

We are living in a moment of political, environmental, health, and social crisis. The pandemic interrupted the rhythms of daily life, placing us all in a state of suspension.

The risk of an invisible virus, political unrest, environmental disasters and racial injustice in both of my countries, the United States and Brazil, led me to find refuge in my garden.

I watched wild birds come to eat from the bushes and fly in the open air. I focused on the contours of the tree branches, smelled fresh green after the rain, and sniffed the fermented scent of lantana flowers near my window.

I was held within the refuge of the birds and branches and yet... four million people have died of COVID-19 as of this writing. In the last six months, 3,325 square kilometers of the Amazon rainforest have been deforested due to the policies of the Brazilian government.

Collective grief hovers in the air; we mourn the death of those we could never know, while at the same time we mourn lost connections and intangible foundations of our way of life.

This shadow time is marked by prolonged uncertainty.

Olfaction is an art of the liminal; a fragile interplay between oneself and the other. For Suspensio, an interruption in time, I have created four smells in collaboration with Leandro Petit of Givaudan do Brasil. Four smells encapsulated in crystal beads fill the air: Burrow, Incense II, Emptiness and In Suspension. They are inserted into blown glass branches, claws based on the extinct Dodo bird, and empty nests.

Burrow is an animalic scent, made of dark notes that transport us inside the protective nest of the earth. Incense II calls to mind the freshness of forests and tree resin. Emptiness interprets the discomfort of feeling displaced in space and time. Suspension is the duality of being cocooned while facing danger and risk.

Dark blue light envelops the space, providing a source of meditative tranquility amidst uncertainty and fear.

*Where do the birds fly when death screeches at them?*