

Pacha Suomi

Ars Häme ry — Hämmenlinna / Finnland

with works from:

Piela Auvinen, Edwina Goldstone, Maija Helasvuo, Salla Laurinolli, Pilvi Ojala, Anni Paunila, Leea Pienimäki, Kukka Pitkänen, Anssi Taulu & Anniina Vainionpää

Organisation: Sirpa Taulu

Curator / Autor: Pablo Hermann / Organ kritischer Kunst

„So, wie die Organisationsweise eines Lebewesens zugleich durch seine organische Kraft und seine Umwelt bestimmt ist, muss die kulturelle Entwicklung eines Volkes, wenn sie gelingen soll, zugleich bestimmt sein durch den ‚Charakter‘ oder ‚Genius eines Volks‘ und durch die physischen Bedingungen (‚Clima‘) des ‚Landes‘ oder ‚Erdstrichs‘, in dem es lebt. Diese beiden Determinanten beeinflussen sich wechselseitig: das jeweilige ‚Clima‘ prägt die Sinnlichkeit und Denkart des Volkes, das Volk prägt sein Land, indem es dieses zweckmäßig gestaltet, d. h. kultiviert. Im Laufe ihrer Geschichte bildet so jede Kultur eine organische, Mensch und Natur umgreifende Einheit, die einzigartig ist, weil jedes Volk besondere Anlagen hat und jedes Land spezifische Anpassungen erfordert bzw. Nutzungsmöglichkeiten bietet.“ (Johann Gottfried Herder)

„Just as the way a living being is organized is determined by its organic strength and its environment, the cultural development of a people, if it is to succeed, must also be determined by the ‚character‘ or ‚genius of a people‘ and by the physical conditions (‚Clima‘) of the ‚country‘ or ‚streak‘ in which it lives. These two determinants mutually influence each other: the respective ‚climate‘ shapes the sensuality and way of thinking of the people, the people shape their country by making it functional, i.e. H. cultured. In the course of its history, each culture forms an organic unit encompassing people and nature, which is unique because each people has special facilities and each country requires specific adaptations or uses.“ (Johann Gottfried Herder)

An artistic experiment in relation to the terms Ecology and Homeland ...



„untitled“, Maija Helasvuo, Stone 12 x12 x28 cm

„Homeland is the place I remember the people I loved and lost.“ (Maija Helasvuo)

In Finland the works of the artists, in special the ones chosen for this project, are straight linked to the earth and nature, not only by materiality, structure, shape or color, also in a meta-formal way implementing a vital consciousness of the roots of organic life and the interdependence of mankind and civilization on the one hand and mother earth on the other side (which in the Quechua/Aymara culture from the Andean region is determinate and known as „pacha mama“). This intertwining between us (as individuals or societies) and the planet as a living entity is a cosmic principle which in our contemporary societies is systemically ignored or even counteracted. The destructive dynamics of the consumerist capitalism, in it's actual form as a virulent neoliberalism is transforming any aspect of human life all over the planet. It is a worldwide environmental and social state of emergency. The extinction of species, biohazards, environmental pollution, mass-migration and surplus exploitation are only a few concepts which shows the results of an unleashed economic ruling system which is colonizing even the most remote places, and destroying the matrix of our planet. A consciousness about the vital interdependence between earth and mankind as species seems to be the first step to overcome nationalism, racism, exploitation and fascism as the most ugliest forms of the capitalist display.

The ideas of ecology and earthiness, also „Heimat“ (a term used in German to describe homeland and the intent of a cultural identity) are very close to each other and interweaved. In the cause of that, nationalist discourses are attacking the environmental consciousness and are exploiting the „homeland“ as a tool of segregation and punishment against the excluded ones - in the „own“ societies the economical weak ones, but also people arrived by any migration causes - for sure triggered by the same systemic capitalist impulse.

In Autumn 2019 when this artistic project was in full process, I realized the strong intertwining of these both terminologies observing the political, social and environmental clashes in South America in that singular time-frame. While the Amazon is getting burned down in Brazil favoring the large landowners and rangers, strong social and political ruptures are going through the Bolivian, Chilean, Ecuadorian, Colombian and Venezuelan societies, among others. A 20 years period of progressive changes in the continent (here the environmental, social and economical fields) including the strong concept of plurinationality -proclaimed and implemented in the political systems by the autochtonous people-, has been followed by a current reactionary tendency which is massively destroying this vision of the plurinational project.

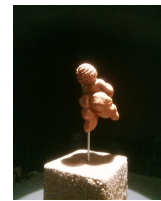
The indigenous people in special in the Andean region, have been able to establish by law the equality of cultures living on the same place: the mother earth as an originary entity for all peoples and species. The concept of homeland had radically changed because of the plurinational idea!

Suddenly the perspective on this concept was focused from the viewpoint of the exploited ones. Exploited during five centuries of colonialism (1), the first destructing wave of capitalism as a planetary scourge. In the book of Eduardo Galeano “Open Veins of Latin America” he describes the atrocities happened to the autochtonous people and makes clear why their demand for an own homeland is so important. The recognition of the originary culture by implementing the indigenous languages into official laws, as well as teaching Quechua, Aymara, Guarani (among other 30 native languages around in South America) (2) in schools beside the traditional official Spanish or Portuguese language, was

long overdue.



Wiphala



“Paleogym”, Piela Auvinen, ceramic sculptures

The symbol of this concept is the Wiphala flag (in reality it is more a symbolic agricultural calendar than a flag) of the native people, who have a clear consciousness of the mother earth in their cosmovision (which we all share as our home that we should preserve and protect). Ecology and Human Dignity was the main goal: Here the sense of motherland or homeland gets a turn towards a deconstructed new lecture, based on ancient beliefs of autochthonous cultures.

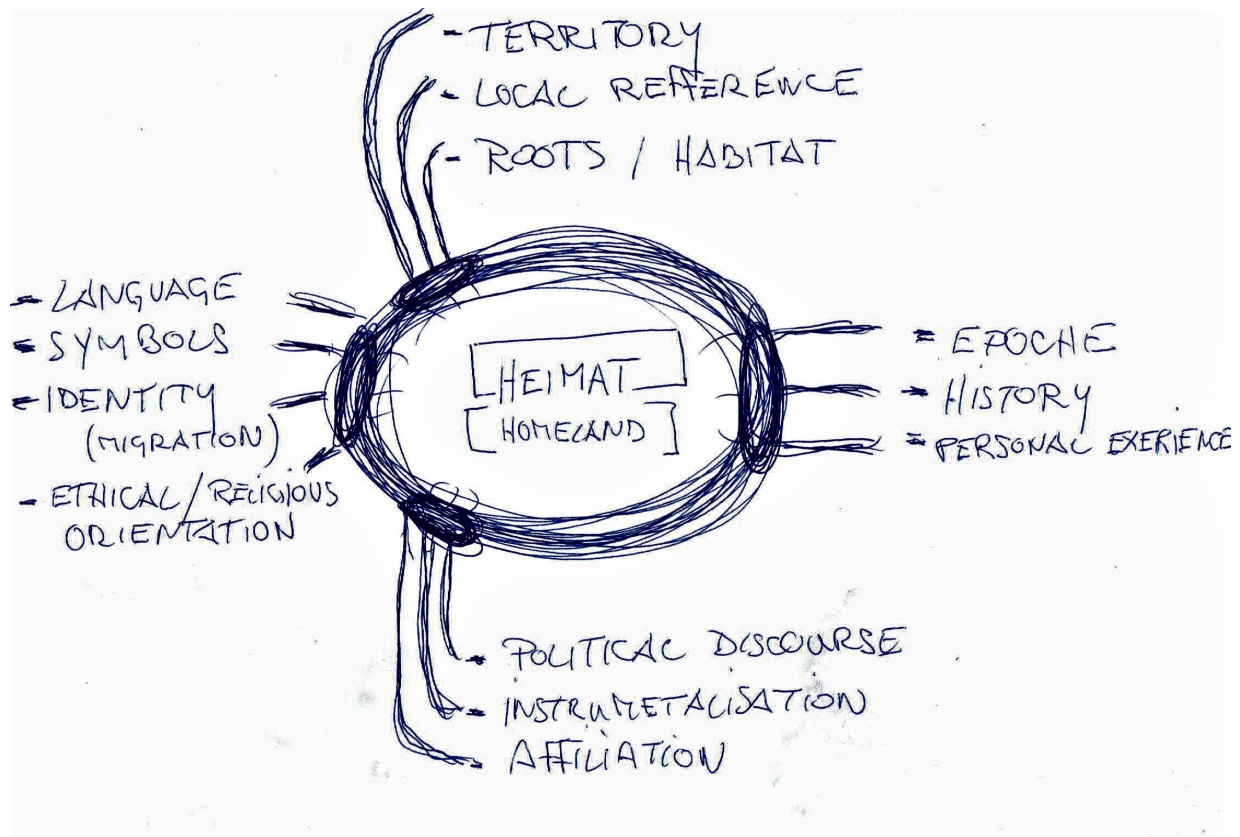
The current socio-political and economical developments are testimonies of a roll-back on these progressive cultural changes during the last two decades.

This problems are shown clearly in the racist discourse and political coup done in Bolivia against the plurinational and indigenous government: the one who deconstructed the Nation terminology, rebuilding a new perception of (multiethnic) state, in a very similar development as it was already experienced in Ecuador. Of course, the complexity of social changes has many other factors linked to special regional differences. To mention only a few parameters of political influence, would be important to regard: the exploitation by transnational companies, drug trafficking, corruption, and chauvinism... but including all those items in the analyzed context definitely would go beyond the scope of this cultural-aesthetic text.

The context I actually am referring to, is the area of conflict between the environmental consciousness and the nationalist proclamation of homeland within all its revisionist and racist discourses. The negation of the obvious and scientifically well proved environmental collapse is coming out of the same womb as the racist, anti migrant discourses exploit the homeland as poor victim need to be defended by brave nationalist people.

I am talking about the same reactionary tendencies which are also harming and threatening the European societies and the supra-national project of European community. The main aim is to cut the term „homeland“ from the idea of nation or a national membership. The „Heimat“ means to feel any affiliation towards a social, territorial and personal environment, not a Nation or State. The term of homeland has four different dimensions (3) and not necessary all of them have positive connotations :

1. a local dimension
2. a temporal dimension
3. a social dimension
4. a cultural dimension



The Title of the exhibition consists of the reflection about the two terms being the main impulses:

PACHA means earth in Quechua and Aymara. The idea is a view towards nature and the earth in a sense of connection with its structures and rhizome networks. Pacha-Suomi is a term, which should be used as a progressive one, by us and our contributing people - reconnecting with the earth, creating consciousness about it.

SUOMI because it should mean the earth where we are living on. It is more linked to the language than to a political territory or state, it is more linked to the land than to a national belonging or passport. In Scandinavia are recognized minorities declaring their language as a official minority language in all the countries around Finland (4). Our home, our roots, our cultural heritage, people who pass or maybe stay, our force to understand the nature from „outside“, and inside. We are connected and linked by the biggest network itself „PACHAMAMA“ so the belonging to any nationalities or other inventions to segregate, imprison people physically and mentally, or divisions by origin are obsolete.



"Soil Resurrected", Salla Laurinolli, Acrylic and Oil on canvas, 100 x 129 cm

I study how individual concept of nature collides in shared concept of nature through the individual experience. Lately I've been focusing on historically significant places whose significance does not necessarily accumulate to the spectacular views of the area. Experiencing the place means mostly walking with struggle, sweat and wind or the fear of being lost in the wilderness. Stumbling in difficult terrain draws attention to various obstacles and caverns. Observation shifts closer, under the scenery and starts to grasp the movement that happens in dusk and darkness, where the essence of all life is created.

(Salla Laurinolli)

As curator I invited the colleagues to share their thought about the items I gave as Curatorial framework, here with a consume-critical position of the Wunderkammer:

„It is a common thought that Finnish people have a strong connection to their environment. We find this hardly true- most people just want to exploit the Nature around them. Well, of course people love trees but they don't want the leaves to fall on their gardens. In general they want to control everything and that concerns the Nature as well. Our artwork is named Wunderkammer and it is a small collection of artificial and found objects. It can be seen as a comment to a fact that we love Nature as long it is placed

safely behind a glass in the museum or in a cage at the zoo.“

I am thinking of homeland as in the context of our work “Curiosity Cabinet”. I see the whole globe, the Earth as our common homeland. People have continuous need to re-organize, collect, classify nature. We have created vast systems to make order in the abundance of things surrounding us. The earth as our common homeland has no borders. Nature covers the Earth. By classifying objects and nature we expand our home, our circle of experience. By classifying we break borders as well as create new ones. These borders are not geographical nor eternal, but always changing as human itself.

(Pilvi Ojala & Anni Paunila: Wunderkammer)



Wunderkammer (detail), Pilvi Ojala & Anni Paunila



Black Room "Pacha Suomi"

Anssi Taulu gives us an artistic work which is directly connected with the language and the roots and gives his work a strong cultural dimension towards the understanding of homeland.

I am approaching homeland theme from my relationship to the environment and language which are inseparable on a mental level. In my childhood I enjoyed spending lots of time in the forest. I learned the names of the plants and trees. So my mother tongue is connected to the land, its history and future. That's why my "heimat" is there where everything has a name in my language.

(Anssi Taulu)



"Mother and Child", Edwina Goldstone,
photograph on hand coated tyvek



"Waspfactory", Annsi Taulu,
Installation, cotton and wood

In the case of Edwina Goldstone the main factor is the migration element. If you have moved from your homeland and you feel settled down in another place the homeland as such is not necessarily moved - you also can decide to have two spots (or even more) which you defines like your homeland. So we can state that people with migrant background can erupt the idea that homeland is only connected with (one singular) territory. For meta-national people homeland often is beyond the territoriality which by structure leads us towards the capitalist sense of land and homeland.

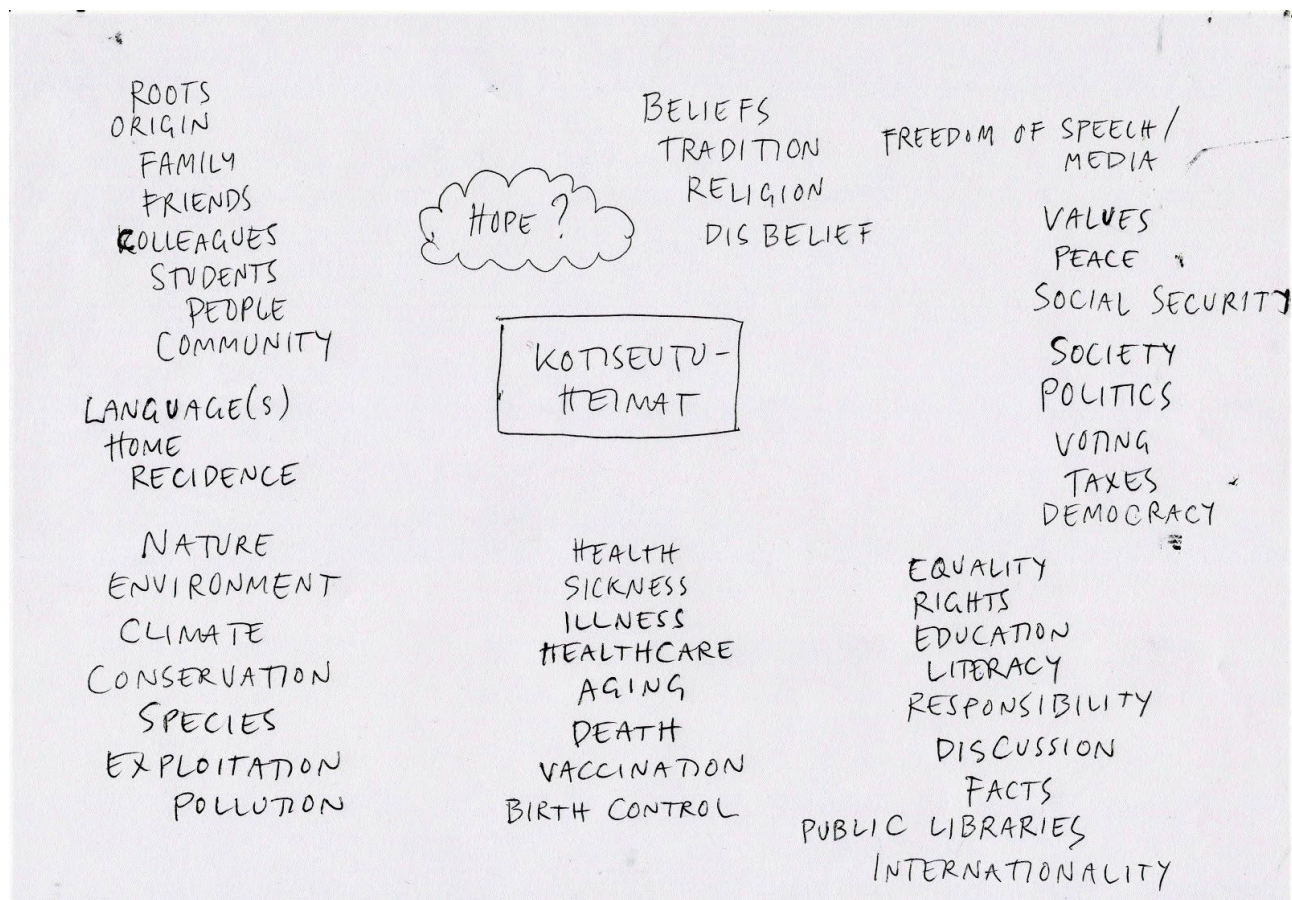
"In its original sense, the word territory describes a demarcated area, a clearly bordered unit that can be physical, symbolic or metaphysical in nature. Like few other concepts, 'territory' encompasses the complex of material disputes over power and its historical origins, comprised of economic, political and strategic parameters. This is a term from the Middle Ages, which extends beyond a physical land domain to describe a power position and the associated position of authority (structured in hierarchies) (...)."

(Demarcations – on the territorial in critical arts, Pablo Hermann) (5)

The very concept of the words '*Homeland / Motherland or Fatherland*' for me evoke images of identity possession and nationalism, and have become profoundly politicized. Having lived almost equal years of my life in 2 countries, I don't associate or identify my national identity 100% with either country so in that sense I am 'homelandless'. Does this contribute to who I am? Yes of course! But it does not define me. I am more than the sum of where I was born or where I choose to live.

'Homeland' if I have to use a phrase! is more a reminder of our tangible and intangible relationship to the world around us, as well as a reminder of our inter-dependence on that world/place/country for our physical and mental sustenance, and the formation of a collective identity.

(Edwina Goldstone)



„Mindmapping – Kotiseutu“



„Traces“, Leea Pienimäki, acrylic on canvas

Since the state of the world is depressing and scary, I am addicted to calming daily walks in nature with my dog, especially in protected old forests. My art filters urban marks and traces of humanity through nature's own creations, and the peace of mind that I find in the forest. I breathe in the nature and breathe out my art; following my intuition, allowing the process lead itself. The Traces series is a kind of visual diary.

(...) Homeland usually refers to a place where a person was born, or in some cases feels at home. For some people the concept of homeland may sadly be only a memory, or even utopia, and yet it is often like tattooed in the person's memory. Sometimes it can be more an emotional than a physical place and issue, but the question of homeland is huge in all aspects. Also, I think the concept of homeland, and at least nationality, needs rethinking, just like the concept of gender is being redefined today. (..)

(Leea Pienimäki)



„At Night“ (detail), Anniina Vainionpää, woodcut and monotypia 150 x 97 cm

The Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) writes in his book *Letters To A Young Poet*: "For if we imagine this being of the individual as a larger or smaller room, it is obvious that most people come to know only one corner of their room, one spot near the window, one narrow strip on which they keep walking back and forth."

This piece is a part of an ongoing series of works *Condensed Time*. In my work I often depict aspects of humanity such as feeling of disparity and alienation. According to my personal experiences concepts of safe and familiar can transform into something strange and unrecognizable.

(Anniina Vainionpää)

In my works I often depict nature as a metaphor of growth and degrading. I unite the human organs, vessels and cells with the moss, algae, branches, roots and myceliums. For me it's all the same, all connected. Especially roots are important symbols for me. They are the base -concretely and metaphorically.

In my work "Hyphas" I admire the trees and other living systems. The work can be "read" from up to down; it starts as branches but later transforms to smooth movements, maybe to cells, and continues with earth/stones and water. The work consists of two pieces mirroring each others. The pairs can be seen as positive/negative, as matrix/print or, why not, as yin/yang. This work is my personal praise for nature and I'm happy to present it in this context in Berlin.

(Kukka Pitkänen)

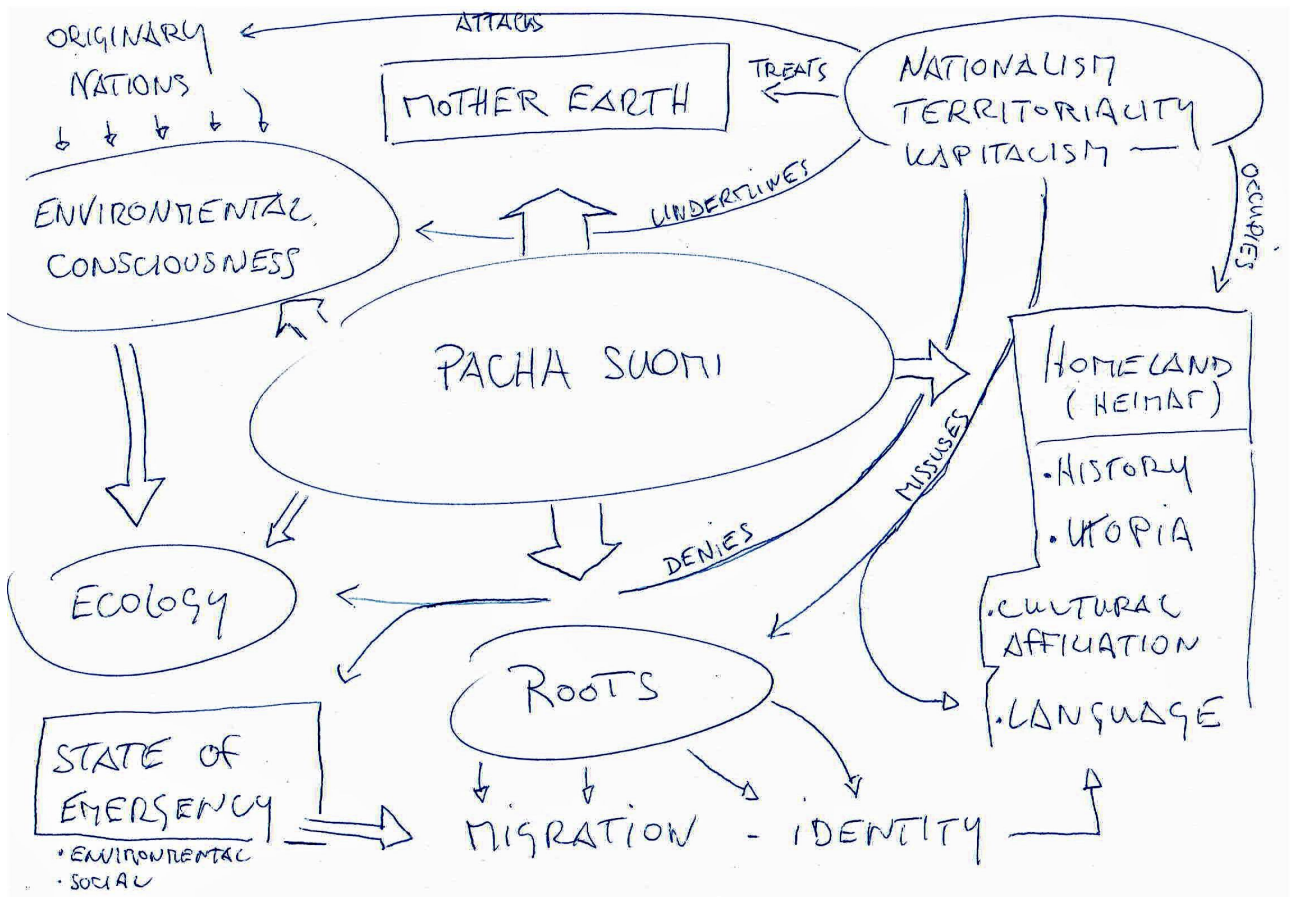


Kukka Pitkänen: Rihmat / Hyphas, *pencil*, size about 1 x 7 and 1 x 9 metres

All this statements are very personal approaches to the thematic we have been working about. It is very clear that there is a discrepancy between the options you can use and implement the term of homeland. The mentioned one as a destructive, segregationist and exploiting way to understand the own land, a mixture of misunderstood conservatism, nationalism and racism. This misunderstood notion of Heimat is showing it's fruits with every new social irruption, like the right wing terror act (in Hanau / Hessen, Germany) the last night - 10 dead victims with migration background.

The other notion, is a conscious consideration of a planetary view of homeland. The mother earth as the ultimate homeland of all people and all species eliminating ethical differences and gathering common values. The following mind-map describes the relation between this two terms, connecting problematic items which will be discussed for a long time in the societies, we as artists had our positioning in an actual socio-political context. The modest contribution with this work, consists in giving impulses for the audience and participants to keep thinking about the possibilities of language and symbols we have in order to contribute to the planetary consciousnesses and braving the reaction.

We draw a bow from the Willendorf Venus to the consumerist reality, from the real to utopia, from viral, extraterrestrial Waspfactories to imaginary extinguished species, from white to black, from roots to wings, from monochromatic to color: all in all a mental rhizome in honor of our earth.



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- (1) Open Veins of Latinamerica, Eduardo Galeano, 1971, Editorial Siglo XXI, ISBN 950-895-094-3
 - (2) Lateinamerika Institut (LAI) / Freie Universität Berlin, https://www.lai.fu-berlin.de/e-learning/projekte/indigen_sprachen/sprachfamilien/suedam_tabelle.html
 - (3) Gerhardt Handschuh; *Brauchtum – Zwischen Veränderung und Tradition*. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Hrsg.): *Heimat*. Bonn. 1990 <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heimat>
 - (4) Wikipedia / Finnish language, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finnish_language
 - (5) Pablo Hermann, *Demarcations – on the territorial of critical arts* http://www.sharonpaz.com/personalterritories/PT_PDF2014.pdf

