

Form to Gesture to Embrace

A chronology of our progression from observation to action to connection

Form

Water is finite, in a constant cycle through river systems, the skies and our own bodies. We could have carried the river at some point. As rain on our face. As water that we drink. We are part of the body of water.

The flow of the river, gravity, balance, suspension... flow patterns that operate within the forces of nature, and our own bodies.

The river cannot be studied in isolation. It carries, sifts, sorts and accumulates, over time. It has shaped the rocks and the colours of the pigments, as much as it shapes the land that we inhabit.

Gesture

Ephemerality is the defining character of performance, or durational work. Duration, presence, movement, futurity, spontaneity, event, instantaneity, memory

To move water, to collect water, to take water to the river. To draw on the water. Letting the water draw. To float, and experience the flow of the water. To use the water for rituals. Water as memory and matter.

Working together, as well as apart. Eating together. Asking for help, collaboration and assistance.

To go into nature, make or perform with what you find, document it and depart, leaving the work to decompose, live on, or perish. What the artists are doing on this residency plays with both process and temporality. Some works were only moments. Some works are disappearing before our eyes. For some, the gesture is an attitude, a way of acting. A meditation

The mayfly belongs to the order Ephemeroptera, an ancient group of insects, their adult lives typically lasting no longer than 24 hours. We operate on a subjective and humancentric experience of time. It is perspective. From one perspective, everything is ephemeral. How long must something exist for us to not see it as ephemeral? What would the mayfly classify as ephemeral? By accepting that which is unseen: our perspective of the historical, geological time; by stepping away from our own conception of time, we can begin to have a greater understanding of natural processes.

Materials, or experiences, do not end when a piece falls from your hand, or flies away in the wind, or drifts downstream. As Rafa said, a leaf when it falls is a rebirth, it continues to live. The moment itself is not at an end.

Embrace

In Phenomenological discourse, the body is seen as the site of perception, our way of experiencing, feeling the world. And that this perception is fixed in time, present. These ideas stemmed from the writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and his book *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945, translated into English 1962).

The artists here are responding to similar notions of embodied experience and interconnectivity, the primacy of putting one's body into nature. Creating form with the body, acting out processes of nature or submitting one's body to the forces of nature. It is an understandable instinct, as we consider a human-nature relationship, our connect or disconnect to the land.

Philosopher Alfred North Whitehead wrote: 'Our perception of natural events and natural objects ... is a perception from within nature.' Nature being inclusive of human. quote 'being-at-the-world-from-within-it'. end quote

we continued our thoughts on our own separation from the natural world. We spoke of cultures who wouldn't conceive of a separation to begin with, an everyday life which is nature-bound and that we have to train ourselves to take on these awarenesses.

Inherently, the ephemeral is environmentally-conscious. Leaving no trace is also an ethical decision. The mutual respect between ourselves and nature. It could be argued that any act of change or movement of nature is an interference, even if it is gentle, discreet, fleeting – an act which harms the aesthetic of nature. quote - 'A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community' - end quote.

We may only look to the monuments and standing stones of ancient peoples or the Nazca Lines in Peru to see that human has always transformed the landscape, has played with the natural and created environment. The domestication of animals and plants, too, demonstrates this. Boundaries do not exist in nature. We are all an element of the natural world, and we all interact with it. There must be an awareness of this exchange. To me, it is a case of ownership. Whether the land, its plants and animals are ours to claim.

In defining the actions we take on this residency as artworks, is claiming an ownership of natural materials and space. And yet, this ownership may only be that of an instant. At which point, nature reclaims. It depends on the lasting impact of what we create.

The shared experience of this residency, itself, is an ephemeral gesture. A meeting, a gathering, a bringing together of people, who will in a few short hours break apart and drift away...

thank you