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by Antonio Ianniello

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Philosophy Through Unorthodox Means: Enacting a Monstrous Education of Attention to Face the Climate Crisis

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Abstract

An overwhelming scientific consensus confronts us with the need to radically transform our habits to cope with the climate crisis in which we are living.

The production of data – in addition to the related flow of information and images regarding the threat to our survival and ecosystems – is not enough to activate our pro-environment actions.

To set radical change in motion, it is necessary to design imaginative interventions based on the knowledge gained in embodied cognitive science so that interventions are directed not at disembodied minds but at situated individuals enacting within a rich landscape of affordances.

By way of experimenting with philosophy through unorthodox means, I will present a concrete artwork, *Infinity Pool*, whose purpose is to enact tangible invitations addressed to a situated community through a monstrous education of attention, that is, through an imaginative invitation that offers an opportunity to bring attention to aspects of the environment usually ignored.

Keywords Monsters | Radical embodied cognitive science | Climate crisis | Affordances | Attention

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Climate Crisis and Philosophy Through Unorthodox Means

As the 2023 IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report shows, the last century has seen a global average temperature rise of 1.1°C compared to the pre-industrial period caused mainly by the use of fossil fuels, unsustainable energy practices, and soil exploitation. This has resulted in an intensified frequency of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, storms, and fires that pose a risk to the survival of ourselves and of ecosystems.

Inevitably associated with these scenarios are sociopolitical events related to climate migration, social polarization, inequality, and exacerbated exposure to death of economically marginal populations. The actions taken so far to counter the climate crisis are not adequate. If global warming is to be limited so that it does not exceed 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level, action must be taken now so that greenhouse gas emissions in all sectors are halved by 2030.

The 2023 IPCC report calls for urgent and ambitious actions that can no longer be procrastinated.

In practice, in the face of the climate crisis, an overwhelming scientific consensus invites us to thoroughly reconsider our relationship with the environment to achieve sustainable modes of human existence on Earth.

As I will try to highlight, the data provided to us, while necessary, are not enough to invite us to act and thus enable us to deal with an invisible threat.

Fig. 1. Tiber River and mirror mask realized for Infinity pool i.c.w. David Habets, photograph by Valeria Scrilatti

To cope with the current crisis, in addition to producing scientific studies that provide data on reality and outline possible scenarios, there is an urgent need for an effort that involves knowledge, strategies, and modalities from different fields so as to develop imaginative interventions that can activate concrete change. My proposal works in this direction. I will try to do so through a philosophy that, from a radically embodied approach to cognition,[1] is enacted through unorthodox means; it is a "philosophy without text"[2] that is embodied in an artistic proposal, *Infinity Pool*, consisting of the sculptural realization of a mirror mask, three performance walks, and a video installation.

In the face of urgent calls to action, multiple proposals have been suggested by activists and researchers. Consider, for example, the one that comes from the side of radical activism outlined by Andreas Malm in his 2021 text-manifesto, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*. Malm, considered one of the leading thinkers in climate radicalism, given the inadequate results to date by activists, suggests sabotage actions that do not exclude the use of violence against property.[3] My proposal, instead, is aimed at highlighting how one of the problems of the lack of effectiveness of the countermeasures implemented so far is related to considering humans on the basis of a misleading paradigm that tends to define them as rational beings characterized by cognition modeled after the computer. The point I will try to make is that in order to have more effective results there is a need not for more radical actions but for a radical rethinking of the human mind, imagination and the way these are treated in academic research.

Within the philosophy of embodied cognition, numerous attempts exist to experiment with non-discursive and therefore unorthodox approaches to philosophical practice. The widespread intention is to take philosophy

1 See E. Rietveld, J. Kiverstein, "A Rich Landscape of Affordances," *Ecological Psychology* 26, no. 4 (2014): 325-352, https://doi.org/10.1080/10407413.2014.958035; A. Chemero, *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2009).
2 E. Rietveld, "The Affordances of Art for making Technologies," *Adaptive Behavior* 30, no. 6 (2022): 489-503, 500, https://doi.org/10.1177/10597123221132898.
3 A. Malm, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* (London-New York: Verso, 2021).

beyond the means of text-based thinking and argumentation, i.e., a philosophy that is not necessarily and exclusively tied to abstract theory, but can instead engage the concrete activity characteristic of artistic practices. In this way, such a philosophy would engage in the realization of imaginative objects or processes to trigger interactions between different fields of intervention such as science, engineering, design, sociology, etc., and question acquired practices in a way that could potentially transform our form of life.[4]

The work that philosopher Erik Rietveld conducts in parallel with his engagement with the Amsterdam-based RAAAF [Rietveld Architecture-Art-Affordance] interdisciplinary group – which operates at the intersection of architecture, visual arts, and philosophy – represents a paradigmatic example of a possible collaboration between artistic and philosophical practice. It is also paradigmatic of the development in embodied cognitive science as it considers embodiment not exclusively as a mere object of study but, taking it seriously, explores it at the practical level of our bodily engagement with the sociomaterial environment, as well as at the level of our activities including ones we enact as researchers and scholars in academia. Just think of the emblematic *The End of Sitting*, a sculptural investigation by RAAAF in collaboration with Barbara Visser, that is intended to question our addiction to sitting by designing a chair-free working environment. Rather than merely theorizing that people are embodied minds situated in a landscape of affordances, this artwork allows them to experience new possibilities through their active engagement with an unusual landscape. This constitutes a new way of doing philosophy, which is precisely a philosophy

4 See A. Noë, *Strange Tools. Art and Human Nature* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015); E. Rietveld, "The Affordances of Art for making Technologies;" C. Hummels et al., "Non-discursive Philosophy by Imagining New Practices Through Design," *Adaptive Behavior* 30, n. 6 (2022): 537-540; T. E. Feiten, K. Holland, A. Chemero, "Doing Philosophy With a Water-Lance: Art And the Future Of Embodied Cognition," *Adaptive Behavior* 30, no. 6 (2022): 1-3, https://doi.org/10.1177/1059712320983041.

without text, a "show, don't tell philosophy,"[5] or a philosophy that is developed through unorthodox means.

Rietveld's proposal develops from the extension of the Gibsonian notion of affordance operated in collaboration with the philosopher Julian Kiverstein.[6] In its canonical version, an affordance is an invitation the environment provides the animal with in order to act.[7] To account for the "whole realm of social significance for human beings,"[8] Rietveld and Kiverstein propose to understand affordance as a relationship between an aspect of the sociomaterial environment and an ability available in a form of life – accounting in this way not only for the sensorimotor dimension related to the environmental invitation but for the rich landscape of opportunities that characterizes our niche too. We are able to pick up environmental invitations based on the abilities we have; these abilities are learned within practices into which we are introduced "by more experienced hands"[9] through a process of "education of attention."[10] Depending on the practice in which we are raised, we are solicited to respond by certain invitations rather than others. Being "selectively open"[11] to the sociomaterial environment leaves some invitations underutilized, which means that we fail to see some aspects of our surroundings.

This is where artistic interventions and philosophical practices come in, with their ability to bring out new possibilities for action and invisible aspects that we might not otherwise grasp. Installations, architectural interventions, or more generally artworks that rest on a radically embodied conception of the mind can be understood as

5 E. Rietveld, "The Affordances of Art for making Technologies:" 12.
6 E. Rietveld, J. Kiverstein, "A Rich Landscape of Affordances:"
7 See J. J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (1979) (Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986).
8 J. J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*: 128.
9 T. Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (2000) (London: Routledge, 2011): 37.
10 J. J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*: 254.
11 J. Bruineberg, E. Rietveld, "Self-Organisation, Free Energy Minimisation and Optimal Grip on a Field of Affordances," *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 8, no. 599 (2014): 1-14, 4, https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00599.

real-life "thinking models,"[12] tangible invitations to think that address agents situated in a rich landscape of affordances. It is a matter of thinking about the interventions enacted by artistic practices in terms of unorthodox landscapes of affordances that offer invitations outside the norm capable of transforming acquired practices.

Infinity pool, the artistic proposal presented here as part of philosophy through unorthodox means – as it summons situated climatic monsters that enact a specific education of attention – stands within the framework of the research just outlined.

The monster I refer to is an imaginative being that constitutes a particularly powerful and ancient invitation to potentially reorganize our form of life. Addressing embodied minds that act in a particular sociomaterial context, *Infinity pool* is articulated through heterogeneous means – more specifically, a mirror mask, worn in three performances, and a video installation – whose purpose is to produce a change in coordination with the environment through an imaginative process. This change can take place on different planes and times by inviting different individual coordination, but also by producing a transformation of specific practices and thus of the very way in which the relationship with what usually remains distant – i.e., the environment and its/our crisis – is understood. This will be possible, as we shall see, as *Infinity Pool* tries to "put on display"[13] the concrete materials and related practices that literally give a face and a voice to our polluted environment.

12 E. Rietveld, "Situating the Embodied Mind in a Landscape of Standing Affordances for Living Without Chairs: Materializing a Philosophical Worldview," *Sports Medicine* 46 (2016): 927-932, 927, https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-016-0520-2; E. Rietveld, R. Rietveld, J. Martens, "Trusted strangers: social affordances for social cohesion," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 18 (2019): 299-316, 308, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-017-9554-7.

13 A. Noë, *Strange Tools*: 11-18.

Facing Invisible Threats Through Monstrous Education of Attention

As American scholar Jeffrey Cohen states, the monster "always escapes."[14] It is not easy to frame it in a discipline – the monster crosses disparate fields ranging from anthropology to religion, from ecocriticism to queer studies, from medieval studies to art – nor is it even possible to define it conceptually. The monster is a "breaker of category" that eludes all possible categorizations, and ridicules our attempts to define, which are always partial and incomplete, in fact, "it always rises from the dissection table as its secrets are about to be revealed and vanishes into the night."[15]

Different are the ways to try to frame it from heterogeneous disciplines. Philosopher Noël Carroll argues that the monster provokes curiosity that prompts us to try to figure out how we are going to deal with it, and in doing so it poses a cognitive threat;[16] for literature, film, and media scholar Jeffrey Weinstock, the monster embodies the "desire for other worlds,"[17] while for medieval studies scholar Asa Mittman it is an epistemological vertigo, through which established cognitive categories are questioned.[18] Instead, it is the "form of fear" for anthropologist Timothy Ingold[19] who considers the monster to be that construct through which an attempt is made to concretely articulate an otherwise elusive terror.

Here I consider the monster in reference to the artwork I will present below, Infinity pool. I thus understand the monster in terms of an imaginative artifact by which to

14 J.J. Cohen, ed., *Monster Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 4.
15 Ibid.
16 N. Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990): 34.
17 J. Weinstock, ed., *The Monster Theory Reader* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020): 20.
18 A. S. Mittman, P. J. Dendle, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (Abingdon Oxon: Ashgate Publishing, 2013): 1-14.
19 T. Ingold, "Dreaming of Dragons: On the Imagination of Real Life," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 19*, no. 4 (2013): 734-752.

enact a monstrous education of attention that aims to illuminate usually marginal aspects of our environment.

I argue here that such a monster constitutes an extremely powerful resource for coping with the climate crisis.

The term "monster" comes from the Latin monstrum, which is related to the verbs monstrare – "to show" or "to reveal" – and monere – "to warn" or "to forewarn."[20] The monster is thus a kind of omen,[21] which warns by showing us something we had never seen.

Humans, as anticipated, being selectively open to the sociomaterial environment, are able to grasp only certain aspects relevant to the abilities they have acquired. Through a process of education of attention, the novice is introduced to a practice that invites him to pay attention to determined aspects of the world and to ignore others. Tim Ingold, to define this process, gives the example of a hunter who learns by being led into the woods by an experienced elder. The novice does not accumulate information in a supposed internal organ – the brain – but, through active exploration of the environment, is led to develop a sensitivity to the qualities of surface texture by which, simply by touch, they will be able to determine how long ago an animal left its footprint in the snow and even how fast it was traveling; in short, the young hunter, understood as an embodied mind situated in an extremely vast landscape of possibilities, is guided to notice aspects they would not otherwise have grasped, thus coming to develop a perceptual awareness of the properties of their surroundings and the possibilities for action they offer.

I propose, therefore, that the monster, understood as an artifact through which to produce a process of monstrous education of attention, constitutes for a specific community an invitation to pay attention to what is usually unseen, to aspects that are not soliciting, that fall

20 T K. Beal, *Religion and its Monsters* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 6-7.
21 S.T. Asma, *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 13.

outside established practices and thus remain invisible to a specific group of people.

What turns out to be dramatically invisible today – not in the sense of mere knowledge of data but relative to the collective navigation of our environment – is the climate crisis for which we fail to act effectively. How do we act about something we do not see?

The climate crisis is a threat that shows itself only when crimes have already been committed; storms, floods, fires, droughts, respiratory diseases, and cancers, are the misdeeds of something we have nurtured through our practices but that remains invisible to our eyes.

In an attempt to put a face to it and motivate our pro-environment action, the climate crisis is usually presented to us through disparate numbers or images that from time to time are brought to our attention. Such strategies, usually enacted by institutions, are based on the idea that it would be sufficient to send information toward the center of cognition – the brain – of the rational agent.[22] As it has been widely highlighted,[23] pro-environmental knowledge, values, or attitudes are not alone sufficient to make us act in the face of a threat that we do not see and that remains invisible, because the appeals are based on a misconception of human beings and their behavior,

22 See R.O. Kaaronen, "Affording Sustainability: Adopting a Theory of Affordances as a Guiding Heuristic for Environmental Policy," *Frontiers in Psychology* 8 (2017): 1-13, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01974; Q. Gausset, "Stronger Together: How Danish Environmental Communities Influence Behavioural and Societal Changes," in J. Hoff, Q. Gausset, S. Lex, eds., *The Role of Non-state Actors in the Green Transition: Building a Sustainable Future* (New York: Routledge, 2019): 52-70.

23 See on this respect J. Blake, "Overcoming the 'Value-action Gap' in Environmental Policy: Tensions Between National Policy and Local Experience," *Local Environment* 4, no. 3 (1999): 257-278, https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839908725599; A. Kollmuss, J. Agyeman, "Mind the Gap: Why Do People Act Environmentally and What Are the Barriers to Pro-Environmental Behavior?," *Environmental Education Research* 8, no. 3 (2002): 239-260, https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620220145401; W. Abrahamse *et al*., "A Review of Intervention Studies Aimed at Household Energy Conservation," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 25, no. 3 (2005): 273-291, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2005.08.002; E.H. Kennedy *et al*., "Why We Don't 'Walk the Talk:' Understanding the Environmental Values/Behavior Gap in Canada," *Human Ecology Review* 16, no. 2 (2009): 151-160; L. Steg, C. Vlek, "Encouraging Pro-Environmental Behavior: An Integrative Review and Research Agenda," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 29, no. 3 (2009): 309-317, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2008.10.004; R. O. Kaaronen, "Affording Sustainability: Adopting a Theory of Affordances as a Guiding Heuristic for Environmental Policy;" L. Steg, "Limiting Climate Change Requires Research on Climate Action," *Nature Climate Change* 8, (2018): 759-761, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0269-8.

and also because the practices in which we are involved continue to invisibilize the threat itself.

My proposal aims to emphasize the need to develop imaginative invitations that are based on a less misleading idea of cognition understood simply as "mental gymnastics,"[24] and rather to take into account ourselves as situated embodied minds.

The disconnected data and images presented to us as brain food are unable to activate our action concerning something that appears to our eyes in a fragmentary, elusive, and suddenly violent way. We can only grasp the climate crisis as a collection of disjointed parts, pieces of a corpse that have not yet been sewn together and have not yet received the jolt that would bring them to life, galvanize them by putting them on their feet – as happened to the huge body of the Frankensteinian Creature – to truly terrorize us. In times of such urgent crisis, we are called upon to give a face to this monster by taking into account as possible its complexity and a renewed conception of the human being and its cognition; like novice, mad scientists, we have the responsibility to gather and stitch together pieces to produce an imaginative artifact that can offer concrete possibilities for action.

Thus, while science or the media provide us with numbers and images with respect to which it is difficult to take concrete action, the culture industry, which also seeks to shape our anxieties, very often presents us with hyper-simplifications before which we are equally unable to act – think for example of the highly successful 2021 film Don't look up produced by Netflix and directed by Adam McKay in which the climate crisis takes the form of a comet about to destroy our planet.

The purpose of the situated climate monsters of which Infinity Pool is a prototype is to provide a face to what threatens us and at the same time let some tangible

24 A. Chemero, *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science*: 134.

elements emerge against which a community can take concrete action.

Crucially, the face that will emerge addresses embodied minds, and it appears literally defined by the practices in which we are engaged.

Infinity Pool: Setting Monstrous Social Change in Motion

Infinity Pool is an artistic project composed of a sculpture, a performance, and a video installation conceived in collaboration with landscape architect and researcher David Habets and with the visual support of photographer Valeria Scrilatti.

We have imagined developing the project along the course of the river Tiber, but we aim to develop Infinity Pool in disparate locations around the world to provide multiple faces of the transformed environment of human intervention.

Infinity Pool revolves around the design and creation of a reflective, chromed mask that will be worn as part of a three-act performance.

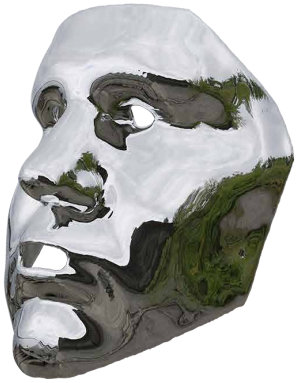
We have planned to enact Infinity Pool through three walks that will take place: 1) where the Tiber has its source, on the top of Monte Fumaiolo; 2) where the Tiber crosses Rome; 3) on the beach of Ostia where the Tiber flows into the sea.

Throughout each walk, every participant will collect what they encounter in their path as well as water samples of the river, which they will hand over to the masked performer.

Fig. 2. Antonio Ianniello, exploration Infinity Pool i.c.w. David Habets, photograph by Valeria Scrilatti.

With a video camera placed over the mask and pointing at it, we imagined recording its reflections. In a follow-up, these reflections will be projected in a museum space accompanied by words spoken by the individual masks. These voices will speak of objects and chemical components related to the water samples collected by the participants in the live performance. The specific materials of each location will thus define the faces of the environment.

Hypothetical dialogue that might develop between the three different projected masks is presented next. The succession of words should be read from left to right as if the faces are engaged in conversation. On the far left is the Source of the Tiber, which starts the dialogue, then the mask of the Tiber running through Rome, and finally the Tiber flowing into the sea.



	Polyurethane	Polyurethane
	Gonyaulax fragilis	*Gonyaulax fragilis*
Barbus Tiberius	dead *Barbus Tiberius*	dead *Barbus Tiberius*
	Escherichia coli	*Escherichia coli*
	stone	
Clothianidin	Clothianidin	Clothianidin
Sorbus aria	*Platanus*	*Juniperus oxycedrus*
Cypermethrin	Cypermethrin	Cypermethrin
Boletus edulis	Coke	
	cocaine	cocaine
pebbles	grit	sand
		dead *Silurus glanis*
		Polyurethane
		Cypermethrin
		Escherichia coli
		dead Barbus Tiberius

The monstrous face and voice of the environment offer the possibility of developing wide-ranging imaginative investigations with respect to the collected materials and the related heterogeneous practices – such as lack of purification of civil and industrial discharges, illegal fishing, spilling of pollutants and toxic substances, substandard hydraulic works, or the use of pesticides and fertilizers in intensive cultivation.

The purpose is certainly not to provide solutions but, more humbly, to inspire citizens, local communities, scientific researchers, and policymakers through processes of monstrous "education of attention" that can set in motion sustainable social change. Such faces can potentially invite – on multiple levels of activation – different imaginative coordination with the sociomaterial environment.

By imagining, here, we do not mean stepping back, daydreaming, fantasizing, immersing ourselves in an internal process, and engaging in solipsistic confabulations that detach us from reality. Imagination here means a radically situated process[25] in which the affordances available in the sociomaterial environment, determining themselves over time through the actions in which we engage, enable coordination in which the organism participates on different time scales.

If affordance is a relationship between an aspect of the sociomaterial environment and an ability available in a life form, then action is not to be understood exclusively as a determinate invitation to sit or walk but also as an "indeterminate"[26] one, that is articulated on different planes and in a more extended time, and that characterizes imaginative processes. Imagination in this sense has more to do with being open to a process that develops based on tangible invitations – although their development is indeterminate –, rather than with closing in on oneself.

Infinity pool constitutes an imaginative invitation aimed precisely at allowing the central role that

25 See L. Van Dijk, E. Rietveld, "Situated Imagination," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* (2020): 1-23, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-020-09701-2.
26 Ibid.

practices – and the materials used in them – play in defining the face of the environment in crisis to emerge, and thus tries to emphasize how, to counter such a crisis, an appeal to individual intention is not sufficient.[27] In the face of the need for an unprecedented transformation of the way we live, rather than leveraging individual cognitions or motivations, a systemic perspective should be taken,[28] and thus emphasis should be placed on the complexity of social and contextual factors that promote or inhibit a given type of behavior.[29] In short, the magnitude of the crisis we are experiencing requires shifting the focus from individual spheres to collective processes,[30] which should enact not only low-cost behaviors – such as cheap individual consumption choices – but high-cost behavior change[31] and behaviors that can radically question and destroy established practices, which means giving up taking-for-granted habits and moving against social conventions and norms.[32]

In this sense in the context of such an urgent crisis, the collaboration between researchers and artists, invoked from several fronts to put in place effective

27 R.O. Kaaronen, N. Strelkovskii, "Cultural Evolution of Sustainable Behaviors: Pro-Environmental Tipping Points in an Agent-Based Model," *One Earth* 2, no. 1 (2020): 85-97, s; R.O. Kaaronen, E. Rietveld, "Practical Lessons for Creating Affordance-Based Interventions for Sustainable Behavior Change," *One Earth* 4, no. 10 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2021.09.013.

28 R.O. Kaaronen, "Affording Sustainability: Adopting a Theory of Affordances as a Guiding Heuristic for Environmental Policy."

29 L. Steg, "Limiting Climate Change Requires Research on Climate Action," *Nature Climate Change* 8 (2018): 759-761, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0269-8.

30 S. Bamberg, J. H. Rees, M. Schulte, "Environmental Protection Through Societal Change: What Psychology Knows About Collective Climate Action and What It Needs to Find Out," in S. Clayton, C. Manning, eds., *Psychology and Climate Change: Human Perceptions, Impacts, and Responses* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2018): 185-213; Q. Gausset, "Stronger Together: How Danish Environmental Communities Influence Behavioural and Societal Changes."

31 A. Kollmuss, J. Agyeman, "Mind the Gap: Why Do People Act Environmentally and What Are the Barriers to Pro-Environmental Behavior?;" W. Abrahamse *et al*., "A Review of Intervention Studies Aimed at Household Energy Conservation;" L. Steg, C. Vlek, "Encouraging Pro-Environmental Behavior: An Integrative Review and Research Agenda;" see R. O. Kaaronen, "Affording Sustainability: Adopting a Theory of Affordances as a Guiding Heuristic for Environmental Policy."

32 R.O. Kaaronen, E. Rietveld, "Practical Lessons for Creating Affordance-Based Interventions for Sustainable Behavior Change;" D. Centola, *How Behavior Spreads: The Science of Complex Contagions* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018); D. Centola, *Change: How to Make Big Things Happen* (Boston MA: Little, Brown and Company, 2021).

interventions to deal with the climate crisis,[33] is as necessary as ever, given that artists bring with them a long tradition of strategies designed to disrupt norms, rebel against the status quo, and unmask acquired conventions.

Infinity pool is an imaginative opportunity that tries to invite a specific community – in this case, the prototypical one that is situated around the Tiber River – to act concretely for tangible invitations within a given context. In this sense, Infinity pool pushes to go beyond the simple individualistic model, insofar as it addresses first and foremost embodied minds situated in a landscape of invitations – not by exclusively directing information toward individuals understood as passive receptors who in the depths of their cognition make decisions – and because it foregrounds, through a monstrous education of attention, that is, by intercepting reflections and whispers, the crucial role that practices play in the climate crisis we are experiencing.

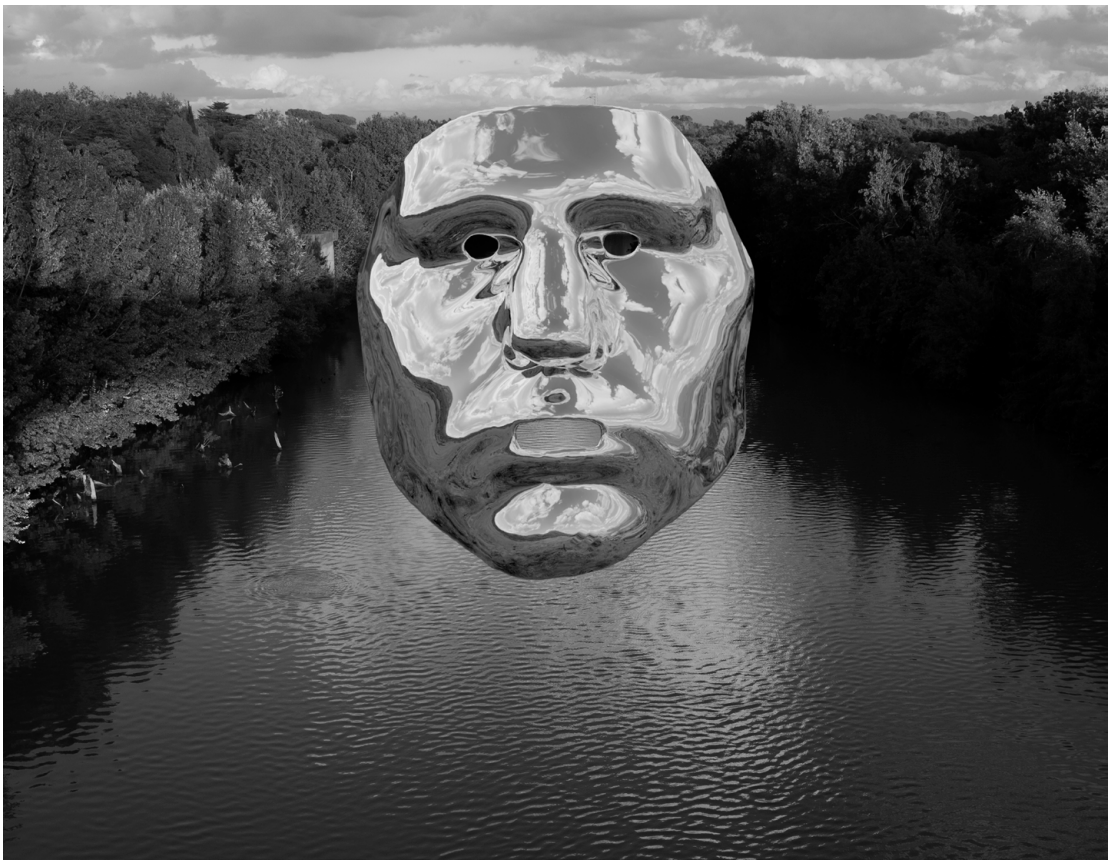


Fig. 3. Tiber River and mirror mask realized for *Infinity pool* i.c.w. David Habets, photograph by Valeria Scrilatti

33 G. Caniglia *et al*., "A Pluralistic And Integrated Approach To Action-Oriented Knowledge For Sustainability," *Nature Sustainability* 4 (2019): 93-100; Report of the International Expert Panel on Behavioral Science for Design 2019; K.S. Nielsen *et al*., "How Psychology Can Help Limit Climate Change," *American Psychologist* 76, no. 1 (2020): 130-144, https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000624; E. Rietveld, "The Affordances of Art for making Technologies."

Infinity pool not only questions non-sustainable practices for our planet but questions the very practice of academic philosophy.

The philosophy by unorthodox means enacted here invites us to explore how we coordinate with the sociomaterial environment, not in the sense of abstract intellectual reflection, but through the active perception of the environment itself made monstrous here by artistic intervention.

To transform our form of life, to question our practices, for change to be possible, and for a monstrous education of attention to have an impact beyond academia, we must enact a "bold departure from the confines of the ivory tower and into the shared social worlds of everyday life."[34]

A philosophy without text was used here for the specific purpose of "summoning" a monster with specific, radically situated characters, thus inviting an embodied mind to act through concrete actions. The goal was not to produce yet another sample of the "Mcglobal-Mcgothic"[35] monoculture that enacts an undifferentiated scare by not inviting any specific action. Yet the faces and words of *Infinity Pool*, as they emerge on the basis of explorations around the Tiber, could very likely be identical to countless other faces and words that could testify to further future explorations in different environments across the Earth. In this sense then, the multiple "globalgothic"[36] faces of *Infinity Pool*, could show us (*monstrare*) that the heterogeneous landscapes we find ourselves exploring are increasingly homogenized by anthropogenic intervention: they all look alike in some ways. We are therefore called upon to bring into play specific and situated actions that are able to stop an endless monologue of one everywhere identical face that talks only

34 T.E. Feiten, K. Holland, A. Chemero, "Doing Philosophy with A Water-Lance: Art and The Future of Embodied Cognition:" 2.
35 G. Byron, ed., *Globalgothic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013): 3.
36 Ibid.: 1-10.

about the same things over and over again, in order to prevent it from, inevitably, very soon going silent or unheard (*monere*).

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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
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"PIERO MARTINETTI"

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