ARCHIVIO
ANTROPOLOGICO
MEDITERRANEO

Editoriale

Managing Global Social Water

In copertina: *Planet* (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

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Fourth Landscape in the Anthropocene. Artethnographic Findings from a Mediterranean Waterfront

The soul never thinks without an image
(Aristotele)

Lineal thinking will always generate either the teleological fallacy (that end determines process) or the myth of some supernatural controlling agency
(Bateson 1979)

Introduction

I will outline here some of the questions raised within the "Fourth Landscape Project", a complex action I like to define a 're-search', composed by a practical *search* and an intellectual research activity. First of all, images are the core of this article. They are photographs pointing back, in an indexical sense, to the reality beyond them (Mjaaland 2017), and represent some ethnographic material/physical findings I collected, minimally arranged, and exhibited, in order to provide a stimulating evidence of an environmental micro-macro reality. Through this pluri-dimensional, material and representational, visually *layered* evidence, the viewers-readers can find their own interpretative connections to the actual reality I am talking about.

The collected 'things/objects' – temporary definitions – were exposed at the 4th Biennal ANUAC Symposium 2015, in Bolzano University, Italy[2], presented and discussed in an interdisciplinary panel by the contemporary art critique Andreas Hapkemeyer (2015)[3], the communication designer Kris Krois, the environment anthropologist Nadia Breda, and by me, the author. It is the ongoing result of the two different, yet connected, activities I carry out for a few years along a short stretch of a Tyrrhenian-Mediterranean coastline, the Enfola[4] headland, in Elba Island, part of the National Park of the Tuscan Archipelago (Livorno province, Italy).

I named this context *Fourth Landscape*, borrowing from Gilles Clément's (2004) *Manifeste du Tiers Paysage* (*Manifesto of the Third Landscape*), since it fits into that definition but has further distinctive characteristics. I will illustrate them in the last paragraph, dedicating the first part of

this article to a critical description of the 'things/objects' I collect there, and their anthropological implications[5].

The theoretical background for understanding some of the interconnections emerging from my fieldwork can be traced in the *Systemic-Interactional-Ecologic Turn* in Anthropology, among whose standpoints figure the pioneer interdisciplinary works that refuted the conceptual separation between nature and culture. I broadly refer to the scientific-philosophical ontology of Maturana and Varela (1972), where the "living systems are self-making"; to Gregory Bateson's interrelated concepts of scientific inquiry, ethics and aesthetics, as in the *Ecology of Mind* (1972), beyond his distinction between *Mind and Nature*, and specifically between mind and matter (1979); to the new materialist development of an *Ecology of Life* by Tim Ingold (since 1989-), a complex-yet-unitary scientific approach that leads to a retrieval of the material reality, far surpassing old positivist views. Within this broad framework, I design my way through Anthropologies of Things and of Waste, meshing with Anthropology of Art, issues of perception, inner/external imagery, cognitive metaphors, semiotics, and agency. Also reference to self-ethnography is often evident.

I will not discuss here the many theoretical implications of such assemblage, but, concerned with the possible effects of the exposition of my material-results, I underline a few premises within the outlined broad framework. Specifically, I consider the concept of embodied Autopoiesis of the living-and-cognitive systems (Maturana, Varela 1972; Capra, Luisi 2014) as compatible with Bateson's concept of epistemology embedded in the natural world (Bateson 1972). I see these two concepts as laying at the roots of some recent elaborations of the idea of agency (Capra, Luisi 2014; Guo *et al.* 2016). I also consider, as a further advancement of those ideas, Ingold's (2013) discussion on activity and enactment as properties of every concrete matter, within the living flow of things and people.

These premises share many other concepts with the active, social vision of *Art as Agency* by Alfred

Gell (1998), whereas I focused on his elaboration of the concepts of nexus, index and abduction, at their turn taken from Peirce's (1908) semiotics[6]. They constitute 'synthetic' cognitive processes – different from unemotional, abstract, boring (Bateson 1979: 86) formal explanations – leading to the ideas of Art as interaction, pragmatics (Arnaut 2001) and correspondence (Ingold 2013). A view that allows to question my particular kind of art, an 'artethnography', as a form of knowledge production, possibly stimulating new behaviors, and new political and economic views.

The mentioned 'still new' theories of practice (Herzfeld 2001) are not yet easily accepted, mostly because they break the previous strong reified categorizations that permeate our knowledge, the very ones that produced the global predicament we are entangled in today – and from which, paradoxically, we would like to get out without changing them (Morton 2010). Basically, we are not able to acknowledge the characteristics of the natural-material systems we live in: we still conceive ourselves as separate, out of- or superior to them, and the technological powers apparently legitimate our mistaken ideas. Bateson's list of *false* dominant ideas is still updated: we position ourselves

> *against* the environment […], *against* other men […], it is the individual […] that matters, […] we *can* have unilateral control over the environment and must strive for that control […], we live within an infinitely expanding 'frontier' […], Economic determinism is common sense […]. (Bateson 1972: 497; italics in the original).

Both ideas of "technology will do it for us" (*ivi*: 497) and "nature will do it for us" – another diffused 'New Age' common sense – are wrong.

An Anthropocenic, micro-macro fieldwork

Passing to practice, my fieldwork consists of a Mediterranean waterfront where I fuzzily delimited a narrow re-search area, inaccessible-by-land, at the overlapping frontier between the land and the sea. Such field delimitation is not an artificial choice, due to simple reasons: the coastline frontier delineates itself, and the interesting stuff is there. It is a relatively isolated area I reach by swimming or by canoe, since I was young, so I observed its changing on time. My activity had a progressive development: a first activity consisted in a physical search, or casual finding, of plastic waste and other debris on the seashore, and of some natural-organic elements they are clinging to. I gather them in plastic bags that I find there, or else, swimming back to my base, I push the floating stuff ahead to me. I am motivated by an ethic-aesthetic necessity, in order to keep these little beaches and rocky shores relatively clean. This is an isolated but not unique new environmental practice that other people recently develop, alone or in Associations[7].

The second activity derived from the first, so that 'place' became my 'field', and the *search* became an ethnographical-artistic *research*, actually a '*sea-search*', as Nadia Breda wonderfully nicknamed it. I carry it out since about three years, taking also photographs and videos for documenting it and its *Fourth Landscape* context. All developed in subsequent steps: after gathering these waste materials – objects, crumbling objects, pieces, fragments – I was not able to get rid of them, and the main reasons are two. One is quite rational: why gather garbage and put it in the garbage again? Garbage 'in the right place'... is not enough, a not satisfactory tautology; moreover, a few days later I would find these things scattered 'round' again. A recycling process for many of them was not possible: they had become hybrid, non recognizable materials, too compromised, corroded and mixed up, often in microparticles. Re-use was possible only for a few of them, as the most were rotten[8].

But the strongest reason is that I was captured by their 'novelty', an indefinable and incongruous strangeness, due, as I realized later, to the rupture of a silently established order, creating an unforeseen combination of what we categorize as 'natural' and 'cultural' elements. Such mishmash was produced, first of all, by the scenery: the improbable location of these worn-out industrial objects, displaced in a 'natural' environment, so 'unnatural' for them. Weirdness was also due to the unexpected visibility and creativity of their heterogeneous aging processes, a material de-structuration 'naturally' happening in artifacts and industrial objects. So I was dealing with a double-strangeness, due to the landscape conjunction, and to inherent composition of the objects.

As Tim Ingold (2007) observes, although the normal state of materials is processual and transformational – we know that no object lasts forever – this is rarely noticed, even by scholars. These materials were peculiarly eroded by the backwash, the undertow and attrition among the seawater and the stones, the sun heat and light, the cold – to quote just some of the elements at work – grating one against the other, molding whatever happens to be there. The sea-travelling objects were thus modified in unpredictable ways, unfamiliar to the eye, since we are used to throw them away and hide them from our sight when they get old.

Their 'life' was over, and their shabby looks inspired me a sort of pity or compassion. Strange feelings if addressed to objects; I had never experienced anything like that before. They led me to imagine the stories of their former 'social life' (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986) and I realized that we can have a quite clear image of many processes that shape our society by analyzing its waste. So I started considering them as meaningful relics of our civilization, consumed products at the edge of the consumer society. Skeletons we should not hide but think about: mere physical rotten objects, yet highly symbolic, concrete metaphors and tangible testimonies of a planetary condition.

I accepted the challenge and, paraphrasing Appadurai, I started thinking of the "social death of things". Further on, as Michael Thompson (1979) suggested in his *Rubbish Theory*, I brought "them back to life", I gave them back a 'value', and a social role: they are now 'art pieces', within the honorable artistic category of 'still life' – here more appropriate than ever[9] – and their social role is to visually-tell their stories to people, spreading around vital messages. Their stories turned out to be our common story[10]. Publicly exhibited, their status of indexes[10] – not of icons or symbols, nor of mere disembodied 'representations' – convey layered, problematic, uncomfortable, hidden meanings, and exposes their invisible connections among different spheres of our 'natural-cultural' world.

They tell us of the over-production we developed and carry on, about our excessive material accumulation and the unjust distribution of it, about migration, pollution and contamination of macro and micro plastics in the oceans[11], about new forms of life appearing on plastic marine debris (Goldstein *et al.* 2012; Galgani *et al.* 2013; Zettler *et al.* 2013) and, by contrast, they allow us to think what we could rather do to avoid the worst. They let us reflect on these and other issues of crucial importance, and above all, on the negative and powerful effects of ignoring all that[12].

Ignorance is a culturally and socially built status: in this case, debris are accurately removed from touristic beaches, in summer, so we do not know how a 'natural' beach would really be; we don't worry, protected like children, and pay for being deceived. And – a linguistic trap – rubbish is taken away by workers called 'ecological operators' who paradoxically, and powerlessly, hide the actual ecological plight. Indeed, ignorance is functional to the construction of denial, as exemplified in the case of "global warming/climate change" by Kari Marie Norgaard (2011): we "do not integrate this knowledge into everyday life", we rather live in a fictional "double reality", constructing social "strategies of denial" (*ivi*: 403-405) supposed to protect us from our fears. Even concerned people, in wealthy nations, elaborate denial strategies as justifications for their inaction. But "knowing or not-knowing is itself a political act" (*ivi*: 409-410), connected to the macro-level political economy, which becomes a depoliticized tool for the immobilization and maintenance of a socially-and-environmentally destructive capitalism, whose wealth is unjustly distributed.

So 'garbage' is a political concept, the consequence of a political economy. As 'garbology' (Humes 2013) and anthropology tell us, garbage is systematically hidden – by words and *de facto* – in any possible way, for economic purposes (Reno 2015). If we really knew how much garbage, and vital damage, we produce, we would probably change our consumerist behavior, and consequently, the harmful political system. But some garbage – or all, as Joshua Reno (2016) states – sooner or later escapes from the 'hiding system' and comes back to us. My materially-active field report is constituted by some of these supposed 'dead objects' who came back to us, gathered onshore by seawater, winds, currents, flows, tide and drifts, and lastly by me. Exhibited, they revive as artistic-ethnographical indicators, as evidence of what is hidden to us by the touristic industry, and by the industrial economic-political system as a whole.

Despite their small dimensions, these 'things', material products and agglomerations, testify to a crucial contemporary interaction between the so called 'nature' and 'culture'. Moreover, their watery journey connects the micro system of my narrow coastline fieldwork to the global system: they are in fact the same stuff that composes the vast Oceanic Garbage Vortex/Patches (Harse 2011, Sesini 2011), the same materials from which microscopic polymeric filaments detach and get progressively smaller, globally polluting water, air, food, plants, animals, and us.

Art, Science, and Commitment

So I go on collecting these 'things' and juxtapose them in compositions, as a material evidence counteracting the denial of a reality. Exhibited, they appear to elicit in the spectators deep-emotion and wider-thinking: their bizarre, contradictory, multifaceted repulsive-attractive antiaesthetics can be used to convey-through-emotion new knowledge, information and consciousness about the meanings of their – and our – existence. I exhibit them for what they are: ethnographic tactile materials, possibly more socially divulging and impacting, if compared to just-written ethnography (Marano 2013). I

use this concrete message, symbolic and 'objective', touching and touchable documentation in order to show, sensitize and raise consciousness about the natural/cultural quandary we are building up for our planet. On such a natural-artistic composition, new scientific information, knowledge, creativity and speculation can hinge – through educational programs, workshops, or spontaneously – possibly opening new cognitive-emotional ways to connect the material and theoretical areas of our ethical, economic and political choices and responsibilities (Latouche 2007).

Many people are roughly aware of this, but, as the construction of denial illustrates, they don't like to see, or being reminded of, the ecological connections (Bateson 1972, 1979) between thoughts, practices and the global predicament they build and live in; practices and predicament ranging from the knowledge of its 'natural' – or so deemed – components and relations, to the economic and political power systems.

Yet, humans' regard is trapped in these little installations, evoking micro futurist landscapes. They do not let us easily escape, while, out of the exhibit-experiential metaphor, we are physically trapped in a not reassuring actual macro Anthropocenic landscape, where the life of things *is* the life of people. A closer look at our own garbage, at our transient and discarded things, as Reno (2016) concludes, places in front of us-humans the eternal struggle between our transient life and an imagined eternity, disconfirming our dreams of immortality carried on by commercial rhetoric, and embodied by our minds. Some pieces of the collection are gloomy, other ironic, critical of common places, and tease a normalized, stereotyped life, ridiculing the obsession for goods accumulation or junk food.

Such anthropological-artistic work intends to make visible and graspable some of the connections among different physical and symbolic *areas* of the planet's life, in a new perceptible language, through the objectiveness of their status of ethnographic findings: they expose the 'natural-cultural' processes they undergo. They are not conceptual products of a human-driven project or idea, but stuff I find 'already done', and I go on partially 'making' with a minimal intervention. The process of the "collaborative [natural+human (natural/cultural)] material making" of artifacts is so described by Tim Ingold:

> To read making longitudinally, as a confluence of forces and materials, rather than laterally, as a transposition from image to object, is to regard it as such a form-generating – or *morphogenetic* – process. This is to soften any distinction we might draw between organism and artifact. For if organ-

isms grow, so too do artifacts. And if artifacts are made, so too are organisms. What varies, among countless other things, is the extent of human involvement in the generation of form: but this variation is one of degree, not kind (Ingold 2013: 22)[13].

Being the variation of degree, and not of kind, these 'collective artefacts', produced by human and non-human makers, are giving evidence of a global situation, publicly exposed in installations / micro landscapes / concrete poems / 3D still-lives. Surely they are "organisms" that do not belong to a defined category. They were not foreseen by Art History, nor by Anthropology. They can potentially interact with people of any age, language and instruction; they are trans-disciplinary, trans-cultural, trans-linguistic and trans-material – 'by nature' or 'by definition', since they are combinations of different materials, embodying *as well* a material-symbolic dimension – mixing up some classical categories of beauty and ugliness, life and death, and many others. I can define my activity 'a visual/ visionary globally bound project, tightly rooted in material details'.

The collection is a never ending *corpora* and activity made up by a relatively organized interaction between different agents, we could call 'nature' and human 'nature/culture', not by an 'artist' alone. My artistic minimal intervention works as an 'ecological communicative medium' that highlights the anthropological connections among different spheres of the 'environment': from the smallest Mediterranean beaches, to other beaches all over the world, to the Oceans' Vortexes, and ultimately to our 'civilization' as a whole, across biology, chemistry, industry, economics, production, pollution, politics.

They remain ethnographic findings and, by the way, take their chance to critically evoke and symbolically overturn the collections-robbery perpetrated against other human beings' properties by earlier anthropologists, mainly for exotic exhibition purposes (Clifford 1988). The exotic drift is avoided here: this is our stuff, it looks familiar at some stages, yet gradually disguised by the 'natural' treatment. Robbery is out of the question since the interest of the ex-owners in these objects is over and, rejected, they become public goods.

So, the ethno-artistic process 'simply' consists in seeing[14] these barely visible 'un-useful' objects; selecting the most aesthetically meaningful to attest and illustrate the local and the wider situation; transferring them from the physical context of their discovery to more public places; not modifying but arranging them in positions that maintain visible the conditions created in and by the environment; illuminating and presenting them to the public eye, to

the same people who encountering them by chance or by mistake, would have turned their head away.

I collect but not manipulate these findings, for two reasons: one, I want the public to see the actual – exceedingly interesting – shapes that the multiple combination of 'artists' made. I do not want to hide them behind my interpretation (as it often happens in Reflexive Anthropology), but I want to offer them to your emotional attention for what they are: materials undergoing their transformation process in a peculiar context, through a pseudo-spontaneous organic-inorganic 'natucultural' activity, from the laboratory of the sea-land frontier. I like to see materials and their compositions as they are. I appreciate collectors and artists that exhibit natural elements without intervening on them at all, asserting, as Herman De Vries[15] does, that "nature is art", "nature presents and represents herself". This is a clear non-anthropocentric position, ideal for the Anthropocene era, I believe.

Reason two: I am not an old fashioned positivist nor an objectivist, but – subjectively – I want these things to maintain their status of material evidence of a real situation. I no longer stand the manipulation of reality, actuated by almost any media, often ending with its deformation, falsification or disappearance. That is why I make documentary films – and not fiction – following methodological rules of vicinity to reality. I am 'lucky' to have here a lot of material evidence of the factual situation, so I want to give people the opportunity to interact directly with it, and not only with its representation. As an ethnographer-artist my satisfaction comes from dealing with 'things in process' as they are, and in being able to show them to others. To show these 'Archeo relics of modernity', attesting their own existence, providing raw material evidence of the natucultural, economic and political situation we built for our planet up to the Anthropocene era, is more than enough. As we see in some photography, they may also represent an evidence of the correctness of the appellative Anthropocene, already showing their underground stratification.

Reason three: I don't want to treat them with any chemicals. I want to give the smallest possible contribution to environmental pollution, especially while assembling artwork whose role is to testify against industrial and chemical pollution. Committed art cannot commit pollution itself, pretending to condemn it. Unfortunately this is very common. So these objects are non-further-polluting material messages-and-actions, exhibited to the public within a self-imposed activist frame. I can accept negotiations to survive but I do not accept creating 'environmental art' by means of an additional production of chemicals and polluting materials[16].

The 'artisticization' of obsolete objects, also by the unique means of their mere exhibition, is a process for their de-commodification, a cultural and cognitive redefinition, a way to free our imagination from the reductive, standardized capitalistic idea of things as goods, pervasively assumed in our culture. This was suggested by Kopytoff (1986), who looked at the cultural biography of things outlining a 'moral economy', different kinds of values, and uncertain identities for things. Indeed, every single object goes through continuous transformation, but we are forced – mainly by the media, by visual and commercial advertising, and physically by its temporary staticity – to see only one phase/face of its life. This leads us, in a short time, to think of objects as boring, still and limited dead things since their first day of production, while this is not the case. Objects, things and materials are not 'inert' – despite the mainstream definitions – they themselves change (Ingold 2007), and they actively change environments and contexts: emotionally, relationally and socially (Appadurai 1986). When an object changes its identity, our vision of it changes, as well as our relationship to it, both on the material/practical plan, and on the cognitive/ideological one.

The non-useful-dead object identity/perception prompts the success of the 'planned obsolescence' production strategy, and of the entire commercial chains. The artistic form showing hidden processual aspects of the 'life of things', through the materialized metaphor of 'still life', go in a different direction: to see other facets of things, like in these still living objects, in different phases of their not just-utilitarian transformation, can intensify our consciousness of the consumerist process and its consequences on the environment. When we see different faces/phases/identities of objects, we are no longer forced to relate to them according to the unique, utilitarian, monetary value meter: we get more options, and cognitive creativity and emotional intelligence can be put in action (Mayer, Salovey 1997). These bizarre complex objects – and partially their photographic images – show us uncommon identities, intersections, perspectives. This can lead us to new ways of thinking 'things' and our relations with them.

Such processes of discovery, across art and science, are stated by Bateson, decades ago:

> No doubt deeper levels of the mind guide the scientist or the artist toward experiences and thoughts which are relevant to those problems which are somehow his, and this guidance seems to operate long before the scientist has any conscious knowledge of his goals. But how this happens we do not know (Bateson 1972: 16).

I recall the new conflicting sentiments first evoked by seeing these 'poor things' at the end of their lives, but when I 'saw' their ongoing life-activity, I *got* some *new* knowledge. Now these complex objects embody and connect negative and positive meanings: the evidence of pollution and destruction, dead objects damaging animals and environments, yet, on their new artistic identity, they are denouncing this harm. All this influences somehow our views, choices, and activities. Through the intersection of art&anthropology, our emotional-cognitive system is stimulated by the conflicting *garbage-aesthetics*, a *counter-aesthetics* able to generate complex meanings, new directions, transformation, ambiguity, contradiction, good and bad, purity and impurity – metaphors well fitting with such paradoxical *aesthetics*.

As Timothy Morton (2010: 60) says, "[…] art can allow us to glimpse beings that exist beyond or between our normal categories". The art framework is able to illustrate and make acceptable also the bad, ugly, dark sides of things, sides we don't want to– or we didn't– see: once artistically contextualized, we can more easily look at them. We are disturbed, of course, yet the aim is to 'point at', to denounce an apparent normality. This action offers new meanings to things, allowing us to see them differently.

I can then affirm that, expanding our horizons of imagery, diffusing information and new ways for 'thinking old things', Art is not only a strategy for understanding other cultural fields, but it is a practice for providing knowledge. *Artethnography*, in particular, is a *new* practice for providing actual, complex knowledge, and at the same time, a practice of cultural commitment.

What happens when 'we see'

Art has so deep effects on our emotional minds that it cannot be described nor understood once and for all, nor it is easy to comprehend why we 'make' it, nor how it influences our mental imagery, our agency or behavior. Studies based on Cognitive Science, which do not separate affectivity and rationality, intellect and its contents, theory and experience, provide hints for considering how the sense of vision – the one we mainly use when exposed to this kind of art – 'works'. Without going into such a complex issue I just quote here, in extreme synthesis, three perspectives theoretically quite different (Psychological, Linguistic, Artistic) but in my view not incompatible, ending with Tim Ingold's *Ecology of Life*.

In studies on the relevance of vision for Social Cognition, according to Lisa Libby and Richard Eibach (2013), the role of visual imagery – namely the "mental imagery in the visual modality", informally referred to as "pictures in the mind" (*ivi*: 3) – that obviously derives from the possibility of physically 'seeing things' – is widely recognized as

> a legitimate form of mental representation, that functions specifically in representing concrete, perceptual information. However […] imagery may also have the capacity to represent abstract information […] Evidence demonstrates the function of visual imagery in a wide range of social processes including attribution, impression formation, memory, emotion, persuasion, communication, judgment and decision-making […] (*ivi*: 2).

This explains the passage from seeing a concrete object, and forming an abstract, inner but socially sharable, idea about its meanings.

Cognitive Linguistics, through the analysis of our everyday language, affirms that mental categories, image-schemas, frames systems, and metaphors we 'think with' and 'live by' (Lakoff, Johnson 1980) derive from our visual imagery, unconsciously mapped on our experience, mainly the experience of the space we live in (Lakoff 1987). So what we see simultaneously constructs our cognitive system and its cultural contents. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999) adopt the concept of embodied philosophy, to explain this. In particular, analyzing the metaphors we use to think-and-talk about the environment, Lakoff (2010) notes: "we are suffering from massive hypo-cognition in the case of the environment" (*ivi*: 76), and that "[…] such frame systems have to be built up over a period of time. This has not been done" (*ivi*: 73). He then exposes the political consequences that this lack of knowledge implies.

The third approach specifically questions the social role of visual arts, dealing with the Anthropology of Art elaborated by Alfred Gell in his *Art and Agency* (1998), acknowledged as "revolutionary" by Maurice Bloch (1999: § 1), even if he criticized some of its statements. Gell is an artist himself, a drawer, skilled in details (see Gell 1999), so he had personally experienced 'the matter'. In extreme synthesis, he criticizes the positions taken by the classical Art theories, which reify and de-contextualize art objects. He focuses instead on "what art objects do within their social worlds – that is, their 'practical mediatory role [...] in the social process'" (Gell 1998: 6). He considers the concept of aesthetics as not inclusive of non-Western art, and

replaces it with the concepts of intentionality and agency, which in non-Western arts and cultures are applicable to many kinds of relations, whereas both human and non-human agents are included: so Gell intends Art as social communication and social action, processes in which art objects participate, exerting a 'force' that influences the viewers[17]. Borrowing from Peirce's semiotics, he considers an art object as a *nexus* of social relations, and an index, a sign inscribed in a natural relation (see note 10). Being the product of a social-natural relation, the artwork-index embodies in its material-matter the intentionalities/agencies of the maker, and, influencing the viewers, it becomes a social agent itself. The influencing process takes place through abduction:

> I propose that 'art-like situations' can be discriminated as those in which the material 'index' (the visible, physical, 'thing') permits a particular cognitive operation which I identify as *the abduction of agency.* An 'index' in Peircean semiotics is a 'natural sign', that is, an entity from which the observer can make a *causal inference* of some kind, or an inference about the intentions or capabilities of another person (Gell 1998: 13; italics in the original).

Abduction is a highly creative process of analogical inference[18], shared by science as well by art, and other instances:

> Metaphor, dream, parable, allegory, the whole of art, the whole of science, the whole of religion, the whole of poetry, totemism […], the organization of facts in comparative anatomy – all these are instances or aggregates of instances of abduction, within the human mental sphere (Bateson 1979: 142).

Peirce himself, quoted by the semiologist Jaime Nubiola, wrote:

> […] neither Deduction nor Induction contribute the smallest positive item to the final conclusion of the inquiry" (Peirce 1908: 6, §475). It is Abduction which introduces innovation, which starting from facts, broadens our knowledge by means of explanatory theories. Abduction is not merely a "logical operation", but it is rather, from a semiotic point of view, that spontaneous activity of the mind which makes the strange familiar, making sense of what has surprised us (Nubiola 1997: 4-5).

It is interesting in Gell's exposition, the circu-

larity (Gell 1998: 27) of this creative system, underlined by various scholars (Arnaut 2001: 3). As Bloch (1999) puts it in its *Résumé*: «artworks stimulate the imagination through the many types of intentionality that have gone into producing them; and they themselves become imagined sources of intentionality».

More than with 'circularity', I would say we are dealing with a rhizomatic (Deleuze, Guattari 1987), pluridirectional systemic 'diffusion of influence', in a sort of 'family resemblance' with the idea of 'diffused agency', echoing some recent ideas of creativity as "global agency" (Capra, Luisi 2014) or multi-agency (Guo *et al.* 2016).

It is easy to recognize how it happens, at least for an artist: we physically give an intentional (conscious or unconscious) shape to our artwork, which communicates something to viewers. In my case the manipulation is minimal, since the material 'emotionally communicates' by itself. The intention is the environmentalist message I want to disseminate. So it is not a question of 'mysterious' forces transposed into objects and from objects to people but, of the indexicality of the selected matter and compositions. Sometimes artists succeed, so an artwork influences the viewers, and we say it 'has a force' for provoking interpretations, reactions, "distributed effects" (Chua, Elliot 2013), or "pragmatic effects" (Arnaut 2001).

Bateson, sometimes, poses the question in synthetic terms: «[…] was the same question as that I set for the artists: Is there a biological species of entropy?» (Bateson 1979: 7. So, he gets to the biological, material plan, opening the way for our next approach.

Tim Ingold, in his *Making* (2013), does not agree with the theoretical notions of the 'transpositions' of ideas from cognition to matter, nor with the idea of intentionalities or agencies as 'abstract forces attributed to the objects', as they are often intended. His view reminds me of the concept of autopoiesis (Maturana, Varela 1972; Capra, Luisi 2014): if "materials are inherently lively" (Ingold 2013: 96), then we do not need to invent the concept of *agency*, rather humans and non-humans "are possessed by action" (*ivi*: 97); this is basically his point, similar to Karen Barad's view (2003). He pushes further Bateson's *Ecology of Mind*, founding an *Ecology of Life*, where all «Materials are ineffable. They cannot be pinned in terms of established concepts or categories» (Ingold 2013: 31). He focuses on the material processes of the "substances-in-becoming", where «things are alive and active not because they are possessed of spirit – whether in or of matter – but because the substances which they comprise continue to be swept up in circulations

of the surrounding media [...]» (Ingold 2007: 12). The collective making of the human and non-human matters' flow is "a process of growth" (Ingold 2013: 21), where

> The living work of art [...] is not an object but a thing, and the role of the artist is not to give effect to a preconceived idea, but to follow the forces and flows of material that bring the work into being. To view the work is to join the artist as a fellow traveler, to look with it as it unfolds in the world [...] (Ingold 2013: 96).

"A traveler"... and, as ethnographers, explorers and collectors know, "walking" is a form of knowledge (Ingold 2008). So "making" is "a process of interaction and *correspondence*" among living matters (Ingold 2013: 105):

> To correspond with the world, in short, is not to describe it, or to represent it, but to answer to it. Thanks to the mediating work of transduction, it is to mix the movements of one's own sentient awareness with the flows and currents of animate life (*ivi*: 108).

To exhibit artworks made through morphogenetic processes is to open the relation of correspondence to the public; 'to see' it, is to participate in the flux of indexical matters, an inevitably transformational experience, to some extent. In the *Fourth Landscape*, and in the things collected there, the transformation of matter and objects, and the interconnectedness among many life activities and organic/inorganic elements are more visible than elsewhere. Of course the result is out of the artists' control. Yet, to recall an image/frame, 'a souvenir', from the *Fourth Landscape* can produce new emotional knowledge able to influence our old categories and our future 'making'.

Art, as a practice of knowledge production, by virtue of the rhizomatic pluri-directional activity of matters-makers-viewers is also a practice of democratization of knowledge, and a form of cultural politics. Many trans-disciplinary projects designed and realized by scientists-artists believe in this potential, like the mentioned *Art & Evidence* Conference Series by Disruption Network Lab (2016), Regina Hengge's Science&Theatre Project (2014)*,* Nathalie Blanc's Environmental Aesthetics and Social Poetry (2016) (see note 12), who engage and invest in these new forms of cultural politics.

What is a Fourth Landscape?

I sketch here a few notes on the characteristics of what I call *Fourth Landscape*, since I plan to pursue the issue in a forthcoming publication. I conducted my *sea-search* in this particular field, a place where I was wandering, spending a long, pleasant and attention-grabbing time. I found interesting how, from that micro-context, an ordinary seashore just a bit off the beaten track, I could be in direct contact with the macro-context of the immense oceans, physically connected by the seawater, and by the trajectories of the floating migrant waste, swept up in the marine currents towards the Oceanic Garbage Vortexes. I was surprised to be able to show a planetary situation simply through what was there.

Here, if you get closer and look in detail at the beautiful 'naturalistic postcard' perspectives, you see the waste, the material surplus rejected by our civilization, literally emerging from the sea in unimaginable proportions, brought there by the collective action of natucultural human and non-human agents. Interesting stuff happens and 'becomes' there, at the frontier between the land and the sea. It reveals special characteristics that led me to rename it *Fourth Landscape*.

This is a place, an environment, a territory, a context, a research field. Now, the term 'territory' sounds quite technical, while 'environment' clumsily connotes a separation of nature from culture. 'Landscape', instead, includes natural and cultural elements, implies a variety of interacting ecosystems, can be anthropized or wild, symbolic or meaningless, vast or minute, yet without borders, except for the horizon. So, I decided to call it 'landscape', because of the many nuances that the term implies, ranging from visual, to aesthetic, emotional, and physical qualities, as the Anthropology of Landscapes explains.

I gave to it the specific appellation of 'Fourth' Landscape because it presents the same characteristic elicited by Gilles Clément in his *Manifeste du Tiers Paysage* (Clément 2004; Lai, Breda 2011), and some more. In synthesis, here are some of the characters of these unorganized, residual, disregarded spaces, called *Third Landscapes*:

> an undetermined fragments of the Planetary Garden – [...] sum of the space left over by man to landscape evolution – to nature alone [...], urban or rural sites, transitional spaces, neglected land, [...] shores [among other sites] [...].
> To these unattended areas can be added [...] Natural reserves: inaccessible places, mountain summits, non-cultivatable areas, deserts; Institutional reserves: national parks, regional parks, nature reserves.
> [...] [They] can be considered as the genetic reservoir of the planet, the space of the future[19].

They are not-exploited spaces, whether for human decision or not: – their existence is casual, due to access difficulties, or to the impossibility – or excessive cost – of its exploitation – (Clément 2004: 3)[20]. "Residual spaces" abandoned after some human activity, or "Reservations", they are shelters for biodiversity, and hopefully, being considered wild and uncomfortable, difficult to reach or simply unknown, they are ignored and unfrequented by human beings, so biodiversity here can grow and flourish.

All this is true also for my landscape research area, but a difference that can no longer be ignored is the presence, as in other similar landscapes, of vast amounts of not only natural materials; the *Fourth Landscapes* are maybe intended to be left "to nature alone", but they are not. And the waste above described is not a temporary character of some place, nor of 'our' time, but appears to have become a structural, endemic quality of the 'planet's time', as argued by many scientists discussing the reach of the Anthropocene era.

So many *Third Landscape*'s qualities, e.g. the relative stability/instability «attributed to the singularity of the biotopes and of the species in those ecosystems […]», or statements as «natural biodiversity reservoir […] protected from the human activity», «[…] still host the widest planetary diversity» (*ibidem*: 7), "the Third Landscape represents the biological future" (*ivi*: 10), are no longer adequately precise for many landscapes, characterized by the situation described: they are not "protected from the human activity", not only "natural biodiversity reservoirs", their future will be not only biological. So, though they share some characters, the appellative *Fourth Landscapes* indicates the differences: their planetary diversity is not only a biological one, and we are not aware of the consequences *on* biodiversity.

Posed this distinction, many other characteristics are to be redefined. E.g., a "refuge territory": the *Fourth Landscape* remains a refuge for some known species, but also for new ones that are adapting to plastic stuff (see notes 11, 12). Statements as "place of possible invention, an active situation" (*ivi*: 10), or as "territory of resistance" (*ivi*: 7), fit well with the *Fourth Landscapes* as well, but their active resistance and creativity will be different, since it has to be stronger. They are confronting with the "planetary mishmash" (*ivi*: 24) since a longer time, in a broad and serious way, so their 'work' has to be harder. Besides that, they share many points of the *Manifeste*, even if their developments will be different:

STATUTE

5 - For its content, for the stakes involved in diversity […] the Third [*and Fourth*] Landscape acquires a political dimension.
6 - The non-written but proven status of the Third [*and Fourth*] Landscape is of planetary dimension. The maintenance of its existence does not depend on wise-men but on a collective conscience.
7 - Shared fragments of a collective conscience (*ivi*: 9).

REPRESENTATION OF THE BORDERS

1 - The representation of the Third [*and Fourth*] Landscape depends on the possibility to determine its geographic boundaries.
2 - The limits become visible at the frontiers between the residual spaces and the territories subjected to exploitation (*ivi*: 17)

12 - Inconstancy of biological systems is a guarantee of their resistance over time (*ivi*: 19).

RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIETY
6 . The lack of interest of the Institution for the Third [*and Fourth*] Landscape does not change its becoming, it makes it possible (*ivi*: 21).

The 'objects' I collect are products of this system, so they embody some of its characteristics. Indeed, some of the *Fourth Landscape*'s traits are recognizable in these little micro-landscapes installations: in their double or plural senses, in the mixture of materials, in deceiving similarities between organic and inorganic micro-systems, in the hidden interstices or in evident, yet intricate, meanings of these socio-natural unruly Anthropocenic elaborations.

So, *Fourth Landscapes* present quite positive characters: they have the virtue of showing the actual situation, they can give the perception of reality in becoming, and they are micro-contexts that connect in direct ways to macro-contexts.

They are isolated, silent places; being quiet they allow an unusual contact with ourselves and with the surrounding reality – to the extent you want to conceive it. I feel good and pensive there, and so do the few people I met there. Politically and scientifically speaking, they are alternative and resistant places, where counter-cultural activities can initiate.

As far as I noticed, another peculiar characteristic of the *Fourth Landscapes* is that they exist at waterfronts, by the seas, lakes, rivers, or channel's shores, at the meeting points between land and water, the two biggest 'areas' of reality we can phys-

ically see and perceive at once – with some possible collateral effect. This maybe induces particular states of consciousness which seem to stimulate inquiry and artistic activities (see notes 7, 15). Waterfronts are since ever considered 'inspiring places'. I find this peculiar frontier location significant, as a vital place. There, water 'makes' her job. Something happens there, still to be studied, and it has to do with the big issues of the planet.

Notes

[1] I am grateful to Nadia Breda for 'discovering' and appreciating my work, and inviting me to exhibit it at the Bolzano's Symposium. I am grateful as well to her and Elena Bougleux for inviting me to contribute to this issue, and for their precious suggestions.

[2] The exhibit title was *Quarto Paesaggio, Quarto Potere. Reperti etnografici dalle coste Mediterranee / Fourth Landscape, Fourth Power. Ethnognaphic relics from a Mediterranean coast.* The expression 'Fourth Landscape' derives from Gilles Clément's 'Third Landscape', as developed in this article. The expression 'Fourth Power' indicates the global joint-power of Media, Politics and Economy, since the impact of industrial waste on the planet is a consequence of these combined systems. The exhibit was also accepted at EASST/4S 2016 Conference-Science and Technologies by Other Means, in Barcelona, at the 6th Ethnography&Qualitative Research Conference in Bergamo, at EASA Biennial Conference 2016 - Anthropological Legacies and Human Futures in Milano, but minimal funds for the installation were not available.

[3] For Hapkemeyer's discussion on Art & Garbage, see also *Nel contesto: arte o spazzatura?*: http://www.museion.it/2015/11/nel-contesto-arte-o-spazzatura

[4] The non-touristic publications I found about Enfola are only two: an interdisciplinary short survey (Casini 2005) and a school research (AA.VV. 2000).

5 I will not go into Visual Anthropology, nor in Landscape discussions here, reserving to do so in a next publication.

[6] The process of *abduction* are re-elaborated by Bateson (1979: 84-86, 142-143). He also extensively elaborated issues of *metaphor* and *art*.

[7] See other cases of waste collections at waterfronts: Tommy Kleyn - Netherlands, 2015, *Man Cleans Up*

Entire River On His Way To Work (http://www.higherperspectives.com/tommy-kleyn-1406166488.html?c=cleo&ts_pid=2&ts_pid=5)
Vincenzo Lombardo (Lampedusa-Italy) and Mohsen Lidhabi (Tunisia), in the documentary film *Sponde. Nel sicuro sole del Nord*, by Irene Dionisio (Mammut-Vycky Film, 2015).
Virginia Ryan's work documented by Steven Feld (2007) in "The Castaway Project", Ghana.
Valter Baruzzi (Italy) collected his firsts 'Idoli del mare' in Alonissos Island (Greece), in Maria Grosso (2011). Initiatives of collecting-for-cleaning are nowadays organized by many agencies and international networks, and sometimes they are followed by exhibitions: e.g. *Ocean Conservancy - International Coastal Cleanup* (https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/). In my case, I started collecting alone, occasionally friends joined, and now I develop it in a voluntary form with the Association AntropoLogiche.

[8] As it turned out from the conversations with elderly local people, collecting reusable objects from the seashore was once a common practice; in the coastal language of the area it was called "*stracquo*": a noun indicating the action of picking up something brought there by the seawater. The difference with the present time is that now collecting is not a 'normal' activity, we mainly collect debris or unusable small wreckage trying to clean up some shores.

[9] The Italian translation for "still life" is "*natura morta*", literally "dead nature", even more appropriate, reaching here its extreme meaning.

[10] In C.S. Peirce's Semiotics an *Index* 'naturally' links two elements: it is part of a natural situation, and not artificially invented in order to communicate something (as are instead *symbols* and *icons*); there is spacial contiguity between the *object* and the *index*: e.g., the smoke (*index*) *indicates* a fire (*object*) – smoke was not artificially invented for indicating a fire; the *object* can directly modify the *index* – if a fire extinguishes, smoke disappears. Other examples: a noise *indicates* that something fell down. Footprints on the sand, human smile etc. Mountains of garbage *indicate* exaggerate production and pollution. One of my findings *indicates...*

[11] Among many scientific reports, see also: Francois Galgani's research group bibliography at IFREMER Institute: (http://annuaire.ifremer.fr/cv/16060/). The *MERLIN Microplastiques Project* (http://wwz.ifremer.fr/Recherche-Technologie/Projets-MERLIN-Pour-la-MER.-Lancement-d-Initiatives-Nouvelles/Microplastiques). AA.VV. (2016), *The Mediterranean Plastic Soup: synthetic polymers in Mediterranean surface waters.* AA.VV. (2012) *Neustonic microplastic and zooplankton in the North Western Mediterranean Sea.* Specifically on Elba area, see: «*La microplastica avvelena il Mediterraneo.*

Le più alte concentrazioni all'Elba, a Portofino e in Corsica», in *Greenreport.it* 15/05/2012 (http://www.greenreport.it/_archivio2011/?page=default&id=15855).

[12] For other examples of new artistic-scientific approaches on this theme, see, in Germany, *IGNORANCE: The Power of Non-Knowledge*, in *Art&Evidence* Conference Series, Disruption Network Lab, Berlin, Sep 30 - Oct 1, 2016 (http://www.disruptionlab.org/ignorance). For other initiatives about Scientific Information & Art, see Pinar Yoldas' exhibit *"An Ecosystem of Excess"* (2014, 2015, http://www.berlin-ist.de/berlin-ist-kunst-und-wissenschaft-pinar-yoldas-schering-stiftung/), with Regina Hengge, Microbiologist, Humboldt Universität-Berlin, studying biofilm development in marine ecosystems permanently exposed to pollution with plastic waste (https://www.biologie.hu-berlin.de/de/gruppenseiten/mikrobiologie/hengge/cv). Hengge founded the Transdisciplinary Project *Science&Theatre* (https://www.biologie.hu-berlin.de/de/gruppenseiten/mikrobiologie/hengge/science_and_theatre). In France, see the Association *COAL-Coalition pour l'Art et le Développement Durable*-2008, for a Sustainable Development and a Cultural Ecology (http://www.projetcoal.org/coal/). See also Nathalie Blanc, DR at CNRS-Paris, Urban Geographer, Eco-artist in *Environmental Aesthetics and Social Poetry* (http://www.ladyss.com/blanc-nathalie?lang=fr).

[13] The contrasting process is «the *hylomorphic* characterization of materiality as form-receiving passivity rather than form-taking activity» (*ivi*: 28); a model highly conceptualized, abstracted and alienated from the matter-flow, so «the life proper to the matter […] is hidden or rendered unrecognizable […] which reduces matter to inert substance» (*ivi*: 31). These notions are taken by Ingold from Deleuze and Guattari, who inherited them from Simondon (*ivi*: 25).

[14] 'To see' is not an activity that is worth little, as Merleau-Ponty (1964: 18), cit. in Faeta (2011), says «Il est vrai à la fois que le monde est ce que nous voyons et que pourtant, il nous faut apprendre à le voir» «it is at the same time true that the world is what we see, and that, nonetheless, we must learn to see it». (Author's translation).

[15] Well known Dutch artist (http://www.hermandevries.org/). Another collector of natural elements, precisely stones, is Luigi Lineri, collezionista di sassi, in Verona-Italy, 2016 (http://video.repubblica.it/cronaca/il-collezionista-di-sassi/238897?ref=fbpr). They both work at waterfronts.

[16] Actually, I had to buy led lights for the exhibit. As support plans and packaging I reuse old cardboard boxes. Among problematic artworks, see e.g. Maria Grazia Finucci who recreates the Ocean Garbage Patch in different places; her conceptual idea of declaring it "a Nation State" is interesting and provocative. The problem is that for realizing her artworks she gathers and transports tons of plastic around, apparently not only taken from waste, mobilizing new consumerist activities and re-producing what she wants to denounce (http://www.garbagepatch-state.org/web/index.php). Also Pinar Yoldas (2014, 2015), despite the aesthetic value of her artworks, uses plastic and other polluting technologies (http://www.pinaryoldas.info/RESEARCH).

[17] Gell refers here to the 'spiritual force' called *hau* and to other 'magic powers' attributed, in many cultures, to things that in Western culture are considered non-living things, hence deprived of any possible 'force' or agency. Yet we cannot deny that often we feel, and say, that an artwork 'moves' or has a 'force', or it provokes (good or bad) sensations.

[18] Physical science proceeds by *abduction* processes, e.g.: I experiment a medicine on rats because, by *analogism*, I *infer* that it could work on humans as well.

[19] Description taken from: http://www.gillesclement.com/art-454-tit-The-Third-Landscape. All the following quotations are translated by the author.

[20] Author's translation.

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Landing Microplastic (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Landed Microplastic (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

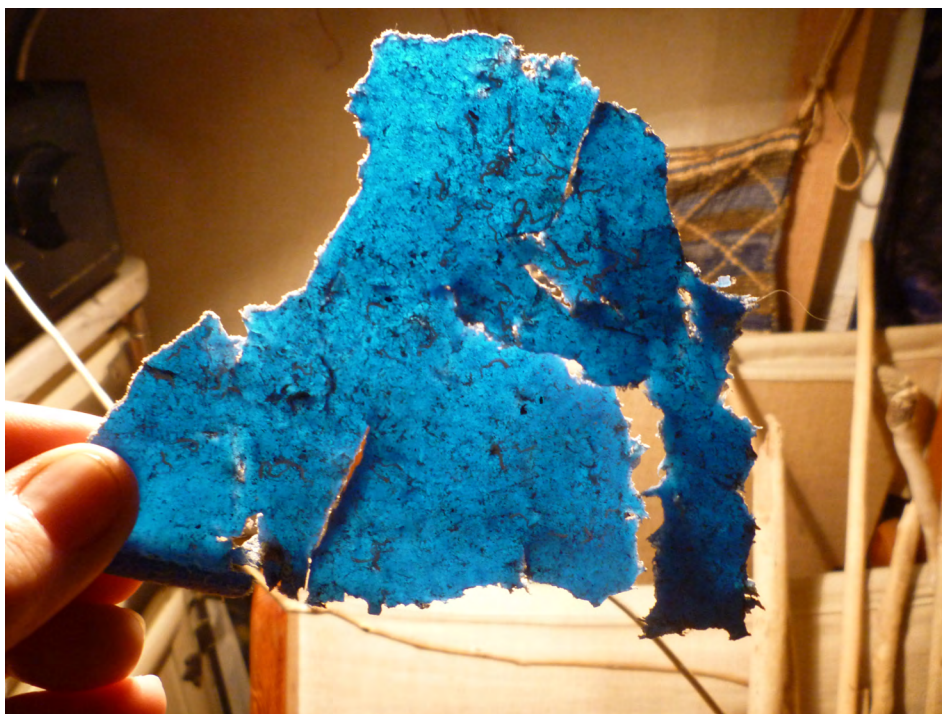*Skeletons (*2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Submarine Jar (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Mediterranean Graveyard (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Plastic Rope worked in filaments (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Microplastics in becoming (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Lunch Time (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Birthday Cake (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)
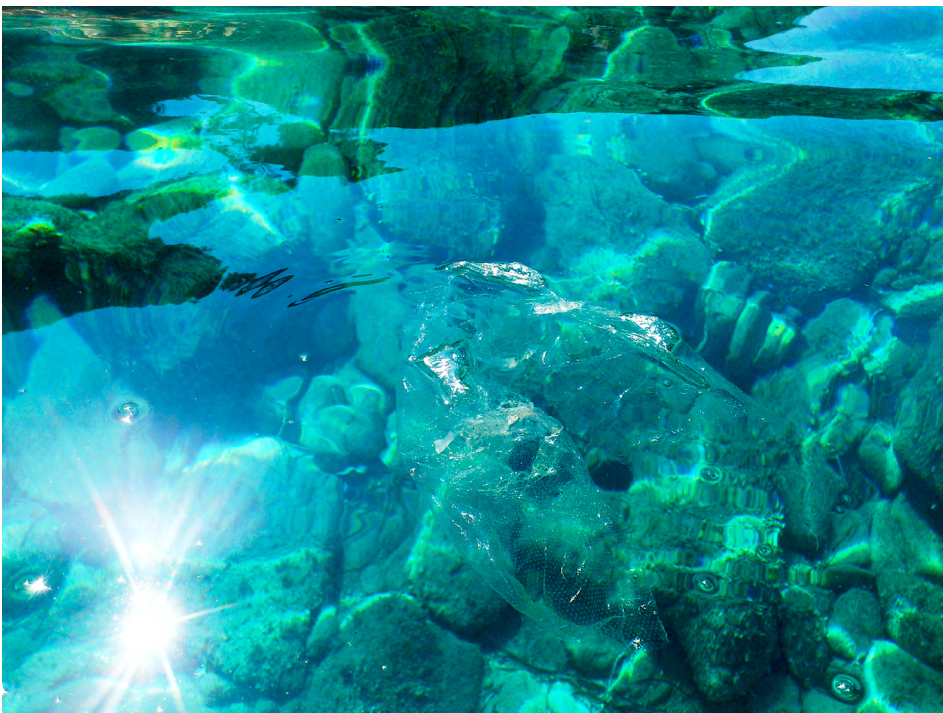

Pinna Nobilis et Ignobilis (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Antropocene Layers 1 (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Antropocene Layers 2 (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Floating plastics (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Floating invisible plastics (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Enfola headland: *a Fourth Landscape from afar* (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)
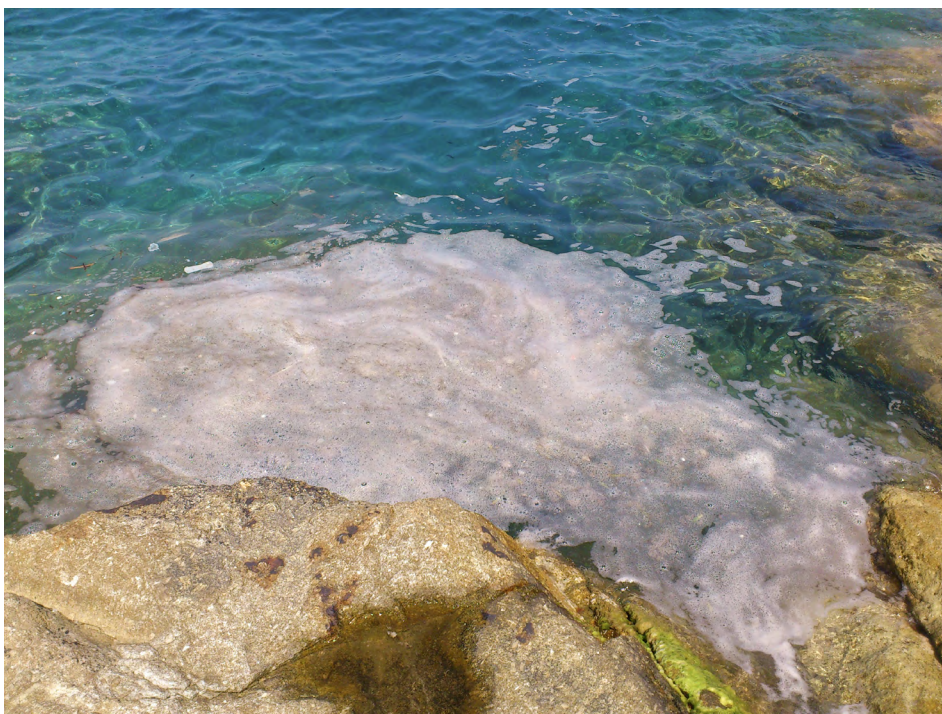

Fourth Landscape, the beach (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)
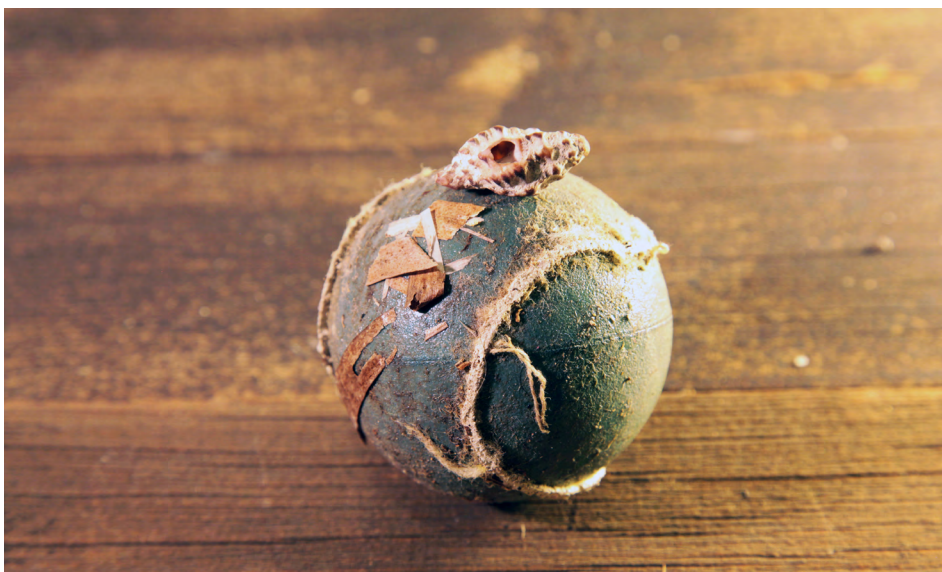
Fourth Landscape details 1 (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Fourth Landscape details 2 (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Fourth Landscape, the sea (2016 Silvia Lelli photo ©)

Planet (2015 Silvia Lelli photo ©)