Woven Echoes:
Myth, Landscape, and Architecture as Listening

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary responses to ecological crisis are often shaped by solutionist approaches that treat environmental damage as a technical problem to be fixed through measurement, optimisation, and control.[1] While scientific knowledge is essential, this mode of practice frequently reinforces a dualistic worldview in which humans are positioned at the top. Such human–nature dualisms can enable ecological exploitation by denying the agency, value, and relational presence of the more-than-human world,[2] thereby risking further detachment from the lived, embodied realities of place.

This work forms part of an ongoing design-research practice that explores these themes through spatial textiles that materialise relationships between materials, bodies, land, and environment. It does so, through the interplay between scientific and narrative practices, seeking to expand current material and computational methodologies toward more situated forms of design. Drawing from textile thinking, the project considers how textiles can function not only as carriers of narratives but also as fabricators that shape, and are shaped by, their contexts.

The *Woven Echoes* installation acts as an architectural inquiry into how design might operate as a practice of listening rather than control. Listening here is not metaphorical but methodological, referring to practices of sensing, making, and dwelling that register environmental rhythms over time.[3] Rather than proposing solutions, the project asks how architecture might remain attentive to ecological change through material, temporal, and narrative engagement. Drawing on myth, environmental data, and textile making, the project explores textiles as a temporal archive: a medium through which ecological memory, present conditions, and lived rhythms of a landscape are held together. In doing so, it develops *attunement* as a mode of engaging with land through embodied and relational practices.

LANDSCAPE AS A LIVED NARRATIVE

The landscape of Kunsthal Aarhus in this project is treated as an active participant that shapes both the development of the work and how it is engaged with. Rather than a site defined through

detached survey data, landscape is understood as a lived and temporal space, experienced through rhythmic and embodied involvement.[4] It is a place where past stories are revealed and new narratives are continually formed. A place where perception and engagement are shaped by the language spoken and the stories constructed. In this sense, landscape actively participates in meaning-making.[5]

A key aspect of this understanding is the recognition that the ways people speak about land shape how they dwell in it. As Basso writes, 'wisdom sits in places',[6] emphasising that moral knowledge is embedded in specific locations and expressed through stories that guide how individuals shape their lives in relation to land. This is particularly evident in Western Apache practices, where connections to the natural landscape are formed through storytelling, and place-names function as condensed forms of knowledge in which language, memory, and place merge.[7] Here, language and land become inseparable, and stories serve not merely to describe places, but to teach responsibility, attentiveness, and appropriate ways of dwelling.[8]

As 'it matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories',[9] narratives actively shape the worlds people inhabit and the relationships they form. Stories therefore can function as moral and relational guides, encouraging modes of engagement with land that resist extraction and control in favour of care and responsiveness.

Landscape is understood both as a place of dwelling and as a medium through which rhythms are revealed and interpreted. In many Indigenous traditions, particularly Aboriginal Australian cultures, songlines function as place-based mnemonic systems through which landscape, memory, and movement are held together.[10] Similarly, Western Apache storytelling demonstrates how narratives tied to specific places operate as moral and mnemonic guides for dwelling in the landscape.[11] These practices encode ecological knowledge, survival strategies, and ethical guidance through rhythm and repetition. The land itself functions as a mnemonic field, where specific features activate particular stories and songs.

However, not all stories function in the same way. Western Apache narrative traditions distinguish between different forms of storytelling, including myths, historical tales, and everyday narratives, each serving distinct social, ethical, and cosmological purposes.[12] Among these forms, myths

occupy a specific role: they recount events from a foundational time when the world and its inhabitants were taking shape, and they are performed for instruction, explanation, and moral orientation. Myth is therefore not simply a story about the past, but a structured way of explaining how the world came to be and how people should live within it.

MYTH AS A RELATIONAL ECOLOGY

A common contemporary conception is that myth opposes scientific knowledge, frequently regarded as irrational, archaic, or incompatible with empirical methods. Within this project, myth is approached instead as a mode of ecological knowledge grounded in lived experience. Myths have the ability to articulate relationships between humans, non-human beings, and landscapes through narrative, memory, and movement.[13] Thus, myth here does not compete with scientific measurement but operates alongside it, shaping how environments are perceived, inhabited, and cared for.

Anthropological and structuralist analyses of myth further support this understanding. As Lévi-Strauss argues, myth should not be understood as a failed form of scientific reasoning but as a distinct way of organising experience, one that brings heterogeneous elements (natural processes, social relations, and moral values) to patterned correspondence.[14] Myth acts as a cosmological framework that holds together multiple scales of time and interactions without reducing them to singular explanations. It provides a way of situating knowledge rather than abstracting it.

Myths can also be spatially and geographically embedded. They historically operated alongside practices of mapping and geography, offering situated ways of understanding landscapes through story, movement, and memory.[15] While scientific measurements tend to abstract landscapes into coordinates and datasets, myths preserve experiential and relational knowledge of place. Rivers that flood, trees that shelter or threaten, and seasons that shift are encoded as narratives of consequence rather than control.[16] In this way, myth organises space through narrative, enabling relationships between people, places, and non-human actors to be negotiated over time.

Within *Woven Echoes*, myth does not function as narrative content but as a mode of engagement that shapes how data are selected, how rhythms are translated, and how material decisions remain open, reversible, and responsive rather than fixed. Myth guides not what is made, but how attention is directed in the act of making toward correspondence, care, and attunement rather than

optimisation. In particular, the project takes the Norse myth of *Askr and Embla* as a starting point. In this myth, the first humans are shaped from trees and given breath. Read not as an origin story but as an ecological ontology, it depicts a world in which human life is materially continuous with vegetal life and where agency is distributed across bodies, land, and atmosphere.[17] Returning to this myth today is not an act of belief or revival, but a reorientation of attention toward kinship, vulnerability, and shared ecological histories.

RHYTHM, DWELLING, AND MAKING-WITH

Building on the understanding of landscape as relational and storied, the project engages with the landscape through its rhythms and temporalities. A place of dwelling, where the human body is approached not as a detached surveyor of space but as a sensory instrument that records and responds to the environment through movement, touch, and attention.[18] Engagement with landscape unfolds through a meshwork of relationships between human and non-human actors (trees, soil, birds, and weather) each participating in what Ingold terms the *taskscape*: a field of ongoing activity through which places are lived rather than merely observe.[19] Each of the interactions can be viewed as having its own rhythm, with each task being a constitutive act of dwelling.[20]

Here, rhythm is not understood as a fixed or metronomic measure of time, but as an emergent quality produced through the build-up and release of tensions within ongoing activities.[21] There is no single rhythm of a site, but a plurality of interwoven temporalities unfolding across different scales, where they coexist without synchronisation, forming layered temporalities that reflect the site's ongoing processes. Attentiveness to rhythm allows landscape to be read both archaeologically, revealing traces of past activity, and as a place of present and future becoming.[22]

Rhythm is also expressed through cultural practices that link memory, place, and movement. In many Indigenous traditions, particularly in Navajo (Diné) cosmology, ceremonial chants enact *Hózhó*, a state of balance among humans, land, and non-human forces.[23]These chants do not symbolise the landscape but address it as an active participant, positioning making and dwelling as acts of ongoing repair rather than control. Rhythm, in this context, becomes a means of sustaining and restoring relational balance rather than imposing order.

Within the project, rhythm operates as a translational logic that connects myth, data, and material practice. Environmental sensing, bodily engagement, and site recordings are treated as rhythmic expressions of the landscape. Measurements of temperature, humidity, CO_2, and vibration operate alongside walking, observing, touching, and listening. These rhythms are not treated as abstract data points, but as lived and relational processes that shape how materials are selected, manipulated, and interwoven.

Through textile processes knitting, weaving, and the fabrication of bio-yarns, rhythm is translated into material form through repetition and variation. Making thus becomes a form of *making-with*,[24] in which materials, tools, bodies, and environments participate in shared processes. By working through rhythm, the project engages with landscape as a dynamic field of relations, allowing myth to become active within design practice as a guiding logic for how time, material, and attention are organised. Through this approach, rhythm becomes a way of holding together multiple temporalities: deep environmental change, present atmospheric conditions, and embodied experience. Making unfolds incrementally, allowing decisions to remain open, reversible, and responsive to the site. In it, rhythm becomes both a method of reading the landscape and a way of designing with it.

WOVEN ECHOES

Building on myth as a mode of engagement and rhythm as a mode of attention, *Woven Echoes* materialises these concepts through situated textiles that engages directly with a living landscape. The project is situated around cherry trees at Kunsthal Aarhus, whose flowering cycles are highly sensitive to temperature change. Their visible response to seasonal shifts makes them both ecological indicators and collaborators. The cherry trees are approached as actants through which relationships between climate, time, and life can be sensed, interpreted, and made material.

Textiles serve as the project's primary medium functioning as relational structures capable of encoding rhythm, time, and care through making. They allow for material decisions to remain responsive and reversible. Two main elements structure the fabrication process: the design of knitted textile patterns that translate environmental data, and the fabrication of bio-yarns produced on site. The knitted textiles translate long-term scientific datasets into tactile form. Deep time is encoded through cherry phenology records that trace shifts in flowering onset over decades. These data are translated into the base knitted textile, where pattern density and scale register the acceleration of

seasonal cycles under climate warming. The textile is wrapped around the tree, situating the data within the landscape from which it emerges.

Present atmospheric conditions enter the work through on-site environmental sensing. During the fabrication of the bio-yarns, measurements of humidity, temperature, and CO_2 inform their composition. Each bio-yarn is formed from a sodium alginate hydrogel, cured with calcium chloride, with additional powders adjusted in response to the environmental readings. As such, present atmospheric stress is embedded materially.

Lived rhythm is articulated through weaving logic. Vibrational data from the tree, alongside narrated embodied experiences from both human and non-human participants, are translated into rhythmic patterns that guide the interweaving of the in-situ bio-yarns with the knitted textile. Rhythm becomes the means through which presence is recorded, translated, and remembered through material correspondence.

Together, these layers establish a dialogue between temporalities. A relatively stable deep-time textile acts as a scaffold through which present atmospheric conditions and lived rhythms are continuously interwoven. The project does not aim to exhaustively capture site conditions, but to explore how tools of measurement, such as environmental sensors, can be engaged through lived, rhythmic, and material practices. The resulting textile system functions as a temporal archive that holds ecological memory, present conditions, and embodied encounters within a material structure, one that remains responsive and capable of being woven and unwoven as the site continues to change.

CONCLUSION

Woven Echoes operates as a practice of listening. By bringing together myth, environmental sensing, and textile making, the project explores how architecture can remain attentive to a multiplicity of rhythms rather than seeking to control them. It cultivates an ongoing process of engagement with the site. Through responsive and reversible material practices, data are translated into tactile qualities that register change over time. In doing so, the project frames architecture as a temporal and relational practice, positioning both human and non-human actors as active participants in shaping how environments are sensed, inhabited, and cared for.
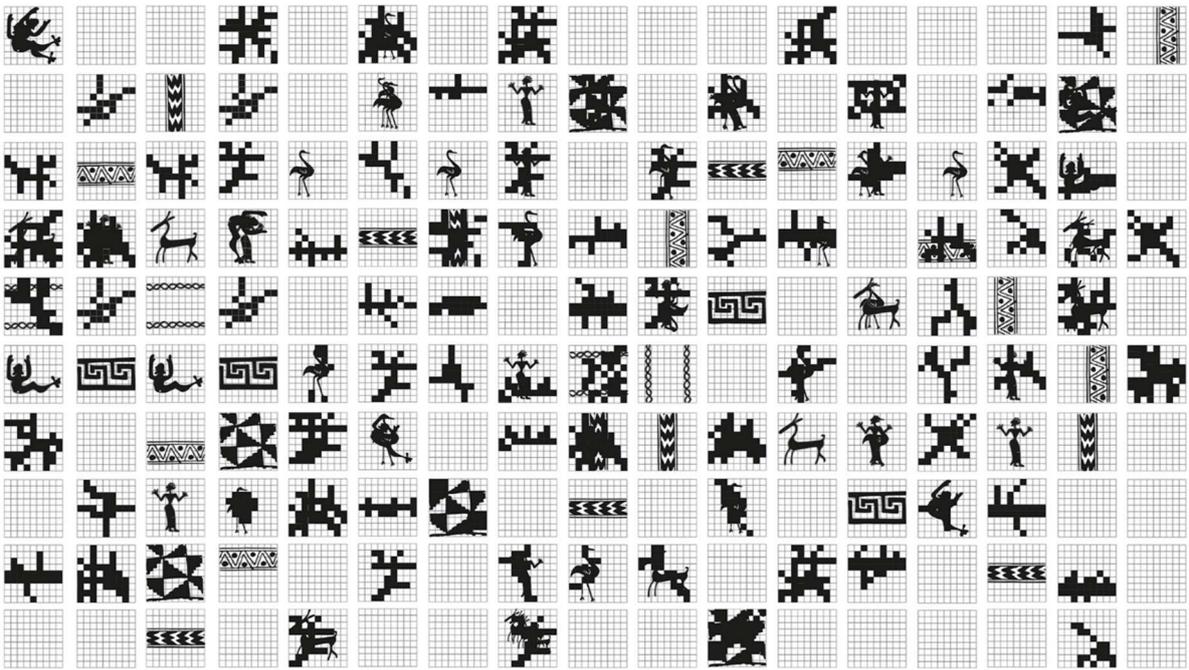
Hybrid

Knit
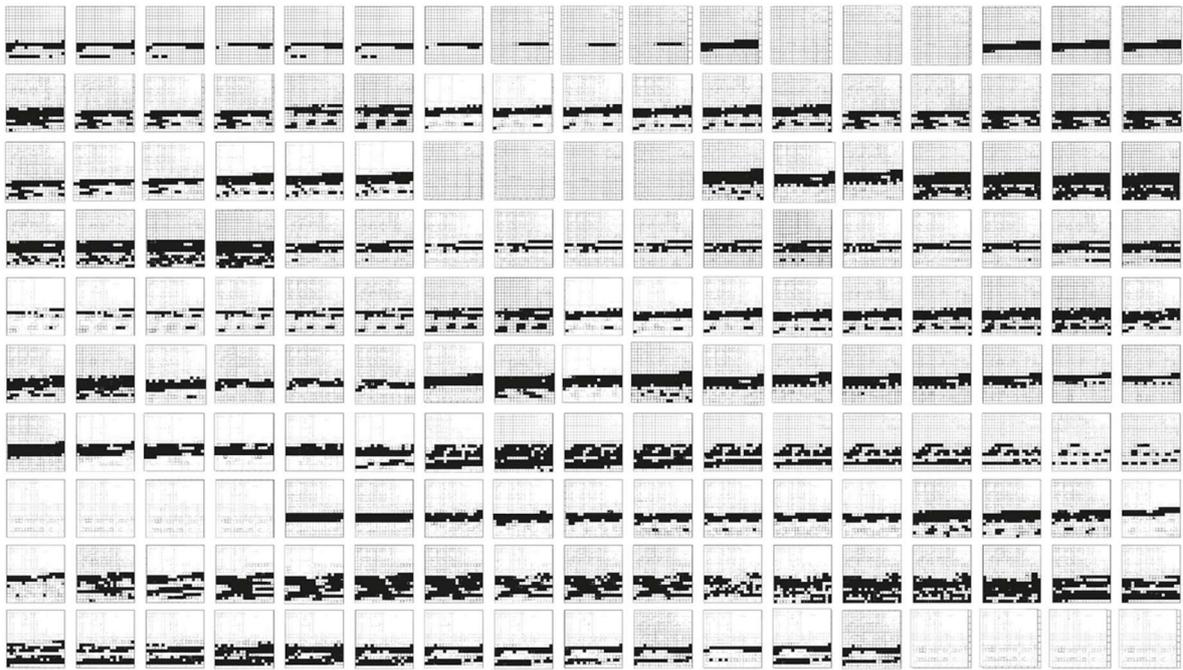
Pattern – Haraway

Pattern

Yarn

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Bio

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Notes

[1] Daniela K Rosner, *Critical Fabulations: Reworking the Methods and Margins of Design*, 1st ed., Design Thinking, Design Theory (MIT Press, 2018), 158, https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/11035.001.0001.

[2] Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 1st ed., Opening Out: Feminism for Today (Routledge, 1993), 41–68, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203006757.

[3] Tim Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," *World Archaeology* (London) 25, no. 2 (1993): 152–74, https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.1993.9980235.

[4] Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape."

[5] David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous : Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (Pantheon Books, 1996), 56–61.

[6] Keith H. Basso 1940-2013, *Wisdom Sits in Places : Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque : University of New Mexico Press, [1996] ©1996, 1996), 99, https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/999878830002121.

[7] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places : Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*, 37–52.

[8] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places : Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*, 105–127.

[9] Donna Jeanne Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Experimental Futures : Technological Lives, Scientific Arts, Anthropological Voices (Duke University Press, 2016), 35.

[10] Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous : Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, 140–156.

[11] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places : Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*, 37–52; 105–127.

[12] Keith H Basso and Robin Ridington, "Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache," *Anthropology and Humanism* 23, no. 2 (1998): 37–52.

[13] Christopher Abram, *Evergreen Ash: Ecology and Catastrophe in Old Norse Myth and Literature* (University of Virginia Press, 2019), 19–40; 124–147, JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvbcd06q.

[14] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," *The Journal of American Folklore* 68, no. 270 (1955): 428–44, https://doi.org/10.2307/536768.

[15] Greta Hawes and Greta Hawes, *Myths on the Map : The Storied Landscapes of Ancient Greece*, First edition. (Oxford University Press, 2017), 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198744771.001.0001.

[16] Hawes and Hawes, *Myths on the Map : The Storied Landscapes of Ancient Greece*, 65–89.

[17] Christopher Abram, *Evergreen Ash: Ecology and Catastrophe in Old Norse Myth and Literature* (University of Virginia Press, 2019), 84–102, JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvbcd06q.

[18] Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," 154–156.

[19] Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," 153–161.

[20] Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," 153–161.

[21] Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," 158–162.

[22] Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," 163–168.

[23] Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous : Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, 164–181.

[24] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 4–12.