



THE SITE, CURRENTLY A WHEAT MONOCULTURE, NEAR ROWEL BROOK, AUTUMN 2023



BEGBROKE INNOVATION DISTRICT
PUBLIC ART PROGRAMME

Another Landscape is an interdisciplinary programme that celebrates and facilitates collaboration, knowledge exchange, research and scientific endeavour. This materials-led programme includes opportunities for artistic practitioners to collaborate with researchers, with a focus on plant cultivation, regenerative materials, and material sciences.

Artistic practitioners are invited to explore ideas that draw connections between people and place through a series of site-specific land-based works. *Another Landscape* is curated by Company, Place for Oxford University Development.

Jaimini Patel is the first artist in residence in this programme. Collated here is documentation of Patel's initial research, explorations of the site and development of ideas through which *Autopoietic* emerged. It is also an invitation for future collaboration.



A SPOIL NEAR PARKERS FARM, ADJACENT TO THE SITE. INSPIRATION FOR THE HÜGEL



BEGBROKE INNOVATION DISTRICT, 5 MILES NORTHWEST OF OXFORD



FULL CIRCLE:
AUTOPOIETIC ENTANGLEMENT

Reciprocity Between Land and People

Self-Sustaining

Cycles

Interdisciplinary

Cathedral Thinking

Permaculture

Expanded Library

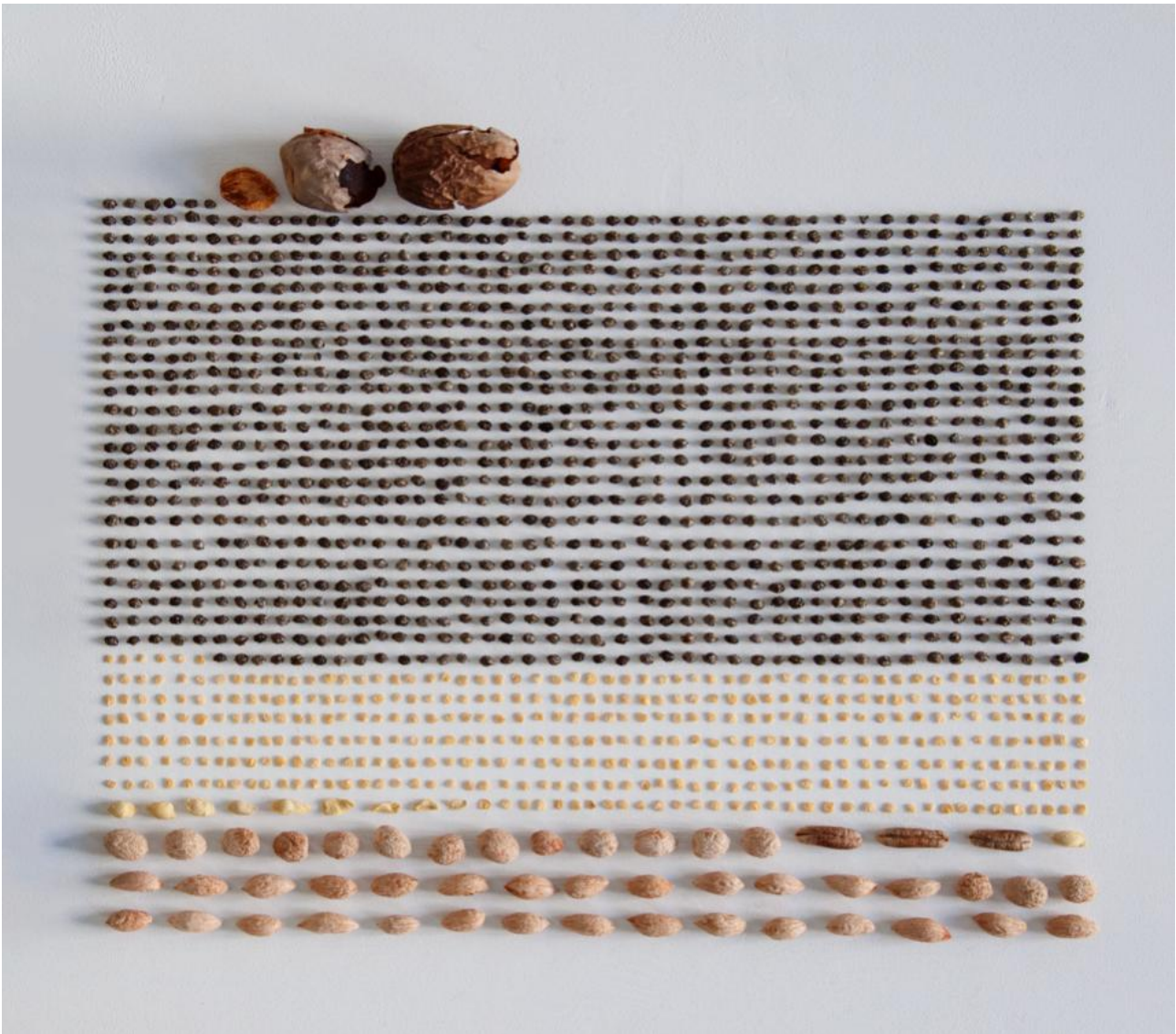
Autopoiesis

Materials from Waste/Grown/Recyclede

Collaboration/Exchange

Process

Experimental Creative Research



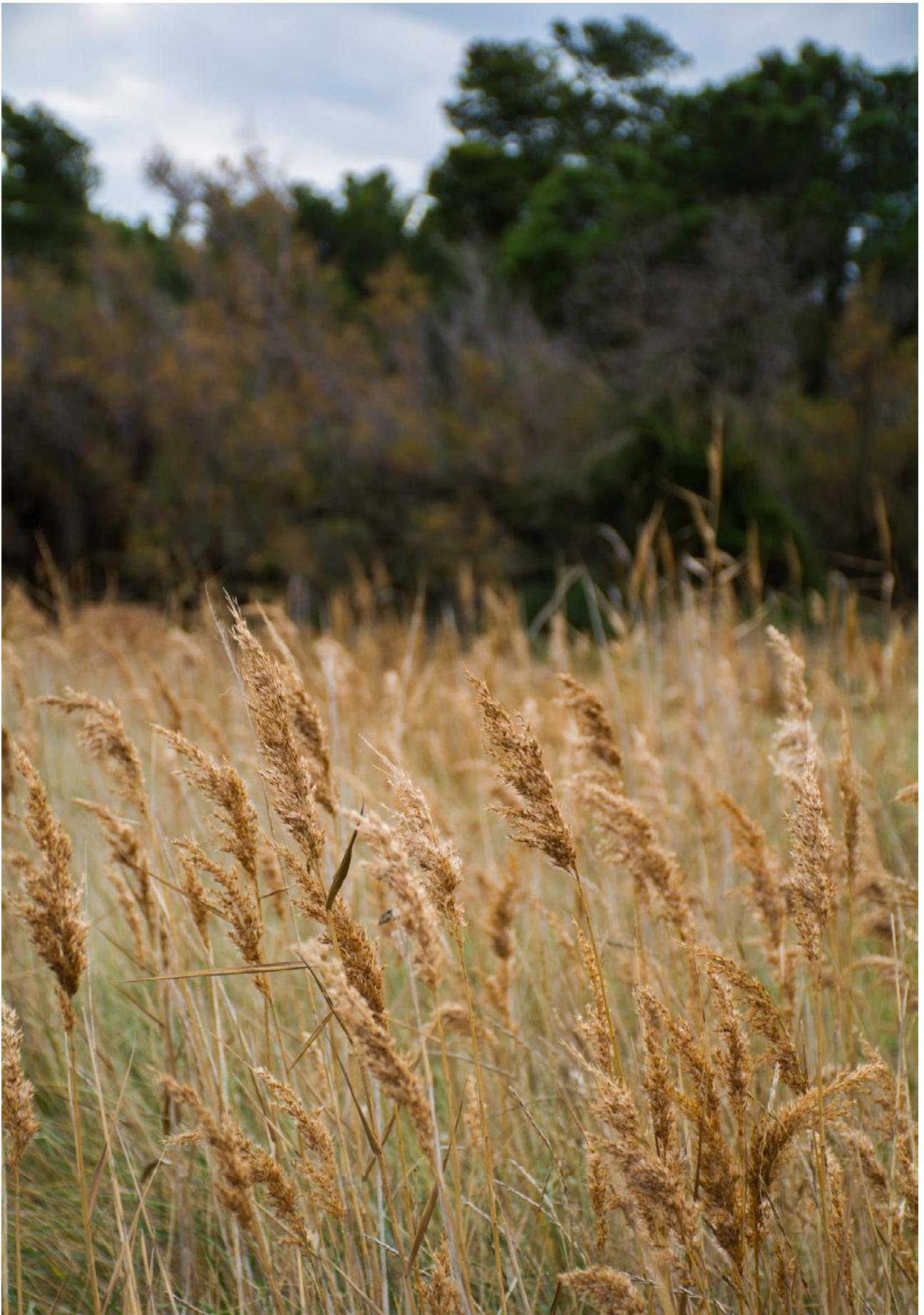
Culture begins with our first attempts to cultivate – the process of growing echoes the creative process in art and science. “I do a bit then nature does her bit, then I respond to that, and so it goes on, not unlike a conversation. It isn’t whispers or shouts or talk of any kind, but in this to-and-fro, there is a delayed and sustained dialogue.” (Stuart-Smith, 2020: 9–10) This form of tuning in through conversation with materials and each other leads somewhere not yet imagined. It is a process with its own time.

OXFORD REAL FARMING CONFERENCE DEEP LISTENING

Deep Listening, as developed by Pauline Oliveros, explores the difference between the involuntary nature of hearing and the conscious nature of listening. The practice includes listening to the sounds of daily life, nature, one's thoughts, imagination, and dreams. It cultivates a heightened awareness of the sonic environment, both external and internal, and promotes experimentation, improvisation, collaboration, playfulness, and other creative skills.

The workshop delivered in Christchurch Meadow, Oxford was an opportunity to meet land workers and people interested in collaboration around biomaterials, living architecture, biodiversity, and waste. The participants were diverse, and their spirit of generosity and openness was heartening for this experimental initial offering.







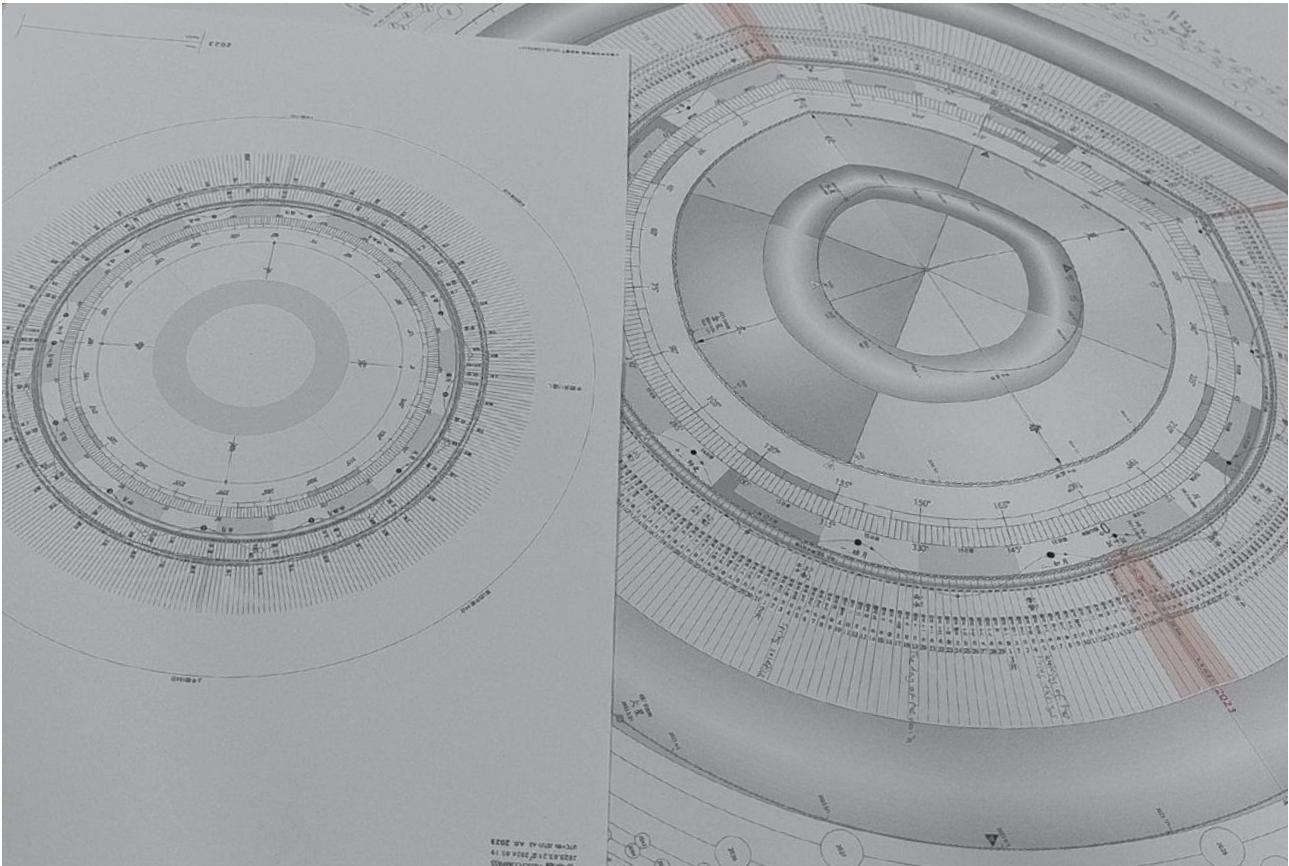
ONE OF THE MANY TREE HOUSES IN THE WOODLAND

VISIT TO
WILLOWBROOK FARM

This family-run farm is remarkable in its vision and approach. Through trial and error, experimentation, hard lessons and sheer determination the family have created an environmentally sustainable farm that is so much more than that. Ali, the youngest working member, was generous in his willingness to share his already substantial knowledge and experience which included mobile chicken coops on wheels that fertilise the land. An evocative idea and image. The attitude of learning by doing and often through failure is encouraging for an artist undertaking a land-based project.



THE FAMILY COB HOUSE, BUILT FROM TRIAL AND ERROR, CONSTRUCTED ENTIRELY OF NATURAL MATERIALS MOSTLY DRAWN FROM THE FARM



In many parts of the world, there are more than four seasons. In China and Japan, there are twenty-four small seasons based on the lunisolar calendar. In addition, in Japan, there are seventy-two micro-seasons each lasting around five days. Those working outside may share a more heightened awareness of the many macro and micro cycles interacting at any given time and their significance.

CYCLES

Carbon

Life

Circadian

Biogeochemical

Seasons

Lunar

Research

Thermodynamic

Tides

Economies

Respiration

Time

Menstrual

Water

Waves

Planetary

History

Photosynthesis

Neurofeedback

Nitrogen





KŌ OR MICRO-SEASONS

Snow reveals hidden barley	Warm wind arrives
Celery begins to flourish	Lotus flowers begin to bloom
Water springs move	Hawks start learning
Pheasants start to call	Paulownia trees begin to form
Midwinter flowers bloom	flowers
Water in marshes freezes solid	Earth becomes moist and sultry
Chickens start to lactate	Heavy rain occurs occasionally
East winds thaw the ice	Cool wind arrives
Bush warblers are seen	Cicadas sing in the cold
Fish ascend the ice	Dense fog rises and falls
Earth's veins become moist	Cotton flowers open
Mist begins to rise	Heaven and earth begin to cool
Plants and trees start to move	Millet ripens
Hibernating insects open their	Grass dew turns white
doors	Wagtails sing
Peach trees start to smile	Swallows depart
Caterpillars transform into	Thunder ceases its voice
butterflies	Hibernating insects close their
Sparrows start nesting	doors
Cherry blossoms begin to open	Water begins to dry up
Thunder first makes its voice heard	Wild geese arrive
Swallows arrive	Chrysanthemum flowers bloom
Wild geese head north	Crickets are at the door
Rainbows begin to appear	First frost
Reeds begin to sprout	Light drizzle falls occasionally
Frost ceases, seedlings emerge	Maple leaves and ivy turn yellow
Peonies bloom	Camellia flowers begin to bloom
Frogs begin to croak	Ground begins to freeze
Earthworms come out	Japanese allspice blooms
Bamboo shoots sprout	Rainbow hides and cannot be
Silkworms wake up and eat	seen
mulberry leaves	North wind sweeps away
Safflowers flourish	fallen leaves
Wheat ripens	Tachibana oranges begin to
Praying mantises are born	turn yellow
Decaying plants become fireflies	Earth closes and winter begins
Plum fruits turn yellow	Bears hibernate in their dens
Wheat withers	Flocks of fish gather
Iris flowers bloom	Wheat sprouts
Half-summer plants sprout	Deer shed their antlers



GRANGE HILL QUARRY, 28 MILES FROM THE SITE



BLUE CLAY
FROM GRANGE HILL QUARRY

Material that cannot be grown or recycled will be from waste and where possible, sourced locally. Blue clay is a byproduct at the quarry and will be used with participants and creative practitioners.



OXFORD BROOKES

The MA Digital Craft in architecture is a new course at Oxford Brookes. It explores the relationship between digital fabrication methods and traditional crafting. Students were given a brief to develop a collaborative research project based on the *Full Circle* proposal.

Brief

I Use a bioregional approach to map local materials and skills. Consider what the appropriate boundaries are and why. Materials can be grown, recycled, salvaged, be waste, off-cuts or byproducts. Skills might be those that have been lost or forgotten. Create prototypes.

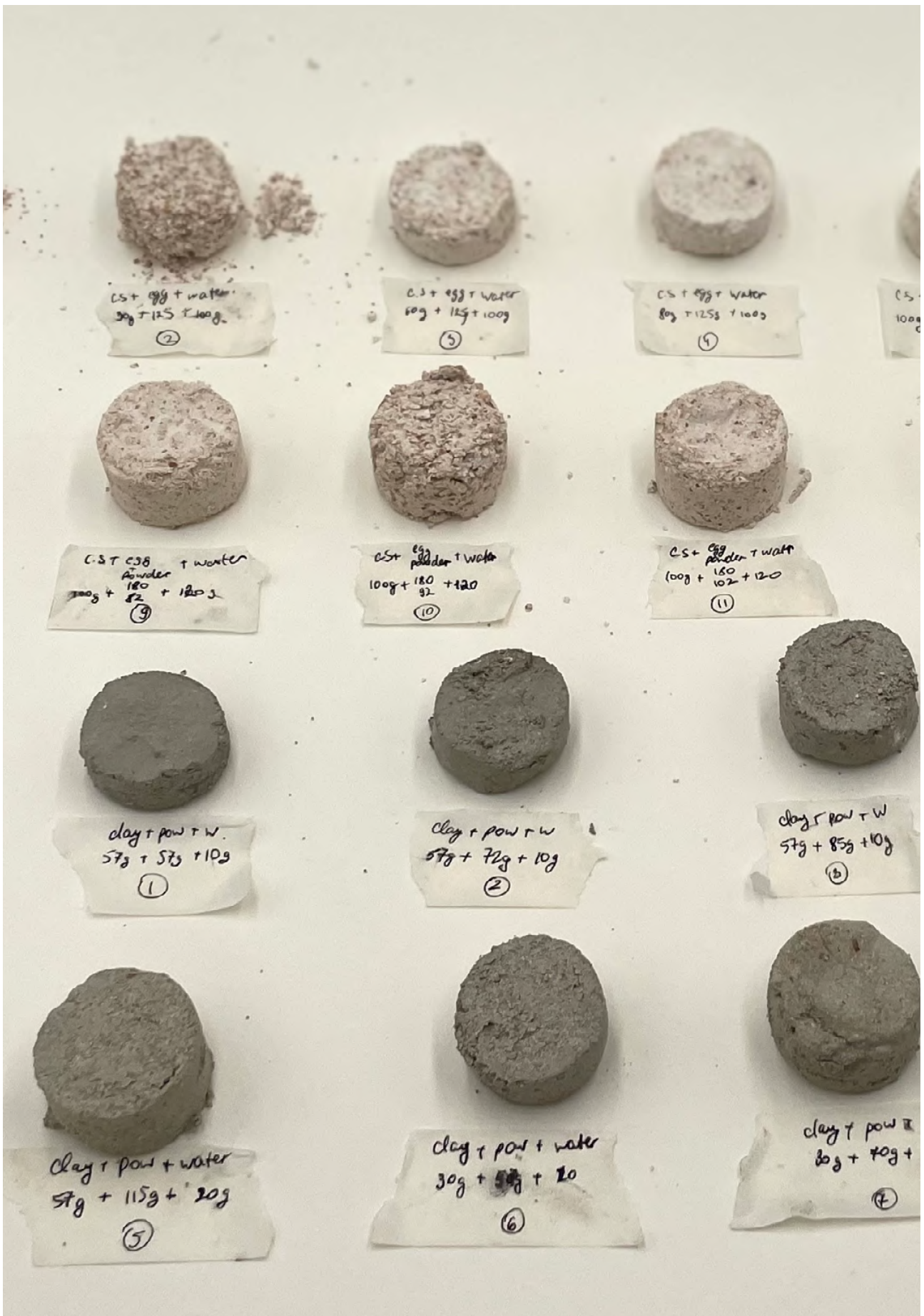
II Create an archive of this research that can be used. What form can an archive take and how can it capture different types of knowledge and experience – research, materials, processes, workshops, stories, creative outcomes, skills, and tools.

Things to consider:

- a. plants that can restore biodiversity and be used as materials
- b. circular, self-sustaining economies/systems
- c. bio-materials of the future as the climate changes

Students experimented with blue clay from the quarry, mixing it with ground eggshell (collected from local businesses) and firing it at different temperatures. They responded individually and as a group interpreting the brief through their various research foci. Conversations included the nature of hospitality, and future archaeology and through the process of working together, the brief evolved. It became clear as the residency progressed that the work is about growing – plants, skills, materials, knowledge, communities, and connections. The abstract ideas in the proposal began to take form.



















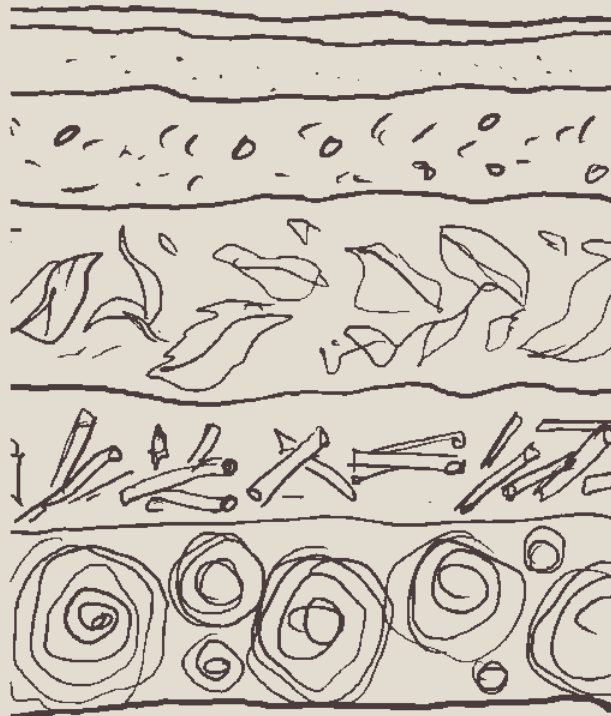




AUTOPOIETIC: RECIPROCITY

As the commons¹ worldwide become smaller and people's relationship to land becomes more tenuous, how can reciprocity between land and people and between each other be enabled? Poiesis means to make our world and to make ourselves through creativity (Caloun, 2013: 195). The biologists Maturana and Varela use the concept of Autopoiesis to distinguish living systems from non-living systems as being capable of producing and maintaining themselves by creating their own parts through a network of dynamic and ongoing interactions. Beautiful in their economy, biological systems can teach us about social systems.²

All the materials used for creative exploration and research will be grown as part of the work. A place for sensory experience, learning, and experimentation, the work will use a bioregional³ approach to create an intricate web of connections that evolve through collective self-organisation and exchange.



AUTOPOIETIC: HÜGELKULTUR

Many indigenous cultures saw themselves in relation to their ancestors and those yet to be born; they were careful to leave an abundance for future generations and take from nature wisely. The commons were also key to Native Americans who planted the three sisters combination of corn, beans and squash on mounds. Hügelkultur from the German: *Hügel* = mound or hill + *Kultur* = cultivation or culture, is a self-watering, self-tilling, and self-fertilizing system, an ancient no-dig growing technique used by many indigenous cultures around the world. This zero-waste method uses material that would be discarded such as logs, branches, cardboard, leaf litter and food scraps. The decomposing wood releases water and nutrients, acting as a sponge enabling flood and drought resilience.

Hügels can be self-sustaining for up to two decades. Unmaintained eventually they return to ground level or by adding waste material their lifespan is extended.





THE FIRST HÜGEL, HAZEL WALK ALLOTMENT, KIDLINGTON

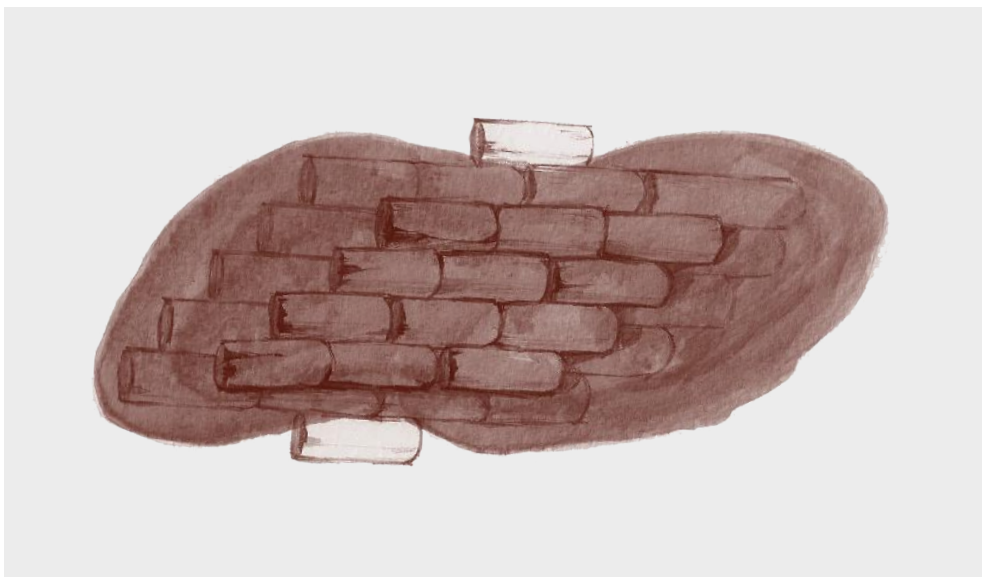
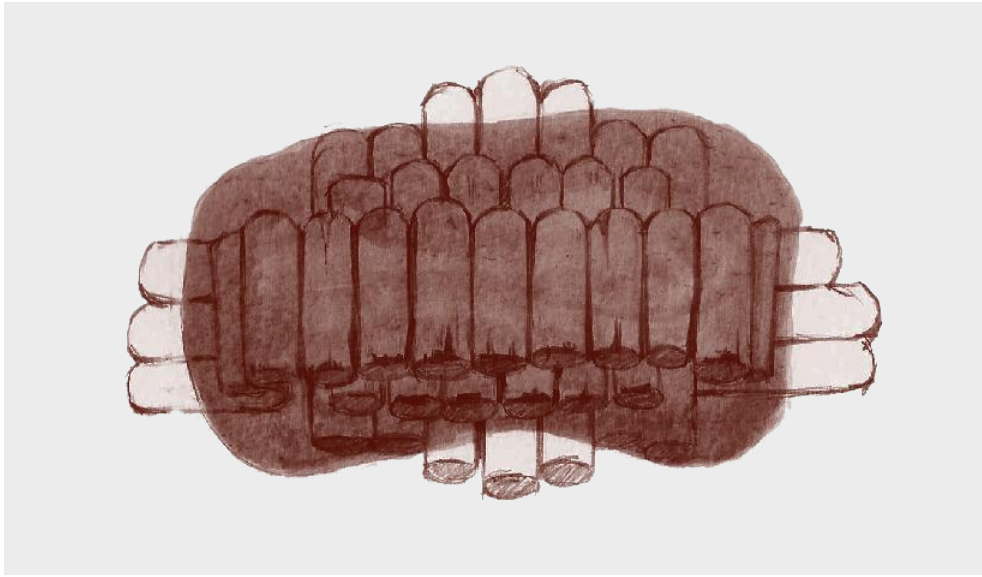
RUBBISH GARDENING WORKSHOP

The first hügel built on Hazel Walk Allotment for the Cherwell Collective to grow plants which can be used for dyes was built with Fine Art BFA and MFA students from The Ruskin School of Art.

Two layers of oak were put down, then branches and garden waste from the allotment, followed by compost, topsoil and a layer of woodchip. Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Pot marigold (*Calendula officinalis*), Gooseberry Hinnonmäki Röd (*Ribes uva-crispa*), Blackcurrant Ben Sarek (*Ribes nigrum*), Purpletop vervain (*Verbena bonariensis*), Purple Cone flower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans*), Thyme (*Thymus Jekka*), Dyer's Chamomile (*Anthemis tinctoria*) and Giant Bronze Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) were planted. The planting scheme included insect-attracting flowers, berries, herbs and plants for making dyes. Nitrogen-fixing Yarrow is useful in the first year of the hügel as the wood will draw nitrogen away from the plants as it rots before it starts to release nitrogen.

Building the hügel raised questions – how to stack the wood; what kind of shape works best; how wide and high to build; the proportion of each layer; the maturity of the plants; and how to prevent runoff?

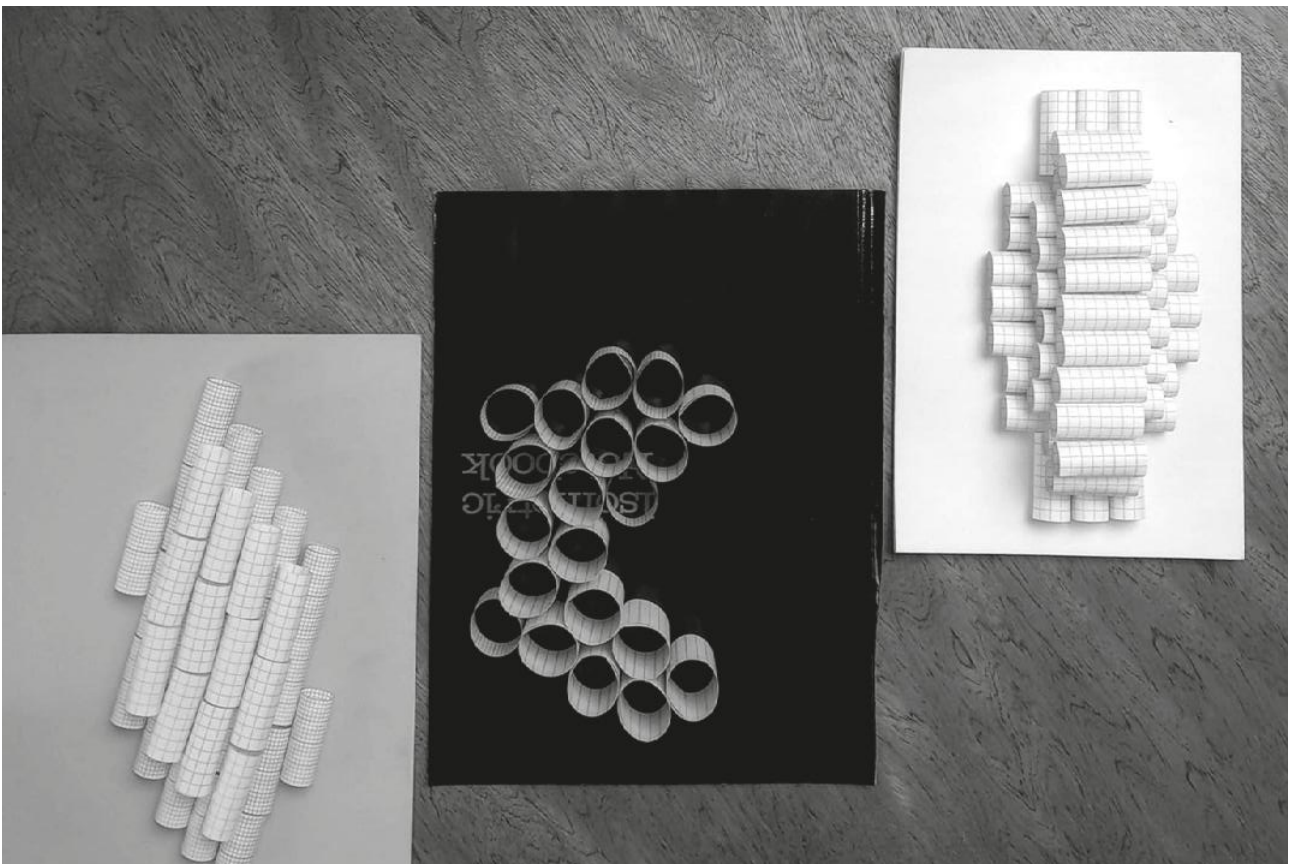




HÜGEL SHAPES

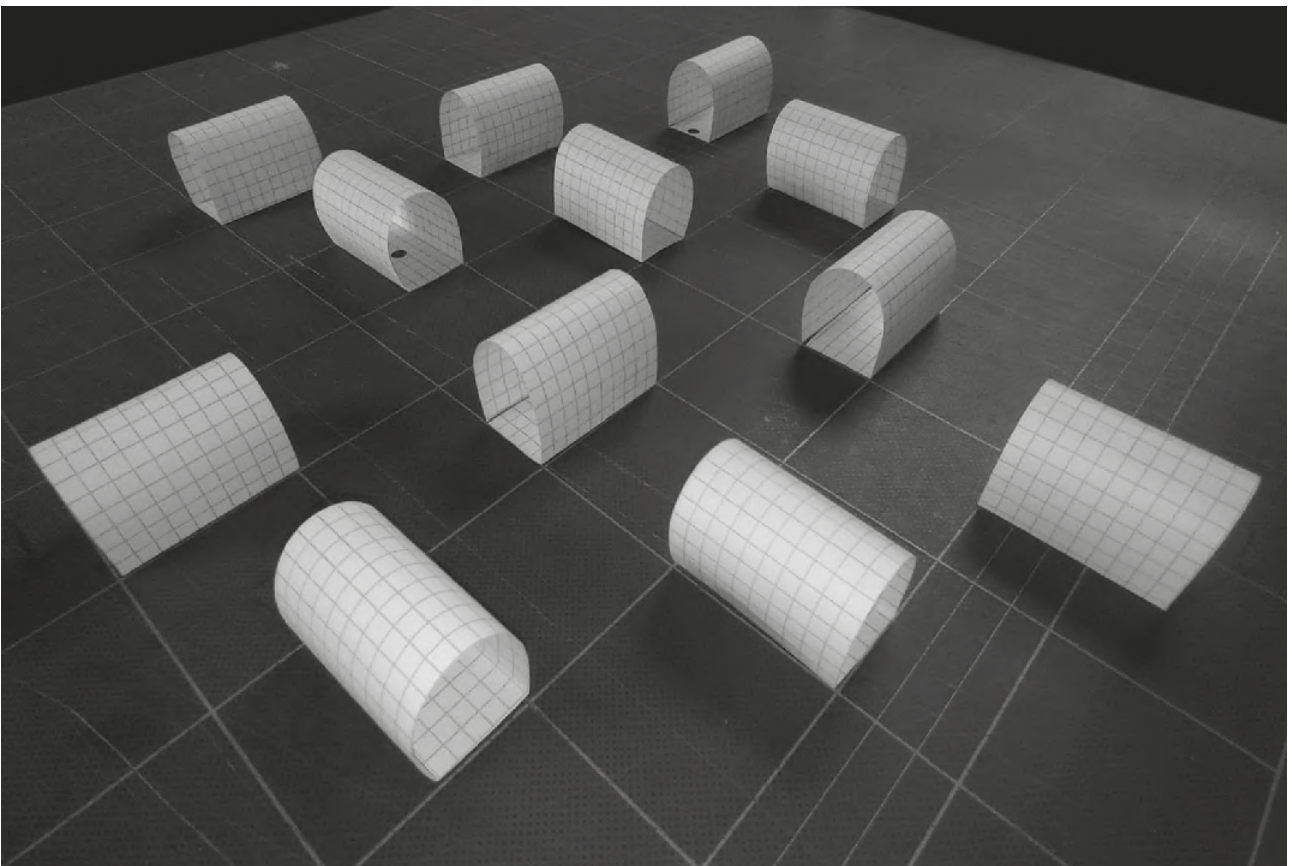
The shape and size of the logs determines how they are stacked and the subsequent shape of the hügel. Experiments with models to explore the possibilities were translated into drawings by MA Narrative Environments students from Central Saint Martins.

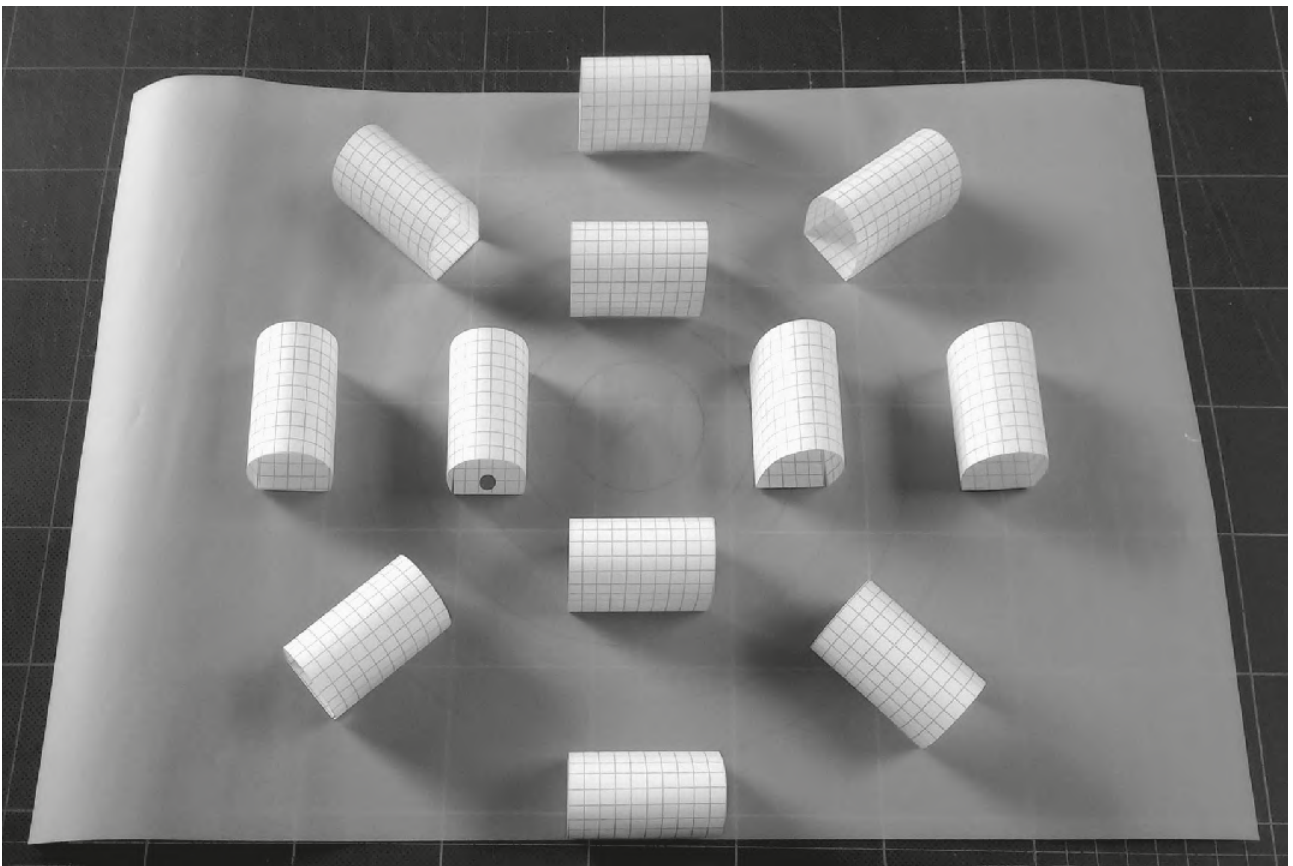
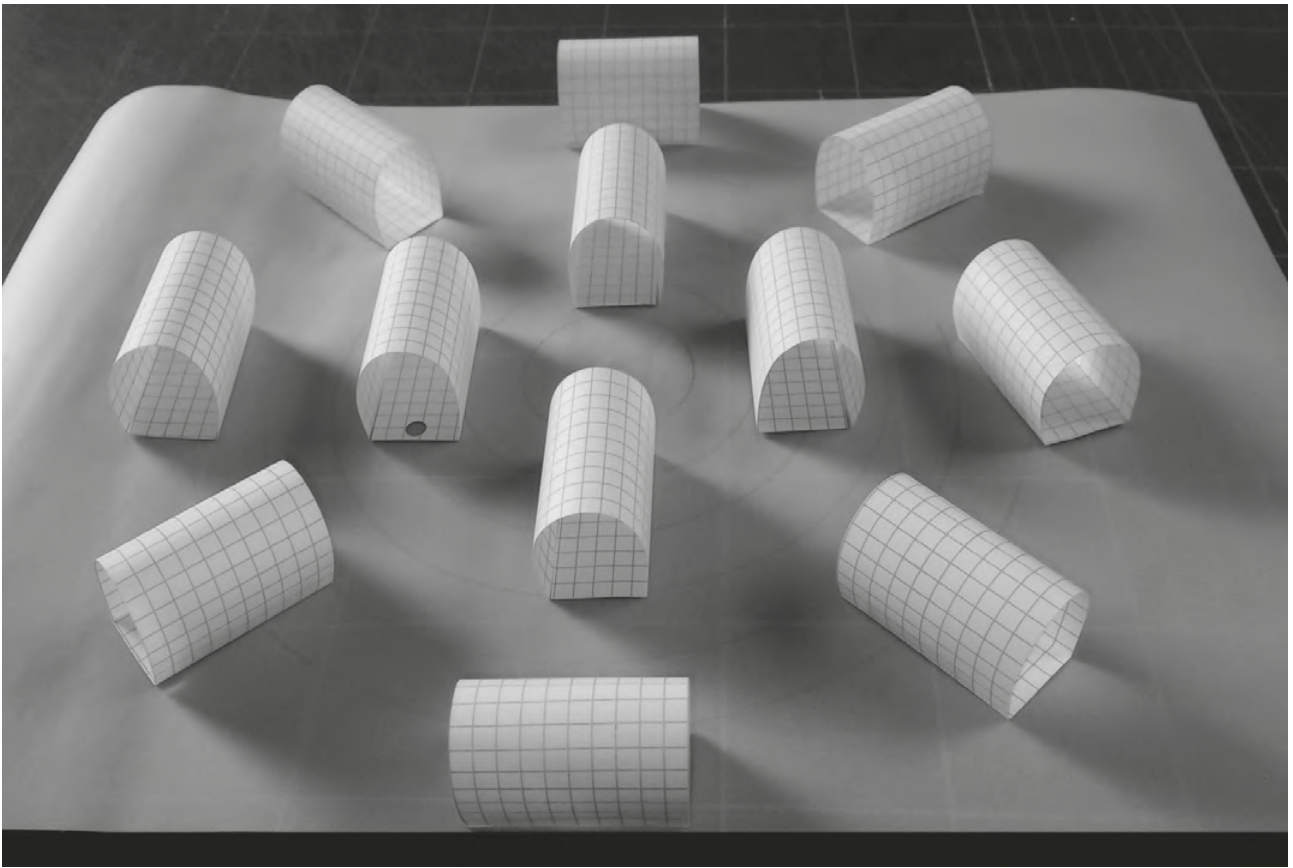
The inside of the hügel is beautiful, yet unseen. This led to thinking about how some of the wood could be left exposed as a hint to the internal structure. It could provide seating or be stood on to reach the higher parts of the hügel when gardening.

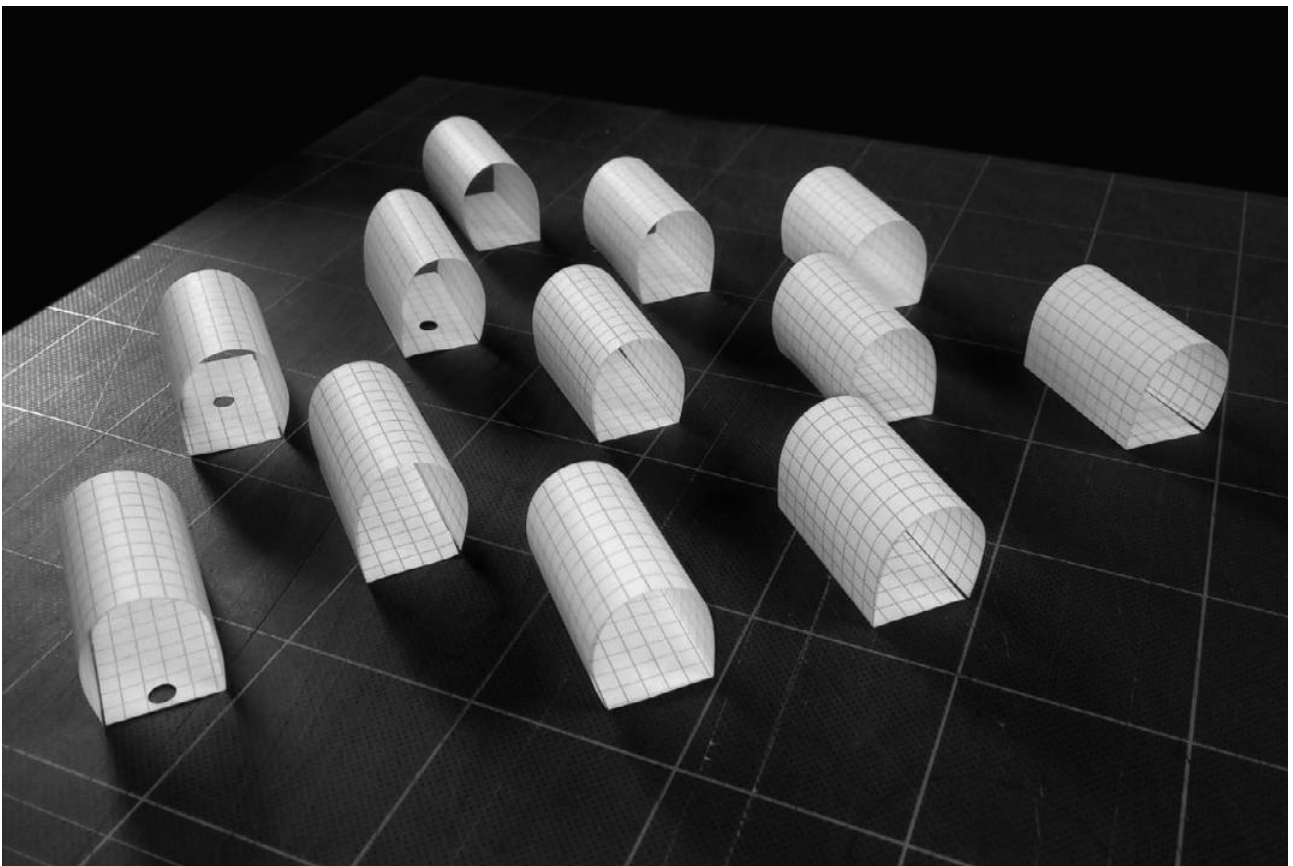
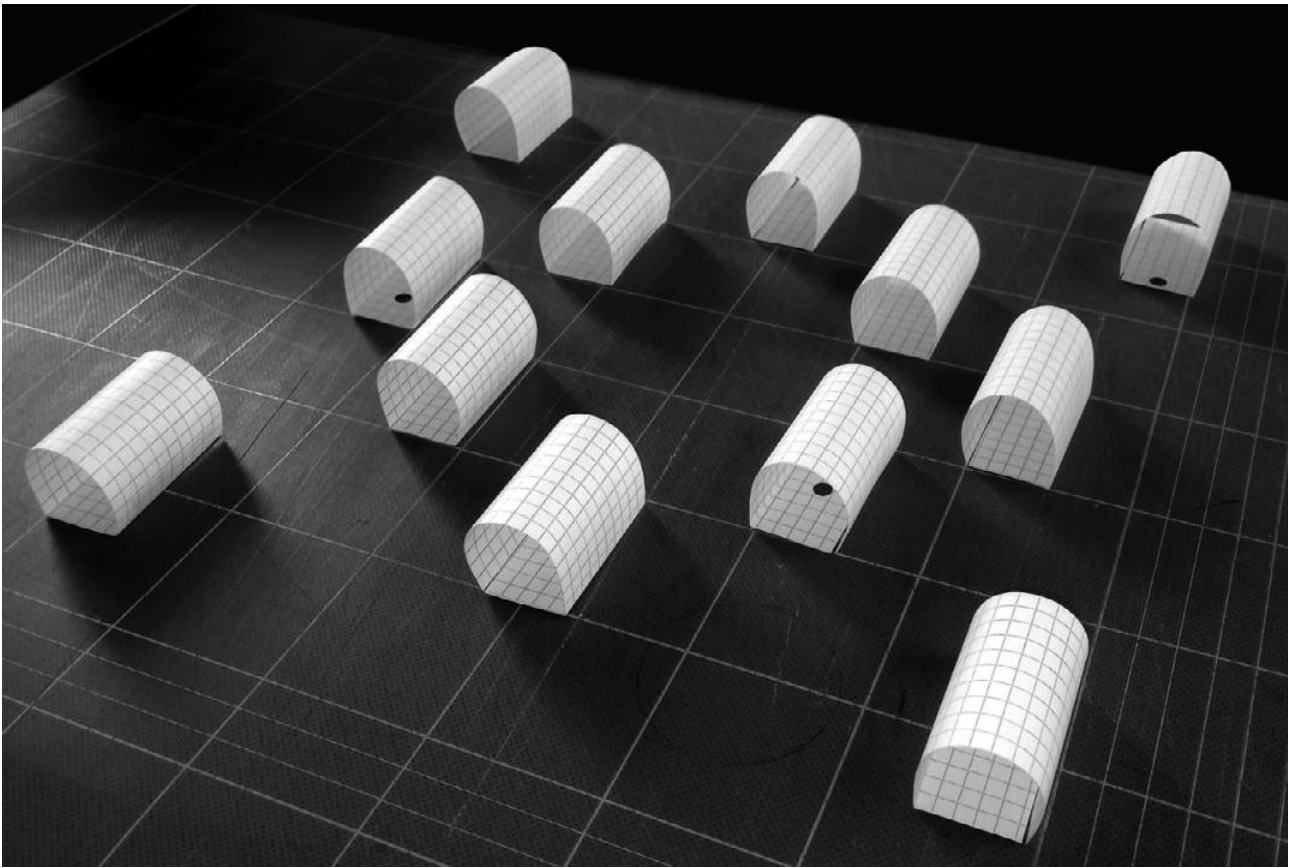


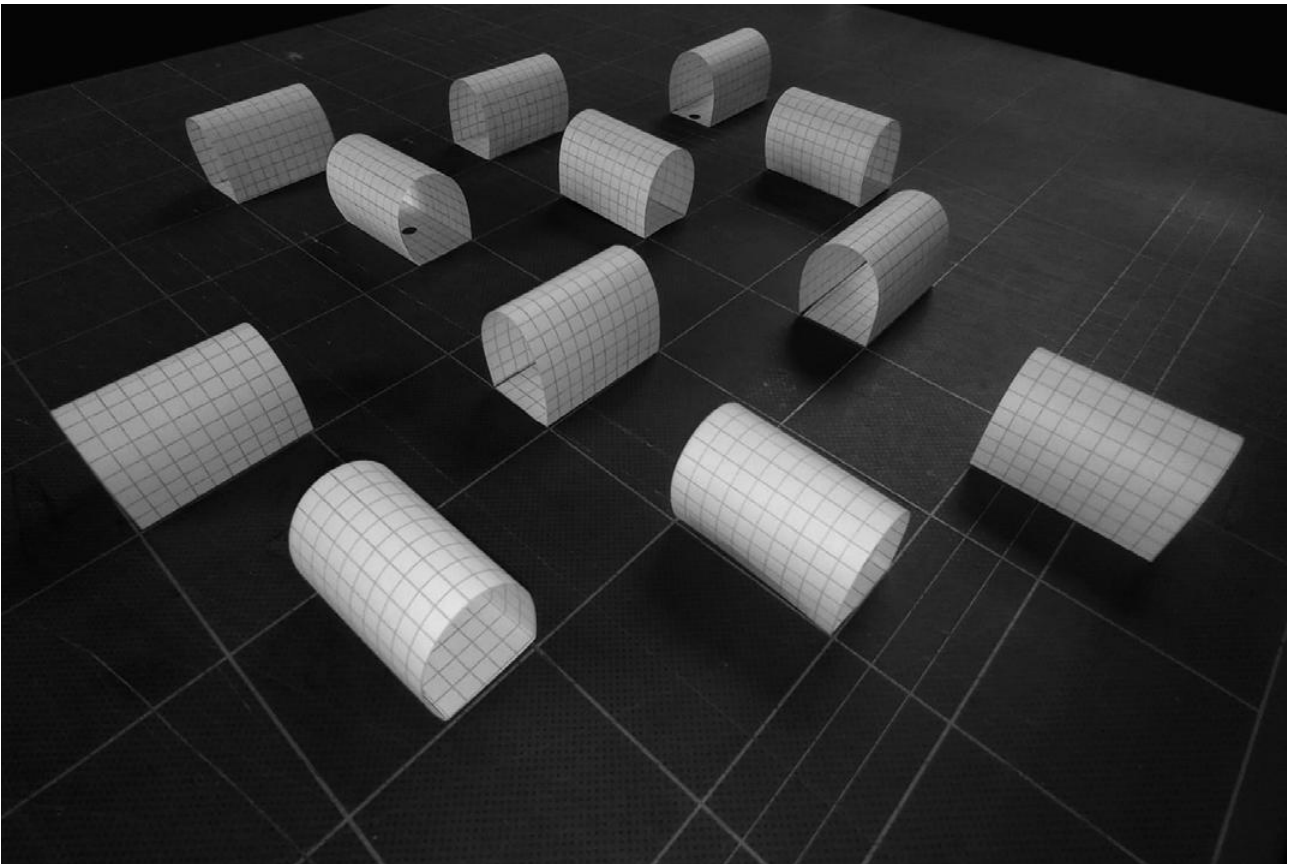
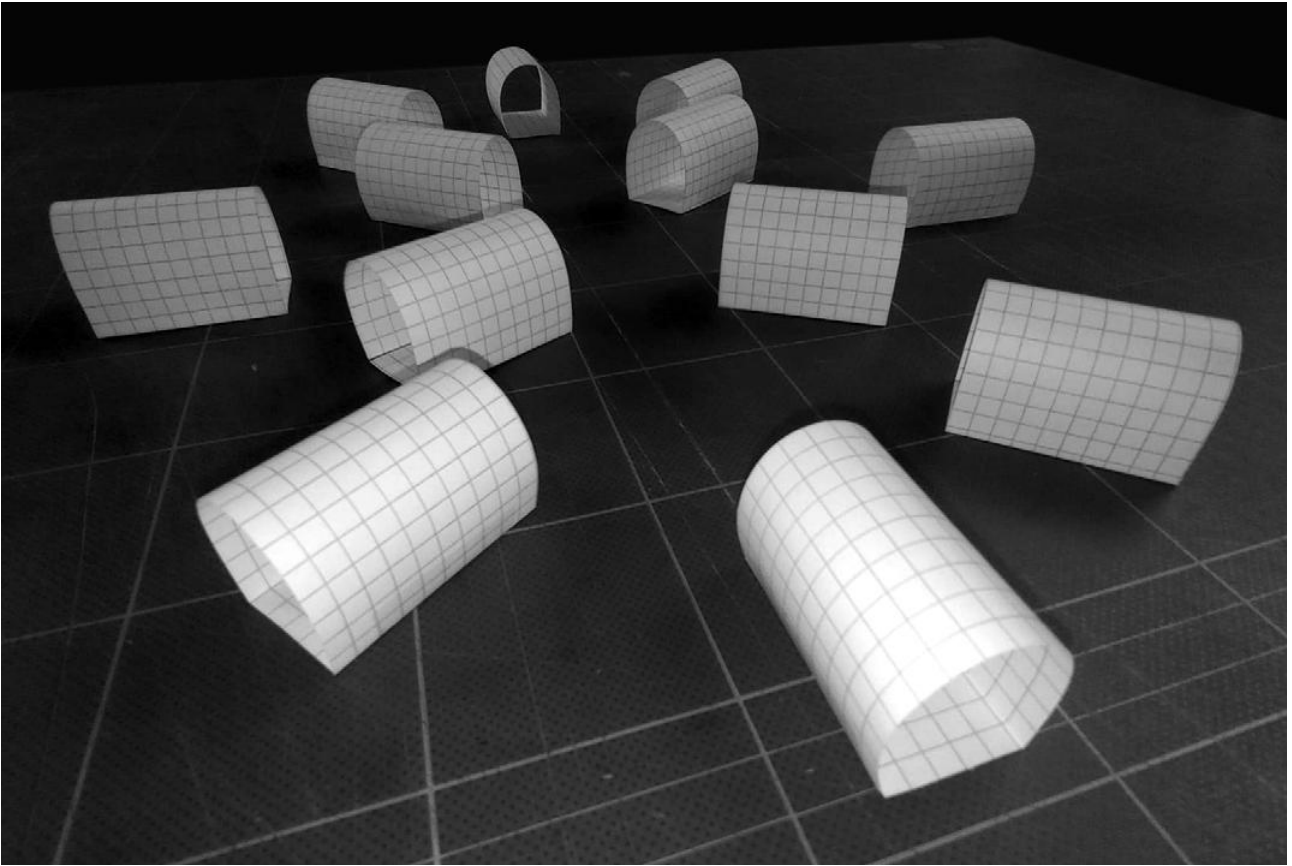
HÜGEL CONFIGURATIONS

The shape of the hügel and their arrangement within the landscape will affect how they are experienced. These models were helpful to explore the possibilities but the embodied experience of being amongst them is difficult to imagine. MA Narrative Environments students from Central Saint Martins translated the models into videos to help explore how a sense of spaciousness could be created in an immersive environment.











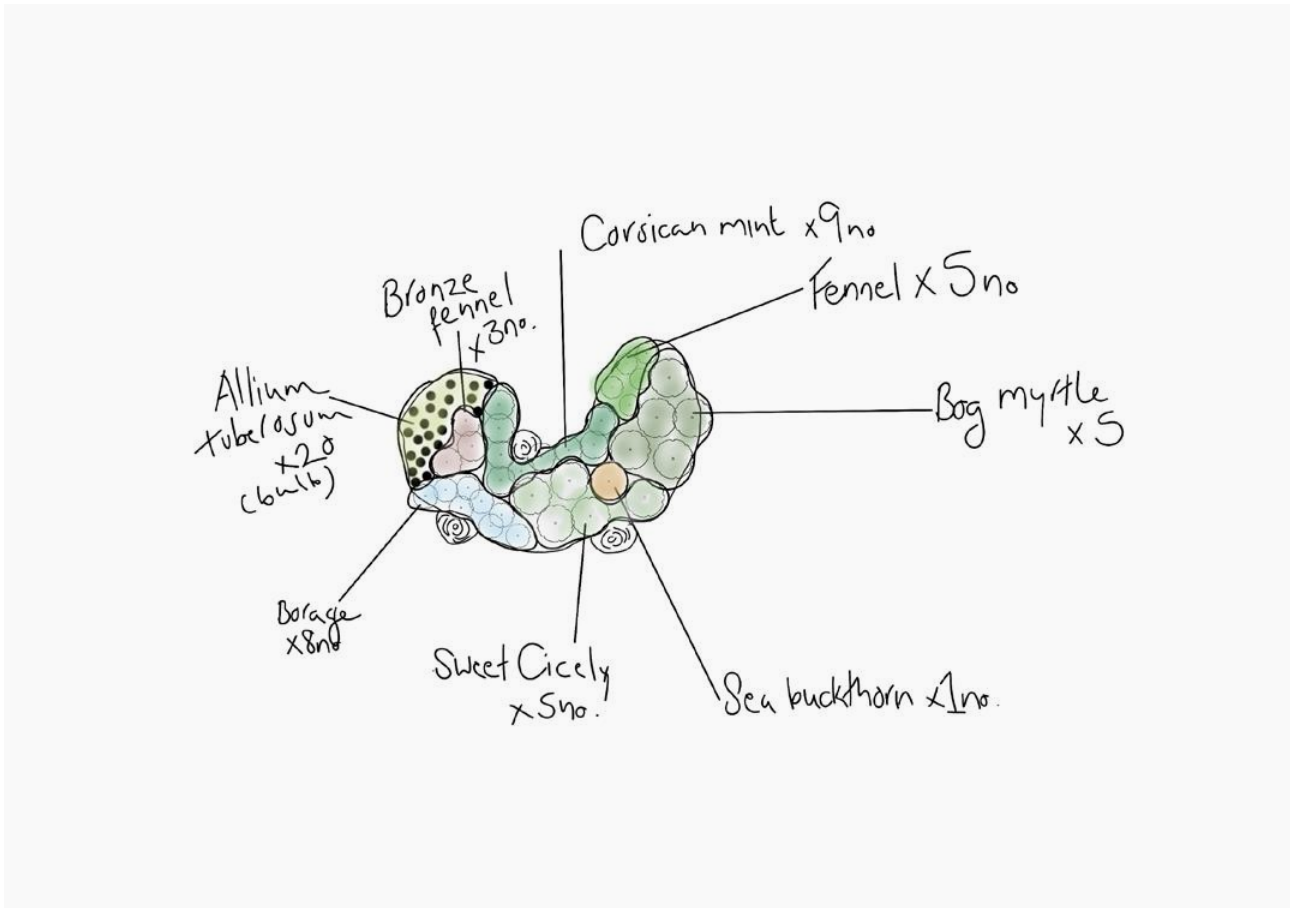
Sasha Vinnicombe, an animation student at the University of the Creative Arts, Farnham made their initial sketch for an animation that shows the building of the hügels, the plants that would grow as the seasons changed and how people might engage with them.

THREE TEST HÜGELS SARAH-ALUN JONES

The three hügel shapes were to have a planting theme – scent, colour and structure. The horseshoe-shaped hügel, would focus on scent to enfold a person in fragrance. The colour hügel would include plants that can be appreciated for the colour of their leaves, stems, flowers and fruit and/or be used to create dyes. The structure hügel, would use the three sisters planting technique of growing corn, beans, and squash together in a symbiotic relationship. Garden designer, Sarah-Alun Jones, made a planting plan with these drawings.

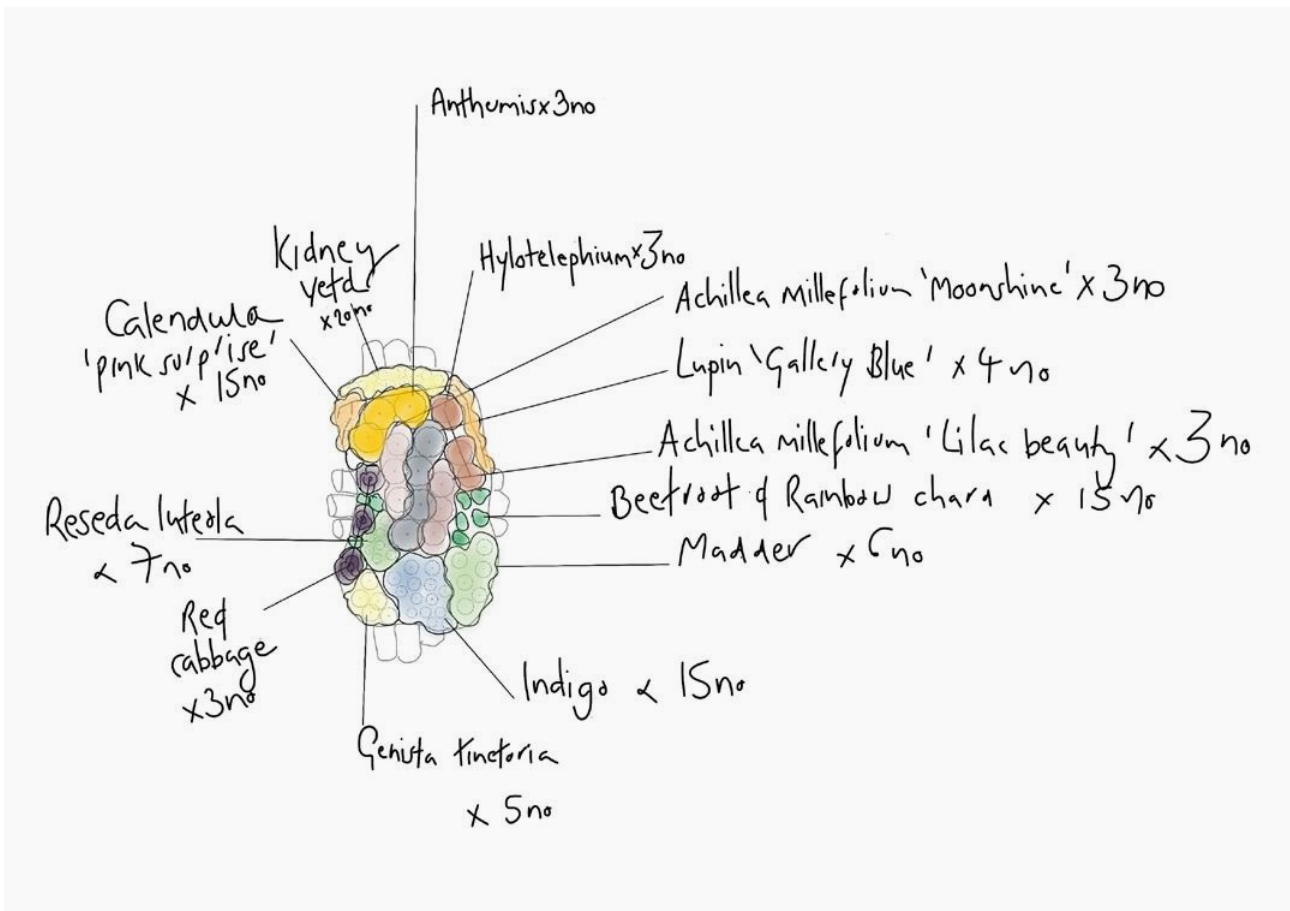
HÜGEL PLANTING SELECTION

Plant List	No.	Height (mm)	Width (mm)	Pot size
<i>Achillea Millefolium</i> 'Moonshine'	3	600	600	2L
<i>Achillea Millefolium</i> 'Lilac Beauty'	3	600	600	2L
<i>Anthemis Tinctoria</i> 'Sauce Hollandaise'	3	900	600	2L
<i>Brassica Oleracea Capitata</i> (Red Cabbage)	6	600	800	plug
<i>Beta Vulgaris</i> (Beetroot)	15	600	300	plug
<i>Calendula Officinalis</i> 'Pink Surprise'	15	500	300	plug
<i>Genista Tinctoria</i>	5	600	500	9cm
<i>Lupinus Polyphyllus</i> 'Gallery Blue'	4	1500	400	3L
<i>Persicaria Tinctoria</i> / <i>Indigofera Tinctoria</i>	15	1000	1000	plug
<i>Reseda Luteola</i> (Weld)	7	900	300	3cm
<i>Rubia Tinctorum</i> (Madder)	6	500	600	plug
<i>Anthyllis Vulneraria</i> (Kidney Vetch)	20	150	300	9cm pot
<i>Hylotelephium Spectabile</i>	3	500	500	2L
<i>Allium Tuberosum</i> (Three Cornered Leek)	20	300	200	bulb
<i>Borago Officinalis</i> (Borage)	8	500	200	plug
<i>Foeniculum Vulgare</i> (Sweet Fennel)	5	1000	450	2L
<i>Foeniculum Vulgare</i> 'Smoky' (Bronze Fennel)	3	1000	450	2L
<i>Hippophae Rhamnoides</i> 'leikora' (Sea Buckthorn)	1	1000	400	6L pot
<i>Mentha Requienii</i> (Corsican Mint)	9	50	100	9cm pot
<i>Myrica Gale</i> (Bog Myrtle)	5	400	800	3L pot
<i>Myrrhis Odorata</i> (Sweet Cicely)	5	100	80	plug
<i>Cynara Cardunculu</i>	1	1200	400	2L



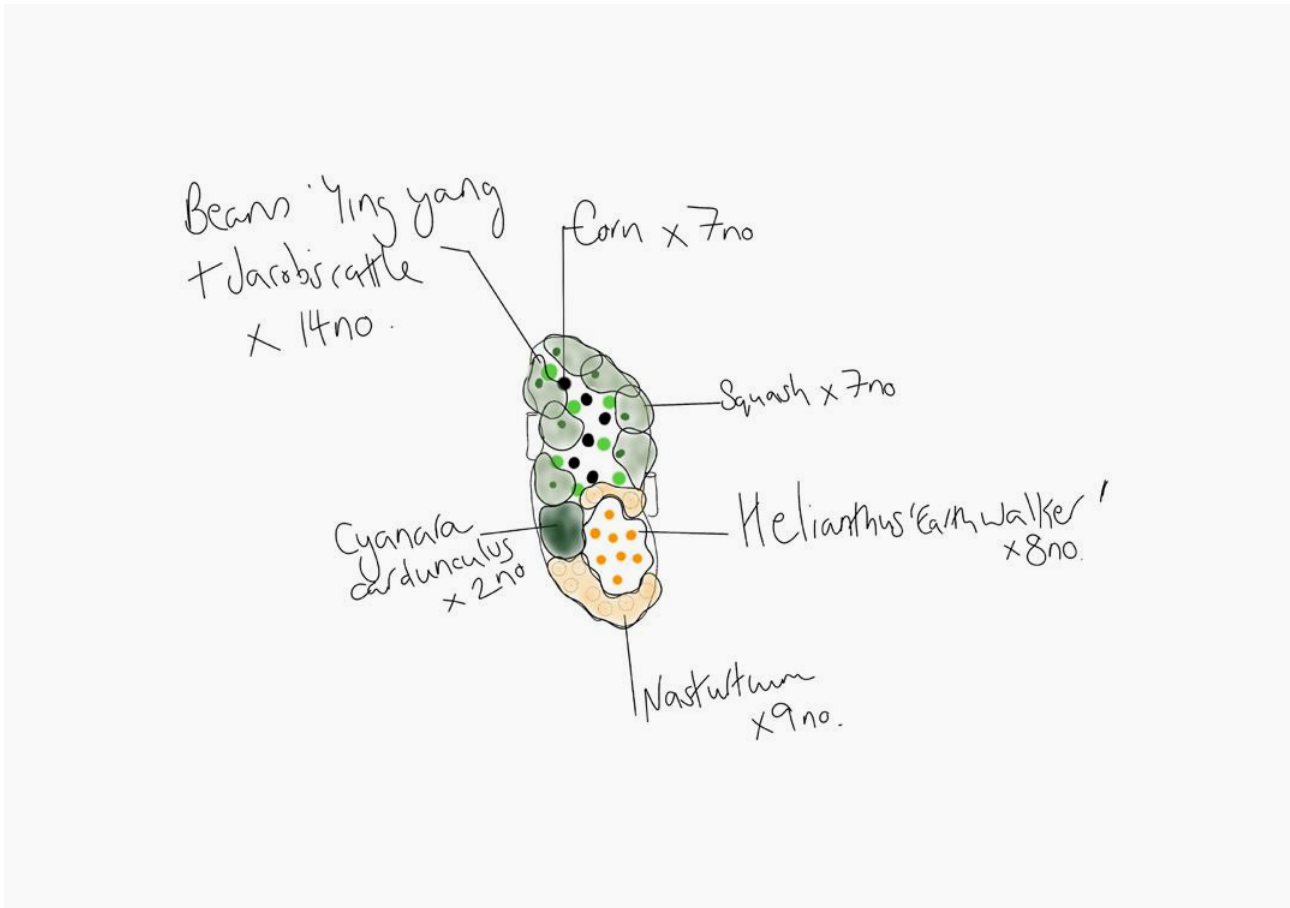
SCENT HÜGEL

- Allium Tuberosum (Three-Cornered Leek)
- Borago Officinalis (Borage)
- Foeniculum Vulgare (Sweet Fennel)
- Foeniculum Vulgare 'Smoky' (Bronze Fennel)
- Hippophae Rhamnoides 'leikora' (Sea Buckthorn)
- Mentha Requierii (Corsican Mint)
- Myrica Gale (Bog Myrtle)
- Myrrhis Odorata (Sweet Cicely)



COLOUR HÜGEL

- Achillea Millefolium 'Moonshine'
- Achillea Millefolium 'Lilac Beauty'
- Anthemis Tinctoria 'Sauce Hollandaise'
- Brassica Oleracea Capitata (Red Cabbage)
- Beta Vulgaris (Beetroot)
- Calendula Officinalis 'Pink Surprise'
- Genista Tinctoria
- Lupinus Polyphyllus 'Gallery Blue'
- Persicaria Tinctoria/ Indigofera Tinctoria (Japanese Indigo)
- Reseda Luteola (Weld)
- Rubia Tinctorum (Madder)
- Anthyllis Vulneraria (Kidney Vetch)
- Hylotelephium Spectabile



STRUCTURE HÜGEL

- Cucurbita Maxima 'Jumbo Pink Banana Winter Squash'
- Helianthus Annuus 'Earthwalker'
- Tropaeolum Majus
- Phaseolus Coccineus 'Ying Yang'
- Phaseolus Vulgaris 'Jacobs Cattle Gold'
- Zea Hybrida - 'Glass Gem Popcorn' (Sweetcorn)
- Cynara Cardunculus

DRAWING BEETROOT (SUMMER), YING CAO, 2024



BRONZE HEAD FENNEL (WINTER) ELENA (YUTONG) ZHOU, 2024





CRANBROOK COMMUNITY FOOD GARDEN

This small haven tucked away in the iconic Cranbrook Estate is truly inspiring. So much knowledge and experience is gathered and nurtured here. Every week a new activity or project emerges, from a woodwork workshop to build a library, seed archive, to a medicinal herb garden. Each approached with creativity, ingenuity, generosity and fun. There is much to learn from such community organising. Currently, preparation is underway to build a hügel, the largest yet. It will be an opportunity to experiment and test ideas that can be observed and recorded collectively.





Cranbrook community garden

20/07/24

- Tied up tomatoes, pruned new shoot at elbows.
- Deadheaded calendula
- Support to Lavage
- watered pots
- Tidied up Geum (nice yellow flowers) + yarrow and planted near hole where pear tree will go.
- saw shield bug beetle
- Don't water potatoes in bags
- potted strawberries, raspberries (16/07) taster session + lemon balm

31/07/24

- potted shallots
- Planted out: beans

2

— / — / —

- hand span apart, can
 all climb up together.
- planted salvia near
 the marrebellia plum
 tree, orange/yellow
 - Kalamancee tree - lemon
 orange fruit, - cocktails,
 on East Asian food
 - recognising early plants
 tiny carrot,
 - grasses + mallow weeded
 - mounts too close together
 can contaminate flavours
 - lovage - very strong
 celery flavour - add
 small amount instead of
 celery!

07/08/24

Watered plants, sowed salad

3, 1, 1
Good Sound, 55k Pumpkin

label with date

onions in planter, cut back
dried blackberry bush.

learnt about comfrey tea -
soaked for 3 days, diluted
and one bottle added to
half a water butt. oranges
+ banana skins soaked -

vit c + potassium. Wormery

tiger worms. Harvested
green apples with Lizzy and
weighed them + cleaned with
a cloth + wrapped in news
paper so that not touching
each other. Had Laura's

potato + bean pasties!

Took home pumpkin -

added to laska + then stir

fry with black na +

bailed egg - Chinese Pumpkin

Polg gardening - letting things
self seed.

Cholla
winter melon
wax courde
Benincasa hispida

4

14/08/24

Repaired net with Loulou,
and planted 1 vine aubergine
from pot into planter.
Sorted out vine leaves with
larva for dolma - soak in
wine oil to soften. Large ones
without holes. Took off
brown bits of fern. Salad
onion seeds eaten. Planted
3 aubergines. Mended hole
in net. sewed a piece to it
in the dark. Laura found
a beautiful lace aloe for my
plant collection, gave me a
chilly plant and the harvest
was cucumber, (mouse melon),
Mexican sour gherkin.

17/08/24

soil sifting, sift from d/s
leaves waste. throw out stones



THE FLAX EXCHANGE

The experience of being a participant in a project is incredibly valuable as an artist inviting collaboration. Artist, Shane Waltener led workshops at Poplar Union exploring homegrown and sustainable textiles practices through movement and sound. Shane's practice draws inspiration from ceramics, textiles and basketry and is rooted in ideas of ecology and reuse. The flax used in the workshop and subsequent performance was grown nearby with local people. Shane has a wonderful way of facilitating the exchange of skills, knowledge and experience. The process of doing something non-verbal together has a particular generative quality. Building relationships in this way with people and place over time is central to Autopoietic.





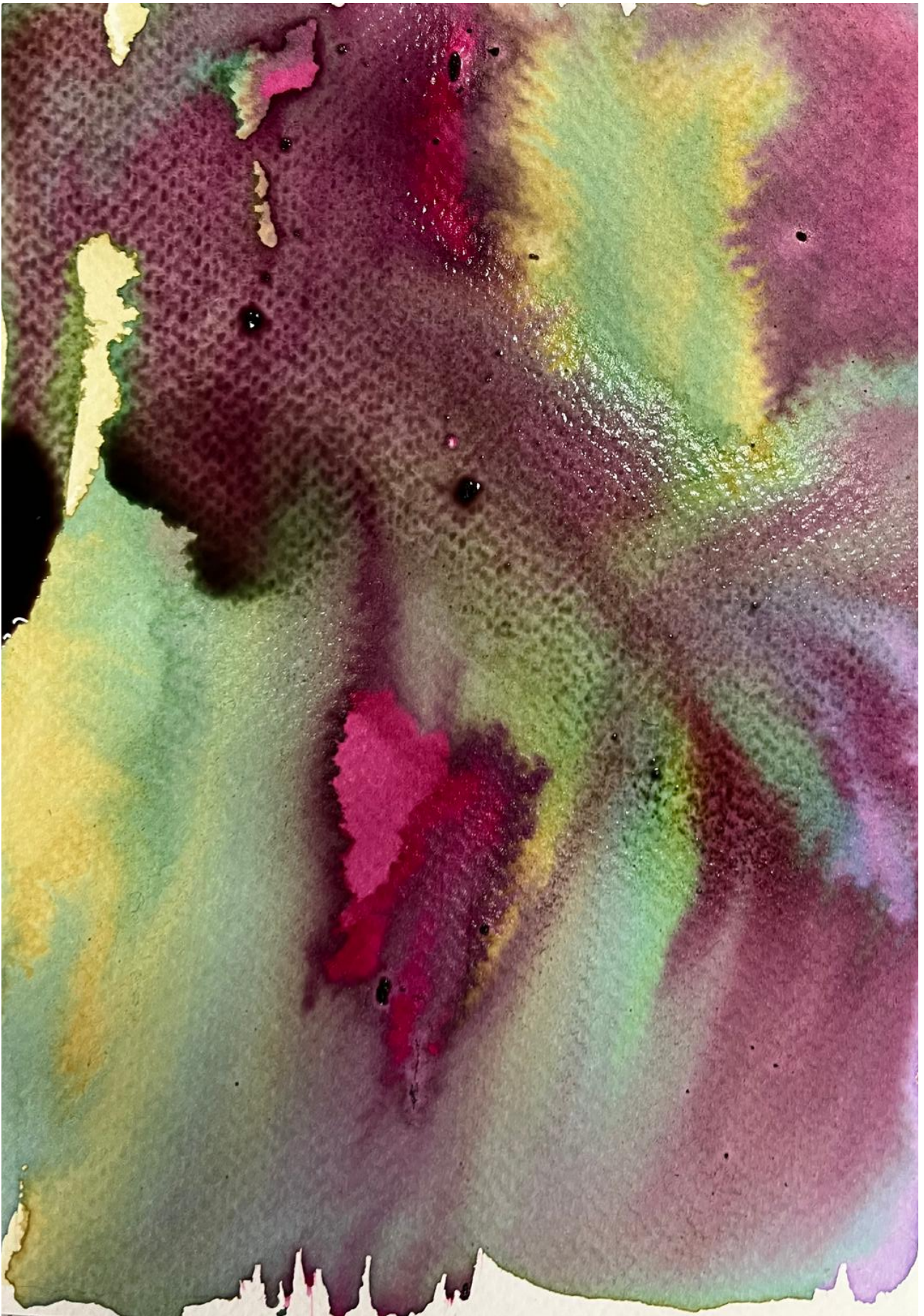


CHERWELL COLLECTIVE ANTHOTYPE WORKSHOP

From Greek *Anthos* (flower) and *typos* (imprint), an anthotype is an image created from the photosensitive material from plants. Participants were invited to participate in a workshop using kitchen waste and local weeds. Artist Kim Coleman who has been working with anthotypes co-led the workshop.

Emulsions made from cabbage, beetroot, nettle and onion skin was painted on paper on which pressed plants, seeds and paper cutouts were placed and exposed to sunlight. The images take time to appear and then in time will also disappear.







THE WEED GARDEN WEED WALK

The Weed Garden, a commission for the Begbroke Innovation District, is an artwork and an inventive biodiversity initiative, celebrating the plants that many would usually regard as weeds. The garden is also in response and contrast to the history of the site, formerly home to the British Weed Research Organisation.

Its creators, architecture practice *Assemble* and garden designer Sarah Alun-Jones led a weed identification workshop. For Autopoietic, it is interesting to consider how these plants came to be on the site and which will end up being planted on the hügels. Verbena, for example, is a nitrogen fixer particularly useful in the early life of the hügel, which is why it was chosen for the Hazel Walk Allotment.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE "PLANTS IN THE 'WRONG' PLACE"](#)









WEED WALK, THE WEED GARDEN, BEGBROKE INNOVATION DISTRICT, IMAGE COURTESY OF YESENIA THIBAUT-PICAZO

AUTOPOIETIC: A LIBRARY

Autopoietic is a slow work. It will constitute a series of hügels built with people to create a library of plants, materials, knowledge, skills and relations. The size and shape of a hügel will be determined by the tree that it is made with, retaining a memory of it and its place of origin. Participants will establish a research focus for each hügel e.g. bees, biodiversity, climate change, dyes, colour, weaving, paper, textiles, health, medicine, tea, ritual, myth, lore, baking, brewing, fungi. People from the local community, the science park, universities, schools and local industries will be invited to build, plant and tend the hügels, which will become research tools and sites for collaborative experimentation.

Amongst the hügels will sit a metal polytunnel frame, to which creative interventions will be made using the materials grown. These will encourage plants to grow around it. In time, they will grow to cover the frame entirely. This democratic living structure, a hügelesque form, which can be inhabited, will encourage placemaking providing a space for formal and informal gathering. At the heart of the work is how we create and share knowledge and experience through the act of making and taking care of something together. Autopoietic is a provocation to set an alternative in motion – a place to test wild ideas, learn from failure, disagree, and reimagine. It is an experiment in collective self-organisation, an invitation, an evolving expanded archive.



SALAD BURNETT, FIELD MARIGOLD, MALLOW, COMMON POPPY



RED CLOVER, LOBELIA, PINEAPPLE WEED, FIELD SCABIOUS BLUE



SPOTTED MEDICK, FAT HEN, SPOTTED HAWKSBIT, FEVERFEW



YARROW, WILD GERANIUM, SHEPHERD PURSE



HAZEL WALK ALLOTMENT HÜGEL, IMAGE COURTESY OF YESENIA THIBAUT-PICAZO



NOTES



FOOTNOTES

1 Defining Commons. The existence of ‘gated’ and commodity-producing commons demonstrates that there are many forms of commons and challenges us to see what aspects of communing activities identify them as other from the state and market and the principle of a social organization alternative to capitalism. To this end, keeping in mind Massimo De Angelis’s recommendation against setting up ‘models’ of commons, we propose some criteria drawn from discussions with comrades and practices we have encountered in our political work:

i) To contribute to the long-term construction of new modes of production, commons should be autonomous spaces and should aim to overcome the divisions existing among us and build the skills necessary for self-government. Today we see only fragments of the new society potentially in the making, in the same way as we can spot fragments of capitalism in urban centres like Florence in late medieval Europe, for example, where broad concentrations of workers already existed in the textile industry by the mid-fourteenth century.

ii) Commons are defined by the existence of a shared property, in the form of a shared natural or social wealth – lands, waters, forests, systems of knowledge, capacities for care – to be used by all commoners, without any distinction, but which are not for sale. Equal access to the necessary means of (re)production must be the foundation of life in the commons. This is important because the existence of hierarchical relations makes commons vulnerable to enclosures.

iii) Commons are not things but social relations. This is the reason why some (eg., Peter Linebaugh) prefer to speak of ‘commoning,’ a term that underscores not the material wealth shared but the sharing itself and the solidarity bonds produced in the process. Commoning is a practice that appears inefficient to capitalist eyes. It is the willingness to spend much time in the work of cooperation, discussing, negotiating, and learning to deal with conflicts and disagreement. Yet only in this way can a community in which people understand their essential interdependence be built.

iv) Commons function on the basis of established regulations, stipulating how the common wealth is to be used and cared for, that is, what the commoners’ entitlements and obligations should be.

v) Commons require a community, the principle being “no community, no commons.” This is why we cannot speak of a ‘global commons,’ a concept that presumes the existence of a global collectivity... The ‘global commons’ designation is a fraudulent manoeuvre that must be rejected. The same applies to the United Nations’ designation of selected cities and geographical areas as ‘heritage of humanity,’ which required municipalities and government to adopt ‘protection’ and valorisation measures that benefit the tourist industry, while diverting resources away from more works that would improve the conditions of local populations.

vi) Commons are constituted on the basis of social cooperation, relations of reciprocity,

and responsibility for the reproduction of the shared wealth, natural or produced. Respect for other people and openness to heterogeneous experiences provided the rules of cooperation are observed distinguishes them from gated communities that can be committed to racist, exclusionary practices, while fostering solidarity among the members.

vii) Commons are shaped by collective decision-making, through assemblies and other forms of direct democracy. Grassroots power, power from the ground up, power derived from tested abilities, and continual rotation of leadership and authority through different subjects, depending on the tasks to be performed, is the source of decision-making. This distinguishes commons from communism, which consigned power to the state. Commoning is reclaiming power of making basic decisions about our lives and doing so collectively....

viii) Commons are a perspective fostering a common interest in every aspect of life and political work and are therefore committed to refusing labor hierarchies and inequalities in every struggle and prioritizing the development of a truly collective subject.

xi) All these characteristics differentiate the common from public, which is owned, managed, controlled, and regulated by and for the state, constituting a particular type of private domain. This is not to say that we shouldn’t fight to ensure that the public is not privatized. As an intermediate terrain it is in our interest that commercial interests do not engulf the public, but we should not lose sight of the distinction. We cannot abandon the state, since it is the site of the accumulation of the wealth produced by our past and present labor. Similarly, most of us still depend on capital for our survival, as most of us do not have land or other means of subsistence. But we should work to ensure that we go beyond state and capital” (Federici, 2019: 93–96).

2 Maturana and Varela are cautious about applying the term Autopoiesis to other fields. Niklas Luhmann, nevertheless, applies it to social systems, and it has been applied to other disciplines. There has been criticism and varying interpretations of the term. I pick it up as an artist loosely. I’m interested in how “Living systems...are organized in such a way that their processes produce the very components which are necessary for the continuance of these processes” (Mingers, 1989: 162). In this work I invite the circular organisation of processes which through certain conditions and relations can maintain an autonomous entity. Beth Dempster proposes the term ‘sympoiesis’ for self-organising systems, which unlike Autopoiesis do not have self-defined boundaries, are not self-produced but collectively produced and are not organisationally closed but organisationally ajar. (Dempster, 2000: 1).

3 “*Living-in-place* means following the necessities and pleasures of life as they are uniquely presented by a particular site, and evolving ways to ensure long-term occupancy of that site. A society which practices living-in-place keeps a

balance with its region of support through links between human lives, other living things, and the processes of the planet — seasons, weather, water cycles — as revealed by the place itself. It is the opposite of a society which *makes a living* through short-term destructive exploitation of land and life. Living-in-place as an age-old way of existence, disrupted in some parts of the world a few millennia ago by the rise of exploitative civilization, and more generally during the past two centuries by the spread of industrial civilization. It is not, however, to be thought of as antagonistic to civilisation, in the more human sense of that word, but may be the only way in which a truly civilized existence can be maintained” (Berg and Dasmann, 1977: 399).

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Autopoietic
The Hügel Story

Part One: Growing an Idea

By Jaimini Patel

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