

**What is this all about?**  
**This project is about the qualities and vitality of the material loam.**  
**It is about our interaction with the material.**  
**It is about discovering our surrounding in a new way.**  
**Dive in, into this new world, the world of loam.**

## 1 loam

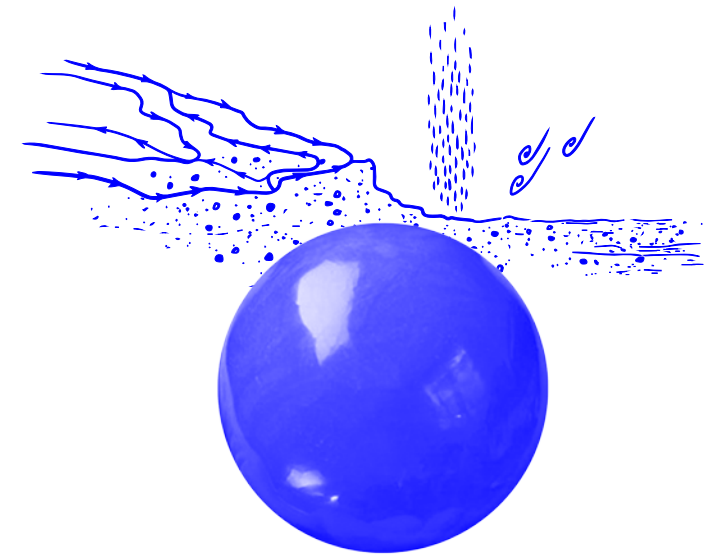
Loam is a type of soil, consisting of sand, silt, and clay. It occurs in various compositions under the upper humus layer in all parts of the world. Depending on their grain size and their formation, there exist different types of loam: alluvial loam, boulder loam, loess loam, and mountain loam.

You are holding boulder loam in your hand.

Boulder loam is glacial, fine-grained, non-layered sediment, which is partly interspersed with large rocks, so-called boulders. It was formed when

moraines (of ice-age glaciers) were deposited. Depending on the degree of weathering and lime content, its color varies from grey to yellow-brown. Characteristic for this type of loam are the polished, round boulders, that are, fragments of magmatic or metamorphic rock of the Scandinavian mountains.

This whole process did not happen overnight. Loam is the result of thousands of years of development. You are not just holding a piece of dirt here, but a piece of history.



**Dorodango**

**boulder loam**

## 2 why vitality matters

We live in a world full of objects. It is part of our culture to throw them away when they are no longer needed. In other words, these objects - finished artifacts - are children of the linear economy which will, one day, fill the garbage dumps.

Behind every object, there is at least one material. If you scale it all up, an immense amount of resources is needed to satisfy our consumption needs.

The planet cannot and should not have to accomplish this.

If you want to counter the exploitation of resources, it is best not to consume at all. However, this cannot be realized. A world without materials is unimaginable since every action is directly or indirectly connected to the world of things.

Alternatively, we could rethink our approach to materials, to no longer think solely of finished objects, but of things that allow transformation.

Materials aren't made to become finished artifacts, they are substances-in-becoming. They undergo constant change during their formation as well as in their further processing.

What does this mean now?

Matter needs to be seen as something active, lively on its own, but instead, it is prevalently perceived as a passive, inert mass that can be and is (trans)formed and shaped by human action.

To witness things or material means to join the process of formation. It is about thinking of interaction rather than usage. It is about thinking of collaborating with materials instead of imposing artificial properties on them, which makes it impossible to return them to their origin. It is to think from materials, not about them.

We should, therefore, learn to understand materials and try to respond to them in a way that makes fair handling possible.

If we start to give the matter a voice and ascribe it with an agency, we consequently will care for it better.

Care is everything that helps to maintain, continue, or repair the world that all beings can live in it. And this is why the vitality of matter matters.



## 3 the vitality of loam

Loam has many stories to tell. Depending on the initial rock, the degree of weathering, decomposition, or relocation, the mineral composition of loam varies. It hosts diverse organisms and animals and builds the ground for growth.

Loam is a vital matter. It does not only reveal a living world within but also a liveliness by its own. This does not mean to equate soil to living beings but to see it as something active that can be the catalyst of actions and reactions.

If you want, you can interpret loam's vitality with its capability to infinitely transform. The clay minerals make this possible. They act as binding agents for sand, silt, or other components, when they are wet. Likewise they harden in the air. So, loam can become malleable or solid at any time. It constantly reacts to its surrounding in absorbing or releasing moisture.

The vitality of loam undergoes the constant process of becoming, has the ability to trigger actions and to tell stories, indirectly, about itself and the co-existence with others. We should not put an end to its vitality by firing it or adding chemical substances, instead, we should rather react to its qualities and try to use them in the best possible way.

Loam is a circuit. It can be used over and over again.

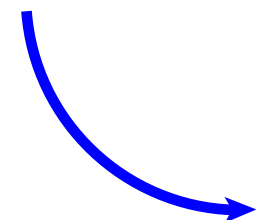
Experience it by yourself and create a Dorodango!



**„The things that people make, make people.“**

Daniel Miller

On the back, you will find the instruction for it.



You are holding a Dorodango (Japanese: mud ball) in your hand. It is the result of a wonderful, meditative process where you get to know the material at its best.

**Re-create a new - your - Dorodango from this one.**

In this collaborative process with the material, you'll learn to react and respond to it. Don't worry the instruction and the loam will show you how.

Most important for you, is, to take your time!  
Wait some hours between every step, because the loam needs its time to change its appearance and get to know its new surrounding.  
Follow the instruction and try to listen to the material.

Have fun!

Great you're done!  
You have created your own Dorodango.  
Now, you can put it onto its base and enjoy its existence. When you feel it's time to give it to someone else, do it.



#### Finishing

Take some sand and scatter it over the mud ball. Flatten the surface with the vessel again as in step 5. Then, let it stay a couple of hours under a reversed bowl. Repeat this five to six times. Finally, let it air-dry. If you like, you can polish it a little with a textile.



#### Documentation

Please document every step with some pictures and send them to this address: [thecycleofvitality@gmail.com](mailto:thecycleofvitality@gmail.com)

Then, you will find your Dorodango in the collection of vitality on this website: [www.thecycleofvitality.com](http://www.thecycleofvitality.com)

If you like, you can write down your process and thoughts in the feedback sheet.

#### Circulation

When you have finished your Dorodango, please give it to someone else, any person you would like to share this experience with.  
In repeating this process and creating diverse Dorodangos, the collection will grow.  
This collection, the cycle of vitality, is here to present the qualities, agency, and vitality of loam.

1

#### Destruction of the Dorodango

Put it in a vessel and fill it with some water (half full). Then, let it stay. The loam will soak the water. After some hours, the loam will be soft again. Pour the surplus water away. Let the moist loam stay overnight.



2

#### Kneading

Knead the loam. It takes a while. After some time, the loam will warm up and soften. It shouldn't be too sticky, likewise, not too dry that it cracks.

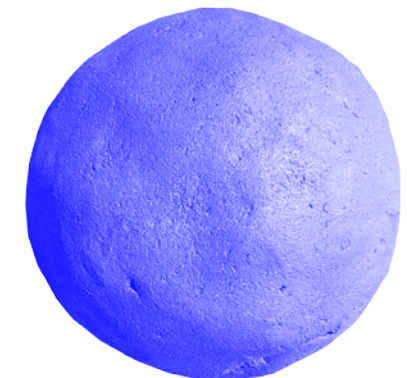


3

5

#### Forming the ball

Roll the loam and form a sphere. Then let it stay overnight, in a plastic bag.



4

7

**Loam is a circular material.  
So, this process can be done again and again.  
It is up to us,  
to use this quality and not to suppress it in finished, unchangeable objects.**

6

#### Shaping the sphere

Take a glass and hone the sphere. You can either turn the glass or the ball. Then, put the ball, again, overnight in a plastic bag. Repeat this step three or four times.

