

1. Introduction: My name is Marnie Pagter and I'm an intermedia major at PNCA.
2. Land Acknowledgement: Portland, Oregon lies within the traditional homelands of the Multnomah, Oregon City Tumwater, Watlala, and Clackamas Chinooks and the Tualatin Kalapuya Peoples who were relocated to the Grand Ronde Reservation under the Kalapuya etc., 1855, ratified treaty (also known as the Willamette Valley Treaty, 1855). Today, these Tribes are a part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. The Grand Ronde people continue to maintain a connection to their ancestral homelands and maintain their traditional cultural practices.
3. Project Proposal:  
Humans have become a major force of nature in the Anthropocene, a proposed geological epoch where human activity has been the dominant influence on the climate and environment, yet this reality has been obfuscated. This installation interrogates Western society's anthropocentric worldview using speculative fiction to envision the future and our evolving relationship with Earth's organisms. By blurring the line between technology and biology as well my use of various digital and physical mediums this installation will evolve into an immersive environment that culminates into introspection for the viewer.
4. I visualize this installation will fill up a medium-size room that contains images that evokes visuals or ideas of mutation, biotechnology, and climate chaos in order to dramatize Western societies' effect on the non-human world.  
As an intermedia major, I plan to make use of materials ranging from sound, 3D printing, painting, and other mediums to create a fully fleshed-out environment. All of my pieces will be research-intensive because of the conceptual connection to my thesis and due to my exploration of new materials.. The materials I select will be due to their aesthetic qualities or connotations with technology or biology. For my more illustrative or figurative pieces, I will be picking mediums that best represent the idea or scene they are depicting. My goal for the end of this project is to have a minimum of 3 pieces in this installation.
5. Speculative fiction - a genre of fiction that encompasses works in which the setting is other than the real world, involving supernatural, futuristic, or other imagined elements.

There has been a widespread emergence of writers, thinkers, and artists using speculative fiction as a way to explore the scientific imaginaries of the Anthropocene (Freitas and Truman, 2020). This project will fuse real engagements with science and elements of science fiction to construct an environment that teeters between fantasy and reality. While this project utilizes science, it won't shy away from critiquing the relationship with Western society and its role in contributing to the Anthropocene.

6. Katja Novitskova's practice often concludes in coherent ecosystems that jam hard at the intersection between technology, sentience and art.

A lot of her well known work involves immersive environments of cardboard cutout animals. In a podcast interview I listened to she explained the reasoning behind these works. She thought about how the internet is a competition for our attention yet pictures of cute or beautiful animals have always been some of the things that get the most clicks online and she wondered if it would still grab attention in the gallery space. She believes there is a primordial or pre human interest in animals even before commodification. She notes that humans have an instinctual interest in nature → almost like our brains are hard-wired to feel sympathy when we see images of an animal mother with its baby. Additionally, other emotions can be invoked in the viewer and viewers have a harder time connecting to non-anthropomorphized animals such as worms. In some of her work she brings attention to laboratory animals and bacteria to broaden the idea/scope of ecological interest.

In this piece on screen, her sculpture represents a monument of biodiversity, and she mixes in graphical elements of scientific and conspiracy theory contexts.

7. Influences: Timur Si-Qin

Artist Timur Si-Qin's interests in the evolution of culture, the dynamics of cognition, and contemporary philosophy, weave together to create a new kind of environmental art. Taking form through diverse media such as installations of 3D printed sculptures, light-boxes, websites, texts, and virtual reality, Si-Qin's work often challenges common notions of the organic vs the synthetic, the natural vs the cultural, the human vs non-human, and other dualisms at the heart of western consciousness.

His piece The 8th Gate Sorting Processor, is a part of a solo exhibition at Magician Space, Beijing called Biogenic Material. Informed by the qualities and form of rock minerals, the exhibition presents 'Truth by Peace', a brand released by the artist for this exhibition under the banner of which includes an installation of sculpture and photography. Geological transformation is used as a metaphor for a consumer culture heated, pressurized and compressed in order to generate new patterns and forms.

## **8. Research**

- a. Here are a few selected readings that have contributed to my understanding of my thesis.
  - i. *New Empiricisms in the Anthropocene: Thinking With Speculative Fiction About Science and Social Inquiry*, was incredibly insightful for introducing me to a wide variety of thinkers and showed how numerous poets, artists, and writers have used speculative fiction in their work to convey the Anthropocene.
  - ii. *Speculations on Anonymous materials* cover three different exhibition, but I took the most from the writing about the nature after nature exhibition because it showed how artists approached the Anthropocene and nature in their work.
  - iii. *Life as Surplus* was a book recommendation by the artist Katja Novitskova, and it talks about the intersection of neoliberalism and biotechnology.

## **9. Past Work:**

Before going over projects I've started for my thesis, I'd like to share some work that I've made during my time at PNCA that involved me thinking about the Anthropocene and/or about the interaction between humans and animals.

One project I started on during my Sophomore year at PNCA was a soundscape that used synthesizers and foley(which is a technique used in film that involves creating and "performing" everyday sounds for movies and television shows). These methods allowed me to recreate various bioacoustics of animals representing a dramatized field recording once we no longer have the sound source.

My Junior year I created a Vuo project, which is an application designed to help people develop interactive experiences, live performances, digital media, and more. My project consisted of a projected hologram of an animal that was manipulated by the amplitude of its surrounding environment. My intention going into this piece was to create a work where we had an effect on the animal projection just by being in the same space.

## **10. Thesis Works:**

I will provide you with project descriptions, the research behind my individual projects, my materials, and the progress of my various pieces. This is not an exhaustive list as I will be adding to my body of work as I continue my research.

11.

Biophony (also known as the niche hypothesis) consists of the Greek prefix, bio, meaning life, and the suffix, phon, meaning sound, is a neologism used to describe the collective sound that vocalizing animals create in each given environment.

The main pillar of my installation is the same soundscape that I started my sophomore year, except expanded and built upon. I envision the audio to be played as a seamless loop throughout the installation. The audio traverses the viewer through different terrains such as underwater, swamp, and forest. I'll share a short one-minute example of the beginning.

12. Phylotypic Project:

My next piece revolves around the phylotypic stage. The *phylotypic stage* is a key concept in evolution and development. It can be defined as the time point in the development of an animal when it most closely resembles other vertebrates.

13. I plan to juxtapose the human embryo and a mouse embryos. This will reflect that we both carry ancient genes as well as the dependency we have on mice for research.

There will be 3 laser etched cast acrylic panels. Each panel will have a corresponding color.

In the middle will be an ovum which will depict the mouse and human embryo residing in the same space.

14. The way I wanted to execute this piece was directly inspired by a piece by Timur Si-Qin, because I was enamored by his light sculptures.

15.

The green color of the mouse embryo directly references the creation of glow in the dark mice that were produced by chemists and gene therapy experts by inserting the code for modified proteins into the cells of mice.

The embellishments in this design I took from the Allen Mouse Brain Atlas, which is a genome-wide, three-dimensional map of gene expression throughout the adult mouse brain.

16.

The embellishments from this design were sourced from a 3D viewer created by PDB-101, which is an online portal for teachers, students, and the general public to promote exploration in the world of proteins and nucleic acids

17.

So far, I've had to do a lot of prototyping and troubleshooting to create the base which will hold my cast acrylic panels. As of right now, I had to scrap the designs I had in fusion 360 with the plans of using a CNC router for the base.

18.

Instead I have designed an enclosure that I can create with a laser cutter. Inside I'll have three addressable LED lights, which will be connected to an Arduino which will send code to the lights to assign each strip a color.

19.

Recent efforts of mine have been to 3D print a shell form to insert a speaker to play ocean sounds to recreate the nostalgia of holding up a shell to your ear.

I have decided to create a mold of the 3D print I made because I didn't like the results, and now I'm planning on making a resin cast

Currently, I'm still deciding if I want to put a speaker in or on the seashell to play ocean sounds or alternatively to create my own noise generator which would be attached to the seashell. In both of these approaches, I want the wires and components to be visible which is why I have chosen to create a resin cast.

20.

Next term, I plan on making more pieces for my installation and finishing the current projects I've started. Before then, I plan on brainstorming more ideas.

Already, I have started doing some ideation around a sculpture where I'd do a UV print of open-source 3D models of bones onto thin plastic and thermoformed with a heat gun, which is a technique which is utilized by the artist duo Pakui Hardware.

Additionally, I have ideas about illustrative work that reflects visuals of mutation, artificiality, or degeneration.

## **21. Summary**

To summarize, I have a goal of creating a minimum of 3 pieces, which will sit together in an installation. These works will fabricate transmuted bodies and hybrid interlocking ecologies of natural, animal, and human activities in the hope of cultivating introspection in the viewer.

22. Questions?