

Interspecies Dialogues: The 'love stories' between human and nature

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- **Outline:**

Technology is changing our relationship with nature as we know it and the ethics of technology requires us to understand the intersection of two modern phenomena: the destruction of nature, and the growth of technology. The world is in crisis. I see this project as a provocation and hyperstitions to anthropocentrism. Thinking about how to create a multidimensional network of humans entwined with other creatures based on deconstructing any ontological hierarchy. My central concern in this project is how design can better establish a balanced and dynamic connection between humans and non-humans. Simply put, this is a speculative earth healing programme. But when we try to explore non-human centred design methods to fight the anthropocentric violence¹, We need to keep drilling into the phenomenon of interspecies communication. Allowing the audience to engage in non-linguistic forms of awareness.

Imagine a virtual 'non-space' where humans can form harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships with other species. Through the development of sensors incorporated into plants/animals, we can monitor the real-time electrical activity of these species due to environmental changes. Non-humans are equipped with a wide variety of sensors that keep us informed of what is happening in our environment and allow us to respond to various environmental stimuli². At the same time we exchange energy with plants through our exhaled carbon dioxide, and these environmental sensors monitor the temperature, sound, distance etc. of our surroundings, establishing a communication between us and these non-human species. Through exploring the secret language of nature, we know more about the complex relationships that form the ecosystems we are part of. However, these communication signals are often very abstract, even many later beyond the realm of human cognitive experience, so we try to bring this process to life visually, using generative art to transform these obscure messages into graphics, colors and sounds that humans can empathize with so that they can better interact with these species in real time.

- **Why does the project need to be undertaken?**

The complex entanglement of technology with politics, economy, ecology, human, non-human, politics and power calls into question this dualism that places nature on one side and culture on the other. With the COVID-19 crisis providing a rude awakening to the fragility of our economic, social and political models, we are beginning to realize that a healthy and balanced ecosystem should include human/non-human/fictional objects and maintain a state of diversity. More and more artists are

¹ "From Human-Centred To Interspecies Design — Unbore", Unbore, 2022

<<https://www.unbore.org/stories/human-centred-to-interspecies-design>> [Accessed 20 March 2022].

² "María Castellanos", Mariacastellanos.Net, 2022 <<http://www.mariacastellanos.net/?/=seccion/projects/entrada/prosthetic>> [Accessed 20 March 2022].

developing interdisciplinary creative practices in their fields, creating non-linguistic forms of communication. They develop intimate relationships between strangers/strange species, bringing true and inclusive reflection, break down barriers and bring the margins into the culture. It is crucial to understand that today's anthropology cannot longer be centered on the human species³. Exploring this counter-linguistic turn towards cross-species communication is particularly crucial as a necessary prerequisite to show the complexity of our ecosystems and to enhance non-verbal communication dialogue and mutual commentary.

- **What readings and/or independent research has led to the project, and how do these connect to the themes of the project. What other artists, designers, thinkers and/or 'other' are already working in this area and/or have undertaken similar work?(200-300 words). Provide a bibliography/list of references, and images as appropriate.**

To reemphasize the importance of (re)connecting humans to nature, a large body of existing literature in design methodologies and cognitive theories has been developed. I delved into the following theories and discourses addressing human-nature connection. Timothy Morton's OOO-based Object-Oriented Design rejects the idea of human exceptionalism and reminds us to put ourselves in our place in the world, acknowledging our entangled relationship with other fiddling-humans. Haraway's another thought is making kins⁴ and companion species, based on the understanding that kin is an assemblage to the world, re-emphasizing that we can never exist on our own, we are called upon to give more attention to our fellow species and to establish a harmonious and symbiotic intimacy with them. Additionally, the concept of 'cooperative actions'⁵ also suggests that overcoming the traditional dichotomy of nature/culture, human/animal or subject/object is about acting together. In short, the development of diverse and multi-species environmental justice is a sure way to avoid the destruction of our planet.

MARÍA CASTELLANOS' OTHER INTELLIGENCES. PLANT-HUMAN INTERSPECIES DIALOGUES

I was fascinated by this work, a project that aims to explore communication between plants, by using artificial intelligence tools to try to better understand the habits of these creatures living with us on Earth, comparing the real-time reactions of humans and plants when faced with the same environmental changes. 'Nonhuman Networks' presents the aesthetics of non-linguistic communication between human and non-human participants, with 'Myconnect'⁶ by Saša Spačal, Mirjan Švagelj and Anil Podgornik is a symbiotic interspecies connector that questions the nature of anthropocentrism and the division of humanity. The installation combines art, biology and cybernetics to create a platform for inter-species

³ Terray, Emmanuel, "La Vision Du Monde De Claude Lévi-Strauss", *L'homme*, 2010, 23–44 <<https://doi.org/10.4000/lhomme.24346>>

⁴ Haraway, Donna Jeanne, *Staying With The Trouble*

⁵ Haraway, Donna, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question In Feminism And The Privilege Of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies*, 14 (1988), 575 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>>

⁶ "Nonhuman Agents - Art Laboratory Berlin", *Art Laboratory Berlin*, 2022

<<https://artlaboratory-berlin.org/exhibitions/nonhuman-agents-nonhuman-networks/>> [Accessed 20 March 2022]

communication, creating a comfortable immersive experience that expands our senses and enhances our perception of a complex ecology, pinpointing a unique narrative style at the intersection of humans and non-humans, revealing a fascinating collective intelligence.

- **Personal motivation for the project. Tell us why this project is important to you (100 words)**

Since I entered IED, we have been motivated to push boundaries, to create more inclusive, multi-perspective, dialectical information, to challenge the traditional paradigm of 'human-centred' design, to deconstruct long-standing and stubborn ontologies, and to find a new language to articulate the complex web of inevitable entanglements between human and non-human species. How to respond to the environmental crisis and ethical challenges of our time through design has always been an area of interest to me. As an information experience designer, requiring us to take a wider 'more than human' view, actively assuming responsibility as host to a productive entanglement between the human and non-humans, fully returning the agency of these non-humans to give them a voice for themselves is meaningful but challenging. It is a wonderful journey to explore the concretization of the entanglements in which we find ourselves, including new configurations, new subjectivities, new possibilities, through ethical learning through technology.

- **Reference:**

1. "From Human-Centred To Interspecies Design — Unbore", Unbore, 2022
<<https://www.unbore.org/stories/human-centred-to-interspecies-design>> [Accessed 20 March 2022].
2. "María Castellanos", Mariacastellanos.Net, 2022 <<http://www.mariacastellanos.net/?/=seccion/projects/entrada/prosthetic>> [Accessed 20 March 2022].
3. Terray, Emmanuel, "La Vision Du Monde De Claude Lévi-Strauss", *L'homme*, 2010, 23–44
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4. Haraway, Donna Jeanne, *Staying With The Trouble*
5. Haraway, Donna, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question In Feminism And The Privilege Of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies*, 14 (1988), 575 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>>
6. "Nonhuman Agents - Art Laboratory Berlin", *Art Laboratory Berlin*, 2022
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