

## Post-Human Pastoralism: Afterland Fragments from Ida-Viru

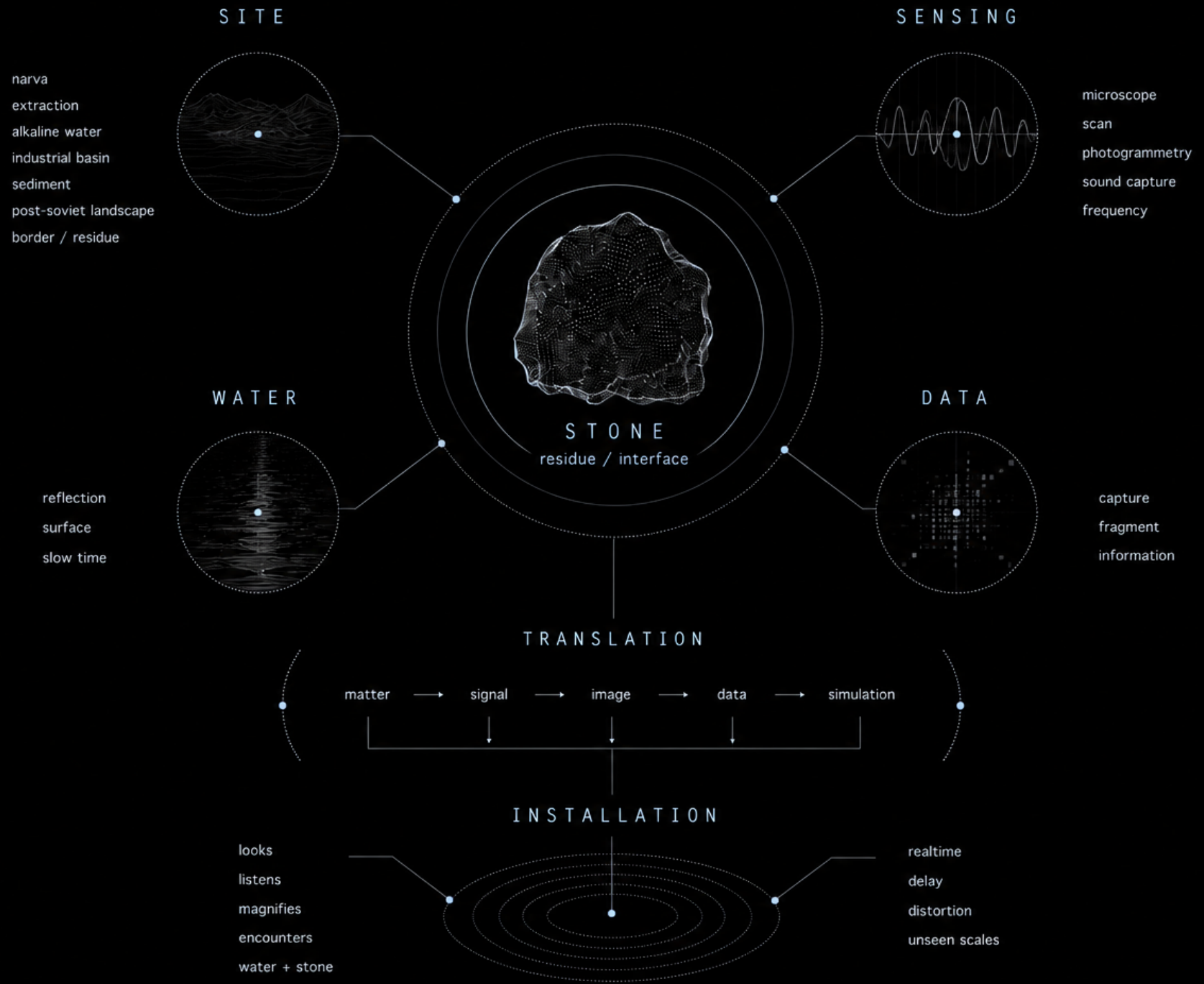
This work explores post-extraction landscapes in Ida-Viru, Estonia, where industrial residue produces environments that appear simultaneously toxic, artificial, and strangely alive. Through field recordings, microscopic scanning, photogrammetry, and material experimentation, the project translates geological residue into moving image, sound, and installation. A collected stone becomes both archive and interface — a material witness through which industrial landscapes are sensed across multiple scales.



The research began during a residency in Narva, Estonia in May 2025, where fieldwork focused on the post-extraction landscapes of Ida-Viru County. One of the central sites was the Eesti SEJ settling basin — an artificial sedimentation basin formed through oil shale extraction and ash waste processes. What initially appeared as a strangely beautiful turquoise lake revealed itself as an industrial infrastructure shaped by chemical residue and continuous human intervention. The vivid blue colour of the water is caused by microscopic limestone and carbonate particles reflecting light, while the water itself remains highly alkaline due to the presence of ash and calcium-based compounds produced during oil shale combustion.

The stone collected from the basin emerged directly from these material and chemical processes. Formed through the interaction of ash, water circulation, mineral sedimentation, and crystallization over time, its porous and irregular surface records the transformation of industrial residue into a new anthropogenic geology. The cavities, sharp protrusions, and eroded textures are not natural formations in the traditional sense, but traces of ongoing reactions between water, heat, minerals, and waste matter. Rather than treating the stone as an object, I approached it as a material witness — a physical archive of extraction, toxicity, and environmental transformation. This encounter became the conceptual starting point for the process-based explorations that follow in the work.





## Process and Moving Image

During my time in Narva, I spent time walking, listening, recording sounds, taking photographs, and collecting materials from the site. Writing also became part of the process, and a poem emerged from these encounters with the landscape.

Rather than documenting the site directly, I became interested in translating it through material processes. I brought back a stone collected from the Eesti SEJ settling basin and began working with it across different media. I created a 3D scan of the stone, photographed it, and used stone dust gathered from the material itself.

I later combined the stone dust with an agar-based bioplastic, creating a semi-transparent organic surface containing fragments of industrial residue.

Using a microscope connected to TouchDesigner, I began exploring this material in real time through magnification, light, and digital processing. The camera does not observe the material from above; it moves slowly across the surface as if traversing a landscape. **Microscopic scanning becomes another form of walking.**

Through this process, the material began to resemble microscopic terrains, cosmic textures, or cellular structures. The final work developed into a three-channel moving image installation constructed from these live scans.

The sound composition is built entirely from field recordings captured in Narva: water movement, wind, birds, footsteps, and distant industrial machinery from the extraction site. At moments, mechanical sounds interrupt the meditative atmosphere, creating ruptures within the audiovisual flow.







## Installation

At the center of the installation is the actual stone placed within a basin of water, accompanied by a microscope or sensing device that allows viewers to closely examine the material surface and its microscopic textures.

Video, sound, live image processing, and physical matter function together as a single responsive environment. Rather than representing the landscape, the installation creates a space of encounter — where geological residue, industrial sediment, water reflections, sound frequencies, and digital image systems continuously interact and transform one another in realtime.

The work explores how patterns emerge across wounded landscapes: through extraction, contamination, erosion, reflection, and technological mediation. The stone — residue / interface — becomes both a material witness and an archive of industrial and environmental trauma.

The installation operates across multiple scales of perception, shifting between microscopic detail and immersive spatial experience, between physical matter and translated signal, between what is visible and what remains unseen.

- INSTALLATION SETUP
  - stone
  - water basin
  - microscope / sensing system
  - speakers
  - 3D model + video projection
  - multichannel audio



