

4th March 2023, Lisbon

Dear Kristina (and Joanna),

I stumbled already on the first line of your text, meaning - the source of water. *Enhydro agate*. Never heard the name before.

Enhydro agates are nodules, agates, or geodes with water trapped inside its cavity. Enhydros are closely related to fluid inclusions, but are composed of chalcedony. The formation of enhydros is still an ongoing process, with specimens dated back to the Eocene Epoch. They are commonly found in areas with volcanic rock.

The agate has a hollow center, partially containing water. Enhydro agates can also contain debris or petroleum.

Because the cavity is not full, the agate can produce sound from being shaken.¹

Never seen one *in flesh* either. Or I don't remember. The expression 'in flesh' first made me think of a piece of rock trapped in a body, in a human flesh (or *other-than-human?*). I imagined a stone ingrown into the skin, like the stones that can form in human kidneys, or something equally weird and disturbing as the ear implemented on Stelarc's arm. (I always questioned the reasons behind this performance, and just now read a full article explaining his motifs:

Certainly what becomes important now is not merely the body's identity, but its connectivity (...) An ear that not only hears but also transmits. (...) By injecting saline solution into a subcutaneous port, the kidney shaped silicone implant stretched the skin, forming a pocket of excess skin that could be used in surgically constructing the ear. The body is a living system which isn't easy to surgically sculpt. (...) the ear lobe would be partly grown using my own adult stem cells. Such a procedure is not legal in the USA, so it will be done in Europe. It's still somewhat experimental with no guarantee that the stem cells will grow evenly and smoothly - but it does provide the opportunity of sculpturally growing more parts of the ear- and possibly resulting in a cauliflower ear! (...) The final procedure will re-implant a miniature microphone to enable a wireless connection to the Internet, making the ear a remote listening device for people in other places. (...) We have evolved soft internal organs to better operate and interact with the world. Now we can engineer additional and external organs to better function in the technological and media terrain we now inhabit. (...) The biological body is not well organ-ized. The body needs to be Internet enabled in more intimate ways. THE EAR ON ARM project suggests an alternate anatomical architecture - the engineering of a new organ for the body: an available, accessible and mobile organ for other bodies in other places, enabling people to locate and listen in to another body elsewhere.²)

I've barely started developing the thread of the rock enclosed in a body, and now the Ear on Arm effectively called my attention (*Can ear call? Or is it always the organ that receives calls?*). I find technology terrifying; as far as it is fascinating, it also scares me. Where will it take us and how much more entangled in it will we become? Just look at the Internet, the web which silky sticky strands are wrapping us tighter and tighter, until the huge spider will come and devour us. But let's come back to the Ear, equally monstrous idea as the eight-legged predatory arachnid. Stelarc speaks about *the body's connectivity*. It makes me wonder if really the most effective way of connecting with others is through technological devices. Why do we even need to construct something that resembles a real ear while its purpose is to be artificial and external. And another

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enhydro_agate

² <http://stelarc.org/?catID=20242>

question - do we need to listen more? Or rather just listen more attentively? Even though I find Stelarc's performance spectacular and successfully thought-provoking, I do believe that what we need more nowadays is to bring back the attention to the senses we're forgetting. And take time with each of them, become more aware of the surrounding world and our perception of it. Also another observation arose in my mind while discussing the Ear on Arm. Technology and the Internet are efficient in connecting people but can they connect us with other-than-human beings? Certainly yes, the developed research methods allowed scientists to learn much more about other species, observe them closer and thanks to that, probably understand better. However, will we ever be able to speak with an animal, or a plant, or a mushroom via technology? Somehow we already do. Recently I came across this beautiful project called *Orcas Talk*³; I think I have already shared it with you. *Listening*. Definitely that's what we need more. Still better installing an ear on your arm rather than an extra mouth.

Coming back to enhydro agates. *They can produce sound from being shaken*. How carefully do you have to listen to hear the agate's song? What do they say to us? Water trapped in a stone. Fascinating idea of the relationship between two extremely contrasting elements. *Unlike fluid inclusions, the chalcedony shell is permeable, allowing water to enter and exit the cavity very slowly. The water inside of an enhydro agate is most times not the same water as when the formation occurred.*⁴ I'm looking at the picture of an enhydro agate and it makes me think of a volcano. Filled with water rather than with lava. Imagine a gigantic rock in which interior you can jump in and swim in the stone. (*Aren't some lakes like that?*) What if volcanos would be erupting with water? Definitely that seems less frightening than the wild unstoppable rivers of liquid fire but still could be destructive. (Yesterday the Ocean was wild and powerful. Brought out a huge branch; I wondered from which shore it came.)



I'm reading your poem and it makes me aware of the time passing. I need to stop now and go to the rehearsal but I feel that my thoughts are still unfinished. Not enclosed yet, still forming, layers growing over layers. The memory leaking out of the stone.

Is any thought ever finished? When you put it in words, speak out loud, does it become defined like a piece of rock? Thoughts forming as really hard stones, piling on one another to eventually fall as an avalanche and destroy. Volcano throwing out rocks. Someone throwing a stone towards a barking dog. Or towards a woman.

Maybe if all rocks had a crusty shell and water inside, the world would be softer.

With love,
Małgorzata

³ <https://ocean-archive.org/story/orcas-talk>

⁴ See above (1).