

excerpt #01

‘Storied Matter’ is one of the conceptual tools of material ecocriticism, which basically underlines the idea that matter is not only lively, agent and generative, as it is theorized in the new materialist paradigm (Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; Coole and Frost 2010; Abram 2010), but also densely stored. It describes the idea that from its deepest lithic and aquatic recesses to the atmospheric expanses, and from subatomic to cosmic realms, matter is capable of bringing forth a display of eloquence, which can be explained as the ‘ontological performance of the world in its ongoing articulation’ (Barad, 2007:149). Whether biotic or not, matter in every form is a meaning producing embedding of the world, or ‘storied matter’: a material ‘mesh’ of meanings, properties, and processes, in which human and nonhuman players are interlocked in networks that produce undeniable significance forces (Lovino and Oppermann 2014b: 1–2). This means that matter’s stories emerge through humans, but at the same time humans themselves ‘emerge through “material agencies” that leave their traces in lives as well as stories’ (Cohen 2015b: 36).

‘Storied matter helps us better understand fragile ecosystems, polluted landscapes, carbon-filled atmospheres, acidifying oceans, changing climates, retreating glaciers, species extinctions and social crises than the scientific presented in figures and numbers. Simply because through these stories we come to know ‘not only...the hidden plots and meanings of a reality’, but also...the often unheard voices of this reality’ [Lovino 2016:48], which has today become quite disenchanting with catastrophic human practices.

[...]

Serl Oppermann, » Storied Matter « in: Rosi Bradiotti, Posthuman Glossary: Theory in the New Humanities, p. 411/p.413
 Bloomsbury Academic, London
 2018

poem #02

Indeed, a mineral’s olive. Once as a brine or gas
 it boiled as raging magma in the earth interior.
 But carbon turned to diamond as the centuries passed,
 and now it is before me, safe under my stare.
 So don’t you tell me that the stone has no soul,
 that most of them aren’t interesting to ponder,
 I won’t believe you, rocks and stones are well,
 and I will write dozens of songs about them.
 And don’t you tell me that the mineral’s got no life,
 and to be cold and dead is in the mineral’s nature.
 I won’t believe you, and my words will be upheld
 by the example of the Uralis Range.
 I’ll gaze at Jasper or a cubic pyrite crystal,
 the reddish limonite or garnet, breathing fire,
 and wonder how much was really witnessed
 by stones that here before me lie.

Vladimir Brtanišsky, » Rocks « (1950ies)
 in: Edward Landa, Christian Feller ‘Soil and Culture’ p.183
 Springer, New York
 2010

Let’s start with the end of the world, why don’t we?
 [...]

N. K. Jemisin, » The Fifth Season: The broken Earth « p.01
 Orbit, London
 2015

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 MA student (medical anthropology and science and technology studies)

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Robert Luther
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Tahani Nadi
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Sybill Neumeyer
 artist

Sina Ribak
 researcher for ecology & the arts

Make Weirflug
 political scientist and museum practitioner (open science)

excerpt #03

SHARING
 memories about the stones everyone brought

LISTENING
 to each stones’ stories

EXCHANGING
 knowledge and imagination

CROSSREADING
 collectively experts of texts from science, science fiction,
 tales and poetry

DISCUSSING
 criticalities and questions concerning museum practice and
 scientific narratives

DRAWING
 stories together on a map

SPECULATING
 possible futures built on correlating multiple presents and posts

REFLECTING
 on the workshop format

activities

encounters

collective reading

collective reading

The Space between the Stones – Stratigraphic Storytelling Workshop

workshop

»The fossils, for example, tell stories of extinct beings captured in time. Volcanoes tell stories about the earth’s turbulent past. Tree rings yield stories of long years of droughts and rains, while retreating glaciers transmit stories of changing ecosystems and climate, blending global warming with political anxieties and social changes. Since narrative agencies emerge through their interchanges with the human reality – such as rocks and mountains with geological records revealing stories of dynamic fusions with animals, plants and humans – they all ‘tell us evolutionary stories of coexistence, interdependence . . . extinctions and survivals.’«
 (S. Lovino & S. Oppermann)

The *Space between the Stones* is a multiperspective examination of rocks and stones as ‘storied matter’, of their narrative agencies and their co-authorship in a posthuman and polyphonic storytelling. Lab participants contribute with a stone and its story.

guest

Sybill Neumeyer is a multimedia artist with a background in art history, linguistics, ethnology and visual communication. She explores – with a focus on ecological issues – relationships and entanglements between humans and non-humans. Currently she is investigating in polyphonic (hi)storytelling based on cross-disciplinary research.

ODDKIN°labs are experimental workshops exploring unexpected relations for more-than-human worlds.

The first labs series was situated in the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, questioning objects, spaces and narratives with a trans-disciplinary approach.

In each session, a new ensemble of practitioners from different fields – including from the Museum itself – critically engaged with the themes of coevolution, taxidermy, and stone (hi)stories.

Each theme was set by a host through her art & science practice. Multispecies Storytelling – Constanza Mendoza
 Taxidermic Cinema – Debbie Onuoha
 Stratigraphic Storytelling – Sybill Neumeyer

This poster is a curated partial re-elaboration of the ODDKIN°-lab 0.2, which was held on July 4th 2019 in the Experimentierfeld at the Museum.

»Staying with the trouble requires making oddkin;
 that is, we require each other in unexpected
 collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles.
 We become—with each other or not at all.«

Donna Haraway
 Staying with the troubles

ODDKIN°labs

Unexpected relations for more-than-human worlds

Co-designed by Chiara Garbellotto and Sina Ribak in cooperation with the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin and Humboldt Universität.

Chiara Garbellotto is a doctoral researcher on the *Making Differences* Project at the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage (CARMAH). Her research focuses on how ‘bio-diversity’ and ‘participation’ are co-produced and how knowing and caring are mobilised in museum public engagement.

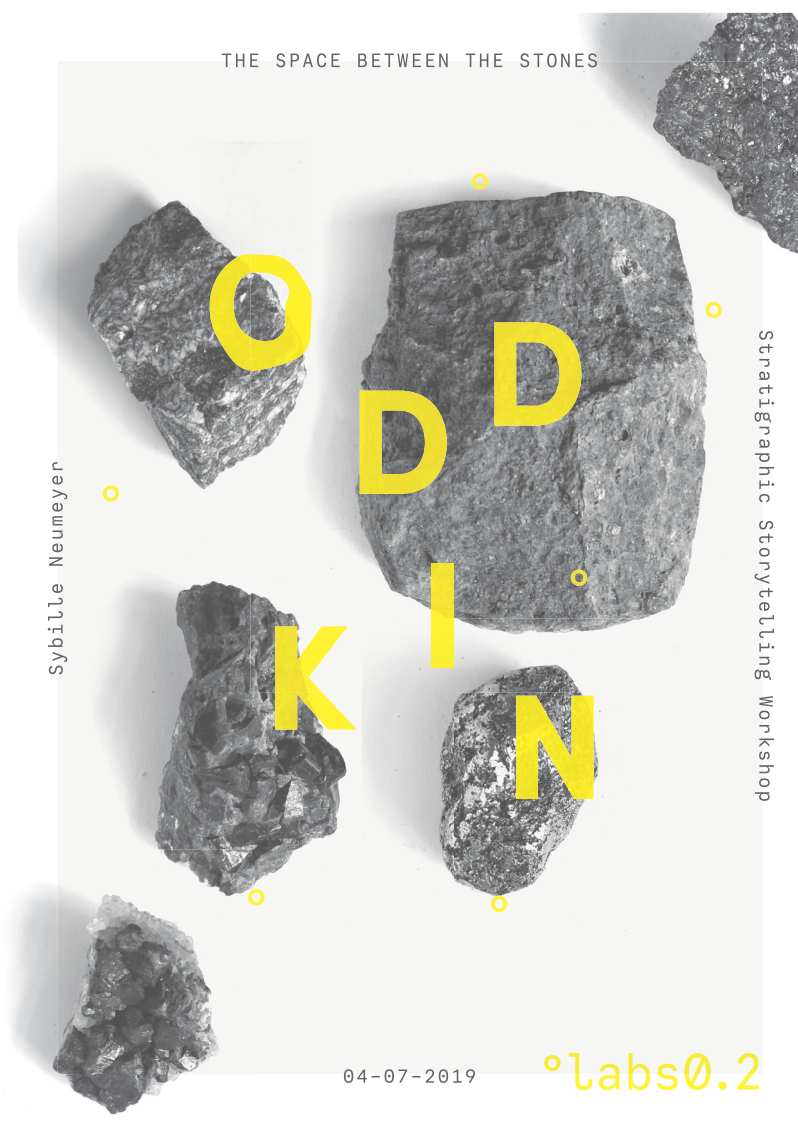
chiara.garbellotto.1@hu-berlin.de
 www.carmah.berlin/people/garbellotto-chiara

Sina Ribak – researcher for ecologies and the arts – is an engineer in environmental management and nature conservation working at the interface of nature and culture. With her socio-ecological focus she engages in international collaborative projects contributing to transdisciplinary research. Since 2017 she is co-director of the Berlin based ‘*Between Us and Nature*’ Reading Club.

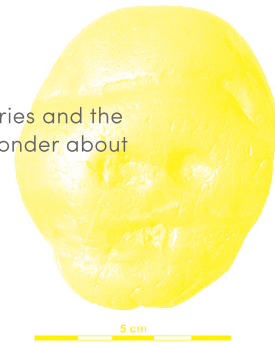
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With kind support of:



- o Quotes
- x Questions
- > Feedback



> » We encountered the cultural stories and the scientific stories of the stones. I wonder about the relation between them. «

Robert Luther

- o » You can tell geological stories in two directions, from past to future, and from future to past. «

Ferdinand Damaschun

> » Opening a museum to other professional fields is both an innovation and a complication. How to innovate its pedagogy? «

Yen-Yi Lee

x Do personal stories belong to a museum of natural history?

x Is there a division between geos and bios?



x Which potential has storytelling in the museum and scientific communication?



x Experimenting artist-led (un)learning in between museum and academia: to pursue an open-ended experience participants' positionalities come first.

o » To whom do stones belong? «
Deborah Cohen

> » It was ok to also fail and acknowledge the presence of "less facts". «

Yen-Yi Lee

o » This is my grandmother's finger. «
Tahani Nadim

x How to shift the mode of relating ideas and materials when working across multiple epistemologies?

o Maïke: » Reconnecting to the actual and not the abstract thing, I think there's a power in stories enable us to connect, to not to enter in some kind of truer vision of the world, but to connect with the world. And this is something against all these fantasies of technofix, and Mars, and all these dangers. (...) To me it gives always hope to see how we can still connect to things and discover new perspectives and unseen things and really work with the materiality of the world and be there actually. «

Sybill: » This is even more powerful as a personal story if we think about that thousands of millions of personal stories can be a force that shapes the world rather than a big top-down technofix. «

> » Personal stories stay 'in between', it was important to combine different kind of stories in the workshop. «

Maïke Weißpflug

o Sybill: » We put them here to think about them not as objects but as strata, so also give maybe some mass of volume to these events, now they also relate to each other in a very different size (...) «

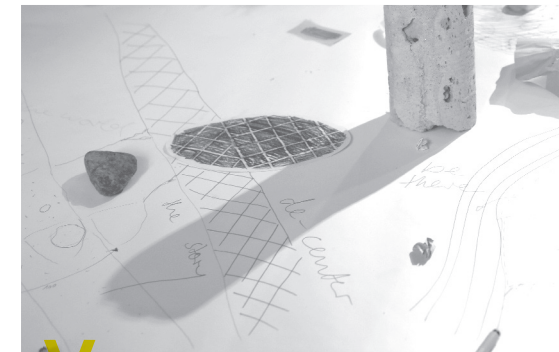
Chiara: » so it's how to visualise intensity, or acceleration «

Sybill: » Yes, so for example this strata could be something that grows and also eats other strata, so I am really thinking how we can make forces visible and how we could think about these correlations. «



> » The culture/science divide stroke back but personal stories assumed a fundamental role. «

Anita Hermannstädter



x (Scientific) history as truth, stories as fiction: from linear narratives to stratigraphies of stories. And the question is: what is a stake in this movement?

o Robert: » As a scientists I would say I try to make a model and a theory of something that has happened. Of course it's somehow a story but just the term story is like anything that you want to make up. «

Tahani: » But your work add to the story we can tell about the Earth. «

Robert: » Ja. «

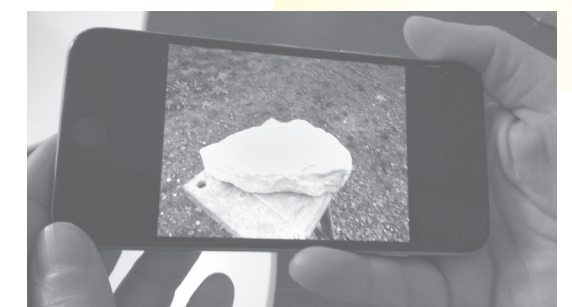
Tahani: » About the planet, about the solar system... «

Robert: » History. «

x What does it mean to put failures at the centre of the research in public engagement?



x How can indigenous practices of knowledge provide better scientific narratives?



o Yen-Yi: » Each other object has a different kind of connection to us also according to how we physically can afford to carry it on without disrupting other people, it's an agency or a performativity being limited or being changed in different surroundings as well. «

Sybill: » If you want to perform a force that moves it please, do it! «

Yen-Yi: » It will be very loud! It's ok? «

Sybill: » Yes, why not!? «

-Bang!-