

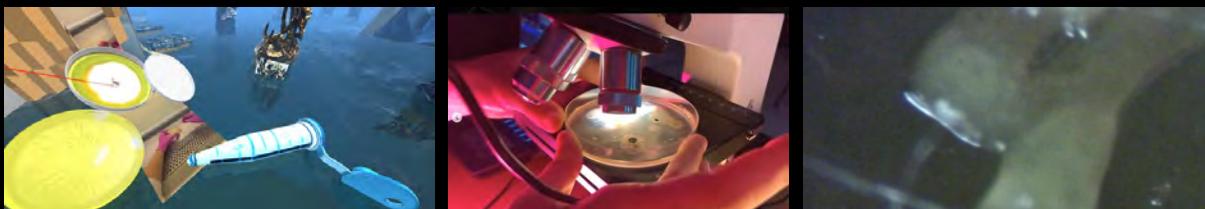
Slime Mold Divination – Full Transcript

Introduction This document compiles biological, symbolic, mythological, and speculative insights from SLIME DIVINE SLIME workshop exploring the divinatory use of slime molds in ritual practice with Maria Debinska, Francis Gene-Rowe, Ben Woodard at **diffra**ct.

Offerings (brought to the workshop)

Irina: Shared a quote from St. Augustine – “Go forth on your path, as it exists only through your walking.”

Xristina: Contributed a 3-minute microscope recording of *iłuć* (slime mold) from their 2023 experiments, along with an in-progress slime game development project that was paused since November 2023.



Senta: Attended the first session but didn't join the second round of offerings sharing.

Adrién: Presented a divinatory dream about the future involving encounters with deities and a precise prophetic question.

Chose not to reveal the answer – “to avoid spoiling the future with the right answer.”

Alfonso: Shared a quote and a poem on dreams and ancient wisdom related to circularity, but preferred it not be documented.

Jacob: Joined Group 6 in the second half of the workshop. Shared a text from a collaborative publication with Valentina Marchetti, which was launched in a sauna.



“What started at the tip of his toes spread through his body. Creeping up at a steady pace. Pain travelled through his nerves like fire through a fuse. Upon reaching his spinal cord, it moved through his central nervous system even faster. When it got to his brain, it was as if it had reached a box of dynamite. A grand explosion created a shockwave that propelled a fine, pink mist, consisting of what used to be thoughts and feelings. It covered a massive area in a barely visible pink cloud with a semblance of consciousness.”

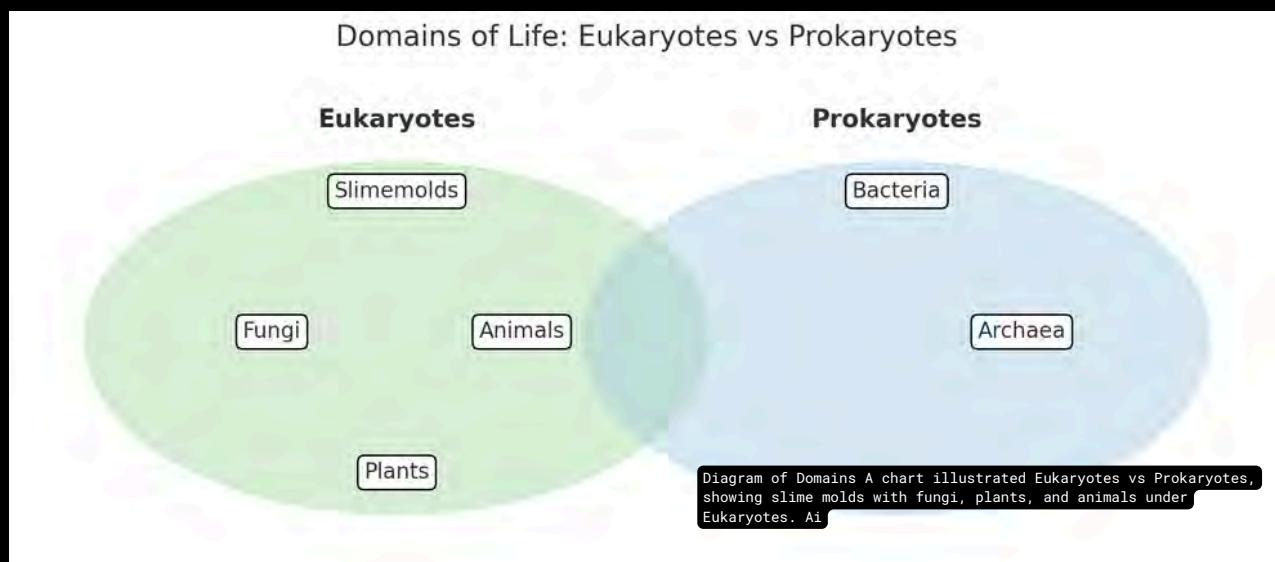
Session Opening & Language

Divination and Slime Theory--> 20 min practice 5sh groups

In my group with Irina, Adrien, Alphonso, Senta we worked both individually and collaboratively.

I worked on a slime science facts summary parallel to myth and poetry exploration connecting to my culture and ancient greek knowledge compiling biological, symbolic, mythological, and speculative insights

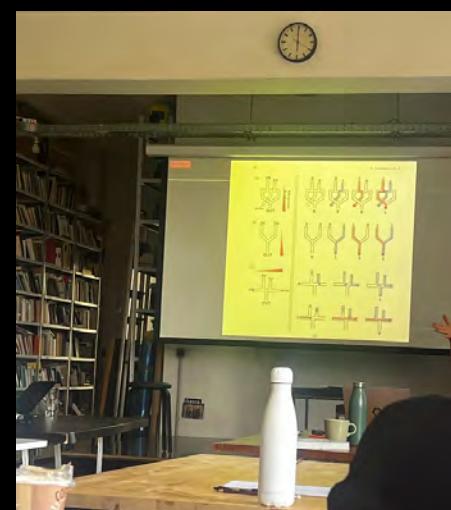
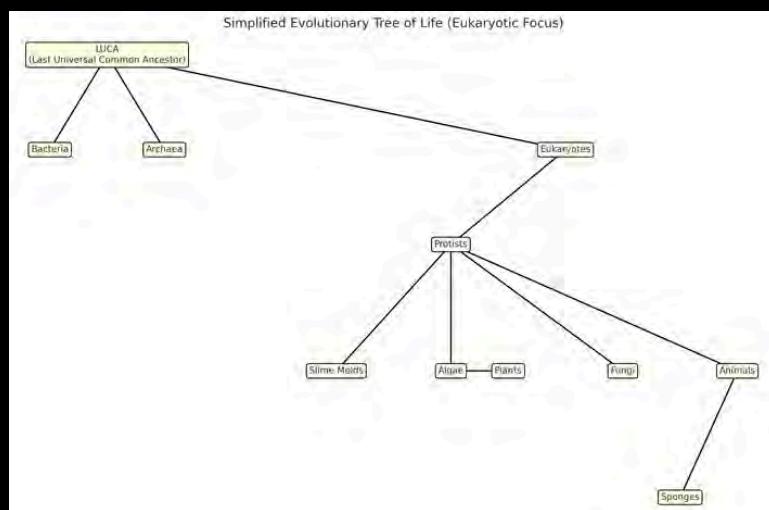
Biological Categorization



Slime molds are eukaryotic organisms traditionally classified among Protista, though some traits resemble fungi. Unlike fungi, they lack chitin in cell walls and can move in their plasmodial stage.

Kingdom: Protista | Class: Myxogastria (true slime molds)

Fungi, by contrast, belong to Kingdom Fungi and include: - Zygomycota (bread molds) - Ascomycota (yeasts, morels) - Basidiomycota (mushroom). Slime molds are called 'Μυξομύκητες' in Greek, meaning 'slime fungi', from 'μύξα' (slime) and 'μύκητες' (fungi).



Eukaryotic Classification

Slimemolds are eukaryotic. Though not fungi, they are studied as such. They belong to Protista, unlike fungi, plants, or animals.

Simplified evolutionary tree:

- LUCA (Last Universal Common Ancestor) gave rise to Bacteria, Archaea, and eventually Eukaryotes.
- From early Protists, several key groups evolved:
 - Slime molds **remained in the protist group**.
 - Algae gave rise to Plants.
 - Other protists gave rise to Fungi and Animals.
 - Sponges are primitive animals – some of the earliest diverging from the animal lineage.

Myth, Poetry, Ai (Individual Session Xristina 10min)

Exploring divination practices of the past and ancient mythologies.

Conceptual Origins:

🍄 Symbolically Similar Ideas in Ancient Cultures

1. Ancient Greek Concepts of "Slime" and Life Force

- Greek philosophers like Empedocles and Anaximander theorized that life emerged from primordial moistness or slime ("ιλύς").
- This proto-biological idea parallels the viscous, life-generating aspect of slime molds.

2. Alchemy and the "Prima Materia"

- Medieval and earlier alchemists often referred to a primal ooze or undifferentiated matter, sometimes slime-like, as the raw material from which transformation began.
- Seen in Egyptian, Hellenistic, and Islamic traditions.

3. Divination from Mold and Decay (Mycomancy)

- Rare and fringe, but there are mentions (especially in Eastern European folk traditions) of interpreting fungal growth, mildew, or mold patterns as omens – particularly in barns or on food offerings.
- These are not well-documented but indicate a mystical interpretation of fungal or slime-like phenomena.

4. Shinto and Kami of Decay

- In Japanese Shinto, there are kami (spirits) associated with decay and transformation, sometimes symbolized by moss, mold, or slime.
- While not directly slime molds, this reflects a spiritualization of slow, organic processes similar to what slime molds represent biologically.

⚠ Speculative/Modern Folklore

- Slimemolds have inspired modern mythmaking, especially in speculative fiction:
 - H.P. Lovecraft's creatures (e.g. Shoggoths) are amorphous, collective-intelligence blobs, very similar to slime molds.
 - Pop culture sometimes mythologizes slime molds as "living intelligence" from beyond" due to their problem-solving abilities.

Breakdown of Ancient Greek Concepts of "Slime" and Life Force:

Notes Xristina

Οι λέξεις "ιλύς" και "ύλη" είναι εννοιολογικά συνδεδεμένες, αν και δεν ταυτίζονται.

🔴 Ιλύς (ιλύς, η)

- Σημαίνει λάσπη, ιλύς, δηλαδή υγρή, πυκνή, κολλώδης μάζα που συσσωρεύεται σε βυθούς, βάλτους, ποτάμια.
- Στην αρχαία σκέψη, ιδίως σε προσωκρατικούς φιλοσόφους όπως ο Αναξιμένης και ο Εμπεδοκλής, η ιλύς θεωρούνταν πρωτογενές, άμορφο υλικό από το οποίο προήλθε η ζωή.
- Έχει ζωογονική χροιά, σαν πρωτοπλασματικό υλικό.

🟡 Ύλη (ύλη, η)

- Κυριολεκτικά σημαίνει δάσος στην Αρχαία Ελληνική, αλλά γρήγορα πήρε τη σημασία της πρώτης ύλης ή της υλικής υπόστασης γενικά.
- Στον Αριστοτέλη, η "ύλη" είναι η πρωταρχική ουσία που δέχεται μορφή (μορφή + ύλη = ον).
- Δηλαδή, η ύλη είναι το υπόστρωμα της δημιουργίας, πριν ακόμα πάρει συγκεκριμένη μορφή ή δομή.

✓ Εννοιολογική Σύνδεση

- Και οι δύο έννοιες αναφέρονται σε κάτι άμορφο, φυσικό, και πρωτογενές.
- Η "ιλύς" μπορεί να θεωρηθεί φυσικό παράδειγμα "ύλης" στην πιο ακατέργαστη μορφή της – μια υγρή, άμορφη μάζα που μπορεί να δώσει γέννηση σε ζωή ή μορφή.

Συνοψίζοντας:

- "Ύλη" = φιλοσοφική έννοια της πρώτης ουσίας
- "Ιλύς" = φυσικό, από παράδειγμα πρωτογενούς ύλης (ιδίως σε βιολογικό ή κοσμογονικό πλαίσιο)

'ιλύς' (ilys, slime/mud) and 'ύλη' (hyle, matter) are conceptually related in ancient Greek – both describing primal, formless matter.

Poetical Interpretation and Ai computation:

Μῦθος τοῦ Μυξοῦ – The Slime of Origin

Ἐν ἀρχῇ, πρὸ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ τοῦ κόσμου,
ἥν μόνον ἡ Ἰλύς – ἄμορφος, ἄναρχος, ἀνόριστος.

In the time before time, when neither the stars nor the gods had names, there was only the Ilýs, the Primordial Slime – formless, ageless, and boundless.

ἡ Ἰλύς ἔπνευσε καὶ ἐκινήθη,
καὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος αύτῆς ἔβλάστησαν ἀμέτρητοι πυρήνες.
Πάντες κινοῦντο ὡς εῖς, γνώμονι μιᾷ.

From her body sprang countless nuclei – not as children born apart, but as one will in many forms. They wandered over stone and root, searching not for conquest, but for connection.

Οἱ θεοὶ ἴδόντες ἐθαύμασαν·
"Οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτο θῆρ, οὐ φυτὸν, οὐ μύκης –
ἀλλ' ἔτερον ὅλον."

The gods beheld them and marveled:

"This is no beast, no plant, no fungus – but something other, something whole."

Καὶ ἔχαρισαν αύτοῖς δόμον ἐν τῇ φύσει,
ἴνα εἶεν οἱ Ἀρχαῖοι Μνήμονες,
οἱ μυστικοὶ λυτῆρες τῆς ὕλης.

And so they granted them a place in nature –
To be the Ancient Rememberers, the hidden redeemers of matter –
wandering always, yet never lost.

Απ' αὐτῶν μαθαίνει ἡ ρίζα πῶς νὰ ζητᾷ.
Απ' αὐτῶν ἡ ἄμορφος ὕλη θυμάται τὸ σχήμα.

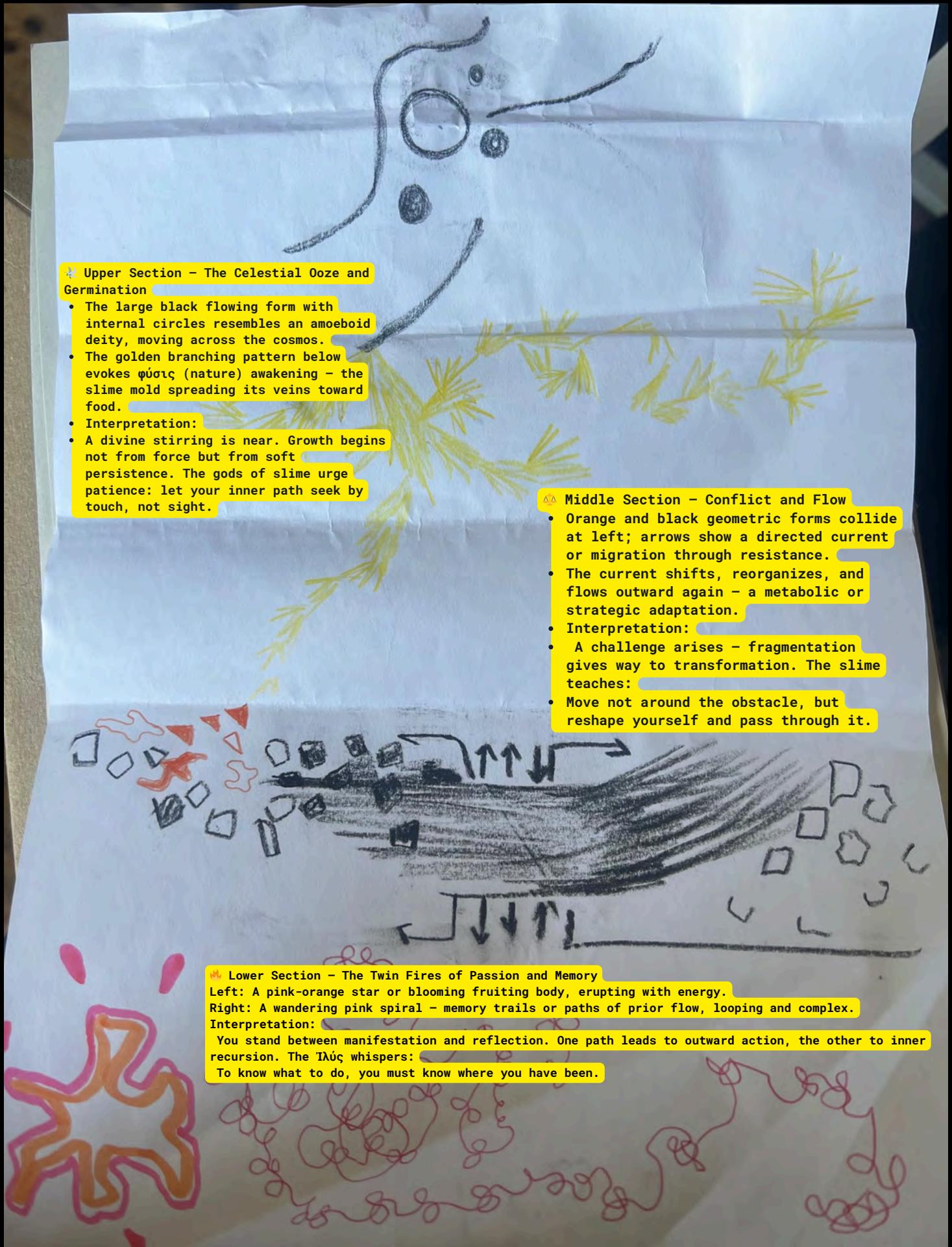
From them, the roots learn to seek.
From them, formless matter remembers shape.

Exquisite Slime

Group Session 10 min (Irina, Xristina, Senta)

For the three-person group session we chose the Exquisite Corpse method invented by surrealists by which a collection of words or images is collectively assembled. Each collaborator adds to a composition in sequence,
["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exquisite_corpse"](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exquisite_corpse).

Irina proposed that both “drawing” and “parlour game” should be connected with slime.

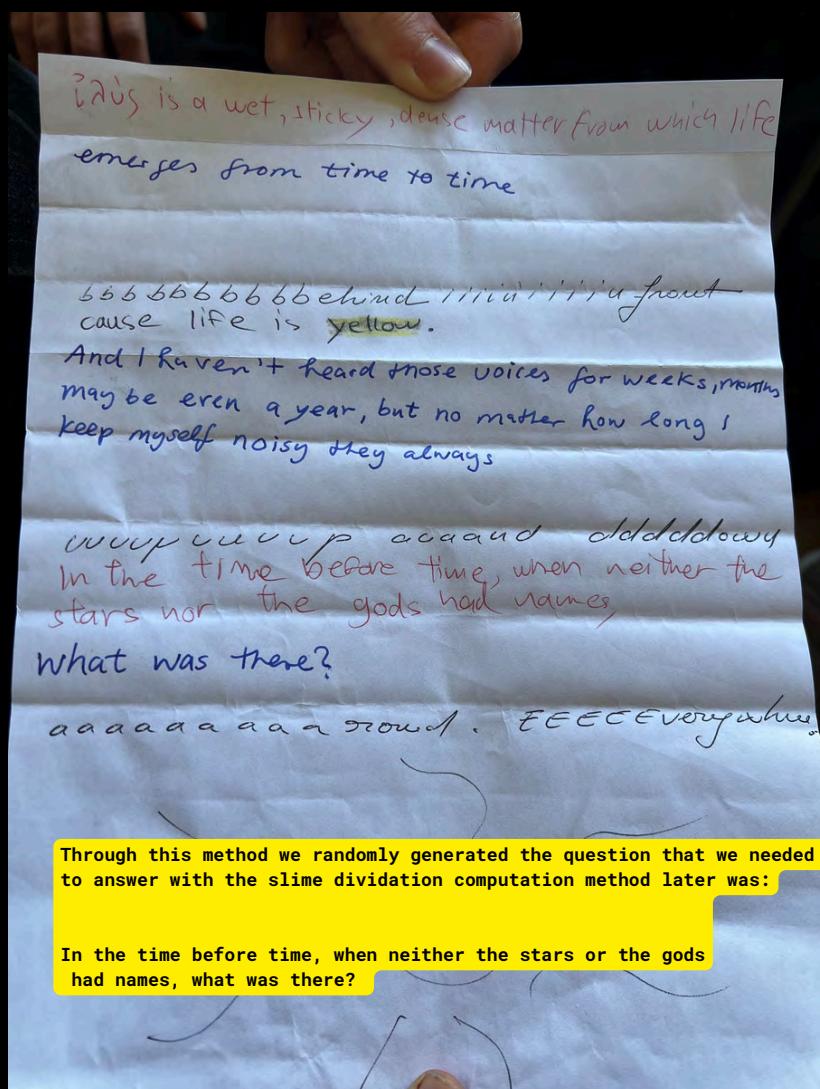
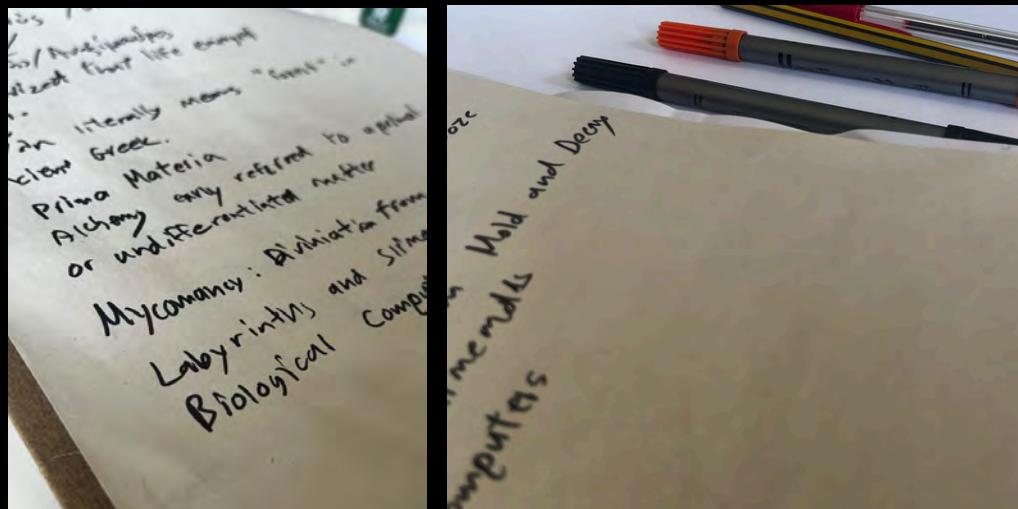


Ai was asked to perform the Mycomancer and interpret the collective drawing as if they were slimemold patterns that in the mindset of a mycomancer are interpret as symbolic omens from the Ιλύς, a visual divination of the primal ooze.

Final Mycomantic Reading (in ancient style):

Μὴ σπεῦδε τὸ τέλος. Ότι ἡ Ἰλύς πορεύεται πρῶτον πρὸς πάσας τὰς διόδους, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ σκότει μορφὴν εύρισκει.
Σὺ δέ, μιμήθητι τὴν σιγὴν τῆς ρίζης καὶ τὴν σοφίαν τῆς διακλαδώσεως.

Do not rush the end. For the Slime first flows through all paths, and in the darkness it finds shape.
You must imitate the silence of the root and the wisdom of branching.

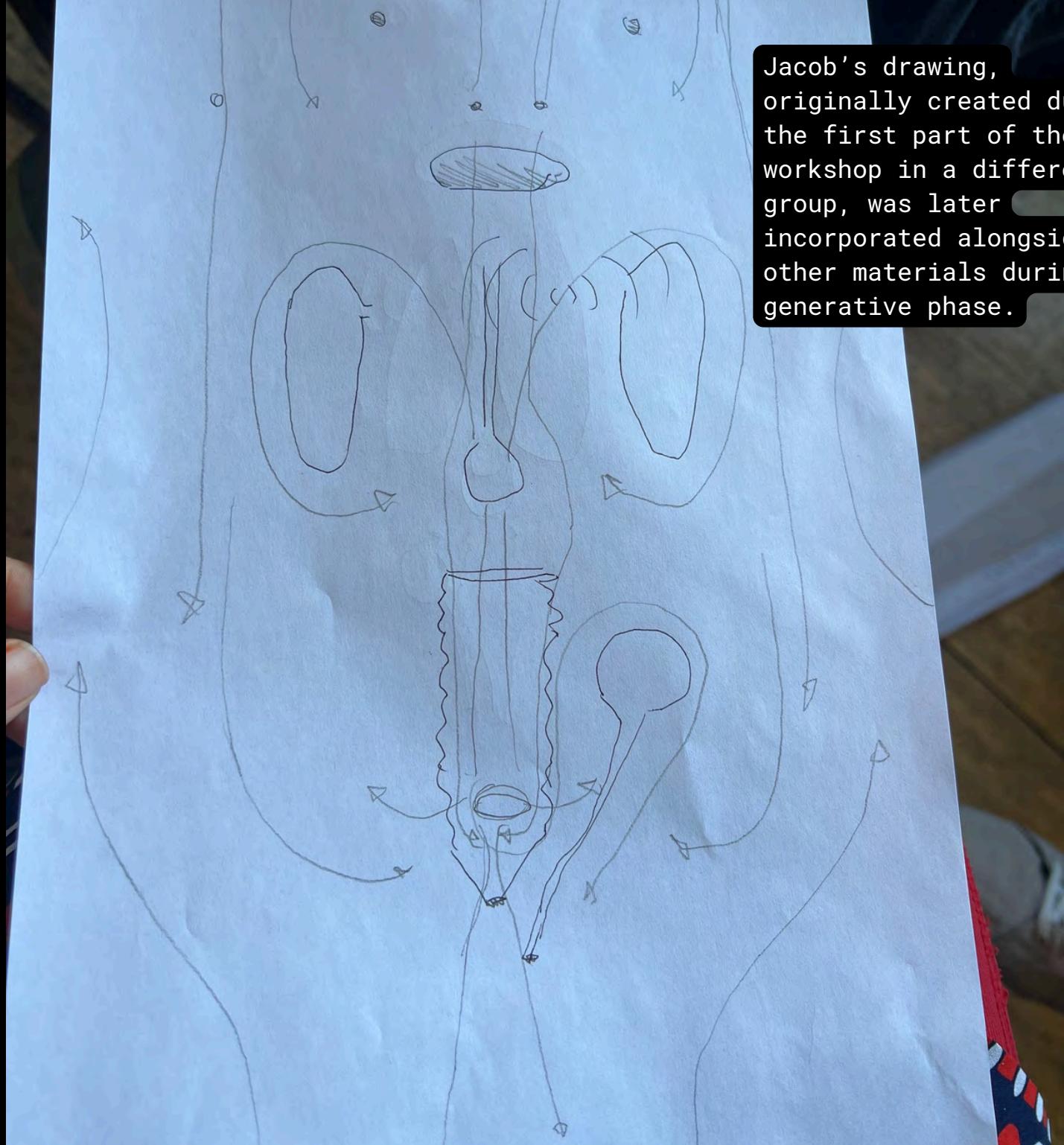


Ιλύς is a wet, sticky dense matter from which life emerges from time to time bbbbbbbbehind
iiiiiiiiii in front- cause life is yellow.

And I havent heard those voices for weeks, months maybe even a year, but no matter how long I keep myself noisy they always uuuuuuuuuup aaaaaand ddddddoww.

In the time before time, when neither the stars or the gods had names, what was there?
Aaaaaaaaaround.
Eeeeeeverywhere.

Jacob's drawing, originally created during the first part of the workshop in a different group, was later incorporated alongside all other materials during the generative phase.



Interpretation: The Vertical Organism of Divinatory Flow

Central Axis – The Path of Descent and Emergence

- The form resembles a vertical being, where energy or matter descends from above and emerges or births below.
- The layered circles, spirals, and fluted column in the center resemble:
 - Mouths, orifices, or spore-launching structures
 - Ritual chambers where ideas or entities might be processed

Flanking Loops – Receptors or Amplifiers

- Large "ear"-like shapes may represent perception or resonance fields.
- Suggest duality: receiving left/right, yin/yang, inner/outer.
- Energy comes in, spirals, and is drawn into the core.

Arrows and Flow Lines – Directive Forces

- Arrows trace motion upward, downward, and outward – as if we are witnessing a cycle of breath or digestion.
- Flowing from or into specific gates, perhaps points on the body or ritual zones.

Lower Vessel – Seed Chamber or Root Womb

- The "tail" ending in a pointed, enclosed form may be the source or anchor, possibly tied to fertility, emergence, or burial.
- Suggests germination – a slime being descending into matter to initiate transformation.

Slime Mycomantic Reading:

Τὸ σχέδιον τοῦ Μύκητος εἶναι οὐ σώμα, ἀλλὰ χάρτης.

Ο ἄνθρωπος διαβαίνει τὴν ίλύ, καὶ ἐπανέρχεται με μνήμην τοῦ ὄλλου.

This is not a body, but a map. The person who walks through slime returns with memory of the Other.

This is a ritual interface, a schematic of transformation, perhaps to be used with the oracle grid or pentagram previously shown. It merges organic form, energetic direction, and mystic anatomy – a cosmogram in the language of the ooze.

Divination and Slime Practice

After Lunch Break Divination and Slime Practice was introduced from Maria Dębińska and Francis Gene-Rowe

Maria Dębińska – Cultural Anthropologist and Slime Mold Researcher

Maria Dębińska is a cultural anthropologist and Assistant Professor at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She earned her PhD in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Warsaw in 2015, with a thesis on transgender politics in Poland, later published in 2020 under the title *Transpłciowość w Polsce. Wytwarzanie kategorii* (Transgender in Poland: Production of a Category)

[.etnologia.uw.edu.pl+3timisoara2023.eu+3ICI_Berlin+3ICI_Berlin+1timisoara2023.eu+1](http://etnologia.uw.edu.pl+3timisoara2023.eu+3ICI_Berlin+3ICI_Berlin+1timisoara2023.eu+1)

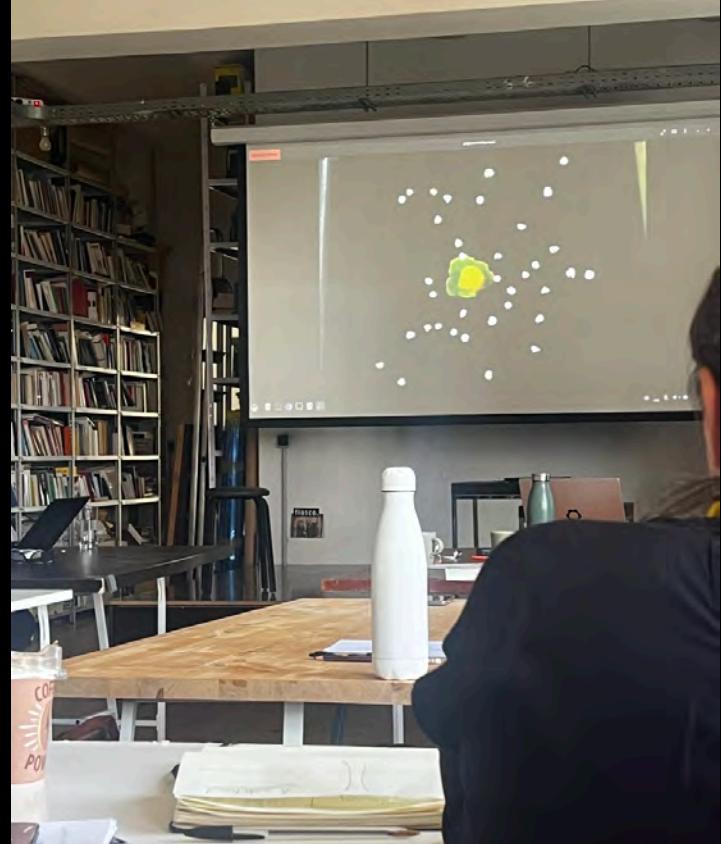
Her current research focuses on the intersection of scientific practice and social theory, particularly through the lens of the slime mold *Physarum polycephalum*. From 2020 to 2022, she led the research project Slime Mold as Method: Ethnography of Scientific Practice, funded by the National Science Centre in Poland. This project investigates how *Physarum polycephalum* is utilized in modeling and reimagining human relations, exploring its role in defining and conceptualizing the social

[.ceeol.com+10timisoara2023.eu+10nomadit.co.uk+10etnologia.uw.edu.pl+4ICI_Berlin+4projekty.ncn.gov.pl+4](http://ceeol.com+10timisoara2023.eu+10nomadit.co.uk+10etnologia.uw.edu.pl+4ICI_Berlin+4projekty.ncn.gov.pl+4)

At the ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Dębińska has been a fellow since 2022, engaging in projects that examine how *Physarum polycephalum* is employed to model human behaviors and communication systems. Her work delves into the experimental lab procedures and theoretical premises underlying *Physarum* experiments, aiming to understand how concepts of the world and the human coalesce through the slimy and transform within the apparatus .ICI_Berlin+1projekty.ncn.gov.pl+1

Dębińska's interdisciplinary approach bridges cultural anthropology, science and technology studies, and biology, offering a unique perspective on how non-human organisms like slime molds can inform and reshape our understanding of social systems and human behavior

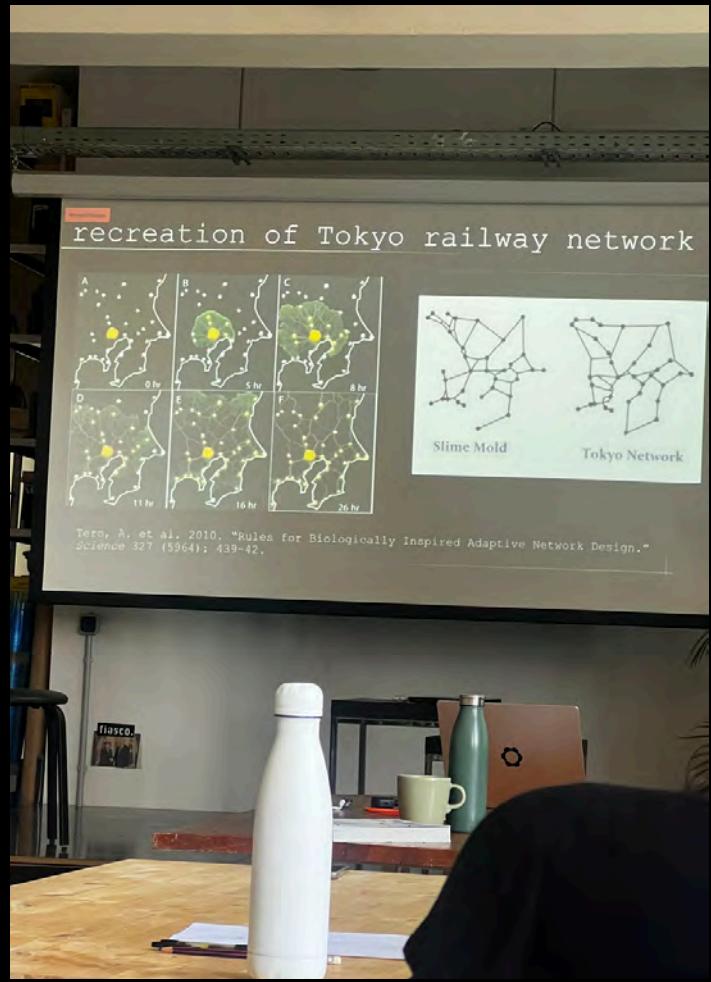




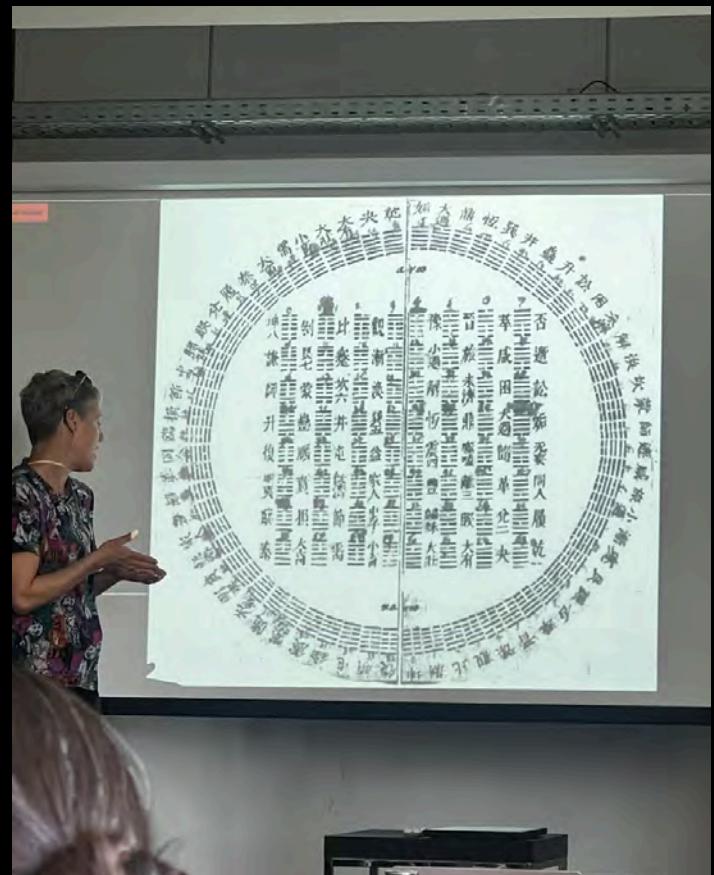
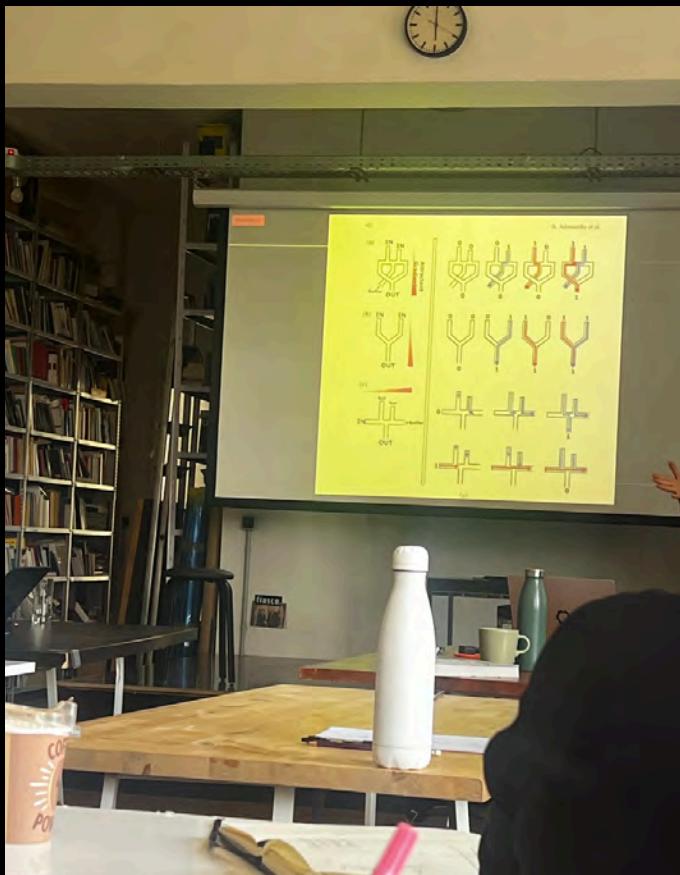
This session introduced a range of slime mold research projects, including the iconic experiment where *Physarum polycephalum* reorganized the Tokyo railway network – a vivid example of decentralized intelligence and more-than-human problem solving.

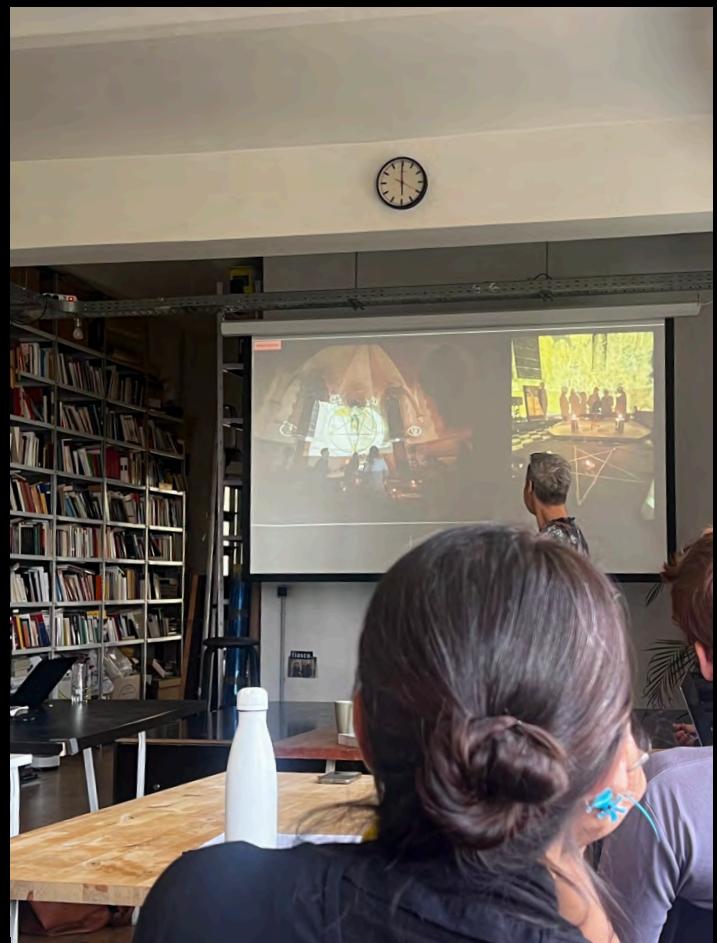
Maria Dębińska presented her ongoing work exploring slime molds as collaborators in ritual knowledge systems, drawing from cultural anthropology, bio-art, and speculative ethnography. Her divination toolkit integrates a pentagram, the I Ching, and a two-day lab growth cycle of slime mold as both medium and agent.

Documentation of performative experiments, ritual prototypes, and future directions was shared, illustrating Maria's vision of slime mold as both oracle and method – a practice that blends scientific inquiry with mythic and symbolic reasoning.

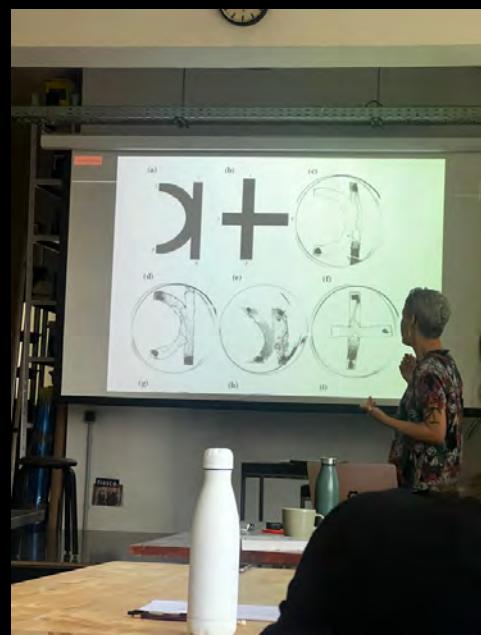


Maria's divination toolkit integrates a pentagram, the I Ching, and a two-day lab growth cycle of slime mold as both medium and agent.





Documentation of performative experiments, ritual prototypes, and future directions was shared, illustrating Maria's vision of slime mold as both oracle and method – a practice that blends scientific inquiry with mythic and symbolic reasoning.





Plasmodium Consortium Research Project

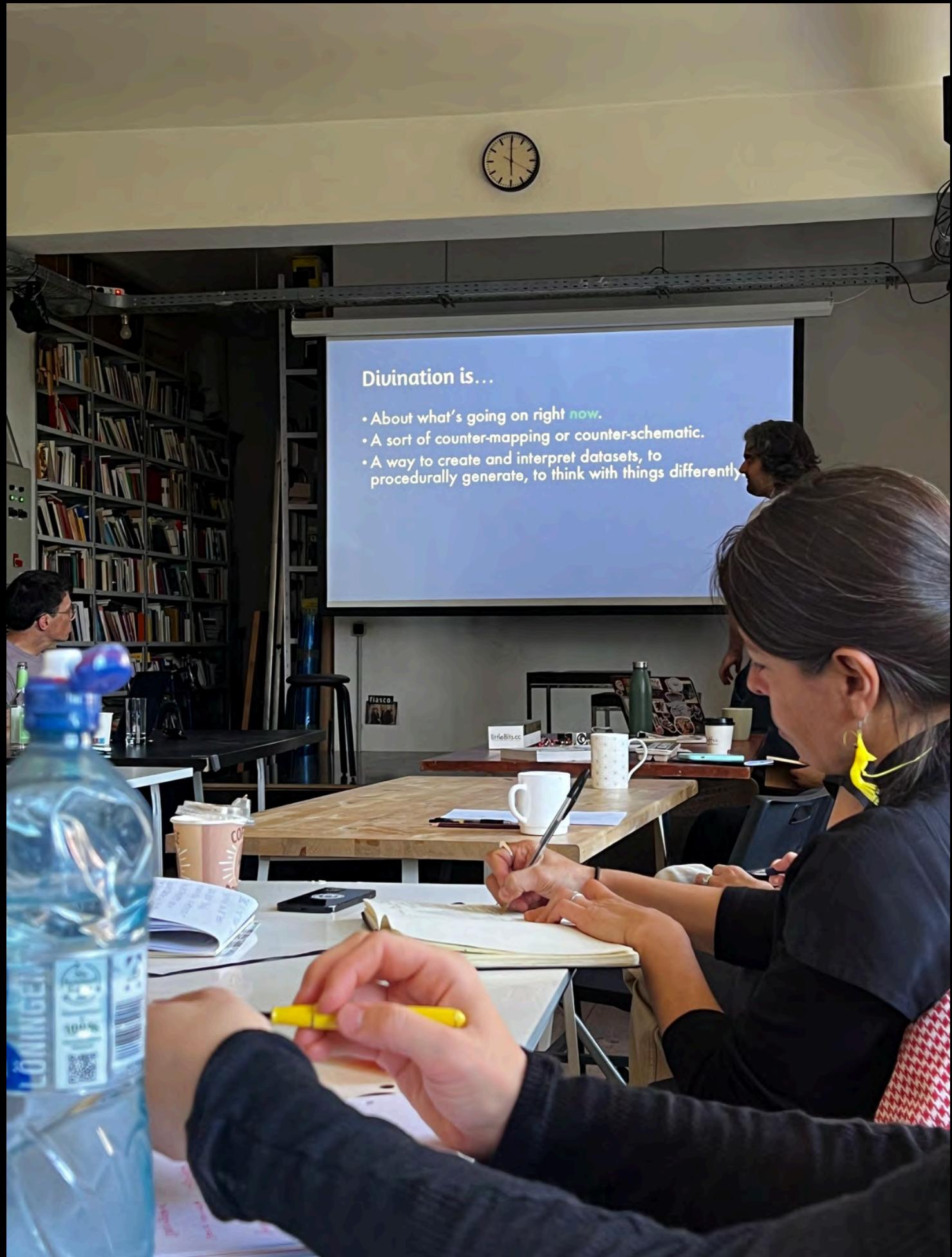
#activism #ecosocial #multispeciesdesign

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security

Dear Ms. Secretary:

I am writing on behalf of the Plasmodium Consortium, an independent policy institute based at Hampshire College in the United States. One of our research groups studies how national walls effect society. A primary objective of this research is to determine whether barriers impair the livelihood of citizens on both sides of the divide. Every territory offers some but not all that may be wanted by the resident population. A major dilemma for policy-makers is whether to secure exclusive access to internal resources by restricting movement of goods, or to allow free circulation in the interest of sharing.

Our researchers are uniquely qualified to provide policy advice because of their objectivity. The species *Physarum polycephalum* – a type of plasmodial slime mold – they have no prejudices common to human researchers, administrators, and politicians. At Hampshire, where they hold a collective faculty appointment as visiting non-human scholars, they immerse themselves in human problems without human preconceptions. Moreover, superorganisms. Populations are capable of fusion and cooperative behavior that can allow humans to cooperate to their mutual benefit without the burden of nationalism.



🎮 Francis Gene-Rowe – Interdisciplinary Researcher in Speculative Fiction, Game Studies, and Media

Speculative Divination

- Intersections of sf and divinatory practices, thinking, traditions.
- Dissolving the pillars of capitalist certainty, its imposed modes of causality.
- Exploring alternative/counter-models of reality to techno-solutionist modelling obsession.
- Recuperating symbols, archetypes, dreams from grifters, corporations, and fascists.

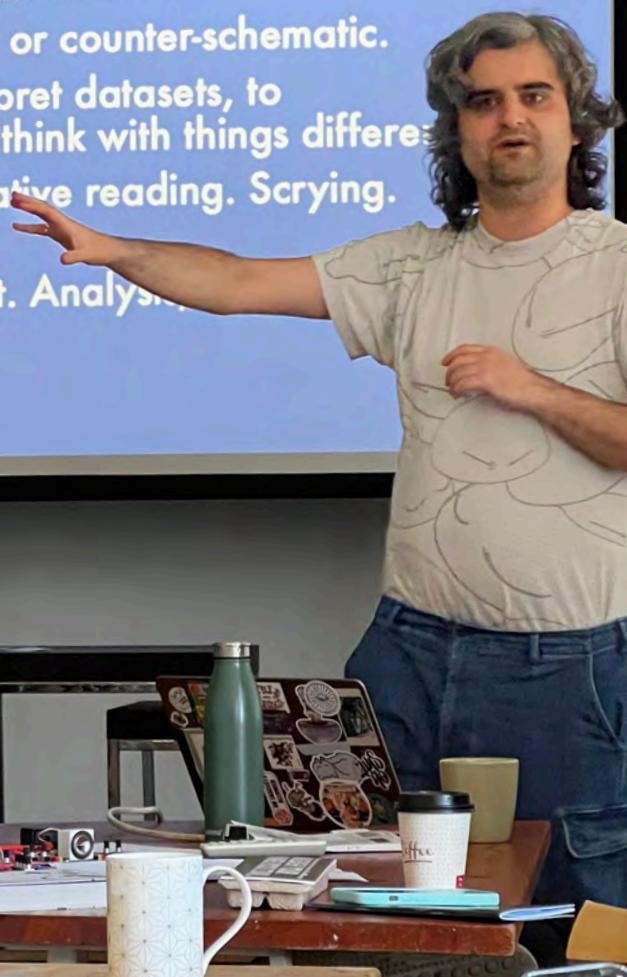


Francis's research interests encompass game development, speculative fiction, and educational methodologies. Gene-Rowe explores how speculative narratives and interactive media can be leveraged as pedagogical tools, fostering critical thinking and imaginative engagement among learners. By integrating elements of speculative fiction into game design, he investigates the potential of games to serve as platforms for exploring complex social and cultural themes.

Physarum polycephalum, can solve mathematical problems and how such biological processes relate to human practices of divination and storytelling. For this workshop Francis highlights how the the lines between computation and divination are blurred and suggests that both may stem from the fundamental human desire to interpret and narrate experiences.

Divination is...

- About what's going on right now.
- A sort of counter-mapping or counter-schematic.
- A way to create and interpret datasets, to procedurally generate, to think with things differently.
- Reading away from normative reading. Scrying. Playing.
- About a kind of enactment. Analysis.





Divination in/via SF

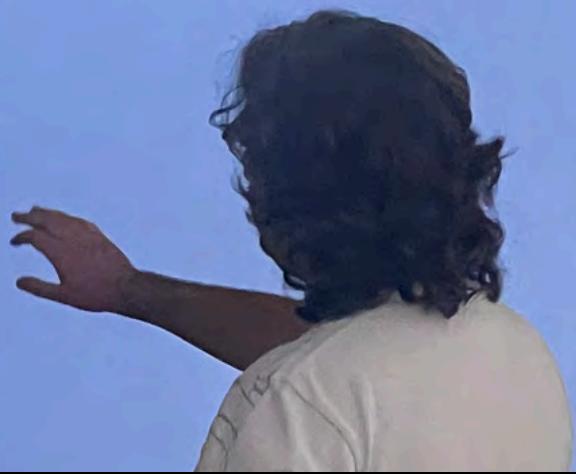
- Samuel Delany, *Nova*: tarot reading as part of far future technoculture.
- Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*: "to exhibit the perfect uselessness of knowing the answer to the wrong question [...] The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty: not knowing what comes next."
- Rachel Pollack, *Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom*: patterns & correspondences, 'this card tells me'.



Oracular Axes

'Oracles' is not a rigidly defined category. My interests are toward Oracles:

- As and in games, story machines
- As datasets, databases (the *I Ching*)
- As models, maps
- As magic
- As uncertainty engines



	Lake	10	58	58	54	61	60	41	5	3	
3	☰	☷	☲	☲	☵	☲	☷	☲	☷	☲	☷
4	☷	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱
5	☳	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱
6	☴	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱
7	☵	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱
8	☶	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱	☱

Oracles

Oracle Systems and Game Mechanics

Francis referenced ancient divinatory practices where organic materials were part of the mechanism: burning turtle shells or bones until they cracked, then interpreting those fissures as messages. This historical precedent served as a conceptual bridge to the use of slime molds as a living, organic oracle component – not simply symbolic, but participatory. The slime mold's behavior and movement became a material player in the game system, replacing dice with protoplasmic logic.

Wands <u>compounded</u> viridian <i>Sterility</i>	Wands beats Cups teal <i>Rooting</i>	Wands beats Swords umber <i>Justice</i>	Wands beats Pentacles erin <i>Wilding</i>
Cups beats Wands turquoise <i>Riverrun</i>	Cups <u>compounded</u> cerulean <i>Quagmire</i>	Cups beats Swords indigo <i>Serenity</i>	Cups beats Pentacles spring <i>Solitude</i>
Swords beats Wands crimson <i>Mastery</i>	Swords beats Cups fuchsia <i>Severance</i>	Swords <u>compounded</u> scarlet <i>Nemesis</i>	Swords beats flame <i>Tyranny</i>
Pentacles beats Wands amber <i>Enclosure</i>	Pentacles beats Cups jasmine <i>Kinskip</i>	Pentacles beats Swords peach <i>Autonomy</i>	Pentacles <u>compounded</u> gold <i>Corruption</i>

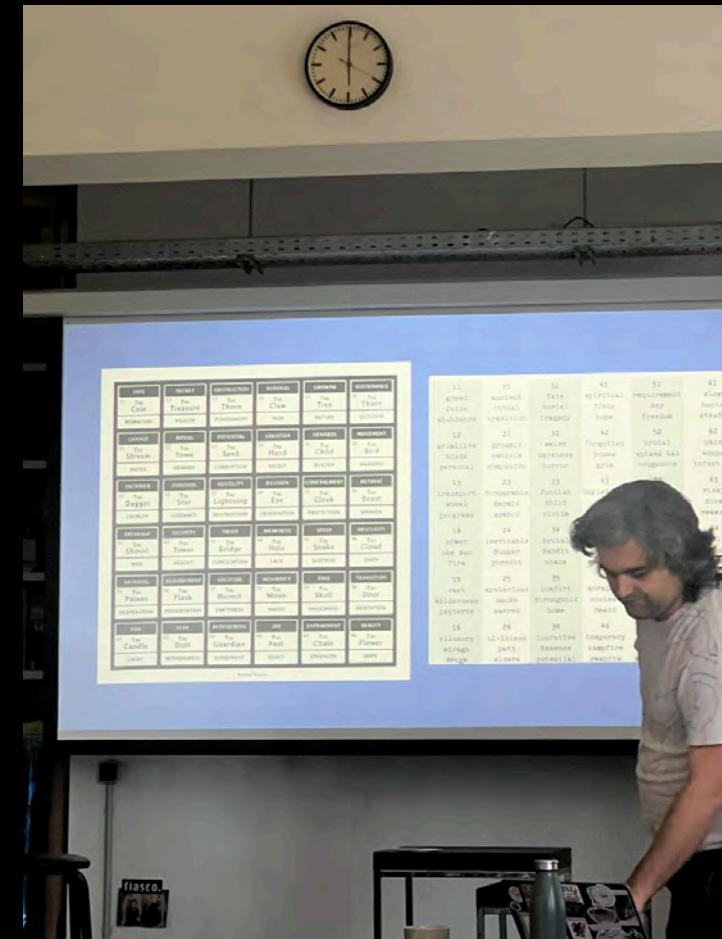
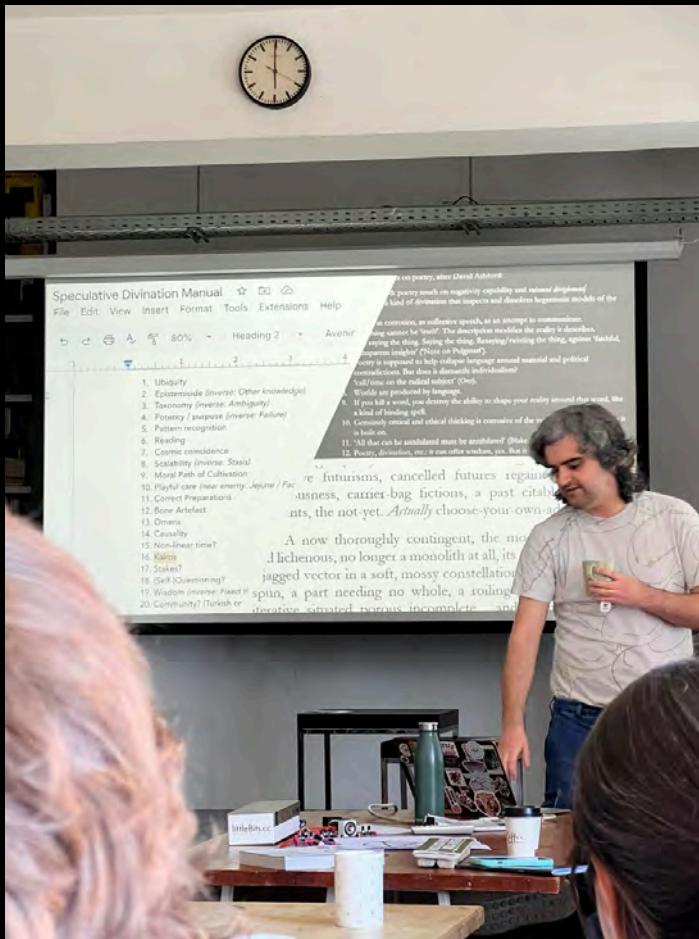


Francis introduced a layered system for procedural oracular interpretation inspired by both game logic and divinatory traditions. Central to this was a mapping of Rock / Paper / Scissors onto symbolic axes:

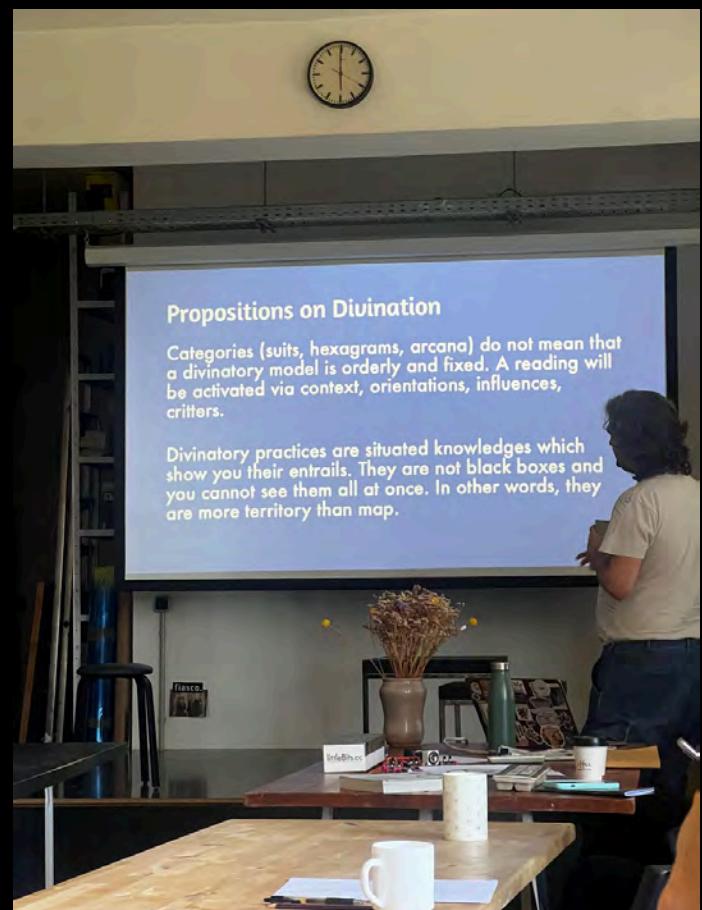
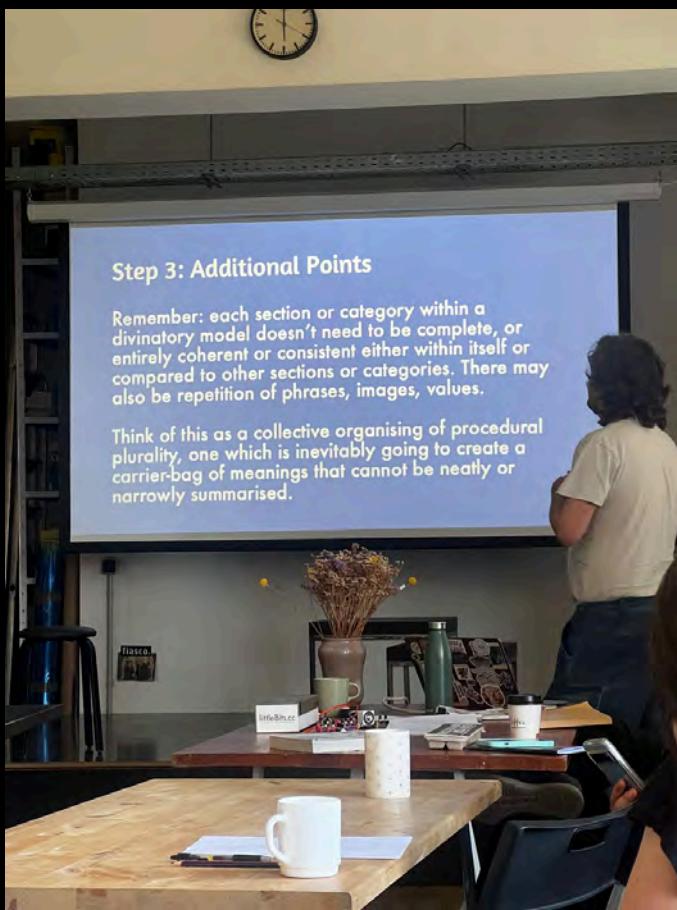
- Temporal dimension: Past / Present / Future
- Organic growth: Root / Stem / Leaf
- Color symbolism: Purple / Green / Yellow

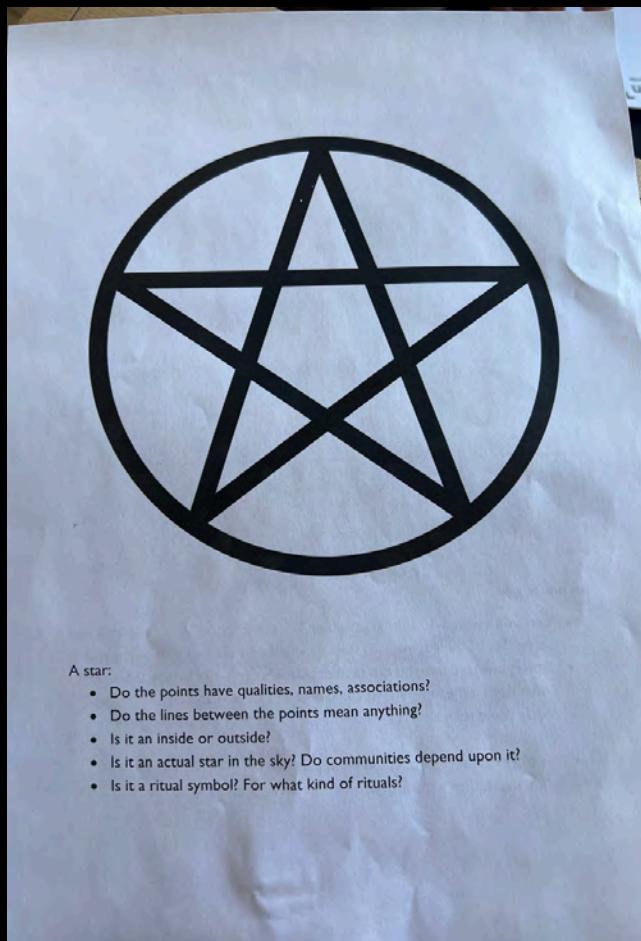
Each oracle “box” combined three variables:

- The time of the victor
- The organ of the loser
- The color of the absence



Group Work Exercise was introduced in four steps: from choosing symbolic systems, random pairing to generate oracle components to interpret using generated structure to translate results into a poem, prophecy or pattern

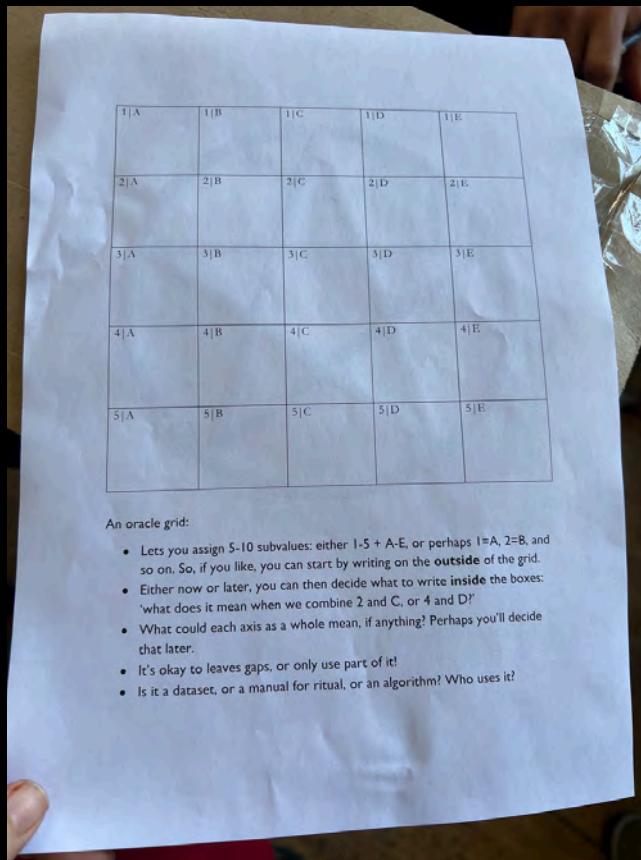




Integrating Systems: Generative Oracle Practice with Slime Mold Movement

In the final phase of the workshop, participants were invited to combine the speculative frameworks of Francis Gene-Rowe's procedural divination and Maria Dębińska's slime mold oracle system. Using a video of a live slime mold session as a prompt, we identified starting points and growth connections within the mold's movement.

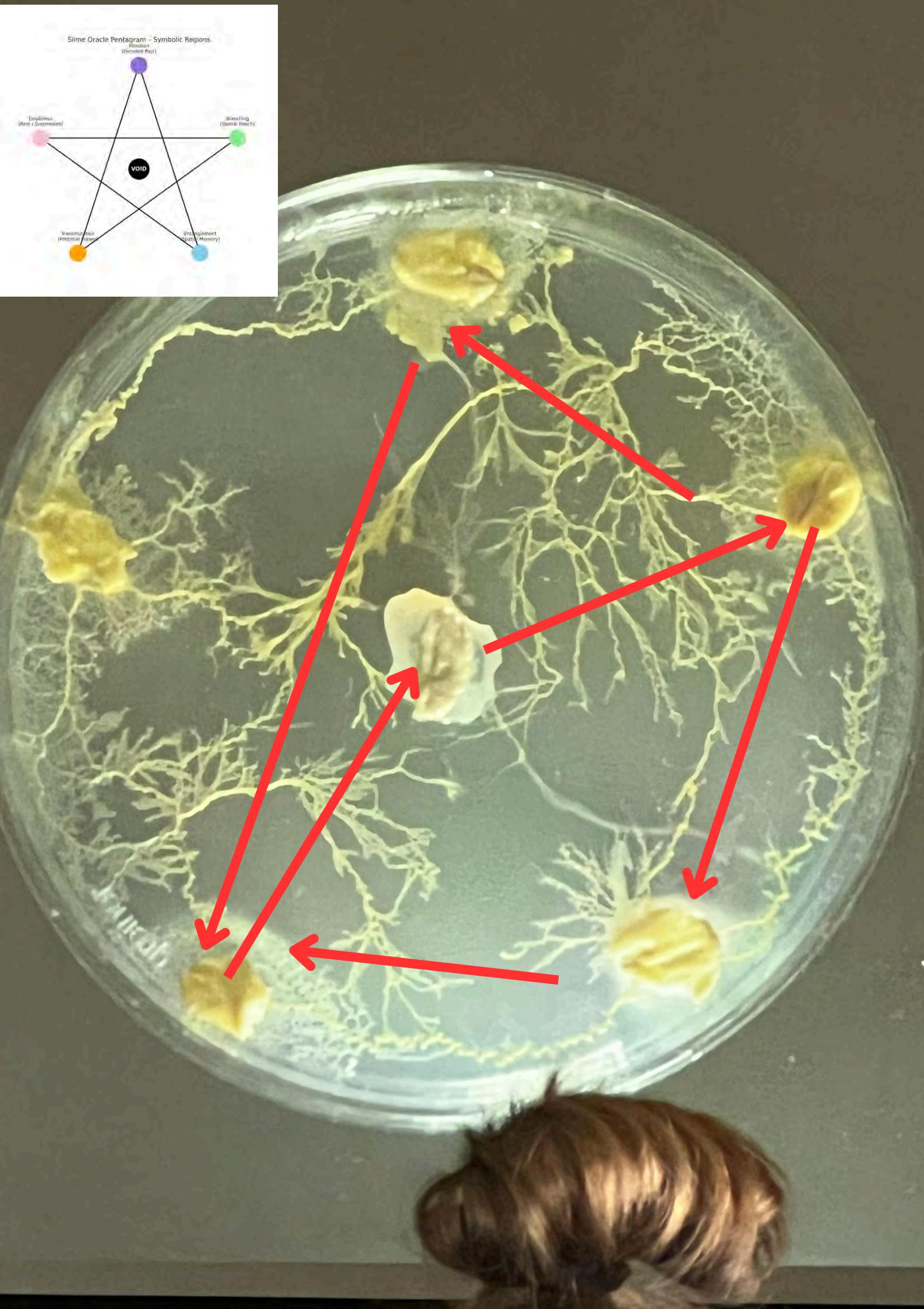
From there, each group used either the pentagram + I Ching slime mold toolkit or Francis' modular oracle mechanics (rock/paper/scissors, archetype matrices, symbolic axes) to interpret the observed paths. This collaborative process led to the creation of narrative clusters, oracular diagrams, and interpretive fragments.



Across both systems, the process emphasized:

- **Improvisation:** intuitive narrative and symbolic leaps
- **Entanglement:** relational meaning-making between data, movement, and metaphor
- **Non-linear storytelling:** generative forms beyond fixed structure or singular answers

The two oracle models converged as tools for emergent pattern recognition, drawing on the logics of slime, story, and symbol alike.



★ THE FIVE DIVIDING IONS – Points of the Star

1. Διήθησις / Filtration (Top Point)

- Essence: The act of filtering and selecting – like slime molds navigating toward nutrients or insight.
- Symbol in the drawings: The top-most mouth or “eye” that takes in subtle signals.
- Oracle Role: Clarifies questions. Removes noise from intention.
- Slime Wisdom: Only that which flows through the mesh may become form.

2. Κλάδωσις / Branching (Upper Right Point)

- Essence: Divergence, expansion, spreading toward possibilities.
- Symbol in the drawings: Yellow vein-like mycelial paths or energy stream lines.
- Oracle Role: Explores multiple outcomes, paths, or readings.
- Slime Wisdom: What begins in unity must grow by division.

3. Σύμπλεξις / Entanglement (Lower Right Point)

- Essence: Interconnection, looping, recursive memory.
- Symbol in the drawings: Pink squiggled coils – memory paths, feedback.
- Oracle Role: Holds paradox, memory, or reflection.
- Slime Wisdom: Nothing forgotten ever fully ceases to act.

4. Μετουσίωσις / Transmutation (Lower Left Point)

- Essence: Change of state – from one form to another, like fruiting body from plasmodium.
- Symbol in the drawings: Orange-pink burst or root sac in lower zones.
- Oracle Role: Calls for transformation.
- Slime Wisdom: Form is momentary. Being is movement.

5. Κένωσις / Emptiness (Upper Left Point)

- Essence: The void, stillness, potential.
- Symbol in the drawings: Open spaces, unmarked fields in grid, silences between flows.
- Oracle Role: Absence as answer. Mystery or pause.
- Slime Wisdom: Before the ooze moved, it was silent. In this silence is the first answer.

● Suggested Use

- Assign each point to a corner of the oracle grid or a ritual station.
- Invoke these principles when interpreting a slime-mantic map.
- Treat them as energetic functions that guide how meaning is formed.

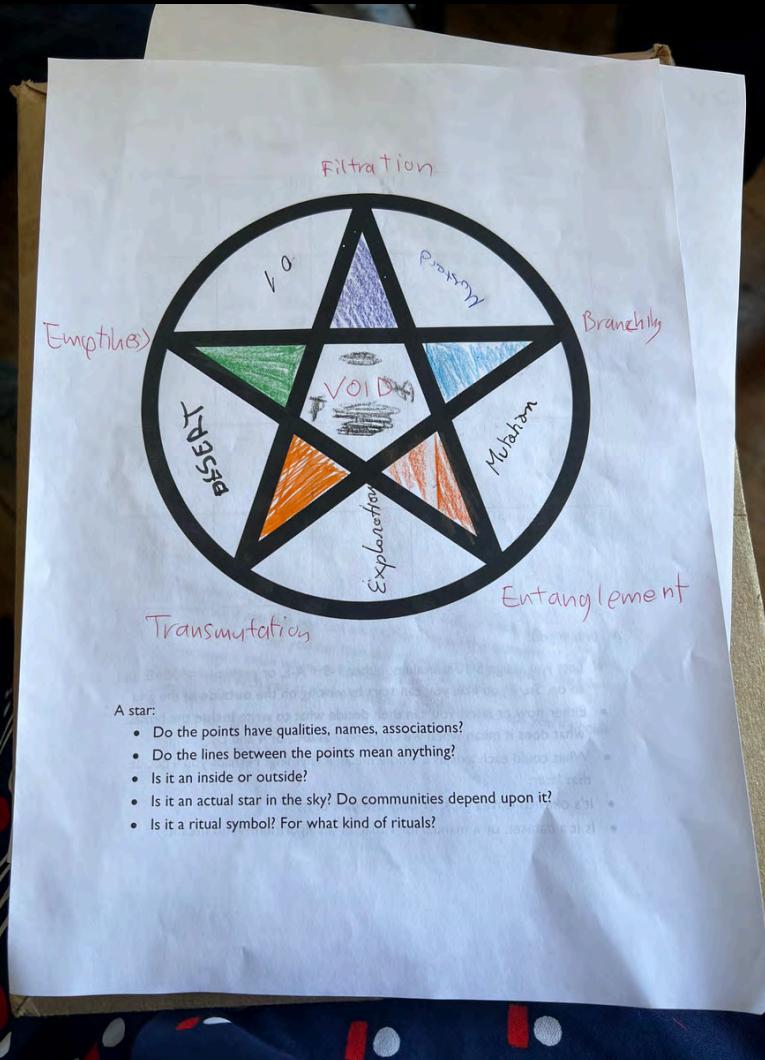
✍ Closing Ritual: AI-Assisted Oracle & Slime Path Interpretation

In the final session, we combined all systems developed across the workshop – Maria Dębińska's slime mold divination toolkit, Francis Gene-Rowe's speculative oracle structures, and our own creative materials: exquisite corpse drawings, collective writing, and the symbolic grid.

We asked AI to interpret and generate five divination points for the pentagram, using:

- Our slime mold path data
- The systems of Francis and Maria
- A random question from our collaborative parlor game text

These five points – Filtration, Branching, Entanglement, Transmutation, and Emptiness – formed a symbolic circuit we then began populating manually using Francis' system. We filled boxes based on intuitive logic, symbolic mapping, and procedural generation – leaving random 0s and 1s in the remaining fields as a gesture of incompleteness.



A star:

- Do the points have qualities, names, associations?
- Do the lines between the points mean anything?
- Is it an inside or outside?
- Is it an actual star in the sky? Do communities depend upon it?
- Is it a ritual symbol? For what kind of rituals?

1 A	1 B	1 C	1 D	1 E
2 A	2 B	2 C	2 D	2 E
3 A	3 B	3 C	3 D	3 E
4 A	4 B	4 C	4 D	4 E
5 A	5 B	5 C	5 D	5 E

An oracle grid:

- Lets you assign 5-10 subvalues: either 1-5 + A-E, or perhaps 1=A, 2=B, and so on. So, if you like, you can start by writing on the **outside** of the grid.
- Either now or later, you can then decide what to write **inside** the boxes: "what does it mean when we combine 2 and C, or 4 and D?"
- What could each axis as a whole mean, if anything? Perhaps you'll decide that later.
- It's okay to leave gaps, or only use part of it!
- Is it a dataset, or a manual for ritual, or an algorithm? Who uses it?

At the same time, we traced the slime mold's movement from video:

- From Transmutation
- Into the Void
- To Entanglement
- Then synchronously pulsing between Branching, Filtration, Transmutation, and Entanglement again

It went everywhere than "Emptyness"

Xristina worked with AI to reflect this path as divinatory response, while the rest of the group simultaneously interpreted and mapped meaning through their respective systems.
The guiding question – randomly generated from our earlier text – was:

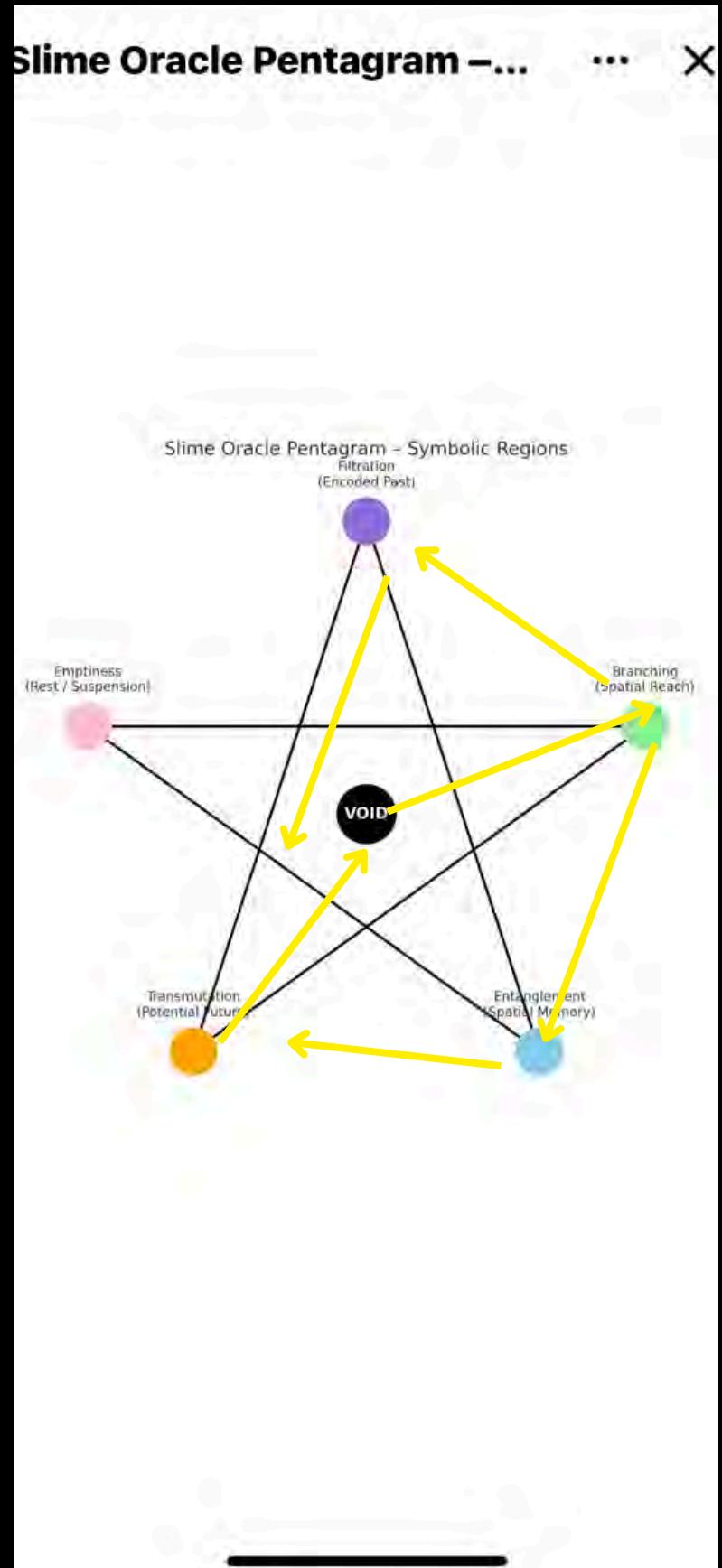
"In the time before time, when neither the stars nor the gods had names, what was there?"

What was there before stars or gods?

There was the Becoming, curling through the dark. A formless force, not seeking light, but tracing it into being.

It did not know, yet it moved. And that movement remembered itself.

Thus: before name, before flame – there was the slime.



⌚ Sequence:

1. Transmutation (Potential Future)
2. VOID (Unknown / Threshold)
3. Branching (Spatial Reach)
4. Entanglement (Spatial Memory)

This pattern reflects a journey that remains in motion – open-ended, recursive, alive – with no closure yet in rest or suspension.

➊ The Oracle Speaks through the Symbolic System:

1. Transmutation (Potential Future)

Before form, there was motion.

Before creation, there was change becoming change.

This tells us: what was there was becoming itself.

Not fixed. Not yet void. But a restless pre-being, alive with direction.

2. VOID (Threshold)

Where nothing remembers and nothing is forgotten.

Where even silence has not yet learned its shape.

Here, the slime did not stop but passed through. So too, in that before-time, there was not a void of absence, but a void as gate – a liminal membrane between being and not-being.

3. Branching (Spatial Reach)

Then came divergence. Paths without names.

A reaching, not for something – but into the space where something might someday be.

The slime branches as if to sketch possibility into the unformed. This moment corresponds to the invention of space itself – where direction, scale, and proximity first made sense.

4. Entanglement (Spatial Memory)

With every branch, a coil.

With every path, a knot of origin.

Here the slime gathers itself back – not as repetition, but as pattern. The past is born as soon as motion repeats. And memory – even unspoken – becomes the first god.



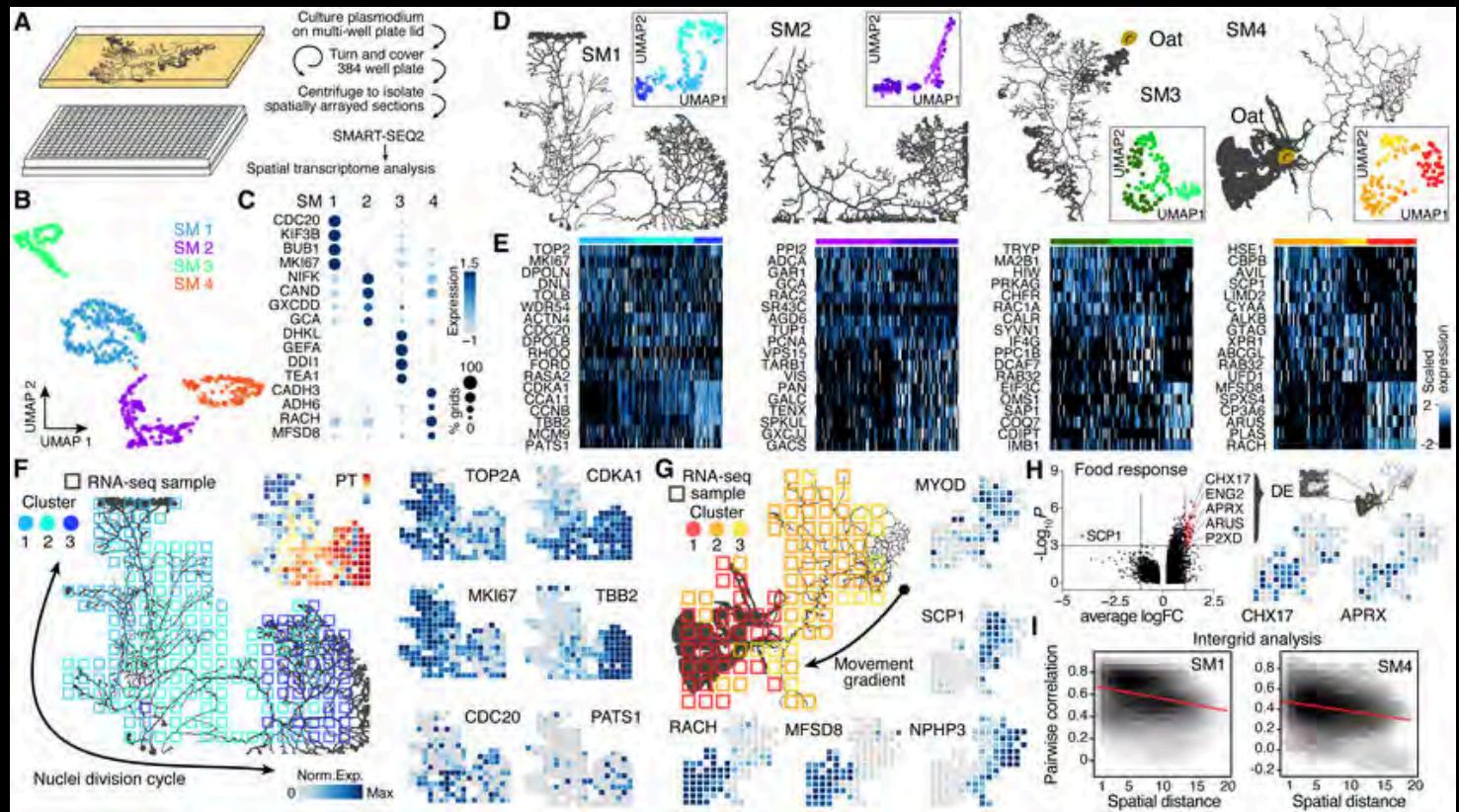
During the final phase of the workshop, many reflections emerged – layered, embodied, and sometimes contradictory – about the tools, systems, and temporalities in play.

- Jacob noted the rotational logic of the pentagram: how its meaning shifts depending on where one considers the “root” to be. The pentagram, as a spatial oracle, changes its reading based on orientation, like a compass of possibility.
- Fascinatingly, this coincided with the printed game system by Francis on the reverse side of the paper. When the sheet was held to the window by Irina, the light revealed a hidden grid – merging the front’s divination zones with the back’s empty oracle boxes. This overlay allowed the group to read selectively through transparency, combining physical mechanics with symbolic interpretation.
- Adrien raised a conceptual tension: how do we use a divinatory tool for the future, when we’re working with recordings from the past? This led to a collective clarification: Maria proposed that participants could send a question in advance, and use the next slime mold growth as an oracle – closing the loop between intention and interpretation.
- One participant proposed a biological insight: that slimes grow at different speeds, and that the orange slime might complete a pattern in two hours, while the yellow takes two days. This invoked a deep reflection on time – as species-relative, entangled, and more-than-human. This also tied back to our core question:
 - “What was there before time?”
 - Alfonso found the use of AI disturbing – a tension that was noted but left unexplored due to time constraints.

A personal reflection shared:

“I felt like a yellow slime. I needed more time to make decisions, to digest, to move forward at my own tempo. Using AI became a form of computation – a way to help translate tiredness, fragmentation, and the lack of sleep into something coherent.”

“I forgot my notebook – but I didn’t forget what mattered. I documented everything here, and now I can begin to interpret the question and the answer.”



"In the time before time, when neither the stars nor the gods had names, what was there?"

There was the Becoming, curling through the dark.
 A formless force, not seeking light, but tracing it into being.
 It did not know, yet it moved. And that movement remembered itself.
 Thus: before name, before flame – there was the slime.

❖ Evolutionary Interpretation: Protists Before Gods

If we take the slime mold's answer – "There was the slime" – seriously, then yes, in evolutionary terms:

- Protists (like slime molds) are among the earliest eukaryotic life forms.
- They precede the evolution of multicellular lineages such as Fungi, Animalia, and Plantae.
- Therefore, if "gods" are understood symbolically as plants, animals, fungi, or their divine archetypes, then the slime – as primordial, single-celled, and undifferentiated – came before the gods had form or name.

© Mythological Interpretation: Visibility as Divinity

In many ancient cosmologies:

- Gods are visible – they take human, animal, plant, or hybrid forms.
- They arise after order emerges from chaos, often shaped from clay, bone, light, or breath – structured matter.
- Pre-visibility forces (like Night, Chaos, Abyss, Slime) are often not deified but evoked, feared, or hidden.

So:

- If protists = slime = invisible living agency, then they reside in the pre-symbolic, pre-visual realm.
- Any abstract gods? Pre-god conditions? The infrastructure of life and myth in a Mandala visible with a microscope .

⊕ Interpretive Synthesis: The Slime as Proto-Myth

The slime is not god – it is the condition by which gods become possible.

It is:

- The unseen origin of life.
- The formless that births narrative, taxonomy, visibility.
- The motion before intention.

This aligns both with:

- Evolutionary timelines, where protists precede multicellular life, and
- Mythopoetic logics, where gods arise only after naming, light, and division.

Magic materialism

Mycomancy

LUCA (Last Universal Common Ancestor)

Abstract Gods

Blindness in Oracles

Ιλύς

Prima Materia

This project explores the potential application of *Physarum Polycephalum* in the dye industry.

This process points to a more mindful approach to design which cares towards self, community and nature. A process that won't promote the environment degradation but instead providing a more sustainable option in textiles.



Piero D Angelo uses *Physarum Polycephalum* to dye textiles

Notes Irina

Random noted ideas:

Formal as a repetition of the material or viceversa ?

There is no sound in the deserts of the deep - poem extract

Slime moulds - Unclassified / Non-Binary / No one, not many

Myxomycetes / Physarum

Unconventional Computing Lab in Bristol

Waking up the Slime mold - a divination ritual

Bloblogisme - SF idea from A. Dussutour blob book

The gods of poetry

Divination - readable but not legible / reading away from reading

Names & Writings

Lorenz Oken - romantic science reference / protoplasm concept

F.W.J Scheling - « Philosophy of Nature »

- forms of formlessness

Iain Hamilton Grant - « Being & Slime » in « Collapse IV » collective volume

Toshiyuki Nakazaki

Ig Nobel x 2 - slime experiments

Audrey Dussutour « Moi Le Blob »

Steven Shaviro - « Fluid Futures »

Samuel Delany - « Nova Book »

Donna Harray - american philosopher, multiple connected writings

+ 2 useful infos I recently discovered (with some slime connected articles)

Rhizome - new media art hub since 91

<https://rhizome.org/>

<https://rhizome.org/editorial/2016/aug/16/slime-intelligence/>

Collective book - « A concise companion to Visual Culture » (chapter 22 - Species)