



GARDEN OF KNOWLEDGE

on Art/Science Collaboration

Anne Marie Maes

**Mulhouse - La Kunsthalle - Colloque
Associer l'artiste et le chercheur pour penser une société contemporaine
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FERMENTATION

I think of 'fermentation' as the metabolic process of converting one thing into another, usually through the intervention of bacteria or other microorganisms. Fermentation processes require nutrition and time. It releases energy. When the process involves living cultures, it is about life and death. Parasitic and autonomous life are involved.

But fermentation can also take place symbolically. E.g., in art and science collaborations. In my short presentation, I will discuss both meanings by illustrating my artistic research and my collaborations with scientists.

THE GARDEN OF KNOWLEDGE

My rooftop garden is my laboratory. It is my training ground to develop my creativity, and it enables me to have an active dialogue with living material. It is a space where thinking and manual work go hand in hand. It connects the visible with the invisible and brings together making and performing.

My art is based on a collaboration with living organisms such as plants, insects and bacteria. I research the natural networks and dynamic ecosystems they are part of. Complementary to my training as an artist, my studies in botany provide a solid basis for my artistic research.

All my resulting artworks have their own behavior, metabolism and agency. The installations and sculptures grow, communicate, sense, smell and react. They are evolving performances where each installation has its own lifetime, creating a landscape on the border between natural life and art.

THE GARDEN OF KNOWLEDGE

Through a deep concern for socio-ecological issues, I create artworks that stimulate ecological change, this in the tradition of Joseph Beuys and the Fluxus movement.

For many of my projects I also make use of DIY bio/technology that I develop and integrate in my artworks in collaboration with fab labs and university research labs. I challenge conventional forms of artistic expression by combining traditional media with living organisms. I prefer to focus on the process instead of on the final result, as I work with organically evolving elements. They generate an art that creates itself.

My artistic research is focuses on 3 strands:

1. Connected Open Greens
2. Bee Agency
3. The Lab for Form and Matter

CONNECTED OPEN GREENS

Open Greens are marginal zones where culture and nature overlap and enter into a symbiotic relationship.

I would like to focus on the role that these Open Greens can play in the conservation of biodiversity in the cities, and their functionality in terms of habitats for wild plants, for insects and for birds. If we want to live in the cities in a different way, we'll have to change our ideas on what is most essential and necessary in our lives. We'll have to break with the common rules, deviate from the norm and create dynamic structures.

My Open Greens project researches different bottom up approaches for designing artificial environments that have the stability and diversity of natural ecosystems. Hereby I focus on rooftop gardens.

Integration of renewable energy systems, energy efficiency in food and gardening systems, natural building, rainwater harvesting and urban planning along with the economic, political and and social policies that make sustainable living possible and practical.

Food sovereignty is crucial in this new way of living. Therefore I experiment with an Edible Forest on my rooftop garden. Imagine yourself surrounded by trees, bushes and herbs - all ready to pick and to put in your mouth.

Forest gardening is based on natural models from all times: it is a self supporting healthy and fertile system in which useful plants with edible and medicinal qualities grow together in different vertical layers and have beneficial effects on one another.

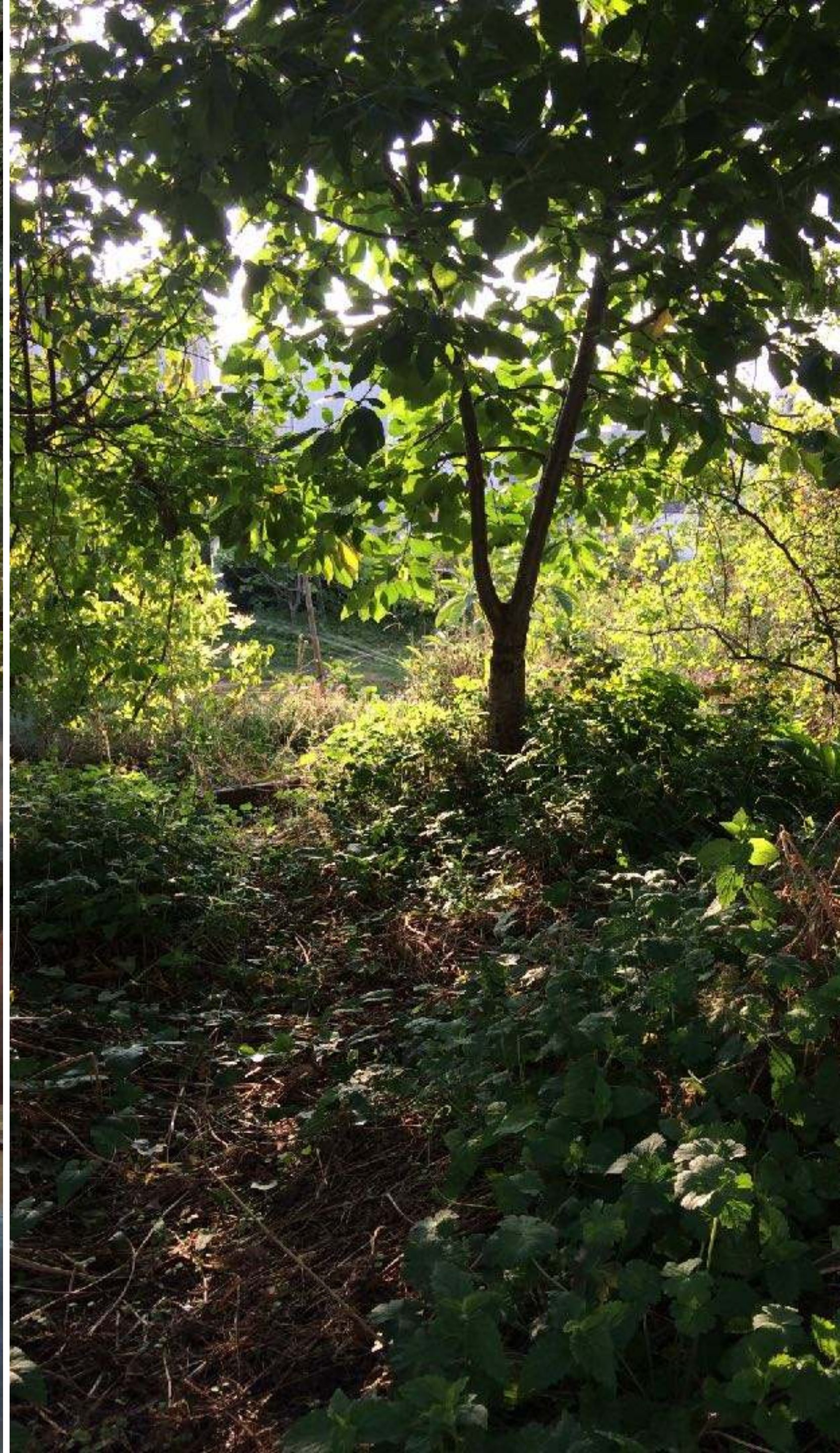
















The plant room? No
I'm not leaving outdoors today,
picking organically grown vegetables
right in your kitchen,
staying in a tent with the blue tent,
comfortable regardless the weather outside.

- vegetable garden
- medicinal herb garden
- mediterranean garden
- edible food garden





BEE AGENCY

The Bee Agency should be seen as an open framework research. It is a long-term project on the edge of art, science and technology, a collaboration between artists, scientists, engineers and non-humans: bees and bacteria.

Observing and monitoring the activities and behaviour of the honey bees in relation to the urban environment results in an amount of data with environmental information value.

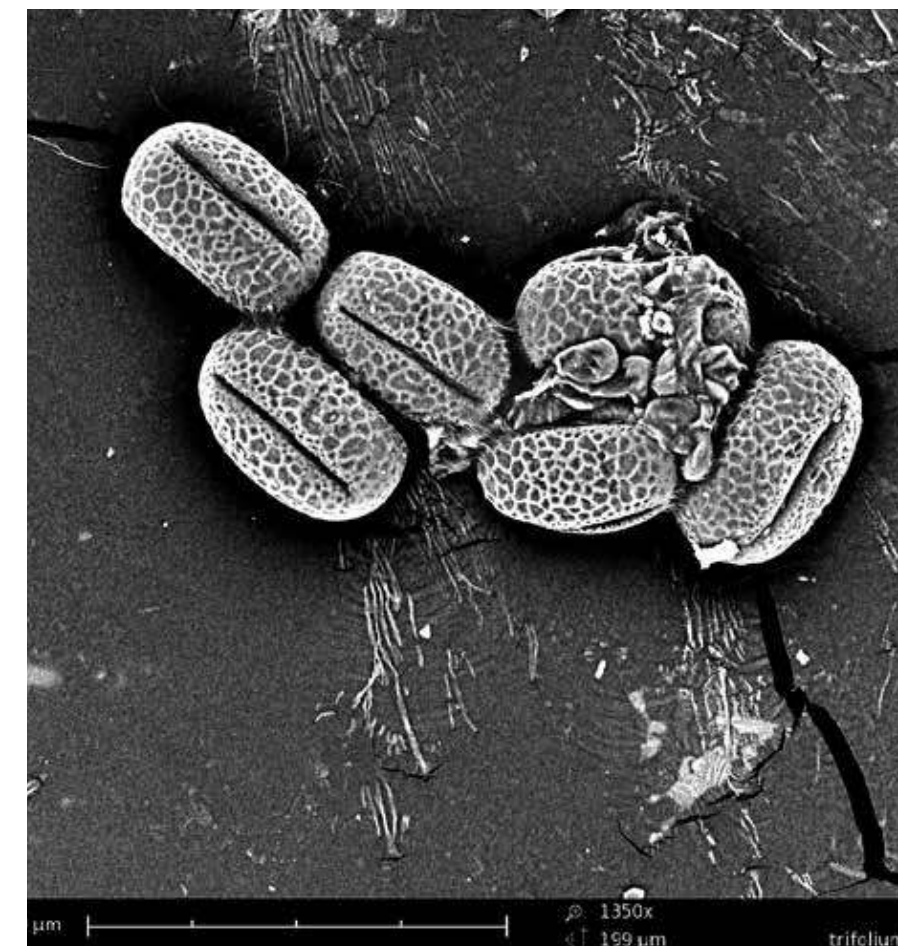
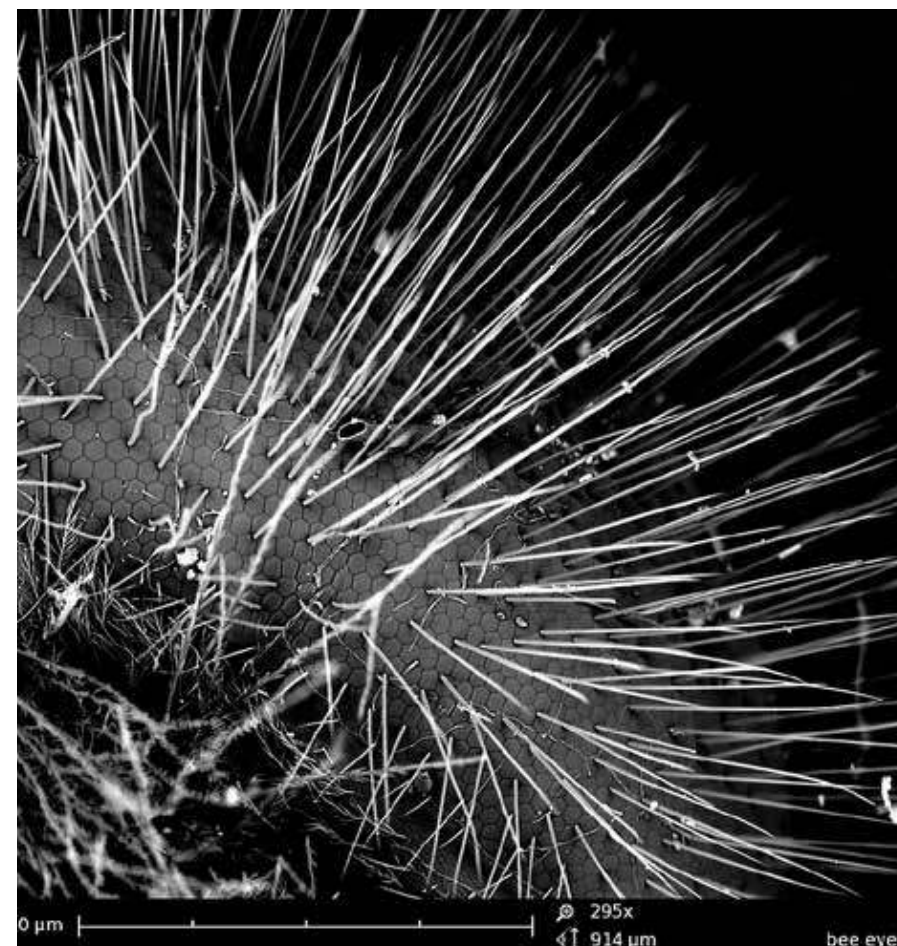
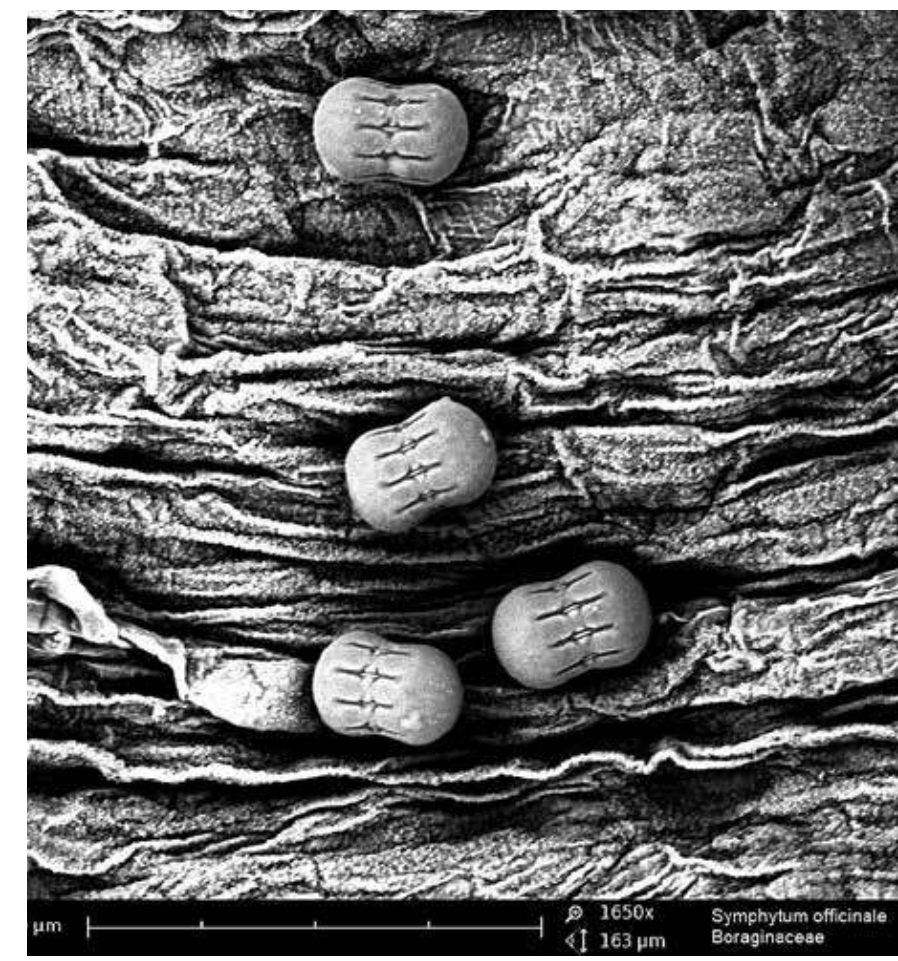
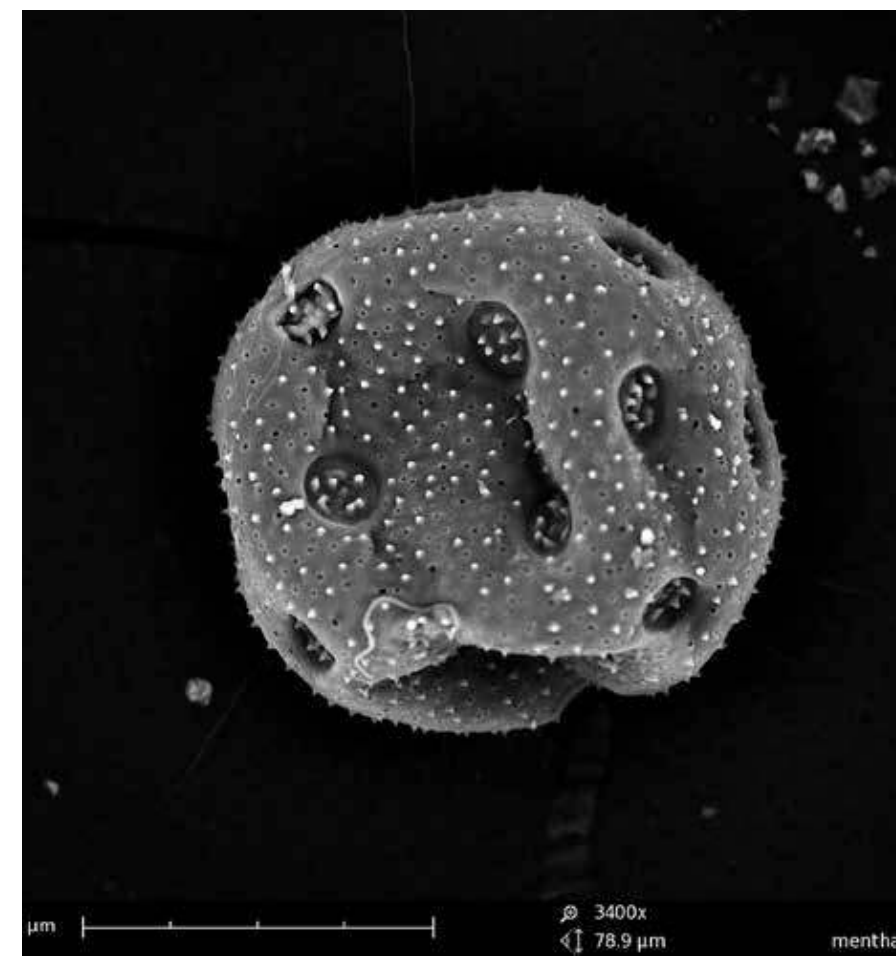
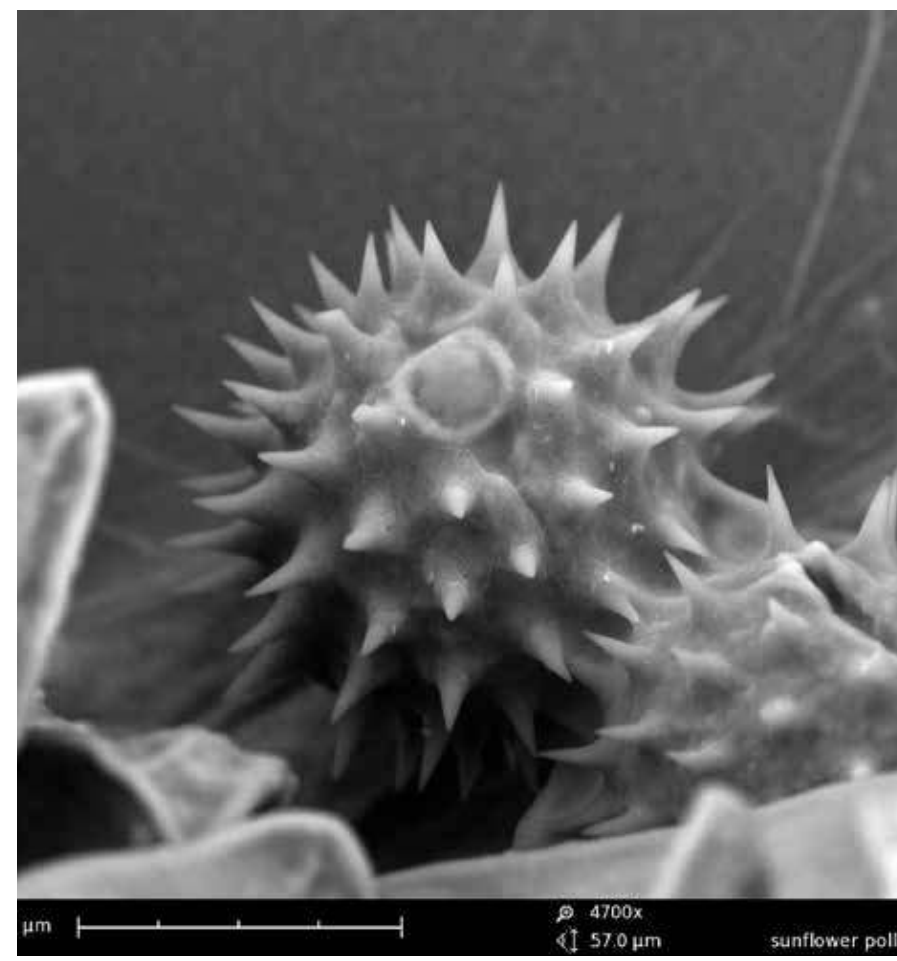
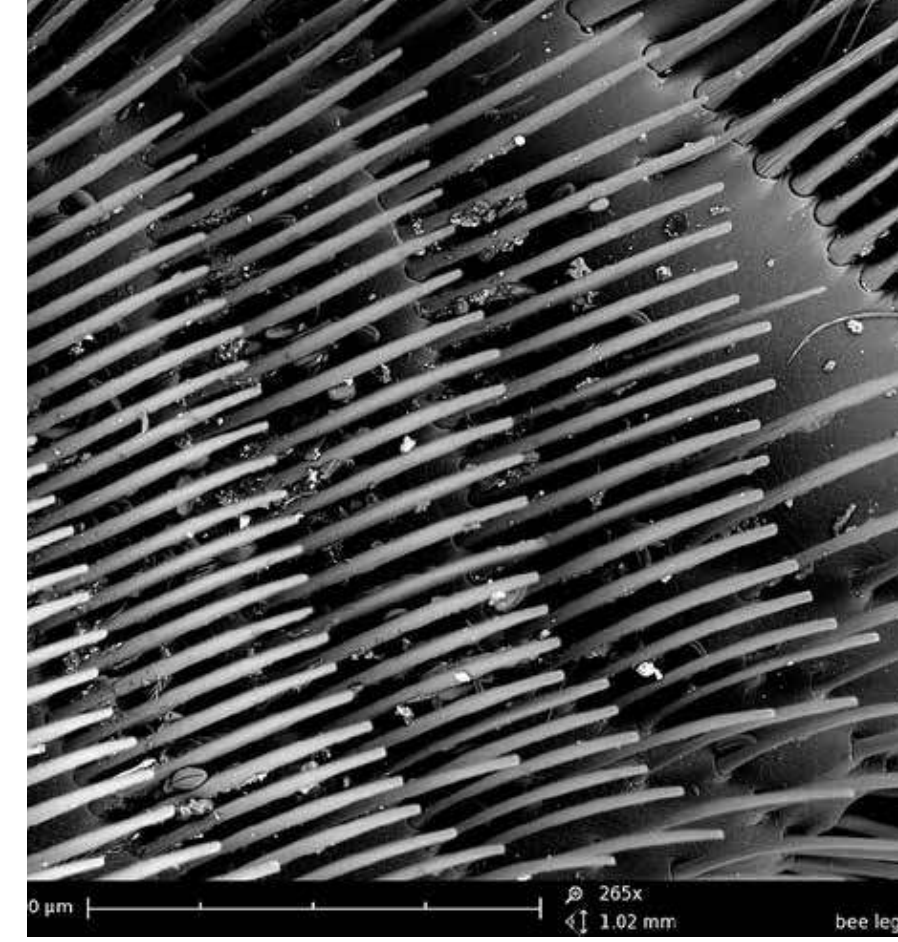
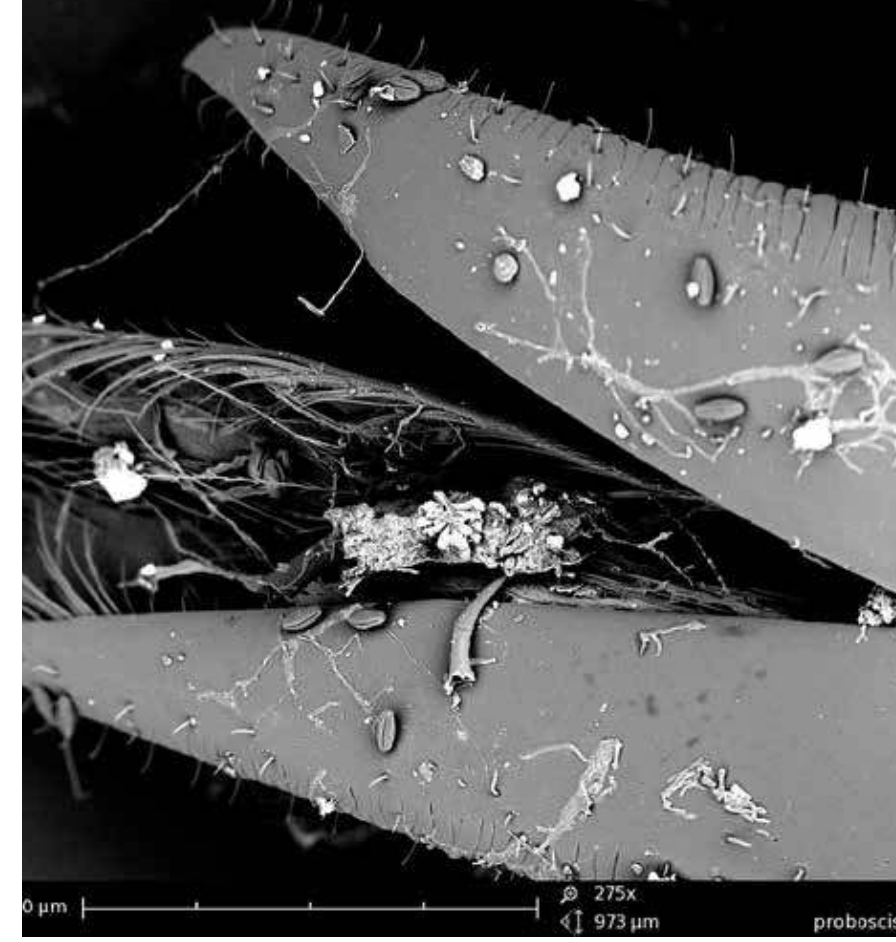
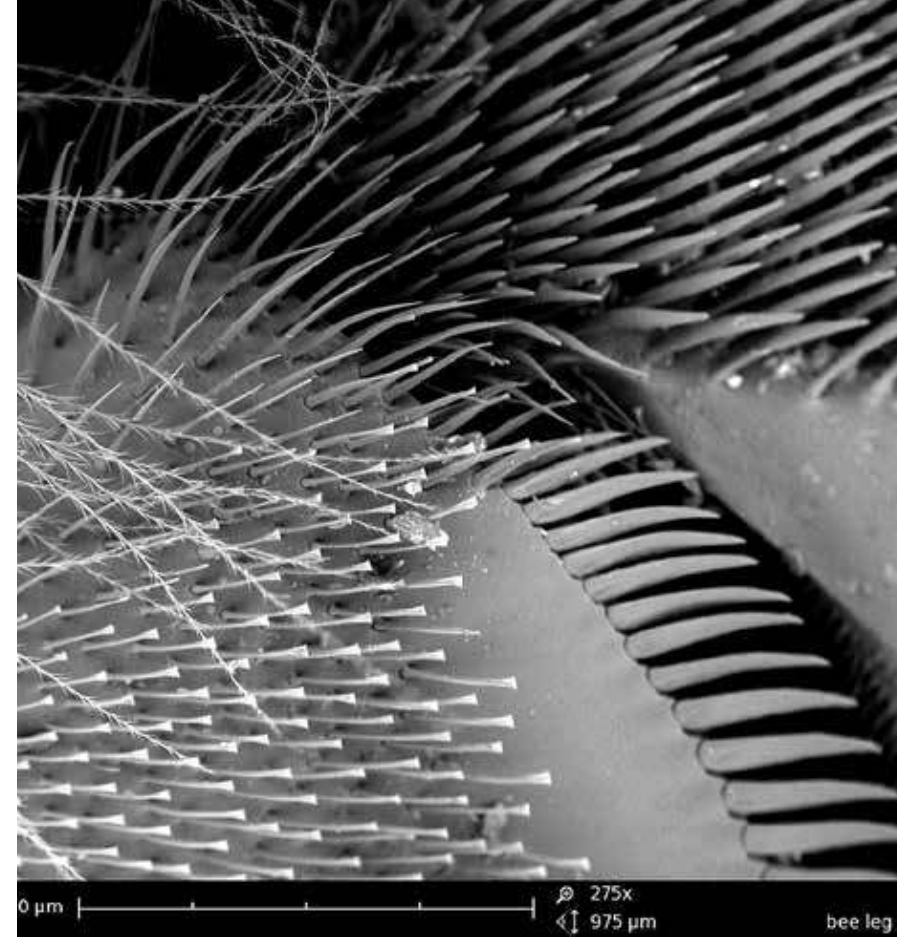
The 2 Bee Observatories in the OpenGreens-project transform 2 rooftopgardens located in the center of Brussels at about half a kilometer distance from each other into communicating vessels.

Several hives with both carnica and buckfast bees were installed in the gardens. The bees manage to bridge the spatial distance and associate the locations by going about their business and natural processes within their individual but overlapping territories. The presence and the activities of the bee colonies interconnect the gardens. The emerging inter-space can be perceived as place of encounters and neighborhood.















ELBBIENEN ENTENWERDER Innentemperatur: 31.31°C / Außentemperatur: 14.45°C 27-7 / 10:17:20

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LAB FOR FORM & MATTER

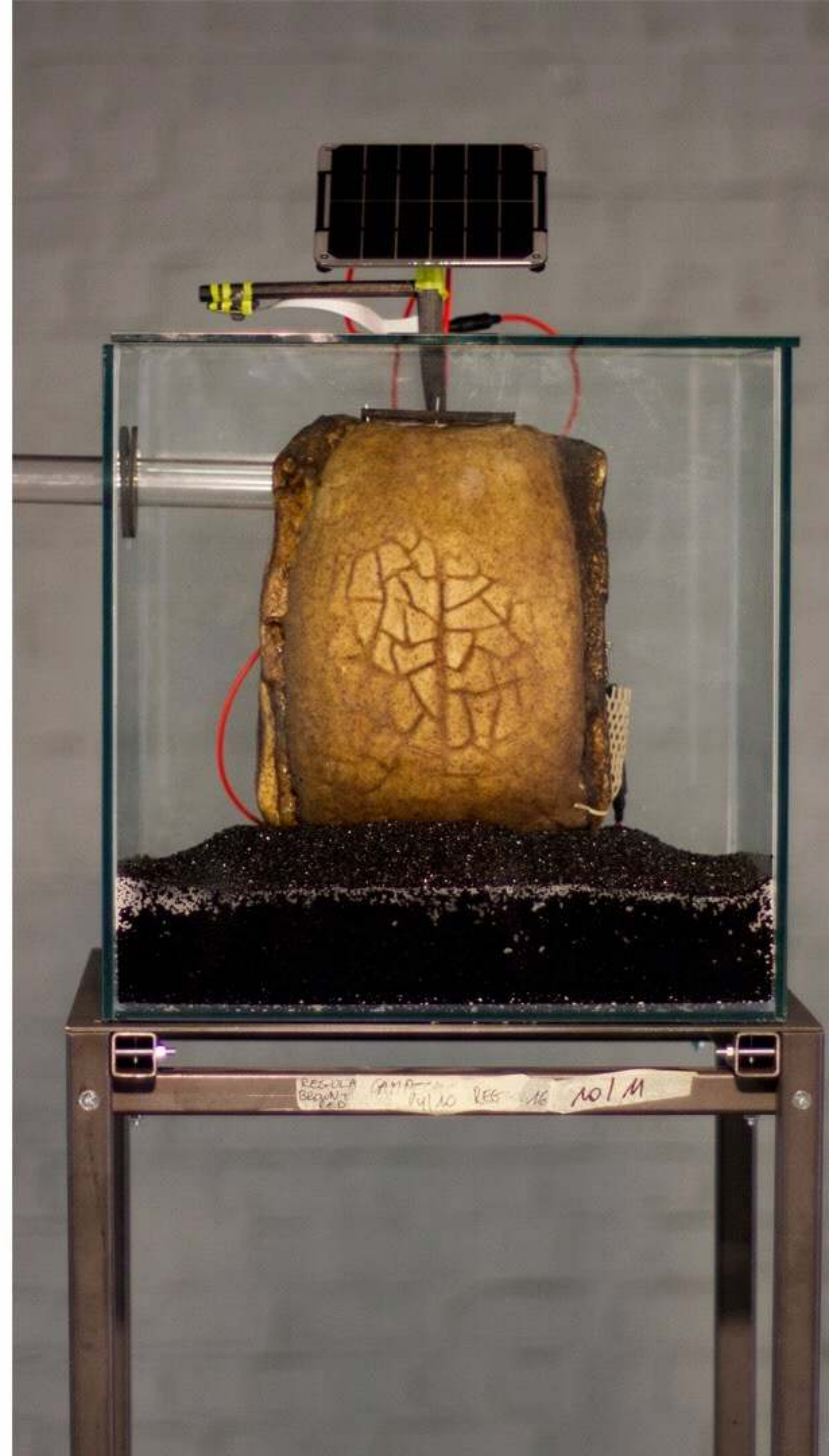
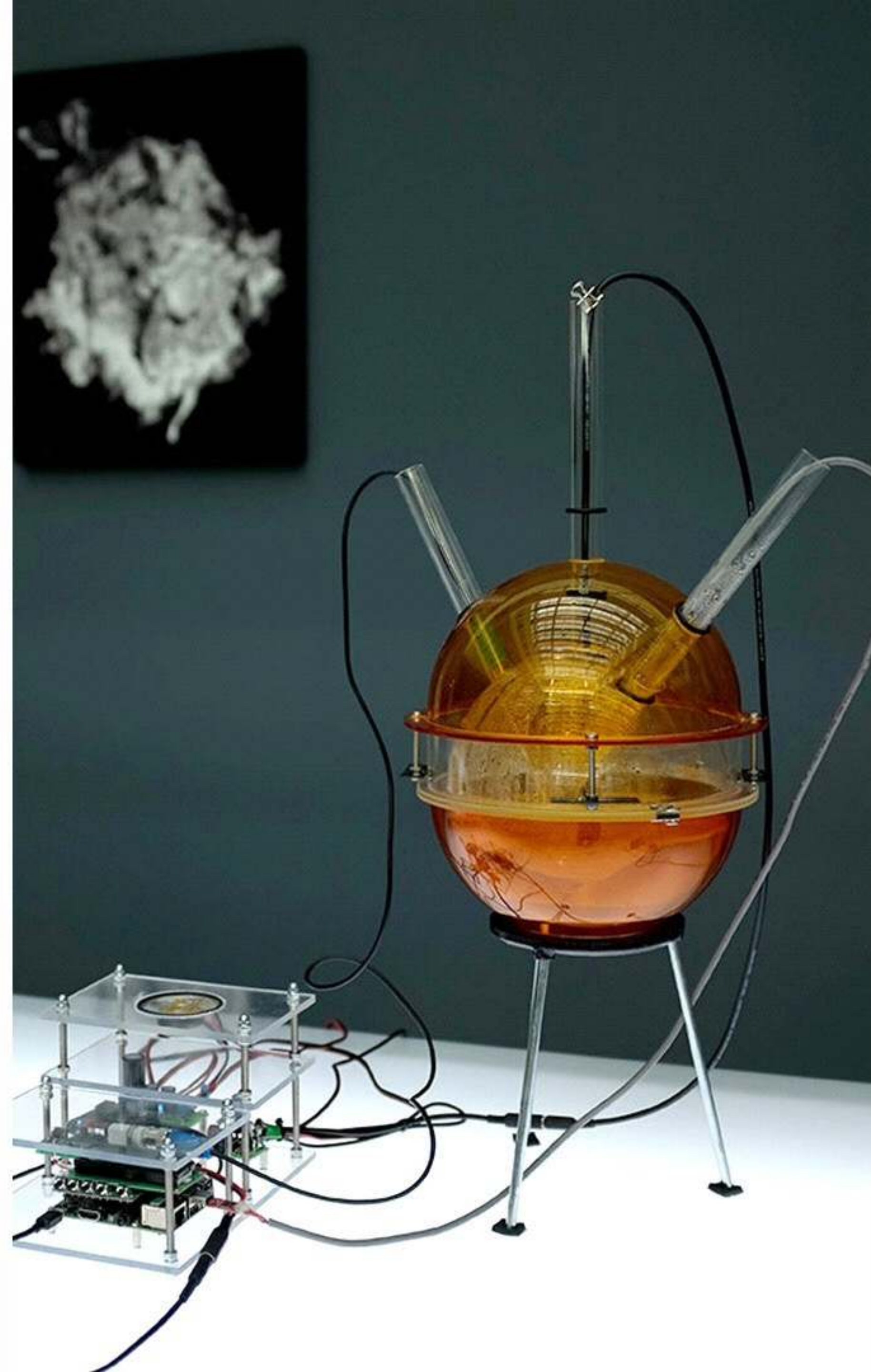
In my Lab for Form & Matter I investigate the sculptural potential of organic materials. I transform them into fabrics, tapestries, membranes and biofilms. I thus create complex surfaces that arouse our senses through their materiality, their texture, their colours and smells.

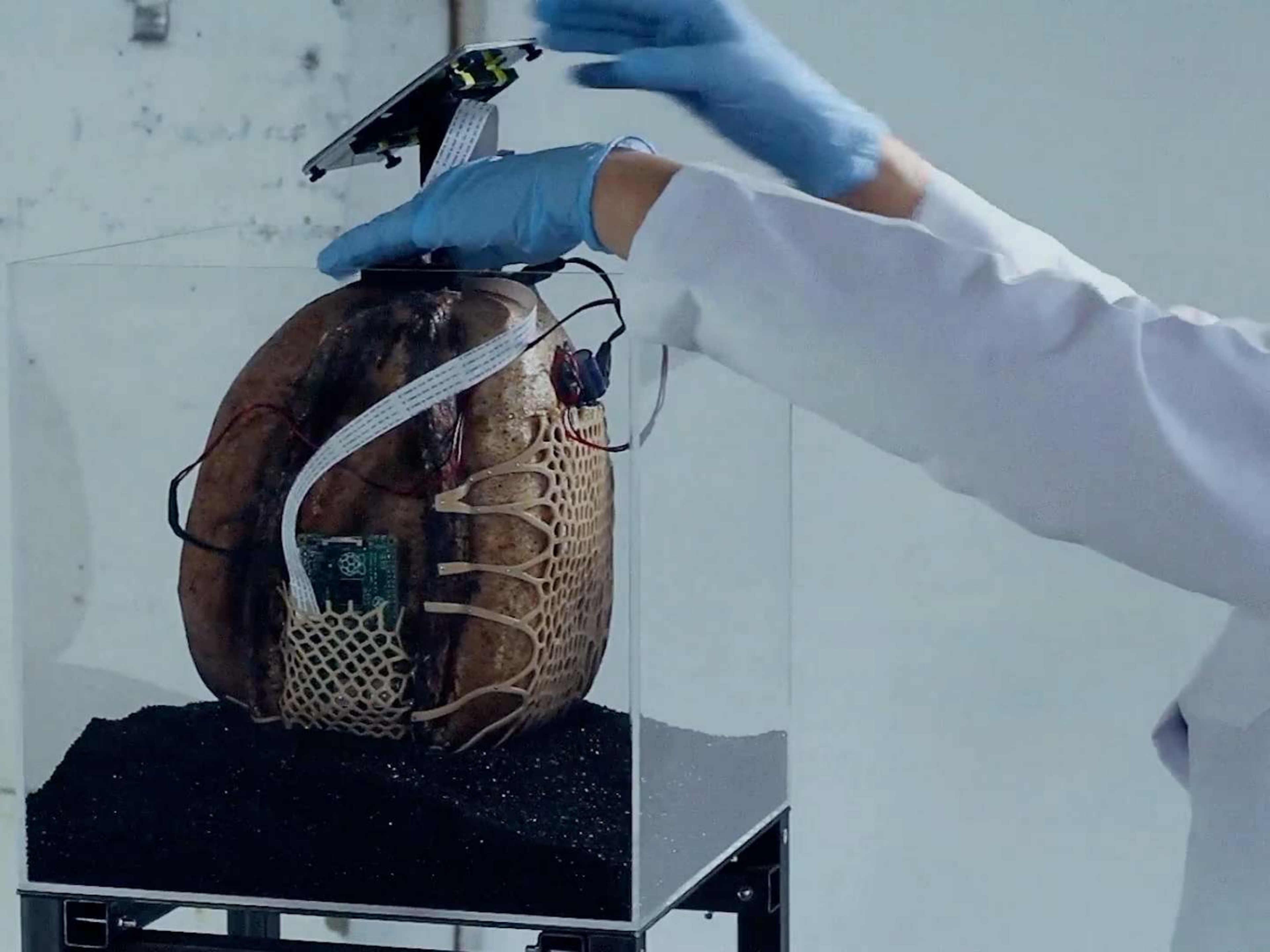
The ever-evolving fabrics shrink, harden or soften in response to humidity, temperature and other parameters of the environment. They result from processes reminiscent of alchemical practices, grounded in fieldwork and scientific methodology.

The fabrics become interfaces between the human and the non-human, the macroscopic and the microscopic. They transform the natural into the cultural realm. They plunge the viewer into earthly colours, materials and textures.

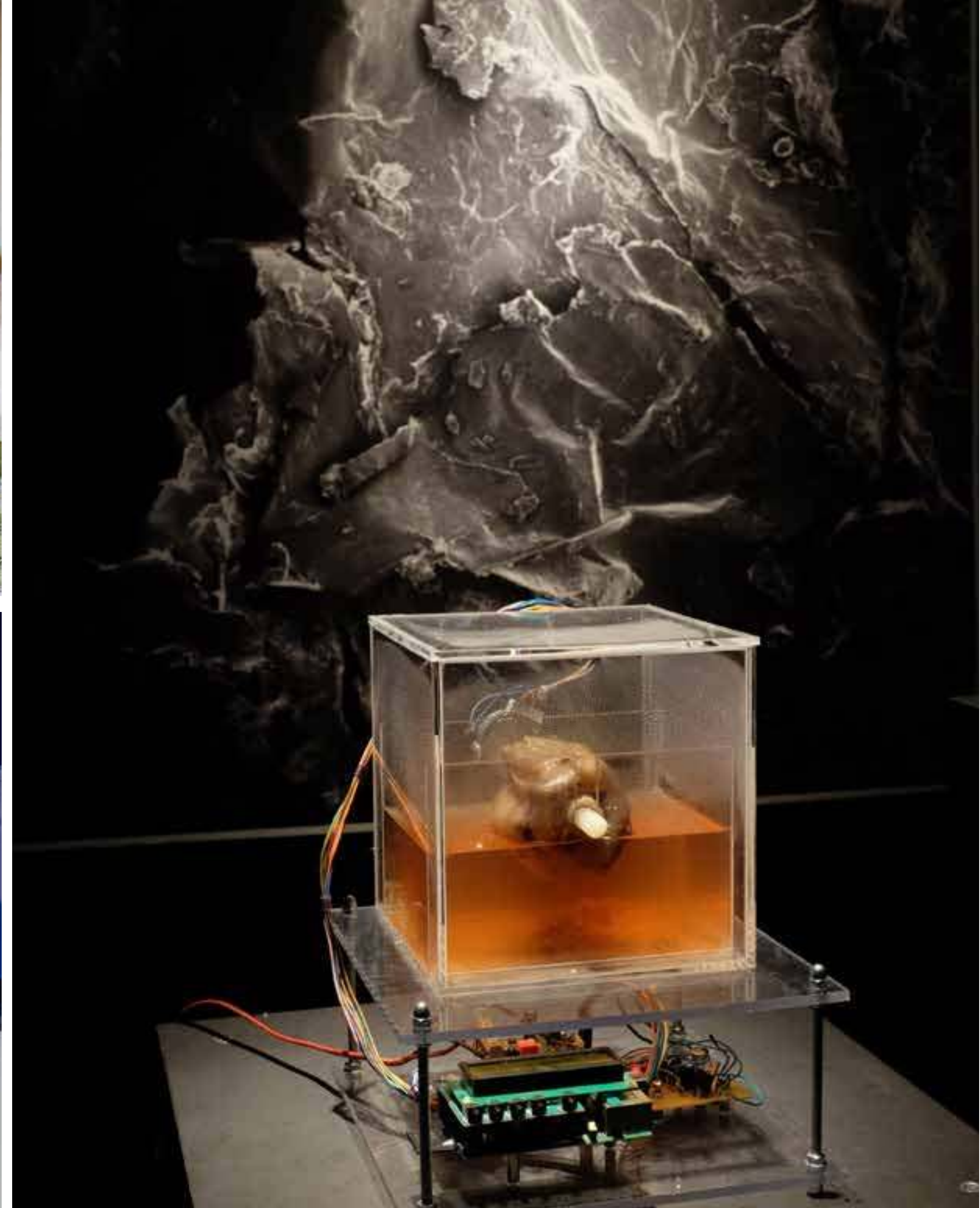












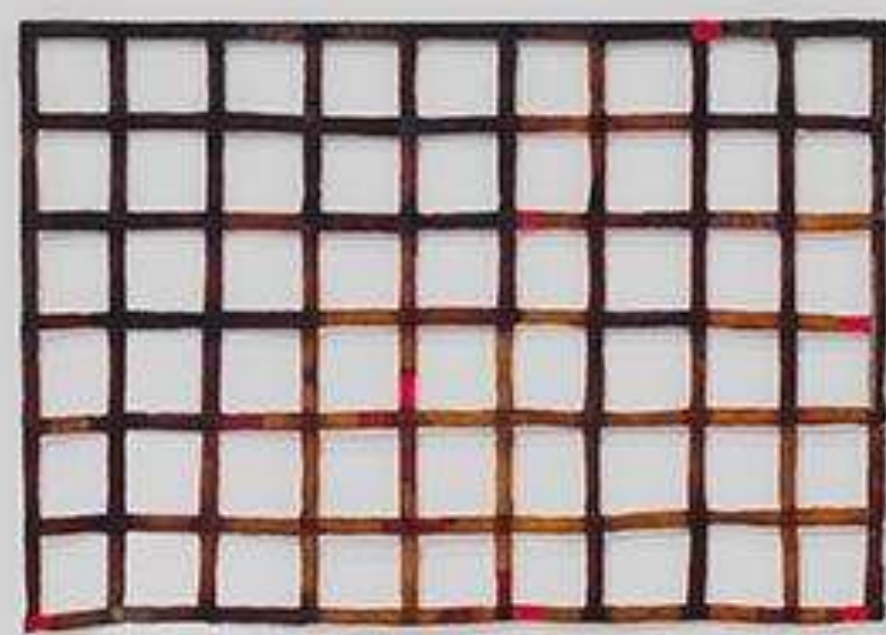




Winogradsky Column
Glass container, soil, water, bacterial colonies.

Sensorial Skins at Ferment
Cyfest#14 in Yerevan -
Armenia









'Poems from a Rooftop Garden'
jacquard woven tapestries
225cm x 170cm
Installation at Kunsthalle
Mulhouse

PERFORMANCES

THEATRUM ALGAERIUM

Early in the morning and late in the evening, between low and high tide, the Theatrum Algaerium rises from the sea. Metal frames hold the fluttering weeds. Glass jars fill up with seawater, their round shapes are acting like a lens and focus on the morphology of the floating algae, creating narratives woven from the threads of past, present and future.

A team of performers prepares and offers ocean delicacies. The waves threaten to swallow up the lab, but in a repetitive action, the structures, the algae and the jars are carried past the flood line.

Durational ritual performed in Ostend (Belgium), August 2021











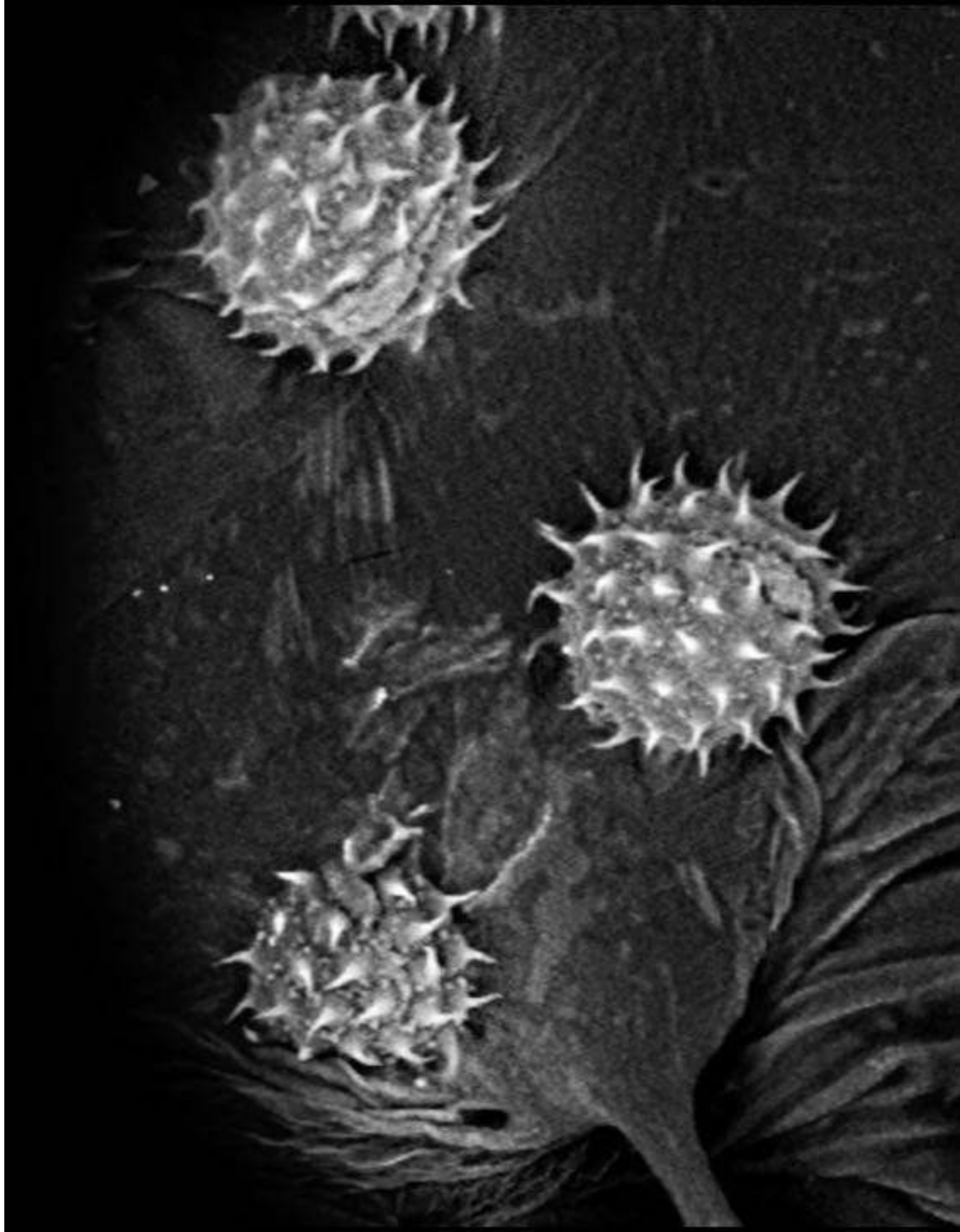
a Bee is a Bee is a Bee

At Palais de Tokyo (June 2022), Anne Marie Maes offers an immersive experience.

With an artistic and scientific approach, she transforms the spaces of the Palais into a laboratory. The starting points are the research of two major scientists who have studied the world of bees: Karl Von Frisch and François Huber. Through a poetic narrative, the artist leads us into an animal world with a finely organised social structure. Anne Marie Maes creates a symphony of the five senses. In the delicate notes of beeswax, floral perfumes, propolis and honey, the performers move through the darkened space, and mark their work area following the flight lines communicated to them by the foraging bees. The sound that fills the space has a buzzing background, as the recordings were captured during long-term observations inside the hive and turned into a composition with some electronic touches. In the adjacent space the video Variation Games reveals an observation of the behavior of a colony of bees inside their nest.







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