

# Editorial

01/02

In this issue of *e-flux journal*, deep glances at the past hope to make sense of the present by diving into history's original abysses and early promises. Mi You brings us a refreshingly constructive analysis of this year's documenta fifteen, its curators, its intended organizational structure, and its audiences. Olga Olina, Hallie Ayres, and Anton Vidokle chart suppressed, banned, and otherwise disappeared languages in a resource that sprawls over geography and time from 1367 to today, showing an ongoing process of erasure and survival that corresponds with the rise of nation-states.

Sometimes it's only possible to understand the present by seeing what was later scrubbed away. Nicola Perugini and Tommaso Fiscaletti explore fascist lineages that keep reemerging in their research of bathhouses that proletarian Italian youths were sent to each summer in the 1930s for regimens of strict hygiene, sunshine, and outward worship of Mussolini. Leon Dische Becker and Cosmo Bjorkenheim argue that some things are better left in the past, recommending against Hollywood directors mounting a fourth remake of H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Better to leave its curses and racist colonial critiques in the dust.

In issue 23 of *e-flux journal* (March 2011), Bruno Latour recounted an uneven 1922 conversation between Henri Bergson and Albert Einstein, in which Einstein almost entirely dismissed Bergson's deep, yet critical, engagement with the theory of relativity. "After Bergson spoke for thirty minutes," Latour wrote, "Einstein made a terse two-minute remark, ending with this damning sentence: 'Hence there is no philosopher's time; there is only a psychological time different from the time of the physicist.'" Latour, looking at the end of the twentieth century from 2011, highlighted this typical scientist's dismissal of philosophy, politics, and art. At the time, he asked, "Can we do better at the beginning of the twenty-first century? In other words, is it possible to give Bergson another chance to make his case that, no, he is not talking about subjective time and space, but is rather proposing an alternative to Einstein's cosmology?" Bruno Latour died this October, and in this issue his colleague Martin Guinard shares memories of a thinker who never stopped asking massive questions and drawing connections. Through his boundless writing and expansive collaborations, he never stopped marveling at our world.

By following okra, mustard greens, freekeh, and other flora through various times and places, Pelin Tan shares the entangled, exiled existences and resiliences of human refugees and the plants that survive with them. In a conversation between Matt Peterson and Sabu

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Kohso about radiation and revolution (also the title of Kohso's recent book), Kohso traces deep, interconnected fault lines between the ongoing aftermaths of the Fukushima disaster and the Covid pandemic, as well as the imperial and also liberatory history of activist movements in Tokyo, New York, and all places where people rise up against a disintegrating world.

In the second installment of Su Wei's essay on emotion in post-1949 art in China, he writes explicitly about looking at the past to understand China's present. Within this, he also describes historical, forward-looking views of late-twentieth-century artists, such as artist and theorist Zhang Anzhi and his belief that art was a force for "creating emotions for a new world." Su Wei asks, "Might brief flashes of emotion in historical moments of uncertainty help us to see the maze that we are currently in?"

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