



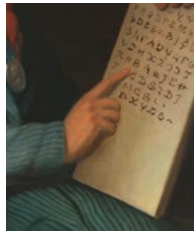
MANI ROKE HANDS

MANI

ROKE



HANDS






## OPEN CALL


After a long trajectory that explored ecologies closely related to Topolove's metaphorical and material world – such as forests, islands or soils – and after passing by a type of landscape – the orchard, where human actions are intertwined with and needed for the growth of trees and their fruits – we want to pause a bit longer on human gestures. This 12th issue of Robida will be dedicated to hands, to their making and meaning.

Usually the magazine's topic emerges from Topolò/Topolove itself, the village in the mountains where Robida lives. As of today, human inhabitants are the minority in comparison to other-than-human ones and even though the village and forest are mainly used and shaped by animals and plants, they still hide hand-made ruins of dry stone walls and small buildings. In the village itself, many of the buildings hold traces of the hands that made them: stones were cut and shaped by hand, wooden elements were sawn by hand, roof tiles were molded by hand. Through this issue of Robida we want to celebrate hands and learn to appreciate what they built here in Topolove. At the same time, as we always do, we would like to widen our gaze and collect stories and reflections about hands from elsewhere – their gestures of shaping, tracing, gathering, tasting, loving, manifesting, and writing.


*Mani roke hands* will be the title of the new issue of Robida magazine. When thinking about hands, a familiar distinction often appears: between hands working and hands meaning – between hands that materially make and shape the world, and hands that carry meaning through gestures, symbols, and political expressions. While we recognize that these two dimensions are deeply intertwined, we nevertheless explicitly invite authors to explore both dimensions and their intertwinings: hands as tools of making and embodied knowledge, as well as hands as sites of meaning, ambiguous interpretations, and socio-political expression – for instance in political theory, semiotics, or affect theory.


We want to explore the topic through seven sections, presented through seven small open calls, one for each editor, suggested by our personal inclinations:


 HANDS SHAPING: on crafts and embodied know-how

 HANDS TRACING: on drawing and designing

 HANDS TASTING: on cooking and sharing food

 HANDS GATHERING: on harvesting, collecting and holding

 HANDS LOVING: on touching, feeling and eroticism

 HANDS MANIFESTING: on the politics and semiotics of hands

 HANDS WRITING: on writing and on carrying meaning

 HANDS SHAPING

Antônio Frederico Lasalvia

*“He is only really living, he would say, if he is holding the brush and facing the canvas (or if a brush is holding him and a canvas is facing him).”*

— Vilém Flusser, *Gestures*



By reversing the direction of agency in this passage, Vilém Flusser gestures toward something that exceeds the painter's will in the relation between humans and materials. As a field of possibilities is disclosed by the working hand, the distinction between forming and being informed begins to blur. Such an intuition of entanglement is not limited to painting, but extends across different spheres of making. As André Leroi-Gourhan argued, the liberation of the hands marked a decisive threshold in human becoming. With bipedalism, the hand became available as a technical mediator, unleashing a long evolutionary process in which organs and memory were progressively exteriorised into tools, techniques and artifacts. Our hands allowed us to transform the world around us, which in turn transformed us.

This section turns to the many ways the hand mediates between humans and materials: weaving, sewing, carving, knitting, cutting, bending, splitting, forging, casting, turning, mending, joining, assembling. How does the hand participate in worldbuilding? Can thought emerge through the manipulation of matter? What role do specific materials and embodied knowledge play in shaping these relations? What are the prospects of manual labour in the face of increasing automation? And how has the appropriation, invisibilization, or suppression of the hand shaped the material world we inhabit?

craft, skill, labour, materialism, building, technology, high-tech/low-tech, archeology, tools, entanglement, agency, environment, forming/informing, assemblages, indexicality, know-how, machine, abstraction, repair

 HANDS TRACING

Elena Rucli

*“Lines are not simply connections between points, but paths of movement.”*

— Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines*



Hands that trace lines, hesitate, retrace their steps, begin again. In this section, we would like to receive contributions that reflect on drawing and designing as practices that develop through gesture: illustrating, sketching, mapping, scribbling; tracing paths that are simultaneously observation and imagination. Even a gesture in the air, like the trace of an imaginary path to follow. We would like to collect materials of various kinds: finished images and traces of processes. Completed drawings and uncertain lines, mistakes, trials, which hold within themselves the possibility of transformation: the sketch of a shape, color tests, a set of dots, traces of different tools... These are signs in which the hand becomes both instrument and witness to an ongoing process: it observes, researches, synthesizes, organizes, translates.

In this section we wish to collect: theoretical or personal texts about drawing and sketching as practices of research, diaries that develop through drawing, research on ancient drawing practices, hand drawn maps and spatial representation, series of drawings as imagination and as observation, with a particular interest in the representation of nature. Hands that trace as a way of thinking through lines.

observation, sketch, trials, lines, mistakes, uniqueness, doubts, paths, invisible, process, drawing, hand thinking, herbarium, imagination, maps, stains, scribbles, colors

 HANDS TASTING

Elena Braida

*“Sapientia: no power, a little knowledge, a little wisdom, and as much flavour as possible.”*

– Roland Barthes, *Inaugural Lecture at the Collège de France*



This section explores how hands act as environments for shaping and interpreting flavours and matter. Drawing on what Vivian Sobchack evokes in *Carnal Thoughts* about language’s ability to conjure touch and flavour through the synaesthetic act of reading a recipe – so that we may find ourselves “tasting the recipe as we read it” – I invite you to explore how to bring us closer to the experience of eating, of sharing a meal collectively and of awakening the appetite through the language of food combined with the gesturality of hands.

This section focuses on the modality of touch-as-flavour rather than on smell or taste alone and is open to anyone with the ability to use food as a means to engage corporeally with the reader and to encourage them to experience the contribution through their own hands.

I imagine this cluster as a cookbook in itself, welcoming contributions such as, but not limited to: recipes that emphasize gestures and the senses; theoretical or personal texts about gastronomy and touch; photographic sequences of hands cooking, stirring, kneading, fermenting, chopping, pinching, squeezing; handwritten recipes and footnotes; sensory-focused food abecedaries; grocery lists noted on hands; auto-gastrobiographies; choreographic scores for future meals; culinary fiction stories, and reflections about fermentation that will become a momentary source of solidarity and comfort for the many hands forming Robida’s community.

recipes, cooking with bare *minimum* hands, touch-as-flavour, fermentation, culinary embodied knowledge, touched by food, recipe choreographies, tactility of the ingredients, ceremonial food, recipe sequences, vernacular recipes, to taste = to know, sharing food, conviviality, baking, culinary gestures, hands shaping meals and culinary heritage, cross-modality of the senses, comfort food, leftovers

 HANDS GATHERING

Sasha van Aalst

*“The gleaning certainly made me reconnect with the actual value of things.”*

– Agnes Varda on the making of *Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse*



For this section of Robida 12, I would enjoy being surprised by different reasons, motives and outcomes for hands gathering in order to sustain living over time.

*Harvesting:* how do we relate to natural resources in order to generate food for sustenance?

I think of hands sowing, tending, reaping, picking, foraging, gleaning and perhaps even mustering up the courage to steal – all as a means to harvest, contain, store and enjoy for survival. Pantries, agroecology, outlaws, gift economy, uprisings and mischief come to mind.

*Collecting:* what are the different habits for collecting from scattered places and sources? How are elements brought together in archival forms? Here I think of selecting, assembling, listing and remembering. Travel, memories, logbooks, lists and diaries come to mind.

*Holding:* how do we gather and convene as humans, joining many hands to build belonging, to foster intentional interaction and to create communities? Crowds, connecting, dispersing, caring, sharing purpose, spaces, more than human species and reciprocity come to mind.

All of these thoughts, words and images loop around to a sum of parts, an evolving shared harvest for the theme of hands gathering. Hopefully, they inspire different approaches from theoretical to embodied, from experiential to mundane and from personal to experimental.

sustenance, memory, community, seeds, farming practices, storage, guerilla gardening, community shared agriculture, crop plans, stolen land, stolen goods, bartering, lists, memories, archiving, handling, presenting, time, tending, community building, sharing space, mutual aid, reciprocity.

 HANDS LOVING

Laura Savina

*I just wanna be touched  
I just wanna shiver  
Can I trust—  
(You?)  
I just wanna shiver  
— Fever Ray, Shiver*



Every time I find myself enchanted by the beauty of animal fur, I think about what madness it is that human beings gave up such a marvel of beauty and practicality. There is only one gain in this catastrophic loss: we can be caressed more easily.

In this section I would like to explore the role of hands in the language of affection – bodily, loving, physical, nonverbal, intimate and also social. Touch [(con)tatto] is the first sense that guides us when we come into the world. There is something primordial in the way we use our hands to communicate emotions, desires, and messages. Intimacy is often expressed through the way we use our hands: the familiarity, the care, the intention, and the affection involved in making a gesture.

I invite you to reflect on the theme of hands within the affective, emotional, bodily, and erotic sphere. Intimate languages, secrets transmitted at the fingertips, private and collective rituals. Hands loving seeks to tell a story that begins before, passes through and goes beyond words.

instinct, intimacy, eroticism, memory, touch, remembrance, language, secret, reciprocity, strength, tenderness, contact, care, audacity

 HANDS MANIFESTING

Aljaž Škrlep

*“Cleopatra’s nose, had it been shorter, the whole face of the world would have been changed.”*

— Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*



If certain hands had not been raised, clasped, or withdrawn, political worlds might have unfolded otherwise. Through the gestures of something so mundane as hands – their manifestations of meaning, relations, and forms of power – the body enters the public sphere and participates in the shaping of socio-political worlds. These gestures are not only signs but inscriptions of experience: movements through which the body writes the world while simultaneously acting within it. As Carlo Sini writes, “[t]he gesture is the original writing of experience”: a writing that can bind bodies together as easily as it can divide them.

The raised fist of a striking laborer, civil rights activist and anti-fascist fighters; the infamous Roman salute; the V-sign – on the one hand for victory, on the other for peace – all are gestures through which political worlds are enacted and contested.

The hand is at once an organ of solidarity, but also a site of danger: during the COVID-19 pandemic, even the simple handshake was suspended, replaced by gestures of distance. Similarly, contemporary regimes of hand capture – fingerprints and biometric scans – turn the intimacy of touch into trace and evidence. These examples reveal the bio-ethico-political nature of our gesticulation.

This section therefore invites contributions on the one hand exploring emancipatory and, on the other, oppressive political and semiotic life of hands in all its different manifestations.

solidarity, collective bodies, political movements, protest gestures, raised fist, political symbolism, ideological symbols, political semiotics, gesture politics, body politics, performativity, a/signification, mediality, contact/distance, intimacy/risk, authority, discipline, biopolitics, invisible hand (of the market), iron hand, dirty hands, biometric surveillance, fingerprints, forensic bodies

## HANDS WRITING

Vida Rucli

“Where do we harvest our words?”

– Daniela Cascella, *Something More and Something Else*



This section will explore both hands as producers of meaning that emerges through writing and as carriers of meaning inscribed in their lines, in their shape and gestures.

What role does the hand play in writing practices in times when we mainly write by typing? Where does the carving and the scratching contained in the etymology of writing reside, now that the hand isn't dragging itself along the paper anymore? But also, what can we read from the hand as a body archive of stories? What do hands, when we read their shape, their skin, their wounds, narrate?

From Medieval *maniculae* to experimental (hand)writing practices and forms such as calligrams, micrograms, *marginalia* or asemic writing, from palm reading to hand symbolism and iconography of hands, from citational practices and referencing as handing down to writing as harvesting words – in this section we will dwell on the relation between hands and language: on what hands do when they write and on what is inscribed in our hands.

on the one hand: writing practices, calligraphy, micrograms, asemic writing, citational practices, referencing, *marginalia*, Medieval *maniculae*, *tavole parolibere*, calligrams, concrete poetry; on the other hand: hands as body archive, palmistry, graphology, chirology, iconography of hands, hands symbolism



## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Deadline: 01/05/2026

### Formats

As always, we welcome a wide range of contributions and encourage diverse formats. Please review the list below carefully, noting the distinction between two types of submissions: those requiring a finished piece and those for which an abstract or a finished piece is expected. We introduced this hybrid open call methodology for some of the categories to give more time for those who need it to delve deeper into their contribution, and at the same time giving the possibility to apply with a finished contribution if you think you don't need more time. The abstracts and finished contributions will be evaluated at the same time (check the timeline). If you are not sure into which category your piece belongs, don't worry, go with your gut.

### Essays

Hardcore theoretical texts or lighter essay formats — both are welcome, especially when they include personal stories and elements of fiction. The essays can be accompanied by visual material. For this kind of contribution we welcome abstracts (max. 3.000 characters) or complete texts (max. 25.000 characters).

### Visual essays and archives

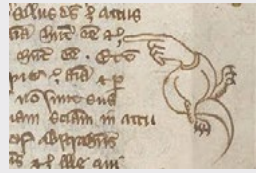
Photographical reportages accompanied by a short story or description, collections of images or photographs, series of drawings and illustration, or even combined all together. Visual essays made as collections of images from the history of art, stills from films, old photographs, or textual archival pieces made only of quotes. For this kind of contribution we request the final piece: send us your collection of images and a brief introduction explaining the concept, story, project etc.

### Conversations

Interviews and correspondences on one of the topics. It's good if they are accompanied by visual materials. For this kind of contribution we welcome abstracts (max. 3.000 characters) or complete texts (max. 25.000 characters).

### Hybrids

Projects containing images, short texts, recipes, photographic material, video sequences, drawings, all mixed together. For this kind of contribution we request the final piece.



## TIMELINE

March 16th

Publication of the open call

March 16th → May 1st

Writing of abstracts or complete/final contributions

May 1st → June 1st

Robida's selection of the contributions from the open call

June 1st → July 1st

Writing or refining the final contribution

July 1st → end of summer

Editing and structuring the publication

autumn

Printing and presenting the magazine

## HANDING IN THE MATERIAL

Texts (whether abstracts or final texts): in PDF format.

Image collections (whether visual narratives, archive or images accompanying texts): you can use a swisstransfer link (the link lasts for one month and you don't need to log in). We will take care to download it in the right time.

Where abstracts are required, you should send us:

- the abstract (max. 3.000 characters)
- keywords (5 to 10)
- a short bio of max. 500 characters

Where final pieces are required, you should send us:

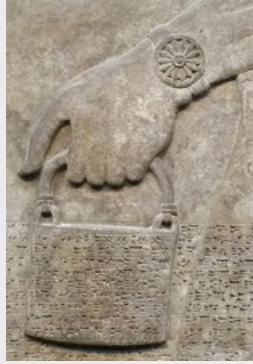
- your contribution (max. 25.000 characters)
- keywords (5 to 10)
- a selection of images (the final images we choose will all need to have captions, be ready to write them)
- a short bio of max. 500 characters

Both for abstracts and for final pieces, follow these guidelines:

- \* File name: Robida 12\_Name Surname
- \* Email object: Robida 12 open call + **SELECTED SECTION** (hands shaping/tracing/tasting/gathering/loving/manifesting/writing)
- \* If you want to include images, put them all in a single PDF document as an attachment to the email or, if the file is too big, send it via swisstransfer link.
- \* Send your proposals to: [robidaopencall@gmail.com](mailto:robidaopencall@gmail.com)

Thank you, but we are not looking for:

Whole thesis (please, send us just one chapter), image collections without introductions, video works or audio works (or other formats unsupported by printed magazine technology).



## LANGUAGE

We welcome pieces in every language. We read: English, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Slovene, Friulian, French, Serbo-Croatian, Dutch. If you write in a language not mentioned above, please include an abstract in English.

We value contributions written in minor and minority languages, in an intertwinement of different languages, or in a playful multi-linguistic way.

## \* AN IMPORTANT NOTE!

As many of you already know, we don't pay writers and contributors and this makes us sad. None of the editorial board is paid for the work at the magazine either. Robida magazine is an extremely fragile being and we barely manage to cover printing costs for the big book that she is! We hope you understand. We can promise to read your proposals and contributions very carefully and edit them together with you with passion and joy.

At the end of the day, Robida magazine is first and foremost mostly a big group of friends who get to know each other by participating in each issue, joining presentations and maybe by visiting us in Topolò! If your work is included, we will send you one copy of the magazine by post.

Feel free to contact us in order to discuss any ideas or doubts you might have while preparing your contribution at [robidaopencall@gmail.com](mailto:robidaopencall@gmail.com)