



EDEN

and Everything

AFTER



// Gold snake with a gaping mouth and a wavy body. Found on the island Finnøy, Rogaland. 1800 BCE – CE 1050. Photo: Terje Tveit, Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger.



// Naga II Nammu, excerpt.  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022.







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# Preface

// Iselin Grayston, head of the public outreach department //

// Kristin Armstrong-Oma, project leader //

The temporary exhibition *Eden and Everything After* is one of a series of exhibitions where the Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, collaborates with artists to invite their unique perspectives into our museum.

Our exhibitions are meant to share collections, but often the objects are presented in solitude, although several together on a showcase shelf, they are elliptical and turn on their own axes. The rich life that surrounded them, in all its dirty physicality, is lost in translation. It is our work as a research institution to bring forth knowledge of those messy, lively interfaces that once existed.

Dissemination of our research, both of its foundational value and its consequences for current affairs, is part of our strategic mission. A fruitful approach to reach this aim is to collaborate with artists and other strong, current voices. *Eden and Everything After* is one of several projects where we welcome artists to activate our collections. By welcoming the artistic gaze, we wish to give our visitors a new dimension and inspire to novel reflections on our own exhibitions.

Collaborations with artists raises questions of our identity as a museum of archaeology – what is our overarching mission, what stories should we tell, and which kinds of narratives

should we make space for in our exhibitions? Considering that our social mission is to shed light on our contemporary society by researching the past, we need to reach back into our misty origins. Projects like these, that bridge past, present and future, help us understand our current time from a novel perspective.

The gaze of the artist is that of an outsider. By inviting it in, we create a kaleidoscopic view of the past, current museum institutions and society at large where they all cast light upon each other.

By scrutinising ourselves in such a manner we want to open an arena dedicated to debates concerning the relationship between art, archaeology, and our common history. There is much that we know, but also much that is hidden in the past. Letting the artist dive into these hidden depths and unfold in this mysterious space can make room for reflections on past materiality, its makers and artists as well as past art.

The prehistoric objects are revived through Tanja Thorjussen's gaze. The energy felt when holding and simultaneously drawing the object shines through her artistic works presented in this exhibition. It has been a privilege for us to work closely with Thorjussen and partake in her process. By lending us her gaze, she lets



us see the animal figurines with her eyes, which enriches the objects and reactualise them to thereby carry their agency into the future.

We wish to extend our warmest thanks to the contributors of this project, first and foremost Dr. Jean Marie Carey, our postdoctoral fellow who initiated the exhibition and the catalogue, that springs from her Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship project *Prehistoric Paradigms of 'Animalised' Art from Modernist Visions of Utopia to Post-History*. We are grateful to all the contributors to this catalogue for their timely and thought-provoking texts. Designer Marte Moen Danielsen has, by her conceptual design, elegantly brought the exhibition together. Graphic designer Ingund Svendsen has created a sublimely beautiful catalogue and exhibition graphics. Not least we extend our thanks to Tanja Thorjussen for enlivening the collections with her exquisite works and for creating an atmospheric universe for reflection, learning and magic.

We are proud to work with such gifted colleagues and collaborators that elevate the objects in our care and contribute to creating new knowledge of the past. Such projects inspire us to look at the objects, their past makers and users – the people of the past – by enlightening hidden aspects of the collections. ◆



# Introduction

// Jean Marie Carey //

*Eden and Everything After* has been germinating since 2017, when I became aware of both the Animals Mediating the Real and Imaginary (ARI) research cluster at Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, and the artistic practice of Tanja Thorjussen. It became simultaneously clear that neither activism nor activist-inflected art had done much to curtail the plight of the planet, of animals, or humans. Mourning always contains elements of longing, and imagining alternative paths to the present. The force of the past revealed itself as necessary to new artistic practices, whether they be enacted via emergent media or rediscovering old ones.

As this seed of relationships began to grow, it became clear to Thorjussen, ARI's director Kristin Armstrong-Oma, and myself that an exhibition bringing together the various effects of this impulse could itself have a kind of force of refusal. The exhibition could not only demonstrate the power of our connection to animals across time, but would also reclaim and activate a category of image-making that the illusion of secularism in the 21st Century had silenced, abandoned, and even made contentious – namely, animals as elevated subjects imbued with spirits around whom we formed

our own devotional rituals. The Museum of Archaeology, which welcomed our project, was in the process of inaugurating a series of collaborative exhibitions with artists and filmmakers. Acknowledging that exhibitions, even the most neutrally calibrated ones, such as the display of the beloved skeleton of a polar bear, nonetheless always take a position, and are always driven by deep-seated motivations, the museum agreed to allow us a forum for our ideas.

Thus it was that the catalogue for this exhibition was conceived from the outset as a book with a coherent proposition to honour my foundational concern, *Der Blaue Reiter* Almanach, not only in tangential homage to its creators, but also the reinterpretation of Eden by “modernism’s integrative personality,”<sup>[1]</sup> Franz Marc, and how it could be regained by allowing its animal inhabitants to maintain their pristine habitat, imaginatively, and even, possibly, in the future.

For Marc, paradise became an image of his own artistic endeavor of imagining a world where animals and humans lived in harmony and could communicate. He was not so much concerned with the historical paradise of Adam and Eve, but rather with the paradise of a life





// Figures 1–3. Details of the atelier and the replica of the *Paradies* mural made in situ by August Macke and Franz Marc in 1912. Photos: Jean Marie Carey

beyond mortality, which at best awaits us at the end of all days. This longing for reunion had its earthly expression in art: “Its great goal is [...] to show an unearthly being that lives behind everything, to break the mirror of life so that we can look into being.”<sup>[2]</sup>

A larger-than-life mural (Figs. 1–3) in a private studio initially seems paradoxical, since monumental works are usually aimed at a larger public. But the *Paradies* fresco created in 1912 in the fifth-floor attic atelier of August and Elisabeth Macke laid claim to an ideal audience of two, in its instigators, Franz Marc (1880–1916) and August Macke (1887–1914).

Marc’s and Macke’s paradise on Bornheimstraße in Bonn was the result of utopian love and creative communion. As such, it depicts the longings and fantasies of two artists on an

equal footing. In addition, the painted paradise, especially the dreamy animals surrounding a substantial yet gossamer Eve, stand for that invisible “being” that art in general fundamentally tries to approach.

August Macke was killed in 1914 at the beginning of the First World War. In 1916 Franz Marc likewise fell victim. After collaborating with his friend on the mural in the late summer of 1912, Marc returned to his home in Sindelsdorf. Presciently, he then wrote to Macke: “The air smells of snow; it’s been so quiet and wintry since you’ve been gone.”<sup>[3]</sup>

As a similarly intuitive and fearlessly sincere and authentic messenger, Tanja Thorjussen is able to travel to the mind’s eye of the past, bringing to the nascent future harbingers of a form of life not obliterated by the Sixth Mass

Extinction, yet changed, rematerialized in the unthinkable conditions of a doomed planet. The *Tupilaq* relics and drawings are projections of utopianism from a refuge of necessary unmoored isolation. They work specifically to recode time and transfer essential species characteristics to survivable forms. Thorjussen's use of ancient artefacts from the museum's collection in the creation of new works allows the injection of our present into a network of material and mythology, connection to a system of the sacred and echoes of paradises past, if not lost.

Of course the makers of the originary objects from the museum have hardly disappeared. Each item hewn from stone or metal contains traces of an even deeper regression. For each rock, each geological element, is the evidence of whole forests, whole species, who have decayed and under the pressure of this process have become a form of frozen eternity. *Eden and Everything After* aims to tease apart, while joining, these layers.

The idea of Eden and what comes after it is not at all demarcated by the territories occupied by this exhibition, however assertive it might be. Thus I am extremely grateful to the contributors to this volume, who have helped to carry our project farther, into book form, where the horizon of the conversation can grow and evolve. Funding for my research has come from the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and from the U.S-Norway Fulbright Foundation. For the design of this book I am indebted to Ingund Svendsen and, for its oversight, to Kristin Armstrong-Oma. To this entire group of people who have made both the exhibition and catalogue possible, I extend my deepest thanks. ♦

## Endnotes

- [1] Robin Lenman, "The Internationalization of the Berlin Art Market 1910-1920 and the Role of Herwarth Walden," in *Künstlerischer Austausch – Artistic Exchange*, vol. 3, ed. Thomas W. Gaehtgens (1993), pp. 535-542 (537).
- [2] Franz Marc, „Zur Kunsttheorie“ in *Schriften* (DuMont: Köln, 1978), 12. „Ihr großes Ziel ist, [...] ein unirdisches Sein zu zeigen, das hinter allem wohnt, den Spiegel des Lebens zu zerbrechen, daß wir in das Sein schauen.“
- [3] August Macke and Franz Marc. *August Macke, Franz Marc; Briefwechsel*. (Köln: DuMont Schauberg), 1964 (62). „Die Luft riecht nach Schnee; es ist so still und winterlich geworden, seit Du weg bist.“







# Connecting to the Past - Artistic Research and Intuitive Listening

// Tanja Thorjussen //

Holding a small stone seal from the Stone Age in my hand is magnificent, and drawing it is a powerful and sublime experience.

In my preparation for the exhibition *Eden and Everything After* at Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, I have been studying objects in the museum collection carved in stone and cast in metals made by our ancestors that lived in the area of Norway now known as Rogaland. After being introduced to a variety of objects, there were three creatures who especially spoke to me: a seal, bird, and snake.

// *To hold the seal in my hand I dive into the ancient water energy of rivers and oceans I sense playful magic and ritual.*  
*To hold the bird in my hand I connect to the great above and the great below I recognize the Neolithic bird goddess*  
*To hold the snake in my hand I am surprised by how heavy and full of energy it is I glimpse the divine feminine.*

My artistic practice is based upon speculative research. By making artworks about a historical object, I speculate on its meaning and use. I imagine how it is held and revered. My aim is to connect to the past, present, and future based on intuitive listening and artistic methodology.

In this artistic research, delving into an object is equivalent to becoming friends with its maker and our ancestors' history. I connect to the living animal as well as the symbolic and mythological animal when I make art about it. In the research phase I study the animal's physics and behavior. I look at videos of how it moves if I cannot see it in real life, and study where it lives and what it eats. I read mythologies about what the animals have meant in different cultures.

In this project I have also contemplated how the objects from the collection were interpreted in the past. I imagine these objects as having been used by communities in ritual and reverence to connect to nature and animals, as they are both very skillfully made and have no scratches of everyday use.

Although we will never know what meaning they had, now they are resurrected to give us another perspective on something. By tapping into that something I study the real birds, seals, snakes of the present as well as the relics created by another artist, I feel as a sister of the past. An essential part of researching these ancient objects consists of drawing them. In drawing the object, I get to study both how the creator has made her interpretation of the animal, and the animal itself.



Drawing is for me studying in detail how the shape is created, it is tracing the thought process of the creation of the object. The material it was made in dictates how quickly or slowly it was made. By seeing and understanding the shape through drawing, it is clear to me that its creator had deep knowledge of the living animal, its essence, and its mythological aspects.

## Tupilaq

The Tupilaq diptych drawings are made with inspiration from the seal and the bird. Since 2015 I have created a series of Tupilaq drawings and Tupilaq Relics. Tupilaq derives from Inuit language and Greenland mythology. It is an object the shaman makes from animal, plant, and human materials. This Tupilaq is sent out into the world as a curse.

My Tupilaq is made with the intention to nurture and protect the animals and their habitat. When I create a Tupilaq I study what animals coexist in the area and what environmental challenges they are facing. Are their habitats decreasing? Do they have a hard time finding food? How can this Tupilaq I create help focus on this animal and their needs? By giving them wings for a speedy flight, claws to protect, and the ability to move swiftly through water, I wish for them to be equipped for whatever challenge they are facing. These Tupilaqs made for the Eden and Everything After exhibition are both linked to the objects in the collection and the animals in the area they were found.

The seal Tupilaq has bird wings, a raven claw, and a hooflike tree root. The bird Tupilaq has butterfly wings, a polar bear paw, and a tree-like back leg. The bird object inspiring the bird Tupilaq is based on the diving bird, such as eider ducks, (Ærfugl) who can both dive into water and fly in the air. The seal Tupilaq

is inspired by the harbor seal which was also hunted by the people living in Rogaland such as in Svarthola ca 8000–6000 BCE.

## Tupilaq Relic

In my Tupilaq Relic series I have previously used found materials from nature. Here at the Museum of Archaeology I have been able also to include objects from the collection. In addition to the animal objects, I include tools such as spindle whorls and sinkers which have been found in Rogaland. The Tupilaq Relics holds the same intention as the drawings and are made with found objects from my travels and study trips since 2015. Driftwood from Russia and Greece, volcanic rock from Tenerife, reindeer antlers and rocks from Finnmark, wood from California, feathers from Oslo. The objects I have gathered contain special meaning to me and paired with the objects in the collection I hope they can activate an intention to protect and nurture nature cross borders.

## Into the garden

Preparing for the exhibition *Eden and Everything After* has made me contemplate the Garden of Eden. When did the concept of Eden begin? Why did we separate ourselves from the wild? Why was nature tamed and made into a garden?

In our age of transitioning from the Holocene to the Anthropocene epoch, reflections on the balance between what nature provides and what humans consume is paramount. Earth is a wild place, with wild forces and creatures, and we cannot control it. We nonetheless treat it as a garden. When the human city structure is imposed and nature is tamed, we create a situation where the Earth's ecosystem becomes unbalanced. When our whole world becomes a formal garden, we might believe

that we are in control of our environment, but we are not.

In many mythologies the Garden of Eden was inhabited by trees and placid animals strolling around. The one aspect in the garden of Eden that was not controllable was perhaps the snake. For the last three years I have studied the mythology of the snake through how it has been portrayed historically in art for the last millennia. In the triptych drawing I have reflected on the garden of Eden by portraying the primordial snake and the world tree.

The drawing is inspired by the small gold snake in the collection as well as my readings of various creation myths and indigenous cultures where the snake is one of the main primordial beings. While doing research I noticed how the snake in many cultures was often a creatrix, and goddess representing water, the river, regeneration, fertility, and the mystery of creation.

The world tree of plenty which nourishes humanity and upholds the structure of the universe is in Norse mythology called Yggdrasil and in ancient Sumerian called the Huluppi tree. These trees both have a mythology of a snake connected to them, and so has the tree in the garden of Eden.

The name Naga in the title refers to the many mythologies and cultures in Hinduism and Buddhism where a Nāga is a divine serpent with many healing abilities.

I have tried to unpack and dig deep into the snake in particular as its history is loaded with contradictory messages. With this drawing I would like to focus on the positive aspect of the snake in mythologies throughout time. In my reading I have come to understand the snake as the main primordial goddess of creation, or the energy in which all life originates from. The owl in the drawing is inspired by Athenas Owl

in Greek mythology, the *Athene noctua* and the many birds in mythology being the messenger of news and premonitions.

In my work of weaving together the past and present many questions have arisen. How can these objects of the deep past help us reconnect to the same nature, animals, and earth that still exist? What were the objects used for? And what is their meaning today? After a long time buried and forgotten, to be resurrected by the archaeologist, these objects are now in the museum where they convey something unique to us.

I believe our ancestors cherished these objects and their makers created them with great skill and insight into the animals' physical, spiritual, and mythological significance. These animals are still important, and in my work as an artist I search for, and visualize, the influence they have in the world.

The act of drawing an ancient object is to me the main entry to understand its history. I invite you to listen to the past. I invite you to take an object you love and hold it in your hand when you make a drawing of it. The connection to its creator is immediate and you will understand more of how it is made and maybe why.

In working on this exhibition, I dove deep into history, archaeology, astronomy, mythologies, and indigenous cultures by reading, meditating, observing, and drawing. The beautiful objects found in the Stavanger area, and my reading on human history stretching back in time have led me on a journey learning and connecting to our ancestors in a wonderful and enriching way. I am grateful to witness how all our mythologies make up a rich tapestry of interconnected stories on what it means to be human. I give thanks to every person, creature, spirit, and muse who has made this exhibition and journey possible.



// Tupilaq Relic Slange. Art installation. Animal figurine, snake, gold, Bronze Age or Iron Age (1800 BCE–CE 1050), from Hesby, Finnøy. Tanja Thorjussen, 2022.





THE SNAKE:

Found: Hesby, Finnøy

Dated: Late Iron Age

## Letter to snake:

*Snake*

*Naga*

*Mystic beauty of regeneration and rebirth*

*Cyclic being*

*Water bearer fluid flowing*

*I am invoking your return*

*I am asking of your energy to resurface*

*It is time for you to remind us of what has been forgotten*

*What I do not know, what it means to be human*

*How earth energy is expressed through naga and tree*

*How healing and knowledge is expressed in your duality*

*How human knowledge is earth knowledge*

*We invoke your spirit and connect to it*

*We honor it and are curious and positive of what we learn and  
relearn*

*What we remember*

*Naga*

*Your resurrection of abundant sharing of Gaia's resources*

*The earth Gaia is reciprocity, is regeneration*

*We are many gathering who work for change*

*The knowledge you have from our ancestors are needed*

*We ask for help*

*I invoke all goddesses holding your knowledge*

*Inanna, Ishtar, Isis, Demeter, Persephone, Cybele, Aphrodite,*

*Pandora, Maria, Anna, Shahmaran, Kali, Lilith, Eve*

*We are ready to receive your wisdom, ready to expand knowledge,  
ready to change*

*I am your oracle*

// Tupilaq Relic Sel. Art installation. Animal figurine, seal, soap stone, Stone Age (8000–1800 BCE), Nordre Sunde, Stavanger. Driftwood from Greece, feather from Oslo, spindle whorl, stray find, Iron Age or Medieval (CE 100–1300). Tanja Thorjussen, 2022.



## MEETING SEAL

Found: Nore Sunde, Stavanger

Dated: Stone Age

This seal is made to hold in the hand, to be a tactile experience, it has a smooth surface and perfect form.

The seal has an expression of warmth and humor, created with great skills and precision, and fits perfectly in my hand. The stone warms up as I hold it and becomes familiar and intimate as I draw it. I study its form. By replicating the seal in drawing I understand more of the form and the process of making it, how complex and refined it is.

I have an inner image of a child, the child loves this seal, she holds it in her hand.

I have an inner image of a grown woman, she is strong and powerful, a shaman and a shaper of objects. When I hold the seal in my hand in a specific way I feel the strength of it, the seal-strength, the strength of the ocean, water and currents in the river, and the seal ancestors.

The seal is cute, and powerful and strong, which is what seal energy is, and this is what this seal expresses.

Seal in the Stone Age is the same as the seal now. Humans in Stone Age is the same as humans now.

### Letter to seal:

*Dear Seal,*

*I am so happy we met and that I could spend this time with you.*

*You were presented to me by Håkon, which takes care of you and all the other objects found around Stavanger that are now taken care of by the people working at Arkeologisk Museum in Stavanger.*

*I was both surprised and in awe that I could touch you and hold you in my hand, and this touch has made all the difference. I have held you in my hand every day, and in this way experienced different aspects of your form.*

*It is easy to fall in love with you, your expression is enormously cute. Your maker created an open expression and a content smile. This openness that is nature itself, this curiosity that is seal and human.*

*You express interspecies communicating.*

*Your maker made you this way and gifted this form to us and the future us.*

*When I draw an animal, a seal, I must feel the personality of the seal. I sense the strength of the movement in water, and the curiosity and quick wit of assessing a situation. Moving with speed and grace.*

*When I express seal, I have to imagine what that feels like and observe seal energy, and meditate on being seal.*

*I connect physically and spiritually to seals and their purpose in this world.*

*Your maker has done the same.*

*She has made you in the most loving way, with awe and respect and with the intention of being close to and learning your energy.*

*You are a vessel of communication; you have a function.*

*My understanding of this function is not scientific, it is human.*

*To understand you means to understand my inner human ness, stripped from electronic devices.*

*I have to be in solitude, near water, near the seal to understand it.*

*Thank you for showing this to me.*



THE BIRD

Found: Høyland, Sandnes

Dated: Stone Age

Letter to bird:

*As above so below  
You fly, swim, dive  
You visit the underworld and is resurrected  
You are the messenger  
Tell us our fortune  
Tell of our destiny  
Connecting the hydrosphere  
I listen  
You are the messenger*

*Diving below the surface you show us what  
the underwater depths hold  
What the fish tells you  
What the octopus tells you  
What the seal tells you*

*Great interconnector  
You travel across lands and water  
Carried on winds  
To landscapes I do not know  
To landscapes I know well*

*Flying high you show us what the brilliant  
sky hold  
You are eternal  
Returning to us with wisdom  
As a phoenix you resurface  
Each autumn I am sad to see that you left  
I miss you in the winter  
Rejoice upon your return*

*Let me witness your strength  
Not your decline  
I support you and wish you well*



// Tupilaq Relic Fugl. Art installation. Animal figurine, bird, soapstone, Late Stone Age (4000–1800 BCE), Høyland, Sandnes. Rocks from Finnmark, feather from Oslo. Tanja Thorjussen, 2022.

*I declare you sacred sentient being  
I declare your habitat sacred sentient being  
I declare my support, protection and nurture  
for you and your habitat  
I hear you sing, cry, screech, howl  
You are part of us  
I accept your grace ♦*

# Eden – Time and Again. An Essay on Despair and Hope

// Kristin Armstrong Oma //

## The Spell of Eden

I am sitting in a stuffy conference room in Dublin, attending a conference on hunters and gatherers in the past and the present, when one of the speakers gives a talk about the current trend of rewilding us back to the past, to safeguard a future in which we survive. There are a slew of articles in British media addressing a return to Eden as a solution to the climate emergency, and a growing number of books addressing rewilding, a reset of the environment to a previous point in history. But when should that point be? Before fire? Before domestication? Before the Industrial Revolution?

I picked up one of these books, *Losing Eden – Why Our Minds Need the Wild* by Lucy Jones (2020). Jones makes a poignant case for how necessary it is for human beings to spend time in “the natural world”. Although this term, along with “nature”, implicitly carry with them a nature-culture divide and are as such to me deeply problematic, her none-the-less substantial point is that we need to spend time outdoors, with living, organic beings such as trees, grass, animals etc. Against my better judgement, I will use the term here. Jones presents research demonstrating that being near, or seeing, the

natural world is bone-deep good for us, and is, for example, a success factor for convalescing patients in medical institutions. What we stand to lose with global warming and loss of natural habitats is staggering – beyond imagining – not just in terms of food security but also for our mental health. In Jones’ eloquent prose, Eden is potentially every natural place on the planet. But for me, as an archaeologist, Eden is a trope – a paraphrase of metaphors, clichés, and figures of speech – that connects us to the past, as well as to the animals and plants that share our world.

If we take Eden seriously from the point of view of archaeology, what would Eden have been like? In this contribution, I will consider Eden from three perspectives: first and second, briefly, as a physical place and an empirical find set. Thirdly, I will dwell on Eden as a state of mind – in societies both prior to and following domestication, in which there was a deep awareness, knowledge, and respect for all beings – and how this feeds our current imagination as a panacea for the climate emergency and nature collapse.

The exhibition *Eden and Everything After* has a deep-time perspective and mediates real and



imagined animals by uniting art in the past, present, and future by a deep engagement with past and present artists. Art is created by combining objects from the collections of the Museum of Archaeology with found objects.

Tanja Thorjussen has created hybrid beings, Tupilaqs, in visual media and installations in which animal figurines from the past come alive and merge with other life forms. A Tupilaq is a spell that combines different components and send these out into the world to realise its purpose by magic – the elements are forged together to create something strong, bigger than the sum of its parts, something that holds life. The spell a Tupilaq weaves intends to secure a future on a planet that continues to be habitable for humans and other animals. Ideas of equilibrium, harmony, and sustainability are anchored together in an archetype that is foundational to European cultural history, an archetype central to our communities: the Garden of Eden.

This concept is represented by the shimmering projection of the modernist mural *Paradies*, painted on a wall of the Macke House in Bonn, Germany, in 1912, by Maria Marc, Franz Marc, and August Macke. Thorjussen's art and that of the artists of the past merge, and our simultaneously retrospective and futuristic glance meet in the idea of, and longing for, Eden.

## A Return to Eden

The garden is a metaphor of the beginnings of Western culture. Its time depth makes it something to ponder for archaeologists. However, although archaeology in its infancy juggled the trowel in one hand and the Bible in the other, the search for the garden of Eden holds no direct sway over the discipline today, except as a trope for a half-remembered dream.

In this trope, Eden is simultaneously a state of mind, a mythical time in history, and a physical locale. The Garden of Eden is not as such searched for except by biblical archaeologists and google, but there are sometimes excavations of “unspoilt” places, particularly islands, bereft of predators and rich with plant life, that let the trope drift to the surface.

Within the ontological turn in social sciences, a return to indigenous knowledge systems offers an Eden of sorts, not one where the lion sleeps with the lambs but one where there is an intrinsic embeddedness of beings in ecosystems, a seamless understanding of oneness and maybe also a promise for a different future.

Archaeological investigations that manage to shake loose from the shackles of humanism and the normative fantasy of human exceptionalism hold potential to do the same and create narratives of alternative understandings of the past to hold up as beacons of inspiration and hope.

The Garden of Eden is what every dedicated gardener tries to recreate, regardless of the size of the plot. The story in the Book of Genesis posits that the garden was fashioned by God to fill with the beings and creatures \*he\* had created during his seven-day creative frenzy. \*He\* then left his creatures to work it all out, which did, according to the narrative given in Genesis, 2.8, end badly.

God the creator is famously epitomised by William Blake (1757–1827), the British Romantic poet and painter, who rendered Urizen, the creator in Blake's personal mythology, complete with a compass in his painting *The Ancient of Days* from 1794 (Fig. 1). It is as such a powerful metaphor of the deep time beginnings that has been strongly influential upon Western culture. There was once this beautiful place, untainted by greed and unnatural



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// Figure 1. William Blake, *The Ancient of Days Setting a Compass to the Earth* (circa 1800). Drawing on paper, 296 by 188 millimetres. The British Museum, London. Nr. 1885,0509.1619.

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// Figure 2. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Paradies*, 1530. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Germany. Oil on poplar wood, 80 by 118 centimetres. Nr. 1908 A.

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curiosity, but then we squandered it. This narrative has been heavily influential on artists through the ages, for example by the German painter Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) and his rendering of the story of ejection from 1530 (Fig. 2).

However, Eden was in early history – and still is by some – also thought of as a real place, east of Canaan, somewhere in Mesopotamia, a place that was still there but out of reach – we have been barred from entry and subjected to hide in shame behind fig leaves. Therefore, Eden has become the epitome of longing for the beautiful and serene life in the secluded garden, a life without toil and sweat, where “nature” – animals and plants – would freely share its abundance with its human denizens. Where the lion slept with the lambs. No wonder that there have been those that have been trying to locate it as a physical locale.

### The Eden That Never Was

If we were to find Eden archaeologically, what would it look like? Would we even recognise it? What kind of ancient objects would it have left behind? Would there be a physical boundary that could be retrieved as an architectonic feature? Stone implements used by Adam and Eve? Or a certain something still lingering in the air? It would be an impossible task to make a scientifically stringent argument for



an archaeological site to be the remains of Eden itself.

So, it seems there is slim chance of ever locating a physical place that ever manifested the Garden of Eden, and it might not even be considered a worthy pursuit. Although this kind of Bible-driven archaeology is popular in fringe circles, this search has not resulted in any big discoveries. Eden as a physical locale holds little curiosity today in archaeology except for some pursuers of biblical archaeology.

The other avenue of investigation that draws upon Eden as a metaphor is the young scientific





discipline of genetics, that strives to find the origins of humans, but finds it is much more complicated than anyone could have imagined. As Harvard geneticist David Reich said in 2020: “When it comes to human ancestry, there was no Garden of Eden.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### Rewilding – A Return to Eden?

This intense scrutiny by the media and by naturalists on past environmental history serves to identify issues that need to be not just researched but also thought hard about. Crowding to the front is the hand-wringing

question: when and where did we go wrong, when did life as we know it become under threat? Another important issue is well-meant but phrased awkwardly, demonstrating a staggering flaw in perception: What does nature/wilderness do for us and can we live without it? And down the line, the nagging question is about our readiness: How can we prepare for a future without insects and glaciers? And everything else that we might lose, not to mention our creature comforts?

Regarding the first question, the complexity of life is such that even the very wise cannot see how it all ends – meaning that the same crowd cannot agree on one point that can be pinpointed as the grand finale tipping point. There are several tipping points, and scientists who do modelling of big data agree that they can cascade in unforeseeable directions. Models are probability predictions and are a useful tool for decision making and policies, but not so much for mentally navigating – or drowning – in the murky waters of terror of an unknown future.

In 1974 when James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis published their influential Gaia-hypothesis, named after the primordial Greek earth goddess, they proposed that different large-scale systems pull together to create the conditions for life on the planet by their synergetic interactions. Living organisms and inorganic, geological surroundings (mountains, deserts, bodies of water, etc.) form a self-regulating complex system that maintains and perpetuates conditions for life. In other words, everything in our world depends on everything else.

The Gaia-theory demonstrates that a shift in perception within humanity is clearly needed. A shift in perception can be achieved by studying the ways our ancestors lived, as a



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deep immersion in their lifeworld, profoundly connected to everything and everyone around them. If there is a Garden of Eden that archaeologists can find, it is in every site, every location where humans in the past and the present live in complete entanglement with the world around them, whether they be hunters, gatherers, or farmers.

One way of moving forward is a deep engagement with indigenous knowledge. A poignant example, one often held up as an example of a stakeholder perspective, is found in the way The First Nation Oneida tribe would go about their move from one camp site to another. As they were planning their move, they realised that their plans would interfere with the wolves living in the territory. What would they do about those wolves? At a council meeting where the elders were debating the move, one person was elected to advocate for the rights and needs of the animals in the new territory. When the meeting began, they asked: “Who speaks for Wolf?”

This way of looking at the world, found in many indigenous communities as well as in past communities, sees everything as an interconnected web. Although the Western civilization is a large and many-headed beast and should not be conflated to one overarching worldview, it is still fair to ask: Who speaks for Wolf today? Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) speak for both Wolf and other wild animals. But who speaks for Wolf around

the campfires, or tables, where decisions are being made? Who, in inner governmental circles, speaks for Wolf? For example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) formulated by the United Nations, are anthropocentric, and although life on land and life in sea are separate goals, they are formulated not as if life on land and in sea have an intrinsic value, but rather that we must preserve them to safeguard the future of the human race, and have clean and unpolluted habitats for us to live in, as well as waters to swim in. In other words, what’s in it for us and our species?

## Hope after Eden

These issues reflect an eerie sense of disconnect that is felt by so many in this time – a deep-seated eco-grief that finds its rallying point in public figures like Greta Thunberg and organisations like Extinction Rebellion. The Deep Adaptation movement created by Jem Bendell and his self-published paper by the same name, is notable because it created a wider conversation about climate emergency, possible societal collapse and because Bendell provides a road map of sorts for how to navigate and reconcile a bleak future.

But it has also given rise to the European Union’s Green New Deal and a massive roll-out of policies such as ending single use plastic and cleaning up the oceans. However, radical changes in big systems policies are needed to implement the Gaia-hypothesis and a broad

stakeholder perspective to create real change in the way humans understand their own place on the planet.

To return to archaeology – what role can a discipline that deals with the past possibly contribute to these murky waters – when even the wise cannot say how it will all end? The lesson from archaeology is that we have studied so many gardens of Eden and their collapse, so many civilisations and their demise. Life finds a way, and even though our current global civilisation might be in danger, it does not mean that the world will end. This extinction event that we are living through and forced to bear witness to, is heart-wrenching, but according to current scientific knowledge, it is number

*// Rather than being consumed by worry and grief, we should prepare for a life worth living, no matter the state of the planet.*

six in our planetary development. And after the other five, life has found a way to thrive, and it will again. So, archaeology has a lesson for us about how to not be consumed by an overwhelming sense of despair – and to detach from the current cognitive dissonance that is the flip side of the coin. It encourages us to engage in the world we live in here and now, to really *see* it, in all its splendour and decay. Rather than being consumed by worry and grief, we should prepare for a life worth living, no matter the state of the planet.

One example of this is the model of trophic cascades, an ecological concept that describes how indirect interactions within ecosystems, for example between predators and prey, can

change demographics of animal populations but also landscapes and vegetation. A famous example is the top-down cascade of how grey wolves (*Canis lupus*) were re-introduced in Yellowstone National Park in the Western United States after decades of absence. Ecologists were amazed to see how this set off indirect interactions that led to changes in the ecosystem and a richer species diversity, and even physical geological changes to the river course. Some of the mechanisms involved how wolves regulated the elk (*Cervus canadensis*) population and their behaviour. Elk would graze and drink water at the riverbank, leading to a barren environment and a straight, swift-flowing river.

The reintroduced wolves started hunting down the elk, leading to decrease in the population as well as driving the elk away from the bank where they were easy prey. Consequently, vegetation started growing along the banks. This brought back a diversity of vegetation, including trees, that attracted birds and beavers. Bio-engineering beavers started damming up the river, creating a richer biodiversity still, and the slower-running river started meandering. The changed vegetation brought in foxes, rabbits, mice, insects, reptiles and amphibians, species that had been absent in the open, over-grazed landscape created by the over-populated elk. Regulation of the elk population by the reintroduced wolves led to landscape changes where a wider diversity of species could thrive. So, even though the only thing the wolves did was to hunt elk, they created shifts in the food-web that had wide-ranging implications. This example demonstrates how trophic interactions shape patterns of biodiversity. Returning for a moment to indigenous knowledge, it also highlights the importance of including



// *Trophic cascades unravels the question “what does nature do for us” that is tacitly present in a lot of media articles, policy papers and even the Sustainable Development Goals formulated by the United Nations.*

a wide stakeholder perspective in ecological management and how necessary it is to appoint someone to “speak for Wolf” – and all the other creatures – in a metaphorical sense in order to create a richness of life-webs.

Trophic cascades unravels the question “what does nature do for us” that is tacitly present in a lot of media articles, policy papers and even the Sustainable Development Goals formulated by the United Nations. This question, inherent in several approaches to wilderness, reveals a perception of humans as a monolithic species, as though we exist in separation from the world around us. If we think about it for just three seconds and notice how the wild wind is the air that we breathe into our lungs, that feeds our blood with oxygen that is transported around in our bodies – basic, life-sustaining functions, we realise that the idea of a separation between us and nature is simply not true. Therefore, the question needs rephrasing: what does life need to survive and how can its composites thrive together?

Emerging from a stuffy conference room, I enter a spacious museum and an exhibition that starts a conversation that aims to bring together concepts of Eden through the ages. With her Tupilaqs, Tanja Thorjussen speaks for Seal, Snake, and Bird. She shows us how they are interconnected with everything else, but more than that – their dreamy, inward-looking expressions are a striking example of their rich inner world. Seeing them, something changes inside

of the perceptive viewer. Thorjussen invites us to reflect upon these beings, composites of many forms, as beings with an intrinsic value, beings that are awake to their inner joy, beings fully immersed in how their lives matter to them.

And if they matter to them, they should also matter to us. ♦

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# Encounters with Animals from Lost Worlds

// Håkon Reiersen //

*'We are making an exhibition based on object shaped like animals. Can you help us, Håkon?'*

Working as a keeper of the museum collections, you get intimate knowledge about different groups of objects. A very special and non-uniform group of objects is those shaped like animals. When I was asked about which objects might be suitable for this exhibition, it was an easy job to write the list. Many of these animal objects are like old friends whom you know well. Being unique and visually effective, several of the objects on my list are “classics” in our museum and have been on display since they were unearthed. Other objects are well-kept secrets that few other than the collection keepers know about. In this text, I share my reflections when thinking about these animal objects in the light of past and present worlds, focusing on my personal experience with some of the exhibited objects. As a group, they reflect a long prehistorical time span from the Mesolithic to the Viking Period.

## Birds, Seals, Fishes, and Whales from Stone Age Worlds

Among the obvious museum classics are a bird and a seal made of soapstone. They are both

stray finds, found in 1931 and 1935 respectively, and they have been exhibited and photographed together. The seal from Nore Sunde in Stavanger is particularly expressive, smiling to us from a time long gone. The bird found in Høyland, Sandnes, has a hole underneath, so that it could be placed for instance on a stick. In the permanent exhibition made in the 1990s, the bird and the seal were associated with hunting magic.<sup>[1]</sup> This brings my mind further to one of the large birds that were hunted in the Stone Age: the Great Auk. In the Mesolithic cave at Viste near Stavanger, bones of this bird were found in the midden.<sup>[2]</sup> In Norwegian, it is called “geirfugl”, deriving from Old Norse “geirr” meaning “spear”, and alluding to its pointy beak. The Great Auk is the Dodo of the North Atlantic. It was a large bird who could not fly. In the modern era, it was hunted to extinction in 1844.

When the seal and the bird were catalogued by Jan Petersen in the 1930s, he assumed that they were of a Stone Age date. The museum catalogues of the 1990s mention the uncertainty of this dating, as there were few parallels



known from existing contexts. However, recent excavations in northwest Norway confirm that this group of soapstone figurines of birds and marine mammals stem from the Stone Age. A small bird figure found at Skatestraumen in Nordfjord is dated to the middle Neolithic.<sup>[3]</sup> In 2012, a whale figure and a bird figure of soapstone was found at Mesolithic sites in Øygarden near Bergen.<sup>[4]</sup>

In the 1980s, a soapstone fishing net sinker with a fish motif was found at Frøneset at the Hå river, south of Stavanger. Despite a lack of parallels, based on shoreline dating, Sveinung Bang-Andersen proposed a date between

*// When researchers opened his stomach, they uncovered a troublesome diet. He had swallowed about 40 plastic objects, mainly plastic bags.*

the late Mesolithic and the middle Neolithic.<sup>[5]</sup> When I participated at the excavation of a Stone Age site in 2010 at Bjarøy near Bergen, a similar sinker with geometric patterns was found. A few years later, another sinker was found at Bildø.<sup>[6]</sup> Leif Inge Åstveit interprets the motif on the Frøneset sinker as a halibut, well known from rock art. In Old Norse it was called “heilagr fiskr” – the holy fish.

Not far from Bjarøy, Bildø, and Øygarden, in 2017 a living whale was found severely injured at Vindenes in Sotra. Vindenes is an area with several known Stone Age sites.<sup>[7]</sup> The young male goose whale had to be euthanised. When researchers opened his stomach, they uncovered a troublesome diet. He had swallowed about 40 plastic objects, mainly plastic bags.

Through media coverage, the story of the dead “plastic whale” raised international attention to the issue of plastic pollution in the sea. In 2017, Sky News UK made a documentary on this issue, called A Plastic Whale. The plastic waste from the whale’s stomach were shown in a temporary exhibition at the University Museum of Bergen in 2017–19. The skeleton of the plastic whale and its stomach contents is now on permanent display, as a reminder and a warning.

## Mysterious Hybrid Animal from an Unknown Past

We then come to my more personal encounters with animal objects. The animal object that I have the most intimate relationship with is an object that literally caught my eye – or rather I caught its eye. One day in 2016 when I was working in the basement housing our collections, I felt as if I was being watched. Turning around, on a dark shelf I could see a stone figure with eyes staring right at me. I picked it up and did immediately realize that this was a remarkable object from the past (Fig. 1). But there were no markings on it that could point me in the direction of the context of the object. Many questions arose: What type of object was this? How old was it? Which being or beings was it supposed to represent? Where had it been found, and when?

Putting an image and a description out on a Facebook page on Norwegian archaeology, the editor of the page luckily recalled having seen this object in an article written in the 1970s. This proved to be correct. The archaeologist Odmund Møllerop indeed had published a short article on the figure in 1976, and its find context could thus be re-established. The figurine had been found in 1965, a few hundred metres from the sea at Dirdal, southeast of

// Figure 1. The mysterious soapstone figurine from Dirdal, phallic in shape and seemingly a hybrid combining attributes from various animal species – seal, fish, (polar) bear, amphibia, human? A 3D-model of the figurine is available at: [sketchfab.com/arkelogiskmuseum](https://sketchfab.com/arkelogiskmuseum). Photo: Terje Tveit, Museum of Archaeology,





Stavanger. However, the article of Møllerop did not adequately answer the questions of date, function, and which animal species this object represented. Still, with reference to the animal figures discussed above, a Stone Age date seems probable. I have previously written an online article about the figurine<sup>[8]</sup>, keeping several questions open for interpretation. In my view, having a mystery object like this in our collections truly has a value of its own.

### Bird pins and golden serpents – the end of an era and the start of a new

Wading birds was a motif already in the Stone Age and are also known from Bronze Age imagery.<sup>[9]</sup> In the Iron Age, the Migration Period seems to be the end of the era of the thick wading birds. A senior researcher once pinpointed to me the change in imagery from the wading birds to the far more aggressive animal imagery like ravens in the Merovingian and Viking periods. An example is the bird brooches of the Merovingian period. This change in symbolism and mentality was a sign of a new era – the rise of kingdoms and aggressive warrior ideologies.<sup>[10]</sup> In such a context, the small bird pins of bronze, depicting swans or ducks, represent the world that was. Such pins are found in Norwegian and Finnish female graves from the Migration Period.<sup>[11]</sup> As to their function, the common interpretation is that these were hair pins.<sup>[12]</sup> The birds in the hair give me associations to 1968, Woodstock and peace on earth. But this is an illusion, as the Migration Period by no means was a peaceful time.

The changes in iconography between the Migration Period and the Merovingian Period might well reflect real changes in society. The last decades, scientific evidence has shown that

*// The date fits well with my simplified narrative going from depictions of the “friendly” seals, whales, flatfishes, and wading birds to the more “aggressive” species like ravens, serpents – and killer whales.*

there was a climatic catastrophe at this time, The Fimbul Winter of Norse mythology.<sup>[13]</sup> The climatic changes led to death and conflict and was probably one major factor explaining the dramatic shifts of the 6th and 7th centuries. In this light, another animal object is of interest: The small golden serpent found in 1969 at Hesby in Stavanger.<sup>[14]</sup> Yet again, this was a stray-find, with an uncertain date and function. However, due to new parallels from the Staffordshire Hoard in England<sup>[15]</sup>, it might tentatively be interpreted as a sword sheath mounting from the Merovingian Period. To me, the skin-shifting serpent is a powerful symbol of the transformations of the time, at the start of a new era.

### Killer whales in the Viking world and the Anthropocene

We might finish this article with a soapstone sinker showing a whale’s head in each of its two ends. The whale sinker was found in 1947 in a potato field near the sea at Førland in Tysvær, north of Stavanger.

In my opinion, it is a killer whale that is depicted here.<sup>[16]</sup> The sinker might well have been modelled this way to transfer the great fishing skills of the killer whale to the object. In many ways, the soapstone sinker with killer

whale motif gives associations to Stone Age imagery and hunting magic. However, the unique sinker was catalogued by Viking Period specialist Jan Petersen as a sinker from this period. In respect of his deep knowledge of objects from the Viking Period, and his engagement with the museum collections through half a century, it is fair to assume that this is the correct date.

The date fits well with my simplified narrative going from depictions of the “friendly” seals, whales, flatfishes, and wading birds to the more “aggressive” species like ravens, serpents – and killer whales. In our era of Anthropocene, it is rather evident that the most aggressive species in fact is our own. Although we never were a “noble hunter”, we surely can do better.

The killer whale is one of the master hunters of the sea. Second after homo sapiens, it is the animal species with the widest geographical distribution on our blue planet. It is a highly intelligent and well-adapted species, beautifully coloured in black and white.

In the 1990s exhibition, the whale sinker was displayed laying helpless on its back. For an exhibition in 2016, I turned it around so that its beautiful head was facing the visitors. The craftsperson making the soapstone sinker, surely had great respect for this animal. And so should we. ♦

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# Of Honey-Coloured Stone

// Elna Siv Kristoffersen //

Honey coloured stone – of circular, biconic shape, incised with the sun. Defined as a spindle whorl – adding movement; a regular, repeating rhythm, cyclic.

## A honey-coloured spindle whorl

The described object, numbered S8607 1 is defined archaeologically as a spindle whorl that once sat on a spindle, as a weight keeping the circular movement of spinning going, making the movement regular and the spun tread even and strong (Fig. 1). At least during the object's life – the movement disrupted and stilled in a grave, following a woman who died sometime in the late 5th century.

The woman was buried on the farm Holmen (gnr. 29) in Bjerkreim, where she probably also lived her life. Two spindle whorls were laid down in her grave – one of simple form and without ornaments and the honey-coloured one. No skeleton was preserved. Her position in the grave was suggested by a collection of brooches, commonly found below the deceased's neck or on the chest and a collection of pots and wooden vessels, usually found below the deceased's feet, where also textile tools, such as spindle whorls, often are found. The honey-colored whorl, however, was found close to where the woman's head must have been, indicating a special relationship between

her and the object. However, the grave had been disturbed and at least some of the objects might have been moved from their original position. Perhaps also the spindle whorl that lay next to her head.

## Sun symbols and cosmic forces

Sun symbols are fairly common ornaments on spindle whorls from Rogaland. It has been suggested that the sun figures, the regular and rhythmic movement of spinning and the circular shape of the whorl were associated with the movement of the sun across the sky. Perhaps we recognize a remnant of such a cosmic relation embedded in the tradition that one should not be occupied with spinning during winter solstice – the circular movements of the spindle might disturb the cosmic forces and prevent the sun from returning.

The figures that constitute the rays in the sun figure on the Holmen whorl are slightly bent, giving the impression of the whorl in a spinning movement. Other whorls have radiating lines bent in a whirling pattern, probably connected to the spinning movement that might follow both the directions of Z- and S-spinning. These various directions of spinning have been argued to be embodied and profoundly based in cosmology, Z- and S-spinning being related to clockwise counterclockwise (medsols and motsols in





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// Figure 1. Circular spindle-whorl with centre-drilled hole, c. 450. University of Stavanger Archaeology Museum, Stavanger, Norway. Nr. S8607 I.

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Norwegian – meaning with the sun and against/counter the sun). These are the kind of connotations embedded in activities that constitute potential expressions creating certain set of associations. Spinning is also described as a mediative process encouraging mental activity and thinking.

## Time course and fate



*It was a long time ago that the eagles shrieked,  
the sacred waters poured down  
from Himinfell;  
then Helgi, the man of grat spirit,  
was born to Borghild in Bralund.  
Night fell on the place, the norms  
came,  
those who were to shape the  
fate for the prince....  
They twisted very strongly the  
strand of fate,  
...in Bralund;  
They prepared the golden thread  
And fastened it in the middle of  
the moons hall  
East and west they secured its  
ends,*

First Poem of Helgi Hundingsbani,  
1–4 (Larrington 1996, 114–115)

Textile work has the potential to create associations through expressive movements connecting body, tools and various kinds and stages in the process of production. Spinning produces thread of various length and quality that could be associated with different courses of life.

The thread might turn out to be long and strong – or short and full of knots – and it could come apart. Such connections are often related to the poem with the spinning norms. The exact meaning of the Norse words in the poem, is rather *making tread* or *twisting tread*, but often explained as spinning. Important to this understanding are also concepts such as *åndetråd* (spirit thread) and connection between *gand*, *seid* (i.e. practicing magic) and *spinning*.

Through metaphors of daily activities, such as spinning, large and complex questions, related to the cosmic forces and fate, might be more easily overcome and handled. The sun-related motifs may, however, on the other hand, also be explained by the simple and direct link between activity and tool – what could be more important than combining functionality with beauty in a tool which was handled daily and to bless ones work through the life-giving symbol of the sun?

## Spinning war

Within the seemingly peaceful practice of textile work, an additional element of war might be embedded. Spindle whorls may easily be confused with a certain kind of nearly identically-shaped sword amulets.

The iron weaving battens, or weaving swords, have a likeness to swords – and are occasionally known to have been remade from swords.



The connection between weaving and war might still be found in the much later, Medieval, Njáls saga where the fate of war is woven,

on a loom with men's heads as weights, men's entrails as warp, a sword as the shuttle, and arrows as the reels:

// // *See! warp is stretched  
For warriors' fall,  
Lo! weft in loom  
'Tis wet with blood;  
Now fight foreboding,  
'Neath friends' swift fingers,  
Our gray woof waxeth*

*With war's alarms,  
Our warp bloodred,  
Our weft corseblue.  
See! warp is stretched  
For warriors' fall,  
Lo! weft in loom  
'Tis wet with blood;*

*Now fight foreboding,  
'Neath friends' swift  
fingers,  
Our gray woof waxeth  
With war's alarms,  
Our warp bloodred,  
Our weft corseblue.<sup>[1]</sup>* // //

"The Story of Burnt Njal", trans. George W. DaSent, Icelandic Saga Database, Sveinbjorn Thordarson (ed.)

## Endnote

- [1] "The Story of Burnt Njal", trans. George W. DaSent, Icelandic Saga Database, Sveinbjorn Thordarson (ed.). Online Resource. Accessed 8 October 2022.

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// Tupilaq Relic Spinnehjul / Spindle Whorls. Spindle whorls from Rogaland, unknown find sites (not catalogued). Reindeer antler, Finnmark, wool thread. Tanja Thorjussen, 2022.

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# The Snake, the Fruit and an Ancient Truth

// Tanja Müller-Jonak //

Libraries could be filled with nothing else besides interpretations of the creation of man and how Paradise was lost. Over time the story changed, flowered in many variations, from generation to generation to be eventually captured in the Old Testament as part of the Judeo-Christian belief system. We might assume that the story was shaped by its own evolutionary process, in that over time its tone changed and details were added and dropped. Eventually the reception of Genesis became merely symbolic. The fruit represented anything desirable, and the snake represented the ultimate evil. “This is fiction at its most fictional, a story that revels in the delight of make-believe,” claims Stephen Greenblatt at the beginning of his study on the Adam and Eve story, although he admits “...few stories in the history of the world have proved so durable, so widespread, and so insistently, hauntingly real”.<sup>[1]</sup>

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// Naga II Nammu, excerpt.  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022.

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Could this “realness” be real? Recent findings demand a new approach to identifying and getting to nucleus within this colourful story of wonders. During the last decades, scientists have revealed specifics in evolution that were the foundation for *Homo sapiens*, some with a curious concordance in the Book of Genesis.

The notion of Original Sin is connected to sight – eyesight and insight: “For God sees that on the day when you take of its fruit, your eyes will be open, and you will be as gods, having knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). Along with our closest relatives, the primates, we share a sharp visual acuity and good depth perception made possible by trichromatic colour vision. This enables humans to distinguish red from green, which in turn assists in detecting fruits and edibles camouflaged among green leaves as well as to observe perils, be they poisonous or predatory.<sup>[2]</sup> Additionally, in her study on the correlation between the evolution of snakes and primates Lynne A. Isbell argues that the latter developed snake-related fear responses.<sup>[3]</sup> Taking these insights into account, the Tree of Knowledge contains a truth: Our ancestors lived in trees.



They feasted on nourishing fruit and tried to avoid predators and poisonous snakes.

Agreement about what is good and what is evil is at the core of every belief system that enabled humans to form larger groups. Archaeologists and historians usually refer to a different phenomenon that drove humankind “from nature to culture”: The invention of agriculture. In Genesis these features, the serpent’s story and toiling in the field, actually emerge from each other. “And to Adam he said, Because you gave ear to the voice of your wife and took of the fruit of the tree which I said you were not to take, the earth is cursed on your account; in pain you will get your food from it all your life” (Genesis 3:17).

The scientific research of anthropologists, biologists or neuroscientists comes with a by-product. It gives rise to the idea, that the features of the Adam and Eve story were by no means chosen randomly. This does not imply, that it was a precise knowledge of evolution that led to integrating these specific images into the narrative. But it relates to the proposition that we humans carry with us a deep knowledge about ourselves, a hoard of inner images in the Damasian sense, an idea of our ancient past.<sup>[4]</sup>

Reading the ancient texts on behalf of their scientific truth, we realize that we always knew how we became what we are, even though we have not found out how exactly these ideas manifest themselves within our organism.

Not yet. ♦

## Endnotes

- [1] Stephen Greenblatt, *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve: The Story That Created Us* (New York: Norton 2017), 3.
- [2] B.C. Regan et al., „Fruits, Foliage and the Evolution of Primate Colour Vision,“ (*Philosophical Transactions Royal Society London B*, no. 365 (March 2001): 229-283.
- [3] Lynn A. Isbell, *The Fruit, the Tree, and the Serpent: Why We See So Well* (Cambridge/ London: Harvard University Press, 2011)
- [4] Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens. Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness* (London: Vintage, 2000), 317.

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# The Raptor-Human Relationship in Falconry

// Ellen Hagen //

## What Is Falconry?

A falconer is a person who hunts with a trained bird of prey, and falconry is the art of hunting with a trained raptor in the bird's natural habitat. A person who flies various raptors, vultures, and owls in bird shows is not a falconer but a raptor-handler. True falconry birds used in the past were golden eagles, gyrfalcons, peregrine falcons, merlins, kestrels, goshawks, and sparrowhawks. It is uncertain when this method of hunting came to exist, but it dates back at least 4,000 years. As it was so widespread, there are theories that it might have been invented simultaneously in several locations. Falconry began as a method for acquiring food, and over time it developed in style to become an aristocratic activity where trade and gifting of birds of prey grew well past the Medieval period. With the development of weaponry such as guns, falconry declined and nearly vanished. A few falconers across the world have kept traditional falconry alive and brought it into modern times. In 2010, UNESCO recognized falconry as a living heritage through the work of falconers and falconry associations worldwide, celebrating falconry annually on November 16th. The most recent contribution to global awareness of

falconry is the international bestselling memoir *H is for Hawk* (2014) by Helen Macdonald.

As with all animals in a human-animal relationship, there are ways to tame and train them. Both in the past and today, it is usually done by caring for animals from a young stage in which they 'imprint' on a human and become very tame, as well as the use of food in all stages of age. In falconry, both are used. A trained raptor must not be starved, nor overfed. It has to be fed just the right amount to be able to stay fit and "keen" to hunt. The bird returns to the falconer's glove when food is offered. When the bird catches game, the falconer can trade the falcon's kill for another piece of meat if the food caught was intended for human consumption. After a hunt, the bird is "fed up" for the day, an old falconry term, and will then rest until next day. Predators save energy by not moving unless hunting or courting. No skilled falconer underfeeds or overfeeds their bird, but carefully monitors its weight and intake on a daily basis to keep it healthy and fit. The falconry hood is mainly used on falcons and eagles to keep them calm until it is their turn to hunt and fly. Birds of prey can see up to eight times better than the human eye, and a hood will help





// Photo: Ellen Hagen.

keep focus on prey on a closer distance which is much better in a hunting setting. Hoods are also becoming a standard welfare equipment in rehabilitating injured wild raptors as they are very effective at reducing the birds' stress levels.

The key element of a falconer is to always be present for the falcon when out in nature. In other words, if the falconer neglects to pick up the falcon, it can rewild itself over time, as the strong, solitary predators they are. That is the fragile beauty in the human-animal relationship. As long as the falconer can read the needs of the falcon, and the falcon sees the value of the falconer in a hunt, the falcon will follow, wait, return and hopefully even catch prey. The latter is what these birds do in the wild every day to survive, the only difference in falconry is that there is a falconer there to feed it every single day regardless of how successful it has been at hunting, giving them a

much longer lifespan in captivity than in the wild. What most people are not aware of is that every year two-thirds of the wild raptor chicks don't survive their first winter, with starvation from unsuccessful pursuits the biggest cause.

### The Raptor-Human Relationship

One could say that a falconer is a servant to a bird of prey – daily feeding it, keeping it safe, training, and exercise. A falconer needs additional personal qualities such as patience because the bird itself will test the falconer on all levels to see if he or she is a worthy companion. Birds of prey are mainly solitary creatures as they are predators, and the only way to train them is by using positive reinforcement. They do not respond to discipline. The bird is only ready to fly free once trained to return to the falconer. Then it is ready to pursue prey the falconer flushes for it – its reward. Even though a falcon might not respond to affection in the way of a dog, they cooperate and can create a bond through daily interaction. When the falcon is not hunting, the bird is resting near the falconer or being carried on their glove, a process called manning. Through manning, the falconer also learns to know every single movement of the bird's body language. The falcon is a force of nature, and we are only “borrowing” them because at any moment they could choose to fly away, but they do not. Falcons return over and over again as long as the balance of the relationship is maintained. Birds of prey were never domesticated, meaning the process of training or taming them is much the same as throughout the past. The art of hunting with a trained bird of prey is passed on from falconer to falconer over generations, and the relationship with the raptor is considered an intangible heritage of humankind. ♦



// Photo: Elen Hagen.



# The Falconer

// Laura Hohlwein //



// Figures 1 and 2. Inlay and Obverse Depicting a Falcon with Spread Wings, from Hermopolis, Middle Egypt. Late Period–Ptolemaic Period, 4th Century BCE. Faience. 15.1 x 1.3 x 30 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, USA. Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926, Nr. 26.7.991.



They have kept me hungry  
so I'd come back.  
They took off my hood and I was  
blinded

Then the air  
the olive orchards.

I rose high  
There – my falconer,  
our glove,  
the donkey,  
the farm,  
the smell of the river,  
the shake of the dog.

I circled out farther  
and below me – just then –  
the olive orchards turned to stone,  
went flat, grew houses  
the crickets stopped their singing  
and the creek had lost its frogs  
the houses gathered in circles and  
moved closer  
the houses moved tighter  
the children grew taller  
the children grew wider  
and disappeared inside the houses  
that grew bigger  
that grew wider  
that stopped their music  
and the creek had lost its tadpoles

I was circling  
and  
drifting  
The fog lifted forever.

The oats went dull and bent  
under pavement.  
The pavement filled with metal.  
Light from it blinded me  
this high up  
and from it rose the sound  
of nothing

I circled higher  
and could not see  
and could not breathe

I navigated by hunger  
I navigated by hill shape  
I wanted to return  
to where the persimmons were  
where the peacock was  
where the donkey chewed the fence  
where the falconer had been  
waiting for me  
his strong arm outstretched.  
but I found  
no dirt  
no hand  
no glove  
no keeper  
no one waiting  
no trembling prey and vanishing tail  
no sweet barn and board  
on which to fold my wings,  
tuck my head  
and rest

no one who remembered  
letting me go.







// Soapstone sinker shaped like a flounder or a halibut. Found in Hå, Rogaland. 8000–1800 BCE. Photo: Terje Tveit, Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger.

# Realising Urban Imaginaries of Eden: Green Transport Access in Stavanger

// Siddharth Sareen //

Norway's energy capital Stavanger sits in a landscape rich with contrasts and contradictions both natural and cultural: the Ice Age cave Vistehulen, the archipelago islands that dot the Ryfylke fjord, the three swords at Hafrsfjord which symbolise the founding myth of the nation dating back to the battle of 872, the monastery Utstein Kloster from the Middle Ages, the cabin getaway Sirdal thick with some of Europe's deepest snow, the eternal beaches stretching south from Sola Strand replete with a mysterious stone circle first documented in the mid-1700s, the Rogaland Arboretum with a wealth of botanical species, and the agricultural landscape of Jæren spreading southward into undulating rurality. While public transport runs to the first four of these sites, the other four remain the preserve of the automobile class, who in recent years have been encouraged by elitist state incentives to greenwash their exclusive access modes by buying luxury electric automobiles powered by batteries with lithium extracted from sacrifice zones elsewhere.

The green revolution of Stavanger is constituted within the confines of capitalism and its atomistic ideals, a departure from the Eden of

snowscapes, beaches, flora, and farming inhabited through shared, collective endeavour. The enablers of the wealth that propels this isolating extravagance sit at a fitting remove out at sea: oil rigs connected with humans by helicopters carrying labour and by sea vessels transporting fossil fuels. This essay takes the lie of a green transport transition in Stavanger – one of 112 European cities selected to pursue their ambition to be climate neutral by 2030 – and imagines it anew as a return to an Eden of convivial interconnectedness of definitive landscapes. It channels mythmaking into the enterprise of envisioning a public transport system that commons the experience of Stavanger as a natural continuum between landscapes of being that modernity lures us away from through vehicles of desire. The intervention contributes a discursive imaginary premised on a map of six sites of natural and cultural significance, imagining a Stavanger where public transport serves the weekend recreation needs of urban inhabitants without energy intensive automobility. This celebration of peri-urban interconnectedness with the urban core for non-elitist place-making as a commons resonates with a 2030 vision of Eden regained, as public wealth



accessible through low-carbon urban transport infrastructure and practices (Fig. 1).

We proceed through the six sites from the one that reaches farthest in space, the valley of Sirdal in the mountains two hours east of Stavanger. Despite their physical distance, these mountains are proximate in the minds of many urban residents as a popular weekend retreat. Yet with the exception of some weekend buses during the ski season, the site remains cut off for much of the year to those who do not opt to use an automobile, with no realistic public transport connections. Imagine daily express connections, coupled with fixed tariff taxis ferrying families to their cabins in Sirdal, with automobile use heavily discouraged, and the landscape becomes a sociable one to access. Rather than the isolated elitism of private access modes, the common, far less resource-intensive mode of transport then plays a democratising role in enabling wider participation in weekend leisure activities that bring together the rural and urban. Rather than cabins standing unused for many months, they become part of an often utilised site, engendering more creative, generous ways of sharing the built environment and nature.

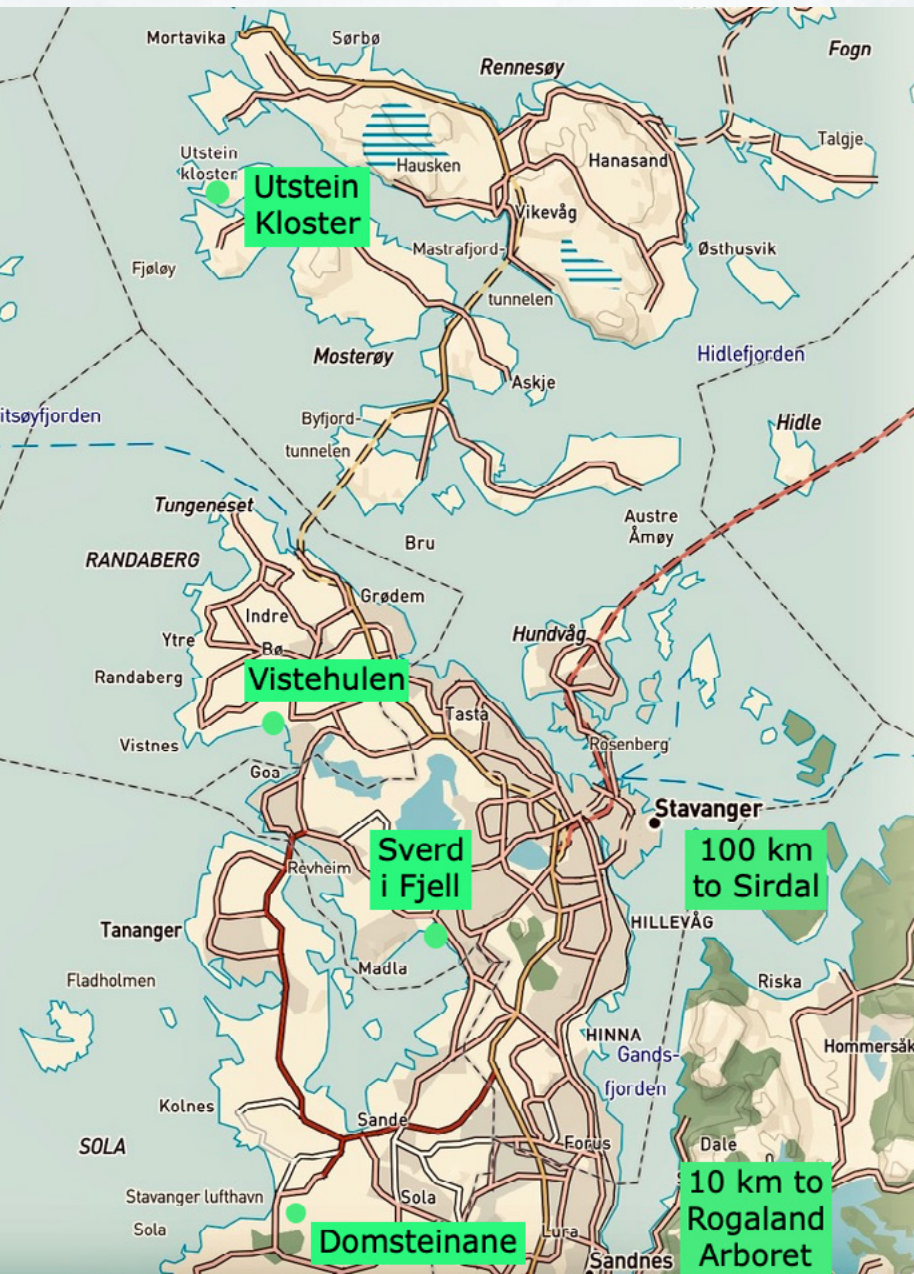
Just south of the nearby city of Sandnes Rogaland's arboretum, established in the 1970s as a public investment in the amazing floral offerings of the bounteous earth in the county and beyond. This collection of trees and shrubbery serves to connect county residents with biodiversity common and rare. Yet public transport to this facility – shockingly – does not exist, necessitating a half hour trudge along narrow roads with cars going by, or cheeky detours into farm fields. Imagine a bus route that runs to the arboretum and promotes its treasures to urban residents, without the experience being

bound up with a consumptive form of access. This could couple up with popular use of public bicycles by the arboretum entrance. Similarly, the mysterious stone circle Domsteinane, first referenced in 1745, could be made accessible by bus, along with the undulating beaches nearby.

*// Surely a city with public access to beaches without car dependence is an essential part of climate neutrality, and well before 2030!*

These are currently inaccessible to families with small children and others with limited ability to walk, as buses stop several kilometres away from these historic landscapes. Surely a city with public access to beaches without car dependence is an essential part of climate neutrality, and well before 2030!

The monastery Utstein Kloster sits on an island just north of Stavanger, well connected by bus, yet impossible to access during weekend evenings when it hosts cultural events such as theatrical and musical performances, as bus services through the tunnel to it are limited. This is a regressive approach to weekend transport, where leisure is centred on automobiles and the regional transport service provider reduces routes instead of encouraging public transport use. Imagine a different understanding of the temporality of transport needs, one that encourages people to use low-carbon means and celebrate the cultural offerings in the archipelago that characterises Stavanger and the many beautiful islands that dot the Ryfylke fjord. How sad that boats ferry people often during the week yet limit contact during holidays when there is a chance to enjoy this abundance!



// Figure 1. Stavanger inscribed in a natural and cultural landscape spanning centuries and millennia.

Source: clipping from <https://kommunekart.com/klient/stavanger/stavangerkart> edited on <https://pixlr.com> by author based on locations from <https://www.google.com/maps>.





// Figure 2. The Stone Age cave at Vistehulen. Photo: Terje Tveit, Museum of Archaeology,

The Stone Age cave at Vistehulen (Fig. 2), with the beautiful Viste beach close by, reminds us of the joy that simple access can bring, and the connection to an iconic past that this can engender. Similarly, Sverd i Fjell, a monument constructed in the 1980s harking back to the fabled battle of 872 where Harald Hårfagre emerged victorious, presents a popular outing where a hop off well-serviced bus route opens on to a stroll along the promenade.

Gazing into Hafrsfjord during a sunset, one can think back to the unification of Norway 1,150 years ago. What an Eden it is in many ways, bringing nature and culture together in the arms of a tremendous landscape inscribed with historical meaning. Imagine its meaning being celebrated through the simple means of commoning, using the nation's wealth to make

its legacy a vitalised and revitalising part of everyone's everyday life.

This contemporary conceptualisation of Eden provides us with a means to make the future through a rich understanding of our past, valuing the fullness of Stavanger in a manner that moves us beyond the isolation and elitism of automobility, into a closer sense of connection with each other and with the past in the present that can enrich our low-carbon future. ♦

*Note: This contribution draws on work from the JPI Climate and Research Council of Norway funded Responsive Organising for Low Emission Societies (ROLES) project, grant 321421, which examines socially inclusive transitions to low-carbon systems (including transport in Stavanger) in digitalising mid-sized cities.*

# Rebuilding Paradise Lost. Dutch Art and Innovation as Both Ideal and Solution

// Stephanie Lebas Huber //

According to Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), Eden was a philosopher’s paradise. It was the only place in creation that offered the possibility of achieving intellectual perfection. Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden for the sin of responding to their bodily yearnings and tasting from the forbidden fruit. Because of their indiscretion, the imagination became a necessary, but imperfect way to compensate for the loss of universal rational thought. The fallen could only attempt to return to this paradise by inventing manmade rules that merely approximated God’s vision. With its promise to provide structure to the earthly world, human law played the important societal role of regulating passions and appetites. More importantly, it gave mankind the hope of knowing God fully and completely.<sup>[1]</sup>

Spinoza’s concept of Eden as the locus for an idealized, pre-moral humanity perhaps found its most fitting artistic corollary in Piet Mondrian’s 1917 essay on Neoplasticism titled “The New Plastic Painting,” and in the painter’s arrival at total abstraction that same year. Rooted in the teachings of Hegel and reborn in the twentieth century Netherlands in the

writings of Dutch philosophers H. J. Schoenmaekers and G. J. P. J. Bolland, Neoplasticism located beneath the guise of natural laws a harmonious dialectic between the subjective and the objective, or rather an intellectualized and fiercely rational beauty.

Guiding Mondrian’s aesthetic was the Calvinist ethos that strove for purity, with the idea of arriving at a singular truth unsullied by human fallibility. At his most iconoclastic, Mondrian (1872–1944) reduced his canvases to primary hues, non-colours and basic geometric forms (Fig. 1).

Such fundamental building blocks encompassed his worldview, and put into visual terms his belief that modern man had become increasingly abstract and simplified, veering toward – but never quite achieving – the Platonic ideal. He intended the resulting aesthetic to be both utopian and productive, writing in 1927: “The application of these laws will abolish the tragic outlook of the home, the street, the city, joy, moral and physical joy, the joy of health, will spread by the oppositions of relation, of measure and color, of matter and space, which are to be emphasized by the relations of



// *Mondrian had also found an artistic solution to resolving the fragmentation caused by the recent World War: a binding and healing balm that could be universally understood by people of all languages and cultures.*

position. With a little good will, it will not be so impossible to create an earthly paradise.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Art historians Hans Janssen and Hans Jaffé have compared Mondrian’s aesthetic solutions to the polders in The Netherlands, referring to the low-lying land recovered from the sea.<sup>[3]</sup> The land – especially in the areas reclaimed from the Zuiderzee in 1920 – required a drainage system that separated large, flat tracts into parcels, made with sometimes straight geometricizing and unnaturalistic lines. While the resulting landscape bears a superficial resemblance to the gridded canvases of Mondrian, the true correspondence between the two existed on the level of concept.

The landscape was something that could be formed, managed, and maintained on the basis of a strict adherence to natural laws. Mondrian’s quest for such an efficient, rules-based vision, both Janssen and Jaffé argue, ensconced the artist in the Dutch Calvinist tradition. By stripping his painting of everything and anything non-essential and reducing it to plastic expression, Mondrian had also found an artistic solution to resolving the fragmentation caused by the recent World War: a binding and healing balm that could be universally understood by people of all languages and cultures. It was an aesthetic with endless possibilities that also

offered the promise of universal assimilation into a nonhierarchical totality. He thus arrived at the grid as an aesthetic solution with his first Neoplastic painting *Composition in Red, Yellow, and Blue* from 1920. His principles of elementarization and integration, as embodied in his painting, articulated the universalizing and logical system that had always existed behind nature and its phenomena.<sup>[4]</sup> But beyond that, they also offered a utopian blueprint for spiritual liberation, which could be achieved through and not in spite of modernization.

In his writings, Mondrian rendered emotion as an aesthetic experience; Neoplasticism provided the frame for expressing pure, internal, spiritual states. Mondrian’s theories gestured to the idea that mankind could both intervene into and influence the trajectory of natural processes. Nature and man existed, he believed, as one single substance – the result of a synthesis between inward consciousness and outward expression.<sup>[5]</sup> Despite their shared adherence to certain universal laws, however abstract, the artist’s vision still determined its ultimate form. Therein exists a parallel between the introduction of free will in the Edenic sense (as argued by Spinoza) and the will to form or *Kunstwollen* evident in the productive and totalizing, yet also transcendental potential of Mondrian’s paintings.

His utopia, after all, was based in an aesthetic experience that found beauty in pure plasticity and promised to usher in an era of harmony through total stylistic homogeneity. A similar experience was revisited a century later by the Dutch design duo Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta, known as Studio Drift, who held their first solo exhibition *Coded Nature* at the Stedelijk Museum in 2018. For this show they staged an expansive installation *Fragile Future*

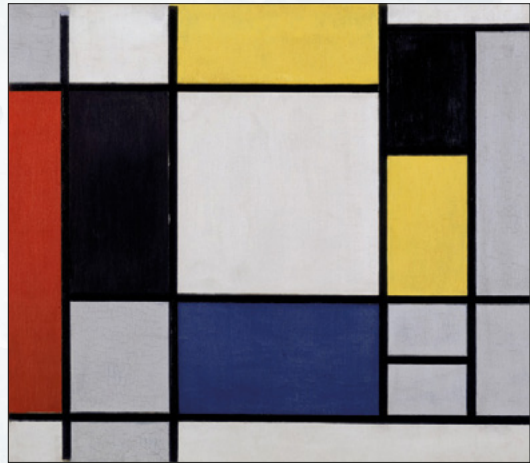
*Chandelier 3.5* (2012), featuring electrified dandelion seedheads (Fig. 2). It required the artists to plug individual parachute achenes into a LED, which they then light up using a circuit board, illuminating the dandelion's component parts, while also dissecting them on the basis of their naturally-occurring and elementarized structures. The modular gridded frame that surrounds them – a visual and conceptual nod to Mondrian – can be expanded ad infinitum.

While still utopian in the same spirit as Mondrian, Studio Drift openly embrace technology on principle, viewing it as one component in an evolutionary synthesis between nature, human beings, and the manmade. Gordijn and Nauta successfully integrate these disparate entities by literally fusing them together, rather than formally conceptualizing them as building blocks like their De Stijl predecessor. They demonstrate the proximity with which human systems correspond to their animal analogues by mechanically recreating internalized reflexes.

One of the best such examples can be observed in *Franchise Freedom*, an aerial installation made up of hundreds of drones guided by a biological algorithm, which debuted at Art Basel Miami in 2017. Rather than arguing that mankind can or should transcend above such unreasoned and instinctual tendencies, Gordijn and Nauta use the work to draw parallels to human group behavior.<sup>[6]</sup>

Recreating in their installations the natural laws that govern human and animal alike, they show an invisible hand at work. Extending into the world of found (natural) objects and man-made technical creations they have also found a universalizing aesthetic language to bind them: an equilibrium that locates a synthesis between opposites, nature and the manmade.

Their installations remind us that technology – as a manmade substance — is in and of itself a product of nature, one that intervenes into the natural yet exists simultaneously as woven into its fabric.



// Figure 1. Piet Mondrian, *Tableau*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 54 cm by 53.5 cm. RKD – Institute for Art History, The Hague, The Netherlands.

It is in this achievement of equilibrium that both Mondrian and Studio Drift can come as close as possible to the aesthetic experience of Eden: an aspirational version of nature, not as it exists in the earthly realm, but as God's ideal. Human law, after all, is impure because it is merely a replica of its “natural” counterpart. The fact that Eden also precedes the creation of human law also presents a seemingly impossible synthesis: how can mankind, fallen from paradise and aware of his earthly urges exist in a paradise that predates rules and imagination? For this – Mondrian and Studio Drift have found a human solution.

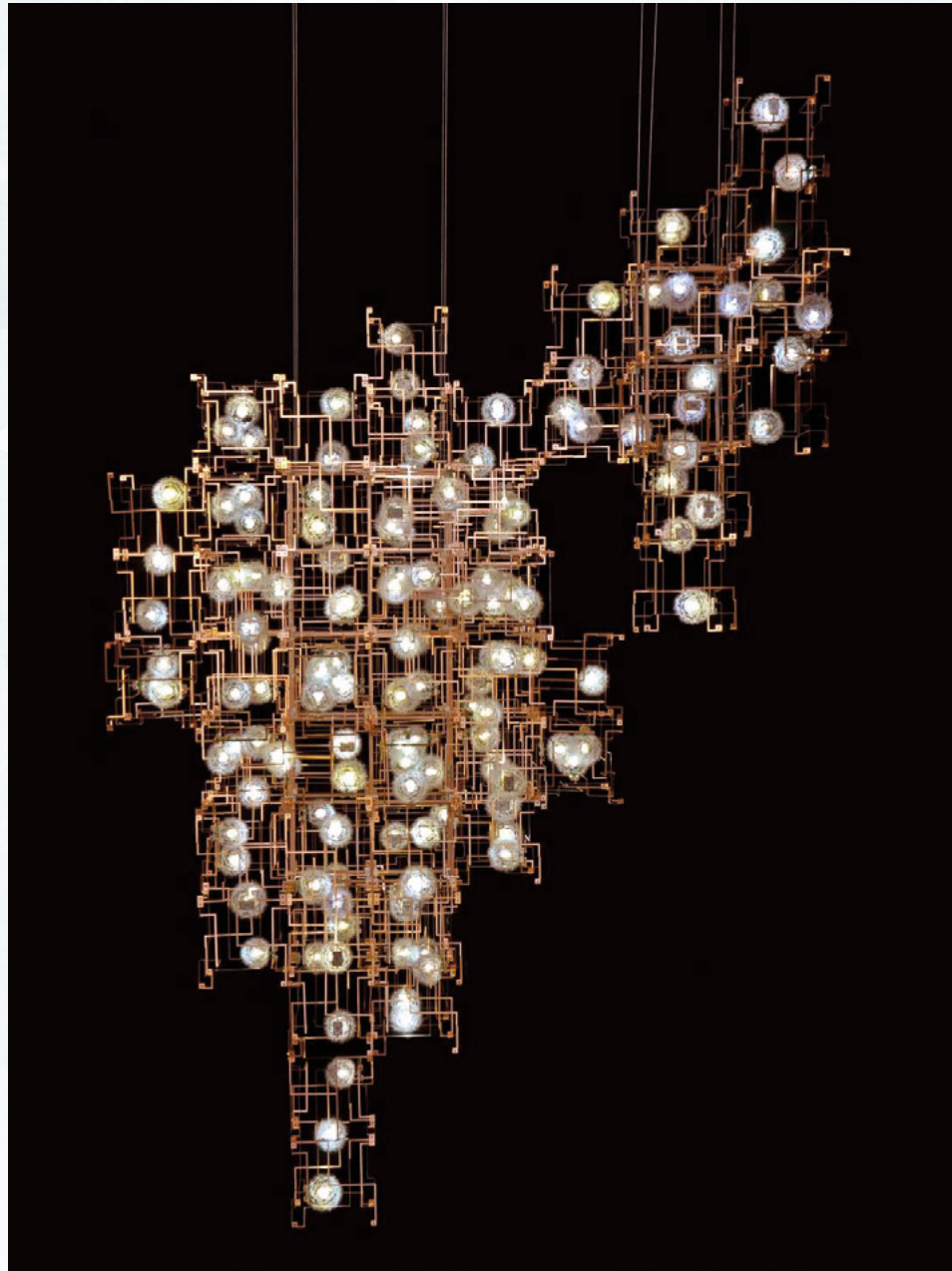
As Mondrian wrote in the magazine *De Stijl* in 1920: “If finally the new man re-creates nature in



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// Figure 2. Lonneke  
Gordijn, Ralph  
Nauta, Studio  
Drift, Fragile Future  
Chandelier 3.5,  
2012. Dandelion  
seedheads, LED  
lights, 12 x 33 x  
34 x 0.3 x 3.5cm.  
Stedelijk Museum,  
Amsterdam, The  
Netherlands, Nr.  
2015.1.0480(1-56).

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terms of what he has become himself — nature and non-nature as a balance of equivalents — then man shall have reconquered — and for you too — paradise on earth!” He went on to say, “Yet what I said is, to a certain extent, quite attainable...don’t think of it as a dream!”<sup>[7]</sup>

The above suggestion is the compromise: an evolutionary synthesis whereby man does not simply live in Eden, but rather coexists in symbiosis with it. Studio Drift shares Mondrian’s conceptual worldview — one based in solution-finding through a constant search for poetic parallels that relate man to nature. They ask what it means to recreate Eden while accepting mankind’s fall from paradise and propose ways to best live with what we have. The answer may be in the commitment to live well and in equilibrium in an imperfect world that continues to be depleted and degraded by human activities, while also finding beauty in its plasticity. ◆

## Endnotes

- [1] See Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, Gebhardt Edition, 1925, translated by Samuel Shirley, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998, 49–59. Spinoza discusses the development of the imagination in Ethics.
- [2] Piet Mondrian, “Neoplasticism De Woning — De Straat — De Stad,” *i10*, vol. 1, no. 1 (January 1927), p. 17
- [3] Hans Janssen, L’Évolution de Piet Mondrian,” in *Mondrian Figuratif: Une histoire inconnue*, exh. cat., edited by Marianne Mathieu, Paris: Musée Marmottan Monet, 2019, pp. 25–26 and Hans L. C. Jaffé, *Piet Mondrian*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, inc., 1971, p. 48.
- [4] See Yves Alain Bois, “The De Stijl Idea,” in *Painting as Model*, Cambridge: MIT Books, 1990, pp. 101–121.
- [5] Piet Mondrian, *De Stijl*, “De Nieuwe Beelding in de schilderkunst,” *De Stijl*. vol. 1, no. 9, (July 1918), pp. 102–108. See also Tim Threlfall, *Piet Mondrian: His Life’s Work and Evolution, 1872–1944*, New York: Garland Publications, 1988, pp. 290–291.
- [6] See *Short Documentary DRIFT: Coded Nature*, Amsterdam: Xnix Films, 2018.
- [7] Piet Mondrian, “Natuurlijke en Abstracte Realiteit,” *De Stijl*, vol. 3, no. 9 (July 1920), p. 76.

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// Black soapstone sinker shaped like a two-headed whale, possibly a killer whale. Found in Tysvær, Rogaland. CE 700-1050. Photo: Terje Tveit, Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger.

# Expanding Eden: Animal discovery and rethinking paradise in Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Garden of Eden*

// Dolly Jørgensen //

In the lower left of the canvas, two black and tan guinea pigs peacefully nibble pea pods while two leopards groom themselves, a pair of rabbits scamper off, a pair of cows lumber away from the viewer, and a pair of porcupines stand nearby. The entire scene is full of animals, wild and domestic, big and small, mammal and avian. They are all in a garden — but this is not just any garden — it is the *Garden of Eden*. Two small naked figures in the middle register of the canvas are discussing a fruit which the woman is about to grab. It is obvious that they are Adam and Eve at the moment before the Fall.

Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625) painted this *Garden of Eden* in 1613 (now on display at Thyssen-Bornemisza Museo Nacional in Madrid). The theme of the work – a depiction of Paradise as described in the Bible – was a common one in both the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, but in this vision of paradise, Adam and Eve discussing the apple are overshadowed by pairs of animals representing God's creation. Animal diversity was more commonly put on display in images of Noah's

ark, a more obvious choice for a menagerie of animals entering two-by-two.<sup>[1]</sup> The same year as his *Garden of Eden*, Brueghel created a strikingly similar scene of the animals being herded toward Noah's ark (*The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* held by the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles). In his *Garden of Eden*, Brueghel is drawing upon the Biblical creation story which is likewise filled with animals created by God: the fish and birds on the fifth day and land animals on the sixth along with humans according to Genesis 1:20–25. These animals were carried to safety on the ark only after inhabiting the Garden. But which animals were they?

In *Garden of Eden*, Brueghel offers a vision of an Eden which had to be rethought in light of new discoveries of far distant lands inhabited by previously unknown animals. The painter, as well as contemporary naturalists, had to expand their catalogue of paradise's inhabitants. The context for this expansion of creation lies in the Western European expansion into the Americas. When Christopher Columbus and his crew in 1492 encountered the New World (even



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// Figure 1. Jan Brueghel the Elder, *The Garden of Eden*, ca. 1610–1612. Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. Oil on panel, 59.4 by 95.6 centimetres. Nr. CTB.1988.29. Photograph by Dolly Jørgensen.

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though they didn't realize that's where they were), they began the processes of bringing new landscapes, new people, and new animals into the European sphere. Within a decade, explorers were voyaging into the Caribbean and Brazil, often leaving destruction in their wake. In the 1530s, Francisco Pizarro had gotten to the other side of the South American continent and conquered the Incan city of Cuzco in what is now Peru. As the conquests expanded, so too did knowledge of the natural sphere. Newly discovered animals from early explorations of the Americas, including the guinea pig, turkey, and scarlet macaw, are included alongside animals known from Africa, Asia, and Europe in Brueghel's work. In fact, Brueghel's 1613 paintings of the *Garden of Eden* and *The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* are two of the earliest European representations of guinea pigs. He was expanding his palette to incorporate new knowledge about God's bounteous creation.

The European learned class were interested in using this expanded nature as evidence of the wonder of God's creation. Brueghel's patron Cardinal Federico Borromeo was a well-known patron of the arts with a special interest in nature as a Christian wonder, collecting a significant library of books on natural sciences and an art collection particularly strong in landscapes and still lives.<sup>[2]</sup> In 1606 Brueghel became a court painter to Archduke Albert and Infanta Isabella



of Spain who ruled the Southern Netherlands, and the painter took the opportunity to visit their significant animal menagerie in Brussels. The exotic animals from the New World tropics in the collection included parrots, macaws, golden lion tamarin monkeys, and marmosets.<sup>[3]</sup> Brueghel's firsthand viewing of these New World animals influenced the realism in his painting; the animals are quite unlike the illustrations in natural history encyclopedias of the time.<sup>[4]</sup>

Naturalists eagerly included new species in their compendia, often providing illustrations as well as textual descriptions. Swiss physician Conrad Gesner included descriptions and drawings of South American species such as





the armadillo, guinea pig, llama, and sloth in his well-known *Historia animalium* (1551–1558). Although Gesner was a talented illustrator and had access to some of these animals (like a pair of guinea pigs which he had been given and he notes that he had seen guinea pigs in various colors, including all white, all red, and mixes), the drawings he included of the animals were by other artists and he often included descriptions partially written by others.<sup>[5]</sup>

Brueghel's vision of Eden expanded to incorporate these newly described animals. He could have easily filled the canvas with animals he knew from Europe, Africa, and Asia, but he intentionally included turkeys, guinea pigs, and

scarlet macaws in *Paradise*. In later works such as *Adam and Eve in Paradise* (1615) which Brueghel painted together with Peter Paul Rubens, the animal diversity expands even more, with a toucan and a blue-and-yellow macaw perching on a branch near the center of the canvas.

This moment of expansion would later be disrupted by contraction, as naturalists in the eighteenth century grappled with and finally accepted extinction as a possibility. Whether animals could go extinct was highly contested: such an end to a line might mean that God's plan was a failure. Yet discoveries in the New World – from findings of mastodon bones debated by Thomas Jefferson and Georges Cuvier to the



rapid disappearance of Steller's sea cows in the northern Pacific – made extinction visible to Europeans.<sup>[6]</sup> Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory further disrupted notions of a complete Eden, as his proposal meant that animal types would arise and die out over time rather than them existing since Creation.

We have documented more than 800 named species as becoming extinct in the modern era, although the actual numbers of lost are orders of magnitude higher because in most cases we haven't even identified something as a species before it becomes extinct. At the same time, new species continued to be found and described by scientists. Approximately 15,000 new species are described annually under the Linnean system. The new forces – expansion of biodiversity through discovery of new species and contraction of biodiversity through loss of extinct species – continue to operate in tandem, forcing a continual reexamination of Eden and what is in it. ♦

## Endnotes

- [1] Arianne Faber Kolb, *Jan Brueghel the Elder. The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), 4-8.
- [2] Pamela M. Jones, "Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lifes: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600," *The Art Bulletin* 70, no. 2 (1988): 261-272;
- Marie Lezowski, "Wonders of Nature at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana ", *Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe* [online], published 22/06/2020, consulted 20/05/2022. <https://ehne.fr/en/node/12393>
- [3] Kolb, *Jan Brueghel the Elder*, 13–17.
- [4] Kolb, *Jan Brueghel the Elder*, 10.
- [5] Sachiko Kusukawa, "The sources of Gessner's pictures for the *Historia animalium*," *Annals*

of Science 67, no. 3 (2010), 323-4; Conrad Gesner, *Icones animalium quadrupedum uiuiparorum et ouiparorum*, second edition (Tiguri: Excudebat C. Froschouerus, 1560), 106.

- [6] Mark V. Barrow Jr., *Nature's Ghosts: Confronting Extinction from the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Ecology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Ryan Tucker Jones, *Empire of Extinction: Russians and the North Pacific's Strange Beasts of the Sea, 1741–1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

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- Lezowski, Marie. "Wonders of Nature at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana ", *Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe* [online], published 22/06/2020, viewed 20/05/2022. <https://ehne.fr/en/node/12393>
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# Traumatic Imagination in Franz Marc's Animalisation of Art

// Julie Kim Rossiter and Jean Marie Carey //

## Introduction

*Abstract Landscape with Fabulous Beast* (Red Deer) (Fig. 1) is a vivid egg tempura painting on a military field postcard of which so little has heretofore been known it has been ambiguously dated “1914–1915”. This artefact of war reveals Franz Marc’s designation of an evolving red deer as the species who heralds a new Genesis, an originary “fabulous beast.” In this article we examine the iconography of Marc’s last painting while our investigation establishes the creation date of the work, a fact previously obscured. With Marc’s interest in conceiving of a new Eden for people and animals in mind, we perform a close analysis of Marc’s other, little-examined wartime works. Our research began with *Skizzenbuch aus dem Felde*, and was supported by military archival records, to expand upon the details Marc revealed in his letters.

In his book *Brutal Aesthetics*, art theorist Hal Foster probes the traumatic imaginations of a post-World War avant-garde response to barbaric civilization. His idea is that the creative canon sought to annihilate associations of inhumanity by assimilating primitive motifs of the child, the animal, or the creaturely to illuminate a return to Eden. Foster interprets this

postmodernist schism as a collective quest to construct a new cultural foundation dependent on these archetypal cornerstone motifs as an “Avatar for pure vision”.<sup>[1]</sup> To exemplify an illuminating vision, an inner sense of innocence, Foster posits Franz Marc’s animalisation of art: “How does a horse see the world, how does an eagle, a doe, or a dog?”<sup>[2]</sup> Foster elaborates upon the “Avatar for pure vision” by introducing Red Deer II (1912) by Marc (Fig. 2).<sup>[3]</sup> Foster’s intuitive interpretation of the artist’s deer is one of paradisaical purity that signifies the eye of a divine child in Eden.

From the same year, however, *Fear of the Hare* reveals a hare’s still-warm corpse beneath the hound that scared her to death; Hell is envisioned in the animal’s blood-shocked right red eye. This little-researched painting reflects Marc’s knowledge of Claude Bernard’s barbaric fight-or-flight animal experimentation at the core of 19th century neuroscience and psychology, but also veils vicarious trauma.

Artists Respond to Crisis, held at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City during the Vietnam War, included Marc’s *The Unfortunate Land of Tirol* (1913) (Fig. 3). In his review, Hilton Kramer asserted that this





// Figure 1. Franz Marc, *Abstract Landscape with Fabulous Beast (Red Deer)* (Abstrakte Landschaft mit fabelhaftem Tier (Rotwild) ). Watercolour on paper, 9 x 13 cm. Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München. Nr. -Z/D- -IB-.

“pleasant landscape” should not have been included.<sup>[4]</sup> Marion Wolf defended the curatorial choice by asserting the work responded to the evocation of war in the ominous foreboding of animals amid a charnel land scarred by graves. She argued that only a delusional critique of Marc’s painting would exclude this traumatic aesthetic. Wolf concluded that the painting “was created in uncanny premonition.”<sup>[5]</sup>

Marc then painted *The Wolves (Balkan War)* (1913) (Fig. 4). In this painting, the artist’s

only work to mention war in its title directly, three predatory wolves stalk the right hand of the elongated picture plane. On the left a fallen wolf seems to gush blood, while another animal body lays in the background. In the recessional horizon, a simplified deer figure stands at the edge of a void. Marc’s paradisaically pure deer is equidistant from heaven and hell: “Within the loveliest peace there is always latent war.”<sup>[6]</sup>

Alfred Kubin wrote to Marc in the spring of 1914 about progress on Marc’s *Book of Genesis*





// Figure 2. Franz Marc, *Rote Rehe II (Red Deer II)*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 70 x 100 cm. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen – Sammlung Moderne Kunst in der Pinakothek der Moderne München. Nr. 8923. <http://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/en/artwork/wq4jBBY4Wo> (Last updated on 18.03.2022).

chapter of a collaborative Blaue Reiter illustrated Bible.<sup>[7]</sup> Marc replied he was striving for “heavenly direction” to reimagine the creation of animals. In an aside about *Fear of the Hare* (Fig. 5), he confessed to Kubin, “I was also the hare that Kandinsky kept from participating.”<sup>[8]</sup> Kandinsky, who had opted to illustrate *The Book of Revelations*, had excluded the painting from Blaue Reiter exhibitions in Munich and Berlin in 1912 (though it did find small audiences in Marc’s solo shows in Munich and

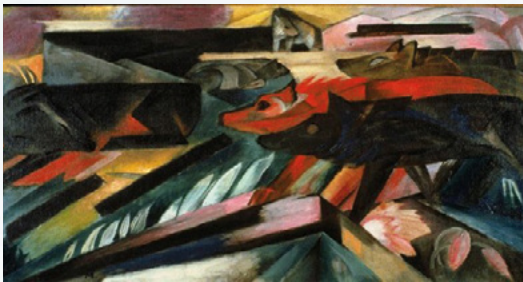
Berlin in 1913). This heretofore unanalysed correspondence reveals significant aspects of practice that Kandinsky wanted kept from the public perception of the Blaue Reiter “brand.” Until now this culture of silence around Marc’s struggle to survive civilisation as causation to seek the divine child in Eden has remained.

Marc’s “heavenly direction” aimed at regressing the human condition of knowledge of amorality, misery, and death to the state of innocence before *The Fall*. Eden symbolises





// Figure 3. Franz Marc, *The Unfortunate Land of Tyrol (Das arme Land Tirol)*, 1913. Oil on canvas, 131.1 x 200 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection. Nr. 46.1040.



// Figure 4. Franz Marc, *(Die Wölfe (Balkankrieg) Wolves (Balkan War))*, 1913. Oil on canvas, 70.8 by 139.7 centimetres, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, United States.



// Figure 5. Franz Marc, *Fear of the Hare (Die Angst des Hasen)*, 1912. Private collection via Galerie Thomas, München. Photo Jean Marie Carey, Koelnmesse 2014.

an unconscious model of the absolute; sacred, spiritual, and divine existence in reverence of nature. As Foster argues in *Brutal Aesthetics*, this unknowable realm of perfect harmony that civilisation yearns for is beyond reach of the human condition.

Marc was a realist striving for an untenable romantic vision. Marc's "heavenly direction" is driven by desire to regress to a pre-cognitive existence governed by the sensory mammalian cortex. Whilst his verbalized wish was transference between human and animal perception, his deeper dream was to eradicate human memory altogether and exist in a purely sensory realm. This unsustainable juxtaposition culminates in *Fate of the Animals* (1913) (Fig. 6), which follows *Wolves (Balkan War)*. Here a blue deer rises in flight response to an apocalyptic forest fire that has already consumed two horses and seized two wild boars. As the terrified deer releases a scream, wolves again wait in the periphery. In a detail, a machine-cut tree stump erupts, implying the all-consuming fire has been set by the hand of humans.

## Eden as Survival

Marc recognised humans as the cruellest apex predator. The Balkan War did act as catalyst for the Great War with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on the 28th of June 1914. Marc enlisted as a Lieutenant of the 2nd Reserve Battery Battalion of the 1st Field Artillery Regiment – one of five million Germans to enlist in August 1914.<sup>[9]</sup> His unit marched directly into battle in the Vosges. In one of the first letters to his wife Maria written from La Croix-aux-Mines on 6 September 6 Marc writes, "The worst is the smell of corpses for many kilometres".<sup>[10]</sup>

It was not until the 17th of March 1915 when Marc received a Sturm Gallery postcard of *Fate of the Animals* from Herwarth Walden that Marc, who had renounced art making when learning of the death of August Macke, quietly embarked on creating a series of sketches radically different than anything else in his oeuvre. That day he recounted to Maria his "Somnambulist vision ... was a premonition of the war, horrifying and moving."<sup>[11]</sup> His letter ends: "For me everything gathers itself up into a painful tiredness in my head, but I am, quietly beginning to draw in the sketchbook."<sup>[12]</sup>

In 2016, Michael Semff, director of the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich, introduced a new edition of *Skizzenbuch aus dem Felde: Franz Marc*, accentuating the importance of the 36 palm sized sketches as "an artistic last will and testament ... among the greatest creations of drawing in the twentieth century".<sup>[13]</sup> Not all of Marc's sketchbooks have been accounted for, with many missing pages and no agreement on how the now-unbound leaves were originally organized. The 2016 iteration, published a century after Marc's death, was thus a profound achievement as it is the first to include all the wartime sketches, in the original order, with Marc's original titles. Of the 40 animals Marc drew in his sketchbook, 20 are deer. Following in Kandinsky's footsteps, Maria Marc redacted the first sketch of a deer seized by overwhelming horror to minimize focus on her husband's war trauma.<sup>[14]</sup>

Close looking at the reconstituted sketchbook allows us to make an important revision. Modernist historian Maria Stavrinaki of the Université Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne stated flatly in a widely-cited 2011 article that "No trace of the horror of war can be detected in [Marc's] texts or war sketches," though her assessment



came prior to the restored version of Marc's *Skizzenbuch*.<sup>[15]</sup> During the sketchbook-making period in the spring of 1915 Marc was based in Berrwiller, at the Veil of Armand amid the horrific battles for control of Hartmannswillerkopf. This desolate mountain landscape forms the backdrop of the first sketch, *Abstract Landscape (Animal Lying Down)* (Fig. 7).

War trauma is assimilated in the animal as it lies inert and isolated within the desolate landscape, stripped of taxonomic identity. Barely recognisable as a doe, too weak to stand, the animal lingers in endless pain. Flies hovering over her carrion flesh signal that she is maggot-infested and aware of being eaten alive. Struggling to support a slightly raised head, she gazes toward a dark void. Marc's divine child is cast out of Eden. She is uncanny, deerlike but not deer – more dead than alive; endlessly waiting to die.

This sketch argues experiential dehumanisation; a traumatised soldier void of identity, exhausted by the rhythm of death in the field. All hope is lost. "One can only live through it, but not imagine it," Marc wrote.<sup>[16]</sup> This first sketch shows Marc took months to externalize the essence of trauma; to probe the nihilism of the wound. To achieve survival consciousness his animal must remember she was a deer, cease lying down and rise to fight back.

The second sketch, *Creation Halted* confronts a cessation of new life being brought into existence. A world without hope is expressed by an abstract mountain landscape in which the sun rises over the tallest summit only to illuminate a world void of life. However, in the aftermath of desolation Marc's third sketch, *Plant Life in Growth* the artist begins to conceive survival consciousness in the aesthetic of organic growth.



// Figure 6. Franz Marc, *Tierschicksale (Fate of the Animals)*, (1913). Oil on canvas, 196 by 266 cm. Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland.

Sketch five, *Deer Mating* follows the theme of fertile agency. However, the uncanny dominates this image in its distortion of natural mating behavior. The doe is on bended knees with her head forced to the ground at an unnatural angle. Everything is incorrect about her stance and posture which should be upright, balanced



// Figure 7. Franz Marc, *Abstract Landscape (Animal Lying Down) (Abstrakte Landschaft (Tier liegend))*, 1915. Figure 1 from Marc's *Skizzenbuch*. Pen on paper, 9 x 13 cm. Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München. Nr. -Z/D- -IB-.



// Figure 8. Franz Marc, *Three Deer (Drei Hirsche)*, 1915. Figure 36 from Marc's *Skizzenbuch*. Pen on paper, 9 x 13 cm. Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München. Nr. -Z/D--IB-.

and alert to the surrounding environment during mating. At first glance, the stag appears to signify a natural behaviour, but he is overshadowed by the form of a larger beast whose head merges into his. The uncanny resonates a question – is the doe inseminated by the stag or the dark beast he coexists with?

As Marc focused on art in the trenches, he annotated the margins of Leo Tolstoy's *What is Art* (1897). In these forgotten notes, the artist rails against the author's aesthetic theory. Marc defends his core beliefs as he denounces Tolstoy for thinking *What is Art?* is a "sacred codex".<sup>[17]</sup> Raging against Tolstoy's praise of traditional representation, he argues, "This 'combination' of lines, forms, what does that mean: 'combination'? and the 'certain rhythm'? As if I wanted to define a horse and say: a combination of cells according to a certain rhythm that results in a horse. This definition annoyed me earlier with Kandinsky. Abstract forms are created very differently!"<sup>[18]</sup>

In sketch twelve, *Arsenal for Creation* it is of no surprise that the abstract form charging the

canon is a deer. Viewed in isolation, there is a sense of an animal rising in fight response, a body detached from an open-mouthed head challenging an explosive environment. Ten sketches later a mirror image appears in *Deer*. This time the protagonist stag rises in the same fight reflex with an attentive head firmly fixed to its body. This stag is not alone, he stands protective over a primitive stag whose stance suggests flight. This paradigmatic pair of stag sketches reflect a primal sense of survival in the animalistic instinct of fight or flight.

Sketch 25, *Two Deer in Abstract Landscape*, depicts the pregnant doe nesting in a nest of rocks. Her mate stands behind her, guarding against predatory forces his fixed gaze on a dark abstract form reminiscent of that in *Deer Mating*. This modified stag reveals species estrangement in the form of horns as opposed to antlers. The uncanny is omnipresent; he is also deerlike, but not deer.

*Three Deer* (Fig. 8), the final sketch, depicts the doe and stag as their hybrid fawn finds her feet. Since the first sketch, the dying animal has recalled its taxonomy of deer, shaken off flies and cast out maggots that consumed her. She has risen, conceived in unnatural circumstances and carried her young in the womb whilst constricted and aware she is the last of her species.

Born into war, her precious offspring must never experience her life of suffering. She gazes down at her fawn knowing survivors survive, reproduce, and propagate heritable characters to ensure future survival. Her fawn has found its feet by adapting to a conflict environment, safe under parental protection. The stag, the apex defender, maintains a watchful eye. He is still overshadowed by a large beast who evolved curved horns stemming from



a faceless head – from its mouth slithers a viper’s tongue sensing nubile life. This figure is reminiscent of the snake enticing Adam and Eve out of Eden, yet Marc reinterpreted the parenthesis of all fear to cease an eternal return of the same. His Divine child has birthed an archetypal species of absolute faith who ignores the snake.

On packing the completed sketches for leave on 23 June, 1915, Marc wrote, “There is only one blessing and redemption: death. The destruction of the form means that the soul may become free.”<sup>[19]</sup> But there is more to the story of Marc’s divine war child. Arguably the most critical unresearched work of a life cut short by war, is his final painting, the only one from a battlefield. It names his archetype of absolute faith.

### Abstract Landscape with Fabulous Beast (Red Deer)

*Abstract Landscape with Fabulous Beast (Red Deer)* is a postcard that shows the eponymous, archetypal creature standing upon a summit illuminated by a spherical portal exuding white and blue light.

Embraced by celestial ciphers, she stands absent of fear as the only figurative form in all existence. Her downward gaze verifies an abstract landscape constructed of organic forms imploding toward a centre, yet her ascent assures detachment from the chaotic centrifugal force. Wide-eyed, with ears raised and snout lowered, she remains alert but serene as terrestrial habitats fall beneath her. As flames and suffering transpire below, her apotheosis is absolute – a revelation she stands eternal as all form dissipates.

The handwriting on the field postcard unveils the doe’s precious prodigy as a spiritual enigma:

“Dear Fanny, I hope the picture on the back will please you. It is from a comrade named Mark [*sic*]. It is a miraculous story about this picture. I will tell you on leave. Do not worry, I’m fine. Many greetings and kisses sends your Franz [Köberlin].<sup>[20]</sup>

This alluring miraculous story informing Marc’s image is written by a Bavarian soldier, Franz Köberlin, to whom Marc gave his final painting. Marc’s motifs in the sketchbook evolve from apathetic to empathetic – from hopelessness to hope. By 14 April 1915, postmarked next to a blue rectangular censor stamp of the 7th Kompanie Bayerisches Landwehrinfanterie Regiment No.1, the deer signifies not just hope but a miracle. The military field card is an issue to the 8th Bavarian reserves, an infantry division of the Imperial German Army.

The ambiguity regarding the postcard’s timeline may have arisen because, theoretically, Marc could have painted the image at any time between reporting for military duty in Munich on 1 August 1914, to the postmark date of 4 April 1915. However, research of military records of the 8th Bavarian Vogesenkrieg, details in Marc’s correspondences to Maria, the metamorphosis in the deer sketches, and documentation of the illustrated field postcard as the only painting in the field, linking Köberlin and Marc to a significant event, establishes Marc painting his “miraculous story” on 27 March 1915. Moreover, it transitions *Abstract Landscape with Fabulous Beast (Red Deer)* from *arguably* to *definitively* Franz Marc’s most critical unresearched work by revalorising his artistic last will and testament.

Overcome by horror, neither German nor French troops had words for Hartmannswillkerkopf other than “Mountain of Death”.

On 26 March 1915, the French retook the summit. Early that same day Marc received orders to drive ammunition to the summit of Hartmannswillerkopf mountain (this fact was redacted from Marc's letters to Maria by German military postal censors). Marc knew this was a perilous mission, and so he kept this from his wife until his return of the 28 March 1915.<sup>[21]</sup> Only then did he share, "What battles in mountainous regions mean, only those who experience them can know."<sup>[22]</sup> One of these men was Köberlin, whose 8th infantry unit the ammunition was allocated to for the purposes of retaking the summit.

Marc's narrative to his wife suggests that despite the horror he experienced en route to the Vosges, what the soldiers stationed solely at the summit of the Mountain of Death experienced amounted to perdition, a purgatorial state of no escape. Marc had taken his sketchbook with him. Sketch 20 depicts *A Group of Deer*, a tight formation of seven does alert in all directions. However, sketch 21 *Magical Moment* reinterprets the horrific summit battlefield. The Mountain of Death dominates the page and beneath it are spread disjointed military duckboards and shattered wooden trench supports.

The sketch is a moonlit chaotic explosion of matter which resonates experiential battlefield trauma. However, trauma is absent from Marc's page in the exclusion of death. The Battle for the Summit of Hartmannswillerkopf left thousands dying, dead, and decaying in the field. Directly after this sketch comes *Deer*, where the apex defender, the great stag, rises in fight response to protect the smaller primitive stag in flight.

The letter dates his final painting *Abstract Landscape with Fabulous Beast (Red Deer)* to the Battle for the Summit of Hartmannswillerkopf.

Moreover, *Creation Halted*, *Plant Life in Growth*, *Group of Deer*, and critically *Magical Moment*, all have the mountain (Hartmannswillerkopf) as a central motif.

The notion of living art with an ability to evolve the self in the face of oblivion, reflects pure instinct. Fight, flight, or freeze are instinctive reactions to fear, and Marc has included all three in his sketchbook deer motifs. However, the archetype *Fabulous Beast* is a revelation that rejects the old dictums of the temporal sphere to stand fearless as an apocalypse is unleashed on the world. A miraculous magical moment of absolute faith on the summit of the Mountain of Death. Whether detached from reality or denial of the horror before him, the field postcard supports Marc found absolute faith to survive the mission.

Marc will have met an exhausted, traumatised Köberlin after delivering the ammunition to his 8th Bavarian unit tasked to retake the summit. Marc would soon descend Hartmannswillerkopf to return to the Berrwiller trenches, but his comrade must remain in purgatory. As the poet Virgil became the emissary of divine grace to guide Dante through *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* to unite him with Beatrice in *Earthly Paradise*, Marc is inspired to lead Köberlin through battles to come and back to his beloved Fanny. One is reminded that after the dark dominion of the Devil, Dante's opening Canto in *Purgatorio* is, "But here let poetry rise again from the dead."<sup>[23]</sup>

On 8 April 1915, ten days after making the small painting, Marc writes to Maria the "eternal return has new meaning," and that he was "experiencing a renewal of the mind."<sup>[24]</sup> This revelation resonates the fawn in *Three Deer who is Fabulous Beast (Red Deer)* and turned away from the snake at the root of all fear.



## Conclusion

Hal Foster's research introduces Franz Marc's *Red Deer II* to *Brutal Aesthetics* as the eye of the divine child in Eden, and is thus relevant to the journey of his deer motif. Foster noted that post-trauma aesthetics conceal horror, "the image as an enigmatic trace of a traumatic experience and/or fantasy, ambiguous in its curative and destructive effects."<sup>[25]</sup> Foster's interpretation is that the brain walls off trauma, and then what is externalised is codified, or in extreme cases encrypted, in images that re-represent the limiting event as a felt reality. Any interpretation of Marc's animalisation of art only as paradisaical purity denies Marc's probing an externalised essence of trauma which allowed him to confront the tension, trauma, and tragedy of war.

Our research aimed at countering a 'double bind: a culture of silence' to debate paradoxical perspectives of the artist's work. Post-trauma aesthetics are prolific in images of Marc's deer Leitmotif culminating in *Abstract Landscape with Fabulous Beast (Red Deer)* which aligns to Foster's early trauma theory. Marc's final painting, gifted to a terrified Bavarian comrade is a "sacred codex" to Marc's traumatic imagination. Ironically, his 1915 concept of art to "challenge and correct the canon" written on the Franco-German frontline, predates Foster's interpretation of Freudian theory at the core of *Brutal Aesthetics*.

Weeks before beginning the sketchbook, Marc prophesied to Maria, "what we will experience in the outer realm, we cannot even fathom today."<sup>[26]</sup> He knew he had to survive the frontline hell by seeking a temporality that ascended beyond it. As the sketchbook was completed, Marc wrote to Helmuth Macke, his friend and the young cousin of August Macke,

that he detected "a first breath in another existence, as a threshold to the spiritual realm."<sup>[27]</sup> *Abstract Landscape with Fabulous Beast (Red Deer)* is an enigma that resonates an inner sense of the transfiguration of one ascending to the "threshold to the spiritual realm" and releasing Earthly consciousness. ♦

## Endnotes

- [1] Foster, Hal. *Brutal Aesthetics: Dubuffet, Bataille, Jorn, Paolozzi, Oldenburg* (Princeton University Press: Princeton: 2020), 14.
- [2] *Brutal Aesthetics*, 14.
- [3] Hal Foster, Lecture at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 8 August 2021.
- [4] Hilton Kramer, "Artists and Crisis, a Hot Subject,". *The New York Times*, 22 November 1970, pp. 127. <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/11/22/archives/artists-and-crisis-a-hot-subject.html>. Accessed 2 November 2022.
- [5] Marion Wolf. "Biblia Omnii: Timeliness and Timelessness in the Work of Franz Marc." *Art Journal* Vol. 33, No. 3 (Spring, 1974), pp. 226-230. Accessed 4 November 2022; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/775786>.
- [6] Franz Marc, *Letters from the War*. Eds. Klaus Lankheit and Uwe Steffen, translation Liselotte Dieckmann. (Peter Lang Verlag, New York: 1992), 57.
- [7] The six intended contributors were Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Alfred Kubin, Erich Heckel, Oskar Kokoschka, and Franz Marc. Only Kubin was to complete *The Book of Daniel*.
- [8] Franz Marc, *Briefe, Schriften, Aufzeichnungen*. (Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1989), 97.
- [9] Elizabeth A. Marsland, *The Nation's Cause: French, English, and German Poetry of the First World War*. (London: Routledge, 1991), 34.
- [10] *Letters from the War*, 2.
- [11] *Letters from the War*, 34.
- [12] *Letters from the War*, 35.

- [13] Franz Marc and Michael Semff, *Skizzenbuch aus dem Felde* (Sieveking: Munchen, 2016) i.
- [14] Thirty-five untitled sketches appear out of sequence in *Briefe, Aufzeichnungen und Aphorismen, Volume II*. (Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1920). Maria Marc's redaction and alteration is repeated in the 1956 edition of *Skizzenbuch aus dem Feld* edited by Klaus Lankheit.
- [15] Maria Stavrinaki, "Messianic Pains: The Apocalyptic Temporality in Avant-Garde Art, Politics, and War." *Modernism/Modernity* 18, no. 2 (2011): 371–93 (372).
- [16] *Letters from the War*, 27.
- [17] *Letters from the War*, 49.
- [18] Marc, Franz. *Schriften*, ed. Klaus Lankheit, (DuMont: Köln, 1978), 57.
- [19] *Letters from the War*, 59.
- [20] "Liebe Fanny, Ich hoffe, das Bildchen auf der Rückseite wird Dir gefallen. Es ist von einem Kameraden namens Mark. Es ist eine wundersame Geschichte um dieses Bild. Ich werde sie Dir im Urlaub erzählen. Mach Dir keine Sorgen, mir geht es gut. Viele Grüße und Küsse sendet Dein Franz.' As cited in Annegret Hoberg and Isabelle Jansen, *Franz Marc: The Complete Works Volume II: Works on Paper, Postcards, Decorative Arts and Sculpture* (Philip Wilson Publishers: London, 2004), 350.
- [21] *Letters from the War*, 36.
- [22] *Letters from the War*, 37.
- [23] Martin McLaughlin in *The Oxford Handbook of Dante*, eds. Manuele Gagnolati, Elena Lombardi, and Francesca Southerden, "Translations," Oxford Handbooks Online, 14 April 2021. At <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198820741.013.45>, accessed 4 November 2022.
- [24] *Letters from the War*, 44.
- [25] Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, (MIT Press: Cambridge, 1997), xx.
- [26] *Letters from the War*, 32.
- [27] *Briefe, Schriften, Aufzeichnungen*, 212.

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// Naga III Ananta, excerpt.  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022.



# Interpretation of the Fanal as *Hortus Conclusus*<sup>[1]</sup>

// Olaya Sanfuentes //

In Spain and in many Latin American countries, especially those that formed part of the Viceroyalty of Peru, including Chile, there is a complex artefact called *fanal*. *Fanales* can still be found today in private collections, museums, and antique stores. Not many people know what these complex objects were made for. Here I present one *fanal* found in Chile, which arrived from Ecuador during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The *fanal* is a lantern which encapsulates a religious sculpture, surrounded by miniature figures depicting flora, fauna, and decorative items. The wooden religious sculpture inside is usually Baby Jesus, who is either naked or dressed, lying down or standing up. The *fanal* presented here has a wooden figurine made in Quito during the 18th century. In this city, a school of polychromed sculptures was developed, and they exported them throughout the rest of the Spanish Empire. The figures were made of wood, a material that warms quickly with human touch, which facilitated intimate interaction with them. The style was characterized by the imminence of movement, naïve expression of the depicted characters, and the use of the *encarnado* technique as a strategy of showing the flesh color with naturalism. Most

Quito School sculptures had glass eyes, and tongues made of leather which also contributed to the verism of the figures.

I hypothesize that the *fanal* represents a closed uterus, Baby Jesus' dwelling place, an idea corroborated by its oval shape. I propose that this uterus represents paradise and belongs to Mary: it is the *Hortus Conclusus* – a Latin name, meaning literally, enclosed garden – which comes from the interpretation of a fragment of the Song of Songs (4:12 in Vulgate Bible): “My sister, my bride, you are a locked garden – a locked garden and a sealed spring” (Fig. 1). In the *fanales*, Jesus is usually lying down, as a baby asking for someone to take care of him. He might also be standing up, as he might be taking part in the iconography of *Tota Pulchra* or the Virgin of Hope. Among visual representations of those iconographies, it is worthwhile to mention those where the Virgin is explicitly pregnant with the Baby Jesus, the Savior of the World, inside her oval womb. This iconography was popular in 17th century Spain, making its appearance in America a likely occurrence.

This ideal and paradisiac uterus was created by devotees for the Christ Child so they could



// *The Christ child within the fanal appears as a chubby, rosy-cheeked baby – an image of a healthy and happy toddler that the nuns protected and cared for, using their everyday skills.*

interact with him. At the same time, this artefact was a mnemonic artefact that reminded nuns of the importance of purity. Through the act of praying in front of such a devotional object as well as the continual action of adding elements, decorating and rearranging of the composition inside, I propose an interpretation of it as an ideal and paradisiac uterus where the devotee was able to spiritually accompany the Infant Jesus in this perfect space, a little Garden of Eden. Therefore, this sacred space is perceived as a social construct on both the material and symbolic levels.

When nuns chose life in the convent, they gave up worldly marriage and motherhood but practiced the ritual of mystical marriage to Christ. This commitment to Him was celebrated by their dressing as His wives. Many novices entered the convent with a wooden sculpture of Baby Jesus who accompanied them intimately day and night for the rest of their lives. Through their words, care takings, and love toward the Baby Jesus figure the nuns experienced a form of motherhood.

When analyzing the maternal words they dedicated to Christ I am reminded of what Carolyn Walker Bynum suggested regarding the Benedictine monks of the Middle Ages.<sup>[2]</sup> These monks venerated Christ as a mother and spouse in an effort to alleviate the effects of the lack of married life. For nuns, maternity did not require sex or worldly marriage, since they had the opportunity to experience it through the physical and spiritual care of girl orphans, young nuns, and naturalist sculptures of Baby

Jesus. Using this artefact meant looking for a path for getting to the original Edenic state, that of the paradise encountered through the religious pilgrimage. As a cultural mnemonic tool, the figure of *Hortus Conclusus* allows for its creator to spiritually return to paradise, to humanity's origins, to the uterus. For a nun, it also means following Mary's model, who kept her womb untouched and impeccable even after giving birth to Christ. The *fanal* depicts a sacred ideal place while at the same time it contains it.

Complementary sources indicate practices that allowed nuns to sublimate their childlessness through these sculptures of Baby Jesus and to treat the whole artefact as a uterus containing the son. These practices included everyday activities such as gardening and sewing, and religious ones such as praying the novena.

The Christ child within the *fanal* appears as a chubby, rosy-cheeked baby – an image of a healthy and happy toddler that the nuns protected and cared for, using their everyday skills. The attention and care were expressed with material gifts, offerings in the form of miniature objects. Often hand-made by the devotees themselves, these activated the enclosed paradise of a *fanal*. They were added as gifts for the Christ child embodied in the figurine that inhabits the garden. An abundance of objects, flowers, little animals, pieces of jewelry, coins, crosses, coloured stamps, porcelain toys, and other decorations surrounding the central figure of Infant Jesus, are visible. Their different styles and materials within the

// Figure 1. Fanal with Christ Child leaning and porcelain basket, attributed to a follower of Manuel Chili Caspicara, ca. 1780. Glass dome, wood base, gemstones, figurine, fabric, and flowers. Museo de Artes Universidad de los Andes, Santiago, Chile.





same compositions prove that they were added at different time and possibly by different people. This extended addition of pieces extends the moment of creation of a *fanal* over time and illustrates the intimate character of the practice of caretaking within the devotional and everyday activities of the religious women that used them.

Besides the physical experience of manufacturing objects for the *fanal*, nuns would make both physical and spiritual penitence inspired by the contemplation of the fanal. For the celebrations of Christmas Eve and especially for female devotees, the Catholic authorities would recommend a spiritual preparation that consisted in realizing a novena – that is nine days of prayers, worshipping, and exercises to prepare the body and soul for the birth of Christ.<sup>[3]</sup> The novena was composed to be read nine days before the 25th of December, when Jesus' birth was celebrated. Praying the novena was a way to prepare the crib, the crèche, and the soul. Various novenas from the circles of religious women and nuns of mid-nineteenth-century Chile confirm that they were a part of a strategy to prepare the female devotee for the great event.

The emphasis of the novena is put especially on the progress of the gestation and the growth of the baby in the Virgin's womb, encouraging the feelings of expectancy and anticipation. Through the recommended prayers and preparation, the devotee experiences a mystical pregnancy in parallel to the Virgin Mary's. Novenas would typically relate each of the days of preparation and meditation on the mystery of Nativity with specific events or motifs from the life of expecting Virgin, for instance, as noted in one novena composed in Chile during the nineteenth century and published in 1902: "On

the first day, one prays with nine Ave Marias in memory of the nine months that Jesus Christ was in the womb of Mary."

Some years ago I attended an exhibition about utopias. Among the works exhibited there was an intervened photograph of a baby in their uterus. In that precise moment I thought about the *fanal* as a utopic artistic uterus. What I have tried to suggest so far is that many Christian nuns from different places and times have tried to mitigate the effects of non-having children. One strategy was taking care of figurines of Christ the Child. When incorporating this child inside a created garden, they also have the opportunity to think of that artefact as an uterus, the holy uterus also known as the *Hor-tus conclusus*. ♦

## Endnotes

- [1] Some of the ideas of this article are included in "Back to Paradise: experiences with fanals as a tool for approaching the renewal space", to be published in *Quintana* journal.
- [2] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother. Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).
- [3] As early as the fifteenth century, manuals and guides for performing a novena communicated the need for preparing the devotee's spirit for receiving the Baby Jesus at Christmastime. Recommendations to pray them were made to Catholics in Europe and throughout the rest of the world, particularly Latin America.

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# Artworks

// Naga and the Huluppi Tree, triptych  
Naga I Amana, Naga II Nammu, Naga III Ananta  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Pencil drawing and gold leaf on Arches  
watercolor paper //

// Tupilaq Sel – Nordre Sunde, Stavanger  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Pencil drawing on Arches watercolor paper //

// Tupilaq Fugl – Høyland, Sandnes  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Pencil drawing on Arches watercolor paper //

// Tupilaq Relic Sel  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Animal figurine, seal, soap stone, Stone Age  
(8000–1800 BCE), Nordre Sunde, Stavanger  
Driftwood from Greece, feather from Oslo,  
spindle whorl, stray find, Iron Age or Medieval  
(CE 100–1300) //

// Tupilaq Relic Fugl  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Animal figurine, bird, soapstone, Late Stone Age  
(4000–1800 BCE), Høyland, Sandnes  
Rocks from Finnmark, feather from Oslo //

// Tupilaq Relic Slange  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Animal figurine, snake, gold, Bronze Age or Iron  
Age (1800 BCE–CE 1050), from Hesby, Finnøy.  
Rock from Oma in Time, Feather from Bryne,  
Spindle Whorl, stray find, Iron Age or Medieval  
(CE 100–1300) //

// Tupilaq Relic Fiskesøkke  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Net sinker, zoomorph / killer whale, soapstone,  
Viking period (CE 700–1030), Førland, Tysvær  
Wool thread //

// Tupilaq Relic Fiskesøkke  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Net sinker, zoomorph / halibut, soapstone, Stone  
Age (8000–1800 BCE), Frøneset, Hå  
Wool thread //

// Tupilaq Relic Spinnehjul / Spindle Whorls  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Spindle whorls from Rogaland (not catalogued)  
Reindeer antler, Finnmark, wool thread //

// Song of songs, hymn to Shekhinah  
Tanja Thorjussen, 2022  
Film //



// Stone Age soapstone figurines. Bird found in Sandnes and seal in Stavanger, both Rogaland.  
Photo: Terje Tveit, Museums of Archaeology,  
University of Stavanger.



# Prehistoric artefacts

// S6290 Animal figurine, seal, soap stone, Stone Age (8000–1800 BCE), Nordre Sunde, Stavanger. The small animal figurine was found during agricultural land clearing. It looks like a grey seal, with clearly outlined eyes, nostrils and mouth, and front flippers are indicated by two horizontally incised lines along the sides //

// S5850 Animal figurine, bird, soap stone, Late Stone Age (4000–1800 BCE), Høyland, Sandnes. Stray find of small bird figurine that looks like an eider duck. A fairly shallow hole is drilled vertically into the head, and another, 1,1 cm deep, is drilled into the underside, suggesting that the figurine was fastened to something and that an ornament could be fastened to the top of its head //

// S9469 Animal figurine, snake, gold, Bronze Age or Iron Age (1800 BCE–CE 1050), Hesby, Finnøy. The small, undulating snake tapers towards the tip of the tail. The head opens into a gaping mouth. There is shell-like ornamentation on the head. Along its back there is a narrow band of tightly packed lines. It might have been mounted to a sword sheath from the Merovingian period (CE 550–700). Little is known of the circumstances of the find //

// S7220 Net sinker / animal figurine, zoomorph/ killer whale, soapstone, Viking Period (CE 700–1030), Førland, Tysvær.

Finely ornamented net sinker found in a potato field in 1947. The sinker has incised ornamentation of whale heads at each end on the same neck. It looks like a two-headed killer whale. The holes for fastening the sinker is drilled through the positioning of the eyes. It weighs 1,16 kg //

// S12386 Animal figurine, zoomorph/halibut, net sinker, Stone Age (8000–1800 BCE), Frøneset, Njærheim, Hå.

Oval sinker found in a field during agricultural work near the Hå river in the 1980s. An incised, schematic figure on one side resembles a flounder or a halibut, with traces of a similar figure on the other side. A furrow to fasten a string runs along the length of the ovoid shape. It weighs 1 kg //

// Assorted spindle whorls, uncatalogued. Stray finds, Iron Age or Medieval (CE 100–1300) Collected by Jan Petersen.



# Contributors

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is professor of archaeology at the Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger. Her academic work bridges archaeology and the interdisciplinary field Human-Animal Studies. She is an active participant in arenas that promote the understanding and theorising of human-animal relations. She seeks to insert time-depth into current debates about the state of animals in society to contextualise and nuance today's husbandry practices. Her work ranges from horses as companion species in the Scandinavian Iron Age, the social practice of humans and animals in the household arena in the late Bronze Age in Europe, to the development of landscape and environment in the Early Bronze Age in relation to the farm and husbandry. Currently, she chairs the research cluster "Animals mediating the real and the imaginary".

## JEAN MARIE CAREY

received her doctorate in Art History and German from the University of Otago in New Zealand. Visual representations of the livingness of animals, particularly the oeuvre of Franz Marc, are the foundation of Carey's work. Her research at the Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, is funded by the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions of the European Union and the U.S.-Norway Fulbright Foundation.

## ELLEN HAGEN

is a museum educator at Arkeologisk Museum, University of Stavanger in Norway, where she teaches local prehistory spanning more than 10,000 years to the public. Hagen is the founder of the Norwegian Falconry Association, the Norwegian delegate at the International

Association of Falconry and Conservation for Birds of Prey, and is Norway's only licensed falconer.

## LAURA HOHLWEIN

is a California-based painter, poet, teacher, photographer, and scholar. She has had numerous solo exhibitions and works in permanent collections in museums and galleries on the Pacific Coast of the USA. Hohlwein is the creative director/ documentarian of The International Readers of Homer.

## STEPHANIE LEBAS HUBER

received a PhD in art history from the City University of New York, Graduate Center in 2022, where she completed her dissertation "Cultural Predicaments: Neorealism in The Netherlands, 1927–1945." For the 2022–2023 academic year she has a Leonard Lauder postdoctoral fellowship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art where she is transforming her dissertation into a book. Her research has been supported by grants from the Mellon Council for European Studies, Fulbright, and the American Association for Netherlandic Studies. Her peer-reviewed articles have been published in Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte and Moving Image Review and Art Journal, as well as a forthcoming issue of Modernism/Modernity.

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## DOLLY JØRGENSEN

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#### ELNA SIV KRISTOFFERSEN

did her PhD in archaeology on animal art at the University of Bergen and is now working as a professor at the Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger. Her research has focused on the Migration Period mortuary practice and the development of crafts such as the animal art in small-scale metal objects as well as pottery and textile within perspectives concerning chronology, manufacture, and identity.

#### HÅKON REIERSEN

is an associate professor in archaeology at the Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger. As a keeper of the museum collections, and with a PhD from the University of Bergen on the early Iron Age in western Norway, his research mainly focusses on Iron Age objects, graves, elite milieus and centres of power, as well as on research history.

#### JULIE KIM ROSSITER

"I am a poet, sculptor, and scholar committed to challenging a societal culture of silence comorbid with war trauma. My great-grandfather, grandfather, father, and husband returned from war haunted by traumatic imagination; abstract truths emanating from battlefields. In the U.K., it is illegal for 16-year-old children to play violent computer games such as Call of Duty; however, it remains legal for our government to encourage the same children to enlist- to 'serve their country.' I commenced a residency at Vermont Studio Centre by painting Virginia Woolf's words on the studio wall, 'How are we to help you prevent war?' Instinctively, my answer was to actively teach my sons the truth of war. When my youngest son then brought enlistment papers home for me to sign

on his sixteenth birthday, I utilised traumatic imagination to sculpt a paternal line embedded in the overwhelming horror of war. Whilst my iron sculptures revealing the faces of four consecutive generations of shattered soldiers were being hung at the Ruskin Gallery, my son learned from history and tore up his enlistment papers. Therefore, I remain dedicated to interpreting the traumatic imagination of soldiers to expose a culture of silence that obfuscates the psychological damage they and their families experience."

#### OLAYA SANFUENTES

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// Gold snake with a gaping mouth and a wavy body. Found on the island Finnøy, Rogaland. 1800 BCE – CE 1050. Photo: Annette G. Øvreid, Museum of Archaeology



