



Bed Rock

We are humus, not Homo, not anthropos; we are compost, not posthuman.
Donna J. Haraway

Pedogenesis is the formation of soil from bedrock through symbiotic relations between bacteria, algae and fungi that secrete acid compounds softening rock formations. These symbiotic associations known as lichen, extract minerals from bedrock, metabolizing and decaying into a fertile soil at a speed of 1cm per 500 years. Soil enables more biological interactions than bedrock weathering further its minerals as plants and micro-organisms start to collaborate. Without fully understanding these co-dependencies we humans of the global North historically have created anthropocentric, technoscientific, productionist and colonial infrastructures that enable the exploitation of the earth's resources at a dazzling speed. How do we create imaginative futures that enable us to overcome the present ones? Can we look at what is right below our feet, what connects us earth wide, what can be felt but not always be seen?

Can we learn from soil forming metabolisms and align ourselves with local histories and stories to guide us through the present crisis?

As lichens, communities of artists have grown from metabolic interactions with bedrock; the Bohus granite for example did not only form industrial capital used for infrastructures worldwide, it also grew aesthetic textures and communities in Bohuslän. From this “cultured” soil, artists have been weaving in stories with earth matter into complex metabolisms, creating narratives and kinships with visible and not so visible critters that are the foundation of biological and cultural life.