

Encounters



Janusz Wrobel

"Encounters" summarizes my multimedia materials accumulated across two decades that focused on the human interaction with the natural world. As such, it has an interpretational character, evolving along my growing understanding based on in situ studies and observations. It served as the base for my past exhibitions in public and private galleries, a practice I stopped less than a decade ago.

The title has different connotations in the languages I used other than in English, my latest self-taught language, a work still in progress. To communicate anything as complex as I am about to define, I inevitably will encounter receivers with unique experiences within different environments, cultures and historical backgrounds. Only one subject of universal importance can transcend them all, I had thought. Life, as a process that encompasses us all without exception, is the one, with everything in it that matters the most.

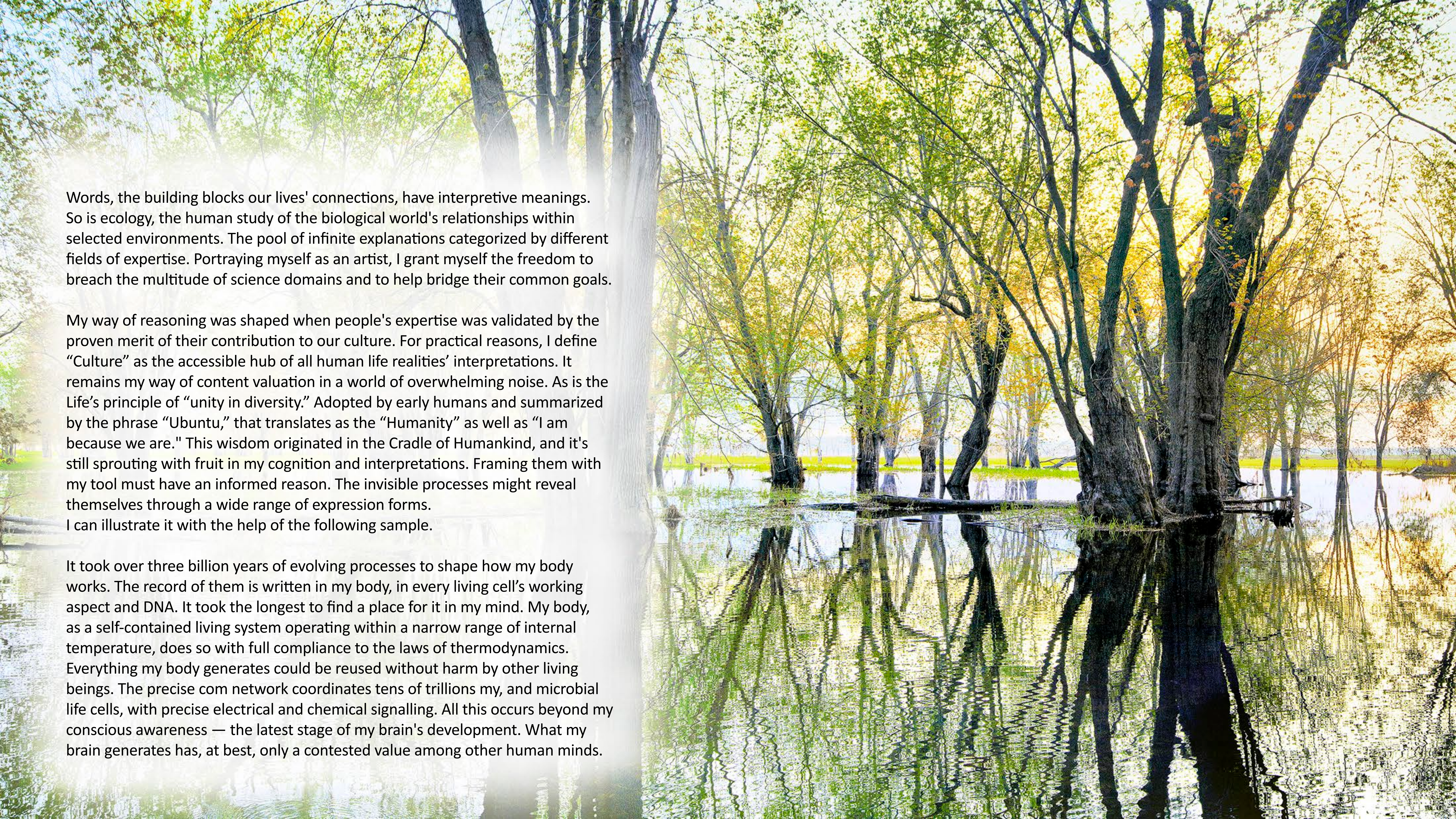
I used arts as a communication platform before, in my university years. Back then, art was the focal stage sustaining our culture, allowing for circumventing state censorship imposed by the country's occupiers. A part of a movement that played a pivotal role in dismantling "iron curtain," succeeding what the ten trillion-dollar arms race could not. Recent cultural transformations have led to an identity crisis for many art galleries, with a diminishing prospect of their cultural status recovery.

Why try again, you might ask. What started my project only intensified, and more effective communication channels are needed. Contemporary human culture is defined by urban environments that now have the character of self-referencing echo chambers. To change anything, a single individual is powerless. To do so, it needs the combined effort of many. What I submit for the readers' attention might be looked at as a contribution to the steps inevitable for us all. To face the changing biophysical status of our planet's conditions and our lives on it.

"The painter constructs, the photographer discloses."

Susan Sontag

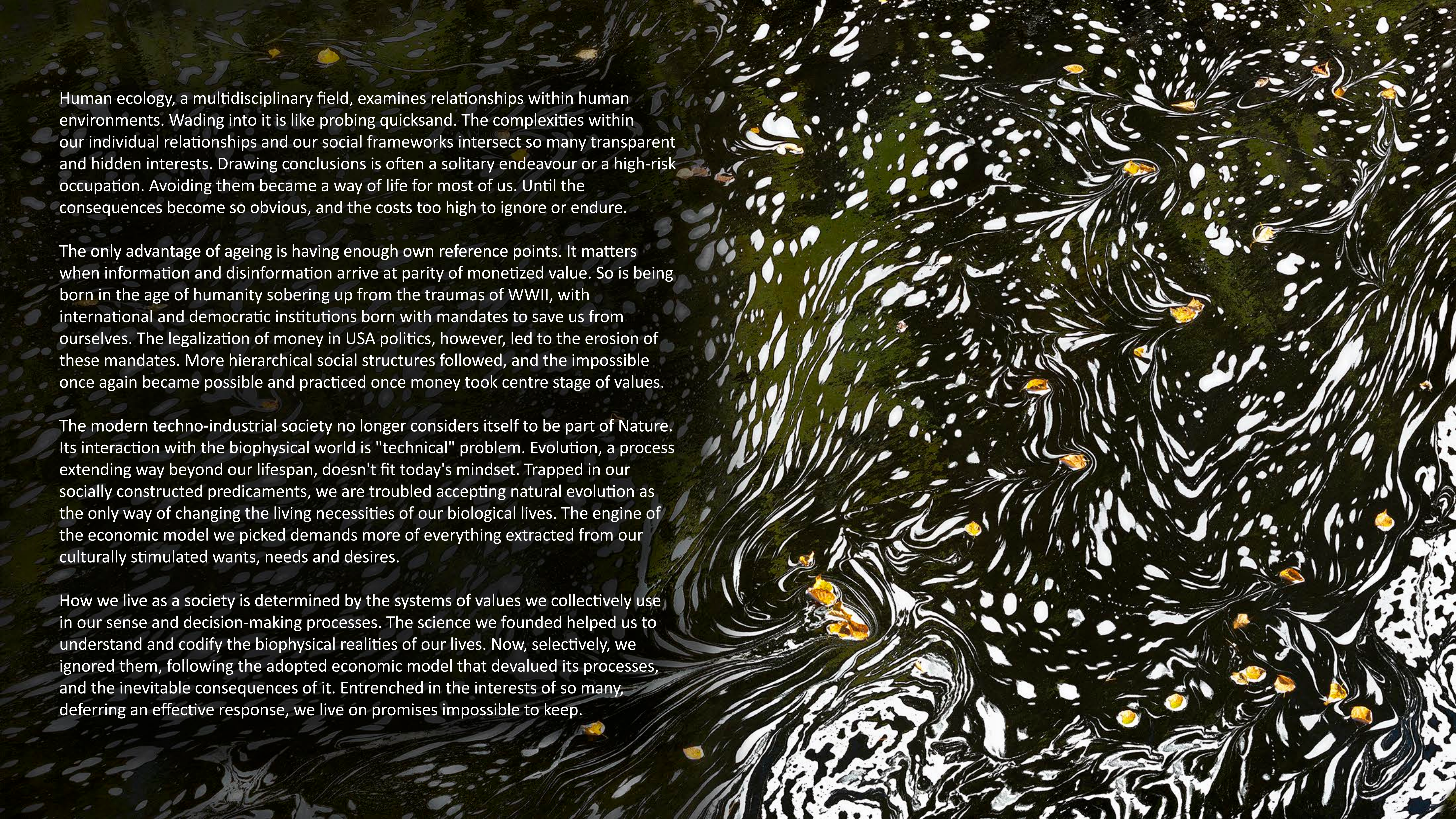




Words, the building blocks our lives' connections, have interpretive meanings. So is ecology, the human study of the biological world's relationships within selected environments. The pool of infinite explanations categorized by different fields of expertise. Portraying myself as an artist, I grant myself the freedom to breach the multitude of science domains and to help bridge their common goals.

My way of reasoning was shaped when people's expertise was validated by the proven merit of their contribution to our culture. For practical reasons, I define “Culture” as the accessible hub of all human life realities’ interpretations. It remains my way of content valuation in a world of overwhelming noise. As is the Life’s principle of “unity in diversity.” Adopted by early humans and summarized by the phrase “Ubuntu,” that translates as the “Humanity” as well as “I am because we are.” This wisdom originated in the Cradle of Humankind, and it's still sprouting with fruit in my cognition and interpretations. Framing them with my tool must have an informed reason. The invisible processes might reveal themselves through a wide range of expression forms. I can illustrate it with the help of the following sample.

It took over three billion years of evolving processes to shape how my body works. The record of them is written in my body, in every living cell’s working aspect and DNA. It took the longest to find a place for it in my mind. My body, as a self-contained living system operating within a narrow range of internal temperature, does so with full compliance to the laws of thermodynamics. Everything my body generates could be reused without harm by other living beings. The precise com network coordinates tens of trillions my, and microbial life cells, with precise electrical and chemical signalling. All this occurs beyond my conscious awareness — the latest stage of my brain's development. What my brain generates has, at best, only a contested value among other human minds.

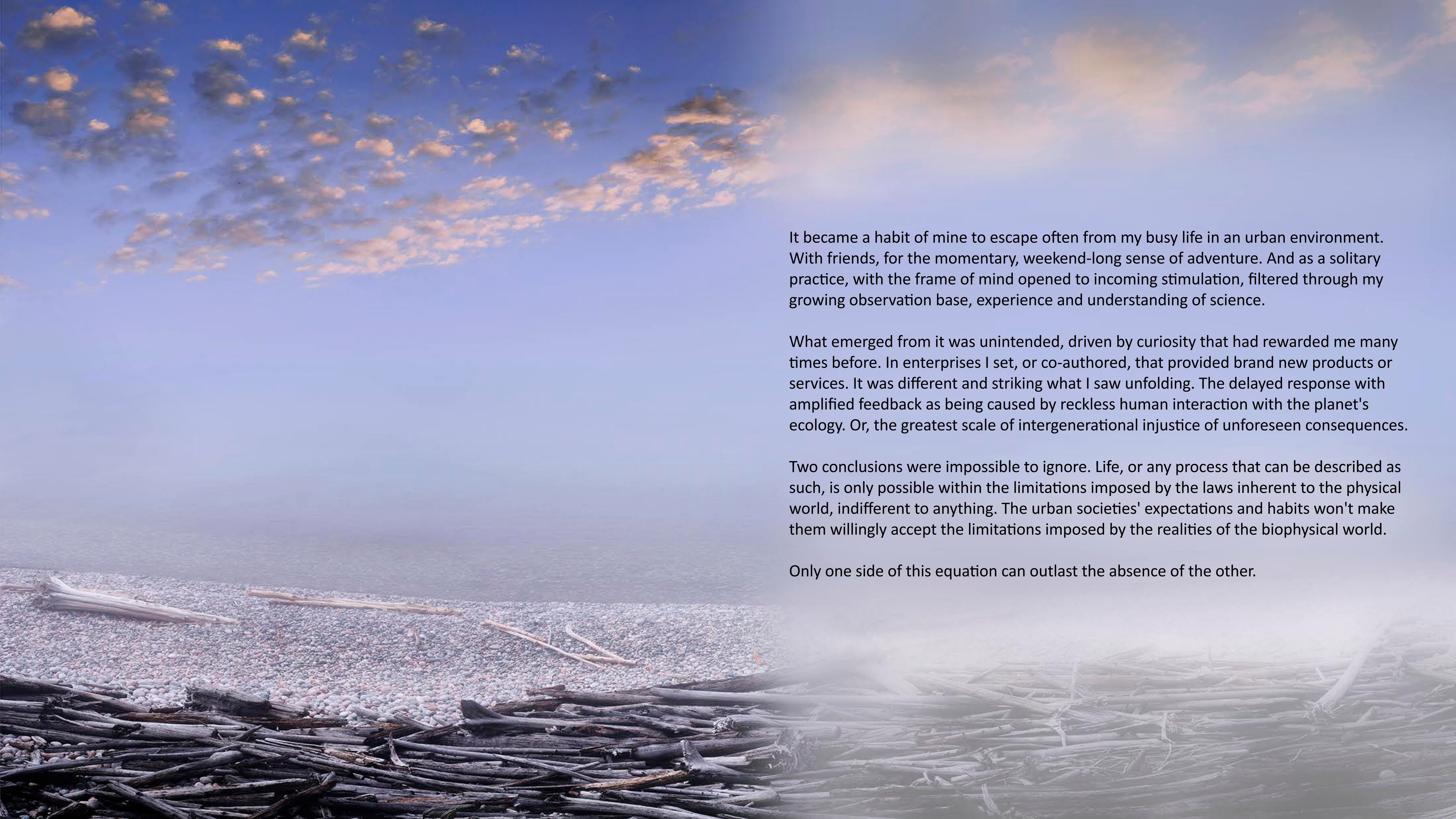


Human ecology, a multidisciplinary field, examines relationships within human environments. Wading into it is like probing quicksand. The complexities within our individual relationships and our social frameworks intersect so many transparent and hidden interests. Drawing conclusions is often a solitary endeavour or a high-risk occupation. Avoiding them became a way of life for most of us. Until the consequences become so obvious, and the costs too high to ignore or endure.

The only advantage of ageing is having enough own reference points. It matters when information and disinformation arrive at parity of monetized value. So is being born in the age of humanity sobering up from the traumas of WWII, with international and democratic institutions born with mandates to save us from ourselves. The legalization of money in USA politics, however, led to the erosion of these mandates. More hierarchical social structures followed, and the impossible once again became possible and practiced once money took centre stage of values.

The modern techno-industrial society no longer considers itself to be part of Nature. Its interaction with the biophysical world is "technical" problem. Evolution, a process extending way beyond our lifespan, doesn't fit today's mindset. Trapped in our socially constructed predicaments, we are troubled accepting natural evolution as the only way of changing the living necessities of our biological lives. The engine of the economic model we picked demands more of everything extracted from our culturally stimulated wants, needs and desires.

How we live as a society is determined by the systems of values we collectively use in our sense and decision-making processes. The science we founded helped us to understand and codify the biophysical realities of our lives. Now, selectively, we ignored them, following the adopted economic model that devalued its processes, and the inevitable consequences of it. Entrenched in the interests of so many, deferring an effective response, we live on promises impossible to keep.



It became a habit of mine to escape often from my busy life in an urban environment. With friends, for the momentary, weekend-long sense of adventure. And as a solitary practice, with the frame of mind opened to incoming stimulation, filtered through my growing observation base, experience and understanding of science.

What emerged from it was unintended, driven by curiosity that had rewarded me many times before. In enterprises I set, or co-authored, that provided brand new products or services. It was different and striking what I saw unfolding. The delayed response with amplified feedback as being caused by reckless human interaction with the planet's ecology. Or, the greatest scale of intergenerational injustice of unforeseen consequences.

Two conclusions were impossible to ignore. Life, or any process that can be described as such, is only possible within the limitations imposed by the laws inherent to the physical world, indifferent to anything. The urban societies' expectations and habits won't make them willingly accept the limitations imposed by the realities of the biophysical world.

Only one side of this equation can outlast the absence of the other.

Project Statement *with full disclosure.*

"Encounters" is an introduction to selected collections of visual narratives focused on the underlying biological factors of human life. They were the basis of my website "Natural Disclosures." As a solitary endeavour, it drowned in invisibility. I closed it a year ago, six years after withdrawing my work from art galleries. The traumatic silence in the familiar environments I revisited, teeming with life until recently, renewed my motivation. It needs further explanation.

The intensification of these conditions' changes, and its unforeseen consequences, becomes increasingly apparent. Ignored until recently, they have become impossible to disregard or dismiss as before. Long confirmed by scientific research, overlooked often by social organizations and cultural institutions, they reveal our collective failures. No risk today in calling them the symptoms of a self-destructive pattern in human interactions with all biological life foundations.

Drawing lessons from my previous decade, I disclose my binding principles first. To address common human predicaments, we all should start with improving the social coherence in our culture. The clear identification what caused its fracturing would be a good beginning. I view "culture" as an all-accessible today pool of human life's realities' interpretations. Science, independent journalism and the arts as the principal contributors are to be judged by their merit of culture actualization in a changing world. Facilitating escapes from it is a domain of the entertainment industry, or people hired for this job.

It all comes down to the existing possibilities. With the proliferation of social media and the mechanisms underlying them, the principal contributors to our culture have lost voice or trust. Reversing this history is the major challenge of unshackling human communication channels for well-intended common benefits. Art must emerge from the dead ends alley of the "end of art" philosophy. Accepting that if works of arts can't captivate with enough depth of ideas, they should at least delight with the mastery of their execution. Science must sort out problems with bias in peer reviews, and compliance with the sources of its funding. Journalism to deserve the trust and support from a broad base audience.

Projects, Navigation & Intended Purpose.

- *Each project on my web presentation was formatted to illustrate my mind evolution and ways of seeing their subjects, but not as the exhibition project proposals. I am open to cooperating resonantly with scientists, journalists, artists, curators, publishers and environmental organizations on any project with clear objectives and means of delivery. I have a sizeable collection of exhibition-ready works, hundreds of engaging images from different environments with resolutions supporting digital 4K, 8K and 12K multiscreen presentations. I also have image selection for printing photo-quality murals when scale and impact of finely defined details matter.*
- *I deemed dates irrelevant to my presentations. Many images underwent on-location revisions while maintaining the integrity of the edition. Each represents what one would see at the scene. The editions are listed in brackets.*
- *I would appreciate if you shared this document with a party that might be interested in my invitation. Please inquire about the availability of the print-quality version of **Encounters**.*