

# Say My Name and I Will Tell You My Story

What if a meaningful acceptance of other-than-human life could help us to build a stronger appreciation of the full complexity of life, and allow us to weave a new story of reciprocal relationship with nature? What if we followed an indigenous way of being, tuning into our own indigeneness to the place where we live? What if we treated other-than-human life with more attention, respect and reverence? What if we tuned into the deeper wisdom that our planet offers, and listened to her guidance?

Earth with all her beings is the largest and most complex organism we know of – a wonder we are part of. Earth speaks with her presence, her complex ecology, her beauty and her purpose.

I offer a radical vision of empathizing with all living beings, regardless of how we classify them and what we know of their intelligence and form. Imagine how this could shift our relationship to the Earth – how it could change our reality! What if this is the key – the secret – to a fuller experience beyond our typical anthropocentric framing. It could be the starting point of a new story.

This vision grows from an experience I had in 2020, in which I heard the voice of a *Eucalyptus* tree: humble, mistreated, sad; taken out of its home, planted in soulless monocultures around the world for paper production, including in Portugal, where I live. A sacred *Eucalyptus* tree appeared to me in a dream and spoke to me. From that moment, walking amongst *Eucalyptus*

was never the same experience. I heard the trees' voices: they asked me if we could collaborate, as they had messages to communicate to us, humans.

As an artist, I explored further. Working with the materials the trees naturally offer – leaves and bark – I began to create botanical prints on fabric, thanks to the presence of tannins in the *Eucalyptus*. I feel that through my art the trees are given a voice; they speak to us. There are many messages that the trees have offered me, including methods of working with them and a rich variety of ways of immersing myself in their world, through sensorial and contemplative practices.

This journey continues, as we – the *Eucalyptus* trees and myself – agreed to weave a new story together through the art project *Say My Name and I Will Tell You My Story*.

The essence of the message I received from *Eucalyptus* trees is clear: open our senses to what non-human life has to say. What we will hear will reconnect us with Earth, begin our healing process, and ultimately help us to see better solutions to our ecological and cultural crisis.

The stories we tell ourselves build, destroy and reinvent our world. The anthropocentric story we have told ourselves is missing the language of nature – pulsating, luminous, wild, abundant, alive. We have forgotten how to listen to nature; we have forgotten how to speak to her. Listen deeply. Let her into your life. We will understand once again. The voice will come. To tell a different story. ■

## Evgenia Emets

### About the author

Evgenia is an artist based in Portugal.

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### More details on the project

*Say My Name and I Will Tell You My Story* was curated by Ines Valle, the Cera Project.

For further information, see: <https://is.gd/sayname>.

Artworks from the project are presented on the pages that follow.

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by **Evgenia Emets**

About the artworks: Botanical prints on cotton fabric with wood fixings (2020; various dimensions).

Higher-resolution version: <https://is.gd/ecoartwork>





