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Appel
Amsterdam

SENSING INTER DEPEN DENCE

Exhibition by A4C – Arts for the Commons
(Rosa Jijón & Francesco Martone)

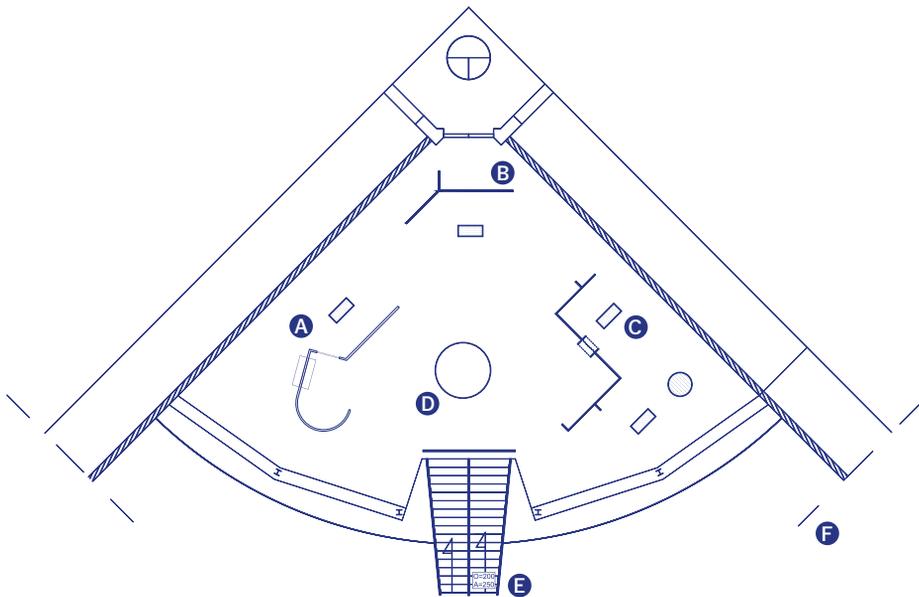
Curated by Aria Spinelli and Angelo Castucci

27.06–10.08.2025

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Sensing Interdependence is a retrospective exhibition on the work of the Italian art collective Arts For the Commons (A4C), a collaboration between Ecuadorian artist Rosa Jijón and activist and artistic researcher Francesco Martone. The exhibition tackles the notion of interdependence between nature and humans. It is guest-curated by Aria Spinelli and Angelo Castucci.

Through the perspective of A4C's artistic methodology, the exhibition proposes to rethink interconnected empathic, tactile, and political relations in the context of the rights of nature and the rights of people(s). The works on show ask audiences to harness interdependency in order to navigate the complexities of climate justice, resistance against extractivism, the legal personhood of ecosystems, and new institutional art forms in the ecological crises of our times. By conceptually revisiting the collective's research and production, the exhibition proposes a small archipelago of three installations hosting the artworks, curated around three core aspects of A4C's artistic approach. These islands map geographies of mobility and communities' resistance, going beyond anthropocentrism and the rights of nature.



A COMMON GEOGRAPHIES

Vilcabamba: de iura fluminis et terrae
(videoprojection + shelf)
Have a Wonderful Time
(neon)
Memorias del hielo
(videoprojection + shelf)

B MOBILE GEOGRAPHIES

Camera con vista
(on-screen video + wallpaper)
Kolxoz Collective
Gliina - Elementary Conditions
(Poster)

C RESISTANCE GEOGRAPHIES

Lacus Legalis Naturae
(on-screen video)
Quito Sin Minería
(on-screen video)
La invención del blanco
(videoprojection + installation)
Kloxoz Collective, Liquid Environment
(Poster)

D GLACIER

E ENTRANCE
Aktivismus
(on-screen)

F LIBRARY/ARCHIVE
Libertailia
(on-screen)

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Sensing Interdependence with
ArtsForTheCommons

Curator's Introduction by Aria Spinelli and Angelo Castucci

In a time marked by ecological crisis, proliferating borders, and the dismantling of common goods, the work of Arts For The Commons (A4C) emerges as a radical and consistent practice at the intersection of art, political activism, and ecology. Rather than simply representing environmental conflict, forced migration or territorial resistance, A4C constructs a language that is simultaneously artistic, political, and collectively generative.

Since formally uniting in 2016 after years of collaboration, A4C has developed a body of work that merges artistic research and political engagement. Drawing from distinct but complementary backgrounds – visual art, activism, diplomacy, and critical theory – Rosa Jijón and Francesco Martone create installations, video essays, and performances that challenge extractivism, affirm the rights of nature and peoples, and open space for new ecological imaginaries.

Our first encounter with Francesco Martone was in 2019, during a panel on migration in Rome convened by the art collective Stalker/NoWorking in collaboration with Artists at Risk. In that context, he spoke about *In Difesa Di*, a network of Italian human rights defenders. His approach revealed a capacity to move across diverse terrains – legal, artistic, ecological – with an ease that is both tactical and deeply relational. Francesco's work did not present a fixed identity or institutional allegiance, but rather enacted a form of situated engagement: one that channels multiple roles to advance the rights of peoples and of nature. In our first joint conversations with Francesco and Rosa Jijón, we noticed how A4C is built on mutual complicity and a shared desire to navigate complexity through artistic, political, and poetic means; their work speaks to a broader ethics of care. It resists systems of extraction and injustice – not through direct representation or activism alone, but through the reweaving of connections between bodies, territories, and histories. From that first exchange emerged a sustained collaboration, one that eventually gave form to *Sensing Interdependence*.

The title of this retrospective is, *Sensing Interdependence*, more than a thematic anchor, it is a call to action. French philosopher Edgar Morin (Morin, E. (2011). *La Voie*. Paris: Fayard) describes our time as one of *polycrisis*: a convergence of ecological, economic, civilizational, and existential crises that no longer unfold in isolation. A4C's work responds to this condition not by illustrating crisis, but by inviting us to unlearn dominant frameworks and sense alternative logics of connection. Their practice is guided by the ethics of listening, witnessing, and re-commoning, and is rooted in the understanding that art can shift perception, reframe governance, and open up imaginative space for planetary futures. It signals a paradigmatic shift in how we respond to today's entangled global crises, urging us to reimagine forms of coexistence that are relational, reciprocal, and embodied. Interdependence here is not only ecological, but also epistemological and political. It is sensed – through water, resistance, ritual, and memory – as a new imaginary of the commons begins to take shape.

This perspective is evident in the curatorial choices, which reject the notion of the exhibition space as a neutral frame or passive container. Instead, the exhibition becomes an extension of A4C's political thought: a space where visual codes, representational hierarchies, and dominant logics of display are interrogated. The installation does not

seek to organise or explain, but to open up a plural, layered experience. It functions as a discursive device, a field of forces, and a temporary infrastructure for the activation of multiple subjectivities.

When considering the exhibition design with studioamatoriale, we divided the exhibition space of de Appel into three conceptual and philosophical “islands,” forming a small archipelago. These islands — namely Common Geographies, Mobile Geographies and Resistant Geographies — are influenced by critical thinkers Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson’s approach to borders (Mezzadra, S. and Neilson, B. (2013). *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press). In their research, borders are not merely tools of exclusion but active sites, where subjectivities, economies, and territories are produced — ontological lines, fabrications of the world, that must be questioned, rerouted, and resisted. These islands within this small archipelago divide A4C’s work into conceptual groupings, whereby they critically reflect and produce different worldviews.

The layout is therefore conceived as an open field — non-linear, traversable, and free from hierarchical centrality. The works coexist as overlapping presences that generate multiple, unexpected trajectories. This spatial strategy mirrors the theoretical and political horizon of the project: no privileged viewpoint, no single narrative, but a stratified plurality of intersecting, contradictory, and reinforcing voices. Visitors are not guided along a fixed path but invited to construct their own routes, to linger, and to take a position.

The three thematic “islands” are conceived as interconnected, deconstructed pavilions. Each island is a porous organism in which the installation is not merely a vessel but an active agent of meaning: it acts as language, atmosphere, and political space. **Common Geographies** opens the exhibition by addressing landscape as a living archive of memory, rights, and relationships. Works such as *Vilcabamba: de iura fluminis et terrae (2022)*, *Memorias del hielo (2024)*, and *Have a Wonderful Time (2021)* explore legal, poetic, and symbolic dimensions, proposing landscape as both legal subject and site of memory. Here, the commons — or the processes of commoning — are not contextualised within the human world and its forms of social organisation; instead they advance these concepts of gathering from more-than-human perspectives. Departing from a critical approach to the absurdities of extractive capitalism as in *Have a Wonderful Time (2021)*, **Common Geographies** advances alternative perceptions of the world by proposing the representation and personification of the waters of Vilcamba and the Glaciers of Chimborazo in Ecuador as in *Vilcabamba: de iura fluminis et terrae (2022)*, and *Memorias del hielo (2024)*. These waters and glaciers are not silent witnesses to ecological crises; water bodies become vital actors in the struggle for preservation. To tell this story, A4C asks the audience to listen carefully to how we perceive these waters through sound, moving images, and sonifications. **Mobile Geographies** unfolds through *Camera con Vista (2017)*, where mobility becomes both a perceptual and political condition. The representation of mobility concerns our second island, where colours and moving images combine to address forced mobility within the urban context of Rome. Roma and migrant communities are often victims of forced displacement, yet many set up homes as best they can, arranging furniture and putting up wallpaper. The contradiction

of the excluded being forced into displacement while also establishing their own lives within that enclosure is evident in A4C's representation of mobility. The island prompts us to question how we perceive mobility and the contradictions within it. In our current polycrisis, mobility is part of the everyday experience of the world. When forced mobility is enacted, the lines between inclusion and exclusion are blurred. **Resistant Geographies** assembles practices of resistance to environmental destruction, colonial violence, and extractivist policy. *Lacus Legalis Naturae* (2021), *Quito Sin Minería* (2021), *La invención del blanco* (2021), and *Aktivismus* (2021-2024) form a landscape of both denunciation and symbolic and legal reappropriation. In the last island, the human world is presented through reflections in forms of resistance, notions of whiteness, and enactments of struggles through performative law-making. Here, the colours, chants, calls to action, and enactments of legal representation come together in one setting, showing and inviting reflection on how alternatives are created and proposed, and how resistance and forms of struggle are potent tools for alternative political imaginings. In the archive of De Appel, we place *Libertalia* (2025), which reflects on the historical legacies of autonomy and utopian imagination.

Finally, A4C collaborated with the transnational collective Kolxoz, in order to visually and conceptually map the underpinnings of the islands. Kolxoz's brings another layering to the exhibition, proposing a **visual intervention** that weaves these geographies together, creating graphic works that draw on their own visual archive of post-socialist imaginaries and visual vocabularies – collage, typography, and symbolic motifs – to map out these zones of extraction and refusal. Their designs are not static illustrations but dynamic assemblages that echo the exhibition's central themes: the entanglement of human and more-than-human lives, the violence of capitalist accumulation, and the search for alternative ways of coexisting.

Arturo Escobar's theory of the pluriverse further inflects A4C's work, proposing that radical ecological politics begins with recognising that many worlds co-exist, not just as metaphors, but as lived realities (Escobar, A. (2018). *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press). The archipelago gathers different forms of struggle for new ecological imaginaries of interdependence: imaginaries that reflect emerging practices of commoning, new forms of mobility beyond borders, and modes of resistance without violence. Each island proposes a perspective that gestures toward an alternative future beyond extractivism, exclusion, and systemic violence. Together, the islands invite the viewer into a space where art is both representational and propositional: a site where different worlds, and ways of being with the world, can be sensed and imagined.

To enact the politics of the pluriversal is, first and foremost, an act of struggle against the universal understanding that only one world exists. By doing so, it dismantles the hierarchies of western thought, offering multiple and interdependent approaches to sensing the world. It proposes a less anthropocentric relation to the more-than-human world, advocating for an ecocentric approach. Finally, pluriversal politics force us to embrace diversity and learn from the interconnectedness of our pluriverse, asking us to co-exist.

About

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works

Aktivismus, 2021-2024, HD audio stereo

Aktivismus is a video archive of images and sounds taken on various occasions: in Austria, Italy and Ecuador. On the occasion of an artist's residence at Q21 in Vienna, A4C members participated in a demonstration with Afghan refugees at a rally convened by Fridays for Future (initiated by climate justice activist Greta Thunberg, now a global phenomenon that unites teenagers who struggle for climate justice), where they visited a protest camp against the enlargement of a highway in Lobbau and joined a meeting with a delegation of Zapatista women that arrived in the Austrian capital as the first leg of the *gira zapatista* that brought hundreds of Zapatistas across Europe. In Ecuador, A4C members participated in a series of demonstrations in support of indigenous communities in resistance against oil drilling and mining, and in two national marches of the *Ni una menos* movement.

Quito sin Minería, 2021, HD audio stereo

Quito sin Minería tells the story of the homonymous Ecuadorian movement currently struggling against mining in Ecuador in the biosphere reserve of the Andean Chocó. The video shows the movement in action, documenting some of their symbolic parades taking place in the streets of the city of Quito.

Camera con vista, 2017, HD audio stereo

Camera con vista (A room with a view) is inspired by E. G. Forster's novel written in 1908 about a young woman traveling to Italy; it is a critical description of English society in the 20th century. Nowadays the view from rooms in liminal spaces in Rome is a view of expulsion and exclusion that runs parallel to the mainstream image of the *eternal city*, kept alive to attract tourists and capital investments in real estate speculation. Refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean, or Roma people seeking a space to live, settle in these *extraterritorial* zones, the point of temporary arrival before being forcibly driven away again. They transit in space and time, in locations that had a previous life and now hang suspended from their past vocation and future possibilities. Their liminal lives overlap with the liminal time and spatial dimensions of a global city.

Vilcabamba, de iura fluminis et terrae, 2022, HD audio stereo

Spurred by the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth that took place in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in 2009 and on the basis of the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth thereby adopted, social movements, communities, and academics have started to develop and implement legal instruments for the recognition of the rights of Nature, the so-called Earth Jurisprudence. First in New Zealand with the Whanganui River, then in Ecuador with the Vilcabamba River, in Colombia with Rio Atrato, and in Bangladesh and India with the Yamuna and Ganges, rivers and watersheds have been granted legal personhood or have been recognised as living beings with their own rights. It is with rivers and their rights that the drive to develop systems of law, and new categories or rights, that complement the traditional anthropocentric human rights systems with a more biocentric approach, has been spearheaded.

Vilcabamba, de iura fluminis et terrae offers a visual and sonic representation of rivers with rights throughout the world, through the performing of a score produced from

the re-elaboration of geospatial data and actual sounds of the Vilcabamba River. The identification of GPS coordinates of rivers with legal personhood and/or recognised as living entities serves the purpose of a countermapping exercise to question the current use of geospatial technologies, and develop a critical approach that allows for the visibilisation of a complex web of rivers and ecosystems that enjoy rights, as well as spaces of struggle and resistance against the dominant anthropocentric paradigm. Data sonification further transforms these spatial data into sound, that in turn have been transformed into musical notes and into a *sound map* of rivers and ecosystems.

Have a wonderful time, 2021, neon sign

Have a wonderful time echoes a sign in the historical quarter of the futuristic South Korean city of Song-Do, a once-populated recreational district overlooking the expanding metropolis. It represents a past set aside, demolished by the fury of accumulation and development, and the continuing tension between tradition and innovation. *Have fun* is the promise – or a simple wish – of the owner of a Karaoke bar that provides an alternative place of community and recreation for the residents of Song-Do, something that seems to be inconceivable in a dystopic urban settlement where any unexpected, irrational, nonproductive, and unpredictable activity is restricted if not impossible.

Lacus, legalis naturae, 2021, HD audio stereo and poster 140x106 cm

The performance *Lacus, legalis naturae*, organised together with the Italian collective Stalker, took place at Lago Bullicante (Ex-Snia) on the outskirts of Rome in 2021. It consisted of a reading of the declaration of the rights of Lake Erie in the United States. In February 2019, the citizens of Toledo, Ohio, adopted a charter of rights for Lake Erie which recognised the lake's legal personhood. It was the first time in the United States that the legal personhood of an ecosystem was recognised. Lago Bullicante sprang up spontaneously in an area originally occupied by a synthetic textile factory, Snia Viscosa, and later occupied by social movements. It has since flourished with biodiversity, becoming the only urban lake in Rome, while simultaneously being threatened by the expansion of speculative interests. After the performance, a dialogue between committees for the defence of Lago Bullicante and for the recognition of the rights of Lake Erie took place, as well as a series of workshops with pupils of a primary school curated by Stalker, in which a charter of the rights of the Lago Bullicante plants was drafted.

La invención del blanco, 2024, HD audio stereo

The video *La invención del blanco* is inspired by the work of Ecuadorian anthropologist Bolívar Echeverría, and by recent facts of political life in the Andean country. It recalls how institutional racism against indigenous and Afrodescendant peoples emerged during the most recent national strike across Ecuador in June 2022, called by indigenous organisations and social movements in response to the economic policies of President Lasso's government. Instigated by the government itself, white and mestizo citizens of Quito took to the streets with their white flags and shirts to call for social peace in the name of civilization. In reality, it was not peace but pacification through the use of gun violence, considering how policemen on tanks were celebrated by the same white-flagged protesters on the Avenida de los Shyris in the north of the city. Hidden behind those white flags were impunity and appeasement, vindication of a supposed social

purity, of alignment and unconditional faith in the state and its apparatuses. White becomes a colour-mask defining a posturing identity in the face of the other; the masses of supposed criminals or savages who descended on Quito, it was said, to destroy it.

Libertalia, 2025, HD audio stereo

David Lazzaretti was the prophet of Amiata. The elders of those Tuscan towns, of Arcidosso and Castel del Piano, still remember him; a memory handed down from father to son. On top of that mountain, a millenarian utopia was born and died out, similar to many other utopias that have crossed history – to imaginary republics, or real ones, collective experiments of autonomy, horizontality and self-government. Narrating these events, situating them in real or imaginary places, and reconstructing their plots offers a possibility of recreating meaning in a world that makes havoc of freedom, wrapped in the coils of authoritarianism, hatred and war against humans and Mother Earth. It means attempting to restore meaning to history, proposing a key to interpreting the world's events, both present and past.

Memorias del hielo, 2024, HD audio stereo

Memorias del hielo offers a transversal reading of the territory and the ecologies of the glaciers of the Chimborazo volcano and its human communities, both affected by climate change. It highlights the importance of an integration between cosmologies, ancestral knowledge and science. Also on show is the archival material, comprising digital photography, scientific documentation, and linoleum prints on handmade cotton paper. As Scottish anthropologist Tim Ingold postulates in his *Correspondences*, when we worry about the disappearance of habitats, species or glaciers, and consequently climate change, we must not “forget that by transforming nature into a fact and knowledge into interpretation – away from the conversations of life – we miss those things and therefore the whole world.” Far from attempting to offer a proposal for the conceptualisation and visibilisation of the Anthropocene, the project aims to offer a coherent and original key to decolonial analysis, inspired by the chronicles of French anarchist geographer Elysée Reclus' visit to Chimborazo, as part of his research on the natural history of the world.

Glina - Elementary Conditions, Poster, 225x106cm, by Kolkoz collective

Here, Kolkoz uses the word *Glina* (ground) to describe how objects collide or interact with each other, forcing a change of meaning context and abstraction. Focusing on ordinary utilitarian objects, this poster questions the relationships between consumer culture and means of survival.

Liquid Environment, Poster, 225x106cm, by Kolkoz collective

Based on the notion that borders are more fluid than we think, and that circulating within the collective is a reality, Kolkoz created an imaginary map of rivers and lakes that reflect the utopian and dystopian hallucinations of post-industrial capitalist drift. Through a shared conceptual mapping process with A4C, and as representatives of post-socialist societies, the collective presents alternative perspectives by tracing perceptions, tapping into Kolkoz consciousness. The reservoirs of this poster are filled with allusions to Soviet placards, traces of the modernist experiments, asymmetric tactics, and subversive methods.

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Conversation between A4C and Aria Spinelli

AS: Together we chose *Sensing Interdependence* as the title for this retrospective exhibition on your collaboration since 2016. I see this title as more than theme: it's a call to action. It gestures toward a paradigm shift in approaching today's interconnected crises, calling for new forms of coexistence rooted in interdependence and accessed through the senses to grasp an ecological imaginary of the commons. Do you agree with this reading? And how does this affect or resonate with your artistic practice – conceptually, formally, or politically?

A4C: Indeed, the debate on the role of arts in contributing to creating the necessary conditions, or better said, to bolster enablers for action, is a very pertinent matter in times of crisis – be it political, social, environmental or cultural. We will get back to this issue later. Here it suffices to say that as a practice, A4C has always sought to connect, cross-fertilise and open a space of dialogue with activists and practitioners working on relevant matters, from migration, to struggles against extractivism or for the rights of nature. However, we also think that arts per se does not offer solutions but rather opportunities to explore interconnections, it creates a fertile ground for exchange and mutual enrichment, whether this would result in action is not necessarily the primary assumption of our activities. We do not engage in militant arts as such, we believe that the space of relation between art and activism can exist or materialise during or after our practice, but it is not a given goal. Also, setting it as a primary goal would risk limiting its possibilities, and also the capacity of reaching out to a broader public and contributing to public awareness.

As to the role of sensorial perception as a tool to create an ecological imaginary, we think again that this is not the only possibility; we'd rather adopt the concept of *senti-pensar* – feeling with reason and thinking with the heart – that is proper of Zapatista experiences, for instance. It is not a coincidence that we decided to title our residence at the Murate Art District in Florence *Senti-pensar con L'Arno*, when we engaged students and curators in a series of workshops and creative processes meant to reconnect them to nature by experiencing the river – physically and emotionally. Our works are meant to offer a critical approach to geography and interpretation of territories and ecosystems as spaces of recognition and struggle. This is where French anarchist geographer Élisée Reclus' vision comes into play. As opposed to his contemporary Alexander Von Humboldt, Reclus did not imagine geography as a discipline based on taxonomy and scientific dissection of nature and ecosystems, but as a discipline of emancipation for humankind. In this principle we notice a lot of resemblance with Arturo Escobar's reading of territories, through *senti-pensar*, as a form by which territorialised communities have learned the art of living. Or otherwise said, as a call to think and feel with territories, cultures and knowledge of its peoples, with its ontologies, rather than the decontextualised knowledge that underlies the notions of “development”, “growth”, or the “economy” itself. In a talk with Peruvian anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena on pluriversal contact zones, Escobar summarises some leading concepts that emerge in these spaces, and points to the key role of arts in helping the dialogue and communication of the different worlds that populate these contact zones. Namely: territoriality, communality, autonomy

and production of the commons, politics in the feminine, and transition. Therefore, interdependence entails the recognition of the existence of different and varied worlding experiences, and universes that enter a dialogue, also through arts. This is somehow how we see our role, as facilitators and enablers of these conversations, or correspondences, in a pluriverse, and by doing so creating an immaterial “common”. When we opted for the name A4C-artsforthecommons, we were thinking not only about the issues we wanted to refer to for inspiration, but also of commoning as an artistic and – finally – political practice. Finally, we can say that our artistic practice is political. This is clearly explained by Uruguayan artist and educator Luis Camnitzer, according to whom,

“... all communication is political, there is always a power relationship and, therefore, it is political. All art is inserted in a political relationship; if I say: “I am apolitical”, it is a political statement, there is no way to escape. In a way we are talking about whether what you are doing in art has to be adapted to a cause or not. To the extent that you bow to a cause you are making mercenary art, and I don’t say that badly, but in a sense that you have to balance. If you want it to be art, it has to have a plus. When you dedicate yourself to serve a cause, you are leaving the plus aside. There is a lot of political art that ignores the plus and, then, for me, it is no longer art, it can be effective as propaganda, pamphlet or expression of my opinion, but in reality, nobody cares, or nobody should care.”

AS: In our conversations, you’ve often spoken of art as a form of intervention and investigation. How does research enter your creative process? How do your complementary approaches shape the field of action in which you operate?

As a duo, in the beginning, we thought we had a clear distribution of roles, Rosa is the artist, and Francesco the activist. We have been trying to better define our respective identities and almost never managed to come up with a definitive solution. We continuously navigate between our attempt to create artistically and to engage politically, by researching the realm of cultural, sociological, and philosophical critique or historical archives. This ever-shifting focus is evident in the process of research and analysis that accompanies the definition of the creative process that is then distilled into the finished body of work, be it a moving image, an installation or a performance. And if you look at the grain of this apparatus, as Gilles Deleuze would say, you can see that there is a lot of research into archives, historical memories, current and past texts and narratives. Furthermore, we see the use of archival material as an artistic practice per se, be it through the display of historical documents and maps, or their re-elaboration, or even their participatory re-enactment and performance. By doing so, we propose a critical narrative that hacks the archive system, similar to what we do to canonic geography to denounce power relations, decolonising their use and turning them into instruments of utopian imagination – hopefully our favorite author, feminist and anarchist sci-fi writer Ursula LeGuin will excuse us for stealing her words. In a nutshell, we cannot really say that research enters the creative process but rather that it is a part of it from the very beginning and becomes a creative process. In the end, our search for a definition of Francesco’s role

in A4C was answered in a conversation with a close friend and ally, Nicholas Martino, who suggested the term “artistic researcher”, which somehow offers a concise answer to the question.

AS: Across your practice, there is a clear commitment to interdependence – not only ecological, but also methodological and political. Edgar Morin (2011) has described our era as one of polycrisis, where multiple systemic crises – ecological, economic, civilizational – interact and amplify each other, demanding new forms of thought and response. What guides your working process as a duo in this context? How do you navigate between storytelling, legal critique, poetic form, and activist urgency? And how would you define the aesthetic and ethical responsibility that underpins your work in the face of such entangled global conditions?

Firstly, we have always navigated between two continents, Latin America and Europe, for personal reasons, and this has necessarily influenced the way we look at things. Not only because our bodies are interchangeably situated in different geographical contexts, shuttling between varied cultural, political and social realities, but also because in the 25 years of this continuous nomadic experience we concluded that every time we shift contexts, the way we inhabit them determines our choices, in terms of artistic projects and the way they materialise. Therefore, interdependence is not a choice but a given in our lives and in our commitments as artists and activists. We cannot, therefore, say that we have undertaken a commitment to interdependence as a static and one-off choice, because we could not but embrace and acknowledge interdependence, be it between different epistemologies, human and nature, among different cultures, political practices, or current and past experiences.

Somehow our physical presence in human, social and political contexts inevitably transforms us into political actors, leading us to explore the intersections between artistic storytelling and political practice and vice versa. It means moving from one side to the other on overlapping levels, enfolding political practice in artistic storytelling and artistic practice in political storytelling. What the artist does, therefore, is not simply adapting arts and artistic language to political commitment, turning it into a sort of visual propaganda, nor to offer a definite solution. Rather, the artist’s role is that of bringing to life a deeper reality than what we see (or that we don’t see or cannot represent, as Marisol de La Cadena defines the anthropo-not-seen). This endless search implies also the acknowledgement that – as a chosen decolonial posture – there are things that art cannot and should not represent, it should rather question realities and their hidden aspects. To quote James Baldwin, the precise role of the artist *“is to illuminate that darkness, blaze roads through that vast forest, so that we will not, in all our doing, lose sight of its purpose, which is, after all, to make the world a more human dwelling place.”* A world that is currently experiencing Edgar Morin’s polycrisis, a term that has been picked up by practitioners and activists, particularly in Latin America, who also use the term *crisis civilizatoria*. Looking at it through our Latin-American lens, we see that there is not only a multiplicity of crises that requires an intersectional approach to arts and politics, but also the universal

space where this crisis takes place should be questioned. Another recurring concept linked to *poli-crisis* or *crisis civilizatoria* is that of pluriverse, a world of many worlds, a concept that reconciles culture and nature, thereby “fixing” the epistemic fracture represented by modernity. Since the colonial project on our continent Abya Yala, the separation between the two has represented the dominant epistemology, one that reorganises the world in service of the human, a singular and universal world view.

Given these assumptions, we see the *poli-crisis* as a consequence of this fracture which disqualifies spaces that are not rational, but sensorial; that of touch, of hearing, to which we can oppose the practice of feeling-thinking, the construction of affections between human beings and non-humans. The hierarchy of the visual was also imposed as a colonial project discrediting the other senses and the capacity to put us in the space of the affections. It is the idea of the relationship between human and non-human and the rupture between them, that we finally want to pay attention to, always attentive to avoid considering it as a mere topic rather than a platform for resistance and struggle. These reflections emerged in the early stages of research when our work mostly dealt with human mobility.

We also navigate through epistemologies and knowledges, from the moment of production to the practitioners and activists we invite to join our platform, to the sources and authors that inspire our writing as a creative and political act, to the spaces where we decide to show and validate our work. For A4C, writing is part of our methodology that does not only describe or present our work, but becomes a creative process, we place creative writing in non-conventional spaces for artists, for instance in academic publications or talks, or in contributions to publications clearly oriented towards activism, be it against extractivism or for ecological activism. Examples are *Estado Fósil*, or the Arts for Radical Manifesto by the Institute of Radical Imagination. *Estado Fósil*, a book edited by Anamaría Garzón Mantilla, Sofía Acosta, and Francisco Hurtado, is a collection of artistic essays to “counter-celebrate” the 50th anniversary of the first barrel of oil in Ecuador. We contributed with an original text, interviews with Italian activists on the frontline against oil extraction and fossil fuel infrastructures in southern Italy, and with images that we produced re-elaborating archive video documentaries on oil industry development in Italy and Ecuador. Our clear position in support of movements against extractivism is also the leading force behind two works displayed in the exhibition, *Lacus Legalis Naturae* and *Quito sin Minería*, and has also determined our policy of selecting our potential funders. Another aspect of our policy is prioritising public and independent artist-run spaces and noncommercial venues.

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**SENSING INTERDEPENDENCE:
OCEANS, PLURIVERSES, AND RIGHTS OF NATURE
SATURDAY 28 JUNE, 11AM-7PM**

Oceans, Pluriverses, and Rights of Nature is a one-day gathering that explores artistic experimentation and radical environmental politics. Panels feature Sylvia Kay, Carsten Pedersen and Fiona Dove (TNI), Rosa Jijón and Francesco Martone (A4C), and Roberta Bosu (Antarctic Rights), engaging with ocean justice, the pluriverse, and legal rights for the more-than-human world. The programme includes a presentation by the Embassy of the North Sea on the Confluence of Water Bodies – an initiative advocating for water ecosystems as legal and political players. The evening closes with the first test performance of the Water Bodies Orchestra together with the Smartphone Orchestra. Fresh Stalls, in collaboration with local chefs, will offer a menu featuring ingredients sourced from local regenerative farms. Amidst art, food, and performances, the program imagines collective futures beyond anthropocentrism.

10am: Doors open

11am–12.30pm: Reclaiming the Ocean Commons

Researchers Sylvia Kay and Carsten Pedersen (TNI) in dialogue with Francesco Martone and Rosa Jijón (A4C)

Moderation: Aria Spinelli, respondent: Fiona Dove (TNI)

While oceans have been central to the expansion of the capitalist economy for centuries, ocean resources and territories have gained renewed traction in recent decades as frontiers for accelerated economic growth. Through conservation initiatives, ocean areas are increasingly turned into products that can be bought and sold – such as carbon credits. From industrial fishing and oil extraction to off-shore wind projects and deep-sea mining, the continuous appropriation of territories and resources increasingly displace small-scale fishers and local communities.

Inspired by A4C's works on display at de Appel, TNI researchers and activists Sylvia Kay and Carsten Pedersen, and A4C's Rosa Jijón and Francesco Martone, will share perspectives on the contribution of contemporary art in the struggles for the future of our oceans and its communities. Sylvia and Carsten will reflect on their work with grassroots movements resisting these forms of ocean and land grabbing. They will share stories of resistance and promote an alternative vision for coexisting with nature. This panel will explore how community-led efforts – rooted in local knowledge and collective rights – offer meaningful, grounded responses to the ecological and social crises we face today.

1pm: Lunch by Fresh Stalls with produce from local regenerative farmers

2.30–4pm: Creative attempts to represent the pluriverse

Francesco Martone and Rosa Jijón (A4C), Harpo 't Hart (Embassy of the North Sea), and Roberta Bosu (Antarctic Rights), moderation: Aria Spinelli

Drawing on the Rights of Nature movement, speakers and discussants revisit the principle of *harmonious coexistence* through A4C's artistic production, and ongoing campaigns by Embassy of the North Sea and GARN to recognise the rights of the North Sea and Antarctica as legal entities, thereby challenging dominant paradigms of environmental governance, while proposing a shift from anthropocentric to ecocentric legal frameworks.

Performing and reenacting legal documents that recognise the rights of nature; imagining ecosystems as queer entities through a feminist and decolonial approach; reframing representation as a call to imagine a future where nature has standing – not symbolically but legally, politically, and poetically. These and other topics will be explored in a dialogue between A4C, Embassy of the North Sea, and Garn Antarctic Rights Campaign, where artistic production and creative communication blend with a shared commitment to shift from anthropocentrism to a biocentric paradigm as a key answer to the current civilization crisis.

4.30pm: Presentation of the **Confluence of Waterbodies** (Christiane Bossman, Embassy of the North Sea)

5pm: Presentation of experimental format **Water Bodies Orchestra** by **Smartphone Orchestra**

This digital design project is a musical and embodied way to unlock the digital sound archive of European waters. Through interactive group experiences, the human and non-human voices of the water bodies will come together in a performative moment. This iteration of the Waterbodies Orchestra is the first test of a new experimental platform developed by the Smartphone Orchestra.

6.30pm: Drinks and bites

SENSING INTERDEPENDENCE: FILM SCREENING
FILMTHEATER KRITERION
SUNDAY 20 JULY, 7.15PM

On Sunday 20 July, a screening of the documentary *I Am the River, the River Is Me* by Petr Lom will take place at Filmtheater Kriterion in the context of Sensing Interdependence. The film follows a five-day canoe journey along Aotearoa/New Zealand's Whanganui River, the first river in the world to gain legal personhood. Guided by a Māori guardian, this visually stunning documentary explores the river's profound impact on Indigenous rights and environmental stewardship. For more information on the screening, please visit kriterion.nl.

DE APPEL IS/
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Nell Donkers
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Lucie von Eugen
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EXHIBITION DESIGN

studioamatoriale

EXHIBITION PRODUCTION

Sjoerd Tim & team (installation)
Markas Michmel (AV support)

GRAPHIC DESIGN

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PRINTING

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