



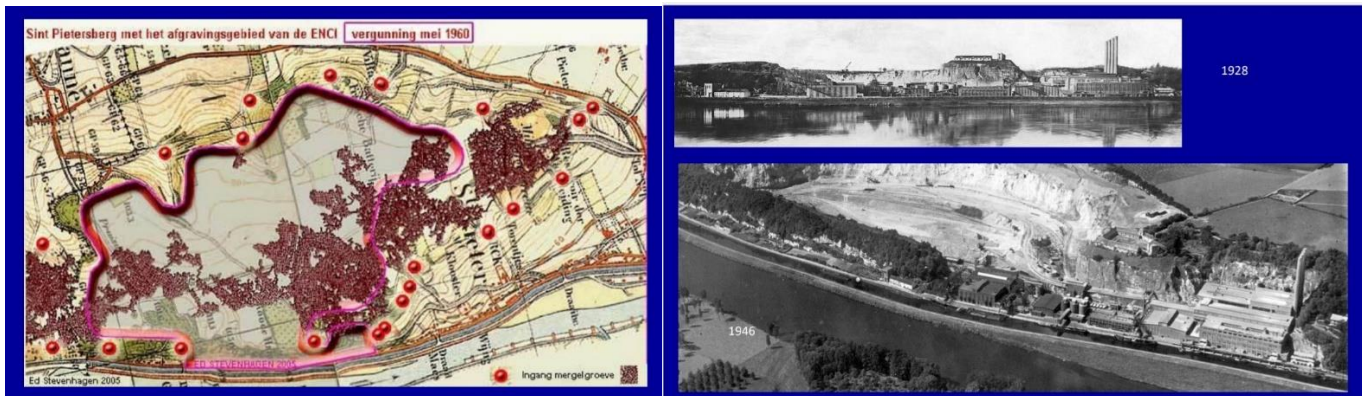
## Limestone and canvas

Mariia Trofimova (2023)



## Research goals and questions

During my research in the Situ area, I aimed to maintain a hands-off approach to the territory and minimize any potential impact on its natural processes. I was driven by a desire to witness the independent evolution of the ENCI without any interference or disruption from human intervention or artificial factors. This was particularly important to me, given the complex history of this area, which has been subjected to multiple disturbances stemming from research activities, conflicts, disputes, excavations, and various changes. By taking a passive stance in my research, I hoped to gain a deeper understanding of the region's natural state and the potential ways in which it could evolve on its own. My ultimate goal was to contribute to the preservation and protection of this unique ecosystem by providing valuable insights that could inform future decision-making processes and guide the efforts of organizations working to develop the area.



## Research history

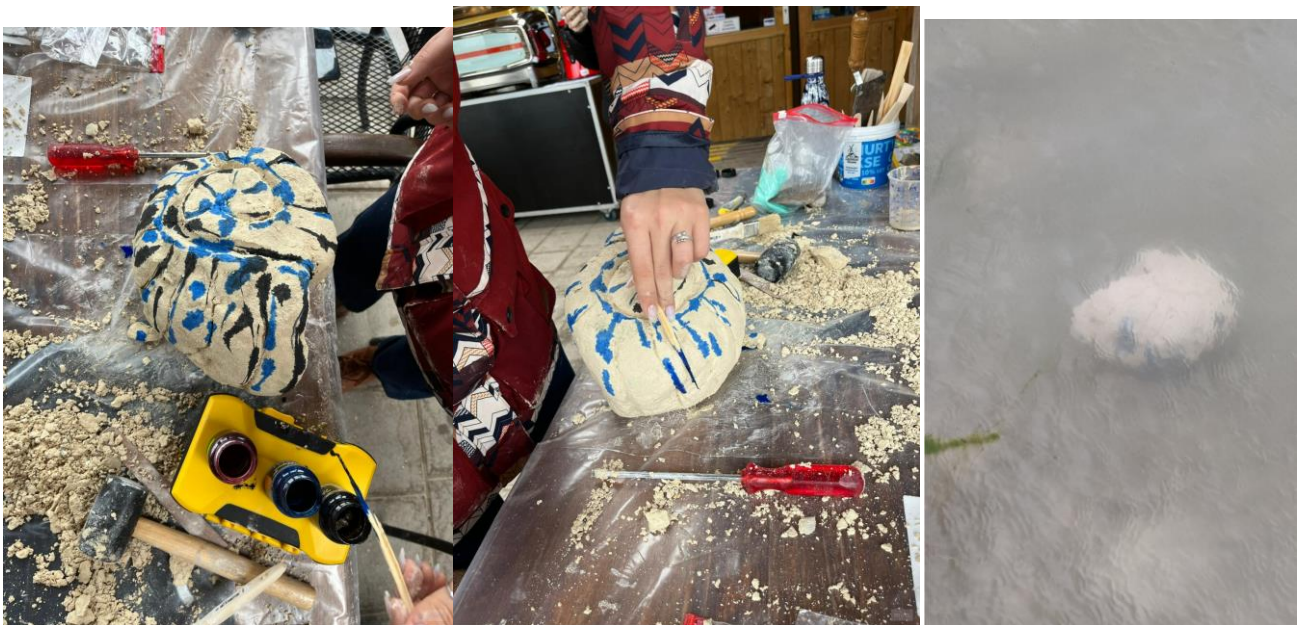
During my first visit to the Situ area, I had the chance to gain a fresh perspective and a deeper understanding of the area. From the inside, I observed the basic structure of the place and gained insights into the complex network of intersecting interests of various organizations. Unfortunately, these interests often harm rather than benefit the area. However, despite these issues, I was able to discover new locations, sights, and unique representatives of flora and fauna that I had not seen on my previous visits. The composition of the soil and the unusual appearance of its surface also caught my attention. While exploring, I stumbled upon unusual stones that sparked my curiosity to learn more about the history of mining and excavation in the area. Additionally, I was excited to meet with an archaeologist and paleontologist to learn more about the excavation of ancient animal bones in the region.

My research began when I visited the Situ area for the second time. Going back to the area after some time allowed me to take a fresh look at it. Since it was a different season, all the colors weren't as bright as they were in Summer. The area looked much greyer and wasn't as pleasant to the eye as it was during Summer. The area wasn't as appealing. During my first visit, I was there as a tourist to enjoy the area. During my second visit, however, I was there as a researcher, causing me to not be as interested in the area as I was previously.





That's when I discovered the situation of the area. The territory is of interest to a large number of organizations whose interests intersect. Unfortunately, none of these organizations are able to benefit from the area, because none of these organizations agree on what to utilize the territory for. The owners of the manufactory wanted to create a museum of cement production history. The government of Maastricht, however, were planning on creating a public beach out of the area. A Dutch organization called Natuurmonument wanted to close the area off and make it a preserved and protected area to allow the ecosystem to develop without being disturbed by humanity.



This situation often harms rather than benefits the area. The intersecting interests of various organizations create a complex web of issues that the area has to deal with. Some organizations are looking to profit from the area while others are looking to preserve it. The area's resources and natural beauty make it a valuable asset for both sides. However, the inability to come to an agreement often leads to negative consequences for the area.





Despite the challenges, I believe that there is potential for a solution that benefits all parties involved. With open communication and a willingness to compromise, the various organizations can work together to create a plan that benefits everyone while also preserving the area's natural beauty and resources. In conclusion, my visit to the Situ area allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the area and the potential for a positive solution through collaboration and compromise.

In the third week of the program, we had a lecture that delved deeper into the concept of nature, its properties, and forms of manifestation. During this session, we discussed methods of humane study that would not cause harm to nature and explored the mutual influence between nature and humans. To prepare for this lecture, we were required to submit photographs of nature that inspired us. For my submission, I attached a photo of the river near my childhood home that triggered nostalgia and sentimental feelings about my hometown.





During the fourth week of our program, we decided to collect materials that caught our attention. I was particularly interested in small stones that differed in material and shape. To explore their natural and acquired properties, I created prints of these stones and formed them into various patterns. We also created installations in boxes made of different materials, and my installation was characterized by geometric, architectural features, in contrast to the natural softness of the lines.

At our second meeting during the fourth week, we had the pleasure of meeting two artists who shared their work and projects with us. I was especially inspired by Elena's work, which involved forming manifestations in different regions of the Earth and applying them to paintings.

In the fifth week, we decided to explore a part of the forest that looked like a tropical jungle. With the help of a local environmental organization, we were able to go beyond the fences that had previously limited our exploration of the area. Accompanied by an archaeologist, I had the opportunity to fulfill a childhood dream of discovering fossils and learning about the history of the excavations in the area, including the discovery of mesosaurs. The archaeologist also shared his insights on the relationship between archaeologists and environmental organizations, which sparked many questions in my mind.

## Concept creation

My research focused on exploring the unique properties of soil and limestone in the ENCI quarry. I was intrigued by the various colors present in the limestone and how they differed based on the components of the limestone. Through a process of boiling the limestone in water, I was able to extract the pigments and create paint from the limestone. This paint was then used to create artwork that showcased the natural beauty and diversity of the area.



The limestone powder used in the artwork was collected directly from the ENCI quarry, where some of the limestone deposits date back over 16 million years. Each color in the artwork has a special composition, resulting in a unique shade that captures the essence of the quarry. To further explore the diversity of the area, I also collected soil samples from different parts of the SITU region and extracted pigments from them, which I then packaged in ziplock bags as a visual representation of the natural variety.

The focus of this research was to demonstrate the beauty and diversity of nature without relying on the addition of artificial materials. By utilizing the pigments found in the soil and limestone of the ENCI quarry, I was able to create a series of paintings that reflect the natural colors of the area. When the paint dries, the colors lose their intensity, which serves as a reminder that the beauty of nature is constantly changing and evolving.



Overall, this research highlights the importance of preserving natural areas and the unique characteristics they possess. By showcasing the natural colors and pigments found in the ENCI quarry, it is my hope that people will gain a deeper appreciation for the beauty and diversity of the natural world.





## Conclusion

After visiting the Situ area for the second time, I gained a fresh perspective and deeper understanding of the area. The complex network of intersecting interests of various organizations, including the owners of the manufactory, the government of Maastricht, and Dutch organization Natuurmonument, who want to utilize the territory in different ways, poses challenges to the area's development.

During my research, I extracted pigments from limestone found in the area and used them to create artwork, showcasing the natural beauty of the region. My aim was to demonstrate the diversity of nature and highlight the unique colors found in the area without the addition of artificial materials.

Overall, my research highlighted the importance of balancing human interests with the preservation of natural areas. While development and utilization of natural resources can bring benefits, it is essential to do so in a sustainable manner that protects the environment and maintains the unique characteristics of the area.

Personally, I was struck by the beauty and complexity of the Situ area, as well as the challenges that come with balancing the interests of different groups. My experience has reinforced my belief in the need for environmentally conscious and sustainable development practices that prioritize the preservation of natural resources and ecosystems.

As for the conflicting interests of various organizations in the Situ area, progress can be made through continued communication and collaboration between stakeholders to find common ground and reach a consensus on the best use of the territory. It is vital to strike a balance between economic development and environmental preservation to ensure the sustainable development of the region.



On a personal level, my experience in the ENCI quarry and Situ area has inspired me to continue my journey in environmental science, art, and sustainability. I plan to further explore the intersection between these fields and find ways to make a positive impact on the world around us.

In terms of future plans for the artwork made from limestone pigments, I aim to exhibit them in art galleries or other public spaces to raise awareness about the beauty of nature and the importance of preserving it. Additionally, I will continue to experiment with different combinations and mixes of colors to create unique and natural shades that reflect the beauty of the ENCI quarry.