FIELD EXPLORATIONS

DESIGN- AND ARTS- BASED PRACTICES TOWARDS VIABLE AGRI-CULTURES

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SCHOOL OF VERTICALITY

A TRIBUTE TO GROUNDED PRACTICES AND SITUATED FORMS OF KNOWING

SOPHIE KRIER AND ROBERTO GIGLIOTTI

The following contribution draws on a written correspondence between Sophie Krier, artist-in-residence and Roberto Gigliotti (Lungomare) which took place in the autumn of 2019. Invited by the curators of the cultural association Lungomare – Angelika Burtscher, Roberto Gigliotti, Daniele Lupo and Lisa Mazza – Sophie Krier developed School of Verticality as a public program about listening and learning from embodied, situated forms of knowing in Südtirol-Alto Adige (South Tyrol), a rural region of the north-east Italian Alps. Where on earth do we belong? Which forgotten nurturing practices can we bring to light and reinvent, together? The program unfolded in four episodes in dialogue with specific locations during 2018-2019. Each episode interwove different biographies (human, animal, territorial) and temporalities (of geology, history, biology, dreams, memory).

The first episode, Weaving Gardens, gained shape in close collaboration with *Donne Nissà* association and the gardeners of the *Orto Semirurali Garten* of Bolzano. Together with social association *Akrat*, Sophie Krier installed a vertical loom (Figure 1) with the intention to create a collective fabric that would unveil the biographical stories embedded in the plots – most of them related to seeds. The loom was activated during *Festa del Raccolto*, the yearly harvest celebration, in dialogue with anthropologist Francesca Cozzolino.

The second episode, Seeding Stories, took place in winter 2019 at Sockerhof farm in Mals-Malles, Obervinschgau, during the first edition of the seed swap market *SamenFest* in Obervingschau–Val Venosta.[1] On this day, the idea to collect and exchange not only seeds but also seed stories was activated and discussed (Figure 2) amongst activist communities of seed savers from Italy, Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

Following up on Seeding Stories, the third episode, Breaking Bread, consisted of a hands-on springtime bread baking workshop during the *Festival Hier und Da – Gut leben im ländlichen Raum / Il buon vivere nelle zone periferiche*, also in Obervingschau–Val Venosta.[2] The workshop brought together bread making traditions from Südtirol-Alto Adige and Afghanistan (Figure 3) to explore the interconnectedness of bread and culture. The second and third episode were developed in dialogue with ethnobotanist Frederik van Oudenhoven.

For its fourth episode School of Verticality explored the potential of displacing borders to challenge the understanding, in Western modernity, of our belonging to certain spaces or identities. Titled Weaving Boundaries: OVERTIME, a one-time gathering of people with different knowledges reinvented Allan Kaprow's happening OVERTIME on the high pasture Villanderer Alm–Alpe di Villandro in Südtirol-Alto Adige (Figure 4). The happening was realized only once before, in Spring 1968 at University of California, San Diego. OVERTIME was realised in dialogue with artist/activist Stéphane Verlet-Bottéro.

1 Weaving Gardens (open air vertical loom), Sophie Krier, School of Verticality, 2019.

Commissioned by Lungomare. Realised with Akrat, Donne Nissà, and Orto Semirurali Garten, Bolzano.

Photo: Jörg Osschmann

2 Seeding Stories (swapping seeds for stories), Sophie Krier, School of Verticality, 2019.

Commissioned by Lungomare. Hosted by SamenFest, Obervingschau-Val Venosta.

Photo: Jörg Osschmann

3 Breaking Bread (exchanging traditions: Razia showing how to make filo dough), Sophie Krier, School of Verticality, 2019.

Commissioned by Lungomare. Hosted by Festival Hier und Da - Gut leben im ländlichen Raum / Il buon vivere nelle zone periferiche, Obervingschau-Val Venosta, 2019.

Photo: Marion Oberhofer

4 Weaving Boundaries: OVERTIME (after OVERTIME, Allan Kaprow, 1968), Sophie Krier with Stéphane Verlet-Bottéro, School of Verticality, 2019.

Commissioned by Lungomare. Hosted by Villanderer Alm-Alpe di Villandro.

Photo: Jörg Oschmann

1 AMSTERDAM, 20 DECEMBER 2019

Dear Roberto,

One thing I'd like to discuss with you in the context of this anthology concerns the question of knowledges that School of Verticality, as a series of situated, hands-on conversations and interventions, makes manifest, and attempts to interweave. On a number of occasions since my return from Südtirol - Alto Adige, I have received questions from people who did not attend the "episodes" physically, such as: What is it, exactly (what kind of school)? Where is it based? How can we take part?

Over the summer I was talking with my friend, designer and editor Erik Wong about these things, over the course of a few days. He asked me what I really, deeply (want to) do with School of Verticality - how I wish to go on with it. His conclusion is that the four episodes so far (Weaving Gardens, Seeding Stories, Breaking Bread[3], Weaving Boundaries: OVERTIME), all are "essential movements that define what it means to be human". He struck a chord in me by putting things so simply.

Weaving Gardens was about weaving histories of gardens on an outdoor loom, which was installed in the community garden *Orto Semirurali Garten*[4]. The physical movements it asked from participants (mostly, gardeners and their families) included interweaving yarn (one up, one down), drawing, knotting; mental movements included conjuring up memories of gardens from their past homes.

Seeding, and cultivating plants, enables a vertical, two-way movement that grows upwards, and roots downwards at the same time. Plants connect soil and sky. For me they are an example of how we can learn to be grounded, relational, and spiritual beings. Collecting stories of seeds made me realise how they form the minuscule beginning of everything that surrounds us: food, clothing, even architecture.

Everything starts with seeds.

When I think about seeds now, I see them as time capsules: vessels bringing together human and non-human biographies. I am now working on a Seeding Stories podcast series[5] that follows up on the paper archive that was launched in winter 2018 at the seed swap market *SamenFest* Obervingschau-Val Venosta.

Back to movement - with Breaking Bread, I was looking into cereals as the ancestral basis of our present day agriculture, which goes back all the way to the first sedentary settlements in Mesopotamia. At the *Festival Hier und Da - Gut leben im ländlichen Raum / Il buon vivere nelle zone periferiche* in Obervingschgau-Val Venosta, we brought together Mike, a baker from Südtirol-Alto Adige, with Razia, a baker from Afghanistan; my hope was to enable an exchange of knowledge between their respective bread practices and traditions. The workshop involved movements of kneading, dividing, rising (dough), sawing (bread planks), transferring (drawings of totem animals).

Lastly, OVERTIME was about the movement of erecting and shifting boundaries (the first fences, by the way, were woven, from willow, which for me made the project come full circle). The activity consisted in re-enacting a Happening envisioned by American artist Allan Kaprow in 1968[6], on the Villanderer Alm - one of the most privatised pastures of Südtirol-Alto Adige. You can really see the surging upwards movement of modernisation (roads, tourism) and privatisation (weekend cottages) there: the last remaining commons are situated on the *Toten Rücken* [trans. the back of the dead], on the right of the small chapel *Totenkirchlein*. It struck me how symbolical this is. What it tells me, is that our ancestors, whose backs shaped the landscape we know today, are the ones who hold the keys to another

relation to land, one that is not about colonising but rather about working with the land, through a process of listening, of slowing down, of observing.

I'm curious if you see School of Verticality in the same way. For your information, in response to my initial proposal for this anthology, Alastair wrote me the following note:

> Dear Sophie, there is a theme in what you write about story gathering or generating, sharing, then (re-) telling over time and across geographies that I think embodies your practice in "alternative agri-cultures". I think it would be valuable if you sample all of these projects to synthesise what you bring, blend and broadcast as a nomadic artist/designer/weaver. This could take the form of "reflections" in and after the "field explorations" with visual content to support, and a synthesis of how your practice affects you, and (positively) disturbs the situations/ social settings that you find yourself in. So, I do see a theme - *Nomadic reflective practice as a mutual exchange…*

What Alastair describes as the "(re-) telling across time and geographies" has to do with what I've been working on with my students at University College Roosevelt, (Middelburg, Netherlands) this fall semester. We explored the *Atlas Mnemosyne* (1929) of German art historian Aby Warburg[7] who through this life work, tried to tell *another* cultural history of images. Mnemosyne is the muse of memory, and in his visual atlas, Warburg figured out the relation between "roots and routes" (vertical, time related movements - what he called *Nachleben*, [trans. afterlife, recurrence] and horizontal, migratory movements that he coined *Wanderstraße der Kultur*, [trans. pathways of culture]. It is striking how, when you combine the vertical warp or *Nachleben* (the past re-emerging in the present), and the horizontal weft or *Wanderstraße* (the migratory, intercultural circulation of things and ideas), you get, again, a fabric…

This particular realisation reassures me, because a recurrent question when I lecture about School of Verticality concerns the perception that we live in a time where horizontality, in the form of non-hierarchical forms of collaboration, and flows of knowledge, manifests itself more and more, and is clearly needed in order to counter movements of oppression, privacy infringement, or populism. So many people are destabilised by my plea for verticality, which they see as a plea for authority.

Why is it that when we think of verticality, most of us think of hierarchy, and not depth, I wonder?

One way, through which I try to explain what I'm pursuing, is by making an analogy with plants. Collecting seed stories, and discussing food sovereignty and plant life with ethnobiologist Frederik van Oudenhoven, made me realise something I had never thought about before. Given that plants cannot take flight as we do in case of danger (by running away physically), they possess a (seemingly) immobile, local intelligence that is all about sensing and anticipating the environment, in which they live. If I transfer this phenomenon to my practice, it would mean that with School of Verticality I try to practice an acupuncture of place.

(By the way, realisations, or insights, are also as a form of vertical movement, which I seek with School of Verticality, since they take place inside ourselves, connecting our deepest abilities to the possibilities around us, in a temporary moment of clarity).

Looking forward to hear back from you,

Sincerely, Sophie

Dear Sophie,

Thanks for initiating this dialogue with your long, exhaustive letter. And let me thank you also for this opportunity: it is quite useful for all of us to re-start thinking about the project that you shared with Lungomare, now that the time gives us the necessary distance to look back at it and think in a more relaxed way (unlike the stress we experienced before planned public events; no shared anxiety that we might have forgotten something and the participants will not take the expected profit from the School of Verticality!) about the decisions that have been taken and about all the contents that have been put in this articulated project. This is probably exactly the right time: some time has passed, but the memories are still vivid.

In your letter you have given a precise description of all the episodes of the School of Verticality and I will go back to each one of them later on. Before we start I would like to make a little, but I think an important, step back. Preparing myself for this dialogue, I was mentally back in Antwerp, and thought about the first time we met and we, Lungomare curators, asked you about the possibility of doing a long term project in Bolzano. You had already told us about your experience with the outdoor public classroom in Middelburg, but how did you feel about Lungomare's request to expand your practice through a long-time project and to connect it a very specific context such as Südtirol-Alto Adige? What is the relevance of extended time in your practice? How do you relate it to the openness of a not pre-defined outcome? How do you feel today looking back at this project that, although rooted in a territory, still addresses issues that are relevant on a broader level too? School of Verticality started in Südtirol-Alto Adige, but it might be activated again in another place on earth… What would happen then?

You say you are curious if we see School of Verticality as you do. Of course, after so much time spent together and so many words shared about the project, we mostly agree with your descriptions of the project, but let me add a Lungomare perspective to your words. After all, you are the author of School of Verticality, but you know quite well that for us *curating* is very much an issue of letting topics that we perceive as very relevant for the place where we intersect with the practice of guests who come from somewhere else. Through our activity we try to facilitate possible interactions with cultural and socio-political processes related to the region in which we are located, focusing on three principles: a specific attention to the context, a transdisciplinary approach, and reflection on the role of Lungomare as a cultural institution.

Weaving Gardens is probably the episode of the School of Verticality that most corresponds to what we talked about at the very beginning, as we invited you to be the Lungomare resident-artist. In fact, the project recognises an interface in Bolzano, the *Orto Semirurali Garten*, where different communities, stories, identities (the list could go on forever…) come together and start a dialogue. You offered the *Semirurali* gardeners an instrument that embodies the nature of the place, gives a visibility to the idea of sharing and reinforces the idea of working together. And the roof is still there today! It might not be used to protect the loom right now, but still it offers a shelter for the future gatherings and meetings in the garden.

We love the idea of Breaking Bread being a reinvention of a tradition, and we keep hoping that there will be a time in which the *vinschger Paarl* (a twin bread consisting of two interlocking circles, originating from the Vinschgau valley) will really consist not of two pieces of the same dough, but of two different kinds put together. This would represent, as it did in the past, the union of two souls.

Obviously OVERTIME, with its symbolic strength related to the shifting of a border, fits perfectly in the project, though it seems to us an episode of different nature. It accompanied the School of Verticality, since the very beginning, during its whole duration. It was a sort of background presence all the time. Did it influence the other episodes of the School of Verticality, in your opinion?

This last observation leads me to another aspect that I would love to discuss with you about a specific topic related to the School of Verticality. The project is extensive and covers so many different issues. How do we bring all of them together? Is there a red thread connecting the different initiatives of the School of Verticality? Does it make sense at all to look for this thread?

Fabric is part of your poetic, you were educated as a textile designer and now you interweave stories, history and biographies in your projects. How much is fabric a metaphor or a symbol and how much does the idea of weaving deeply relate to your practice? You used this symbolic level to describe every episode of the School of Verticality and even to connect it to your teaching activity in Middelburg…

I tried to answer your questions and ended up asking back, and now I want to conclude my letter with a final question. We started this series of residencies - and let me confess that after three of them we are not sure about this definition anymore and prefer to refer to them as long term, site specific projects - after ten years of Lungomare and they were celebrated in the frame of a one-month event called Lungomare *Gasthaus* [trans. inn]. This was intended as a temporary space for thought and action. During the days of the *Gasthaus*, we asked ourselves how to activate context-specific practices deliberately positioned on a distance from the centres (geographically and metaphorically), how to establish a dialogue between a resident-artist and a territory, and what formats could we have developed to support this dialogue. A certain understanding of *hospitality*, as an issue denoting the temporary condition of relational and social space, while also implying the negotiation of power relations, was always in the centre of our actions and we decided to go on with this theme. We handed over this topic to you after having explored it with the two previous residencies: how would you frame now School of Verticality in this idea of hospitality?

Best,
Roberto and the Lungomares

Dear Roberto, dear Lungomares :),

Your questions raise multiple new ones…

I remember feeling joy about spending time with the mountains and the rocks that surround Bozen-Bolzano when you confirmed the invitation to come to Südtirol-Alto Adige. I also felt a sense of space thanks to the time span of your site-specific residency (one year). I didn't know much about the ecological, economical, historical or agricultural stakes of the territory then. I knew what the media has foregrounded over the past years: the migratory bottleneck of Brenner-Brennero. My first stays were spent criss-crossing the valleys of Südtirol-Alto Adige in search of (discarded) crafts and knowledges. These field trips allowed me to meet some of your existing contacts, and to make new ones: I talked with a weaver, a stove builder, a geologist, a historian, a fence builder, a pedagogical scientist, an anthropologist, a morphologist, but also local gardeners and seed savers, among others. From these first encounters, I initially developed the idea of a physical, nomadic outdoor classroom that would travel between different altitudes: a kind of "fold out" classroom on wheels, pulled by a tractor, reminiscent of local market stalls that bring agricultural produce from the farm lands to the cities. I imagined that this mobile classroom could bring about a dialogue between the values of the predominantly Italian speaking urban inhabitants of the valleys, with those of the largely German speaking farmers on the valley slopes and mountains. In the end, School of Verticality travelled from place to place as a programme of activities, but did not materialise in the form of an open-air classroom as such (unless we consider the garden loom at *Orto Semirurali Garten* as a - symbolic - classroom).

Confronting my research-driven, relational practice to the complexity of issues in Südtirol-Alto Adige proved exhausting. I wanted to get to the bottom of things, but also wanted to get a sense of the inter-connectedness of the dilemmas, which I perceived. For instance, I realised that Obervinschgau-Alta Val Venosta, a valley known for its cereal cultivation, also known as *Kornkammer*, [trans. cereal attic], hosts, since the turn of the century, a citizen-led movement of eco-activism aimed at safeguarding, and regenerating the last plots of land not yet colonised by the upward-moving, pesticide-based apple and wine monoculture.[8] From what I understand - we'd have to fact check this - industrialised agriculture really took hold when Südtirol-Alto Adige gained administrative autonomy as a region in 1972. The exponential economic growth started after this change of status, perhaps because it created the conditions for land speculation.[9] As seed activist Vandana Shiva stated during her support visit to the *Festival Hier und Da - Gut leben im ländlichen Raum / Il buon vivere nelle zone periferiche* in spring 2019, it is essentially "monoculture of the mind" that leads to monoculture of land.[10] Could School of Verticality, by virtue of adopting a cross-section view, in the same way that archaeologists follow the strata of time, connect different perspectives (pragmatic/scientific and spiritual/holistic), and thereby function as a *small crack that lets light in*[11], making new insights possible (or reactivating ancestral ones)?

For sure the roundtable talk held during *SamenfFest* about farming culture of the Pamir people (on the border of Tajikistan and Afghanistan) versus the cereal tradition and knowledge in Obervinschgau-Alta Val Venosta, yielded striking parallels. I see them as tentative directions for further inquiry into polyphonic futures for working the land. They are analogies of diversity (Figure 5 Rye/Figure 6 Lashak), maintenance (Figure 7 Waalwege/Figure 8 Irrigation channel), good omen (Figure 9 Horse heads/Figure 10 Roetz), and of room for otherness (Figure 11 Tartscher Bichl/Figure 12 The boulders of Tegh Barahnagon). I will try to explain why.

If we can listen to it, the Pamiri tradition of rye cultivation (Figure 6) is an answer to the question of how we can embody diversity in our agricultural practices, and learn to think, and act in a relational manner: "The Pamiri name for rye, *lashak*, comes from the word *aralashak*, which means 'mixed with'. Rye is never grown alone, always together with other grains or pulses".[12] The contrast in approach with the efficiency, soil-depleting agricultural model as it practiced (and subsidised) throughout most of Europe couldn't be starker.

If we go one step deeper, and consider water, we have to acknowledge that it is the condition of all life on earth. In the Pamiri, water is traditionally celebrated as a form of fluid wisdom, through a yearly, collective cleansing ritual of the waterways (Figure 8). "The first water that is cleared, even if it full of leaves and mud, is drunk, because it is believed to be the best water. One family, always the same one, starts the ritual by calling out to the water god from a mountain top. When I asked the family if they still keep up this tradition, they said "we do, but now we whisper", because they are not so sure anymore that the water god exists".[13] Similarly, the traditional Vinschger *Waalwege* [trans. water ways], (Figure 7) used to be commons. They functioned through an inventive, socially controlled, water-sharing system. Sadly, the spiritual dimension of sharing water has gone missing in Südtirol-Alto Adige, as in most of modern, Western society.

One question I ask myself is: can we remember (as in *re-member*, referring to the French term "membre", reconnecting the members of an amputated cosmic body) how to nurture healing relations with our environment? I think part of the answer lies in acknowledging that we depend on natural forces beyond our control. When visiting Plawenn, the village above Malser Haide in the upper part of Obervinschgau-Alta Val Venosta, I noticed two horse heads mounted on the former firemen's house. Later I was told they always face East and West, and are intended to protect wooden houses from catching fire. For me they also speak of the necessity of to look in all directions - East and West, North and South. I decided to mount two such heads on the garden loom at *Orto Semirurali Garten*, as spiritual guardians for the (precarious) future of the community garden (Figure 9). The orientation of the horse heads is what determined the slightly skewed position of the loom on the plot. I don't know if horses can ward off our futures, but I know that incorporating these kinds of details in my work make me very happy.

In terms of protection against evils, the Pamiri hold up a beautiful tradition: "The intrinsic connection between people and the landscape is reflected in one of the oldest traditional elements of the *chid*, the Pamiri house: the skylight or *roetz*. Constructed as part of the roof, it is a window placed on top of a small dome made of four spiralling concentric wooden squares. These squares represent the sacred Zoroastrian elements that form the foundation of all aspects of life that underlie people's relations with the land and their food: air to breathe, water to drink, earth to grow crops, and fire to prepare food".[14]

The last example ties in to your last question on hospitality. It's about which forms of otherness we allow into our world: which other entities are we willing to co-habit with? When I asked the audience if there still was a place in Obervinschgau-Alta Val Venosta that marked a transition between this world, and another, parallel one, permaculturist Ägidius Wellenzohn pointed to the *Tartscher Bichl*, which he sees as a

time capsule - a visual reminder of how the valley looked before it became artificially irrigated (Figure 11). The prompt to ask this question came from yet another Pamiri story, about the boulders of Tegh Barahnagon, near the village of Khuf (Figure 12). "At their foot are small offerings, ibex horns, signs of human culture..."[15] The boulders mark the border between civilisation, and wilderness; it made me think about the need for places, which would be shielded from human intervention, so that they could act as some sort of external, ethical consciousness.

To conclude yet another long letter (!), here are succinct answers to your other questions.

The red thread connecting the different initiatives of the School of Verticality are the ancestral movements, which I talked about in my first letter, which take us back to what it means to be human on this planet.

Indeed, at this point, weaving is more a metaphor than a deeply embodied dimension of my practice. This has to do with the simple fact that I am trying to remember (*re-member*) why weaving attracted me in the first place, when I studied it in the mid-1990s. I'm still getting to grips with its language.

OVERTIME was all the time on my mind, throughout my residency, yes; partly because it was the most adventurous activity to plan; partly because, as tribute to Allan Kaprow, I felt responsible to uphold his legacy; but more importantly, the "background presence" of OVERTIME fed into the other activities of School of Verticality through a focus on overcoming, shifting, and interweaving cultural, historical, and mental boundaries.

Speak soon,
Sophie

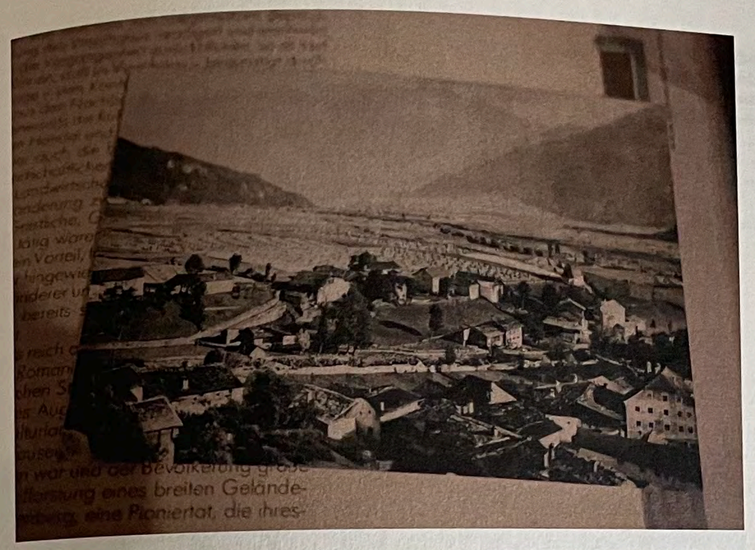
Dear Sophie,

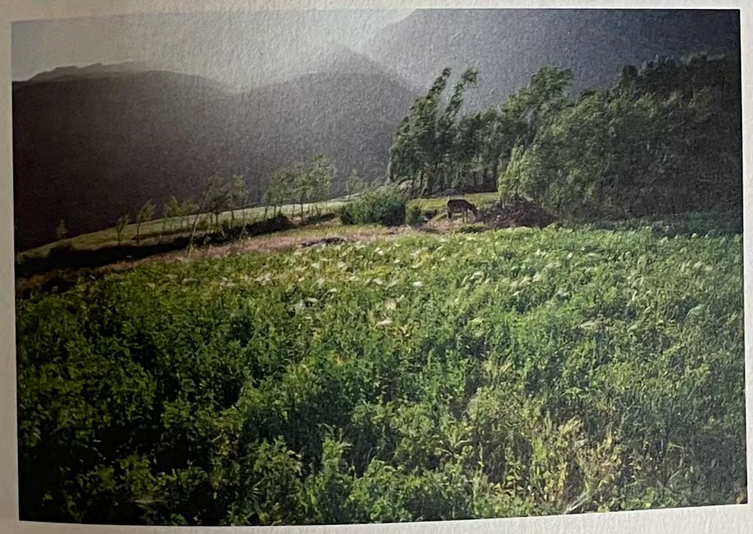
Thank you again for your long letter. It is interesting how we could keep going on re-thinking about the experiences that we shared the last one and a half years, about the connections of the actions started with a world understood in a broader sense, and discussing the deep meaning of all the decisions taken and the influence of School of Verticality on the present and on possible futures.

The topic of movement that you raise with your words keeps resonating in my mind. Weaving, knotting, conjuring up in relation to Weaving Gardens; vertical, two-way movement upwards and downwards as far as it concerns the general approach of your project towards the idea of land(scape); kneading, rising, sawing, transferring (Breaking Bread); erecting, shifting (OVERTIME)... It all brings us back to a dynamic comprehension of the universe that might positively change our way of looking at things, and the way they happen. In your last letter you reminded me of Frederik van Oudenhoven's argument about the intrinsic nature of seeds and their capability to develop a resilience towards what is happening around them, and I really appreciate this because it adds a significant point of view to the consolidated opinion that seeds keep migrating, no matter how the man-made structures subdivide the world.

But it's time to conclude. To finish this conversation, I would like to ask you about the consequences of thinking of School of Verticality as you do and explained extensively with your words. In his letter Alastair connects your practice to the idea of "alternative agri-cultures". Thinking about School of Verticality, what should be, in your opinion, the main focus that we should have with regards to our relation to land?

Best,
Roberto





5 (Rye) cereal fields as far as the eye stretches in Burgeis, Obervinschgau-Val Venosta, circa 1950s.

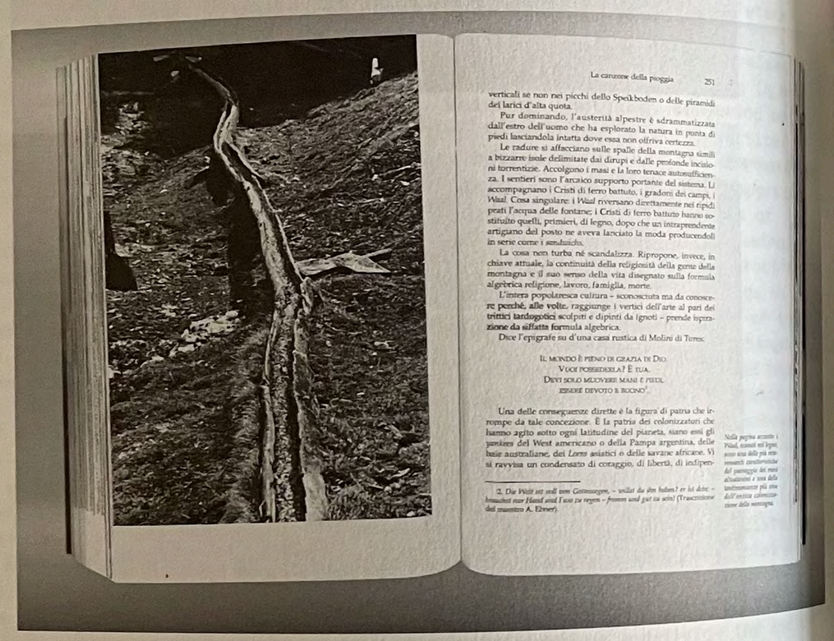
Personal archive Robert & Edyth Bernhard.

6 A field of lashak-makh (rye and pea) in Ghorzwinj in Afghan Shughnan, 2015.

Photo: Frederik van Oudenhoven

7 Waalwege (waterway) in: Golfer Aldo, Die Erben der Einsamkeit. Reise zu den Bergbauernhöfen Südtirols, Athesia Tappeiner Verlag, 2017, p. 250.

Photo: Flavio Faganello



verticali se non nei picchi dello Speikboden o delle piramidi dei larici d'alta quota.

Pur dominando, l'austerità alpestre è sdrammatizzata dall'estro dell'uomo che ha esplorato la natura in punta di piedi lasciandola intatta dove essa non offriva certezza.

Le radure si affacciano sulle spalle della montagna simili a bizzarre isole delimitate dai dirupi e dalle profonde incisioni torrentizie. Accolgono i masi e la loro tenace autosufficienza. I sentieri sono l'arcaico supporto portante del sistema. Li accompagniano i Cristi di ferro battuto, i gradoni dai campi, i *Waal*. Cosa singolare: i *Waal* riversano direttamente nei ripidi prati l'acqua delle fontane; i Cristi di ferro battuto hanno sostituito quelli, primieri, di legno, dopo che un intraprendente artigiano del posto ne aveva lanciato la moda producendoli in serie come i *souvenirs*.

La cosa non turba né scandalizza. Ripropone, invece, in chiave attuale, la continuità della religiosità della gente della montagna e il suo senso della vita disegnato sulla formula algebrica religione, lavoro, famiglia, morte.

L'intera popolaresca cultura – sconosciuta ma da conoscere perché, alle volte, raggiunge i vertici dell'arte al pari dei trittici tardogotici scolpiti e dipinti da ignoti – prende ispirazione da siffatta formula algebrica.

Dice l'epigrafe su d'una casa rustica di Molini di Torres:

IL MONDO È PIENO DI GRAZIA DI DIO
VUOI POSSEDERLA? È TUA.
DEVI SOLO MUOVERE MANI E PIEDI,
ESSERE DEVOTO E BUONO[2].

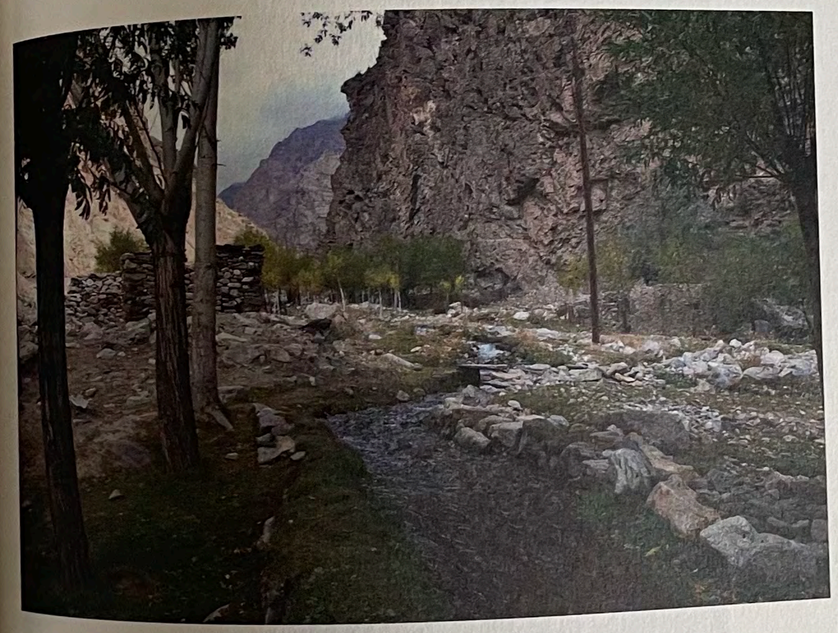
Una delle conseguenze dirette è la figura di patria che irrompe da tale concezione. È la patria dei colonizzatori che hanno agito sotto ogni latitudine del pianeta, siano essi gli *yankees* del West americano o della Pampa argentina, delle bande australiane, dei *Lares* asiatici o delle savane africane. Vi si ravvisa un condensato di coraggio, di libertà, di indipen-

2. *Die Welt ist voll von Gottessegen, – willst du ihn haben? er ist dein: – brauchst nur Hand und Fuss zu regen – frommt und gut zu sein!* (Trascrizione del maestro A. Ebner).

Nella pagina accanto: i Waal, scorsi nel legno, sono una delle più emblematiche caratteristiche del paesaggio dei masi altoatesini e una delle testimonianze più vive dell'antica colonizzazione della montagna.

8 Water irrigation channel, Pamir mountains, Tajikistan, 2009.

Photo: Frederik van Oudenhoven



9 Horse heads facing East and West, mounted for good omen on the garden loom of Orto Semirurali Garten, Bolzano, 2018.

Photo: Jörg Oschmann

10 Roetz (skylight) of a Pamiri House with four spiralling concentric wooden squares representing the sacred Zoroastrian elements, 2015.

Photo: Frederik van Oudenhoven

11 The Tartscher Bichl, perceived by some as a time capsule, close to Mals-Malles, 2019.

Photo: Sophie Krier

12 The boulders of Tegh Barahnagon, marking the passage from civilisation to wilderness, 2015.

Photo: Frederik van Oudenhoven

5 PARIS, FEBRUARY 7, 2020

Dear Roberto,

The main focus needed with regards to our relation to land made itself manifest to me through various encounters in the past years. In the interest of concluding our conversation, I'll name one: meeting biodynamic farmer Elisabetta Foradori at the *Festival Hier und Da - Gut leben im ländlichen Raum / Il buon vivere nelle zone periferiche* in April 2019. She was one of the experts whom the Bürgergenossenschaft Obervingschgau had invited to reflect on regional development. On a bright, crisp day Foradori took a group of us on a walk on the hillside from Mals-Malles in the direction of Schluderns-Silandro.

What struck me, even before her words did, was her quiet, yet determined pace. I felt she walked slowly, yet I struggled to keep up with her. When she spoke to us, she did so in German with a warm Italian accent, and chose her words carefully. I literally felt that she weighed each and every one of them. This consciousness is precisely what is lacking in the modern, capital-driven, colonising relation to land. In her words: *"Wir arbeiten auf dem Feld, aber wir sind mit den Gedanken anderswo"* [trans. we work on the fields, but our thoughts are elsewhere].

Foradori gave a very apt description of the situation by drawing on plants. *"Man sagt, der Kopf der Pflanzen ist die Erde. Und die Wurzeln sind ihr Denken. Wenn es im Boden keinen Humus gibt, wenn er tot ist, dann ist ihr Kopf leer. Die Pflanze hat auch keine Verbindung zum Kosmos mehr"*, [Trans. People say that the earth constitutes the mind of plants. And that the roots are their thoughts. When the soil contains no humus anymore, when the soil is dead, then the mind is empty, and plants are disconnected from the cosmos]. In a similar way, the anthropocentric gaze has severed us from our ancestral relation with nature. We need to reconnect as humans with ways to enable life in all its diversity.

Meanwhile, companies like Monsanto pressurise farmers to the point of suicide and soil quality depletes worldwide. For Foradori, this is the biggest tragedy we have yet to gain full consciousness of: contaminated, polluted, dead soil. Her prompt is therefore to make good compost, and use biodynamic know-how to set regeneration cycles back in motion.

Back in motion… We are back to movement, again! Do you know *'Seitai-dō'*? It's a bodily practice whereby you allow the body to find involuntary movements that will help it re-adjust itself. Getting to know *Seitai-dō* made me realize how rich the capacities of our bodies are for self-healing. Putting the right kind, that is, a healing kind, of consciousness to our thoughts, words, and the actions of our bodies, seems to be the only thing we should focus on.

Best,
Sophie K.

ENDNOTES

1 The *SamenFest* Obervinschgau - an initiative of the *Bürgergenossenschaft Obervinschgau* [trans. cooperative of the Obervinschgau-Alta Val Venosta citizen] - is a platform for gardeners, farmers and persons who want to take the conservation and evolution of their own food security back in their hands in order to make it a common good again. Its aim is the sharing and exchange of seeds, information and knowledge; it contributes to bringing diversity back to our gardens and landscape. The Seeding Stories round table at SamenFest brought together Suzanne Waiz, Armin Bernhard and Frederik van Oudenhoven. [from the initiative's website]. gutleben.da.bz.it/hier-und-da-festival.html.

2 School of Verticality participated in the April 12-14 2019 edition of *Festival Hier und Da - Gut leben im ländlichen Raum / Il buon vivere nelle zone periferiche*. The festival is, like *SamenFest*, an initiative of the Bürgergenossenschaft Obervinschgau to both ground and inspire regional development through conversations and field trips. gutleben.da.bz.it/hier-und-da-festival.html.

3 Although defined here as discrete episodes for the chronology, Seeding Stories and Breaking Bread were considered artistically as a "double episode".

4 The *Orto Semirurali Garten* is a community garden established in Bolzano by the association *Donne Nissà*, an intercultural women association that cultivate the values of welcoming, richness, diversity and sharing [from Donne Nissà's website]. www.nissa.bz.it/; www.facebook.com/orto.garten.

5 Accessible via @seeding.stories on Instagram.

6 Allan Kaprow, OVERTIME (Happening), University of San Diego, California, May 1968. www.allankaprow.com.

7 Aby Warburg, *Mnemosyne Atlas*, 1929. warburg.library.cornell.edu/about.

8 A book, film and dedicated website entitled Toppling Goliath document the various actors and milestones of the (in part, successful) Mals-Malles uprising against mass-scale monoculture and the use of pesticides. www.thelexicon.org/toppling-goliath.

9 In 1972 the so called "*Secondo Statuto di Autonomia*" agreement was signed by Italy and Austria; it regulates the autonomy of the region for certain aspects of its administration, such as tax administration. www.provincia.bz.it/politica-diritto-relazioni-estere/autonomia/statuto.asp.

10 Shiva Vandana, "Monocultures of the mind" In *The Trumpeter, Journal of Ecosophy*, 1993/1999. trumpeter.athabascau.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/view/358/563.

11 Cohen Leonard, *Anthem, The Future*, Sonic Music Entertainment, 1993.

12 Oudenhoven van, Frederik, *With Our Own Hands, A Celebration of Food and Life in the Pamir Mountains of Afghanistan and Tajikistan*, Volendam: LM Publishers, 2015,p 70.

13 Free translation and transcript from the German-spoken round table talk at *SamenFest*, February 23, 2019.

14 Oudenhoven van, Frederik, *With Our Own Hands*, 2015, p 67.

15 Oudenhoven van, Frederik, *With Our Own Hands*, 2015, p 411.