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‘Interspecies communication’ project in the framework of
Mudvibe course in Sao Paulo 32nd Biennale

For the Biennale’s project, we wanted to make people experience an interspecies communication with the tree that was growing outside the pavilion. It was connected by the wooden tubes with the mudhut, built by Pia Lindman for the 32nd Biennale, to bring soil bacteria and tree energy to the hut and to create the unique environment.





The idea started from our common interests in nature, trees and their way of existing. As human beings we might not be able to « speak » to other beings, or at least we believe we can't and end up locking out any other type of eventual communication.

It is worth mentioning that we understand the word ‘communication’ in a broad sense, which liberate us from the academic discourse on what could be called communication and under what conditions. We believe that there are other forms of interaction that we cannot perceive if we stay in the realm of the human-centered perspective. Here comes another important question - the question of the tools we use to investigate these possibilities. With the developing of the technologies we use now, we can generate colors that are not represented in our natural environment, this is one of the examples that lie on the surface, so what if we just do not have tools yet o we have tools and data, but we cannot interpret it. Also we are interested in the research of the capacities of human body. Could it be a tool that we are missing? Could we reinterpret the ancient and indigenous knowledge to understand more about interconnection between nature and human being and the practices to establish these connections?



The first thought was that we wanted to combine a meditative form and a scientific tool together in order to see the things that change in a human’s body and mind while trying to intercommunicate.

With an object we would put on the head of the experimenter that was supposed to perceive the brainwave activity, we wanted to use it inside the hut and outside next to the tree where the energy for the hut was coming from. We were aware it might not give logical results but we wanted to misuse the equipment to see what kind of data we can get and how it could be interpreted.

However after a few technical difficulties we had to give up the brain wave headpiece and we decided to change a little the procedure of the experiment.



We decided to experiment with the second question – how can we use body as a tool according to the ancient knowledge? As a starting point we took a tchi concept, that being a sort of meditative form in Chinese culture, that enhances the ability to connect with nature and pass energy from the tree to us and vice versa.



At the beginning of the performance, we asked the person to sit on the chair in front of the plants of the hut with eyes closed. One of us performed a sort of massage on the person's hand in order to awaken his sense of existing, sensing his own body's presence within his surroundings.



We proceeded by leaving a moment to the person to listen, taste, feel, smell the atmosphere around him or her.



Then we took the person outside the hut and lead them towards the tree, with blindfolded eyes: it was a way to enhance the other senses rather than always seeing around.



Once we arrived at the tree, we left the person with it. From there, the person had the freedom to do whatever they wanted, for however long they wanted but we encouraged them to try and have some sort of connection with the tree. The experiment would end when the person would be ready to end their session.





The whole experience went much better than we expected and lasted longer than we thought. The participants were very enthusiastic and were very much cooperating for it. It was very exciting to see different types of people reacting with such a meditative way towards an unusual scenario. Taking into the consideration the research we did before the experiment was designed and the reaction of the participants after it we came up with several conclusions and strategies to develop this investigation. First of all, we were surprised by the fact that all participants, who neither had thought about the possibility of the interspecies communication before nor practiced it, intuitively found their way to interact with the tree and the process of this interaction overwhelmed them so that they spent more than thirty minutes touching, hearing, breathing, whispering to/with the tree. It made us think that our preliminary idea of using body as a tool combined with the ancient Chinese knowledge was the right direction to head to in our further research. We strongly think that the knowledge that we are looking for is embedded into ourselves, but how to evoke it – this question remains. What we would like to do next is to use scientific tools to get data that cannot be interpreted in a conventional way, to design several exercises to see how the body responds to different practices like meditation, sensory deprivation, diets, different methods of concentration and self-visualization. We clearly realize that our research lies in the intersection of science, traditional medicine and indigenous knowledge and we run a risk to slip into unscientific or esoteric dimensions, but only by the rethinking and redesigning existing approaches might we find the answers to our questions.

