

HUMAN PROJECTS

Freedom.

Wait; hold on for a moment.

Hold onto that liminal space of conflicting arguments, of subversive confusion and self-doubt.

Pause and think, what is freedom to you? Is it exemption from control, despotism, domination? Is it the possession of specific forms of privilege? Does it require particular mental or moral qualities? Is it absolution from duties and responsibilities? Is it a state of being or lack thereof?

Debated, lived in, worn out, hardly detectable and conceptually elusive, freedom is a distinctive human confabulation that we consume through degrees of absence-absence of constraints, impositions, judgements. It centres the western rhetoric of subjectivation into an equivalence between self-fashioning and individual emancipation, a detachment from ties that bind the singular to the multiple. The philosopher Byung-Chul Han laments how today's neoliberal regime and the coercive doctrine of absolute transparency, exposure, and always-on performance propagated through its digital infrastructures, have collapsed the 'subject' into a 'project', where (the illusion of) freedom is driven by compulsive optimization, exercised by a disjointed multitude of entrepreneurs of 'unlimited self-production'. And yet, the Indo-European root of the word 'free', is the same as that of 'friend', whose usage, connected to concepts of devotion and love, was first found in the Rig Veda, one of the oldest Vedic Sanskrit texts dated to 1500-1200 BC. Freedom, unlike its contemporary signification most typically associated to a relinquishment of dependencies—be these erected by secular or religious orders—is in fact synonymous with an interpersonal, multi-sided 'relationship' whose fulfilment is a product of kinship, sensual affinity and reciprocation. It is what we rehearse not in isolation but with others; it is a process that harbours "the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology" (Haraway, 1988). It is an unextinguishable search and a longing for mutual becoming.

People are already there. Many, probably, you don't know. Your eyes wander through and look for the familiar—gestures, gazes, postures. You grasp with vision and lean into the unspoken. You settle into the vibrant matter that imbues that soft zone of hesitation where rules are not imposed but tacitly procured in a reciprocal acceptance of the limits to "vision". This is where your body teaches you how to ask questions, how to hold that space of proximity not in fear or suspicion of the other, but in a durational experience of kindred anticipation, of the potentiality of connection that presentness transforms into togetherness. Whether enhanced or stultified by technological augmentations, our capacity to sense, process, and communicate is effected through a primate organic system. Bodies are dispositives of learning, living assemblages that produce a specific form of knowledge, that is always particular, situated, and contextually created, and produced in the encounter with what is alien, unlikely, unknown—human and non. In Amerindian cultures, the social universe is conceived in a perspectival framework, otherwise termed "multinaturalism" (Eduardo Viveiros de Castro) where relations are not predicated on objectifying processes of evolutionary hierarchy, but lived and experienced as networked and transformational, where non-human actors too are considered as 'persons', thus giving them consciousness and intentionality. This relational perspective champions horizontal configurations of co-dependence and co-constitution, that endows agency onto human as well as more-than-human beings, suggesting that planetary survival is possible only in the awareness of the deep entanglements among our bodies, the built environment and natural ecosystems.

In this *paradise* we enter vulnerable and unprepared. Yet we are premised with protection, we are offered a place of civic rehearsal where we are holding space for and with others. Where we learn how to see and how to look from. Here we rediscover that freedom is not a condition but a distinctive human project germinating from participatory observation, consumed in the collaborative edification of a social pact built on respect, accountability, and an egalitarian politics of co-existence.

How can we repopulate our environments of shared life-our neighbourhoods, cities, schools and streets-with these interstitial spaces of non-determination, of non-confrontational yet productively agonistic positions where it is no longer our self-determination to be championed, celebrated and rendered dominant, but where the embodied knowledge and the situated condition of being human returns, loops back and bounces off in a myriad relational configurations, in an arbitrage of willful interactions, shaped and determined by mutual care and affective reciprocation.

A state reached in consensus-and as such a product of collective agency rather than individual affirmation.

The *paradise* we seek is not a space; it is not a sanitized enclosure of disengagement. It is a process of learning that we need to reinstate in our communities, where relationships are not transactional but safeguarded by the dignity and respect of life as 'ways of being' in their adaptive, shape-shifting diversity. These are the architectures of dialogue, encounter and interaction that harbour our collective imagination, where intellectual progress, wild dreaming and social determination conjure the common good. As Haraway would have it, Paradise "[it] allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see."

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MP5 is an Italian visual artist.

The work is iconic, multimedia, and characterized by a striking use of black and white. Trained in theatrical set design and animation, **MP5** grew up in the European underground art scene. The production ranges from studio works to video installations and large mural interventions, and the imagery conveys a critical and politically engaged view of reality; in recent years, **MP5** has closely linked the work to themes related to bodies and gender. **MP5** has created exhibitions and public interventions in Europe, Asia, and the United States; some works have been exhibited at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, the Pecci Center in Prato, La Tour 13 in Paris, and the Museo Novecento in Florence. **MP5** designed the manifesto for the Turin Book Fair in 2019 and the Strega Prize in 2025, and many of the images have become symbols of the *Non Una di Meno* movement. From 2018 to 2022, **MP5** curated the art direction for Gucci's global campaign for gender equality, Chime for Change, and since 2021 and has been working on "Movimento Immagine", a research project exploring the connection between visual and performing arts, in collaboration with choreographer and performer Alessandro Sciarroni.

The book "Corpus," published by Rizzoli Lizard in 2023, collects for the first time twenty years of **MP5** production.

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