

Artist Statement

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What does it mean to know through a plant? Not to know about one — to receive knowledge by way of it. I begin from the assumption that an Artemisia root system, the hallucinogenic grammar of a Datura, the bioelectric flicker a leaf sends before it is touched, are not figures of speech. They are ways of holding information that predate writing and survive it.

Matter is my archive. Stone, ash, seed, rusted iron, woven fibre, a page of a medieval manuscript — each has been present at events no human record kept, and each carries that presence forward. What the archive discarded, the material retained. I work to make those retentions perceptible: to let what was silenced arrive as form, sound, scent, and weight rather than as citation.

I call the guiding principle Relational Intelligence. Intelligence, in my work, is never held by one body. It is what appears between plants, minerals, human participants, and algorithmic or more-than-human intelligences when they are kept in sustained relation instead of studied apart. Quantum entanglement gives me the compositional law for this: what has once been in relation never fully separates, and keeps acting on its counterpart across distance and time. When I bring such elements back into contact, the encounter releases a spark — a brief opening onto memory the material has carried without speaking.

My lineage is matrilineal and Celtic, reaching back through a Galician grandmother who handled plants as both medicine and oracle, and through the women who carried that knowledge and were burned for it. This is subjugated knowledge in the exact sense: coherent systems of understanding that were not refuted but suppressed. I do not reconstruct them as heritage. I reactivate them as method.

Choreography is how the knowledge enters a body. Working alongside plants over weeks — attending to their rhythm, their chemistry, their hours — participants arrive at scores no single author wrote. I call these anarchoreographies: movement composed by the relational field rather than issued to it. The dancer is not illustrating a plant. The

dancer is the instrument through which vegetal time becomes audible at human scale.

SHIH: Thirteen Moons — Artemisia / Wallada, made at C3A Córdoba, gathered thirteen assemblages around the erased thirteen-moon calendar and the suppressed cosmologies of Andalusian and Celtic women, a living plant's electrical activity composed into sound. SPOIL, made at Marble House Project with yarrow and 450-million-year-old marble, followed a slower exchange: the plant drawing calcium from quarry stone into its own tissue, stone becoming plant and plant becoming stone. Neither work was decided by me, and neither ends when I leave. Both feed The Quantum Leaf Speaks in Ancient Tongues, where these lines converge and the seeds are the protocol continuing without me.

I am not giving these intelligences a voice. I am building the conditions under which we can finally hear that they never stopped speaking.