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Becoming Architect-as-Ally: A Conversation on Practice, Definitions, and Privilege with Nature of Hope Participants

Alina Paias, public works, Karin Reisinger, Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors, Husos arquitecturas

Abstract: In a polyvocal piece, one of the curators of the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) 2024 – *Nature of Hope* presents four exhibition participants: the design practice public works; collaborators Karin Reisinger (researcher) and Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors (Sámi ethnologist and researcher); and the architecture studio Husos arquitecturas – along with reflections and questions for them to consider. These questions concern their work in its situatedness and concreteness, and the complexity of transferring ideals into practice. What unfolds is a conversation on how working in alliance with the historical others of the discipline can reorient architecture toward a more ecological and just future. Reflecting on their own experiences, the curator and participants discuss the alliances they have forged, whether and how their practices are political, how their work and its definitions are changed by their alliances, and how they deal with vulnerabilities and privileges.

Keywords: Architecture; Alliances; International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam; Activism; More-Than-Human; Ecology; Extractivism; Soft Activism.

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Introduction

Alina Paias | The 11th edition of the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR), titled *Nature of Hope*, took place between June and October of 2024. I was invited to join the team of five curators along with Janna Bystrykh, Catherine Koekoek, Hani Salih, and Noortje Weenink. Our shared foundational desire was to amplify ecological sensibilities already transforming architectural practice from the margins to the center, addressing the problematics of a practice seeking to reorient itself, having historically relied on and undergirded ecological ruptures.

I am interested in architecture as a result of its conditions of production; that means I work with interpretive theoretical frameworks for architecture that encompass both its »social, economic, regulatory and industrial factors« and »the cultural, formal or aesthetic expression of materials,« as stated by Katie Lloyd Thomas (2022: 167). In the context of *Nature of Hope*, this was expressed in the curation of work that communicates how there is a continuous and co-constitutive process between what architecture can do and how architecture is done. This conversation, specifically, is focused on how the usual procedures of architecture are changed when architects forge alliances with the discipline's historical others.

My co-authors are four participants in the *Nature of Hope* exhibition: the architecture practice Husos Arquitecturas (2006), researchers and allies Karin Reisinger and Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors, and the not-for-profit design practice public works (2011). Their work is marked by a recognition of connected struggles, deep bonds of solidarity, and the sharing of resources in ways that are never exclusively commercial. The text picks up where these participants and I left off, providing an opportunity to diffractively re-make our own circumstances of coming together, now distant from the mediation between my responsibilities to the IABR and my attempts to extend the ethics of alliance (that is, an ethics founded on sharing a political project, and a vision for architecture) to the curator-participant relation.

This text is collectively and diffractively written (cf. Haraway 2018), with my reflections and prompts, in the form of questions, acting as jumping-off points for the other authors to establish their own perspectives. It grew and took shape during small pockets of time between our projects; ideas were changed and exchanged in emails and the furtive marginalia of word processor comments and suggestions. In it, the practices discuss the alliances they are part of, if and how their practices are political, how they

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are changed by their work with others, and how they find and appropriate different resources while dealing with the vulnerabilities specific to each of their situations.

Architects-as-allies | I first became aware of how architects relate to working through alliances at the start of my curatorial research, in conversation with different practitioners: The collective Cartografia Negra (2018), focused on reaffirming Black presences into the historical narratives of the formation of São Paulo, noted that they would often not benefit from one-off projects or events, when the approach to the valuable knowledge the group offered was often extractive. Lucas de Mello Reitz, an academic and architect, presented alliances as an intentional coming-together, focused on broader goals than just the production of architecture. Both mentioned preferring to work with people they already knew.

> I invited you to this conversation because your installations in the Nature of Hope exhibition foreground the forging of alliances in distinct ways. Could you describe your practice, especially in terms of which alliances you have forged?

public works | We are a not-for-profit critical design practice set up in 2004. We work across the terrain of art, architecture and performance to realize social and environmental change. Our roots are grounded in relational art practice (Bourriaud 1990), and we have always looked to nurture and amplify citizen voice in the production of the built environment. This is a matter of rights, and of our commitment to promote the rights of communities within which we work. More recently, our alliances have shifted from purely anthropocentric to more complex and messy entanglements involving the more-than-human (Haraway 2016).

Karin Reisinger | As a researcher I question how we know about architectures and the materials used in architecture (Reisinger 2020). Which areas and voices are excluded, and how can they become part of the knowledge of architectural practitioners and academics? I have been working with areas of extractivism, which provide raw materials for building, often at the cost of socio-environmental health. As a non-indigenous person based in Central Europe and educated by a Western architecture curriculum, I am part of the extractivist problem. No matter how critical I am, materially, I write

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this on a laptop which functions due to mineral resources, on a table with metal legs under a roof carried by metal pillars (cf. Reisinger). Under these conditions, I started relating to an area around a town which calls itself the »Mining Capital of Europe.« That is Gällivare, or as my friend and local practitioner Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors calls it, Váhtjer. I was mostly interested in the town's spatial practices caused by the disappearance of the entire neighboring town, Malmberget. During my relational research I learn from local cultural practitioners dealing with loss, living and coping with extractivism. I am grateful for the collaboration with Lis-Mari, which consists of writing, presenting, and organizing together, ongoing since 2016.

Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors | I am a Lule Sámi[1] ethnologist and researcher. I discuss the importance of the Sámi taking care of their own cultural heritage and their rights as indigenous people who have lived in this area long before the place became a mining community. The return to indigenous cultural heritage means for the Sámi identity to escape colonization. Taking back one's cultural heritage is part of the work of reconciliation, focusing on the importance of places to feel belonging. Váhtjer/Gällivare municipality is a mining community with a harsh climate for the Sámi.

My hometown is located between two very large mines, LKAB/Vitåfors and Boliden/Aitik. We are affected by mining, and as a Sámi people we fight for our rights. The ore mountain Málmmavárre/ Malmberget has disappeared bit by bit over many decades. Local residents have become accustomed to parts of the community being demolished or moved. Many say that there are a lot of emotions when houses are demolished or moved. »You don't have any roots left.« (fig. 1)

In my professional role, I teach the public about the Sámi culture by showing the presence of the Sámi in the area and work with educational methods in presentations, talks, articles, poetry, and exhibitions. The oral storytelling tradition has always played a central role in the Sámi culture. I bring the place to life and reconnect to the cultural and natural environment. The biggest threat to the Sámi is making Sámi culture invisible. This needs to be countered by conveying knowledge and providing counter-images through activism – soft activism (cf. Gurák Hjortfors/Reisinger 2024).

1 The *Lule Sámi* inhabit the central part of the indigenous Sámi area. It is called Sápmi and spans Norway, Sweden, Finland and Kola Peninsula in Russia.

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Husos arquitecturas | In 2003, we began our collaborative practice in Madrid, between Colombia and Spain. We approach architecture as a tool for ecosocial transformation. For us, this transformation involves collectively opening multiple possibilities of existence for the vast diversity of sentient beings inhabiting the Earth, together with planetary care. From our perspective, these dimensions are inseparable.

Inspired by philosopher María Lugones' commitment to counter-hegemonic coalitions (Lugones 2005) and the broader framework of Abya Yala/Latin American and Caribbean decolonial feminisms (Curiel 2014), we explore the potential of interwoven architectures – simultaneously decolonial, interspecies, and post-heteronormative, approached through a lens of ecological interdependence.[2] These architectures are conceived in close dialogue with the territory and its communities, aiming to embrace their heterogeneity while simultaneously addressing structural asymmetries of gender, race, class, species, functional body capacities, and more.

Through this lens, we see transversal alliances as necessary to challenge normative, compartmentalized frameworks and imagine alternative collective possibilities.

Within this approach, each project we participate in functions as a shared micro-laboratory – imperfect and inevitably incomplete – yet offering a platform to test and refine ideas together with others toward tangible possibilities for ecosocial transformation through architecture (fig. 2).

Politics and the Design of the Coming-together

Alina Paias | The architects-as-allies featured in the exhibition are involved; their work makes them inextricably responsible to others. The involvement with the co-creators and users of architecture is sustained, tended to, never finished – although negotiations grounding collective work can be conflictual, the position of allyship is incompatible with an extractive practice.

The forging of alliances is grounded on a consciousness that the *how* of coming together is fundamental to a collective project; in many ways, it is

2 Abya Yala is the name used by the Guna indigenous people living in Panama and Colombia to refer to the territory now known as the Americas. Decolonial and other social movements around the region have reclaimed this term to remember and reimagine other ways of being and existing in this land.

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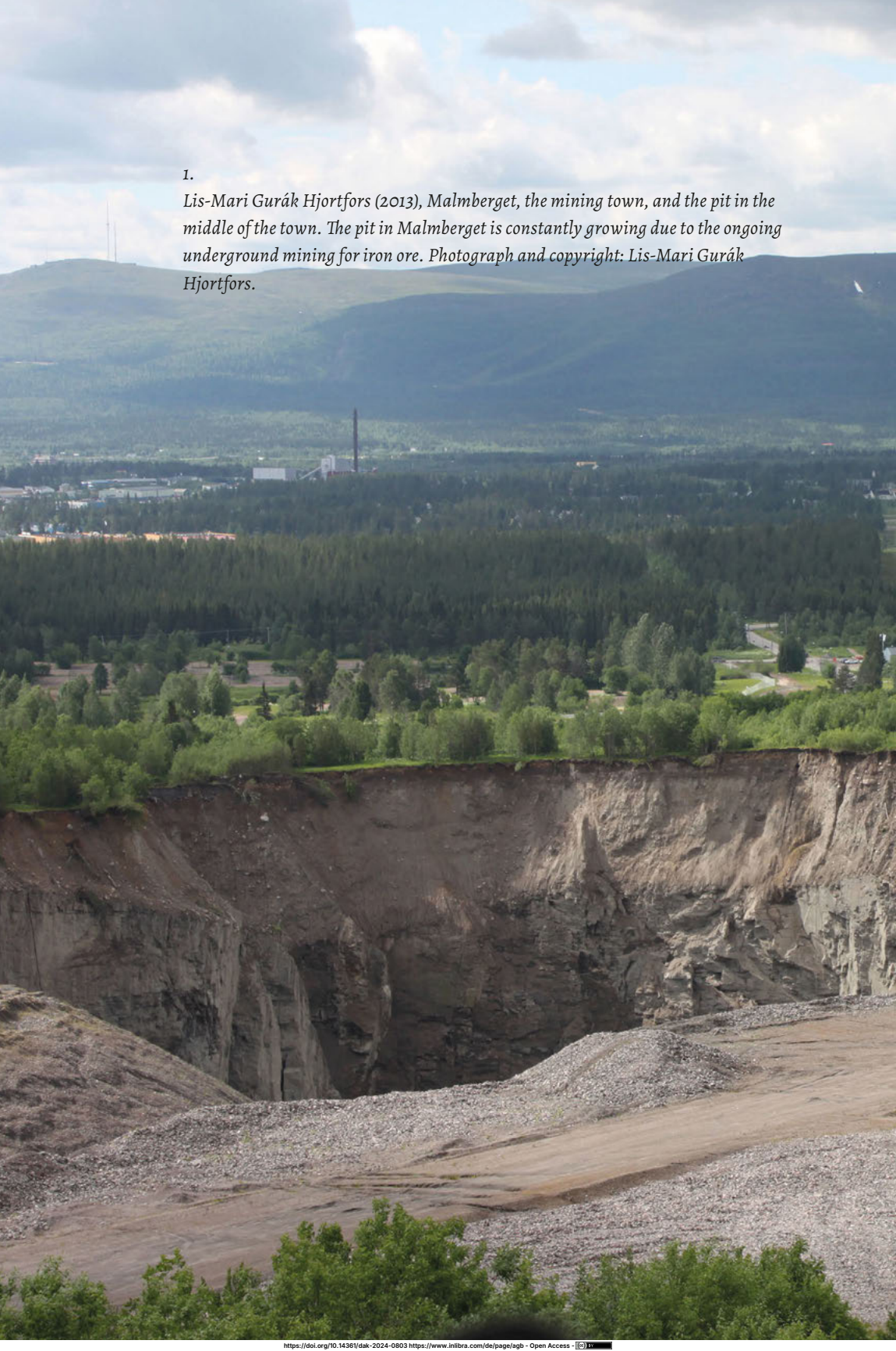

1.
Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors (2013), Malmberget, the mining town, and the pit in the middle of the town. The pit in Malmberget is constantly growing due to the ongoing underground mining for iron ore. Photograph and copyright: Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors.

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2.
Husos Arquitecturas (2020). (Synanthro)Love Shack. Spatial project: Husos arquitecturas (Diego Barajas and Camilo García with Aníbal Arenas, Almudena Tenorio, Giulia Poma). Gardening and animal architectures: with Daniel Prieto, Aristides Mettas, João Manfrinato. Construction: Nicasio Pato. Carpentry: Verticales Forme. Special Thanks to biologist Daniel-Martín Vega. Exhibited at the International Biennial of Architecture in Rotterdam, 2024. We list several entities whose previous related actions provided particularly valuable contributions to this work: human neighbors from Cadalso de los Vidrios (particularly Juan, Raul and Virginia), SECEMU (Spanish Society for the Conservation and Study of Bats), SEO/BirdLife, ASVEPA (Association of Neighbors, Property Owners, and Friends of San Bartolomé de Tormes), ASEORG (Association of Entrepreneurs of Northern Gredos), the Navarredonda Town Council, the MONAU Project promoted by the Valencian Society of Ornithology, the Valladolid Forestry Association, and the Ávila Forestry Association (associations of private forest owners), students and teachers from the Compensatory Education Classroom (ACE) of IES Marqués de Santillana, along with the rural warden of Dehesa de Navalvillar in Colmenar Viejo and the Sustainability Delegation of the Leganés Town Council + the Forest Health Service of the Balearic Islands. Image from the author's archives. © Husos arquitecturas.

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the project. The architect-as-ally has to devise processes for coming together that include those who do not stand to gain anything from sticking to the standard Modus Operandi of architecture. Crucially, Isabelle Stengers' cosmopolitical proposal (2020), which involves an always emergent common political procedure that depends on the »issue in its concrete environment« (ibid.: 237), presents the cosmopolitical negotiator as a designer (ibid.: 241). The hopeful horizon of architecture is certainly relational, but it is also political in the sense that it involves the »staging« (ibid.) of the coming together as a design task.

Do you experience your own practice as political?

public works | In simple terms, our practice is inherently political, if sometimes a little polite; our methods do not overtly protest, but set procedures and precedents. To take your curatorial term, »architects-as-allies,« we often find ourselves somewhere in the middle, mediating processes and interests. We're both comfortable advocating on behalf of grassroots communities, as we are working with institutional powers and gatekeepers to gain access. We see our role as a mediator or negotiator in this space, which can be a challenging space to occupy and hold, at times feeling conflicted when the power imbalance is too great, or the scope to extend and rethink the brief is too limited. Irit Rogoff describes this as embodied criticality, »producing criticality through inhabiting a problem« (2006: 1).

We regularly initiate our own projects, such as the R-Urban hub in Poplar, London (2023). This creates a different political arena from which to practice. Initiating projects directly allows for a more radical and critical approach, where citizen voice and other ecological values become the client. R-Urban Poplar is an attempt to build the future in the present by developing and testing new modes of governance, economies, and relational practices in the exploration of more resilient futures (fig. 3). In this case, we leveraged our practice track record or »capital« to negotiate free access to land with a housing association, something residents previously struggled with. Once secured via formal lease agreements, it has become possible to share access to this land with other grassroots groups, civic associations, and residents in the spirit of urban commoning.

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3.
public works (2023). Civic and Climate Learning at R-Urban Poplar 2023. R-Urban is a collaborative project between public works (London) and Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée (Paris). The Poplar hub is a collective vision involving: SunnyJar, MAD LEAP, Teviot People's Kitchen, London Wild Fruits, Bower Studio, Women's Environmental Network, The University of Sheffield, Resident Food Growers and the many citizens who take part. Image from the author's archives. © public works.

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Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors | My practices are political in the mining town, because in every presentation, poem, article, or exhibition, I make the Sámi culture visible through activism and soft activism.

Vuojŋŋanisán	In the spirit
Mijá ájttega ja mijá	*Our ancestors and our history are*
histåvrrå gávnnu juohkka sajen	*everywhere.*
várijn meran ja jávrijn	*In the mountains*
miehtsijn ja ednamijn	*in the seas and lakes*
Gejnudagájn	*in the forest and on the fields*
Vuojŋŋanisán	*On hiking trails*
	In the spirit
	— Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors

Karin Reisinger | In an extractive field it is already political to raise questions about the environment. In my research, I ask why a diversity of local perspectives are invisible. Feminist Political Ecologies have taught me to stay exactly with the cracks and fissures (Harcourt/Nelson 2015; cf. Haraway 2016). Effects of the politics of extractivism and neo-colonialism connect profits to material, cultural, and environmental losses (cf. Truman 2019), such as a loss of ground, homes, etc. In a community where many people live from these material profits, this is a tricky connection with many cracks and fissures. The mined areas have, through time, become homes of diverse communities with different dependencies. An approach based on intersectional feminisms is helpful to work with a variety of knowledges and literacies that often go unheard in dominant research practices. The local practitioners from the videos in our installation have developed situated and complex practices of dealing with this loss (2024); the artist Miriam Vikman walks paths through woods to save them from clearcutting, the musical artist Pernilla Fagerlönn curated a farewell exhibition for the last remaining high-rise building of the mining town, while the artist and organizer Karina Jarrett embroidered houses before they were dismantled together with the women of the embroidery café (fig. 4). Like Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors, they live these ambivalences daily and elaborate and apply respective literacies (fig. 5). Opening up spaces for these contributions together is the politics of our collaborations.

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4.
Karina Jarrett (2019). Embroidery, Insekterna flyttar in / The Insects Move in. Photograph and copyright: Karina Jarrett.

5.
Jacqueline Fuijkschot (2024). Listening Station on Practices of Hope amidst Extractive Violence – Karin Reisinger, Pernilla Fagerlönn, Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors, Karina Jarrett, with contributions by Miriam Vikman, Eeva Linder, Karina Engelmark and Lena Sjötoft. Exhibited at the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam. © International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR).

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Redefining the Practice

Alina Paias | Scholars Marisol De La Cadena and Mario Blaser (2018) have embraced the notion of cosmopolitics and developed it further into what they call a political ontology, with the crucial difference resting on the acknowledgement that negotiating between heterogeneous worlds is itself a world-making practice. By opening up political practice to the possibility of pluriversality – a term connected to the Zapatista demand for a world where many worlds fit (1996) –, political ontology both remakes the imaginary of politics and redefines its components.

The negotiation between worlds involved in forging alliances means that the architect-as-ally is open not only to new ways of coming and working together, but also to undoing their practice, its standard procedures and definitions, and their image and understanding of themselves. Ruinorama, a collective of Brazilian practitioners, presented an installation during *Nature of Hope* that was focused on this undoing: Through their work with traditional communities in Brazil and encounters with indigenous and Black thinkers in books and conversations, they have gathered a new lexicon, with entries for each letter of the alphabet, that unsettles the normative definitions of architecture (fig. 6) (2024).

Do you also see your practice as changed by the alliances you have made? Can you let go of the conventional definitions of the practice?

public works | Our alliances and relational networks are crucial to how we function, working through long-sustained collaborations based on mutual trust and reciprocity. We don't subscribe to a uniform aesthetic or dictate specific outputs; instead, we value co-authorship with our allies, which defines the process and outcome of any commission. This is reflected in what we produce, from buildings to zines (and everything in between).

We try to avoid being gatekeepers to groups or knowledge, encouraging openness, care, and sharing with others in opposition to enclosure. Generosity is often repaid in kind (by allies) or somehow finds its way back into the practice in unexpected ways, allowing us to continue with certain lines of inquiry that weave through projects.

Karin Reisinger | My practice is determined by the inseparability of ethics, ontologies, and epistemologies (Barad 2007; Geerts 2016) and therefore

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6.
Jacqueline Fuijkschot (2024). Ruinorama's work Lexicon at the IABR, at the center of the image. Around it, from left to right, are the installations of Alexandra Arènes & Studio SOC (Société d'Objets Cartographiques) with Atelier shaa (architecture urbanisme), MOULD, HouseEurope!, Extinction Rebellion UK, Théo Demans & Clemence Seilles, and CHRITH Architects & Emma Diehl Studio. © International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR).

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needs to be accountable to the local inhabitants of the communities I work with and write with. This responds to feminist practices and epistemologies of accountability (Butler 2005; Rendell 2016), which have demanded foregrounding situated knowledges (Haraway 1988) and material environments generating (or suspending) agencies. Thus, my practices mess with who is the subject and who is the object, by changing roles and collaborating with practitioners from areas wrongly understood as »peripheries,« such as the ones occupied by traditional communities and extractive and mining settlements distant from large urban centers. I am not only dependent on local knowledge but also try to subordinate my work to local contributions and needs.

Husos arquitecturas | Alina, reflecting on your last two questions and examples, we agree that building forms of togetherness through non-extractive practices is among the most pressing challenges for fostering genuinely transformative collective political projects today. For us, this commitment is rooted in personal experience.

Extractivism, especially epistemic extractivism (Grosfoguel 2016), is something we have endured firsthand as Norandean[3] migrant architects in Spain. This has occurred in specific relationships that initially seemed to be close friendships but ultimately proved extractivist, characterized by the recurring appropriation of intellectual work. Over time, we have sought to reinterpret these experiences not as isolated failures but as opportunities for learning and redefining our practice.

We've come to realize that, in Western-centric, racially hierarchical societies, voices are valued differently, not solely for their content, but also based on the social perception of the body speaking. For a long time, we viewed these experiences in isolation, not infrequently blaming ourselves. However, through collective reflection, we began to recognize them as structural rather than personal issues. Discovering decolonial and anti-racist thinkers from Abya Yala/Latin America, and later meeting related activist communities in Madrid, has been profoundly healing for us. We believe that the existence of counter-hegemonic spaces for sharing such lived experiences are

3 We use the term »*Norandean migrants*« to refer to those of us who come from the northern Andes of South America – from countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, or Bolivia – shaped by a strong Indigenous heritage. In Spain, these migrations are often viewed through a particularly racialized and paternalistic lens, which associates them with manual and care work, and rarely with knowledge production.

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7.
Impresiones cotidianas/Juan Asolot (2022). Espacio Afro Cultural Center. Spatial project: Conciencia Afro association (Yeison García, Esther Mayoko Ortega, Moha Gerehou, Lucía Mbomío, Rubén H. Bermúdez), Husos arquitecturas (Diego Barajas, Camilo García and Allyson Vila; with the collaboration of Almudena Tenorio) and the association's expanded community. Gardening actions: Yania C. Vicente, Husos, neighbors and expanded community. Construction: UZ studio. Artistic works: Ken Province López and Larry Achiampong, among others. Textiles: Candelas and expanded community. Image from the author's archives. © Impresiones Cotidianas/Juan Asolot.

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crucial. Spaces that, while not always fully safe, foster trust and closeness, as described by Ecuadorian-Spanish architect and curator Camena Camacho of *La Parcería Cultural Center*. Only collective action can confront the structural asymmetries and extractivist logics that shape our society. In this context, resistance-based communities play a vital emancipatory role. This is why our participation together with the architect Allyson Vila in the design and construction of the community space Espacio Afro, developed by the activist-thinkers group Conciencia Afro in Madrid, has been so meaningful to us as urbanists and activists. This place centers Afro perspectives and antiracism, while fostering alliances with other activist movements, which they view as essential (fig. 7).

In fact, we agree with the members of this group that while communities of shared subaltern experiences are necessary, they are not sufficient, regardless of how internally diverse they may be. We must broaden this »we« into the most heterogeneous communities possible, composed of widely varied experiences and perspectives. In our practice, a central question is how architecture can act as a caring ally to such communities while also helping to build a »broad and diverse we« through non-extractive practices in a structurally unequal society. In this respect, we find it especially interesting to explore some sort of »architectures of deep reciprocity,« having in mind Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar and artist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's proposal of deep reciprocity as an alternative to extractivism (2017). Following Betasamosake Simpson's identification of deep reciprocity as a core of Nishnaabeg ethics, this architecture would be shaped by respect, relationship, and responsibility. Her reflections on interconnectedness, consent, empathy, caring, and sharing further echo the spirit of deep reciprocity.

We are continually learning in this direction: Long term collaboration with activists deeply aware of these issues has been very important. Many of our projects emphasize shared work across diverse spheres, though we often do so from a micro-community perspective – a dimension frequently undervalued. Authorship here expands without diminishing individual contributions and responsibilities. The participation in Espacio Afro (2022) with the Conciencia Afro Group and its expanded network is one example. For us, it is a shift towards »doing with« rather than »doing for.« It also means actively recognizing the contributions of other spatial agents – within or beyond our field – while paying particular attention to those whose voices are often pushed aside.

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8.
public works (2024). »Give and Gain: Relational Economies of Care,« our contribution to IABR involved the restaging of the R-Urban dining space, telling the story of the more-than-monetary economy that has sustained the project in London from 2012-present. Image from the author's archives. © public works.

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In these community-driven processes, extended time frames matter, as does keeping space open for doubt, to counterbalance overly confident positions. Since the *Host and Nectar Garden Building* (2005), within an interscalar territorial framework we refer to as »the expanded site,« we have pursued an exploration grounded in practices of material counter-extractivism, engaging with a broad interspecies »we,« as in the *(Synanthro)Love Shack* (2020), presented at *Nature of Hope* – often interwoven with post-heteronormative approaches. More broadly, it is about recognizing the overlapping systems of domination we work within, the resistances they generate, and understanding that, as architects, we are never outside these power dynamics.

Working through Systems and Institutions

Alina Paias | Much of the work conducted in alliance with cosmopolitical others happens at the margins of conventional and largely commercial practice, capturing resources from funds and grants and institutions such as museums and biennales, complementing those with academic activities, lectures, and residencies. A lack of material resources can be bypassed by adopting different means for their circulation, through the exchange of resources in-kind, through favors and gifts. Taking this position is, of course, not without its challenges: One of the installations in the *Nature of Hope* exhibition was the Practice Place, a soft assembly space for practitioners. Some of the discussions in this space revolved around strategies such as redistributing, misusing, and appropriating resources – while certainly valuable, they do not remove the practitioner from a fragile position in relation to those with economic and institutional power. And having to reconcile institutional expectations and demands with goals that serve the »undercommons« (Harney/Moten 2013), or the alliances forged outside these institutions, can be incredibly exhausting.

> How do you relate to the redistribution and appropriation of resources? Do you feel like you are in a fragile position?

public works | Our approach is characterized by flexibility and adaptability, in part born out of precarious work from the margins. Our strength is in the relational networks we have nurtured for over twenty years of practice, often turning to allies for help when resources are scarce.

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Alliances and relational economies are a central theme of our exhibition contribution, which describes the relational economies of care sustaining the R-Urban hub (2023). Within this space, resources are shared and exchanged without commodification, through gifting, time banking, by sharing knowledge and swapping skills with members of the network. It is an example of another logic for how spatial urban resources can be designed and shared in cities, beyond modes of capitalist exchange, and to help (precariously) resist the enclosure and privatization of urban spaces. The project supports a network of allies and companions to tackle compounding climate and social injustices by creating a space for collective action at the neighborhood scale. Beyond this, it nourishes our practice and those of our close collaborators, providing a free space where we can experiment, prototype, and fail, whilst also being a space that gives us hope (fig. 8).

Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors | I expose myself and I feel vulnerable, but it is necessary for making the Sámi culture visible.

Karin Reisinger | Although my impacts on epistemologies of extractivism are very precarious and often get me in fragile positions because it is outside what is expected from architectural research, I have to acknowledge that I am privileged because I can leave the situation of extractivism. The house in which I live will not be torn down to extract more resources. However, there are moments when I can share a small part of the local fragilities with the people I work with, as I shared this invitation to join the article with Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors. Further ways of sharing fragilities are by asking uncomfortable questions to power, collating and empowering imaginaries of hopeful futures, and hosting local practices in moments of public attention (as in the exhibition); ideally, by doing things together.

Husos arquitecturas | Acknowledging our privileges helps us avoid self-centeredness and better understand the oppressions others face. As Afro-Brazilian feminist philosopher Djamila Ribeiro states »Privileges are not natural; they are constructed through the oppression of other social groups« (Ribeiro 2020, author's translation).[4] The hardest – and most transformative – task is finding imaginative ways to dismantle them. By examining our

4 From the original »Los privilegios no son naturales, se construyen sobre la opresión de otros grupos sociales […].«

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privileges, we believe we can build a stronger, broader, and more just »we.« Engaging with a more just »we« from a situated perspective demands critical reflection on our practice. From our perspective, inclusion means little without examining architecture's power dynamics. A truly diverse architecture must embrace difference from within, not merely reflect it outwardly. Furthermore, we understand that there can be no collective »we« beyond human nature without, as Black Brazilian historian Giovana Xavier puts it, »restoring denied humanities« (Xavier 2017).

> Which bodies typically hold influence in shaping space – and which do not?
> How do we relate to that in our own practice?
> How do we share resources, recognition, and care?
> To which bodies are we willing to cede power – or even offer a little love?

These are questions that walk with us in these journeys.

Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors and Karin Reisinger | Reflecting privileges and fragilities, we claim that long-term, collaborative and counter-extractive work with sites and places shall be more valued in architecture and research in general. In our collaborations, which concern specific extractivist areas in Váhtjer/Gällivare municipality, we want to give our work back to the communities and the people, especially to indigenous communities and people with strong roots to their environments, which often means struggle and pain in extractive environments.

Karin Reisinger | Also, for these areas to allow for alliances with migrants and refugees, as Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors has described in a previous work of hers already in 1998, called *Vi har våra rötter både här och där (We Have our Roots Here and There)* (Hjortfors 1998)[5].

Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors | Through our common working method and research work, we build bridges and understanding when we work together.

5 At that time, Lis-Mari Gurák Hjortfors had not yet reclaimed her Sámi name.

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Final reflection

Alina Paias | What emerges in this shared text is an explicit concern about power, how it is distributed and how it is expressed. This concern gives form to ways of acting that are openly political, against a pervasive depoliticization of the practice in the era of architectural commodification (Arantes 2019: 204). This commitment is connected to how much of the work detailed here already begins from a position that is marginal to conventional practice; as Husos aptly put it, the architect-as-ally is not so much the one who reaches out to the discipline's historical others from a position of unquestioned power as the one who attempts to connect to others through shared or familiar vulnerabilities. This is radically different from the paralyzing pessimism that so many architects can default to in the face of perceived powerlessness.

The work of Husos, Karin, Lis-Mari, and public works is contextualized by specific struggles such as the extreme inequality in the distribution of resources, often along racial lines, connected to the extension of the neoliberal turn in the United Kingdom and in the wake of Spain's colonial project; or the deeply entangled ecological collapse and existential threat to indigenous forms of life felt so directly in Sámi territory. In all of these contexts, architecture is confronted with its own reliance on material extraction and work exploitation; it seems impossible to work towards urgent change within the usual procedures of the practice, which have been so thoroughly captured towards the commodification of its objects. What the co-authors of this text have identified is that the only way to keep practicing is to change how we practice.

It is common to associate matters of location and distribution of power and of the vulnerability to this power with the matter of scale; for example, a traditional community is powerless against a nationally-backed mining enterprise because it is small and the enterprise is big. What can easily follow is the idea that a transformative practice in architecture would be as powerful as it is scalable. From early on in the making of *Nature of Hope*, we anticipated a critique of our work that would amount to how these situated practices could not be sublimated towards re-applicable models – especially when it came to transferring strategies from the Global South to the Netherlands – or towards national and international-level policy change. However, the work of my co-authors is changing architecture practice in how it replaces large-scale thinking with ecological thinking. At different points in this text, they have described their projects as prototypes, micro laboratories, and

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ways to envision and rehearse alternative collective futures. This approach resonates with architecture scholar Renata Tyszczuk and geographer Joe Smith's reframing of scenarios, especially in the context of the use and diffusion of climate change scenarios, as a »rehearsal space« for desired futures (2018: 58), and with my co-curator Catherine Koekoek's description of the prefiguration of desired ways of doing and living as preparation to »return to the city,« here understood as returning to the potential arena of institutional politics and large-scale industry change (2024: 28). Koekoek's argument that the inside-outside movement between alternative practices and institutional change is most successful when ways of doing otherwise also function as modes of awareness and advocacy is particularly relevant in the context of an exhibition (ibid.). Most crucially, their approach moves beyond and besides the issue of scale, acting on a form of planetary thinking which is framed by philosopher Yuk Hui as constitutively based on diversity and always engendering diversification, against the solutionism of systems that can be scaled up globally (2024). Working through and within alliances is transformative for architecture in how it allows for the construction and inhabitation of collectively designed and desired futures, while retaining and deriving strength from diversity in ways of understanding, technologies, and ways of being. Here might reside a fundamental response to the current crises of our discipline.

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