

Wind Theory
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Throughout art history, artists have found inspiration in the sun, the water and the mountains, and light and colour. But what of the borderlessness of a less-explored natural element: the wind? Wind is everywhere and nowhere. It crosses territorial zones and can't be contained, seen or photographed directly. It's more than air in motion; without its five major wind zones, most of Earth would be uninhabitable and the oceans would have no currents. From the updrafts supporting the wedge-tailed eagle to the skies above Darug and Gadigal lands, this audiovisual essay references commissioned works in BLEED's Echo program, cinema history and literature to form a new digital collage of the wind above the Yass Valley, a grasslands ecosystem, in a stage of post-drought growth in August 2022.

At first the planets were cold and still

Now, all we can ever see is its effects

It has strange properties

Without form, without visibility

Carrying energy and gases, bacteria and information across timezones

Many of its movements are lateral, horizontal, layered

Here, closest to Earth, it is densest. It delivers spiders and birds in flight

Up there, a hitchhiking bird of prey coasts on its updraft for up to ninety minutes at a time, reaching altitudes of higher than two kilometres and beating it into shape with its wind. The true eagle spots its prey and swoops

Outside the Intertropical Convergence Zone, it always travels...

...in trade belts, prevailing westerlies, polar easterlies, in land and sea breezes, in mountain and valley breezes, in Hadley cells near the equator and Ferrel cells in the mid-latitudes

Above, these renaissance skies, with their floating cloud palettes, empathise with you

"Air masses moving from land out over the ocean start with average concentrations of around 500 bacteria per cubic meter..."

“Clouds are probably the greatest concentrators of airborne micro-life...”

“The immediate source of many potential pathogens lies in the air and on high-level winds. it seems that nothing anywhere is immune from seeding by the wind.”

But who has seen it? Now, we know a mass movement, an invisible breath that leaves the rest of us living

References and clips

- Dean Cross, You Can Never Touch Your Shadow, 2022
- EarthWindMap, <<https://classic.nullschool.net>> captured on August 23, over Yass Valley
- Andrei Tarkovsky, The Mirror, 1975
- Lyall Watson, Heaven's Breath: A Natural History of the Wind, 1984
- Jodie Whalen, Endless Blue Edge, 2022