



Open Library of Humanities

## Ecologies of Embodiment: Co-Editing With the More-Than-Human

Raffaele Rufo, Independent Artist-Scholar, Italy, [raffaele.rufo@gmail.com](mailto:raffaele.rufo@gmail.com)

Doerte Weig, Movement Research, Spain, [doerte.weig@gmail.com](mailto:doerte.weig@gmail.com)

---

**Abstract:** Looking for ways to address and attune to the urgent ecological crises of our age, this special issue problematizes the notion of the "more-than-human" and explores the nexus between ecology and embodiment across different artistic disciplines and traditions of embodied research. The editorial evokes our ecosomatic processes of co-editing with the more-than-human, and we offer a poetic commentary alongside video excerpts from the authors' works, which weaves connective tissues between the works. We conclude by discussing ecologies of embodiment as a bodily felt and cognitively thought generative space between certainty and uncertainty, knowing and not-knowing, sensing and naming.

---

**Keywords:** skin; breath; water; fire; earth; air; vulnerability; multispecies; more-than-human; bodily earthly ground; generative power; with-ness; relational coherence; ecosomatic resonances; sensing and naming; academic constraints; technology

---



## VIDEO ARTICLE

Available to view here: <https://doi.org/10.16995/jer.10129>.

Available for download here: <https://doi.org/10.16995/jer.10129.mp4>

## STILLS FROM THE VIDEO ARTICLE





## VIDEO ARTICLE TRANSCRIPT

[Please note: This is a transcript of a video article. Some metadata elements may appear more than once in the document, in order to be properly read and accessed by automated systems. The transcript can be used as a placeholder or reference when it is not possible to embed the actual video, which can be found by following the DOI.]

[0:10]

*Imprints*

*Violence*

*Breath*

*Feeling the other feeling you*

*Liveness lives in the remains*

*Feeling other feeling you*

*Planetary care*

*The body as a place of joy and enchantment*

*Art, and life, and planetary care*

This special issue brings together artists across disciplines in the growing field of practice-led embodied research, looking for ways to address the intensifying ecological crises by problematising the notion of the “more-than-human”.

Our editorial process was shaped by 3 questions:

How is the bodily presence of the researcher informed and changed by the ecology of the research?

How does ecological engagement affect the expression and understanding of embodiment?

How does embodied research influence our engagement and understanding of ecology?

[01:20]

Raffaele Rufo

Rome (Italy)

Doerte Weig

Barcelona (Spain)

[Raffaele Rufo:]

Do we need to totally structure this process based on something that is not coming out of the practice itself? Or can we play with that?

We engaged in a process of not reproducing the model of academic editing and we explored co-editing as a “more-than-human” work.

[Raffaele Rufo:]

Why don't we activate networks, webs between, across these people so that it can grow, their work can grow, and with that the special issue can grow?

This involved attuning to the ecological resonances with and between the submissions through somatic, visual and sound-based eco-embodied mappings.

[Doerte Weig:]

We are drawing out our somatic responses to their submissions, and we are trying to engage at the same time the more-than-human and, what I would call, really bring ecosomatic practices into being and qualities into this editing process.

[Doerte Weig:]

There is this connective tissue that holds us, which is, for want of a better word, the more-than-human, and through which we do share these resonances.

[Raffaele Rufo:]

I need to let go of something, I need to catch something, I need to navigate sensorially in this space.

*Fragile and even illusory barrier between human and wilderness*

*Philosophy of conversing with animate subjects not with objects*

*Animate, alive*

*Moments of relational correspondence*

[Raffaele Rufo:]

Because the reality is that we don't know, we work with not knowing. And, of course, we'll bring something to completion but we'll bring something to completion by allowing it to happen. And we don't know until we go through the process what's going to happen.

[Singing]

**ecologies of embodiment  
co-editing with the more-than-human**

In what follows, we offer poetic fragments of our editorial conversations on the works included in this special issue. The fragments emerged through naming our somatic resonances and are placed alongside or below the excerpts from the original works of the authors.

While viewing-speaking the connective tissues within and between the pieces, we witnessed the emergence of a tensional arc from the microscopic details of the human skin, to the earthly surroundings of bodies from wild to urban contexts.

[04:46]

**Video essays I**

**Bodylandscapes I.  
by Csenge Kolozsvari**

[Csenge Kolozsvari:]

“Listen! To the sound of texture shifting! [...] To the connective tissue dances, a topology that is cross-species!” (in Kolozsvari et al., 2022)

[Editorial commentary]

The magic of skin

How often do we actually take the time to really look at our own skin?

Sensing how these lines are shaped by everyday touch

Grasping a sensation, grasping an idea, and everything that is in-between

The body becomes a universe

**Breathing Gaia  
by Anja Plonka et al.**

[Anja Plonka:]

“Violence and trauma stripped you Persephone and me of the body and its voice. How can we find our specific language again? How can the vulva transform from a place of violence to a place of language? (in Kolozsvari et al., 2022)

[Iambe/Baubo who “loosely based on the Spanish saying: El habla por en medio de las piernas, i.e.,] ‘She [sic.] speaks through the organs between her legs’ – her vulva” [Sanyal, 2009, p. 28], was able to make Demeter laugh and dispel her sadness” (in Kolozsvari et al., 2022).

[Editorial commentary]

One step further into the depth of the body

In the deepest, most sacred place

It takes you inside, you know without seeing

A mythology that speaks to the female bodily presence of co-healing

### **Our Bodies, These Lands**

by Jessica Marion Barr et al.

[Editorial commentary]

We are literally going into the viscera of the earth

Looking from the outside in and from the inside out

Becoming together with land, with place, with the qualities of soil

The sacredness of site

A more-than-human coherence

### **Wisdom and Trouble**

by Alessandro Guglielmo

[Alessandro Guglielmo:]

“The body, once the head has been cut off, undergoes two or three spasms, and the blood flows in the hole while Alessia explains the technique she inherited from her parents and experience. Later, a big pot filled with boiling water is used to facilitate the plucking, the corpse is immersed in hot water, and it becomes easier to separate the feathers from the skin. I am now witnessing the slow but steady transformation of a corpse into meat, of a subject into food.” (in Kolozsvari et al., 2022)

[Editorial commentary]

A vegetarian anthropologist witnessing the killing of an animal

Blood as a bodily fluid shared by human and nonhuman animals

How can visual anthropology engage the sensorial experience of death?

Making blood and death accessible to the bodily senses

[07:57]

## **Video essays II**

### **The Shared Space of Hackney Marshes**

**by Dominique Rivoal**

[Dominique Rivoal:]

“With the intention of remaining fluid and available to what is arising, and, inspired by the mover’s own somatic practice, I use peripheral vision, reciprocal touch between me and the land, while engaging in deep listening to the sounds of the Marshes.” (in Rivoal et al., 2022)

[Editorial commentary]

Exploring the role of the camera in videographic embodied research

The author’s words articulate the somatic quality of her filmmaking

Focusing on where the author has filmed from

Witnessing the unfolding relation between perspective and the camera angle

### **What the River Doesn’t Say About Itself**

**By Daniel Portelli**

[Daniel Portelli:]

“In a process I call a biological ‘automavision’, the mangrove aerial roots become opsins for the performer’s sonsigns, to internalise, correlate, and intensify their experiences. Mangrove noosigns are embedded into body representations, or body signs, then into acoustical images, or acoustical signs.” (in Rivoal et al., 2022)

[Editorial commentary]

Fine, delicate balance between academic knowledge and deeply felt resonance

Our bodies tingling and vibrating with the sound of the instruments



Layers of resonance: human instruments, sound terminology, mangroves, boats, river flow

Honouring the qualities of water and the way water interacts with land

**Of Speeds and Slownesses**  
by Florian Goeschke

[Editorial commentary]

Spherical, abstract, avantgarde sound

A snail becomes the protagonist, moving from a microscopic to a gigantic presence

How can a musical instrument reconfigure the relationship between human and nonhuman?

**Embodied Understanding of Spatial Transformation**  
by Fani Kostourou and Takako Hasegawa

[Rafael Alvarez:]

“We are just signing different regions on our body, and then we can move to the space and we can also draw in somebody else’s skin.” (in Rivoal et al., 2022)

[Editorial commentary]

Techne – movement and spatial knowledge

Our bodies as if we are all one, but each body is different ...

Performing individual identities

Urban ecologies of embodiment

[11:18]

**Branching Songs**  
by Julie Andreyev et al.

[Editorial commentary]

Re-learning, regaining the skill to hear vegetal sounds

Using microphonic technologies to capture the different voices of human-tree encounters

How do trees respond from the inside to us touching them?

A lived and deeply grounded connection between artistic research and environmental activism

[12:28]

**Sentience, Sentences, and Sentiment  
by Angela Rawlings**

[Singing]

[Editorial commentary]

Scientific tracing of ocean layers

The beautiful cultural words we have given to those layers

Artistic geological research

The power of words to bring up and out the invisible

The immense danger of changing the sediment of the planet

A wider conversation about the human species as geological agent

[13:43]

**ecologies of embodiment:  
traces of our learning**

Our editorial dialogues were creative and diverse, touching on the importance of place and positionality in embodied artistic-academic research, and the integration of audiovisuality and textuality as a decolonial practice. We also discussed how scholarly video articles offer novel perspectives on earthly-bodily relations that hold potential for wider audiences.

[Doerte Weig:]

I feel the tension between on the one hand what we tried to do of, you know, allowing as much space as possible, holding as much space as possible for the creative process and at the same time honouring that we are doing this for an academic journal which comes with all the constraints of science.

[Raffaele Rufo:]

Let's say there is sensing on the one side, what you are describing, and naming on the other. The problem is not to be either on one or the other side. The problem is to exist in this connective tissue that is nesting, one is nested into the other, and that is a very complicated thing to do. You cannot solve that issue, it's a mystery: how you access, or how you perceive the sensing qualities of naming and the naming qualities of sensing.

[Doerte Weig:]

We call it uncertainty but I also wonder this in many other contexts whether we can't find a different term for it, which both encourages us to go to that space but may be bringing in what you said earlier, or what we talked about, on the one hand the heartfelt or, as I try to suggest, really the entire bodily presence in that, as something which is not about certainty or uncertainty but about this mystery, the magic of that not-knowing and the power, the generative power of being in that space. Is it possible to get to the point where you welcome that, and where you want to be in that space?

[Raffaele Rufo:]

It's not possible out of your mind, it's not a mental thing that you decide. It's not something that comes out of an individual thought, it's something that comes out of experiencing these ecologies of embodiment, and then suddenly becomes a real possibility, sorry not suddenly, gradually. So for me ecologies of embodiment are a way of saying, not saying uncertainty, you are saying ecologies of embodiment, that's what they are. When you experience that, when you dwell in that you are not separating certainty from uncertainty, you are not separating sensing from naming. You are dealing with the complexity of their nesting into each other. An ecology of embodiment is felt, but is also thought. It has a feltness and also, also a thinking.

[Doerte Weig:]

The cognitive does play a part in obviously giving voice to the felt experience and in that sense, you know, communicating, transmitting and finding common ground across time-space.

[Raffaele Rufo:]

When naming meets sensing, like when the human meets the nonhuman, you get the more-than. You lose the dualism, the dichotomy.

[18:04]

[Singing]

### **Acknowledgements**

Raffaele Rufo and Doerte Weig would like to thank the specific more-than-human presences and technologies that have supported them and co-shaped this editing process. We are especially grateful to certain trees in the vegetal Wood Wide Web spanning from the pines and oaks on the Roman coast (Italy) and in Barcelona (Spain) to the mabé trees in the Ivindo Region (Gabon) to the mangroves in Sydney (Australia) and the cedars in Ontario (Canada).

### **Abstract**

Looking for ways to address and attune to the urgent ecological crises of our age, this special issue problematizes the notion of the “more-than-human” and explores the nexus between ecology and embodiment across different artistic disciplines and traditions of embodied research.

The editorial evokes our ecosomatic processes of co-editing with the more-than-human, and we offer a poetic commentary alongside video excerpts from the authors' works, which weaves connective tissues between the works.

We conclude by discussing ecologies of embodiment as a bodily felt and cognitively thought generative space between certainty and uncertainty, knowing and not-knowing, sensing and naming.

### **Keywords**

skin

breath

water

fire

earth

air

vulnerability

multispecies

more-than-human

bodily earthly ground

generative power  
 with-ness  
 relational coherence  
 ecosomatic resonances  
 sensing and naming  
 academic constraints  
 technology

Doerte Weig's fascination is to uncover how the different facets of human physicality relate to socio-political transformation and ecological awareness. Doerte's work combines anthropology with artistic research-creation to show that we cannot think-perceive the future of human societies, of education, health, or work, without taking into account more the sensoriality of our moving-sensing bodyings and nurturing ecosomatic aliveness. [www.movementresearch.net](http://www.movementresearch.net)

Raffaele Rufo (PhD) is an artist-scholar across the fields of somatics, dance and theatre. He works with words, movement and video at the interface of research, performance and teaching. The body – as ecologically perceived and as the medium for participating in the more-than-human ecologies of life – is his primary site of inquiry. Raffaele aims to develop and disseminate tools, processes and perspectives of embodiment and emplacement that support the co-creation of liveable futures. [www.raffaelerufo.com](http://www.raffaelerufo.com)

*What does it feel like to dance with the waters of time?*

*What happens when all sounds are appreciated as shared vocabularies for communication?*

*How can we honour that the trees hold our world together?*

## References

Abram, David (2017), *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, New York: Vintage Books.

Abram, David (2020), 'The Ecology of Perception,' Interview by Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee, *Emergence Magazine*, June 20, 2020.

Akomolafe, Bayo (2020), *The Myth of the Gilded Researcher. A Thesis of Posthumanist Inquiry for Ecoverstities in the 'Anthropocene'*, <https://ecoversities.org>.

Andreyev, Julie, Lantin, Maria, Street, Sam, Jacobsen, Cara, Madsen, Keira, Overstall, Simon, Felsing, Lara and Plisic, Leanne (2022), "Branching Songs," *Journal of Embodied Research* 5(2): 4.

Bardet, Marie, Clavel, Joanne and Ginot, Isabelle (eds), 2019, 'Introduction', in *Ecosomatiques: Penser l'écologie depuis le geste*, Montpellier, FR: Deuxième Époque.

Classen, Constance (2012), *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Kampe, Thomas, McHugh, Jamie and Munker, Katja (2021), 'Embodying Eco-Consciousness: Somatics, Aesthetic Practices and Social Action', *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*, 13:1–2.

Kolozsvari, Csenge, Plonka, Anja, Stefanovic, Marko, Nordhold-Frieling, Rasmus, Marion Barr, Jessica Cole, Jenn, Alfonso, LA, and Guglielmo, Alessandro (2022), "Ecologies of Embodiment: Video Essays I," *Journal of Embodied Research* 5(2): 2.

LaMothe, Kimerer (2018), "As the Earth Dances: A Philosophy of Bodily Becoming," In *Back to Dance Itself: Phenomenology of the Body in Performance* (ed. Sondra Fraleigh), Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1968), *The Visible and the Invisible* (trans. Alphonso Lingis), Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Myers, Natasha (2018), "How to Grow Livable Worlds: Ten Not-So-Easy Steps, In *The World to Come*, edited by Kerry Oliver Smith, 53–63, Gainesville, Florida: Harn Museum of Art.

Myers, Natasha (2020), "Are Trees Watching Us?," *Spike Art Magazine* 65, Autumn 2020.

Porges, Stephen W. (2022) *Polyvagal Theory: A Science of Safety*, Frontiers in Integrative Neuroscience

Rawlings, Angela (2022), "Sentience, Sentences, and Sentiment: Sensing Deep-Ocean Sediment Through Artistic Practice," *Journal of Embodied Research*, 5(2): 5.

Rivoal, Dominique, Portelli, Daniel, Goeschke, Florian, Kostourou, Fani and Kasegawa, Takako (2022), "Ecologies of Embodiment: Video Essays II," *Journal of Embodied Research* 5(2): 3.

Rufo, Raffaele (2022), "Sensing with trees: Explorations in the reciprocity of perception," *VENTI Journal: Air, Experience, Aesthetics*, vol. 2(2).

Rufo, Raffaele (2023), "Humans, Trees, and the Intimacy of Movement: An Encounter with Ecosomatic Practice," *European Journal of Ecopsychology*, vol. 8.

Weig, Doerte (2020), "Fascias: Methodological Propositions and Ontologies That Stretch and Slide," *Body & Society* 26(3).

Weig, Doerte (2021), "Novel Ecosystemic Awareness: Singing-Dancing-Laughing with Earth," *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 13:1&2.

Weig, Doerte (2021), *Tensional Responsiveness: Ecosomatic Aliveness and Sensitivity with Human and More-Than*, Bielefeld: Transcript.

Whitehead, Alfred N. (1978) [1929], *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, New York: Free Press.

Wildermuth, Rhyd (2016), 'The Forest That Will Be', <https://abeautifulresistance.org>.

---

## Acknowledgements

Raffaele Rufo and Doerte Weig would like to thank the specific more-than-human presences and technologies that have supported them and co-shaped this editing process. We are especially grateful to certain trees in the vegetal Wood Wide Web spanning from the pines and oaks on the Roman coast (Italy) and in Barcelona (Spain) to the mabé trees in the Ivindo Region (Gabon) to the mangroves in Sydney (Australia) and the cedars in Ontario (Canada).

---

## References

Abram, David (2017), *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, New York: Vintage Books.

Abram, David (2020), 'The Ecology of Perception,' Interview by Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee, *Emergence Magazine*, June 20, 2020.

Akomolafe, Bayo (2020), The Myth of the Gilded Researcher. A Thesis of Posthumanist Inquiry for Ecosoverities in the 'Anthropocene', <https://ecoversities.org>.

Andreyev, Julie, Lantin, Maria, Street, Sam, Jacobsen, Cara, Madsen, Keira, Overstall, Simon, Felsing, Lara and Plisic, Leanne (2022), "Branching Songs," *Journal of Embodied Research* 5(2): 4.

Bardet, Marie, Clavel, Joanne and Ginot, Isabelle (eds), 2019, 'Introduction', in *Ecosomatiques: Penser l'écologie depuis le geste*, Montpellier, FR: Deuxième Époque.

Classen, Constance (2012), *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5406/illinois/9780252034930.001.0001>

Kampe, Thomas, McHugh, Jamie and Münker, Katja (2021), 'Embodying Eco-Consciousness: Somatics, Aesthetic Practices and Social Action', *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*, 13:1–2. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp\\_00063\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp_00063_2)

Kolozsvari, Csenge, Plonka, Anja, Stefanovic, Marko, Nordhold-Frieling, Rasmus, Marion Barr, Jessica Cole, Jenn, Alfonso, LA, and Guglielmo, Alessandro (2022), "Ecologies of Embodiment: Video Essays I," *Journal of Embodied Research* 5(2): 2.

LaMothe, Kimerer (2018), "As the Earth Dances: A Philosophy of Bodily Becoming," In *Back to Dance Itself: Phenomenology of the Body in Performance* (ed. Sondra Fraleigh), Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1968), *The Visible and the Invisible* (trans. Alphonso Lingis), Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Myers, Natasha (2018), "How to Grow Livable Worlds: Ten Not-So-Easy Steps, In *The World to Come*, edited by Kerry Oliver Smith, 53–63, Gainesville, Florida: Harn Museum of Art.

Myers, Natasha (2020), "Are Trees Watching Us?," *Spike Art Magazine* 65, Autumn 2020.

Porges, Stephen W. (2022) *Polyvagal Theory: A Science of Safety*, *Frontiers in Integrative Neuroscience*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnint.2022.871227>

Rawlings, Angela (2022), "Sentience, Sentences, and Sentiment: Sensing Deep-Ocean Sediment Through Artistic Practice," *Journal of Embodied Research*, 5(2): 5.



Rivoal, Dominique, Portelli, Daniel, Goeschke, Florian, Kostourou, Fani and Kasegawa, Takako (2022), "Ecologies of Embodiment: Video Essays II," *Journal of Embodied Research* 5(2): 3.

Rufo, Raffaele (2022), "Sensing with trees: Explorations in the reciprocity of perception," *VENTI Journal: Air, Experience, Aesthetics*, vol. 2(2).

Rufo, Raffaele (2023), "Humans, Trees, and the Intimacy of Movement: An Encounter with Ecosomatic Practice," *European Journal of Ecopsychology*, vol. 8.

Weig, Doerte (2020), "Fascias: Methodological Propositions and Ontologies That Stretch and Slide," *Body & Society* 26(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X20952138>

Weig, Doerte (2021), "Novel Ecosystemic Awareness: Singing-Dancing-Laughing with Earth," *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 13:1&2. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp\\_00036\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp_00036_1)

Weig, Doerte (2021), *Tensional Responsiveness: Ecosomatic Aliveness and Sensitivity with Human and More-Than*, Bielefeld: Transcript. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839460115>

Whitehead, Alfred N. (1978) [1929], *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, New York: Free Press.

Wildermuth, Rhyd (2016), 'The Forest That Will Be', <https://abeautifulresistance.org>.

