



PERMANENT CREATION, ECOSOPHY, AND ECOARTIVISM An Interdisciplinary Journey with Robert Filliou, Félix Guattari, and Transnational Temps

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to explore the convergence between Félix Guattari's ecosophic perspective, Robert Filliou's theories and the ecoartist approaches of Transnational Temps, which promotes interdisciplinary dialogue in the context of new telecommunications technologies. Through critical analysis of their works and theories and supported by original and unpublished interviews with members of Transnational Temps, this study shows how the intersection of these ideas promotes a networked future in which everyday activism through art and creativity offers a vision of a more conscious and harmonious alternative society

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1. Introduction

The contemporary landscape of art and philosophy is full of revealing intersections, often challenging conventional notions and pushing us towards a richer, multidimensional understanding of the world. One such intriguing and unexplored confluence can be found in the triangulation of the life/work of artist Robert Filliou (1926-1987), the ecosophic perspective of philosopher Félix Guattari (1930-1992), and the eco-artist work of the collective Transnational Temps, founded in 2000.

The key convergence between the works and theories of the three nodes that make up this research is the intertwining of activism and networking, using telecommunications media as an experimental field.

Guattari, together with Gilles Deleuze (2002), proposed rhizome theory, a conceptual tool for challenging conventional ways of seeing the world, valuing diversity and non-hierarchical multiplicity, reminiscent of the hypertextual structure of cyberspace. His activism is reflected in concepts such as molecular revolution and micropolitics¹, which refer to singularisation and privacy, and propose the development of small everyday acts of resistance that challenge prevailing norms by seeking continuous personal reinvention.²

This rhizomatic and molecular thinking, which would enable social transformation through connection and accumulation, is echoed in Filliou's Permanent Creation. This strategy seeks to integrate art and creativity into life through connection in order to remain in, or otherwise reconnect with, what he and the American artist George Brecht called the Eternal Network (Jouval, 2003b).

This rhizomatic and molecular thinking would allow for social transformation through connection and accumulation, and is echoed in Filliou's Permanent Creation. This strategy seeks to integrate into life and through connection, art and creativity and thus remain in, or alternatively reconnect with the Eternal Network, as Filliou and the American artist George Brecht have called it (Jouval, 2003b). The latter is an infinite and overarching network of a spiritual nature that links the understanding of art with science and the universe (Welch, 1995) and allows us to step outside of dominant social expectations by offering an alternative vision of society. His interest in new telecommunication technologies reflects a desire to democratise art by creating collaborative spaces without geographical limitations (López and Morgado, 2023), highlighting an artistic activism that connects and empowers groups and communities.

This intersection between art, activism and technology is also evident in the work of the Transnational Temps collective. Made up of the Spaniard Verónica Perales, the Frenchman Fred Adam and the American Andy Deck, they proposed the term eco-activism to define their work. This concept underlines the positive approach of activism ("what we can do") and shows their will to generate art, knowledge and respect (inseparable concepts in their projects) around the biosphere, committing themselves to its preservation (Perales and Adam, 2009, p. 1). The legacy of this collective radiates a collaborative, transnational perspective that embodies a rhizomatic understanding of art and activism. It also ties in with the spirit of the Eternal Network through the collective approach, "You are Transnational Temps", and the use of the Internet and related technologies, as we will see below (Transnational Temps, 2005).

2. Objectives and Methodology

This research aims to promote an interdisciplinary dialogue between contemporary art, philosophy and ecological activism in the context of new telecommunication technologies, highlighting the relevance and urgency of such exchanges in the current context of environmental and social crises.

It also aims to fill a gap in the academic literature by analysing the convergence between Guattari's ecosophic perspective, Filliou's formulations and the ecoartist approaches of Transnational Temps, providing valuable insights for future researchers, artists and activists. In particular, it seeks to show how they invite us to imagine and work towards a future where ideas flow freely, communities are interconnected and activism is part of our everyday lives, reformulating with a critical eye our understanding of the world and our relationship to it.

¹ The molecular revolution proposed by Guattari in *The Three Ecologies* (1996) refers to a profound and transformative change that occurs at microscopic levels of existence and has the capacity to reconfigure larger systems. This idea is based on the notion that significant transformations occur not only in large, visible revolutionary movements, but also in small, everyday acts and practices that cumulatively can trigger profound changes in the mental, social and environmental spheres.

² Both concepts are developed in various publications, among which we highlight, due to the subject that concerns us, *The Three Ecologies* (Guattari, 1996) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002).

Finally, it is imperative to highlight the valuable artistic work of Transnational Temps, a collective whose discursive coherence and bold proposals have not received the recognition they deserve from critics and art institutions. Undoubtedly, this omission is largely due to their focus on a processual and engaged art that deliberately distances itself from the commercial dynamics and hierarchical structures of the art world.

In terms of methodology, this research has focused on a qualitative approach, which is based on an interpretive and comparative analysis of texts and works of art. The project began with an exhaustive review of the main writings of Filliou, Guattari and Perales, including primary (original) and secondary texts (critiques and commentaries on their works). In parallel, considerable time was devoted to the study and analysis of prominent artistic theories and projects by Filliou and Transnational Temps, paying particular attention to proposals such as the Eternal Network, Permanent Creation and the Poetic Economy, and committed initiatives such as *The Smiling Cedilla (La Cédille qui Sourit, 1965-1968)*, *The Territory of the Genius Republic (ca. 1970s)*, *Novus Extinctus (2001)*, *Ecoscope (2007)*, *Simiomobile (2008)*, *Safari Urbis (2009-2011)* and *Mall of the Wild (2014)*.

An important milestone in this process was the opportunity to establish two dialogues, the first with Adam and the second with Perales, active members of Transnational Temps. These encounters, which took the form of interviews, became enriching dialogues that went beyond pre-established questions and gave way to emerging issues, the product of the dynamic of the conversation. To ensure the fidelity and subsequent revision of their testimony, the sound recordings and transcriptions of the interviews were kept.

Finally, with all this data, we proceeded to analysis. Recurring themes and patterns were sought in all the materials collected, from texts to transcriptions, in order to decipher the perspectives and intentions of the authors and artists.

3. Presentation of the Convergences Between the Life/Work of Robert Filliou, the Ecosophic Perspective of Félix Guattari and the Ecoartist Work of Transnational Temps.

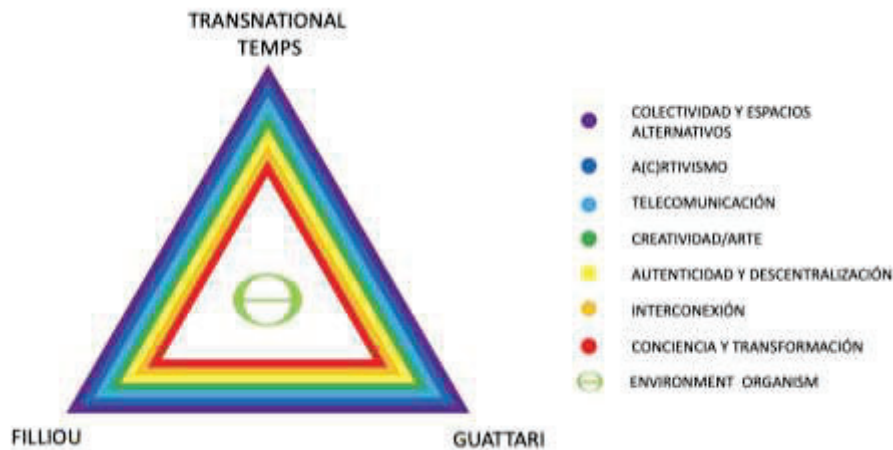
Three artists - one Spanish, one French and one American - meet Filliou and Guattari in the ecological interface. Who shares the wi-fi password?

Forgive the little humorous wink; far from annulling anyone, the aim is to draw attention to an unexpected and, a priori, rather eccentric situation: the study as a whole of a transnational team of thinkers and artists, two of whom are already deceased, who must therefore, in order to meet, resort to an abstract but shared space, a kind of holodeck³ or "ecological interface". This interface is understood as a dynamic and fluid meeting point, a zone of interaction that manifests itself not only in theoretical-philosophical discourses, but also in artistic practices and activist actions. Referring to one of its Greek roots, this *eco/oikos*/house is a space born out of the need to seek a more harmonious relationship with the natural environment by critiquing the dominant structures that perpetuate the ecological crisis. In short, the ecological interface to which we allude is a space of confluence, dialogue and collaboration, where sharing becomes the key or the password, not so much to wi-fi, but to another network that addresses issues concerning our relationship with the environment and with others from multiple perspectives.

In the process of unravelling the convergences between the three main actors in this research, several points of connection have been identified. Although these points have been grouped into seven distinct areas for ease of presentation and understanding, it is important to stress that they are neither rigid nor hierarchical. In fact, they act more like sliding nodes in a network, bridges that allow the flow of ideas and connections to pass through. In the following, we will briefly present the seven established bridges, which will be developed later and in relation to the artistic works analysed.

³ The concept of the "holodeck", as described by Janet Murray (1999) in her work on digital media and storytelling, refers to an immersive and highly interactive virtual reality space. Inspired by the "holodeck" in the science fiction series *Star Trek*, this concept is used to explore the possibilities of virtual environments where the line between reality and fiction is blurred, offering rich and immersive narrative experiences.

Figure 1. Diagram summarising the multidimensional relationship between the works and theories of Filliou, Guattari and Transnational Temps.



Source: Lopez and Morgado, 2024.

- Awareness and transformation underline the commitment inherent in the artistic and philosophical works of the three actors, who actively seek to change and improve the relationship between human beings and between them and their environment. This intention goes beyond mere representation and becomes present in the ecological struggles, the art/life fusion of Filliou and the ecoartist stance of Transnational Temps.
- The emphasis of our three areas of study on activism/artivism is on actions and positions that challenge the *status quo*, considering art as a form of micro-politics.
- The creativity/art binomial emerges as the essential tool for transformation, art being not only a form of expression but also a means of change. Childhood creativity and play become essential metaphors and practices in his work and theories.
- Authenticity and decentralisation feature in their critique of capitalism and the search for more authentic and connected ways of living.
- In the field of interconnectedness, Guattari's wager on the indissoluble relationship between mental, social and environmental ecology, as well as his rhizomatic vision, find echoes in the Eternal Network, mainly developed by Filliou, and in the Transnational Temps philosophy of connecting with the biosphere through the development of communal artistic actions. It is an understanding that nothing exists in isolation and that connections are vital.
- It examines the perception and critical use of telecommunications media. Filliou was interested in using telecommunication media in his artistic projects to break down geographical barriers and promote multidirectional connections. Guattari, on the other hand, was interested in how media could be used to challenge dominant narratives and create new forms of subjectivity. In the case of Transnational Temps, he uses telecommunications technology as a tool, support and discourse in the development of his net.art works and for his community 'activities'.
- Finally, the drive to form communities and create alternative spaces reflects a common interest in developing places that allow for the development of ideas and practices beyond conventional norms, thus reimagining the concept of community.

4. Awareness-Raising and Con(II)ective Transformation Amidst Widespread Social Alienation

In a world interconnected by complex networks such as Filliou's eternal network, Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic structure and Transnational Temps' cosmic network, we face a crisis of alienation. According to these authors, the current crisis consists of a disconnection resulting from a capitalist, centralised and hierarchical system that limits our ability to connect authentically with ourselves, with our social and natural environments, and with these higher order networks. Guattari, Filliou and Transnational Temps,

each from their own perspective, look at how this alienation affects our perception, our creativity and our connection to the universe.

More specifically, Guattari (1996) critiques the formation and codification of our subjectivity (thoughts, feelings and perceptions) by systems of power and media, producing a uniformity of human experience. Deleuze and Guattari (2002) propose the establishment of rhizomatic and non-hierarchical connections, always active and constantly evolving, ranging from knowledge systems to human experience, politics, identity and interactions between nature and society, promoting interconnectedness, diversity and resilience.

Filliou theorised and practised the Eternal Network, briefly presented in a poster co-produced with Brecht (Untitled, 1968), as follows: "manifestations, meanderings, meditations, microcosms, macrocosms, mixtures, meanings...". It is a network of networks in which all human activities and the cosmos are connected. According to Filliou, our belonging to this network is innate. He also stresses that we are all born geniuses, innocent, good, free and extremely creative. However, the capitalist system pushes us to forget this genius and our belonging to the eternal network, prioritising the development of useful talents for society instead of our innate creativity (Jouval, 2012). In this network, forgotten by many, art and life are inseparable, supporting the argument of his famous statement that gives the title to his work *Dear Skywatcher: Art is what makes life more interesting than art* (1984).

This premise is understood and practised by Transnational Temps as 'loving life even more than art' (Perales, 2013, p. 91). Their discourse focuses on sustainability, with an emphasis on the media and the environmental crisis. For this collective, we are part of a network, a global intelligence that goes beyond the connection between human beings and must open our communication to an integral and interspecies connection. Everything and everyone comes from atoms in the cosmos that participated in a supernova, and we need to reconnect with the cosmos to overcome alienation (F. Adam, personal communication, 20 May 2019).

(...) fostering and intensifying our bodies' intelligence and embodying our life experience are ways to amplify our connection with others and the whole (cosmos) of which we are a very small part. (Raquejo and Perales, 2022, p. 60).

From these theories, Guattari, Transnational Temps and Filliou acknowledge the inherent interconnection of everything, be it animal, vegetable or even energy.

But these discourses are not just about revealing these connections and exposing the agents that impede them. In response to reported disconnections, they offer strategies for subverting them. Guattari's molecular revolution, Filliou's Permanent Creation and the ecoartivism of Transnational Temps are presented as tactics for transforming an impermeable society. Their theories and projects constantly seek an active participation of citizens to end the dielectric passivity that distances us from the universe.

According to Guattari, these strategies involve the creation of new values far removed from economic, social, aesthetic and cultural profitability. Thus, when he speaks of art, he explains that it becomes an aesthetic process directly involved in the collective practices of life, a means of reconnecting with ourselves and our environment (Zepke, 2006). These statements are fully in line with Filliou's proposal to transform our lives from everyday acts (molecular sphere) by practising a permanent creation in which the individual would prioritise the creative activity of sharing. A sharing that is far from the economic profitability that Guattari avoids and that is qualitative, poetic and non-monetary. Filliou (Musée d'art moderne Lille Métropole, 2003) has called this exchange poetic economy.

The latter, which advocates a more meaningful human exchange, is reflected in the philosophy and practice of Transnational Temps. Their approach reflects a deep emotional connection to the issues of climate change and biodiversity loss, practices that resonate with Guattari's idea of promoting a social, aesthetic and cultural profitability that is removed from economic metrics. At Transnational Temps, this commitment manifests itself through projects that invite active participation and creative exchange, fostering communities and collective action.

His work *Simiomobile* (2008) is presented as an emblematic example of the connection between Filliou's and Guattari's ideologies. It transforms the everyday use of the mobile phone into an act of connection and donation that promotes sustainability and ecological awareness, reflecting Filliou's

philosophy of integrating art into everyday life and Guattari's proposal for a molecular revolution that promotes change through small acts of resistance and active participation.

The project highlights the links between the production of mobile phones and damage to endangered species through aggressive coltan mining strategies that have triggered socio-political conflicts and damaged ecosystems that are home to species such as gorillas and elephants. (Adam, 2012b).

Simiomobile proposes a response to this problem by seeking collaboration with mobile phone companies to offer special ranges of phones, called *Digital Jungle Mobile*, dedicated to the conservation of endangered species. *Simiomobile* would be the first in this series. By purchasing a *Simiomobile*, the user not only receives a mobile device, but also sponsors a great ape species, creating a direct and meaningful link to biodiversity conservation. The user invests in the conservation of the species with their purchase, while the phone company recognises and rewards their commitment by donating one eurocent to the protected species every time the user receives or makes a call to another phone number. This mechanism creates a continuous cycle of support in which the user's everyday actions become significant contributions to the preservation of the environment. Although the individual contribution seems minimal (micro), the sum of them all makes change possible (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Simiomobile*



Source: Image courtesy of Transnational Temps, 2008.

The work also explores interconnectedness and exchange beyond the economic, drawing on Filliou's Poetic Economy, where value is measured in terms of human relationships and experiences rather than in monetary terms. This approach resonates with Guattari's critique of capitalism and his promotion of new forms of value based on the social, aesthetic and cultural. The initiative includes additional services related to the sponsored species, such as receiving free text messages with the latest news affecting the survival of the species, the ability to communicate for free between sponsors of the same species, searching for other like-minded sponsors, and other tools to facilitate communication between Jungle users (Adam, 2012c). This work highlights the importance and need for users to connect and become part of an easily accessible community network, with shared interests in conservation.

Simiomobile thus becomes a manifestation of Guattari's ecosophy, which advocates the reconfiguration of our relationships with systems of power and the environment, while embodying the ideas of Filliou's Eternal Network, highlighting the interconnectedness of all aspects of life, art and the cosmos. The work also invites the public to reflect critically on our relationship with technology and the natural world, emphasising the importance of coexistence and synergy between the different codes that make up our reality. *Simiomobile* seems to respond to the kind of collective action described by Guattari:

New social practices, new aesthetic practices, new practices of the self in relation to the other, the alien, the stranger: a whole programme that may seem far removed from the urgencies of the moment! And yet it is in the articulation:
of subjectivity in its nascent state;
of the socius in a mutated state;
of the environment at the point where it can be reinvented; where the way out of the main crises of our time will be revealed. (Guattari, 1996, p. 78).

5. Tools for Disalienation: Art, Creativity, Play, Ac(r)tivism and Telecommunication

Focusing on the development and well-being of the human psyche, Guattari's theory of mental ecology is concerned with how mental and emotional processes are influenced and shaped by external factors, and how they can be redirected towards healthier and more creative practices. To put this into practice, he suggests that we should act more like artist, who can radically change their work because of a random detail or an unexpected event, rather than following the traditional paradigms of psychology professionals, operating according to what he considers to be an obsolete ideal of science (Guattari, 1996). The philosopher emphasises the need for a period of 'resingularisation', where attention shifts to creative expression and individual experimentation, recognising that innovation and transformation can emerge from freedom of expression and creative play.

This mental ecology is inseparable from social ecology, understood as the improvement of interactions and relationships within human society, focusing on the reconstruction of social practices and community structures in more sustainable and equitable ways. For him, social ecology requires an activist phase in which people come together to fight for common goals and achieve significant social change, acting as "little soldiers" or militants (Guattari, 1996).

Here creativity becomes a political and transformative practice, offering modes of reinvention and resistance to the social transformations of capitalism. To complete this socio-ecological practice, Guattari explains the need for the phase of individual creative expression and "resingularisation" just alluded to. This artistic-creative approach to ecosophic principles aligns with the principles of Transnational Temps and Filliou's philosophies or, as essays writer and art critic Jean-Clarence Lambert calls them, "fillousofias" (2003, p. 34).

Guattari advocates continuous experimentation and the search for new forms of expression and understanding through the creativity and *savoir-faire* of the artist. This translates into practices that transform everyday life, enriching individuality and social connectedness, developing more innovative ways of "being in the group" and of inhabiting and relating to the world.

Transnational Temps embraces this theory, believing that art and creativity celebrate diversity and enable a more inclusive and adaptive society by offering alternatives to consumerism. Much of their discourse claims that there is pleasure and/or satisfaction outside of this hypnotic consumerism. Art thus becomes a catalyst for "opening the senses" that have been stifled by the suffocating dynamics of globalised capitalism. This opening of the senses is an experience that needs to be experienced firsthand in order to be effective and improve our perceptiveness. Our understanding of the environment and our relationship with it, once scorched, becomes more sensitive thanks to her artistic proposals. However, this phenomenon, which requires an initial self-awareness directly related to Guattari's "resingularisation", is expansive and goes beyond us, giving rise to a phase of consciousness that requires collective action. The latter offers us new ways of relating to each other, of connecting with each other, with life, with the biosphere and the cosmos, in short, with a higher and integral network.

Filliou postulates Permanent Creation as a system in which art and life are intimately intertwined. Filliou's idea is not that everything is art in the literal sense, but that the qualities and freedoms inherent in art are diffused into all aspects of life (Jouval, 2003a, p. 9). In his self-described 'multi-book', *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (1970, p. 7), designed for the reader to become a co-author, he develops this idea of infusing art, life and spirit into writing in relation to Permanent Creation:

I believe that a revolutionary system can be built on the true motivations and values of artists. I will mention four: innocence and imagination on the one hand, freedom and integrity on the other. (And anyone who manifests these qualities is, in my opinion, an artist, whether he produces works of art or watermelons. (Filliou, 1970, p. 45)

He had already reflected on this in his *Permanent Creation Toolbox n°1* (1968), which presents a toolbox with various objects, including a broken wooden metre, wires and two words in neon light: innocence and imagination. As Jouval (2003a) rightly states, these are "two faculties of the mind, the first passive and the second active (...) whose combination generates a creative potential" (p. 9). This potential becomes reality with his *Permanent Creation Toolbox n°2* (1969), another metal toolbox containing dozens of wooden blocks with hooks and sockets closed at the ends, which the public is invited to assemble and make this creative act come true through play.

5.1. Play as a Creative Process and a Meeting Space: *La Cédille qui Sourit* and *The Mall of the Wild*

Popular wisdom and ancient poetry highlight the revelatory and unifying nature of play. Spanish proverbs such as "Boat, game and road, from the stranger they make a friend" ("Barca, juego y camino, del extraño hacen amigo") point to play as a facilitator of relationships, mutual understanding and friendship. Verses such as "*Nudaque per lusus pectora nostra patent*", which means "through play our hearts are offered naked", from Book III of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (ac. 1 BC, v. 372), underline how play can strip us of pretence and artifice and reveal our true nature.

These expressions suggest that play unfolds genuine connections and reveals the sincerity of the heart. While for Guattari (1996) creative play is a key that unlocks the unexpected, the ability to re-imagine from new perspectives, the ideas of authenticity and togetherness inherent in play are also present in the philosophies of Filliou and Transnational Temps. They see it not only as a playful activity, but also as a space for authenticity, creativity and social connection.

More specifically, as Jouval and Vergez (2003, p. 145) explain, for Filliou play becomes a key individual and collective tool. It is a means of exploring and distancing oneself from conventional language, revealing its poetic potential and generating new forms of sensitivity and expression.

It should be noted that play is an activity generally associated with childhood, as is the innocence and creativity reflected in the first *Toolbox*. Filliou saw children as a source of genuine spontaneity, wisdom and creativity. As his proposal "Homage to those magicians who are children" in his book *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (1970, p. 98) reveals, children represented for him a way of thinking untainted by the strategic and economic constraints that dominate social relations in the adult world.

Transnational Temps is a critique of the dualistic society that divides us into adults and children and is necessary to establish interactions between both categories and break the existing glass structure between generations (F. Adam, personal communication, 20 May 2019). Children, adolescents and even adults, who need to exploit their "kid spirit" and save the child through imagination and freedom, are the participatory agents who activate their artistic works and who, like Filliou, defend the approach of playful-creative interaction. For this collective, art goes beyond the limits of creation to become a dynamic and participatory process in which play is often a fundamental tool available to all for exploration.

The works of Transnational Temps *Safari Urbis* (2009-2011), aimed at young people aged 13-17, and *Mall of the Wild* (2014), with rules for children and adults, represent artistic initiatives that combine creativity, ecological awareness and interactive play in urban and commercial contexts.

These projects focus on raising awareness of endangered animals and their use in advertising and consumer products, contrasting the ubiquity of these images with the reality of declining biodiversity. In other words, these works highlight the dissonance between the commercial perception of animals, with their vast number of representations and copies, and their reality, where only a small number of specimens/originals are found in the wild (Adam, 2012a) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. *Safari Urbis*



Source: Image courtesy of Transnational Temps, 2009.

The methodology of both projects involves participants in a kind of "safari" in cities (*Safari Urbis* took place in three Spanish and two French cities) or "crawling" through shopping centres (*Mall of the Wild* took place in five shopping centres in England), where they must look for and photograph such representations of endangered animals using a map specially designed for the activity.

These photographs, unlike those of the tourist, do not document our presence in unique and wild environments with biodiversity that we may have only seen in books and documentaries. The images generated are achievements, awareness-raising. The maps provided provide information about the species photographed in such a way that, by knowing what the animal we see is really like, we become true explorers, moving away from the role of tourist/consumer. The resulting photographs are not shared with family or on social networks as tangible memories of an adventure and of the majesty and diversity of nature, but, in the case of *Mall of the Wild*, they are shared through an online application called the *Digital Zoo app*, making it possible to raise global awareness of the fight to prevent the extinction of species in the natural world.

This application, produced thanks to Furtherfield, Culture Code and Land Securities, allowed the photographs to be framed as if they were a pictorial work, with inscriptions such as *Ceci n'est pas un éléphant* with a Magritte wink, which, with its discourse on *The Treachery of Images* (1928), adds an additional conceptual dimension to the work, as was evident in the maps of the activity.⁴

These works by Transnational Temps, which rely on telecommunications technologies, challenge the traditional conventions of art by using play in real space as a means of exploring and communicating ecological concerns. They merge creativity with everyday life and social reality, developing leisure activities as a form of connection but also of resistance, like *La Cédille qui Sourit* (1965-1968), which Filliou created with Brecht. The latter, located in Villefranche-sur-Mer (France), is a space of constant innovation and experimentation, a unique blend of shop, studio and (re)creative space. It was conceived as a "permanent creation centre" and a "non-school", designed to allow the exchange of information and experience in a humorous and joyful way, thanks to the goodwill of its members, who are neither students nor teachers (Musée d'art moderne Lille Métropole, 2003).

This non-school operated at irregular hours and was only open on request, underlining its focus on creation and exchange rather than commercial transaction. Indeed, many of the activities developed for this space often took place in the surrounding area, bringing art into its immediate context and into the lives of neighbours such as Fernand the plumber, Alfred the bricklayer and Antoine the fisherman (Harren, 2012). In this workshop, Filliou and Brecht produced numerous works ranging from puzzles, letters, poems, actions and drawings, all characterised by a playful logic that invited constant reconfiguration and connection, encouraging expansive and associative thinking (Harren, 2012). *La Cédille qui Sourit* functioned not only as a space for artistic experimentation, but also as a critical commentary on the production and commodification of art. The works were pieces open to interpretation and interaction, inviting the public to actively participate in their development, challenging the traditional relationship between art and object and promoting a more dynamic approach to creativity that is valued above the final product. In *La Cédille qui Sourit*, art became a political action, a means of communication that transcended individual time and space, connecting people through a wider and more permanent network.

While *La Cédille qui Sourit* received considerable acclaim from the circle of artists associated with its creators (including Bob Guiny, Ben Vautier, Arman, Dick Higgins, Dorothy Iannone, Alison Knowles, Emmett Williams, Mieko Shiomi, Daniel Spoerri, Jean-Jacques Lebel, and others), the anti-advertising ethos upon which the space was founded hindered its recognition and, consequently, its financial sustainability. In 1968, it filed for bankruptcy, and its closure was announced through a poster detailing the transformation of the project into the aforementioned *Eternal Network*.

Although the sign at the end of this school was the first advertisement for the *Eternal Network*, the rhetoric of its language seemed to suggest not only that this space was part of a larger structure that would continue indefinitely into the future, but also that the shop was part of something that had always existed. It was but an instantiation, a point, of a poetic project to which a proliferating and infinite network of activities could be added. (Own translation). (Harren, 2012, p. 138)

⁴ Some of the images from the *Digital Zoo app* can be found today in the album: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/transnt/sets/72157641869962974/>

Since the works produced under the umbrella of *La Cédille qui Sourit* were mainly processual, open and non-objective, one of the best ways to approach them is through Brecht and Filliou's book *Games at the Cedilla* or *The Cedilla Takes Off* (1967), in which many of their games are recorded and catalogued (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. *M HKA postcard* showing one of the games proposed by Filliou and Brecht in *La Cédille qui Sourit*.



Source: Own photograph of a postcard edited in 2017 by the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst (Antwerp) for the exhibition *Robert Filliou: The Secret of Permanent Creation* that took place between 14 October 2016 and 22 January 2017.

The inclusion of play in the artistic process, as practised by Brecht, Filliou and Transnational Temps, is in keeping with Guattari's idea of creative experimentation as a form of resistance in a world increasingly dominated by homogenising structures. These works also reflect Guattari's vision of an integrated ecology that encompasses the mind, society and the environment. While *La Cédille qui Sourit* encourages a reconnection with personal and collective creativity, *Safari Urbis* and *Mall of the Wild* address all three ecologies, promoting a greater awareness of our impact on the natural world.

5.2. From Creativity to Commitment to Ar(c)tivist Action with the Help of Telecommunications

So far it has become clear how our three protagonists develop diverse actions to promote individual and collective change on a variety of issues, but which they intertwine with dedication and care. Their interests encompass a wide array of subjects, including spirituality (such as the Eternal Network, global intelligence, and interspecies communication, which connect individuals to a cosmic and integrated network), socio-political matters (such as the molecular revolution and the critique of globalized capitalism), economics (including the concept of poetic economy and resistance to alienating consumerism), environmental concerns (such as ecosophy and ecoactivism), and artistic endeavours (such as resistance to conventional systems of art production, distribution, and commodification, as well as the dissolution of art-life boundaries).

Their theoretical lines are characterised by a markedly committed character and a continuous effort that, in the case of Filliou and Transnational Temps, is translated into action through their artistic proposals. As mentioned above, for our three actors, creativity becomes a political and transformative tool that offers ways of resisting the social transformations of the dominant market economy.

Filliou stands out as an artist whose work goes beyond mere aesthetic expression to become a form of activism. His recently reviewed project *La Cédille qui Sourit* is interpreted as a political statement that challenges the commercial norms of art and promotes a deeper and more meaningful interaction between art and its audience.

This idea is in line with his notion of Permanent Creation, a concept that turns life into a resistance against individualistic idolatry and competition, promoting a collective and anti-hierarchical exchange that questions institutional structures. Although Permanent Creation has already been analysed, let us delve into its principles through two "action poems". The first was entitled *L'autrisme ou le secret relatif de la Création Permanente* (*Altruism or the Relative Secret of Permanent Creation*, 1962), which he

defined as "Think of something else, do something else, be elsewhere, be with someone else, be someone else, be something else" (Filliou, 1970, p. 94) (own translation), focusing on the constant evolution of thought and action. The second poem, *Le Filliou Idéal ou le Secret absolu de la Création Permanente* (*The Ideal Filliou or the Absolute Secret of Permanent Creation*, 1964), says: "Desire nothing, decide nothing, choose nothing, be aware of yourself, remain awake, sit quietly, do nothing" (Filliou, 1970, p. 95).

Absolute Permanent Creation does not contradict relative creation but complements it. This call to silence is actually close to Eastern thought and Zen meditation. This idea emphasises a state of mind of emptiness or continuous movement (Jouval, 2003b). Filliou suggests that instead of holding the mind in rigid constructs or misrepresentations that are far removed from reality, we should adopt an open and fluid mental attitude that involves constant creative reinvention, like a river where the mind is freed from fixations and opens up to new possibilities and perspectives. In these approaches, Filliou sees a way to achieve a greater fullness of being and a new art of living. For this artist, the very act of living on these foundations becomes an activist act.

Throughout his life, Filliou dedicated himself to enhancing the dissemination and accessibility of his ideas and artistic works, as well as fostering connections and facilitating the exchange of ideas. The article titled "Creativity and Exchange: Convergences between the Editing Politics of Robert Filliou's *Eternal Network* and Internet Art" examines how, despite Filliou's passing before the widespread adoption of the World Wide Web, the French artist foreshadowed many of the early dynamics observed in Internet art, such as collective creativity, exchange, cross-border collaboration, and interactive art/life. This underscores the enduring relevance of Filliou's concepts within the contemporary digital landscape (López and Morgado, 20-23).

The article also discusses how Filliou integrated telecommunications into his art, breaking down geographical barriers and promoting bi-/multidirectional connections. This is reflected in works such as *Suspense poème- Étude d'acheminement de poèmes en petite vitesse* (*Suspense Poem-Study of Poem Routing at Low Speed*, 1960-1961), which used the postal service for participatory artistic exchange, and *Ample Food for Stupid Thought* (1965), which consisted of 96 postcards designed to establish cross-border connections.

La Cédille qui Sourit also developed short audiovisual projects with Brecht and Guiny, such as *Travail et divertissement, un hommage à Méliès* (*Work and Play, a Hommage to Méliès*, 1968), which was intended to be broadcast on TSF television during the breaks between programmes, in an attempt to reach a much wider audience (Giroud and Jouval, 2003). Similarly, Filliou's collaboration in the 1970s with the Canadian collective The Western Front to realise video art projects allowed him to direct his works towards a wider scope and even interaction and feedback from the viewer. These audiovisual works also engaged with the concept of the open work, fostering interaction and feedback from the viewer, thereby considering them an integral part of the artwork's reconfiguration (López and Morgado, 2023).

Transnational Temps, on the other hand, was born at a time when telecommunication technologies were already in place and developing by leaps and bounds. For this collective, technology acts as an attractor for the participating audience. For the work to be properly experienced by the public, it cannot remain passive and confined to a specific space such as a museum. The work goes out to meet the user, it introduces itself into their everyday practices, such as using a mobile phone in *Simiomobile*, walking through a shopping mall in *Mall of the Wild*, or searching the internet as in *Novus Extinctus* (2001).

Novus Extinctus, winner of the Fundación Telefónica's Vida 4.0 competition, is a perfect example of a project that highlights the importance of telecommunication technologies as an artistic tool and discourse. This work, conceived in the context of the emergence of the human genome and the proliferation of websites at the beginning of the new millennium, offers a profound reflection on the relationship between technology, nature and society.

Drawing a parallel between DNA and DNS (Domain Name System), *Novus Extinctus* explores the analogy between the extinction of species and the inexorable growth of domain names in virtual space. The work challenges the viewer to reflect on the alarming rate of species extinction in the world, i.e. species names (DNA) that remain "empty", without representation in the natural world, while DNS (websites) multiply. Accessible to any web user, this project offers another incisive critique of the superficiality with which biodiversity conservation is often approached in the digital age.

The work takes a dual approach: on the one hand, it offers a face to galleries and art centres interested in net.art; on the other, it infiltrates the net, attracting users looking for free domain and hosting

services. Users are directed to an online space that pretends to be a hosting service, but actually leads to a digital bestiary/herbarium of extinct species. When users try to choose a name for the web pages they want to create, *Novus Extinctus* announces that these names are no longer available and offers them domain names based on extinct species. This is a powerful metaphor for the void left by these species (they no longer exist, their "names" have been vacated, these names no longer have anyone to represent them) and for the increasing dehumanisation of biodiversity loss (V. Perales, personal communication, 10 December 2023) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. *Novus Extinctus*



Source: Image courtesy of Transnational Temps, 2001.

Just as Guattari advocates a change in the way we perceive and relate to our environment, *Novus Extinctus* challenges audiences to rethink the implications of our digital actions and their impact on the natural world. It does this by engaging web users in a dialogue about extinction and creation, forcing them to confront the dissonance between digital (virtual) expansion and ecological (natural) loss.

Novus Extinctus thus aligns with Guattari's ecosophic vision and Filliou's permanent creation, acting as a catalyst for transformation. Just as Guattari urged a rethinking of our relationship with systems of power and the environment, and Filliou advocated a life in which art and creativity are inseparable, Transnational Temps, through *Novus Extinctus*, invites a critical reflection on our relationship with technology and the natural world, emphasising the coexistence of a genetic code and a digital code, and postulating that the two must coexist in synergy.

Finally, as far as Guattari's relationship with the telecommunications media is concerned, it is worth noting that while on numerous occasions he blames them for the current extreme alienation, he also argues that this cause-and-effect relationship is not inevitable, but a circumstance that can be changed. Specifically, Guattari lists several factors that can reverse this situation, namely: the awakening of consciousness in the population; the gradual dissolution of Stalinist systems into more open and flexible systems with the potential for freer and more democratic social transformations; and technological advances in the media that allow them to be used for non-capitalist-oriented purposes (1996). The first two factors are fundamental objectives in Filliou's practices, while all three together are integrated struggles in the projects of Transnational Temps. He understands these media as part of everyday life that, far from being rejected, must be recontextualised and used in a critical and conscious way, demonstrating his commitment to contemporary issues. It is this approach that makes his work more accessible, interactive and participatory, allowing the message to be amplified and resonate more in today's society.

6. Conclusions

This research has fulfilled its objectives of promoting interdisciplinary dialogue and filling an academic gap by presenting and detailing the convergence between Guattari's ecosophy, Filliou's formulations and the eco-artist approach of Transnational Temps. This analysis has shown how their artistic and philosophical practices are intertwined with current environmental and social challenges, highlighting the appropriateness and relevance of such intersections. Their works and theories make art/creativity/life a collective experience and a space for research, experimentation and dialogue.

In addition to *La Cédille qui Sourit*, Filliou conceived other experimental spaces, such as the *Poïpoïdrome* (another centre for Permanent Creation, initiated in 1963 with Joachim Pfeufer) and the

Territory of the Republic of Genius, a utopia that transcends traditional geographical and political borders, operating from a Volkswagen van that allowed the itinerancy and multiple foundations of this space from disparate situations. This space is defined by the attitude and spirit of those who participate in it. It is an open space, without specific statutes for its creation, which everyone can create and develop, and thus experience creatively as they wish, based on their own interests: if this space is not practised, this space does not exist.

Filliou conceived it as a research activity, a place for "investigations" into new forms of thought and artistic practices through curiosity. These investigations materialised in works such as *Research on Filmmaking* (1968-1972), *Territory No. 0 of the Genius Republic: 9 Weeks of Research on Futurology* (1971), *Research in Art and Astrology* (1972), *A Joint Work of R. Filliou and the Anonymous Visitors of the Genial Republic* (1971), *Research in Progress* (1972-1973), *Research on Children's Language* (ca.1973), *Research on Pre-biology* (1973), *Recherche sur l'origine* (1974) and a long etcetera (Van den Valentyn, 2003).

We have broken down the barriers between the arts. Now I want to break down the barriers between the arts and the other disciplines. (...) The new interesting artistic research being done now is the research of new life forms. But this very important form of art is now outside the field of the usual artistic information. (...) Art that only refers to art has problems. (Filliou, 1971, last page)

Following this idea of art as an experimental space for interdisciplinary research, rather than focusing on art itself, Transnational Temps created the work *Ecoscope* (2007). This was an online forum where web users could share their perspectives on issues of environmental sustainability, such as ozone depletion, deforestation and respect for animals, in dedicated chat channels.

The group's approach fuses non-violent protest methods, such as the traditional peaceful sit-in, with current technology to create a form of digital activism. Participants' avatars symbolically 'sit' on digital images related to specific environmental issues. For example, to address ozone depletion, the virtual protest sits on NASA satellite images showing ozone levels over the South Pole, while discussions on deforestation take place on satellite images of changes in Bolivia's forests. This debate project is notable for its focus on public participation and the use of digital and technological media.

The Territory of the Cool Republic and *Ecoscope* are important examples of how art can discover alternative spaces for reflection, exchange and collective action. Both projects share a common search for spaces, whether physical or conceptual, where ideas and practices can flourish outside conventional structures. They also embody the idea of Guatterian's networked ecology, where art acts as a catalyst for rethinking and reconfiguring our relationship with the world and ourselves, in a synergy between the creative, the social and, in the case of Transnational Temps, the environmental.

In the current context of ecological challenges and identity crises, this multidisciplinary approach invites us to imagine and work towards a future where interconnectedness and activism are commonplace. It also proves to be a valuable tool for rethinking our intrapersonal, interpersonal and environmental relationships, offering new perspectives for interacting with the world in a more conscious and harmonious way.

Finally, this analysis also highlights the significant work of Transnational Temps, emphasising the importance of its processual approach and eco-social engagement, differentiating it from the dominant mercantile dynamics of art, and justifying the need for greater critical and institutional recognition.

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