

FLUXING

The word 'foment' means to stir up trouble - to incite or provoke (as in riots, rebellions and revolution). In general, in 'polite' society, the term 'foment' is loaded negatively, associated with instigating undesirable sentiments or unacceptable actions: what people foment tends to be, well, trouble.

What if, for a moment (a foment-moment?), we stayed with the trouble for a while, and listened to this word 'foment', its rhythms and rhymes and relations? To our ears, it echoes of 'ferment' - that process of microbial interrelation that bubbles and froths and changes itself, and changes others. To us, fermentation *is* fomentation. (Creation moves. The feminist 'movement' needs to move!).

We hear in this word 'foment', its complex history, coming, as so many English words do, from Latin, where its earliest meaning was "to heat" - but also, curiously, "to cherish" (*foveō*). How can you heat and also care deeply about something at the same time?!

And yet we can perceive how fluidly this word might make its journey across time and minds and continents, and how, in it, carries the seeds (or is it the eggs?) of fomentation - because caring deeply for something is, as a state of being, rousing. To cherish is to be warmed by adoration - fired up by love, stoked and stimulated and steaming - and that is something worth fighting for.

Country is Kin, so Country is worth fighting for. Country is mangroves and mud, and concrete, and plastic, and seaweed and smoke and liquid and neon and the ferment and the air we all share.

Country is itself a nourishing system of circulation, with its own patterns of mutual growth. Fruit, sap, honey, nuts - all are fermented at their energetic peak (that's what nourishes us) in the ongoing process of care and connection.

In this space of digestion, feminist and cultural fermentations lie across each other, extending interconnections to bring non-humans into the conversation. Within the institution of continuously organised and continuously performed cultural labour, the more-than-human speaks for us.

Fermenting is (like) culture, always regenerating, always relational. Like *yinnar/djalan/black woman on dhawun/djara/Country*, it is listening and co-creating, in the most intimate of collaborations. We are constantly culturing.

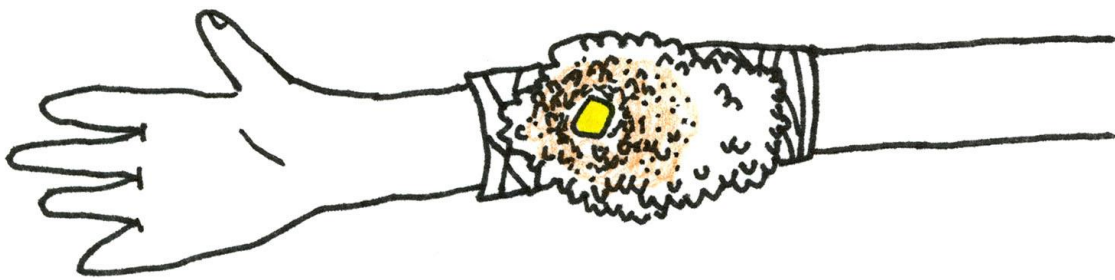
Like a nightclub, a ferment is a space where bodies intermingle and react to each other. Things may fizz, pop, break down, decompose, get messy - but that can be how pleasurable things are made, and enjoyed.

In the haze, we can just make each other out - and make out, if you want to, because while making light visible, thickened air can also provide a distraction; a smoke-screen.

We are interested in the ways that some organisms cooperate, synthesise, and exchange fluids, while others interact more awkwardly (or too politely - the only thing that should be inert in a club is the neon gas).

What hangs in the balance? Is it too much, or too little tension that cruels the process of symbiosis?

by Libby Harward, Dominique Chen and Danni Zuvela.



A sketch of a fomentation poultice on a wound.

2.

ARCHAIC

bathe (a part of the body) with warm or medicated lotions. From *Middle English* *fōmentāciōun* (“act of fomenting; lotion or poultice applied to a diseased part of the body”),

FLUID BODIES (2023) details:

Acrylic LED sign, custom-blown glass sculpture, parabolic aluminized reflector, UV light, kefir with *laminaria saccharina* (sugar kelp) and *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, *Lactobacillus kefiranofaciens*, UV ink, plastic safety sign on concrete floor, mangrove mud, dried Archontophoenix Cumminghamiana (Bangalow palm) inflorescence, haze, sound, bonyi.

Sign fabricated by Trevor at neondrip Gold Coast.

Opening night music by DJ Vincible. Clean & Green kefir by Currumbin Fermentary.