

“We need to cultivate a bit of anthropomorphism, the idea that human agency has some echoes in nonhuman nature, to counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world.” – Jane Bennett

Anthropomorphism. Perhaps this is the magical gaze through which we should attempt to view the world. In revealing the resonances and assonances between ourselves and what we recognize as Other, we might witness matter, hitherto perceived as inert, mutate before our eyes into vibrant, actant, vital matter. It is then that the gaze shall fall to the ground like a drop of rain, the tree’s trunk will reveal as no different from our pelvis, where the weight roots and propagates, the rocky ribs of the mountains will then become our chest.

## Porous Kinship

Kesewa Aboah, Alberte Agerskov, Aléa,  
Dimitra Charamandas, Diana Policarpo

Curated by Maddalena Iodice

According to philosopher Manuel De Landa, bones are nothing more than the mineralization of matter conglomeration that constituted life 500 million years ago. We are minerals, we are body, we are world. The urge is to rediscover this relationship, to reawaken our sensory capacity for the natural ecosystem of which we are part, a world of matter intrinsically present even in the most mundane of our gestures. Emblematic is an anecdote by dancer Simone Forti, from her book *Handbook in Motion*. She describes the workshops her partner, the artist Robert Morris, and her attended with choreographer Anna Halprin, whose research was deeply committed to the dialogue between body and space. Often, the proposed “explorations” involved prolonged observation of the surrounding environment before accessing dance improvisation. The environment was not a backdrop, but an active participant. “I remember vividly the movement Bob did on this particular day. He had observed a rock. Then he lay down on the ground. Over a period of about three minutes he became more and more compact until the edges of him were off the ground, and just the point under his center of gravity remained on the ground.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Forti, Simone, *Handbook in Motion*, Contact Editions, 1974, (31)

In 1960, Halprin seemed to explore through the body and somatic research what Gregory Bateson theorized in the fields of anthropology and semiotics in 1970. In *Form, Substance, and Difference*, he articulates the fundamental relationship between organisms and environment, contributing to the development of modern ecology. Within Bateson’s thought, we are porous substance, the individual mind is immanent, but not only to the body, it belongs to a wider ecosystem of pathways which we are entangled with.<sup>2</sup> The possibility of knowing the human being thus oversteps the boundaries of the skin and enters into our relationship with the soil, with the objects to which we relate and which become a haptic, sensory extension of ourselves. The very form of being.

<sup>2</sup> Beatson Gregory, *Form, Substance and Difference, A Review of General Semantics*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (January 2015), Institute of General Semantics, (101)

The research of the international artists in this exhibition, Kesewa Aboah, Alberte Agerskov, Aléa, Dimitra Charamandas and Diana Policarpo, reveals this impulse toward reciprocity, toward the exercise of a magical, animistic gaze that offers the traces of a horizontal dialogue with the vibrant matter of the world.

In the work of Kesewa Aboah, artistic making evades the hegemony of the hand and the gaze, becoming a totalizing movement. The artist’s body, covered in pigments, meets the support of the canvas, capturing in the pressure between the two a residue of mutuality, the trace of the encounter between elements. The skin, capable of establishing a new relationship with space, becomes space itself: a site of sensory exploration, a “touch-all-skin” (*pelle-toccatutto*)<sup>3</sup>, in the words of dancer Dominique Dupuy. It is the memory of this contact that appears in the metal engravings on display. Like talismans of bodily devotion, *July, series (N. 1-4)*, 2026 offers liminal landscapes of profound visual hapticity.

<sup>3</sup> Dupuy, Dominique, *La Saggazza del Danzatore*, Mimesis / Eterotopie, 2014

Contact is not merely human, but a fundamental property of matter. “Touching, sensing, is what matter does, or rather, what matter is: matter is condensations of response-ability.”<sup>4</sup> The thought of feminist theorist Karen Barad seems to unfold in the practice of Alberte Agerskov, who, oscillating between art and architecture, explores the relationship between matter and space through concepts of porosity, memory, and desire. The work *MP Mutual Pressure*, 2026, unveils the relational process between the calcite of marble and

<sup>4</sup> Barad, Karen, *On Touching, The Inhuman That Therefore I Am*, Duke University Press, 2012, (215)

the acidity of water, which slowly carves its form. The composition of the liquid extracts the crystals inherent to the metamorphic rock, irreversibly altering itself in the act of encounter. The distinction between agent and reagent is dispersed, the dialogue between the two bodies is mutual. The trace left on a carved stone is not just the sign of an applied force, but the gestural residue of such an encounter.

Reciprocity and intra-action are at the heart of the work of Aléa, the duo comprising Miriam Josi and Stella Lee Prowse. By experimenting with mycelium, they develop modes of regenerative creation, rethinking how materials are used, understood, and valued. The works *Mycelial pattern N.7*, 2026 and the series *Mycelial Pattern Detail (N. 1-3)*, 2026, are the result of an interspecies collaboration in which the agency of organic matter and environmental conditions are as central as human action. The textured striations of the fabric, in dialogue with the gallery's space and light, speak the rhythm and intelligence of the mycelium, its ability to digest the fabric's color and transform the matter it relates with, proposing a substantial paradigm shift. The control and perfection of industrial capitalism collapse, leaving breath for a mode where care and cooperation are central.

Liminal topographies, anthropomorphic sites where physical and geographical corporeality merge, surface in the paintings of Dimitra Charamandas. Rendered in dense yet airy brushstrokes, the flows of water, the harsh fractures of the soil, and the gentle sandy slopes, become in her figurations, affective cosmologies. As shown in *Terraces, outfields (Nadia)*, 2025, and the ongoing series *Little inlets*, they become places for feeling the world just as we feel the flow of air filling and emptying our lungs, or saliva moving between tongue and pharynx. Often extending beyond the confines of the painterly medium to incorporate sculpture, moving image, textual offerings and communal rituals, Charamandas exposes the mineral assonances between earth and body. Geological formations take on the appearance of emotional condensations, capable of evoking a deep reflection on the exploitation of the ecosystem by contemporary socio-political structures.

*"I am an island, but I'm not really an island. / I'm a multitude of identities and bodies, within the same formation. / We have evolved together in total isolation. / My name is Selvagem, but I prefer to be called Aea."*

The interdisciplinary research of Diana Policarpo investigates folk culture, gender politics, and interspecies relations, tracing frequent connections between art and science, and showing a direct commitment to deepening the relationship between landscape, ecological systems, or extractive regimes. In the video work *When the Sea Swallows*, 2022, the artist chooses an eco-centric narrative position, letting a small island in the Selvagens archipelago voice its own history. Myth and environmental change intertwine as the island retraces the events, communities, and phenomena that shaped its existence. *Aea* reveals a world in constant transformation, where resilience, adaptation, and the unfolding of life are inseparable from the forces that carved it over time.

We are world-assemblages, we have cheeks of clouds, and our internal scars are no different from those of the fractured earth, drought parched. We are bodies of plastic and flesh, we are minerals and debris, foolish savants, unable to look beyond the shape of our own eyes. Let us close them, then, to look with our skin, to feel what it means to be rock through the breath of our muscles, and to discover within ourselves the very toxic organisms we have forced the sea to drink. Looking is not a matter of sight, but of relation with the Other. If the idiocy of the contemporary hustle alienates us from the possibility of relating to the soul of the natural ecosystem, then let Art awaken our capacity to *feel*.

Maddalena Iodice (1992, Italy) is an artist and curator working at the intersection of visual art, poetry, somatics, and sound. Her practice frames the body as a living site of knowledge, a porous threshold where histories, desires, and haptic modes of being converge and transform. This inquiry unfolds through a dual path: a curatorial stance engaging with the work of contemporary emerging artists and a performative practice that activates words-making, voice and corporeal presence. Based between London and Milan, she holds an MA in Culture, Criticism, and Curation from Central Saint Martins, London, and is the co-founder of Provinciale11, a research collective dedicated to interdisciplinary residency projects. Her work has been featured in several international journals, and her recent writings include interviews and essays engaging with Zehra Doğan, the Trisha Brown Company, Marina Abramović, and Liliane Lijn.