

Connection with Nature and Landscape



*Figure 1. Rundlogen.
Image: Aybike Gul Karaoglu, 2023.*

We humans come from hunter-gatherer ancestors. However, a sedentary life, from wandering to agriculture and animal husbandry, was chosen. Therefore, people engaged in agriculture and sustainably produced their food with Mother Earth.

By the Industrial Revolution, technology had developed significantly. The rapid development of technology and mass production has resulted in a reduction in product life cycles and an increase in manufacturing products with more features and higher quality (Jovane et al., 2008; Kotha, 1995). Over time, the pursuit of economic competitiveness has led to the relentless depletion and pollution of our vital environmental resources. The Industrial Revolution is one of the events with the greatest anthropogenic impact on nature and the environment. Additionally, industrialisation drove urbanisation because it spurred urbanisation as people flocked to growing industrial centres in search of employment opportunities (Williamson, 1988).

Urban life and health are intricately linked at many different levels. It offers advantages such as improved access to services and employment opportunities whilst also posing challenges such as overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure, especially in cases of extreme poverty. The relationship between urban life and health is multifaceted and not easily characterised (McDade &

Adair, 2001). However, urbanisation and modern-era demands have a potential impact on physical activity, sedentary behaviour (screen activities) and physical fitness and their subsequent influence on health. It might vary based on socio-geographic factors and gender, yielding diverse outcomes (Squillaciotti et al., 2023). The rapid pace of technology adoption in urbanised areas might detrimentally result in increasing screen time, contributing to limited mobility, rising obesity rates and potentially higher levels of depression among city dwellers.

The process of industrialisation, characterised by the shift from agrarian and craft-based economies to mechanised and factory-based production and subsequent urbanisation, had a profound impact on the emotional landscape of communities. As individuals moved from rural to urban areas, faced challenging and gruelling working conditions, and witnessed significant social and cultural transformations, it gave rise to emotions of displacement and alienation (Smith, 2000). These can evoke emotional responses such as stress, frustration and even despair, all of which are reactions to the challenges associated with industrialisation, mass production and standardised routines. They could be seen as a threat and could hinder the quest for personal meaning and authenticity while losing the meaning of life. Hence, profound societal transformations often left individuals grappling with a loss of meaning in their lives because traditional ways of living were upended.

In light of these facts, I believe humans should remember the importance of individual self-examination and the pursuit of a meaningful life. Life can become meaningful by finding genuine fulfilment and purpose in our lives. The solution is a connection with nature and the emotions we experience while in the environment that surrounds us.

However, due to the Industrial Revolution, characterised by mechanisation and mass production, human beings have adversely changed the environment through activities such as the extensive release of greenhouse gases and deforestation, which have ultimately led to pronounced and alarming global warming. One of the photos I took during the LiLa fieldwork was mistakenly shot, but on one side, it was reddish, and it occurred to me that it was like dried trees during the scorching summer due to global warming.

To decrease anthropogenic effects on the environment, humans need to recognise the beauty and importance of nature, which can inspire individuals and communities to manage our waste properly. We should implement better waste management strategies, which prioritize the circular economy in a waste hierarchy. Some would suggest applying the traditional 3Rs (reduce-reuse-recycle) rule, but some would prefer using minimisation, recovery, transformation and land disposal (Zhang, et al., 2022) However, the waste hierarchy can be generalised for zero waste as 6Rs, i.e. 1) refuse/rethink/re-design, 2) reduce/minimise, 3) reuse/repurpose, 4) recycle, 5) recover and 6) retain (positive contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, SDG 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”, and SDG 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”) (Singh, S., & Hussain, 2021; Ingold, 2000).

Cultivating a strong connection to nature and taking part in nature-related activities can benefit one’s physical, mental and emotional health. We seek refuge in nature from the noise of the city, from the noise of cars and even from air and water pollution, from the asphalt that does not allow the soil to breathe. Nowadays, activities in natural settings, such as nature walks, yoga and medi-

tation, can contribute to both individual well-being and the creation of healthier surroundings. These activities highlight interconnectedness and emphasise the positive impact of nature on human health. In conclusion, we try to establish a connection with nature, especially with our own nature and our existence. In this way, we may find peace and calm our souls (see Fig 2 a-c).



Figure 2. a,b,c study from *Fieldwork*.
Images: Aybike Gul Karaoglu (a,c) and Heini Kankaro (b), 2023.

Ingold (2000) proposed the idea of an “ecology of life”, highlighting the connection between people and their environment. He advocates the perspective that humans should be seen as engaged participants within their environment rather than as isolated entities exerting influence on it. He also discusses the idea of “dwelling” as a manner of being in the world, where people change and adapt to their environment as a result of their actions and experiences. His overall point is that humans, dwellings and their environment should be evaluated more

holistically. I also agree with Ingold because people both shape and are shaped by their environment, a dynamic interplay that can be discerned through their surroundings. For example, in a farming community nestled in a fertile valley, people actively shape their environment by cultivating land and constructing landscapes and infrastructure. Simultaneously, they are influenced by natu-

ral features of the environment, climate and resources, which dictate their agricultural practices and way of life. This intertwined interaction illustrates how people both impact and are impacted by their surroundings.

In a nutshell, I had many inspiration points after our fieldwork and before creating my artwork. (Figure 3 a, b, c p. 90).

As is shown in Figure 4 (p. 91), the artwork was developed step by step. Deciding to use a piece of wood as my canvas, I first scraped it clean. I drew the house



Figure 3. a, b, c. Some materials supplied from the forest in Sweden, C. Bark of Palm tree trunk in Istanbul F. PVC foam sheet. Images: Aybike Gul Karaoglu, 2023.

onto a sheet of PVC foam and cut it for optimal shape, then I began to paint the sky and grass. I added two little branches with some moss and cut one of the cones to give the tree a shape. I added moss under the house and painted empty spaces to give a natural view.

My work compares the nature of the people who lived in the past and engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry with nature that has become arid due to global warming. Governments, policy-makers, Non-Governmental Organisations and relative institutions should

take urgent actions to protect nature, combat climate change and ensure sustainable consumption. We have one world. Thus, my artwork highlights UN SDGs 11, 12, and 13.

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Figure 4. presents the process of my artwork.
Images: Aybike Gul Karaoglu, 2023.

