

SATTES GRÜN (LUSH GREEN) * – An Ecological Manifesto in Paint

A work bridging biological encyclopedia, surreal mythology, and existential urgency

It is a painting from the ***NATURE FIRST*** series,

a body of work through which Saxana ultimately defines her very existence and her entire creative practice.



Introduction: The Toad as Guardian of Regeneration

SAXANA's painting *"Sattes Grün"* (Lush Green) is not a quiet nature idyll but a living, painted organism, a painting that breathes and transforms, drawing the viewer into a micro- and macrocosmic dialogue about healing, destruction, and the invisible threads of ecology. At the center of this cosmos sits an oversized root ball that resembles a "broadly grinning toad" that has just devoured an insect: root branches protrude from its "mouth" like the legs of its prey, while moss, fungi, and blackberry vines unfurl from its body like a web of life. Yet within its belly, amidst moss-covered roots, a large pair of eyes, a nose, and a mouth shimmer faintly into view. Almost like a dragonfly being digested. Or is it an embryo maturing within the womb?

This surrealist suggestion is no coincidence, but a philosophical message:

It represents the eternal cycle of life and decay, the eye of the universe that sees all, and a symbol for the infinite spirit of existence. Here, Humboldt's philosophy of nature converges with Eastern concepts of the cycle (Samsara) and modern ecology: everything is connected, nothing is lost, and everything transforms into new life. This toad is not merely a metaphor but an alchemical figure, a being that unites destruction and renewal, much like the Gaia hypothesis describes: Earth is not a passive planet but a self-regulating system that constantly renews itself. But SAXANA goes further: it shows us not only the resilience of nature but also its vulnerability, and humanity's responsibility within this web.

1. The Root Ball: A Microcosm of Transformation

The root ball is the heart of the painting, a site of metamorphosis where death and life merge.

What initially appears to be a decaying clump of earth reveals itself to be a biological alchemist: sprouting from its crevices are the Dusky Large Blue butterfly (whose caterpillars rely on specific plants), the Harebell Furrow Bee (a cavity-nesting wild bee), and the *"Penicillium"* fungus, a symbol of medical healing as well as the invisible natural networks that ensure our survival. Housed within the cavities of the root ball is a subterranean amphipod; its scientific name (*"Rhynchostegium megapolitanum"*) points to its habitat, groundwater ecosystems threatened by human interventions such as low water levels in rivers (Rhine, Danube, Loire) and the lowering of groundwater tables. Its chemical formula, H_2O , and the alchemical triangle highlight the essential role of water, a resource that is becoming increasingly scarce and coveted worldwide. A mole has just captured one, drawing attention to soil functions that are being destroyed by monocultures and pesticides. The earthworm, the "architect of the soil", appears here not merely as prey, but as a symbol of the underestimated importance of soil organisms in the fight against the climate crisis.

Scientific Context:

Here, SAXANA references Tim Flannery, the Australian climate scientist and author of *"The Weather Makers"*, who warned as early as the 1990s about the consequences of human interference in natural cycles. His appeal to view the Earth not as a resource but as a living organism resonates in every brushstroke of this painting.

2. The Blackberry Vines: Wilderness as Boundary and Bearer of Hope

Thorny blackberry vines—a plant that colonizes disturbed areas as a pioneer species, wind around the root ball. Yet SAXANA portrays them not as a threat, but as a symbol of untamed nature that defies control: The vine bears medicinal plants such as the common evening primrose (a traditional remedy for inflammation) and seeds from the quaking aspen, which float in the air like tiny propellers. Wildflowers bloom amidst the thorns, attracting pollinators, including the bellflower furrow bee, thereby highlighting the biodiversity crisis driven by pesticides and habitat loss. To the right of the image stands a cluster of quaking aspens; at their center lies an ancient Germanic goddess: Nerthus, the Earth Mother, rests on a bed of moss, surrounded by Scottish Highland cattle and a calf. This scene is a tribute to indigenous wisdom and the idea that nature must be revered rather than dominated.

Contemporary Context: The quaking aspen stands against the backdrop of a dying pine forest (reminiscent of the Harz region following bark beetle infestations), a symbol of the forest dieback crisis in Germany, triggered by climate change, droughts, and pest infestations. Low water levels in rivers like the Rhine and Danube exacerbate these issues by hindering groundwater recharge and causing ecosystems to collapse.

3. The Sky: Transcendence and Dynamic Change

The painting's background is not a neutral sky but a living entity: On the left, clouds radiant with color glow in the final light of the setting sun a painterly allusion to the light source, which originates from the front and bathes the painting in a golden shimmer. In the center, four red kites (two pairs), symbols of freedom and far-sightedness, circle, while swallows streak across the sky like black brushstrokes. To the right, a "Leisler's bat" (Europe's Animal of the Year 2026/2027) flies by, highlighting the importance of nocturnal animals to the ecological balance. In the distance rises the silhouette of a dead pine tree; a raven takes flight from it, a messenger between worlds, embodying the cycles of life and death.

Philosophical Dimension: Here, SAXANA's work intersects with Timothy Morton's concept of "Dark Ecology", the idea that nature is not a harmonious system, but one fraught with ambivalence, mystery, and unresolved conflict. The sky is not a realm of peace but a theater of change, reminding us that destruction, too, is part of healing.

4. Soil of the Year 2026: The Archive Soil as Metaphor

SAXANA highlights the "Archive Soil", the Soil of the Year 2026, making it the central element of the painting. The soil is not merely a static substrate but a repository for history, seeds, and life. Hidden within it lie treasures: a fawn ("Bambi") concealed in the moss, a symbol for those displaced, whether by deforestation, climate change, or human greed. The story of "Bambi" (Felix Salten, 1923) here becomes a parable about the loss of home, a theme more relevant than ever in an era marked by slash-and-burn practices (Amazon, Australia), wildfires (Greece, Canada), and species extinction. An owl crouches hidden beneath the main root, pointing to the threats faced by cavity-nesting birds due to monocultures and pesticides. A female "wart-biter" (a type of bush-cricket) sits on a leaf, symbolizing nature's adaptability, yet also the limits of survival in a human-dominated world.

5. Science, Myth, and Ecology: A Work of Substance

"Sattes Grün" (Lush Green) is more than a painting; it is a visual encyclopedia of ecology that engages with the following concepts:

- 1 Gaia Hypothesis (Lovelock & Margulis): The root ball as a self-regulating organism.
- 2 Dark Ecology (Timothy Morton): Nature as a system fraught with ambivalence.
- 3 Hope in the Anthropocene (Jane Goodall): The eggs in the nest as a symbol of resilience.
- 4 The Hidden Life of Trees (Peter Wohlleben): The root ball as a breeding ground for new life.
- 5 Indigenous Wisdom (Sebastião Salgado): A tribute to nature as the goddess Nerthus, a reminder not to dominate the Earth, but to revere it.
- 6 The Eternal Cycle of Being: The pair of eyes in the belly of the toad as a symbol of life, passing, and rebirth.

Focus on Current Crises:

Wildfires (Greece, Canada, Siberia) and droughts (Rhine, Loire) demonstrate just how fragile even seemingly stable ecosystems are. Low river levels not only hinder shipping but also destroy entire habitats, affecting everything from fish to insects. Soil loss due to erosion and land sealing threatens the foundation of all life.

Conclusion: A Call to Listen and Act

"Sattes Grün" (Lush Green) is an ecological manifesto in paint, a work that invites the viewer not merely to look, but to understand. SAXANA shows us: Nature is not a passive backdrop but an active agent that influences our decisions. Healing is possible if we learn to listen and stop treating the Earth merely as a resource. The future is Indigenous: we must respect nature's wisdom rather than seeking to dominate it. Everything is interconnected: the pair of eyes in the belly of the toad reminds us that life and decay are part of an eternal cycle. At a time when the climate crisis, species extinction, and environmental destruction are becoming increasingly urgent, this painting is not a luxury but a necessity. It is a wake-up call in color and an invitation to become part of the healing process. "Sattes Grün" is not just a painting. It is a promise.