

# The Matter with Time

In an age of instantaneity what role can art play in engagement with the 'wild'?



*Figure 1 Foot on North Ronaldsay flagstone (R Boyd)*

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*Consciousness is not a programme in the brain, where if you get the right programme, any hardware will do...consciousness is a biological phenomenon, like photosynthesis, digestion...You can't make a conscious robot.* (John Searle, Professor of Philosophy of Mind and Language, University of California, 2013)

*The effective, present, ultimate and primary being, the thing itself...offer themselves [sic] only to someone who wishes not to have them but to see them, not to hold them as with forceps...but to let them be and to witness their continued being – to someone who therefore limits himself to giving them the hollow, the free space they ask for in return, the resonance they require...from which obtains not an answer but a confirmation of ...  
astonishment*

(Maurice Merleau-Ponty on 'Wild Being' in *The Visible and the Invisible* 1968:101,102)

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# The Matter with Time: in an age of instantaneity what role can art play in engagement with the 'wild'?

## Abstract

In the context of the Anthropocene, characterised by 'instantaneity' and 'ocularcentrism', I explore how changes in how we experience time and matter affect creative consciousness, relationship with the 'wild', and how we inhabit the world. I then consider in more depth three aesthetic and philosophical responses that challenge anthropocentrism and encourage more embodied engagement. With reference to Henri Bergson's 'duration' and Neolithic rock art, I examine art that broadens perceptual awareness of time and place. I introduce 'resonance' as a powerful concept involving broader sensory perception that builds relationships between objects, breaks down divisions between human and nonhuman and expands notions of time. I consider resonance and silence in relation to the pollen installations of Wolfgang Laib and to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'Wild Being'. Finally, I explore a creative engagement work by Ásthildur Jónsdóttir in the light of Deleuze's philosophy of Becoming. For critical context I draw on the phenomenology of Juhani Pallasmaa, Ted Toadvine, Charles Brown and David Abram, the vital materialism of Jane Bennett and the object-oriented ontology (OOO) of Timothy Morton. While these philosophies differ in critical ways, each attempts to broaden appreciation of a world of which humans are only one element. These ideas are explored in relation to my own practice and, in addition to the artists above, to the digital forensics of 2018 Turner Prize nominees *Forensic Architecture*, to the work of David Claerbout and Broomberg & Chanerin and to the 'acoustic ecology' of Hildegard Westerkamp. I conclude by drawing parallels between 'resonant' experience of the 'wild' and aesthetic experience and suggest that an 'art of resonance' might transform creative consciousness in ways that deepen both aesthetic engagement and lived experience.

## Part I The Anthropocene Challenge

### 1 Creative consciousness and changing perceptions of time and matter

It is an ordinary day. Cars pass on the road. Near me smooth sandstone slabs, partly covered by Arctic birch and crowberry, slope down to the fjord. The bay has the feel of both haven and vantage point, shouldered in by broad hills but facing outwards to where islands split the outer fjord into three, with the familiar mountains of Sørøya crossing the north-west horizon. Where the light falls on the smooth slabs they appear to come alive, moving with thousands of figures. There are reindeer, elk and bear, geese, divers and cormorants, human figures in boats, with spears and bows, all carefully carved into the rock. Overhead a red-throated diver flies towards the sea, making its low cackling call. I know its ancestors survived the last dinosaur extinction 66 million years ago. Where I am, at the intersection of the ritual domains of land, sea and sky, was chosen for a period of over 5000 years as a gathering place for people from across Arctic Norway to make and share art.



Figure 2 Hjemmeluft with view towards Sørøya (<http://www.mygola.com/hjemmeluft-d1079825>)

Visitors photograph the stone carvings on their phones to relay them instantaneously to online viewers far away. Yet the artwork seems to have an arresting power, and I notice people becoming still as they examine the figures. Do they, as I do, want to touch the

carvings? I am both challenged and fascinated. How does the extraordinary power of this art connect me, an Information Age viewer, with 7000-year-old Neolithic stone carvers and with the surrounding hills, fjord, plants and birds? The basic elements seem to be time, the physical environment and a sense of something strangely 'wild'. There is definitely a dialogue between this art and the Information Age. What can it be?

Apart from an Instagram photo, what relevance can Neolithic stone carvings, let alone red-throated divers, possibly have for today? It is an extraordinary time to be alive. The instantaneity of digital technologies offers myriad opportunities to manipulate, insulate from and control the temporal and material world. Science informs our systems, and virtual worlds offer radical and pleasurable experiences of freedom from conventions of time and space. Spontaneous visual communication allows 2.23bn Facebook users to make 510,000 posts and upload 136,000 images every sixty seconds (Zephoria.com 2018). The 'time-space compression' describes a world in which technology has telescoped time and matter into each other (Harvey 1990). The virtual consumer or modern 'time-traveller' is offered an array of surrogates for lived experience that offer myriad opportunities for distraction, meeting demand without time 'spent' or physical inconvenience. As the physical world is mediated, mastery of 'the instant' appears to grant control of the physical at almost every level. 'Real-time' technologies offer the empowering prospect of infinite connection, infinite knowledge of a finite world and relief from physical effort, while artificial intelligence overrides human physical and intellectual limitations, even promising a solution to finitude itself (cf Berg2018ScienceRobotics[online]).

Contemporary art, meanwhile, has moved into the interface between the digital and the human, appropriating new tools for self-reflection and analysis. All four nominees for the 2018 Turner Prize use digital technology to explore issues around human inequality and conflict. One, the multi-disciplinary team *Forensic Architecture*, examines digital footage to ascertain culpability in state war crimes, exploring notions of public truth (*Forensic Architecture* [online]). An opinion piece relates the Turner nominees' work to the purpose of art today. It concludes that: '*if art is no longer to be understood as the domain of technique or beauty, originality or genius, it can perhaps be this: a public forum for building the common world and reflecting on the struggle of doing so*' (Balsom 2018[online]). Contemporary art, reflecting a

technology-driven world in complex ways, has moved beyond simple stone carving. Yet relevant points are raised. At one level the use of sophisticated, 'novel' technologies for revisiting age-old human barbarism in the service of a quasi-Modernist utopian vision ironically undermines narratives of progress. More importantly, *Forensic Architecture's* abandonment of aesthetics in the quest for 'Truth', described as, '*something like air or water, something we all need in order to understand our position on earth*' (Tate2018 [online]) leaves a question hanging. If art leaves 'beauty' behind and is reframed, sharing with technology the quest for certainty, what circumscribed version of 'truth' can it convey?

To explore these questions, it is important to understand how consciousness and creativity might be affected by changing experiences of time and matter. Despite their incredible power and potential, 'real-time' technologies present challenges. Time itself has become fascinatingly slippery. 'Dynamically curved space time', the static 'space-time continuum' and the 'uncertainty principle' of the quantum particle bewilder perceptual 'certainties' of absolute time, linear chronology and future-orientated momentum (cf Hawking1988; Mastin2018). Technology offers its own multiple alternative temporalities. 'Out of Time', an exhibition exploring time in the Information Age, describes experiences of:

*Repeat, fast-forward, rewind, pause, recycle, live, delay: these terms are part of the language we use to describe how temporality is manipulated in the contemporary world. Recent technological advances facilitate an unprecedented alteration, compression, and extension of time. These new possibilities coexist with a vision of history as fractured, contradictory, and subject to multiple interpretations* (MOMA NewYork:2006)

Yet, at a human scale, encounters with this temporal diversity are commonly associated with excessive speed, loss of control and disconnection. Rather than offering freedom from linear time in favour of a choice of temporal experience, instantaneity reinforces both a sense of fractured yet relentless forward momentum and the historicisation of the 'instagrammed' present. The cultural critic Fredric Jameson famously described Postmodernism as a condition of, '*nostalgia for the present*' in which '*the past itself has disappeared*' (Jameson1991:278,310). In *The Eyes of the Skin*, Juhani Pallasmaa expresses strikingly how, '*the incredible acceleration of speed during the last century has collapsed time into the flat screen of the present, upon which the simultaneity of the world is projected*' (2012:52). Charlie Gere, in *Art, Time and Technology* assesses the human challenge. He writes that technology has become, '*the means by which the human element was – and indeed is*

*still – being increasingly marginalized by a system which is too complex and operates too fast to tolerate such elements'* (2006:111). Linear, quantitative time, described by the ancient Greeks as 'Chronos', is dominant, leaving little room either for 'Kairos', the unfolding 'ripe' or 'timely' moment or for 'Aion', unbounded time or eternity.

It appears that speed is at the heart of an odd separation of time from matter, offering the freedom of the virtual, but at the cost of a material quality of experience. It is the visual sense, the human 'control-sense', that finds itself implicated. Pallasmaa ascribes to visually-based technologies and to post-Enlightenment Western society as a whole an 'ocularcentrism' or dominance of sight over other perceptual modes. As he observes, *'The only sense that is fast enough to keep pace with the astounding increase of speed in the technological world is sight. But the world of the eye is to live in a perpetual present, flattened by speed and simultaneity'* (2012:21). Associated with visual dominance is a binary separation between 'seer' and 'seen' and between intellect and body that, in his view, contributes to *'alienation, detachment and solitude in the technological world today'*. He believes 'ocularcentrism' encourages *'a will to power...a tendency to dominate, secure and control'* while it *'weakens our capacity for empathy, compassion and participation in the world'* (2012:21,24). While this may appear to be an extreme position, recent media coverage of the 'bystander effect', in which smartphones both document but also distance the user from actual intervention into traumatic or emotional events, would seem to corroborate it (cf BBCR4,Badalge 2017[online]).

The visual arts reflect these changes most markedly. Gere believes that, *'the history of modern art can be read, at least in part, as a history of various artistic responses to the increasing speed and accelerating evolution of technology in the modern era...'* (2006:1). Symptomatic of instantaneity has been the re-assignment of the visual image from 'true representation' to a manifestation of dissimulation, manipulation and control. As early as 1983 American artist and writer Peter Halley described post-structuralist society as having become a largely self-referential *'empire of signs'*, in which art *'looks exclusively to the mass media for its repertory of images'*, and visually-accessed language and imagery are the key to *'the single remaining power to manipulate the codes'* (Kastner2012:100). He echoes Baudrillard's influential theory of the simulacrum, which described how the proliferated

image creates a *'hyper-reality of self-generating needs and desires, in which 'virtual' and 'real' become a mere interplay of surfaces'* (Cazeaux:448).

The unreliability of the image and its capacity to manipulate real events has itself become a rich seam of inspiration for contemporary artists like David Claerbout and Broomberg & Chanerin, generating deconstructions of visual and temporal 'truth'. Broomberg & Chanerin examine the power of the image to generate layers of reality, focusing particularly on ways in which photographic coverage of conflict constructs historical and present 'realities' (Broomberg&Chanerin[online]). David Claerbout's work takes place at the intersection of photography, film and digital animation and poses questions about the passage of time and about how, in the sophisticated virtual worlds we inhabit, images construct realities, and, *'capitalism and cutting-edge technologies collude to remake visual perception'*(2018:[online]). In an early computer-based work, 'Present', Claerbout provides the viewer with a choice of



Figure 3 'Present' David Claerbout (2000) [online]

three virtual flowers, each of which can be 'grown' on the computer screen, 'living' and 'dying' over the course of a week (2000[online]). The work explores time and matter at the interface of 'real' and 'virtual'. The virtual

plant lacks a physical 'presence', yet it creates a 'real' temporal relationship with the viewer by undermining what she believes to be her autonomy over online time events. Yet this 'lived experience' is belied by the fact that it is observed not experienced, by the supremacy of internet time, and by the ubiquitous manipulation of data. As Claerbout says, *'we are losing the momentum of photography and giving it back to people with power who will decide what you are looking at...information becomes the next 50% of perception'* (Claerbout2018[online]). Claerbout is less interested in control over the image than in what the loss of a lived relationship with time does to our encounters with art. In an age of 'real-time' technological dominance, he believes that art may continue to, *'keep our human relation with time open'*. But he is concerned that technology's effect on our lived experiences of time risks art itself - *'[art's] potential foreclosure by such technology'* (2006:2). The implication is that art can continue to create, provoke and articulate human relationships with matter

and time, but only in as far as we continue to 'have time' to experience those relationships fully.

Contemporary, predominantly visual, aesthetic experience perpetuates rather than challenges art's potential to 'keep open' relationship with time and matter. Despite O'Doherty's 1976 attack on the way in which white-walled gallery space separates and elevates the artwork in ways that, *'bleach out the past...and control the future by appealing to supposedly transcendental modes of presence and power'*, the 'white cube' remains the established gallery style (1986:11;Jones2015[online]). Gallery space that appears *'untouched by time'* becomes *'a sepulchre for art'*. Securing the hermetic space of the gallery such that, *'the outside world must not come in'* affects not just the artwork but the viewer. O'Doherty and later critics observe that a vision-dominated intellect has squeezed out embodied experience in contemporary aesthetic encounters: *'while eyes and minds are welcome, space occupying bodies are not'* (1986:15;Jones2015[online]). The separation of the aesthetic experience metaphorically 'disembodies' the viewer. Arguably, a viewer further separated by 'real-time' technology has a yet more impoverished 'lived' relationship with art. A review of research on how long gallery visitors spend with artworks found the average time to be a little over 20 seconds. A recent increase to almost 30 seconds was reported, but further analysis ascribed the difference to the fact that 35% of subjects were taking 'selfies', rather than viewing the art itself (Kaplan2017). Despite the potential of art to open up polychronous temporalities and possibilities, the creation and consumption of art is clearly not only not immune to, but in part complicit in, narrowing that potential.

Ironically, in pursuit of 'mastery' over the apparent freedoms and certainties of the Information Age, we may have created a Deleuzian *'control society'* characterized by attempts to achieve, *'even more predictability, even more efficiency'*. The myriad temporalities offered by technology appear to have been 'reterritorialised' into Chronos, time as a form of control (Deleuze1992;Williams 2011;Morton2018:51). On one hand there is a tension between the temporal opportunities unlocked by technology and the evolved capabilities of the human subject to process and experience them. But, more critically, changing experiences of time and matter are affecting the ways in which we inhabit the world and

the nature of creative consciousness. Can the Hjemmeluft stone carvings offer some insight into how we might respond to these challenges?

## 2 The Anthropocene and the 'wild'

In the context of instantaneity it is difficult to conceive of the temporal universe shared by the Neolithic hunter-gatherers who made the Hjemmeluft petroglyphs. When the most recent carvings were made 2000 years ago, the way of life they depict - hunting bear, corralling wild elk and reindeer



Figure 4 Neolithic elk carving, Hjemmeluft  
(<http://www.mygola.com/hjemmeluft-d1079825>)

and catching halibut - had not altered substantially over the preceding 5000 years. The modern visitor observes the artworks through the eyes of the 'Anthropocene', the term for the present geological epoch. Various defined as post-1945 and post-1964, this is the period during which anthropogenic compounds began to have a significant impact on the nonhuman environment (cf Lewis & Maslin 2015). While the carvings celebrate individual conquests over other creatures, the stone carvers could have had no concept of the large-scale ecological consequences of anthropocentrism, measured in mass species extinction or climate change. What the society depicted in over 6000 carvings clearly did have was an intimate knowledge of the ways in which its existence was interpenetrated by the annual cycles and movements of plants and animals. The carvings suggest that this involved a relationship with the natural environment that went beyond mere control to ongoing material, temporal and spiritual interdependence.

The Anthropocene relationship with the biosphere is convoluted and problematic. Ironically, while technology has deepened and refined our knowledge of and intervention into biological systems, emphasising our role as an interdependent organism, it has also allowed us to spectate the disintegration of the biosphere as a result of those very technologies.

Meanwhile the terms 'nature' and 'wild' have become loaded with what is perceived as nostalgia for an illusory state of grace. It is unlikely that the relationship between the stone carvers and their environment accommodated such concepts. As a more recent hunter-gatherer Luther Standing Bear famously observed in 1933, '*We did not think of the great open plains...as 'wild'...Only to the white man was nature a wilderness*' (Survival 2018[online]). For the Arctic Sami, the city, not the taiga, is considered 'wild' (Måsøy Museum,pers.comm.). The English dictionary definition of 'wild' is a relative term, connoting degrees of loss of human control as set against implicit norms of domestication and 'civilised' behaviour. 'Nature' is defined as, '*the physical world collectively...as opposed to humans or human creations*' (Oxford[online]). According to ecopsychologist Lawrence Cookson, humans, '*have rejected wildness, producing a dichotomy where wildness is now otherness*'. As Western ideas, 'nature' and 'wild' imply their obverse, emphasising difference and distance.

Since ancient Greece this dichotomy has been at the heart of the Western relationship between culture and nature. Jeffrey Kastner, editing a recent collection of essays on the place of nature in art, comments on the fact that:

*...for enormous stretches of human history, the contingency of civilisation, and in particular its cultural products, was read in contradistinction to the supposed integral essentialism of the natural world...whether constituted as muse, or foil, as contestant or collaborator, nature continues to loom as the elusive, originary Other* (2016:14)

Culture has repeatedly 'rejected' and 'reclaimed' nature, emphasising or de-emphasising human control. The large-scale earthworking of 1970s Land Art set in motion a diverse 'environmental art' movement that commonly takes environmental and social justice as its themes (cf Martinique;WEAD2018[online]). In practice the creative challenge of bridging the divide between 'human' and 'nature' often simply highlights what seems an intractable mismatch between capitalism and sustainability (cf Guattari2005:32). Arne Naess points out that even the mainstream green movement is characterised by anthropocentrism: '*future generations of non-humans seem to be valued publicly only for the sake of future humans*' (Naess *ibid*:90). Identifying anthropocentrism as a key issue, Timothy Morton is critical of cultural approaches that both reify and distance 'the wild'. His work, including *Ecology without Nature*, takes as a central premise that, '*putting something called Nature on a pedestal and admiring it from afar does for the environment what patriarchy does for the figure of Woman*' (2007:5). Distance can soon become disregard. In *The Lost Words*, Robert MacFarlane

addresses the loss of a common language around nature as denoting its perceived irrelevance. Importantly, physical separation from the needs and habits of other life forms is implicated in the loss of that world from the imaginary of our *'stories and dreams'* (MacFarlane 2017). It appears to be a key feature of Anthropocene consciousness, and therefore culture, to place 'nature' and the 'wild' in the role of 'other', separate and therefore subject to veneration, domination and, ultimately, neglect.

Philosophy has responded by re-framing the age-old tension between freedom and control, between the 'conscious' human as actor and analyst and the human as organism, to fit contemporary insights. Process philosophy (Bergson), metaphysics (Deleuze), phenomenology and ecophenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, Abram, Pallasmaa, Toadvine and Brown), vital materialism (Bennett), and Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO - Morton), are critically different in the ways in which they address this tension. Yet all share a similar foundation, challenging anthropocentrism as an inherently dualistic and therefore life-limiting Weltanschauung. Morton ascribes the Anthropocene's ecological crisis to a mode of *'living as though you believe in subject-object dualism'*, according to the binary divisions that he believes first emerged with the taming of the natural environment for agriculture (2018:73). The ecophenomenologist Monika Langer observes that:

*The dominant, dualistic ontology that fuels our 'environmental' crisis...involves a host of hierarchical, binary oppositions, such as...mind/body...culture/nature, subject/object, human/nonhuman... Further features include the following assumptions: that absolute boundaries keep the binary oppositions intact; that time is linear; that the self is given as suprasensible mind; that clarity and distinctiveness are valid criteria for ascertaining Truth; and that Truth is objective, timeless, permanent.* (Brown&Toadvine 2015:107).

Morton's most recent book, *Being Ecological*, suggests that this binary approach lies at the heart of *'the actually rather boring (and definitely anthropocentric) idea that the world is exactly how humans make it'*. He highlights the critical tension between anthropocentric illusions of control and the systemic damage such illusions have caused, citing the separation of human from the biosphere as the source of trauma. He writes, *'maybe mental health and ecological 'health' are interlinked... humans are traumatised by having severed their connection with nonhuman beings, connections that exist deep within our bodies (in our DNA for instance)'* (Morton 2018:53,76). Jane Bennett, in *Vibrant Matter* challenges the traditional ontological distinction between 'life' and 'matter' as a binary that, *'feeds*

*our...earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption...by preventing us from detecting (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling)...a fuller range of the nonhuman powers circulating around and within human bodies'* (Bennett2010:ix). David Abram pinpoints the source of both trauma and anthropocentrism in a disembodied experience of time:

*The insistence that we've got just five years, or we've got twenty years, or two – these are all framed within the mindset of a linear, progressive time...The other animals seem to align themselves with the roundness of time, a curvature that our bodies remain acquainted with, although our thinking minds have become mighty estranged from this cyclical sense of time's roundness.* (Hine2011:[online])

Charles Brown views the Anthropocene human as experiencing a kind of physical and temporal disconnect from the material world, describing him/her as the tragi-comic, '*Homo centrus centrus – that mode of human being that seeks to escape the anxiety of its own finitude by treating the Earth as though it would provide an infinite source of distraction from that anxiety*' (Brown&Toadvine 2015:17). In the world of instantaneity, where matter is mediated and time controlled, technology seems to challenge finitude itself. Yet reflection on the stone carvings suggests that there is a fundamental problem that the technology of our 'thinking minds' cannot resolve. It seems to relate to a disjuncture in anthropocentric consciousness that drives an overemphasis on Chronos and the urge to subjugate the 'wild' without and within, in a quest for certainty and control.

There are clearly significant challenges for any art, like my own practice, that attempts to engage with 'nature' or 'wild'. One way of moving beyond the encumbered cultural legacy is to approach the 'wild' not as 'other' but as a quality of relationship. Cookson explores a definition of 'wildness' as, '*a quality of interactive processing between an organism and its surroundings in which the realities of base natures are met, allowing the construction of durable systems*'. In this conception wildness as the converse of human control is not disordered chaos, but an 'attunement' that enhances the stability of an organism by improving the quality of its interactions (Cookson2011). This suggests relationship with a physical and temporal world based on embodied interaction, reciprocity rather than control. If art is to continue to open up new ways of living and being in the world then it is essential that we have full access to that world and to our complex physical, temporal and imaginative relationship with it.

## Part II Approaching the 'Wild'

### 3 Bergson's duration, reciprocity and Hjemmeluft rock art

For the Anthropocene human a few weeks of camping, cooking on fires and walking across the landscape of the stone carvers, living alongside the same wildlife, without a phone, but with 21<sup>st</sup>C thoughts, supermarket food and a road at most three days walk away, is as deep into 'wild' territory as one is likely to get today. Nevertheless, it is an immersive experience that is difficult to articulate. There is an irony in even attempting to do so. Its impact has something to do with stillness – distance from human 'noise' and presence. It has to do with a loss of control - adapting

to the unpredictable, physical insignificance, vulnerability to the elements. Perhaps most importantly it is about a multi-sensorial feeling of belonging, at a cellular level, to the macro and micro timescales, processes and materials underfoot



Figure 5 Red throated diver (L Petersson 2016)

and overhead. Of course, as a modern human, one is acutely aware of the pattern of human impact on natural environments and particular species. Yet the overwhelming dominance of astronomical, geological and myriad ecological timeframes, one's own perception of lived time, and the wonderfully continuous metamorphosis of the material 'stuff' of life is a reminder of human transience rather than importance. It seems quite obvious that, as Morton puts it, *'it's the case that from grasses to gorillas to gargantuan black holes, everything has its own time, its own temporality'*(2018:64). The knowledge that one might well be physically 'reconstituted' into food for any number of creatures, rather than being alarming, is instead deeply reassuring. In this way cognitive and visceral experience, mind and matter, find a way to coexist within time without tension. This is a personal perception, but there is something of significance in it. In part it is experiencing what Morton describes

as, *'a glimpse of living less definitively, in a world comprised almost entirely not of ourselves'* (Morton 2018:67). But beneath this *'glimpse'* is a possibility, as a contemporary human, of a relationship with other forms of life, with time, matter and something mysterious, to do with reciprocity rather than control.

My creative practice attempts to express something of these experiences. Rather than attempting to control outcomes, I have explored many ways of making in which other processes create traces. I have allowed plants, animals, the sea and wind to make marks on paper, textile and clay, interested in unpredictability and how the materials express their own processes of change. Aware of the unreliability of the image I have focused on matter, particularly *'naturally-occurring'* materials – stone, wood, wool, clay. Philosophically, as Morton and Bennett maintain, there is no distinction between types of object or matter (cf Bennett 2010:viii; Morton 2018:75). However, at a human scale that is tactile and largely subconscious I sense my connections to Toadvine's autonomous *'mutually sustaining web of life'* more tangibly working with wood or stone than for example, with man-made fibres or bio-persistent plastics. In the process of making I am aware of the reciprocity and visceral, sensory nature of my relationship with the materials, which themselves have or take on the marks of other time experiences. Instead of representing *'nature'*, I am interested in the OOO mode of *'being ecological'*, which Morton describes as, *'a world in which everything is relevant to everything else but is also unique and vivid'* (2018:88). In particular I am interested in how materials can open up relationship with the *'wild'* as the mysterious *'spaces we don't control'*, both outside and within ourselves.

Morton, whose Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) maintains the equivalence of all phenomena as *'objects'*, opposes the Romantic notion of *'seeking some false oneness'* with an illusory ideal of nature. He identifies a *'gap'* between human and nonhuman, believing that, *'acknowledging the gap is a paradoxical way of having greater fidelity to things'* (2007:142,144). Toadvine, whose ecophenomenology bases itself on experience as the key mode of access, is similarly critical of, *'the recent tendency of environmental thinkers to stress the 'kinship' between humanity and nature'*, because it, *'runs the risk of collapsing humanity and nature into a predictable, continuous and homogeneous unity'* (Brown&Toadvine 2003:xvi). For Morton the *'gap'* is the knowledge that objects, whether red-throated divers,

stone carvings, ideas or shopping trolleys, are all part of the biosphere's '*network of relations*' that remains '*intrinsically mysterious*' (2018:50,75). For Toadvine the 'gap' is the awareness that the '*mutually sustaining web of life*' is '*idiosyncratic*', beyond human understanding and control (Brown&Toadvine 2003:xvi,12). While 'oneness' with nature may indeed be illusory, both Morton and Toadvine acknowledge that this 'gap' may have widened to a fundamental separation from the possibility of the unknowable. In the land of the stone carvers, as both human and being, my bodily experience allowed access to the 'intrinsically mysterious' in ways that intellect alone could not. Access to the 'wild' implies a rebalancing away from the narrowly anthropocentric, instantaneous, 'ocularcentric' and intellect-driven towards a physical consciousness that is open to connection.

For insight into what this might mean let us return to the Hjemmeluft stone carvings. The experience of this artwork is many-layered. First, there is a walk of half a kilometre through birch woods in which birds are singing. The long view across the fjord opens up, giving a sense of space between sea and sky. The path leads over rich-smelling heath, and the eye joins the feet in choosing the best way. The red-throated diver flies overhead, calling. Coming upon the carvings, though expected, feels astonishing. Through them the presence of the stone carvers is suddenly all around. The 'time' of the viewer and the 'time' of the carver, the minds and bodies that hunted and carved and the mind and body of the viewer, somehow penetrate each other. This awareness of human time and the endurance of the carvings feel connected with the greater-than-human timescales enveloping both the smartphone-holding viewer and the stone carvers, between rock, sky and the sea. As well as this interplay of bodily sensations and interconnected times one has a sense of the carvings not being 'set in stone' but still evolving, shaped by what passes around and through them. I am a human observing but also participating in an experience, and the 'gap' between the two is one of mystery, not separation.

Henri Bergson, working over a century ago, first described the concept of 'multiplicity', which Deleuze adapted to his own later notion of rhizomatic assemblages, as a challenge to logic and linear causality. In ways that relate closely to Hjemmeluft, Bergson focuses on time as the key to unlocking connection with a living world. He describes consciousness as a temporal '*multiplicity*' which is continuously creating itself through unpredictable

interaction with materiality. The temporal quality that underpins both creation and consciousness he terms 'duration' (*durée*). For Bergson duration is a '*qualitative multiplicity*' that cannot be quantified, has no causality, is heterogeneous, indivisible and continuous. Pre-empting Anthropocene instantaneity, Bergson describes the limiting effect of applying causality and intellect to qualitative consciousness:

*[If] we set our states of consciousness side by side in such a way as to perceive them simultaneously, no longer in one another, but alongside one another; in a word, we project time into space, we express duration in terms of extensity, and succession thus takes the form of a continuous line or a chain... Note that the mental image thus shaped implies the perception, no longer successive, but simultaneous, of a before and after (1913(1889):101).*

Pure duration, direct unmediated experience, he describes, by contrast, as: '*succession without distinction...a mutual penetration, an interconnexion and organization of elements, each one of which represents the whole, and cannot be distinguished or isolated from it except by abstract thought*' (1913(1889):101). This infinity of durations is a manifestation of the vital impulse which Bergson terms '*L' Élan vital*', a creative life force that is continually harnessing mind and matter in a dynamic creative process. Intuition, rather than intellect, is the quality of consciousness that places us, through direct sensory experience, back into this creative life force. Bergson writes:

*...it is to the very inwardness of life that intuition leads us – by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and enlarging it indefinitely...That an effort of this kind is not impossible, is proved by the existence in man of an aesthetic feeling' (1911 (1907):176,177).*

The complex aesthetic experience of the Hjemmeluft carvings shares much with this account of a reciprocal creative *Élan vital* that connects multiple materials and temporalities. Notions of multiplicity, duration, intuition and *Élan vital* offer an alternative, broader framework for human consciousness and creativity in which consciousness as complex sensory awareness integrates with mind. The stone carvings open access to the outer 'wild' by creating an ongoing relationship with a real but unfathomable physical and temporal universe. This intuition of *Élan vital*, in turn, can return us to the 'wild' within.

#### **4 Resonance, sensory perception and the 'white cube'**

Bergson narrates a version of how one might approach the 'wild', allowing time and matter to reveal each other through bodily experience, broadening consciousness beyond binaries,

control and cognition. As I explored my own perceptual experience in the light of this I came upon the notion of resonance. Dictionary definitions include:

*the condition or quality of being resonant; sound produced by a body vibrating in sympathy with a neighbouring source of sound; amplification of speech sounds by sympathetic vibration in the bone structure of the head and chest, resounding in the cavities of the nose, mouth and pharynx* (Collins[online]).

Common to all these definitions is physical and temporal interaction. Resonance is a dynamic natural phenomenon that is simultaneously about reciprocity, energy exchange, time and matter, and incorporates unpredictability and creativity. It is alive to a breadth of relationship that goes beyond the virtual, visual and intellectual to more embodied sensation. Actual perceptual experience is inherently 'resonant', undermining traditional ocularcentric theories of perception. The Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Perception notes that the early science of perception, '*suffered from an excessive concentration on vision, which was taken as the proxy for all of the other senses*' (Matthen2015:14). Indeed, the convention that senses are receptors for a processing and controlling intellect has fed the assumption that consciousness is based in mind. Recent research indicates that perception is in fact multi-modal, involving complex interactions between body and brain and allowing for synaesthesia, sensory substitution and multi-sensory integration. In addition, the relationship between the perceiver, the process of perception and the 'external' object is more mutual and dynamic than previously believed. Rather than the senses providing an internal 'picture' for the mind to interpret, it is now clear that, '*consciousness can be perceptual...we literally and directly see objects, faces, places and shapes; we hear melodies, voices...directly and not by painstakingly piecing them together by the use of learned experiential associations*'. (Matthen2015:3,9,21,603). As Pallasmaa concludes, '*We are connected with the world through our senses. The senses are not merely passive receptors of stimuli...neither is the head the sole locus of cognitive thinking. Our entire being in the world is a sensuous and embodied mode of being, and this very sense of being is the ground of existential knowledge*' (Pallasmaa 2009:13). Consciousness is not rational but embodied. In other words, we do not use our senses, we are the senses we share with the world.

In response to my sensory experiences outside I began to make field sound recordings accompanied by sound transcriptions onto tactile materials, particularly clay and textile. I was interested in a physical interaction between 'viewer' and object and how a tactile

relationship might open a relationship with the nonhuman source of the sounds. I worked with the areas of the human body that transmit and sense resonance. All involve chambers of still space through which vibration can travel, for example the chest cavity and the space



Figure 6 Resonant drum being played (R.Boyd)

between sole and ground. I made clay 'Footprints' of the spaces between the soles of human feet and pieces of North Ronaldsay flagstone marked by the ripples of 380 million-year-old sound waves. I made similar imprints of cupped hands, enclosing the space where resonance occurs; once fired the 'space' creates a sound when held to the ear. Exploring the possibilities for interaction between the human as resonator and the physical world I worked outside to make stone-like clay flutes. Abram writes of the breathing body engaged in a reciprocal relationship: *'ceaselessly spreading out of itself as well as breathing the world into*

*itself, so that it is very difficult to discern, at any moment precisely where this living body begins and where it ends'* (2010,46). I also made resonant clay drums. The experience of holding and playing these instruments is visceral, and the vibrations can be felt right through the body. I took them to various outdoor locations, and found that passers-by touched them, talked about them and played on them. Engaging with the physical resonance of the instruments prompted unpredictable conversations about making, time, material and relationships with the environment which, themselves, became part of the creative process.

An exploration of how perception operates reveals that vision, as the key access mode in the Anthropocene *'empire of signs'*, has only limited capacity for resonance. Matthen observes that, *'light yields only crude information... the visual system computes colour from the responses of only a few types of cell, each of which responds to a broad visible frequency range'* (2015:14,16). Vision requires light and distance, and the viewer controls the perceptual

encounter by training her eyes on the 'object'. As philosopher Merleau-Ponty writes, '*To see is to have at a distance*' (1968:166).

Sound is a more refined, reciprocal sense than vision. Unlike the eye's rather crude apparatus, the ear has a dedicated receptor for each acoustic frequency and is inherently physical. Not only does it rely on the interaction of energy and matter to create sound resonance, but vibrations are sensed bodily. Sound is ambient and relates to external events, so the 'listener' has no control either over the sound event or the perceptual encounter and has instead to be in a 'listening' receptive mode. There is strong connection between this and a bodily experience of time. Matthew Nudds notes:

*Sounds take time...Individual sounds change over time – and the identity of a sound is not fixed by how it is at any time but depends on the way it unfolds over time. So sounds occupy time in a way similar to the way events and processes occupy time* (inMatthen2015:275).

The vestibular system in the inner ear also locates our physical bodies in space. In this way, '*everything we do and every part of our consciousness, is informed by this very primitive ancient system...We are profoundly embodied in our existence as beings on a planet with gravity. The tiny plaque with hairs basically says: You Are Here – Now*' (Henderson BBC[online]). Smell, meanwhile, is the sense most closely associated with emotional connection to place through memory (cf University of Toronto, 2018).

In this way audition, touch and smell as resonant 'tactile' senses that rely on energetic interaction between 'perceiver' and 'world', find themselves more closely linked to unfolding time and place than vision. It appears that resonant senses locate us better in the interconnected mode of being variously termed '*ecological*' (Morton), '*sensuous*' (Abram) and '*vibrant*' (Bennett). They involve a physical interchange in which 'perceiver' and 'perceived' are continuously changed and they are inherently open, subverting intellectual control. Critically, resonant senses enable us to listen to, taste, smell or feel time as an opening, stillness or space, rather than as a relentless Chronos to be monitored or 'filled'.

The power of resonant senses is beginning to be recognised, both in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and in gallery-based aesthetic experience. In an attempt to overcome the constraints of the 'white cube, the 2015 'Tate Sensorium' accompanied four abstract

paintings with olfactory, sound and touch stimuli using HCI 'mid-air haptics' (Tate 2015; ThanhVi *etal* 2017). Some critics found it refreshing and 'immersive', and visitors spent more time with each painting. However, others reported a cognitive rather than emotional response, felt '*manipulated*' by the selected sensory stimuli with insufficient scope for '*free exploration*' or for the '*unexpected imaginary sensations that pop up of their own accord*', or found the technology distracted from the artworks (Courtauld Institute 2015). In the light of my own work, the experiment raises important thoughts about 'resonant' aesthetic experience as an 'opening' that owes its depth and transformative power to the quality of the viewer's ongoing relationship with an external physical world.

## **5 Resonance, Silence and Merleau-Ponty's 'Wild Being' in the art of Wolfgang Laib**

Working with the resonant senses prompted reflection on the still spaces in which resonance is felt and on time as space or opening. The 'void' (Kū) is considered the most powerful of the five essential Buddhist elements or 'godai'. It combines the symbol for sky with the symbol for the craftsman's tool that creates an opening into that space. As Daniel Barenboim writes, '*In the beginning, there was silence. And out of the silence came the sound...The sound does not exist in this world...It is here at one moment and then it goes...There are many types of silence. There is a silence before the note, there is a silence at the end and there is a silence in the middle*' (2004[online]). The composer and acoustic ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp's collaborative sound work *Nada* explores the Sanskrit concept of silence as the ambient creative force. She writes:

*To experience sound at its point of origin, is to experience it as energy before it becomes split and objectified...This underlying, unstruck vibration (anahata), the silent sound...thus becomes the source of all vibrations that are meaningful and fulfilling (ahata)...It is quite amazing that sound which seems to be characterized as outward moving and spreading, has the power to take us back into its source* (Westerkamp[online]).

*Nada* is a sound installation recorded in India that takes the listener on a journey from noise to silence, from '*acoustic onslaught*' to sacred sound experiences. The journey dissolves the boundary between exterior and interior, returning the listener to an inner sense of silence. There is an important perceptual connection between the receptive spaces of 'resonance' and of 'silence'.

Wolfgang Laib's pollen pieces are extremely simple, do not move or make use of external sound, but nevertheless create a physical interaction or 'resonance' with the viewer that involves

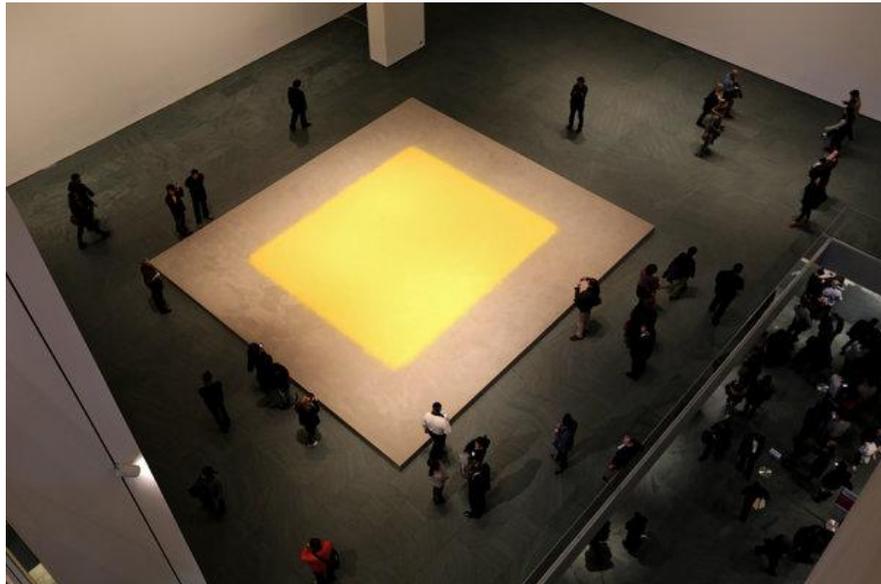


Figure 7 'Pollen from Hazelnut' Wolfgang Laib (image in Johnson 2013)

stillness, space, matter and time. He achieves this within the conventions of the contemporary art space. One critic writes, *'In a world where...what counts is getting things done, Laib's work asks to viewer to...slow down and sink into a piece of art, not as mere concept, but as a sensory experience'* (Good2013[online]). His largest pollen piece, 'Pollen from Hazelnut' (2013) consisted of a thick rectangle of bright yellow hazelnut pollen measuring 6x7m on the concrete floor of the Marron Atrium at MOMA New York. He has also installed several versions of 'The Five Mountains not to Climb on', five tiny pyramids of yellow pollen arranged on the floors of both high cathedrals and gallery spaces. 'Pollen from Hazelnut' was visible not only from close up but from the highest floors of the atrium, as Laib says, like, *'looking down not into hell but into heaven'*. One observer described the colour as *'so radiant that you might think for a second that it is a projection of pure yellow light from above'* (Johnson 2013:[online]). While the works have a strong visual impact, their power is in the way in which they engage a complex sensory response; visitors note the fragrant smell of the pollen, a bodily sense of space and diminutive human scale and an awareness of both sound and silence in the cavernous space. Laib ensures that the gallery experience is as direct and unmediated as possible, pure material without textual interpretation. He says, *'for me the pollen is the beginning of plants...but it is not my task to explain this. That is the secret and the beauty and the power and the potential of all this'* (Laib 2014:online).

Laib's work has parallels with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's evocation of *'Wild Being'* (*l'être sauvage*), which describes a 'resonant' relationship between subject and world based on reciprocity and embodied perception rather than distance and judgement (1968:203). Merleau-Ponty places the physical fact of bodily perception as a counterpoint to the 'projections' of intellect; for him the senses are the only truthful mode of access for interrogating and communicating with a world that is dynamic, ambiguous, and inherently indeterminate (cf 2002(1945):28). He writes, *'sense-experience is a vital process, no less than procreation, breathing or growth...the world is not what I think, but what I live through'* (2002(1945):xviii,11).

Time and matter as encountered by the senses are the substance of Laib's work. He has hand-collected the pollen of plants local to his village since 1976. As the pollen is subject to



Figure 8 Laib collecting pollen (<https://trendland.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/wolfgang-laib-artwork-1.jpg>)

unpredictable natural cycles of abundance it can take a month of daily work to gather a small jar. 'Pollen from Hazelnut' is composed of pollen collected annually since the 1990s. Laib says, *I love this work, it's something that I do for hours and hours and days and days. It is a very quiet work in this environment which means a lot to me'*

(Laib MOMA 2013 [online]). His subjects and

materials, pollen, beeswax and stone, have not changed significantly over four decades, and his process is *'deliberately slow'*, influenced by oriental philosophy and the rejection of social norms of speed and achievement. He spends hours carefully sieving the pollen grains into a neat rectangle. In this way time and physical process play a role in transforming the material into art: *'the time investment makes [the pollen shapes] meaningful as objects, not merely as illustrations'* (Good2013 [online]). Time also modifies both artist and viewer, creating *'an interaction with the audience...a situation in which we are forced to slow down'* (ibid). For Merleau-Ponty, similarly, time is not unilinear or quantified Chronos but qualitative, arising from the body's openness in relation to things: *I am not in space and time, nor do I conceive space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them...the*

*space and time which I inhabit are always in their different ways indeterminate horizons which contain other points of view'* (1968:162).

In Merleau-Ponty's last, posthumously published work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, he articulates his theory of 'flesh' as, 'the common tissue of which we are made, the Wild Being' (1968:203). In the notes to this work he identifies the dilemma of Anthropocene human: 'how can one return from this perception fashioned by culture to the...'wild' perception? By what act does one undo it and return to the phenomenal...to lived experience?' (1968 notes:212). He finds the answer to this dilemma not in a monist unity with nature and sensation, but rather by acknowledging the coexistence of the 'sensible' and the 'sentient' as dual aspects of consciousness. For Merleau-Ponty the state of 'clear consciousness' is the result of the body's embodied presence in the world in a way that engages, through the senses, with matter and time:

*When I find again the actual world such as it is, under my hands, under my eyes, up against my body, I find much more than an Object: a Being of which my vision is a part, a visibility older than my operations or my acts...because between my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching, there is overlapping or encroachment, so that we must say that the things pass into us as well as we into the things* (1968:123)

Experiencing Laib's work achieves something of this reciprocal exchange. Although Laib's choice of materials attracts superficial comparison with Joseph Beuys, the self-effacement of the artist ('*I feel the pollen piece is much more important than me*') and his reluctance to impose an anthropocentric narrative on the work, create the possibility of open dialogue between artwork and viewer. This dialogue might involve contemplation of colour and light, of the life-force dormant in the pollen, the human time taken to collect it, the evolutionary time of bees, the modern relations of human, bee and plant, or the meadow sounds that are audible only in the imagination. The art is not in the artefact, nor in the artist, but in the 'overlapping' and 'encroachment' of temporalities and materials, in the unfolding, lived experience. One viewer notes that, '*the experience is the art and it's impossible to convey through a photo*' (Good,2013[online]).

Merleau-Ponty refers to the dynamic space between the sense perception, 'sentient', and the sensed idea, 'sensible', as the 'chiasm', with 'the flesh' as the originary connecting force (1968:liv,139) This creative force recalls Westerkamp's reflection on 'anahata' or the 'unstruck

vibration' as the silence before creation. The meditative space opened up by Laib's work can be seen as a kind of 'chiasm' that opens up the 'visible' to the 'invisible'. Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'Wild Being' and Laib's pollen work involve a fundamental reimagining of the relationship between human and nature as conscious, sensory encounter. Critical to the actualisation of this encounter is the disposition of the subject. One senses the 'chiasmic' resonant space through stillness, perceptual openness, and by ceding anthropocentric desire and control. Westerkamp describes this approach as, '*conscious attention...an enquiry into listening itself...as involved, living participants*' (Westerkamp[online]). Laib's creative process and the experience of his work embody these qualities. As visitors enter the pollen installation, '*No one dares break the stillness. People respond with a deep stirring of awe*' (Good2013[online]). Merleau-Ponty writes that, '*our view of man will remain superficial as long as we fail to go back to that origin [silence], so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence* (2002(1945):214). It is this resonant space that allows access to 'the thing itself' or 'Wild Being'. According to Merleau-Ponty these wild qualities are accessible:

*...only to someone who wishes not to have them but to see them, not to hold them as with forceps...but to let them be and to witness their continued being – to someone who therefore limits himself to giving them the hollow, the free space they ask for in return, the resonance they require...from which obtains not an answer but a confirmation of...astonishment*(1968:101,102).

For Laib, as for Merleau-Ponty it is this condition of embodied consciousness, stillness, space and resonance that constitutes and gives access to the mystery of the 'wild'.

## **6 Creative Engagement and Deleuze's 'Becoming'**

There are other, more direct ways for contemporary art to encourage interaction with the world beyond the confines of gallery and other human spaces. Hildegard Westerkamp, Karine Polwart, Hanna Tuulikki and Collins-Goto are some of the many artists who make use of both outdoor sensory installation and sound performance. Creative Engagement is an art practice that, more even than interactive installation or performance, allows for co-creation from the beginning of the creative process. In 2017 I was part of the unfolding of 'Take Me Somewhere' a 'cross-media participatory installation' that involved international participation (Jónsdóttir *et al* 2017). What was most impressive was the way in which the work crossed conventional boundaries of space and time, using traditional and digital media to

create new connections, while still retaining a strong sense of ‘bodily’ experience.

The work was led by a cross-disciplinary group of artists, philosophers, educators and natural scientists from Iceland who explored the sharing of personal experiences of place and nature with residents of the Shetland islands. Based on Goethe’s concept of opening up to nature, the Shetland participants were asked by handwritten letter to spend time outside in a place that was special to them, and then describe the sensations and feelings of that experience in hand-written responses to the Icelandic group. The Icelanders read the letters and made their own sensory and emotional connections based on their own experiences.

They reported that:

*...It felt like we were getting to know Shetland... Portrayals of the seaside evoked our connections to the ocean; waves coming in one after another, watching them in fascination; smelling them, breathing them. A letter about walking near the sea brought up the feeling of pebbles and stones under our feet, the touch of the sand; running it through our fingers. Receiving the first reply was a magical moment, full of potentials and possibilities. The first impression we all had was of warmth, integrity and trust (Jónsdóttir et al 2017:169).*

The Icelandic group responded to the letters in a range of creative ways, in painting, writing, reflection, and in taking the descriptions to similar Icelandic places. Two of the Icelandic group, artists Ásthildur Björg Jónsdóttir and Gunnþís Ýr Finnbogadóttir then brought the letters and the group’s

responses to Shetland. They met the participants at the Shetland knitting group and exchanged stories about their relationship with place over a work of collaborative knitting. The creative process was then opened to a broader group of



Figure 9 A visitor takes part in the installation (Ásthildur Björg Jónsdóttir)

international participants who had gathered in Lerwick for the *Relate North* conference. The letters and responses were installed at a local art gallery, and visitors took part in adding to the knitted piece. Digital technology was used to connect the rest of the group in Iceland

with the Shetlanders in 'real-time' and they reflected on their shared creative experience together with the participants of the conference.

This artwork has the power typical of participatory works in that the process, connections and 'outcomes' are not concrete or finite, but indeterminate and unpredictable, continuing beyond the initial spatio-temporal frame of the work in a way that reflects and shapes lived experience. The Icelanders, the Shetlanders and the broader participants found the communal artistic process transformative, a means to, '*look at their local surroundings in a new way*' and '*to relate to others far away, yet so close*'. Crucially, the art was not just a shared expression of relationship with the 'wild' but a way of deepening connection with it, '*enhanc[ing] the experience of being an islander in the north*' (Jónsdóttir et al 2017:171). While different in its form from the meditative gallery installations of Wolfgang Laib, Creative Engagement art has a similar capacity to open up relationships with time and a physical world in unpredictable ways. What is interesting in 'Take Me Somewhere' is the way in which art as a shared creative process can both inform and create an ongoing communal experience of place, matter and time by being a catalyst for new and unexpected connections.

In important respects this approach to art parallels Deleuze and Guattari's 'Rhizome', described in *A Thousand Plateaus* as an '*assemblage of multiplicities*' that ramifies and develops laterally without a centre or a periphery (D&G1987:1-25). Rhizome expands Bergson's concepts of multiplicity and *élan vital*, overtly challenging and subverting arborescent systems of growth or thought based on binary division (D&G1987:3-10). Unlike Bergson, however, Deleuze removes the human subject and focuses instead on articulating the dynamic forces of differentiation and repetition that characterise and energise all life forms. This is a feature of creative engagement art, in which authorship is subsumed by the unpredictable process of creation.

Like Bergson, the concept of dynamic change, or 'becoming' is core to Deleuze's ontology. It is his formulation of life as a continuous, non-linear movement of change between heterogeneous or paradoxical states in which there is no start or end point. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze posits difference as necessary for the emergence of new forms,

*'The eternal return affirms difference, it affirms dissemblance and disparateness, chance, multiplicity and becoming'* (1994:300). Becoming as change and innovation has, therefore, to take place at the *'borderline for each multiplicity'*, the zone of paradox and anomaly. The Rhizome's mode of innovation is based on difference: *'Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight, or deterritorialisation according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities'* (D&G1987:9). For Deleuze, as for creative engagement, and arguably, for all genuinely 'open' art, the potency of the Rhizome is to 'deterritorialise', to create unique intersections of space and time (D&G 1987:7-9,12; Williams 2011). In this way the Rhizome becomes an unfettered, independent embodiment of the impulse to life, the natural creative act itself: [it] *'ceases to have any relation to the One as subject or object, natural or spiritual reality, image and world'* (D&G1987:8).

The implications of Deleuze's thought for a consideration of the role of art and the 'wild' are wide-ranging. Particularly significant are the concepts of an infinite life force based on resonance not binary separation, and of the role of the artist as a facilitator of 'becoming' rather than a manipulator of ends. 'Becoming' is not linear, and has no defined outcomes, but like Creative Engagement, is a process of co-creation: *'Becoming is always double, that which one becomes becomes no less than the one that becomes ... essentially mobile, never in equilibrium'* (D&G1987:305). Critically, we only 'become' through our lived experience of the world: *'We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it'* (Deleuze1994:169). For Deleuze, as for Merleau-Ponty, Morton and Bergson, the experience of being alive is not an uncontrolled surrender to sensation in pursuit of a homogeneous oneness with nature, but a dynamic interplay of connection across the 'chiasmic gap', fuelled by the force for life. This is very close to Cookson's definition of 'wildness' as *'a quality of interactive processing between an organism and its surroundings'* (2011[online]).

For Deleuze art, as an instigator of difference, has unique access and insight to life: *'Life alone creates such zones where living beings whirl around, and only art can reach and penetrate them in its enterprise of co-creation'* (D&G1994:173). Deleuze privileges the role of artist as *'a seer, a becomer'*, able to create the connections with *'otherness'* that enable life and art to continue. Deleuze describes this as, *'mak[ing] perceptible the imperceptible forces that populate the world, affect us, and make us become'* (D&G1994:168,171,177,182). Art enables

both 'perceiver' and 'perceived' to open up to the unknowable 'wild', to what Deleuze terms *'the non-thought within thought'*, the *'passage from the finite to the infinite'* (D&G1994:59,180). 'Take Me Somewhere' embraces these opportunities, using 'real-time' and traditional methods in a simple, practical and unselfconscious way to connect time, consciousness and artwork in ways that share, communicate and deepen embodied experience.

## **Conclusion - Towards an Art of Resonance**

As I worked through this paper I was fascinated to observe how the disparate perspectives of art, philosophy, ecology and ecopsychology converge on the basic need identified in my own practice - for lived physical connection with a shared world. I discovered that 'wild' is not an entity or even a definable quality, but a way of being in the world. This way of being, as explored here, engages consciousness as a bodily process, not merely an attribute of mind. As such, it involves relationships with time and matter that are characterised by bodily senses, openness and intuition rather than control. Our basic need for this 'wild' has clear implications for how we engage with 'instantaneous' visual and virtual technology, for how we share the world, and for the art we are able to create.

In conclusion, I return to the relationship between the 'wild' and the 'beauty' experience referred to at the beginning of the paper. 'Resonant' life and art unfolds the material, temporal world and brings us within it. In doing so it can take us beyond the physical. For art and secular philosophy, the leap from matter to mystery is not to 'God' or 'Spirit', but to that creative force described variously as *'flesh'* (Merleau-Ponty 1968) *'élan vital'* (Bergson1911), as *'Aletheia'* (Heidegger2002) *'praxic opening-out'* (Guattari2005), *'imagination'* (Bachelard1983:240). In the past the mystery at the heart of aesthetic and natural encounters was referred to as 'beauty'(cf Goethe 2016(1811)). More recently this quality has tended to become obsolete; art is *'no longer...the domain of beauty'* (Balsom2018[online]). One art critic writes that:

*any talk of beauty has become sceptical or ironic...What no longer functions in the idea of beauty is the sense that it represents something of the value and importance of being human...[it] is disconnected from any greater purpose or aspiration.* (Charlesworth 2016[online]).

The word beauty in contemporary aesthetics seems instead to relate to surface rather than matter, sight rather than feeling and judgement rather than resonance. Yet in the context of

the 'wild' it is notable that both Laib and Jónsdóttir retain beauty as a central concern of their work. In 'Take Me Somewhere' Jónsdóttir reports that, *'beauty ... was used to describe a special kind of relation through our senses and the meaning of our existence...a quality of life* (Jónsdóttir et al 2017:170). Laib observes that:

*I am not afraid of beauty, unlike most artists today...The pollen, the milk, the beeswax, they have a beauty that is incredible, that is beyond imagination, something which you cannot believe is a reality—and it is the most real. I could not make it myself, I could not create it myself, but I can participate in it.* (Laib 2018 Artnet [online]).

This is the same response to the temporal, material world that Timothy Morton terms the *'beauty experience'*. He equates *'being ecological'* with the experience of aesthetic beauty, which allows *'a fantastic, 'impossible' access to the inaccessible, to the withdrawn, open qualities of things, their mysterious reality'*. Echoing the intuitions of Bergson, Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze, Morton describes *'ecological art'* as an *'attunement'* to an *'ambient openness'* of forms, that is *'about the Earth out of which they are ultimately made'* (2018:41,52). In an age of instantaneity, art that is of this physical, temporal Earth has a vital role to play in connecting us with the great wild, beautiful world of time, matter, red-throated divers and stone carvings of which we are just a tiny part.

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