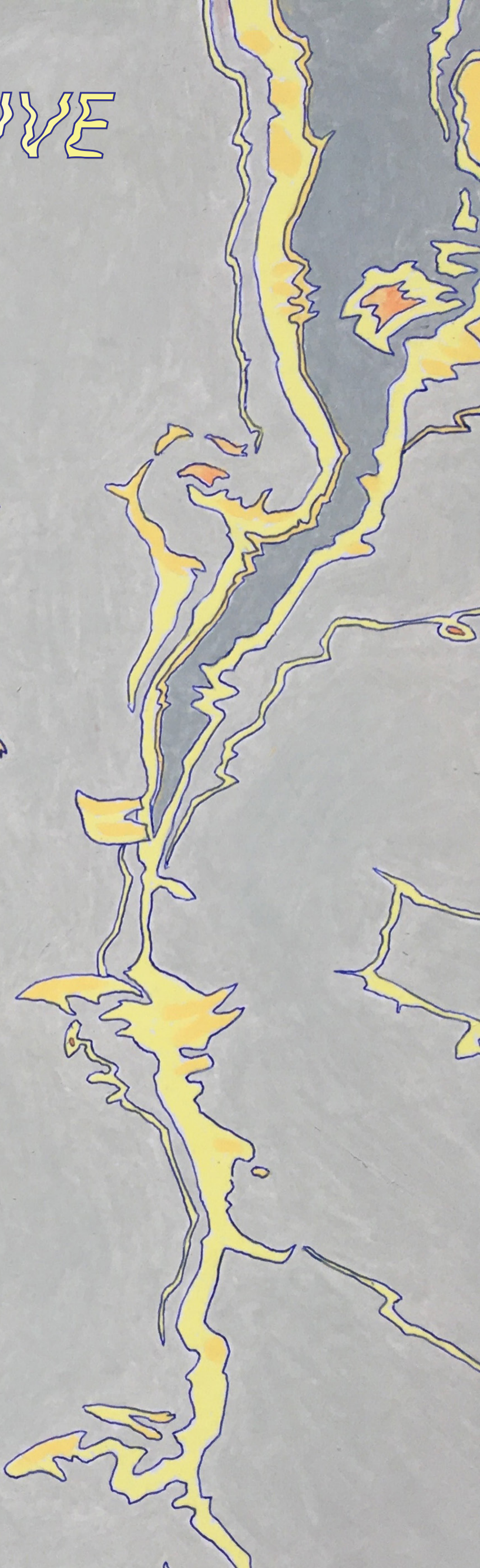
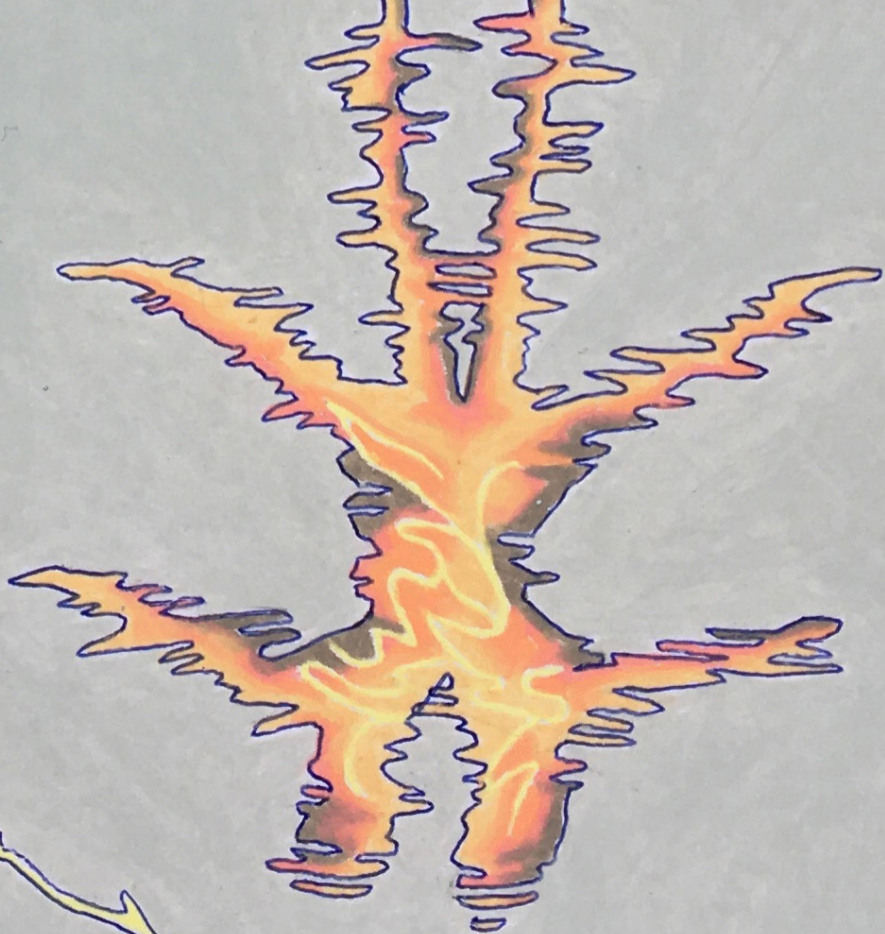


FURTIVE

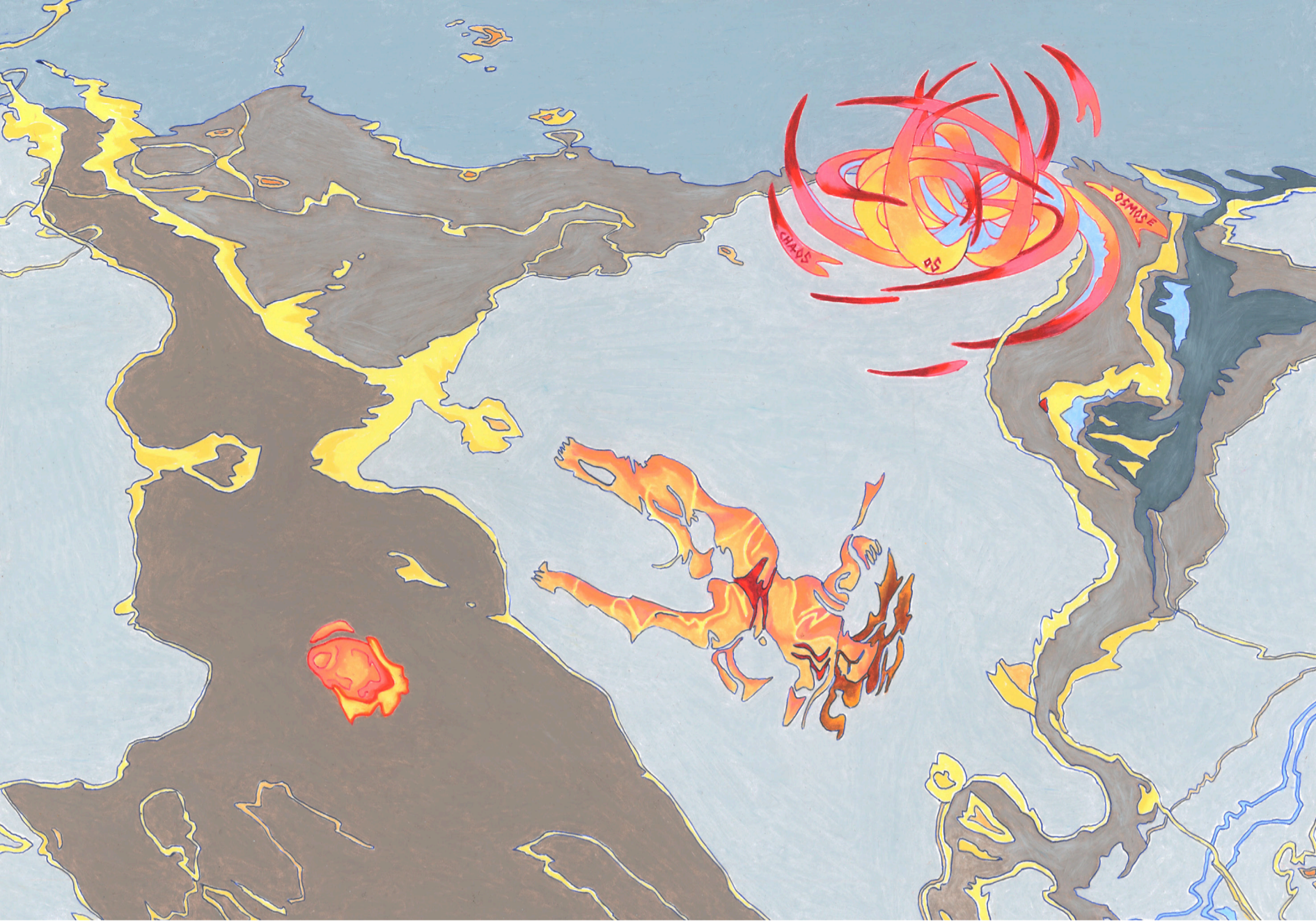


PRACTICING THE

& Manual to develop alter mundialism

FURTFIVE STATE

FURTFIVE STATE





PRACTICING THE *FURTIVE STATE* & Manual to develop alter mundialism¹

Furtive is an adjective borrowed from the french *furtif* meaning «stealthy», itself from the Latin *furtivus* that means stolen, or evasive secrecy.

In the eponymous novel, *Les Furtifs*², written by the French science fiction autor Alain Damasio, *Furtive* is the name of a fictitious species endowed with extraordinary capacities.

The furtives are living beings that can hybridize with their close environment, with any objects or beings they encounter. Thus they do not have a fixed shape, they are in perpetual motion and metamorphosis which is why they are out of control and impossible to catch. They embody freedom, and the intense energy of the living as they escape any format, any rules and cannot be captured or defined.

« Like sound, the furtive does not know a stopped state.

The unforeseen and unexpected is its nature. All two, furtive and sounds are part of the perpetual transformation, they are impossible to block or to fix. In permanent reconstitution, they are autopoiesis in its purest expression, namely the agile self-manufacture of oneself. This is the engine of the living. The furtive arouses apprehension because it remains unpredictable and uncontrollable: it is already other when we identify it. »²

«They are a mix between plant, animal, and mineral which is, for me, the ideal of what humanity could be.»³

MANUAL TO PRACTICE THE *FURTIVE*

I. *MINDSET*

Listen to your night dreams
Question traditions & Try new rituals
Adopt a spirit of extreme attention
Dissolve the ego
Be a shepherd in the city

II. *TOOLS*

Stickers and aerosol cans
Chaosmose chance game
Stilts
Tree climbing and hanging
Watchtower

III. *ACTIONS*

Swim underwater
Feed fires
Squat squats' events
Demonstrate
Rehabilitate industrial ruins
Build sanctuaries in cities
Join a ZAD
Kiss from two entwined tree & Make love in a tree house

In the novel, the French government launches an extermination campaign against the species. The authorities reckon that the creature is a threat to human order and health. As a result, environmental activists create a political party to protect the furtives because they consider their specificities as a lifestyle model. They also practice how to behave as furtive, how to renew themselves and escape the controlled society.

Nowadays our every move is transformed into data, it is almost impossible to leave no trace, you can always be spied on: we are constantly watched through cameras and listened through the technological devices that surround us. The furtives found a way to slip through the breaches of the system, to become invisible to surveillance measures, therefore, they keep their agency and power of actions. Indeed they are constantly active as they unite with other lives. They are a symbol of struggle for life and freedom.

In a world where consumption became our religion and money our beliefs, where money is a reason to destroy *Nature*, namely the non-human, where our survival is taken off our hands by multinationals and big corporations, the furtive stands as a guide that enlighten a new way of living.

I encountered persons that carry a part of furtive in them, they are people that strongly question these general truths that capitalism imposed on us and opened alternatives to organize ourselves differently. These persons build their independence from this productivist society, they appropriate their means of sustenance, they build communities and unite to fight for nature's right to be everywhere, for the value of life in its essence and they share this knowledge and experiences around them.

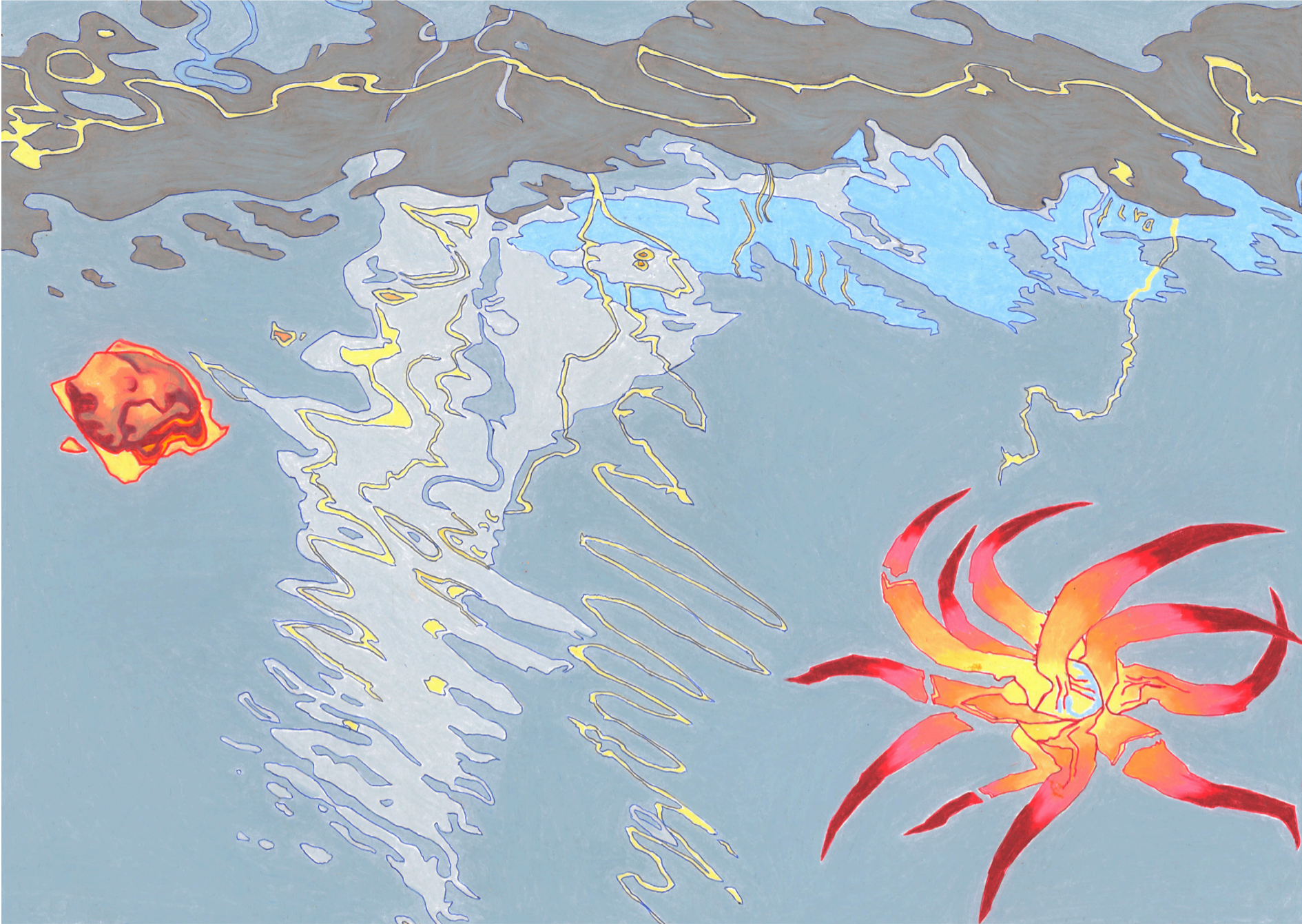
I wrote a manual to free the furtive living inside of the human. This is in a way a manual I write to myself, a proposition of ideas, an unfinished process for some of the people I mention and for me.

It is a list of injunctions from my experiences and discoveries, subjective and non-exhaustive, permanently evolving as I found the numbers of topics to cover endless and I could continue to add content to it infinitely, following the path of my life.

1. The word altermondialism is derived from the slogan «Another world is possible». Altermondialism is a social movement which, facing a logic of unbridled liberal globalization, claims and promotes values such as democracy, economic justice, environmental protection, human rights with a view to controlled and solidary globalization.

2. *Les Furtifs*, Alain Damasio, Edition La Volte, Paris, 2019.

3. Damasio Interview by Jerome Vincent: Les Furtifs, Alain Damasio dévoile les secrets de son nouveau roman, <https://www.actusf.com/detail-d-un-article/les-furtifs-alain-damasio-d%C3%A9voile-les-secrets-de-son-nouveau-roman>



A Kite Mantis Witcher

In the living room of my lover's house, I found what I identified as a witcher. He was standing immobile in a corner of the wall, looking at us. He had the appearance of a flat vertical mantis with a light exoskeleton of green color with touches of yellow and red. This thin aspect made me think of an aerial Asian kite made of delicate translucent smooth silk paper. As I got closer to it, one of his antennas touched my hand's palm and stung me. It wasn't hurtful but it disturbed me a lot... an antenna normally doesn't sting. I thought his presence might signify a place filled with a special unfamiliar energy.

Human is a moving sculpture

There was a woman that lived all her life with a nervous tic, she was constantly eating her cheeks, she couldn't even speak, her mouth was always moving but useless for anything else than her nervousness. She overpassed this uncanny gesture around her sixties, and could finally speak freely. From now on she shines and testifies that as human beings we are full of energy and we are not made to calculate numbers but for movement. Human is a moving sculpture! She said laughing.

This woman feeling sick from life could be an image of my fear of auto-destruction. When she finally evolve into a healthy and sparkling woman she sends me this message: to feel this swarming energy in our body is not a disease, it's the nature of a living being.

I. MINDSET

LISTEN TO YOUR *NIGHT DREAMS*

Feel like being your own Pythie: our dreams talk to ourselves to show us truths... Our dreams depict our unconscious relation to our environment and reveal instincts that can be occulted in awoken life.

I am spreading in these pages some of my dreams from these last months of 2020...

QUESTION TRADITIONS... TRY NEW *RITUALS*

~ Aerial silks

~ Ropes and carabiners

~ Climbing skills

~ Sturdy tree

↪ Hang an aerial silk on a solid tree branch, spread a bit of pine rosin on your hands for its anti-slip effect, and climb up the silk. Position yourself into the «hanged man» figure, rest for some second admiring an upside-down landscape, and then spin.

Observe how it feels to be turning at this height and to see the shapes of your surrounding becoming blurry and mixed colors.

Whirl until you become dizzy and your clothes fly around your body. If you close your eyes you will get the impression you are running fast, you could even picture yourself as a cheetah running in an infinite and empty landscape.



Doubles

~~~~ ~~~ ~ ~  
~  
~

The water's undulating surface reflects a dazzling light. I am swimming in this immense sea, sliding in the smooth water so soft that it gives me speed. I am going so fast so easily and I feel so alive, that I jumped out of the water and dived in again like a flying fish. You were following me closely. You come to hold my waist to let you carry behind me. Then you begin to imitate my movements until you synchronized perfectly with my swimming. You are now swimming at the same rhythm as me, against me. You are my exact double. We are so similar and so close now that we are one body splitting the sea.

### *A flabby body running*

A fleshy transparent face as a mold comes off a head full of layers

I have no idea who is this character.

Again in these two last dreams, the hidden monstrous part of me, that I reveal in this dream, I free it, it jumps out of its stash and moves freely...

## ADOPT A SPIRIT OF EXTREME ATTENTION TO THE *SURROUNDINGS*

~Discretion

~Sensitivity

~Self-forgetfulness

~> Be alert as if you wanted to surprise the most lively and discreet animal.

In his writing *The Snow Panther*, Sylvain Tesson tells how he manages to see two precious times the snow panther camouflaged in the icy landscape. Coming back from this experience, he decides to keep this nippy and alert state in other environments than the lands of Siberia, in the city of Paris for instance, to discover things that would be invisible to usual human eyes. He reckons that when you observe and pay attention to your surroundings you can notice odd apparitions full of meaning.

~> Project yourself in another animal perception.

This animal could be one you often see as this pigeon that you see from your window. How does it feel? I currently have a mother pigeon brooding her eggs on a flat nest she created in the corner of my window. I imagine her sensations, she must be extremely reactive to the change in the air, she feels every detail of the warm and cold currents of the wind and she watches the moving creatures in the sky, staying attentive that none get close to the balcony...

The French writer Alain Damasio advises us to allow ourselves to be free from any technological devices and to channel our attention to our direct sensations from the outside world.

«At a time when you are shot at by shots and stimuli reactions, try to increase your sensitive surface, your listening and welcoming spectrum.»

«Try sometime to have a direct and without interface relationship with the outside.»<sup>4</sup>

4. Alain Damasio talk at TedXParis, Très humain, plutôt que transhumain? Théâtre du Châtelet, October 5th, 2014.



### *Chopped trunk*

**We are the nature we crush.**

**The evening light was caressing the landscape, skimming skins, barks and leaves.**

**The car stopped at a red light and a trunk was standing outside in front of me, it was cut from bottom to top. The side branches had also been chopped, opening holes that seemed to stare at me as hollow eyes. I saw the life of this tree fading away in multiple colored tentacles, long floating leaves rippling like water.**

**I felt this last intent of life in my body, I was equally undulating and bleeding the crushed blood of this wood, my shapeless skin was infusing into the air.**

**Human in essence, I exploit and exhaust matter**

**that I eat, chew, spit and digest**

**I depend on my body and other beings organic matter**

**I depend on animals or plants,**

**I need their vibrating substance,**

**I grab the energy they secrete to survive,**

**the substance that pearls from their existence.**

**I am insufficient.**

## DISSOLVE THE EGO

In the *Teachings of Don Juan*<sup>5</sup> Juan Castaneda, the author of this autobiographic novel, meet the shaman Don Juan, called wizard in Mexico, and he becomes his apprentice. Don Juan teaches him how to let go his ego and individualism that is the cause of all his suffering. The wizard says: «Don't give yourself too much importance». He teaches Carlos to not consider himself of higher importance and to live humbly knowing he is a part of the Whole in the same way as a blade of grass.

The existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre has a close discourse.

In a passage from the novel *La Nausée*<sup>6</sup> his main character, Antoine Roquetin starts to feel like he is becoming the tree root he is staring at. This external being invades his human world. Antoine realizes that this root exists with an intensity even stronger than himself.

«This root existed to the extent that I couldn't explain it. Gnarled, inert, nameless, it fascinated me, filled my eyes, and brought me back to its own existence over and over. No matter how much I kept telling myself, *this is a root*, it didn't take hold either. I could see that we couldn't go from its function of root, of suction pump, to that, to that hard and compact skin of a seal, to that oily, calloused, stubborn aspect.»

↪ Feel your trans corporality: you don't belong only to your body.

Emanuel Coccia wrote a good description of this phenomenon in *Metamorphoses*<sup>7</sup>: living beings have to exchange substances with each other and their environment.

«no species can be limited to inhabiting its own body, it is forced to enter the other's carnal house, to occupy it, to integrate itself into it, to become the body of the other, the flesh of other species.»

We are dependent on others' life. The air that we perpetually absorb and embrace in our lungs, that is the condition of our existence, is a plants' rejection: it is their trash.

**«Each being is the garden and the gardeners of other species»**

5. Las Enseñanzas de Don Juan, Carlos Castaneda, 1968, University of California Press.

6. La Nausée, Jean Paul Sartre, 1938, Folio.

7. Metamorphoses, Emanuel Coccia, 2020, Payot Rivages.



### *Nocturnal Monument*

An empty house skeleton, a house that no human has touched for at least three years. This is no longer a house, it is an imposing inert structure, a human made facade now emptied of its blood, ready to receive a new and alive one. It is a non-place waiting to be occupied and transformed. We come to disturb its stillness and stiffness, to disturb its paralytic calm. We come with strong colors and smells to inject a new breath. We make this façade a banner: Nature doesn't have a house. Plants and animals are homeless. They don't belong to a steady residency. This house is no longer a closed home, it is doors and windows open to the swarming of animals and plants.

We come to write in blood letters that we are nature, we have no home, so we occupy this house turning it upside down, making it a battleground between the swarming and the rigid.

## BE A *SHEPHERD* IN THE CITY

- ~ Idealism
- ~ Strong political opinions
- ~ Sense of resistance
- ~ Sociability
- ~ Sheep and goats (optional)

↪ Defend nature and lands in the city, as Gilles Amar does with la bergerie des Malassis in Bagnolet 93, Paris outskirts. He built a pedagogical sheepfold connected with a primary school in a wasteland surrounded by buildings. He is supported by the whole neighborhood but still has to struggle for the sheepfold's rights to be respected by the municipality. He leads the herd to graze in the streets of Bagnolet as the plants growing between the sidewalks are actually really diverse, some of them are even medicinal plants, really good for the beasts.

At La bergerie des Malassis, people and animal live intensively, they debate, they drink, they play music, they fuck, they have fun ... it's really lively and this disturbs some people that would prefer a more «normal» atmosphere, he says, rolling his eyes.



*Slithering tree*

**A reflection of myself is watching me above a slippery pine,  
The red reflection of my veins flows in my hair  
The glitter of blood in my hair and on the barks reverberates the red  
which fluctuates in me and the tree,  
The sprawling agave emanates warm lights heating our lost bodies.**



## II. TOOLS

Resourcefulness and tools for awakening.

### STICKERS AND AEROSOL CANS

~Colors

~Drawing

~Cadavres exquis

~Slogans/ wordplay

~> Paint on the streets, do your own propaganda, and make the walls speak.

Draw the symbols that are important for you.

For me, it has been a walking fire with his three libertarian eyes and a hybrid human mantis. The days before with my friend we were in a Chinese canteen in Barcelona, I started to draw the fishes in the lotus ponds and we brought up the idea of the surrealistic cadavres exquis, we drew a lot of beautiful hybrid beings that inspired us for some murals.

### CHAOSMOSE CHANCE GAME<sup>8</sup>

~Paper

~Pen

~Inventivity

~> The goal of this game is to draw lots for one challenge every day that will make you go out of your routine and comfort zone, and change your habits of city dweller or even human point of view... Toni, a character from *Les Furtifs*, has to be water for one day: he was hanging on a rope behind the barge and he says that he became water, he understood what this element was and he flowed the same way. He says «We would never mix with the furtives if we don't dislocate ourselves and our habitus»

«**We only do transformation**»<sup>9</sup> says a Zadist from Le Carnet.

8. Game created by Toni Tout fou character of the novel *Les Furtifs*, Alain Damasio, Edition La Volte, Paris, 2019.

9. *Zadistes La lueur*, Episode 14, Oikos Podcast, Soldat Petit Pois, January 11th, 2021.



*Baby please don't take off your heels.*

**I built high heels. I wanted to see how it feels to be really tall, I mean even taller than a tall human.**

**I first made the legs extensions, and then built the arms in order to have a four legs catwalk. I showed my new appearance to my friend and asked her if she would feel like trapping me. She did.**

**First playing with my new legs to surprise her, I came discreetly behind where she was sitting and stood above her imprisoning her with my four legs. She was scared first but then, she found a way to trap me in return: with her caresses. She caressed softly my legs her hand following their line. I was letting her do it, a bit astonished when she suddenly climbed on the bench and kissed me.**

**This moment appeared to me as coming straight from a fantastic movie, in the style of the Beauty and the Beast. I saw in her strange look on me, that she didn't consider me as her usual girl friend. My height and my four legs walk changed her perception of me, or maybe the other way around, it changed my perception of myself what changed her perception of me...**

## STILTS

~Wood

~Straps

~Screws

~> For a metamorphosis effect

Wearing the stilts enables you to learn a new way of balancing your body, to reach the tree's height and to walk with ease on different types of floor. The French shepherds of les Landes used the stilts to be able to walk above the swamps and extend their view over their flock. The people from the neighborhood considered them as freaks...

Being way taller than the average, you can attract attention during festivals and demonstrations... You can then fake a tall creature or become her if you feel like it.

For the philosopher Emanuele Coccia, our technical objects are for us humans like the cocoons of the insects: they allow us to transmute and reshape ourselves.

«These are not simply extensions of the human body, they are on the contrary handlings of the world that make possible a change in personal identity»<sup>7</sup>

Therefore the stilts are a cocoon in which I wrap myself to evolve.

**«Any relation to oneself is of a technical nature and aims to modify its own form, the Technique - the art of constructing cocoons - makes the self the subject, the object and the means of the act of transformation.»<sup>7</sup>**

When I was going to the circus as a child, I was admiring the tamers of wild animals, and was thinking of doing the same later. I eventually ended up being both: the tamer and the wild animal. With the stilts, I raise myself as an odd creature and I now have the choice to adopt the walk of the beast or the human.



*Pelerinage en air trouble (pilgrimage in cloudy air), Sage est le singe qui s'engage ( wise is the monkey who engages), Attention les Cieux (beware the heavens), Tu joues la fille de l'air (you play the air girl), Tutoyer le vide (familiar with the void), Vouvoyer la chute (distant with the fall). Quotes from Alain Damasio, Les Furtifs.*

## TREE CLIMBING AND *HANGING*

~Harness

~Carabiners

~Rope for abseiling with smaller ropes for prusik knots.

~Light hammock

~Arborist mind

~> This equipment allows you to climb high, until the tree crown; you can enjoy the contact with the tree and the view from it. If you climb fir trees you will feel quite safe because they have branches everywhere around their trunk and you do not see the void under you. But if you climb cedars or oaks, these trees are massive, they have thick branches but way less numerous than the fir, thus you will intensely feel the void. Be prepared.

~> Climbing trees can also be a political act if you decide to stay up there to defend its life, impeaching the tree to be cut. A lot of Zadists practice it, I will evoke them later.

~> Take height.

As the young Baron character of Italo Calvino that decided at twelve years old to live the rest of his life in the trees :

**«Those who wish to look carefully at the earth should stay at the necessary distance »<sup>10</sup>.**

## *WATCH* TOWER

~Wooden trunks

~Nails/ ropes

~> Build huts, tripods, and barricades.

You can install these constructions everywhere you have space: in your garden, in the public space, or in a privatized zone that should belong to everyone.

Raise a Tripod with three specific ladders: the Piteys. The Piteys are single post wooden ladders used traditionally in the pine tree exploitation of the South West of France to carve tree pines at different heights in order to obtain their resin. Their use needs a good balance. The three Piteys assembled at their top form a monument, a throne, a watchtower easy to climb up. You earn a wide view from a point easier to access than a tree. It is an open structure easy to access to everyone.

But you can also build a tripod with raw trunks that would isolate you from unwelcomed people. The inclined smooth trunks can be impossible to climb without a specific material. Zadists also used these structures to block the road to engines coming to cut trees or pour cement...

10. *The Baron in the Trees*, Italo Calvino, 1957, Giulio Einaudi editions.



*My make up isn't waterproof*

**I discovered the sound of a nice creature.  
A free-living behaving like dripping water,  
With the fluidity of a liquid, its body has no stable form, it is constantly  
moving, transforming, hybridizing...  
This being was infusing into the water where I was bathing, slowly it in-  
filtrated me, and I felt that it gently divided my body into small floating  
and foamy pieces until it dissolved in the water.**

# III. ACTIONS

## FEED FIRES

~Logs and matches

~Axes/machete

~Wheelbarrow

~> The basis of a new fire.

Light a fire in the wheelbarrow and stay hypnotized by the flames until all the wood becomes embers. imagine yourself and your friends as teeny persons with thermally insulated coverall walking in between the glowing embers as if you were in a volcano, a gold mine of fire.

## SWIM UNDERWATER

~Smartphone or camera

~A sister filming

~Apnea

~> Capture the reflection and refractions of your body melting in the waves.

Let yourself be carried and moved by the water's flow.

Feel the water's temperature against your skin, when all the air bubbles hanging to your epiderm fly away, your skin becomes thinner and porous, until it fusions with water streams, and your mind dissolves in the transparent liquid.

«We live in a watery commons, where the human infant drinks the mother, the mother ingest the reservoir, the reservoir is replenished by the storm, the storm absorbs the ocean»<sup>11</sup>

11. *Hydrofeminism or on becoming a body of water*, Astrida Neimanis, chapter from *Undutiful Daughters, New Directions in Feminist Thought and Practice*, H. Gunkel, C. Nigianni, F. Soderback, Fanny Söderbäck.



*Fieres et Furieuses* ( proud and furious) and *Adelphité Turbulente* ( turbulent adelphite), graffs by feminist French group Douceur Extreme.

**I was wearing four stilts and tried to stay discreet, my motion was slow and heavy. As planned by XR I was embodying a stressed nature, harassed by the clowns of capitalism. They tried to destabilize me and make me fall; indeed, even if I was higher than them I was also less stable hence more fragile. "YOLO" they shouted at me and pushed me while laughing.**

**They wanted to enjoy, and live fast. I looked at these huge forced smiles on their face... they just don't want to understand my way of life and prefer to bully me instead.**

### *The Bumpy whale*

**I am floating on a small plastic boat while something alive stays under the water surface just below. I can't say what it exactly is but I think it has the shape of a whale. I finally see its skins, it is covered by round bumps and each of them is nuanced by a different color.**

**The mooring of the boat is endowed with a red beacon; I pulled it to free the boat from the whale. Indeed, according to my estimate, the bumpy whale was installed under the hull allowing herself to drift with the boat. I disturbed the creature in her immobility so she dashes out of the water and in the air it collects on itself and seems to explode with the appearance of a tiny mushroom cloud.**



## DEMONSTRATE

~Social and Ecological Revendications

~Performance

~Slogan

~Script

~> A demonstration is medicine for mind awakenings. It raises awareness in the public space.

Extinction Rebellion Anti Black Friday Show was a street theater performance at Rokin avenue, one of the most commercial streets of Amsterdam city center. The demonstrators were disguised to play a satyr of our consumer society that exhausts our natural environment.

Here is an extract of the script.

«The capitalist clowns, those who for decades benefited from a system that enriched them, while exploiting everything and everyone else. Each time they came out of it, they were the cause but did not personally experience the destruction of our ecosystems. They kept their feet dry from their high office buildings. But they caused it with their endless production. It's time for the capitalist clowns to payback for all the damage done.

At the same time, we as a society should not always want more. We must recognize the abundance. Reuse, reevaluate and repair what we collectively already have!

Singing :

**Like nature, like nature**

**When nature is exploited**

**We stand up, and we rebel!**

**If nature is exploited**

The drummers join forces with all the other demonstrators and the lyrics are repeated 4 more times.»<sup>12</sup>

## SQUAT SQUATS' EVENTS

Check the page [Radarsquat.net](http://Radarsquat.net). In Amsterdam, follow Jeffrey's nomadic cinema, be at Joe's Garage where you can prepare free food and listen to nomad bands, be at OT301's cinema and meet movie directors and artists, OT's nightclub to party or to practice circus...

~> Get inspired by squatters who always question common values and stay active.



### *Hybrid container*

I discovered this container standing in Erasmus park. It was a red rusty old shipping container placed in the middle of the small wood. What caught my attention was that its two side walls were composed of ingeniously intertwined branches. The branches were slightly bent, tightly braided, as for this old wooden fence technic that we can see in the north countryside and I think is used by different autochthone people all around the world. It reminded me the crazy creation of the Khasis people in India, who build bridges and fences with living roots interweaved. The contrast between the geometric painted metal and the curves of the branches struck me. The function of the industrial artifact shifted thanks to the integration of the organic material. I read there a claim: we need to transform industries, hybridize them with ecosystems in order to make them collaborate with nature instead of killing it.

### *Cut horns, the tree and the ladder.*

I was wandering trying to follow the map in this village dotted with a lot of bridges. There was the line of a circle in the middle drawing a round field. I definitely wanted to reach the center of this field and finally got there, after having been lost in some spiral paths. Inside of the circular field there was a squared space delimited by a red bricks wall in ruins where was living a wild vegetation. All around it, some sheep were grazing calmly, serene. I sat on the low red wall and looked at these peaceful creatures, there were all males whom horns had been torn off so that they could not fight anymore. This peacefulness they radiated was then only an appearance : the consequence of the lack of these horns ...

## REHABILITATE INDUSTRIAL RUINS

~ Branches

~ Old metal container

→ Take an old industrial container, and transform half of his walls into organic sides. Hang banners. The inside can become storage for soil seeds or gardening tools.

## BUILD SANCTUARIES IN CITIES

In the Netherlands, environmental fights stay calm but are not passive. More and more eco-villages flourish.

The neighborhood Eva Lanxmeer in Culemborg, is a beautiful example of an organic organization of the space. I walked almost every path between houses, everything was so green and wet, and at each blocks corner was a common garden where some inhabitants were building convivial infrastructures, as a wooden bench, an awning, a pergola...

It was designed by its inhabitants to be of "zero rejection" thanks to its rain gardens: little ponds that filtrate wastewater discharges.

Every house is equipped with green roofs and solar panels. The french Physician Elizabeth Delannoy who studies Symbiosis and ecosystems explains: « **It looks bucolic but everything was wisely thought and build: infiltration, purification, isolation, alimentation and recreation. Every square meter is designed to be productive and to perform several functions interconnected with each other.** »

«Only the trees can probably bring together such great wealth in such a small space. Whatever the latitudes in which we live, the oasis city is within our reach!»<sup>13</sup>

In Amsterdam South West can be found DIY and self managed and self sufficient mobile urban farm restaurant. Its creator, Menno Houstrat, built it with the aim to be off grids: be autonomous on food thanks to the greenhouse and the garden, on energy with solar panels and water with the rainwater filter.

It is cooperation, everyone can join the community to volunteer. Volunteers forming a cooking group, a building group and a garden group animate the place.

In a nutshell, the eco space of the Kaskantine<sup>14</sup> is composed of:

- ~ 11 containers,
- ~ small and big greenhouses,
- ~ natural & recycled materials
- ~ small electricity line
- ~ solar panels
- ~ rainwater filter
- ~ pizza oven
- ~ nights and workshops

The Kaskantine makes use of plots temporarily free, it already moved once and will have to move again. This piece of grass was unused, so the owner invited them to construct on it but it still has future construction plans. «In 5 years the Kaskantine has to move again, and the trees and the canals will be destroyed.» Explained Menno.

Menno stands firmly for the land rights of this space and would like to extend their stay on the site. He is leading negotiations with the municipality to defend the Kaskantine. He proposes layout plans compatible with the municipality offices installation project. He would like to create an eco corridor from Siegerpark to Slotterplas.

«You know for nature not to get lost in the urban jungle, we need eco corridors» He told me.

13. *L'Economie Symbiotique, régénérer la planète, l'économie, la société.* Isabelle Delannoy, Acte Sud/ Colibris, 2017.



«I woke up the fire out of ash and embers, we didn't notice as it burned down our house. Oh I know, neither of us is ever gonna say it, but we need this smoke to breath.» *Unearth me*, song's lyrics by Oklou

**I continued my path to the next bridge. I crossed the circle walking its entire diameter, opened the fence and the sheep followed me, staring at me with intensity as if I was a really promising person. They maybe saw me as a kind of shepherd.**

**I found the farm logo on a beautiful old fashion well. It was composed of a tree and a little ladder affixed to a branch, a symbol of communion between a technical human tool and a natural entity.**

**At the beginning of autumn 2020, I discovered another intriguing space: the Kaksantine. I passed by this urban farm cafe Kaskantine while I was biking from school to the material shop Gamma. The place immediately caught my attention with its patchwork appearance. A garden was surrounding containers used as storage rooms and extended with a greenhouse hosting a big hoven and a vertical garden. Solar panels were installed on the roof and a lot of pipes slipped in the corners. I entered in the green house hearing echos of a conversation and exited through a door leading to a wood construction workshop where two guys were sitting and chatting. The younger Kristiaan talked to me first. He welcomed me and answered some of my questions about the place. The oldest, Menno, gave me a visit. At one point he disappeared, I thought of leaving, being a bit lost in between the containers, but he came back smiling handing me a glass of clear water. "Taste it, it's our rainwater" I was slightly wary but I drank it. Menno then showed me their rainwater filter system, they have many 1000l barrels to store it!**

**Since then I help their «green team» to build a vertical garden in front of the communal center at Jacques Weltmenstraat. They are creating a system that will feed the plants pumping water from the canal.**

Menno is part of a Cosmopolitan network that doesn't like borders so much,

He reckons that nowadays identity and community are the most important social issues.

He says that there is a real need to re-introduce commons in our society: the public space can be used for new purposes.

Here are some of Menno's new ideas:

~ To ask 10 percent of public space and give it to the neighborhood and people so that they can reinvent how to take care of our basic needs.

~ To do a Float on the IJmeer, «to build floating villages is a logical concept in this country that is sinking.

The Geo polymer concrete is an innovative material from which can be created rafts that do not need any maintenance for centuries.

We can build greenhouses on it and plant things in the water...

This would recreate life in this big lake that is suffering from biodegradation.»<sup>15</sup>

He sends a call for people in Amsterdam for new perspectives of life between townsfolk:

**« There is space ! Put demands on space, on roof, canal, grass fields unused, 20% is still available for initiatives. Municipality welcomes it in every neighborhood we could use this public space in a multidisciplinary way! »<sup>15</sup>**

I guess that Menno Houstrat thinks together with Gilles Amar that our neighborhoods are Zone to Defend.

After I asked about his dreams related to nature, Menno wrote me a nightmare he did when he was 6 years old and its echo in real life:

**«I was skeltering, in the neighborhood of Nieuw West, and came home. When I wanted to ring the doorbell, the name on the plate wasn't right, and I lost totally my feeling of who I was.**

**Later when I was a teenager, it happened to me in reality in the Biljmer, the flats were repeatedly built the same way, and I entered the wrong flat and rang the doorbell of the right flat. I guess this would not be possible in a more organically build place!»**

14. Plans and designs are available on the website : <http://www.kaskantine.nl/>

15. Impact Unpacked, Kaskantine Interview, Broadcast Amsterdam, March 25th, 2019.

<https://broadcastamsterdam.nl/podcast/impact-unpacked-kaskantine-interview/>



«The Only Growth we will support will be the one of children and trees» English translation of a quote from Alain Damasio in his novel *Les Furtifs* : «Maintenant la seule croissance que nous supporterons sera celle des arbres et des enfants.»

### *Ghost marble on woodens hut.*

There were four treehouses following each other on four trees, I constructed them with my friends in the past. They were improvised structures with diverse materials: fabric, wood, ladders, metal, and furniture. I was staring at them from the ground and I notice that someone came to add an abstract construction on top of them, like ruins of an old Greek temple. On the roof of each hut, white cylinders made of something like plaster were assembled in the shape of broken columns. I thought it had the appearance of two eras which would rub each other in the same space-time. The rigid geometric marble buildings breaking with time and the organic huts that grew with the tree. Are these two different building styles leaving the same debris?

The ghosts of the antic temples are floating over the huts, but the huts are the ones alive, inhabited and loved. They look like the treehouses built by the Dannenroder forest's activists who live on the trees to make one with the forest and claim "we are nature defending itself".

This dream follows Menno's: it shows a strictly ruled architecture made for its geometrical and authoritarian aestheticism that as a contrast, highlights the ephemeral, and constantly evolving tree houses modified each day by the addition of wooden planks or graffitis.

## JOIN A ZAD

ZAD is the acronym of Zone A Defendre, translated Zone to Defend in English. It is the name given in France to a gathering of activists occupying land to protect it from overbuilding and concreting.

The name Zad appeared in France with the occupation of the zone of Notre Dame des Landes. In the 70s an airport had to be built in this zone, in the middle of wetlands. Activists united to form an occupation of the place in order to defend the pre-existent nature. It led to huge and violent confrontations with the police but even though, the Zadists temporarily won the fight. Since 2018 the airport project is abandoned and the Zad still survives as a community proposing a different system of cohabitation with nature.

There are now other Zads flourishing in France : la Zad du Carnet, the one of St Nazaire, and in Belgium : la Zad d'Arlon.

Since October 2019 the forest of Dannenröder in Germany welcomes a Zad where hundreds of militants came to impeach the clearing of 85ha of the three hundred years old forest for the construction of a highway: the A49. This road is implemented by DEGES a road construction company for public infrastructure and supported by the European Investment Bank and car industry. This motorway would obviously cause a lot of ecological damages: the loss of huge pieces of the healthy forest and the contamination of clean drinking water supplies located in the area.

The protest: NO A49, DANNI BLEIBT (Danni stays) became a massive occupation with more than 70 treehouses forming little villages called the *Barrios*. Every day activists built new structures to stay on the trees and every day they were getting evicted by the police until a total eviction in December 2020.

«Wald statt asphalt», Forest instead of asphalt, is the main slogan in Danneröder.

«Zadists are considered parasites by the media, but there are much more dangerous parasites, such as those which destroy all life.» Writes David Graeber.<sup>15</sup>

This is the chorus of a song from the Zad du Carnet where the demonstrators address to the police:

**«Open your eyes wide and look behind your shield,  
These are your children and your sisters on the barricades,  
It's your blood that flows every time you cut down a tree,  
See how we live and see how we believe»<sup>16</sup>**

15. *Eloge des mauvaises herbes, ce que nous devons à la ZAD*. Jade Lindgaard, 2018, Les liens qui libèrent.

16. Extract from a Zad du Carnet song, *Zadistes La lueur*, Episode 14, Oikos Podcast, Soldat Petit Pois, January 11th, 2021.



Drawing inspired by a picture of the Dannenroder Zad.

**I had the wish to kiss someone from the height of a tree. He was sitting on a branch that was embracing the other tree where I was. He was on one tree; I was on the other, astride on the branch. As Philemon and Baucis in the greek myth, our two trees were embracing each other, their foliage mingling at the level where we were sitting. While talking, we got closer and closer, advancing on the branch that was becoming tinier and more fragile, until we could touch each other. And there, hold by these trees that were trying to become one we kissed.**

*One year later, in the summer,*

**I noticed a beautiful treehouse in a field at the edge of a grove. The hut was on the crown of an oak tree at around 6 meters above the floor. I managed to go up quite fast climbing the tree thanks to a thin hanging rope, and entered by a little hatch leading to the caban's floor. The caban was still under construction, some pieces of wall roof and floor were missing... I stayed up there until nightfall. It was a wonderful feeling to be so alone, clandestine, floating above the ground slightly moving with the tree under the wind.**

**Some weeks after I brought my friend there. Together we climbed up the tree thanks to the tiny rope next to the trunk and faced the underside of the treehouse platform but this time, the hatch was locked, maybe the builders had noticed that someone had already broken in, namely me several times before. This was inopportune... We were so close to it and now the access became really complicated if not impossible. There was one, quite dangerous, way left though: to climb by the side of the hut, which meant having the ass facing the void. I personally was too scared for that but my friend didn't care about height at all so she went easily up and threw me a rope from the hut.**



## KISS FROM TWO ENTWINED TREES

~> While walking at the frontier of meadow and forest, locate two trees that grew together intertwined. Climb until you reach a branch where you can stay comfortably seated. Feel the contact with the tree, how it welcomes your presence on its structure. You can stay there for a while with your partner, next to you, at the same height, but on the other tree.

## MAKE LOVE IN A TREEHOUSE

~2 frontal lamps

~2 blankets

~2 beers

~Last reggeaton songs

~Box of cigarillos

~Isolated treehouse

~Ropes

~> Manage to sneak in a treehouse with your crush to sleep under the stars.



Drawing inspired by a picture of Kein\_ in the forest of Dannenroder. «EMBALLEZ VOUS (avec la langue)» Graff from the French feminist group Douceur Extreme.

**Admirative, I joined her and we went on the roof. We stayed lying down for a while, looking at the stars. I was anxious because I knew what I wanted, I was definitely attracted to her but was too shy to initiate anything. We came down to the inside of the hut, I lit a cigarillo because I needed its stunning effect in my mind. And there we started to exchange smoke in a shotgun kiss. I loved that her lips were shaped like a heart. There in the middle of the wood, in balance in the void only supported by some wooden planks, I felt super light, light as a bird. It was as if we were not humans anymore, we were the air inside of the treehouse, the light of the candle, the smell of the cigarillo, and the leaves.**

«Si vous aimez vraiment la vie, et bien... *defendez la!* »<sup>17</sup>

17. "If you really love life, well... Defend it!", Zadistes La lueur, Episode 14, Oikos Podcast, Soldat Petit Pois, January 11th, 2021.







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