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CASE STUDY

REVISED Living archival practice and the choreographical navigations: Encounters and approaches with other-than-human persons

[version 2; peer review: 2 approved, 2 approved with reservations]
Previously titled: Living archival practice and choreographical navigations: Encounters and approaches with other-than-human persons

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Abstract

This article delves into the collaborative work of the interspecies dance collective, Mapped to the Closest Address (MaCA), focusing on MaCA's living archival practice and exploration of choreography with other-than-human persons. Through encounters with various species and environments, MaCA seeks to shift anthropocentric perspectives, interrogate its orientation towards modernity and coloniality, and question its understanding/administration/entanglement/devotion of, with, and to nature. The collective's journey, from a digital residency during the COVID-19 pandemic to site research, installations, and performance at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2022, is documented and analyzed. The collective's collaborative process involves relinquishing control to allow for the emergence of disobedient movements and the exploration of choreography from the perspective of other-than-human perspectives. This practice includes encounters with kudzu vines and mountains, weaving their movements and patterns into performances and installations. The authors discusses the immersive performance *Turn Off the House Lights* , in which MaCA integrates stories from local communities with

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gestures inspired by the landscape. Through the collective's living archival practice, MaCA aims to transmit a collective memory of intra-actions among organisms and environments. and highlight the intra-connectedness of humans and the other creatures of the Earth. The article reflects on the significance of choreography beyond human-centric notions, emphasizing the emergent forms of ecological performance and the dissolution of boundaries between human and non-human realms. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives including dance, visual art, and theatre, MaCA's work exemplifies an intra-disciplinary approach to expressing the choreography of other-than-human persons. This approach not only presents audiences with immersive experiences but also responds to the future ecosystem through artistic exploration. Ultimately, MaCA's living archival practices contribute to awareness of the collective lives of other-than-human persons and offer insights into navigating the collective's enmeshment with the natural world.

Keywords
Other-than-human persons, malfunction, disobedient movement, choreography

Any reports and responses or comments on the article can be found at the end of the article.

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REVISED **Amendments from Version 1**

In this revised version, the authors have addressed all major comments raised by the reviewers and made several structural and conceptual improvements.

First, in the author list, the group name "Mapped to the Closest Address" has been removed, following the reviewers' observation that performing groups should not be listed as authors. Additionally, in both the abstract and the main body, the term MaCA is now treated consistently as a singular collective.

Second, Table 1 has been newly inserted into the Introduction. This table clarifies the trajectory and locations of MaCA's research-creation activities and was created to enhance transparency, reproducibility, and contextual understanding. Furthermore, to improve clarity, the authors reorganised several sections: theoretical context previously embedded later in the manuscript has been moved into the Introduction, and explanatory notes formerly placed in footnotes have been integrated directly into the main text. The theoretical framework has been expanded with references to Anna Halprin and Lawrence Halprin, as suggested by the reviewers, and the authors have further articulated the distinction between "wild" and "domestic," drawing on Brian Massumi, as well as intra-action following Karen Barad, to better support the argument.

Third, key conceptual terms—particularly movement in malfunction and disobedience movement—have been revised and defined in greater detail. While the expression other-than-human person may be unfamiliar to some readers, the authors retained it for conceptual accuracy and added an explanatory footnote outlining its meaning and implications.

Finally, a new section titled "Suggestions for Future Research" has been added. This section addresses the previously missing reflection on MaCA's carbon footprint and considers how research-creation practices may more ethically engage with ecosystems.

No changes were made to the figures.

Any further responses from the reviewers can be found at the end of the article

Human beings are part of nature.

(Echigo-Tsumari Art Field, n.d.)

Introduction

From 2019 to 2022, Mapped to the Closest Address (MaCA) was an interspecies dance collective composed of four human animals (Colombian performance maker Alex Viteri Arturo, Colombian sound/light designer Catalina Fernandez, Japanese visual and performance artist Maharu Maeno, and Japanese dancer/choreographer Shuntaro Yoshida) and a cat, Violeta, who participated as a non-human videographer and relational being. Through choreographic practices, the humans in the group sought to interrogate MaCA's orientation towards modernity and coloniality, question its understanding/administration/entanglement/devotion of, with, and to nature, and shift their anthropocentric perspectives. The concept of the Anthropocene highlights that the human-induced destruction of nature began in earnest as societies industrialized, and the human-centered view of nature accompanying the term "Anthropocene" holds the key to retreating from modernity/globalization. As historian Dipesh Chakrabarti indicates, this encourages a historical dialogue between the non-human and the human species living on the planet. However, when discussing the disrupted collective environment, it is essential to note that the terms "Anthropocene," "human species," and "nature" are tied to human agency. While the Anthropocene started in the industrial societies of the 19th century, environmental historian Jason W. Moore points out that the pre-industrial 16th century was equally important—the global system through which natural resources are bought and sold at artificially low prices was dramatically expanded by Western colonialism starting in the Age of Exploration. Humans view nature as a resource and render it into capital, creating an imbalance between humans and nature. Cultural critic and feminist Donna J. Haraway and geographer Kathryn Yusoff offer a different critique of the concept of the Anthropocene.[1] Furthermore, theatre and performance studies scholar Una Chaudhuri shifts the focus from the representation of animals to their performance, referring to the emergence of reciprocal animality—a dynamic interrelation between humans and animals (Chaudhuri, 2017, 31–48). In this vein, MaCA engaged diverse human and non-human players to consider on other-than-human persons' performance as the mutual constitution of entangled agencies and landscape.

Thus, MaCA's standpoint shifted from the notion of "the Anthropocene" and "more-than-human" associated with post-humanism to "Earth beings," which approaches other species' performance collaboration from a more symbiotic or altruistic perspective. Collectively, MaCA sowed practices to enter into contact with other-than-human persons.[2] MaCA used various devices to record its encounters and crafted multimedia social spaces to share its archive (Figure 1). The following discussions



Figure 1. Mushroom field surrounded by forest at El Arenero Yumita. 35mm black-and-white film. Photo by Alex Viteri Arturo.

[1] See: Chakrabarty, 2009, 212–220; Crutzen and Stoermer, 2013, 483–485; Haraway, 2016, 30–57; Moore, 2017, 620–621; Yusoff, 2018, 13–31

[2] Throughout this article, MaCA employs the term "other-than-human persons" not to anthropomorphize non-human beings, but to recognize their relational agency within shared ecologies. The notion of "person" here follows Marisol de la Cadena's *Earth Beings* (2015) and Eduardo Kohn's *How Forests Think* (2013), in which "personhood" exceeds the human and denotes the capacity for responsiveness, affective presence, and intra-action. Acknowledging the physiological and perceptual differences between human and non-human beings, MaCA's practice does not seek equivalence but resonance—an attunement through difference that allows non-coincidence and movement in malfunction to become sites of empathy rather than domination. In this sense, "person" functions as an ethical and methodological figure, not as an anthropocentric attribution.

of its collaboration explore the history of its encounters and research-creation.

MaCA participated in the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (ETAT) in 2022. Before the opening of the festival, the collective explored three nearby mountains—Akiba, Gongen, and Takaba mountains. During these explorations, they encountered and collected kudzu vines, which shifted the collective perspective on the plant. Initially seen as an invasive species, kudzu revealed its intricate connections to the local ecosystem through its weaving patterns and growth behavior. Inspired by these observations, MaCA choreographed movements reflecting this entanglement and integrated kudzu's weaving patterns into the *Clumsy-Seeming Mountains* installation. This choreographic score extended non-human choreographies, knitting together an understanding of how plants live and move on the land, embodying their intra-connected rhythms and lifeways.

This article considers MaCA's research-creation, from its recollections of a digital residency in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic to site research, installation, and performance at the ETAT 2022 in Niigata. The discussion follows a digital residency conducted between Tokyo (Japan) and Frankfurt an der Oder (Germany) in 2020, the performance *Turn Off the House Lights* in Berlin in 2022 (further discussed in the conclusion), and site research in Tōkamachi City, Clumsy-Seeming Mountains and the performance *Turn Off the House Lights* in Tōkamachi City, Niigata, in 2022, and "広い島/HIROSHIMA NO TIENE NADA QUE ENVIDIARLE A PARIS," an immersive talk at Morishita studio in Tokyo (Table 1). The collective archived the movement of other species and collectively translated the awareness of local ecosystems within planetary and seasonal processes into its choreography. Artist Carolina Caycedo calls these "geo-choreographies." This term clarifies "how a seemingly mundane every gesture [...] can be given agency through language. The term geo-choreography is charged with political power that can be put to use when the river is threatened. The deeper the connection with the locality, the stronger the agency of the geo-choreography" (Ostendorf-Rodriguez, 2023, 34–35). Here, the choreography means the interactions of our bodies within that environment that hold knowledge, power and influence. Meanwhile, dance scholar and dramaturge Moritz Frischkorn speaks of "more-than-human choreography," positing that dance or movement practice is not solely a human activity but a collaborative and relational endeavor involving various elements of the environment. This term avoids both the techno-romance implied by "post-human" and the care practice associated with "more-than-human" (Frischkorn, 2023, 19–21).

Table 1. List of MaCA's research-creation, from a digital residency in 2020 to site research, installation, performance at the ETAT 2022 and an immersive talk at Morishita Studio.

Name	*Date*	*Place*	*Items*
Digital Residency *Open Forest Launch*	October 15–November 2, 2020	Morishita studio in Kōtō-ku (Tokyo, Japan) and El Arenero Yumita (Frankfurt an der Oder, Germany) Coordinates: 35°41′14.0″N 139°48′03.4″E (Morishita Studio) 52°17′49.2″N 14°28′32.2″E (Arenero Yumita)	Photo documentation Spy camera Two fax machines Gardens Video diary
Turn Off the House Lights, an immersive performance	March 4, 2022; May 21, 2022	CORDILLERA Raum für Körper und Utopien (Berlin, Germany) Coordinates: 52°27′30.2″N 13°31′40.9″E	Cotopaxi mountain pictures by Frederic Church (large and small sizes) Garden Microphones Props from garden (dead leaves, moss, trees)
Site Research at ETAT 2022	July 12–July 31, 2022	Three mountains (Akiba, Gongen, and Takaba) in Tōkamachi City (Niigata, Japan) Coordinates: 37°06′03.9″N 138°45′49.4″E (Akiba) 37°09′00.3″N 138°41′40.7″E (Gongen) 37°15′01.0″N 138°49′42.3″E (Takaba)	Kudzu *Satoyama* scores (Akiba, Gongen, and Takaba mountains)

Name	***Date***	***Place***	***Items***
Installation: *We like to watch the clumsy-seeming mountains* Immersive *p*erformance: *Turn Off the House Lights*	August12–November 5, 2022 Presentation: August 17–19 and September 10–11, 2022	Risetsu Shinsetsu Sōgō Center, Sanjo area, in Tōkamachi City (Niigata, Japan) Coordinates: 37°11′53.7″N 138°46′34.2″E	**Inside:** Artificial pine tree Cushions Indoor croquet lawn and equipment (mallets, balls, and goals) Fluorescent tubes with red covers *El Arenero Yumita* (installation; inside: photo documentation and objects from research) Kudzu-threaded mountains (head-worn type) Mount Fuji pictures Plants Print of Violeta (large scale) Sounds mixed from natural environments and electronic noises Stones Three *satoyama* dance scores (Akiba, Gongen, and Takaba Three huge kudzu-threaded mountains with three sound speakers Three monitors (videos: video diary, documentation of kudzu fermentation, and site research) Wooden benches made of wood reclaimed from Yamaneko Guest House, with secondhand headphones and devices **Outside:** Double print of Mount Cotopaxi by Frederic Church (large scale) with wooden pedestal Installation of Yamaneko's Guest House, made of wood reclaimed from the original Rice field **Performance:** Fireworks Gloves Lighting and tape lights
"**広い島**/HIROSHIMA NO TIENE NADA QUE ENVIDIARLE A PARIS," an immersive talk	September 12, 2022	Morishita studio (Tokyo, Japan) Coordinates: 35°41′14.0″N 139°48′03.4″E	Fluorescent tubes with blue covers Map of Kōtō-ku's gardens Three projectors (two videos of Mount Fuji research and live screen for guest (Cory Tamler))

MaCA speaks of "other-than-human choreography" as an element of the intra-connectedness and intra-disciplinary perspectives united under the concept of *intra* (Barad, 2007), emphasizing the ethos and dynamics of the more-than-human. In other words, through the accumulation of living archives, MaCA's collective memory of intra-actions among organisms and environment navigates the other-than-human persons' choreography in the context of confused the notions of the "wild" and "domestic" notions in creative practice. By considering non-human agents within the expanded history of choreography, we can begin to situate the choreographic object itself as non-human. For instance, dance historian and dramaturgist Anna Leon comments on a choreographed tree in choreographer William Forsyth's *Groningen Project*. She observes that "people control nature, and choreographers define the movement of bodies – in an expansion of choreography, the choreographer controls nature and defines the forms that it will embody" (Leon, 2022, 191). However, the collective theorizes an other-than-human choreography that challenges Western approaches to the non-human's non-danceable movement and the more-than-human's non-moving movement based on Western notions. A key point is the cross-cultural approach that offers the clumsy-seemingness which deconstructs a central point of view and proposes more symbiotic and altruistic worldviews and approaches.

The detailed examination of these perspectives in *Turn Off the House Lights* aligned with emergent ecological performances. This sound-dance performance was held at the ETAT in 2022. Its multi-species creation process, involving other species, has focused on the concept of the "intra-connectedness" of humans and non-humans. However, in this article, MaCA turns its attention to the approaches to and significance of the other-than-human choreography.

To explore the collective's living archival practice, the authors look at how movements emerging from relationships with non-human beings have been practiced. The idea of attunement to nature took on new developments in the US in the 1960s through the work of choreographer and dancer Anna Halprin. Focusing on an awareness of the environment, Halprin explored the relationship between the human body and the natural environment through bodily awareness of her own movements and how they responded to the surroundings. Meanwhile, her husband, architect Lawrence Halprin, designed gardens for visitors and for dance. Both of them created scores (instructional frameworks) in which they pursued the relationship with nature, thereby forming a mode of interconnectedness with the environment through dance. Underlying their exploration through scores was Lawrence Halprin's concept of the "RSVP Cycles." As both an architect and Anna Halprin's partner, Lawrence conceptualized the creative process as a cycle consisting of four elements: Resources, Scores, Valuaction (value assessment), and Performance. He presented this as a flexible framework in which one can move back and forth among the elements, engaging in iterative feedback. In particular, "Scores" were positioned as guidelines for engaging both sensorially and analytically with the "conditions of the site," which included interactions with the environment and with others. By employing scores, Lawrence aimed to reveal "hidden obstacles"—barriers that, once made visible and recognized as hindrances, could be addressed through the RSVP Cycles (Halprin, 1970, 3). Such "obstacles" constitute the very nature of a living archival practice, and for the authors, they signify the other-than-human choreography. The "entanglements," "frustrations," and "misunderstandings" that often appear in site-based practice are, within the RSVP framework, not things to be overcome, but rather catalysts for creativity. In other words, the detours whereby an agent recalibrates relations with the external environment and responds resonantly via the score correspond precisely to the existence of movement in malfunction within ecological choreography.

In contrast, the authors also draw on dance and theatre writer Maša Radi Buh's notion of ecological choreography, which foregrounds not only the ecological experience of awareness but also the imagination of a future ecosystem—for instance, envisioning a post-apocalyptic time without humans through a geolocational sound walk that she mentioned. Furthermore, the choreography values "an (utopian) idea of a blurring of the distinction between (the value of) human and non-human creatures appears"(Buh, 2022, 48). Discourses on choreography, when mediated through "ecological awareness," reopen the questions around how choreography by other-than-human beings works in practice. Today, thinking about dance and choreography can no longer be confined within the frameworks of human perception, intention, and technology. Rather, choreography can be understood as a process of response to local environments, plants and animals, minerals, sounds, gravity, and even invisible existences—"alien" others. This process is often triggered by deviations known as "malfunctions" or "disobedience." Such deviations do not simply disturb an anthropocentric order; they themselves open up new choreographic possibilities. As Nina Lykke points out in her posthuman phenomenology and poetic practice, it is crucial to avoid the double trap of either anthropomorphizing alien others or distancing them as wholly incomprehensible beings (Lykke, 2024, 80–84). From this critical perspective, we must assess how "movement in malfunction" can demonstrate an ethical sensitivity within creative processes

This article examines its ecological choreography strategies via malfunction and disobedient movement, revealing how such movements expose the dissolution of the border between human and non-human. Movement in malfunction designates to a resonant movement that emerges through the intertwining of human movements derived from contact with the environment or other-than-human persons and the movements generated by non-human choreographies. It attempts to shift controllable movements into disobedient ones. Relearning "planetary kinship" thus becomes an essential task in choreographic practice. This entails moving away from modern thought that privileges the human, rediscovering symbiotic connections between humans and other beings—plants, animals, minerals, weather, microorganisms—and bodily reweaving these ethical resonances. Dance, in this sense, functions as a medium for attempting,

experimenting with, and documenting such relationalities at the level of the body. Within this framework, movement in malfunction is positioned as both a deviation and a creative circuit toward planetary resonance.

Furthermore, from the perspective of more-than-human choreography, feminist theorist and physicist Karen Barad's notion of intra-action offers an important insight. Ecology here is not only about relations between living beings, but also about entanglements of matter itself, in which all agencies—human and non-human, animate and inanimate—emerge through their intra-actions. In MaCA's living archival practice, this extends beyond relationships with nature to include the entanglements of materialities themselves, pointing to an intra-connectedness that we can glimpse within artistic practice. In this respect, this paper seeks to understand how MaCA perceives and receives such intra-connectedness, and how it might open the conditions for disobedient movement of other-than-human persons.

Specifically, MaCA aims to act out the transmission of its collective memory of landscape by encountering other-than-human persons. MaCA's creation then shifts to tuning to local ecologies, and the collective encounters the notion of "disobedience" through the choreography of other-than-human persons. To illuminate the experience of heightened ecological awareness generated by disobedient movement, MaCA speculates on the choreographic navigations.

Malfunctioning video and non-human choreography: Open Forest Launch, a digital residency (Frankfurt an der Oder/Kōtō-ku, Tokyo)

MaCA tended two vegetable gardens: a family's backyard garden in Hyōgo (Maeno and Yoshida) and a *Schrebergarten* in Frankfurt an der Oder (Fernandez, Arturo, and Violeta). MaCA named the latter "El Arenero Yumita" as a tribute to American scholar of Chicana feminism Gloria Anzaldúa and Fernandez's mother Luz Marina Giraldo "Yumita." The garden represented a wishful naming for its queer family sanctuary and place to encounter and learn from other-than-human beings.[3] Through MaCA's horticultural practice and research, the collective strived to cultivate a heightened awareness of planetary and seasonal processes and translated them into its notion of choreography.[4]

Unable to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, MaCA worked remotely, devising a digital residency to exchange the sensory experiences of its respective locations. Hosted by the Saison Foundation, MaCA investigated various ways to relate to non-human beings.[5] Its practices combined readings on non-human personhood with gardening. Non-human personhood denotes an active, sui generis mode of existence—neither a metaphor for the human nor something "less than" human—invoked to foreground the relationship between humans and non-humans. This led to "Open Forest Launch," a collection of videos documenting its exchanges uploaded to a digital world still in progress (Figure 2) (Mapped to the Closest Address, 2020a).

[3] In the Lesbian Plenary Session, "Lesbian Alliances: Combating Heterosexism in the 80s," at the National Women's Studies Association 1988 Conference, philosopher Gloria Anzaldúa described four roles, or ways of being and of interacting in the world: bridge, drawbridge, sandbar, and island. "I sought and found the sandbar, a submerged or partly exposed ridge of sand built by waves offshore from a beach. To me, the sandbar feels like a more 'natural' bridge (though nature too, some argue, is a cultural construction) [...] For me the important thing is how we shift from bridge to drawbridge to sandbar to island. Being a sandbar means getting a breather from being a perpetual bridge without having to withdraw completely" (Anzaldua, 2019, 147).

[4] MaCA's notion of choreography is about personal transformation, turning to disobedient beings, and relinquishing its mastery. Postcolonial scholar Julietta Singh states the following: "To survive mastery, we must begin to deconstruct our own movements (intellectual, activist, corporeal) that remain entangled with the violent erasures of other lives, and of things we declare insensate. Survival depends on new forms of living together, gathered in collectives that promise to astonish us" (Singh, 2018, 173–174).

[5] MaCA was funded by The Saison Foundation's "Saison AIR Partnership" from 2020 to 2022.

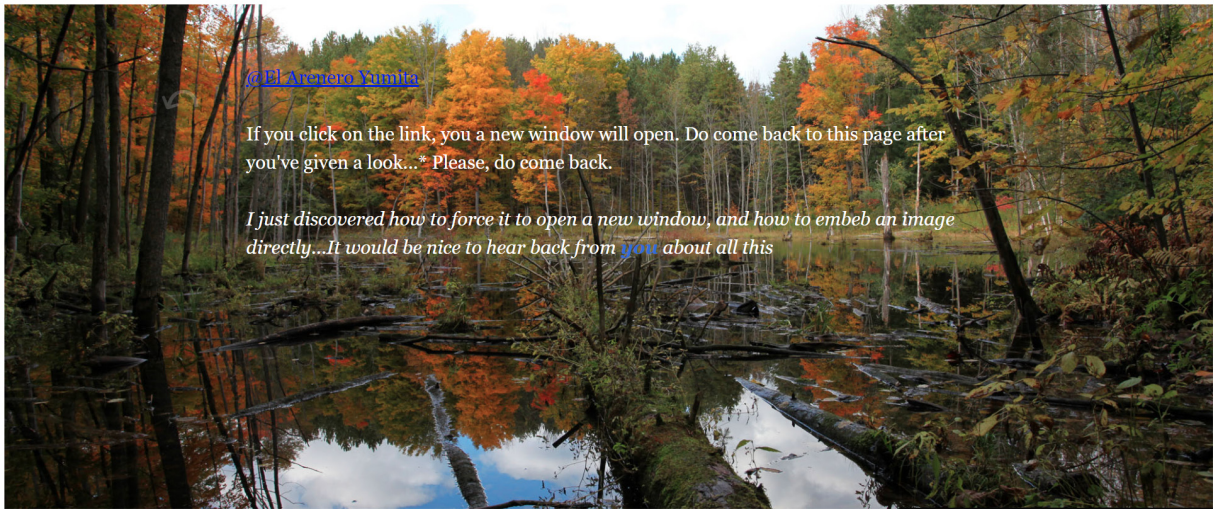


Figure 2. Screenshot of *Open Forest Launch* in progress. Photo by Catalina Fernandez.

In the video diaries, the collective witnesses the slow growth of vegetables, join the Kiyosumi community garden in Tokyo (Figure 3 and Figure 4), and gazes into the depths of the Hellenesee, a sinking lake on the Germany-Poland border (Mapped to the Closest Address, 2020b). MaCA sought to draw attention to diverse human and non-human players to dislocate its anthropocentric standpoint and explore from other points of view the many worlds within gardens, forests, and lakes. A cat, Violeta joined the collective as a non-human videographer, and her material became a fundamental part of the work. She made several field trips with a miniature spy camera attached to her back. Violeta's footage served as one of the living archives that revealed and documented how she moved. Similarly, MaCA reimagined her life and world through her actions, such as following her gaze and climbing up trees, and communicating with crows alongside her (Figure 5). In her video, MaCA noticed the impossibility of translating concepts between the humans and the non-humans, so the collective decided to cohabit with non-human movement.



Figure 3. Kiyosumi community garden in Kōtō-ku. Photo by Shuntaro Yoshida.

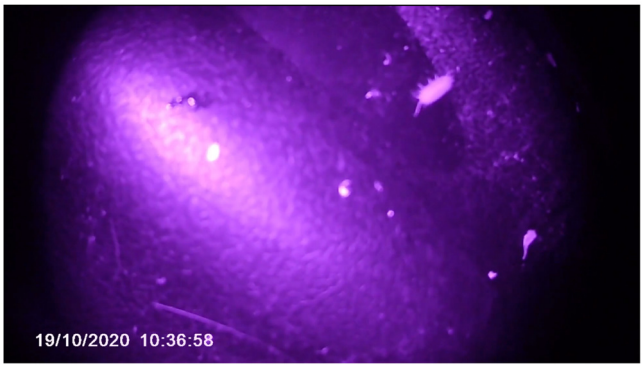


Figure 4. Scene from *Open Forest Launch_Video Diaries*. Captured by Violeta and edited by Catalina Fernandez.

The camera captured a view from a much lower position than a human's camera would be placed and produced seemingly chaotic images. MaCA was exploring with the camera, which was bound by her pace and her four-legged locomotion. It is in this context that malfunction appears, as Massumi argues, within a "zone of indiscernibility," where the conceptual distinction between the "domesticated" and the "wild" becomes blurred. (Massumi, 2014, 8–9). Accepting the malfunction of the video was also a way of relinquishing mastery over the final art product. As the camera had been given to Violeta, human choreography committed to her and there was no way MaCA could control her movement: where she went, how long she decided to stay in a spot, and how fast she was. The collective relinquished the mastery over the video capture to Violeta. The video diary, including her perspectives, was also an attempt to take its thinking past human phenomena to a place beyond the human. Thus, the footage served as a portal that allowed MaCA to escape, although briefly, from its human perspective.

Kudzu and mountains as other-than-human choreography: Clumsy-seeming mountains and site research (Tokamachi)

MaCA received a second invitation, this time to participate in the ETAT.[6] In accordance with the Triennale's guiding concept and ecological stance, MaCA managed to use 90% found natural objects in its performance and only the sound and lighting equipment introduced manufactured plastic goods. The collective traveled several times to the Shimojo area of the city of Tōkamachi, visited its assigned space, and planned for

[6] "The Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (ETAT) is one of the largest art festivals in the world as well as the pioneer of regional art festivals now taking place across Japan. It has provided an alternative way to explore *satoyama* following artworks as guiding lights, which has received great attention both within and outside Japan as a leading practice of community building through art" (Echigo-Tsumari Art Field, 2023).

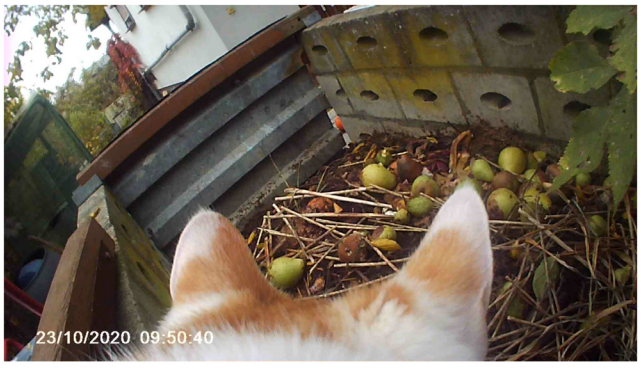


Figure 5. Scene from *Open Forest Launch_Video Diaries*. Captured by Violeta and edited by Catalina Fernandez.

field research. The city of Tōkamachi is surrounded by mountains, which are called *satoyama*.[7] Prior to the opening of the festival, Maeno, Yoshida, and architect Jun Yamaguchi[8] stayed at Yamaneko Guest House to explore the three nearby mountains: Akiba, Gongen, and Takaba. They encountered and collected kudzu vines from up in the hills around the guest house (Figure 6). While craftsmen of the ancient Jōmon periods (c. 14000 to 300 BCE) utilized kudzu for fibers and cloth, few such techniques remain. Today, the vine is deemed invasive and categorized as a weed. However, after engaging in processes like boiling, retting (Figure 7), and river-washing to gauge its durability, the collective shifted its perspective on kudzu. MaCA recognized its intricate connection with kudzu and choreographed movements reflecting this entanglement. The collective learned from kudzu's weaving patterns, integrating them into their mountain portraits for the installation. Portraits of Mount Fuji and Mount Cotopaxi emphasize that mountains have not only been perceived as natural landscapes but also represented, idealized, and inscribed with meaning through human-centered perspectives. In contrast, MaCA followed the patterns as if dancing, by handweaving the dried vines. The choreographic score comprised, in Yamaguchi's words, "covering," "spreading in search of the sun," and "intertwining." These extended non-human choreographies were knitted again to how plants live and move on the land, and the collective noticed their life compositions. The human role here was not to author choreography for the plant, but to attend to, inherit, and translate existing vegetal patterns into artistic practice. In MaCA's case, choreography meant handweaving dried leaves while attuning to kudzu's rhythms. In this sense, choreography emerges through entanglement: the plant offers its patterns, and human bodies respond, reframe, and render them perceptible as art. Thus, the collective stayed close to kudzu in terms of its embodied knowledge as inheritors of their movements.

[7] *Satoyama* originally denoted any mountains in rural Japanese villages before gaining more specific ecological significance. Initially exploited by forestry and mining industries since the 1950s, many *satoyama* regions faced devastation and abandonment by the 1970s. This led to a movement advocating for the safeguarding of the natural world. The momentum swelled in the 1990s with heightened global environmental awareness. Japan's Ministry of the Environment incorporated *satoyama* protection into its ecological planning during the same period. See: Okada, 2017, 65–66

[8] For ETAT 2022, MaCA was joined by architect Jun Yamaguchi.



Figure 6. Maharu Maeno and Jun Yamaguchi cutting kudzu. Photo by Shuntaro Yoshida.



Figure 7. Kudzu fermentation (Pictured: J. Yamaguchi and M. Maeno). Photo by Shuntaro Yoshida.

While contemplating the mode of existence of kudzu and the functional workings of these life forms, MaCA explored the choreography of the intelligence of plants through the practice of listening to their rhythms and movements. Their leaf tips were growing very vigorously in the summer. Listening to and cohabiting with their movements, the collective relearned the guidance of kudzu. Becoming attentive to kudzu also opens up an intra-action with the mountains, the "Earth beings" which allow MaCA to engage in a sensory dialogue with organic matter. (de la Cadena, 2015, 105).[9] This attentiveness gradually expanded beyond the plants themselves, attuning the collective to the geological and spiritual agencies shaping the surrounding mountains.

To this day, kudzu cloth continues to be crafted in Kakegawa. The mountains transmitted knowledge to MaCA, and the collective was tuning in to their rhythms rather than the other way around. While researching the Akiba 秋葉, Gongen 権現, and Takaba 高場 mountains, which surround the exhibition site, the collective encountered intra-connectedness between humans and non-humans. At the summit of Akiba mountain stands a shrine dedicated to Akiha Sanjakubō 秋葉三尺坊 or Akiha Gongen 秋葉権現, who is a manifestation of the Buddha as a Shintō god of fire protection appearing as a long-nosed Japanese goblin called a *tengu* 天狗 (a divine being in Japanese folklore). During the Edo period (1603–1867), Akiha Sanjakubō was widely revered as having control over fire. Akihabara 秋葉原, the neighborhood of Tokyo where the collective bought electric parts for MaCA's installation, is

[9] Anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena reflects on issues of paramount concern to current anthropology, from the meanings of indigeneity in the context of multiculturalism to the contested agency of nonhumans and material things. She says, "I do not translate earth-beings as spirits or gods, nor am I saying that the peasant struggle for land was motivated by nonsecular, or religious, modes of conscience" (de la Cadena 2015, 105).

renowned globally for anime and subculture, and derives its name from the Akiha Gongen. Legend has it that the technique for extracting thread from kudzu was developed by a Shugendō practitioner—a mountain ascetic who combines esoteric Buddhist, Shintō, and Taoist practices through rigorous physical and spiritual training in nature— in Kakegawa, Shizuoka prefecture, not far from another Akiha mountain. (Fukatsu, 2008, 41) On Takaba Mountain, power lines carrying electricity produced by nuclear power from Niigata to Tokyo stand in areas covered by kudzu. Kudzu is often seen here as both a plant that covers the mountain and a "weed" that invades the power station. Meanwhile, on Gongen Mountain, there is a small stone shrine on the summit dedicated to horses. It is said that long ago, horses frequently rolled down the slopes and died while eating the grass that grew on the mountain, and the shrine was built to mourn their spirits. In this way, the relationship between the souls of the dead horses and humans is inscribed into the landscape. These layered memories of the mountains and plants informed MaCA's bodily gestures and choreographic translations.

Through kudzu movements and the collective's gestures (boiling, fermenting, and river-washing) which render kudzu into fiber, the collective enacted the traditional kudzu-weaving techniques documented on the Kakegawa crafts website, which also reflects on the loss of craft skills in an era of modernization (Figure 8 and Figure 9). When translating the movement of kudzu into task-based dance scores—simple written and drawn instructions that guide bodily actions inspired by the plant's growth patterns—the collective treated kudzu itself as a witness, not in the human sense of an observer, but as an other-than-human presence that records and remembers. In this way, the witness of kudzu links the memory of local territories with the living presence of *satoyama*, the landscape that connects village and mountain. *Satoyama* attunes MaCA to the rhythm of kudzu in Echigo's ecosystem and debates the symbiosis between humans and non-humans. However, MaCA does not only demonstrate the well-worn observation that "human beings are part of nature," but also that kudzu and Akiba mountain in their other-than-human personhood echo with the past and future of the life cycle and resist human control—we watch the clumsy-seeming mountains.



Figure 8. Washing kudzu (Pictured: J. Yamaguchi and M. Maeno). Photo by Shuntaro Yoshida.



Figure 9. Kudzu fiber. Photo by Shuntaro Yoshida.

Navigation of the living archives and ecological considerations: *Clumsy-Seeming Mountains*, the installation (Tōkamachi Snow Center)

In the *Clumsy-Seeming Mountains* installation, MaCA's installation was housed in the Risetsu Shinsetsu Sōgō Center, Tōkamachi Snow Center (MaCA's translation), a former bathhouse surrounded by rice fields. In the winter, the two-storey building serves as an emergency shelter and an indoor croquet lawn (Figure 10 and Figure 11). MaCA's multimedia archive stood on the field's artificial grass.

The installation emulated a sci-fi bathhouse. MaCA installed red filters in the overhead lamps and windows and played a sci-fi soundtrack composed by Fernandez using sounds from natural environments and electronic noise (Figure 12). The whole experience bathed the croquet lawn in an eerie red glow, making the familiar landscape feel strangely alien to locals and visitors. The deep red of the interior gave the greens a particular intensity, a visual illusion similar to the water stage in Min Tanaka's Butō performance, highlighting the presence of rice fields around MaCA's installation.[10] In the field, MaCA placed

[10] MaCA witnessed Min Tanaka's performance during its visit to ETAT 2022. The museum was packed with locals and visitors who had all come to see the renowned Butō dancer. Tanaka performed in the museum's open courtyard, filled with water. A delicate mist veiled the stage, enhancing the illusion of a natural setting. Against the backdrop of the museum's concrete walls, through the dense fog, MaCA watched his silhouette and the subtle articulations of his limbs. Sometimes he vanished, enveloped by the watery matter, only to resurface as if emerging from a bomb attack. Both Tanaka and the fog moved according to a finely crafted dramaturgy. His body was seamlessly integrated with the theatrical machine, continuing the orchestrated illusion of naturalness within the museum's confines. The performative device skillfully enacted naturalness and created an impression of nature's defiance, which Shuntaro calls disobedience. Still, MaCA remained mindful of its controlled precision.



Figure 10. Tōkamachi Snow Center in Winter 2020. Photo by Maharu Maeno.



Figure 11. Tōkamachi Snow Center in Winter 2020. Photo by Maharu Maeno. Figure 11 has been reproduced with permission from the participants A, B, C, D, E F and G. Edits were made for de-identification purposes with permission from Maharu Maeno.



Figure 12. Threading kudzu vines (Pictured: J. Yamaguchi). Behind him is the scaled-down version of *El Arenero Yumita.* Photo by Catalina Fernandez.

TVs with its video diaries, documentation of the vine's entanglements, three-dimensional kudzu-threaded mountains, the aforementioned dance scores, poems, and a model of El Arenero Yumita's house. Outside, MaCA installed a scaled-down version of Yamaneko's Guest House and a double print of Frederic Church's portrait of Mount Cotopaxi (Figure 13).[11] Visitors were invited to explore the grounds barefoot, encounter the trembling mountains, and have a glimpse of MaCA's video and photographic archives documenting the seasonal growth of its digital-residency garden and the gardening processes in Japan and Germany (Figure 14).

By installing the aforementioned MaCA's archives in the Risetsu Shinsetsu Sōgō Center, MaCA aimed to link the collective's past to the rice fields and the mountains, a living

[11] Although Church's 19th-century painting depicts nature, it does so as a spectacle to be admired rather than inhabited. The pine tree in Church's painting, for instance, could not exist in a real landscape. Church fictionalized nature in his portrayal of naturalness (Kusserow, 2018, 117–25).



Figure 13. Outside, the scaled-down version of Yamaneko Guest House with a portrait of Mount Fuji and a double reproduction of Frederic Church's portrait of Mount Cotopaxi. Photo by Julie Lee. Figure 13 has been reproduced with permission from Julie Lee.

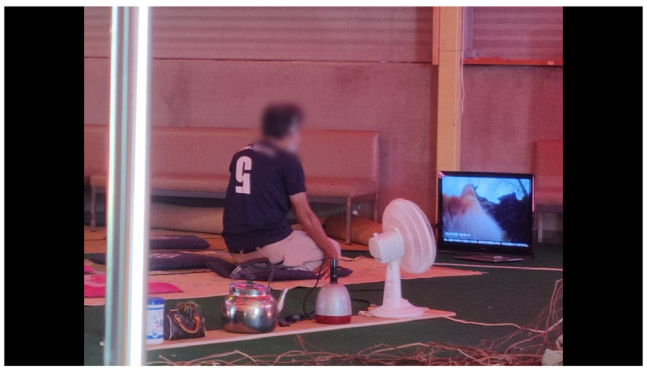


Figure 14. Detail of MaCA's installation *Clumsy-Seeming Mountains* in 2022. Photo by Catalina Fernandez. Figure 14 has been reproduced with permission from participant H. Edits were made for de-identification purposes with permission from Catalina Fernandez.

archive just outside of the exhibition space. However, the rice fields slowly change presence outside and humans harvest rice according to the seasonal cycle. Rice fields represent the time-space between nature as wild and as tame. The performance of rice fields enmeshes people in plant agencies. Even though rice fields have been heavily domesticated, they continue to exhibit behaviors that are not solely driven by human desires; rather, they also put on their own performances. Indeed, visitors are aware of the performance of rice fields and watch three huge mountain objects, each about three to five meters in diameter, made by collecting and weaving local kudzu, hung in the space. Mountains made of kudzu in the building and the real mountains outside guided the visitors to in-between perspectives. Mountains were vessels of organisms and living archives in order that visitors walked around inside/outside of mountains, staying close to Earth beings. Thus, the choreography of the clumsy-seeming mountains reopens the discussion of ecological considerations and brings a sense of kinship.

As mentioned above, MaCA managed to use 90% found natural objects and reused materials from the site for both the exhibition and the performance. On the other hand, the sound and lighting equipment involved manufactured plastic products. In fact, MaCA struggled to find second-hand, recycled materials of sound and equipment for the installation. The vast amount of e-waste produced in Japan is a serious concern for the Japanese environmental movement,[12] and the use of second-hand materials does not seem to be a common practice. MaCA searched for used headphones, cables, and transmitters in the basement of a second-hand, recycled materials store in Akihabara, Tokyo. The omnipresent of plastic packaging in daily existence in Japan presented a challenge to a collective seeking to adhere to eco-friendly practices (Figure 15). When dismantling the installation, the newly purchased items were sent to Germany for reuse. Moreover, Maeno was able to avoid discarding the debris and instead preserved it by turning it into ash a living archive.

[12] Several laws were introduced by the Japanese government to promote e-waste recycling and effective utilization of resources. At present, Japan is widely considered to have the best functioning e-waste management system in terms of citizen compliance levels and the amount of e-waste recovered. See Izzat Rasnan, Fariz Mohamed, Ta Goh, and Watanabe 2016, 1–23



Figure 15. Collecting materials at Eco Factory in Muikamachi, 2022 (Pictured: A. Viteri Arturo). Photo by Catalina Fernandez.

An emergent form of ecological performance: *Turn Off the House Lights*, an immersive performance

During MaCA's time at ETAT 2022, the collective listened to rice farmers, local volunteers, and sightseers. For its contribution to the exhibition, the collective shared the atmospheric performance *Turn Off the House Lights*, adapting the script to the region's stories and integrating movements and gestures inspired by the collective's intra-actions with the landscape and the people. *Turn Off the House Lights* transformed MaCA's embodied research into a tangible experience, immersing MaCA's guests in the sensuous realms of real, imagined, and imaginations-of-real landscapes (Figure 16) (Tamler, 2022).

In the Berlin rendition of *Turn Off the House Lights*, the collective guided guests wearing wireless headphones from a dance studio to a horticultural garden, stewarding them through an imagined forest (Figure 17). The outside community garden features several islands of flowers and plants cared for



Figure 16. Rice field dance, *Turn Off the House Lights*, 2022 (Pictured: S. Yoshida). Photo by Catalina Fernandez.



Figure 17. Instagram post, *Turn Off the House Lights* at Cordillera Berlin, 2022 (Pictured: S. Yoshida and A. Viteri Arturo). Photo by Maharu Maeno.

by neighbors. Together, the collective meandered—something like taking a walk while chatting on the phone with a loved one or sitting with a group of friends to listen to a thunderstorm—before convening around a bonfire to witness the sunset. MaCA's narrations layered Tokyo's urban views with Frederic Church's portrayal of the Andean mountain chain.[13] MaCA's script aimed to challenge colonial interpretations of the landscape and delved into the mountains' spiritual lives (de la Cadena, 2015, 25).

Conversely, the Japanese version incorporated embodied renditions of the collective's visits to Takaba mountain, gestures developed while handling kudzu, and stories from local rice field farmers. MaCA wanted visitors to have an immersive experience that reflected the experience of viewing Mount Fuji while submerged in a hot spring, part of Japan's bathhouse culture. While Maeno and Arturo told stories, Fernandez mixed MaCA's soundscape live, Yamaguchi sewed kudzu fibers, and Yoshida performed non-human choreographies – he became a spider in a bathhouse, a bird in a rice field, the pine tree in Church's paintings, a cherry tree beside the river in Kōtō-ku, a kudzu vine, and one stalk among the many in the rice fields. Emerging from the back of the rice fields and returning to them towards the end, Yoshida describes the experience as the following of disobedient movements, something in between the wildness of the mountains and the domesticated nature of the fields (Figure 18):

> I tried to draw every movement from the environment. I moved in response to the wind, the clouds, the weaving of the rice fields, followed mountain ridges, and channeled distant rainfalls. The more I was invested in their movement, the lighter my movements became. In the in-betweenness of domestic and wild, the body's senses did not know which nature it was responding to.[14]

[13] MaCA used the painting of *Cotopaxi* (1855) by Frederic Edwin Church.

[14] Shuntaro Yoshida, discussion with Alex Viteri Arturo, July 21, 2023



Figure 18. Cherry tree beside the river in *Turn Off the House Lights*, 2022 (Pictured: S. Yoshida). Photo by Osamu Nakamura. Figure 18 has been reproduced with permission from Osamu Nakamura.

In the performance of *Turn Off the House Lights*, the rhythms of the body and nature resonate through the sensory and perceptual (re)organization induced by other-than-human persons' choreography. To "perform the other-than-human" here means to assemble and improvise with multiple other-than-humans' scores in real time—each score deriving from observed growth patterns, material resistances, or site conditions. Human and non-human bodies do not coincide; misalignment inevitably produces movement in malfunction. Crucially, this gap is not an error but a register of non-coincidence: when a performer aims at the land and yet clearly fails to "match" an other-than-human choreography, a trace of empathy remains without erasing other "aliens". Dance scholar Tamara Ashley's proposal for ecological choreography introduces and expands upon the notion of performances that are primarily linked to place (Ashley, 2012, 27). Going against this, dance and theatre writer Maša Radi Buh explains that the location is sequentially changed and updated in trans-geolocation choreography through the sound walk. She mentions the updated ecological choreography in the following:

> Ecological choreography not only incites an ecological experience of awareness through theatrical content but offers an experience through the medium itself as well. The difference between the former and the latter is that one of them counts on the audience's feelings while the other engages them with embodied ways of attending and perceiving. (Buh, 2022, 47)

Buh proposes a geolocational multimedia soundwalk as ecological choreography. Such a performance engages the attendee through a physical attunement that is connected to two interpretations of listening, both connected to artistic practices aiming to aid the body in experiencing some type of ecological awareness. Participants listen to a set of audio tracks which correspond to certain locations along the route, with intra-connected elements giving the sense of a unified event. She describes the connection between the three elements of space, time and sound, observing that this connection "exemplifies the principle of intra-connectedness taken over from ecology as the change or fault in the execution of one of them significantly alters the performance itself, as well as the participant's experience" (Buh, 2022, 47–48). Buh's ecological experience of awareness indicates attentive walking and recalls the absence of the noises of civilization during the COVID-19 pandemic. In MaCA's performance in Berlin, the collective challenged the soundwalk, inviting gardens into an embodied practice. However, simply told, MaCA's performance at ETAT 2022 couldn't avoid such theatrical frameworks such as the division of space between stage and auditorium space because MaCA couldn't use remote headphones in Japan.[15] During the performance in ETAT, guests were located between live narrators (behind guests) and performer, and

[15] In Berlin, MaCA could use long-distance remote headphones for the silent disco club. In Japan, however, MaCA could not use them for performances because most products are made overseas and do not comply with the technical standards of the Japanese Radio Law; such headphones were very expensive, even to rent.

the fixed location prevented the changes and contingencies of participants moving the environmental structure.

Conclusion

In this case study, MaCA has presented its collective research-creation and *Turn Off the House Lights*, a work of other-than-human choreography. The choreography navigated the border zone between human and non-human, which emphasized ecology territories inciting an ecological experience of awareness. Rather than centering subjective experience, MaCA's account traces the processes and relations through which the work unfolded: attuning to site-specific ecologies, following entanglements among beings and materials, and translating these encounters into task-based scores and installations. MaCA understand movement in malfunction as a resonant movement that emerges from the intra-connected of human motions—arising in contact with environments and other-than-human persons—and movements generated by other-than-human choreographies. Within MaCA's living archival practice, other-than-human choreography operates intra-disciplinarily across visual art, music, lighting, dance, theatre, and text. The back-and-forth of incommensurable noise—movement in malfunction and disobedience movement inherent to Earth's beings—does not interrupt the work; it conditions it, offering methods for sensing kinship, recalibrating relations, and responding to future ecosystems.

Writer, translator, and interdisciplinary artist Cory Tamler interviewed MaCA at Morishita Studio after the performance of *Turn Off the House Lights* at the ETAT (Figure 19). She wrote of MaCA's work that:

> the research and creation process is one of shared archiving, a kind of living accumulation – analogous, in my mind, to the simultaneous growth and decomposition in a garden. The collective (de)composes their archive through the exchange of gardening techniques and a "practice of encounter" (in their words) with non-humans, but also through their varied artistic practices, from sound and visual art to dance. (Tamler, 2022)



Figure 19. "広い島/HIROSHIMA NO TIENE NADA QUE ENVIDIARLE A PARIS," hosted by The Saison Foundation, Tokyo, 2022 (Pictured M. Maeno and C. Fernandez). Photo by Taro Inamura. Figure 19 has been reproduced with permission from Taro Inamura. Edits have been made for de-identification purposes with permission from Taro Inamura.

The collective's living archival practices are comprised of the transmission and performance of other-than-human persons' lives and forms.

From digital residency and site research to installation and performance, the collective's living archives accumulate, on the one hand, the conceptual malfunction that spills over from material exploration. The malfunctions that appear during the creative process address phenomena beyond the human and open the way for an escape from the anthropocentric perspective. On the other hand, a feeling of substantive disobedience spills over from transcendental exploration. The disobedient movement of other species dissolves the dichotomy of human and non-human, and changes to the tuning of their rhythm in an intentional break from the dramaturgical framework. The collective's senses shifted back and forth in the encounters with other-than-human persons' choreography, underlining the way other-than-human approaches reflect the complex relationship between humankind and the natural world. However, living archival practice in a collective life can contribute to concern and care for both the Earth and the disobedient movement of its living beings. This practice helps sustain the collective lives of other-than-human persons and their ecosystems.

Suggestions for the future research

At the time of writing, MaCA's artistic practice only incites the consciousness of environmental awareness. Furthermore, considering the Earth's rapid deterioration over a decade since 2000s, it is significant that MaCA considers how artistic works represent ecological choreography. From the perspective of the carbon footprint, MaCA might also have to reconsider the use of air travel in order to sustain an ethical engagement with the ecosystems to which its choreography responds. Despite the development of theories of the Anthropocene and posthumanism, these have primarily been applied to science and artwork rather than intra-disciplinary research. Thus, MaCA argues for a more radical development of embodied practices and interactions between human and non-human environments to elicit a new investigation of the relationship between the human and the non-human that may be experienced by audiences. Most importantly, intra-disciplinary perspectives should transform collaboration in the collective through encounters with other-than-human choreographies, opening the way to further living archival practices.

Finally, it is essential to note that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) confirmed that no formal ethical review was required for this research. Nevertheless, because MaCA deliberately refers to its collaborators as other-than-human persons, the project implicitly challenges anthropocentric notions of ethics and consent. Even when no additional approval was deemed necessary, such terminology compels researchers to consider what ethical stance is being taken toward non-human collaborators—the potential risks, forms of care, and

accountability involved in recognizing them as agents or persons in the research and creative processes.

Ethics and consent

Ethical approval and consent were not required. The authors confirm that consent to publish the name of Luz Marina Giraldo. Any identifiable information has been used with explicit permission for publication. Regarding the consent to publish identifiable details, written informed consent was obtained via her family member because she has passed away.

Data availability

No data is associated with this article.

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✓ **Ian Garrett**
York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

The restructuring and placing more contextual information earlier in the paper are great improvements to understanding the relationship of the pieces to one another and the timeline for the work.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Extensive research/creation experience focused on ecological design for performance or "ecoscenographic" approaches to performance and time-based art publishing across Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies and Digital Environmental Humanities with a focus on extended reality technologies in site-specific and geolocated performance projects and the ethics of this work, in part through non-human collaboration working both as an international touring artist, and through a variety of peer-reviewed publications. Educator focused on ecoscenography, devised and site-specific performance and research creation supervising graduate students on related project as former director of graduate program of Theatre, Dance, and Performance studies.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Reviewer Report 11 December 2025

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Teresa Heiland
University Of North Carolina, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Dear editors,
The paper continues to improve, but it remains rather dense and difficult to follow at times. I have some new recommendations that I wish I had sent along in the first round. Please forgive the delay, but I think these revisions will help the paper to allow a reader to sustain focus. Here are some recommendations to support more focused engagement among readers. These changes are not complex, but will provide anchors for readers:

1. The article is very dense in its opening section. To increase readability, consider breaking the introduction into smaller subsections (e.g., “Anthropocene Debates,” “More-than-Human Performance,” “MaCA’s Positioning”) to help readers track the conceptual stakes.
2. I think a Method section is needed: The ethnographic detail of MaCA’s process—particularly the digital residency, kudzu research, and ETAT site practices—provides a textured sense of the collective’s methodology. However, t**he article would benefit from a clearer articulation of methods.** A concise methodological section early in the paper would strengthen its academic ground.
For example:

- **What were the research questions** guiding the digital residency? Can these questions be stated early in a method section to help readers to follow the author’s line of thinking?
- H**ow was video analyzed**? Did authors use qualitative video analysis software tools such as NVivo, Atlas.ti, and MAXQDA, which help to track themes. What system did they use? Published research should be shared in such a way that another team of researchers could replicate the methods.
- **How were kudzu gestures documented or translated into scores?** I believe some sample scores would reveal the thinking process and creative practice within the methodology. Also, are not the scores artifacts or documents that represent artist-researchers' relationships with the ecosystem?

3. Please define “malfunction” a paragraph earlier in paragraph 6. It is used in that paragraph without explanation, so meaning is vague, and it is not described until paragraph 7.

Excellent work. Interesting paper.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Ph.D. in Dance in Higher Education and AdministrationExtensive experience publishing qualitative and statistical research about the artsEditor and creator of an online academic, peer-reviewed journal about dance. Author of a peer-reviewed book and multiple articles on dance topics. Educator of site-specific processes in the arts. Experience with dance in South East Asia and Japan.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Version 1

Reviewer Report 20 November 2024

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Natalie Schiller
The University of Auckland, Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Reading this article might urge the reader to get down on their hands and knees to re-experience the world from an *other-than-human* perspective (at least this is what happened to me!). In this case study, the authors celebrate the propositions of *other-than-human* choreographies and ecological choreographies. The authors are part of the international and interspecies collective *Mapped to the Closest Address (MaCA)* and cartograph four events of their research-creation in this writing. Here, they introduce their insights from their digital residency (*Open Forest Launch*), site-research, installation (*Clumsy-Seeming Mountains)*, and immersive performance (*Turn Off the House Lights*). Their work intra-mingles *earth beings*, such as a cat, kudzu vines, and mountains (*satoyama*), and *other-than-human* performative actions, such as processes of fermenting. O*ther-than-human* entanglements stimulate ideas on *disobedient* and *malfunctioning* movements. The choreographies seem to emerge in "zone[s] of indiscernibility" (Massumi, 2014, p. 8), where notions of the "domestic" and the "wild" (article p. 9) are con-fused.

This case study is well written and allows the reader to encounter a *tacit* and *felt* knowledge that research-creation seeks to offer (Loveless, 2019; Nelson, 2022). This writing is a unique and significant contribution to the realm of research-creation and captures essences of the concepts on how and when assemblages of *other-than-human* beings and ecological choreographies can activate artistic practices.

With a focus on *other-than-human beings*, I encourage the authors to re-evaluate the chosen words and if those terminologies mirror the dynamics of their research-creation they seek to express with this case study. For example, the term "other-than-human persons" has mainly been applied throughout the case study, although on page 10 the word person has been left out, creating "other-than-human choreography"*,* which for me captures the particularities and core of this research-creation more specifically.

Furthermore, could the integration of *intra* (Barad, 2007) emphasise notably the ethos and dynamics of the *more-than-human* configurations within the case study? Barad's agential realism thrives on its neologism of *intra*, where *intra* "*signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies* ….[and] *agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don't exist as individual elements*" (p. 33). Therefore, the authors could consider implementing instead of *inter* or *cross* an *intra*. For example, interconnectedness (p. 2, 3, & 10) could morph into intra-connectedness, interactions (p. 2, 3, 9, & 11) could transform into intra-actions, and cross-disciplinary (p. 11) could be intra-disciplinary.

On another note, the work of Katja Aglert et al. (2024) might be of interest to the authors.

References

1. Lykke N, Aglert K, Henriksen L: Feminist Reconfigurings of Alien Encounters. 2024. Publisher Full Text
2. Barad K: Meeting the Universe Halfway. 2006. Publisher Full Text
3. Massumi B: What Animals Teach Us about Politics. 2014. Publisher Full Text
4. Nelson R: Practice as Research in the Arts (and Beyond). 2022. Publisher Full Text
5. Reference Source

Is the background of the case's history and progression described in sufficient detail?
Yes

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?
Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Not applicable

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full access and reuse by other researchers?
No source data required

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data and analysis?
Yes

Is the case presented with sufficient detail to be useful for teaching or other practitioners?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: My areas of expertise lie within artistic research, feminism, performance arts, performance philosophy, and posthuman/new materialism theories. My projects seek to explore how artistic research supports critical, creative, and affirmative approaches of becoming and being in a contemporary world. Some of my work has been published via the following articles: (2020) 'Experiments in Motion – An entanglement of dancing hips and domesticity.' RIACT – Journal of Artistic Research, Creation and Technology, 1(1), 51-75, (https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/54430) and (2017) 'Breathe through your vagina! — An attempt to catch ineffability.' Dance Research Aotearoa, 5(1), 47-58 (https://doi.org/10.15663/dra.v5i1.60). I am a member of the international posthuman reading and writing group, Posthumanism in/as Artistic Practices, and associate editor with The International Journal of Education and the Arts.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of

expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Reviewer Report 19 November 2024

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Stefanie Gabriele Sachsenmaier
Middlesex University London, London, England, UK

The article documents the artistic practice of the dance collective Mapped to the Closest Address, outlining a series of its projects since 2020. It discusses the collective's creative processes and methods, thematising issues such as human and other-than-human relations, disobedient movements, interconnectedness between human and more/other-than-humans, entanglement, ecological awareness etc.

The strength of the article is its perspective of the makers who provide insights into the creative processes and critical approaches explored. It includes a strong resource of visual materials, which convey the artistic practices in a mixed mode to the reader.

What might be further considered in developing the work is its rather long list of keywords, partially listed above. While these are very current terms and there is a sense of how these belong together, as such these concepts remain largely undefined and under-explored. Indicatively, questions open up along the lines of what constitute practices of disobedience and in what ways the documented practice might align and perhaps also expand these.

Furthermore, the article comprises a long list of footnotes, which, if to be read in line with the main text, create a disruption to the flow of reading. While some of these materials do indeed work well in footnote form, others provide details that seem key to understanding the thinking that is developed in the main text. It would be helpful if the authors considered to place some of the materials presented in footnotes into the main body of the writing, where the respective ideas further outlined seem vital to the understanding of the discussion.

I would also point to an opportunity for further criticality of the collective's practice in view of considering its practice in view of ecological practices, such as for instance critically commenting on the carbon footprint it incurs. A slightly more self-critical view would also help to frame the writing as a mode of ongoing enquiry into the rich, and crucially challenging, ideas and concepts presented, rather than presenting these as having been achieved in their artistic practices.

Is the background of the case's history and progression described in sufficient detail?
Yes

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Not applicable

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full access and reuse by other researchers?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data and analysis?
Yes

Is the case presented with sufficient detail to be useful for teaching or other practitioners?
Partly

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Performance practice, performance processes, process philosophy, posthumanism, performance and politics

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Reviewer Report 12 November 2024

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Ian Garrett
York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

The article by Yoshida et al. explores the interspecies dance collective, Mapped to the Closest Address (MaCA), and their approach to choreography with other-than-human persons. It details their living archival practices from a digital residency during the COVID-19 pandemic to performance installations at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2022. The collective incorporates non-human elements like a feline collaborator, kudzu vines and mountains into their work, aiming to break down human-centric views and foster an ecological awareness through emergent and disobedient choreography.

The article presents an innovative and compelling approach to ecological and environmental site-specific choreography, emphasizing interactions between humans and non-human entities. It successfully introduces concepts like “malfunction” and “disobedient movement,” which challenge

traditional human-centered choreography practices. The analysis of MaCA's performances and installations provides a rich narrative, drawing attention to the interconnectedness of human and non-human-collaborators.

There are areas where the clarity and organization of the paper could be improved:

Terms such as "malfunction," "disobedient movement," and "other-than-human persons" need clearer initial definitions, at least to understand the use by the authors. While they're well considered and appropriate, the unfamiliar reader would benefit for help in understanding how these are being used more explicitly. Introducing these concepts earlier with brief definitions on what is meant by their use in the paper would help readers understand the framework without having to refer to later sections or accept ambiguity with their own understanding.

I think it would be useful to also unpack the focus on the idea of the "non-human person". While collaboration with non-human entities or non-human collaborators has become relatively common in at least some conversations, there use of "person" is an interesting divergence and may load the reader's understanding with a specific idea of the relationship between humans and non-humans as people, which feels like it can pull the efforts of the authors to explore the non-anthropocentric views of their non-humans by suggesting their personhood and the social relationships and rights of personhood in anthropocentric frameworks. For this reviewer, it pulled the understanding of the relationship to each of the non-human collaborators towards the anthropocentric and may undermine the idea. Further to this, it also feels like the authors would benefit from the addition of writing on their thinking about the ability of humans and non-humans to share experiences given the differences is physiology, neurology, and each's distinct evolved sensorium.

There are allusions to this consideration, such as the citation of Frickhorn on pg. 3. I think this is particularly important in the description of Shutaro's expression of non-human choreographies on pg. 9, where I'm curious to hear about the introduction of human reasoning and creative decision making in translating the non-human to the human and what sort of fidelity is possible and what further mutual understanding is found in recognizing these uncrossable boundaries between human and non-human experiences of the world.

As an important distinction stemming from this thinking, when it comes to the Ethics and Consent section at the end, It would be helpful to confirm that the fact that Ethics approval was not required was confirmed by an IRB. Given the choice to refer to collaborators as "non-human persons" there is a question of the anthropocentric concept of ethics and consent in a research context. If the non-human collaborators are being given personhood, then it stands to reason that there would need to be consider of the risks and potential harms to the non-humans and associated ethical approaches. This reinforces the need to be explicit and intentional about the use of this term. So, while an IRB may not require further consent and indicates it does not require further approval based on institutional risk, what are the ethics of the researchers if non-humans are positioned as persons?

The article would also benefit from restructuring certain paragraphs to improve coherence. For example, the section discussing kudzu vines and mountains could be presented in a way that better integrates the description of site-specific practices with the underlying theoretical concepts.

It may also be useful to add an early paragraph with a clear timeline of activities along with their locations, and how other locations are layered. For example, on pg. 9, there is reference to the Berlin iteration of the work, which was a location less clear to me as a site of performance early. This discussion the layering of Tokyo over the experience, and I was unclear about how these geospatial relationships were being described. The following paragraph then describes the Japanese version, which presents some confusion given the scale of the location and the previous description of a specific city in Japan being layered over an experience in Berlin. This may also be useful as chart/matrix as an additional figure or appendix to provide the reader with a clear understanding of how the authors layered locations and to offer easy reference to the spatial context of each iteration.

Overall, the concepts are expressed well. It may be worth addressing dangling modifiers and eliminating colloquial expressions which would make the text more polished. Please also use surnames consistently. There are many specific and excellent suggestions by the previous review which I will suggest the authors heed instead of listing them again.

It would primarily benefit from providing greater clarity for the unfamiliar reader, so that specific terms and the temporal and spatial planning of the performance work is clear so that the focus is on the author's critical understanding of their findings, which are somewhere clouded by these ambiguities. Most importantly, a clear understanding, and consistency in the language used to refer to non-human components and either some additional writing on why the authors have positioned non-humans in this way and/or acknowledgements of the limits of human understanding of non-human perspectives would be beneficial to reinforce the de-anthropocentric goals of the paper and the work it described.

I would suggest that the authors may consider Una Chaudhuri's *The Stage Lives of Animals* to develop a deeper critical approach to the complexities of non-human expression in performance.

Is the background of the case's history and progression described in sufficient detail?
Partly

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?
Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Not applicable

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full access and reuse by other researchers?
Partly

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data and analysis?
Partly

Is the case presented with sufficient detail to be useful for teaching or other practitioners?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Extensive research/creation experience focused on ecological design for performance or "ecoscenographic" approaches to performance and time-based art publishing across Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies and Digital Environmental Humanities with a focus on extended reality technologies in site-specific and geolocated performance projects and the ethics of this work, in part through non-human collaboration working both as an international touring artist, and through a variety of peer-reviewed publications. Educator focused on ecoscenography, devised and site-specific performance and research creation supervising graduate students on related project as former director of graduate program of Theatre, Dance, and Performance studies.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Reviewer Report 08 October 2024

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?

Teresa Heiland
University Of North Carolina, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Answers to questions:

1. Is the background of the case's history and progression described in sufficient detail?

The study's background history and progression are mostly clear. I did find one paragraph on page 7 that, if brought far earlier in the paper, would improve reader's comprehension of the work. I have noted it below. I have also gathered a list of many syntactical and word-choice needs in the writing that could be improved to ensure reader understanding.

1. Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

The work references the theme and progression of the activities. The well-known literature of Anna Halprin and Lawrence Halprin might be of interest to this group. Anna Halprin's work was about relating to nature. Her husband Lawrence Halprin created gardens for visitors or dances. They both also wrote scores and related to nature in ways that spiritually parallel your work. Lawrence Halprin's RSVP cycles, page 3 might be a place to start reading. Their work might inspire these authors. Literature seems sufficient, although some of it comes far later in the paper than what is traditionally done. This choice of adding literature later than the way most academic papers read causes the flow to feel less focused and directed than it could.

1. If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate? NA
2. Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility? To have full reproducibility, a list of items used in each of your projects might be helpful. Would

a map of the locations be useful as well? For example, how far into natural areas did you travel? People unfamiliar with Japan might not be able to picture the locations without reference points. We will have to Google the locations ourselves. I'm not implying these lists and maps are needed but I think in

3. Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results? Yes.
4. Is the case presented with sufficient detail to be useful for teaching or other practitioners? Some concepts need to be fleshed out more. See my notes below. Also, the word posthumanism is mentioned in footnote 1, but not in the text until the last page (page 11). I would double check to make sure you have fleshed out all the key terms early to introduce the philosophies and concepts early.

Approved with reservations:
The article needs some clarifications in the writing, but it is getting close to being ready. The main idea is strong, but assumptions are made regarding some main ideas that need to be addressed. Just the syntax, grammar, and writing clarifications need to be worked on. Then I think this paper is almost ready.
Suggestions for improving and polishing the rough draft:
Page. 1.
In the list of authors' names after the title, the group title "Mapped the Closest Address" is likely a mistake. The people created the article, not the performing group.
P.2.
Small detail: I see in the abstract that MaCA (which is a group of people but is also a singular entity) is then described as "their." Consider whether the MaCA should be listed as singular or plural. It seems like a group (singular) when you speak about it as a whole. The grammar was a bit confusing due to word choice.
The word "this" is a dangling modifier and should be followed by another word. "This ____process/practice/investigation? ____ includes…."
I see you stated, "The article discusses." An article is not a living being and cannot discuss anything. I urge you to instead state something like this, "The authors discuss…"
P.3. Introduction:
Question: Is the cat a non-human person? You don't suggest it as such, but maybe you will later.
Again, I see you stated, "The article draws." An article is not a living being and cannot draw anything. I urge you to instead state something like this, "The authors draw…"
The syntax is not working in this sentence. "Furthermore, the choreography values "a (utopian) idea of a blurring of the distinction between (the value of) human and non-human creatures appears." (Buh, 2022, 48). Remove the word "appears."
I imagine you will go on to explain what "*malfunction and disobedient movement*" are; however, I am desiring an explanation here when you first introduce it.
Footnote 1: Dangling modifier again. See "This is…." What is "this?"
p.4.
I noticed you use the first names of the contributors rather than the surnames: Maharu, Shuntaro, Catalina, and Alex. This choice may be a way to make the article seem personable; however, typically contributors are addressed in articles by their surnames. *Yoshida, Arturo, Fernandez, and Maeno.*
"Catalina's mother" should probably be changed to "Fernandez' mother."
p.5.
Which "province" did you travel to? I think you might need to state it. You called it "the province."
You mentioned, "*our mountain portraits*" but we don't know what those are. Can you explain?

Does the phrase "*non-human choreographies*" imply that the kudzu is creating itself? What is the role of the human in this choreography?

p.6.

Are the "*tips*" the root tips or the leaf tips?

The word very is discouraged in English. The use of the word vigorously alone is more powerful. *very vigorously*

If you "*we unravel the composition of kudzu.*" Isn't this a modernist approach to affecting nature? Maybe you need to describe that the kudzu guided your movement, and it was the choreographer.

Party of this sentence is sounding vague. Can you clarify? Why is "the acceptance of the mountains" followed by the words, "the Earth beings?" I am not sure what you are implying there. Can you explain a bit more?

What are "*multispecies stories?*" You don't explain this concept and it will be unknown to readers.

What is a "*Shugendo practitioner?"* Be sure to describe so readers don't have to Google it to understand this.

I think this sentence should start your paragraph, not end it:

"The mountains transmitted knowledge to us, and we were tuning in to their rhythms rather than the other way around."

What does the phrase, "encountered a composition of kudzu" mean? Did the composition/design emerge from your efforts, or did you encounter it as you walked through the woods? The word "encounter" is more often about a happenstance meeting with something along a path. I think your use is different, so maybe find a different word.

What type of dance scores are you referring to in this passage? "When we translate the kudzu movement into dance scores." Can you clarify the type of dance score? There are so many in existence. Is it written on paper?

Is "*the witness of kudzu"* any person who happens to be watching the activity?

In the section titled, Navigation of the living archives and ecological considerations: Clumsy-Seeming Mountains, the installation (Tokamachi Snow Center), I think you are likely introducing a new installation, yet you simply state "Our installation was housed…" I think you need to signal to readers that you are dealing with a different installation. Such as: "In the Clumsy-Seeming Mountains installation, …"

p.7

I strongly think that this paragraph is extremely important to your paper and should be included as regular text, not as a footnote. It seems to ground so much of what I keep asking about right here in this paragraph. I would move it up into the paper somewhere. It is a strong paragraph: "we theorize an other-than-human choreography that relativizes the non-human's non-danceable movement and more-than-human's non-moving movement. based on Western notions. A key point is the cross-cultural approach that avoids a singular Western notion and offers the clumsy-seemingness which deconstructs a central point of view and proposes more symbiotic and altruistic worldviews and approaches."

I think you can remove these couple of words from the photo caption Figure 10: "*Figure 11 has been*" and start with "Reproduced with permission…"

"*composed by Catalina" should probably be changed to "composed by Fernandez."*

I think readers will not know what you mean by "slightly 'off'" Can you give a more tangible experiential descriptor or adjective?

p.8

What sort of dance scores are you referring to on page 8?

What do you mean by archives? You must tell us what that is. It sounds interesting, but you've not

told us.
You wrote "*By placing MaCA's archives.*" Typically, in English we would say "*By placing MaCA's archives ____ (next to, near, beside, above, juxtaposed with, etc), we aimed to…"* I think you need to qualify what you are doing by adding the right word there.
I noticed you switch from present to past to present tense in this paragraph. Maybe stay with present tense and speak about it as if it is happening. It will allow readers to experience it as if it is happening for them. I edited these words in your paragraph below: hanging, guide, are, so, can, meanwhile.
Even though rice fields have been heavily domesticated, they continue to exhibit behaviors that are not solely driven by human desires; rather, they also demonstrate their own performances. Indeed, visitors are aware of the performance of rice fields and watch three huge mountain objects, each about three to five meters in diameter, made by collecting and weaving local kudzu, **hanging** in the space. Mountains made of kudzu in the building and the real mountains outside **guide** the visitors to in-between perspectives. Mountains **are** vessels of organisms and living archives **so** that visitors **can** walk around inside/outside of mountains, **meanwhile** staying close to Earth beings. Thus, the choreography of the clumsy-seeming mountains reopens the discussion of ecological considerations and brings a sense of kinship.
I think the insertion of the paragraph about the search for second-hand materials and plastic seems oddly placed or even unnecessary. Was this factor a part of your mission or something you simply experienced? If you don't mention it earlier as part of the project, it comes up as odd on page 8. We are already into your philosophy and mission, and this seems to appear out of nowhere. Do you need it? Maybe earlier you could briefly mention in a method-section about how you managed to use 90% found natural objects in your performance and only the sound and lighting equipment introduced manufactured plastic goods.
Footnote 14: Does Japan have the "best functioning e-waste management
System" in the world? I think you left out a modifier.
Where you wrote "*he describes*" I think you need to say who said that. There are too many names in the paragraph. I think it's Yoshida, but it's hard to follow and I had to check the footnote to be sure.
p.9
Be sure to call Maša only by the surname Buh. First names are never used when speaking respectfully in academic writing.
Conclusion:
You could say, in this case study, we… I thought it was a case study, but now you call it an essay. This is confusing. Isn't it more of a report about a case study?

I think your paragraph would be stronger if you dropped out the word "*effectively*"
Why qualify your experience when it is more about understanding the process and the relationship?
p.11
Possibly reconsider changing one of the awareness words here: "awareness of environmental awareness…" Maybe instead state the consciousness of environmental awareness. Or maybe you wish to repeat the word for meaning. In that case keep it.
Maybe state which decade you are referring to in "over a decade"?
Before this statement, "At the time of writing," maybe you could put a heading such as
Suggestions for Future Research.
Ethics and consent:
You wrote "Ethical approval and consent were not required." Was this made clear to you through an IRB application. If so, you could say, this study was approved and categorized as exempt upon

IRB review.
I think you have an extra word “that” in here:
The authors confirm that consent to publish the name of Luz Marina Giraldo.
Data Availability:
“No data are associated with this article”. It should be “data is”
References:
For some reason this item is capitalized differently than your other references. Your other references are lowercase.
Frischkorn M: More-Than-Human Choreography: Handling Things Between
Logistics and Entanglement. Bielefeld
Note: I’m not sure it’s needed, but you could put the dates when each of the photographs were taken, if they were taken in a particular year or season of a year.

Is the background of the case’s history and progression described in sufficient detail?
Partly

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?
Partly

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Not applicable

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full access and reuse by other researchers?
Partly

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data and analysis?
Yes

Is the case presented with sufficient detail to be useful for teaching or other practitioners?
Partly

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Ph.D. in Dance in Higher Education and Administration Extensive experience publishing qualitative and statistical research about the arts Editor and creator of an online academic, peer-reviewed journal about dance Author of a peer-reviewed book and multiple articles on dance topics Educator of site-specific processes in the arts Experience with dance in South East Asia and Japan.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.