

Arboroscene: reflections on decay is the result of a long and intimate contemplation of a dying apple tree. The title reflects on an alternative way to look at things: de-linking ourselves from our human centric interpretation of life we live by today.

The title reveals different levels of comprehension. *Arboroscene* is ambiguous by its written polyvalence and thus calls into question our own cosmopolitanism. The era we currently live in has been described as the Anthropocene: an interval in which human impact and existence take the forefront in the universe. Playing with the latin root of the word tree—*arbor*—*Arboroscene* is a change of perspective: how would we perceive our environment if we decentred ourselves and contemplated the tree as an axis, rotating and impacting its surroundings?

On a local level, *Arboroscene* refers to a particular scene the artist witnessed over a year, observing the ill apple tree in her garden decaying over time. Along the pages, the scene multiplies into micro-moments of its dying process.

The choice of photography as a medium reveals itself vital to the whole process of its framing and fragmentation. The artist reconstructs the movement of the tree through growth, decay and metamorphosis, visible with the change from summer to autumn. Movement is not, therefore, confined to locomotion but a transformation over time. The word *plant* itself, as revealed by Michael Marder, can either enclose its immovability—as it is chained to the ground through its roots—or reinforce the idea of a movable being over time¹.

Joana Patrão is not forcing ownership or a human voice on the tree, but cherishes the state of co-existence with nature as a dignified being. Just like a self-contained scene, we experience a piece of the tree's life and metamorphosis towards death within its own organizational system. This eco-aesthetic approach “tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community”².

The artist does not create out of the tree, she takes on the role of a mediator between human and non human. The devitalised tree is the source of the artistic vision, impacting both the non-linear format of the book and the rhythm of time and continuity.

As we turn, unfold and refold the pages of this book-exhibition, Joana Patrão reveals an inter-connection between artist and tree. Her handwritten visual poetry seems to echo her personal gestures towards the tree whilst following its natural wooden lines.

As viewers and readers, we witness the tree's experience of life inwards through illness and death as well as outwards through its environment. This natural and artistic spectacle opens up a new understanding of a decaying and cosmic existence, both alternative and similar to our own.

1 Marder, Michael. (2015). “The Place of Plants: Spatiality, Movement, Growth”. *Performance Philosophy*. 1. 185. 10.21476/PP.2015.1128.

2 Leopold, Aldo. (2014). “The Land Ethic”. *The Ecological Design and Planning Reader*. Island Press/Center for Resource Economics

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