

MAIN SECTION

Inhabiting the Anthropocene: Aesthetics of Everyday Life in Times of Crisis

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ABSTRACT

Reconciling the seemingly incompatible concepts of the Anthropocene and the everyday, this paper argues and demonstrates that (1) despite the disconcerting effects of its truly planetary scale, the Anthropocene is not absent or invisible in the realm of everyday life; (2) the everyday is not simply a neutral background solely meant for times of stability, but it is in fact a dynamic system that responds to various scales of change and absorbs the new and the unfamiliar into the familiar. Moreover, the paper also shows that the ways in which change is lived and navigated on an everyday scale, in times of the covid-19 pandemic and climate change, are a unique field for aesthetic enquiry. Everyday material objects such as tote bags, water bottles, masks, and habits like working from home and second-hand wearing are discussed as examples of the everyday experience of relating to the Anthropocene and its crises.

KEYWORDS

Climate change; covid-19 pandemic; hyperobject; habit; material objects.

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The Anthropocene and the everyday: a doomed marriage?

What the Anthropocene and the everyday have in common, as concepts, is perhaps that they both seem to encompass everything and yet elude delineation. As Timothy Clark points out, especially in the humanities, the term Anthropocene is used “mainly as a loose, shorthand term for all the new contexts and demands—cultural, ethical, aesthetic, philosophical and political—of environmental issues that are truly planetary in scale.”¹ The broadness of the term is such that in the wake of the so-called “Syrian refugee crisis” in 2015, it was suggested that the conflict and the ensuing wave of displacement should also be seen through the lens of the Anthropocene and as a consequence of anthropogenic climate change². It is, then, no stretch that, with the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic, many scholars readily included the pandemic in the Anthropocene literature either directly³ or by discussing it in relation with the boldest issue within the Anthropocene, namely climate change⁴. Similarly, everyday life is used as a loose blanket term to refer to all that is familiar, recurring, and thus generally taken for granted. The abundant and the mundane. But its boundaries are hardly clear. Where does the ordinary stop and the extraordinary begin? How to take account of something that is supposed to be almost invisible in the background? In Maurice Blanchot’s words: “whatever aspects it might have, the everyday has this essential trait: it does not allow to be seized, it escapes.”⁵

However, apart from the all-inclusiveness and elusiveness that the Anthropocene and the everyday share, there seems to be little that is common between the two. With its origins within Earth System science and geological time, the Anthropocene is a totalizing framework that, first and foremost, marks a “rupture” in Earth history and thus a “paradigm shift” in how we must think about the planet and our position⁶. As such, the discourse around the Anthropocene—or better put, all the discourses that are

1 Timothy Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene As a Threshold Concept* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 2.

2 Colin P. Kelley, Shahrzad Mohtadi, Mark A. Cane, Richard Seager, and Yochanan Kushnir. “Climate Change in the Fertile Crescent and Implications of the Recent Syrian Drought,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112, no. 11 (2015): 3241-46; and Byron Williston, “The Sublime Anthropocene,” *Environmental Philosophy*, 13, no. 2 (2016): 155-174.

3 See for instance: Eva Horn, “Tipping Points: The Anthropocene and Covid-19,” in *Pandemics, Politics, and Society: Critical Perspectives on the Covid-19 Crisis*, ed. Gerard Delanty (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2021); Cristina O’Callaghan-Gordo, & Josep M. Antó, COVID-19: The disease of the anthropocene,” *Environmental Research*, 187 (2020): 109683.

4 See for instance: Bruno Latour, *La crise sanitaire incite à se préparer à la mutation climatique*, *Le Monde* (26 March 2020), 23; Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World* (London & New York: OR Books, 2020); Thomas Heyd, “Covid-19 and climate change in the times of the Anthropocene,” *The Anthropocene Review*, 8, no. 1 (2021): 21–36.

5 « Quels que soient ses aspects, le quotidien a ce trait essentiel : il ne se laisse pas saisir. Il échappe. » Maurice Blanchot, *L’entrelien infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 357.

6 Clive Hamilton has repeatedly emphasized this point in his works. See for instance: Clive Hamilton, *Defiant Earth: The Fate of Humans in the Anthropocene* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017); and Clive Hamilton, “The Anthropocene as Rupture,” *The Anthropocene Review*, 3, no. 2 (2016): 93–106.

gathered under the great umbrella of the Anthropocene—are concerned with the “big questions” regarding the future of humanity and the planet, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, pollution, or pandemics, but also fundamental questions of human-nature relationship and the entanglements of the human and the non-human. The scale here is the largest possible—the planetary scale. On the other hand, we have the everyday, which has a far more modest scope. It deals with the humdrum aspects of human life and all the insignificant details of run-of-the-mill non-events. There seems to at least be a clash of scales. But this is just the surface. There are larger epistemological and ontological concerns arisen with the Anthropocene (such as the shift from the human-centered viewpoint⁷) that could make the perspective of everyday life (which is, as Agnes Heller puts it, temporally and spatially anthropocentric⁸) rather trivial, if not altogether impertinent and outdated.

So, the question, here, is whether the two seemingly incompatible concepts can be reconciled in a meaningful and useful way. Moreover, what could an aesthetic enquiry into everyday life entail, within the framework of the Anthropocene? The aim of this paper is to show that establishing a dialogue between the Anthropocene and the everyday is not only possible but also valuable. In order to do so, I briefly review some of the challenges that embracing the concept of the Anthropocene brings about, as well as comparing climate change and the covid-19 pandemic as two types of crises. Then, I turn to the matter of everyday life and the ways in which change and the unfamiliar are assimilated and absorbed into it, followed by some concrete, everyday examples from the two crises. These examples are accompanied by a few photographs taken in Bologna and Copenhagen as part of my studies on the homes and everyday lives of university students in those two cities.

Challenges of embracing the Anthropocene

The problem of scale with regards to the Anthropocene is not simply that we are dealing with big issues or extra-large entities. That is one part of the problem; we need to think about human life in much broader spatial and temporal scales. We are faced with issues such as climate change that are not directly observable or easily localizable, because as Clark puts it, “there is no simple or unitary object directly to confront, or delimit, let alone to ‘fix’ or to ‘tackle’. There is no ‘it’, only a kind of dissolution into innumerable issues.”⁹ But the planetary scale of the Anthropocene is fundamentally disconcerting because it radically asserts that everything is connected with everything else and, as such, it challenges our very position

7 This perspective will be discussed in the following section.

8 Agnes Heller, *Everyday Life*, trans. G. L. Campbell (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 239.

9 Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, 10.

as a subject *in or in front of* Nature and the non-human. The dual distinctions of subject/object and Society/Nature are famously dismantled in the works of Bruno Latour¹⁰, and later in the object-oriented ontology movement¹¹, particularly championed by Timothy Morton with regards to ecology and the Anthropocene. Morton refers to this vastness of scale by coining the term “hyperobject” to describe an entity that is so vast in temporal and spatial scale, and complexity, that it overwhelms ordinary conceptions of thingness as well as shattering the foreground-background distinction in favor of a flat, symmetrical ontology¹². Therefore, Morton defines “ecological awareness” as a moment when we rid ourselves from the idea of “living in an environment”:

The historic moment at which hyperobjects become visible by humans has arrived. This visibility changes everything [...]. This is a momentous era, at which we achieve what has sometimes been called ecological awareness. Ecological awareness is a detailed and increasing sense, in science and outside of it, of the innumerable interrelationships among lifeforms and between life and non-life. Now that awareness has some very strange properties. First of all, the awareness ends the idea that we are living in an environment! [...] When we look for the environment, what we find are discrete lifeforms, non-life, and their relationships. But no matter how hard we look, we won't find a *container* [my emphasis] in which they all fit; in particular we won't find an umbrella that unifies them, such as world, environment, ecosystem, or even, astonishingly, Earth.¹³

Now, even if we take it that we do not live in the world, as a neutral container that envelops us, we still *inhabit* it by actively forming habits and negotiating regimes of habitus in everyday life. This is even bolder when we speak of large-scale change—be it the slow and creeping rise of CO2 levels in the atmosphere, or the bursting spread of covid-19 across the globe. In order to become visible, and for us to achieve ecological awareness, the hyperobject needs to become perceived in the everyday. And since a hyperobject like climate change can only be encountered in its totality through discourse, as Maggie Kainulainen suggests, the matter of representation is key.¹⁴

That is why, in order to address the epistemic and aesthetic aspects of the encounter with the hyperobject, scholars like Kainulainen,¹⁵ Byron

10 See: Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

11 See: Graham Harman, *Object-oriented ontology: A new theory of everything* (London: Penguin UK, 2018).

12 Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

13 *Ibid.*, 128–9.

14 Maggie Kainulainen, “Saying Climate Change,” *symplokē*, 21, no. 1-2 (2013): 109-123.

15 *Ibid.*

Williston,¹⁶ and Eva Horn¹⁷ have resurrected the concept of the “sublime” to deal with a greatness that is not relative but absolute. Recognizing the absence of a neutral background, and the entanglements of the human and the non-human, the sublime of the Anthropocene marks the disturbing inability to precisely map the complexity of climate change, for instance, or locate oneself within it. As Horn puts it, “no aesthetic distance is possible; rather, the aesthetic experience is one of radical immanence.”¹⁸ We cannot withdraw ourselves from the event, but the events and the things withdraw from perceptibility and representability¹⁹. Therefore, although many effects of climate change or the pandemic can be physically experienced, narratives—or metanarratives for that matter—are the only way to connect various events together, draw causal relations, and call them by those names. This, in turn, highlights the potentials and also the perils of these narratives in shaping the everyday thought of the Anthropocene, as well as affecting the shape of everyday life.

Indeed, the issue of narratives and representations of the Anthropocene crises such as climate change have been raised numerous times. One of the main lines of criticism, which is well represented by Erik Swyngedouw, is the warning against the depoliticization of discourse and the establishment of a post-political framework that is not really concerned with a systemic change but tries to allow life as we know it to continue for some, while sacrificing the others. Instead, he advocates for a political perspective that gives space for dissent and true performative political action in the sense that considers political practice to be strictly aesthetic and performative.²⁰ Swyngedouw has eloquently levelled this criticism at various types of discourses: the academic discourse on symmetrical relational ontologies²¹ (like those that were briefly mentioned in this text), the sustainability-oriented governance rhetoric that promises salvation in techno-managerialism, and apocalyptic representations of climate change and doomsday scenarios.²² This latter type of narratives, namely the catastrophic, is worth a closer look here, since it reveals something about the relationship between time and crisis, which became particularly

16 Williston, *The Sublime Anthropocene*.

17 Eva Horn, “Challenges for an Aesthetics of the Anthropocene,” in *The Anthropocenic Turn: The Interplay between Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Responses to a New Age*, eds. Gabriele Dürbeck and Philip Hüpkes (New York & London: Routledge, 2020), 159-172.

18 *Ibid*, 166.

19 The withdrawal of objects is intended in the sense that Timothy Morton elaborates in *Dark Ecology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

20 Japhy Wilson and Erik Swyngedouw, “Seeds of Dystopia: Post-Politics and the Return of the Political,” in *The Post-Political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics*, eds. Japhy Wilson and Erik Swyngedouw (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014): 1-22.

21 Erik Swyngedouw and Henrik Ernstson, “Interrupting the Anthro-po-obScene: Immuno-Biopolitics and Depoliticizing Ontologies in the Anthropocene,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 35, no. 6 (2018): 3-30.

22 Erik Swyngedouw, “Apocalypse Forever?” *Theory, Culture & Society*, 27, no. 2-3 (2010): 213-232.

salient with the covid-19 pandemic.

Up until before the pandemic, the Anthropocene crisis (i.e., the ecological crisis and climate change) was generally perceived as a *looming crisis*; imminent, but nevertheless pertaining to the future. As such, it was always tied to the rather paradoxical notion of the prophecy of catastrophe and belief, as explored by Jean-Pierre Dupuy.²³ But with the eruptive covid-19 crisis, the question was no longer if or when the crisis would happen; it turned into when or if it would end. Although, this did by no means stop political and everyday discourses and actions from plunging into outright disbelief and denial²⁴ on one side as well as obsession and abuse on the other side, in many instances. The main difference, though, is in how change is introduced and perceived in everyday life within the context of the pandemic as opposed to that of the larger ecological, Anthropocene crisis. Patterns of change can, in fact, be seen in both crises, in a scalar, almost fractal way. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have time and again witnessed peaks of acceleration and periods of relative stability. A “tipping point.”²⁵ Similarly, in the larger scale of the ecological crisis, the same pattern of lengthy, seemingly uneventful periods followed by moments of sudden escalation and abrupt change can be observed—the covid-19 being one such eruptive moment. And although there have already been many other moments before, such as occasional wildfires, droughts, and so on, the gravity and immediate globality of the pandemic had a much stronger effect. If until then, “it was necessary to conjure up the ultimate event: the end of the world,” writes Eva Horn, “today, with Covid-19, things look different. The arbitrariness of disaster scenarios has suddenly given way to something all too real: the pandemic.”²⁶ Realizations of this kind have prompted many scholars and thinkers to conclude their arguments—quite rightfully—by statements such as “the only thing that is now no longer possible is to carry on as before.” But it is hard to imagine that right after finishing typing that final sentence, they would go about preparing their dinner or taking a shower any differently than the day before. Such is the inertia of everyday life and the sheer obstinacy of its practices.

23 Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *Pour un catastrophisme éclairé : Quand l'impossible est certain* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2002).

24 Since Dupuy and his *Catastrophisme* was mentioned here, it is worthwhile to note that this very disbelief and denial in the face of the covid-19 pandemic prompted him to revisit his work and write a new book: *La Catastrophe ou la vie. Pensées par temps de pandémie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2021).

25 Eva Horn takes this term from Malcolm Gladwell's 2001 bestseller of the same title to discuss the pandemic and the Anthropocene: “hard-to-predict moments of dramatic change in a complex self-regulating system. A tipping point occurs when a threshold value is reached at which a slight increase of a certain factor suddenly causes a massive change in the overall system, which thus irreversibly transitions to another state. At the tipping point, a small quantitative increase leads to drastic qualitative change in the entire system, or to the emergence of unpredictable new phenomena”. Horn, “*Tipping Points*”, 126.

26 *Ibid*, 130.

Inhabiting change in times of the covid-19 pandemic and climate change

What we see as the inertia and inflexibility of everyday life, at first sight, is in fact a much more dynamic system. If the everyday is that which is most familiar, then what happens when it is disrupted by the unfamiliar, say, climate change or the covid-19 pandemic? First, we must realize that it is not only via big changes that the everyday is presented with the unfamiliar or the new. The unfamiliar is constantly introduced to the everyday on many scales all the time. In fact, everyday life is the arena for this dynamic process: the process of turning the unfamiliar familiar; getting accustomed to the disruptive force of the new; and adjusting to new ways of living. That is not to say that the everyday does not resist; but its resistance is not to repel, it is to assimilate and absorb: to create a *homely* world that we can *inhabit*.

Homely not in the sense of having some sort of coziness and warmth—although that could be the ultimate goal in many cases—but in the more pragmatic sense of establishing the familiarity that makes everyday life and its many recurring demands (from bodily functions of eating, washing, sleeping, to daily rhythms of commuting and work) possible. Now, let us turn to the word ‘inhabit’. *Habitō* from which we have the words inhabit, habit, habitus, and the Latin verb of *habitāre*, meaning to dwell, is itself made of *abeō* (from *habēre*, to have, to hold) and the frequentative suffix *-itō*. Naturally, the frequentative signals repetition and habit, which manifests itself in the act of *habitāre* and inhabiting. As such, “inhabiting” evokes the notion of home and homeliness, but also habit (i.e., the everyday practices and semi-automatic routines that lay the foundations of quotidian life for an individual) and habitus (i.e., the tacit knowledge and the unthought know-how to navigate everyday life). As such, the relationship between everyday life, the act of inhabiting, and change becomes clear. I would like to turn to a passage by Georges Teyssot that sums this point very well:

[...] the act of inhabiting would consist in the production of regimes of habitudes, as well as in the transposition of these regimes when in contact with extraordinary situations or noncustomary events, such as an invasion of other humans, a change of climate, or the spread of unusual diseases.²⁷

Thus, inhabiting the Anthropocene and its crises, entails navigating change in everyday life through cultivating new habits, modifying existing ones, or recycling those that have been forgotten. As already discussed in the previous section of this paper, we can only encounter the hyperobjects of climate change and the covid-19 pandemic in their totality through

27 Georges Teyssot, *A Topology of Everyday Constellations* (Cambridge & London: The MIT Press, 2013), 9.

narratives. Those narratives, combined with the actual experiences of certain effects inform our new constellations of habits and shake our existing dispositions, our habituses. However, it is important to understand this does by no means indicate a top-down, linear trajectory, where narratives simply shape habits. In his seminal work on the practices of everyday life, Michel de Certeau distinguishes between “strategies” and “tactics” in the sense that he associates strategies with a totalizing view when “a subject of will and power is isolatable from its environment,” whereas a tactic is based on “doing” and spontaneous, practical creativity.²⁸ As such, in spite of the strategic nature of grand narratives, policies, and designs, the tactical nature of everyday life means that even as consumers of those narratives, policies, or designs, we still find and make our own “ways” and “arts of doing,” even if the exact way seems to be dictated already.²⁹ An inquiry into the aesthetics of everyday life in the face of large-scale changes should be concerned with the seemingly insignificant, everyday practices and objects that form and are formed by the new emerging habits. It must be taken into account that, as Walter Benjamin points out, habit has a playful, aesthetic dimension: “Habit enters life as a game [...] habits are the forms of our first happiness and our first horror that have congealed and become deformed to the point of being unrecognizable.”³⁰ Now, let us take the example of the covid-19 pandemic; for many of us who were lucky enough not to be closely struck by the “unknown” illness at the beginning, the pandemic and the lockdowns came as a shock, for sure, but the dramatic, overnight change in lifestyle presented itself in a rather playful manner. “We stay home for a couple of weeks, and it will all pass!” we said, and we started baking bread at home, showing up to online work meetings in pajamas, talking to neighbors from balconies, socializing with friends over video calls, and occasional clapping for health workers at the window. But soon, the playfulness faded away and we were faced with a new situation where habits of working or meeting from home, for instance, were parts of the everyday reality.

It is important to note that a habit is not simply a repeated action. As Rita Felski puts it, “habit describes not simply an action but an attitude: habits are often carried out on a semi-automatic, distracted, or involuntary manner.”³¹ As such, habits are *attitudes towards* objects. In that sense, working and meeting from home also mean a change of attitude towards the materialities of the home. The dining table becomes a work desk, and the things around the table, which were only meant to be seen by dinner guests, now appear every day on online meetings. Is the bookshelf a better background for an online meeting or the painting on the wall? If

28 Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien : 1. Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), I-LIII.

29 *Ibid.*

30 Walter Benjamin, “Toys and Play: Marginal Notes on a Monumental Work,” in *Selected Writings Volume 2, Part 1, 1927-1930*, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 120.

31 Rita Felski, “The Invention of Everyday Life,” *New formations*, 39 (1999): 26.

once for Walter Benjamin, the domestic interior was “antithetical to the place of work” and a “phantasmagoria”, because “the private person who squares his accounts with reality in his office demands that the interior be maintained in his illusions”, concluding that the living room is “a box in the world theater,”³² now the domestic interior has become the setting where its objects have to perform at the theater of everyday work, through the digital window of video calls. Not only uses of certain objects have altered, but in a more profound way the relations between the inhabitant of the home and its objects are changed. If working-from-home is an example of how existing everyday objects and practices enter into new relations in the context of the covid-19 pandemic, wearing masks can be seen as an example of the introduction of a new object in everyday life. As the pandemic gained momentum, many countries around the world adopted various degrees of mask-wearing mandates or recommendations in public spaces. Suddenly, a small object that was almost entirely absent from the lives of many, became an indispensable part of everyday life and a recognizable element in the landscape of many cities. For example, one can, in many cases, easily distinguish a ‘pandemic era’ photo of a public space versus a pre-pandemic one, solely on the basis of the mask. It also soon went on to become available in different sizes, patterns, shapes, colors, and brands; and a face without a mask a ‘naked’ one. Wearing a mask is closely related to the human body, both on an individual and a collective level. It can arguably be seen as an embodied habit³³, where the mask becomes an extension of the body of the wearer, forgotten at times despite its unpleasantness. Therefore, the ensemble of the mask-wearer and the mask become an embodied subject that has a certain level of protection or immunity, therefore more apt for social settings where the virus can be transmitted, but also with limited sensory perceptions of smell, for example, or diminished abilities in speech. On a collective level, it is about the interconnectedness of our human bodies with each other, with the virus, as well as with the material object of the mask and with the air that we share. But the connections do not stop there. An ironic consequence of widespread mask-wearing has been the massive environmental toll that mask waste has taken on the planet.³⁴ A respiratory disease caused by a virus that infects humans poses threats to marine ecosystems, via this object that we introduced in our crisis-ridden everyday life—making it look more like we are moving from one crisis to another.

Within the Anthropocene, the issue of waste has always been an important point of reference. Closely tied to consumption habits and choices,

32 Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 154.

33 In the sense that can be derived from Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York & London: Routledge, 2002).

34 See, for instance: Selvakumar Dharmaraj et al., “The COVID-19 pandemic face mask waste: A blooming threat to the marine environment,” *Chemosphere*, 287, no. 4 (2022): 132411.

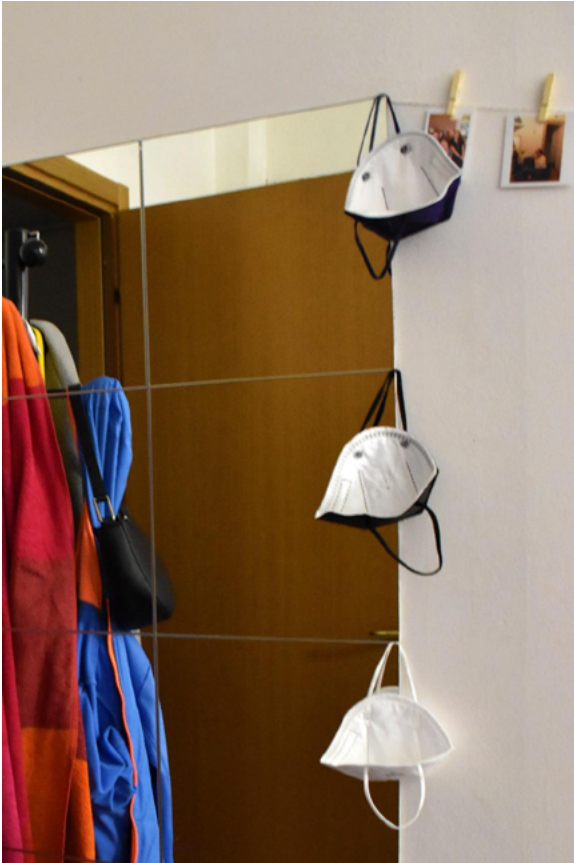


FIG. 1 FFP2 masks hanging next to the mirror in the bedroom of a student in Bologna, December 2021. Photograph by author.



FIG. 2 A vintage Carlsberg beer crate is used as a makeshift bookshelf in the bedroom of a student in Copenhagen, November 2018. Photograph by author.



FIG. 3 A second-hand desk in the bedroom of a student in Bologna, March 2022. Photograph by author.

awareness of waste issues easily connects with everyday, aesthetic choices and questions of lifestyle. One example could be the popularity of vintage and second-hand,³⁵ in clothing items as well as domestic objects, among many young people in Europe. Other examples of ‘waste-aware’ Anthropocene objects are those that replace disposable items, such as reusable shopping bags, cloth tote bags, and water bottles, that again, especially among young people in Europe, have become common as objects of everyday use, which represent a subtle signaling of ecological concern and action.

In an attempt to play the devil’s advocate, the first question that was put forward at the beginning of this paper was a rather loaded one: can the two seemingly incompatible concepts of the Anthropocene and the everyday be brought together in a meaningful way? The assumption that lurks behind the question is that a predominantly human-centric concept such as everyday life cannot be of much relevance *vis-à-vis* the Anthropocene. I hope to have demonstrated that a meaningful dialogue can indeed be established between the two concepts. On the one hand, this dialogue shows that, despite the disorienting effects of its planetary scale, the

³⁵ For a review on the literature dealing with second-hand and vintage, as well as an in-depth study on second-hand objects in Swedish homes, seen through the perspective of the Anthropocene, see: Anna Bohlin, “The Liveliness of Ordinary Objects: Living with Stuff in the Anthropocene,” in *Deterritorializing the Future Heritage in, of and after the Anthropocene*, eds. Rodney Harrison and Colin Sterling (London: Open Humanities Press, 2020): 96-119.



FIG. 4 A water bottle in the bedroom of a student in Copenhagen, November 2018. Photograph by author.



FIG. 5 A tote bag hanging from the door handle in the bedroom of a student in Copenhagen, December 2018. Photograph by author.

Anthropocene is not absent or invisible in the realm of everyday life. On the other hand, there is something revealed about the everyday: it is not simply a neutral background solely meant for times of stability, but it is in fact a dynamic system that responds to various scales of change and absorbs the unfamiliar into the familiar. Moreover, the paper has shown that the ways in which we navigate and live change on an everyday scale in our crisis-ridden times are a unique field for aesthetic enquiry. It is crucial to acknowledge the implications of everyday aesthetics on the state of our world and its future, because the seldom-noticed aesthetic dimensions of our everyday lives constantly influence us and lead us to certain attitudes and actions, and thus, affect our collective world-making³⁶. Trivial things such as tote bags, water bottles, masks, and ordinary actions like going on an online work meeting, or wearing a second-hand jacket simply make up our everyday experience of relating to the Anthropocene and its crises, and guide us in our attitude towards building our world's present and future.

36 Yuriko Saito emphasizes this point in her works on everyday aesthetics. See: Yuriko Saito, "Everyday Aesthetics and Artification," *Contemporary Aesthetics*, Special Volume 4 (2017); Yuriko Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

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