

A
Thesis
by

THE
ADORNING
ENTITIES
AND
I

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THESIS OF
ADORNING ENTITIES

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Mini-me and reciprocity

The thin spider legs tripled hastily over the palm of my hand. Finding his way over the fleshy crinkled soft squishy surface, creating the slightest sensation, alike the faint touch of a feather. Yet more precise, a prickly little dance lasting barely a few moments. The other three girls observed me skeptically from a safe distance. Within a heartbeat, the spider had disappeared into the freshly cut green grass of the elementary schoolyard. I vividly remember feeling this overflowing sensation of proudness in my 6-year-old heart. As I had shown them (the girls, the spider, and myself) that neither Insects nor humans are dangerous if treated with kindness.





fig.1

After this realization, made by mini-me and as a response to the painful absence of a pet. As my parents were of the firm prohibiting opinion, I could not take care of any animate being. Like every overly imaginative and eager child, I decided to foster and create my own companions. Starting by making tiny prison-like retreat houses for the insects I would find at break time in school. It quickly grew, as I noticed that the insects I collected would only die or flee from my tiny sanctuaries, into giving all kinds of objects that occurred special to me names, emotions, and characteristics that appeared fitting. Imagining these sometimes found, gifted, inherited, or bought inanimate objects to have their own feelings and emotions felt right to me. As if I could give them a bit of my soul and create my very own companions through this. I would turn them into friends that would understand me completely and unconditionally be there for me.

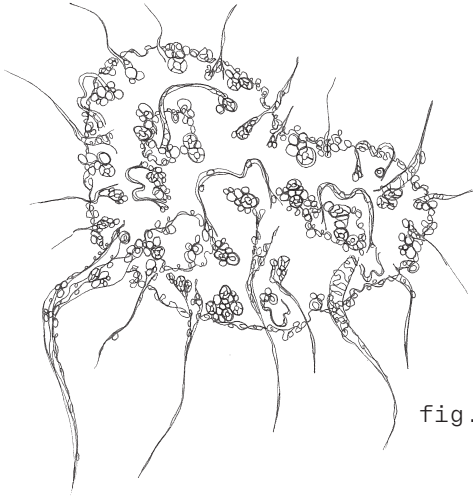


fig.2

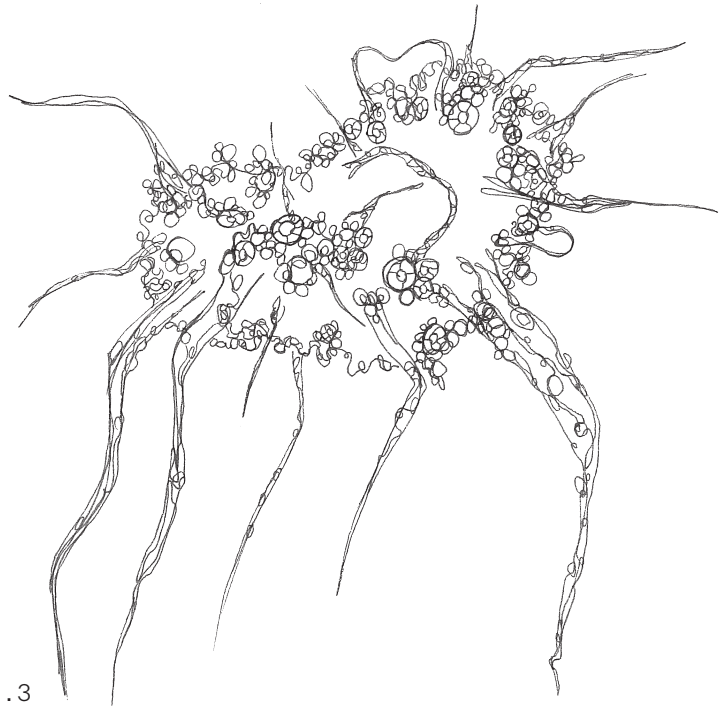


fig.3

These experiences and means of viewing the world disappeared into the thick, freshly cut grass carpeted of my subconscious mind (like the spider) upon becoming a juvenile. Most likely due to the intense teenage brain's desire to blend in.

The occurrences only recently crawled out of my brain's dense subconscious memory jungle. These memories were lured out by a project regarding a fetish market that acquainted me with the word Animism and its meaning. The word stems from the Latin word anima, which translates to soul or breath. Animism is the attribution of a conscious being to nature and inanimate objects. It is often described as the root of all religions and is practiced by around 40% of the world's population. The word's Western connotations stem from the British anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor's book "Primitive Culture" published in 1871. It reintroduces Animism as "a general belief in spiritual beings" and the minimum definition of religion. Through his and other western scientists and anthropologists writing, Animism was characterized as a "primitive" religion practiced by so-called "primitive" humans. That stand inferior to a modern worldview, a world view that is carved by capitalism, colonialism, rationalism, dualism, and philosophers like René Descartes and Emanuel Kant.

As a teen raised on western, modern philosophy that my child brain couldn't quite grasp, I can still hear Descartes softly whispering cartesian writings "cogito ergo sum" lingering in my mind. And the underlying arrogance and high-headedness going along with conversing about and agreeing on these long-gone spoken words. Secretly still not entirely aware of their contextual meaning and impact.

"I think, therefore I am," yet does that not disconnect humans from their surroundings? Placing the human form of intelligence on a pedestal? Justifying humans using nature and beings to their disposal? As they don't think they don't am?

In recent years the connotations and meaning of Animism have been slowly changing. This change is rooted in the political and social embrace of the word by differing native tribes and authors like Robin Wall Kimmerer. An excellent example of this is the Whanganui River in New Zealand, recognized as a legal person in 2017. Upon endeavors of the indigenous Maori of New Zealand giving him Environmental personhood. After that, many other natural resources followed.

In Japan, another beautiful example of contemporary or so called "Critical Animism" can be found. Where Animism is to this day intertwined with modern culture. And even exported (as odd as it sounds) worldwide through movies and other art pieces by Studio Ghibli and founder Hayao Miyazaki.

I still remember the first time I saw "Spirited away" as a child. The way it connected to me and my way of sensing the world. Mini-me wanted to crawl into that movie and never return. This illustrated world of water spirits dirtied by human trash in need of cleansing through a magical bathing procedure. These strange beings follow their duties and desires, not to be squished in a human-shaped box. Animism has connected with me since being tiny. It guided me to understand the world as a child and how to connect with it. Give kindness to other beings like the spider but feel compassion towards myself equally. I could always find a friend, a being that listens to me and that I could learn from in my surroundings. I want to further explore this animate sensation of feeling connected to the environment in my artistic practice. On the one hand, a connection that fuels the relationship with the matter around. But equally, through that, the connection with the self. I believe that Animism is not a "primitive" tool of the ancient but rather the key to a balanced future. This guides me to the question:

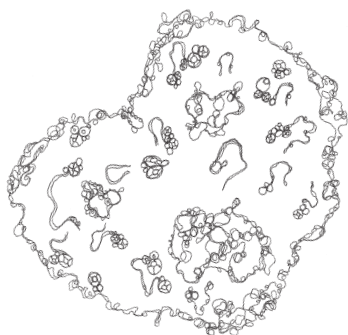


fig.4

How can I archive the concept of Animism within adornments?

To reestablish our connection
and compassion towards the
often-mistreated matter
around us?

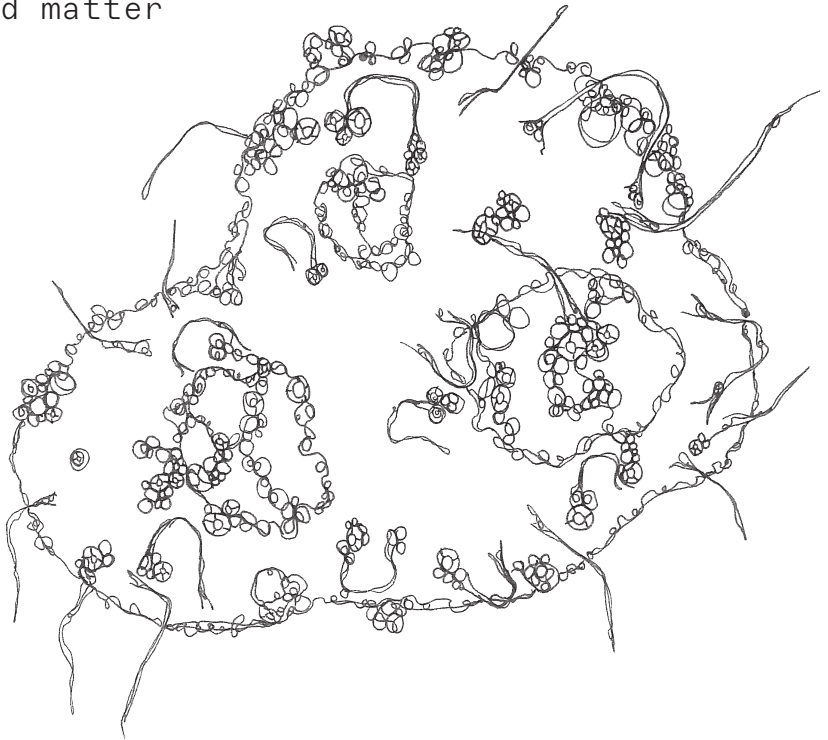
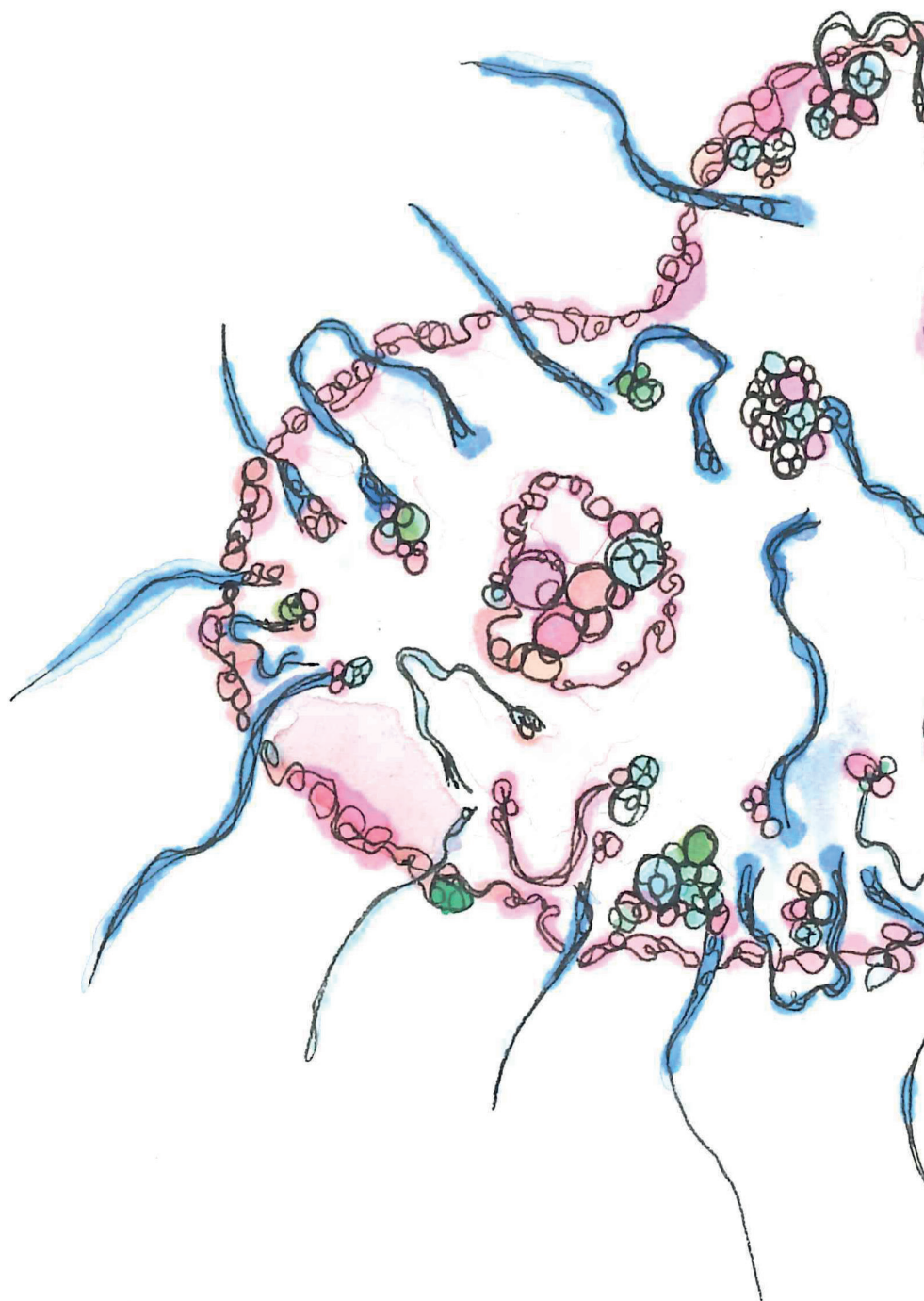


fig.5



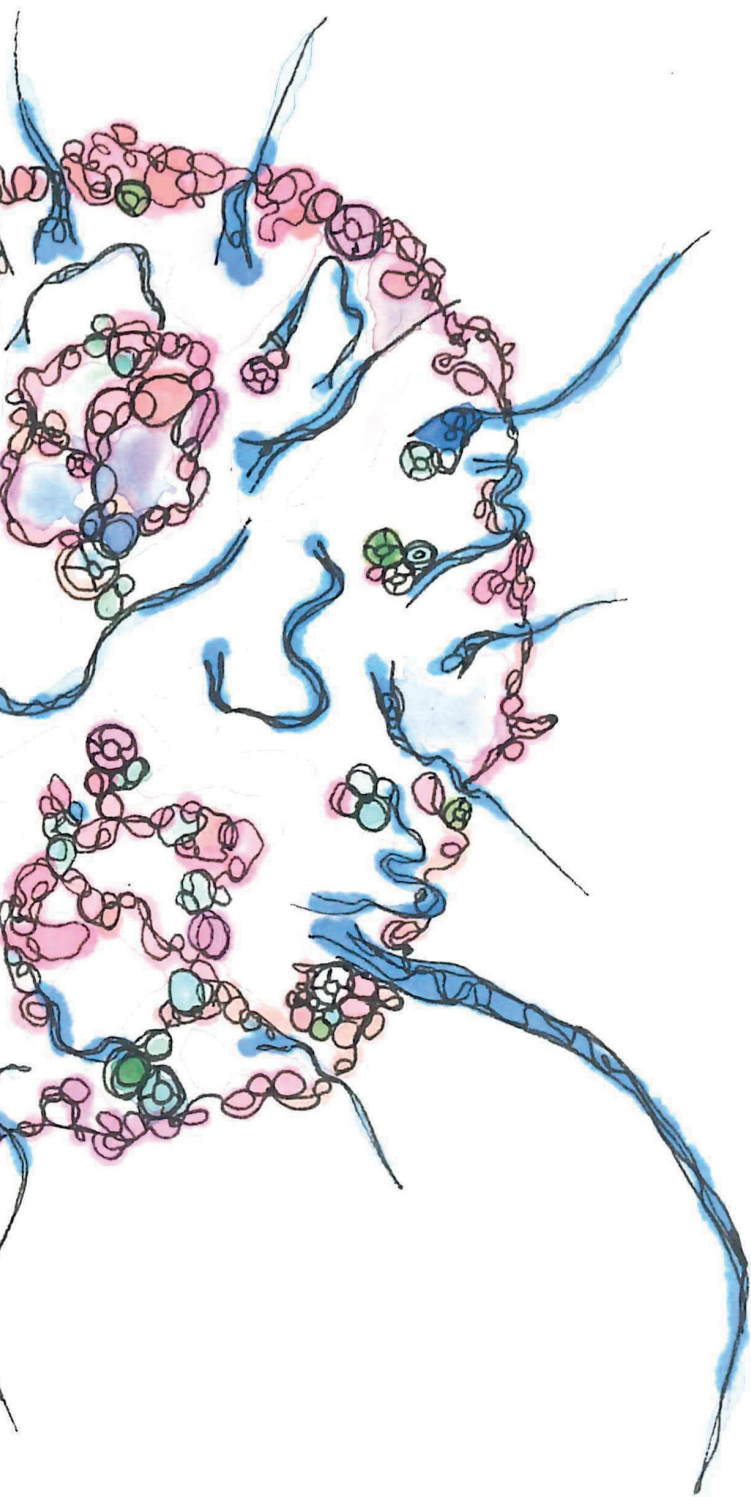


fig.6

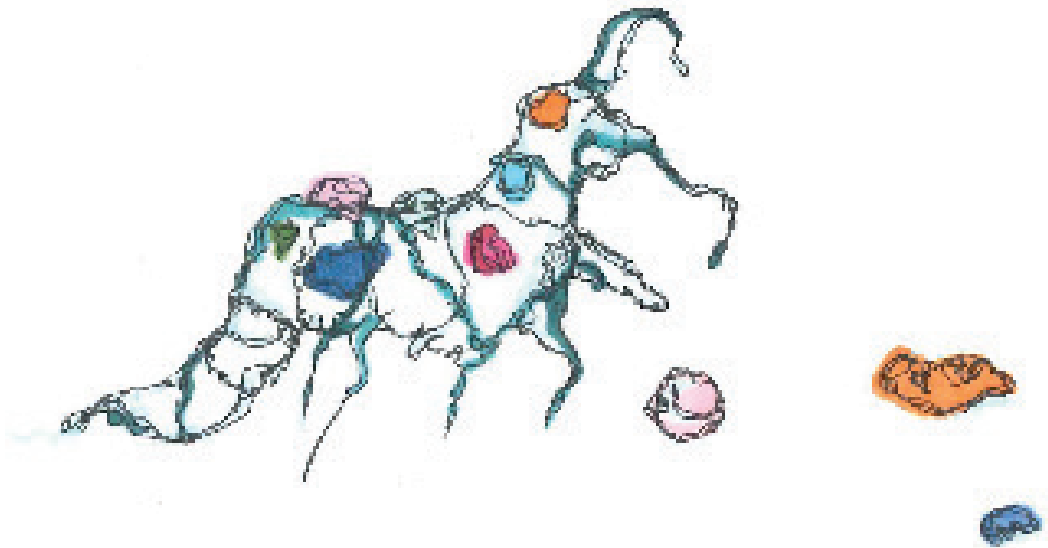


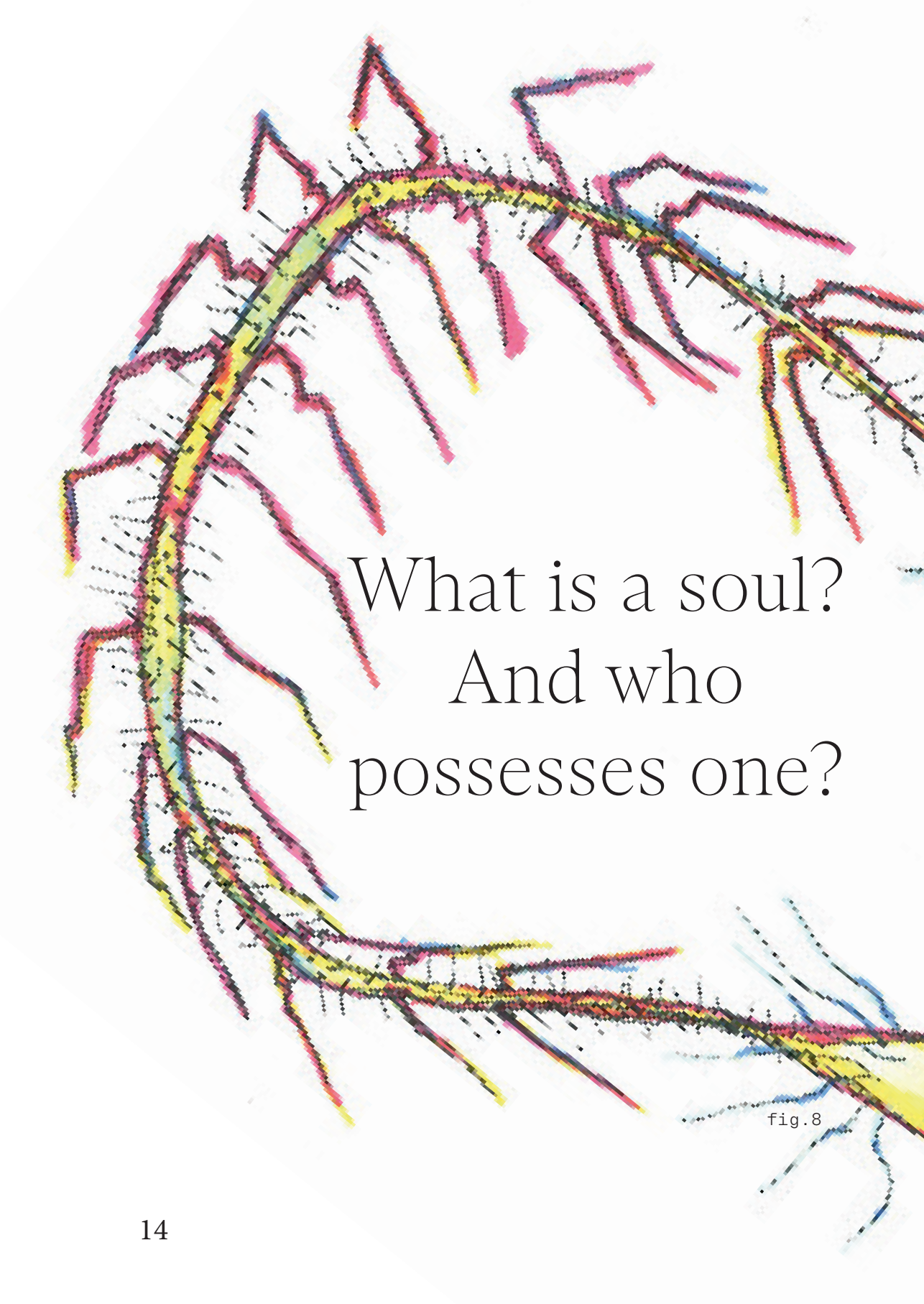
fig.7

A

chewed-up friend

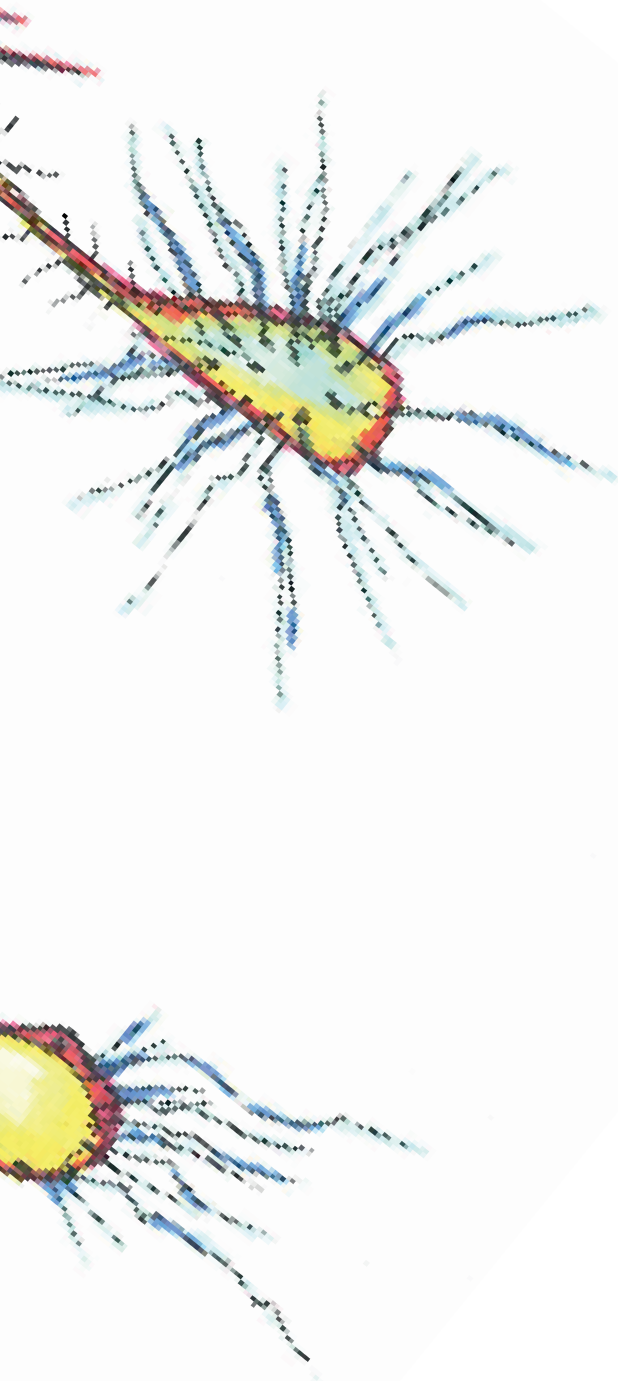
As a child, one of my most prized possessions was a little approximately 6cm tall bubblehead figurine of an unknown soccer player with a slightly chewed-up head. I had found the dark-haired, red-color-clothed friend on the way home from my weekly ballet lessons. Stuck in a flowerbed alongside the pedestrian walk. The retired soccer player was quickly dressed in a lemon-yellow jersey sweatsuit. Embellished with cobalt blue beads on the neckline, crafted from an old t-shirt of mine. Even though I despised soccer with passion, he quickly became one of my favorite treasures. Maybe due to his glorious chewiness (I always imagined a golden retriever nibbling on him). Perhaps because he picked me to find him.

Despite being beloved, he was only one of many abandoned objects mini-me would collect. She was a systematic collector, with her eyes glued to the street, always on the hunt for new companions. Being more than convinced to have extraordinary all-seeing sight as most people would simply seem to overlook these treasured friends. As I would also feel overlooked and misunderstood at times, the objects would become my loyal accomplices. Who always lend me a (sometimes chewed up) ear. They listened to my stories, dreams, and (in)conveniences. These imaginary companions gave me comfort whenever I felt disconnected from the world. Equally, I would listen to their stories and give them a safe place, a sanctuary. As mini-me believed in reciprocity.



What is a soul?
And who
possesses one?

fig.8



Humankind tends to believe that we, as self-proclaimed developed, highly complex creatures, possess something called a soul. Numerous experiments have been done to determine such elusive matter throughout history, leading to misconceptions like the 21gram idea, which is still up and running today. In an attempt to measure and categorize what impossibly can be, we often place ourselves above other beings. Does a dog have a soul? A pig? A ladybug? Or only thumb possessing entities?

Often this form of categorizing seems more of an effort to justify human behavior towards our environment. Maybe it is easier to justify hurting and apathetic actions with this belly of thought. As we comfortably place ourselves above others.

As a new human not entirely familiar with this culturally imposed concept, I found myself seeking the companionship of matter perceived to be soulless. Yet, it appeared natural that these entities had their character, story, and soul, properties not defined or projected on by the human brain but rather hardly perceived and often overlooked by it. The matter around us usually has something to tell, learn from, observe, and admire. And eventually, once observed enough, these beings can turn into companions.

In the book "Jewelry matters" Marjan Unger and Suzanne van Leeuwen speak about the difference between extroverted versus introverted values.

In the book "Jewelry matters" Marjan Unger and Suzanne van Leeuwen speak about the difference between extroverted versus introverted values. Extroverted values are materialistically, visually perceivable ones like valuable material or expensive gemstones. In contrast, introvert or intrinsic values are described in the following manner.

"Unless they were linked to historical figures or facts, jewels whose value derives primarily from the wearer's private life, and which are introvert rather than extrovert, have received less attention from historians than great jewels. Such personal meanings may sometimes be recorded in family portraits, in an account of a marriage, or in a will. Sometimes the word 'souvenir' is literally engraved in a piece of jewelry, on the inside of a ring or medallion. When people acquire a jewel for themselves, there is usually a specific reason, which will continue to cling to the pieces in the form of a memory. For the owner, it is irreplicable and its memorial value cannot be expressed in money."

These intrinsic values of jewels or, in this case, beings are what strikes me as fascinating. They define the character of the being its personality. Yet not in the form precisely elaborated by the "Jewelry matters" book but in an object-independent way.

Introvert values are the character, tales, and properties an object possesses independent of humans. The above-mentioned independent way of viewing the object also changes the relationship between humans and non-humans, from a one-sided relationship of use into a balanced give and take reciprocity. This relationship changes the way we interact with beings around us.

It also shapes the process of creation within my artistic practice. It turns it from a single-sided interaction into a collaborative effort. Rather than pushing an idea onto the object, I begin by observing it closely and listening to what it is expressing. For me, this starts already within the way I find my collaborating beings. They are often bits and pieces found on the street during a walk, grocery store run, or any activity that allows spying for the abandoned and uncared matter. These beings can be most often found on the side of the street, quietly lying in a puddle of forgottenness. Once picked up from the ground, most of them decide to stay with me for a while. Others, on the contrary, decide to leave as soon as possible. They are finding their way through a crack in the pocket or the opening of a sipper. Not to be held for long but rather faint companions that have grown attached to the notion of being abandoned. Maybe they have found their freedom in being deserted.

As a child I always believed that
no one could see me.

I was certain that I was capable
of observing and listening to everyone.

I would sit in ^{class,} ~~class~~ be quiet, look at
my blank piece of paper and listen.

Silently.

fig.9

Looking back to the ones deciding to stay a while. Upon arrival at home, they get examined and, if needed, cleansed and laid down on silky-soft textile surrounded by others like them in an ever-changing puzzle of abandoned matter. From there on, in a collaborative effort, I observe and listen to the tales they tell and begin turning them into an adorning entity. Carefully layering on materials and matters of meaning that these abandoned friends enjoy. The creatures express who they are within this creation process, which I archived through drawings and writings. One might call these expressions the spirit of the being.

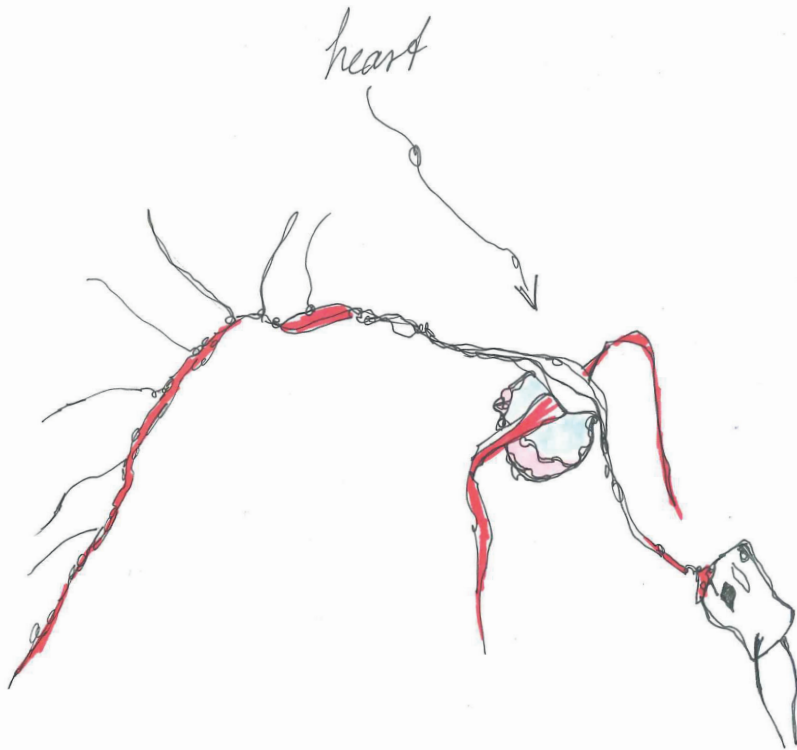
Yet to follow up on our initial question. Certainly, the spirit is not the soul. So, where to find the soul within these companions? How does one certify that they possess a soul? The search for soul or, in Latin, anima has been wafting in my mind for a while now. To me, these beings, these creatures, are vibrating with soul and, in some cases, seeming to express more of it than me, if anima would be a matter able to be measured. I suppose, like most matters, it depends on the perspective, similarly to how my view shifted from seeing abandoned matter as rubbish to seeing them as most valuable beings. The stuck notion of soul in my head shifted. The soul is something that occurs, not something that can be possessed or measured—an event of interaction. I can create soul in collaboration with the creatures by being animate, interacting, and communicating. Finding, cleaning, placing, observing, getting to know them, the process of helping to express their spirit is what gives them anima. But equally, this exchange offers soul to me as this is a relationship of reciprocity.

He is a predator.
But he was not
always like this.

Once he was a
innocent being.

A creature of the
wind, softer and
more serene than
all the others.

Close to his chest
he carried his
pearlescent heart,
glowing in the
wind, it guided
lost souls.



He is a predator.

fig.10

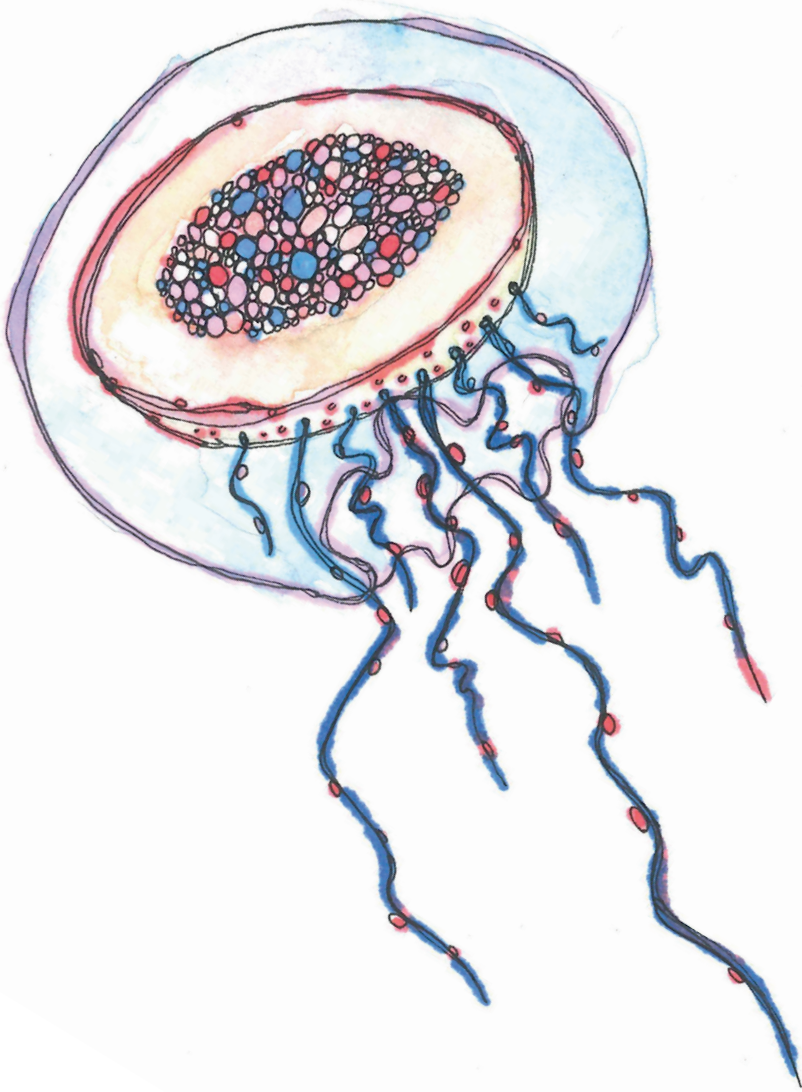


fig.13

Tiny enclosed shell ocean

The palm leaves were softly wafting in the warm sunny breeze. Its stem grew on the sandy beige ground between the two little vacation bungalows facing the quiet stone-paved street. My seven-year-old brother was handed the most beautiful shell by a man in a formfitting scuba suit on said street. Our left side vacation bungalow neighbor, the man, had found the baby head-sized, intricately twirled shell during a dive excursion in the morning. Four-year-old me was observing them skeptically from a safe distance. She had a strong disdain against the neighbor, partly because of his strange seeming creepily tight black outfit. Partly because he had a tiny yet loudly barking Chikwawa that had rejected her friendship advances the days prior.

And now for a freshly added final third reason. Mini-me was intensely angry at the neighbor for only gifting my older brother such a marvelous deep-sea treasure. Yet the acidic feeling of jealousy lingering on my thong was quickly swallowed and forgotten about, as my brother was not shy of sharing this magnificent hard-shelled creature and the magic it possesses. Once pressed firmly against the ear, one could hear the rhythmic sound of the ocean's waves the shell was birthed from. Wherever in the world, one might be.

I remember sitting for hours and hours on the beach, taking turns listening to the tiny, enclosed shell ocean with uttermost concentration. Obsessively trying to see if it matched up with the rhythm of the endless outside sea.

If soul is in interaction, what is interaction?

Interaction is something we engage in constantly with others. If consciously or unconsciously, whether we want to or not. Yet, upon asking my unknowing family in an impromptu field study, their first examples of interaction. The term got quickly singularly associated with animate beings. Chatting with other humans, paying the cashier at the grocery store check-out, drawing faces towards a baby, petting an excited dog. A form of transaction sparked between alive matter. But what if I touch the harsh texture of an oyster shell, feeling its sharp surface. Observing it carefully with my senses; yet no noticeable reaction from its side. Or if I lift a baby head-sized shell up to my ear, listening to the soft sound of blood flooding in my head echoing. Still without a perceptible reaction from the shell. Is this less of interaction than chatting with another human? And how would this idea of interaction then transfer to the context of my adorning entities?

During my search for answers to this thinking knot that fastened itself in my head, I stumbled across the written down conversation of Issa Samb and Antje Majewski titled "La coquille". One specific part of the conversation in Samb's garden in Dakar offered me the words to untwist this thinking knot.

"It is not a question of interactivity, neither is it even a question of interference. It is a question of inter-relationship of living things."

The word inter-relationship describes much better what I thought of as interaction before. It seems that interaction is one mosaic in the entirety of inter-relationship. Nobody, no matter, can escape inter-relationship. We are all intertwined one way or another. I am not sure if that is what the Philosopher Issa Samb utterly meant by using this term. Yet I allow myself the freedom of adapting it, coloring it in a shade fitting to my frame of mind.

It allows me to see the act of touching an oyster shell as an act of inter-relation. One big soft squishy clump of atoms inter-relating to a smaller harder shelled clump of atoms.

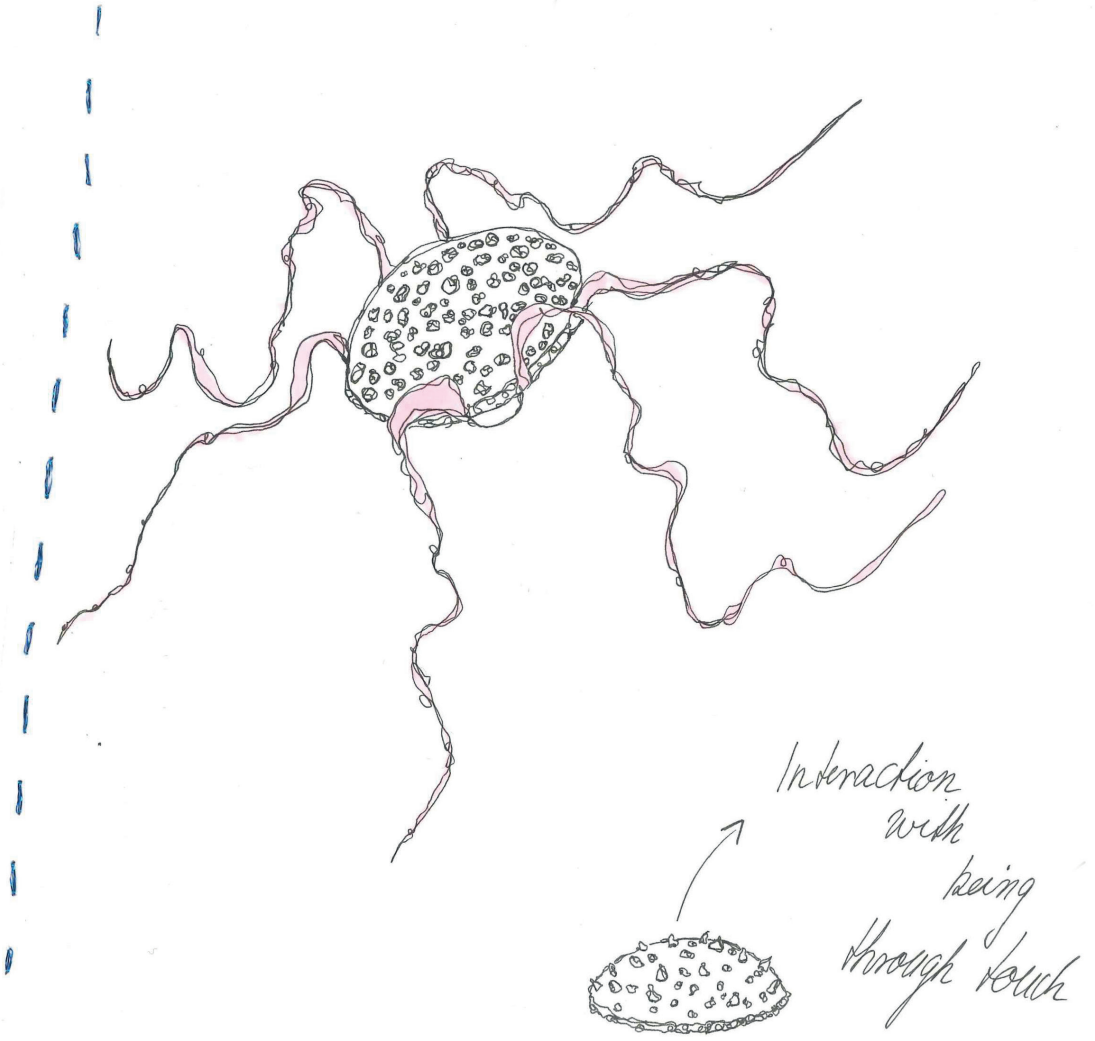


fig.14

Giving attention to others
Giving attention to matter
positive attention
Perceiving with senses
body / mind

fig.15

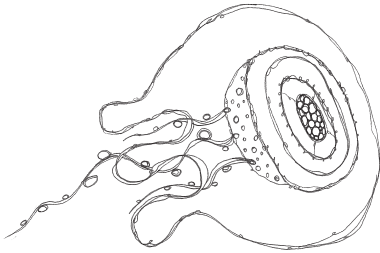


fig.16

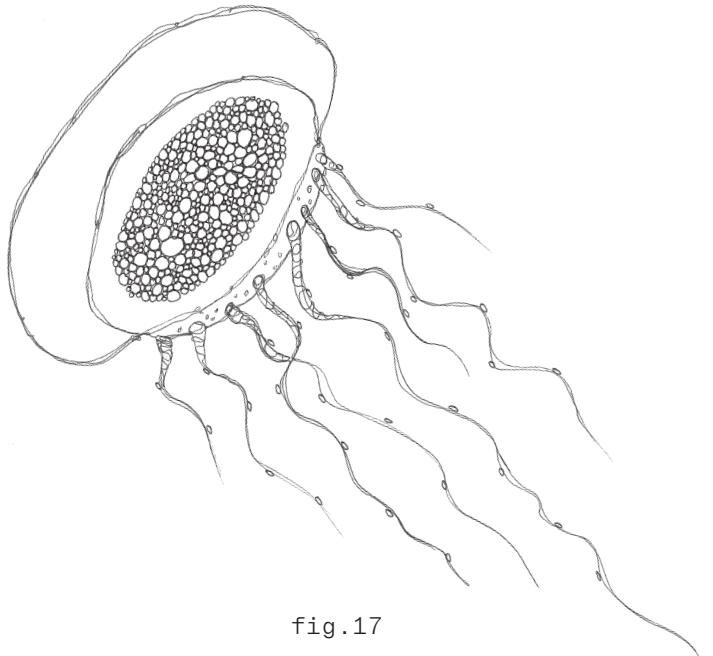


fig.17

Equally the adorning entities, these creatures of collaboration are born from the inter-relational process the matter, and I engage in. The inter-relationship way of perceiving removes the difficulty of waiting on a noticeable reaction from the other. Like the method of viewing the soul, it shifts away from a purely in-the-moment exchange of action to a panoptic intertwined matter.

For instance, there are plenty of things the adorning entity friends educate me on during the process of growth. A vital part of the creation is listening to them. The secret keeper doublets have taught me plenty about the flow between focused patience and precise shaping acts. They have taught me about spherical forms and the shape of water droplets. They have brought me the feeling of quick cracking fear and soft, warm relief. The shiny scream of glass touching then ticking away from each other. The sense of calmness once caressing the tiny doublet softly in the palm of my hand, feeling its weight and cold, clean skin. Those are only a few of the experiences thought and brought by them. Yet they illustrate that this interaction, inter-relationship comes in all shapes and forms.

Not singularly the quick, easy perceivable interactions, limited in-depth and creativity we often get thought and presented within "modern" society. The examples of interaction my family gave above reflect the relationship the culture I was raised in has with matter, with others.

The term I learned to use to describe this relation in the last few years is the Anthropocene, the man-made. A beautiful-sounding word with a not at all beautiful meaning. If you ask me, having altered the earth through human activity is certainly not worth a batch of honor.



fig.18

Quasimodo and I

The slimy brown snail was wriggling its dark brown body in pain. The white salt crystals were quickly robbing it of all its gooey mucus. It was slowly shriveling up to a tiny mummy on the stairstep leading up to the garden.

My cousin giggled in pure delight, the salt shaker between his little fingers. Mini-me was staring at him in shock and disbelief. How could one tiny blond angel-like looking boy be so evil as to torture an innocent ugly snail friend? Indeed, the brown slug was not the most beautiful garden creature and 5-year-old me had nightmares of stepping on one barefoot. Yet torturing the little slimy Quasimodo for some perfidious satisfaction seemed outlandish to her. At that moment, that burned itself into my brain like the salt into the snail's skin. Child me decided two things. Firstly to mistrust her cousin and stop inviting him over. Someone who salts snails for entertainment must be capable of much worse acts. And secondly, to protect those little, maybe a bit unattractive, slimy beings that could not defend themselves. The small helpless creatures of this world.

What is the deal
with fragility and
mortality?



fig.19

This classification of the contemporary time as noticeably altered by humans as Anthropocene expresses some questionable type of human strength to me. The power of humankind and its wheeling and dealing with the world. Within a few years, we managed to obtain change. You can see a difference in the environment. Yet sadly not a positive change. Somehow along this destructive path, we must have forgotten or egomaniacally denied that humankind is equally part of the world it has been light-handedly using and abusing. We are even more dependent on the ecosystem than it is on us. Yet beguiling with our ecosystem now confronts us with the fragility of the fooled with. But in the same breath with the fragility and mortality of our livelihood.

This aspect of fragility and mortality is something that fascinates me. It is equally vital to exist as being lively and robust. Yet it often comes along with a certain darkness and negativity. Of course, that depends on the culture one is surrounded by. But growing up, the notion of mortality was always filled with sadness and darkness, tainted with fear. Equally was the concept of fragility, something negative. I was seen as a fragile child, someone you needed to be especially careful with. And in many ways, it seems like the world we are in now sees mortality instead as an annoying obstacle that should not take up any space in this world. This society appears to neglect the beauty found in soft sensitive fragility. As well as the critical lessons that it can teach us. Maybe leaving a bigger space for the awareness and celebration of fragility could introduce a certain softness and understanding of the beauty and preciousness of being. As we seem to neglect the necessity of mortality in our Athanasia-driven world.

The preciousness that lies in fragility is something that the adorning entities and I have been carefully crafting through the chosen layered materials. A noticeable part of their little bodies is crafted from glass. Not any type of glass, to be precise. One of the strongest and most heat resistant of its kind named borosilicate glass. In medical and scientific devices, this material is what their shiny translucent little legs and bulbous body parts are formed from. Yet even with this durable glass, the material itself still makes them mortal. The glass offers them a certain fragility and mortality that translates into how we view them and inter-relate with them. They are to be touched, explored, and placed on the body with particular care and softness. As their transparent, glossy, glassy limbs and torsos invite us to observe and caress. Yet always with the lingering mortality connotated mannerism of conscious and delicately aware examination and exploration of the entities. The fear of losing something or breaking someone changes our perception of the world and our behavior towards it. This feeling might not be an enjoyable sensation. Yet, it offers the foundation or root for all the pleasant sensations and feelings sprouting and blossoming above the surface to the adorning entities and me.



fig.20

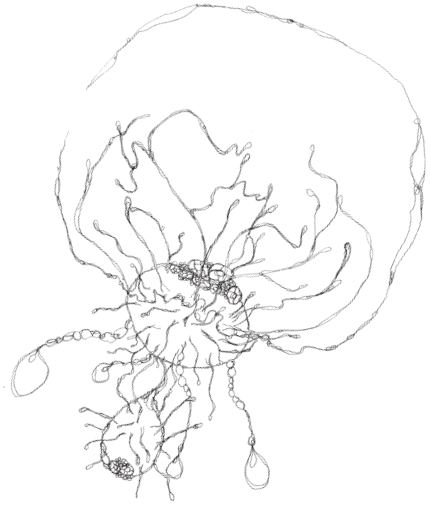


fig.21



fig.22

How do I protect and preserve an adorning entity's physical from?

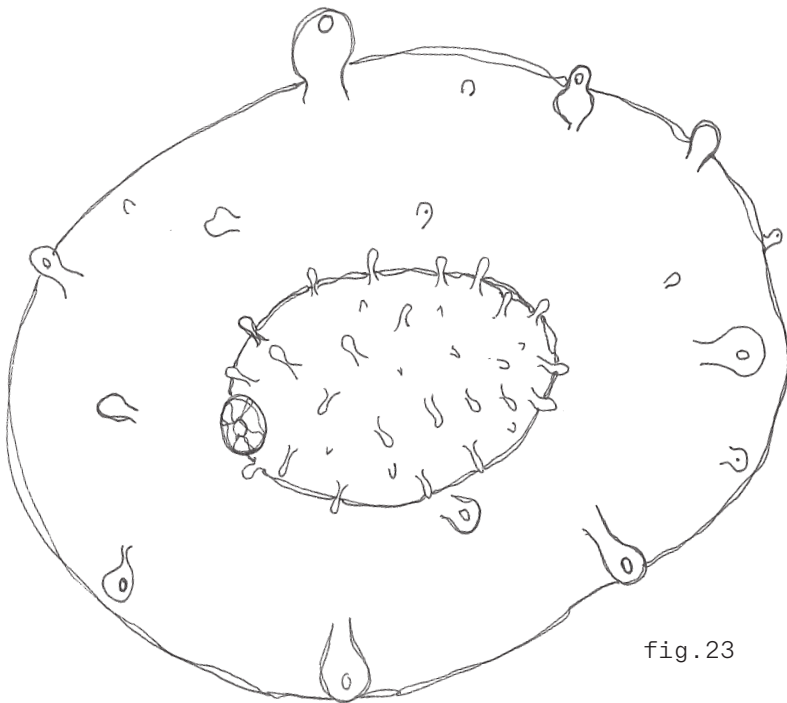


fig.23

Yet nevertheless, I see myself as a gardener of these growing and flourishing emotions. And similarly to the brown Quasimodo slug from the beginning of the chapter, I feel the need to protect them to some measure. This notion of protection started with the silky soft blankets the abandoned matter was automatically placed on. The safety blankets began from that point and grew into silk sheets dyed with silk paint in creature correlating colors. I see these pieces of fabric as their safe space, their habitus. A little bubble they can rest in or a blanket they can wrap around themselves to feel protected. And equally, these textiles are nurtured to protect the adorning entities. They grow into silky soft fluffy pillows and pedestals for the creatures.

In hindsight, this process of finding tiny pillow islands of safety resembled the story of the insect sanctuaries turned into confinements only with a happier ending. We stumbled upon many restricting or unfitting options, searching for a safe space for the adorning entities. There were tiny origami boxes folded and constructed, vintage jewelry bags and boxes researched, and vaults investigated, only to reach the same point as I did many years ago as a child. These bowls and boxes would only turn into traps, hiding and confining the creatures. Drawing the attention away from the essence of the adorning entities. Through this search, I have understood that what they get from me is a soft, sometimes squishy safety blanket. Alike the textile foundlings are bundled up in when found on someone else's stairs or given for adoption. Certainly, with the substantial difference, I would never abandon an adorning entity. Entangled in these blankets made with care, the "adorning entities" get placed in a temporary terrarium crafted from seethrough glass. This soap bubble resembling space is necessary for them to travel safe and sound.

Looking back at the beginning tale of the snail that could not protect himself from the mightier tiny human. This reflects how children get taught to interact with and treat nature. A particular element of empathy and kindness is missing in educating, beginning from miniature to full-grown humans. This and a variety of other factors brought us to the point of the Anthropocene. Of course, I can easily make this comment sitting comfortably surrounded by all the benefits this way of relating to the environment has brought to the western world. At the same time, these comforts also offer me the resources, opportunity, and luxury of critically reflecting on what has been so far and what is to come. Can we, as humans, become aware of the delicate, elegant structure of the environment we have been born into? Can Animism help us to shift our perspective? While researching such an elusive topic as the future, I learned about the era some anthropologists believe will come next.

The Symbiocene is a word or, better put, a name not yet recognized by the grammar program of Word. Yet equally as catchy as Anthropocene if you ask me. But with a far better meaning. The Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht forged the term from the Greek word symbiosis, meaning "living together" or "a cooperative relationship". It can be rephrased with the phrase "Mutualism" if one trusts the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Oddly this fits very well with the animistic views encored in my heart. And makes me hopeful for a future in which the majority can be a Gardner and protector of beings. A future in which we live symbioses with the environment. Maybe Animism is a way to reach this state of symbiosis and sustain it.



fig.24

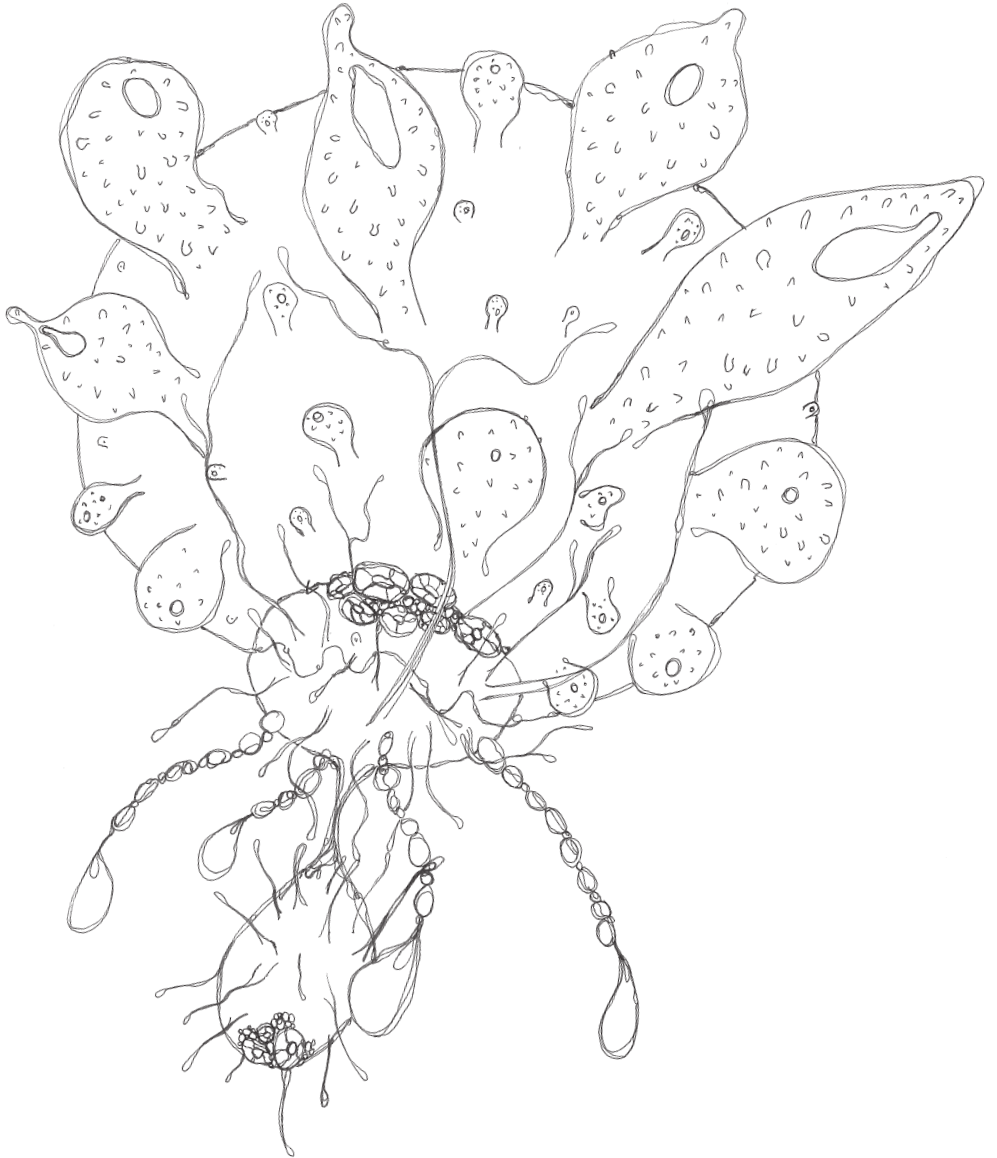


fig. 25

Clay sanctuary

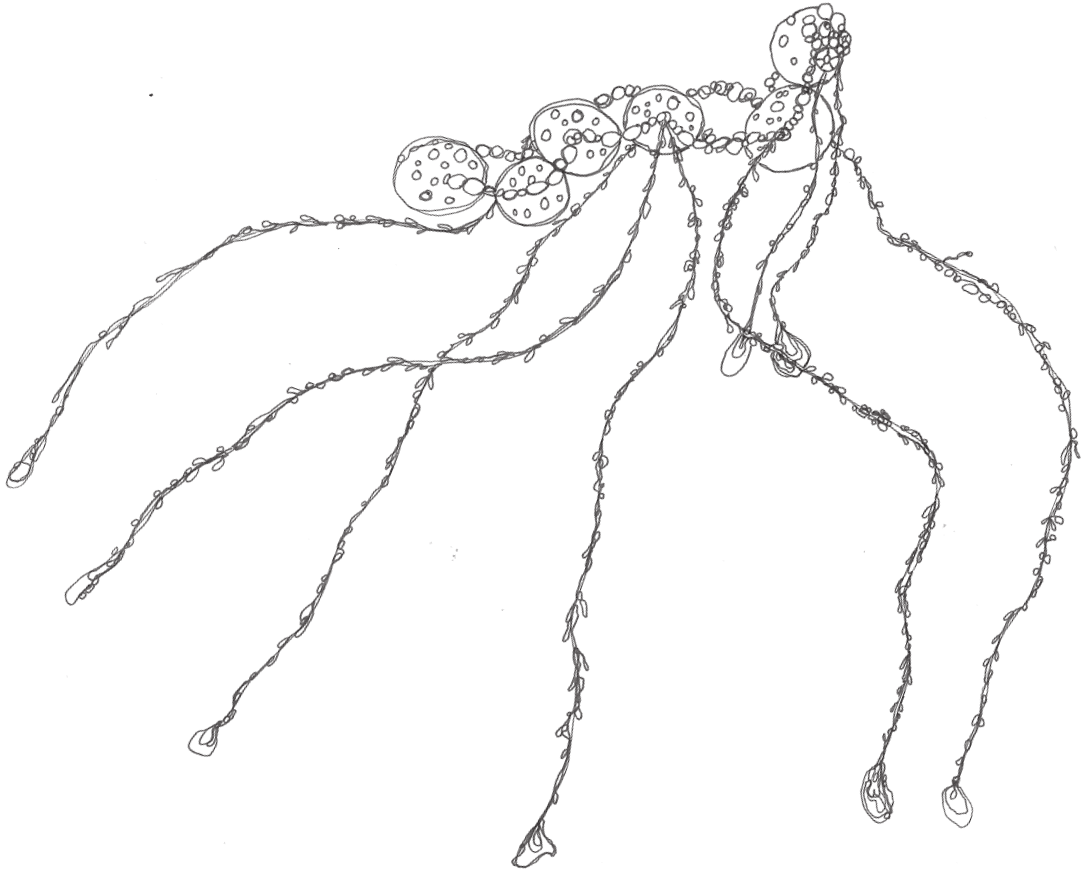


fig.26

Whenever I visit my parents' home nowadays, I most often make a trip down to the less frequented area of the house. Downstairs is a quiet room hidden in-between thick green leaves, placed on the dark brown earth. A tiny, colorful clay house sits at the foot of a mighty deep-rotted pot plant.

Surrounded by a green garden, a wooden fence, a densely reeds-covered sea, and a tiny brown bench. The house has a vibrant red organic yet somewhat triangular-shaped roof with a small brown chimney. The clay walls holding up the ceiling used to be in a sunflower bright yellow that faded with time as clay apparently does not age well. The front pond facing side has a small wooden door with a black handle. One somewhat round window can be spotted on the port's left side. Underneath that positioned, the small bench tinnily towering over the blue clay puddle that mini-me carefully garnished with green rolled clay reeds. It was surrounded by a slowly falling apart wooden fence. At first glance, a pretty need relaxing vacation getaway.

The idyllic appeal of this miniature clay sea sight residency is as picturesque as it is elusive as it was being built on a tragedy. Formed as a hallmark of a terrible accident, a monument against forgetting, against losing a sad memory. Murder was the reason for creating the tiny home. Eight-year-old mid-size Maureen had taken an innocent life. Indeed, on accident, not with the intent to kill, yet out of annoyance, it had happened.

She was listening to her favorite crime audiobook, eating the well-deserved butter cookie, when suddenly, a tiny fruit fly appeared. Tragically the little fruit fly grew a fond interest in the girl's butter cookie. Circling around, the butterfly backed good time and time again. Even the most energetic wafting and waving did not stop the tiny insect. Within milliseconds the girl squished the abrupt direction changing fruit fly in an energetic wafting of the right hand. Killed out of an over-boarding desire for the butter cookie from both sides. After the death happened and the corps had been examined, mini-me was shocked. The cookie and the audiobook had been forgotten. Someone had died out of my selfish carelessness. Not a very pleasant feeling. To not forget the terrible accident and the tiny cookies-loving fruit fly, 8-year-old me decided to bury the insect in a dry and dead-looking plant and build a small home for the friend above it. That serves as a sanctuary for the dead fly and a memorial of the tragedy.

How to protect and preserve an adorning entity's spirit?

As mentioned in chapter one, I believe in for every object independent introvert values that give the adorning entities their character, tales, and properties shortly put their spirit. These introvert values are a somewhat elusive matter. Of course, I beguine collecting and compiling the hints and bits and pieces of them during the creation process. They come most often in the shape of drawings, pieces of text I write and find. Yet to me, this is not enough to document the adorning entity's introvert values, their spirits. I began writing down their stories out of fear of forgetting any of these wondrous beings' characters. This started with me writing down the tales, properties, and what makes them who they are of the already existing entities. This took a moment as quite some creatures had compiled.

But once this typing task was complete, the formulating and archiving of the adorning entities turned into a ritual, a vital part of the process. Because at this particular point in time, the creature and I both agree that they are grown to independence. I compile my drawings, readings, and writings and reflect. To carefully name the being and write his story to tell, his introvert values down.

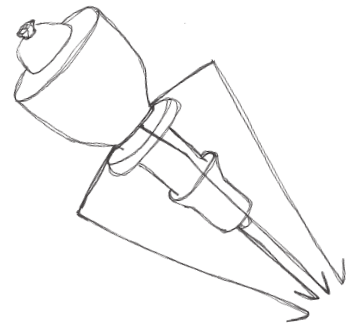


fig.27

Observing this string of actions from the outside, they are best described as a private intimate first birthday celebration between the adorning entirety and me. Of course, I do not bake the little friends a birthday cake and glue together a tiny crown for them. But nevertheless, reflecting on this now, this procedure is best described as a birth celebration. In which I compile and archive the creature's process, almost like a proud parent makes a rather unpleasant to watch birthday video of their child.

After elaborating on what the creature and I do together, even though it pains me to write. There is a point in every adorning entity's existence where we both need to let go. Do I want to let go? Certainly not. Do I understand the necessity of letting them go for our own sake? Yes.

If I kept them on a blanket somewhere in the shadows of my home, I would deprive them. Rob them of curiously getting carried out into the uncertain world. I would bereave them of inter-relations, of others interrelating with them. I would become a hovering, helicopter, controlling creator. Piling the creatures until I could not take proper care of them as I have so many that I could attend non-properly. Similarly, to those people, you see late at night on some sensation-mongering TV show that collect and neglect innocent beings of all kinds in their foul homes.

Sometimes I wonder what these others would tell us humans if they could speak, advocate for themselves, voice their opinions, and how they want to be treated. Somehow those luring piles of uncared-for beings randomly piled on some abused pee or puke-stained mattresses or, even worse, a sad slatted frame always seemed most horrifying to me. The being became an impermeable, most often muddy mountain on top of something that should be a place of peaceful sleep and sanctuary. But at the same time, those human figures living in homes with bedframe mounts. Who, alike unhappy tiny worms, wind and wriggle through their gulches of stuff (a derogatory term for mistreated matter in my eyes) are victims themselves. Maybe they did create that monstrous muddy mountain by neglecting the beings around them, but they are most often outcasts of our times like the objects in their home are. Not to disregard that most often, these people have mental and general health issues leading to this excessive, uncontrollable collecting behavior. Yet the protagonists in these horror documentaries reminded me of people that got possessed by their so-called possessions. As if the mistreated turned bad and stood up for themselves. Turning the human into a shadow figure reliant on its objects around. A horror film turned trashy reality tv documentary.

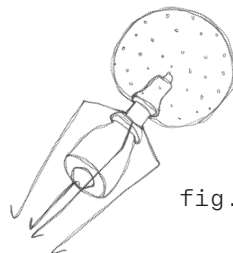


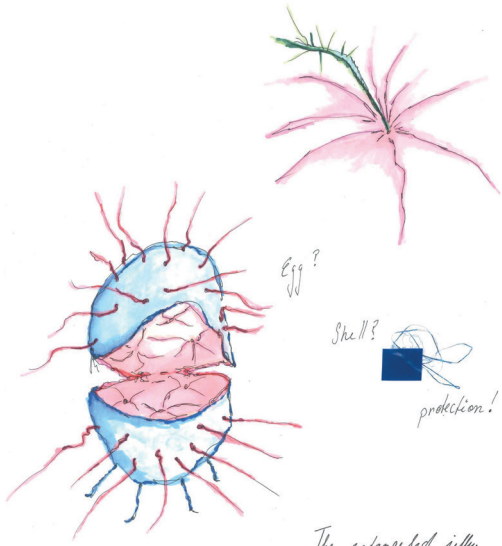
fig.28

At the same time, I cannot deny that I see parts of my own behavior in matter-posed humans like this. I can relate to the materialistic desire to have things like most other people. A messy is an exaggerated and layered example of mistreating matter, yet the culture I grew up in seems to have a general issue with wanting to have things, beings. We define ourselves through what we call our own, equal to the soul that culturally we claim to possess. Historically, our greed and need for consuming, having, and owning have led us to do monstrous unethical actions. Slavery is one of many appalling and dreadful actions that can be connotated with this addiction. We discard the environment, others, and humans in our hungry predatory pursuit of possessing, obtaining, and owning.

To return to exploiting these unwell poor figures pictured in a sensation-mongering reality tv show. Watching the piles of "stuff" as a mid-sized Maureen, I wondered what these beings piled into miniature mountains would scream at the audience watching. What would happen if people listened to them and decided to give them the object equivalent to human rights? If they would start resisting, marching on the streets. The union of the coffee machines would do a walkout in the morning at 6:00 sharp. Protest rallies and art performances would be done by the matter around. Maybe a reversed messy documentary would be produced where humans lay in piles everywhere in a tiny yellow-colored espresso mugs home. Where he would be winding and wriggling through his gulches of human.

The idea of the "tiny yellow-colored messy espresso mug" that does not have his "humanmatter" consumption under control may be obscure and peculiar. But two years ago, I learned about a more serious, already existing approach to this animistic notion called "The parliament of things". I saw this concept first exhibited at the Dutch design week and was later educated on it during a lecture in the second year of my bachelor's study. On the "The parliament of things" website, in the about section, they describe the project with the following words:

"What if we welcome all things, plants, and animals to our parliament? The Parliament of Things is a speculative research into the emancipation of animals, plants and things. "



Egg?

Shell?

protection!

The entangled jelly had an accident!
 He broke 2 of his tentacles
 Therefore he needs protection
 a sanctuary.

fig.29

A lying dump of matter.

The project is based on the writings of the French philosopher Bruno Latour, and his 1991 published work "We Have Never Been Modern" which explains the concept of "the parliament of things" for the first time. Exploring their website and emerging myself in the things stated was an eye-opening experience. As if someone had given a spine, a skeleton of words to the amorphous shaped fleshy blob of thought I had been sensing in my mind. I fell into one Alice in wonderland like internet reading rabbit holes beginning from their website. Opening tab after tab guided by author names, neologisms, book and essay titles, and unfamiliar word combinations. And as wondrous as the world wide web can be, my attention and digital adventurousness were rewarded with free books. It seems genuinely like an understated wonder of our time that we have costless access to endless piles of expert righting and knowledge only to be paid with



fur real from an old light.

with chain his skeleton.

fig.30

The project is based on the writings of the French philosopher Bruno Latour, and his 1991 published work "We Have Never Been Modern" which explains the concept of "the parliament of things" for the first time. Exploring their website and emerging myself in the things stated was an eye-opening experience. As if someone had given a spine, a skeleton of words to the amorphous shaped fleshy blob of thought I had been sensing in my mind. I fell into one Alice in wonderland like internet reading rabbit holes beginning from their website. Opening tab after tab guided by author names, neologisms, book and essay titles, and unfamiliar word combinations. And as wondrous as the world wide web can be, my attention and digital adventurousness were rewarded with free books. It seems genuinely like an understated wonder of our time that we have costless access to endless piles of expert righting and knowledge only to be paid with a sharp time enduring eye and critical mind.

The bit of knowledge that stuck with me the most was this notion of dualism that I had found explained in Bruno Latours works. But with the contribution of many significant artists, righters, and general voices regarding the notion of Animism and edited by Anselm Franke.

The idea of a separation of subject and object is something ingrained in our "modern" culture, something we, as a western society, use to define and set ourselves apart. Historically this dualism has been used and abused to place in a box and evaluate the notion of Animism and the humans practicing it. This is a bit of a detour into the gruesome capitalistic history of our understanding of Animism. Noting I personally sought out to write about. Yet I believe it is essential to understand why we "modern" cultures view the animistic worldview as one primal and wrong in its nature. As I could not describe it better than it has been explained to me, I would like to quote from the "Animism, Volume 1" book:

“Animism is a term coined by nineteenth-century social scientists, particularly the anthropologist Edward Tylor, who aimed to articulate a theory on the origins of religion, and found it in what was to him the primordial mistake of primitive people who attributed life and person-like qualities to objects in their environment. Tylor’s theory was built on the widespread assumption of the time that primitive people were incapable of assessing the real value and properties of material objects. Animism was explained by its incapacity to distinguish between object and subject, reality and fiction, the inside and outside, which led to the projection of human qualities onto objects. The concept was inscribed into an evolutionary scheme from the primitive to the civilized, in which a few civilizations had evolved, while the rest of the world’s people, described by Tylor as “tribes very low in the scale of humanity,” had remained animist, thus effectively constituting “relics” of an archaic past. This evolutionary scheme would soon be taken up by psychology in its own terms, asserting that every human passes through an animist stage in childhood, which is characterized by the projection of its own interior world onto the outside. “

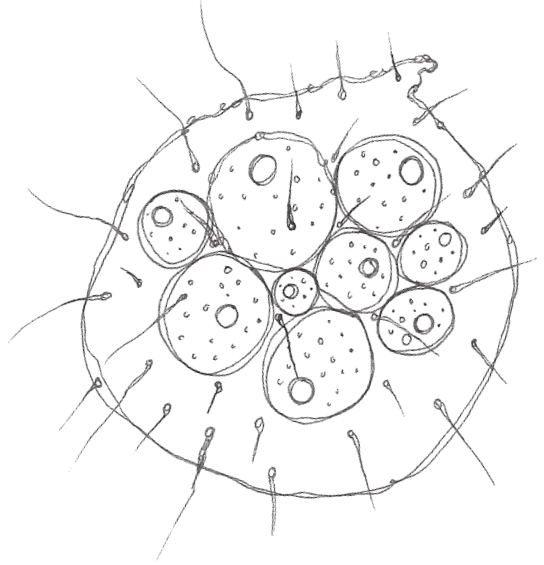


fig.32

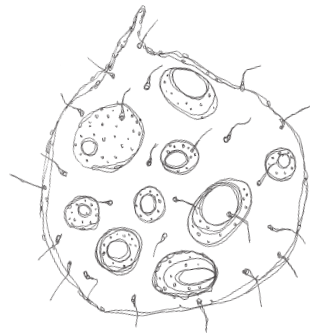


fig.31

The not-quite beloved anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor is also someone we have become familiar with in the introduction chapter. Reading this for me was again one of these eye-opening moments. I had researched the by this quote described as “animist stage in childhood” that holds the term “Anthropomorphism”. To understand why I intrinsically view the world the way I do and, frankly, what is wrong with me for doing so. If there possibly was some, as people like to say, “screw loose” in my mind, as if the brain was a little human maid machine that could be fixed with the right tiny toolset. A Horrendous “lobotomy” named attempt of this wrong manner of understanding and updating the mind can be reviewed throughout Western history.

I am elaborating on this as I noticed that some people seem to have difficulties understanding or connecting with the notion of Animism. They appear to be very comfortably settled in their view of the “modern” world. In some moments, I am plainly scared for the adorning entities. Afraid that they will be misunderstood and wrongly valued by the western measures elaborated in the quote above. That they become little outcasts, frowned upon by those who see them as unrealistic and “Anthropomorphic” piles of “stuff”. This triggers the instinct to find other humans who view them like I do. To put it shortly, fellow caretakers are people who understand them and their intrinsic values.

During this creation process, I have been lucky to come in contact with mentors, friends, and supporters whom I would trust without a doubt. People whom I would give the title of caretaker within the blink of an eye. This knowledge and experiences help me feel confident that there is a place in this modern world for my beings. Other humans are willing to see the adorning entities for whom they are and are eager to care.

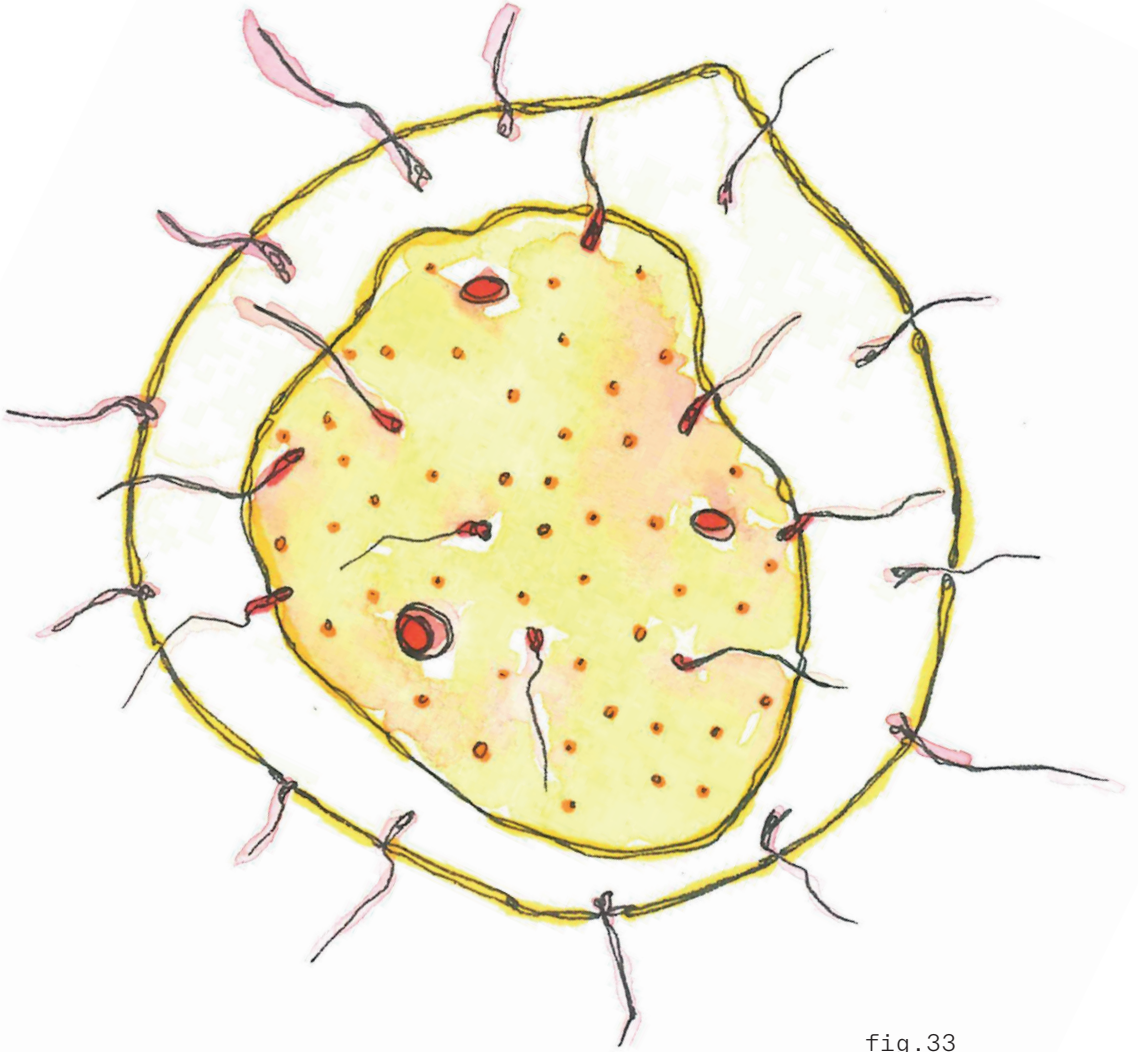


fig.33

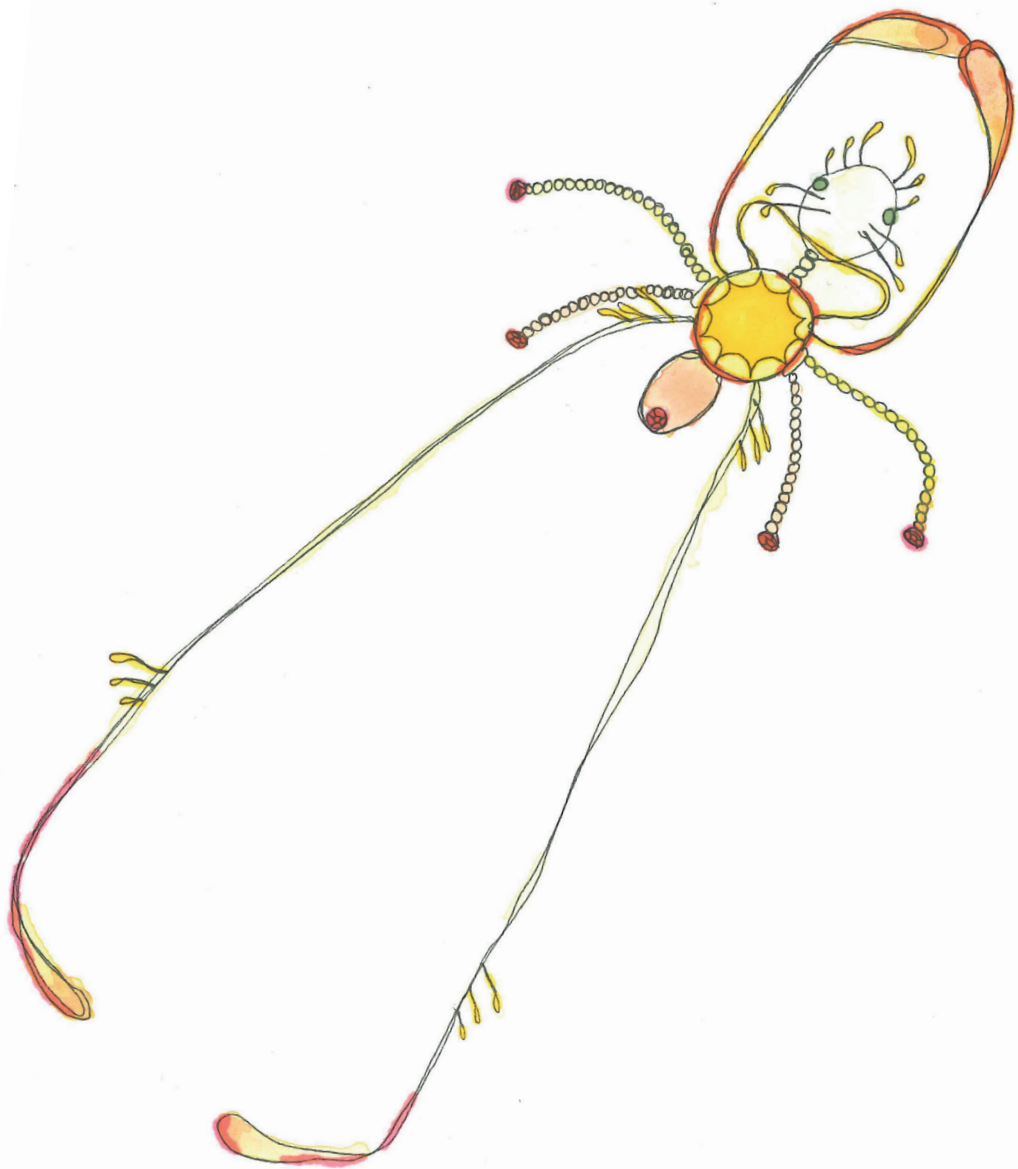


fig.34

Paper dreams

The yellow Pikachu stuffed animal was comfortably launching in his tiny living room, holding a tiny book in his left paw. The book was composed of a folded piece of paper scribbled on its cover in 5-year-old Maureen's childish handwriting, the word diary. The giant, fluffy yellow Pikachu seemed to have emerged entirely in the book, relishing every word. Was it his own diary or someone's confessions he was indulging in? The room from a paper formed and folded living room walls covered in various colored pencil drawn family portraits. The little red outlined couch folded from paper, similar to everything in the stuffed animal's home, was dangerously rounding faced with the yellow creature's body weight.

My 8-year-old brother was kneeling to my left, carefully cutting, folding, and coloring in a tiny makeup compact powder for the leisurely laying Pikachu. So he could touch up his round red cheeks as my brothers explained to me. In the meantime, I was drawing a small pink brick-shaped mobile phone, so the fluffy yellow friend could call his twin brother. An exactly alike-looking Pikachu that was also under the care of my brother and me. Maybe to gossip about the findings of the diary he was ever so observingly reading?

How do I
detect a fellow
caretaker?

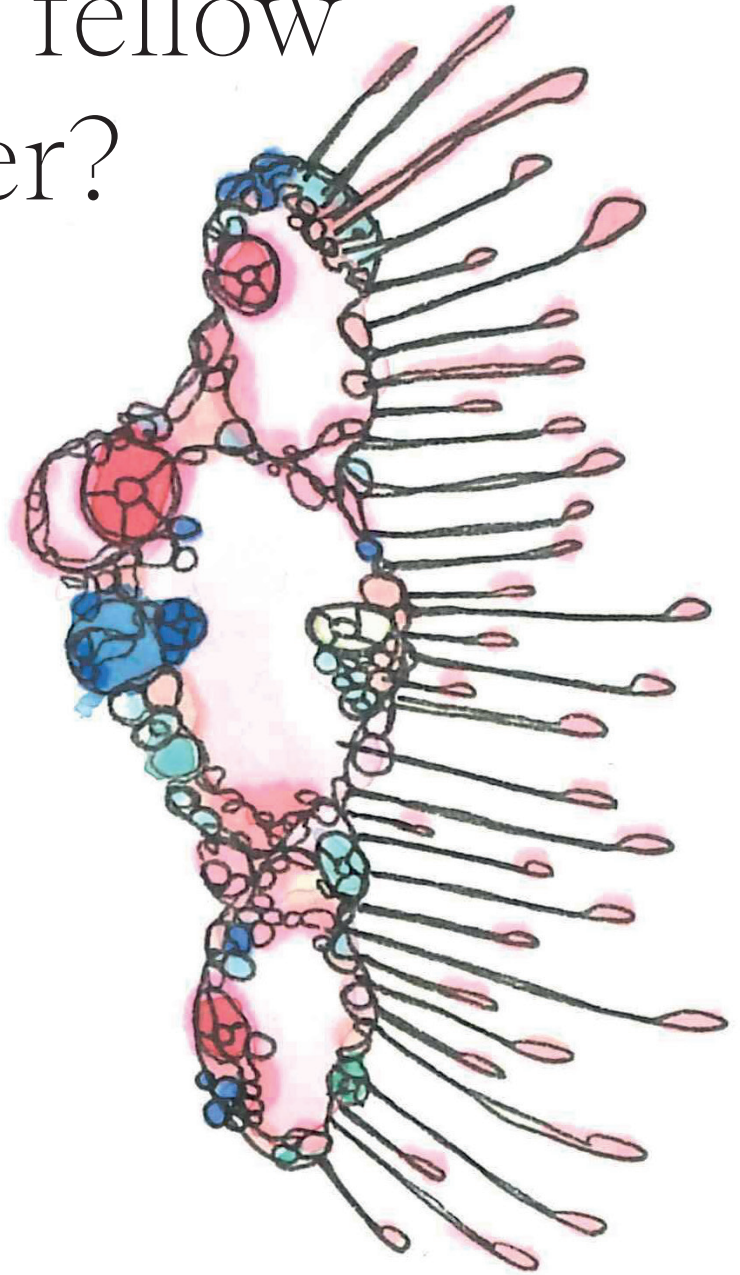


fig. 35

As kids, my brother and I would spend hours and hours building miniature paper homes and accessories for friends I had found on the street and our stuffed animals. Nowadays, we do not partake in this activity anymore. Yet he was the first person to show me that there are people as imaginative, peculiar, and caring for the binges around as I can be. I would argue that he is even a softer spirit than me in some instances. Of course, he has grown as I have and chosen a different path than I did. He decides to pursue social studies with a master's and Ph.D. in politics. At first glance, two entirely different directions, yet nevertheless, I would title him a kindred being a caretaker without a doubt.

As I touched upon in the chapter on the pillow baby blanket, giving a creature away resembles giving away my own baby, your own flesh and blood. This might sound a bit dramatic, but we (the adorning entities and I) have grown together through an intense creation process, and like a very over-eager parent, I only want the best for my being.

After careful thought, discussion and evaluation, I have concluded that like a child who gets adopted by its to be loving parents, an adorning entity equally can be adopted by a caretaker. The adoption process is not as bureaucratically as a human adoption is, and it is a playful, fluid process of getting familiar with each other. As not every creature needs the exact same requirements. Some crave a significant amount of attention, while others prefer to be left alone most of the time. Some love the sun, others prefer the dark, some are curious and easy to touch, and others are grumpy and delicate to access. Nevertheless, at least a baseline of structure is essential. The adoption process can be ruffly explained in the following way:

Get to know:

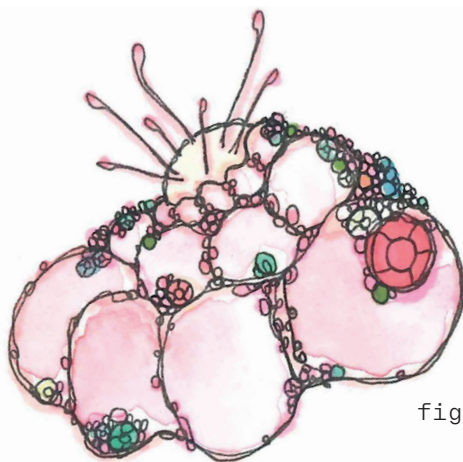


fig.36

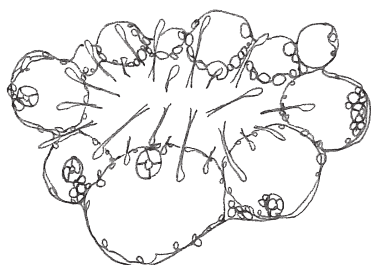


fig.37

In advance, we advise the potential caretaker to read the creature archive to understand the creature's introvert values.

Upon first meeting, the human is free to observe the creatures and vice versa. Who sparks interest? How do they inter-relate to each other? This is an intuition-based process like the procedure of creature creation. Maybe best described as a play date to spot which is interested in whom. A conversation takes place between the caretaker to be and me. Questions get asked on both sides. Is it just an impulse wanting to possess a sparkly creature, or am I interested in taking in a being? And do I feel compatible with the adorning entity? With the last question, it is also essential to understand that it is equally important that the creature can support the caretaker's needs and character. Once consent is found in a goodbye ceremony, the creature will be set with its silky soft safety blanket under a securing glass travel terrarium. Placed in a breathable journey container and taken home by the new caretaker. If the freshly made parent agrees pictures are exchanged, updates on the "adorning entities" are more than welcome.

If the adorning entity gets injured, they can always frequent me for medical repair. The visit ends with the new caretaker and the adorning entity going home. Lastly, the fresh caretaker is free to donate a self-decided amount of money as an adoption fee and vow of protection.



fig.38

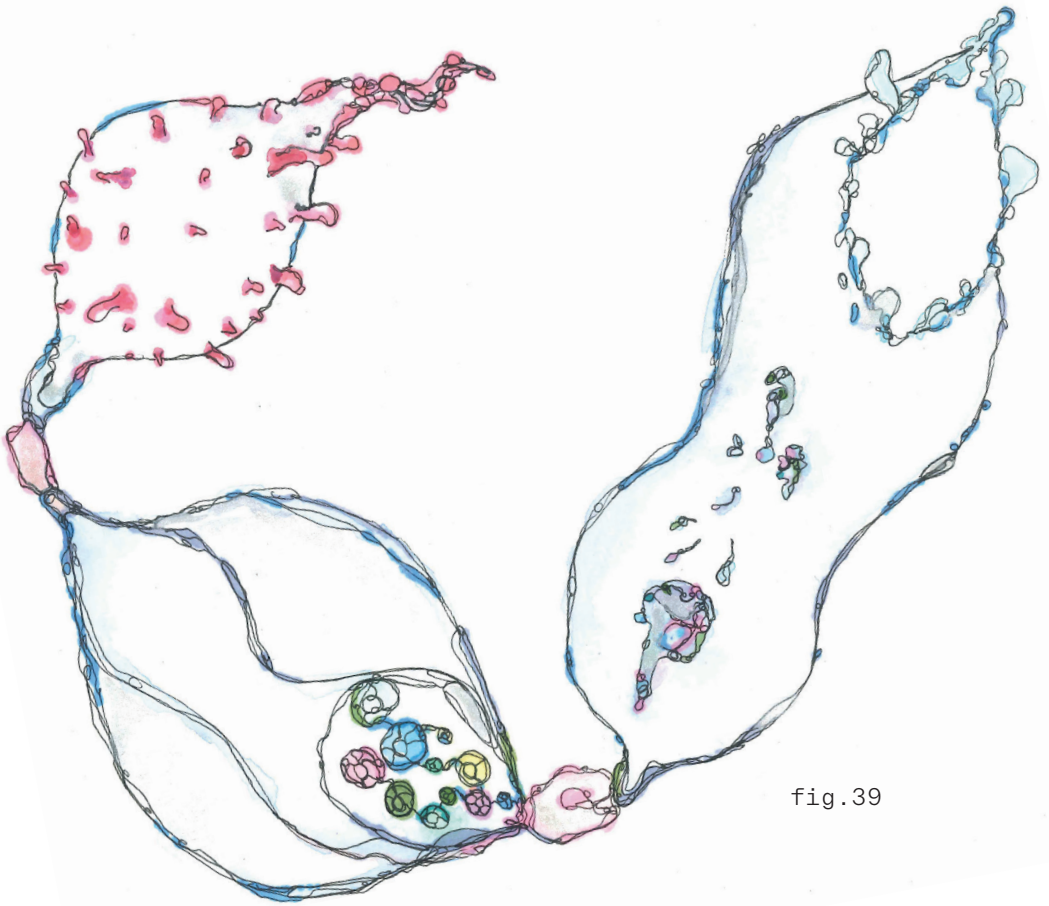


fig.39

Baby Vulcano

The newborn was scrunching its round, chubby face in discontent. Towering over the right corner of its stroller casting a shadow on its soft squishy face, an orange-haired girl. She was excitedly staring into the baby's innocent googly eyes, drawing faces eagerly anticipating a reaction. Suddenly on the left side of the stroller, another girl with long light-yellow hair appeared excessively and enthusiastically poking out her tongue while making loud squeaking noises. The girl on the left began frantically giggling, poking the newborn's tiny chubby right hand. A soft sprinkle of giggle-fueled saliva rained down on the bald baby's head. The tiny human scrunched his plump face intensely, its chubby cheeks flushed by a red hue. The little fingers clenched into fists. The girls intensified their mannerisms. The baby's round toothless mouth opened, resembling an adorable squishy miniature volcano, releasing a loud complaining cry. Big chunky tears rolled down the soft red cheeks. The girls struck back in surprise.

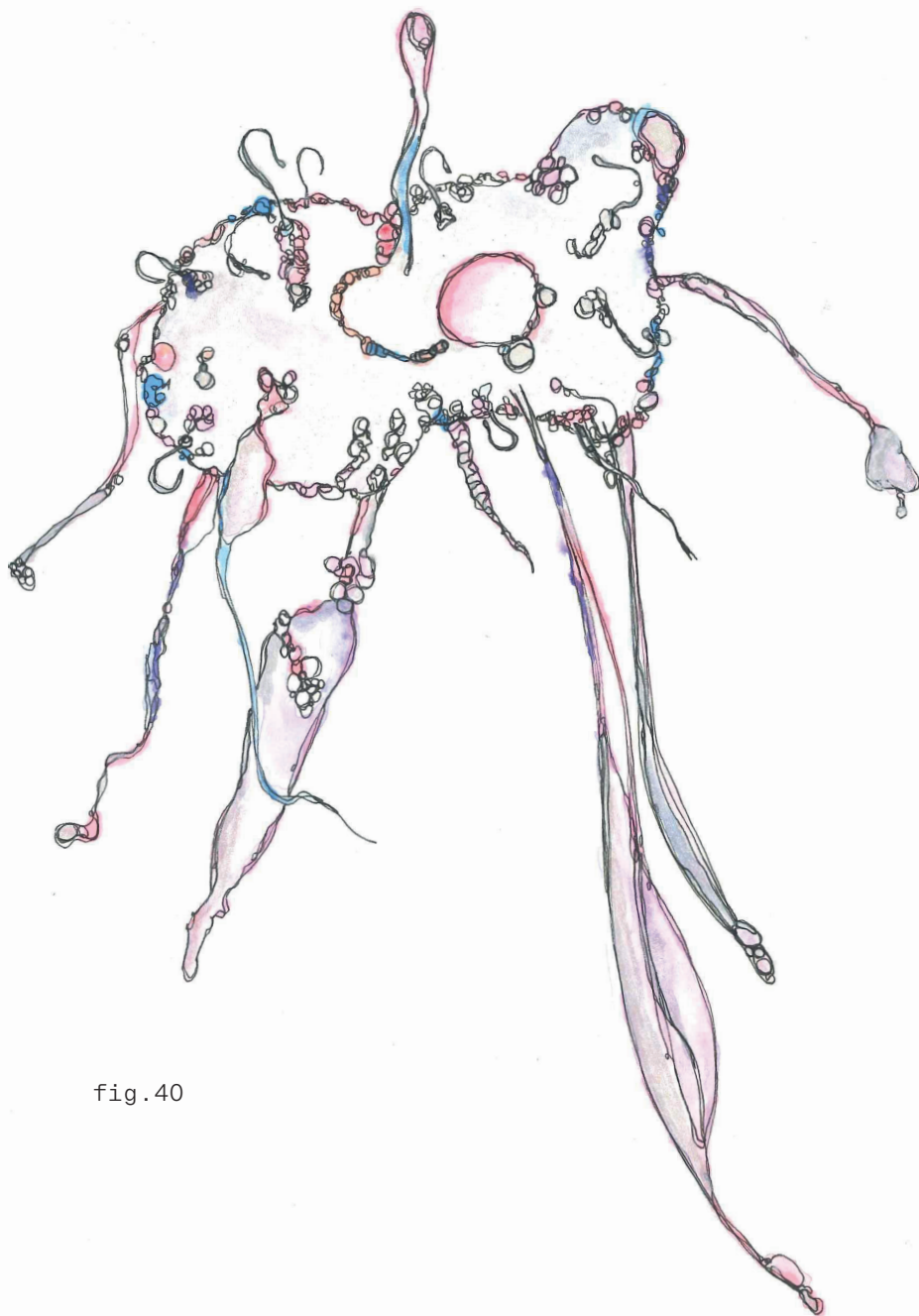


fig.40

Growing up, I had two girlfriends who would swoon and swindle over tiny humans. They would poke their heads into every stroller in reach. Making goggle eyes at babies, harassing mothers and their newborns left and right. Both were certain they wanted to be mothers, ideally already. I still vividly remember one especially shocking conversation. The older and taller one proclaimed that she wanted to have a baby because they looked so cute standing in front of an innocent tiny human's stroller like a scary giant. As a child, I would always sense this behavior as peculiar as we were only a bit bigger than tiny humans ourselves. Certainly not yet capable of taking care of such a complex baby being.

It is peculiar and a bit ironic to contemplate that I have grown a horde of child alike beings for myself even though I am, until now, startled by the idea of the responsibility a baby brings along. Yet as most parents would say, I love them dearly and would never want to miss them.

Reflecting on the so far experienced growing process that will hopefully keep on flourishing, I cannot pinpoint when the adorning microorganisms turned into more complex beings. They keep on learning, evolving into granter, more complex, diverse beings, and I do with them. Connecting back to the first chapter, this is a creative process built on reciprocity. Similar to a circle, by the growing and evolving, I grow and evolve equally from which they then prosper and benefit and grow and evolve further.

This circular and collaborative process is always guided and influenced by the environment we are in and the materials, tools, and techniques that are ethical and available to us.

The last weeks and months have reawakened my mini-me in more than one way. This growth has taught and is still teaching me to treat the environment around me softly and myself. At the beginning of this process, I was aspiring to be a maker of contemporary jewelry. This field of art that allows putting so many layers of meaning into such small objects. Reflecting on that now, I would still, without a doubt, place myself in the field of contemporary jewelry but rather name myself a creator of adornments. Surely, this is something that will grow and evolve throughout the upcoming years. But for the moment, it is a fitting title as it describes what I do but also leaves space to explore and play, grow and evolve.

The adorning entities stand for far more than their little glossy bodies can hold. They embody a shift in the way to view matter, the environment, and the process of creation. If we start treating everything, including ourselves, with an animistic approach with care and kindness. This could help us overcome the various crises we face, environmental and mental health being only two of the most urgent ones. They symbolize a shift in priorities, from the primacy of possessing, being superior, and ruling the world to focusing on caring, connecting, and accepting others as different yet equal.

I am aware that this is an idealistic method of thinking, and I am not naïve enough to believe everyone agrees and understands this approach. Yet conversing about and putting this thought out there is something that seems necessary and essential for me in times of uncertainty and issue.

I have been quite harsh throughout this text towards the modern society I grew up in. Critiquing some of the things I deem as problematic. I am aware of the privilege that I grew up in a society that aspires to be tolerant where I can speak my mind freely as other parts of the world prohibit and punish open expression. Equally, I understand that others might not be able to relate to my animistic worldview for various reasons. Yet as a society that takes pride in being tolerant, the animistic worldview should be, at last, if not understood, tolerated.

I believe it would be foolish as a creator to ignore the Anthropocene issues we are facing. It would be looked back on as one of those historical instances where humans simply, out of comfort for the known, ignore the problems at hand until they become unbearable and much worse than needed. In Shoko Yoneyamas's paper on Animism in the Anthropocene times, the following is stated:

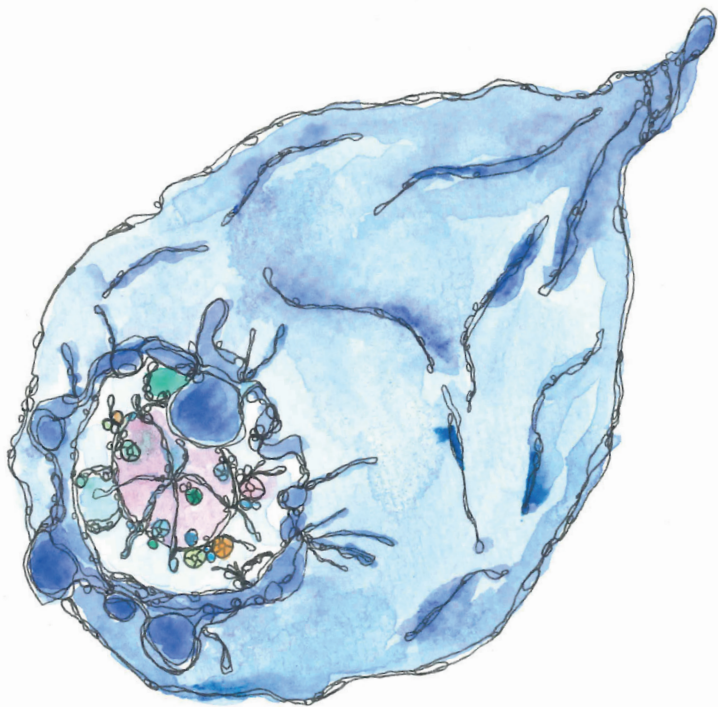
“The need for a reconsideration of human-nature relationships has been widely recognized in the Anthropocene. It is difficult to rethink, however, because there is a crisis of imagination that is deeply entrenched within the fundamental premises of modernity.”

The term crisis of imagination is something that stuck with me. During the past months of creation, I have come across many positive, caring reactions to the adorning entities. But also a few disregarding responses, as if I was an adrift-minded oddball, which I proudly am, to some extent. But the underlying disregard for a different than so-called “modern” worldview is what stuck to me like a piece of nagging thought gum under a favorite pair of shoes. In moments it made me question the validity of this artistic endeavor and, evidently, my worldview, memories, and intuition.

Yet as every idealistic, overly eager young person not quite tainted by the bitterness of life, I came to the consensus of venturing on, communicating about the topic of Animism through the adorning entity's ongoing creation and evolution. As once revealed, it hardly can be hidden again; this is my animistic core; this is who I am and how I see the world.

Concluding these lines of letters piled onto these pages. I believe that somewhat of an answer can be found regarding my initial question between these strung-up beads of opinion and research. Not a solution in the typically opposed mathematical sense. Rather an answerer is composed of more questions, conversations, and creations to be asked, had, and made. This is why I would like to leave you, dear reader, with a question.

Where does
your mini-me
find soul?



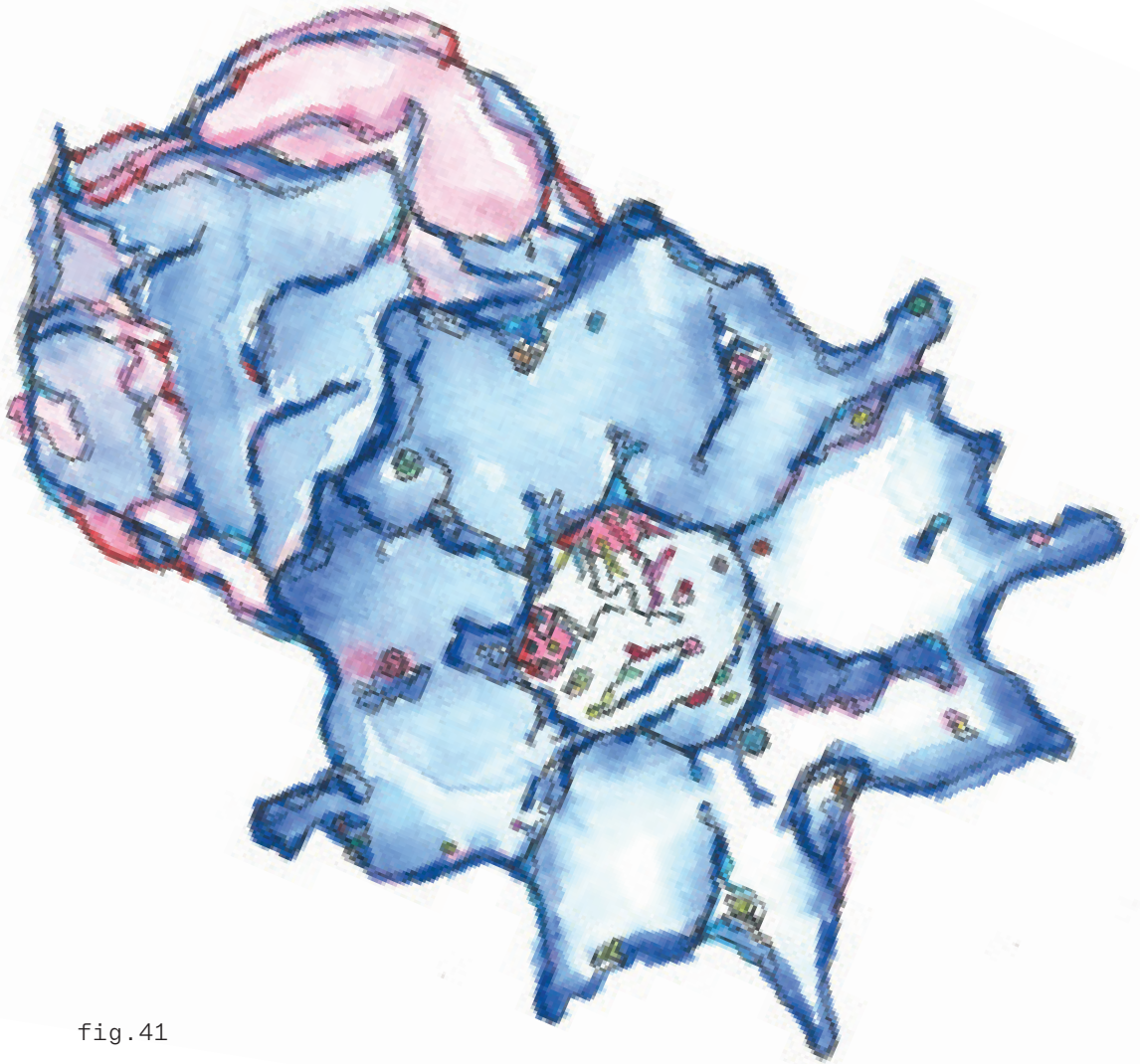


fig. 41

Captions

Fig.1
Ink pen drawing of
"A billowy flock of
dust" at 15 months
of age.

Fig.2
Ink pen drawing of
"A billowy flock of
dust" at 12 months
of age.

Fig.3
Ink pen drawing of
"A billowy flock of
dust" at 15 months
of age.

Fig.4
Ink pen drawing of
"A billowy flock of
dust" at 3 months
of age.

Fig.5
Ink pen drawing of
"A billowy flock of
dust" at 6 months
of age.

Fig.6
Ink pen drawing of
"A billowy flock of
dust" at 9 months
of age.

Fig.7
Marker and ink pen
drawing of a full
grown "compiling
caterpillar",
compiling matter.

Fig.8
Marker and ink pen
drawing of the full
grown "softest of
bristle worms".

Fig.9
Handwritten process
note capturing a
childhood believe.

Fig.10
Initial marker and
ink pen sketch of "A
predator", narrating
the creatures hearts
position.

Fig.11
First written idea
outline of the
introvert value of
"A predator".

Fig.12
Close up image of
the biggest
abandoned matter
blanked, showing
different findings.

Fig.13
Aquarela, marker and
ink pen drawing of
"The jealous jelly"
at 9 months of age.

Fig.14
Initial idea sketch
of

Fig.15
Process note of
tought going alonge
with creation of
"The jealous jelly"
idea sketch.

Fig.16
Ink pen drawing of
"The jealous jelly"
at 6 months of age.

Fig.17
Ink pen drawing of
"The jealous jelly"
at 12 months of age.

Fig.18
Ink pen drawing of
"The quiet globe of
air" at 21 months of
age healty.

Fig.19
Ink pen drawing of
"The quiet globe of
air" at 21 months of
age once utterly
infected with
"angule
translucante".

Fig.20
Ink pen drawing of
"The quiet globe of
air" at 12 months of
age healty.

Fig.21
Ink pen drawing of
"The quiet globe of
air" at 15 months of
age healty.

Fig.22
Ink pen drawing of
"The quiet globe of
air" at 18 months of
age healty

Fig.23
Ink pen drawing of
"The quiet globe of
air" at 3 months of
age once utterly
infected with
"angule
translucante".

Fig.24
Ink pen drawing of
"The quiet globe of
air" at 9 months of
age once utterly
infected with
"angule
translucante".

Fig.25
Ink pen drawing of
"The quiet globe of
air" at 15 months of
age once utterly
infected with
"angule
translucante".

Fig.26
Ink pen process
sketch of unknow
creature that moves
in the same family
as"The bean size
beam of light".

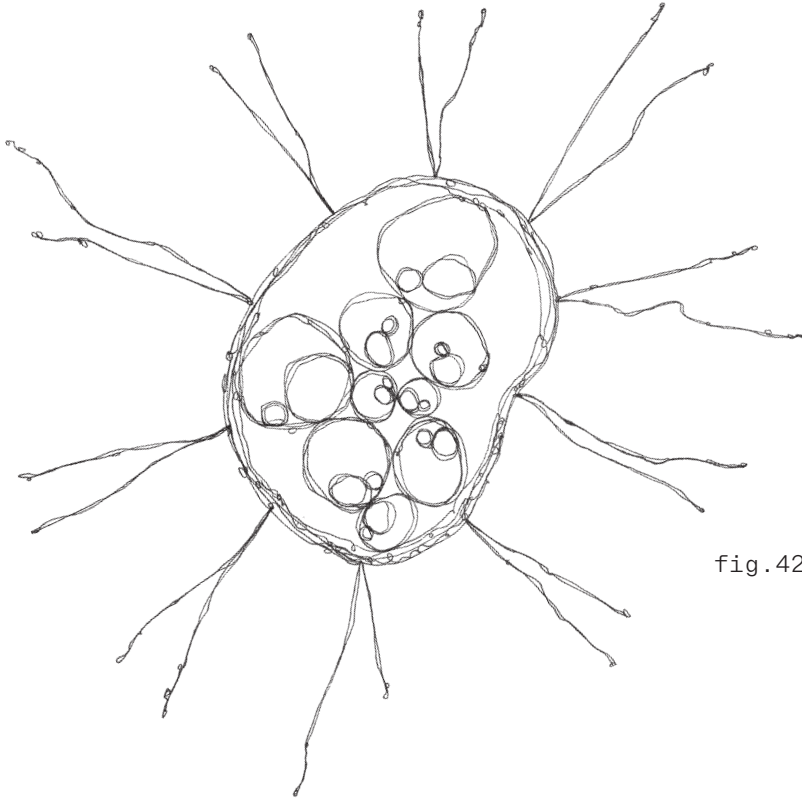


fig.42

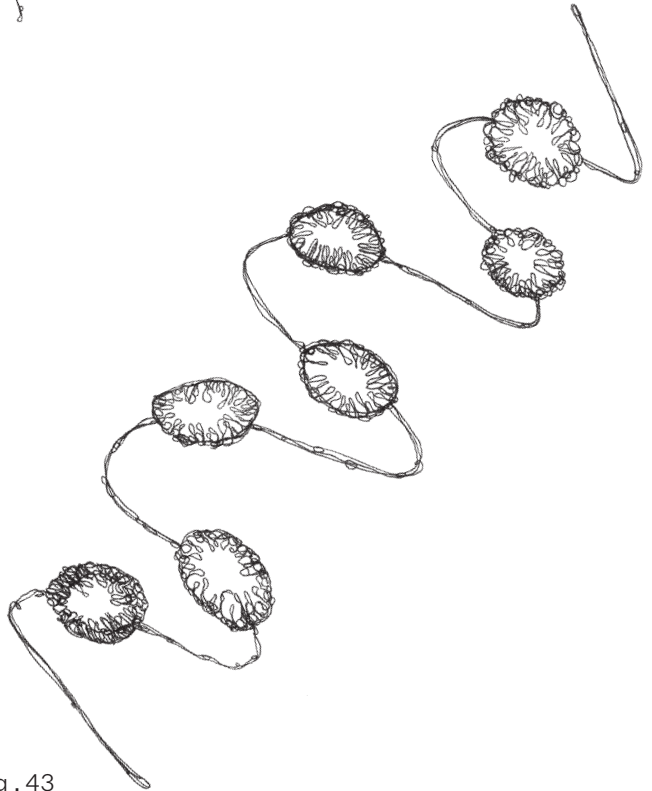


fig.43

Captions

Fig.27

Ink pen drawing of "The adventure seeker". A not well-known creature that moves in the same family as "The bean size beam of light".

Fig.28

Ink pen drawing of "The adventure seeker," a not well-known creature that moves in the same family as "The bean size beam of light" with a blown-up head.

Fig.29

Initial marker and Ink pen idea sketch of the sanctuary, safety blanked, or habitus for each creature.

Fig.30

An initial marker and Ink idea sketch of "A lying clump of matter," a not yet well-known creature.

Fig.31

Ink pen drawing of "The sunray spider" at three months of age.

Fig.32

Ink pen drawing of "The sunray spider" at six months of age.

Fig.33

Aquarelle, marker, and ink pen drawing of "The sunray spider" at 12 months of age.

Fig.34

Aquarelle, marker, and ink pen drawing of "The sunray spider" at 21 months of age.

Fig.35

Aquarelle, marker and ink pen drawing of "An unhurried caretaker" at 18 months.

Fig.36

Aquarelle, marker and ink pen drawing of "An unhurried caretaker" at 3 months of age.

Fig.37

Ink pen drawing of "An unhurried caretaker" at 12 months of age.

Fig.38

Aquarelle, marker and ink pen drawing of "An unhurried caretaker" at 15months of age.

Fig.39

Initial and singular growth drawing from Aquarelle, marker and ink pen drawing of "The tear eater" at 21 months of age.

Fig.40

Aquarelle, marker and ink pen drawing of a fully grown "A billowy flock of dust" at 21 months of age.

Fig.41

Aquarelle, marker and ink pen drawing of a fully grown bigger "Secret keeper sibling" at 21 months of age.

Fig.42

Ink pen drawing of process from the beginning phase of the creature growth resembling microorganisms, green algae.

Fig.43

Ink pen drawing of process from the beginning phase of the creature growth resembling spirulina.

Fig.44

Ink pen drawing of process from the beginning phase of the creature growth, showing first shape developments.

Fig.45

Ink pen drawing of process from the beginning phase of the creature growth, inspired by single celled organisms.





fig.44

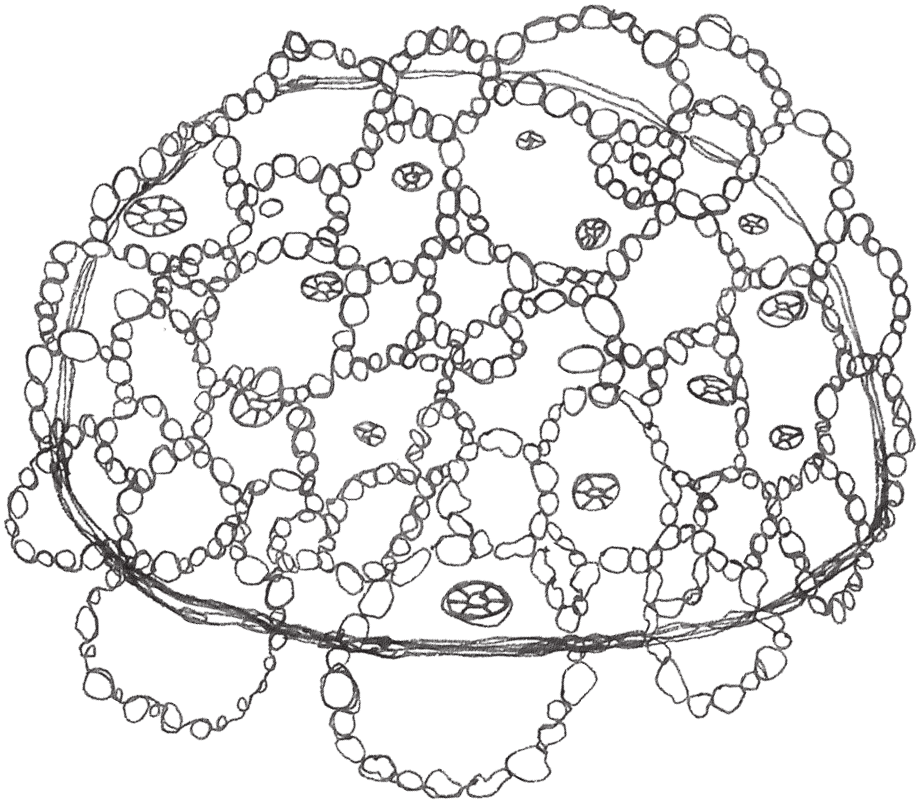


fig.45

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