

Prompt: More-Than-Human-Participatory Research

More-than-human-participatory research is an intellectual framework that develops powers of observation beyond the standard framework of western, enlightenment-based understandings of the world. The goal of this type of work is to better understand how to bring human culture and society into better relationship with the physical world.

Art, science, and philosophical traditions have long been observation-based, and our current scientific understandings of the world are based on knowledges that were originally imaged by painters and philosophers. In this prompt, as, we are exploring new ways of knowledge creation and world building. To successfully complete this prompt, we will explore outdoor space.

Biophilia Exercise:

1. Move around the outdoor space, going towards what attracts you and away from what repels, when you are in each space, try to determine how it makes you feel, try to sense the information that is being relayed by your senses. Try not to use your phone or other electronic devices as prosthetics – try to rely on your bodily senses alone. Once you have found your site:
2. Be sure and take a journal with you. Find the area you like most and relax. Sit down if you want to; get comfortable. How does this place feel? Try to describe it in words. Be as specific as you can. Go on in your journal at length if you need to. Write down everything that comes to you no matter how silly it sounds. Even if you think it's crazy. When you are done, allow your eye to rove, to be drawn to whatever one thing is most interesting to you. Look at it. Let your eyes explore it, noticing everything about it. The color, the shape, how it rests or grows in the ground. Its relation to the air around it, to the objects, furniture, architecture, plants, water, and/or soil around it. What feelings do you have? Write them down. Is there any part of what you're looking at that you like more? Less? Why? Can you tell? Do all parts of what you're looking at generate the same emotion? Different emotions? Write everything down in your journal. Do this with at least two other things that you see. You can get up close if you want to, place your eye on a level plane, take an insect view, or get high up and take a bird's eye view. Write everything down.

Each place on Earth has unique feelings associated with it, as does each thing that grows or resides there. The numbers of shadings of their emotional nuances run into the thousands. Each can fit into a specific space within the different human beings that need them. There is a richness in feeling, a companionability that comes from perceiving, the complex interweaving of emotional textures that reside in the life that surrounds us.
(from *The Lost Language of Plants* by Stephen Harrod Beuhner)

3. Next, start thinking about your site. Our emotions often give us more complex and nuanced information than our rational minds. Use intuition, and “trust your gut”. Don't

be afraid to use an unconventional site – it could be very tiny, or dispersed over a very large area. It could be someplace hidden, that a viewer wouldn't find unless directed to it. Allow this to be very experimental!

4. If possible, determine what non-human entity or entities you are interested in collaborating with. You may not know, and your observation may wind up being a method of finding out what nonhumans are at the site, and about their behavior.

5. Write everything down in your journal, repeat as often as necessary.