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"Sensoriographic Sensibilities: Immersing, Recording, and Storying the Senses in Multispecies Worlds"

Hey, Maya, L. Sasha Gora, Sevgi Mutlu Sirakova, Philine Schiller, Lena M. Schlegel, and Penelope Volinia

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Multispecies research relies on multisensory methods to know other earthly beings. This new mode of research faces a double challenge: how to know others in multi-sensory ways and how to document and communicate them back to a human audience. Previous workhas expanded on the need for combining multispecies and multisensory modalities. However, limited scholarship speaks to this approach's practical challenges, including how to re-visit, re-write, and ethically re-present sensory experiences with other species long after fieldwork. This paper explicitly addresses these challenges with an experimental process we consider "sensoriographic." A sensoriographic practice iterates through sensory experiences, such that they span spatio-temporal divides from immersive fieldwork and the (inevitable re-)turn to writing. Sensoriographic sensibilities shift the focus from singular encounters to recursively reliving experiences, asking researchers to synthesise the many partialities of knowing. We ponder: How do we overcome sensory biases like sight and individual experience while immersing in multispecies fieldwork? How do we deal with the ephemerality of sensory experiences and the fallibility of our memory in recording data? And how do we speak alongside and with other-than-human creatures as we try to write worlds thick with more-than-human life? Across diverse locations and with diverse species, we come together to stay with the trouble of immersing, recording, and storying the senses as we seek to create more responsive multispecies stories. (Abstract)

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