LLIM

La Biennale di Venezia

59. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte

Eventi Collaterali

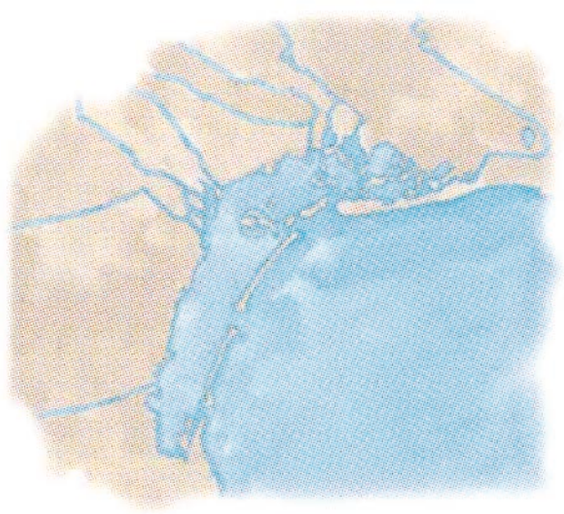
an organism by
Lara Fluxà

curated by
Oriol Fontdevila

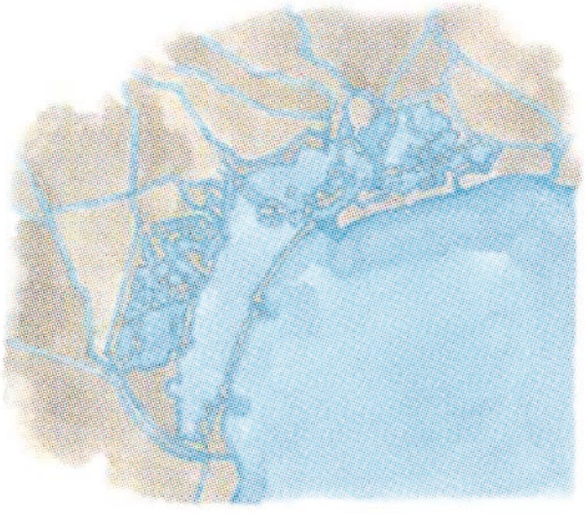
CATALONIA IN VENICE

from April 23rd
to November 27th

A fusible stone at the same time as a solid



The mouths of the Adige, Brenta, Livenza, Piave, Sile and Tagliamento rivers have been feeding sediment to the Venetian Lagoon since its geological formation 4,000 years ago. Banks and barriers, marshes and mudflats have been created through this process.



In the 15th century, canals began to be constructed in order to divert the mouths of the rivers to the northern and southern part of the lagoon. This prevented the accumulation of silt inside the lagoon, maintaining its navigability.

Institut ramon llull
Generalitat de Catalunya
GOVERN ILLES BALEARS
Ajuntament de Barcelona

juice. Glass is the

I therefore conceive that the earth in the first state was a globe, or rather a spheroid of vitrified glass material, if you will, very compact, covered with a light and friable crust, formed by the scoriae of the material in fusion, of a real pumice stone: the movement & the agitation of the waters & the air soon broke & reduced to dust this crust of spongy glass, this pumice stone which was on the surface; from there the sands which, by uniting, then produced the sandstones and the rock saw, or, which is the same thing, the pebbles in great mass, which owe, as well as the pebbles in small mass, their hardness, their color or their transparency & the variety of their accidents, with the different degrees of purity & the fineness of the grain of the sands which are included in their composition.

CHARLES BUFFON, *Natural History*. 1749

THÉORIE DE LA TERRE. 259

Je conçois donc que la terre dans le premier état étoit un globe, ou plûtôt un ſphéroïde de matière vitrifiée, de verre, ſi l'on veut, très-compacte, couvert d'une croûte légère & friable, formée par les ſcories de la matière en fuſion, d'une véritable pierre ponce: le mouvement & l'agitation des eaux & de l'air brisèrent bien-tôt & réduiſirent en pouſſière cette croûte de verre ſpongieuſe, cette pierre ponce qui étoit à la ſurface; de là les ſables qui, en s'uniſſant, produiſirent enſuite les grès & le roc vif, ou, ce qui eſt la même choſe, les cailloux en grande maſſe, qui doivent, auſſi-bien que les cailloux en petite maſſe, leur dureté, leur couleur ou leur tranſparence & la variété de leurs accidens, aux différens degrés de pureté & à la fineſſe du grain des ſables qui ſont entrez dans leur compoſition.

Ces mêmes ſables dont les parties conſtituantes s'uniſſent par le moyen du feu, s'aſſimilent & deviennent un corps dur très-denſe, & d'autant plus tranſparent que le ſable eſt plus homogène, expoſez au contraire long-temps à l'air, ſe décompoſent par la déſunion & l'exfoliation des petites lames dont ils ſont formez, ils commencent à devenir terre, & c'eſt ainſi qu'ils ont pû former les glaiſes & les argilles. Cette pouſſière, tantôt d'un jaune brillant, tantôt ſemblable à des paillettes d'argent dont on ſe ſert pour ſécher l'écriture, n'eſt autre choſe qu'un ſable très-pur, en quelque façon pourri, preſque réduit en ſes principes, & qui tend à une décompoſition parfaite; avec le temps ces paillettes ſe ſeroient atténuées & diviſées au point qu'elles

The glass blowing studio Ars Cenedese flooded during the *acqua alta* in Murano.

Everywhere Cassandra ran Cassandra found she could float.
How did she float? With her float can.
Does that sound like a tautology? But the arts of prophecy are often tautological.
They reason in a circle.
The prophet must prove you that she is a prophet
by telling you unbelievable news,
which you will only believe if you already regard her as a prophet.

ANNE CARSON, *Casandra Float Can*. 2016. Extract

very manifestation of ambiguity, according to the words the

Glossary of terms by ARIADNA PARREU made during the production of LLIM.

first
traveler
used
to
describe
its
industry
in
Venice.

A—Blow-pipe. B—Little window. C—Marble. D—Forceps. E—Moulds by means of which the shapes are produced.

Glass Blowers and Their Furnace.
Woodcut of a drawing by
Blasius Werfing for *De Re Metallica*,
by Georgius Agricola. 1556

«It is made from fusible stones and from solidified juices,» Georgius Agricola writes in *De Re Metallica* (1556), a notably influential historical text of chemistry and mining. Although he had spent two whole years in Venice researching the process of glassmaking, Agricola admits that he was unable to ascertain the chemical formula used by Venetian master glassmakers. They worked on a basis of trial and error and they zealously guarded their experiences.

cradled
been
has
it

The same can be said of the city;

Silt is the
d u s t
of water, as ash is the
d u s t
of fire.
A s h ,
s i l t ,
d u s t ,
s m o k e
furnish images that exchange their substances endlessly.
In these reduced forms,
elementary matters communicate.

These are, in a way, the four
d u s t s
of the four elements.
Silt is
one of the most strongly valorized of matters.
Water, it seems,
has brought to the earth
the very principle of
c a l m ,
s l o w ,
assured fecundity in taking this form.

GASTON BACHELARD, *Water and Dreams: an Essay on the Imagination of Matter.* 1942. Extract

LLIM diverts water from the Canale di San Pietro.

throughout the centuries
in a precarious balance between a
solid state and a liquid one.

Venice
emerges from the sediments
supplied by the rivers
that flow into the lagoon,

Who knew that in Spain and in Catalonia there is imprisoned land? Land literally imprisoned in reservoirs. It is no coincidence that the large concrete walls that make up the reservoirs are called ‘dams’*.

River walls continuously imprison and release water –this is their original meaning– but they also imprison land - and this is not their *raison d’être*. And they do not release land easily. Land is the great forgotten one. Because the *Imprisoned Land* is ‘only’ earth, silt and gravel, pebbles, sediment; it is the imprisoned land that should be free in the Ebre Delta and many other beaches along the Mediterranean.

JOSEP JUAN SEGARRA, *Terra Presa. Per una nova política dels sediments*. 2020. Extract

*Translator’s note: *preses* in Catalan, which is the same word for female prisoners.

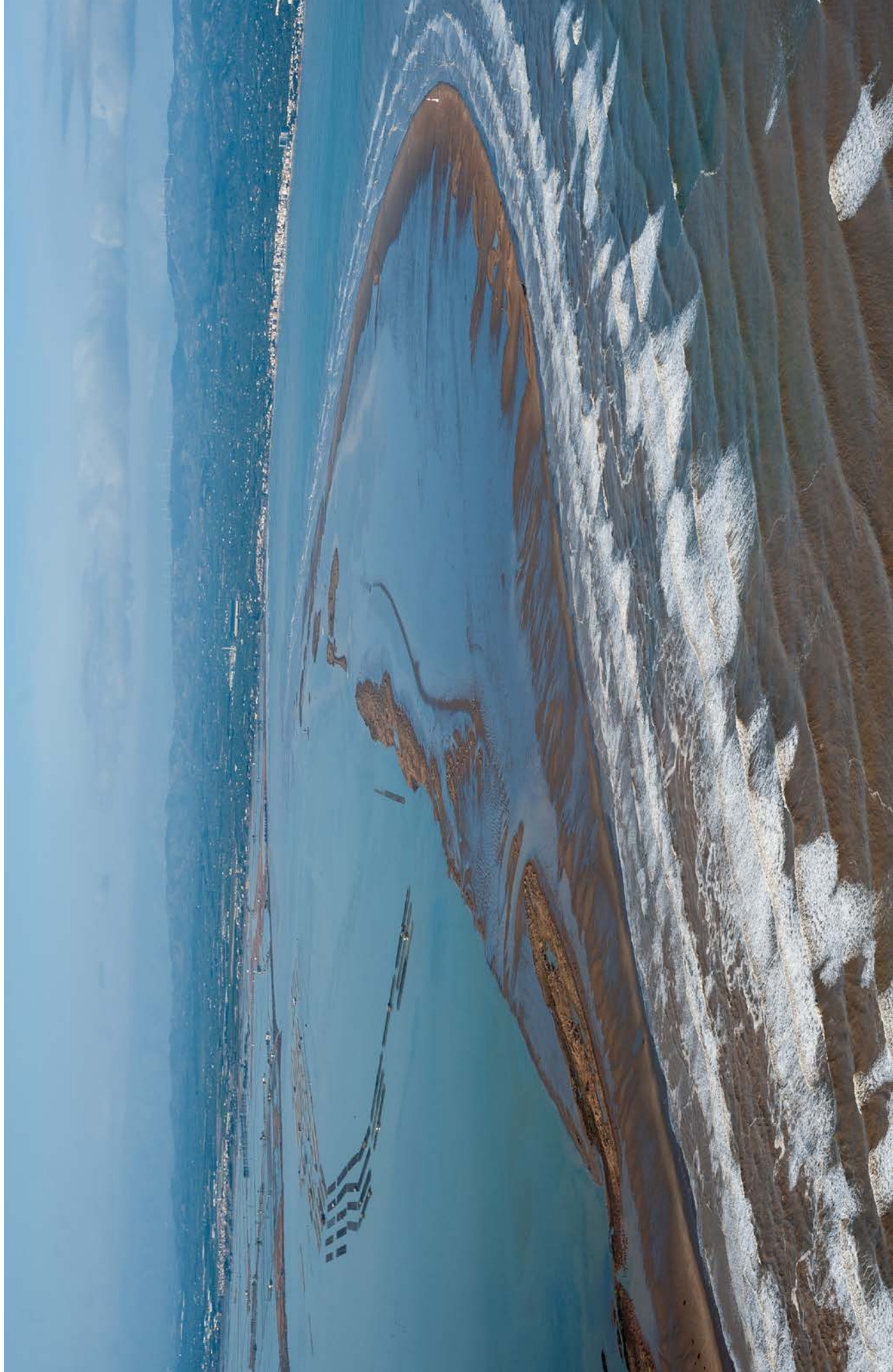
into the waters of the Adriatic.

perpetual threat of disappearing

although it is under

Sediment policy has substituted the centrality that water policy had during the protests against the deviation of the Ebre –an observation that we owe to Carles Guerra. Sediment deficit added to the exacerbation of Storm Gloria, which led to a significant decline of the Marquesa beach and the practical disappearance of the Trabucador sandbar in early 2020.

Punta del Fangar, in the Ebre Delta, overrun by the onslaught of the sea and flooded due to Storm Gloria (2020).



PERE ALMEDA
Director
Institut Ramon Llull

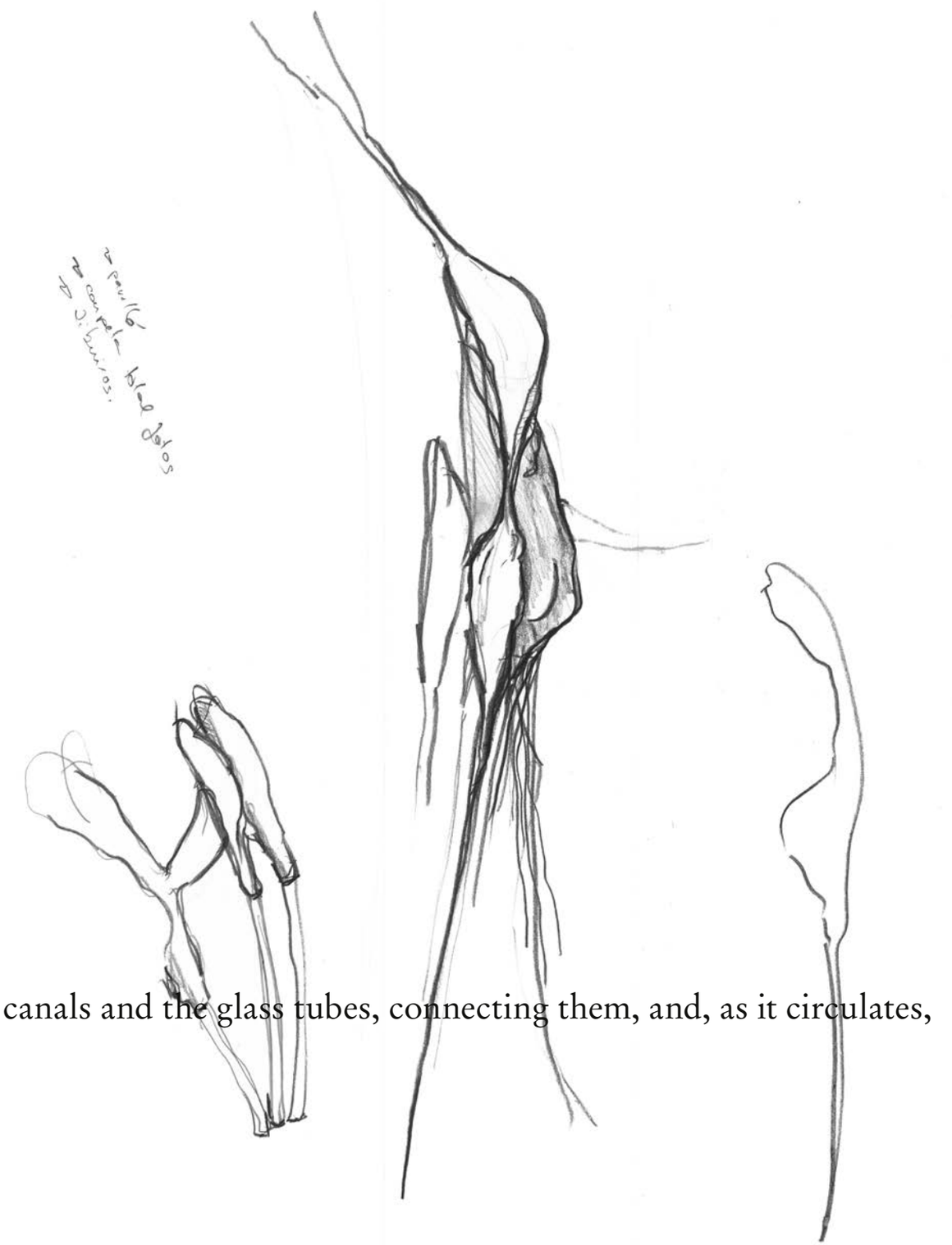
In 1907 Georg Simmel wrote that Venice had lost its meaning and its ability to be an explanatory metaphor of the world, and that it could only be conceived as a façade or a mortified stage set through the lying beauty of the mask[1]. Paradoxically, however, in a time of other masks, LLIM seduces us with new meanings that flip this argument on its head.

So, from the precarious balance between the Venetian Lagoon's solid and liquid states, LLIM becomes the unifying thread of a tubular imaginary full of elements of dance and movement: from water, mud and silt, to the properties of glass and light. And it is in these matters and their sediments where we perceive the analogies and metaphors that transport us to today's frenzied and transitioning world.

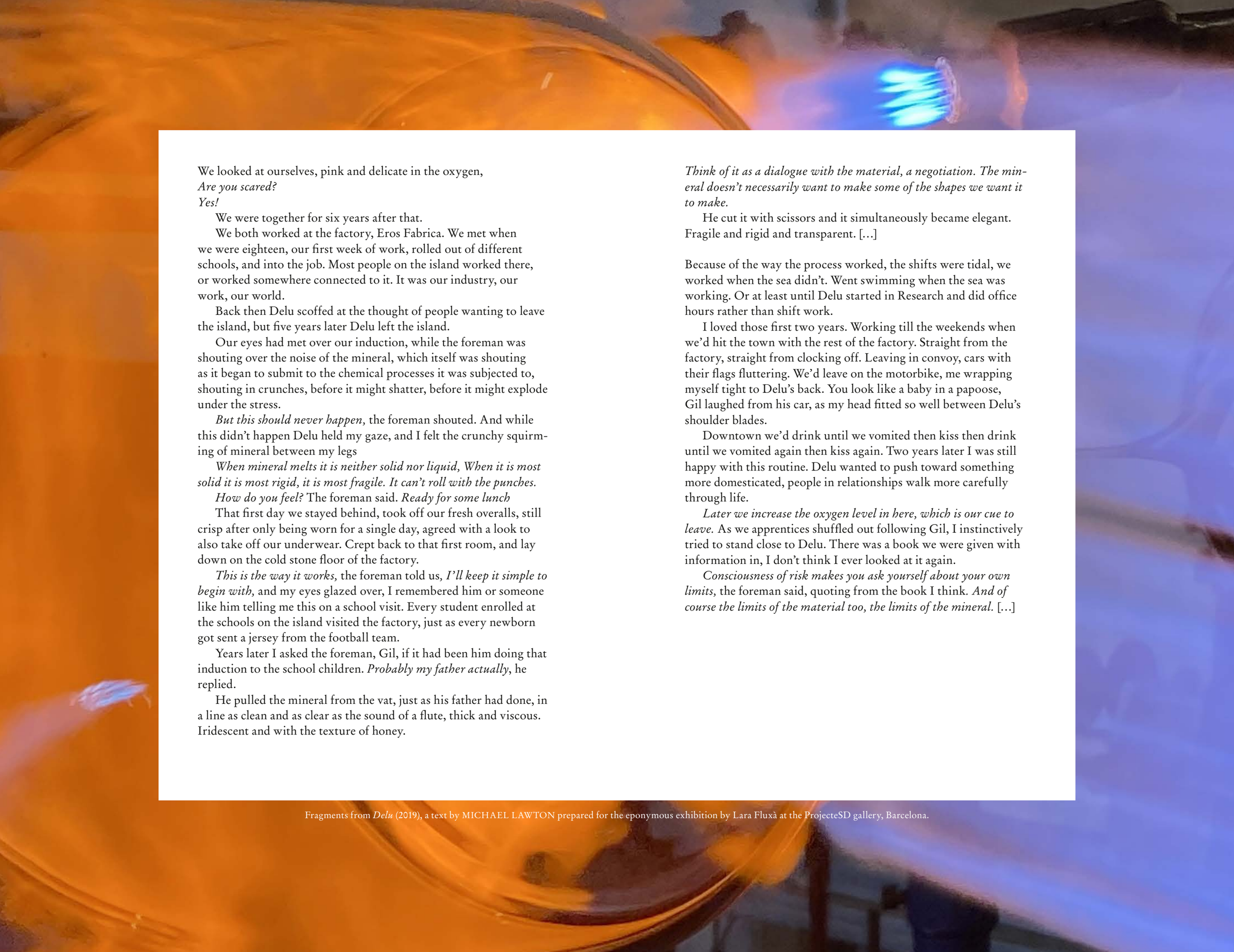
A journey made of alchemy, and, in the words of Palau i Fabre, a tradition imbued with madness, which served to illuminate the medieval sages' desire for knowledge. Straddling science and utopia, the alchemy of Ramon Llull, Arnau de Vilanova or Thomas Aquinas was a path of experimentation in search of the impossible in order to unveil hidden or unexpected worlds.

And it is now, as Catalan culture returns to Venice, in Lara Fluxà's glass and experimentation and Oriol Fontdevila's vision, that we use alchemy to go beyond a reality that often overwhelms us. Milking and moving the city's canal water to test the limits of Atterberg and discern the boundary between silt and clay. Wanting to assure that the earth that we tread on will have the necessary resistance to endure, and that, beyond the wounds that we live and the changes that will come, from action and reaction, water will continue its course. Reviving Bauman, we present LLIM as a new metaphor to discover and admire, which is useful for interpreting and thinking about the disorder of liquid modernity, in the midst of an enormously complex, uncertain and dangerous world.

1. GEORG SIMMEL. *Rome, Florence, Venice.* 1907



LLIM (silt)  discreetly adheres to the canals and the glass tubes, connecting them, and, as it circulates,



We looked at ourselves, pink and delicate in the oxygen,
Are you scared?
Yes!

We were together for six years after that.

We both worked at the factory, Eros Fabrica. We met when we were eighteen, our first week of work, rolled out of different schools, and into the job. Most people on the island worked there, or worked somewhere connected to it. It was our industry, our work, our world.

Back then Delu scoffed at the thought of people wanting to leave the island, but five years later Delu left the island.

Our eyes had met over our induction, while the foreman was shouting over the noise of the mineral, which itself was shouting as it began to submit to the chemical processes it was subjected to, shouting in crunches, before it might shatter, before it might explode under the stress.

But this should never happen, the foreman shouted. And while this didn't happen Delu held my gaze, and I felt the crunchy squirming of mineral between my legs

When mineral melts it is neither solid nor liquid, When it is most solid it is most rigid, it is most fragile. It can't roll with the punches.

How do you feel? The foreman said. *Ready for some lunch*

That first day we stayed behind, took off our fresh overalls, still crisp after only being worn for a single day, agreed with a look to also take off our underwear. Crept back to that first room, and lay down on the cold stone floor of the factory.

This is the way it works, the foreman told us*, I'll keep it simple to begin with,* and my eyes glazed over, I remembered him or someone like him telling me this on a school visit. Every student enrolled at the schools on the island visited the factory, just as every newborn got sent a jersey from the football team.

Years later I asked the foreman, Gil, if it had been him doing that induction to the school children. *Probably my father actually*, he replied.

He pulled the mineral from the vat, just as his father had done, in a line as clean and as clear as the sound of a flute, thick and viscous. Iridescent and with the texture of honey.

Think of it as a dialogue with the material, a negotiation. The mineral doesn't necessarily want to make some of the shapes we want it to make.

He cut it with scissors and it simultaneously became elegant. Fragile and rigid and transparent. […]

Because of the way the process worked, the shifts were tidal, we worked when the sea didn't. Went swimming when the sea was working. Or at least until Delu started in Research and did office hours rather than shift work.

I loved those first two years. Working till the weekends when we'd hit the town with the rest of the factory. Straight from the factory, straight from clocking off. Leaving in convoy, cars with their flags fluttering. We'd leave on the motorbike, me wrapping myself tight to Delu's back. You look like a baby in a papoose, Gil laughed from his car, as my head fitted so well between Delu's shoulder blades.

Downtown we'd drink until we vomited then kiss then drink until we vomited again then kiss again. Two years later I was still happy with this routine. Delu wanted to push toward something more domesticated, people in relationships walk more carefully through life.

Later we increase the oxygen level in here, which is our cue to leave. As we apprentices shuffled out following Gil, I instinctively tried to stand close to Delu. There was a book we were given with information in, I don't think I ever looked at it again.

Consciousness of risk makes you ask yourself about your own limits, the foreman said, quoting from the book I think*. And of course the limits of the material too, the limits of the mineral.* […]

Fragments from *Delu* (2019), a text by MICHAEL LAWTON prepared for the eponymous exhibition by Lara Fluxà at the ProjecteSD gallery, Barcelona.

Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructure and Mobility
Interregional Superintendence of Public Works, Veneto – Trentino Alto Adige - Friuli Venezia Giulia
Department 2 – Anti-Pollution Department of the Venetian Lagoon

Processed via PEC

To Institut Ramon Llull
c/o Tamara Andruszkiewicz

SUBJECT: Point of view on the water management project for the Venice Art Biennale art exhibition at the Catalonia Pavilion - Castello 40, Venice

On 22.09.2021 the Institut Ramon Llull filed in the deeds of the undersigned Department with note prot. 35289 the project relating to the artistic installation of the Catalonia Pavilion as part of the 59th Venice Biennale Art Exhibition to be held from 23.04.2022 to 27.11.2022 for which it is necessary to pump in water from the lagoon.

The water needed to fill the installation circuit (about 800 liters of water) will come from the Canal de San Piero. Three different alternatives for the withdrawal of lagoon water have been proposed.

The first two proposals differ in the methods and times of withdrawal, but basically the plan is to pump the water through a PVC pipe (fixed or mobile) connected to the intake pumps that will be installed inside the Pavilion. The water would accumulate inside two tanks to ensure a continuous renewal of water inside the circuit.

the place. it progressively assimilates the layers that make up

The third proposal is to take the water from the lagoon to fill the installation circuit only at the beginning of the exhibition. To maintain the quality of the water unaltered for the entire period of the Biennale, the addition of additives would be necessary, such as chlorine.

The undersigned Department, having examined the project, expresses, to the extent of its competence, a favorable opinion on the execution of the installation under the following conditions:

1) The proponent must present an application for authorization to acquire and dump lagoon water accompanied by:
   a) a graphic with the exact indication of the point of water acquisition and dumping;
   b) a technical report that clarifies: the flow rate of the pumps that will be installed for the water acquisition, the diameter of the drainage work in the lagoon and the method to be adopted for the dumping;
2) with regards to the *first two solutions,* the water used for the installation circuit must not undergo any chemical treatment;
3) with regards the implementation of the *third solution*, it should be remembered that in relation to Legislative Decree 16.12.1998 it is forbidden to dump the water drawn with the addition of chlorine into the lagoon. Therefore, the water contained within the circuit at the end of the exhibition must either be disposed of as waste or, if dumped into the lagoon (or into the sewer), it must be previously treated by means of a dechlorination system;
4) the discharge must comply with the limits set for the dumping of wastewater into the lagoon by Ministerial Decree 30.07.1999, Table A, Sections 1, 2, and 4;
5) the end of the activity must be communicated to the undersigned Office to allow verification of correct execution, necessary for the release of the authorization / concession for dumping.

This opinion is expressed pursuant to art. 3 and 12 of Presidential Decree 962/73.

The forms for the presentation of the application and the completion of the activity pursuant to Law 171/73 are available at:
http: maintitoratovenezia.mit.gov.it.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR
Engr. Francesco Sorrentino

Ministero delle infrastrutture e della mobilità sostenibili
PROVVEDITORATO INTERREGIONALE ALLE OPERE PUBBLICHE
VENETO - TRENTINO ALTO ADIGE - FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA
UFFICIO 2 – Ufficio Antinquinamento per la Laguna di Venezia

Trasmessa via PEC

All' Istituto Ramon Llull
c/o Tamara Andruszkiewicz
[redacted]

OGGETTO: Parere relativo al progetto per la gestione delle acque per l'esposizione artistica Biennale Arte di Venezia c/o il Padiglione Catalogna - Castello 40, Venezia

In data 22.09.2021 la società Istituto Ramon Llull ha depositato agli atti dello scrivente Ufficio con nota prot. 35289 il progetto relativo all'installazione artistica del Padiglione Catalogna nell'ambito della 59ª Esposizione Biennale Arte di Venezia che si terrà dal 23.04.2022 al 27.11.2022 per la quale è necessario l'attingimento di acque lagunari.

L'acqua necessaria per riempire il circuito dell'installazione (si tratta di circa 800 litri di acqua) verrà prelevata dal Canal de San Piero. Vengono proposte tre diverse alternative di prelievo di acqua lagunare.

Le prime due alternative proposte differiscono per le modalità e tempi di attingimento, ma sostanzialmente si prevede di attingere l'acqua mediante una tubazione in PVC (fissa o mobile) collegata alle pompe di presa che verranno installate all'interno del Padiglione e di accumulare l'acqua all'interno di due serbatoi per garantire un continuo ricambio dell'acqua all'interno del circuito.

La terza alternativa propone di prelevare l'acqua dalla laguna per riempire il circuito dell'installazione solamente all'inizio della mostra. Per mantenere inalterata la qualità dell'acque per l'intero periodo di svolgimento della Biennale è necessario l'aggiunta di additivi, come ad esempio l'aggiunta di cloro.

Lo scrivente Ufficio, esaminato il progetto, esprime, per quanto di competenza, parere favorevole all'esecuzione dell'installazione alle seguenti condizioni:

1) **il proponente deve presentare istanza di autorizzazione all'attingimento e allo scarico in laguna corredata da:**
   a) **un elaborato grafico con l'indicazione esatta del punto di attingimento e di scarico;**
   b) **una relazione tecnica che chiarisca: la portata delle pompe che verranno installate per l'attingimento, il diametro dell'opera di scarico in laguna e le modalità che si intendono adottare per lo scarico;**
2) **per quanto riguarda le *prime due soluzioni* le acque utilizzate per il circuito dell'installazione non dovranno subire nessun trattamento chimico;**

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3) **per quanto riguarda l'esecuzione *della terza soluzione* si ricorda che in relazione al DL 16.12.1998 è vietato scaricare in laguna le acque trattate con l'aggiunta di cloro. Pertanto le acque contenute all'interno del circuito al termine della mostra o devono essere smaltite come rifiuto o, se scaricate in laguna (o in fognatura) devono essere preventivamente trattate mediante un sistema di declorazione;**

4) **lo scarico dovrà rispettare i limiti previsti per lo scarico dei reflui in laguna dal D.M. 30.07.1999, Tabella A, Sezioni 1, 2 e 4;**

5) **si dovrà comunicare allo scrivente Ufficio la fine dei lavori per consentire la verifica della loro corretta esecuzione, necessaria al rilascio dell'autorizzazione/concessione allo scarico.**

Tale parere viene espresso ai sensi degli artt. 3 e 12 del DPR 962/73.

La modulistica per la presentazione della domanda e della fine lavori ai sensi della L. 171/73 è disponibile all'indirizzo web *http://provveditoratovenezia.mit.gov.it.*

IL DIRIGENTE DELL'UFFICIO
Ing. Francesco Sorrentino

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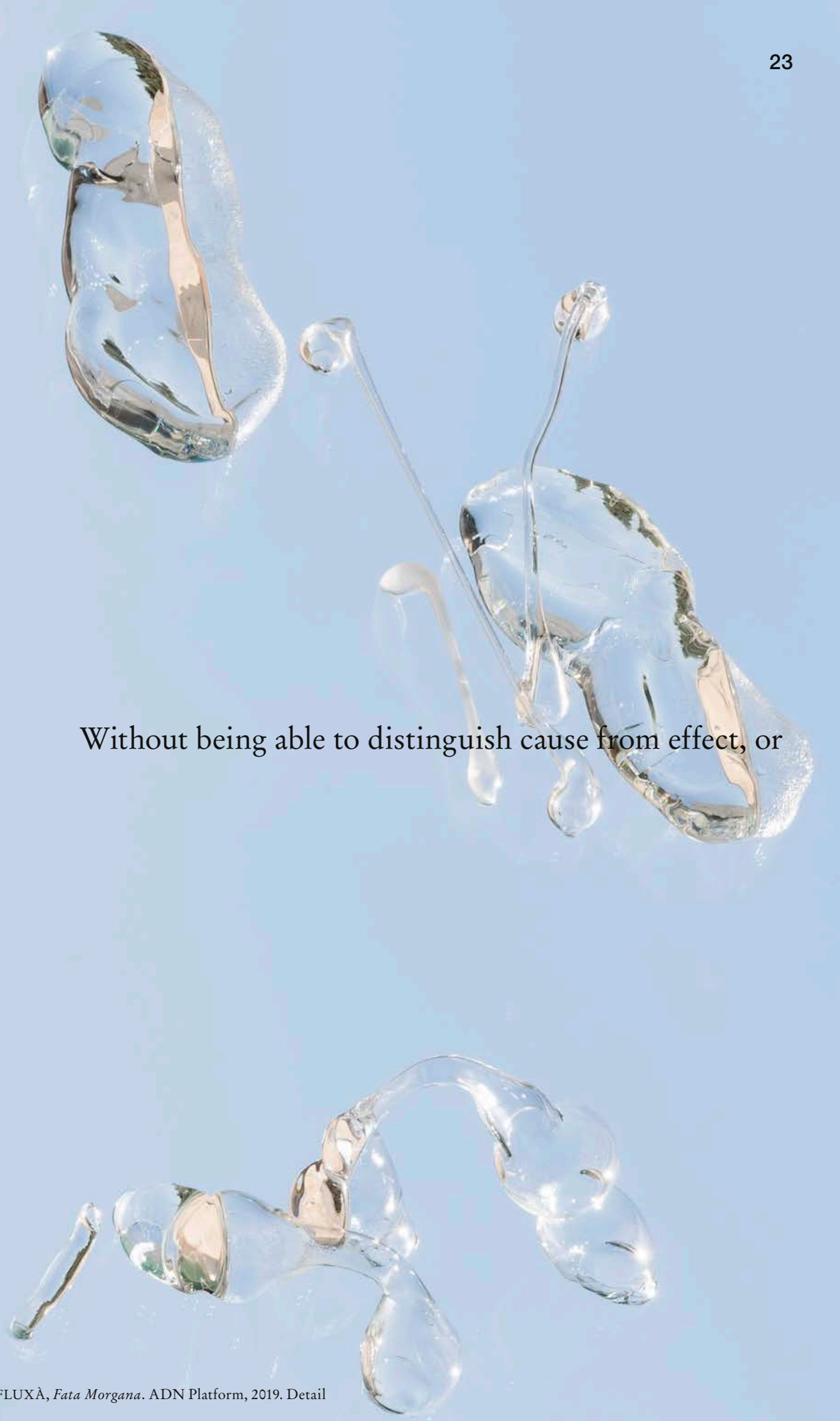


Without being able to distinguish cause from effect, or

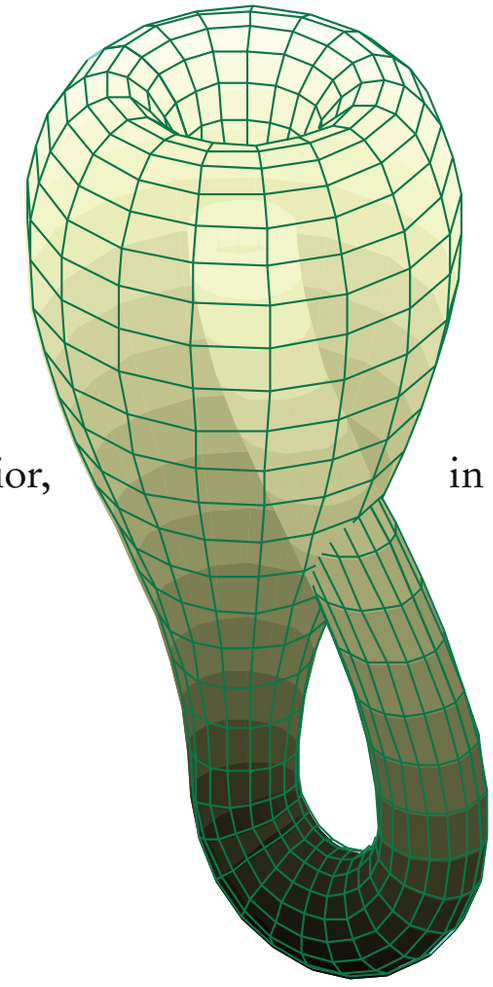
LARA FLUXÀ, *Fata Morgana*. ADN Platform, 2019. Detail

The first cultural device was probably a recipient.

ELISABETH FISHER, *Women's Creation*. 1975

–and not a sharp, pointy weapon, as the more popular story goes, at all.

ASTRIDA NEIMANIS, *Bodies of Water. Posthuman Feminst Phenomenology*. 2017



interior from exterior, in Venice LLIM conducts itself like a Klein bottle:

I now propose the bottle as hero.

URSULA K. LE GUIN, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*. 1986

Could Felix Christian Klein have come up with Klein's bottle if it weren't for glass? In the middle of the 19th century, could this mathematical object, impossible in Euclidean geometry, have been imagined on the basis of any other material?

There was retaliation in the laboratory the day Klein twisted the neck of a flask to then incorporate it into a glass recipient. So much so that the events took place only in a notebook: when the hole reached the other end, the translucent appearance of the receptacle suddenly darkened, surfacing as a bellwether case of tubular topology.

The Klein bottle is famous for being a bottle but having only one single side: when it is crossed from top to bottom by its own opening, the resulting space can no longer differentiate between an inside and an outside. The surface becomes continuous and, therefore, it no longer makes sense to see through it. For the Klein bottle to reveal the density of the glass, it returns it to its condition as a substance. This is, undoubtedly, an expression of viscosity.

Until that point, science had tended to make glass invisible. At least subsequent to Isaac Newton establishing light as the most faithful conductor of rational knowledge. His book, *Opticks* (1704) paved the way for glass to become the modern laboratory's best ally. It is a discreet ally, the fiction of a neutral and objective intermediation, the fantasy of direct contact between observers and the materials being scrutinized.

Lara Fluxà has experimented with establishing alternative alliances between glass, light and water in order to recover a density of vision. Rays of light curved when the bulbous shapes of *Fata Morgana* (2019) sprouted from the windows of ADN Platform, in Sant Cugat del Vallès, as well as later in the Casal Solleric, in Palma. The light returned to its wave state which circulates in the space differently according to the bodies inhabiting it.

Fata Morgana consists of an apparatus that frees up diffraction patterns, which is in tune with feminist research in the studies of science. First Donna Haraway, and later Karen Barad, states that seeing is not a mode of representation, but above all of a relationship with the world. The gaze of *Fata Morgana* places us enmeshed in the middle of things.

LLIM proposes something quite similar, although it involves spaces that are usually associated with opacity:

LLIM circulates inside the tubes of the trachea and pharynx, the metal and rubber tubes that carry the breath that inflates and gives shape to the viscous mass that, once stabilized, is transformed into bulbous shapes, into heavy capsules, into the glass tubes loaded with fluids. These are supported by iron structures, assisted by pumps, and are attached to the plastic tubes which are then attached to the urban tubes of brackish water that the lagoon's tides move; that is to say, the sediment and mud-filled canals contaminated by motor oil from the boats, by silt from the marshes, and mucus from the sea that has bathed a city where, for centuries, the tubes of the trachea and the pharynx, the metal tubes have carried the breath that inflates and shapes the viscous mass.

LLIM is not a site-specific intervention, rather it is the fold that turns a strip into Moebius strip; the twist that reveals that any bottle as a matter of principle is a Klein bottle.

it is a situated manifestation of the viscous behavior of matter.

4 BUSINESS | INSIDE STORY

RESOURCES

Water becomes the new oil as world runs dry

That a city surrounded by water became the glass-making center of the western world in the 13th century

Western companies have the know-how – and the financial incentive – to supply water to poor nations. But, as Richard Wachman reports, their involvement is already provoking unrest

The midday sun beats down on a phalanx of riot police facing thousands of jeering demonstrators, angry at proposals to put up their water bills by more than a third. Moments later a uniformed officer astride a horse shouts an order and the police charge down the street to embark on a club-wielding melee that leaves dozens of bloodied protesters with broken limbs.

A film clip from the latest offering from Hollywood? Unfortunately not. It's a description of a real-life event in Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city, where a subsidiary of Bechtel, the US engineering giant, took over the municipal water utility and increased bills to a level that the poorest could not afford.

Welcome to a new world, where war and civil strife loom in the wake of chronic water shortages caused by rising population, drought (exacerbated by global warming) and increased demand from the newly affluent middle classes in the emerging economies of Asia and Latin America.

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THE OBSERVER, 09.12.07. Extract

→

The control room of Centro Previsioni e Segnalazioni Maree, the tide office of the City of Venice. The office works in collaboration with CNR | ISMAR, Instituto di Scienze Marine, and receives forecasts of wave height and direction in the Upper Adriatic.

Picture by
ELEONORA SOVRANI, 2017


12/09/16 11.25
12/09/16 11.20
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TM 31,4
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LI 0,42
30 Burano
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28 Laguna Nord
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25 P.Salute CAE
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46 Giudecca
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39 S.Giorgio
22 D.S.Lido
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32 P.Malamocco
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23 D.N.Malamocco
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21 CNR CAE
LI 0,47 0,46
33 P.Chioggia
LI 0,42
36 Chioggia Vigo
LI 0,42
24 D.S.Chioggia
LI 0,39
48 Meda
LI
Panasonic


CAE


CAE

Where there is only a gentle slope, we think we see, when we follow the broken line of our attention, the steps of a staircase.

HENRI BERGSON, *Creative Evolution*. 1907

LLIM is an organism that informs of the material flux in its continuum, its vitalism as well as its fragility.

Henri Bergson described the vital flux as a *continuous outpouring*: an infinite sequence of transitions in which matter is permanently in a state of change. The changes take place uninterruptedly and string together in an almost imperceptible way. In contrast, Bergson argues that human attention fragments the continuum when it tries to grasp it; it has no choice but to steady it with the creation of static representations.

Lara Fluxà's intimate work with matter has provoked in her a particular intuition of the vital flux. With her decade-long experimentation with glass and water, the continuum reveals itself to her, above all, as a substance that is viscous. That is: a substance that moves between the different states of matter and is linked to elements of disparate origins. If for Bergson the continuum was long-lasting, for Lara Fluxà it is, above all, collaborative.

is a circumstance that is entirely due to viscosity:

> In fact, there is never a completed crystal; each crystal is infinite by right, in the process of being made, and is made with a seed which incorporates the environment and forces it to crystallize. The question is no longer that of knowing what comes out of the crystal and how, but, on the contrary, how to get into it. For each entrance is itself a crystalline seed, a component element.
>
> GILLES DELEUZE, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image.* 1986

The duality of glass - solid and liquid at the same time - has led Gilles Deleuze to argue that in this material comes together, on the one hand, life with its incessant surfacing - the vital flux, *running water*, time in its pure state, the continuum - and on the other, the unfolding of consciousness - representation, lifeblood, *frozen water.*

For Deleuze glass is the possibility of overflowing the division that Bergson had raised between life and its representation. These two movements are interwoven in glass, in an unsolvable tension.

Héctor Sanz Castaño observed in *Malc* (Es Baluard 2021) that Lara Fluxà, when blowing glass, allows it take on the arbitrary shape imposed by her breath. Effectively, the artist models glass as the minimum unit of registry - *the frozen water* - of a minimum unit of life - the breath, *running water.*

LARA FLUXÀ, *Delu*. ProjecteSD, 2019. Detail

the ability of glass and water to reversibly mutate between states

But there are tides in the body.

VIRGINIA WOOLF, *Mrs. Dalloway*. 1925

> Consider the case of pentastomes. They attach to the host tissue by a row of hooks on their heads and feed on the blood and tissue fluids in the lungs or air passages of the host. Their eggs pass out through the host's saliva, mucus secretions, and feces; the eggs are eaten by intermediate hosts, which can be fish, amphibians, small reptiles, small mammals, or insects. Inside their intermediate hosts, the pentastome eggs hatch into four- to six-legged larvae. The larval form bores through the gut of the intermediate host and enters vital organs, where it feeds and grows. When the intermediate hosts (possibly weakened by the infection of the parasite) are captured and eaten by a predator, such as a snake, the predator becomes the final host. The young pentastomes attach to the nasal passages and lungs of the predator and complete their life cycle.
>
> MARK A MCMENAMIN & DIANNA L. SCHULTE MCMENAMIN, *Hypersea.* 1994

The ability of pentastomes to reproduce with vertebrate animal tissues is one of the cases that Mark A McMenamin & Dianna L. Schulte McMenamin, develop in their Hypersea endosymbiotic theory. The organisms, which originally developed in the aqueous environment, carried the sea beyond the sea once they moved onto land.

The vital substance, which was directly accessible from the sea, required the development of increasingly complex networks and physical connections between unicellular organisms, fungi, plants and animals. Hence the McMenamins describe biological evolution as a tide that expands over the surface of the land:

> Acting over evolutionary time as a rising tide, the land biota literally carries the sea and its distinctive solutes over the surface of the land, into some of the driest environments on Earth.
>
> *Hypersea.* 1994

Astrida Neimanis, on the other hand, prefers the images of Russian dolls and carrier bags:

> In Hypersea, life nests with other life on land like sets of Russian dolls. Or, one species visits another, bequeathing to it new species who seek out new routes of fluid fecundity in novel other-species internal habitat. Without the sea to serve as prime communicator and facilitator, life on land needed to chart its own watercourses –most available in the watery tissues and body fluids of other life forms. This is how we became carrier bags.
>
> *Bodies of Water.* 2017

of matter keeps them open to collaboration and facilitates their coexistence.

LARA FLUXÀ, *Verni*, 2018. Detail

Venice, 22.2.2022

Dear Oriol,

Here is some Venice information, as requested, specifically as regards LIMO – mud, sediment, silt, sludge..... A fascinating variety of forms defined by mud make up the Venice Lagoon – from open waters to various gradients of water depth from a few cm to more than 10/15m within and between channels, mudflats, salt marshes and islands (natural / constructed).

Where mud is – and where it goes or where it is missing – defines Venice's past, present and future. We coined the term "Venezia è Laguna" (Venice is the Lagoon) to highlight the fact that the city and its Lagoon

are inseparable elements of a single system – the health of one depends on protection of the other.

Lagoons, anywhere, are implicitly ephemeral depending on the relative dominance of currents from the sea that wash away the mud versus river/estuary inputs of sediments. Venice's lagoon was originally characterised by a few navigable channels amidst marshy, shallow, extensive and constantly shifting sandbanks and mudflats. During the hayday of the Venetian Republic as a maritime power, the channels started silting up making navigation difficult for ships between the Adriatic and San Marco so, starting in the mid XV Century, the principal rivers had to be diverted away from the Lagoon.

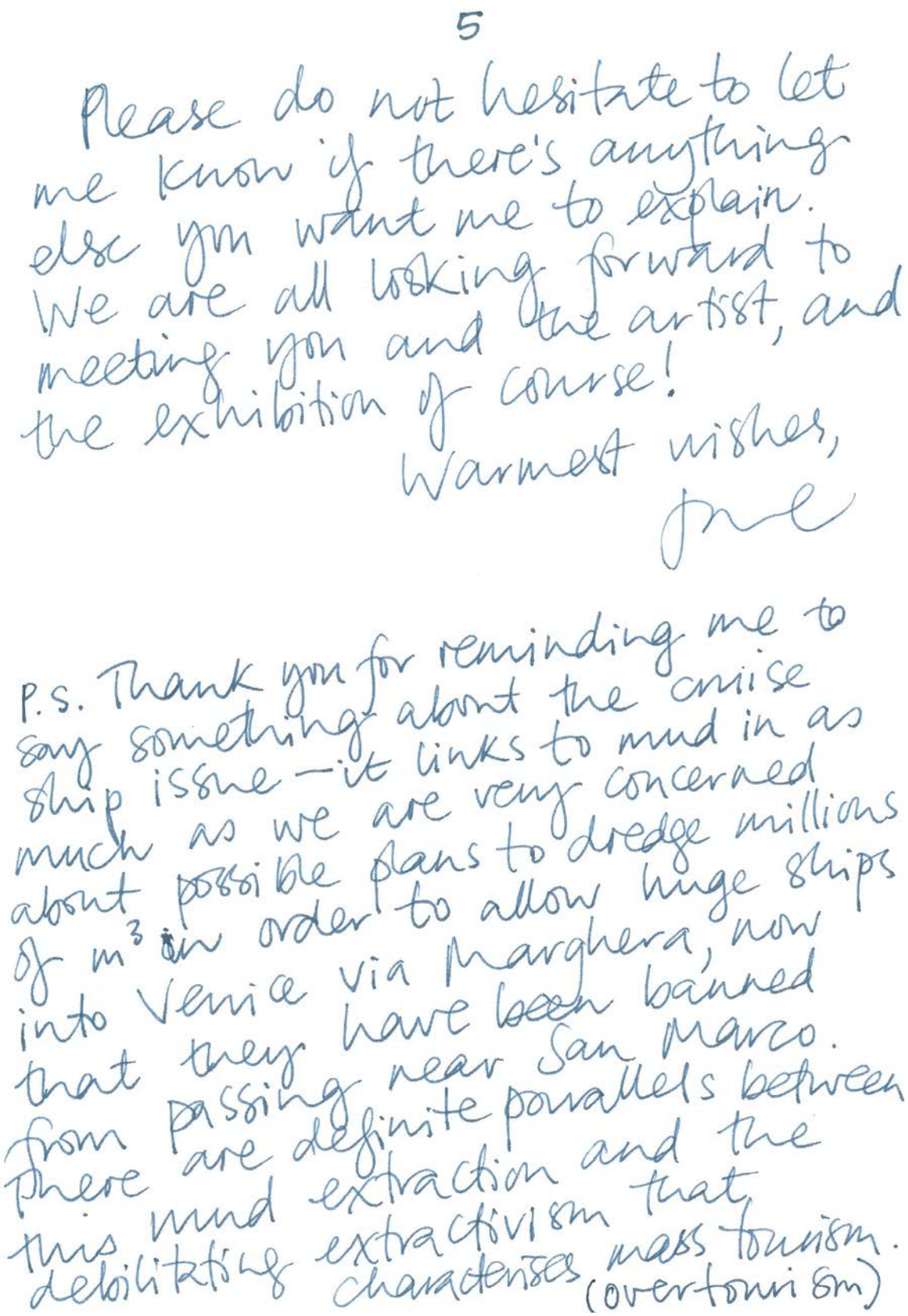
Hence the Lagoon changed its nature, from being a sediment sink to a sediment exporting system with significant consequences for the mud forms, water depths and associated shallow water ecology. Other changes exacerbated this imbalance and unless actions are taken NOW, the Lagoon will soon become a bowl of the sea, especially as a result of sea level rise.

The excavation of the Canale dei Petroli, the main shipping route between the central Lagoon inlet and the Marghera industrial zone, 50 years ago, radically changed water and sediment circulation patterns. Sediments are churned up by passing ships and then flushed out to sea by the tide or they settle and clog up the channels which then need to be dredged.

These issues, their effects on the Lagoon and associated compensation

measures are hotly debated and contentious, adding to the complexity of the lagoon as an aqueous/terrestrial, marine/freshwater, human/natural transition zone: resilient, versatile as well as delicate.

As I said, our work focuses on finding ways to revive the richness of life in, on and around the salt marsh. This includes deploying dredged sediments — when possible and if necessary — to re-create salt marsh that is ecologically functional. We recently began engaging with the Port Authority as well as a local agency of the Ministry for Infrastructure. Everyone is ready to look beyond the fiasco of MOSE and embrace a more holistic approach to reviving the glory of Venice.


5

Please do not hesitate to let me know if there's anything else you want me to explain. We are all looking forward to meeting you and the artist, and the exhibition of course!

Warmest wishes,

Jane

P.S. Thank you for reminding me to say something about the cruise ship issue – it links to mud in as much as we are very concerned about possible plans to dredge millions of m^3 in order to allow huge ships into Venice via Marghera, now that they have been banned from passing near San Marco. There are definite parallels between this mud extraction and the debilitating extractivism that characterises mass tourism (overtourism).

Venice, 21.2.2022

Dear Oriol,

Here is some information, as requested, specifically as regards LIMO –mud, sediment, silt, sludge… A fascinating variety of forms defined by mud make up the Venice Lagoon –from open waters to various gradients of water depth from a few cm to more than 10/15 cm within and between channels, mudflats, salt marshes and islands (natural/ constructed).

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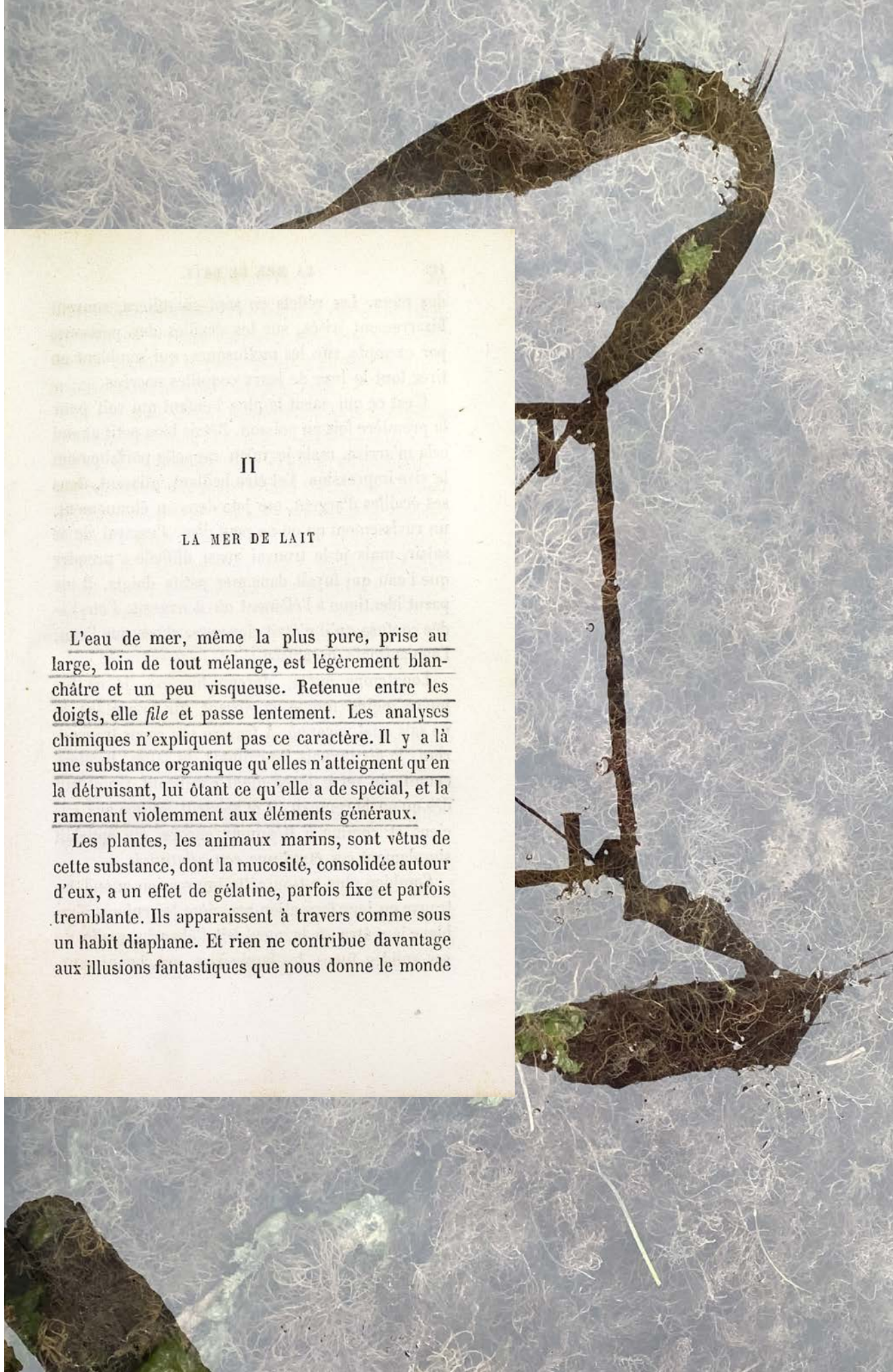
Water has fertile power because it becomes silt

THE MILKY SEA

The water of the Sea, even the purest, examined when you are far away from land, and from all possible admixture, is somewhat viscous; take some between your fingers, and you find it somewhat ropy and tenacious. Chemical analysis has not yet explained this peculiarity; there is in that an organic substance which Chemistry touches only to destroy, taking from it all that it has of special, and violently reducing it back to general elements.

> "What is the mucus of the Sea? That viscousness which water in general presents? Is it not the universal element of life?"
>
> "Sir, what, in your opinion, is that whitish, viscous matter which we find in sea water?"
>
> "Nothing else than life."
>
> "I should rather say a half organized and wholly organizable matter."

JULES MICHELET, *La mer*. 1861. Extracts



II

LA MER DE LAIT

L'eau de mer, même la plus pure, prise au large, loin de tout mélange, est légèrement blanchâtre et un peu visqueuse. Retenue entre les doigts, elle *file* et passe lentement. Les analyses chimiques n'expliquent pas ce caractère. Il y a là une substance organique qu'elles n'atteignent qu'en la détruisant, lui ôtant ce qu'elle a de spécial, et la ramenant violemment aux éléments généraux.

Les plantes, les animaux marins, sont vêtus de cette substance, dont la mucosité, consolidée autour d'eux, a un effet de gélatine, parfois fixe et parfois tremblante. Ils apparaissent à travers comme sous un habit diaphane. Et rien ne contribue davantage aux illusions fantastiques que nous donne le monde

des mers. Les reflets en sont singuliers, souvent bizarrement irisés, sur les écailles des poissons, par exemple, sur les mollusques, qui semblent en tirer tout le luxe de leurs coquilles nacrées.

C'est ce qui saisit le plus l'enfant qui voit pour la première fois un poisson. J'étais bien petit quand cela m'arriva, mais je m'en rappelle parfaitement la vive impression. Cet être brillant, glissant, dans ses écailles d'argent, me jeta dans un étonnement, un ravissement qu'on ne peut dire. J'essayai de le saisir, mais je le trouvai aussi difficile à prendre que l'eau qui fuyait dans mes petits doigts. Il me parut identique à l'élément où il nageait. J'eus l'idée confuse qu'il n'était rien autre chose que l'eau, l'eau animale, organisée.

Longtemps après, devenu homme, je ne fus guère moins frappé en voyant sur une plage je ne sais quel rayonné. A travers son corps transparent, je distinguais les cailloux, le sable. Incolore comme du verre, légèrement consistant, tremblant dès qu'on le remuait, il m'apparut comme aux anciens et comme à Réaumur encore, qui appelait simplement ces êtres une *eau gélatinisée*.

Combien plus a-t-on cette impression quand on trouve en leur formation première les rubans d'un blanc jaunâtre où la mer fait l'ébauche molle de ses solides fucus, les laminaires, qui, brunissant,

arriveront à la solidité des peaux et des cuirs. Mais, tout jeunes, à l'état visqueux, dans leur élasticité, ils ont comme la consistance d'un flot solidifié, d'autant plus fort qu'il est plus mou.

Ce que nous savons aujourd'hui de la génération et de l'organisation compliquée des êtres inférieurs, végétaux ou animaux, nous interdit l'explication des anciens et de Réaumur. Mais tout cela n'empêche pas de revenir à la question que posa le premier Bory de Saint-Vincent : « Qu'est-ce que le *mucus* de la mer? la viscosité que présente l'eau en général? N'est-ce pas l'élément universel de la vie ? »

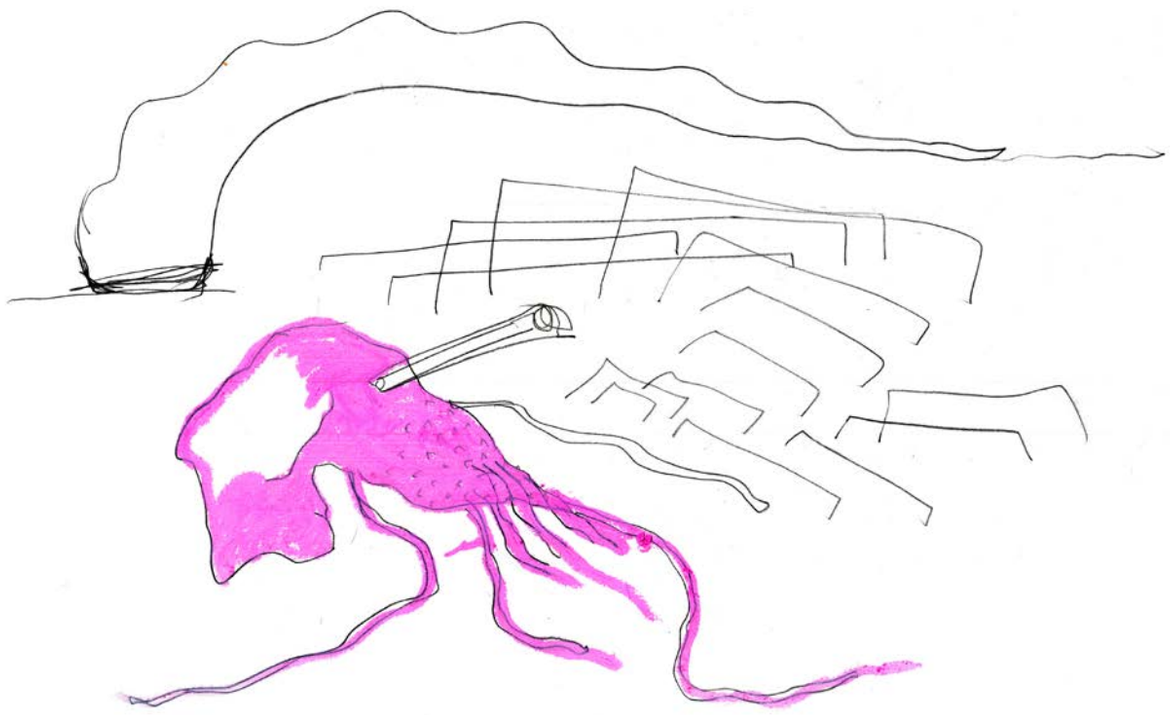
Préoccupé de ces pensées, j'allai voir un chimiste illustre, esprit positif et solide, novateur prudent autant que hardi, et, sans préface, je lui posai *ex abrupto* ma question : « Monsieur, qu'est-ce, à votre avis, que cet élément visqueux, blanchâtre, qu'offre l'eau de mer?

— Rien autre chose que la vie. »

Puis, revenant sur ce mot trop simple et trop absolu, il ajouta : « Je veux dire une matière à demi organisée et déjà tout organisable. Elle n'est en certaines eaux qu'une densité d'infusoires, en

Replenishment with dredged sediment from the Venetian Lagoon for artificial salt marsh recreation.

Picture by ELEONORA SOVRANI, 2021



when

in

contact

with

the

earth.

→
Salicornia colonizing areas recently refilled with dredged mud, destined to become new marshes. Marsh vegetation absorb large amounts of CO2 and play a key role in the revitalization of the Venetian Lagoon.

Salicornia also snuck into the workshops of master glassmakers for centuries: from its ashes comes the sodium carbonate that characterized local glass production. Angelo Barovier refined it to obtain, in the mid-1400s, that extremely fine surface, immaculately transparent, which he called *cristallo*.

Picture by ELEONORA SOVRANI, 2020

Guillem Sedacer concentrated his efforts on imitating rubies and other gems in varying colors. Whether in Barcelona, where he obtained religious training at the Carmelite *studium*; in Montpellier, where he studied medicine; or in Perpignan, where a document from the last days of his life states that he had to pawn his astrology and alchemy books.

He was not an ordinary 14th century alchemist. Contrary to the properties his colleagues attributed to mercury, Sedacer established glass as a prototype for the transmutation of metals. In *La Sedacina (*1378), a title that is probably a play on words between his surname and acting as a "sedasser" (a sieve maker in Catalan) on alchemical knowledge, he referred to glass as a changeable jasper - *lapis convertibilis* - precisely because of this material's ability to move between states of matter and transmute into any other mineral. With regards to this he wrote:

Vitrum est corpus diaphanum artificialiter ad naturam quinte essencie redactum.

Meaning: *glass is a transparent body that artificially returns us to the nature of the quintessence*. Sedacer seemed to find in the glass nothing more and nothing less than a path into an underlying substance, of which fire, air, water, and earth are the outward appearances.

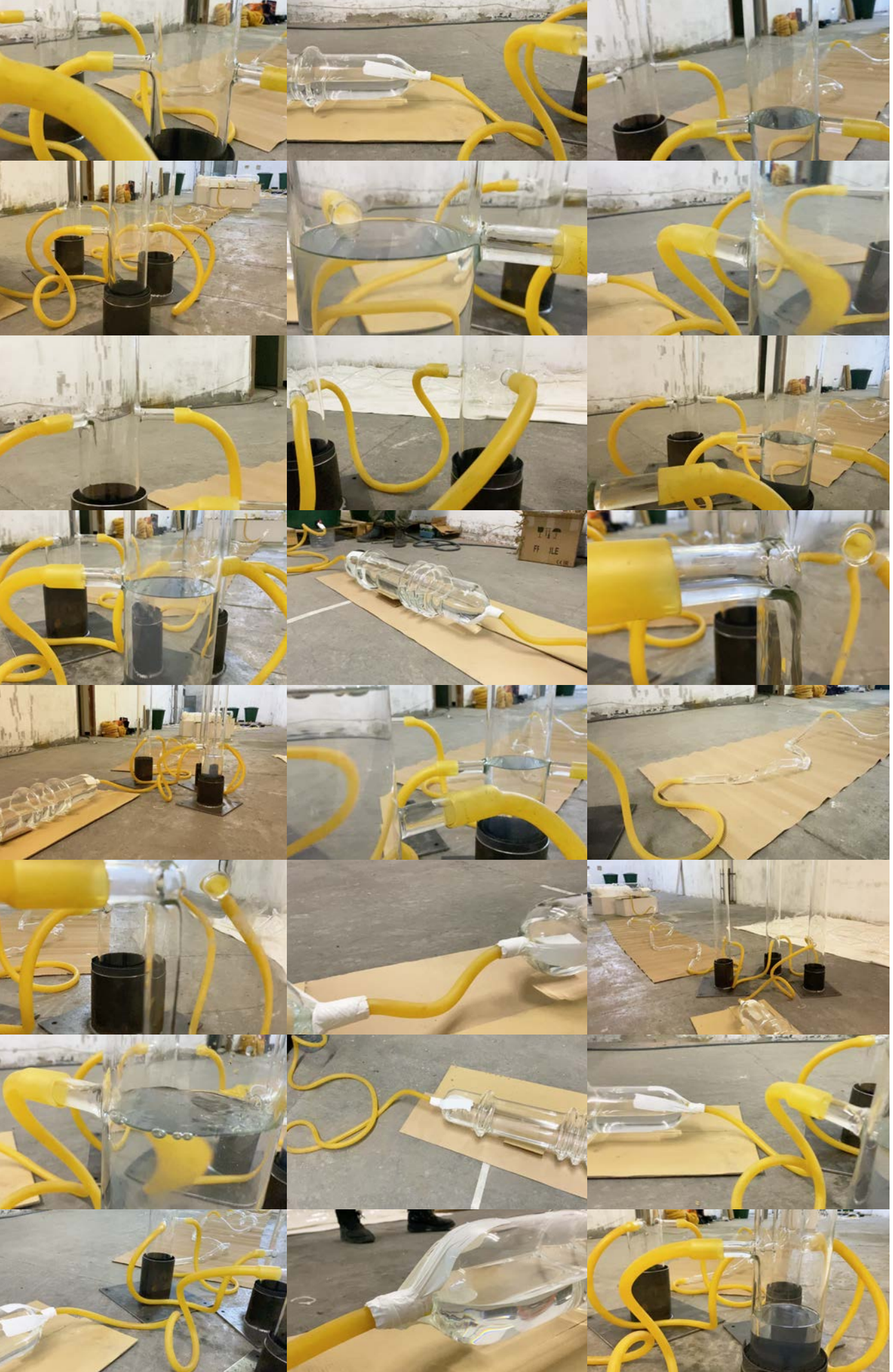
Ariadna Parreu shares her knowledge with Lara Fluxà during the long working days that are involved in the production of LLIM. Together on the workshop floor they speculate on the possibility that Sedacer received hermetic knowledge from Mount Carmel. The monastic order of the Carmelites, to which this friar belonged, came from the hermits who inhabited the caves. From the fine sands of the Belo River come the first evidence of transparent glass, which has been attributed to the Phoenicians. Sedacer recovered its production and promoted it in *La Sedacina*.

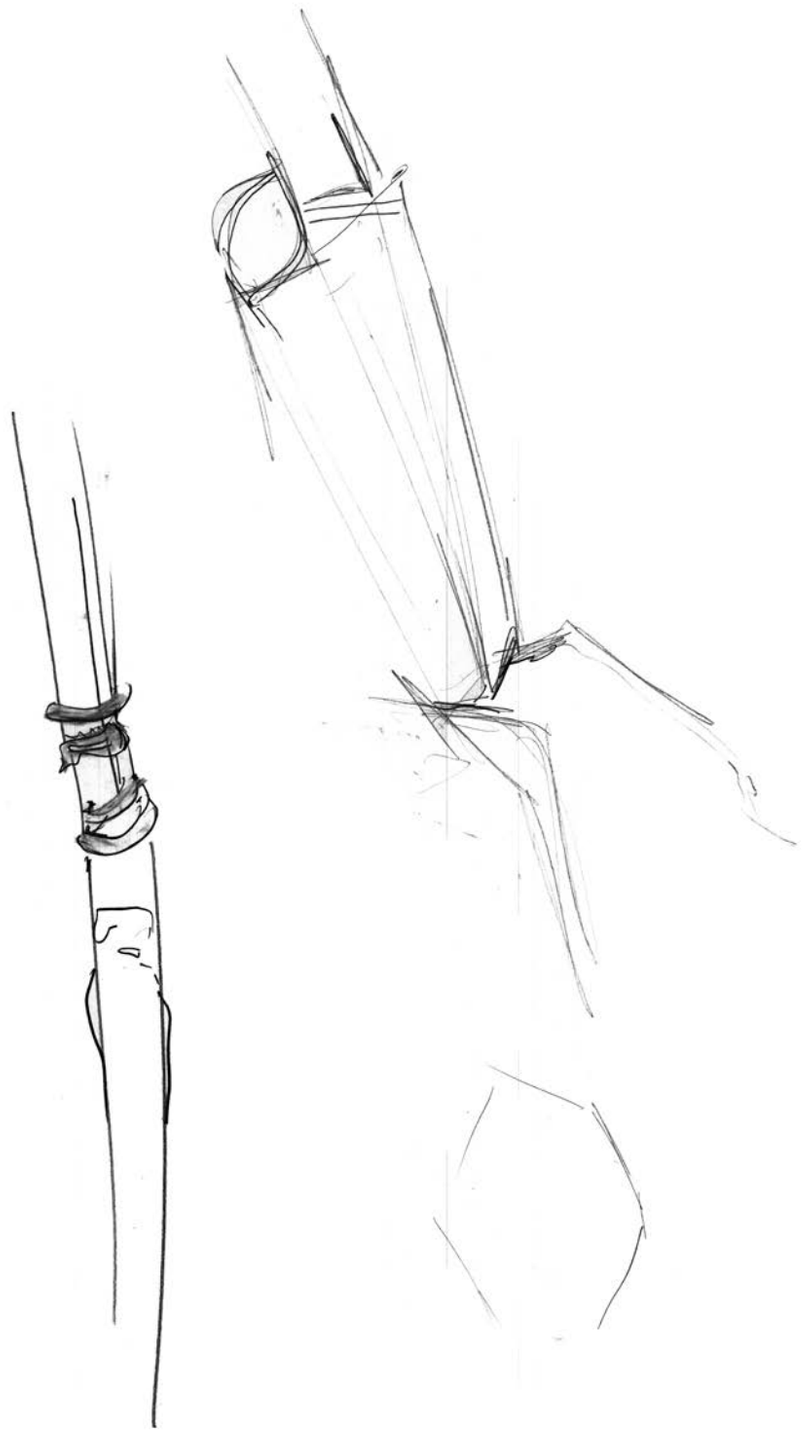
comes the Arabic word

the fertile land,

of the Nile,

From the black mud





khemia, alchemy,

A clever imitation in glass casts contempt, as it were, on that precious jewel the emerald (which is most highly esteemed by some), unless it come under the eye of one able to test and expose the counterfeit.

IRAENEUS, *Against Heresies.* 2nd century

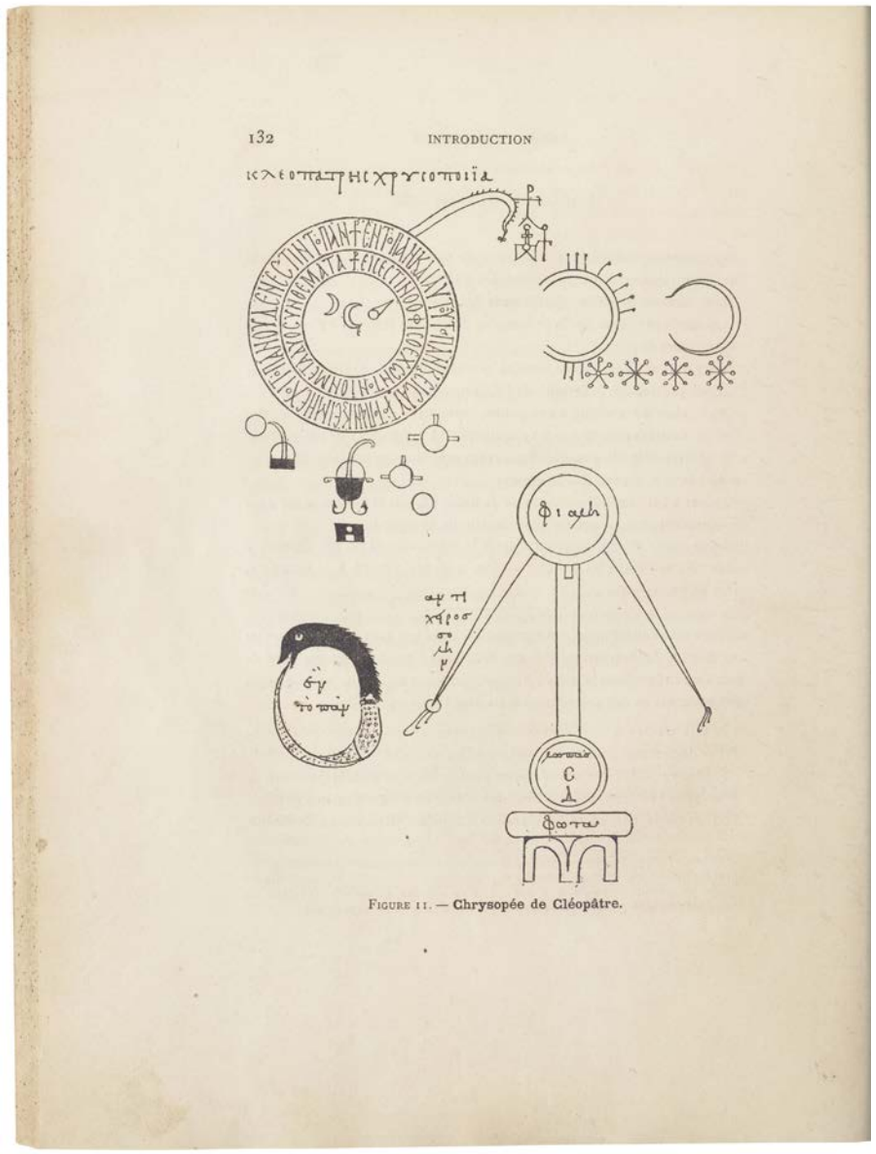


FIGURE 11. — **Chrysopée de Cléopâtre.**

Glass has been the great driver of curiosity about the subject matter. The alchemists of antiquity preferred to investigate the possibilities of glass transmutation than to venture in search of gold. At that time this metal did not have the value or magical qualities that were later attributed to it. Nor did it offer the malleability to simulate gems or gemstones. Glass, on the other hand, delighted the eye with all sorts of deceptions while captivating the mind with the reversibility of its outward appearance.

En to pan (The All is One) conjures the ouroboros of Cleopatra the Alchemist. She was a founding figure of alchemy. She lived in the first or second century and the invention of the alembic has been attributed to her. There is an echo of pre-Socratic philosophy in her writings. Thales of Miletus, for example, who argued that the different substances in our environment are modifications of a primordial substance, which he identified with water.

Alchemy explains the phenomenon of transmutation according to this same principle: one thing can become another because on a deeper level it remains identical to itself. The symbol of the ouroboros is a good ally for the purpose of explaining this, just as water and glass show the material qualities that may have more clearly inspired this principle.

Cleopatra the Alchemist is also famous for her philosophical dialogue that has been preserved, in which she compares her work with that of a mother who affectionately cares for and feeds her child. Stanton Lindsay has mentioned this document as the most imaginative and emotional in the history of alchemy:

"For I tell this to you who are wise: when you take plants, elements, and stones from their places, they appear to you to be mature. But they are not mature until the fire has tested them, when they are clothed in the glory from the fire and shining color thereof, then rather will appear their hidden glory, their sought-for beauty, being transformed to the divine state of fusion. For they are nourished in the fire and the embryo grows little by little nourished in its mother's womb, and when the appointed month approaches is not restrained from issuing forth. Such is the procedure of this worthy art. The waves and surges one after another in Hades wound them in the tomb where they lie. When the tomb is opened they issue from Hades as the babe from the womb."

ANONYMOUS: 'Dialogue of Cleopatra and the Philosophers', 2nd century. Extract

which has historically found a source of inspiration in glass, and its practitioners used it for the transmutation of base metals.

LLIM

CATALONIA IN VENICE
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA – COLLATERAL EVENTS
23 APRIL – 27 NOVEMBER, 2022

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Installation assembly support
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Photographic report
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Communication agency
Silvia Macchetto - PR Communications

Web development
Iago Barreiro

Acknowledgements
Mercè Bachs, Aina Bauzà, Eliana Bertrán, Laura Canedo, Juhn Carpena, Pep Carpena, Teresa Carranza, Pilar Cruz, Amica Dall, Sílvia Dauder, Olga Díaz, Laura Esquinas, a la gent de FASE, Patricia Fernández, Jose Ferrà, Llucia Ferrà, Paula Fluxà, Pep Fluxà, Núria Güell, Carles Guerra, Victor Jaenada, Aina Jaume, Aya Kariouh, Lola Lasurt, Margot Lasurt, Maria Lladó, Pere Llobera, Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructure and Mobility, Elena Paez, Anna Ribas, Gina Sansaloni, Héctor Sanz Castaño, Eva Sòria, Libreria Studium, Alexis Vargas, Rubèn Verdú, Octavi Rofes, Irina Russell, Bodega Salan, Aida Sánchez de Serdio, Olga Subirós, Mariona Terrats, TMTMTM, Laia Ventayol, Ouafae Ziani.

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Printing
Rotimpres

DL: B 7181-2022

does not aspire, in any case, to the obtaining of gold nor of the quintessence:

it moves the foundation of with the same calm that it Venice

Alchemy is an ancient way of relating to the world. Before the patriarchy there was even a matriarchal alchemy of the indigenous peoples, which was a way of relating to the world in a peaceful way.

CLAUDIA VON WERLHOF, *Mother Earth or Death! A Critical Theory of Patriarchy*. 2021

Claudia von Werlhof observed that alchemy, in its original connotation, refers to a mode of knowledge based on the observation of nature and life's natural rhythm:

> This is probably the pre-patriarchal phase of alchemy of gardeners and peasants, of men and women who wished to encourage and cooperate with this natural process without the desire to change its basic principles (for example, the early notion of the Garden of Eden or the famous 'Hanging Gardens' of queen Semiramis).
>
> *Mother Earth or Death!* 2021

However, men gradually weakened the foundation of life and usurped the power of women to create life, through what Werlhof calls *patriarchal alchemy*. Alchemy thus became a practice based on the destruction and fragmentation of the elements of matter, which aimed to discover life in its purest form and appropriate its vital force:

> The goal of the alchemist is not just to build any (ancient) new life, but to build a new life form so special that, apart from being supposedly better, it also leads to the discovery of the so-called 'philosopher's stone,' the 'tincture,' the 'elixir,' the 'powder,' all terms to refer to the 'quintessence,' the last essence or 'fifth element,' with which all substance can be transformed into the most valuable of all matter: gold, meaning 'life.' Finding life in its 'pure' form is the ultimate goal of all alchemical filtration. […] However, the alchemists' purpose is not to protect life and fertility. They need the philosopher's stone to seize the 'essence of life,' which is believed to be hidden somewhere within all matter.
>
> *Mother Earth or Death!* 2021

After more than five hundred years of Western and patriarchal modernity, this 'alchemical civilization,' based on creation through destruction, has become global, a war against life:

> Modern civilization as a whole, despite attempts to extol it as the best of all possible ones, capable of offering advancement, progress, democracy and human rights for all, is an 'alchemists' civilization' or an 'alchemical war system,' and it must first and foremost be described as a 'capitalist patriarchy.' This civilization is immersed in a process of world destruction and is in a state of absolute failure. It is what we currently identify as 'crisis.'
>
> *Mother Earth or Death!* 2021

m e t a b o l i z e s and returns the materials to their origin.

C. S. Cosmo, 611, 30133 Venezia VE, Italy
11/02/2022

Letter to a fisherman in Mazzorbo, Venetian Lagoon, in 1983.

One day in September on the cantilevered steel walkway that goes from the Celestia stop to the ACTV workers' houses, fearing I would be late for a concert at the Arsenal auditorium, I had to run. The sound of my speed was the mood of the lagoon.

That walkway reminds me of the Sky House by Kikutake, founder of the Metabolist movement. The passing of time in Kikutake's Sky House meant that the infant floor, added at birth, would disappear when the children were gone and later the garage when the car was no longer needed. Japanese metabolist architecture relied heavily on deterritorialization and a certain un-patrimonial joy.

A few months ago, Urbansphere, by ecoLogicStudio, at the Biennale of Architecture, took clues from Venice's natural evolution. Thanks to an Artificial Intelligence algorithm, the video installation in the Italian Pavilion showed how the urban fabric of Venice could evolve in the next 250 years. The images showed a mutation with really large time frame jumps, perceptibly difficult for our human expiry dates. The canals in 100 years will be practically spherical, almost everything rounded out, with a tendency towards the ellipse. This installation combined the organic intelligence of the lagoon together with the biological intelligence of Physarum Polycephalum, an acellular slime mold and infrastructural logics of the Venetian canal system. Some curtains simulated the brick walls of Venice.

Touching those slime curtains, a minute of Luigi Nono walking through the narrow streets came to mind, listening and investigating the sounds of his city. I am convinced that right now Nono would be as attentive to the possibilities of microalgae in the world as to those of utopia in acoustics.

Many a time I have thought of crystals as acoustic frames, the tempo of alchemy transports a DNA of music.

That technology is a mirage, that it became a metaphysical dictatorship from the ideologies that animate algorithms; we are verifying in so much as mutants. Algorithms, with their dating, guarantee victims.

Living things seem to ignore the mutation of our way of life, especially in dynamic cities, but it's not so in the lagoon. A fisherman was talking to the architect Giancarlo de Carlo, in the run-up to the construction of his charming social housing project in Mazzorbo. The inhabitants of Mazzorbo arrived after their work day, after six o'clock, to meet the architect of what would be their new homes in a few years. Before they drank some wine and carried with them an irony that De Carlo had never seen in his previous social housing projects, certainly not in Milan. "Quindi intendi dire questo?"

In Mazzorbo, white Istrian stone was used, which, for all of the lagoon's liquids, is a heavenly foundation.

It would have given a lot of fodder for laughter among the fishermen of Mazzorbo, what happened to the capsules of the most famous metabolist building: Nagakin capsule tower. It will be torn down and its detachable capsules, some of them, have already gone to museums, to be collected. Exactly the inverse of its presumed function.

For Giancarlo de Carlo, his social housing in Mazzorbo, 1980 to 85, responded to the "result of the transaction between human beings and the quality of the organization of physical space, which depends on the way in which space is inhabited and ways are inhabited."

This uninhabitable present allows us to say something very unexpected for the requests and contexts of the utopias of the 70s. The intent was to combat alienation amongst ways of living. Today, on the other hand, metabolizing alienation is an infinite subcontracting that defines cubicle modules without a social bond.

To remediate is very close to *remedy*. It subscribes too much into the absurd idea that health itself exists (the wild flag of our species).

The un-patrimonial idea gains followers every day in our agency of life. How to return to what is extracted without protected polyphonies?

In this context, meanwhile, some ways desire –desire?– to call themselves Utopia, others choose Atlas. But, from another place not too far away, they assure us that Physarum Polycephalum, the acellular slime mold, is capable of cleaning the atmosphere, and for the lagoon and for Venice that would be so useful… Venice has had the worst air quality in Europe, until lockdown arrived.

At the most recent Biennial of Architecture Bit.Bio.Bot. warned us of something that needs to be repeated until it belongs to all of us: "if, collectively, we transform air pollutants and water pollutants into highly nutritious food, we would take a step towards replacing urban gastro-terror with a new food utopia."

I direct this letter to the irony of the fisherman from Mazzorbo, because he proves to have the best of stomachs, preventive regarding the recent atmoterror.

Sofferte onde serene. Luigi Nono's work, written and dedicated to Maurizio and Marilisa Pollini, is, above all, an attempt to approach the sounds of their hometown.

I walked around Mazzorbo listening to Pollini's interpretation and also Hideki Nagano's. I wanted to see someone fishing. No one. The composition lasts exactly 14 minutes. It has a drastic ephemerality, necessary for the coexistence of the piano and the magnetic tape. On the other hand, I feel that some sounds might come from crystals. And the best thing, sometimes I confuse the performer and the tape; there is an ancient alchemy that would come from a hidden utopia, to be metabolized, without data. The best happens without warning, deaf ears for the whole algorithm.

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