

# EVENTS

Plants exist within plurality; they are part of, and themselves contain many worlds. In the course of survival in its environment, a plant cultivates relationships with various non-human others with whom it shares the earth and air. Plants communicate through these interspecies proxies, passing messages through pollen, bacteria, and along underground filaments of vast mycelial networks. Less competitive than they are collaborative, these interspecies co-operations position plant partners as important co-creators of vegetal life – and suggest that mutual aid may be as much a condition of material existence as mutual struggle.

In this program of experimental plant-listening, we attempt to model the best features of these interspecies entanglements (reciprocity, mutualism, collective intelligence) while leaving behind the worst (co-dependency, parasitism). Through talks, screenings, workshops, performances, reading groups and residencies, we explore plants as sites of collective organisation, and their collaborators microbes, fungi and bees as social protagonists. With so much to say, these super-organisms suggest expanded definitions of both non-human subjectivity, and the listening – discursive, decentred, yet embodied – necessary to tune into them.

THU 22 NOV  
6–9PM

## WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS (OPENING)

Possible conditions for multicellular entanglement

WURUNDJERI COUNCIL opens this exhibition with a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony. DJIRRI DJIRRI DANCE GROUP will perform stories of creation, family and country. KELP D/J + BENJAMIN HANCOCK will orchestrate vegetable and other matters. SLIME will offer gooey microtonal concoctions.

In all ecologies, microbes perform vital element-cycling work for our planet. Microbial listening needs to be broad, proliferant and expansive, reflecting this ubiquity and encompassing varying complex entanglements of lifeforms and situations. But microbial existence also necessitates a listening that becomes specific, attuning with sensitivity to the cellular expressions of the imperceptible and the infinitesimal. We begin by opening an encounter between human and other worlds that hinges on deepening our listening, via conviviality and music, meeting in the universes we contain.

FRI 23 NOV  
6–9PM

## OUT OF THE OOZE (PERFORMANCE)

On the self-propagation of viral forces

HANNAH HALLAM-EAMES (NZ) will explore microbial economics as interwoven intentionalities built by desire.

FLORIS VANHOOF (BE) experiments with neurocinematic vegetal thinking. ALICIA FRANKOVICH (NZ/DE) will remap expressions of the natural world through queer voice.

Microbes, like thoughts, are moving entities. Microbial communities develop and exist in constant cycles of metabolic exchange between themselves and other organisms. While these relations can be mutualistic, they can also be ruthless and exploitative. Under biocapitalism, emerging new regimes of accumulation mimic this multiplying modality, harnessing molecular biology and scientific financialisation towards the production of surplus value and the commodification of life itself. In this stage for subjects both very small and very large, through the intermediary presence of human subjects, we explore new rhetorics to give voice to resistant strains, and propagate viral forces of our own.

SAT 24 NOV  
12–5PM

## POROUS INTERACTIONS (PERFORMANCE + WORKSHOP)

Social togetherness fermented and reordered

IVEY WAWN with AMAARA RAHEEM, ARINI BYNG, EVAN LOXTON, JIMMY NUTTALL, LUCIEN ALPERSTEIN, MEGAN PAYNE + SHOTA MATSUMURA perform *Greyness and Infinity*.

*Greyness and Infinity* uses observed microbial processes to develop a durational choreography for multiple performers, infinite microbes and the audience. Borrowing from the poetics of microbial

transformation and processes of mutualistic symbiosis, *Greyness and Infinity* makes visible the labour of the microbial world to reconsider and reorder social togetherness towards networks of care, sensitivity and pro-sociality.

AIDYN MOURADOV (SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, BIOSCIENCES & FOOD TECHNOLOGY, RMIT) will share his latest research into algae. LUCIEN ALPERSTEIN will reflect on multi-species interactions and terroirs of synthetic culture. BRIONY BARR AND GREGORY CROCKETTI (SCALE FREE NETWORK) will share observations on microbes as social actors.

Microbes have shaped the current biosphere, and continue to drive the Earth's biogeochemical cycles, and have also created somewhere between half and two thirds of the mineral diversity on Earth. Plants, microbes and humans occupy different kingdoms and domains. Interspecies collaborations, individual permeability and widespread cooperation, however, trouble the work of making neat distinctions between these categories.

All larger creatures are holobionts – unable to exist without their radically unappreciated microbial partners (microbiomes). This means that close consideration of microbial interactions brings not just modes of social organisation into question, but also the very notion of what it is to be an individual. In this workshop, we assemble researchers, artists and activists to listen and to talk about the implications of the communal agency of microbes across different social spaces – internal

(bodily, including plants and animals), and external 'habitats' (soil, ocean, ice).

Questions we may explore include: How far does the 'umbrella of life' extend? Should we consider viruses as living creatures? What is the role of microbial communities in ordering present relations and shaping future ecologies in soil, sediment and seawater? Considering the work microbes perform, in what ways do recently-discovered extensive microbial divisions of labour, microbial cooperation and cross-feeding networks open up bio-economical considerations for plant listening? If the amplification of the microbial voice is a chance to reconsider the unheard, in what ways might this extension of subjecthood work to assist the frictionless commoditisation of biomedical knowledge into productivity?

TUE 27 NOV  
2–5PM

## SLOW RELEASE (READING + LISTENING) Multiplying singularities

WED 28 NOV  
6–9PM

## MORE ROOTED (TALKS + PERFORMANCE) The vegetal subject and our listening co-create each other

JUSTIN CLEMENS will read his work *Rooted*, and poems by others. DANNI ZUVELA will discuss listening to vegetal others. MAKIKO YAMAMOTO (AU/JP) will present her works *Banana Apart*, *Coffee and Tobacco* and *Onion*. NATHAN GRAY (AU/DE) will present

*The Station*, a science-fictional lecture-performance featuring three narrators, one of whom is a tree; with reading and music from Zara Kimber.

If plants use sound (to detect and shape their environment), might it follow that they can also speak? The presumption that because we don't hear them, they don't have something to say – the trope of plant muteness – serves only to further other the vegetal world. This program counters plant silence through a series of engagements with plants as conversation partners, interlocutors, narrators and companions. In situating the speaking plant at 'the fulcrum of its own world' (Michael Marder), we encounter the problem of never knowing, or being able to know, fully, what it is to be a plant. What conditions might justify what would inevitably be a process of, if not appropriation, then at least compromise, to allow the projections of our speaking for plants? Is it possible to hold our not-knowing lightly enough to allow the vegetal subject and our listening to co-create each other?

THU 29 NOV  
2–5PM

## UNEARTHLY OBJECTS (WORKSHOP) Soil holds time, events and knowledge

UNCLE DAVE WANDIN (WILIM-EE MOORING; WURUNDJERI COUNCIL) will yarn through time, ash and soil. DIEGO BONETTO will discuss practices of wilding, from the ground up. ANN LAWRIE (THE AUSTRALIAN ORCHID

FOUNDATION; SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, RMIT) will share her research into soil-plant-microorganism systems, in particular the mycorrhizal symbioses between fungi and endangered Australian orchids. BEN BYRNE (SCHOOL OF DESIGN, DIGITAL MEDIA, RMIT) will reflect on fungal questions for experimental sonic practice.

As alternative patterns of food production and consumption, foraging and wild food gathering realign and reconnect plants, fungi and humans. Knowledge, care and considered observation are fundamental to identifying where, how and why fungi 'flush' in certain micro-climates. But the appearance above ground is only part of it; to understand mushrooms, we need to go underground, upturning the soil shot through with mycelial communication networks carrying nutrients, information, time, and promise.

This workshop brings together specialists, researchers and artists whose plant-thinking will help us explore questions such as: How does soil hold time, events and knowledge? What specific attunements might enable us to listen rhizomatically? What other knowledges do we need to cultivate a hypertemporal, multidimensional perception of landscape?

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FRI 30 NOV  
6–9PM

**FRUITING BODIES  
(PERFORMANCE)**

Sometimes poison,  
sometimes cure

MAGIC STEVEN + MAKIKO YAMAMOTO (AU/JP) will stage a fraught cooking show, with mushrooms. AUTUMN ROYAL + ELA STILES will explore the poetics of spores and how the pervasiveness of mould outstrips our ability to control it. TYSON CAMPBELL (NZ) + BELLA WARU (NZ) will dance and rap about systems ecological and political. YING-LI HOOI + TARQUIN MANEK will unearth subterranean narratives.

Mushrooms and mould are literal signifiers of the presence of hidden realities. Their fleshy, temporal appearances provide evidence of concealed systems of constant potentiality in the material strata of our world. Sometimes poison and sometimes cure, they are less an object than they are a process.

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SAT 01 DEC  
12–5PM

**FILAMENTAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS  
(PERFORMANCE)**

Intertwining mutualisms  
in motion

DEBRIS FACILITY will offer a collective meditation with networked biomatter. ANTHONY MAGEN will lead a listening-while-walking. *We Can be Many Shapes* with LZ DUNN with SHIAN LAW. GEOFF ROBINSON will ground sound across bodies, extending in multiple dimensions.

The vast underground networks of mycelium that support plant communication are among the largest living organisms on earth. These delicate but strong webs offer many metaphors – some obvious, some less so – for the operation of human

communities. How can we proliferate while still maintaining the intimacy of close connection? Do we listen just with our ears – or can we regard the whole body as a listening organism?

In this performance event, we explore different modes of social communication through collaborative movements organised in distributed space and time. Starting at Design Hub to Royal Park, we cluster, walk, sync and disperse in ritual acts of collected listening.

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TUE 04 DEC  
2–5PM

**SLOW RELEASE  
(READING)**

The Language of Bees

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WED 05 DEC  
6–9PM

**BOLD FLORALS AND  
RUNNY THINGS  
(TALKS + PERFORMANCE)**

Plant listening in the key  
of bee

MICHAEL MARDER (US) will give a keynote lecture on attuning to the self-refreshing systems of nature. MONICA GAGLIANO (IT) will translate the language of plants. MADELEINE MILLS will offer a poem on floral awareness. CHARLIE SOFO will note how well flowers are trending; *Why Fuck Flowers?* by RADHA LABIA will create sweet haptic connections.

Superfluity to the bare needs of human existence means that flowers, in Western art and culture, are emblematic of that which is decorative, frivolous, and insubstantial. Yet to a systems understanding of ecology,

flowers are the precise opposite. In the delicate symbiosis between bees and flowering plants, each enables the ongoing existence of the other. What allows us to continue to regard flowers as trivial – by ignoring the critical interdependence with bees – is, then, anthropocentrism; under-examined, but not undisturbable. Plants and bees message each other, and us, in a running three-way commentary on the local, the temporal and the floral. We tune our plant-listening to bees' frequency, to hear the hum of self-renewal underscoring and connecting vegetable and human existence.

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THU 06 DEC  
2–5PM

**UNDILUTED FLOW STATE  
(TALKS)**

Hosting a hive-minding

NIC DOWSE (HONEYFINGERS) will share experiences of urban bee-keeping. ADRIAN DYER + SCARLETT HOWARD (BIO INSPIRED DIGITAL SENSING-LAB, RMIT) will share their research on bee cognition and communication. KIRSTEN BRADLEY + NICK RITAR (MILKWOOD) will offer observations as practitioners of natural beekeeping.

European honey bees are highly social creatures with complex modes of communication. When we speak of the language of bees, we may be referring to the range of actual vocalisations and psycho-mechanical vibrations bees use to share information and ideas with each other.

Or, we may be speaking of the abstract visual language of flowers, and their

various appeals made to pollinators via shimmering stripes and bee-oriented colours, textures and shapes. Either way, distinct bee vocabularies and registers exist – if usually at a level just below the limit of everyday human understanding.

This workshop brings together leading bee experts to share their experience of paying attention to bees, and generate dialogue about bees, flowers and humans. Among the questions the workshop may address are: How does a bee perceive the world? What role does sound play in bee culture, and what shifts in our human awareness are required not just to hear but to understand what we are hearing? What are the implications of insect intelligence for rethinking the interplay between the local and the temporal?

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FRI 07 DEC  
6–9PM

**STICKY REQUEST  
(PERFORMANCE)**

The heat of the hive

WET KISS will offer a floral tribute. MARIA CHAVEZ (PE/US) will generate biorhythmic tremors from broken wax. GIAN MANIK will counterfeit honey and deliver psychic tutorials via gore-core and relaxation techniques.

We begin with a gathering of coordinates, a massing, an emplacement of bodies with alignments of breath, voice and vibration. Through shared resonances we escalate, a succession of elliptical trajectories intersecting, magnifying, swelling into heat, proximity, elevation and sweetness. In syncing, we are seeking the transformation of matter into energy, together.

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SAT 08 DEC  
12–5PM

**AIRING THE SHARE  
(PERFORMANCE)**

Bees as music, metaphor and material

DYLAN MARTORELL will create a spatialised environment for evolving drones. ARINI BYNG, JESS GALL + REBECCA JENSEN will sink in the hole between expectations and outcomes. BENJAMIN WOODS will play a piece for breathwork on beeswax flutes. DAMIEN NICHOLSON will propagate vibrations with a yidaki drone.

We exist as individuals, a basic unit of one. To dwell in a cell, however, is to forfeit one's access, and contribution, to collective energy, and so everywhere we make new formations, each requiring us to recognise and respect the individual rhythms of the other. Connected by shared vibrations, oscillating between solo flight and the throb of the social, we listen out for echoes of possible ways to live together.

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TUE 11 DEC  
2–5PM

[offsite] Royal Botanic  
Gardens

**SLOW RELEASE  
(READING + LISTENING)**

The Life of a Free-Flying  
Drone