

As an interdisciplinary and transmedia artist Allison Arkush engages a wide and fluctuating range of materials, modalities, and research in her practice. In *It Won't Be Easy*, Arkush places and piles her multimedia sculptures into installations, overlapping them with her writing and poetry, sometimes also layering in (or extending out to) audio and video components. **[Interested in] or [This approach enacts/mimics/facilitates] probing prevailing value systems and flattening hierarchies within and between humans, the other-than-human, and the inanimate—though no less lively. Her work meditates on and vendiagrams the forsaken and the sacred, the traumatic and nostalgic.**¹

There is an underlying, undulating, lexicon of symbols and metaphorical motifs that connects and deepens the human, nonhuman, and more-than-human narratives within her work. The individual symbols of this lexicon are *germunits*², each representing a single germinated concept/object that has proliferated and taken on new associations and meanings, deeply rooted in and vining through her practice. They coalesce and congeal into larger sculptures, ***Object Ecosystems: works containing multiple germunits, materials, found objects, they branch out, forming knots and networks of trophic exchange.***³

The works in *It Won't Be Easy* can be understood (i.e. read) similarly to her poems, handwritten diagrams, annotations, and even the scrawled lists. Just instead of words the

¹ *Should this go somewhere later instead? Maybe as part of next paragraph when I introduce object ecosystems (see footnote 3)? Or could be broken up into two parts and put in dif places...*

² Want to point out: Deliberate choice in creating/wording this terminology. Ties the work to ecology and sciences, and establishes/implies the germunit is a fundamental building block within my practice (can be used to build infinite combinations, like an atom or cell). *How can I add this without it being a footnote or clunky clause? Is it ok as a footnote?*

³ *Replace with or just add: "Mixing more than materials and modalities Object Ecosystems organize, figure, and refigure. Manifestations of decay and growth, of wasted and spent, of strange and familiar, all overlap. Arrangements become portals of and through temporality, flickering like her lanterns or a cephalopod's chromatophores."*

arrangements are primarily of physical objects and materials. Her more-than-linguistic language. She both celebrates and frustrates with the limits of language. [**In solace and allegiance,**]⁴ She heavily underlines passages of Karen Barad, Donna Haraway, and Michael Foucault's writings: language only represents matter approximately. Allison visualizes the borders of language as a murky interspace, both tidal zone and deep sea. Low-visibility, turbulent, fertile, fecund, gritty yet slippery, muddy. In using language to describe and examine the internal logic of her practice—figuring and refiguring through outlines, word webs, poetics, and essays—she seeks to notice, identify, languish and luxuriate in these areas of tension and dissonance. Also noting when(if?) areas that resist such elisions reveal themselves. In this way Allison and the viewer begin to make meaning, question, and speculate on alternative narratives and notions of progress, with the potential to resonate across personal, collective, and temporal levels.

⁴ *Trying to say that I look up to them and find solace in the fact that these thinkers also acknowledge and write abt the limits of language. (Not sure if 'in solace' is a made up use of 'solace')* Bc they agree that the limitations (even failings of language) are a feature of it being an approximation of matter, not necessarily a sign of futility in language as a tool and artform...doesn't negate the power of language, bc its shortcomings are not mutually exclusive to it's utility and power. [in fact maybe the shortcomings are where poetry and diagrams live]. so my efforts to use writing to make sense of things isn't totally doomed/futile.

Any of the following worth trying to include?

Each germ spore is in conversation with the object ecosystem it resides in. The object ecosystem is in conversation within its own content and the constellation of other Object Ecosystems that constitute the exhibition. Transitivity, germ spores are all in conversation with each other and with other; networks of webs of trophic exchange. All elements can be considered in conversation with one another, leading to infinite **physical/performed** results and trains of query. Not all yield compelling results, not right now at least. So those fade back into the neuronal network while the compelling come forward. But this network is living and evolving, with the fore shifting and subducting in areas (looking like the aouara borealis in movement) as the network grows and brings formerly faded threads to the surface. Its figuration encoded with its history, the present, and potentiality, futures—encoded like dna or hyperlinks. When there's no such thing as compartmentalizing.

Abject places/examples

Shipwrecks Uboat wrecks, old abandoned treehouses, gutted asylums, Chernobyl Exclusion Zone