



FIELD INVESTING

WHITE PAPER · 2026

Spark a Flourishing Future.

A multisensory approach to deploying capital.

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PUBLISHED

First edition, 2026

PUBLISHER

The Mothership Investments

ABSTRACT

This paper introduces Field Investing: a practice of stillness, sensing, vision, and the conscious deployment of complete capital, financial, relational, intellectual, temporal, and presence, in service of what wants to emerge. It argues that the quality of our investing is limited by the quality of our inner life, and offers a framework for moving from successful to significant.

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INTRODUCTION

What is it like to be alive on this earth, right now?

Not as a board member or a founder. Just as a human being, waking up every morning and taking in the world as it is. Take a moment to reflect. How have you really been feeling?

We are living through a time of transition, a time of chaos, uncertainty, and unraveling. Old systems are breaking down faster than new ones can take shape. The ground underneath us keeps shifting, and most of the frameworks we inherited for making sense of the world, and for deploying capital in it, were built for a stability that no longer exists.

The world is on fire, and not in a good way. It feels as though it is being run by a small group of people disconnected from the whole. Our planet, our safety, our compassion: all are in danger. It would be easy, in such a moment, to harden. To move faster. To grip tighter. Much of the financial world is doing exactly that.

For years, I have been looking for a different way of moving through this world through my work as an investor, in a way that keeps me oriented even in the uncertainty. What I have found is not a strategy, exactly. It is a practice. I call it *Field Investing*, and this paper is an invitation into it.

PART ONE

The Three Stories

When I look at the world today, I see three stories unfolding at the same time.

The first story is *Business as Usual*. The pursuit of wealth. Maximizing returns. Picking the winners, even in impact investing. The race for AI. Increased spending on defense, so we can go to war over who gets to keep the most. This is what we have been taught in school, at home, in the way government and business work. This system has gravity. It pulls us in.

The second story is on the front page of every newspaper. War. Violence. Devastation. Climate breakdown. The refugee crisis. Polluted oceans. Toxic food. Poverty. Intolerance of our differences. These are the costs of practicing business as usual for so many years; now impossible to ignore. The true cost is quietly carried by nature and by those who never benefited from the growth in the first place.

If I am honest, most days I cannot read the front page. I want to turn away. I feel overwhelmed. I wonder: *can we come back from this?*

And then there is a third story. I sense it all around me. Out of the chaos, a global movement is emerging: quiet, persistent, growing. A movement that is building a more just and life-sustaining way of living together. A paradigm shift. It is the story in which we have clean air to breathe, water to drink, safe food to eat, enough for everyone. Energy that is clean and abundant. Soil that gets richer every year. Thriving communities. Wild nature. A flourishing future.

I learned this framing from the late Joanna Macy, the ecophilosopher and Buddhist scholar who has been teaching at the edge of systems thinking and engaged spirituality for over six decades. Her naming of these three stories, *Business as Usual*, *the Great Unravelling*, and *the Great Turning*, has shaped a whole generation of people working for change. It resists the two traps that paralyze so many investors I meet: the cynicism of assuming nothing can change, and the denial of pretending business as usual still works.

What Joanna teaches, beyond the framework itself, is how to be inside all three stories at once without turning away. Her life's work, which she calls *the Work That Reconnects*, holds a quiet, fierce conviction: that we cannot serve the third story without also feeling the second one. That grief and love are the same gesture, because we only mourn what we love, and what we love is what we will protect.

This is the lineage in which I stand. It is also why, before saying anything more about how we invest, I want to begin somewhere quieter.

Which story do you live in? I live in all three. I think we all do. These stories are alive at the same time. But more and more, I choose to be in the third.

This is the field I want to be in. And every time I choose it, I meet more people who are choosing it too. So the question I want to sit with is this: *how do we lean into this third story? How can we be of service to it? How do we invest in it? How do we spark a flourishing future?*

PART TWO

It Starts Within

The answer, I have found, starts within. This is the part of the conversation that most investors would rather skip. Stillness, listening, interiority, these words sit uneasily on a term sheet. But I have come to believe that the quality of our investing is limited by the quality of our inner life. *You cannot read a field you have not learned to be still in.*

When we take time to be quiet, the most honest question we can ask ourselves is: *Who am I really, and what am I here to do?*

This inner work is not a soft skill. It is one of the hardest. It asks us to follow our inner voice and not the outer noise, the noise of benchmarks, peer comparisons, LP pressure, the next hot thematic. When we do, it leads us to our inner authority, our inner power. And from that place, our investment decisions start to look and feel different. Slower, sometimes. Clearer, always.

This is why I spend so much time in nature, in silence. It is why my advisory practice begins with a walk rather than a conversation in the office. It is why I keep returning to the question: *What is mine to do?* Not what is the market doing, but what is mine to do.

Going within takes time and practice. Most of all, it takes courage. It takes courage to trust the inner voice over the outer noise, especially when the outer noise is loud, well-funded, and confident. But without that courage, the rest of what follows, the sensing, the vision, the investing, has nothing to stand on.

PART THREE

Sensing the Field

From that inner place, from the stillness, from our inner authority, we begin to truly sense the field around us. We sense the patterns and themes emerging in the world, the shifts that haven't made the news yet but are visible if you know how to look. We are not separate from this field; we are part of it. Connected, like mycelium, in networks through which information flows.

Sensing happens in conversations, in synchronicities, in nature's guidance. There is so much information flowing through us when we are open enough to receive it. We have all followed a hunch about a person or an idea and been right. How many times has the thing that looked risky on paper but felt completely right in your heart turned out to be exactly right? *That is the field speaking.*

Every investor I respect has learned to trust this signal, though most will not name it in those terms. They will call it "pattern recognition," or "gut feel," or "thesis conviction." But listen to them long enough and you realize they are describing something more than analytical pattern-matching. They are describing a form of knowing that integrates intellect, intuition, relationship, and presence.

Sensing, in the Field Investing practice, is the disciplined cultivation of that knowing. It is what happens when we stop treating due diligence as purely adversarial, stop treating the founder as a pitch to be evaluated, and start treating the whole situation, the team, the moment, the market, the land, the lineage, as a living system giving us signals. The craft is in learning which signals to trust. Stillness is what makes that learning possible.

PART FOUR

From Sensing to Vision

From sensing comes vision. Behind every initiative, every fund, every company worth backing, there is a person who had a moment of vision, who sensed and saw something no one else could yet see, and decided to act on it.

Vision does not come from a whiteboard session or a spreadsheet. It emerges from stillness, from listening, from sensing the field long enough that something becomes clear. A vision, held with that kind of conviction, is what makes a pioneer.

The pioneers I most admire, the ones I invest in, are not fueled by anger at what is broken. They are fueled by love for what could be. They dare to do what has never been done before, not because they are without fear, but because their vision is stronger than their fear.

Fear-driven ventures burn out; they tend to replicate the very extractive patterns they claim to oppose. Love-driven ventures, grounded in a clear vision of what they are for, have a different quality of resilience.

This matters for how we deploy capital. Love-driven ventures attract the right people. They hold through the hard years. They regenerate themselves.

There is only one way to sustain that kind of courage over time: to be guided and surrounded by love. By community. By teachers and elders. By nature itself. *This is not an addendum to pioneering, it is its precondition.*

PART FIVE

Three Levels of Reality

Vision is not enough on its own. A vision that never lands in the world stays a beautiful idea. The next question is how we act on what we have sensed.

Tijn Tjoelker shared his experience of spending time with the Arhuaco people in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia, what they call *the Heart of the World*. The Arhuaco navigate complexity by working fluidly across three distinct levels of reality: the Ant, the Eagle, and the Angel.

LEVEL	DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION
<i>The Ant</i>	Immediate, physical	The tangible work of making things happen in the three-dimensional world. Walking the territory. Tending the soil. Without the Ant view, our grand visions never actually touch the earth.
<i>The Eagle</i>	Systemic, strategic	Stepping back to see the whole pattern. The Arhuaco have mapped 348 sacred sites along what they call the Black Line, understanding how rivers, forests, and peaks connect as one living, interdependent body.
<i>The Angel</i>	Cosmic, energetic	Tuning into a universal story, recognizing that everything is cosmically connected. The Mamos perform precise energetic work at sacred sites to balance the invisible structures of reality.

The greatest trap, for those of us trying to invest in regenerative futures, is getting stuck in our preferred view. Stay only in the Ant view and we fragment ourselves into exhaustion. Stay only in the Eagle view and we become detached architects, drawing beautiful maps from behind our laptops. Stay only in the Angel view and we float in the spiritual realm without doing the tangible work to heal the physical systems of our world. *Coherence requires us to move across all three.*

Anne Marie Voorhoeve, who works with the *4 Architectures of Natural Design* at The Hague Center for Global Governance, Innovation and Emergence, adds a refinement that is especially important for those of us shaped by Western ways of thinking. Within the Ant view, she points out, there is a distinction worth holding: the difference between the *material* architecture of action and the *social* architecture of action.

The material is what we are most fluent in: systems, structures, behaviors, the visible mechanics of how things get built. The social is what we tend to forget: culture, values, consciousness, the invisible fabric in which any system is held.

This distinction matters in investing. We are quick to fund the material work, the technology, the infrastructure, the measurable build. We are much slower to fund the social work, the relationships, the trust, the shifts in values and consciousness without which the material work cannot hold. *A regenerative venture without a regenerative culture eventually replicates the patterns it was trying to leave behind.*

For a Field Investor, this becomes a practice of self-inquiry. Which view do I naturally default to? Where do I sense most clearly, and where do I have a blind spot? Most of us have a strong preference. The discipline is not to abandon the view that comes easily, but to keep moving, deliberately, into the views that do not, and to surround ourselves with people who see what we cannot.

PART SIX

Field Investing, defined

This whole practice, taking time to be still, turning within, sensing the field, holding a vision, and acting with love, is what I call Field Investing.

DEFINITION

Field Investing is a multisensory, inside-out approach to investing that integrates stillness, presencing, intuition, ancestral wisdom, and the understanding that we are nature. It means deploying your *complete capital*, financial, relational, intellectual, temporal, and spiritual, in service of what wants to emerge, rather than only what already exists.

6.1 Complete Capital

Most investors deploy only one kind of capital: money. Field Investors deploy several, and they do so consciously.

CAPITAL	PRACTICE
<i>Financial</i>	Remains essential, but no longer treated as the only lever, nor the first.
<i>Relational</i>	The network of trust, introductions, and long-term relationships, often the most decisive input into whether a venture thrives.
<i>Intellectual</i>	What we know and what we have lived, deployed through advisory, mentoring, and strategic presence.
<i>Temporal</i>	Time and attention. Showing up, walking alongside, staying close through difficulty. These compound.
<i>Presence</i>	The quality of our attention and our being is what allows trust to build, always from a deep listening and being of service.

When we deploy the whole, the whole is available to what wants to emerge.

There is a further question, beyond which capitals we deploy: how does our money itself behave once it is deployed? The Argentinian regenerative thinker Ernesto van Peborgh, building on the work of Carol Sanford and Bill Reed, has given me a useful image here. He writes about capital the way a biologist might write about nutrients: in living systems, nothing accumulates indefinitely without consequence. *Sugar flows. Nitrogen cycles. Water moves.* The health of the whole depends on circulation, not concentration.

Money, he argues, was severed from this metabolic logic; it became the one substance permitted to pool without losing its meaning. There is also, in his thinking, the practice of *composting capital*, allowing what no longer serves to break down and feed what is becoming, so that yesterday's wealth becomes the soil for tomorrow's emergence. Field Investing is, in part, the practice of restoring money to the rhythm of living systems.

6.2 The Matrial Values

Field Investing rests on what I call *Matrial* values: caring, collaborating, regenerating, and long-term thinking. These are not soft. They are the values that allow complex living systems, forests, families, communities, economies, to sustain themselves across generations.

MATRIAL VALUES	EXTRACTIVE VALUES
Caring	Competing
Collaborating	Extracting
Regenerating	Scaling
Long-term thinking	Short-term thinking

Both sets of values have their place. But the last fifty years have demonstrated what happens when only the extractive set is allowed to drive the system. *We are living inside the consequences.*

6.3 Futuring Through the Field

Field Investing asks a different question than conventional investing. Conventional investing asks: *what already exists that I can own a share of?* Field Investing asks: *what is trying to emerge, and how can I be of service to its emergence?*

I call this *futuring through the field*: investing not only in what is, but in what wants to be. It is inherently more uncertain. It also turns out to be where the most important opportunities are being born, regenerative agriculture, feminine leadership, reparative economics, community-owned energy, community living systems where people share land, resources, and care across generations, and post-extractive ventures of every kind.

6.4 A Community of Practice

Field Investing is not a solo practice. It is a community of practice, built on the material values and guided, always, by a choice for love over fear. This community is not theoretical. It is being built, in many places at once, by people prototyping the structures that Field Investing needs to take root in the world. Two examples that I keep returning to.

The first is *Pando Funding*, developed by Anna Muoio of the New Capitalism Project together with Rob Ricigliano. Pando is named after the world's largest single organism, an aspen grove in Utah whose 47,000 trees share one root system. The funding model takes that image seriously: it is designed to resource entire networks of system change rather than isolated projects, to fund the relational and coordinating work that conventional philanthropy treats as overhead, and to delegate decisions about deployment to the network leaders themselves, trusting those closest to the work over those furthest from it. It is multidonor, multicapital, multiyear, designed for the timescales of living systems rather than funding cycles. What Pando offers, in the language of this paper, is a funding architecture for material values.

The second is *The Explorers Club*, the yearlong community Astrid Leyssens has built within We Are Impact Collective. It is invitation-only, deliberately small, and explicitly not a fund. It is a curated space in which capital holders, investors, philanthropists, and family offices travel together for a year, rebuilding their portfolios and their thinking in the company of peers and pioneers. Astrid is herself a Field Investor in the fullest sense; she deploys her complete capital not into a single venture but into the ecosystem in which other Field Investors can land. Where Pando offers a funding architecture, The Explorers Club offers a community architecture: the trusted container, the curated peer group, the companionship that makes inside-out work possible.

These are wonderful examples of how the third story already has structure. People are quietly building the architectures of capital, of community, of governance, in which Field Investing can hold and grow.

I think often of the work and wisdom of those who have shaped this practice, whether by walking it for decades or by prototyping its newer edges: Joanna Macy, Marilou van Golstein Brouwers, Frank van Beuningen, Lisette Schuitemaker, Otto Scharmer, Anne Marie Voorhoeve, Tijn Tjoelker, Ernesto van Peborgh, Anna Muoio, Astrid Leyssens, and many others whose wisdom runs through everything I do. We stand on the shoulders of people who listened to the field when no one else was listening, who trusted what they sensed before there was data to confirm it, who deployed their complete capital for decades without certainty of the outcome.

That is what Field Investing asks of us now.

CLOSING

From Successful to Significant

There is a distinction I have come to care about deeply: the difference between being *successful* and being *significant*. Success is measured in what we accumulate. Significance is measured in what we contribute. Field Investing is the practice through which success becomes significance, the practice through which our resources, financial and otherwise, orient themselves toward the future we want to create.

Gratitude is part of this. Gratitude is not just the blessings you have. It is what you do with them.

We have resources: financial, relational, intellectual. We have chosen to orient ourselves toward a flourishing future. We are in the adventure of sensing the field together. The outcome is uncertain; it always will be. That is not a reason to hold back. It is an invitation.

Let us become stewards of the future, instead of owners of the past. The future belongs to those who can sense it.

That is Field Investing. That is how we spark a flourishing future.

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Liet van Beuningen is a Field Investor, entrepreneur, and author. She is the founder of *The Elleders*, a community of women building regenerative futures, founder of *The Mothership Investments*, and the author of "*Is This It? Question What Matters and Spark Your Meaning.*" She lives and works in the Netherlands.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. Joanna Macy, *The Work That Reconnects*. The framing of Business as Usual, the Great Unravelling, and the Great Turning.
2. Tijn Tjoelker, Weaver & Writer | The Mycelium | Bioregional Weaving Labs.
3. Anne Marie Voorhoeve, *4 Architectures of Natural Design*, The Hague Center for Global Governance, Innovation and Emergence.
4. Ernesto van Peborgh, founder, *The Seva Institute*. Structuring auditable nature-finance vehicles from regenerative land in Brazil and Latin America | Bridging institutional capital to biodiversity assets.
5. Anna Muoio, founder *Pando Funding*, New Capitalism Project.
6. Astrid Leyssens, *The Explorers Club*, We Are Impact Collective.