



MEMORY GARDEN

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND ARTISTIC PROJECT

The idea of introducing the concept of climate justice into the Polish public discourse stems from a deep conviction about the need for fair and context-sensitive solutions to the climate crisis. It is important to acknowledge that, although Poland may not have a colonial past, it remains entangled in the postcolonial structures of the contemporary neoliberal global order. For this reason, initiating a critical discourse on this topic in Poland is essential.

At first glance, the climate crisis may seem distant from issues of memory and politics. However, deeper reflection reveals that the intersection of these two domains holds significant potential. In Poland, where the debate on the climate crisis is multifaceted and complex, linking memory with politics can open up new perspectives, serving as a key tool for building social awareness and mobilizing action.

"Memory Garden" has become a space where two groups—artists and researchers—collaborated to create artistic tools aimed at presenting the project's issues to a wider audience. Furthermore, the project provided a platform for researchers to introduce topics related to Polish (post)colonial narratives, thus enriching the debate with historical and political dimensions.

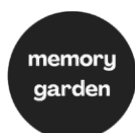
The main goal of the project is to engage participants in critical reflection on both overt and hidden (post)colonial narratives while simultaneously fostering a strong discourse on climate justice in Poland.

EXPERIENCE. MEMORY. CLIMATE.

Art has always been key in shaping human awareness and sensitivity to important social issues. In the face of the growing climate crisis, art becomes a tool for both protest and deep reflection. The works presented at the "Experience. Memory. Climate"; exhibition are not merely a record of reality, but an exploration of it and an active artistic commentary that evokes emotions, encourages thought, and mobilizes action.

The exhibition "Experience. Memory. Climate." is the result of the collaboration of an interdisciplinary group of artists and researchers who take on the challenge of combining concepts of the climate crisis, (in)justice, and memory and history in their work. The projects presented not only show the dramatic impact of human activity on our planet, but also pose questions about our role and responsibility. Through their work, the researchers and artists provoke thought about whether we perceive changes over time or view the climate crisis only in the context of the present and future. The projects transcend the boundaries of time and space, referring to intimate experiences and memories that form the foundation of our relationship with nature.

All these elements make "Experience. Memory. Climate." a multidimensional experience for viewers, allowing them to reflect on something both deeply personal and universally shared—our relationship with the world in which we live.



CURATORIAL TEAM & PARTICIPANTS



ALICJA PRZYBYSZOWSKA



MAGDALENA KLARENBACH



MATEUSZ GAWRYSIAK



ŁUKASZ TYSZKIEWICZ



ANOUSHKA BERENIKA LEEPSKY



KATARZYNA NIEMER



FILIP GAJEWSKI



TINI MARTYNA DUBICKA



JAGODA MYTYCH



JOANNA GRZYMAŁA-MOSZCZYŃSKA



JAKUB BARAN



KLAUDIA OPOKA



WERONIKA KAŁWAK



AGNIESZKA JEJKA JEWASIŃSKA



WIKTORIA TARNOWSKA



WIKTORIA CHOJNACKA



HUBERT FIEDIG



ZOFIA PROKOP



ADRIANNA MAKOWSKA



KAROLINA BONARSKA



WORK OF ART

The elements of the artistic work, as well as its message, revolve around the memory of old techniques and folk traditions. We draw from old photographs depicting people dressed in folk costumes from different regions of Poland, highlighting the richness and diversity of peasant culture. The symbolism of linen, used in the work, is also important, as it evokes memories of the past, when rural economies were based on the cultivation of flax plant. Cyanotype, an old technique, is also featured in the work as a tribute to noble, historical photographic methods. We also consider individuals excluded due to visual impairities and include folk proverbs about weather written in Braille in the work.

YESTERDAY'S PRESENT, 2024

KATARZYNA NIEMIER, ALICJA PRZYBYSZOWSKA

ART TECHNIQUE:

ASSEMBLAGE

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

DESK RESEARCH, SURVEY

RESEARCH

In remembering old techniques used by people living and working in rural areas, we reflected on the functioning of sayings and proverbs that helped predict the weather, and thus plan field or garden work. Today, we have the ability to check the weather accurately from day to day, without needing to remember whether there were frosts in January. We are also aware that the climate crisis may have affected the reliability of such proverbs, and that the societal distancing from folk traditions may have contributed to the fading memory of this technique. We investigated whether there is regional variation in the knowledge of weather-related proverbs. Our intuition suggested that in regions still involved in agriculture, this knowledge and the use of proverbs would be more widespread than in regions heavily industrialized and economically focused on services.

A total of 114 participants took part in the study, many of whom were connected to the Rural Housewives' Circles. Their knowledge and experience were extremely valuable in this study, and we wanted to recognize the contribution of this often underappreciated group in preserving folk traditions. However, the results did not align with our hypothesis: within the group studied, we were unable to identify regional differences in the use of the proverbs we selected, nor did we observe greater familiarity with them in any specific age group or among those working in farming. Nevertheless, the study clearly showed that the majority of people who know these proverbs believe that they are still useful and valid today (with confidence levels ranging from 87-92%). Among the group of proverbs we proposed, three stood out: 'February comes, put on your boots,' 'March is like a pot,' and 'April weaves, as it mixes a bit of winter with a bit of summer.' We recognize the cultural presence of these proverbs, and this study made us more aware of that.





REST IS MORE, 2024

ANOUSHKA BERENIKA LEPSKY, ŁUKASZ TYSZKIEWICZ

ART TECHNIQUE:

VIDEO, INSTALLATION

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY

RESEARCH

The research project aimed to investigate the impact of contact with nature and rest in natural settings on people's mental health and well-being. Through a survey, we assessed how proximity to nature affected well-being and stress levels. The study included various demographic groups, focusing on marginalized communities. The goal was not only to understand the therapeutic role of nature but also to raise awareness of how contact with it can support well-being, which strengthens engagement in environmental protection and efforts to counter the climate crisis.

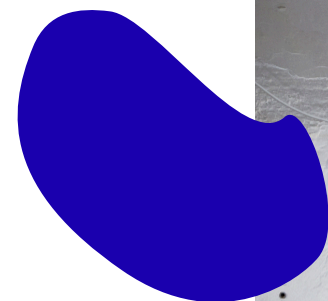
The results of the study showed that people feel greater peace when resting in nature. Participants also experienced increased creativity in such conditions. The research indicated that contact with nature has a positive impact on well-being. Respondents reported improvements in mental health and reductions in anxiety while engaging with the natural environment.

The most noticeable effects were reported by individuals experiencing a significant contrast: those living in large cities who regularly traveled to nature.

WORK OF ART

Rest is more is an attempt to find an answer how to contrast the rush of life in today's world with the desire to be closer to the Nature. Being in the Nature and interacting with it helps you stop for a moment and stay in here and now. Rush Is everywhere and being calm and relaxed can seem an act of courage, even a movement of resistance. The video shows such moments of stopping and personal journey to find "here and now". The moss installation is a symbol of connection with nature and immersion in it, which emphasizes the softness of the moss and its susceptibility to deformation. It is a metaphor for various systems that interact with each other.





[LINK TO
VIDEO \(ŁUKASZ\)](#)



[LINK TO VIDEO
\(ANUSZKA\)](#)

NIKOJ NAS NI MA, ŻODYN NOS NIY WIDZI, 2024 (WE ARE NOWHERE, NO ONE SEES US)

FILIP GAJEWSKI & WERONIKA KAŁWAK

ART TECHNIQUE:

2.5D PRINT, STEEL SHEET

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

DESK RESEARCH

RESEARCH

The climate crisis obliges us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate further climate change. It also means we must adapt to the changes that have already occurred in the natural and social environment, changes that cannot be reversed. Environmental degradation and the pressure to adapt threaten our mental health. Research shows that young women and girls, who are simultaneously the most aware of the challenges posed by the climate crisis, are particularly vulnerable to its negative mental health effects.

One way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is through the energy transition, which involves moving away from the use of fossil fuels (such as coal and oil). The European Union currently regards energy transition as its top priority. This coincides with deindustrialization, which has been underway since the end of the 20th century, characterized by the declining economic importance of mining and metallurgy. Globally, the decline of heavy industry supports the fight against the climate crisis. Locally, deindustrialization causes former industrial regions to lose significance, gradually depopulate, and see their communities lose not only their sources of income but also their way of life and sense of purpose, which had previously revolved around industrial work. As a result, these communities often oppose the energy transition and doubt the anthropogenic nature of climate change. Research conducted in many deindustrialized regions – including Upper Silesia – shows that men have a much harder time than women adapting to changes in their living environment, and they are at greater risk of depression.

Men, who have always constituted the vast majority of industrial workers, experience a loss of identity when they lose their jobs and the social roles associated with them. In the age of the climate crisis, are we ready to acknowledge their loss? Can we recognize and respond to their psychological vulnerability as we do in case of young girls?

WORK OF ART

The work reflects on the disappearing identity of Upper Silesia. It is based on photographs printed on raw steel sheet, reminding about the industrial past of the region. A "moving" video mapping of images from the closing ceremony of the last coal mine in Germany is projected onto abandoned postindustrial buildings of Silesian mines and workers' houses.





WORK OF ART

The topic of hunting can be quite polarising. Most of us probably have an opinion about it. On one hand, you hear about the necessity of protecting wild animals, prohibition of hunts and decreasing their negative impact (like accidental shootings and dysregulation of forest ecosystems) and the need to put to end barbarian hunting practices - insensitive to the suffering of other beings. On the other hand, you hear voices about the forest management carried out by hunters, the need for access to fresh meat from a conscious source, the educational potential provided by hunting, or simply - preserving the culture and tradition.

Which side are you on?

Poetical performance LOVE ME KILL ME is a queer, personal fantasy about the hunter's identity. It's an attempt to reach beyond the polarised societal and political narrative and search for new forms of dialogue about unpleasant and controversial topics in our culture and history. To achieve this, the author of this performance takes on board the interviews with members of a local hunters association and takes over hunting attributes and traditions to create his own positive narrative about his hidden and inherited identity.



LOVE ME KILL ME, 2024

KAROLINA BONARSKA, HUBERT FIEBIG, DAWID NOWAKOWSKI

ART TECHNIQUE:

PERFORMANCE

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

DESK RESEARCH

RESEARCH

As part of this study, three semi-structured interviews were conducted, addressing how hunters understand hunting, their role in society and nature, as well as the significance of tradition and culture to them. All participants emphasized the importance of spending time in nature, observing and learning from it as both constant and changing, grounded in the repetitive and predictable cycles of day and season. They valued the specific language used by hunters, the distinct culture and set of ethical principles, and their attachment to the symbols of Polish hunting. At the same time, they highlighted their understanding of their role in forest management and wildlife conservation, through regulating animal populations and taking care of vegetation.

Additionally, desk research was conducted based on an analysis of articles and statements from scientists in the fields of biology and natural sciences, focusing on environmental protection, the conservation of endangered species in Poland, and the role of hunters in this regard. The opinions of experts are largely critical, pointing out that hunters' activities are based on managing forest resources in a capitalist system, rather than on concern for animals and nature.

Hunters emphasized their closeness to nature and how much they have learned from it throughout their lives.



[LINK TO PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION](#)



WORK OF ART

ŚLINIKUM MOBILE / JOANNA

The inspiration for the artwork was the findings of the study on the Lusitanian slug. The materials and forms used are symbols of the methods employed to combat this species. The slug, originally brought to Poland to support farmers' work, has become their nightmare. The kinetic sculpture resembles mobiles hung over baby cribs and also references dreamcatchers.

GLEBAE ADSCRIPTI / KLAUDIA

The inspiration for the artwork was Bolesław the Forgotten, a king so cruel that he was erased from the pages of history, much like the imperialist ambitions of the Commonwealth. Glebae Adscripti refers to the pride associated with the vastness of the Commonwealth of Both Nations and the Sarmatian heritage of the nobility, which is foundational to today's national identity, despite the fact that most of us descend from peasantry—then tied to the land. Thus, the Crown of Greater Poland is merely an illusion: a façade covering the crumbling granary of Europe, which is rotting from within while clinging to the copper that currently positions us among the world leaders.



SLIPPERY SLOPE, 2024

JOANNA GRZYMAŁA-MOSZCZYŃSKA, KLAUDIA OPOKA

ART TECHNIQUE:

SCULPTURE, INSTALLATION

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

INTERNET RESEARCH, INTERVIEW

RESEARCH

The study we conducted combined qualitative research with desk research and virtual ethnography. As part of the project, we conducted five individual interviews and analyzed reports on the presence of the Lusitanian slug (*Arion lusitanicus*) in Poland, as well as methods of controlling it. The interviews took place in Albigowa and Markowa in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, where the Lusitanian slug was first observed in Poland in 1987. A common theme in the conversations was the changing role of gardens, as well as the drought that "destroyed everything." In the gardens of our interviewees, both native plants (in the form of lower yields) and ornamental, often non-native species fell victim to the drought. Paradoxically, the drought has a beneficial effect on the fight against the invasive slug species - Lusitanian slugs. One interviewee expressed satisfaction that "there is no invasion because it's dry." These slugs evoked strong emotions in him; he said, "I brutally murdered them with a knife." In one of the conversations, a detective-like narrative emerged—respondents recounted how the Lusitanian slug was brought to Poland by orchardists from Albigowa to clean up the area of fallen apples.

Genetic studies conducted in 2006 did not confirm this version - they showed significant interpopulation variation in the slug, suggesting that its presence may result from multiple independent introductions. We were intrigued by the aggression that this species evokes. We therefore examined the methods people use to combat it in their gardens. The comments on the Allegro platform turned out to be fascinating reading; methods based on copper received favorable reviews (e.g., "The tape actually works (...) not a single slug has entered inside, even though they are plentiful in the garden!"), but the most interesting - and aggressive - were the opinions about the chemical agent: "The slugs died, and that was the point," "It really works. The slugs devour it like fools and then die," "Just perfect for the 'Last Supper' for slugs."







WORK OF ART

An installation composed of objects that approach the notion of loss and memory of mines and glaciers. Ice cubes, wooden cubes covered with blue tones and lumps of coal. The construction will be complemented by an information panel covered with a composition of blue squares. The ice cubes from the installation will melt during the exhibition, permanently changing the composition. The original version will only remain in the memory of the first viewers; the process will be recorded for days to come. This underlines the sense of loss felt by the marginalised groups presented in the project.



STRATA TA TA, 2024

ADRIANNA MAKOWSKA, JAGODA MYTYCH

ART TECHNIQUE:

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

INSTALLATION

DESK RESEARCH

RESEARCH

With the STRATA ta ta project, we want to create an opportunity to touch intangible losses. Like attending the increasingly frequent glacier funerals, it offers the chance to say goodbye to what is being lost (ice and glaciers) in the most remote and vulnerable regions to anthropogenic climate change. At the same time, we are saying goodbye to coal, a symbol of a revolution in human industrial activity. It is also the branch of the Polish economy that is heavily criticised for its unprofitability and environmental impact. Today we already know that a future without glaciers awaits us, but it will also be a future without mines, whose closure will mean for many people not only the loss of jobs, but also of their social environment and network.

The loss we present is reduced to bricks to play with. It is deliberately trivialised, and you can almost hear a sneer in the background ('ta ta'). Because ecological and climatic loss is still not taken seriously, its commemoration does not have its own official, mature formula that would lead to greater empathy and solidarity. It would be difficult to find more different groups than the Silesia miners and the inhabitants of ice-covered areas like the Inuit (northern Canada). But both are losing something precious to them, and we are all losing with them. Climate change is not the end of the world, but it is certainly the end of the world as we know it - a world that, like childhood and playing with wooden blocks, was a safe haven for some associated with ice, for others with coal...



[LINK TO DOCUMENTATION](#)



WORK OF ART

A poetic synthesis of the research material reflects varying human perspectives on how it is to relate with the plant species. Combined with an audio visual meeting with a living ecosystem (Re)cultivating relationships invites you to WOMB - a community garden located on squatted land under threat of construction. For decades this land was under care of gardeners, families and inhabitants of the city who cultivated in allotments until the industry forced their leave.

Historically, close relationship with the land and its many lifeforms has served as the fertile ground on which the songs and the music of human cultures were cultivated. Recording the vocals for this project was a personal exploration of reopening the space of conversation across species.

Marginalisation of the more-than-human world by human society is at the root of the ongoing crisis of civilisation. This project asks the question of what happens when humans pause for a while to consider the experience of other life forms.



(RE)CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS, 2024

TINI MARTYNA DUBICKA, ZOFIA PROKOP

ART TECHNIQUE:

VIDEO

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

EXPERIMENT, INTERVIEW

RESEARCH

'We need acts of restoration, not only for polluted waters and degraded lands, but also for our relationship to the world.'
Robin Wall Kimmerer 'Braiding sweetgrass. Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants'

The study included an experiment in which each participant was asked to spend 3 minutes carefully observing a plant of their choice. During the first minute, I asked only for the observation itself, while in the following minutes, the participant needed to address the plant with questions - first: "who are you?" and then: "what is the world like for you?" Then, I had a short conversation with the participant, in which I tried to find out what their impressions were from this contact (in particular: how does it feel to say something to a plant?) as well as what is their general perception of, and relationship with, plants (in particular: do they think that plants consciously perceive/sense their surroundings? do they feel some form of relationship with plants?). The conversations were recorded.

The research is still ongoing, I am arranging further conversations, and the formal analysis of the recordings is still ahead of me. In the meantime, my research process and the first conversations conducted provided Tini with material for a song accompanying the film she made, and inspired some of the shots. And you, dear Reader, how do you look at plants? What - or Who? - are they to you?



[LINK TO VIDEO](#)



WORK OF ART

Echo is a multisemiotic installation that combines visual, musical, and textual layers. The sound composed by Marta Kluba relates to the music of the Earth, the frequencies of the soil, and the proximity to the core of our planet. The audio piece incorporates sounds of nature, such as leaves in the wind, walking in the forest, the sound of water, and a heartbeat. A special device was used to record sounds from plants in the Błędów Desert.

ECHO, 2024

WIKTORIA CHOJNACKA, MARTA KLUBA

ART TECHNIQUE:

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

INSTALLATION

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

RESEARCH

The ECHO project is the result of a polyphonic meandering of two female voices, an artist and a young researcher, exploring themes related to eco-poetics. The object serves as a metaphor for a story devoid of explicit or predetermined meaning. It is a playful exercise in associations, a hermeneutics of meaning, memories, and an attempt to discover an alternative realm of imagination. What is concealed within the capsule presents visions of creating a symbiotic experience. The authors have crafted a cosmic capsule capable of containing undirected trajectories of thought, a multi-threaded narrative, and a chaotic thematic diversity, ranging from the concept of walking to the issue of wars. The research inspiration drew from the work of scholars such as Anna Burzyńska, Glenn Albrecht, Tadeusz Ślawek, Monica Gagliano, Suzanne Simard, Kira Hoffman, Yannick W.L. Brunet, Julia Fiedorczuk and Gerard Beltrán.



Recycled glass was used to create the capsule. Inside, symbolic elements were placed:

1. Object Alpha W - a photo of her best friend, her deceased dog Karmel. She believes he was beautiful and changed her soul. He taught her how to walk;
2. Object Beta W - a photo of a loving couple, as she believes that love is beautiful;
3. Object Gamma W - a stick, because she likes sticks;
4. Object Delta W - dried flowers, because plants give life, and flowers smell beautiful;
5. Object Epsilon W - dried mint, because plants give life, and mint has a good taste;
6. Object Dzeta W - a picture of water, because water is life, and you can swim in it;
7. Object Eta W - a candy, because she likes sweets;
8. Object Alpha M - a dried structure of a cactus from an abandoned city of people, but inhabited by cacti;
9. Object Beta M - a photo of a cactus and the sun, because it draws energy from it
10. Object Gamma M - a photo capturing the change in weather conditions during a mountain trip;
11. Object Delta M - a photo of an ammonite fossil from 300 million years ago.





WORK OF ART

The project „Mining Damage” is based on the exploration of recreational areas connected to mining. During our journey through these sites, we encountered places such as an abandoned cinema building, an overgrown swimming pool complex, and a sports club. Our work resulted from observing the gradual destruction of these facilities over the years. This led us to capture them through photojournalism and installation art. The installation is a collection of objects associated with these places and with mining itself.



SZKODY GÓRNICZE (MINING DAMAGE), 2024

JAKUB BARAN, WIKTORIA TARNOWSKA

ART TECHNIQUE:

PHOTO JOURNAL, INSTALLATION

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

INTERNET RESEARCH

RESEARCH

The Szkody Górnicze project investigates the impact of the energy transformation on the identity of the region and local communities that have been strongly connected to the mining industry for decades. It focuses on places inextricably linked to mining and heavy industry, which once served as centers of social and cultural life.

The project draws attention to the processes of social and economic exclusion that have affected the communities residing in the Upper Silesia region due to economic changes. The research is based on the analysis of cultural works, archival photographs, and literary sources to capture the local lifestyle and ways of spending free time. The project sought answers to questions about the key elements of the social fabric that shaped how the community was perceived both from the outside and within the group.

In the course of the project, contact with "dead objects," which serve as decaying evidence of degradation and growing oblivion, was crucial. This contact lent reality to the subject matter and inspired the artistic component. The visualization of the research results employs the techniques of photojournalism and artistic installations, aiming to present the transformations of space and the fading of local identity. The project emphasizes the irreversible nature of the changes that have occurred in the social structure of the region.





WORK OF ART

The ceramics I create are an attempt to address the disconnection between humans and nature. In my work, I refer to the coexistence of different species within a single habitat, where the various needs of plants are taken into account. I mimic these relationships in such a way that the diverse requirements of plants—regarding water levels, soil types, and light exposure - are met when they grow together. I aim to shift the perspective of inviting plants into urban spaces towards designing with their needs in mind. I move away from "owning" plants to creating a shared space for a good life.



LOST CONNECTION, 2024

AGNIESZKA JEWASIŃSKA

ART TECHNIQUE:

CERAMIC

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE:

DESK RESEARCH

RESEARCH

The inspiration for the project came from reading Johann Hari's book *Lost Connections*. The author investigates the rising number of people experiencing various emotional difficulties. He identifies one of the causes of this situation as the disconnection from nature and other people. This detachment traps individuals in a state of loneliness within concrete landscapes. Numerous studies point to a simple correlation between the lack of contact with nature and decreased mood, along with symptoms of anxiety, regardless of the socio-economic status of the subjects. The opposite of this state is the experience of "biophilia," a term combining "bio" (life) and "philo" (love). E.O. Wilson, the creator of this concept, emphasized the sense of awe we feel when we are connected with the entire ecosystem. For a moment, we become one organism, inhabiting a shared planet.

Why is mental health in modern societies in such poor condition? And what can we do about it, given the ample evidence of the crucial role that contact with nature plays in mental well-being? I attempt to answer this second question in my artistic work.





Exhibition documentation, phot. Mateusz Gawrysiak



Exhibition documentation, phot. Stan Barański



Exhibition documentation, phot. Stan Barański



Exhibition documentation, phot. Stan Barański



Exhibition documentation, phot. Stan Barański