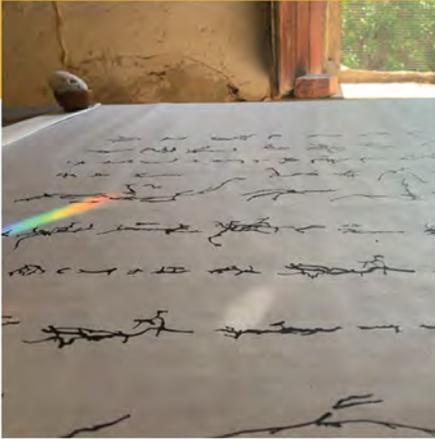


# A SENTIENT LAND

*aesthetic alliances with forests, beetles, salt, and air*

Margaux Crump  
Julia Krupa

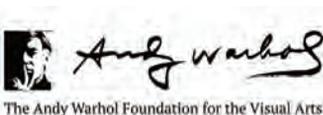
Nelly-Eve Rajotte  
Eileen Ryan



January 21 - March 28, 2026

Emerson Contemporary  
Media Art Gallery

Supported by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and The National Endowment for the Arts.



# A SENTIENT LAND

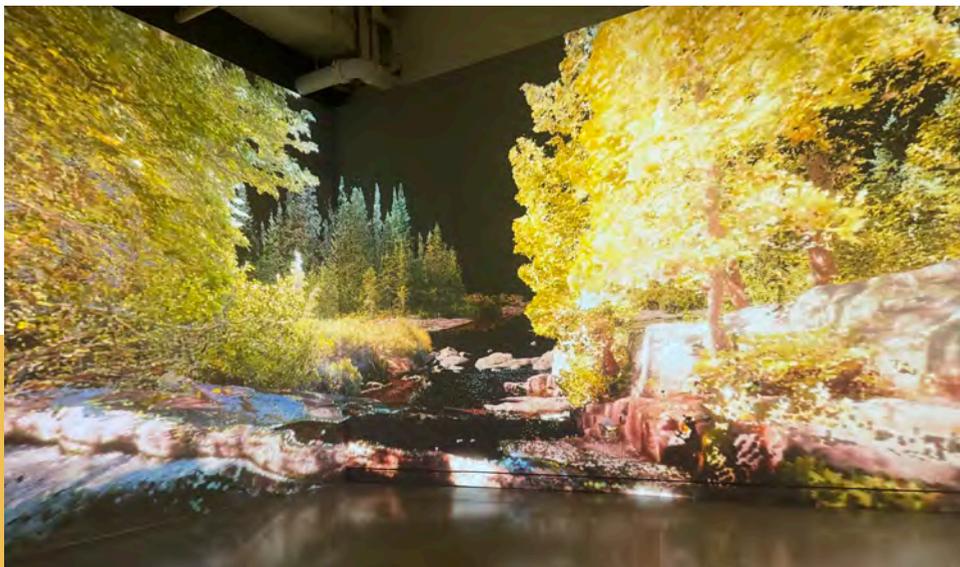
*aesthetic alliances with forests, beetles, salt, and air*

Shana Dumont Garr, Exhibition Curator

*A Sentient Land: Aesthetic Alliances with Forests, Beetles, Salt, and Air* brings together immersive artworks created at innovative intersections of science, aesthetics, and spirituality. Artists Margaux Crump, Julia Krupa, Nelly-Eve Rajotte, and Eileen Ryan recognize the sentience—the capacity to experience subjectivity—of the materials that compose their art. They expand the authorship of their work to include the innate intelligence of their non-human collaborators, including trees, beetles, salt, and air.

The artists' way of thinking parts ways with Materialism, a school of thought that considers matter to be inert. Vibrant Materialism, in contrast, holds that all matter possesses life. With the climate catastrophe in mind, scholarly circles increasingly acknowledge the benefits of decentering humans and including the intelligence of non-human beings in critical thinking strategies. While the current era, the Anthropocene, has accelerated climate change through human actions, these artists are part of a growing movement that prioritizes the needs of the more-than-human world.

It might seem paradoxical that the artists work so closely with nature while also using cutting-edge tools to create their art. However, the perceived binary between people and nature is false—the technology we create is itself an extension of the natural world. The artists' affirmative use of technology situates their work firmly in the present, recognizing the potential of bearing witness to their respective locales rather than romanticizing the world before the Industrial Revolution. As Kate Mondloch has observed, “the artistic enactment of technological intimacy and mediated entanglement, as a feminist material practice, might offer a new model of critical aesthetics.”\* This approach acknowledges that mediation through media and technology can foster bodily affinity and a heightened understanding of what connects us all.



The art in *A Sentient Land* traces the artists' time and actions as co-authors with the more-than-human world. They research, communicate, and share sensory experiences with other beings and with you, the viewer. Their methods are ancient, contemporary, and inventive, including traveling to rural regions to visit elderly herbalists, tracing, collecting, building cloud chambers, bio-sonification, and LIDAR scanning.

Through practices that are both intuitive and strategic, the artists' innovative modes of working raise questions: Do they translate on behalf of the materials? How do speculation and anthropomorphism fit into these explorations of restoration, time, and scale? The works embrace chance, uncertainty, and the act of ceding control as generative forces. What we experience in *A Sentient Land* suggests the possibilities opened by expanded authorship. In exchange for certainty stands potential.

The resulting works of art forge stronger interspecies connections and cultivate increased empathy and hope for the future. Built from darkness with an earthen Baroque sensibility, the four immersive installations engage viewers in dynamic aesthetic experiences. Audiences become part of these interspecies connections through energy shifts—prompting emotive events and encounters with essences that may linger beyond the gallery.

\*Mondloch, Kate. *A Capsule Aesthetic: Feminist Materialisms in New Media Art*. Minneapolis & Lond: University of Minnesota Press, 2018. P. 7.

Top: Margaux Crump, *Quantum Conversations*, installation view, 2026. Courtesy Feast Day Studio

Left: Nelly-Eve Rajotte, *The Trees Communicate With Each Other at 220 Hertz*, installation view, 2026.

# MARGAUX CRUMP

*Whispered messages from visitors to Earth from the cosmos*

**Sense focus:** sight, taste

**Disciplines:** quantum

When Charles Wilson invented cloud chambers in the early twentieth century to observe ionizing radiation, he created portals into the invisible architecture of reality. These closed environments containing supersaturated vapor clouds render visible what should be unseeable: the trajectories of subatomic particles moving through space. We can witness with our naked eyes the smallest constituents of matter—entities far tinier than molecules, which themselves are composed of multiple particles.

Margaux Crump built a cloud chamber to witness cosmic rays. In her words:

*Cosmic rays are particles traveling through the universe at nearly the speed of light. Their ghostly trails are gestures in time, momentarily inscribed in the mist, leaving a fleeting trace of their presence with us.*

As she watched the particles trace their paths through the chamber's mist, Crump received an internal monologue that was not her own. She transcribed these channeled messages, and visitors to the installation in the Project Gallery can hear them whispered in the artist's voice—a transmission from matter in motion. The video is her record of the experience.

In October 2025, Crump traveled from her home in Texas to gather stones in Massachusetts for the cairns that anchor the installation. These stones are symbolic guides for the particles, signaling the connection of spirit with matter. They also echo the holy wells, marked by similarly stacked stones, in Wales, where Crump has visited—sites where the material and the unseen have merged since ancient times.

The smoky forms that emerge from the clouds in *Quantum Conversations* also manifest in Crump's *Spells for Protection*, which she creates by immersing silk in salt baths, allowing crystals to gradually colonize the fabric's surface. Graphite, mica, and smoke made from burning mugwort and juniper join the alchemical process. Drawing on the Scottish folk practice of saining and the technique of fumage, she creates four new moon-like drawings of shimmering texture. Each of the works on view began with identical conditions, and how they uniquely formed is a mystery, even to the artist. The materials transform—matter becomes smoke, liquid crystallizes over time—resulting in glittering formations that animate with light and the presence of each viewer. These works pulse with a lunar character, embodying cycles of visibility and concealment.



# JULIA KRUPA

## *The herbalist, the gatherer, the witch*

**Sense focus:** smell, taste

**Disciplines:** archives, anthropology, ethnology, herbalism

An herbal scent fills the air around Julia Krupa's monumental, double-sided paintings. Pigmented with dyes made from herbs she foraged, each canvas presents an entirely covered surface, dappled and variable like light catching water or filtering through a forest canopy. The surfaces pulse with organic energy, their layered marks echoing the ripples of veined marble or the living bark of ancient trees. They hang suspended so both sides remain visible—there is no “front” or “back” to each painting, no hierarchy of viewing, and an invitation to circle and witness from multiple perspectives.

The accompanying two-channel video installation documents Krupa's field research: intimate interviews with herbalists and performative herb walks through the Carpathian Mountain Range along Poland's southern border. These collected interviews and activities with female participants form the Herbal Herstory Archive—a living repository of lineages of care passed through generations of women working intimately with plants. Together, Krupa's paintings and Herstory Archives enact a non-hierarchical vision that merges personal experience with a radical proposal for environmental restoration.

This is deeply multidisciplinary work, with each element belonging to a holistic process of making, storytelling, and sharing. The project forms part of Krupa's PhD research titled “Herbal Road to Bioegalitarianism: Phytotherapy in Poland in the face of the climate crisis.” Responding to ecological devastation is not peripheral but central to both her artistic practice and anthropological investigation.



Julia Krupa, *Herbalist paintings*, Deadnettle, Nettle, White Poplar, Birch, Tansy, handmade dye on fabric, 2021. 78.7 x 118 inches



Julia Krupa, *The Gatherers From the Herbal Herstory Archive, Carpathians*, 2023–2025, video still.

Krupa amplifies the voices of women—particularly elders—who follow time-honored practices such as harvesting two-thirds or less of what is available, leaving enough to sustain each plant's life cycle and meet the needs of other harvesters, including more-than-human beings inhabiting these environments. The work holds space for a radical reorientation: how to center the land and its needs rather than human extraction and profit.

The colors suffusing the paintings are created with dyes made from herbs harvested for healing. Each painting is conceived with the specific functions of its botanical collaborators in mind. Julia's notes about each work appear below.

### ***Elder and Black Alder Trees***

The elder was gathered from urban green spaces, where the tree's branches sometimes reach as high as the second floor of a building. It is a plant deeply embedded in Slavic symbolism—believed to cure nearly any ailment. Its power was invoked not only through ingestion but through a spoken plea repeated three times: “Holy elder, take my pain beneath your healthy roots.” Elder possesses well-documented antiviral properties and proves remarkably effective during infections. Paired with the antibacterial potency of alder, it becomes a formidable remedy for colds and fever.

### ***Deadnettle, Nettle, White Poplar, Birch, Tansy***

This dye was created during Poland's Black Protests, ignited by the tightening of the country's already restrictive abortion ban. It is composed of plants once used in traditional practices to induce miscarriage—a deliberate invocation of bodily autonomy and the knowledge women have carried and concealed across centuries.

### ***Birch and Hazel Trees***

This painting emerges from birch and hazel, two trees deeply rooted in Central European landscapes and traditionally associated with youthful, feminine energy. Birch, with its pale, luminous bark, has long been valued for cleansing and revitalizing: its leaves support kidney function, reduce swelling, and ease inflammation, while its sap was regarded as a source of renewal. Hazel, known for flexible branches and protective symbolism, offers gentler support—its bark and leaves possess astringent and anti-inflammatory properties that soothe and strengthen skin. Used together, birch and hazel form a balancing pair: a remedy that purifies, stabilizes, and calms what has become inflamed.

# NELLY-EVE RAJOTTE

*A sublime forest, archived as a vibrant mirage for the future.*

**Sense focus:** hearing, sight

**Disciplines:** archives, Forestry, VFX (Visual Effects) animation, electrical engineering

Nelly-Eve Rajotte's immersive, monumental projection envelops spectators within a simulated, sublime forest. Rajotte invokes the colors, moods, and themes of Romantic and Baroque painting to conjure the sublime—that paradoxical state where terror and exhilaration converge. Paintings in the Western tradition since the sixteenth century have emphasized the miniature scale of human figures against nature's vastness, rendering visible our insignificance and mortality. This construct of nature as fundamentally separate from humanity can be read as an attempt to contain existential dread. Rajotte draws upon these historical associations while radically expanding them through duration, spatial immersion, and sound.

Rajotte's installation transcends individual anxiety to confront species extinction itself. The drama and ceaseless transformation of *The Trees Communicate with Each Other at 220 Hertz* explodes the static representation of landscape far beyond what any cultural object such as a painting or photograph could contain. Trees communicate with each other and perceive their surroundings at a frequency of 220 hertz, a vibrational language invisible to human perception. Rajotte placed electrodes directly on tree leaves to sense their internal electrical currents. The data harvested from these electrodes drove a sound algorithm through a modular



Nelly-Eve Rajotte, *The Trees communicate with each other at 220 hertz*, 3-channel video installation 4K, 25 min, installation view, 2024-2026.



Nelly-Eve Rajotte, *The Trees communicate with each other at 220 hertz*, 3-channel video installation 4K, 25 min, 2024-2026

synthesizer, translating arboreal bioelectricity into audible speech. While Rajotte worked with living trees to generate the original soundtrack, for this exhibition, we present a recording rather than live, generative sound—a decision made to avoid confining a living tree in a darkened gallery.

The imagery is hauntingly, unnervingly realistic because it was generated through LIDAR scanning, which preserves spaces as navigable 3D files. These scans are typically used in forestry to assess forest health and calculate commercial extraction value. Rajotte subverts this extractive technology, using it instead to conserve and electrify the imagination through digital means. The installation seamlessly merges the organic with the technological.

The arboreal ecosystem dissolves the experience of trees beyond the limiting constructs of subject/object relations. Rajotte's work radicalizes perception by erasing boundaries between beings, generating visceral feelings of immersion, connection, and kinship. When witnessing the trees communicate with each other, viewers may experience an expanded awareness of the intelligence animating the forest—a recognition that we are never alone, never separate, always enmeshed in webs of relation.

Nelly-Eve collaborated with a team to realize this vision:

Codrin-Mihail Tablan Negrei, VFX artist

Guillaume Sasseville with Gabrielle Andrea Ouellette, modular synthesizer design

Expertise Laser 3D-iSCAN, LIDAR scanning

# EILEEN RYAN

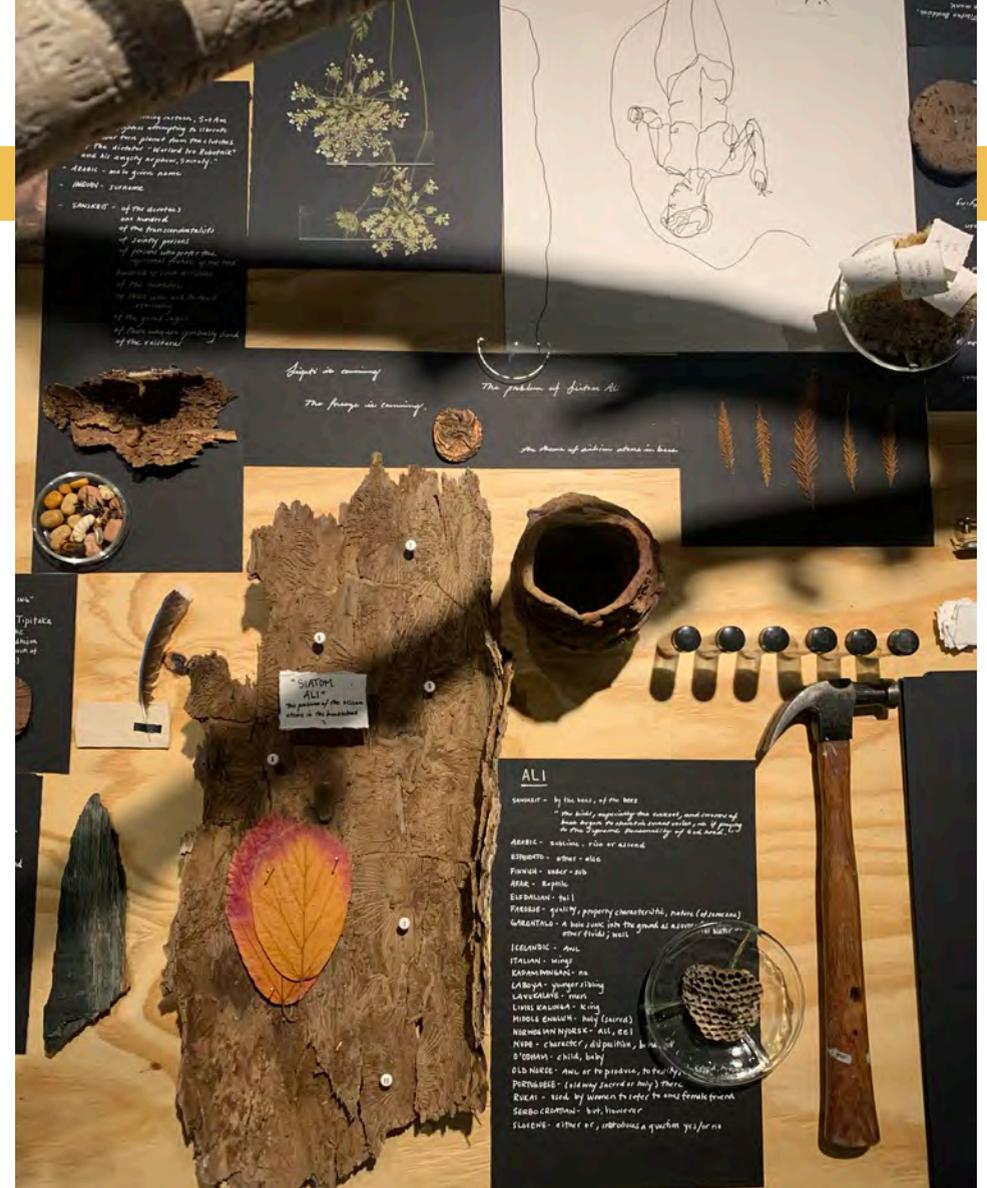
*The limit has been taken, a translated declaration inscribed by beetles onto a branch*

Sense focus: sight, touch

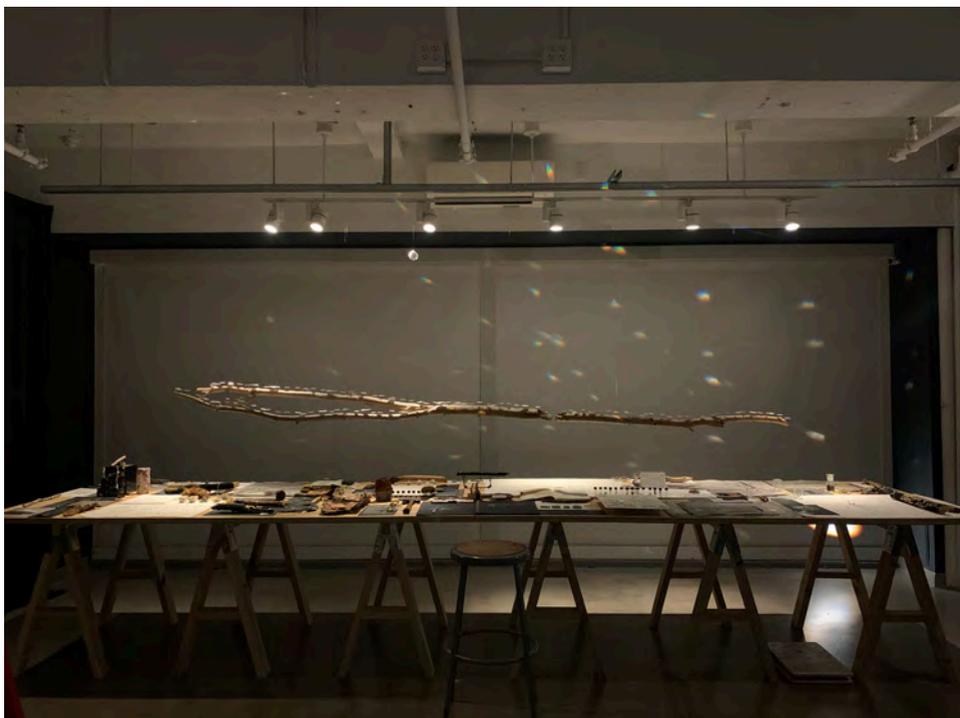
Disciplines: microbiology, entomology, hospitality

Eileen Ryan's *CODEX* project probes the spiritual microbiome of the forest through speculative storytelling that refuses the boundaries between science and mysticism. She began her training as a microbiologist, but gradually art and spirituality claimed equal importance in her practice—not as departures from scientific rigor but as necessary expansions of it. With this project, she interrogates interspecies communication and asks why forests have served as spaces of holiness and veneration across cultures and millennia.

Those intimate with forests can read the signatures of climate catastrophe. The lichens Old Man's Beard and Fish Bone cannot survive polluted air—their presence or absence functions as atmospheric testimony. In a healthy ecosystem, they flourish. High beetle populations accompany tree death, but beetles are indicators more than executioners, participants in a process already underway. Ryan describes the marks beetles inscribe beneath bark as a hospice for trees, a collaboration initiated when dying trees emit pheromones to summon the beetles. It is a cooperative death rite, and the resulting intricate patterns carved beneath bark are called “galleries”—an etymological coincidence that haunts the space where this artwork now resides.



Eileen Ryan, *CODEX* | *the limit has been taken*, installation view, 2026.



Eileen Ryan, *CODEX* | *the limit has been taken*, installation view, 2026.

Beetles evolved approximately 327 million years ago, carrying ancient knowledge in their bodies and behaviors. High beetle populations accompany tree death, but they are participants in a process already underway. Ryan shared her cryptically pictographic tracings of beetle galleries with Neural Machine Translation (NMT) software. Trained on every available human language ever recorded in writing, the NMT technology decodes what the beetles inscribed. Her installation recreates a lab-like space containing collections, translations from her tracings of beetle tracks, and the startling results of her queries to artificial intelligence.

The translations are preserved in a multimedia codex spanning a physical book, a library of specimens, and a website. The *CODEX* functions as an archive and an invitation, presenting Ryan's discoveries while supporting her ongoing research. By working in cooperation with technology, beetles, and trees, Ryan amplifies the potential of the strange, the defiant, and the marginal—those beings and processes dismissed or overlooked by anthropocentric frameworks.

In the installation, light filters through a prism, conjuring transient rainbows as it did in Ryan's temporary studio in Portugal. As prism and light converge, rainbows materialize—seemingly by chance, yet inevitable—and then continue to shift and evolve, never static, always becoming.

# WHEN GALLERIES TURN GREEN

Essay by Martina Tanga, Art Historian

As the world outside burns and melts, the walls of museums and galleries, at least in 2025, have turned a green hue. There has been an overabundance of exhibitions and programs that have focused on ecological concerns, plants, nature, and the environment. A few standout international shows include Biennials, whose themes address humans' relationship with nature, such as the Geumgang Nature Art Pre-Biennale in Geumgang, China, and the Helsinki Biennale. There have also been major museum exhibitions that address the non-human world through the lens of contemporary art, like *Mutual Aid - Art in Collaboration with Nature* at the Castello di Rivoli, Italy, and a revisionist approach by looking at the role nature played in canonical artworks, such as *Arcimboldo - Bassano - Bruegel—the Times of Nature*, at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Additionally, there have been a host of other programs, such as the *Earth Rising* festival, hosted by the Irish Museum of Modern Art, and the Luxembourg Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, which featured “Fallen Trees,” an exhibition celebrating the connection between art and nature.

There are several reasons for the germination of such shows, including the development time seeded during the COVID-19 pandemic, which thrust many into isolation, moving many of us out of urban environments and into green spaces. The result is that, a few years later, many curators and cultural producers began to think green and are now realizing projects that bring “nature” into the “white cube.”

Another reason, which fundamentally refers to how humans are hard-wired, is that the anxieties and fears that come from bearing witness to our rapidly depleting and degenerating earth mean that humans crave the connection with nature, which we are in danger of completely severing by living with the legacies of colonialism and within the ongoing violence of the neo-capitalist order. Being out in



Julia Krupa, *The Gatherers*, installation view.



Eileen Ryan, *CODEX | the limit has been taken*, installation detail.

the greenery inherently soothes and calms the mind, lowers anxiety, and relieves stress. To cope with the calamities of our current times, people are flocking to the galleries to find some semblance of relief.

But the question is, what, if anything, will be the result of greening these traditionally white spaces? Flocking indoors instead of outdoors to rekindle an idea of “nature” which we have now long lost simply reinforces the illusion and delusion of the condition we now find ourselves in.<sup>1</sup> What is needed is to fundamentally change our relationship with the world around us, and this can both be attained inside—where meaningful conversations need to take place—and outside the gallery—where we need to confront, with a full consciousness, exactly how depleted the earth's resources are, how much biodiversity we have lost, and just how disconnected we have actually become from ‘nature.’ The critical task at hand seems to be that we need to learn with the sentient life that still exists out there.

Artists and cultural producers have long been concerned about the impact humans have had on the planet. The ecological turn in contemporary art runs parallel to and in dialogue with the broader environmental movement, which began shortly after the advent of the Anthropocene, also known as the “Great Acceleration,” when the human population experienced a dramatic increase, fossil fuel consumption spiraled out of control, and deforestation escalated rapidly. Conversations evolved in the late 1960s and early 1970s, consciousness-raising that this acceleration in resource extraction was, and is still not sustainable, as we can see with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962); Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968); the first Earth Day celebration 1970; *Limits to Growth* (1972); and Endangered Species Act (1973). These texts and events helped shape the environmental movement's consciousness.

Since the 1960s, artists and cultural producers have understood that a major contributor to the Anthropocene is humanity's dislocation from “nature,” a term at once simple—defined as everything non-human—and infinitely complex. They have sought, through different means, reconnection, repositioning, and, at the very least, to grapple with this sense of dislocation. Land Artists—like Robert

<sup>1</sup> Richardson M. Modelling Nature Connectedness Within Environmental Systems: Human-Nature Relationships from 1800 to 2020 and Beyond. *Earth*. 2025; 6(3):82. <https://doi.org/10.3390/earth6030082>



Margaux Crump, *Spells for Protection: VI*, salt crystals grown into silk with mica and graphite, along with smoke from mugwort and juniper, 2025.

Smithson, Nancy Holt, Michael Heizer, Richard Long, and Maya Lin—took the “Art” out of the galleries and into the land, both green and remote, and concrete and closer to home within the urban space. Attempting to shift not only our physical bodies to be outside, but our minds, and our relationship with the outside world, Robert Smithson published the essay, “A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects,” in the September 1968 issue of *Artforum*, where he used geological stratification to metaphorically speak to history and experience that resist human attempts at ordering or control. Ecological engagement outside, throughout the subsequent decades, took on many forms, including political efforts, such as the work of Agnes Denes, Mel Chin, and Olafur Eliasson.

Likewise, artists have taken “nature”—living plants and animals—and brought it inside, into the rarified space of the art gallery. An early example includes Edward Steichen’s unusual 1936 exhibition, titled “Steichen Delphiniums,” where the photographer displayed the rare variety of the plant that he had, for over twenty-six years, cross-bred to a particular form. Indeed, to avoid confusion with Steichen’s now famous photographs of flowers, the exhibition’s press release specified that “it will be a personal appearance of the flowers themselves.”<sup>2</sup> While Steichen’s exhibition of the flowers within a museum setting brought living plants inside, it also subjugated and positioned them as a Steichen artistic creation, depriving them of subjectivity or agency. They existed only to destabilize the category of “art,” and not for humans to question their relationship to “nature.”

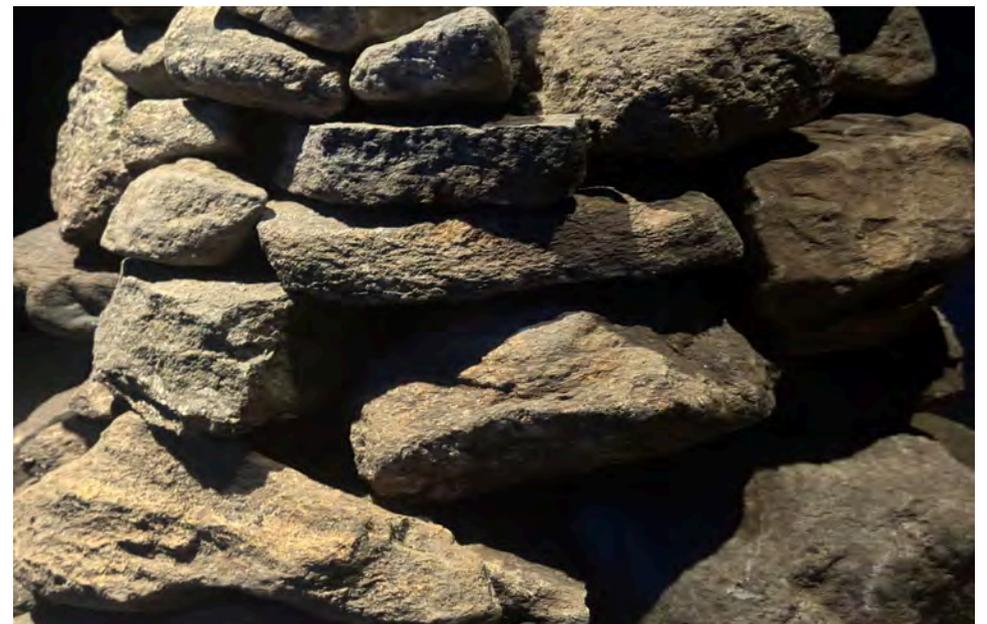
Since then, modern and contemporary gallery doors have been opened to all manner of sentient, non-human beings. Plants transitioned from being integral to the exhibition design, as exemplified by Marcel Broodthaers, to becoming subjects in an ecological context. Examples of galleries turning green from this period include Hans Haacke’s *Grass Mound* (1967-69); Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison’s *Portable Orchard* (1972); and Nam June Paik’s *TV Garden* (1974). Non-human animals, too, have been welcomed in, becoming the protagonists, at times. In 1969, Greek-born artist Jannis Kounellis tethered twelve horses to the wall in Galleria L’Attico in Rome. A few years later, in 1975, experimental artist

and musician John Cage created “Lecture on the Weather,” a complex sound installation with live crickets. These varied artworks demonstrate the diverse ways artists engaged with living plants and animals in the 1970s, reflecting a growing awareness of environmental challenges, species relations, and a fascination with the natural world, yet always from an anthropocentric perspective. In other words, human concerns—both aesthetic and sociocultural—were at the center.

Intersecting with feminism—specifically, ecofeminism—aesthetic and conceptual concerns began to shift in artists like Ana Mendieta, whose performances and documentation, such as the *Tree of Life* (1976), evoked the ancient and iconic image of the Earth Goddess. Mendieta’s work suggests a deep-rooted continuity between the human body and the plant body. Reviving such precolonial belief systems sought to heal the dislocation of the modern era. Furthermore, Mendieta’s practice needs to be viewed in conjunction with the refashioning of the Gaia hypothesis, conceived by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, which proposes that the Earth’s living and non-living components form a single, self-regulating system that maintains conditions favorable for life. In short, Earth is a living entity, much like many indigenous cultures had imagined in the form of a god or goddess.

It is in the roots of ecofeminism that many artists working today can trace a lineage. In the present, perhaps more than ever before, artists are elaborating their engagement with other sentient beings in their work, blurring the lines between art and nature, agency and production. Mark Dion often works with chirping finches, Suzanne Anker focuses on plants and small creatures, such as butterflies, and Pierre Huyghe incorporates animals like tadpole shrimp, bees, dogs, and fawns into his conceptual installations.

Plants, too, are turning galleries greener, challenging the white walls. For instance, American artist Rashid Johnson incorporates plants into his large-scale structures to explore themes of fragility, impermanence, and the construction of personal meaning through memory. Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey, a British duo, create living artworks by growing their portraits and installations with grass. Zheng Bo, from China, has devoted himself to the study of plants, learning from



Margaux Crump, *Quantum Conversations*, installation detail, 2026.

2 [https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press\\_archives/331/releases/MOMA\\_1936\\_0027\\_1936-06-18\\_18636-17.pdf](https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/331/releases/MOMA_1936_0027_1936-06-18_18636-17.pdf)

biology and botany experts while creating art and daily rituals that focus on interspecies care. Australian artist Natalie Jeremijenko's public art installations explore the interface between society, the environment, and technology. These are all artists who do not represent plants and trees, but work directly with the living beings. Their nationalities indicate that this is not a geographically specific phenomenon, but a global one, where artists often consider their cultural and ancestral heritages alongside their sentient collaborators.

Then, some contemporary artists are turning to more subtle sentient beings that stretch the very definitions of what it means to be living on our planet. For instance, Martha Tuttle is interested in the intimacies possible between entities of varying scales and time frames, such as the human and the mineral, or the pebble and the interplanetary. In 2020, for instance, she wondered, "What does a stone think about?" in her outdoor exhibition at the Storm King Sculpture Park in Upstate New York.

In recent history, Boston has been fertile ground for artists and cultural producers concerned with greening traditional art spaces. In 2022, for instance, the MIT List Visual Art Center presented "Symbionts: Contemporary Artists and the Biosphere," which explored the concept "with-living," and how humans relate to the Earth's biosphere. Curated by Caroline A. Jones, Natalie Bell, and Selby Nimrod, the exhibition featured fourteen international artists—Crystal Z Campbell, Gilberto Esparza, Jes Fan, Pierre Huyghe, Candice Lin, Alan Michelson, Nour Mobarak, Claire Pentecost, Špela Petrič, Pamela Rosenkranz, Miriam Simun, Jenna Sutela, Kiyon Williams, and Anicka Yi—whose work explored themes of interdependence and collaboration between humans and other species.

Across the Charles, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum showcased in 2023 the "Presence of Plants in Contemporary Art," which considered how artists use living plants as a medium to express themes of life, fragility, and memory. Instead of depicting nature, artists—including Ackroyd & Harvey, Jeremijenko, Johnson, and Bo, as well as Cerith Wyn Evans, Piero Golia, and Henrik Håkansson—incorporated and manipulated plants to reflect on our relationship with the natural world and its inherent impermanence.

Many of these artists, as well as others exhibiting internationally, are confronting the fact that the socio-economic forces of the neo-capitalist order have shaped our relationship with what we now call "nature" in the modern era. It is time for a green paradigm shift, where our relational understanding of the world and other sentient beings needs to be reimaged.

Two philosophers, not too distant in earthly years but vastly separated in thought, encapsulate where we have been and where we need to go. Martin Heidegger, who only died in 1976, described, in his book *The Question Concerning Technology*, nature as a "standing reserve." This concept explains how modern technology and civilization perceive nature as a resource to be exploited and used, rather than respecting its intrinsic value. While Rosi Braidotti, a contemporary feminist philosopher who was 22 when Heidegger passed, advocates for a "posthuman convergence" where we recognize our interconnectedness with all forms of life and acknowledge the limitations of human exceptionalism. Artists, along with philosophers, are at the forefront of this ontological paradigm shift, creating a way for us to see, feel, and experience this new relational modality, where we acknowledge, respect, and learn with the sentience of all living beings.



Margaux Crump, *Quantum Conversations*, 4k video (silent, color, 21:29 minutes), looped, 12 audio tracks of various lengths, looped, stones gathered from the Nashoba Formation in Acton, Massachusetts, Still, 2026

# QUESTIONS

Which element (water, earth, fire, air) in this show best represents the theme of transformation in *A Sentient Land*?

Have you ever translated from one language to another? How about translating what a pet means based on their behavior and gestures?

What is an example of science and art cooperating that inspires you? Was there an example in this exhibition that had a similar relationship between two seemingly different disciplines?

Should art have to solve or point to a problem to be interesting?

Does the audience get to be a part of these interspecies connections, or are we bearing witness?

# LEARN MORE



Margaux Crump



Julia Krupa Interview



Nelly-Eve Rajotte



Eileen Ryan

# TERMS

**Hertz** – A unit of frequency that measures cycles per second, named after physicist Heinrich Hertz. One hertz (Hz) equals one cycle per second. It's commonly used to measure sound waves (audio frequencies), electromagnetic waves (radio, light), and electrical currents. For example, the note A above middle C vibrates at 440 Hz.

**LIDAR scan** – LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) is a remote sensing technology that uses laser pulses to measure distances and create detailed 3D maps of environments. A LIDAR scan involves emitting rapid laser beams and measuring how long they take to bounce back from surfaces, generating precise spatial data. It's used in autonomous vehicles, archaeological surveys, forestry, and geographic mapping.

**More-than-human world** – A concept in environmental humanities and ecological philosophy that recognizes the agency, perspectives, and significance of non-human entities—including animals, plants, ecosystems, objects, and even technological systems. It emphasizes interconnectedness and challenges anthropocentric worldviews by acknowledging that humans exist within complex networks of relationships with other beings and forces.

**Post-humanism** – A philosophical and cultural movement that questions traditional humanist assumptions about human nature, consciousness, and our place in the world. It challenges the idea of humans as fundamentally separate from or superior to animals, machines, and nature. Post-humanism explores how technology, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology might transform what it means to be human, and considers perspectives that decenter human exceptionalism.

**Saining** – A Scottish and Northern English term for a traditional blessing or protective ritual, often involving water, fire, or smoke. Historically used to ward off evil spirits or bad luck, particularly for people, animals, or dwellings. The practice might involve sprinkling blessed water or passing objects through smoke.

**Synthesizer** – An electronic musical instrument that creates audio signals to generate sounds. Synthesizers can produce a wide range of tones by manipulating waveforms, filters, and other parameters. They can imitate acoustic instruments or create entirely new sounds, and have been fundamental to electronic music, pop, and experimental genres since the mid-20th century.

# EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

## Margaux Crump

### **Quantum Conversations, 2026**

4k video (silent, color, 21:29 minutes), looped.

12 audio tracks of various lengths, looped.

Stones gathered from the Nashoba Formation in Acton, Massachusetts.

### **Spells for Protection: VI–IX, 2025**

Salt crystals grown into silk with mica and graphite, along with smoke from mugwort and juniper.

## Julia Krupa

### **Herbalist paintings, 2021**

Deadnettle, Nettle, White Poplar, Birch, Tansy, handmade dye on fabric, 78.7 x 118 inches.

1. Oak and Alder - Dąb i Olsza
2. Buttercup, Nettle, White poplar, Birch, Borage, Vetiver Jasnota, Pokrzywa, Topola Biała, Brzoza, Wrotycz
3. Birch and Hazel - Brzoza i Leszczyna

### **The Gatherers**

From the *Herbal Herstory Archive*

Carpathians, 2023–2025

## Nelly-Eve Rajotte

### **The Trees communicate with each other at 220 hertz**

3-channel video installation 4K, 25 min, 2024-2026

VFX artist/Software developer: Codrin-Mihail Tablan Negrei

3D laser expertise – iSCAN 3D: Richard Lapointe

## Eileen Ryan

### **CODEX | the limit has been taken, 2026**

Beetle galleries, AI transcriptions, and image-based translations

# CREDITS

### **Emerson Contemporary Staff**

Leonie Bradbury, Curator-in-Residence

James Manning, Exhibitions Manager

Shana Dumont Garr, Associate Curator of Campus Engagement and Special Projects

**Preparators** Joel Laino, Dylan Silvia, Audrina Warren, Jack Gruman

**Design** Liz Nofziger **Documentation** Sue Murad

**Exhibition Fellows** Doris Cao, Sophie Dodd, Adele Eaton,

Courtney Hatcher, Xingyue (Star) Liao, Arthur Sahami,

Jean Robert Delos Santos, Tehya Tenasco

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25 Avery Street, Boston | Tuesday - Saturday, 12:00 to 6:00 PM | (617) 824-8667 | [contemporary@emerson.edu](mailto:contemporary@emerson.edu)

[emersoncontemporary.org](http://emersoncontemporary.org)