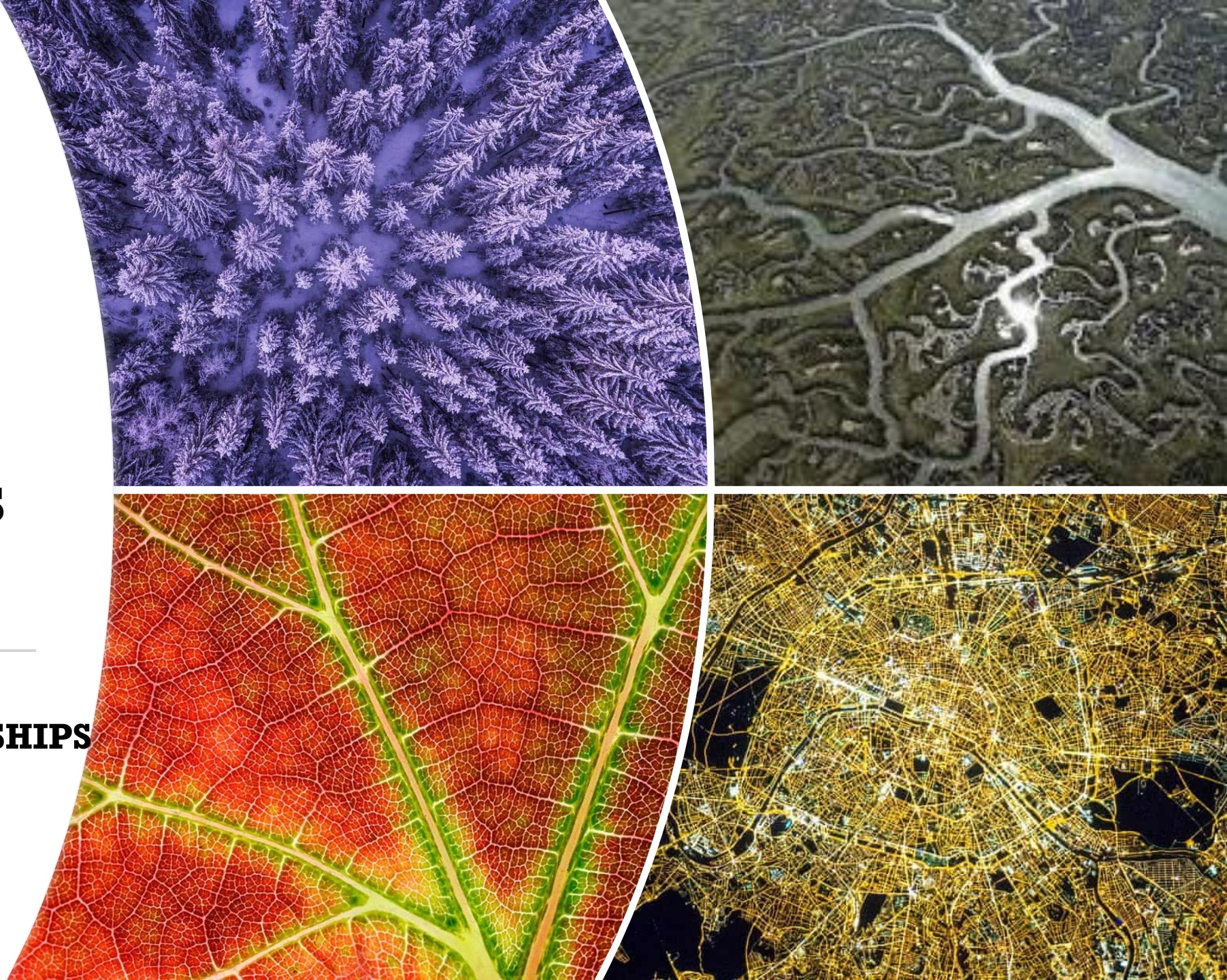# Cities as living systems

FROM OBJECTS TO INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIPS
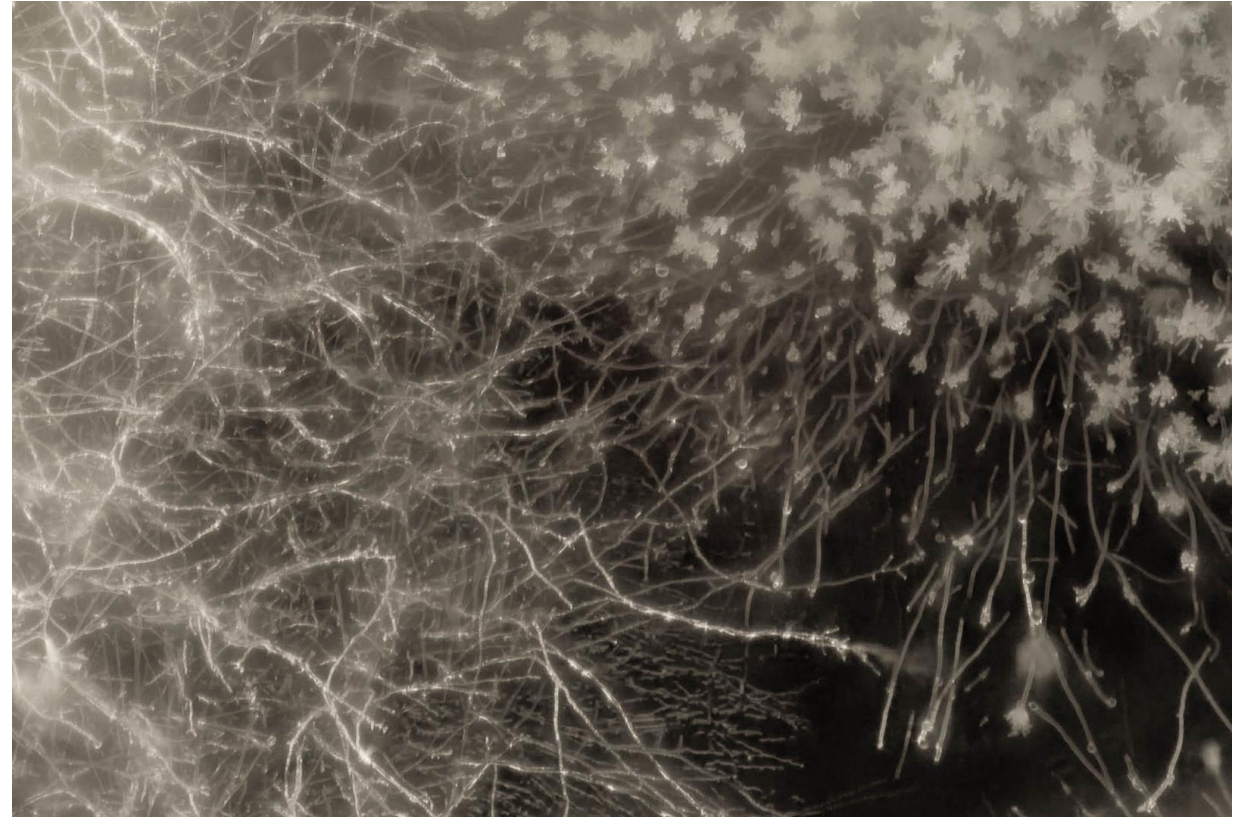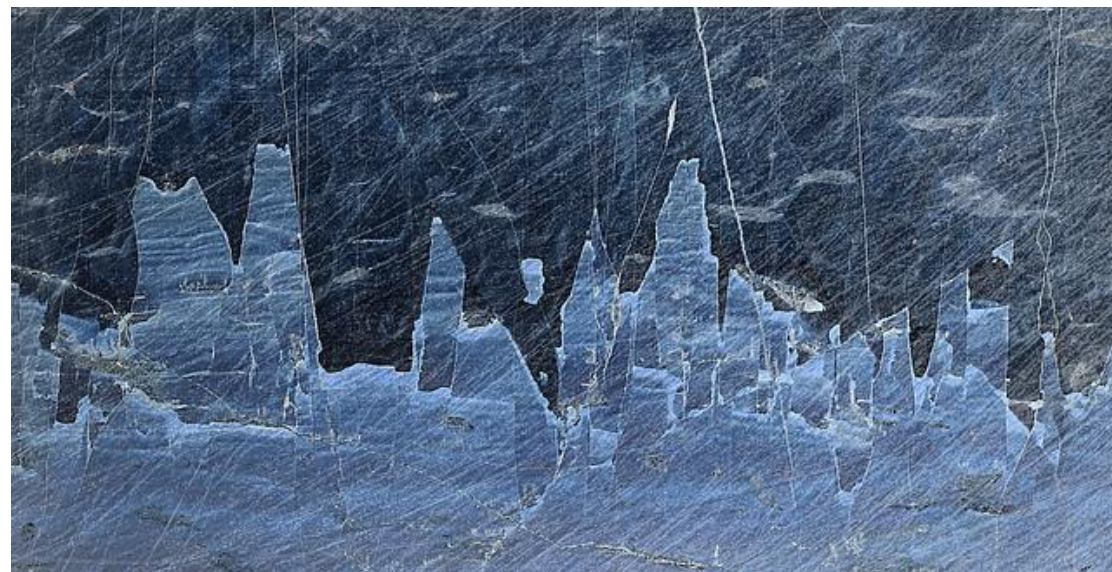
Presentation of
Daniela Quacinella

The human species has become masters over manufacturing objects. We modify our environments like all living-beings and build interconnected systems - like our cities.

City of Naples- satellite image
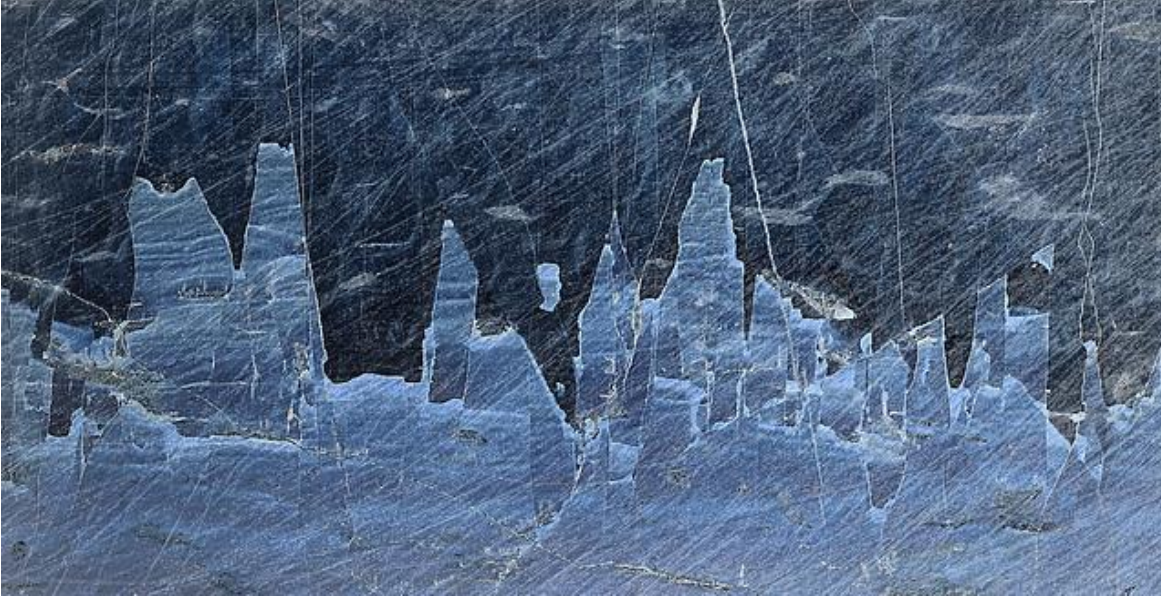
A still of the mycelium network

Pietre Paesine «Landscape rocks»

The beautiful patterns are created when the earth's movement causes fractures in the stone. It is a silty limestone, found in Tuscany, Italy, that was formed in sea beds during the Eocene epoch period, about 53 to 39 million years ago.

It is a sedimentary stone mainly made of compressed limestone and clay that was formed in sea beds with infiltrations of iron and manganese hydroxide which create the different colours with light grey from the limestone, reddish-brown from iron oxides and manganese provides black and blue for the clay.

ART(artificial) AND NATURE:
ARE THERE FIXED BOUNDARIES?
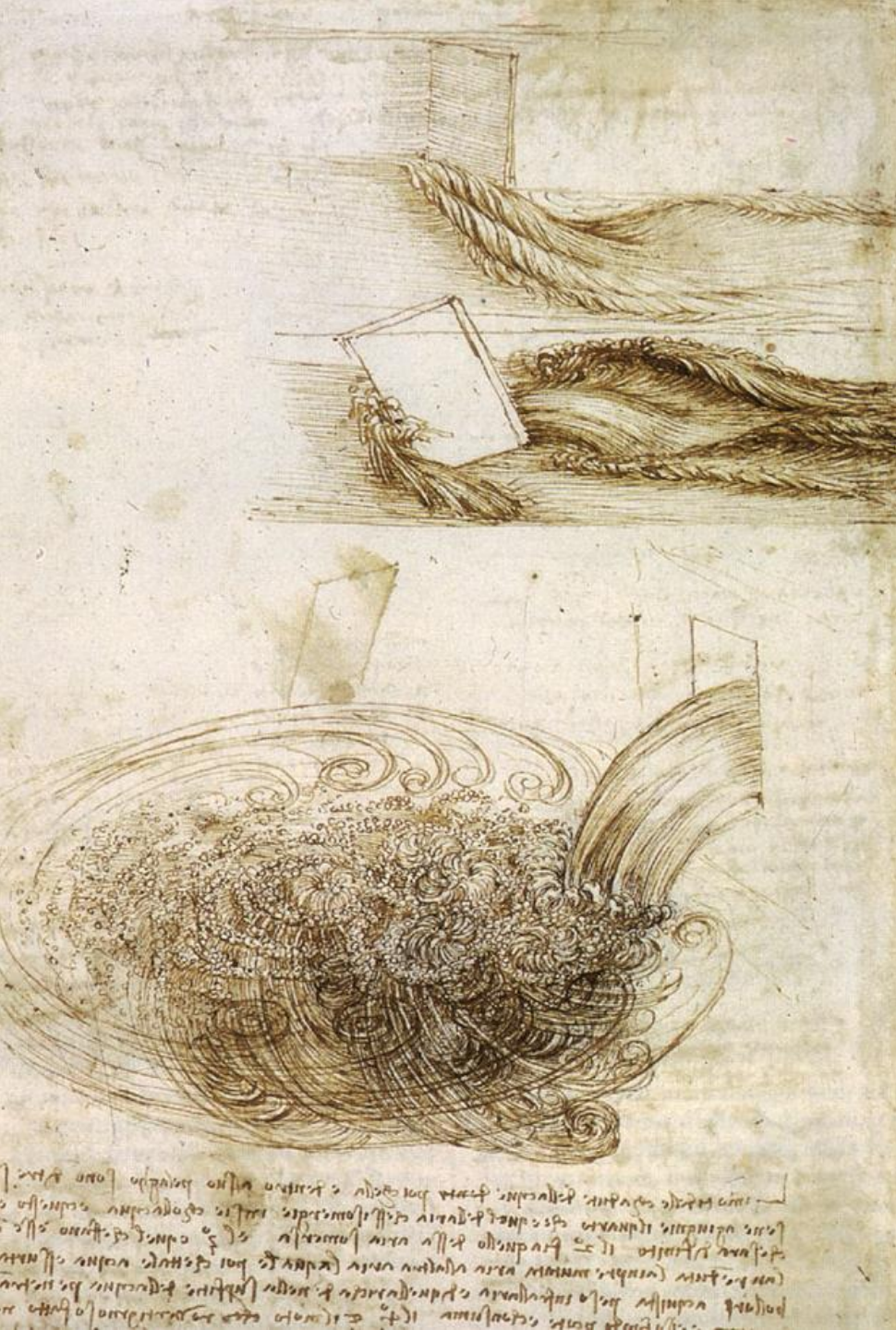
Nature and Creativity

" Do not despise my opinion, when I remind you that it should not hard for you to stop sometimes and look into the **stains of walls**, or the **ashes of a fire**, or **clouds**, or **mud** or like places, in which, if you consider them well, **you may find really marvellous ideas.**

The mind of the painter is stimulated to new discoveries, the composition of battles of animals and men, various compositions of landscapes and monstrous things, such as devils and similar things, which may bring you honour, because **by indistinct things** the mind is stimulated to new inventions. "

Leonardo da Vinci

"Look at walls splashed with a number of stains, or stones of various mixed colours. If you have to invent some scene, you can see there resemblances to a number of landscapes, adorned with mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, great plains, valleys and hills, in various ways. "

Leonardo Da Vinci
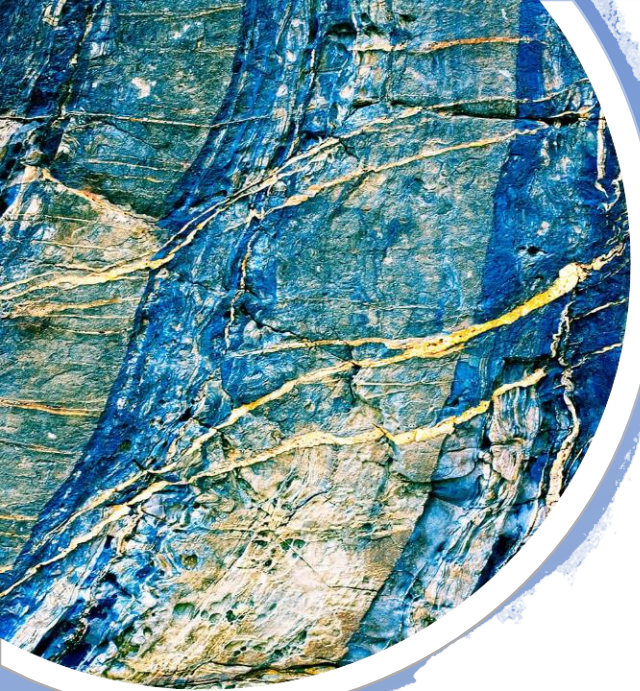
CO-CREATING WITH NATURE

"…because **by indistinct things** the mind is stimulated to new inventions. " Leonardo Da Vinci

Chauvet Caves, 32.000 b.c.

CREATIVITY- SENSE MAKING- RELATIONAL

The rocky surface appeared as " seméion", as an absence that shows something else: it's not a neutral surface but a «mirror» creator of mimesis where Homo Sapiens have generated images, forms in relation with himself.

We are *sense-makers animals,* the «objective» external reality is perceived as a process of making sense: the external reality as a «mirror» reflects the subject and meaning is created in this relationship between Self and Other.

The Zeitgeist ("spirit of the age") of the early twenty-first century is being shaped by a profound change of paradigms, characterised by a shift of metaphors from the world as a machine to *the world as a network*. The new paradigm may be called a **holistic worldview**, seeing the world as an integrated whole rather than a dissociated collection of parts.
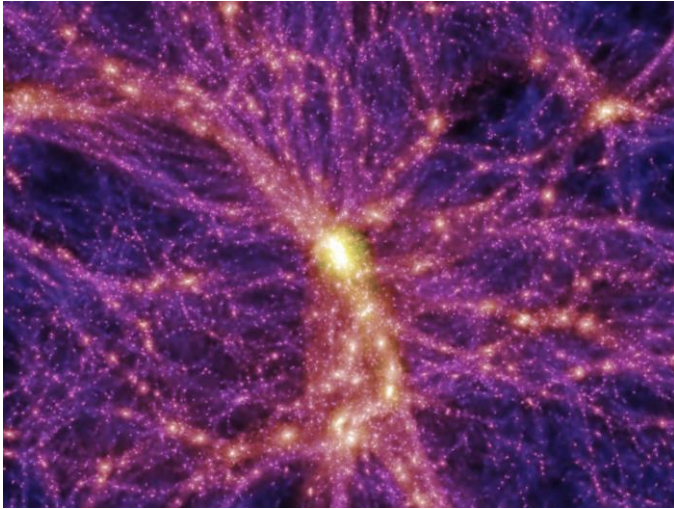
Dark Matter map of the Universe
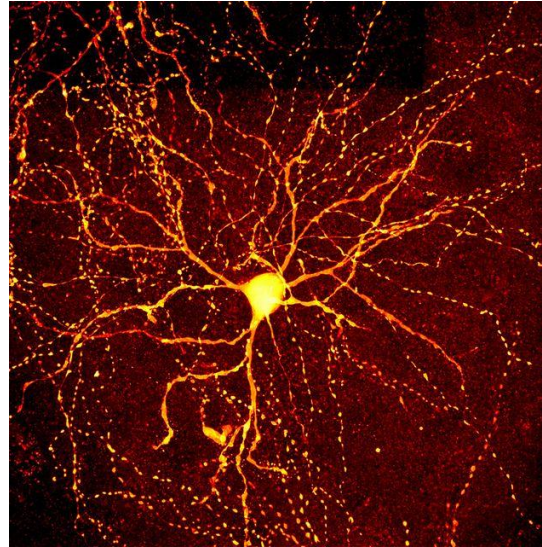
Brain Neurons
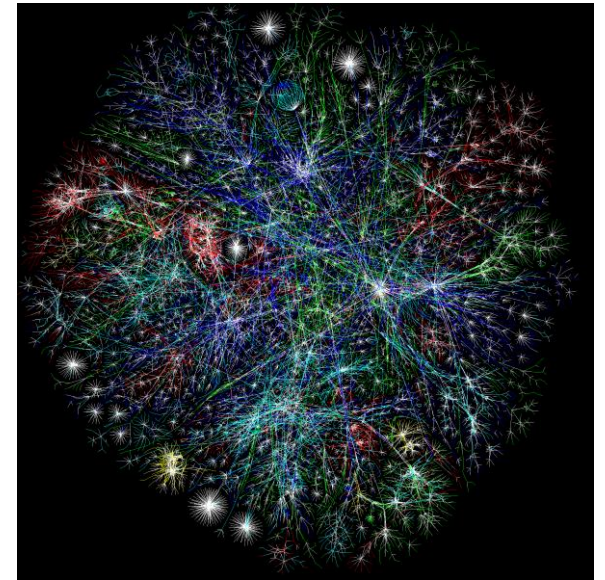
Map of internet
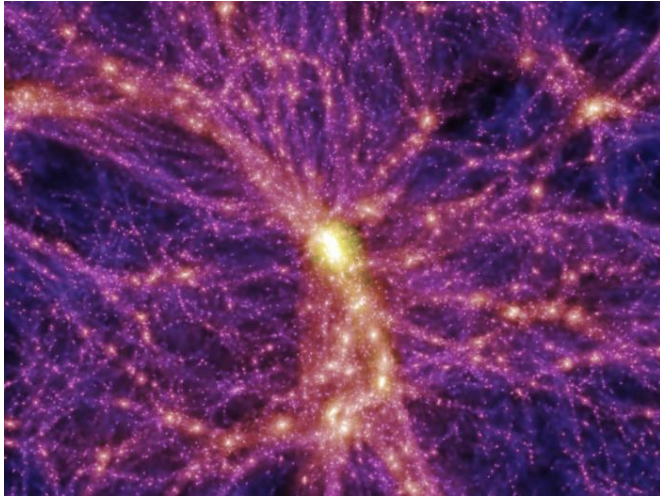
Mind and matter

"Once again, the world seems to be less about objects than about interactive relationships."

Carlo Rovelli, Seven Briefs Lessons of Physics (2015)
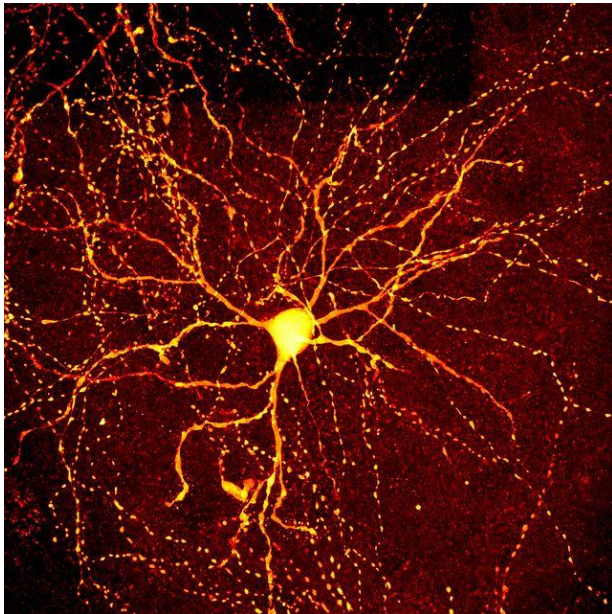
"The stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a machine. Mind no longer appears to be an accidental intruder into the realm of matter…"

James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe* (1930)

Posthumanism, Non-human turn, Transhumanism

" These developments blur the boundaries between the familiar binaries **of human and nonhuman**, **culture and nature**, and **human and animal**, that have dominated Western thinking since at least the Enlightenment. They underscore the ways in which **nonhuman**s—whether environmental or technological—**have new kinds of agency in the world.** They also reveal new perspectives and raise questions about what, how, and why we engage in the design of the so-called "artificial" world.

Laura Forlano (Posthumanism and Design)

LEARNING SOMETHIGN NEW: BREAKING HABITUAL PATHS

THE PROCESS OF BECOMING: DECENTRALIZING YOUR POINT OF VIEW

Processual nature of things

vs

Objectified nature of things

Hylomorphic model of creation =

" Form came to be seen as imposed, by an agent with a particular end or goal in mind, while matter – thus rendered passive and inert – was that which was imposed upon" (Tim Ingold, 2005)

Liminal Space

The word 'liminal' refers to the space beyond a boundary or threshold: an area of the unknown. A liminal space is the time between the 'what was' and the 'next.' It is a place of transition, a season of waiting, and not knowing. Liminal space is where all transformation takes place, if we learn to wait and let it form us.

A city, a countryside, from *afar* are a city or a countryside: but, the *closer* we get, they are houses, trees, tiles, leaves, ants, ants' feet, to the infinite. All this is understood under the name of "countryside".

Blaise Pascal (1656)
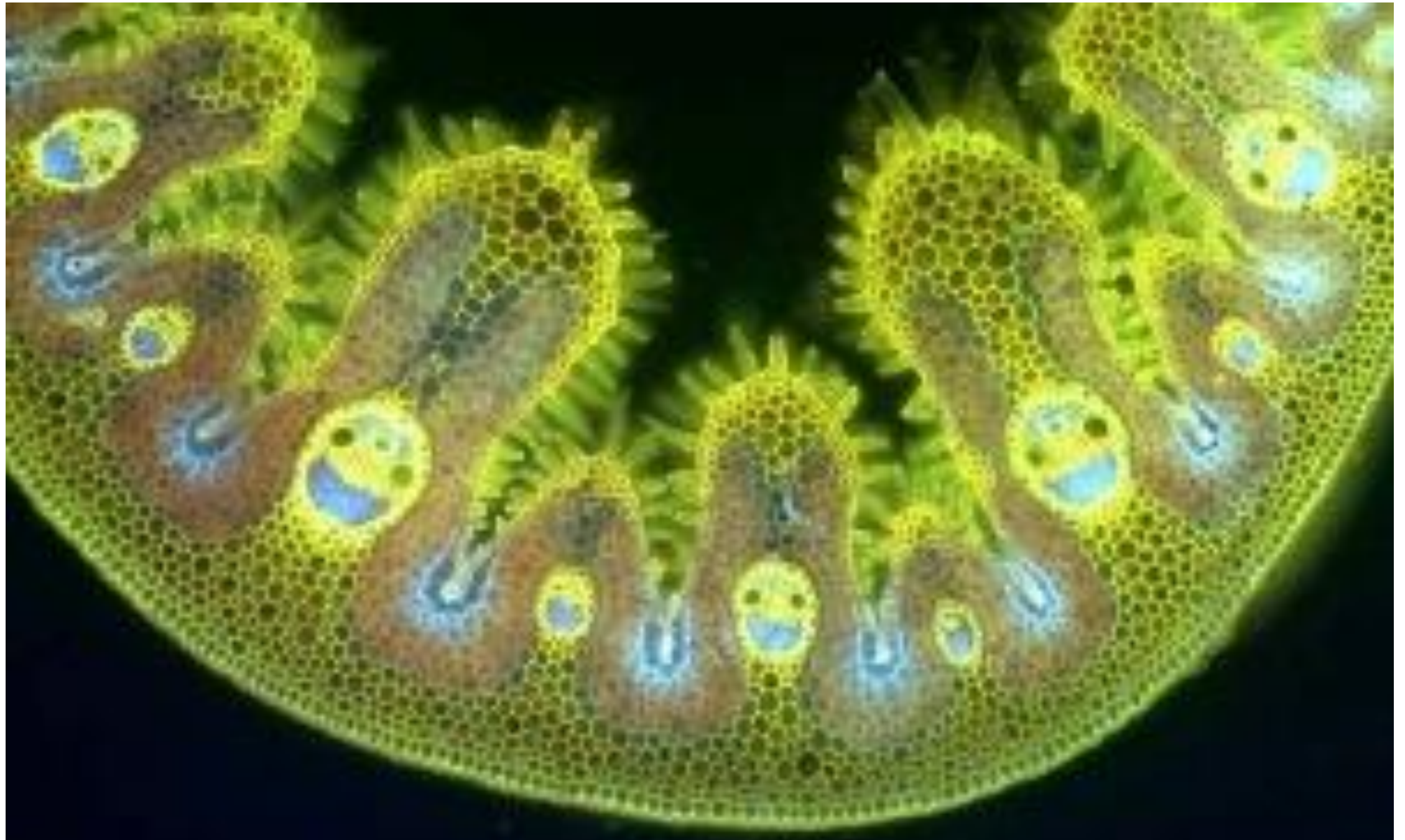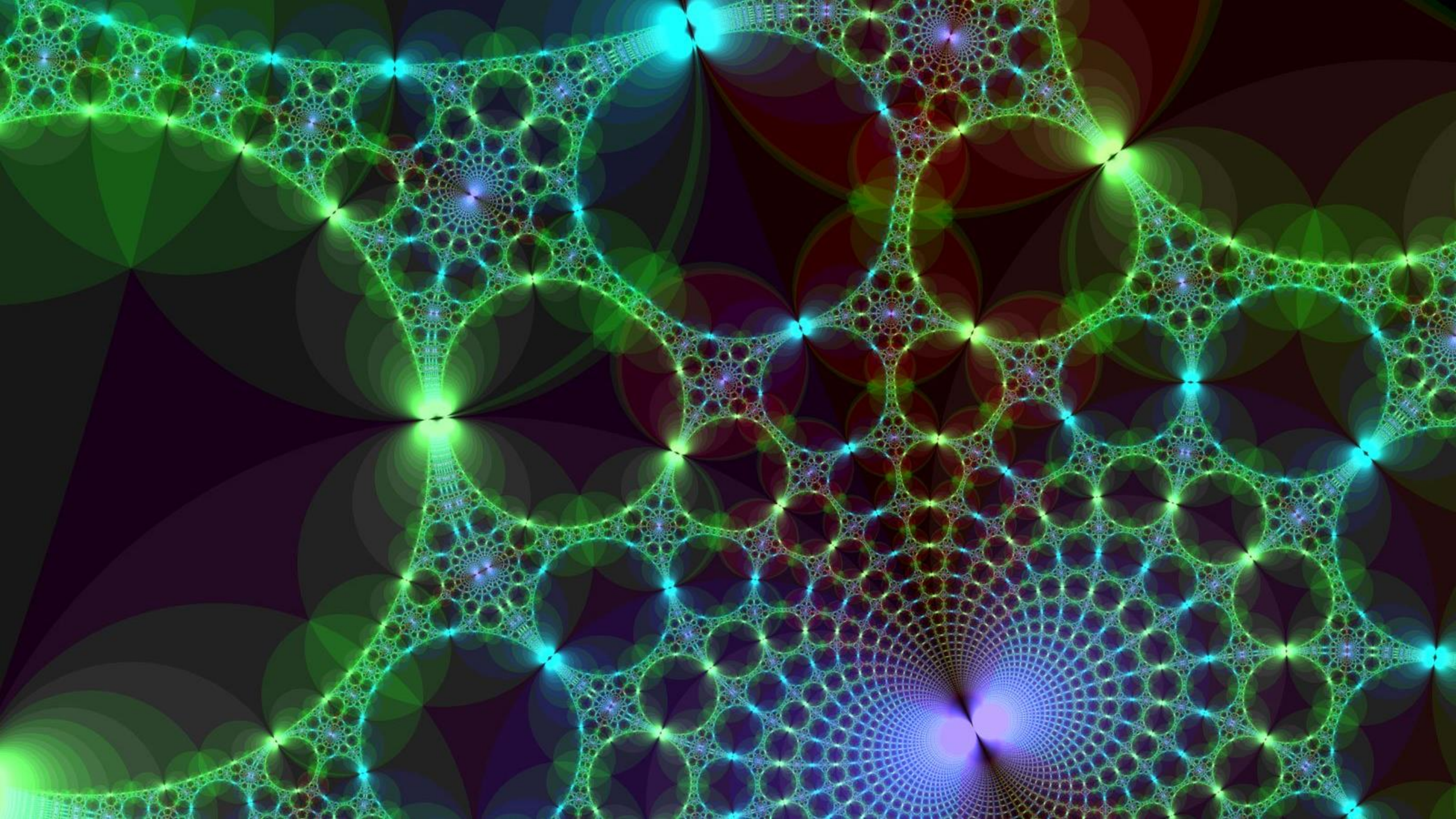
To have a flexible point of view , to shift perspective and question the norm, what we think we know....it makes us **aware of the *complex relations and interdependence between human and non-human entities.***

"**There is an urge for design practice to find ways to enrich these complex relations that bind people and their environments shifting from the conventional objectification of the material world to a world that comprise the flux and the flaws of materials**"

(Anusas, Ingold, 2013)

TICKET
GARNETHILL
URBAN OASIS
ADMIT ONE

16328304494
28305044 94

GARNETHILL URBAN OASIS
Re-imagining urban spaces with temporary creative intervention
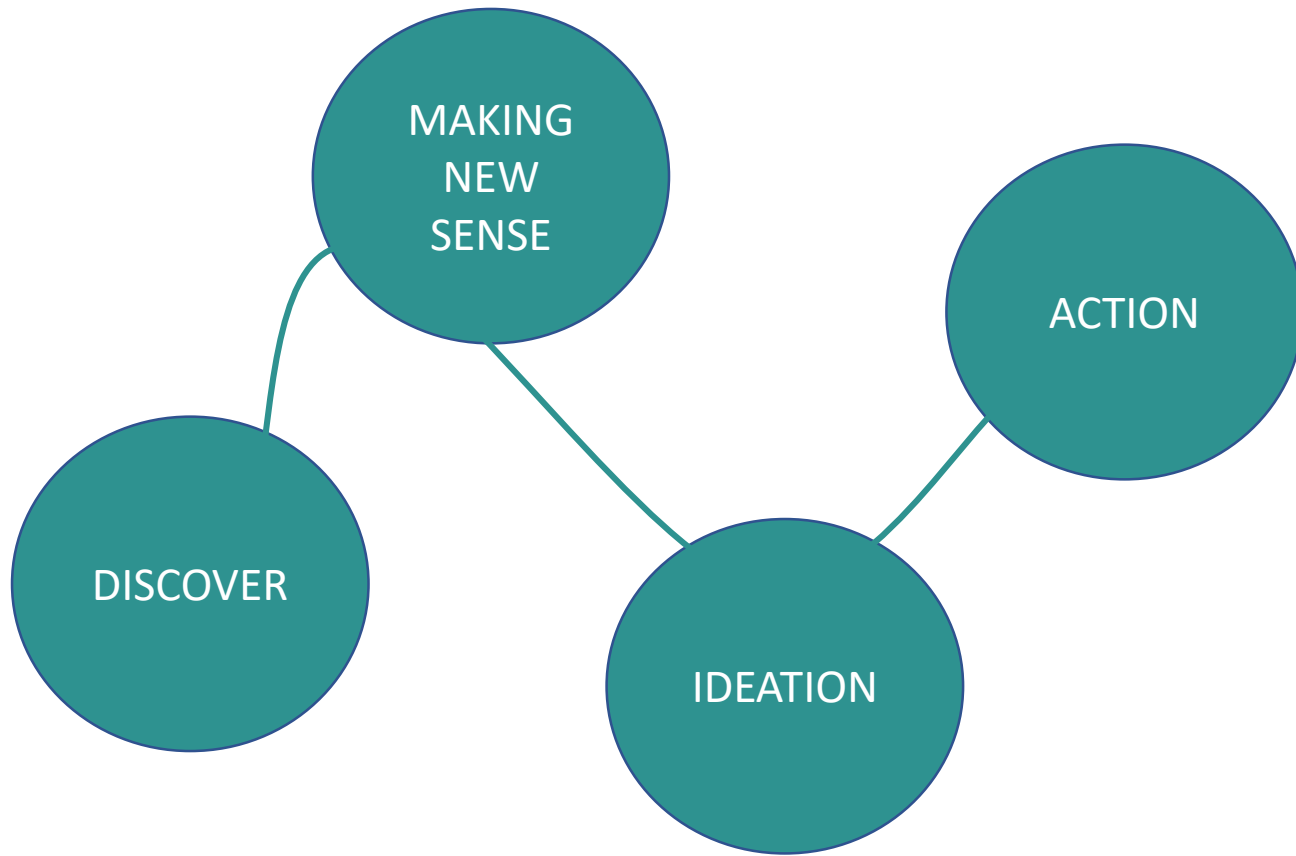
DISCOVER

Garnethill: a hub for arts and culture on top of the highest hill in Glasgow
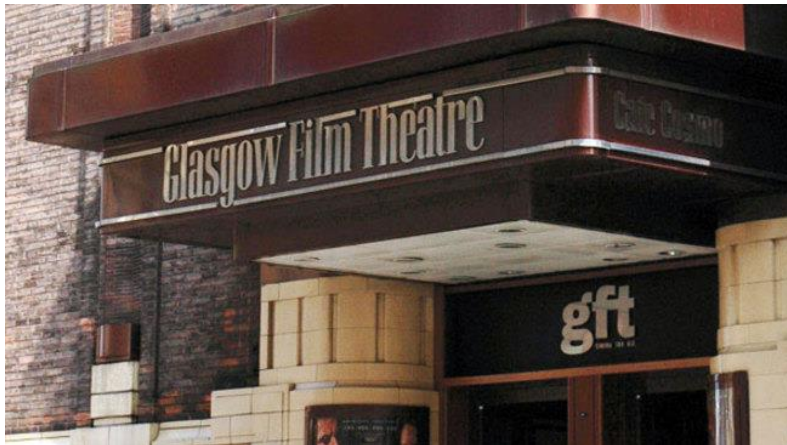
How to define «the community»

- Garnethill is a residential area with a committed group of residents

- It's also home to many different groups of people who are attracted to the area by all the various key institutions there.

"When the M8 carved it's way through Charing Cross it turned our Hill into an island"

Jane Sutherland, Chair of Garnethill Community Council

Method

Individual research

Group research

Action research

Observation and mapping of built environment and people

Participant observation of "Botanic Concrete": pilot experiment to facilitate a grassroot project

Exploration as a detective - tourist

Informal conversations and interviews

Desk reaserch

METHOD

Secondary research: case studies and theories

Garnethill

CCA

Botanic Concrete

Froggs

Community Council

as partecipant

ME

as student

as observer

School of Art

Radical Imagination

Multi cultural centre

St. Aloysus

Urban pedagogy

Tactical urbanism

Socially engaged art

Active citizenship

Relational goods

Grassroot approach

Play in public spaces

Temporary architecture

Urban commons

PLACE

PEOPLE

Place: mapping the built environment

HOW TO CREATE A NEW NARRATIVE OF THE PLACE

THE "ENTRANCE" TO GARNETHILL TOWARDS THE HILL :

Areas that embody meanings and metaphors with the opportunity to transform the narrative of the place

VIEWPOINT AREA

METAPHOR: Like being at the bow of a ship, the Viewpoint area represents 'the eyes of Garnethill'

OPPORTUNITY: Activating this area to create a new narrative, from the negative perception of the 'island' to the positive perception of the 'hill'

PEOPLE: PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

In order to understand the more intangible layer made by people's relationship with the neighbourhood I did participant observation in a public engagement initiative called 'Botanic Concrete'.

I wanted to observe my experience as a participant and to understand how **'Botanic Concrete'** was perceived by residents in Garnethill

GARNETHILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

covering residents' issues towards a better future

Monthly meetings
1st Tuesdays 7.30
Garnethill Multi-Cultural Centre, Rose Street

This provides opportunities to air grouses, share jokes,
The occasional serious matter,
a cup of tea, a bikkie and a blether.

We think our Hill is unique in the City
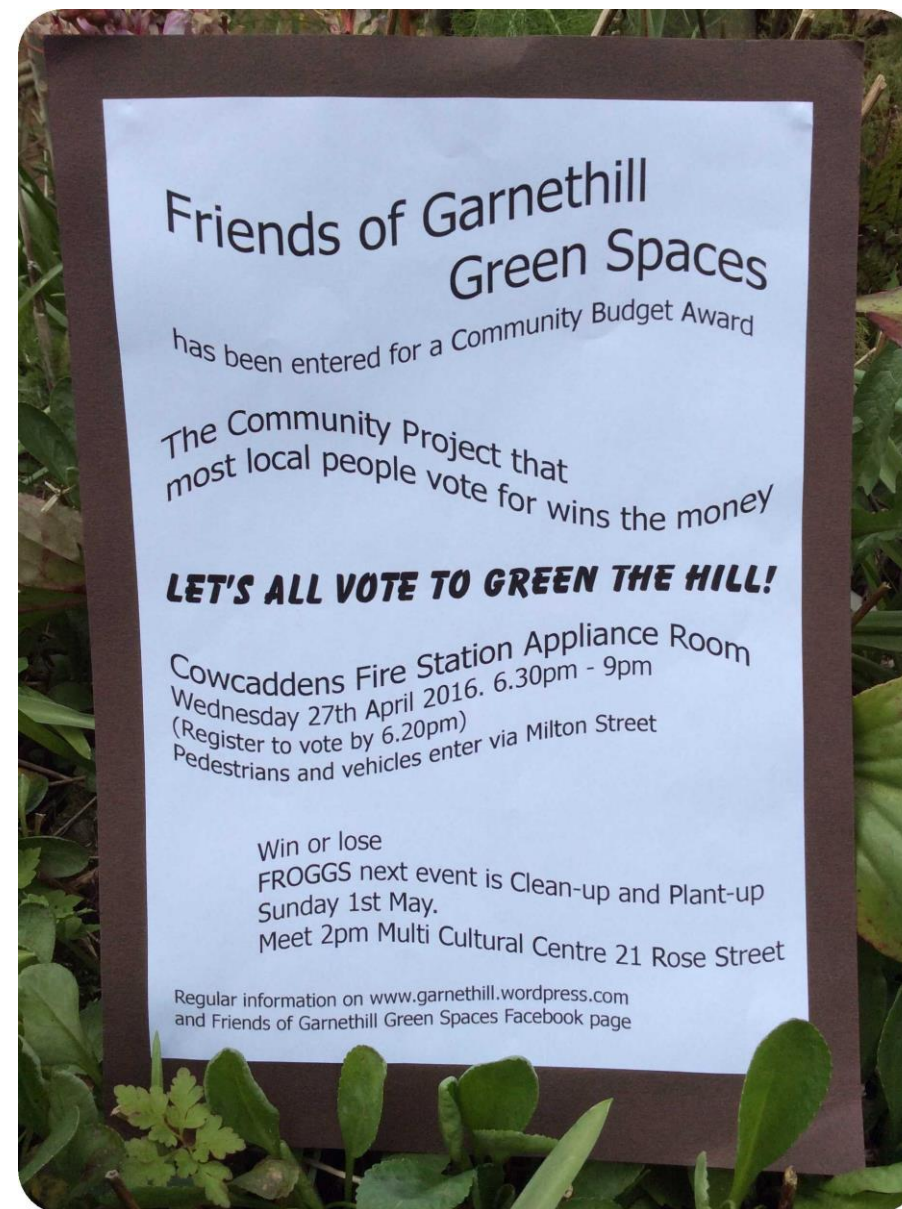
We have a very famous Art School
A Synagogue with a beautiful choir
And a Tenement House in its own time capsule
much sought after by tourists of all ages despite
confusing signage and one-way streets

We want the best for us all and hope you will
join in to make us a strong community

Friends of Garnethill Green Spaces

has been entered for a Community Budget Award

The Community Project that
most local people vote for wins the money

LET'S ALL VOTE TO GREEN THE HILL!

Cowcaddens Fire Station Appliance Room
Wednesday 27th April 2016. 6.30pm - 9pm
(Register to vote by 6.20pm)
Pedestrians and vehicles enter via Milton Street

Win or lose
FROGGS next event is Clean-up and Plant-up
Sunday 1st May.
Meet 2pm Multi Cultural Centre 21 Rose Street

Regular information on www.garnethill.wordpress.com
and Friends of Garnethill Green Spaces Facebook page

TENSION BETWEEN CCA AND LONG TERM COMMITTED RESIDENTS

**BOTANIC CONCRETE:
CENTRE FOR
CONTEMPORARY ARTS**

**FRIENDS OF GARNETHILL GREEN SPACES:
GARNETHILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

DETACHED FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

'THEY TALK, WE DO'

MAKING SENSE

INSIGHTS:

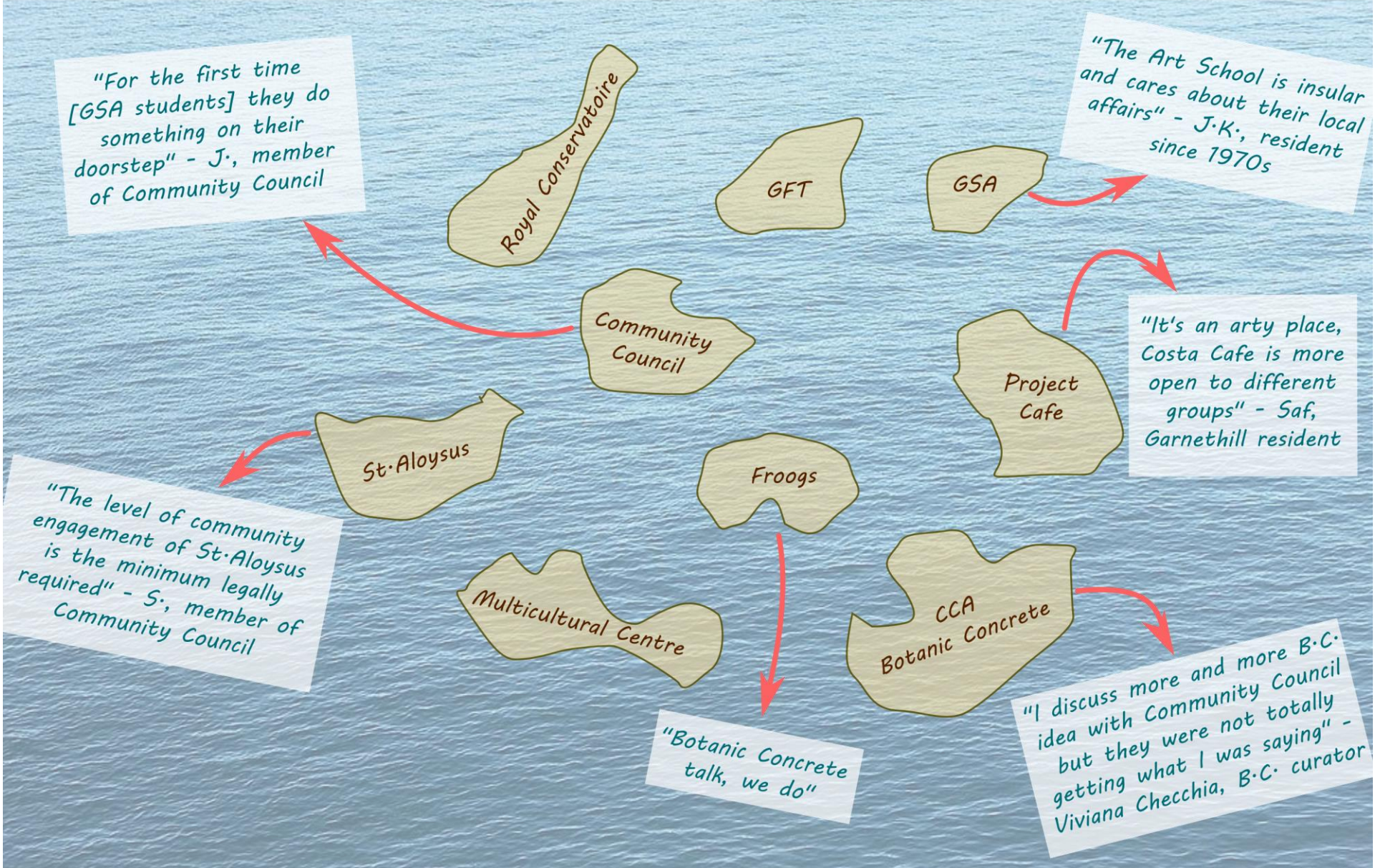LACK OF ENGAGEMENT OF THE KEY INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

THE INSTITUTIONS HAVE AN "INDOOR" ATTITUDE: GARNETHILL VIEWED AS A "CONTAINER" OF INSTITUTIONS RATHER THAN A SPACE FOR SOCIAL RELATIONS

TENSION BETWEEN USERS AND RESIDENTS

TENSION BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT: PAST OF COMMUNITY ACTIVISM IN THE AREA WAS OVERSHADOWED BY THE PREVAILING HISTORY OF THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS OF GARNETHILL

One neighborhood, many islands

"For the first time [GSA students] they do something on their doorstep" - J., member of Community Council

"The Art School is insular and cares about their local affairs" - J.K., resident since 1970s

"It's an arty place, Costa Cafe is more open to different groups" - Saf, Garnethill resident

"The level of community engagement of St.Aloysus is the minimum legally required" - S., member of Community Council

"Botanic Concrete talk, we do"

"I discuss more and more B.C. idea with Community Council but they were not totally getting what I was saying" - Viviana Checchia, B.C. curator

Royal Conservatoire

GFT

GSA

Community Council

Project Cafe

St.Aloysus

Froogs

Multicultural Centre

CCA Botanic Concrete

REFRAMING MY DESIGN RESEARCH QUESTION

HOW TO ENCOURAGE MORE AWARENESS OF GARNETHILL ENVIRONMENT THAT CAN FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN USERS AND RESIDENTS?

IDEATION

'There is 90 per cent of observation and 10 per cent to create structure of what you see'

Bob Hamilton, Glasgow community activist

Threshold space: the area of encounter between users and residents

'Thresholds explicity symbolize the potentiality of sharing by establishing intermediary areas of crossing, by opening the inside to the outside'

Stavrides (2016)

"Entrance of Garnethill" towards the hill

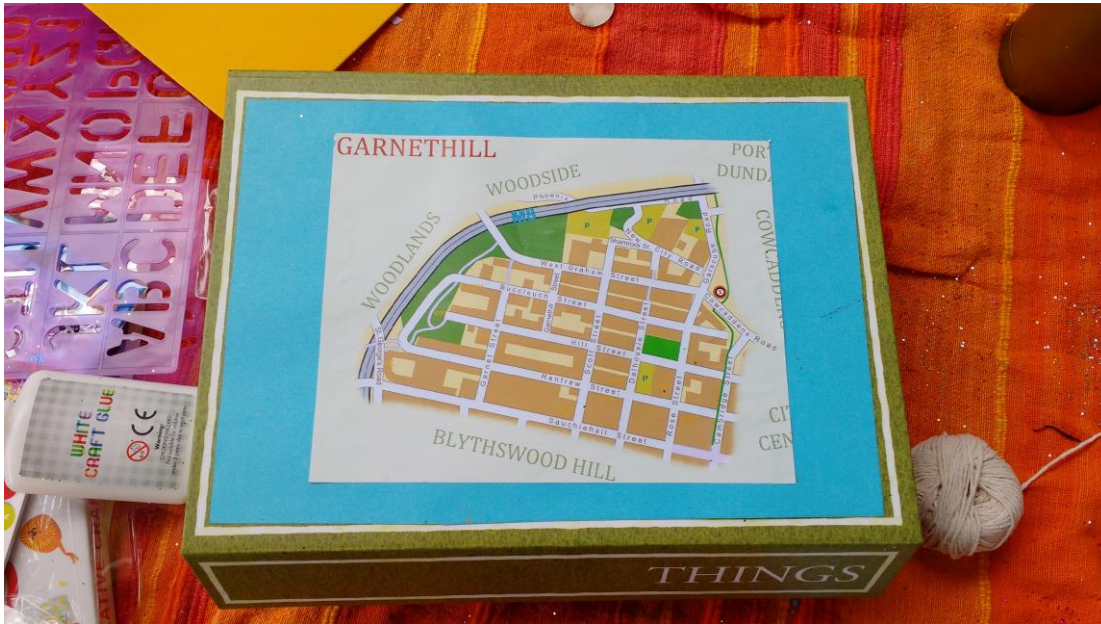Defining and naming the space to create the condition of entrance and exit and create a "rite of passage"

Participatory nature: people were invited in the process of making the space

Outdoor exhibition of Garnethill:
old and new photos to share
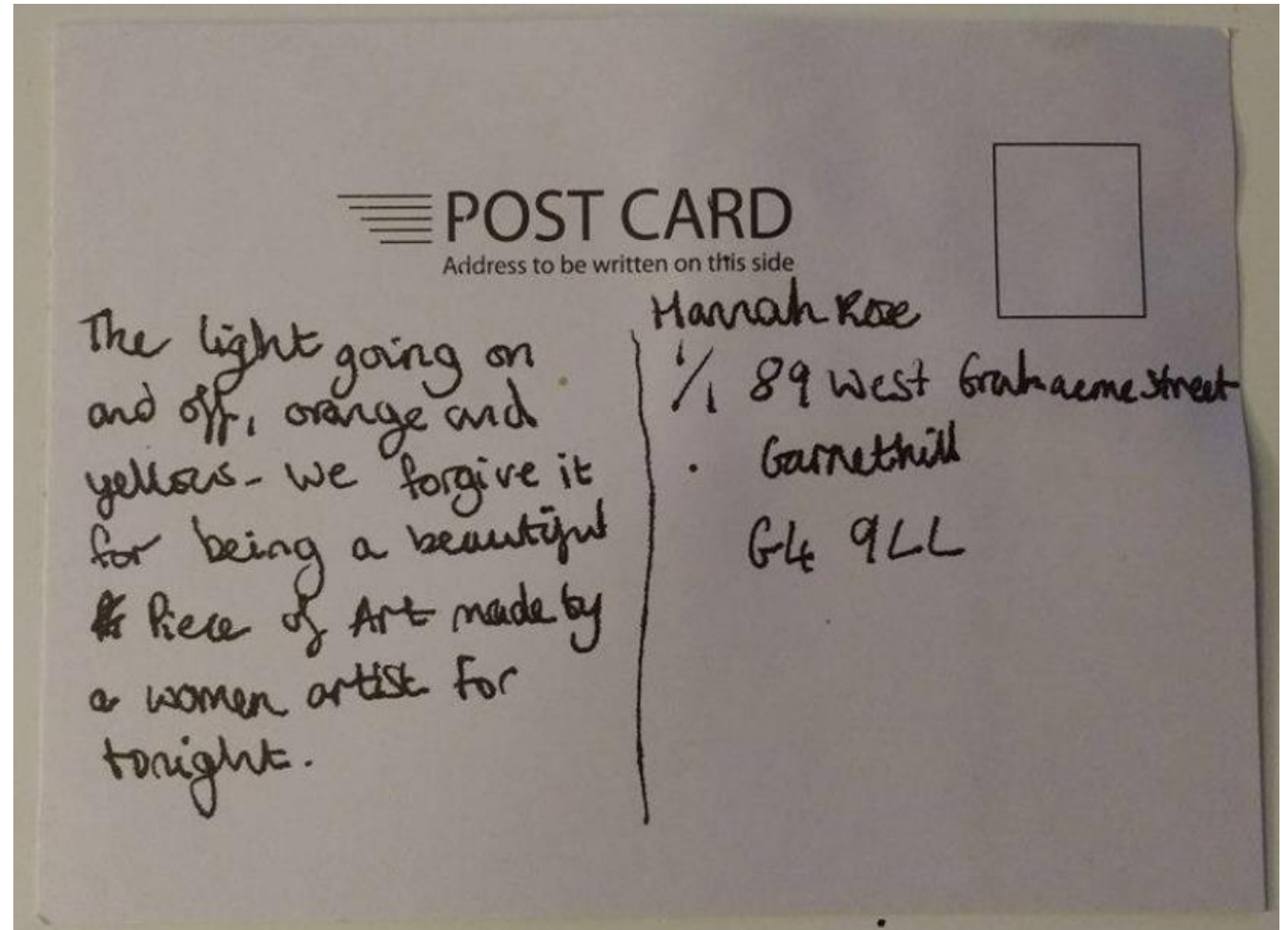# knowledge of the area

TOOLBOX TO MAKE "GARNETHILL POSTCARDS"

Involving participants in making postcards and the display of photographs connected citizens to the place in a new way, creating a new awareness of the opportunity the environment can offer. People shared stories about the place, asked questions about my research and suggested ways to re-imagine the neighbourhood.

The intervention brought together students, members of the community council, residents, tourists and people who stopped before heading to work or to their designated destination

The light going on and off, orange and yellows - we forgive it for being a beautiful # piece of Art made by a women artist for tonight.

Hannah Rose
1/1 89 West Grahaeme Street
. Garnethill
G4 9LL

The outcome of this design-led research is was a toolkit for re-imagining outdoor spaces and promoting community participation. It creates a playful space for sharing of ideas and stories and to learn more about the neighbourhood.
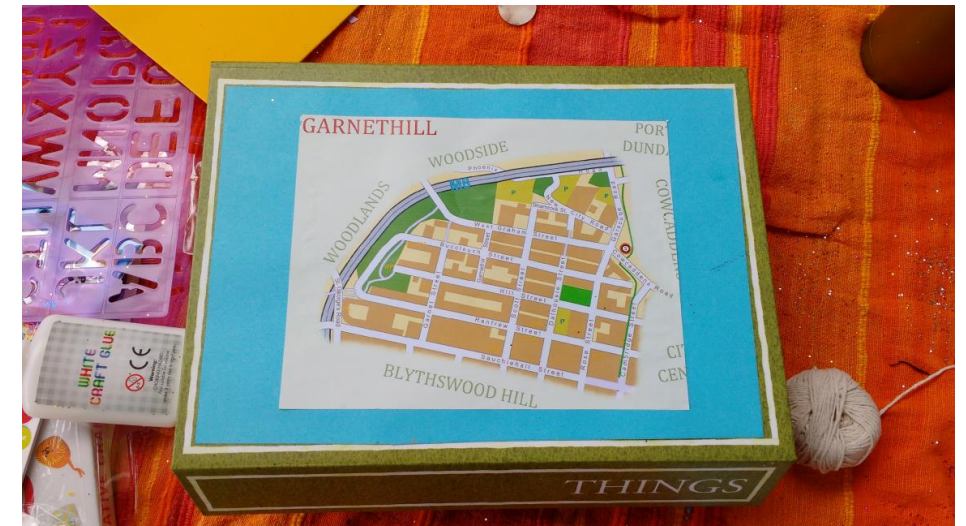
"In the awareness that we can always be wrong, and therefore ready at any moment to change direction if a new track appears; but knowing also that if we are good enough we will get it right and will find what we are seeking. **That is the nature of science."**

Carlo Rovelli, Seven Brief Lessons of Physics

"As the jazz musicians **feel the direction** of the music that is developing out of their interwoven contributions, **they make new sense of it and adjust their performance to the new sense they have made."**

Donald Schön, The Reflective Practitioner

- **During the week explore your neighbourhood/city as you have never seen it before, how does it "talk" to you? How can your observations and experiences inspire you for your project? Observe yourself and your experience of the space, does your mood changes during your walks?**

- **How is the experience of the course, in all its different aspects, allowing you to learn new things, and to learn about yourself, your purpose, and your connection to others, to your home and to your city.**