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to Ismujol
Therolinguistics

PERENCHIO
FOUNDATION

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The art of the plant, the lyrics of the lichen...

In 1974, California-born author Ursula K. Le Guin published the short story *The Author of the Acacia Seeds and Other Extracts from the Journal of the Association of Therolinguistics*, introducing therolinguistics* as a fictional field dedicated to translating languages, art, and literature beyond the human, such as the “kinetic poetry” of penguins, the messages of ants, and the lyrics of the lichen.

Less relativity, more relatedness.

Journal of Therolinguistics acts as a living sequel to this provocation. In 2026, we know that forests communicate through underground fungal networks, that soil is a living archive of microbial exchange, and that plants, far from being passive organisms, respond, signal, and remember. How might we further recognize and honor the diverse range of communication methods used by other species? Rather than imposing human frameworks onto other beings, Le Guin challenges us to listen, learn, and engage with more-than-human worlds on their own terms.

This spring, the Boddy House at Descanso Gardens transforms into an active Therolinguistics Research Center, where eight international artists move beyond the limits of human language to explore translation as an act of fascination, care, and ecological kinship. Visitors are invited to engage with imaginative field reports investigating trees and tree-dwelling species. They will experience birdsong as multicolored landscapes, engage in deep listening with plants and soil, encounter lichen as an ancient grammar, explore beaver-built worldmaking, participate in bat-flower pollination role-play, read stories inscribed in beetle-carved branches from Swiss forests, and collaborate on tree-tongue messages sent to the Amazon rainforest.

Oscar Salguero
Exhibition Curator

*therolinguistics: From Greek *thér* (θήρ) “wild, feral animal” and linguistics (the study of language and its structure; from Latin *lingua*, “language”)

Department of TECTO Tecto

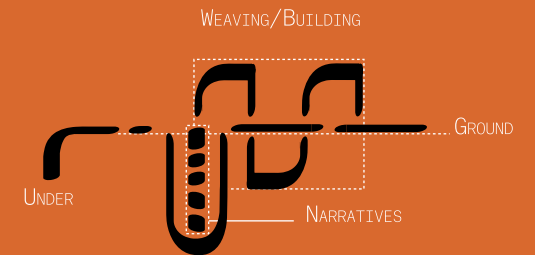
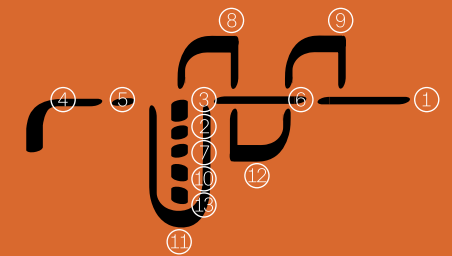
In TECTO, we witness the animal as a maker and shaper of worlds. Living structures may be read as texts, revealing more-than-human histories. A subtle understanding of the threats and resources of a particular environment become manifest as burrows, nests, dams, and hives; thus building relies on an intimacy and reciprocity with the environment. In TECTO, we recognize wisdom in building, and look to animal structures for blueprints of other ways of living, thinking, and moving.

Studies

of



Deep Habitation & Built Narratives




"This piece, which I have called LOG, has become a significant object, a threshold for thinking about different beaver stories."

PITTSBURGH, USA: A wooden object is discovered, shaped by the gnawings of a young beaver. This artifact is a fledgling expression of the adult beaver's approach to architectural engineering.

A beaver's teeth are its primary tools: four self-sharpening chisels fortified by iron, giving them their characteristic orange tone. Tooth marks, visible across the log, have been traced, catalogued, and transformed by TECTO investigator

DEPARTMENT OF TECTO Marianne Hoffmeister Castro into a typeface denominated Castor, after Castor canadensis: the North American beaver.

"[The characters'] abstract configuration is ambiguous and open-ended, and

FIELD REPORT: A Study Of BeaverNESS *their structure may be*
NATIVE TITLE:  *interpreted as the*
INVESTIGATOR: Marianne Hoffmeister Castro (CHILE) *path of a river,*
COLLABORATOR: Castor Canadensis (THE BEAVER) *a topographic map, fur patterns, or a flock of birds on a distant horizon."*

Accompanying field notebooks document the shapes of beaver-gnawed wood shavings discovered on-site, and a set of two videos present attempts to understand the experience of beaverNESS.

These expressions of beaverNESS stand against histories of trapping, exchange, and objectification of the beaver in the United States, and their characterization as invasive in the investigator's *of* native South America.

Studies



Deep Habitation & Built Narratives
REQUEST NO.: 261418-01
PREPARED BY: TEC-MHC

"Proposing other ways of imagining animals outside of capitalist logics that pigeonhole them as objects, property, or mere bodies of labor is an act of resistance and care."



DEPARTMENT OF TECTO ARCHIVES

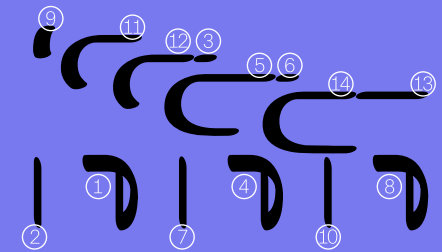
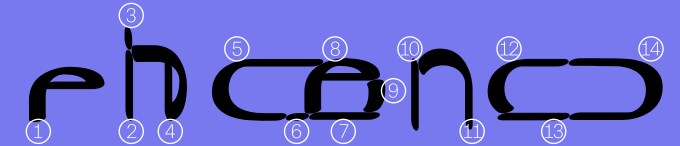
Marianne Hoffmeister Castro
A Study of BeaverNESS, 2020 (detail)
Video installation
Courtesy of the artist



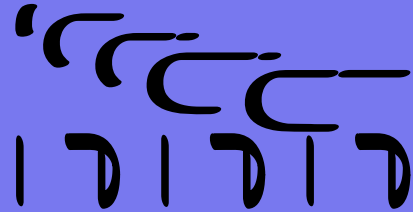
DEPARTMENT OF TECTO ARCHIVES

Department of פִּהוֹנוֹ Phono

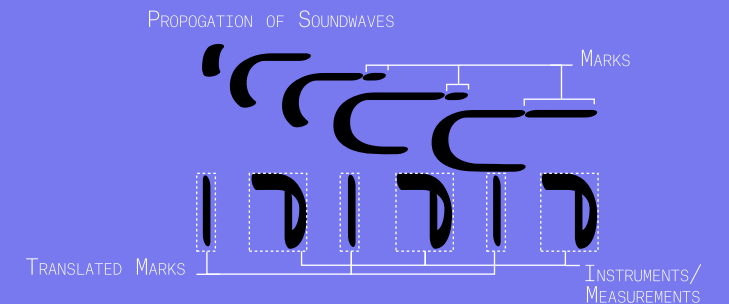
In PHONO, we witness life as a symphonist and shaper of soundscapes. Through air or water, vibrations transmit both individual bursts of expression and collective patterns of communication. Deep listening requires putting an ear to sounds beyond our accustomed range of frequency and tempo. Sound's text is lyrical and elusive, carrying messages that bear no trace. In PHONO, we recognize the wisdom in the orchestra of earthly expressions which creates fleeting, resonant harmonies.



Studies of



Deep Listening & Sonic Worlds



CUNEO, ITALY: Like its singers, birdsong is delicate and ephemeral, posing a challenge for the therolinguist who seeks to detangle distinct avian grammars. PHONO Investigator Lucio Arese has made significant advances in birdsong translation through an innovative method that transforms sequences of avian vocalization into vivid visual architectures.

"The result is a multi-faceted visual ecosystem, enabling novel ways to analytically explore the hidden structures of sound."

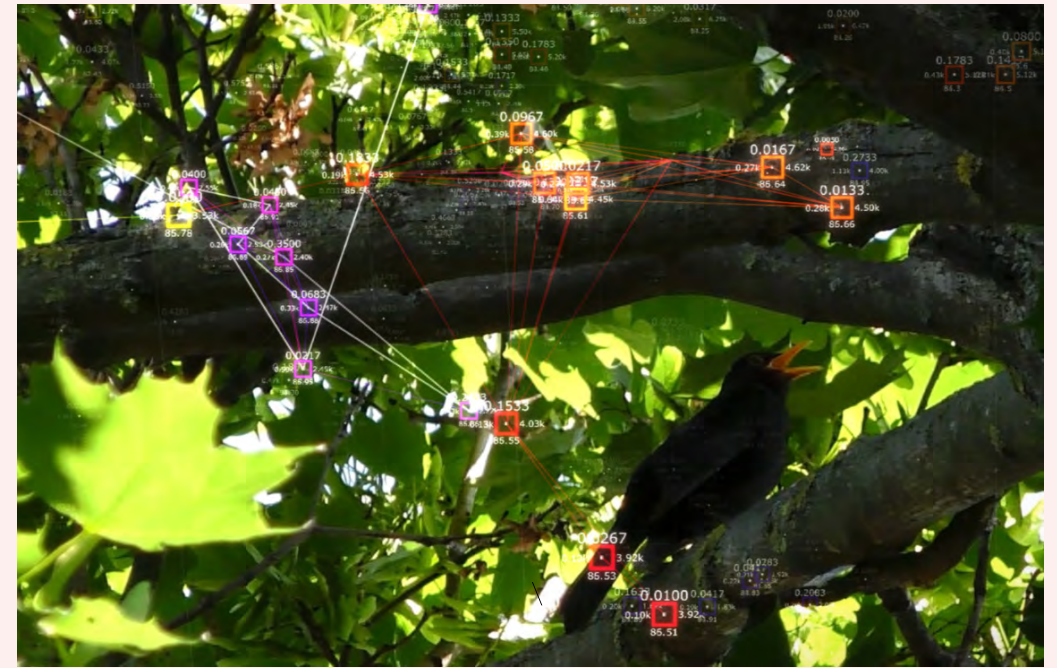
Recorded by the investigator in the forests of his native Cuneo, in northwest Italy, the present DEPARTMENT OF PHONO report focuses on the following passerine species: the Common Blackbird, the Eurasian Blackcap, the Common Chaffinch, the Common Nightingale, the Wood Thrush, and the European Serin. Future iterations will extend this method to visualizing rodent

FIELD REPORT: Seeing Birdsong vocalization in Poland and INVESTIGATOR: Lucio Arese (ITALY) whalesong in Australia. COLLABORATORS: Passerine birds (AVIAN CHORUS)

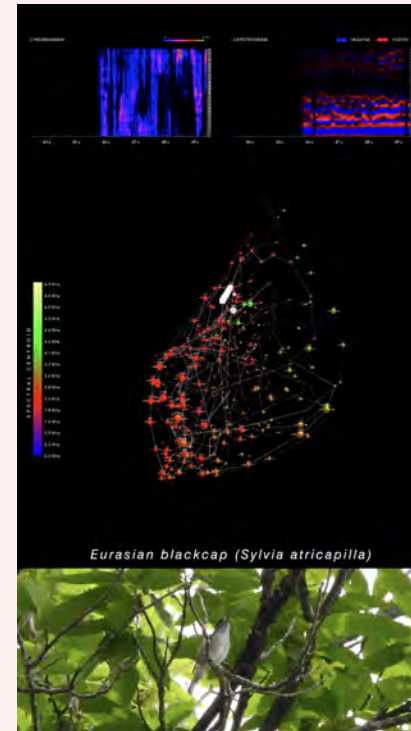
The birds' calls and gestures, preserved through video, sound and image, form a "poetic multidimensional study" of avian literature. Arese's model turns birdsong into constellations by stringing together sounds that prick the sky. These ephemeral expressions become solid for just a moment, giving therolinguists a breath to scrawl down poeries once unknown. Some songs pose difficulty only for the height of their poignancy, like the low, devotional songs sung by nocturnal birds to the moon and the aching lyrics of the Loon's lament.

Studies of

 Deep Listening & Sonic Worlds
 REQUEST NO: 261418-02
 PREPARED BY: PHO-LA



DEPARTMENT OF PHONO ARCHIVES



DEPARTMENT OF PHONO ARCHIVES

Lucio Arese
Seeing Birdsong, 2025 (detail)
 Video installation
 Courtesy of the artist

A recent bulletin released by the President of the Therolinguistic Association notes a shift in the concerns of contemporary therolinguists. Where the field previously concentrated solely on human interpretation of specific nonhuman languages, the Association recognizes a movement towards participation in generative, healing dialogues with the more-than-human world.

This investigation understands the flora of Descanso Gardens not as specimens but as the primary audience. The research station offers a sonic composition to the plants, utilizing frequencies proven to foster plant growth and featuring

DEPARTMENT OF PHONO handmade instruments

crafted from elements of nature. In this research station, PHONO investigator Paige Emery proposes methods to join in the nourishing, harmonious hum that is shared between plants, soil, bacteria, roots, air, and a multitude of other subtle

FIELD REPORT: Intercommunications for the Fertile Earth voices.

INVESTIGATOR: Paige Emery (US)

COLLABORATORS: Plantae (THE VEGETAL COLLECTIVE)

Deep listening, Emery suggests, opens us to Earth's wisdom, which rehabilitates itself through "cycles that are like rituals of remembrance." Rather than extracting fixed meaning from Earth's communications, she invites us to learn from and participate in the Vegetal Collective's own cyclical, sonic language.

"When we come into places of deep listening, intentionally moving with the elements and cycles of nature, ritual can be a meeting place with the language of the Earth."

Studies of



Deep Listening & Sonic Worlds
REQUEST NO: 261418-03
PREPARED BY: PHO-PE



DEPARTMENT OF PHONO ARCHIVES



DEPARTMENT OF PHONO ARCHIVES

Paige Emery
Intercommunications for the Fertile Earth,
2025-2026 (detail)

Multimedia art installation
Dimensions are variable
Courtesy of the artist

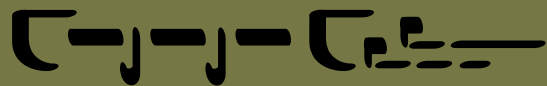
Paige Emery
Intercommunications for the Fertile Earth,
2025-2026 (detail)

Multimedia art installation
Dimensions are variable
Courtesy of the artist

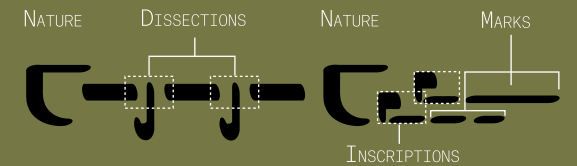
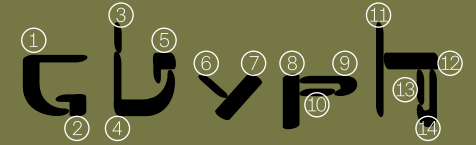
Department of גלפיה Glyph

In GLYPH, we witness more-than-human agents as authors and shapers of meaning. Traces left by encounters with surfaces of all kinds become records of animal intention. Leaves, wood, and stone together compose the manuscripts of life's churning movement. Within bodies, too, forms become symbols that combine and transform into mysterious poetry. In GLYPH, we recognize wisdom in the living archives and kinetic script that turn biological processes into sagas of birth, life, death, and resilience.

Studies of



Deep Composition & Inscribed Memory



Findings on recovered deadwood manuscripts in Swiss forests (location).

Hidden beneath sapwood bark, stories are inscribed in a cryptic script, revealed only to those who pause to collect, debark, and clean the wood. The language belongs to the deadwood beetle. As investigator Nicole Brugger explains:

"Many of the beetle tracks are reminiscent of signs, runes, hieroglyphs, written stories of mythical creatures, mysterious spells."

While the marks of the *Anthaxia quadripunctata*, DEPARTMENT OF GLYPH a jewel beetle, are wavy, those of *Molorchus minor*, a longhorn beetle, are sharp-edged. Other patterns emerge from their scripts: differences, for instance, between marks on trees felled by storms and those that succumbed to illness. For these species, wood is their sustenance, FIELD REPORT: Bork Bibliothek habitat, and medium.

NATIVE TITLE: 

INVESTIGATOR: Nicole Brugger (SWITZERLAND) *"The beetles belong to*

COLLABORATORS: *Anthaxia quadripunctata*, *Molorchus minor* *the group of deadwood beetles—the group of beetles that are tied to wood in their way of life and cannot survive without it."*
(DEADWOOD BEETLES)

Of the 52 spruce branch writings, only a few messages have been deciphered. What forest sagas, diligently recorded by insects, remain unknown to us? *Bork Bibliothek* remains a deliberate exercise in the noble failure to comprehend insect literature.

Visitors to the research station are invited to touch the branches, investigate Bork archives, and propose of interpretations and insights.

Studies



Deep Composition & Inscribed Memory

REQUEST NO: 261418-04

PREPARED BY: GLY-NB



DEPARTMENT OF GLYPH ARCHIVES AND BORK ARCHIVES

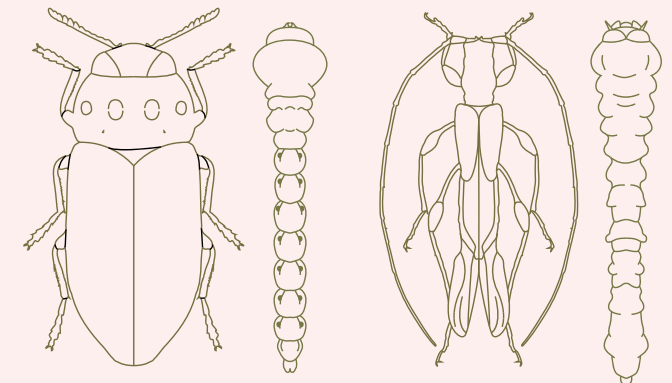
Nicole Brugger

Bork Bibliothek, 2022–25 (detail)

Multimedia installation with natural specimens

Dimensions are variable

Courtesy of the artist



ANTHAXIA QUADRIPUNCTATA

MOLORCHUS MINOR

DEPARTMENT OF GLYPH ARCHIVES AND BORK ARCHIVES

AMAZON RAINFOREST, BRAZIL: Great strides in the advocacy for vegetal life have been made with The Jagube Protection Act of 2053, a landmark document in planetary governance. Presented here in three languages (Portuguese, English, and Tree Tongue), it is the first legal text to recognize vegetal life as a legal subject rather than an environmental resource.

Unlike kinetic scripts of animals, *Tree Tongue* is a living record-keeping system that archives memory and transformation within the body of the plant itself.

DEPARTMENT OF GLYPH *“The Jagube dialect operates through polytemporal logics, dynamic sigils, and layered meanings... reflecting the adaptive, relational, and interdependent conditions of vegetal life.”*

FIELD REPORT: Tree Tongue & The Jagube Protection Act

NATIVE TITLE:  research site, participants are encouraged

INVESTIGATOR: Audax M. Gawler (AUSTRALIA) & Pri Bertucci (BRAZIL) TO

COLLABORATORS: Banisteriopsis caapi (JAGUBE VINES) experiment with *Tree Tongue* linguistic tools to compose

letters addressed to Amazonian trees, which will be collected and returned to knowledge keepers in the Amazon.

Ongoing discoveries in the field of dendro-linguistics (the arboreal branch of therolinguistics) call for a shift in the ways we relate to vegetal life as conscious agents, storytellers, and political citizens.

“The Jagube Protection Act stands as both a legal artefact and a linguistic threshold, of signalling a broader recalibration of responsibility in which that which cannot be fully understood is nevertheless recognised as politically and ethically consequential.”

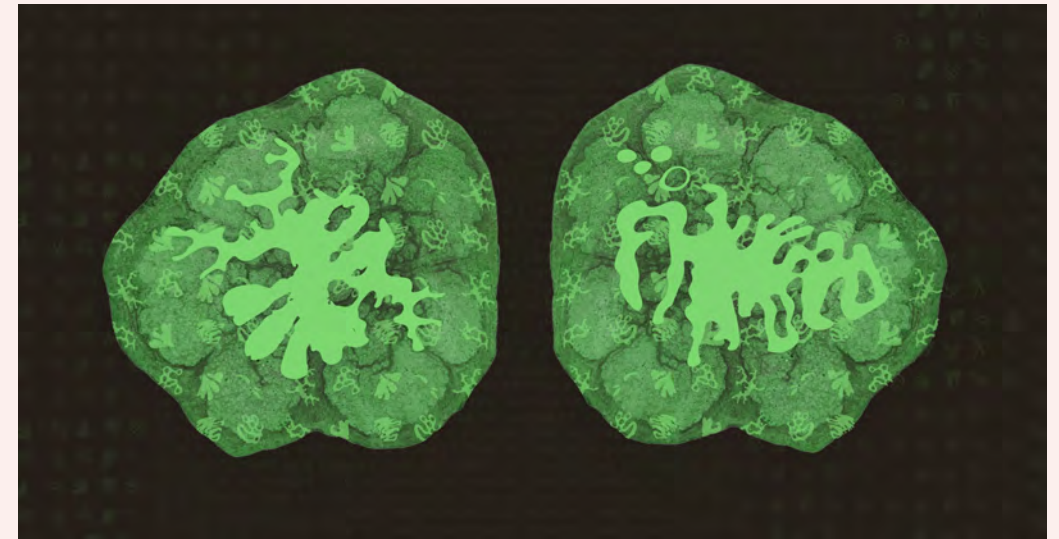
Studies



Deep Composition & Inscribed Memory

REQUEST NO: 261418-05

PREPARED BY: GLY-AGPG



DEPARTMENT OF GLYPH ARCHIVES

Audax M. Gawler and Pri Bertucci
Tree Tongue, 2026 (detail)

Multimedia art installation
Dimensions are variable
Courtesy of the artists



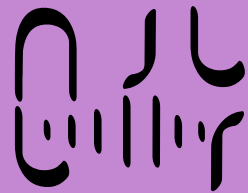
DEPARTMENT OF GLYPH ARCHIVES

Department of XENO Xeno

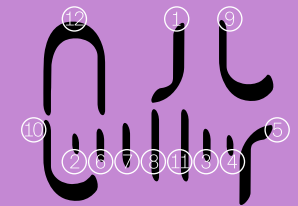
In XENO, we witness the organism as an observer of reality and a shaper of experience. Whether animal, vegetal, fungal or microbial, to inhabit a body is to encounter a world mediated by its sensory instruments. XENO encourages immersion into stories that transcend the limits of human perception. Here, we recognize wisdom in the wide range of biological interfaces and alien logics, which reveal methods of survival and serve as poetic expressions of inner worlds.

Studies

of



Deep Sensing & Altered Realities



PARIS, FRANCE: In the dark, a bat and a datura flower come together to pollinate. These beings are vastly different—one air-borne, the other apparently motionless—and both communicate and operate in ways deeply foreign to the human therologist. German biologist Jakob von Uexküll coined the term *umwelt* to describe the distinct perceptual worlds experienced by different organisms. How may we come to imagine these perceptual worlds? And how do creatures that experience their environment so differently work together to accomplish a common goal?

This research station, led by XENO investigator
DEPARTMENT OF XENO Alice Bucknell, invites visitors to participate in a simulated nocturnal pollination session. Participants must work in synchrony to “rewild” the Grand Palais, a historic museum hall situated in the heart of Paris. Together, they compose a shared musical score, which evokes

FIELD REPORT: Nightcrawlers a cooperation that transcends

INVESTIGATOR: Alice Bucknell (UK/US) language.

COLLABORATORS: *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (BAT),

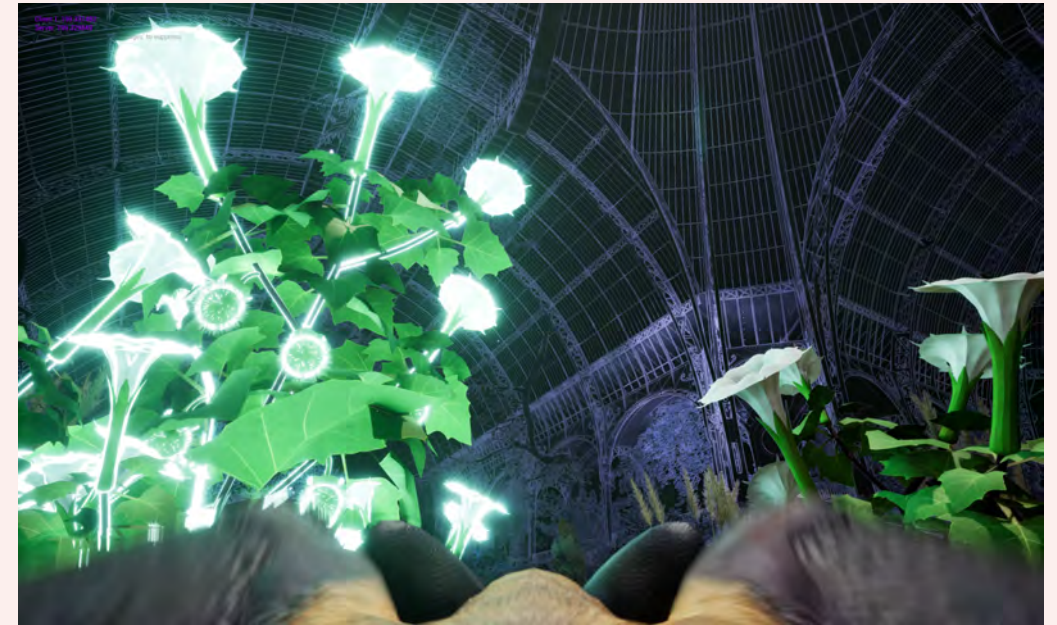
Datura wrightii (DATURA FLOWER) *“the flower evolves to shape itself to be the precise length that could pick up and reflect the bat’s sonar back to the bat.”*

Participants play either as a bat or as an electromagnetic signal, traveling through the vast, pulsing network of the flower’s root system. Here, the conventional hierarchy between pollinator and pollinated dissolves into a shared choreography.

Studies of



Deep Sensing & Altered Realities
REQUEST NO: 261418-06
PREPARED BY: XEN-AB



DEPARTMENT OF XENO

Alice Bucknell
Nightcrawlers, 2025 (detail)
Videogame
Courtesy of the artist



DEPARTMENT OF XENO

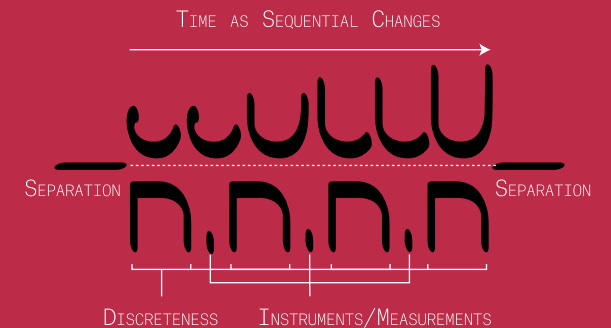
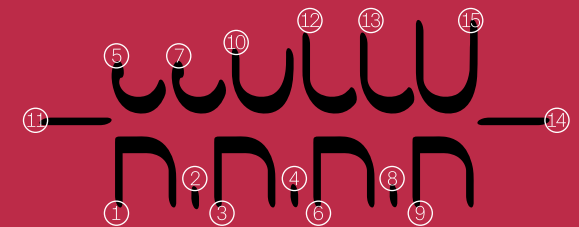
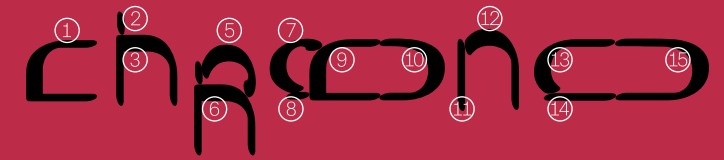
Department of CHRONO Chrono

In CHRONO, we witness the non-human subject as a keeper and shaper of deep time—that is, geological time, beyond human experience. The timescale that we inhabit determines the rhythm of our stories. What stories are told by glass sponges, lichen, even stones, those cold, quiet giants whose layered bodies hold geologic records—those who exist in the meter of eternity? In CHRONO, we recognize wisdom in the strategies that lend deep time-keepers their endurance.

Studies of



Deep Time & Atemporal Narratives



Those who have been following the evolution of therolinguistics may remember a time when plant communication was an imagined horizon. The half-century that has passed since the early days of *The Journal* has seen vast changes in the field of communicative arts, yet the time has been a mere punctuation in the existence of atemporal creatures such as the lichen.

Like the silent, motionless stone on which they're sprawled, lichens subsist in the meter of eternity. Strategic dormancy enables lichens to survive without water for long stretches of time, with some lichens persisting for thousands of years. Lichens

DEPARTMENT OF **CHRONOS** are composed of algae and/or cyanobacteria living symbiotically within a fungal structure. Their mutualism, non-linear growth, and sensitivity to their environment serve both as profound strategies and poetic metaphors for survival through deep time.

FIELD REPORT: Lichen Grammar

INVESTIGATOR: Aistė Ambrazevičiūtė (LITHUANIA)**Lichen teaches*

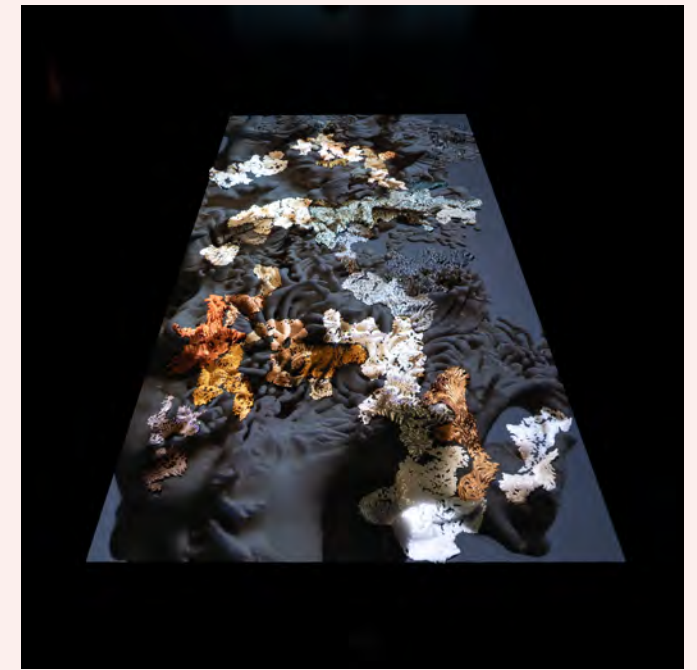
COLLABORATORS: Cladonia, Parmelia, Ramalina (LICHEN)*us to trust our metaphors, our descriptive systems, and feelings as a form of knowing."*

Through digital imagination and projection, CHRONOS investigator Aistė Ambrazevičiūtė maps a grammar of the lichen mind. Her investigation presents lichens in many forms—grown and simulated, magnified and tactile—collected from sites urban, wild, and digital. Through this imagery, the investigator embeds herself within the lichen's worldview, approaching it as a lyrical, living archive of ancient resilience.

Studies of



Deep Time & Atemporal Narratives
REQUEST NO: 261418-07
PREPARED BY: CHR-AA



DEPARTMENT OF CHRONOS

Aistė Ambrazevičiūtė
Patchy Heterogeneous Everything, 2024 (detail)
Dimensions are variable
Video, 3D prints
Courtesy of the artist



DEPARTMENT OF CHRONOS

Artist Bios

Aistė Ambrazevičiūtė is a digital artist and experimental architect based in Lithuania. Her interdisciplinary practice explores the intersection of digital and natural realities, creating innovative visualizations that uncover the intricate—and often invisible—relationships between environments, forms, and textures. In December 2024, Ambrazevičiūtė defended her practice-based PhD at the Vilnius Academy of Arts with a research project titled *Lichen Grammar*, which investigated the spatial and visual relationships between lichen growth forms and their habitats.

Lucio Arese is an architect, composer, musician, visual artist, and filmmaker who has been working across the visual arts and film since 2008. He has collaborated with various artists, labels, and brands, including Suguru Goto, Jimmy Edgar, Mille Plateaux, Armando Testa, Onitsuka Tiger, Asics, McKinsey, and De'Longhi. His work has been featured at prestigious festivals and platforms such as Ars Electronica, SIGGRAPH, ArtFutura, MTV, and the Saatchi & Saatchi New Directors' Showcase. His short film *Les Dieux Changeants* (2021) has received over 100 festival selections and 40 international awards.

Pri Bertucci (they/them), also known as Lyon Adryan Ror, is a visionary social artist and post-activist who creates artistic programs and encounters to foster radical social change. Their work fuses media, embodied and spiritual practices, and social strategy to envision emergent, relational futures and foreground new methods of thinking, being, and knowing. They are the creator and executive producer of the São Paulo Trans Pride March, the CEO of [DIVERSITY BBOX], and the founder of the [SSEX BBOX] Institute, a pioneering project focused on gender and sexuality.

Nicole Brugger is a graphic designer based in Lucerne, Switzerland. Since 2022, she has been pursuing the project *Bork*, in which she examines and exhibits the "writings" of various deadwood beetles. As part of a residency program in 2025, she visited caves and rocky beaches to study other non-human writers, such as sponges and vermiculations, and she continues to expand her artistic research in the field of non-human writing.

Alice Bucknell (they/them) is an artist, writer, and educator based in Los Angeles. Their work explores the affective dimensions of video games as interfaces for understanding complex systems, relationships, and forms of knowledge. In 2025, their video game *The Alluvials* was acquired by SFMOMA in San Francisco, marking the first time a video game has entered the museum's permanent collection. A recipient of the 2025 Creative Capital Award and a former CERN/Collide resident, they teach world-building, game design, and the philosophies of technology at SCI-Arc and UCLA.

Paige Emery is an ecological artist and herbalist exploring rituals of remembering the Earth. Her work interweaves healing arts and critical ecology, ancestral memory and embodied futurities, and ecopoetics and socio-environmental praxis. Her practice, rooted in reciprocity with the Earth, stems from a background in fine art, herbalism, ancestral medicine, eco-philosophy, and environmentalism. Emery's work bridges inner and outer landscapes of ecological consciousness through guided plant rituals, plant-based paintings and installations, ecopoetic meditations, embodied ecology walks, more-than-human music performances, and the sharing of plant remedies with her community.

Audax M. Gawler (they/them) is a multigenre Symbiopunk and experiential world-builder working to prototype and rehearse the Symbiocene—a symbiotic, compassionate, reverent, and post-anthropocentric planetary future. Emerging from so-called Australia, their research-driven work weaves diverse disciplines to offer experiential encounters with interspecies imaginaries, fostering speculative horizons rooted in the science, sensations, and ecologic stories of the present. For this work, they have been internationally recognized by awards including the Most Significant Futures Works (MSFW) Award from The Association of Professional Futurists.

Marianne Hoffmeister is a Chilean multidisciplinary artist whose research examines representations of nature and non-human animals in contemporary visual culture. Her work explores how language, narrative, and ways of looking shape human relationships with other-than-human worlds. Through installation, video, and research-based projects, she investigates counter-anthropocentric perspectives and alternative storytelling strategies. She holds a BFA from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago and an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University. Hoffmeister has exhibited internationally and works between the United States and Chile.

Oscar Salguero is an independent curator and researcher based in Queens, NY. He is the founder of the Interspecies Library, the first archive of artists' books exploring interspecies futures. Salguero curated Interspecies Futures [IF] at the Center for Book Arts (2021) and NEO MINERALIA at the Center for Craft (2023). Since 2023, he has run the *Journal of Therolinguistics*, a platform dedicated to the poetic study of non-human languages, for which the current exhibition acts as its first curatorial chapter.

Credits

All images courtesy of the artists.

A Study of Beaveriness (2020–ongoing)

CONCEPT AND DESIGN:
Marianne Hoffmeister Castro
A STUDY OF CHOMPS PUBLICATION:
The Observatory of Radical Empathies and
Issue Press Sharp-Toothed Dreams publication:
PUBLICAR and The Observatory of
Radical Empathies Project.
CASTOR TYPEFACE:
Patricio González / WType Foundry.
Both projects were supported by the Language
and Creation Center, Faculty of Architecture,
Design and Construction of the University of
the Americas in Santiago de Chile
LOG AND SHAVINGS:
Beaver residents of the ancestral lands of
Haudenosaunee, Lenape, Osage, and Shawnee
peoples (now Frick Park, Pittsburgh US), and
the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe Three
Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and
Potawatomi peoples (now Grand Rapids, US).

Lichen Grammar (2023–ongoing)

CONCEPT AND DESIGN: Aistė Ambrazevičiūtė
VIDEO EDITION: Mikas Zabulionis
SOUND: Arūnas Periokas, Oleg Moisejenko

Nightcrawlers (2025)

GAME CONCEPT, DESIGN, CHARACTER DESIGN,
CINEMATICS, ENVIRO DESIGN,
AND ART DIRECTION: Alice Bucknell.
SOUND DESIGN AND ORIGINAL SCORE: Nicolas Snyder
GRAPHIC DESIGN AND USER INTERFACE: Tom Joyes
GAME DEVELOPMENT: Mati Bratkowski

Bork Bibliothek (2022–ongoing)

CONCEPT, GRAPHIC DESIGN, AND PUBLICATION:
Nicole Brugger
58 SPRUCE BRANCHES WITH TRACES:
Longhorn beetle and jewel beetle larvae

Seeing Birdsong (2025–ongoing)

CONCEPT, RECORDING, DESIGN: Lucio Arese

Tree Tongue and The Jagube Protection Act (2026)

CONCEPT, WORLDING AND DESIGN:
Audax M. Gawler & Pri Bertucci
FEATURING: Ayá kukamiria
ADDITIONAL GRAPHIC DESIGN: Gio Carvalho
ARTISTIC ASSISTANCE AND DRAMATURGY: Justine Walsh
Commissioned by Oscar Salguero & Descanso Gardens

Intercommunications for the Fertile Earth (2026)

CONCEPT AND DESIGN: Paige Emery
Commissioned by Oscar Salguero & Descanso Gardens

Acknowledgments

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Image: Marianne Hoffmeister Castro - *A Study of Beaveress*, 2020 (detail)

