UMWELTRAUM((A))

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PRESENT

A HERBARIUM & BESTIARY

OF THE

UMWELTRAUM((A))

JAKOB VON UEXKÜLL (1934)

A STROLL THROUGH THE WORLDS OF ANIMALS AND MEN: A PICTURE BOOK OF INVISIBLE WORLDS*

This little monograph does not claim to point the way to a new science. Perhaps it should be called a stroll into unfamiliar worlds; worlds strange to us but known to other creatures, manifold and varied as the animals themselves. The best time to set out on such an adventure is on a sunny day. The place, a flower-strewn meadow, humming with insects, fluttering with butterflies. Here we may glimpse the worlds of the lowly dwellers of the meadow. To do so, we must first blow, in fancy, a soap bubble around each creature to represent its own world, filled with the perceptions which it alone knows. When we ourselves then step into one of these bubbles, the familiar meadow is transformed. Many of its colorful features disappear, others no longer belong together but appear in new relationships. A new world cornes into being. Through the bubble we see the world of the burrowing worm, of the butterfly, or of the field mouse; the world as it appears to the animals themselves, not as it appears to us. This we may call the phenomenal world or the self-world of the animal. To some, these worlds are invisible. Many a zoologist and physiologist, clinging to the doctrine that all living beings are mere machines, denies their existence and thus boards up the gates to other worlds so that no single ray of light shines forth from all the radiance that is shed over them. But let us who are not committed to the machine theory consider the nature of machines. All our useful devices, our machines, only implement our acts. There are tools that help our senses, spectacles, telescopes, microphones, which we may call perceptual tools. There are also tools used to effect our purposes, the machines of our factories and of transportation, lathes and motor cars. These we may call effector too/s.Now we might assume that an animal is nothing but a collection of perceptual and effector tools,connected by an integrating apparatus which, though still a mechanism, is yet fit to carry on the !ife functions. This is indeed the position of all mechanistic theorists, whether their analogies are in terms of rigid mechanics or more plastic dynamics. They brand animais as mere objects. The proponents ofsuch theories forget that, from the first, they have overlooked the most important thing, the subject which uses the tools, perceives and functions with their aid.

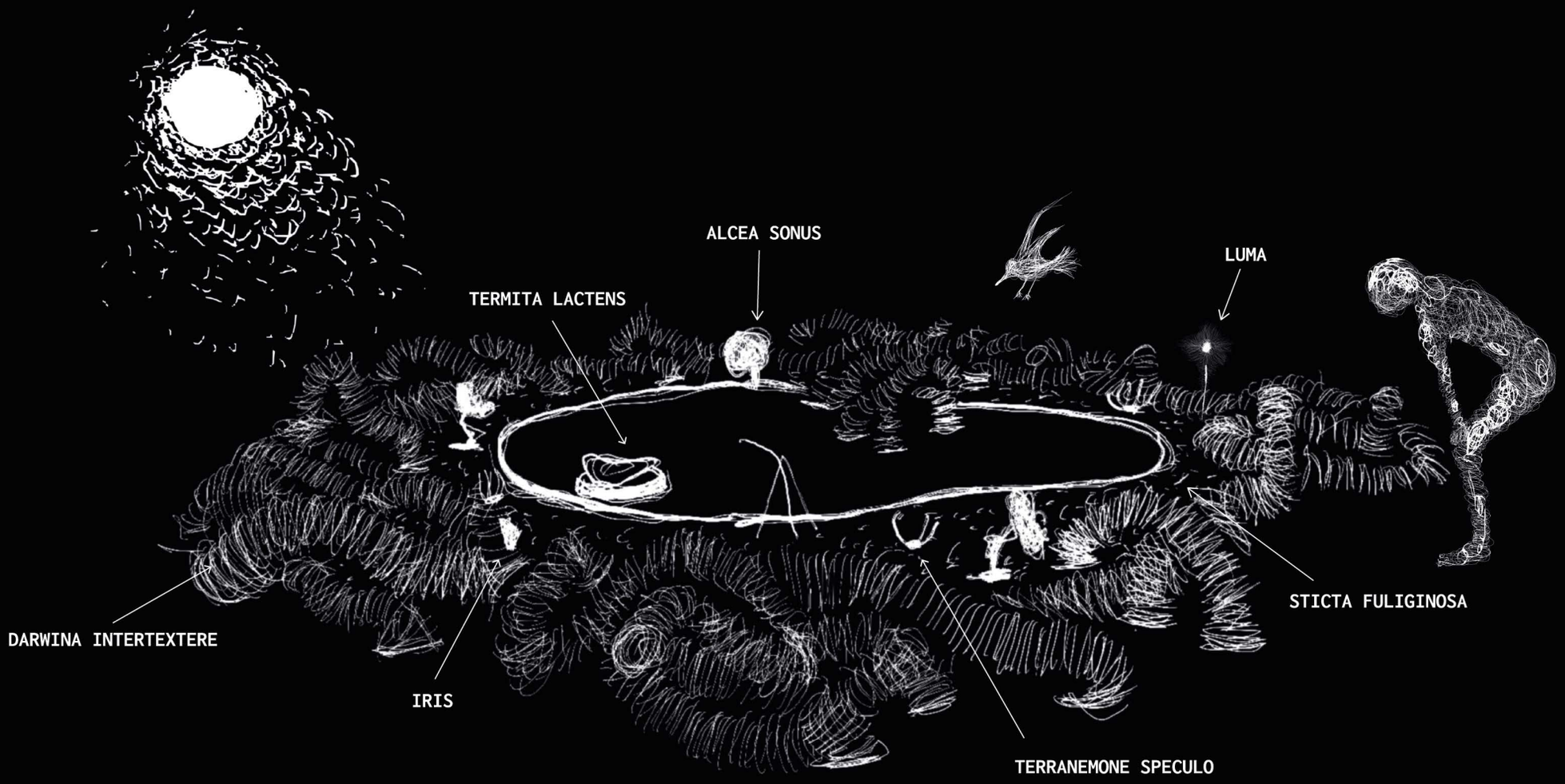
The mechanists have pieced together the sensory and motor organs of animals, like so many parts of a machine, ignoring their real functions of perceiving and acting, and have even gone on to mechanize man himself. According to the behaviorists, man's own sensations and will are mere appearance, to be considered, if at all, only as disturbing static. But we who still hold that our sense organs serve our perceptions, and our motor organs our actions, see in animais as well not only the mechani cal structure, but also the operator, who is built into their organs, as we are into our bodies. We no longer regard animals as mere machines, but as subjects whose essential activity consists of perceiving and acting. We thus unlock the gates that lead to other realms, for all that a subject perceives becomes his perceptual world and all that he does, his effector world. Perceptual and effector worlds together form a closed unit, the Umwelt. These different worlds, which are as manifold as the animals themselves, present to all nature lovers new lands of such wealth and beauty that a walk through them is well worth while, even though they unfold not to the physical but only to the spiritual eye. So, reader, join us as we ramble through these worlds of wonder.

*Test extracted from: Originally published in Instinctive Behavior, trans, by Claire H. Schiller (ed.), 5-80. Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1957. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

THE SOUNDECOLOGIST

Our sound ecology researcher

THE SWAMP


ALCEA SONUS
LUMA
TERMITA LACTENS
DARWINA INTERTEXTERE
IRIS
TERRANEMONE SPECULO
STICTA FULIGINOSA

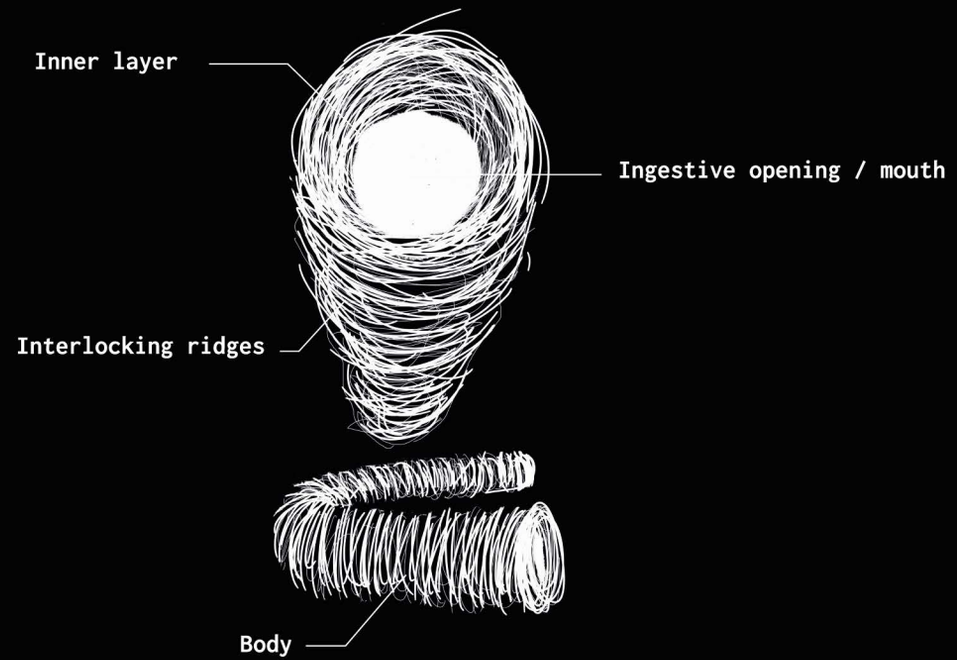
KARWINA INTERTEXTERE

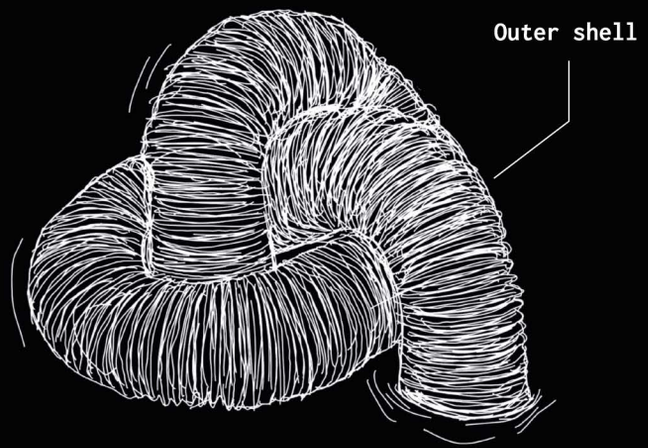
Darwina Intertextere is one of the few worms that display affection to other worms by rubbing their bodies against each other. The ridges in Darwina's skin lock together to form a connection. This way, the Darwina species slowly form a cluster, protecting each other from predators and unleashing a unique chemical into the ground that changes it's acidity. This way, the worm can decompose it's prey, including plastic, metal and paper materials found in the ground. The Darwina Intertextere can live up to 100 years and is very slowly moving. It only feeds once a month, once the soil has reached it's optimum acidity.

DARWINA INTERTEXTERE

Date. 10.04.2024 Location. Cove Park, Scotland

Description. Worm





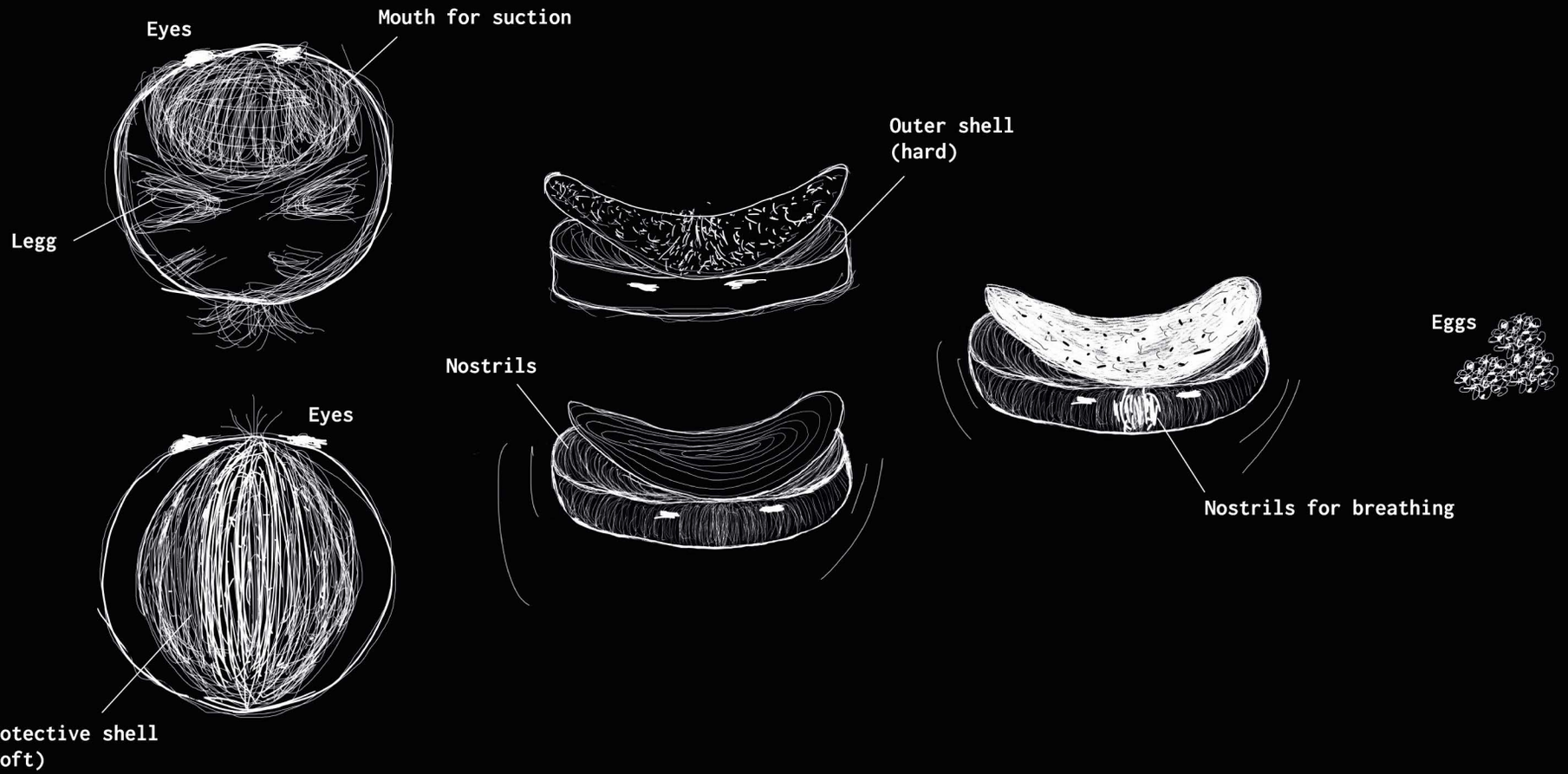
TERMITA LACTENS

Termita Lactens are species of water termite that can only survive in saline lakes. The high sodium content of the water permits this termite to stay afloat, despite its large size. It feeds by sucking small plants and plankton through its mouth, which is situated under its hard shell, facing the water. To breathe, the termita lactens has two nostrils in its outer shell, creating points of vulnerability. The nostrils are therefore protected by a textured layer, elevated at the sides, to protect from predators.

TERMITA LACTENS

Date. 15.04.2024 Location. Cove Park, Scotland

Description. Water termite



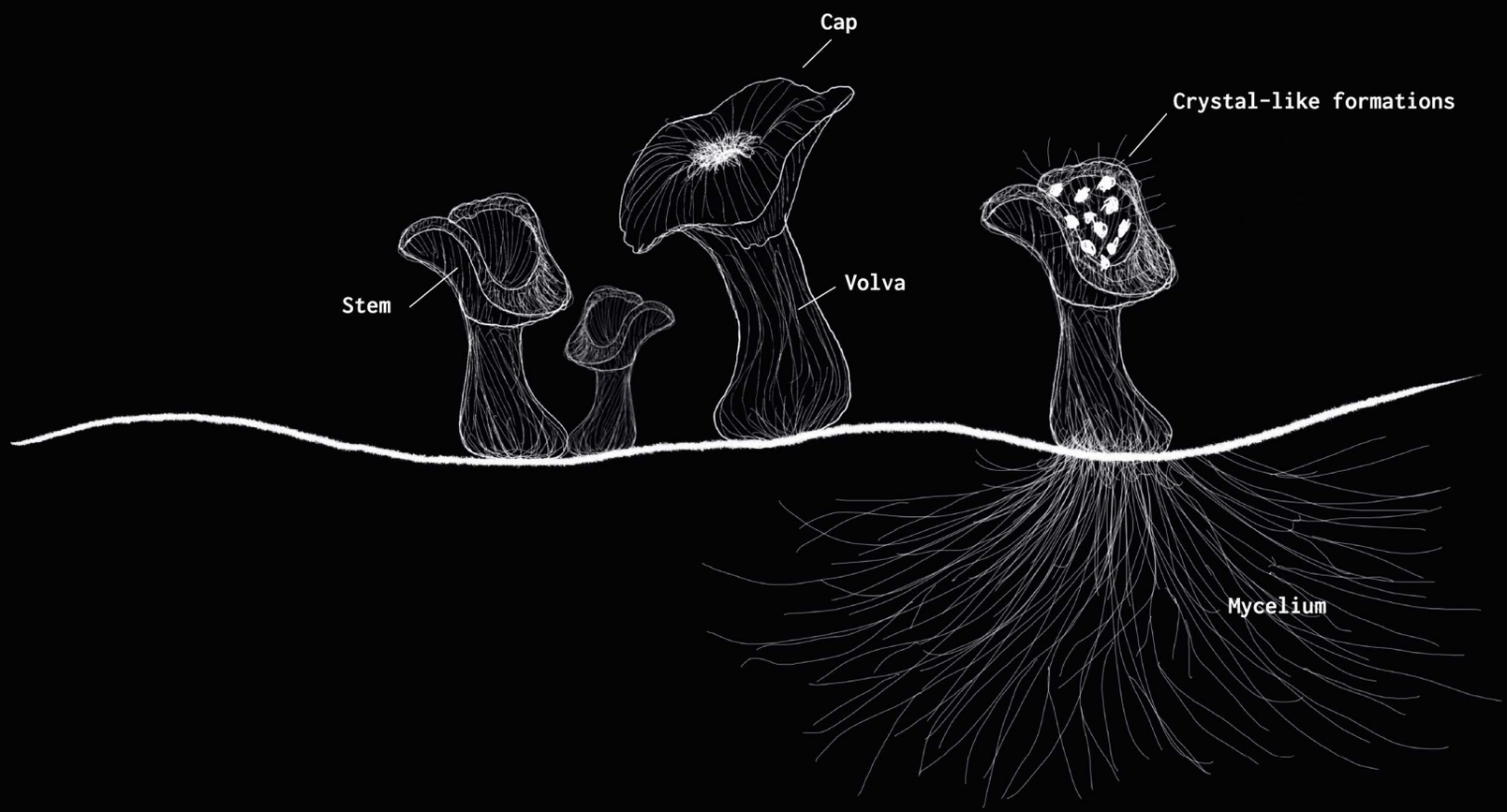
IRIS

The Iris is a rare form of black fungus that also builds iridescent crystal-like formations on its surface. These are to attract birds, such as magpies and ravens. While birds can feed off of this mushroom, it has highly hallucinogenic and poisonous properties for humans. While not always deadly, a bite of the iris can be life-altering. Some also refer to this species as the ‘third-eye-mushroom’. The mushroom is often found close to the darwina intertextere, as it takes advantage of the acidic nature of the soil and feeds off decaying organic matter.

IRIS (type 01)

Date. 24.07.2024 Location. Cove Park, Scotland

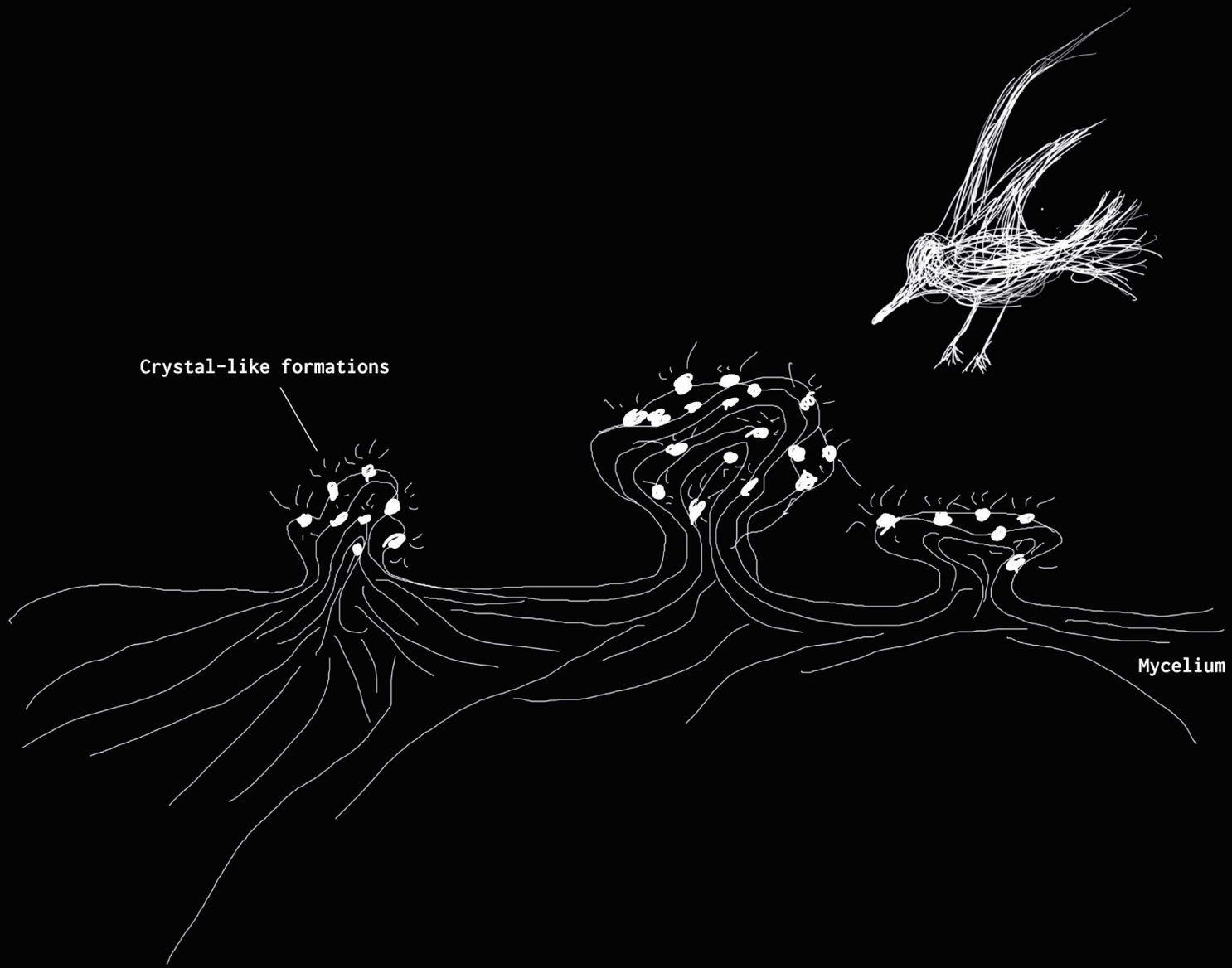
Description. Mushroom



IRIS (type 02)

Date. 24.07.2024 Location. Cove Park, Scotland

Description. Mushroom



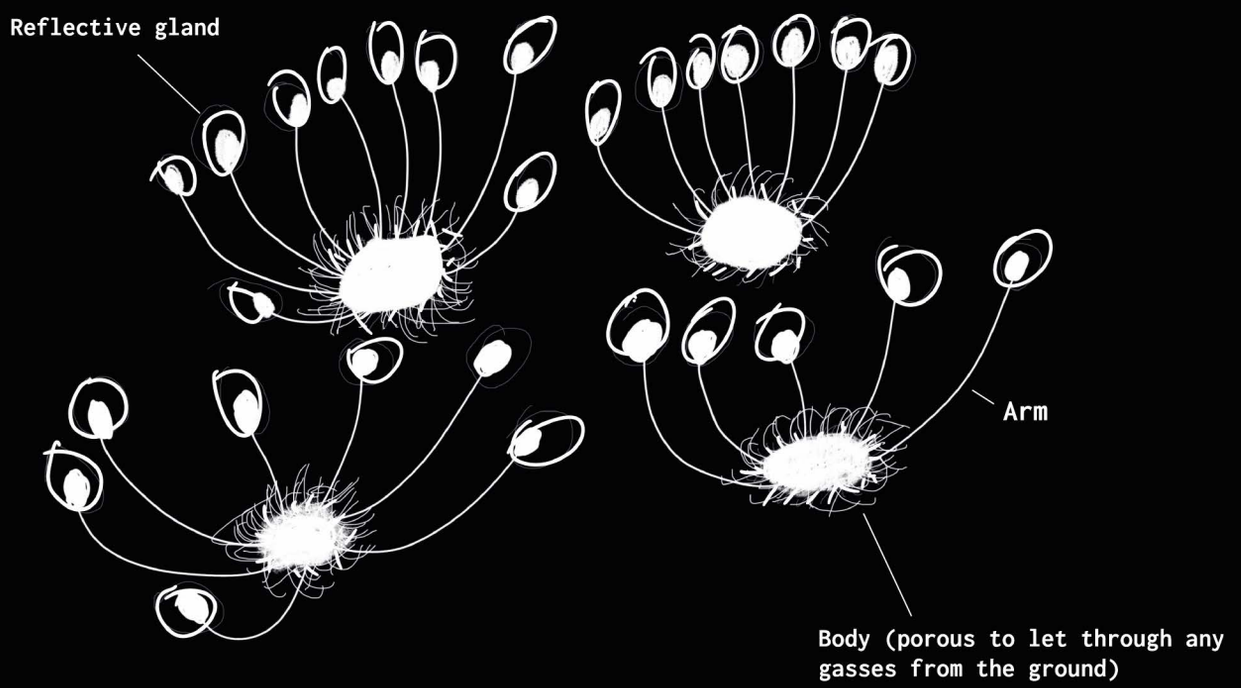
TERRANEMONE SPECULO

The Terranemone Speculo is a form of algae that grows above water near marshland, small lakes and swamps. Its name, meaning ‘mirror’ comes from the algae’s reflective surfaces. These allow the speculo to harbour energy from the moonlight at night before it retracts and hides when sunlight hits its surface. The rectangular shapes of the speculo’s tips are sensitive to airflow coming from the ground, causing the algae to move and jitter. This is to fight off predators who mistake the plant for a living and breathing being.

TERRANEMONE SPECULO

Date. 11.07.2024 Location. Cove Park, Scotland

Description. Algae



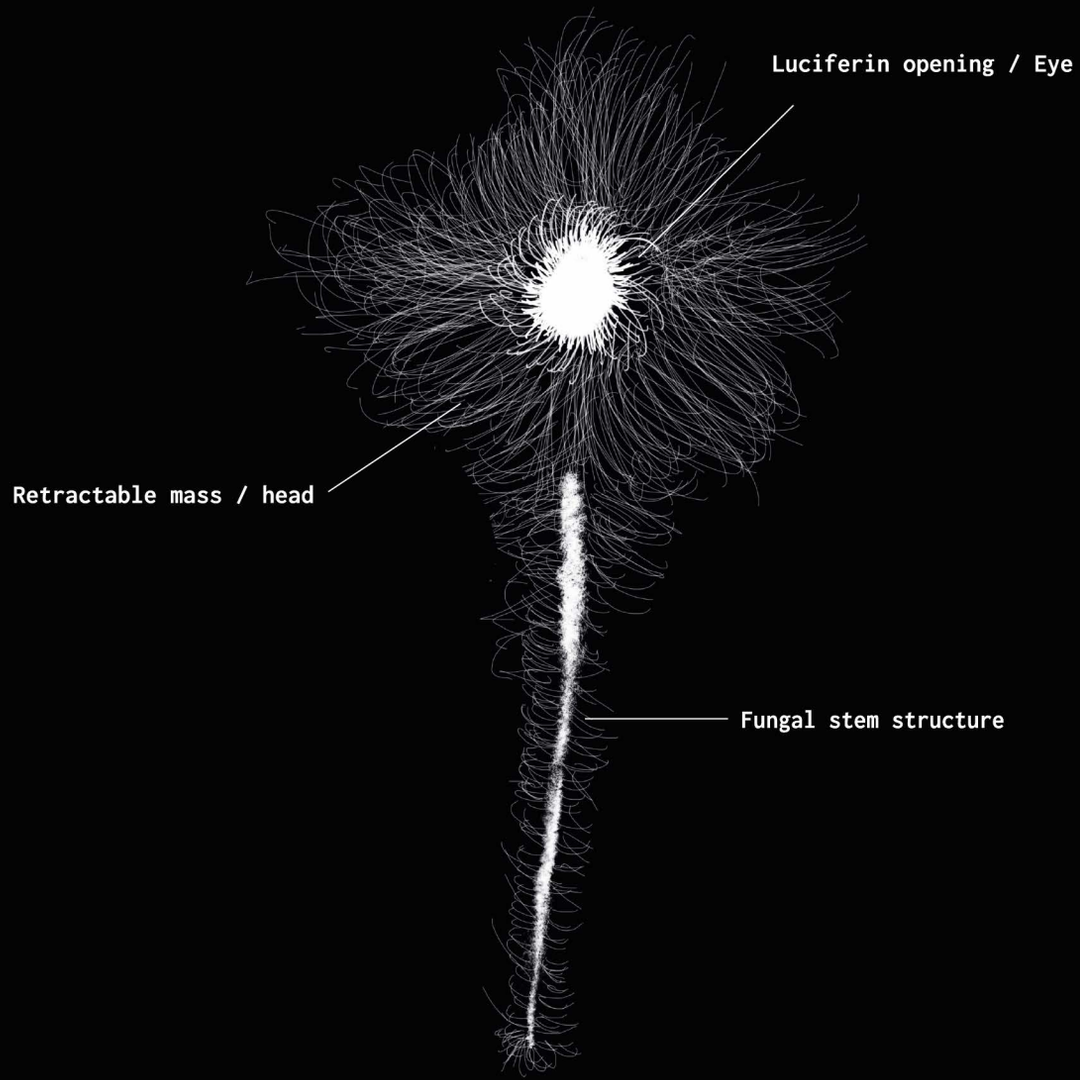
LUMA (OR LUCI)

The Luma (or Luci) is a recently discovered species and a mystery to modern scientists. The luma pushes up from the ground forming three thin poles that could be mistaken as legs. These remain static while the fungus forms a mass that can almost be seen as its ‘body’ or ‘head’. During the night, this mass opens and gives way to a bright light, illuminating the swamp. The glowing light is caused by a chemical called luciferin (also found in fireflies), one of this fungus's main components. The luma has only been found in conjunction with the darwina intertextere and iris mushrooms.

LUMA (OR LUCI)

Date. 12.08.2024 Location. Cove Park, Scotland

Description. Unknown Fungus



Sticta Fuliginosa

The Sticta Fuliginosa is a species of Lichen that grows not only on plants and rocks but also on living beings. While not producing light, this Lichen grows iridescent formations and irregular textures that reflect light and create a shimmer. Once this lichen grows, it spreads quickly in humid and saline air. The high sodium content in the air encourages crystal-like and iridescent formations. While the sticta Fuliginosa feeds on its host, it also protects other flora and fauna from predators, who reside elsewhere, by disguising living beings as rock.

STICTA FULIGINOSA

Date.11.09.2024 Location. Cove Park, Scotland

Description. Luminescent Lichen

ALCEA SONUS

Alcea Sonus is a unique flora that emits a pulse in the form of low sound waves that create vibrations in the ground surrounding it’s roots. This will permit the sonus to fight off any predators, as the pulses may be disorientating for them.

ALCEA SONUS

Date. 23.07.2024 Location. Cove Park, Scotland

Description. Flower