

DECAY – Carrion Ecologies

One published output from this project is Carrion Ecologies (Wagner, 2025), an iterative audiovisual editing project featuring images and video taken during my practice. The work highlights interspecies entanglements at sites of death and decay, without ambitions of a “finished” narrative. The following is the abstract from the film’s exhibition at FilmEU’s Synthetic Rewilding exhibition in Bulgaria:

Carrion Ecologies is an improvisational audiovisual work emerging in 2024 from a practice-based research project about (re)wilding certain creative grieving practices and processes. Developed through chance encounters and multi-species interactions, the project resists ambitions of completeness, permanence, or design. This submission explores death’s ecology by focusing on two found carcasses: 1) a deer, half-eaten and suspended by his antlers between the split trunks of a fallen tree; and 2) a seal, washed ashore and later carried to the boundary of the same forest. Each carcass becomes embroiled in life processes—scavenging, predation, sexual rivalry, and pro-generation—offering a frame to conceptualise decomposition as an active, lively, multi-species event.

The project’s methodology followed a forest-based (re)wilding practice intended to engage with principles modeled on conservation rewilding. These include embodiment, site-specificity, emergence, ecocentrism, and improvisation. The editing process employed rapid collage techniques that generated uncanny coincidences, highlighting the entanglement of process and chance. Sound design integrates bio-sonification from a Plantwave device, human improvisatory composition, and drastically slowed down forest-based audio samples (500–1000%). This decision, informed by research on nonhuman temporal perception, invites listeners into a soundscape that gestures toward species-specific experiences of time. By shifting temporal scales, Carrion Ecologies amplifies sensory difference, offering a perspective on the multiplicity—and distinctiveness—of agencies beyond the human.

In addition to decay-based content, this project exemplifies decay as a season of practice. It does so much in the same vein as “Crash”, in that it takes most of its footage from the component parts of previous films that weren’t working and which I broke apart to allow certain moments to find new life in different contexts.