

Encounters



Janusz Wrobel

"Encounters" summarizes my multimedia materials accumulated over two decades, focusing on 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 will inevitably 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, during 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 seeded 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 efforts 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

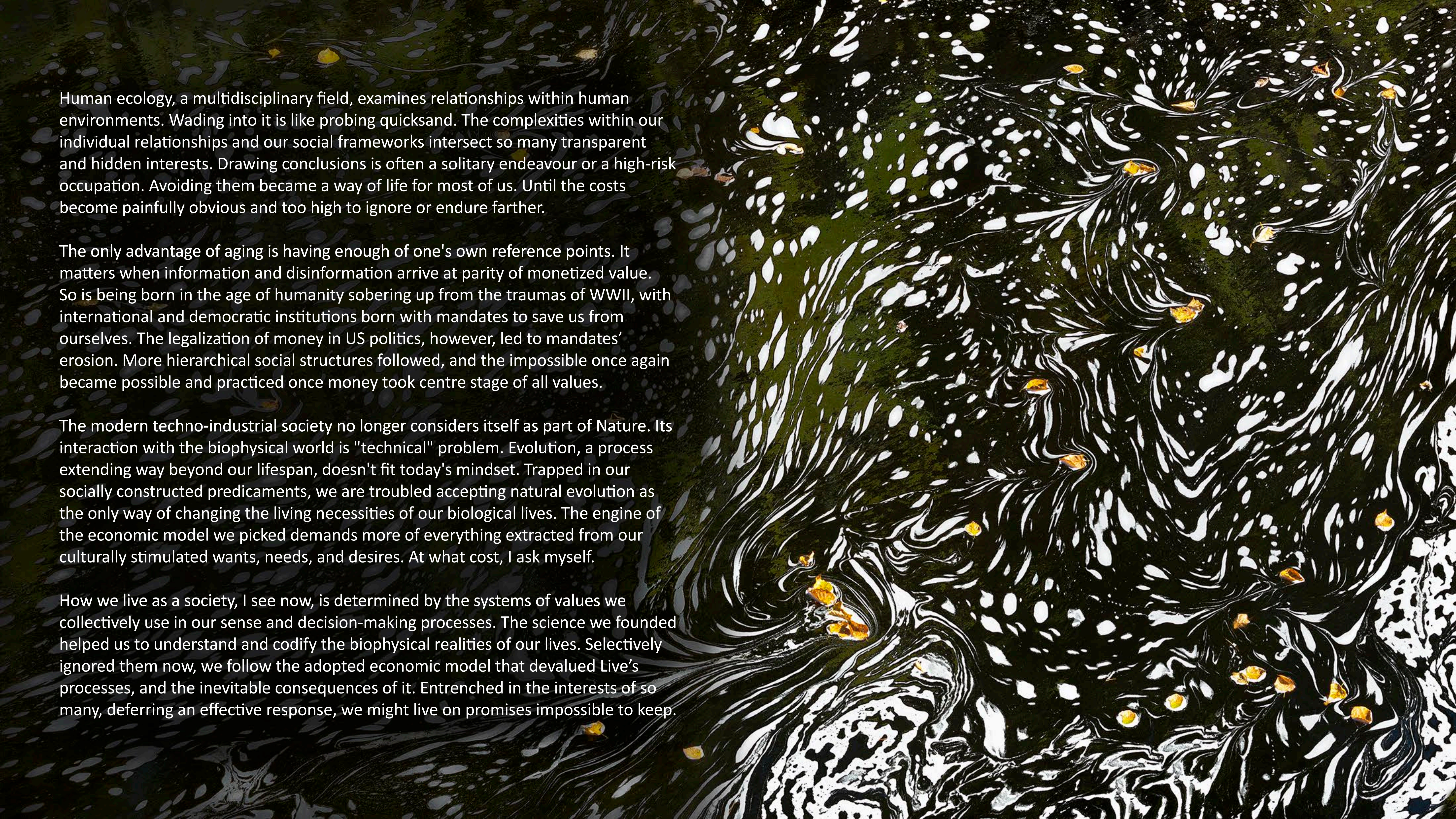




Words, the building blocks our lives' connections, have interpretive meanings. So is ecology, the human study of the biological world's relationships within selected environments. The pool of infinite explanations categorized by different fields of expertise. Portraying myself as an artist, I grant myself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

My way of reasoning was shaped when people's expertise was validated by the proven merit of their contribution to human culture. For practical reasons, I defined "Culture" as the accessible, now to us all, pool of human life realities' interpretations. It is still my way of content valuation in a world of contradictory noise. As is the Life's principle of "unity in diversity." Adopted by early humans and summarized by the "Ubuntu" phrase, which translates as both "Humanity" and "I am because we are." A wisdom originated in the Cradle of Humankind, still sprouting with fruit in my cognitive interpretations. Framing it with the use of my tool has limits, but it must be an informed reason. The Life's invisible processes might reveal themselves through a wide range of forms or expressions. I can illustrate it with a sample of the following descriptive narrative.

It took over three billion years of evolving processes to shape my body working today. The record of them is written in every living cell's working aspect, and its 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 costs become painfully obvious and too high to ignore or endure farther.

The only advantage of aging is having enough of one's 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 US politics, however, led to mandates' erosion. More hierarchical social structures followed, and the impossible once again became possible and practiced once money took centre stage of all values.

The modern techno-industrial society no longer considers itself as 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. At what cost, I ask myself.

How we live as a society, I see now, 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. Selectively ignored them now, we follow the adopted economic model that devalued Live's processes, and the inevitable consequences of it. Entrenched in the interests of so many, deferring an effective response, we might 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 open to incoming stimulation, filtered through my growing observation base, experience, and my expanding understanding of science.

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

Two conclusions are impossible to ignore. First, 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, which are indifferent to anything. Second, urban society's expectations and habits won't make them willingly accept the limitations imposed by these realities of the biophysical world.

It is a simple equation. Only one can't survive without the other. That should matter in humans' objective reality.

Project Statement *with relevant disclosures.*

"Encounters" is an introduction to collections of visual narratives I saw as the biological determinants of human life. They formed "Natural Disclosures," a solitary website endeavour, that drowned in invisibility. I closed it six years after withdrawing my work from all 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 biophysical conditions' changes and their inevitable effects became apparent. Still ignored recently, they are impossible to disregard or dismiss. Long confirmed by scientific research, but overlooked by social organizations and cultural institutions, they testify to the failure of collective action. No risk today calling them symptoms of self-destruction in human interactions with biological life foundations, as well as within our social structures.

Drawing lessons from the previous decade, I disclose my binding principles first. Any effort to address warning signs must influence the coherence of social awareness. I view "culture" now as an all-accessible today pool of human life's realities' interpretations. Science, independent journalism and the arts, the principal contributors to our culture, are judged by their merit of culture actualization in our changing world. Facilitating escapes from it is a domain of the entertainment industry or hired people doing their job.

The strange thing could happen to a human mind unshackled, liberated from the reasoning and endless distractions of urban environments. The solitude of travelling through Great Shield's vast uninhabited spaces could supply endless seeds of imagination. What is left behind becomes slowly, oddly inconsequential. The adaptivity of human consciousness signifies the role of frames of reference in our brain functions. This liberation has a sweet and enduring flavour, a vapour trail of promise, yearning to encounter it all over again.

It all comes down to possibilities. With the proliferation of social media and the mechanisms underlying them, the principal contributors to our culture have lost voice or trust. Reversing it is the major challenge of unshackling communication channels for the well-intentioned common benefit. Art must emerge from the dead ends alley of the "end of art" philosophy. Science must sort out problems with bias in peer reviews and compliance with the sources of its funding. Journalism must deserve again the trust and support of a broad base audience.

Projects, Navigation & Intended Purpose.

- *Each project on my web presentation was formatted to illustrate my mind's evolution, a way of seeing their subjects, not as exhibition project proposals. I am open to co-operating reasonably with scientists, journalists, artists, curators, publishers and organizations on any project with clear objectives and means of delivery. I have a sizable 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 presentation. 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 PDF version of Encounters.*

The footnote to "Seven Day Island" project. Janusz Wrobel, 2014.