

INTRODUCTION

The edge of a glacier is not a line but a zone of interaction, a space of entanglement where glacial ice and human and non-human lives create new realities. It's at these edges where glaciers meet the air, soil, and sea. Glacial edges narrate the power structures, where ice marks the end of prehistory and soil signals the start of civilization (Simonetti 2022; Sörlin 2015), a division often upheld by male-dominated glaciology (Carey et al. 2016) but contrasted by Arctic Indigenous and local knowledges, where ice is not only a natural boundary but a living part of history, culture, and identity (Cruikshank 2005; Nuttall 2009). How does one wait and hear at the edge of such a (metaphorical) glacier?

Stemming from Rousseau's (1782/1992) method of "doing nothing" through a deep withdrawal from society, isolation, and meditation, we open their practice further and acknowledge that we are never truly isolated. Microbes thrive on our skin, the wind carries with it traces of distant places, and the landscapes bear the power structures reminding us that our solitude is never complete. If we evolve Rousseau's method of doing nothing with this awareness, waiting and hearing becomes an act of subtle engagement. In this revised practice, *We* extend beyond just humans.¹ *We* form a network of more-than-human: soil, meltwater, rock debris, vegetation, microbes, human objects, and social paradigms that operate on both micro and macro scales, in close proximity to the current glacial edge, but also further away in places that the glacier's edge passed through in the past. By sharing the four practices below that emerged in and around Kilpisjärvi (Bovermann 2024a), we invite the readers to engage, witness, and feel *We* among past, current, and future glaciers.

1 The authors acknowledge an extended *We* as a more-than-human network in which beings and environments mutually influence each other's perceptions. However, they refrain from speaking on behalf of others and their perspectives, limiting their claims to their individual experiences.

CONTEXT

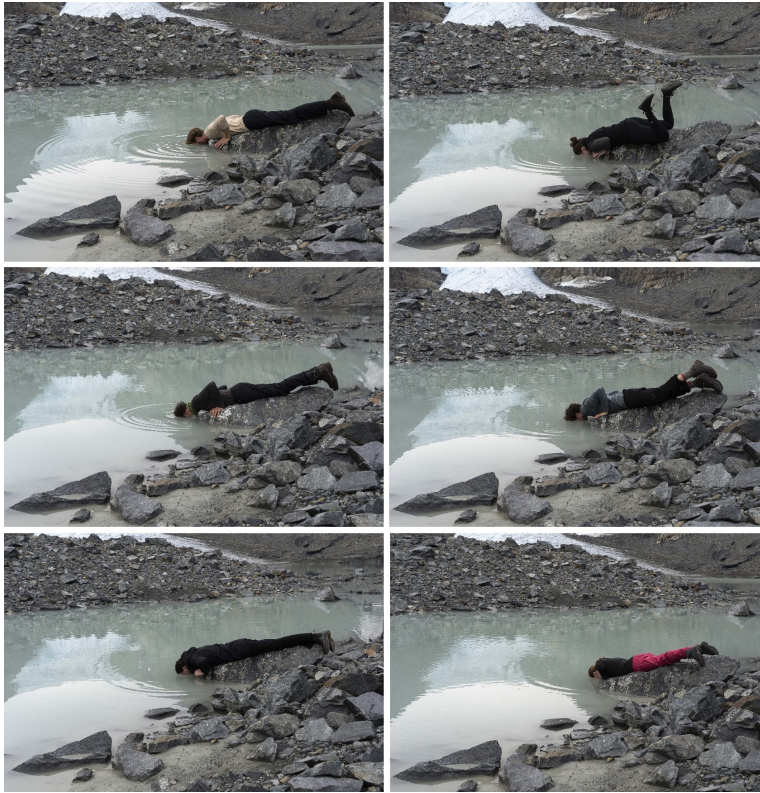
On our earlier walks on the fells surrounding Kilpisjärvi, we experienced the scarceness of the land. With little vegetation, hardly any scents reached our noses whilst out in the field. Perhaps a shift in individual human perspectives was required in order to interact with the local olfactory activity. Initiated by the artist Mari Mäkiö, we decided to adopt a more intimate position and bring our noses to the land.

INSTRUCTIONS

Instead of using eyes, ears, or hands to explore the environment, use the multisensory surface of your face to receive and exchange sensations. Find a spot with soft inviting moss, lay down on your belly and press your face against the surface of the vegetation. Experience how in this close proximity a new place opens up before our eyes, ears, and noses, revealing all of its various micro-layers, surfaces, scents, and exchanges. Slowly breathe in and out. Feel the moss' small branches and leaves meeting your body, massaging your face and skin. Hold the position for several minutes (be aware of your breathing), and focus on every bodily or facial movement and how they create a shift in composition and contact points. In this close proximity, embrace the exchange of sensations and reflect on your experience (Bovermann 2024b).



Till Bovermann, *Moss-Breathing*



Mari Mäkiö, *Glacier-Breathing Diving*

CONTEXT

When we were at the Steindalsbren glacier in Norway, the water coming off of the ice body was milky and turquoise in colour, the result of glacial erosion. The glacier emitted an energy that invited us to engage through our bodies, adapting our posture and orientation to meet it.

INSTRUCTIONS

Find a place next to a glacier lake and lie down in a comfortable and secure position which allows you to access the coolness of the glacier pool with your face. Lower your head, approach the waterline, and focus for a moment on the surface. Find your own choreography of meeting the water, be it in a gentle or energetic way, to breach through with your face. Hold the position, feel the exchange of temperature, and focus on the subtle vibrations your face receives while gaining an immersive, tactile intimacy with the materiality of the glacial pool and the environment. When you feel ready, lift your head out of the water and reflect.



Mari Mäkiö, *Wind-Listening*



Till Bovermann, *Wind-Listening*

CONTEXT

Whilst ascending the fells of Malla Strict Nature Reserve (Finnish: *Mallan luonnonpuisto* | Sami: *Gihcibákti*), we interacted with the local winds through a guided exercise created by the artist Joshua Le Gallienne. Joshua read aloud a pre-prepared text entitled Zero-Material Performance (Le Gallienne 2019), which provides basic instructions for engaging with the air around us to facilitate a sonic experience created in collaboration with the surrounding airflow. The instructions focus on the physical sensations of the wind on the face, particularly the acoustic resonances of the inner and outer ear that can be experienced when activated by the wind itself. The full text for Zero-Material Performance can be found below.

INSTRUCTIONS

Face the wind. Close your eyes. Feel the cool breeze on your facial features. Notice the sound of the wind hitting your ears and the rhythms produced. Carefully position your head so that the air hits both ears with equal force. Observe the wind move between the ears and across the face. Very slowly, start to gently rotate your head from one side to the other. Move the head to feel the wind on different sides of the face. Notice how the noise appears to dance from one ear to another. The resonances of the ear will change as you rotate your head away from the wind. Be aware of how your movements affect the rhythm of the sounds perceived. There are specific angles where the ears will resonate. Whistling tones and low-frequency melodies can be perceived. Experiment with different postures and movements to achieve these effects. When resonances are found, allow time to explore them. Remember to observe the silences between the sounds (Le Gallienne 2019).

BAREFOOT BOULDER MEDITATION

CONTEXT

Another exercise that we experimented with was to explore direct contact with the environment through bare feet. This practice was initiated by Bart HM Vandeput and Jan Christian Schulz whilst traversing the landscape near Saarijärvi, Finland. Here we considered sensory input through the soles of the feet to act as a point of connection to the environment. We took off our shoes and stood barefooted on large rocks, attempting to attune to what lies beneath our feet. The exercise is somewhat reminiscent of one of Pauline Oliveros' *Sonic Meditations* (1974) text scores which instructs participants to "walk so silently that the bottoms of your feet become ears."

INSTRUCTIONS

Find a spot, possibly on a rock, preferably alone. Walk there in silence, then take off your shoes. Take a minute or two in which you shake your body to attune to the place. Try to settle into a quiet and relaxing rhythm of breathing and moving your body. Stand barefoot for 5-10 minutes, breathing and moving your body. You may have your eyes open or closed, whatever feels comfortable to you. When you feel ready, put your shoes back on and walk back to where you started (Bovermann 2024c).



Till Bovermann, *Barefoot-Boulder-Meditation*

Through the above practices, we invite a non-prescriptive engagement with the environment, where readers can discover their own embodied and situated experiences. Rather than imposing how one should feel or perceive, the practices invite exploration and attentiveness. In this context, by ecological listening, we mean a mode of being that lies beyond passive hearing and has at its core an awareness of relationships or their absence with and within the more-than-human worlds (Larsen et al. 2017, 21). Our understanding of ecological listening remains a work in progress as we attune to new sonic and affective layers, and it is not guided by a fixed theoretical framework, but was critically inspired by writings and practices we suggest below.

SUGGESTED READING ON ECOLOGICAL LISTENING

Our perspective on ecological listening has been informed by writings and practices of, among others, Sarah Politz' (2022) relational listening, Edouard Glissant's (1990) *la Relation*, Steven Feld's concept of *acoustemology* (Rice & Feld 2020), R. Murray Shafer's (1993) soundscape, and Pauline Oliveros' *quantum listening* (Oliveros et al. 2022).

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