



# DigiLabAiR 2023 ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY

## On Climate Emergency

*The waters that we comprise are never neutral; their flows are directed by intensities of power and empowerment. Currents of water are also currents of toxicity, queerness, coloniality, sexual difference, global capitalism, imagination, desire, and multispecies community.*  
– Astrida Neimanis

In 1946, Elyne Mitchell pointed out that exploitative practices such as large-scale agriculture and colonisation have contributed to an endemic disconnect between humans and the planet. Today, at the peak of the Anthropocene, ecosystem distress and climate chaos have intensified the desolation people experience in response to environmental phenomena. Invasive human interventions aggravate pressure on the mesh of the natural world, non-humans and people, bringing forth an irreparable loss of home environments and causing existential angst and disorientation. Timothy Morton calls the climate crisis and humanity “hyperobjects”, massively distributed in time and space. Human-made materials and artificial stuff –so-called anthropogenic mass– now outweigh living things on Earth. The future fossil is the plastiglomerate, a rock made of natural debris held together by plastic – a potential Anthropocene marker horizon on the geologic record. Our three DigiLabAir online digital artist-in-residency sessions took place in the to-be globally hottest year on record, precipitating the increase in extreme weather phenomena worldwide. As climate-forced migration presses the ever-tightening borders of Europe and the Global North, we recognise the connections between severe weather events, climate crisis and global inequities. In this era of ecological panic and scientifically measurable risk (Beck), DigiLabAir: ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY calls artists to apply the lens of queer ecology and conjure a multiplication of differences at as many levels and scales as possible. To shatter the treacherous reductionism of rigid binaries, art acts as the mnemonic of the potential, catalyst of the manifest, and shrine to the residual. All art is ecological (Morton 2021), and Performance art centres on the body and the embodied. Adrianna Rich understands the body as “a congeries of the personal and the political; of the material and the semiotic. It is biological and cultural, and it is never only one thing, in only one place, or only ‘itself’.” (Neimanis 2017, 29). Earth emotions can have adaptive functions when they lead people to seek comfort collectively, and so do we, as the three film works of our residency resonate with care and grief through the intrinsic mesh of connectedness.

Ecological imaginations and chemical affinities are at the core of *Becoming Fossil*, where Petra Kupperts, Kym McDaniel and their collaborators invite us to journey through the strata of Deep Time. Bodies are the ambient of prehistoric subterranean transcorporeality and interstellar affect. The movement is simultaneously in differing bodies, the elements of the paleo-abode and the viewers'/listeners' minds. Threaded onto the here-and-now only by Petra's voice, we experience “stories of embodied indebtedness, where past and future bodies swim through our own.” (Neimanis 2017, 4).

In *Your Wounds Bleed Me*, Priya Prethora takes us in a posthuman becoming on a walk along the moist grounds of the mountain ranges of the Himalayas and the Alps. Connecting homes across the nomadic landscapes of borrowed belonging, they sing their mourning for glaciers in this tactile and sonic diary. Tracing wounded paths, they hum to the ancient frozen imprints disappearing into the memory of algal blooms sprouting in the warm seas.

*Waiting With The Waters* by Vicky Maier and Steef Kersbergen affronts solastalgia –a place-based anguish, the homesickness we feel in rather than for our home. By dissecting the generational narrative characterised by denial, they share tales told to a child living in the most human-altered habitats on the planet. They plunge into the gaps of a map that condenses around a territory claimed back by the sea it once was extracted from. They respond with a psychogeographic approach to grounds doomed to drown, their subaqueous orientations turning into a dance with the white flag of surrender.

All of them are with, in and of the lands and show the dances we dance and songs we sing while we lose the ground under our feet and turn our back to the wave coming in.

Verena Stenke | VestAndPage, EntrAxis e.V., October 2023