



# Sacred Black

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*“[Black] means totality. It wasn’t a  
negation of color. It was an acceptance. Because  
black encompasses all colors”  
—Louise Nevelson*





# Paradox Paralysis

# Fourth Industrial Revolution

Rapid innovation of AI, human optimization through nanobiotech and space travel promise solutions to contemporary environmental, economic and social issues.

# Climate Emergency

2023 Climate Change report from the UN concludes insufficient action taken to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Anatomy of an AI System, Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler (2018)



# A Greener Future?

*Humanity is now faced with a stark choice...If the structures of the human mind remain unchanged, we will always end up re-creating the same world, the same evils, the same dysfunction.”*

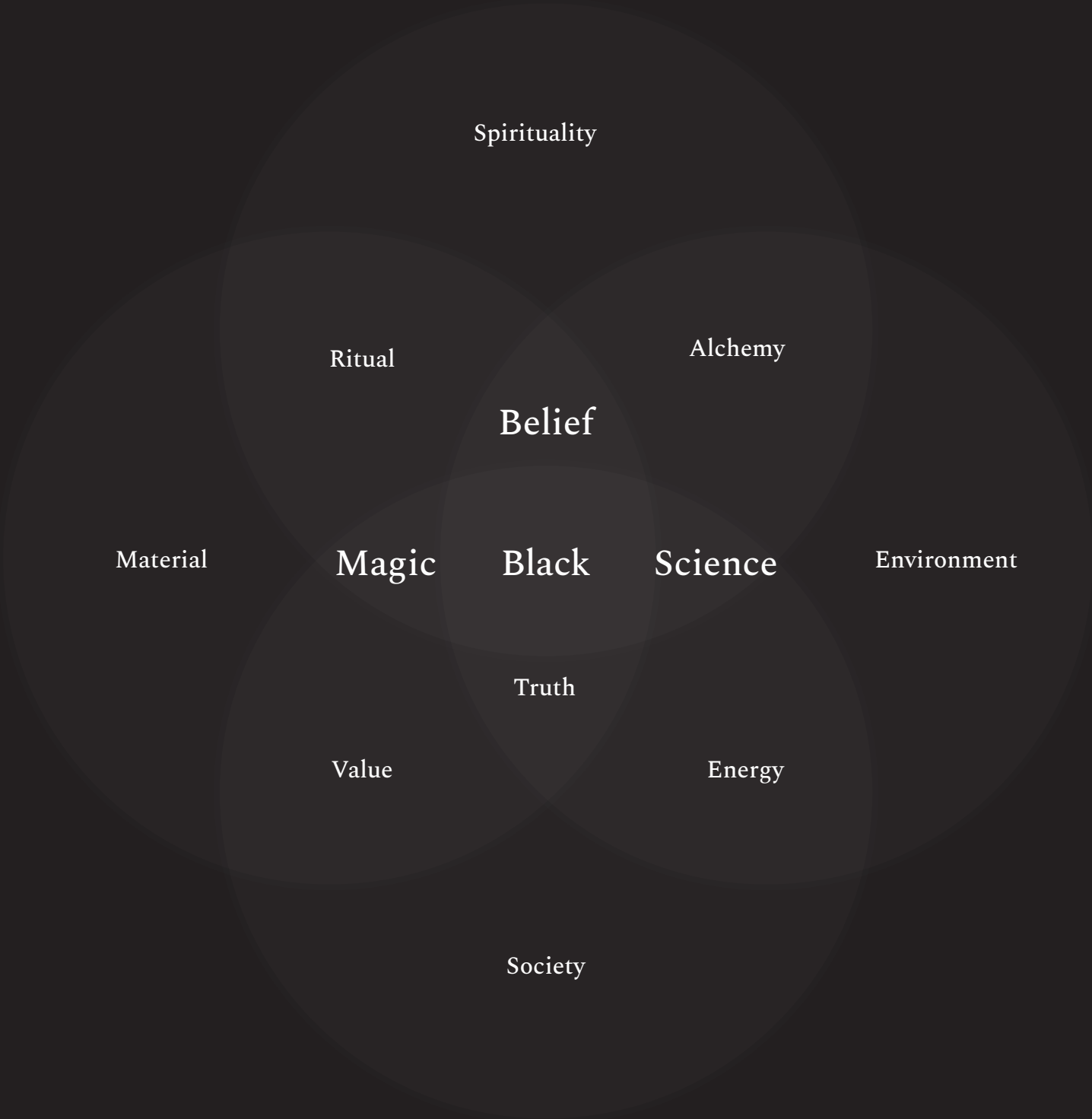
*—Eckhart Tolle*

In an APAC survey of 16,000 consumers, 15% said that they don't purchase sustainable goods due to lack of clarity and trust around claims.



# A Complex World Needs a Complex Color

Black is not going anywhere. It has survived the passage of time, vilified as evil, then exalted into puritan ideology during the European Middle Ages. It is eternalized in sacred scripture, dissolved and consumed by cultures in Western Africa, it is the coal tar that unlocked a whole spectrum of color in fashion, and the mythological power that has inspired humans to explore space. Its symbolic significance is vast and contradictory, but as a commodity, the abundance of black dye has made it a mainstay in our contemporary commodity chain.







Make My Money Matter

Renewable  
Pigments

Emissions  
Reduction

Demand for  
Sustainability

# Market Precedence

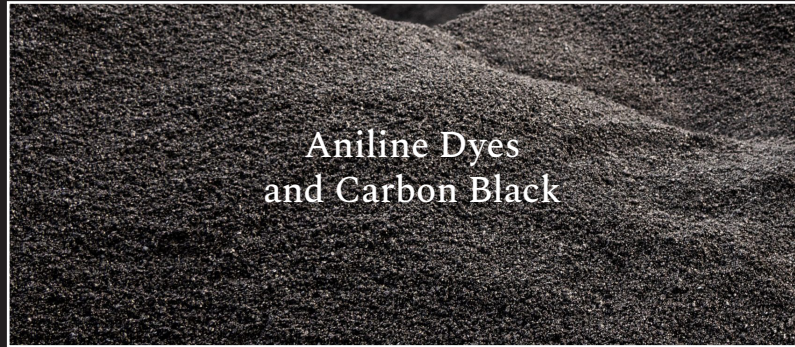
1.5 tons of fossil fuel raw materials are used to produce 1 ton of carbon black with 2.5-3 tons of CO2 emissions released per ton (Recovered Carbon Black).

The increasing demand for sustainability is driving the renewable pigment markets, consumer behavior and business accountability.

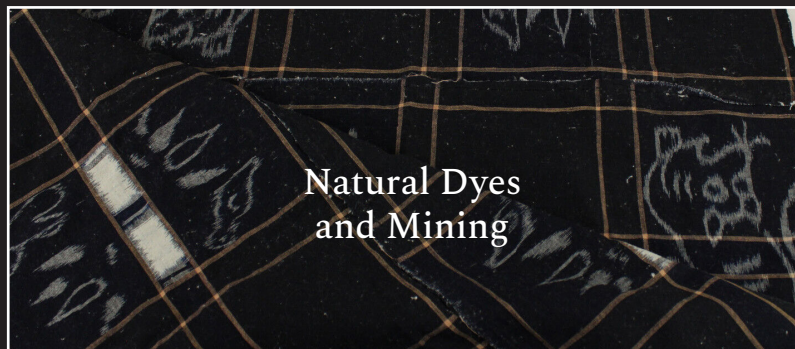




Synthetic



Historic



Future



Grown



# Trend 1

## Waste Not, Want Not

Biochar, as the black earth is commonly known, is a carbon-rich soil created when organic materials decompose via heat in an oxygen-deprived environment.

Biochar is produced by heating biomass in an environment with very little oxygen (pyrolysis), resulting in a highly porous product capable of absorbing water, nutrients, and promoting

microbial colonization. Selected projects imagine how waste can be utilized to generate new streams of use such as product, architectural materials and to improve soil quality.



Post Carbon Future, Carla Alcalá Badias



Pig waste, Clemence Grouin-Rigaux



Made of Air



# Trend 2

## Carbon Capture

‘Carbon black’ is the main component of fine Particulate Matter (PM), produced by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels across homes, industry and transport. As smog, it

obscures visibility and is the main cause of air pollution. Architect Iris de Kievith and designer Annemarie Piscaer found a way to harvest fine particulate matter and use it as a glaze for ceramics. With

the colour that the particulate matter gives, the poor air quality is made visible and tangible



Activated Carbon, Marie Melcore



Air pollution, Smogware



Carbon Black, Tino Seubert





As we shift towards climate oriented solutions, might the color black bridge deeper connection to sustainability at the intersection of environment and spirituality?



# New Romantics

*Eco-Fatigue  
Distrust  
Ambivalence*



*Eco-Spiritual Awakening  
Confronting the Unknown  
Connection through Magic*

These digital natives are turning away from industry to reconnect with greater meaning through novelty, heritage, and the supernatural.

Highly aware of greenwashing tactics having previously fallen from them, they resonate with radical honesty and upliftment of undervalued voices.

Gen Z and  
Millennials

Novelty and  
Heritage

Eco-spiritual  
Imagination





## Shifts

# Meaning Market

American Gen Zers experience sacred moments more in nature (69%) rather than in a place of worship (55%) (Spring-tide Research Institute).

At the intersection of spirituality, intimacy and tech, this shift is driven by Genz and Millenials who are skeptical of traditional religious institutions, but prioritizes holistic health and wellness. As digital natives, they facilitate these existential journeys through tech to stay connected and in control.



## Shifts

# Radical Indigeneity

Indigenous communities safeguard 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity (World Bank). Integration of indigenous knowledge and mythologies in present day provide critical framework for climate resilience.

### Case Study - Lo-TEK

(Lo)cal + (T)raditional (E)cological (K)nowledge is an interdisciplinary land-based educational initiative to reframe technology and progress.



Shifts

# Post Human Design

This approach challenges human centric approaches to non-hierarchical relationships with all living forms. This involved catering technology to and inspiring technology from ecology.





# Value Proposition

Despite frayed relations between consumer and businesses due to greenwashing, Business remains the most trusted institution to address societal and environmental problems (2024 Edelman Trust Barometer Global).

Opportunity for long term loyalty is bridged through radical honesty, co-creation with undervalued voices, and open education.



A person wearing a white shirt, black pants, and black shoes stands on a light-colored concrete floor. To their left is a large, perfectly black oval shape painted on the floor. The background consists of plain, light-colored concrete walls meeting at a corner.

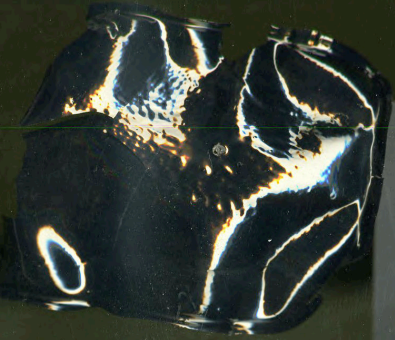
# Anti-Benchmarking

The “blackest black”, Vantablack, is expensive, inaccessible and completely two dimensional with carbon nanotubes which absorb all light.

When viewed in the present of light, blacks generally appear dark grey. Texture and finish are crucial to the expression of black.



# Artifacts and Process





# Design Parameters

## Color Framework - Munsell:

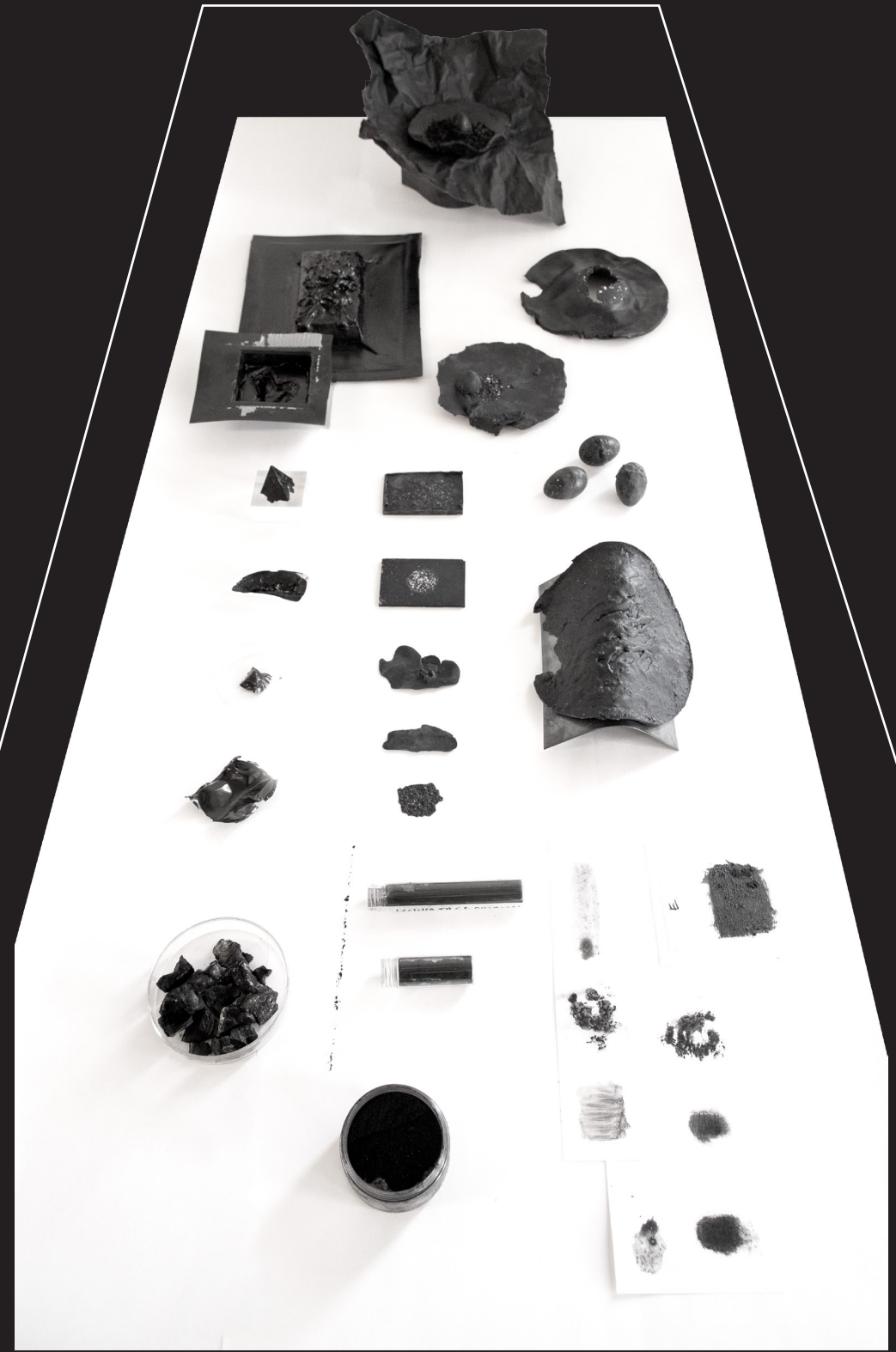
Used internationally for specifying opaque colours of dyed or pigmented surfaces. USDA choice for soil comparison, making it a potential color indicator for climate.

## Material

Self ground charcoal pigments, mussel powder, steel, shellac, beeswax, and salt.

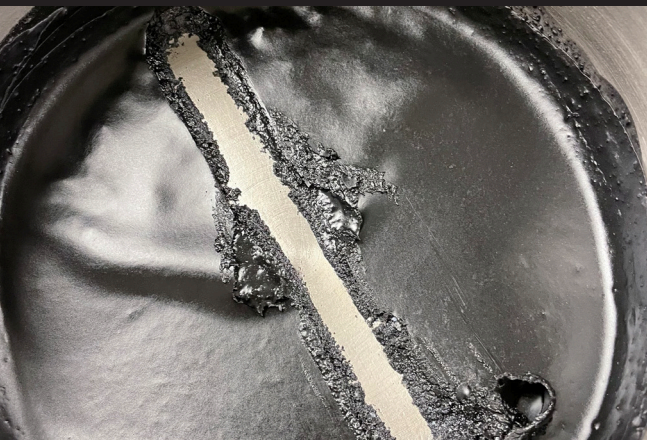
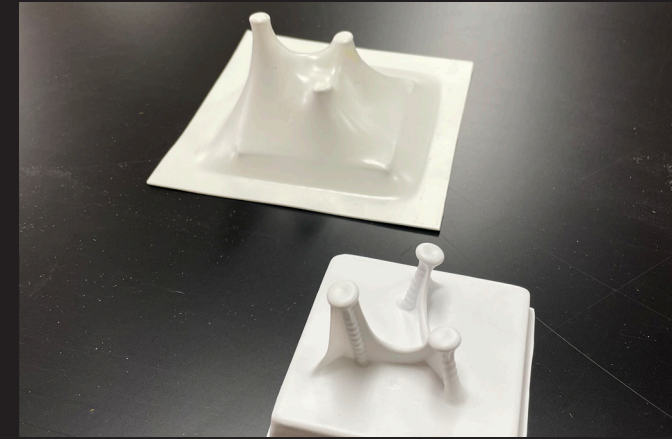
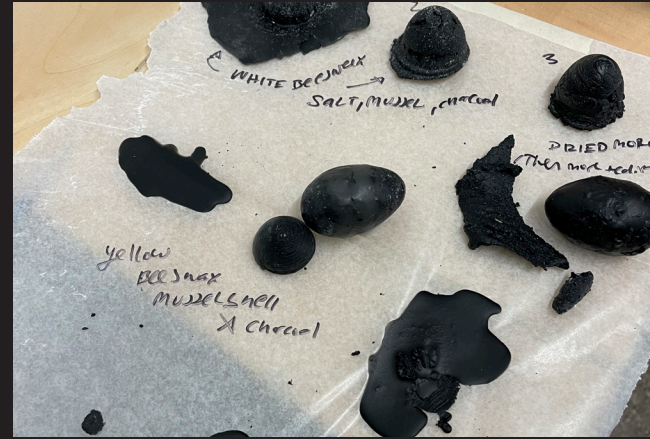
## Texture and Finish

Dripped, oily, lustrous, erotic, sandy, matte, sheen, speckled.

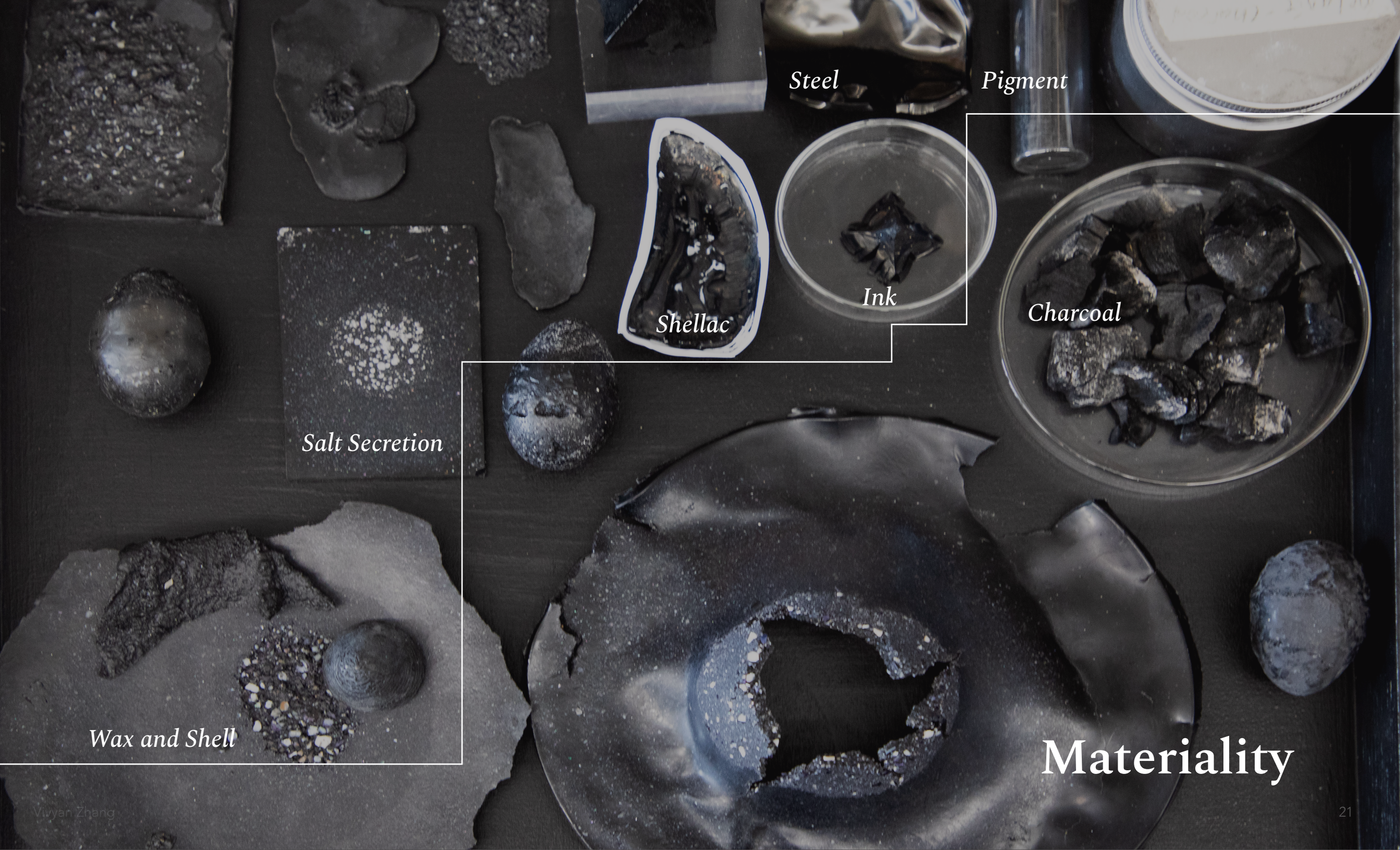




# Artifact Process







*Steel*

*Pigment*

*Ink*

*Charcoal*

*Shellac*

*Salt Secretion*

*Wax and Shell*

**Materiality**



# Sacred Black

A 2050 Planet focused future recognizes the supernatural value of Earth's resources as anthropogenic depletion forces evolution from human centricism.

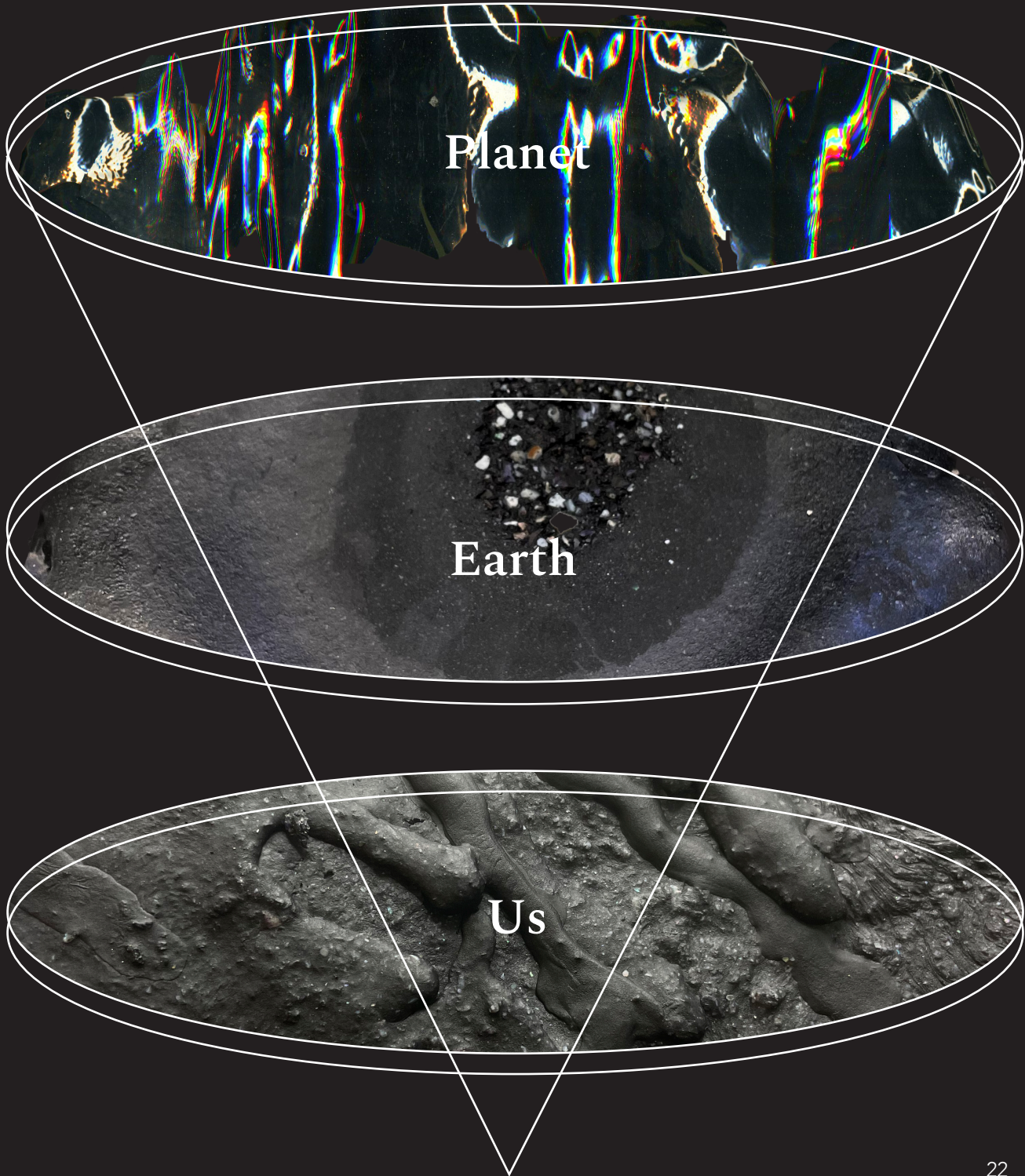


2050

2035

Present

Human Centric







# Present: Making the Invisible Visible

Carbon sequestering and craft as pathways for sustainability popularizes charcoal matte and oiled finishes. Early stage bio-based dyes achieve light value blacks and remnants of greenwashing informs green tinted blacks.

Net Zero  
Economy

Carbon  
Sequestering

Biofuture

Carbon Captured

2.5G/1/2

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) has the potential to reduce future world emissions from energy by 20% (International Energy Agency, Paris, 2008)

Biochar

10GY/1/2

Though Biochar undergoes a similar process as rCB, the use of the term “bio” will be associated with grown materials such as algae and fungi. This interchangeable, albeit innacurate association will take on a green tone to push the point.

Decarbon Black

5GY/2/2

Biochar

Targets for reduction in carbon emissions is expressed in light hues blacks, or dark dark greys. Black shows the tangibility of carbon and representation of reduction from air into valuables goods.





# Present: Making the Invisible Visible

## Key Materials

1



Recovered Carbon Black  
(rCB)

+96% carbon content

Process of removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and industrial waste processes and converting it into an alternative to virg in carbon black.

2



Black Algae

Green Tint  
Speckled Variance

Vollebak and Living Ink heat treated waste spirulina algae from the natural food colouring industry to create black dye for clothing. The green origins of this material creates a speckled variance.

3

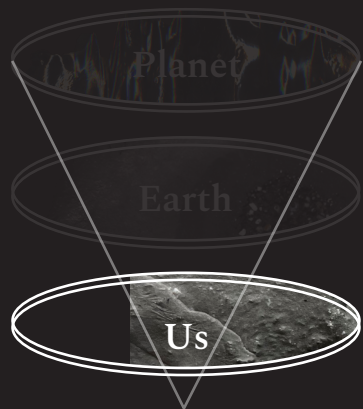


Tire Pyrolysis Oil

Byproduct of rCB  
Represented by beeswax

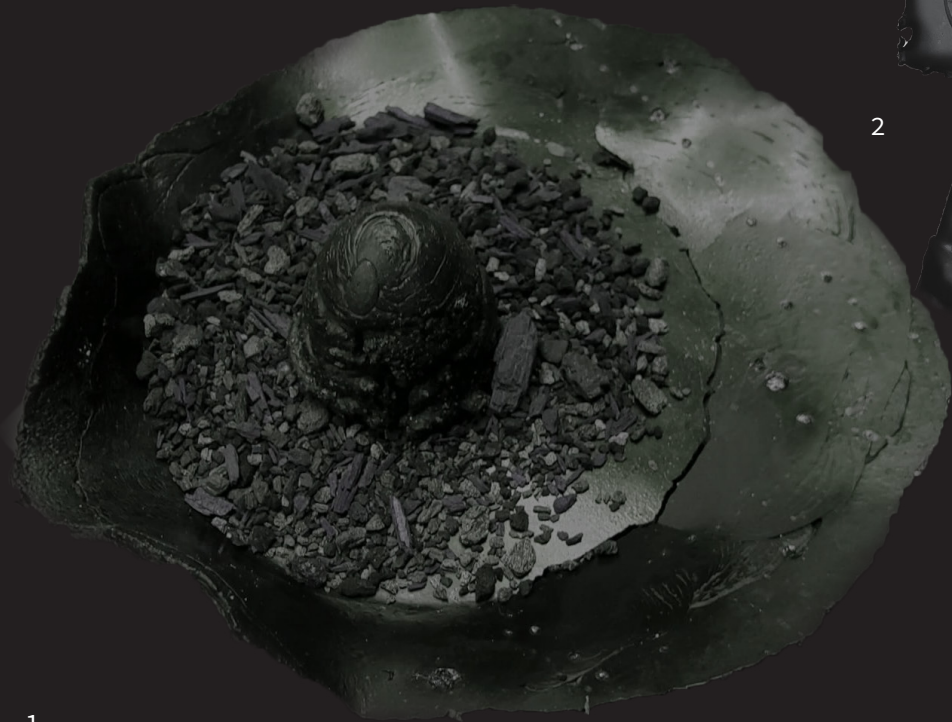
Tires which account for 70% of carbon black market share. A circular process of recycling tires creates a byproduct of tire pyrolysis oil which can fuel combustion systems. Growing field of study for energy alternative.



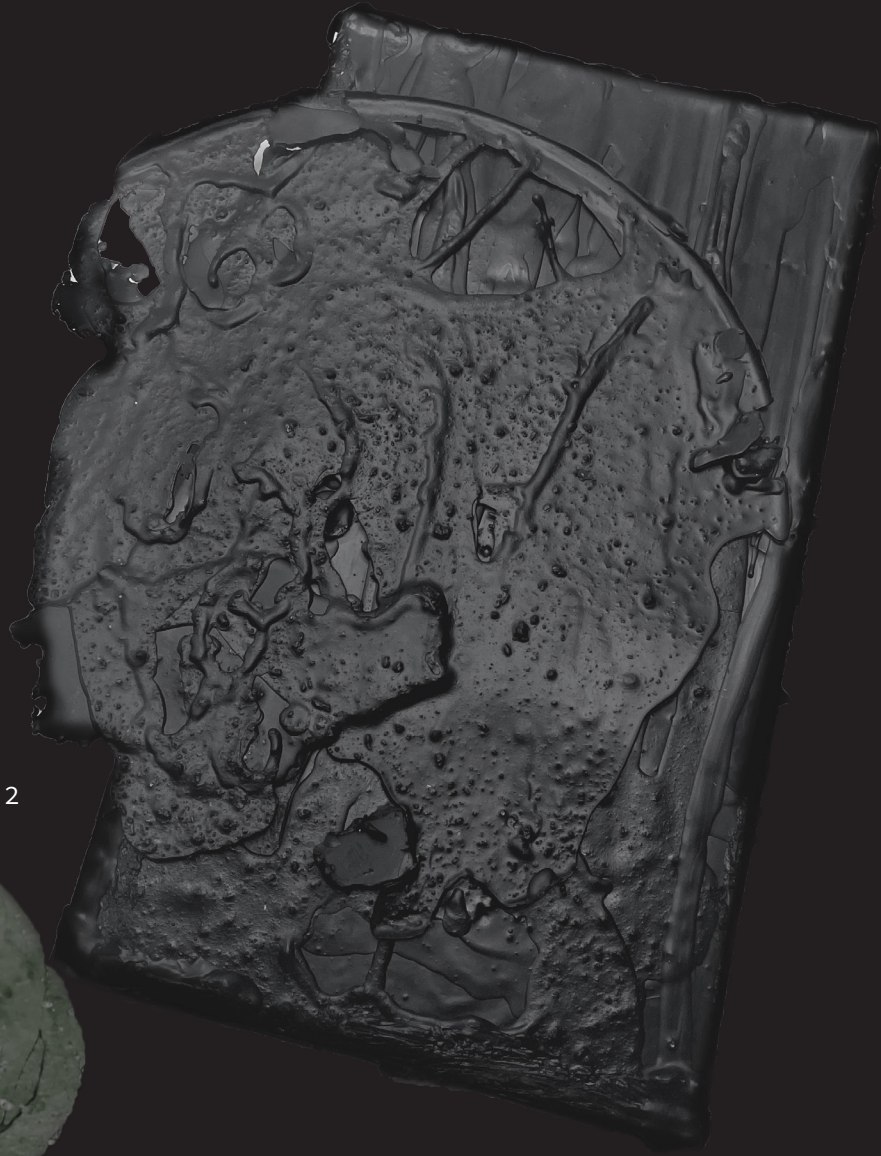


# Present: Making the Invisible Visible

- 7. *Altar to Biochar*, Beeswax and Charcoal pigment dish and egg with charcoal fragments.
- 8. *Petrol Drip*, Beeswax and Charcoal on wood plank.



1



2





# 2035: Consecrating the Primordial

Human depletion of fossil fuels sparks reverence for Earth's once abundant resources. Black dyed products are considered high luxury to be used sparingly or in ritual. Marine origins of the material inspire primordial form language, and shell embedded texture.

Resource  
Reverence

Primordial  
Form

Oil Slicked  
Finish

Shell Slick

2.5B/1/2

The marine quality of fossil origins elevate shells and crustaceans to a level of luxury. Lustrous nacre on black provides coincides with the rainbow surface of oil slicks.

Fossil Kin

2.5P/1/2

Fossil Fuels recognized not as passive resources to be burned, but our ancestral origins. No longer vilified, they are given somber respect for their service and sacrifice to human progress.

Primordial Fertility

10PB/1/2

Early life forms draw mystery and inspiration for how changed human behavior can coexist with Earth's rebirth. This creation in darkness brings hope for a fertile future.





# 2035: Consecrating the Primordial

## Key Materials

1



*Nacre*

*Pearlized luminescence  
Resilient structure*

Protective layers of aragonite and conchiolin that line mollusk shells and protects from irritants and parasites. The natural luminescence has long been valued for its beauty, and will represent the purity of fossil fuels without human abuse.

2



*Fossilized Marine History*

*Representation made from  
beeswax, Biochar, Mussel  
Powder, Salt.*

Inspired by the material composition of ambergris, a highly valued waste material from the sea and used for human ritual.

3



*Liver of Sulfate on Steel*

*Patinaed  
Oiled Finish*

Steel heated and beaten into template to create object holders. Inconsistency of heat and impact create uneven, but obvious hand giving a carnal feel.

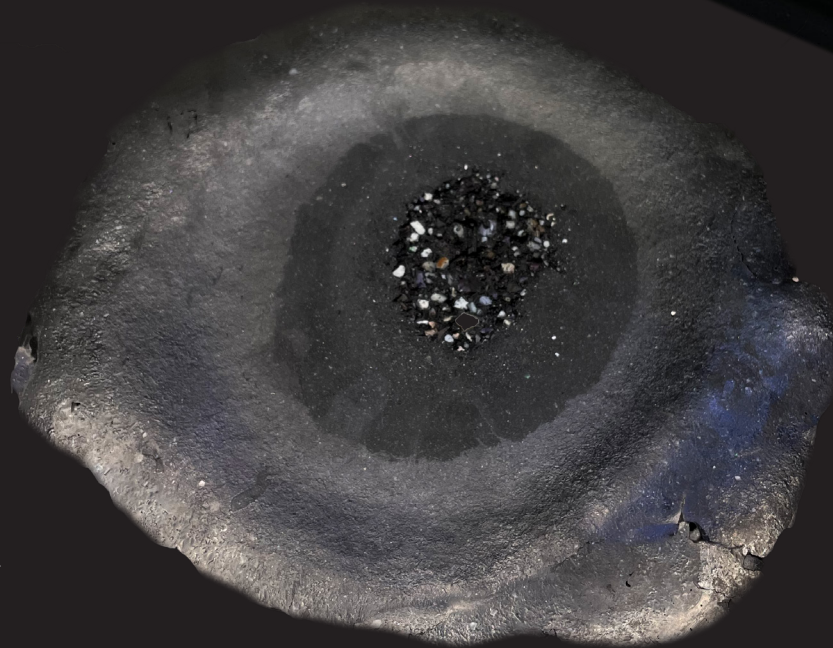




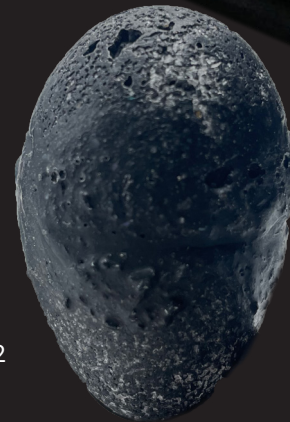
# 2035: Consecrating the Primordial

1. *Mother site of fossilized marine history*  
Beeswax, Biochar, Mussel Powder, Salt.
2. *Unhatched fossilized marine egg*, Beeswax,  
Biochar, Mussel Powder, Salt.
3. *Ritual observation dish*, steel.

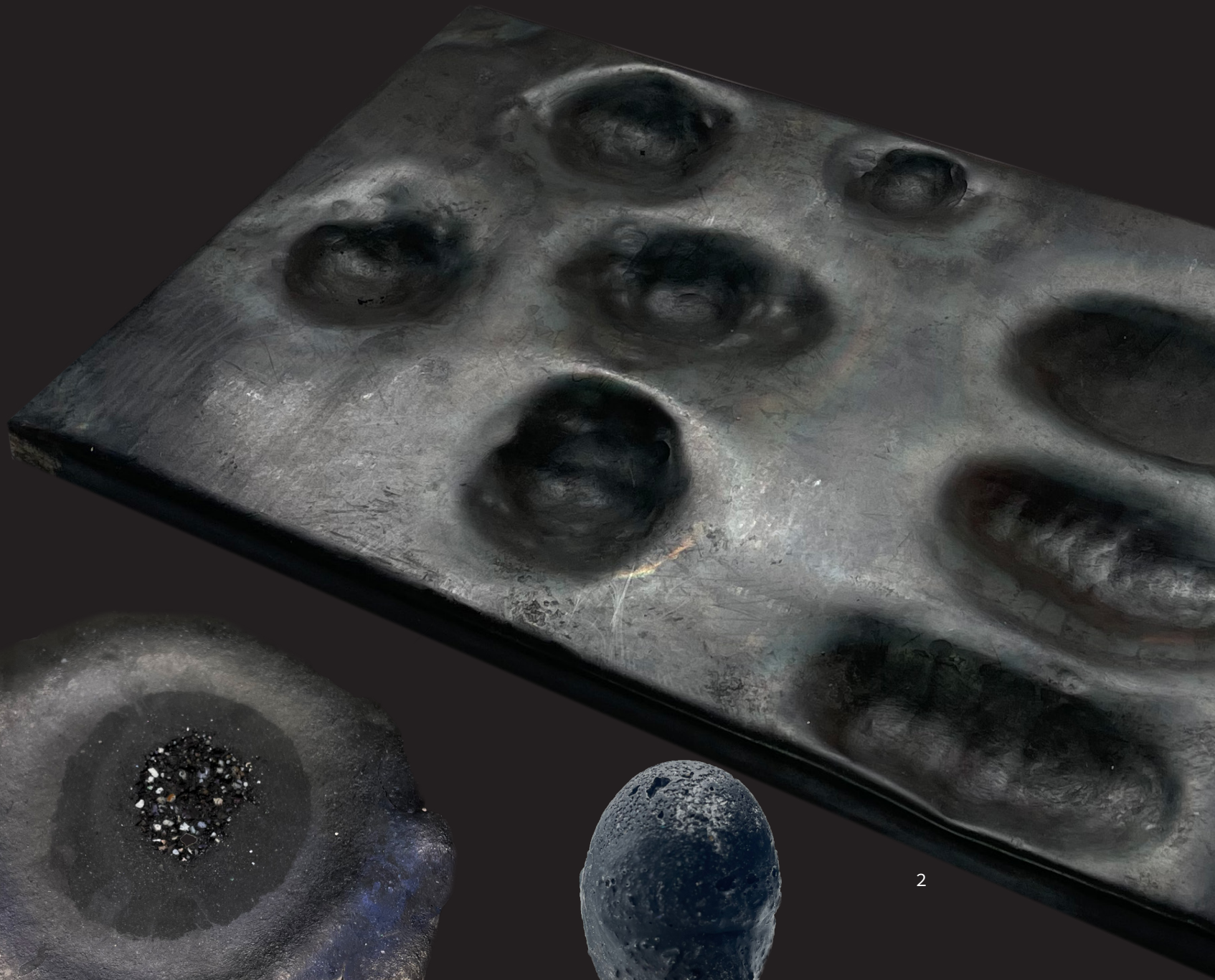
1



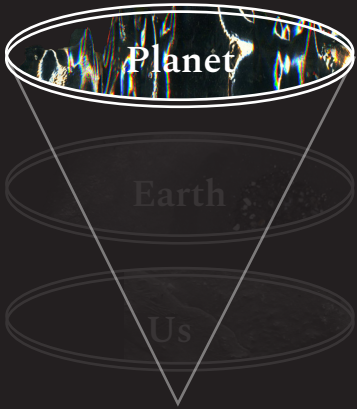
2



2







# 2050: Embracing the Unknown

Black embodies the supernatural existence of the planet outside of our understanding. Celestial elements reflect all color absorbed by black and have a tar like iridescence. Otherwordly material shifts color and texture under mysterious alchemical conditions that embody immaculate energy.

Supernatural Planet      Otherworldy Iridescence      Alchemical Finish

Celestial Element

2.5G/1/2

The marine quality of fossil origins elevate shells and crustaceans to a level of luxury. Lustrous na-cre on black provides coincides with the rainbow surface of oil slicks.

Alchemical Creation

7.5PB/1/2

Fossil Fuels recognized not as passive resources to be burned, but our ancestral origins. No longer vilified, they are given somber respect for their service and sacrifice to human progress.

Energy Immaculate

2.5RP/1/2

Early life forms draw mystery and inspiration for how changed human behavior can coexist with Earth’s rebirth. This creation in darkness brings hope for a fertile future.

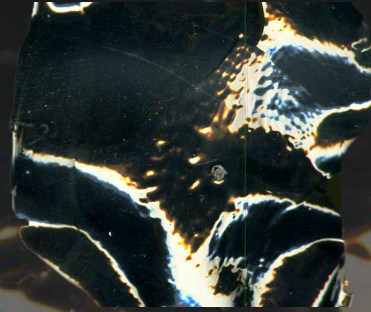




# 2050: Embracing the Unknown

## Key Materials

1



*Celestial Element*

*Iridescent  
Tar-like  
Glossy*

Protective layers of aragonite and conchiolin that line mollusk shells and protects from irritants and parasites. The natural luminescence has long been valued for its beauty, and will represent the purity of fossil fuels without human abuse.

2

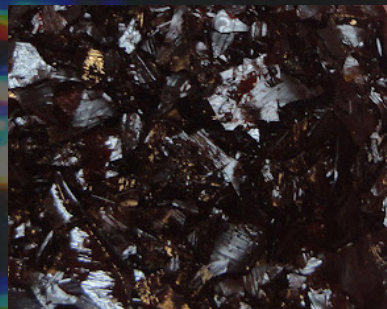


*Biochar*

*Time Capsule of  
Ancient Matter*

Charcoal has a natural luster that is masked when the pigment is bound with a binder. This less expensive luster to nacre can be utilized as a coating on wood and steel.

3

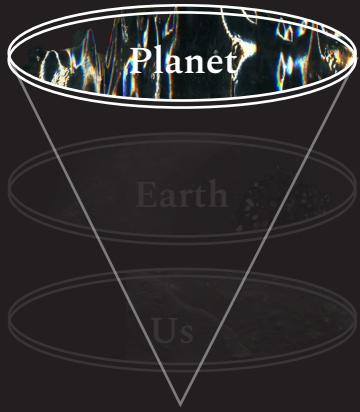


*Shellac*

*Lacquered Tactility  
Hard Softness*

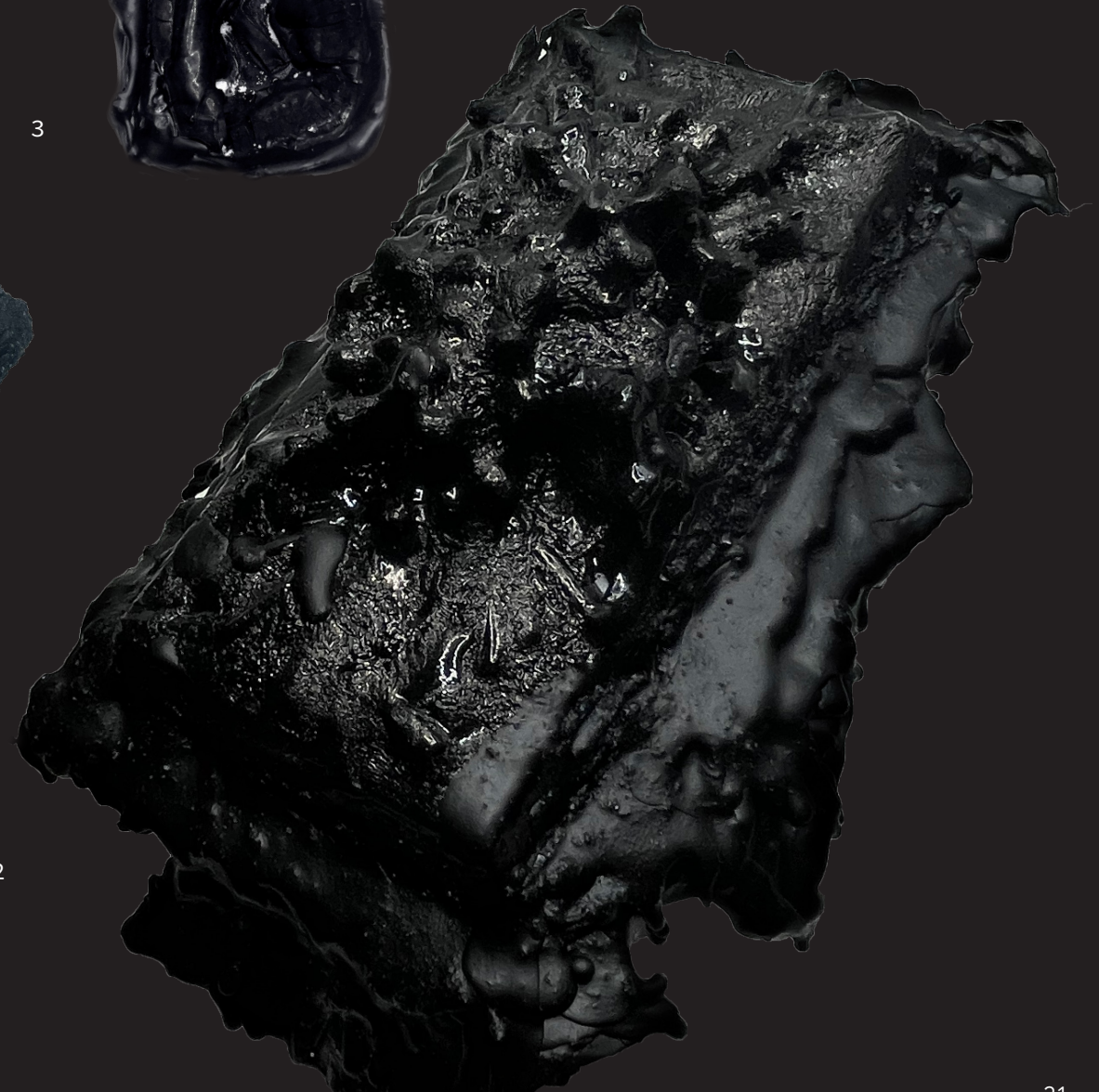
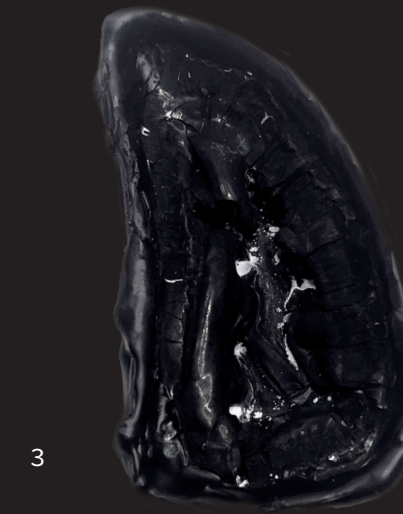
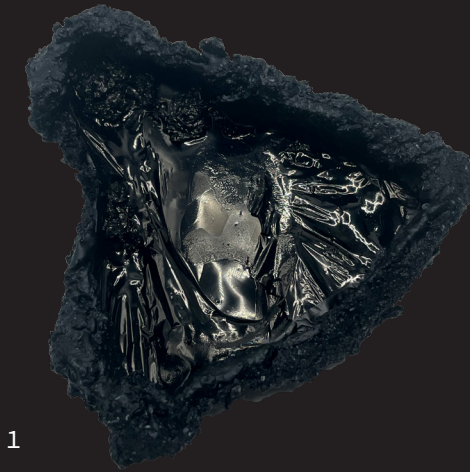
Derived from Lac insects, shellac is soft and flows under pressure when heated but becomes rigid at room temperature. It has been phased out commercially for vinyl resin, but its original takes on unpredictable alchemical finishes.





# 2050: Embracing the Unknown

1. Celestial element reflects all color absorbed by black. Speculative material uncovered from supernatural power of Planet. Shellac and Biochar representation
2. Alchemical creation made manifest. Geiser like spewing of Planetary ooze. Power unbound. Beeswax, Biochar, Mussel Powder, Salt representation.
3. Divinity dish reflects energies in its surroundings. Shellac, Beeswax, Biochar, Mussel Powder, Salt representation.







# Concluding Remarks

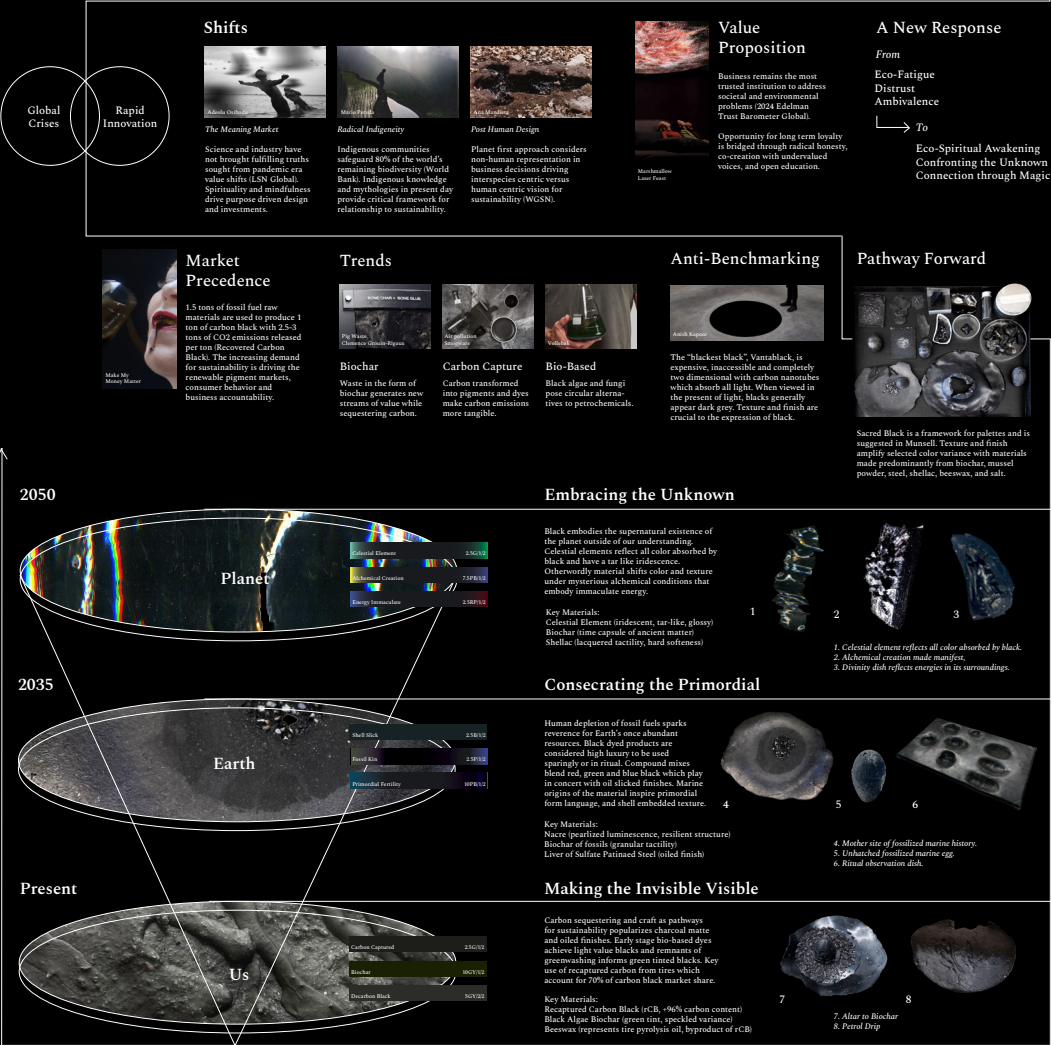
The color black has the potential to confront the costs of our progress at the expense of our environment and wellbeing. Within this unknown, represented by black, creation comes from chaos. As we move away from human centricism to a future where environment and spirituality are deeply entwined, black will no longer be the end of human life, but the beginning of a new one.



# Sacred Black

A complex world needs a complex color

Our misuse of fossil fuels has generated rapid innovation, but at the cost of global crises. Despite being the color of coal and petrol, black also has global associations to the unknown, creation and chaos. As we shift towards climate oriented solutions, might the color black bridge deeper connection to sustainability at the intersection of environment and spirituality?





# Tray







Thank you



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