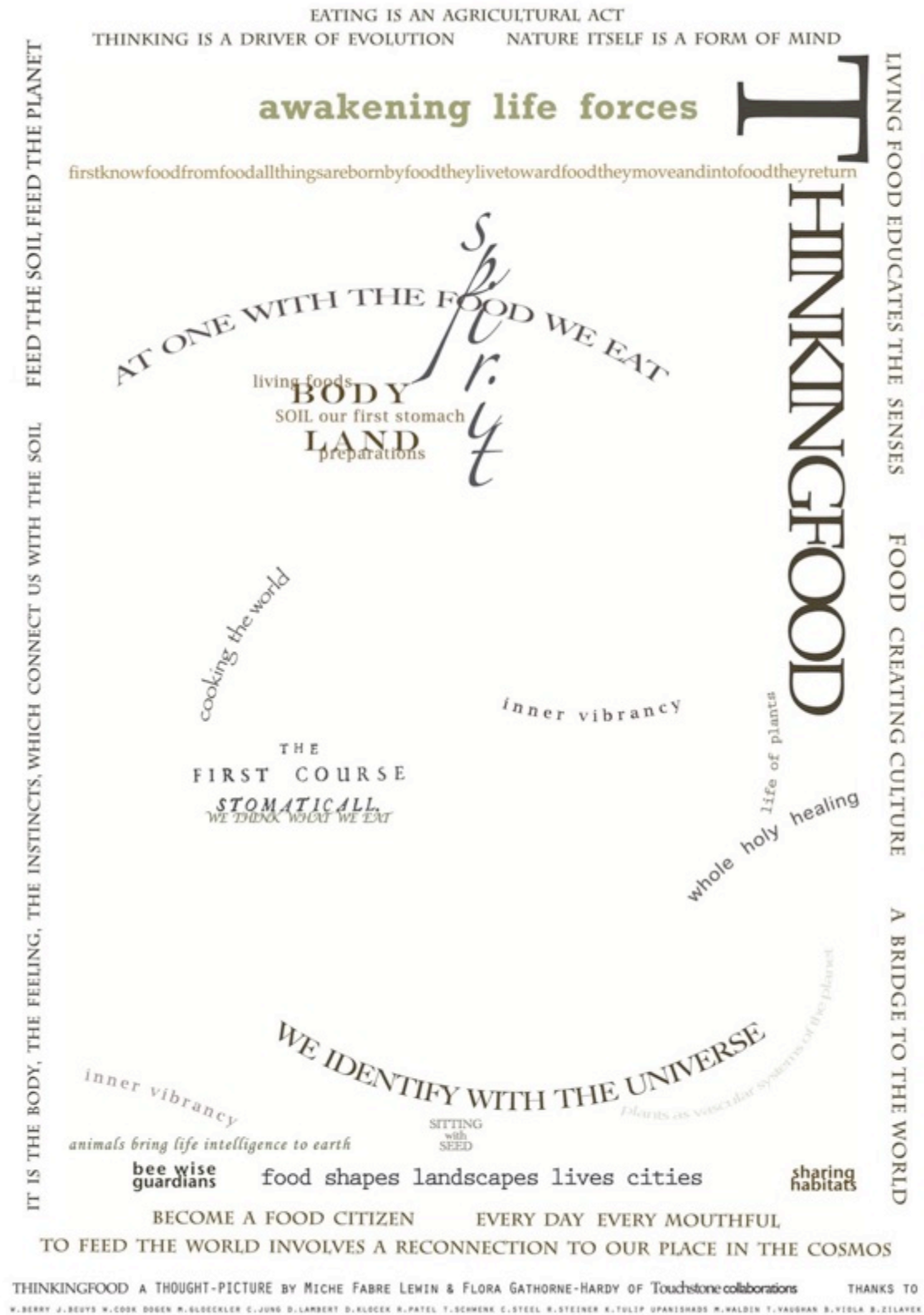
The principles and practices of *ThinkingFood* also manifested as a ThoughtPicture, which was commissioned by the UK Biodynamic Association for their journal *Star and Furrow*. The ThoughtPicture highlights the lineages of culinary and agricultural traditions that inspire my practice with food. As the legend accompanying the printed image explains:

ThinkingFood is a ThoughtPicture to be with, to muse on and to inspire us to remember the living exchanges between food, soil, our bodies, our cities and the world. Food is the medium, the message and the solution. Insights within this ThoughtPicture arise from ancient and modern teachings as well as from the inspirational experience of working with the cycle of food – composting, growing, cooking and eating. (Fabre Lewin and Gathorne-Hardy 2012: 40)

Figure 50. *ThinkingFood* ThoughtPicture.

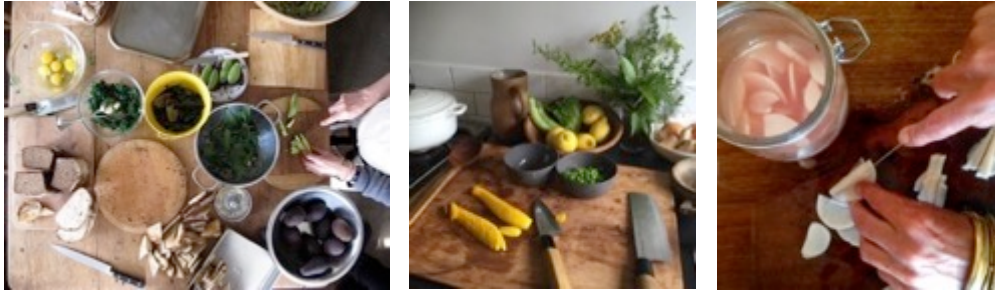


Figure 51. Text within *ThinkingFood* ThoughtPicture.



As an everyday lived inquiry, my food practice has been the most powerful medicine for keeping my physical and mental energy attuned to the purpose and practice of my life. Attending to how one nourishes the body is one of the most political and socially transforming practices as it impacts on our thinking, our behaviour and our care for the planet's natural systems.

Figure 52. Cooking in farmhouse kitchens.



Most profoundly, my food practice is a daily reminder of my being in and of nature. The daily grace at the table of the Zen Retreats comes to mind: 'At one with the food we eat, we identify with the universe, at one with the Universe we taste the food, the food we eat and the Universe partake of the same nature' (Dogen cited Curtin 1992: 127). The honouring practice of a grace, lighting a candle and sitting at table with spaciousness to eat wholesome food freshly prepared is one that is truly nourishing of the bodymind. It is this concept of food as an agent of change which manifests as an epistemology which has the potential to transform our ways of knowing and acting in the world. Here is food as a medium which offers the opportunity to lessen the distortion through a liberation practice of conscientisation (Freire 1970).

Figure 53. Travelling to Johannesburg with food on Shosholoza train.

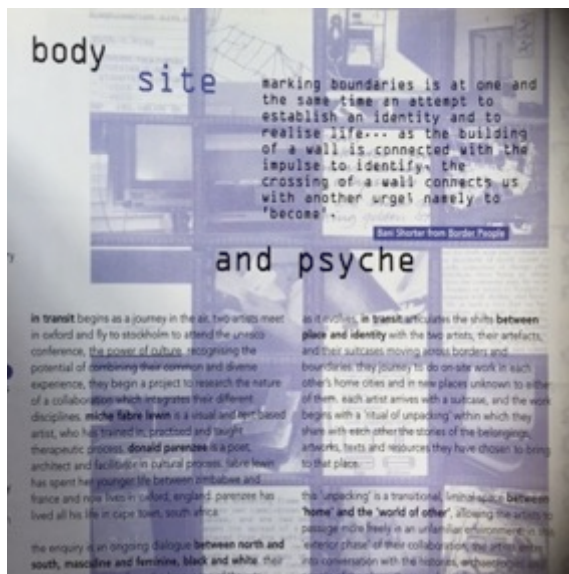


In my travels I am always prepared with a bounty of healthful food to enjoy on trains and planes, with a paper bag at hand to gather my compost.

Artful collaboration

I now turn to explore how living into this radical presence of the artful bodymind within a participatory consciousness calls for the presence, intelligence and witness of another. Since the late 1990s, experimental collaboration has been a dedicated focus within the evolution of my arts practice. I am choosing one example of an intercultural collaboration which arose in 1998 when I met South African architect-poet Donald Parenzee as part of a group of artists who had been invited to present at the UNESCO *Power of Culture* Conference. As our connection developed in mid-air sitting next to each other on the plane flying to Stockholm, a collaboration unfolded that we called *In Transit*. As part of our exchanges, we were commissioned to write a piece in *Public Art Journal*. Our photo-narrative 'Body, Site and Psyche' shares how our collaboration was storytelling through matter with the creation of physical 'messenger-artefacts' posted between us and our habitats of Oxford and Cape Town. Here, we write of 'text as kinship – ties woven between writer and reader, between absence and presence, between biography and biosphere' (Fabre Lewin and Parenzee 1999: 49).

Figure 54. Detail from 'Body, Site and Psyche'.



In Parenzee's words, our collaboration enabled 'a shifting of outline, of self-definition, a sense of re-generation of life, planet, ecosystems, resources, productive systems' (Fabre Lewin and Parenzee 1999: 48). As Parenzee expands:

Meeting Miche Fabre Lewin on the plane to Stockholm, I recognised a commitment to not only social but psychological and ecological possibilities for art and human creativity. From this encounter we evolved a transcontinental collaboration *In Transit*, which invited in a blending the fluid and the structural, across geographic, national, disciplinary and conceptual boundaries. (Fabre Lewin and Parenzee 1999: 48)

This was an emergent, political and ecological project that engaged us in suitcase explorations between Africa and Europe, within which we were able to grow our practices as artists within the co-evolved threshold space of an artist collaboration.

Such creative inquiries informed the evolution of my long-term collaboration with Flora Gathorne-Hardy which in 2010, midwived our Touchstones arts and ecology practice. We chose the name Touchstones from the ancient practice of using a basalt stone to test the quality of gold and silver alloys. As a method for discovering the genuineness of something, we too, have sought forms of inquiry that attune our attention to the true gold inside within ourselves, the more invisible, inner, yet-to-be known resources. These reciprocal exchanges within our collaborative practice embrace intuition, the senses and feelings. In these experiences of becoming-with, we furrow pathways for deep trust within our relationship and uncover fertile material for our co-labouring together within an ecological arts practice.

Figure 55. An artful collaboration for the Earth.



At the outset of my PhD, I invited Flora to become my academic Thinking-Listening partner. The dynamics of our collaboration were necessarily refined for the doctoral research through continuous dialogue, practice, experimentation, inquiry and detailed documentation. We both took on to further develop the ethical dimensions of our collaborative practice, to emerge into ‘a clearing, an opening, within which a new way of being-with’ (Catlaw and Jordan 2009: 12). Our explorations were supported and guided by conversations with other researchers within the circle of my fellowship of co-inquirers, who engaged with respect, interest and attention. Here was a safe community within which to navigate and strengthen the intimate dynamics of our co-inquiry.

What emerged were two main forms of co-inquiry between us that manifested a dedication to thinking as an embodied and sensuous process, responsive and in relationship within human and other-than-human interactions. To convey the scope of the artful collaboration I look to describing firstly the Chrysalis Drawings, and then the Thinking-Listening exchanges. Both activities are framed as dedicated times for us to give focused attention to each other’s thoughts, feelings and experiences and enquire through questions, dialogue, images and drawings as a way of exploring in greater depth what is being encountered within my research practice.

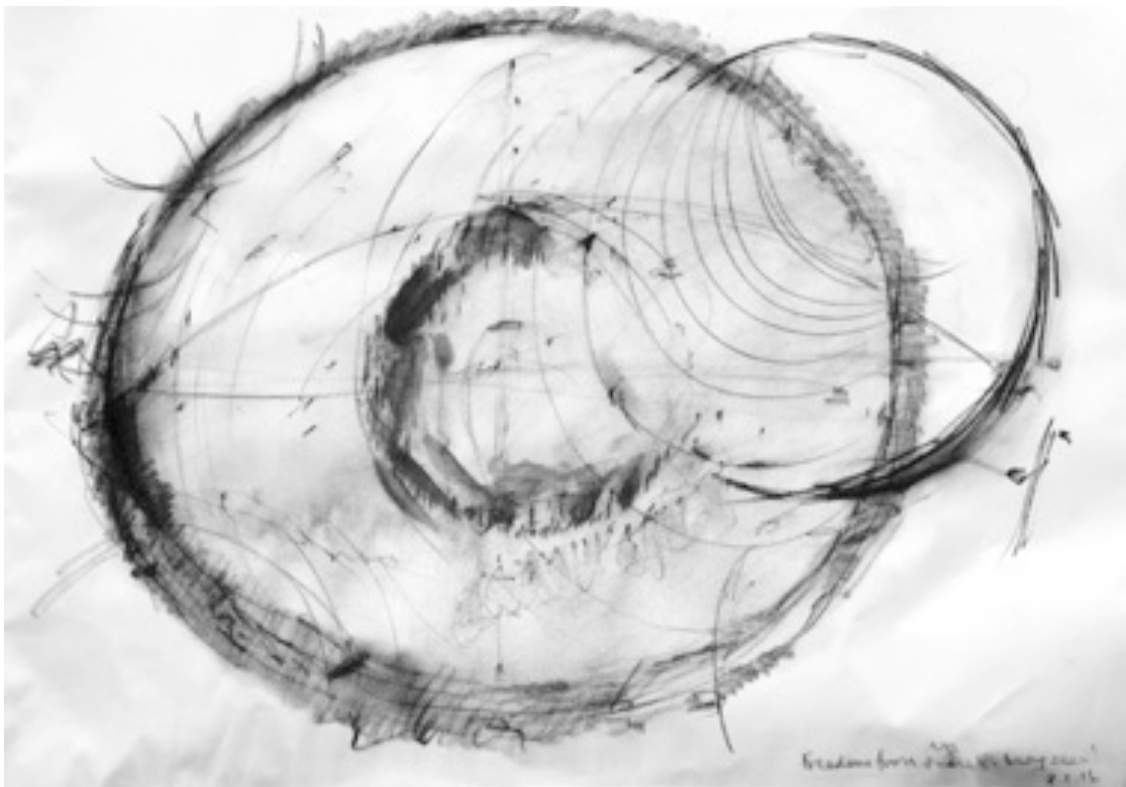
Chrysalis Drawings

This artful dimension of our collaboration transformed Flora’s drawing practice into a method of inquiry, which we came to describe as Chrysalis Drawings. The process unfolds as a dialogue through mark-making whose nascent meaning is revealed through us giving the quality and focus of our shared attention. The drawings are lyrical and graphic expressions of what Flora experiences, hears or sees of my practice, both consciously and unconsciously. In Flora’s words, ‘they allow me to surrender to other ways of knowing, ones which connect me to a wider field than my own mental processes’ (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 12 February 2019).

The Chrysalis Drawings add the diffractive dimension of provocations and interventions which stimulate the iterative cycles of inquiry, reflection and action. They help make visible the inter-weaving patterns, and the diverging and converging flows that unfold to form my Practice-as-Research. The example below of ‘Freedom from the eye socket: seeing and being seen’ emerged from the field practice of the Ritual

Workshops in 2016. For Flora, the drawing was a simple illustration of how the perspective of another helps to reveal what she cannot fully see herself. In talking through this drawing together, it became clear that the main circular form represented an eye firmly held within an eye socket, only able to move within the space of its bony protection. The smaller circle to the top right connects with and extends beyond this main orb of the ‘eye’, offering a different perspective that is freer to move. The drawing came to represent the agility offered by our collaborative forms of inquiry enabling each of us to reflect on what the other sees and experiences.

Figure 56. *Freedom from the eye socket: seeing and being seen.*



In their article ‘Wording Pictures: discovering heartfelt ethnography’, painter Karen Scott-Hoy and writer Carolyn Ellis reflect on their interdisciplinary collaboration. Bringing their different artistic practices into a method of inquiry is a pathway for Scott-Hoy to validate her own ‘tacit world’ (Scott-Hoy and Ellis 2008: 129). It also challenges her assumptions and allows her to locate herself ‘through the eyes of the Other, and observe myself observing’ (Scott-Hoy and Ellis 2008: 129). Scott-Hoy adds an embodied dimension to Ellis’s research by introducing painting as inquiry. These ‘visual texts’ evoke sensory knowing and involve physiological and bodily reactions,

thus uncovering for Ellis inner worlds of ‘subjective human perception’ (Scott-Hoy and Ellis 2008: 133).

Similarly, the Chrysalis Drawings, as visual scriptings, invite in new ways of seeing, interpreting and validating my research practices. By bringing in the imaginal and bodily knowing, the Chrysalis Drawings re-position our viewpoints away from our logical knowing and habituated perspectives. The drawings enable us to move beyond reactive patterns, familiar responses and conditioned ways of thinking. We are able to range with a refreshed visual score, which can then diffract with other research material to enrich the comprehension and interpretation of my research. See below ‘Anatomy of a Ritual’, which emerged through Flora’s bodymind as a response to her participation in my Ritual Workshops.

Figure 57. *Anatomy of a Ritual I.*



These are extracts from the notes we made within a focussed dialogue seeking to illuminate what this drawing was revealing to us:

FGH: What do you see in this drawing?

MFL: I am seeing containment and safety within the workshops and there is an overall quality of space with elements of beauty.

FGH: Yes, the gold dots felt like the matter and objects that are all around, within reach for people to be with.

Thinking-Listening

Thinking-Listening is a second collaborative research method that we refined within my doctoral research. It offers me a boundary of time to be in a thinking and feeling space with Flora who is listening with her full attention, interest and confidence in my own thinking. In the spirit of Laura Rendon's 'sentipensante' or 'sensing/thinking' pedagogy, we were both committed to exchanges that nourish and give voice to our bodyminds in sympoietic relationship to the other-than-human world (Rendon 2014: 7). Over the doctoral research the Thinking-Listening sessions became regular, reciprocal exchanges that were recorded and transcribed for us to engage with and respond to in further cycles of inquiry. These were bounded safe arenas within which to honour each other, share appreciations and gratitude, notice what is going well, and offer affirmations to each other as a counter to the false and the negative, the doubt and the despair which distorts our human nature. In these freedom spaces we gave full permission to range and expand ideas, feelings, thinking and to unfold the not-yet known through practice, experiment, making mistakes and 'taking two'. This is the widening into the fields and expressive energies of our authentic and vibrant human-beingness within a participatory and sympoietic consciousness.

Figure 59: Thinking-Listening with my ritual methodology.



This collaborative methodology has helped me recover the trust in my own intelligence and capacity to manifest. Through this practice of deepening our humanity and integrity, this process benefits wider liberation in the world. In October 2018, Flora and I shared a taste of our Thinking-Listening process within a seminar at the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition (CST) at Stellenbosch University. Ebenaezer Appies, a doctoral student at the CST who had participated in the seminar, emailed me afterwards in order to understand how he could take forward elements of this process with his own community of fellow researchers. As Ebenaezer wrote to me:

I think that your research method could form a major thread in the decolonisation of the education system, which is a major theme in Higher Education in South Africa. ... South Africa is undergoing a major shift from 'tried-and-tested' mechanisms to exploring and advancing 'out-of-the-box' learning and teaching methods that are less rigid and more inclusive. (Email Exchange with Ebenaezer Appies, 21 November 2018)

Here, in drafting my thanks to Ebeneazer, is my response where I share the core elements of the Thinking-Listening practices:

The language of Thinking-Listening is significant as I am looking to reconsider thinking as a space that embodies a safety for feelings and senses – listening to and with the whole bodymind. The listener holds a space of safety and trust, which includes an agreement of confidentiality. Within this fertile attention and abundant affirmation of the listener, the thinker is given permission and confidence to be unravelling her own emergent bodymind thinking processes of coming to know. The listener offers active engagement without comment, shows respect, is non-judgemental, is encouraging, and shares a bright enthusiasm and gratitude for the thinker's intelligence and sensibilities. So, it is within this space of respectful and trustworthy partnership, that we can be thinking by talking, musing, not knowing, pausing and being silent, voicing doubt and confusion. This is a time for dreaming and envisioning, for expressing buoyant and difficult feelings, a place where physical, cathartic release of personal suffering through the bodymind is also welcome. Because in the Thinking-Listening partnership there is a reciprocal exchange between both partners it affords equality to this relationship and each partner is flourishing her own conscious selfhood as part of this process. (Personal Journal, November 2018)

Politics of Intimacy

My artful collaboration with Flora has offered itself as a sympoietic habitat for us both to nurture our artful bodyminds within a political and participatory consciousness. Through divining with marks and deepening dialogue these different forms of knowing through our Chrysalis Drawings and Thinking-Listening exchanges help dissolve separation and isolation by fostering trust and respect between two people.

Over the course of my research, there were many times when my feelings overwhelmed me and I lost faith in and devalued my own instinctual ways of knowing and embodied sensing within a participatory consciousness. At these times Flora's affirmations and reality checks offered me a picture of the present moment where I was able to reclaim my own sense of congruence and authenticity. Her loving and integral presence countered the de-valuation reinforced by lifelong patriarchal patterns of discrediting and diminishing female intelligence. Within our Thinking-Listening partnership, I experienced the presence of a female human being whose perspective and wide intelligence I trusted and respected, and who was at hand to reflect back to me another mirror that showed a truer picture of myself. Here was the safety, rigour and reliability for a liberation practice towards freedom.

Throughout the doctoral research, we have also needed to be watchful towards the complexities of working so closely – what I named as the politics of intimacy. Bearing witness, maintaining confidentiality, being aware of unintended and subtle forms of oppression, safe-guarding reciprocity, being vigilant to the triggering of old traumas: these are all elements within our collaborative dynamic that require delicate and painstaking attention if we are to transform our consciousness. Below, Flora reflects on such attentiveness:

I have to recognise that at moments I am trespassing or editing out dimensions of your thinking. I know I can privilege words over making. I am thinking back to my childhood when my sense of how best to receive recognition and affirmation at school and at home was by performing well intellectually. But you are able to detect these moments and through our challenging investigation of these moments of trespass, I grow as a human being. We can work this all through together, and the working out *is* the work. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 11 September 2017)

As my artful collaborator, Flora was participant and observer-witness. Her presence enhanced the scope, conceptual depth and quality of my research. Yet this collaboration served not only the research. It was also a testimony to the power of the imaginal to enrich our relationships within the wider webs of living connections. As Flora reflects in a Thinking-Listening exchange about her own liberation and reconnection to the present moment within a participatory consciousness:

It is this gesture of 'heading home' to myself, in relationship to more than myself – to you, to others, to the other-than-human – that I know I have been able to deepen into through our artful collaboration. I cherish this connection and expansion of my self. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy 12 January 2018)

The transformation of Flora's arts practice and own selfhood within the artful collaboration is one that generates its own political awareness within the safety of an intimate bond. My decision to be having a companion who would walk and talk the path with me – intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and practically – was an ethical one. It afforded me reliability through a second person inquirer who could act as a sounding board, a veritable touchstone to measure whether my responses were trustworthy and accurate. The collaboration has been an experimental threshold for a meta-digestion of each of our wounds, personal and social. Here, again as with Parenzee, collaboration is a transformative practice that has the potential to encompass personal and planetary wellbeing.

Our collaboration in art, research and activism offer values and principles that are lodestars for an ethics of being. Collaboration as a practice in liberation and leadership encompasses the intimate, the political, the capacity for surrender and humility, a release to the not-yet-known, as well as the restoring of the element of mystery. We have dedicated our practice to political arts interventions for a just world. We both seek to make manifest and open the dynamics of a politics of intimacy that revolves around daily interactions. This necessarily evolves in the artful practice between two people dedicated to a personal/political lifestyle of response-ability which encompasses the processes of artmaking and performance. As a politics in consciousness, authentic collaboration nurtures a sympoieisis that entwines our ways of knowing with how we come to know and live with the values of what we know.

Imaginal encounters with matter

A poetic approach to research acknowledges that the participatory consciousness of human knowing and being arises from subjective physical experiences of reality, as well as encompassing the non-physical realms of soul and the unconscious. Imaginal encounters with matter enable an opening up of pathways which legitimate and make place for 'subtle and non-traditional ways of knowing ... feelings, dreams, symptoms, intuition, and synchronicities' (Romanyshyn 2007: 216).

Figure 60. Chaos from *Aurora Consurgens* manuscript attributed to Thomas Aquinas.

Some materials have been removed from this thesis due to Third Party Copyright. Pages where material has been removed are clearly marked in the electronic version. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

The profound alchemical image of Chaos from *Aurora Consurgens* has been a sentinel in my life, and one I have carried around with me and inquired within its wisdom and mystery for decades. Rilke warns it is because of the 'imageless act' that 'Things we might experience are vanishing' (Mitchel 1982: 199-203). As an artist I am dedicated to deepening into the experiential and the imaginal in the exploration of my research question. To illustrate this commitment, I am selecting two artmaking processes from during my doctoral study that engaged my bodymind within a participatory consciousness. These are:

Burnt Offerings – an intuitive ritual exploration of my biography through natural materials. This healing transformation of my personal wound with its patriarchal origins unfolded within the sanctuary of a retreat space in South Africa in January 2017.

Hermes Process – an intentional research inquiry with the matter of my research. Within this visual process I sought to surrender to the imaginal, and inquire into what are the many forms of my artistic research practice as the 'text' revealing to me? The artful meta-digestion of this question took place within my Suffolk Studio in May 2018.

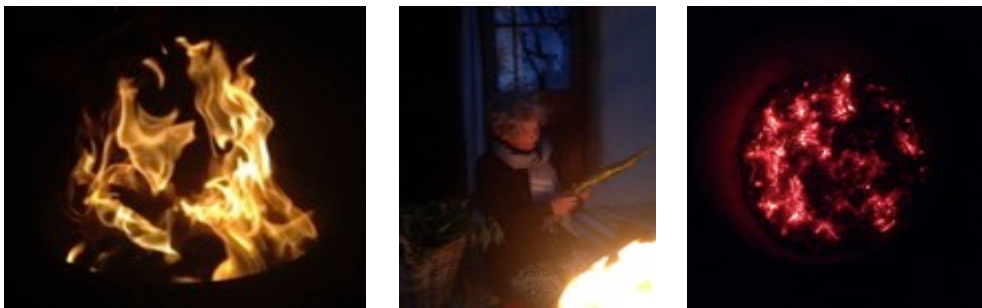
Burnt Offerings

Since my art therapy training I have developed my own personal rituals which are cathartic and healing and engage my body in a relationship with matter and place. This ritual practice offers me sanctuary and solace to dwell within the more invisible collisions and inner fluctuations of my bodymind. This responding to ways of coming to know through a communing between matter and metaphor, between my imagination and in relation with the *genius loci*, is my opening to encounters within a participatory consciousness.

Below is a photowork of *Burnt Offerings*, a three-day personal healing ritual with an elder tree that took place at the end of January 2017. The annotations come from my Personal Journal notes made the day after I completed the ritual. *Burnt Offerings* emerged spontaneously within the sanctuary of a research retreat week in Garden Cottage, Spier Farm near Stellenbosch – a process made possible because I gave my bodymind spacious time for stillness and not knowing.

Figure 61. Photowork of *Burnt Offerings*.

Underneath the elder tree I lay in a dejection. Still. In looking up I notice how the elder is needing tending and pruning. I seek to bring in the light and remove dead wood. What stirs me from my despair is the connection to the presence of the elder. Instinctually I rise and I begin to cut away the dead and crossing branches. I gather up all the fallen twigs.



I make a fire and burn the wood and twigs ceremoniously whilst making a chrysalis of golden thread around the switches of cut leaves. All the prunings are burned over three hours. Throughout, Flora accompanies me. As the fire burns I am slowly binding the leaves in golden thread. After ferocious crackings, spittings the flames die down in slow agonizing writhing.



The next morning from the burned out elder branches I gather the charcoal twigs and make a paste mixture from water and ash and strain it through muslin cloth.



Sitting beneath the eight-year old elder, my imagination begins to be called in and I experiment with ash and charcoal marks on handmade cotton khadi paper. A series of drawings emerge.



After experimenting with diverse marks, I dry the pages in the sun. I work with the flame and smoke to make more marks. I create an outdoor installation on the wooden towel rail amongst the dappling shadowing elder branches. I wrap bundles of smaller elder twigs in golden thread.



Working with a sheet of soft pewter, I cut out frames to add around the ash drawings. I resuscitate the fire and continue to work on the images adding them to the licking, smoking flames. I peg them randomly on the wooden towel rail to commune alongside the elder. Nine *Burnt Offerings* emerge.



As part of a family Sunday lunch I offer a ritual thanksgiving ceremony. I create a binding for the *Burnt Offerings*. The gifts from the elder of bundles of twigs, switches are offered. I read a letter whose words are an offering of power and protection and purification to my blood family and myself. As a reclaiming of myself, I offer gifts of gratitude to my primary blood relationships.



As a closure I stand beside the clock under the elder and honour Chronos time. I surrender and pledge to give myself to Kairos time. This was a ritual of dedication to the performing of my new self – a creature being in a cyclical rhythm rather than dominated by the rigidities of structured time. As a farewell gesture to the elder, to the *genius loci* of Garden Cottage, I gather the ironstones which have guarded the fire bowl, and place them in the formation of a *Cairn of Remembrance* inside the branched trunk of the venerable elder. (Personal Journal, January 2017)

These images and words are a testimony to the complexity of the interrelated dynamics that the *Burnt Offerings* ritual was drawing into itself. Such ritual work entails working within the physical, psychological and spiritual experience of being with oneself amongst others. This ritual encompassed the complexity of my own colonial background, family traumas, self-diminishment, and ancestral karma, all enmeshing and unravelling within the context of my re-search taking place in the political and liberatory dynamics of multi-racial South Africa. This contemporary form of a therapeutic and cathartic ritual also involved me in a practice that invites reconnection with the other-than-human world.

What the ritual process has yielded is its purpose through its own choreography and unfolding of a physical encounter with the venerable elder tree, with all the potent metaphors it proliferates. It was a private and political healing for my bodymind.

To offer an interpretation of the content of *Burnt Offerings*, to decipher its aesthetic, or probe too deeply into the detail would be to trespass on the power of the image and the mystery it enfolds. As Law suggests, we need to ‘know the realities of the world through the hungers, tastes, discomforts, or pains of our bodies’ (Law 2004: 2). He continues to ponder on how knowing through emotion is a necessity:

Perhaps we will need to know them through ‘private’ emotions that open us to worlds of sensibilities, passions, intuitions, fears and betrayals. These would be forms of knowing as emotionality or apprehension. (Law 2004: 3)

Weber confirms that it is ‘only through the opacity of the symbol can we become transparent to ourselves’ (Weber 2016: 135). A fellow researcher who participated within my Performative Installation and Ritual was drawn to the finished artwork, and her response to its aesthetic is testimony to the energies and sensibilities which it evokes:

The images seem to dance to me ... they are living images because they have been through a process and that process will continue. I have a sense they will continue to move and develop and change. (Response from Sarah Whatley within Transcript of Performative Installation and Ritual, 3 April 2019)

Hermes Process

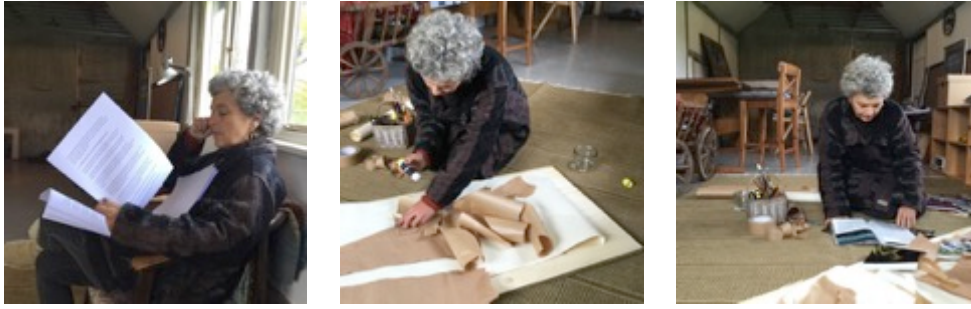
In April 2018, after three years of amassing a vast amount of material and having read thousands of words on the theories of others, I had come to an impasse and a painful recognition that I was not being faithful to my own practice as an artist. I sensed a misalignment between my method and my theory. Alongside a return to literature on arts as research and the performative paradigm, my research practice as an artist begun to furrow its own direction. At this time Chris Seeley offered me soul supervision in the form of a retreat space in her home where I serendipitously came across Romanyshyn’s book on the wounded researcher. This writing was manna to my soul for Romanyshyn writes of the abyss of the chthonic phase, and illuminates how the character of Hermes is a vital part to the process of transformation. Hermes is the messenger god of communication who translates between gods and humans, and within his art of creativity and invention he has a trickster energy. Yet he brings in invention, solving of puzzles and the art of change (Moules 2002: 2).

Romanyshyn describes the 'Hermes Process' as one that provides a threshold space for unconcealing the relationship between the wounded researcher and the research work by offering a space for making the unconscious conscious (Romanyshyn 2007:220). I recognised I would not be able to work through this impasse without returning to the image. It was time to invite in Hermes with his interpretative powers and to surrender to my visual arts practice with matter and encounter the unconscious and imaginal through collage and mark-making. From this inquiry I was allowing my bodymind to enter into a process of unknowing to more deeply investigate the nature, purpose and form of my research.

This time in the studio was space to process the chthonic darkness and make works as an intentional inquiry with the research practice itself, through a non-verbal, non-linear medium. I was not seeking to write about the practice but instead see the flow of my mark-making as a significant visual inquiry to discover what is the purpose of my research – not only the ritual process with others, but my own visual arts practice as necessary for the inquiry. I named this imaginal inquiry the *Hermes Process* in respect of Romanyshyn. It was an exploration between myself as the researcher and my text to explore with collage materials the questions: what is my text – what is the work, and how is it addressing me? what is my practice-as-research seeking to make visible as a contribution to knowledge? Here my notes:

I prepare for a soul and imaginal encounter in the studio ... my aspiration/dedication to open to the unknown and surrender to the soul energies of thought – the unconscious aspect of reason which finds its form through metaphor, manifests its meaning through correspondence and symbolism and relationality rather than through a direct and literal rationality which masks the fecundity and profound multi-valance of a gesture, a thought, an action, an encounter. (Personal Journal, May 2018)

Below, a photowork of the *Hermes Process* accompanied with notes from my Personal Journal May 2018:

Figure 62. *Hermes Process I.*

I begin by reading through the matter of my emerging thesis. I take two kinds of brown paper and some white lining paper. I sense the need to create the base, the palimpsest from which an imaginal landscape will arise. Create the ground, the *topos*, from which to manifest my pathway into it. In amongst the dexterity of casting fragments into position, there is a continuous undercurrent of emotion in my bodymind pulling at me with doubt and questions as to the purpose of such actions as I make the markings of a spatial territory.

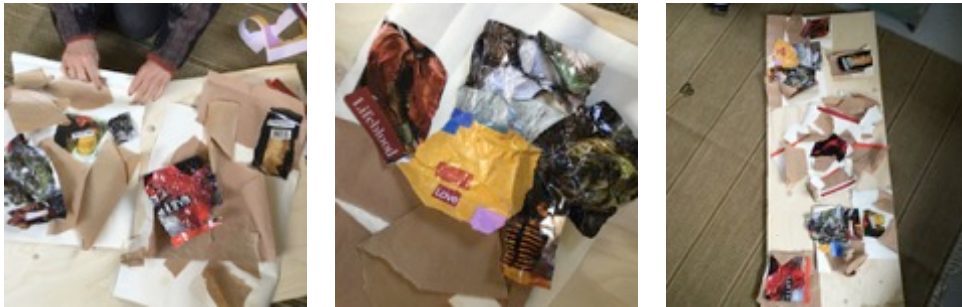


I trace and cut and stick and end up with three sheets and then begin to look at magazines and supplements to surrender to words and images and I tear and cut and let these images and text fall randomly on the page. I keep looking through to discover other textures, colours, forms, words, gestures, patterns, vistas, landscapes, images and visual sequences, which find their place within the collaged *topos* of the brown and white ground.

As Romanyshyn writes, it is Hermes who leads us into the depths and unsettles through causing ‘all those countless tricks and deceptions involved in the process of making a work ... and the work suddenly no longer makes sense’ (Romanyshyn 2007: 220). Inevitably, during my process, Hermes the trickster comes with his deceptions and I was filled with doubt, desolation and questions. Is this a misleading seduction through the image or is it what is required to circumvent the controlling ego and the torturing internalised self-limitation born from a history of patriarchal and capitalist messages of negativity and degradation of female intelligences and the wisdom of the soul?

Figure 63. *Hermes Process II.*

This visual sequence of text and images takes shape within a bodymind in an artful conversation which is beyond a planned mapping and ordering through a musing hand and a mind in a reverie with texture and a manual dexterity and a soul sensibility which has a knowing beyond my ego rational structuring. Not only a musing with mind and matter, there is also a receptivity, a moving of hand, fragments of paper hovering and in a suspension seeking a landing place and discovering where to be attached to the *topos*.



With torturing thoughts and bodily sensations I continue to make and discover a sequence and an aesthetic for these *topos* pages. Words that were chosen, words that appeared - lifeblood, body and soul, earth, silence, rhythm-time – all mingling amidst torn and cut images collaged together. The last piece to come into form was the remains of the brown and white fragments that I had cut away from the four fragments, leaving a more defined form to these collaged sheets. Having glued them together, a central lava image found its way into the *topos* and the last cut pieces of red bands of paper configured around this image – my red thread.

Figure 64. Completed collage fragments from *Hermes Process*.



Lifeblood silence love



Body and soul rhythm-time



EARTH



BECOME emotional



The Red Thread

Figure 65. The composite *Hermes Process* fragments.



These imaginal encounters offered me a time for setting intentions away from my outer concerns to focussing on inner experiences. Through them I have the courage to go through a liminal process of unknowing within the space of my art making with matter. As I wrote:

This was a space of letting go to really understand what is my practice. I saw my practice was not just about giving people good food. It is a deeper inquiry and having been inquiring into it through a thousand different theories and thinkers, I am now drawing in on my own material: my imagination, my thinking, my feelings, my dreams, my conversation exchanges, emails, my readings, notes from my readings, distillations from my notes. I have started delving deep into my own processes, my own way of understanding the world and discovering what my research truly is, begin to interrogate what is my practice? Within this *Hermes Process* with the mark-making and collage process I am brought into recognition of the destiny of the work. (Personal Journal, May 2018)

The process of making, the imagery, the number of elements, the words, the patterning, all offer meaning to me. 'EARTH', 'BECOME emotional', 'life blood', 'silence love', 'body and soul' and rhythm-time. And the largest fragment remains wordfree and has only one figurative image on it and is surrounded by spaciousness and the red ribbons. Here were the answers I was seeking from asking the question, 'what is the nature and purpose of my research with the artful bodymind?' This is research for the Earth, it calls to recognising what is our life-blood, calls for silence, and love. Reminds us that we need to experience, express and release our feelings, to become with our emotions. That we are body and soul, that we need to go in rhythm time. The simplicity and clarity of these visual artefacts took me to the next dimension of my research and I was affirmed in my Constellative form of four contributions, unfolding within the spaciousness of a poetics of research with the red thread of the artful bodymind with ritual encounters. (Personal Journal May 2018)

My feelings through the duration of these encounters were ones of resistance and self-depreciation – a piercing desolation and dismissal at my effort to make sense and meaning with the imaginal. Yet through Thinking-Listening exchanges with Flora I came to the apprehension that these stark feelings are the desecration of the imagination and the unconscious by a marauding ego and its entrainment by legacies of systematic oppression of women, artists, and Jews. These are the emotional scars of the epistemicide of the body by social norms that condemns other ways of knowing. I had to enter into this cthonic chasm between the literal and the metaphoric language of the image in order to transform my wound of disconnection. Through this visual and imaginal choreography was a tracing of another map, one which was deciphering, clarifying the simplicity of the meaning and purpose of my research.

Mourning and emerging

As an undergraduate student at university in Norwich in the 1980s I became aware of how my own artful bodymind had been not only an oppressor but had also been oppressed. This realisation became a dedication to inhabit an ethical decision to commit my life to becoming free. This necessitated a valuing of the time, energy and practices which enabled me to go beyond the wound. This has been my desire to live, experience and cultivate my own artful bodymind, bringing it into recognition and

manifestation within my PhD. This continuous, on-going lived inquiry to go beyond the wound maintains my own presence as an artist and researcher through interconnecting arenas of practice that enliven my bodymind in the everyday in order to reconnect to sympoietic worldmaking. I had to free my artful bodymind from aspects of my biography that restricted my capacity to think, to feel, and thus re-inhabit the full measure of what I was able to bring to expression as a human being.

Practices in Freedom has been a journey in cultivating diverse, trusted and reliable methods which explore, encompass and restore many forms of knowing. This has been 'research with soul in mind' whereby my wound transforms into insight (Romanyshyn 2007: 227). As Romanyshyn defines, the alchemical hermeneutic method is an 'art of transforming a wound into a work' where 'the researcher attends to the wound and makes a work through the wound to take the wound beyond itself' (Romanyshyn 2007: 227). Through these practices I have come to an understanding of how the wound obscures, trespasses, distorts and devalues the experiences of the sensate bodymind. I have had to notice, respect and draw on the elements and energies of a sympoietic world for me to live authentically within a participatory consciousness. These interweaving practices are testaments to my refusal 'to submit to that distortion' and the cultural criteria which negate our capacity for an emotional and psychological expression. These freedom practices attend to what Roszak refers to as our collective state of soul (Roszak 1977). The process of liberation begins with the self and by working through and with the intimate personal struggles for self-emancipation, such soul processes set in motion liberation on a social scale.

This journey has been a challenge and a teaching in staying with the suffering. As Weber writes:

Without experiencing our real emotional and physical connectedness to the remainder of life, we risk having stunted, deformed identities ... The most important psychological role that other beings play is to help us reconcile ourselves to our pain, our inevitable separation as individuals from the remainder of the web of life. (Weber 2016: 8)

In *World as Lover, World as Self*, Joanna Macy writes of the interconnected nature between human beings within the living system of the Earth (Macy 1991)). Her project *The Work that Reconnects* invites us to engage in personal and collective mourning as a requisite for awakening to our responsibilities and being able to take action. I had the

good fortune to work directly with Joanna Macy with her methodology of Despair and Empowerment workshops. These were practices addressing our environmental degradation. Her view is that humans are unable to act in the face of this eco-systemic destruction because we are numb with pain and unable to think clearly. Macy argues that our suffering is caused by our alienation from nature and that we need to be feeling our pain. Her cycle of reconnection begins with gratitude followed by sharing and baring our pain, which leads to seeing with new eyes and having the will and courage to be going forth (Macy 1991).

Macy's collective grief practices encourage us to be facing the loss. Macy's mourning practices enable us to name our pain through the choice of an artefact or a natural object such as a pile of dead leaves, a stone, a stick, or a bowl (Macy and Brown 2014). Through un-numbing ourselves we become aware of the consequences of our behaviour and begin to renew active and response-able relationships with ourselves and the other-than-human world. In Macy's powerful work of release, I found an embodied and collective practice that aligned with the recognition that the owning, experiencing and releasing of emotion is a vital process in freeing our capacity to think. Promoting social and environmental change happens because we decide to feel our feelings and become active agents of change. For Haraway, too, 'thinking people must learn to grieve-with ... we need to be in a sustained remembrance so that we can be clear in our thinking' (Haraway 2016:37-39). For Van Dooren, mourning is also intrinsic to raising awareness and cultivating response-ability:

Genuine mourning needs to open us to awareness of our dependence on and relationships with those countless others being driven over the edge of extinction ... The reality, however, is that there *is* no avoiding the necessity of the difficult cultural work of reflection and mourning. This work is not opposed to practical action; rather it is the foundation of any sustainable and informed response. (Van Dooren cited in Haraway 2016: 39)

This entraining in an ethics of being has evolved from the generative experiences, encounters, emotions and teachings of my formative years and surfaces significant features of the artful, therapeutic and liberation teachings which I began to constellate in and through my bodymind. Practices in Freedom helps me to turn my gaze inward and give voice to the trouble, the joys and the terrors. What is significant is that, as in *The Work that Reconnects*, my suffering, my imagination and my liberation are mediated within an entanglement with substance and matter. Within my ritual process of *Burnt*

Offerings the transformative processes – pruning branches, bundling of twigs, burning dead branches, making ash paste, mark-making with elder charcoal followed through with flame-smoking the worked pages – set in motion the unfolding of my own catharsis and healing. My bodymind was in a participatory consciousness with the elder tree entangled within a sympoietic worldmaking.

I also acknowledge that the conditions and qualities of space can be offering an opportunity for us to be engaging in ‘the difficult cultural work of reflection and mourning’ (Van Dooren cited in Haraway, 2016: 39). I explore this challenge and the practical interventions that it calls forth in a Conversation Exchange with fellow collaborator Peter Simpson. This Conversation Exchange testifies to the challenge of questioning society’s norms and standards of sanity:

PS: How have you found it, trying to unpack that space of the ritual in the middle? Your mention of the word sacred ... how has it felt to do that with ritual?

MFL: So this PhD I knew was going to be a real reckoning for me because I also had to really show myself. I do and I am still wrestling with my demons, I go from elation to desolation, yet knowing that I had a Thinking-Listening partner who doesn’t ever judge. It is all the same. That is what the sacred is – it is all one. A lot of what I do or how I am in the world – I feel very mute about all of this, you know, and I don’t believe that I would have had any courage to bring it to light if it had not been for Flora’s consciousness and the safety of what she holds and offers me, and reflects back to me. So, in terms of the ritual artmaking and creating of the ritual spaces, it feels embarrassing and shameful in a way. It’s like, ‘Who do I think I am?’ And if I am doing this and no one else is, then there must be something wrong with it. I am mystified and bewildered.

I was noticing that these ritual spaces were actually spaces for me, places where I could be in a safety, and a containment, and a recognition of a relationship to a space, its beauty, its potential, its need for constellating artefacts in a particular way with a particular setting. That was my luminous contemplation with myself and with psyche and with objects. And then it becomes something for someone else, because then it becomes public, which is when all the feelings, the terror and the fear and the threat come in. But the point is that I have somehow been given enough courage and trust in my own psyche and

being to create the space, to ring a bell and say that thinking about every mouthful of food that we put in our bodies is the most political act. I did so much research but no-one ever saw it when they saw the final spectacle, the final product happening. But naming it still feels quite shameful. Its presence, its luminosity sometimes feels – I don't know why it does – but it silhouettes a terrible shame and terror in me, but I have never held back from sharing my shame and terror. Rilke says terror is only the beginning of beauty. Our angels are the most terrifying tigers guarding our greatest treasures. (Conversation Exchange with Peter Simpson, 4 August 2017).

Summary

As human beings on this planet Earth, we inhabit bodies. We are of, and belong within, nature. Our knowing arises in participation with our environment – a sympoietic entanglement. To be in an encounter within a participatory consciousness we need to be restoring practices which re-member that we are sensuous and embodied creatures. We cannot disentangle ourselves from social and environmental injustices without the personal awakening and understanding of how the ecosystemic dynamics of oppression affect our individual bodyminds and determine our social interactions.

As a researcher whose work engages the artful bodymind with its many ways of knowing, my doctoral studies have been a quest to discover the conditions within which we all can be practising an ethics of being within our own lives. From this attention to our own personal and social wounds we can develop practices that encourage political awakening and emancipatory actions in response with a sympoietic world. It is with the embodied 'text' of my life through daily practices that I have the opportunity to cultivate the capacity to craft my own selfhood and my responsibility to live a satisfying and authentic life. These practices of inhabiting my 'cooking body' within an authentic presence to food, developing an artful collaboration, and creating time-bounded threshold spaces for cathartic ritual process have all contributed to my personalist paradigm for cultivating my artful bodymind. Such Practices in Freedom constellate the lodestars for risking to be real, making mistakes and meeting the unexpected. They are cultural forms that awaken my bodymind to becoming free in its lively, responsive relationship to the animate world and to others, to the *genius loci*, and other-than-human as a regular practice in the care of everyday life.

Honouring Roszak and his call for a politics of consciousness, I return to his writings which further tune us into the significance and necessity of working on our selfhood. He continues, 'the adventure of self-discovery stands before us as the most practical of pleasures' (Roszak 1977: xx). Through a practice of the convivial, and working to become-with, we have the opportunity to be enlivening of our own consciousness of the self within sympoietic worldmaking. Within these practices in freedom we become more responsive in the art of relationships and living resourcefully and respectfully within the collective.

ECOLOGIES OF CARE

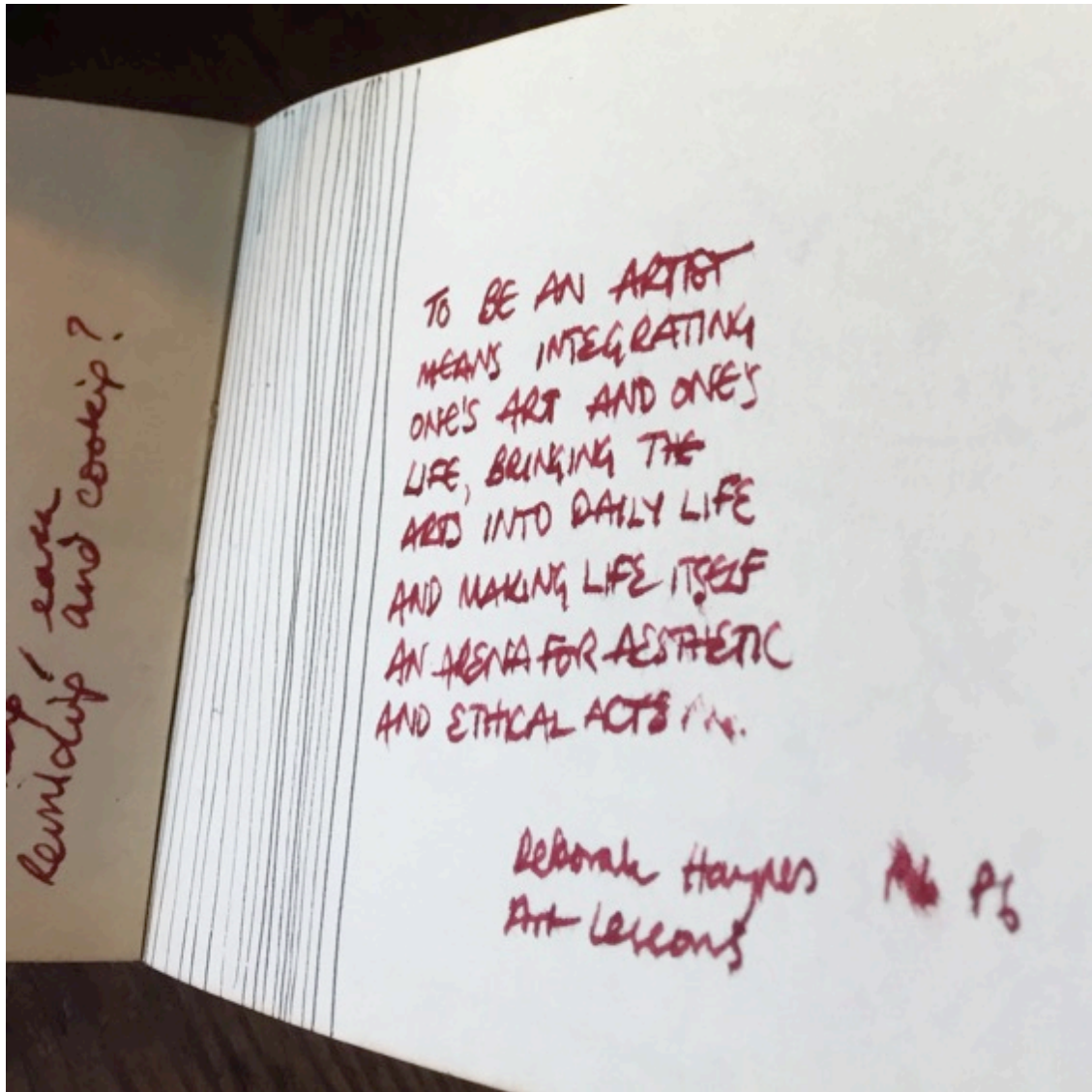


Figure 66. Integrating one's art and one's life.

I came across this entry in one of Chris Seeley's journals while on research retreat at her home, Folly Cottage in 2017, where I was immersed in the archive of her note-sketch books. These illustrated and densely annotated journals are a testimony to the evolution of her concept of 'artful knowing' as a contribution to Action Research. This page features Chris's handwritten quote of Deborah Hayes's reflection: 'To be an artist means integrating one's art and one's life, bringing the arts into daily life and making life itself an arena for aesthetic and ethical acts' (Hayes 2003: 6).

Objectivity of subjectivity

Research that addresses the epistemicide within our Western cultures around the human body and its many ways of knowing is necessarily a re-search process of an embodied kind. Within my doctoral studies, I seek for the trustworthiness of my research to be rooted in the emerging of a coming to know through the experiences of my artful bodymind. Brad Haseman notes that it is not possible to carry out research from an objective standpoint as one's own body and background shape decisions being made (Haseman 2006). Objectivity arises out of the recognition and humility of knowing your own subjectivity. Haraway also reflects within her writings on situated knowledges how the researcher is embodied in a research process of 'permanent partiality' (Haraway 1988: 581). For 'only partial perspective promises objective vision ... It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see' (Haraway 1988: 583). In *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson write of 'stable truths' that arise out of embodiment as our 'conceptual systems grow out of our bodies, meaning is grounded in and through our bodies' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 6). Here, for a deepening into their words:

Truth is mediated by embodied understanding and imagination. That does not mean that truth is purely subjective or that there is no stable truth. Rather, our common embodiments allows for common, stable truths. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 6)

With this understanding, my selfhood situates itself within the animate world from which my awareness is born, and wherein lies my capacity to respond – to become response-able. For my research to be 'objective', I need to be enquiring into and becoming aware of my own subjective and bodily experiences. Acknowledging the 'permanent partiality' of an embodied research process is to become accountable, credible and trustworthy (Haraway 1988: 583).

Hosting an ethics of being

Cultivating the criteria for a philosophical life points towards principles that we can be practising as an ethics of care and living the everyday. As Maria Puig de la Bellacasa writes, it is within a 'continuous existence' embedded within our naturecultures that

we can be nurturing a thriving for all beings (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 166). Only through such an integration of the ethics within our daily practice of life can we become trustworthy and accountable as researchers and human beings.

Within my research, *Living Cultures* Artist Research Residency afforded me a time and space to be dwelling-with place. At the end of my Residency, Jess Schulschenk spoke of my role as being one of a host. In our Conversation Exchange she shared that ‘it is about you hosting a space where the connections can be made by people directly’ (Conversation Exchange with Jess Schulshenk, 10 October 2017). Jess’s words and my own inquiry led to the recognition that I am indeed looking to curate spaces for an experience of a hospitality that seeks to cultivate relationships and practices that care for each other and our shared habitats (Ryan, Myers and Jones 2016). A healthy tension arises from the concept of hospitality with its etymological roots in complementary meanings where *hostis* means both guest and host (Barnette 2016). This calls in the idea of reciprocal interdependent relationships but also recognises that a different power relation exists and there is a mutual demand of both a giving of myself, as well as maintaining clear and open boundaries with the communities of people with whom I am engaging.

To be curating is to be caring for. Puig de la Bellacasa elaborates a conception of thinking with care as ‘a vital requisite of collective thinking in interdependent worlds’ (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 197). In *Re-thinking Ethos*, Sean Barnette maps out a feminist hospitality that enacts principles of inclusivity and embodied knowing, an approach which reflects a ‘performative extension of care ethics’ (Barnette 2016: 136). Ethics has its source in the word *ethe*, from which *ethos* is derived. As Ryan, Myers and Jones explore through the lens of ecological thinking and ecological feminism, *ethos* is a dwelling place where people come to know together (Ryan, Myers and Jones 2016: 7). *Ethos* and its ethics regard knowledge and values as being constituted in ‘dynamic construction of relationships within and across locations and between people’ (Ryan, Myers and Jones 2016: 11). Such reconceptualising of ethics as being rooted in places of engagement offers me safe ground for my practice. These expansive notions of *ethos* bring to light the value of thinking ecologically – of thinking-with place. It is this exploration of *ethos* where knowing is entwined with inhabiting place, restoring community, enriching identity and inspiring social action which is deeply resonant with my own practices as an artist, activist and researcher.

The Ritual Workshops extend the experience of hospitality into the realms of material encounters that affect ‘not only on intellectual and effective state of audience mind but on the physical state of their bodies’ (Barnette 2016: 134). I have discovered how this notion of hospitality as a space for affecting interactions, combined with an extensive relationship to food, becomes a fertile medium for personal and collective transformation. Central to the Ritual Workshop is a focus, a hearth to practise caring for our artful bodyminds through material processes that are also an expression of care for land and place. Connections are made within a diversity of material encounters with the processes of food, through touching, feeling, handling, smelling and tasting food. The practice of a feminist hospitality enables an opening up of my agency within the realms of everyday actions where the offering of skills through an artisan and ecological gastronomy stimulates transformative encounters with and through the bodymind.

A politics of consciousness in South Africa

All oppression begins with separation – the severance of relationship. Division from each other because of a different skin colour, ethnicity or class background is ever visible and present in South Africa. My field research in post-apartheid South Africa at the Sustainability Institute offered me a daily liberation practice for my own artful bodymind as well as providing the potential for a practice in liberation with and for others. Evolving transformative practices within a safe space for multicultural groups to gather together is a practice in liberation. My research ritual workshops become *refugia*, habitats within which to experience the bodymind as an instrument of consciousness which counters the epistemicide of the body’s knowing. Within this transcultural arena, we all contribute to cultivating an ethics of care which recognizes the vital interconnectedness of the personal body, the collective body and the body of land – the naturalcultural interplay of a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology. As Mikal Lambert, farmer and Change Agent at Goedgedacht Farm, reflects:

Your work brings to the table the culture within agriculture, the celebration and connection of food to ritual and art. It brings diverse communities together in a South Africa, which is still largely segregated along racial and economic lines.
(Email from Mikal Lambert, 29 February 2016)

In his reflection, Mikal refers to the segregation in South Africa and the potential for art

and ritual to create inclusive spaces which bridge the divisions. This dedication to creating safe conditions for political and personal transformation guides the liberatory dimension of my research. My own personal healing comes through decades of cathartic and therapeutic work focussing on the politics and psychology of oppression (Jackins 1975). In this work I have faced and engaged with my own internalised oppression as a woman, an artist, and a Jew. As a white person, I have come to understand how, through a colonial heritage, I have colluded as a perpetrator of oppression. I also recognise that in working with such an emancipatory intention, I will encounter resistance, conflict and potential scepticism. This is inevitable in research that sets out to offer authentic solutions in diversity work for social change. Indeed, giving space for naming, voicing concerns, difficulties and discomforts, as well as working with and through feelings, *is* the work of liberation.

Choreographing experiences with ecological food practices fulfils the liberatory and transformative research objective of enlivening the artful bodymind and remembering and integrating the multiple intelligences and sensibilities of the knowing human body. For it is within the Ritual Workshops that participants of all cultures, ages, genders and class can become inquirers within processes which foster interactions with the substance of matter all the while engaging within cycles of listening and reflection with each other. Here is the transformative opportunity within this bounded ritual form. Again, I recall and draw on the words of Theo Oldjohn, facilitator of Youth Diversity Work and Director of the Agroecology Academy, who gives his understanding of my Sympoietic Ritual Methodology in his reflections about what he experienced within *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop:

For me, your food is about interaction, it is about the other, and it is all of that. That is the art for me. Art is about holistic. It is about inclusivity. It is about understanding not one, but many messages. Art is to bring consciousness and awareness. It is to raise what people may not necessarily be aware of. It is not having this one perception about something, but really broadening my horizons in terms of my interaction with the food. So, for me, your work is an art in the sense that it is holistic and it speaks to individuals. So, it is not you standing there saying or pointing a finger. It is about you creating a space for people to experience what you bring, your art, and coming up with their own interactions. So that for me is what is critical. (Conversation Exchange with Theo Oldjohn, 15 May 2017)

How does a commitment to creating such arenas for ethical and aesthetic actions work in practice? Given the histories and on-going realities of segregation and inequality in South Africa, I seek to be vigilant, to be present, to be responsive, and to create safe and familiar spaces where people can feel welcome, included and able to experience and express themselves as feelingly and openheartedly as possible. Here, below, are a selection of principles, processes and practices which I developed over the years to create human and physical infrastructure for liberation work and which I inhabited throughout my doctoral research:

Responding only to invitations from organisations dedicated to cultures of transformation within which I co-evolve a frame in response;

Creating time and attention for noticing and attending to the myriad thoughts and feelings that arise within my bodymind moment by moment;

Inviting Flora's support as a Thinking-Listening partner;

Hosting safe spaces of *refugia* that are convivial in cultivating freedom through interdependence;

Participation in ritual encounters is always by self-selection and all are free;

Working within the overarching frame of the Artist Research Residency that accommodates me on site;

Requesting a dedicated studio as a visible, accessible and welcoming space for informal conversations and exchanges for the duration of the Residency;

Setting up Shrine to the elements and *genius loci* within the studio which attends to the body, the sacred, food and thanksgiving practices;

Owning and naming my whiteness and colonial heritage as a pathway for creating trust;

Creating reflective forums to share my research with all members of the host community.

These are conditions for transcultural and convivial research which has a liberatory and transformative potential. Embedding these principles, processes and practices within my research offered me the tuning forks for attending to any conflict, discomfort or tension that might arise within the Ritual Workshops. In good faith, and to the best knowing of my sensing artful bodymind, I was not aware of resistance, reactive attitudes or discomfort within the Ritual Workshops. This was confirmed by listening to the workshop transcripts, as well as attending to the Conversation Exchanges conducted a few months later. The embodied experience of the Ritual Workshops, which catalysed around my hosting of diverse relationships between the matter of physical substances, culinary processes, and spaciousness for ample personal dialoguing and collective interaction, were the refugia encounters which offered a safety and respect that encompassed difference and unity for nurturing new norms.

Resistance did come towards me. Such voicings of concern are welcomed as they offer an opportunity for change. For it is within the fertile 'matter' of tension and friction that transformation can take root. This resistance did not arise within the primary field research of the Ritual Workshops. I elaborate and share how it came about. Towards the end of my Residency I gave a series of slide presentations with the Sustainability Institute staff teams to share my work, receive feedback and follow through with next steps. During the last feedback session there was affirmative appreciation for my work as an 'aesthetics methodology – the artists' way to construct ways of knowing, processes, engagements, which I find productively subversive and uncomfortable' (Feedback session at the Sustainability Institute, 3 October 2016). The aspiration was that my methodology be developed as a 'manifesto that picks up on the conditions under which this cultural expansion is sustained' (Feedback session at the Sustainability Institute, 3 October 2016). However, alongside this acknowledgment, during this same session, I also received some disturbing feedback from one member of the staff team.

In looking to illuminate how I approached this puzzling and uncomfortable feedback, I offer some background. Although the white, male responder was very involved in my pilot research project PULSE, and was invited to other food rituals which were part of *Living Cultures* Residency, he had not participated in any of the Ritual Workshops. His feedback was not relating to my Ritual Workshops but rather to the visual documentation of my work throughout the Residency. He was concerned that this visual narrative was giving a 'one-sided' and overly positive picture (Feedback session at the Sustainability Institute, 3 October 2016). This was a shock and I questioned long and hard over the following days to discover my blindspots, what had I failed to

notice, what had I disrespected, what had I not shown? To discover answers I listened to the recording of the feedback presentation. I sought reality checks from co-researchers and colleagues who had commissioned and experienced my work. I shared extended time with Flora expressing and feeling through my emotional disturbances, and took hours to write and draw out my thoughts and feelings. The feedback gave me a fruitful opportunity to explore how, where and whether in my work I was being neglectful, oppressive or in denial.

After my re-search with Flora, with my transcripts and with my self-inquiry, I followed through with my dedication to the art of relationship, and sought to meet face to face with the responder and engage directly with his disquiet and understand what was lying behind such words and attitudes about my work. Between us we arranged a conversation in a given place and within a few days we were sitting together at an agreed place with rock and bush surroundings. The exchange enabled us to share our feelings and seek understanding – for me to listen and hear the cause of his disquiet and concerns about my work, and for me to share my pain about his unexpected reaction, and give more context for my research approach. On a sacred granite rock, within a bounded yet spacious time, while sharing corn chips and a drink of kombucha, we entered into a meaningful dialogue about ritual, its associations, the nature of participation, and we each learned more of the other's biography and the challenges within each other's work and worlds. In this space of communing with another on subjects of food, ritual and participatory research we were in a sympoietic exchange with our artful bodyminds amidst the energies of food, rock, bush, tree, sky.

My dedication is to bring my values, my vulnerability, my practices and my full engagement into everyday encounters by tuning into my bodymind. This means honing my listening skills, giving a quality of attention that respects the other's experiences and makes space for the unknown, the unspoken. Seeking connection, conversation, encounter and making space for feedback is the way I work with all dimensions of relationship whether harmonious or unsettling. Aware of my 'permanent partiality' the charge of being 'one-sided' and too positive in the visual documentation was one that I attended to in our conversation (Haraway 1988: 581). Re-search with soul in mind is work which risks to nurture connection and has in its aspiration the cultivating and making visible of the diverse, rich and expansive relationships that can and do exist between food, land and people. Given that the medium of my art manifests within our cultures of degraded soil, food deserts and fragmented communities, documentation of images which share rich examples of the abundance of agroecological methods and collective experiences, sympoietic practices

which bring out the colour and vitality of interconnections and encounters between ecological food and people might look unfamiliar, seem exaggerated and therefore questionable. Cultivating such sympoietic conditions for liberation work and transformative research is a practice for living an ethics of care. Trust is tended to through response-ability. Within these practices is a commitment to inclusion – to nurture liberation work that engages with and respects human diversity and biodiversity. This is the poetics of sympoietic worldmaking. As Dr Rika Preiser, my South African adviser reflects to me:

By being differently in the world, being conscious, by being aware, by being reflective, by being creative, by being process oriented, by sense making, by building relationships, by having a thinking partner, by having all these various strategies of engaging, you constitute yourself as a person who is being-becoming. (Skype Supervision with Rika Preiser 18 April 2018)

Liberation work requires respect and attention to the personhood of everyone, and respect for the other-than-human world. For all oppression comes from a sense of not being respected, valued or heard, not given space and time to be true to oneself. What the research illuminates is how my Sympoietic Ritual Methodology, through the hosting of embodied exchanges between self, other, matter and place encourages a place for a healing of personal and planetary disturbances. As Scott Peck writes, love is a decision (Peck 2006). For me liberation work is an ethical, daily decision, a practice for nurturing love. Below, a playful yet profound mantra for the art of relationships:

feel
fuckup
sleeponwrite
talkgrieveheed
roarsitwithlisten
makemistakesmaketime
sharefoodshowupdraw
weeptakeuptakein
ragemovegroove
shakemakeresist
persistwaitcook
digestletgoface
rockup

Diffraction with my Constellations

In recognising that the world is complex and messy, Law calls for new ways of being in relationship to the lived process of life and research where 'we're going to have to teach ourselves to think, to practise, to relate and to know in new ways (Law 2004: 2). As noted in *Practices in Freedom*, the Hermes Process offered a new way for me to surface the intentions and aspirations of my practice-as-research. From the mass of material gathered, I was able to 'see' what the work was calling for – a dedication to the 'EARTH', a call to 'BECOME emotional', discovering our 'life blood', inviting 'silence', embracing of 'love', recognising 'body and soul', spaciousness which is respecting of different 'rhythms of time', and the red thread of my artful bodymind. These lodestars guide me towards understanding how the contributions and conditions of my artful research with the bodymind enliven research methodologies for experiencing participatory consciousness. Here is an embodied ethics within the integration of art and life.

In the extract from Rilke's poem at the start of this Complementary Writing, he urges us to be remembering the experience of being at one with the Earth and alerts us that it is through the 'imageless act' that the 'The Things we might experience' are 'vanishing' (Mitchel 1982: 200). As part of my Performative Installation and Ritual I depicted my four Constellations on hangings of organic cloth. The Constellations were foregrounded by a *Shrine to the Living Food Cycle*. This offered the participant-researchers a sensuous experience of the matter of an ecological gastronomy by making visible the process of the cycle of harvesting, vegetable chopping, making stock and food composting. The cycle was completed with the sharing of an organic seasonal soup cooked on an open fire in a cast iron pot in the Cook's Garden at Ryton.

Figure 67. Constellations foregrounded by *Shrine to the Living Food Cycle*.



Lederach writes that ‘the key to complexity is finding the elegant beauty of simplicity’ (Lederach 2005: 66). In a Thinking-Listening exchange with Flora following my Performative Installation and Ritual, I reflected on the unfolding interactions and the research material that was generated from the day. This material included the transcription of participant researchers’ responses to the installation; some of the rushes of Benjamin Cook’s film footage; revisiting photographic documentation of the event and space; and reading email descriptions sent to me in thanks with feedback from some participant researchers. (See Appendix F material, visual documentation, interpretation of the day and transcription of the film *Art of the Everyday*). This exchange with Flora revealed how the Performative Installation and Ritual further developed my own thinking-feeling about the contributions I was making to research. Below are images of each of the Constellation hangings accompanied by extracts from my Thinking-Listening exchange with Flora that convey in ‘spoken word’ what I consider to be the essence of each of the four contributions.

Poetics of Re-Search

Figure 68. Poetics of Re-Search.

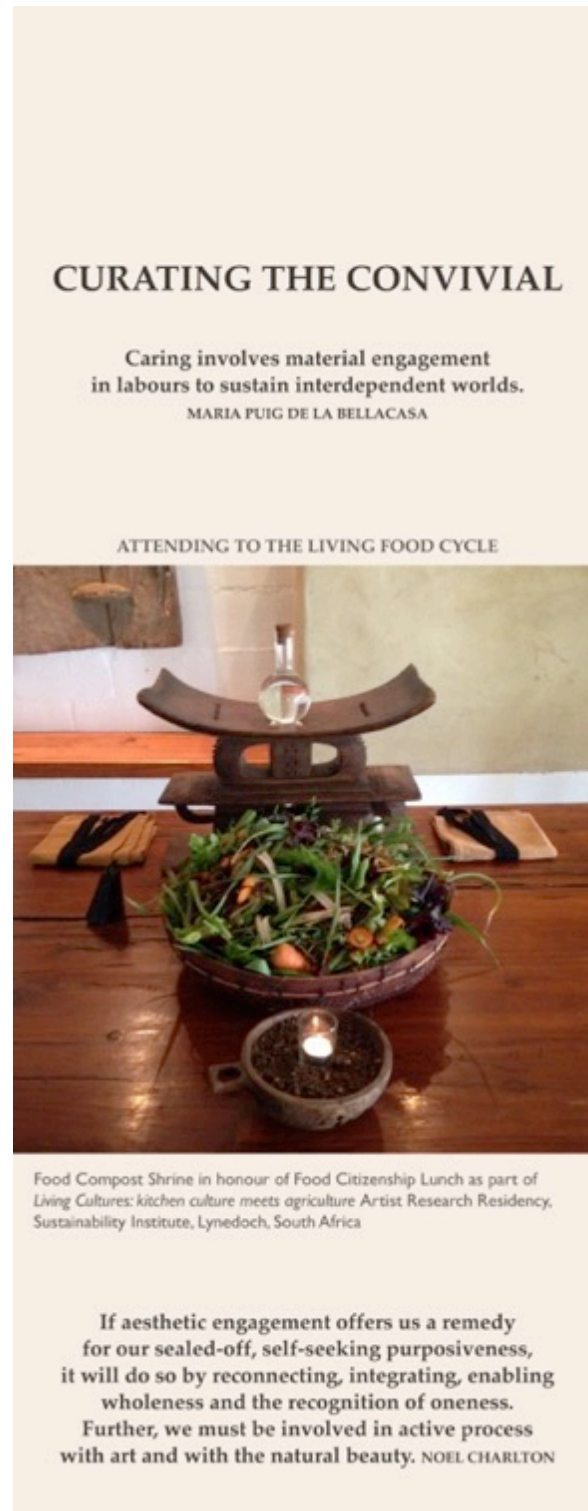


Here, below, my reflections on the first Constellation Poetics of Re-Search:

MFL: In Berry's questions about what value and respect we give to our bodies is the clue to what my research has been seeking to illuminate. Art is the vehicle for conveying what relations we have between our bodies and the Earth. That vivid photograph taken from outside of the studio with me seated at my working table in front of the computer screen is an image, which for me manifests sympoeitic worldmaking. The reflections in the window show how my bodymind is entangled within trees, fields, walls and fences and is entwined with all those domestic artefacts of a teacup, a lamp, a bookcase, my ball of red thread, sheaves of grain in the basket and the clock. All exist within a moment of interconnection with my bodymind within the larger whole. Poetics of Re-search tunes into the researcher's body. Exploring through my ritual food practice, I look to make visible the relationships and responsibilities that maintain a connection between our bodies and the earth, between our mind and soul. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 10 April 2019)

Curating the Convivial

Figure 69. Curating the Convivial.

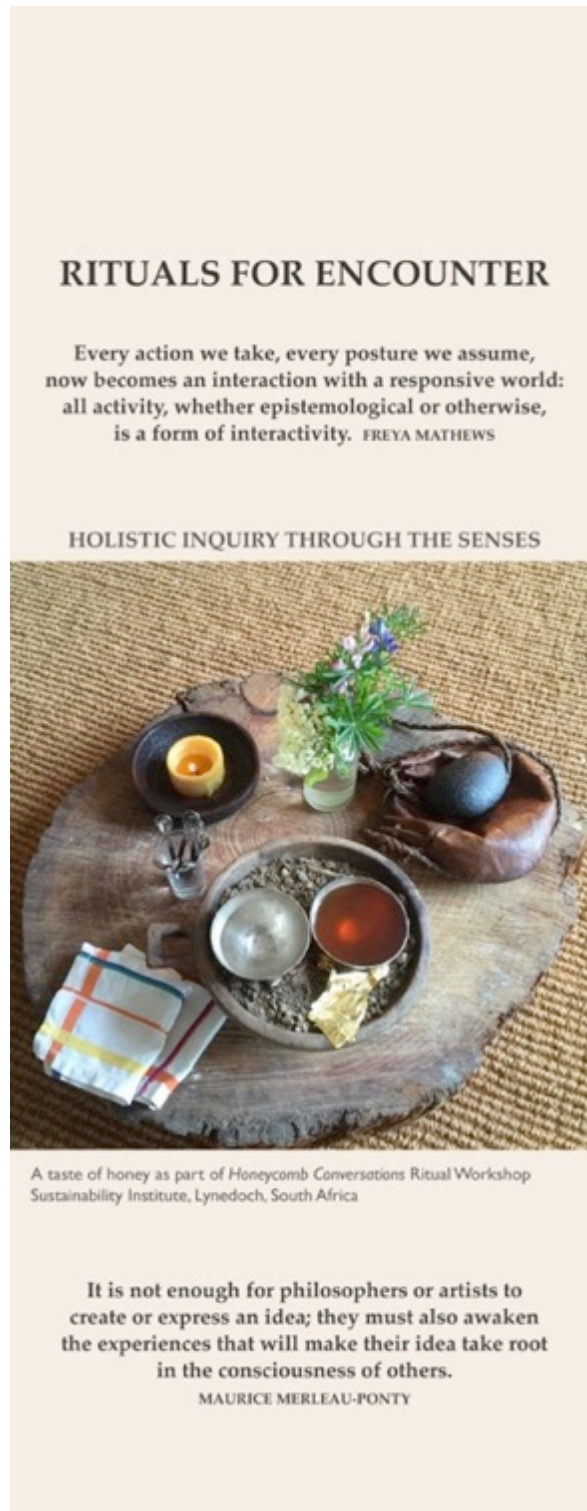


Here, below, my reflections on Curating the Convivial, the second Constellation:

MFL: Knowing that the world we inhabit is one of naturecultures which are interconnected through flowing processes, I sense how food has the potential to be making manifest this interdependence. *Convivere* means to live together, so my approach has been to curate the living food cycle through convivial experiences with food practices. My relationships to people and place grow through engaging with the material labours of growing, preparing, cooking, all of which involve caring. The caring comes about because I am resident in a place, it matters to me, I have a relationship with it. Artist Research Residencies enable me to reconnect and integrate and cultivate active relationships. By making food artful and beautiful, the kitchen and food garden become more visible in the sharing of the natural and vital bounty of vegetables. This compost shrine is placing these sacred relationships within the everyday. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 10 April 2019)

Rituals for Encounter

Figure 70. Rituals for Encounter.



Below, are my spoken reflections on Curating the third Constellation, Rituals for Encounter:

MFL: Every action, every posture becomes a gesture towards becoming-with. It is to be responsive to the people, the organisational culture, the farmers, the communities of practitioners, the matter of the food – and that is my inter-activity. It is to becoming conscious of my actions as part of this entanglement within a sympoietic world. And then as an artist I create conditions and experiences to awaken this participatory consciousness in others, this essential interconnectedness. For that I choreograph spaces for a holistic inquiry through the senses. The image of the honey ritual with tiny spoons for a tasting has significance because we are getting a taste of embodied knowing – it is through an experience of knowing through our bodies that we gain the awareness of how to be responsive and act in the world as an ethics of being and becoming-with. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 10 April 2019)

Practices in Freedom

Figure 71. Practices in Freedom.



Finally, below, my spoken reflections on Practices in Freedom Constellation:

MFL: So how do I do all this? By cultivating my own responsibility as a researcher, as a human being. For this I need an ecology of practices. This needs energy – I have to do this with my passion and will. Actively do it, regularly. These practices are wrought, made, they are experimental and innovative, they are what it means to nurture a politics of consciousness to counter our amnesia. It is through practices with the body and matter, which I am inviting everybody to inhabit in their own way. My own awakening is through consciousness practices based around sourcing and preparing vital food; being in a collaboration for trustful knowing; engaging in ritual artmaking to attend to my imagination and my unconscious which inspires imaginal encounters with matter and the other-than-human world. This interconnectedness is about enriching ourselves and relating to each other with abundance and celebration. (Thinking-Listening with Flora Gathorne-Hardy, 10 April 2019)

Embodying criteria

Figure 72. The red thread as the umbilical cord to my artful bodymind.



The conditions that express and manifest themselves within and across the four Constellations have emerged as the embodied quality criteria of my Practice-as-Research. Yielding to the power of the image, I was able to discover the unfolding quality criteria for an ethics of being within a poetics of research. During the four years of my doctoral studies, I gathered over 8,000 photographs. In reviewing these, I came to notice that many of the photographs contained my red thread in very different contexts. It was interesting to consider what the red thread was linking me to. What metanarrative might these images, illustrating my bodymind in diverse environments, be sharing as evidence of sympoietic entanglement?

As the research narrative within my Complementary Writing emerged, I was called back to these images. Gradually, the selection of photos distilled to a group of nine images that I intuitively sensed were expressing a coherence of purpose. It was in the process of preparing for my Performative Installation and Ritual that I realised what this sequence of images was revealing and articulating for me. They were illustrating the conditions or quality criteria for my Practice-as-Research with the artful bodymind. In this way, the images containing the red thread were talismen for showing the encounters through which I cultivate validity and trustworthiness within my life as an

artist-researcher. Below, the composite image 'Conditions for enlivening transformative research methodologies', expresses the nine conditions for quality criteria for embodied and sensuous research. It shows the diversity of arenas from within which my practice has been seeking to cultivate ecologies of care.

Figure 73. The red thread of my artful bodymind – conditions for enlivening transformative research.



These nine criteria have emerged through attending to my artful bodymind within the *refugia* of my Practice-as-Research. Within safe and convivial spaces an opportunity for growing our ecological selves and nurturing a sympoietic intelligence arises.

The visual narrative of nine encounters is a glimpse into the entwining of the subjective with ecological processes, practices that maintain the webs of relationality between my human being and other-than-human worlds. By re-presenting my primary, direct and embodied encounters through a selection of photographs, I have been able to un-obscure and evidence the interweaving conditions of a whole-bodied experience of sympoietic living within a dynamic flow of interdependence. These qualities of experience are in themselves the criteria, the conditions for practising ways to live within a participatory and sympoietic consciousness. As such, they are my guides for inhabiting an ethics of care in the everyday. Below I outline these criteria alongside the images which offered the insights.

Figure 74. Criteria for a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology.

Conditions for flourishing an holistic and embodied interdependence with each other and the sentient Earth as an ethics of care in the everyday.

**Spaciousness**

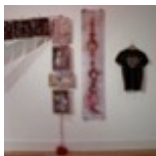
Time and space for being in rhythm and flow

**Gratitude**

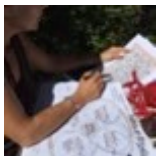
Hosting spaces for thanksgiving rituals

**Matters of Sentience**

Tasting and becoming-with an animate world

**Artful knowing**

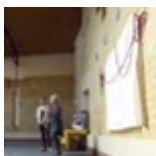
Nurturing the imagination in matter and metaphor

**Sensuous thinking**

Integrating the senses, intuition and emotion

**Liberation**

Crafting healing practices for personal and social freedom

**Collaboration**

Cultivating respect, risk and trust in the presence of another

**Beauty**

Choreographing an aesthetics of care

**Conviviality**

Flourishing well-being through interdependence

Nato Thompson in *Living as Form* expands our awareness of the role of art and moves beyond the question, ‘what is art?’ to considering the more metaphysical question ‘what is life?’ (Thompson 2012: 33). I conducted my experiential research as a means of challenging the Western dualist paradigm and its epistemicide of the body’s knowing. To enliven transformative research methodologies, I sought to engage in life processes which manifest the concept of *Rta* as the dynamic continuum of entanglement. As Bateson’s poem *Sacred* illuminates, we are a flux within an interconnected world of ever-changing processes:

So: where we find the sacred is within
The process – in the ‘going on’
Which is the changing, flowing, thinking
Of the world. (Bateson quoted in Charlton 2008: xiv)

My coming to know has emerged within the dance of interconnections between my own inner and outer landscapes, within the arena of collaborative practice, in the research encounters with people, my relationship to matter, alongside artefacts and my dwelling within place. As Hayes writes, being an artist encourages a political role, one which offers transformative and liberatory processes for engendering arenas ‘for aesthetic and ethical acts’. The art of restoring the convivial with ecological food practices is a vital arena for cultivating a politics of participatory consciousness in the everyday. My artful bodymind becomes the divining instrument for enculturing art and ethics as a practice of life.

It is within this meta-narrative of an ecological and sympoietic imaginary that I make my contribution. The *refugia* of a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology is a habitat for enlivening transformative and performative research methodologies with place-based encounters with food and farming. These are safe habitats for learning new life skills within collective and solo communing. Within a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology we have the opportunity to be attending to and practising the sympoietic art of relationships which foster our flourishing as interdependent beings within the other-than-human worlds.

Below is a visual depiction of this flow of changing, flowing, thinking of sympoietic worldmaking. The unedited, unaltered photograph taken by Flora is a profound imaginal illustration which conveys visually in one plane what I have come to deeply inhabit – the understanding that consciousness is radically empirical and its emergence

is within an entanglement between the artful bodymind in its experience of the practical, the physical and the imaginal in a dynamic encounter with the living processes of life.

Figure 75. Me in the studio emerging with a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology.



Summary of my research contributions

My primary contribution is a Sympoietic Ritual Methodology. This methodology choreographs Ritual Workshops as convivial *refugia* for enlivening the artful bodymind through skills-sharing with food practices. A Sympoietic Ritual Methodology reconnects the artful bodymind with the ecological processes of life through the living food cycle.

As secondary contributions, this Sympoietic Ritual Methodology has emerged:

a poetics of re-search that is embodied, emergent, and responsive to self, other, matter and place;

an Artist Research Residency model of embedded exchanges for becoming-with food and place;

a sequence of emancipatory practices within agroecological food cultures, collaborations in thinking-listening, and personal ritual-making for healing.

Criteria for Sympoietic Ritual Methodology

Here I set out an inventory, an aide-memoire for the qualities, practices and principles which foster an ethics of care in the everyday.

These are:

Spaciousness Time and space for being in rhythm and flow

Gratitude Hosting spaces for thanksgiving rituals

Matters of Sentience Tasting and becoming-with an animate world

Artful knowing Nurturing the imagination in matter and metaphor

Sensuous thinking Integrating the senses, intuition and emotion

Liberation Honouring healing practices for personal and social freedom

Collaboration Cultivating respect, risk and trust in the presence of another

Beauty Choreographing an aesthetics of care

Conviviality Flourishing well-being through interdependence

A Sympoietic Ritual Methodology has application within transformative research cultures namely Practice-as-Research, Action Research and Artful Inquiry. In the arena

of food politics, I am currently applying my methodology within the fields of agroecology and community food initiatives. As a sympoietic imaginary for socio-ecological regeneration my research with *refugia* enhances the arenas of socially-engaged art, activism and ritual studies. Within liberatory politics, a Sympoietic Research Methodology has reach for diversity work and decolonising pedagogy. It is contributing to art-science collaborations and the discipline of new materialism. As a methodology for cultivating an ethics of care, it has wide potential within Peace and Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution work. A Sympoietic Ritual Methodology offers research forms and practices for enlivening embodied and collaborative research within doctoral training and re-imagining leadership programmes.

In gratitude

I would like to end my thesis in a gesture of gratitude which conveys and expresses the embodied and sympoietic experience of one of my food rituals. As defined during my performative installation (see transcript of the film *Art of the Everyday* in Appendix B), the word ‘thanks’ has its Indo-European origins in the word *pancean*, to think. I spoke of the gesture of gratitude as being one which encourages us in more expansive realms of thinking and feeling.

To give the context: my field research pilot PULSE took place in the Visual Arts Quad at Stellenbosch University in 2016. After the opening which was a durational edible installation, Professor Mark Swilling, Academic Director of the Sustainability Institute, wrote to thank me for hosting Masters students in the sharing of my food ritual practice. It seems faithful to the performative paradigm that my Complementary Writing ends in an imageful and poetic act which describes the convivial experiences, skills-sharing and interactions of this day. I have created an image-poem with an extract from Mark’s poem which sits alongside a photograph of the long table in the Quad where MA and BA students and tutors gathered to chop the vegetables for the PULSE Deep Soup. As illuminated by the poem, ‘now it has to be art – intended to remind, curated to experience, organized to happen’ (Email exchange with Mark Swilling 10 February 2016).

Figure 76. Conviviality as a way of life.



Rising up from within
 Memories of ancient pasts
 When conviviality was just a way of life
 Now it has to be art –
 Intended to remind
 Curated to experience
 Organised to happen
 All transported in, for making
 Ovens, materials, even fire
 Who sensed what we've lost?
 Touch of soil Food as love
 Smells of the fire as place
 Conversing without structure
 Connections without intent
 Discoveries in the everyday
 Excitements of solidarity
 Happenings, not structures
 That's the sense of place.
 And through it all
 Memories surface
 Of futures where art returns
 As way of life
 Where all is in place
 Nothing brought in
 For its just simply there
 All can do it
 Know-how is passed on
 Specialists are not needed
 Creating becomes the norm
 For in that reconfiguration
 Peace prevails
 Conviviality thrives
 All have a place
 Reconnected
 And life unfolds.

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<http://www.zhoubrothers.com/feeling-is-liberty.html> [12 July 2019]

Appendix A: Dedication to my Complementary Writing

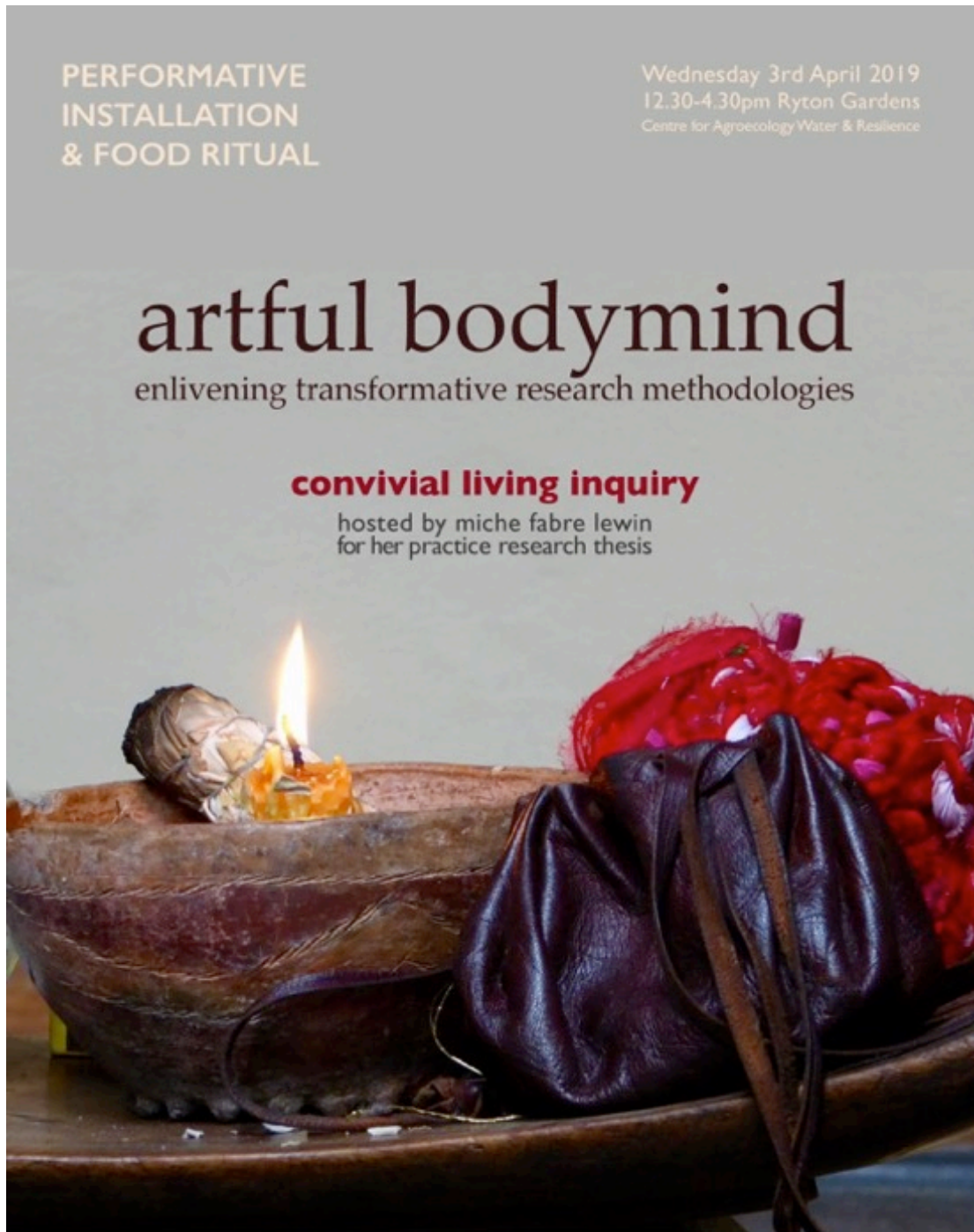
Spaciousness Serenity Simplicity

May my hours
flow with trust, courage
and surrender and be an ever-evolving
receptive and integral process of being
with feeling, thinking, musing, writing, in an
attitude of ease and grace, pleasure and harmony,
within the diversity of body and land guardianship, convivial
exchanges and creature encounters with the day, in the presence
of the angels and a soul companionship supported by artful
collaboration, nourished with truly wholesome
food, surrounded with bountiful beauty
and purified with the vow to engage daily in
holy-healthy practices which free my
artful bodymind from self-demeaning
doubt, criticism, negativity,
desolation and
desecration.

Studio Barn, Suffolk, 12 July 2018.
Edited Spier, 24-25 September 2018.

Appendix B: Performative Installation and Ritual

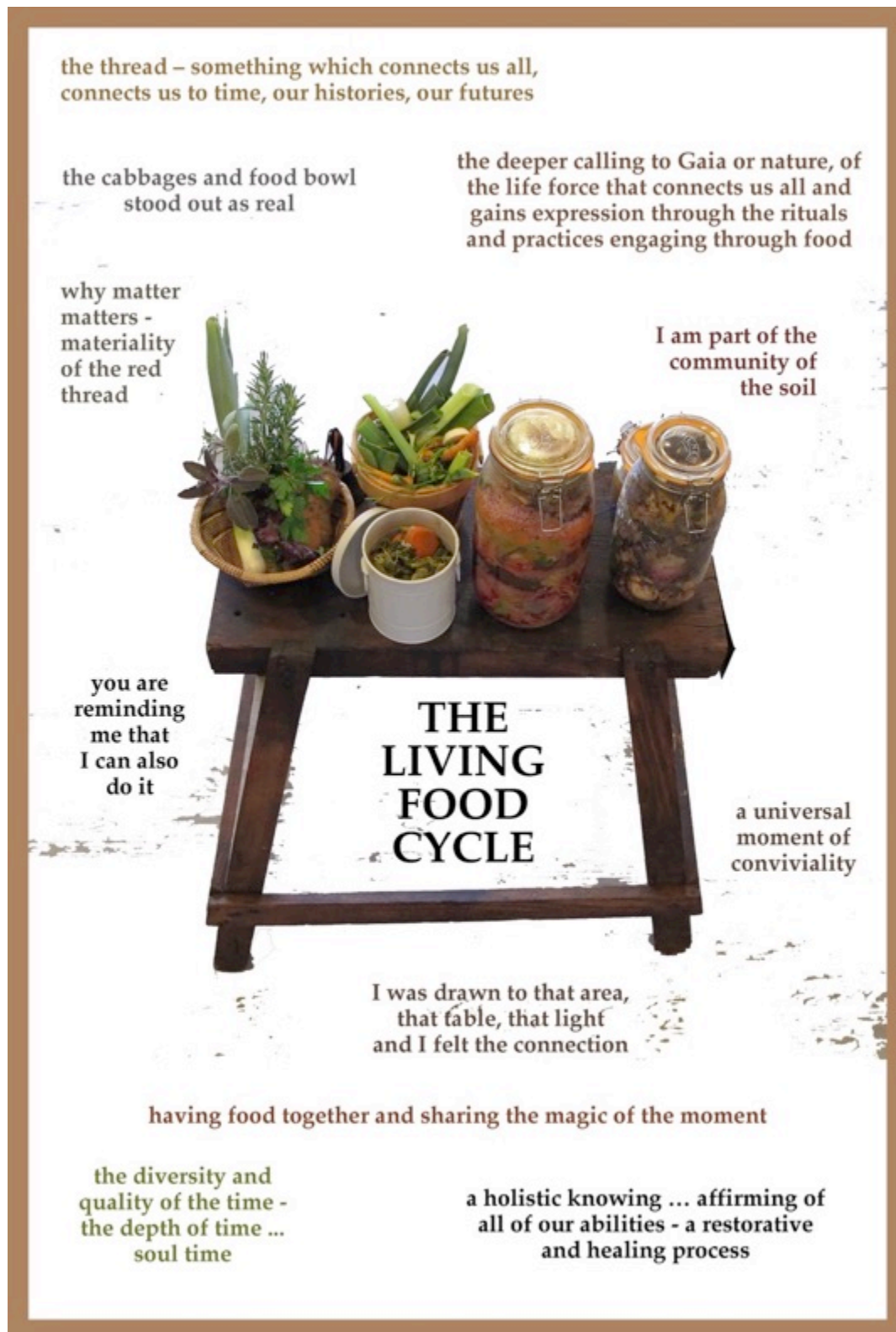
Invitation to Performative Installation and Ritual, 3 April 2019



Images from Performative Installation and Ritual, 3 April 2019



Composition of image and words shared by participant-researchers during
Performative Installation and Ritual, 3 April 2019.



Sequence of images from Performative Installation and Ritual, 3 April 2019.



ART OF THE EVERYDAY Film transcript

Miche Fabre Lewin (MFL): Why am I researching? What for? Some of the questions being answered through making collages that begin with the question: what is my method? What is my methodology? What is my paradigm? What is my way of seeing the world? How did it come to be? So it is about becoming conscious and seeking to live a life based on truth, ethics and trust and integrity. And this is the way I have found to live a life.

I kind of turned my thesis upside down by finding that I needed to work with my own practice and find the theory from my own practice. The visual with the verbal and the written and the scripterly, because actually none of it could have manifest if I hadn't gone through the processes which are imaginal.

There were times when fellow researchers and seekers came to spend time with us and we considered what is it to collaborate, what is true collaboration? It is about dreaming literacy, it is about revealing joy, it is about the atmosphere when we get together, it is about trust, it is about what better time than now?

Photographs have helped me understand. The documentation done by Flora throughout my PhD as my thinking partner has been immense and I could not have come to know without that other lens to help me understand what I was doing.

You have to be full of rage about what is going on in the world and you either hide or let it free, and my way through all this ritual process and allowing myself to be in a relationship with nature and matter helps me tend to some of that rage.

I have to also do a lot of thinking and researching and deep questioning into myself into what are my motives, what are my intentions. So after I have done the work as part of my own field practice, where I was invited to the Sustainability Institute in South Africa to work as an artist in residence and to dream into a ritual methodology I had proposed called the Ritual Workshops, I

ran a series of three workshops and one of them is here being represented as Wild Cultures.

All the Workshops were about giving people an experience with the subject and matter of food. Flora was doing these beautiful, beautiful Chrysalis drawings here which in a way were a reflection for herself, making sense for herself, of what were my Ritual Workshops, what was inside them, what was their form? And these were the three: that is Food for the Earth, Wild Cultures and Honeycomb Conversations. And these were the Workshops that I had proposed to the Sustainability Institute in South Africa in the Western Cape. And this is a board that again shows not just a linear experience or expression of what happened there but it is this idea that it is diffractive, that everything talks to each other and intersects and interjects, kind of interferes in order for there to be some clarity and some discovery of what is really going on at a deeper level.

And so I have been very transformed and enlivened in my own research process because of this particular work around bringing fermentation as a practice and a process to South African cultures – black and coloured and white – where the experience is to actually handle food, and to be with food, and to smell it and feel it, and hear it and then prepare it in such a way that you will get a fermentation which is a very nutritious food. It is about that idea of biodiversity in a bowl because all these micro-organisms come from the atmosphere. Every fermentation will be different in a different place because it is being true to the biodiversity of a place. So again, that is a wonderful metaphor of what it means to encourage all of our cultures to discover a much greater range of what it is to be a human being.

Patrician Gaya (PG): All of these materials, all of these things, all of this matter that is part of your life and so embodies everything that you represent, and the work that you do, and your intentions and values and your offering to the world, and I am just very deeply in an appreciation of what that aesthetic does to us, to the space, to what you are inviting us to. You just open up this way of being and being with matter and being with ourselves and our bodyminds that

is so healthy and wholesome and affirming. And I think more than anything it leaves me feeling so deeply inspired to seek it out as a way that is truer for myself and my family and my work and to have that coherence.

MFL: With the matter of this ball of red thread, we are taking our bodies on a journey between the inner and the outer, between practice and theory. It is an umbilical cord. The idea had been that we would go out and have something to eat in a space that relates to this, and when I was looking at where I could do my practice, it felt like the best place was to be honouring Ryton, here given that it is an organic centre for research and has had a history. And I happened to go out eighteen months ago and discover there was a little garden called the Cook's Garden and that felt a little appropriate.

The idea is to be with this space and be with the outdoor. It just feels that this is a time for even myself to see it with new eyes and to enter into it and be in conversation with it.

This is artful bodymind research. It makes me so aware that the work I am doing around my PhD is our work and every single one of you, in some way, I have an extraordinarily profound and precious relationship with.

The etymology of the word 'thanks' comes from the old English 'pancean', which is to give thanks, which is traced back to the Proto-indo European word 'tong' to think, to feel. I like to imagine that in sharing gratitude we better think and better feel.

This is in a way the culmination of the research which is what is going into my Complementary Manuscript and that manuscript is called Complementary Writing because it complements what you are seeing here which is the practice research. This is the element which is about the human body, the human resource that we have to know so much more widely that just through our brains and through our mind, and so this complements what the writing is about, which is to create a kind of manual or a guide to the theories that are infusing my practice. And in fact, the relationship happened because I went to

theory, I was doing practice, and they were continually entwining with each other.

And so what we have are these beautifully printed cloths that are organic cotton and they take some very key quotes about my work that have guided me and really go to the heart of what I am seeking to reveal through, and discover and uncover through my process as an artist working with a ritual methodology. Images that are from the actual living experience of my inquiry.

By caring we are actually being ethical, and to be ethical we need to have a relationship with our bodies. Artists need to help experience that relationship through a tangible process and means so that is what those Ritual Workshops have been. Those rituals are those rituals where it is an holistic inquiry through the senses. And the last one is about the practices in freedom that help us become aware.

PG: I need this in my life. You open up spaces of possibility that are so rare and so beautiful. And you remember - thinking about Gregory Bateson and his work on aesthetics - that connection to that beauty is so important because it connects us to something much bigger than us, and much bigger than these tiny little concerns that are so completely beyond the point of what the planet needs at this moment.

MFL: So really I would say that my work is seeking a way that we might all be cultivating the art of good relationships and Nature is very much part of that interconnection. And food has become the way that I can understand. It offers a meaningful daily experience of that connection with Nature.

And what my work has been inviting in is the encouraging of our capacity to handle matter, to be with food, to become-with Nature.

End titles

MFL: We have been in a dance. The performative installation has actually found another form because of our passions for our mediums and for getting to know each other through our mediums. And also to risking to not know and to surrendering. You surrendered. You said you did not know how this would turn out and I went with complete trust of not knowing as well. And yet, it as though the environment and our intention took to it on to another level and took each of our own genres, our metiers, a whole other breathing space.

Benjamin Cook: And from this point where we are now, it is possible to look back and see the points where ideas came from, in a sense. Like form. When I was talking about the colours in the room, they were all matt. Now I can see how it affected the look of it. It can seem like these are little bits and bobs, but now you can see it was forming ideas in your head. And you at the beginning saying you wanted this drifting camera, which is something I always wanted to do but never had the vehicle to use it.

MFL: So it has taken us both beyond.

Appendix C: Ritual Workshop participants

Food for the Earth Ritual Workshop 17 August 2016

* SI = Sustainability Institute

Initial s	Gende r	Age	How heard about the workshop	Cultural identity	Occupation
LN	M	32	Informal meeting in the SI garden	Sesotho	Agroecology Student at the SI
RvN	F	49	Met during SI team meetings	South African	Community Liaison team leader at the SI and local resident at Lynedoch
CP	M	62	Informal meeting and participated in PULSE	South African	Agriculturalist
SF	F	60	SI website	South African/ Caucasian	Therapist
NG	M	31	Informal meeting and participated in PULSE		Farmer and Agroecology Trainer at the SI
MS	F	53	SI website	South African/ Caucasian	Life Coach and energy healer
TvT	F	62	Invited by CP	Afrikaner	Dancer and Human Experience Facilitator
J	F		Informal meeting through SI hospitality team		Volunteer at the SI and photographer of workshop

Wild Cultures Ritual Workshop 24 August 2016

* SI = Sustainability Institute

Initial s	Gende r	Age	How heard about the workshop	Cultural identity	Occupation
XM	M	23	Informal meeting at the Guest House	Xhosa	Agroecology Student at the SI
MX	M	20	Informal meeting at the Guest House	Black	Agroecology Student at the SI
MD	F	22	Flier at the SI	White	Masters student at the SI
TO	M	41	Informal meeting at the Guest House	Xhosa	Youth Development
AB	F	21	Flier at the SI	White	Masters student at the SI
ER	F	37	Informal meetings at the BDAASA office	White	BDAASA Adminstration
CC	F	52	[left blank]	[left blank]	Independent
ZN	F	-	Informal meeting at the SI	Black	Agroecology student at the SI
JM	M	23	Informal meeting at the SI	Indian	Masters student at the SI

Three women members of the Abafazi Cooperative, Malmesbury, joined the group after the initial introductions. They had heard about the workshop via CP, who works with them as a volunteer agricultural adviser.

Honeycomb Conversations Ritual Workshop 30 August 2016

* SI = Sustainability Institute

Initial s	Gende r	Age	How heard about the workshop	Cultural identity	Occupation
FS	M	64	Informal meeting in Lynedoch	[left blank]	Technical
BT	M	27	Informal meetings at SI	[left blank]	Agroecology student at the SI
RS	F	38	Informal meeting at SI	Black	Financial Administrator at the SI
JC	F	46	Recommendation by a friend	South African	Artist and Bee Researcher
KS	F	48	Recommendation by a friend	South African	Bee Researcher
FD	F	24	Team member at SI	White	Hospitality and Market Co-ordinator at the SI
AP	M	42	Informal meeting at SI	Human	Conservation Consultancy Manager
JZ	F	25	Flier at SI	German	Volunteer student at the SI
AJ	[left blank]	27	Flier at SI	[left blank]	Artist
EPS	F	55	Informal meeting at SI Guest House	Afrikaner	Research and Project Co-ordinator

Appendix D: Consent forms



PARTICIPANT-RESEARCHER CONSENT FORM

August 2016 Sustainability Institute, Lynedoch, South Africa

Miche Fabre Lewin, Doctoral Researcher at Centre for Agroecology

Water and Resilience (CAWR) Coventry University, UK

Before we begin this food ritual workshop, please read, and tick the following: I have read and understand the attached participant information sheet and by signing below I agree to participate in this research study. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research study without giving a reason at any time during the ritual-as-research and without any other effect. Please answer the following three questions and complete and sign the section below. You may also give your consent on film.

		Yes	No
A	Do you agree to participate in this food ritual-as-research as a part of my research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Do you agree for this food ritual workshop be documented through audio, video recording or photography as well as note-taking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Do you understand and agree that wherever any material relating to you appears within my research (including words, photos or video) you have the choice to remain anonymous or withdraw your consent for this material to be included or referred to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research participant information and signature:

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Gender:

Age:

Cultural identity / race:

Occupation:

Research Participant Signature:

Date:

Researcher:

Name: Miche Fabre Lewin

Date:

Signature:



PARTICIPANT-RESEARCHER BACKGROUND SHEET
August 2016 Sustainability Institute, Lynedoch, South Africa
Miche Fabre Lewin, Doctoral Researcher, Centre for Agroecology
Water and Resilience (CAWR) Coventry University, UK

RESTORING THE ECOLOGICAL SELF THROUGH THE ART OF FOOD RITUALS

My name is Miche Fabre Lewin, and I am an artist and doctoral researcher at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR) at Coventry University in the UK. I was born in 1956 and grew up in Zimbabwe. During the liberation war I went to the UK for my higher education, completing a University degree in Art History, Comparative Literature and French. Later I trained in art therapy. My life is lived between Europe and Africa.

Practice and Purpose of my Doctoral Research

My practice as an ecological artist is with food and ritual. Over the past decades, I have been working internationally within a diversity of settings – farm fields, a disused grain store, a city bridge, an urban park, a museum, a ballroom, galleries, streets, a glove factory, a hospital, university venues, community centres, food gardens, festivals, the European Parliament chamber, and deconsecrated churches. With respect to the geography and spirit of place, I have devised and choreographed participatory food happenings, edible compositions and soil shrines in dedication to the ecological self. For my arts-based research I am looking to understand how my contemporary food rituals offer space and time for thinking-sensing to reconnect with our knowing bodies through food.

Rituals-as-Research

My research question arises from these convivial food rituals - experiences that I am calling *rituals of reconnection*. The research takes the form of hands-on experiences where participants are invited to take part in an experiential practice of skills-sharing around food preparation. These encounters are followed by time for personal reflections, conversation exchanges and group discussion. My research is dedicated to reflecting with others on what kind of experience these hands-on rituals of reconnection with food offer us and how they encourage the body to remember and know itself through the preparing of life-giving food practices (for example, composting food, fermentation processes, bee guardianship). These ritual workshops are sites of inquiry where I am discovering with you, what are these experiences fulfilling in us? How are they satisfying our fundamental human needs, and in what ways are they cultivating a sense of food citizenship which in turn cultivates a wider responsibility towards each other, our communities and our environment? What are the ways in which these rituals of reconnection are supporting and enhancing the health of the personal, human body and the ecosystem of the planet? How are the rituals encouraging us to become more aware of how our personal, individual self lives resides within nature as the ecological self?

Collaborative Co-Enquiry

Since 2010 my ecological arts practice has been within a collaboration with artist-geographer and plants-woman Dr. Flora Gathorne-Hardy, who is also a Research Associate at CAWR. Flora accompanies me on my research journey as a reflective thinking partner, acting as an assistant in recording and documentation, as well as collaborating in the assessing of the data collected. She will be conforming to the same ethical standards and procedures that I am abiding by.

Your invitation to engage.

You have been invited to participate in this research encounter for us to discover together why and how this research is necessary and has value in the world. You have the opportunity of making your experience known through structured reflection time, conversations and written responses. During some of the rituals-as-research, Flora my collaborator, will be filming or recording the process. You are entirely free to be part or not part of the documentation. Any reflections and written material which appears in my research will be anonymous.

Taking part in the research.

Taking part in this research encounter, being filmed and photographed is entirely your decision – you *do not* have to take part if you would rather not. And if you do decide to take part you are still free to change your mind at any time and without giving a reason, and you may leave the ritual at any point and ask not to be filmed/photographed any more.

What are the benefits of taking part?

By participating in this research encounter, you will be part of a project which is looking to bring new approaches to ways of knowing and understanding our cultures through artful explorations with food.

Data protection and confidentiality.

Some of the material gathered may be included in my final thesis. The information you provide will be kept securely and you will be able to decide whether you are happy for it to be included and whether you are named or remain anonymous.

For further communications.

You can contact me at any time if you feel you would like to know or share more. If you are troubled or unsatisfied with any aspect of the research encounter and process, or its documentation please be in touch and let me know in writing, providing as much information as possible. I will respect and address all issues that are troubling or you need clarification on.

What will happen to the results of this work?

The material generated during the research encounter, including written responses, photographs and filming, will feed into my doctoral research and potentially the editing of short films. I may also use material for writing research reports and publishing articles about this work.

Who has reviewed this study?

My proposed research work has been reviewed by the Coventry University Ethics Approval Process to ensure that the work has been undertaken in accordance with ethical standards.

Acknowledgement and gratitude

In participating in these ritual workshops you are making a vital contribution to this research project which explores the ways in which we come to know our world through our senses, our hands-on experiences, and our imaginations. I appreciate and thank you so much for the dedication, time and energy you are giving to this research practice.

Should you require any further information about this research please contact me:

Content removed on data protection grounds.

Appendix E: Handout for *Wild Cultures* Ritual Workshop

WILD CULTURES

Living Cultures: kitchen culture meets agriculture
Sustainability Institute 2016

BIODIVERSITY IN A BOWL



the traditional & simple art of preserving cabbages through fermentation

LET THE WILD INSIDE

Micro-flora are our ancestors. We are descended from bacterial origins.

In soil that is alive & fertile, it is the action of the diverse community
of micro-organisms that support healthy plant growth.

In the stomach, it is the micro-flora which help to digest our food.

Through the fermenting of food & drink we attract wild cultures & participate
in the life-cycle of the Earth's micro-organisms into our intestinal ecology.

What are fermented foods?

Fermented foods have been a part of culinary traditions all over the globe for centuries. Many foods & drinks we regularly enjoy have been through a process of fermentation such as yoghurt, cheese, bread, coffee, chocolate, tea, wine & beer. In Asia & Europe & Africa fermented foods (kimchi, olives, sourdough, sauerkraut, injera) are eaten daily to aid digestion as well as being delicious accompaniments to cooked foods as relishes or part of salads.

What is fermentation?

Fermentation is one of the oldest & simplest means of preserving & pickling vegetables & fruits. By harnessing benign micro-organisms which live naturally on raw vegetables & creating anaerobic (absence of air) conditions, the process of fermentation enables the suppression of pathogens & harmful bacteria which cause disease & spoilage. Through this unpasteurised & cool process of preserving, foods are enlivened & carry beneficial lactic acid bacteria directly to the digestive system. These live cultures begin the process of breaking down foodmaking nutrients more easily digested & readily absorbed. This hands-on encounter is the dry method that encourages a spontaneous lactic fermentation.

Fermented food for health

Good health depends on promoting microbial diversity in the body. As well being aromatic & delicious, fermented foods generate preservative acids which pickle & preserve the life, texture & nutrient quality of foods. Eating fermented food is a health-giving practice.

In 1770s Cook conquered scurvy, the vitamin C deficiency, by filling the hold of his ship with 60 barrels of fermented cabbage for his round the world journey.

The micro-organisms of fermentation protect & benefit our immune system in the following ways:

- Predigests food by breaking down complex proteins & starches
- Removes toxic substances from plants
- Neutralises phytic acids which block absorption of minerals
- Increases vitamin C, B & essential fatty acids
- Produce antimicrobial substances such as lactic acid & carbon dioxide
- Introduces probiotic lactobacillus which protects lining of the digestive tract
- Enhances anti-oxidant function

Living foods for the health of the planet & the gut

A planet in balance is sustained by biodiversity. Fermented foods are Earth friendly foods which encourage good healthy bodies by promoting microbial diversity in the stomach.

Fermented foods need no fuels, no cooking, no particular climate. Fermentation is a low-carbon way of preserving foods & keeping food safe. No need to buy a fridge, or find your can opener.

Fermentation is a fulfilling way to add the span & colour of the seasons to your larder. Preserving through fermentation can be a wonderful communal activity to deal with a glut of vegetables.

Fermented foods connect us with the life forces of nature.

Appendix F: ThinkingFood manifesto

ThinkingFood

is an arts & research initiative inspired by culinary & agricultural traditions
which awaken life forces & cosmic energies

FOOD BODY LAND

ThinkingFood

INVITES DIALOGUE & THINKING AROUND FOOD & CONSCIOUSNESS

AWAKENS US TO THE AUTHENTIC PRESENCE OF FOOD

ENCOURAGES US TO REMEMBER OUR CONNECTION TO NATURE & SPIRIT

SUPPORTS OUR RESPONSE-ABILITY TOWARDS OUR PLANET

It is around the following questions that ThinkingFood originates:

What would it mean to approach our own food preparations & eating practices with the same attention that is given by biodynamic growers to making preparations which enhance the vitality of soil & the land? How might this biodynamic approach inspire food practices which heal the inner soil of our own gut & re-enliven the rhythms of the human body, mind & spirit?

ThinkingFood is guided by this beacon question:

**What practices can help us think differently about food,
& how can the matter of food itself help us think differently?**

These are our aspirations:

to encourage awareness of the connection between food & enlivened thinking
to awaken & support consciousness through hands on practices with food
to co-evolve ThinkingFood residencies within the biodynamic movement
to widen access & introduce biodynamic concepts to new audiences
to co-evolve forums for ThinkingFood in diverse settings

Appendix G: *Living Cultures* gratitude card



LIVING CULTURES kitchen culture meets agriculture

Living Cultures Artist Residency celebrating us all becoming
active & responsive food citizens reviving the living soil & water cycles,
every day every mouthful.

**'Food emerges as something with phenomenal
power to transform not just landscapes, but political
structures, public spaces, social relationships, cities.'**

Carolyn Steel (2008) *Hungry City*.

Living into food citizenship:

transforming foodwaste into food for the earth through composting
being in companionship with wholesome food & handbaked bread
respecting honeybees as pollinators of 90% of our food plants
pickling & fermenting produce to preserve nutritional benefit
sourcing natural produce of the season from local growers
preparing food by hand, cooking whole, serving freshly
knowing natural seasonal food is good medicine
saving costs & avoiding packaging
sharing in thanksgiving

In gratitude for the Artist Research Residency at the Sustainability Institute, Lynedoch, South Africa,
supported by Stellenbosch University & Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University.
Miche Fabre Lewin & Flo Hardy 2016 - 2017 all@touchstonecollaborations.com
www.touchstonecollaborations.com

Appendix H: Menu for Food Citizen Lunch

MENU Honeycomb Conversations Food Citizen Lunch at the Sustainability Institute 31 August 2016

Whole roasted butternut squash with black pepper and fennel fronds.
Beetroot with balsamic and olive oil dressing garnished with fresh oregano.
Warm salad of broad beans, braised spinach, and mange touts dressed with olive oil.
Salted chard strands in fresh lemon juice and honey rooibos vinaigrette.
Slow roasted young carrots and kohlrabi crescents with whole spring onions.
Fresh leaf and herb salad.
Fermented Liberation Cabbage.
Freshly baked focaccia with thyme and rock salt



Source: Sustainability Institute Garden and Green Road HUB farmers
Food costs: Approximately 18 Rand per person