

# FUGLESPOR / BIRD TRACES

## **Living as a Bird (Vinciane Despret)**

"Territory is a place where everything becomes rhythm, melodic landscape, motifs and counterpoints, matters of expression. Territory is the result of art. Territory creates and therefore insists that our thinking be guided by new relationships."

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"Interesting research is research conducted under conditions that make beings interesting."



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The journey began with a reading circle of Vinciane Despret's book, *Living as a Bird*. Meeting up on Sunday afternoons in the dark winter month of February in the Dome of Life, anyone could come along, and the reading would be shared between the participants. When there was something we wanted to address, we would stop and talk. And when we heard words or phrases, that resonated, we would write them on the glass of the dome, and the words would merge with the view of the harbor landscape and the winter skies surrounding the room.

The workshop FUGLESPOR / BIRD TRACES focused on exploring the traces of birds in a cityscape like Islands Brygge, where birds are considered unwelcome guests, are chased away or ignored. How can we pay attention to their lives, their ways, their preferences – and what can we as humans learn from that?

The workshop was developed in collaboration between design anthropologist Laura Winge and artist Nana Francisca Schottländer, based on our individual yet very related practices and methodologies of 'Going Visiting' (NFS) and 'Visiting as a subject- and object-making dance' (LW). We both draw inspiration from the work of Donna Haraway and Vinciane Despret, and this quote was central:



*"Visiting is not an easy practice; it demands the ability to find others actively interesting, even, or especially others most people already claim to know all too completely, to ask questions that one's interlocutors truly find interesting, to cultivate the wild virtue of curiosity, to attune one's ability to sense and respond - and to do all this politely! [....]"*

*....[This] sort of politeness does the energetic work of holding open the possibility that surprises are in store, that something interesting is about to happen, but only if one cultivates the virtue of letting those, one visits intra-actively shape what occurs. They are not who/what we expected to visit, and we are not who/what we anticipated either. Visiting is a subject- and object-making dance, and the choreographer is a trickster."*

Staying with the Trouble - Making Kin in the Chthulucene (Donna J. Haraway)

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The workshop consisted of different steps, like a ritual:

An initiation into the 'nest' that we had created as our base for the day.

A session of naming the birds there, all the birds we know, and all the imaginary birds we can think of.

An individual journey, looking for traces of the lives of the birds here: footprints, bodies, movement, feathers, nesting material, food, pathways and more.



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### **Excerpts from the introduction to the individual explorations:**

Listen to the sounds of the area, to the sounds of your body. Notice the scents. Feel the ground against your body. Keep your eyes closed and use your hands to touch and feel what is around you. Fall into yourself, into the place. Spend time here.

Open your eyes when you are ready. Look close around you. Are there birds or traces of birds here? What/where are the traces? What do they tell you about how birds navigate, inhabit and use this place? Choose one trace you want to focus on. A living bird, a route across the sky, a pole where they sometimes land, some food, a sound, a movement pattern...

Observe to understand what is at stake here and let your associations unfold around it. How can you meet it? What can you give and receive? What does it call for you to do? Dare to do things you wouldn't otherwise do. Dare to be strange, loud, sad, playful, tired, mobile, angry, fast/slow...

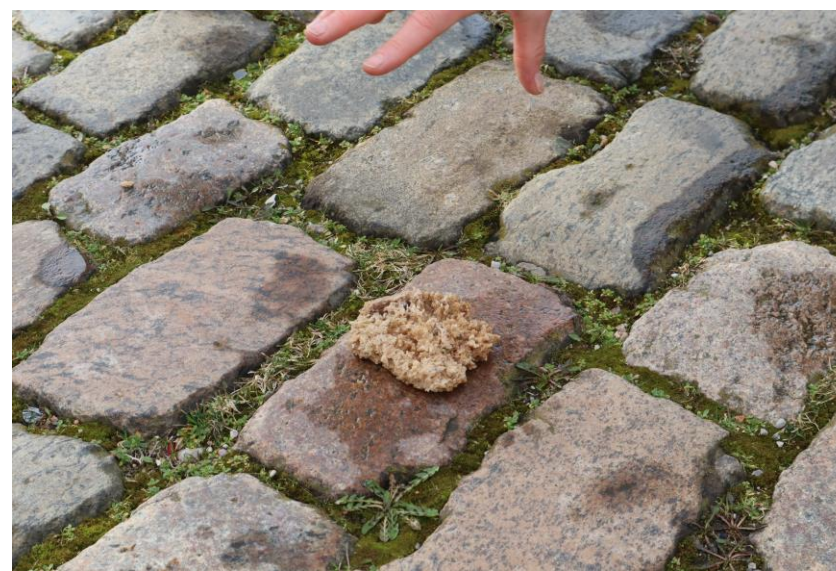
Follow the invitations and potentials that arise and the impulses they arouse. Let yourself be absorbed by the investigation and what it unfolds.



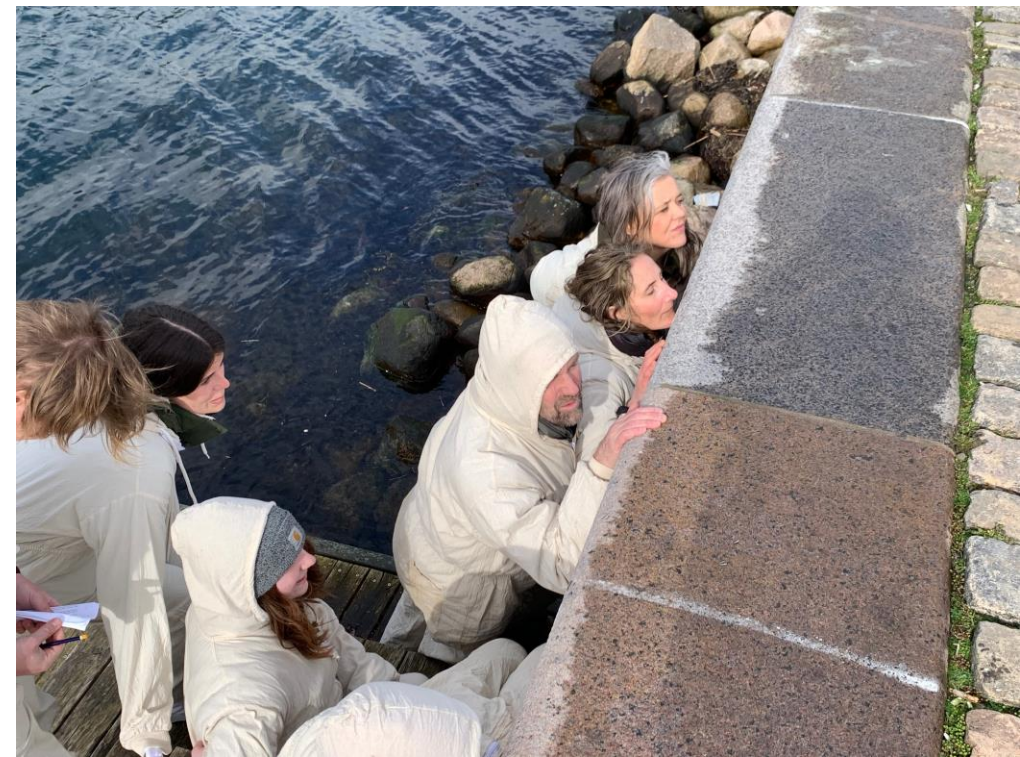




After the solitary explorations, we each in turn, based on the principles of the Going Visiting method, invited the rest of the group into our findings to connect through our senses, our bodies, our thoughts and our imagination with the bird-perspectives of each individual exploration.











Then we all came back together in the 'nest' to draw, write and otherwise record our thoughts, realizations and experiences of the day.





In the end, we collaboratively created a clay egg, full of sunflower seeds and our hopes and intentions for the future of bird/human coexistence in a place like this.





In the summer, the egg was placed in a remote corner of Sydhavnstippen, originally a landfill or scrapyards now turned protected natural area (for the time being) in a braided grass nest to slowly disintegrate, commune with the land there and plant the seeds, the hopes and intentions for the future of bird/human co-existence to grow and blossom here.

