

An ash I know there stands, Yggdrasil is its name, a tall tree, showered with shining loam. From there comes the dew that drops in the valleys. It stands forever green over Urd's well. -verse from the Edda-

The tree is a living sculpture, an image in a state of ongoing metamorphosis, in which the earth and her atmosphere are reflected. In extension, the tree could be a miniature of the complete universe.

It can be the skeleton around which a world is woven, as we read in the Icelandic Edda, the poems from the German Antiquity. The tree of life, the Yggdrasil, stands as the central axis within the constellation of gods, men and mythological beings.

The Yggdrasil is rooted deep in the underworld, where are three springs: a spring of darkness and danger, a spring of wisdom (with Odin's eye laying on the bottom), and a spring of life-energy. The 3 Norns, Urd, Skuld and Werdandi live nearby the roots; they are the fates of the past, the future and the present. Its crown far branched off, the tree reaches for the atmosphere and heaven.

The big eagle that nests in the crown, overlooks north, south, east and west; and sometimes he flies up to the regions of the gods

The trunk stands straight in the center of the world. Hungry deers gnaw his bark; a dangerous snake tries to climb up, and a squirrel runs up and down, an indefatigable messenger between the spheres.

The image of the Yggdrasil also could be condensed and all upper elements can be projected on the human system. So the trunk becomes the spine of the body, the transportzone between belly and brains, the bridge between the physical and the spiritual atmosphere.

The Outer Spine Exercise

The artwork with trees as a central theme is searching for a certain stability and for roots in the earth. Because it concerns a video-artwork, the elements of light, air and movement are coming into the static nature.

In the progress of the work, some indications are followed:

1. With a weekly rhythm, the artist and the performer go on a "pilgrimage" to a tree. They are doing so for the time of one year.
2. The setting for the performance is always "at the roots of an old tree".
3. The performers dress is adapted to each of the four seasons passing the yearcircle in Europe.
4. The direction of the image is vertical and the distance between the camera and the tree is about four steps; the trunk is always the vertical central axis of the video image.

If trees could have a potentiation for the generation of an outer spine, than this intense exercise can possibly reveal it.

In the best case scenario, the image-power of the trees can refine, via moving vibrations, and metamorphosis on the rhythm of the seasons, to vital elements.

The outcome is completely open and undefined, but the artist and the performer consider the opportunity that this project hides a *healing factor*.

Marie Julia Bollansée, januari 2012