

apian gazette

Number 1

Vol.02.5

Special (Digital) Issue



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The Official Journal of the Ministry of Bees

Reviewer: “Here, I would want more reflection on multispecies politics. If you think of this Gazette as a relational technique, a material (Digital) collaboration device, what does it do to stake your ground like this prior to entering into relation with others? What form of techno-communication is this?”

To my mum (Françoise Borioli).

In today’s political landscape, I believe this is a central question for multispecies ethnographers and, more broadly, academics. I want to answer by sharing an anecdote from a recent workshop I attended. One of my colleagues shared a story about being accompanied in the field by a collaborator and a friend. Notably, this friend is an artist, and not an anthropologist. (I am intentionally omitting specific details here to avoid my colleague being recognised, so please forgive the lack of ethnographic details.) The story goes as follows: my colleague planned a visit to her field and invited her artist friend along.

Once there, she realised that their agendas diverged. While she was trying to establish a “good” relationship with the property owner to secure future access, her friend was seeking direct answers about workers’ labour conditions. His straightforward inquiries about workers’ rights caught the owner off guard and crossed him. This tension between my colleague’s need and her friend’s directness creates some productive frictions.

Of course, there isn’t a definitive answer to which approach one should take; there is no right or wrong here. The approach one

EDITORIAL

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Briefly, I also want to make clear the kind of politics Apian stands for. During the time of live-streamed genocides, ecological breakdown caused by fossil, racial, and colonial capital, and fascism seizing power, thinking about bees also means working against deadly, queerphobic, petrocapi- talist, and the myriad other forms of oppression – no matter where they take place – because these politics are the exact reasons our bees are dying. If you disagree, please give this gazette to someone who cares about the future of our one shared planet!

This second issue of *Apian Gazette* is unique because it’s about Apian – the Ministry of Bees itself rather than a specific research subject. It’s an issue that’s dear to me as it offers a brief overview of over a decade of research – from the fields of anthropology, art, and beekeeping – about the relationships humans have developed with bees. In particular, I wanted to produce an object that I can easily distribute (away from the digital) which acts as a call for future collaborations.

Mixing images and writing, this special issue sums up the Ministry’s story and spirit. Here, images are not mere illustrations; they are an integral part of the knowledge produced by the Ministry.

Aladin Borioli

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takes depends on the researcher’s ultimate goal. For me, this Gazette is not a technology designed to gain access to a field. Instead, I’m trying to build a community of people I can trust and work with. This approach is also deeply tied to our current political context. Had I written that two years ago – before the acceleration of the genocide in Palestine – I know I wouldn’t have used the exact same wording, or made the same statement, for that matter.

Ultimately, this distinction is key in defining this Gazette. Rather than an elicitation tool, this techno-communication object is a call

for alliances. While the Gazette is public and I don’t hide it, I distribute it selectively based on my own intuition in the field. For example, I might not give the Gazette straight away because it might lead the discussion into another terrain. I might instead wait until the end of our meeting and leave it behind as a trace of this encounter, as a propaganda zine for the interviewee to engage with later. Or I might not share it at all, if I realise that the interviewee is not interested in further collaboration, or if they voice fascist politics – though, of course, such leanings are not always immediately apparent.

collaborations.

commune.

Mêlant images et textes, ce numéro spécial retrace l’histoire et l’esprit du ministère. Ici, les images ne sont pas de simples illustrations, elles constituent une part intégrante du savoir développé par le ministère.





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AND DECORATION
NOVEMBER, 1912

GROTESQUE ARCHITECTURE

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G. MORTIMER MARKE

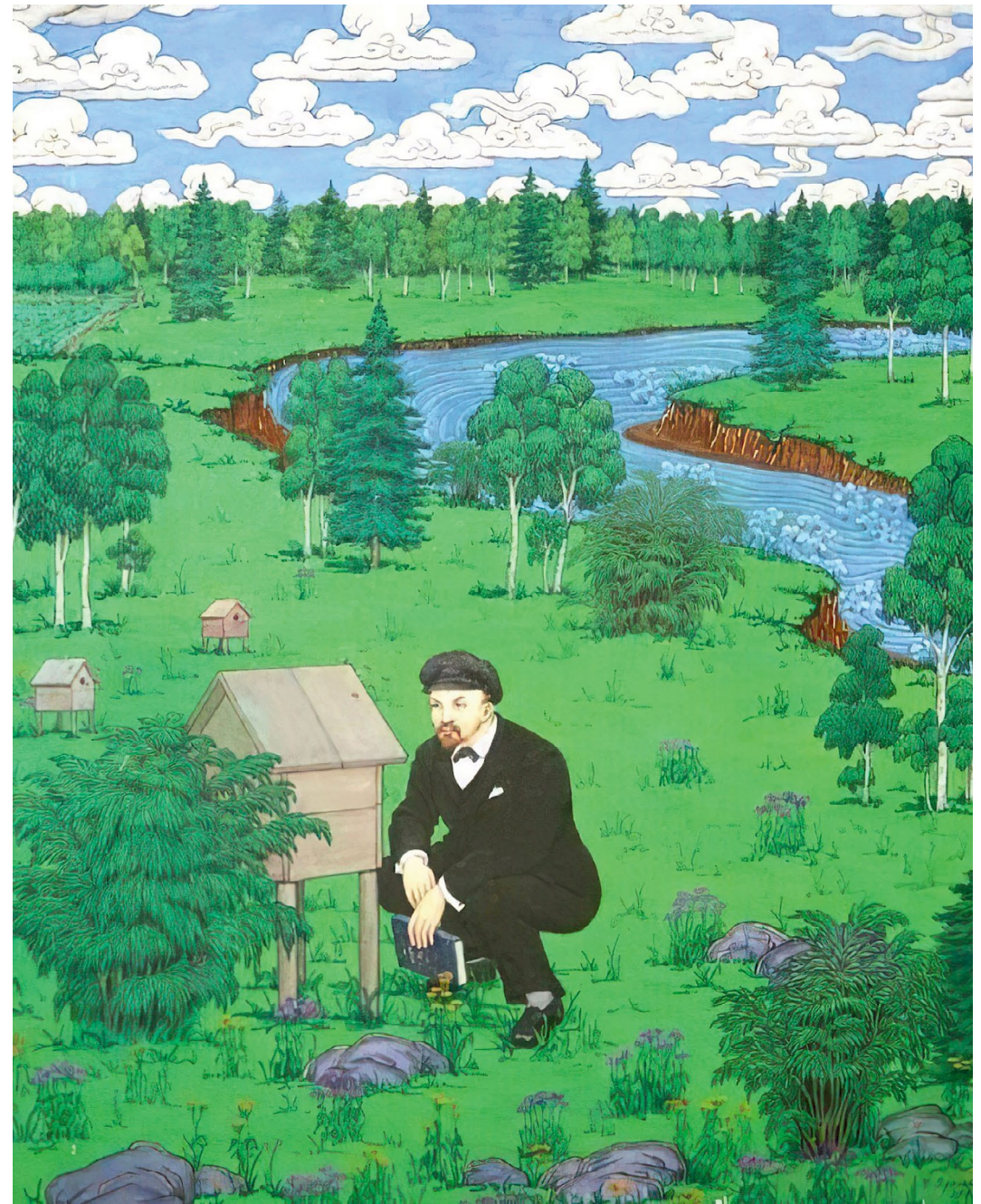
Character Studies
By Walter Sinz

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pagan Europeans silly introduce their discredited gods into the haunts of the new deities, enjoying the fun of getting the better of the proud prelates who were ever ready to have them punished, or even burned alive for devil worship. They also felt as did the submissive Mexican Indians that perhaps, after all, there might be some power left in the old demoralized gods, some uncanny virtue in their images which it would be the part of wisdom to conciliate, in case the saints were deaf, or otherwise too much engrossed to listen to their prayers. Cautious minds felt that the devil himself was too powerful a seigneur to exasperate."

From spirited renderings of devils, dragons, griffons







The Ministry of Bees: Its Story and Spirit

In the face of our political institutions failing to take concrete action towards the decline of bees and other insect populations worldwide¹, I decided to create Apian, a self-proclaimed Ministry of Bees, in 2014. I borrowed apian from Juan Antonio Ramirez, who used it extensively in his essay *The Beehive Metaphor* (2000). Apian is an adjective that defines something which relates to the world of bees – from architecture to behaviour, basically as broad as one's imagination can be. The addition of the Ministry of Bees came a bit later and was motivated by the ideas behind the word ministry itself.² Connoting power, a ministry is a governmental institution that could, in theory, change

something. To me, it seemed more feasible to act under a *Ministry* rather than a *studio*. Of course, this is a semantic dispute, but words matter. So to be clear, Apian does not aim to be a metaphorical entity – quite the contrary. It rather aims to fight for the material condition of this age-old relationship, strengthening it in collaboration with bees, beekeepers and other bee lovers.

1) Of course, the political failure of our era is not limited to climate breakdown. From tackling racism and queerphobia, to wealth inequality and preventing genocides, one can say that our Western politicians have failed at almost everything with unparalleled success.

2) The name was also inspired by Kim Stanley Robinson's novel *The Ministry for the Future* (2020).

Le ministère apian

Reviewer: "I think this term deserves more elaboration and anthropological (self-) analysis. The word ministry denotes (state) power for us now, but it comes from the Latin minister which means servant, attendant. It also has a Christian connotation, a spiritual function. But are state and religion the kind of institutional frameworks you wish to reproduce? Obviously not, but I would like more than a reference to the Robinson's novel to work that out. I like a reclaiming of the notion of ministry, but a more carefully crafted than there is space for here."

Presenting and discussing the Ministry in various cultural contexts outside Europe over the past couple of years, I've realised that the term *Ministry* indeed carries vastly different histories for different people and communities. And while I don't want to abandon it – at least not yet – I agree that it needs a much more precise definition than the one I've provided here.

To give some context: the use of this term stems from the artistic side of my practice. It also reflects a specific cultural framework, as the project began and is still located in Europe – primarily Switzerland, followed by France, Germany, and the UK. I chose the term partly as a provocation, but also for its poetic potential. Beyond aesthetics, it's about re-appropriating our institutions from a local, international, and democratic perspective. I believe we shouldn't abandon the idea of ministries or other political institutions even though they've failed so many times; instead, we must improve them. These institutions are ours, not theirs, and calling Apian a Ministry of Bees is a gesture towards that end.

Taking matters into its own hands, the Ministry of Bees is responsible for the relationship between humans and all bee species.³ It is tasked by bees to safeguard the history of this age-old relationship, and does so by producing polymorphous ethnographies. These ethnographies combine various media, including video, sound, photography, and writing, in order to represent the world of bees to humans and promote Socialist Beekeeping practices. The Ministry aims to establish a framework for the present and future of this relationship in the context of climate breakdown – a future free from extractive practices and grounded in ancestral knowledge.

3) In the English language, "bees" groups together most bee-like hymenopteran. Whilst Apian centres honeybees – notably European honeybees which are often at the forefront of ecological concern – it is essential to note that the Ministry is responsible for all bee species.

So far, the Ministry's research has primarily focused on Western Europe.⁴ However, this focus does not mean that it aims to be Eurocentric. It is first a conscious decision to avoid perpetuating anthropological colonial legacies, and instead imagine non-extractive forms of producing knowledge, especially when it comes to working away from home. Non-Eurocentric knowledge aims to be gathered by inviting like-minded bee lovers to contribute to, or join, the Ministry, rather than extracting it myself. This special issue is thus a call for exactly that – to invite colleagues from around the planet to collaborate and work with the Ministry. Join us! We demand ethical futures for bees and humans all over the planet. Socialist Beekeeping now!

Whereas Apian was founded and is still mainly operated by me, Aladin Borioli,

4) Except for around 5 weeks of fieldwork conducted in a small village called Inzerki in Morocco between 2014 and 2018.

matérielles de cette relation ancestrale, qu'il cherche à renforcer aux côtés des abeilles, les apicultriceuses et autres personnes qui leur portent attention et soin.

Prenant les choses en main, le ministère des Abeilles est responsable des relations entre les humains et l'ensemble des espèces d'abeilles.³ Mandaté par celles-ci, il a pour mission de préserver l'histoire de cette relation ancestrale à travers des ethnographies polymorphes qui combinent divers médiums, tels que la vidéo, le son, la photographie et l'écriture, de manière à représenter le monde des abeilles auprès des humains et à promouvoir les pratiques apicoles socialistes. Le ministère s'attache à définir un cadre pour l'avenir de cette

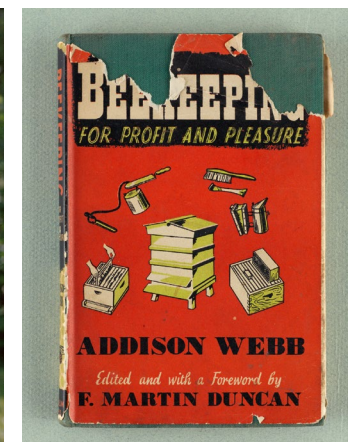
3) En anglais, le terme *bees* [abeilles] regroupe la plupart des hyménoptères apparentés aux abeilles. Bien qu'Apian se concentre sur les abeilles mellifères, notamment européennes, qui se trouvent souvent au cœur des préoccupations écologiques, il est important de préciser que le ministère est responsable de l'ensemble des espèces d'abeilles.

relation dans le contexte du dérèglement climatique, un avenir affranchi des pratiques extractives et enracinées dans les savoirs ancestraux.

Jusqu'à présent, les recherches du ministère ont principalement porté sur l'Europe occidentale.⁴ Toutefois, cette orientation ne signifie en rien que le ministère adopte une perspective eurocentrique. Ce choix résulte d'une décision réfléchie visant à éviter de reproduire l'héritage colonial anthropologique et à imaginer, au contraire, des formes non extractives de production de connaissances, en particulier dans le cadre de recherches menées loin de son territoire.

Les savoirs non-eurocentriques sont recueillies en invitant des personnes partageant la même passion pour les abeilles

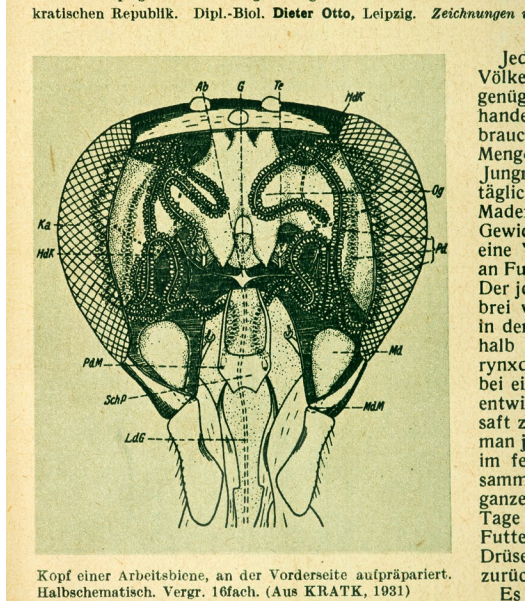
4) À l'exception d'environ cinq semaines de travail sur le terrain menées dans un petit village appelé Inzerki au Maroc entre 2014 et 2018.



↑ XI
← X
↓ XII



Le rustique panier d'autrefois n'a pas été abandonné et les élèves de l'école savent le tresser avec art. Notons l'entrée supérieure adoptée pour les paniers de ce rucher couvert.



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↑XIII
←XIV

XV→



the use of an alias aims to reveal the Ministry's inherent collaborative face and encourage future exchange. As I said above, I didn't want to create a studio; Apian is in the process of becoming an institution, which ultimately aims to function without me. However, I wanted to give a brief introduction of myself here as the Ministry draws from personal and tangible experiences. I was born and raised in the French-speaking countryside of Switzerland in the late '80s. I learnt beekeeping from my grandfather as a teenager (fig. XXVII). Since then, I've continued to keep bees out of passion (yes, I do love bees)⁵ and as a research method. Meanwhile, I have a background in visual communication (graphic design and photography), anthropology, and bits and bobs of knowledge in critical philos-

5) In *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals* (2020), Alexis Pauline Gumbs encourages animal scholars to share the love of their subject out loud. Thank you for this!

à contribuer ou à rejoindre le ministère, et non en les extrayant moi-même. Ce numéro spécial est donc un appel à collaborer et à œuvrer avec le ministère, adressé à l'ensemble de la communauté internationale. Rejoignez-nous ! Nous réclamons un avenir éthique pour les abeilles et pour les humains, partout dans le monde. L'apiculture socialiste, c'est maintenant !

Bien qu'Apian ait été fondé et soit encore principalement porté par moi-même, Aladin Borioli, l'usage d'un pseudonyme souligne son caractère collaboratif et vise à encourager de futurs échanges. Comme mentionné plus haut, je ne souhaitais pas créer un atelier ; Apian est en voie de devenir une institution qui, à terme, fonctionnera indépendamment de moi. Je tiens néanmoins à me présenter brièvement, puisque le ministère s'enracine dans des expériences personnelles et concrètes. Né et grandi dans la campagne francophone

ophy. Today, as a visual anthropologist, artist, and beekeeper, I work as a minister for the Ministry of Bees.

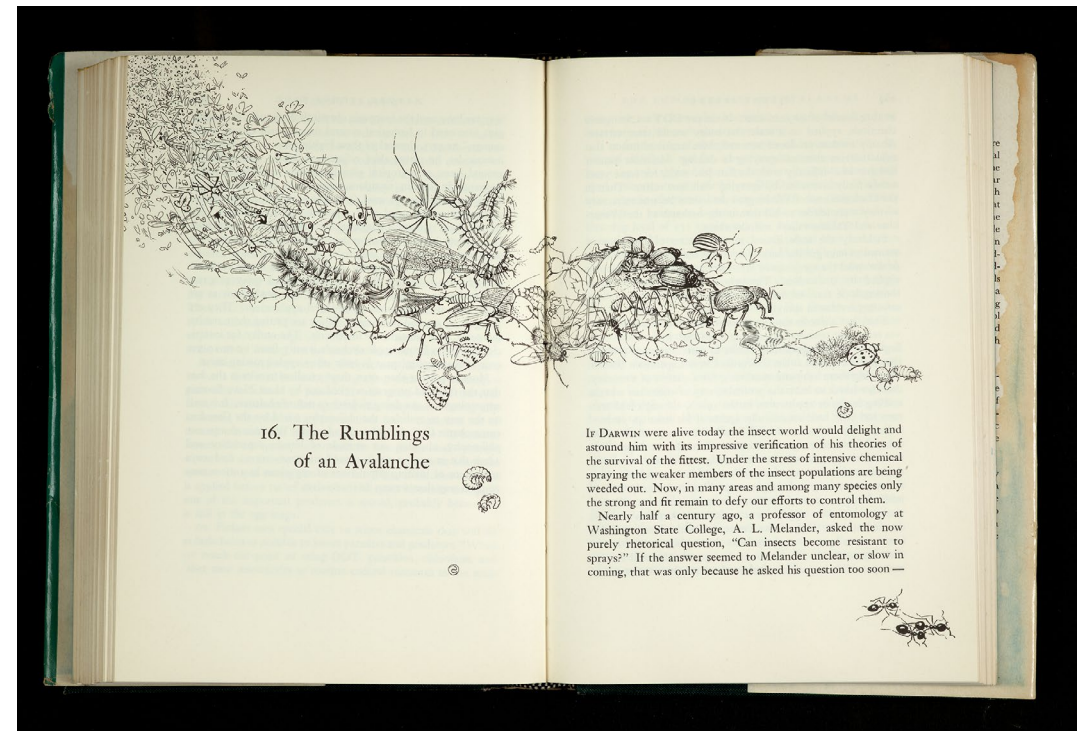
Drawing from this background, the Ministry uses an odd kit of methods which mixes an anthropological approach – tainted by philosophical inputs – with the practice of art and beekeeping. Concretely, that means conducting interviews with beekeepers, bee scholars, and artists – basically anyone with shared sensibilities towards bees. The Ministry also uses methods such as participant observation, elicitation sessions, and collaborative workshops. At the heart of the Ministry's methods is a form of *collaborative ethnography*.⁶ Collaborative ethnography transforms fieldwork into a space of co-imagination, allowing for the co-production

6) For more about *collaborative ethnography* see Joanne Rappaport, "Beyond Participant Observation: Collaborative Ethnography as Theoretical Innovation," *Collaborative Anthropologies* 1 (2008): 1–31.

suisse à la fin des années 1980, j'ai appris l'apiculture adolescent auprès de mon grand-père (fig. XXVII). Depuis, je la pratique toujours, à la fois par passion (oui, j'aime les abeilles)⁵ et comme méthode de recherche. En parallèle, je me suis formé à la communication visuelle (graphisme et photographie), à l'anthropologie et à quelques notions de philosophie critique. Aujourd'hui, en tant qu'anthropologue visuel, artiste et apiculteur, j'exerce le rôle de ministre au sein du ministère des Abeilles.

À partir de ce parcours, le ministère s'appuie sur un curieux assemblage de méthodes qui combinent approche anthropologique – traversée de réflexions philosophiques – et pratiques artistiques et apicoles.

5) Dans *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals* (2020), Alexis Pauline Gumbs invite les spécialistes du monde animal à exprimer ouvertement leur amour pour leur sujet d'étude. Merci pour cette invitation !



Concrètement, cela se traduit par des entretiens avec des apicultrices, des spécialistes des abeilles, des artistes, et, plus largement, toute personne nourrissant une sensibilité particulière pour elles. Le ministère mobilise également des méthodes complémentaires telles que l'observation participante, les séances d'élicitation ou encore les ateliers collaboratifs. Au cœur de ces méthodologies se trouve une forme d'*ethnographie collaborative*⁶, qui fait du travail de terrain un espace de co-imagination, permettant la coproduction de connaissances tout en comblant le fossé entre la recherche académique et l'expérience vécue.

Par ailleurs, chaque rencontre est aussi une invitation à rejoindre le ministère, une tentative d'aller au-delà de la simple

6) Pour en savoir plus sur l'*ethnographie collaborative*, voir Joanne Rappaport, «Beyond Participant Observation: Collaborative Ethnography as Theoretical Innovation», *Collaborative Anthropologies* 1 (2008): 1–31.

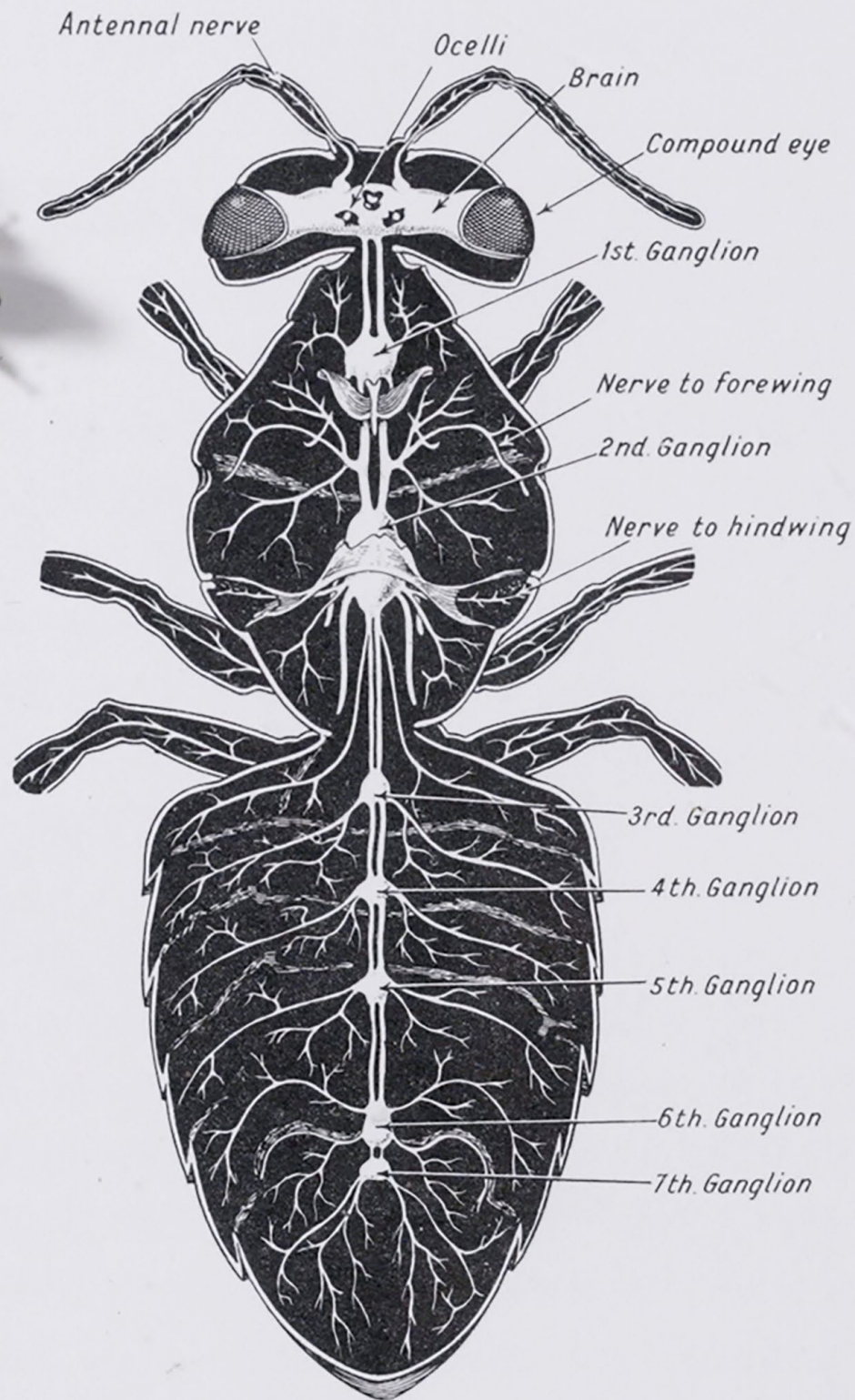
collaboration. Plutôt que d'étudier des communautés, le ministère s'attache à en constituer une : une ruche socialiste planétaire. Jusqu'à présent, l'initiative a travaillé avec diverses personnes amies et collègues, notamment des sphères universitaire, apicole, artistique et militante. Parmi ces collègues, j'aimerais mentionner l'anthropologue visuelle Ellen Lapper, le musicien et artiste Laurent Güdel, les mélittologues Dorothea Brückner, Randolf Menzel et Nicolas Césard, l'artiste et graphiste Nicolas Polli, qui coédite également *Apian Gazette* chez Ciao Press, et bien sûr, des milliers d'abeilles (même si la collaboration avec elles reste pour le moins asymétrique).

En matière de financement, à l'image de ses méthodes, le ministère s'est constitué à partir de ressources multiples. Une large part provient de subventions artistiques ; parmi lesquelles Pro Helvetia, La Becque,

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of knowledge, bridging the gap between academic research and lived experience.

Meanwhile, each encounter is also an invitation to join the Ministry, as an attempt to go beyond collaboration. Rather than studying communities, the Ministry aims to build a community itself – a planetary socialist hive. So far, it has worked with a range of friends and colleagues, including academics, beekeepers, artists, and activists. I'll mention just a few: the visual anthropologist Ellen Lapper; the musician and artist Laurent Güdel; the bee-scholars Dorothea Brückner, Randolph Menzel, and Nicolas Césard; the artist and graphic designer Nicolas Polli, who also co-publishes *Apian Gazette* via Ciao Press; and, of course, thousands of bees (even though the collaboration with bees is pretty asymmetrical, to say the least).

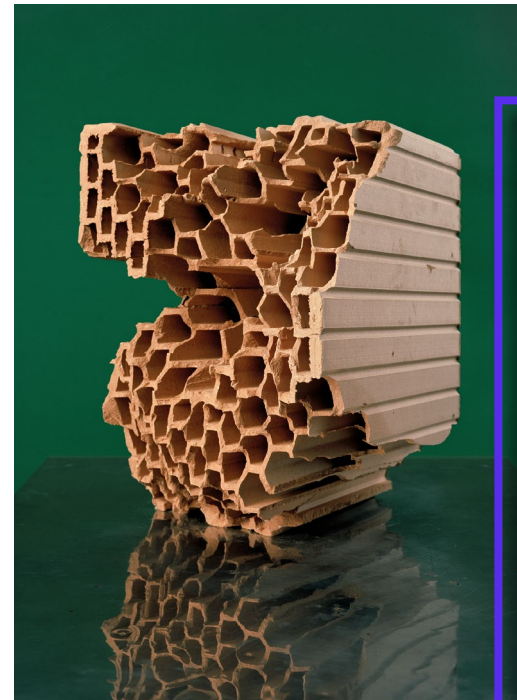
When it comes to its economy, a bit like its methods, The Ministry has been built from various pots of money. A large chunk has come from artistic grants; again, to only mention a few, the Ministry has been supported by Pro Helvetia, La Becque, EyeBeam, Images Vevey, C/O Berlin, The CAIRN, Salt Gallery, and more. Alongside this, personal investments (side jobs and savings) and academic support (currently by the University of Amsterdam via a PhD position) continue to fund various activities and projects. Most of the money generated by exhibitions, selling publications, and so on, circulates back into the Ministry's economy – when it's not being used to pay my rent.

The polymorphous ethnographies produced by the Ministry are at the same time autonomous and related to one another. Each ethnography works as a research unit tackling a specific question. Once reunited,

these ethnographies assemble a narrative universe which explores The Ministry's meta question: the age-old human-bee relationship. Here I aim to outline a few of these ethnographies, offering an overview of The Ministry's activities over the past ten years.

I want to start with *Hives, 2400 B.C.E. – 1852 C.E.* – a visual history of the beehive. In 1852, the modern beehive was patented. Its subsequent success largely eliminated diversity in beehive design and led to the obsolescence of a varied history of alternative beekeeping techniques. While this is not Apian's first work, it is a clear example of the Ministry's approach. Through an array of archival images and an essay co-written with Ellen Lapper, this visual ethnography uncovers that forgotten history, offering a renewed perspective that challenges conventional historical linear narratives, creating a common ground for future beehive research.

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How does technology, and technics, shape the age-old human-bee relationship?

Les ethnographies polymorphes produites par le ministère sont autant autonomes qu'interconnectées. Chacune fonctionne comme une unité de recherche abordant une question spécifique. Réunies, elles composent un univers narratif qui explore la méta-question du ministère: la relation millénaire entre humains et abeilles. Je propose ici d'en présenter quelques-unes, afin d'offrir un aperçu des activités

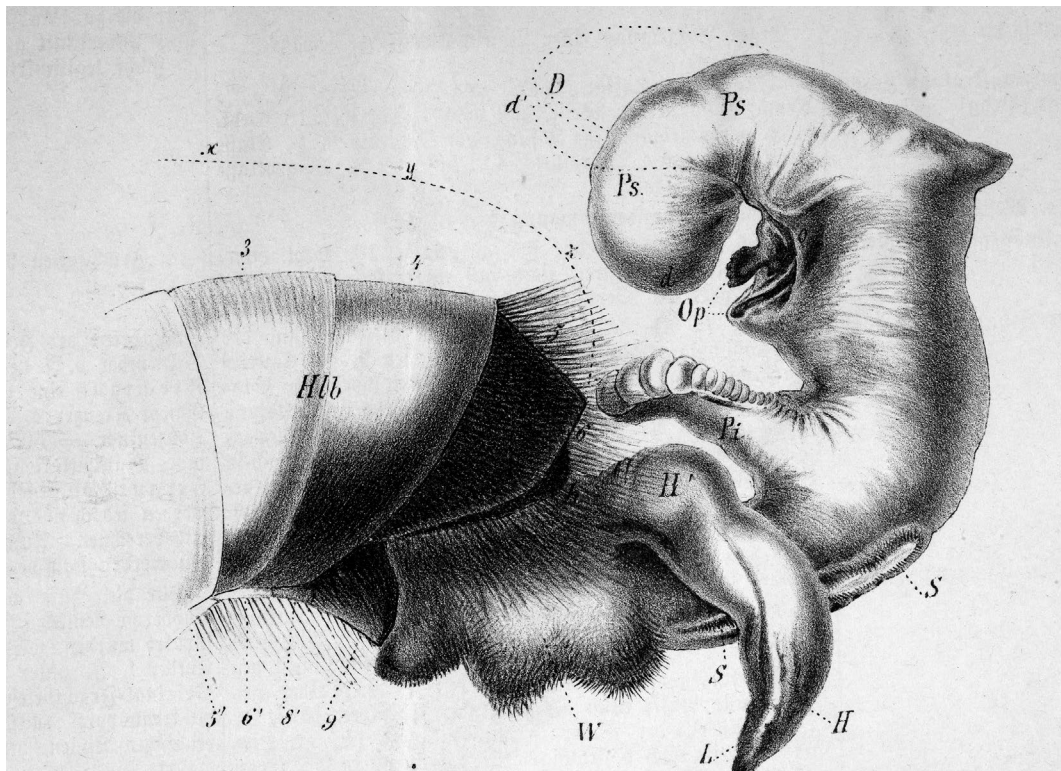
ministère. A travers une série d'images d'archives et un essai coécrit avec Ellen Lapper, cette ethnographie visuelle exhume cette histoire oubliée et propose une nouvelle perspective, qui remet en cause les récits historiques linéaires conventionnels et ouvre la voie à de nouvelles recherches sur les ruches.

Dans le même esprit, le ministère a également conçu *Hiss*, une ethnographie

sonore consacrée aux pratiques d'écoute en apiculture. Réalisée en collaboration avec l'apiculteur marocain et le musicien suisse Laurent Güdel, cette pièce de vingt-neuf minutes explore l'espace acoustique du rucher. Enregistré près d'Inzerki, au Maroc, *Hiss* trouve le plus grand rucher du monde, *Hiss* se concentre sur la modeste colonie d'Hassan, installée dans des ruches à la fois traditionnelles et modernes. Vingt-deux ans de pratique lui ont permis de développer une écoute fine, capable d'analyser des signaux sonores spécifiques, et de suivre, voire prédire, le comportement des abeilles. À partir d'une conversation sur ces compétences, *Hiss* associe les enregistrements d'abeilles mellifères à la musique électronique de Güdel. Le résultat unit momentanément plusieurs communautés acoustiques dans une composition polyphonique intéressée.

Passons maintenant à l'internet, avec *Intimacy Machine*, une plateforme de recherche universitaire qui rassemble des travaux de recherche sur les abeilles à travers des revues, des livres, des vidéos, des podcasts, etc. Les savoirs multimodaux et les formes alternatives de production et de diffusion de connaissances. Conçue en collaboration avec le Studio Harris Blondman, cette plateforme à strates multiples guide la rencontre épistémique du public avec les abeilles. Elle propose d'abord un contenu multimodal, suivi d'un résumé des articles originaux et de liens vers leurs sources. En éclairant autrement les recherches existantes par son approche multimodale, *Intimacy Machine* rend la recherche universitaire sur les abeilles accessible à un public élargi.

Reviewer: "This is not actually a question? Perhaps here would be a good point to insert the question of technology, materials and techniques, that seems central to all of your work!"



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Taking a path towards sound, another example of the Ministry's outputs is *Hiss* – a sonic ethnography which looks into listening practices in beekeeping. Made in collaboration with the Moroccan beekeeper Souaf Hassan and the Swiss musician Laurent Güdel, the twenty-nine-minute piece navigates through the acoustic space of Hassan's apiary. Recorded near Inzerki, Morocco – home of the world's largest migratory apiary – *Hiss* centres on Hassan's modest congregation of bee organisms, hived in both traditional and modern beehives. Twenty-two years of practice has provided Hassan with listening abilities to analyse specific sonic cues, allowing him to monitor and predict bee behaviour. Building upon a conversation which discusses these skills, *Hiss* interweaves recordings of honeybees with Güdel's electronic music. The result momentarily unites an array of acoustic communities into a polyphonic interspecies composition.

Moving now to the Internet, the *Intimacy Machine* (www.intimacy-machine.net) is an online DIY academic journal publishing research on all bee species worldwide. Contrary to conventional bee journals, the *Intimacy Machine* focuses on multimodal knowledge and alternative forms of knowledge distribution and production. Made of multiple layers, the platform – designed in collaboration with Studio Harris Blondman – shapes the visitor's epistemic encounter with bees, starting with the multimodal content, followed by a summary of the original articles, and links to their sources. By shedding new light on existing research through its focus on the multimodality of knowledge, the *Intimacy Machine* brings academic bee research to a broader audience.

Films are also a central part of the Ministry's productions. *CH05 Drugs*, for example, illustrates the data from an academic

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Les films occupent également une place importante dans les productions du ministère. *CH05 Drugs*, par exemple, met en image les données d'une étude universitaire sur les effets d'une exposition prolongée à des doses non létales de pesticides néonicotinoïdes sur les abeilles mellifères.⁷ Ces pesticides, qui ciblent le système nerveux, tuent les insectes jugés nuisibles. Si l'étude porte uniquement sur les abeilles mellifères, il est essentiel de rappeler que ces substances chimiques ont des effets similaires sur de nombreux autres insectes, notamment les bourdons, les abeilles solitaires et d'autres pollinisateurs. À l'aide d'un modèle 3D créé par Nephilia, le film traduit les résultats de l'étude en

images animées, permettant ainsi de toucher un public au-delà des cercles académiques.

Comme en témoignent *Ruches* et *Intimacy Machine*, le ministère a contracté le « mal d'archive », une inclination qui culmine avec *Apian Index*, les archives cachées du ministère. Conçu dans le cadre du site internet d'Apian, l'index réunit l'ensemble des documents collectés et produits par le ministère. Autrement dit, il en constitue en même temps la base de données et la source d'inspiration.

Pour explorer plus en détail nos recherches et découvrir d'autres projets, rendez-vous sur : www.apian.info. Vous y trouverez peut-être l'*Apian Index* (appuyez sur la touche i, il n'est pas vraiment bien caché).⁸

7) Menée par une équipe de scientifiques de la Freie Universität Berlin, l'étude a eu lieu en 2013, dans un champ près de Großseelheim, en Allemagne. Voir Léa Tison, Marie-Luise Hahn, Sophie Holtz, et al, «Honey Bees' Behavior Is Impaired by Chronic Exposure to the Neonicotinoid Thiacloprid in the Field», *Environmental Science & Technology* 50, 2016, 7218–27.

8) La plateforme d'Apian a également été développée avec le Studio Harris Blondman en 2019.

research study on the effect of prolonged exposure to non-lethal doses of neonicotinoid pesticides on honeybees.⁷ Such pesticides kill insects deemed harmful by targeting their nervous systems. And while this study only focuses on honeybees, it is essential to stress that these chemicals have similar effects on a wide range of insects – including bumblebees, solitary bees, and other pollinators. Using a 3D model created by Nephilia, the film translates the study's result into moving images, reaching an audience beyond academic walls.

Evident in *Hives* and the *Intimacy Machine's* work, the Ministry has caught the so-called archive fever, an approach which culminates

7) Led by a team of scientists from the Freie Universität Berlin, the study took place in 2013, in a field near Großseelheim, Germany. See Léa Tison, Marie-Luise Hahn, Sophie Holtz, et al, "Honey Bees' Behavior Is Impaired by Chronic Exposure to the Neonicotinoid Thiacloprid in the Field," *Environmental Science & Technology* 50, 2016, 7218–27.

in *Apian Index* – the Ministry's hidden archive. Built as part of Apian's website, *Apian Index* regroups all the material gathered and produced by Apian. In short, it's the Ministry's data set and source of inspiration.

To delve deeper into our research and discover other works please visit: www.apian.info. Maybe you'll find *Apian Index* along the way (hit key i, it's not that well hidden).⁸

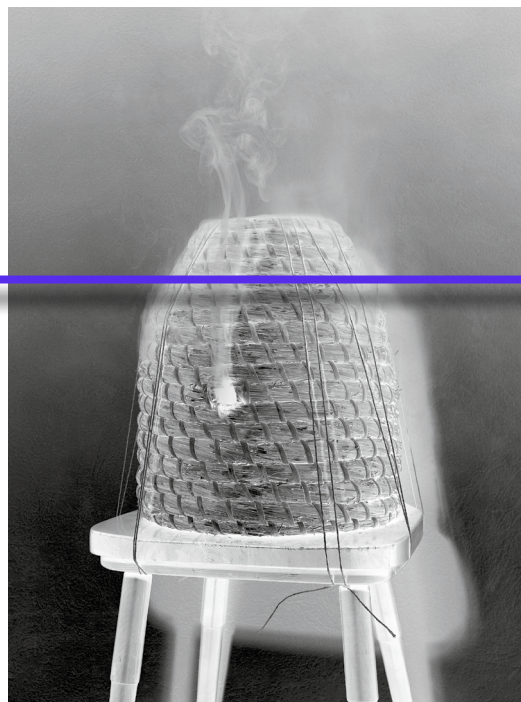
So far, the Ministry has primarily focused on the common honeybee, but it is ultimately responsible for all bee species. Whereas honeybees are also at risk, they are being well looked after through the love of many keepers around the world. However, this isn't the case for all bee species. The threats our bees are facing

8) Apian's platform was also developed with Studio Harris Blondman in 2019.

Jusqu'ici, le ministère s'est principalement intéressé à l'abeille mellifère commune, mais sa responsabilité s'étend à toutes les espèces d'abeilles. Si les mellifères sont, elles aussi, menacées, elles bénéficient néanmoins des soins attentifs d'innombrables apiculteurs. Ce qui rend d'abeilles les ruches en particulier la propagation de diverses maladies et parasites (comme les varroas), ou encore la destruction de leurs sources alimentaires et de leurs habitats – sont démultipliées lorsqu'il s'agit des abeilles sauvages et solitaires. L'origine de ces dangers est connue: elles découlent directement des processus extractifs et destructeurs du capitalisme. Il est urgent d'y mettre fin.

Dans ce contexte, la mission d'Apian est de penser des pratiques apicoles alternatives

Forgot to cite Derrida for archive fever, and Yuk Hui for technodiversity. See the bibliography.



in apiaries – the impact of pesticides and especially, neonicotinoids, the spread of various diseases (Varroa mites amongst others), and the destruction of food sources and habitats – are exacerbated when it comes to wild and solitary bees. Let's be clear: we know the origin of these threats. They stem directly from the extractive and destructive processes brought by capitalism, and the only option is to end this system as soon as possible.

In this context, Apian's mission is to think about alternative beekeeping practices in alliance with bees and other bee lovers – an approach the Ministry calls *Socialist Beekeeping*. Socialist Beekeeping practices centre all bee species, while situating beekeeping within the context (local and global) it is practised. Global contexts such as climate breakdown, fascists seizing power, genocides and other destructive politics cannot be ignored. And while

keeping bees can be a form of resistance in specific contexts, for example in the Palestinian Occupied Territories,⁹ how and where we do it matters. At the same time, beekeeping demands technodiversity and localised practices; different climates and political systems create varied practices. Socialist Beekeeping is thus situated, internationalist, and ethical, putting all bees at the forefront of its practices.¹⁰

Join us! To get in touch, please email: aladin@apian.ch

9) See Combcutters, "Bees, Land, & Liberation: A Conversation with Palestinian Beekeepers."

The webinars took place on 25th February 2024 and 12th July 2025 and are now on YouTube under the same title.

10) This is only a really brief introduction to Socialist Beekeeping. The Ministry is currently working on a manifesto in order to better define this practice and share it with a broader audience. Stay tuned!

en alliance avec les abeilles et toutes personnes qui leur portent attention – une approche que le ministère nomme *apiculture socialiste*. Ces pratiques placent l'ensemble des espèces d'abeilles au centre, tout en inscrivant l'apiculture dans les contextes (locaux et globaux) dans lequel elle est pratiquée. Les réalités mondialisées telles que le dérèglement climatique, la montée du fascisme, les génocides et autres politiques destructrices ne peuvent pas être ignorées. Si l'apiculture peut devenir une forme de résistance dans certains contextes précis, comme les territoires palestiniens occupés⁹, la manière dont nous la pratiquons et le lieu où nous la pratiquons sont déterminants. Parallèlement, l'apiculture appelle une technodiversité et des pratiques situées; chaque climat, chaque

système politique, façonne d'autres manières de faire. L'apiculture socialiste est ainsi toujours contextuelle, internationaliste, et éthique, et met toutes les abeilles au premier plan.¹⁰

Rejoignez-nous !
Pour nous contacter : aladin@apian.ch

9) Voir Combcutters, «Bees, Land, & Liberation: A Conversation with Palestinian Beekeepers». Les webinaires ont eu lieu le 25 février 2024 et le 12 juillet 2025 et sont désormais disponibles sur YouTube sous le même titre.

10) Ceci n'est qu'une brève introduction à l'apiculture socialiste. Le ministère travaille actuellement sur la rédaction d'un manifeste afin de mieux définir cette pratique et de la partager avec un public plus large. À suivre...



↑XXIV
↘XXV



The Official Journal of the British Bee-Keepers' Association



↖XXII
←XXIII



↑XXVI

←XXVII

EN	
IMAGE CAPTIONS & SOURCES	
I	Photomontage of two images. In the foreground is a bust of my grandfather "Nono," beeswax and brick, Apian (Aladin Borioli, Françoise Borioli, and Pierre-André Borioli) 2015. In the background, a detail of Juan Antonio Ramirez's book, <i>The Beehive Metaphor</i> (Reaktion Books, 2000), 38.
II	A traditional beehive used by Inzerki's beekeepers, photographed in August 2017. This hive is made from a straw basket, covered with earth and cow dung. It measures approximately 1 metre long and has a 20-centimetre diameter.
III	Traditional honey super used by Inzerki's beekeepers, photographed in March 2018.
IV	Bannkorb with shoulders and a mask. 68 x 57 cm. Second half of the 18th century. Flight holes: mouth and nostrils. Provenance: Timme's farm in Hassel, district of Celle, Germany. Now: Bomann-Museum Celle. Apian (Aladin Borioli) – [H-0413], 2023.
V	Detail of Mortimer Marke's article "The Grotesque in Architecture: Frivolous Whims of a Severe Art" with annotations. Source: Mortimer Marke, "The Grotesque in Architecture: Frivolous Whims of a Severe Art," <i>Arts & Decoration</i> 3, no. 1 (November 1912): 22–24.
VI	An installation view of <i>Apian – The Ministry of Bees</i> at Gamle Munch in Oslo, as part of the 2023 Fotobokfestival. Image by Tor S. Ulstein / KUNSTDOK.
VII	Bannkorb with a mask. 47 x 39 cm. Date unknown. Flight holes: mouth and nostrils. Provenance: unknown. Now: Institut für Bienenkunde Celle, Germany. Apian (Aladin Borioli) – [H-0398], 2023.
VIII	<i>Lenin as a Beekeeper</i> , painting by Ürjingiin Yadamsüren, Mongolian People's Republic, 1970. Source: unknown.
IX	Bee with a transponder. Apian (Aladin Borioli, and Ellen Lapper), 2023.
X	Nono at work at the apiary. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2013.
XI	Front cover of Addison Webb, <i>Beekeeping for Profit and Pleasure</i> (Museum Press, 1947).
XII	Women weaving skep hives. Source: <i>La Gazette Apicole</i> 47, no. 470 (January 1946).
XIII	An installation view of <i>Abelhat</i> at Cairn, foyer d'art contemporain, Digne-les-Bains, France. The picture also shows <i>HIVE Index</i> , an ongoing collaborative artwork between Fragmentin and Apian. Image by Antoine Lippens, 2024.
XIV	Head of a worker bee dissected at the front. Semi-schematic. Magnified sixteen times. Source: <i>Leipziger Bienenzeitung</i> 68 (January 1954).
XV	Log hive with a carved face at the front. 69 x 69 cm. Circa 1930. Hollowed out chestnut wood, wax, moulded plaster. The face was carved later by artist Auguste Aichiardi around 1970. Provenance: Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France. Now: Mucem, Marseille, France.

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et narines. Provenance: ferme de

Source: inconnue.

age sculpté sur le devant. 69 x 69 cm.

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XVI Spread of Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), 262–263.

XVII Film still from the ongoing film *Therianthropy*. Apian (Aladin Borioli, Laurent Güdel, Robert Torche, and Ellen Lapper), 2021–ongoing.

XVIII Brick. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2015.

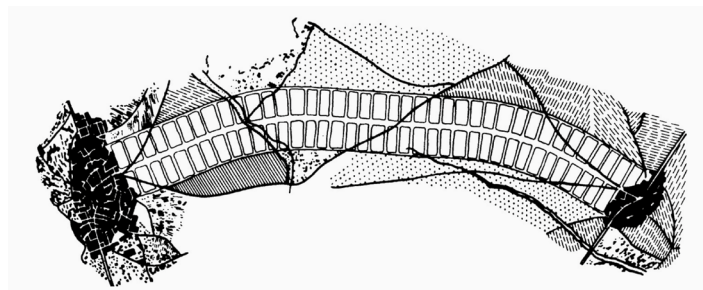
XIX An installation view of *Bannkörbe* at C/O Berlin, Germany, in 2024. Photographs by David von Becker (© C/O Berlin Foundation).

XX Engraving of a drone's internal genital apparatus. Source: *Bienen Zeitung* 32, no. 16 (August 1876).

XXI Nono's first basket hive. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2013.

XXII An installation view of *The Beehive Metaphor* at Photoforum Pasquart, Biel/Bienne, Switzerland. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2014.

XXIII Detail front cover of *Bee Craft* 67, no. 7. (July 1985) – [BJ-664].



XXIV An installation view of *Abelha* at Cairn, foyer d'art contemporain, Digne-les-Bains, France. The installation includes *HIVE Index*, an ongoing collaborative artwork between Fragmentin and Apian. Photograph by Antoine Lippens, 2024.

XXV *Hive Index*, an ongoing collaborative artwork between Fragmentin and Apian, 2024.

XXVI An installation view of *Neurocopter* at CAN (Centre d'Art Neuchâtel), Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Photograph by Sébastien Verdon, 2021.

XXVII *Nono*, portrait of my grandfather. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2014.

XXVIII Arturo Soria y Mata's plan for the linear city, 1882. Source: Wikipedia contributors, "Linear city (Soria design)," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (accessed August 28, 2025).

XXIX Unknown beekeeper on top of Inzerki's apiary photographed in March 2014.

XXX Nono holding the date-stone of his farm, dated 2061. Apian (Aladin Borioli, Pierre-André Borioli), 2013.

Vers 1930. Bois de châtaignier évidé, cire, plâtre moulé. Le visage a été sculpté plus tard par l'artiste Auguste Aichiardi vers 1970. Provenance : Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France. Actuellement : Mucem, Marseille, France.

XVI Double page de *Silent Spring* de Rachel Carson (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), 262–263.

XVII Film still du film en cours de développement *Therianthropy*. Apian (Aladin Borioli, Laurent Güdel, Robert Torche, and Ellen Lapper), 2021–en cours.

XVIII Brique. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2015.

XIX Vue d'installation de *Bannkörbe* à C/O Berlin, Allemagne, en 2024. Photographies de David von Becker (© C/O Berlin Foundation).

XX Gravure de l'appareil génital interne d'un faux-bourdon. Source: *Bienen Zeitung* 32, no. 16 (August 1876).

XXI La première ruche en panier de Nono. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2013.

XXII Vue d'installation de *The Beehive Metaphor* au Photoforum Pasquart, Biel/Bienne, Suisse. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2014.

XXIII Détail de la première de couverture de *Bee Craft* 67, no. 7. (July 1985) – [BJ-664].

XXIV Vue d'installation d'*Abelha* au Cairn, foyer d'art contemporain, Digne-les-Bains, France. L'installation comprend aussi *HIVE Index*, une œuvre collaborative en cours de développement entre Fragmentin et Apian. Photographie d'Antoine Lippens, 2024.

XXV *Hive Index* une œuvre collaborative en cours de développement entre Fragmentin et Apian, 2024.

XXVI Vue d'installation de *Neurocopter* au CAN (Centre d'Art Neuchâtel), Neuchâtel, Suisse. Photographie de Sébastien Verdon, 2021.

XXVII *Nono*, portrait de mon grand-père. Apian (Aladin Borioli), 2014.

XXVIII Plan d'Arturo Soria y Mata pour la cité linéaire, 1882. Source: contributeurs de Wikipédia, « Cité linéaire (plan de Soria), » Wikipédia, l'encyclopédie libre (consulté le 28 aout 2025).

XXIX Apiculteur inconnu au sommet du rucher d'Inzerki, photographié en mars 2014.

XXX Nono tenant la pierre de date de sa ferme, datée de 2061. Apian (Aladin Borioli, Pierre-André Borioli), 2013.

XXVII
XXIX →
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EN

The Ministry of Bees is responsible for the relationship between humans and all bee species. It is tasked by bees to safeguard the history of this age-old relationship, and does so by producing polymorphous ethnographies. These ethnographies combine various media, including video, sound, photography, and writing in order to represent the world of bees to humans and promote Socialist Beekeeping practices. The Ministry aims to establish a framework for the future of this relationship in the context of climate breakdown – a future free from extractive practices and grounded in ancestral knowledge.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- ◆ Human-bee relationships
- ◆ Beekeeping practices
- ◆ Apian technology
- ◆ Apian mythology

FR

Le ministère des Abeilles est responsable des relations entre les humains et l'ensemble des espèces d'abeilles. Mandaté par celles-ci, il a pour mission de préserver l'histoire de cette relation ancestrale à travers des ethnographies polymorphes qui combinent divers médiums, tels que la vidéo, le son, la photographie et l'écriture, de manière à représenter le monde des abeilles auprès des humains et à promouvoir les pratiques apicoles socialistes. Le ministère s'attache à définir un cadre pour l'avenir de cette relation dans le contexte du dérèglement climatique, un avenir affranchi des pratiques extractives et enracinées dans les savoirs ancestraux.

RESPONSABILITÉS MINISTÉRIELLES

- ◆ Relations humains-abeilles
- ◆ Pratiques apicoles
- ◆ Technologie apiaire
- ◆ Mythologie apiaire

