



Performing  
the Outside

**Performing the Outside** is all about finding new and creative ways to explore our surroundings.

The activities in this booklet have been designed by artists working in Live Art and Performance. They offer ways to be creative by using everyday objects, our bodies and our imaginations.

Please ensure children are supervised by an adult when undertaking these activities.

# Performing Trust

by Will Pham

For this activity it is important that you take care of yourself and those around you by paying attention to traffic and being sensitive to people and your surroundings.

Follow a familiar route, like the one you take to school, to work or to your local shop.

Think about the way you move.

The side of the pavement you chose.

Are there obstacles in your path?

Notice the people around you and the way they move.

Is someone observing you?  
Smile, say 'hello'.





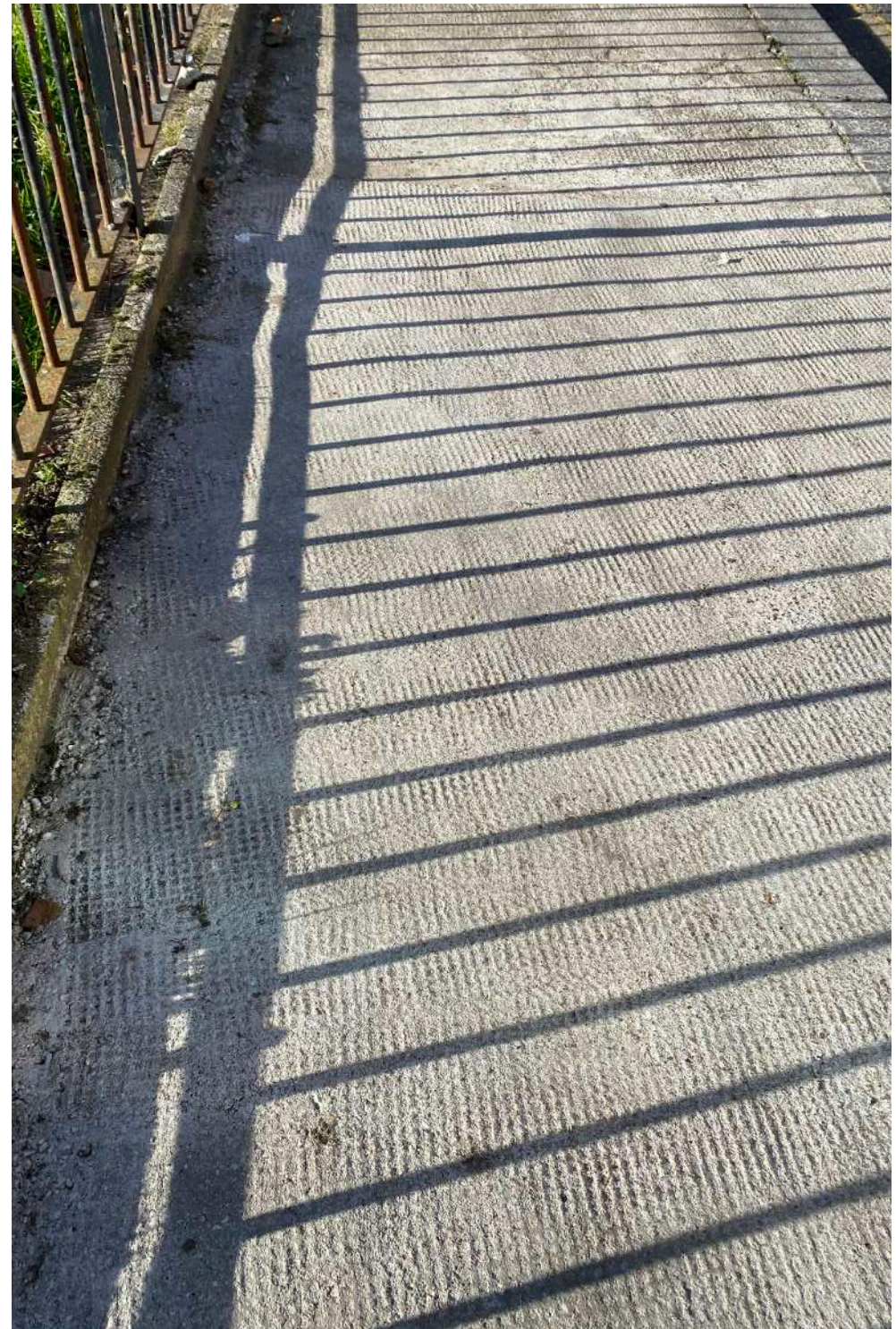
Choose something about the way you move and exaggerate it.

Make it bigger, smaller, very fast, very slow.

Try using your surroundings as inspiration.

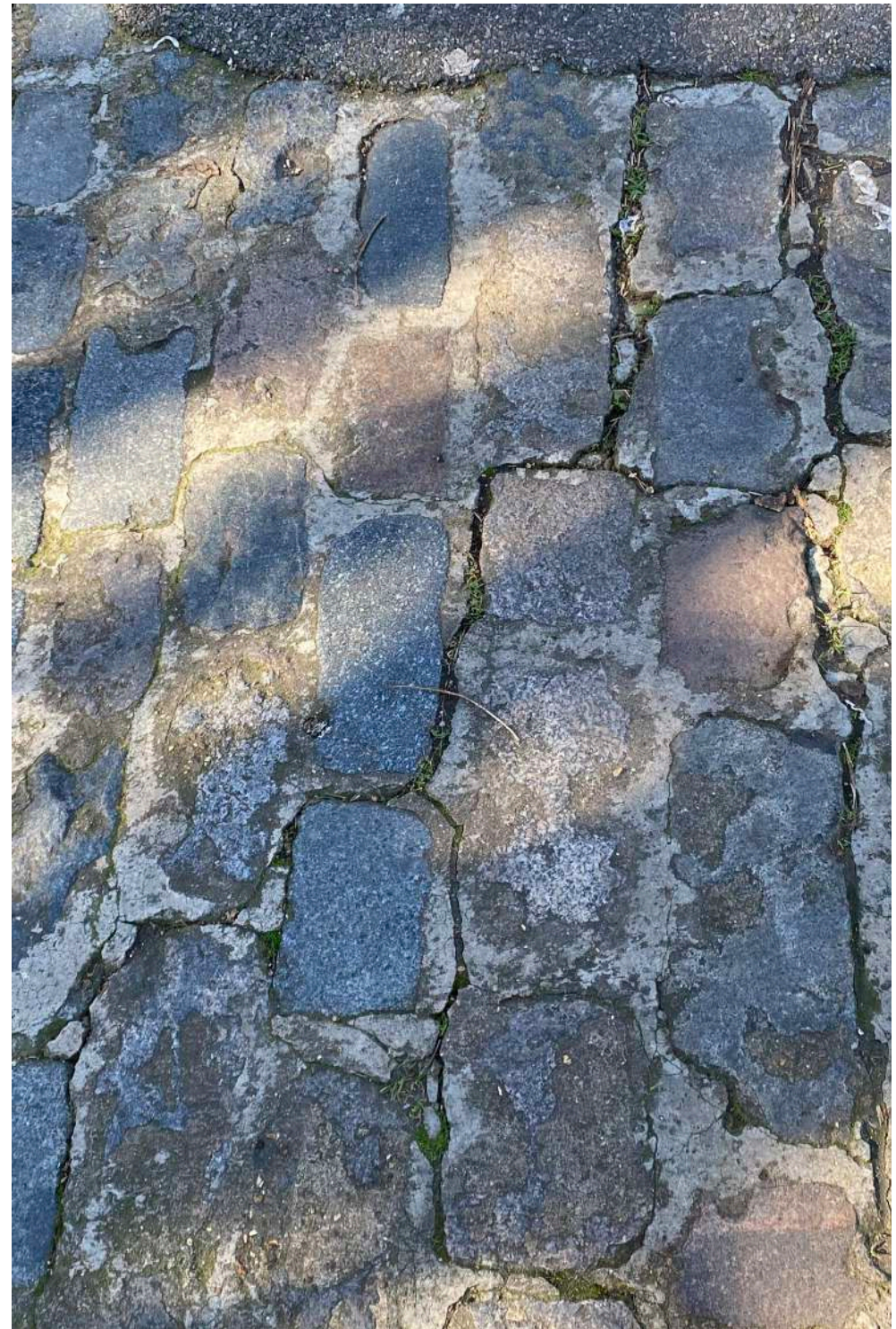
If there is room, zig-zag across the pavement or get low down, or high up.

Perhaps find a stick and trace it along a wall or a metal fence. Listen to or feel for how it sounds or vibrates differently on different surfaces.





Respond to the textures of your environment. For instance, if you are passing a smooth window, move smoothly. If you pass water, move with fluidity. If you are passing a rough brick wall, make your movements bumpy.





Sometimes working with other people or in a group can make us feel more free to try things out.

What actions can you come up with together?

What can you do together that you cannot do alone?

How does it feel to put all your trust in another person?





In an open space like a park try taking it in turns to close your eyes and be led by another member of your group.

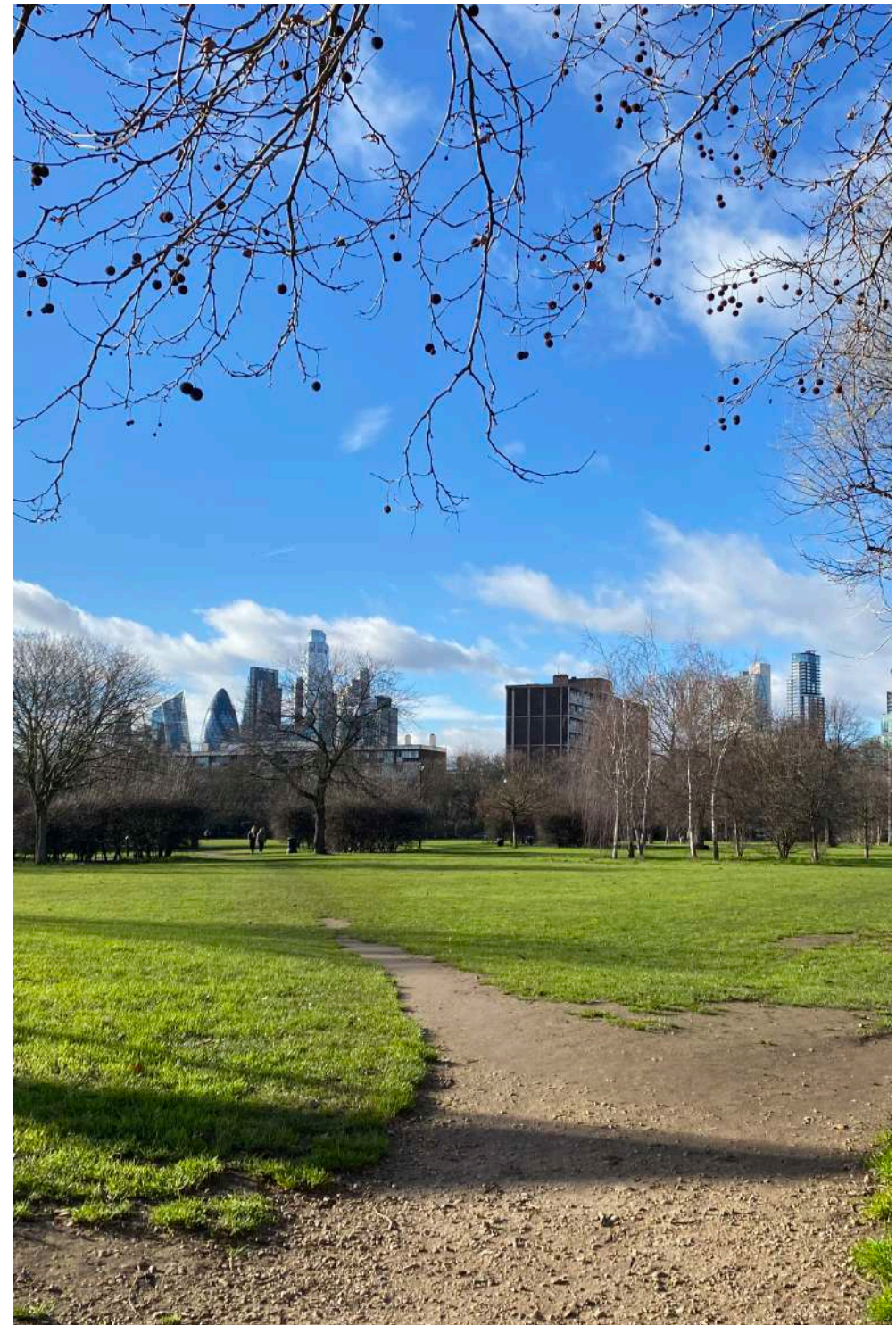
If you are leading remember that you are responsible for the wellbeing of the person you are guiding, be sensitive and responsive to them.

If you are being led remember to let the person leading you know how you are feeling.

You can stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Try doing this for 1 minute. Then for a longer time.

What do you notice about your environment?





When you opened your eyes were you where you expected to be?

## **Plant Communication**

by Grace Ndiritu

## Communicating with Plant Spirits

With a sketch book and something to write or draw with find a spot to sit in a garden or park.

Use pillows and blankets to make yourself comfortable.





Breathe and close your eyes.

In your mind's eye picture the details of the garden or park you are in.

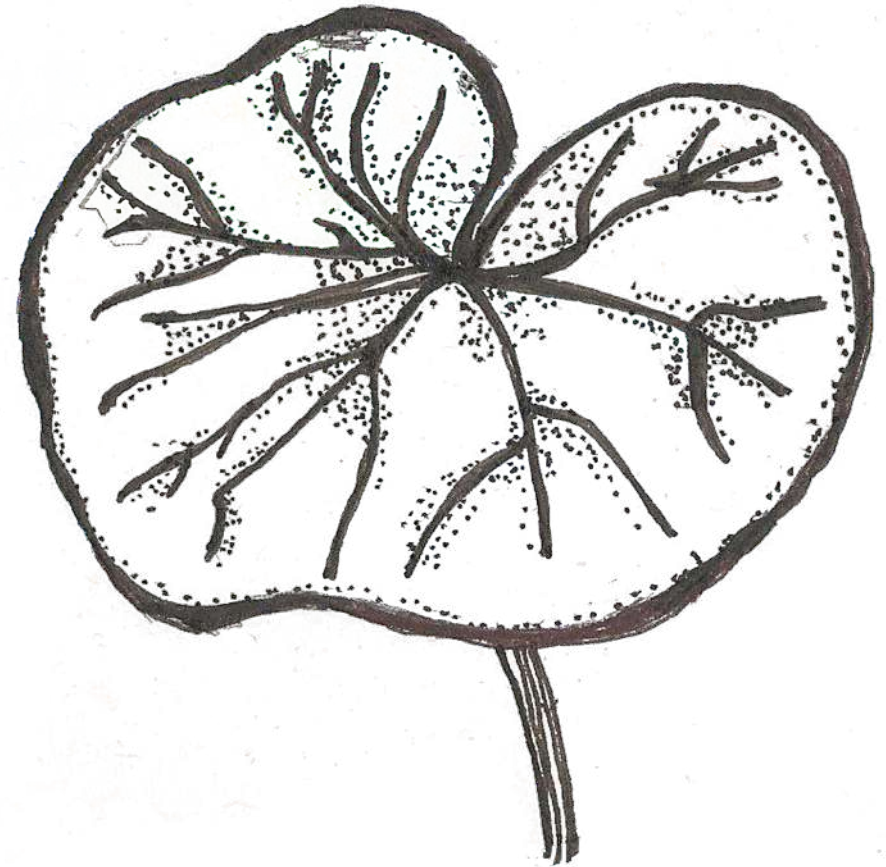
By seeing without seeing scan this space.

Can you become aware of the plants?

Breathe into the space.

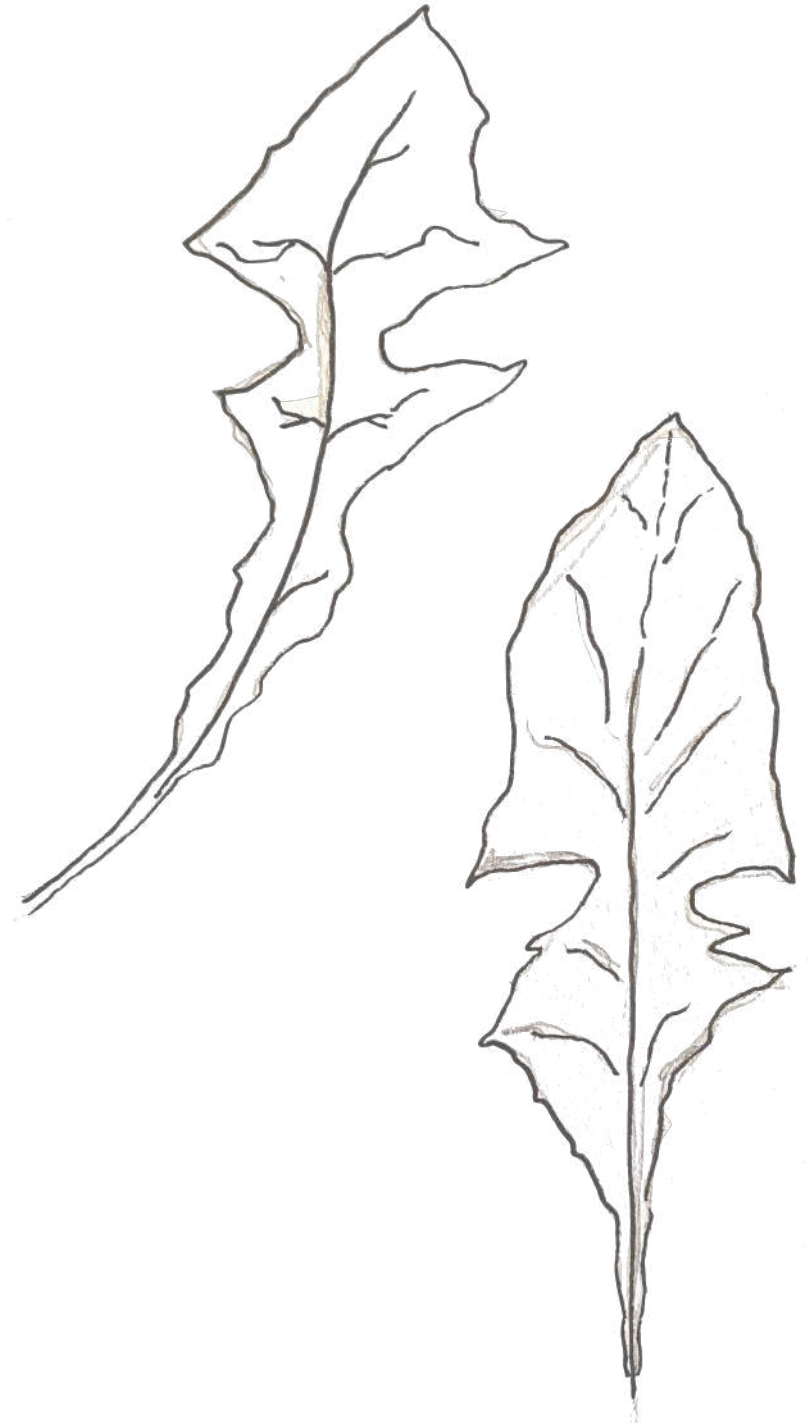
Breathe in the life of the sky, the earth, the plants and the trees that surround you.

Rest your attention within your heart as you begin to communicate with a Plant Spirit.



Open your heart and try to hear what the plant life is telling you.

Loosely and without overthinking allow yourself to sketch out images or write down words as they come to you.





Ask the Plant spirits some questions.

What type of creative person am I?

What kind of plant am I most like?

What kind of plant family do I belong to?

Draw what comes to you.



Write a letter to a nature based ancestor.  
They might be a plant, tree or flower.

Tell the ancestor about the time you are living in  
now.

Tell them how you can help to look after the  
environment to help stop climate change and  
future pandemics.





## Radical Gardening

For this activity you will need a packet of seeds. Sunflower, Wildflower or Edibles like lettuce or spinach for example.

Go on a journey around your local neighbourhood or another urban area.

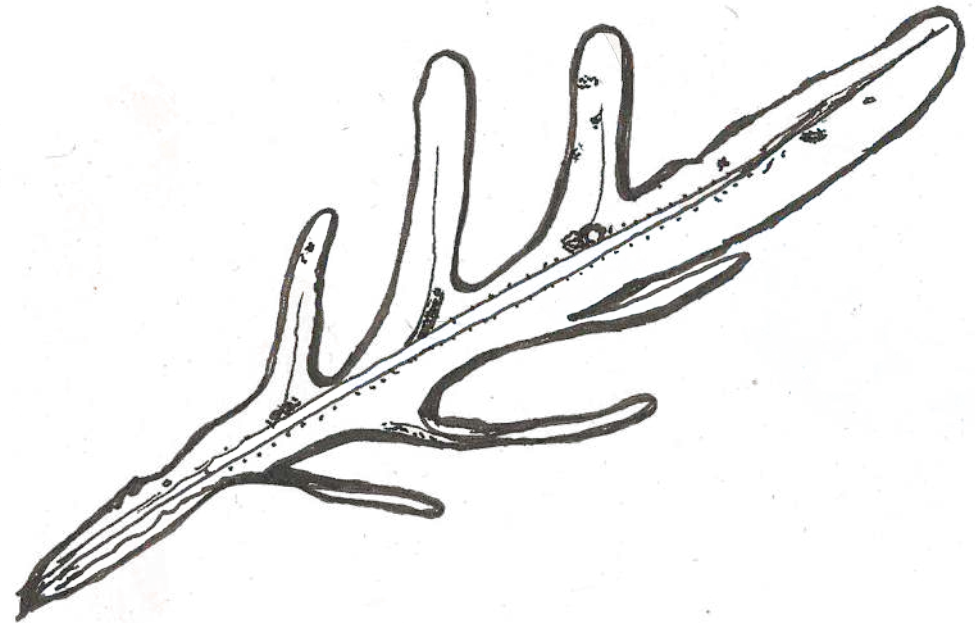
At points along your journey take a moment to stop and close your eyes.

Breathe in as you take a handful of seeds in your palms.

Keeping your eyes closed, throw the seeds far away but on to the ground.

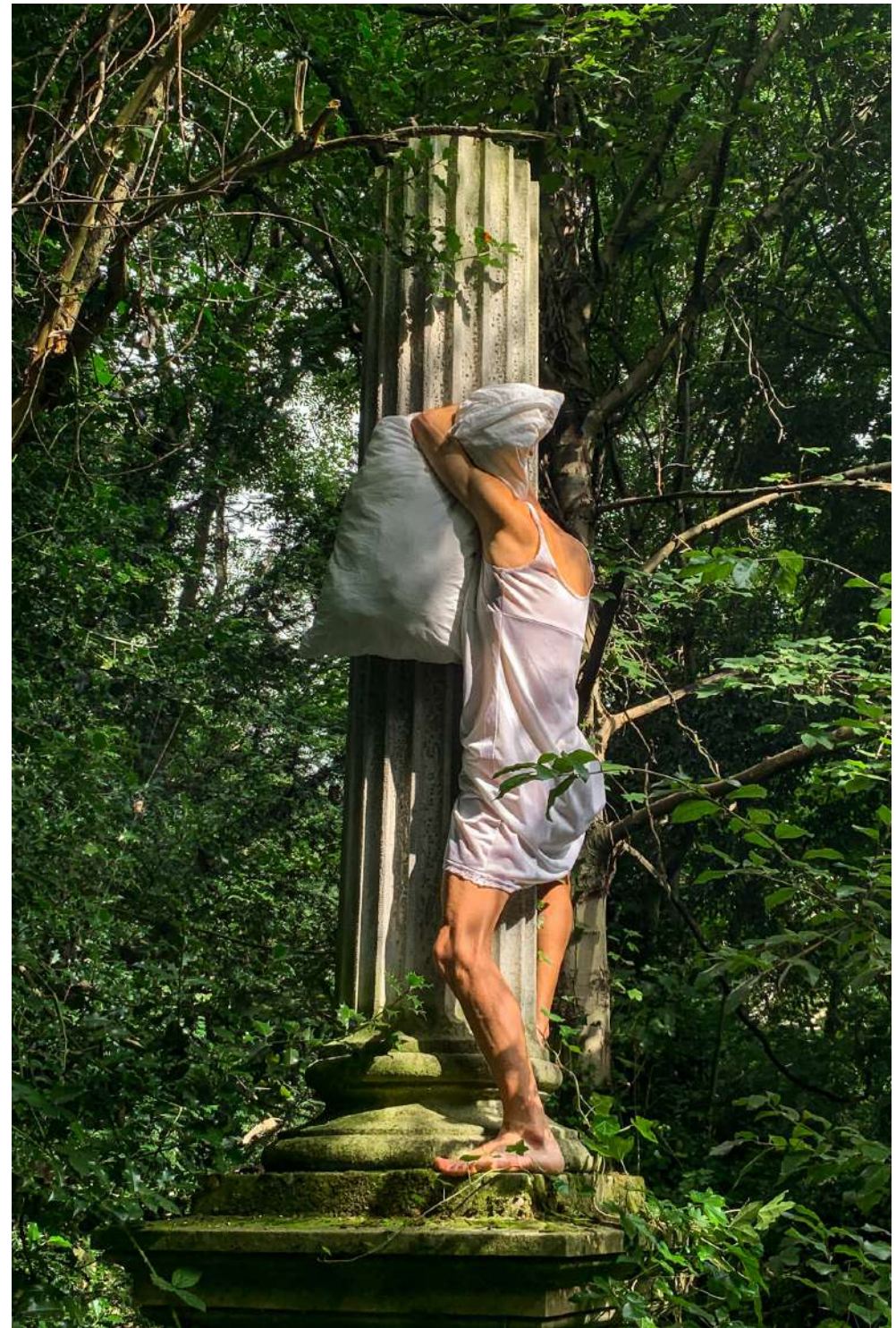
Say “thank you” and then move to the next spot.

Repeat the same action until all the seeds have gone.



# Mutual Embrace

by Monstera Deliciosa



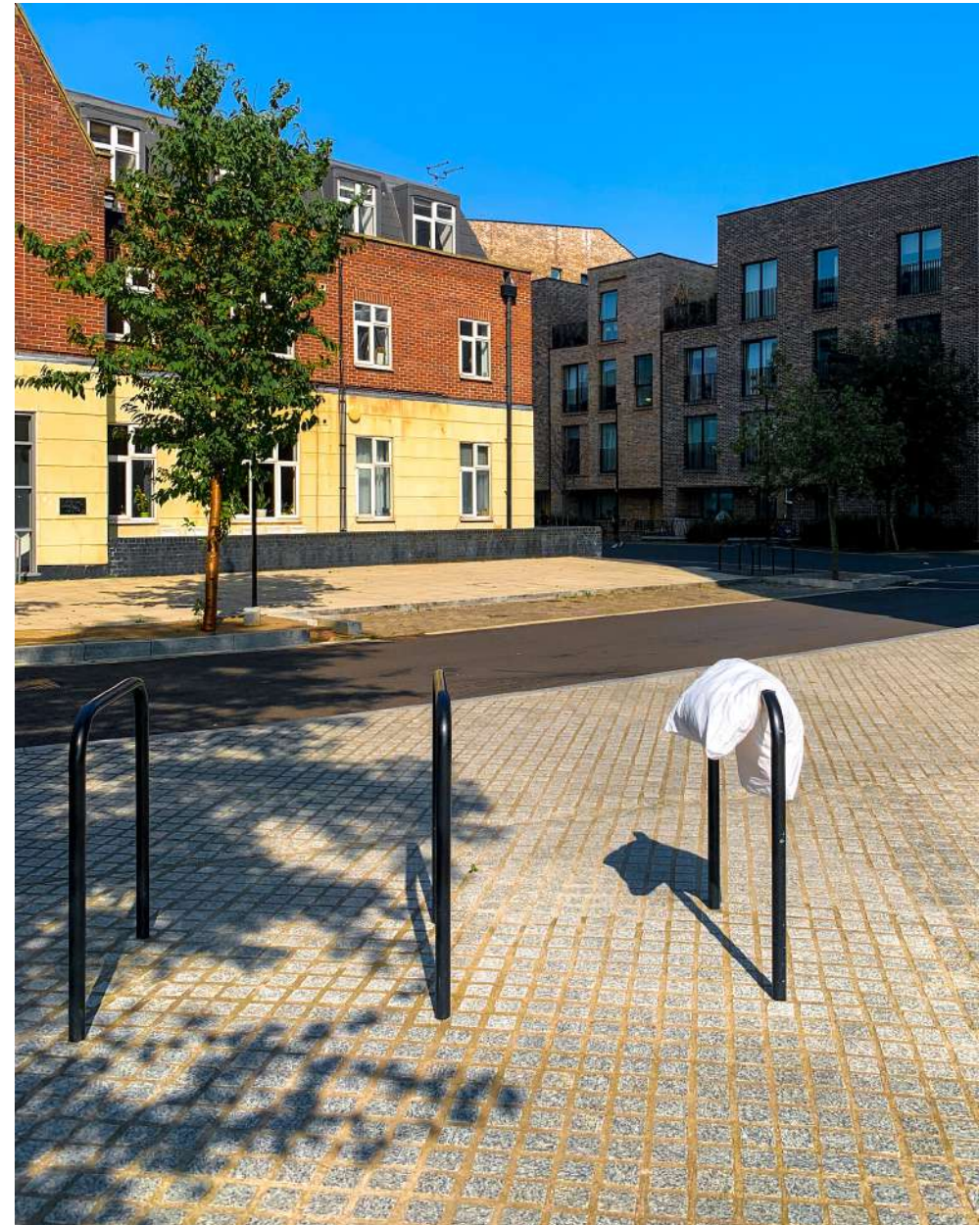


Do you have a favourite pillow in your house?  
I do, and oh it makes me so fuzzy.

If you don't have one, go around your home  
and choose it.

You must pick the right one though, and be  
sure to show it some love.

When you've found the one, you'll know it, trust  
me.



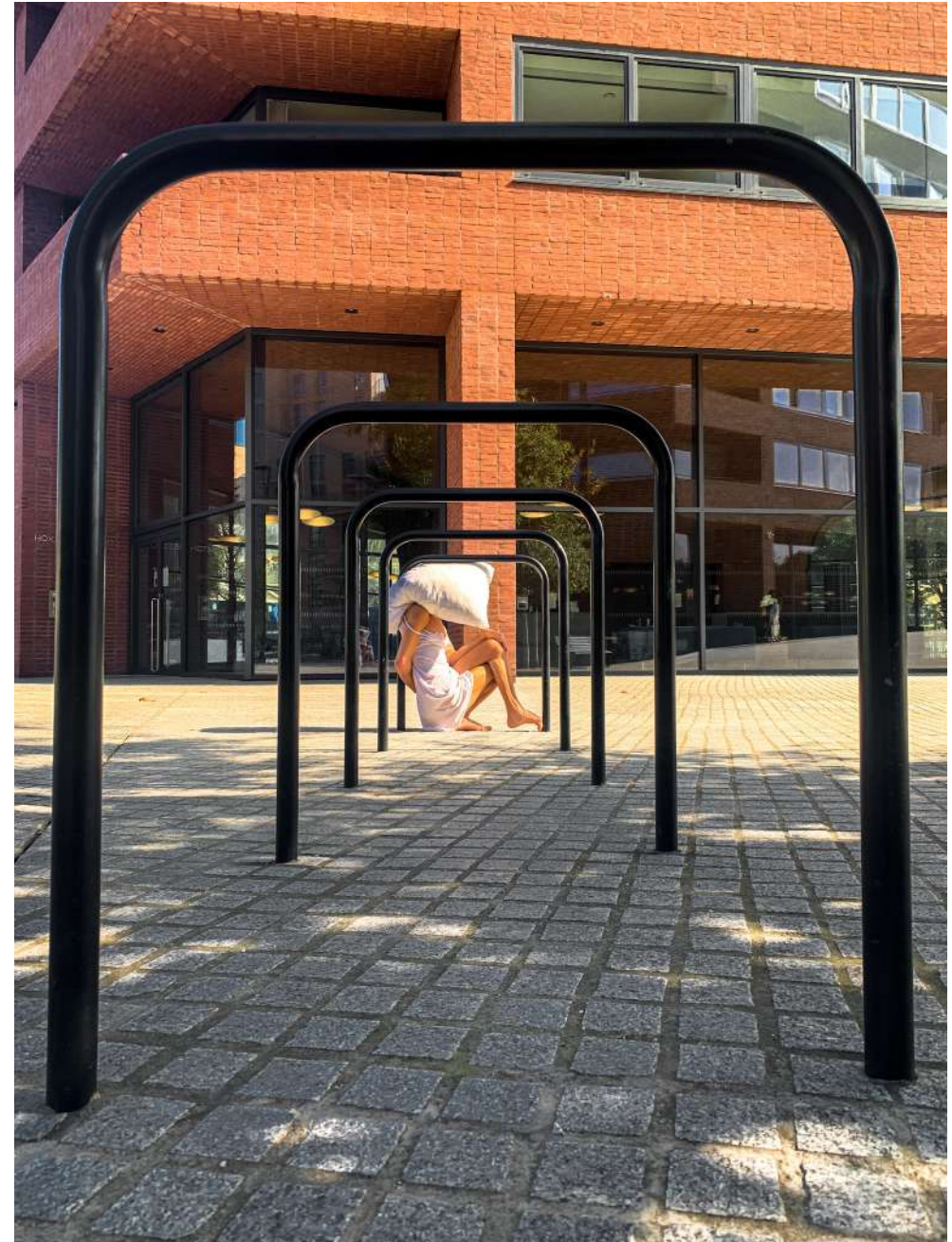


It might stand out to you because of its shape or its colour.

Perhaps it will be its familiar scent or welcoming texture that will call you to it.

Do you use it to support your head while on the sofa, or is it perhaps the one you squeeze tight in your arms before falling asleep?

When you've found the one, you'll know it, trust me.



My invite, now, is to take this special connection further. On a little adventure, if you will.

I'm inviting you to go around your city, town, village and take your favourite pillow with you.

It will be a cute tour of your surroundings. Which places will you show it? New ones? Old ones?  
How will you be holding it along your journey?

Surely you're taking care of it, just like it is taking care of you.





Sure, it might feel a bit odd to be out and about carrying a pillow, even if your favourite pillow... Perhaps, it might make the outside world feel a little cosier too.

Along your route, find points of interests, peculiar surfaces, angles, structures where to lay the pillow.

What if I asked you to sit on the grass with it?

You know, in that nice spot at your favourite park... Or indeed, to lay on a bench with it, as if it were the laps of your best friend or companion.

Feel free to place it somewhere curious or exciting.

Surprise yourself!

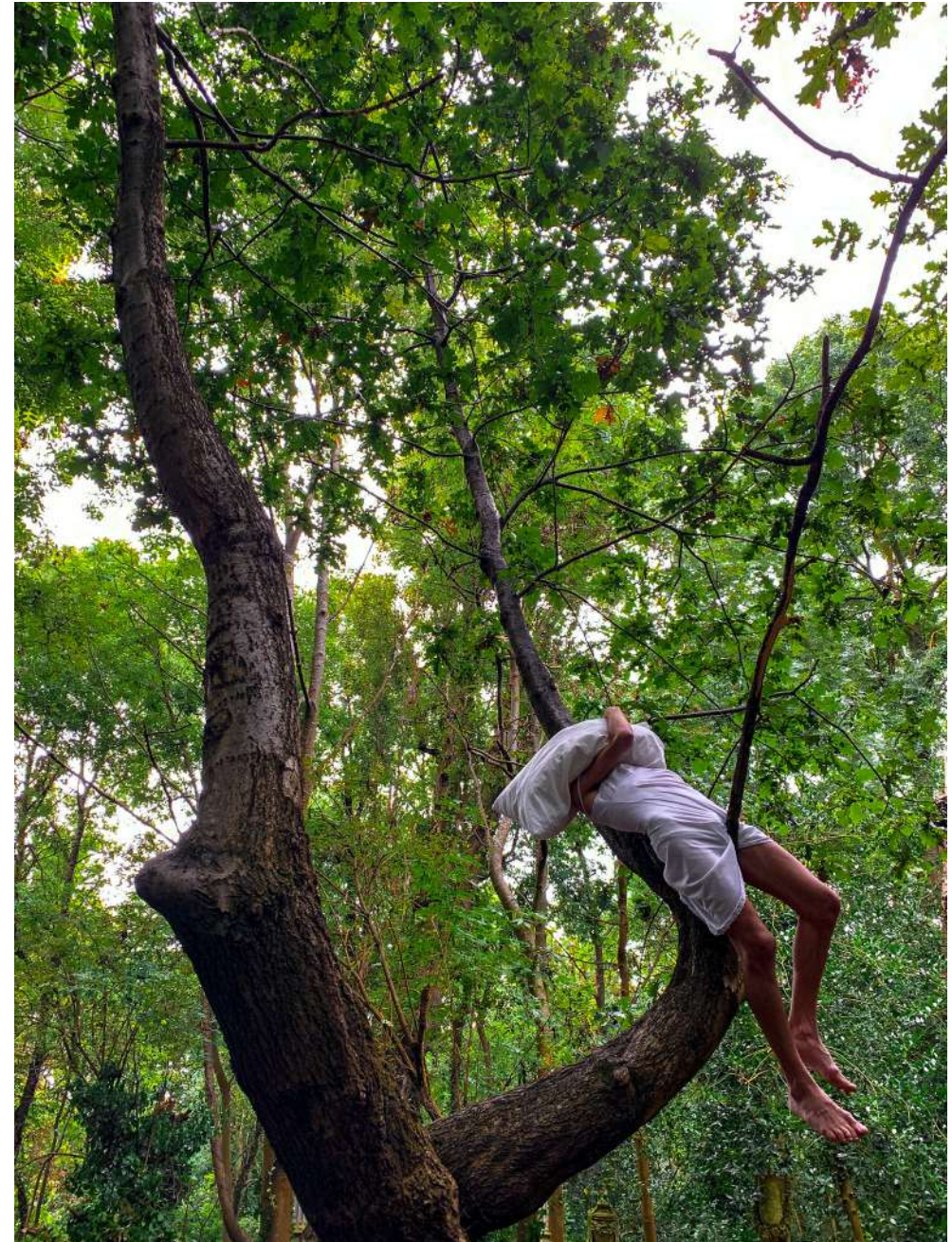




Perhaps place it on that window sill where the funny flowery curtains always dance to the breeze.

Or indeed, you may want to wrap it around the magic tree in the meadows nearby.

You know the one I'm talking about...





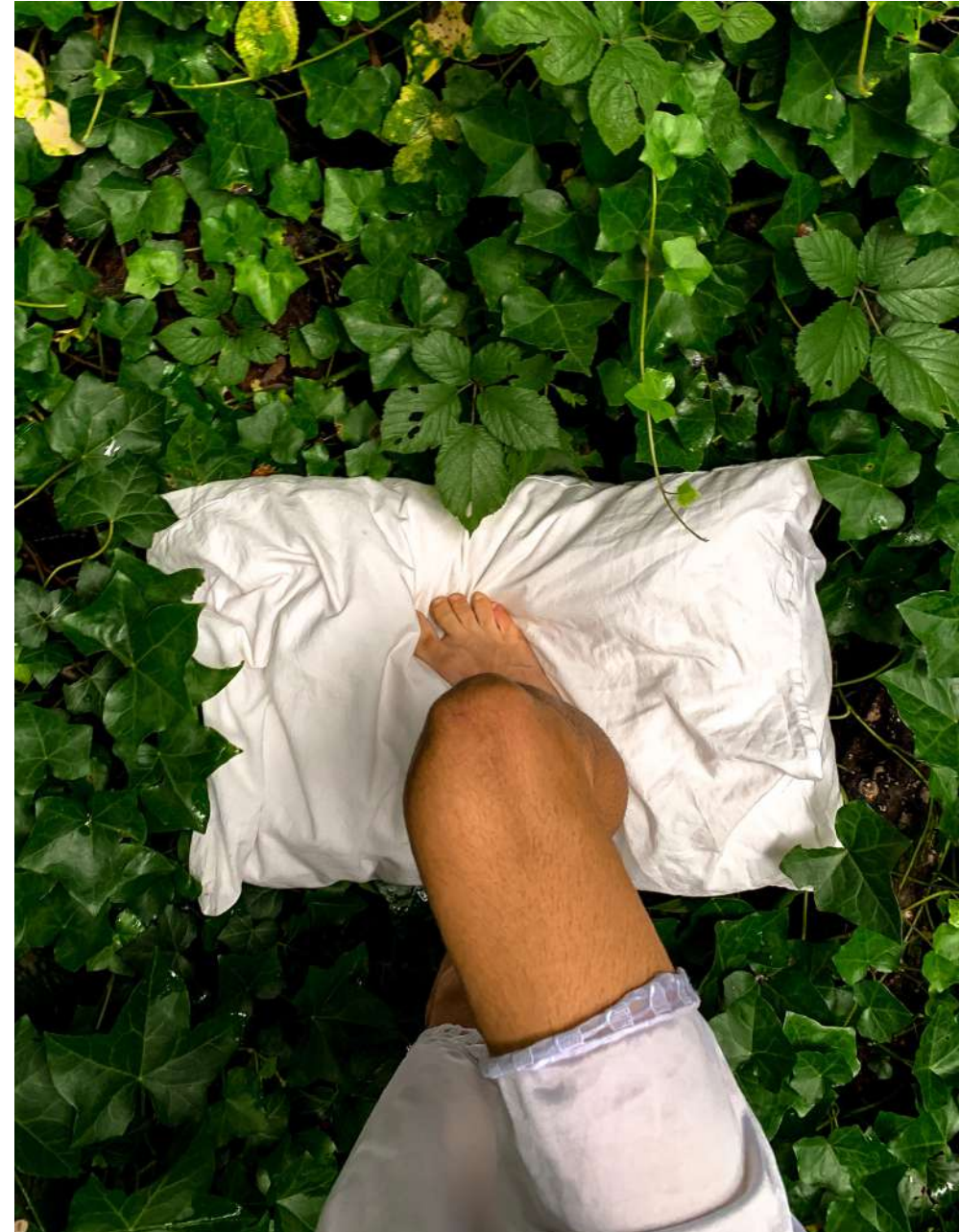
Wherever you take it and place it, it doesn't only have to be your head to rest on it.

What if you laid lightly just one finger on it?

Or imprinted the whole of your foot, gently...

Could it be the perfect padding in between the back of your knee and the ground?

Or could it float suspended between your neck and your shoulder?



Feel free to try out as many compositions and poses as they come to you and indulge in this heartwarming mutual embrace.





# From Where Do They Speak?

by Jade Montserrat

How can language be drawn through our bodies?

How can it represent and acknowledge our pasts, our presents and our imagined futures?

“What shall I say? What can I say?”

To build the confidence to speak aloud, our journey begins with writing.

Phrases and sentences will be generated through breath work and in response to a book of your choice.

Have a piece of paper and pencil to hand, or a note taking feature on a digital device, as well as the book you have chosen.



Sit down in a comfortable place.  
Rest your eyes.

You may want to sit outside on a step, or a bench, with a cushion or scarf underneath you, for comfort.

You may want to sit against a tree, in your wheelchair, or on a stool, with the slight shade of the tree's arbour.

You may want to sit amidst long grass, or on trimmed grass in the park, or near running water, a brook or stream, lake, or pond.

Think about how you are oriented to the space.  
Can you relax further into the space?

Consider your posture and make necessary changes for comfort.





Listen to your environment

Listen to all and every thought that emerges from being outside.

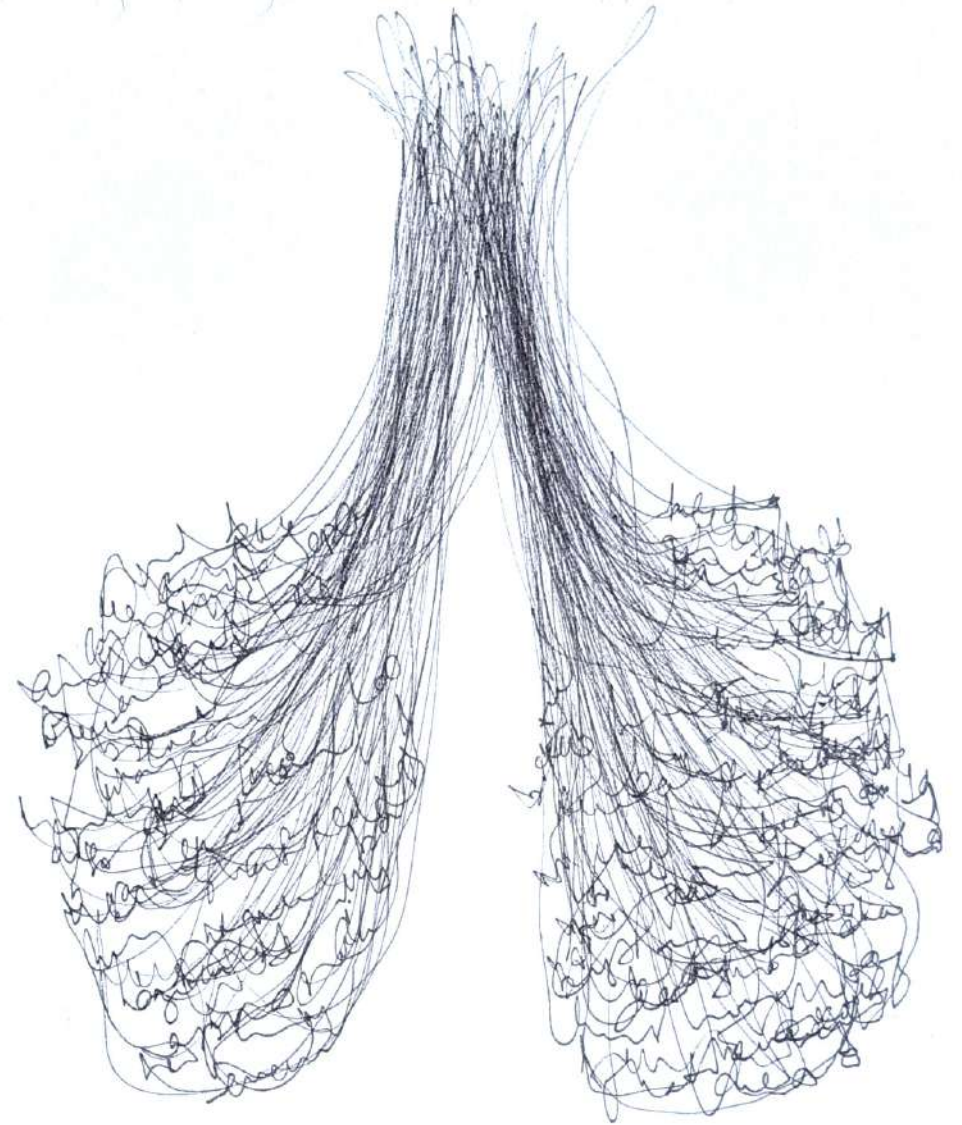
Think about your body in relation to where you are.

Observe your breath, your inhalations, and exhalations.

Celebrate your beautiful breathing.

Breathe slowly, deeply, and deliberately in through your nose, expanding your tummy, filling your diaphragm with rich air.

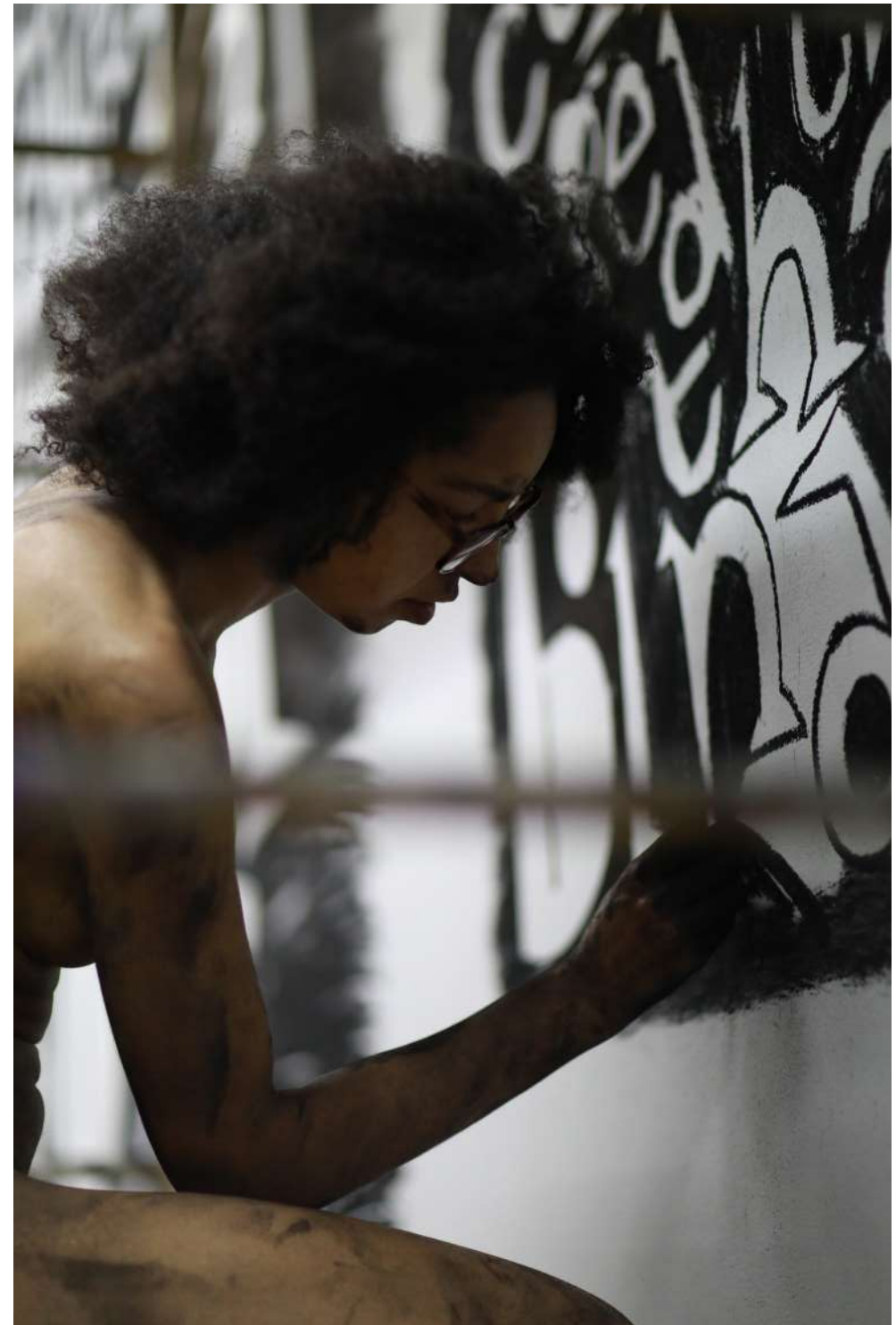
Exhale with ease.



Where does listening and watching your breathing take you?

Begin gently jotting down all the things you notice around you. What sounds you can hear? How do you feel?

If for any reason you are interrupted, by thoughts, or movements from the peripheries, merely permit yourself release of breath, without judgement.





Open the book you brought with you and begin reading aloud.

If you are with other people, read aloud to one another, taking it in turns.

Note the things that come into your mind. They might be images, other words or memories.

Note down specific words and phrases that you're drawn to.



Look back over the notes you've written down.

Pick out words and phrases.

Be playful with them.

Re-arrange them, change them, mix them up.

Are there any phrases that "speak" to you?

Or phrases that you would like to hear yourself speak, utter, shout or sing?

Share your written phrases aloud.

You may want to whisper at first and gradually increase your volume.

Listen to yourself.

Notice how you sound in your environment.

Explore different ways of sounding your phrase.

Letting yourself breathe in and out of your sounds and your body.





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Stuart Hall at CND Rally, Trafalgar Square, 1958.  
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Ana Mendieta, Imágen de Yágul, 1973. © ARS, NY  
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Jade Montserrat, The Last Place They Thought Of.  
Installation view, Institute of Contemporary Art,  
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Rubiane Maia, The Garden - Performance, 2015.  
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Elaine Mitchener, SWEET TOOTH, 2016  
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Whitechapel Gallery 2022.

**Performing the Outside** offers playful ways to explore outside spaces using ideas drawn from Performance and Live Art Practices.

Aimed at children age 8 and up and adults.

From artists:

**Grace Ndiritu**

**Jade Montserrat**

**Monstera Deliciosa**

**Will Pham**



**Whitechapel Gallery**

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