



## Composting in Awkward Spaces

Journal/ research note book/ raw material

Metropolis to Ecopolis Residency  
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with David Sebastian Lopez Restrepo/ The  
Performance Kitchen

# Application/ idea

HOT COMPOST/ Composting in awkward spaces

Tired Architecture +C.

## HOT COMPOST/ COMPOSTING IN AWKWARD SPACES PERFORMANCE IDEA FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

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Budget estimate and technical requirements p. 6  
CV and visual material scrap book - separate document attached.

### IMAGE 1: BOKASHI

Foodscraps going into the bin with lactobacteria to become pre-compost on my kitchen to



HOT COMPOST/ Composting in awkward spaces

Tired Architecture +C.

### IMAGE 2: HAND IN HOT COMPOST



# Application/ idea

HOT COMPOST/ Composting in awkward spaces

Tired Architecture +C.

## Presentation of HOT COMPOST/ COMPOSTING IN AWKWARD SPACES

A performance by one human, ca 15 participants and hot compost in different stages of decomposition. The ceremony is presenting the aesthetics of compost to a group participating in planting seedlings they can then take home with them and includes actions as well as readings from a literary compost text intended for independent publication.

As part of a process of grieving and taking care of an acute stress illness, I started composting and looking for soil to bury my tired body in, to decompose and grow anew. As I live in an apartment without my own garden, composting could be quite awkward, even as I started practicing bokashi composting, which is intended to be done indoors and only in the last stage of composting, brought out into the soil as very nutritious compost. I started writing this process too, what is on its way to becoming a compost book, composting both emotions, regrowing the self and growing plants in my apartments in the recycled food scraps of the bokashi compost. The performance reads texts from this book-to-find-a-publisher.

I present compost in three different stages: To be filled with food scraps, ready to be taken out of the first airtight container and mixed with soil, and soil at full heat breaking down the rest of the bokashi and emitting lots of warmth in the process. The audience will take part in these three procedures, enacted as a ritual in between the text readings. The dryness of the foodscraps, then the stickiness and a bit of smelly fermented cold first step, will be contrasted with the HOT working second stage compost. At the end plant cuttings will be put in ready composted nutritious delicious soil for the participants to take home.

I use elements from yoga meditation training to guide the participants into listening deeply to the organisms in the soil and point out organisms I have gotten to know through the process of composting. The desire to bathe in warm compost will probably not be realised in this performance, as there will not be large enough quantities of bokashi available, but will be part of the reading meditations.

A specific site is imagined for the performance: Skovhavelunden communal permaculture garden in Lundtoftegade, Copenhagen N. The garden is designed by artist and permaculture designer Skye Jin in collaboration with Eva Max Andersen and Til Vægs. I have been a volunteer assistant and participant in the project from the beginning. It is, however, possible to carry out in any garden space, as the composting itself is done in my home basement.

HOT COMPOST/ Composting in awkward spaces

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## PERFORMANCE CHOREOGRAPHY/ FLOW SKETCH

Ceremony master/ reader: Silje  
Participants: Ca 15

Welcome. Information. Instructions. Opening.

Reading from compost text 1.

Actions 1:  
Peel and eat food  
Collect peel  
Chop peel  
Put in bokashi container (no.1)  
Put in lactobacteria bran  
Close bokashi container airtight

Reading from compost text 2.

Actions 2:  
Open fermented bokashi bucket (no.2)  
Smell  
Go to buckets (Ax?) half filled with soil  
Pour fermented bokashi into buckets half filled with soil  
Cover with the soil  
Cover with mosquito net or thin cloth

Reading from compost text 3.

Actions 3:  
Remove cover from buckets (Bx?) full of hot soil  
Mix the rest of uncomposted the organic matter with hands  
Feel the heat  
Rest

Reading from compost text 4.

Actions 4:  
Take some of the compost out our the hot pile  
Make little plant pots with cuttings or seeds for people to take home  
Pour the rest of the soil into the vegetable field

Reading, thank the compost  
Fare well. Closing.

Circle, sharing perspectives, composting thoughts and emotions

Estimated time: 1 hr

# The diaries text

## 1. NY INTRO TIL DAGBOGSPROJEKTET

*Jeg er omsorgen du søger*

*Jeg vil kramme dine ord*

*Jeg er rygraden og stammen*

*Som kan holde væksten fast*

*Jeg kan indramme det hele,*

*suge op forlis i flis*

*Sætte brudstykkerne sammen,*

*skabe frem forud og nu*

*Jeg kan bygge op stativer*

*Der kan væves laser i*

*Jeg kan svøbe om forvitring*

*Give ensomheden hus*

*Flettet net som samler sammen*

*Bryder op og rækkefølger*

*På en flade, tegn som myrer*

*Bliver billeder, flyder du*

---

*Du satte dig ned for at skrive efter du havde været syg et par uger. Holde fast i en træstamme som flød fra vragresterne i flodbølgen på den røde sofa. Fra ugerne op til dette findes spredte noter i den lilla indbundne A5 ugekalender. Du bestiller den hvert år selv om der skal betales ekstra importgebyr fra USA. Dette år har forsiden en sart udvandet lillafarve og detaljerede symboler fra et omfattende solur præget i læderet. Jeg har klæbet en sort miniature elg som dem på vejskiltene i Norge, ind i soluret. Den er fra et klistremærkeark købt i den lille souvenirbod på færgen der hedder Oslobåden eller Danskebåten alt efter på hvilken side du befinder dig. Der er et tomt felt nederst på den højre side i hvert ugeopslag i kalenderen med overskrift "Space of Infinite Possibility". Feltet er ca 14cm x 7 cm med virkelig uendelige muligheder. Der er syet ind i ryggen et smalt forårsgrønt silkebånd man kan bruge som bogmærke, og en elastik holder bogen sammen i samme farve som læderomslaget. På bagsiden er også en klistremærke med "Plads til Naturen" fra valgkampen.*

*I kalenderen står i ugerne op til sygdommen på det uendelige sted bl.a.*

*"Loneliness is not the physical absence of other people. It's the sense that you're not sharing anything that matters with anyone else. J. Hari." Uge 17.-23. januar. Du har skrevet det med store blokbogstaver, og "ANYTHING THAT MATTERS" er fremhævet med orange selvlysende markørtusch og lysende strålestreger rundt.*

*"I need to explode myself. What does that mean??" Uge 7.2.-13.2. Du har forsøgt tegne en bombe som først er en tændt lunte og så sprænger i småstykker. Stykkerne er mørkegrønne og indenimellem dem er selvlysende neonmarker, lilla og røde tuschkruveduller.*

*"The only thing that really matters is time to think and process life. This is the highest value". Uge 28.02.-06.03. Den første sætning er skrevet med store boblebogstaver, hvor det første "the" er skraveret. Den sidste sætning er meget mindre men også i kapitæler. Det hele er tegnet med lilla tusch.*

*Så bliver det stille. Hvidt. Tomt. Senere en gang har du skrevet ind "Syg" i ugen 14.-20.03.*

*Det sidste som står i kalenderens uendelige mulighedsrum før en længere pause er "Ro. Forsvandt. Hvordan tænke tankerne færdig? Jeg sover ikke mere. Kaffe. Granatæble."*

*Den ovenfor nævnte uge har du på den røde flydende sofa besluttet dig for at skrive dagbog mere sammenhængende for at holde fast i et eller andet tvivlsomt koncept du ikke helt selv tror på, men som kan betegnes som 'virkeligheden'. Du har fundet en lille turkis notesbog i ca samme størrelse som det uendelige mulighedsfelt i ugekalenderen. Den er halvfylt med random noter om alt og ingenting. Mest alt. Der er ikke så meget ingenting.*

*Tidligere har du næsten altid ført dagbog over dit hurtigt oplevede ret omskiftelige liv. 'The Girl who Lived too Fast' var titlen på en bog som udover titlen aldrig rigtigt har været planlagt få et liv udenfor din hjerne. Du mødte en gang en professor som sagde at dit liv jo lød som en roman. Én gang. På en parkcafé med udsigt over den gamle havn i Maputo, hvor i sat i skyggen i ly af et indhak i cafébygningen og snakket om postkolonial litteratur og et eller andet som havde med din Ph.D at gøre. Opdagelsesrejserne ud i forskellige geografiske kroge af virkeligheden skulle skrives ned mens før og efter de store indtryk fandt sted, så de ikke blev alt for overvældende. Og normalt også passes ind i et format kaldet 'rejsebeskrivelser', 'essays' og senere 'forskning'. Struktur. Noget at holde fast i. Du skrev også en wordpressblog i den periode da du møde professoren i Maputo.*

## + image of the diaries

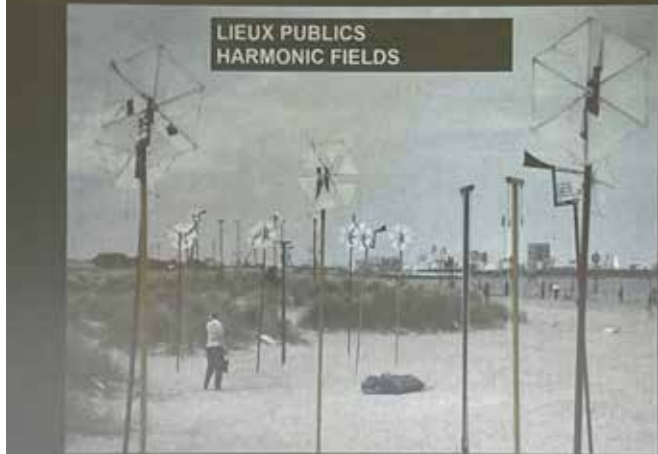
*De sidste par år er det gået ged i det. Ikke tid og rum nok til at skrive det hurtigflyvende ind i virkeligheden på en systematisk måde her på en ovenpå hinanden stablet lille adresse i København N. Adressen deles med resten af en ret pludselig opstået tremandsfamilie med andre verdner og tanker der optager pladsen og ikke er interesserede i at se ind i dit hovede, hjælpe til være bro mellem indre og ydre virkeligheder. Der er opstået kommunikationsbrist. Tankerne i hjernen kommer ikke frem. De når ikke tænkes færdig og bliver ved med leve intenst i hjørner af en hjerne hvor strukturen ligner mere en myretue svampemycelium fraktalspiraler fra biomimicry foredrag end et ordnet kartotek. Når tankerne ikke bliver tænkt færdig og luftet ud, danner de eksplosive centrifugalstoffer i fermenteringen, som presser udad. Ordene danner en kulsyreballon som når den bliver prikket hul på falder halvfermenteret udover alle tingene uden pause i meget lang tid.*

*Men så blev du syg og det hele gik meget langsommere et stykke tid. Du tænkte den langsomhed måske kunne indeholde en ny form for forhandling mellem sprog, hjerne og notesbogsside, en anden måde søge omsorg på.*

Arrival 21.-22.05.24.



First day of @metropoliskbh compost art residency at Refshaleen in collaboration with @davidlopezrestrepo



**METROPOLIS : WHAT WE WANT TO DO**

WE WANT ARTISTS TO CONFRONT, INTERVENE AND FACILITATE

PROVIDING EXPERIENTIAL PLATFORMS.  
FOR THE PUBLIC  
BY CREATING UNIQUE MOMENTS,  
LEADING THEM ON URBAN SAFARIS, REFLECTING ON THEIR OWN BACKYARDS  
PROVOKING REFLECTION ON CHANGE,

WE SEE THE CITY AS A COMPOSITE, COMPLEX  
AND EVER CHANGING HUMAN CREATION

WE WANT TO STIMULATE SENSING THE CITY

PERCEIVING THE CITY AS REAL – A AND IMAGINARY  
PART FACT - PART FICTION  
AND USUALLY FINDING A WAY BETWEEN

CHALLENGING THE NOTION OF PUBLIC SPACE  
CHALLENGING NOTIONS OF TERRITORY

ACTIVATING AND EMPOWERING CITIZENS TO ENGAGE IN THE CITY

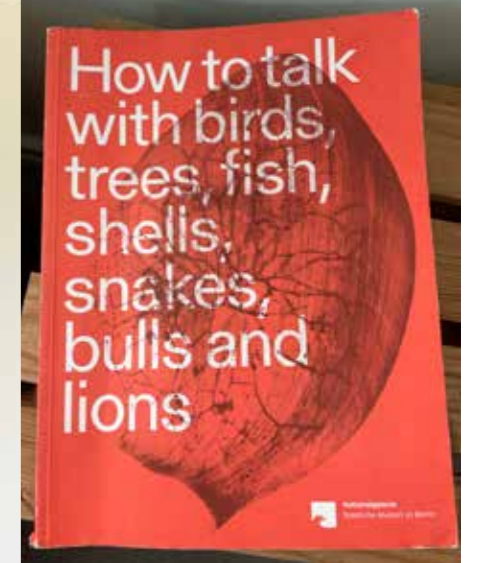
OUR THOUGHT LINE IS  
FROM SPACE TO PLACE  
AND FROM  
PLACE TO COMMUNITY

THE PUBLIC SPACE IS THE KEY CULTURAL FORUM OF OUR SOCIETY

PERCEIVING THE CITY AS REAL – A AND IMAGINARY  
PART FACT - PART FICTION  
AND USUALLY FINDING A WAY BETWEEN

CHALLENGING THE NOTION OF PUBLIC SPACE  
CHALLENGING NOTIONS OF TERRITORY

ACTIVATING AND EMPOWERING CITIZENS TO ENGAGE IN THE CITY



Act I - Dinner 23.05.24.



+ Sancocho recipe

Cooking food and fermenting food waste. Feeding people and feeding microbes.



## Act I -Dinner 23.05.24.



The composting process was initiated by a meal with The Performance Kitchen. This is a performance David Sebastian has been doing for 12 years but which adapts to specific situations. The alphabet soup was engaging and the letters ended up coming into the compost in the end. I had invited David Sebastian in so that I could have something to take point of departure in, not

do this completely from scratch. David Sebastian also was an important ingredient in my composting of new personal soil last year.

Note for future: Potential of developing collaborations with a series of artists affecting the soil and being affected by the soil. Develop a form of log book/ documentation format for this.



# Act I - Dinner 23.05.24

## WHILE WAITING TO PUT WASTE IN BUCKET:

Before putting the food waste in the bucket, I will tell you a little bit about the composting of tiredness. When I got sick and couldn't really read long sentences and just wanted to lie down, pulled down by gravity, not to move for fear of overwhelm, I still started writing. Slowly. Little things to keep me going. To in a way document what was going on. To find meaning in the collapsing. In fragments of not very connected sentences. Broken down sentences. Statements. Questions. Mostly this question: What is the way to explain this? Why is this happening to me? Trying to stay afloat in a flood of emotion. Words being the flotsam to hold onto. And about gravity. Falling down. To the ground. To Earth.

We are soil.  
We will grow.  
We will compost.  
But first I was going to build a text.  
It self-composts.  
Hollows itself out from the inside,  
full of worms eating the ashes from the burnout.

We continue.  
The illness is self-composting.  
When we are allowed to be sick.  
Let the fear.  
Free.  
Let it out.  
Free.  
Away.  
Illness is to write another history when the previous one has fallen apart.  
It is difficult to stand while falling.  
It is difficult to write a text that flickers.  
Gravity explodes to the ground.  
The fragments fermenting.

It started with the plants.  
Earlier. But I had already fallen apart then. Just that I could still go to work. So I wasn't ill. Illness is when you cannot work. Some times you can still work even if you have fallen apart. Stone. I was stone body. Falling through the floor and the apartments under me. Gravity. Stone can become soil. Lichen break down soil. Stone can become plants.

You can grow mushrooms in coffee. Imagine if there were fungi growing all over my skin. Would that metabolise all the thoughts? Would the fungi cleanse my body? Create new life? I guess I would die of it. And be resurrected as philodendron climbing up a ficus tree.

Then I wrote things about plants and forest and I could breathe again. The stone-like heaviness and breathtaking fear relaxed among plants. Thinking about plants. The stone was broken down into plants.

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# Meeting the site - Sharing places/ movement



I met fallen leaves. Then it rained....

24 May 07:41

selmabsklo

Another way of investigating decomposing organic matter

@torabalslev  
@planetsije  
@nanna.giveitup  
@kevin.trappeniers  
@ehlinanders  
@metropoliskbh

Working with human body movement



Meeting the site  
- The soil of Refshaleøen



The thin emergent critical zone. Soil in the making.



Heaps of added soil



Enchanted forest in-the-making



Creating ground



Soil in boxes



Pioneer plants doing their thing



Attempts at weed control



The farm Øens Have



The grassy field by the harbour being cut for party



Magic party forest wiht wood chips



Wood chips with tree produce



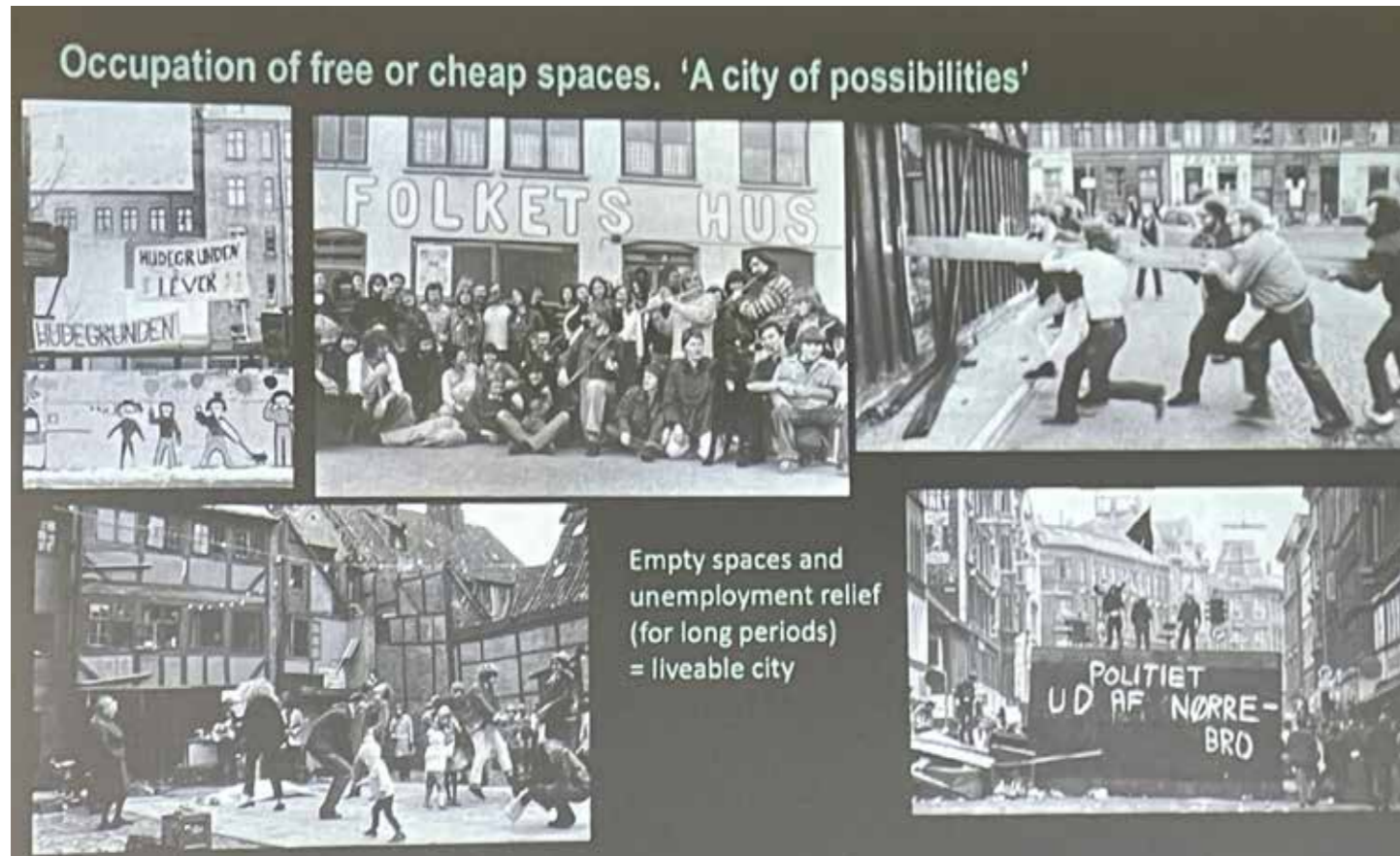
Earth heaps with plants growing



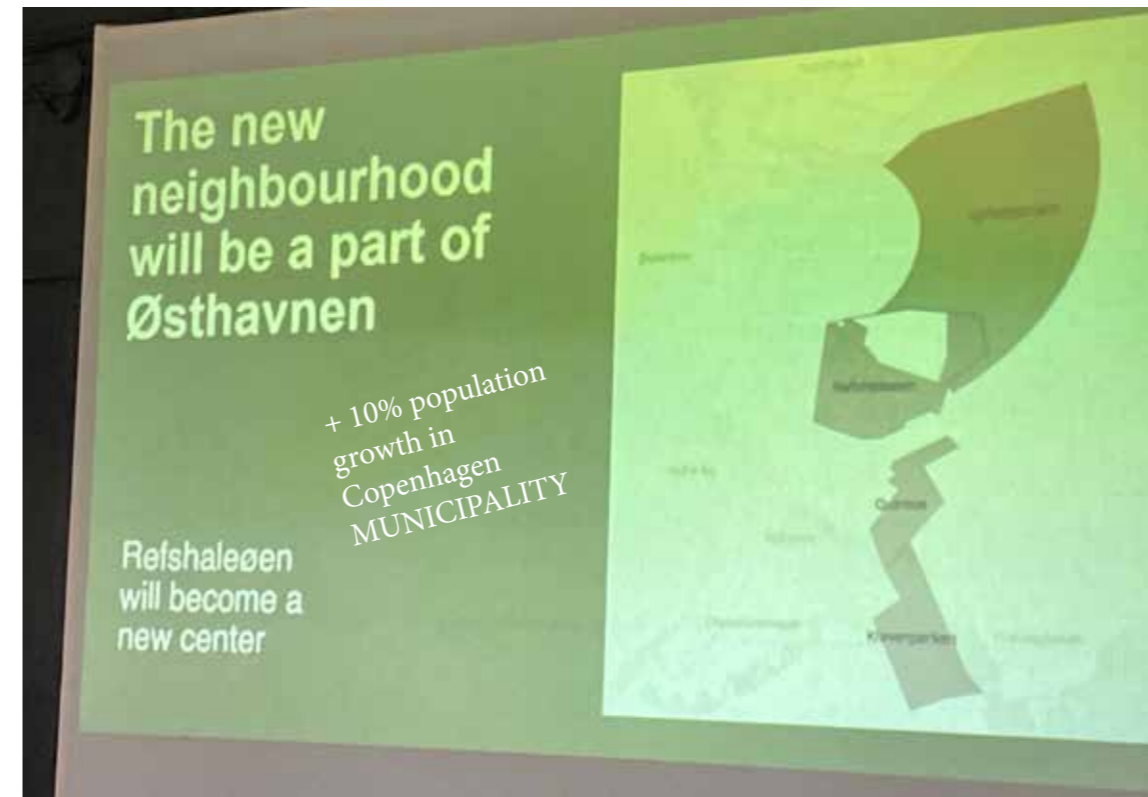
The cirical zone can be very narrow







## Meeting the site - Refshaleøen urban development



Refshaleøen Development Authority

Does the creative just have to live in the in-between?

Do we need to sell all the land?

How do we plan for organically developing without a plan?

Saltholmen







## Act 2 - Mixing soil

I found some bowls stored in the shed outside the Annexe, which felt suited to carry elements of soil. I gathered bits of soil from other places on Refshaleøen and elements from the Saltholmen materials archive I carried home with me. The bowls lined up in a row in the kitchen to be carried down the stairs to the little platform outside inspired a form of procession which was not photographed, unfortunately. Procession with bowls of soil materials

down stairs to be documented in mental image. Later I learnt that the bowls are actually from the wonderful big performance by *Becoming Species* where a ton of soil was moved into prominent places in the middle of the city to provide habitat for red listed species being danced. A wonderful element to compost traces of into the soil.



I AM TOTALLY TERRIFIED OF MY E-MAILBOX FROM THE AUTHORITIES  
I BELIEVE ALL THE PRARGRAPHS ONE DAY WILL POUR OUT OF THE COMPUTER SCREEN  
AND EAT ME LIKE A SWARM OF ANGRY WASPS.  
I REMIND MYSELF THAT I HAVE A PHD AND HAVE WORKED IN PUBIC ADMINISTRATION.  
IT DOESN'T HELP.  
I DRINK A CUP OF COFFEE AND READ A BIT INSTEAD.  
MAYBE IT HELPS.

Fuck. (Inappropriate word.)

I need to read my e-mailbox. I am going to the GP on Monday. Find out how long I should be on sick leave. I need to tell my boss something.

.....

I throw ants up over the computer screen

Then I lie on the floor under the table buried in the soil of the plants

Fall down through the apartments under us

Down into the basement

The underground

To the ants

They carry me out into the forest. Eat my clothes and the skin on my upper arms.

I get covered by moss.

Turn soft and humid, warm

Green pierced by small roots

Fungi penetrate my system

We exchange nutrients

Here I can just

Be

For a while

Maybe it is called

Flight

Magical thinking

Escapism

Lack of taking responsibility for adulthood

Bank accounts

Paragraphforms

Time

Spreadsheets

Dead

Zombies don't exist in the forest. The dead get eaten.

Composted.

To moss. Decomposed.

Recreated.

Angst

Flight

Away

Here

As long as self medication is coffee, books and daydreaming, everything will probably be ok. As long as I have time, it will probably all be ok.

Time

I need to open the e-mailbox.

After a cup of coffee

Or two

But it doesn't work on my phone.

So I need to go home

Computer

I just throw up some ants and wasps over the roofs of Inner Nørrebro

The plants in the library are not doing super fantastic

I would like to pour this earth over me. Turn all the plant pots upside down and make a little pile of earth here on the blue linoleum floor.

I can compost in the soil of the plants on the linoleum floor without creating lasting marks.

At some point when enough moss has grown, they can dig me away and dump me somewhere on the church yard with the dead

I am not dead.

I am just composting

Partitioning myself up into small pieces that are gathered anew in other microorganisms

Maybe I turn into a plant. If someone drops a mother of thousand offshoot near me. Or something else which just grows totally wild and unstoppable.

--

I have an enormous urge to be composted. To be buried and pierced through by roots fungi earthworms. I have recently seen several artists bury themselves in mud and film it. Maybe something like that. But it is a bit difficult to film as long as there is actually growing moss on the body. It is not nihilistic. It is a wish of giving birth to something new. A rebirth. Not a womb birth. A compost birth.



"There is

Now the rest of elements of the soil to be nurtured by the fermented bokashi is this residency composting process:

- WOOD CHIPS from "Inest" party area
- CHRONIC DISEASE
- SOIL/Sand lying around in piles
- FEAR OF FAILURE
- Nutritious Champast from Cens Hlave
- CAPITALISM

Saltholm:

- Almost white chalk sand/soil
- STORIES AND BELIEFS OF DISCONNECTION
- Sea grass
- INDECISIVENESS
- Cracked earth/manure with salt cover
- ALL THE STRAIGHT LINES
- Fine soil near sheep grazing
- ANTHROPOCENTRISM
- Another sample of straw and sea grass caught on a wire
- STRESS
- Some dried leaves that remind me of Tori's exercise
- WHITE SUPREMACY

→ All this working together "cooking" crumbly soil full of nutrients quickly breaking down the ferments to regenerate the rest.



## Holding Surplus House

## Excursions

- away from the residency but with the material

Small appearance at 'Holding Surplus House' research project's exhibition at **Southern Sweden Design Days** in Malmö. None of us were prepared for the format which was a bit trade fair - like, so prepared workshop had to be adapted into 5 minute ritual. Was lucky to get some very nice press photos just the hour I was there.



## Repair - Broken World Building

I held my first academic presentation since my burnout during the residency at **Repair - Broken World Building seminar** by CITA, Royal Academy Architecture School. This took a bit too much energy and i actually got sick the following day. But it also made contact with an academic fabrication research community very interested in waste products and even soil remediation to some extent. I learnt from a researcher that bokashi composting is used as soil remediation in some Latin American activist farmer communities. Potential for something here! ....But can I still do this fancy conference venue panel thing with people from GSD and such places?



In. Papadopoulos, D., Puig de la Bellacasa, M. & Myers, N., Eds. (forthc. 2021) *Reactivating elements. Substance, Actuality and Practice between Chemistry and Cosmology*. Durham: Duke University Press.

[\*DRAFT please refer to published version for exact citations\*]

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**Origin Stories – From Stardust to Life**

For my daughter’s sixth birthday we booked a children party at the Space Centre, a museum in our city dedicated to space science and technologies. The gig included the viewing of an educational animated film called *We are Stars*, shown in a planetarium style immersion projection hall. The film was a cosmic Earth biopic, telling children and their adult companions a classic popular science origin tale, that of the elementary origins of Life. *Once upon a time...*, five entities known as the “building blocks” of life emerged from billions of years of cosmic fireworks and stardust mixings: Oxygen, Hydrogen, Carbon, Nitrogen, Sulphur and Phosphorus. Fusions and bangs went on and on for so long a time that is impossible to comprehend... and even once Earth was formed as planet, geochemical melt and shake followed ceaselessly, until a mysterious juncture allowed *geos* to engender *bios*. Something happened when elements organically compounded and re-compounded into chemical substances and became involved with each other, to generate forms, teeming in the elemental sea (or soup), and came to be called life. Ye *We Are Stars* tale continued, with a commonplace plot and ending : the depiction of a tree of life shooting up into a myriad straight branches and sub branches, holding living creatures of all shapes and sizes. And at the top of one the highest branch, the end product, a Human figure. Us. Stars out of stars.

This story is commonplace to those acculturated in pop modern western cosmologies imbued with aestheticized scientific themes and metaphors. From stardust to elements, from elements to compounds, to substances, and life of all kinds, crowned by Life with a capital L, animated by superior intelligence. All emerging from primal stardust recompositions. This is a charismatic tale, telling how the multifarious forms of life that we know arose from what scientists now call biogeochemical processes. What’s not to like? A

# Day of rest, repair and illness. Reading Puig de la Bellacasa “Breakdown Ecopoethics”

ice-based, secular-materialist,  
reverence for the magical and  
improbable emergence and rise of life (a paradoxical occasion, both explainable and mysterious).

There is much to say about the narratives and imaginaries conveyed by this story. Imaginaries of cosmic wonder continue to generate joy to delight. Yet, something did strike me as not particularly educational in today’s planetary circumstances. Not only the human exceptionalism that the story tends to perpetuate, but more subtly, the mobilisation of the biogeochemical natural history of the elements as one of build-up towards achieved complexity. I felt unease at the absence of an indispensable dimension of the biogeochemical tale: that life on Earth as we know it is as much the creation, the build-up of stuff, as it is its elemental breakdown and recirculation. The imaginary that equates life to creation, growth and attainment in this longstanding story missed integrating even today’s most conservative conceptions of sustainability that translate into popularisations of ecological thinking ( from living in harmony with natural cycles to ideas of circular economies): the breakdown and circulation of matter that rebalances generation, productivity, and excess in a finite Earth. Most important for children growing up in a post-industrial city of the Global North, *We Are Stars* does not tell how biogeochemical cycles that took aeons to be established the ecological choreographies forming Earth as we know it, slowly started to become affected by cultivation activities about ten thousand years ago, and became dangerously disrupted since the industrial and agricultural revolutions. And yes, that the situation is dire, and the process seems unstoppable. Of course, as a parent, I feel one would have to find a way for new retellings that does not damp down cosmic wonder with paralysing fear and humanist guilt but nurtures a sense of involvement that transforms hope and joy into an everyday practice. A way that inspires curiosity about how, on Earth, are we going to continue to live together as a more than human community.

## **Breakdown Ecopoethics**

My sensitivity to the absence of this storyline in the education of children, many of whom already know they will be inheriting a damaged and trashed planet, is made more acute by

This place is new enclosure all over the place!!

This place is a container harbour!!

This place is a building site!!

There is so much activity here!!

How can you regenerate somewhere so full of activity, building, enclosure?









# Act 3 - Hot Compost

Text from **January** this year:

I had never touched this warm compost before. Does everyone know that you can warm your hands on active compost?? That it can get up to 60 degrees in larger piles and then seeds in normal compost are killed and you don't get weeds in your garden.

I need a place to make a big motherfucker compost. That can keep me warm at all times. That can be a place to shelter, to get taken care of. My compost will warm me. The soil bacteria are producing my energy. Wonder how long I will have to lie in a warm compost pile before the bacteria start breaking down my skin. Maybe I would get burns or get cooked at 60 degrees. Tattooed.

One day I will make a compost bath. One day.

Days later:

The warmth of the soil is delicious. Maybe I should try a footbath in hot compost? What if I found a bath tub to put in there? Compost wellness would be a wonderful market to explore.

**March:**

The compost is not burning. But it is a little warm in the middle. At least the bucket to the right. Can I ever recreate the magic of discovering warm compost?

I wonder if the hands touching the soil does anything to it. Apparently when you make sauerkraut with just salt and cabbage, the bacteria of the hands help the fermentation process start.

There is so little I understand. Beings appearing that I meet and greet. Soil mites. Grey mould that looks like ash. All the bacteria I cannot see but that create some kind of reaction. The warmth the smell. Affect. Disgust. But I cannot extract the organisms I communicate with from the actual combined form of being soil. Yesterday I learnt the word for the crumbles of combined sand clay organic matter but I already forgot. Co-something.

Days later

I love my beautiful soil going from slimy to crumbly. What was that word for soil structure that I learnt from Eva again?? Soil crumble. Fermented orange crumble with coffee.

**April:**

My stomach is still angry from thinking about my sadness issue, so I decide to spend some time with the good soil that was fermented maybe two months ago or something like that. There are still a couple of clumps of some things that haven't been completely broken down. There is also the seashell from Helle. The seashell from the original aloe vera that started my whole indoor jungle.

(...)

As I contemplate onion peel and tear it into strips - after the other clumps being pulverised, only onion peel doesn't pulverise - I decide to move my hands to the new soil factory that isn't even a week old. The calmed down beautiful soil is nice and crumbly, kind of dry but soft for the hands. I

am doing this as a conscious form of soil therapy, offering the knot in my belly to the onion peel and all the work that has been done to make this fresh, porous, well aired humus. It helps. I start thinking of the sea shell and Helle, the rainbow corn and the onion peel. My hands move and my stomach calms down. I think briefly about my fantasies of compost bathing. This is the type of soil which would be wonderful to bathe in. I just don't know how to produce enough of it in my basement. (...)

I shift focus to the new mix ...the ferments are of course still slimy. I prepare my hands for the sliminess of the ferments that are still big and not really much broken down yet. I mix around the upper half part of the soil factory, slowly moving the not yet quite integrated soil and new ferments. And guess what - just a little bit away from the edges THE BUCKET IS HOT!!! I dig my hands deep into the more humid mix and rejoice. We made hot compost again!! Six days after the bokashi was taken out. The corners are still cold. But the whole middle area is a furnace, burning, making heat, combustion, inviting other magic bacteria to do their thing.

The bacteria are of course not magic, they are just living their lives... My hands are warmed by creatures in the soil. I don't even know who they are. But I know there are friends there working together to warm my hands. Joy. Warmth. Healing. A pause is created, another sense of time. My time with these creatures I don't even know, warming me. Isn't that magic?

Next day

The compost is now so hot it is really bordering on burning my hands. I could feel the heat on top of the bucket.

I don't know how to measure it by any other unit than "close to burning" or "almost too hot"

I just wrote to David Sebastian "Hot compost hand bath releases all your worries". True therapy.

Slimy therapy.

Two days later

The compost is still warm. (..) I push my hands way down to the bottom of my little 30 L tray.

Move the soil around a bit, mixing. Let my hands be still. Feeling the warmth, the weight on my hands, the soil structure going dryer and more crumbly but still being warm. So warm. Embracing me. Warmth running from my hands via the heart to the stomach, loosening the knot of sadness.

A couple of minutes and the heat exchange loses some of the power.

Together with this writing my stomach is now completely calm. The real composting may be the writing. A combination of observing life around me and writing. Safe space. Stopping time, awkward me-shaped spaces. Supported by soil, their bacteria heating up, and a blank page filling up with writing.



“Ah, it’s so warm! That’s nice.  
It’s really like a hot water bottle  
{varmepude} warmth. Slow heat,  
somehow”

“You can maybe introduce it for wellness”

“I want to have some of this batch to build  
on, like a sourdough, for my own garden”

“It’s totally not slimy. No, it feels good. It’s  
becoming prettier and less smelly”

“There is an eggshell”

“It’s not a bad smell. Less sweet than when  
the ferment came out.”

**“Do you think that if you  
just have your hand down  
here for a while, it will just  
send good energy?”**

**“Or it will start composting  
your hand”.**

**“You will get very  
grounded”.**

**“The soil sends heat into  
my hand and then it goes  
into my body and then I  
get fresh and happy”**

“Breaking it into smaller pieces certainly  
helps the process.”

“There is very little fruit in here now.  
I really see that chopping it makes a  
difference.”

“This is actually a bit slimy. Maybe a little  
mold here. But that also breaks it apart.”

“The hand is also sending energy. How will  
the hand change the compost?”

“You can start breaking it up, give it a  
massage. This is kind of what I want to do,  
break it apart and so.”

“Ok. First I did it just a little bit. Now it’s  
work. Now I want to build this soil! Now I  
want to make the dough!”

“A potato! With peel on. Because it was  
whole with peel, I believe they have had  
more difficulty breaking through.”

# Potential pathways

## Notes for future 'Tired Architecture: Composting in Awkward Spaces/Hot Compost' collaborations with Metropolis work formats: (Based on conversations with Trevor.)

1. **The Lab** - workshop format. Performing Landscapes non stop format to test ongoing collaborations/development projects

This is the format I had in mind when I arrived, because it is basically the only one I knew. I still hope to be invited to a 1 hr 30 min workshop with the actions now tested, where I am instructor, we perform the actions of the composting process pretty much like in the residency, including the material composting, the texts and the word composting. Depends on direction of longer term collaborations, what needs to be tested in a lab with an audience for future productions? Design upgrade of my tools needed. Just me, microbes and food waste. Not other human collaboration as point of departure.

2. **Performance kit** to take out to groups of people, schools, libraries

Design project around the workshop actions as above. To be mobile. (I need to start driving a car again in order to move soil even if the amounts are not so big. Or design a bike cargo kit or big rolling suitcase that can also be taken on trains.) Talk to Rune Fjord, potentially. Maybe also Svenja. How do we ask the microbes what they need/like? Basic building block for ongoing project.

3. **Metropolis Greenhouse collaborations** - inviting other artists into the compost lab. What is happening with the soil/ in the soil, in these new realtions meeting in the actions/ performance work?

The collaboration with David Sebastian is the first in a series. Documentation of this, recording of what I take with me etc. to be developed. Brainstorming next candidate(s) Snorre Elvin! Because he wants to actually start composting. We could go out to his summer house. With Nanna too? Other dancers from Metropolis? Tora Balslev and the decaying leaf from the residency exercise? Already there. Was put in the soil mix. Rune Fjord also here? Because he might have to help me with the design project :). Svenja and the Malmö/ Holding Surplus experience already happened. To be explored, thought through with the soil. Maria Viftrup. Her performance compost was meant to physically go into the soil mix but somehow disappeared along the way. The woman who carries her weight in soil? (I didn't get her name)

Til Vægs/ Skovhavelunden? Kind of already happened too. But not in this format. The Degrowth people. Signe Vad. Permakulturgården Skvovirke. Well - all I've been doing and experiencing for the past year and a half sort of goes into the soil. If we see it that way, there is potentially already a bog book there. Nanna Francisca. Oleg Kofoed. Dorte Bjerre Jensen. Di Ponti. The whole of Hosting Lands. Det Lilla Rum. But that might be extending the concept a bit too far. Helen Nishijo. Heidi Svenningsen Kajita. Smith Innovation. Sebastien Marot. Natasha Myers...

Maybe there is an intro **Greenhouse composting text** describing this form of composting new inspiration/ relations in a less concrete way but leading towards the concept and ethics of composting as the synthesis of my very personal research. Much of it was experienced being participant in performative or discursive workshops, or workshops in a particular physical setting, and generated a lot of affect in a relational situation, actually. Will think about that. Text introduction to the project, maybe. Conceptual foundation experienced in relation. With both people and the physical spaces. Generating new soil, roots. Then comes the continuous Greenhouse collaboration growing organically out of this via the residency.

How to apply for money for fees for these people? Just an ongoing process?

There is already a physical soil making process established in the Loft, which might just be able to continue in some way. Snorre is taking soil to his garden.

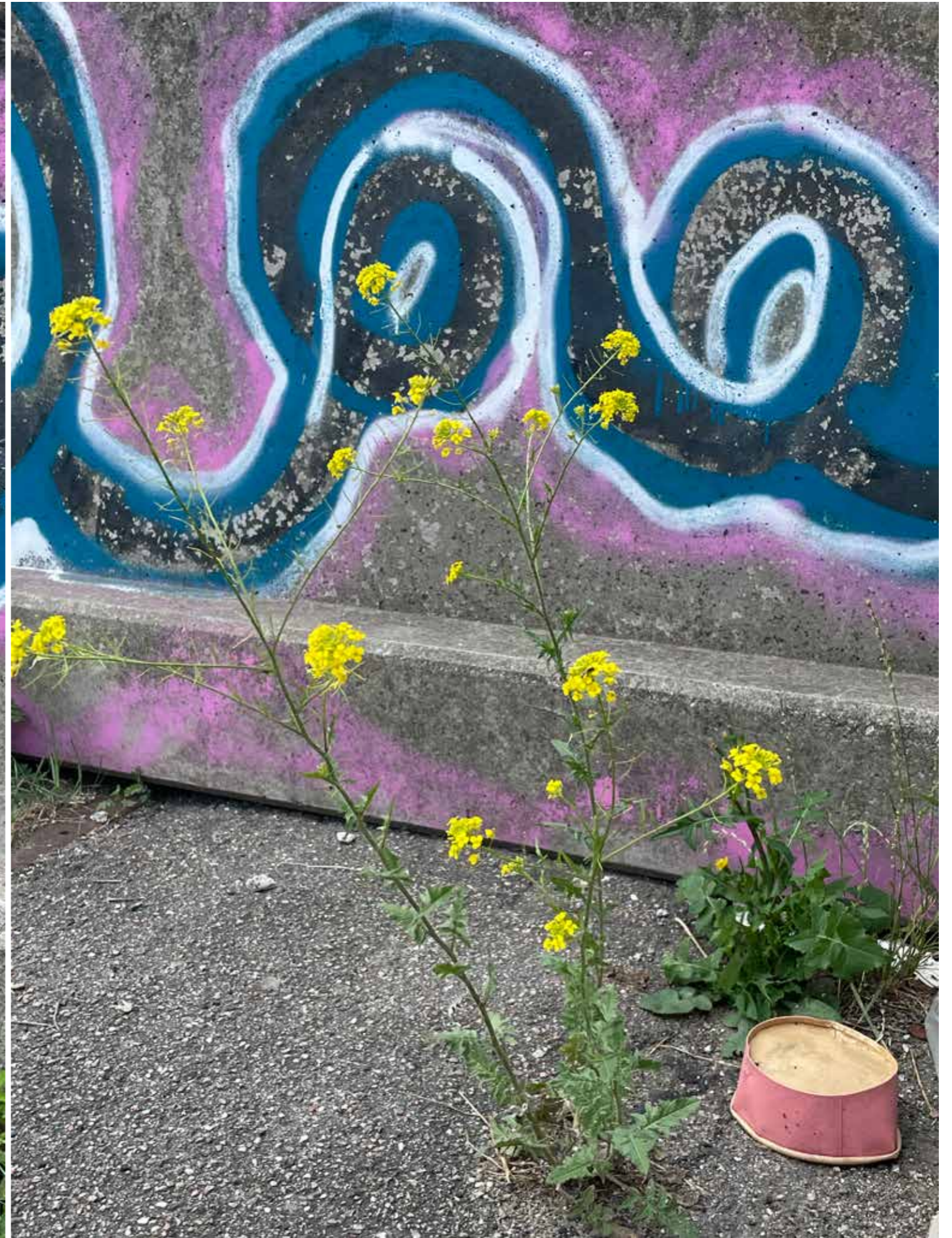
4. **Metropolis physical Greenhouse space**- apply to Realdania, LAF, Nordea Fonden mm for an investigative performance architectural research process on establishing an actual built physical space for Metropolis Greenhouse.

Potential main collaborators Gitte Juul and Luis Barrios-Negron. The investigation is also a public open performance series, inviting people in in a more meaningful way than post-it workshops or normal "participatory planning" workshops. More a performance series as test-sites to be documented and evaluated but with some architectural work in between.

Community = metropolis artists and audience, local people, plants, birds, insects and microbes living and working around Teaterøen and everyone with an interest in the area.

5. **My literary text project** that never gets near completion but keeps composting itself in perpetuity. But I will keep Metropolis out of this :)

6. **Academic research:** Soil, affect, performance and MPdIB article for some unknown publication. I might cooperate with CITA/ Repair - Broken World Building, on this.



# Act 4 - Bringing the soil to Refshaleøen

## Procession

Two people one bowl.  
Garden spoon. Bring dinner spoons to sift the soil later (in my backpack).  
Scope as much ferment-compost-soil into the bowl as you think you can carry for 5 minutes  
I have backpack with pens paper zip lock bags markers **GLOVES**  
Mats to sit on with me.  
Stones/ chalk from Saltholmen

## Walk

When we walk, notice the plants and soil along the way. **What do they need? What do we need?**

## The place

Bringing the composting out to Refshaleøen and the urban development all around, the intense playground, the container port, more and more enclosures for building sites which are actually festivals but still building sites which you are not allowed to enter. We are seeing the first enclosure here. The little site we found with Tora one of the first days really captivated me. An ultrathin layer of decomposing critical matter. Half soil, much moss, half seeds, pollen, leaves fallen from trees. I had planned to come back to this place. Enclosure.

Then I moved out on the huge open expanse in front of the wolf. The scale of this place is like nowhere else. I had imagined nurturing some of the small plants in ultrathin soil layers out there. Enclosure.

So we are here in the left over wilderness of Refshaleøen. But even here they have mowed the lawn. There are barriers ready to put up somewhere. Is something coming here too?

My personal composting process was about finding place for soil regeneration in awkward mainly indoor space. My access to soil was restricted. Composting in awkward spaces repeats itself here. Where is there time to regenerate? The time of soil?

What is the ground here anyway??

## Now I will read the little text lines from two years ago for this session:

Went to the temple.  
This place is a mess.  
I can't concentrate even on writing here. Too much in the head spinning around. And I just went to meditation!  
I need to get out of here, out of the city. Out until the trees and less stimuli.  
I need a forest.  
Being fired may give some peace, but not like this.

I need to make a story I can live in.

I have been set free.  
Three people including myself have signed electronically that I shall be free from work for three months. Without being kicked in the butt by the unemployment agency. Without having to fight to be allowed to be sick. It actually says in the document that I shall not be signed off sick any more. That is the rather strange thing, but that is what it says. So now I am not formally sick any more. Maybe that will make me well?

Went to meditation and felt gravity.

GRAVITY.

Tend to an ecosystem. Make compost. Lots of compost.

WHAT IS FINDING MY VOICE, REALLY?  
IS IT ACTUALLY FINDING SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO LISTEN??

I'm in the wrong story.  
I shall write a new one.

It can take some time.

### The composted words

So here we are writing stories. That take too long.

The soil is not really soil yet. It needs a couple of weeks more to get really crumbly. The ratio of fermented matter to soil was also quite high in our lasagne box. But either way less than two weeks is not enough to complete the composting into calm soil. It is still hot, working.

Microorganisms burning heat while decomposing the organic matter.

But let us see how far the composting has come. Let's see what transformation has taken place. Let's see if we can find the stories, if there is only decomposition or also new meaning appearing. With all the materials from Saltholm, good soil from my home, and three sources of ground improvement found in piles on Refshaleøen, we composted these words and issues, situations and concepts that no longer serve us:

Chronic disease

Fear of Failure

Capitalism

Stories and beliefs of disconnection

Indecisiveness

All the straight lines

Anthropocentrism

Stress into interconnected stillstand

White supremacy

Now I want you to look through the in-between compost-soil in your bowls, hold one of the thoughts above in your head and see which words and issues you can find there now. Maybe the decomposition isn't quite done yet. But maybe there are some letters or other things that speak to your issue or one of the other issues we put away to compost. You can choose to collaborate or work separately.

### TIME

When you have dwelled on the message in the words and the compost, you can decide if you want to take it with you or leave it here, give it to compost on the land. If you want to write down notes, I will give you pen and a small paper. You can also write something on the ground with the chalk stones from Saltholm.

### What to nurture

Then we want you to think about what you want to do with this nutritious but not quite composted matter. The ferment-compost-soil in between. If we bury it or leave it here, it will help establish new nutritious soil. You can also take it home and put it in your garden where you want to grow vegetables. I have zip lock bags for you if you want to take some of the not quite yet soil with you home. The power of the transformation of the really difficult to break down - words are also there. Maybe it will keep inspiring you to compost the things that bother you, that no longer serve you?

But we have a lot of soil, so we want us together to decide a corner, a plant, a being around here that we want to regenerate by giving it some of all this nutritious compost.

What do they need? What do we need?

What needs regeneration here?

Is it us? Do we give it to ourselves??





What do they need? What do you need?



Strong leaders

Hollow. What is down there?

What kind of ground are we walking on?



What space is still left over?

Enclosure



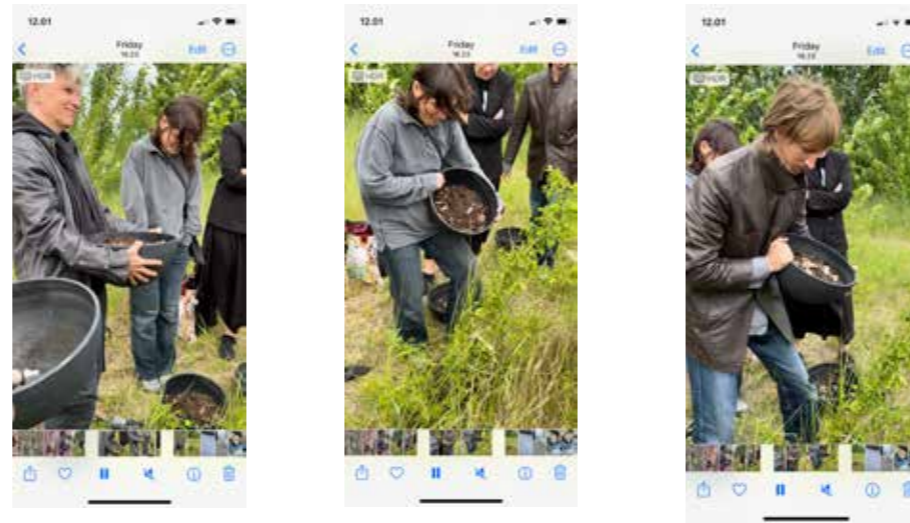
Thin layers

Soil in the making





**What do you want to nurture?**



**“May you grow strong roots  
and reach the sky”**





## Feedback

- TIME - cannot do it all in one. Positive
- Generous process, ongoing thing to check into
  - How do you connect to someone/thing by own process - meaningful to put whatever into it. Banana peel, etc."
  - Methodologies - Plastic bags. "Part 1, 2, 3" Satisfaction, coming from another field.
- Happy you building intimacy with soil, decay, something dirty, something we eat then dirty etc. Intimacy w. what we throw away. Direct effect on me wanting to build soil.
- Connected personal - material - the existential. Keeping <sup>everyday</sup> three parallel things balancing out.
  - Caretaker - metaphysical process. Framework for what we think. Whenever see one, etc. (Trevor)
- Happy felt the warmth act. (Adam)  
'don't intentionally go seek out this. Important after movement class!
- Transformation. Burying at 2. stage
  - now transformed - collective. Not just burying - but transforming warmth, massaging the soil. Healing!

- therapeutic, takes time.
- simplicity. happened because simple.

### Critical round

- Performative response:
  - The personal not to destroy the poetic smuggle the "poetry" into the text in more subtle ways. (Kevin)
- Performativity:
  - Curious how to develop performance, create time? Eg. Thr
- letters - how did they come into it? (Snore) The
- Very strong beginning, maybe too strong. Fell apart a bit. Not so structured. Didn't know how to gather up and conclude. (Trevor)
- Only time I didn't know what to do felt overwhelmed etc. The soup <sup>fell</sup> I was empty. Do we need to put more into it? The soil and soup enough. The SOUP continues, talk. (Adam)
- Didn't need the words!!
  - The reading: Not needed / Kevin's comment.
  - Reading/poetry can come from anything.
  - time not necessarily about compost.
- PS - Don't need to repeat all processes. Long duration - a book to be read from any point.

Future - Time - follow the natural process. (Kevin) Whole season? Growing the food + decomposing? The text important - smuggling in site specific history etc.

- Who are you? Potential, diary etc. Are you facilitator, poet or what?
- How could 4 performances exist separately and connected??
- Trevor: You have to go to all of them! Not reduced to an experience, performance.
- Building a community!
  - Inviting others in, learn and change the world.
- Adam: Important that the soil remains the main performer. How can the soil be the performer? Not make it overly performative. Tending the soil, the garden.
- How could this be represented somewhere? David Sebastian: I am shallow....

