



Meetings with Remarkable and Unremarkable Trees

Annette Arlander

Background:

Performing with Plants

artistic research project
by Annette Arlander

[https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/
316550/316551](https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/316550/316551)

2017

at Helsinki Collegium for
Advanced Studies,
funded by Kone Foundation

2018-2019

at Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH)
funded by Vetenskapsrådet
(The Swedish Research Council)





Meetings with Remarkable and Unremarkable Trees

2020-2021

As visiting researcher at
Academy of Fine Arts,
University of the Arts
Helsinki

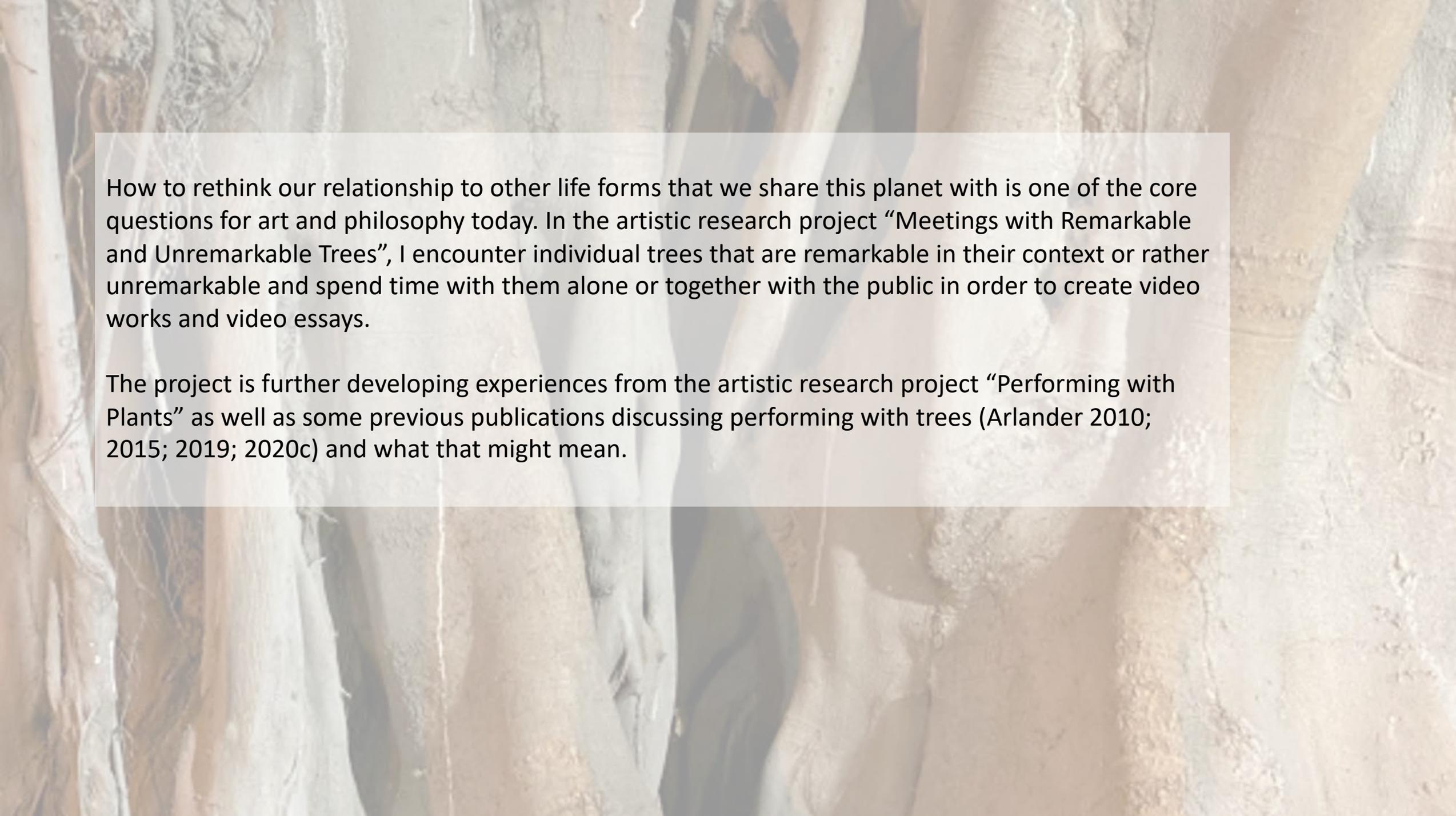
Supported by Finnish
Cultural Foundation

Project archive on the
Research Catalogue

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/761327>

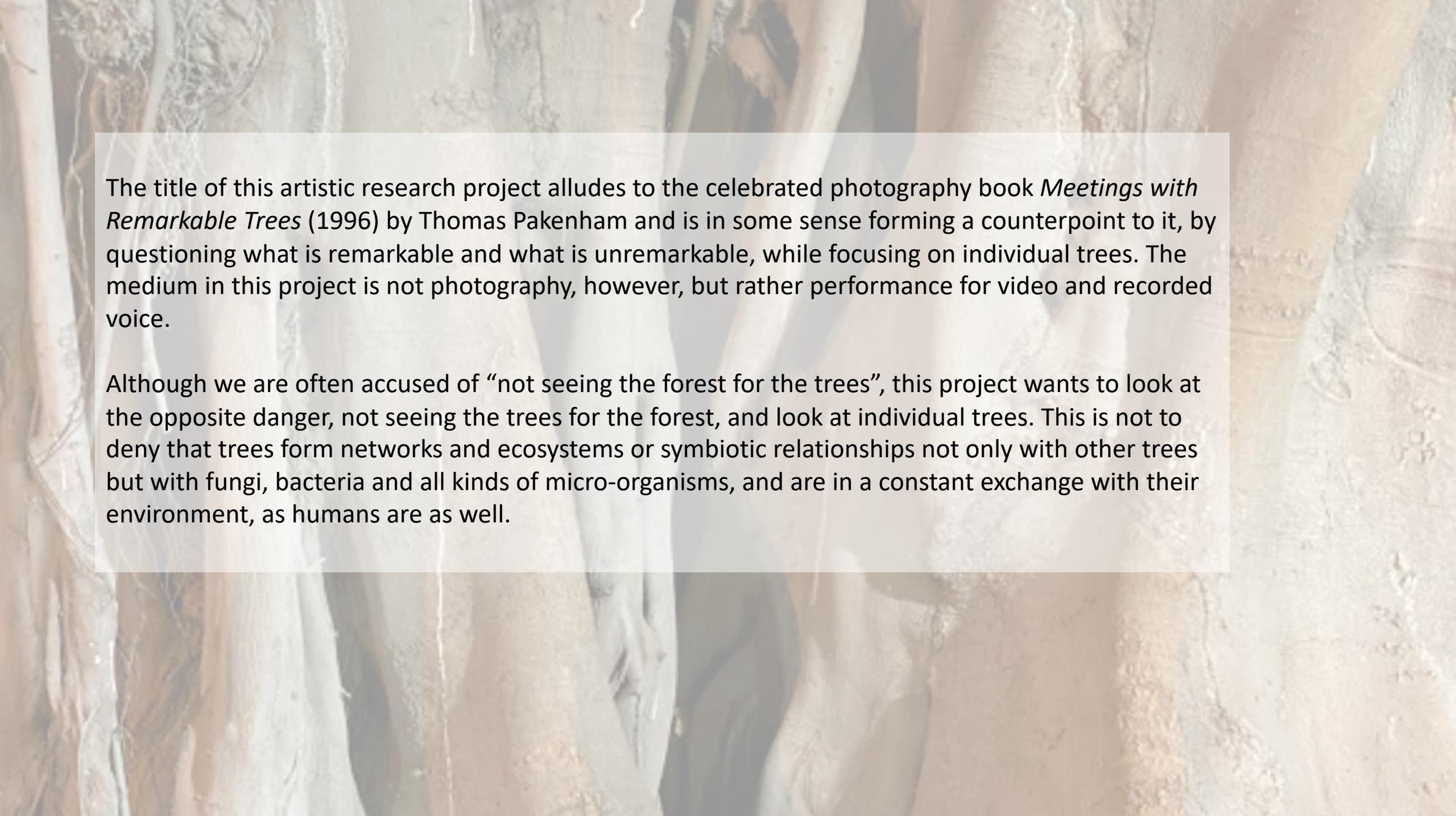
Project blog

<https://meetingswithtrees.com>



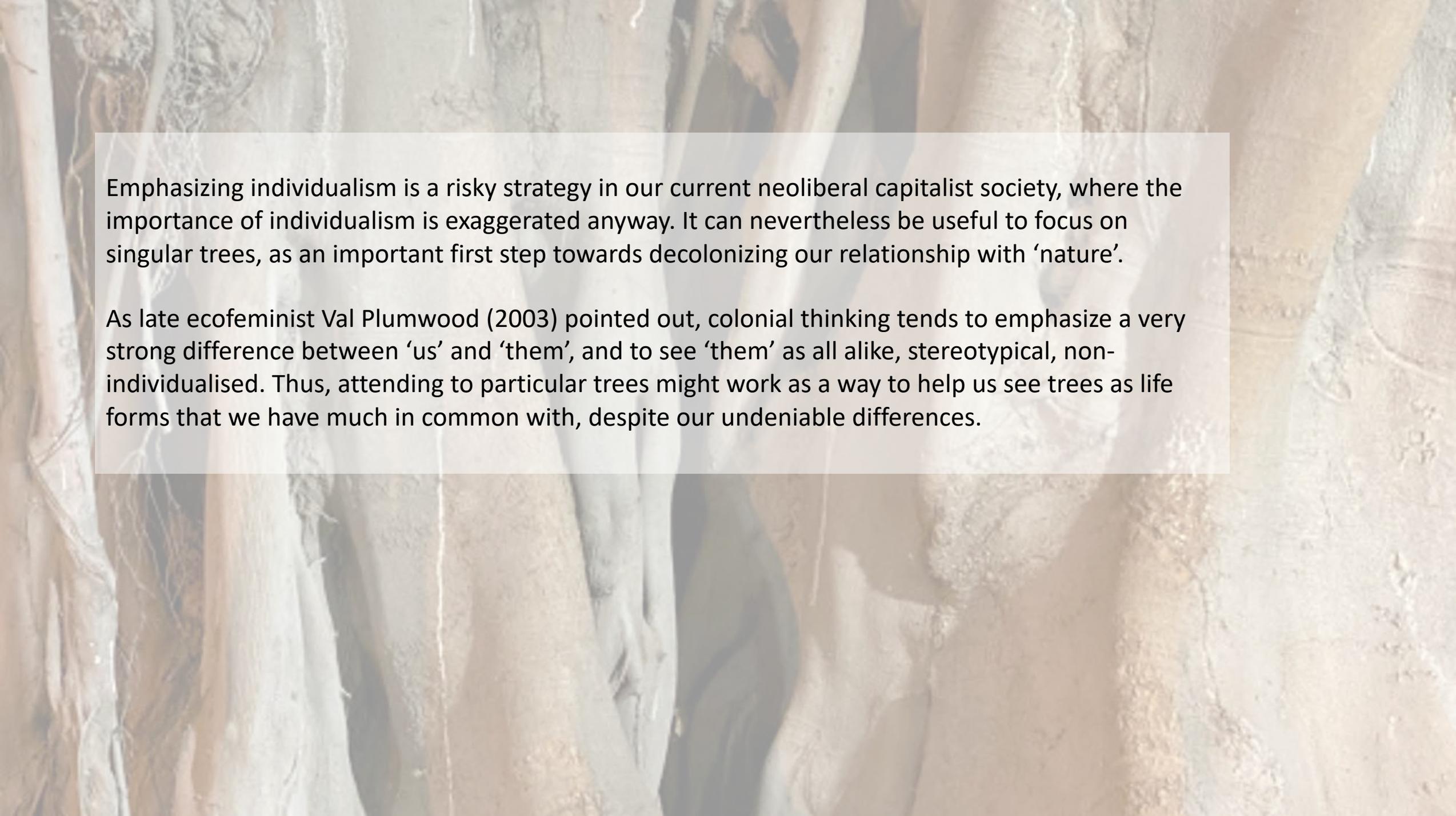
How to rethink our relationship to other life forms that we share this planet with is one of the core questions for art and philosophy today. In the artistic research project “Meetings with Remarkable and Unremarkable Trees”, I encounter individual trees that are remarkable in their context or rather unremarkable and spend time with them alone or together with the public in order to create video works and video essays.

The project is further developing experiences from the artistic research project “Performing with Plants” as well as some previous publications discussing performing with trees (Arlander 2010; 2015; 2019; 2020c) and what that might mean.



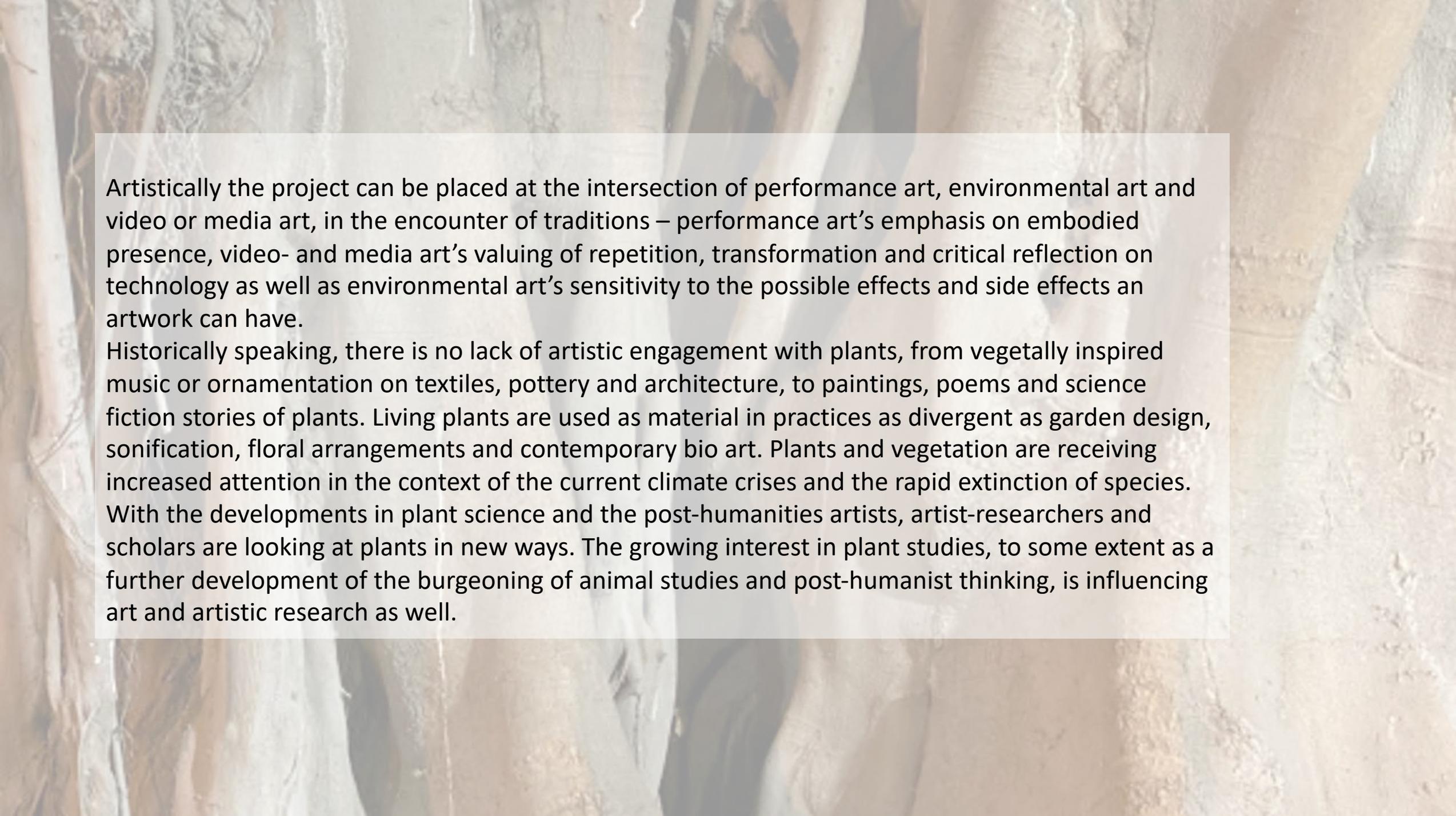
The title of this artistic research project alludes to the celebrated photography book *Meetings with Remarkable Trees* (1996) by Thomas Pakenham and is in some sense forming a counterpoint to it, by questioning what is remarkable and what is unremarkable, while focusing on individual trees. The medium in this project is not photography, however, but rather performance for video and recorded voice.

Although we are often accused of “not seeing the forest for the trees”, this project wants to look at the opposite danger, not seeing the trees for the forest, and look at individual trees. This is not to deny that trees form networks and ecosystems or symbiotic relationships not only with other trees but with fungi, bacteria and all kinds of micro-organisms, and are in a constant exchange with their environment, as humans are as well.



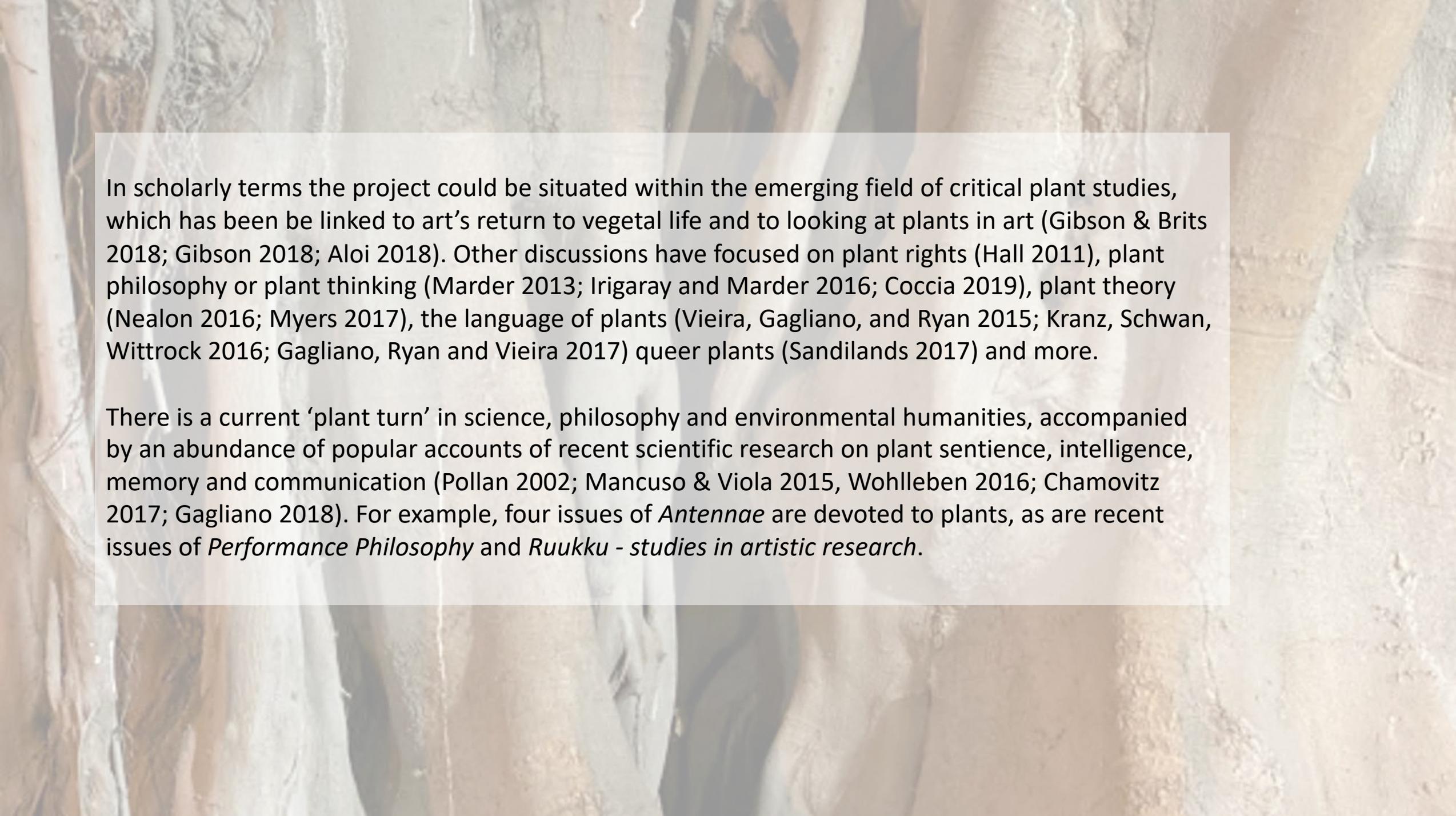
Emphasizing individualism is a risky strategy in our current neoliberal capitalist society, where the importance of individualism is exaggerated anyway. It can nevertheless be useful to focus on singular trees, as an important first step towards decolonizing our relationship with 'nature'.

As late ecofeminist Val Plumwood (2003) pointed out, colonial thinking tends to emphasize a very strong difference between 'us' and 'them', and to see 'them' as all alike, stereotypical, non-individualised. Thus, attending to particular trees might work as a way to help us see trees as life forms that we have much in common with, despite our undeniable differences.



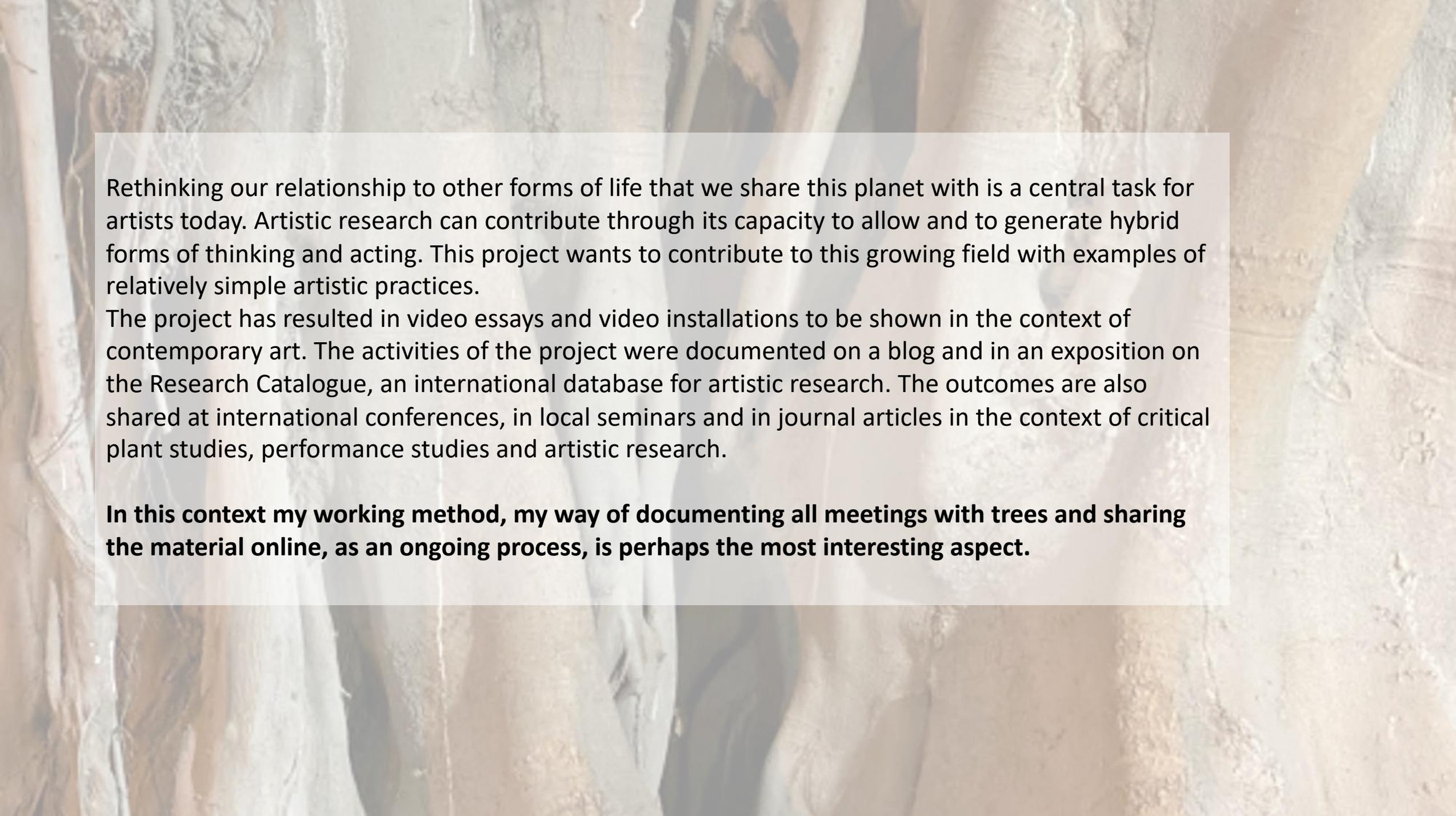
Artistically the project can be placed at the intersection of performance art, environmental art and video or media art, in the encounter of traditions – performance art’s emphasis on embodied presence, video- and media art’s valuing of repetition, transformation and critical reflection on technology as well as environmental art’s sensitivity to the possible effects and side effects an artwork can have.

Historically speaking, there is no lack of artistic engagement with plants, from vegetally inspired music or ornamentation on textiles, pottery and architecture, to paintings, poems and science fiction stories of plants. Living plants are used as material in practices as divergent as garden design, sonification, floral arrangements and contemporary bio art. Plants and vegetation are receiving increased attention in the context of the current climate crises and the rapid extinction of species. With the developments in plant science and the post-humanities artists, artist-researchers and scholars are looking at plants in new ways. The growing interest in plant studies, to some extent as a further development of the burgeoning of animal studies and post-humanist thinking, is influencing art and artistic research as well.



In scholarly terms the project could be situated within the emerging field of critical plant studies, which has been linked to art's return to vegetal life and to looking at plants in art (Gibson & Brits 2018; Gibson 2018; Aloï 2018). Other discussions have focused on plant rights (Hall 2011), plant philosophy or plant thinking (Marder 2013; Irigaray and Marder 2016; Coccia 2019), plant theory (Nealon 2016; Myers 2017), the language of plants (Vieira, Gagliano, and Ryan 2015; Kranz, Schwan, Wittrock 2016; Gagliano, Ryan and Vieira 2017) queer plants (Sandilands 2017) and more.

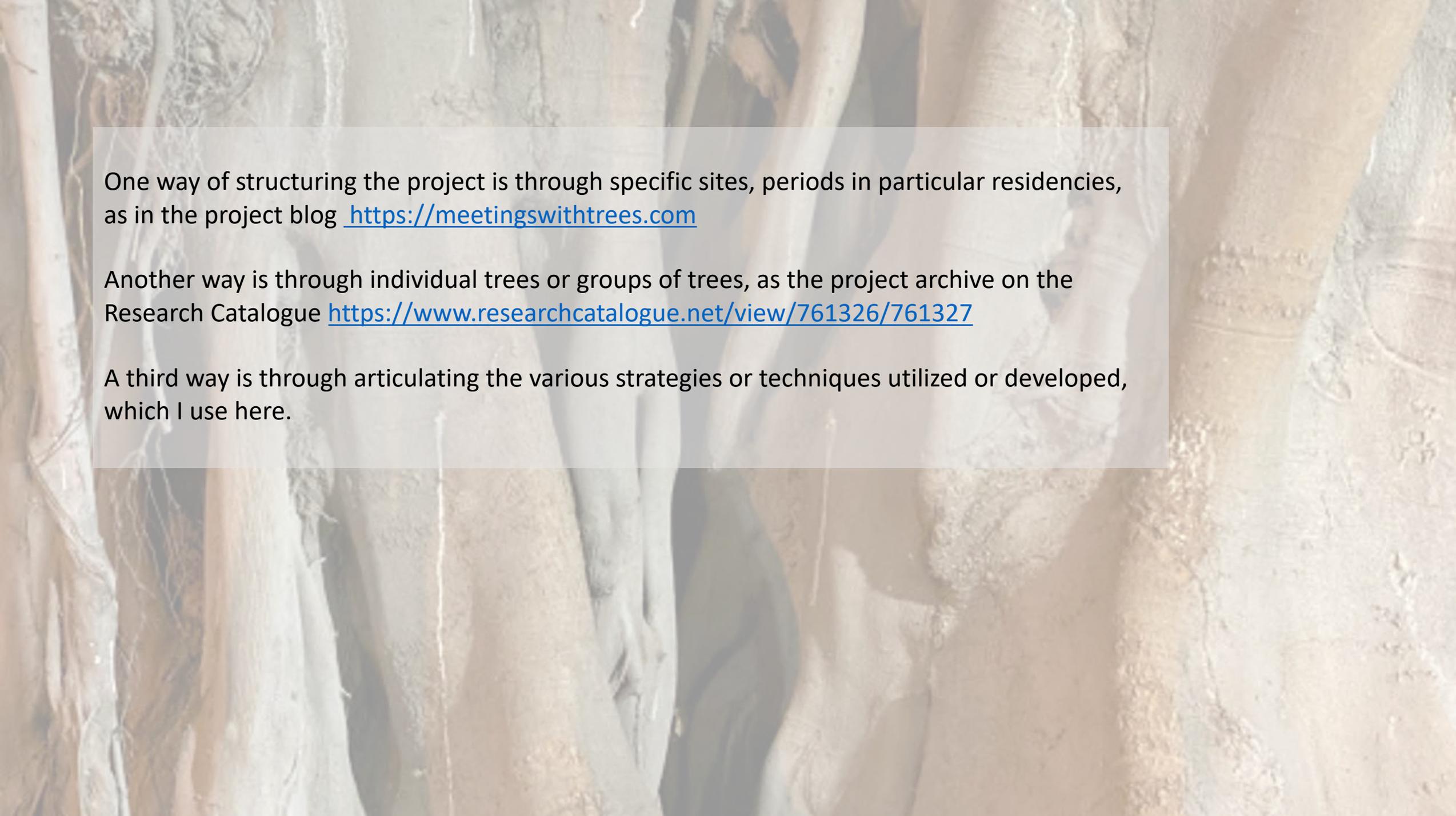
There is a current 'plant turn' in science, philosophy and environmental humanities, accompanied by an abundance of popular accounts of recent scientific research on plant sentience, intelligence, memory and communication (Pollan 2002; Mancuso & Viola 2015, Wohlleben 2016; Chamovitz 2017; Gagliano 2018). For example, four issues of *Antennae* are devoted to plants, as are recent issues of *Performance Philosophy* and *Ruukku - studies in artistic research*.



Rethinking our relationship to other forms of life that we share this planet with is a central task for artists today. Artistic research can contribute through its capacity to allow and to generate hybrid forms of thinking and acting. This project wants to contribute to this growing field with examples of relatively simple artistic practices.

The project has resulted in video essays and video installations to be shown in the context of contemporary art. The activities of the project were documented on a blog and in an exposition on the Research Catalogue, an international database for artistic research. The outcomes are also shared at international conferences, in local seminars and in journal articles in the context of critical plant studies, performance studies and artistic research.

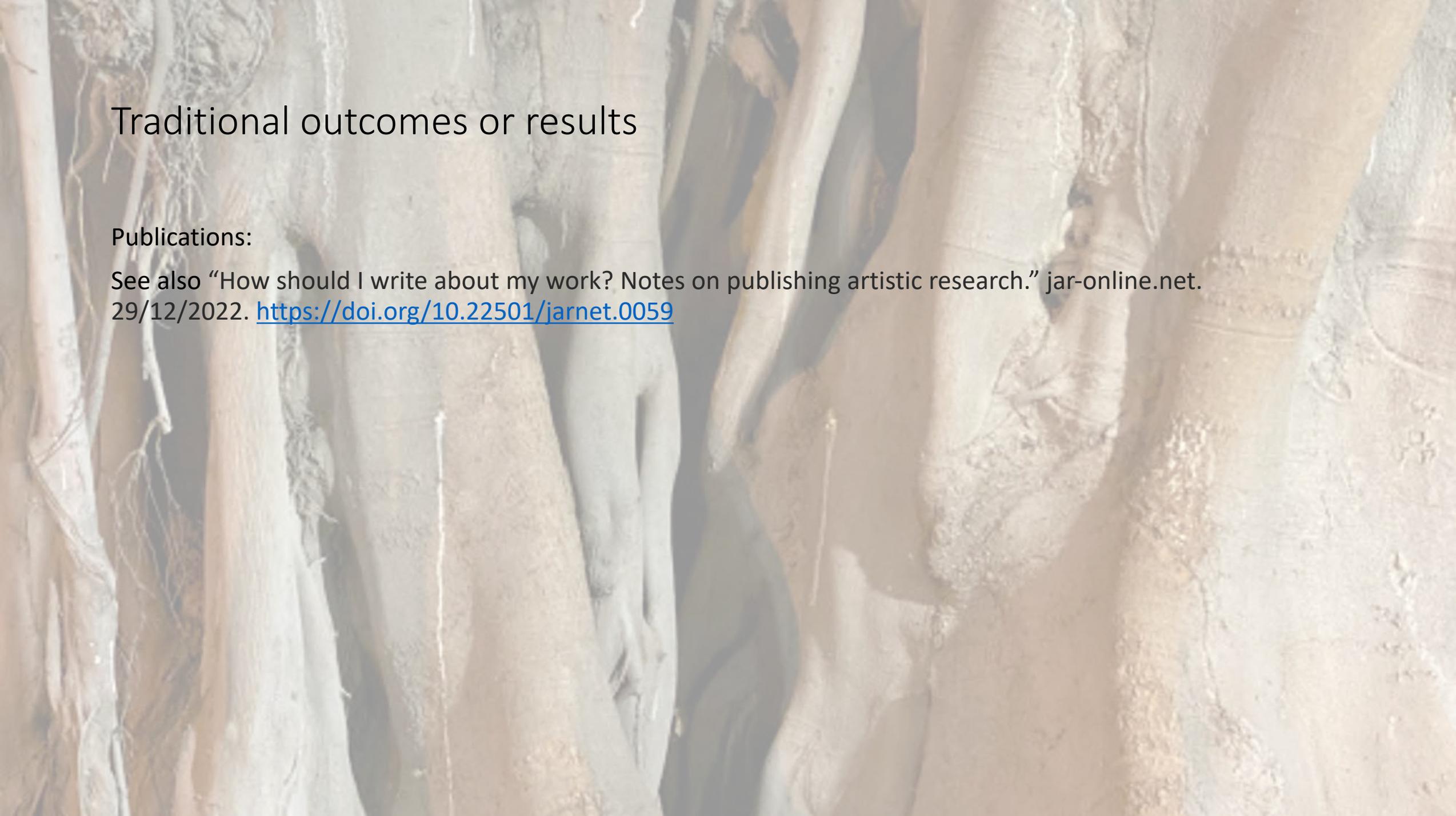
In this context my working method, my way of documenting all meetings with trees and sharing the material online, as an ongoing process, is perhaps the most interesting aspect.



One way of structuring the project is through specific sites, periods in particular residencies, as in the project blog <https://meetingswithtrees.com>

Another way is through individual trees or groups of trees, as the project archive on the Research Catalogue <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/761327>

A third way is through articulating the various strategies or techniques utilized or developed, which I use here.



Traditional outcomes or results

Publications:

See also “How should I write about my work? Notes on publishing artistic research.” jar-online.net.
29/12/2022. <https://doi.org/10.22501/jarnet.0059>

ATT UPPTRÄDA
MED TRÄD
PERFORMING
WITH TREES

Annette Arlander

*Att Uppträda med Träd
– Performing with Trees.*

X-position n 6.

Stockholms Konstnärliga
Högskola 2019.

not available online, except as
a proof copy, on the RC

[https://www.researchcatalogu
e.net/view/316550/316551/2
6432/30](https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/316550/316551/26432/30)



Meetings with Remarkable and Unremarkable Trees in Johannesburg and Environs

Annette Arlander

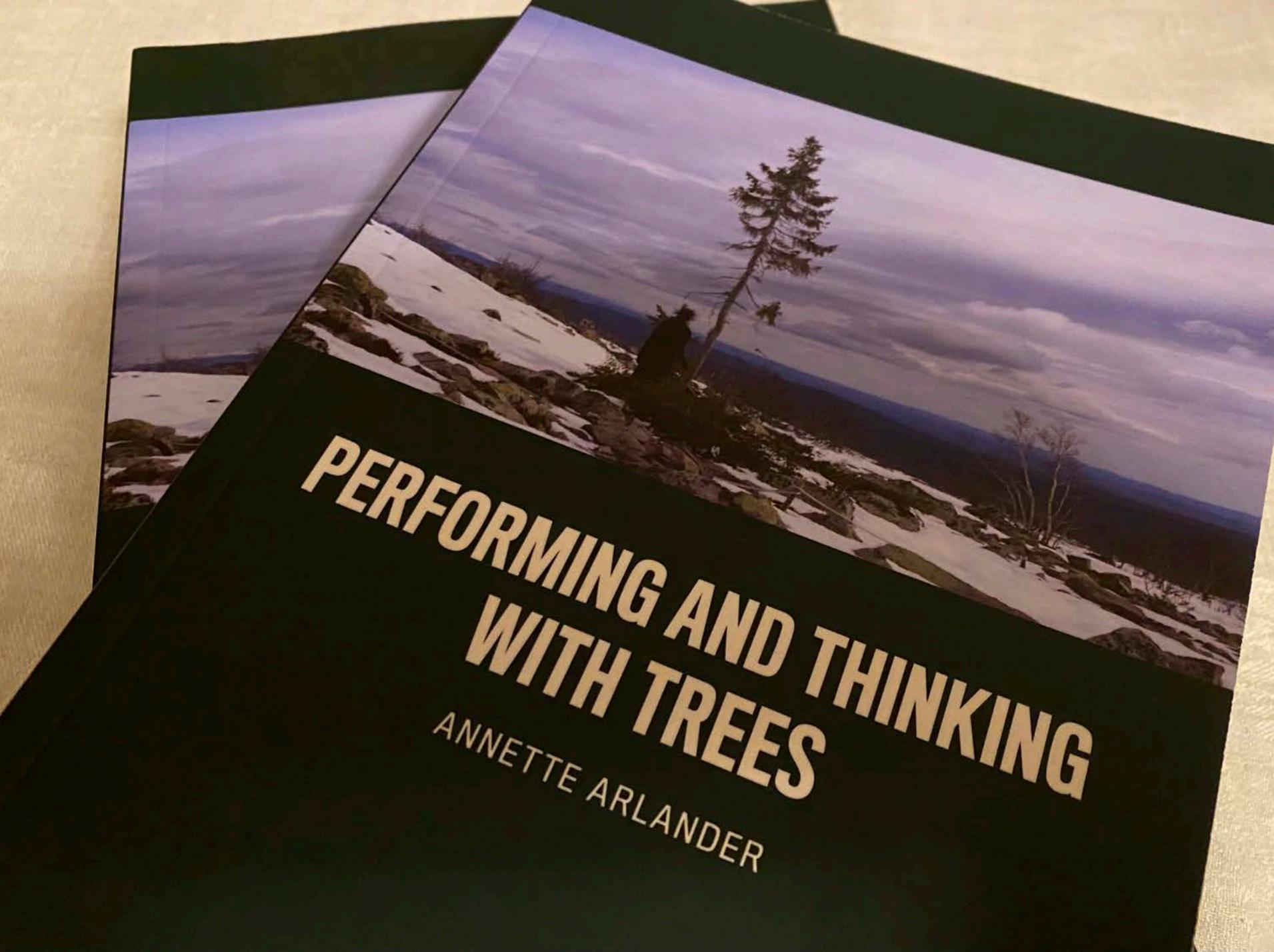
Meetings with Remarkable and Unremarkable Trees in Johannesburg and Environs

Arts Research Africa, The Wits School of Arts, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2020

<https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/30395>

Or here:

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/761327/0/1710>



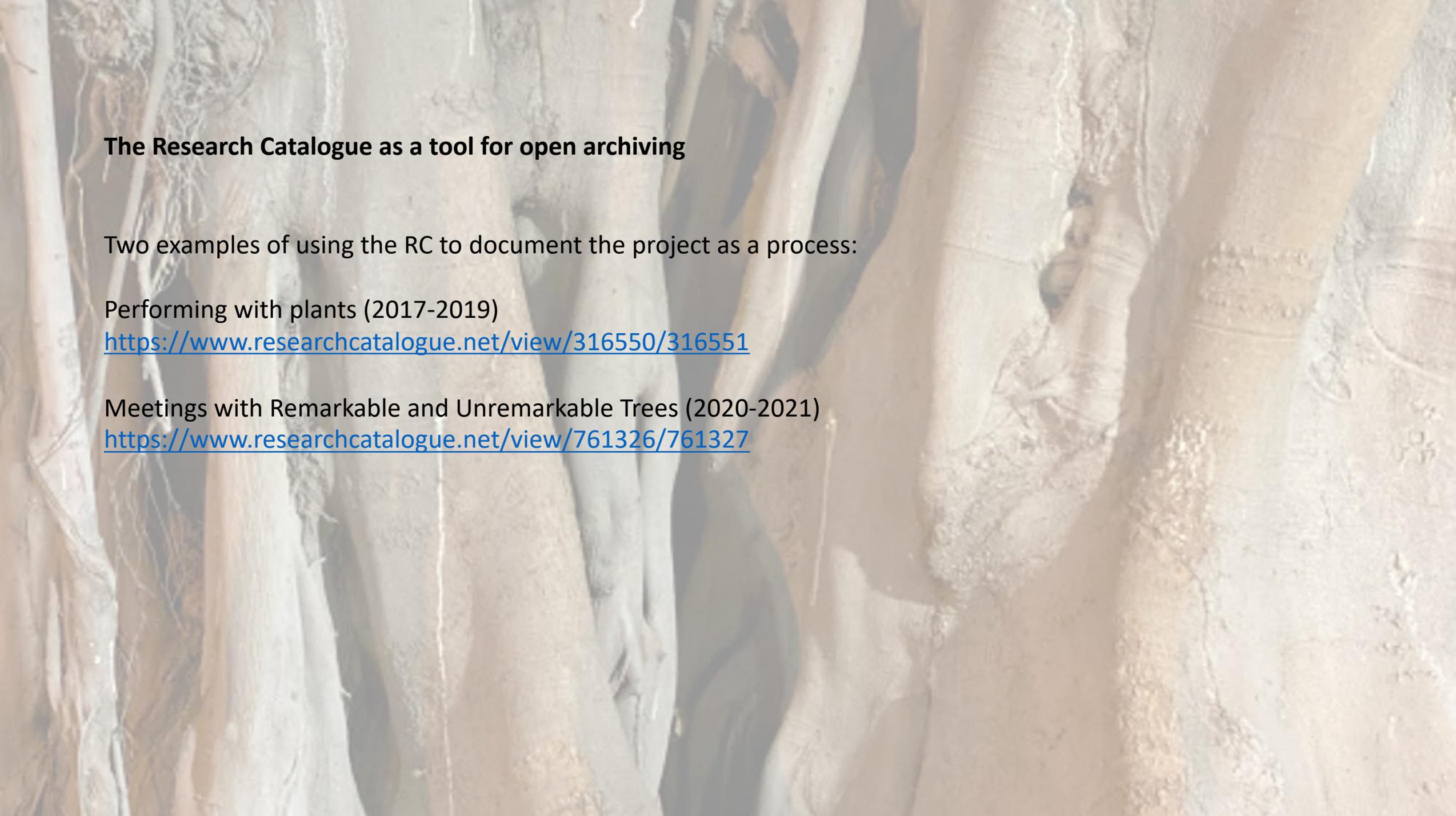
**PERFORMING AND THINKING
WITH TREES**

ANNETTE ARLANDER

*Performing and Thinking
with Trees,*

Art theoretical writings
from the Academy of Fine
Art 15,
University of the
Arts Helsinki.

[https://taju.uniarts.fi/
handle/10024/7666](https://taju.uniarts.fi/handle/10024/7666)



The Research Catalogue as a tool for open archiving

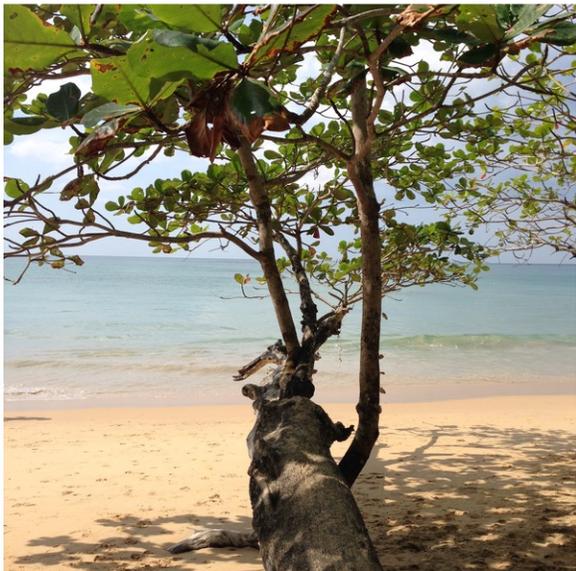
Two examples of using the RC to document the project as a process:

Performing with plants (2017-2019)

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/316550/316551>

Meetings with Remarkable and Unremarkable Trees (2020-2021)

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/761327>

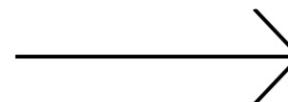


Performing with Plants

- an artistic research project by Annette Arlander

Att uppträda/samarbeta med växter

- ett konstnärligt forskningsprojekt av Annette Arlander



follow the timeline

följ tidslinjen

Direkt till 2018
Directly to 2018

Direkt till 2019
Directly to 2019

Tidigare publikationer
Previous publications

2017

Första delen av projektet sker under 2017 i Helsingfors vid forskarkollegiet Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies vid Helsingfors Universitet, finansierat av Kone Foundation.

The first part of the project takes place during 2017 in Helsinki at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies at the University of Helsinki, financed by Kone Foundation.

Andra delen av projektet sker under åren 2018-2019 i Stockholm vid Stockholms Konstnärliga Högskola, finansierat av Vetenskapsrådet.

The second part of the project takes place during 2018-2019 in Stockholm at Stockholm University of the Arts, financed by Vetenskapsrådet.

Experiment i Helsingfors /
Experiments in Helsinki
(2016)

Experiment i Stockholm
Experiments in Stockholm
(2016)

Uppträdanden för kamera i
Performances for camera in
(2017)

Uppträdanden för
Performances for
(2017)

Meetings with Remarkable and Unremarkable Trees

For more information, see blog <https://meetingswithtrees.com>



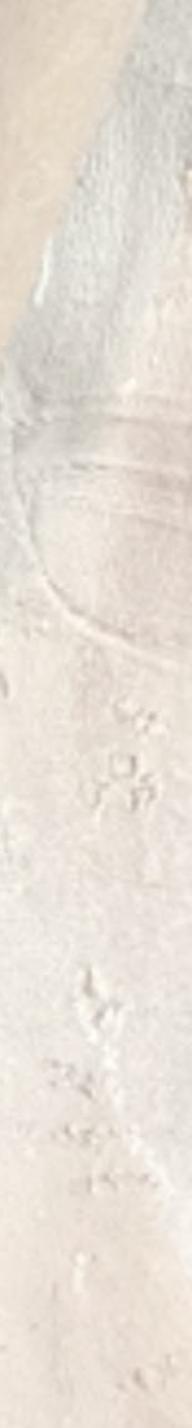
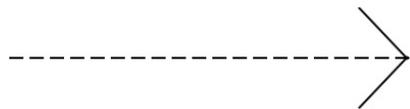
Particular Trees Encountered Previously



The Pine on Hundudden



The Oak on Galway Road



Presentations:

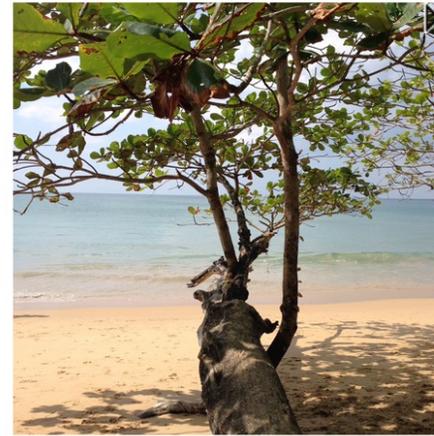


Background:

Performing with Plants
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<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/316550/316551>

2017
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2018-2019
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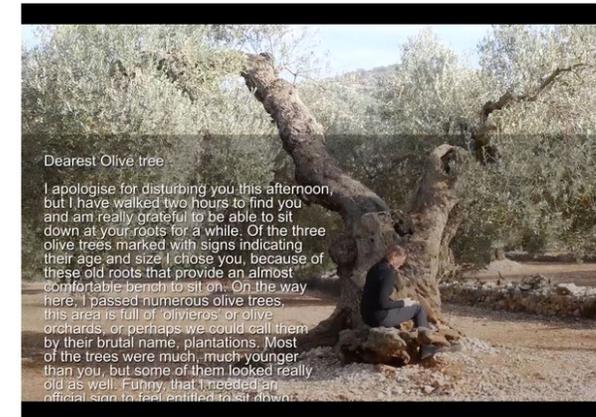
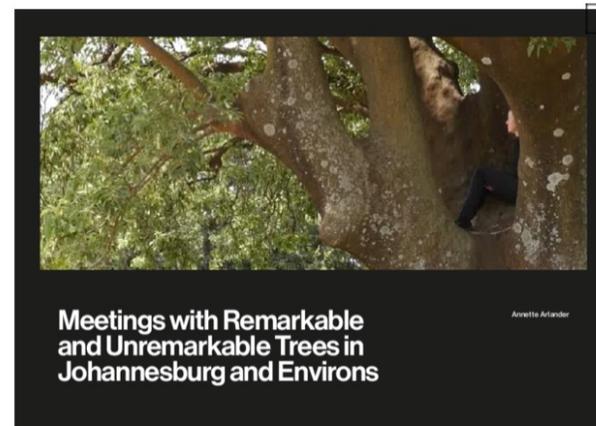
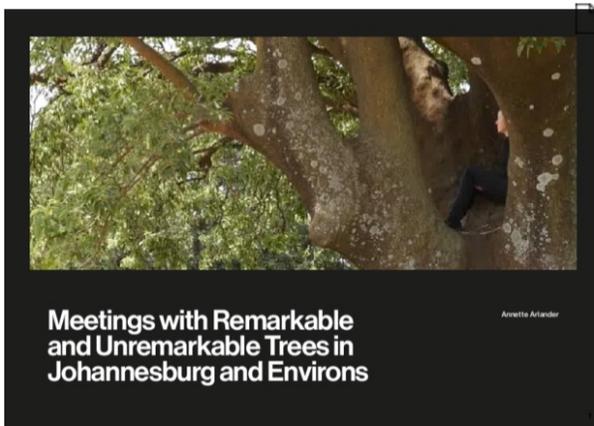


Knowledge in the Arts

Annette Arlander

30.03.21, 15-16.

Publications:



Considerations

Format of RC archive (and type of editor)

- Timeline, horizontal grouping, vertical chronology
- Pages for a repeated activity, or for each site, or event, or tree
- linking to journal in blogposts or adding transcripts on RC
- recorded or written notes
- all activities or selected highlights only

Online documenting and archiving as a method – but why share it publicly?

- What parts of this material will be useful in the future, as part of exhibitions, or submitted to the Finnish Distribution Centre for Media Art?
- What parts am I going to write about or compile video essays of?

Various structural strategies

- Year-long time-lapse videos with specific trees (usually once a week), a further development of recording the landscape on Harakka Island in the series Animal Years (2002-2014)
- A day with a tree (usually every two-hours or every three-hours) based on Animal Days and Nights on Harakka (2002-2014), often with journal notes after each session
- Posing with a tree daily for a month, usually the two-legged tree pose
- Writing letters to trees next to the trees
- Talking to trees, real time recordings, also as podcast episodes

Background: Year-long time-lapse videos with trees in parks
(a few times a week for a year in 2017-2019)

With Elms in Kaivopuisto 1-2 <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=476426>

With an Alder in Kaivopuisto <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=476425>

With a Beech in Djurgården <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=438266>

With a Sycamore in Humlegården <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=438260>

Year of the Dog in Lill-Jan's Wood (On a Spruce Stump) 1 <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=612191>

Year of the Dog in Lill-Jan's Wood (On a Spruce Stump) 2 <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=709461>

Swinging in a Pine <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=709462>

Year of the Dog in Lill-Jan's Wood (Sitting in a Pine) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=652999>

Year of the Pig with a Tatarian Maple <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=783427>

Year of the Ox – On the lowest branch (in Helsinki) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1159196>

Year-long time-lapse videos



With Elms in Kaivopuisto 1
performed 101 times between 10.1 and 17.12. 2017 in Kaivopuisto Park, Helsinki

Year-long time-lapse videos

With Elms in Kaivopuisto 2
performed 101 times between 10.1.and 17.12.2017 in Kaivopuisto Park, Helsinki

Year-long time-lapse videos

With an Alder in Kaivopuisto
performed 100 times between 12.1.and 17.12.2017 in Kaivopuisto Park, Helsinki

A winter scene in a forest. The foreground is dominated by large, dark tree trunks and branches heavily laden with snow. The background shows a person with long dark hair, wearing a pink jacket and a white hat, standing in a snowy clearing. The overall atmosphere is cold and serene, with a soft, diffused light.

Year-long time-lapse videos

With a Beech in Djurgården
performed 44 times between 7.1. and 16.12.2017 in Djurgården Park, Stockholm

A person with long hair, wearing a pink sweater, is sitting on a large, snow-covered tree trunk in a park. The scene is a winter landscape with many trees covered in snow. In the background, there are park benches, street lamps, and a large building. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow.

Year-long time-lapse videos

With a Sycamore in Humlegården 1
performed 44 times between 7.1.and 16.12.2017 in Humlegården Park, Stockholm

Year-long time-lapse videos

With a Sycamore in Humlegården 2
performed 44 times between 7.1. and 16.12.2017 in Humlegården park, Stockholm

Year-long time-lapse videos

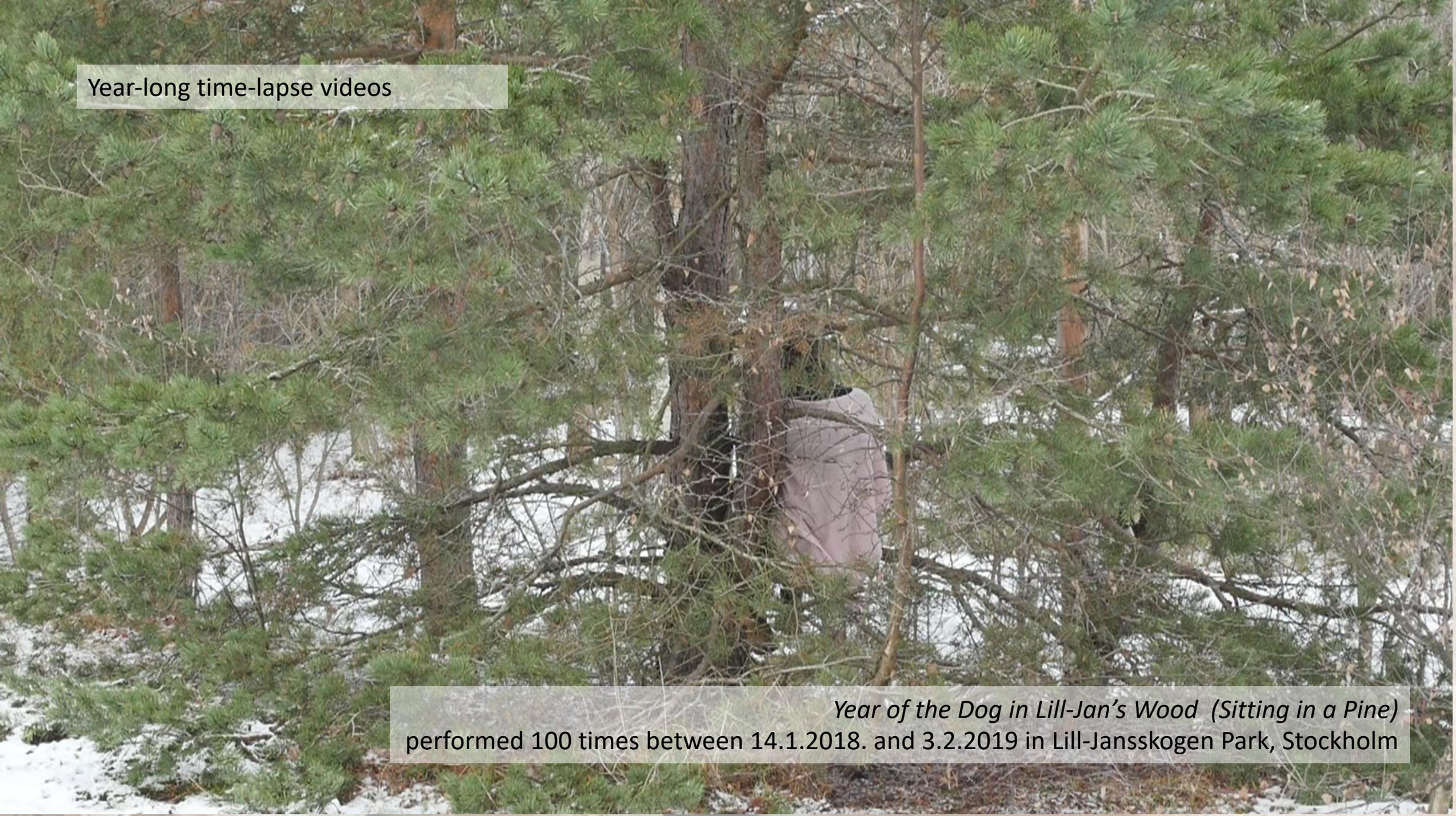
Year of the Dog in Lill-Jan's Wood (On a Spruce Stump) 1
performed 100 times between 14.1.2018. and 3.2.2019 in Lill-Jansskogen Park, Stockholm

Year-long time-lapse videos

Year of the Dog in Lill-Jan's Wood (On a Spruce Stump) 2
performed 100 times between 14.1.2018. and 3.2.2019 in Lill-Jansskogen Park, Stockholm

Year-long time-lapse videos

Swinging in a Pine
performed 100 times between 14.1.2018. and 3.2.2019 in Lill-Jansskogen Park, Stockholm

A photograph of a person sitting in a pine tree in a snowy forest. The person is wearing a light-colored jacket and is positioned in the center of the frame, partially obscured by the branches of the tree. The forest is filled with pine trees, and the ground is covered in snow. The overall scene is a winter forest setting.

Year-long time-lapse videos

Year of the Dog in Lill-Jan's Wood (Sitting in a Pine)
performed 100 times between 14.1.2018. and 3.2.2019 in Lill-Jansskogen Park, Stockholm

Year-long time-lapse videos

Year of the Pig with a Tatarian Maple
performed 108 times between 9.1. 2019 and 15.1.2020 in the Nobel Park, Stockholm

A photograph of a person sitting on a low, thick branch of a large, leafless tree in a snowy forest. The person is wearing a dark, heavy winter coat and a black hat. The ground is covered in snow, and the background shows more trees and a bright sky. The scene is captured in a time-lapse format, showing the progression of the year.

Year-long time-lapse videos

Year of the Ox – On the Lowest Branch
performed once a month from February 2021 to January 2022 on Harakka Island, Helsinki

Time-lapse videos of days with trees (every hour or every two-hours):

Day with Old Tjikko, Day with a Juniper 1 & 2 <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1013698>

Day with the Firethorne Rhus (Nirox) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/822442>

Day with a Bog Birch (Mustarinda) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/999357/2/1002>

Day with a Pine, Another Day with a Pine (Örö) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1044218/0/0>

Day and Night with a Mountain Birch (Kilpisjärvi) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1292734>

Day with An Ash (Eckerö) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1307712>

Day-long time-lapse videos

Day with Old Tjikko (17 min 45 sec & 19 min 35 sec)
performed on 14. May 2019 every hour between 10.30 AM and 7.30 PM on Fulufjället, Sweden

Day-long time-lapse videos



Day with a Juniper 1 & 2 (21 min 56 sec)
performed on 3. August 2019 every hour between 7 AM and 9 PM on Utö, Finland

Day-long time-lapse videos

Day with the Firethorne Rhus (24 min 10 sec)
with a Firethorn Rhus (*Searsia Pyroides*) in Nirox Sculpture Park every hour between 7 AM and 6 PM on 17 March 2020.

Day-long time-lapse videos



Day with a Bog Birch (with text) (52 min 17 sec & 20 min)
on 23 September 2020 every hour between 7 AM and 7 PM with a birch near Mustarinda.

Day-long time-lapse videos

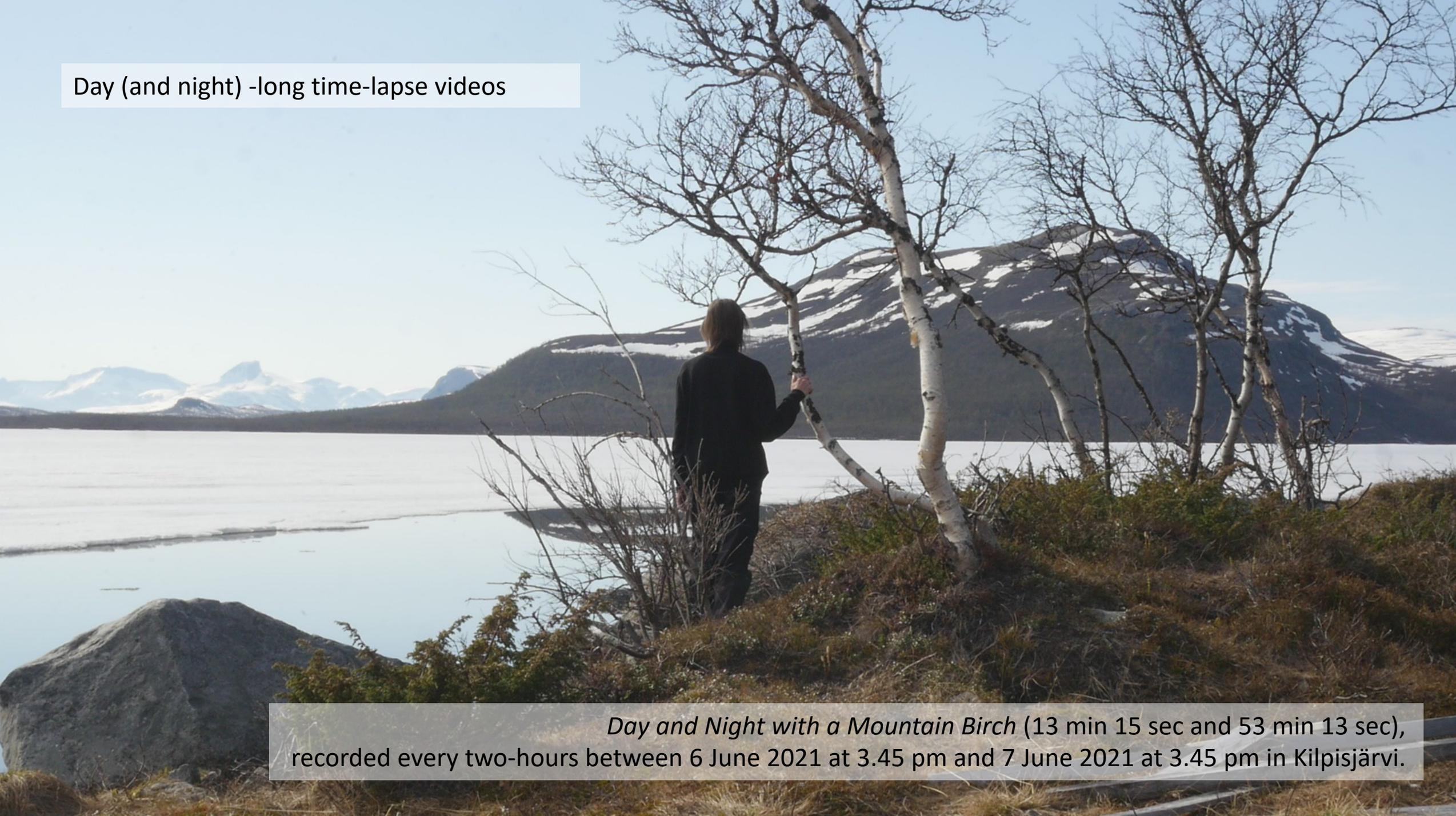
Day with a Pine (3 min 20 sec)
performed on 13th November 2020 every hour between 8 am and 5 pm with a pine on Öro.

Day-long time-lapse videos



Kära Tall (Another Day with a Pine) (5 min 43 sec)
performed on 28. November 2020 every hour between 9 AM and 4 PM with a pine on Öro

Day (and night) -long time-lapse videos



Day and Night with a Mountain Birch (13 min 15 sec and 53 min 13 sec),
recorded every two-hours between 6 June 2021 at 3.45 pm and 7 June 2021 at 3.45 pm in Kilpisjärvi.

Day (and night) -long time-lapse videos

Day with an Ash (26 min 12 sec and 91 min 40 sec),
recorded next to Eckerö Post Quay every two-hours on 22 July 2021 from 5 am to 11 pm.

Becoming Tree exercise (two-legged 'tree pose' daily next to a tree, often for a month):

With the Oak on Galway Road (in Johannesburg) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/796954>

With the Maple Tree (Corona Diary) (in Helsinki) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/831532>

June with the Spruce of Independence (in Helsinki) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/917581>

July with a Pine (on Harakka Island) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/944410>

Daily Birch (September in Mustarinda) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/978491>

The Pine's Apprentice (in Örö) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1034899>

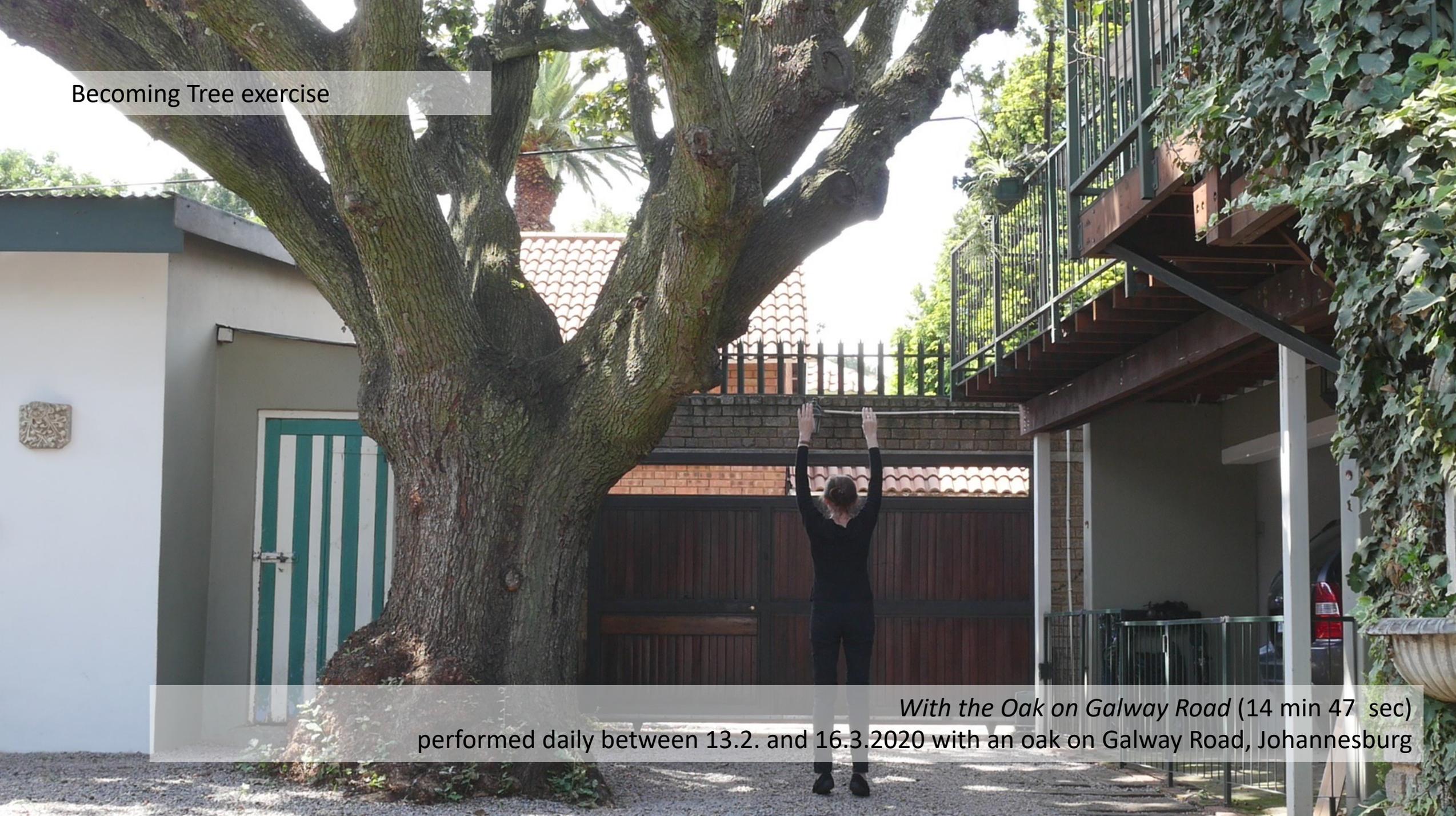
The Pine on Skifferholmen II (in Helsinki) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1102386>

Practicing with a Pine (in Hailuoto) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1219495>

With the Maple Tree (in Eckerö) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1305636>

With the Apple Tree (in Eckerö) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1305636>

Becoming Ginkgo (in Stockholm) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1318140/0/0>

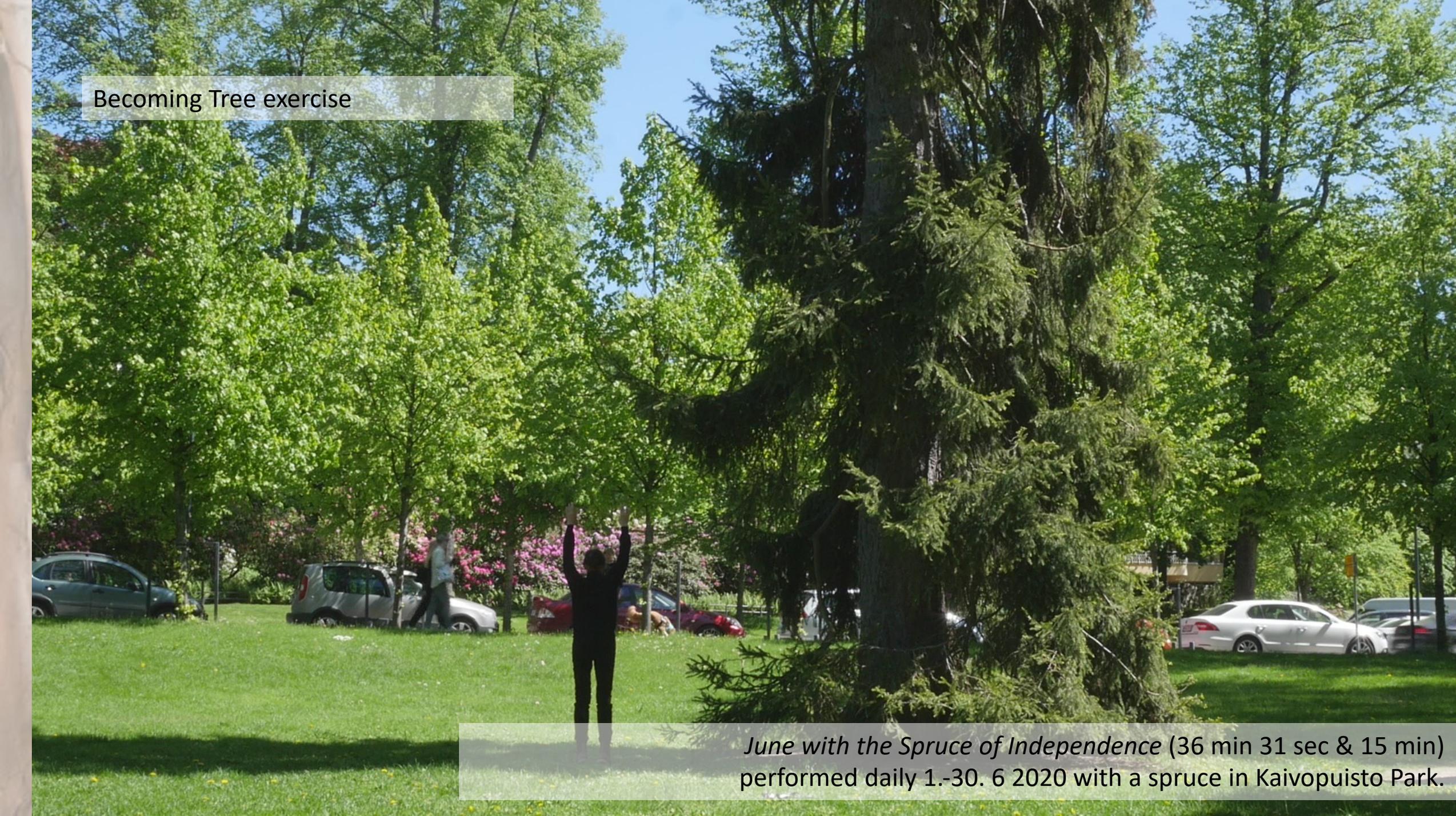


Becoming Tree exercise

With the Oak on Galway Road (14 min 47 sec)
performed daily between 13.2. and 16.3.2020 with an oak on Galway Road, Johannesburg

Becoming Tree exercise

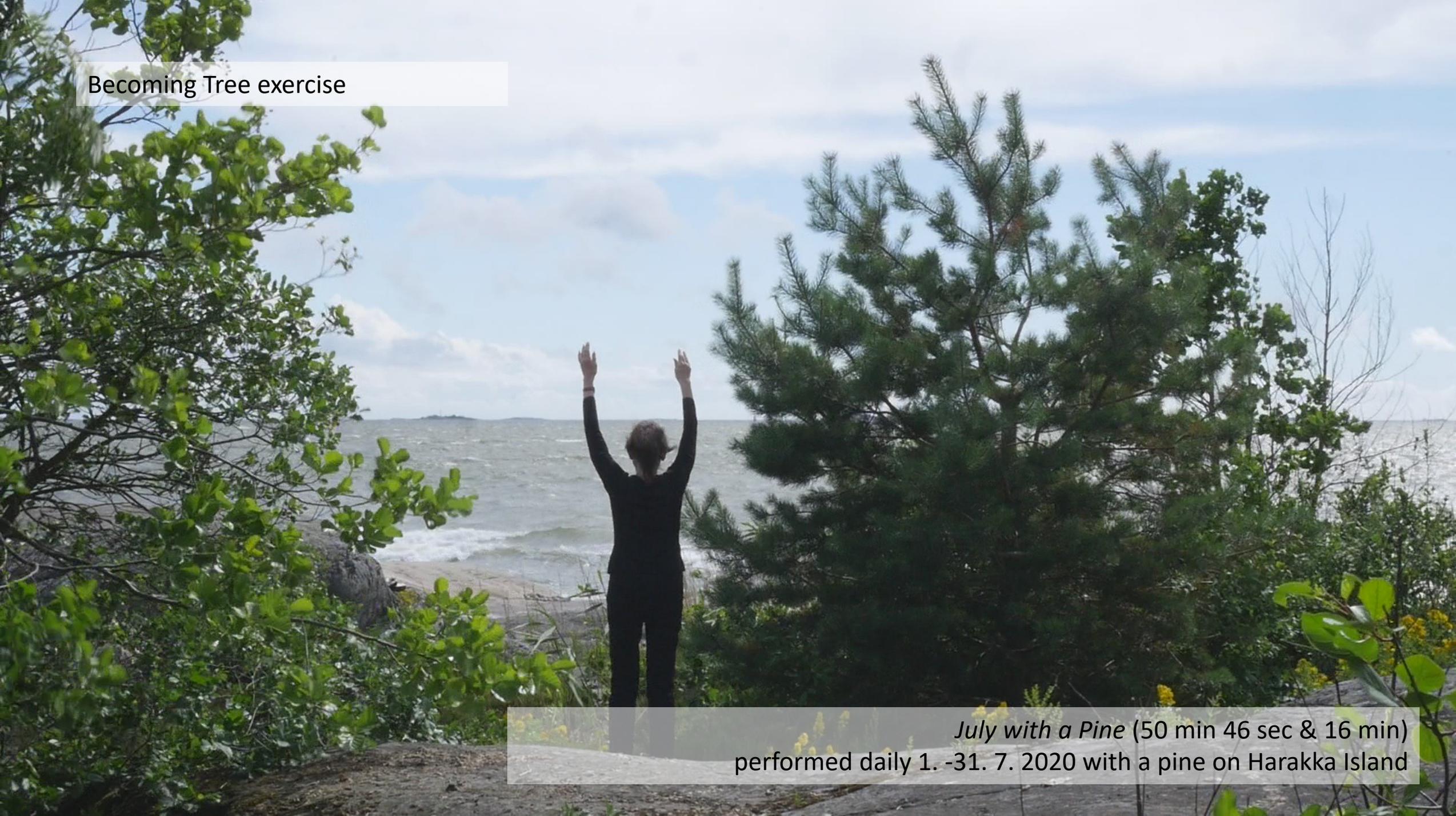
With the Maple Tree (Corona Diary) (62 min 22 sec & 16 min 50 sec) performed daily between 29. 3 and 31.5. 2020 with a maple tree in Tehtaankatu yard.

A photograph of a person in a black long-sleeved shirt and pants standing in a grassy park. The person has their arms raised straight up, mimicking the branches of a tree. They are positioned in the center-left of the frame. To their right is a large, tall spruce tree. The background is filled with lush green trees and a clear blue sky. In the distance, several cars are parked on a street, and another person can be seen walking. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a clear day in late spring or summer.

Becoming Tree exercise

June with the Spruce of Independence (36 min 31 sec & 15 min)
performed daily 1.-30. 6 2020 with a spruce in Kaivopuisto Park.

Becoming Tree exercise



July with a Pine (50 min 46 sec & 16 min)
performed daily 1. -31. 7. 2020 with a pine on Harakka Island

A tall, slender birch tree stands prominently in a forest of evergreens. The tree's trunk is light-colored with characteristic lenticels. Its branches are covered in green leaves, some showing signs of autumn. At the base of the tree, a person is visible, standing with their arms raised, possibly in a meditative or exercise pose. The foreground is filled with tall grasses and wildflowers, including purple and yellow blooms. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Becoming Tree exercise

The Daily Birch (September in Mustarinda) (60 min 20 sec & 14 min 10 sec)
Performed daily 2. 30. 9. 2020 with a birch near Mustarinda house.

Becoming Tree exercise

The Pine's Apprentice (53 min & 13 min 50 sec)
performed daily 2.11. - 2.12.2020 with a pine next to the residency house on Öro,

Becoming Tree exercise

The Pine on Skifferholmen II (35 min 38 sec and 20 min 10 sec)
performed daily 1-28.2. 2021 with a pine in Helsinki.

Becoming Tree exercise



*Practicing with a Pine (25 min 10 sec),
performed daily 4.-28.4.2021 in Hailuoto.*

Becoming Tree exercise



*With the Maple Tree (15 min 10 sec),
performed daily 3.- 30.7. 2021 in Eckerö.*

Becoming Tree exercise



*With the Apple Tree (15 min 10 sec),
performed daily 3.-30. 7. 2021 in Eckerö.*

Becoming Tree exercise

Becoming Gingko (working title)
performed daily (when in Stockholm) from 4.8.2021 with a gingko tree on David Bagares gata -street.

Holding hands and other variations (daily next to a tree, often for a month):

With a Pine on Skifferholmen (in Helsinki) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1102386>

The Pine Next Door (in Örö) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1107375>

Monument in March (in Helsinki) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1174139>

Listening with Mountain Birches (in Kilpisjärvi) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1289070>

Power practice with a Weeping Beech (Stockholm) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1406102>

Variations

*With a Pine on Skifferholmen (23 min 11 sec and 66 min 55 sec),
performed daily 1- 31. January 2021 with a pine in Helsinki.*

Variations

The Pine Next Door (54 min 14 sec & 10 min),
performed daily (when visiting the island) between 7.1. – 21.12. 2021 with a pine in Öro.

Variations

A person with long hair, wearing dark clothing, is sitting on a large rock in a snowy landscape. They are looking out over a frozen body of water towards a city skyline in the distance. The sky is overcast and grey. The foreground is covered in snow, and there are several large, bare, brown bushes or trees in the middle ground. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

Monument in March (31 min 10 sec and 122 min 20 sec),
performed daily 1-31.3.2021 with a protected sea-buckthorn in Helsinki.

Variations

*Listening with Mountain Birches (24 min 10 sec),
performed twice daily 2.-13.6..2021 in Kilpisjärvi.*

Variations

*Power Practice with a Weeping Beech (24 min 11 sec),
performed daily between 1.-8.11.2021 and 26.11.-11.12..2021 in Stockholm.*

Writing letters to trees next to the trees:

Dear Olive Tree, Dear Ficus Macrophylla I & II <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1013698>

Tallen på Hundudden 1-4 (The Pine on Hundudden) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/771644>

Dear Firethorn Rhus <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/822442/51/603>

Dear Firethorn Rhus II <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/822442/51/2128>

Dear Pine – Kära Tall <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/831544>

Kuusi Hyvä – Dear Spruce 1-7 <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/844990/0/0>

Dear Spruce, Dear Birch and Dear Deceased <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/982302/20/3334>

Writing with a Pine, Writing in a Pine <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1036306/182/2455>

Dear Pine, Pines by the Path <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1036306/182/2455>

Writing letters to trees next to the trees (continued):

Tala om det för tallen (Tell it to the Pine) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1107375>

Dearest Pine, Esteemed Pine Tree <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1165222>

Esteemed Tarri Pine <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1225961>

Dear Mountain Birch (with text) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1294375/18/4222>

Dearest Mountain Birch (with text) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1289070/536/4656>

The Ash Tree on Eckerö (with text) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/761326/1307712>

Writing letters to trees

With an Ancient Olive Tree (19 min)
performed 19.12.2019 in Ulldecona, Spain

Writing letters to trees

Dear Ficus Macrophylla I (19 min 30 sec)
performed 25. 12.2019 in Alicante, Spain

Writing letters to trees



Tallen på Hundudden 1-4 [the Pine on Hundudden] (c 14 – 20 min),
performed 7., 13., 26.1 2020 and 19.7.2021 on Hundudden in Stockholm.

A person with long hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, is sitting on a thick, dark tree branch that extends horizontally across the frame. The person is looking towards a small waterfall in the foreground. The waterfall is composed of several tiers of dark, wet rocks, with water cascading over them. The background is a lush green landscape with a grassy hillside and dense foliage. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Writing letters to trees

Dear Firethorn Rhus (20 min 15 sec & 6 min)
Performed with a Firethorne Rhus (*Searsia pyroides*) in Nirox Sculpture Park 18.3. 2020.

Writing letters to trees



Dear Firethorn Rhus II (20 min 15 sec & 6 min)
Performed with a Firethorne Rhus (*Searsia pyroides*) in the Nirox Nature Reserve 19.3.2020.

Writing letters to trees

Dear Pine – Kära tall 1-7 (12 min 30 sec - 20 min 32 sec)
performed between 30. 3. and 6. 8.2020 with a pine in Brunnsparken, Helsinki.

Writing letters to trees

A person wearing a dark jacket and a beanie is sitting on a rocky, grassy hillside. They are looking down at a book or notebook in their lap, appearing to be writing. To their right stands a large, tall spruce tree. The background shows a clear blue sky with some light clouds and a few bare trees in the distance. The overall scene is peaceful and contemplative.

Dear Spruce – Kuusi Hyvä 1-7 (c. 20 min 50 sec)
performed between 10.4. and 25. 8. 2020 with a spruce on Harakka Island.

Writing letters to trees

Dear Spruce – Rakas Kuusi (20 min 15 sec & 5 min 47 sec)
performed 25.9.2020 with a spruce near Mustarinda

Writing letters to trees

Dear Birch – Kära Björk (20 min 15 sec & 5 min 50 sec)
performed 29.9. 2020 with a birch near Mustarinda

Writing letters to trees

Dear Deceased (20 min 15 sec & 6 min 26 sec)
performed 29.9. 2020 with a dead spruce near Mustarinda

Writing letters to trees



Writing with a Pine II (20 min)
performed 10.11.2020 with a pine on Örö

A large, gnarled pine tree with thick, dark bark and many branches dominates the center of the image. A person is visible climbing the trunk of the tree. The background is a dense forest of similar trees under an overcast sky. The ground is covered with moss, small plants, and fallen branches.

Writing letters to trees

Writing in a Pine (13 min & 5 min 20 sec)
performed 16.11.2020 with a pine on Öro

Writing letters to trees



Dear Pine (10 min & 4 min 30 sec)
performed 18.11.2020 with a pine on Öro

Writing letters to trees

Pines by the Path (Kära tall) (16 min 20 sec & 4 min 5 sec)
performed 1.12.2020 with two pines on Örö

A person is sitting on a large, gnarled pine tree trunk, looking out over a body of water. The tree is the central focus, with its branches extending across the frame. The water is calm, and the sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Writing letters to trees

Tala om det för tallen (Tell it to the Pine) 1 -3 (8 min - 14 min. sec)
performed on 11.1., 20.2., 11.5. and 27.6.2021 with a pine on Öro

Writing letters to trees

Dearest Pine (with text) (15 min 45 sec)
performed 21.2.2021 with a pine on Öro

Writing letters to trees

Esteemed Pine Tree (16 min 15 sec)
performed 23.2.2021 with a pine on Öro

A person wearing a black hooded jacket and grey pants is sitting on the ground at the base of a large, thick-trunked pine tree. They are holding a notebook and a pen, looking up at the tree. The ground is covered in snow, and there are many other pine trees in the background under a clear blue sky.

Writing letters to trees

Esteemed Tarri Pine (with text) (8 min 10 sec and 27 min 30 sec)
performed 14.4.2021 with a pine in Hailuoto

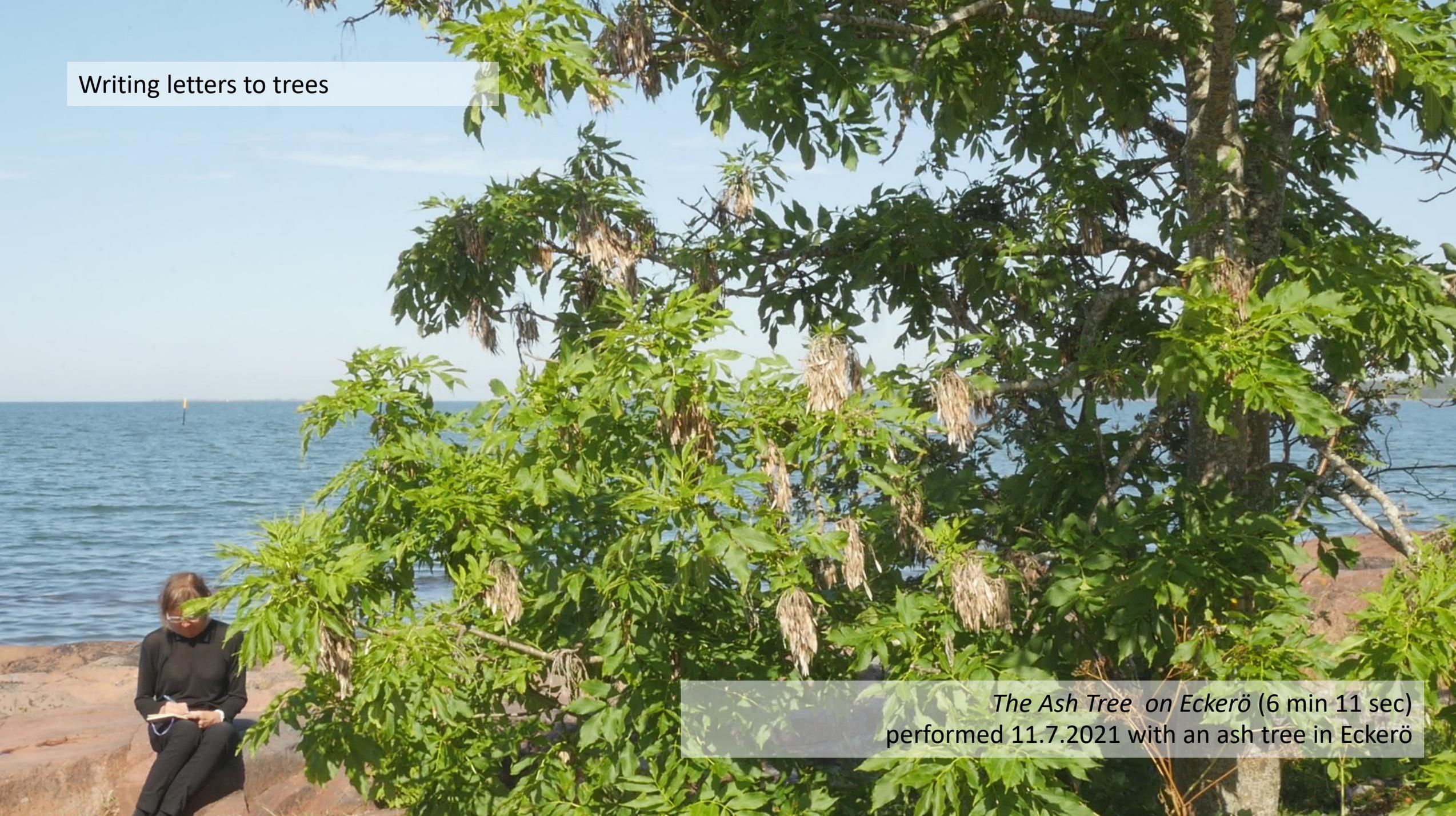
Writing letters to trees

Dear Mountain Birch (23 min) and *Dear Mountain Birch (with text)* (7 min)
performed 10.6 and recorded 13.6.2021 with a birch in Kilpisjärvi

Writing letters to trees

Dearest Mountain Birch (25 min) and *Dearest Mountain Birch (with text)* (7 min)
performed 11.6 and recorded 13..6.2021 with a birch in Kilpisjärvi

Writing letters to trees



The Ash Tree on Eckerö (6 min 11 sec)
performed 11.7.2021 with an ash tree in Eckerö



Exhibition

Forum Box 11.2. — 6.3.2022

11.2. — 6.3.2022

Annette Arlander: MEETINGS WITH SPRUCES AND BIRCHES

Jaakko Kahilaniemi: HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

Saku Soukka: SCOPE

ANNETTE ARLANDER: MEETINGS WITH SPRUCES AND BIRCHES

The video works in the exhibition were recorded in April 2019 with Old Tjikko, a 9950 year old spruce tree on Fulufjället mountain in Dalarna and with some spruces and birches in September 2020 in Mustarinda residency in Paljakkavaara in Kainuu. Most of the works were made within the project Meetings with Remarkable and Unremarkable Trees, supported by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. The name of the project alludes to the photography book *Meetings with Remarkable Trees* (1996) by Thomas Pakenham and the project is in some sense forming a counterpoint to it, by questioning what is remarkable and worthy of attention and what is unremarkable. The medium is not photography, however, but rather performance for video and recorded voice.

Although we are often accused of not seeing the forest for the trees, I look at the opposite danger, not seeing the trees for the forest, and focus on individual trees. This is not to deny that trees form networks and ecosystems or symbiotic relationships not only with other trees but with fungi, bacteria and all kinds of micro-organisms, and are in a constant exchange with their environment, as humans are as well. Nor the fact that forests or woods or substantial areas of trees are needed for producing effective carbon sinks, cooler and fresher urban air, flood resistance and more. Emphasizing individualism is a risky strategy in our current neoliberal atmosphere, where the importance of individualism is often exaggerated. Focusing on singular trees can nevertheless be useful as a first step towards decolonizing our relationship with “nature”. As late ecofeminist Val Plumwood (2003) pointed out, colonial thinking tends to emphasize a very strong difference between “us” and “them”, and to see “them” as all alike, stereotypical, non-individualised. Thus, attending to particular trees can help us see trees as life forms that have much in common with humans, despite the undeniable differences.



Photo:
Emilia
Pennanen



Photo:
Emilia
Pennanen





Photo:
Emilia
Pennanen

Puun rinnalla



Annette Arlander: Day with Old Tjikko 1, 2019. Pysäytyskuva teoksesta.

ANNETTE ARLANDER pysähtyy puun luo. Millainen on lähes 10000 vuotta vanha Old Tjikko -kuusi? Entä kuinka metsä näyttäytyy muiden erityisten puuyksilöiden rinnalla maailmaa katsellessa?

Annette Arlander 6.3. saakka Forum Boxissa, forumbox.fi

Screenshot from
Helsingin Sanomat



Leading to next project:
Pondering with Pines
(2022-2024)



Three-lingual (artistic research) project
**Pondering with Pines – Miettii Mäntyjen kanssa –
Funderar med furor**

2022-2024

As visiting researcher at Academy of Fine Arts,
University of the Arts Helsinki

Supported by Arts Promotion Centre Finland

Project blog

<https://ponderingwithpines.wordpress.com>

Project archive on the RC

[https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1323410/
1589526](https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1323410/1589526)

Podcast *Talking with Trees* on Soundcloud

[https://soundcloud.com/user-
90370389/sets/talking-with-trees-pine](https://soundcloud.com/user-90370389/sets/talking-with-trees-pine)

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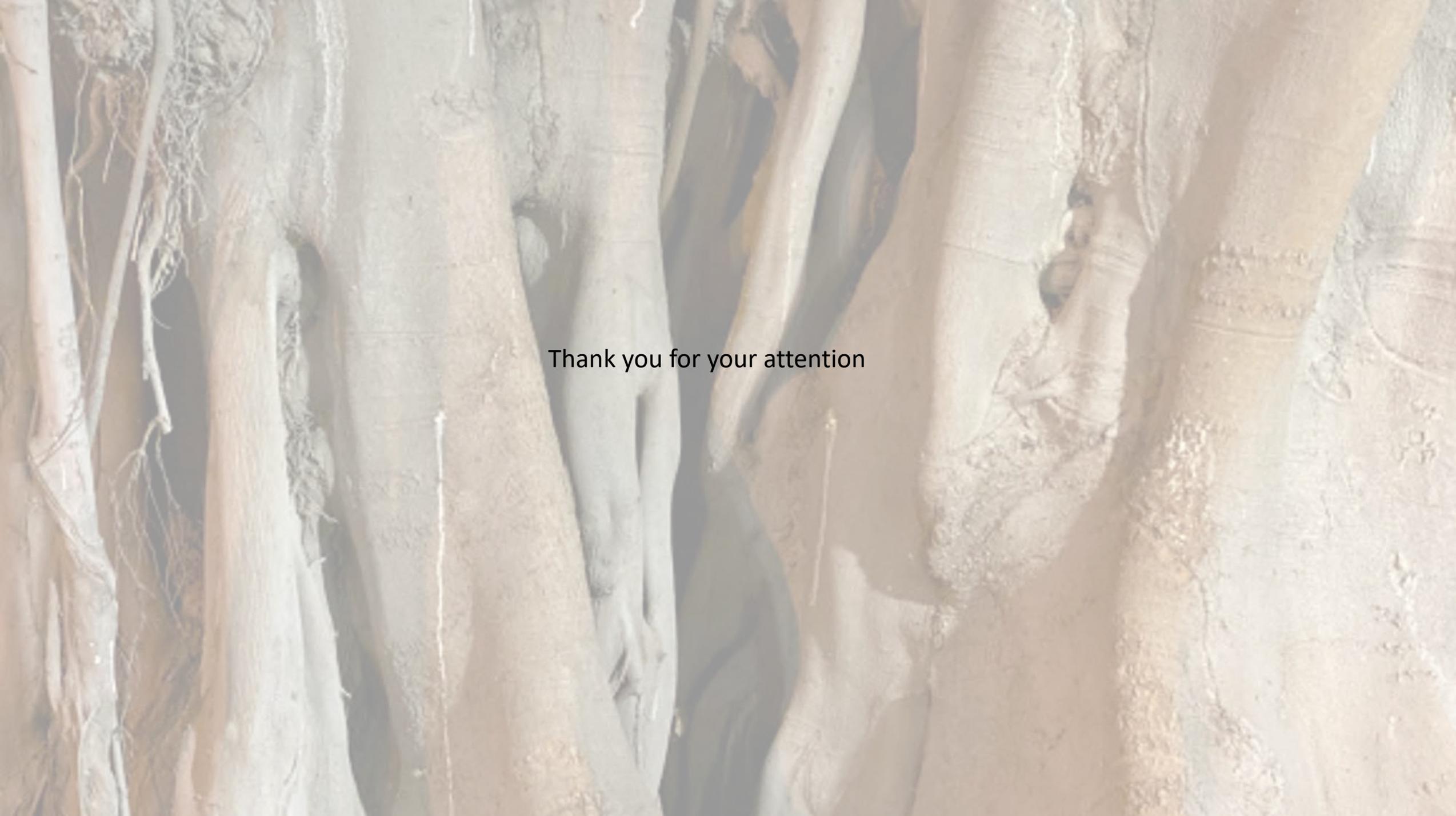
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Thank you for your attention